

Reflections from the 30th Anniversary
Conference of the International Network
for Urban Research and Action (INURA)
in Luxembourg

Small State Big Transitions

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INURA



Photo by K. Madron and U. Lehrer

The Urban Studies Group at the Department of Geography and Spatial Planning (DGEO), of the University of Luxembourg's Faculty of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences (FHSE), the INURA Common Office and the ETH Department of Architecture were pleased to welcome the 30th Conference of INURA, taking place in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

The local organizing committee from DGEO's Urban Studies Group were: Constance Carr, Markus Hesse, Olga Kryvets, Karinne Madron (and Zoe), Elide Nicotra, Chris Reiter and Mafaz Syrus.

The 30th Anniversary Event was organised by Constance Carr (DGEO), Iacopo Zetti (University of Florence), Christian Schmid (ETH), Ute Lehrer (York University), Roger Keil (York University), Marvi Maggio (Architect & Urbanist) and Philipp Klaus (INURA Common Office).

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LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère de l'Énergie et de
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INURA 2022 took place at the heart of Luxembourg City. From the Pfaffenthal panoramic elevator the towers of the Kirchberg Plateau can be seen overlooking the old city.

Photo by K Madron

INURA AS A VILLAGE

URBAN RESEARCH AND ACTION IN URGENT TIMES

by **Constance Carr and Karinne Madron**

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To some extent the INURA 2022 conference felt like being in the eye of a storm. It was the first INURA conference since Zagreb 2019, postponed twice and reduced in length because of the pandemic – a crisis that upended lives around the world and changed the ways that many navigated the cities they knew. For many participants, attending INURA 2022 marked the first time travelling or even the first time being around other human beings since the pandemic began, while for others it was still an impossible conference to attend because the pandemic was still keeping them at home. For others still, attendance wasn't possible because the so-called summer pandemic pause generated a ton of competition in the conference landscape. INURA 2022 was, for example, in direct competition with the World Urban Forum in Poland, which some committed INURA members understandably wanted to attend. And, if the pandemic wasn't traumatic enough, a war was also unfolding on the eastern edges of Europe (which rages on as we write this). Sunny and calm INURA 2022 seemed a welcome

respite for reflection and reconnection amidst so much isolation and upheaval.

Thank you for reading this Bulletin, which aims to serve as a kind of post-conference reflection; but, before delving into the contents, it is worthwhile to credit the conference that was originally planned for 2020. Back then, in another world, we—the Urban Studies Group at DGEO (University of Luxembourg), D-ARCH (ETH Zurich), the INURA Common Office, and the INURA Birthday Committee—planned a much more extensive conference.

Then March 2020 rolled around. In describing his 2020 lockdown experience during an interview, Dave Grohl from the Foo Fighters explained how at the moment of the lockdown announcements, they were all ready to go on tour. The bus was packed and everything. They just had to get on board and go; but then, it all just fizzled out. This is how it was for everyone involved in INURA 2020: We all just had to get off the INURA 2020 bus. And, for two years INURA met online, thanks to events organized by the INURA Common Office in Zurich.



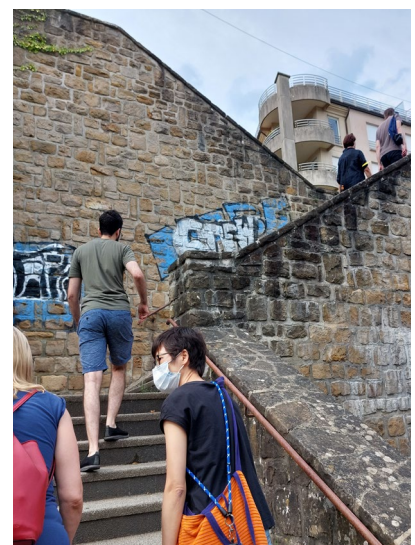
Snapshots of INURA 2022 by O. Kryvets, C. Carr and U. Lehrer

We found the bus again in 2022. This time around, our team had also changed. Key organizers from 2020 had moved on to other pressing domains of work and life. The Urban Studies Group of the Department of Geography and Spatial Planning (DGEO) at the University of Luxembourg (UL) were also joined by new members. The INURA 2022 conference was again organized by DGEO, the ETH and the INURA Common Office with further financial or technical support from FHSE, the Fonds National de la Recherche, the Ministry of Energy and Spatial Planning, the Ancien Cinéma Café Club in Vianden, and the INURA Conference Fund. Once it was clear that 2022 was actually going to happen (around the end of January 2022), monthly meetings were held with a voluntary INURA committee who hammered out the speakers list for the 30th Anniversary. Thank you Philipp Klaus, Roger Keil, Ute Lehrer, Marvi Maggio, Christian Schmid, and Iacopo Zetti.

INURA 2022 began with tours of the City of Luxembourg and Kirchberg (see page 9). The Minister of Energy and Spatial Planning of Luxembourg, Claude Turmes, also welcomed INURA in a video message, explaining the broad lines of the work of his ministry and expressing enthusiasm about the important links between activism and planning. These were followed by two days of discussion, addressing

a number of current urgencies. Of course, each discussion was too short, and there were many moments when everyone wished they had more time (apologies to those that were cut off!)—reflecting again the times we are in, but also the amazing debate culture that members of INURA possess. Never in our experience has it been so easy to convince speakers to put away their presentations and simply reflect on a question and discuss it. Never has it been so easy to get an audience to engage.

Opening the birthday event, Ute Lehrer and Tino Buchholz introduced and recalled the history of INURA. This was then followed by two days of panels, video screenings, and retreat discussions. The first set of debates addressed different patterns and pathways of urbanization in Latin America, Asia, and Africa—places where conditions of uncertainty and crisis are not new(!)—subverting any eurocentricity and setting the stage that it is the underlying political economies and structures of governance that shape the crises unfolding around us, no matter where we are. Other issues addressed included the ongoing climate crisis, the financialization of housing, the urbanization of disaster, the role of Marxist movements as strategies for organization and solidarity, the contradictions that characterize politics and activism, the role of big tech as new actors in urban development,



Snapshots of the 2022 tours by C. Carr and K. Madron

and perspectives on research and action because, lest one forget, another world is possible.

The discussions which marked the conference were the ones on the devastation brought about by authoritarian—some now argue totalitarian (Kolesnikov, 2022)—aggression. Olga Kryvets, who joined Mariia Prystupa in sharing witness statements of fleeing the war, exposed INURA to the need for research in recovery and post-war urban futures for Ukraine. This led to the birth of a new group aimed at reconstruction in Ukraine.

We are not republishing the specific program in this Bulletin, but instead wish to thank everyone who participated: Panayotis Antoniadis, Nitin Bathla, Bernd Belina, Johannes Birgmeier, Jens Brandt, Bob Colenutt, Laura Colini, Jorge Peña Diaz, Kike España, Markus Hesse, Vedran Horvat, Roger Keil, Philipp Klaus, Philippe Koch, Olga Kryvets, Tom Leufen, Ute Lehrer, Yiqiu Liu, Marvi Maggio, Faiq Mari, Anitra Nelson, Camilla Perrone, Kacper Pobłocki, Mariia Prystupa, Fred Robinson, Jennifer Robinson, Marit Rosol, Mark Saunders, Angela Stienen, Monika Streule, Christian Schmid, João Tonucci, Louanne Tranchell, Chris Tranchell, Lorenzo Tripodi, Arie van Wijngaarden, Richard Wolff, Tammy Wong, Tino Buchholz and Iacopo Zetti!

It took a village to get this bus moving! We are thus glad that we can present this Bulletin as a way of remembering the contents of the conference itself (e.g. Tripodi/Colini; Wolff). The Bulletin also documents some of the lessons learned: In our (Madron/Carr) next entry, we summarize the feedback and reflections that INURA members had about the Grand Duchy, and this is followed by an entry from Markus Hesse who explains why this critical feedback is important. This is complimented by Arie van Wijngaarden's observations of Luxembourg past and present, including a remarkable memory of the Youth Hostel years ago. Philipp Klaus and Arie van Wijngaarden, in separate entries, also recall the recurring themes of INURA over the

years. At the same time, we are glad to welcome an entry by Olga Kryvets who was new to the local organizing team, to Luxembourg, and to INURA at the time of the conference. This is balanced by Tammy Wong's input that amplifies the solidarities between Ukraine and Hong Kong, and Marvi Maggio's conceptual way forward drawing on Marx's 'realm of freedom'. We look forward to keeping these conversations going!

Thank you! And, happy birthday INURA!

Further Readings

In addition to this Bulletin, we can also refer you to two further outputs: During the conference, Nitin Bathla interviewed a number of participants, which can be heard at Urban Political Podcast. Shortly after the conference, the local team also published a brief in Brennpunkt (Madron et al., 2022).

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The fortress and old quarters of Luxembourg City have been recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1994.

Photo by C. Carr

INURA REFLECTS ON LUXEMBOURG

RESULTS OF A FEEDBACK SESSION WITH INURA

by **Karinne Madron and Constance Carr,**

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One of the great traditions of INURA is providing feedback on the places participants visit. This is valuable information for conference organizers, local actors, decision-makers and politicians. Van Wijngaarden, looking back at 30 years of INURA (See page 44), lists some of the inputs from previous conferences. In this entry, we review some of what we, the conference organizers presented, followed by the feedback from INURA.

Presenting Luxembourg

In basic terms, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is a sovereign small state wedged between France, Germany and Belgium. It is a founding state of the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Eurozone, Schengen area, the UN, NATO, the OECD, seeking national sovereignty through international integration and stability (Bousch et al., 2009), and 'political brokering' (Wong et al., 2019). Luxembourg City is also a business city, hosting the European headquarters of the RTL Group, SES, Amazon, Skype, ArcelorMittal, BGL BNP Paribas, KPMG, RE/MAX, iTunes, Ferrero, to name a few. Given the hundreds of mailbox companies that one can locate in the lobbies of office buildings around the City, there are probably many more 'HQs' settled in the Duchy as well. Hard to say. It is a major center for big players like PwC, Ernst & Young, and Deloitte, and of course, many other institutions of the financial industry. The Luxembourg Statistics Office (STATEC, 2022) lists 79 "banks incorporated under Luxembourg law, plus another 45 banking enterprises offering financial services, and 198 reinsurance companies."

During the day, over 200,000 people working in the Grand Duchy are also daily cross-border commuters, who reside in one of the neighbour

countries (France, Germany and Belgium). This puts significant pressure on the existing road infrastructure and most newcomers are struck by the cars everywhere (which, don't get us wrong, include plenty of domestic vehicles). One is also struck by the free public transit, which solved a problem that didn't exist (Carr and Hesse, 2020) but at least saves an individual just a little headache by not having to figure out a new ticket system, in addition to saving 2€. That's not all, perhaps newcomers are struck by the air traffic over the small, well-kept city. Here, it is notable that the Luxembourg airport is also the largest cargo airport on the continent. Sending cherries from Chile to China (Hesse, 2014)? They passed through the Duchy.

