We are IntechOpen, the world's leading publisher of Open Access books Built by scientists, for scientists

6,300

Open access books available

172,000

International authors and editors

190M

Downloads

Our authors are among the

154

Countries delivered to

TOP 1%

most cited scientists

12.2%

Contributors from top 500 universities

WEB OF SCIENCE™

Selection of our books indexed in the Book Citation Index
in Web of Science™ Core Collection (BKCI)

Interested in publishing with us?
Contact book.department@intechopen.com

Numbers displayed above are based on latest data collected.
For more information visit www.intechopen.com

Devolution of Decision-Making: Tools and Technologies towards Equitable Place-Based Participation in Planning

Donagh Horgan

Abstract

Neoliberal development has increased spatial inequalities for communities in both urban and peri-urban settlements across in the global north and south alike. The financialisation of property has increased urban development in favour of opaque private and semi-public actors, making it harder for community stakeholders to influence decision-making. Social innovation in which diverse stakeholders collaborate towards sustainability and resilience in the built environment, offers pathways towards place-based policy-making and more inclusive growth, but needs political support and tools to facilitate participation. Using findings from a set of international cases, this chapter considers the effectiveness of participatory approaches to decision-making, and digital tools that facilitate public consultation. Cases consider the effectiveness of mechanisms available to communities in the cities of Moscow, Belgrade and Edinburgh to influence urban development. Literature review and new knowledge is brought together to shine light on whether information and communications technologies are used to provide a veneer of engagement with communities, and whether more bottom-up or insurgent tactics can give citizens a voice to influence more equitable future cities.

Keywords: urban development, neoliberal planning, community participation, platform urbanism, living labs

1. Introduction

In a study looking at a set of cases from both the Global North and South, Horgan and Dimitrijević [1] found that increasing inequality is manifest in the built environment, as trends towards populist governance decreases the ability of communities to influence spatial decision-making. The authors use examples from around the world to illustrate how political ideologies influenced by global capitalism dominate urban planning systems. Even in cases where overarching policy objectives pursue sustainability and resilience, the underlying political system often prioritises economic growth at the expense of more holistic investment. Their research demonstrates that competitive or capitalist values promoted by neoliberal governments are often in conflict with social and ecological priorities, resulting in development strategies that continue to favour the market in practice. This is

most evident in the increasing monetisation of property and commodification of home—which has exacerbated acute housing crises in a number of cities and territories [2]. Horgan and Dimitrijević's [1] findings follow warnings from Lefebvre [3] and Harvey [4] on the exclusionary power of a pro-growth politics that produces capitalist forms of spatial development. Lamentably, the research would seem to suggest that decision-makers favour models that align to short term political priorities—that ignore and even inhibit social innovation in communities—in order to reduce risk for those funding development.

In a challenge to financialised development models, Horgan and Dimitrijević [1] identified networked approaches within communities seeking to take control over local development, and how community networks are making steps towards autonomy, self-reliance and resilience. Common across the phases of social innovation observed with those communities was the need for strong supportive governance systems to ensure participation at the grass-roots influences spatial strategy at higher levels of organisation. Tokenistic forms of engagement will only serve to further alienate communities suffering spatial inequality, and encourage citizens to challenge opaque urban governance. The authors conclude that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought new attention to the politics that buttresses spatial inequality, and the precarity of unsuitable and undignified living conditions in cities and peri-urban settlements all over the planet. Similar findings in scholarship which support that capitalist modes of production produce spatial inequalities—through the configuration and allocation of space—inform the context of this research. Semi-structured interviews with key informants provide insights into the nature of participation in decision-making related to the built environment in three urban communities, and provide a lens for further analysis. Case studies from Belgrade, Serbia; Moscow in the Russian Federation and Edinburgh, Scotland are examined—looking particular at opportunities for citizen participation to influence spatial development.

The three cases reveal commonalities in how city governments approach entrepreneurial models of development, albeit within vastly different political regimes. The study confirms a relationship between politics and planning that influences the type of community engagement that accompanies spatial transformation in each case. The chapter provides insights into how communities approach issues related to spatial development within different political contexts, and the mechanisms available to them to influence urban policy in each. Included are relevant themes from literature review that background the political and cultural context of spatial inequality in the chosen cases—with reference for example to previous socio-political systems such as those relying on forms of self-management, as is the case in the former Yugoslavia. The research strengthens findings from previous research on how aspects of ownership and participation in planning are aligned to the nature of the surrounding political ecology. It reveals how different forms of participation—including networked opposition and organisation—can open up decision-making in the medium to long term—and contribute to a sustainable lasting social investment from urban development.

2. Situating hard and soft power in planning and placemaking

The global pandemic has demonstrated the need for resilient social infrastructures, and the highlighted importance of co-creating social value through place-based approaches. Such values are in immediate conflict with pro-growth models of development that prioritise global flows of capital, and the commodification of property and urban assets [1]. At the city scale, pro-growth and competitive modes of urban governance can result in ill-defined forms of collusion between state and

market actors—necessitating the need for transparent participation mechanisms for public oversight of planning. Top-down governance—from authoritarian to laissez faire—inhibit nuanced conceptions of public value that promote alternative measures of social capital [5]. In what Swyngedouw [6] calls the post-democratic city, one-way or tokenistic forms of participation in planning spread further disillusionment and disengagement—and eventually post-politicisation of the built environment. In a challenge to increasingly technocratic global governance, agile and insurgent approaches to defend spatial rights are emerging borne out of networking at the grassroots [1, 7].

