

@utconnect



Urban Transformations Digest

Fourth edition
September 2018



Bridging European Urban Transformations



Welcome to this issue of @utconnect, a digest that summarises the activities of a collaborative workshop series that took place between 2016 and 2018 in Brussels.

While there were considerable uncertainties in the research landscape with regards to future connections within the EU, even before the results of the Brexit referendum became known, in the spirit of building bridges

a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on 15 June 2016 – just a week before the vote took place - between the University of Oxford, Urban Transformations ESRC Programme and Brussels Centre for Urban Studies (BCUS) at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). The MoU, besides pledging close collaboration between the two institutions, also launched a series of workshops, ‘Bridging European Urban Transformations’, lasting from June 2016 to February 2018.

During this time, a wide range of debates and inspiring conversations took place in different locations within Brussels by bringing together a variety of speakers, projects and initiatives. This functioned as an active approach to research, by building a roadmap of some of the key issues and priorities – outlined in more detail below.

The first workshop [1], entitled ‘Unplugging Data in Smart City-Regions’ (#UnpluggingData), was held in the Brussels Centre for Media Studies at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. In overcoming the ‘smart city’ buzzword, the event focused on the implications of smart urbanism and the use of big data for citizens by presenting leading initiatives in Europe (Future Cities Catapult, HackAIR, Flamenco, and City of Things, among others).

The second workshop [2], entitled ‘Experimenting Urban Living Labs (ULLs) Beyond Smart City-Regions’ (#ExperimentingULLs), explored in-depth the potential opportunities of ‘living labs’ and urban laboratories as means for more democratic and transparent city-making. The turnout of this event in the European Delegation of the Basque Country in Brussels was impressive, including government representatives and members of the European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN), drawing significant attention and bringing together a large number of regional governmental delegations from the EU.

The third workshop [3], entitled ‘Scaling Migration through the European City-Regions’ (#ScalingMigration), blended very diverse perspectives and techniques. The macro

scale examined the nation-state's role in this global crisis of migration and the emergence of city-networks. Moving towards the meso scale, newcomers and refugees' integration programmes were examined before arriving at the micro level, analysing grounded projects set up in neighbourhoods and districts. The event took place in the neighbourhood of Molenbeek.

Finally, the fourth workshop [4], 'Rethinking the Urban Commons in European City-Regions' (#RethinkingCommons) revolved in practical terms around the core idea of the 'commons', which was developed by Ostrom and Hardin, among many others. The event, which took place in Visit Brussels, piqued the interest of a wide range of stakeholders.

As a general final reflection, the 'Bridging European Urban Transformations' has contributed to enhance and focus the European Urban Agenda regarding (i) the awareness of the technopolitics of data in the post-GDPR realm, (ii) the increasingly experimental approach toward the smart city evolving policy agenda, (iii) the challenge in addressing the complex multi-scalar migration European scheme, and ultimately, (iv) the vital role of the 'urban commons' in regenerating the political economy of cities and regions in Europe.

Dr Igor Calzada, MBA, FeRSA

Related references:

1. Keith, M. & Calzada, I. (2016), European Smart Citizens as Decision Makers Rather Than Data Providers, Urban Transformations ESRC report on 14th November 2016 Workshop entitled '(Un)Plugging Data in Smart City-Regions'. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.11175.14240/1.
2. Keith, M. & Calzada, I. (2017), European Urban Living Labs As Experimental City-to-City Learning Platforms, Urban Transformations ESRC report on 13th February 2017 Workshop entitled 'Experimenting with Urban Living Labs (ULLs) Beyond Smart City-Regions'. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.20968.47361.
3. Keith, M. & Calzada, I. (2018), Citizenship in a Changing Multi-Scalar Post-Brexit European Context, Urban Transformations ESRC report on 11th September 2017 Workshop entitled 'Scaling Migration through the European City-Regions'. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.21119.71842/1.
4. Keith, M. & Calzada, I. (2018), Back to the "Urban Commons"? Social Innovation through New Co-operative Forms in Europe, Urban Transformations ESRC report on 12th February 2018 Workshop entitled 'Rethinking the Urban Commons in European City-Regions'. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.22227.27688/1



UT EVENT 1

(Un)plugging Data in Smart City Regions

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UT EVENT 2

*European Urban Living Labs as Experimental
City-to-City Learning Exchanges*

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*Citizenship in a Changing Multiscalar
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*Back to the 'Urban Commons'? Social Innovation
through New Cooperative Forms in Europe*

Michael Keith and Igor Calzada

UT team



Michael Keith

Urban
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Michael Keith's research focuses on migration related processes of urban change. His most recent work is the monograph *China Constructing Capitalism: Economic Life and Urban Change* (2014) and his next book will be *Press, Power, Identity and Representation: Race, Governance and Mobilisation in British Society*.



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Emma is helping to develop the ESRC Urban Transformations Programme and oversees all COMPAS' communications work, including events, website/ social media, publications, user engagement and impact activities.



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Mikal manages and monitors online communications for the Urban Transformations portfolio and assists with design and training activities.

UT researchers



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Andreza developed an interest in cities, and especially those in the global south, from her previous experience living, studying and working in Brazil, South Africa and India. Her activities include linking Newton funded ESRC cities research projects in Brazil, China, South Africa and India.



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Dr Igor Calzada, MBA, manages the European focussed knowledge exchange work for Urban Transformations.

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Nicola is working to develop links across the Urban Transformations portfolio to the Foresight Future of Cities programme run by the Government Office for Science within the Government Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.



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Foresight: Future
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Fellow

Paul is investigating the complex relationship between forms of knowledge; public innovation and legitimacy.

UT Event 1

European smart citizens as decision makers rather than data providers

by Michael Keith and Igor Calzada



On 14 November 2016 the Urban Transformations programme, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), brought together a range of academics and practitioners from across Europe for a knowledge exchange event on smart cities. This **workshop**, which took place at the Centre for Studies, Media and Telecommunication (**SMIT**) at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), was the first of a series entitled Bridging European Urban Transformations established in partnership with the VUB and its Brussels Centre for Urban Studies, with support from the **RSA Smart City–Regional Governance for Sustainability Research Network**. In this post-Brexit era, cooperation across borders and disciplines seems more important than ever before. Consequently the series, which runs from November 2016 to October 2017, emphasises the value of connections between institutions and key players in the field of urban transformations, in the UK and in the rest of Europe.

