

Upsetting Participation? Modes of Ordering Art Spaces

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Participation: Consensus-orientation versus heterogeneous dissensus?

For several decades ‘Western’ city planners and politicians have grappled with the question of how to include citizens in the process of organizing public space. While in the first half of the 20th century participation was not much of an issue, neither in urban theory nor in the practice of city planning, new understandings of the organization of urban life and city space emerged since the 1960s. The modern paradigm which saw the city mainly as a ‘machine’ functioning independently of the political issues was contested by, and often gave way to, alternative conceptions of the city. These introduced the idea of participation as a way of building consensus by encouraging a dialogue of rational discourse (Forester, 1980, 2000; Healey, 1996, 2002). In this sense, participation was conceived of as a process that represents the interests of all citizens on equal terms.

However, as critics argue, this idea of participation in planning processes is often (mis)used for purposes of breaking resistance and concealing power relations of political decision making (Arnstein, 2000; Flyvbjerg, 1998). The exclusion of citizens in the planning and production of the space which they inhabit seems to be all the more urgent as cities compete more and more with mega-projects and spectacular buildings that might attract a certain elite or ‘class’ of people, but many times leave weaker groups in the cold, let alone they are asked for their opinion. Images of whole neighbourhoods which are weeded out in favour of prestige projects are common

practice in such scenarios. Also with regard to artistic spaces, it can be noticed that the imagination of who is included in its planning and use is many times elitist and privileges certain actors, twisting the process of representation. For instance, it is known that for local Basque artists it is quasi impossible to exhibit in the iconic Guggenheim museum of Bilbao that opens its door widely for internationally renowned artists and embraces the cosmopolitan tourist. Artistic spaces form thus highly contested public arena's where the question what (is) art, by whom and for whom turns into a political process through which certain concepts, objects, practices and people become visible and other ones forgotten (Obrist, 2006). Therefore, the debate has more and more confronted the question whether participation can inscribe differences and is able to accommodate an agonistic form of conversing. For sure, it has brought the return of the political (Kniess and Voggenreiter, 2006; Mouffe, 2005), which is "not geared to the established canon of political processes and consensus formation, but [wants to] rely on dissent and use techniques of performance, risk and assertion" (Kniess and Voggenreiter, 2006: 201).

As a consequence of this crisis of representation and legitimation, the notion of participation itself is contested and problematized. *Did someone say participate?*, a question which Miessen and Basar (2006) chose as the title of their atlas of spatial practice, indicates how the notion itself has grown 'tired' and produces a mere echo. This problematization brings along that the notion of participation is 'under erasure', giving a chance to at once question and vitalise this notion. This requires a quest for new concepts and practices of relating that can accommodate dissensus and that might alter radically how participation is thought and framed. In this paper, we will draw upon actor-network theory (Latour, 2005) in order to de-essentialize participation as a (ideal-speech) communication-driven process between human actors and to reconceptualise it as a heterogeneous assemblage that attracts, connects, attaches and involves all kinds of actants through translation. For ANT, participation is not a special or normative case of organizing and relating, it forms a basic point of departure as "no science of the social can even begin if the question of who and what *participates* in the action is not first of all thoroughly explored, even though it might mean letting elements in which, for lack of a better term, we would call non-humans" (Latour, 2005: 72; our italics). In this study, we will thus cast our net wider and move beyond the usual suspects of a participation debate in order to reconstruct how the planning and imagination of a new museum only stabilizes, if at all, as it is performed

in associations and its modes of ordering: relations are forged, simultaneously connecting and altering those involved and enrolled.

In this paper, we aim at understanding the process through which the question of whether and what kind of new art museum should be built in a medium-sized city in Switzerland is addressed and resolved by setting up an extensive consultation process with the citizens of this city. In 2005, following the examples of many other European cities, our case study's regional (cantonal) government pronounced the necessity for reorganizing the city's cultural spaces. Since two planned and major cultural investments in this Swiss town were already rejected by referendum – not an unusual incident in this country's regime of plebiscitary democracy – the government was particularly interested in new ways of including people's voices in the process of generating ideas for the possible new museum. By means of a series of workshops and interviews the regional government set up a participatory planning process and developed a set of scenarios for the future of the art museum. Thus the political goal of the canton's pre-project appears to have been twofold: On the one hand a convincing project for the city's positioning in an international competition should be developed, on the other hand this project had to find broad support by experts and people alike.

The analysis, based on a rich set of data gathered in quasi-ethnographic form of research, is structured around two research questions: (1) which modes of ordering constitute the translation process through which the new museum is planned?, (2) how are modes of ordering in conflict through which certain forms of participation become possible or remain impossible?

In the remainder, the paper will be structured as follows. First, we further situate our problem formulation within an understanding of cities from a relational paradigm, prioritizing a conceptualization based on difference, multiplicity and otherness, and focused on the making of conflict and dissensus. To reconstruct our conceptual framework, we will connect this relational paradigm with actor network theory, which approaches the planning process as performative but which also brings along the need to understand how its political scope can be analyzed (as some authors have critiqued ANT for representing dominant modes of relating). Second, in the methodological part, we will describe how we have participated in the data generation process giving special attention to the question how data are constantly translated as we bracket them and to the issue how to set boundaries in relationship to such vast and unstable actor-networks. Thirdly, we present our analysis with regard to the first

research question where we will distinguish between a strategic, classic and situational mode of ordering. Each mode of ordering forms a heterogeneous assemblage and hybrid association between various objects, practices, people and discourses, bringing along a certain imagination of the museum space. For instance, the strategic mode envisages a new building, orders action around events and sees the participant as a member who openly partakes in and experiences art. The classic mode aims at reconstructing the existing building in all its grandeur, structures action around exhibitions and openings and enrolls participants as passive visitors or inquisitive apprentices and researchers. The situational mode thinks of the museum building as decentred and present in multiple spaces, it sees action as related to the unexpected, surprise and affect, and welcomes the participant as an engaged accomplice, if not a creative contestant. In the second part of our analysis, we document the differences and tensions between these various modes of ordering as they contest resources and construct for each other difficult passages, inscribing the translation process with friction and struggle. In the discussion section, we suggest a two-fold revitalization of the notion of participation: First, to depart from an imagination of participation as always already at work in the heterogeneous assemblages that produce urban space; and second, to relate participation to Žižek's idea of genuine politics as the art of the impossible (see Knies and Voggenreiter, 2006: 200).

The relational city and its contested modes of ordering

The city - a contested public space

“[W]e are all urbanists now”, Soja (2003: 280) matter-of-factly states. For one, the amount of research on urban spaces and the role of cities has grown significantly in recent years across a number of disciplines. More importantly, however, this interest is often related to the recognition that development of social life not only predominantly takes place in cities but that it emanates *from* cities. Echoing an argument of Lefèbvre, Soja points out that “all forms of social relations and social life originate, evolve, develop and change in the materially real and socially imagined context of cities” (2003: 275). In this sense, the much-discussed ‘spatial turn’ simultaneously reflects an ‘urban turn’; the (process of the) production of space always-already implies the (process of the) production of the city. For Lefebvre, “[t]here is nothing more

contradictory than ‘urbanness’. (...) The city and the urban sphere are (...) the setting of struggle; they are also, however, the stakes of that struggle (Lefebvre, 1991: 386)." The city denotes a ‘differential field’ that brings together contrasts and contradictions, that is made up of differences, encounter and simultaneity (Lefèbvre, 2003: 156 et seq.). The production of urban space thus resembles a “continuous and contentious process (Soja, 2003: 275)"; the city’s conflict-ridden density and juxtaposition of difference has productive, generative effects.

