Unravelling Spaces of Representation through Insurgent Planning Actions

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Building on Henri Lefebvre's triad of dialectically interconnected dimensions of space, the aim of the paper is to discuss insurgent planning actions as 'spatial practices', which make planning supersede the mere 'representation of space' and be focused on the production of 'spaces of representation'. It is here proposed that insurgent planning practices not only are counter–hegemonic (disrupting the status quo), transgressive (through place and time) and imaginative (promoting a different reality as feasible), but also spatial. Drawing on a case study of an urban community in San José, Costa Rica, it is argued that planning can also constitute an everlasting collective insurgent action that endures local realities, which means that people do produce spaces within the crannies—and even in spite—of official planning processes. Eventually, spatial insurgent planning actions increasingly unravel spaces of representation.

Keywords: Insurgent planning actions, Space, Spaces of representation, Spatial insurgent practices

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Introduction

'WE MUST BUILD ON A CLEAR SITE!'
(Le Corbusier 1971 [1924]: 220, capitals in the original)

Planning, in broad terms, has two primary dimensions. On the one hand, there is its 'technocratic–scientific' feature, which deals with all the requirements (information availability, time frames, technical resources, etc.) that constitute the 'rational programming of planning'. On the other hand, there is its 'political' facet whose cornerstone is the ethical dilemma of legitimizing means to ends, within the convoluted process of decision–making (Mäntysalo 2005: 31, Forester 1993: 9).

Planning, too, has to do with space and its definition has, indeed, bearings on how planning is theorised and exercised. Space, by the same token, is conceived responding to the dominant dimension of planning. Thus, space may, from a general standpoint, be regarded as either 'absolute' (more technocratic–scientific like) or 'relational' (more political like). From 1950 onwards an absolute spatiality—largely influenced by the Euclidean and Newtonian thought—resounded in much of the planning ideas and praxis (Graham & Healey 1999), in such a profound way, that to have considered another planning model—which would have implied a different spatial approach—could have meant the abandonment of planning as a whole (Friedmann 1993: 482, Davoudi & Strange 2009: 13). This physical design approach in master planning, moreover, flourished mostly in Europe and North America and was soon imported to other contexts due to its alleged 'universality'.

This paper is aimed at contributing to the discussion of how, in countries of the global South, such planning conception and action have had a fairly different impact and how its aftermaths have been challenged. To that end, Henri Lefebvre's 'trialetics' of spatiality is revisited to advocate that planning can be centred around the 'spaces of representation' by means of insurgent planning actions. This implies, amid other things, that planners would have to stop seeing space as empty and ready to be modelled—as the introductory note by Le Corbusier explicitly suggests—in accordance with a centralized state or market rationality.

The paper begins with the elaboration on a more pragmatic view on space (underscoring the nexus between space and politics) and its pertinence to planning; to, next, examine Lefebvre's spatial 'trialectics' as 'dwelling as the production of space' (Stanek 2011: 128). Afterwards, some of the planning traditions—with a focus on their spatiality—that were influenced by the modernist paradigm are briefly reviewed[2]. Along with that, 'insurgent planning actions' (Miraftab 2009) and the 'spaces of insurgent citizenship' (Holston 1999) are introduced to explore the changeover from the 'representation of space' to the 'spaces of representation' in planning. Finally, the case of Paso Ancho, an urban community located in San José, Costa Rica, is presented as an 'insurgent historiography' (Sandercock, 1998a), wherefrom some lessons are drawn to encourage the permanent enhancement of planning theory and practice.

Beyond 'fixed' space and 'dwelling as the production of space'

The conceptualisation of space, as previously mentioned, responds to the prevailing dimension of planning, and this, in turn, is bound to a question of either ambiguity or uncertainty.

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[2] This basically includes the 'rational–comprehensive' planning theory and the 'procedural planning' mode, given that they have shaped much of the professionalised planning thought in the global South and hence the constitution of cities and regions.