The workshop, ‘**(Un)Plugging** Data in Smart City-Regions’, focused on the necessity of unpacking and deconstructing the ‘smart cities’ paradigm that has been so influential in structuring the European policy agenda. The core idea that drove the discussions was the need to define the

interconnections between ‘hard’ and smart’ infrastructures and the broader economic, political and social systems at the metropolitan and regional scales. The workshop was broken down into three themes: addressing new sources for data collection, storage and usage; urban expertise for citizen/user involvement; and finally, smart knowledge and expertise to tackle urban inequalities.

According to Gartner, 1.6 billion connected devices will be hooked up to the larger smart city infrastructure worldwide by the end of this year. However, as was highlighted in the discussions, some uncertainties remain at the centre of the debate around what Yuval Noah Harari has described as ‘dataism’. The workshop showcased how various projects within the ESRC Urban Transformations portfolio were exploring innovative strategies of data collection, storage and usage to harness urban and regional smart governance models to guide decision-making processes.

Richard Tuffs, the director of the European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN), a platform that connects academics and practitioners in a wide diverse of research fields within the European regions, introduced the workshop, emphasising the importance of citizen concerns regarding data policies and the role of institutions to foster ecosystems of experimentation via what are known as Triple/Quadruple/Penta Helix approaches, thinking through stakeholder interdependencies engaging not only the public sector, private sector and academia but also civic society, social entrepreneurs and activists.

In the first thematic discussion, addressing new sources of data collection, storage and usage, Peter Triantafillou, from the Urban Big Data Centre in Glasgow, presented the major

obstacles to fostering a people-centred design of data that he called the ‘human in the loop’ – the acquisition, sharability and licensing restrictions of the obtained data. He advocated closer collaboration between computer scientists and social and political researchers in developing stronger evidence-based research on how tackle unexplored data issues so far.

Paul Cowie,
an Urban
Transformations
Research
Fellow based
at Newcastle
University
and **Future
Cities Catapult**,
elaborated



on the need to consider individuals not only as citizens deliberating on their material conditions, but also as consumers agreeing and disagreeing to the particular terms of a service. In this respect, there he advocated a more human-centred approach to the smart city – one that fosters interplay and interdependencies among multiple stakeholders.

Citizen interaction, engagement, involvement, participation and deliberation are at the centre of the debates around smart cities and big data. How should we deal with the lack of trust, apathy and open outrage that has become increasingly evident in popular political attitudes today? The misalignments between technology and the social needs of citizens in data generation were identified as a common dilemma today: will data-driven devices continue to serve citizens or vice versa? As a consequence, different forms



of engagement were discussed. However, as **Morozov** has argued, despite the plethora of technological solutions to social problems, key questions remained unanswered: ‘Who gets to implement data?’, for example, and ‘what kinds of politics of data do technological solutions smuggle through the back door?’. Discussions highlighted how the calls for data to be ‘open’, while apparently simple, in reality challenge existing legal norms and pose profound implications for users along the chain. For example, liability risks might be passed to the end user of open data – but what if end users cannot bear the risk? In the **internet of things (IoT)** generates continuous monitoring and commonly individualised data, how should we theorise, regulate and make visible the ethical choices that have now emerged around the legal liability surrounding the ownership of data?

The second thematic discussions showcased two participatory smart city projects: **HackAIR** and **Flamenco** (Flanders Mobile Enacted Citizen Observatories). The first, HackAIR, is a social innovation project and open technology platform for citizen observatories on air quality. The discussion focused on the levels of citizen engagement and related strategies such as crowdsourcing (citizens as sensors), distributed intelligence (citizens as basic interpreters), participatory science (citizens as participants in data collection) and extreme collaborative science (citizens as participants in problem definition and data analysis). The call to transit from the conception of citizens as data providers to citizens as decision makers provoked a powerful debate on the ethical dimensions of participatory innovative technologies. Flamenco developed this theme further, exploring how citizens can be empowered to tailor their own

observatories based on participatory sensing and citizen science principles. An inter-disciplinary team presented a demonstration on the applicability of the project from computer science and social science perspectives.

In the final thematic strand of the workshop, the discussions focused on socio-economic developments and institutional capacity. **The City of Things**, presented by **Pieter Ballon** from SMIT-VUB, explored the experimental dimensions of data-driven living labs. In the presentation, these were related to multi-stakeholder co-creation processes for business, user design, prototyping and product development (aspects that will be explored at the next workshop on 13 February 2017 in Brussels). To conclude the workshop, **Joana Barros** from Birbeck, University of London, based within the Urban Transformations project **RESOLUTION: REsilient**



Systems fOr Land Use TransportatION, highlighted the methodological difficulties involved in gathering and comparing data in two distinct metropolitan regions, London and São Paulo.

The workshop demonstrated that

in one sense what was once novel has become received wisdom. It is now ‘common sense’ to suggest that the nature of the metropolis demands forms of knowledge that transcend old boundaries between humanities, natural sciences and social sciences. It has become almost self

evident to assert that a model of knowledge production that is produced 'upstream' in the academy and then exported 'downstream' to city hall and local governance structures is inadequate for the metropolitan challenges of the 21st century. Instead we have moved towards a stronger sense of co-production between research and practice. The sense that the questions arise in the real world, but the answers are to be found in the academy, is less plausible than ever.

And yet, at worst, at times the 'smart' agenda, particularly in journalistic form and at times in spite of itself, can look like a return through the back door of a technocratic determinism whereby all urban ills are resolved through scientific solutions. Complexity can be analytically generative, simplicity narratively powerful. Such naïve arguments are in reality more often the belief of second rate technocrats and third rate academic critique.

More interestingly we see a situation where the complex and open systems of urban life are disrupted by rapid social change and powerful economic forces. Recognising that such change is unpredictable in its disruptive form and uneven in its social consequences, one function of academic research is to speculate, to test, to map and to trace how disruptive technologies restructure the relationship between the individual and the city. The smart citizen at the heart of the new city needs to understand both the emancipatory potential and the divisive consequences of different moments of disruptive innovation. As Ballon suggested in the case of his living lab in Brussels, it is the duty and function of Urban Living Labs to surface and make visible the choices at stake rather than provide singular solutions to problems. How we make these choices then becomes a mediation of scientific expertise and deliberative democracy.

ESRC investments and collaborative links in Brussels at the workshop highlighted how data-driven issues presented new pathways to conduct research and implement policy. However, if we want to unplug data we must consider also deeper the underlying social and ethical questions and policy implications alongside those affecting the technical capacity to store and distribute bits of information and the power of data science. This workshop sparked a provocation as well as an effective knowledge exchange. Dystopian visions and technocratic utopias alike demand rigorous research scrutiny and public debate to optimise the chances of shaping a better future city.



