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Insurgent Participation

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Insurgent Participation

Despite decades of debate, participatory planning continues to be contested. More recently, research has documented a relationship between participation and neoliberalism, in which participation works as a post-political tool – a means to depoliticize planning and legitimize neo-liberal policy-making. This paper argues that such accounts lack attention to the opportunities for opposing neo-liberal planning that may be inherent within participatory processes. In order to further an understanding of the workings of resistance within planning, it suggests the notion of insurgent participation – a mode of contentious intervention in participatory approaches. It develops this concept through the analysis of various participatory approaches launched to regenerate the former airport Berlin-Tempelhof. A critical reading of participation in Tempelhof reveals a contradictory process. Although participatory methods worked to mobilize support for predefined agendas, their insurgent participation also allowed participants to criticize and shape the possibilities of engagement, challenge planning approaches and envision alternatives to capitalist imperatives.

Keywords: Participation, planning, post-politics, neo-liberalism, contestation, Berlin

Word count: 9.880

Introduction

After years of debate, Berliners succeeded in preventing the redevelopment of the former airport Tempelhof through a public referendum. In May 2014, around sixty-five percent of the voters spoke out against the Senate's plans and secured the use of the site as a public park. Previously, numerous planning-workshops, public forums on site visits, as well as online surveys had marked the contested attempts to regenerate the site. Despite this particularly participative approach to planning, citizens remained skeptical towards the construction of housing, a science park and an industrial estate on the vast empty airfield. An exploration of the practices of resistance prevalent in this process provides a useful basis from which to revisit an old standing debate on the pitfalls of participatory planning and a more recent one on the opportunities for resistance and involvement in what has been called a post-political condition (Swyngedouw, 2009; MacLeod, 2011; Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012). How does participation foster dissent and shape conflict throughout planning processes? This question provides grounds for two arguments.

Firstly, a critical reading of participation in Tempelhof allows interrogation of the ways in which scholarship on the neo-liberalization of urban development has linked civil engagement in planning to a closure of democratic opportunities and a demise of dissent. Alongside a well-established body of scholarship targeting the procedural constraints of participation, more recent work on the politics of urban development views participation as a means of cooptation and control, or, more generally, a way to depoliticize planning (Gunder, 2010; Miessen, 2010; MacLeod, 2011). While participatory planning approaches can be read as attempts to avert conflict and legitimize pre-defined objectives, I aim to show that these processes do not merely work to produce consensus. Rather, the case of

Tempelhof is a useful example to consider the opposite: formal spaces of participation provide opportunities to defy urban planning. In other words, the case of Tempelhof illustrates a process in which an active urban public objects to its inclusion through tokenistic forms of participation, so that these attempts not only fail to produce consensus, depoliticize activists or settle conflict, but also foster moments of conflict. To be clear, my aim is not to downplay cooptation in participatory planning. As the editors of this special issue convincingly show, attempts of control and moments of contention are closely interwoven. However, the exclusive emphasis on de-politization and cooptation that the post-political framework suggests, risks ignoring moments of insurgency that remain possible or are perhaps widened within and through participatory planning. As a consequence of this blind spot, an understanding of the workings of contention within planning-processes remains underdeveloped.

Secondly, this paper seeks to understand *how* civil society actors use participatory space to politicize and challenge institutional planning attempts. I probe the notion of *insurgent participation* to frame the study of such practices. Insurgent participation aims to foreground the contradiction of participating in while aiming to subvert, contest, or resist contemporary planning regimes. And it seeks to highlight the various modalities of political practice that may work to shape planning through contentious interventions in institutionally designed processes. In the case of Tempelhof, spaces of engagement provided a terrain upon which opposition was organized and performed through a number of complementary elements: In formally organized workshops, forums and information events, participation allowed participants to raise awareness of the proposed development scheme's downsides; public events brought disparate actors together, allowed them to connect specific interests and ally different initiatives; participatory workshops provided opportunities

to introduce discussions on contested themes and reframe the scope of the questions that had initially been open to debate; gardening projects installed as interim uses were key to challenging the lack of visions and provided – through their symbolic and material presence – an inspiration for others to protect the site. These practices of insurgent participation are crucial to an understanding of contention in planning: They illustrate that efforts to achieve legitimation or domination may trigger resistance or be appropriated and contested throughout and within processes of participation. In framing participation as a means of de-politization these practices easily slip out of sight.

This discussion is based on interviews, participant observations, and the analysis of textual sources. First, I conducted 12 semi-structured interviews with members of activist initiatives, city officials, as well as experts and informally spoke to residents of the neighboring areas. To reduce bias, I interviewed actors from different citizens' groups and selected institutional actors according to their responsibilities and roles in the planning process. Second, I combined this data with participant observation of public hearings and the meetings of activist groups between June and August 2012 and used my observations to complement the interview material and to gain a more multifaceted view of the groups' social interaction, internal conflicts and different strategies. I returned to the field-site in 2014 around the time the referendum was held to keep track of the process. Third, an analysis of documents on planning and development strategies that I retrieved from the Berlin Senate, its planning agencies, and various websites set up by citizens' groups provided a means to understand the stated strategies and the envisioned technical details of the planning and participation process. Finally, newspaper articles and documentations of the planning process

provided a synthesis of the development and a way to understand how this material entered into public life and shaped citywide debates.

