



Participative processes as tools for designing public spaces

Master of advanced studies
in sustainable urban planning
Université de Lausanne - Mémoire

Tamara Kocan
August 2013

Acknowledgments

With thanks to Professor Bernard Debarbieux for his help in writing this mémoire. Thanks to all interviewees who shared very interesting insights; Hans-Rudolf Christen, Rudolf Steiner, and Enea Corubolo from TAZ, Ruth Zollinger from the neighbourhood coordination team Altstetten, Peter Rothenhäusler from the neighbourhood association Limmatquai, Trond Maag from Urban Identity GmbH and Walter Schenkel from synergo as well as Beat Jörger from TAZ.

Thanks go also to all at David Bonnett Associates for my formative years, and especially in memory of Adrian Cave who taught me a lot about participation. Thanks go also to enlightening ideas and discussions about participation with Marine Semichon.

Big thanks go to Rachael Marshall for her editing skills as well as late night discussions about inclusive design.

And special thanks for an unprecedented emotional and intellectual support and patience from Garðar Snæbjörnsson as well as longtime patience and any kind of support from my family; Max, Elisabeth and Leonard Kocan.

Table of content

1. Introduction	7
1.1. Research aims and objectives	8
1.1.1 Aims of the research	8
1.1.2 Objectives	9
2. Research methodology	10
2. 1 Research techniques	10
3. Literature review	12
3.1 Public space and its role in the urban fabric	12
Elements of local identity in public spaces	13
3.2 Participation	15
The mechanics of city-making	15
Participation as tool for creating public spaces	15
3.3 Participation and its relationship to social sustainability	19
Social sustainability in Zurich	20
4. Context - Zurich, Switzerland	22
4.1 Public space design in Zurich	22
4.1.1 Stadträume 2010	22
4.2 Participation processes in Zurich – an Overview	28
4.2.1 Participatory processes – Legally binding participation procedures in Switzerland	29
4.2.2 Participatory processes – legal framework in the city of Zurich	30
4.2.3 Informal participatory processes	31
The evolution of participatory processes	31
Legislative focus point “Stadt und Quartiere gemeinsam gestalten”	32
Current practice in Zurich	32
Scope of work and Definitions	33
Types of participation processes versus project types	34

Scope of impact and scope of participation	35
Pilot projects involving participative methods	37
5. Case studies	38
5.1 Lindenplatz, Altstetten	40
5.2 Idaplatz	45
5.3 Limmatquai	49
6. Analysis and Conclusion	53
Summary of findings through case studies and interviews with external specialists	54
High participation demand and scope of design input	54
A user-centred approach to enhance local character	55
Conclusion	56
7. Bibliography	59
8. Annexes	62
Interview Trond Maag – 23.06.2013	62
Interview Walter Schenkel - 16.06.2013	65

1. Introduction

“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”

Jane Jacobs, 1961, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

Since 2008 more than 50% of the world population lives in urban environments (United Nations). Cities are now humans' main habitat¹ and thereby the predominant social system that humans function in. Cities act now more than ever as a catalyst of human activity and therefore need to be able to function sustainably in environmental, economical and social terms.

*“The order of sustainability calls for the handing over of a liveable city to its future generation.”*² Consequently, the development and redevelopment of urban fabric must respond to the challenge of creating a liveable city for its present and future generations. Public spaces as articulation of the urban fabric and social meeting spaces therefore also need to meet this challenge. The role of public space as the democratic ‘centre’ of a city emphasises the need to include social sustainability factors. Participative processes have been used as a tool for achieving sustainable developments since the Aalborg Process³ and are having an increasing role in the city-making process.

This research examines how the city of Zurich is creating public spaces and how it includes participative processes to improve factors of quality and ultimately how this contributes to social sustainability.

‘Quality’ in this context refers to how suitable a place is for its users. A qualitatively good public space will be well-used, and this will only happen if the space responds to the users’ needs.⁴

This research argues that a more user-centred approach to public space design through participation enables the design of public places to respond more effectively to the local community’s needs and therefore engender a sense of place. Consequently, the information collected during the participation process could inform the design brief. This helps the design to integrate elements of local character, resulting in a more socially durable place.

Three case studies of recently produced public spaces in Zurich demonstrate how participation was used by their designers and reveals interesting theories about the scope of inclusion of participants in design issues relating to Zurich’s public realm design standards.

The hypothesis of this analysis is that participatory processes help to create more effective user-centred public spaces and therefore lead to a more socially durable design of public spaces.

.....
1 H.Girardet, 1999, *Creating sustainable cities*, Schumacher Briefings, Bristol UK

2 Alonso, Antonio Da Cunha, Luc Gwiazdzinski , Lionel Chabot, Laurent Essig , Lou Herrmann. Mai 2013, « Vues sur la ville, Urbanisme temporaire et projet, La ville malléable, solution ou mirage? N o 30. Free translation from the author.

3 La Charte d’Aalborg, 1994

4 Jan Gehl , date unknown, *Public Spaces for a Changing Public Life*, School of Architecture, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen

1.1. Research aims and objectives

1.1.1 Aims of the research

The aim of this research is to analyse how urban planners and designers can make use of participatory methods in order to design public spaces that are well suited for its users. These investigations are based on examples of actual practice in public space design within the city of Zurich.

One factor supporting the thesis is that the gathering of more user-centred input through participatory methods can contribute to local identity being evident and valued in the character of the design. A sense of place⁵ and identity can lead to the community using the space more regularly and fully. Ultimately, these notions of identity⁶, and the local populations' contribution to it, can strengthen the social sustainability of the place.

A reason for research of this kind is that in the current planning process in Zurich, the emphasis is on creating sustainable urban developments. While the focus of planning policies is on environmental sustainability, the social aspects of these urban developments are still relatively underdeveloped.

With Zurich's current legislative focus point "*Designing the city and the neighbourhoods together*"⁷, participation is becoming one of the main tool in policy implementation for creating cohesive and social developments. This essay aims to explore how participation has been implemented in Zurich in recent years for the design of public spaces. Furthermore, a key objective is to establish whether participation processes for the design of public spaces in Zurich have developed to a 'mature' state or if they are still being shaped and refined.

The main interest of this essay is therefore to understand how the participatory processes used during the design of public spaces in Zurich are contributing to creating more user-centred public spaces and ultimately socially sustainable public spaces. This is analysed through three case studies of public spaces based in Zurich, which have been designed recently and which have used participatory processes during their development. These three case studies also provide an independent study of how participative processes were used during these projects and what the results have been.

The author undertook the research independently, and without formal agreement with the city of Zurich. With a background in sustainable product design and work experience in inclusive design (design for all⁸; accessible urbanism and architecture for people with and without disabilities), the author has developed an interest in creating more user-friendly and user-centred environments.

5 G.Bramley, N. Dempsey, S.Power, C. Brown , 2006, What is "social sustainability", and how do our existing urban forms perform in nurturing it? Bartlett School of Planning, UCL, LONDON:. Paper for presentation in the 'Sustainable Communities and Green Futures, p.5

6 Andrea Colantonio and Tim Dixon, 2009, Measuring Socially Sustainable Urban Regeneration in Europe, Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development (OISD) School of the Built Environment, Oxford Brookes University

7 Translated by the author "Stadt und Quartiere gemeinsam gestalten" http://www.stadtzuerich.ch/content/portal/de/index/politik_u_recht/stadtrat/legislaturschwerpunkte/stadt_quartiere.html#ziele

8 Design for All is the intervention on environments, products and services with the aim that everyone, including future generations, regardless of age, gender, capabilities or cultural background, can enjoy participating in the construction of our society, with equal opportunities participating in economic, social, cultural, recreational and entertainment activities while also being able to access, use and understand whatever part of the environment with as much independence as possible. <http://www.designforall.org/en/dfa/dfa.php>

User-centred design⁹ is an approach mainly used in product and interface design. The author suggests that it can be a relevant approach in the field of urban planning and more precisely in public space design. This suggestion is based on design approaches by Jan Gehl (Gehl, 2010, Cities for people) and design thinking by Jane Jacobs (Jacobs, 1961, The Death of Great American Cities).

The authors' experience in the fields of sustainable and inclusive design have led to the observation that user-centred design via participatory methods could inform design briefs more efficiently, leading to the public realm being more suitable for its users as well as providing important information for designers.

1.1.2 Objectives

- Examine how participatory processes are used by designers and planners (formal and informal participatory processes);
- Examine how these processes help designers or planners in the decision making process;
- Examine whether participatory processes enable designers to design more user-centred public spaces, and if not, what the issues are that prevent this, and
- Demonstrate that participatory processes assist in creating more user-centred public spaces and therefore lead to a more socially durable place.

.....
⁹ Donald A. Norman, 1988, The Design of Everyday Things

2. Research methodology

This mémoire follows a qualitative research methodology for the purpose of examining the research questions and the set hypothesis. The research strategy is divided into two parts, which are described below.

The first part entails the theoretical research of the subject. A review of literature on the subject of public space and its role in the city as well as questions of the identity of places, participation as a tool for designing user-centred places and the meaning of social sustainability in the context of urban developments constitutes the first part of the strategy.

The theoretical analysis is based on published and current research, regulations and literature about participation in the design of public spaces in Zurich. These texts have been examined in order to understand the context in which participatory processes are used in the city of Zurich.

The case studies form the qualitative entity of the research to demonstrate how current practice uses participatory processes, which methods are used most efficiently, and whether the outcome is satisfactory for the stakeholders.

The aim of this research is not to assess or quantify the social sustainability of public spaces. Therefore methods such as quantitative analysis, which require that a specific type and number of observations are collected over a certain amount of time, has not been carried out. Instead, the author has chosen the alternative methodological approach described above because of the limited time available for extensive research.

The author interviewed a various people who are involved with the development of public spaces, including:

- Designers and other professionals;
- External stakeholders; and
- External specialists in the area of participation and urban identity.

These interviews demonstrate different actors' opinions of the participative process undertaken for such developments, and establish an understanding of how decisions are taken.

2. 1 Research techniques

Theoretical and data-based information was gathered using the internet web and specialised libraries.

This research has been self-initiated by the author without any formal agreement with the city of Zurich. The author has been undertaking an internship within the urban planning department of the city of Zurich when writing this research, but has done the research independently. In result, some practice-based information could be gathered through the knowledge acquired during the internship as well as previous work experience in related fields.

Practice-based information was compiled by analysing the selected case studies, which were selected in collaboration with Beat Jörger, the Head of Project Development at the Civil Engineering Department of the city of Zurich (Tiefbauamt Zürich or 'TAZ'). He suggested three public spaces that have been recently redesigned using information from participative methods.

These three public spaces are:

1. Lindenplatz – Altsetten
2. Idaplatz - Wiedikon
3. Limmatquai – Centre of Zurich

The author has interviewed project leaders in the Civil Engineering Departments for all three spaces, who were involved with the design, or had a comprehensive knowledge of the subject.

External stakeholders who took part in the participative processes of the projects as representatives of the local community were also interviewed where possible. Examples are representatives of neighbourhood associations (Quartiersverein), and members of the social coordination departments. Unfortunately, it was not possible to contact the representative of the local community for the Idaplatz case study.

The link to the public has been made through the neighbourhood association and neighbourhood social coordination team. These interviewees were selected because they both had the insiders' knowledge of the local population as they represented them in the participation process for the elaboration of each project as well as an understanding of other stakeholders' roles in the making of public spaces.

The landscape architect for Lindenplatz and Limmatquai were invited to be interviewed for the research, but no meeting was yet possible.

Additional informal interviews were conducted through email exchanges with the following experts:

These specialists were selected because of their in depth knowledge and expertise in their respective field.

Questions about participation and its impact on social sustainability and connection to local identity factors were discussed with Dr. Walter Schenkel, doctor of political science, who specialises in political processes and participative processes, and is an associate at Synergo.¹⁰ Dr. Walter Schenkel has worked closely with the Tiefbauamt in Zurich on several projects and has produced reports such as the „Mitwirkung und Kommunikation optimieren“ report.¹¹

Questions of urban identity and its relevance to social sustainability were discussed with Trond Maag, an urbanist who specialises in city sound, the public realm and its qualities and is Director at urbanID GmbH Zürich. Trond Maag has contributed to the book “The world's fairest city – yours and mine”¹² which was the outcome of the Urban Identity and Design course at the Zurich School of Art (Zürcher Hochschule für Künste). He has also published several reports for the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment as well as for the Construction Department of the Canton of Zurich.

.....
¹⁰ <http://www.synergo.ch/team/walter-schenkel.html>

¹¹ Walter Schenkel, 2012, Legislatorschwerpunkt 3: Stadt und Quartiere gemeinsam gestalten, Teilprojekt 5: Qualität öffentlicher Raum in den Quartieren, Mitwirkung und Kommunikation optimieren, Modul 1: Zwischenbericht

¹² T. Maag in cooperation with R. Baur, M. Feuz, C. Gasser Derungs, A. Gmünder, T. Hausheer, M. Jann, P. Krass, M. Con Lupin, U. Tgetgel and M. Zwissler, 2009, “The world's fairest city – yours and mine” features of urban living quality, Lars Müller Publishing

3. Literature review

This literature review analyses the role that public space has taken in the urban fabric and establishes an understanding of its social context including elements of the identity of places. The review also describes the various actors involved in city-making, their overlap and the role of municipal authorities as moderator. The increasing use of participation as a tool for creating the city and public spaces, its evolution towards a more user-centred approach and its relation to social sustainability is also examined.

The recent protests in Turkey about the proposed transformation of Istanbul's Gezi Park into a shopping mall reminds us of the importance of the public space as a symbol for democracy. The protestors' objection to the government's plans to build a shopping mall on one of Istanbul's most popular public park raised awareness of the population's desire to play a part in the decision-making process, and shows the relevance of participative processes in democratic society.¹³

3.1 Public space and its role in the urban fabric

Public space has served as a symbol of a democratic society in cities since the ancient Greeks defined it as 'Agora' or 'place of gathering'. Ring et al called it "*a space for political, spiritual and artistic life of the city as well as birthplace of democracy*."¹⁴

Public spaces are intrinsically part of the urban fabric due to their materiality (junctions of streets, spaces in front of buildings, etc.), function (circulation space, leisure and trade space) and sociological functions (space for gathering, protests, and self-expression). In others words, public spaces articulate the functions of mobility, sociability, quality of life, democracy¹⁵ and identity within the urban fabric.

Hannah Arendt explains the importance of sociological aspects of the public space in her account of the origin of the public realm: The public realm in ancient Greece was reserved for individuality and was the "*only place where men could show who they really and inexchangeably were*".¹⁶ This act of self-expression reflects the importance of the social nature of the public realm. Some argue that these sociological functions are now replaced by social media and that therefore the public space has lost its social value, J. Parkinson points out that its physical space should not be underestimated: "*...democracy depends to a surprising extent on the availability of physical, public space, even in our allegedly digital world*."¹⁷ Social media remain a tool to share ideas and representations of real people who act in physical spaces.

A public space suggests the freedom to interact with and see others whatever their background or origins. J. Parkinson argues that this "*freedom to enjoy the city is more restricted than appearances might suggest*"¹⁸ and that they are not fully accessible anymore because of the privatisation of public space. This applies more to Anglo-Saxon cities than in other parts of the world, but one could argue that the notion of public here in Switzerland has also changed in certain public environments. This issue can be seen quite clearly in the empty public spaces of some middle-sized cities, which is the result of the increase in shopping

13 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22744728>

14 Ring, Salkin, Boda, Trudy, Robert, Sharon, 1996. International Dictionary of Historic Places: Southern Europe. Routledge. p. 66.

15 Michel Bassand, Anne Compagnon, Dominique Joye, Véronique Stein et Peter Güller, 2001, Vivre et créer l'espace public, Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, Lausanne

16 Hannah Arendt, 1958, The human condition, University of Chicago, The Public and the Private Realm, P. 41

17 John R. Parkinson, 2012, Democracy and Public Space, The Physical Sites of Democratic Performance, Oxford University Press, New York

18 John R. Parkinson, 2012, Democracy and Public Space, The Physical Sites of Democratic Performance, Oxford University Press, New York

centres in the suburbs (Neuchâtel for example). The public realm though, now and in ancient times, remains a place where one can see other fellow citizens¹⁹ of diverse backgrounds, which is one element that can help create social cohesion in the city. A public space should therefore remain accessible to all, as opposed to semi-private spaces such as restaurants, shopping malls or shopping streets where the public also can meet others, but by definition exclude those who cannot afford to consume or do not want to consume. Kohn indicates that public spaces are thought of as *“owned by the government, accessible to everyone without restriction, and/or fosters communication and interaction”*.²⁰

Public space should be seen as a *“shared resources... in which experiences and value are created”* and act as a public service, according to Mean and Tims²¹, therefore becoming a shared resource and a common good in the city.

Elements of local identity in public spaces

A public space mirrors the identity of the neighbourhood and city it belongs to. The identity of a place has two sources: one is the specific emotional meaning that one ascribes to it and the other is a communal identity that is shaped by all individuals' perceived meanings combined with physical and spatial qualities such as landscape, typography and built history.²²

Primarily, the meaning of public space can be derived from differentiations between 'public' and 'private'. In Arendt's definition of 'public' she states that *“...everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity. For us, appearance – something that is being seen and heard by others as well as by ourselves – constitutes reality.”*²³ Therefore the private, individual identity only becomes real to others when expressed by speech and action in the public realm.²⁴ Consequently, the public realm is constituted by the fusion of a collection of individual realities.

A public space takes on many roles within its community in everyday life; it is a meeting place, a place where one goes to the market, has a rest, just passes through, uses amenities such as shops or services, allows children to play in and so on. According to Walter Schenkel, *“it is such emotions that shape “my” identity – and vice-versa.”*²⁵ All these activities create a set of personal experiences and therefore the place is tainted by personal emotions relating to these experiences. This interweaving of personal and public perception and experience creates the individual identity of a place.

Thus, places do not have a single sense of place or identity that everyone shares as Massey points out. Instead, a complex, communal identity is formed by individual identities. Massey adds that *“If it is now recognized that people have multiple identities then the same point can be made in relation to places.”*²⁶

In addition to these various personal meanings and identities, contemporary urban environments have many facets to their identities. Globalisation, the flow of people and layers of historical events and complex socio-economic changes, create a very complex sense of place (Massey, 1994 and Maag, 2013 interview in Annex 8). When speaking of the identity of cities, the communal notions described above as well as the individual's sense of place come

19 John R. Parkinson, 2012, *Democracy and Public Space, The Physical Sites of Democratic Performance*, Oxford University Press, New York

20 Kohn, Margaret, 2004, *Brave New Neighborhoods: The Privatization of Public Space*. New York: Routledge

21 Melissa Mean and Charlie Tims, 2005, *People make places: Growing the public life of cities*. Published by Demos

22 Dana Lyn Dougherty, 2006, *EMBODYING THE CITY: IDENTITY AND USE IN URBAN PUBLIC SPACE*, Thesis Master of Landscape Architecture, Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

23 Hannah Arendt, 1958, *The human condition*, University of Chicago, *The Public and the Private Realm*, p. 41,

24 Hannah Arendt, 1958, *The human condition*, University of Chicago, *The Public and the Private Realm*, p.179

25 Walter Schenkel, 2010, *The world's fairest city – yours and mine, Features of Urban Living Quality*, Lars Publishing, *From the City to the Neighbourhood – and back*

26 Doreen Massey, 1994, *A Global Sense of Place, Space, Place and Gender*. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press

into play. Visual factors such as landscape, typography and the built environment also shape our communal image of the city.²⁷ Debarbieux notes that *“this valorisation of the visual experience is constantly paired up with notions of identity”*.²⁸ Cities all over the world use these visual identity factors to project an image to the outside world. Authorities actively market ideas of identity and character to compete with other cities in the world in attracting businesses and tourism.²⁹

Bassand et al note that each city has an identity that stems from its site and that this identity *“deeply impacts on the city’s public spaces.”* Each public space therefore *“contributes to the elaboration of this identity”*.³⁰ Therefore the reflection of local characteristics can contribute to the overall image of the city. These local characteristics change from area to area and should be reflected in the design of the public realm as to echo the city’s many different local qualities and identities. This idea of different types of public spaces all over the city having a similar role in reflecting local identity in their respective neighbourhoods is explained by Delbaere when he notes that the public realm is a space that is used by civic society and that city centre squares do not have more importance in this sense than public spaces in the periphery, where residents have properly taken ownership of them.³¹

The idea that people take ownership of places demonstrates that they feel a certain attachment to them. The attachment to a place is *“intimately linked to a preservation of a sense of personal identity”* according to Rowles.³² Comparing factors of identity and ownership with the design of places, Hester notes that *“..designs that have taken symbolic ownership into account tend to be extremely popular and socially suitable.”*³³ A neighbourhood in which people feel welcome, at home and want to stay for a longer time has identity.³⁴ Trond Maag comments that *“a strong local identity is a prerequisite for the city residents to be able to stand up for the place. In the sense that they can take a place seriously and see it as a place with specific qualities they want to take care of. Ultimately, this kind of attitude is beneficial for the whole city – not only for the individual neighbourhood.”*³⁵

.....