When planning is understood and exercised predominantly as a scientific task, planners face problems of uncertainty, because there is not, perhaps, enough or adequate information (i.e., they seek evidence). When issues of legitimacy arise together with divergences between values and interests, planning becomes more political and planners are in need of practical judgment to deal with ambiguity (i.e., they look for justification) (Forester 1993: 88ff.). Put another way, uncertainty is concerned with the 'content' derived from the planning method, while ambiguity reacts to questions of the 'context' of the planning method (Mäntysalo 2005: 31).

The spatiality of planning is thus affected by both dimensions of planning and their concomitant dilemmas—ambiguity and uncertainty—and, ideally, encompasses the content as well as the context of the planning method. In practice, though, planners are not likely to envision space in such a way that recognizes its capacity to be, simultaneously and variously, 'abstract' and 'concrete'. As Lukasz Stanek (2011: 133) explains: 'space appears to be a general means, medium, and milieu of all social practices, and yet it allows accounting for their specificity within the society as a whole'. Rather, since the times of the reformist ideas (from Ebenezer Howard's *Garden City* to Le Corbusier's *La Ville Radieuse*) and the upsurge of Patrick Gedde's aphorism 'survey before plan', space has been mainly seen as neutral and static, as a blank canvas containing human activity (Hubbard *et al.* 2004). This Cartesian notion of space has reduced issues of ambiguity to uncertainty and the political dimension of both space and planning has been, consequently, suppressed. A naïve assumption that the complexity of economic, cultural, social—let alone political and spatial—processes could be controlled solely through a scientific planning method, caused this clampdown of the 'political' in space and planning.

For Henri Lefebvre (1976 [1970]: 30), such mode of planning praxis reveals that there is not an epistemology of planning, for it places the emphasis on the 'pure' physical form and not on the people. Moreover, contends Lefebvre, inhabitants shall likely have to adapt their lifestyles to the proposed spatial scheme, since they do not actively take part of the planning process. To overcome this narrow sense of planning and space, the 'political' in them has to be stressed. The political dimension of planning comes to the fore whenever ambiguity arises and is not occluded by the question of uncertainty. Planners thereby must accept, as inevitable, that social and political judgements are inherently part of decision–making (Forester 1993: 9). Likewise, there is a need to go beyond 'fixed' space, which for planning purposes means delving into the dynamic relationship between space and politics.

Space and politics: Towards a more pragmatic spatiality of planning

Space has to be reinterpreted by planners in a way that, as proposed by Mustafa Dikeç (2011), is not only a sensible manifestation of things; i.e., concrete space. In addition, space ought to be thought as the product of a series of relations between objects and events. Also, asserts Dikeç, space is a 'domain of experience' combinig space as a sensible manifestation of things and as a system of relations. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, space is to be understood as a 'mode of political thinking', that is to say: 'thinking concepts in our experience of the world spatially…a way of engaging with the world, a way of making worlds spatially through and in action' (Dikeç 2011). For this broader view of space to fit into the planning discourse and action, a 'critical analysis' is required along with what Henri Lefebvre refers to as 'the science of space', which would have to be twofold:

"The science of space…must be asserted at several levels. It can be viewed as a science of formal space, that is to say, close to mathematics; a science which employs such concepts as construction density, network analysis, critical path analysis and program evaluation and review techniques. The science, however, cannot only be situated at this level; it cannot remain formal. Critical analysis defines how and according to what strategy a given space has been

produced. Finally, there is the study and science of the contents of a given space, or in other words, the people using this space, people who perhaps are opposed to the physical form or purpose of the space" (Lefebvre 1976 [1970]: 31).

The 'science of space' may well help to harmonize the dual condition of planning, as long as it does not restrict itself to the 'formalities of space' and opens up to the complexities of the (social) production of space, where 'an indefinite multitude of spaces, each one piled upon, or perhaps contained within, the next: geographical, demographic, sociological, political, commercial, national, continental, global…nature's (physical) space, the space of (energy) flows, and so on' (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 8) are constantly being produced and shaped. Overall, both the construction and modelling of space are the resulting interaction of natural and historical elements, a social process that criss–crosses politics and ideologies (Lefebvre 1976 [1970]: 31), which accordingly confers political and strategic character to space.