Before turning to the analysis of this data, the next section reviews general tendencies in scholarship on communicative planning and their critical reception within literature on neo-liberal urban development. This section also introduces the notion of insurgent participation, which is further developed in the subsequent empirical parts. Considering the case of Tempelhof, the paper proceeds to show how different forms of participation were implemented to control and activate neighboring communities. Finally, I shift the focus to moments of insurgency. A counter-narrative of contentious processes within participation allows me to illustrate the various modalities of resistance that were entangled in this case.

What's wrong with participation?

Despite longstanding debates, research on participation continuous to be contested (Moulaert, Rodríguez, & Swyngedouw, 2003; Beaumont & Nicholls, 2008; MacLeod & Johnstone, 2011). To reiterate briefly (for a more detailed discussion, see for instance Silver et al., 2010), critical planning theory (CPT) draws on Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action (2011 [1981]) to promote rational consensus and intersubjective understanding as a means to overcome the intrinsic difficulties of majority-rule decision-making.ⁱ The key to a more democratic management of planning hereby is the incorporation of deliberative practices to improve decision-making through undistorted communication, rationality and egalitarian dialogue. Theoretically, the benefits are clear: scholars assume that participatory mechanisms make room for a direct and transparent relation between civil society and urban administrations (Lowndes, Pratchett & Stoker, 2001), build social capital and empower civil society

(Cuthill, 2004), allow for better information on local needs (Albrechts, 2002), or open up solutions that would have been inaccessible for planners (Innes & Booher, 2004).

In practice, the implementation of communicative ideals proves to be difficult. Already in 1969, Arnstein's famous ladder of citizen participation listed a number of procedural constraints on a just implementation of participatory approaches. For critics of communicative planning, her arguments still count as valid (Selle, 1996; Beaumont & Loopmans, 2008). Over four decades, critical planners have shown how participation is used as a rhetorical exercise. For Flyvbjerg, it is a "leap of faith" (1998, p. 192) to bridge the gap between the 'ideal speech situation' and planning realities. Hillier finds the "ideal of undistorted communication [to be] a logical impossibility" (2003, p. 52). Others suggest that participation produces 'lowest common denominator solutions' that suffer at the expense of deliberationists' focus on designing the right process (Fainstein, 2000).

In addition to the practical problems of implementing participation debated within theories of planning, urban scholars have turned their attention to the politico-economic structures within which participatory processes are embedded (Yiftachel & Huxley, 2000; Gunder, 2010). These 'materialist' writers argue that deliberative planning ignores power relations and is biased towards those with better skills. For Fainstein participation operates on the idea that "if only people were reasonable, deep structural conflict would melt away" (2000, p. 455). As Yiftachel (2002) argues, participatory planning lacks a critical engagement with the structural conditions within which planning is located (Heeg & Rosol, 2007). Therefore Cooke and Kothari conclude that participation is tyranny and as such it is systemic rather than "merely a matter of how the practitioner operates or the specificities of the techniques and tools employed" (2001, p. 4). Their closing question (*ibid.*) is scathing: "How many

concerns must be raised before participatory development itself becomes to be seen as the real problem?”

Post-politics and its discontents

A more recent turn to the role of planning in the contemporary neo-liberal conjuncture shows participation in yet another light. In debates on neo-communitarianism (Jessop, 2002, p. 463), austerity or localism (Peck, 2012, p. 632), participation is discussed in light of the contemporary political conjuncture and, as Baeten finds, seen to be incorporated to specific ends, namely to facilitate of market forces (2011, p. 205-206). Hereby, scholars frame participation both as a possibility to offload public responsibilities and as a means to legitimize undemocratic mechanisms of decision-making (Mayer, 2011; Rosol, 2010). States, it is argued, unburden their tasks by shifting former institutional duties to the local realm to ‘govern through community’ (Rose, 1996, p. 332). According to Jessop, these attempts to foster partnerships with citizens, so that these attain greater self-sufficiency, is ultimately a means to “develop ... and implement ... economic strategies” (2002, p. 463). Following Purcell, neo-liberal regimes need to adopt strategies that mend the democratic deficits they produce (2009, p. 141). Participatory planning, he writes (ibid, p. 140), works as one such strategy. Through its democratic disguise, it is seen to legitimize politics, reinscribe (unequal) power relations and stabilize the neo-liberal project. Moreover, by avoiding conflict, depoliticizing planning and coopting contestation, it complicates resisting hegemonic neo-liberal ideals (ibid.).

This diagnosis is part of a broader thesis on the disappearance of politics from contemporary life – a contradictory process that is frequently described as a post-political condition (Žižek, 1999; Diken & Laustsen, 2004; MacLeod, 2011; Tasan-Kok

& Baeten, 2011). For Swyngedouw this term indicates “a replacement of debate, disagreement and dissent in current urban governance with a series of technologies of governing that fuse around consensus, agreement, accountancy metrics and technocratic (...) management” (2009, p. 604). Yet the post-political discourse posits not merely the abandonment of politics. While post-political regimes, as Rancière (2001) argues, are no longer founded in legitimate political processes, they work through intact institutions of democracy (e.g. periodic elections, campaigns, party competition), in which decision-making procedures are reduced to the consumption of political choices that cannot be told apart. This conclusion is derived from a conceptual division between dissensus and agreement that is often based on Chantal Mouffe’s notion of ‘agonistic pluralism’ (1997, 2000) and Jürgen Habermas’ theory of communicative rationality (2011 [1981]). Other than in Habermas’ approach to deliberation, post-political thinkers argue that to use participation as a means of conflict-resolution requires excluding people from democratic decision-making. As alternative voices do not allow for consensus, they are pushed out of the sphere of governance, so that the possibility of proper politics is closed down (Habermas 2011 [1981]).

