Co-designing collaborative forms for urban commons: using the notions of commoning and agonism to navigate the practicalities and political aspects of collaboration

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Abstract:

This paper aims at contributing to the discussion of how to design collaborative forms for urban commons. It does so by bridging the commons field with the participatory design tradition, which has almost 40 years of experiences in exploring and reflecting on the practicalities as well as the political aspects of collaboration among actors with diverse interest.

In the growing discussion about urban commons, it has been pointed out how in designing collaborative forms for their management Ostrom's design principles might not hold, due to the difference between urban commons and traditional commons (Foster 2011, Harvey 2011). Urban commons entail an active role of public authorities and they gather participants who have different understandings and perspectives over the commons. Diversity in participants' interests entails a higher risk for ossification, meaning that a stable management form might hinder rather than support collaboration (Daniels 2007, Foster 2011).

By building on Participatory Design theory and reflecting on three cases of collaborative management forms in Malmö (Sweden), the paper discusses how the notions of commoning and agonism might be at play in the design of collaborative forms for urban commons. The notion of commoning entails to understand collective use and management of commons as a located and ongoing socio-material practice that requires the creation of management forms able to change and evolve in time in relation to the diversity of interests. The notion of agonism, on the other hand, focuses on articulating the political dimension of commoning, that entails to consider to which extent diversity is present in the collaboration and how it could be further nurtured.

The paper does not provide a definitive answer to how these collaborative forms are to be designed but it stresses the importance of considering both the practicalities as well as the political aspects of collaboration.

Keywords: urban commons, collaborative management forms, commoning, agonism, participatory design, co-design

1. The rising of urban commons: from Triple Helix to co-ownership?

Progressive ageing of population, economic vulnerability, growing inequalities and social polarization, congestion of transport networks, environmental pollution, and degradation of public space, are some of the challenges that European cities are facing today (EU 2011).

These challenges are often paired with aspirations of creating more sustainable, inclusive and attractive cities (URB@EXP 2015).

In looking at the kind of projects and proposals which have been formulated in the last years for facing such challenges and fulfilling those aspirations there are two recurrent elements. The first one is how the mobilizing of different kinds of knowledge is needed in order to deal with the complexity of such issues (Murray et al. 2010). The second one is how they are driven not only by public authorities but also by citizens, businesses and associations who are actively engaging on different scales and in different ways in responding to and formulating possible solutions (Murray et al. 2010). The fact that these concerns are shared and require the mobilization of different actors is leading to an increasing attention towards how collective action may lead to more thriving cities, moving beyond the public and private model towards more hybrid solutions that entail the collaboration between citizens, public institution, the third and the private sector.

This is in line with the notions of Triple/Quadruple Helix and Living labs, which have emerged within the innovation discourse as propositions in relation to how collaboration between different actors could be organized and perform.

Triple Helix can be seen as way to establish hybrid organizations of academia, government and industry where complex dynamic of feedback loops between them both could enable and constrain the different sectors operations and knowledge production and potentially also lead to self-organized innovation systems (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff 2000, Leydesdorff 2010).

Other scholars have suggested the need to add an element and talk about Quadruple Helix, especially the need to include citizens and/or civil society and to do that on equal terms (Arnkil et al. 2010, Ahonen & Hämäläinen 2012). Still what this fourth element might be can vary and according to Ahonen and Hämäläinen the particularity of Quadruple Helix models depends on the context and the owner of the innovation process. They differ between some ideal models of Quadruple Helix; (1) a traditional Triple Helix but where citizens are added to provide information, (2) a firm-centered model where citizens participate to generate ideas for business development, (3) a public-sector-centered model where citizens participate to support the public sector and finally (4) a citizen-centered model where the citizens themselves are in the center and decide what to innovate (Ahonen & Hämäläinen 2012).

Living Labs are one of the ways in which triple/quadruple helix are implemented for example in European cities. There exist no clear consensus of the definition of what a Living Lab is, but most describe them as long-term environments for cross sector innovation including also final users/citizens, and driving activities in real contexts. (Følstad 2008, Stålbröst 2008).