Viewing cities and the socio-spatial production of urban spaces in this agonistic manner has a number of important conceptual implications for how we explore empirically and for how we can re-examine (and re-imagine) the notion of participation: *First*, the city is recognised as an effect of ongoing interrelations and interactions of multiple phenomena at the same time; ‘writing the city’ therefore calls for a relational perspective (Massey, 2005). *Second*, these interrelations and interactions encompass the complex materialities of the urban. The city is seen as a “machinic assemblage” generated by both human and non-human actors or, more precisely, as emerging from the relations between heterogeneous components (Amin and Thrift, 2002: 78 et seq.). *Third*, and relatedly, conceiving urban spaces as shifting socio-spatial constellations highlights the inevitability of conflict and dissensus: “Conflict is not something that befalls an originally, or potentially, harmonious urban space. Urban space is the product of conflict (Deutsche, 1996: 278)". In this sense, ‘public space’ is not an a-priori given ‘container’ for free and equal speech but a democratic invention, for it is precisely through the event of the (often antagonistic) negotiation of unequal relations that ‘publicness’ appears (Deutsche, 1996: 273).

Planning/organizing as translation: modes of ordering

Within urban studies, recent texts have emphasized the need to rethink cityspace along an apprehension of the complex materialities of the urban so as to invent a socio-spatial vocabulary able to describe the restless hybridity and multiplicity of urban moments (e.g. Amin and Thrift, 2002; Latham and McCormack, 2004). From this perspective, the relations between human and non-human forms of life are not ‘in advance’ determined by some kind of structural logic. Of course, this is not to say that e.g. urban planning is without effect, but that urban policy measures have to embark upon a remarkable and uncertain ‘labour of translation’ in order to show effects in the complex everyday meshworks of urban spaces. So-called Actor-Network Theory

(ANT) provides an entry into exploring such heterogeneous assemblages and their making. ANT presents a relational view of the world and is concerned with how certain relations come into existence while others fail. It is a way of describing how (human and non-human) actors get involved in and are thus (re)constructed by processes of associating. These processes of problematization and reconstitution of actors in specific relations have been described by the term ‘translation’, and thus ANT is also known as “sociology of translation or association” (Callon, 1980; 2006; Latour, 2005). In that sense, ANT clearly echoes the first two properties of the relational city outlined above (relationality and heterogeneity). But, and this may be a bit more tricky, we can ask the question whether a sociology of translation can do justice to moments of contestation and otherness, or whether it is doomed to always reconstruct and thus reinforce the (hegemonic) status quo, as a recent critique has argued (Whittle and Spicer, 2008: 622f)¹. Is ANT really “without the ammunition both to construct other possibilities and empower actors to pursue them (p. 623)”²? We differ from Whittle and Spicer in reading ANT not as a means for *explaining* but rather as a way of *exploring* the construction of social orders. We suggest focusing on the ‘how’ rather than the ‘why’ of emerging social relations. In our reading ANT does not aim at allocating an explanatory role to objects (or humans) but is interested in retracing the ways in which they relate and how these relations are performed. Granting agency to non-human actors – one of ANT’s characteristics – implies that they always already produce political effects in that they resist certain translations while allowing for others. Moreover, there is not only one way in which such materialities can be enacted; rather, every human and non-human actor participates in multiple, contingent and sometimes contesting modes of translation. Thus every order of things is contingent and this contingency can be contested by other ways of translating.

Callon describes translation as a four-step process of problematization, intersement, enrolment and mobilization (2006). Although we agree with Whittle and Spicer in their critique of a painting-by-number-application of the four-step translation process we think that it presents convincing insights into how relations

¹ This critique of ANT moves far beyond the arguments presented here and culminates in attesting ANT a tendency “towards an ontological realist, epistemologically positivist and political conservative account of organizing (Whittle and Spicer, 2008: 623).” Although we would agree with this critique if (and only if) ANT is read as a *theory* – as its name seems to imply –, we prefer to follow Latour (1999) in distancing ourselves from such an interpretation. Instead we suggest taking ANT primarily for a *method* that explores an ontology of the social that moves beyond interpersonal relations. This shift in perspective opens up ways for a social science that is performative, reflexive and sensitive to power relations and how they are produced.

become problematic, how they are contested and how new relations might emerge. But – a big ‘but’ – the concept of translation seems to presuppose rational actors who intentionally mobilize other actors. Such a reading would distribute agency to the ‘translator’ alone and simplify the complexity of the translation process as a process of mutually negotiating (new) associations. But in our reading of the sociology of translation, agency is distributed. Both translation and its resistance are effects of continuous ordering work carried out by a heterogeneous assemblage of actors. Therefore, translation becomes a process of uncertain mediation which connects things and humans alike in the process of ordering. We thus prefer to see ANT as a ‘tool’ for following the recursive making of these relations. Agency becomes the outcome rather than the cause of the work of translation. This has implications for our understanding of participation in that participants are not seen as autonomous agents but as effects of the relations in which they participate. It follows that ANT is not a political theory but that it can be a theory of the political. It is concerned with how specific orders are produced and stabilized in material relations without a-priori drawing on concepts such as ‘class’ and ‘power’ as mobilizing agents and invisible hands. Thus, we will enlist ANT as a method “to find the procedures which render actors able to negotiate their ways through one another’s world-building activity (Latour, 1999: 21).”

However, being concerned with the political is not exhausted by “‘just describing’ associations, and nor can it simply enjoy the spectacle of the sheer multiplicity of new connections (Latour, 2005: 259).” It also has to be concerned about how the connections are “*composed* in order to *design one* common world (Latour, 2005: 259; original emphasis).” In his study on “Organizing Modernity”, Law (1994) developed the concept of “modes of ordering” which helps to do so. Law is not primarily concerned with translations as such but with “*fairly coherent and large scale ordering patterns in the networks of the social* (Law, 1994: 107; original emphasis).” As with power, agency cannot clearly be attributed to things or humans but is seen as an effect of “unending processes” of patterning that make certain ways of acting/relating possible. Thus, “modes of ordering may be seen as intentional, but (often) non-subjective, self-reflexive strategies (Law, 1994: 109).” This chimes well with Foucault’s notion of “discourse(s)” but extends the latter into the realms of “relational materiality” (Law, 1999: 4). Modes of ordering are heterogeneous in their material, discursive and corporeal realization. They are intentional in the sense that they produce certain effects, that they make distinctions, draw boundaries and

distribute power and knowledge. However, their agency is (unevenly) distributed over human and non-human actors and their interrelatedness. Now, different modes of ordering distribute agency, power, knowledge, resources etc. in different ways. They use different forms of representation, employ different resources (or the same resources differently), draw boundaries differently and produce different sets of problems. Thus, reading modes of ordering in the empirical world does not only mean to look for ordering patterns, but also to analyse how “they develop protocols for dealing with, profiting from, or resisting one another (Law, 1994: 111).” It is in these interactions that ordering modes are reaffirmed, that they can be reflected, and that they sometimes change. “So there’s an interesting place here for us to tell stories about how agents or other effects dodge between and combine ordering modes, being both multiply constituted and multiply resourced (Law, 1994: 22).”

To sum up, modes of ordering are characteristic ways of translating and thus performative in character. They are produced and stabilized through specific actor-networks. However, in situations of contestation, transformation or resistance their political rationales can be challenged and changed. It is here where new possibilities of ordering and participation are most likely to emerge. For the following, we suggest to read the city and its public spaces as effects of different modes of ordering and how they interact. Exploring the possibilities for participation in the production of a city’s cultural spaces thus calls for retracing the modes of ordering at work.

Methodological and field study considerations

Researching modes of ordering, translating the practices of collecting and analyzing data as well as different theoretical concepts into the limited narrative space of a paper, is ordering work, too. We thus understand the three ordering modes, which are presented in this paper as fragile assemblages, as an effect of our scholarly labour of association. The question of agency is a difficult one, too. For instance, agency here is constituted and limited by a heterogeneous set of actors which make up the academic world. This text can be read as an effect of the modes of doing social science to which we relate through our profession and interests. To cut a more complicated story short (e.g. Law, 2004), although our text is part of the labour of representation, it is not a representation of an unquestionable order but rather as an effect of ordering work which (necessarily) includes some actors while it excludes others, which draws on

specific texts and practices while it disregards others. The three modes of ordering presented below emerged from a one-year field study that closely followed the planning process for a new art museum in a medium sized city in Switzerland. We assumed that with this large scale intervention by the regional government many of the otherwise silent actors related to the cultural spaces of our city might be aroused. Furthermore this process was conceived of as a participatory planning approach, aiming at the mobilization and inclusion of a wider public. Hence we deemed it as a good opportunity to learn about participation in the constitution of public spaces.

