

# KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTION AS CITY AGENCIES DEPLOYING A PEDAGOGY “IN, WITH AND FOR THE URBAN”

## The case of SALO (Finland)

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### Abstract

While a common urban agenda at the supra-national EU-level, as foreseen by the Amsterdam pact has been established, there are very local knowledge requirements to harness the potential of an individual city and to tackle its social challenges and relay them regionally. To articulate local knowledge specificities for regional imperatives and inter-city cooperation, there needs to be an exchange about hyper-local, sensory learning of the city and situated deliberation.

This chapter argues that urban transformations rather than (innovations) ought to be borne by bottom-up processes where individuals come together through common urban experiential learning to shape resilient networks of solidary urban communities.

We first, contextualise our argument on knowledge institutions by discussing such particular actors in cities that are creating “local hubs of knowledge” and argue for a new role for higher education institutions to take on more independent and open roles to catalyse and facilitate a process of “pedagogy of the urban”. In the second section we analyse the process of “pedagogy of the urban” induced through a partnership financed by the EU project ‘Urban Education Live’ to develop a high school curricula involving civic engagement to produce local knowledge hubs in the Finnish city of Salo. We finally conclude by presenting a new situated model in view of engaging and creating conditions and access mechanisms for participation in knowledge co-production for “in, with and for the urban”

### Keywords

Situated pedagogy, experiential learning, sensory learning, urban knowledge, knowledge institutions, Amsterdam pact

### Knowledge institutions and the urban agenda

*“Evidence based policy is a 2006 illusion - policy is increasingly driven by politicians’ ability to harness our collective cognitive biases & prejudices - for evidence to have a meaningful intervention in policy - it must be used to build movements of civic awareness. This is perhaps why - focusing efforts on replicating successful policy - will not work - politics and context are particular not generic and are fundamental drivers” (Johar 2018)*

While there exist vast amounts of publications and books on best practices for positive urban change accompanied by conferences, seminars and so forth, the resources that feed into such activities seem not to match the concrete results on the ground. We argue that when it comes to the urban as a complex and dynamic fabric of territorial, discursive, socio-economic and political forces, the mainstream types of communication, learning, production and transfer of adequate knowledge tend to reduce the character of the urban to “fit all” model.

In this chapter we argue that to bridge a common urban agenda at the supra-national EU-level, as foreseen by the Amsterdam pact, but with very local knowledge requirements, there needs to be an exchange about hyper local, sensory learning of the city and situated deliberation. This could lead to collective action to trigger transformational urban processes to be disseminated at larger scale. Such a situated pedagogy implemented Europe-wide will advance the principles of the Amsterdam pact, focusing on identified priority themes, horizontal and vertical coordination, impact assessments of governance and implementation processes, exchange of knowledge in evolved partnerships to be scaled up to the European level. The paper is divided in 3 sections to argue for the need of a situated pedagogy of the urban. In the first section we explore the notion of the urban especially seen through the work of the French sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre to look for explanations why the current knowledge sphere is reductive of the urban. Conceptual underpinnings are enriched with relevant types of pedagogy. We contextualise our argument on knowledge institutions by discussing such particular actors in cities that are creating “local hubs of knowledge” and argue for a new role for higher education institutions to take on more independent and open agency to catalyse and facilitate a process of “pedagogy of the urban”.

In the second section, we use these concepts to unfold and analyse the case of “pedagogy of the urban” in city of Salo, Finland. This case is linked to the EU financed project Urban Education Live with academic partners in Sheffield, Ljubljana, Bucharest and Tampere - the latter being the lead partner. The case tells the story of how the educational partnership to develop a new high school curriculum involving civic engagement becomes the occasion to produce local knowledge hubs to trigger processes for situated “learning and doing”.

Third, we conclude by presenting a new and situated model for exchanging and producing new knowledge - "in, with and for the urban". We will present a new pedagogy and curricula called Active Citizenship or ACCITI that feeds into a concept for a "University Field Unit Network" or UFUN, which builds local "urban capacity" that could shape resilient, self-organised networks of solidary urban communities.

Our argument is rooted in the premise that urban transformation rather than (innovation) ought to be borne by bottom-up processes where individuals come together through common urban experiential learning to shape resilient networks of solidary urban communities.

