# Engaging

# (for) Social
# Change

## Towards New Forms
## of Collective Action

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# Off the Beaten Track – Sensory Ethnography as the Missing Layer in Urban Planning

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## Introduction

For the Russian formalists, defamiliarization is in the very center of literary (artistic) creativity: it consists of a world view, and above all, a view of the everydayness that reveals something we've never seen before in things we have been taking for granted. This new, asquint view has the power to undermine our acceptance of the reality into which we are immersed and to reconsider its alleged self-understanding and justification. The process of ethnographic mapping, which will be in the focus of this paper, can be understood as the *defamiliarization of the city*. Cities, as complex spaces, crowded with places, people, communities, rhythms, sounds, memories, routines and conflicts, create special environments that are constantly changing. However, cities do not change by themselves. Since one of the goals of this paper is precisely putting an emphasis on agency (Tilley 2001: 260) of the inhabitants and residents of the city - I will say that these places are being constantly changed. By changing, cities do not lose but rather acquire plurality and affluence of meaning.

As a young girl, I used to play improvised strategic games with my peers, drawing maps of our neighborhood with chalk, or with a stick in sand or engraving it into the wall of a wooden garage with a divider. Later on, and yet before the Google maps, when I began to travel, I started to collect the maps of cities I visited as some kind of relics. Photos gave memories a clear visual component, and the maps spatialized them. This mapmaking hobby attained new shape and intensity during my first serious encounter with *the field*. Ethnographic curiosity was, as it usually does, sparked by the challenge of facing the unknown city and being surrounded by people whose language I do not understand. By obtaining knowledge, adapting and pursuing familiarity, arbitrariness of meanings in cities became palpable. Ethnographic mapping voyage presented in this paper was my way of grasping that arbitrariness, enduring it and learning from it.

## Making sensory ethnography on foot

This paper is a result of ethnographic mapping project that took place in Poznań between 29.04. and 30.07.2018. Poznań was imposed since the University of Belgrade, where I am a doctoral student at the department of ethnology and anthropology at the Faculty of Philosophy, and the University of Adam Mickiewicz from Poznań established an *Erasmus+* partnership.

During the field research in Poznań I went for long walks with my informants that were inspired by the works of Tim Ingold (2008, 2015) and sensory ethnography methods (Pink 2008, Grimshaw 2001). We didn't, however, choose some random paths but the ones they – as inhabitants of socialist-modernist housing estates on the right bank of

Warta – take every day. Even though it may sound trivi-al, walks are a very convenient way to "enter" the field, to get information that would otherwise remain "behind the scenes" during formal interviews. Walks, due to a more in-formal approach, are also well-suited for the exploratory part of ethnographic research. They are also very suitable for informants to get used to the researcher's presence, to get to know each other and to spend some time in a joint activity before they let a complete and extremely curious stranger into their home and share with him/her their ev-eryday life and intimate thoughts.

During these two-hour strolls, we walked through the roads and shortcuts where they are going every day - to the bus station, to the bakery, we followed a path they take while jogging and went to see where they leave bicycles. But it was far more than a neighborhood sightseeing. They showed me not only the landmarks such as the favorite bench, a mural or a blossoming lilacs tree, but also the unlit underground passages they avoid, the corners where "suspicious types", local hooligans (*blokersi,* pl.) are gathering or simply areas that smell bad.

Besides the semi-structured in-depth interviews made during those walks, we both took pictures of the visited area and significant objects, and I made recordings of the distinctive sounds and noises of the neighborhoods. Includ-ing and even provoking different sensory stimuli built in the layered mental image of their housing estates was a big and important part of the interviews and I believe it shouldn't be considered negligible since "multisensory experience of any physical and material environment is inseparable from the cultural knowledge and everyday practices through which the city is built and experienced" (Pink 2008: 96). The material collected during these walks is so stratified and valuable that anyone who has dealt with a similar type

of research knows how painfully monotonous is the process of its systematization. As a final result, we get folders. Each informant has his/her own. Within one folder there are more of them. Photos. Sound recordings. Transcripts. And then for the next encounter one more, exactly the same folder, with a different date in the description. And then all of it again for the next informant and so on... Besides that, my reflections on the research process and the encounters themselves are located in a completely separated place, outside of all the folders, in the research journal. But all these precious records about the city do not communicate with each other, located in electronic folders.