Ethnography served as a method for collecting data in the form of field notes, interviews and documents. The government granted us access to all workshops, the project-team's meetings and the meetings of the peer group consisting of representatives of the affected institutions. By sitting (silently) in team meetings and citizen workshops, studying project documents and history books, interviewing participants and researching newspapers, we continuously translated data into our way of sense making, and thus generated it. However this translation process must not be understood as one-directional. Accompanying this process as researchers we ourselves were translated into the canton's mobilization strategy. With the university being a well renowned institution in our city of inquiry our participation in this planning process must not be underestimated. As the project evolved we soon became aware that we could not pretend to be 'flies on the wall' but that we were part and parcel of the (re)ordering process of the art museum. For example, our participation was deemed to give credibility to the canton's planning strategy. In terms of data analysis, we approached the material with a number of different methods which included mapping, coding and (re)reading of data. The writing of (ethnographic) reports in which we assembled fragments of data into little narratives of ordering was another important way of sense-making. Testing and translating our data through different modes of scholarly sense making, we have been looking for narratives that would tell (us) something new about participation in a sensible and convincing way.

Reconstructing modes of ordering

The strategic mode

The first ordering pattern that we identified in the planning process is operating by recombining a set of different actors into the imagination of a new cultural space. On

the one hand it challenges or problematizes existing relations; on the other hand it seeks to reassemble them in a different manner. In this it aims at producing a specific outcome in form of a new art house that serves as a hub for the city's creative energy not only with regard to art experts but also for a wider public. It is oriented towards a different future of the city's cultural landscape. It searches for new possible alliances – or for new ways of mediating – between a host of 'problematized' actors and draws on the civic participant's (political) voice. Furthermore, it emerges from and recombines two discourses that are relatively unfamiliar – and thus challenging – to the existing order of the art museum.

The first of these two discourses is well-known and much-discussed in the contemporary urban landscape. As Hetherington and Cronin have written in their introduction to a recent volume on "Consuming the Entrepreneurial City", "the entrepreneurial city's symbolic economy (...) plays an ever-prominent role in shaping urban form, economies, and the lives of the city's inhabitants" (2008: 2). Here are two excerpts from the Canton's government economic strategy papers from 2003:

"Culture as driving force of the economy

Culture fosters innovation, it can be a pacemaker of societal and economic development, it overcomes boundaries, it is a strong means for creating an [region's] image, it boosts the self-confidence and it attracts people. Therefore it is a promising strategy to create a flourishing cultural landscape in our town. This will provide a rich breeding ground for innovation and contributes to a liveable and attractive habitat for the workforce and their families. Tourism will yield a direct economic benefit (own translation)."

"The region's cultural landscape has to vibrate as a whole and on different levels. It has to penetrate the social and economic life. At the same time it is in need of strong icons and highlights. Convincing [cultural] contents need an expressive and self-confident realisation in architecture. In order to do so we need courage for the unconventional and the will for additional expenses (own translation)."

In the context of the international competition for the creative workforce the government had detected a deficit in the city's attractiveness. Within this economic discourse the cultural life of cities has become an important aspect of site selection, not only to the highly profitable companies of the third sector but also to small innovative enterprises. As the arguably most pre-eminent advocate of this kind of urban renewal has put it, "[a]ccess to talented and creative people is to modern business what access to coal and iron was to steelmaking. It determines where

companies will choose to locate and grow, and this in turn changes the ways cities must compete. (...) Creative people (...) don't just cluster where the jobs are. They cluster in places that are centers of creativity and also where they like to live (Florida 2004: 6f).

Quite obviously, then, the 'strategic mode' enlists the discourse of urban entrepreneurialism and the perceived necessity to compete with other cities. However, we would misrepresent the heterogeneous and fragile assemblage of this ordering pattern if we would reduce it to a strategic decision of the Canton's political decision-makers who would 'merely' reproduce an international trend. The imagination of the museum at work in the 'strategic mode' emerges from a complex knot of 'actants'. For one, and related to but exceeding the quest for urban competitiveness, other Swiss cities had invested into 'iconic' architecture during the last fifteen years, while in this city all attempts for creating architectural icons had failed in the recent past. The last two major investments in high-profile public architecture were the theatre and the university campus, built during the 60s and 70s. In political discussions around the project as well as by some participants in the public workshops, it was argued that it would be high time to create new architectural landmarks, regularly referring to the university and theatre buildings as well as to other Swiss towns' more recent architectural endeavours. In what was (also) an aesthetic argument, the backward-looking and timid urban design policy of the past years was criticized. Furthermore, the 'strategic mode' was stabilized through the widely unquestioned 'spatial problematic' of the city's art museum and library: Both institutions were said to be short of space; the art museum 'simply' lacked room for showing parts of its collection next to its respective thematic exhibitions. This argument will resurface in the 'classic' mode of ordering; with regard to the 'strategic' mode, it was reinforced by a both political and 'popular' acknowledgement of the success story that the art museum had been for the last twenty years.

Moreover, the perception of a general architectural immobility was connected to two failed projects in the recent past. The project for the extension of the art museum as well as the plan to build a house for a well renowned Swiss theatre group was rejected by plebiscite in 2002 and 2003. Although the municipality's parliament as well as the government supported both projects, the citizens rejected them at the urn. Here, then, the second discourse (or rationale) of the strategic mode comes into play. The translation of 'the public' into the project becomes essential in a twofold

way. First, it picks up on the economic discourse by activating the creative energy of all citizens; second, the citizens play a key role for the mobilization of the necessary public resources for a new building.² Therefore, political reasoning lent ‘glue’ to the ‘strategic mode’ of ordering. As the city’s more recent history has shown the ballot is a decisive actor in (re)assembling new public spaces. In our case, ‘translating’ the citizens into the network of the new art museum proved to be as essential as finding potential configurations of the institution and its building.

Therefore, the participatory pre-project was provided with a comfortable budget of CHF 500 000 and a time span of 10 months. The government entrusted the newly appointed, comparably young and energetic director of the culture department – who earlier held a position in the economic department – with the pre-project for a new art house and a new library in 2005. Being ‘enrolled’ in a complex web of political and economic discourses as well as human and non-human actants, the director, a self-proclaimed ‘networker’, became constituted as the ‘face’ of the overall project and an influential ‘player’ of the ‘strategic mode’ – both a centre of calculation and a centre of translation as effected by the strategic mode of ordering, to use the ANT vernacular (Latour, 2005). The pre-project was organized in five modules and evolved through three phases. Module A consisted of thirteen workshops inviting (lay) citizens to contribute wishes and ideas for a new museum and library. In modules B and C experts were interviewed on the issues around the museum or library respectively. Module D was lead by an urban planning specialist and was concerned with finding suitable locations for the two new buildings. Finally, module E raised questions on possible modes of financing and administrating the new institutions. The first phase served the creation of new ideas. In a series of workshops citizens were invited to express their needs and to produce ideas for a new art museum and library in their town. At the same time a team of journalists conducted interviews with experts of the respective fields, while Module D searched for possible spaces within the city’s limits. In a second step all ideas from phase 1 were structured and transformed into blocks of a ‘construction kit’, which came into play during phase three. In this third phase, for each institution nine scenarios were developed: making use of the ‘construction kit’ and working in teams of six, participants from all modules were invited to build ‘their’ future museum and ‘their’ library. Finally, the project team further processed these nine scenarios and presented four potential solutions (three for

² The Swiss political system prescribes referendums for government projects exceeding the costs of CHF 6 Mio. on the municipal level and CHF 15 Mio. on the regional level.

the museum and one for the library) at the pre-project's closing event. The whole process of the pre-project was accompanied by the regular meetings of a committee that consisted of representatives from the involved institutions, namely the municipality, the canton, the library and the art club.