UT Event 2

European Urban Living Labs as Experimental City-to-City Learning Platforms

by Michael Keith and Igor Calzada



On 13 February 2017, the Urban Transformations programme brought together a range of academics and practitioners from across Europe for a knowledge exchange event - the second in the '[Bridging European Urban Transformations ESRC Workshop Series](#)' on urban living labs and smart cities. As [Professor Michael Keith](#) and [Dr Igor Calzada, MBA](#) highlight, the event highlighted the value of urban living labs in encouraging innovation and the need to move beyond 'smart' approaches to embrace an 'experimental' urbanism.

The workshop *Experimenting Urban Living Labs (ULLs) Beyond Smart City-Regions* explored potential transitions, feasible pathways, and missing links between the smart cities paradigm and the experimental urban living lab approach. Despite the underlying critical discussion from academia regarding the technocratic discourse derived from the smart city mainstream policy agenda, the workshop facilitated not only a critical but also a constructive collective joint reflection by European academics and regional policy-makers examining the potential of the 'lab' concept. The workshop considered how the 'living lab' approach might nuance technocratic framings of the 'smart city' and open up more democratic and open systems of making cities.

In this sense, how we make the future *visible* might be as significant as the ways in which we make the future *possible*. The former might emphasise a greater sense of choice, trade offs, uncertainties and conflicts; the latter might emphasise a greater sense of determinism, efficiency and inevitability. The former might foreground ethical choices, the latter technological drivers. Social science needs to bridge the normative logics of the former and the analytical logics of the latter. In this context the workshop asked how the notion of the living lab might differ from some of the ideas of the smart cities paradigm that has strongly influenced research and innovation funding in recent years.

So then, in what ways are ‘living labs,’ as the new experimental initiatives from the applied social sciences, the right—or at least, a feasible—kind and/or scale of intervention? According to Athlestan Spilhaus, ‘the city is a completely interacting system and thus, the experiment must be a total system. Nobody knows the answers to city living in the future, and, when answers are unknown, experiment is essential.’ The notion of the city as a space of experimentation can morph easily into a particular way of seeing the urban. [Gillian Rose](#) has argued [in an Urban Transformations blog that followed the workshop](#) that ‘the whole notion of a “lab” on the face of it continues that commitment to technocratic solutions to urban challenges.’

The notion of ULLs is normally credited to Professor William Mitchell from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). MIT Living Labs aimed to bring “together interdisciplinary experts to develop, deploy, and test—in *actual living environments*—new technologies and strategies for design that respond to this changing world”. People from the world outside were to be invited into living laboratories

where ethnographers and other researchers observed how they used newly invented information technology. Popularised in the USA, the notion generated particular traction in Europe as diverse practices complicated what different actors considered the lab concept to involve. There have been numerous attempts to define what a ULLs is, but there is no firm consensus in the literature.



We see living labs as innovation platforms where the stakeholders develop and exchange ideas in a community. According to the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL), ULL projects present active

user involvement, real-life settings, multi-stakeholder participation, multi-method approaches and co-creation. The workshop showcased how various projects within the [ESRC Urban Transformations](#) portfolio had moved towards an experimental laboratory approach to how they organise research and policy. This transition from a smart to experimental approach is partly in response to a fragmented discourse on sustainability. As such, the concept of the ULL emerges as a means to speed up socio-technological innovation by involving stakeholders in co-production processes. Nevertheless, the workshop concluded with an open question: Ultimately, what will the implications of ULLs be for society and for research?

Two policy professionals set up the discussion of the workshop by providing an understanding of the democratic dimensions of urban experimentation. The director of

ERRIN, [Richard Tuffs](#), introduced the workshop and highlighted the regional leadership of the Basque Country in the EU, particularly through two H2020-Smart Cities and Communities projects: [Replicate](#) and [SmartEnCity](#), led by St. Sebastian and Vitoria respectively. Tuffs particularly emphasized the key value of [citizen science](#) via ULLs for the current socio-economic development of the European regions, given the importance that engaging citizens in specific action domains has for their local communities.

Thereafter, [Tuija Hirvikoski](#), the president of the [European Network of Living Labs \(ENoLL\)](#), elaborated on the history and definitions of living labs. In her opinion, the core challenge was how to engage citizens in innovation and research to shape the urban and regional agenda decision-making process. In a nutshell, ENoLL considers that ULLs are forms of collective urban governance that can positively influence our European communities through more effective citizen engagement. Some critical voices advocated, by contrast, that such a notion of cities as ‘smart’ or ‘labs’ is much easier to support in places with long histories of social democracy and welfare state. Thus, context-and-culturally-driven ULL experimental designs seemed to be required for broader and more comprehensive interventions.

The three thematic discussions and the whole workshop were led by eight fundamental questions, as follows:

1. What does inter-disciplinary integrating place-making mean? How can we bring together expertise in areas such as computing, mapping, politics, economy, digital anthropology, spatial analysis and urban planning?
2. What *are* the roles of the private sector, public authorities, academia, civil society and entrepreneurs/

activists in these ULL initiatives? What *should* the roles be? In the policy literature these configurations are known as ‘helix’ formations. How can we deal with these multi-stakeholder ‘helix strategies’?

3. How can ULLs, as a form of collective urban governance, positively influence the smart policy agenda in Europe by going beyond its governance implications?
4. What makes the ULL approach attractive and novel?
5. How are ULL initiatives being operationalised in contemporary urban governance for sustainable and low carbon cities?
6. What prospects are there for alternative funding and business models for cities and regions in Europe?
7. What are the practical and political interventions needed within multi-stakeholder approaches, and what are the potential concerns about data technopolitics?
8. Is another urban governance model possible, a ‘third way’ of urban experimentation between state and market?

In order to address these open questions, the workshop was broken down into three themes: first, consideration of ULLs and smart cities in the making; second, comparison of specific ULL and smart city cases; and finally, the move towards experimental cities.

In the first thematic discussion, addressing urban sustainability transitions between smart cities in the making and ULLs, [Prof Simon Marvin](#) (Director of the Urban Institute at the University of Sheffield) from the [GUST ESRC-funded project](#) presented an overview of the context that is producing ULL experiments everywhere via JPI Urban

Europe and H2020 projects. According to Marvin, there are three types of ULLs to be found in real interventions: strategic, civic, and organic ULLs. As such, what makes ULLs distinct are the place-explicit (urban) focus and the fact that they experiment with future solutions through different modes of change.