Within a development context dominated by smart city narratives, and top-down platform approaches to urbanism that rely on big-data, interest has grown around policy-making that engages with the financialisation of the built environment [8]. Funded by the European Union's *Horizon 2020* research and innovation programme, the *Urban Maestro* action involved UN-Habitat and academic partners in order, *“to understand and encourage innovation in the field of urban design governance through a better understanding of alternative non-regulatory (‘soft power’) approaches and their contribution to the quality of the built environment”* [9]. Collecting best practice from a host of cross-sectoral activities the project was built around a premise that soft coordination mechanisms create a common vision to promote alignment of a large number of stakeholders towards the same objectives. The project looked at the relationship between financial mechanisms and informal tools of urban design governance—looking at how synergies between such tools have the potential to make both approaches more effective in attaining their desired outcomes. A survey conducted for the project among European countries revealed under-exploited potential to use financial tools in urban design governance to reward good behaviour, and discourage poor behaviour. Bento and Carmona [10] found that while the role of the state should be to incentivise high quality development over development for development's sake, many administrations across Europe are *“attempting to do this with one hand tied behind their back”*. The authors concluded their report with a reminder that *“the public sector nevertheless has a special responsibility for creating the conditions within which a high quality built environment can flourish”* pointing at a host of tools already available to governments [10]. These ranged from tools for evidence gathering, knowledge dissemination and proactive promotion, to structured evaluation and direct assistance tools that seek to develop community capacities for placemaking.

It is within this research context that the three cases below are considered—seeking to understand how decision-making is facilitated (or not) within a set of different political environments. Findings reveal persistent concerns around citizen engagement platforms in Russia, while in Serbia an engagement vacuum has activated networked approaches to achieving combined social and spatial rights. Despite a pro-market planning agenda in Edinburgh, an enlightened policy context in Scotland has allowed for sophisticated co-production in the planning process that is more compatible with strategies for an inclusive growth. This chapter offers insights into how cities can look to enhance practices of urban design governance within Europe and beyond, for the ultimate benefit of all citizens delivering better-designed places. It demonstrates how spatial equality can provide a lens for wider democratic deficits, and that while technology allows for participation, it may also give voice to propaganda that mask unsustainable unequal spatial reorganisation.

2.1 Active citizenship in Moscow?

Horgan and Dimitrijević [11] identified that for citizens seeking to participate in spatial decision-making technology can be both a force for good—connecting

communities of practice united in the struggle for spatial rights—yet can also be tools to advance neoliberal policies and planning orthodoxies. Their study looked at technology-enabled approaches to engagement, alongside tools to facilitate spatial decision-making in the community setting, such as Scotland's Place Standard [11]. This research follows warnings from a number of scholars that caution how technology is not a panacea to enable participation, and how seemingly 'smart' approaches to urban governance are driven by neoliberal ideals in conflict with the citizens' desired social outcomes [12–14]. That study, which focused on a case study from Moscow in the Russian Federation, revealed a technology-enabled approach that embraces tokenistic participation in planning, allowing city governments to shape dialogue around urban development to suit their own speculative strategic ends. These findings are supported by Wijermars [15], who found that alongside an increase in the number of internet users, the country saw a drastic increase in regulation over Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) which gradually decreased its salience as an object of participatory socio-political construction. Recent years have seen the development of the Internet as a critical form of modern communication infrastructure that supports citizen's lives, as well as being used by governments as a tool of political influence. In their pre-pandemic study, Horgan and Dimitrijević [11] found that through a joint venture, the city of Moscow developed an online engagement platform—*Active Citizen* (Активный гражданин)—to support urban development decisions and others as part of its smart cities strategy. Through interviews with a number of citizens in the city, the authors found widespread suspicion around the platform, and concerns at how it was being used to demonstrate support for large-scale demolition and urban renewal on valuable sites in Moscow. The article noted that alongside questions around how such platforms are used for explicit political means, major concerns exist around aspects of ownership, governance and participation on the platform itself. When decision-making is required on highly impactful issues such as large-scale urban renovation or displacement, there is no substitute for offline face-to-face engagement through incremental and iterative engagement [11].

