FORMALISING THE INFORMAL

TEMPORARY USE OF VACANT SPACES

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ABSTRACT

The master thesis follows the transformation suffered by an old, bottom-up practice into an urban planning tool in two specific contexts: Barcelona and Copenhagen.

The research starts by examining how the temporary use of vacant spaces has been traditionally present in these cities and has slowly entered government-led programmes, being formalised by authorities under different arrangements. The intention is to unveil the conditions which determined a change in the way the urban is built, by enlarging the array of stakeholders who have access to decision-making processes and interventions.

Subsequently, the case studies represent a zoomed-in investigation of two precise examples, helping to elucidate the effects of this formalisation on all the actors involved. Although common tendencies and patterns are distinguishable, the examples show the importance of embeddedness in local contexts as well as the fluidity between formal and informal actions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

PROLOGUE

Thesis rationale

An old practice in the urban reality, temporary use has only entered academic discussions some decades ago, determined probably by the proliferation of such actions after the 70s. The phenomenon has been analysed by an increasing number of scholars who have taken different standpoints. One of the most influential works has been the project called *Urban Catalyst* (Studio Urban Catalyst, 2003) which researched five European cities (Helsinki, Amsterdam, Berlin, Vienna and Naples), unveiling the potential of temporary use to influence or stimulate *urban regeneration*. Later publications have derived from it (Haydn and Temel, 2006; Lehtovuori and Ruoppila, 2012; Oswalt et al., 2013; Overmeyer, 2007; etc.), stressing the *cultural and economic benefits* in abandoned areas. Apart from these, other studies have connected temporary use to social theory and culture, linking it to *indeterminate spaces* (Groth and Corijn, 2005), *squatting* (Pruijt, 2003), *everyday activism* (Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010) or *creativity* (Colomb, 2012). Almost all papers have had a positive interpretation, highlighting the *qualities of actors* (self-initiative, flexibility, creativeness, pro-active character, etc.) and considering that these should carefully be incorporated in formal planning systems (Lehtovuori and Ruoppila, 2012; Oswalt et al., 2013; Street Plans Collaborative, 2012).

Since temporary use is embedded in the local context and depends predominantly on the stakeholders, all articles have focused on specific examples or locations. Some of the most explored locations have been in Germany, the Anglophone world and the Netherlands (Colomb, 2012; Franck and Stevens, 2013; Jorgensen and Keenan, 2011; Overmeyer, 2007; etc.). Besides numerous bottom-up initiatives observed, an additional reason why these sites have attracted so much attention is the government's reaction in trying to create *formal programmes* and include them in their planning frameworks. Scholars like L. Andres (2012) or K. Foo (2015) have thus researched temporary usages as a new instrument of collaborative practices employed in *multistage governance arrangements*. Honeck (2015) conducted research in Germany considering a *social innovation* the new way planning involves temporary uses. Before, the planning legislation did not differentiate between long and short term, imposing the same rules no matter the time span. However, temporary use projects require a different agenda which allows more flexibility, faster decision-making, a less tedious bureaucratic systems and at times even inconsideration of restrictive laws (Németh and Langhorst, 2014).

Although explored from different angles, I argue that government-led temporary use programmes still offer aspects to be researched. One of the identified directions lacking from the literature seems to be the process through which the planning system starts integrating previously informal temporary usages, the distribution of power within the new collaborations and the aftermath for all the stakeholders. In trying to fill this gap, this dissertation focuses on two specific urban contexts (Barcelona and Copenhagen) where *formal temporary use* is still a new practice, used mostly as an experiment. Before exploring them, the paper presents the theoretical framework, drawing from works related to temporary use, vacant spaces and formalisation processes, and establishing a connection between them.

Research question and hypotheses

Taking into account that temporary use has initially been associated with informal bottom-up initiatives, activism and a do-it-yourself mentality of city residents (Bishop and Williams, 2012; Lehtovuori and Ruoppila, 2012; Oswalt et al., 2013; 2006, 2006), and that nowadays it is often adopted by municipal authorities in their tools for urban development (Bishop and Williams, 2012; Frisk et al., 2014; Oswalt et al., 2013), it can be said that the temporary use of vacant spaces is a new way of making the city which has implications for all stakeholders.

The research question is, then, how does formalisation affect the temporary use of vacant spaces and the actors involved? In order to answer this, several sub-questions can be formulated:

· Who are the actors and what are their motives for getting involved in municipally-initiated programmes?

· How is the vacant space and its (re-)use negotiated?

· Can temporary use still retain its inherent characteristics (such as being user-driven, dynamic, spontaneous, etc.) if planned? But also, are any of these characteristics enhanced?

· How did temporary use come to be considered a viable solution and an urban planning tool in Copenhagen and Barcelona? What does formalisation mean in these two contexts?

· What limitations and benefits does formalisation bring for all parts involved?

It was acknowledged from the beginning that the examples chosen might not be able to act as representative samples for generalization and so the inductive investigation tried to understand dynamics embedded in context. Nonetheless, throughout the field research it appeared necessary to formulate a number of hypotheses which worked as an organizing device and conferred a better structure to the case studies. These were:

· Temporary uses are deterred by authorities as soon as more profitable uses can be foreseen for the vacant space, regardless of the success.

· Authority-led temporary use programmes can equate a disengagement from the city to fulfil its traditional duties (such as service provision).

· Cities will find it very difficult not to over-impose a high number of restrictions that will considerably limit the temporary uses.

· Citizens involved in formalised temporary use projects will not fully comply with the regulations imposed, even if these were negotiated jointly.

· Although formal temporary use programmes offer citizens freedom to intervene in the space, they can also be used as a tool for control and regulation.

MAIN INSIGHTS FROM RELEVANT LITERATURE

This first chapter represents the theoretical base of the thesis and is divided in two distinct parts aimed at highlighting the main insights from the literature review. The discussion starts with a general introduction for temporary use, trying to identify its history, the meanings attached to it and the main participants. It goes on to investigate how the concept of *vacancy* is almost always connected since the so-called *vacant spaces* are seen as a prerequisite for temporary initiatives. The second part debates on processes of formalisation, narrowing down to the formalisation of temporary use and explaining also the preference over other notions encountered.

TEMPORARY USE

A search for roots and definitions

Space is a valuable resource unaffordable and inaccessible for many people. Simultaneously, urban territories often abound in land which is not being taken advantage of. With this discrepancy between demand (the society's real needs) and supply, a wide range of transient activities, different from the owner's expectations or the designated use arise. These temporary actions have been present for many centuries now and in an attempt to determine their ideological roots Haydn and Temel (2006, pp. 12-13) relate it to the revolutionary organization called the Situationist International (SI) which activated from 1957 until 1972. This body of intellectuals, artists and politicians were highly critical concerning capitalism and thought city planning was one of its main tools of expression.

In "Revolution of Everyday Life", the SI philosopher Raoul Vaneigem criticised the exclusive manner in which cities were built and the impossibility for most citizens to intervene in the space and decisions taken: *Power is the greatest town-planner. It parcels out lots of public and private survival, buys up vacant lots at cut price, and only permits construction that complies with its regulations* (Vaneigem, 2001, p. 93). In their fight, the SI coined the idea of *unitary urbanism* aimed at allowing all people the freedom to experiment and create their own lives.

Besides the SI, other actions have been associated with temporary use. Trying to contest embedded hierarchies and having a strong political focus, the numerous occupy movements that prevailed after the 60s and continue to happen nowadays are an example. Furthermore, squatting, which entails living in or otherwise using a space without the owner's consent, has had different motivations. These varied from political initiatives such as protests to alternatives for housing and construction of social centres, bars or libraries (Pruijt, 2003, pp. 133-134). The chosen case study in Barcelona is relevant to be mentioned here since the initiators of the temporary use are former 15M activists, a social movement happening all around Spain which asked for a truly democratic political system and the enhancement of chances to participate in decision-making processes.

Although to some extent more limited in scope, one of the most common and visible examples of social activism comes today with the transformation of public spaces into community gardens or small pocket parks. Oftentimes the initiative comes from a group of locals unsatisfied with the way the administration handles their requests or the time they take to. The decision to

act is fuelled by a *do-it-yourself* attitude, based on personal skills and resources, without necessarily addressing an expert. All these actions start from current conditions and seek to utilize what already exists as opposed to building from scratch (Haydn and Temel, 2006, pp. 12-13). It can be, at the same time, a fight against consumerism, linking it once more to the SI that were arguing against commodity fetishism.

Therefore, this might be a wellspring for the advancement in the way urban development is envisioned: *the built environment in no longer the goal, but the starting point* (Oswalt et al., 2013). Considered by Haydn and Temel (2006, pp. 12-13) an *alternative for urban planning by means of a master plan* and increasingly found in the umbrella of strategic planning, temporary use is often advocated for and seen as a relevant mechanism for urban transformation[1]. This becomes obvious when looking at the attention gained by the practice in the past decade, yet in spite of the impressive number of studies from all over the world, temporary use remains a notion that lacks a generally accepted definition.

The aforementioned project led by the Technical University of Berlin, *Urban Catalysts: Strategies for Temporary Uses – Potential for Development of Urban Residual Areas in European Metropolises*, carried on between 2001 and 2003 proved that temporary uses are informal processes that take place all around urban areas. The report postulated that pop-up bars, start-up firms, art galleries, informal markets and other social and recreational activities breed *innovation* and a *vibrant public sphere* by requiring few financial resources. They are bottom-up initiatives which can become an example to follow by the city planning practitioners and authorities that have disregarded them for a long time from the sequences of urban development (Studio Urban Catalyst, 2003). This shows that the temporary use has been, in general, a *grassroots approach* which allows interventionists to take control over the way cities are produced, even if only for a limited amount of time.

Outcome of this study, the influential book *Urban Pioneers. Temporary Use and Urban Development in Berlin* defined temporary use as *the interim stage when a site's original purpose has been abandoned, its future development is still uncertain and it can be used on favourable terms*. (Overmeyer, 2007, p.37) Here, the words *temporary* and *interim* are considered equivalents. Nevertheless, in their most recent publication entitled *The Temporary City*, Peter Bishop and Lesley Williams do not agree with this interchangeability because like others before them (Haydn and Temel, 2006), the two authors consider that notions such as *interim*, *meanwhile use* (found in the British context), and *stop-gap* denote that the temporary use is necessarily secondary (Bishop and Williams, 2012, p.5). Although they can be provisional, temporary uses should not be reduced to mere substitutes. In contrast, Bishop and Williams accept a degree of ambiguity in their approach and consider activities based on the intention of the user, developer or planner: *a temporary land use is an intentional phase*.

Nonetheless, scholars such as Kohoutek and Kamleithner have actually asked whether or not all urban uses are already transitory in nature and what could distinguish the temporary from the normal (Haydn and Temel, 2006, p. 25). Precisely because the concept is so difficult to grasp,

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[1] Nonetheless, the scale of such operations remains a debatable issue because it is difficult to assess whether complex temporary use projects could function and be defined by spontaneity of informality. An example given later during the research on Copenhagen, shows in addition that an officially-led project named PLUG N PLAY has successfully acted as an experiment but the investment costs have been substantial, reducing the acclaimed advantages of temporary use.

the next definition will be adopted allowing to have clearer boundaries for which activities will be considered temporary in this research.

Three different aspects are taken into account by Hentilä et al. (2002): the nature of the use, whether rent is paid and the temporality of the activity. Thus, the use is temporary only when (1) *people other than the real estate owner perform activities on the site*, (2) *the owner receives no or no relevant financial income for this use of ground and building*, and (3) *the use is limited in time* by the illegal status of the activity which can end at any time, by the unwritten permission which can also end at any time due to a different and more profitable use, or a predefined lease or permission which is timely limited in expectation of a different, formal use in the future. The advantages of this definition is that although being precise, it remains inclusive enough in terms of temporality. Also, it does not necessarily imply that the temporary use is only a stop-gap, at least not for the users who frequently aspire for longer periods.

Based on this delineation, the next subpart describes some general categories that have been outlined by researchers and which seem to fit, to a certain extent, the chosen case studies as well.

What counts as temporary?

A part of the literature concerning temporary use has focused on looking at outcomes, searching to understand whether its effects were as short-lived as the practice. Although I argue that aiming to transform temporary use into a permanent one comes in conflict precisely with the intrinsic characteristics and benefits of the temporariness, it is worth mentioning a division from the Urban Catalyst study (Oswalt et al., 2013) that examines the relationship with the site in a more long-term perspective.

Thus, temporary uses were classified into: (1) *stand-in* (gap-filler between two uses with no lasting effect on the place), (2) *free-flow* (temporary only in terms of location because the practice continues to move indefinitely to new spaces as the opportunity arises), (3) *impulse* (temporary uses are kick-starter for the place's next development), (4) *consolidation* (temporary uses are turned into long-term and previous informal arrangements into regular permits), (5) *co-existence* (hybrid which allows the temporary use to exist on a smaller scale at the same time with the permanent one), (6) *parasite* (the temporary uses develop, exploit and depend on the long-term established activities of the location), (7) *pioneer* (deployed on territories hitherto unused), (8) *subversion* (activities are part of a strategy aimed at disturbing and transforming the permanent ones) and (9) *displacement* (when permanent uses move to a temporary location). The examples which will be discussed in the fieldwork part can easily be included in certain categories here, but there is an overlap for some of them. For instance, a free-flow is also a pioneer for a previously unused piece of land in Copenhagen, whereas an example of co-existence from Barcelona is fighting to a certain degree to disturb the planned development, thus allowing to be included in in the subversion type.

The diagram below (Figure 1) combines elements from the building life cycle analysis (LPO/CAUE, p. 11) with the classification of temporary usages, trying to portray in a conceptual manner the possible evolution of a specific space and the different moments when temporary use can emerge. In the first phase, an empty space is awaiting to be used. This is where pioneer and impulse uses are conceivable, but also the start of a consolidated one. The next two phases

show the setting of activities and the further needed maintenance, while they can be accompanied by coexistent, parasite or subversive uses. The end of these activities (which can be determined by other factors than the high cost of preservation) determines vacancy, which, from an objective point of view can either be a liability since the space is unused and sometimes even blocked (for example when the owner is not willing to activate it), as well as a prospect for revamp and alternative use (stand-in). In the first case, the lack of prospects for reuse can determine the destruction of previous installations (if any) and prolonged idleness. But, at the same time, all these stages offer the possibility for temporary uses to take shape, either engendering a new cycle or simply prolonging the lifespan.
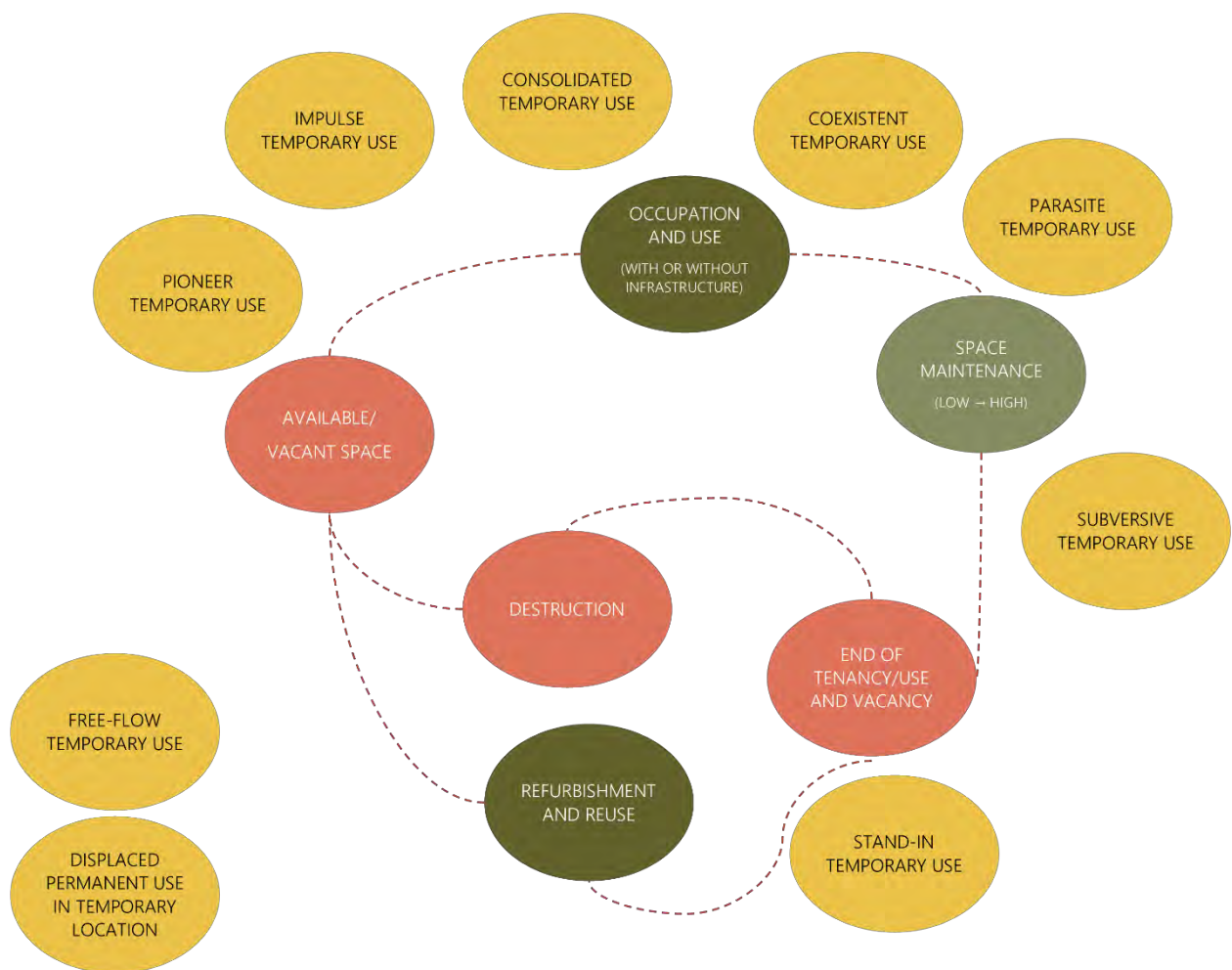
Figure 1 - Evolution of space and possibility for temporary use
(source: author)

The different classes include, undeniably, an extremely wide array of examples. It would be redundant to list them all here but Blumner's (2006) macro-categories include all kinds of parks and gardens, artistic and cultural initiatives, sport and recreation, entrepreneurial as well as alternative living situations. Most of the times, these usages were very different from the sites' original designation and often contradictory, defining them as problematic when they had to be accepted, formalized or even legalized by the authorities. Yet, proving to bring various benefits

depending on the perceiver's point of view (socially engaging on a neighbourhood level, culturally enriching or even economically productive), temporary activities have slowly gained their recognition not only among citizens, but also among other classes.

This recognition diversified the array of stakeholders so the next part of the paper will describe all actors that might be involved at some point in a temporary use project.

Stakeholders in the temporary use

The temporary use of vacant spaces has often had at its core citizens whose different incentives determined them to act and change the status of a place through new activities developed on the site. These different practices were of course, place-bound and always depended on the conditions offered by the vacant site. This meant that temporary users had to learn to exploit what was generally perceived as disruptive or dysfunctional. The recycling then had a double facet: actions must be adapted to the prospects offered by the location, while the location is adjusted to one's actions (Ziehl et al., 2012, p.300). In general, being able to play with the existing circumstances requires a fair amount of creativity and as Oswalt et al. (2013, p.12) have affirmed, *the heroes of our epoch are the garage do-it-yourself-ers*, persons that have the necessary know-how or at least the imagination and the initiative, leading the avant-garde.

Klaus Overmeyer (Oswalt et al., 2013) claimed that from a practical point of view, temporary use only requires two actors: *the owner* of the space and *the user*. This is highly arguable if we take into account squatting activities. Basically, any space can be activated as long as a keen user exists. Nonetheless, in reality temporary use projects engage very different actors and their intentions are quite diverse. In order to follow the development of temporary use into an urban planning tool it is important to identify who these stakeholders are nowadays. By studying concrete cases, the literature (Oswalt et al., 2013; Lehtovuori and Ruoppila, 2012), has already identified: users, facilitating agents, owners, policy makers and city administrators, private investors, media and also the direct public composed of city dwellers.

Considering these different stakeholders, the first category, *the users*, have been further grouped by the Urban Catalyst research depending on their main characteristics into: start-ups, system refugees, part time activists, migrants and drop-outs. Throughout the field research, stakeholders could only be included the first three categories so these will be employed in the second part of the dissertation. It should be remembered, though, that the reality is much more complex and clusters can be composed of different kinds of users, but also that users can migrate from one type to another.

Now, with the enlargement of temporary use programmes it is relevant to differentiate also between *initiators*, *mediators* and *users*. Sometimes (and especially in the past) the first and last overlapped, preponderantly in socially-oriented projects. However, in the case of formal projects initiated by cities, there are often *mediating agencies* who pre-define a more or less rigid framework for users. An interesting aspect that can be remarked is that in most user-initiated cases, the users involved tend to form *clusters*. The synergies that arise are determined by the social relations as well as personal values and it can be questioned whether planning the

temporary use by outside actors can have similar outcomes or not. The chapters dedicated to the case studies will correspondingly try to explore this matter.