27 Kevin Lynch, 1960, The image of the city, MIT Press

28 Bernard Debarbieux, 2012, Ville-Montagne Carnets du Paysage, Les figures de la montagne dans le projet urbanistique (1870-2010). Free translation from the author.

29 Michel Bassand, Anne Compagnon, Dominique Joye, Véronique Stein et Peter Güller, 2001, Vivre et créer l'espace public, Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, Lausanne.

30 Michel Bassand, Anne Compagnon, Dominique Joye, Véronique Stein et Peter Güller, 2001, Vivre et créer l'espace public, Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, Lausanne

31 Denis Delbaere, 2011, La fabrique de l'espace public. Ville, Paysage et démocratie, Paris, ellipses, Collection « La France de demain », Free translation from the author.

32 Rowles, Graham D. 1983. “Place and Personal Identity in Old Age: Observations from Appalachia.” Journal of Environmental Psychology 3

33 Hester, Randolph T. 1984, Planning Neighborhood Space with People, 2nd ed. NewYork, N.Y.: Van Nostrand Reinhold

34 Trond Maag, 2013, translated from the interview held on 23.06.2013

35 Trond Maag, 2013, translated from the interview held on 23.06.2013

3.2 Participation

The mechanics of city-making

In the making of urban environments, many different actors are involved. These are economical actors (land owners, enterprises), political actors (municipal, cantonal or national authorities), professionals (architects, urbanists, engineers) and residents, users and citizens.³⁶ Each of these have a role in the creation of a successful urban environment and therefore also in the making of public spaces.

The role of each actor is described as follows, based on a description from Bassand et al.:

- **Economical actors** are property owners or local entrepreneurs involved in the dynamic of the public space surroundings
- **Political actors** such as municipal, cantonal or national authorities who initiate projects or / and respond to the needs of the economical actors. The political actors have responsibility for creating the project process and take on the role of moderator between all actors
- **Professionals** who accompany both the economical and the political actors and translate their instructions and / or needs into a design process which has its own autonomous conceptual power
- And last but not least, the **residents, users and citizens** who use the space and redefine it by their usage of it. Their influence on the public space depends on their age, sex and origin and therefore constitutes a complex set of elements that create the socio-spatial³⁷ realm.

Bassand et al explain that the creation of a public space needs to be fed with a complex network of interdisciplinary elements.

In the place-making scenario, public actors such as residents, users and local associations come into play at different stages of the public space redevelopment process. Local authorities invite them to contribute to the process, or they choose to be part of it. The specific legal and informal mechanisms of participation are explained in chapter 4 and are not be described in detail in this literature review.

Ultimately, the users of the public space are the designers' client. Even though not officially contracted by them, they inform the brief as a normal client would do when designing his or her house and therefore should be considered as such in the design process.

Participation as tool for creating public spaces

The Rio declaration (UN 1999) demanded that citizens have access to environmental information through participation and encouraged transparent processes at all government levels. The Aalborg process, which was signed by many European cities in 1994, including Zurich, promoted sustainable urban development and made participation one of the tools to implement it.

Since then, participation has been used at many different stages and for many different types of urban redevelopment projects as a tool for the political actors to inform the public, exchange information with them and in some cases even share the decision-making responsibilities with the public.

.....
³⁶ Michel Bassand, Anne Compagnon, Dominique Joye, Véronique Stein et Peter Güller, 2001, *Vivre et créer l'espace public*, Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, Lausanne

³⁷ Socio-spatial realm has been taken by the author from a term used in German culture to describe the sociological aspects of the built environment „sozialräumlich“

The increased role of individuality in our society since the 90's has led to an increase in the need to participate in the decision-making process. In parallel, the processes of urban redevelopment and demands for urban quality have triggered a more participative overall process.³⁸

Participatory processes in Switzerland have gained much momentum and are used widely in the urban redevelopment process. Participatory processes in Switzerland can be divided in four groups according to Cabane³⁹: informing, consulting, participation in the decision-making process and self-determination. The participation guidelines produced by the municipality of Zurich differentiate the processes even more and add co-decision-making, co-responsibility and self-organisation.

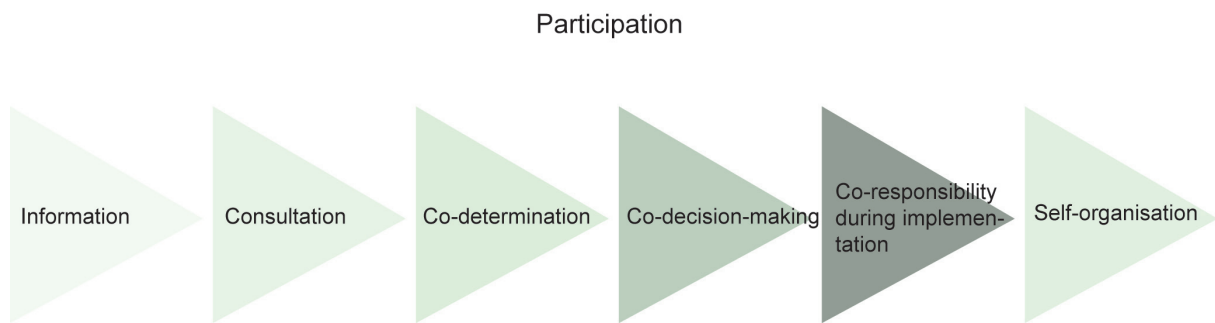


Illustration based on the illustration of the Mitwirkungs- und Beteiligungsprozesse. Arbeitshilfe für die Stadtverwaltung document produced by the municipality of Zurich in 2006.

Felli explains that participation is a means to help political decisions being understood and accepted by the public and therefore avoid the political blockage of projects.⁴⁰ Political decision-making for urban redevelopments are complex issues and need this transparency, but participation is often also a political tool used at specific times to transmit difficult political agendas. Toussaint and Vareilles go as far as to use the word 'publicity' to describe participation in this context.⁴¹

Cabane points out that participation in Switzerland is still implemented too often to achieve a political decision instead of being orientated towards creating a sustainable urban development and therefore the authorities still do not use the full potential of participatory processes.

In conclusion, participation as a tool could be used more efficiently and democratically by the authorities for explaining complex political processes as well as for creating spaces with the user. A. Brady describes this idea of creating 'with' the user effectively when she contextualises it with urban quality: *"the quality of the places created will depend on our ability to appropriately engage with local people and issues right from the start, designing 'with' rather than 'for' communities."*⁴²

The idea of designing 'with' should be examined more precisely by the political and professional actors when creating a public space. 'Designing with' means a more user-centred design approach, which can translate into a high appropriation of the space by the local community and therefore empower it at the same time. Space appropriation is described by Feldmann and Stalls as *"individuals' and groups' creation, choice, possession, modification,*

38 Prof. Colette Peter, 2008, Mehrwert Partizipation, Hochschule Luzern – Soziale Arbeit, Leitartikel metron Themenheft 24 „Mitwirkung mit Wirkung“, Hrsg. Metron AG, Brugg

39 Philippe Cabane, 2008, Partizipation zwischen Dialog und Kalkül, Tec21, Vol.134

40 Romain Felli, 2005, La démocratie introuvable, Développement durable et participation: Institut d'études politiques et internationales (Lausanne)

41 Jean-Yves Toussaint, professeur, Sophie Vareilles, doctorante, La «durabilité» à l'épreuve des pratiques d'aménagement urbain. Le cas de la concertation dans l'espace public de l'agglomération lyonnaise

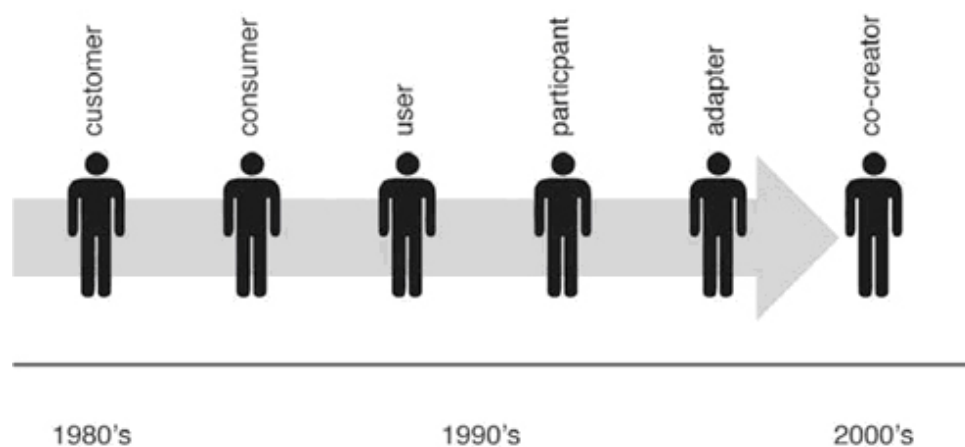
42 A. Brady, 2012, Not in my back yard, RIBA

enhancement of, care for, and / or simply intentional use of a space to make it one's own."⁴³

Space appropriation should therefore be an aim for the authorities when designing a public space, because the right to participate in the design discussion helps to integrate the user instead of alienating him or her as King et al. explains.⁴⁴ This in return creates a sense of space appropriation or sense of belonging. The idea of being part of the design discussion and even co-design in some cases might reduce acts of vandalism on urban elements and improve community life according to King et al.

Sanders also expresses this tendency for participation to become 'co-creation' *"it has become increasingly evident that everyday people are no longer satisfied with simply being 'consumers'; they want to be 'creators' as well"*.⁴⁵

The illustration below shows well how the relationship between the designer and the user has changed over time and that participative processes are themselves evolving towards more user engagement as seen in the participation grade illustration used in the Municipality of Zurich.



Changes in the way designers think about people, illustration from: Co-design in Public Spaces: an Interdisciplinary Approach to Street Furniture Development, Maria Gabriela Sanches, Lois Frankel, Carleton University, Canada

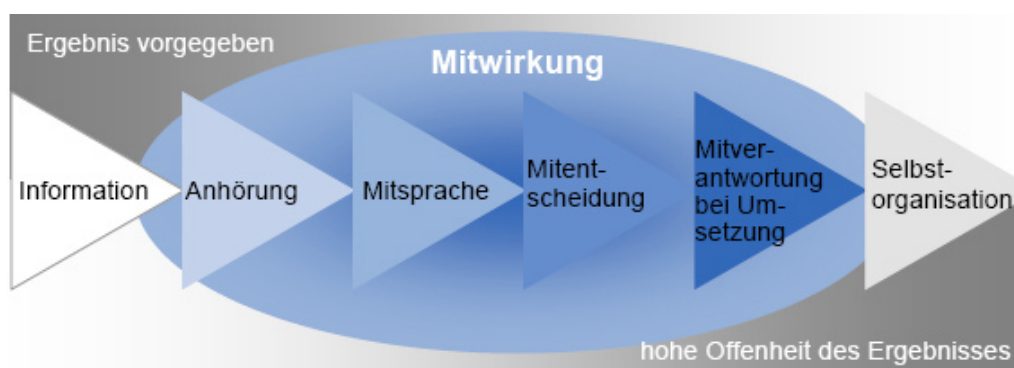


Illustration from „Mitwirkungs- und Beteiligungsprozesse Arbeitshilfe für die Stadtverwaltung“ document produced by the municipality of Zurich in 2006

43 Feldmann R.M and Stall, 1994, The politics of space appropriation, Women and the Environment, New York, Springer Publishing Company

44 King, Ferrari, Conley, and Latimer, 1989, Co-Design: A process of Design Participation, Van Nostrand Reinhold

45 Elizabeth Sanders, 2006, Design Serving People, Copenhagen Cumulus Working Papers, Publication Series G, University of Art and Design Helsinki

When mentioning user-centred approaches to public space design, one should mention the work Jan Gehl and his team have done over the years in public realm design. Although, his methodological approach is not strictly speaking participation based, as he uses more user observation methods and quantitative methodologies to assess the use of spaces, his main aim, when designing spaces, is user focused. He expresses this idea of user-focused approach of public realm design when he states *“In short, the formula must be; first life, then spaces, then buildings.”*⁴⁶

Walter Schenkel thinks co-design *“is plausible in Zurich, especially for public spaces and neighbourhoods’ streets that are home and identity for its residents”*, but that a consensus needs to take place between the residents’ desires and the city-wide design demands.⁴⁷

Walter Schenkel uses an interesting and very relevant terminology when he speaks of the relationship between public space and participation. He differentiates the formal process involved in creating public spaces and the ‘emotional logic’ that is brought in by using participative processes. He uses ‘Hardware’ to describe the formal, functional logic, including the physical aspects, the type, content and functions of the planning project. Questions of quality of stay and quality of life are also mentioned under this designation.

Participation in this setting acts as a linking bridge that feeds the ‘emotional logic’ or ‘Software’ into the planning process. The term ‘Software’ describes the actor’s interests, subjective values and beliefs as well as material and social needs. Walter Schenkel makes the analogy with the hard and software to explain that each of these functions cannot exist without each other, like a computer cannot function efficiently without software.⁴⁸ Therefore participation is organically linked to the creation of public spaces.

.....
46 Jan Gehl , Public Spaces for a Changing Public Life, School of Architecture, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen

47 Walter Schenkel, from interview on 18.06.13, Annex 8

48 Walter Schenkel, interview held on 18.06.13, Annex 8

3.3 Participation and its relationship to social sustainability

Herbert Girardet defines the sustainable city as follows:

*“A ‘sustainable city’ is organised so as to enable all its citizens to meet their own needs and to enhance their well-being without damaging the natural world or endangering the living conditions of other people, now or in the future”.*⁴⁹

Since the Brundtland report in 1987 for the United Nations, sustainability has become an essential component of everyday life and of urban development. Urban environments, as stated earlier, are multidimensional systems built up of economic, political, spatial, cultural, technical and natural dimensions. The city system therefore needs to combine these dimensions skillfully to achieve a sustainable urban environment.⁵⁰

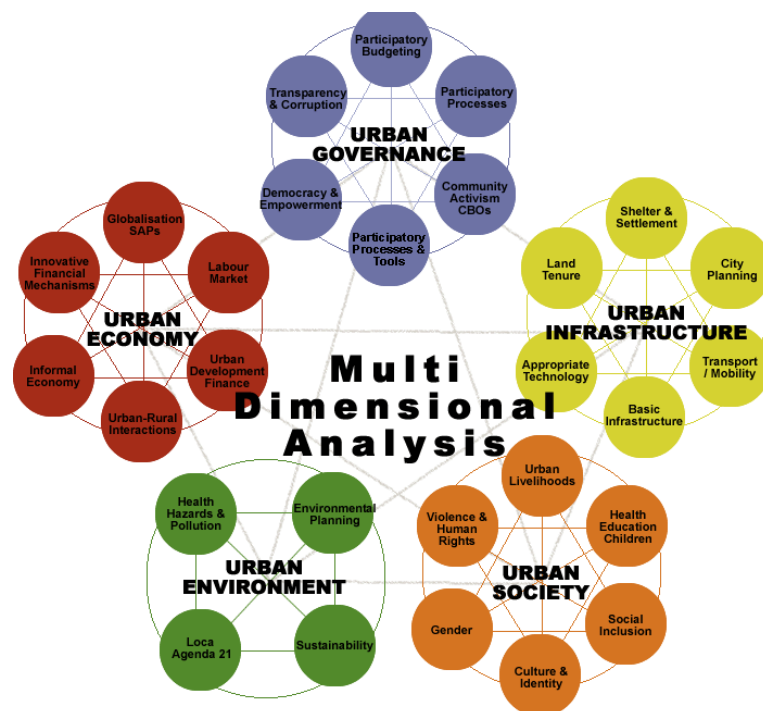


Diagram by Michael Safier Development Planning Unit, UCL, London

The sustainable development of cities is consequently based on the balance of its economical, environmental and social capital. Social capital, as defined by Putnam “*refers to features of social organisation such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate coordination, and cooperation for mutual benefit.*”⁵¹

Social sustainability includes ideas of social capital, social cohesion and social exclusion according to Bramley et al. Social sustainability has two important conceptual dimensions; social equity (social justice) and “*a more collective ‘sustainability of community’*”.⁵² Sustainable community in this context, is explained as “*the continued viability, health and functioning of ‘society’ itself as a collective entity*”.⁵³

49 Herbert Girardet, 1999, Creating sustainable cities, Schumacher Briefings. Bristol. p. 13.

50 Antonio Da Cunha, MAS urbanisme durable, Module 1, Block 1 on 20.09.2011.

51 Robert D. Putnam, 1993, The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life, The American Prospect no. 13

52 G.Bramley, N. Dempsey, S.Power, C. Brown, 2006, What is “social sustainability”, and how do our existing urban forms perform in nurturing it? “ p.6, Bartlett School of Planning, UCL, LONDON:. Paper for presentation in the ‘Sustainable Communities and Green Futures’ track.

53 G.Bramley, N. Dempsey, S.Power, C. Brown, 2006, What is “social sustainability”, and how do our existing urban forms perform in nurturing it? “ p.6, Bartlett School of Planning, UCL, LONDON:. Paper for presentation in the ‘Sustainable Communities and Green Futures’ track.

In the context of public spaces in Zurich, the latter definition of sustainable communities applies best. Social equity is a result of political overarching decision-making and will only have limited repercussions for public spaces in Zurich.

Bramley et al include the following dimensions as important elements when sustaining local neighbourhoods:

- Interaction in the community / social networks
- Community participation
- Pride / sense of place
- Community stability
- Security (crime)

Participation comes in at this point as a tool to achieve social sustainability. In the Aalborg Process⁵⁴, European cities including Zurich have agreed to include all relevant actors in civic society in the decision-making processes and give them access to information regarding the reorientation of the cities towards sustainable development.

Bramley et al explains the importance of people's participation in the community as follows:

*"The premise is that if people participate in activities within their local community then they will have stronger ties to the community. A similar argument applies to the inclusion of the concept of pride / sense of place. This relates to the importance of feeling pride in one's area and of having a vested interest in the area, the idea being that if people feel attached to the neighbourhood, they will want to stay living in the area and contribute to its continued development."*⁵⁵

Therefore the sense of belonging and the wish to stay in that community creates stronger ties amongst the population, which creates a higher quality of life.