> The problem is that, most obviously, fragmented knowledge is, by definition, incomplete knowledge, and, less obviously, fragmented knowledge - because it lacks a surrounding context -is difficult to evaluate. Not only is there much that we do not know, then, but it is also hard to judge how important or generalizable what we do know may be. (Lofland, 1998: 19)

I needed to defragment the ethnography I was creating, to establish a system of communication among the narratives of the respondents, their memories, their shortcuts and local tales. The first encounter with one of the respondents helped me find the system I yearned for. The following ethnographic vignette is an excerpt from the field diary that describes that encounter:

I lost myself a little bit while trying to find that bar called "Dragon", but it was worth it. A blond guy with glasses waited for me in front of it, comfortably sitting in a deckchair. I apologized for being late, he approached, said "I am Sasha" and hugged me, although I offered my hand clumsily. This immediacy was refreshing. Somehow we just clicked, like real buddies. We even smoke the same cigars, LM Forward. He told me about his parents and panel housing he grew up – a settlement built for workers at the Ukrainian power

plant. He kept talking about illegally built terraces that appear overnight like mushrooms, renovation and fake black birds on the windows used to scare pigeons, and about Polish non-existent attitude towards public spaces that he explains with the Cold War paranoia. By using cigarette packs, glasses, ashtray, lighters and phones and, we created the Poznań map on the table and mapped all the settlements I had visited so far, the ones where he lives or has lived, and the ones I should be visiting. I was amused by the fact that we are thinking about space in a very similar way. We must have looked weird to everyone around us because we were the loudest and most expressive. Bestriding our benches, we were surrounded by that "map" of the scattered inventory in which we only managed to find a way. When a waitress came to clear the tables, we "protected" all those settlements and buildings, the glasses we placed on the table and pots around us. We even made Warta river and the train racks out of cigarettes. If we were to make a digression, of course we would forget about that map, but soon, returning to the topic, we would continue to draw the city around the garden table. The ease with which we communicated with the help of that imaginary map gave me the idea. Was it always that simple?

The map is available for preview via MyMaps free service offered by Google.[1] It is a result of eight in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with seven informants, inhabitants of five different housing estates in Nowe Miasto. Housing estates encompassed by the mapping are: *osiedle Lecha, osiedle Czeha, osiedle Rusa, osiedle Orła Białego.*[2] The following chart contains basic information about the informants:

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1 https://goo.gl/nLGYi6 Accessed: 09.10.2018.
2 Osiedle is a Polish word for housing estate or any form of settlement and researched housing estates contain it in the official, administrative name. Informants were often referring to the housing estate they live in as „my osiedle". That combination of English and Polish can bring us to the conclusion that the concept of osiedle is crammed with (informal) meaning, similar to "blok" in New Belgrade.

| Name | Age | Gender | Housing Estate | Time spent in that HE | Occupation | Members of household | Color |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lukasz | 44 | Male | osiedle Czeha | 1976-1999 | Anthropologist (professor at AMU) | 5 (mother, father, 3 sons – he is one of them) | Red |
| Michał | 21 | Male | osiedle Czeha | October 2017 – present | Student (Law) | 4 (girlfriend and 2 flatmates) | Blue |
| Ewa | 20 | Female | osiedle Czeha | October 2017 – present | Student (Economy) | 4 (boyfriend and 2 flatmates) | Blue |
| Michalina | 26 | Female | osiedle Orła Białego | 1994 – present | Civil servant in the Poznań city development department | 3 (mother, father and daughter – herself) | Pink |
| Ewa | 50 | Female | osiedle Orła Białego | 1994 – present | English language professor for foreign students, AMU | 3 (husband, daughter and herself) | Pink |
| Oleksandr | 25 | Male | osiedle Rusa | 2013 – present | Economist | 1 | Yellow |
| Piotr | 20 | Male | osiedle Lecha | 2016 – present | Student (Neuroscience) | 3 (friends, flatmates) | Green |