In debates on the politics of planning, geographers and urban scholars have drawn on this discourse to show how development solutions are backed up by expert-knowledge, presented as value free and inevitable (Carr, 2012). Forms of participation, authors argue, provide a valuable tool in this game: public hearings, citizen-workshops or deliberative forums neither allow for ‘proper’ discourse, nor leave much scope for alternative pathways of development, while participation “ratifies and even carries out decisions that favour capital” (Silver et al., 2010, p. 455).

Participation and insurgency

In contrast to these accounts, a number of authors have placed greater emphasis on the workings of conflict within participatory planning (Meth, 2010; Rinn, 2013). These scholars insist that participation is hardly neutralizing dissent. They suggest different ways of conceptualizing the nexus of dissent within state-attempts to build consensus. In an IJURR-symposium on ‘Participation in Urban Contention and Deliberation’, Silver, Scott and Kazepov urge us to understand conflict and consensus as different moments in planning procedures, rather than as polarizing binary oppositions (2010, p. 472). Their collection of case studies shows that “both conflict and consensus are present in different places and at different times” (ibid.). Beaumont and Loopmans (2008, p. 95) seek to overcome the division between consensus and conflict through a combination of “a Habermas-inspired ideal speech situation with more organic, grassroots and bottom-up processes in line with Mouffe”. The hybrid framework they suggest and term a ‘radicalized communicative rationality’ is meant to provide a means by which to capture the conflictual as well as the consensual moments of participation (ibid., p. 96). Similarly, Rosol has traced practices of resistance that can neither be understood as ‘cooption’ nor as ‘rebellion’ (2014, p. 71). Her case study of protest against a rezoning application for a large-scale development scheme in Vancouver foregrounds more subtle mechanisms of counter-conduct that disavow “the binary view of power and resistance” (p. 80).

While this work turns attention to moments of resistance that are prevalent in participation *despite* state attempts to produce consensus, this paper seeks to highlight the ways in which participation fosters dissent, that is, how it causes and shapes multiple expressions of conflict throughout the process of participation. Under what conditions does participation trigger dissent? What modalities of resistance does it

bring about? And how can we capture the trajectories such forms of resistance may take?

I suggest exploring these questions through the notion of *insurgent participation*. This framing builds on a paradox that is already invested in the concept of insurgent planning (Miraftab & Wills, 2005; Sandercock 1998, Miraftab, 2009; see Holsten, 1999; for a discussion of insurgent citizenship). For Sandercock, insurgent planning involves “something oppositional, a mobilizing against one of the many faces of the state, the market or both” (1999, p. 41), whereas planning – a crucial element of governing – implies the implementation of order and state control. Accounts of insurgent planning offer an exploration of state-transgression and grassroots engagement beyond the reach of the state. They highlight radical struggles and modalities of planning that undergo state systems. Conversely, my account of insurgent *participation* provides a frame through which to examine the dynamics of contention within state-orchestrated modalities of planning. In other words, I use it as a lens to consider insurgency in processes of making consent. Participation and insurgency thus combine to pose a series of thorny questions that address a pointed contradiction: Can participation constitute a practice of resistance? If so, how do citizens subvert structures by participating in them? Insurgent participation – as a practice or conceptual framing – confronts this ambiguity.

First, it seeks to contribute to an understanding of contention in relation to, that is, in response to participation. Differing from post-political conceptions, insurgent participation starts from the assumption that the production of consensus is infused with moments of resistance so that spaces of participation form a stage on which conflicts may play out. This claim builds on the likely possibility that participants are aware of the difficulties of cooptation, manipulation and the like and reflect on their

engagement before, during, and after getting involved. Insurgent participation thus captures moments of resistance that evolve from this awareness and may operate and thrive in interaction throughout processes of participation. Moreover, focusing on insurgency within participation aims to develop a better understanding of the conditions necessary to foster or prevent contention.

Second, the notion of insurgency is concerned with the multiple expressions of conflict that participation may bring about. It identifies a repertoire of contention that is enmeshed in the trajectories of planning and goes beyond the idea of fundamental ruptures or counter-hegemonic resistance. Rather, it captures all sorts of minor political acts that undermine and disrupt seemingly consensual planning. These may include modes of political practice in which people subordinate themselves to formal procedure without positioning themselves strategically against planning regimes so that complicity and resistance lie side by side.

In the next section, the case of Tempelhof offers an opportunity to develop these concerns. But before discussing moments of insurgency in practice, this paper turns to some of the problems that dominated participatory planning in Tempelhof.

