

URBAN STREETS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN PUBLIC SPACE AND MOBILITY

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Article in co-authorship with

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CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES...

- Contested Urban Space
- Environmental Sustainability
- Social Sustainability
- The Right to Mobility / Access

...EPITOMIZED IN URBAN STREETS



Minhocão, São Paulo



Leefstraat, Ghent



Parklets, San Francisco



Occupy Central, Hong Kong

LEEFSTRAAT, GHENT

- Emphasis on street as public space, public domain, meeting space, non-commercial
- Incorporates mobility functions
- Collaborative action for change
- Street closed to motorized traffic, discourages car traffic (active)
- Encouraged walking, cycling sometimes possible
- NGO, residents and government collaboration
- Several streets, each individually designed
- Directly accessible, except by car
- Car-users included in discussion and parking solutions incl.



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4 DEBATES

1. Uniting functions of public space and mobility
2. Multi-Purpose Planning
3. Sustainability Transitions & Experiments
4. Governance

1. PUBLIC SPACE AND MOBILITY FUNCTIONS

Public Space: civic space, inclusion/exclusion, city ownership, exchange, mobility, ...

Mobility: accessibility (!), proximity, segregation, (in)complete streets, shared spaces,...

Mobility and public space share: access, movement, meeting ('others'), exchange,...

Streets: 'quintessential social public space', space of both 'places and flows'

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→ Move AND linger AND interact (potential!)

→ What speeds, which functions, which sizes, which objects?

2. MULTI-PURPOSE PLANNING

Dealing with uncertainty and complexity

Need for flexibility in planning

Room for change and alternating uses



Pedestrianized (shopping) streets are as 'single-purpose' as highways...

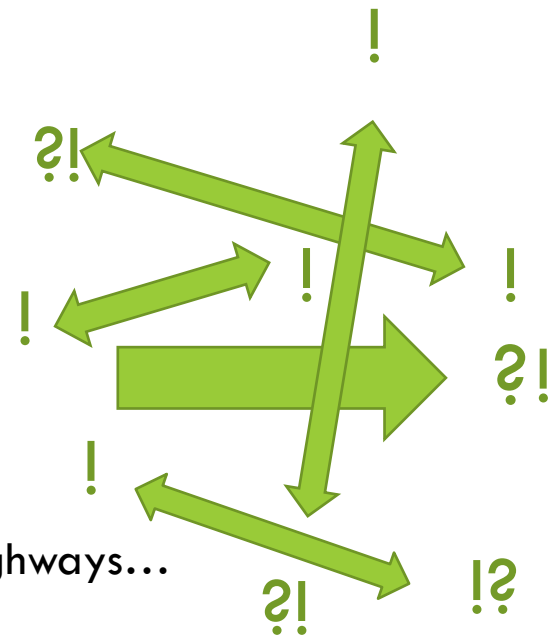
2. MULTI-PURPOSE PLANNING

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Pedestrianized (shopping) streets are as 'single-purpose' as highways...



→ No single purpose

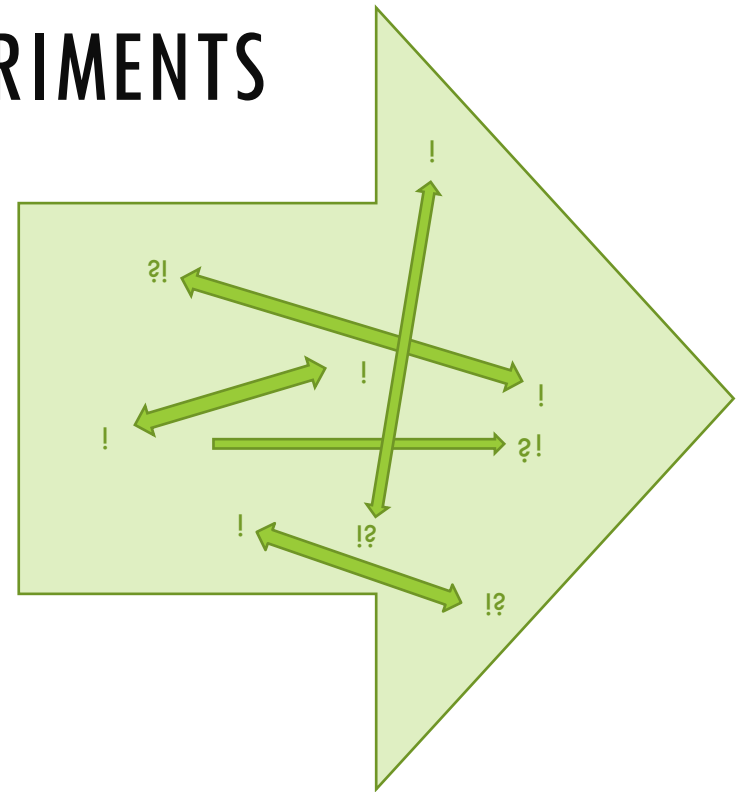
→ But what multi-purposes?