Clearly though, besides initiatives and proactive individuals, temporary use is considered to depend on another essential prerequisite: the availability of vacant space (without forgetting that *vacancy* is a matter of definition and perception). For instance, vacant spots have been named *areas whose future is vague for a definite or indefinite period of time and which find themselves in a state of no longer or not yet* (Oswalt, Overmeyer, and Misselwitz, 2013, p. 14), becoming a ground for opportunity, a more flexible environment that incites action precisely because of the in-between condition. The next parts will develop on the idea of *vacancy*, highlighting the different visions over the subject and the impact this variation has had for the formalisation of temporary use.

Determinants, definitions and dialectics of vacancy

Urban voids, for them (politicians, public officials, planners, and city marketers) represent the ruins and ghosts of burdened, unwanted pasts, or the failure of the contemporary urban economy in bringing expected amounts of investment and growth.

(Colomb, 2012, p. 4)

Urban development often entails a tabula rasa approach so planning is made and implemented starting from previously undeveloped areas according to those uses which can bring most benefits. Yet, different processes determine spaces to become obsolete and vacant, whether or not former installations are removed. Thus, since throughout its lifecycle the same space can be titled vacant irrespective of its characteristics, it appears clear that *vacancy* describes a condition which can take many shapes and which allows dissimilar processes to be encompassed. The next part will try to deconstruct the notion of vacancy and explain why vacant spaces are the main loci for the informal, unexpected intervention through which citizens get to play a role traditionally assigned to city administrations.

Vacancy, in general, defines the condition of being unoccupied or unemployed. Commonly associated with space, vacancy describes an empty area that is usually bounded in some way between things, standing idle as opposed to being in use. Nonetheless, the complex body of literature associated with vacancy has not universally agreed upon the various forms of spaces which can be included or the characteristics that make land vacant[2]. The names under which such spaces can be found have created an even more complex problem. A widely accepted definition of vacancy does not exist and there are also distinctions between the different terms employed.

However, it is worth examining first some of the explanations given by academia for this phenomenon. For instance, David Harvey considers that capitalism, with its perpetual aim of accumulation, is a crisis-prone system that has an essential feature embedded in it – the *creative*

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[2] Although some of the commonly accepted are: agricultural or uncultivated land; recently razed land; derelict land; land with abandoned buildings and structures; brownfields; greenfields. (Pagano and Bowman, 2000, p. 2)

destruction. Investment of capital in the urban environment is always matched by de-valorisation which in return represents a new phase for valorisation. Said differently, the system relies on spatial fixes but which then become limiting themselves, generating the necessity for destruction and reconstruction (Harvey, 2001).

Building on Harvey's theory of space production, Neil Smith's rent gap theory is also based on the belief that capitalist urban development has an intrinsic tendency to be cyclical (Smith, 1979) but there is a certain rhythm of unevenness in the location and the amount of capital invested in cities (Slater, 2014). Therefore, areas go through processes of investment, disinvestment and reinvestment during which they are characterized by a potential ground rent and an actual ground rent[3]. The rent gap appears when there is a disparity between the potential ground rent level and the actual ground rent capitalized under the present land use (Smith, 1979, p. 545). Nonetheless, as Tom Slater (citing Stuart Hodkinson) pointed, *rent gaps do not just appear out of nowhere*; they are dynamically created by the actions of numerous actors (such as landlords, bankers, urban property speculators, etc.) and the authorities should not be seen as a noninterventionist body, but most often as a political and economic facilitator. Profit is the basis of capitalism and through rent gaps, certain social interests are revealed (Slater, 2014). Undeniably, the highest and best use is arguable depending on the actors involved and this explains the increase in the examples of provisional interventions in vacant spaces. Even though for owners or developers there is no possibility of gaining profit, other persons may bring a different perspective and the chosen case studies are illustrative in this sense.

The de-valorisation of the built environment capital is nowadays very easy to observe in declined neighbourhoods because of the changes underwent and their translation into an increase in vacant land. Among the most evident shifts, the transition from the industrial to the service economy has been associated at the same time with an intensification of mobile or flexible workplaces. In addition, the legacy has not only consisted in leftover sites which are now out of use, but also a work capital less attached to a certain location. Along with many other factors, the residential choices that engendered a migration towards the suburbs have affected some inner-city neighbourhoods where owners sometimes prefer to maintain their buildings or plots unused and speculate for better times for investment or selling.

Still, some areas have always been empty as a result of features that render them unusable, at least at first sight. These can be physical or can be generated by functional zoning that sometimes leaves marginal space or creates a buffer zone (for example next to infrastructure such as railroads or highways).[4] The extent of these *unutilized* or *underutilized parcels* is often difficult to determine and so governments encounter problems for transforming vacant land into an urban resource. Visually unappealing in terms of aesthetics, these milieus are also frequently contaminated industrial sites where new developments or changes of use encounter strict environmental regulations which deter them from legally changing shape. The precariousness characterizing vacant lands and buildings is a condition that can foster deviant behaviour involving substance abuse or violence.[5] However, vacant, uncertain spaces which are either

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[3] The potential ground rent represents the value reached at the highest and best use and shows a possible profitable redevelopment option even though the socio-economic features of a declined neighbourhood might seem unfavourable.

[4] Such areas have extensively been categorised by thinkers such as Northam (1971), Greenberg (1990) or Kivell (1993).

[5] One of the case studies will exemplify how a parcel considered vacant and for which authorities could not find utility, was hosting homeless and people with alcohol dependence, proving that land can have many uses but which might be outside of the officially desired ones.

friction spaces or free zones, allow counterculture movements and unconventional users to infiltrate and experiment (Groth and Corijn, 2005; Lehtovuori and Ruoppila, 2012).

As such, *whether a given quality is considered an asset or a liability depends on the needs of the viewer and, just as importantly, upon one's assumption about what is good about space* (Franck and Stevens, 2013, p.17). Thus, vacant land has been differently perceived in the urban discourse, as a constraint or predicament, but also as a prerequisite for beneficial restructuring. Besides clear references to vacancy, numerous other associated appellations can be found. It is worth mentioning the ideas of *urban interstices* (Thrasher, 1927; Tonnelat, 2008) or *terrain vague* (de Sola Morales, 1995) that encompass not only the characteristic of being unoccupied, but also the potential created by the void. Their undefined boundaries incite the imagination of the users so *indeterminate* spaces are appropriated by *civil or informal actors coming from outside the official, institutionalised domain of urban politics* (Groth and Corijn, 2005, p. 506). Similarly, *loose space* (Franck and Stevens, 2013) and *wildscapes* (Jorgensen and Keenan, 2011) are other terms used to describe often, but not necessarily, empty areas which give a sense of freedom, allowing users to unfold activities that cannot find space in other parts. Moreover, in an article written in 2000, Doron criticizes the use of terms such as *wastelands*, *derelict areas* and *urban voids*[6] by saying that a closer, more attentive look at these spaces would prove that there is more than the nothingness associated with them. These spaces have never been entirely empty and they represent layers of the urban palimpsest, pointing towards a vast array of urban processes which can lead to vacancy.

Thus, the phenomenon of vacancy can be looked at from a completely different perspective, considering it a normal stage in the urban life cycle which opens up the door for numerous opportunities and alternatives. This can be considered the standpoint adopted by administrators who decide to embark in temporary use projects because problems linked to vacancy can often be solved through temporary use[7].

In the end, the definition preferred in order to carry on with the thesis investigation was kept broad, the notion of vacant referring to *any kind of land that is not being* officially *used at the present but that may have utilities and infrastructure in place* (Evans, 2007). Making this choice allows an objective standpoint from where it is possible to include the different forms of vacant spaces encountered, to analyse their evolution and specificities, as well as the meanings attached. In addition, it can facilitate understanding the possible uncertainty surrounding the ownership, usage and future transformation.

These different conditions when temporary usages have the possibility to materialize can be created by users, owners, as well as local governments. The next part will explore precisely the process through which temporary use can be formalised, right after discussing the different dimensions of formalisation.

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[6] Used by authors such as Northam (1971), Greenberg (1990) or Kivell (1993) but also architects like Rem Koolhaas.

[7] Politically, there is a possibility to alleviate patterns of uneven development, a less expensive option when using already existing facilities (Németh and Langhorst, 2014). The re-use can correspondingly have ecological benefits and other scholars and planners have long debated the inherent capacity of open vacant sites for nurturing emergent ecologies (Jorgensen and Keenan, 2011) which can further on help depolluting contaminated soil, as well as improving air's quality. In addition, unconventional uses can re-activate an area and bring life back to it.

FORMALISATION OF TEMPORARY USE

Informal vs. Formal?

The formal-informal debate occupies an overwhelming body of theoretical research, empirical as well as policy investigation since the topic is considered crucial in the study of development processes. Different disciplines have given different meanings and without trying to exhaust all of them, the following part will be a short overview of those which can be related to the temporary use of vacant spaces.

One of the most explored angles has an economic perspective where informality encompasses the unregistered economic activities that form the underground economy. H. De Soto, G. Fields or A. Marshall have assumed that informal arrangements represent a temporary alternative to unemployment and poverty and tend to disappear once the economy develops and can absorb surplus labour (ISED and Aspen Institute, 2002, p. 12). This could be due to the large number of studies conducted initially mainly in developing countries, but more recent investigation has confirmed the presence of the informal sector in all economies around the world (Ghani and Kanbur, 2013; Guevara, 2014; ISED and Aspen Institute, 2002). Numerous start-ups and small businesses, mainly driven by insufficient funds or a desire to experiment, can locate in abandoned buildings where rent costs can be ignored, and maybe operate outside the established labour conditions. Once the activity proves to be successful, people might choose to register their activity and follow formal procedures, although they might also still perform actions in a grey area, making it impossible to define precisely their status.

A second possible perspective would be the legalistic one that considers informal everything happening outside the formal regulatory framework. In this sense, a frequent and faulty association of informality is made with illegality. Here as well, there is a high degree of elusiveness because not all informal actions are necessarily illegal and there can be various arrangements. For example, some legal commodities such as food, clothing or even childcare services can be produced in legally unregulated arrangements. Although they are not intrinsically unlawful, they violate certain rules or laws (ISED and Aspen Institute, 2002, p. 5). For instance, some small-scale entrepreneurs might operate in an industrial site where pollution norms are transgressed while still having entirely formal work conditions and products.

Moreover, social sciences have also studied this dichotomy, concentrating mostly on the creation of informal social networks through various modalities of urban association or political engagement (Guevara, 2014, pp. 250-251). As an organisational system, formal is commonly presumed to be *rule-based, structured, explicit, predictable and regular* so the absence of all these characteristics can define the informal. Informality is, in addition, often *spontaneous, tacit, and affective*. In reality though, the informal is not necessarily unruly, unstructured or unpredictable (Waibel and McFarlane, 2012, p. 3).[8]

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[8] Throughout the case studies it will become obvious that individuals driven by common interests can naturally bond in informal groups where internal regulations, difficult to observe from the outside, do tend to exist and structure the interactions.

Consequently, with so many different opinions and standpoints, it is not surprising that there is no widely accepted definition and that numerous attempts represent overly-simplistic representations of the complex reality, losing the nuances that exist between clear-cut boundaries. In this sense, Guha-Khasnobis et al. cited Michael Lipton by stating in the chapter called *Beyond Formality and Informality* (2006) that there is no perfect split, but rather a *continuum*. Daniels (2004) has reinforced this idea by saying that although informality is often associated with underdeveloped countries, no political system functions on the basis of formal structures and processes alone and all cities are characterized by a hybrid arrangement of happenings. Therefore it is possible to conceive the formal-informal in terms of spatial categorization but even though informality has often been associated with marginal locations and *slums* (probably because of the increasing extent of this type of settlement), informal spaces can be interweaved in central areas as well (Waibel and McFarlane, 2012, p. 3). Barcelona especially, but also Copenhagen, abounds in examples of buildings or open lots which have been appropriated and transformed by people into squats, youth centres, urban gardens or leisure areas, without any formal permission from the owner or the administration.

Undeniably, the concepts and their dichotomy are a social construct that can be employed in many different ways and the implications are very diverse, especially when used as a governmental tool. In relation to planning, yet not only, informality should not be seen as something lying beyond it, but rather acknowledging that *it is planning that inscribes the informal by designating some activities as authorised and others as unauthorised* (Waibel and McFarlane, 2012, p. 4). Therefore, defining as well as changing the status from informal to formal requires a certain (political) power and will.

Sometimes, *formalization* is used either inter-changeably or in conjunction with the word *institutionalization* (Coppola and Vanolo, 2014; Foo, 2015; Groth and Corijn, 2005). However, Pruijt (2003, p. 134) understands institutionalization as the channelling into *a stable pattern based on rules and laws* through which unwanted behaviour is sanctioned and conventional methods displace disruption. Based on his definition, this dissertation distinguishes between formalization and institutionalization, considering that the latter might simply be a more advanced step than the former: temporary usages might be formalized without being instutionalised. In addition, the concept of *institution* also denotes a practice or a behavioural pattern which is constant and embedded for a society.

In relation to temporary use, the field research has shown that government-led projects are still something new and less conventional, at least in Copenhagen and Barcelona where the framework is yet being defined by experimenting and sometimes using a trial and error method. The next section will expand on the idea of formalisation and its consequences, especially when applied to temporary use.

A Debate on the formalisation of temporary use

Expressed simply, formalisation points towards a process of giving something a definite form or shape. More often though, formalisation refers to the procedures through which acts, situations or entities obtain a formal or legal recognition, previously inexistent, making this a

post-action (Guevara, 2014). Formalisation is a proof that (in)formality is a negotiable value that governments can play with to offer or take authorisations, as a response to emerging situations (Waibel and McFarlane, 2012, p. 6). Hence, numerous informal practices are not only considered acceptable but even examples to follow, so local authorities can go beyond tacit acceptance by formalising them. This stands true in numerous cases of bottom-up temporary use. Certain cities have chosen to respond to these actions that are indicators of a certain deficit, and at the same time of an abundant local knowledge able to find alternatives and even be self-sufficient.

In general, this recognition of the residents' savoir-faire is seen as sign of flexibility and openness to testing and learning (Waibel and McFarlane, 2012) since municipality-initiated temporary use means setting up a collaborative process. Lauren Andres postulated that *the power shift goes from the temporary place-shaping users to formal place-making decision-makers*, empowering citizens during the time when authorities are generally in a *stand-by position* (2013, p. 5). However, disguised behind the will of improving participation and activism, traditional power elites can have many *reasons* to support this widening of the stakeholders' array. As said, land is a powerful asset over which governments want to *impose as much control* as possible in order to influence development and growth. In this manner, shaping temporary use allows *dictating rules and restrictions*. Moreover, several scholars have argued that citizen initiatives to intervene in spaces are supported by authorities only as long as there are *no other more profitable options* (Andres, 2013; Foo, 2015; Lawson, 2004). Thus, periods of crisis when vacancy tends to augment, making physical space for possible intervention, are at the same time accompanied by a more permissive governmental context. Once real estate values start improving, the bottom-up intervention can come in conflict with official plans and be mutated or completely banned. Nonetheless, the formalisation of temporary use represents a new kind of negotiation over how the city is (re)constructed and whose interests are served.

Pradel (2012, pp. 8-9) considers that by adopting temporary use, authorities can *organize and orchestrate urban development according to different time scales*. On the short term, the image of the previously vacant space can be improved, transforming it into an attractive location for citizens and investors as well. This is a visible, fast but also less dangerous change which can play a very important role in terms of political reputation. Improvements brought can conduce to the (re-) valorisation or renewal of the area on the middle term, determining urban spaces to re-gain or re-orient their functions. It is interesting though, to see whether on the long run these spaces can work on a daily basis or whether it was the temporality which caused only a momentary revival.

Therefore, it should be clear that temporary uses do not automatically have equitable effects when shifting urban development trajectories (Foo, 2015, p. 4). Besides possibly failing from the very beginning to gain popularity and functionality or losing them with the time passing by, strategies can also engender *unequal development patterns for the neighbourhood*. Once an area is upgraded, the path to gentrification is already paved and can easily transform into displacement and exclusion. Since the rules are now set by the power elites, different categories of people might not be able to access programmes not only because of lack of material resources, but also lack of information. Moreover, in economically challenged neighbourhoods, people might be struggling to cover their basic needs, not having enough time to appropriate the given space.

The consequences of formalisation for those who choose to participate in the formal temporary projects are rather scarcely described in the literature and they are case-specific, depending mostly on the approach chosen by the city. It is worth mentioning that some of the most well-known *models of formalisation* come from German cities[9], the Netherlands and the Anglophone world[10]. In many of these examples, special agencies and institutions were created as a strategy to deal with the phenomenon. Also documents were created and the practices were quickly spread and replicated in various places and under different forms. Other methods of formalisation include simple legal permits for using a space, agreements with obligations for all parties or funding. Authorities in Copenhagen, for example, mention that Berlin and Hamburg have had an important role in the acceptance of temporary use as a possible planning tool at local level, whereas in Barcelona the Netherlands and Great Britain might have been more influential.

It must be kept in mind though, that even if ideas and policies have been very mobile, there are strong differences in the creation and implementation of programmes. Basic generalizations can be formulated about their effects on the users. The benefits include the diminishment of uncertainties (related to funds or time periods) and possibility to make predictions and plan ahead, more cohesion because of the organization, as well as potential publicity and recognition. Disadvantages can be constituted by the restriction of freedom and choices, a loss of spontaneity, disagreement with authorities and a general feeling of instrumentalisation.

Also, there might be certain groups whose ideology centres on positioning themselves *in opposition with the system* and so refuse to engage in officially generated temporary projects. From the different categories of users defined by the Urban Catalyst, some general assumptions can be made. The *start-ups* and the *migrants* are most likely to participate since in general, their initial motivation for temporary uses is related to a low budget, the impossibility of penetrating the job market or certain social networks. Thus, a project developed by the municipality could mean surpassing these barriers, but it would also signify becoming mainstream which for certain subcultures is not desirable. On the other side, the *system refugees* and the *part time activists* might refuse to play by the rules laid out by the power elites as a form of revolt or resistance, unless the potential benefits for their cause are convincing enough. The group of *drop-outs* is, probably, the most difficult to place around any of these lines.

Therefore, the fieldwork is very helpful for gaining deeper insight into the way formalisation was led and what were the consequences for all stakeholders so the next chapter will first present the methodology of research and then the two case studies.

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[9] Pioneered by Berlin and followed by Leipzig, Hamburg or Bremen, where various temporary use agencies (*Zwischennutzungagentur*) were created.
[10] Most prominent in London (*Meanwhile Space*) and Glasgow (*Stalled Spaces*) in the UK, but also Christchurch (*Gap Filler*) in New Zealand.

FIELD WORK

Methodology

　　　　The next part describes the methodology and methods used for completing this research. In order to follow the aim of this thesis and answer the main question, an inductive approach seemed best suited. Thus, the research started with observation and data gathering, then the information was analysed and from this enquiry derived the theories and the conclusions. As Becker claimed, a description of details, unfiltered by previous ideas and theories can lead to theoretical growth and articulation (1998, p. 180).

　　　　A number of steps were taken in this sense. Based on the idea that *the pathway that leads to any event can be seen as a succession of events that are contingent on each other in this way* (Becker, 1998, p. 51), it seemed necessary first of all to do primary and secondary research for the histories of the city, the surrounding area and the location itself. These revealed factors which determined vacancy to intervene at a certain moment, as well as initiatives for changing this status. The next stage traced back the different occupations: who the occupiers were, what kind of negotiations had to be pursued, what the interests of the occupiers could show and how their different statuses have changed with the evolution of the project. The process through which temporary use is formalised by authorities is closely connected to the general urban context and is relevant for how it assembles numerous actors. It can mean that the initial users do not act alone, but form *social organizations*, making it interesting to see how these are shaped and how new entries might influence the process, what kind of negotiations or conflicts emerge. Besides following the insiders, it is important to study the outside view through *media representation and coverage*.

　　　　This first step can reveal the *type of city* that is produced in this time: the words used to define it, the social relations formed, the balance of power among the actors. It is fundamental for the next one which shows what is at stake when the practice of temporary use becomes integrated into urban planning. How do actions transform into a *practice to be followed* and what changed the perception of the authorities over it? Why was it necessary to change the way urban planning is accomplished in the city? What is on the public agenda and how does temporary use come in accordance with it? Here the choice of words, definitions, translations or comparisons might be the channels through which the concept of temporary use has travelled and transformed, be it in new procedures, a new image of the city chosen to be portrayed, or the new neighbourhoods on which the focus falls.

　　　　The observation and data gathering focused specifically on two cities (Copenhagen and Barcelona) for a grounded insight. They were chosen mostly based on rational and practical considerations: the required temporary residency in Denmark and Spain facilitated a better understanding of the general context (historical, socio-economical) and the current trends. In addition, this enabled a faster formation of contacts as well the opportunity for several visits and meetings with the interviewed actors. Following this rationale, Madrid could have been a better option than Barcelona but it was disregarded because no information about city-led initiatives could be found. Fortunately, language was not a barrier in any of the two cases. Starting from

the city level, the research then zoomed into two particular examples[11] and became a microscopic study. In order to gain perspective, comparison became helpful and in order to make it possible, it was important to employ the same structures and questions.