Following Prof Marvin, [Prof Gillian Rose](#) (Professor of Cultural Geography at the Open University), presented the ESRC-funded project entitled [Smart Cities](#)

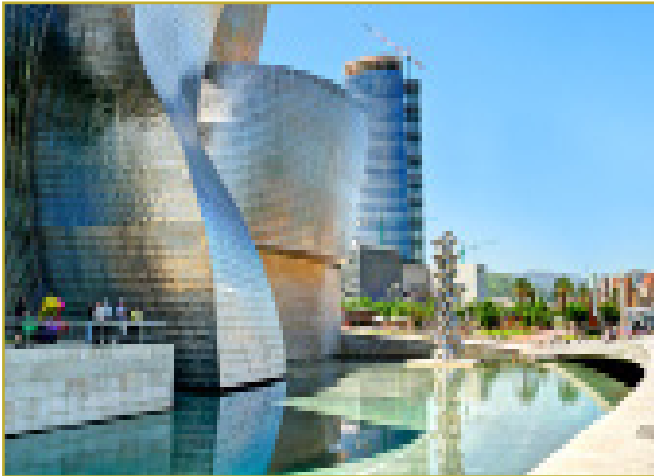
[in the Making: Learning from Milton Keynes](#). She suggested that currently, although local community and citizen participation is repeatedly asserted to be a prerequisite for a successful smart city, very little is known about how the development and roll-out of smart policies and technologies actually engages city residents, workers and visitors. Rose elucidated on the importance of recognising conflict and culturally-observed urban experiments when discussing the notion of smartness.

The second thematic discussion showcased two projects that intertwined smart city and ULL approaches: on the one hand, Nicola da Schio from the [VUB/Cosmopolis](#) presented a [JPI-funded SmarterLabs project](#), and on the other hand, [Dr Nicola Headlam](#) (Knowledge Exchange Research Fellow at the Urban Transformations programme) discussed the ‘urban living global challenge.’ Despite having different orientations and purposes, both presentations highlighted the contribution of ULLs as a new collaborative institutional

settings to solve urban problems. The first presentation focused on the environmental politics of air pollution by reflecting on the different modes of citizen engagement in various locations including Santander (Spain), Istanbul (Turkey), Helsinki (Finland), Maastricht (Netherlands), Graz (Austria), Brussels (Belgium) and Bellinzona (Switzerland). The second presentation gave an overview of a desk research analysis of the urban living global challenge, made up of two forthcoming reports produced by the Urban Transformations ESRC programme: 'The Urban Lens: Research Ecosystem, Innovation and Interdisciplinary Research' and 'Comparative International Urban and Living Labs'.

In the final thematic strand of the workshop, a recent book entitled 'The Experimental City' was presented by one of its co-editors and a co-author. The first speaker, [Dr Andrew Karvonen from the KTH in Stockholm](#), delivered a talk on the 'politics of monitoring, assessing and scaling.' In order to establish a link between the smart city policy interventions and the potential of the experimental city, the speaker elaborated on a former participation of an [EU funded H2020-Smart Cities and Communities lighthouse project called 'Triangulum'](#). According to the speaker, after participating in an H2020 Smart City lighthouse project, there are three unanswered questions from the technopolitical perspective of European policy making: who determines the scope of experimentation; who monitors and assesses the experiments; and how the insights are scaled up and rolled out. In response to these thought provoking issues, the debate was developed around the diverse critical implications of urban politics in growing numbers of smart city interventions. However, very little constructive policy advice was offered to link up the mainstream notion of smart

city policy-making processes with more experimentally-driven and laboratory-based experiments. Finally, [Dr Federico Curugullo](#) from Trinity College Dublin provided a metaphoric narrative based on the idea of the ‘Frankenstein city’ to explain why smart cities are characterised these days by patchworked or de-composed urbanism.



The workshop curated a rich debate regarding urban interventions. An implicit commitment at the workshop to the democratisation of experimental approaches in urban policy was not always matched by a practical prescription of the means

and mechanisms for simultaneously safeguarding citizen interest and promoting progressive change. This opens up an interesting domain of future research questions. In critical discourse ‘smartness’ may not be very appealing, while the ethical rules of the experimental have yet to be established. Meanwhile the pluralisation of experimental labs structured by private sector interests, less open to research scrutiny, require a return on capital investment and yet engage in diverse ways with city government implementation and public regulation. Likewise, culturally diverse contexts of collaboration and co-operation [across Europe in cities such as Bilbao and Barcelona](#) are generating interesting niches in social and economic innovation that demand further exploration. It might also be useful to explore how the Scandinavian social democratic traditions that attempt to reconcile public interest and private sector motivation compare with more free market alternatives in structuring the logics of the experimental city.

In this light, discussion at the workshop considered the role of local authorities in fostering public innovation and procurement – even a new approach to the governance of the urban commons – as a way to overcome the simplistic separation between the state and the market. In fact, many experiments are actively moving away from the ‘smart’ trend that has so far been hegemonic. Cities and regions in Europe are embracing alternatives and testing new methods to address the failures of the exclusively techno-rational approach to smart cities. Optimistically we might hope that, sooner rather than later, the experimental trend will take the lead in favour of more sophisticated and democratically powerful transformative alliances that will encourage a city-to-city learning among European regions and cities. It may be not just a matter of time, but also a question of connecting ongoing experiments and labs around Europe, for ideas and knowledge to be shared effectively.

ESRC investments and collaborative links in Brussels at the workshop emphasized how urban laboratories could complement new methodologies and tools to reorient research and policy interventions. Nevertheless, a number of urban political questions remain unanswered regarding the multi-stakeholders’ interdependencies and related interventions. This workshop opened up a transition from the ‘smart’ to the ‘experimental’ by connecting different cases around Europe, representing another small step forward in connecting the public interest with rigorous research and democratic policy-making.

UT Event 3

Citizenship in a Changing Multi-scalar Post-Brexit European Context

By Michael Keith and Igor Calzada



The third workshop from the series ‘Bridging European Urban Transformations’ took place in the neighbourhood of Molenbeek in Brussels on 11 September 2017. Entitled ‘Scaling Migration Through the European City-Regions’ (#ScalingMigration), it blended very diverse perspectives and techniques. The macro scale examined the nation-state’s role in the global crisis of migration and the emergence of city-networks; at the meso scale, the workshop examined newcomers’ and refugees’ integration programmes; and at the micro scale, it analysed grounded projects set up in neighbourhoods and districts.