3. SUSTAIN. TRANSITIONS & EXPERIMENTS

Potential for transformative change toward sustainability

Experiments, flexibility, embracing complexity and uncertainty

Emphasis on learning



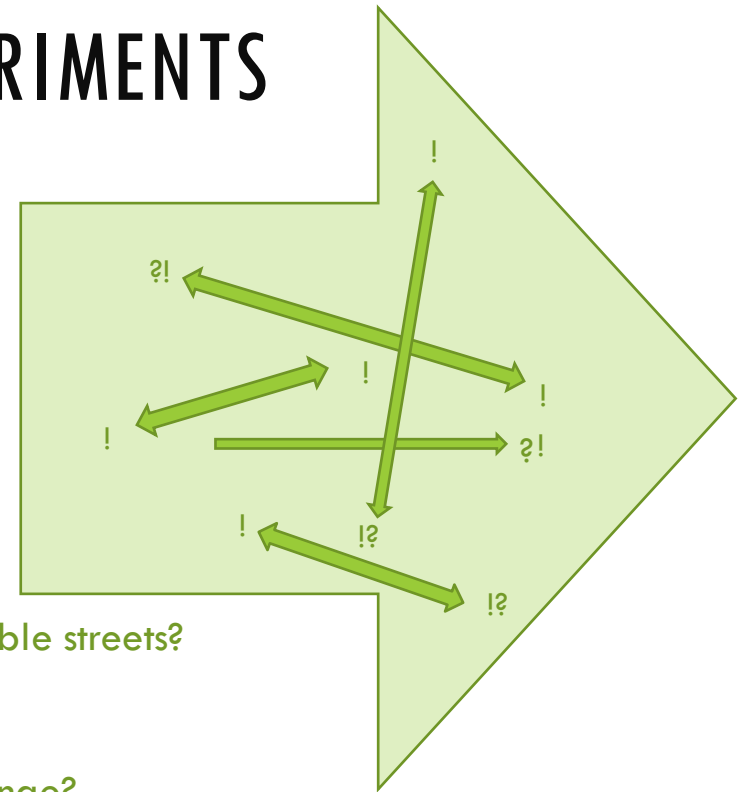
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- what kind of experimentation could generate more sustainable streets?
- how can we learn from both failure and success?
- how do we move from successful experiments to regime change?



