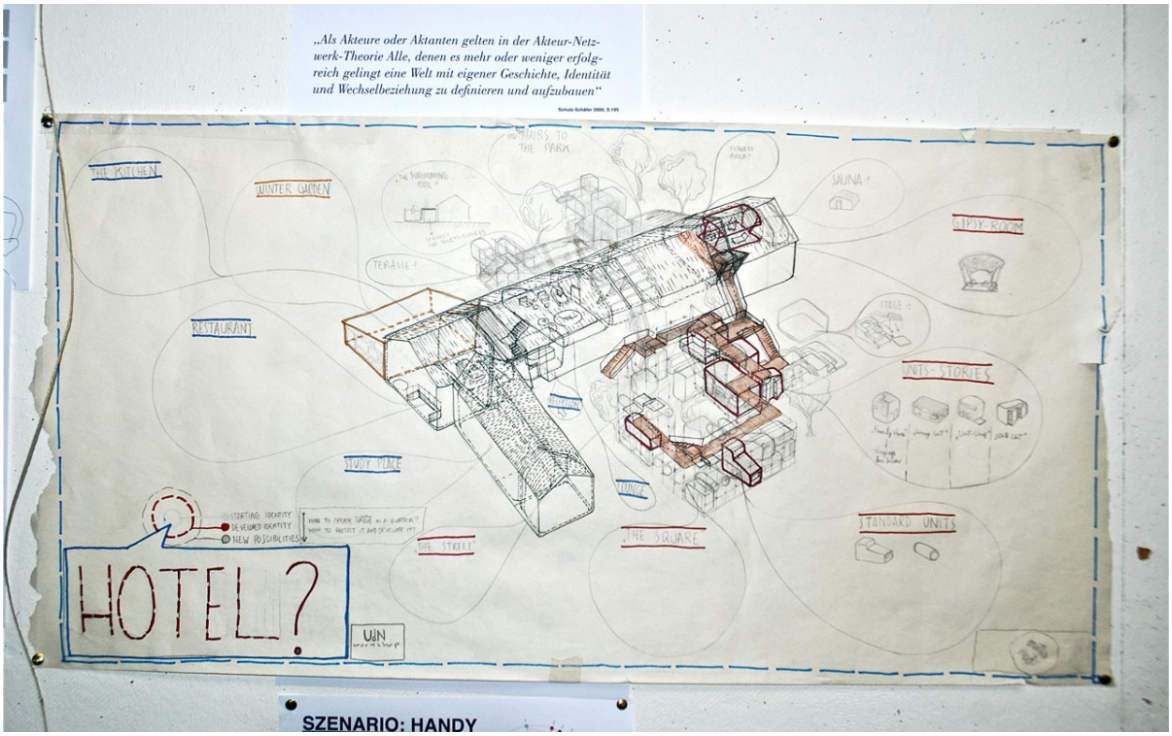
CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

The Assembly of the University of the Neighbourhoods

Christopher Dell, Bernd Kniess, Dominique Peck & Anna Richter



This paper explores what the project of running an experiment in urbanism as part of the International Building Exhibition 2013 (IBA Hamburg), called the University of the Neighbourhoods (UoN) (2007-2013), can teach professionals in urban design about urbanisation in general and about changing political conditions in urban design in particular.

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Introduction

This paper explores what the project of running an experiment in urbanism as part of the International Building Exhibition 2013 (IBA Hamburg), called the University of the Neighbourhoods (UoN) (2007-2013), can teach professionals in urban design about urbanisation in general and about changing political conditions in urban design in particular. The materials and preliminary findings in this paper are from an on-going project archaeology [1] for the publication Tom Paints the Fence. Re-negotiating Urban Design, which is to be published by the research and teaching programme Urban Design at HCU Hamburg in 2019.
To ground the arguments more concretely the authors use the documentation of what happened in one 'take' [2] , in retrospect named building a proposition for future activities, of the project University of the Neighbourhoods (UoN). The paper will meander between descriptive and conceptual paragraphs. The descriptive paragraphs function not so much as case studies, but rather as illustrative examples that are helpful in rehearsing an argument. The conceptual paragraphs assemble methods, tools and theories used in practice.
The paper reflects on how the UoN's team processed uncertainties around the role of urban development and education in the process of making a beginning of the project with the simple question: what is it like to live, work and learn in the area where the project site is located and how does this relate to the neighbourhood and the city? [3] And what are we actually doing when we live somewhere day-to-day? Sleeping, eating, recovering, maintaining private relationships, running the household, being a neighbour…? [4] Shifting our focus from housing in terms of object-centred policies to dwelling-as-practice, we were interested in studying and pushing existing understandings of housing. The contemporary administrative, policy. development and architectural perspectives on housing in our view prove myopic if we consider the emerging schism between housing as form and housing as function [5] . Our perspective and the UoN experiment aimed to problematize the seemingly set understandings of housing by traversing the discursive and disciplinary territory in order to unpack and bring into play the various agencies and inner logics or potencies contributing to 'problem solving' without debating the problem. In an attempt to unravel the production, management and usage of housing and dwelling as a complex set of practices, understandings, regulations, materials, situations and actors, our curriculum provided a framework within which to question what housing is, does and could be. If, as Engels noted as early as 1872 [6] , 'in mainstream debates, housing tends to be understood in narrow terms' it is seen as a 'temporary crisis that can be resolved through targeted, isolated measures.' [7]

1. The term 'project archaeology' for us describes a technique for reading structural traces of projective processes and thereby multiplying the directions of a project's time vectors. It is clear that a documented process is a temporal entity that happened in the past. It thus seems to be a closed entity although in its becoming it was an open one. The dilemma now is that when the process is read as closed entity, the potentialities of the process itself get lost. Consequently, in order to open up the process again and to regain its immanent potentialities, we work with a diagrammatic approach of a serial fragmentation, de-assembling, cataloguing and indexing of the process structures. Rather than looking for representational effects, we look in the document archive for traces

that incorporate new beginnings and for structural entities that can be reassembled.