Consensus and emancipation: two tales of planning an airport

In 1996, Berlin's government decided to unite the city's air traffic in one central site, the new airport Berlin Brandenburg, and, as a consequence, the closure of two inner-city airports, Berlin-Tegel and Berlin-Tempelhof. While to date, Tegel continues its functions, Tempelhof – Berlin's first central airport, concentration camp from '39 - '44 and symbol of resistance in the Berlin Air-lift – was closed in October 2008. Already in 1994, a new preparatory land-use plan (*Flächennutzungsplan*) had rezoned the airfield – an area of approximately the size of New York's Central Park – into building

land. In 1999, a subsequent master plan laid out the basic structure of the site as an egg-shaped park, surrounded by four urban quarters on its edges. They foresaw residential uses, a district with a focus on education and a Technology Park.ⁱⁱ These projected building areas join up with three inner city districts of different socio-economic distinction: Kreuzberg, is renowned for its alternative scenes and squatter movements, and accommodates 53% of Berlin's Turkish population. Neukölln displays high unemployment rates and leads Berlin's poverty statistics (SenStadt, 2013). Only in the last decade, it has developed pockets of gentrification – particularly adjacent to the foreseen building blocks (SenStadt, 2010b). Large parts of the airport are situated in the middle-class district Tempelhof, but its neighboring residential areas are cut off from the field through a high-speed ring road. Subsequent planning aimed to integrate these boroughs.

It is crucial to consider the socio-spatial and politico-economic context in which these developments were projected. Until its reunification, Berlin's wall had kept the city relatively isolated from global financial flows with little attraction for private investment in its housing sector (Krätke & Borst, 2000, 8). Reunification brought an euphoric boom followed by bust and conflict. After 1990, large investment sums flowed into the construction industry (Colomb, 2012a). However, due to the decentralized nature of the German state and the 'worst-practice' governance of Berlin's policy-makers among other factors, growth never stabilized (Krätke, 2004). From the 2000s on, unified Berlin was no longer booming. Rather than becoming an "economic powerhouse" (Colomb 2012b: 132), as policy makers had expected, growth rates decreased and unemployment rose until the city was close to bankruptcy. Public cuts and an 'austerity discourse' have since dominated Berlin's politics (Krätke & Borst, 2000), alongside the promotion of Creative-City politics and private investment.

Clear signs of segregation have followed large cuts in welfarist policies and private investment in the city's housing sector (Bernt, 2012), while recent indications of population-growth have aggravated the situation for lower income tenants. In light of these developments, the closure of Tempelhof airport and the related opening of the new and larger airport Berlin Brandenburg appears as an attempt to increase the city's locational advantages, while the development of housing and industry on Tempelhof's former airfield provided the city with an opportunity to attract private investment in the city's housing sector, primarily its upper segment.

Entangled in these developments is a history of participation in and contestation against large-scale development projects (Beveridge & Naumann, 2013; Dohnke, 2013). Already before the fall of the Berlin Wall, community activism had played a crucial role in the city's planning policies (Colomb, 2012a; Holm & Kuhn, 2011). Most notably, the city's 'rehab squats' enforced policies of 'careful urban renewal' (Behutsame Stadterneuerung) that prevented the demolition of building stock and reinforced the inclusion of citizens into planning decisions (Holm, 2006; Bernt, 2012: 10). The paradigm of 'careful urban renewal' was officially integrated in planning policies, but when applied after the fall of the Berlin wall in a climate of reduced subsidies and heightened privatization, the modernization of housing stock through private developers that was publically subsidized through tax benefits quickly raised rents (Bernt, 2012: 11). Today, the private sector is granted relative autonomy to advance urban development, while many of the former achievements of careful renewal policies have fallen prey to the socio-spatial effects of entrepreneurial urbanism (Bader & Bialluch, 2009: 93). As Berlin has witnessed the rapid growth of creative as well as knowledge intensive economies, temporary uses, civil activism and

urban underground culture have been marketed and officially integrated into the city's growth strategy (Colomb, 2012b: 140).

Yet, protest has grown alongside these developments. In 2008, a network of activists challenged the water front project 'Media Spree' in "Berlin's most successful urban social movement of the last decade" (Scharenberg & Bader, 2012, p. 327). An extended campaign supported by a broad variety of actors ranging from residents to local bar owners mobilized successfully for a public referendum against the large-scale investment project alongside the riverbank of the Spree. Although this engagement only achieved minor changes in the foreseen developments, Berliners have learned to position themselves against urban politics and press the city to justify its planning projects.

As a result of this history of opposition, a fearful awareness of civil insurgency put participation in Tempelhof high on the political agenda. In 1994, the city merely followed the mandatory procedures of participation, which broadly consist of quietly exhibiting land use plans. On the basis of the above described master plan from 1999, the Senate pushed further development through a variety of expert-workshops and planning competitions. In 2007, Berlin's Senate Building Director introduced the idea of planning through the IBA, an international building exhibition that had been invited to provide a testing ground for innovative architectural development.ⁱⁱⁱ Concurrently, an explosion of formal and informal participatory strategies was set out to accompany planning. From May to October, the general public was invited to participate in planning through randomized surveys and on-site visits (Zebralog, 2007; SenStadt, 2011, 2012a). In an online dialogue set up by the Senate, citizens could submit their ideas for the site's short- and long-term use (SenStadt, 2009). The involvement of interim uses, dubbed 'pioneer projects', followed the park's opening in 2010 (SenStadt

2010b). Selected pioneers set up different projects on the future building sites. These ranged from gardening initiatives, like the ‘Allmende Kontor’, an urban agriculture project, to youth projects, like the ‘Gecekondu’, a building workshop that facilitates the construction of huts from recycled materials, and included political projects, such as the ‘Stadtteilgarten Schillerkiez’, a meeting point that offers possibilities for exchange and political debate. They were to form part of a bid that the city had submitted to host the 2017-IGA, an international horticultural exhibition that aimed to ‘revitalize’ the airfield.^{iv} In addition, a series of participatory workshops was held for neighbors to discuss a range of themes such as leisure activities and park-design (Tempelhofer Freiheit, 2012). Finally, an info-pavilion was set up to inform the casual visitor about the planned park design.

