



UXUC

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Urban Creativity
Scientific Journal**

Urban Territories as Malleable Matter
for Negotiating Urban Futures:
Anchors, Assemblages, Antagonisms

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Editorial

Vera Penz, *Conceptualization*

Social Anthropologist, Independent Researcher, Vienna, Austria

Urban Territories as Malleable Matter for Negotiating Urban Futures - Anchors, Assemblages, Antagonisms

Duarte argues that space, place and territory are the key dimensions to conceptualize spatial matrices. They enable us to explore 'how humans establish relations with each other and with the world, namely their physical and social surroundings' (Duarte 2017: 2). Traditionally, territories have demarcated spheres of political influence and translated power relations into physical spaces. Territories - physical or imagined - mirror continuities and discontinuities of dominance, sovereignty, participation and belonging. This issue offers a lens on urban territories as a malleable matter for negotiating urban futures from a grassroots perspective, searching for answers to the age-old question: Whose territory?

Hence, we gathered contributions from authors that want to take part in a (re-)rendering of our collective understanding of urban spaces and their territorial implications, not only as places of power and political decision-making, but as places of empowerment, co-creation, and the collective redefinition of urban lifeworlds.

Several articles examine the potential of artistic interventions in urban territories for democracy (Kaare Nielsen), community-building and participation (Luque Rodrigo, del Carmen Sánchez Miranda, Gálvez Sánchez). Rooted in arts-based research practises, Schnell, Schweiger and Billensteiner delve into collective drawing as a medium to radically reimagine collective futures and forms of coexistence.

Evaluating the perception of public art, Crespo et al. argue for a methodological shift from object-centered to community-centered approaches, focussing on its social impact rather than merely aesthetic value. In a similar sense, Klostermeier et al. offer a perspective of how AI-driven architectures can enhance cultural exploration in urban spaces, turning everyday environments in Munich into interactive, inclusive galleries.

Kovács probes notions of engagingscapes, emphasising the importance of mental models and embodied understanding of urban spaces. Zhang offers a fresh perspective on potted plants as inhabitants of the liminal, representing aesthetic-political micro-interventions in public spaces. Hudgins-Lopez takes a closer ethnographic look at 'Latine Detroiters' as transformative agents of the cities' space-time ecologies and identities.

Collectively, they offer possible answers to questions such as: How is power over political, emotional, or imaginary territory articulated in urban spaces today? Which are levers of territorial power, media of revolution, and actors that keep the struggle for urban spaces alive? Which role can creative approaches to urban studies, artistic and arts-based research as well as urban planning, architecture, and social design take in the (re-)definition of collective urban territoriality? Ultimately, this volume showcases the firm faith in self-authorship of one's habitats, and the urban as an interdisciplinary playground to contest and shape authority over territories.