As indicated in the table, each informant's responses are marked in the legend using a different color (red, green, blue, pink and yellow). In some cases, two informants are marked with the same color and the reason for it is that they belong to the same house-hold. It is also worth mentioning that in those cases, interviews weren't conducted separately.

Moreover, the map contains several "layers" or segments: domestic territory, sounds, smells, flavors, churches, objects, shopping, home, memories, avoided places. Layers labeled as: domestic territory; objects; and avoided places are inspired by Lyn Lofland's "provisional formulation of person-to-place connections: (1) memorialized locales, (2) paths/rounds/ranges, and (3) hangouts and home territories" (Lofland 1998: 66).
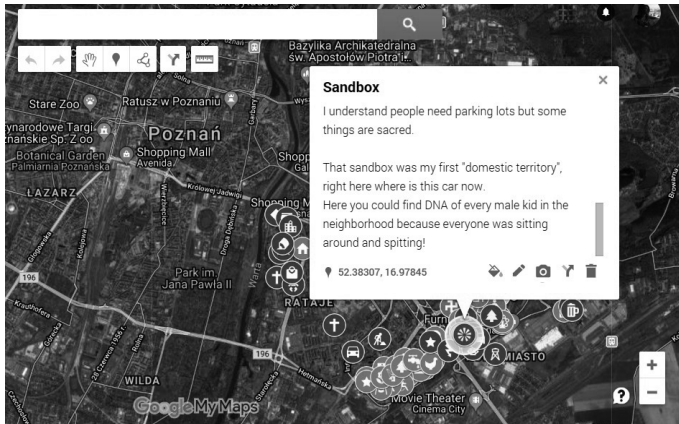


*Figure 1*

Memories, or "memorialized locales" by Lofland's typology, are clearly one of the most personalized layers in this map. She defines them as "small pieces of the public realm that, because of events that happened and/or because of some object (e.g. a statue) that resides within them, take on, for some set of persons, the aura of "sacred places" (*Ibid.*)

According to the same typology *Paths/Rounds/Ranges* is the "concept-cluster composed of paths, rounds, and ranges refers to locales that persons encounter or move through on a daily or nearly daily basis and with which they establish a familiar relationship" (*Ibid:* 67). Nowe Miasto is often perceived as "the bedroom of Poznań" and as a result of insufficent services and facilities on the right bank of Warta the rounds and ranges of my informants often went beyound the borders of explored housing estates, knitting the net across the city. Bearing that in mind, I have decided to focus soley on the avoided roads.

When it comes to the domestic or home territory, the original articulation of the concept (borrowed from animal studies) is to be found in Stanford Lyman's and Marvin Scott's 1967 piece *Territoriality: A Neglected Sociological Dimension*: "Home territories are areas where the regular participants have a relative freedom of behavior and a sense of intimacy and control over the area" (Lyman & Scott 1976, in Lofland 1998: 70). The kinds of space that can serve as home territories are remarkably varied (Ibid. 71) as well as their scope. That is, I believe, obviously represented in this map (domestic territory).