These planning strategies, however, were highly contested by a variety of civil groups or individuals with varying agendas. Beyond the first generation of activist who had already accompanied the ‘careful renewal policies’ of the eighties, actors with more particularistic concerns, such as a group aiming maintain the city’s airport (Pro-Tempelhof), environmentalist groups (e.g. BUND), residents who would be affected by the development or were engaged in the pioneer projects (e.g. Allmende Kontor), but also numerous activist groups that framed the development of the airport through critical concerns about the alignment of urban policy with market imperatives mobilized against the planning scheme. In reports on planning, conversations with residents or the accounts of citizen groups, three lines of argumentation stand out. Firstly, participants feared that the construction of new houses would primarily support the building industry, while residents in neighboring areas would be displaced. Given the gentrification that had already hit most of the airport’s adjacent districts as well as the Senate’s mismanagement of numerous large scale projects (in particular the new

airport), a climate of heightened awareness for the pitfalls of large-scale investment fostered these fears. Most of my respondents saw it more appropriate to house the foreseen facilities (e.g. a new library) in Berlin's stock of vacant buildings or to densify other neighborhoods to accommodate further construction. Secondly, as Tempelhof was site of a Nazi labor camp, people found it insensible to build on a plot of land whose history should never be forgotten. Thirdly, opponents referred to the ecological qualities of the field. They argued that the field functions as a 'cold-air corridor' that provides systemic ventilation to adjacent neighborhoods and a sanctuary for a diversity of animals.

The protest of these diverse voices passed through a number of stages. Already in 2008, a referendum by the above-mentioned group 'Pro-Tempelhof' aimed to enforce the continuation of the air traffic, but never reached the necessary quorum.^v In 2009, an initiative called 'squat Tempelhof' started to call for public access to the closed field and intended to enter the gated site in order to raise awareness for the Senate's development initiative and promote self-determined planning on site. Although this initiative remained unsuccessful, the field opened as an inner-city park in 2010 and immediately became a popular destination with crucial effects for its trajectories of planning: Responding to heightened public criticism but also to numerous procedural constraints the Berlin Senate announced to relocate the IGA in July 2012 (Schönball, 2012). In November of the same year, the city abandoned the IBA, officially because of cost-cutting efforts (Zykla, 2013). Finally, the initiative '100% Tempelhofer Feld'^{vi}, so called because it rejects any planning and aims to preserve the entire field, managed to collect the signatures of more than seven percent of Berlin's electorate in support of an end to planning. Crossing this threshold allowed them to launch a referendum against the Senate's plans to build on approximately one

third of the field^{vii}. In May 2014, over half of the city's voters (64%) supported their proposal to secure the space as a public park.

Activation and control: a narrative of building consensus

A brief analysis of these attempts points to two interlinked patterns that confirm critiques of neo-liberal planning.

First, participation was strategically controlled to avert conflict. Processes of participation were staged to take place at convenient times while at other decisive moments participatory endeavors paused. The most fundamental step, the decision to develop the site in the first place, was taken in 1996, twelve years before the airport closed. Still before opening, several expert workshops and competitions were held, in which development goals, time-frames and planning processes through interim uses and mega events—for example, the IGA and the IBA—were outlined and contractually fixed. In addition, the Senate entered a contract agreement with two corporations, the GrünBerlin GmbH, responsible for the management of the park and the Tempelhof Projekt GmbH, whose central tasks comprise the project-design, the realization of concrete building measures as well as the marketing and sale of resulting constructions (SenStadt 2010a), in short, the profitable development of the site.^{viii} If participatory methods such as the online dialogue were introduced as unconditional opportunities to voice visionary ideas, this openness clearly contradicts the tacit preconditions that had long been set. Planners willingly admitted that participation was suspended at crucial moments (for instance during the election campaign in 2011) in order to circumvent a broader public debate (interview, GrünBerlin, 19.07.2012). According to a gardening-pioneer and member of a political collective, the inclusion of their group in the pioneer scheme was merely supported to weaken possible protest. A planner had confided in an

interview that his initiative had been given a plot on the airfield based on the assumption that gardening would prevent them from “developing silly ideas” (interview, activist, 24.06.2012).

When participation did take place, fundamental topics were removed from the agendas. Instead, communities were to engage in a range of circumscribed questions as the following quote of a city-official indicates.

We [the administration] have to set clear boundaries for participation. We don't want to ask: 'do you want everything or nothing'. But we say 'this is what we want and have to do, because it is the duty of care [*Fürsorgepflicht*] of urban planning to provide for a holistic development of the city. Those are our defined boundaries and then there is a wiggle room in which we can discuss, but other areas are not open to discussion (interview, city official, 09.07.2012).

Here too participation is placation. Certainly, citizens' ability to take responsible and 'holistic' decisions can be called into doubt. But as planning is increasingly aligned with economic concerns, the promise of planning's duty of care and the assumption that well-meaning city officials will decide in residents' best interest similarly need to be questioned.