### **Situated pedagogy to transform urban communities of learners to communities of practice**

It is in the nature of cities that they are so complex. Varied socio-economic-political forces, routines and new trends are played out at different scales with regional rayonance. Nevertheless, policy mobilities, offer the temptation to address challenges and to create intervention models that are based on best practice or evidence based policies that are implemented in a "one size fits all" – but such an approach is reductive. It does not pay justice to the importance of the particular ways in which place co-constitutes identities of inhabitants through cultural mediation (Dimick, 2016). The French sociologist Lefebvre called the urban an "abstract space" where the mechanisms of the market and bureaucracy makes it impossible for the citizens to appropriate their city and address the problems they face such as inequality and segregation. Lefebvre likens the industrial gaze on the urban with the enigma of the black box: "They know what goes in, are amazed at what comes out, but have no idea what takes place inside" (Lefebvre 2003a, 28). In other words, the urban is a "blind field": "We focus attentively on the new field, the urban, but we see it with eyes, with concepts, that were shaped by the practices and theories of industrialization, [which] is therefore reductive of the emerging reality" (ibid., 29).

While decoding the urban is challenging, it also represents a creative and exploratory space to learn, unlearn and re-learn collaboratively and re-appropriate it to make it productive and cohesive. Kitchens<sup>1</sup> (2009) laments that pedagogy has been "placeless" and appeals for a "a situated pedagogy that connects the curriculum to the everyday lives of students and is interested in identity and self-formation, but also social-formation and the relationships between the two. He asks students to pay attention to their environment, and listen to what places have to tell us." In such an approach, learners decode the environment politically, socially, historically, and aesthetically, thereby ascribing space performative and transformational qualities. In this way pedagogy moves beyond just knowledge institutions and more towards communities, as knowledge producers and also as learners, as they perceive their environments in new light. In other words then (ibid.), pedagogy

can even become public pedagogy that incorporates place-based education. As Sandlin et al<sup>2</sup>. (2011) identify public pedagogy is still under-theorised. Within the available theoretical developments, the 'public' is seen as a homogenous entity and is hardly examined for its diversity and the different levels and modality of engagement that diverse publics in an urban setting may require.

Urban publics are highly These in turn allow to work with highly complex configurations of stratified populations with different identities that relate to dynamic issues and networks. These networks embody certain types of resources and competencies that can work in a trans-disciplinary way to address urban challenges.

Only a complex and dynamic learning modality can then do justice to transform the urban. Lave and Wenger<sup>3</sup> define situated learning as social co-participation that compels to question the social engagements in diverse learning environments. Schindel Dimick (2016) stresses the critical need for place-paced education that is coupled with a critical pedagogy in Freirian understanding. Critical pedagogy, she defines, embodies critical consciousness that facilitates decolonization of and re-inhabitation of place. Decolonising deconstructs hegemonic understandings related to place by reflecting issues of marginalization and engagement in transformative action (ibid, 817). Re-inhabitation re-establishes productive relations through "living well" (ibid, 817). "Living well" can be strengthened by informed, knowledgeable and nurturing action. Ideas of "living well" are mediated by culture and identity that co-constructed by the experiential lessons offered by place. Place hence, becomes central in the production of "selfhood in its social, cultural and political macro- and micro-contexts" (ibid. 819). By coupling critical pedagogy with place-based education, experiential learners can come to form a community of practice. Kolb (1976 in Miettinen, 2000) conceptualizes four steps in experiential learning: 1) The concrete experience, 2) Observations and reflections 3) Formation of abstract concepts and generalizations and 4) Testing implications of concepts in new situations. John Dewey theorized that only a reflective experience had to be triggered by a breach, inadequacy and contradiction of habitual way of action in pursuit then to solve problems faced in habitual ways of action (ibid, 66). Learning is hence a process, whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.

Our understanding of a situated pedagogy "in, with and for the urban" requires bringing about a situation to learners that exposes a contraction in their habitual ways, to trigger reflection on the bases of critical consciousness and the importance of place as co-constitutive element of their individual and social identities.

Such a triggering situation can be created:

1. through a sensory exploration of the urban questions: What are the complex dynamics of the urban community within a particular urban space/setting? Who are the actors and what is their power relationship? What arenas of deliberation and expressions are possible to forge an agenda for collective actions?
2. through a situated pedagogical effort that enables citizens to act in an exploratory way to discover possibilities, problems and

2. Sandlin, Jennifer A., Brian D. Schultz, and Jake Burdick. 2010. *Handbook of Public Pedagogy. Education and Learning Beyond Schooling*. New York: Routledge.

3. Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991) *Situated Learning. Legitimate peripheral participation*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press

1. John Kitchens (2009) *Situated Pedagogy and the Situationist International: Countering a Pedagogy of Placelessness*, *Educational Studies*, 45:3, 240-261, DOI: 080/00131940902910958

potential resources.

These two approaches will be demonstrated in the empirical case of the city of SALO.

### Knowledge institutions as city agencies

We would like to propose not to constrain “city agencies” to formal bureaucratic entities of the municipality, but rather to view “city agencies” as living labs, which are embodied by formal knowledge institutions (universities, schools, research institutions and urban think tanks) or by informal knowledge institutions such as civil society organisations and neighbourhood associations –. Such a perspective on knowledge institutions represents a chance to work in a manner that is much more situated within super site-specific local nodes.

We argue that formal knowledge institutions such as higher education institutions can trigger and moderate a process of creating and establishing nodes of informal knowledge institutions that can emerge as a network of communities of practice.

We argue that Higher Education institutions embody a unique role for efforts in a place-based situated pedagogy both because they hold knowledge and could innovate methodology to trigger transformational predispositions in learners. More importantly universities (still) can act as a more open, proactive and independent actor working in an exploratory way that can discover problems and possibilities that are often overseen by other actors in the city. These work in a more focused and reactive way - mostly the public and private sector but also the NGOs that are driven by solving problems. Social work as a discipline and especially community practice include the approach of an open engagement with communities, they too are most often driven to seek out problems and solve problems collectively. Probably, the approach most similar to how we view the role of universities is the German social work tradition called “Gemeinwesenarbeit”. It is a professional and civil society oriented working field, which aims to support the articulation and implementation of collective concerns.

The university as a public knowledge institution has varied possibilities due to its inter- & multidisciplinary potential. While most will argue that universities can be very powerful and risk-averse conservative institutions, we point to the concept of basic research and the “Pasteur’s Quadrant” that has been coined by Donald Stokes in the book of that name (Stokes 1997). Stokes argues for the value of the position between the basic and applied research - what he calls use-inspired basic research. We argue that the very open and exploratory element of basic research has value when it comes to discovering what is happening in the black or the blind field of the urban mentioned above.

One example that illustrates both an example of a type of city agency driven by a higher education institution is the Pratt Centre in New York City. The centre works as a “mediator” between Pratt Institute

- the educational institution - and the outreach program to urban communities in New York City. On an organisational level the Pratt Centre is linked to the Pratt Institute as being a part of the research department and as such has a higher degree of independence, while still being part of the overall higher education institution. The centre works as a coordinator of students and researchers working in the field and works on three levels: First, being directly engaged in urban communities solving problems in an everyday context. Second, working with empowerment and advocacy planning - inspired by Davidoff, with the aim of building local capacity to act on their own. Third, working on policy reports and papers that address issues that have been discovered in during community work.

While more contemporary practices such as CUP - Centre for Urban Pedagogy - have a very interesting approach to tackling social injustice etc., the approach is fundamentally reactive.

We are trying to push for a view of the urban, from which something new can emerge. This is where universities could take on a more proactive role. Universities do not need to be requested by community groups to engage. Such a perspective contrasts the American tradition of community outreach programs.

Another example from New York is the NGO called “596 acres” that identifies and locates unused publicly owned land by analysing the publicly accessible records of land ownership. They then make this information accessible by producing an online map and placing posters onsite to encourage people to take action in these spaces. This information about overlooked possibilities is then combined with a pedagogical offer for local citizens, which involves giving a course in how to (self)organise and realise the project they may have.

In the same spirit a conference took place in 2016 in London entitled “how to do it” (<https://how2doit2016.wordpress.com/>). Its aim was to disseminate strategies of how to (self-organise). It brought together people from all walks of life to learn from each other how to bring about concrete radical social change in a context. The workshops included sessions regarding organising and mobilising in a participatory way, creating own media and engaging with art and culture.

