Collective City Making

How commoning practices foster inclusivity

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Abstract

The article addresses the concept of urban commons, specifically the ways in which it can contribute to inclusive urbanism. We consider how communities appropriate urban spaces, how commons mediate participation in urban development as well as the role of the physical configuration in fostering inclusiveness. The "PLATZprojekt" in Hanover, Germany, is taken as a case study.

A container village of about 3,000 m2, the PLATZprojekt is understood as an experiment in offering people a self-organized space, one they can actively shape, a space to implement their ideas and to provoke discussion about their city. Initiated by a group of young skateboarders, it was funded by the BBSR (Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development). Situated on a vacant lot in an industrial zone relatively close to the inner city, the PLATZprojekt seeks to provide space for projects and ideas that cannot be realised within the gentrified neighbourhoods of dense and commodified European metropolises.

We analyse the PLATZprojekt as a permanent "commoning process" that encompasses different levels of accessibility and represents a positive example of inclusive urbanism while at the same time revealing various limitations.

KEYWORDS

urban commons, inclusive urbanism, PLATZprojekt, citizen participation, spatial practice

1. Introduction & Research Questions

Since 2017 the senate administration of Berlin has been working on specific guidelines for citizen participation in urban development. This reflects the increasing demand for the right of co-determination in this field, as displayed by the initiative "Stadtneudenken", which fights the sale of public properties. Furthermore, the guidelines explicitly name social groups that are often neglected in the participation process such as the disabled, migrants or children suffering from urban processes of exclusion and with few possibilities to express their needs. This exclusivity can concern various rights. For example, a good education still seems to depend on where in the city and under what economic conditions children grow up. Further, the right to living space in cities is restricted for homeless people and refugees, or indeed for wider social groups, due to high rents. Hitherto, the struggle to acquire these rights has frequently taken place within public space, sometimes leading to its appropriation, e.g. the long-term occupation by camped protesters. On the other hand, private land or wasteland can also be transformed into a commonly owned part of the city. Here there may be different goals, whether to make that place accessible or usable for more people, or to realise a common dream or vision such as urban gardening, or simply to satisfy the daily needs of a particular group of people. These appropriation processes or projects can be called "commons" and exemplify the senate's guidelines: Commons projects offer a high level of participation and thus involve a certain idea of inclusiveness. At the same time, however, they can also be seen as rather exclusive, as they often consist of a self-determined group of people.

In this article we would like to discuss the conditions under which a "bottom-up" commoning practice can lead to a more "inclusive urbanism" as well as the constraints on this process. As architects and planners, we are especially interested in determining how the physical-spatial configuration of a commons resource influences its inclusiveness. In our field research we have visited several such projects in major cities in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, analysing these in regard to the above-mentioned correlation.

Based on this research, we claim that commons can help to increase inclusive urbanism on several different levels. The degree and form of inclusion depend on the spatial and organisational structure of the commons. Bottom-up initiatives are more likely to tackle problems that city administrations often fail to perceive. Urban commons are, therefore, stopgaps in urban development and consequently an important tool for more inclusive cities, which cannot be simply replaced by new guidelines.

Hence our article should make interesting reading for planners in urban administrations or the free market, for commoners as well as scientists by raising awareness of both subjects, commons and inclusive urbanism, as well as the link between them. We hope to provide some new insights on this dependence, which has not been sufficiently investigated in the scientific discourse.

In the following, we would first like to briefly define the terms "commons" and "inclusiveness" as applied to the urban studies discourse. This is followed by a presentation of our case study, the PLATZprojekt in Hanover, in which we discuss the different levels of inclusiveness in this specific commons project and consider briefly where transferability can be observed outside the German context. A short conclusion provides a summary of our results.

2. Defining Commons

The concept of the commons or the commoning process itself in an urban (or rural) context (Ostrom 2011) is an increasingly popular topic in scientific discourse and in practice among activists as well as planners and city administrators. Following Elinor Ostrom's groundbreaking "Governing the Commons" (Ostrom 2011), similar publications have appeared in different scientific fields. Within urban studies, the discussion on commons is focused around questions of what "urban" commons are (Dellenbaugh et al. 2015), how to map spatial commons (Pelger et al. 2016), commons in architecture (Avermaete 2018) and various other topics.