Themes that were bound to trigger conflict were packaged to steal the protests' thunder. Briefly before the referendum, governing mayor Wowereit delegitimized the protest as a NYMBY (not-in-my-backyard) movement by arguing that their contention against construction would end up forcing lower income residents to the periphery of the city (Kröger, 2014). Given the narrow possibilities the rental market offers in this segment, the Senate presented the development of more housing in Tempelhof as a crucial relief of the strained situation and the referendum as a means to hinder this intent. When the necessary threshold of signatures had been collected and the referendum could no longer be avoided, the governing coalition drafted their own

legislative proposal to be voted upon in the same referendum. As it was framed similarly to that of the protesters – as an attempt to secure the site as a park – it appeared to present a comparable alternative to the grassroots proposal. However, the Senate’s counterproposal merely suggested reducing the open spaces to those areas that remained undeveloped after the construction of its fringes.

The second process that is closely intertwined with the above measures to retain control over planning is a strategy of activation. The promotion of informal interim uses is a point in case. The involvement of pioneers speaks for a political will to include civil actors in innovative cooperations. According to the marketing campaign, these uses were invited “to get involved in the ongoing development ..., to influence its further course,... [and to] transform Tempelhof... into a model location for participative urban development” (SenStadt, n/d). Participatory strategies have, in fact, incorporated residents in the park’s maintenance, created attractive recreational uses, sparked international media attention and promoted the attractiveness of the site. However, it is unclear whether such activation has lasting effects. While initiatives have contributed substantially to the quality of the open space, there has neither been any scope for the projects to effectively shape the planning process, nor does the current park design secure the continuation of their projects. In this sense, participatory strategies can be seen to provide an interim strategy against the loss of property value that has helped to market and ‘brand’ the site (see also Colomb, 2012b).

In sum, both strategies show that participation was hardly designed to shape planning. Rather, the trajectories outlined here appear to confirm the theses of post-political writers that I previously discussed: that participation responds to two contradictory necessities, namely to accommodate the commitment to cooperative planning with pre-given political rationales, that consensus is merely produced to seek

compliance, displace conflict and preserve the status quo, and that it works to secure and legitimize predetermined economic rationales (Swyngedouw, 2009; Carr, 2012). However, if my analysis were to end on this point, it would miss a crucial dimension of the process.

Insurgent participation: a counter-narrative

A closer look at the contentious tendencies within processes of participation complicates a narrative of de-politicization. In Tempelhof participants also used the terrain of deliberation to stage and utter their dissent: Deliberative forums provided an opportunity to voice controversial ideas and network with other attendees, they allowed citizens to reframe planning questions, and they provided a possibility to envision development alternatives. These processes constitute what I call insurgent participation. They indicate that attempts to building consensus and coopting residents into state agendas may also trigger multiple expressions of contention. To further explore the opportunities for resistance inherent within spaces of participation, the conditions under which they flourish, the prerequisites for such developments and the various expressions contention can take, I highlight four dimensions of such insurgency in more detail.

Firstly, participatory spaces form a breeding ground for frustration from which participants learned to critique capitalist-as-usual development. In the present case, most active participants I spoke to had previously attended various similar events. They had experienced their lack of influence in planning decisions and commonly felt that the Senate engaged them in trivial topics, or, as one interviewee reported, that the ‘real’ decisions had already been taken elsewhere (interview, activist, 22.06.2012). These attendees hardly anticipated that the opportunities for participation provided

would allow them to effectively shape the politics of the Senate or push for what they felt were major concerns. Rather, most participants used participatory forums to monitor planning and gather information. To be sure, this opportunity is contingent upon a critical awareness of political processes and is unlikely to play out in the absence a public counter discourse. But in the present case, deliberative arenas fostered such insurgent participation.

Secondly, formal participation provides a discussion arena for the exchange of divergent interests that allows stakeholders to communicate their contentious ideas. If the planning proposal in Tempelhof provided grounds for joint disappointment and a common desire for an alternative, the general contention was nevertheless based on a plethora of different topics that were promoted by a variety of voices with divergent agendas. The question not only moved various organized groups – for example, the more left-leaning activists from 100%Tempelhof, or the rather conservative initiatives such as Be-4-Tempelhof or ProTempelhof that promote resuming the air traffic – it also concerned various ecologically minded gardening initiatives, residents, or leisure users. These groups, however, were not without internal disputes around the means and ends of the process. For instance, at various points throughout the difficult process of preparing the referendum activists left 100% Tempelhof as they disagreed with numerous details of the foreseen referendum (interview, activist, 22.06.2012). But my point is not to argue that participatory forums foster internal conflicts that may undermine insurgency. Rather, I seek to show that they presented opportunities to disseminate divergent arguments amongst the various political actors, engaged citizens or casual bystanders and to unite desperate camps.

Consider, for instance, a pioneer project called Stadtteilgarten Schillerkiez, which describes itself as a meeting point that aims to accompany the development

“constructively critical”. While this project submits to the given format of participation, as an interviewee from this group explained, their presence on the field went beyond being an incentive for profitable investors. Their occupancy was similarly an opportunity for dissemination and reflection (interview, 24.06.2012). For Schalk, this space “serves as a Trojan horse, assuring the citizen initiative a certain presence in the field, from which it can reach out and promote its agenda, giving visibility to the constant struggle for rights to the field” (2014, p. 141). As a broader, otherwise not politically organized public frequents the ‘official’ arenas of formal deliberation, such insurgent participation provides an opportunity to involve a wider audience in a more critical discourse. Participatory spaces may be choreographed to silence alternative voices, but – at least in the present case – they allowed these voices nevertheless to be heard and helped to link divergent voices around common issues, such as the referendum.