The European feel in the city is reflected in the linguistic melting pot. In shops, restaurants and cafés you hear every major language from French and Finnish to Estonian. One must always begin every new encounter with: "What language shall we speak?" This is reflected further in the Duchy's unique demographics, which also implicate rather strange dynamics of citizen participation: About 47 per cent of the roughly 645,000 inhabitants are non-Luxembourgers. In Luxembourg City the share of non-Luxembourgers reaches 68% (STATEC, 2022). In the north, this statistic is the opposite.

Perhaps all this activity is surprising for a tiny city with a population of just 115k (STATEC, 2022). On one hand, one can respond by saying that it's international interweaving is hardly post-war (Péporté et al., 2010), and it goes to show how nations do not exist in isolation (contrary to populist thought). On the other hand, it is part of the puzzle that reveals the Duchy as a relational state:

"Luxembourg, one of Europe's smallest territories by landmass and population, is

also one of the largest satellite operators in the world [...] today evolved to be driven by pan-European access to human capital, multi-lingual expertise, and multi-national legal expertise” (Wong et al., 2019).

INURA 2022’s organizing team wanted to show you some of the tensions associated with this kind of urban space. Even though the extensive visits originally planned for 2020 could not be entirely fit into the short programme of the 2022 conference, two tours were proposed with the aim of showing the range of challenges and contradictions that constitute the urban spaces of Luxembourg—a small state, city-state, multilingual sovereign nation, European capital, financial capital, international business hub, and cross-border (sub)urban region.

The Tours and Events

The first tour was of the sites of two major projects underway in Luxembourg City – Place de l’Etoile and Josy Barthel Stadium. During the tour INURA met with two members of EisStad, a non-profit association which demands more engagement with local citizens. In Luxembourg City the alliance of land and money breeds profit, undisturbed—or even mastered—by politics and planning. This, in the context of a nation that, following the Global Financial Centers Index 2021, ranks 4th in Europe’s financial sector development, and 3rd in business environment

(3rd and 2nd, respectively, if we account for Brexit), being particularly competitive in the areas of investment management, finance, insurance, government and regulation. Real-estate developers extract value by transforming and trading urban properties. The members of EisStad explained the difficulties of, and barriers to participation and citizen engagement in urban development in such a context.

The second visit was of the Kirchberg Plateau. Kirchberg was once a field on the outskirts of the (old) City of Luxembourg. Today, it is one of the central axes of the city, sitting between Findel Airport, the old city and the central train station. It was conceived in the 1950s as a place to house the institutions of the European Union as both a post-war peace project, as well as an opportunity for the Grand Duchy to secure its place in that international network. The Government of Luxembourg preemptively acquired the land, built the Red Bridge, as well as the A1 highway to this end. Today, it is home to banks and investment funds. Slowly retrofitted—with mixed reviews about the success of this endeavour—Kirchberg can be conceived as the Duchy’s first attempt to drive a large-scale project to satisfy and secure the national interests of the small Grand Duchy. That this planning style would later be replicated in Belval (in the South) and arguably again in Cloche D’Or, Kirchberg has become a symbol for the planning policy in the country known as



Snapshots of the 2022 tours by K.Madron

the Kirchberg Syndrome (Hesse, 2013).

We also hoped that the evening activities presented still further dimensions. In Vianden, we hoped that participants would see a Duchy that is composing many (over 100!) autonomous municipalities, all under growth pressure, and that some of the more independent, ‘alternative’, businesses are operating beyond city limits (of course, one could rightly ask if all of the Duchy is urban). At Rives de Clausen, participants got a glimpse of the downtown party culture, (which didn’t impress everyone), driven by project urban renewal.

Feedback from INURA about Luxembourg

At the 2022 retreat, the INURA organizing team sat down with the INURA membership and asked them to reflect on the City and share the impressions that they could gather from the few days they had spent in Luxembourg. The organizers collected these observations, and they are summarized in the following, as a sort of documentation of this critical collective analysis. Quotes were collected, but not pinned to any one person, in particular. Hesse (page 14) further reflects on these impressions and the added value that INURA has provided to Luxembourg.

i. Initial impressions

Of all the places that INURA has visited, Luxembourg is the smallest, but members were impressed by the diversity of issues and angles. Luxembourg destroys the myth that small is automatically beautiful, or automatically easier to understand or simpler to manage. The City of Luxembourg seems to have excellent transit options, tidy public spaces, new infrastructures, and an unusual topography. For some, Luxembourg reminded them of Zurich—a well-designed place with money available for investment (one person noticed the ‘fancy garbage containers’ in the pedestrian zone). The City also seems to place the history in the foreground. Newcomers easily encounter the well-maintained old city, souvenir shops, and symbols of the Luxembourg royalty. Some were also impressed by how green it was: “It was incredible to be lost in a forest in the middle of a city!” The overall first impression is that Luxembourg appears to be a sort of surprising paradise.

ii. Where is the City?

At the same time, the city is almost “frightening” as the social fault lines are hidden. What and where are the contradictions? All cities have



View of Luxembourg City. Photo by C. Carr

contradictions, problems, but they are hard to see. The strong city center with high-end shops seemed kind of “snobby” or even “fake”. Why is that? Are they hidden? Is it denial? What is the link to everyday life? For example, where were the “small shops for ordinary people”? Where were the homeless? To the keen eye, there are hints that contradictions exist. First, the city was often empty. Where is everyone? Where are the teenagers? Where is the activism? Where are the social fights or the voices for a counter plan? Where is the edge? Indeed, where is the city? To these questions, some suggested that the Gare district or Esch might provide insight. For some, these areas seemed more diverse and more metropolitan than the old city or Kirchberg Plateau and provided “short moments of reality”.

iii. The City as an international hub

Some viewed Kirchberg as an interesting starting point for understanding the City, with its large office buildings, proximity to the airport, and an urban design that does not appear targeted for public use. Kirchberg reveals the City’s position as an inflated international business and administration center, as a node on the international geography of finance, as a tax haven (letterboxes seen there, and in the City), and as a niche in global flows.

Business development was clearly high on the agenda. One participant was surprised to find the Bank of China: Luxembourg does business with China, how interesting! Pfizer surprised another. The City clearly fosters international business development: It is observable on the ground with the high degree of internationalism (many languages, not just the official languages).

iv. Community

Some members asked how this environment affects communities. The following questions were not cynical but genuinely curious: How do communities form (or fall apart) with this degree

of international flow and fluctuation, with this variety of languages? How do children fare? Who uses the public institutions?

v. Transport

Of course, Luxembourg’s free transit is now world famous and deserved some comment. Within the city, the transport options were seen very favorably – not withstanding that there were ‘way too many cars’ in the city. There is also a certain comfort achieved in not having to fiddle with tickets. Less clear was how decisions about infrastructure provision were made and who they were for. The tram, for example, seemed targeted at the banks and other businesses. So, the ‘success’ of the fare-free public transport is really a question about where one comes from. How even is public transit provision across the country? How are the rural parts of the country integrated into the urban agglomerations? Luxembourg is clearly dependent on cross-border labour, how are cross-border transportation needs integrated into policy decisions about infrastructure provision?

vi. What is the trajectory?

Ultimately, the observations and set of questions that were generated invoke larger questions about what Luxembourg is trying to do, and where it is going. It’s ironic that while the history is so elevated, its direction into the future is harder to determine. Is there an urban model? There are many pieces that do not come together: Is there a plan to bring them together at all? Does Luxembourg even want an urban model? Luxembourg is small but also somehow huge. What scales do planners work with? The tours revealed that public participation is difficult at best, or reserved for those with capital power (e.g. Place de l’Étoile). Can a participation be expanded more on the ground to develop a trajectory of development that speaks to the needs of people already here?

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The free tram now runs along Avenue John F Kennedy, providing a direct link from Luxembourg city center to the Kirchberg Plateau.

Photo by K Madron

INSIDE-OUT

A RELATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON AND OF LUXEMBOURG

by **Markus Hesse**,

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The debates during the 2022 Annual Meeting of INURA inspired me to rethink my own experience of being situated between urban knowledge created inside the country, and the perspectives taken at the same subject from outside. I am now wondering how a renewed, critical view from outside could contribute to changing discourses within Luxembourg.

Small states are an exciting subject for geographical research – they lack size and a sufficient internal market and, as a result, are forced to maintain strong foreign relations. Consequently, an outbound orientation has always been part of the *DNA* of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. This applies particularly in considering Luxembourg's economic development and its evolution, which has variously drawn from labour migration from Italy or Portugal, the adoption of steel production from the German Ruhr Area, and, most recently, the development of a full-fledge financial centre as a nodal point of global investment flows (and its associated importation of a specialist workforce).

Having emerged from small-but-global urbanization, the country is thus “punching far above its weight”.(1) Strong growth rates are accompanied by growing pains. As a result, Luxembourg faces a range of conflicts between wealth, economic power, and development pressure on the one hand, and small territory, poor infrastructure provision, and limited governance capabilities on the other. These conflicts mark some key characteristics (and dilemmas) of the country. However, they are often hidden behind a façade of growth and modernity that appears hermetic to alternative views from outside, which makes mainstream discourses in the country even more hegemonic.

Views from outside

Admiration from outside is a common, day-to-day practice in the small country, when groups from abroad visit, and individuals deliver invited talks or advise institutions like the government or municipalities. Luxembourg is used to attracting a high number of visitors as it presents itself as a place of both tradition (the Capital City being a UNESCO World Heritage site) and modernity (as the Plateau Kirchberg or the new science city Belval have demonstrated). An entire CBD-regeneration project in the Capital (Hamilius) was tailored mainly to the demands of the affluent shopping tourist and the global property investor. Another case in point is the international media coverage of the European Capital of Culture 2022, which took place jointly in Esch-sur-Alzette with ten smaller municipalities in Luxembourg's south and eight French communes. Without having done a statistically valid survey, my impression is that almost all press articles on the 2022 European Capital of Culture have highlighted not only Esch-sur-Alzette but Belval, the new services district, in particular – most notably using a combination of the red “*Dexia*” building and the refurbished High Furnace as illustrations (see Figure 1). Two iconic representations of the progress the country has made in its transition from steel production to becoming a (real, permanent) Capital of the European Union and a hub of modern services industries.