In 2017, according to Franck Düvell (Allen et al., 2017, p. 11), the number of globally displaced persons reached a record 65 million. Over a third, around 22 million, were from the wider neighbourhood of the European Union. Of the 21.3 million who fled to other countries and were categorised as refugees, around 3 million resided in Turkey, 1.1 million in Lebanon, 980,000 in Iran and 660,000 in Jordan.

As a backdrop to this phenomenon, solely in the European Union (Burridge, Gill, Kocher, & Martin, 2017, p. 3), migration and border policies have produced complex

spatial dynamics: the bounding of Europe's Schengen Area; simultaneous freeing of internal mobility for EU citizens and 'hardening' of external boundaries; the harmonization of border and immigration controls as a condition of EU admission; Good Neighbor Agreements with non-EU members tying aid to immigration and border policing requirements; and the expansion of long-term detention as a mobility control practice.

Hence, in the workshop, considering that the post-Brexit era is still characterised by doubt over what Brexit entirely means for British and European citizens – amidst mass migration, a refugee crisis, rescaling nation-states, state-city relations, transnational networks, ethnic and non-metropolitanised right-wing populist nationalism, politics of austerity and division, spatial segregation and inequalities, and diversity integration policies in neighbourhoods and districts – we asked how migration can be scaled throughout European city-regions (Bürkner, 2017; Burrridge et al., 2017; Calzada, 2015; Hoekstra, 2017).

In response to this general concern, according to Keith (2013), the city has historically been seen as an 'integration machine', the site where most people can describe themselves not only as 'citizens of the city' but also increasingly—as we have recently observed—as 'citizens of the non-city': invisible citizens of the visible city. Thus, migration is a changing multi-scalar and multi-territorial phenomenon that has become a constitutive principle in the public's understanding of the city.

However, no less importantly, in the United Kingdom (Keith, 2013, p. 3), even after the 2008–09 global financial crisis, migration remains a top political concern, and in mainland

Europe, anti-migrant sentiment has driven both the rise of extremist parties and at times mainstream debates.

In Europe, cities and regions represent the closest level of government to citizens. This is the case with EUROCITIES, which represents the leaders of 137 of Europe's largest cities, encouraging them to stand together to deliver real solutions for their citizens. The impact of the British public's decision to leave the EU is a wake-up call for international, national, regional and city leaders in Europe and beyond. Surprisingly, neither the New Urban Agenda released by the Habitat III Conference in Quito, Ecuador in October 2016, nor the White Paper released by the European Commission in March 2017, entitled 'Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025', mention the possible impact of external effects such as Brexit. Thus, in these urgent circumstances, cities and regions must be equipped with the tools to connect people and places to growth, wealth and equality (Cohen, 2016). The Urban Agenda for the EU and Eurocities foresees a future for UK cities in this process too, as demonstrated by many UK city leaders from the UK Core Cities initiative. As such, in the midst of re-scaling the UK nation-state, cities, regions and their devolutionary claims have become active drivers in their own rights – increasingly independent of the confines of their respective nation-states (Calzada, 2015).

Furthermore, some interpretations (Johnson, 2017, p. 1) are considering the rescaling and relocation of border enforcement in the European Union in relation to state sovereignty by arguing that existing “soft” conceptualisations of the EU's relationship to sovereignty and bordering – “shared”, “joint”, “multi-level”, “consociational” – are inadequate for understanding the ways that the exercise of sovereign power in European borderlands have been

transformed.

Hence, in this messy and complex migration context, Europe is at a crossroads, and its cities and regions are bearing the brunt of multiple challenges from macro, meso, and micro scale perspectives. This workshop was an invitation to rethink how migration can still ensure that the cities and regions of Europe are international conduits for the passage of trade, commerce, and most importantly, citizens.

This workshop considered how a broad scope of participants such as activists, policy-makers, academics, companies, social entrepreneurs, and citizens reacted to the challenges migration is posing to European cities and regions by not only overcoming the side effects of the lack of vision and humanitarian aid regarding migrants but also empowering city-to-city learning in order to remodel Europe through its cities and regions.



Despite the burdens for citizens in Europe, cities and regions should continue to work cooperatively across borders to secure the economic, social, and environmental future that citizens deserve. Cities are also central:

- At the macro scale, guaranteeing the right to live and work for EU nationals and British citizens in the post-Brexit era.
- At the meso scale, facilitating the integration process of

refugees and newcomers in reinforcing and enhancing social cohesion.

- At the micro scale, setting up intervention projects and exchange programmes in neighbourhoods and districts.

Building on the emerging body of ongoing initiatives, the workshop brought together a group of European academics and policy-makers to reflect on and debate the current potential for scaling migration throughout European cities and regions.

The workshop began with questions about the macro interpretations of this changing context. Macro migration issues such as Brexit are not only re-scaling nation-states but also altering the whole understanding of migration at the supranational scale, insofar as there is a growing disconnect between citizens and EU institutions. Citizens are asking politicians: What does the EU really do for us? Why does it matter?

Richard Tuffs, director of the European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN), a platform that connects academics and practitioners in a wide diverse of research fields within the European regions, introduced the workshop by presenting the migration policy framework of the EU. In particular, he presented the Future of Europe White Paper by underlining the migration section, which argues that the EU must protect 'our borders while preserving the right to free movement within Europe'. In the same direction, he said that more than 8 in 10 Europeans consider unemployment, social inequalities, and migration as the top three challenges for the Union. Nonetheless, he also argued that legal immigration has generally boosted the economies of receiving countries and can provide the EU with the skills needed to

address labour market shortages. By contrast, where local infrastructure and integration efforts have not kept pace with the increased scale of migration, migration can lead to social tensions in communities.

After this presentation, Professor Sarah Spencer from COMPAS, University of Oxford, kicked off the workshop discussing cities as incubators of inclusion by reflecting on European city responses to migrants with legal and irregular status and on evolving implications for multi-level governance. In her presentation, Professor Spencer stated that many migrants flourish while others experience disadvantages across the EU, which can lead to their social exclusion. She focused on integration processes and the knowledge that we have gathered so far: integration as a process, not an end-state, and integration processes across domains (social, structural, cultural, civic, political and identarian). According to Professor Spencer, cities have a key role in facilitating integration insofar as they have direct impact as convenors. Likewise, she pointed out that development of local strategies has created an appetite for research and knowledge exchange. However, the divergence of local approaches can lead to tensions in multi-level governance mechanisms, leaving one open question open for the discussion: can city-regions use voice more effectively to shift the terms and tone of national public and policy debates?