Scaling up lessons from super site specific work that produces complex and dynamic knowledge, research questions, projects etc. will need a network of Knowledge institutions - universities but also NGOs and other actors that have the relevant capacities to be engaged in the local action, should come together. While formal knowledge institutions producing knowledge through scientifically recognised valid methods are conventionally viewed as holding authority over a particular subject, increasingly knowledge as commons and indigenous forms of knowledge are getting recognition. The universities’ community engagement could foster an approach where they are no more looked upon as subjects, but rather as partners in knowledge co-production. Local inhabitants know their

lieu the best and this knowledge, could be spread over nodes and network, by crystallising common process by determining some urban constellations. In sum, community engagement is less a research activity for building academic case-studies, rather it should be part of a public mandate with effect of enhancing the communities' well-being by recognising them as knowledge and learning partners as well. Learning communities could lead to better social cohesion and hence an urban fabric that is more solidary and resilient. The diversity of actors included, is an indicator of the acknowledgement of different types and sources of knowledge. Some existing networks, which are linked to the United Nations are: GUNI - or Global University Network for innovation (UNESCO), network of learning cities (UNESCO) or the UNI network - UN-Habitat's partnership with universities worldwide.

### The Salo Case

The main goal of Urban Education Live (UEL) project mentioned above is to develop new models for collaboration between Universities and urban communities. It is an EU funded (JPI Europe) funded collaboration between academic partners in Sheffield, Ljubljana, Bucharest and with Tampere School of Architecture as the lead partner. In this case we will focus mainly of the pedagogical experiments done by the Tampere Team developing new curricula with a local high school in the Finnish town of Salo. The city has been hard hit by globalisation when the Nokia factory closed as it was bought by Microsoft. The factory had contributed to 95 % of corporate taxes paid in the municipality.

The more specific goal for the Tampere team was to develop new curriculum at high school level that feed into a mutual learning process with the university students and researchers: An educational link between a more engaged university and urban communities.

In this case the team was able to work in an experimental way by "co-opting" the art classes in the High school of Salo - Salon Lukia - for 3 periods (75 minutes each) during 2 or 3 weeks. In all, we did four experiments from May 2017 to May 2018. Each experiment involved two different classes that allowed for testing and comparing different approaches.

May 2017 - During 3 weeks we tested a process with 3 elements: A - What is there: Perception and dialogue. B. What could be there: Looking for problems and possibilities for what the future could bring C. How to get there: Civic entrepreneurship - how to become active citizens and organise new initiatives.

August 2017 - During 2 weeks we dived into the use of smartphones as a tool for telling stories as short videos and looking at what separates and connects people.

March 2018 - During 2 weeks we developed and tested a game format.

May 2018 - During 2 weeks we looked at a new approach to "situated storytelling" both using a higher degree of context sensitivity - explorations - and working on how to express how places feel in words and images.

In the following, we present some of the most important elements of these 4 experiments:

#### 1. The urban and situated - connecting the spatial and the social.

The goal of a first exercise was to give a more clear idea of why space or places are important. We did this in a series of simple spatial transformations and explorations. First exercise was one minute silence sitting in the classic classroom setup (rows) and discussing how that felt. One observation was "new" sounds like the air conditioning that sparked a discussing on how we filter our sensory input in everyday life to keep things simple and how an enhanced sensitivity and openness can be achieved.

After sitting in rows the students were asked to rearrange the chairs and tables to form a large circle. Then this was the subject of a discussion - how did that feel? Mostly students felt more exposed and vulnerable sitting like this, but one group actually thought that it felt better to be able to see each other and not least being more present because they couldn't sit and look at their smartphones.

Finally we rearranged one more time to form smaller groups that was asked to discuss how that change felt. Clearly students feel more comfortable in the smaller groups and in that sense they also came to the overall conclusion of the exercise that the way urban space is organised influences how we feel, work - and ultimately live our lives.

#### 2. How does it feel here and how do we talk about that?

An exercise that tries to wake up a higher sensitivity for the surroundings of the students. The students would be blindfolded and deprived of the visual sense that often dominate the other senses. They would walk around the classroom following a sound and after overcoming the first confusion - bumping into walls, chairs and stumbling over steps - the other senses become stronger. How does the space smell or sound? How does it feel when I touch the hard or soft surfaces? And how does these sensory impressions change when we move around?

Once this exercise is done, the students are asked to remember how the different places felt and write post-its that are added to those places. The students are then asked to "vote" by adding little

dots to the post-its with words. This forms the base for a discussion about the places and how they felt. Often the same places are experienced in very different ways and especially the sense of smell can trigger some strong memories going back to childhood.

Apart from discussing the concrete findings the main point with this exercise is to awaken the awareness of the richness of such sensory experiencing of the spaces and begin to work on how to express - and discuss - those experiences.

