

Architects as 'Mediators'

Socio-political
roles in mediating
the 'temporary
use' of vacant
spaces



Hella Hernberg is an architect striving towards creative and sustainable cities. She specialises in sustainability, mediation and participation in the changing built environment. Before her doctoral research, she ran her own company, *Urban Dream Management*, worked as a strategic designer at the Finnish Ministry of the Environment and as an architect in several architecture firms. She is also the editor and publisher of *Helsinki Beyond Dreams*, a book about urban culture and local initiatives in Helsinki.





NANTES

GHENT

BREMEN

RIGA

**HELSINKI /
ESPOO**

**Architects
as
'Mediators'**

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the 'temporary use'
of vacant spaces**

HELLA HERNBERG











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paysans maraichers



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PAR LE
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& REVELER
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TOUT CARRÉS

Figures 1–3. Examples of temporary use from the contexts of the qualitative interview study of *Refill Mediators* in this thesis:

Figure 1. *DOK* is a temporary use project at *Oude Dokken*, the old port of Ghent in Belgium. Since 2011, the neglected industrial site has served as an area for events and a creative platform for activities ranging from culture, sport, art and ecology to well-being. In the meantime, the site is undergoing a large-scale urban renewal into a new residential area. In this thesis, the ‘neighbourhood managers’ mediating temporary use in Ghent are part of the study of *Refill Mediators*. Photo: Michiel Devijver.

Figure 2. Temporary users building an outdoor stage for events and concerts at *Lastādija* in Riga, Latvia. Since 2015, the *Lastādija* quarter has developed into one of Riga’s largest self-organised sites for culture and art, with approximately 100 artists, artists’ associations, musicians, social activists, craftsmen, and cultural organisers. *Lastādija* has been established by *Free Riga*, a temporary use mediator organisation that is part of the study of *Refill Mediators*. Photo: Lastādija.

Figure 3. A farmer’s market at *Solilab* in Nantes, France. *Solilab* hosts premises for companies and organisations of ‘social and solidary economies’ in a warehouse at the former industrial harbour of *Île de Nantes*. *Samoa*, the organisation responsible for the urban redevelopment of the area, is part of the study of *Refill mediators*. Photo: Vincent Jacques / Samoa.

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Helsinki, 12 April, 2020
Hella Hernberg

Abstract

Climate change, resource depletion, and other complex global challenges place urgent pressure on cities to develop more flexible and inclusive approaches to planning and the adaptable (re)use of existing built environments. In recent decades, the ‘temporary use’ of vacant spaces – such as the adaptation of empty offices or hospitals into spaces for artists, residents or entrepreneurs – is increasingly recognised by scholars and planners as a resource-efficient, experimental and inclusive approach for managing urban change. However, despite the growing appreciation of temporary uses and their formal deployment in cities of the Global North, temporary uses face challenging socio-political conditions, including structural barriers and tensions between the multiple actors involved.

‘Mediators’ are increasingly recognised as necessary actors in managing the socio-political dynamics and conditions in temporary use. Recent examples show architects often act as mediators; one example is my own work as an architect engaged in temporary use in Finland for over ten years. However, socio-politically engaged work of this kind expands beyond architects’ traditional training and competencies and thus presents a need for learning across disciplines.

However, there is currently scant academic literature on mediation in temporary use. At the same time, relevant knowledge is rapidly emerging in practice. To contribute to the conceptualisation and analysis of mediation, this doctoral thesis aims to develop conceptually relevant and nuanced articulations of mediator *roles* in temporary use and outline the underlying socio-political conditions. I address this aim through a research approach that integrates knowledge from adjacent scholarly fields and professional practice.

To elaborate the socio-political conditions in temporary use and conceptualise mediation work, this thesis integrates related perspectives from four scholarly fields: temporary use, participatory design, urban sustainability transitions and architecture. In addition, the thesis investigates mediation roles *on and through* practice in two empirical studies. In a ‘practice-based’ study, informed by qualitative ethnography, I studied my ongoing work as a mediator in a temporary use project in Espoo, Finland. To provide broader insights into mediation, I conducted qualitative interviews with five other mediators in four European cities.

This is a ‘compilation thesis’, comprising four peer-reviewed academic papers and seven introductory chapters. The papers present complementary perspectives on mediation and its conditions. The fourth paper presents a detailed typology of mediation roles, further elaborated in the introductory chapters. As a cross-cutting finding, this thesis articulates three roles for mediators in temporary use: *brokering the collaboration and partnerships between actors, negotiating the structural conditions and building capabilities for temporary use.*

This doctoral thesis offers conceptual and practical contributions relevant to different academic and practical audiences. Besides the three mediation roles, the thesis elucidates detailed activities and instances of such roles in practice, which also bring to light broader socio-political dilemmas. By articulating mediator roles in temporary use, the thesis highlights aspects of professional work that question our current premises behind planning, architecture and related expert work. Therefore, the thesis provides relevant knowledge for municipalities and practitioners aiming to develop approaches for sustainable, inclusive and adaptable urban development.

Keywords

Mediation, intermediation, temporary use, participatory design, urban sustainability transitions, architecture, planning, sustainability

Tiivistelmä

Arkkitehdit välittäjinä

Välittäjätoimijoiden sosiaaliset ja poliittiset roolit tyhjen tilojen väliaikaiskäytössä

Kaupunkien pitää kyetä nopeasti vastaamaan globaaleihin haasteisiin kuten ilmastonmuutokseen ja resurssien niukkuuteen. Yksi tärkeä kysymys on, miten edistää olemassa olevan rakennuskannan joustavaa uudiskäyttöä. Viime vuosikymmeninä tyhjen tilojen väliaikaiskäyttö on yleistynyt monissa globaalien pohjoisten kaupungeissa ja se on tunnistettu yhdeksi keinoksi kehittää kaupunkeja resurssiviisaasti, kokeilevasti ja osallistavasti. Väliaikaiskäytön avulla voidaan hyödyntää tyhjilleen jääneitä tiloja ja rakennuksia, kuten tyhjiä toimistoja, teollisuustiloja tai sairaaloita, esimerkiksi taiteilijoiden, asukkaiden tai pienyrittäjien käyttöön. Huolimatta useista mahdollisuuksista väliaikaiskäyttö kohtaa käytännössä sosiaalisia ja poliittisia haasteita kuten rakenteellisia ja hallinnollisia esteitä, vallan ja omistajuuden tuomia kysymyksiä ja eri osapuolten välisiä ristiriitoja.

'Välittäjillä' on kasvava merkitys väliaikaiskäytön edistämässä ja kehittämässä toimijoina, jotka ohjaavat ja selvittävät väliaikaiskäytön sosiaalista dynamiikkaa ja poliittisia kysymyksiä. Käytännössä arkkitehdit toimivat usein välittäjän roolissa väliaikaiskäyttöä kehitettäessä. Oma yli kymmenen vuoden kokemukseni arkkitehtina tilojen väliaikaiskäytön parissa Suomessa on tästä yksi esimerkki. Kuitenkin sosiaalisesti ja poliittisesti painottunut työ poikkeaa selvästi arkkitehdin perinteisestä työstä ja koulutuksen mukaisesta osaamisesta. Välittäjän työ poikkeaa myös perinteisestä kiinteistönvälittäjän toimenkuvasta. Välittäjien työn tarpeellisuus on tunnistettu, mutta sitä on tutkittu huomattavan vähän tilojen väliaikaiskäytön yhteydessä, vaikka käytännön tuomaa tietoa kertyy jatkuvasti.

Tämä väitöskirja tutkii välittäjien sosiaalisia ja poliittisia rooleja tilojen väliaikaiskäytössä sekä niihin vaikuttavia olosuhteita. Väitöskirjan tavoitteena on kehittää merkityksellistä sanastoa, jonka avulla voidaan paremmin kuvata ja ymmärtää välittäjätoimijan rooleja ja toimintaa tilojen väliaikaiskäytössä sekä käsitteellisellä että yksityiskohtaisella ja käytännöllisellä tasolla.

Tutkimus lähestyy nopeasti kehittyvää ja alojen rajat ylittävää aihetta yhdistämällä tietoa useilta tieteenaloilta sekä käytännön toiminnasta. Tut-

kimus kokoaa yhteen kirjallisuutta väliaikaiskäytöstä (temporary use), osallistavasta suunnittelusta (participatory design), kaupunkiympäristöjen kestävyysmurroksista (urban sustainability transitions) ja arkkitehtuurista. Lisäksi välittäjän rooleja tutkitaan kahden empiirisen tutkimuksen avulla, joista toinen, käytäntölähtöinen tutkimus käsittelee omaa työtäni väliaikaiskäyttöhankkeessa espoolaisella toimisto- ja teollisuusalueella. Lisäksi tutkimuksen näkökulmaa on laajennettu haastattelututkimuksella viiden kokeneen välittäjän työstä neljässä eurooppalaisessa kaupungissa.

Tämä artikkeliväitöskirja koostuu neljästä vertaisarvioidusta tieteellisestä artikkelista sekä seitsemästä johdantoluvusta. Artikkelit tarjoavat toisiaan täydentäviä näkökulmia välittäjän työhön ja rooleihin tilojen väliaikaiskäytössä sekä niihin vaikuttaviin olosuhteisiin. Väitöksen keskeisenä havaintona nostetaan esiin kolme välittäjäroolia tilojen väliaikaiskäytön prosesseissa: Välittäjät edistävät useiden eri toimijoiden välistä yhteistyötä ja kumppanuuksien syntymistä, neuvottelevat väliaikaiskäytön rakenteellisista ehdoista ja olosuhteista sekä kehittävät tilojen väliaikaiskäyttöön liittyvää osaamista.

Väitöskirja tarjoaa käsitteitä ja käytännön tietoa, joista on hyötyä sekä akateemiselle yleisölle että käytännön toimijoille. Kolmen välittäjäroolin lisäksi väitös kuvaa välittäjien käytännön toimintaa yksityiskohtaisten esimerkkien avulla, jotka kytkeytyvät laajemmin tunnistettuihin sosiaalisiin ja poliittisiin kysymyksiin. Välittäjän roolien kuvaus myös korostaa arkkitehtien ja muiden suunnittelualojen työn murrosta ja kyseenalaistaa perinteisiä oletuksia arkkitehdin työstä. Näin väitös myös tarjoaa kaupungeille ja käytännön toimijoille hyödyllistä tietoa kestävästä, osallistavasta ja joustavista lähestymistavoista kaupunkisuunnitteluun ja -kehittämiseen.

Asiasanat

Välittäjätoimijat, väliaikaiskäyttö, osallistava suunnittelu, kaupunkiympäristöjen kestävyysmurrokset, arkkitehtuuri, kaupunkisuunnittelu, kestävä kehitys

Research papers and author contributions

This compilation thesis consists of seven introductory chapters and the following four papers, which are referred to in the text by their numbers:

Paper 1

Hernberg, H. and Mazé, R. (2017) 'Architect/Designer as 'Urban Agent': A Case of Mediating Temporary Use in Cities', in *Proceedings of the NORDES Nordic Design Research Conference 2017 Design + Power*, Oslo, Norway, June 15–17, 2017.

This paper brings together concepts from contemporary participatory design and architecture for a preliminary conceptualisation of mediation work in temporary use. As the first author, the empirical part of the paper is based on my reflections on previous and ongoing professional work. I was also responsible for conducting the literature reviews and bringing together concepts from two sets of literature and practice as well as the main writing work.

Paper 2 (Short paper)

Hernberg, H. and Mazé, R. (2018) 'Agonistic Temporary Space – Reflections on 'Agonistic Space' across Participatory Design and Urban Temporary Use', in *Proceedings of the 15th Participatory Design Conference – Volume 2*, Hasselt and Genk, Belgium, August 20–24, 2018. doi: 10.1145/3210604.3210639

This literature paper builds conceptual bridges between discussions on 'agonism' in participatory design and 'conflict' in temporary use. As the first author, I was responsible for the literature reviews, making the conceptual connections and most of the writing work.

Paper 3

Hernberg, H. (2020) 'Mediating 'Temporary Use' of Urban Space: Accounts of Selected Practitioners', in Chudoba M, Hynynen A, Rönn M, et al. (eds) *Built Environment and Architecture as a Resource*, Proceedings series 2020-1. Sweden: Nordic Academic Press of Architectural Research, pp. 211–239.

I am the sole author of Paper 3.

Paper 4

Hernberg, H. (2021) 'Holding Properties Vacant Is Resource Stupidity': Towards a Typology of Roles in the (Inter)mediation of Urban 'Temporary Use'. *Planning Practice and Research*. doi: 10.1080/02697459.2021.2001730

I am the sole author of Paper 4.

Chapter 1








Figure 4. Vacant office buildings in *Kera*, in the city of Espoo, located in the Helsinki metropolitan area in Finland. The suburban office and logistics district of *Kera* is the context of the primary empirical study, *Mediation in Kera*, in the thesis. Photo: Susanna Ahola.

1. Motivation: Architectural design in the face of complex urban challenges

Cities today are facing unprecedented challenges and growing uncertainty about political, economic and environmental conditions. Cities and built environments¹ must cope with diverse change processes and crises: financial crises, rapid urbanisation, migration, ageing, and growing economic and social inequalities are only some examples. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the vulnerability of our current systems and economies and brought about rapid changes to the patterns of our daily lives (e.g. Gaziulusoy et al., 2021). At the same time, long-standing and urgent environmental challenges, including climate change and resource depletion, require radical and systemic responses. As stated recently by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2021), preventing global warming above 1.5°C requires even more urgent actions than previously anticipated. In the face of such complex challenges, cities, particularly in the Global North, must develop ways to adapt to rapidly changing conditions and radically reduce their carbon and material footprints.

Cities and built environments have an undeniable impact on the urgent environmental challenges of today. The construction, usage, renova-

¹ The term 'built environment' refers to the human-made surroundings that provide the setting for human activity, including buildings, parks, roads, open spaces and infrastructures (e.g. Abraham, 2017).

tion and demolition of buildings generate 40% of energy consumption, 35% of greenhouse gas emissions, and 30% of waste globally (Ministry of the Environment, 2021). Buildings also embed about 50% of the world's natural resources (ibid.). Notably, the impact of the construction of new buildings (versus their use) is considerably high (e.g. Heinonen, Säynäjoki & Junnila, 2011). Accordingly, scholars call for holistic lifecycle perspectives beyond incremental changes to the business-as-usual (Pomponi & D'amico, 2020). Thus, a critical question concerning the sustainability of built environments today is: How can we advance the adaptable reuse of the existing built environment to reduce its environmental impacts and better address changing needs and conditions?

Nevertheless, cities also show potential as an important locus of novel solutions aiming at socio-ecological sustainability (e.g. Bulkeley et al., 2011; Lehtovuori et al., 2017). Recent research on the emerging field of 'urban sustainability transitions' (Wolfram, Frantzeskaki & Maschmeyer, 2016; Frantzeskaki et al., 2017) recognises the potential of bottom-up, civil society initiatives in pioneering and modelling new practices that may eventually have a more systemic contribution towards sustainability. For example, Niki Frantzeskaki and colleagues suggest that some civil society groups 'may play a critical role in helping to reshape unsustainable social, ecological, economic, and cultural practices and patterns' (Frantzeskaki et al., 2016, p. 42). Therefore, scholars of urban sustainability transitions suggest that local municipal governments need to develop novel ways of engaging with and empowering the development of local initiatives and experiments (ibid.; Buijs et al., 2016). This, in turn, calls for a fundamental rethinking of the current practices and premises in fields such as urban planning, development and architecture.

Addressing such questions of socio-ecologically sustainable urban development is, essentially, a complex social and political challenge. It concerns fundamentally questioning and rethinking the dominant market conditions, regulatory frameworks, social and cultural norms, conventions, values, power relations, as well as professional roles. Scholars of urban sustainability transitions recognise the complex socio-political tensions involved in transformation processes, in which 'alternative' or 'niche' practices challenge dominant 'regime' rules and practices. For example, local 'grassroots' practices, such as urban farming or community energy initiatives, face difficulties to operate, let alone grow or seed wider changes, in conditions involving rigid regulatory frameworks and multiple interests of

different actors (Hargreaves et al., 2013; White & Stirling, 2013). Furthermore, civil society initiatives may face the risk of exploitation or co-optation to serve neoliberal agendas and narratives, such as those about decentralisation and the need for 'small' government (Frantzeskaki et al., 2016, p. 46). Therefore, there is a growing need to increase our understanding of the work of nurturing and empowering such initiatives in order to spur more substantial changes leading towards sustainability in cities.

This doctoral thesis is situated in relation to a phenomenon that brings together these complex concerns related to sustainable urban development, grassroots initiatives and the transforming premises of urban planning and development. Namely, the thesis enquires into the 'temporary use' of vacant spaces (Oswalt, Overmeyer & Misselwitz, 2013), understood as the adaptive and inclusive reactivation of existing redundant properties and spaces. Temporary use also presents a context for emerging socio-politically engaged architectural work – one example being my own work as an architect operating in this field for over ten years. The specific focus of the thesis is on the work and roles of 'mediators', who address the complex social and political conditions and dynamics in temporary use. It investigates mediation roles and the underlying conditions in temporary use through an approach that integrates knowledge from adjacent scholarly fields and empirical studies on and through mediation practice.

The following sections of this chapter will briefly unfold how the seemingly innocent idea of reusing existing buildings may be perceived as fundamentally unconventional and complicated within the prevailing modes of real-estate business, planning and building regulation. By outlining the problematics and emerging scholarship concerning temporary use and related socio-politically engaged architectural design work, the chapter introduces an urgent research problem in an understudied area and motivates the need for research concerning mediation in temporary use.

1.1 Emerging social, political and environmental concerns in architectural design

Architectural design is one of many fields facing a demand to fundamentally reconfigure itself in the face of the urgent environmental and social challenges in cities today. Architecture scholarship and practice show an increasing attention to approaches that shift the focus from the design of (new) buildings towards socio-politically situated and environmentally concerned approaches. This section gives a brief overview of such approaches that are reshaping the understanding of architectural design.

Sustainable urban development is a challenge that transgresses multiple disciplines and practices. Thus, it highlights the overlaps between areas of study and practice, such as architecture and design. Within architecture, emerging approaches connect and overlap in particular with the contemporary scholarship and practice of participatory design in the public and urban realm. For this reason, in this doctoral thesis, I approach architecture as a field within rather than outside design.

Scholars criticise mainstream architecture as practised today for its failure to address critical environmental, social and political issues. By narrowly foregrounding functional-aesthetic aspects of building design (Till, 2021), architecture is criticised for distancing itself from its social and political dimensions and responsibilities (e.g. Cupers, 2020) and overlooking the knowledge of ‘others’ who use or are affected by architecture (e.g. Schneider, 2013; Cuff, 2018). Scholars also argue that architects’ tight dependency on the property sector and speculative development has rendered their role irrelevant and reduced their impact on what gets built (Deamer, 2015; Dutta, 2020). Thus, there is a growing demand to revise the premises of the profession. This is reflected in recent architectural book titles such as *Everything Needs to Change* (Pelsmakers & Newman, 2021), *Architects after Architecture* (Harriss, Hyde & Marcaccio, 2021), and *Rethinking the Social in Architecture* (Gromark, Mack & van Toorn, 2018).

The environmental impacts of architecture, particularly new-build developments, are receiving increasing attention in architecture scholarship and practice. A growing number of architects in the UK formally subscribe to the declaration of ‘climate emergency’,² a term that scholars have also

² <https://www.architectsdeclare.com/>



Figures 5-7. Architecture scholars are drawing attention to extending the lifecycles of existing buildings through reuse and adaptation as an alternative to new-build. Vacancy is a crucial issue to address from this viewpoint. The photos display vacant warehouse spaces in *Kera*, as part of the study of *Mediation in Kera* in the thesis. Photos: Johannes Romppanen.

adopted recently (Harriss et al., 2021; Pelsmakers & Newman, 2021). In Finland, the recent architectural policy programme for 2022–2035 similarly highlights the social and ecological responsibilities of the field (Finnish Government, 2022). To date, architectural responses towards sustainability have primarily focused on incremental technical problem-solving (Leach, 2016) addressing operational energy consumption (Pomponi & D’amico, 2020). However, with a growing concern for the carbon and material footprint of new construction (Heinonen et al., 2011), scholars are calling for alternatives to new-build, such as extending the lifecycles of existing buildings through reuse and adaptation. For example, the Finland-based architects Kari Kytölä, Paulina Sawczuk and Satu Huuhka argue that ‘[t]he extensive stocks of existing buildings ... are in fact our best chance to fight resource depletion and climate change ... as the reuse of the building helps to avoid the immediate emissions from the manufacture of a novel concrete or steel frame’ (2021, p. 27). Such a turn in attention to extended use and non-development presents an important shift in sustainability thinking, which is often phrased as a call to action. Attention to the lifecycles of buildings highlights that it can be equally important to think about sustainability as ‘non-action’.

Architecture beyond building design is a topical issue in recent architecture discourse. This is further related to social sustainability (e.g. Gro-mark et al., 2018), environmental concerns (Pelsmakers & Newman, 2021; Till, 2021), and political engagement (Dodd, 2020). Such concerns in the architecture profession and discipline have gained particular momentum since the financial crisis of 2008 that halted much property development (e.g. Stickells, 2011). A seminal concept instigating this debate was ‘spatial agency’ proposed by the UK-based architects and scholars Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till (2011). The concept emphasises social engagement and participation in architectural work and recognises the knowledge and agency of others, such as users, in spatial production (Awan et al., 2011). Spatial agency and related architectural approaches thus follow the legacy of Henri Lefebvre, a philosopher highly influential amongst architectural and urban scholars. In 1974, Lefebvre articulated ‘the production of space’ as a shared enterprise that belongs to a diversity of actors who live, work, play or pass by spaces (Lefebvre, 1991) – thus, not least to the professional experts traditionally involved.

Such a more collaborative and participatory understanding of architectural work also challenges the limits of the legally-protected, exclusive

expert role of architects. In many countries, this particular and protected expertise is a defining characteristic of the architect's role³, which differentiates it from professional roles in other fields of design. Such a protected title implies certain status and power relationships by designating building design as the exclusive domain of architects. The 'permanent' and long-standing nature of the built environment further strengthens the justification of expert power and jurisdiction for architects (and equally, planners). However, legally-defined expert roles also limit the role by defining whom architects may primarily serve (see Dodd, 2011). Resisting such pre-defined roles, emerging architectural approaches as outlined above are reimagining who the architect may serve and who may contribute to architectural or spatial practices.

Approaches such as spatial agency also draw attention to the political agency of architects. Instead of waiting for commissions, 'spatial agents' are proactive; they initiate projects and expand briefs (Awan et al., 2011). In addition, they may engage critically with underlying institutional structures (Dodd, 2020). Furthermore, understanding architecture as both a political and collaborative endeavour engaging multiple actors and forms of knowledge (see Doucet & Janssens, 2011) also highlights the inevitable presence of conflicts and contestations.

The shift of attention away from the physical product of architecture, i.e. buildings, towards socio-politically situated processes connects architecture to contemporary design scholarship and practice. Contemporary 'participatory design', in particular, addresses social and political questions in the public and urban realm (Huybrechts, Benesch & Geib, 2017a). This development is connected to a broader 'social turn' in design, characterised as a move away from the design of physical objects towards managing longer-term collaborative processes with multiple stakeholders (Ehn, 2008; Björgvinsson, Ehn & Hillgren, 2010). Some recent doctoral theses in participatory design also embrace spatial issues (e.g. Calderón Salazar, 2021; Seravalli, 2014) and urban communities (Barbosa, 2019). Particularly relevant for this thesis is how conflict in contemporary participatory design is understood as an inherent and productive part of collaborative processes involving multiple actors (e.g. Disalvo, 2012; Keshavarz & Mazé, 2013).

³ While the professional title of architect is legally protected in many countries, including others in the EU, this is not the case in Finland, which is the context of the primary empirical study in this doctoral research. However, although the architect title itself is not protected in the Finnish system, there are other types of legal requirements for acting as an architect. An example is a specific certificate needed for performing as a lead designer in a building project or signing a public commission (EU Commission, 2017).

Discussions in participatory design drawing on ‘agonism’ (Mouffe, 2000) are here considered relevant for understanding power and conflict in recent architectural approaches such as ‘spatial agency’ as outlined above. Thus, there is a potential for mutual learning.

The emerging critical scholarship on architectural work, as mentioned above, raises important questions on architectural roles, expertise, power relations, and the complex set of knowledges and agencies involved. The next sections will introduce ‘temporary use’ and ‘mediation’ as an emerging territory for architectural work, bringing together concerns about sustainability as well as socially, politically and spatially engaged work.

1.2 ‘Temporary use’: Adaptive and collaborative spatial practices addressing vacancy

One approach addressing critical questions of resource efficiency, adaptability and participation in urban development is the ‘temporary use’ of vacant spaces. The term temporary use describes the practice of activating existing spaces or properties that have become redundant due to different change processes, such as industrial restructuring, financial crises, political and public service reforms, or the revolution of work. Such spaces may remain vacant pending decisions on their future redevelopment for months, years or even decades. By utilising such pauses in formal development, temporary use addresses the key concerns highlighted above: adapting buildings and spaces to ongoing changes and reducing the carbon and material footprint of the built environment through reusing existing spaces.

In recent decades, there has been a proliferation of creative, local, often self-organised practices appropriating vacant spaces in many European cities. Such practices have originated from the informal and spontaneous occupation of leftover spaces: transforming abandoned industrial build-

Figure 8. *Solilab*, the temporary use of a harbour warehouse for ‘social and solidary economies’ at *Île de Nantes* in France. Nantes is one of the contexts of the study of *Refill Mediators* in the thesis. Photo: Vincent Jacques / Samoa.





Figure 9. Community action by tenants and neighbours in *Lastādija*, in the Latvian capital of Riga, to clean up the temporary use site to become a place for picnics, concerts and workshops. Riga is one of the contexts of the study of *Refill Mediators* in the thesis. Photo: Lastādija.

ings into workspaces for artists or entrepreneurs, organising flea markets and events in former warehouses, or growing food on urban wastelands (e.g. Oswald et al., 2013, see also Hernberg, 2008). The temporary use of the Tempelhof Airport in Berlin – known as *Tempelhofer Freiheit* – is a well-known example (Hilbrandt, 2017; Rossini & Bianchi, 2020). Such civic appropriation of vacant buildings and urban spaces is not new (Stevens, 2018; Andres & Zhang, 2020). Yet, until recent decades, such uses have not been recognised as part of the formal planning of urban districts and sites. Such practices represent an unconventional rationale compared to top-down urban planning and development, which typically concerns the longer-term land use perceived and regulated as ‘permanent’. Since the late 1990s, such uses have attracted the growing attention of urban scholars and planners and articulated as ‘temporary use’ (e.g. Bishop & Williams, 2012; Oswald et al., 2013; Henneberry, 2017b). More recently, temporary uses have been

increasingly deployed in formal planning processes in some cities (Honeck, 2017; Christmann et al., 2020).

Temporary uses are seen as part of a broader landscape of contemporary urban practices and initiatives driven by urban residents and other local actors. Related user-driven urban practices are described by labels such as ‘do-it-yourself’ (Finn, 2014), ‘tactical’ (Lydon & Garcia, 2015), or ‘insurgent’ (Hou, 2010). Among such practices, temporary uses present a concrete opportunity for various local actors to contribute to urban development, including ‘non-experts’ not traditionally included in decision-making concerning urban planning and development. Such practices are argued to transform the role of ‘users’ towards ‘co-authors’ in urban development (Németh & Langhorst, 2014). Such an opportunity for direct spatial engagement differs from formal participatory planning processes, instances of which have often been criticised as ‘tokenistic’ or ‘placatory’ (Arnstein, 1969; Till, 2005). Therefore, temporary use can also be seen more broadly as part of a societal transformation towards new forms of democracy, in which citizens are enabled new kinds of agency as part of self-organised networks and forms of ‘urban activism’ (Mäenpää & Faehnle, 2021; see also Hernberg, 2012).

Temporary uses can be understood as resource-efficient, as they take advantage of existing vacant spaces to address present needs (e.g. Ziehl et al., 2012). Vacancy is not only an inherent character of speculative property markets but also a side effect of the many ongoing changes in cities and societies, which have led to large-scale vacancy and disruption of traditional property markets (e.g. Bishop & Williams, 2012; Madanipour, 2017). One topical example is office vacancy. In the Helsinki metropolitan area in Finland, office vacancy rates have remained exceptionally high throughout the past decade, being among the highest of European capital cities (BNP Paribas, 2021; Catella, 2021, see also figure 10). While temporary uses alone cannot solve vacancy, they can be seen as part of potential solutions for more effective and adaptable reuse of existing spaces. Arguably, temporary use is also a potential tool for envisioning the longer-term usage of spaces and properties (e.g. Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2012). Thus, temporary uses might help to increase the appreciation of the value of existing spaces and properties, which might otherwise be demolished. Furthermore, even if individual temporary uses are often ephemeral, they can contribute to broader cultural transformation. This has been true in many Central European cities, most notably Berlin, where the emergence of creative and experimen-

tal temporary uses of abandoned sites has become a motor for urban transformation and revitalisation (e.g. Oswald et al., 2013).

From a broader perspective, temporary uses are seen as part of reconfiguring the processes and premises in urban planning and development. Arguably, temporary uses address the incapacity of traditional, highly regulated planning practices to accommodate complexity and uncertainty in today's cities (Bishop & Williams, 2012; Oswald et al., 2013; de Roo & Boelens, 2016). Some scholars interpret temporary use as part of a broader transition towards adaptive, iterative and process-oriented forms of planning and development (Honeck, 2017). Such arguments for temporary use, understood as a form of civic or grassroots phenomenon potentially contributing to broader systemic change in urban development, connect temporary use to the scholarship on urban sustainability transitions.

As argued in urban sustainability transitions, the empowerment and mobilisation of local grassroots and civic initiatives - here associated with temporary use - within urban planning and governance frameworks require further attention. Urban transitions scholars recognise that empowering grassroots and civic initiatives entails socio-political contestations with established institutional structures. Similarly, temporary use often faces many tensions and barriers in practice, although many cities have given different levels of support to temporary use and related local practices. On the one hand, temporary uses face structural barriers in the form of ambiguous regulations, stringent zoning practices and the conventional mechanisms of real-estate development (e.g. Gebhardt, 2017). On the other hand, temporary uses involve multiple types of actors with asymmetric power relationships and contradictory motivations (Andres, 2013; Németh & Langhorst, 2014), including the risk of co-optation (Colomb, 2012; Rossini & Bianchi, 2020). Hence, it is clear that temporary use operates within complex social and political conditions and dynamics.

Figure 10. A vacant office space in *Kera*, a suburban district in the Helsinki metropolitan area in Finland. Office vacancy is an example of vacancy in many cities today. The Helsinki metropolitan area currently has over 1 million square metres of vacant office space, comprising 12% of the whole office stock (Catella, 2021). Office vacancy rates have remained exceptionally high throughout the 2010s (ibid.) due to workplace revolution and increased remote working, accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Office vacancy shows how buildings can become obsolete relatively quickly, even if in reasonably good condition and far from reaching the end of their ideal lifecycle. This is a problem concerning sustainable use of resources, but it also shows the narrow perspective of the current planning and real-estate industries regarding sustainability. For example, despite high office vacancy, municipalities in the Helsinki area have been actively planning and building new offices that meet new green building standards and respond to the latest office trends – which, however, may soon again become outdated. At the same time, the construction of new offices accelerates the production of vacancy (see Hernberg, 2014). When the longer-term destiny of vacant offices remains unclear, temporary uses arguably represent one potential solution for more effective use of such spaces and for reimagining their future potentials. Photo: Susanna Ahola.