Social sustainability within the design of public spaces is foremost about the process that is used to create it. Participation allows the public to feel included in the process and therefore empower them. It is therefore also a tool for social democracy.⁵⁶ Trond Maag adds that each local actor is part of the urban process by being present physically in its local environment. He thereby takes part in the social life of its surrounding, by taking responsibility and creating opportunities and therefore actively *"designs its social space"*. The association of all individual contributions compose a *"social kit in the city making process"* which feeds social sustainability.⁵⁷

Colantonio expressed the increased importance of social sustainability as component of urban sustainability and the sustainable community discourse. Colantonio and Dixon also include notions of identity, sense of place, empowerment, participation and quality of life in their key themes to social sustainability.⁵⁸

Social sustainability in Zurich

Due to its high standard of living and predominantly stable political situation, social sustainability in Zurich will be analysed through the themes Colantonio and Dixon include in their definition of social sustainability. Therefore public spaces will be analysed with the aim of

54 La Charte d'Aalborg, 1994

55 G.Bramley, N. Dempsey, S.Power, C. Brown, 2006, What is "social sustainability", and how do our existing urban forms perform in nurturing it? " p.6, Bartlett School of Planning, UCL, LONDON:.. Paper for presentation in the 'Sustainable Communities and Green Futures' track. ,P. 6

56 Heidi Kaspas, Elisabeth Bühler, "Räume und Orte als sozialer Konstrukt" , Plädoyer für einen verstärkten Einbezug sozialer Aspekte in die Gestaltung städtischer Parkanlagen

57 Trond Maag, interview held on 23.06.13

58 Andrea Colantonio and Tim Dixon , 2009, Measuring Socially Sustainable Urban Regeneration in Europe, Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development (OISD) School of the Built Environment, Oxford Brookes University

improving quality of life, making public spaces more user friendly and inclusive. Questions of poverty and unemployment are not examined in this paper. This does not mean that they are non-existent in Zurich or do not impact on public space design: they are very present, but there are too many factors influencing these two major social issues to be analysed here.

It is important to define realistically the social impact of a public space on its neighbourhood. A public space has arguably limited impact on its surroundings but reflects the social state of a neighbourhood.

Issues of diversity, employment or the lack of it, affordable housing and accessibility to essential amenities, which are thought of to constitute a sustainable neighbourhood, can only be implemented at urban planning stage, which happens at an earlier stage than the design of public spaces. Nevertheless, a well-functioning public space depends on these amenities and accessibility (transport, etc.) and it is therefore important to see it in its entire planning context.

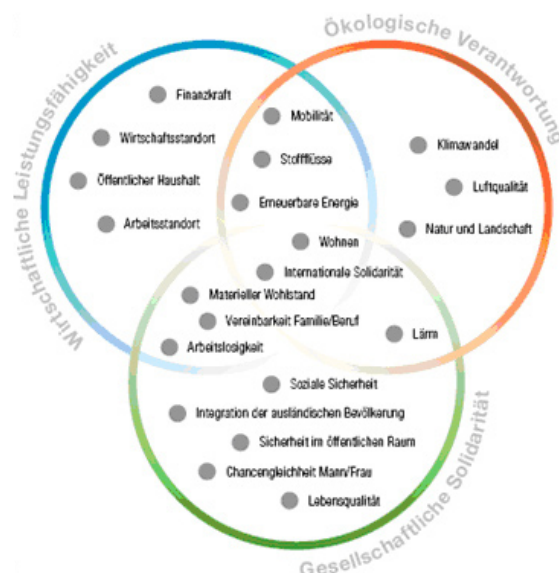
The municipality of Zurich has interpreted the term 'Sustainable city' in their working definition as follows:

*"A development is sustainable when it ensures economic capacity and human well-being, and strengthens social equity, as well as helping to ensure the natural livelihood for humans, animals and plants."*⁵⁹

Zurich has also set itself the challenge of becoming a 2000 Watt society⁶⁰ and has therefore developed a set of 21 indicators to help Zurich to monitor its journey towards a sustainable development.

The indicators under the society dimension include:

- Living quality
- Social security
- Security
- Gender equality
- Family and work balance
- Integration of foreign citizens
- Sub regional solidarity



The 21 indicators. Illustration from Sustainability monitoring in the City of Zurich Summary 2012

59 Free translation from: Arbeitsdefinition der Fachstelle Stadt-entwicklung der Stadt Zürich (Stadt Zürich 2004;6)

60 <http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/2000watt>

4. Context - Zurich, Switzerland

4.1 Public space design in Zurich

“Public life will no longer take place in the traditional public space. It is often claimed that its functions have been taken over by the media and cyberspace, and the “withdrawal into the private” becomes deplorable. I realise the opposite. Public space is being reclaimed as a living space.”

Translated by the author from the Foreword by the municipal councillor Martin Waser in the strategy document for the design of public spaces Zurich, Stadträume 2010

The design of public spaces in Zurich is divided between different departments because public space is described as either ‘Green’ or ‘Grey’. ‘Green’ public spaces are taken care of by Grün Zürich (Green Zurich) and include parks and other natural habitats. Tiefbauamt Zürich (Civil Engineering Department of Zurich) is responsible for ‘Grey’ spaces, which are squares, streets and other urban spaces.⁶¹ The focus of this research is ‘Grey’ spaces.

The following chapter summarises the principal design strategies Zurich has put in place for the implementation of the public realm. Texts are extracted and translated by the author from the documents listed below.

4.1.1 Stadträume 2010

The Stadträume 2010 document explains that the city of Zurich has changed from strict financial capital to a more open minded, international cityscape over the years. This is observed through the change in usage of the public realm.⁶²

The meaning of public space in Zurich has changed over the years. The city was required to react to increasing mobility and commercial demands and to integrate these within its neighbourhood strategies by creating design guidelines. This pressure for change stemmed largely from stakeholders’ and the public’s increased expectations for interacting with its usage and design.

In 2004, the urban consultant office Gehl Architects were invited to conduct a quality analysis of public spaces and life in Zurich, and to represent the outsiders view on public spaces.⁶³ This independent analysis was part of the second phase of the overall strategy “Stadträume 2010”. It gave an external and neutral point of view on the city’s qualities alongside a comparative analysis of other European cities.

Gehl’s document entitled “Zürich public spaces 2004, Quality & Use analysis for 18 selected Public Streets and Parks” analyses the status quo of Zurich’s public realm and, as stated in the document, identifies “*certain problems and potentials related to how people use and perceive spaces in the city at large.*” It then illustrates suggestions and interpretations on how to improve the condition of these spaces. The document presents Gehl’s general ideas of people focused planning. It suggests that planning for people and life should come first instead of the classical way of planning cities, which responds first to traffic and infrastructure issues. The document also suggests making “*people and city users more visible in the planning process.*”

.....
⁶¹ Based on a discussion with Beat Jörgen, Tiefbauamt Zürich, July 2012

⁶² Foreword by the municipal councillor Martin Waser in the strategy document for the design of public spaces Zurich, Stadträume 2010

⁶³ Gehl Architects for Stadt Zürich, March – September 2004., Zürich Public Spaces 2004, Quality & Use Analysis for 18 Selected Public Streets, Squares and Parks. Delegation für Wirtschaft und öffentlichen Raum des Stadtrates.

The document goes through different examples of public space issues such as; pedestrian and cycle traffic, how to create liveliness in places, the importance of the variations of places and the importance of attracting people to stay in those places. It then describes Zurich's unique features such as its natural setting, stunning views and its historical built environment.

The document then describes a holistical approach to future planning in Zurich and introduces the idea of spatial hierarchy. The hierarchy of spaces should enable planners to control *"the future regeneration and building of new squares to ensure the different city areas have the spaces that are needed in that area."* It then explains that a space typology would help in controlling the distribution and character of spaces all over the city. It would help understanding where to find which space type and where there are too many similar space types (it takes Oerlikon as an example for too many public spaces of similar type). A space typology would enable planners to understand how each space type is used by people and the different functions it entails relating to its area, this understanding helping then to increase the liveliness of places. The document also asks what type of life Zurich wants in its public realm, which is an interesting question to ask, but all too often dismissed by designers.

A set of 18 different public spaces and streets are then analysed with following criteria in mind:

Type of space and its location type (city, district or local)

- Character of the space (functional / aesthetic)
- Function (Transport, connection, market, retail, etc.)
- Use (Recreation, pause, transit, events, etc.)

Each space is then analysed through a SWOT analysis and ideas for improvement then illustrated through drawings and examples.

Findings of this analysis are summarised as:

Problematic: Lack of squares in a traditional sense, lack of city squares, lack of history in new spaces, shape over function, incoherent design of urban furniture

Potentials: Great amenities such as landscape and setting, fine urban network, good human scale of spaces although not designed for people's activities, great variety in public space character, spaces are well used

Each of these problems and potentials is then compared with good examples in other European cities. In its final reflections, the document points out where Zurich could improve its design strategies. An interesting point is that according to this document, Zurich should improve questions of identity as it has been distilled in certain places. It also advises on creating a vision for public spaces in Zurich by creating a typology of spaces.

This quality analysis was written as a first step towards a new strategy for Zurich's public spaces and concludes that the process should be iterative and therefore question itself over time.

From the findings of Gehl's document and internal opinions, strategies were formed which would then form the "Stadträume 2010" document. This design tool presents the principal strategies that the city of Zurich uses to create high quality urban spaces.

These strategies can be summarised as follows:

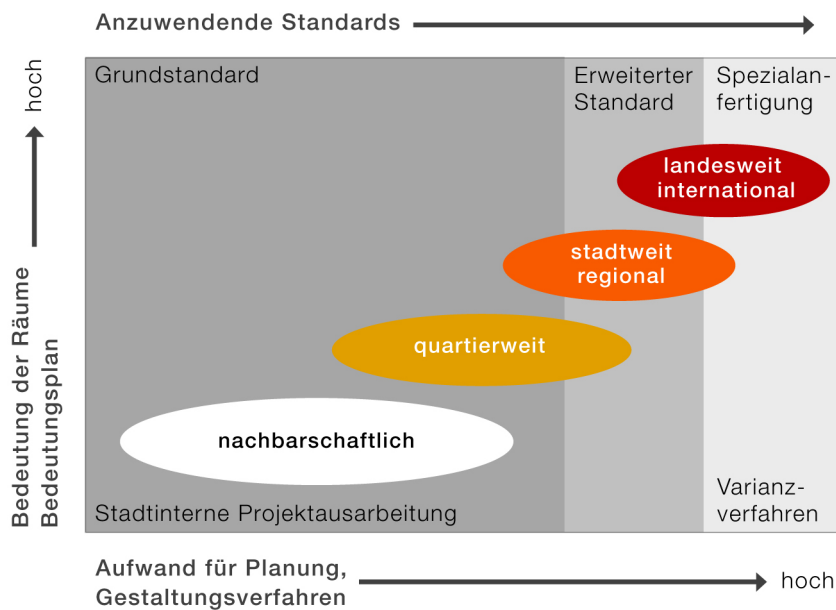
- Clear hierarchisation of spaces
- Coherent design
- Quality of stay (Aufenthaltsqualität)

From these strategies, the city created a plan that shows the hierarchisation of spaces and their public significance (see plan below). The spaces are then classified into a scale of importance: international, national, regional, quarter to neighbourhood scale. Generally, the overarching priority was revealed to be the improvement of pedestrian zones.

The scale of importance also dictates the scale of design effort to be applied on each space. Spaces in neighbourhood or quarters of the city will be designed by the city in-house design team, while spaces of international importance might go through an architecture competition process.

Public spaces which are part of a regeneration or development area can be 'upgraded' in the plan of space importance in order to act as image or identity factor for the area. Otherwise, the standards establish a design language that reinforces the city's image and identity.

Chart showing the scale of importance relating to the design standard and effort to be applied for each type of space

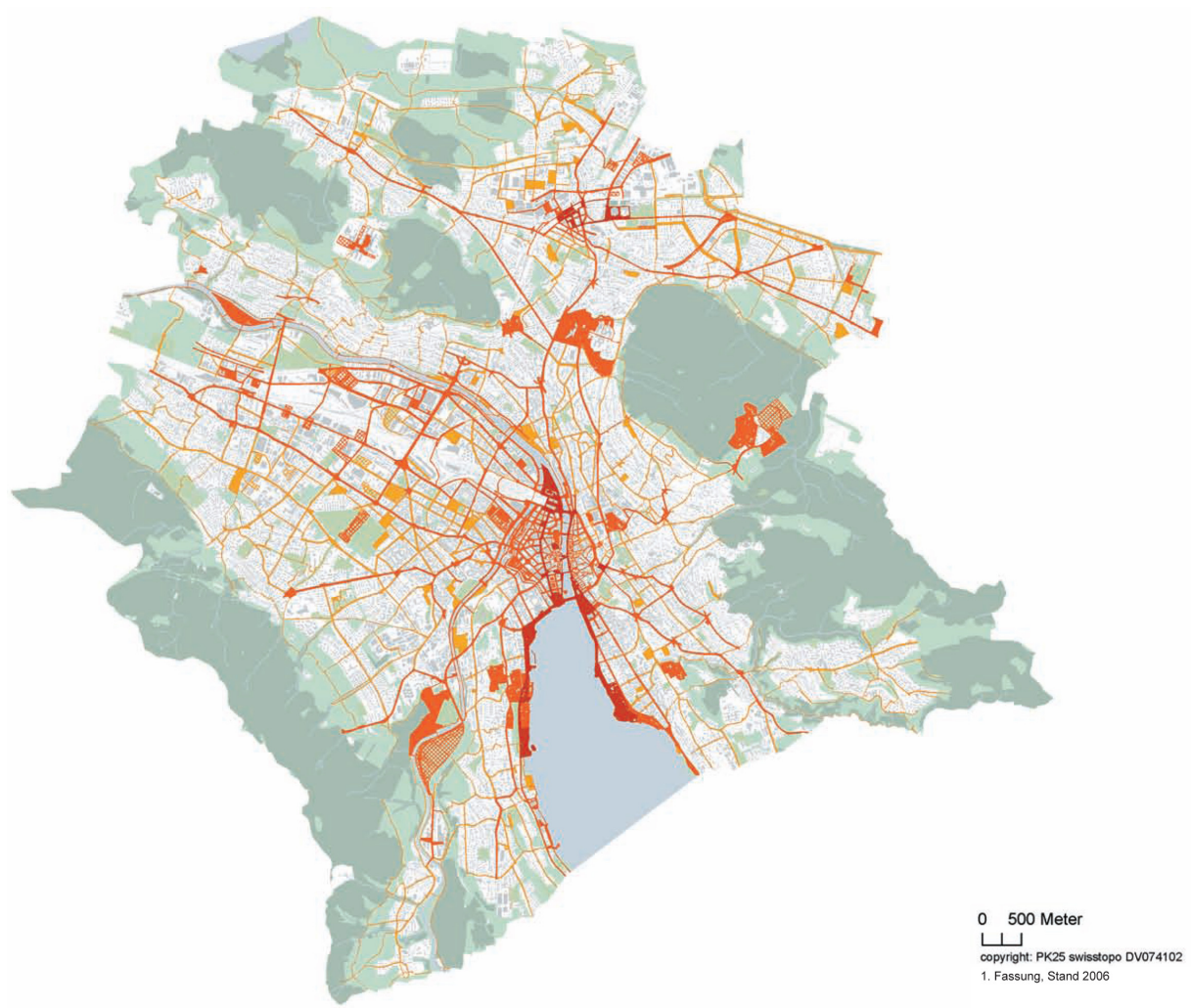


Anwendung von Standards und Verfahren nach Bedeutung

The public spaces marked onto the importance plan and therefore being of importance for the city satisfy at least five of the ten criteria listed below:

- High profile space
- High importance as main circulation, neighbourhood axis or old country road
- High density of use
- High pedestrian / cyclist density
- Important cross-connection
- Important recreational space
- Important cultural centre
- Important view, park, water feature, historical centre or generally significant neighbourhood view/vista (quartierbildprägend)
- Potential to act as a planning connection
- Potential to increase the attractiveness of the site

Zurich 'Bedeutungsplan' or the public space significance map



Legende

- international / landesweit bedeutende öffentliche Stadträume
- geplant (international / landesweit)
- regional / stadtweit bedeutende öffentliche Stadträume
- geplant (regional / stadtweit)
- quartierweit bedeutende öffentliche Stadträume
- geplant (quartierweit)
- Wasser
- zweckgebundene Freiräume
- Freihaltezone
- Wald

Because the public realm shapes the overall view of the city, design becomes an important language tool to create a coherent city landscape. Therefore, the 'Stadträume 2010' strategies include specific design guidelines which dictate a certain design behaviour for each space typology.

For example, it is necessary to keep an orderly character through strengthening the calm and open appearance of public spaces.⁶⁴ The strategies encourage designers to keep the words 'elegance' and 'clarity' in mind while creating public spaces in Zurich. Other guidelines highlight consideration for the needs of pedestrians and introduction of public activity, such as restaurants and shops at ground level as priorities. Specification of durable, low-maintenance materials and a subtle colour palette emphasises the focus on a 'less is more' approach.

Clear and homogenous design is sought, with the aim of improving users' legibility of the spaces and to create a recognisable identity for the city. These elements are precisely explained through design standards for each public space type.

The standards include a catalogue of elements which are to be used when designing urban public spaces. These elements are categorised under various sub-types such as; surfaces, infrastructure, vegetation, information, consumer elements (postal and newspaper boxes), small constructions (telephone booths, bus shelters, etc.) and equipment (benches, seats, fountains, etc.).

Alternative elements to those specified in the elements catalogue can only be used if the public space has been categorised as being of interregional, national or international importance in which cases standards relative to its context will prevail. Only in spaces of this significance can there be a made-to-measure design for individual items such as benches for example.

The strategies document points out that these standards should not feel restrictive and that creativity in the use of them will be encouraged.

'Staying quality' (Aufenthaltsqualität) is often used as criteria in the Stadträume 2010 document. The staying quality of a place is defined by well-being, sensitivity and security factors. The checklist includes climate issues, noise protection, good access, inviting space edges, seating possibilities, views, feelings of security, and so on.

All built-environment departments of the city coordinate the financing and implementation of public space design. Public space redesign is often done in parallel with major road or engineering work. A significant decrease in spending has been noted, brought about by the standardisation of processes and elements, procurement of materials, and working methods. However, the opposite result is occurring with the design of sub regional or interregional spaces, because these require a more elaborate process.⁶⁵

The Stadträume 2010 document is preceded by a collection of guidelines for the implementation of the strategies described above. The guidelines instruct designers on how to ensure a high standard of design quality during implementation.⁶⁶ The guidelines "Gestaltungs-Basics" and "Gestaltungs Standards" have a legally binding effect on the design of public spaces owned by the city and should serve as guidelines for public spaces on private ground.

.....
64 Stadt Zürich, September 2006, Strategie für die Gestaltung von Zürichs öffentlichem Raum, P. 14

65 Stadt Zürich, September 2006, Strategie für die Gestaltung von Zürichs öffentlichem Raum

66 Tiefbauamt Zürich, 2007, Stadträume 2010 – Umsetzung der Strategie für die Gestaltung von Zürichs öffentlichem Raum, Genehmigt von der Delegation für stadträumliche Fragen am 02.11.2007

The authors of these standards note their concerns that this standardisation might be seen as administrative, restrictive and not leaving much space for creativity, risking the homogenisation of Zurich's public realm. Nevertheless, they claim that a degree of standardisation is necessary to create a strong identity for Zurich's public realm especially in order to minimise interchangeable design approaches and approaches which do not fit Zurich's identity. It is also necessary for creating an efficient and cost-effective design process. The standards should still offer potential for creativity and innovation.⁶⁷

The **Gestaltungs-Basics** document defines public space as follows:

*"Public spaces are multifunctional, public open spaces in a populated city area. They are bound by the structure of high built environment as well as adjacent free spaces."*⁶⁸

The document emphasises the aesthetic and volumetric aspects of public spaces, and the dialogue between a public space and its surroundings. It also notes that a proposal's scale and response should consider and address the needs of pedestrian users.

