



Norbert Kling

# The Redundant City

A Multi-Site Enquiry into Urban Narratives  
of Conflict and Change

[transcript] urban studies



Norbert Kling  
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“To think about the city is to hold and maintain its conflictual aspects: constraints and possibilities, peacefulness and violence, meetings and solitude, gatherings and separation, the trivial and the poetic, brutal functionalism and surprising improvisation.”

*Lefebvre, Henri (1985) Qu'est-que penser?, translated in: Kofman, Eleonore and Lebas, Elizabeth (1996) Lost in Transposition, p.53*



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## Introduction

### Contributing Towards a Broader Understanding of Urban Transformation

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Urban theory emphasises the dynamic nature of cities. Processes like restructuring, densification, segregation, gentrification and the contesting of urban centralities are core issues in current discourses on cities. Social, environmental, economic or political questions are broadly studied in their connectedness to urbanisation and urban transformation. Change is an ever present urban condition. Change is also related to conflict. People negotiate and fight over change. Materialities and fixations of different kinds exert resistances towards change. Institutions are challenged by and seek to control change. Urban conflict and change are more than anything the products of collective human action and of the processes humans conceive to structure their lives and the world.

Against the background of continuously shifting conditions of conflict and change, descriptions of and assumptions about spatial transformations have to be constantly re-examined and revised. Researchers and theorists from different backgrounds devise concepts to develop a better understanding of urban phenomena and to share their ideas with others. However, the complexity and recursive nature of urban processes raise major difficulties in representation, analysis and conceptualisation, not without consequences for their conceptual integration into architectural and urban theory and operational integration into urban practice. If change is an omnipresent aspect of urban reality, and if conflict is connected to change in multiple ways, to what extent, and in which ways, are they addressed in architectural and urban theory?

Although a significant number of concepts in architecture and urbanism are related to change in one way or the other, it seems that conceptualisations of conflict are underdeveloped. This is even more the case with joint conceptualisations of conflict and change. If they are studied in combination, change is often established as the main topic, whereas conflict is relegated to a supporting or subsidiary function. The reason for this might be twofold: change is such an evident phenomenon in the built environment that assigning it a key role in research does not require much justification<sup>1</sup>; at the same time, change is closely related to what architects and urbanists do in practice. The actions which they employ in their work, such as designing, communicat-

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<sup>1</sup> Speaking for the social sciences, Hans Haferkamp suggests that “change is such an evident feature of social reality that any social-scientific theory, whatever its conceptual starting point, must sooner or later address it.” (Haferkamp and Smelser 1992, p.2)

ing, mediating, and the outcomes of their actions, such as a transformative process, a development plan, a design proposal, are all related to – and subject to – change. There is a long list of practically and instrumentally informed questions that may be raised as part of an architectural or urban enquiry into change. At the same time we may speak of a general tendency in architectural and urban conceptualisations to couple the problem of conflict exclusively with that of conflict resolution. Architects and urbanists are frequently seen as experts who handle and solve complex problems. Their professional identities are tightly related to the idea of the problem solver who describes and eliminates conflicts through spatial planning and ‘design solutions’. If we look at the history of architecture and urbanism as institutionalised professions, we realise how they have over time, and under the surveillance of legislative and economic actors, adopted an extensive legal and administrative framework to avoid, manage, mitigate and resolve conflict. The framework is geared towards economic optimisation, smooth integration of workflows and the distribution of risk. The conceptualisations of conflict based on this identity are of limited theoretical range. Where contractual dependencies and the implicit agreement about problem solving define the framework of action, normative questions about the broader implications are not raised. As a rule, this is also the case in statutory planning consultations and institutionalised community involvement as part of building projects. Issues that are not considered material to the case are bracketed out and not admitted to the process. In applied and demand-driven forms of research funded by the building industry, development agencies or housing corporations, researchers are frequently commissioned to produce practical recommendations for conflict resolution, for maintaining efficiency despite conflict, and for the analysis and discussion of best-practice projects.