The project's public workshop structure was both an important part of and affected the 'strategic mode'. It was designed to allow lay people to participate in the imagination process for a new museum, and thus to possibly identify with the emerging museum. These workshops exemplify how the ongoing 'labour of translation' of the strategic modes was enacted in the planning process. A first attempt to draw on the creative potential/energy of the population – activating the creative class, so to speak –, the process became a political statement for no longer doing business as usual. It abolished a purely expert driven planning process and reconstructed planning as a learning process, where directions can be changed and new possibilities arise. By means of an elaborated and aesthetically pleasing graphic design, interesting workspaces – like an old warehouse or the train depot – and new media (internet, film, world cafés), an affective relation to the participants was established. Instead of critically pre-judging such 'seductive' technologies, we prefer to see them as part of a communication process that didn't limit itself to rational thought and argument alone but that tried to enable affective involvement. This strategy seems all the more sensible as the process sought to create new spaces that tried to break with common ways of thinking and talking. Although the majority of the concrete ideas did not make it into the final solutions on offer, these ideas were at all times transparent to the public and not 'corrected' or even criticized by experts. Therefore, we might miss the point if we dismiss this participatory process as a strategy of participation without representation. As we will show in the second part of our analysis, the 'strategic mode' of ordering irritates and is irritated by the 'classic' and the 'situational' mode, and we will have to take these as well as their mutual irritations into account if we wish to more fully understand the complexities of participation.

To sum up, the 'strategic mode' emerges as an assemblage of multiple relations that connects discourses (the entrepreneurial city, civic participation), objects ('iconic buildings', the existing museum space, the 'other spaces' of the public workshops), practices (of plebiscitary democracy, the workshop structure), various media and people (political decision-makers, the director of culture, among others) into a pattern

of ordering ‘for’ a new building and ‘for’ a wider involvement in matters of cultural importance. Aiming at a new museum building and at fostering creativity outside of the ‘inner circles’ of urban planning and the administration of art, it engendered a new way of event-driven project development which tries to take seriously and draw upon the ideas of a greater number of participants.

The classic mode

The second ordering pattern that we identified in the planning process is related to the status quo of the art museum and circles around the stabilization of the museum as a place of ‘professional’ art knowledge and research. It seeks to keep the established relations between the museum building, the collection and the well-respected art experts of the city stable. It is ‘classic’ in the sense that it (re)performs ordering strategies that date back to the beginning of the 19th century. But it could also be described as the ‘scientific’ or ‘enlightened’ mode since it constructs the museum as a place of liberating knowledge and education *for* the participants’ intellect. It is firmly situated in the city’s historic structures (of knowledge) and aims for their continuation and improvement.

Standing in front of the temple-like facade of the museum a feeling of sacredness overwhelms us. Everything seems to be in the right place. The building is ordered according to a perfect symmetry, which extends beyond the museums’ limits into the park. On the one side of the building its longitudinal axis is continued with a lovely circular fountain and a massive steel sculpture by an internationally renowned artist; on the other side it connects over the sculptural chimney of the museums’ underground storage to the central axis of the neighbouring history museum. The building’s lateral axis is prolonged by the grid of the so called “Museumsquartier” (from our field notes).

Being constructed in 1877 the museum was the first building in this area and gave the quarter its name. It served as a first cornerstone in this well ordered cultural district east from the medieval city centre. This pleasant symmetry and orderliness can be read as the effect of the ‘classic’ mode. As became apparent in the gathering of data, this mode of ordering was performed in the city’s history since the early 19th century. We thus need to briefly sketch the art museum’s history in order to see how the ‘classic’ pattern of ordering (re)performs and continues the traditional ordering work of the city’s cultural district.

The city experienced a tremendous change in its spatial order during the 19th and early 20th century. Boosted by the rapidly growing textile industry the city's population almost quintupled within one century. New practices and institutions, but also new building styles and planning procedures emerged from this industrialized and 'enlightened' bourgeois urban society.³ This process went along with the constitution of scientific and cultural knowledge, which was performed in the foundation of scientific clubs as well as in the construction of educational facilities (schools, prison, orphanage, theatre, university, library and museum). The foundation of the art club in 1827 was part of this development. In the first years of its existence, the members of this club exclusively spend their meetings with doing art – mainly drawings and paintings – and giving critiques on each other's pieces. The first exhibition of the art club took place in 1835. From that time on, the formation of a collection and the organisation of lectures and public exhibitions became the central issues of the club. In the club's charter of 1877 we read: "The art club consists of artists and art lovers and pursues the enhancement of the appreciation of art by regular meetings, the constitution of the art collection and the organisation of exhibitions (own translation)." The knowledge thus shifted from the embodied practice of doing art towards an intellectual and materialized practice of collecting and (re)presenting art.

In 1855 the canton built a large and representative classicist building outside of the medieval ring-wall. This was the city's first public educational building and gave room to three schools, to concerts and lectures, to the library as well as to the art, crafts and natural history collections. This can be seen as a significant step of spatially re-organizing a city's knowledge and its mediation. This process continued with the construction of, among other sites, the then new museum building in 1877, being a first corner stone of the rising museum district. Apart from the library – which moved to a new library building in 1907 – all collections were moved from the school building into the museum: the natural sciences on the ground floor while the art, the historic and the craft collections had to share the upper floor. Although the museum was perceived as a great improvement of the city's cultural life, its limitations soon became obvious. Apart from a lack of space for the quickly growing art and history collections, a certain discomfort arose concerning the mixture of the different

³ After razing the town walls during the 1830s the construction of new institutional buildings advanced quickly: orphanages, the prison (1839), hospitals (1845, 1867), the public school of the canton (1855), the train station (1856), the barracks (1857, 1878), the theatre (1857), high schools (1841, 1869, 1892), the post office (1887), the puppet theatre (1903), the indoor pool (1906), the library (1907), the concert hall (1909), the university (1911) and the historic museum (1921) were built.

institutions within the same building. The situation relaxed when the historic and the craft collection moved to a new museum building in 1921. Quite clearly, then, the ‘classic’ mode of ordering is drawing upon a history of being performed in a continuous differentiation of space along the growing collections of the library, the history club, the natural science club and the art club – and their respective forms of knowledge.

The logical next step in this process would have been a separation of the natural history and the art museum, a topic since the 1940s. However, through a lack of funding, neither a new museum nor the most necessary repair work for the slowly decaying old museum was on the agenda for years to come. In 1970, the museum had to be closed for security reasons. In 1987, 17 years after its closure, the renovated building reopened as a museum for natural history – with an extension to the basement – and art. Until today this situation remains unchanged. The curator expresses his discomfort with the spatial situation in the following way: “Back then, putting the nature and art museums into the same building again, and against all experts’ opinions, probably was a major political error. (...) You have to separate the departments. What is needed [now] is a new museum of natural history, and the art museum to stay in this building. In this case, we would have a size comparable to [other Swiss towns], we would be on the same level. But this was dismissed for political reasons. One didn’t want to move out the nature museum, it had to stay integrated. And actually, (...) already back then, you could see immediately that this wouldn’t work (own translation).”