### 3. Stories and storytelling

The groups discussed what is a good story that sparked a discussion on what difference it makes when the stories are "peer to peer" especially in social media - how stories that are told by somebody like yourself has a special quality.

We touched on the difference in telling stories through images (more than 1000 words) books and movies that were more like a finished product and mostly produced by professionals - as opposed to the "peer to peer" stories.

We discussed how face-to-face dialogues have richness since the dialogue includes a more layers of communication: the sound of the voice, body language and the socially produced situation (the example was sitting at the bus stop and waiting for the bus).

Another class discussed first how they enjoyed stories that could make them relax such as TV shows and movies which then lead to how music was the medium that could convey emotions very well (best sounds and music was when it had a "wavy" character)

### 4. Games as a driver for change.

In the first class we tested the element of chance/challenge and with the other class we tested the element of time and how places change and can be changed.

For the class that worked with places in the time machine the most straightforward part was to go back in time but it was harder to go forward in time and imagine something new. Yet some ideas managed to both reflect the dreams of the students and the history of the city: The empty shopping centre/bus station became an indoor skate ramp that would follow up on a reputation that Salo used to have as a hotspot for skaters attracting people from Helsinki and Turku.

The challenge game would push the students playing the game to do things that would make the experience of a certain location more intense. One example was to make participants see the city from a waterpower overlooking the city of Salo. Another challenge was to hit a metal sculpture and let the sound change the experience of that space - small transformations that also points to the more

active role of the students.

### 5. Introduction to civic society initiatives in vague spaces.

The first week (of the first three week experiment in early 2017) was focused on experiencing and expressing what was there. The students especially noticed many empty shops and run-down buildings in the centre of Salo - ugly and empty were some of the more common words used to describe the experience.

The following week the students were asked to imagine what they themselves would dream about in Salo. To inspire the students we visited a number of "civic initiatives" - Pro Viljavarasto, Ihme & Kumma, and Kulttuuritalo - that in many cases were growing out of exactly the same empty shops and abandoned buildings. This would raise the awareness of what kind of places that are open to such new and unpredictable initiatives - the vague spaces of the city.

### 6. Own actions and the sense of being able to change and engage in the future of the city.

The last week of the three-week programme the students would work in groups on ideas that they themselves could engage in - how to realise their good ideas - organisation, money, communication. The students were asked to present their ideas by answering the 3 questions: What, Why and How?

The proposals often both reflected the situation in Salo and their own dreams but also the first small steps into realising these dreams - contacting the owners of buildings or got the plans of the empty shopping centre to better illustrate their idea.

The first learning of how to go from the dream to a more thought out project would more importantly give the students a - brief - experience of actually being able to engage and change their own situations or space.

### 7. Situated storytelling

The "situated storytelling" in and about Salo used two questions: What is special here? And how has it changed. The lesson was done "on site" where we met at the central market square and used a stage in one corner as an open air classroom. Since they would use twitter to document the stories it was possible instantly to see the stories and discuss the tweets at the end of the lesson.

The last lesson in the two weeks was again in the "open air or public space classroom" and this time we asked the students to pose the same questions to people at the market square. Interviewing strangers turned out to be problem only for a very few students. This part of the experiment is quite significant seen in the broader UEL

perspective, where the social and situated mapping of the Tampere UEL team is envisioned initially to be done by the high school and university students.

Some first considerations on the 4 experiments:

1. Why is space and the stories we can tell about - or with them - important:

The exercise that is described first in this text where students sense the space (in silence) and change the way they sit works as good first "explainer" that in itself is using space and how it can change to discuss how this affects how the space feels. This exercise can then be "repeated" in urban space where we move around to distinctly different places and discuss how the difference feels and how it affects how we work together and ultimately how we live our lives

2. Sensing, talking and taking space.

The blindfolding and moving around the spaces following a sound works well to give attention how space is perceived and especially by giving more attention to the other senses such as sound, smell and touch. In the first experiment in May 2017 we did that and it worked well in spite of doing this in the classroom which is not very rich in a sensory sense. We could still work very well with the naming and talking about the experiences - not least to see how the same place can be experienced radically differently by different people.

3. Mapping and storytelling tool

While we have been working with a rather old mash up with twitter this is no longer working very well since some of the functionality - the location - in twitter has been changed. A new tool with a similar basic function would be the ideal: the collective mapping of stories about - in and with - the places that in real time - but gradually - can show new patterns of where and what is important.