However, if conflict is predominantly perceived as something that interferes with established norms, working routines, administrative processes and added-value chains, without questioning the larger frameworks that enable and sustain them in the first place, and without questioning the full depth of the motives and interests of the parties involved, research perspectives are severely narrowed down and outcomes pre-defined. Here, macro-scale perspectives on conflict are excluded, together with the many different ways of ‘doing’ conflict and change at the micro scale.

In “*La révolution urbaine*” Henri Lefebvre challenges the dominant forms of space production, complete with the concepts, institutions and processes that are related to them (Lefebvre 2003 [1970]). Written in the midst of the late 1960s social unrest that emanated from Paris and other large cities, he criticised the implicit anti-urban intentionality inherent to the capitalist restructuring of space, together with its stabilising mechanisms of conflict mitigation and resolution. For Lefebvre, “[...] there is nothing harmonious about the urban as form and reality [...]” (ibid., p.175). In strict opposition to the modernist approach in architecture and planning, in particular in respect of practices of segregation that attempt to “[...] resolve conflicts by separating the elements in space” (ibid.), Lefebvre proposed that the urban must be conceptualised “[...] as a place of conflict and confrontation, a unity of contradictions [...]” (ibid., p.175f). He emphasised the dynamic and integrating power of the urban condition, as well as the potential of conflict to act as a driver of positive change. Today, almost fifty years after Lefebvre and other contemporaries formulated their criticisms of what they perceived as an anti-urbanity, we may claim that over-simplified perspectives on conflict continue to dominate our concepts of urban change. This influences the way public

debates about urban conflict and change are conducted. It also contributes to the formation of blind spots in urban analysis and fails to provide incentives for developing new concepts.

If we look at other theoretical fields, beyond architecture and urbanism, we notice the diversity in joint conceptualisations of conflict and change. They range from grand social theory to situations of the everyday. Perhaps the most extensive and prominent example is the Marxist perspective, in which conflict and change are connected to class struggle, revolutionary process, accumulation and restructuring (Harvey 1975; 1982). Lefebvre's notion of conflict and change relates to this tradition, foregrounding and extending the socio-spatial implications of the theory (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]; 2003 [1970]). Karl Popper's anti-totalitarian theory of the open society emphasises pragmatic action as a driver of change, and utopianism as a source of conflict and violence (Popper 1947). Ralf Dahrendorf, who draws on Max Weber, Karl Popper and others, speaks of contested shifts in the balancing of "entitlements and provisions, [...] rights and opportunities" (Dahrendorf 2008 [1988], p.ix), whereby "the battles for more life chances provide the theme of the modern social conflict." (ibid.) Political theorist Chantal Mouffe understands conflict as constituent of modern society, and proposes "agonistics" as a vehicle of change within a multipolar world (Mouffe 2013). In social systems theory, Niklas Luhmann conceptualises autopoiesis as a fundamental form of change, in which communications that contradict each other may establish a conflict (Luhmann 1995 [1984], p.288). Symbolic interactionism assumes that meanings are produced through intersubjective interaction, which in itself defines a condition of continuous change. And if the collective production of meaning is disturbed, it is the participants' "commitment to stability" that activates mechanisms of conflict resolution so that interaction is "realigned" (Dellwing and Prus 2012, pp.33f)<sup>2</sup>. Joint conceptualisations of concept and change have also informed the urban sociology perspectives on space and the city. Georg Simmel suggests in "The Sociology of Conflict" and other writings that conflict is a fundamental principle of socialisation and in this sense of collective life in large cities (Simmel 1904, p.493f; Simmel 1950 [1903]). The history of urban sociology, since its various beginnings at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, could be reconstructed on the basis of its conceptual approach to conflict and change. Manuel Castells suggests its general orientation has shifted "from the discipline studying social integration to the discipline specializing in the new social conflicts of postindustrialism." (Castells 2002, p.11). Both fields of research in urban sociology, the production and integration of differences, and the contradictory and conflictual aspects of the urban, continue to be of relevance for the research on the mutual relationship of urban environments and social processes, as well as the conceptualisations of urbanity (Siebel 1994). The editors of the volume "Negotiating Urban Conflicts. Interaction, Space and Control" suggest in the introduction that