In an article by the Russian newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, data analysts found that voters on the Moscow platform had done so in several neighbourhoods at the same time, suggesting some people participated in polls about things without any informed knowledge [16]. The investigation found that rewards for users in casting votes and posting to social media often skewed the voting process, and that in some cases users could claim rewards for simply liking an improvement. The article referred to a number of voting anomalies identified by several sources, including too-regular voting behaviours and seemingly fictitious users. The newspaper cynically suggested that the platform had undergone a tremendous evolution towards emulating the free expression or the will of living people, since earlier well-publicised failures in the system's credibility. Emerging from the success of *Active Citizen*, a version of the portal is being developed for all cities according to the requirements of the Ministry of Construction of Russia. In fact, cities should procure a platform to comply with the roll out of the Ministry's *Smart City* programme across the federation. A white-label version of the portal sold by LLC "Internet business systems" provides cities with technology to facilitate citizen polls as part of urban renewal projects and policymaking, towards a comfortable urban environment. Already online in cities as diverse as Ulan-Ude and Chelyabinsk, the platform allows citizens the chance to vote on minor aspects of urban development, at a point where any significant influence on urban strategy is impossible.

For example, a scan of posts on a regional platform offered citizens the chance to decide the phasing of a development rather than provide feedback on anything of strategic importance, without revealing anything related to procurement or the

tender process. The veneer of transparency around urban development given over by these technologies obscures the relationships between local government and development actors, offsetting public scrutiny. An academic looking at critical area studies, and an expert on Russian *blagostroitsva* (improvement)—initiatives that promote amelioration of the public realm—confirmed that these platforms were an integral part of a strategy to foreground top down decision-making in planning with vague policy rhetoric around the smart city. In a semi-structured interview, the informant explained how the platforms are meant to sit alongside strategies for urban renewal in Russia's regions, and are tied to policies towards promoting a perception of decentralisation of power and constitutional reform to the population. This process, which began under President Medvedev, was piloted by Moscow mayor Sobyanin, and is continued through the work of Russia's Ministry of Construction in other cities.

It has the effect of keeping dissatisfaction with governance at bay within the general populace through the spectacle of improvement, mirroring neoliberal pro-growth approaches to development in other areas of the economy. Undeterred by supply chain disruption during the pandemic, Moscow—and cities across Russia's regions—are still carrying out large scale urban reorganisation at an unprecedented scale, as part of a strictly authoritarian modernisation agenda. The academic informant emphasised how that in Russia, the *Active Citizen* portals follow a model where economic actors conspire to present a speculative development project as a bottom-up intuitive—using participative technology to sanction interventions on public land. Such a model is important following the success of consortia in cities such as New York to convey speculative development in the public as a public good—such as the High Line—while local developers and funders make massive returns on investment on adjacent lots. This approach takes advantage of loosely defined ownership status in Russian law, and is emblematic of how broader privatisation disinherits the community of what was social property under the Soviet system. What is hidden by simulated engagement in the form of what has been described by Asmolov [17] as 'vertical crowdsourcing' platforms, is the incremental transfer of state assets—once part of a socialist commons—to new forms of organisations, and attributed to spatial redevelopment in the public good. While motivations for participation in online polls can be driven by a host of reasons—from incentives to active citizenship—a lack of transparency around the initiators of development proposals, means that users are often willingly championing neoliberal development with little other option. While those can afford to shape how the city is remade, without levers to exercise democratic control, everyday citizens are often passive participants in decision-making that govern place.

Evidently the pandemic has increased tendencies in governments worldwide to substitute online platforms for direct democracy opportunities in real life, the need for greater transparency over online platforms also increases. The likelihood of spatial policies informed by the logic of crisis urbanism means that citizens are likely to become further disenfranchised from decision-making, as city governments use paradigms of austerity and recovery to sanction the absence of public oversight and participation. Writing on urban policy making after the global financial crisis, Theodore [18] found that the financial crisis saw a "*redefinition of the state's role in fostering a globally competitive environment through marketisation, deregulation, and fiscal conservatism*". In the article, the author shows how the resort to austerity has been highly regressive, socially as well as politically all over the world—aggravating spatial inequalities. For Theodore [18], austerity-led development represents, "*the consolidation of neoliberal urbanism, driven by its underlying logics and deepening its effects on governance arrangements and everyday life*". This follows authors such as Peck [19], who noted that following a brief period of economic introspection,

“commitments to the antisocial credo of market fundamentalism were soon [...] renewed and reinvigorated” around the world. There is a growing scholarship documenting insurgent tactics being used by communities to challenge neoliberal orthodoxies in planning, and safeguard the right to the city for citizens [6, 20–22].

2.2 The right to a new Belgrade?

The shock of regime change has often provided an excellent foil for sweeping changes to urban governance, policy and development structures, in particular in relation to the provision of housing [23]. Prior to the collapse of its uniquely iterative economic system of market-socialism, housing was confirmed as a social right in Yugoslavia. In building a national state at the confluence of imperial powers, its early federal government saw housing for all as a significant policy objective in bringing about a prosperous and aspirational egalitarian society [24]. As a mechanism for equal distribution and management of society, a right to housing was introduced as part of the socialisation of property after the establishment of the socialist state [25]. In fact, the concept of Yugoslavia itself became an inspirational platform for social innovation in architecture—translated into the production of socialised housing informed by an expert evidence base and knowledge culture—supported by high-quality research, technical prototyping and testing on smaller scales [26]. Yugoslav urban planning was a spatial application of a set of ideas for community, providing for genuinely heterogeneous neighbourhoods, the outcome of a distinct economic system of self-management. Within this polycentric governance system, a unique ideological framework for society was constantly being negotiated [27].

