

The Nature₂ of Society₂: Enmapping Nature, Space and Society into a Town-green Hybrid

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Abstract

The paper describes the transformation of derelict land into a ‘town-green’ and the role legislation played in transforming social and natural relationships. Town-green denotes a legal status under the Great Britain Commons Act (2006) that protects certain open spaces from building development; the status requires that a space must simultaneously have a specific social quality (i.e. ‘town-ness’) and a specific natural quality (i.e. ‘green-ness’). This hybrid condition requires an alliance between society and nature in a certain configuration (referred to here as nature₂ and society₂). In this empirical study it involved the participation and consensus of local residents, volunteer gardeners as well as nature itself; flowers needed to bloom and grass had to grow in order for the hybrid town-green status to be conferred. There are two distinct phases of this transformation; the first is the change in identities and configuration of the constituents of town and green. This involved the production of a modified ‘real’ world with: different plants and flowers; reconfigured spatial arrangements; as well as different social actors. The second phase is a shift from changes in the ‘real’ world towards an ‘enmap’ – a displacement of myriad actors into documentation. This transfer from a complex messy reality into an enmap permitted the legitimization of the new network to be accepted as a ‘town-green’. What the research reveals, other than hints for gardeners and community activists, is how material and non-material; social and natural; spatial, discursive and temporal worlds are hybridised.

Keywords: Hybrid, actor-network, space, power, informal, urban.

Introduction

The research describes how a derelict piece of land was modified by local residents to fit the legislative definition as a ‘*town-green*’. It is an account of how these actors attempted to use the Great Britain Commons Act 2006 (more commonly referred to as the ‘*Town-Green*’ Act) to facilitate a small area of their neighbourhood being defined as a town-green. ‘*Town-green*’ refers to a legislative mechanism that designates undeveloped land as a kind of parkland and forbids further development of that space. The process is interesting in its stipulation that both nature and society must form an alliance; the term town-green is an inherently hybrid conception – in that it is simultaneously social (town) and natural (green). The research uses empirical evidence from a case-study in the UK.

Town-Green Legislation

The Great Britain Commons Act (2006) concerns town-green legislation and defines itself (rather neutrally) as ‘*An Act to make provision about common land and town or village greens*’. The Commons Act provides legal protection for an open space to be used for the purposes of a town-green, the corollary of which is that the space cannot be developed or built on. This Act is currently being used in the UK for a number of high profile cases of communities attempting to use this legislation to block development of open land (BBC 2008). The legislation from this Act pertains only to land that has no clear owner or land ownership is ambiguous. Land that has an owner cannot be registered as a town-green. Town-greens are somewhat transgressive in that this condition often requires users of space to trespass on land that does not belong to them in order to invoke the town-green legislative mechanisms. The legislation states that any space must meet the conditions pertaining to the notions of ‘*town*’ and ‘*green*’. However what these terms denote mean is far from clear; the Act does not stipulate comprehensively what these might be; the next subsections examine how these terms are contextually interpreted.

Defining Town-ness

The definition of ‘*town*’ relates to a notion of communal and social use; ‘*a significant number of the inhabitants of any locality, or of any neighbourhood within a locality*’ (Act 2006: Section 15.2). This definition is significant in what it excludes rather than it describes. For example a town-green may not be enjoyed by *all* humans or *all* society, it is only applicable to certain humans. Rather than all of ‘*society*’ being eligible (this population is referred to as ‘*society*₁’), for example, visitors to the area or friends of the local residents only a small subset of the population can be considered eligible within this Act (henceforth referred to as *society*₂). The stipulation that town must be formed specifically from ‘*inhabitants from the locality*’ differentiates between these human actors (i.e. *society*₂) from *society*₁.

'*Inhabitants*' in this legislation is restricted exclusively to humans rather than the many other inhabitants (i.e. flora and fauna) of the space (although this is implied rather than explicitly stated).