"Cities have always been arenas of social and symbolic conflict. As places of gender, class, ethnicity, and the myriad variations of identity-related differences, one of the major roles they are predestined to play is that of a powerful integrator; yet on the other

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2 Here, Dellwing and Prus refer to the writings of Gary Alan Fine, Erving Goffman, Randall Stokes and John Hewitt, and Anselm Strauss.

hand urban contexts are, as it were, the ideal setting for marginalization and violence.” (Berking et al. 2006, p.9)

Joint conceptualisations of conflict and change are characterised by their multiplicity – different theories and research perspectives emphasise different aspects in their relationship. In some theories, conflict is the key driver of change, in others it is change – or the absence of change – that are seen as the sources of conflict; some concepts are based on asserted causalities between conflict and change; some concepts infer practical, and therefore normative consequences from the relationship, others remain on the level of theory. Despite the fundamental differences in approach and conclusions, what these theories and concepts have in common is the view that conflict and change cannot be conceived as isolated objects. They suggest that conflict and change are mutually related to each other.

Taking both conflict and change into consideration holds the promise of a fuller understanding of phenomena of urban transformation, as opposed to considering change alone. The first part of this book, therefore, sets out to explore the rich yet dispersed body of narrative knowledge about conflict and change in the field of architecture and urbanism. With reference to the writings of Catherine Riessman (Riessman 2008), Willy Viehöver (Viehöver 2011) and others, narratives are defined as instruments used to conceptualise, communicate, integrate, memorise, instrumentalise, or politicise issues for an audience, that is, issues that are of broader concern. Accordingly, the analysis is focussed on the narratives produced and used in architecture and urbanism to conceptualise, communicate, integrate, memorise, instrumentalise, or politicise the phenomena, practices and situations of conflict and change that are relevant to their disciplinary fields. Some of these narratives maintain an abstract and theoretical level, while others are more focussed on the interactions of change and design, or the practical aspects of professional work. The exploration aims at identifying and assembling the concepts and positions they contain about conflict and change.

Research in architecture and urbanism cannot be considered a routine or pre-given process. Architectural and urban knowledge serves different and at times contradictory ends. It is spread across different “cultures of knowledge” (Biggs and Büchler 2011, pp.68f), or “knowledge landscapes” (Dunin-Woyseth and Nilsson 2011, p.80). Rather than perceiving this as an impediment to research, I take multiplicity as a resource to work with, based on the understanding that the urban is an open construct that defies closure (Lefebvre 2003 [1970], p.174). Urban issues cannot be grasped in isolation or from a single perspective. Reductionist research approaches which tailor research problems in such a way that they become rigorously demarcated objects are of limited range in urban research contexts.

In view of these epistemological and methodological difficulties, research perspectives are required that can handle openness and conditions in which the researcher does not have previous knowledge of the phenomena under study. In our case, this is provided by the social science research perspectives of grounded theory methodology (GTM) (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss 1987) and situational analysis (SA) (Clarke 2005; Clarke, Friese and Washburn 2018). SA itself draws on social worlds/arenas theory (Strauss 1978b) and discourse theory (Foucault 1981 [1970]; Keller 2011a and 2011b). For the purpose of this research project, I combine GTM and SA with a critical urban perspective and add different analytical and interpretative instruments of

architectural and urban research, to form a multi-site/multiple-methods approach. In the research design, critical-interpretative enquiry is conjoined with the scrutiny of empirically-driven research. The project engages with different bodies of knowledge, research materials and questions, without resorting to demarcation, categorisation, and closure.