2. A take is a specific didactic form, which we have developed and included in our curriculum. The notion take derives from film and music. Especially in jazz music, making a take means to record the same piece in different versions with different improvisations. That is exactly what a take for the research and teaching programme Urban Design is about: a structural form to work in circular iterative processes around the same motif or question. The take is a rehearsal tool to learn how to keep an indeterminate open process constructive without closing it. The performative moment of the take is the repetition; its formal moment is the incorporation of difference into the repetition. In regard to notation it is characteristic of the take that its form of repetition works beyond the representational without neglecting representation. We can call this characteristic diagrammatic. The take leads to a transformational state of working on questions in which the repetition unlocks spaces of potentialities as well as potentialities of spaces.
3. cf. Bernd Kniess Christopher Dell, Michael Koch, and Ellen Fiedelmeier, *Universität der Nachbarschaften 04.10*. Hamburg, 2010.
4. Cf. Michaela Schmidt, *Im Inneren der Bauverwaltung: Eigenlogik und Wirkmacht administrativer Praktiken bei Bauprojekten*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2016.
5. MTT (Methods, Tools, Theory) is one of three main pillars in the Master's curriculum of the research and teaching programme Urban Design.
6. Friedrich Engels, *The Housing Question*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1936(1872).
7. David Madden and Peter Marcuse, *In Defense of Housing. The Politics of Crisis*. London: Verso, 2016, 4.

How to work with and within the existing

At the beginning of IBA's official operation period its board of directors invited the president of the newly founded HafenCity University for the Built Environment and Metropolitan Development to contribute to the IBA's catalogue of projects. The starting point of the discussion was a common urban situation: an empty and derelict building that had not been used for years – the former Public Health Authority building of the district that in its initial function had once served as a home for unmarried women. IBA offered this building on a lot next to a park in the area of central Wilhelmsburg and negotiated the commitment of funds in the amount of 540.000€ for the duration of six years (see Figure 1). The contract for the project stated that at the end of IBA in 2013 the building was to be demolished and the lot returned to the municipality's housing programme. IBA and HCU both formed teams around the future project and issued a student competition as a teaching format in HCU's urban planning programme. Meanwhile the chair of Urban Design at HCU Hamburg, Bernd Kniess, was asked to head the project called *Experiment on the Island*. He was faced with what could in retrospect be called 'careless' design: the results of a competition showed 'nice' designs but obviously without taking into account the framing conditions. This was not alone their failure, however, as their ambitions were based on the competition's brief, which asked them to design 'a temporary use of the empty premises as an IBA Exhibition Pavilion", as a "working environment", a "place of dialogue", a "thin-k-tank", and of course a "space of inspiration"' without emphasising the existing building. It didn't come as a surprise that only one student group was able to imagine keeping and working with it. Their project, named *Grenzposten* (frontier post), was awarded the first price by the jury on the grounds that using 540.000€ to demolish the building, re-building something from scratch only to demolish it again in order to fulfil its initial contract would amount to an unsustainable use of the project's resources.