Thereafter, Dr Ilke Adam from the VUB presented on 'State-city relations in migration governance from the state-of-the-art perspective'. In her presentation, Dr Adam asked 'how state-city relations and multi-level governance in global migration issues could alter the current urban shape of Europe'. Dr Adam bridges the gap between the political

party literature and the literature on immigration and integration policies in cities. In her research on subnational nationalisms, she relies on a more nuanced categorisation of policy positions proposed by the immigration policy literature, which is absent in research on subnational political party literature. In this way, she presented the importance of devolution and multi-level governance mechanisms to inclusive policy frameworks on the city-regional level of Europe.

The second part of the workshop, the debate among academics and policymakers focused on the gap between citizens and institutions by suggesting the substantial role of cities and region leaders in advocating transnational networks, integration of migrants and refugees, and meso initiatives, projects, and policies (Agier, 2016; Betts & Collier, 2017). In this section, transnational networks, integration of migrants and newcomers, and the refugee crisis throughout European city-regions were discussed. Professor Yasemin Soysal from the University of Essex, presented her research 'Transnational bright futures between China, Germany, and the UK', funded by the ESRC. Using this comparative study of the internal and international mobility of Chinese higher education students, she presented results from the main data collected via large-scale surveys of a representative sample of student groups, complemented by exploratory interviews with students and parents.

The next speaker was Dr Sophie Withaekx from the VUB, presenting on 'transnational migration networks in Europe'. She particularly focused on transmigration, and the rise of flexible migration strategies as part of superdiversity. She attempted to respond to how transnational migration networks are the driving forces for these changes in

European cities and regions. She presented the concept of 'superdiversity', which implies increasing diversity within diversity, including the rise of flexible migration strategies: complex migration trajectories implying serial cross-border mobility between two or more countries. She explored 'transmigration' in the two main superdiverse Belgian cities of Brussels and Antwerp, based upon in-depth interviews with Brazilian, Ghanaian, and Moroccan transmigrants. She analysed the social problems related to transmigration, and how these problems transcend borders and challenge urban social work and social policies at different levels. Ultimately, she explored why transmigration requires forms of multilevel governance to deal with people living beyond borders in the EU.



In the final part of the workshop, the discussion involved several policy interventions that require tailored neighbourhood and district-level micro interventions in order to enable real diversity by tackling segregation and social inequality. The vitality and connections in super-diverse streets in London, for instance, 'demonstrates how important migration has been to the UK's development in the last few decades' (Hall, 2015; West, 2015).

In the final thematic strand of the workshop, the discussion centred around spatial segregation and neighbourhood integration in European city-regions. Professor Gwilym Pryce, from the University of Sheffield, provided a remarkable presentation on the implications of migration and spatial

persistence by presenting the implications for urban segregation and inequality. Professor Pryce described four major concerns regarding immigration: (i) segregation and social fragmentation, (ii) employment and wages, (iii) housing prices at local and national levels, and (iv) inequality.

He explained that research has tended to concentrate on the total number of migrants rather than on where in the country migrants choose to live. Regarding some data on London, he focused on the path-dependency of migrants from poor countries, who are attracted to areas with low housing costs and a high proportion of the same nationality. As such, he showed that in London there has been a large increase in areas where more than 30% of residents were born outside the UK. He asked whether immigration leads to a local net reduction or increase in available jobs. Regarding the UK, he summarised that all migrants from beyond the EU have zero or negligible impact on local employment. EU migrants, on the other hand, have a significant positive effect on local employment, according to the provisional and ongoing findings of his ESRC-funded research. In another strand of the debate, he argued that a large influx of poor migrants may be more likely to result in social tensions in areas that are already poor. A clear example was Rotherham in England.

He concluded that migration is likely to have different impacts on levels of segregation, employment creation and housing prices, depending on the affluence of country of origin and local employment types in destination areas. Likewise, he warned that path dependencies in location of particular migration may increase divergence between areas over the time.

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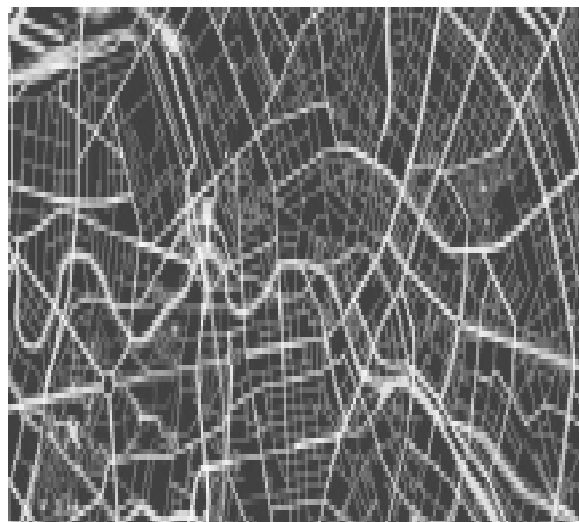
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UT Event 4

Back to the ‘Urban Commons’? Social Innovation through New Cooperative Forms in Europe


by Michael Keith and Igor Calzada



The fourth and final workshop from the series ‘Bridging European Urban Transformations’ took place on 12 February 2018. The title of the workshop was ‘Rethinking the Urban Commons in European City-Regions’ (#RethinkingCommons), and it revolved around the core idea of the ‘commons’, which was developed by Ostrom (2000) and Hardin (1968) among many others. The event piqued the interest of a wide range of stakeholders.

Although the ‘urban commons’ has increasingly appeared as a topic of scholarly inquiry related to the urban politics and governance of social innovation in austerity, the research questions, methodologies, and disciplinary approaches necessary to more fully conceptualise and develop the idea of the ‘urban commons’ and the new challenges and facets it introduces into the ongoing study of the commons in diverse fields have had no sustained attention (Ostrom, 1990, 2000, 2010).

Generally speaking, the problem of governing resources commonly used by many individuals has been long discussed in economics, migration, data science, smart urbanism, and environmental studies literature in certain



European city-regions (Calzada, 2015; Calzada & Cowie, 2017; Keith & Calzada, 2016, 2017; Kitchin, 2015; Labaeye, 2017; McCullough, 2013; Nordling, Sager, & Söderman, 2017; Parker & Schmidt, 2016; Subirats, 2012). Depending on the type of common resource, attributes of the group of users, and the property regime, collective action can either preserve the commons or deplete it. Privatisation and deregulation of public services, as well as dismantling of the traditional residential community due to rapid urbanisation, currently affect the condition of commons resources in urban areas. As cities become denser from large-scale urban development projects, the 'urban commons' is either privatised or left as open access. While the latter puts the commons at risk of wasteful usage, the former limits access to shared resources to a group of privileged users at the cost of excluding others.