Therefore, and a year before the Canton announced the new planning process, the museum foundation (which includes the art, the nature and the historic museum) had devised a new strategy to solve this situation. The plan – named “three museums – three houses” – aimed at stabilizing a set of existing relations, continuing and reproducing the logic of spatial differentiation, and is thus the most striking representation of the ‘classic’ mode. First, the old museum would be secured for the art club with its international exhibitions, while a new museum was to be built for the natural history collection. Second, there would be more space for the presentation of the art collection. Third, the people would have to vote primarily on a new museum of natural history and not the art museum. This would make the plebiscite not a decision for or against more ‘culture’ but for or against more ‘nature’, and thus more likely to be won. However, this strategy needed the financial support by the Canton. Therefore,

the project was put to a rest when the canton announced its own interest to plan a new art museum in 2005 – somewhat out of the blue, as several members of the art club have asserted.

The spatial differentiation⁴ of the city's collections, however, is just one of the 'narratives' enrolled by the classic mode. Furthermore the museum, with its art collection and the art club as a 'centre of calculation', sees itself as embedded in the international art discourse. Shortly after the reopening of the building in 1987, the director of the museum handed over his responsibilities to his then 32 years old assistant. Together with his agile curator and the support of the art club the museum was led into a new era. The new team was eager to prove that the museum could become a renowned institution again. With a clever strategy and good connections to the international art scene they were able to attract well recognized artists from around the world. The former art club's president tells us: "To bring a museum that no longer existed to a certain level was a long, cumbersome and gradual process. And we had a splendid start. I remember, how Richard Long, Donald Judd and others came, and each one who came to us and made an exhibition was a building block for the next (own translation)." Within this international contest for the attraction of sought-after artists the classicistic building turned out not to be a hindrance - as had been argued during its closure - but rather a comparative advantage. With modern museum buildings popping up in cities all around the world the strict order and the classic decoration provided a nice contrast to the more than ever reduced artefacts of the then en vogue Minimal Art. The director states: "Yes, that is what most artists do [to play with these spaces], because they have a certain, superior quality. (...) I think this space attracted many internationally renowned artists (...) (own translation)". The building has thus become essential for maintaining the good connection to the international art scene and for the conception of the high-end exhibitions the art club arranges today. Thus the stability of the classic mode is partly delegated into the obduracy of the building, so to speak. In this, the art collection has taken up a similar role. Although the collection cannot compete with those of bigger (international) art museums it plays an important role in the museums' organization as a 'scientific' institution. On the one hand the collection is seen as a cultural archive and therefore collecting means identifying which pieces of art must (not) be preserved as the "region's memory". On the other hand the collection allows to sustain connections to

⁴ This sketch of the art museum's history can only superficially indicate the many "problematizations" of the old museum over time, the many attempts to translate the building into other modes of ordering.

other art museums around the world by lending them pieces of the collection for special exhibitions (and in turn receiving loans).

Apart from the spatial differentiation and the embedment into the international art scene, we would like to highlight another ‘rationale’ that is closely aligned to the classic mode and that exemplifies its relations to the public. “Art is not democratic”, a member of the art club tells us. The art museum’s abstract and sometimes difficult program seems to shy away most of the potential local visitors. Since the museum shares the entrance with the popular natural science museum there are no exact numbers on the actual visits of each institution. However our own visits and some chats with the museum attendants give the impression that the upper floor spaces are rarely crowded. Most of the time we found the exhibition halls in sacred silence, only the slow steps of the always friendly attendant could be heard from time to time. On Sundays, however, the spaces appear to be a bit more frequented. A highly-ranked politician neatly expresses this point: “I appreciate the art club highly, because they understand their business very well, very well. But they let you know. I see them as elite, they really insist on going to the core and seem to have little understanding for the people – me included –who are not experts. I react emotionally... If something appeals to me, then I am interested. I think many people feel that way. They are interested, but looking at installations I need explanations so I can imagine something else. If I look at them by myself I might see something completely different, which also has a value. But I think that this [situation] is a bit elitist. But one has to admit that they have of course developed and advanced the art museum, they have a good nose. They talk about artists I have never heard of and they know ‘this is in New York, now we have to pull even, there is a chance to create value’. Only experts can do so (own translation).”⁵

In sum, the ‘classic mode’ of ordering assembles discourses (how the art world ‘works’), objects (the existing art museum and its exhibition spaces, the collection), practices (expert rounds that oversee the museum’s doings and strategy, exhibition making and visiting) and various people (most visibly, the former president of the art club as well as the art museum’s director and curator) into a distinct imagination of the museum space. This pattern of ordering can be seen as a way of stabilizing and

⁵ The curator is well aware of this problem and explains in another interview: “(...) [W]e are well aware of our deficiencies. Since one year we have a fifty percent position for museum education. You have to imagine, for decades the museum was run without that. We fought 15 years for this position (own translation).”

refining the apparatus of art knowledge and art experience. It fosters clear spatial distinctions between the different collections; it participates in an international discourse of art expertise; and it aims at including the local population by means of art pedagogy which distinguishes between those who have gained expertise and those who are being educated: participants are enrolled as passive visitors. This is enacted in the practices of collecting art, arranging exhibitions and providing educational programmes. This mode of differentiation is also expressed in the wish to separate the natural science museum and not to couple with the prospective library (as the cantonal government had tentatively suggested), not to move to the other side of the town where the less established cultural institutions are located and last but not least to stay in the old museum building, which provides a distinctive characteristic within the international art scene. Whereas the 'strategic mode' envisages a new architectural icon, echoing the failed attempt in the 1980s, the 'classic' pattern of ordering that emerges in the pre-project under discussion aims at reconstructing the existing building in all its grandeur.

The situational mode

The third ordering pattern that we identified in the planning process is concerned with the temporary and experimental realization of situations. It differs from the other two modes in that it does not aim for the stabilization of a lasting (new) order but for the spontaneous reconfiguration of the present. It seeks opportunities for practical manipulation of existing relations and thus heavily depends on the predominance of other modes of ordering. It primarily connects to the bodies and senses of the participants by testing (im)possible ways of talking and walking. Thus it could also be called the 'performative' or 'tactical' mode of ordering.

It is a Thursday in late summer of 2006, early evening. A group of people, I among them, moves slowly through the 'Museumsquartier' past the art museum, the theatre and the concert hall. Behind the concert hall, we are entering a recently constructed public parking garage. Down the ramp, past the gate and the ticket machine, we arrive in the new parking space. Since it is half empty, there is lots of free space. It looks strangely inviting. Moreover, walking through a parking garage is eerie when one is not looking for a car, when one is not tied into usual parking garage constellations - occupied by shopping, the next meeting, the film just seen etc. I am consciously affected by the physical surroundings of a parking garage, seeing with new eyes, so to speak. In one of the parking spaces there is an overhead projector; we build a half-circle around it, taking a seat on the portable

folding chairs we have received earlier. There is an old-fashioned wooden carriage on which is mounted a sign that reads "warm up". With another carriage, folding tables are brought in and installed across the garage. One of the three guys who make up a local artist collective and who have brought us here gives a short introduction. In changing constellations, we group around the tables, discussing the art museum and the library to-come, generating ideas and criteria. Occasionally, a car comes in or leaves; the drivers give us bewildered looks, or so it seems. After a while, we move on. Our next stop is on a central square where we again provisionally settle. Then, we enter and temporarily transform the defunct attic of the Canton's department of construction to further pursue our discussions. Finally, it is another walk to an old warehouse where we end up at the artists' atelier where wine and sandwiches await us (...).

The above perceptions are excerpts from the field-notes of one of us who took part in the most 'different' of workshops of the 'public' Module A. Although a part of the conceived consultation process, the artist collective was given free reign as to the workshop's unfolding. Opting for another form of participating in the process of imagining the future art museum and library, the participants were asked to move across town, temporarily settling in unexpected places in order to brainstorm and reflect upon potential buildings, its characteristics and contents. Intriguingly, the workshop simultaneously intervened in the urban planning process under discussion and in the everyday orderings of urban places. The bodily enactment of participating in city space and the various positionings in the urban realm exemplifies what we would call the 'situational mode' of ordering that is at work in the consultation process. The 'situational' pattern of imagining the museum space thinks of the museum building as decentred and present in multiple spaces, it sees action as related to the unexpected, surprise and affect, and it welcomes the participant as an engaged accomplice, if not a creative contestant.