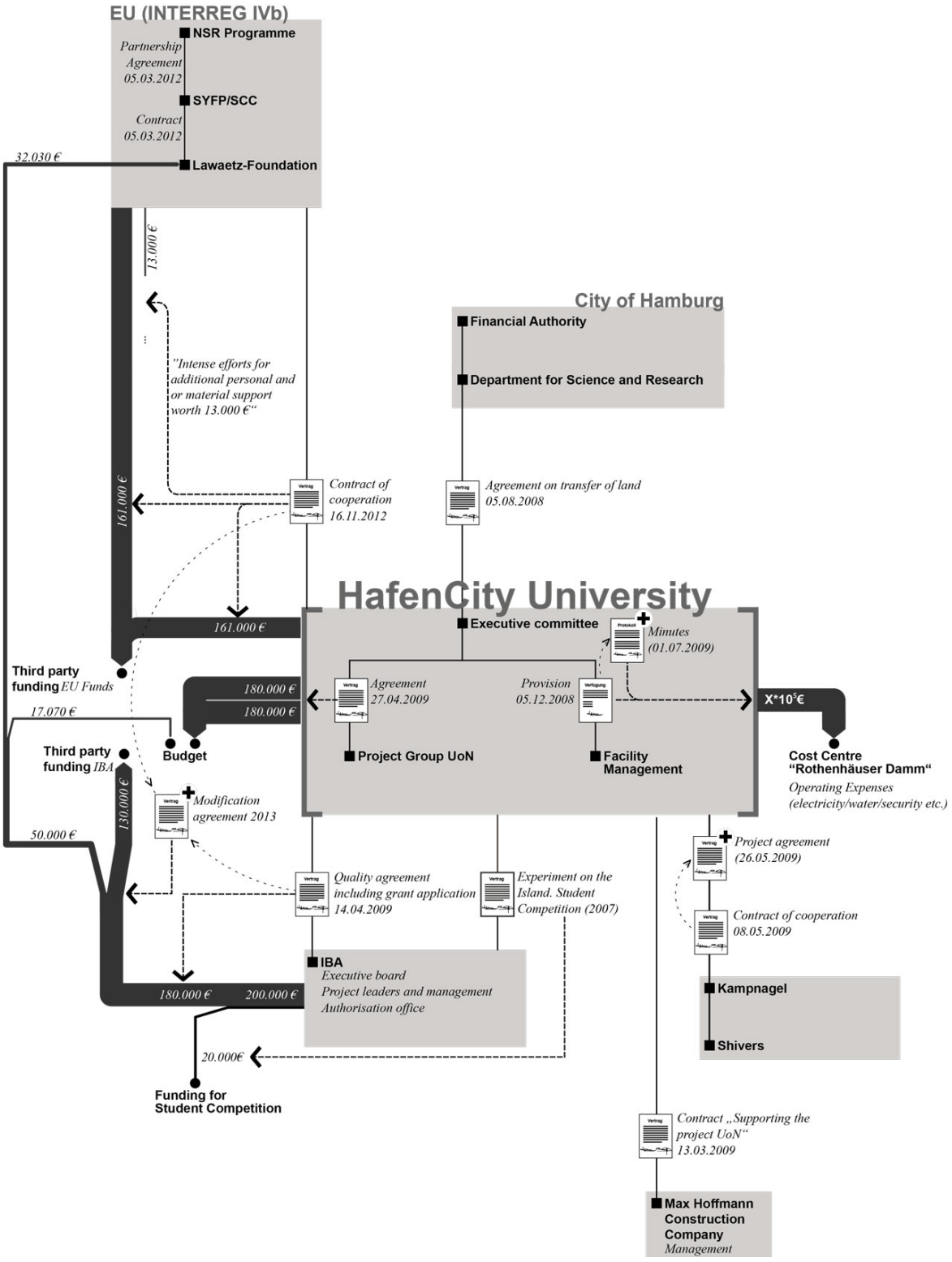


Fig. 1. Project Funding Diagram. Source: Jakob Kempe / Research and Teaching Programme Urban Design, HCU Hamburg

How to do things with art. Part I

Having analysed the preconditions of the competition, the UoN team decided to take a step back in order to find out which principal and basic questions are ingrained in the project itself. What was at stake was not to create a specific architectural design from a tabula rasa but to initiate a continuously renewing process that respects the framing conditions as resource. Much later we understood that this had consequences on how we conceptualised design processes. What had happened was a shift from the formula of problem solving to creating what one could call a machine that produces questions and broadens its target mode from matters of fact to matters of concern [1] . In order to conceptually frame the open process that we were about to undertake, we entitled the project University of Neighbourhoods. 'University' underpins that we are neither a community centre nor social workers but researchers and students of the urban. The notion 'neighbourhood' demonstrates the relational and contextual approach of the project. Having come up with the conceptual framing, we spent one semester simply on putting our prejudices and scopic regimes [2] to zero. Students and staff collaborated in experimenting with teaching formats, undertaking dérives and field research, and methodologically reflecting knowledge production in MTT seminars. A particularly important recognition amongst the many different aspects and forms that resulted from the first semester students' work was the form of presentation they chose for presenting their proposal: they staged a cooking event they called *Kulturküche* (culture kitchen). Students stood in front of the jury comprised of professors and project managers, improvised a kitchen with school furniture, portable cooking equipment and their own pans, dishes and cutlery and prepared a meal that was subsequently offered to everybody. They were aware that proposing a process rather than a product would need to be practiced and performed (see Figure 2). Our approach here draws on J.L. Austin's speech act theory as well as N.K. Denzin's call for a performative dimension. Based on the argument that concepts and ideas such as housing and dwelling, as well as research and knowledge production have to be actually practiced and performed, the actual doingness aspects of research, learning and teaching in the context of housing were stressed.



Fig. 2. Final Presentation of the Student Competition. *Project Grenzposten*. Source: Benjamin Becker / Research and Teaching Programme Urban Design, HCU Hamburg

This mode of projecting futurities was later used for further project conceptualisation of the UoN. But what happened during this performance? Students claimed a project before there was a project and thereby programmed a process of the urban as sensually perceptible to all people present. Thinking with Henri Lefebvre's notion of the production of space, we further developed this way of making a beginning into a project postulating a 'strategic hypothesis': we consolidated the definition and the hypothesis of a continuously evolving urban situation into one. Setting a fictional starting point allowed us to make an entrance into to the existing urban situation, leave the work open for uncertainties along the way and simultaneously question and amend the initial definition. [3] By using a strategic hypothesis the reality of the phenomenon of urbanisation is less a static object, which can be reflected upon, and more a virtual object [4] . This approach allowed mapping urban processes on a space-time axis as well as ascribing different dimensions to it within which transformations can be analysed that would otherwise remain hidden in the mere black boxes of urban development processes. [5] The following paragraph reflects on how education and urban development in Hamburg Wilhelmsburg were considered two main selected dimensions of urbanisation and translated into an experimental design for the UoN. [6]

The project's didactic approach centrally worked with the superposition of two logics: the design build strategy of working with students off campus in the context of real building processes and housing/dwelling processes on the one hand and the conceptual curriculum on the other. By building a university of and in the neighbourhood we followed the aim of making practice reflective, and vice versa, reflection active. [7] The clash of these two logics led to broadening each of their central assumptions, and furthermore constituted a new form of theoretical

practice. While the concrete motif and territory of the interplay of conceptualizing practice and bringing theory in action was the existing urban situation, the main interest was to develop an understanding and reading of contemporary processes in urban development. The specific mode through which to give this reading a form was a design task in itself. We sought to develop epistemological forms that translate urban processes into education and vice versa. If space, following Lefebvre, is conceived as a relational practice, its production processes and means as well as its meanings and perceptions of it need to be studied in situ. An important reference in that respect was Cedric Price's project 'Fun Palace'. Besides the fact that Price worked on his project in an interdisciplinary setting from the start, what constituted a decisive strategic stronghold for the UoN was Price's basic concept of a building that organises performative modes of education by subtraction and eventually vanishing altogether. [8]