Defining Green-ness

The Commons Act 2006 does not define what is meant by '*green*'; instead this is a concept that adjusts/distorts/conforms according to local contexts, cultures, knowledges and practices. '*Green*' from a UK perspective invariably requires '*grass*'. There are, for example, few parks (if any) in the UK that are not green, i.e. predominantly grassed, other than in some very built-up areas, but these would perhaps be defined as '*play-areas*', playgrounds or multi-purpose sports areas. A patch of land that would be considered appropriate for a town-green must be both literally and symbolically '*green*' to fit the UK socio-legal definition of green; i.e. grass-y. Nature₁ describes here the '*natural*' state of the informal space at the start of the process: brambles, weeds, slugs, snails, ants, mud, wasps, bees, mice, rats, trees, ivy, mushrooms, mud, lichens, moths and nettles. The definition of weeds is a culturally specific term; not a scientific fact – some plants, such as flowers, are deemed 'good' whilst others, such as fungi and brambles, are deemed 'bad'. Nature₂ describes the configuration of the biological and organic actors when constituted as a '*garden*' (situated specifically within the cultural context of an English garden) i.e. mostly an expanse of grass, with certain species of flowering plants, typically arranged in flowerbeds (which must be devoid of grass). Nature₂ denotes the assemblage of flora and fauna that fits the definition of '*green*' in the town-green legislation.

Defining History

There is a third aspect to the Act, and it relates to the temporal: '*the inhabitants ... have indulged... in lawful sports ... for a period of at least 20 years*' (Act 2006: Section 15.2). '*History*' has to be part of the equation. It is up to the Local Government to deem what those pastimes might be. What this definition raises is the timeframe for this Act; the town-green must have had the qualities of town-green-ness for at least 20 years. There is therefore a degree of historicity to the interpretation and identity of town-green. Town-green legislation requires that the space must be used in a specific mode for a period of twenty years, this register of history is referred to here as history₂. The full, unedited and extra-legislative version of the previous twenty years (which also includes unlawful events) is referred to as history₁.

The Town+Green equation

A town-green must fulfill all of these criteria: that it acts as a '*town*' i.e. it has a some '*social*' quality and that it is '*green*' i.e. it has some '*natural*' quality; it

must comprise both of these qualities, one quality cannot be achieved at the cost of the other, a hybrid socio-natural space is required. The status quo of town-green must also have been maintained for at least twenty years; thus ‘*history*’ is enmeshed as part of the process. These three elements thus form the equation: society+nature+history. Although each of the three elements are complex entities that could be broken down further into more discrete parts; they are applied here to marry the terms used in the Commons Act. Furthermore it is when these elements successfully elide that the hybrid ‘*town-green*’ will come into existence.

Research Framework: *Introducing the ‘Actors’*

The term ‘*actor*’ is used through out this account. Whilst the term ‘*actor*’ is used in some sociological narratives to indicate action with a concomitant subjective meaning – this is not universally accepted. According to Weber (1997) social action rarely has any subjective meaning that can be attributed to it. Bourdieu & Eagleton (1992: 113) go further and suggest that ‘*the social world doesn’t work in terms of consciousness, it works in terms of practices*’. These practices are synonymous with the activities of the actors in this account. Action is carried out by actors who, as Latour asserts straightforwardly, are ‘*entities that do things*’ (Latour 1992:241). The term, as used here, marries that of Actor-Network Theory (ANT). ANT examines how ‘*things*’ (i.e. actors) come together, interact, alter identities and/or relate conflictually qua networks (Law 1999). ANT describes how almost any object or entity can be an actor in a network, for example examining humans in the same way as scallops (Callon 1986) or hinges (Latour 1992). This research, more specifically, appropriates the ‘*translation*’ framework as proposed by Callon (1986). Translation was originally used for ‘*the study of the role played by science and technology in structuring power relationships*’ (Callon 1986: 196). Translation has subsequently been used to explore power relationships in a much wider variety of contexts than science and technology, for example: pop music (Hennion 1989), ‘*things*’ (Preda 1999), museums (Star & Griesemer 1989), sustainability (Rice 2011) and ecology (Lee & Roth 2001). Translation involves the construction of meaning, identity and knowledge (Law 1986).

Actor Power

The use of a term such as ‘*power*’ is often used as a metanarrative for explaining or describing a context or phenomenon (Castells 1997). Power is conceived here as the effect of one entity or network on another; power is operating, ‘*speaking*’ or ‘*visible*’ when one actor makes another ‘*act*’ (Westwood 2002). The process of translation is a study of power-relationships. Power can be conceived of as not merely something owned or maintained by one group to be meted out on another,

but more as a relational network, where power is exerted through consensus, from one group to another (Harrison 2011). Power is not immanent to some actors and external to others; nor is it an abstract force that operates invisibly across this scene (Foucault 1980). To put it another way, if there is no action, then there has been no transference of power.