1.2.1 Substantiating the research problem through my prior professional practice

My own background as an architect engaged in temporary use highlights some of the social and political issues and problematics in temporary use and emerging professional work outlined above, which also sparked my interest in academic research. As an architect, I have engaged with temporary use and the reuse of existing buildings in the Helsinki metropolitan area in Finland since 2008 in different positions: as an entrepreneur in my own architecture/design consultancy *Urban Dream Management*, as an employee in the architecture firm *Part Architects* and as a civil servant in the Finnish Ministry of the Environment. In this section, I will briefly describe relevant prior experiences to elucidate temporary use, related work and its problematics in the Helsinki context and to further substantiate the need for more academic research in this area. Furthermore, as will be discussed in Chapter 4, a more recent project from my work (*Temporary Kera*) was included in this doctoral research as a ‘practice-based’ study.

One of my early professional experiences in the project *Kalatatama Temporary*⁴ (2009–2011) opened up particular questions that motivated this research. The project was the first time for Helsinki to try out temporary use in connection to a large-scale urban redevelopment project. The project temporarily transformed the former inner-city harbour of *Kalatatama* into a popular place of outdoor recreation and urban culture, actively utilised by local residents, event organisers, cultural actors, activists and entrepreneurs and inviting a range of different activities (See Figures 11–14). While the activities attracted interest from local residents, visitors, international media,

⁴ I was employed in the *Kalatatama Temporary* project through *Part Architects* (*‘Suunnittelutoimisto Part Oy’*). The project was commissioned by the City of Helsinki through a public tendering process. In the tender offer (made by architects Johanna Hyrkäs, Tuomas Siitonen and myself), *Part Architects* initiated the idea of temporary use, while the public tender was originally intended for coordinating urban environmental art as part of the urban redevelopment project.

Figures 11–14. The project *Kalatatama Temporary* (2009–2011) in Helsinki was one of my early professional experiences motivating this research. The project turned a former inner-city harbour into a temporary living room for local residents and visitors, with activities ranging from high-end cuisine made with solar cookers, urban farming and cycle-in cinema events to bicycle repair workshops. Photos: Johannes Romppanen



1. Motivation: Architectural design in the face of complex urban challenges

and city marketing, they also demonstrated the challenges and tensions in the dynamic between the different interests and operational tactics of the actors involved: the spontaneous and activist approach of temporary users, the more conventional interests of private developers (funding the project) and the (justifiably) slow, risk-avoiding operational set-up of municipal departments. For us, the architects and designers coordinating the project, this was also a learning experience in understanding our role, which was not as expert designers in the traditional sense. Instead, we engaged on the one hand in creating conditions that would empower local actors to develop new activities in the harbour and, on the other hand, in mediating between the various interests as well as the operational and regulatory set-ups.

A number of urban scholars have discussed the challenges of the local planning and urban development context in *Kalasadama*. For example, the Finnish urban scholars Panu Lehtovuori and Sampo Ruoppila (2012) argue that, in *Kalasadama*, temporary use was implemented with only limited resources in the short term, with a lack of clarity regarding its further potentials or the connection to policy development. The Danish architecture scholar Tina Vestermann Olsen reports in her doctoral thesis that the private developers disapproved of the types of temporary use activities in *Kalasadama* and that the practical handling of temporary uses proved too resource-intensive for the municipality (2017, p. 143). These examples highlight the complex set of interests involved in implementing temporary use and the rigid planning and administrative context in Helsinki.

Another relevant experience was my leadership of the project *Vacant Spaces* (see Figures 18–21) in the Finnish Ministry of the Environment in 2012–13 (Hernberg, 2014). In the project, I investigated vacancy and the challenges involved in the reuse of the existing built environment in Finland through a collaborative approach engaging multiple stakeholders across different sectors. The project drew particular attention to office vacancy as a contemporary challenge that highlights many of the current problems concerning sustainable urban development in numerous cities today, including the Helsinki metropolitan area (see Figure 10). By bringing together multiple stakeholders to identify different aspects related to vacancy and reuse,

Figures 15–17. In the beginning of the project *Kalasadama Temporary* in 2009, *Part Architects* organised a public ideation brunch. For many participants, the event was the first time they were allowed to visit the former industrial harbour. Photos: Janne Suhonen / Part.



1. Motivation: Architectural design in the face of complex urban challenges

the project promoted a shift in thinking across all sectors dealing with the built environment, from legislation, planning, design and construction to users. Concerning the work to advance such changes, the project drew my attention to the need for collaboration with stakeholders across sectors.

Such prior experiences from practice started to reveal urgent problematics concerning temporary use as part of sustainable urban development and related architectural work. They also illustrated Helsinki as a relevant



Figures 18–21. As a strategic designer at the Finnish Ministry of the Environment in 2012–13, I investigated the challenges and opportunities of vacancy through a collaborative approach engaging multiple stakeholders across different sectors. All the stakeholder events of the project *Vacant Spaces* took place in vacant office spaces. Photos: Johannes Romppanen.



context for further research, which could potentially resonate with other contexts that have strong public administration and a conventional property development sector. The examples above also present temporary use as a context for changing architectural work. My experience as one of the architects increasingly engaging in this kind of work shows that architectural training has hardly prepared us for the social and political complexity involved. Moreover, in my experience, clients (such as municipalities or, potentially, private developers) often have limited understanding of the kinds of services they might need, resulting in challenges with procurement, briefing and resourcing such work. Therefore, these experiences from practice are examples of knowledge ‘from the field’ and are relevant for learning more about this kind of emerging work in temporary use and architecture.

1.3 Mediating temporary use as architectural work

The phenomenon of temporary use brings together the complex issues discussed above: urgent sustainability challenges, resource efficiency in the built environment, the rapidly changing conditions in cities today, social justice, participation and collaboration among multiple stakeholders, as well as the emerging and increasingly institutionalised local phenomena presenting potentials for sustainability. These issues span disciplinary boundaries and forms of practice. Furthermore, as already illustrated by the example of my prior work, temporary use presents a context for changing professional work concerning urbanism today. In particular, ‘mediation’ is a topical but understudied area within the broader research space. Mediation in temporary use is the context and main topic of this doctoral research.

In temporary use, ‘mediation’ is becoming recognised as an emerging professional role for actors who manage the social and political complexity involved (Oswalt et al., 2013; Patti & Polyak, 2015; Jégou, Bonneau & Tytgadt, 2018). In the past decade, arguments for the professional mediation of temporary use have increasingly appeared in academic and non-academic research studies. However, despite emerging attention to mediation, temporary use scholarship to date only includes brief mentions of it. In this rapidly developing field, practice is currently outpacing research. Mediation has been recently explored in non-academic reports on temporary use (e.g. Jégou et al., 2018) and in accounts by practitioners themselves (Berwyn, 2012; Hasemann et al., 2017). Such reports include some worthwhile, yet preliminary, elaborations on different types of mediators, their various roles and activities. However, there is a need for more systematic, empirically nuanced and theoretically grounded research to clearly understand this emerging phenomenon.

Mediation can also be seen as an example of changing architectural work. In the emerging discourse on mediation in temporary use, architects are recognised as actors often engaged in mediation. An early example is the articulation of ‘architects as agents’ in temporary use by Philipp Oswalt and Philipp Misselwitz (2004), architects and pioneers in temporary use practice and scholarship. Across Europe, there are architecture studios currently working with temporary use and related collaborative spatial practices. Some examples are *atelier d’architecture autogérée* (aaa), *Raumlabor Berlin*

and *Meanwhile Space* in London. As mentioned above, my previous professional experience as an architect engaged in temporary use in the Helsinki region is also an example. As it is concerned with engaging local actors in spatial production and negotiating the structural conditions, mediation is connected to the aforementioned socio-political themes in contemporary architectural practice, such as 'spatial agency'. Furthermore, mediation has been recently suggested as a broader characteristic of contemporary architectural work. In their introduction to a new volume showcasing the expanding landscape of architectural practice today, Harriet Harriss et al. (2021a, p. 9) suggest that 'the architect is recast as a creative mediator, bridging different forms of knowledge, seeking clarity amongst complexity, bringing together disparate communities, building and combining emotional power with pragmatic potential.' When mediation is understood in this way as a more common characteristic of architectural work, it can be seen as an example of the shifting premises of architecture and its merging with other disciplines, such as participatory design and temporary use.

Mediation in temporary use also overlaps with recent scholarship on 'intermediation' in urban sustainability transitions. Intermediaries are identified as pivotal actors in advancing complex transition processes by bridging between multiple actors at different levels (Kivimaa, Boon, et al., 2019), navigating between multiple interests (Hodson, Marvin & Bulkeley, 2013), empowering the development of grassroots initiatives (Hargreaves et al., 2013) and alleviating institutional barriers (Warbroek et al., 2018). Transitions scholars recognise that various types of actors, including architects (Fischer & Guy, 2009) and designers (Hyysalo et al., 2019), may perform intermediation work. The scholarship on intermediation further offers systematic articulations of the roles and activities of intermediaries, which are here seen as particularly valuable concerning mediation in temporary use.

The emerging scholarship on mediation in temporary use, the evident connections to adjacent fields, and the rapidly evolving practice all present mediation as a particularly understudied, unformalised, fragmented and fast-moving field. Given the evident lack of training to educate professionals working in this field, there is an urgent necessity to interrogate and explore the phenomenon further. Having in this section presented the research problem addressed in the thesis, in the next I will explain the scope, objectives and research questions of the doctoral research.

1.4 Objectives and scope of the research

As I have started to argue above, mediation in temporary use is emerging as a socially and politically complex area of work, engaged with negotiation, power asymmetries, multiple interests, and challenging structural conditions. I have broadly outlined the social and political tensions in the processes of sustainable urban transformations. I have further exemplified the particular challenges in urban planning and development and related professional work in the context of Helsinki and my prior work. With such tensions and challenges, the urgent need for further research on mediation becomes evident.

The aims and objectives of the thesis respond to the significant lack of theoretical grounding and empirical detail of mediation in existing temporary use scholarship. To address this, the thesis aims to contribute to the conceptualisation and analysis of mediation. Therefore, the objective of the thesis is, firstly, to systematically investigate social and political *mediator roles* in temporary use and to develop a vocabulary for a conceptually relevant and nuanced articulation of mediator roles, and, secondly, to outline the underlying social and political conditions pertinent to mediation. I will treat *roles* with more nuance in terms of *activities*, understood as part of roles, as I will explain in more detail in Chapter 6.

Given the increasing evidence of mediation in temporary use operated by architects, related developments in architecture overall, and my prior professional experience in the field, I approach mediation in this thesis as a form of architectural work, which can also be seen more broadly as part of design, as elaborated by Hyysalo et al. (2019). By this positioning, I do not intend to suggest mediation as the exclusive domain of architects. In part, mediation in temporary use benefits from the specific spatial, technical and legal knowledge of architects. Nevertheless, the work extends beyond architects' traditional training and competencies, because it also, and essentially, concerns social and political questions (Hernberg & Mazé, 2017). The expansion of architectural work into areas such as mediation, the multiple actors and types of knowledge involved in such work, and the diverse competencies and skills required, would all indicate that learning from adjacent disciplines is beneficial for an improved understanding of mediation in temporary use.

As this is a nascent area of scholarship, in which ‘practice’ is performed in various ways, it is neither possible nor necessarily relevant to delve deeply into an existing or established academic canon. Therefore, this thesis bridges together relevant perspectives across three fields of scholarship in order to establish a broad common ground and understand an emerging field before investigating mediation roles in more detail. Firstly, the thesis draws on participatory design to understand nuanced and micro-scale perspectives on conflict and politics in processes engaging multiple actors (e.g. Keshavarz and Mazé, 2013). Secondly, the thesis draws on urban sustainability transitions to elaborate more hierarchical socio-political dynamics in transitions processes and further articulate the related actor roles of ‘intermediaries’ corresponding to mediation in temporary use (e.g. Kivimaa, 2014; Hargreaves et al., 2013). Thirdly, the thesis draws on architecture to set the scene for socio-politically and spatially engaged architectural work (e.g. Awan et al., 2011). Through these fields of scholarship, I derive and synthesise different conceptual and analytical perspectives relevant for understanding and explicating mediation in temporary use and its socio-political conditions.

Research on an emerging and understudied phenomenon, such as mediation in temporary use, benefits from different types of knowledge production, including practical and scholarly forms of inquiry. Therefore, this thesis not only crosses disciplinary boundaries but also includes knowledge from professional practice and ‘lay’ people. It employs different epistemological perspectives in order to disclose and analyse practical, context-specific knowledge. Firstly, in an in-depth, two-year study of *mediation in Kera*, I investigated my work as a mediator in a Finnish temporary use project taking a ‘practice-based’ approach (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson, 2017; Vaughan, 2017). Secondly, in the study of *Refill mediators*, I examined the work of five other European mediators using qualitative, semi-structured interviews to understand mediation in temporary use in a broader context.

In sum, in this thesis, I contextualise, explore and articulate temporary use mediation as a form of emerging architectural work that intersects with areas of participatory design and intermediation in urban sustainability transitions. Broadly understood, the aim is to contribute to a clearer understanding of mediation as part of complex transformation processes contributing towards more socio-ecologically sustainable urban development and related professional work.

1.4.1 Research questions

To address the objective of the thesis, I have formulated an overall research question that is further investigated through three sub-questions. The overall research question is:

**What kinds of socio-political roles
can we identify for actors, such as architects
or designers, mediating temporary use?**

In order to address the overall question, I will examine it through the following sub-questions. These questions allow me to progressively narrow in on the main question on three layers.

**(1) What socio-political conditions support
or impede temporary use?**

In answering this sub-question, I outline the background context and conditions for mediation. Of the introductory chapters, Chapter 2 addresses the question based on literature reviews in the fields of temporary use, participatory design, and urban sustainability transitions. Chapter 6 elaborates on additional perspectives based on the empirical findings. Papers 2 and 4 also partially address this question.

**(2) How can we understand and conceptualise
mediation work addressing such conditions?**

With this sub-question, I investigate perspectives relevant for temporary use mediation work, framed by the socio-political conditions addressed in the previous question. Chapter 3 addresses this question based on literature reviews in temporary use, architecture and urban sustainability transitions. Chapter 6 elaborates additional perspectives based on the empirical findings. Papers 1, 3 and 4 also partially address this question.

(3) What types of roles and activities comprise mediation in temporary use?

Answering this sub-question forms the major original contribution of the thesis, while the previous sub-questions provide relevant background knowledge for narrowing in. To answer the question, Chapter 6 describes cross-cutting findings from the empirical studies and sets of literature included in the thesis. In addition, Paper 4 provides a thorough elaboration of roles based on the literature on transition intermediaries and the study of *Kera*. Paper 3 also partially elaborates the roles in the study of *Refill* mediators.

1.5 Structure of the compilation thesis

As this is a ‘compilation thesis’ (see Gustavii, 2010), it is divided into two parts. The first part is formed of seven introductory chapters that discuss literature, methodology, cross-cutting findings, and conclusions. The second part consists of the four peer-reviewed papers, which are also summarised in Chapter 5. The nature of a compilation thesis is that the papers build upon each other to a degree, even though they were produced at different stages of the research process. Thus, they express some aspects differently, some papers being more precise or more consistent, given my growing understanding of the phenomenon under study. Therefore, the combination of the individual papers needs some further interpretation of findings and expansion of parts of the literature, which is done in these introductory chapters.

Of the introductory chapters, this first chapter began by presenting the research problem and by motivating the research on the topic, i.e., mediation in temporary use and the underlying socio-political conditions. The chapter discussed the changing architect roles in the face of complex sustainability challenges, introduced temporary use as one potential approach for addressing such challenges and the emerging roles of architects in mediating temporary use. The chapter concluded by presenting the research objectives and questions.

The second chapter discusses relevant perspectives on socio-political conditions in temporary use. The chapter starts by introducing literature on temporary use. It further deepens the understanding of complex socio-political dilemmas and dynamics by bridging together related discussions on 'agonism' in participatory design and niche-regime dynamics as discussed in urban sustainability transitions literature. Thus, the chapter also provides a better understanding of the need for mediation in temporary use. The third chapter continues by elaborating mediation work itself. The chapter starts by briefly reviewing emerging literature on mediation in temporary use and then presents related concepts describing socio-politically engaged architectural work and intermediation in urban sustainability transitions literature.

The fourth chapter describes and justifies the research design, including epistemological and methodological considerations, research contexts, empirical studies, methods, analysis, and questions of ethics and trustworthiness in the research. Chapter 5 presents summaries of the original research papers by describing the role of each paper in the thesis as well as the type of papers, literature, empirics and findings.

The sixth chapter discusses the cross-cutting findings of the thesis, with a focus on articulating mediator roles and activities. The cross-cutting findings are formulated by bringing together conceptual themes from the four sets of literature and the empirical findings from the two studies. Finally, Chapter 7 discusses the contributions and conclusions of the thesis, including both academic and practical contributions as well as delimitations and suggestions for future research.



FLEISCH



WUR
13-20
Uhr
16
Uhr
17
Uhr
Tag

Chapter 2



ich willkommen
zur
WURSTSAFARI
Fahrradt
Workshops
Fahradwerkstatt
Kaffee, Kuchen, Getränke
Grillwürsten + Bier
(vegetarisch/vegan)
LIVEMUSIK
der offenen Tür
im WURST CASE

Figure 22. *Wurst Case*, temporary use of a former sausage factory in Bremen, Germany, since 2015. *Wurst Case* promotes the affordable and small-scale use of spaces in order to accommodate diverse users who might not otherwise afford spaces for their ideas and projects. Due to the unclear future of the area, the rental agreements can be terminated at short notice. In return, the rent for the property is comparatively low. *Wurst Case* is managed by *ZZZ Bremen*, a temporary use mediator agency that is part of the study of *Refill mediators* in the thesis. Photo: Daniel Schnier

2. 'Temporary use' (TU): socio-political characteristics and conditions

The temporary adaptation of vacant spaces or properties is not new. Such practices have existed for several decades in cities of the Global North, particularly Europe⁵. Since the late 1990s, a field of scholarship has emerged to study 'temporary use' (TU), particularly from a planning perspective (Haydn & Temel, 2006; Oswalt et al., 2013; Henneberry, 2017b). The term 'temporary use' implies the interim activation of vacant properties or spaces pending political or development decisions (Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2012) but is also connected to further processes of reimagining and opening up paths for their future (e.g. Andres & Kraftl, 2021). While temporary uses have originated from a more informal and insurgent appropriation of derelict sites and buildings outside the traditional constraints of planning (e.g. Hilbrandt, 2017), they are today increasingly considered as a tool to activate and sequence change as part of formal planning and development (Honeck, 2017; Andres & Zhang, 2020b). As temporary uses have become

⁵ Although forms of 'temporary urbanism' (Andres and Zhang, 2020) are also common in the Global South, the phenomenon has been predominantly studied in the context of the Global North. Accordingly, my stance concerning temporary use in this thesis focuses on the formally sanctioned and institutionalised area of TU practice and scholarship prevalent in the Global North. This is partly because of my interest in this as a professional area of practice and work. To the extent that TU is understood in this way, it is subject to and constricted by different regimes of power, for example, capitalist property development and, in the Finnish context and to a slightly lesser extent within the EU, ideologies and rationales of strong public governance.

more varied and widespread and increasingly deployed in formal planning, recent TU scholarship has directed more critical attention to the social and political dimensions of TU. These include conflicts, power asymmetries and the range of interests involved (e.g. Bosák et al., 2020; Tonkiss, 2013). It is evident that temporary use engages not only spatial but, essentially, social and political dimensions of urban planning, development and related professional work.

As the social and political dimensions of temporary use and related work are the key focus of this doctoral thesis, it is necessary to disambiguate the 'social' and 'political'. By 'social', I refer to the functioning of human society and the relationships between individual actors, as generally understood in social science (e.g. Kuper & Kuper, 1996). Thus, in the context of TU, the social can refer to relationships and interactions including collaboration or conflict, patterns of behaviour, forms of organisation, or social and cultural norms. The 'political', in turn, can be understood as being closely related to the social. I refer to the political here, as recently employed in political philosophy (e.g. Mouffe, 2000), as concerned with human coexistence and cooperation in the society, essentially linked to questions of power, antagonism and diversity (see also Keshavarz and Mazé, 2013). Therefore, the political also refers to questions of representation, participation, negotiation, expertise and decision-making. Thus, I understand the term more broadly than in 'politics', that refers to political parties or government.

In line with this understanding, space and spatial practices are essentially linked to both the social and the political, as is made evident in the writings of, amongst others, Lefebvre (1991) and geographer Doreen Massey (2005). Dodd (2020, p.9) elaborates on the political dimension of space further by suggesting: 'What makes space political is when an encounter becomes an interruption in the established order, the opening of a space for something 'other'.' As will be further discussed in this chapter, TU can

Figure 23. *De Wasserij* was a temporary use project in a former laundry building run by a residents' association in Ghent, Belgium, during 2017–20. The place offered the local community, among other things, a carpentry workshop, skate lessons and beer brewers. The 'neighbourhood managers' mediating temporary use in the city of Ghent are part of the study of *Refill Mediators* in the thesis. Photo: Hella Hernberg.





Figure 24. *019* is an artist-run exhibition, concert and workspace occupying a former welding factory in the old harbour area of *Dok Noord* in Ghent since 2014. The project is initiated and run by the artist collective *Smoke & Dust*. The photo displays a billboard by Torbjørn Rødland as part of the art project *Billboard Series*. Photo: Lucas Neven.

clearly be seen as such an ‘other’ form of spatial practice seeking to deviate from ‘the established order’. As such, temporary use particularly engages with the ‘micro-political’ (see, e.g. Huybrechts, Benesch & Geib, 2017b) scale of spatial practice. As the social and political are closely intertwined, I will from now on use the term ‘socio-political’ to characterise such issues and questions as the above.

As briefly outlined in the previous chapter, temporary use brings together many complex and topical issues concerning urban planning and development today. These include concerns of adaptability and resource-efficiency in the built environment, rapidly changing urban conditions, social justice and participation, as well as the potentials of emerging local, civic phenomena for sustainability. Thus, TU operates in particularly complex socio-political conditions, the problematics of which span disciplinary

boundaries, only partially elaborated in TU scholarship to date. Therefore, it is useful to learn from adjacent fields of scholarship. To this end, this chapter not only overviews current TU scholarship but also brings in literature from two adjacent fields, ‘participatory design’ (PD) and ‘urban sustainability transitions’ (UST), in order to address the first sub-question of the thesis. Firstly, the chapter draws on contemporary PD to provide a more nuanced and less polarised understanding of socio-political dynamics at a human scale in TU – such as conflicts involved in the collaboration and participation of multiple actors in urban and spatial settings. PD further articulates the processes and practice – not just products – of engagement, which are potentially relevant for further understanding related work in temporary use. Secondly, the chapter draws on UST scholarship and the theories of socio-technical transitions applied in the field to conceptualise the more hierarchical power dimensions and contestations between micro- and meso-levels as identified in related urban transformation processes.

The first section of this chapter introduces the state of current scholarship in TU and identifies its key characteristics. The second section further elaborates some of the relevant socio-political conditions and dynamics between main actors in temporary use. The third section then elaborates complementary perspectives on related socio-political dynamics through PD and UST literature.

2.1 Background and characteristics of temporary use

Temporary use as a field of scholarship is relatively young. Originating in the late 1990s, earlier research on TU has been practice-oriented and partly carried out by practitioners in planning and architecture. Seminal early works include *Urban Catalyst: The power of temporary use* (2013) by the architects Philipp Oswalt, Klaus Overmeyer and Philipp Misselwitz that reports on the key findings of a pioneering cross-European research and development project *Urban Catalyst* (2001–2003), and *The Temporary City* by the planning scholar Peter Bishop and the environmental scientist and planner Lesley Williams (2012) that explores the rise of TU in the post-2008



UK. These works provide valuable examples and elaborations of types of temporary uses, actors involved, its many benefits, as well as some of the socio-economic and technological drivers and barriers. Early works such as these have started to establish temporary use in urban scholarship, particularly from a planning perspective. Such works also highlight the creative and cultural character of TU and the role of ‘creative industries’ in it (see also, Stevens, 2018). In connection to the ‘creative city’ (Landry & Bianchini, 1995) and creative economy discourses (Scott, 2000), these works recognise and advocate the potentials of TU in the cultural and economic regeneration of cities and neighbourhoods.

In Finland, there is also a tradition of temporary use research. The architect and planning scholar Panu Lehtovuori has engaged with TU research since the *Urban Catalyst* project two decades ago (Lehtovuori, Hentilä & Bengs, 2003). Together with the social scientist Sampo Ruoppila, they have conceptualised temporary use as a ‘tool for experimental planning’ (2012) and theorised temporary uses through Lefebvre’s concept of ‘difference’ (2017), drawing attention to the tension between users, property developers and planners in temporary use scholarship and practice.

In the past decade, there has been increasing critical attention paid to different implications of temporary use, its formal deployment and the instrumentalisation of its cultural potentials. The planning scholar Lauren Andres (2013) has influentially raised a discussion on power and ownership in TU. Claire Colomb (2012, 2017) and Fran Tonkiss (2013), among others, have instigated a debate on the risks of exploitation or co-optation of TU in favour of neoliberal planning and gentrification (see also Bosák et al., 2020). Ali Madanipour (2018) and Mara Ferreri (2015; Ferreri & Graziano, 2014), have drawn attention to the vulnerable and precarious role of users in TU. Concerning policy and governance, Daniela Patti and Levente Polyak (2015, 2017), as well as Agnes Matoga (2019), have started to elaborate some key structural constraints and governance responses for TU.

Figure 25. Urban farming as part of the urban redevelopment of the former industrial area of *Île de Nantes* in France. *Samoa*, the organisation in charge of the urban redevelopment of the area, is part of the study of *Refill mediators* in the thesis. Photo: Vincent Jacques / Samoa.



Figures 26–28. The *Kaņepes Culture Centre* is a cultural, social and political platform hosting a café and spaces for exhibitions and experimental art and culture events in Riga, Latvia. The centre was established in 2012 in a building that was formerly a social venue for Baltic-German and Russian aristocrats, later a dormitory for art students and a music school. After standing abandoned for several years, the building is being gradually restored by the culture centre. In the thesis, the temporary use mediator organisation *Free Riga* is part of the study of *Refill Mediators*. Photos: Left, Arthur Aizikovich; top right, *Kaņepes Culture Centre*; right below, Ričards Zaļmežs.

Recently, there are also efforts to introduce more systematic and theoretical perspectives on the still largely practice-oriented discourse. The recent work of Lauren Andres with Amy Chang (2020) and Peter Kraftl (Andres & Kraftl, 2021) as well as of John Henneberry (2017b) are prominent examples. As Henneberry (2017a) notes in the introduction to the book *Transience and Permanence in Urban Development*, TU discourse has started to assess the degree and manner in which temporary uses might sustain, challenge or disrupt prevailing social and power relations. Yet, as many scholars note, the current discourse remains polarised and lacks nuances on critical socio-political dynamics and conditions, which are elaborated further below. Even so, the discourse is largely practice-oriented. It arguably lacks more systematic approaches to explain the different socio-political dimensions and the processes, activities and interactions entailed in the production and development of TU.



2. 'Temporary use' (TU): socio-political characteristics and conditions

Figure 29. Scouts were selling pancakes on the parking lot of a warehouse in the event *Kerapia* in 2017. The event was part of the project *Temporary Kera*, which aimed to revitalise the suburban office and logistics district of *Kera* in Espoo, Finland, through temporary use. In the thesis, I investigated my work as a mediator in the project in the practice-based study of *Mediation in Kera*. Photo: Max Söderholm



LÄHTEVÄ



2.1.1 Key characteristics of TU

What does the ambiguous term ‘temporary use’ mean? As we know, neither the built environment nor its usages can be fully fixed or permanent. Change and the ‘unfinished’ are an essential characteristic of the urban condition (Lerup, 1977). Paradoxically, the formal mechanisms of planning and developing built environments often aim at ‘finished’ and ‘permanent’ outcomes, leaving limited space for more flexible and iterative processes (Andres & Kraftl, 2021, p. 1). Therefore, temporary use is an essentially planning-centred term, denoting a difference from the typical temporal and regulatory scope of planning, which typically concerns land use intended as ‘permanent’ (see Vestermann, 2018). The term thus signifies an intermediate and dynamic development stage, often in times of uncertainty (e.g. Madanipour, 2017), where the temporal and legal status of the usage deviates from the conventional. However, many argue that the term temporary use does not adequately capture the many temporal dimensions, nor the various other qualities, experiences and values that can be part of temporary uses (e.g. Till & McArdle, 2015). The terminology is indeed somewhat contested in TU scholarship today.

In this section, I will briefly elaborate a definition of temporary use to establish my understanding of it for the purposes of this thesis. By doing so, I will assemble a set of key characteristics and qualities frequently attached to temporary use, focusing on characteristics related to socio-political issues, and explain these in more detail.

There is no strong consensus on how to define temporary use. A widely adopted definition is one by Bishop and Williams (2012, p. 5), characterising temporary uses as ‘intentionally’ time limited. However, I argue that this definition is too narrow and simplifying considering the possible range of temporal durations (which may also be open-ended) and the multiple intentions of different actors involved. As already implied in the German term *Zwischennutzung*⁶, from which ‘temporary use’ has been translated, there are other more dynamic, open-ended and versatile ways of understanding TU. I will explain here some key qualities and characteristics frequently at-

⁶ The German term, *Zwischennutzung*, was originally coined in connection to a wave of spontaneous and informal TU activities following the fall of the Berlin Wall (Colomb, 2012). The term bears multiple connotations. The word *Zwischen* may mean ‘in between’, ‘among’, ‘betwixt’ and ‘intermediate’, therefore associated with transition and intermediacy (Till & McArdle 2015, p. 48). The word *Nutzung* can be understood as ‘exploitation, usage, utilisation or even use and enjoyment’ which contain possible connotations beyond the legally-defined usage of a space (ibid). Karen Till (2011, p. 106) suggests that *Zwischennutzung* therefore originally implied a more ‘dynamic and open-ended sense of in-betweenness, interventions, and unexpected possibilities’ present in such early forms of TU.

tached to TU, which sidestep the question of duration. Firstly, temporary uses nearly always enable forms of *activation*. Among others, Andres and Kraftl (2021) highlight this aspect, pointing out that such activation often occurs through collaborative and experimental practices to initiate spatial transformation. Secondly, the question of *informal vs formal* is relevant concerning TU in its legal and planning context, as TU often operates in an ambiguous space between formal and informal (Gebhardt, 2017, see also Acuto et al., 2019). *Adaptability* is a third key quality of temporary uses, recently also elaborated by Andres and Kraftl (2021). Adaptability is linked to an understanding of TU as an experimental approach in activating underused sites (Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2012), connected to their future transformation (Vestermann, 2018) but also to the processes of adapting or renegotiating structural conditions (Honeck, 2017). Lastly, questions of *inclusivity* are important in TU discourse, pointing at the variety of users that TU may engage and their agency (Groth & Corijn, 2005).