Self-management allowed for successive economic reforms and policy experimentation that set Yugoslavia apart [28]. While it did not solve the housing crisis in the federation, it made possible large-scale residential developments with a capacity to house 5000–10,000 inhabitants, managed by locally-elected units [29]. While the virtue of participation emphasised in self-management doctrine did not translate into a genuine participation of citizens in urban or regional planning, the participation of state enterprises encouraged a culture of open innovation [30]. During the 60s and 70s, New Belgrade continued to be one of the largest building sites in Europe, whose housing typologies and designs were as much influenced by socialist thinking in neighbouring countries as the architecture of the welfare states of Northern Europe [31]. Despite its limitations, the system allowed workers to participate in decision-making related to their enterprise that led to improvements in their general quality of life, including housing [28]. Ultimately the Yugoslav system unravelled as unscrupulous actors exploited inconsistencies in its nuanced understanding of Marxism, which was unable to withstand mounting individualism at all levels of society. The nationalist parties that emerged to lead the newly independent states introduced a neoliberal capitalist economic system that allowed foreign capital to cheaply purchase production resources in former Yugoslavia, previously owned by the workers [28].

Belgrade is still reeling from the upheavals of the late twentieth century, which saw the stock and production of public housing reach record low levels [32, 33]. An estimated 53% of housing stock in Belgrade was socially-owned apartments in 1991 [34], dropping to less than 1% today [35]. While the politician vacuum and population movements in the period during and after the war saw a significant demand on housing and space in the city, and overall lack of strategy for is one of the most significant outcomes for the built environment since the introduction of free-market capitalism in Yugoslavia [36]. Hirt and Petrović [32] (2011) note that globalism and the collapse of the old system are to blame for the spread of gated housing in

Belgrade—evidence of ever decreasing social and spatial solidarity. Projects such as Belgrade Waterfront are emblematic of a speculative approach to planning in the city which prioritises high-wealth individuals in access to public space and spatial decision-makers [37]. In the absence of a coherent strategy put to public consultation, large scale public assets such as the city's main train station are relocated in favour of projects concerned with the exchange value of property rather than social value, and the actual needs of society.

Indeed, movements for spatial rights in Serbia have grown, perhaps in parallel to an ever-growing discontent with urban governance and a litany of unpopular planning decisions and actions across the country. In a study on frameworks for social innovation, Horgan and Dimitrijević [1] identified organisations in the city working to achieve combined social and spatial rights, and address a democratic deficit in decision-making. Spatial activism and organisations such as *Ne Davimo Beograd* (NDB, Do not strangle Belgrade) and *Ministarstvo Prostora* (MP, Ministry of Space) present parallel political movements offer hope for Belgrade as development can be impeded by a lack of strategy and perceived kleptocratic governance [38]. These organisations employ shared methodologies, management and governance to offer ownership to citizens. An interview with the organisers of NDB in a year since the outbreak of the global pandemic, suggests that the top-down spatial development approach in the city is increasingly trending towards monumentalism, following Northern Macedonia's model for statecraft through urbanism in Skopje. While interventions are presented as strategic, NDB cannot figure out the pattern in Belgrade's spatial development, which they consider to be harsh and inconsistent, ignorant of the needs of citizens. The group sees no clear divisions between branches of government in Serbia, no independent institutions or transparency over city authority. Since the introduction of a market economy in the 2000s, a privatised state has emerged, producing a stark deterioration of the public sphere, visible in housing issues and everyday life struggles. A perception that political and economic actors are basically one has been behind widespread criticism of monumental projects such as Belgrade Waterfront, which since 2015 has advanced sweeping changes to the city's urban fabric [37].

For spatial activists, the urban development approach combines symbols of raw capital and raw power, that mask a captured state with weak social institutions. Since the coronavirus pandemic the market in Serbia has been stagnant, making it easier to identify opaque relationships in small scale residential developments on key strategic sites in the old city. Often these sites are on formerly state-owned industrial assets which have lain vacant after years of unsuccessful privatisation. It is within this context that NDB and their partner organisations have been successful in making an incremental impact towards spatial equality. Their approach has been a mix of hyper-local and regional campaigns that engage citizens on environmental issues such as air pollution and the lack of adequate sewage systems common across peri-urban areas of the former Yugoslavia. Campaigns have focused on topics as wide as forests in the city's development plan to the upgrading of former bomb shelters and other shared public amenities, and included solidarity actions around the pandemic. Tactics have sought to bring about policy change through greater awareness, bringing undisclosed issues into the public domain and mainstreaming dialogue around urban planning—in a country with a polarised and limited media. This is not a linear approach, and its agility comes from an ability to connect public and expert spheres, social and environmental movements within a community of practice.