The research project evolves along two connected iterative-cyclical processes based on the GTM model. In the discursive-interpretative process, urban narratives of conflict and change are assembled and discussed in essay-like units. The selection of narratives is based on the GTM principle of theoretical sampling. The exploration does not work with definitive fixations, nor does it seek to establish a comprehensive systematics based on categories. It follows an open mode of enquiry in line with the project's overall methodology. The first iterative-cyclical process leads to the production of a positional map, which is based on the SA repertoire of analytical mappings.

The positional map presented in this book assembles, for the first time, a broad range of concepts to do with conflict and change in a single visualisation. It evolved step-by-step in the explorative process. The map is conceived as an intersection, or analytical space of convergence, in which the concepts contained in some of the most influential narratives in architecture and urbanism, as well as the lesser known narratives, are condensed into individual positions. The intensity of change and the corresponding foregrounding of conflict in each concept are devised as ordering principles for the setting out of the positions on the map. The pattern produced in this way is not homogenous. It reveals a proportionalising tendency, or bias, in the conceptualisations, as a large number of concepts equate the intensity of change with the intensity of conflict. The pattern also shows densely populated areas circumscribing two voids. They occur, firstly, in the region of low intensities of change in combination with high levels of foregrounding of conflict, and, secondly, in the region of high intensities of change in combination with medium levels of foregrounding of conflict. Areas which have been treated only marginally by architectural and urban theory are in this way made visible. The voids could be understood as conceptual vacuums. They indicate that the theorisation of conflict has remained almost unexplored for conditions of low and high intensities of change. For these positional regions, the narratives of conflict and change are strangely silent.

The findings and discussion in the first part of the book point to four main issues:

Firstly, since the dissolution of the modernist paradigm of unlimited growth and rapid change led to the insight that urban problems cannot be approached through growth-based scenarios alone, conceptual alternatives to high intensities of change have gained in significance. The map shows that the region of low intensities of change is to a large extent occupied by depoliticised positions that do not pay much conceptual attention to controversies and urban conflict. However, concepts of change with high levels of foregrounding of conflict beyond the proportionalising bias seem to be of particular relevance if the urban condition is understood to define a highly contested field.

Secondly, some concepts in the narratives are developed and theorised in such a way that they do not easily transgress disciplinary boundaries. Issues that are not considered 'architectural' or related to design problems are regularly excluded. The keeping separate of material and social worlds and the anxious maintenance of disciplinary boundaries makes it difficult for concepts to travel and connect. This imposes limits



for architecture and urbanism's ability to contribute their spatial and other specialist knowledge to broader discourses and public debates.

Thirdly, the growing significance of process-led urbanism and the steady formation of contested spaces in which conflicting interests intersect demand new conceptual approaches to conflict in architecture and urbanism. Understandings are required which go beyond the idea of conflict as a temporary condition that disappears with conflict resolution. In this situation, rather than insisting on the disciplines' expertise in 'problem solving' according to their own narrowly defined terms – which all too often has resulted in disappointment and frustration – the disciplines must put greater emphasis on detection, spatio-temporal analysis, communication, and actively working with conflictual conditions of change. The knowledge produced in this way should be shared and debated with others in the sense of urban "matters of concern" (Latour 2005).

Fourthly, the concepts represented in the positional map do not seem to adequately address certain observations of asymmetric urban change I made at the outset of my enquiries. In particular, the contrast between the outward inactivity in the Parkstadt Bogenhausen housing estate in Munich in comparison to the substantial transformations in the surrounding area could not be explained and raises new questions. Further and different research is required to engage with this phenomenon. This is the task of the case study which I present in the second part of the book.

How, then, can we conceptualise the pattern of change in the Parkstadt Bogenhausen housing estate if we consider dynamic processes and conflicts to be at the core of the urban condition? How, in doing so, can we challenge the voids and the proportionalising bias in the narratives of conflict and change, connect material and social worlds with each other, and conceptually move beyond problem solving?