To ensure that all stakeholders were taken into account, the method used was inspired by the *stakeholder analysis* (Aaltonen, 2011). This explores all individuals and organizations that take an active part in a project and can affect the evolution. Based on it and on Becker's recommendation of conceiving the society as an organism in order *see all connections that contribute to the outcome* (Becker, 1998, p. 63), certain aspects were revealed: stakeholders (internal and external), their needs and motivation, their influence power, actions, expectations and results. Unfortunately, not all selected persons could be contacted or reached, but additional desktop research and questions addressed to other key players tried to compensate.

In addition, having learnt that in most cases it is much more than just human beings that affect the development of a phenomenon, the study took into account ideas from the actor-network theory which considers all elements just as important as persons. All of them are treated impartially, without an a priori distinction between the natural and the social (Callon, 1986), permitting to discover how the idea of temporary use has circulated, through what channels and how did it become a legitimate urban planning tool.

For Copenhagen the Danish literature and media were consulted since numerous articles had recently been produced, documenting both informal and formal temporary uses. Then, general interviews and discussions were conducted with persons whose knowledge about the city helped reveal patterns and examples that could be worth for in-depth study. Gathering data one interview at a time permitted to discover new variables worth exploring (Becker, 1998, p. 265).[12] The discussions were very helpful for understanding how Copenhagen slowly started adopting the temporary use in its planning system, but also discovering an initiative formalised by the Fuglekvarteret Area Renewal, entitled Container By (Container City).

The novelty of the Container City project made it difficult to obtain information but semi-structured interviews (organized by using the snowballing technique) and ethnographic research closed undocumented gaps. The collaboration with area renewal representatives was the key for unravelling what determined this decentralised unit to initiate a temporary use programme and whether specific physical and social aspects of the vacant site had any influence. Further on, interviews with the main users showed a different perspective, exposing the new associations and networks formed.

In Barcelona in addition to the desktop research, two preliminary discussions played a primary role. The one with Afra Quintas, a young event organizer collaborating with Meanwhile London[13] and trying to implement at home the experience accumulated abroad, was helpful in understanding how Spanish legislation is standing in the way for engaging private owners in formal temporary use strategies. Another fortunate collaboration happened by contacting Manu Fernandez, researcher and urban policy consultant whose knowledge in the field and of the practical cases in Barcelona was extremely valuable. Through him, it became possible to contact

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[11] as mentioned, cases of temporary use are context-embedded and the research proved that even examples stemming from the same officially-led programmes can vary greatly, making it impossible to study thoroughly more than one
[12] three persons coming from different backgrounds were consulted: a project consultant for the city's local department called Urban Life, a project leader of the company called CPH City & Port Development, and a professor at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation.
[13] an emblematic mediating organizations focusing on the activation of private vacant space in UK

different persons engaged in Pla BUITS, Barcelona City Council's official project for the temporary use of vacant spaces. The interaction with them allowed to select one example and closely observe it. Formal and informal interviews were conducted with people involved in different ways in the project Espai Germanetes. In addition, numerous site visits and participation in different events became a manner of immersion with the group itself. The research tried to investigate more than just *the super-ordinates in hierarchies of credibility*[14] (Becker, 1998, pp. 127-128) to unravel various opinions and conflicts.

The case studies showed that distinct cities and projects are very differently reasoned and concepts that apply in one case, may not be relevant for the second. Moreover, theoretical themes that were not taken into account during the first part of the literature review seemed to appear essential to investigate so subsequent theoretical research was conducted to gain awareness about topics such as creativity, urban renewal projects or strategic planning.

Results represent an attempt to sketch a complex picture in order to assess how the formalization of temporary use has had any influence on the stakeholders and the activities themselves. Of course, it must be mentioned that the research accepts its wide limitations precisely because temporary uses are location- and case- specific and the results obtained from one investigation can be very different from the realities of another place. In addition, since these projects are defined by the concept of ephemerality, they become very difficult to entrench into more general delineations. As a further strain, groups and individuals themselves are oftentimes characterised by uncertainties and inconsistencies, and so the reality portrayed is always circumstantial.

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[14] Becker describes and criticizes a common tendency of giving more authority to the super-ordinates than the sub-ordinates of a certain system (including social classes of a community), as if only those persons from the top have access to genuine, complete information

A first comparison: how vacant are Copenhagen and Barcelona?

The first chapter showed why precise information and statistics about vacancy is in general, very difficult to find. The lack of an undisputed definition becomes an even bigger problem when trying to compare rates between different areas. Also, data is either inexistent, unreliable or too old to reflect real levels for both private and public properties. In the first case, private owners are either reluctant to declare empty assets (especially if extra taxes are applied for medium/long term un-occupation) or simply do not have to. Moreover, in countries that have been severely touched by the real estate boom, like Spain, many properties are half-built, completely abandoned by owners or awaiting for financially better times, making it difficult to decide whether they should be included in the category of vacant or not. In the case of public assets, municipalities often do not have an updated data base of all empty spaces. Sometimes, they are also unwilling to make the information public – a situation encountered during the field work in Barcelona.

In Copenhagen, the Building and Housing Register publishes a yearly updated rapport (Boligbarometer) which considers vacant homes. The definition given to a vacant unit is explained in detail, being a *unit accepted by the city as having no registered occupants and units that are not required to be occupied temporarily or long-term. This includes housing for employees working for embassies or international organisations, commuter housing, guest housing, municipal housing for special purposes, units that are temporarily unoccupied due to urban renewal (including re-housing) as well as units that have never been occupied (including units that have recently been completed), etc. This also includes cases pending while the City clarifies the status of a number of units. This figure does not include units accepted as unoccupied that are owned by the state* (Københavns Kommune, 2015, p. 5). Unfortunately, the city has no such information for unbuilt spaces or vacant lots, making the information incomplete.

In Spain, the situation is similar: data exists for vacant homes, but not for vacant open spaces. An additional problem is that statistics have not been updated since 2011. The Catalonian Institute for Statistics considers *vacant dwellings those which are not occupied, not available for sale or even abandoned* (Idescat, 2013).

Therefore, comparing vacancy in Copenhagen and Barcelona is obviously limited. Nevertheless, since statistical data was also confirmed by interviews with local actors, as well as experiencing the urban reality through direct observation, some general facts can be stated.

Copenhagen is well-known for the housing market pressure which significantly reduces the vacancy rate. The National Registration Office approximated that 95.2% of Copenhagen's housing was occupied in 2014 (Københavns Kommune, 2015, p. 5). When asked about the availability of space, all actors described the difficulty in finding proper locations as well as the consequence which is reduced affordability. Mikkel Mindegaard (Urban Life Department) said: *Copenhagen is not Berlin. There, the fall of the wall has created many possibilities for temporary use.* As opposed to the German capital, Copenhagen's dense city fabric needs to accommodate more people every year. Nevertheless, Jesper Koefoed-Melson from Givrum.nu, an organization that promotes the temporary use of vacant spaces and public participation, showed that temporary use has a flexible nature and can easily be implemented in areas which are being developed. Copenhagen has numerous areas which are undergoing transformations so there is

space for temporary activities. Thus, it can be said that temporary use is not only dependent on the available space, but also on the willingness to unlock it.

In order to ameliorate the housing pressure though, the city's administration has adopted on the 1st of February 2015 an amendment which obliges both owners and renters to notify the Centre for Buildings if their dwelling is vacant for more than three months. The period has been reduced from one year because of the housing shortage (Københavns Kommune Official Website).

Barcelona, on the other hand, is still facing the consequences of the property bubble. In 2011, 10.88% of the dwellings were vacant or abandoned. Although displaying a decrease when compared to 2001 (13.30%), the very high level has been severely criticized, especially in a context where many people were evicted or dispossessed by banks (Neate, 2014). It will be interesting to follow the evolution of the vacancy rate in the future because of the new political changes that came with the elections in May 2015. The new mayor, Ada Colau, famous for being the voice of Platform of People Affected by Mortgages, is taking major steps in this direction. Her political agenda promised to localize empty flats and encourage the transfer or lease from small private owners, as well as granting support for rehabilitation or insurance. In the case where empty apartments are possessed by banks, Colau said the owners would be penalised (López Alonso, 2015). One of the interviewees from Barcelona showed high enthusiasm when asked whether he believes the political change could influence in any way the development of their temporary project because he thinks that Ada Colau would support citizen initiatives, participation and the use of empty spaces. In fact, Barcelona's new mayor stated that *the crime of leaving buildings empty when there is a need for housing (...) is far greater than using them without permission* (O'Sullivan, 2015), supporting not only temporary use, but even squatting. It is nevertheless too early to draft any conclusions.

TEMPORARY USE IN BARCELONA

It would be impossible to track back precisely the beginnings of temporary use in Barcelona. Nevertheless, the literature and some of the interviews have indicated various activities that could be considered precursors. The next part will try to sketch this complex history which in Barcelona's case has been linked to other key concepts than in Copenhagen. As opposed to the Danish capital city where words such as *creativity, innovation* and *entrepreneurialism* are found in almost all discourses, in the Catalan example (and actually all over Spain), *self-management (autogestión), participation, social movement* and *occupation* define not only the beginnings of temporary use, but even the formalised, more recent attempts.

Athenaeums as a collective effort for self-sufficiency

Athenaeums are cultural centres organized in Spain since the middle of the 19th century, by both the bourgeoisie and the working classes. Many of the latter created them based on principles of anarchic syndicalism, constantly refusing subventions or institutional and economic support coming from the authorities (Carlos, 2010). Organized at neighbourhood level, they tried to compensate for the lack of opportunity for poor inhabitants and so the activities within included lectures, artistic representations, political debates as well as libraries. An important feature is the strong connection formed among the members whose networks were characterized by solidarity and union, a desire to participate and work together, as well a strong opposition to established powers and ways of living.

These athenaeums, although not necessarily organized as temporary, are important in portraying essential characteristics later observed in temporary use examples throughout Barcelona. First, athenaeums are administered by *assemblies*[15]. Second, the members' financial contributions or *cooperative funding* grants them complete freedom from the state or private investors. Finally, athenaeums appear as *civic sociocultural initiatives* which try to counterbalance the lack of basic facilities that the city failed providing. They are a classic example of reaction in times of crisis because, like Miquel Reñé Garaboa (from Barcelona's urban planning department) mentioned: *the Spanish population remains comfortably passive until the authorities are no longer able to provide the needed amenities*. Their pro-active nature is awaken when their needs are not fulfilled, just like after the real estate crisis in 2007. However, the next subchapter will demonstrate that there are other, more complex conditions which determine people to react.

Okupa-tion of abandoned buildings and public spaces

The year 1975 brought a change of regimes along with Franco's death as the end of the dictatorship allowed people once again to articulate their necessities and demands and intervene in the public policies (Blakeley, 2010, p. 135). In Barcelona, revolutionary spirits came up especially in popular neighbourhoods marked by a certain degree of blight and where abandoned locations created space for neighbourhood assemblies to form. Although squatting was an existing

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[15] A form of government where all present members have the same power of influence, sought in Espai Germanetes too.

practice during the 60s and 70s too (mostly for individual housing needs), the 'okupa movement' took momentum shortly after the beginning of the 80s. The name is intentionally spelled with a 'k' to individualize the occupations through which *squatted and self-managed social centres* (Centros Sociales Okupados y Autogestionados – CSOA) were created. Through them, squatting did not necessarily lose its residential function, but became more powerful and more important for a larger public who gained access to a broad range of cultural, social and political activities (Martínez, 2007, p. 383). Moreover, occupations became a means of political expression from where citizens could reason and act differently and even in opposition to the conventional powers.

Martínez (2007, p. 384-385) divides *the squatter movement* into three different periods. An important moment was the introduction of the *Penal Code of Democracy* in 1995 which criminalized squatting and resulted in a much larger number of evictions. Not many squats were formalised, but most were tolerated probably because it was an easy option for the authorities to deal both with the increase in the number of population and the pressure on the real estate sector. After the change of regulations, numerous squatters protested and were arrested (47 only in the case of *Cine Princesa*, for instance). Blakeley (2010) thinks that these occupations have been much more than a search for a place to live, they might even be considered the forerunners of protests later evolving into various social movements. It is important to mention again the assembly-oriented organization which aimed at openness and horizontality, instead of delegation of power and representation by leaders. During the interviews, Garaboa talked about the impossibility of achieving this idea of assembly inside Espai Germanetes where certain persons would gain stronger voices and power to influence decisions taken.

It would be impossible and also not the scope of this paper to discuss all occupations that emerged in Barcelona, yet the cases of *Can Vies* (where citizens' efforts are still facing several legal trials) and *Can Batlló* (where two buildings have been formally ceded by the authorities) are interesting to mention because they emphasize the power of the civil society to influence political decisions taken when united. They expose the idea that using an abandoned space means most of the times much more than just occupying it. The space gains completely differently meanings as it becomes an arena for social and political participation. In addition, they are an example of grassroots action happening in working class neighbourhoods where people affected by the crisis could still enjoy certain cultural, social and political benefits. In Can Vies, attempts of demolition affected the historic edifice and eviction is still a threat because the administration has not sanctioned the use. Can Batlló, on the other hand, has been sanctioned and exists thanks to volunteers' commitment in the neighbourhood's collective belongings, but it also shows the facility with which the municipality simply abandons its own infrastructure. It will be interesting to follow the development of this case in the future if land value becomes too profitable for community uses.

Yet, besides these struggles which have a visibly political orientation, another important aspect that can be significant in the evolution of formalisation of occupied spaces are the community gardens. These green spaces have been taken care of by people of all ages and have had several benefits for the neighbourhoods: a greening effect through biological agriculture and a (clearly limited) source of nourishment, but also a space for inter-generational socialization. The city authorities have provisionally tolerated these urban gardens. This confirms the idea that Andres (2013), Foo (2015), Lawson (2004) and others have stressed: periods of crisis determine vacancy rates to augment and create space for intervention. At the same time, they generate a more permissive governmental context and the negotiations over urban space are conducted

among a broader range of actors, but only until the real estate market starts improving.

The next part will introduce the first authority-led initiative of temporary use of vacant spaces which has been quite limited in scope but whose success might have been another milestone before the foundation of Pla BUITS, the temporary use strategy created by Barcelona.

Urban gardens as platforms of participation

The network of urban gardens of Barcelona is a programme designed by the Environmental Department to establish a platform of participation for persons over 65 years old. This is basically Barcelona's first attempt to formalise temporary use. Thirteen parcels (25 – 40m²) were opened and interested citizens had to comply with a set of requirements: age, physical condition permitting agricultural work and domicile in the same neighbourhood with the garden. The plots are ceded for five years with a 6 month trial period to the assigned persons who are not allowed to sell the produce obtained and must conform to a model of biological agriculture (Barcelona City Council, 2015).

Authorities acknowledge having been inspired by previous civic initiatives and petitions coming from neighbourhood associations but in the same time, other community gardens created by individuals often risk being proscribed if they do not coincide with the plans of the city leaders. Even if it is a laudable initiative coming from the city, its scope seems quite limited and exclusionary considering the very small number of parcels ceded. In addition, the website emphasizes the *communitarian* aspect through which generations can interact but this is questionable considering that access and management is done by one person only.

Rules are mostly uttered top-down but this network of urban gardens is, nonetheless, an example of formalisation of temporarily self-managed vacant spaces. The next subchapter will introduce a second attempt and will further be analysed in detail through one of the case studies.

Pla BUITS

The so-called Pla BUITS[16] was conceived in October 2012 inside Barcelona's urban planning department, Hàbitat Urbà. Pla BUITS is a concrete action of incorporating the temporary use of vacant spaces into the planning system, by provisionally opening up unused public spaces in order to facilitate the involvement of the civil society in the regeneration and revitalization of urban fabric (Barcelona City Council, 2013, p. 1). It goes well beyond the simple management of urban gardens because citizens can now decide on the uses and the way the project is steered. Laia Torras, the director of the Participation Unit, affirmed during a meeting that the idea was to determine people to become an active part in building and managing public space. Miquel Reñé Garaboa, from the same department, stated that *this programme means a responsibilisation of the citizens, transforming them from citizen-users into citizen-participants*. This is similar to the concept of *prosumer* that Temel borrows from Hans Groiss to refer to a consumer who becomes active and takes part in the production (Haydn and Temel, 2006).

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[16] the name can be translated into Empty Spaces Plan but the word *buits* is also an acronym for urban vacant land with territorial and social involvement (Buits Urbans amb Implicació Territorial i Social). (Barcelona City Council, 2013)

Pla BUITS is a legacy of the 15M movement, Garaboa said, which took place during the summer of 2011 in Plaza Catalunya. Affected by the on-going crisis, people started gathering in the centre of Barcelona in order to protest against the austerity measures and evictions which left numerous homeless while houses stayed empty. Barnaby Noone, professor at the University of Barcelona, part of the 15M and involved in Espai Germanetes, considers that the novelty of this occupation was the heterogeneity of persons attending: people of all ages and socio-economic statuses gave the action more legitimacy. The indignados raised the attention on the high rate of vacancy and on the people's will to self-manage spaces that authorities were no longer capable of maintaining. Laia Torras believes that vacancy became a problem because of the associated risks which are a general image of decay for the neighbourhood, as well as the undesired uses of the space. This idea resonates with Accordino and Johnson (2000) who described the entire array of negative externalities that vacant spaces have on the neighbourhood level. Torras said: *the construction time of the urban environment during periods of crisis becomes much longer and the politics of the government have to adapt to this in-between period by creating a strategy that deals with the meanwhile*. This is why in Barcelona, the demand for space was met by the offer to make empty public plots available.

Pla BUITS was drafted many years after temporary use became fashionable in other countries. Yet, the Spanish city officers that were interviewed denied any external inspiration in the creation of the programme, saying they were rather inspired by local community initiatives. Nevertheless the City to City Barcelona FAD Award gave in 2013 (right after the launch of Pla BUITS) the first prize to a very similar project called Stalled Spaces, initiated in Glasgow in 2011. FAD appreciated precisely the reduced financial investment from the city of Glasgow whose role is mostly to offer technical support. The investment is made by the community which is expected to find the financial means of embarking on the initiative (just like in the case of Pla BUITS). This raises once more the question whether temporarily ceding vacant spaces to citizens becomes a mere abandonment of responsibility from the government's side. Rightfully said by Marc Martí (2013): *we can talk about low cost urbanism, but not about zero cost urbanism*.

The two editions of Pla BUITS (2013 and 2015) were organized under the form of an open competition. Besides the self-sufficiency of the project, there are quite a few rules for participants. First of all, individuals must be part of an entity, an organization or a neighbourhood association. Furthermore, all uses and activities must have a temporary character and prove to be easily removable, must be considered of public interest or social utility[17]. At the same time, it is strictly forbidden to have economic or profit-oriented uses, with the exception of those destined exclusively to the self-financing of the project. Based on this, a complex jury analyses and evaluates projects and evaluates. Garaboa considers that through this procedure, *the competition and the assessment are very open and fair*. Nevertheless, there have been voices criticizing the organization of Pla BUITS, first because it is still the government that decides the future use and then because it can generate conflicts between different entities who might have to compete for the same space (Martí, 2013).

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[17] Regulation broad enough to include educative, sport, leisure and recreational, cultural and artistic, environmental and landscape, social or communitarian activities.

Those spaces which are opened for competition are selected by the ten districts. For the first edition, twenty plots were available and their dimensions ranged from 100 m² to 1,000 m². Orduña-Giró and Jacquot (2015) criticized the inequality in sizes but in my opinion this is irrelevant since temporary use tends to adapt to local conditions. It is of course, easier to develop activities on larger plots without physical constraints, but it does not mean that there cannot be proper projects for the small ones as well. In contrast, a real problem is the fact that locations are chosen top-down and citizens or already existing projects are not consulted. Garaboa also believes that only twelve spaces were successful during the first edition because there has not been any research to see whether there is a strong civic movement around the space or if there are any possible initiatives.

The problem has not been fixed for the second edition either and the risk is that spaces can remain unused while independent initiatives might arise in other parts, creating conflicts between initiators and administration. Representatives of Pla BUITS mentioned another risk the districts perceive: the resistance from the competition winners to give back the space once public works or other investments can be made. This seems to be a general issue described not only in the literature, but also by officials interviewed in Copenhagen. However, Laia Torras said that even worse would be a situation when users would be removed and rehabilitation would still not start. In addition, both Torras and Garaboa talked about the problem of privatising a public space by offering the possibility of managing it only to a small group of people. Although all winning proposals had to prove their openness and community oriented goals, not all people living in the neighbourhood might appreciate the idea or feel welcome to join at a later stage.

Moreover, misunderstandings can easily appear among the members involved as well and this will become clear during the next chapter which describe the project called Espai Germanetes. Being, one of the twelve formalised temporary uses in Pla BUITS, this case seemed most relevant to portray the complexity of the network of actors, the different rationales at play and the ongoing tensions.