Layers labeled as: sounds, smells and flavors are inspired by the following pieces: Sarah Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography* (2009), Anna Grimshaw, *The Ethnographer's Eye: Ways of Seeing in Modern Anthropology* (2001) and a collection *Ritual, Performance and the Senses* edited by Michael Bull and Jon Mitchell (2015). The thread of inspiration which originates from these works is embedded in the mapping process more implicitly and less structurally. Sensory ethnography is not, however, "just another route in an increasingly fragmented map of approaches to ethnographic practice" (Pink 2009: 8). It is a critical methodology which insists that ethnography is "a reflexive and experimental

process through which understanding, knowing and (academic) knowledge are produced" (*Ibid*). Insisting on the bodily, sensory experience of cities gains importance in a contemporary context. By no stretch of imagination todays researcher with academic affiliation could commit to the ideal of long term, old-fashioned participant observation fieldwork. In the chapter titled "What is sensory ethnography", not only does Sarah Pink explain this methodological concept, but also explains why it could be tailored for contemporary (urban) anthropology:

> While classic observational methods certainly produce valuable in-depth and often detailed descriptions of other people's lives, this type of fieldwork is often not viable in contemporary context. This might be because the research is focused in environments where it would be impractical and inappropriate for researchers to go and live for long periods with research participants, for instance, in a modern western home or in a workplace to which the researcher has limited access (Pink 2009: 9).

These newly developed, innovative methods are not short-cuts to the materials that could have been produced through the classical approach, they are rather taking us off the beaten track. Methods of sensory ethnography are "alternative, and ultimately valid, ways of seeking to understand and engage with other people's worlds trough sharing activities, practices and inviting new forms of expression" (*Ibid.*).

Layer labeled as Objects is the most extensive and the most abundant. It could have been merged with other layers such as Memories. However, the noted objects spatialize locales in the researched housing estates that have become localities, public realms that have become known, familiar, more personal.

Layers labeled as Churches and Shopping were not part of the initial idea of mapping. However, through the interviews they crystalized as of particular importance to the informants/dwellers of the researched housing estates. When it comes to shopping and consumer habits, one discount store, Biedronka, plays a significant role in all the narratives. Those findings have already gained in importance among human geographers in Poland - Magdalena Fuhrmann from the University of Warsaw wrote about "the biedronkization of the public space" (Fuhrmann 2017: 47-55). Postmodern Catholic temples are also an integral part of the housing estates and the urban landscape in Poland since the late 1970s, and passing them by during our walks instigated informants to express their opinion on the growing influence of the Catholic Church and re-traditionalizing of the contemporary Polish society.

292    Although it is interesting to analyze different meanings that the same places carry for different people (the same school building can evoke blithe teenage memories for one, while evoking "the symbolical end of childhood" and death of a close friend during the construction of the school for the other informant), it is even more important to pay attention to what places in the settlement always bear meanings (e.g. Church, Elementary school).

Finally, within every layer there is a large number of markers, each of them is illustrated with the informants' quotes and (in most cases) photographs. Although I have collected recordings of the distinctive sounds of the housing estates, it wasn't possible to create a soundscape and include them in the map by using services offered by Google maps. Narrative descriptions of those sounds can, however, be found in the map.

## Theoretical Framework

Mapping is a form of place-making. Anthropologically built maps help in the process of understanding, but also in the process of the production of social space (Lefebvre 1991).

> 'Space' is more abstract than 'place'. What begins as un-differentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value (...) The ideas 'space' and 'place' require each other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place. (Yi-Fu Tuan 1977: 6).

Since the ethnographic mapping that I refer to in this paper did not take place in the territory of the whole city of Poznań, but only in housing estates in its eastern part, it is significant to introduce a theoretical concept of public realms I will be using for the study and analysis of housing estates, and later cities.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, *Housing Estate is a residential area in which the houses have all been planned and built at the same time.*[3] On the other hand, human geographers such as Ivan Andraško define them as "dynamic, ever-changing socio-technical-spatial formations constantly passing through a continuous process of (re)production by various forces/actors and (power)relations" (Andraško 2017: 4). Housing Estates in Nowe Miasto, where I have conducted this project of ethnographic mapping, correspond to both definitions.