In the course of pursuing these questions in the second part of the book, I engage with different sites of analysis, in particular the collectively negotiated process of change itself. Methodologically, I continue to work with SA and GTM and expand them with additional research steps. In terms of analysis, SA assumes that all elements constitutive "of the situation are *in* the situation" (emphasis in original, Clarke 2005, p.71). The situation to which I refer in the case study is thus both a conceptual representation of social and material reality, as well as a site and unit of analysis – the transformative process of the Parkstadt Bogenhausen housing estate. Engaging with urban issues means engaging with different processes simultaneously and across different scales. The meso level is of prime research significance if the urban is understood as collective process and not as mere aggregate level of individuals. Social worlds/arenas theory and SA offer a unique perspective on collective processes, and therefore also, as I set out to demonstrate in this book, on the collective processes through which spaces are co-produced and changed. SA itself integrates social worlds/arenas theory, to form an explicit theory of conflict. It has the capacity, among other things, to represent and analyse controversies, negotiations, commitment and collective action. It assumes that issues of broader concern are negotiated between and through social worlds that partially and temporally participate in arenas. The research approach which I follow in this book understands architecture and human actors as mutually co-producing spatial situations. Architecture and the built environment, equipped as they are with a multitude of institutionally, culturally, economically and otherwise produced proper-

ties, reflect back on situations, as do human actors with their presence and underlying intentions in those situations.

Theorising on the constitution of space through the establishing of spatial relations in action, Martina Löw proposes that this “[...] is not as a rule done in isolation, but takes place in processes of negotiation with other actors. Negotiation of power structures is an immanent aspect of this process.” (Löw 2016 [2001], p.191) Consequently, the case study combines actor-centred perspectives with the analysis of structural and material conditions. It traces collective processes together with the estate’s trajectory of spatial transformation, based on a set of interrelated questions: Which internal and external factors influence a housing estate’s process of change? How do human and non-human actors interact in order to produce the observed condition? What are the structural conditions in the process? What can we learn from the housing estate’s changing, or non-changing, spatial characteristics? If SA highlights the usefulness of ‘sensitising concepts’ in empirical research, how could we use all the data and findings to arrive at a new concept of urban change?

Housing estates have an ambivalent relation to the city. They relate to the intrinsic web of social interactions and spatial practices of the everyday, as well as to the more abstract levels of planning thought, institutions, urban organisation, and socio-economic processes. Research into housing estates is as diverse as the estates themselves. Public authorities, planners, architects, economists, social scientists and others have at all times sought to develop a better understanding of housing estates, be it because of professional or academic interest, or because of statutory, fiscal or other responsibilities. Research agendas have changed considerably over previous decades. They typically address technical problems, questions of design, management, funding, or social issues. However, modes of analysis that apply a very narrow frame to their research object have to carefully assess the theoretical range of their analysis, together with their assumptions about the “context of context” (Brenner 2013, p.92) that acts upon their particular research situation. Likewise, if conditions of change in housing estates are predominantly observed from macrostructural levels, researchers may lose sight of the processes that co-produce change ‘on the ground’. The steep rise in rents and property prices in many metropolitan regions has brought housing-related issues back to the centre of public debates, together with fundamental questions like urban justice, inequality, and the right to the city (Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer 2012; Harvey 2012; Trapp 2018; Vogel 2019). Housing estates are directly connected to the political domain, as well as the research about them.

Completed more than sixty years ago, the Parkstadt Bogenhausen housing estate has been organised as a commonhold-type entity according to the ‘Wohnungseigentumsgesetz’ (WEG) since 1984. With almost 2000 units under a single commonhold declaration, it is the largest of its kind in Germany and forms a contiguous legal and spatial construct in the city, covering an area of 15ha. Like other housing estates dating from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is located within modernist frameworks of conflict evasion, simplification, tight-fit-functionalism, and static models of space. The homogenising tendency of the welfare state is inscribed in its spatial layouts. At the same time, it is connected to many different actors, institutional arrangements, and interests. It is characterised by its own ownership constellation, its unique decision-making process, and its contingent future(s). It is connected to the city in which it is located in its own ways.