Planning policy mobilities

Inspiration from abroad has also directly shaped planning and the built environment. This applies, for example, to the work of German urbanist Joseph Stübgen in Esch-sur-Alzette or in the Capital City in the 1920s; the (eventually not successful) attempt of Nazi-occupants to leave a

planning footprint in the country during WWII; or the emerging ‘starchitecture’ practice when the Plateau Kirchberg (which we visited with a small group of INURIANS during the conference) was developed since the early 1960s. More recently, the import of planning concepts became standard practice, for example, when the 2004 IVL Concept, which borrows heavily from Central Place theory, was created as one of the very first strategic planning guidelines developed by the government, and the underlying spatial rationale of the then Programme Directeur (2003). The IVL had evolved from an international expert group that included mostly German experts. Likewise, architectural competitions and planning related calls-for-proposals aim to include international authorities and their expertise. Such practices

have persisted, with competitive processes such as “Luxembourg in Transition 2050” being launched, under which international teams envisaged a decarbonized future for the high-emission society. The same applies for the call-for-proposals for the new neighborhood on the territories of Esch and Schifflange, or the government’s internal consultation on the new state planning directive Programme Directeur (PDAT) 2023. These efforts can be understood as invitations for outside world expertise to redesign the small state.

The PDAT perfectly illustrates the constraints of local complexities being assessed by observers from outside. As members of the government’s official Advisory Board on Spatial Development (CSAT), we were introduced to the



Figure 1: Another outsider’s view of Luxembourg published in the travel section of the daily German newspaper, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (February 10, 2022), finding both the glossy and the rough

draft framework for the new PDAT 2023. When asking whom the advisers from Switzerland had consulted to obtain the knowledge basis for this endeavor, the answer was: “admittedly, this was based on *internal* consultation only”. In effect, this means seeing the territory through the lens of the government. This may also explain why perspectives from outside are often disconnected from ‘real’ developments, and the conflicts and contradictions that come into play here. Moreover, they often overlook the structural reasons that have caused the dilemma. While visitors tend to be impressed by buildings, districts or even just colourful plans, the specificities of the case and how they are linked to what are often particular or peculiar problems remain hidden.

Turning inside-out

Having dealt with the contents and the participants’ presentations of the INURA conference in last June, I recall this experience as completely different and rather enjoyable. During the debates, experienced urbanists proceeded to detect key problems and conflicts of urban development and policy in the country and its capital. This is also indicative from other contributions in this Bulletin: Observations include the clean and proper built spaces, which are provided “at least for its own citizens”, while the commuting part of the population does not enjoy “all the rights and privileges of the residents” (Arie van Wijngaarden, see page 20). The glass & steel palace of the money industries, on Blvd Royal or Plateau Kirchberg, stand in perfect contrast with areas that are occupied by marginalized groups. Nothing unusual for cities at all, but the contrast is particularly stark. Social inequality is also an issue, i.e. when it comes to the housing crisis, but remains hidden from the visitors’ perspective on the built environment. In other words: “Luxembourg destroys the myth that small is automatically beautiful, or automatically easier to understand or simpler to manage.” (Carr and Madron, see page 10)

What are the factors that help to deconstruct

the myth of the tiny little country? In the most general terms, we assume the explosive growth of the past – Luxembourg having doubled its population and increased its GDP by a factor seven over four decades only – is an important framework condition for planning. In fact, the country’s political economy is *the* main driving force behind growth and development. However, this is barely mentioned in planning discourses. Even more so: recent growth rates are expected to remain in place for the foreseeable future, and there is no Plan B for Luxembourg’s development trajectory being disrupted. At the conference, the link between the political economy driving the country’s growth and the related urban and planning outcomes was indeed clearly established, which was much appreciated.(2)

We also discussed the governance conditions, state of planning institutions and governmentality practiced in the country. Yet the conduct of conduct is, like the political economy, rarely analyzed by planning and policy discourses. Planning is used to treat most problems as mere technical issues, ignoring the many relationalities, vested interests, and contradictions that are at work. Governing bodies seem open to the importation of ideas, and for public participation, but one tends to do both quite selectively, eager to leave the very peculiarities of decision-making untouched. Unfortunately, the planned exchange between the Minister of Spatial Planning and INURA had to be replaced by a video speech. His response to the audience would have been very interesting to follow ...

Renewing the outside-in perspective

By concluding this reflection, is there a place for conceptual innovation that would bring us out of our dilemma? One could think of the policy mobilities literature, on success and policy failure, but in fact it seems too early for that. Still, we need to understand the subject matter before intervening in or telling others about any outcomes. Therefore, I’d treat this as a question of different analytical views of the same subject – between inside and outside.

The problem at stake here is what Ash Amin once observed as ‘telescopic urbanism’.(3) By this he means a highly selective, abstract and territorially-bounded view of cities or urban sub-areas that neglects the nature of the urban economy and society: “Telescopic urbanism, in focusing on specific sites, leaves out everything else, above all the myriad hidden connections and relational doings that hold together the contemporary city as an assemblage of many types of spatial formation, from economically interdependent neighbourhoods to infrastructures, flows and organisational arrangements that course through and beyond the city.” (Amin 2013, p. 9)

Luxembourg appears as a template case where the telescope has ultimately replaced a detailed, critical analysis of the idea of development and its ramifications for city, region, and society. Starting with this reflection on the past INURA Conference, I wonder how Luxembourg could improve in this respect: how to share more appropriate and comprehensive perspectives, and how to better align the different views from

outside and inside the small state in the future? Perhaps the secret is in the key mission of INURA: to combine urban research with action. This is easier said than done, but is there space for a renewed agenda for critical research jointly *with* politics and practice, rather than only on it? I am tempted to think the unimaginable... even if it seems totally unrealistic. In fact, that would enable us to get rid of the telescope and to advance our insight into the urban and the planning field.

Notes

1. Wong, C., Hesse, M., & Sigler, T. J. (2022). City-states in relational urbanization: the case of Luxembourg and Singapore. *Urban Geography*, **43**(4), 501-522.
2. Our case was nicely embedded in stories from other cities such as Zurich. For a general debate see e.g. Weber, R. (2015), *From Boom to Bubble*. Chicago, UoChicago Press.
3. Amin, A. (2013). Telescopic urbanism and the poor. *City*, **17**(4), 476-492.



Photo by K Madron

Part of the ArcelorMittal industrial site in Belval is still operational. It is seen here from Maison du Savoir which hosts part of the Belval Campus of the University of Luxembourg.

LUXEMBOURG

PAST AND PRESENT

by **Arie van Wijngaarden**,

Former project manager in the field of housing, urban planning and infrastructure at the City of Amsterdam

Past

It was the 4th of July 1970 while travelling from Rotterdam to Montmédy in France that I missed my train connection in Luxembourg. No more trains that day. At the Luxembourg station, I met a girl from Amsterdam who was heading for the same working holiday in Northern France and had the same problem, so I proposed: Let's head for the youth hostel! We asked for directions and arrived at the Pfaffenthal location. At the given address, we found an old building which had been empty for a long time, waiting to be demolished. The windows were broken and there was glass all over the place. In the meantime, dusk had set and we had no money for a hotel. So, we opened one of the doors and rolled out our sleeping bags in a room on the first floor. During the night we heard a group of young North Africans entering another room for the night. We got our train to France the next day.

Present

How much Luxembourg has changed since then: from a tourist-based economy in the north and the steelworks in the south back then to an advanced service-based economy today. Arriving at Findel airport the expansion is already evident, just witnessing the enlarged airport and availability of surrounding facilities, including freeport called Luxembourg High Security Hub, secretly housing more artworks than most art museums in the world.

A free bus takes you to the city center, in the future to be replaced by a more efficient tram line. The bus passes through the Kirchberg Plateau, which looks like a huge spaceship full of buildings that has landed at the only flat area close to the city center. Where star architects have produced their individual jewels with buildings which do not relate to each other in the slightest. Initially made possible by the European establishments like the European



Photo by A. van Wijngaarden



Photo by C. Carr

The building of the former youth hostel as I found it in 1970 and the present facilities (spacious, clean and affordable).

Investment Bank and the European Court of Justice, it was later followed by banks which could not expand around the historical center, a hospital, schools and some ministries of the Luxembourg government.

Talking about banks, for a long time the vaults of Credit Agricole, ABN-Amro, Deutsch Banks and the like were full of money from foreign account holders. In this way, they could hide their wealth from the tax authorities in their own countries. New regulations about information exchange between Luxembourg banks and foreign tax authorities led in the best cases to a voluntary disclosure, in the worst cases moving the money to other tax havens like those in the Caribbean. The growing presence of Chinese banks in the cityscape is remarkable.

Luxembourg is a wealthy country, at least for its own citizens. The highest income per capita of the European Union, free public transport and the cheapest petrol and cigarettes in Western Europe. The monumental historical center of

Luxembourg has become a car-free strolling zone, where they now are working on the last unrestored buildings. Public schools are free, but to protect the fragile Luxembourgish culture education follows a complicated cycle of teaching in Luxembourgish, German and French.

As said, most facilities are for its own residents and citizens (who make up just over half the population). The enormous number of commuters who travel every day (mostly by car) from Belgium, France or Germany enjoy less of this wealthy Switzerland of the North. Yes, they can have their children enlisted at Luxembourg schools, but they do not enjoy all the rights and privileges of the residents.

Less visible to tourists perhaps, but well present are some marginalized groups. From illegal North Africans to buskers and beggars. In the early morning riding on the public bus I found homeless people sleeping on the doorstep of the middle class houses in Luxembourg-West.



Photo by A. van Wijngaarden



Photo by A. van Wijngaarden

A well-preserved and vivid local center (Vianden) versus a modern infill in the historical center of Luxembourg-city (ACAB means 'all cops are bastards')



Kirchberg Plateau

Pfaffenthal-Kirchberg
Train Station and Funicular
up to Kirchberg Plateau

Findel
Airport

Cents

Place de l'Etoile

Youth Hostel

Old City

Luxembourg Gare
Train, Tram and Bus Station

Cloche D'Or

Map source:
geoportail.lu (labels added)

0 200 400 600m

FROM RESEARCH AND ACTION TO EXECUTIVE POLITICAL POWER

by **Richard Wolff**,

Former City Councillor (Stadtrat), City of Zurich, elected member of the city government

9 Years in Government

This text is based on my contribution to the INURA panel debate “Urban political protests & (big) politics: What is the role of big politics, left politics, activists and local governments?” held in the INURA conference 2022 in Luxembourg, where I reflected on my experiences as a member of the local government in the City of Zurich, and drew conclusions about the possibilities and limitations of executive political power.

After 33 Years of Research and Action

In 2013, in a by-election for just one seat, I became Zurich’s first-ever member of the City government (Stadtrat) from the very left and very small party Alternative Liste (AL). I was re-elected twice, in 2014 and 2018, holding one of the nine seats that comprise the City executive. In 2022, I decided not to run again.