However, it must be clarified that space is not political in just one unambiguous way. Rationalities and logics of action underpinning systems of governance and domination can superimpose and establish—for instance through the 'clean sweep' philosophy of planning (Ravetz 1980: 23)—a particular, or several, spatial orders (Dikeç 2012: 675). These spatial orders reflect the dynamic linkage between rationality and power, which in planning means the argumentations supporting the 'right' kind of knowledge to reach/enforce decisions. The issue is that power, as assessed by Michel Foucault (1984, 1991), is not necessarily an 'outer distortion'. It is, conversely, very much entrenched in the mechanisms of bureaucratization and commodification—both to which space is subjected to—of each society; to the point that power prominently determines much of the cultural and social framework that people utilise to define their societal roles and identities—what Pierre Bourdieu (1995 [1984]: 15) calls the constituent of the '*habitus*'.

That being so, space operates as an integrative lattice that might as well be at the service of politically and economically dominant groups (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 9). Yet, the hegemony over the configuration of space can be actually challenged, contested and, ultimately, reconfigured, according to Saul Newman (2011: 345), considering the question of space as suitable for radical politics and placing the notion of political space around the project of autonomy. As suggested here, this can be done in the extent that planning focuses on the 'spaces of representation' and not on the mere 'representation of space'—which for Lefebvre (1991 [1974]: 45) are a mixture of knowledge and ideology—and that planners become 'thinkers of dwelling' paying closer attention to the 'spatial practices' that join together 'daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, "private" life and leisure)' (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 38).

Dwelling as the production of space
Within his theory of the production of space, Henri Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) sustains that both social time and social space are integrative part of social practice. They are thus social products. As such, far from being universal they must be comprehend in the context of each society, that is, every society and every mode of production constructs a space of its own. Therefore, 'space is a fourth and determining realm of social relations—one in which the production exchange and accumulation of wealth and surplus value take place' (Shields 2004: 211).

Lefebvre's 'triple dialectic' consists of perceived, conceived and lived space, which can be reformulated as: spatial practices, representation of space and the spaces of representation (Stanek 2011: 128). For Rob Shields (1996: 161, italics in the original) the spatial practices are, 'with all its contradictions of everyday life, space perceived', representation of space are 'discourses *on* space' that form space conceived and

spaces of representation 'might be best thought of as the discourse *of* space…this is space *as it might be,* fully lived space'.

The 'representation of space' comprises the abstract theories and philosophies of sciences such as planning. In the representation of space conceptual spatial depictions, interconnected with product relations, express the logic and form of knowledge and ideology, in order to impose a particular (spatial) order (Shields 1996: 163–164). To that end, planners, as technocratic subdividers and social engineers, 'identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived' (Lefebvre (1991 [1974]: 38). On the other hand, the 'spaces of representation' are defined by the practice of appropriation aimed at seeking change and taking over space. They, too, 'receive meaning from symbolic objects, attendant imaginary, and mythic narratives' that enable the individual, as a result, to relate to the community due to a historical and an experiential tie (Stanek 2011: 131). These ties are created given that 'space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols…overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects' (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 39, italics in the original).

The spatial practices, moreover, allude to the creation of a specific spatialization and, what is more, 'the ability and freedom to do so is the prime index of quality of social life' (Shields 1996: 162). In other words, the spatial practices are the 'space of dwelling' that tells the mental space of planning from the actual lived space of people (Stanek 2011: 131), the specific places and spatial 'ensembles' that respond appropriately to the social formation (Shields 1996: 162). All in all, it is by freely dwelling, that space is actually produced in such a fashion that lived space may overcome conceived space—or leastways impact profoundly its conception.

As it is sustained in this paper, spatial practices of an insurgent nature may facilitate the transition from 'conceived' to 'lived' spaces. This signifies that space, for planning purposes, is not a container of society (people and things *in* space) and that patterns of social action and embodied routines are to be placed at the core of debate and action. In the long run, spaces of representation can be fostered, those 'popular' (re)appropriations from the space 'dominated' by hegemonic forces of either the state or the capital and that, in due course, become 'the site of possible emergent spatial revolutions' (Shields 1996: 165).