However, in all these models there is one particular part that is seen as the owner of the processes, none of them suggests any co-ownership between the sectors. Also, the dynamic and self-organizing potential in the original Triple Helix and the inclusion of civil society and citizens suggested by Ahonen & Hämäläinen in Quadruple Helix seems to offer a platform

where agendas, issues and focuses potentially could be negotiated on equal terms between the sectors. Yet, the majority of the rhetoric in Living Lab and Quadruple Helix literature seems to present a quite different and skew image regarding equal relations and co-ownership and where "citizens" most often are reduced to mere "users". Arnkil et al is for example arguing for how Quadruple Helix should be seen as a user-centered approach that can serve business development in the private sector to strengthen companies' competitive advantage (Arnkil et al. 2010). Living Labs are often presented as platforms where users are a resource for companies to meet innovation challenges (Følstad 2008, Eriksson et al 2005). Many of these approaches relate to the notions of "open innovation" (Chesbrough, 2003) and "lead-users" (Von Hippel 2003) with an explicit agenda of supporting the private sector and where citizens mainly are seen as a knowledge resources that can be harvested.

At the same time, there are some emerging examples where collaboration between diverse actors is organized on more equal terms and it entails co-ownership and shared responsibility over resources and processes. For example, cases of urban gardening initiatives where public authorities provided spaces in the cities to NGOs and citizens for their activities, and where the management and decision over the space is delegated from the city to the citizens (Foster 2011). Or cases such as Bologna's regulation on public collaboration for urban commons (Comune Bologna 2014), which provides a legal frame to support the collaborative management of the city.

It can be said that cities- and the issues and possibilities around their future- are increasingly understood as a matter of urban commons, that is resources which are shared by different stakeholders and whose thriving depends on the active collaboration between these stakeholders in developing and driving new ways of collectively use and manage these resources (Foster 2011).

We argue that is important to focus on how such collaboration is designed and performed, since it might both provide citizens with new possibilities of acting in and over the city; as well as just perpetuate existing power structures and rather entail the exploitation of citizens' ideas and actions (Hardt and Negri 2009; Harvey 2012).

This article aims at contributing to the discussion about how to design collaborative forms for the management of urban commons. It does so by proposing two notions that bridge commons studies with the participatory design field, which has over 40 years of experience of dealing with collaboration and sharing in the design, firstly, of technologies and, increasingly during the last decade, of collaborative services and solutions within the urban context. The two main notions from Participatory Design suggested as fruitful for understanding urban commons are commoning and agonism. Commoning focuses on understanding collaborative management of commons as a located, ongoing socio-material practice and agonism allows to critically articulate and discuss the political aspects of collaboration within such practice. These two notions should not be understood as guidelines for the design of urban commons but rather as compasses (i.e. practical and reflective thinking tools), that may support a more reflective and

attentive way of dealing with the complexities and challenges that collaborative management forms entail.

Beside presenting these two notions the article also relates them to practice. During the last 6 years as design researchers we have been exploring different collaboration forms across sectors that can support innovation addressing societal challenges in the City of Malmö in Sweden. This has been and is being done through engaging in three platforms, Living Lab-The Factory, Living Lab- The Neighborhood and Innovation Platform Malmö South East. They are and have all been involving many different actors and exploring different forms and possibilities about collaboration. We will through these examples discuss the opportunities, but also dilemmas of the notions of commoning and agonism in dealing with collaborative forms for urban commons.

2. Urban commons specificities and challenges

The notion of urban commons refers to shared resources in urban context, that is resources which are accessed and used by different participants and whose long-term sustainability depends upon how these different uses come into be and interact with each other (Foster 2011).

Government regulation or privatization are seen as the two possible options when it comes to the management of these resources. However, as already pointed out above , a growing number of examples are experimenting with how collective action might be also coordinated by involving the users of such resources (Foster 2011, Comune Bologna 2014) and thus developing collaborative management forms for shared resources.

Those forms have been largely studied when it comes to the management of natural resources, i.e. traditional commons (Ostrom 1990), in order to understand how they might be designed and managed. However it has been pointed out how such findings might not be relevant for urban commons (Foster 2011, Harvey 2011) due to some peculiar characteristics that urban commons entail such as the role of the public sector and the diversity in participants' interests.

2.1 The role of the public sector and the diversity in participants' interests

The first one is the role of the public sector (Foster 2011). While in traditional commons, public authorities are not usually involved in the collaborative management, but when it comes to urban commons such involvement appears inevitable. As the resources often are publicly-owned, and the management thus is "opened up" towards more collaborative and inclusive forms (for example how the explosion of urban farming has opened more for more collaborative management forms of green spaces in the cities). There are also cases in which public authorities are directly involved in the commons having civil servants cooperating with citizens, NGOs and companies in the management of a particular resource (for example business innovation district, which entails the creation of a cooperative between the city, landlords and real estate companies for neighborhoods improvement). Thus there is the need to further

articulate what is the role of the public authorities as enablers and participants in urban commons (Foster 2011).