Before running for the government, from 2010 to 2013, I had been a member of the legislative Municipal Council (Gemeinderat or Parliament with 125 seats) holding one of my party’s five seats. I also had a background as activist and academic. As an activist, I had been part of the anarchist punk movement of the 1980s, which spawned countless cultural and political projects, some of them ongoing today. As a student at university, I had dealt with “the urban question” in all its facets. My goal was to apply all of this knowledge for liberating, progressive causes. Therefore, I remained an activist, a researcher, working for many urban initiatives, progressive cultural institutions (e.g. Rote Fabrik), ecological transport associations (e.g. VCS) and the large local tenants association (Mieterverband). I eventually became a lecturer at the University of Applied Sciences of Zurich, aiming to raise awareness of urban issues

among the next generation. I also co-founded INURA and worked at the Common Office in Zurich. All of these activities produced a wide and varied social network, something very helpful for a political campaign.

When the Alternative Liste suggested that I run for the City Council, I first evaluated the pros and cons: What could I expect from a career as member of city government? What would be the possibilities and limitations of such work compared to continuing life as an activist, researcher, consultant, and lecturer? Are institutional politics just a waste of time, energy and talent or can they be another form of activism? In the end, I decided that I was ready for a change, ready to turn away from the critical, opposing and proposing side of the urban field, and ready to take the side of the big institution “state” to help achieve the goals of social justice from another position in society.

Setting the Scene - Of disappointments and colleagues

In the first–constituting–meeting with the City Council, much to my and almost everybody else’s surprise, my eight fellow City Councillors decided that I should head the Municipal Police Department. Five years later, it was again a majority of the City Council (Stadtrat) that forced me to leave the police department and to head the Department of Civil Engineering and Recycling. So, when people now ask me how much power I had as member of a coalition government, my first answer is: Not enough to decide what my job was (!). Or, more generally speaking, it became clear to me that what I would be dealing with in government would not necessarily match what I thought I was best at.

The checks and balances start within the governing City Council itself. Made up of a

coalition of four to five parties, the Council controls and limits the powers of its own members. More limits to power come from Municipal Parliament, the public, and the higher levels of administrative and juridical power, i.e. the Canton of Zurich, the federal state, the courts. Time is another limit because running a department at the City with almost 30,000 civil servants and a budget of 10 billion Swiss Francs consumes much time and energy. There is the risk that time is used up by red tape before even getting started with the politics.

Achievements - Of ambitions, humbleness and satisfaction

When I started, rumor had it that my goal was to abolish the police (!). I thus had to overcome mistrust and suspicion from the police force itself before I could start changing things. I invested much time talking and listening to police officers and external experts to better understand “my” police.

As for my own political agenda, I decided to focus on the relation between the police and the public. I started several programs to improve the quality of policing, to develop customer relations, to implement “mutual respect” as the guideline, the credo, for the police to follow. Under my guidance the recruitment process was reformed to appeal to and attract more women, persons of color, and persons with diverse social and cultural backgrounds. The curriculum of the police school was also overhauled to incorporate new contents on critical issues such as racial profiling, LGBTQ+ rights, minorities, etc. The police office for feedback management was enlarged with more staff and began reporting directly to the commander, as a measure to handle complaints more thoroughly, and with noticeable consequences. Stop and search practices were more regulated and every case had to be registered electronically (also new). Several regular round tables about anti-racism, prostitution, and football fan culture brought together representatives of civil society, professionals, and members of the police to discuss and to improve manners of conduct and

to relax conflictive situations.

The success of all these efforts could be measured in a decrease of complaints, fewer police interventions, reduced application of physical force, and a generally improved rating of police work. This is not to say that complaints stopped or that all police actions were always and by all sides applauded.

In the Department of Civil Engineering and Recycling that I led for the following four years, challenges were usually less life-threatening but very often just as controversial as in the Police Department. Trees and bicycles instead of violence from or against the police. Fridays for Future and very active ecological traffic associations (up-)set the agenda, demanding faster and tougher measures against the climate catastrophe, for more bicycle and pedestrian safety, and a better usability of public spaces.

The introduction of an almost city-wide general speed limit of 30 km/h, a new transport plan including the construction and marking of 150 km of safe bicycle paths within the next 10 years, and a greener city with massive investments in public green spaces, trees, parks and unsealed public space surfaces were big steps towards an environmentally and people-friendly urban environment. In the next 18 years, up to 2 billion Swiss Francs are scheduled to finance the extension of fossil-free distant heating in Zurich connecting more than 60% of all households.

Whereas the heads of the nine departments dispose of significant decisive power in their respective departments, important and more general, critical, innovative, and sensitive issues are discussed and decided by the plenary of all nine City Councilors. In this way, it is possible for every City Council member to give inputs to other departments. In my case, outside of my own departments, I focused mostly on issues regarding civil rights, climate change, housing policies, and cultural projects such as the introduction of a “City Card” as an identification card for undocumented persons, setting the year 2040 for net zero emissions in the City of Zurich, or the tracing and returning of art that

had been confiscated by the Nazis or that was sold under pressure by persecuted persons.

Analyzing the outcome - Conclusions after 9 years of co-governing the City

The city perspective: As City Councilor, head of two departments and member of a coalition government I determined political guidelines, made decisions over projects, set the pace for programs, answered to public demands and media interviews. I was not alone in these decisions but I found that my voice mattered and always had an impact.

The party perspective: A seat in the government made a big difference for how our party was perceived. A City Councilor is always associated with his or her party and, therefore, every speech, every quote, every appearance in Parliament, in the public or the media adds to the visibility of the party. The fact that the party is willing and able to take responsibility in the executive, makes the party more credible to potential voters. Both in the City and in the Canton (the region) of Zurich the Alternative Liste doubled its share of voters and seats in the respective Parliaments.

The wider political perspective: In a city with a large support for progressive politics it is important to have a strong, decidedly left party in government, left of the social democrats. Many voters with more radical positions on issues of feminism, nuclear energy, ecology, anti-fascism, housing rights, civil rights, alternative culture, etc. do not feel well-enough represented by the powerful social democrats, who are often seen as too compliant to the wishes of conservatives

and big business. A decidedly progressive left voice in government, like the Alternative Liste, represented this share of society and introduced more radical positions into the inner circle of political power.

The movements' perspective: I believe that for most left movements, it was a benefit to have someone in government who not only shared their values but who had been part of them and had worked with them for many years. The benefit was mutual. The movements got a fast and easy "access to executive power", and I, in turn, got backing for my politics by their demands and their presence. Their demands were important as a compass for my political positioning. In turn, I could give political, legal, moral, or financial support or even just a mere signature for a required document.

Most importantly, however, is that movements and NGOs remain independent and non-compromising on their core values. Having a member in government did not mean the end of the movements' endeavors for social change, or their *raison d'être*. Movements have to keep up the pressure, regardless of their closeness to executive power.

The personal perspective: For me, becoming and being a city councilor was a very worthwhile, successful and satisfying experience. I do believe that I was able to realize progressive projects and programs, that I contributed to a better representation and acceptance of minorities and alternative voices, and that I helped to advance the most pressing social and ecological policies to the best of my abilities.



The panel discussions of INURA 2022 took place at the Youth Hostel in the valley of the Alzette, at the heart of the Pfaffenthal, between the historic old town and the modern Kirchberg Plateau.

Photo by U. Lehrer

IMAGINING POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION FOR RESILIENCE IN KYIV WITH INURA

by Olga Kryvets, with special thanks to Constance Carr for consulting and editing

Department of Geography and Spatial Planning (DGEO), University of Luxembourg

“Just when you think this war has taken everything you loved, you meet someone and realize that somehow you still have more to give.” Ruta Sepetys, Salt to the Sea

I and my family are among the millions of Ukrainians who fled the war, leaving their families, their homes, their friends, their beloved jobs, their whole life in search of a safe place. Our life will never be the same as it was before the war.

The past months have presented a multitude of challenges: with the atrocities of Russian troops on one hand, and the incredible kindness of people we met along on our journeys seeking refuge on the other. It is clear that the Kremlin rejects the territorial configurations established after the world wars and wants to eradicate Ukrainians and Ukraine in this process (Hill & Stent, 2022).

“Russia is fighting for a version of Ukrainian existence that is non-consensual and hierarchical, where Ukraine is subservient to Kremlin hegemony and ideology, where Russia decides what is good and evil, and right and wrong, and where Russia has the right to occupy whatever territory of Ukraine it chooses” (Knott, 2022; 2)

At the same time, I have seen that the kind hearts of people all over the world, who support Ukraine and Ukrainians in “fighting for the right to exist and maintain its right to determine what that existence should look like” (Knott, 2022, 2), will end this war. As my family and I seek temporary protection in Luxembourg, we do not know what our future will be, but we can say with certainty that the war in Ukraine is changing not only our future but the world’s. As we reckon with Russia’s aggression, become world experts in confronting Russian dictatorial geotactics, the world is also feeling the heat in terms of food production, energy production/consumption and migration (Hellegers, 2022; Osiča & Černoch,

2022; Osendarp et al., 2022; Pushak et al., 2022; Sturm, 2022; Mykhnenko et al., 2022).

My migration story

Before the full-scale invasion by Russian troops into Ukraine, it had never entered my mind to leave. I had a good life, as Head of the Licensing Department at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, and a happy family. However, in March, there was active shelling and fighting near the city of Brovary (20 km from Kyiv) where I was born and lived. Given that I had a 9-month old son (soon to celebrate his first birthday), I decided to flee from the war together with my mother. On March 3rd we headed to Lviv. We then crossed the pedestrian border in Uhryn, Poland, and stayed in a refugee camp for 3 days. After that, we stayed with a young Polish family in Lublin for 5 days, and then we carried on to Spain to stay with family. We stayed there for 2 months. It was very good because my family was close, but there was the difficulty that Spain does not pay any benefits to refugees from Ukraine. So, I sent my CV to different Spanish universities, but there was no response. In April, I saw an open call from the University of Luxembourg for Ukrainian scientists and decided to apply.

And, I got lucky, I received an official letter of invitation from Christian Schulz and Constance (Connie) Carr. Of course, the challenges were serious: moving with a small son and mother to an unfamiliar country where you have no friends, relatives or housing. However, there were two significant advantages - the management and staff at the University of Luxembourg immediately got in touch and set up a grant system of support to Ukrainian scientists. We stayed at Connie’s until longer-term housing was available.

Getting back into urban research

After all the immigration issues were settled, the interesting work in the urban studies team of Connie and Markus began. Specifically, I joined Connie's research team looking at digital cities and large corporations. By this time, it was May 2022, and right before the INURA conference that the whole team was involved with. I was happy to join. INURA was very interesting for a new experience and to share my own. It was very interesting to hear reports from urban scientists, whose works I had only read in scientific journals. I was really inspired by the reports from Ute Lehrer and Philipp Klaus. Mariia Prystupa, a postgraduate student from Kharkiv, and her story about how her landscapes changed after February 24th was also very emotional for me, recalling the excitement and all the events that we experienced too.