Although green and recreation areas, playgrounds and walkways between buildings of a housing estate are open,

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3      https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/housing_estate Accessed: 10.10.2018.

public spaces they are, however, not as public as for example a city square. Already in the sixties Anselm Strauss noticed that many public areas are not very public which led him to distinguish between what he called "locations" and "locales" (Strauss 1961, in Lofland 1998: 33). In that sense housing estates are seen as *locales*, although they may become locations for some of its residents. Locales are "bounded portions of non-private space dominated by strangers or categorical relations" (*Ibid*). Although green and recreation areas, playgrounds and walkways between buildings of a housing estate are open, public spaces they are, however, not as public as for example a city square. Already in the sixties Anselm Strauss noticed that many public areas are not very public which led him to distinguish between what he called "locations" and "locales" (Strauss 1961, in Lofland 1998: 33). In that sense housing estates are seen as *locales*, although they may become locations for some of its residents. Locales are "bounded portions of non-private space dominated by strangers or categorical relations" (*Ibid*).

> Like 'real' kingdoms, the public realm not only has a geography, it has a history, a culture (behavioral norms, esthetic values, preferred pleasures), and a complex web of internal relationships. Again, similar to 'real' kingdoms, it is the object not only of perceptions, but of conceptions as well. (Lofland 1998: 16).

In her eminently influential book, *The Public Realm: Exploring the City's Quintessential Social Territory* (1998), Lyn Lofland defines *the public realm* as social, not physical territory "constituted of those areas of urban settlements in which individuals in co-presence tend to be personally unknown or only categorically known to one another" (Lofland 1998: 30). Basically, public realms are inhabited by "strangers". In that regard, it is worth mentioning that my informants didn't know each other despite living in neighborly housing

estates, and moreover they weren't familiar with other people's everyday uses and interpretations of the same paths, objects and facilities. Bearing that in mind, defining open, common spaces in housing estates as public realms, rather than public spaces, seemed quite appropriate.

## Application

> Urbanites are seen as interacting almost subliminally, demanding nothing of each other, making no contacts with each other, merely passing near each other (Strauss 1961: 63-64).

Ethnographic, mental mapping of the housing estates on the right bank of Warta created a dialogue between silent, personal practices, everyday habits and trajectories of my informants, occupants of the "public realm" (Lofland 1998) of Nowe Miasto. Inspired by the possibilities of reading, overlapping and combining various narratives and memories offered by this map, I began to think about the ways in which ethnographic research can contribute to the understanding of urban phenomena, and more specifically how it can contribute to the research of cultural dynamics and sociability in large modern cities, as well as smaller ones.

The built environment of the city, or "hard territorial capital" (Petrović 2014: 371), is in direct interaction with our world, more precisely, it *is* our world. Understanding the different housing estates and their inhabitants requires from a social scientist to descend to the ground, to understand that the life-worlds focus on the everyday life and meanings created by the repetition of activities in this material environment (Hyler 2013: 372). The life-world is primarily "something that you think with rather than think

about" (Frykman & Gilje 2003: 36-37). Bearing this in mind, it is clear why my informants were astonished with almost every asked question, why they initially provided quantitative data on the number of tenants in their building or the number of students in their elementary school. It was just after my insistence that the respondent recalled how she chose one of the three (identical) kindergartens in their estate for her daughter. Ewa remembered that she chose that one because in its courtyard grew a beautiful bush of yellow flowers and she loved to picture her daughter playing there. One other informant, Piotr, was completely confused by the question whether he is always jogging around his housing estate in a counterclockwise direction and why. Just then he realized that it's because jogging that way he can avoid more trams and noise pollution. These are not things we think about. We live them, repeat them mechanically, feel them, take them for granted. This engaging reflexivity of my respondents probes into possibility of researching both their individual and collective – private and public – (social) engagement within the given public realm. Considering that "street" and "kitchen" are two out of four research areas within the Research Platform for Social Engagement Studies of the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory (Research Platform for Social Engagement Studies, 2018), the informants' reflexivity on their neighborhoods that are trapped between private and public, could offer a new perspective for understanding civic participation and community engagement. Researchers gathered around this platform are united in an endeavor to include "the private dimension of everyday life into the broader understanding of social engagement and strive to demonstrate that socially engaged actors face various deterrents in their willingness to produce social change" (ibid). Although I am more than interested in both individual and collective practices

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that occur on one's way from the "kitchen" to the "street", mapping the voyage is not a sufficient methodological tool. Grasping it would require more sophisticated and refined methodology that wouldn't be too intrusive in everyday-ness of the observed community.