For the purposes of this thesis, I characterise temporary use as an *inclusive, (in)formal and adaptable* approach for activating and transforming spaces or properties that are temporarily redundant. While acknowledging that there are multiple other characteristics identified and associated with TU, I argue that the characteristics I have selected are particularly prevalent in scholarship and also useful for further illuminating the socio-political aspects in TU. Below, I will further discuss these three characteristics, thus opening up a discussion on the complex socio-political conditions and dynamics in TU.

Inclusivity is an aspect often attached to temporary uses, highlighting the active agency of local actors and residents, and touching on questions of diversity, power and participation. Temporary uses are argued to open up possibilities for concrete and collaborative forms of engagement for diverse local actors, particularly those traditionally underrepresented in urban planning and development (Groth & Corijn, 2005; Németh & Langhorst, 2014). Thus, TU can be seen as a platform for direct engagement that allows multiple, also contestational, voices and diverse activities. However, temporary uses may not always be inclusive or diverse by default. Ultimately, it comes down to the intentions of those in the position of making decisions about TU. Nevertheless, TU arguably contains a potential for inclusion and direct engagement. Thus, temporary uses may challenge existing power dynamics in planning and development (Andres, 2013) and expose conflicts and contestations between the multiple interests, agendas and values involved

(Németh & Langhorst, 2014). The aspect of inclusivity, therefore, indicates a potential for political renewal and transformation in urban development.

*Informality*⁷ is another attribute often linked to TU, highlighting its difference from ‘formal’ planning and regulation (e.g. Groth and Corijn, 2005, Patti and Polyak, 2015). However, most temporary uses in the Global North today cannot be simply described as informal as they operate within strongly regulated environments. However, their relation to formal planning and regulation remains ambiguous which is why I characterise them as ‘(in)formal’ (see also Acuto et al., 2019). The ambiguity is because the planning and building regulation in many countries of the Global North, including Finland, typically concerns the long-term, ‘permanent’ land use and construction. Thus, ‘temporary use’ is a non-existent legal category (Gebhardt, 2017; Hernberg, 2014). This makes it challenging to interpret regulations concerning other timescales of usage. For these reasons, temporary uses often operate in a ‘grey area’ involving circumvention of regulations or zoning codes (Gebhardt 2017, p. 177; Stevens & Dovey, 2019). Moreover, while requiring a degree of informality and freedom from typical formal constraints (e.g. Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2012), TU is subject not only to legislation but also to other formally agreed procedures, such as contracts and permissions. Although the interpretability of legislation can be seen as positive, leaving room for flexibility, unconventional interpretations also require particular expertise and attention (Hernberg, 2014). Hence, there is a threat of arbitrariness as interpretations may depend on the intentions and values of those in charge.

Adaptability is a third relevant characteristic of temporary use, further linked to dimensions of resilience, experimentation and transformation. As Andres and Kraftl (2021) note, adaptability recognises the versatile and flexible nature of TU interventions, seen as ‘site- and context-specific responses to the needs of local spaces and/or people’ (2021, p. 5). This quality further connects TU to resource efficiency and ecological resilience (e.g. Pike, Dawley & Tomaney, 2010). Furthermore, adaptability signals different dimensions of transformation. Many scholars have drawn attention to the capacity of TU to experiment and imagine the future potentials of specific places (e.g. Lehtovuori and Ruoppila, 2012; Vestermann, 2018). As Oswald et al. (2013) note, the uses and activities themselves are adaptable; some of

⁷ Temporary uses in the context of the Global North are here understood as somewhat different from forms of ‘informal urbanism’ taking place in less regulated societies such as those of the Global South (Stevens & Dovey, 2019, see also Haid & Hilbrandt, 2019).

them may even transform into longer-term uses. Temporary uses may also transform local conditions by creating new activities, jobs and networks that spur economic, cultural and social benefits (Till & McArdle, 2015; Galdini, 2020). Therefore, they are seen as a dynamic alternative for understanding and managing urban change, compared to the modernistic planning tradition (Bishop and Williams, 2012; Oswalt et al., 2013). Adaptability can thus be connected to a broader transformation process where temporary uses might be involved in renegotiating existing structural conditions and models of urban governance, planning and development (Galdini, 2020; Honeck, 2017). Consequently, temporary uses may potentially open up pathways for a broader paradigm shift towards more iterative and dynamic forms of planning (e.g. Oswalt et al., 2013; Honeck, 2017). However, the materialisation of this transitional potential of TU is not straightforward or self-evident.

Based on the above discussion, characterising temporary uses as *inclusive*, *(in)formal* and *adaptive* helps differentiate TU from formal planning and development and opens up a further discussion of its complex socio-political conditions. To further elaborate the socio-political conditions in TU, the next section will introduce the main actor groups involved and discuss the interests and responses of these groups concerning TU, as well as related structural conditions.



Figure 30. People enjoying a sunny day at *DOK*, a temporary use site in the old port of Ghent. Photo: Michiel Devijver.



2.2 Actors, conditions and dynamics in temporary use

Temporary use is a field that connects multiple actors and interests involved in urban development, including those not traditionally part of decision-making in the field. By 'actors', I refer here to both individual people and organisations across different societal levels. The main actor groups identified in TU are the potential users, property owners and developers (private or public) and municipal actors, including planners and building authorities. While understanding that such groups are not homogeneous and various types of actors and interests coexist within such groups, the intention here is to allow a general discussion of the main actor groups in TU. Notably, mediators are also identified as a key actor group (e.g. Henneberry, 2017a), which will be a topic of further discussion in Chapter 3. Given the multiplicity of actors and groups involved in TU, at issue are multiple kinds of dynamics, power relations, collaborations and negotiations between the different actors, groups, institutions and organisations distributed across different levels.

Ideally, temporary use contains a promise of delivering mutual benefits to all actor groups involved. For the users, access to affordable space can provide an opportunity to pursue diverse personal, collective or professional goals and start new activities (Groth & Corijn, 2005). For property owners, TU may provide income from properties that would otherwise stand empty, vulnerable to vandalism and decay. In the longer run, TU may also increase the value of properties (Bishop and Williams, 2012). For planners and cities, TU can become an instrument in 'experimental planning' (e.g. Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2012) that allows the revitalisation of places at low cost and potentially spurs many more widespread economic, cultural and social benefits (e.g. Oswalt et al., 2013). However, the possible benefits are, of course, not guaranteed or always possible. The benefits and consequences of temporary use may be spread unevenly within and across different populations, groups or types of actors. For the different actor groups, temporary uses can serve multiple and contradicting interests, which can ultimately become a source of conflict and tension.

Even if planners' and developers' appreciation of temporary uses has been growing recently, temporary uses often face tensions and barriers in

practice. Temporary uses struggle within the structural conditions constituted by the institutional powers in planning, property development and regulation (Gebhardt, 2017; Patti & Polyak, 2017). Temporary uses face barriers not only in the form of formal and regulatory frameworks but also ‘entrenched’ patterns of behaviour and thinking (Dotson, 2016, p. 149). To understand these conditions and dilemmas in TU more clearly, this section will describe in more detail the positions, interests and responses of the key actor groups.

2.2.1 Temporary users and the ‘right to the city’

There can be various types of ‘users’ in temporary use, ranging across different age groups, professions, nationalities and socioeconomic positions. Cultural actors, artists, entrepreneurs, sports and leisure organisations are among the most common types. Users may also be urban activists, neighbourhood groups, civic organisations, or different minorities (e.g. Oswald et al., 2013). Temporary users may as well be commercial or institutional actors (such as schools or museums). A commonality of the different users is that they often seek affordable, even free, spaces to enable their activities or test something new. Users may also be interested in the unique character of existing spaces rather than looking for spaces built according to the highest contemporary standards.

I acknowledge that the term ‘user’ in this context does not fully capture the actors’ active agency or the variety of their possible activities. The term also bears some problematic connotations (see, e.g. Schneider, 2013). Instead of simply ‘using’ a space for a predetermined purpose, the ‘users’ can shape, modify and maintain spaces, initiate and develop various activities, build social networks and have particular kinds of expertise. TU scholarship does also recognise other related terms such as ‘occupant’, ‘resident’ or ‘citizen’ to characterise such actors. However, for the purpose of this thesis, I maintain the term ‘user’ as a relatively general term, suitable for differentiating this group of actors from the other key actor groups in TU. In the paragraphs below, I will also present an expanded understanding of the position and agency of users.

In the discussions concerning users in TU, questions of agency, empowerment, ownership, power and values are involved. These discussions

often draw on the legacy of Lefebvre. Temporary uses are often interpreted as a manifestation of the ‘right to the city’, a concept that Lefebvre coined in 1968 to describe the fundamental right of citizens and urban dwellers to participate in the appropriation and production of space (Lefebvre, 1996; see Pugalis & Giddins, 2011; Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2017). This is also connected to Lefebvre’s understanding of the ‘production of space’ as a shared social enterprise and his concept of ‘differential space’ (1991).

User empowerment and agency, as discussed in TU, are connected to the potential of TU to generate ‘difference’ compared to profit-seeking urban development. Jeremy Németh and Joern Langhorst (2013) argue that TU may empower more diverse local actors and communities to engage in urban development. They envision that temporary uses may shift the role of urban residents and other local actors from passive ‘users’ towards ‘co-authors’ in urban development (*ibid.*, p. 149). Many scholars have further discussed temporary uses as ‘differential space’. Jacqueline Groth and Eric Corijn (2005) note that TU may enable people to demonstrate alternative values and foster extremely diverse activities, generating critical debate about urban values and the types of cities that people wish to inhabit. Creativity and culture notably play a role in producing difference in TU (Krivý, 2013). On the other hand, Lehtovuori and Ruoppila note that temporary uses may also be ‘consciously political alternatives to capitalist urban processes and spaces’ (2017, p. 60). Similarly, Hanna Hilbrandt (2017) and Jeffrey Hou (2010) draw attention to insurgent and radical intentions that temporary uses may manifest. As Karen Till and Rachel McArdle (2015) note, temporary uses may allow people to express dissatisfaction or turn their discontent into something productive. However, what types of temporary uses are preferred or tolerated depends on the intentions of landowners and municipal politics (see, e.g. Colomb, 2012).

The user perspectives in TU are further linked to values. Till and McArdle (2015) argue that temporary uses may produce various non-monetary values that are relevant particularly for users but underrepresented and undervalued in the current discourse. Such values and benefits include ‘use value’, emotional and health benefits through collective creation and engagement, learning, networks and non-commodified forms of exchange. Lehtovuori and Ruoppila (2017) similarly refer to ‘intrinsic’ values, as opposed to the ‘instrumental’ values that temporary uses may represent for institutional actors. Németh and Langhorst suggest that through accommodating multiple and potentially oppositional values, temporary uses can

‘expose the ongoing conflicts and contestations between competing value systems, interests, agendas and stakeholders’ in urban development (2014, p. 147). This can be seen as a positive source for critical reinvention and learning. This discussion is further connected to the concept of ‘agonism’ discussed in Section 2.3.1.

Power, ownership, access and displacement are important issues concerning the agency of temporary users. There may easily be a fine line between empowerment, displacement and exploitation of the users in TU. Andres (2013) discusses how TU initially involves renegotiating the access to and ownership of space. Here, an agreement between users, owners, planners and authorities is not always easy to find. Agreement on TU requires the institutional actors to relinquish their power and conventional ways of thinking (Killing & Cook, 2014). Even when temporary uses are enabled, further tensions often emerge when opportunities for more profitable development arise and the temporary users face the threat of displacement (Andres, 2013; Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2017).

The displacement of temporary users and the intentions involved in their formal deployment and instrumentalisation are topics of a broad debate in the current TU discourse. Even if the opportunities given to users through TU are generally considered positively, Madanipour (2018) draws attention to the vulnerable and precarious position of the temporary users. Through their creative efforts, the users may unwittingly generate the right preconditions for owners to speed up commercial redevelopment and gain further profits (Ibid; Colomb, 2017). Among other scholars, Tonkiss (2013) and Colomb (2012, 2017) have highlighted the threat of exploitation and co-optation of TU to serve goals of value appreciation, gentrification and city marketing, or to legitimise the interests of neoliberal planning. Particularly in the context of post-2008 UK and Ireland, scholars have interpreted TU as a reflection of austerity politics, transferring government responsibilities to grassroots activists (Tonkiss, 2013; Moore-Cherry, 2015). Colomb (2012) critically discusses how, in Berlin, the mobilisation of TU to serve the ‘creative city’ agenda of city government has led to the commercialising of TU, abandoning its originally radical and activist values, and consequent conflicts about the proper purpose of sites under transformation. The risk of co-optation and exploitation thus inevitably compromises the promise of the users’ ‘right to the city’.

In sum, the current debate on the agencies, interests and benefits in temporary use reflects important questions of what, and whose, intentions

and values TU ultimately serves, who gains the benefits and what are the consequences. The current discourse remains, however, rather polarised and reliant on dichotomies. As many scholars note, the discourse lacks a nuanced understanding of the multiple interests, power relations, dynamics and conflicts involved (Henneberry, 2017a; Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2017; Stevens & Dovey, 2019). Therefore, the agency and legitimisation of temporary users depend not only on macro-political legislation and governance but also ultimately on negotiations with institutional actors – the property owners, planners and authorities. The next section will unfold the perspectives of the institutional actors as well as related constraints and responses.

2.2.2 Institutional actors: conditions, constraints and responses

Temporary uses operate within structural conditions constituted by institutional actors and their formal rules and conventions. By institutional actors, I refer to established organisations in formal urban planning and real-estate development, including governmental actors such as municipal planners and authorities and incumbent market actors such as real-estate development and investment firms. This understanding of ‘institutional’ is in line with that of the sociologist W. Richard Scott (1995, p. 33) who defines institutions as ‘social structures that have attained a high degree of resilience’.

The institutional actors involved in urban planning and development have central decision-making power concerning the access to spaces, their usage and the terms and conditions of use. Such actors regulate and control land use and urban development through legally regulated instruments such as zoning and building codes and permissions, through standard business models and procedures, as well as political decision-making processes. Such ‘regimes’ controlling the built environment are particularly conventional, obdurate and resistant to change. They involve not only formal and legal frameworks but also actors bound to entrenched patterns of expertise, knowledge, thought and action, which create barriers to change or alternative ways of operating (Filion, 2010; Dotson, 2016). In addition, TU scholars recognise communication and knowledge gaps between the temporary users and institutional actors, which increase misunderstandings and present barriers to TU (Moore-Cherry & McCarthy, 2016; Patti & Polyak, 2015).

Below, I will generally discuss the conditions and responses towards TU of property owners as well as planners and regulatory authorities.

It should of course be noted that ‘institutional actors’ in planning and development are not a homogeneous group. For example, planning practices vary considerably between cities and countries. Even within a single municipality, there can be a range of different interests and conventions within and across administrative units. Similarly, companies in the real-estate business may have different strategies, values and operational tactics. While acknowledging this heterogeneity, I discuss institutional actors as a group in order to highlight their power and agency compared with the temporary users and to enable a general discussion of the socio-political conditions in TU.

Property owners: conditions and responses

Property owners and developers – both public and private – have tended to have ambivalent responses towards TU. Traditionally, accommodating temporary uses into property development has not served the owners’ ideals or conventions. In conventional property business, contracts are ideally made for large volumes of space and long durations. In contrast, temporary uses typically require cheap rents (or sometimes other non-monetary forms of compensation), and often individual contracts for small spatial units, as well as other flexible terms and conditions deviating from the standard models in property management (Bishop & Williams, 2012). Thus, the incremental, small-scale and low-cost approach of temporary use contrasts quite fundamentally with the conventional expectations of property owners.

Even in the context of high vacancy, property owners may have various reasons for holding properties vacant. As Matthew Gebhardt (2017) notes, owners may have unrealistic rent expectations based on previous markets. Notably, standard methods of property valuation encourage owners to keep spaces empty rather than lower rents in order to maintain the calculated (short-term) property value. Furthermore, specific return requirements by equity partners or existing debts may constrain owners (ibid., p. 173–174). Moreover, depending on the legal context, property owners can be legally responsible for the safety of their users, as is the case in Finland. My earlier investigation (Hernberg, 2014) demonstrated that safety regulations can become an impediment for TU, for example, if technical requirements on air conditioning or fire safety entail costly investments. Furthermore, as Bishop and Williams suggest, temporary use may imply a political risk to

owners, who can quickly change from being perceived as ‘local hero to public enemy ... when it is time to gain repossession of a site for development’ (2012, p. 39). A typical fear on the owners’ side is that once temporary users get settled, it will be difficult for them to get repossession (ibid.). Therefore, Bishop and Williams note that trust and reliability between landlord and tenants are key issues for enabling TU from the owners’ perspective.

Nevertheless, recent examples show that property owners and developers’ appreciation of temporary uses may increase considerably when they imply a potential of raising property value. Particularly in the context of economic crises, temporary uses have been embraced as indicators for potential growth, providing impetus for new development (see Christiaanse, 2013, p. 6). For example, in the post-2008 UK and Ireland, property owners have started to initiate TU schemes themselves (Bishop & Williams, 2012; Moore-Cherry, 2015). However, in countries like Finland, even with the growing vacancy rates of offices, many prominent property owners and investors have relied on conventions and tended to disregard temporary use as a convincing solution to address vacancy (Hernberg, 2014).

Planners and authorities: constraints and responses

By planners in this context, I refer to civil servants acting as planners within the municipal offices (i.e. not private planning agencies), therefore referring primarily to their role in regulating land use. Within planning and building legislation, the use of spaces and properties is regulated at several hierarchical layers through masterplans, zoning codes and building codes. These instruments are typically targeted towards long-term and ‘permanent’ use and construction and are thus not well suited for handling more dynamic forms of usage such as temporary use. Granting even temporary exemptions from the formal zoning codes of a single site may be a slow process and not immediately in the interests of planners (Gebhardt, 2017). It should be noted that planners consider it to be their role to regard issues of land use and zoning from a ‘public interest’ perspective, beyond that of individual stakeholders (Puustinen, Mäntysalo & Jarenko, 2017). Nevertheless, even if temporary uses are granted formal permission for repurposing spaces – for example, from warehouse space into offices or a cultural venue – the permission may entail high transaction costs and expensive technical requirements (Gebhardt, 2017).

From a regulatory perspective, as noted above, temporary use often has an ambiguous position as a non-existent legal category, which makes zoning and building codes subject to interpretation. Hence, temporary uses often operate in a grey area, which can be either explicitly agreed on (Hernberg, 2020) or a result of officials turning a blind eye (Moore-Cherry & McCarthy, 2016). Some cities, such as Ghent in Belgium, have developed strategic guidelines promoting TU that help to negotiate the grey area. However, in the absence of such guidelines, interpretations of norms may depend on individual civil servants' interests, priorities and expertise (e.g. Bishop & Williams, 2012). A further challenge is that the conventions of interpreting regulations can result in resource- and energy-intensive forms of renovation, which may not be the intention underlying the legislation. For example, as identified in Finland, norm procedures in the architecture and construction industries often rely on 'spoken truths' concerning legislation rather than a solid knowledge of legislation itself. A common misunderstanding is that repurposing existing buildings always requires abiding by the technical standards and energy requirements concerning new buildings (Hernberg, 2014). Such assumptions would render many temporary uses impossible because of costs.

Some cities, particularly in Europe, have given different levels of political support to temporary uses and adopted them into municipal strategies or planning processes. Notably in Germany, TU has become increasingly appreciated by planners within the past 30 years (Honeck, 2017). Belgium and the Netherlands are other examples. Cities' responses towards TU range from tolerance as a provisional solution towards more strategic integration into long-term planning (Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2012; Honeck, 2017). Patti and Polyak (2015) identify several ways for cities to accommodate temporary uses, including legal assistance, taxes and other incentives for owners, funding, and supporting mediation between stakeholders. Overall, many cities are developing forms of governance to facilitate related civic initiatives and experimentation more broadly (e.g. Frantzeskaki et al., 2016). However, scholars note that policy intervention concerning temporary uses should be moderate and experiment-driven to avoid temporary uses becoming too 'stifled' (Moore-Cherry & McCarthy, 2016, p. 354, see also Lehtovuori and Ruoppila, 2012). Lehtovuori and Ruoppila (2019) further raise the question as to whether some particular types of temporary uses require

more protection from market-driven development. Furthermore, in light of the debate concerning co-optation and exploitation of TU, further attention to questions of cost and benefit to different parties, the recognition of non-monetary values, and the potential of TU to imagine and experiment with longer-term solutions becomes relevant.

2.2.3 Concluding the actor perspectives in TU

This section has elaborated the socio-political conditions in temporary use by introducing the partly contradicting perspectives and responses of the key actor groups involved. As outlined above, at stake in TU are asymmetries of power, entrenched conventions, conflicting interests and operational setups, and communication gaps. These present barriers to TU and may lead to unevenly distributed benefits or compromising some of its potentials. The current scholarship on TU generally recognises such complex conditions and relations between actors and levels, but the discourse lacks nuances. As argued, the discourse relies too much on dichotomies, such as temporary vs permanent, bottom-up vs top-down or public space vs neo-liberal capitalism (e.g. Lehtovuori and Ruoppila, 2017, Stevens & Dovey, 2019). In particular, a need is recognised for a more nuanced understanding of the socio-political dynamics, power relations and multiple interests at a micro-level (Stevens & Dovey, 2019; Moore-Cherry and McCarthy, 2016; Henneberry, 2017a). This makes a case for further investigating such issues with the help of other adjacent disciplines.

Therefore, the next section will introduce complementary perspectives on related socio-political conditions and dynamics based on literature in participatory design and urban sustainability transitions.

2.3 Perspectives from participatory design and urban sustainability transitions

The fields of ‘participatory design’ (PD) and ‘urban sustainability transitions’ (UST) offer relevant complementary perspectives for a clearer understanding of the socio-political dynamics and conditions in temporary use. Contemporary discussions in PD offer a nuanced, human-scale and horizontal perspective on the more micro-political dynamics and conflicts involved in the collaboration of multiple actors in the public realm. Particularly the discussions drawing on ‘agonism’ in PD offer relevant perspectives concerning conflicts in collaboration involving multiple actors. In turn, UST offers a more hierarchic and vertical perspective on the power contestations between actors and structures at meso- and micro-levels (articulated as ‘niche’ and ‘regime’) involved in urban transformation processes. The following sections will elaborate these perspectives in PD and UST.

2.3.1 ‘Agonism’ in participatory design

Since the 1970s, participatory design has been addressing social and political questions in design. Moving from issues of ‘workplace democracy’ (Bjerknes, Ehn & Kyng, 1987), PD has more recently been oriented towards multi-stakeholder collaboration and engagement in the public realm. Here, the work of Pelle Ehn (2008) and Erling Björgvinsson et al. (2010) are seminal examples. While earlier forms of PD mainly took place in workshop settings, contemporary PD often concerns temporally extended collaboration processes (Saad-Sulonen et al., 2018) involving diverse subjects, interests and power relations. In such processes, conflict and political questions are inherent, and thus also relevant issues in contemporary PD. Key scholars who have addressed the politics of participatory design include Ramia Mazé (2014, 2019), Mahmoud Keshavarz (Keshavarz & Mazé, 2013) and Liesbeth Huybrechts (Huybrechts & Teli, 2020). In addition, PD increasingly concerns spatial settings, as seen in recent doctoral theses dealing with living labs (Seravalli, 2014), occupation of shopfronts (Calderón Salazar, 2021), and urban communities in temporary spaces (Barbosa, 2019), thus converging with contexts similar to TU. Within this discourse, a significant number of schol-

ars connect architectural background and PD, such as Huybrechts, Mazé, Doina Petrescu (Baibarac & Petrescu, 2019) and Markus Miessen (2010). Concerning TU, this discourse is helpful for understanding a human-scale and practice-oriented perspective on the collaboration between diverse actors, including questions of conflict, experimentation, risk and trust.

Conflict is a particularly deliberated issue in PD today. Informed by theories on ‘agonism’ (Mouffe, 2000) and ‘dissensus’ (Rancière, 2010) borrowed from political philosophy, many PD scholars approach conflicts and antagonism as inherent and foundational in the relationships between multiple subjects (e.g. Keshavarz & Mazé, 2013; DiSalvo, 2012). As in agonism, conflicts can be seen more broadly as an integral part of democracy. Keshavarz and Mazé (2013) argue that agonism and dissensus are of particular relevance for PD because they provide an understanding of participation and democracy that is different from institutional practices privileging consensus. They point out that in consensus-based politics, conflicts and contradictions are ‘labeled as threats rather than understood as the essential condition of democracy itself’ (2013, p. 11). Therefore, as consensus always implies exclusion to a degree, it is seen as a problematic goal for democracy (ibid.). For PD, agonism not only provides a relevant perspective for acknowledging and accommodating multiple and conflictual voices, but it also presents a potential for questioning the (re)distribution of power between stakeholders. What PD notably offers to the discussion on agonism and participation is its practical and human-scale orientation to addressing conflict and multiple voices in collaborative processes.

It is worth mentioning that the issues of participation and agonism are not exclusive to PD. In planning, agonistic approaches to planning theory have become topical in recent decades (Pløger, 2004; Bäcklund & Mäntysalo, 2010; Gualini, 2015). Agonism has been proposed as a valuable approach for acknowledging conflict in planning (e.g. Bäcklund & Mäntysalo, 2010), seen as an alternative to the consensus-oriented communicative (or collaborative) planning theory (Forester, 1989; Healey, 1997). The strengths of agonism for planning, as Manfred Kühn (2021) notes, include viewing planning as a political practice, enabling a debate about alternatives, and strengthening democratic citizen participation. However, agonistic planning theory has been criticised for its distance from practice and ambiguity of how, or with what kinds of roles, could planning actually approach conflicts (ibid.). Therefore, the orientation of PD is considered particularly useful in this thesis for addressing questions of conflict in TU.

PD scholars have articulated particular design approaches for acknowledging and addressing conflicts and confrontations as part of participatory design processes. ‘Agonistic space’, proposed by Björgvinsson, Ehn and Per-Anders Hillgren (2010, 2012), is one of the key concepts that clarifies the role of design in addressing and articulating controversial issues rather than achieving consensus in collaborative processes. Carl DiSalvo’s ‘adversarial design’ (2012) addresses ways to express dissensus through design interventions that can ‘provide resources and opportunities for others to participate in contestation’ (DiSalvo 2012, p. 5). Similarly, Keshavarz and Mazé propose a design practice oriented around dissensus, suggesting that the role of a designer concerns ‘the framing and staging of relations’ as well as ‘translation’ among diverse participants (2013, p. 8–9). Hillgren, Anna Seravalli and Anders Emilson (2011) further note, in the context of *Malmö Living Labs* (see Seravalli, 2014), that agonistic design approaches can expose and accommodate controversial issues and questions that may contribute to longer-term processes of social change, even if they might fail to generate concrete results in the short term.

Fostering the agencies of participants is considered important in such PD processes involving multistakeholder collaboration. Noting that ‘citizens’ may lack the negotiation power to engage in such complex multi-actor processes, Huybrechts, Katrien Dreessen and Ben Hagenaars (2018) argue for ways to strengthen the capabilities of participants to act in such processes. This view also challenges the expert role of the designer, for whom it is necessary to develop sensitivity towards the participants’ experiences, skills, knowledges, interests, and socio-economic positions (Pihkala & Karasti, 2016; Thinyane et al., 2020). Therefore, contemporary PD engages with processes of empowering, learning, developing skills, capabilities and agency of the participants.

Experimentation, risk and trust are further relevant aspects in PD that relate to agonism. In PD, experiments and prototypes are seen as essential tools for accommodating contestational claims and alternative visions (Hillgren et al., 2011; Binder et al., 2015). Huybrechts (2014) further elaborates the notion of risk concerning experimentation and conflict in PD. She argues that risk and uncertainty are unavoidable and desirable aspects of participation, as they involve continual questioning and openness to ‘innovation’. Huybrechts, Selina Schepers and Dreessen (2014) note that risk in participation is related to expertise: professionals expose themselves and their preconceived ideas to risk when confronting themselves with unfamil-

iar groups. Drawing on Storni (2011), they suggest that PD can address the inherent complexity of participation ‘by making risks debatable and negotiable, instead of attempting to reduce this complexity’ (Huybrechts et al., 2014, p. 51). As they note, trust between actors is necessary for being able to face uncertainty and risk.

Concerning TU, contemporary PD scholarship clearly intersects with it by addressing related socio-political questions concerning the durational engagement in urban and spatial settings and the collaboration of multiple actors. Here, the practice-oriented and human-scale approach of PD on socio-political issues such as conflicts, risks, power, and agency are relevant for TU, offering ways to move beyond polarisations. At the same time, I understand the temporal and spatial scale of TU to be somewhat broader than is typically understood in PD. PD operates in more constrained, experimental environments, such as dedicated projects, units within public or private organisations, or ‘living labs’ that are specifically set up, unlike the complex urban reality in TU. In addition, the timescale understood as ‘long-term’ in PD is quite different from that in planning and may be shorter than that of a TU project. Furthermore, while design work in PD typically concerns ‘users’ (engaging, representing, advocating users and staging their collaboration), the social dimensions of TU can be seen as more complex, involving a wider array of actors across levels in both institutionalised and non-institutionalised contexts.

Acknowledging these limitations, I argue that the discussions informed by agonism in PD are relevant for TU in several ways. Firstly, they help clarify TU as an inherently conflictual practice that faces inevitable challenges as it operates within a traditionally consensus-oriented realm such as planning. Understood as a platform that can accommodate various actors and conflictual and contestational views, ideas and experiments, and related risks, TU questions the traditional (legally-protected) expertise and power dynamics in planning and development. Understanding the ‘multivocality’ (see Geib, 2019) inherent in agonism is also relevant when addressing the more nuanced micro-relations between and within actors and actor groups in TU. Furthermore, questions of trust and risk are inevitable but less elaborated in TU. Trust between actors is recognised as a key prerequisite for TU but is challenged by mismatching values and communication gaps. Inevitably, TU also involves risk from the perspective of planning in which slowness and the level of control are seen as means to reduce risk. Therefore, the PD perspective might help make risks and conflicts ‘debat-

able' in TU (see Huybrechts et al., 2014) and generate more constructive new understandings and possibilities. Therefore, understanding conflict in TU as inherent, productive and powerful, as implied in agonism, further illuminates the transformative potential of TU in empowering new actors to engage in urban development and, therefore, potentially challenging the prevailing structural conditions.

The next section will discuss another relevant perspective on power contestations and socio-political dynamics between levels based on urban transitions literature.

2.3.2 'Niche' and 'regime' in urban sustainability transitions

The emerging scholarship on 'urban sustainability transitions' (UST) addresses the role of cities in advancing long-term (i.e. decades-long) processes of transformative change towards sustainability (Wolfram et al., 2016; Frantzeskaki et al., 2017). This interdisciplinary field (here also referred to briefly as 'urban transitions') cuts across disciplines, including urban studies, policy, planning and geography, where temporary use scholarship is also located. The UST field has emerged as part of applications of socio-technical transitions theories⁸, particularly the works of Frank Geels and Johan Schot (e.g. 2010), in a wide range of fields today. Previously, urban transitions discourse has been dominated by socio-technical orientations linked to energy, water and transport infrastructures, as seen, for example, in the works of Harriet Bulkeley et al. (2011) as well as Mike Hodson and Simon Marvin (2009, 2012). More recently, scholars in the field have drawn attention to the role of civic and grassroots initiatives in advancing socio-ecological sustainability (Berkes, Colding & Folke, 2002; Folke et al., 2005), in which the work of Niki Frantzeskaki is notable (e.g. Frantzeskaki et al., 2016).