In between panel discussions, I talked to the conference participants. At one of the breaks, I met Tammy Wong from Hong Kong, who asked about Ukraine and about the situation that is happening. She talked about Hong Kong, and ultimately she suggested that I also tell the participants about what I know is happening in Ukraine. It is difficult to talk about the war at home, we are living in war, our homes and relatives are under constant shelling. We are all constantly worried and nervous about our relatives and friends. However, the friendly atmosphere of the conference inspired me.

At some point I noticed that the problem of reconstruction of Ukraine had not been addressed. And, although my own personal story is one of mainly of migration, I have family and many friends in Ukraine who are already reconstructing – cleaning up after soldiers have left, surveying and repairing bomb damage, trying to get on with life, and even continuing with building projects that began before the war. This, my dream for a victory for Ukraine, and the rapid restoration and reconstruction of Ukrainian cities, is also a part of my story.

Further, the topic of reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine is a challenge for scientists in many fields of science and for urbanists, in particular. So, I was very happy to learn that this topic not only interested the academic community of INURA, but that members

were also motivated to continue thinking this topic through. Later, after the conference, a circular was emailed around documenting the objectives of this group (shall we call this group Ukrainura?), which are (thank you, Arie!):

- to learn from other cities with a history of post-war or post-disaster reconstruction, and to show which participatory instruments can be used
- to provide a counterweight to large scale projects by commercial real estate companies
- to promote affordable and accessible housing (new or renovated)

The group also proposed to have a thematic panel discussion on the topic of reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine at the next, 31st conference in Zurich, 2023.

The discussions at INURA helped me realize how I really wanted to focus my research. Until the conference, I had a research plan on the topic of gender differences, digital corporations Amazon and Google, and thought about Ukraine. To this end, I also conducted research to find literature sources on this topic. Everything went according to plan. The discussions about Ukraine however, revealed that this topic of recovery is really motivating. The topic of Ukraine caused a certain synergy between all participants of the conference. As a result, we, in the Urban Studies Group at DGEO came up with the idea to do a study on the recovery and reconstruction of Kyiv city and the de-occupied territories of the Kyiv region. We analysed literary sources, built a map of the main actors. And, we continue to work on this research topic. We plan to publish articles on this topic.

Looking forward

When the full-scale invasion of Ukraine began, we all felt that the war took away our spring, summer, autumn, and eventually our lives. My family and I all found ourselves living in a February 24th, which will not end. It is hard to overstate how the war has so fundamentally changed the lives of so many people: Ukrainians dying on the battlefield, living under enemy missile attacks, turning kindergartens and train stations into “Spaces of Invincibility”

(Пунктнезламності), crafting camouflage for soldiers, surveying missile damage, getting by without light, heating or water, leaving their homes in search of other regions/countries to provide their children with a safe haven and happy childhood. We, Ukrainians, are paying a very high price for the victory we are aiming for together with the entire world that rejects totalitarianism, autocracies, or dictators. Partner countries help in many ways—financially, spreading the message, providing weapons, and sheltering Ukrainian citizens. I, personally, have felt great support from all sorts of people from different countries who I have met on my journey for protection. Even with all the pain and hatred towards the aggressor country that I harbour, all these people rekindled the fire of kindness in my soul. And, in this moment the loneliness dissolves through the common desire to establish peace and create new opportunities.

A year ago, I could never ever have imagined that I would be working and living in Luxembourg today. Every day I cross my fingers for good news from Kyiv. But I am very glad to work in a team of professionals who are inspired and hardworking, and who are not afraid of new challenges and supporting new research topics. In the Urban Studies Group at the Department of Geography & Spatial Planning, I was able to apply for a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action Grant, proposing to examine, understand and explain how tech enterprises, big and small, shape reconstruction efforts and contribute to multiple digital urban futures in the East-European headquarter city of Kyiv (RE-DIGICITY). I have also recently joined the Luxembourg Ukrainian Research Network, helping the Faculty's circa 30 new staff members from Ukraine adjust to temporary (but safe and hopeful) life in Luxembourg.

My aim is to keep moving forward, to interact with new people, and to open new horizons of cooperation. I try to do what seemed impossible in the past life. I believe that these cooperations will provide good results, create quality research products, and strengthen the process of knowledge transfer. I very much look forward to

discussing these ideas further in Zurich!!

Thank you very much for the support of the entire scientific community of INURA, the University of Luxembourg, and personally Constance Carr and Markus Hesse.

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In Ukraine, everyday citizens now engage in projects about protection, such as recycling shopping bags into camouflage.

Photo by Olexander Kryvets

OUR CITY

HOPE, SOLIDARITY AND LOVE

by **Tammy Wong**

Osaka Metropolitan University, Urban Resilience Research Centre

Hong Kong and Ukraine have similar experiences—we both fight against oppressive regimes with expansionary dreams (China and Russia). Hong Kong people learnt of the Ukrainian resistance in 2014. Perhaps, this is what connected me to Olga Kryvets when we met at the registration desk on the first day of the INURA conference in Luxembourg in 2022, and we could immediately share our different situations, our lives, families, people and home.

Hong Kong has always been a frontier, struggling between China, the former British Empire and the United States, powers that largely affected the development of its democratic pathway, and formation of social movements and civil society. It was a city of refugees but developed its own specific system, culture and identity during the post-war colonial rule. We were promised the status quo of prosperity and stability, but not the right to universal suffrage. In the 1980s and 1990s, the colonial government opened more direct elections, in particular, the Legislative Council, in the interests of meeting demands of democratisation; however, this arrangement was immediately abolished by Beijing in 1997. Because Hong Kong was useful for Beijing, Deng Xiaoping, who took power in 1978 after Mao Zedong, offered the Hong Kong people “a high degree of autonomy” under the framework of ‘One Country, Two Systems’, which would last for 50 years. In 1989, Jiang Zemin, the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), reasserted that “a river (Beijing) will not interfere with the well water (Hong Kong)”. Under Xi Jinping’s so-called ‘China’s dream’, Hong Kong was forcefully subordinated under the comprehensive control of the CCP’s power, and the ‘One Country, Two Systems’ was reinterpreted such that the relationship of

the two rests on the power *granted* by Beijing. On 30 June 2020, Beijing forced the National Security Law upon Hong Kong. This was like a “Cultural Revolution 2.0” that not only overrides, but actually destroys, Hong Kong’s long-established system in all areas. To name a few, 2.0 measures include intimidation of enemies (pro-democrats, intellectuals), control of media, and rewarding informants.

Since the handover of sovereignty in 1997 to China, waves of the democratic movements had expanded civil society and numerous urban social movements clashed with the political interests of the CCP. These included struggles against urban renewal, high-speed rail construction and new development areas in the New Territories, fights for the right to public space and the citizen’s participation in planning and policy-making process, and the like. At the same time, these struggles gradually turned to oppose Beijing’s growing control that undermined the city’s autonomy and freedom. Opposition points included Beijing’s agenda of socio-economic integration of urban development between Hong Kong and the Shenzhen/Pearl River Delta, the protest of secondary school students against the national education curriculum in 2012, the demand for universal suffrage, the outbreak of the 79-day occupy movement in the CBD areas in 2014 (the Umbrella Movement), and the Anti-Extradition Movement in 2019. The demonstration of 2 million citizens and persistent protests eventually forced the Hong Kong government (that was seen as a puppet of the CCP) to withdraw the proposed bill which could enable it to extradite any opponents to mainland China. Beijing soon bypassed the Hong Kong Legislative Council and enforced the National Security Law which can even strengthen Beijing’s hold in Hong Kong with

its own security agency and sentence those opponents to jail on the charges of ‘secession, subversion and colluding with foreign powers and terrorism’.

During the Anti-Extradition Movement and after the National Security Law were put into effect, Hong Kong turned into a fierce battleground between the protestors and the police. The National Security Law dismantled civil society and the juridical system, crushed the protests and social movements, and led to the dissolution of many political and civil organisations. While the CCP weaponizes the pandemic to control peoples’ daily lives, social activities and gatherings, Hong Kong is undergoing the ongoing political crackdown: endless arrests, pre-trial detentions and prosecutions (a total of 10,278 and 2,850 people have been arrested and charged, respectively, so far); a comprehensive network of surveillance and censorship; the imposition of new textbooks revising Hong Kong’s history; regulation of teachers’ conduct; and the creation of a hotline for informants wishing to report on those who might endanger national security, and the like. This resulted in a massive exodus of Hong Kong people to foreign countries¹. So far it is estimated that more than 200,000 people have left. Some people called the city ‘New Hong Kong’, or other called it ‘South Shenzhen’(!)—names that symbolize the destructive impacts of the National Security Law. But regardless of what one calls it, for those who stayed and left, there is a big hole in their heart: We have lost our city, and are full of enormous anger and grief.

Nevertheless, all of the above struggles and protests have given rise to a political community and identity for those who believe in the liberation and democratization of Hong Kong, the “Revolution of Our Times”. The emergence of these post-1997 democratic movements, protests and struggles is by no means

accidental and independent. They began with a handful of marginalised communities, university students and activists, who resisted demolition, defending their homes and public spaces. This later evolved into a much larger group across different disciplines, classes, ages and occupations, demanding for democracy, citizen participation, fighting against developmental and institutional violence, and setting a larger platform of discussing and reimagining Hong Kong’s future. Initially, there was some internal divide and distrust in Hong Kong’s Umbrella Movement, in 2014; however, it turned into solidarity, characterised by the slogan of ‘do not split’ in the 2019 Anti-Extradition Movement. It evolved from a belief of obligation to obey to the law (e.g. annual July 1st pro-democracy protest), to non-violent civil disobedience, and then to co-existing nonviolent and violent tactics. It also changed from being centrally organised through the occupation in the city centres, to a de-centred, diversified approach by different individuals and small groups, and the ‘be water’ idea adopted as a formless and unpredictable resistance strategy against the police, taken place in dispersed communities, universities and secondary schools and malls. All these political experiences aligned the Hong Kong people to fight for democracy and justice, for the future of Hong Kong and the next generation. These common memories are the history of Hong Kong rewritten by the people that, I believe, offer hope in the future.