BARCELONA CASE STUDY: ESPAI GERMANETES

> *Just because a tiny group of people could intervene in these spaces doesn't change the*
> *real way this city is built.*
> (Laia Torras, Participation Dept., Hàbitat Urbà)

The vacant space

Eixample is a central, densely populated neighbourhood where residential use is combined with activities and services. The crisis has left numerous buildings empty yet overall, vacancy does not create a general feeling of blight and decay as Accordino and Johnson (2000) considered. Nonetheless, the uninhabited dwellings are reminiscent of times when people were often evicted because of impossibility to pay mortgages.

Part of Cerda's plan, the Eixample District is spatially organized in superblocks. One of them used to host the Convent of the Sisters of the Poor[18]. The building which belonged to the Clinical Hospital was closed in 2001 and demolished three years later. The city negotiated and took over the ownership of this space in 2006, trading it for another empty plot and some services (Recreant Cruïlles, 2012, p. 2). The idea was to build several facilities that the neighbourhood was in need of (a day care centre, a nursery, a secondary school and apartments for young and senior people) and plans were included in several planning documents and schemes[19].

However, the so-called Espai Germanetes which measures over 5500m², was not only abandoned until 2013 (Recreant Cruïlles, 2013, p. 4), but also enclosed by a very tall brick wall and metal gates that made entering impossible (Figure 2). This is a good example to portray Slater's (2014) idea that rent gaps reveal specific social interests and that authorities are not a noninterventionist body, but much rather a political and economic facilitator.

Figure 2 - Espai Germanetes seen from outside the walls and gate (source: author)

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[18] Convent de les Germanetes dels Pobres.
[19] Such as the Municipal Action Plan 2007-2011, the Special Urban Plan for Germanetes Island 2010 and the Metropolitan General Plan 2011.
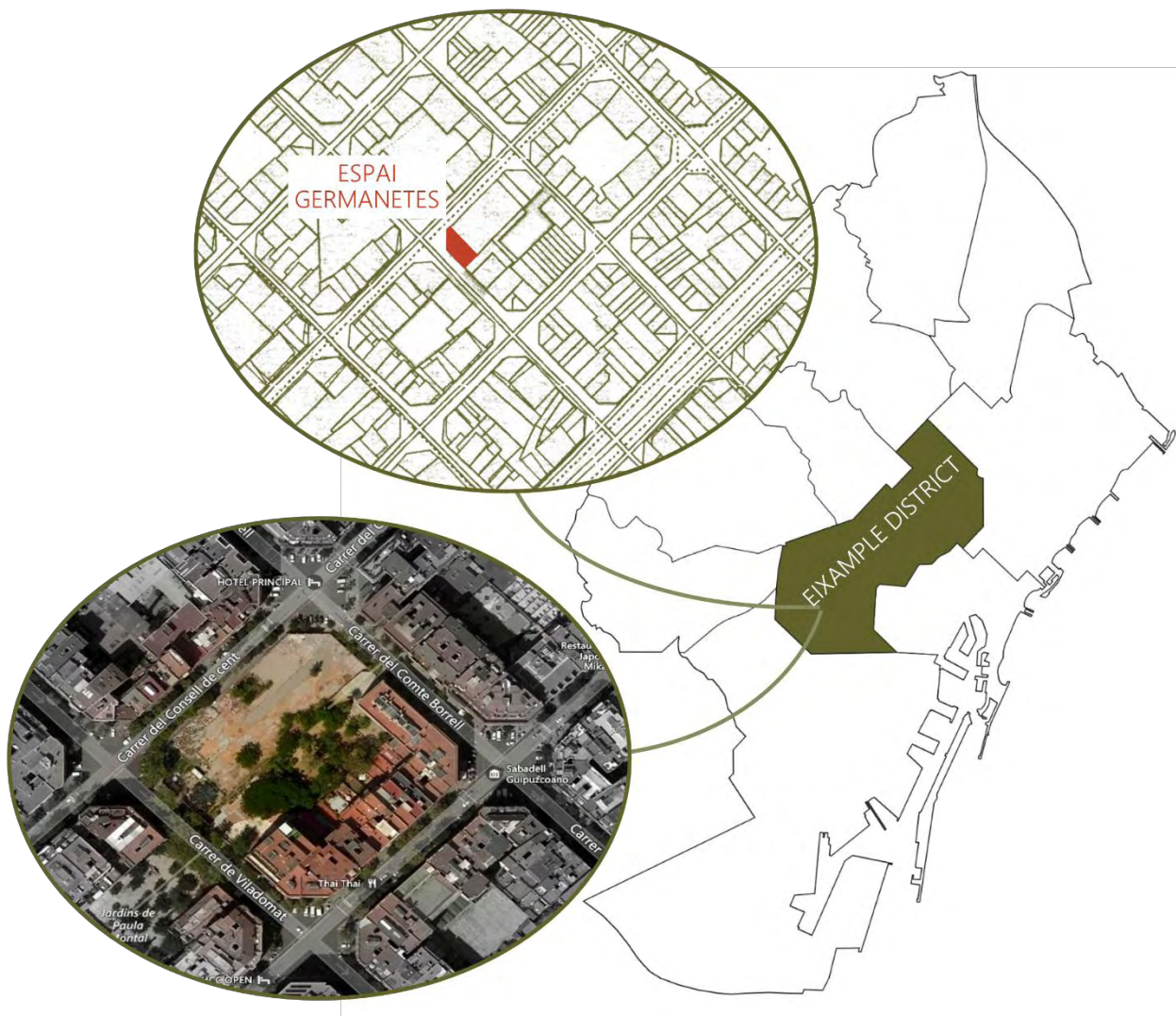
Figure 3 - Location of Espai Germanetes
(own compilation, Barcelona districts map: https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distritos_de_Barcelona; street map: https://www.mapbox.com; satellite view: https://www.google.com/maps)

Nonetheless, the area's latent qualities were not disregarded by everyone. Having to deal with the lack of amenities on a daily basis, the community, animated by a small group of people, decided to intervene and revive this plot of land. The next part will describe the thinking inscribed in their project.

The idea behind the informal temporary use

During a festive day organized in October 2011 by the Assembly of Eixample Left Neighbourhood, a workshop gave locals the possibility to highlight what they considered to be lacking in the area and come up with proposals and solutions. The persons who showed interest wanted some space to develop community projects or generate new places which could be situated out of the consumerist dynamics. Espai Germanetes was seen as a good opportunity for all the proposals to take shape so the neighbourhood association created a special working group. The group which later converted into *Recreant Cruïlles* (RC) dedicated to drafting and

putting in application a project for Espai Germanetes and its surroundings. Black and white photos of the different participants together with quotations of their desires were hung on the exterior walls through the *Inside Out* project but no other action could be deployed because of the locked gates. Shortly after, the district's authorities took off the posters from the walls (Figure 4), creating a high level of discontentment among the people in the neighbourhood.

Figure 4 - Barcelona City employees removing the posters of the Inside Out project
(source: http://www.btv.cat/btvnoticies/2012/10/18/l%E2%80%99ajuntament-elimina-el-mural-reivindicatiu-del-solar-de-germanetes/)

In its constitutive project, RC defines itself as a citizens' initiative for *a more human urbanism* that is based on public participation and activism, aiming to support the regeneration of the urban space (Recreant Cruïlles, 2012, p. 5). Part of the 15M, *los indignados* that occupied Plaza Catalunya protesting against the generally austere times were removed by the police in September 2011 and regrouped inside their neighbourhoods. Here they kept meeting as an assembly and tried to discuss and solve issues which were most stringent to the local environment. The movement was spontaneous and tacit, but definitely not unstructured or unruly, demonstrating Waibel and McFarlane's (2012, p. 3) supposition that formality and informality depend entirely on the structure that defines its meaning.

In Espai Germanetes, numerous persons rapidly joined Recreant Cruïlles, united by the idea that an open process of appropriation and self-management of the public space should start, while still expecting the government to fulfil its promises. The members came mostly from the neighbourhood but this was not a prerequisite for joining as the common denominator was being open to all people who wanted to participate. Barnaby Noone said during the interview that *the beauty of an assembly is exactly the fact that anyone can join at any given time* and the decision making power is equal among all those present. Since the entire project was dedicated to improving the current features of the area, citizens' participation was seen as essential because they embodied experts, knowing exactly the problems that need to be solved. Some of the persons were also part of other local associations such as the ones of mothers and fathers of the

surrounding schools (AMPAs) or the one called Camí Amic[20], of neighbourhood assemblies as well as cooperatives and self-managed social centres, cultural centres and universities (Recreant Cruïlles, 2012, p. 5). This cluster can be seen as a natural process of formalisation through which weekly assemblies were given a more definite structure through the adoption of a name and the creation of a project to encompass a common vision.

The initial project mentioned five main pillars, each with a dedicated working group:

· creating a community garden

· arranging a multifunctional space for physical activities

· pedestrianizing the adjacent streets and calming down traffic

· claiming the educational community (the insufficient number of schools left 800 children out of the public system, obliging parents to pay for their education in private facilities)

· providing enough space for cultural and social activities to take place

Conscious of the need to gain popularity, Recreant Cruïlles tried to become visible. Using social media, the movement was rapidly acknowledged and appreciated. The local newspapers also promoted all activities with great enthusiasm and in 2012 Espai Germanetes was one of the four finalists in the Best Citizen Initiative Award organized by Time Out Barcelona, a local guide and event magazine (Recreant Cruïlles, 2013, p. 8). Nevertheless the project was basically still not sanctioned by the official authorities and most of the plans remained mere intentions at that time. RC mentioned it aimed to stay open for different possibilities of negotiation with the City Council, since the goal was to achieve the greatest possible consensus. Unlike in other cases, RC had not proceeded to any more violent measures to open up the space and occupy it by force and the Pla BUITS competition was launched in time to avoid this.

The next part will focus on analysing the relation between these two entities once the Pla BUITS contest began and the process of formalization of Espai Germanetes commenced.

The formalisation of Espai Germanetes through Pla BUITS

The project called Pla BUITS will only be briefly recapped here. This initiative of Barcelona's City Council offered 20 vacant spaces that could be temporarily used for free by organizations and non-profit associations. The spaces are leased for maximum three years while the district remains the owner. After being selected in a strict public contest, the users would be allowed to deploy non-profit activities that would energize the space and reintegrate it in the urban fabric, while empowering them with the opportunity to self-organize and engage in their environments.

The strategy was inspired by the numerous civil initiatives that arose all over the city and which, according to the Council, questioned the efficiency of the local government in managing urban and territorial matters (Barcelona City Council, 2014, p. 4). This could mean that the social movement in Espai Germanetes has played a major role in determining the district to offer the

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[20] a pressure platform whose main aim is to make the neighbourhood more pedestrian-friendly, safer and more enjoyable especially for children

vacant plot in the competition. As Groth and Corijn (2005, p. 506) explained, unexpected intervention came from actors that are normally outside the official projects of urban planning and politics, demonstrating that space can be successfully used and managed by everyday citizens as well.

Aware of the fact that it might still take a long time until the public amenities would be constructed, Eixample District considered more advantageous to allow the temporary and alternative use of Espai Germanetes. However, the government decided to unlock only 585m² out of the 5 895m² available (Figure 5). It has been impossible to contact the district directly but all interviewees (including Garaboa and Torras) thought that authorities might have been afraid of opening the entire space because of the potential difficulty in determining users to leave once necessary.

Figure 5 - The larger part the parcel which has not been unlocked by the district
(source: author)

Although cooperation was not planned from the very beginning, RC decided to participate in Pla BUITS with their project. Most members considered that their actions were already aligned to the official requests for *temporary activities of public interest that aim to recover, adapt and enhance these places, in order to regenerate the urban and induce social dynamism in the environment* (Recreant Cruïlles, 2013, p. 8). It must be mentioned though, that the interview with David Benito Carnice revealed that among the ones involved in the assembly there were people who did not agree with this decision and thought it was *a bad compromise for Espai Germanetes*. The latter group believed that complete self-management of the entire space without any sort of constraints would be the normal step since the authorities had not kept their promise for such a long time.

Nonetheless, the majority's voice was more powerful as the common good was aimed at. The application stated the various needs of the district which had already been promised. Moreover, an environmental study showed that Eixample is one of the most polluted areas in the city. Although the environmental quality of the district had been improved in the past 30 years with the recovery of inner courtyards, the traffic still needed to be appeased and the densely built neighbourhood would benefit more from the creation of green spaces than from new constructions. This follows the lines of theorists of vacancy like Jorgensen and Keenan who have already debated the ecological benefits of empty spaces which can improve air's quality and not only.

Recreant Cruïlles were the only ones who applied for receiving the temporary lease of this space. The application was successful because of their motivation: primarily, RC wanted to facilitate a process of participation and active citizenship by shaping a meeting place where neighbours could meet, discuss problems and together work out constructive proposals (Recreant Cruïlles, 2013, p. 10). In this way both social networks and natural ecosystems - embodying public spaces and natural areas (Figure 6) - could be rehabilitated through open, pluralistic and democratic new forms of organization and solidarity (Recreant Cruïlles, 2013, p. 13). Being wide enough in its scope, the project could reach a large number of people that continues to grow with every person that decides to participate in activities or discussions.

Figure 6 - The self-managed community garden in opposition to the larger, unused, locked space behind
(source: author)

The next subchapter will try to map this extensive network of stakeholders by looking at the groups they represent, follow the internal organisation while also trying to identify whether there are any different rationales inside the same group. Moreover, the focus will be to follow how formalising uses in Espai Germanetes through Pla BUITS has changed spatial and social dynamics.

Stakeholders and internal organization

Figure 7 - Espai Germanetes being used by very diverse actors
(source: author)

Nowadays, Espai Germanetes amasses a very comprehensive network of actors (Figure 7). There are different ways in which these actors could be categorized but following H. S. Becker, this thesis will try to focus more on actions than on groups themselves, because most often *people do whatever they have to or whatever seems good to them at the time, and since situations change, there's no reason to expect that they'll act in consistent ways* (Becker, 1998, p. 67). Supposing they will adopt a certain behaviour only because of their adherence to a specific grouping (such as coming from the public or private sphere, having a certain political preference, etc.) can be misleading and empirically unfounded. For this case study it is necessary, nevertheless, to differentiate between four main clusters that play a key role in Espai Germanetes, without assuming that their affiliation will dictate their actions: the initiators and users of the space, the Eixample District, the representatives of Pla BUITS, but also other interested parties and the people in the neighbourhood of Eixample (Figure 8).
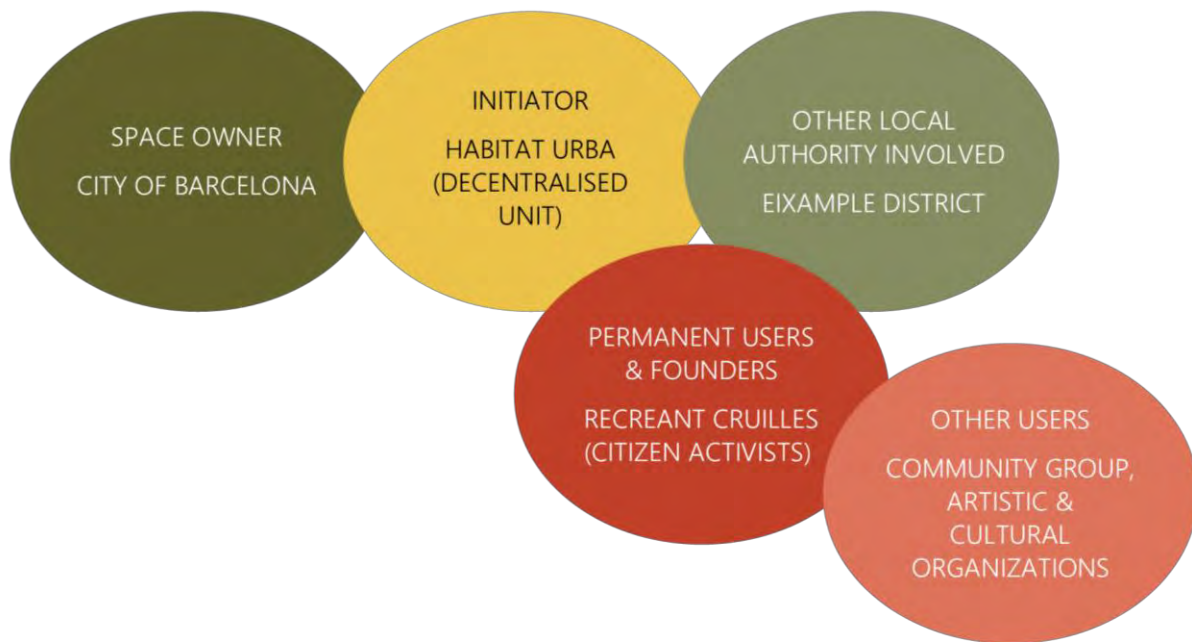
Figure 8 - Stakeholders in Espai Germanetes
(source: author)

To begin with, key players in the development of the project have been the people involved in the 15M movement and whom, after being dispersed by the police, continued meeting inside the neighbourhood, forming the Neighbourhood Assembly[21]. As mentioned before, they have very different social statuses[22], age and even ways of thinking, but have been united by a common desire for more democracy in the social and physical urban processes through which they could exercise their 'right to the city' (Recreant Cruïlles, 2012). Based on the Urban Catalyst research, the initiators of Recreant Cruïlles could be considered *system refugees* who are trying to challenge the current societal configurations, but also *part-time activists* who try to fight for different (ideological) projects. In terms of initial organization, Barnaby Noone said during the interview that assemblies would take place in the beginning on the street but the cold weather started posing problems. Luckily, some of those involved were also active in the Neighbourhood Association[23] which allowed them to gather in their location. Slowly, others from the association started attending the assemblies and the group was increasing steadily. Out of all those involved, four or five considered that Espai Germanetes is an underused space which could solve some of the issues of the area and so the workgroup *Recreant Cruïlles* was formed in order to design a plan and start implementing it as soon as possible.

It is vital to mention again that ideally, an assembly gives each participant the same rights and obligations and an equal amount of power in reaching decisions. However, different interviews have revealed that in reality, there is a tendency for some actors to gain more important functions, whereas others do not get the chance to express their opinion. Miquel Reñé

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[21] Assemblea de l'Esquerra de l'Eixample.
[22] They are students, workers, lawyers, teachers, architects, retired persons, etc.
[23] Associacio de Veins i Veines.

Garaboa talked extensively about how figures such as Francesc Magrinyà would take different forms of leadership and *traditional sensibilities would come to surface*. David Benito Carnice, although among the initiators that supported the idea of unlocking Espai Germanetes, decided to drop out of the assembly because of such issues and also because he considered that some other people involved could not be objective and leave out their personal relationships. Even worse, *for some, assemblies had turned into a simple weekly meeting for drinking and smoking*.

In spite of these problems, RC created their project and continued to organize neighbourhood events to raise people's awareness. The actions regarding Espai Germanetes were often not accepted by the district, creating conflicts between the two parts. Nonetheless, the Pla BUITS call out came in time and demonstrated that the previous actions had been taken into account by the local council's representatives who proposed this location. One of the constraints for Recreant Cruïlles was that the application required a more organised form and an insurance number. Therefore, avoiding to transform their assembly into an organisation, RC chose to participate under the aegis of the Neighbourhood Association but this decision had its liabilities. The Neighbourhood Association depends on the local council for its budget so RC *has now a moral debt to behave well* (Barnaby Noone) and refrain from creating any problems that could compromise both parties.

Having by now many adherents and comprehensive aims, Recreant Cruïlles chose to work on its internal organization depending on the different topics touched. In this sense, the participation is structured under three different levels: individuals, commissions and general assembly. The different commissions are open for anyone and they are established depending on the interests and thematic areas of work (such as communication, education, urban garden, public space, physical activities, etc). The general assembly is the decision making body that meets at least once a month and its ordinary and extraordinary meetings must be announced one week in advance. Meetings are open for anyone who wishes to participate and decisions are democratically reached through the consent of the present persons, making it a very flexible process. However, in case of disagreements between voters, the Urbanism Board of the Neighbourhood Association of Eixample Left can exercise a casting vote in order to ensure that decisions taken are not against the primary objectives. As applicant for the Pla BUITS projects, this board remains the caretaker at all times of the space management and coordination of activities. (Recreant Cruïlles, 2013, p. 15)

Regarding the participation in Pla BUITS, the initial project did not have to change too much in order to fit the lines of the competition. However, D. B. Carnice believes that this involvement was a mistake because collaborating with the authorities automatically meant playing the game for which they established the rules alone. At least from his point of view, mentioning that self-management is only desired until the construction of all public amenities (initially promised by the government) was a compromise for receiving the space. In reality, the densely built neighbourhood would benefit much more from a green space instead of new buildings. Of course, it does not mean that schools and community centres are not needed, but considering the high rate of vacancy, a solution for converting the currently vacant spaces instead of building new ones should be found. This view is not shared by all the users though. Another part only agrees with the construction of the nursery and secondary schools, but not with the housing plan for young and elderly people mostly for the same reasons. The result is the separation of the former from RC into a small group which took the name of *Els 5000*[24] (Figure 9). They are fighting for opening up the space and transforming it into a park: either self-managed by the people or by the city council.