Adopting the proposal of Kip et al. (2015, p. 13), we define commons as consisting of three elements: 1) common resources – here the physical space, although resources can also be objects or immaterial things such as knowledge; 2) the institutions, i.e. the process of negotiation and the rules of appropriation; and 3) the community, i.e. a self-determined group of people using the resources and producing the commons, who are also called commoners. A happening or a place can be understood as a "commons" if all three parts interact. For example, while a public space itself is not a form of commons, if people use the public space commonly and define rules for its use, this process can be called a "commoning practice".

However, we have to keep in mind that there is often an inherent tradeoff for some common resources, so that once a free space in the city is used by one group of commoners e.g. for urban gardening, it cannot be appropriated by others, e.g. for a housing project. In addition, some resources within the commons are not durable, e.g. the apples in the urban garden might not be sufficient to feed all participating gardeners. This so-called "tragedy of the commons" (Hardin 2008) can be avoided through the introduction of regulations, which may include some restrictions and thus, in certain cases, lead to

forms of exclusion.

Furthermore, if the commoners (e.g. people in a co-housing project) pursue different aims in line with their disparate backgrounds, this can undermine the success of the commons project as no decisions will be made and no common drive will develop.

However, if the community works well together and regulations help to define access and use, the exploitation of the commons can be an exemplary bottom-up practice characterised by diverse participation processes. This can contribute to a more inclusive urban development by fostering self-empowerment, in particular civil society's shaping of the city. Notions of this interdependence of the commons and the inclusiveness of cities can already be found in the "right to the city" debate of the 1970s: "The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization." (Harvey 2008)

3. Inclusiveness within urban studies

The Cambridge Dictionary defines inclusiveness as a quality of including many different types of people and treating them all fairly and equally. In urban planning the term "inclusiveness" often concerns physical access. The accessibility of public space and public transport is very much discussed, especially for disabled or elderly people but also for parents with baby buggies. Cities still have a long way to go before they can be said to offer an urban design for all.

Inclusive urbanism aims to create a city where everyone has equal rights regardless of race, faith, ability, gender or sexual orientation. But again this kind of inclusiveness is far from being a reality in most cities. For example, most public buildings provide only gendered public toilets, while discrimination against apparent foreigners (so-called "racial profiling") or homeless people can be observed in public spaces on a daily basis. Furthermore, an inclusive city should ensure a safe environment for every road user and a certain level of security so that everyone can enjoy public spaces as a place to stay temporarily, for leisure or recreation. Inclusiveness in cities can also mean that there is enough living space for all, with no social group excluded due to their lower income or any of the other factors already mentioned. Finally, as stated by Stren (2001): "Inclusive cities (or socially sustainable cities) are therefore cities in which all citizens are incorporated in decisions and policies." Consequently, inclusive urbanism involves local residents in the design and use of the city itself, which means encouraging participation in planning processes.

4. Inclusive urbanism by commoning?

The commons can variously contribute to an inclusive city, depending on the levels at which each project and process is accessible. Hereby inclusiveness is reflected in the way that the commons can offer and co-produce collectively-used resources (in our case physical places). Rejecting economic interests, the aim is to present opportunities of participation and appropriation of space for people whose interests are not taken into account by the state.

Consequently, not every commons project is inclusive in the same way, but each has its own strengths and particular approach to fostering a diverse and inclusive city.

In his essay "The City as Commons", the Athenian architect and researcher Stavros Stavrides envisions a shared city that constantly involves all residents and is thus totally inclusive. For Stavrides, the role of commons within this vision is that institutions of commoning must remain permanently open and inviting to newcomers in order to prevent the accumulation of power. He also describes the interrelation between this openness and the process of a common space which "is always in the making" (Stravides 2016).

There have been previous attempts to describe the inclusivity of public spaces through the various factors of access such as physical access, social access, access to activities or discussions and access to information (Akker 2005). Commons are generally places accessible to all commoners, where residents have the right to participate in the process of formation and where they are allowed to determine the regulations of use. Hence, inclusiveness in regard to the commons concerns, first, accessibility to the physical resource, second, the socio-spatial accessibility of the group of commoners, and third, accessibility to the participation process and regulations of the resource, namely the common institutions. More precisely, inclusiveness exists on several levels, as outlined in Table 1.