Today, the Hong Kong people locate in different places and adopt different approaches to maintain, rebuild and reconnect people for Hong Kong. I receive news of Hong Kong and political commentaries from the independent media established by Hong Kong people in the UK, Taiwan, Canada and Germany, etc. Different groups, protestors and creators continue, too, to promote and support the ‘Liberate Hong Kong’ movement in different ways and in different

¹ Particularly, the British government expands the emigration programme for Hong Kong people who are holders of British National (Overseas) visas to emigrate to the UK (150,600 applications so far); other countries such as Australia, US and Canada also offer different lifeboat and asylum programmes for Hong Kong people.

places. Those who stay in Hong Kong take up the remaining space to defend the Hong Kong culture and ways of life, and use a new way of reconnecting people. This is the new stage of Hong Kong's struggle beyond the city. I believe that only hope, solidarity and love are the ways of healing this political trauma faced by protestors and individuals. Because what changes are no longer simply the everyday lives, these challenges have also brought about physical and mental trauma during these three years of struggle, departure, exile, ruptures and doubts about self-value and lives. There is an incredibly strong desire for recovery and rebuilding of the Hong Kong civil society and individual's strengths. At the same time, solidarity is not only among the Hong Kong people at different places, but it connects people who have been fighting in their countries. This was how I connected with Olga Kryvets on the first day to share our situations, families, struggles and hope. Lastly, our times of resistance have spanned the time, places and scales; but equally important, these would be based on all the individuals, their embodied experiences and feelings.

Further Readings

Here are some further resources, that are important to me and Hong Kong people.

Wong and Ng (2020) tell the personal account of Joshua Wong's journey of struggles for democracy. Born in 1996, Wong is one important and was one of the youngest protestors from 2010 to 2019. He is in jail. Patten (2022) provides another important personal account of the last Hong Kong Governor. Stephen Vines is a well-known Hong Kong-based journalist, he (2021) gives account of the protests from the people's perspective. Goodstadt's books are not about the 2019 protest, but his (2009) account is extremely important in understanding the changing power relations in Hong Kong. He was appointed as the head of the Central Policy Unit for the colonial government.

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The idyllic context of sunny summer days in Luxembourg City with the tragedy of war and a pandemic unfolding in the background made INURA 2022 feel like the eye of a storm (see Carr/Madron, page 5)

Photo by C. Carr

INURA AND KRAFTWERK1

A SHARED COMMON HISTORY

by **Philipp Klaus**

Secretary of INURA, co-president of Kraftwerk1

For the celebration of 30 years of INURA, in Luxembourg, I wanted to present a parallel process of research and action: The connection and common paths of INURA and the Kraftwerk1 housing cooperative in Zurich.

INURA was founded in 1991 and was initiated by SAU—Ssenter for Applied Urbanism—in Zurich. SAU consisted of four young geographers (Hartmann, Hitz, Schmid, Wolff) doing urban research and teaching political economic development to activists, students, and a wider audience in the 1980s. The works of David Harvey and Henri Lefebvre played a key role. Another group in Zurich at the time was the Konzeptgruppe Städtebau (KGS), mainly architects discussing and publishing on alternative urban development. SAU and KGS started meeting, exchanging ideas, and organizing common events. The exchange of the two groups was very inspiring.

Discussions at early INURA meetings were characterized by critical analysis and research of urban development, exchange on fights against mega-projects, reports on de-industrialization, waterfront developments and the housing question. Another focus has always been alternative projects and possible urban worlds.

In 1993, a writer, an artist, and an architect (member of KGS) together edited a small but powerful book, named “Kraftwerk1 - Projekt für das Sulzer-Escher Wyss Areal” that aimed to find new ways of living and working together. It was presented at the 3rd INURA conference in Durham, UK. The essence of the book was described in the INURA Bulletin No. 6 (Hofer, 1993: 19):

“After having fought many years against the projects of ‘the others’ (sometimes

with success), we try to find out whether concrete constructive proposals can be made from ‘our’ side, whether the political discussion could be broadened and focused on a more relevant search for the social and ecological problems we are facing in our cities. Kraftwerk1 is the name of a community project to be realized on the site of the Escher-Wyss factories in Kreis 5 in Zurich. 700 people will live and work together according to their cultural lifestyles. Through direct exchange with farms in the region, partial self-sufficiency in providing food will be achieved. Communal facilities like workshops, cafés and a swimming pool will be available for all inhabitants.”

Every year a short report on Kraftwerk1 was given at the INURA conferences, and the developments at Kraftwerk1 co-operative that finally began construction in 1999, were a constant thread at INURA. The writer p.m. (1998)—famous for his utopist bolo’bolo (p.m. 1984)—wrote about Kraftwerk in INURA’s first book, “Possible Urban Worlds”, and another report by Andreas Wirz (2004) about Kraftwerk1 was included in the 2nd INURA book “The Contested Metropolis – Six cities at the beginning of the 21st century”. By 2001, the Kraftwerk1 (2022) was home to 280 people in apartments of all sizes, a workplace for 100 people, with a restaurant, several shops and offices, photovoltaic power production, rents not for profit, shared terraces and rooms, a self-run shop for everyday (mostly organic) goods, solidarity funds, shared decision-making organization, guest rooms, ateliers and much more (no swimming pool though!). The INURA Common Office and the INURA Zurich Institute

also settled in Kraftwerk1 and still operate from there.

Kraftwerk1 has even become a symbol of an alternative way to build and live in the city—a possible urban world. In 2012, a second project for 100 people was finished, and in 2015 a third one for 320. A fourth project should be in use in 2026. About 1200 people will then live in Kraftwerk1 projects. More projects by other cooperatives were started with similar and new ideas for more social and environmental justice.

In 2010, INURA celebrated its 20th anniversary with a reception in Kraftwerk1. In 2023, INURA will take place in Zurich. You are welcome to visit the Kraftwerk1 projects. And, spread the word. Another Urban World is possible!

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MOVEMENTS AND MARXISM

A METHOD TO REACH THE 'REALM OF FREEDOM'

by **Marvi Maggio**

PhD in territorial and urban planning, independent researcher, INURA Florence

In 2022, INURA met in Luxembourg, a tiny country, but also a center of capital power, and actually an important place to understand Marx's 'realms of freedom' and current challenges in generating equality and social justice.

The true difference is to imagine a society that is alternative to the capitalist model and based on values totally different from those established in bourgeois society.

Marx's (1867) method of societal analysis is still so effective and full of potential because it puts to the fore the material bases of social organizations seen in their totality and specificity. Marx interpreted the material bases as organic systems in their historical and geographical space-time, and ever changing development. Marx investigates the material basis by looking at the instruments of production for sustaining life, as different moments of the same process: technology, that discloses society's mode of dealing with nature; relation to nature, and the construction of second nature through urbanization and the building of physical infrastructures; the process of production by which life is sustained; production systems and labour processes; social reproduction as reproduction of everyday life and of species; social relations such as class relations, gender relations, power relations; institutional organizations and administration; mental conceptions on the world. Crucially, Marx's analysis of the material basis of social organization includes history and its processes. It is constantly acknowledging changes through time and space (Marx, 1867).

All the moments are functioning as an organic system, a totality. Each one is related to the other as a part of the whole. Marx (1858/1993: 278) explains: "this organic system itself, as a totality, has its presuppositions, and its development to its totality consists precisely in

subordinating all elements of society to itself or in creating out of it the organs, which it still lacks. This is historically how it becomes a totality". Totality of capital's inner structure, as economic engine, exists within the much broader totality of capitalism as a social formation. To transform the totality, it is necessary to act simultaneously and strategically over all the moments that compound it.

Specific social movements choose one moment that becomes the key feature imagined to transform all the others by spill-over effect: trade unions (e.g. Italian General Confederation of Labour) and many communist groups, like Workerism (operaismo), concentrate on labour processes; other movements such as Syriza or Podemos, believe that, once taken, the power in institutional organization and administration, all society can be transformed; others concentrate their actions on social reproduction and social relations as feminist movements (like second wave feminism); others focus on the relation to nature, such as environmentalists like WWF; squatter movements act on the creation of a second nature, the built environments, and on social reproduction; others, like researchers and artistic movements, concentrate on mental conceptions.

To act only and specifically on one moment, thinking that all the others will change automatically is, of course, a fatal mistake: the moments act as a totality and will easily readjust without overcoming the whole of their injustices. Some social groups will gain, some other will lose, but the unfair total processes will remain the same. The social movements aiming at revolution—such as the radical new left social movements in Italy in the seventies did—where taking action on all the moments simultaneously, as they were conscious that it was necessary in order to transform and revolutionize all of them, without forgetting activists' own being and personal relations: The personal is political

in the sense that it is a ground of radical transformation.

One of the main limitations of movements that followed the revolutionary movements of the seventies, is the fragmentation of social struggles, of issues raised, and of aims. That is a crucial problem as it leads to a lack of capacity in addressing the whole functioning of the dominant capitalist system, with different parts linked and operating in relation to each other, organically. In this way, it is easier for ruling classes to render them irrelevant and readjust the whole in their favour.

The Marxist method that comprehends history and its processes allows the modification and readjustment of the results of the analysis through time and space. New questions have been raised throughout the years by, for example, 1968 movements, feminist movements, the Black Panther Party, EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional) with its call for an international common fight against capitalism from 1994 on, the 1999 movement against global governance of capital that started with the Battle of Seattle, the World Social Forum (from 2001 on), Ni una menos from 2017, Fridays for Future that began in 2018. The method is the same, but the results are different because the social spatial-temporal processes have changed, in their totality and specificity, as historical and territorially specific social practices and relations.

Marxism suggests a science of general questions and the preservation of particular cases, of local answers. This means the identification of a general question of research and of an important general relevance that nevertheless generates an unpredictable myriad of particular answers, that expresses the territorial and historical specificities, which in turn can suggest new general questions. It is always possible to add a new point of view, a new perspective and interpretation. Time modifies questions that are possible and considered relevant and which previously had not been or neglected; the present, like the past, is inexhaustible and cannot be fully known. The risk of generalization is to eliminate concrete facts that are inconsistent with the general reading that is given (Levi, 2018).

Revolution: The realm of freedom

The main strength of Marxism is how it bases the strategies of social transformation on actual contradictions and crises in their territorial and historical specificity as part of a totality. What Marx (1894) refers to in volume 3 of *Capital* as the 'realm of necessity' must be cared for. That is, we need to find collective ways to manage the metabolic relation to nature, the production of material goods, the mental conceptions of the world and the production and reproduction of our own human nature through material practices. We need an economy to take care of material wants, needs and desires and to release the free time to pursue complete—'unalienated' (Sayers, 2011)—human content.

In Marx view freedom in the realm of necessity can only consist in the associated producers, rationally organizing production and reproduction with "the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature" (Marx, 1894). This idea is the inspiration of all the struggle based on self-management in the work place, and has been adopted also in struggle on reproduction, like the social centres. Workers can develop the alternative way to produce for sustaining life. With the shortening of the working day as the basic prerequisite, a path to the realm of freedom is exposed.