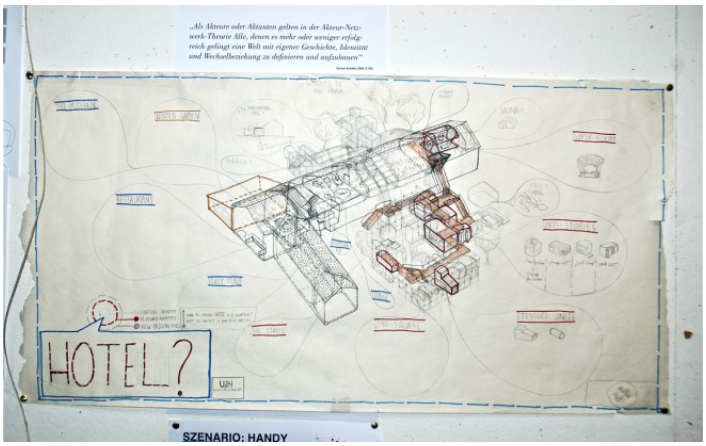


Fig. 3.1. Building a Proposition for Future Activites. Source: Mattio Gammarota

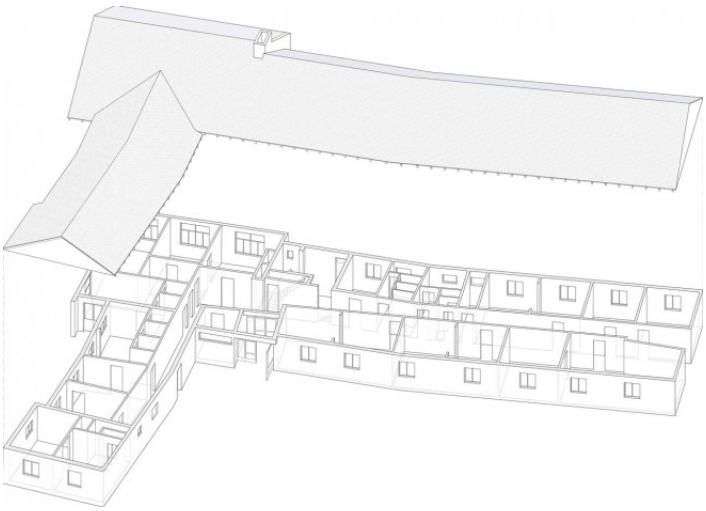


Fig. 3.2. The existing building. Source: Ben Becker.

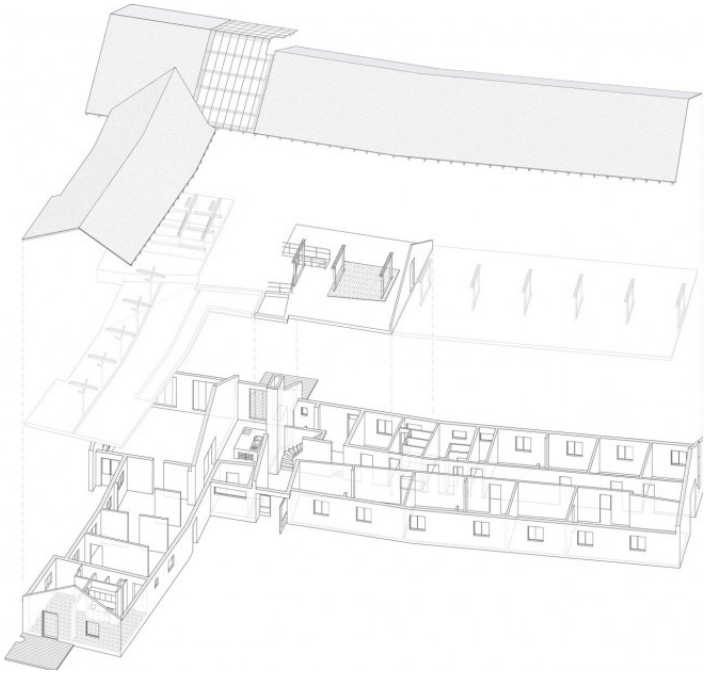


Fig. 3.3. Subtraction. Source: Ben Becker.

1. Cf. Bruno Latour, 'Why has critique run out of steam? From matters of fact to matters of concern,' *Critical Inquiry* 30(2), 2004.
2. cf. Martin Jay. 'Scopic regimes of modernity,' in *Vision and Visuality*, ed. Hal Foster Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1988.
3. Christopher Dell, *Das Urbane: Wohnen. Leben. Produzieren*, Berlin: Jovis, 2014, 235.
4. Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*. Minneapolis, 2003, 57-58.
5. Christopher Dell, *Das Urbane: Wohnen. Leben. Produzieren*, Berlin: Jovis, 2014, 214.
6. Cf. Bernd Kniess, Ben Pohl and Anna Richter, "University of the Neighbourhoods as enabling architecture," in *Agents of Alternatives*, ed. Alaistair Fuad-Luke, Anja-Lisa Hirscher and Katharina Moebus Berlin: Agents of Alternatives, 2015, 413, 416.
7. Donald Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, New York, 1983, 49, 52.
8. Cedric Price, *Fun Palace*, 1964.

Enabling architecture and its forms of knowledge – projective recording

Rather than offering an object as a solution to an insufficiently explored problem, we argued for understanding and reading the existing urban situation in a mode that combines analytical and of projective thinking. In that way the notions of project and projection, which are so important for design, receive a transformation. Conventionally the project has a time vector that directs in the future. With the analytical logic the time vector of the project is multiplied, allowing to look at the 'now', the 'as found' or to look at the conditions of the project's coming into being in the past. That changes the formal category of a project from being a fixed object to a processional action. In her book *Extrastatecraft* as well as various other writings, Keller Easterling laid out the structural conditions of this performative form as 'disposition.' Easterling's notion of disposition leads to the concept of infrastructure space as a way of 'detecting and developing the active forms that shape disposition. […] Disposition is the character or propensity of an organisation that results from all its activity. It is the medium, not the message.' [1] Easterling proposes that professionals in urban design and related disciplines can develop a knowing how by altering their available tools to shape object forms to understand and manipulate active forms. [2] Her approach is particularly interesting as it allows describing how organisations use space, amongst other media, in the form of zones as powerful infrastructure that produces elaborate routines and schedules for organizing consumption. [3]

In a similar fashion we merged aspects of situational analysis as brought forward by Adele Clarke (as taught in the MTT block of the Urban Design curriculum) with aspects of project management currently used in urban development. Equally here we find the strategy of superimposing logics. Doing so, we put the existing legal infrastructure determining how professionals in urban design and related disciplines operate to test and push its meaning towards the possible. One such example is the German Fees for Architects and Engineers (*Honorarordnung für Architekten und Ingenieure - HOAI*). Within this regulation, a wide range of Urban Design practices occupies what the Baukultur Report 2014 calls *Phase 0* – the conceptual or research phase, and *Phase 10* – the use management phase (see Figure 4). From these – currently not yet paid – phases actors involved in construction broadly expect to avoid conflicts of interests, save expenses and achieve better results in the overall acceptance of a project. This holds true in particular at times and in places where the public sector on every level behaves austerely. In a first phase 10 the students' performance was conceived as the research subject and translated key aspects of it into a phase 0 for the project UoN.