In the chapter about public space usage, the document focuses on usability, accessibility and openness for all. This encompasses the inclusion of accessible design for people with reduced mobility or sensory impairments, security issues and access to recycling/waste points. Private usage of public space is encouraged as long as it does not obstruct passageways or other uses.

An interesting point in the design of these spaces is that only elements such as furniture, bins, lamp posts, barriers, etc. that are in the Zurich element catalogue under the specific public space type can be used to furnish the space. Elements need to be used sparsely but adequately and are always subordinate to the overall design.

Several detailed guideline sheets (Gestaltungs-Standards, Stadträume: Plätze) follow with descriptions of each element of the public realm. Public squares, which are reviewed in this report, are categorised under C3 which includes recreational squares (Aufenthaltsplätze), transit squares (Verkehrsplätze) and junction squares (Einmündungsplätze). This typology bases itself more on its functional and built character than its importance in the overall city. It builds a subcategory to the scale of importance plan. Each space has then to be analysed through the scale of importance plan. For example if a square is of international importance, the planners need to seek guidance at the level of the city Councillors or Directors in order to plan its aims adequately.

In this standard principle document⁶⁹, squares need to represent Zurich and encourage public stay and cultural exchange. The guidelines also state that these public squares, especially recreational squares, need to be defined clearly with surface treatments, borders, trees and lighting elements. Important axes and focal points should be accentuated with art and fountains.⁷⁰ Furthermore, a variety of comfortable seating possibilities need to be installed.

The document Gestaltungs-Standards, Stadträume: Plätze (2007) explains that *"the design has to be adjusted to the site-specific environment in order for the public spaces/squares to form an identity generating impression (identitätstiftende Wirkung)."*⁷¹

67 Stadt Zürich, 2007, Stadträume 2010 – Umsetzung, Einführung der Strategie für die Gestaltung von Zürichs öffentlichem Raum

68 Translated from the author: Öffentliche Stadträume sind multifunktionale, öffentliche Freiräume im besiedelten Stadtgebiet. Sie werden begrenzt durch die Struktur von Hochbauten und den dazu-gehörigen Freiräumen (1)."

69 Stadt Zürich, 2007, Gestaltungs-Standards, Stadträume: Plätze

70 Stadt Zürich, 2007, Gestaltungs-Basics, Stadtraumkatalog, C, Oktober 2007, p. 22

71 Stadt Zürich, 2007, Gestaltungs-Standards, Stadträume: Plätze

4.2 Participation processes in Zurich – an Overview

Participatory processes have their roots in the student demonstrations of the later 60s world-wide. They re-appeared more intensely in planning processes with the introduction of the Local Agenda 21 (UNCED 1992a) in the 90s which asked for more sustainable development at all levels.

Josef Estermann, the mayor of Zurich from 1990 to 2002,⁷² started a participatory process on a large scale when he launched the Stadtforum in 1996. The forum aimed to open a city-wide dialogue and improve the mutual understanding between all interested parties. 40 neighbourhood representatives, politicians, industry, unions and associations were invited to participate at ten events totalling 75 hours. The forum was also implemented because discussion of the city's development had become tense due to contradictory interests.⁷³ Zurich West was the starting point for the forum's attentions and all stakeholders decided in 1997 that this part of the city would undergo a cooperative urban redevelopment.

Since then, the massive development of participative processes in urban development in Zurich has brought experts in the German and English speaking countries to speak of a "*communicative turn*".⁷⁴

Another large scale city wide debate was launched by the city of Zurich in September 2011. The Stadtdebatte was an online interactive debate platform where every citizen had the opportunity to express views about possibilities for Zurich's urban development. This was the first time a debate of this scale had been implemented using online forms in the German speaking countries.⁷⁵ Subjects such as changes in the built-environment, city boundaries, co-habitation, energy efficiency and mobility were discussed during three days. The city debate was launched within the current legislative priority "Designing the city and the neighbourhoods together" (Legislature Schwerpunkt «Stadt und Quartiere gemeinsam gestalten», LSP 3 (2010–2014)) as a test project and triggered 1'996 contributions.

The findings of this forum were multiple but the following points came out as most important for the population:⁷⁶

- A need for a good social and functional mix
- A need for **carefully planned and designed public spaces that encouraged visitors to stay**
- An emphasis was put on not planning more anonymous constructions **with no room for design freedom and meeting places**
- A need for the conservation of public green areas within the city boundary, especially in relation to densification

The analysis report revealed that the quality of public spaces and objection to anonymous large scale redevelopment are paramount to Zurich's population, indicating a need for a planning process that aimed to integrate local character and more design freedom more effectively. Under the theme about the changes in Zurich's built environment, people asked for the character of the neighbourhoods to be preserved.

.....

⁷² [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josef_Estermann_\(Politiker\)](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josef_Estermann_(Politiker))

⁷³ Einen konstruktiven Dialog erreicht, NZZ 1.4.1999 <http://www.stadtlabor.ch/einen-konstruktiven-dialog-erreicht/#more-2027>

⁷⁴ Stadt Zürich, Stadtentwicklung Zürich, Präsidialdepartement, 2012, Online-Stadtdebatte, Auswertungsbericht,

⁷⁵ http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/content/hbd/de/index/ueber_das_departement/medien/medienmitteilungen/2011/september/110914a.html

⁷⁶ Simon Keller und Jeanette Zahner, Stadtentwicklung Zürich, Präsidialdepartement, March 2012, Online-Stadtdebatte: Auswertungsbericht

Another very interesting point, which underlines the necessity for more socially integrated public spaces, is that the offer and design of public spaces had triggered conflict in the debate under the theme “How to live together”. The fact that the debate about the public realm appears under the theme about social integration and cohabitation, demonstrates the importance of the social dimension of the public realm.

More support for people who might feel excluded by participative neighbourhood work has been proposed. Additionally, a desire was identified for greater freedom in selected zones, which could be defined as ‘anything-goes-zones’, more gastronomic choice along the waterfront and less regulations regarding streetlife during summer.⁷⁷

Basically, the population of Zurich appeared to demand more scope for improvisation and creativity in the way public space is used and regulated.

4.2.1 Participatory processes – Legally binding participation procedures in Switzerland

Citizen participation is very important in the Swiss direct democratic system. Nevertheless, there are several levels of participation that can influence the built-environment. On the federal, cantonal and communal level, there are formal, legally binding participatory processes but there is also an increasing amount of informal alternative forms of public participation.

This chapter will briefly explain the different levels of formal participatory processes that are required by the federal, cantonal and communal law system and then investigate more informal participative procedures.

In a federalist constitution such as Switzerland, the public has a decision-making power on its built-environment and carries a responsibility for the common interest. The public has the power to accept or reject any urban project that has an effect on their daily lives. Participation allows the people affected by the decisions to be taken to add elements to the decision-making process and therefore integrate them.

“The instruments of Swiss direct democracy at the federal level, known as civic rights (Volk-srechte, droits civiques), include the right to submit a constitutional initiative and a referendum, both of which may overturn parliamentary decisions.”⁷⁸

The following chapter is based on a summary text from T. Tanquerel, and translated by the author.⁷⁹

The Swiss direct democracy has three instruments that include citizen participation in the political decision making process. These are; the mandatory referendum, the optional referendum and the popular initiative.

The Swiss referendum system gives public authorities less power than other countries, but distributes the power to all actors of civilian life such as the general public, associations, land owners, etc.

.....
⁷⁷ Simon Keller und Jeanette Zahner, Stadtentwicklung Zürich, Präsidialdepartement, March 2012, Online-Stadtdebatte: Auswertungsbericht, p.33

⁷⁸ Political System admin.ch, 2009.06.22

⁷⁹ T. Tanquerel, La participation du public aux décisions en matière d'aménagement et d'environnement en Suisse, summary of a contribution at a conference, p.2, (source IDEAP)

The mode of citizen participation in development projects is defined in law as follows:

- The Constitution gives the right to the people to be heard during administrative decisions.⁸⁰
- Article 4 in LAT (federal planning law) requires that the public be informed.⁸¹

The decisions in which the question of public participation has to be raised within the planning and environmental field are as follows:⁸²

- Building permit applications, or other authorisations necessary for the implementation of development projects
- Cantonal master plans, land use plans, policy decisions or budgets for the delivery of public infrastructure.

Public participation in these decisions is based on three pillars :

- The administrative procedures leading to the adoption of planning documents - master plans and land use plans - or the administrative decision-making.
- The appeal, called legal protection, which is open to interested actors.
- The instruments of direct democracy that complement relevant administrative procedures.

Formal public information is done during the public enquiry. This consists of announcing the project via press release, posters or in an official local newspaper. The public enquiry is obligatory for all land use plans.

In terms of design, the mandatory referendum plays a particular role in its financial form, when applied to appropriations / credits for major projects planned by public authorities.

Beyond the minimum legal requirements, development projects may require significantly more extensive procedures of public consultation.

Participatory processes that are outside the legal framework, are not legally protected. Therefore even a project that has been developed with very thorough participatory processes can still be challenged by appeal or by a popular referendum.

Public participation in the decisions about the built and non-built environment has the advantage of integrating the rule of law in most disputes and lends great legitimacy to decisions taken. Therefore the added value of participatory process incorporated in the law is to give people the right to give their opinion on developments in their locality and in Switzerland.

4.2.2 Participatory processes – legal framework in the city of Zurich

Participatory processes in the city of Zurich are defined by two separate approaches: the formal and the informal.

The formal processes are dictated by the cantonal planning and public building laws, which state in paragraph 7.1 that regional spatial strategy documents and zoning plans are to be shown publicly. The public then has 60 days to express their point of view. This paragraph

.....
80 Constitution fédérale de la Confédération suisse du 18 avril 1999

81 Loi fédérale sur l'aménagement du territoire du 22 juin 1979 (LAT)

82 T. Tanquerel, La participation du public aux décisions en matière d'aménagement et d'environnement en Suisse, summary of a contribution at a conference, p.2,(source IDEAP)

draws on the federal planning law (Art. 4. LAT/RPG).⁸³

At planning application level, the public needs to be informed when any type of building project has a visual or volumetric impact on its surrounding. The proposed volume is demonstrated using a full scale 'outline' of timber on the relevant land, which must be in place for 20 days, during which the public can express their opinion (Planungs-und Bau Gesetz §309 from 314 and 323f).⁸⁴

In the case of public space design, specific legislation such as Strassengesetz § 13 states the necessity of including participatory processes. These processes though are again, limited to informing the general public of any major civil engineering project before a decision can be taken. The population then has 30 days in which to object to the project proposal.

For projects which might have a bigger impact on its surroundings or are in a sensitive area, it is recommended to invite the public to an event for a process of dialogue.⁸⁵

At a later stage, when the project exists, Strassengesetz § 16 is applied where only the neighbouring population can file an appeal against it.

4.2.3 Informal participatory processes

In this chapter, the evolution and use in daily practice of informal participative processes in Zurich are described.

When we speak of informal processes, we speak of participative processes that are additional to the formally applied participative processes in the national, cantonal and municipal legislation system.

Informal participative processes have evolved in their structure, application and impact on creating the public realm since their emergence in the 60's. The processes are slowly accommodating the increase in public awareness of the right to participate in the decision-making process. Bottom-up initiatives have taken place in Zurich and the authorities are increasingly taking this into account.

The evolution of participatory processes

The aforementioned Stadtforum in 1996-1997 inaugurated the introduction of more informal participative process in the planning process of Zurich. The Stadtforum was intended as a test project to enable improved communication between the city, the economic sector and the population, which had become difficult. The Stadtforum initially triggered disbelief from the population, but when Josef Esterman, the then Mayor of Zurich, appeared as the first 'participant listener' at each of the ten forum meetings, it rapidly became clear that the city wanted to listen to what the population had to say.

The main outcome from this forum was the intensive participation of the participants and the final consensus on a cooperative development process for Zurich West. The Stadtforum model left its marks on how the city was to create their planning process from then on.⁸⁶ Since then, informal participatory processes have been implemented at different stages of various projects of all types in the city of Zurich.

83 Gesetz über die Raumplanung und das öffentliche Baurecht – 700.1 (Planungs-und Baugesetz) Kanton Zürich, §7.1

84 Stadt Zürich, Stadtentwicklung Zürich, Präsidialdepartement, 2006, Leitfaden Mitwirkung der Stadt Zürich, Eine Arbeitshilfe für die sozialräumliche Stadtentwicklung

85 Stadt Zürich, Stadtentwicklung Zürich, Präsidialdepartement, 2006, Leitfaden Mitwirkung der Stadt Zürich, Eine Arbeitshilfe für die sozialräumliche Stadtentwicklung

86 Stadtentwicklung Zürich, Präsidialdepartement, Zürich, 2006, Mitwirkungs- und Beteiligungsprozesse, 22 Fallbeispiele

Legislative focus point “Stadt und Quartiere gemeinsam gestalten”

In the current legislative focus of the city council 2010-2014, participation is set as one of its four main aims. The current legislative focus aims to respond to an increased necessity for densification of the city centre and its fringe areas due to a population increase and a need for rapid transformation in the built environment of all of Zurich's neighbourhoods. The increased mix of new incoming and settled populations of all backgrounds, demands a targeted inclusion of social factors in the neighbourhood planning. Therefore the legislative focus “Designing the city and the neighbourhoods together”⁸⁷ brings participative processes to the forefront of planning tools. Commissioned projects span masterplanning projects, which citizen participation helps to implement, integration projects and activity initiatives for local neighbourhoods.⁸⁸

The Stadtdebatte 2011 was also triggered by the legislative focus “Designing the city and the neighbourhoods together” and acted as a test project for this legislative focus.

Current practice in Zurich

Each department involved in different stages of planning decisions will have their own participative methodology. For example, the department of city planning (Amt für Städtebau) will use participative methods to define the scope of work for their study area which might involve public spaces, while the department of civil engineering (TAZ) responsible for the ‘grey’ public spaces, will use participative methods to define more specific needs and uses of a particular public space.

The methods used by TAZ and specifically documentation produced by the city of Zurich are the most relevant for the purpose of this analysis. TAZ has developed a set of methods that are adapted to each project. Nevertheless, for the avoidance of doubt, participative processes are always implemented because they might reveal answers to proposal specific questions.

Texts are extracted from the documents mentioned below and summarised and translated by the author.⁸⁹

The municipal authorities published a guideline document for participative processes in urban projects in 2006, with the intention of assisting municipal authorities, planning professionals and designers in choosing the relevant participative process for their project. The following paragraphs summarise its content and scope of implementation.

These guidelines present the informal participatory processes in the sense of an addition to formal processes. The informal processes are differentiated from the formal processes that are prescribed by law.⁹⁰

Informal participation can help prepare the decision-making process: it can inform and empower both participants and organisers. Interestingly, the guideline notes that participation encourages the understanding of democratic processes, in the sense of a better understanding of the hierarchy in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, informal processes do not replace formal participative processes and this therefore limits the legal power of the decisions taken during the process.

.....
87 Translated by the author “Stadt und Quartiere gemeinsam gestalten” http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/content/portal/de/index/politik_u_recht/stadtrat/legislaturschwerpunkte/stadt_quartiere.html#ziele

88 http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/content/portal/de/index/politik_u_recht/stadtrat/legislaturschwerpunkte/stadt_quartiere.html

89 Leitfaden Mitwirkung der Stadt Zürich, p. 18

90 Leitfaden Mitwirkung der Stadt Zürich, p. 8.

Scope of work and Definitions

Participative and collaborative processes are part of the working culture of the municipal authorities. Although they cannot be applied in all circumstances, they should be used proactively whenever relevant.

Participative processes during the development of the urban realm are the main focus of these working guidelines. 'Sozial räumliche Fragen' which could be translated as questions of a socio-spatial⁹¹ nature, receive special attention from the authorities. The guidelines clearly specify that the authorities cannot work on issues of the socio-spatial realm without involving the public and economic stakeholders in their decision-making processes.⁹²

The guideline defines socio-spatial urban development as follows: (This statement has been translated directly by the author.)

*"The socio-spatial perspective is concerned not only with the physical space, but also explicitly with its resident population and users. This definition combines sociological, cultural and historical aspects of the spatial dimension. The socio-spatial urban development always focuses on social aspects and the social environment of the concerned population: the district, the living environment and the neighbourhood. The focus is on the social habitat of its population. Participation processes are therefore an essential element in urban development."*⁹³

It is important to note and understand how the municipal authorities have defined participation in their documents so that, further on in this analysis, the use of participation as a tool for social development in Zurich can be reviewed.

The definition stated in the "Arbeitshilfe für sozialräumliche Stadtentwicklung" document is as follows: (This statement has been translated directly by the author.)

"The notion of "participation" describes the involvement of people, enterprises or interested groups, who are affected by sovereign decisions."

It is interesting to note that the definition does not include what the scope of the involvement of the participants is.

Participative processes are also described as an approach in stages. The guidelines explain how different grades and types of participation can be used depending on the project's context and importance in the area. Each project should be looked at individually and an appropriate participative process should be chosen in accordance with it. The illustration below shows the different types of participation and therefore also the different levels of citizens' involvement in the decision-making process.

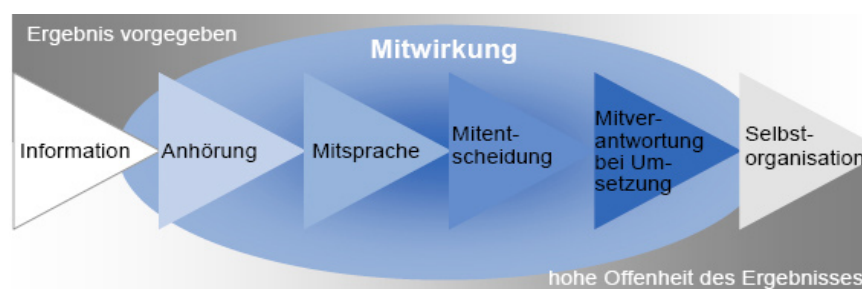


Illustration of the formal and informal participatory processes in the planning process in Zurich

91 Note that the term „socio-spatial“ has been found as the term which translates best „sozialräumlich“, but that „sozialräumlich“ is a specifically German term which is not directly transferable in the English language.

92 Stadtentwicklung Zürich, Präsidialdepartement, Zurich, 2006, Leitfaden Mitwirkung der Stadt Zürich, Eine Arbeitshilfe für die sozialräumliche Stadtentwicklung, p. 5

93 Stadtentwicklung Zürich, Präsidialdepartement, Zurich, 2006, Leitfaden Mitwirkung der Stadt Zürich, Eine Arbeitshilfe für die sozialräumliche Stadtentwicklung, p. 43

In relation to sustainable development, Zurich's authorities encourage participative processes in order to gather as much information as possible from a cross-section of the population involved in order to build a long-lasting relationship with all its stakeholders.

Due to the increased complexity of urban development, the municipal authorities feel that their role is increasingly becoming more of a coordinating role than an authoritative top-down one.

Types of participation processes versus project types

The guidelines underline the variety of projects types where participation can play an important role. It is stated that participation can be used as a constructive planning tool, especially in issues relating to the community life or during the planning of new housing areas, public spaces or new transport systems. In these cases, an active community who start off projects or initiatives by themselves is the motivation.