Neighborhoods and individual places in Poznań, or any other city, must be understood through the multiplicity of life-worlds existing there, creating different meanings about the same objects, events and spaces – together and separately from each other. It is obvious that the explored housing estates were interpreted and lived very differently in relation to those who constituted them through everyday use.

On the other hand, in the sociology of the city and related disciplines, cities are often interpreted as "entities inde-pendent of their inhabitants" (Magnani 2005: 11-29). They are conceived as completely determined by the transitional economy, local elites, political lobbies, demographic vari-ables and other macro factors. Lyn Lofland claims that this tendency for sociologists to denigrate the study of certain areas of social life that they define as not "big" enough, not "important" enough, and not sufficiently amenable to "hard" techniques is a part of a syndrome she labeled as "exaggerated manliness" (Lofland 1990).

On this occasion, I do not want to challenge the influence of these macro factors on the appearance and future of our cities, but to offer an additional perspective in which the city is not just a set design deprived of everyday life, activi-ties, actions, places of meetings, social relations – a city whose citizens are not passive recipients (Barthes 1991), where people aren't added to the rendered images of the city just for scale.

In many ways, urban planners have the task of constant (re) constructing urban environments, especially public spaces (Hyler 2013: 365). As a result of such practice, public and social life is determined by the possibilities that space - and finance - allow. In her book *Culture and Planning* (2011), Simone Abram argues that city planners also produce culture and in order to bring culture into focus in planning, it is necessary to problematize the structures and categories surrounding it. In contrast, people also create places, inhaling life into empty plots within blocks for which there was not enough money to build an outpatient clinic, or by illegally making communal gardens in times of inflation. These practices are the best illustrations of Lefebvre's concept of the production of social space (Lefebvre 1991).

Ethnographic research brings us insights "from close-ups and within" (Magnani 2005). The change of focus that anthropological perspective permits, largely the result of ethnography as a method, allows us to avoid the dichotomy that puts individuals and urban mega-structures and actors into opposition. If we understand built environment as an outline for engagement that was imposed from above by various stakeholders, the inhabitants / people / citizens are coming out as the ones who are getting around those rigid outlines by redrawing and tailoring the public realms through their networks of relationships, everyday trajectories, lifestyles, habits, conflicts and memories, thus transforming and dividing space into places. Even though methods of sensory ethnography could be applied to the analysis of macro factors' and stakeholders' impact on the microcosms of the everydayness, and despite the unquestionable significance of such insights for understanding urban phenomenon, further debate on that is beyond the scope of this paper. The research, from the very beginning, insisted on the emic approach by focusing on the life-worlds of inhab-

itants of large *osiedles (*pl. housing estate). Narratives about power relations, even though theoretically analyzable, did not appear during walks and neighborhood mapping. Of course, I do not attempt to annihilate the existence of such power-relations, but to stay modestly converged to the ethnographic mapping potential for engagement.

The practices of detailed, ethnographic mapping open the possibility of a different understanding of the places, based on human, lived, experience. „The mutual shaping of place constitutes its particular identity and the identity of those within it" (Hyler 2013: 372). As Casey puts it, "lived bodies belong to places and help to constitute them" (Casey 1996: 24). This new understanding does not only apply to the way in which the spaces are produced, but also how they are figuring in the experience and consumption of local identities. According to Samantha Hyler, "cultural mapping" explores knowledge gathered through ethnography, translates cultural information into folders and finds possible points of application (Hyler 2013: 374).