Expansion of the HOAI service phases with “Phase Zero” and “Phase Ten”

Source: Federal Foundation of Baukultur 2014

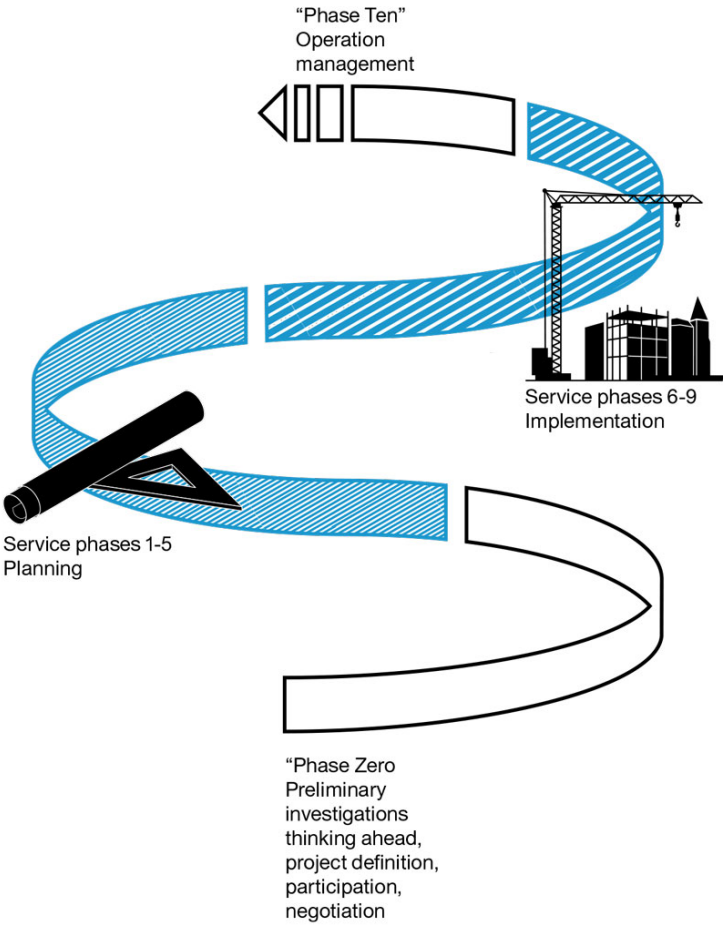


Fig. 4. Expansion of the HOAI Service Phases with *Phase Zero* and *Phase Ten*. Source: Baukultur Report 2014

We were (and are) concerned with the organisation of urban development. In order to understand the existing and emerging agencies in their indeterminacy, we conducted what in retrospect can be described as a superposition of document analysis and scenario technique. Through these modes of analysis and projection we tried to process uncertainties of urban development and explore them across different scales. Thus the core of the research, ingrained in a design-build format, consisted in the challenge to work with the existing building as a frame for working with the existing urban situation. This resulted in bringing together various dimensions of indistinctness about education and urban development that are normally not negotiated together.

1. Keller Easterling, *Extrastatecraft. The Power of Infrastructure Space*, London: Verso, 2014, 21.
2. ibid.
3. ibid.

Hamburg – zoning ‘growth islands’ and new modes of production

Let’s zoom in. To understand the IBA’s project dimensions, we began questioning its genealogy, its discourses and its practices. A first document for analysis that illustrates the then contemporary modes of urban development is the spatial model *Metropolis Hamburg – Growing City* [1] , published July 11th 2002 by the municipal press office. This citywide spatial model served as an umbrella for existing and future projects in a clearly outlined development corridor. The spatial model of Hamburg suggests strengthening its position as one of the ‘growth islands’ of demographic development in Germany. In a timespan from 1987 to 1999 Hamburg had the biggest growth rate amongst German cities at 6,9%. The bigger part of the pie came from so-called ‘long-distance migration’. Yet, this international mobility is ignored in the document’s strategy for implementing the ‘Growing City’ spatial model. The municipality offers a simplifying calculation: every new citizen immediately adds 3.000€ to the taxes that Hamburg as one of the federal states receives by way of Germany’s fiscal equation system. Yet this calculation ignores the heterogeneity of these new citizens and concentrates on the usual suspects: ‘Young, creative people are – besides young families with children – one of the main target groups. Apart from apprentices and skilled workers this includes students.’ The authors of the spatial model conclude that if it is possible to ‘restructure’ investments in the higher education sector the municipality would gain 690€ per capita per annum. [2]
This needs to be put into relation to the then contemporary trends in urban development. Such commodification in the form of assigning a precise financial value via an obviously oversimplified calculation in spatial guidelines falls in line with Sharon Zukin’s writings about the culture of cities first published in 1995, seven years prior to the spatial guidelines that were crucial for the IBA and hence the project UoN. As part of the transformation of the Fordist city to a post-Fordist and post-industrial city, a new relevance is attributed to the symbolic economies in terms of the marketing of land, houses and apartments. Symbolic space itself becomes a commodity. [3] In 2002 Jörg Dräger, the former Senator for Science, is believed to have given out fresh copies of Richard Florida’s *The Rise of the Creative Class* to all members of the senate to peruse during the summer holidays. [4] Florida, although out-published by Charles Landry and his book *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators* published in 2000 [5] , became the figurehead for change in Hamburg. Like Wilson and Kelling’s ‘Broken Windows Theory’, originally an article in The Atlantic Monthly published in 1982, scientific findings made agencies available on a global scale. [6] Florida offered a global blueprint for new modes of urban development. Dangschat in reference to Hamburg’s former mayor Klaus von Dohnanyi’s infamous speech *Unternehmen Hamburg* (Hamburg, a business case) summarised this under the header ‘moving business from the wet to the dry harbour’ [7] , the dry harbour referring to Hamburg’s airport and standing for infrastructure ready for transnational creative industries companies such as facebook,