Thirdly, invited participation presents a crucial site from which to *reframe* planning debates. The ‘citizen talks’ in 2012 provide a fitting example. The Senate had commissioned a mediation company to conduct a series of three workshops in May and June with the stated intention to collect suggestions for the continuous planning of the site (GrünBerlin, 2012).^{ix} These meetings had been planned as an information event, in which planners presented the state of affairs as well as a moderated discussion around a fixed set of topics (leisure, sport, recreation, environmental education, and urban gardening). In all meetings, slogans such as ‘participants against construction’, or ‘for the zero-alternative’ covered the bulletin boards that the workshop facilitators had provided to gather ideas about the parks future (Tempelhofer Freiheit, 2012). In the final event, a number of organized participants annexed the stage with banners claiming ‘to let the meadow remain a meadow’ (ibid.). Demanding

to be handed the microphone, they managed to state their dissent around the means and ends of planning. In assuming the moderation of this workshop, they were able to change its agenda and address those issues that they considered to be relevant. These initiatives clearly dominated the event, and may have silenced voices with different interests, but their insurgent participation also involved debating a number of highly conflictive themes that had not been foreseen in the initial agenda, such as the format of participation itself, or a number of economic questions underlying the development (Tempelhof Projekt, 2012). It is crucial to consider the preconditions necessary for such insurgency. Many of the people I spoke to were experienced in political protest or engaged in their professional life in planning-related tasks. These participants not only hold insights into political and administrative procedures and thus privileged access to decision-making power, they also build on high commitment and professional structures of organization. Thus if insurgency allows for the decentering of debates, it hardly puts citizens on more equal terms.

Finally, spaces of engagement open up a room that allows participants to envision and stage alternative forms of development. If public forums in Tempelhof prompted people to talk through development possibilities that lay outside of the scope of the Senate's vision, the engagement of the pioneers exemplifies how an active urban public was also able to stage these visions. In particular, the gardening projects have created a sense of place and ownership. Through both their permanent presence and accessibility, they have allowed visitors to appreciate the space and raised a critical awareness of its possible loss. As one interviewee told me, his project was attempting to "conquer the site with its footprint" (interview, activist, 22.06.2012). Hereby, insurgent participation compares to what Arjun Appadurai has called a philosophy of "do first talk later" (2001, p. 31). It works by setting precedents, convincing people of

their quality and learning to persevere. Particularly the gardening projects maintain a symbolic and material presence on the field. Their claim to space is visual, can be made public, spreads through the media and disseminates alternative ideas. The conclusion that pioneers will in the long-term increase the viability of constructions needs hence to be taken further. Pioneers may not only attract investors: their presence has also worked as a steady reminder of the quality of the undeveloped airfield and fostered support for resisting the development of these sites.

These four moments in which citizens develop a critical awareness for the pitfalls of planning, ally disparate voices, decenter debates or stage development alternatives point to modalities of resistance that undermine the thesis of post-politicization. Despite clear evidence of attempts to activate residents and control their conduct, these efforts may be appropriated, hijacked and reconfigured for (possibly) more progressive ends. Participation cannot merely be read as a threat to alternative aims. As part of a complex process of negotiation, it provides a platform for contestation and perhaps even a driver for political change. In looking closer at the ways in which the formal trajectories of planning are used to practice resistance, insurgent participation offers a lens through which to capture the ambivalence of resistance and engagement in the rules of the game.

Such understanding requires rethinking trajectories of contention. Insurgent participation demarcates a sphere of politics that is enmeshed in the workings of urban development. It is thus not an approach of refusal; it hardly starts from counter-hegemonic struggle; it also departs from the idea that change is only possible where resistance fundamentally questions the existing politico-economic configuration, while projects that may resemble resistance but remain within this assumed consensus are inevitably subject to cooptation. Insurgent participation highlights the close links

between complicity and resistance, cooptation and subversion, bargaining and instigating within a seemingly consensual constellation. It posits that everyday forms of intervention open up possibilities to act upon the cracks inherent in dominant planning regimes. Romanticism is not an option. Rather, as Newman suggests, this focus involves acknowledging that “[t]he residual, perhaps, can bite back: though how sharp its teeth can be in the present political conjuncture is as yet uncertain” (2012, p. 167).

Certainly, how sharp these teeth may be depends on some of the conditions that foster insurgency. Contention hardly arises out of the blue. The four dimensions previously outlined have pointed to numerous crucial preconditions that allowed insurgents to use participatory spaces. A critical awareness among those engaged and the willingness to share this experience prove essential and lead, at best, to an informed counter discourse. An infrastructure of participatory instruments through which insurgency may operate is key. Moreover, insurgency appears to be a question of individual resources such as time and capacity, the managerial qualities of political networks, and their administrative knowledge.

It is a big step from insurgent participation to a citywide referendum and to measure insurgency in terms of a success at the polls misses the point. In the end, to vote for a referendum merely implies to support a law – hardly an act of insurgency – although in the present case insurgent groups developed this law. But the insurgent moments that dominated participation in Tempelhof helped to build the critical awareness for alternative development possibilities that is certainly a prerequisite to mobilizing the necessary support for a referendum.

Conclusion

In closing, I would like to refer back to theories of communicative planning and their failure to explain the ways in which planning actually gets done. Following critics of planning, critical planning theory lacks an account of the big picture that is the political and economic context within which participation is set (Yiftachel, 2002). But if the response to this neglect views participation merely as a tool of political oppression and de-politicization, it is too easy to lose sight of the moments of contention within participation that may work to reconfigure dominant planning regimes. This omission has crucial effects.