Transitions thinking has not previously, to the best of my knowledge, been explicitly used to analyse temporary uses. However, I argue that there are relevant connections between TU and UST. As mentioned earlier, TU has been generally interpreted as part of a broader transition process towards more iterative and inclusive approaches in planning (see e.g. Honeck, 2017). Some of the TU literature reflects transitions vocabulary, characteris-

⁸ Such as the 'multi-level perspective' on transitions (Geels, 2002, 2004; Smith et al., 2010) or 'strategic niche management' (Kemp et al., 1998).

ing TU as a ‘breeding ground’ and ‘catalyst for innovations’ in planning and development (e.g. Oswalt et al., 2013). However, TU’s role or potential as part of such a transition has not been more thoroughly investigated. I argue that transitions research offers useful conceptual tools for articulating the transition perspective in TU. As discussed further in Section 3.3, UST is also relevant for articulating related professional work.

Furthermore, UST literature addresses socio-political issues and contexts resonating with those identified in TU. Recently, UST scholars have investigated aspects of the built environment (Valderrama Pineda, Braagaard Harders & Morten, 2017; Nielsen & Farrelly, 2019), housing (Cauvain, Karvonen & Petrova, 2018), neighbourhood community initiatives (Wittmayer et al., 2017) as well as urban planning experiments (Newton, 2021) as part of urban transformations. On the one hand, scholarship on urban energy transitions recognises particular challenges concerning the obdurate nature of stable infrastructure, regulated technological environments, strong market actors as well as sunk investments, which bring barriers to change (e.g. Bulkeley et al., 2011). These aspects resonate with the regulatory and market conditions identified in TU. On the other hand, literature concerning ‘civil society’ and ‘grassroots’ initiatives touches on related urban phenomena such as urban farming (e.g. White & Stirling, 2013) and further highlights particular socio-political struggles which resonate with those identified in TU (e.g. Frantzeskaki et al., 2016). Overall, urban transitions scholarship addresses related socio-political dilemmas, including multi-actor dynamics (Avelino & Wittmayer, 2017) and the wide range of motivations involved in urban transition processes (Hodson et al., 2013), which also resonate with those discussed in TU.

Despite the heterogeneity of urban sustainability transitions, conceptual perspectives from established socio-technical transitions theories are commonly applied in the field (Savin & van den Bergh, 2021). Widely applied concepts include ‘regime’, representing the dominant order in a societal system, ‘niche’, from which radical innovations and alternatives emerge, and ‘landscape’, understood as the broader, macro-level context that hosts external trends and developments (Rip & Kemp, 1998; Geels, 2002). In the widely applied ‘multi-level perspective’ on transitions (Geels, 2002, 2004; Smith, Voß & Grin, 2010), change is understood to occur through a dynamic interaction between niche, regime and landscape. Transitions are understood to come about when landscape-level changes create pressure on the regime, opening up ‘windows of opportunity’ for new alternatives and ‘innovations’

to break through from niches and, consequently, contribute to a disruptive realignment of the prevailing regime. Urban sustainability transitions discourse particularly recognises the tensions and barriers in such change processes, in which ‘niche’ or grassroots innovations struggle to develop or grow. Particularly grassroots innovations face the dilemma of ‘fitting and conforming’ (see Smith & Raven, 2012) to the existing regime, or potentially challenging dominant regime institutions to ‘stretch’ or even ‘transform’ (ibid; Loorbach et al., 2017). The concepts of niche and regime thus help to elaborate the complex power dynamics between levels and the struggles entailed in advancing change within established institutional contexts. While recognising that the MLP model has shortcomings, as its treatment of transitions processes remains somewhat straightforward and linear, I argue that the concepts of niche and regime are useful for elaborating the socio-political struggle in TU. Thus, I will explain the concepts below in more detail.

The concept of regime is important in transitions research. It expresses power and stability, representing the dominant ‘rules’ that guide the perceptions and actions of actors (Geels, 2004, 2011). Such rules can be regulative, normative or cognitive, including shared beliefs, values, norms and regulations, routines, role expectations, cognitive priorities, and capabilities (Schot, 1995; Geels 2004). While regimes are understood as highly persistent and resistant to change, they are not necessarily coherent (Geels, 2004; Fuenfschilling & Truffer, 2014). On the other hand, niches are understood as the seedbed, or ‘protected space’, for path-breaking innovations and alternatives, which may lead to wider change within regimes (Raven, Van Den Bosch & Weterings, 2010). Niches ‘shield’ the development of innovations through norms and practices that depart from those of the prevailing regime (Smith & Raven, 2012, p. 1026). Even so, grassroots innovations often struggle within existing conditions, which they simultaneously seek to transform (Smith, Fressoli & Thomas, 2014). As broader developments within the landscape level open up opportunities for radical alternatives to develop within niches, this will cause increasing pressure on regimes, leading to their ‘reconfiguration’ or ‘destabilisation’ (De Haan, 2010; Geels, 2006). Thus, transitions are ultimately understood as regime change.

For temporary use, UST and the underlying transitions theories offer relevant conceptual perspectives for understanding and articulating the socio-political dynamics at play. In particular, I argue that elaborating TU through the concepts of niche and regime helps to articulate the institutional conditions involved. This also nuances the predominantly micro-politi-

cal and shorter-term perspective of PD with a somewhat more ‘meso’ and longer-term perspective while retaining sensitivity to individual actors and organisations. Therefore, I will elaborate on niche and regime in TU below.

Concerning temporary use, we can identify several powerful regimes, which are related to the ‘institutional actors’ and conditions as discussed in Section 2.2.2. Firstly, the real-estate business regime involves incumbent investment companies, which typically rely on standard economic and operational models. As mentioned, property owners may have various reasons for holding properties vacant, including rent expectations, valuation standards, constraints from equity partners, or safety concerns (Gebhardt, 2017). Secondly, the planning and regulatory regime controls land use through zoning and building codes, which are usually tailored for ‘permanent’ uses, hence open to interpretation regarding temporary use (*ibid.*; Hernberg, 2014). Besides such formal ‘rules’ and instruments, such regimes involve entrenched patterns of knowledge, thought, and action, which create barriers to change (Filion, 2010; Dotson, 2016). Concerning niches, temporary use can be understood not only as a niche-level or grassroots phenomenon that struggles to operate within the structural barriers of the regimes but also as a source of potential innovations that may challenge the regimes. TU can clearly be interpreted as a ‘protected space’ (both symbolically and as physical space) as it provides not only a physical space that itself enables many activities but also requires shielding from typical constraints or regime rules through, for example, low rents, specific contract terms and circumventing regulations (Gebhardt, 2017; Stevens & Dovey, 2019). Moreover, TU relates to the particular challenges of grassroots innovations, as described above. It is especially the question of conforming to versus stretching and transforming existing regimes (see Smith & Raven, 2012) that seems critical. This is somewhat reflected in the discussion concerning the institutionalisation of TU and its implications (see Section 2.2).

These considerations on regime and niche are quite illuminating for understanding TU both in terms of protection and empowerment and the potential for challenging regimes, and helping to understand the complex socio-political dynamics in TU. The complex dynamics between niche and regime, as briefly discussed above, further set up the context and need for ‘intermediation’. Urban sustainability transitions literature recognises the pivotal role of intermediaries in advancing transitions by nurturing and empowering niches and contributing to regime change. Intermediary roles will be further addressed in Chapter 3.

2.4 Concluding remarks on socio-political conditions in temporary use

In this chapter, I have outlined the socio-politically complex conditions in temporary use by reviewing the literature on temporary use, participatory design and urban sustainability transitions. Hence, this chapter contains a cross-cutting endeavour to draw together related and complementary perspectives from the three sets of literature to outline a common ground across the different disciplines and address the first sub-question of this thesis. To sum up these perspectives, I conclude the section by answering the first sub-question. In addition, Chapter 6 will further address this research question based on empirical findings.

(1) What socio-political conditions support or impede temporary use?

This chapter has discussed the socio-political nature of the relations between actors and levels as well as conditions in temporary use based on three sets of literature. Firstly, TU literature has highlighted how temporary use operates on a complex terrain characterised by tensions and power contestations between temporary users and the institutional, conventional 'regimes' of property development, planning and regulation. TU literature has further identified challenges concerning contradicting values and interests, asymmetries of power, communication gaps and mismatching operational and regulatory contexts at issue in TU.

By inviting heterogeneous groups to contribute to urban development, TU inherently involves conflictual relations between the multiple actors, interests and agendas. Contemporary PD discourse drawing on 'agonism' has provided a nuanced perspective helpful for understanding conflict and tensions in related multi-stakeholder processes at a human scale close to practice. This helps further to clarify how TU might challenge existing power relations and contribute to the critical reinvention of urban values and practices through experimentation, risk-taking and trust-building.

At issue in TU are not only interpersonal relations but also the broader socio-political dynamics between different levels and spatio-temporal scales. UST literature and the underlying transitions theories help to clarify the dynamics between temporary use as a 'niche'-level phenomenon and the

institutional ‘regimes’ of real-estate development, planning and regulation. When understood as a niche-level phenomenon, TU can be seen both as a ‘protected space’ that enables activities that do not fit real-estate capitalism and as a source of potential innovations seeking to ‘stretch and transform’ the existing regimes of urban planning and development. Perspectives from transitions research are useful in understanding aspects of empowerment and those concerning the renegotiation and destabilisation of the prevailing regimes.

Having outlined the complex socio-political conditions and related dynamics and barriers in temporary use, a need becomes clear to further investigate related work addressing such conditions, dynamics and barriers. Therefore, the next chapter will focus on the professional work and roles in ‘mediating’ temporary use.

Chapter 3





Figure 31. The artist-run exhibition, concert and workspace *O19* occupies a former welding factory in the old port of Ghent. Photo: Michiel De Cleene.

3. 'Mediation' in temporary use as socio-political architectural work

Professionals working in temporary use operate in a socio-politically complex domain of work. The previous chapter has outlined the socio-political conditions in TU, including multi-actor dynamics, contestations and structural barriers. These call for a further enquiry into the *work* addressing such conditions.

'Mediation' is emerging as a role for professional actors (including individuals and organisations) who manage and steer the complex socio-political conditions and dynamics in TU (Jégou et al., 2018; Oswalt et al., 2013; Patti & Polyak, 2015). Scholars have identified the need for professional 'mediators', for example, to build alignment between actors and to negotiate structural barriers in temporary use (Jégou et al., 2018, Patti & Polyak, 2015, Matoga, 2019). However, beyond the identified need for mediation work and some preliminary characterisations of it, academic TU scholarship to date lacks empirical detail and theoretically grounded approaches to articulate mediation.

To achieve a clearer articulation and conceptualisation of the understudied and undertheorised phenomenon of mediation in TU, I argue it is useful to learn from adjacent fields of scholarship. Therefore, this chapter draws on literature in architecture and urban sustainability transitions be-

cause they offer conceptualisations of related work addressing socio-politically complex conditions and relations between multiple actors and levels in urban and spatial contexts. Conceptualisations of socio-political work in architecture and urban transitions help to develop a conceptually relevant vocabulary for the work and roles in TU mediation.

A clear connection can be found between temporary use mediation and architectural work. In practice, architects are among those professionals increasingly engaging in and commissioned in TU-related work. Some key scholars in TU have started to describe new kinds of architectural work emerging in TU. Bishop and Williams (2012) identify architectural studios engaged in TU practice in the UK. Recently, the architects and scholars Klaske Havik and Dorina Plumbi (2020) discussed the role of architects in the transformation of the DNSM wharf, a well-known TU project in Amsterdam. They identify the role of architects as mediators engaged in ‘complex processes of negotiation between the different interest groups and their diverging expectations’ (p. 300) as well as between ‘users’ wishes, architectural ideas and formal and technical requirements’ (p. 296). In addition, Oswalt et al. (2013) illustrated how TU has opened up new professional roles within architecture and planning. In the preface of the book *Urban Catalyst*, the Dutch architect and planner Kees Christiaanse (2013) describes this shift in professional roles:

[T]his new [temporary use] approach has the potential to fundamentally alter the way we think about our role as architects, designers, city administrators or investors. ... Within this more holistic approach, urbanists become spiders in a web of stakeholder interests – filling a gap as coordinators, managers, and visionaries, even becoming developers themselves. ... today’s stakeholder management brings together a range of participants, capitalists and local activists alike, mediating conflicting interests within an integrated decision-making process.

(Christiaanse, 2013, p. 6)

Christiaanse here describes an example of architectural work expanding beyond spatial design to managing socio-political processes. However, such work exceeds the traditional training of architects or other professionals typically involved in planning and development. As such, TU mediation converges with recent conceptualisations of ‘alternative’ architectural work, such as ‘spatial agency’, as mentioned above (Awan et al., 2011). Therefore,

related conceptual descriptions of socio-politically engaged architectural work are relevant here for articulating mediation in temporary use.

Scholarship on urban sustainability transitions offers further relevant and more systematic accounts of work and roles related to temporary use mediation. As outlined in the previous chapter, TU can be conceptualised as a niche-level practice and a potential source of innovation, which clarifies its struggle vis-à-vis the ‘regimes’ in urban planning and development. Furthermore, UST scholars have identified the pivotal role of ‘intermediaries’ in mediating related socio-political dynamics in urban transformation processes (Hodson et al., 2013; Valderrama Pineda et al., 2017). Studies on urban transition intermediaries offer explications of intermediary work and roles (e.g. Hargreaves et al., 2013) which relate to those in TU but are more mature and systematically developed. Therefore, I consider these to be valuable for articulating mediation in TU.

Before further discussing mediation and related work and roles, I want to clarify my choice of terminology concerning ‘mediation’ and ‘mediators’ in these introductory chapters. Within temporary use, architecture and urban sustainability transitions, there is a range of somewhat overlapping terms used to characterise the work of professional actors operating between actors, levels and scales and managing the socio-politically complex dynamics involved in spatial and urban transformation processes. In TU, the term ‘mediator’ seems predominant, while other overlapping terms include ‘agent’ (Oswalt et al. 2013), ‘intermediary’ (e.g. Matoga, 2019, Bishop and Williams, 2012) ‘intermediate agency’ (Berwyn, 2012), and ‘broker’ (Jégou and Bonneau, 2017). In architecture, ‘agent’ is a prevalent term linked to discussions on ‘agency’. However, architects are also mentioned as ‘mediators’ (e.g. Harriss et al., 2021a; Havik & Pllumbi, 2020). In UST, ‘intermediary’ is the predominant term, while some scholars also use ‘mediation’. As Valderrama Pineda et al. (2017) note, in the context of urban transitions, the meaning of the term ‘mediator’ is in line with that of the understanding of the ‘relational’ character of the ‘intermediaries’ work, as forwarded by Moss (2009, p. 1481) as well as Guy et al. (2011).

For the purposes of these introductory chapters – acknowledging that there is some fluctuation of terminology between the papers included in this thesis – I have chosen ‘mediator’ as the ‘term of art’ to describe the professional actors working in TU. In comparison to the term ‘intermediary’, I understand ‘mediator’ to imply a somewhat stronger agency and less neutral position. Thus, I understand that the term mediator draws more

attention to the complex socio-political nature of the work. Furthermore, I argue that the term is better suited for the TU context as a more prevalent term in that discourse.

The sections below will start to expound on and conceptualise mediation work in temporary use, drawing on literature in TU, architecture and UST. Section 3.1 reviews the state of emerging literature on mediation in TU. Section 3.2 then explores relevant conceptualisations of socio-politically engaged architectural work, and Section 3.3 draws on studies on ‘intermediary’ roles in UST. By elaborating such conceptualisations of related socio-politically engaged work and roles across different fields, this chapter addresses the second sub-question of the thesis.

3.1 ‘Mediation’ in temporary use

In the past decade, arguments for the professional mediation of temporary use have increasingly appeared in academic and non-academic research studies. Oswalt et al. (2013) drew attention to the necessity for dedicated ‘agents’ to work between the users, owners and municipal authorities in TU, often voluntarily or commissioned by the municipality. Bishop and Williams (2012) noted the emergence of mediating actors working in the private sector in the UK but primarily focusing on owner-tenant relationships. In addition, Patti and Polyak (2015, 2017) and Matoga (2019) have touched on mediation in relation to the governance of TU. Overall, scholars recognise mediators as necessary, even as key actors in TU (Henneberry, 2017a). While academic TU scholarship⁹ to date only includes brief mentions of mediation, practice is rapidly outpacing research in this area. Mediation has been increasingly explored in non-academic reports focusing on TU practice (Jégou et al., 2018) and accounts by practitioners themselves (Berwyn, 2012; Hasemann et al., 2017). Such reports recognise different types of mediating actors, ranging from activists to more established organisations and working across public and private sectors. Examples include private ‘agencies’ such as the *ZwischenZeitZentrale* Bremen (Hasemann et al., 2017;

⁹ The review on mediation in TU in this thesis only covers literature in English (and some in Finnish). I acknowledge that there may be additional accounts on mediation in other languages, e.g. German. However, it has been beyond the scope of this thesis work to search for and translate non-English literature.

Hernberg, 2020), new public sector roles such as the ‘neighbourhood managers’ in Ghent (Jégou et al., 2018; Hernberg, 2020), online platforms and NGOs (Jégou et al., 2018).

Early academic and non-academic sources have typically used colloquial terms and loose formulations when describing the emerging work, roles and activities of mediators in TU. Mediators are identified as necessary in facilitating the social relations between actors, which involves, for example, ‘arbitrating conflicts’ (Oswalt et al., 2013, p. 247), trust-building (Oswalt et al., 2013; Hasemann et al., 2017), translating (Rubenis, 2017) ‘negotiating,’ ‘moderating’ and ‘communicating’ between actors (Oswalt et al., 2013, p. 231, 247; De Fejter, 2017, p. 17). Additionally, mediators advise temporary users and negotiate regulations, permissions and contracts (Oswalt et al., 2013; Rubenis, 2017). Furthermore, mediators can contribute to reducing structural barriers for temporary use (Berwyn, 2012) through lobbying government (Hasemann et al., 2017), developing new collaborative governance structures (Patti & Polyak, 2017; Matoga, 2019) or giving a voice to bottom-up initiatives (Matoga, 2019). Such sources thus characterise a wide array of mediation roles and activities ranging from mundane to more strategic contributions.

Overall, the emerging discourse on TU mediation provides some useful yet preliminary elaborations of TU mediation practice. However, the sources lack systematic enquiry and articulation of mediation. Moreover, they perhaps do not fully capture the complex and socio-politically contestational conditions and the multiple relations between actors, levels and scales underlying mediation, as described in the previous chapter. Therefore, there is a need for an expanded and nuanced vocabulary and conceptually relevant articulations suited for reflexive practice and research upon such work. To start elaborating more conceptually relevant articulations of such work, I turn to discourses within architecture and urban sustainability transitions, in which I focus more specifically on work and roles corresponding to mediation in TU.

3.2 Architects as 'agents'

Conceptions of socio-politically engaged architectural work and roles have increasingly emerged in architecture scholarship and practice in the past decade. Scholars and practitioners are starting to conceptualise new work and roles for architects, which shift the focus beyond the building as the object of architectural work towards socially and politically engaged processes. Drawing attention to agency, participation, expert roles, power and political intervention in architecture, the emerging discourse and practices echo themes that have arisen in architecture since the late 1960s (see, e.g. Hughes & Sadler, 2000; Blundell Jones, 2005), also reviving the legacy of Lefebvre in architectural discourse (see Stickells, 2011). This section focuses on the contemporary conceptualisations of socio-politically engaged architectural work, which intersect with the emerging practice of mediation in TU, thus considered as useful for further elaborating TU mediation work.

'Spatial agency' was a particular proposition of the architect's role and a characterisation of a type of practice, coined by Awan et al. (2011). As a role, 'spatial agents' move away from the exclusive expert role of architects towards empowering others in performing situated spatial practices (ibid., see also Dodd, 2020). Spatial agents are characterised as proactive, seeking to initiate projects and expand briefs rather than waiting for pre-determined commissions. The concept of spatial agency also outlines an architectural approach that can present responses to architectural problems not necessarily in a built form, but turning attention to appropriating and reusing particular under-used spaces and resources (Awan et al., 2011; see also Lorne, 2017). In relation to this, particularly given my architectural motivations at the start of my doctoral research, the term 'urban agent' has been an inspiration and a point of departure for the research. Oswald and Misselwitz coined the term in 2004 in the context of the temporary use of the (now demolished) *Palast der Republik* in Berlin. They described their role as 'agents' and 'facilitators' of temporary use, arguing it as 'a potential model for a new territory of action for architects, acting less as builders and more as urban agents' (Oswald & Misselwitz, 2004, p. 97). More recently, Melanie Dodd has discussed related approaches of architecture beyond building, such as 'designing for organising' (Dodd & Bose, 2020, p. 211) or designing 'operational alternatives and systems' (Dodd, 2020, p. 1). Such approaches

present an important shift in the professional ethos of architects, in which attention to built form has been central.

‘Agency’, in itself, has been characterised more specifically in relation to architectural work (Doucet & Cupers, 2009; Kossak et al., 2010; Awan et al., 2011). Whereas traditional dictionary definitions of agency point at the capacity to act for oneself, architecture scholars understand agency to include the ability ‘to act on behalf of others’ (Kossak et al., 2010, p. 3) and in the empowerment of others (Awan et al., 2011). Awan et al. (2011) understand agency as transformative action, underlining its political dimensions. Informed by Giddens (1987) and Latourian Actor-Network-Theory, agency in architecture is understood as relative to structure. Agents are seen neither as ‘completely free as individuals’ nor as ‘completely entrapped by structure’ (Awan et al., 2011, p. 31). This understanding opens up possibilities for a critical evaluation and negotiation of existing conditions to improve or transform them (ibid.; Kossak et al., 2010). Therefore, this understanding of agency also highlights the political agency of architects and their position in between different actors and institutional structures.

‘Double agency’ is another concept that further develops the understanding of agency in architecture and challenges the traditionally-understood and legally-defined expert role of architects. Liza Fior, a co-founder of *muf architecture /art*, coined the term to describe the multiple relations and intents involved in architectural work (see Fior, 2020, p. 204). Her colleague, the architect and scholar Melanie Dodd, further elaborated the concept in her doctoral thesis (2011). In architecture, professional roles and responsibilities are regulated by legal and professional codes, thus not only by tradition and culture. For example, in the UK, the responsibility of the architect is defined in the *Client Architect Agreement* as to ‘act as the client’s agent for the project and as required under the selected building contract’ (Dodd, 2011, p. 55). Such a definition underlines the architects’ relation with their clients, which is typically strengthened because of financial dependency. The notion of ‘double agent’ questions this relationship by drawing attention to how architects may struggle between serving their paying client and simultaneously pursuing other socially or politically significant goals (Fior, 2020; Dodd, 2011). Hence, this notion sheds light on the complexity and political dimensions of agency in architecture and highlights the reality where architects may be working on commissions while pursuing other, potentially opposed, goals.

The concept of 'urban curator' and architectural approaches focusing on 'participation' further challenge the expert role of architects. 'Urban curating' is a concept that diverges from the traditional work of master-planning and was originally coined by the architect Raoul Bunschoten (2004) and elaborated by a number of architecture scholars, including Petrescu (2005) and Meike Schalk (2007). Concerning participation in architecture, Petrescu (2005) characterises architecture and planning as a curatorial practice. She characterises the urban curator as 'a connector of people, things, desires, stories, opportunities' (2005, pp. 56–57). In a similar vein, Schalk asserts that as an urban curator, 'the role of the architect has shifted from the creator of objects to the mediator between actors, forces, processes and narratives' (2007, p. 159). The concept of urban curator further relates to architectural approaches focusing on 'participation', which emphasise foregrounding the needs, values and desires of 'others' in spatial production (Blundell Jones, Petrescu & Till, 2005). As Lee Stickells (2011) notes, architecture's relation to participation has historically been dominated by questions of power and control. Some forms of formal participation have been criticised as placation and tokenism (e.g. Arnstein, 1969). As an alternative, architecture scholars propose approaches such as 'conflictual participation' (Miessen, 2010), where the architect may enable and facilitate interaction stimulating alternative debates and speculations, and 'critical participation' (Schalk, Šušteršič & Sandin, 2018, p. 299), in which participants may create 'a form of 'insurgent space' as a starting point for negotiation'. By further blurring the roles of architects and users, such approaches engage critically with power-related issues of expertise, mastery, control and conflict.

Concerning the blurring of expert roles in architecture, some architecture scholars problematise the term 'user'. When, as in 'spatial agency', the production of space is understood as a shared social enterprise, it entails acknowledging the diverse skills and intents of other actors involved (see Lefebvre, 1991). Drawing on Lefebvre, Schneider (2013) problematises the term 'user' as a generally accepted term to describe the multitude of actors who pass through, live, work or play in spaces. She argues that the term user creates a divide between the expert producers and those, perhaps understood as more disadvantaged and passive, who come after the production to use a space or building (Schneider 2013, p. 11, citing Darke, 1984 and Forty, 2000). Instead, Schneider argues for more collaborative forms of architecture that acknowledge the role of users as active subjects or 'makers' of the built environment (2013; see also Cuff, 2018).

Through rethinking agency and expertise, the characterisations of architectural work and roles as described above turn the attention to power and political engagement. As already implied in the discussions of agency in architecture, architects as ‘agents’ can engage critically with underlying societal structures and negotiate existing conditions. The architecture scholar and founder of the *Office for Political Innovation*, Andrés Jaque, highlights the complexity of processes and relationships involved in architecture. He suggests that ‘any architectural intervention requires political action to engage with and mediate between different players’ (Jaque, 2021, pp. 71–72). He argues that key in architecture is the negotiation of diverse interests, slowly contributing to shifting power (ibid.). Dodd similarly calls for the political engagement of architects and spatial practitioners. She suggests that architects can exploit their in-between role to disrupt hegemonic structures and operations ‘from the inside out’ through careful and provocative acts of design (Dodd, 2020b, p. 19). The attention to mediation, negotiation and disruptive intervention thus further highlights the political and controversial nature of emerging architectural work today.

The notion of ‘transversality’ further articulates the political agency of collaborative spatial practices operating at a micro-scale but engaging transversally across scales. Doina Petrescu (2005), a founding member of the *atelier d’architecture autogérée (aaa)*, discusses transversality in connection with the urban gardening project *EcoBox* that appropriates abandoned urban sites in Paris. She argues that local micro-scale practices are not detached from larger-scale political questions (Petrescu, 2011). In her words, “transversal participation’ (issuing from ‘transversality’ as a method) ... transverses different social strata, which is neither hierarchical (vertical) nor symptomatic (horizontal), and generates unexpected and continually evolving reactions’ (Petrescu, 2005, pp. 49–50). This clarifies how spatial practice operating at the scale of everyday life and accessible to a broad range of participants can at the same time be a vehicle for generating debate and negotiation about broader political issues.

These articulations and conceptualisations of socio-politically engaged architectural work and roles are connected to the central socio-political dilemmas, as identified above, in TU, including the involvement of multiple actors and levels, the multiple interests involved and the critical questioning of structural conditions and existing power relationships. Concepts such as ‘spatial agent’, ‘double agent’ and ‘urban curator’ offer some ways to articulate TU mediation as socio-politically engaged architectural work.

The notion of ‘transversality’ further clarifies how the mundane work (see also Hyysalo & Hyysalo, 2018) in TU occurs at a micro-scale yet addresses broader political questions. The emerging architectural discourse is particularly relevant for characterising mediation as architectural work concerned with social and political questions extending beyond the spatial. Such work involves empowering ‘other’ actors in spatial production, acknowledging their skills, needs and knowledges, working within the constraints of existing structures but with the intent to challenge and potentially transform them, reusing existing material, spatial (and other) resources, and working in an in-between position between actors, structures and interests, where negotiation and critical intervention is necessary.

However, while such conceptualisations of architectural work address many issues that are identified as critical in TU, the discourse tends to remain somewhat abstract and detached from the realities and work at the practice level. Architectural work is mainly discussed in relation to ‘big’ terms such as agency, expertise and power. Therefore, the next section turns to the literature on ‘intermediation’ in urban sustainability transitions, which moves a step closer to practice by describing related work, roles and activities in more systematic detail.

3.3 ‘Intermediary’ roles in urban sustainability transitions

‘Intermediaries’ are widely understood as actors with an in-between position, increasingly and systematically studied within urban sustainability transitions (e.g. Hodson et al., 2013). This literature is rooted in innovation studies and science and technology studies (e.g. Baum, Calabrese & Silverman, 2000; Howells, 2006). Within UST, there is a particular interest in intermediation in urban grassroots (White & Stirling, 2013) and energy (Hodson & Marvin, 2009) contexts. In addition, some recent studies (e.g. Valderrama Pineda et al., 2017) address ‘mediating’ urban transitions in a spatial context. Such literature discusses intermediation work addressing socio-political dynamics related to those identified in TU, and further articulates related ‘roles’ systematically and in detail.

Diverse types of actors can be considered intermediaries. Examples range from national-level public organisations, innovation agencies and independent professional actors to small-scale civic networks (Hyysalo, Juntunen & Martiskainen, 2018; Kivimaa et al., 2019a). Particularly architects (Fischer & Guy, 2009) and designers (Hyysalo et al., 2019) are also recognised as potential intermediary actors. As Moss argues, a shared characteristic of different intermediaries is the ‘relational nature of their work’ (2009, p. 1481). In line, Hodson et al. characterise such actors as ‘mediating’ between multiple actors and interests across levels and scales (2013, p. 1408). Despite such commonalities, Kivimaa et al. suggest that different types of intermediary actors and activities are necessary in different transition phases (2019b) and at different levels (2019a). Furthermore, the intermediaries’ scope of action can vary depending on their funding source, organisation size, affiliation or the duration of their involvement (Kivimaa, 2014; Mignon & Kanda, 2018).

The systematic and detailed elaborations of intermediary *roles* are of particular interest in this thesis. Important to highlight, however, is that the intermediation literature remains somewhat unclear on what is the understanding of the term ‘role’ as such. Scholars use the terms ‘role’, ‘activity’, and ‘function’ somewhat interchangeably. Therefore, to clarify the theoretical understanding of ‘role’, I draw on the transition scholars Wittmayer et al.’s (2017) review of the concept of ‘role’ in social interaction discourse (Turner, 1990; Collier & Callero, 2005; Simpson & Carroll, 2008). Wittmayer et al. characterise roles ‘as a set of recognisable activities and attitudes used by an actor to address recurring situations’ (2017, p. 51). Furthermore, they view roles as evolving and negotiated social constructions, which can serve as a ‘vehicle for mediating and negotiating meaning in interactions’ (ibid., p. 50). For the purpose of articulating roles in this doctoral thesis, I take the understanding that *roles* comprise *activities*, which are recognisable, purposeful and recurring, yet negotiated and evolving.