Figure 9 - Banners prepared for advertising the schism of Els 5000
(source: author)

It is important to mention that in March 2015, fed up with waiting for any action from the city, RC organized a farmers' market and a popular paella (Figure 10) by illegally opening the entire 5 000m². The event was very successful since numerous people from the neighbourhood participated (possibly without knowing they had entered the space illegally), but the president of the neighbourhood association kindly asked Recreant Cruïlles not to repeat this action too often. Shortly after, in the end of the month, the works for the primary school had started. It is difficult to establish whether the occupation was an impulse for the administration or if the soon to come elections from May had any influence. Moreover, for some people this is a success of years of neighbourhood activism, whereas for others it is an example that the temporary use was only an interim opportunity for self-management that will soon come to an end.

Figure 10 - Preparing the popular paella
(source: author)

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[24] Referring to the entire surface of Espai Germanetes.

Mentioned hitherto frequently, the *Eixample District* is a decentralized body that represents the interests of this area in the municipality of Barcelona. It has autonomy, decision-making and economic management capacities. In the case of Espai Germanetes, it played a crucial role from the very beginning since districts are empowered not only to choose the spaces which will be opened up for the temporary use, but are also part of the evaluating commission of the competition.

Yet, before this formal interaction between the users and the district's representatives, there seem to have been some conflicts which determined a mutual feeling of mistrust. *The district has this rather paternalistic attitude in dealing with us and the neighbourhood's public spaces* (B. Noone) claiming autonomy in the management. Other actors which might have a more objective view have been interrogated about this relationship as well. Both Torras and Garaboa acknowledged that there are some issues due to the fact that people in Espai Germanetes are considered to be having a rather squatter idiosyncrasy and are seen as difficult to deal with.

One of the events which can be representative both for the district's patronizing attitude and for the members of Recreant Cruïlles' rebellious spirit was the *Inside Out* project mentioned before. The intention of RC was to make the identified problems more evident for the entire neighbourhood, but also to propose the occupation of Espai Germanetes as the locus and solution for some of them. The action was not well received by the district that might have perceived it as an attack and since it has the capacity to decide upon wall paintings, it removed the posters from the walls.

Another action which might have enlarged the gap between the two entities was the decision to open only a very small part of Espai Germanetes compared to the entire area available. Thus, although it legitimized most of the requests made by Recreant Cruïlles through hanging photos on the wall, it only offered limited space for their deployment. A third conflictual event took place with the opening of the park next to Espai Germanetes (Figure 11) for which the city was accused of investing too much money in a poorly designed public space that did not involve any participatory process, so much requested by Recreant Cruïlles. In addition, Joan Sendra Mestre said during the interview that the

Figure 11 - The park created by the district, much less popular (source: author)

ongoing plans for the remaining space are rather unknown for the people in the neighbourhood so RC had asked for a meeting with the authorities in the beginning of July 2015. The intention was to enquire about the development of the area, but also present their alternative, hoping to be taken into account this time. Unfortunately due to the time limitation, it was impossible to follow up with the outcome of these discussions.

Once again, the conflict cannot be generalized for all users because some of them have not shown any aversion regarding the representatives of the district. One interviewee stated: *politicians are not villains, but they are not particularly imaginative or brilliant either. And unfortunately this is what Spain needs now*. Moreover, most users understand that although sometimes regulations are absurd, it can be difficult for the administration to change or disregard them even though they might personally want to. Nonetheless, throughout almost all discussions it appeared that the political change which arrived with the elections is expected to be in favour of such projects like the one in Espai Germanetes.

Another player in Espai Germanetes is the *City of Barcelona* whose role is obviously very important. *Hàbitat Urbà* or the Urban Planning department of Barcelona is the locus of creation for *Pla BUITS* (Figure 12). The Participation Unit which manages the project is an outcome of the previous elections when the urbanism department was merged with others dealing

Figure 12 - Pla BUITS logo
(source: http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/)

with services (such as public facilities) or new technologies. The representatives of Pla BUITS are the facilitators of the entire process and can sometimes act as mediators between the districts and the users. Working on behalf of the city, they are the initiators but play a limited role in terms of contribution, at least the financial one. In general, the maximum investment is in levelling the ground and installing the basic facilities.
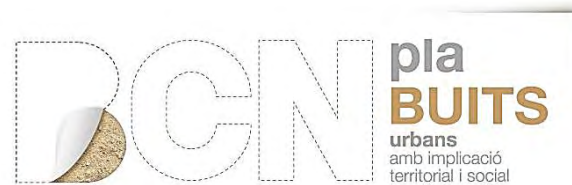
In the case of Espai Germanetes, most of the interviewed users perceived the district and the agents of Pla BUITS as two distinct entities, although in the end they need to act according to the same lines. They tend to agree that the people working for Pla BUITS are much more open minded and willing to leave space for participation for everyday citizens. For example, Barnaby Noone stated that in Espai Germanetes, they have hardly had any limitations imposed in the beginning (except for the social orientation of activities and the condition to be non-commercial) and that discussions are mostly positive.

From their side, representatives of Pla BUITS are trying to shift the impression people have on the administration in general, considering that dialogue is very important and that citizens should start looking at authorities as collaborators and not adversaries. However, during the second meeting Miquel Reñé Garaboa expressed his discontent with the evolution in Espai Germanetes where some users expect the authorities to collaborate and act like partners, while they still follow their hidden aims. It was impossible to find out what exactly was he referring to, yet he also mentioned the sometimes unreal expectations of Recreant Cruïlles. *Some of these users have the impression they are conducting the most successful project in Pla BUITS* said Garaboa who insisted that there are also others (maybe smaller in scope or number of participants) which are equally successful. Therefore, the different sensibilities should disappear and the provision of well-being for the entire neighbourhood should be pursued.

With respect to the formalization of the temporary use, Pla BUITS is a living example of the professionalization of citizens' initiative. It can be seen from two points of view: either as the initiator, promoter and facilitator of temporary use or a tool for control and regulation of vacant spaces which had already been appropriated in one way or another by individuals or communities.

Last but not least, it is important to acknowledge the role played by other entities from the neighbourhood. Since some initiators (and most of the times also beneficiaries) have been active in both, strong connections exist between RC and the Local Associations of Mothers and Fathers of the Surrounding Schools (AMPAs) and the association Camí Amic. Furthermore, the social network would encompass many more interested parties: associations linked to urban or architectural matters (such as Idensitat, Arquitecturas Colectivas, Straddle3, Makea), groups of alternative movements (like the Universitat Indignada) as well as artists and student groups. In addition, some people living in the neighbourhood might get involved only from time to time, either during events or only when matters concerning them are being discussed (Figure 13). For them, formalising the use in Espai Germanetes might have been the only opportunity for any kind of intervention in this space, especially if we refer to children or the elderly population.

Figure 13 - Dwellers from Eixample neighbourhood enjoying the farmers' market organised by RC on the adjacent street
(source: author)

Final remarks regarding Espai Germanetes

In conclusion, the formalisation of temporary use of vacant spaces through the programme called Pla BUITS has had a significant effect on all actors involved. For the initiators and users (grouped around Recreant Cruïlles) it has been both an opportunity for legally deploying their plan, but also a limitation both in terms of time and space. The possibility to continue self-managing Espai Germanetes is seriously restricted because of the creation of public facilities, although considering the reality, their postponing leaves more time. Nonetheless, the users do not always play by the rules imposed by the authorities, challenging some already

established lines and sometimes engendering conflicts. The spatial constraint imposed by the district has caused frustration among some users who decided to segregate themselves from the initial group and fight for the occupation and self-management of the entire surface.

On the other side, the district has had to open the realm of building a city for everyday people as well. Although able to control the activities, it has lost the monopoly of management of public spaces at least for a very small part of the city. The representatives of Pla BUITS have not only gained new functions with the creation of the programme, but are also responsible for its evolution. They seem willing to learn from previous mistakes and improve the coming editions while still struggling to mediate between the citizens and the city. The city of Barcelona might have improved its reputation for being flexible and open to experiments which recognize the residents' savoir-faire and empower them.

In general, the neighbourhood has benefited from the opening of a space whose value had depreciated and was seen as a wasteland while citizen initiatives were lacking space for organisation. Overall, the programme has brought together very different actors who have been put in a new situation where dialogue and collaboration was a requirement. Nonetheless, actors still maintain their traditionally established positions. In the initial phase, authorities have a higher degree of control and decision-making, while citizens are a subordinated part which is given the opportunity to act but needs to do it according to the lines imposed. If accepted, users' contribution is then evaluated at the end of each year in order to decide whether the project should go on for another year. It is true though, that in reality, no project has been disregarded, cancelled or removed (at least for now). Unfortunately, even Laia Torras who is the chief of the Participation Direction believes that Pla BUITS, just like other examples of temporary use, has had more impact in literature and academic circles than in real life. Nevertheless, although the factual impact is very limited, allowing temporary uses of vacant plots is almost always a better idea than leaving them unused. It also challenges existing neoliberal and capitalist rationales for which city branding and large scale projects (flagship projects) have replaced the more citizen-oriented and lower-scale ways of building the city.

TEMPORARY USE IN COPENHAGEN

The Danish capital has evolved during the past three decades into a very popular destination especially for young persons in search of a city that promises much more than only accommodation and employment. Well known for the rather high degree of freedom experienced as part of daily city life, Copenhagen's familiarity with temporary initiatives is worth following, proving to be an interesting and multifaceted case study. Both this evolution and the chosen case study seem to be different in some respects (rationale, orientation, etc.) when compared to Barcelona, but there are also similar behaviours and patterns. The next part will follow briefly some of these initiatives to see if they left any marks and influenced the evolution of temporary use in Copenhagen. The next subchapters will discuss some differently-shaped projects and will finish by describing the official actions that have included the promotion and implementation of temporary uses throughout the city, driving in this way its formalisation.

First Initiatives of a Restless City

A study conducted by the city of Århus[25] defined temporary activities from the title as a *tool for urban development* (Århus Kommune, 2008). By temporary they refer to any activities of limited duration, *from an event of few hours to more than 30 years – like in the case of Christiania* (Århus Kommune, 2008, p. 7). It is thought-provoking that although Christiania is given as an example of temporary use, the presentation starts by acknowledging that forms of temporary use have first been observed in the 90s in Copenhagen. As opposed to that, Birke's article[26] brings up the *Free City*[27] *of Christiania*, *Ungdomshuset*, as well as *Bolsjefabrikken* to argument that local initiatives for using vacant spaces have faced opposition and encountered numerous difficulties for a long time in Copenhagen, giving rise to unseen social strife (Ziehl et al., 2012, pp. 378-381).

Christiania's case is definitely exceptional since this (semi-)autonomous community was born in 1971 as a squat of a 34ha abandoned military base. Against all odds, it survived for more than 40 years in spite of its central location, on a land with enormous real estate value nowadays. The area is a classic example of a space that lost its function and temporarily its value, but it was appreciated and appropriated by informal actors. Its foundation was laid on principles, ideologies and practices typical for the cultural revolution of the 60s, still distinguishable today (Coppola and Vanolo, 2014), although to a debatable extent. The self-governed collective tried to resist normalization and regularization that the Danish authorities fought to impose for many years. Impossible to do away with, it had been tolerated (especially because of its immense value as touristic attraction) as a *social experiment* by the Danish government. Nonetheless, in 2012 a set of special rules and procedures that reframed (and refrained) Christiania's autonomy was negotiated (Coppola and Vanolo, 2014, p. 14). Therefore, an extremely controversial formalisation process started. Through this signed agreement, the Free Town of Christiania was recognized and thus had its survival guaranteed, but at the same time various aspects that used to be self-regulated by the community are now controlled. The process encompasses the buy-out of most of the area and buildings by the Christiania Foundation for which an increase in the community

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[25] The second-largest city in Denmark.
[26] *Between the Poles of Normalization and Gentrification.*
[27] Written in italics by Peter Birke too, in order to emphasize the partial loss of independence experienced by the community.

taxes is necessary. In addition, a small number of buildings (which still belong to the state) will be demolished and locals will be relocated, but compared to previous arrangements which targeted many more constructions, this is considered a success. It is a compromise that modifies the stance of all parties concerned, as well as an example of a temporary use that went through a change of status in order to be sanctioned and maybe convert into permanent.

Another civic initiative turned into a social struggle came with the notorious Ungdomshuset (Youth House), set up in 1982 in a vacant building owned by the government. Activists were allowed to create and self-administer a youth centre for an unlimited amount of time, becoming a hotspot for the city's underground culture (Ziehl et al., 2012, p. 378). However, in 1999 the building was sold to a private investor despite the latter's clear intentions of eviction, demonstrating the argument raised by scholars like Andres (2013), Foo (2015) or Lawson (2004) who consider that civic initiatives are permitted by authorities only until another more profitable opportunity appears. The community's struggle for autonomy continued for eight years[28] until a Danish police anti-terror unit cleared the occupied space, causing what the Danish sociologist Rene Karpantschof (cited by Peter Birke) described as *one of the most prominent and certainly most significant conflicts in the history of social protests in Scandinavia* (Ziehl et al., 2012, p. 379). Ungdomshuset received another space where it could carry on with its cultural, political and physical activities, a bit further away to the north but the case shows that market logics tend to come out victorious, regardless if they had been challenged for a certain amount of time.

Bolsjefabrikken[29] is also worth mentioning mostly because some of its initiators are also part of the Container City, the chosen Danish case study. Moreover, the user-controlled cultural centre left an important legacy in the present, although it was evicted after one year and the building has been tore down. Today the private investor that transformed it into a residential area is proud to advertise the history of the previous factory and later cultural centre. In an attempt to legitimize the demolition and complete transformation, the owner specifies that the construction was in very bad conditions. *The non-profit, non-commercial space* that focuses on *cultural, social and political activities* (Bolsjefabrikken's website) has moved and operates in two different locations which are both known under the same name, even though none of the two spaces has ever had any link to the food industry. Again, it is a highly arguable case: it shows indeed that temporary use can reassert value and especially that civic initiatives have the capacity to give identity to a derelict space. Moreover, it remains representative because of its symbolic legacy and its significance for the avant-garde cultural scene of Copenhagen. Nonetheless, it is another arena of freedom that lost the battle with the real estate market forces which continue to profit from its fame.

Noticeably, the nature of all of the aforementioned examples is similar: they are all cases of audacious people that were aware of the existing social needs and decided to challenge the current conditions, even if that came in conflict with different laws and regulations. Vacant and abandoned spaces put their imagination to a test and allowed them to create an alternative for the reality. However, these initiatives should not be romanticized. Both interviewees from the City

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[28] As trials were accompanied by barricade battles, occupations, as well as artistic representations and events all over Nørrebro neighbourhood.
[29] Danish name for Candy Factory, denoting the former activity of the building.

of Copenhagen confirmed that negotiating with people is oftentimes difficult because of their rebellious character. In the end, autonomy over a space can determine deprivation for others so the government must carefully maintain the balance whether it chooses to formalise or ban a certain use.

Later initiatives are up to a point, comparable, but of a much more entrepreneurial nature. It is significant to examine also how their initiators were often titled[30]: a small group of *creative young* persons. The next chapter will focus on these first signs before moving on to what might be a turn of events for the history of temporary activities in Copenhagen, its self-definition and promotion as creative city.

Embracing the Temporary

These first entrepreneurial initiatives such as *Basecamp*, *Thorsen*, *Luftkastellet* and *Pappa Hotel* are evidently different in motivation but also organisation. As examples of kick-starters[31] for the place's next development, initiators negotiated directly with private owners. Permission was given to use the space, managing to transform the old industrial harbours of the city centre into a recreational area (combining beach cafés and an open air cinema with facilities for paintball and golf). Although not existing anymore, they are remembered as an ingenious (for that period, at least) example of seeing potential in a place which had definitely lost meaning and functionality for most people. Although some of the activities had a very short time span, they left noticeable marks on the city. Besides igniting the private investors' attention[32], they have remained in the collective memory. Mikkel Mindegaard, project leader of the Urban Life Department said: *Pappa Hotel, Luftkastellet and Basecamp were temporary use examples but were still an exception, a grassroots movement and not a strategic tool.*

In addition, some of the entrepreneurs continued their activities throughout the city, changing location as soon as the terms stopped being convenient, turning into free-flow cases. Interesting enough, most of these spaces hosted numerous cultural meetings and debates. An outcome of these has been the Urban Development Laboratory *Super Tanker*, whose founder (Erik Skibsted Hey) is cooperating today with CPH City & Port Development[33]. He has delivered ideas, programmed and helped executing PLUG N PLAY, a temporary urban activity park which will be discussed in greater depth later.

Nonetheless, in Copenhagen's history of formalising temporary usages, a milestone was put only in 2005 when the new municipal plan was adopted, designating eight zones as creative and two as potential. Although the document did not specify exactly that these creative zones were dedicated to temporary activities, it emphasized that small creative industries and craft companies wanted cheap and flexible leases so a change had to be made in order to maintain the existing business areas' mixed nature and attractiveness (Københavns Kommune, 2014a).

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[30] During interviews but also in the study commissioned by Århus.

[31] Based on the Urban Catalyst categorization of temporary uses. (Oswalt et al., 2013)

[32] One of the initiators said that the value of the space increased in only six months from 10.000 to 1.000.000 Danish Kroner. (Århus Kommune, 2008, p.5)

[33] An urban development company jointly owned by the City of Copenhagen (95%) and the Danish state (5%).

Trying to avoid the extensively discussed connection between temporary use and creativity proved impossible. The word *creative* came up in almost all interviews and besides, the existing planning documents had placed the *creative players* at centre. Thus, the next part will be a short introduction to how Copenhagen has started *singing the same ode to creativity* (Lund Hansen et al., 2001, p. 851) like all other big cities in their competitive attempt of attracting investors and becoming globally recognized.

A potentially creative city

In the attempt to trace back the moment when the creative city discourse[34] took shape in Copenhagen, Lund Hansen et al. (2001) agree that it started being noticeable especially around the 2000s with Pia Gjellerup's[35] speeches. Their analysis places the creative city strategies in the context of globalization, urban governance and social change. Aware that it might not be able to compare itself with Paris or London, Copenhagen was still trying to become a hotspot by investing in the nurturing of its *creative class* so various efforts[36] were made for more visibility and even institutionalisation of this idea (Lund Hansen et al., 2001, p. 853).

Making technology, creativity and tolerance a development rationale became an aim expressed in speeches and strategic documents that considered them the driving force behind the city's economic growth and progress. The designated (10) creative and (3) potential areas aimed at *maintaining existing business areas mixed character and offer attractive localization for small creative businesses and craft businesses that want cheap and flexible leases* (Københavns Kommune, 2014a). The municipality has tried throughout the years to improve the circumstances of these zones and has consulted also the stakeholders. Although some of them complained about the established maximum plot ratio of 60% (considered a constraint for the existing businesses and landowners who aspired to expand beyond this barrier), Jens Kvorning, professor at the Danish Architecture and Design School, said during the interview: *Copenhagen made a very clever move with this limitation because it helped maintaining these zones appropriate only for small industries and firms. Big developers could not be forbidden to buy these parcels, but they were discouraged from building here housing or office spaces.* Thus, the administration's attempt to support small-scale industries is acting at the same time as a limitation for them and a form of control for larger investors.

The potential zones are also important to mention as they host, in fact, initiatives of temporary use. Besides the private one coming from Carlsberg Byen[37], the two others have been formalised by the city itself. Mentioned before, PLUG N PLAY is a provisional park built in Ørestad South[38] by CPH City & Port Development. Asked about the motivation, Peter Larsson said: *the company was set up to develop and sell areas in Copenhagen in order to earn money and finance*

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[34] Through which *creativity* became a mandatory asset (and toolkit) for cities aiming for prosperity and a high rank in the global competition. (Lund Hansen et al., 2001, pp. 851-852)

[35] At that time in charge of the Minister of Trade and Industry.

[36] Like cultural establishments (Learning Lab Denmark), funding of emblematic buildings (Arken Museum, The Black Diamond) and creation of environments that would attract world renowned companies (including better infrastructure, high-end shopping centres and exclusive residential areas).

[37] This is transforming the former Carlsberg Brewery into a mixed-use neighbourhood. The project was paused because of the financial crisis, making space for temporary initiatives. Not planned from the beginning, art exhibitions, dance halls, small cafes and sport amenities were formalised and used as a strategic choice for advertising and portraying the company as progressive, innovative and committed to doing something untraditional. (Realdania By, 2013, p. 9)

[38] A newer development of Copenhagen which has been often criticized for lacking life and character.

the new metro. Thus, all efforts concentrated on bringing profit and since Ørestad South needed to be activated and given identity, a temporary urban activity site came as a solution. This pioneer temporary use was hence formalised by the city on a hitherto unused territory. Initially planned for five years, the urban park has survived already seven and Larsson said *it would be kept at least for one more year*. The developers have tried to assess the success of each part and will decide which ones are worth keeping. It can be said that the project worked as an experiment, allowing to test before investing, but the costs have been substantial.

The other potential area located in Nordhavn, the newest urban development which is transforming the north harbour of the city into a mixed use neighbourhood, is also owned by CPH City & Port Development. In March 2015, a part of PB43 (probably the most discussed example of temporary use in Copenhagen) provisionally set up its location there, having to pay a rent almost equal to normal market prices. It might be a sign that in Copenhagen temporary use is not necessarily anymore a cheap solution for small-scale industries.