Based on the assumption the collectivity is incapable of managing common resources, conventional solutions to the tragedy of the commons (Hardin, 1968) have focused on either centralised government regulation or privatisation of common pool resources. However, Ostrom has shown how collectivities (from locals in Africa to Western Nepal) have developed institutional arrangements for effective management of common resources, challenging established economic theory.

Extrapolating (and somewhat expanding) Ostrom's analysis to the level of cities (Amanda, 2017; Bieniok, 2015; Bollier, 2015, 2016; Bollier & Helfrich, 2016a, 2016b; Borch & Kornberger, 2015; Bruun, 2015; Dellenbaugh, Kip, & Bieniok,

2016; Foster, 2011; Foster & Iaione, 2016; Harvey, 2011; Iaione, 2017), it seems evident that rethinking the notion of the urban ‘commons’ will likely generate interesting and diverse perspectives in the European city-regional scope: How are the boundaries of the ‘commons’ defined in an urban context defined? What processes regulate the use of the urban ‘commons’? What exclusionary processes are involved in such definitional and regulatory processes, and what organizational and political implications follow in the wake of such endeavours? What are the cognitive, symbolic, technological, and material infrastructures that render the ‘commons’ and citizens visible thus constituting them as objects for governance not only individually but also collectively (Calzada, 2018)? What conceptions of value(s) constitute the urban ‘commons’, and how do managerial ‘smart’ technologies organise these values?

These days, it has become fashionable to talk about the ‘urban commons’, and it is clear why. Traditional conceptions of the ‘public’ are in retreat: public services are at the mercy of austerity policies, public housing is being sold off, and public space is increasingly non-public. In a relentlessly neoliberal climate, the commons seems to offer an alternative to the battle between public and private. The idea of commonly owned and managed land or services speaks to a 21st-century sensibility of participative citizenship and peer-to-peer production. In theory, at least, the ‘commons’ is full of radical potential to implement social innovations in European city-regions.

Hence, the workshop sought to better understand the idea of urban ‘commons’ as a way to reimagine the city as a ‘commons’ and as a ‘platform’ (Bollier, 2016; Borch & Kornberger, 2015; Foster & Iaione, 2016) at different

European city-regional scales. In addition, the workshop explored the circumstances and contexts in which urban commons emerge, what contributes to their durability and effectiveness, and what undermines them. In the current policy context, entirely dominated by urban data in the realm of the so-called ‘smart city’ hegemonic discourse, the workshop was presented as an invitation to reflect upon and think beyond the technocratic idea of the city by reclaiming public space and urban ownership as an experimental means. to address the urban ‘commons’ (Calzada, 2018; Labaeye, 2017). This could be achieved through:

- social innovation and anti-austerity public policy that generates resources through alternative finance and harnesses social energy through grassroots mobilisation, and
- meeting needs through community provision in land use, housing and rental cooperatives, food initiatives, etc.

The workshop stressed the importance of transitions as a new urban ‘commons’ narrative for urban infrastructure (housing, food, mobility, etc.), collaborative civilian empowerment, network governance, alternative finance, urban co-operatives, energy grassroots mobilisation, data-driven sovereignties/devolution, urban welfare, and urban development. Additionally, the workshop focused on questions of urban governance and explored different frameworks for governing common urban resources.

Hence, after considering the above, it was also discussed whether another urban governance model is possible—a ‘third way’ of urban experimentation between state and market (Keith & Calzada, 2016 and 2017; Dellenbaugh et al., 2016).

The workshop kicked off by introducing its own concept of the ‘commons’. The first speaker was Professor Joe Painter from Durham University, who presented the findings of the ESRC-funded project ‘The Urban Politics and Governance of Social Innovation in Austerity’(PUSI). By addressing the fields of social innovation as ‘wicked problems’ – such as rising life expectancy, growing diversity of cities and countries, stark inequalities, rising incidence of long-term



conditions, behavioural problems of affluence, difficult transitions to adulthood, and constraints on wellbeing – Professor Painter framed social innovation as (i) innovation with social purpose, (ii) innovation by social

means, and (iii) innovation in the social. He went on to link social innovation and the urban ‘commons’ as a way to overcome risks of enclosure and exclusion through civic crowdfunding. Moreover, he argued that the commons enables social innovation by setting-up social hubs, creative spaces, and knowledge-sharing platforms. Thus, ‘commoning’ could be seen as an aim of social innovation. He then presented several projects and initiatives around co-housing, communal gardens, swap shops, and free shops—particularly ongoing cases in Berlin, Newcastle, and Athens on finance, food, arts and culture, and refugees, which are part of the PUSI project. He concluded that the purpose of the commons should be the re-shaping of social relations and forms of social organisation as a means to respond to austerity without being determined by it.

Nele Aernout then presented her PhD results on reproducing housing commons. Her presentation discussed the required government involvement and differentiated forms of communing in a rental cooperative. At the beginning of the twentieth century, many countries in Europe adopted Ebenezer Howard's cooperative garden city model: this combined collective land holding and participatory principles with housing that aimed to connect qualities of urban and rural living. Starting in the late 1990s, new literature on the commons developed that was not based on natural resource management but rather new types of commons in danger of privatisation and enclosure, such as knowledge commons, social commons, intellectual commons, and urban commons (Bollier, 2015; Harvey, 2011). In her conclusion, rather than arguing that commons will be destroyed or enclosed in cases of an increased government involvement (Harvey, 2011) or free-ridership (Ostrom, 1990), she showed a differentiated understanding of governance and participation within the commons. Building on the notion of 'differential commoning', she shed light on the way housing commons were reproduced in a rental cooperative in the Brussels Capital Region. The management of the cooperative creatively used the new institutional arrangements of the umbrella organisation to re-identify the cooperative notion, turning a regular social housing company into a cooperative via increasing resident involvement in the board of directors, installing local management committees, and developing social cohesion projects in line with co-operative values.