In cases of practical projects, such as street design, public space redesign and the change of use of current buildings or spaces, the gathering and sharing of information with the general public and other stakeholders is principally used as a participative method. These tools often also enable the resolution of internal conflicts of interest within the community.

Broader projects, such as the marketing strategy of a commercial street like the Langstrasse in Zurich or the sustainable Zurich project (Zukunftsfähiges Zürich) seem to require a proactive approach from its population and therefore the authorities encourage processes that involve idea-sharing in workshop formats and a more collaborative approach to problem solving. In this type of project, cooperative planning enables negotiations between land-owners, authorities and specialists, which then feed the overall concept for the area or the project.

The authorities often take on the role of moderator, but when the authorities are themselves an important stakeholder within the project, a neutral external moderator is employed to avoid conflicts of interest.

In the case of utilisation concepts for the public realm, there is more scope in the work that can be done because the space is mostly public property. Nevertheless, the scope of work is limited by regulations that apply to public land.

To return to the practical building projects, building permits demand certain legal participation processes such as informing the public of a new project (Strassengesetz para 13.) as seen in the previous chapter. It is nevertheless highly recommended to include informal participation for large and / or significant projects. These enable the project to receive better acceptance amongst the public and the stakeholders as well as feed opinions and local knowledge into the project proposal. This method also enables the project to be accepted by the public during the formal procedures. The inclusion of local wisdom and knowledge helps the project to adapt itself more effectively to its local context and therefore results in a better appropriation of the public space in the community, which in turn can lead to less acts of vandalism. However, participation can also emerge from a reaction against a building permit which then enables the authorities to negotiate with the community.

Scope of impact and scope of participation

TAZ decides, with the help of a set of criteria and depending on what type of project it is, the scope there is for an informal participative process and what the general framework for it is.

The criteria for informal participative processes are:

- *Has the need for participation been initiated from the 'outside' (residents, groups of interest, politicians, trade or industry)?*
- *Is the need for action big enough; is there a scope for involvement? (general framework regarding traffic issues not too narrow, other superordinate parameters?)*
- *Does this project have a history that goes beyond planning aspects? Are there known comments from residents, industry or groups of interest?⁹⁴*

The general thought behind the scope for participation processes in public realm projects, is that the more complex the framework requirements are, the higher the interest of super-ordinate stakeholders and therefore the least possibility of population involvement. For example, in public space redevelopment projects where transport issues come into play, the scope for involvement of the public participants is minimised because of the set, non-negotiable technical issues of the transport system. In cases where the scope of involvement is too little, informal participation will not be implemented at all.

Conversely, neighbourhood squares or meetings places with minimal traffic will have a greater potential for participative involvement in the design issues.⁹⁵

When it comes to voluntary informal participation, it is preferable, but often difficult, to engage a wide variety of local stakeholders. Nevertheless, the guidelines note the difficulty in making participation accessible to all and then to integrate all ideas or inputs. The scope of involvement must be defined clearly from the start of the project and the particular interests of individuals must not overshadow the process.⁹⁶

Decision-making powers must also be defined from the beginning of the project so as to ensure the participants know what their scope of input on the project is.

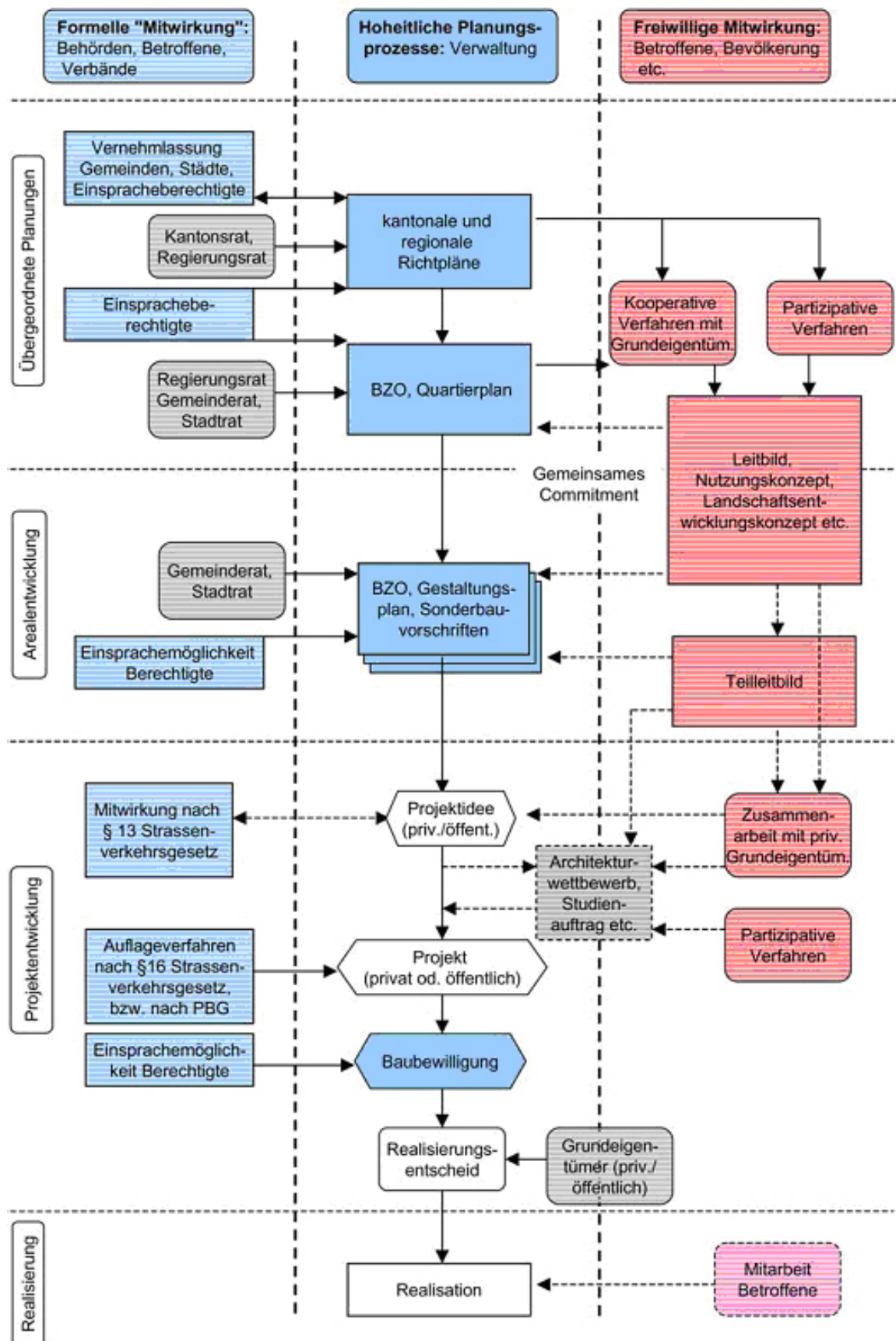
The case studies in Chapter 5, demonstrate how certain methods described above are applied in current practice in the design of public spaces in Zurich. They also describe the scope of involvement the participants actually have in each of these projects.

94 <http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/content/ted/de/index/taz/mitwirkungsverfahren.html>

95 Mitwirkung, Informelle Mitwirkungsverfahren im öffentlichen Raum, Flyer TAZ

96 Leitfaden Mitwirkung der Stadt Zürich, .p.29

Illustration of the formal and informal participatory processes in the planning process in Zurich



Pilot projects involving participative methods

Züri wie neu

The newly introduced pilot project “Zueri wie neu” online tool is the most recent exercise in encouraging the population to be involved with improving quality-of-life standards in Zurich: <https://www.zueriwieneu.ch>

This tool enables individuals to record problems, essentially shortcomings in infrastructure and maintenance in the public realm. These can be logged using a smartphone-app or directly onto the website. The city council issues the information to the relevant department and informs the individual of when it will be dealt with. This tool has been created to enable a better communication between citizens and the city council as well as making the city more beautiful. If this pilot project proves to be effective, it will be formally introduced in 2014. This project was initiated by a competition and costs 60'000.-.⁹⁷

Örbi

Another recent addition to the available participation tools for public space improvement in Zurich is the Örbi, the ‘needs-gathering-thing’. An UFO-looking like caravan that travels around Zurich to gather ideas and opinions of passers-by on selected public spaces for which there are redevelopment proposals. The aim of this project is to gather information in order to create attractive and well designed public spaces in which people are pleased to stay. This project began in 2012 and was initiated by the “Designing the city and the neighbourhoods together” legislation focus. At the end of 2012, it was decided not to continue this project under this legislative focus because of cost issues, but TAZ took it over to use it on other relevant public space projects.⁹⁸

97 <http://www.srf.ch/news/regional/zuerich-schaffhausen/zueri-wie-neu-mit-app-zu-einer-schoeneren-stadt>

98 <http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/content/ted/de/index/taz/oerbi.html>

5. Case studies

The main interest of this research is to understand how the participatory processes or 'Mitwirkungsverfahren'⁹⁹ used during the design of public spaces in Zurich are contributing to creating more user-centred public spaces. This is analysed using three case studies of public spaces in Zurich.

The project teams of each of the following public space design projects used formal and / or informal participatory processes during the design process.

The aim of the case studies is to analyse how urban planners and designers made use of participatory methods and if they effectively contributed to the design of successful public spaces.

The author made the selection of suitable case studies with the assistance of Beat Jörger, the Head of Project Development at the Civil Engineering Department of the city of Zurich who suggested three public spaces that have recently been redesigned using participative methods.

These three public spaces are:

1. Idaplatz - Wiedikon
2. Lindenplatz – Altsetten
3. Limmatquai – Centre of Zurich



Location plan of Lindenplatz, Idaplatz and Limmatquai in Zurich

.....
⁹⁹ Leitfaden Mitwirkung der Stadt Zürich, Eine Arbeitshilfe für die sozialräumliche Stadtentwicklung, Entwurf, 18.01.2006, Stadplanung Zürich

The three case studies provide a commentary about how participative processes were used during the projects and describe their results.

The case studies are based on the author's interviews with professionals at the Civil Engineering Department of Zurich (Tiefbauamt Zurich or TAZ) who worked on the redesign projects or have relevant knowledge of them.

Additional informal interviews were undertaken with people responsible for neighbourhood coordination for the projects: Ruth Zollinger for the Lindenplatz project and Peter Rothenhäusler from the Limmatquai neighbourhood association. The relevant architects for each space were contacted, but meetings with them have not yet been possible.

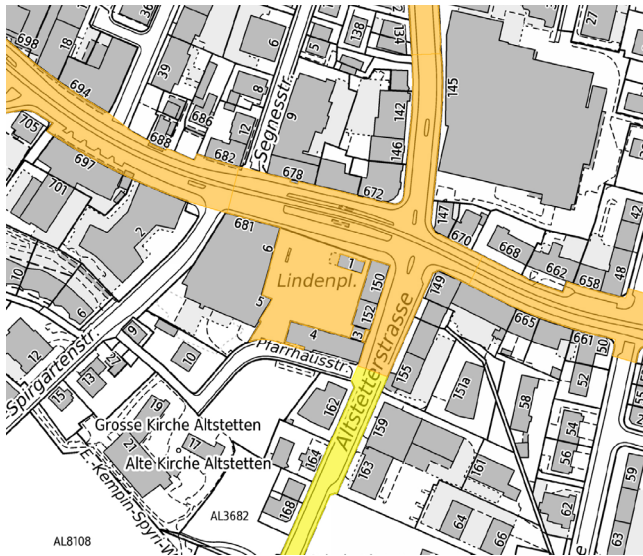
The following elements and questions were the framework for the discussions:

1. Context of each public space;
2. The actors involved;
3. Participatory methods used in the design of the spaces;
4. What were the specific tools or methods used?;
5. Were ideas for elements of special identity contributed by the participants?;
6. What were the results? Is the outcome satisfactory for users?;
7. What were the positive and negative experiences of these processes?;
8. Did the processes contribute to the social sustainability of the places?;
9. The views of the urban designer, architect, public space designer involved in the project;
10. The views of the actors involved in the participatory processes.

5.1 Lindenplatz, Altstetten

This case study is based on a semi-structured interviews held on 9 April 2013 with Mr. Hans-Rudolf Christen, Project lead at the Civil Engineering Department of the city of Zurich (TAZ) and an email exchange and a meeting on 17 July 2013 with Ruth Zollinger from the Neighbourhood Coordination Department of Altstetten.

Context



Timeframe: 2005-2010

Client: Tiefbauamt Zurich

Designers: Hager Partner AG

Level of importance in the public space importance plan of 2010: square of city-wide/regional importance (orange) / medium to high importance and medium to high design standards required.

Lindenplatz is one of the most important and highly used neighbourhood squares in Zurich Altstetten.

It was built in the 1950's as the main neighbourhood square of the area. The majority of buildings surrounding it date from the same period. The paving pattern on the main square is listed in the 'Denkmalschutz' register of historic elements to be preserved. The paving was in a dilapidated state and needed urgent refurbishment. In July 2005, two municipal councillors submitted an official letter asking the city about the plans for the Lindenplatz as it suffered, in their view, many problems such as lack of seating, dilapidated paving slabs, and that it was in a 'desolate' state and needed urgent refurbishment.¹⁰⁰ The refurbishment of the paving has triggered a comprehensive upgrade of the Lindenplatz.

Participation process

The TAZ informed the neighbourhood coordination department of their plan to redevelop the Lindenplatz. The community Centre GZ Loogarten together with a research group of the HSA Luzern (College of Luzern) initiated the work process called "Altstetten bewegt Altstetten". From this initiative the working group Lindenplatz was formed. The interviewee, Ruth Zollinger, was part of this working group as a representative of the neighbourhood coordination group but also as a private citizen.

The working group Lindenplatz within the research framework, "Altstetten bewegt Altstetten", requested that a participative process to be put in place for the redevelopment of this public space. The group organised a stand at the weekly market and within three events, collected approximately 1000 comments from the population. This initiative was triggered by the fact that the local people did not identify with the process of the official workshops that were planned by the city.

.....
¹⁰⁰ Auszug aus dem Protokoll des Stadtrates von Zürich 1424/26.10.2005, 26.10.2005. Schriftliche Anfrage von Muriel Herzog und Mario Mariani betreffend Lindenplatz, 13. Juli 2005, GR Nr. 2005/293.

Ruth Zollinger points out that Altstetten has a mainly working class population, with a modest background and many immigrants who do not speak the language fluently enough to be able to participate at official workshops. Being on site during the market helped the group collect comments from the broadest possible range of people.

Ideas were collected using different methods in order to reach out to these people. One method used was a physical model¹⁰¹ (Planning for Real) where the local community could design the square with the help of a plasticine modelling kit. Many people, including children, used this method with great pleasure. Other methods included awarding points to comments or features participants liked or disliked about the square. This method worked well for people who were not used to expressing opinions about the subject or did not speak German fluently. These methods were used to encourage people to participate in the project and to animate the process.

In parallel, TAZ began its participative process to include the neighbourhood population's needs and wishes in order to formulate a design plan.

The first stakeholder group was assembled in May 2006. This group was composed of land owners, trade association presidents, neighbourhood associations, ground floor tenants, market traders, community workers, youth workers and the group Altstetten bewegt Altstetten. In total ten people participated at this event. The aim of the initial meeting was to establish the terms, aims and content of the participatory process. The process was to be implemented by means of a workshop involving local residents and the interested community. The aim of this workshop was to gather information about users' needs and visions of the future appearance of the new Lindenplatz. It was made clear from the start of the workshop that its aim would not be to involve the public in its design process but to explore ideas and work on the framework of design parameters for the project.

Two consecutive three hour workshops were held on the 23rd and 24th of August 2006. These workshops were advertised on flyers distributed in the area and in the local newspapers. Interested individuals were invited to register their participation with the council. A total of 90 participants attended the events of those two days. The Department of Civil Engineering supported the workshops by providing an external moderation group 'Frischer Wind' to lead the sessions. These workshops enabled the city to explain the project as well as gather key information from its users. These workshops mainly attracted representatives from the organised societies, such as associations, politicians and the educated and/or interested population.

An important factor was that the meeting of all parties helped in the broadening of the ideas and enabled participants who had very specific ideas in mind to interrogate them with other participants. Difficulties in coming to agreement were encountered, but any consequences for the process as a whole were benign. The workshop also made the planning committee aware of any possible future problems, enabling the council to prepare for potential objections to aspects of the project during the formal participatory process in the Strassengesetz paragraphs 13 and 16.

After the workshops, TAZ used the information gathered to evaluate the possible scope for action. A design proposal for the space was created, which was presented publicly. Objections to the proposals were made during the public exhibition, but the city was already aware of them due to the workshop events. Further requests for more public involvement were also submitted at this time. The public event enabled TAZ to prepare for the formal process Strassengesetz para 13, which was implemented in February 2009. Once the project began, there was no need for the focus group to be further involved in the process.

A significant issue arose after the redesign of the public space when a water feature that had been included as a result of requests from the public caused major problems during winter. Several people with different disabilities had accidents because of its low visibility during winter when the water pumps were not operational. This forced the city to close it and install boxes to cover it during winter.

.....
¹⁰¹ W. Schenkel, synergo, Februar 2012, Legislatorschwerpunkt 3: Stadt und Quartiere gemeinsam gestalten, Teilprojekt 5: Qualität öffentlicher Raum in den Quartieren, Mitwirkung und Kommunikation optimieren, Modul 1: Zwischenbericht

An interesting point was that a local association for disabled people had been consulted by the city on issues relating to accessibility for people with disabilities, but design details had not been discussed thoroughly enough.



Lindenplatz in Altstetten Zurich before refurbishment / Photo TAZ



Lindenplatz in Altstetten Zurich after refurbishment / Photo T.Kocan

Analysis and end result

In general, this public space is accepted and positively rated by the local stakeholders and 90% of questioned users.¹⁰² Comments such as “*they (TAZ) renovated the Lindenplatz well*” were noted by Leo Demarlmels, the director of the Hotel on Lindenplatz and echoed by many citizens. The President of IGLA (Cooperative Initiative Lindenplatz Altstetten) adds that “*Altstetten now has a nicely renovated living room*”.¹⁰³ The participants had the opportunity to express opinions about issues close to their hearts, such as the restoration of the old paving slabs, the location of the market, the linden tree and the old fountain. The space has been largely retained as the locals wished. Locals particularly enjoyed the opening of the square towards the church.

For many residents of Altstetten, the Lindenplatz is ‘their’ village square and it serves as a considerable identity factor.¹⁰⁴ Ruth Zollinger confirmed that the people of Altstetten saw it very much as a village square, and the “*most important square in Altstetten*”, especially now that there was a neighbourhood directive plan underway, which many citizens strongly oppose. This plan (Quartienentwicklungsleitbild) aims to change the location of a tram stop that currently is in front of the Lindenplatz. The citizens argue that this location change will ‘shake off’ the Lindenplatz; in other words, that it might diminish the liveliness of the adjacent street and that it will therefore be less used. Therefore the Lindenplatz becomes a “*piece de resistance*” in that context, as Ruth Zollinger points out.

102 INFRAS | 18. JANUAR 2012 | AUFENTHALTSQUALITÄT UND NUTZUNG VON ÖFFENTLICHEN RÄUMEN IN DER STADT ZÜRICH | ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

103 Der neue Lindenplatz, „Altstetten hat wieder eine schöne Stube“, Newspaper article extracts of 9.12.2010, Zürich West

104 Fall.Lindenplatz (02439) Faktenblatt Tiefbauamt Zürich

TAZ had difficulty presenting any design study during the redesign process because of the people's attachment to the square. The residents had a very clear image of their square in mind, and so the risk of the study being rejected was very high. However, the participative workshops enabled problems to be pre-empted and contributed to an acceptance of other ideas and an understanding between all actors.