This networked approach to social innovation is important in driving a rise in new civil society actors in Serbia, and grow participation in spatial decision-making. Without giving these networks the tools to influence development frameworks,

and co-produce imaginative social architectures, prevailing political ideology will always stand in the way of change [1]. Belgrade's city government has attempted to develop ownership to citizens through its attempts at participatory budgeting, however the lack of a feedback loop in the process brought attention to the state of the city's badly neglected public services, ultimately derailing the project. For those at the helm of *NDB* the biggest challenges related to a lack of human resources, made worse by an ever-present brain drain from Serbia. This presents challenges for those seeking to grow collective rights, and reinstate some of the innovative forms of ownership of the former socialist federation. Also difficult is the promotion of shared or holistic narratives for spatial development within a system where privatised development is seen to deliver functioning security for those who can afford it.

2.3 Enlightened engagement in Edinburgh?

In a study of the enlightenment in Edinburgh, Scottish author Murray Pittock [39] uses the methodology of urban innovation to describe the civic networks and cultural change at the heart of what made Edinburgh a smart city in 1700. This analysis reveals that civic development produced the innovation and dynamism that made social transformation in the Scottish capital possible and the political power of the gentry and patronage [39]. The current neoliberal turn in the city's mode of governance has been lamented by many, and is visible across a whole host of spatial strategies, from planning for festivals and tourism to economic development. Tracking contested development proposals in the city, Ballard Tooley [40, 41] found that the political and economic logic of urban development in Edinburgh privileges economic growth within a system of interurban competition, by prioritising the needs of business over citizens. The studies explore tensions between the values of community and efficiency in urban development, and reveal how community engagement itself unearthed conflict between political visions of a pro-growth urban renewal agenda with neoliberal realities for local residents. Edinburgh's growth to become the second largest financial centre in the United Kingdom after the City of London has rested on the service sector, is a major contributor to the local economy with culture, consumption and knowledge exchange vital pillars for economic development. Sutherland [42] found that the complexity of devolution in Scotland means that policy priorities, notably inclusive growth and approaches to reducing economic and social spatial disparities differ greatly from that of the Westminster government. For Sutherland [42], evidence of neoliberalism can be found in urban developments, in place-marketing to multinational corporations, and in the competition to attract city investment—efforts which are often at the expense of engagement with citizens, and public service innovation. It is apparent in Edinburgh's ambitions to become the 'Data Capital of Europe', an entrepreneurial framing of the smart city concept, yet difficult to disaggregate in practice. This ambition is anchored by Edinburgh's City Deal—part of a UK government framework to reduce spatial imbalances between London and other parts of the country—a combined investment from the United Kingdom and Scottish governments and match funded through capital investment from universities and other sources [42]. Sutherland [42] notes that Edinburgh's growth faces significant bottlenecks, in the availability of skills and housing, and is almost certainly destined to draw activities and people away from other places, whether in the UK or further afield—necessitating massive spatial reorganisation.

In a study looking at the establishment of a Commission on climate change in the city, Creasy et al. [43] noted a persistently technocratic model of governance in Edinburgh, where a "*fast-tracked conceptualisation of place, instigated from the top-down*", legitimises a focus on policy-making through 'expert' knowledge. The

authors found such an approach to be in direct conflict with Massey's [44] relational interpretation of place, which seeks to engage with citizen's place-based knowledge on the ground. Creasy et al.'s [43] study indicated that in the process of establishing the commission, the city was moving towards more experimental approaches to urban governance, seeking opportunities to unlock new resources and possibilities with new partners, as opposed to "*feeding the zero-sum game of carving out resources from existing local allocations*". The project has helped to amplify the place-based agency of the city at the grass roots, helping to "*to balance the vital networking and learning opportunities they facilitate with resisting a one-dimensional and static interpretation of the 'places' that they seek to network together*" [43]. In Scotland however, place-based principles are an integral part of a National Planning Framework that mandate levels of community participation in the planning process—in both spatial and community planning—which has encouraged the development of a host of tools and methods that support collective decision making [11]. This means that while economic agendas may drive urban strategy to an extent in Edinburgh, negative impacts and social exclusion may be mitigated against through focused and targeted engagement with specific cohorts. Even as development strategies focused on growth prevail at the policy level, socially innovative place-based approaches to decision-making at the community level—generating ownership over changes in the built environment.

Such an approach is visible in the work of Edinburgh's Living Lab (ELL, part of the University of Edinburgh), whose work takes a holistic perspective that integrates data innovation and place-based practices that put people and sustainable futures at the heart of decision-making. Through community engagement, applied researchers at the ELL help to define these options for the City of Edinburgh Council—providing them with information that allows for a better understanding of multiple perspectives, usage patterns, and aspects of neighbourhood and place—to enable evidence-based decisions. Working with the City of Edinburgh Council, the Living lab produced a report on Data and Design for Property and Planning based around a collaborative placemaking project with a community in the Gracemount area of the city [45]. Through their service design programme the local authority worked with the lab to test an embedded data-and-design methodology to make better decisions about significant changes to the council estate. Project objectives included an audit and analysis of local authority data to address key questions about building use; a process to identify key community values to support the management of assets and service delivery in the area; the definition of future options for the future of buildings; and a set of guidelines for replicating a similar approach in other areas of the city.