The second characteristic is related to the difference in interests that the involved actors may have (Foster 2011). The involvement of the public sector, citizens, actors from the private and third sector entails to bring together different values and preferences in relation to which uses may the commons support and, thus, how the collective management should be designed. The issue of having different values at play between users of the commons has been brought up also in traditional commons (Nightingale 2011). Particularly he pointed out how the traditional way in which collaborative management is understood in the commons field- that is a matter of rational arrangements where collective interest is understood by users as a way to increase their individual gain in the long run- does not allow to articulate and understand these different values. He rather underlines the importance of considering also the "irrational" elements of commons, that it entails to look at how subjectivity is at play in collective action, considering the different understandings which are present and how they are negotiated, as well as look at power relations between users (Nightingale 2011).

2.2 The dilemma of ossification

In designing collaborative management forms for urban commons there is an additional issue that needs to be addressed, which is related to the risk that such forms entail.

Traditional commons studies stresses the importance of creating stable forms for collaborative management in order to ensure the well-functioning of the collective action, and consequently, the long-term sustainability of the shared resource (Ostrom 1990, 1999). However, more recent studies highlight how the creation of these stable forms may turn out to be a risk, since they imply the creation of structures that support and facilitate collective action but also resist change. Daniels discusses the risk of "ossification" of commons (2007, n.d.) by pointing out how the formalization of rules and actions entails that a particular way of valuing and understanding the shared resource is prioritized. This may turn out to be problematic if such understanding needs to be changed, since stable organizations with their formalized rules and procedures will tend to resist that change rather than embrace it (Daniels 2007). The issue of ossification is brought up also in relation to urban commons (Foster 2011), since the differences between stakeholders makes more likely that different ways of valuing the commons might be at play. Thus, having management regimes which support only a specific understanding, and particularly the understanding of a specific stakeholder or group, do not only entails risks of rigidity but also the actual exclusion of some participants from the commons.

What Foster (2011) suggests for responding to the issues of ossification is the creation of management regimes "which should ideally be able to remain flexible by maintaining their core identity as stewards for the various constituencies that use and depend on the commons, both now and in the future" (Foster 2011, p.132-133).

With the above-mentioned challenges and risks in mind, in the designing of collaborative management of urban commons, thus, it appears fundamental to further explore and elaborate ways to shape and articulate the role of public authorities as well as to deal with a diversity of interests and to create flexible management forms which allow to renegotiate and reframe how those interests are at play.

3. A participatory design perspective for urban commons: practicalities as well as political aspects of collaboration

We suggest that the participatory design field (PD) may contribute to the commons field, in providing some notions that may support the process of designing collaborative management forms for urban commons and specifically addressing the issues related to ossification and the diversity of interests' involved.

Since the nineteen-seventies, PD has been focusing on staging and understanding long-term participatory processes between people with different backgrounds and knowledge, aiming at generating new technologies, products, services and practices. . Participatory design stemmed out from the concern of democracy at the workplace, particularly the focus was on setting up collaborative design process involving workers in the development of new working technologies and tools, in order to provide them a possibility to influence how their future working practices would look like (Simonsen and Robertson 2012). These processes have amongst others been generating knowledge both in relation to the practicalities of collaboration between actors with different interests as well as discussions of its political aspects (Simonsen and Robertson 2012).

In the last decade, increasingly PD has been moving out from the working environment and increasingly engaging in collaborative innovation processes in different contexts (Bannon and Ehn 2012). In the last six years, our Participatory Design research group has been focusing particularly on different challenges within urban context that span from how to create more inclusive city planning processes to the development of more user-centered health services, from the integration of new citizens, to the future of work and production in urban environments (Ehn et al. 2014). We have been exploring them by setting up long-term collaborations with citizens and institutions, gathering actors with diverse and sometimes conflicting interests (Hillgren et al. 2011, Björgvinsson et al. 2012). We have also been actively engaging in processes driven by civil servants and public authorities about collaborative management of urban commons (Seravalli 2014). All in all, in our work we have continually been striving towards addressing at the same time both the practicalities as well as the political aspects of collaboration.

From the field of participatory design, particularly we suggest there are two notions that can contribute to the understanding and practices of design of urban commons, the one of commoning and the one of agonism.

3.1 Commoning: co-designing for an ongoing collective practice

The notion of commoning has been firstly used by Linebaugh (2009) to highlight how commons is not just a resource or an idea, but also an action, and within the commons studies, it has been used to highlight the social and cultural aspects that collective action entails (Bollier and Helfrich 2012). The PD field has been adopting and further developed this notion (Martilla and Botero 2014, Seravalli 2014) by both specifying what the nature of commoning might be as well as how it can be used in thinking about the design of collaborative forms.