google and advertising firms who today occupy inner city offices. Most pertinent to the UoN's Phase 0 is that the notions of creativity, education, research and knowledge production related to urban development are aspects of alternative modes of production (a proposition for future activities).

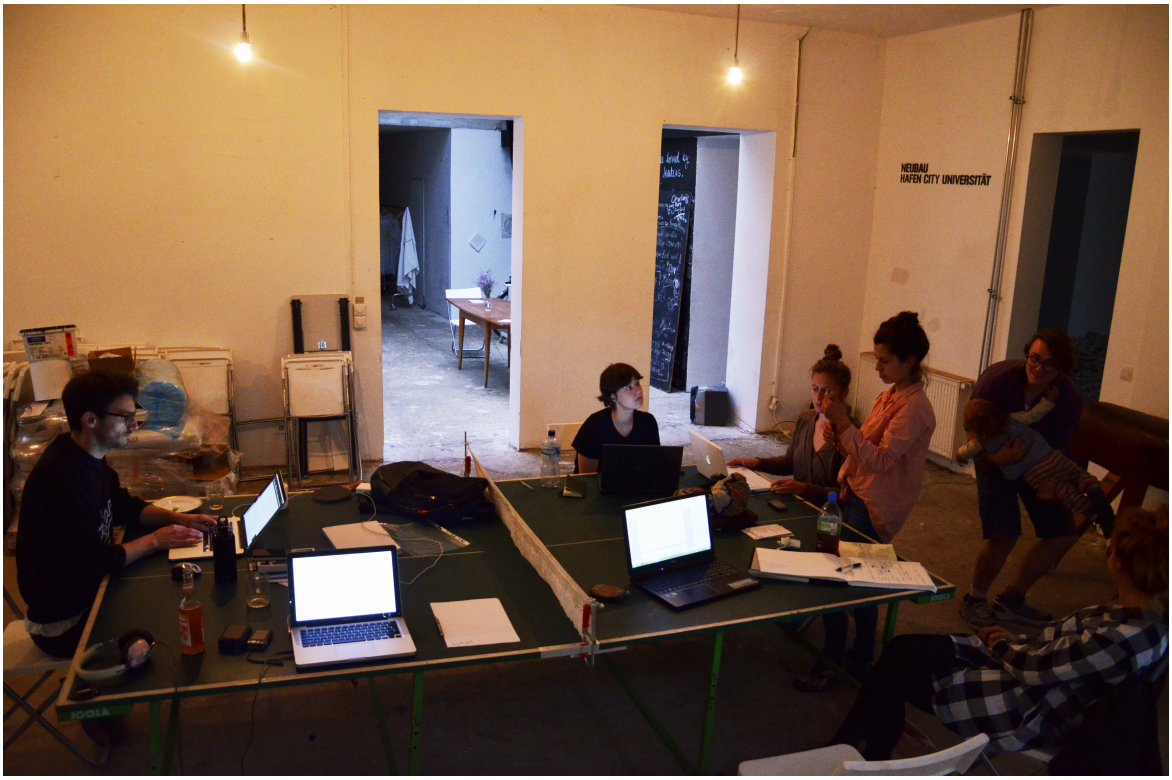


Fig. 5. Studio Space during the research and design project 'How to live together?' with performance theatre group Cobra. Cobra Festival. Source: Research and Teaching Programme Urban Design

1. Behörde für Stadtentwicklung und Wohnen, *Metropole Hamburg - Wachsende Stadt*, 2001, https://www.hamburg.de/contentblob/155068/65b62ad9195e940e29ed0453626acd90/data/raeumliches-leitbild.pdf;jsessionid=5679A661C6DE338D4133E1CBE8FA1D14.liveWorker2
2. Hamburger Stiftung für Wirtschaftsethik, https://www.stiftung-wirtschaftsethik.de/fileadmin/user_upload/downloads/projects/205t_Downloads/A1_Schueler.pdf
3. Sharon Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities*, Cambridge, Wiley, 1996.
4. Richard Florida, *the Rise of the Creative Class*, New York, Basic Books, 2002.
5. Charles Landry, *The Creative City. A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, Earthscan Publications, 2000.
6. George Kelling and James Wilson, Broken Windows. The police and neighbourhood safety, 1982.
7. Jens Dangschat, 'Von der Vielfältigen Stadt zur Geteilten Stadt,' *Polis. Magazin für Urban Development 18*(3-4), 2011, 16.

Wilhelmsburg – managing accessibilities and governmental strategies

Andrej Holm and Henrik Lebuhn have shown that and how the diagnosis of exclusion and disaffiliation in urban areas such as Wilhelmsburg has been translated into the governmental programme *Soziale Stadt* (Social City). [1] This programme had been developed in the late 1990s by Germany's Ministry of Building and Construction while it was consequently put into practice by local organisational forms that were called *Quartiersmanagement* (management of the quarter). Although this programme was aware that integration is a constitutive aspect of urban development, it failed to negotiate migrants and the urban poor and their particular practices and patterns of being active as equal to their German fellow citizens. Organisations set up to manage participation were not able to offer points of interaction for migrant self-organisation processes. Drawing on Foucault's notion of governmentality (*gouvernementalité*) [2] , this clearly demonstrates how specific spatial models of the city coincide with specific ideologies of how the city should be managed – and are then presented as objective knowledge.