Although most visibly in the artists' workshop described above, the 'situational' mode is at work in other workshops of Module A as well. Here, many of the stabilize assumptions about the art museum were playfully problematized and new relations were suggested. The workshops' title "marketplace of ideas" indicates that the spaces that were created here were primarily imaginative ones and raised questions like: How can we imagine the museum? What are the constraints of rethinking the art museum? How do we wish to represent art in our city? Some of the ideas that found their ways into the so-called "catalogue of ideas" were actually very unlikely to become realized (in this city). Some participants for example proposed that the collection should be shown in the city's streets, or that visitors should wear bathrobes

and rabbit slippers, while enjoying marshmallows and hot chocolate. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the two children's workshops that were part of the process were hotbeds of creativity too. In miniature models and drawings they proposed museums made from marzipan, cars or as floating ice blocks in a lake. Many of these ideas did not bother with being "realistic" but rather challenged the imaginative and discursive space of the existing museum by drawing on their current wishes and desires. They couldn't/wouldn't take into account all the complicated entanglements in which the museum is (generally) stabilized but rather ignored them and thus created glimpses of what is steadily excluded from our imagination of the art museum. They explored, so to say, the museum's (im)possible spaces. Critics may argue that in the end it was "just" talk (and nice little models) but we wish to challenge this assumption by pointing to the importance of discursive practices in (de)stabilizing spatial configurations. These workshops can thus be understood as upsetting practices of the existing order of the art museum, without stabilizing it in new ways. They rather aimed at temporarily exploring and testing the discursive spaces of the art museum.

Therefore, we find very different relations from which the spatial imagination emerges compared to the other two modes of ordering. The way of organizing spaces is in stark contrast to the clearly conceived spaces of the art club's plans or the architectural projects of the canton. Architecture and buildings with all their history still are an important source to draw on, but they are transformed not primarily by spatial reconfigurations but more by bodily interventions and discursive contestations. Spaces are tested out, "sensed" and imagined instead of being planned and built. Furthermore this mode of ordering seeks not to stabilize a future order but to open it up. The temporary character of these practices and their material minimalism leaves open what may happen next.

To sum up, it does not suffice to attach these modes of ordering to specific actors – like 'pinning' the strategic mode to political agency, the classic mode to the art club and the situational mode to a bunch of young artists. Rather, these modes of ordering were omnipresent in the process under scrutiny and emerged from the relations between very different actors. Instead, we would suggest tentatively relating them to the temporalities of past, present and future. While the classic mode draws heavily on the historic orders of the city, the strategic aims at controlling the future. The situational mode is always directed at changing the order of and only for the

present. Another distinction between the situational and the other two modes of ordering could be found in its use of the human body and its (tactile) practices, while employing only “light” materials in order to adopt them to specific localities.

Frictions of translation: Contesting, supporting, undermining

The three modes of ordering outlined above articulate in our view the three main patterns which shaped the materially heterogeneous processes that produced the planning project. It is important to see, we think, how such processes of organizing form multiple trajectories, and how an other politics of participation entails the acknowledgement of this multiplicity and, therefore, of difference. We will return to a possible revitalisation of the notion of participation in the conclusion. In this section, we will retrace some exemplary passages *between* the modes of ordering. For ‘simply’ reconstructing such patterns of organizing without discussing the impurifications, their mutual interferences, would fall short of the complexity of organizing (Law, 1994). For sure, our ordering work that went into the identification of the three modes already performs an attempt to ‘control’ complex empirical circumstances; we would argue, however, that it is a controlling work keenly attuned to the pluralism inherent in the empirical data. In this sense, looking at the classic, the strategic and the situational mode of ordering cultural spaces we became aware that they don’t ‘exist’ independently from each other but that these modes again interrelate in manifold ways. They overlap, contest or translate each other. Conflicts may arise where the modes draw on the same (limited, public) resources; where key actors are translated into mutually excluding positions; where specific buildings and the art collection are enrolled differently; where the notion of the public is constructed according to distinct premises. Moreover, it is here where modes of ordering transform (each other) and where new rationalities are tested out that we might find moments of newness and more profound change. However, there is little to be generalized about the interactions of different modes of ordering. They resemble situations with uncertain outcomes, in which existing relations might become problematic and new orders might emerge. We will start with making a jump to the planning process’ results and discuss some significant relations between the modes of ordering from there.

Explaining the pre-project’s unfolding to the workshop participants of Module A, the moderators used the metaphor of a funnel, which smacks of a consensus

oriented process: Everybody can give an opinion; nothing gets lost; all ideas will be condensed into one final solution. But even the ‘official’ outcome was more contradictory. At the final presentation the government came up with not one potential solution for the museum, but three: The *first* one was called “switch centre – art house at the train station” (alluring association to a railway control centre) – and proposed a new museum building in the vicinity of the main train station and an old train depot. This plan conceived the museum as an open and participative centre for the arts that was not only well connected to the train station – and thus to the city’s central transportation knot – but also to the surrounding (‘young’) cultural institutions. Especially the train depot, which the government had only recently bought for cultural activities, and the old warehouse, which hosts a number of ateliers and the “new exhibition hall” form the spatial context of this proposal. Furthermore in this solution the role of the art collection was reconsidered and a strong focus was put on the process of art creation and possible ways of engaging (with) the visitors in this process.

In the *second* solution, named “continuum mobile – art museum in the municipal park”, the status quo of the art museum was to be preserved but extended. The nature museum would get a new building in the vicinity of the botanical garden which would leave the existing building to the fine arts. More money should be provided for the expansion of the art collection and the pedagogic programme. However, the regional government signalled that it was *not* interested in financially participating in this plan; the municipality and private donators would have to bear the bigger part of the expenses for this solution. This was due to the canton’s assumption that neither the traditional art museum nor the new nature museum could fulfil the cultural signalling function they were aiming for.

“Continuum mobile” was however connected to the *third* solution, which signalled the canton’s support for remodelling the textile museum. The title of this project was “Bling Bling – the textile museum in its prime of life”, referring to a very successful textile exhibition, which took place two years earlier⁶. “Prime of life” may be related to the large success of the local textile industry in the 19th and early 20th century, which today is still referred to as the ‘golden age’ of the city. Although today’s economic wealth depends more on the third sector, some (high end) textile and

⁶ Even though this exhibition took place in the federal museum in Zurich, it was perceived as an exhibition of and about the city we studied.

fashion companies are still in town. The heritage of this time is preserved in the textile museum.⁷

The message of this final presentation seemed rather clear. Either the canton will build a new art house next to the train station or it will invest in the textile museum, with the art museum being the business of the municipality. And thus it went: The Canton withdrew from the plan to realize a new art museum and decided to invest in the improvement of the textile museum. Now, it almost seems as if the alternatives on offer mirror the modes of ordering discussed above, with the “switch centre” solution emerging from the ‘strategic mode’, the “continuum mobile” from the ‘classic’ mode and the “Bling Bling” from the ‘situational’ mode. Although there are strong connections, we will attempt to show how the entanglements between different modes of ordering are more complex than this, and how the final decision is in fact a ‘hybrid’ one, combining elements of (and thus both stabilizing and changing) the different patterns of ordering. In the following we will therefore briefly analyse this outcome through examples of mutual interferences that we have grouped according to the following passages: first, contesting and resisting, second, supporting, and third, undermining.

Contesting and resisting

In our analysis the tensions between the classic and the strategic mode became most obvious. When the government announced its interest to invest into the art museum the local art club (publicly) expressed worries about what it called an “unfriendly takeover”. Although having wished for years that the regional government would support its cause, it did not expect it to pursue its own agenda. Instead of carefully considering existing strategies, the government clearly set its own cornerstones. “Those who pay decide!” was one of the slogans which legitimized the government’s actions. Moreover, the government’s reasoning was opposed to influential relations of the classic mode of ordering. Most obviously, this can be seen in relation to the mechanism of Swiss plebiscitary democracy, which necessitates the people’s consent with every larger public investment, as well as in relation to a new economic paradigm, which seeks to foster and engage the potential of a broad creative milieu.