Introducing Hybrids

“‘Translation’, creates mixtures between entirely new types of beings, hybrids of nature and culture’ Latour (1993: 10).

The research describes how a network of actors forms during the process of constructing a town-green. At the heart of this dynamic is the production (and reproduction) of a hybrid entity ‘town-green’. The term town-green is an inherently hybrid conception – in that it is simultaneously social (town) and natural (green). Hybridity is used specifically in much ANT literature (Latour 1993, 1996; Callon & Law 1995; Michael 1998; Elam 1999; Albertsen & Diken 2000; Tironi 2010). The term hybrid has sometimes referred (pejoratively) to the crossbreeding of races, particularly in the context of colonised and coloniser (Hall 1993; Said 1994; Soja 1996). However the term has more positive connotations, for example under the guise of multi-culturalism (Mavrommatis 2010) or the outcome of the inter-relativity of two (or more) cultures (Bhabha 1994; Saldanha 2006; Haraway 2008). Hybridity is not restricted to inter-cultural conditions; it might arise within a relatively homogenous group via socio-political change or new technologies, materials beliefs, practices and innovations (Callon 1991). Hybrids are not isolated from their contexts, they are contingent organisations that are deformed and/or affected by their adjacencies; there is dialogue, interaction and conflict with the network. Hybridisation is metamorphic and processual, Hall describes this ‘*as a ‘production’ which is never complete, always in process,*’ (1993: 392). This double-meaning captures the dynamics of the empirical study which is both an examination of the production and product of a town-green. Hybridity forms a fundamental part of the intellectual framing of this research and the basis upon which the approach to the empirical work is established. The case-study follows the creation of a town-green; from its inception as a derelict wasteland into a new socio-natural reality. In this study the imbroglio of material, non-material, social, natural and semiotics worlds are presented as they are in reality – as hybrid.

Case-study Findings

The research examines a case-study site in the UK. This empirical research traces the changes to an informal derelict space and loosely-organised residents into a town-green. It is difficult to ascertain precisely where the process of becoming town-green began. As such this research picks up at the point when some of the local human residents (society₂) are musing over the hypothesis ‘*what is this in-*

formal space for?' This first 'dialogue' is still a theoretical proposition (that will eventually lead to action). The informal space had been a derelict wasteland – the remains of a bombed out row of housing (damage from World War Two) and subsequently used intermittently as: an illegal dumping ground; an informal playground by local children; a home for a family of urban foxes; and was partially covered in dirt, weeds and trees.

Some of the local residents decided to transform the informal derelict site and at this point simultaneously established themselves as indispensable to the process. Their second 'dialogue' moves from general uncertainty to stabilized specificity: this involved the shift from indefinite questions such as '*what is this informal space for?*' into more focused questions, such as '*is this space a town-green?*' It is this second dialogue that begins a process of hybridisation; because up to that point there had been little relationship between any of the actors *society+nature+history* on the informal space. The second dialogue brings a heterogeneous group of actors together to hybridise (whether they want to or not) in relation to the legislative apparatus. In the production of the town-green the three crucial elements: *society+nature+history* form a tripartite alliance; and all three must unite to answer the question '*is this space a town-green?*'

Modifying Networks

There is no inherent need or requirement, in or of itself, for this space to be considered as a town-green. The weeds do not call for it, nor the mud or nature₁: they were all operating independently from legal status and social groups. The local government does not invoke the Act of its own volition; rather it is incumbent on others to instigate the legislation. It is society₂ who determined that town-green status was desirable. The previously isolated entities: *society+nature+history* that must become amalgamated, have other actors or relationships vying for their attention/attracting them/luring them in different directions or simply forcing them to act in a certain way. What must happen is that any unwanted links must be cut – as Gore Vidal proposed '*it is not enough to succeed – others must fail*'. It is through this process that certain actors are barred from the process and ultimately excluded from the use of the informal space. In the construction of the town-green on this case-study site, it was necessary to extirpate the previous occupants, uses and users of the space. Weeds, errant humans, dirt and other actors were all removed or othered in this procedure. The town-green legislation is used to block new building development, in particular by removing links with the original landowners. The original landowners could potentially still return to claim their land and build a house on it. Any links or relationships between these owners (and the legislative apparatus that simultaneously connects them) and the informal space must also be modified.