Munich is currently experiencing a phase of outward and inward expansion. Large scale restructuring and a myriad of small scale interventions transform the appearance and the functioning of the city. This includes the modification of housing estates, which is currently underway on an unprecedented scale, ranging from substantial densification programmes, to upgrading and typological diversification. The Parkstadt Bogenhausen housing estate, by contrast, does not seem to participate in the urban dynamic and clearly deviates from the general pattern of change. However, tight-fit functionalism and other readily available concepts do not provide satisfactory explanations for the observed difference. Assuming that the same overall economic and political frameworks apply in the situation, what kinds of actors, structures and processes have to interact in order to produce a residential environment that resists change and that produces such a stark contrast, or asymmetry? And what, if we consider permanence not as a quality in itself which offers stability and orientation in an ever-changing world, but as a rigidifying restriction to the inhabiting and appropriation of space?

The case study assembles and integrates data from archived meeting minutes and historical material, interviews, participant observation, surveys, and site photography to engage with the above questions. The main body of material, consisting of the minutes of the annual meeting of the housing estate's co-owners according to the WEG, is analysed in the second iterative-cyclical process. This time, the process is based on the standard GTM mode of analysis, which includes the classic tools of theoretical sampling, coding, and memoing. The complementary mappings show the structural conditions and relations in the 'Parkstadt Arena', as well as the overall situational process and the negotiating of common concerns, or 'themes', along a timeline. In the synthesising steps leading towards the construction of the concept, I bring together the conclusions of the GTM process, the SA mappings, the comparative analysis, and the quantitative data; and I exploit the heuristic capacity of the positional map by establishing a dual position and drawing new interpretative connections. The new concept is named 'Redundant City'. It describes the housing estate's unique condition and pattern of change.

The Redundant City has, on the one hand, the legally granted capacity to initiate and develop processes of change, based on the relative autonomy of a collectively exercised, ownership-based authority. On the other hand, collective self-regulation, structural and institutional frameworks, investment-driven accumulation and "dynamic conservatism" (Schön 1971) produce conditions which allow transformations to occur on the micro level, albeit in a very regulated and limited way, while inhibiting changes and interactions on the urban level. Hence, we see empowerment through ownership alongside rigidity, restriction, and stagnation. In the Redundant City processes of change are oriented towards the inside, while interactions with the city are reactive and reduced to a minimum. In the Redundant City, potential spaces of individual appropriation and change are related to potential spaces of stagnation. The Redundant City's pattern of change is fundamentally different to the pattern of other areas in the city and makes it in this sense a space of 'otherness'. It prompts us to think about difference and otherness, through being different and through co-producing a unique condition of asymmetric urban change. The Redundant City conveys the promise of a lasting space of possibilities, because its potential is unlikely to be ever fully realised and used. As the urban level of the Redundant City is likely to remain inactivated,

it increasingly may generate desires and ‘What if?’ scenarios, outside and within the housing estate. The space conceptualised in this way is of broader relevance and has a political dimension. There is an evocative utopian quality to the Redundant City.