From the shortcomings of 'artificial' ambitions to transformative insurgent actions

"Planners…construct a shared social reality that creates illusions and fantasies of clarity and completeness that are readily acceptable, while somehow at the same time blindly overlooking, or at least not challenging, what is lacking and contradicting, so as to make life appear more readily predictable and stable" (Gunder 2004: 302).

Michael Gunder's insight captures much of the classical criticism to the 'rational–comprehensive' planning paradigm, in which the 'public interest'—the 'shared social reality'—is always confined to planning expertise. In consequence, specific cultural habits, social patterns and emotional as well as aesthetic motivations of people are reduced to statistical samples (grouped by age, gender, needs, consumption choices, mode of transportation, etc.) that planners use to divide space functionally: work, leisure, shopping, travel and so on. In addition, their position of mastery prevents planners from admitting their own flaws and incorporating the social knowledge, which entails elements of contingency, unpredictability and antagonism that cannot be scientifically planned (Newman 2011: 352)—they are hence simply averted.

The postulation that space and people are readily prone to adapt to the prescriptions of the plan characterises this planning tradition and stems from the premises of the *Congrès International d'Architecture*

Moderne (CIAM), proclaiming that social problems in cities could be not only reversed but also avoided, by creating a 'perfect' geometrical form and establishing limits of population and area. This 'flat' view of space was assessed by Henri Lefebvre (1991 [1974]: 301–4) as the symptomatic tendency of the Modern Movement to, simultaneously, homogenize and fragment space (Stanek 2011: 154; Shields 1996: 176). This disjoint space is only held together, visually and technologically, by the fictitious coherence of the planning scheme, the foreseen artificial ambition of the planner intended to 'fix' the social practices.

In both North America and Europe, conceiving space as a limited entity that may be physically and perceptually delimited underlined much of the orthodoxies of the post–war planning systems, specifically the aim of restricting and containing urban growth (Hall *et al.* 1973, Ward 2004). In particular, procedural planning theory (overwhelmingly concerned with the means, rather than the ends, of planning) and its positivistic comprehension of space was subject of two major waves of criticisms (Davoudi & Strange 2009: 24). According to Nigel Taylor (1998), there was, on the one hand, a call for planners to better understand cities and how they function (the substantive content of planning). On the other hand, planners were accused of not grasping well the implications 'on the ground' of their decisions (the very process of planning).

More concretely, Jane Jacobs (1992 [1961]) points out the incapacity of planners to regard cities as bundles of interacting and interdependent processes intermeshed in complex ways. Planners instead of operating deductively should go from the particulars to the generals 'to seek for "unaverage" clues involving very small quantities, which reveal the way larger and more "average" quantities are operating' (Jacobs 1992 [1961]: 440). Planners thus supersede their view of cities as simple zones in a map. Christopher Alexander (1965), similarly, demonstrates how the spatial arrangements of cities following either the City Garden or the CIAM principles, create hierarchical structures: the 'trees'; whereas organically and historically consolidated cities have 'semi–lattice' configurations, which means that areas and functions overlap and connect producing rich dynamics by not submitting to a categorised (superimposed) order (Taylor 1998: 97–98).

The failure of technical rationality applied to planning was reflected, by and large, in its incapacity to solve, for once and for all, the social problems caused by the crises of industrial capitalism. In cities of the global South, the fact that planners and architects were not capable of 'reading' the multiplicity—i.e., of finding the 'form'—of societies, brought to the surface the schism of the social as the 'Achilles heel' of modernist planning. As James Holston (1999: 156) explains:

At least in its European and Latin American versions, modernism forged what we could call this imaginary of planning by developing its revolutionary buildings types and planning conventions as instruments of social change and by conceiving of change in terms of the imagined future embodied in the narratives of its master plans.