The Production of Nature₂

The *'idea'* of gardening is one thing; but it is the actual *'practice'* of gardening that is carried out which matters. If nature₂ is to be produced, certain flora must be willing to perform as desired. The (good) plants must actually grow in accordance with society₂'s wishes: the gardening process begins. In order for nature₁ to be transformed into nature₂ a number of approaches and devices were used. The network of actors *qua* nature₂ were transformed through the bringing of an assemblage of heterogeneous entities to act together and break other unwanted links or associations. A poster advertising Spring Planting asks the local society to *'Please bring plants and bulbs, forks and ~~trowels~~ trowels.'* In this request we see that it is not sufficient to succeed in bringing the local residents together on the site, nor merely gain their willingness to do some gardening, but that there is also a need for society to provide the tools with which to carry out these activities. This also points to the need for more than purely societal influences on the site – they must come with tools and materials to perform the task (Graf 2014). For example: metal spades were used (in alliance with a member of the human society) to remove certain actors – particularly the bracken and weeds. Secateurs were used on the ivy; as ivy depends structurally on another entity to survive (usually a nearby tree) along with a connection to the ground for water and nutrients; this cutting of links with secateurs works in two directions to not only cut ties with the ground but cuts the tie with the tree as support. Some gardeners whispered to the plants in the belief that the flowers respond well to this. A few gardeners resorted to invoking God to help with matters such as removing pests, encouraging blooming and auspicious climactic forecasts. Even with all these materials, non-materials, supernatural beings and hope; it transpired that it was quite difficult to break links with existing nature₁ and build new connections with nature₂. Society₂ adopted multiple strategies, for example, they: mowed the grass, strimmed its edges, planted flowers and removed any tenacious weeds that tried to return. Indeed society₂ discovered that nature₂ must be almost constantly reminded, prodded, cut, trimmed, weeded, removed, planted and maintained in order to achieve the (ostensibly) static condition of garden.

In practice however, it was rare anyone could be encouraged to do these tasks more than once a week, in general a monthly gardening session was carried out. The cutting of ties with weeds needed to be performed more frequently. Additional actors were needed to act on a different temporal range, actors that would work more frequently, day and night if possible. If there was any relenting, then the weeds and the brambles and ivy come back. Flowers were too easily attacked by slugs and other predatory fauna. In practice the involvement of nature₂ was difficult to achieve; these actors cannot be controlled very easily; they are signs of the wrong type of nature – the wrong type of green-ness and the possibility that nature₂ relapses back into a wasteland (nature₁). Society₂ expanded their network of

alliances to produce nature₂. Flowerbeds were used to control slugs and snails; not only were the flowers put into delineated flowerbeds but the chemico-biological actor of manure was added to strengthen the relationships with certain flowers. The aim was for fertilizer to act across a temporal landscape; working day and night for weeks on end to maintain alliances with the necessary flora of nature₂. The existing links the weeds had with the soil were stronger than could be cut with secateurs or dug with a trowel. The roots systems and rhizomes of these weeds were too deep (literally). Other apparatus had to be used to further break unwanted ties, one came in the form of a bio-weapon: the pesticide ‘*Weedol*’. This weed-killer was much more effective in cutting the links between the weeds and the soil (which is the primary datum of the space). Weed-killer also has the advantage of working for an extended period of time, and not just when a society member can be convinced to go and weed with a spade on a rainy afternoon. The weed-killer kept on cutting unwanted bonds day and night for weeks and weeks (until effectively all traces of unwanted weeds were removed).

The Production of Society₂

The few local residents who dreamed up the proposition of a town-green were too small a network to successfully create a town-green; their numbers were not deemed to be ‘*a significant number of the inhabitants*’ (Act 2006: Section 15.2). Accordingly a much larger group of humans needed to be involved (and form part of the network) if they were to meet legislation’s ‘town’ stipulations (society₂). Society₂ is a much more distinct collection of human actors: specifically those who meet the legislative requirements of the Commons Act (2006); society₂ is restricted specifically to ‘*inhabitants from the locality*’ who have engaged in ‘*lawful past-times or sports*’ on the land for the prior 20 years.