The developed placemaking methodology evident in the work of the Edinburgh Living Lab, works to offset impacts of neoliberal economic planning by allowing citizens to participate in decision-making at the neighbourhood scale—building out capacities that may contribute to better urban governance at higher levels of organisation. Their work in Gracemount, Southhouse and Burdiehouse neighbourhoods made better use of data held in the Council to open up the planning process—to explore and validate community perceptions and priorities alongside those of the council, ultimately arriving at a shared vision for social transformation. The planning report found that collaboration between different service, building, and community stakeholders helped build relationships and strengthen project outcomes [45]. Specifically, the process helped the property directorate join up their decision-making with other departments to deliver better services with less resources, making cost savings and optimising the Council estate. Since the project, the report found the narrative had changed from council to community, meaning that communities are more engaged in decision-making, participate in making

difficult decisions, understand and are therefore more likely to accept outcomes. An active engagement methodology facilitates ongoing engagement with communities, while spatial data from multiple sources provides more of a holistic insight into access to and exclusion at an appropriate scale.

The methods developed by the ELL in Gracemount have informed another project in Edinburgh which combines citizen engagement and co-design with urban data and research to help support the high street to become a more successful and liveable place as communities emerge from the global pandemic. Scaling tactics developed with other communities the 'Future of the High Street' project led by the Edinburgh Futures Institute (in collaboration with Edinburgh Living Lab) will develop a toolkit of 6 possible ideas to tackle common high street challenges through digital co-design workshops with local businesses and other stakeholders in Gorgie-Dalry high street and Dalkeith town centre—with two ideas selected to be rapidly prototyped. Limited by social distancing requirements, wider digital engagement with residents, young people, local organisations and other stakeholders is designed to focus more holistically on the high street as a 'place'—helping to understand how the high street may be adapted or accommodate new and innovative uses. This helps to address common challenges experienced by local independent businesses and residents that would make the high street more liveable and successful—leaving an actionable legacy.

The Future of the High Street project incorporates use of urban data through baseline assessments of land use, character and business data alongside existing reports and reviews of previous consultation—to respect both this prior work and citizen time and input that had already gone before, in former community engagement. Important here is to emphasise a feedback loop—and two-way relationship between community, the project team and council—and to put forward a nuanced understanding of challenges and opportunities that can inform a robust evaluation of pilots, across a set of common indicators. As ELL continue to refine the methodology use in the Gorgie-Dalry pilot, legacy impacts are already visible in changes to the built environment and public realm at the neighbourhood scale—which involve the prototyping public realm improvements, and artistic installations—based on learning from the pilots. It is hoped that these tactics will influence historically top-down planning with respect to the public realm—and wider infrastructure—in Edinburgh. For many communities on the periphery of Edinburgh's growth, their participation offers a safeguard against social exclusion and spatial inequalities that accompany top-down planning approaches. For communities on the edge of more speculative developments closer to the centre of Edinburgh's financial core, it remains to be seen if the council will offer them the same opportunities to influence development decisions. This raises important questions regarding the political ideologies that govern offers of participation, and whether ownership over such processes is ever truly devolved to citizens.

3. Conclusions: towards a collective urban governance?

As recovery from the great slowdown necessitates capacities for more sustainable social, economic and environmental resilience, urban governance must seek to achieve a balance in the organisation of settlements to support equitable work, housing and economy. Concluding in early 2021, the *Urban Maestro* project found that while "*European cities have developed sophisticated laws and regulations ('hard power') to secure diverse public interest objectives through the governance of urban design, the quality of the resulting urban places can be disappointing [...] often outcomes are not aligned with commonly shared objectives such as creating environmental*

sustainability, human scale, land use mix, conviviality, inclusivity, or supporting cultural meaning” [9]. Thus, decision-making related to the built environment must become much more developed to citizens, allowing communities to generate their own set of indicators, and base decision on informed empirical evidence—presented in a way they can use effectively. Towards a useful typology of tools for urban design governance, means recognising that the urban environment is shaped by various interventions and policy decisions over time and reflects the collective work of multiple stakeholders. *Urban Maestro*’s recommendations promote extensive discussions, whatever the local circumstances, and identify 6 fundamental factors for improving the quality of the built environment to be based on: culture; capacity; coordination; collaboration; commitment and continuity. These factors are important considerations for cities seeking to open up decision-making to the public, private and community actors who co-produce the city. Importantly, the project assembled a wealth of best practice that supports how soft power—and social innovation—can influence levers of hard power present in cities by focusing on the process of carrying out an urban project rather than the end product itself.

The findings in this chapter suggest that for the methodologies promoted by *Urban Maestro* to have impact, city governments must divorce the planning process from politics, and allow for feedback loops in the system through honest engagement processes. Short term political or economic advantage is often at the expense of longer-term sustainability, blocking processes that encourage the development of capacities for resilience in communities. We should not underestimate the role of visions, narratives and cultivated propaganda in the governance of urban design—and the need to challenge established political ideologies that inhibit social innovation in the built environment [1]. Launching the European Union’s *New European Bauhaus* initiative, Commission president Ursula Von der Leyen announced it was not just an environmental or economic project, but a new cultural project for Europe. The policy calls for, “*a collective effort to imagine and build a future that is sustainable, inclusive and beautiful for our minds and for our souls*” and “*sustainable solutions that create a dialogue between our built environment and the planet’s ecosystems*” [46]. In working towards these objectives, cities in Europe and around the world need to provide meaningful opportunities for participation in decision-making that allow stakeholders at all levels to influence urban development, while keeping the barrier for entry low. This means a more concerted effort to design and deliver opportunities for co-production that devolve new capacities to the communities who participate—without further perpetuating processes of social and spatial exclusion [47, 48].