The scope of design input, however, had been over estimated by the participants, which resulted in disappointment. The water feature especially raised expectations that could not be met. The then Project Leader had presented images of the water feature that did not correspond to what actually was realised. The water feature is now commonly called "*The prostate fountain*", says Ruth Zollinger. Some users find the space too cold in its appearance and regret the loss of shade from the felled trees.¹⁰⁵ There was a general wish for a canopy over the public square so that it could be used during bad weather. Ruth Zollinger thinks this would have enhanced the usage of the square. However, the idea would have been too expensive to install. The paving slabs were laid by hand, and therefore the cost of the redesign of the square was already high.

Hans-Rudolf Christen notes that it is not especially collaboration with the public which is the most complicated to deal with during these design processes, but that often the challenges arise from negotiation with internal and cross-departmental administration, and external designers.

When asked if participants could be involved more in the design process, Hans-Rudolf Christen answered that there was no need in this project as the needs and wishes of users and residents had been gathered during the workshops and incorporated into the design. He adds that it is "*difficult to include everyone in the design process when you invite 30 people. One wants a plant pot, the other a cycle stand, etc. But it can happen in some projects.*" Hans-Rudolf Christen thinks that it was essential to involve the local community in the ongoing processes of this project. Hans-Rudolf Christen concludes that "*ultimately someone is always responsible*" and therefore has to take the decision. He notes that these workshops are an opportunity for people to see that they are not alone and that other people have similar ideas or maybe different ones, but that these processes enabled participants to share and confront views and it open the minds of the population.

From the participants' point of view, the neighbourhood coordination department, represented by Ruth Zollinger noted that the community had desired for more scope in their involvement in design issues. Generally, Ruth Zollinger thinks that questions of seating possibilities and their placement and the design or questions related to the atmosphere of a place would have their place with the local participants but that issues of lighting or more detailed technical design should be left with professionals.

About its social sustainability, Hans-Rudolf Christen thinks that the participative processes employed, directly contributed to making Lindenplatz a long lasting and accessible space for all, especially concerning improved level of accessibility for people with disabilities.

This case study demonstrates how important it was to involve the local community in design questions for the community-centred public square of Lindenplatz. The interviews showed how communication between the organisers and participants is paramount to avoid the disappointment of unmet expectations. The complete avoidance of miscommunication is almost impossible, but the aims of the participative processes and scope of involvement of all stakeholders should be clarified from the outset.

105 INFRAS | 18. JANUAR 2012 | AUFENTHALTSQUALITÄT UND NUTZUNG VON ÖFFENTLICHEN RÄUMEN IN DER STADT ZÜRICH | ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

The participative process of the Lindenplatz has been evaluated as 'Best Practice' by Walter Schenkel at Synergo.¹⁰⁶ The criteria being that the high identification factor of the space had been accounted for, that the local community had been involved in the process when the first questions arose and that it was very clear in its statement of aims and scope of action.

During the interview with the neighbourhood coordination representative, it emerged that this process was good practice, but that generally the population thought the processes were too long and complicated, raising their expectations of evidence of their input in the finished redevelopment. Ruth Zollinger concluded that if there was something to learn from this project, it was that more focused sessions including a broader range of people, followed by a presentation of the results by TAZ would have been as effective as all these workshops. She adds that if one can take something from this process is that "*less is more*".

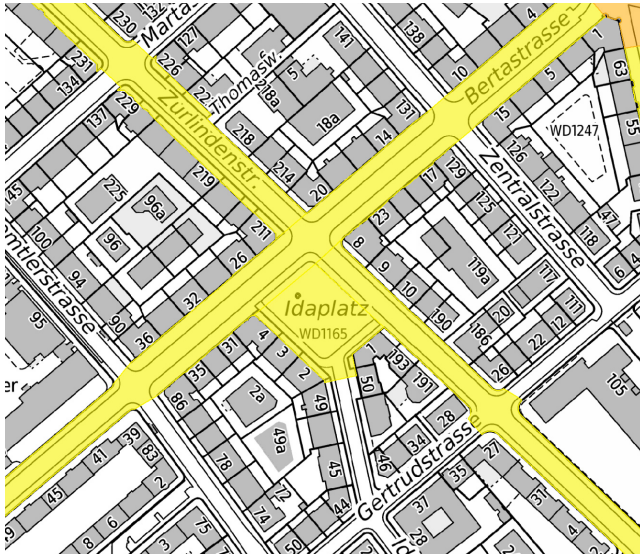
The process used for the Lindenplatz appears as an interesting and good example of how the population needs to be involved in questions of identity and design, but also reveals that false expectations arise even when the project is well prepared. Lindenplatz is hierarchised as square of city-wide importance in the scale of importance plan and therefore requires the application of medium to high design standards. This tallies with the process that was applied.

.....
¹⁰⁶ Legislatorschwerpunkt 3: Stadt und Quartiere gemeinsam gestalten, Teilprojekt 5: Qualität öffentlicher Raum in den Quartieren, Mitwirkung und Kommunikation optimieren, Modul 1: Zwischenbericht, Februar 2012 / W. Schenkel /synergo

5.2 Idaplatz

This case study is based on a semi-structured interview held on 21 May 2013 with Mr. Enea Corubolo, project leader at the Civil Engineering Department of the city of Zurich (TAZ). Unfortunately, the neighbourhood associations involved in the participative processes have not responded to the interview request.

Context



Timeframe: 2002 /2006

Client: Tiefbauamt (TAZ)

Designers: Tiefbauamt (TAZ)

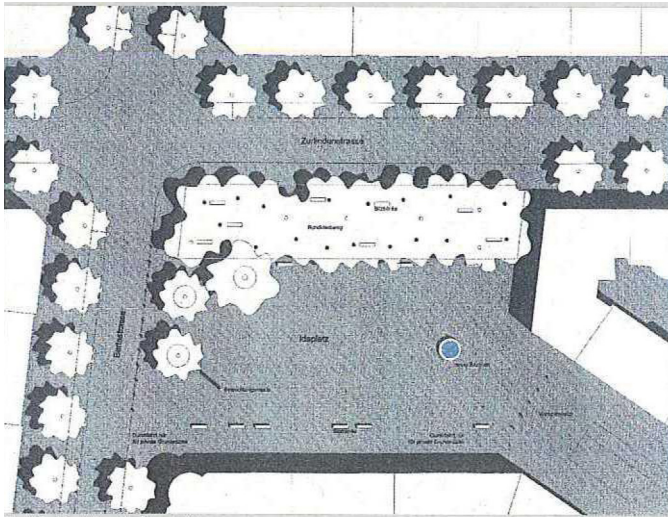
Level of importance in the public space importance plan of 2010:
Neighbourhood square (yellow) / lower to medium importance and standard to medium design effort required.

Idaplatz is a very popular neighbourhood square in Kreis 3 in Zurich, which has received city-wide appreciation because of its friendly feel. It is mainly popular with a young and creative population because of its many cafes and restaurants and its bohemian feel. It is surrounded by a set of buildings from the turn of the century that are in the neighbourhood conservation zone.

Idaplatz needed upgrading because the sewer and water pipes beneath it were in a dilapidated state and new cables needed to be laid. The city took the opportunity to entirely redesign the square.

The Department of Civil Engineering (TAZ) began the process of redesigning Idaplatz in 2002. As it is a public space of neighbourhood importance, no external designers were required and TAZ developed the design with its in-house team. The first proposal was presented to the public through the Strassengesetz para 13 procedure. The proposals and dates for the public viewing of them were advertised on the poster column in the middle of the square. The proposals provoked an outburst of comments and objections from the local population, which is strongly represented in associations and the owners of the Berta Bar, who vociferously opposed the plans. Protest posters appeared on buildings and the objections were so numerous that the city decided to adjourn the project.

The initial proposal (illustrated on the next page) took a very simple, formal, and standardised approach to redesigning Idaplatz. Trees were located to extend the building grid and to continue the avenues of trees on the neighbouring streets. Seating was placed sparsely and in line with the trees. Emphasis was on the avenue as the primary urban structural element.



Idaplatz first design proposal by the TAZ In-house team 2002

The local population deplored the lack of seating, the placement of the trees and especially the apparent disregard of the populations needs. This space is used as an open-air cinema during summer and is the location for the Idaplatz summer party each year. The population felt that the design proposals did not include the necessary space to organise such events, which are paramount to its locals.

Participative process

In 2004, the new councillor Martin Waser decided to restart the redevelopment of the Idaplatz and give the process another chance. Although, this time round the population would be involved from the start of the process in the decision-making process. The then project leader of the Tiefbauamt, Rafael Noesberger, decided to organise a public event for everyone to take part in. All restaurant and bar owners, residents and local politicians from the neighbourhood attended this first event and voiced their wish to be included in the design process.

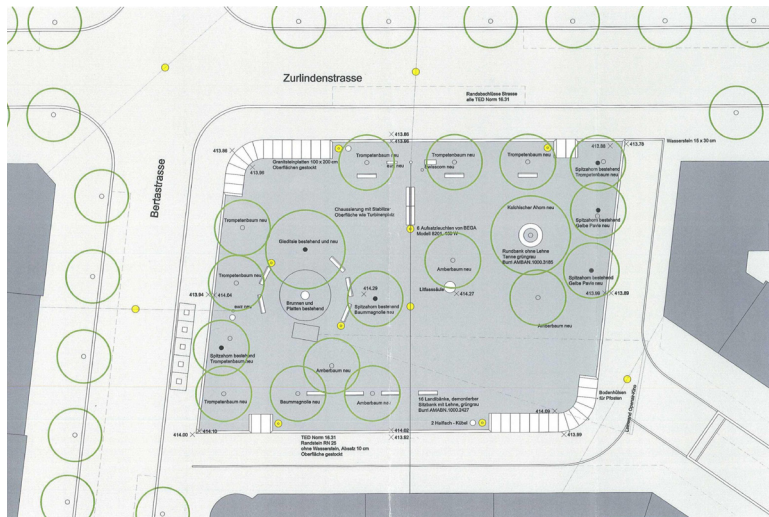
From this first public gathering emerged a focus group that would work more closely with the engineers and designers from the city during a workshop. Residents and restaurant owners decided on representatives who would be part of the focus group. The focus group together with the TAZ design team, the TAZ project lead and an external moderation team developed ideas for the square that would correspond to the population's needs and interests. TAZ especially gathered ideas on how many trees would be introduced and which ones should be kept, possibilities for locations of seating and the fountain and whether the poster column would be kept. Difficulties arose with deciding where to place the recycling bins and the fountain and how to treat the borders of the square.

At the end of this workshop, the owners of the local Berta bar were still not entirely satisfied and wanted more involvement. The TAZ team gathered all information and wishes of the population and worked on a new proposal which was then broadly accepted by the population.

The initial design proposal was elaborated in a classical way, following Zurich's design guidelines and urbanistic principles.

The new proposal offered a more user-centred approach with more space for the annual open-air cinema and summer festival. There were plenty of seating possibilities as well as a more openly-structured space. Vehicular access on either side of the square next to the cafés was retained to enable deliveries to take place.

The design of this public square has been widely accepted and celebrated as a 'soft' redesign.



Idaplatz second design proposal by the TAZ In-house team 2006

Some access issues for people with reduced mobility were examined with specialist associations of people with disabilities, and decisions about the recycling bins had to go through an independent legal application. But, overall, the result at Idaplatz was a success.

A few years later, some local inhabitants and users of the area fear that with the upgrade of the square a certain gentrification is now taking place. Rent in the area has risen, new bars have been established and young middle-class 'hipsters' are taking over the area.¹⁰⁷

Analysis and end results

In 2004, participation was not a formal process that was wholly integrated in the councils of Zurich, despite the fact that the gathering of information at user's level has been part of their methodology for a few years. Prior to the redesign of Idaplatz a participatory process that enabled the participants to 'co-design' elements had not been done, and has not been done often since.

Enea Corubolo remarks that in general terms, participative processes are extremely useful, but from his experience are also often used by up-and-coming young politicians as a platform to gain recognition and express their political agenda. He adds that the ideas and opinions of actual residents are always difficult to represent because residents tend not to attend public meetings, either because they are not interested, too busy or think they will not be able to understand the complex agenda. Idaplatz was an exception in that sense, demonstrated by the large number of local residents who attended the events.

E. Corubolo notes the difficulty in including the local population (the unorganised society) into the design process. Often there is a lack of understanding of planning and design issues and therefore communication can be difficult. But basically, collecting needs and desires of the population is very beneficial and can be easily done through interviews or workshops.

He also adds that too often the population believes the city is using participative processes as an exercise and that their views are not taken seriously. Unfortunately, it is often also the case that the city council does not have much leverage themselves due to tight regulations and rules. In these cases, people that have given their time and opinions to projects, feel that their efforts were in vain.

When asked whether he thought that the element catalogue narrowed the scope of input by the population, E. Corubolo answered that one should be careful in the way one uses the element catalogue and bear in mind the legal framework behind the design process. The important issue being that if the population is asked to participate, the scope needs to be large enough for them to do so effectively; if it isn't, then there is no point in asking people to

107 Quartiernety3 / Idaplatz: Aufwertung mit Tücken, Veröffentlicht am: 05.07.2012 <http://www.qn3.ch/22.html>

participate, because it would only lead to frustration.

He concludes that neighbourhood squares are predestined to participative processes, but that other public spaces are not.

The Idaplatz case study is transparent in its demonstration of local communities' impact on the use of a place and consequently on its character or identity. It is perhaps due to an exceptionally strong community group, which had a significant impact on design decisions. However, it also demonstrates the importance of involving communities in the design of local neighbourhood squares. The case of Idaplatz reveals the level of dependency the planning process has on the opinions of its citizens. Ultimately they took ownership of the decision-making by using legal paragraph 13 to comment and lodge objections and use their basic democratic right to protest in the square.

This case study reveals a clear disconnection between the appropriate level of participation assigned to a project in relation to the importance of a space, which is assigned by the city. Although it should be noted that this space was redesigned before the scale of importance plan was issued, it does show how important a close working relationship with the user is for designing neighbourhood squares. The scope of design input here was extended to include most of the users' needs. However, it appears that this has not been repeated to the same extent with similar projects. The process took advantage of the fact that there were no major traffic issues to be dealt with, which could have restricted the scope of input of the local population significantly.



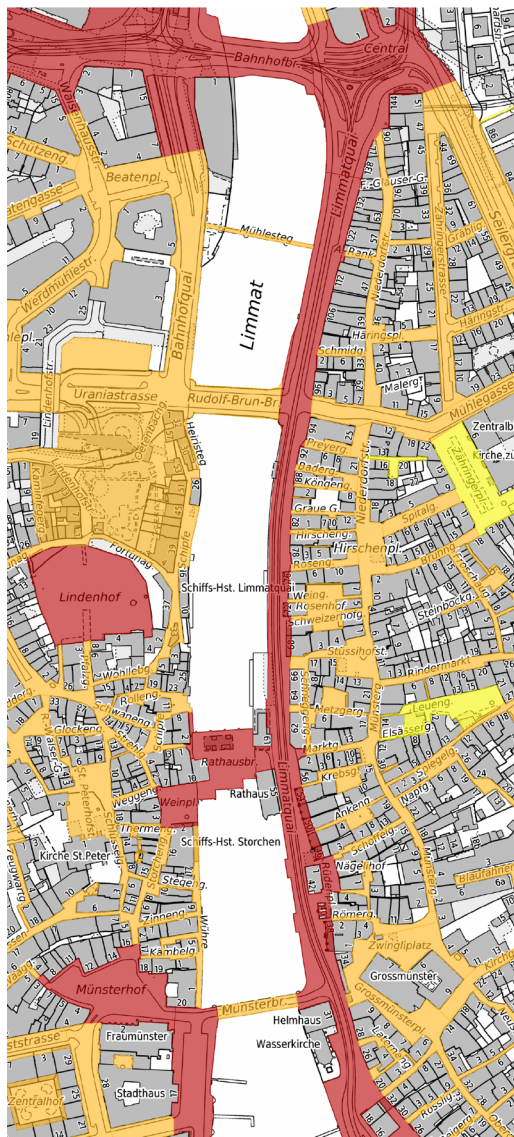
Idaplatz now / Photo T.Kocan

5.3 Limmatquai

This case study is based on semi-structured interviews held on 17 April 2013 with Mr. Rudolf Steiner, project leader at the Civil Engineering Department of the city of Zurich (TAZ) and an email exchange and meeting on 25.06.2013 with Peter Rothenhäusler from the Limmatquai neighbourhood association. The author has also gathered and translated information from the competition report (Projektwettbewerb, Bericht des Preisgerichtes, 2003)

The Limmatquai is not a typical square as such. It was included in this study as an example of the different participative processes used for different types of projects and to compare its outcome with the other case studies.

Context



Timeframe: 1997-2006

Client: Tiefbauamt

Designer: Ralph Baenziger Architekten AG

Level of importance in the public space importance plan of 2010: Public space of national/international (red)/ high importance and high level of design effort required.

The Limmattquai forms part of the main tourist and leisure area of the centre of Zurich. On an urban level it forms, together with the Bahnhofstrasse, a principal axis of the city centre. It is a shopping and strolling strip along the river Limmat. Main transport connections follow the course of the Limmatquai to join Bellevue with the main train station.

The Limmatquai was therefore an important but problematic political issue over several decades. In 1997 an ideas competition was launched in order to try to revive the dialogue and initiate the redesign of this important strip of land. The winning proposal "Gelb" from the architectural Team Affentranger / Othenin-Girard / Koepfli / Rütimann did not succeed as it was initially hoped for. The project encountered many obstacles at planning application stage and ultimately was then rejected by the cantonal planning authorities because of water protection issues. These circumstances showed the limited scope for change in this area.

The population accepted the credit for the closing off of the bypass route that was going through the Limmatquai, in a referendum, in 2002. The general desire for change was very evident and initiated the

first step towards the redesign of the Limmatquai.

The framework requirements were clear and enabled a new project competition, which was initiated in 2002. The winning proposal was to emphasise the articulation and relationship between water and the city, and establish a reduced traffic area, which would serve as a principal, central pedestrian area of very high quality. No participative processes were included in the competition brief nor were set down in any planning document at this stage.

The project “Kai von Zimmern” by Ralph Baenziger Architekten was chosen from 30 proposals. The project convinced the judges with its sensitive inclusion of historical footprints and delicate approach to building a durable piece of city.¹⁰⁸

Participative process

When the project competition started in 2002, participatory processes were not used consistently in all projects. The idea of including participation in the planning process had just started in the 1990s in Zurich and was therefore still new territory and not fully part of the design process.

The participatory processes were therefore left at the legally binding processes underlined in the Strassengesetz para 13 and 16. Nevertheless, informal participation was undertaken in the form of informal dialogues with various stakeholders involved in the project. The TAZ department was in constant dialogue with local trade associations and the land owners since the start of the project. The TAZ department attended the association’s General Assemblies and other meetings in order to inform the trade associations and owners of the city’s redesign plan. During these meetings, the needs of trade associations and local clubs, such as the boating group Limmat Club, were collected to inform the brief of the redevelopment project. Rudolf Steiner from the TAZ emphasizes on the fact that this process is usually done in such a manner to inform the framework requirements for any urban project in Zurich and therefore does not respond to a specifically participative process *“It is just common procedure to do so”*. The dialogues remained informative, rather than participative, and stakeholders were not asked to respond to the design proposals at any stage of the project. Design decisions were primarily made by the jury when it decided on the successful competition submission.