First, I have argued that the spaces for thinking civil agency in participation that a post-political framework leaves, are too narrow. Even if formal participation has been designed to foster consensus, this perspective runs the danger of losing sight of the unruly strategies prevalent in participatory approaches. To consider forms of contestation that may unfold within the terrain of participation, this paper has outlined a number of insurgent strategies and their local effects indicating that citizens have other possibilities but to ascribe to consensus. Devaluing these ordinary, interstitial or temporary practices as not properly political prevents an adequate analysis of contestation within participation.

Second, the diagnosis of de-politicization restrains from developing an understanding of the ways in which cities adapt their participatory strategies to meet contention in processes of participation. Precisely because planning is power-laden, or, as the introduction to this symposium suggests, “an interface through which oppositions and conflicts are constituted”, control and insurgency are closely attuned to one another. If participation may seek to regulate communities, but works to trigger contention and mobilize power, planners may aim to reconfigure participatory

strategies. To disavow these dynamics through a broad-brush assertion of de-politicization detains a more fine-grained analysis of the ways in which cities meet resistance and adapt to forms of insurgent participation.

The insurgent strategies outlined here, suggest a need to question the ways in which a post-political perspective views the opportunities for contestation and urban change within processes of planning. But they are dependent on circumstance. In this paper, I have explored a diversity of conditions and mechanisms that have fostered insurgency such as the awareness of development conditions, a heated counter-discourse, or the resources to become involved. Moreover, it is crucial to note that insurgent forms of public action not necessarily democratize politics or make room for more redistributive politics. If the notion of insurgency is frequently associated with optimistic promises (cf. Meth, 2010), it is crucial to remain critical of participation both in its consensual and insurgent form. Disruption against consensual governance-programs may work productively to strengthen accountability and further local democracy (Briggs, 2008). Yet even if participation triggers contentions, it often remains to serve particularistic interests and hardly guarantees for more inclusive ends. An analysis of citizen involvement in planning needs to recognize that the unequal relations of power that are underlying insurgent spaces are not set aside only because participation may foster contention. Here, the critiques of participatory planning remain a necessary corrective that should caution us to pre-approve insurgency in processes of participation. Therefore, it is crucial to return insurgent demands to democratic processes (such as the referendum) so that they become subject to renewed bargaining, which can level power asymmetries.

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ⁱ Rather than by one coherent framework, participatory planning is implemented through a diversity of interpretations as communicative, collaborative (Healey, 1997) or critical pragmatic (Forester, 1989, 1993) planning, which share a use of critical theory, but stress distinct aspects of it.

ⁱⁱ In 1994, the '*Flächennutzungsplan*', a preparatory land-use plan that defines the planning regulations for Tempelhof was changed to rededicate the airfield into building land. This current plan still constitutes the legal framework for today's structure and lays the foundations for turning the site into one of world's largest inner-city development areas. On this basis, a masterplan was worked out 1999 by Kienast, Vogt and Albers that has determined the outlines of all successive approaches: a central park framed by building plots on the outer fringes of the airfield (Tempelhof Projekt n/d).

ⁱⁱⁱ The IBA (International Building Exhibition) is a large-scale urban renewal scheme that was initiated in 1979 and has since been an instrument of German urban planning. With the closure of the airport in 2008, Berlin's Building Director, Regula Lüscher, invited the IBA as a means to test innovative urban planning and architecture on the redevelopment site. Preliminary studies examined various planning-strategies until the Senate for Urban Development decided in June 2013 to cancel the IBA due to budgetary reasons among other things.

^{iv} The IGA is an international gardening show organized by the Deutsche Bundesgartenschau GmbH (DBG) (<http://www.iga-berlin-2017.de/>). It had been planned as one of the key projects for the development of the airport. Due to insoluble planning problems and a change in local government, the Senate decided to transfer the event to the district of Marzahn-Hellersdorf on September 18th 2012 (SenStadt, 2012b)

^v <http://www.pro-tempelhof.de/>

^{vi} <http://www.thf100.de/start.html>

^{vii} As an element of direct democracy, Berlin's state legislation allows its electorate to vote on public matters. Decisions demand a participation quorum of 50%. If they are approved by 50% of the voters, they are legally binding (State constitution § 62, § 63). Since the referendum in Tempelhof had met these thresholds, it was turned into a law on June 14th, 2014 (ct. http://www.thf100.de/tl_files/thf100/bilder/news/2014-06-24_THF-Gesetz.pdf; retrieved 01.08.2014). In

the referendum held on Mai 25th 2014, 64,3% of all participants voted for the motion. The quorum reached 29,7% of all Berliners entitled to vote (Amt für Statistik, 2014; retrieved from www.wahlen-berlin.de/Abstimmungen/ve2014_tfeld/presse/20140605VE.pdf, 1.08.2014).

^{viii} Deutschen Bundesgartenschau-Gesellschaft mbH (DBG) is a closed corporation that grants licenses to hold the garden shows. Together with the cities selected, it founds companies for the implementation of the event, such as the IGA Berlin 2017 GmbH (<http://bundesgartenschau.de/aktuell/iga-berlin-2017.html>).

^{ix} Planergemeinschaft Dubach, Kohlbrenner, (www.planergemeinschaft.de) in cooperation with nexus insitut (www.nexusinsitut.de).