How can physical, infrastructure planning incorporate ethnographic research of communities and everyday life in urban environments? The methodology I practiced in Poznań was experimental and certainly too phenomenological in relation to what the applied, engaged urban anthropology could have been. However, this map is not the answer, but just a spark that triggered the avalanche of questions. One of those questions is how the knowledge derived from ethnographic research on the culture of life in housing estates and place-making can be used in human-centric urbanism?

The approach I advocate is very modest, so modest that even this map seems too ambitious. The anthropological analysis I propose does not take into account the entire city. Of course, the reference framework of research takes

into account a macroeconomic context, historical, political and cultural. These are not factors that can easily be overlooked. However, in order for the ethnography of the settlement to be applicable, it must be detailed and it must offer a bottom-up perspective.

> A goal in all mapmaking is to render the visual image in such a way that different phenomena are distinguishable from one another: oceans from land masses, for example, or one nation-state from another (…) But as we move into mapmaking, the very simplicity of the dichotomy makes it less useful; exactly because it is simple, it distorts the messier empirical reality it is supposed to illuminate (Lofland 1998: 31).

By narrowing the focus, ethnography becomes denser and our descriptions become thicker (Geertz, 1973). By setting up a narrow framework to the ethnographic research and composing a detailed map by focusing eclectic curiosity of an ethnographer just to a scope of a single settlement, pigeon-holed surfaces or avoided roads, the contribution and thus engagement of ethnography becomes substantial.

> The incorporation of these players (regular people) and their practices would enable one to introduce other points of view regarding the dynamics of the city, going beyond the "competent" examination that decides what is right and what is wrong and also going beyond the perspective and interests of power, which decides what is convenient and profitable. (Mangani 2005: 11-29)

This form of mental, ethnographic mapping is not just a process of visualization, but an understanding of the city, a tool for involving people and their participation in planning processes. If ethnographic knowledge is transmitted through maps and the process of their use in planning, it can be reflected in development strategies.

# Concluding Remarks

In pre-election promises and urban planning ideas of city authorities, we often meet concepts such as "social sustainability", "human-scale", "cities for people". Despite honorable exceptions, these concepts still appear merely as floccules and ornaments of the urbanistic and local government's discourse, since the people rarely get to be asked and involved in the city-making and decision-making processes. On the other side, individual or collective engagement for improvement of the quality of life in cities or housing estates is often perceived as an impossible task or wasting irrecoverable resources of one's energy and time.

Urban planning usually focuses on physical details and concepts, the production of maps and rendering materials that transfer experiences and development opportunities. People are primarily perceived as statistical abstractions, and participation is measured quantitatively by how many citizens came to meetings, took brochures home, or answered a questionnaire. What citizens usually achieve in all this kind of activity is that they have "participated in participation". Rendered images of the future projects displayed to them during public debates are ornamented by imaginary, often stereotypical, "potential users" of public spaces.

However, in order for "cities for people" to become more than a lip service, I argue that urban planning practice (and theory) should incorporate ethnographic methodology and explicit social goals (Hyler 2013: 365). Mediation between institutions, experts and citizens could be one of the possible ways for applying urban anthropology and ethnography in city-making. Ethnography, engaged through its application in urbanism brings in a stronger focus on questioning what potential spaces mean for real, rather than potential

individual users. Because people are real. Spaces are potential.

Ethnographic mapping and engaged urban anthropology could develop phenomenological and sensory approaches to urban space, places, and communities in order to make the unique place identities as well as the life-world experiences resulting from the person-to-place connections visible. In order to achieve the ethnographic ideal of participant-observation and truly participate in city-making, we must develop and improve ways of translating our anthropological knowledge through cultural maps into strategic city planning processes, as a mediation between city planners and citizens.

The practice of creating and using ethnographic maps must become a mean of mediation in order for ethnographic knowledge to be involved in the process of planning and building of space and built environment. Ethnographic maps as a medium transmit the voices, ideas and priorities of real, not potential, users of space. In the struggle for the Right to the City, ethnography is a sidekick.

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