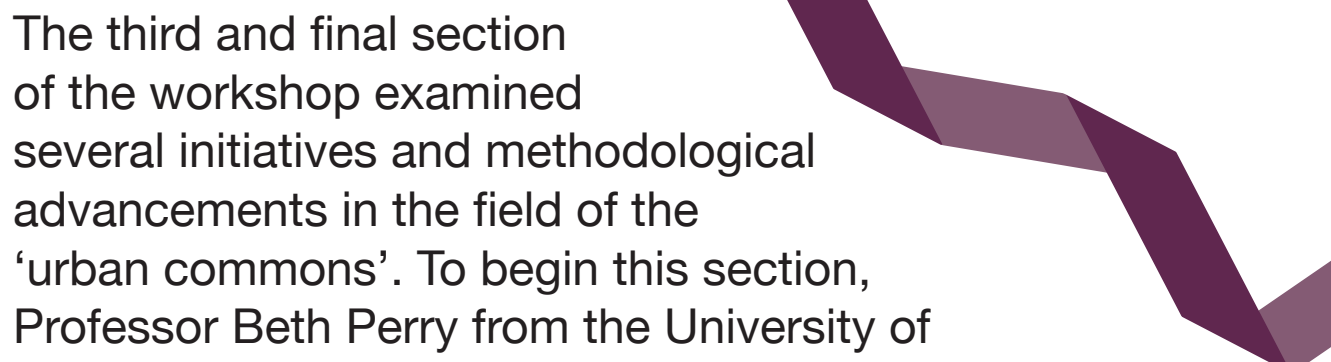
The next section of the workshop focused on critical reflections on the urban 'commons'. Professor Jonathan Davies from De Montfort University presented a paper on governing in and against austerity as part of the CURA's

(Centre for Urban Research on Austerity) ESRC-funded project 'Collaborative Governance under Austerity: An Eight-Case Comparative Study'. His paper focused on the empirical case-studies of cities such as Athens, Baltimore, Barcelona, Dublin, Leicester, Melbourne (Dandenong), Montreal and Nantes. Professor Davies asked whether 'communing with the State' was feasible, to which he responded with some ongoing initiatives such as fearless cities and the international municipalist summit 2017 in Barcelona. In the case of Barcelona, he underlined the importance that Barcelona's En Comú coalition (radical left) took office in 2015 by appointing Ada Colau, former leader of the anti-evictions platform, as the city mayor. According to Professor Davies, this case depicts a radicalisation and democratisation of co-production and commons. Furthermore, he described the long tradition and historical conditions of leftist social and political movements with strong municipalist and cooperativist orientations. Moreover, this orientation sparked an emergence of a 'youth precariat' in employment and housing. Educated, politicised, and networked populations suffered and were hit fiercely by the crisis. In this set of factors, the success of new left populist discourse blended politicised precarity, re-valorisation of the local state, and the obstruction of the far right. Professor Davies set out the priorities for such movements based on the commons: (i) to reassert public leadership in economic development by containing the private sector; (ii) put social rescue, social inclusion, and the reconstruction of basic rights at the heart of public action; (iii) reaffirm the right to the city; (iv) enhance democratic control through citizen participation and political co-production; and ultimately, (v) emphasise recovery of 'the common' (state and non-state) alternatives to neoliberalism. He concluded that Barcelona

was restoring the right to the city with programmes such as the Special Tourist Accommodation Plan (PEUAT), where regulation and public control of tourism have been identifying areas to decrease and limit tourism through sanctions on Airbnb. Likewise, regulations to stop licenses for new hotels and bans on converting flats for tourists across the whole city are, among many others, some of the strategies that Barcelona has undertaken. In summary, he stated ‘commoning’ is political and operates in, with, and against the state, and he argued that it is unclear when communing is a sustainable end in itself or a step towards something else.

The next speaker, Line Algoed from the VUB, presented a paper exploring processes of gentrification and displacement in informal settlements in Latin America. Particularly, she focused on solutions developed at the neighbourhood level that increase the security of land tenure for residents of informal communities. In her presentation, she showed how collective forms of land ownership can protect informal communities from gentrification while promoting participation in neighbourhood improvement and local economic development. Her main case study revolved around the Caño Martín Peña Community Land Trust in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where residents from seven informal communities have established the world’s first CLTs in an informal settlement.



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The third and final section of the workshop examined several initiatives and methodological advancements in the field of the ‘urban commons’. To begin this section, Professor Beth Perry from the University of Sheffield presented on ‘Governing the Commons: Tensions, Tyrannies and Types in Coproduction’. Her paper argued that ‘the commons’ implies features such as collective action, self-governing mechanisms, and a high degree of social capital. From this point of departure, she questioned whether coproduction could be seen as a way to realise the knowledge commons. She defined coproduction as a paradigm shift in the relationship between science and society, and a term underpinning the different practical manifestations of coproduction could be either coproduction of service delivery and governance or coproduction of research. Nonetheless, she noted some criticisms on coproduction including the risks and limits of coproduction, such as pollution, and coproduction as a ‘tyranny’. Thereafter, she presented a methodological framework entitled the ‘Action Research Collective’ (ARC) as a prefigurative space made up of a new organisation formed for collective action: a space for institutional innovation. In this methodological framework, she suggested that coproduction often is based on trust and pre-existing relationships. Thus, ARC seeks to embrace difference and diversity and forge a new collective. In this regard, she presented four modes of coproduction: (i) liberal/rational, (ii) communitarian, (iii) radical, and (iv) agonistic. She concluded that the ARC reveals issues and tensions among stakeholders and these struggles are part of the process of communing. Professor Perry stated the knowledge commons

is always negotiated and it is made also through acting together towards common goal through which pathways, trade-offs and compromises can be reached.

The last speaker, Alessandra Manganelli from the VUB, presented a paper on 'Food Commoning in Practice: Investigating the Hybrid Governance of Local Food Networks in Brussels'. She began with an introduction of food as a commons and its relation to the urban by focusing on examples from Brussels. Thereafter, she reframed 'food commoning' initiatives through hybrid governance. The examples presented from Brussels were collective gardens in Etterbeek, Jardins de la Rue Gray, and Chant des Cailles, among many others. A special analysis was made regarding the www.Bees-Coop.be initiative. The core concept was 'Hybrid Governance', which questioned what types of governance tensions condition the development of local food initiatives and their specific forms of out-scaling and upscaling. These initiatives are not only driven by their own value systems or organisational modalities but also embedded in a net of relations with actors, organisations, and multi-level institutional structures. She concluded by stating that a number of diverse initiatives starting from the bottom-up or local level always suggests the following question: what kind of institutions are needed to facilitate connectivity at different scales to foster food urban cooperatives?

And so, amidst discussions on social innovation, austerity and the creation of entrepreneurial cooperatives, the commons is again at the heart of the urban governance debate.

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