I have chosen redundancy to name the concept because it embodies the key aspects of the observed process – ambivalence, conflict, and change. Whereas the notion of redundancy is neither native to, nor common in architectural and urban discourse at the present moment, it is both widely used and well established in science and technology studies (STS), computer science, engineering, system theory, linguistics, communication theory, and genetics. In these contexts, it is, broadly defined, a surplus considered either as benefit or waste. Sometimes it is understood as creating positive, desirable effects, sometimes it represents the useless, excessive, the ignored. Redundancy is used to pursue different, almost opposing ends. It is often associated with questions about whether we should have more or less of something. I consider it in the context of this critique as surplus in the positive and negative senses together. Part of my purpose in choosing it, therefore, is to maintain the ambivalence inherent in the term. It is intended to make us aware of the Redundant City problematic, its simultaneously enabling and inhibiting characteristics, and the various implications this may have. By explicitly emphasising its different connotations, I seek to establish a conceptual position that is not fixed in a single place and that defies closure in the style of Latour’s “matter of concern” (Latour 2005). The term ‘Redundant City’ functions as a signifier both for the new concept and its socio-spatial referent, the Parkstadt – ‘Park City’ – Bogenhausen housing estate. Hence, the controversial notion of redundancy is an invitation to critically engage with the Redundant City concept as well as the Parkstadt Bogenhausen housing estate and to connect them to current urban debates.

The observations made in the housing estate seem to confirm Martina Löw’s proposition that “spaces, places, and boundaries are enduring precisely because they are socially constructed.” (Löw 2016 [2001], p.xviii) At the same time they seem to confirm that resistances in spatial arrangements do not inevitably and irrevocably result in permanent conditions of inactivity and stagnation. For Löw also suggests that if habits and routines are replaced with new ones “[...] regularly, collectively, and with reference to relevant rules and resources, institutionalized spaces and spatial structures can be changed.” (ibid., p.191) Hence, one of the underlying assumptions in the Redundant City concept is that changes can be initiated if action is assumed collectively and from within the political arena of urban change.

How, then, can the concept and the different methodological components that helped to produce it be used? Clearly, multiple connections can be made in a multi-site enquiry to answer this question. In order to provide an idea of the scope of uses, in the final chapter of the book I discuss potential applications for the mapping tools, the concept itself, and the assembled body of narrative knowledge of conflict and change.

The mapping instruments introduced in this research project helped to reveal the structural conditions, resistances, competing desires, conflicts, and the web of social relations that influence the situational process of the Parkstadt Bogenhausen housing estate. The mapping instruments could be further developed and applied to the analysis of other housing estates and situations of change. Conceived as community mappings, they could become means of empowerment, collective learning, and catalysts of change. The knowledge thus produced could put communities in a position from which they may more easily raise issues and engage in debates about their built envi-

ronment and the aspects that intersect there. They could enable members of a specific social world in participative processes to better understand their situation in relation to other social worlds in the arena. The mappings may give actors a better idea about how and in which constellations decisions are made over time. They make visible the effects of pre-structured processes, the distribution of power, “compartmentalization” and “dynamic conservatism” (Schön 1971, pp.31–60), exclusion, or the establishing of a dominant maintenance project. Actors may in this way analyse how resistances influence participatory processes, or prevent change from occurring. This may facilitate connecting with the macro-level, the realm of WEG legislation, urban discourses on densification, accumulation, asymmetric urban change, or urban inequality, calling into question the structural conditions of change. Empowered through mapping, users, owner and non-owner residents may find new ways of extending their effective range of action to higher levels of control, of renegotiating power relations in the arena, and ultimately of changing the spatial arrangements and their housing estates. Commonhold-type entities according to the WEG as well as housing estates owned by housing associations or housing cooperatives could make use of the mapping tools. For there seems to be a growing awareness of the need to strengthen, establish, and open up arenas. The formerly widespread practice of managing change in housing estates as top-down process, as had been common practice in the Neue Heimat group and other large housing providers, is gradually giving way to more inclusive approaches. Different levels of participation are understood as one of the means of generating and including new qualities in housing.