In specifying the nature of commoning, PD has been discussing it as an ongoing (Seravalli 2014) located socio-material practice (Martilla and Botero 2014, Seravalli 2014). Being a socio-material practice entails to consider both the material elements but also the cultural and social aspects that managing and using something together entails. Thus in designing management forms, it is fundamental to keep in consideration not only the intrinsic property of the resource, but also the specificities of the actors and people involved as well as context in which the collective form is taking place. This is also underlined by the notion of "located" that highlights how every design process is intrinsically different and thus there is no definitive answer to how to design for collaborative action. This was pointed out also by Ostrom (1990, 1999) who formulated a number of design principles for sustainable commons but she has also been highlighting how such principles always should be be adapted in relation to the context in which the collective action is performed (Ostrom 1999).

Ostrom has also pointed out the importance of involving commons' participants in the shaping of the collaborative forms (Ostrom 1999). This has been strengthened in PD's definition of commoning, where it is explicitly discussed the importance of developing co-ownership already during the design process (Martilla and Botero 2014 Seravalli 2014) and thinking the role of designer as a collective role (Ehn and Badham 2002).

The notion of "ongoing" requires a more in-depth discussion, since it opens up for a new and different understanding of what a management form might be. Understanding commoning as an ongoing process entails to consider how collective action is not something which is given and froze in time but rather a continuously evolving process that might undergo changes. This is partially reflected in the above discussions about the risk of ossification of management forms, since such forms are not made to accommodate changes and are unable to modify themselves in relation to changes in values and understandings of the commons.

PD provides a theoretical framing to understand how to design for ongoing practices. This frame is the one of "design-after-design", which entails the creation of products, service and systems, which might be reconfigured (and redesigned) during use time (Binder et al. 2011). Such an exploration has been driven by the interest in providing users' with the possibility of reconfiguring solutions and systems to meet their needs. The notion of design after design goes beyond that of involving users in the shaping of solutions, towards the one of creating solutions that may be appropriated and reconfigured in ways that cannot be foreseen during the design process (Binder et al. 2011).

Thus, to design for commoning entails to set up co-design processes aiming for the creation of forms that may be collectively appropriated and modified in time.

3.2 Agonism dealing with different interests

As already pointed out PD has also been focusing on the political aspects of collaboration (Ehn 1988, Simonsen and Robertson 2012) particularly when actors with different interests are involved. In relation to that, early PD research has been discussing how consensus is not only often impossible to reach but neither desirable when dealing with different perspectives. Consensus implies that each actor should converge on a least common denominator that does not represent anyone's interest and thus it entails that motivation and engagement of participants is lessened (Bødker 1987). Thus, Participatory Design has been working with different theoretical concepts discussing the possibility of having collaboration beyond consensus, as well as how and if it might be possible to establish fruitful collective action despite different way of valuing a shared process.

One such concept is agonism introduced by the political philosopher Chantal Mouffe who in similar lines has warned that consensus also increasingly applies on a societal level through established hegemonies where specific core values has been internalized by larger parts of the population as common sense and taken for granted. She argues that this is very problematic from a perspective of democracy because alternative voices and values are excluded (Mouffe 2000, 2009). She phrases it this way:

 "Things could always have been otherwise and every order is predicated on the exclusion of other possibilities. It is always the expression of a particular configuration of power relations. What is at a given moment accepted as the 'natural' order, jointly with the common sense that accompanies it, is the result of sedimented hegemonic practices; it is never the manifestation of a deeper objectivity that would be exterior to the practices that brought it into being. Every order is therefore susceptible of being challenged by counter-hegemonic practices" (Mouffe 2009 p. 549)

Counter hegemonic practices can according to Mouffe, be produced by creating 'agonistic spaces' that allow and embrace conflicts (Mouffe 2000, 2009). To acknowledge and possible also striving for conflicts might be seen as counterintuitive to the notion of commons, however this should not be seen as conflicts between enemies (which would be antagonism) but rather as agonism where the counterparts respect each other as adversaries (ibid). The idea of agonism has been used by several researchers within PD (Di Salvo 2012, Björgvinsson et al. 2010, 2012) and for us it has worked as an important guiding principle both when acting and discussing who get to be involved in the collaborative processes, who are excluded, and how collaborative forms may perpetrate or rather challenge existing hegemonies. We suggest that the notion of agonism may be useful in the co-designing of collaborative forms to articulate such political aspects and concerns.

