

1st draft short working and discussion paper.

Temporary uses as innovations of spatial planning?

Thomas Honeck

Leibniz-Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning
DFG: "Innovations in Urban Planning"
Humboldt University of Berlin
E-Mail: honeck@irs-net.de

This working paper aims on facilitating preparation discussions for an article on "Temporary Uses as an Innovation in Spatial Planning". It was presented to a small group of scholars during the workshop "Transience and Permanence in Urban Development" at Sheffield University in January 2015. The working paper is based on a research, which forms part of the DFG-funded project "Innovations in Spatial Planning" at Leibniz-Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning (IRS) and University of Stuttgart.

1. Observations and research questions

During the past twenty years, temporary uses have gained a new dynamic within processes of spatial planning in Germany. Different observations indicate the rising importance of temporary uses and their new appreciation by planners, such as:

- rising quantities of projects of temporary use,
- new qualities and new meanings of temporary uses for multiple functional contexts of cities,
- a diversity of German cities with different structural conditions and sizes, in which temporary uses are carried out and funded institutionally,
- institutionalisations such as public agencies to facilitate temporary use and a change of the German building code in 2004,
- an involvement of temporary uses in large scale and representative planning projects,
- a growing number of publications, congresses and workshops on temporary use,
- a diversification and professionalization of users,
- rising numbers of private landowners who consider temporary uses in developments,
- global players who involve the subversive images of temporary uses in marketing campaigns.

In contrast to current observations, only 25 years ago temporary uses have been mostly unwanted by planners and urban authorities. They have been carried out informally or based on loose agreements between private landowners and users. Temporary uses even triggered conflicts between city councils and squatting movements in the 1980s. Concluding the observations, the formalisation of temporary uses went along with a major cut from former planning practices.

The new way planning involves temporary uses is hence conceived as a *social innovation* (Rammert 2010). Social innovation is here used in an *analytical* sense and has no normative connotation. The innovation perspective focusses on intentional acts of stakeholders during the described change. It helps to approach the main research question:

- How have temporary uses as relatively new procedures emerged, institutionalised and diffused in the German system of spatial planning?

Within this question four major dimensions of the innovation are analysed:

- (1.) the temporal dimension,
- (2.) the spatial dimension,
- (3.) the organisational dimension and
- (4.) the institutional dimension.

2. Temporary use: A definition

The concept of temporary use chosen for our research refers to the German term "*Zwischennutzung*", which labels a spatial use carried out for a limited time on a vacant land or in an empty building with no foreseeable development demands (BMVBS, BBR 2008). Temporary use is not linked to a change in owner. Usually, rents are below market conditions. Vice versa, users creatively adapt to the limited time of usage and constrains like low infrastructure and given structures by the previous use. Temporary use may develop to a "*longer term use of a higher urban quality*" (BMVBS, BBR 2008: 107).

3. The concept of *social innovation*

In the existing literature the appearance and spread of new planning approaches is mostly linked to "change", which in most cases implies a reactive and adjusting character of planning. *Social innovation*, instead, emphasises intentional and reflexively motivated acts of stakeholders as motors of these "changes". Hence, the innovation perspective can provide an analytical framework for understanding the proactive moments during the creation and flow of new planning idea or a concept. Innovation can be described as a holistic view on the lifecycle of planning concept since it includes its latent contexts, the approach's formation, its distribution, its normalisation and, eventually, its disappearance.

It is worth pointing out, that in contrast to many notations in the international literature or in the everyday use of the term "innovation", this research does not involve any normative understanding. It is rather understood as an analytical model that appears highly suitable for approaching the research questions. From a sociological point of view, Rammert (2010) designed a complex order of innovation, in which different fields such as technology or economy are interlinked with each other (please see reference). Rammert's concept of "*innovations of society*" is the basic approach for this research. He defines innovations as:

"Variations of ideas, practices, processes, objects and constellations, that are formed by a creative way of reinterpretation and redesign or that are brought up by coincidental variation and recombination that have been perceived and legitimated as improvements in an accepted way and that by imitation and diffusion have changed a part of society in a sustainable way" (Rammert 2010: 39).

Rammert stresses, that an innovation is mainly formed by a (re)combination of already existing elements. Furthermore, he emphasizes the diffusion of the formerly new practice as a condition of innovation. The innovative practice has to be "*perceived*" as an improvement by others and is hence a *social construction*. Another important point is, that the innovation does not necessarily have to be intended as such: "*The object at the end of a process of innovation is only rarely identical to how it was initially intended, planned and designed*" and hence the process "*cannot be anticipated clearly, nor it is entirely coincidental*" (Braun-Thürmann 2004: 4).