Besides all these formal actions, it is worth mentioning that, unlike in Barcelona, the idea of temporary use has been included in numerous Danish strategic and planning documents[39]. From this point of view, temporary use might be more popular among the politicians from Copenhagen who seem to have always the same target: the city must *strategically make use of the creative actors* in the global urban competition (Københavns Kommune, 2009a, p. 3). A research conducted with the aim of *identifying barriers and opportunities in legislation and case management with the scope of promoting the temporary use of urban spaces and buildings* (Københavns Kommune, 2009a) interviewed *creative players* and developers. Users are always the creatives who need affordable and interesting places to carry out their activities while developers search for generating added value to their investment. Reading this gives the impression that there could be no opposing grounds or goals and that temporary use can work on all levels, legitimizing the attention gained throughout the authorities. In addition, the research investigated best case examples not only from Denmark, but also Germany where *urban pioneers* benefitted from a specially adapted legislation (Københavns Kommune, 2009a). Mikkel Mindegaard said during the interview that no city in Denmark has hitherto made this step so every new case must be evaluated individually, increasing the length for all administrative procedures.

The emphasis is constantly put on the need to revitalize certain urban areas where life is lacking and the growing need for new and improved cultural, leisure and green spaces could be solved by establishing temporary city space, city gardens, playing fields, local sports facilities and halls (Københavns Kommune, 2011). Although much more popular at least in theory, temporary use does not seem to have the same orientation towards engendering citizen participation who remain spectators in *the secret, the eccentric and the temporary* (Københavns Kommune, 2010, p. 54).

The conclusion to all these documents is that temporary use is seen as a positive action to be facilitated and supported but enthusiasm has seldom been accompanied by very specific actions. Legislation has to be changed to adapt to conditions needed by temporary users (no or cheap rent, relaxed legal permits, etc.) and work must be done across different municipal departments so as to avoid bureaucratic deadlocks that can damage or even kill initiatives. Moreover, the array of possible users and uses needs to be extended to include non-lucrative

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[39] Like the 2009's Business Plan, the Cultural Strategy 2009-2011, the 2009 and 2011 Municipal Plans, etc.

social and leisure activities as well and the rationale should move away from what seems to be a ubiquitous intention of making an area more appealing for investment and growth. From this point of view it becomes obvious that the formalisation of temporary use in Copenhagen and Barcelona might be differently incentivised.

The next part will describe shortly another one of Copenhagen's action meant to improve the living environment through neighbourhood renewal projects because this appeared to be a new step for formalising temporary use.

Not much Vacancy but a Need for Renewal

Since it is generally difficult to determine the amount of vacancy in a city (especially in a context where a large part of it is privately owned), local initiatives in London, New York or Budapest[40] have tried to create an open source platform where people would be able to report any vacant or abandoned space, raising awareness about possible redevelopment. Although Copenhagen does not have to face high vacancy rates, it does not mean neighbourhoods do not need to be upgraded.

Indeed, low vacancy rates are not necessarily indicative of a thriving, problem-free neighbourhood. Copenhagen has been carrying on programmes of urban renewal for more than three decades now in areas with low scores in other structural and economic parameters[41]. One of the parts on which the attention is concentrated between 2013 and 2018 is called Fuglekvarteret[42], and the actions are described as a *holistic effort to lift the neighbourhood culturally, socially and physically* (Københavns Kommune, 2013, p. 2). As a matter of fact, Kristoffer Theisen, the project leader of Fuglekvarteret Area Renewal mentioned during the interview that sometimes commercial properties can be vacant because many businesses fail in the area, unable to survive the big competition created by their similar profile. Nevertheless, they are very quickly replaced by other companies.

The appellation *soft* or *gentle* urban renewal was used by Fassmann and Hatz (2006) in the context of Vienna, but Copenhagen has also aimed for a non-traumatic process that would avoid gentrification and maintain the city as a *socially just space* (Larsen and Hansen, 2008, p. 2429). Unfortunately, evidence has shown that at least in the case of Vesterbro Neighbourhood, the consequences were very different from the intentions since the uplift, sanitised spaces have pushed some of the socioeconomically vulnerable inhabitants out, (Larsen and Hansen, 2008) giving birth to an iconic picture of a gentrified district.

In the case of Fuglekvarteret it is much too early to assess consequences but one of the actions taken is interesting for the goal of this research. Besides efforts to rehabilitate roads, modernise dwellings, create small pocket parks and reconnect the area to the city, the renewal office also decided to open up an empty plot and allow its temporary use. The next chapter will explore this officially generated project called the Container City (Container By).

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[40] See for example https://lakatlan.crowdmap.com/ or https://vacantnyc.crowdmap.com/.
[41] Such as unemployment, low quality of the building stock, lack of basic and public facilities, etc.
[42] Could translate into *Birds' Neighbourhood.*

COPENHAGEN CASE STUDY: THE CONTAINER CITY

There were only Romas and junkies and graffiti makers that used the space. We want a constant flow of normal people in the area.
(Fuglekvarteret Area Renewal)

The vacant space and its previous informal use

Part of the Fuglekvarteret Area Renewal, the long, narrow plot of land on Ørnevej 3 is owned by the city of Copenhagen and is located at the intersection of Nørrebro and Bispebjerg neighbourhoods (Figure 14), right next to the rail tracks that take to Nørrebro Station. For the moment, the station only serves the urban rail network (S-Train), but is included in the expansion of the metro's City Circle Line which will be accomplished in the next years. Nonetheless, the history of this piece of open land is rather simple because the space has officially been used in the past only as storage for trains. It could actually be included in Northam's (1971) category of *remnant parcels* which are generally undeveloped and often considered undevelopable. The inconvenient shape of the plot and the noise pollution provoked by the trains prevented it from other usages. But, as Becker (1998, p. 220) considered, an object's physical properties are only constraining the possibilities of using the object when and if a person uses the object the way it is usually used. Thus, once the old trains were taken out, the plot was left unused by the local council, allowing however informal and often illicit activities such as squatting, substance abuse and graffiti to occur.

Kristoffer Theisen, from the Area Renewal, confessed that the land and its surroundings are slowly gaining more and more importance. Nørrebro neighbourhood is well known for its multiculturalism and a great mix of people, including categories that face certain economic or social challenges. Some smaller parts have been declared 'ghettos' by the municipality because of visible problems[43]. However, Nørrebro station represents the third biggest traffic junction in Copenhagen so the need to transform the space in more respects than simply infrastructure is high. The city is expanding towards the north and this direction is also attracting developers who *want to tear everything down and build new, hideous things* (Kristoffer Theisen).

However, at least for the space on Ørnevej 3, the city of Copenhagen has a different plan. The plot is enclosed between constructions and the rail tracks, having only one edge opened. The Southern end is abutted by a building owned by the municipality but rented to a private person on the basis of a six month renewable contract. The house is used for a private workshop and storage now but will be torn down as soon as the official plans for the new cycle path[44] will receive the approval and the necessary funds to start. For the moment, the bike path has not been financed yet but it was mentioned in the Municipal Plans, leaving the plot empty and available for alternative functions. Of course, defining the space as *empty* is in reality inaccurate since there were certain affairs going on, just not the ones the officials would have wanted. As

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[43] Such as increased presence of mentally ill and substance abusers on the streets and in public spaces or playgrounds. (Københavns Kommune, 2013, p. 16)

[44] Designed to cross over and connect Ørnevej to Glentevej.

Doron (2000) believed, all places which might be considered by some *derelict areas* or *wastelands* have in fact much more than the nothingness linked to them: they have never been entirely void and their various features can tell about the urban processes which have led to the current state.

For the land in discussion though, the alternative functions desired by authorities would ideally serve to change the perception over this zone and recreate the feeling of security which was diminished by the closed edges and the undesirable activities. The next part will develop on the solution found by the Area Renewal to solve what they define as a social problem.
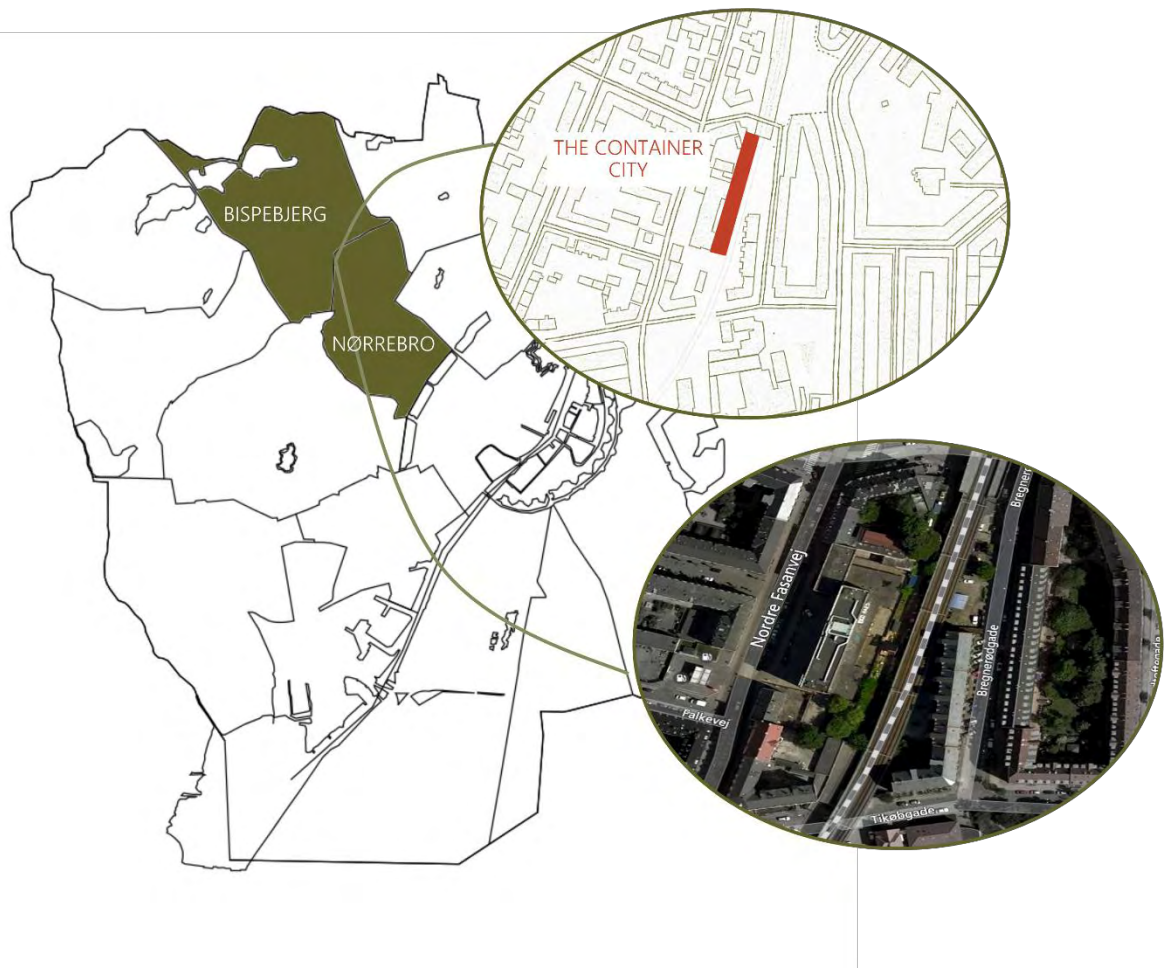
Figure 14 - Location of the Container City
(own compilation, Copenhagen districts map: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copenhagen_Municipality#Districts; street map: https://www.mapbox.com; satellite view: https://www.google.com/maps)

The formalisation of temporariness

Generally, neighbourhood renewal programmes target well defined areas in a city and can come up with different small projects, but the overall improvement is expected to happen at city level and not just punctually (Miller, 1959, p. 7). Fuglekvarteret Area Renewal's scheme goes along these lines in an attempt to uplift the environment physically, socially and culturally so as

to help the neighbourhood reach the same level of development as the city of Copenhagen[45]. All actions are theoretically trying to implicate people in designing schemes, implementing projects and reaching decisions but two different employees of the area renewal have admitted that it is sometimes very difficult to stimulate participation. They try, nevertheless, to facilitate the cooperation between communities, associations, private companies and public institutions.

Among the more specific actions is the opening of the plot located on Ørnevej 3 (Figure 15). Temporary use is one of the strategies that the area renewal has had either to create more life or to stimulate reactions from the citizens. Nonetheless, all other actions were mostly organized under the form of short events. For this location, Kristoffer Theisen confessed they did not have a clear vision for development, but the discussions revealed loud and clear the desire to change the groups that were occupying the place. The idea was to *generate a constant stream of normal people* in a space that had no precise designation, despite its *interesting appearance* and *strong urban qualities* (Kristoffer Theisen). It seems thus, that the potential was clearly acknowledged by the officials but since the actions of the area renewal have to be aligned to Copenhagen's local policies and strategies, they knew permanence was not an option. In addition, temporary use could be used as testbed to know which things would be worth investing in in the future. Also, the success of the interim actions could determine the central unit to supplement the financial aid given each year (Kristoffer Theisen).

Figure 15 - The plot of land before being unlocked for temporary use by the area renewal
(source: http://cargocollective.com/containerby/Skitser-Planer)

Hence, without expecting something particular, members of the Area Renewal had a *lucky encounter*[46] with Bureau Detours (BD), a cultural collective in search of affordable space to develop its project. Its profile and the proposal member came up with seemed suitable to *activate the space* so an agreement was signed in January 2014. K. Theisen said that without having a previous model to follow, the arrangement was conjointly drafted with Bureau Detours and remained general enough to allow modifications that different situations might ask for. However,

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[45] The different ideas include improving the living conditions of the citizens (by modernising dwellings with basic facilities), redesigning public spaces which for the moment are isolated and uninviting, increasing the feeling of security, attracting more social enterprises to provide employment opportunities, as well as inviting more people to move in.
[46] None of the actors could give more precise information about how the idea to collaborate came to life, making in a way questionable its degree of transparency

Loui Andersen Salinas, project leader at BD, confessed that Bureau Detours members wrote the document themselves and the area renewal simply approved it.

As such, the formalisation of the temporary use came under the form of an agreement between the Fuglekvarteret Area Renewal and Bureau Detours. First and foremost, the one year agreement allowed Bureau Detours to use the space freely, without having to pay any rent. The contract could be renewed every year until 2018 (when the Area Renewal ends) or anytime the city announces the commencement of the bike path. At the same time, it could also be suspended by either part with a three month prior notice. There would be no additional funding from the authorities, except for the setting up of the needed infrastructure (electricity, waste, etc.) and for the organization of workshops imposed by the area renewal. The area renewal considered their attribution to finance the installation of facilities since Bureau Detours will have to move at some point and would not be able to take this investment with them. Still, the users were expected to pay for their consumption. The interview with Salinas revealed a different reality, though: *we had to solve this issue alone so we improvised something but we are still expecting them to pay* (Figure 16). It was difficult to further investigate this but it seems to be a classic problem which appeared in the case of Barcelona as well, with a visible retrenchment from the side of the government.

Figure 16 - BD's improvised electric box
(source: author)

Then, in exchange for all these Bureau Detours was asked *to host public workshops, exhibitions, create an urban garden and any other activities that can give positive attention for the neighbourhood and the city.* For this, they presented the idea of a *Container City* (Figure 17), a *movable and removable culture centre* (Loui Andersen Salinas) where social entrepreneurs can work on their projects by using the facilities provided by BD inside different large shipping containers.
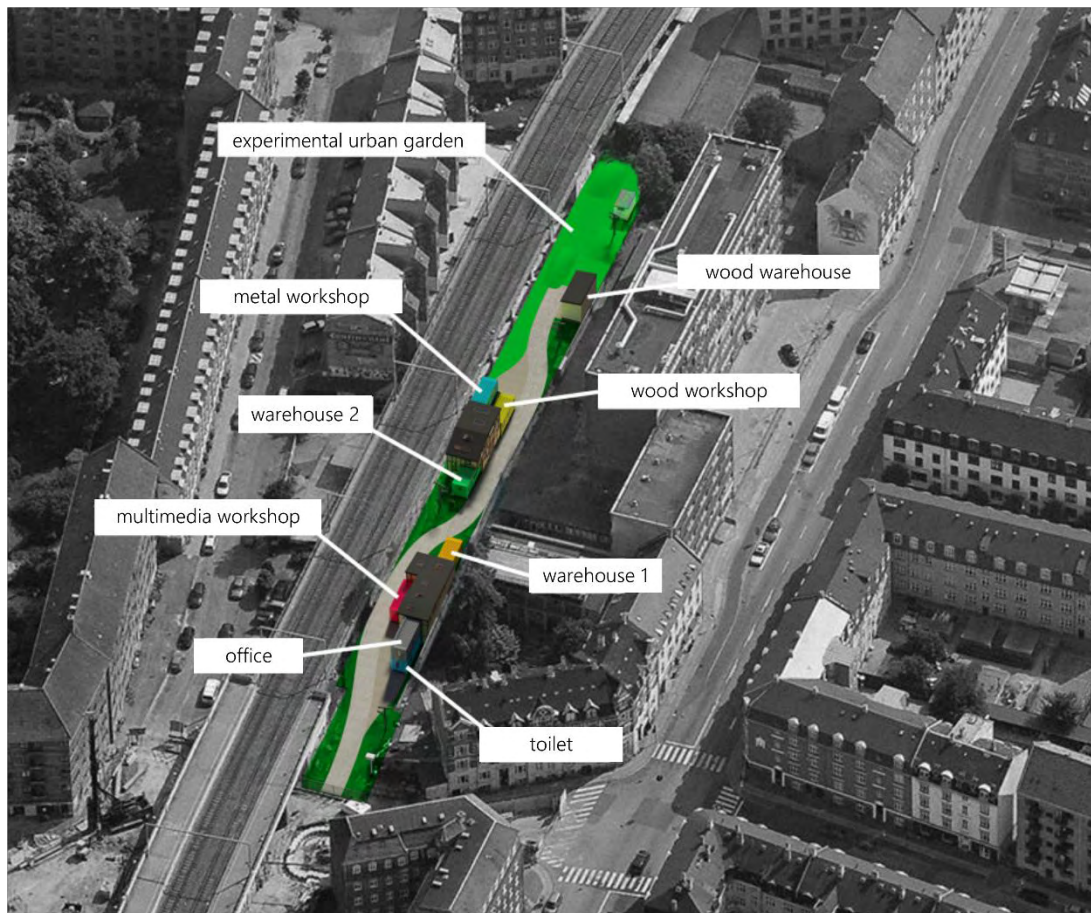
Figure 17 - The initial plan for the Container City created by BD and approved by the area renewal
(source: http://cargocollective.com/containerby/Skitser-Planer; name tags translated by author)

In January 2015 there were eight such containers (Figure 18) but the plan was to bring in more, although a precise number was not decided yet. Each container has a different function and is appropriately equipped to function as a carpentry studio, a metal workshop, a radio station, a stage, as well as a kitchen or a place for socializing. Some of the containers can be taken and moved throughout the city whenever there is an event which requires it (such as the radio station or the one which can be converted into a stage). BD is not allowed to charge rent since the ground is not theirs, but they can sell their work and impose prices for the entrepreneurs using the different tools and work spaces. Moreover, the agreement stated Bureau Detours' responsibility of maintaining the area clean and attractive to visitors. The back of the plot is also hosting a community garden.

Figure 18 - Different containers in the City
(source: author)

The Container City had to involve also people living in the neighbourhood by organizing at least three public activities each year. Loui Andersen Salinas confessed this requirement was not a problem since Bureau Detours was planning to host events much more often than this. Nonetheless, BD members were not the only responsible for it as the area renewal announced they might propose different activities and workshops aimed at encouraging more people to participate, make use of the space and enlarge, thus the network of actors. This constellation will be presented next.