4. Co-designing for collaboration in Malmö

We will now describe and discuss three different collaboration platforms that we have been engaged/are engaging in, that all aim at involving different kinds of actors in the City of Malmö in Sweden, to explore and respond to different complex urban issues and societal challenges. They are: Living Lab - Fabriken, which exemplifies how the notion of commoning might be used in co-designing collaborative forms; Living Lab - The Neighbourhood, which exemplifies how agonism is at play in collaborations between actors with different interests; and finally the Innovation Platform Malmö South East- a three year triple-helix project driven by the Environmental Department of the City of Malmö which is starting to address issues of co-ownership and where we are introducing both notions of commoning and agonism.

4.1 Living Lab - The Factory, commoning production

The Factory is a makerspace a facility that gives individuals and small organizations the possibility to engage in production processes and prototype ways of generating goods and providing services. It is hosted in an old industrial building, which has been recently renovated and is situated in Malmö former harbor area, whose core has been shifting from ship-building to knowledge economy.

The Factory has been set up and driven as a collaboration between a NGO, called STPLN, driving the space; the municipality, providing the facilities and some funding for the NGO; us the co-design researchers, who have been engaged in different activities for the development of the space; and other actors such as citizens and companies who have been engaging in the space in short as well as long-term collaborations. The presence of different actors entails that the space has different goals: for the NGO is about creating a platform that may support citizens in driving their own creative activities, for the researchers it has been a platform to explore possibilities and limits of alternative production forms and of collaborative management (Seravalli 2014).

When it comes to collaborative forms and management, the Factory went through different organizational structures that, however, all are based on a the same principle: the involvement of participants in the development and running of the premises. In this sense the Factory can be considered a urban commons where the municipality provides (some) funding and the NGO together with the users has been developing and is managing the space. The next section discuss more in detail how the Factory can be considered a case of design-after-design when it comes to collaborative management forms. But also how it exemplifies what commoning might be, as well as some of challenges in dealing with different values and understandings of commons.

4.2 Living Lab - The Neighbourhood, agonistic collaboration around urban challenges

Living Lab the Neighbourhood was established in 2009 as a part of the research center Medea at Malmö University. The lab aimed at developing new services, processes or support structures to address some of the urgent socio-economic challenges   which are affecting some of

Malmö's neighborhoods, such as high-levels of unemployment (up to 80% in certain areas) and gaps in health conditions (with life expectancy varying up to 8 years from one part to the other of the city). The Neighborhood was initiated by researchers who along the years worked towards establishing and fostering collaborations between local actors and civil servants with the aim of developing proposals that could make sense both for the local communities and the surrounding society (Björgvinsson et al 2010, 2012, Hillgren et al 2011, Hillgren 2013).

Through this Living Lab we strived for a much more agonistic approach compared to the majority of quadruple helix and living lab initiatives, by taking as a starting point the interests among local grass-roots organizations in these neighborhoods. Crucial for the lab was to ensure that alternative voices and perspectives could come into play that potentially could produce counter hegemonic practices. For this reason we decided not to work with actors which were already established and knew how to work with socio-economic issues, but rather we aimed for collaboration with groups and citizens who were marginalized and would provide alternative views of what could constitute a future Malmö.

Together with these collaborators we developed ideas for new services and practices. Beside working with them we also tried to reach for the municipality and civil servants in order to foster connections between these stakeholders with different views and hopefully establish long-term collaboration and new alliances.

The work in The Neighborhood highlights how agonism supports the articulation of the political aspects of collaboration and how it brings forward alternative perspectives and ways of approaching urban challenges. However it also reveals how agonism may hinder co-ownership.

4.3 The Innovation platform Malmö South East, towards commoning urban renewal?

The third example, Innovation Platform Malmö South East, is a initiative which is driven by the municipal Environmental Department. The aim of the Innovation platform is to develop innovation capacity within the "million program areas" in Malmö. Such areas have been build in the seventies when, due to a lack of accommodation, the Swedish government created 1.000.000 apartments within a few years. Today these buildings are in urgent need of physical renovation; at the same time these areas have to face a number of socio-economic issues. The Innovation Platform aims at gathering a number of different actors (the environmental and other department, the regional office, real-estate owners, universities, citizens, companies, energy organizations, NGOs and associations) to focus on the development of these areas with a particular focus on experimenting with various kinds of innovations (technical, social, financial, etc.) and creating collaborations and knowledge alliances between actors with diverse interests.