In UST, scholars have delineated a broad variety of roles and activities by which intermediaries can contribute to urban transitions processes. The roles of intermediaries are seen to range across the levels of niche and regime as well as spatio-temporal scales. Concerning scales, Hodson and Marvin note that intermediaries can bridge the gap between broad-scale visions and their implementation within urban transitions (Hodson & Marvin, 2009; Hodson et al., 2013). Concerning levels, Kivimaa et al. (2019b: 110)

explain that intermediaries ‘operate on many levels to advance transitions; building from grassroots and local action ... to delegitimising existing institutional frameworks and lobbying for new ones’. While there is increasing evidence on intermediary roles in niche development (e.g. Kivimaa, 2014), some studies also investigate their roles in regime change and ‘destabilisation’ (e.g. Matschoss & Heiskanen, 2018). The work of intermediaries can also range across strategic and more project-focused roles and activities (Hodson et al., 2013). Below, I will review how intermediary roles are described in UST. As part of this thesis, Paper 4 presents a more thorough analysis of such intermediary roles in relation to mediation in TU, which is also described in Section 4.4.2 concerning analysis.

Niche and grassroots empowerment is the typical focus in the majority of studies on urban transition intermediaries. For example, Tom Hargreaves et al. (2013) argue that intermediaries are necessary in sustaining and consolidating grassroots innovations, which are seen as particularly vulnerable as they struggle within strongly regulated regime environments involving stable infrastructures and entrenched operational patterns (see also, White and Stirling, 2013). Many such studies build on the ‘strategic niche management’ (SNM) approach (Kemp, Schot & Hoogma, 1998). SNM differentiates three key processes of ‘nurturing’ niche development: learning processes, articulating expectations and visions and building social networks (Smith & Raven, 2012). In such processes, dedicated intermediation work is seen as necessary. For example, Paula Kivimaa (2014) has analysed intermediary roles in the three nurturing processes in the context of energy transitions. Geels and Jasper Deuten have further emphasised intermediary roles in learning processes. Their influential study (2006) suggests that intermediaries aggregate knowledge across local niches to generate abstracted, ‘global’ knowledge for guiding the development of local activities (see also Hargreaves et al., 2013). However, other scholars have criticised the lack of attention in SNM to questions of power, the structural conditions of niche development (Smith & Stirling, 2007), and the diverse, conflicted realities of local niches on the ground (Hargreaves et al., 2013; Seyfang et al., 2014).

The intermediaries’ contribution to regime change has been somewhat less explicitly addressed in the UST literature. Adrian Smith et al. (2016) assert that by taking a more antagonistic stance, intermediaries may reveal and transform dominant socio-political structures. Correspondingly, Kaisa Matschoss and Eva Heiskanen identify intermediaries as influential in ‘destabilising’ prevalent regime rules (2017, 2018), while Beau Warbroek et

al. mention their role in ‘alleviating institutional barriers’ (2018, p. 2). Hodson and Marvin (2009) further discuss related socio-political complexity in urban energy transitions, identifying how intermediaries address the multiplicity of interests and motivations involved. They characterise intermediaries as ‘deliberately (rather than neutrally) positioned to act in-between by bringing together and mediating between different social interests ... to produce an outcome that would not have been possible, or as effective, without their involvement’ (Hodson & Marvin 2009, p.521). Concerning the multiple interests and levels, Hargreaves et al. (2013) describe the role of intermediaries in ‘brokering’ between niche and regime.

As described, the literature emphasises intermediaries’ contribution to niche empowerment and regime change. This perspective can be seen to reflect the underlying normative values of socio-ecological sustainability in UST. Simultaneously, the literature presents intermediaries as not necessarily neutral middle actors; instead, they may strongly advocate certain goals (e.g. Orstavik, 2014). However, scholars note that the intermediaries’ ability to influence change can vary, depending on factors such as their affiliation and resources (Kivimaa, 2014; Parag & Janda, 2014). Hence, it becomes clear that intermediaries themselves may be under-resourced and in a precarious position (see Hargreaves et al., 2013), which can affect the quality, scope, and impact of their work, particularly concerning regime change.

What remains less critically discussed is that some of the literature on transition intermediation seems to assume a rather direct and linear link between intermediary work, niche development and the consequent change or ‘destabilisation’ of regimes. In this respect, the language used seems somewhat bold and intrusive given the understanding that regimes are very resistant to change and transitions understood as very slow and complex processes, lasting decades. Therefore, the different scales, temporalities and phases of change processes vis-à-vis the agency of intermediation might require further attention and more nuanced explanation. In addition, the vocabulary used in this literature remains somewhat ‘dry’ and distant from practice. Some of the characterisations of roles lack empirical detail that would bring the terms to life on a practical level.

For articulating mediation in TU, the literature on intermediary roles in urban sustainability transitions is relevant despite the above-mentioned shortcomings. It provides systematic articulations of related roles that take a step closer to practice than, say, the discourse on architectural work reviewed in the previous section. While the range of roles described in such

studies can be argued as almost too broad, the literature is useful in describing roles and activities addressing socio-political dilemmas related to those identified in TU. Such dilemmas recognised in the urban intermediation literature are structural barriers, power symmetries, communication gaps, contradicting interests and goals and mismatching operational setups involved in the struggle of niche or grassroots practices operating in regime conditions. Yet, given the shortcomings of the level of articulation in UST as mentioned above, in this doctoral research, I aimed to look still a step deeper into the roles and activities in TU mediation practice in order to properly understand such terms and elucidate the roles in a TU context. While Papers 3 and 4 elucidate roles in the two empirical studies separately, Chapter 6 elaborates roles across both studies, based on the synthesis of conceptual themes from the different sets of literature.

3.4 Concluding remarks on mediation work

This chapter has introduced mediation in TU as an emerging field of work for professional actors, such as architects, and has described relevant conceptualisations and articulations of related work and roles in recent architecture and urban transitions scholarship. To address the second sub-question of this thesis, this chapter has elaborated on discussions of architectural and intermediation work addressing socio-political conditions related to temporary use, as outlined in Chapter 2. To conclude this chapter, I will here recapitulate the answer to the second sub-question. In addition, Chapter 6 will later address the research question based on the empirical findings.

(2) How can we understand and conceptualise mediation work addressing such conditions?

Based on the three areas of literature presented in this chapter, we can conclude that mediation work in temporary use is essentially social and political, while it inevitably concerns spatial contexts. In this chapter, the three sets of literature have provided complementary perspectives on socio-political work and roles corresponding to TU mediation. The discourses

complement each other by elaborating related work and roles at somewhat different levels of abstraction and granularity.

Temporary use scholars and practitioners have started describing some of the emerging roles and activities in mediation work using colloquial terms. However, the discourse remains preliminary and undertheorised and does not fully capture the range of mediation work concerning the complex socio-political conditions elaborated here.

Architecture literature offers relevant conceptualisations of architectural work addressing broad questions of agency, expertise, power and participation. Based on such conceptualisations, TU mediation can be interpreted as architectural work extending beyond spatial issues and concerned with empowering 'other' actors, such as users, in spatial production, where their skills, needs and knowledges are acknowledged. A mediator works in an in-between position between and across various actors, interests, structures and scales. Thus, a mediator works within the constraints of existing structures but with an intention to challenge them and potentially contribute to a longer-term transformation of those structures. However, as noted above, this discourse remains at a conceptual level and somewhat distant from actual practice.

The literature on intermediation in urban sustainability transitions takes an important turn to elaborating the related work, roles and activities of 'intermediaries' systematically and in more detail, a step closer to practice. The literature on urban intermediation particularly helps to clarify mediation concerning niche empowerment and regime change. Thus, in light of this literature, TU mediators can be seen as involved on the one hand in enabling the development of temporary use practices through building social networks and learning, and on the other hand in brokering between the TU niche and the regimes by building alignment between the multiple interests, improving the contractual and operational setups and building new partnerships. The UST literature also expounds on the potential of mediators to contribute to further challenging or disrupting existing structural conditions of the regimes.

Chapters 2 and 3 have now introduced the main sets of literature that this doctoral thesis builds on by elaborating the socio-political conditions in temporary use and mediation work addressing such conditions. The next chapter will present the research design and methodological approach of the thesis.



Chapter 4



Figure 32. A stakeholder workshop as part of the project *Temporary Kera*, which is included in the thesis through the practice-based study of *Mediation in Kera*. Photo: Johannes Romppanen

4. Research design

The research design for this thesis responds to the particularities and the current status of the field of mediation in temporary use. As outlined in the previous chapters, TU mediation is a non-academised (i.e. understudied and undertheorised) field, the problematics of which span disciplinary boundaries. Relevant knowledge is rapidly emerging in practice and involving multiple stakeholders. Thus, mediation in TU can be characterised as a particularly fragmented, fast-moving and unformalised field for a researcher to engage in.

To better understand this emerging field, the thesis bridges adjacent relevant disciplines, bringing together related literature sources to establish a common ground rather than delving profoundly into an established canon. In addition, to gain knowledge of a field where practice is outpacing research, the thesis learns from practice, including knowledge from my own professional work and that of others. To further address the fragmented and unformalised nature of the field, the thesis aims to develop a systematic approach to synthesising and identifying common concepts and terms from the different disciplines and practice in order to develop a conceptually relevant vocabulary for articulating roles in TU mediation.

Given the above characteristics of the emerging research on TU mediation, my research methodology aligns with several related established research traditions, namely ‘practice-based research’ (Vaughan, 2017; Hensel & Nilsson, 2019) in architecture and design, as well as qualitative research in the social sciences. Both research traditions acknowledge the tacit, situated knowledge of practitioners and other stakeholders as a relevant source for knowledge production. Generally, this research design is also informed by case study research as a strategy to draw boundaries within a complex phenomenon in order to study something comprehensively in limited space and time (Stake, 1994; Yin, 2018). Informed by these research traditions, my research design includes two empirical studies examined from different epistemological standpoints and for different purposes within the overall research. The practice-based study of *Mediation in Kera* focused on my work as a mediator in a TU project in the Helsinki metropolitan area. The study of *Refill mediators* used qualitative interviewing to study four other mediators’ work in several European cities, in order to understand mediation in a broader context.

The nature of the qualitative and practice-based studies or the literature reviews in this thesis is not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, the nature of this research is to spotlight, explore and articulate certain aspects (but not all possible aspects) of the main topic from the chosen discourses and practice. The triangulation between different discourses, data types, and methods is seen as a means to better understand complexity, reduce the influence of subjectivity and increase the ‘trustworthiness’ of the research.

By bringing together different forms of knowledge from adjacent scholarly fields and professional practice to describe the socio-political conditions and roles in architecture-related work, this work aligns with the recent calls within architecture to re-engage with its social and political responsibilities and to bridge between profession and discipline. There is a growing awareness across academic disciplines of the need for hybrid forms of knowledge production through ‘transdisciplinary research’ (Hirsch Hadorn et al., 2008). This is seen as particularly relevant to address complex and systemic societal problems (see, e.g. Gaziulusoy and Boyle 2013). My research aligns with the framing of transdisciplinarity, articulated within architecture by Isabelle Doucet and Nel Janssens (2011), as an approach integrating discipline and profession through including the practical knowledge of professionals and ‘lay’ people and through increased attention to

societal and ethical accountability. The call for multiple forms of enquiry in architecture addresses the argued split between profession and discipline and the strong tendency towards disciplinarity within architecture. Instead, as Doucet and Janssens (*ibid.*) argue, architecture by its nature needs to deal with a complex range of disciplinary and practical forms of knowledge production. Such considerations provide a relevant epistemological frame for this research.

These methodological and epistemological choices form the basis of the research design in this thesis. In this type of research, knowledge production is grounded and situated within specific contexts. Inherent in such approaches is also the influence of the subjectivity (of the researcher and participants) and multiple roles of the researcher and practitioner, which are important to acknowledge and account for (Gray & Malins, 2004). Thus, careful reflexivity and interpretations are seen as important (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000). Given these elements – subjectivity, situatedness, and reflexivity – the research aligns with a ‘constructivist’ research paradigm, in which it is understood that meaning is constructed based on social, personal and local experiences (Schwandt, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 2018). Constructivism is characterised by a ‘relativist’ ontology, which assumes that multiple realities exist as subjective mental constructions (Guba & Lincoln; 2018). Research within the constructivist paradigm typically aims at understanding lived experiences from the perspective of those who live it (Schwandt, 1994). Therefore, enquiry into a problem is characteristically based on the interaction between and among the researcher and the informants (Guba & Lincoln, 2018).

In line with the principles outlined above, this research adopts elements from practice-based and qualitative research to study the work and roles in TU mediation and its underlying socio-political conditions. Academic and practical contexts further influenced the more specific choices made during the research process. This chapter will describe, justify and position my choices concerning the research design, including research contexts, methodology, methods and empirical studies. In the following, I provide a more detailed account of these aspects of the research design, which may be more extensive than is typical of doctoral theses in the field of design. I have considered this level of detail relevant for making the research choices and processes transparent and understandable for readers outside the field.



Architects as 'Mediators'

4.1 Contexts for the research

My research design, including choices of methodology, empirical study contexts and literature, has been influenced by different academic and practical contexts, which provided certain conditions, opportunities and constraints for the research and its process. In this section, I explain these contextual factors and how I matched them against the broader demands of the research problem in order to take a unique angle and epistemological advantage of the contexts.

4.1.1 Prior work in an evolving field

I entered doctoral studies as an architecture practitioner with professional expertise of over ten years on temporary use, the reuse of existing buildings, and participatory design. I had worked on these issues in different positions: as an employee in an architectural office (*Part Architects*), as a civil servant in the Finnish Ministry of the Environment, and as an entrepreneur in my own architecture consultancy, *Urban Dream Management*.

Two earlier projects essentially sparked my interest in academic research by introducing particular questions and challenges arising in architectural work on TU and the adaptation of buildings. During 2009–2011, I was involved in the project *Kalasadama Temporary* (through *Part Architects*), which opened up a former harbour area for temporary use as part of a long-term urban planning process in central Helsinki. As mentioned above in Section 1.2.1, the project introduced various challenges, including the different operational set-ups in temporary use and municipal administration in the highly regulated planning and administrative context of Helsinki, as well as the contradicting interests of private developers versus temporary

Figure 33. *L'art est aux Nefs* was an annual art sales event under the structures of a former shipbuilding hall as part of the temporary use of *île de Nantes* in France. *Samoa*, the organisation in charge of the urban redevelopment of the area, is included in the study of *Refill mediators* in the thesis. Photo: Valéry Joncheray/Samoa.

use. Furthermore, the project also demonstrated the changing nature of architectural work in such a context.

Another key experience was my work as a civil servant in the Ministry of the Environment during 2012–13, as a ‘strategic designer’ leading the project *Vacant Spaces* (Hernberg, 2014). This project investigated the challenges and opportunities involved in the reuse of the existing built environment in Finland. The project involved a collaborative process with stakeholders from multiple sectors, including legislators, building authorities, planners, property developers, architects and grassroots activists or users interested in the temporary use of spaces. This project opened a window onto the various structural conditions and challenges underlying current practices of building, using and governing our built environment. In addition, it revealed some of the potentials and challenges of operating at the intersection of the various actors and structural conditions.

These prior work experiences posed relevant questions that motivated the need for further research in this area. For this research, the experiences also sparked initial research interests and considerations of relevant research approaches for studying TU and mediation, such as participatory design and practice-based research. The experience of *Kalatatama* was used in the research for a preliminary conceptualisation of mediation work at the beginning of the research journey, bringing in starting points from my earlier work (see Paper 1). However, in the thesis overall, *Kalatatama* was treated as a motivation rather than the object of an empirical study. This choice was partly methodological, as I considered that studying an ongoing project (see 4.1.3) through practice-based research would provide deeper insights into mediation than relying on retrospective reflections, interviews and documentation to investigate events that had taken place more than five years earlier.

4.1.2 Doctoral research at Aalto University

I conducted the doctoral research in the Department of Design at Aalto University as a member of the sustainable design research group NODUS. Relevant related research is also taking place in several other departments in Aalto University, including Architecture (Kuittinen, 2020), Real Estate (Andelin et al., 2015) and Built Environment (e.g. Pulkkinen, 2014). However, the specific orientations that place my research within the Department of

Design are practice-based research, participatory design and urban sustainability transitions, which are all particular strengths within the department.

The Department of Design at Aalto has a strong tradition and expertise in participatory and collaborative design methods as well as practice-oriented research approaches, which were relevant considering my practitioner background and thus pertinent starting points at the onset of my research. During my doctoral research, the NODUS research group was developing a distinct orientation towards sustainability transitions and transdisciplinary research. These became further relevant orientations in the course of my research, when the research focus was sharpened and informed by new issues arising through practice. Therefore, in the later stages of my research, literature on UST and intermediation became particularly appropriate for addressing the socio-political conditions and related work roles in TU. Nevertheless, while the research group provided support concerning these orientations in literature, I conducted the research individually and unattached to other academic research projects.



Figure 34. Street view of *Kutojantie* in the suburban office and logistics district, *Kera*, located in Espoo, in the Helsinki metropolitan area in Finland. *Kera* was the context of the project *Temporary Kera* and the practice-based study of *Mediation in Kera* in the thesis. Photo: Susanna Ahola



4.1.3 Empirical research contexts on and through practice

In this research, as stated above, I chose practice-based research (Vaughan, 2017; Hensel & Nilsson, 2019) as a well suited approach for studying an emerging phenomenon in depth and to gain unique access to a field context, allowing acquisition of knowledge on the nuances of mediation work. Being a practitioner myself provided an opportunity to study in depth my ongoing work as a mediator. While I started collecting data from two ongoing (professional) projects at the onset of my doctoral research, I later selected the project *Temporary Kera* as most fitting for addressing research questions concerning socio-political roles and conditions in TU mediation, as explained in more detail below. In addition, another empirical context emerged through my involvement in the EU-funded TU network *Refill*, which gave me access to the work of other selected European mediators in order to learn about mediation in a broader context. Below, I describe the characteristics of these empirical contexts and explain the selection of the two particular empirical studies within the overall research design. The actual empirical studies and methods are described in Section 4.3.

The project ***Temporary Kera*** (2016–18) provided me with the possibility to study my own work as a mediator taking a practice-based approach (see Section 4.2). The project took place in a suburban but well-connected office and logistics district, *Kera*, in Espoo, Finland’s second-largest city, located in the Helsinki metropolitan area (see map at the end of the book). The district of *Kera* was facing a growing vacancy problem. Its buildings were outdated, not meeting the demands of the latest office trends, yet in reasonably good condition. The project aimed to initiate a process of bottom-up revitalisation of the district through temporary use.

Figures 35–36. As part of *Our Festival (Meidän festivaali)*, a performance by the string quartet *Kamus* with dancers Maria Nurmela and Teemu Kyytinen took over an empty warehouse in *Kera* in 2017. Photo above: Maarit Kytöharju/Meidän Festivaali. Photo below: Hella Hernberg





Figures 37–38. As part of the *Temporary Kera* project, vacant office spaces were rented as workspaces for professionals and amateurs in the fields of arts and crafts. Photos: Hella Hernberg.

I was commissioned¹⁰ as a mediator in the project by the City of Espoo, or, more precisely, a coalition of the municipal departments of culture and urban development. The commission emerged through direct negotiations with the commissioner who had approached me, being familiar with my prior work in temporary use. Commissioning a mediator, not to mention initiating a TU project, can be seen as a relatively new opening in the Espoo municipality. This was also reflected in the fact that the project was not procured through public, competitive tendering. Consequently, the project budget was also below the legally-defined threshold value for tendering.

The goal of the project, as formulated with the commissioners¹¹, was to initiate a bottom-up and collaborative revitalisation process of the district within five to ten years while a longer-term urban planning process was going on. These goals were linked to broader municipal goals concerning socio-ecological sustainability and circular economy. In addition, the aspirations for temporary use in the district were connected to the results of an international idea competition¹², in which temporary use had been suggested as a part of the urban development concept in the area. The commissioner representatives were particularly motivated to develop agile and bottom-up approaches of ‘urban action’¹³ to complement the slower and more rigid forms of formal urban planning prevalent in the municipality. The commissioner was optimistic about TU as a potential tool to experiment on such an approach in practice. However, the commissioner lacked knowledge and previous experience of what exactly temporary use might entail in practice and how to operate or implement it. This was one of the reasons for commissioning a mediator experienced in temporary use.

A key challenge that became clear in the project’s background research phase was that of private landownership distributed across several owners. Actors in the real-estate regime in *Kera* were private property owners, including leading Finnish property investment companies and local subsidi-

¹⁰ I was commissioned in the *Temporary Kera* project through my own architecture/design consultancy, *Urban Dream Management* (www.urbandreammanagement.com). The company is registered as a ‘toiminimi’ (Finnish for ‘trade name’), under which I have mainly operated as an individual practitioner.

¹¹ The project goal was preliminarily articulated in the project brief, which I crafted based on the commissioner’s requests stated verbally in a meeting. In the first phase of the project, the project goal and vision were further specified with the commissioner and published in the background report (Hernberg, 2017).

¹² The competition, *Kera Challenge*, was organised in 2015 as part of the international *Nordic Built Cities Challenge* competition. www.uusikera.fi

¹³ The words of one of the commissioner representatives, who spoke of ‘urban action’ as an alternative to ‘urban planning’.

aries of international property investors. Many of the property owners were sceptical of temporary use as it was a relatively unfamiliar approach in the Finnish property sector. Their main motivation was to pursue longer-term redevelopment (including demolition) of the underused properties. At the same time, my background study on potential temporary users showed that they had faced great difficulty finding affordable spaces. This group included individual artists, entrepreneurs and sports associations, who were quite unequal as negotiation partners with the corporate property owners. Negotiations at the early stages of the project revealed rather challenging socio-political dynamics between the main actors, characterised by asymmetric power relations, mismatching motivations and values, as well as social and economic distance between actors – thus making it a germane context for studying mediation.

The *Kera* district can be seen to manifest some of the current challenges concerning sustainable urban development in the Helsinki metropolitan area, particularly the problem of office vacancy (see also Section 1.2). The Helsinki area currently has over a million square metres of vacant office space (Catella, 2021). At the time of the project, the estimated office vacancy rate in the *Kera* district was over 50% and increasing.¹⁴ Recognised barriers for adaptive reuse of such buildings in the Helsinki area include the tradition of stringent zoning and regulatory practices and the tendency of the property and construction sector to prioritise demolition and new build instead of adaptation of the old (see Hernberg, 2014). Cities in the area have shown a tentative interest in temporary use in recent decades. However, despite some fairly successful examples, scholars argue that the potential of temporary use has not been utilised on a strategic level beyond single projects (see Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2012; Vestermann Olsen, 2017). Lehtovuori and Ruoppila have criticised Helsinki's 'centralised-idealistic' approach on planning, where 'power is kept centralised so the tactical idea of collaboration is not used', temporary use has been 'implemented only with limited resources in event-like manner', and the link to policy devel-

¹⁴ Estimated by one of the property owners in the area.

Figures 39–40. Above: The event *Kerapia* was organised in 2017 by university students exploring the potentials of temporary use in the *Kera* district. Below: Sports organisations were among the temporary users in the project *Temporary Kera*. During the project, an empty warehouse was rented by a trampoline jumping association. Photos: Hella Hernberg.





opment has been unclear (2012, p. 46–47). An example of recent policy development is that, in 2019, the City of Helsinki introduced a new real-estate strategy in which the aim of promoting temporary use is highlighted (2019, p. 20). However, the implementation of the strategy in practice has so far been unclear.

Given these characteristics of the *Temporary Kera* project and its broader contextual conditions in the Helsinki area, I selected the project as a context for a practice-based study in this doctoral research. The selection was based on a number of reasons. To begin with, there were limited projects available to select from in the timeline of the research. I selected *Kera* due to a number of characteristics that addressed relevant research questions. Namely, *Kera* demonstrated quite complex niche-regime dynamics and conditions for TU, therefore presenting a challenging but relevant context for mediation. Such a context might also be seen as resonant with other contexts with strong and conventional planning and real-estate regimes. As a suburban office and logistics district, *Kera* also demonstrated the ongoing problem of office vacancy, which is evident in many Northern cities and countries today. As a location for temporary use, *Kera* represented the kind of generic stock of vacant office buildings, which are broadly available, and the future of which requires further attention. In addition, *Kera* demonstrated well the emerging, evolving and negotiated nature of the mediator roles and the challenges of procurement and briefing for such work. Furthermore, because of the international idea competition for urban redevelopment of the district, *Kera* had gained international recognition as a relevant temporary use and urban development context. All these characteristics contributed to the selection of *Kera* as a very complex research context representing many of the challenges concerning sustainable urban development, temporary use and mediation today. In Section 4.3.1, I describe in more detail the empirical study of *Mediation in Kera*, its unit of analysis, and methods of data collection.

Figure 41–42. Preparations for the event *Kerapia* by university students in 2017. Photos: Rami Ratvio




Figure 43. *DOK*, the temporary use of the old harbour of *Oude Dokken* in Ghent, has contributed to the changing image of the industrial site during a large-scale urban transformation project. Photo: City of Ghent.



The EU-funded TU network *Refill*¹⁵ emerged as another relevant empirical context, providing me with the opportunity to study the practice of other mediators. During 2016–18, *Refill* developed an ‘action planning network’ of ten European cities and local TU practitioners in order to exchange knowledge and develop solutions for advancing temporary use (see Jégou et al., 2018). *Refill* was a development project (i.e. not a research project) funded through *Urbact*, a programme of the European Regional Development Fund, aimed at fostering sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe. Helsinki was one of the *Refill* partner cities, with *Forum Virium Helsinki*¹⁶ as the official local partner.

During my doctoral research, I became connected to *Refill* as an informal local advisor. My activities within *Refill* included a keynote lecture for the international partners during their visit to Helsinki in 2017 and regular contributions in local workshops. I was originally introduced to the project as an interviewee in the background research for *Refill*. Through *Refill*, I became connected to a network of leading TU practitioners in Europe, including established mediators, who are few in this rapidly emerging field. This provided an opportunity to expand the scope of my empirical research to include a study on the work of other mediators in the European context. Therefore, for my doctoral research, the *Refill* network provided a context for selecting relevant mediators for a qualitative interview study (referred to below as *Refill mediators*). To clarify my role in relation to the *Refill* network, I acted as a researcher independently, in other words not affiliated as a researcher within the network itself. Within the overall research design, I considered the interview study of other practitioners as relevant for complementing the more in-depth study of Kera in order to more clearly understand the broader phenomenon of TU mediation.

My selection of interviewees for the study of *Refill mediators* included five practitioners from four European TU mediation organisations: Neigh-

¹⁵ <https://urbact.eu/Refill>

¹⁶ <https://forumvirium.fi>

Figure 44. The project *Kerk* occupied a former factory building in Ghent during 2014–17 as a place for various activities and events, accommodating different non-profit organisations and neighbourhood associations.

Figure 45. Urban allotment gardens at *De Site* in the *Rabot* district in Ghent. *De Site* is a temporary use project run by two social and artistic organisations on the site of a former telecom factory. Since 2007, *De Site* has engaged local residents in reshaping their neighbourhood. By working at *De Site*, residents can earn local currency, *Torekes*, to buy vegetables and other supplies in local shops (Jégou et al., 2018). Photos: City of Ghent.







Figures 46–48. The agency *ZwischenZeitZentrale Bremen* (ZZZ) has been in charge of mediating temporary use in Bremen since 2009. One of the projects managed by ZZZ is *Wurst Case* (photos top left and right), which has since 2015 occupied the administration building of a former sausage factory in the district *Hemelingen*, located in the eastern outskirts of Bremen. Another project initiated by ZZZ, *Bricolage Plantage* (left below), occupied a vacant commercial property in the *Findorff* district. The *Plantage* offered spaces for actors in the creative industries, including communal workshops, studios and offices. The project has later been self-managed by the association *Plantage 9 e.V.* Photos left: ZZZ. Photo right: Strategic Design Scenarios.

bourhood managers in the City of Ghent (Belgium) (Jégou et al., 2016), *ZwischenZeitZentrale Bremen*¹⁷ (Germany), *Samoa*¹⁸ in Nantes (France), and *Free Riga*¹⁹ (Latvia). The selected mediator organisations come from cities in Central and Northern Europe, thus presenting examples of mediation in a set of local contexts that provide some variation in terms of politics, governance, history, and economic situation. Compared to Finnish cities, some of the selected *Refill* cities have a longer tradition of temporary use within urban planning and governance, as well as specific instruments for supporting TU (see Paper 3 for details). The purpose of the *Refill* study was,

¹⁷ <https://www.zzz-bremen.de/ueber-uns/>, see also Hasemann et al., 2017

¹⁸ <https://www.iledenantes.com>

¹⁹ <https://freeriga.lv>



Figures 49–52. Temporary uses are closely integrated into the redevelopment of *Île de Nantes*, contributing to a distinctly creative character of the area. Large industrial halls on the island host small companies for an intended duration of 10–12 years. *Le Karting* (top left) is a hotel for companies in the cultural and creative enterprises occupying a warehouse previously used as a go-kart racing circuit. Another warehouse hosts *Le Solilab* (left



below, top right), which hosts organisations in the 'social and solidary economies'. The warehouses have been modified for the new use by wooden office modules of different sizes. One of the warehouses hosts *FAAT*, a coworking space for designers and manufacturers (right below). Photos: Jean-Dominique Billaud/Samoa (top left), Vincent Jacques/Samoa (left below), Valéry Joncheray/Samoa (right).



however, not a direct comparison of the local contexts but to identify and discuss some common and different aspects of mediation across a broader context. Section 4.3.2 describes the study of *Refill* mediators in more detail, including its unit of analysis, the selection of respondents, as well as methods of data collection.

The development of temporary use in Ghent, Bremen and Nantes is connected to large industrial reforms, and, in Riga, to the financial crisis of 2008. In both Bremen and Nantes, the closing down of industrial shipyards has opened up opportunities for TU (Jégou et al., 2016). The city of Bremen first procured an agency to manage temporary use in one district in 2007, and since 2009 in the whole of Bremen (Hasemann et al., 2017). In Nantes, the first TU experiments were organised in 2003 as part of the urban redevelopment of the former harbour area of *Île de Nantes*²⁰. The organisation *Samoa* was founded to be in charge of the development of this area, including TU. Similarly, Ghent has developed various temporary use projects for over a decade. The first TU projects in Ghent were part of the urban redevelopment of former industrial sites (Jégou et al., 2016). In Riga, on the other hand, the financial crisis of 2008 led to a halt in property markets and large-scale vacancy. Given the more acute property crisis in Riga, responses from private property owners have been welcoming towards temporary use.

²⁰ <http://www.iledenantes.com/en/articles/128-la-samoa.html>.



Figures 53–54. The *Lastādija* quarter is a self-organised site for culture and art in Riga, Latvia. It is one of the temporary use sites established and managed by the temporary use mediator NGO *Free Riga*. Photos: Sandra Jascherica (left), Linards Zolnerovičs (right).

Figure 55. Aerial view of the south-western tip of *Île de Nantes*. The round wooden tent, *Chapidock*, hosts amateur and professional circus practices. The warehouses housing *Karting* and *Solilab* are located above *Chapidock*. Photo: Valéry Joncheray/Samoa





Table 1 below gives an overview of the contextual characteristics in the two empirical studies. A more detailed account of the methods, units of analysis and data collection and analysis processes in these studies will be provided in Section 4.3.