At this point the analytical innovation literature shows parallels with approaches of the vibrant research field on policy mobility. In this literature, scholars describe the circulation of planning ideas and concepts as fuzzy and polycontextual: "*They move in bits and pieces – selective discourse, inchoate ideas and synthesised models*" (Peck and Theodore 2010: 170). Both fields suggest following an innovative idea from its roots. Healey (2013), for example, proposes reconstructing the traveling stories of concepts with special attention to practices' transformations and institutionalisations. Parallel, in innovation research, so called innovations biographies are becoming more relevant methods.

4. Methodology

Considering the innovation process as a whole, we reconstructed it based on a discourse analysis consisting of quantitative and qualitative document analyses as well as interviews with experts (e.g. Keller 2005). This methodological tool seems most appropriate to approach the above mentioned dimensions of the innovation. It is possible to understand the links between different episodes in the lifecycle of the innovation; e.g. how discourses have led to first experiments with temporary use, how different cities have considered the approach as relevant and copied it, and why and in which contexts it has been criticized. The discourse analysis, furthermore, reveals pros and cons of different positions and motivations of actors at important points of the process. It identifies important figures and groups of actors as well as channels for distributing the new idea.

The research focuses on the time from 1990 until 2014, since main changes are expected to have happened during this period. The quantitative analysis is focused on articles in journals. It is aimed to specify at which time, in which disciplines and thematic contexts the attention to temporary uses grew and declined. The qualitative analysis of documents – mainly of journal papers, articles in edited volumes and monographs – forms the main body of the discourse analysis and provides most content for interpretations. Interviews with experts close informational gaps that are not documented in literature.

5. Summary and first results

This paper is meant to facilitate discussions on the emergence, institutionalisation and diffusion of temporary uses in the German system of spatial planning. To focus on intentional acts during this process, temporary uses are conceived as social innovations. The chosen concept of social innovation is an analytical one and does not involve any normative assignments. The methodology is based on a discourse analysis consisting of document analyses and interviews with experts.

Based on first results of the discourse analysis, the innovation process can be divided in five phases:

The first one is a *phase of latency* starting in the late 1960s. During this time the stage for the innovation-process was prepared by two major discourses: On the one hand, the planning system was criticised for its top-down dominance and *tabula rasa* approaches in urban renewal. On the other hand, the consequences of multidimensional structural changes such as large inner city vacant sites became more obvious and planners and academics started to notice a lack of planning tools to react to them.

The second is a *phase of formation*, in which first experiments with temporary uses have been carried out especially in East German cities such as Leipzig and Berlin or the Ruhr area. In this phase, the duality between informal temporary uses and formal urban planning turned into dialectic.

A third *phase of fermentation* is mainly characterised by processes of learning. At this time, the literature on temporary use increased rapidly, research projects have been carried out and different administrative and political levels drew attention to temporary uses. Particular groups can be understood as agents of change since they facilitated symbioses between different actors.

During a fourth *phase of stabilisation*, the new ways planning involved temporary uses gradually became formalised and normalized. As a strong legitimation for the formerly new practices, the discourse on creative cities and creative industries rose in Germany. As a consequence, the economic dimension of temporary uses for a city became more evident. More and more prospering cities considered temporary uses as relevant for their development.

Parallel to the normalisation of temporary uses in planning, in a fifth *phase of critique*, conflicts related to temporary uses reached the surfaces of several discourse. Temporary uses are described as "*motors of gentrification*" and "*fields of self-exploitation*". Due to conflicts related to the immanent temporality as for example in the case of the Berlin airport Tempelhof, planners start to be more careful involving temporary uses. In reaction to the critique – and similar to the phase of latency – new forms of projects involving temporary uses develop as "innovations of the innovation" or "process innovations".

*Details on the analytical framework and the methodology as well as the results will be published in a **full paper**.*

6. References

- BMVBS; BBR - Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Stadtentwicklung; Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung (2008): Zwischennutzungen und Nischen im Städtebau als Beitrag für eine nachhaltige Stadtentwicklung. Werkstatt: Praxis Heft 57.
- Braun-Thürmann, H. (2004): Zum sozialwissenschaftlichen Verständnis von Innovationen. Planungsrundschau. 9, 9-17.
- Healey, P. (2013): Circuits of knowledge and techniques. The transnational flow of planning ideas and practices. In: International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 37.5, 1510-26.
- Keller, R. (2005): Wissenssoziologische Diskursanalyse. Grundlegung eines Forschungsprogrammes. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Peck, J. and Theodore, N. (2010): Mobilizing policy: models, methods and mutations. In: Geoforum 41, 169-174.
- Rammert, W. (2010): Die Innovationen der Gesellschaft. In: Howaldt, J. Jacobsen, H. (Hg.): Soziale Innovation. Auf dem Weg zu einem postindustriellen Innovationsparadigma. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 21-51.