The platform started as a time-limited project (2013-2015) financed by Vinnova (the Swedish agency for innovation) but since 2014 the Environmental Department has been actively working towards making the platform as a permanent organization, bringing together different actors for collectively managing the renovation of the million program areas. Thus it can be considered as

attempt of the Environmental Department to create a collaborative management form around the renovation of these area. The case is not so developed but it provides insights in relation to the role of public authorities in collaborative management forms as a well as issues in introducing concepts of commoning and agonism.

5.Commoning and agonism in urban commons

This section discusses how the notions of commoning and agonism have been at play in the three platforms and it highlights opportunities and challenges around them.

5.1 Ongoing collaborative forms for commoning?

As already pointed out LL The Factory may represent an interesting example when it comes to understanding commoning as well as what design for it entails. The space itself has been active since april 2011 and it has been through three major changes when it comes to collaborative management forms. The initiators of the space have been the City of Malmö, who owns the space the NGO STPLN, who runs the premises and some researchers at Malmö university, who at that time came in with some human and financial resources.

In initiating the space a major effort was put in discussing which kind of organizational form should the space have. Particularly since the aim was to create a platform for supporting citizens' activities, there was the explicit intention of involving participants in the design and running of the premises. Thus, the decision was to not define all the feature of the space and its organization in advance, but rather let the premises grow organically in relation to the participants that would join as well as involve them in the running and decision making over the premises. This process however was not let completely open, the NGO and the researchers have been playing a major role in inviting different communities into the premises as well as encourage collaboration between them.

Some months after the opening, a core group of assiduous participants emerged, who were not just using the space but also they were willing and capable of taking care of the equipment as well as other technical features. Thus the decision was to give them the mandate (and responsibility) to manage the workshop in collaboration with the NGO, who did not have the competences and the time to take care of all the aspects of the space. This first attempt at a collaborative form ended after one year, since the growing number of users put too much pressure and demands to the group of the core users, who started to systematically enclose the commons, i.e. the shared equipment, in order to avoid misuse. Enclosing the commons meant that it became more difficult for newcomers to join in the space and, consequently, to create possibilities for new activities to emerge.

Thus, the NGO decided to change the management form of the Factory by starting a collaboration with a design studio who would provide a technician for the lab (taking care of the equipment and newcomers) in exchange for having the opportunity to use the space for their own projects. This second management form turned out to be more inclusive when it comes to

support different ways to use and understand what the Factory was about, and still having participants contributing to the space and its general running. However, decision-making and responsibility over the space shifted from participants to the company and the NGO. This second form lasted also from one year due to increasingly differences between the design studio and the NGO. Particularly it emerged how the way these two actors were understanding the commons was quite different, not only in terms of what uses should be prioritize but also in terms of ownership. The studio was interested in developing activities which could create a revenue for them in the long-run, and thus they wanted to have more exclusive control over communication and management of the space. On the other side the NGO wanted to experiment towards including new and different participants, but also hold partial control over communication and management of the space, in order to avoid the issues that emerged within the first form. Thus, this collaborative form came also to an end, leading to a third management form where the NGO has been looking for financing for employing on its own a technician that may take care of the machines and the equipment, and thus not sharing responsibility and control over the space with other actors.

The Factory and its ever-changing management forms exemplify quite well how the idea of commoning as an ongoing located socio-material practice. How the understanding of what a urban commons is and which values and uses should be prioritize evolves in time in relation to changes in participants and context.

It is also interesting to notice how the approach of not striving for defining a management form since the beginning but rather having a more tentative and open attitude allowed for redesigning and reconfiguring how the space was working during use. However, this was not without struggles. The shift from the first to second management form entailed that the core-participants left the space. Even though they thought that the first form was not sustainable anymore and they got involved in the decision of collaborating with the design studio, some months after the second form was in place none of them was still a regular in the space. This might be related to the fact that, in the second form, core participants lost ownership over the space and thus not only the duties but also the benefits that it entailed. Moreover, due to lack of time and resources, they were not directly involved in the process of co-designing the new form and this certainly affected also their sense of ownership over the space.

The changes in the management form reveal the struggle of handling shared resources in a collaborative way when different interests are at play. It also highlights the importance of co-design as a way of fostering co-ownership. It also clearly reveals that there has been a tension between empowering participants and involving them in decision-making processes and at the same time supporting different activities and understandings of what the space might be used for. Paradoxically, while the management form of the Factory became more inclusive, it did so at the expense of having participants involved in decision-making, with the NGO retaining progressively more control over the space. In this case, commoning allows also to discuss in a more nuanced form the boundaries between an actual collaborative management form and what can resemble more a traditional public service. It also points out the centrality of the NGO as being the ones who initiated the different forms and played a major role in changing them,

but also in the actual management form, playing a major role in deciding who gets or not to share the resources of the space.