Overview of the contextual characteristics of the mediator organisations in the two studies

Study name (Paper number in this compilation thesis)	Mediator organisation	Mediator organisation type and affiliation	Funding source	Ownership of properties	Temporary use activity types	Professional background of the mediator(s)
Mediation in Kera Primary study (P1, P4)	Urban Dream Management, Helsinki (FI)	Private, commissioned by the City (project-based contract)	Public	Private (several property owners)	Arts and crafts, sports, culture/art events	Architecture, participatory design
Refill Mediators Secondary study (P3)	Neighbourhood managers, Ghent (BE)	Municipal unit ('Policy participation unit')	Public	Mostly public, some private	Diverse neighbourhood projects or small business	Diverse
	ZZZ Bremen (DE)	Private, commissioned by the City (long-term contract)	Public	Both private and public	Diverse: cultural, business, socially responsible activities	Architecture, urban planning (+ activism)
	Samoa, Nantes (FR)	'Local Public Company'	50% public, 50% private	Samoa owns the properties	Creative and cultural industries, start-ups, media	Architecture, urban planning, economics
	Free Riga (LV)	NGO, in contract with property owners	Private (property owners)	Mainly private	'Public benefit activities': art, culture and neighbourhood projects	Business, art, culture, urban activism

Table 1. An overview of the different contextual and conditional characteristics of the mediator organisations in the two studies. The table is modified from a table presented in Paper 3.

4.1.4 Research funding

This doctoral research work was funded by a 3.5-year working grant from the *Kone Foundation* (under grant number 201608679) and through part-time employment as a doctoral researcher at Aalto University (Department of Design). I used this funding to cover all of the research and study work, including coursework, literature reviews, data collection and analysis, as well as the writing of the papers and these introductory chapters. I received the Kone grant through my individual application and research plan. Therefore, the funding did not have additional requirements beyond the research plan concerning the content or direction of the research. Within the Aalto funding, a small percentage of the work was also dedicated to teaching.

In addition, it is necessary to clarify an additional source of funding connected to the empirical research context in *Kera*. The setup of the study of *Mediation in Kera* can be seen as somewhat untraditional, in the sense that I studied my professional work within a separately funded ‘real-life’ project, which was not originally set up as a research project. For my project work as a consultant in *Temporary Kera*, I received a fee from the City of Espoo (the project commissioner). The fee covered all project work activities as delineated in the project contract. Concerning my research, the commissioner gave written permission for the collection of data in the project but had no specific requirements or intentions concerning the research. The project work and goals of *Temporary Kera* were kept separate from the research work and goals as clearly as possible. Accordingly, within the practice-based study of *Mediation in Kera*, I carried out the data collection and other research work independently of the project, guided by separate research objectives and funded by the above-mentioned research funding. Differently from *Kera*, the interview study of the *Refill mediators* was not connected to any external funding. I used the same research funding for all research work included in the interview study. My other involvements, described above, within the *Refill* network itself (which were not directly part of this research) were voluntary, and I received no funding from the *Refill* organisation. I conducted the interview study independently, not commissioned by the *Refill* organisation.

4.2 Methodology

To study mediation practice in temporary use, this research applies a mixed methodological approach. As a relevant epistemological and methodological approach for in-depth study of an emerging and understudied phenomenon rooted in practice, this research is grounded in the ‘practice-based research’ approach (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson, 2017; Vaughan, 2017) and complemented with methods from qualitative research in the social sciences, particularly ethnographic observation and interviews. In this section, I will describe these approaches and how I applied them within the research, as well as critically discuss and justify these methodological choices.

It is useful to first discuss some of the connections between practice-based and qualitative research. Practice-based research and other traditions in design and architecture research have traditionally borrowed elements and methods from more mature research traditions, such as qualitative research in the social sciences. There are many overlaps between the approaches. For example, both acknowledge the deep involvement and embodied presence of the researcher, involving ‘situated knowledges’ (Haraway, 1988), as a valid position for knowledge production. Therefore, careful reflection and interpretation (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2000) are considered important. It is also typical in both traditions to apply multiple methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Practice itself is seen as a valid and important site for research and even a site of active engagement and participation in various fields, including social sciences, medicine and engineering. However, there are important distinctions in what constitutes the status of ‘practice’ within research between specific approaches or methodologies, which are useful to elaborate here. For example, in ethnography (Wolcott, 2008) or participatory action research (Reason, 1994), a researcher might participate in particular activities and practices within the sites of their research. However, there are limits to participation, and the researcher will not become a complete ‘insider’ (Coffey, 1999; Scott Jones & Watt, 2010). In qualitative research, the researcher is not usually an expert practitioner or a subject of research as such. This is an important distinction from practice-based research, in which the researcher has a double role as a practitioner, adopting an ‘insider’ perspective (Gray & Malins, 2004). I understand ‘insider’ here to denote a particular aptitude, training, experience and knowledge that arguably an ethnographer or participatory action researcher might not have nor be

able to observe and document (see Mazé & Redström, 2009). While practice-based research is applied in various fields, this research is informed by practice-based approaches in architecture and design, which I will describe in the following section in more detail.

4.2.1 Practice-based research in design and architecture

Many research traditions and paradigms recognise practice as a relevant source for knowledge generation and data collection. Within design and architecture, ‘practice-based research’ is a general way of describing forms of enquiry that are embedded in the practices, processes and products of design or artistic work (Vaughan, 2017; Hensel & Nilsson, 2019). For several decades, there have been efforts to develop disciplinarily viable forms of enquiry in order to study design and architecture ‘from within’ rather than ‘from outside’ from a historical, social or technical angle (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson, 2017). Within design, there are various, partly overlapping articulations of research enquiry through practice, including ‘practice-based research’ (ibid.), ‘practice-led research’ (Mäkelä & Routarinne, 2006; Candy & Edmonds, 2018), ‘constructive design research’ (Koskinen et al., 2011), and ‘research through design’ (Durrant et al., 2017). Related approaches are also applied in other creative fields, including artistic research.

For the purposes of this doctoral thesis, I use the term ‘practice-based research’ to characterise research approaches in design and architecture in which the practice of designing and making are a foundational aspect of the research process (Redström, 2017). By this choice of term, I intend to draw attention to the evolving, generative, collaborative and durational nature of the practice itself and the process of it as the subject, and partly, method of research. The insider, expert knowledge that forms part of knowledge production is also relevant. Arguably, a particular advantage of such a research approach is the unique access to the tacit knowledge of design practice through the close involvement of the practitioner (Megahed, 2017).

In design, efforts to establish design practice as a research methodology have evolved more significantly since the 1990s (Markussen, 2017). The roots of such approaches can be traced back as far as to Herbert Simon’s concept of ‘the science of design’ (1969) and to Christopher Frayling’s influential pamphlet (1993), in which he formulated ‘research through design’ as

a form of knowledge production through practice, in which design practice constitutes the research methodology itself. What was also noticeable was the notion of ‘designerly ways of knowing,’ proposed by Nigel Cross (1982), that draws attention to the insider, expert knowledge and ongoing nature of design practice. These works have given rise to the understanding that design should acknowledge its own particular epistemics and methodologies as valid ways of carrying out academic research, and which also require their own evaluation criteria (Dunin-Woyseth & Nilsson, 2013).

In architecture, the recognition of architectural design practice as a form of enquiry has also emerged since the 1990s (Rendell, 2004; Rust, Mottram & Till, 2007), although practice-based approaches have only more recently gained traction (Dunin-Woyseth, 2011). In architecture, practice-based research is particularly linked to efforts at reorienting the profession (Hensel & Nilsson, 2019) as well as bridging gaps between academic and professional communities (Biggs & Büchler, 2011; Doucet & Janssens, 2011). Michael Biggs and Daniela Büchler characterise a type of approach by which an ‘architect-researcher’ (2011, p. 69) can bridge profession and academia by investigating and analysing their professional practice through established research models, with the intention of defending the practice in scholarly terms, thus making it ‘more recognisable and accessible in academia’ (2011, p. 73). Biggs and Büchler argue that such architect-researchers can be relevant as actors who have experience and values as practitioners but also produce research in an academic context (*ibid.*).

In the following paragraphs, I describe key characteristics of practice-based design approaches across its different subfields, as relevant for this thesis. One of the key characteristics is the distinctly generative and evolving type of enquiry occurring through processes of designing and making (Gaver, 2012; Markussen, 2017). In such an approach, the object of design can overlap with the method and subject of research (Scrivener, 2009). Design interventions, processes or outcomes (including, for example, drawings, prototypes, artefacts or systems) can be seen as not only the subject of research but also the method of enquiry, which can frame questions and channel activities (Koskinen et al., 2011). While materiality and the making of artefacts or small-scale experiments are central in some of these forms of enquiry (e.g. Mäkelä, 2007), other approaches, particularly within PD, are more process-oriented and socially engaged, with a focus on complex and intangible, collaborative processes and their outcomes. In what could arguably be called a recent wave of doctoral theses in PD, for example, Hirscher

(2020) and Seravalli (2014) focus on the collaborative process of ‘infrastructuring’ through practice. Their approaches are also quite particular to PD for their spatial and social engagement and process orientation and thus are also relevant here in terms of studying TU mediation practice.

The dual role of the researcher as a practitioner is inevitable in practice-based research, which further relates to questions of subjectivity and situatedness. Colin Robson’s term ‘practitioner-researcher’ (1993) is apt here. Biggs and Büchler’s notion of ‘changing hats’ is also characteristic. They describe a process in which the researcher moves ‘between wearing a practice hat and a researcher hat’, while intentionally keeping the values, requirements and actions of practice and research separate from each other (2011, p. 73). Gray and Malins (2004) further elaborate the researcher’s potentially multiple roles, which may range between a generator of design works, participant, reflective self-observer and observer of others, or facilitator. Thus the issue of multiple roles or ‘hats’ resonates with larger discussions within social science research, such as the ‘partiality’ of view (Harding, 2011) and the influence of subjectivity and values (of researcher and participants) (see Iversen et al., 2012) as well as ‘situatedness’ in a local context (Haraway, 1988). Therefore, constant reflection and transparency are seen as important (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2000).

Theory-building and ‘drift’ are further important aspects discussed in practice-based research. It is generally understood that practice-based research involves a constant interplay between theory and practice, where practice is informed by theories, but new knowledge and theory is also produced through design practice (Markussen, 2017). Drift is understood as an element inherent in such forms of theory-building and a way of articulating learning in the process of research and practice (Bang & Eriksen, 2014; Krogh & Koskinen, 2020). Peter Gall Krogh et al. (2015, p. 1) characterise drift as a sign of ‘continuous learning from findings and adjusting causes of action’. Through drift, the research may evolve in new directions; research questions, plans and actions can be adjusted, sharpened, or reframed.

How theory-building actually takes place in practice-based research has not been articulated in detail until recently. In the book *Making Design Theory*, Johan Redström (2017) sheds light on this. Addressing a tension between design’s orientation toward the particular and how theory aims to speak about the general, Redström uses the notion of ‘design theory’ (2017, p. 5). By this notion, he explains that particular conceptual elements generated through design can be seen as theoretical, even if they may not be

similar to the kinds of theory we are most familiar with. He identifies three basic tactics for producing theory in practice-based design research. One of these tactics, ‘intermediaries’²¹ (ibid., p. 24), addresses the tension between general and particular, aiming at intermediate levels of abstraction that are more abstracted than specific instances, yet not reaching the scope of generalised theories. In this approach, theory can be understood as specific languages that help conceptualising, articulating, making and communicating in design. Such an understanding of theory is, as Redström notes, different from many other research traditions.

These characteristics of practice-based research as outlined above – the generative and evolving type of enquiry, the dual role of the ‘practitioner-researcher’, drift, and the interplay between theory and practice – are relevant to my research approach. Concerning research on TU mediation practice, it is necessary to note that my understanding of ‘practice’ is somewhat broader than the designing and making of artefacts, drawings or buildings, which is the focus in some practice-based design or architectural research. Most notably, my research approach aligns with practice-based approaches in contemporary PD, which take place in temporally and spatially ‘extended’ durational settings and involve collaborative processes engaging multiple stakeholders. Yet, as argued in Section 2.3.1, I understand practice within TU mediation as still more complex and expanded (spatially, temporally and socially) than typical settings in PD or other design or architectural research settings.

In Section 4.3.1, I will describe in more detail the data collection methods in the practice-based study of *Mediation in Kera*. Additionally, in Section 4.3.3, I will come back to key aspects of both practice-based and qualitative research, critically reflecting on them in this research.

4.2.2 Qualitative research in social sciences

To complement the practice-based approach and to find a systematic approach for data collection and analysis, it was necessary to benefit from additional research approaches with a longer tradition in systematic documentation and data collection. Therefore, in this doctoral research, I ap-

²¹ Note that here ‘intermediaries’ is used in a different meaning and context from in the literature on ‘intermediary’ actors in Chapter 3.

plied methods from qualitative research in the social sciences to collect and analyse data.

Qualitative research has had a long tradition, particularly in the social sciences, since the 1920–30s (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). As a family of multiple interconnected terms, assumptions and approaches, qualitative research is seen as particularly relevant for studying subjective meanings, everyday experiences and practice, as well as social relations and interactions (Flick, 2009). As already mentioned, qualitative and practice-based research approaches share many core characteristics and epistemological standpoints. These include understanding practice as a relevant source for knowledge production, acknowledging the researcher’s subjectivity, situatedness, reflexivity and embodied presence in the field as a valid position for knowledge production, and using multiple methods (Flick, 2009) to understand complexity and collect a rich and strong array of data (Yin, 2018). Therefore, it is common, particularly in certain design fields and certain university contexts, to borrow elements and methods from qualitative research in the social sciences for research carried out by design practitioners.

This doctoral research is informed and complemented by specific approaches and methods from the qualitative research tradition that are relevant for a practice-based enquiry addressing the complex, socio-political problematics of TU mediation. In the research, I applied methods from ethnography and interviewing as well as qualitative analysis. On a general level, the empirical research design was also informed by case study research. Below, I will briefly describe these approaches.

Ethnography is widely applied in design research today. It is the study of cultures, aiming at capturing social meanings, activities and practices in their natural context (i.e. ‘the field’) (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Ethnography has its origins in social and cultural anthropology in the early twentieth century (Malinowski, 1922) but has later spread to other social sciences (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Most recently, ethnography has also become a common methodology in design research, and there are emerging approaches connecting the two, such as ‘design anthropology’ (Otto & Smith, 2013). This diversification across disciplines has resulted in a variety of ways for interpreting and approaching ethnography. As a form of enquiry, it relies greatly on observation but supports the use of a mixed-method approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Fieldnotes are central to ethnographic practice as a way of recording the researcher’s observations and experiences (Walford, 2009). In addition to observations and field

notes, interviews and secondary sources are commonly used for gathering data in ethnography (Saldana, 2003). In reporting research, ethnographers often use 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) to provide detailed narratives and interpretations of situations and their background context so that readers can understand the underlying complex cultural meanings and contextual factors.

What particularly connects ethnography and practice-based research is that ethnographic fieldwork is fundamentally an embodied activity, in which the positioning of the researcher 'self' is important and needs to be critically reflected on (see Coffey, 1999). Ethnographers are committed to immerse themselves in the social worlds of their research subjects (Scott Jones & Watt, 2010), which is seen as one of the core strengths of ethnographic research (Coffey, 1999). However, ethnographers also draw limits to their involvement. Although their role may range from being a 'complete observer' to a 'complete participant' (Flick, 2009), an ethnographer rarely becomes 'native' but rather, can remain a 'knowledgeable tourist' or a 'trusted outsider', as Julie Scott Jones notes (2010, p. 7). Therefore, what specifically distinguishes ethnography from practice-based research is the particular expertise and 'insider' involvement of the 'researcher-practitioner' in practice-based research.

Qualitative interviewing is another method widely used in the social sciences and design research. Using interviews as a social research method in itself is fairly recent, dating from the latter half of the twentieth century (Edwards & Holland, 2013a). According to Steinar Kvale (1996), the understanding of interviews has moved from the modernistic understanding of 'miner', seeking to uncover truths out there, to a post-modernistic understanding of interviewing as an interactive process involving reflective interpretation. Therefore, interviewing can be understood as an attempt to understand the world from the research subject's point of view through conversation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). A research interview is a specific type of conversation designed for a research purpose and follows some type of formula involving more or less open-ended questions (Flick, 2009). It is typical of qualitative research to use semi-structured and unstructured types of interviews, with varying levels of flexibility and structure (Edwards & Holland, 2013b). From an ethical perspective, interviewing involves a delicate balance between the interviewer's concern for pursuing knowledge and respect for the integrity of the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Interviewing as a method has inevitable delimitations. The types of knowledge that can be generated in an interview are quite different from, for example, ethnographic observation or practice-based research, which involve long-term immersion in the field. Through interviews, a researcher inevitably gains only a limited access to the complexity of the respondents' world (Silverman, 2017). Arguably, interviews can only access accounts of practice rather than the practice itself (Flick, 2009). David Silverman (2017) draws critical attention to the quality of analysing interviews in order to produce reliable outcomes and urges critical consideration of what kinds of data can be retrieved through interviews. Given these aspects, interviews are often used to complement, for example, ethnography and practice-based research approaches, in which they allow the inclusion of the perspectives of others, contextualisation and understanding of commonalities or differences.

Case study research is a third approach offering some relevant viewpoints for my research design. Within and beyond qualitative research, case study research offers a strategy for defining a bounded 'unit of analysis' as the entity to be studied within a broader and complex phenomenon (Yin, 2018; Stake, 1994). According to Robert Yin, case study research is relevant for investigating a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, particularly when addressing 'why' and 'how' questions (2018). There are different understandings of case study design. While Yin (2018) recommends rather rigorous and consistent forms of case designs, Robert Stake (1994) suggests that different cases can be designed more flexibly within a study. Generally, a single-case design is considered useful for an in-depth, longitudinal study, while including a number of cases or embedded sub-units in a study is seen to increase the robustness of the study and provide broader insights into a larger phenomenon.

Within this doctoral research, qualitative research was applied mainly in the form of research methods for data collection and analysis. Ethnographic methods, including participant observation and field notes, provided a means for systematic documentation and data collection in the study of *Kera*. The *Refill* study was based on qualitative, semi-structured interviews, which were also used as a complementary method to gaining feedback from stakeholders in the *Kera* study. In addition, my research was on a general level informed by case study research as an approach to defining the 'unit of analysis' within the more complex phenomenon of mediation in temporary use. However, as I did not follow a rigorous case study formula, I haven't characterised the empirical studies as 'cases' here.

In the following section, I will describe the more specific data collection methods in detail as well as critically reflect on key issues from and across practice-based and qualitative research in this research, including the researcher role, subjectivity, situatedness, questions of practice as well as the particular advantages and delimitations of the chosen research approaches.

4.3 Empirical studies and data collection

The empirical research design within this doctoral research comprises two studies, which investigated mediation practice through different methods and epistemological standpoints. As described in Section 4.1.3, the studies also concerned different contexts. In the primary study of *Mediation in Kera* (in brief, *Kera*), I investigated my own work as a mediator in a two-year, in-depth study using an approach grounded in practice-based research and complemented by qualitative methods in data collection and analysis. The secondary study of *Refill mediators* (in brief, *Refill*) investigated the work of professional mediators from four European cities through qualitative, semi-structured interviews.

The two studies serve different purposes within the overall research. The *Kera* study provides a rich and nuanced understanding of mediation practice through an in-depth study in unique, locally-situated contexts and conditions. The purpose of the *Refill* study is to provide a broader array of insights into mediation from the perspective of other actors and within a broader context, even if the level of detail gained through interviews is much more limited. Therefore, the purpose of the combination of the two studies is to allow a discussion of mediation in a broader context, to identify some key issues and patterns across the studies and to increase the ‘trustworthiness’ of this research (see Section 4.5). Table 2 below presents an overview of the methods used in data collection and analysis in both studies.

Below, I will discuss the two studies in more detail, including the units of analysis, data collection methods, the selection of participants (in *Refill*), and questions of comparability. I will conclude the section by critically discussing methodological issues of practice-based and qualitative research in the two studies.

Overview of methods, participants and data in the two empirical studies

	Mediation in Kera (primary study)	Refill Mediators (secondary study)
Unit of analysis	Primary unit: Mediation work, roles and activities in my work within the project Temporary Kera, including interactions and dynamics with main stakeholders Secondary unit: Conditions for temporary use and mediation in the project	Mediators' accounts of their roles and relations to main stakeholders, as well as contexts and conditions of their work
Participants/ stakeholders	Myself as a mediator, commissioner representatives (municipal officers from the departments of culture, urban development and sustainability), temporary users (including artists, craftspeople, entrepreneurs, sports organisations, event organisers, students and teachers in a university course)	Five respondents from four European mediator organisations: - Neighbourhood managers, Ghent (2) - ZwischenZeitZentrale Bremen (1) - Samoa, Nantes (1) - Free Riga (1)
Geographical context	Espoo, part of Helsinki metropolitan area in Finland (the district of Kera)	Ghent, Belgium; Bremen, Germany; Nantes, France; Riga, Latvia
My role	Researcher and practitioner (mediator commissioned in the project as a consultant)	Interviewer and peer
Timespan	Two years: autumn 2016 - summer 2018	Interviews carried out in March 2018
Data collection methods	Ethnographic observations, reflections, field notes, semi-structured interviews, surveys	Semi-structured interviews
Collected data and secondary materials	<p><u>Primary data:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participant observations, documented in fieldnotes and reflections (27 A4 pages) - Audio-and video-recorded workshop (transcripts from three workshop groups + workshop introduction and closing) and notes from six workshop groups - Four audio-recorded meetings, transcribed - Two semi-structured interviews for groups of temporary tenants - Feedback survey (10 respondents) - Meeting notes from 40 meetings and phone calls <p><u>Secondary materials (not analysed):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Photos - Groupwork generated in the workshop - Other materials generated in the project, such as excel tables and drafts of floorplan layouts - Emails - Project reports 	<p><u>Primary data:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Four semi-structured, in-depth interviews (length 1-2 hours) + transcripts <p><u>Secondary materials (not analysed):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reports from the Refill EU project - Background materials of the sites/organisations provided by respondents
Analysis methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Thematic analysis' / 'process coding' of the data - Integrated analysis examining the coded data in relation to intermediary roles in UST literature (See Section 4.4.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Thematic analysis' - 'Cutting-and-sorting' method
Papers	P1, P4	P3

Table 2. Overview of the empirical studies, and the methods and data/materials collected

4.3.1 Kera: Study of mediation through practice

The primary study of *Mediation in Kera* involved an in-depth, practice-based study of my work as a mediator. As described in Section 4.1.3, the context of this study was the two-year project *Temporary Kera* (2016–18), in which I was commissioned as a mediator by the City of Espoo in Finland. The overall methodology was based on a practice-based approach, while data collection methods were informed by qualitative ethnography and interviewing. The findings from the study are reported preliminarily (as the study was ongoing) in Paper 1 and more comprehensively in Paper 4.

To determine a unit of analysis to be studied within the project of *Temporary Kera*, in relation to the research questions of this thesis, I formulated two units of analysis. Primarily, the study focused on my own work as a mediator, including roles and activities within the project, as well as interactions and dynamics with the main stakeholders. As a secondary unit of analysis, I focused on the conditions for TU and mediation in the project. For clarity, by the word ‘project’, I refer here to the commissioned ‘real-life’ project of *Temporary Kera*, and the word ‘study’ refers to my research concerning mediation work and conditions in the context of the project.

The main actors taking part in the study and the project were the commissioner representatives (municipal officers from the departments of culture, urban development and sustainability), potential and actual temporary users (including artists, craftspeople, entrepreneurs, sports organisations, event organisers, and a university course) and private property owners, including leading Finnish property investment companies and local subsidiaries of international property investors. In addition, participants in a kick-off workshop included other potential partners and collaborators, municipal stakeholders, as well as temporary use experts (including researchers and practitioners).

Methods of collecting data within the *Kera* study were informed by practice-based research as well as qualitative ethnography and interviewing (See also Table 2 above). As characteristic of both practice-based research and ethnography, I collected – or generated – data through observations, reflections and field notes. After key events and interactions with stakeholders in the project, I wrote structured reflections in order to keep a record of events and to develop preliminary interpretations concerning issues relevant to the research. Key events during the project, such as important meet-

ings and the kick-off workshop, were also audio-recorded (some parts also videoed) and transcribed. Besides the field notes and reflections written for research purposes, I also wrote short memos of meetings, phone calls and similar interactions to keep a record of events for project purposes. These were also included as data in my research. Furthermore, at the end of the *Kera* project, I carried out semi-structured interviews with selected groups of temporary users and a survey for all temporary users in order to learn about their experiences and gather feedback. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

As is typical of practice-based research, the *Kera* project also involved the generation of other materials through practice itself, which were considered secondary for research purposes. For example, I designed and fa-



Figures 56–60 (this and next page). The *Temporary Kera* project involved different tools and techniques, which mainly focused on interacting with and learning about the stakeholders. Examples include arranging data on Excel sheets, organising a participatory workshop, drafting on floor plans together with participants, and talking with stakeholders. Workshop settings in vacant spaces had some improvised technical set-ups. Photos: Johannes Romppanen, Hella Hernberg (this page, below).



cilitated a kick-off workshop, for which I developed specific participatory methods and tools and carefully documented the results co-generated by the workshop participants. I also generated sets of draft layouts of floor-plans, mapping possible ways to divide the vacant spaces for the potential users, and numerous Excel tables mapping the users' needs and requirements (see Figures 56–60). Emails were also used as secondary materials for mnemonic support. However, since this research views mediation as architectural work, it is good to remember that the nature of the practice and its tools was quite different from those in a typical architectural project. For example, drawing was not a central tool, even if it was part of the practitioner toolbox. Instead, the practice in *Kera* focused on interactions with the stakeholders – in which talking was the main medium.

The primary data collected in *Kera* was further analysed through a qualitative, thematic analysis. Section 4.4 describes the analysis process in detail and also discusses the interplay between the two empirical studies and literature in the overall research.

4.3.2 Refill: Study on mediation practice

To contextualise temporary use mediation beyond the findings gained through the in-depth study of *Kera*, I studied other professional mediators' work in other contexts in the secondary study of *Refill mediators*. In this study, I used qualitative, semi-structured interviews to investigate the work of five practitioners in four European organisations specialised in mediating temporary use. The findings from the study are reported in detail in Paper 3.

As the unit of analysis in the study, I focused on the mediators' accounts of their work, roles and activities, their relations to main stakeholders, as well as the contexts and conditions of their work. Included in the study were five interviewees from four European mediator organisations: Neighbourhood managers in Ghent, Belgium (two respondents); *Zwischen-ZeitZentrale* (ZZZ) Bremen, Germany; *Samoa* (*Société d'aménagement de la métropole ouest atlantique*) in Nantes, France, and *Free Riga* in Latvia. As explained in Section 4.1.3, the context for selecting the interviewees was the EU-network *Refill* in which the selected mediators were partners. Here, *Refill* is seen as a common denominator for the mediators, but it is not the primary context of their actual work. In order to formulate a concise name for the study, I have named it *Refill mediators*. I want to emphasise, however,

that the EU network *Refill* itself was not the focus of the study, and neither was the study commissioned by *Refill*.

To select relevant mediators for this study, I faced the reality that TU mediation in temporary use is a fast-moving and sparsely populated field, i.e. such a role exists in few places, and there are not many established mediators in the field. Therefore, the selection process was somewhat opportunistic. The EU network *Refill* was used as a context for selecting key actors as respondents. It already involved expert selection, and I had the opportunity to access key actors at the given time through my connection to *Refill*. The primary criteria with these starting points were to select key articulate and experienced practitioners with over five to ten years of experience in mediation in several projects, including both failures and successes.

Inevitably, this selection includes somewhat varying local contexts and different types of organisations acting as mediators. As shown in Table 1, there is variation in the contextual and conditioning factors of the mediator organisations, such as their funding source and affiliation to public or private sectors. The mediators operate in different cities in Central and Northern Europe, with local specificities in governance, planning and real-estate business. Given this variation, the purpose of the study was not to make a direct comparison of the different actors or their contexts. Neither was the aim to study all possible types of mediator organisations in Europe exhaustively. Nevertheless, the combination allowed me to identify and discuss some common and different aspects of the mediators' work and roles. The purpose of the *Refill* study in the overall research was to contextualise mediation beyond my own experience in *Kera*. By closely studying mediation in limited but somewhat varying contexts, the overall research allows nuanced insights on mediation with some extended contextual breadth.

I collected data in the *Refill* study through four in-depth, semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The duration of the interviews varied between one and two hours. All the interviews were conducted during two days at the end of March 2018 in Ghent, where the practitioners had gathered for the final conference of the *Refill* project. Three of the interviews took place in local cafes and one in the neighbourhood managers' office. All the interviews were transcribed and analysed using a qualitative, thematic analysis approach (see Section 4.4.2).

As is typical of semi-structured interviews, the interviews followed a similar guide (see appendix in Paper 3), yet remained flexible concerning the sequence of questions and the interviewee's responses (Edwards & Holland,

2013b). The guiding questions focused on the mediator role and the context and conditions of their work (including their activities, limits of their agency, their relations to main stakeholder groups, as well as potential conflicts experienced in their work). Therefore, the aim was to understand common and different struggles between the mediating practitioners, with a particular concern for social and political dimensions. The scope of the questions was informed by orientations from my practice-based research (at the time ongoing) in *Kera*, as well as the preliminary contextualisation of my practice (see Paper 1). In addition, I acknowledge that there was an influence of key themes from the literature consulted at the time, for example, ‘agonism’ in participatory design. However, the analysis of the interviews did not have guiding theoretical themes but was instead data-driven. In Section 4.4.1, I will describe in more detail the interplay between the two empirical studies and the sets of literature.

In the next section, I will further critically reflect on key methodological issues, including the advantages and delimitations of the chosen methods and the researcher role in the two studies. In the conclusions, I also discuss overall delimitations concerning the selection of empirical contexts. Under Section 4.4.3, I further discuss questions of comparability between the two studies.

4.3.3 Critical reflections on methodology in this research

As described in the above sections, the empirical research design in this research included two individual studies of mediation *through* and *on* practice, based on different epistemological standpoints and methods. The study of *Mediation in Kera* was based on a practice-based research approach and qualitative ethnography, while the study of *Refill Mediators* relied on qualitative interviews. Below, I will discuss key aspects of both research approaches in this research, including practice as a form of enquiry, the evolving and generative nature of research, the roles of the practitioner-researcher, and questions of reflection, subjectivity and situatedness. I will further discuss questions of drift and the interplay between theory and practice in connection to analysis under Section 4.4.1.

Concerning practice as a form of enquiry, my approach in the study of *Kera* aligned with practice-based approaches in contemporary participatory

design as discussed in Section 4.2.1, particularly the approach of PD, focusing on collaborative processes involving multiple stakeholders, rather than particular design methods or tangible outcomes. However, I understand practice within TU mediation to be somewhat more complex and extended (spatially, temporally and socially) than the typical PD settings, as it is distributed over a larger temporal and spatial scale and involves actors and processes across different levels. My role as an expert practitioner in *Kera* also highlighted the unique aspects of practice that are somewhat different from other approaches in qualitative social science research. As an architect and TU mediation practitioner, my expertise in the *Kera* project involved subject-specific knowledge concerning material, spatial, technical and legal aspects as well as tools and methods from participatory design, which may not be in the 'toolbox' of an ethnographer or action researcher.