4. Introduction to civic society initiatives

The first experiment worked very well by visiting various local initiatives that could be examples of "active citizenship". Where the students the first week saw the many empty shops as a very negative thing we began to look at the possibilities and openness for new initiatives that these places also have. The best examples to show the students are those where they can most easily identify with - the type of people, the character of the initiative etc. - in order to work as an inspiration for them and their own work.

5. Organisation and Action!

What the 4 experiments did not have enough time to do was to

actually work on some first simple steps in a process to realise the dreams of the students. In the first experiment we just touched this stage by asking the students to not only come with a good idea but also work on how to realise it. In an ultra-short time they did such first steps such as calling the owner of a grain silo to discuss the idea of making a climbing wall there (the owner was positive).

6. Situated storytelling and citizens researchers

The experiments where high school students would engage and interview local citizens points to the possibility of seeing the students - high school and university - as citizen journalists and "community researchers", as it is known in anthropology where non academics conduct research. This would not only engage local citizens and build up a local agenda but also produce imperial knowledge that can be used EG for research projects.

7. Basecamp and local hub.

While it is good to start in well-known surroundings for the students, it is quite clear that the ideal is to work on site both to avoid wasting precious time getting to and from the area we work with, but most importantly because "being there" and a situated approach is the whole point. How to not tell stories about the space and the city but to work in, with and for the urban. The basecamp can be appropriated by the students and as such already be one concrete experience for students in changing space.

A basecamp can be used for both the gatherings and discussions internally with the class, but eventually also opening up this discussion to the public and even being the first steps towards a "Local Hub".

### **Summing up the cases and analysing these**

The experiments in Salo point to a new method of how universities can engage in urban communities by establishing an "Educational link" and begin a process of "deep immersion" based on this collaboration. Especially the social and situated mapping that discovers unseen problems/possibilities and new patterns that show where and what is important in a (urban) community. Our own analysis of the experiments described above has led to 2 new initiatives where the first pilot will be tested April 2019: ACCITI or Active Citizenship - Strengthening civil society and fostering Urban Entrepreneurship. The other initiative is "University Field Unit" or UFU that is where a version of a "City Agency" is driven by a mutual learning process that benefits both the research and learning of universities with the ability not only to initiate an "urban capacity building" that strengthens civic societies, but also to take advantage of the open and more independent character of research that makes universities an unique actor in urban communities.

## Conclusions

These experiments in Salo, embedded in a situated learning approach, point out to a new method of how universities can engage in urban communities by establishing an “educational link” and begin a process of “deep immersion”. Based on this collaboration, methods were demonstrated to situate and discover overseen problems, possibilities and new patterns that show where and what is important in an (urban) community.

The experiments described above have led to two new initiatives where the first pilot will be tested in April 2019: ACCITI or Active Citizenship - Strengthening civil society and fostering Urban Entrepreneurship. The other initiative is “University Field Unit” or UFU. It is a version of a “City Agency” that is driven by a mutual learning process that benefits both the research and learning of universities with the ability not only to initiate an “urban capacity building”, but also to take advantage of the open and more independent character of research that makes universities an unique actor in urban communities. The Salo experience echoes the lessons documented by Schindel Dimick (2016) about working with youth through a place-based approach with an imperative of situated and experiential learning yields augmented levels of environmental awareness to promote sustainability and fosters community action and responsibility.

In our opinion such an engagement from formal knowledge institutions can be only fostered, if incentives for local community involvement are elaborated in partnership with other city agencies and the academic framework. Such an approach would offer more scope for direct societal impact than the current incentive regime of “publish or perish”. Acknowledging communities as partners in co-creating knowledge in the urban and not merely as case studies “to publish upon” – gives them more self-esteem that enables their agency. Such recognition in turn has the capacity to transform geographies of authoritative knowledge that has historical underpinnings of global power constellations and is also closely linked to the publishing incentive regime. Universities that are well-funded and score high in journal impact factor ratings, make their mark in authoritative knowledge geographies. Geographies and actors that are left out in the publishing and funding race go unacknowledged in the knowledge production. A more equal partnership in knowledge-production also compels to innovate methodologies of research and engagement, where traditional criteria of validity and reliability could be enhanced. An additional criterion could be the quality of trust networks within the nodes and network. This in turn, could also influence the quality, modality (open access) and scope of dissemination and exchange from situated urban learning and practice that is deeply place-bound.

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