How did they do this? In a variety of ways (different to those for nature₂), for example they used words; initially through conversations – they went around to residents’ associations and drummed up support, and changed the composition and direction of existing community groups so that they too were aligned with the movement. In practice, the conversations and discussions made for turning the derelict space into a town-green, was often made along the lines of increasing safety. The ‘*broken windows*’ theory (Wilson and Kelling 1982) was used to convince the local residents to support society₂’s ideas. Broken window theory is the concept that criminal activity is attracted to signs of dilapidation and decay. In brief, (it is argued) if a person sees a broken window they feel it is acceptable to break another window. In this context, it was argued that the derelict land was a ‘*sign*’ that it was okay to throw away rubbish or dump waste in the neighbourhood (Edensor 2005). This would be bad in and of itself, however it might also attract further criminal behaviour, such as, car crime and burglary. These arguments were used to try to ensure that the derelict space was made to fail, and the town-green

was made to succeed. The semiotics of space become embroiled in the production of a town-green. The conversations from these meetings were minuted with notes, text and diagrams. These documented minutes acted as devices to cajole society₁ into acting as society₂ in subsequent community meetings and social forums.

A number of other strategies and tactics were required to act on/with society₂. Tactics intended to act on/with human actors to form society₂ included: inducements to free coffee, meetings in the living rooms of nearby residents, cups of tea, biscuits, minutes from meetings, dialogue, conversations, ideas, signs, posters, placards, gardening mornings and Neighbourhood Watch sessions. All of these are used to form not just 'a' society, but more importantly, the right type of society (one that will later act as a proxy for 'town' in the town-green application) – i.e. society₂.

The Production of History₂

The approach taken to enmesh the history of that space into one co-incident with town-green activities was to fabricate documentary materials: questionnaires, letters, photographs and written statements to help shift the balance of power towards the requirements of a town-green (rather than any other outcome). History was implicated through text and images principally in the form of the 'evidence questionnaires' submitted as part of the 'Application For Registration Of Land ... As A Town Green Under The Commons Act 2006'. This documentary material was used to translate the (re)telling of the history of the space. In order to create these documentary materials; the newly formed society₂ wrote testimonies, filled in leaflets, submitted photographs and completed questionnaires to substantiate the correct version of the history of the informal space.

The Production of Society+Nature+History

The process so far had mostly involved creating, modifying and augmenting a plexus to form the desired equation: *society+nature+history*. This had involved 'real' changes in the physical world, most evident in the condition of the informal space that had changed from a wasteland (nature₁) into a neat and tidy garden (nature₂); similarly the residents had been galvanized into the appropriate agglomeration qua society₂. This had been a messy, iterative and inchoate process; operating across a network of actors; sometimes acting on individual people, sometimes on larger social groupings, sometimes on plants and flowers and on inanimate materials – stones, mud, spades, pieces of paper, croissants and cups of coffee; sometimes as signs, posters, prayers, dialogues and discourse. This alliance of heterogeneous actors perform their roles and responsibilities in a reliable and durable manner; until their identity appears to be 'permanent' (Latour 1986).

Enmap

A significant modification in the mode of action by the multifarious actors was in a shift from the *'real world'* to a *'documentary world'*. Part(s) of the town-green hybrid could now be maintained, not through the actions of the many actors, but where documentary representations could *'en-map'* actors. The neologism *'enmap'* comes from the notion of a *'map'* representing (but not replacing) reality as a more stable, fixed equivalence (Serres 2007); *'en-*' refers etymologically to an *'expression of entry into a specified state or location'* (Oxford English Dictionary 1993). Thus *'enmapping'* is the process of transporting myriad actors into a more fixed, static representation. The mode of each en-map is invariably in the form of words, but also includes pictures, graphs and diagrams. In this case-study, nature₂ is enmapped to be concomitant with the required notion of *'green'* in *'town-green'*. Similarly the local residents (society₂) were enmapped as equivalences of *'town'* in *'town-green'*. Enmapping does not (and cannot) replace all of the activities of these actors, there is still a need to go and weed the garden etc. Each enmap can act on behalf of many others, indeed as we shall see, the process of enmapping is an exponential effect, where fewer and fewer enmaps can represent ever-larger numbers of actors in the network. An enmap succeeds in displacing a large number of actors in a network (which are often changing, shifting, modifying, kinetic and fluxive) into a single documentary entity that is more easily accessed, transportable (moved from the space of the garden to the space of the local government's offices), stable and fixed.

It is worth pointing out that this article is also an enmap: all of the actions, actors, hybrids and hybridizations that took place *'in reality'* are now (re)presented here in this article, *in absentia*.