Beyond the realm of necessity, it begins the realm of freedom, "that development of human energy which is an end in itself" (Marx, 1894). This concept of the realm of freedom resonates through history and the refusal of exploitative capitalist labour, has been one of the key positions and aims of the 1977 movement in Italy (Maggio, 2017), which interpreted revolution as a radical transformation built from here and now through collective fights, unlike the French or Soviet Revolution that sought to take State Power. Already in the early seventies, the Italian radical left, that was libertarian and communist, imagined the revolution as the results of a long process of struggles over production and reproduction in factories, schools, families, universities, barracks, hospitals, social services, prisons, and indeed the whole city, as indicated by the slogan "Take back the city" launched in 1971 by the political

organization Lotta Continua (Continuous fights) (Maggio, 2021a, 2021b). Following this path, the 1977 movement interpreted revolution as a radical revolutionary transformation stemming from all the contradictions present in society: in families, working places, in the market and in the state structure. The participants of the 1977 movements created their program “starting from their own needs”: however, the answers to their needs were far from the ones offered by market or by the state. The answers that they were looking for were new social relations between equals, overcoming power games, hierarchies and gender discrimination. And, to house these new social relations, the movement occupied several empty buildings in many Italian towns, big and small, and created what were called Circles of Proletarian Youth, interpreted as new liberated spaces. The 1977 movements also used public spaces for demonstrations and for everyday life.

The 1977 movement aimed to speed up the construction of the alternative here and now, starting from “the activists’ own needs”, the radical needs of a generation. The philosopher Ágnes Heller (1974) expressed the radical needs of that generation as follows: to have meaningful work; to have a life full of meaning; to have free time as liberated space and time; to have time to study. The 1977 movement rejected the myth of the labourer as proud producer of goods for social reproduction, because they knew that capitalist production was not aimed at production of goods for answering to the needs of majority, but at production of surplus value (i.e. profit). Production of arms, of nuclear power, of yachts aimed to produce surplus value benefiting only ruling classes. They were producing goods harmful to health, generating pollution, or only for the rich. Only a part of the production answered to the needs of the majority.

The circulation process of capital is something that has been, and still is, in the course of being historically constructed and

reconstructed through continuous human and social practices. Totality as an ecosystem has “internal mutations, the innumerable seeds of alternative practices, the opening at every level to doing things differently, establishing different social relations, cultivating alternative patches of human practices” (Harvey, 2022).

It is our job to use the openness and indeterminacy within the ecosystemic totality to all manner of innovations, to create the realms of freedom through which a socialist alternative can actually develop.

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The Kirchberg Plateau is Luxembourg's banking and financial center as well as the location of EU institutions.

Photo by K.Madron

FROM RIO DE JANEIRO TO LUXEMBOURG

EXPOSING NARRATIVES OF THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

by **Lorenzo Tripodi and Laura Colini**

Founders of Tesseract Urban Social Research

After a long day of discussion about current conditions of urbanity at the 30th Annual Conference of INURA in Luxembourg, we regrouped in the small town of Vianden for video screenings and discussions at the Ancien Cinéma Café Club (who kindly offered their generous support, with access to equipment, space, and promotion!). There, we joined the stage with Tino Buchholz who screened 'How Poles Became White' and Kacper Pobłocki to discuss issues of rights to the city under changing urban conditions. In this entry, we recall our own contribution screened 'Museu da Maré'.

The Right to the City Reloaded - An operational concept for local struggles in the planetary urbanization framework

The documentary short, 'Museu da Maré', is an offshoot of a larger documentary project by Tesseract and ogino:knauss, called 'The Right to the City Reloaded'. Few concepts in urban studies have a similar fortune and at once such a vague application and diverse understanding as that of the *Right to the City*. Since the publication in 1968 of Henri Lefebvre's *Le droit à la ville*, this concept has become the "cry and demand" for rights in cities around the world. From the claims of the students' movements and situationist agitators, throughout the multifaceted experience of urban movements during the last fifty years, until its adoption in municipal charters and policy agendas, the Right to the City is a concept that has settled globally in the academic discourse and in the everyday practice of both activists and policy-makers.

The Right to the City Reloaded project started in 2018 during the celebrations for the fifty years

of Lefebvre's book, when Tesseract started a round of interviews about the book's legacy at the conference 'Les 50 ans du Droit à la Ville de Henri Lefebvre' organised in Paris by La Ville en Commun (2018). The work initiated in that occasion continued in the following months through site visits to grassroots initiatives and interviews of people making a daily use of the concept in their activities. This process started the collection of a living archive of interviews with scholars, activists, cultural agitators, politicians and policy-makers to understand how the *Right to the City* concept has been appropriated, interpreted and endorsed in the context of local and global struggles.

The plan was to create a *narrative device*, tracing back the evolution of the debate on the *Right to the City* and its settlement in local territories through urban struggles as well as in policy-making. The objective is not only to document the pluralities of facets of the concept, but also to question how it can still provide inspiration and tools for emancipation and social justice in our age of capitalist acceleration, producing a concrete assessment on how the concept of *Right to the City* can serve communities around the world today.

The final outcome of the project will be a web documentary platform, collecting interviews and video stories combined with a map and a timeline that will provide an enjoyable user-interface for navigating the archive both in geographical and historical terms. It will be completed by a feature film summarizing some of the most relevant stories and voices in a broadcasting format, and one (or more) books collecting related case studies. The in-progress archive is published in the Vimeo channel of ogino:knauss at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/5587526>.

Museu da Maré

The Museu da Maré is one of the first stories realized for the 'Right to the City Reloaded' project. The short film was shot in Rio de Janeiro in 2019 in the frame of the Co-Creation project funded by the EU's H2020 RISE programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement. The film documents the reality of a community museum born in a favela. The community museum is a way for citizens of a disadvantaged slum to be recognised as part of, and reclaim the right to, the urban story, culture and identity. The Museu da Maré uses collective memories and artefacts to illustrate the evolution of the informal settlement through twelve different "times". It aims at reversing the stigma of the favela and restoring dignity to local issues and struggles.

This survey is completed by other material collected in Rio, such as the interviews of Lourenço César, director of the Museum, and of Mario Chagas, sociologist and father of the Brazilian movement, Social Museology. The online archive contains also interviews/stories regarding some of the other similar experiences of museums of the favelas in Rio, like the Museu das Remoções, Vila Autodromo, Museu Sankofa - Rocinha, etc.

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Further Information

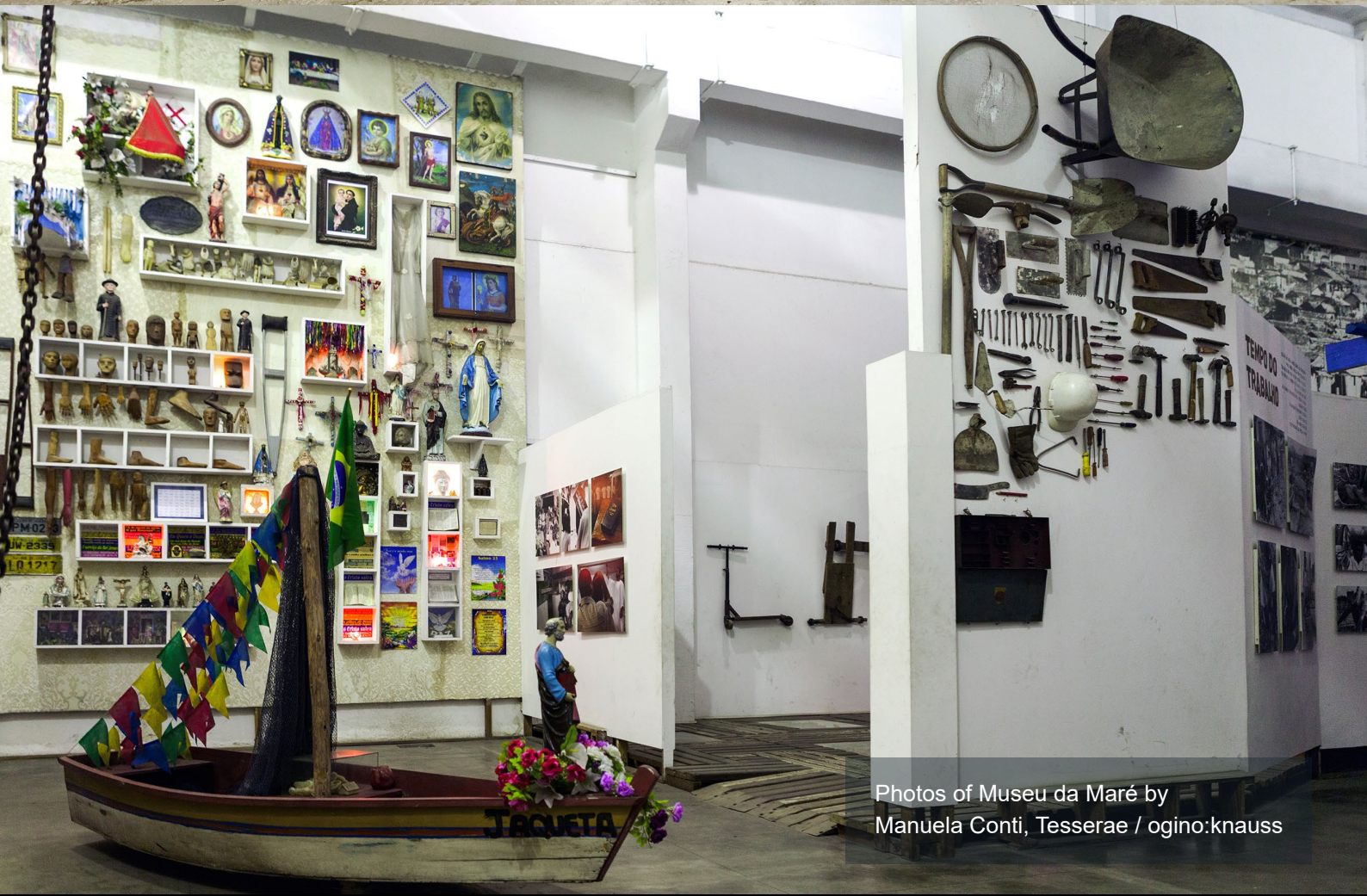
The Right to the City Reloaded - A documentary project by Tesserae and ogino:knauss

Concept, scientific direction and script:
Laura Colini and Lorenzo Tripodi
Art direction, photography and editing:
Manuela Conti
Produced by Tesserae Urban Social Research and ogino:knauss
The in-progress archive is published in the Vimeo channel of ogino:knauss

Museu da Maré

19" - col 2019, HDV

Filmed by Manuela Conti with the collaboration of Giovanni Fiamminghi
Sound recording by Sergio Segoloni
Translation by Antonio Gioia and Lorenzo Tripodi
Produced by Tesserae Urban Social Research and ogino:knauss
Museu da Maré can be viewed at:
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/5589607>



Photos of Museu da Maré by
Manuela Conti, Tesseræ / ogino:knauss

LOOKING BACK AT 30 YEARS OF INURA

A PERSONAL VIEW

by **Arie van Wijngaarden**

Former project manager in the field of housing, urban planning and infrastructure at the City of Amsterdam

Looking back in wonder

Thirty years of INURA conferences, meetings, workshops, publications and informal contacts is a good moment to have a look at how it has worked and if it is at the end of its lifecycle or not. It is a small miracle that INURA has continued so long as a rather informal organization. The concept of the yearly rotating conferences, urban excursions and visits, retreats and workshops has survived nearly unmodified. With thanks to the people of the tiny Zürich Common Office who have done a wonderful job stimulating conference organizers and keeping the administrative framework of INURA alive.