When relating the specific insights of this case to the issues of urban commons, it emerges both how thinking in terms of commoning may support the emergence of more open-ended and flexible management forms, which may be better of in facing the challenge of ossification. However, it is also important to discuss the nature of these forms: to which extent they entail co-ownership, how they support diversity in the understanding of the commons. It appears also as fundamental to discuss the way such forms get to be shaped, who is deciding over them? where does their mandate comes from?

5.2 Agonism, pointing towards urban commons but hindering collaborative forms?

As already pointed out the work with LL The Neighborhood exemplifies quite well how an agonistic perspective may be used to articulate the political aspects of collaboration and generate alternative insights in relation to how to deal with urban and societal challenges. However, it also raises a number of challenges in relation to co-ownership and collaborative management.

One example in this sense is the work we did together with a multi ethnic group of women in Malmö. They were engaged in local community work, many of them had limited skills in Swedish and lived on social welfare. Although they stated that they felt excluded from the Swedish society and were far from the job market, they also were resourceful in many ways. They were engaged in peer-to-peer support activities, from helping each other in case of sickness to intervene in cases of domestic violence. They were also carrying out a number of activities which were connected to their own interests and abilities, such as carpet weaving and embroidery or cooking. Sometimes these activities were taking a more commercial nature, such as doing catering for some events, or sewing things that they could sell.

We got in contact to them thanks to a NGO who was working with youth in the same area. What was striking us was how this group of women were succeeding in dealing with issues which public authorities in the area were struggling with, but also how they were doing it almost completely under the radar. They were formally a NGO however they had difficulties in dealing with the bureaucracy that this entails. While we were working together they often had to deal with financing issues and also problems with maintaining their own facilities. Unlike other more established NGOs in the area, they had very little contact with civil servants and other actors, even though they were interested in finding ways to initiate different collaborations to develop different kinds of ideas. Thus, we started to work together with them trying to both support them in develop further their ideas as well as in creating collaborations that might help them. One of these ideas was to create a service for unaccompanied immigrant children in Sweden, where the women with a similar cultural background could cope with the children quite differently compared to how the public and private sector did it. We got to prototype the service by involving civil servants and a private health company taking care of the kids in Malmö. Even

though all the different actors involved could see a potential in such a service and how it could represent a valid way to support both the children and the women, it did not develop any further.

The service proposal did not fit existing structures and regulations regarding this kind of services and it also challenged the notion of what is counted as a valid "job" on the market, and the role that a NGO might have in producing this kind of services. In order to deal with all these different issues, there was the need of having the involved actors working together to develop new practices and regulation. Thus, making the issue of how to further develop the service, a commons. However this turned out to be impossible. We were missing resources and spaces for experimentation that could support these actors in committing themselves to co-own this issue. Moreover, they had very different ways of understanding and valuing what the issue was about. Thus, creating a commons would have meant that they partially would have to change the way they were working as well as change their role.

An agonistic approach has in this case, and in other cases, brought forward alternative ways of understanding what an issue is about and how it should be dealt with, opening up for innovative solutions. In order to move these solutions forward, it has often emerged the need for considering them as commons since they require the mobilization and co-ownership of diverse actors. However this turned out to be often impossible due both to the diversity of the actors involved as well as a lack of resources and experimentation spaces that could support actors' commitment.

5.3 Civil servants in the commoning: struggling between the political dimensions and the practicalities of collaborative management forms

The Innovation Platform may be considered as an interesting ongoing example of public authorities attempting at commoning. Even though the project has a quite traditional structure (with work-packages addressing different issues and having a steering group supervising activities) the Environmental Department (who formally is the management team/owner of the process) decided to provide a large degree of freedom to the WP leaders (including both researchers and civil servants)[1] in developing activities within their work-package, leaving them the opportunity to interpret and find their own ways to explore the different topics. This entailed not only that WP leaders got more responsibility but also that they quickly developed a sense of ownership over the project. Thus, the platform succeeded in gathering actors with diverse interests and understandings about innovation in these areas.

The IP is also characterized by a sense of co-ownership among some of the main partners, who both got the possibility to develop and bring forward their own perspectives but also have resources and spaces for experimenting with the emergence of commoning within the project.