History₂ Enmap

In the case of *'history₂'* – this was enmapped to satisfy (and displace alternative accounts of) the requisite legislative definition of the history of the informal space. Individuals supplied testimonies to the local authority about the length of time that the space had been used as town-green. Archive documents and photographs *'prove'* that this space has been used for *'lawful sports and pastimes on the land for a period of at least 20 years'* (Act 2006: Section 15.2), i.e. as a town-green for two decades. The *'documentary world'* is hybridized within the *'real world'* – the enmap forms part of the hybrid rather than merely acting as proxy. Documents and photographs constitute an enmap that confirm that the space has been acting as a town-green. The individual sheets of paper can be seen as acting in this context. Akin to voters in a poll, each sheet of paper acts like a *'yes'* vote in the ballot box. The case-study application lists the documentary *'exhibits'* as: *'Land registry search, Garden plaque, Gardening and maintenance sessions, ...*

Photographs, Evidence questionnaires + Statements. Images or documents that portray something else or 'act' against the collective are omitted from the enmap process and remain outside of the negotiations. For example, the space was previously used as an informal play area for children. These actors have been extirpated with the creation of a town-green; there are no specific play facilities for children and most child's play is effectively prohibited for fear of damaging the delicate flowers. Notably none of the 'broken window' material was mentioned within the 'official' history of the site. Similarly, images that might originally have different meanings and signification or bore different histories are subverted and appropriated to tell the 'correct' story of history (history₂). The 'true' identities of 'actors' such as photographs are modified and changed through the process. A family picnic or a family photo is now implicated as evidence; the photograph itself becomes an actor. Twenty years of varying activities, interests and past-times have been elided and displaced into an appendix section of the legislative report. Even further; '148 indexed evidence questionnaires and statements' of individual testimonies provided as an appendix to the application are collated and displaced into an even briefer executive summary. The plurality of voices are displaced into an enmap *qua* bullet point list of 15 items that will be accepted as evidence of town-ness. These enmapped documents act as the apparatus through which history₂ is enrolled into the town-green.

Society₂ Enmap

Once the formal application for town-green status was made; two key events occur; the first is a visit by local government officials to the space to 'see' for themselves; the second is at the Council House (*aka City Hall*) where the application will be assessed and judgement passed. When the two government officials arrive at the site to 'see' for themselves whether the application is appropriate, their eyes are made to see for the many other government officials whom are expected to objectively adjudicate on the application. It is the report by these two officials that will represent the view of many others at the Council House. Similarly those at the Council will be acting on behalf of a much bigger legislative body and for the whole of the city populous for whom they have been charged with representing.

Only a few actors are represented or involved at any one time. It is those few who 'speak' that represent and displace the many silent others. Society₂ speak on behalf of the wider society₁. The thirty-one residents who completed the 'evidence questionnaires' are acting on behalf of the silent majority of residents (many hundred 'inhabitants of the locality') who did not fill in a questionnaire, nor endorse nor verify the application. The active population is represented through the questionnaires via displacement from the neighbourhood into the Council House. Not everyone can speak at such a council meeting, due to time constraints and the size of room; many people do not 'speak' at all; it is their words in the questionnaires

that act on their behalf. It is those who completed their questionnaires who have acted for those who remained silent; the many are represented by the few. The questionnaires enmap the multiple living voices and conversations, discussions and disagreements that existed in reality and occurred over a twenty year period.

Nature₂ Enmap

Those silent residents could have acted if they so wished: they were consulted with notices posted along the street, leaflets through the letterbox and displays in the society noticeboards. (It could be argued the posters and leaflets did not exercise power effectively over the local residents, as so few acted as a result of their presence). However, how does nature act (or speak) for itself and how is nature represented or enmapped? The two officials who visit the site must ascertain whether the space is 'green'; i.e. if nature₂ is present. Neither official is an expert on nature, nor particularly knowledgeable to any extent on horticulture, botany or ecology. Their assessment of what nature₂ should be is based entirely upon expectations of what it should look like; i.e. a neat grassed area with some flowers and trees. In this study; the officials were convinced and could put forward their findings that the space was indeed 'green'. The council officials did not invent nor magically construct this representation of nature₂. Nature₂ communicates directly to the council officials; nature₂ was acting. The grass itself can say nothing verbally, but can enact its own form of representation. Like a form of direct democracy or a union group showing their support by raising their hand in the air, ready to be counted; each blade of grass 'acts' as a voting system; each blade of grass that can stand up and 'vote' is in effect being counted by the council officials. If the grass had not managed to survive, (which was quite possible without the support of society₂) the garden would be bare earth, with perhaps a few weeds. This would not have satisfied the requirements by the local authority for the 'green' of town-green. Similarly the flowers in the flowerbeds are also counted in this way, and the trees too. The council representatives are merely carrying out their role, like a union delegate, of counting up those votes for and against. The voting system of grass/flowers/trees is enmapped as a series of numbers, photographs and words written down in the officials report.