Notes/thanks/other declarations

The author would like to thank all informants who gave their time or interviews in each case study.

IntechOpen

IntechOpen

Author details

Donagh Horgan
Department of Work, Employment and Organisation, Strathclyde Business School,
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland

*Address all correspondence to: donagh.horgan@strath.ac.uk

IntechOpen

© 2022 The Author(s). Licensee IntechOpen. This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

References

- [1] Horgan D, Dimitrijević B. Social innovation in the built environment: The challenges presented by the politics of space. *Urban Science*. 2021;**5**(1):1. DOI: 10.3390/urbansci2010013
- [2] Rolnik R. *Urban Warfare*. London: Verso Trade; 2019
- [3] Lefebvre H. *State, Space, World: Selected Essays*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; 2009
- [4] Harvey D. From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: The transformation in urban governance in late capitalism. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*. 1989;**71**(1):3-17. DOI: 10.2307/490503
- [5] Mazzucato M. *The Value of Everything: Making and Taking in the Global Economy*. London: Hachette UK; 2018
- [6] Swyngedouw E. *Promises of the Political: Insurgent Cities in a Post-Political Environment*. Cambridge: The MIT Press; 2018. DOI: 10.7551/mitpress/10668.001.0001
- [7] Horgan D. *Placemaking*. London, United Kingdom: Elsevier Health Sciences; 2019. DOI: 10.1016/b978-0-08-102295-5.10680-8
- [8] Aalbers MB. Financial geography III: The financialization of the city. *Progress in Human Geography*. 2020;**44**(3):595-607. DOI: 10.1177/0309132519853922
- [9] Urban Maestro. *New Governance Strategies for Urban Design—Urban Maestro*. 2021. Available from: https://urbanmaestro.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/urban-maestro_new-governance-strategies-for-urban-design.pdf
- [10] Bento J, Carmona M. *Informal Tools of Urban Design Governance, the European Picture*. Urban Maestro: New Governance Strategies for Urban Design. 2021. Available from: https://urbanmaestro.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/um_survey-report.pdf
- [11] Horgan D, Dimitrijević B. Frameworks for citizens participation in planning: From conversational to smart tools. *Sustainable Cities and Society*. 2019;**48**:101550. DOI: 10.1016/j.scs.2019.101550
- [12] Odendaal N. Smart city: Neoliberal discourse or urban development tool? In: *The Palgrave Handbook of International Development*. London: Palgrave Macmillan; 2016. pp. 615-633. DOI: 10.1057/978-1-137-42724-3_34
- [13] Grossi G, Pianezzi D. Smart cities: Utopia or neoliberal ideology? *Cities*. 2017;**69**:79-85. DOI: 10.1016/j.cities.2017.07.012
- [14] Cardullo P, Kitchin R. Smart urbanism and smart citizenship: The neoliberal logic of 'citizen-focused' smart cities in Europe. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*. 2019;**37**(5):813-830. DOI: 10.1177/0263774x18806508
- [15] Wijermars M. The digitalization of Russian politics and political participation. In: *The Palgrave Handbook of Digital Russia Studies*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan; 2021. pp. 15-32. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-42855-6_2
- [16] Zayakin A, Smagin A. Продам свой голос за свитшот (in Russian). *Novaya Gazeta*; 2018. Available from: <https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2018/09/21/77914-prodam-svoy-golos-za-svitshot>
- [17] Asmolov G. Vertical crowdsourcing (Russia). In: *The Global Encyclopaedia of Informality: Towards an*