Accessibility of the **common resource**	Geographical location within the city	Central, easy access by public transport
	Physical accessibility	Barrier-free, no gates, spatial openness
	Spatial design	Inviting co-design through common places and open structures, open-to-use design
Accessibility of the **community**	Social affiliation	Sense of belonging, age, social and educational background
	Geographical spatial proximity	Living or working close to the resource and to each other
Accessibility of the **common institutions**	Communication	Digital platforms, language, face-to-face meetings
	Organizational structure	Possible appropriation, right of co-determination, taking part in a participation process
	Regulations	Opening hours, rights to use and change

Table 1: Levels of accessibility within the commons concept

Referring to the spatial condition of the resource, levels of accessibility are the geographical location of the common resource within the city, the physical accessibility of the space and the way the resource is designed. The research on spatial commons conducted by Pelger et al. (2016) describes different spatial qualities such as density, porosity, ambiguity, the relationship to the built environment, stability, flexibility, and positioning within the overall system of the city. These are the conditions that an urban space within its context has to fulfil in order to be potentially transformed into a common resource. With regard to the inclusiveness of spatial commons, some of these qualities such as porosity and flexibility can also be interpreted as conditions for a common resource to be an inclusive space.

Concerning the participation process, accessibility is characterised both by the way communication takes place and the organisational structure or hierarchy. Regarding the group of commoners, the governing factors are social affiliation and proximity. Furthermore, the common resource itself can have an impact on the official planning culture by being integrated into the municipal planning process.

5. Case Study: PLATZprojekt, Hanover

To investigate and test these different aspects and levels of accessibility within the commons concept, we chose as our case study the PLATZprojekt in Hanover, Germany.[1]

PLATZprojekt is an experimental project aimed at offering people a self-organized space which they can actively shape and where they can implement their ideas and initiate discussions about their city.

The story of PLATZprojekt started with a group of skateboarders looking for space to skate and to create their own self-made skate park. For this purpose they squatted an empty plot in the industrial zone "Lindener Hafen", formerly used as a parking lot, and started to build their skate park there. Wishing to use the site on a long-term basis, they contacted the Metro Group, a wholesale and retail company who owned the plot. Fortunately, the responsible agent had himself skated in his youth and was receptive to the project's ideas. The association founded by the skaters, 2er Skate e.V., subsequently obtained a temporary lease agreement in 2005 to use the site. The group decided to share their experience and give more young people the space and opportunity to test and realise projects and ideas that are normally impossible within urban settings due to economic constraints.

1 All the information in the following sections is drawn from field research (spatial mapping, participatory observation, user counting) carried out by students of the Leibniz University of Hanover in 2018, from interviews with the founders, from a lecture by the founders and literature about the project. As the project changes continously the information about uses refers to the time of writing the text.

To this end, the group worked out a concept and applied for funding to create a container village on the site next to the skate park, whose realisation can be seen on the aerial photograph of the PLATZprojekt (see Figure 1). Funding for their project was granted within the research campaign "Jugend. Stadt.Labor", run by the BBSR. This enabled the project to install the first container as a base station in 2014.

Figure 1. Aerial photograph of the PLATZprojekt, © PLATZprojekt Hannover

Today the project is run by the association PLATZprojekt e.V., which has about 30 active members from a total membership of 130. The non-profit container village occupies an area of 3,000 m² and comprises approximately 50–60 containers offering space for start-ups as well as common spaces. The hugely diverse range of activities and services include a café, a wood workshop, a sewing workshop, a bicycle workshop, a skate and surfboard manufacturer, a studio for audio-visual digital art, a tattoo studio, a hotel-container as well as a stage for music- and theatre performances. There are also several non-profit organizations such as the initiative "Du bist willkommen"[2], which offers sponsorships for refugees or "Hanover Voids", a group of architecture

2 "You are welcome" (authors' translation) is a project within the association contRa e.V. (Contra Rassimus).

students who map unused spaces in the city that could potentially be utilized.

The spatial arrangement of the containers determines the functioning of the site: A central space with community facilities – the "village square" – has been created to encourage people to come together, as can be seen in the photo of the so-called "Central Place" in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Central Place © PLATZprojekt Hannover

The first container to be implemented on site hosts a common room with a bar. This is the central element of the project. The founders of the PLATZprojekt describe it as follows: "A base which can be co-designed as a central meeting point, to network and get to know each other at eye level, is an essential success factor. In the village it would be the church or the corner pub where people chat and make plans"[3]. A second community element is the "PlatzWERK", located in the southern part of the site, which consists of seven containers assembled to form one building. This hosts a workshop area,

3 PLATZprojekt (authors' translation)

a co-working space and studios for artistic residencies. Smaller spaces and niches are created by gaps and offsets between the containers. These spaces are understood as a connecting element, creating added value for the community. Used in various ways such as to create an urban garden (PLATZgarten) with a beehive or a grove featuring a hammock, they allow social withdrawal and appropriation at the same time. Due to the different types of space (the "village square", in-between-spaces) and the mix of uses (café, garden, workshops, playground) the project has become an autonomous "Microquarter" with a characteristic atmosphere. Events, collective activities and parties are regularly organised by the group.