Stakeholders and internal organization

The Container City project has managed to assemble together different types of actors (Figure 19): the initiator is in this case, the Fuglekvarteret Area Renewal who is acting in the name of the City of Copenhagen, the owner of the space. The permanent users are members of the Bureau Detours collective, while the participants to different workshops and events could be considered secondary users. Last but not least, the financer of the project, Realdania, has had a crucial role for the development.
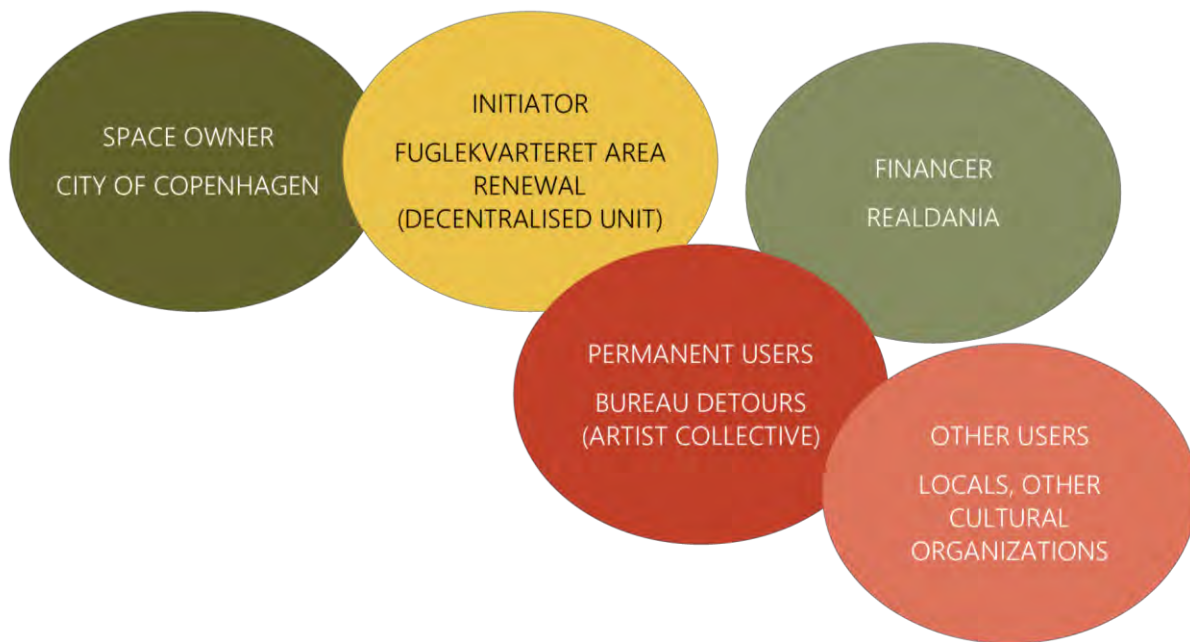
Figure 19 - Stakeholders in the Container City

Like in the case of Barcelona, the city of Copenhagen has also created a special unit to act in its name. Yet unlike in Spain and its Pla BUITS, the decentralized unit from Copenhagen is handling much more than just projects of temporary use. Controlled by the Technical and Environmental department, the area renewal schemes were described by Theisen as *a mix between a user-generated and an officially-generated project with a five year lifespan*. Parts of neighbourhoods are selected by the city and the area renewal office must draft a plan together with the local forces. Afterwards, the plan needs to be approved by the city council who is also the financier.

In the case of *Fuglekvarteret Area Renewal* (Figure 20), residents, associations, schools and businesses in the neighbourhood were asked to participate by expressing their needs and if possible, proposing solutions. One representative said: *we are a decentralized unit so we have more flexibility, for example to invest money in private areas. The city cannot do that directly*.

Figure 20 - Fuglekvarteret Area Renewal's logo (source: https://www.kk.dk/fuglekvarteret)

Unfortunately, the initial written project is oftentimes a limitation because it is hard to sanction changes. As a matter of fact, the project seems to have the same function as a masterplan but since area renewals take place in rapidly changing places, strategies might be better adapted on the go.

As a result, making some space for temporary use permitted less rigidity. This is a proof that temporary use is not necessarily the

antithesis for long term planning[47], but in fact, it can be successfully integrated within. Kristoffer Theisen actually admitted that the temporary status often grants a lack of restrictions which is not conceivable otherwise. Things must be done quickly and even if they might come against regulations, they are most probably accepted because of their momentary nature. Many of the situations that arise are completely new for the area renewal (especially in the case of temporary use which is still largely unused) and so representatives of the different area renewals try to communicate among themselves to see whether there is a precedent. In the case of the Container City though, solutions are mainly discussed with BD.

Bureau Detours is a cultural collective of about 40 persons with different professions such as *architects, designers, sound artists, light artists, garden planners, visual artists and many more* (Bureau Detours, 2011, p. 3). They have departments around Europe[48] and the collective came to life after a *spontaneous street party which went well in Århus* and which led to the famous Institut for (X), an example of temporary use considered very successful[49]. Throughout its various projects, BD tries to put the limits of the public space to a test and engender a *second generation city planning* by encouraging new relations and interactions between people. The members work either independently or jointly, depending on the project, but they cannot use this appellation for their products because *Bureau Detours* is only a brand. Each person has a different firm, each project receiving a separate name and one or two persons in charge, like the Container City. Regarding their organization, they believe their meeting structure is out of the ordinary because they have *mini meetings* (which can also happen over the phone, email or Skype) *and two larger annual meetings for everyone* (Bureau Detours, 2013, p. 3).

During the interview, Salinas said that they like challenging the existing societal order and experimenting. The Container City is led by him and Benny Henningsen, two persons who have been active on the cultural underground scene of the city[50]. Besides, numerous other BD projects have involved researching and teaching, as well as conference lectures about design, architecture, place creation, citizen participation and alternative ways of building the city. The research also revealed that all current users of the Container City have other occupations beyond because they would not be able to financially sustain themselves otherwise[51].

Economic issues were oftentimes mentioned throughout the meetings and some of the biggest discontents with the city seem to come from here. BD has had to pay for everything which was brought or made, besides cleaning and arranging the space and improvising a solution for providing electricity. Thus, its members consider illegitimate any demands coming from the area renewal. Nonetheless, some workshops required by the authorities which were held in the Container City received funds from the area renewal when requested. One of them consisted of involving young delinquents in different activities to help them integrate or even find employment (since one of the objectives of the government is to socially uplift the

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[47] Idea put forward by Haydn and Temel (2007).
[48] Århus, Copenhagen and Kolding in Denmark, Oslo in Norway, Berlin in Germany and Bordeaux in France.
[49] Mentioned also by Haydn and Temel (2006) and Oswalt et al. (2013).
[50] Especially through their involvement in the opening of Bolsjefabrikken.
[51] L. A. Salinas is for instance, a secondary school art teacher.

neighbourhood). Salinas said they had nothing against this strategy as long as their project would also receive some benefits.

All interviewees of this case said there have never been any real conflicts between the different parts and preferred to call them disagreements. On the one hand, BD users consider they are not given enough freedom. This is stemming mostly from the initial project they had to come up with as Salinas believes that the area renewal representatives misunderstood the fact that it was more a concept, than a final product. Users have to *work with what they can find and need to adapt on the way*. The final design might be different than in the original sketches (Figure 21), but the functionality stays the same and this is the most important. In fact, Salinas divulged that a graphic designer made a very good-looking project because they needed to *sell the idea* but the Container City is less about the aesthetics.
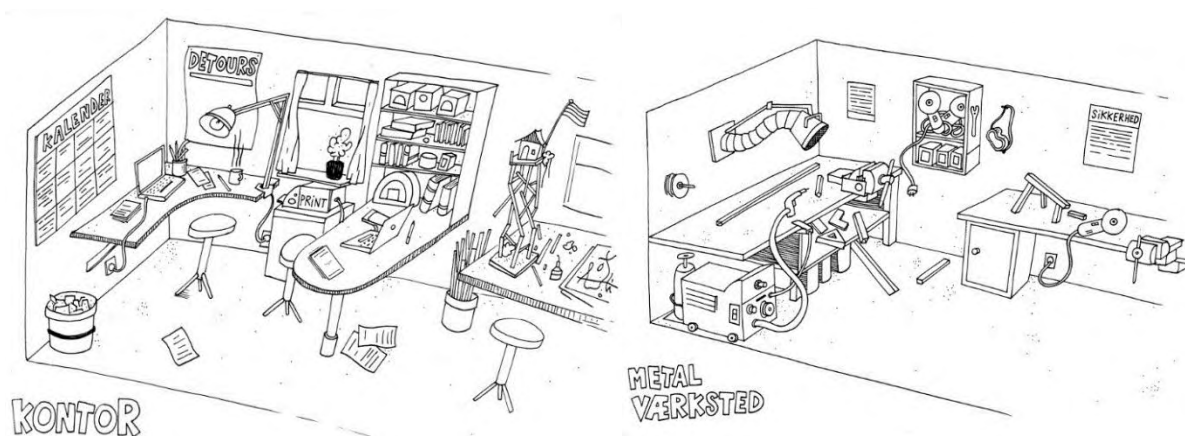
Figure 21 - Sketches of the interior of different containers
(source: http://cargocollective.com/containerby/Skitser-Planer)

Their ideology is that planning everything from the beginning imposes too many boundaries which hinder good, functional architecture. Moreover, they might get new ideas with the advancement of the project but it sometimes seems very difficult to obtain permission. Thus, they found it is easier to act and ask for authorisation only afterwards because otherwise the bureaucracy is either *too lengthy or impossible to handle*. One of the interviewed users stated that this strategy has always functioned for Bureau Detours because the collective has proved that regulations are often too restrictive and even unnecessary.

On the other hand, the area renewal office talked about the times when Bureau Detours did not respect the agreement and generated some difficulties. For example, the structure which resembled a Mongolian tent[52] (Figure 22) *sent a wrong signal, making people from the neighbourhood believe someone might be illegally living there* (K. Theisen). BD was asked to take it down but this did not happen and for a long time the area renewal overlooked its existence. Another case mentioned was that users brought some chicken in the community garden and the representatives of the area renewal did not know whether this was legal or not, being the first

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[52] Being different than the type of structures agreed upon (which were only under the form of containers).

time they faced the situation. Nevertheless, Kristoffer Theisen said that *although the office cannot allow everything to happen, they are very flexible and always looking for a compromise*.

Figure 22 - The urban garden and the Mongolian tent in the back
(source: author)

In terms of communication between the area renewal personnel and Bureau Detours, the two meet on a regular basis but there is nothing fixed. When asked about it, Theisen answered that meetings are very informal, they can happen weekly or every two weeks and the location varies. He considers it is vital to communicate constantly because the area renewal must send applications to the central unit if something new is planned for the Container City, but they also need to be restrictive from time to time. An interesting comparison that the interviewee from the Area Renewal made was between the internal organisation of Bureau Detours and Christiania: *Bureau Detours is very Christiania-like, they have a flat democracy where no one decides on its own, but they have common meetings where they must all agree. There is no boss, whoever is there comes to the meetings.* Apparently, this makes is slightly harder to reach agreements but in general, the users are reasonable and respect the arrangement.

One of the key requirements that the authorities have had from the beginning regarded the openness towards all *people living in the neighbourhood*. Bureau Detours was expected to refrain from monopolizing the space and creating *an exclusive club* that would make other people feel unwelcome or as if they invaded the space. The area renewal stated that their ground rule is to allow all persons to participate and maintain the diversity of the neighbourhood. When asked about the involvement of the neighbours, Kristoffer Theisen said that most of the permanent users live in the vicinity (although there are also some who come from other areas) and that other individuals are free to enter the Container City whenever they want.

However, being located a bit out of sight, most of the visitors only come during events and workshops (Figure 23). Loui Andersen Salinas expressed once again his dissatisfaction with the lack of funds coming from the city because this determines them to impose taxes for the events hosted. Bureau Detours has had many unpaid actions but the costs of electricity, materials and food cannot be covered solely by them anymore, after investing so much in the space. He believes that if the government would be really interested in activating the area and determining people to engage in different actions, *it should be the one paying and not the participants*. Yet, it remains questionable which part of the population living in the environs is actually interested in participating because, as mentioned, an important part is struggling with poverty, unemployment and other social issues. Their primordial care is to improve their living condition and not be part of what can be perceived as a nonconformist, artistic project.

Figure 23 - Attendees of the opening event held in March 2015
(source: https://www.facebook.com/pages/ContainerBy-Detours/864057793642722?fref=ts)

Nonetheless, the Container City is for the moment still benefiting from the sponsorship received from *Realdania* (almost 50 000€ in total), making it the financer in this case. Realdania is a philanthropic foundation that invests in the built environment, supporting different architectural or planning projects. Bureau Detours applied for funds for a different project and the convention obliged it to use the money before the end of 2014, but since this did not happen, they were allowed to use the rest during 2015 as well, helping them to arrange the Container City. In exchange, the benefiters are asked to prove they had spent the money (by sending bills) but no other form of control exists. L. A. Salinas believes Realdania is interested in financing such actions because this contributes to its fame.

Final remarks regarding the Container City

It can be said in conclusion that the Container City project would have not been able to exist (at least not in this precise location) without the initiative of the Fuglekvarteret Area Renewal to allow the temporary use of a space which they considered vacant. The city is planning to transform the plot into cycling infrastructure because of its spatial configuration (size, location, etc.) which deters it from having a more convenient use. Nonetheless, BD has challenged this idea and proved that alternative and innovative solutions can be adopted.

The project has affected all actors involved in different ways. Copenhagen has now an unconventional cultural centre which adds up to its image of a creative city. Authorities did not even need to create a special body for this, like in Barcelona, because the strategy was implemented by an already existing unit. It can be said that this decentralised unit has successfully attained its goals of changing the social composition and the activities previously carried on in this space, while also obtaining a new location for artistic manifestations (Figure 24) and where people living in the neighbourhood could participate. It has been an easy solution for the city to cede the space and do almost nothing in exchange.

Nonetheless, the advantages came for both sides because like Loui Andersen Salinas explained during the interview, even though *the city is using them to improve the area's image and catch positive attention without putting any effort into it*, Bureau Detours truly needed cheap space for their ideas. Considering the low vacancy rate and the real estate market of Copenhagen, obtaining a land for free is definitely remarkable. Although in some situations the users consider their freedom is limited, it looks like the formalisation of their project did not necessarily affect their behaviour and decisions. Bureau Detours acts frequently before asking for permission and their success manages to question the existing regulations – considered interim and often bended by the area renewal. This shows a certain degree of flexibility from the authorities' side and helps maintaining the relations non-conflictual.

Last but not least, the people living in the neighbourhood have been affected in different ways. The project has obviously been very important for the small number of permanent users who live nearby and have now a place to develop their projects, but the significance for other individuals is highly questionable. Events and workshops might not be attractive enough or well-suited for everyone, but the fact that they can now enter the space without any hindrance might be a plus. Direct experience has shown that the permanent users are very open and willing to explain their project to visitors. Moreover, Benny Henningsen affirmed that Container City *is not a place for everyone as we can only afford to welcome anyone who has the desire and will to work*[53]. Yet, especially during the opening event, members were hoping to attract as many families and residents of the area, so they could see what was going on in their neighbourhood and decide whether they want to join or not.

Nonetheless, there is a part of the population which definitely did not gain anything from the project: the former users of the space who have been displaced. Unlike in other cases[54] where

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[53] Excerpt translated from Danish from an interview published online in the Danish daily newspaper Politiken. (http://politiken.dk/ibyen/byliv/ECE2585107/ny-containerby-bringer-kreavaerksteder-og-hoens-til-nordvest/)

[54] Such as Folkets Park where the re-design tried to fit homeless and alcoholics, as well as youngsters and families with children.

the city tried to design spaces which accommodate all types of people, the desire to force out the substance abusers, homeless people and graffiti makers was clearly expressed. Interestingly enough though, almost all containers brought by BD are graffiti-painted. It remains an open question then: for whom is the city being built?

Figure 24 - Old and new art: graffiti and recently manufactured chairs in the Container City
(source: author)

COMPARISON AND DISCUSSION

The case studies discussed have validated that temporary use is *increasingly a structural component of urban development* (Overmeyer, 2007) and that practices are no longer only user-driven. Municipalities have started seeing the value in impermanence and have become themselves the initiators, formalising activities and facilitating processes which can implicate actors who were not traditionally involved in space intervention and decision-making (Groth and Corijn, 2005). As expected, Copenhagen and Barcelona have had very different approaches in doing so and the table found in the appendices (pp. 80-84) is used to summarise the most important similarities and differences. This comparison will be developed on next by following the research question and revealing the results obtained after testing the five hypotheses (stated in the chapter entitled *Prologue*).

Temporary use incentives and formal reactions

To begin with, Copenhagen and Barcelona have equally been marked by civil initiatives of space appropriation and social struggles that tried to challenge spatial commodification and the established order. They have been ignited by similar conditions such as a lack of public facilities and a pro-active attitude of the citizens who decided to intervene in areas left vacant in order to self-govern them. Very often, these fights have had a political orientation and tried to offer an alternative political and cultural scene. In Spain, the legacy of assemblies is still visible today as a form of flat democratic organisation where, ideally, each member has the same rights and obligations, avoiding any leading figures.

Both cities have witnessed a wide array of responses from the authorities but it can be said that in general, initiatives were if not sanctioned, at least tolerated as long as there was no other *higher and better use* for the space at that moment. As Mark Vacher[55] said, to some extent, *all cities need this kind of persons that are able to re-activate an area*. However, there are very few cases which have managed to resist until today, not necessarily because of internal issues, but mostly because capitalist logics were put forward. Of course, examples of persistence such as Christiania in Copenhagen or Can Batlló in Barcelona challenge the idea of *temporary* and show that users frequently desire more stable and long-term spaces (Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010, p. 484) whereas governments see them as an interim solution. Yet, the process of formalisation underwent in these two cases shows that authorities have a certain degree of flexibility but, at the same time, users have to be willing to fight and resist limitations imposed, as well as make compromises to satisfy all parties.

Vacancy and inspiration for renegotiation

Today, the supply of vacant spaces, defined by Overmeyer (2007) as *currently unsuitable or undesirable in mainstream economic cycles*, is very different in Copenhagen and Barcelona.

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[55] Assistant professor at the Department of Ethnology of the Copenhagen University.

While the former is characterised by a high pressure of the real estate and very few empty areas, the latter has a surplus of available plots and buildings which have not been reused after the property bubble. However, even if Copenhagen does not seem to suffer from too many *urban voids*, many areas are being developed or renewed, allowing time and space for temporary uses. Based on Bishop and Williams' (2012) idea that temporary uses are more dependent on the capacity of professional advisers and city governments to unlock spaces and disregard existing financial, legal and even planning frameworks, the research has confirmed that the political will is one of the most important aspects in formalising temporary uses. The stimulus for such actions has different roots but sometimes inspiration comes from abroad, like in the case of Copenhagen where all interviewees mentioned how (especially) German cities have been regarded as an example to follow in dealing with vacancy. In Barcelona though, the city officials considered inspirational the local individual initiatives, as well as some examples from other Spanish cities.

It was also interesting to follow the different words articulated for self-definition which seemed to accompany and confer legitimacy to the two cases chosen. In its planning documents, Copenhagen often links the idea of temporary use with notions such as *creativity*, *innovation* and *small-scale entrepreneurialism*. On the other hand, Barcelona has a different orientation towards concepts like *citizen participation*, *social innovation* and *openness*. This is even more thought-provoking considering that in general Barcelona is also being promoted as a creative city, especially since 1992 when it hosted the Summer Olympics.

Formalisation of temporary use in different contexts and under different forms

The Container City and Espai Germanetes are illustrative examples of moments where a vacant land has been opened up by authorities, inviting for a provisional period of time everyday citizens to participate in its design, governance and use. The matrix below (Figure 25) compares the two cases placing the initiators and main users on a ladder from bottom-up to top-down actors, and the projects from unsanctioned to sanctioned or formalised. Seen from this perspective, the two are almost identical, except for the group of main users. Nonetheless, these decisions are part of dissimilar processes: whereas in Copenhagen it has been included in a broader programme of neighbourhood renewal, Barcelona has developed a specific project for temporary use. This has had serious consequences for the structure and the organisation of further actions. The Fuglekvarteret Area Renewal had never been involved in something similar so its vision for development was not strictly defined. Nonetheless, the main goal was to change the current undesirable uses and gain positive attention for the neighbourhood. On the other hand, Barcelona created the programme Pla BUITS through its Participation Department. Opening municipal plots was done for social and cultural activities and users underwent a rigorous competition to obtain permits. However, in both cases the users have had to write a proposal which needed to be accepted by the authorities. Kristoffer Theisen's affirmation is suitable here: *the idea was to do something different, spontaneous, but still have it under control.*

TOP DOWN

INITIATORS AND USERS		Unauthorized	Tacit acceptance/ Tolerated	Short-term permission	Signed agreement	Fully funded/ semi-permanent
City/Decentralised unit					●●	
Developer						
Small-scale entrepreneur/ start-up						
Architect/artist collective					●	
Community group						
Citizen activist					●	
Squatter						

BOTTOM UP

INFORMAL/ UNSANCTIONED

PROJECT STATUS

FORMALISED/ SANCTIONED

COPENHAGEN
● FUGLEKVARTERET AREA RENEWAL
● BUREAU DETOURS

BARCELONA
● HABITAT URBA
● RECREANT CRUÏLLES

Figure 25 - Comparative matrix of stakeholders and project statuses
(own compilation based the Urban Catalyst classification and the matrix created by David Glick (2012, pp. 38-41) in the publication Bottom-Up Urbanism)

The two cases are also useful in showing what meaning authorities give to *temporary use*. As discussed before, everything is eventually temporary but there is a difference. Here, the temporary is an *intentional phase* (Bishop and Williams, 2012, p. 5) and this phase is comparable for the Container City and Espai Germanetes: 3-4 years. It is important to keep in mind though that this does not apply for all authority-led projects since the timescale can vary. Also, following the definition of Hentilä et al. (2002), the use is limited in time and performed by people other than the owner (that in both cases is represented by the city) who does not receive any financial income for the use of the ground. Besides, since the cities have something permanent planned, both projects can be ceased as soon as funds are allocated for works to start. Therefore, although actions are formalised under legal agreements, users are still under a continuous threat of being evicted, yet the advantage (as compared to informal activities) is their legal right of being announced in advance. Although it is still too early to formulate conclusions, to a certain extent the two case studies confirm the first hypothesis: temporary use is ended if a more profitable use is foreseen by authorities.