A new inventiveness of the future is necessary to overcome this adamant attempt to rationally enforce a (spatial) order capable of dissolving any incongruence between the imagined (by planners) and the existing social realities. Based on a fifteen–year ethnographic work in the Brazilian *favelas*, Holston contends that these informal settlements are sources wherefrom new visions may spring and regard them as 'spaces of insurgent citizenship' reacting to 'modernist spaces that physically dominate so many cities today' (Holston 1999: 157). These sites of insurgence can be deemed as 'spaces of representation', where insurgent spatial practices unfold prompting an alternative to the discourses *on* space institutionalized and executed by planners. Henri Lefebvre considered slums, *barrios* and *favelas* all to be examples of localised 'reappropriations' and thus of 'spaces of representation' acting in a more autonomous realm and displacing the governing spatialization imposed from above (Shields 1996: 164).

These 'representational sites of insurgence', associated with immigrant networks, the urban poor, ethnic and gender minorities, and the like, introduce a possibility to challenge and alter pre–established spatial and historical orders through 'insurgent performances' (Holston 2009: 250), which includes self–construction and self–steering alternative identities and practices (Holston 1999). In other words, insurgency is a key factor to realise a transition from conceived (representation of space) to lived (spaces of representation) space as a fundamental underpinning of planning.

It can, too, be alleged that the new mode of spatial praxis, needed to make planning more receptive to other imaginaries of the future, are insurgent planning actions, since they, within their historical convolution of authority and structural exclusion, aspire to either regain or open up spaces of collective action to achieve liberation (Miraftab 2009: 43). Therefore, insurgent planning actions are not only counter–hegemonic (disrupting the status quo), transgressive (through place and time) and imaginative (promoting a different reality as feasible) (*Ibid*: 33), but also and quite central: they are spatial. In short, insurgent planning actions are 'spatial practices' that react to 'representation of space' imposed by traditional planning practitioners and, in so doing, unravel 'spaces of representation'.

Unravelling spaces of representation

Leonie Sandercock (1998a) observes how historical narratives of planning tend to present it as a totalizing force that has not—as though it could not have—been contested. Also, sustains the author, there is a lot to gain for planners, if closer attention is paid to grass–root insurgent citizenship. In the particular case of the global South, there seems to be enough evidence denoting that planning is not as 'totalizing' as history states (see, e.g., Holston 1999, 2008, 2009, Friedmann 2002, Miraftab 2009, Beard 2002). Furthermore, 'emerging struggles for citizenship in the global South…offer an historicized view indispensable to counter–hegemonic planning practices' (Miraftab 2009: 33).

Planning in the global South: From rational ambition to urban chaos

This 'totalizing' assessment about planning and its spatial outcomes have not been the exception in Costa Rica. Of a marked procedural and scientific–technical tradition, planning in Costa Rica is also very statutory. Most of the efforts have been directed towards land use regulation accompanied by normative pertaining, among other topics, construction (buildings retreats, maximum heights, etc.), property segregation and urban renewal. Space thus has been treated as a neutral container of human activity, being the ultimate goals (trying) to control urban growth and prevent environmental degradation.

In order to achieve these objectives, an 'indicative–regulator' planning mode—close to the 'rational–comprehensive' planning theory—was used to put together a nationwide urban development plan: *El Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Urbano* (PNDU). This plan gave rise to a regional master plan called *Plan GAM 83*, in which general guidelines were settled to orientate urban growth within the largest urban agglomeration in Costa Rica, the *Gran Área Metropolitana* (GAM). Moreover, the *Plan GAM 83* was to be complemented by local plans that each municipality was supposed to elaborate during the nineteen–eighties[3] (Retana 2000: 98–99). This mode of planning attempted to do a 'one–to–one' translation of the 'conceived' (by planners) to the actual 'lived' (by people) space and, accordingly, impinge a form upon society.

The GAM experienced, during the second of the half of the nineteen–eighties, an expanding boom caused by an ambitious state–driven social housing project. To carry out this enterprise a 'state of exception' was created not to follow the main guidelines established in the *Plan GAM 83* (Retana & Sura 1998).

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[3] Even today this remains to be a pending obligation for some of the local governments.