Figure 3. Map of Hanover © Julia Köpper

6. Levels of accessibility

Regarding the *resource* of the PLATZprojekt, we can state that the location has both advantages and disadvantages. A map of Hanover in Figure 3 shows how the project, located within an industrial and commercial zone, is largely surrounded by superstores and diverse buildings such as used by the chemical and recycling industries. While there are few casual visitors, this is still a central location in the city of Hanover, which can be easily reached by public

transport. On the one hand, there are a couple of benefits to being "off the beaten track": There is a lot of room for appropriation without disturbing other users and less attention must be paid to regulations concerning noise and the configuration of the containers. Alongside these advantages of the industrial surroundings, the project profits from the physical proximity to the neighbourhood "Linden", where a lot of potential users of the PLATZprojekt live, i.e. students and young people. On the negative side, this form of "protection" of being out of everyone's view also means that the project is less accessible to the general public. Visitors only come if they already know about PLATZprojekt and only certain sections of society will be informed about what is happening there. Subsequently, the project has a particular target group, which is also determined by the location.

At the same time, for those who know about the project and are interested in dropping by, the PLATZprojekt is accessible to the public at any time of the day. Figure 4 shows the entrance to the site, where the lack of gates confirms the open access to the project and to most of the containers. The entrance is barrier-free and the group is currently working on barrier-free access to all parts of the site, which is maintained by the members of the association, some volunteers and the tenants of the containers.

Figure 4. Entrance to the PLATZprojekt © Frederike Jansen

The design and spatial organisation of the "container village" is highly inclusive to its users and every visitor: It offers flexibility, allows appropriation and makes clear visually that the project is under constant development. Whenever the given space is no longer sufficient due to new containers arriving on site, a crane is hired and the whole spatial set up is modified to integrate the new containers, as can be seen in Figure 5. If necessary, a new layer of containers can be set up. In addition to these planned changes in the space by tenants, visitors can also spontaneously appropriate space. In this way we can say that the spatial design is never "finished". However, the appropriation of land by tenants can also create invisible barriers when, for example, the adjacent space around a container is transformed into a terrace or "front garden" that seems to belong only to that container.

Figure 5. Model to explain spatial flexibility of the PLATZprojekt © PLATZprojekt Hannover

The *community* and "driving force" of the PLATZprojekt basically consists of a group of people aged 22–45 years.[4] Initiated by young students, the project is primarily aimed at their friends or friends of friends. Most of these are well-educated and have creative backgrounds. The two founders, Benjamin Grudzinski and Robin Höning, for example, studied architecture at the local Leibniz University. This training gave them the requisite knowledge and self-confidence to take part in a competition for public funding. Other young people without this background would probably not have been motivated to take part in such a competition.

There exists a core group of about 30 commoners actively involved in the project. Some of these run their own project or company within the PLATZprojekt, while others are directly working to support the project. Interviews with the founders and several field trips revealed that the core group is quite homogeneous. Although the members would probably never exclude anyone because of his or her abilities or education, the project itself is constituted in such a way as to attract only a certain section of society. While there have been attempts to integrate refugees or people from different social backgrounds into the project, the group soon discovered that this is a dedicated task for someone who explicitly cares about integration and who is willing to assist others in implementing their projects. This task proved impossible for them to realise within the existing project structure.

Although the core group of commoners is quite homogeneous, people of different ages are keen to visit the PLATZprojekt. According to the project founders, teenagers come to hang out or elderly people drop by for a coffee while out for a stroll (see Figure 6).[5]

Figure 6. People meeting at the PLATZprojekt © Janna Putzke

4 Interview with Benjamin Grudzinski / Robin Höning.

5 Ibid.

Concerning the *institution*, PLATZprojekt determined its regulations for access to the site and for participation by means of a democratic process. As there are no official opening hours or any control mechanisms, the site can be accessed at all hours. There are several options for involvement in the project: As a guest or visitor, by participating in events, by becoming a member of the association to support and take part in the further co-creation of the project, or by taking over a container pitch to start your own project. Generally, the association is open to everyone. The membership fee is only €1 a month. Monthly planning meetings are open to members and non-members alike, and everyone who attends these meetings can participate. The meetings are used to make decisions and delegate collective tasks, for instance to maintain the site or organise events. The association is organised non-hierarchically and constantly experiments with different decision-making methods. In general, it is essential to be present on site, at project events and to participate in activities in order to be entitled to vote and co-decide. This principle is called "Do-ocracy", i.e. the one who acts is the one who decides (BBSR 2016). This norm ensures that the evolution of the project is always defined by the people who are currently active.