Nonetheless, both locations have required sustained efforts to be set up and adapted for different activities. Positioned quite close to the centre in very dense, mixed-use neighbourhoods, the two publicly owned plots have been vacant for different reasons. In Copenhagen, the land's physical features deterred it from being developed into more than a parking space for train cars, whereas in Barcelona, the lack of funds kept the vast parcel empty for almost ten years. Yet, different actors found ingenious solutions for using these spaces, going beyond physical or financial limitations. They managed to overcome urban crises, showing that *creativity* can be indeed, one of the main assets in accomplishing development.[56]

Authority-lead temporary use up to a point

It is difficult to decide whether the second hypothesis can be confirmed or not: authorities have not entirely disengaged with their traditional duties, although the funding has been very limited. Danish and Spanish authorities have realised that at least basic facilities should be provided by them. Whereas Pla BUITS took care of this, the area renewal in Copenhagen delayed the process until users decided to improvise and do it themselves. It must be mentioned though that later on, the area renewal office did fund some events they required. Therefore, temporary use and citizen empowerment seems like a practical solution in reducing costs but the reduction of the role of public institution in managing the city should be seriously considered since it might translate into a barrier in allowing all categories of people, regardless of their financial situation, to appropriate space and be part of these programmes. In addition, others might not find it worth to invest time and money in spaces which will then be taken away and developed for other uses.

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[56] recurrent idea in Copenhagen's planning documents, but also explored from different points of view by scholars such as Sir Peter Hall, Charles Landry, or Richard Florida

Systems of actors

Figure 26 - KU students attending a garden party in Container City, holding motivational messages
(source: https://www.facebook.com/pages/ContainerBy-Detours/864057793642722?fref=ts)

The constellation of actors has proven quite complex in both projects anyway. Besides the already mentioned initiators who were the two cities (through their decentralised units), the main user groups have slightly different compositions. In the Container City, the Bureau Detours Collective assembles a small number of small-scale entrepreneurs activating in creative industries. Although only eight in Copenhagen, their network is more widespread, including members in other locations throughout Europe. In addition, the nature of their project is capable of constantly involving other people as long as they are interested in the workshops and events held in the Container City (Figure 25). Unfortunately though, many persons living in Nørrebro or Bispebjerg neighbourhoods might not be attracted by the character of the activities because they might seem too unconventional and nonmainstream, as well as dedicated mostly to the younger generations.

As opposed to that, although RC has been a small group of activists in the beginning, it has considerably grown through the project realised in Espai Germanetes. The various sections arranged (the community garden, the dome which allows acrobatics workshops and artistic representations, the small playground, etc.) and the community oriented events (farmers' market, popular paellas, different courses taught, etc.) are regularly used by the inhabitants of Eixample neighbourhood, regardless of age and social status (Figure 26).

Figure 27 - Acrobatics workshop organised by volunteers in Espai Germanetes
(source: author)

It is true though, that not all these persons are active members who take part in the decision-making or the maintenance of the space. Most of the times they are simply not interested in doing so because the assembly-

type of organisation of Recreant Cruïlles would at least in theory offer everyone the same power. Nonetheless, reality has shown that *despite the emphasis on horizontality and consensus, groups sometimes mimic bureaucratic structures* (Chatterton and Pickerill, 2010, p. 482). Some users occupy more important roles and even if not desired, leadership tends to appear. Just like Vacher has affirmed during a conversation about temporary use, spaces such as Espai Germanetes, the Container City, but also other examples like PB43 or Bolsjefabrikken, are not as democratic as they aspire. They all have iconic figures (that Vacher calls *urban shamans* for their capacity of *bringing back order in places where chaos has entered*) that self-impose and others look up to.

Consequences of formalisation

By joining these officially-generated projects users need to organise themselves and communicate efficiently, often negotiating and sometimes even entering in conflict with authorities. For example, Recreant Cruïlles has had to participate in Pla BUITS under the aegis of the Eixample Neighbourhood Association, limiting its array of actions so as to avoid compromising the association. Still, user-groups should not be regarded as a unified voice, especially in this case where internal divergences concerning the future of the parcel have led to the segregation of the group. Members continue to gather weekly and they regularly meet representatives of the district and of Pla BUITS, but, as seen from the interviews, the overall relationship with the district is often conflictual, generated by the mutual mistrust. The same mistrust could be felt in Copenhagen as well, but to a much lesser degree and mostly from the side of Bureau Detours who expressed a feeling of being instrumentalised. Yet, since the situation brings significant benefits for them too, they accept it and maintain a regular and quite informal communication with the area renewal representatives. In both cases, authorities manage to maintain a superior position conferred by their ownership status, the power of limiting activities as well as putting an end to the temporary use.

The restrictions imposed are quite different in the two cases. Bureau Detours has enjoyed a lot of freedom in creating their project, but there were some exceptions such as not building other structures than under the form of containers, not transforming any container in a sleeping space and sometimes having to organize workshops imposed by the area renewal. They were not necessarily affected by them but the lack of funding from the city was the biggest issue, although this was discussed from the beginning. On the other hand, Recreant Cruïlles have had to work with and against a major boundary, besides the basis for the competition which implied the obligation to make all installations easily removable, to host public/social activities with a non-commercial character and have financial autonomy. Yet, probably the most important and the one creating the biggest dissatisfaction has been the space limitation. Having to confine all activities on a space ten times smaller than the whole vacant parcel, but also seeing the rest remaining unused on a daily basis has been extremely challenging for Espai Germanetes. Added to the users' different visions about the future of the space, it lead to the segregation of the group. As such, it can be said that the third hypothesis is only true in Barcelona's case where the high number of restrictions have considerably limited the uses.

Informal in the formal?

It appeared provocative to find out whether these limits were respected and if anything informal was still going on in these spaces. Based on the idea that there is no clear-cut boundary between formality and informality and also that all urban realities are characterized by an amalgam of both (Daniels, 2004; Guha-Khasnobis et al., 2006; Waibel and McFarlane, 2012), the field research has confirmed the forth hypothesis and that informality does not completely disappear inside an officially-generated project of temporary use. Instead, users often find subversive ways of following their goals, but also government representatives might turn a blind eye, knowing that bending rules is sometimes necessary in temporary use to facilitate and make processes faster. For both case studies, these projects are also an experiment


Figure 28 - Figurine illegally left by RC in the locked part of Espai Germanetes, tolerated until the construction of promised facilities
(source: author)

which might give all actors more liberty to test actions and reactions. In the Container City, users have often defied the signed agreement by hosting someone, building a Mongolian tent or bringing animals in the urban garden. The area renewal has been quite understanding and discussions have led to satisfactory compromises. On the other hand, in Espai Germanetes the informal actions were intentionally made public in an attempt to raise the attention of the neighbourhood for the extent of land held unused by the district (Figure 27). Inhabitants were invited to a traditional paella party which was organised on the locked side of the parcel and most of those who joined did not even know it was basically illegal. Its success has legitimized the action even though RC were asked not to repeat this because it might compromise the Neighbourhood Association. Moreover, it might have triggered the commencement of the promised public facilities, igniting some users' frustration though.

To end with, the last hypothesis assumed that formal temporary use projects can be, at the same time, a mean of empowering citizens but also a tool for control and regulation. This has definitely proven to be true in both case studies. In Copenhagen, the Container City has successfully displaced the former users and sought positive attention, but it has also offered an autonomous working space for an artistic collective which might facilitate the access of other people from the neighbourhood (not only to a previously closed space, but also to craft tools and knowledge). In Barcelona, although strongly disproved by the authorities, the users' and media's unanimous opinion was that Pla BUITS has been a strategy for calming down the 15M activists by offering some space they were fighting for. In addition, by entering the competition Recreant Cruïlles agreed to use only one small part of the parcel and all in all play by the city's rules.

EPILOGUE

This study started from the idea that the methods through which cities are planned and constructed have suffered important changes in the recent decades, leaving behind the orthodoxy of permanence and accepting the dynamicity of urban life. One of the new planning tools has been inspired by bottom-up, informal actions of short-term space appropriation by proactive citizens. Seeing the necessity in (re-)activating vacant areas produced either by changes of use, normal economic cycles or financial crises, city governments have taken different steps to unlock spaces and enable communities to temporarily and at least partially self-manage them.

Undeniably, the formalization of temporary use has a rather paradoxical nature since civil initiatives often lay out of the limits imposed by local regulations. They are frequently a sign of citizen resistance and rejection of neoliberal practices, yet they also highlight the numerous local issues that need to be dealt with. At times the benefits brought (which are always subject to one's social values) determine authorities to ignore the informal aspects or try to convert the usages to fit defined frameworks. Such city-driven efforts have taken particular forms in Copenhagen and Barcelona and the second chapter has showed the characteristics of each location, as well as the actors involved, their rationale and the different negotiations over the space and the uses. Moreover, the interviews conducted tried to reveal the different perceptions in terms of assets and liabilities for stakeholders that decided to join such programmes. Taking everything into account, it has not been easy to establish whether temporary use retains its inherent characteristics (such as being user-driven, dynamic, diverse, spontaneous, etc.) because generalisations in this sense would be faulty. The case studies cannot be considered archetypes or reproduced in other context because they are completely dependent on the neighbourhood, local and national contexts, as well as to the group's dynamics.

Nevertheless, even if the research has highlighted the distinctive role of local conditions for temporary usages, both the Container City and Espai Germanetes confirm broad ideas already discussed by other theorists such as Németh and Langhorst (2014) or the Urban Catalysts (2013) that traditional planning must move towards more tactical approaches, create a more loose regulatory framework and accompany citizens instead of trying to lead them. At the same time, the different civil initiatives must adjust to certain structured and formal mechanisms and accept that authorities are not necessarily a force to fight against. Furthermore, an assertion valid in both cases is that there is a continuum between formality and informality and this is highly necessary in assuring the success of a project. It represents the way through which all actors can be satisfied, giving local authorities the feeling of control, but also citizens a feeling of freedom. The optimal degree of involvement from authorities remains an open question: how little is insufficient and how much is excessive?

Temporary use has recently reached a *phase of critique* (Honeck, 2015, p. 5) being considered a *determinant of gentrification* and a tool that uses artists as instruments for area revitalization and class composition change. Regarding Copenhagen and Barcelona, it is still too early to say whether governments simply tried to yield fast and easy results through minimum investment or if the attempt was to rise the value of the real estate through their temporary use

strategies, the way cities such as Berlin or London have been judged for doing. Nonetheless, affirmations of the city representatives support David Harvey's belief that *land is not a commodity in the ordinary sense* but a *form of capital that derives from expectations of future rents* (Harvey, 2012, pp. 28-29). Kristoffer Theisen talked about how the space on Ornevej Street should not only be a transit space for cycling in the future, but some coffee shops could also transform the area into a more inviting place, changing the actual image. In Barcelona, besides the public amenities, the city is also planning to commission private apartments for young and old people on the parcel of Espai Germanetes. Still, further research is needed to assess whether these plans can actually benefit from the place-making qualities of the former temporary use.

Another question, also raised by Harris and Nowicki (2015) and still unanswered for the time being, is whether the phenomenon of temporary use is just another solution found by capitalism for fixing its crises, considering that one of its biggest limitations has so far been the fixity of the real estate. This quest for flexibility in the public sector (through reducing some of the bureaucratic work and constraints) generates quick results but might only traduce in ephemeral fixes to urban problems. This would not be a problem per se if it would not risk producing other effects such as exclusionary practices, displacement of the least well-off as well as a normalisation of precariousness.

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APPENDICES

Summary of main findings

	COPENHAGEN	BARCELONA
Recurrent self-defining words	Creative, innovative, entrepreneurial	Participative, innovative, open
Supply of vacancy	Low, determining a high pressure for the real estate	High, both for open parcels and buildings, public and private
Demand for space	High	
Community initiatives	Yes	
Examples of formalised TU	Yes	
Dedicated project for TU	No, integrated in broader strategies	Yes, Pla BUITS
Inspiration from abroad	Yes (especially Germany)	Not acknowledged (only inspiration from local or national initiatives)
Expressed Rationale For Temporary Use	Reawakening interest for a certain area Attraction of investors/developers Use of remnant parcels Creation of space for creative entrepreneurs Limitation of undesirable uses (e.g. substance consumption) Community involvement	Temporary activation of city-owned open spaces Encouragement of public participation and initiative Creation of space for community activities
Perceived risks	Difficulty to terminate project and determine users to leave	Difficulty to terminate project and determine users to leave Indirectly privatizing a public space by allowing a reduced group of people to self-govern and use it
Project name	The Container City	Espai Germanetes

Determined time period	March 2014 – ongoing	2013 – ongoing but threatened to be closed by the construction of promised public facilities
Necessity to renew permit	Yes, yearly	
Possibility for continuation in this location	Until 2018 or until the creation of the green corridor	Until 2016 when the PlaBUITS three year time limit ends or whenever amenities are built
Possibility for changing location	easily movable due to its character so could change its setting without struggle	difficult to predict due to its local embeddedness
General orientation	Affordable space and equipment for working/hobbies	Space for community activities and socialization
SETTING		
Location	Ørnevej 3, Nørrebro Neighbourhood	Intersection of Comte Borrell and Consell de Cent streets, Eixample District
Distance from City Centre	3.6 km	2.0 km
Surrounding neighbourhood	Multicultural, very dense, mixed-use, combining residences and commerce	Middle class, very dense, mixed-use, combining residences, commerce and tourism, lacking green space
Type of space	Remnant parcel located next to rail tracks, long and narrow	Big, empty parcel, enclosed by tall walls
Physical issues	Lack of basic facilities, noise pollution	Initial lack of basic facilities, rough terrain, tall walls
Former use	Legally only used as train cars depot years ago, occupied by homeless, substance abusers and occasionally graffiti artists	Old convent demolished in 2004
Vacancy period before TU	Undefined	9 years
Ownership	Public	
Owner	City of Copenhagen	City of Barcelona
FORMAL USE		

Rent required	No	
Public competition	No	Yes
Character	Entrepreneurial, cultural and occasionally social	Non-lucrative, social, cultural
Strong regulation	Yes, but not necessarily perceived as limiting by users	Yes, differently perceived among the users
Obligations	- host events required by the area renewal - have financial autonomy - interdiction to house people - interdiction to build other structures different from containers - interdiction to charge rent from other users	- use only the designated area of less than 600m² - apply as an organization adequately constituted - host public/social activities with a non-commercial character - use easily removable installations - have financial autonomy
Ongoing informal activities	unaccepted structures, temporarily housing people	Occasional occupation of the entire surface of the parcel

ACTORS		
Initiator	Copenhagen City Council through the Fuglekvarteret Area Renewal	Barcelona City Council through Hàbitat Urbà
Status of initiator	Decentralised local authority handling the neighbourhood renewal	department in the Direction of Urbanism, dealing with participation
Involvement in past similar projects	No	
Goal of initiator	Gain positive attention for the neighbourhood and the city through cultural and leisure activities	Open municipal plots for social and cultural activities, increasing participation

Main users	Bureau Detours – umbrella brand for a number of small independent firms active in creative industries	Recreant Cruïlles, community group born out of 15M activists
Leading figures	Yes, 2 (Louie and Benny)	Yes, 3-4 persons

Status of users	organization composed of private persons and companies that work independently or collaborate, depending on the project	Individual citizens that formed an assembly (Recreant Cruïlles) and had to apply for contest under the aegis of the neighbourhood association
Goal of main users	Cheap space for a social entrepreneurial project, cultural activities	Initially simply to unlock the space but then divided into: - green space for culture and leisure until the municipality builds the promised public facilities - green space, ideally self-managed, avoiding to build more in an already dense area
Conflicts or opposing rationales	Users and initiators: users would expect the municipality to invest more in arranging the space; also, if the area renewal demands certain activities, they should be the financial founders	among users: diverging opinion over what the future should bring to the area; dissatisfaction among some with the lack of work put in by others with the district: complete mistrust from both sides; disagreement with future plans and the way decision was taken by authorities; dissatisfaction with the delay of works for promised facilities With the initiators: general dissatisfaction with the small part of the area given; a part of the users would want to manage the space permanently
Number	8 persons in BD Copenhagen (40 in all European units), more users to come	Impossible to determine precisely but around 4-6 initiators, around 30 active persons, more joining depending on activities
Communication and organization	Informal among members Weekly meetings with the Area Renewal	Weekly general assembly Various meetings with the district or city representatives
Possibility for locals to participate	Yes: access to courtyard always allowed; participation to events and workshops; use of some facilities	Yes

Other actors	Realdania (financial aid), other artistic and cultural collectives	some social, artistic and cultural organizations, students

ROLE OF THE CITY	Strong (owner of the space)	
Consultancy for legal matters	Yes, but mostly post-realization	Yes, but mostly post-realization
Finance	Theoretically for basic facilities; if events are imposed	Only initially for basic facilities instalment and ground levelling
Other roles	Trying to include locals in some activities	

Interviews

Interviews took place between December 2014 and June 2015. Twenty three interviews were conducted in total, but not all of them proved relevant for the final research path chosen. Only the successful ones will be listed next[57]. Two persons (one for each case) have been interviewed twice because additional questions and issues appeared. One interviewee has been contacted through email and another discussion took place via Skype, both because of the impossibility to meet in person. All interviews were semi-structured and followed a similar arrangement (see the interview prompts), but were adapted according to the actor and situation.

Copenhagen

Name	Role and Organisation	Interview Date
Mikkel Mindegaard	Project Consultant for the Urban Life Department, Technical and Environmental Administration, City of Copenhagen	16.01.2015
Peter Larsson	Project Manager for City Life Department, City & Port	22.01.2015
Jens Kvorning	Professor at Danish Architecture and Design School and leader of Center for Urban Planning	22.01.2015
Jesper Koefoed-Melson	Givrum.nu	19.12.2014
Sara Melson	Givrum.nu	04.02.2015
Mark Vacher	Assistant Prof. at Saxo Institute, Department of Ethnology, KU	04.02.2015
Kristoffer Theisen	Project Leader at Områdefornyelse Fuglekvarteret	05.02.2015
Loui Andersen Salinas	Project Leader at the Container City	23.01.2015; 05.02.2015

Barcelona

Name	Role and Organisation	Interview Date
Afra Quintas	Project Leader of Mentrestant	Skype conversation – 13.03.2015
Berta Cendros i Olle	Department of Strategic Projects, Foment de Ciutat Vella	12.03.2015

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[57] All audio files (and transcripts in case the interview could not be recorded) can be found here https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gm9am6zftpzlyxb/AADvXMRLTi6TvZQbpCuSinrYa?dl=0.

Laia Torras	Director of the Participation Unit and Pla BUITS, Hàbitat Urbà Dept., City of Barcelona	11.03.2015
Miquel Reñé Garaboa	Project manager of Pla BUITS, Hàbitat Urbà Dept., City of Barcelona	10.03.2015; 22.06.2015
Barnaby Noone	Recreant Cruïlles	09.03.2015
David Benito Carnice	Recreant Cruïlles	17.03.2015
Joan Sendra Mestre	Recreant Cruïlles	19.06.2015
Two participants at the popular paella organised by RC (arbitrarily chosen)	Inhabitants of Eixample Neighbourhood	15.03.2015

Interview prompts

Questions for introductory interviews and governmental representatives

What is your background? Where do you activate now? For how long have you been doing this?

Is there vacancy in Copenhagen/Barcelona?

What are the determinants of high/low vacancy rates?

What does the city do to reduce vacancy/diminish the real estate pressure?

How common are initiatives of temporary use in Copenhagen/Barcelona?

What experiences of temporary use can you describe for the city?

When did the city first draft a strategy for the temporary use of vacant spaces?

How was the programme organised?

Where did the idea come from? Has there been any external influence?

Why those specific areas and that amount of time?

Was there any financial aid given from the city?

What were the benefits and disadvantages for the city and the stakeholders?

What was the community's reaction? Who decided to participate or who are the main users?

How often do government representatives visit the site and how do they assure the compliance with the initial agreement?

How are the different parties communicating?

Have there been any conflicts between the stakeholders?

How has the neighbourhood been included? What effects has it had on the neighbourhood?

Is there any possibility for the temporary use to transform into a permanent one?

Do you have any other comments or remarks?

Is there anyone you suggest I contact further?

Questions for users and third parties

What is your role in the project? Have you been among the initiators?

If among the initiators: did the idea exist before the launch of the formal project? Why was it impossible to translate into reality?

If not among the initiators: how did you find out about it and for how long have you been here?

What is your motivation to participate?

How do you take part in the project?

Who else is part and how do you communicate?

How is the project financed?

What is the relationship and how do you communicate with the authorities?

How often do government representatives visit the site?

How do they assure the compliance with the initial agreement?

What benefits and disadvantages do you think the temporary project brings for you? For the city council? For the neighbourhood?

Are there any imposed requirements from them? How much have these affected the project?

How flexible do you thing the city representatives are?

Is there any informal activity going on in the space? Do authorities know about it?

Have there been any conflicts between the different users? Between the users and the authorities?

How much does this project count for the everyday inhabitants of the neighbourhood?

Do you have any other comments or remarks?

Is there anyone you suggest I contact further?