As a result, important sectors (i.e., environmentally protected, public land reserves, etc.) near the 'ring of maximum urban expansion' were surpassed and existing residential areas saw their public infrastructure and facilities promptly collapsed. The 'rational' vision of the *Plan GAM 83* was hence twisted and its weaknesses exposed, when (spatial) planning objectives were faced with political (gain electoral support) and economic (speculation of the land market) interests (Retana 2000). All in all, the state—by far the most powerful planning agent—through its experts dictated (and still continues to determine) much of the fate of the urban communities within the GAM, though the local plans, as stated in the National Law of Urban Planning, have citizen participation as a requisite. However, participation tends to be, for the most part, tokenistic. Thus, the artificial spatial ambitions of the *Plan GAM 83* barely saw the light and an apparent urban chaos progressively emerged favouring a production of space in accordance with the rationality of both the state and the market.

Paso Ancho: Reimagining insurgently the future

Paso Ancho comprises ca. thirty–five barrios within the boundaries of the San Sebastián district located in the central canton of San José. These communities[4], known as *Barrios del Sur*, were caught up between the uncontrolled growth of the GAM and the 'perceived' spatial planning premises—i.e., the discourses *on* space—of the *Plan GAM 83*. Therefore, the foreseen residential areas of the GAM, that included Paso Ancho, could not be 'rationally' consolidated, in spite of the effort of the *Plan GAM 83* to functionalise city space. Nor were there many efforts to revert the uncontrolled urbanization on the outskirts of the GAM.

This urban 'inertia' has, nonetheless, started to be contested since a couple of years. Somewhat unexpectedly a coalition of citizen groups, under the umbrella of the *Comité Patriótico* (patriotic committee) of Paso Ancho, have carried out a series of actions to foster, cooperatively and autonomously, a local development that elicits desires, needs and views of the people, to physically and socially transform their living environment. This committee was organized in the frame of a larger neighbourhood–level citizen network that was part of the movement against the endorsement of the United States–Dominican Republic–Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). After a referendum was held in 2007 to decide on the issue, the members of the committee, in a fairly wide change of scope for their actions, advanced a local agenda involving aspects that ranged from a non–violence crusade to the raising of awareness about the quality of public infrastructure and provision of public services.

By canvassing, distributing informative leaflets, meeting regularly and the like, a campaign was organized to stress the risk of crossing a freeway that, for quite a while, had divided some of the barrios. This led to a demonstration claiming a pedestrian bridge (Rayner 2008). Despite the fact that the bridge was not immediately built, the mobilization engaged a considerable amount of people who were exercising another kind of citizenry characterised by a civil disobedience to demand—rather than just ask—higher structures of the state to provide a solution (Alvarenga 2005, Rayner 2008).

These actions, likewise, exhibit how differences of opinions and interests in communities, often fraught with antagonism and conflict, can be addressed and surpassed. Residents of Paso Ancho, arguably, experienced a radical change in their minds because 'space and time of the "concrete"' helped to prioritise the reality of the community as a major collective interest and it became therefore the primordial political sphere of action (Rayner 2008: 81).

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[4] Community is to be understood as a group or conjunction of groups organized around jointly set interests, rather than as administrative units geographically fixed.

The actions conducted by the Paso Ancho inhabitants can be deemed as insurgent planning actions, for they were meant to 'disrupt domineering relationships of oppressors to the oppressed, and destabilize such status quo through consciousness of the past and imagination of an alternative future' (Miraftab 2009: 44). An imagination of a different future as well as rescuing the rich past of the community has continued to take place with the foundation of the *Escuela Popular Pablo Presbere*, a sort of 'open social forum' where ideas, comments, proposals, worries, etc. can be freely expressed with the aim of forging an endogenous identity. With the creation of this self–steered deliberative space, formal (run normally by the state or NGOs) and substantial (run by people themselves) forms of inclusion were separated, which, according to Leonie Sandercock (1998b), underpins contemporary practices of insurgent citizenship.