To obtain a container pitch, it is necessary to present an idea for a project at a monthly group meeting. The group decides together if and where to implement the new project idea, taking into account the collective guidelines for selection. These guidelines state that the use of a container space must be either for common/social usage or, if it is a commercial project, this must have an innovative character and must not compete with any other commercial enterprise within the city (to exclude any commercial or competitive advantage). The container itself has to be organised and equipped by the future users. The rent for the pitch is €60 a month (plus water and electricity charges) as well as a "pay what you can" contribution to show solidarity with the project's aims.[6] All tenants should identify with the philosophy of PLATZprojekt and must contribute in some way to the community as well as to the infrastructure (although they are considered economically independent within their own corporate structure). In order to keep the project permanently open to new ideas, the right to use a container pitch has to be renewed after one year.

Communication and information are important elements within the organisation. Information about the project, the process and possibilities to participate can be found on the project's website in German and English. A "welcome letter" available for download describes the vision behind the project, its goals as well as the criteria to obtain a container pitch. Figure 7 shows an on-site blackboard used to announce diverse news and meeting times. The

6 The project uses the rent from the container pitches to finance the site lease, maintain the common spaces and areas, pay insurance and provide internet.

commoners regularly organise open days (one in spring and one in autumn) and offer guided tours aimed at attracting and informing interested citizens, neighbours and potential new project pioneers to the site.

Figure 7. Blackboard for announcements at the PLATZprojekt © Frederike Jansen

7. PLATZprojekt – a commons project to foster inclusive urbanism?

If we rely on the definition that inclusiveness means "including many different types of people", it can be questioned how inclusive the investigated project really is. As we have already said, although the project is open to all, it attracts only a certain section of society. In this way the *community* is not completely inclusive in the sense of encompassing many different types of people. While many members have different professions or study in different fields, they share similar *educational backgrounds* or belong to the creative scene. However, additional projects taking part in the Platzprojekt such as "Du bist willkommen" may integrate a more diverse group of commoners over the long term. From a geographical perspective, the commoners come from all over the city of Hanover; the site can be easily reached on foot or by bike, public transport and even car, as there is plenty of parking space. Therefore, if we refer to the understanding that the inclusiveness of a common space depends on the accessibility of the *common resource*, then the

container village can be defined as quite inclusive, also in view of its inviting appearance without gates and its offer of round-the-clock access.

Regarding the *institution* of the PLATZprojekt, it can be described as exceedingly inclusive, as it is open to newcomers and to constant *negotiation*. Its dynamic nature is expressed through the spatial setting as well as the regulations (renewal of rent after one year to foster the establishment of new projects) and the assembly of the commoners. The project developed in a democratic process from an idea to an institution that – due to its framework – inherently changes and evolves. The project is characterized by the do-it-yourself approach of the skateboarders who initially used the adjacent site, even though the group of commoners has changed constantly over time and now a third generation is running the project. All commoners have the right of co-determination and play a decisive role in shaping the project.

In the municipal planning context, the PLATZprojekt plays a special role within the city of Hanover. The local administration tolerates and supports the on-going development of the project, viewing it as an important contribution to an experimental creative culture within the city even though there are sometimes questions about the legality of its operations (e.g. the piled-up container structures contravening building law regulations). The project is even promoted as a best-practice example for user-based city planning by the municipality (BBSR 2016) and was nominated for the "German Neighbourhood Prize 2019" by the "nebenan foundation" in the category "Aiding self-help/Fostering civic engagement and inclusion", thereby underlining its inclusive character.

Summarizing, we can state that the PLATZprojekt has created a unique location within the city of Hanover, turning a previously abandoned site into a common resource accessible to all and which gives the opportunity to use and design this part of the city in a special and inclusive way.

8. Transferability of the analysis

Every project and every common resource has its own specific character that can foster inclusivity to a higher or lesser degree in different ways. The characteristics of one project can never simply be transferred one-on-one to another project. Yet the described accessibility levels of elements inherent to urban commons can be found in different contexts, regardless of the cultural background, the type of commons or the size of the city in which it is located.

Several "transferable" insights of the PLATZprojekt can thus be applied to commoning projects that we have visited within our field research in other cities, also in the international context.