Rudolf Steiner notes that the term ‘Participative processes’ is not suitable for this project as no additional, informal participative process was used in its implementation. An interesting point in the author’s interview with Rudolf Steiner was his statement that *“if the project would have to be redone today, more participative methods such as workshops would have been used to inform the brief and define the needs at an early stage”*. This would have enabled the population to express their fears and expectations.

Contacts with the various stakeholders intensified during the construction phase, but they did not influence any design decisions. The tram stops were discussed more specifically because of the impact of the raised paving on the base of the buildings.

Rudolf Steiner concludes that participative processes are used differently depending on the type of project they are aimed at. Participation will not be used the same way for the redesign of a central, old town square that has more tourist and commercial attributes than for a neighbourhood square. A neighbourhood square will have very strong meaning for its inhabitants and therefore a strong link should be made with the local community. A square in the touristic centre has comparatively less local inhabitants and participation should integrate the needs of the local businesses, as well as the needs of the city as a whole.

Landowners on the Limmatquai are principally large scale real estate companies and therefore to all intents and purposes anonymous with regards to the project. Therefore information about needs was collected informally directly from local shop owners and tenants. Important stakeholders in the Limmatquai area are the guild houses, which have an immense influence on the local politics. Guild members raised no opposition to the chosen project because its concept respected the historical context.

A glass cube-shaped building on the shore of the Limmat was the only feature of the proposals that provoked objections under Strassengesetz para 13. This building was intended as a restaurant and storage space for the city but was omitted from the final design proposal following the objections.

.....
¹⁰⁸ Neugestaltung mittleres Limmatquai, Projektwettbewerb, Bericht des Preisgerichtes, Mai 2003, Tiefbau- und Entsorgungsdepartement, Zürich.

Later in the project, new regulations concerning access to trams for people with disabilities caused problems with the design of the proposed tram stops. These regulations were published in 2004 and introduced new trams throughout Zurich. Consequently, all tram stops had to be levelled and this required major collaboration between associations for people with disabilities and all traffic and civil engineering departments. The issues were mainly internal to the administration, but raised some comments from the population as well. Since then, level access to trams is available on all trams and has been widely accepted by the population.



Limmatquai now / Photo T.Kocan

Analysis and end results

This case study shows how participative processes have evolved since 1997. Rudolf Steiner emphasised the fact that this project would have been done differently today. The principal processes, such as the competition, would be similar but participation would now be included in that process from the start. Members of the local trade associations would have been included in the competition jury for example, which had not been the case in 1997 and 2002. Also participative methods such as workshops would have been used to gather information about the needs of local stakeholders.

Regarding the durability of the design (its long-lastingness and adaptability), Rudolf Steiner comments that the riverbank walls were constructed to last for a long time because this element was such a major change to the design of the public realm, but the surfaces of the area will need to be refurbished in about 30 years due to changes in infrastructure such as tram tracks. Therefore 'durability' in this sense suggests a lifespan of approximately 30 years.

Peter Rothenhäusler from the Neighbourhood Association (Quartiersverein or QV) knows from the then President of the QV, that the organisation was not involved in the design process. The opportunity to influence the design was reacting to design proposals at Strassengesetz para 13. The proposed glass cube building and the raised pavement needed for level access to trams were two features of the proposals that provoked comment at this stage in the process. In an interview with Peter Rothenhäusler, he commented in retrospect that the majority of the residents were pleased with the result. They had wished for a more leisurely and completely pedestrianised shopping mile, but that the reality was that at some key hours

of the day, some logistical vehicular access had to be permitted. Residents also regretted the fact that many small shops had to make space for commercial chain stores, but this reflected the way retail concerns were evolving all over the city.

Overall, residents and users were satisfied with the completed project and Peter Rothenhäusler feels that the city has a good relationship with the neighbourhood associations generally, especially since an official agreement between the municipality of Zurich and all the city neighbourhoods was established.¹⁰⁹ This document gives significant power to neighbourhood associations. He added that the neighbourhood association of Limmatquai felt strongly about the locality and therefore was prepared to help the city when ideas for redevelopments were raised. Peter Rothenhäusler thinks that city councils should use this resource and availability to help more often. But he insisted that more regulations about participatory processes would not be a good idea; that the process needed more space for participation rather than more regulation.

This case study demonstrates how different the design approach is between central and historical parts of the city than for neighbourhood squares. Places of international, national or regional importance undergo a design process that can include a competition procedure where the focus is on the specific design of the place. Centrally located places are perceived to have a role in presenting a place to the outside world. They also have a more significant flow of users and articulate a wider variety of functions than a neighbourhood square. These elements are the reasons why a design competition should be organised to find a satisfactory design. However, the local population, residents or trades, have the capacity to inform the brief with important information, be it for a design competition or an in-house TAZ team.

.....

109 The Neighbourhood association agreement with the city lays down principles of communication and interaction between these two main actors. When it comes to changes or projects involving the public realm, the city has a duty to inform the neighbourhood association as soon as possible and involve them in a transparent dialog. This agreement, according to P. Rothenhäusler has forged a long term commitment between both parties and shows how intertwined they are.

6. Analysis and Conclusion

Public spaces and especially neighbourhood public squares are playing a determining role in the fabric of the city: an idea that essentially resembles the ancient notion of public spaces as symbols for the democratic society they are located in. Public squares continue to be significant physical social spaces, despite social media supposedly replacing the need for a physical representation of this democratic public function.¹¹⁰ The public square is still seen as a place that is accessible and open to all, of whatever background, gender or age.

In light of the sustainable development of urban environments, the redesign of public spaces plays a central role in answering the challenges of creating a liveable city for current and generations to come. The social assets of a public space can, when orchestrated carefully, contribute greatly to the social sustainability of its neighbouring environment.

Neighbourhood squares in larger cities are often regarded as 'village squares' by their local communities. Lindenplatz is seen as typical 'village square' by its resident users, for example. Squares function as meeting places, transit spaces, resting and playing spaces. All these activities reflect the way its users are using the space and vary between locations.

When creating these public spaces, designers need to respond to the wider criteria for a liveable city as well as addressing the needs of the local users of these spaces. Designers can use participative methods as a tool to gather essential information about these needs from the users, to inform the design brief.

Participation presents additional benefits as a political tool for the designer: it enables projects to be explained and discussed, pre-empts, and therefore allows for timely preparation for responses to, conflicts of interest and objections in the short and the long term.

Partaking in a participative process can stimulate a sense of responsibility in the users; including them in the processes that create the city they are living in engenders a feeling of being respected by the authorities.

Involving the user in the design process of a neighbourhood public space can also contribute to a sense of belonging to the space, as seen in the literature review. If users' needs are included in the design of a local square, it will suit their activity needs and the space will therefore be livelier. Similarly, users who have contributed to its design are likely to feel proud of the space and develop a sense of belonging to it.

This close working relationship with users enables designers to include specific elements that the user can identify with, to create a sense of local character.

This essay examined how participative processes have been used by planners and designers in Zurich to create public spaces that are well-suited to their users. The central hypothesis to this work is that participatory processes help to create more user-centred public spaces and therefore lead to a more socially durable design of these spaces.

110 John R. Parkinson, 2012, *Democracy and Public Space, The Physical Sites of Democratic Performance*, Oxford University Press, New York

Summary of findings through case studies and interviews with external specialists

The case studies demonstrated that participative processes were efficient tools when they resulted in allowing the participating public and the professionals to share information and knowledge about the space and its conditions. The professionals had the opportunity to explain the technical, political and regulatory framework they were working in and the public expressed their opinions, experiences and ideas with each other and with the professionals. This basis for communication helped greatly in establishing each others' scope for action and exposing the realities of what the project could achieve. In some cases, this was sufficient to enable a project to flourish. In other cases, more scope for action would perhaps have resulted in a more successful project.

The participatory methods used by the city were questioned both in the Lindenplatz and the Idaplatz case studies. Participative workshops appeared to have been useful for TAZ, but too longwinded and complicated for the local population. The difficulty in reaching out to all users was underlined by discussions with the neighbourhood coordination team and project leaders at TAZ. Also, the language caused misunderstandings between the professionals, the organised associations and 'unorganised' societies, ie local residents who are not represented by an association. The TAZ project leaders ad Trond Maag, confirmed this in interviews with the author. Maag recommended that a common language should be established and used during participative processes because the local population did not speak "*planning Swiss-German*".¹¹¹

When questioned about the implementation of more user-centred participation methods, a certain reticence and difficulty was expressed by the project leaders at TAZ. The reality was that the restrained design scope TAZ had to work with made it difficult for them to increase the population's scope of input.

Informal participation works well for TAZ in communicating the intentions of a project and preparing the formal procedures.

Participation as a political tool is undeniably important. However, if only used in this way, citizens can feel manipulated, and the concept of transparency in political processes loses its strength. Using participation as a design tool and widening the scope of public involvement on the other hand can help to build trust in political processes.

High participation demand and scope of design input

The theory and case studies presented in this study reveal an apparent contradiction between design guidelines and participation guidelines combined with the daily practice. This discrepancy is between the standardisation of the design approach and the increasing demand for participation.

A determining aspect, apparent in the analysis of the design guidelines and case studies, is the use of a hierarchy of the importance of public spaces in Zurich, which originated in a report produced by Jan Gehl Architects in 2004. It can be argued that the Stadträume 2010 guidelines took this idea too literally and pushed it to an extent where it might be counter-productive with regard to neighbourhood public spaces. The guidance recommends that public spaces of international and regional importance are to be treated individually and are permitted a custom-made design approach such as a competition. Neighbourhood squares, on the other hand, are at the bottom of the scale and are to be treated with a standardised approach.

This approach makes sense in an economical way and it has been shown to greatly simplify the design processes, but a contradiction occurs in practice when participation is used. The case studies demonstrate that the local population expects to participate more actively in decisions made about neighbourhood squares of low to medium importance. Interviews with project leaders of the civil engineering department of Zurich and Walter Schenkel confirmed that participation is essential in these projects. Designing any aspect of a neighbourhood

.....
¹¹¹ Trond Maag, Interview on 23.06.13

without consideration for the local population is impossible, especially now that participation is a principal element of the current legislative focus “Designing the city and its neighbourhoods together”.

The contradiction appears because the realistic scope of input from the local actors, especially in design issues, is minimal in local public spaces of low to medium importance. This causes frustration on both sides, as citizens expect more input than what the city’s processes permits them.

The case study of the redesign of Idaplatz reveals the contradiction clearly, even though it was designed just before the Stadträume 2010 document was published. The municipal authorities initially applied a systematic design solution, which was convincing on paper and responded to the city guidelines, but completely dismissed local users and their needs. The first design proposal backfired and put the entire project on hold because the local population did not accept it. It was then redesigned in collaboration with local stakeholders and is now a neighbourhood square that enjoys city-wide recognition for its identity. This case study demonstrates very simply that local stakeholders, such as residents, users and local businesses have an important role to play in design issues of their neighbourhood squares.

Similar processes appear to be easier to co-ordinate more effectively in places of city-wide importance, such as the Lindenplatz. A similar level of participation was required here but because the space is important on a city-wide scale, the design was more tailored and users could have more input from the outset. Frustrations still surfaced, because the scope of input was not made clear enough to all participants. However, the outcome is perceived as successful for all participants and users today.

The Limmatquai study presents different issues. As it is a relatively old project, one cannot judge its lack of participatory processes because they were not in common use in the early 2000s. However, it is interesting to see that most residents and users are satisfied with the outcome despite their minimal involvement. The design proposal was satisfactory for the majority of users from the outset because it respected the architectural and historical setting. It would have been interesting to know how the architects developed the design proposal, but unfortunately they did not respond to interview requests.

A user-centred approach to enhance local character

An additional argument for a more user-centred design approach is that it will feed the design proposal with local knowledge and valued characteristics. In the interview with Walter Schenkel, he notes that *“people living in the neighbourhood often have a very long lasting relationship with their neighbourhood square. This identity needs to be captured by the authorities. This can only be done through participation.”*¹¹²

Defining the identity of a place is complex. Notions of identity are subjective and difficult to quantify. Subjective attributes of public spaces such as identity, meaning and ‘sense of belonging’ are not specifically accounted for in the documentation supporting urban professionals. Identity factors are mentioned in the Stadträume 2010 document, but they are not explicit. ‘Identitätstiftend’ in the document conveys the perception of places for the city as a whole and its perception from the outside rather than perceptions from within its population.

The following statement on the planning department’s website conveys a similar message about the public realm in Zurich: *“The city of Zurich considers the public realm as a holistic task lending character to the cityscape”*. Another statement on this site somewhat contradicts the standards: *“It (the public realm), is the mirror of the society, it generates urban identity and creates the backbone of the urban fabric”*.¹¹³ If the public realm is the mirror of society, should it be treated in a homogenous way all over the city?

.....

112 Walter Schenkel, interview held on 16.06.2013

113 http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/hbd/de/index/staedtebau_u_planung/stadtraum.html - Stadt Zürich betrachtet den öffentlichen Raum als ganzheitliche, das Stadtbild prägende Aufgabe.

The standards do speak of respect for local places and their character but it seems difficult to apply this in practice when it requires that a standardised design approach be applied when designing local neighbourhood or quarter public spaces of low to medium importance. It becomes evident when looking at detailed design and the Element Catalogue produced by the city of Zurich. Only public spaces with interregional, national or international level are permitted an individual design approach.

The standards establish a design language that aims to reinforce the city's image and identity. A common design language is important to create a coherent cityscape, but it poses the risk of creating overly similar spaces all over the city. The argument is that when applying these standards literally, many places are at risk of becoming characterless. As a result, neighbourhood squares in Zurich do not lack material quality or infrastructure, but some are perceived to lack design character and important subjective qualities. For this reason, the author believes a wider scope in the application of Zurich's standards for community involvement in creating distinctive qualities for neighbourhood squares should be incorporated into the processes.

A bold but interesting example of a public space that was created in close relation with its users is the Superkilen series of public spaces in the Nørrebro neighbourhood of Copenhagen. This project was created by a collaboration between architects, landscape designers, artists and a group of local residents. Although many people would criticise it for being brash and poorly integrated into its environment, the process behind it is interesting because the users were involved in choosing elements to reflect their very heterogeneous identities. The design of this public space incorporates various elements representing the diversity of its inhabitants. More than 50 different nationalities reside in this neighbourhood and it is one of the most ethnically diverse and socially challenged neighbourhoods in Denmark. The elements constitute an urban world exhibition of all its inhabitants that reflects the "*true nature of its neighbourhood*" instead of aligning itself to the homogeneous image of Denmark.¹¹⁴



Photo: Iwan Baan

Conclusion

Participation alone does not create a sense of belonging or identity, nor is it the sole contributor to social sustainability. However, it is a critical part of a complex network of elements that constitute the fabric of ever changing cities.

Greater regulation of the methods for participative processes in the planning system is not necessary, as demonstrated by the theories, interviews and case studies presented here. The participation guidelines (Leitfaden Mitwirkung) and the agreement between the city and the neighbourhood associations¹¹⁵ that frame the conditions in which participation is implemented already function successfully in practice. These two documents demonstrate that

114 <http://www.archdaily.com/286223/superkilen-topotek-1-big-architects-superflex/>

115 The Neighbourhood association agreement with the city lays down principles of communication and handlings between these two main actors. When it comes to changes or projects involving the public realm, the city has the duty to inform the neighbourhood association as soon as possible and involve them in a transparent dialog. This agreement, according to P. Rothenhäusler has forged a long term commitment between both parties and shows how intertwined both of them are.

Zurich approaches the issue of participation with considerable depth. However, this study concludes that a wider scope for input from local stakeholders in all proposals for public spaces should be encouraged.

When the scope for input from the local population is diminished by a standardised approach to public space design, frustrations among all involved parties emerge. A more focused and user-centric approach would not only inform the designers' brief with important data about users' needs and their knowledge about their neighbourhood, but can also give the user a sense that his or her contribution to the design has improved the end result. The long-term effect of this is people developing a sense of belonging to the place that they have helped to create. For these reasons, user-centric participation processes are increasingly appearing as essential resources for designers and planners.

In order to create a wider scope for participation in the design process, it would be interesting to encourage temporary pilot projects, like those in Lyon and Reykjavik. During the street garden festival in Lyon, France, elements of the public realm are redesigned and tested by the public.¹¹⁶ In Reykjavik, Iceland, the city runs a program called 'Meanwhile Projects', which trials out public space design in left-over spaces to test easy, efficient and cost-effective solutions for improving the public realm; Citizens and visitors become both evaluators and designers.¹¹⁷



Street Garden Festival in Lyon / Photo Jean-Pierre Charbonneau (2011)



Meanwhile Projects in Reykjavik 2012 / Source: <http://borghildur.info/karatorg-2012>

This type of temporary project provides possibilities for contribution from the public. Trond Maag commented that it is necessary to create instances of surprise in the city. Room for improvisation as an element of planning processes could play a part in the implementation of this idea. The Stadtdebatte showed that Zurich's citizens were very much in favour of 'anything-goes-zones': zones where less planning regulation is imposed and 'freestyle' elements emerge.

Individuals' understanding of the value of their contribution to their surroundings through experimentation encouraged in the projects of the type described above, can provoke curiosity and a willingness to participate in decisions about the city. As Peter Rothenhäusler said, the potential is there for this to happen, and people are keen to assist with finding solutions to issues in their environment; the city just needs to use this resource even more.

116 Jean-Pierre Charbonneau, 2011, Making cities comfortable, le Piéton dans la ville, l'espace public partagé, Collection la ville en train de se faire, Parenthèses

117 <http://borghildur.info/karatorg-2012>

7. Bibliography

Alonso, Marta, Da Cunha, Antonio, Gwiazdzinski, Luc, Chabot, Lionel, Essig, Laurent, Herrmann, Lou. Mai 2013, « Vues sur la ville, Urbanisme temporaire et projet, La ville malléable, solution ou mirage? N o 30.

Arendt, Hannah, 1958, The human condition, University of Chicago, The Public and the Private Realm, P. 41

Bassand, Michel, Compagnon, Anne, Joye, Dominique, Stein, Véronique et Güller, Peter, 2001, Vivre et créer l'espace public, Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, Lausanne.

Brady A., 2012, Not in my back yard, RIBA

Bramley G., Dempsey, N., Power S., Brown C., 2006, What is "social sustainability", and how do our existing urban forms perform in nurturing it? "Bartlett School of Planning, UCL, LONDON: Paper for presentation in the 'Sustainable Communities and Green Futures'

Cabane, Philippe, 2008, Partizipation zwischen Dialog und Kalkül, , Tec21, Vol.134

Charbonneau, Jean-Pierre, 2011, Making cities comfortable, le Piéton dans la ville, l'espace public partagé, Collection la ville en train de se faire, Parenthèses

Colantonio, Andrea and Dixon, Tim, 2009, Measuring Socially Sustainable Urban Regeneration in Europe, Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development (OISD) School of the Built Environment, Oxford Brookes University

Debarbieux, Bernard, 2012, Ville-Montagne Carnets du Paysage, Les figures de la montagne dans le projet urbanistique (1870-2010)

Delbaere, Denis 2011, La fabrique de l'espace public. Ville, Paysage et démocratie, Paris, ellipses, Collection « La France de demain », Free translation from the author.

Dougherty, Dana Lyn, 2006, Embodying the City: Identity and use in urban public space, Thesis Master of Landscape Architecture, Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Feldmann R.M and Stall, 1994, The politics of space appropriation, Women and the Environment, New York, Springer Publishing Company

Felli , Romain 2005, La démocratie introuvable, Développement durable et participation: Institut d'études politiques et internationales (Lausanne)

Gehl Architects for Stadt Zürich, March – September 2004,, Zürich Public Spaces 2004, Quality & Use Analysis for 18 Selected Public Streets, Squares and Parks. Delegation für Wirtschaft und öffentlichen Raum des Stadtrates.