With this context in mind, the planning department of the municipality of Hamburg, in a broad participatory process involving Hamburg citizens, experts and administration, developed a white book 'future conference Wilhelmsburg' (*Weißbuch der Zukunftskonferenz Wilhelmsburg*) and laid the groundwork for the International Building Exhibition IBA Hamburg operating from 2007 to 2013. The IBA further translated this plan into three guiding themes, namely, MetroZones, Cosmopolis and Cities and Climate Change. Let's take a closer look at the example Cosmopolis. The main question behind this ideological framework is how 'an increasingly urban society' is enabled to 'release its powers.' While we don't know what powers this refers to in this context, the main target here seems 'to demonstrate what the future of cooperation in the metropolis might look like' by concentrating on the strengthening of diversity. While it is correct to state that Wilhelmsburg is home to people from more than one hundred and fifty nations, the aim to provide these people with 'diverse opportunities for development' is ill defined. Even less clear is the postulation to solve identified problems such as cultural barriers or demographic change 'by means of urban development and architecture'. The heroic stance is amplified by the military notion of the *Bildungsoffensive* (Education offensive). This programme sought to develop 'new teaching approaches and concepts for improving the education situation in districts with high percentages of immigration, and to facilitate the establishment of new, ground-breaking educational facilities with the main focus on the protagonists' networking.' Taking Cosmopolis and *Bildungsoffensive* together, one can state that, while new themes and techniques are involved, we are still confronted with an approach that interprets the urban as externalised territory or as container within which solutions for identified problems are to be implemented. Chances

are and history shows that this strategy is likely to create twenty-five new problems rather than solving deeply entrenched social inequalities.

1. Andrej Holm and Henrik Lebuhn, 'Die Stadt politisieren. Fragmentierung, Kohärenz und soziale Bewegungen in der "Sozialen Stadt"', in *wohnen ist tat-sache. Annäherungen an eine urbane Praxis*, ed. wohnbund e.V. and HafenCity Universität Hamburg, 2013.
2. Michel Foucault, 'Governmentality', trans. Rosi Braidotti and revised by Colin Gordon, in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press 1991, pp. 87–104.

The doingness aspects of the urban

The above stated underlines why we are interested in how alternative practices of knowledge production and commoning make new forms of agencies available in contemporary and future urban development processes. Take 0 – building a proposition for future activities – addresses practices and structures of making a beginning with this motif. We will now outline key aspects of the conceptualisation of the urban as part of the experimental design of the UoN.
The research and teaching programme Urban Design is concerned with the doingness aspects of existing urban situations, the practicalities and operationalization of urban processes. Even if at first sight the focus on the existing seems to be overhauled by the procedural understanding of the urban, we find it helpful to bring to attention a political dimension of the urban: making a beginning of a project through researching into the existing urban situation decentralises perspectives on the subjectification of research and design and works towards representing conditions of capacities for acting in an existing urban situation as a field of organising practices. [1] Thinking with Latour we understand urban situations as procedural and assembled around matters of concern. [2] This entails the notion that not everything is political, but that every issue in a given situation can be turned into a matter of politics. A conceptualisation of the doingness aspects exhibiting the relation between the urban and politics most suitable for the UoN's research interest can be found in Rancière's writing. Following him, political subjectification is dis-identification, removal from the naturalness of place (position to a matter of concern and in space), the opening up of a subject space where anyone can be counted since it is the space where those of no account are counted, where a connection is made between having a part and having no part. [3] Dikeç argues that 'reading Rancière and Arendt together enables one to go beyond a subject-centred understanding of politics as neither postulates given identities as inherently political ones. Their politics emphasises the construction of space – for acting with others, for Arendt, and for setting a stage of dissent, for Rancière. For both thinkers politics is a world-building activity.' [4]

1. Michel Foucault, *Überwachen und Strafen. Die Geburt des Gefängnisses*. Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1975.
2. Bruno Latour, 'Why has critique run out of steam? From matters of fact to matters of concern,' *Critical Inquiry* 30(2) (2004), 225-248.
3. Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: politics and philosophy*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1999, 36.
4. Mustafa Dikeç, 'Beginners and equals: political subjectivity in Arendt and Rancière,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38 (1), 2013, 83.

How to do things with art Part II

We are challenged by a double movement: on the one hand we observe not only how governmental and political aspects shape the urban condition but also how political dispositifs shape the way we read the urban. On the other hand the constitution of the political is influenced by territorial and spatial constellations. Evidently, one must conceptualise the urban politically in order to understand the organization of its production. And one must think politics spatially, in order to understand the organisation of its actions. The above mentioned examples of *Quartiersmanagement* or Cosmopolis help to understand why and how 'post-politics' intrude in urban policies and how established orders of city governance oppress political action itself. The model that Rancière presented is helpful to conceptualise that what is at stake is not the implementation of urban design strategies in a neutral space but the creation of spatial settings and frames that enable political subjectification. The UoN is a machine that not only produces spaces of and for politics but also reflects on the process of production.

The UoN is a building in process, a process of subtraction and mobilisation at the same time. It is a built structure of contestation that shifts space from a matter of facts to a matter of concern, i.e. a matter of politics (without compromising matters of facts). That in turn has consequences on how to read the UoN as a spatial – i.e. sensible – configuration. Rancière shows that politics is about disrupting routinized sensible and sense-making practices by re-configuring what he called the partition of the sensible. Politics challenge and renegotiate consensus not only theoretically but also aesthetically. So while the UoN started to become a terrain of politics, it opened up the field of struggles over and for a partition of the sensible. This partition confronted the UoN with the notion of the superposition of logics, since politics manifests dissent as 'the presence of [at least] two worlds in one'. [1] It is a double ontology: plurality always is a space producing one, producing spaces of ephemeral and contingent encounter and superposition of different and heterogeneous actors, things and concepts; at the same time plurality is produced by the spatiality of politics.