More recently, the spatiality of the insurgent planning actions in Paso Ancho has taken a more concrete form: sidewalks have been jointly restored/constructed and vandalised walls repaired. Also, the so–called *Parque de los Héroes* (park of the heroes), an abandoned public space, has been cleaned and reopened to the public with the organisation of a cultural festival. The spatial imagination of the people in Paso Ancho has increasingly become active, despite any spatial artificial vision contained in the *Plan GAM 83* and, what is more, as a reaction to the incapacity of the local government to cope with the unrestrained urban growth and to promote ample citizen participation.This, too, exemplifies how Lefebvre's spatial 'trialectics' functions in practice, since the interrelation between the representation of space (*Plan GAM 83*), the spatial practices (the insurgent planning actions of the Paso Ancho citizens) and the spaces of representation (the gradual, active and autonomous reappropriation of space) have been rearranged to remake space. After all, the three dimensions of space 'can be latent, ideological or expressed in practice in a historical spatialisation, and may either reinforce or contradict each other in any given site or moment' (Shields 1996: 161). To summarise: transformative insurgent spatial actions have begun to unravel a different reality as attainable, a reality composed of spaces of representation.

Outlook: Planning in, on, and from space towards change

Insurgent spatial planning practices, like those performed in Paso Ancho, take democracy and inclusion beyond the realm of formality and recognises the right and capacity of counter–hegemonic movements to come up with their own collectivities and forms of participation (Gills 2001), to make consensual decisions and, what is more, to take action. This 'insurgent historiography' also serves to illustrate how to fight back the suppression of a subaltern conceptualisation of cities and planning, caused by the alleged persistency of Western planning ideals (Miraftab 2009: 45).

More specifically, the Paso Ancho case nurtures the recognition of insurgent planning within the academic planning discourse, given that 'subordinate groups and movements have proposed alternative planning practices and challenged some of the orthodoxies of official planning' (Kipfer & Keil 2000: 28). Space, too, seems to play an important role when examining and discovering the far–reaching input of insurgent planning practices, because they reveal 'the vital contributions that citizens have made to the shaping of their cities' (Meth 2010: 241).

In contexts where urban development has primarily been steered by a 'professionalized' planning tradition, the resulting spatial order and the very praxis of planning may well be defied and counteracted by means of 'insurgent spatial practices'. This means that planning rather than be centred around the 'representation of space' (conceptualized *stereotypical visions* of space attempting to submit what is lived and perceived by people to what is foreseen by planners) brings about the production of 'spaces of representation' (where *enduring realities* may take place since that is the space of inhabitants and users, the space that their imagination tries to seek and seize).

Planning thereby can also be an unremitting collective insurgent action, a myriad of 'joint acts of space–making' (Perera, 2009), which are aimed at enduring local realities. In other words, ordinary people, as the account of Paso Ancho demonstrates, do produce spaces within the crannies—and even in spite—of official planning processes. Eventually, spatial insurgent planning actions increasingly unravel spaces of representation.

This proposal, in the cities of the global South, involves the recognition that: (1) informality is, in fact, a form of production of space reacting to the territorial logic of deregulation (Roy 2009). (2) The resulting 'urban chaos'—an 'insurgent urbanization' (Holston 2008)—is essentially a successful resistance to superimposed (spatial) modes of planning coming from the global North (Simone 2004). (3) Given that disenfranchised groups tackle and resolve their livelihood outside formal decision–making structures, it can be argued that planning has progressively been shifting from state–led and market–oriented planning agencies to community–based informal processes; from 'legitimate' planning practitioners to grass–roots activists and inclusive strategies (Miraftab 2009: 42). And (4) 'spatial insurgent practices' unfold, following Judith A. Garber's (2000: 267ff.) formulation of 'four public spheres', *from* space (because people's identities, interests, and experiences are materially entangled with physical space), *on* space (people act collectively to 'own' space, to shape and adapt it materially and/or symbolically), and *in* space (physical space functions as a platform for people to claim to be part of the social, economic, cultural and political processes shaping their lives). Consequently people, through 'insurgent spatial practices', *make* space and, in so doing, regard themselves as citizens fully able to alter their living conditions, despite painstaking attempts of exclusion.

Planning hence may furnish space with political import—and vice versa—because the established order of things is altered and new distributions, creations and relations are generated (Dikeç 2012: 675). That is the reason wherefore planning, due to the space–politics inextricable link, ought to happen *from*, *in*, *on* and *make* meaningful spaces of representation, that is to say, planning towards change for the better in the life of people.

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