- Understanding of Social & Cultural Complexity. London: UCL Press (Taylor & Francis Ltd.); 2018. pp. 463-467
- [18] Theodore N. Governing through austerity: (Il)logics of neoliberal urbanism after the global financial crisis. *Journal of Urban Affairs*. 2020;**42**(1):1-7. DOI: 10.1080/07352166.2019.1623683
- [19] Peck J. Situating austerity urbanism. In: *Cities under Austerity: Restructuring the US Metropolis*. Albany: State University of New York Press; 2018
- [20] Miraftab F. Insurgent planning: Situating radical planning in the global south. *Planning Theory*. 2009;**8**(1):32-50. DOI: 10.1177/1473095208099297
- [21] Roy A. Why India cannot plan its cities: Informality, insurgence and the idiom of urbanization. *Planning Theory*. 2009;**8**(1):76-87. DOI: 10.1177/1473095208099299
- [22] Huq E. Seeing the insurgent in transformative planning practices. *Planning Theory*. 2020;**19**(4):371-391. DOI: 10.1177/1473095219901290
- [23] Madden D, Marcuse P. *In Defense of Housing: The Politics of Crisis*. London: Verso Books; 2016
- [24] Krstić I. The housing policies in Yugoslavia. In: Knežević V, Miletić M, editors. *We Have Built Cities for You: On the Contradictions of Yugoslav Socialism*. Belgrade: Centre for Cultural Decontamination; 2018
- [25] Sekulić D. The Ambiguities of Informality. The Extra-Legal Production of Space in Belgrade During and After Socialism. *Eurozine*; 2018. Available from: <https://www.eurozine.com/the-ambiguities-of-informality/>
- [26] Alfrević Đ, Simonović AS. Urban housing experiments in Yugoslavia 1948-1970. *Spatium*. 2015;**1**(34):1-9. DOI: 10.2298/spat1534001a
- [27] Le Normand B. The contested place of the detached home in Yugoslavia's socialist cities. In: *The Cultural Life of Capitalism in Yugoslavia*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan; 2017. pp. 173-190. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-47482-3_10
- [28] Uvalić M. *The Rise and Fall of Market Socialism in Yugoslavia*. Berlin: DOC Research Institute; 2018. Available from: <https://doc-research.org/2018/03/rise-fall-market-socialism-yugoslavia/>
- [29] Topalović M. New Belgrade: The modern city's unstable paradigms. In: *Belgrade: Formal/Informal: eine Studie über Städtebau und urbane Transformation*. Switzerland: ETH Studio Basel, Scheidegger & Spiess; 2012. pp. 128-228
- [30] Bojić N. Social and physical planning: Two approaches to territorial production in socialist Yugoslavia between 1955 and 1963. *Architectural Histories*. 2018;**6**(1):25, 1-14. DOI: 10.5334/ah.309
- [31] Stierli M, Stephanie E, Vladimir K, Tamara BK. *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948-1980*. MoMA, New York: Museum of Modern Art; 2018
- [32] Hirt S, Petrović M. The Belgrade wall: The proliferation of gated housing in the Serbian capital after socialism. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 2011;**35**(4):753-777. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2427.2011.01056.x
- [33] Vilenica A. Contemporary housing activism in Serbia: Provisional mapping. *Interface: Journal for and about Social Movements*. 2017;**9**:424-447
- [34] Petrović M. Post-socialist housing policy transformation in Yugoslavia and Belgrade. *European Journal of Housing Policy*. 2001;**1**(2):211-231. DOI: 10.1080/14616710110083434
- [35] Vilenica A. Contradictions and antagonisms in (anti-) social (ist)

housing in Serbia. ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies. 2019;18(6):1261-1282

[36] Mojović D. Serbia. In: Gruis V, Tsenkova S, Nieboer N, editors. Management of Privatised Housing: International Policies and Practice. New Jersey, USA: John Wiley & Sons; 2006. pp. 211-228. DOI: 10.1002/9781444322613.ch11

[37] Perić A. Public engagement under authoritarian entrepreneurialism: The Belgrade waterfront project. Urban Research & Practice. 2020;13(2):213-227. DOI: 10.1080/17535069.2019.1670469

[38] Jakovljević A. Fighting corruption with pyramids: A law and economics approach to combating corruption in post-socialist countries: The case study of the Republic of Serbia [doctoral dissertation]. Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky

[39] Pittock M. Enlightenment in a Smart City: Edinburgh's Civic Development, 1660-1750. Edinburgh, Scotland, UK: Edinburgh University Press; 2018. DOI: 10.3366/edinburgh/9781474416597.001.0001

[40] Tooley CB. Competition and community in Edinburgh: Contradictions in neoliberal urban development. Social Anthropology. 2017;25(3):380-395. DOI: 10.1111/1469-8676.12419

[41] Ballard Tooley C. "Beauty won't boil the pot:" Aesthetic discourse, memory, and urban development in Edinburgh. City & Society. 2020;32(2):294-315. DOI: 10.1111/ciso.12279

[42] Sutherland E. Edinburgh: Data Capital of Europe. 2019. Available from: SSRN 3504740. DOI:10.2139/ssrn.3504740

[43] Creasy A, Lane M, Owen A, Howarth C, Van Der Horst D.

Representing 'place': City climate commissions and the institutionalisation of experimental governance in Edinburgh. Politics and Governance. 2021;9(2):64-75. DOI: 10.17645/pag.v9i2.3794

[44] Massey D. The responsibilities of place. Local Economy. 2004;19(2):97-101. DOI: 10.1080/0269094042000205070

[45] City of Edinburgh Council. Data and Design for Property Planning [Internet]. 2019. Available from: https://issuu.com/edinburghlivinglab/docs/edinburghlivinglab_dataanddesignforpropertyplannin

[46] European Union. New European Bauhaus: Our Conversations Will Shape Our Tomorrow [Internet]. 2021. Available from: https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index_en

[47] Arnstein SR. A ladder of citizen participation. Journal of the American Institute of Planners. 1969;35(4):216-224. DOI: 10.1080/01944366908977225

[48] Lund DH. Co-creation in urban governance: From inclusion to innovation. Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration. 2018;22(2):3-17