Nature₂ has been enmapped from the garden into the council chambers without the need to be physically 'there' nor literally 'speak'. This has the effect of further stabilizing and rigidifying the representation of nature₂. The essentiality of nature₂ has been enmapped and made permanent via the written report. The difficulties and flux of maintaining nature₂ in this state, the constant battle against weeds, pests, weather and the indifference of residents is now supplanted into a permanent, unchanging and immutable mode of representation *qua* enmap. An equivalence is made between the static words in the report and the ever-changing natural world of the space.

Town-Green Enmap

In this case study: the town-green status is successful. Any controversies that might have arisen from these conflicting voices were quelled at the point when the Local Government made their decision to determine the space as a town-green. It was at this point, in the local council's chambers at 12.00 on 19th January, when the governmental committee voted in favour of the application that the question 'is this a town-green?' was converted into the definitive statement 'this is a town-green'. Multiple actors have been displaced into single enmap (in the form of a folder of reports, minutes and notes) that act in unity as one coherent, immutable, fixed, representation of a 'town-green'. In this moment, the controversy is closed and all of the various actors; the society, the garden and history are effectively incarcerated within the juridical infrastructure. Once this decision was made, and operating in a reverse direction, the full power of the legislative apparatus acts to maintain this status. Simultaneously in this hybrid: nature₂ is deemed the correct type; society₂ really exists and history₂ is revealed.

Conclusions

The empirical study is in many ways a rather boring and everyday scenario. There is no dramatic finale or radical event (just the rubber-stamping of a report in a local government office). However, the field study reveals, over many years of observations and interviews, a significant change in the socio-spatial constitution of the actors involved. The process fundamentally transformed the local natural world; the flora and fauna changed; even the chemical make-up of the soil was altered over this process; 'town' was produced with different human actors forming a new community; history was altered through this process in a retroactive manoeuvre.

Town-green is a hybrid. There are many actors that constitute the town-green: social and non-social. The signs and posters that lined the streets and letterboxes over the years form part of the collective. Living rooms, coffee, tea, biscuits, trowels, spades, prayers, emails and fertilizers were all found in the liminal space generated between the juridical 'town-green' and the existing prior realities of society₁ and nature₁. It is here, in the final lines of this article, where it is appropriate to remove the conventions of terminology: society+nature+time. These terms are perhaps less meaningful in practice, they merely provided a series of convenient readymade labels to identify actors (in the interim). Grouping all the humans in one pile whilst putting nature over there and consigning history to yet another category rarely captured the identities emergent in the study. The networks of association and indeed existence are transgressed, cut across and blurred – practice is considerably more complex than these three neat categories. The case study reveals that, on occasion: some humans had closer links to animals; flora

were at odds with history; communities existed as documentation; spades created society; gardening was political; mythical spirits came to kill slugs; green-ness was cultural; time is limited to twenty years and living rooms became devices to hothouse communities. Hybrids are messy, multifarious, unanticipated and heterogeneous – they resist shorthand descriptions to capture their identity and constituents.

An enmap facilitates the translation of the events, practices and actors into a form of discourse. In this instance, the enmap is now in the same ‘language’ as legislation. Beforehand it was not possible for the events in the informal space to communicate with, or form part of, the legislative domain. The construction of an enmap is a specific modality of how power ‘acts’. Each enmap is incredibly powerful as it provides and equivalence for all of the many years of heterogeneous activities and actors into a single, fixed, unvarying, consensual source. An enmap is dependent on the translation of action into discourse, texts, images and photographs. The town-green discourse is part of a larger, complex, comprehensive, legislative regime of discourse. The ‘power’ of this legislation is compelling as it is part of an actor-network that includes: legal institutions, judiciary power, council barristers, penal codes, police forces, incarceration facilities and enforcement officers.

It is perhaps too assertive to conclude that ‘*power is hybrid*’; nonetheless, power in this empirical study is distributed throughout the actor-network qua multifarious practices, iterative performances, physical interventions, spatial conditions, signs and discourses. It is a complex imbroglio of: fiction, legislation, nature, economics, knowledge, society and inter-relationships.

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