Nevertheless, whereas Rancière offers arguments for thinking politics and action spatially, he does not reflect upon the consequences that this implies for the notions of space and action. This, in turn, is the central aspect that the research of the UoN aims at. Especially UoN's focus on improvisation and the question of the contingency of space not only refers to Rancière's concept of regarding the space of political appearance as ephemeral and contingent and not a given. For the UoN it is of utmost relevance to take the contingency of space as a basis for any reading of the urban. Consequently, the conceptual focus of the UoN lies on challenging urban research in the mode within which notions of space and of action are thought. We follow Amin and Graham's argument that '[t]he unthinking acceptance within urban studies that time and space act simply as objective, unvariant, external containers for the urban scene is now collapsing. (...) In this perspective, social ordering occurs through complex efforts of both humans and non-humans to engage other actors through performative actions that are funda-

mentally heterogeneous and impossible to generalise.' [2] Being confronted with political spatiality i.e. contingency of space, Thrift and Amin's observation that 'each urban moment can spark performative improvisations which are unforeseen and unforeseeable' [3] holds important questions. How can we read the contingent performativity of the urban? And how can we constructively work with its indeterminacy and its unforeseen and unforeseeable moments? One example of how the UoN tackled this challenge was inspired by Amin and Thrifts suggestion that 'Perhaps the most exacting, exciting and enticing attempts to produce these new models of belonging have been taking place in [...] performance art.' [4] This inspiration led to UoN's collaboration with Kampnagel, Germany's biggest independent production venue for the performing arts, from the very beginning of the project. Kampnagel is a centre for contemporary performance practises, hosting and producing cultural activities, theatre and dance performances and concerts.



Fig. 6. Bar for Nice People during the performance Shivers. CEOS, Project Managers, Spokepersons from Institutions mapped in Figure 1, Students and People from the Neighbourhood Enact Take 0 of the University of the Neighbourhoods. Source: Research and Teaching Programme Urban Design, HCU Hamburg

1. Mustafa Dikeç, 'Beginners and equals: political subjectivity in Arendt and Rancière,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38 (1), 2013, 83.
2. Ash Amin, and Stephen Graham, 'The ordinary city', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 22 (4), 1997, 420
3. Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift. *Cities – Reimagining the Urban*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2002, 4
4. Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift. *Cities – Reimagining the Urban*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2002, 48

Curriculum. Bologna vs. Open Practice

Having discussed the conceptual framing of the UoN, we need to explain yet another topic. After the 5-year experience of the project we can assert that Design-Build practices still remain at the very fringes of curricula. Sure enough it is no novelty that ‘a Europe of knowledge is now widely recognized as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich European citizenship, capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space.’ [1]
But the fragmentation of the curriculum into credit points and modules turns the arrangement of longer periods throughout which students can spend time on a construction site into an art of its own. Again we are challenged by a two-sided effect, which describes the paradessence of the Bologna process as being comprised of two aspects: One is economic. From this perspective, the Bologna Process is about exploitation under the conditions of immaterial labour, about preparing students for the market, about standardization, interchangeability, homogenization and profitability. The other is normative. From this perspective, the Bologna Process is about emancipating students from professorial hierarchy, about social and spatial mobility, about mutual tolerance and experience, about the sharing of knowledge, about unity and a better future. [2] Torn between economy and normativity, the pure task to construct a building as an educational project becomes a design process in itself and a challenge for future research on the curriculum itself. It still remains an open question how to reframe the curriculum in order to multiply agencies and allow for processes of subjectification in a political production of space as part of curricular structures. The translation of the university’s contribution to Hamburg’s urban development efforts into an actual presence in the neighbourhood showed how a clash of different subject positions and conceptual as well as disciplinary logics open the stage for political subjectification in curricular processes. To understand that higher education and re-negotiating infrastructure as building and form as a necessary proposition to be able to get active are inseparably linked is one of the lessons learnt while working at the UoN. We insist that this is not a question of informality but of form: the open form. The open form is made constructive by reading and organizing form structurally and diagrammatically as a series of cases. To give an example, rather than a sequential (linear) mode we know from traditional project management, our approach is structured by sequences and takes that can be extracted, fragmented, re-shuffled, re-assembled and zoomed in upon. The knowledge form and material for this process is derived from the project’s archaeology as described above. With this strategy we achieve a visual organization of the project that keeps the open form intact vis-à-vis a minimal structure. Structure and openness are no contradiction in this example. They enhance each other. At the same time we have to redefine agency itself. Against a dichotomist understanding, agency here becomes a structure-producing device. This redefinition shifts

the mode of agency from rational action to a mode of improvisation. That is how to make good use of diagrammatic on a practical basis.
The minimal structure works on two levels: 1) on the level of form, we work with a series of cases, 2) on the level of content, we engage in a serial play with motifs – which we call Takes. What may sound like a rather isolated process that only refers to the university's curriculum in fact has consequences for epistemological form of the real city, as we have tried to illustrate. The Project UoN and its many interwoven layers showed that this specific form of Design Build project combined with conceptual research aims to accept the challenge of planning for the constructive processing of contingency and to reap the knowledge embedded within practice. However, although the live project / experiment UoN worked within and into the field of housing, what also became clear was that existing approaches to housing are tenacious and indeed immobile. Despite the many suggestions, findings and master theses, the city of Hamburg has so far not devised a viable project for the lot on which the UoN stood and enabled lively encounters.

1. Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999, http://www.magna-charta.org/resources/files/text-of-the-bologna-declaration, accessed 2 November 2016
2. Ursprung, 'Out of Bologna, Lacaton and Vassal's Nantes School of Architecture,' *e-flux* 64 (2015), http://www.e-flux.com/journal/64/60867/out-of-bologna-lacaton-and-vassal-s-nantes-school-of-architecture/ accessed 2 November 2016.