At the same time, we see that research in housing, along with programmes of urban restructuring and densification, continue to be based on narrowly defined conceptualisations and dominant concepts of change. Categories of conflict that do not lend themselves to ‘solutions’, as well as sites of greater complexity that offer resistances, do not easily lend themselves to research projects. Researchers tend to concentrate on, or otherwise establish, problems that are sufficiently structured and clear, hoping that in this way existing instruments can be used, best practice approaches applied, and faster solutions provided. As a result, housing estates as well as smaller scale housing in dispersed ownership according to the WEG are often left aside in current research on densification and urban restructuring despite their overall relevance. In growing cities, this selective approach may lead to the concentration of densification and restructuring programmes in areas that already have to cope with issues of inequality. This raises questions about who in the urban population has to adapt to transformations, and in which ways, but also about the overall capacity of cities to absorb growth and accommodate change. Here, the concept could contribute towards a better understanding of dispersed ownership constellations and improve the basis of decision-making for urban policies on the spatial distribution of growth.

The prevailing phase of low interest rates in the European Union for both savings and mortgages has made residential property an attractive alternative to other forms of investment for private investors. In Germany, this has led to a rising demand for building land and residential units, in particular in metropolitan regions of cities like Hamburg, Munich, and Berlin. As expectations about valorisation and future returns are high, housing prices and rents are rising steadily. The construction of new commonhold-type property according to the WEG, as well as the subdivision of single ownership residential blocks into multiple private units continues to thrive in this

condition. Subsidised affordable housing that has reached the end of the public funding period is often subdivided and sold on in the private market, which causes rents to rise and accelerates processes of displacement and gentrification. In a move to slow down the effects of subdivision on local neighbourhoods, municipal administrations have set regulations in place that control and restrict the conversions in designated areas ('Erhaltungssatzung', respectively 'Milieuschutz') (Landeshauptstadt München 2016b, pp.36, 133ff). This and other measures, like the capping of rents according to an approved local rent index ('Qualifizierter Mietspiegel'), mirror the difficult relationship between the individual's interests in private property and the common interest in the provision of affordable housing. Since the early 1970s, reformers have demanded property owners assume their social responsibility as required by constitutional law ('Grundgesetz'), and to contribute in an appropriate way to the common good (Hertweck 2018a, p.154; Vogel 2019). The problems and questions related to this basic conflict, as well as the selective approach outlined above, suggest that a better understanding of the characteristics of and dynamics in commonhold-type property according to the WEG is also in these fields urgently required.

At the time of writing, there are very few, if any cases which use the combination of SA, social worlds/arenas theory and GTM for spatial issues and problems raised from within the architectural and urban disciplines. Accordingly, an intended outcome of this project is to show that they provide a set of useful tools and new perspectives for engaging with urban and architectural research questions.

Summing up, this book explores the rich body of narrative knowledge in architecture and urbanism and confronts this knowledge with an empirically grounded situational analysis of a large housing estate. The outcome of this twofold research approach comprises a new perspective on urban narratives of conflict and change, an extension of SA mapping tools and their application to spatial issues, and the Redundant City concept, which describes a specific form of collectively negotiated urban change.

The research project is based on the assumption that dynamic processes and conflicts are at the core of the urban condition. It does not provide a solution to a problem, nor does it provide an exhaustive analysis of a demarcated and therefore closed research object. The goal is to contribute to the understanding of dynamic processes in and of spaces and cities. The project engages with processes and structural conditions that drive or inhibit change. It exemplifies how the urban could be conceived of as an open construct, both conceptually and in terms of methodology. It raises the question whether more emphasis should be given to conflict-oriented perspectives. It stresses multiplicity and questions the dominance of single narratives of conflict and change by presenting the many other positions we can relate them to and work with in urban theory and practice.

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field of conflict and change. During this time, our architectural practice, zectorarchitects, started to be involved with the activation of a rooftop space in Dalston in East London and with the restructuring of the high street in the Bauhaus city of Dessau in Germany. I also became interested in the pattern of asymmetric urban change I was observing in the Parkstadt Bogenhausen housing estate in Munich as a resident. Together, these factors contributed to the formation of this project and the combination of issues it seeks to address.

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