The evolving and generative nature of research is recognised as a key element in practice-based research. This was relevant in the *Kera* study, in which the course of events was not only influenced by my actions but quite significantly also by other key stakeholders, such as the property owners and the commissioner. This also influenced how unexpected events and issues emerged through practice and which further led to a drift in the research questions and scope (see Section 4.4.1).

My dual role as a 'practitioner-researcher' was evident in the study of *Kera*. While the practitioner role had, in my case, existed for several years before the researcher role, in *Kera*, the two roles were simultaneous. I was a practitioner serving the project's goals and simultaneously a researcher collecting data and reflecting on my work. Understanding the complexities related to this dual role, I carefully tried to keep these roles as separate as possible in terms of dividing practical work tasks and funding to avoid conflict of interest. To some extent, Biggs and Büchler's notion of 'changing hats' (2011) applies well to my research, but I was often also wearing both hats simultaneously. For example, it was necessary to keep my researcher's eyes and ears open when conducting the practice to make observations for research purposes.

The practitioner-researcher role brought many benefits for both research and practice, even if also some delimitations. For the research, being a practitioner was a clear advantage as it provided unique access and an opportunity for in-depth engagement in every instance of a 'real' project. Having insider and expert knowledge gave the possibility to observe specific things as a researcher. From a practice viewpoint, being a researcher

was also beneficial in many ways. Through research, I could transfer some of the deeper reflections back into practice and look at certain issues from a broader and more critical perspective. Particularly in *Kera*, the research provided a meaningful way to better understand some aspects of the project that turned out very challenging in practice. In turn, the practitioner role also brought about some delimitations concerning the scope or consistency of data collection (see below). Furthermore, although the practitioner-researcher role was more evident in *Kera*, I also considered it valuable in the *Refill* study. Being a practitioner provided a unique standpoint for finding out about other practitioners. Therefore, I considered the interviews partly to be peer-to-peer conversations and did not attempt neutrality as a researcher.

Questions of subjectivity, situatedness and values are seen as important in both practice-based and qualitative research. While subjectivity and partiality of view (Harding, 2011) are inevitable in all qualitative research (and arguably, in all scientific research), this was particularly evident in the *Kera* study. Here, I also acknowledge the influence of normative values of socio-ecological sustainability, which were important to me personally but also given in my commission in *Kera*. In this research, similar values are also clearly present in the sets of literature consulted. Therefore, I could not pretend neutrality either as a researcher or practitioner. I acknowledge that such values somewhat influenced my stance towards the stakeholder groups involved, but these values may equally have affected my interpretation of findings in the study. In addition, being deeply immersed in the topic and subject of the research and simultaneously working to achieve certain goals as a practitioner, it is naturally difficult to distance oneself as a researcher. I found this particularly challenging when analysing the data from *Kera*. However, triangulation between different methods and types of data in this research was purposefully applied in order to decrease the influence of subjectivity and to include the perspectives of others in the research.

However, questions of subjectivity, neutrality and partiality can also be addressed from the perspective of the context shaping and positioning the researcher (or practitioner), as Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000) elaborate. For example, as a relatively young, female architectural practitioner (and a freelance consultant in the case of *Kera*), it is not just a matter of acknowledging my own bias or partiality of view but also how these are at least partly a consequence of the practice context itself and the perceptions of the regime actors involved. For example, the property owners and the commis-

sioner were themselves 'encultured' through power, gender, values, professional positions and so on. My own role and perceptions might have been different if I had been an older man or part of the regime organisations. An interesting example is how I was constantly referred to as 'Hella' in the *Kera* project, instead of, for example, my surname or professional title. This is perhaps partly explained by the emerging nature of the mediator role and the other participants' lack of a proper vocabulary to articulate the role.

There are also other inevitable delimitations concerning the chosen research approaches, even if these were considered to be particularly well suited to address the research problem and questions in focus. Concerning practice-based research, there were a number of limitations. There were limited projects available to which it was possible to gain access. In addition, the dual role brought about limited time resources. As an individual researcher acting simultaneously as a practitioner with sometimes urgent requirements of the project, I sometimes had limited time for systematic documentation and reflection on events and instances in the project. For example, when leading a meeting or facilitating a workshop, the quality and scope of observations might have suffered somewhat – which I compensated for by immediate reflections and recording of such events. For this reason, the research perhaps does not reach a similar level of systematicity and rigour in documentation as would be typical in ethnography. Furthermore, the drifting nature of the *Kera* project (due to key stakeholder decisions, etc.) had an impact on drift in the research, also affecting the types of issues that could be studied and observed. As a result of drift in the project, it was sometimes challenging to follow as a researcher what would turn out to be relevant issues to document. In some instances, I could only afterwards recognise some issues or events as being central for research, and thus I may not have been able to document all such issues or details 'on the spot'. Therefore, there may be some level of detail lacking in some parts of my documentation in the study.

Concerning qualitative interviewing, while it was seen as relevant as a complementary method within the overall research design, it also had particular delimitations. In the study of *Refill*, the time available provided limits to gaining depth in a conversation. There were also some language barriers, as the interviews were carried out in English, which was not my native language nor that of any of the respondents. Although I flexibly followed a similar interview protocol (see Paper 3), some of the respondents were also trying to take the lead in the conversation with a particular agenda. With

respect to my interview questions, particular issues, such as conflict, were more challenging to address in a single interview, even if a long one. Inevitably, some of the respondents were more open than others to account for conflicts or struggles they had experienced. This was naturally one of the major differences between interviewing and the practice-based approach, in addition to the depth and time of involvement.

4.4 Analysis and theory-building

The overall doctoral research journey included stages of literature reviews, data collection and analysis in the two empirical studies, and the writing of publications. These stages were interlinked and mutually informing. The research process involved an interplay between theory/literature, practice, and empirical research. On the one hand, there were questions arising from practice that informed the scope of literature reviews and the questions asked in the empirical studies. On the other hand, the consulted literature informed the practice itself as well as the observations and questions asked in the empirical studies. In addition, gaps identified in some sets of literature led to a search for additional relevant literature for elaborating the socio-political conditions in TU and for further analysing and articulating mediation roles. Throughout this process, I aimed at systematically generating a conceptually relevant vocabulary for articulating mediation in temporary use. The outcome of this came in the form of a typology of roles (see Paper 4) and a rich articulation of the roles and activities, bringing to life more abstract concepts. Therefore, theory-building in this research relates to Redström's (2017) understanding of 'intermediate-level' theory relevant in design.

This section describes the interplay between theory and practice at the different stages of the research journey. In addition, it describes the qualitative analysis of the individual empirical studies and, finally, the process of interpreting cross-cutting findings from the two empirical studies and the four papers for the purpose of these introductory chapters.

4.4.1 The interplay between theory, practice and empirical research

In practice-based design research, it is understood that knowledge is generated through the situated and evolving design practice involving an interplay between literature, practice and (also unexpected) contextual factors. Part of such a process is also ‘drift’, i.e. constant learning and adjusting of courses of action, as mentioned above in Section 4.2.1. Below, I will go through the different stages of the research process explaining how theory, practice and empirical research intertwined in the research and how it affected a certain drift and the orientations of analysis.

At the onset of the doctoral research in autumn 2016, my starting points for the practice-based research were informed by a prior understanding of the challenges and questions of temporary use and participation, rooted in professional practice, particularly my earlier work in the project *Kalasadama Temporary* and in the Ministry of the Environment (see Section 4.1.1). In my professional work, I had drawn on methodological literature on PD and co-design (e.g. Sanders & Stappers, 2012) in order to develop methods for addressing collaboration in temporary use. These provided some early starting points and questions for the practice-based research in *Kera*.

While I started collecting data from the *Kera* project at the very early stages of my doctoral research, at the same time I began reviewing relevant sets of literature. I first reviewed literature in PD and architecture to identify conceptual connections between the two and to find relevant conceptualisations of work in temporary use. Drawing on this set of literature, I developed preliminary conceptualisations of mediation work through my early reflections in *Kera* and through a retrospective reflection on *Kalasadama*. These were published in Paper 1 in 2017.

Questions of conflict and power asymmetries in TU became particularly evident as the *Kera* project unfolded in unexpected ways. ‘Agonism’ was one of the themes already identified as relevant in PD when developing the first paper. Through practice, the tensions between property owners and other actors in *Kera* became particularly concrete. This motivated a literature review on agonism in PD. At the same time, I conducted a literature review on TU, in which issues concerning conflict were evident. I identified connections between TU and PD, including gaps and complementary is-

sues, which were published in Paper 2 in 2018. As the shifting orientations of the *Kera* project contributed to drift in the research focus, the literature on agonism also helped to further rearticulate my research questions.

While crafting the qualitative interview study of *Refill* in spring 2018, the *Kera* project was in its final stages. My experiences and reflections on the ongoing practice in *Kera* informed the questions of the *Refill* interview study. In addition, themes from the literature, particularly agonism, were reflected on some level in the questions. While my analysis of the *Refill* study was primarily data-driven, I acknowledge that the final theme development was influenced by agonism and UST literature, which I was working on at the time. The *Refill* study was published in Paper 3, which was written and revised in different stages between spring 2018 and summer 2019 and published in 2020. The knowledge gained through the interviews of other practitioners in *Refill* also provided further valuable points of reference for the actual project work in *Kera* as well as for reflecting on and interpreting its findings.

The particular power dynamics and challenges identified in *Kera* led to a search for a relevant approach for analysing data from the practice-based study. In autumn 2018, I conducted a preliminary round of analysis, which strengthened the understanding of power asymmetries and the decisive role of the institutional actors in the project as central conditions for mediation in the study or project. These considerations found strong resonance in the literature of urban sustainability transitions, with which I was getting familiarised at the time. In particular, the concepts of ‘niche’ and ‘regime’ were illuminating for myself in achieving a clearer understanding of the struggles and asymmetry between the actors involved – not only as identified in *Kera* but more broadly in TU literature. Furthermore, the studies on intermediary roles within UST were strongly resonating with my experiences as a mediator in *Kera* as well as with the findings from *Refill*. Given the identified level of abstraction in the literature on architectural work, the literature on intermediation roles provided a way of looking deeper into roles and activities. Therefore, I decided to include UST in the set of literature and to delve deeper into the detailed characterisations of roles and activities. This literature became particularly relevant in the final analysis of the data from *Kera* (see the next section for details). In autumn 2020, the results of the *Kera* analysis and UST literature review were written into Paper 4, which was published online at the end of 2021.

4.4.2 Analysis of data in *Kera* and *Refill*

The analysis of empirical data gathered from the studies of *Kera* and *Refill* both drew on the qualitative, thematic analysis tradition and included a systematic coding process of the collected data. Thematic analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2003) concerns discovering themes and subthemes, or categories, in texts and in other qualitative data, which are considered to be a basis for describing findings. Themes can be derived both inductively, from the data, and from the researcher's prior theoretical understanding of the phenomenon under study, i.e. an a priori approach (ibid.). While the analysis of the *Refill* study was predominantly data-driven/inductive (with some inevitable influence from literature in the final theme development), the analysis of *Kera* was also initially data-driven but in its later stages became integrated with an analysis of intermediary roles in UST literature. Considering the different types of data gathered and the different methods used in the studies, the analyses of the two studies also relied on different analysis techniques. Below, I explain the analysis methods and processes.

Firstly, the analysis of data from the *Kera* study consisted of different stages. While my reflections during and after the study were already part of developing an analytic approach, I applied a thematic analysis approach to systematically analyse and interpret the data. More specifically, I followed a 'process coding' technique (Saldaña, 2009) to identify categories of mediator activities and roles. The formulation of roles was further developed in connection with my literature review on intermediary roles in UST literature. However, the first round of coding of the data from *Kera* did not use a theoretical scheme but aimed at identifying roles and activities based on the empirical data gathered in the study.

This analysis of mediator roles in *Kera* was further integrated with an analysis of intermediary roles in UST literature, which resulted in generating a typology of roles in (inter)mediation, presented in detail in Paper 4. To generate the typology, I reviewed literature on intermediary roles in UST focusing on urban grassroots and energy contexts (see Paper 4 for de-

Figure 61. A typology of roles in (inter)mediation

The typology differentiates six role categories in (inter)mediation (a to f) and comprising activity categories (a1 – f4). The categories are based on an integrated analysis of the terminology of intermediation roles in UST literature and the practice-based study of mediation roles in *Kera*. The typology was first published in Paper 4.

tails). By identifying similarities and differences in the terminology of roles and activities from the literature on intermediary roles, I developed preliminary, synthetic categories of intermediary roles and activities. Then, to better understand and evaluate these categories of roles in a temporary use context, I further examined the categories against the coded data from *Kera* through a process of integrating the analysis of literature and the analysis of empirical data, which I refer to here as ‘integrated analysis’. The *Kera* study informed the analysis in two ways: it helped to assess the relevance and meaning of the terminology from transitions literature in a temporary use context and to further specify and differentiate the categories into levels of roles and activities. The typology of roles and activities in (inter)mediation, generated through the integrated analysis, is presented in detail in Figure 61 above and further described in Paper 4.

Secondly, my analysis of the data from the *Refill* study also followed a thematic analysis approach (Ryan & Bernard, 2003) in which I applied a ‘cutting and sorting’ method (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify themes. In the analysis, I selected relevant parts of the interview transcripts, cut them out and grouped them. Based on keywords I had generated for the selected excerpts, I created preliminary categories. After several rounds of rearranging the categories in relation to each other, I derived twelve subthemes, which I explained in writing in more detail in an analytical memo. Finally, I regrouped the twelve subthemes into three main themes. Before identifying the main themes, an intermediate stage of the analysis focused on identifying key mediator activities, the mediators’ relations to key stakeholders as well as underlying aspirations. Paper 3 presents both the results of the intermediate analysis and the final themes (see also Table 3 below).

The thematic analysis of the *Refill* data was primarily data-driven. However, I acknowledge that the final round of interpreting and developing main themes was also influenced by key themes from literature consulted at the time, particularly agonism in PD and niche-regime dynamics in transitions literature, although the integration of these sets of literature was not systematically applied in the analysis.

Given the contextual differences across the *Refill* mediators and the cities in the study, the analysis did not rely on a direct comparison of work contexts and conditions between the four mediators. Nevertheless, with the mediators’ accounts of their work, roles and conditions as the unit of analysis, the selection revealed some common denominators and enabled the development of themes.

4.4.3 Interpreting cross-cutting findings

The individual papers included in this thesis each draw on different sets of literature and the analysis of individual empirical studies. The papers have been written at different stages of the doctoral research process. Each paper therefore presents related and partly overlapping but somewhat different and complementary perspectives on mediation and socio-political conditions in temporary use. Thus, when writing these introductory chapters, some additional interpretations of the empirical studies and the papers were necessary in order to discuss cross-cutting findings and conclusions. Hence, for the purposes of these introductory chapters, I included an additional round of synthetic cross-examination of the empirical findings and papers in relation to each other. I will describe this process here, while the outcomes are described in Chapter 6.

Given that there are methodological and epistemological differences between the practice-based study of *Kera* and the interview study of *Refill*, I acknowledge that the studies are not directly comparable. However, they do touch on related aspects of the same phenomenon. Thus, the purpose of the synthetic cross-examination was not a direct comparison of the findings from different studies, but rather, the purpose was to allow a discussion of related aspects from the studies and papers together in relation to conceptual themes and mediator roles identified in the sets of literature.

In order to bring together the conceptual and analytical threads from all the studies and papers, I examined them side by side. I first examined the main analytical or conceptual themes and mediator roles as articulated in the papers. In each paper, I have discussed different thematic or conceptual aspects from different sets of literature and as derived from the analysis of the empirical data in the two studies. The analytic and conceptual themes from the papers are presented below in Table 3. As shown in the table, the themes in each paper are related and partly overlapping, while there are also differences in the scope of the themes. The related themes are marked with the same colours in the table.

Based on the overlapping themes as formulated in the individual papers, I formulated four common themes that bring together aspects from each field of literature as well as from both empirical studies. These themes are demonstrated in the papers as relevant in TU mediation work addressing socio-political struggles: 1. *Collaboration, social networks and participation*, 2. *Conflicting interests between actors and levels*, 3. *Institutional power and*

4. *Experimentation and learning*. The fourth theme is proposed as tentative, as it has not been addressed in all of the papers, and it has not been explicitly part of the research questions when conducting the empirical studies. These four themes are shown in the lower part of Table 3 below.

To further elaborate these four themes in relation to mediator roles and activities, I pulled out mediator roles activities as discussed in papers 1, 3 and 4 and organised them in relation to the four themes. Through this process, I generated three cross-cutting roles, which are presented in Section 6.2.

Identifying cross-cutting themes across papers

Paper	Analytic and conceptual themes in the individual papers						Source of the theme / concept / role	Empirical studies
P1	Building networks as urban curating / infrastructuring		Negotiating over conflicting interests, controversies or power / agonistic space		Negotiating with <i>non-human actors</i> (i.e. regulations, etc)		Empirics (Practice-based) and literature (A / PD)	Kera (and Kalasatama)
P2	Acknowledging and exposing conflicts		(Re)distribution of power		Alternative visions through experimentation		Literature (PD/TU)	-
P3	Managing and building relationships among actors		Bridging conflicts		Disrupting and challenging dominant traditions, values and norms		Empirics (Qualitative interviews)	Refill
P4	Aligning visions	Building social networks to support niches	Brokering partnerships between niche and regime	Negotiating regime change	Advancing learning	Coordinating project activities and resources	Literature (UST) and empirics (Practice-based)	Kera

Synthetic cross-cutting themes from across papers

Collaboration, social networks and participation	Conflicting interests between actors and levels	Institutional power	Experimentation and learning
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Table 3 presents the identification of cross-cutting themes across the four papers. The above part shows the original conceptual and analytical themes in individual papers. The themes are marked with colours indicating related themes in different papers. Based on the interrelated themes, I have formulated synthetic / cross-cutting themes, which are presented in the lower part of the table.

4.5 Trustworthiness and ethical considerations

As practice-based research within design and architecture is a relatively young and maturing field, there is no consensus among scholars on established criteria to assess the quality of such research. However, often, the criteria applied in design research (and also ethnography) are those of ‘trustworthiness’, developed by Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba (1985). To assess the quality of enquiry within the constructivist paradigm, they suggest trustworthiness as more appropriate than the conventional criteria used in natural sciences, which include, for example, ‘rigor’, ‘validity’ and ‘objectivity’. Below, I will use Lincoln and Guba’s four criteria of trustworthiness – *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability* – to elaborate on the quality of this doctoral research. I will first briefly describe the four criteria and then explain how I applied them in this research. Finally, I will discuss some ethical considerations of the research.

As their first criterion, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest ‘credibility’ in place of the more conventional criterion of ‘truth value’. Techniques to ensure the credibility of the findings and interpretations include ‘prolonged engagement’ in the field, i.e. investing sufficient time for learning the culture, building trust, and testing for misinformation, as well as ‘triangulation’ between sources, methods or investigators and ‘member checking’.

The second criterion, ‘transferability’, concerns the applicability of findings across contexts. As qualitative research is embedded in local specific contexts, Lincoln and Guba reject the conventional notion of ‘external validity’. Instead, they suggest that the research should provide enough contextual evidence to enable the reader to assess whether the findings may be transferable to another context. ‘Thick description’ is suggested as a means to enable the transferability judgement (ibid., p. 316).

The third criterion of ‘dependability’ concerns demonstrating that the findings are consistent and reliable. Within constructivist research, contextual factors of instability and change will affect the research. Thus, the conventional idea of ‘replication’ does not apply. To establish dependability, Guba (1981) suggests that a demonstration of ‘credibility’ as discussed above is already sufficient. In addition, Lincoln and Guba suggest triangulation of methods and, if possible, an ‘enquiry audit’ to assess the coherence of the research process (1985, p. 317).

The final criterion of ‘confirmability’ addresses the concern that the findings of a study should not be determined by researcher bias or subjective interests. While many scholars reject the notion of a purely objective study (e.g. Harding, 2011), Lincoln and Guba argue that the issue here is about the confirmability of the data, not about the investigator’s characteristics (1985, p. 300). To increase confirmability, they suggest triangulation and transparency, for example, by keeping a reflexive journal of the different steps of the research process.

Within this doctoral research, my means/methods for ensuring trustworthiness were, in sum, the following. To start with, I considered various appropriate methods for studying the phenomenon in question. Triangulation between methods and data sources has been the main means to address all of the trustworthiness criteria, particularly to reduce possible bias and the influence of contextual factors. In addition, triangulation between sets of literature helped in developing more robust conceptual findings and interpretations. A further means of addressing credibility was my long-term, two-year involvement in the primary study of *Kera*, enabling the investment of sufficient time in the field. In addition, I used ‘member checking’ in the *Refill* study by asking the respondents to check the published reports of their interviews, including transcript excerpts.

To further address transferability, I have applied a sort of ‘thick description’ style in reporting empirical findings, which gives the reader a nuanced understanding of contextual details in order to assess the potential transferability of findings in other contexts. In addition, I have done conceptual work through analysing literature, for example, in developing the typology of roles, which also adds a level of theoretical ‘generalisability’ beyond the empirical contexts included here. In turn, to address dependability, it was obviously beyond my resources to include an external enquiry audit. However, I have made my best effort to make the methods and research process (including data collection and analysis) as transparent as possible through careful documentation and reflection of the steps involved. I also consider that the systematic analysis process has been a means to increase the consistency of the research. In addition, the findings and methods within individual papers have been assessed by anonymous peer reviewers and published on trustworthy academic platforms. While acknowledging that there is an inevitable influence of subjectivity and normative values, as well

as situatedness of the chosen research approach, I argue that the means I have described also address the final criterion of confirmability.

To ensure an ethically sound research approach, I followed the main ethical guidelines of Aalto University and the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK)²². My primary concerns were to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the informants, as well as fairness towards them, and to cause them no harm by my research.

To address such concerns and the ethical guidelines, I asked the participants to sign informed consent. When possible, I sent the participants information beforehand explaining the research and the dissemination of results as well as the archiving of the data, and also making sure the participants understood they had a right to decline. When sending the information beforehand was not possible, I gave the participants enough time 'on the spot' to read and consider whether they would agree to participate. In only a few exceptions, I asked for the participant's verbal consent, in which case it was audio-recorded. In addition, concerning the *Kera* project, I formally applied for permission to collect data during the project from the municipality before any data collection began.

It was important to carefully consider questions of anonymity when reporting the findings of the research. I had to strike a balance between being able to provide enough relevant contextual information on, for example, the geographical location of the empirical studies, and considering how this might compromise the respondents' anonymity. I discussed the level of anonymity with all respondents in the *Refill* study and with a commissioner representative in *Kera*. In reporting both studies, it was a mutual decision that important place names should be revealed. In the study of *Refill*, organisation names were also shown as they were considered relevant to the reader and also for crediting the respondents. In the study of *Kera*, because of sensitivity issues, I did not include the exact organisation names of the participants (except for mentioning the municipal department names with permission) but used more general descriptors instead.

Concerning data management, it is becoming the norm to share research data in databanks with different levels of openness. I argue, however, that this policy is somewhat problematic in qualitative and practice-based research, for example, because of small sample sizes, sensitive data and the actual impossibility of providing full anonymity to protect the participants.

²² <https://www.tenk.fi/en>

Considering such issues in my research, I decided not to share the data of the empirical studies openly. Because the data transcripts included sensitive issues and I could not guarantee the full anonymity of some of the key participants, I considered that sharing the data might potentially harm the participants. However, when publishing papers, I have offered the possibility for readers to request specific data sets if necessary.



Chapter 5

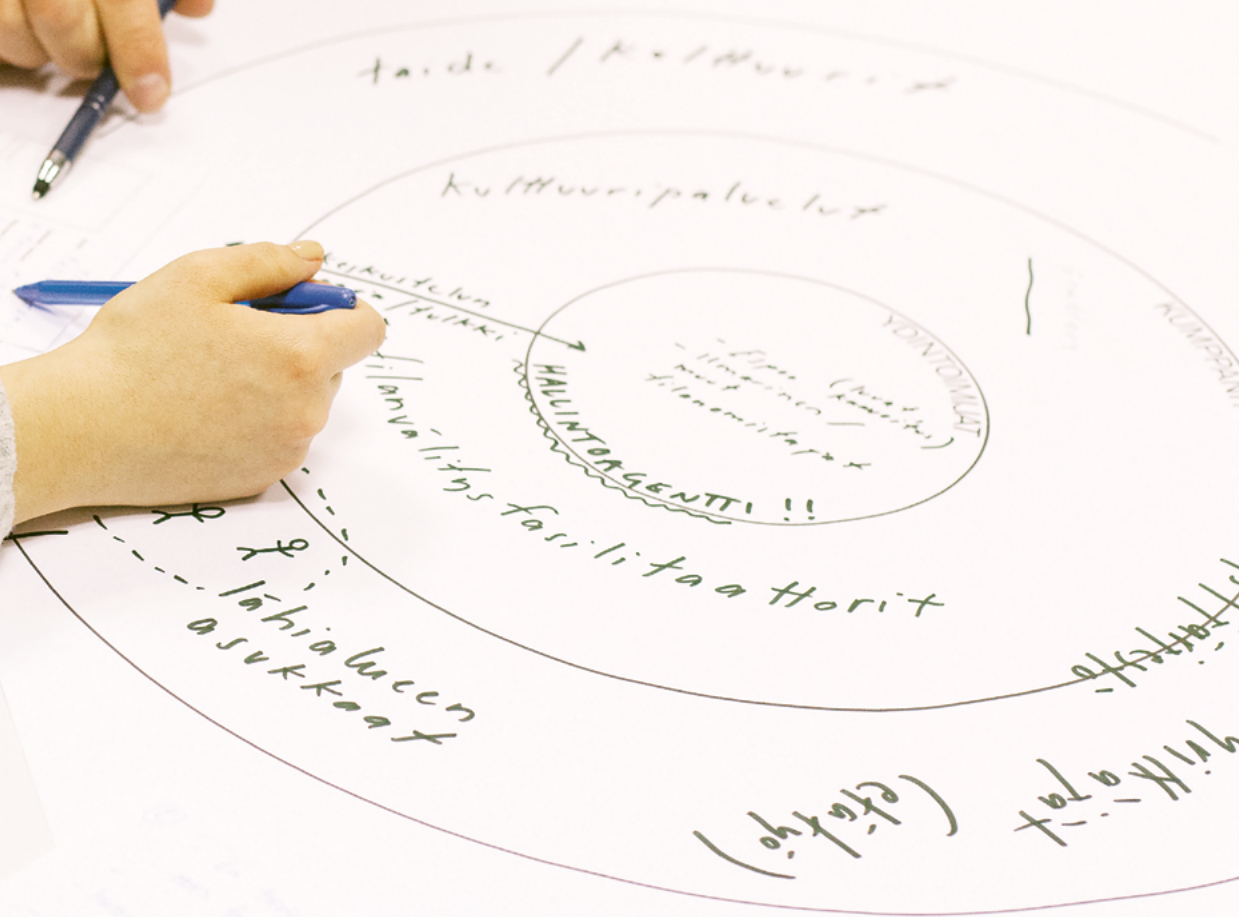


Figure 62. Expert workshop in *Kera*.
Photo: Johannes Romppanen.

5. Summary of the papers

The second part of this compilation thesis contains four ‘papers’, of which I was the first or sole author. All the papers were peer-reviewed through a ‘double-blind’ review process and appeared in publications approved of by the Finnish Publication Forum JUFO²³. The papers in the thesis include two conference papers, a journal article and a chapter in a conference proceedings. As is typical of compilation theses, the papers were produced at different stages of the doctoral research. Thus, some are more comprehensive than others, while some parts needed further interpretation and expansion, which is done in these introductory chapters. Some terms and concepts used in earlier papers were rearticulated or put in different words at later stages as a consequence of deeper understanding. Some of the papers also include aspects excluded from these introductory chapters and the collection of findings, due to the scope of the thesis.

In Table 4 below, I present a summary of each paper, describing their type, their role in this thesis, and the related literature, empirics, findings, and conclusions. The table provides an overview of these main aspects. The

²³ <https://www.julkaisuforum.fi/en>. JUFO (Publication Forum in English) ranks journal, conference and book publishing venues based on the quality, consistency and transparency of review processes. This helps to assess the quality of venues across disciplines because different disciplines prioritise and recognise different types of publication venues.

papers are numbered in chronological order to demonstrate the research journey and interplay between practice, research and theory-building within the doctoral research. The papers were written and published in the same order.

Overview of papers

Paper number, type, year	Research question(s)	Empirical study	Key concepts from literature	Key findings
Paper 1 , conference paper, 2017	How can we understand TU mediation as architectural or design work?	Kera (primary study)	PD: infrastructuring, agonistic space Architecture: spatial agency, urban curating, double agent	Articulating mediation work through the concepts from A and PD literature
Paper 2 , conference paper (short paper), 2018	How can PD contribute to understanding socio-political struggles in TU?	-	Agonistic space (PD), conflict (TU)	Identifying conceptual intersections between PD and TU concerning socio-political issues
Paper 3 , chapter in proceedings, 2020	How do practitioners account for their work in mediating temporary use?	Refill (Secondary study)	-	Illustrating mediator roles, relations and skills. Identifying three themes in TU mediation
Paper 4 , journal article, 2021	How can we understand and articulate roles in TU (inter)mediation?	Kera (Primary study)	Intermediary roles in UST	Typology of roles in (inter) mediation, elucidating selected roles in detail based on the study

Table 4. Overview of papers

5.1

Paper 1: Architect/ Designer as 'Urban Agent': A Case of Mediating Temporary Use in Cities

Hernberg, H. and Mazé, R. (2017) Architect/Designer as 'Urban Agent': A Case of Mediating Temporary Use in Cities. in *Proceedings of NORDES Nordic Design Research Conference 2017 Design + Power*, Oslo, Norway, 15–17 June, 2017.

This paper brings together the starting points for this doctoral research, including reflections on my architectural practice in temporary use and foundational concepts from architecture and participatory design literature. The paper thus starts conceptualising mediation in temporary use as a type of socio-politically engaged architectural or design work. The paper was presented at a design conference; therefore, its content and conclusions are mainly directed at a design audience.

The paper reviews conceptualisations of design and architectural work extending beyond the physical, material, or spatial aspects of design within contemporary architecture and PD discourses. From PD, the paper reviews conceptualisations addressing the collaborative, dialogic and controversial nature of PD work. The concepts discussed – 'things', 'infrastructuring' and 'agonistic space' – address the collaboration and negotiations between multiple stakeholders, inherently involving conflicts and controversies. From architecture discourse, the paper reviews discussions of agency, power and expertise in socio-politically engaged architectural work. Relevant conceptualisations of such architectural work include 'urban curating', 'spatial agency' and 'double agent', which elaborate the changing expert roles and power relations in architecture, clarifying how the role of the architect is

shifting from building design towards mediating between actors and empowering other actors.

Empirically, the paper builds on preliminary reflections on my previous and ongoing architectural work in mediating temporary use. The empirical data in the paper are based on a retrospective reflection of my prior work in the project *Kalatatama Temporary* (2009–2011) and a preliminary reflection of ongoing work in the study of *Mediation in Kera* (2016–2018). The data from the practice-based study of *Kera* include reflections and documentation informed by qualitative ethnographic methods. The paper is thus based on a preliminary reflection and analysis of these materials. It should be noted that the reflection on *Kalatatama* was used in this paper to bring the starting points from my earlier work to the doctoral research but it is not included in the thesis as an actual empirical study.