Spatial openness is a quality that applies to commoning projects located in public space or wastelands turned into commons. Such spaces are often

visible and accessible from public streets, are not completely fenced in and can therefore be accessed at any time of the day. One example we can mention here is Driemaster Park in Ghent, a former plot of fallow land currently used as a neighbourhood garden. The park is a self-managed green space appropriated by and for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood for plant cultivation and leisure activities. It is located next to residential housing and a factory in a mixed-use neighbourhood outside the city centre. The *open-to-use design* of the park is a common feature of such urban gardening projects. On site activities are clearly visible: the growing of vegetables and fruits, some animal husbandry, self-made playgrounds for children and seating opportunities. The principle of *being present to be involved* can also be seen in Driemaster Park. The group of commoners consists of people from the neighbourhood who organise themselves via a Facebook group and by chance meetings on the street or on site.

The processual nature of the formation of the *organisational structure* is inherent to projects that originate in bottom-up processes, leading to self-determined administration in the form of associations or foundations. This is the case, for instance, in NDSM Kunststad in Amsterdam, an autonomous art space created from an old shipbuilding warehouse on the former NDSM wharf. The project was developed in a bottom-up process initiated by local artists in negotiation with the municipal authorities. While the aim of the municipality was to redevelop the former industrial zone, the aim of the artists was to create economically affordable studio spaces co-owned and co-managed by the tenants . Here the process is also reflected in the *spatial configuration* of NDSM Kunststad, two-storey stacked units within the warehouse itself, allowing users to build and design their own working spaces. Today the project is run by the foundation "Kinetisch Noord", which holds a leasehold contract with the city.

9. Conclusion

The various levels of accessibility elaborated in this article show, first, the extent to which commons can be seen as inclusive, and second, how the parameters of inclusiveness have many different aspects, such as geographical location within the city, physical accessibility, spatial design, social affiliation, spatial proximity, communication, organisational structure and regulations. Each aspect has its own legitimacy and effect on the inclusiveness of the common resource, and thus on its users. Analysing these can help to classify and scrutinize urban commons concerning their inclusiveness, thereby identifying deficiencies and needs.

In summary, we would like to state that the physical-spatial configuration of a common resource strongly influences its inclusiveness: The barrier-free, open access to a space helps as a first step towards inclusion (in con-

trast to commons with restricted or controlled access). Further, the activities have to be visible and comprehensible to newcomers. If people do not understand what is happening and why, they will not feel encouraged to participate if they happen to drop by. Consequently, it is also important to communicate visibly on site how to participate. Hence the commons project must be created or even designed in such a way as to operate with a low barrier threshold. Access to the community is the most critical part of the studied accessibility of the commons, and greatly influences the degree of (real or felt) inclusiveness. This depends very much on the composition of the group of commoners and the type of commons. Certainly, it is vital to avoid the exclusive use of a commons resource by any one community, a situation which may unintentionally occur due to social affiliations or because of restricted capacity (e.g. in cooperative housing projects). Yet as previously pointed out, this kind of exclusiveness may sometimes help the commons to function properly, as individuals harbouring the same goals may foster useful dynamics.

Regulations are an important part of the commoning process. These are usually determined by all commoners in a democratic way, adding to our understanding of the inherent inclusivity of the concept of the commons, and also providing a model for city administrations, as shown in the example given at the beginning. Furthermore, a space which is less accessible due to fencing can still be welcoming to many different people if the activities and opening hours are well-communicated.

Finally, we can state that no single commoning project will probably ever be inclusive at all levels of accessibility. The best way to achieve inclusive urbanism is thus to foster a great variety and number of commons within one city, thereby reaching a large number of diverse groups. Consequently, city authorities must provide spatial and structural opportunities (open spaces in the urban fabric) which can be turned into a commons resource. This also applies to the international context: The discussed European cases show how cities already profit in many ways from commons, not only by making a common resource usable, but also, for example, by making the city famous for the idea of commons (Driemaster Park, Gent), by assuming the responsibilities of city governments such as offering cultural activities (NDSM Warf, Amsterdam), by self-organised financing and the building of infrastructure (Luchtsingel, Rotterdam), by activating an entire neighbourhood or by introducing new forms of participation to standard processes of urban planning (Van Beuningen Plan, Amsterdam).

In conclusion, we can state that if cities are successful in hosting several disparate common projects and are able to integrate some of the exemplified participatory processes, they will move down the path towards inclusive urbanism.

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