⁷ That the regional government sees a latent potential for cultural highlights in the city’s textile history became obvious when it conceived a large fashion exhibition in 2006. Following the “Bling Bling” exhibition where only draperies were displayed, in this second show, named “Intersection point”, focused on fashion. Both exhibitions are regarded as great successes.

The role for the public is conceived of differently in the classic mode of ordering. It is educational facilities that serve as means for letting people participate in the art museum. Thus, there is a different rationale for distributing agency. The museum director describes the museum as a place of scientific research and education and wonders “why the art club with its 2500 members and a clear will and financial resources, why this strong community of interest seems to be irrelevant [in the government’s action] while they ask all the world and its brother for an opinion. If you built a psychiatric hospital you wouldn’t survey the citizens neither on where to build it or what should be achieved inside. Nobody would even think of that. For which reason this has to be demonstrated now in the cultural sphere and with the art museum? (...) (own translation).” Agency is distributed differently: In the first case a political rationale is presented, which grants agency to the taxpayers and the regional government as their representative. In the second case this political rationale is questioned by stressing that art spaces are to be decided on by experts and not by ‘the public’ and/or its political representatives. Therefore, both modes ‘rubbed’ each other up the wrong way, so to speak. In an interview conducted after the Canton’s decision to invest into the “Bling Bling” alternative, a representative of the art club stated: “The canton dropped us! [...] But on the other hand – after those experiences with the canton – we are happy that the responsibilities are again in the hands of the municipality. The city has always been a reliable partner for us, although it is financially weaker than the canton. But we know where we are, which is back on solid ground (own translation).”

In addition, the situational mode is invested with traces of resistance and contestation vis-à-vis the strategic and the classic patterns of ordering. For instance, in the early stages of the project, a cultural ‘entrepreneur’ and journalist, who was asked to organize the pre-project’s public module, pulled out after the first two meetings, saying that the process’s goals and structures were wrong and that one should start to think about a museum wholly differently – that is, without recourse to iconic architecture, buildings and art collections but with urban interventions and an open agenda. And the question ‘what for?’ was a recurring theme in the public workshops of Module A, alongside a sometimes resurfacing suspicion that what was going on was nothing more than a fig leaf for a given political agenda.

Supporting

By ordering our data according to differences between the modes of ordering it is easy to forget about the incentives, hopes and mutual reliance that were connected to the planning process. Translating the institution ‘art museum’ into its mode of ordering would have been the ideal scenario for the ‘strategic’ mode; for this, however, it relied upon the ‘functionality’ of the ‘classic’ mode. For the art club the ideal scenario would have been to win the canton as a (generous) partner of the museum foundation with its strategy of the “three museum – three houses” in order to gain the necessary resources for its further ordering activities. So there were clear interests of translating some of the ‘actants’ from one mode of ordering into the other. Or to put it differently, the strategic mode aimed at translating the idea of the art museum without its historically stabilized practices and spaces, and the classic mode wanted to translate public resources without the political interventions in their affairs. In both cases, the modes aimed for the fruits without the roots (or the rhizomes that entangled them)⁸. Therefore, the lines of opposition were continuously blurred by an acknowledgement of a kind of mutual dependence as well as certain shared enrolments of, for instance, the art collection and the ‘spatial situation’, i.e. the lack of exhibition space.

Although, or maybe because, the strategic and situational mode of ordering are very different in the way they translate and draw on resources their coexistence thus appears to be less conflictual than it might be expected. The situational mode of ordering is somewhat counterpunctual and seeks voids or empty spaces that were looked over by the other two modes of ordering. In that sense this logic could not exist without the dominant and somewhat inert doings of another mode of ordering. Even the apparent subordination by the strategic mode of ordering does not disturb or hinder this way of organizing spaces in the city. Conversely, the strategic mode seems to trifle with the principals of the situational mode of ordering. The planning rationality of the pre-project adopted elements (practices) of the situational mode. The project manager kept stressing the importance of the creation and use of desire [“lustvoller Prozess”] in the process. A construction kit was designed; the senses and the bodies of the participants were triggered by choosing (seemingly) makeshift locations and

⁸ On the one hand, then, the strategic mode attempted to enrol the art museum’s international reputation on which the new institution could be built. Since the Swiss political system is built upon the principle of subsidiarity, the canton can only engage in projects that are relevant on a supra-regional level. The art museum is one of the few cultural institutions in the canton that had already achieved this status. Furthermore, the art museum seemed a likely candidate to be translated into the economic reasoning that aimed at fostering the creative potential of the cantons’ inhabitants. On the other hand, the classic mode strongly relies on the provision of financial resources, especially for the extension of the art collection and the construction of the new museum of natural history.

creating graphically appealing posters. Furthermore artists specialized on urban interventions were invited to organize one of the workshops. Moreover, when the canton decided to buy an old train depot and to foster the rather unspectacular textile museum instead of building a new art museum this could be seen as a sort of mimicry of the situational mode. After failing to translate the art museum into the strategic rationality the textile museum turns out to be a less stabilized space in the city's museum landscape and its history and practices seem more compatible with the strategic mode of ordering. This illustrates how the modes of ordering are not strictly connected to specific places or people but how they can mobilize and enrol – and in turn be stabilize in relation to – shifting and sometimes unexpected actors.

Undermining

According to the Canton's government, the new museum was supposed to become a cultural "lighthouse" for the entire region. The iconographic architecture of the new building would take an important role in making the region's cultural and economic vitality visible far beyond the city's borders. Within the classic mode, the lighthouse metaphor was taken up and subverted: Disagreeing with the necessity for a new building, but not with the lighthouse-image as such, the art museum circles emphasized that what is important about lighthouses is not the building but the light inside the house. This of course relates to the exhibitions of the past twenty years which had gained recognition in the international art scene. In fact, the term 'lighthouse' became a somewhat infamous pejorative for the overall project, destabilizing the strategic mode. Conversely, the strategic mode had to somehow provide a place for expertise. In the modules B and C experts from the respective fields were interviewed. However, not only the 'same old' experts from the city were invited but also acclaimed pundits from other Swiss cities and from abroad. In this sense, the strategic mode gathered a surplus of expertise in relation to the historically stabilized positions of the classic mode.

Moreover, the situational mode of ordering not only partly supported and partly resisted the strategic and the classic modes; it also and quite significantly undermined them. As discussed earlier, in the public workshop structure a host of ideas emerged that destabilized the classic modes' insistence on expertise and bringing exhibition *to* the people. Not surprisingly, some of the more far-flung ideas generated in Module A were picked up and ridiculed by representatives of the classic mode. On the other hand

and probably more importantly, the workshop participants' widely shared belief in the necessity to open up the art museums to broader concerns and to make it more appealing were not without influence on the classic mode. "I think it would be bold to say 'that can not be in our interest'", the curator commented. Furthermore, towards the end of the project the art club developed a reform proposal that, while clinging to the mainstays of the classic mode, took notice of and adopted some of the pre-project's results. At the same time, the 'bodily lived' other spaces that were produced by and through the public workshops sometimes playfully and ironically destabilized the strategic yearning for iconic architecture and the creative city. It playfully translated the historically structured spaces – on which the classic mode draws so heavily – as well as the political and economic reasoning of the strategic mode into new (temporary) relations. Showing how newness and direct creative participation of the citizens can be realized with very minimal means illustrates that change and creativity is not necessarily bound up with new architectural icons but rather can be reached by practices of re-reading an re-enacting the city in different ways.