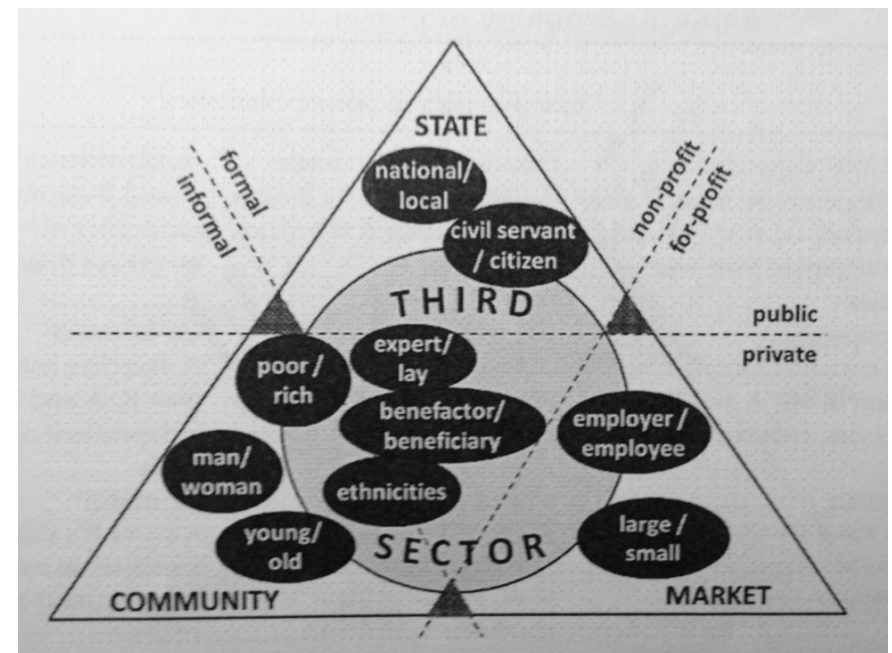
4. GOVERNANCE

Stakeholders & decision-makers

Participation & innovation

Fruitful cooperation between sectors;
overlapping roles

Power relations



Source: Avelino & Wittmayer 2015

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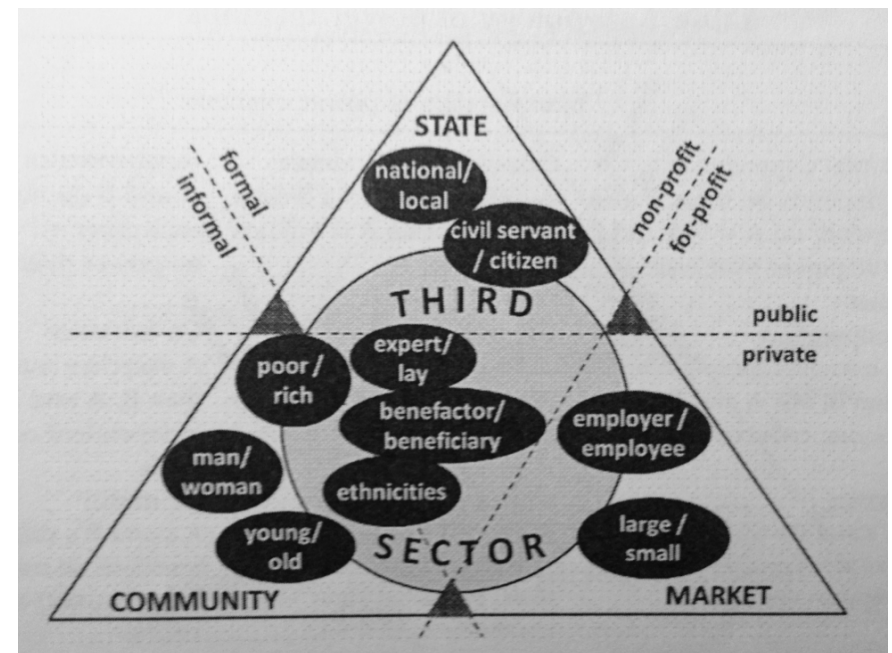
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→ Who should be involved, when, where,
how, with what purpose..?



Source: Avelino & Wittmayer 2015

THIS LEADS TO QUESTIONS

- ❑ **what characteristics** need to be present for urban public spaces and streets in particular to allow people to **move through the city but also to linger and interact** and **provide liveable environments?**
- ❑ **how can multi-purpose planning be implemented** and **allow for flexibility?**
- ❑ **what kind of experimentation** could generate more sustainable streets? How to **learn from both failure and success?** And how to **move from successful experiments to regime change?**
- ❑ **who** should be included in the debates, **when, how, where** and **for whom?**

... WHICH LEAD TO EXPERIMENTS AND MORE... QUESTIONS!

- ❑ **what characteristics to move through the city but *also* to linger and interact and provide liveable environments?**
 - Do we need slow mode focus? More street furniture? More green colour? Or plants? ...
- ❑ **how can multi-purpose planning be implemented and allow for flexibility?**
 - Through collaboration? Through experimentation? Radical or less so? ...
- ❑ **what kind of experimentation could generate more sustainable streets? How to learn from both failure and success? And how to move from successful experiments to regime change?**
 - Blocking cars/motorized vehicles? Knowledge exchange? Replication? ...
- ❑ **who should be included in the debates, when, how, where and for whom?**
 - Government? Residents? Market actors/ businesses? NGOs? ...



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DISCUSSION

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