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[1] The management structure of the Innovation Platform resembles the structure of most large-scale projects with work packages (WPs) and WP leaders. There are seven WPs (1) project management, (2) technical development of buildings, (3) physical development of neighbourhoods, (4) social and economic development for the residents, (5) collaborative action, (6) new business models, (7) Urban Global Innovation arena. The environmental department is leading WP 1, 5 and 6, Lund University WP 2, Alnarp University WP3, Malmö University WP 4 and Region Skåne WP7. The management process mainly consists of monthly meetings between WP leaders, a steering committee that also assemble on a monthly basis and quaterly often thematic workshop and seminar-based meetings among core and peripheral partners and other interested stakeholders..

A crucial role in nurturing co-ownership and diversity has been played by the the monthly meetings of WP leaders, steering committee meetings as well as regular seminars and workshops. Even though these different moments are always organized and driven by the Enviromental Department civil servants they represent arenas where shared matters are discussed and where different participants can propose topics and issues.

In discussing with the civil servants who are responsible for IP how co-ownership, citizens participation and agonism were at play in the platform, they stressed that co-ownership is something that they worked with quite actively. And it is also something they perceive as having succeeded with among the WP leaders and some of the partners. Largely due to the engaged group of partners, when it comes to agonism, they stated that they regard it as quite high in the platform. However, it also emerged that citizens and the civil society were missing as co-owners in the platform.

In working towards transforming the IP from a project to a permanent urban governance structure in Malmö there seem to be a main challenge which is related to how to navigate the tension between the political dimension and mandate and the effectiveness of the commoning. Even though the involved civil servants have been stating that they perceived the platform as an agonistic space, they also recognized that citizens were missing and that some key actors such as property owners were not very active. In relation to citizen involvement in the new proposal they clearly state the need of including them "because experiences has showed that the municipality can't address the challenges that the city is confronting". However, it is still unclear what kind of more concrete actions could be done to actually involve the citizens on equal terms, considering that the actual way in which the platform is organized (with work packages and a steering committee) does not facilitate citizens involvement in decision making processes. Thus, striving towards a more agonistic approach would require to reorganize the management form of the platform, in ways which are difficult to foresee at the moment. When it comes to property owners, instead, a huge effort has been put in setting up dialogues with them and understanding how the platform could generate value for them, since they are playing a key role in making possible to act and transform these areas.

Thus, in striving towards diversity, the platform has both to confront issues related to the political dimensions of commoning (i.e. having citizens owning the platform and thus letting go of some of the managing power) as well as practicalities (i.e. activating property owners). In such a struggle the risk can easily become that the political dimension may be left behind, as we see it. The role of property owners is emerging as crucial in almost all the activities of the WPs and it is also in line with a more traditional way of understanding what a renovation process is about, who carries it out and what it should generate. Including citizens is recognized as something that entails bringing in relevant perspectives. However it raises both the issue of how to do it, as well how to deal with that perspectives if they might be radically different and point towards completely other directions than for example the ones of property owners.

We are also seeing how having the IP becoming part of the structures of the city might entail that civil servants partially lose resources and spaces for experimentation with co-designing the

collaborative management form as well as possibilities to reflect over the nature and quality of such form.

We have no answer to this dilemma but we have seen how explicitly bringing in commoning and agonistic perspective might help civil servants in reflecting on their work. For example in relation to considering how co-ownership is at play as well as looking at collaborative forms out from a critical perspective, considering who is missing from the process and who should be involved. These notions challenge also the way civil servants are used to operate, questioning how agendas are formulated and who is involved in and who is missing in such formulations. They also challenge hegemonies in relation to relevant stakeholders, forms and procedures for collaborative management.

6. Conclusions

The article aims at contributing to the discussion about co-designing and governing urban commons and specifically addressing the role of the public sector, the diversity of interests and the dilemma of ossification in the creation of collaborative management forms for urban commons. It does so by bridging the field of commons with the one of participatory design, which has almost 40 years of experiences in exploring and reflecting on the practicalities as well as the political aspects of collaboration among actors with diverse interest. The article has particularly focused on and proposed the notions of commoning and agonism as relevant for understanding urban commons. The first one entails to understand collective use and management of a resource as a located and ongoing socio-material practice that requires the co-design of management forms able to change and evolve in time in relation to the diversity of interests. The notion of agonism on the other hand focuses on articulating the political dimension of commoning that entails to consider to which extent diversity is present in the collaboration and how it could be further nurtured.

The article does not provide any guideline or tool for the design of collaborative forms, but it rather proposes these two notions as ways to reflect on and work with the practicalities and political aspects of collaboration in and for urban commons. In which way, it this is discussed in relation to three cases of collaborative platforms in Malmö Sweden.

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