Finally, the Canton's decision to opt for a re-development of the textile museum, in conjunction with buying the old train depot and turning it into a platform for temporary artistic interventions, emerges as a hybrid 'solution'. For sure, with regard to the art museum itself it seems to resist the classic mode and its stabilized 'knot' of discourses, figures, objects and practices. But then again, it clearly pays tribute to the 'classic' mode of ordering and its spatial differentiations by attempting to re-invent a museum that more than any other exemplifies our city's 'golden age' and its rise to a short-lived industrial glory. The Canton's gamble, however, is a strategic one: It is based on the belief that the revamping of a rich history and its thriving remnants will be an important step for the city to become more visible (again), helped along by making other spaces such as the train depot accessible for a more situational use.

Discussion: the project multiple and its participatory politics

After having mapped the three modes of ordering – strategic, classic and situational – at work in the planning process for a new art museum as well as the mutual irritations between these patterns (which we have grouped into moments of contesting and

resisting, of supporting and of undermining), we will conclude by discussing our empirical analysis with regard to the question of participation. We will argue for a two-fold revitalization of the notion of participation that attempts to steer clear of its instrumentalization for conceiving the entrepreneurial city and its normative (mis)conception as a consensus-seeking, rational discourse. Rather, and *first*, we suggest to re-conceptualize participation as always already taking place, as being at work in the ongoing processes of assembling, associating and ordering that produce urban space. As we have tried to show, the labour of translation that goes into the stabilization of modes of ordering and imagining art spaces is carried out through a plurality of human and non-human actors. *Second*, the question of how such (a) network(s) of participation emerge(s) and in which way new voices and relations are brought to the fore and distributed harbours the possibility of a more disruptive politics proper.

First, the project multiple. Tracing different modes of ordering implies exploring who and what participates in the continuous production of these fragile assemblages. We cannot, then, limit the case of participation to, for instance, the public workshop structure and its effects. For doing so would silence multiplicity to representational simplicity: “The multiple or the fractional, the elusive, the vague, the partial and the fluid are being displaced into Otherness” (Law, 2004). As our empirical discussion shows, the planning project for a new art museum was more than one thing; it was a heterogeneous assemblage of many things at once that entered into more or less stable relations. Our task therefore becomes to articulate, and to not disarticulate, the relations between words, bodies, texts, things, buildings and practices that participate in and that are brought forward through the process. It is important to see, we think, how such processes of organizing form multiple trajectories and how an other politics of participation entails the acknowledgement of this multiplicity and, therefore, of difference. For participation comes in different forms and cannot be pinned down by a watertight formula. In this sense, our first revitalization attempt avoids the ‘usual’ notion of “participation in politics with a conventional capital P” (Amin and Thrift, 2002: 158). Rather, we are concerned with a “molecular” politics of participation that is always already at work in the production of cityspace.

Thus and second, if such distributed ‘knots’ of agency constitute the participatory planning process, then this is about a politics of distribution, for “politics is about distributions” (Law, 2003: 8). But this politics of distribution is neither

necessarily 'given' in preconfigured power relations nor easily pre-conceived by urban planners. It has to be performed and continuously produced; it emerges from a permanent labour of translation. For example, in our city the classic mode is continuously performed in the orchestration of exhibitions, the pedagogic programme, the enlargement of the art collection, but also in schools, newspaper-features and everyday talk about this institution. These are the places where the distribution of the classic mode takes place. However, another politics of participation emerges when tensions between different modes of ordering arise, in moments when what is possible and what remains impossible within and across each mode of ordering is being renegotiated. It is hard to say and easily overlooked, from the researchers point of view, where modes of ordering change, where the possible is renegotiated, where new actors are translated or established ones are being dropped. Often these changes are marginal and not as revolutionary as we might imagine the urban politics. For example in our case the strategic mode had to restrain from building a new art house. The logic of building art houses as cultural hallmarks of a region was (forcefully) shifted to reinventing the textile museum and the old train depot. But also the classic mode did not remain unchanged. Their counter proposal adopted some of the workshops' ideas and slightly shifted the classic rationale towards a less elite imagination of the museum⁹. The incorporation of the situational practices into the strategic mode is another example for how modes of ordering can change. The canton's planning strategy, so to say, adopted a new dimension, which is open to bodily and imaginative processes, opening the planning procedure for uncertain and unexpected outcomes. This is well reflected in the government's decision for investing into the textile museum and the train depot. Since (being the sole institution of its kind in Switzerland) there are no examples and measures on how to imagine a textile museum, since there are only some uncertain programmatic ideas for the train depot, the projects' future is less controlled and probably more open for new ways of ordering than the realization of yet another art house in the Swiss museum landscape.

However, it is clear that the interferences between the modes of ordering can not only be read as situations of newness and change but clearly they are also moments where existing modes of ordering are reaffirmed. The rather small adaptations described above cannot hide the stabilizing effects of these negotiations. The main rationales of

⁹ It remains to be seen if this imagination will stabilize, now that the canton withdrew from the project.

all three modes of ordering remained active throughout and after the planning process. For example, the museum director's assumption on the impossibility of imaging the participation of a broad public in the planning of a psychic hospital (and thus of an art museum), the canton's withdrawal from the art house project and the continuation of "three museums – three houses" express well the stability of the ordering modes.

Thus the emergence of new – formerly unthinkable – ways of par-taking, new configurations of what is visible and sayable, what Rancière would call politics proper, remain rather the exception than the rule (Rancière, 2004). Echoing this argument, Žižek writes that "[t]he actual political act (the intervention) is not simply something that functions well within the framework of existing conditions, but something that changes precisely this framework, that determines how the various aspects interact. To say that good ideas are those that 'function' means that one accepts from the outset the (global, capitalist) constellation that lays out what can function at all. All this can also be very well expressed with the well-known definition of politics as the 'art of what is possible': Genuine politics is the exact opposite, in other words the art of the impossible – it alters precisely the parameter of what is considered possible in the existing constellation (Slavoj Žižek: Postpolitik, In Kniess and Voggenreiter, 2006: 200)."

Seen this way, the revitalized politics of participation that we are advocating here is bound up with the possibilities of new and different ways of ordering of whatever is at stake. As we have shown in the empirical discussions, different modes of ordering create tensions in their interspaces. In this sense, political change comes about when different modes contest, support and translate each other. (This, of course, may be resisted as we have shown between the classical and strategic modes). Inquiring into urban participation therefore means to explore the modes of ordering and their mutual interferences, and thus how the 'impossible' is introduced into each other's world-building activity. It is in those interferences that (new forms of) political action takes place. And that is why 'a political analysis informed by ANT' is not the oxymoron it might appear to be. Documenting how what is considered possible as art space and museum is kept stable or whether the translations between modes of ordering make visible what is thought impossible first and foremost allows to retrace the everyday politics of participation and the potential emergence of the "art of the impossible". We suggest, then, to re-imagine participation as a way of testing new

ways of relating a heterogeneous set of actors into assemblages. This understanding is not primarily concerned with asking *if* participation is in place but rather with the issue of *how* different actors relate to different ways of ordering and how they deal with the tensions that emerge between them.¹⁰ And it is here where we as researchers aim to participate in the question of participation. We will thus end by calling for more and future work on “an expanded politics of representation” (Amin and Thrift, 2002: 158) that is worthy of the inventiveness and the politics of everyday urban performances of participation.

¹⁰ Where does all this fuzz about modes of ordering then leave the human agent? Are we all just passively floating pieces in the machinery of ordering modes? Not necessarily, we would argue. It is just that participation requires a certain reflexivity and awareness of the modes of ordering we are enfolded in. This way we might be able to give our limited options for action a more conscious and political drive. Relating this argument back to ANT we would like to stress that in this respect human and non-human actors cannot be equated. Although things can also be exposed to tensions between different modes of ordering, although we grant them agency, although they produce political effects by participating in the creation and stabilization of power relations, although they play an important role in drawing boundaries between the possible and the impossible, the potential for self-reflective agency seems to be a human(oid) affair.

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