Gehl Jan, date unknown, Public Spaces for a Changing Public Life, School of Architecture, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen

Gehl, Jan, Public Spaces for a Changing Public Life, School of Architecture, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen

Girardet, Herbert, 1999, Creating sustainable cities, Schumacher Briefings, Bristol UK

Hester, Randolph T. 1984, Planning Neighborhood Space with People, 2nd ed. NewYork, N.Y.: Van Nostrand Reinhold

Infras, Januar 2012, Aufenthaltsqualität und Nutzung von öffentlichen Räumen in der Stadt Zürich, Zusammenfassung

Kaspas, Heidi, Bühler, Elisabeth, "Räume und Orte als sozialer Konstrukt", Plädoyer für einen verstärkten Einbezug sozialer Aspekte in die Gestaltung städtischer Parkanlagen

Keller, Simon und Zahner, Jeanette Stadtentwicklung Zürich, Präsidialdepartement , March 2012, Online-Stadtdebatte: Auswertungsbericht

King, Ferrari, Conley, and Latimer , 1989, Co-Design: A process of Design Participation, Van Nostrand Reinhold

Kohn, Margaret, 2004, Brave New Neighborhoods: The Privatization of Public Space. New York: Routledge

Lynch, Kevin 1960, The image of the city, MIT Press

Maag Trond in cooperation with R. Baur, M. Feuz, C. Gasser Derungs, A. Gmünder, T. Hausheer, M. Jann, P. Krass, M. Con Lupin, U. Tgetgel and M. Zwissler, 2009, "The world's fairest city – yours and mine" features of urban living quality, Lars Müller Publishing

Massey, Doreen 1994, A Global Sense of Place, Space, Place and Gender. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press

Mean, Melissa and Tims, Charlie, 2005, People make places: Growing the public life of cities. Published by Demos

Norman, Donald A. 1988, The Design of Everyday Things

Parkinson, John R. 2012, Democracy and Public Space, The Physical Sites of Democratic Performance, Oxford University Press, New York

Peter, Colette Prof. 2008, Mehrwert Partizipation, Hochschule Luzern – Soziale Arbeit, Leitartikel metron Themenheft 24 „Mitwirkung mit Wirkung“, Hrsg. Metron AG, Brugg

Putnam, Robert D. 1993, The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life, The American Prospect no. 13

Ring, Salkin, Boda, Trudy, Robert, Sharon, 1996. International Dictionary of Historic Places: Southern Europe. Routledge.

Rowles, Graham D. 1983. "Place and Personal Identity in Old Age: Observations from Appalachia." Journal of Environmental Psychology 3

Sanders, Elizabeth, 2006, Design Serving People, Copenhagen Cumulus Working Papers, Publication Series G, University of Art and Design Helsinki

Schenkel, Walter, 2010, The world's fairest city – yours and mine, Features of Urban Living Quality, Lars Publishing, From the City to the Neighbourhood – and back

Schenkel, Walter, synergo, Februar 2012, Legislatorschwerpunkt 3: Stadt und Quartiere gemeinsam gestalten, Teilprojekt 5: Qualität öffentlicher Raum in den Quartieren, Mitwirkung und Kommunikation optimieren, Modul 1: Zwischenbericht

T. Tanquerel, La participation du public aux décisions en matière d'aménagement et

d'environnement en Suisse, summary of a contribution at a conference, p.2, (source IDEAP)

Toussaint, Jean-Yves, Vareilles, Sophie, La «durabilité» à l'épreuve des pratiques d'aménagement urbain. Le cas de la concertation dans l'espace public de l'agglomération lyonnaise

Stadt Zürich:

Strategie für die Gestaltung von Zürichs öffentlichem Raum, September 2006

Gestaltungs-Basics, Stadtraumkatalog, C, Oktober 2007,

Gestaltungs-Standards, Stadträume: Plätze, 2007

Stadträume 2010 – Umsetzung, Einführung der Strategie für die Gestaltung von Zürichs öffentlichem Raum, 2007

Stadtentwicklung Zürich, Präsidialdepartement, 2012, Online-Stadtdebatte, Auswertungsbericht,

Stadtentwicklung Zürich, Präsidialdepartement, 2006, Leitfaden Mitwirkung der Stadt Zürich, Eine Arbeitshilfe für die sozialräumliche Stadtentwicklung

Stadtentwicklung Zürich, Präsidialdepartement, Zürich, 2006, Mitwirkungs- und Beteiligungsprozesse, 22 Fallbeispiele

Fall.Lindenplatz (02439) Faktenblatt Tiefbauamt Zürich

Neugestaltung mittleres Limmatquai, Projektwettbewerb, Bericht des Preisgerichtes, Mai 2003, Tiefbau- und Entsorgungsdepartement, Zürich.

Tiefbauamt Zürich, 2007, Stadträume 2010 – Umsetzung der Strategie für die Gestaltung von Zürichs öffentlichem Raum, Genehmigt von der Delegation für stadträumliche Fragen am 02.11.2007

Legal

Constitution fédérale de la Confédération suisse du 18 avril 1999

Gesetz über die Raumplanung und das öffentliche Baurecht – 700.1 (Planungs- und Baugesetz) Kanton Zürich, §7.1

Loi fédérale sur l'aménagement du territoire du 22 juin 1979 (LAT)

Websites

[http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josef_Estermann_\(Politiker\)](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josef_Estermann_(Politiker))

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22744728>

<http://www.srf.ch/news/regional/zuerich-schaffhausen/zueri-wie-neu-mit-app-zu-einer-schoeneren-stadt>

<http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/2000watt>

http://www.stadtzuerich.ch/content/hbd/de/index/ueber_das_departement/medien/medienmitteilungen/2011/september/110914a.html

<http://www.stadtlabor.ch/einen-konstruktiven-dialog-erreicht/#more-2027>

Newspaper articles

Der neue Lindenplatz, "Altstetten hat wieder eine schöne Stube", Newspaper article extracts of 9.12.2010, Zürich West

Einen konstruktiven Dialog erreicht, NZZ 1.4.1999

Other

La Charte d'Aalborg, 1994

Antonio Da Cunha, MAS urbanisme durable, Module 1, Block 1 on 20.09.2011.

Auszug aus dem Protokoll des Stadtrates von Zürich 1424/26.10.2005, 26.10.2005. Schriftliche Anfrage von Muriel Herzig und Mario Mariani betreffend Lindenplatz, 13. Juli 2005, GR Nr. 2005/293.

8. Annexes

Interview Trond Maag – 23.06.2013

1) Wie wichtig ist lokale Identität für Dich?

Lokale Identität zeigt mir sehr viel über einen Ort und die anwesenden Leute. Sie hilft nicht nur, einen Ort wiederzuerkennen, was auf einem Spaziergang durch die Stadt sehr nützlich ist, sondern zeigt auch die Vielfalt einer Stadt. So erkennt man das, was eine Stadt ausmacht, gerade auch in den Quartieren.

Lokale Identität hat für mich zunächst etwas mit Orientierung zu tun. Beispielsweise erkenne ich, ob ich an einem Ort erwünscht oder lediglich geduldet bin, ob es sich um einen Ort handelt, der Fremde und Besucher willkommen heisst, ob der Ort stolz auf 'seine' Architektur, Geschichte, Menschen, Atmosphäre, Eleganz, Akustik etc. ist, und wie er diese Qualitäten präsentiert. Lokale Identität sagt auch darüber etwas aus, wie gut sich Personen mit einem Ort identifizieren können. Fühlen sich die Bewohner daheim? Möchten sie an einem bestimmten Ort für längere Zeit leben oder sogar alt werden? Haben sie so etwas wie eine persönliche Beziehung zum Ort entwickelt?

Eine ausgeprägte lokale Identität ist für mich eine Voraussetzung dafür, dass Stadtbewohner überhaupt zu einem Ort stehen können. Im Sinne von dass sie einen Ort ernst nehmen und ihn als etwas wahrnehmen, das bestimmte Qualitäten hat, zu denen man Sorge tragen sollte. Eine solche Haltung kommt letztlich der ganzen Stadt – und nicht nur dem einzelnen Ort oder Quartier – zugute.

2) Denkst Du, dass die Bevölkerung (lokale Akteure) bei der Mitwirkung in der Gestaltung von öffentlichen Räumen identitätsstiftende Elemente beitragen können?

Die Mitwirkung von lokalen Akteuren bei der Gestaltung von öffentlichen Räumen ist für mich ein zweischneidiges Schwert. Damit Partizipation gelingt, muss sämtlichen Protagonisten eine Stimme gegeben werden, alle Protagonisten müssen gehört und ernst genommen werden. Es reicht nicht, wenn man lediglich die Meinung über ein bestimmtes Vorhaben abholt, beispielsweise über das zu verbauende Holz für die Aussenraummöblierung. Städtische Planungsprozesse dauern in aller Regel lange, so dass lokale Akteure nur beschränkt mitwirken können, zum Beispiel als Quartiersverein organisiert. Zudem muss für Partizipation eine gemeinsame Sprache zwischen den unterschiedlichen Protagonisten gefunden werden. Die Bevölkerung spricht kein Planer-Schweizerdeutsch. Von daher wird Partizipation aus Sicht der Planer oft als 'unbequemer' Prozess empfunden und aus Sicht der lokalen Akteure ist Partizipation oft auch mit Enttäuschung verbunden. Ist man sich dessen aber bewusst, kann die Bevölkerung für bestimmte Fragestellungen sicherlich sinnvoll miteinbezogen werden, siehe auch Frage 3.

Ich sehe noch weitere Herausforderungen im Zusammenhang mit Partizipation. Die europäische Stadt von heute verändert sich so rasant (Stichworte Abindustrialisierung und Gentrifizierung), dass man sich einerseits die Frage stellen muss, was überhaupt noch identitätsstiftend ist, wenn innerhalb weniger Jahre ganze Bevölkerungsschichten aussortiert werden. Andererseits mündet der gegenwärtige städtische Prozess häufig in einem Planungsvorhaben, wie beispielsweise die gestalterische Aufwertung eines Platzes oder einer Strasse unter Mitwirkung der Bevölkerung. Im schlimmsten Fall ist es also die Lokalbevölkerung selbst, die an ihrem eigenen Ast sägt. Partizipation ist in diesem Fall aus Sicht der Bevölkerung sogar kontraproduktiv.

Von daher denke ich, dass es in vielen Fällen besser ist, die Leute 'unbewusst' zum Mitmachen und Mitdenken zu motivieren. Dazu muss die Stadt aber gewisse Freiräume und Nischen anbieten, welche die Menschen, wenn einmal vorhanden, zu schätzen lernen. Diese vermeintlich planlosen und unkontrollierbaren Zwischenräume fordern von der Planung einiges ab. Es gilt einen Zustand von Spontaneität und Überraschung auszuhalten, welcher

der herkömmlichen Planung eigentlich fremd ist. Urban Gardening ist für mich ein schönes Beispiel einer 'stillen' Partizipation. Die Planung gibt einen Raster vor, in Beton gegossene Massnahmen und gesetzliche Regelungen, und innerhalb dieses Rasters findet sozusagen die Entwicklung identitätsstiftender Elemente statt.

3) Denkst Du das trägt zur sozialen Nachhaltigkeit bei?

Nur indirekt. Soziale Nachhaltigkeit bedeutet für mich zunächst einmal soziale Gerechtigkeit verpackt in einer medial chicen Worthülse. Gerechtigkeit ist hauptsächlich eine Frage der globalen Player, der politischen Machtverhältnisse, der übergeordneten Interessen und letztlich unserer Lebensweise. Wenn jemand den Job verliert, Opfer eines Bürgerkriegs wird, oder aufgrund der Mietpreiserhöhung aussortiert wird, dann zieht er/sie weiter, egal wie toll der Ort ist. Die übergeordneten, sozio-ökonomischen Prozesse übersteuern also jegliche Bemühungen und Anstrengungen eines Stadtplanungsamts. Diese Tatsache ist in der Schweiz womöglich nicht besonders präsent, aber in anderen Teilen dieser Welt wird offensichtlich, weshalb soziale Gerechtigkeit letztlich eine Idealvorstellung ist.

Das heisst aber nicht, dass Partizipation nichts mit sozialer Gerechtigkeit zu tun hat. Ich denke, dass Mitmachen vor allem ein Lernprozess ist, um Orte als soziale Prozesse zu begreifen, die stets im Wandel sind. Orte, aber auch ganze Städte, sind letztlich so etwas wie Arenen, wo die Protagonisten manchmal miteinander zusammenarbeiten und sich manchmal gegenseitig konkurrieren. Die Bevölkerung, jeder einzelne, hat dabei seinen Auftritt und nimmt am städtischen Prozess im Rahmen seiner Präsenz, Möglichkeiten, Verantwortung und Kompetenzen Teil. Je bewusster wir teilnehmen, umso mehr können wir auch Probleme und Missstände benennen und Raum aktiv 'gestalten'. Diese Form der Gestaltung mündet also nicht notwendigerweise in bauliche Massnahmen. Die öffentliche Wahrnehmung eines Orts können wir bereits mit unserer Anwesenheit beeinflussen oder wenn wir über den Ort in den Medien berichten. Partizipation, der Beitrag jedes einzelnen, bildet also so etwas wie der soziale Kit im städtischen Prozess. Und dieser Kit ist sicherlich ein guter Nährboden für soziale Nachhaltigkeit.

4) Ist es in Deiner Sicht wichtig die lokalen Akteure in detaillierte Gestaltungsfragen wie zum Beispiel die Gestaltung von einzelnen Elementen im öffentlichen Raum wie Mobiliar (Bänke, Lampen, Brunnen, Kunst Objekte, usw.) einzubeziehen?

Ja, damit sich die Bevölkerung ihrer Verantwortung und Möglichkeiten für die Gestaltung von Stadt bewusst werden, vgl. vorherige Frage. Kindern und anderen Personen kann man so auch die Freude an der Stadt geben – oder die Angst vor der Stadt nehmen. Ich denke, dass ist auch angesichts der zunehmenden Verstädterung und der nach wie vor geltenden Maxime vom Haus im Grünen kein zu unterschätzender Aspekt, dass zukünftig viel mehr 'StadtDenker/innen' erforderlich sind und ausgebildet werden müssen.

Leute einbeziehen und sensibilisieren kann auch zu mehr Unzufriedenheit führen, weil die Probleme und die (oft begrenzten) Möglichkeiten, diese zu beheben, benannt werden müssen. Der Einbezug von lokalen Akteuren ist daher zunächst ein Commitment der Stadt, dass man die Bevölkerung ernst nimmt und ihnen eine Chance zum Mitreden und Mitbestimmen gibt. Und wer ist nicht ein bisschen stolz auf seinen persönlichen, kleinen Beitrag zur Gestaltung des öffentlichen Raums?

5) Findest Du es wichtig, dass die lokalen Akteure mehr Gestaltungsspielraum in der Gestaltung von Quartierplätzen bekommen als in der von öffentlichen Plätze von regionaler Bedeutung? Wenn Ja, oder Nein, warum?

Nein, ich finde es ist wesentlich, dass Partizipation überhaupt als ernst zu nehmendes Planungswerkzeug verstanden wird, welches unter bestimmten Bedingungen eingesetzt werden kann. Ob die Bevölkerung an der Gestaltung des Bürkliplatzes oder des Bullingerplatzes mitwirkt, ist wahrscheinlich nicht so wichtig. Lokale Identität kann ja nicht auf Bestellung von der Lokalbevölkerung bezogen werden und ist auch nicht nur eine Frage gebauter Massnahmen. Es geht viel mehr darum, wie überraschend, vielfältig, listig und schlau die Bevölkerung die vorhandenen 'Möglichkeitsräume' nutzt. Dazu muss die Stadtplanung die Grundlagen bereitstellen.

1) Denkst Du, dass Mitwirkung in der Gestaltung von öffentlichen Räumen zur sozialen Nachhaltigkeit beiträgt? Im Sinne, dass die Bevölkerung (lokale Akteure) bei der Mitwirkung identitätsstiftende Elemente beitragen kann?

Ja, auf jeden Fall. Die Identität eines öffentlichen Raumes ist stark durch die Nutzenden geprägt, d.h. dieses Wissen sollte in die Planung einfließen. Zunächst muss das formalrechtliche Verfahren mit seinen Prozessphasen geklärt sein. Mit diesen Verfahren wird v.a. der sog. funktionalen Logik Rechnung getragen (Hardware): physische bzw. räumliche Aspekte, Art, Inhalt und Funktion des Planungsprojekts, Eingriffstiefe und Wirkung im öffentlichen Raum sowie objektive Versorgungs-, Aufenthalts- und Lebensqualitäten. Mitwirkung bildet eine Brücke, damit die sog. emotionale Logik in die Planung einfließt (Software): Interessen von Akteuren, Nutzenden und Betroffenen, subjektive Werthaltungen und Überzeugungen sowie materielle und soziale Bedürfnisse (siehe auch Quartier-Branding).

2) Ist es in Deiner Sicht wichtig die lokalen Akteure in detaillierte Gestaltungsfragen wie zum Beispiel die Gestaltung von einzelnen Elementen im öffentlichen Raum wie Mobiliar (Bänke, Lampen, Brunnen, Kunst Objekte, usw.) einzubeziehen? Wäre mehr Spielraum in diesem Sinn eigentlich möglich?

Ich denke schon, sofern die technischen Rahmenbedingungen nicht zu eng sind. Es gibt natürlich öffentliche Räume, die stark durch technisch vorgegebene Nutzungen geprägt sind (z.B. Tram). Dann dürfte der Handlungsspielraum gering sein. Beim Lindenplatz ist zum Beispiel ein breites Mitwirkungsverfahren durchgeführt worden, weil dort die Nutzung recht offen war (Gewerbe, Markt, Quartierleute, Kinder, etc.). Wenn es um einzelne Elemente geht, wäre es sicher gut, wenn eine Auswahl/Beispiele möglicher Möbilierungen gezeigt werden können. Gut sind immer Beispiele aus anderen Quartieren, Städten, Ländern, etc.

3) Findest Du es wichtig, dass die lokalen Akteure mehr Gestaltungsspielraum in der Gestaltung von Quartierplätzen bekommen als in der von öffentlichen Plätze von regionaler Bedeutung? Wenn Ja, oder Nein, warum?

Im Quartier wohnende Menschen haben eine oftmals sehr lange Beziehung zu Quartierplätzen. Diese Identität muss von der Verwaltung erfasst werden. Das geht nur über Mitwirkung. Die Verwaltung sollte gut darauf achten, wie ein Quartierplatz über die Jahre und Jahrzehnte von den Anwohnern genutzt worden ist. Manchmal wird ein Platz so genutzt, wie von der Planung eigentlich nicht vorgesehen. Gerade Kinder sind in dieser Hinsicht sehr kreativ. Bei Plätzen regionaler Bedeutung ist das weniger der Fall.

4) Wie wird sich, in Deiner Sicht, die Mitwirkungsverfahren in der Gestaltung von öffentlichen Räumen in Zürich in der Zukunft entwickeln werden? Wird co-Design oder Mitgestaltung hier je möglich sein?

Schwierig zu sagen, aber sicher wünschenswert. Ich glaube schon, dass das möglich ist, insbesondere bei Plätzen und Quartierstrassen, welche für die Anwohner Heimat, eine Identität sind. Aber wie gesagt, es muss wohl ein Mittelweg gefunden werden, zwischen gestadtischen Design-Vorgaben und individuellen Quartierwünschen. Nur schon aus Kostengründen kann die Stadt nicht jeden öffentlichen Platz individuell gestalten. Hilfreich für die Betroffenen ist eine Auswahl möglicher Gestaltungsvarianten.