Principles

INURA started in 1991 writing its ten 'commandments' in the granite table in the Engadin mountains. Looking back, most of the INURA principles have been incorporated in the activities. This is true for the following principles: networking, using a variety of methods and media, supporting people in neighbourhoods, aiming at sustainability and anti-globalization. The study fields of housing and environment were well served, that of employment has remained a niche. The fourth principle 'changes in forms of work and of community and domestic life must be understood and planned in relation to each other' still remains an enigma to me.

Who are you? ("Who are you, who, who, who, who?" *The Who*, 1978)

I guess that at least 80% of the members or conference participants are attached to academia. The rest are independent professionals or public servants and a small minority is formed by representatives of the various action groups and movements. Of course the combination academic-activist is

also present. Many people with a base in action groups and movements did not continue to participate after one or two years of attendance. This was opposed to many academic researchers and teachers, who made a career at university and could continue to attend.

Geographically, INURA originated along the Italian-Swiss-German-Belgian-British axis. From the second year on, it attracted participants from other Western European countries, Canada, Australia and the USA, Mexico, Hong Kong, Cuba, Colombia, India, Brazil, and Lebanon. In later years the membership broadened and included Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. We often have talked about the lack of global south, but to realise more inclusion—and make it more international (!)—was not that easy. Conferences have indeed been organised in Mexico and Havana and there was a workshop in Porto Alegre. And, travel allowances and reduced conference fees have eased the participation of those who had to travel from Africa, Latin America or Asia to Europe. It could still be more.

Fields of research and action

The first activities and publications of INURA were much orientated towards the defence of alternative spaces ("another world is possible") and the fights against mega projects such as the Docklands in London. Later the discourse went more towards a critique of and a struggle against the neoliberal regimes in the cities.

In those thirty years the nature of urban politics and movements has changed. As an example, in Amsterdam we have seen the rise and decline of the squatting movement because of regressive legislation. In other cities we have noticed the rise of investor-led mega-projects, where financial gain prevails above ecology,

civic participation or even public control. And, in the analysis of metropolitan politics the suburban question got much more attention.

The conference recipe

The recipe of the yearly conference was and still is: give an introduction to the city where the conference takes place, add some presentations, go on urban tours and visits, realise a public event and top it off with a retreat and an AGM somewhere in the countryside. This concept has been very successful through the years and, in spite of various interpretations by local organizers, continues to be used. Over the years the Common Office has helped inexperienced organisers to find the right way.

The power of INURA

Strong points of INURA are: the largely informal organization, broad points of view, beyond professionalism or academism, good local contacts (important for the excursions!) and being a less academic concept than professional academic conferences (no study credits).

It offers a platform for action groups to present their background, concept and projects and to get feedback from experts. At the other side scholars present their research in study fields which might inspire social movements.

A few times INURA showed its institutional power writing to the authorities about a potentially disastrous project, like the Waterfront project in Belgrade.

The strongest power remained of course the informal exchanges during and also outside the conferences.

Famous discussions in the past

A returning subject of discussion is about action and research and how they relate to each other. In the UK we discussed the effects of the regeneration policy: who was really profiting from it? During the interim visit to Belfast we heard the stories from both sides and saw how—with EU money—they rebuild and run their social centres.

Important new subjects which have

been presented include: growth/no growth (Amsterdam), the role of quango's (quasi non-governmental organisations in the UK), the financialization of housing (Essen), ecology in planning (Florence), creative spaces (Amsterdam), smaller or larger utopia's (Luton, Zürich).

A few times we talked about the advantage of English native speakers versus those who didn't master that tongue. With the growing proficiency of the non-native English speakers this problem slowly died away over the years.

Memorable public events

At the Possible Urban Worlds conference in Zürich, 1997, we had famous speakers such as David Harvey, Margit Mayer and Saskia Sassen, paired on a panel with Glen Jenkins (Exodus Collective Luton UK), Peti Buchel (Gilde van Werkgebouwen, Amsterdam), Roger Keil (Green Work Alliance) and Alessandro Romano (Forte Prenestino Social Centre Squat, Rome) and a great crowd following the discussions.

At the waterfront meeting in Belgrade, 2014, INURA showed how the local politicians and a part of the professional community fell into the trap laid down by Abu Dhabi investors, who had entered the Serbian arena by taking over a part of the public debt.

In Athens, 2015, we had a panel discussion about NMM (New Metropolitan Mainstream) and austerity urbanism where a group of squatters doubted if we were on their side and left the venue.

Philipp Klaus nearly always had enriched the conferences with his violin improvisations. The best was his imitation (on violin) of the speech by a property developer who defended enthusiastically his investment project in Beamish Hall.

Memorable urban excursions

Because of the contacts of the local INURA members the excursions were not just looking at neighbourhoods, housing projects or social centres. They also involved talking with inhabitants, neighbourhood groups, rave

organizers, local artists or health care workers. For me, the most memorable experiences were:

- In Luton, we met with the Exodus movement, a group originating from rave festivals, establishing their community in an abandoned farm,
- In Paris, we witnessed the poor housing conditions of North African immigrants in la Goutte d'Or,
- In Amsterdam, arriving by boat, we visited the squatted ADM shipyard full of creative workspaces,
- In Istanbul, we toured a gecekondu area just before the forced removal of the inhabitants and demolition of the houses,
- In Mexico City, we were given a wonderful and unexpected meal by the neighbourhood committee in one of the suburbs after they had presented their activities in the social centre,
- In Athens, we witnessed the refugees' housing barracks and the health centre at the former airport,
- In Bucharest, we saw the poor Roma housing conditions in one of the suburbs, reminiscent of situations in Belgrade and Lisbon.

NMM

The New Metropolitan Mainstream theory has been a red thread through the last decade of INURA. A collective work to analyse the structure of different cities through mapping and descriptions took a lot of energy, but had a great reward. Yes, discussions about what to draw on the map and which categories to use were endless. For me the best experience of the INURA era was the exhibition of 34 maps in the Rote Fabrik in 2010. Here, groups from 34 cities of all continents explained how they had analysed and discussed the structure of their own city in order to draw up the maps. With questions which they had to ask themselves before putting the results on a map: where is the central area, do we have gated communities, where are the prestigious (failed) projects, where

are the poor areas and do we have centres of resistance? Not so much the resulting map, but the mental process of spatial and social analysis became the most important aspect.

During the later phase of the NMM, it was extended and should have led to a book, including new comparative studies. With our Amsterdam group, we produced a chapter on the accessibility and affordability of housing, where the situation in Amsterdam, Berlin, Mexico, Rome, Tallinn, Zurich and Vienna was compared. Unfortunately, other parts of the book did not advance so well, a final synthesis became impossible and the NMM book died a slow death.

The best of INURA

- *Weirdest retreat location*: Kim Il Sung holiday centre in Prerow, 1992,
- *The word that has vanished*: Post-Fordism,
- *Most famous words*: "So, I am an object?" (Exodus representative Glenn Jenkins during a panel discussion in Zürich 1997, commenting Margit Mayer's statement 'INURA is great because people join that usually are objects of research'),
- *Weirdest participants*: Two car traders who got a visa for the EU to visit the conference in Florence, did a short talk a bit about traffic safety in their home town at the retreat and then later explained to me in private that next on their agenda was to buy a container load of cars in Germany for export,
- *Most remarkable meeting*: In the parliament building of Northern Ireland with representatives of the Women's Party, just after the Good Friday agreement (Belfast excursion 2000),
- *Nicest safari*: By boat along the 'broedplaatsen' (incubators) (Amsterdam 2004),
- *Failed projects*: Common research project (workshop 2004), NMM Book (2018),
- *Biggest problem to resolve*: How to represent non-spatial entities on a map (NMM),
- *Most scary excursion*: Travel by bus to a neighbourhood centre in a suburb in Mexico

City with a police escort,

- *Most frustrating discussions:* The mapping categories of the NMM.

The future

I am sure that, considering the reputation of the Zürich group, the coming INURA 2023 will be a success. But after that, has the lifecycle ended? Now it is the moment to reconsider how to carry on, with less Salecina nostalgia

and more open to accommodate new groups which fight social injustice or organise their own environment. Less InURa and more InurA. Early INURA members who now have become of age now often take a nap during lengthy or boring presentations. Time to rejuvenate, let's see if there is enough interest!

References

The Who (1978) Who Are You? Polydor Records

INURA AIMS & PRINCIPLES

International Network for Urban Research and Action

Founded in 1991 in Salecina, Switzerland, INURA is a network of people involved in action and research in localities and cities. The Network consists of activists and researchers from community and environmental groups, universities, and local administrations, who wish to share experiences and to participate in common research.

Examples of the issues that Network members are involved in include: major urban renewal projects, the urban periphery, community-led environmental schemes, urban traffic and transport, inner city labour markets, do-it-yourself culture, and social housing provision. In each case, the research is closely tied to, and is a product of, local action and initiative.

INURA is a network with a self-organizing, non-hierarchical, decentralized structure.

The basic purpose of the Network is to develop and promote the interaction of social and environmental urban movements with research and theoretical analysis. INURA brings together theorists and practitioners sharing a common, critical attitude towards contemporary urban development. The Network wishes to maintain an informal and committed approach to its work.

PRINCIPLES

- We are committed to sharing our experiences and information in order to further the understanding of the problems affecting our areas.
- We are committed to the empowerment of people in their neighbourhoods, communities, cities and region.
- In our work we recognize the importance of ethnic and cultural diversity, and the need to oppose racism, class and gender discrimination.
- Changes in forms of work and of community and domestic life must be understood and planned in relation to each other.
- We must resist and reverse the process of polarization of income and quality of environment, both in the social fragmentation of our cities and the divergence of core and periphery regions.
- Our network particularly wants to broaden its links with housing, employment and environmental campaigns.
- We aim to further the process of environmentally sustainable urban development.
- We seek to resist centralization and the damaging effects of globalization.
- We are working to create strong and diverse visions of the future urban life.
- INURA will work with a variety of methods of research, communication, interaction and dissemination of information, including scholarly work, media productions, activist documents, debates and stories of urban experience. INURA invites future contributions from academics, the arts, political activists and social movements.

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