

Deep Cities THEORY

TOOL HANDBOOK



How do I implement the Deep Cities Approach?





Urban transformation as a source of heritage values : the **Deep Cities** THEORY

The Deep Cities team of the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research explored the potential of developing a conceptual model which includes perceptions of social sustainable urban placemaking with a methodological toolbox for examining forces at play in urban transformations through the uses of heritage.

On the first level, heritage is all about politics and as a political concept the Deep Cities concept can be compared with policy concepts such as the “smart city” which is about developing technologically intelligent cities and “green cities” which is about making environmentally sound cities. Deep Cities is as political and policy concept about how the layered historical city - the temporality in cities – are perceived and accessed as heritage values for being used in urban planning and placemaking.

On the second level, with the concept Deep Cities we want to draw attention to how urban transformation through heritage values would partake in developing socially sustainable cities. Making economically robust cities is not enough. Without the social and cultural dimension - that means cities for wellbeing, good neighborhoods, identity etc. - urban placemaking will lack the main ingredients as being livable cities. We ask: What makes a place to be a good livable place for people? Who’s city? What role does heritage play in socially inclusive placemaking?

On the third level, Deep Cities becomes a theoretical concept for understanding preservation theories and ideologies on how to value urban transformation, for instance relict or fragmented traces as heritage values for being included in urban planning strategies.



Example : The Tuktgus Wall as fragmented “ruin” heritage in renewed urban placemaking

WHEN?

SUGGESTED Planning Phase

Deep Cities Theory Tools would have a valuable contribution especially in the early stages of the planning processes for understand the aims and the objectives which are desired to achieve, for instance as part of strategic heritage / environmental assessment tools.

WHO?

This tool would be a resource for decision makers, urban planners, urban heritage managers, etc to help them to screen the possibilities and “showstoppers” for initiation and cooperation in urban development / regeneration projects.



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CRITICAL URBAN THEORY

When taking the conceptual approach to Deep Cities further a fruitful approach has been to build upon Critical Urban Theory as this helps urban stakeholders and developers to understand the importance of social diversity, community involvement, participatory engagement and power relationships in urban placemaking. In critical urban theory, these topics are often expressed by expressions such as the 'right to the city', 'cities for citizens' or the 'social just' city.

Deep Cities are responding to those societal needs by critically examining urban transformation as value, which can offer practical solutions to social problems or social aims in real planning situations.

Using Critical Urban Theory as a theoretical lens for understanding urban placemaking through heritage will make awareness of social conflicts and dissonances, dynamics of bottom-up vs top-down social interactions, intersectional inclusiveness, socially diversity and divisiveness in cities.



Tagging at a Nordic 'Starbucks-like' coffeehouse chain at Grünerløkka in Oslo, Norway, writing "Stop-the-gentrification" (of our neighborhood) signed by the symbol "A" for Anarchists, a social activism protest movement against global capitalist gentrification which is believed to promote stereotype places and the loss of uniqueness promoting alienation.





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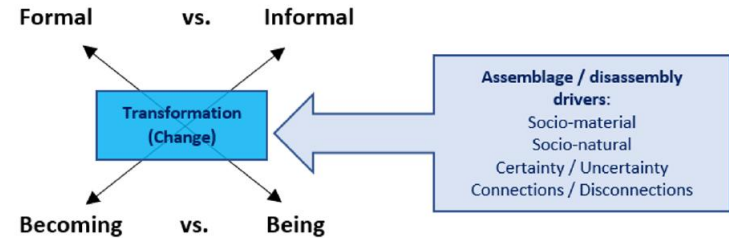
URBAN ASSEMBLAGE THEORY

Taking the Critical Urban Theory one step further, we found a sound methodological approach in Urban Assemblage Theory for making a conceptual framework for understanding what the drivers, processes and dynamic relations in urban placemaking would be when involving the uses of heritage.

Assemblage urbanism seeks, from empirical, methodological and ontological levels of knowledge, to combine urban trajectories on human and non-human interfaces, networked interdependencies and the production of socio-material infrastructures, as well as human agency and social forces, in the processes of social transformation.

Assemblage urbanism gives us a conceptual map for understanding the variables of structures and processes at play in placemaking by the uses of heritage. In other words, the complex driving forces at play in urban placemaking, from overall 'planetary urbanization processes, e.g., in gentrification processes worldwide, to local drivers and dynamic processes of formal (heritage management, planners etc.) vs informal processes (people-centred approaches), and places that are more fixed (in their 'being') or more open for change (as in its 'becoming').

Urban Assemblage Theory would be a valuable methodological tool in the developing of a conceptual map in early planning situations for understanding statuses que and for future scenario and prediction modelling calculating the structures and structural changes, dynamic relationships and processes at play in placemaking by the uses of heritage.



Assemblage thinking point to the dynamic relationships in placemaking where there is a crisscrossing of tensions between 'formal' and 'informal' as well as between 'being' and 'becoming' in urban transformation processes. This includes the historicity of place and the variable actions and intentions in placemaking for creating sustainable urban environments. Placemaking is an open system affected by various drivers of change, depending on two sets of interrelated design concepts: assemblage and disassembly (and thereby as a process affected by reassembled placemaking).



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Urban Assemblage Theory gives access to a critically reflexive approach for defining good vs bad (heritage-led) urban development projects / placemaking. By pinpointing the conceptual framework based on Urban Assemblage Theory we learned about how complex processes of placemaking work, and what does not work. By including the temporality - the shifting character of urban placemaking over time - and the structural and dynamic drivers that defines the complexity of urban assemblages in heritage-based placemaking urban stakeholders and developers would be able to enable heritage and evaluate the function of heritage in social sustainable urban development.

OTHER RELATED METHODOLOGY

Systems Dynamics Modelling simply means the changing behaviour of systems, which can be used in computer modelling for also simulating behaviour of large complex systems. Systems Dynamics Modelling simulates or conceptualizes complex relatively constant over time structures and dynamic processes of change.

Systems Dynamics Modelling can be used both in retrospective analysis for understanding historical changes and for prediction modelling and scenario analysis on possibly future changes. We can distinguish even three System Dynamic approaches, from less intensive towards a deeper involvement of participation: Group model building (GMB), participatory system dynamics modelling (PSDM), and community-based system dynamics (CBSD).

Grounded Theory resonates with the methodological approaches on assembling regeneration, which puts to ground the importance to starting from empirical detail. A focus on how to implement participatory approaches in heritage-led urban regeneration will lead our attention to 'Constructivist Grounded Theory', which in short defines a systematic methodology where the construction of hypotheses and theories 'emerge' from experience, observations, and practices (inductive reasoning) of for instance the collecting and analysis of qualitative data. Grounded theory (or methodology) goes from data to defining theory of generalized knowledge, that for instance could be social variation in systemic behaviour when defining the relationship of built urban environments and social sustainability (e.g., quality of urban life).



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DEEP CITIES
THEORY

TOOL



FURTHER READINGS

- Kalliopi Fouseki, Torgrim Sneve Guttormsen, Grete Swensen, 2019, **Heritage and Sustainable Urban Transformations, A 'deep cities' approach**, Chapter 1, 1-15, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429462894-1>
- Neil Brenner, David J. Madden & David Wachsmuth, 2011, **Assemblage urbanism and the challenges of critical urban theory**, *City*, 15:2, 225-240, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2011.568717>
- Neil Brenner, **What is critical urban theory?**, 2009, *City*, 13:2-3, 198-207, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604810902996466>