The paper identifies connections and overlaps between the concepts addressing socio-politically engaged design work within PD and architecture. The paper uses these concepts for a preliminary conceptualisation and articulation of mediation work in *Kera* and *Kalatatama*. The empirical accounts in the paper elaborate mediator roles and tasks in the two projects in relation to common issues and challenges identified in temporary use. The conceptual themes articulated in the paper are presented above in Table 3.

In conclusion, the paper discusses the potential of mediation work in temporary use to challenge traditional power relations, expert roles and dynamics in urban planning and development. The paper thus provides some first steps towards this and suggests further directions for research concerning socio-political roles in architectural and design work.

5.2

Paper 2: Agonistic Temporary Space – Reflections on ‘Agonistic Space’ across Participatory Design and Urban Temporary Use

Hernberg, H. and Mazé, R. (2018) Agonistic Temporary Space – Reflections on ‘Agonistic Space’ across Participatory Design and Urban Temporary Use. in *Proceedings of the 15th Participatory Design Conference – Volume 2*, Hasselt and Genk, Belgium, August 20–24, 2018. doi: 10.1145/3210604.3210639

This is a short literature review paper that provides an overview of the theme of conflict and ‘agonism’ in participatory design and temporary use. The paper uses the PD concept of ‘agonistic space’ as a conceptual lens to discuss overlapping issues between PD and TU discourses, focusing on the socio-spatial struggles characterising ‘expanded PD’ and temporary use. The paper thus expands on one of the themes that were identified as central in the first paper. As it was presented at a participatory design conference, the conclusions of the paper are directed at a design audience.

The paper explores overlaps and conceptual intersections between discussions on ‘agonistic space’ in PD and conflict in TU. On the one hand, the paper uses ‘agonistic space’ as a lens to explore issues concerning socio-spatial struggles in TU, such as the contradicting interests, conflicts and tensions between multiple stakeholder groups. On the other hand, the paper identifies concepts and issues within TU discourse and practice, which might further expand the spatial and temporal aspects of the PD discussions around ‘agonistic space’.

The paper identifies three main themes related to agonism and conflict, argued as relevant to both PD and TU. *Acknowledging and exposing conflicts* is articulated in PD through the concept of ‘agonism’ in political philosophy

(Mouffe, 2000) and the discussions on ‘right to the city’ (Lefebvre, 1996) in TU. *(Re)distribution of power* is identified as another key issue in both discourses, yet the paper suggests that PD could offer more nuanced dimensions to the quite polarised discussions in TU. A further connecting theme between the two discourses is formulated as *Alternative visions through experimentation*. The paper points out that experiments and prototypes are, in PD, understood as central tools for including and acknowledging emergent publics. Similarly, through experimentation, TU has the potential to challenge conventional urban planning approaches and propose ‘alternative urban futures’ (Groth & Corijn, 2005). Finally, besides identifying connections between the two discourses, the paper further discusses spatial and temporal aspects in TU, which might provide opportunities to expand the understandings of ‘agonistic space’ in PD.

The paper concludes by conceptualising TU as a concrete and physical type of ‘agonistic space’, which could provide further opportunities for expressing multiple voices, practices and visions through experimentation. Consequently, the paper further suggests that, understood as agonistic space, temporary use can expose controversial issues in urban planning, development and policy. The connections and gaps identified between the two discourses in the paper are suggested as relevant areas for further research.

5.3

Paper 3: Mediating 'Temporary Use' of Urban Space: Accounts of Selected Practitioners

Hernberg, H. (2020) Mediating 'Temporary Use' of Urban Space: Accounts of Selected Practitioners. in Chudoba M, Hynynen A, Rönn M, et al. (eds) *Built Environment and Architecture as a Resource*, Proceedings Series 2020-1. Sweden: Nordic Academic Press of Architectural Research, pp. 211–239.

This paper presents the findings of the *Refill* interview study. The paper thus expands the empirical scope of this doctoral research epistemologically and methodologically beyond a practice-based study of my own work to include qualitative interviews of other mediators' work. The scope of the interview study was informed by orientations from my ongoing practice-based research and previous literature reviews and crafted with the aim of understanding common and different struggles between mediating practitioners, with a particular concern for the socio-political dimensions of the work. The paper is directed at an architecture audience.

The scope of the paper is mainly empirical, aiming to provide a rich and nuanced account of professional mediators' experiences in this previously understudied field that is rapidly emerging through practice. Thus, the paper only provides a brief background on temporary use literature to summarise key problematics underlying mediation.

The empirical study consists of four qualitative, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with selected, experienced TU mediators. The selected respondents are five practitioners from four TU mediation organisations in European cities: Ghent (BE), Bremen (DE), Nantes (FR) and Riga (LV), selected through the *Refill* EU network. The interviews are analysed following a

‘thematic analysis’ approach (Ryan and Bernard, 2003), applying a ‘cutting and sorting’ method (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to identify themes.

The paper presents detailed and descriptive accounts of how the respondents described their work tasks, relations with other stakeholders, and motivations underlying their work. In addition, the paper identifies three main themes, which generally outline common roles for the mediators in this study. The three themes are (1) *managing and building relationships among actors*, (2) *bridging conflicts* and (3) *disrupting and challenging dominant traditions, values and norms*. These roles and themes are further elaborated in relation to the findings from the other papers in Chapter 6.

Through the rich, qualitative accounts of TU mediators’ work, the paper illustrates the detailed, socio-political dimensions of mediation work, thus also addressing how TU mediation extends beyond the traditional competence and expert roles of architects or planners. The paper concludes by proposing paths of future research in relation to the three themes presented.

5.4

Paper 4: 'Holding Properties Vacant Is Resource Stupidity': Towards a Typology of Roles in the (Inter)mediation of Urban 'Temporary Use'

Hernberg, H. (2021) 'Holding Properties Vacant Is Resource Stupidity': Towards a Typology of Roles in the (Inter)mediation of Urban 'Temporary Use'. *Planning Practice and Research*. DOI: 10.1080/02697459.2021.2001730

The fourth and last paper focuses on roles in mediating temporary use. It provides a more systematic and comprehensive view of TU mediation by proposing a typology of roles based on a review of 'intermediary' roles in urban sustainability transitions literature, assessed against the findings from the in-depth study of *Kera*. This paper introduces the field of urban sustainability transitions (UST) into the doctoral research and provides a more systematic analytic tool for articulating mediation. The paper has been published in a planning journal and therefore includes more planning-related aspects of the emerging mediation roles and the underlying conditions.

The paper reviews literature in UST. Firstly, it establishes connections between TU and UST in order to articulate TU as part of a transition. The main focus of the literature review is on studies explicating intermediary roles in urban energy and grassroots contexts, in which the problematics correspond to those identified in TU. The paper includes a literature review of intermediary roles, based on which the paper develops categories of roles and their comprising activities, further assessed against the empirical findings from the study of *Kera*.

The empirical part of the paper is based on the in-depth study of *Mediation in Kera*. In the practice-based study, I applied ethnographic methods

to investigate my practice and engagements as a practitioner. The collected data are described in detail in Section 4.3.1 and Table 2. The data were analysed through a thematic analysis involving ‘process coding’ (Saldaña, 2009), focusing on mediator roles and activities. The analytic categories of roles and activities from *Kera* were further examined in relation to categories generated through the literature review of intermediation roles in UST. As a result of this ‘integrated analysis’, I generated a typology of (inter)mediation roles.

The paper proposes a typology of roles in (inter)mediation, with six roles and their comprising activities. The roles are: (1) *aligning visions*, (2) *building social networks to support niches*, (3) *brokering partnerships between niche and regime*, (4) *negotiating regime change*, (5) *advancing learning*, and (6) *coordinating project activities and resources*. The paper further elucidates selected roles of the typology through detailed accounts from the study of *Kera*, which also highlight the socio-political struggles between actors and levels.

Through the systematic and nuanced articulation of roles in (inter)mediation, the paper draws attention to the emerging socio-political roles in planning and architecture. It thus also provides important knowledge for municipalities in order to improve their understanding of the work and competencies involved in temporary use. As the typology is suggested as preliminary, the paper outlines suggestions for future research, also expressing a need for further extensions of research concerning the education of planners and architects.





Chapter 6

Figure 63. Participants gathering after a workshop held in a vacant office space in *Kera*. Photo: Johannes Romppanen.

6. Socio-political mediator roles in temporary use

The practitioner of mediation in temporary use faces particular challenges, including structural constraints, multiple interests and power asymmetries between actors. Based on empirical evidence in the studies of *Kera* and *Re-fill*, TU mediation work is essentially spatial, social and political. Although the work concerns spaces, it particularly faces social and political challenges and issues that contrast with traditionally-understood architectural work. While the *spatial product* of architecture – that is, buildings – dominates most of the discipline and profession, the work in TU revolves essentially around *social and political processes* concerning spaces. Although recent architecture discourse has theorised some of the related social and political issues, for example, through the concept of ‘spatial agency’, my fieldwork reveals more specific socio-political dimensions as central in TU mediation work.

The spatial aspects of TU work are connected to social and political issues and dilemmas. Evidently, traditional architectural competencies are also useful here. Overall, knowledge and skills on space, architectural drawings, zoning plans, and technical questions are relevant, as well as the ability to understand and guide the work of other experts involved. Furthermore, understanding legal questions concerning space and being able to

translate ideas to building permit applications is often necessary, as Havik and Pllumbi (2020) elaborate. However, the empirical findings of this thesis demonstrate that the essence of TU work expands in many ways beyond such aspects of architectural work. For example, the empirical studies reveal how mediation addresses social and political issues concerning ownership, access, and power asymmetries, as well as values, motivations, cultural norms, and conventions.

As the empirical studies showcase, the everyday, mundane spatial work in TU mediation often operates at a micro-scale. Unlike what is perhaps mainstream in architectural design, TU mediation work essentially concerns how to use what already exists with minimal interventions. For example, the work may touch on practicalities of how and by whom existing spaces could be used, or how to divide spaces between users. Mediation often engages with legal and formal procedures, for example, interpreting technical requirements concerning the health and safety of users when adapting to new uses, finding ways to navigate within existing legislation, or rethinking rental processes and contracts for flexible short-term rental. The empirical studies also demonstrate some examples of spatial design by mediators, for example, the design of renovations or new spatial elements within existing spaces, such as new ‘office boxes’ inside a large warehouse space in Nantes (one of the cities in the *Refill* study). However, as temporary use often operates at a meagre cost, it typically aims to minimise spatial or technical interventions and additional investments. Even if such work operates at a micro-scale, the socio-political dimensions also traverse across levels and scales, connecting ‘small’ spatial and other questions to broader legislation, economy, and political issues. Naturally, the spatial scale of TU is also connected to broader scales in zoning and planning, ranging from district to city and regional scales.

The focus of this doctoral thesis is, however, on the *socio-political* aspects of mediation work, roles and the underlying conditions. This choice highlights the remarkably underexplored aspects of mediation (as architectural work), which are central in navigating and steering the challenging dynamics and conditions of TU. Chapters 2 and 3 have already outlined the broader socio-political dilemmas in TU and discussed conceptual perspectives related to mediation work through four sets of literature. In turn, this chapter focuses on the empirical findings from the two empirical studies and the four papers in relation to the conceptual starting points taken from the literature. Thereby, this chapter will address all of the research questions

of the thesis from an empirical perspective. Section 6.1 addresses sub-questions one and two by discussing social and political themes in TU work. Section 6.2 then delves deeper into articulating mediator roles, thus addressing the third sub-question and the overall research question. The articulation of roles thus forms the main original contribution of this doctoral thesis.

6.1 Social and political themes in TU mediation work

The social and political dimensions of temporary use work are broad, complex and central. Chapters 2 and 3 have outlined theoretical and conceptual perspectives on the socio-political conditions, dynamics and work in TU through the literature in TU, participatory design, urban sustainability transitions, and architecture. The empirical fieldwork of this doctoral research paints a more specific picture of locally-situated socio-political dilemmas and dynamics related to TU mediation work.

This section discusses socio-political dilemmas as demonstrated in the empirical studies in relation to conceptual themes taken from the literature. Thereby, it discusses the empirical aspects of the two first sub-questions of the thesis: *(1) What socio-political conditions support or impede temporary use?* and *(2) How can we understand and conceptualise mediation work addressing such conditions?* The section concludes by presenting cross-cutting themes as identified in the empirical studies and papers.

In temporary use, we can identify socio-political dynamics on macro and micro levels and scales, and some relations in between. In my empirical fieldwork, the study of micro-dynamics exposes the details of locally-situated socio-political dilemmas and dynamics in TU. These are not trivial but emerge as relevant within an elaborated data collection and analysis process. Thus, the nuanced dynamics demonstrated in the empirical studies can be seen as indicators and instances reflecting socio-political dilemmas across scales and levels. For example, the empirical studies highlighted dilemmas concerning power asymmetries, social and economic distance between actors, contradicting motivations and attitudes of actors, the agency and precarity of the users, and structural issues concerning legislation, planning protocols, contracts, permissions or operational models.

The study of *Kera* revealed clear power asymmetries and social and economic distance between actors at different levels and in different types of organisations. For example, the actors represented different levels of income, status and recognition in the society, market position, as well as in access to policymaking and investment decisions. An example of the distance and asymmetry was that the potential users, such as individual artists or sports associations, were unequal as negotiation partners with the private corporate property owners. For example, some artists were altogether rejected by the owners, without even getting a chance to negotiate. Gaps in communication and values further increased the distance between actors. Furthermore, *Kera* demonstrated the distinctly mismatched motivations and values of private property owners, municipal actors, and potential users, which presented barriers to temporary use. Some users in *Kera* were particularly concerned about the uncertainty of the duration of their contract, particularly as they had to invest in acquiring permissions and making necessary renovations. From the owners' side, operating small-scale, short-term contracts for individual tenants was considered too resource intensive. Although mediation presented a possibility to test and develop more flexible rental models, the owners in the *Kera* study were not keen on making significant deviations from their normal rental processes.

The *Refill* study provided further evidence of contradicting motivations, attitudes and understandings between actors in different phases of TU. For example, in Bremen, the municipal property owner in some instances associated temporary use with squatting and thus withheld properties. The mediator from Nantes reported tensions and contradictions between the broader aims and perceptions of municipal administration and the implementation of details in practice. The mediators from Ghent talked of users not agreeing to leave when their contract ended. Many of the *Refill* mediators, particularly in Ghent and Bremen, had particular aspirations of strengthening the connection between actor groups at different levels and enhancing the users' agency by communicating and translating their needs to property owners or municipal administration as well as offering opportunities for diverse groups of users. The *Refill* mediators also considered it important to support collaboration among users and to find synergies. The mediator from Riga was particularly concerned about the fair treatment of the users and the need for distributing benefits more evenly between owners and users. While the governance context varied somewhat between the *Refill* cities, the study also demonstrated issues concerning regulations and

other structural conditions that were critical for the temporary repurposing of spaces. Moreover, it was clear that for some of the mediators themselves, an important purpose was to challenge traditional expert roles in planning and development and to pursue diversity and alternatives to profit-seeking and speculative urban development.

The empirical findings thus elucidate in detail many of the broader socio-political dilemmas discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 2 outlined the socio-political dilemmas and dynamics between the established institutional actors and structures and the potential users in temporary use through literature in TU, participatory design and urban sustainability transitions. TU literature describes how temporary use faces structural barriers, conventional attitudes, power contestations, and contradicting interests between the different actor groups. Transitions literature helps in understanding the power asymmetry and dynamics between the experimental and unconventional niche (such as TU) and the regimes of property development and planning. This perspective clarifies TU as part of a transition involving renegotiating the prevailing structural conditions and powers. On the other hand, PD literature provides a more nuanced understanding of the micro-level conflicts involved in the participation and collaboration of multiple actors, including questions of experimentation, trust, and risk.

Chapter 3 further explored the conceptual articulations of mediation-related work through architecture and UST literature. Architecture scholars have conceptualised related socio-politically engaged, 'alternative' architectural work approaches, touching on agency and empowerment of 'other' actors to contribute to spatial practices. For example, the urban or 'spatial agent' and the 'urban curator' are relevant conceptualisations of mediation-related work, although they remain somewhat distant from practice. In turn, the UST literature provides more detailed articulations of 'intermediary' work and roles, particularly from the perspective of empowering niches and 'destabilising' regimes. Such articulations of intermediary work and roles are relevant here for a more systematic articulation of roles in TU mediation.

The different papers included in this thesis have further conceptualised mediation work through themes developed by analysing data from the two empirical studies in relation to concepts from the four sets of literature. Each paper draws upon different empirical studies and sets of literature, thus touching on related and partly overlapping perspectives on mediation work. Therefore, to identify cross-cutting themes across the papers, em-

pirical studies and literature, I have examined the analytic and conceptual themes presented in the papers in relation to each other (see Table 3). Section 4.4.3 above describes the process of developing cross-cutting themes in more detail.

Based on the analytic and conceptual themes articulated in the four papers, I have identified four cross-cutting themes/issues, demonstrated as relevant in socio-political TU mediation work: (1) *Collaboration, social networks and participation*, (2) *Conflicting interests between multiple actors and levels*, (3) *Institutional power* and (4) *Experimentation and learning*. The three first themes were clearly demonstrated throughout the papers. The fourth is proposed as tentative, because it emerged in only two of the papers, and it has not been addressed explicitly in the original research questions when conducting the empirical studies. These four themes thus bring together aspects from each set of literature and both empirical studies.

The next section will move on to elaborate socio-political mediator *roles* in more detail in relation to these themes.

6.2 Socio-political roles in TU mediation

The empirical findings of this doctoral thesis reveal and elucidate TU mediation as a broad professional field involving various types of (spatial,) social and political roles and competencies. The particular focus in the thesis is on the *socio-political* roles and conditions in TU mediation work. Thereby, the thesis aims at articulating in detail how mediators address complex socio-political conditions involving multiple actors from grassroots and institutional levels.

While the previous section discussed the socio-political dilemmas and conceptual themes concerning mediation work, this section focuses on *socio-political roles and activities* in the practice of TU mediation. This section thus addresses the third sub-question of the thesis: *What types of roles and activities comprise mediation in temporary use?* This question forms the main focus of the empirical findings in the thesis.

I reiterate here that my understanding of roles is that they consist of activities. Thus, in my analysis, I have treated roles with more nuance in terms of activities. As explained above in Section 3.3, this understanding is

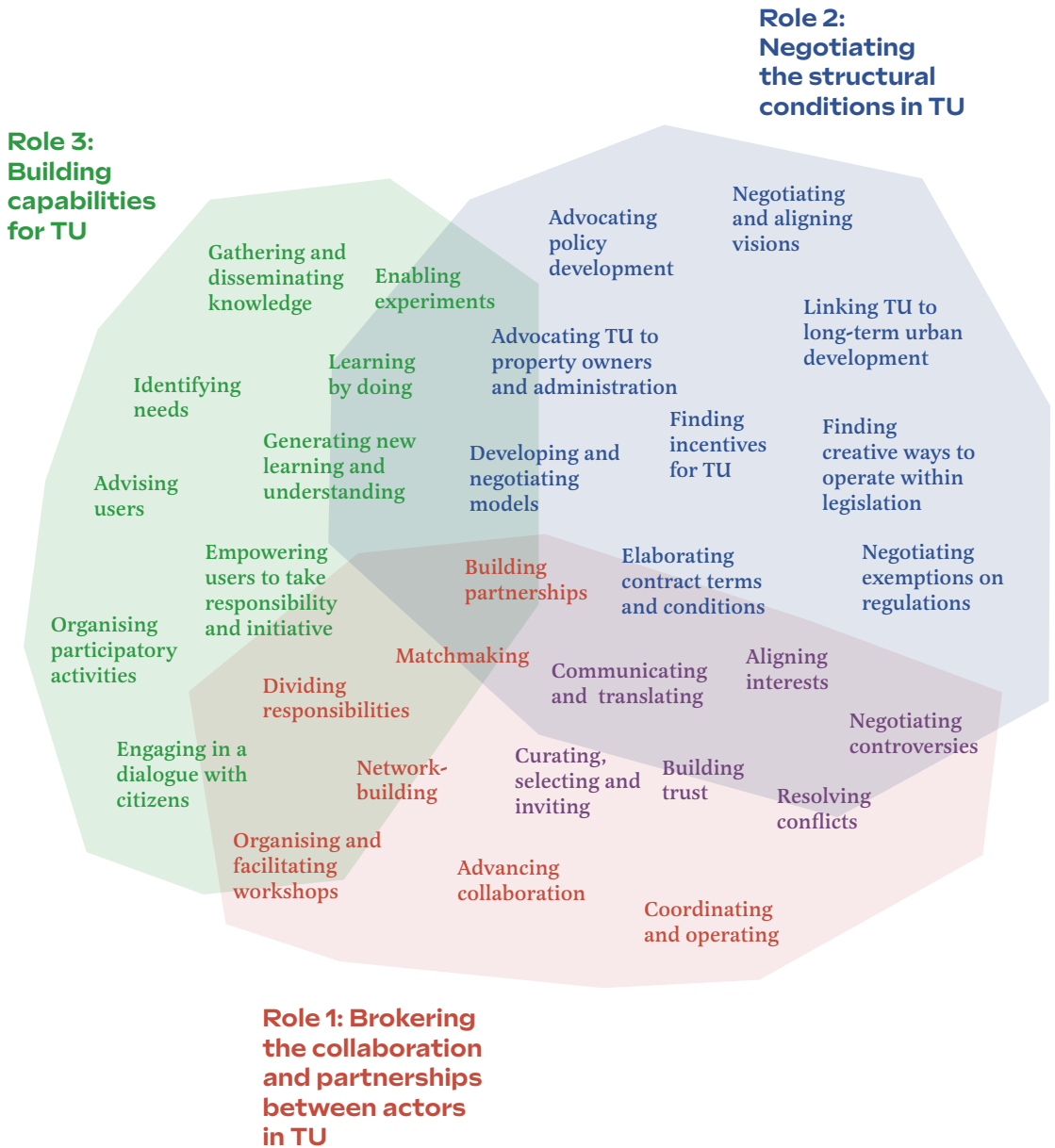


Figure 64. Three socio-political roles and comprised activities in TU mediation.

The core area of the figure presents mediator activities from the two empirical studies, which are coloured in relation to the themes presented in Table 3. The activities are grouped in relation to each other and the four themes. Based on the grouping of the activities, I have formulated three main roles, which are presented outside the central figure in bold text.

based on the work of the transition scholars Wittmayer et al. (2017), whose analysis of social interaction discourse construes roles as shared yet evolving and negotiated social constructions that include recognisable activities and attitudes. In line with this, I understand the evolving professional **roles** in mediation to comprise recognisable, purposeful and recurring *activities*. For example, if a role concerns '**brokering**', the activities comprised can include '*trust-building*', '*communicating*' and '*aligning interests*'.

This section describes cross-cutting mediator roles and activities identified across the two empirical studies and the four papers. As each paper and study touched on different, even if overlapping, aspects of mediation roles, I have examined the papers in relation to each other to identify common, cross-cutting roles. Given the methodological differences between the two studies, the purpose here is not a direct comparison between the studies. Rather, the purpose is to discuss related aspects demonstrated in the studies and in the sets of literature to identify and articulate cross-cutting roles and activities.

The mediation roles presented below have been formulated in relation to the four cross-cutting themes presented in the previous section. I identified the cross-cutting roles and activities by pulling out all roles and activities as articulated in the papers and then grouping them in relation to one another and the themes presented above. Based on grouping the activities, I have formulated three main roles and their comprised activities in mediating TU.

As a cross-cutting finding of this doctoral thesis, I present three socio-political roles in TU mediation: (1) **brokering the collaboration and partnerships between actors**, (2) **negotiating the structural conditions in TU** and (3) **building capabilities for TU**. The three roles are neither exclusive nor exhaustive but they are well demonstrated through my empirical analysis as informed by the particular scope of the thesis being delimited to the socio-political dilemmas and roles in mediation work and the methodological scope of the empirical studies. Inevitably, there may be other relevant roles and activities outside this scope, such as more exclusively spatially oriented ones. However, as the inquiry in this doctoral thesis has focused on *socio-political* roles, other potential roles have been left out. Figure 64 above presents these three roles and their comprised activities, also indicating how they relate and partly overlap.

In formulating the roles and activities, in line with the definition of 'role' mentioned above, I have developed a three-level hierarchy, which I

demarcate typographically in the sections below. **Roles** are marked in bold and highlighted as subsection headings. Given that the roles include numerous activities, I have formulated ***activity groups*** marked in bold italics, under which I explain individual *activities*, marked in italics.

The subsections below will describe the three socio-political roles in TU mediation in more detail. I elucidate each role and its comprised activities taking selected examples from the empirical studies and briefly recapping the main background issues from the literature concerning the role and related socio-political dilemmas. I use specific details from the studies to provide instances that make the roles and activities more concrete. Thus, the details should not be understood as ‘perfect’ nor the only possible instances of the particular category under discussion. In addition, Papers 3 and 4 provide more nuanced details and anecdotes of the roles and activities from the two individual studies. Paper 4 includes a more comprehensive elaboration of the roles and activities, based on the literature on intermediation in UST and the *Kera* study.

Concerning the vocabulary used here to describe the roles and activities, there is a clear influence of UST literature, which included a more detailed elaboration of roles than the other sets of literature reviewed here. However, I considered some terms in UST as somewhat foreign to TU. In addition, some particular terms implied relatively straightforward or disruptive forms of transformation, which I considered less well suited to describe mediator roles within slow, long-term processes. Thus, I have done some further ‘translation’ work to better match the terminology with the practice and scholarship in TU. In addition, considering the whole scope of the literature used in this thesis, there was a need to develop a description of roles that would match the whole scope of literature and both empirical studies more satisfactorily. Therefore, in the framework of cross-cutting roles presented below, I have endeavoured to balance the more theoretically generated roles from UST with formulations originating on the ground in TU practice.

6.2.1 Brokering the collaboration and partnerships between actors in TU

Temporary use involves multiple actors, including individuals and organisations spread from grassroots to more institutional levels, who may have different motivations, values and conventions. Thus, TU involves contested socio-political dynamics among actors and actor groups. As generally outlined in Chapter 2, the main actor groups involved in TU are the potential users (including, for example, cultural and recreational actors, small companies, neighbourhood groups or cultural minorities), property owners, municipal planners, and authorities. The empirical findings of this doctoral thesis demonstrate in detail the mediator roles and activities entailed in addressing the socio-political dynamics among actors. In particular, the findings demonstrate that mediators were necessary for advancing the collaboration between the actors and actor groups as well as brokering new partnerships across groups.

The necessity for mediators in addressing socio-political dynamics among actors has been identified in some of the previous TU literature. For example, Oswalt et al. (2013) highlighted the need for mediators in operating between the different actors, and Christiaanse (2013, p.6) mentioned ‘stakeholder management,’ bringing together a range of participants in TU. On the other hand, for example, Bishop and Williams (2012) pay more limited attention to the relationship between landlord and tenant in TU. I argue that drawing attention to this relationship alone would limit the mediation role to something closer to that of a real-estate agent. The findings here show that, essentially, mediation concerns navigating more complex sets of relations and dynamics among the users and user groups, and between all the groups mentioned above. While TU mediation may also include activities closer to those of a real-estate agent concerning rents, contracts and marketing, these are only a part of the mediator’s work.

Figures 65–67. Group work, gathering and a tour of vacant office and warehouse spaces during the kick-off workshop in *Kera* in autumn 2016. In *Kera*, matchmaking between potential users was one of the important mediation activities. Photos: Johannes Romppanen.



In Chapters 2 and 3, I have brought together different conceptualisations of mediation-related work in participatory design, architecture and urban sustainability transitions literature. UST literature systematically articulates various related roles for ‘intermediaries’ addressing the dynamics between ‘niche’ and ‘regime’. For example, UST emphasises ‘building social networks’ (e.g. Kivimaa, 2014) and ‘brokering partnerships between niche and regime actors’ (Hargreaves et al. 2013) in order to address the contested dynamics and empower the niche actors to challenge or collaborate with regimes (see also Paper 4). PD, on the other hand, offers a more nuanced perspective on ‘framing and staging’ the collaboration of multiple actors as well as accommodating conflicts and contestations as an inherent part of such collaborations (e.g. Keshavarz & Mazé 2013). Architecture literature further conceptualises related work addressing complex social dynamics, for example, through the concept of ‘urban curator’, whose role is to connect and align interests (Petrescu, 2005; Schalk, 2007).

Across the empirical studies in this doctoral research, analysed in relation to the literature mentioned above, **brokering the collaboration and partnerships among actors** was identified as a central role. The empirical studies demonstrated partly different and complementary aspects and activities related to this role. The findings suggest that TU mediators advance the collaboration and socio-political dynamics between actors through various activities, including ***building networks and partnerships, advancing collaboration, curating and selecting***, and ***building alignment among actors***. While different aspects of this role are further elucidated in papers 1, 3 and 4, I will briefly describe these activities here to bring together findings from the empirical studies and provide concrete examples. The activities comprised in this role were demonstrated most strongly and with the most detail in the empirical studies of the thesis. Thus, the description here is longer than that of the two other roles below.

Building networks and partnerships were identified as important activities in both empirical studies. This involved, on the one hand, supporting the *matchmaking* and *network-building* among the temporary users in order to create synergies among them and encourage them to develop new activities together, and on the other hand, to help *build partnerships* between the temporary users and the regime groups, such as the property owners or municipalities.

Matchmaking was demonstrated somewhat differently in the two studies. In *Refill*, the mediators reported a variety of matchmaking activities

among the four cities. The mediators in Ghent in particular used the term ‘matchmaking’ to describe their activities. For example, they organised matchmaking events to build alliances among potential users and to help them team up for ideating and organising TU activities. In Riga, the mediator paid particular attention to community-building by addressing the temporary users as ‘members’ instead of tenants. He also developed specific facilitation methods to encourage the members to select their own groups around shared interests and activities. In turn, *Kera* demonstrated in great detail the process of matchmaking among potential tenants, which became particularly time-consuming and socially complicated.

Related efforts of *building partnerships* between the temporary users, property owners or municipalities were also demonstrated in both empirical studies, even if to a lesser extent. While both empirical studies demonstrated how mediators established partnerships through formal contracts and agreements concerning rent or funding (described in more detail below under ‘operational-level activities’), the mediator in Riga developed more clearly unconventional types of partnerships between owners and users through their co-development model.

In both empirical studies, particularly *Refill*, the mediators were active in ***advancing collaboration*** among the main actor groups and wider audiences. This included, on the one hand, *organising and facilitating workshops* to enable matchmaking, collaborative ideation or co-creation, and to identify the needs of actors. *Dividing responsibilities* between actors was also considered necessary. Furthermore, the mediators were active in *communicating, translating* and *building trust* between actor groups.

Concerning *workshops*, the *Refill* mediators, particularly in Riga, Bremen and Ghent, reported developing a variety of workshops or other collaborative events, such as urban walks, open-door events, and matchmaking workshops (Bremen and Ghent), as well as developing specific facilitation methods (Riga). In *Kera*, a large workshop was organised at the beginning of the project to engage local actors.

To increase mutual understanding between and among different actor groups, *communicating and translating* was found important, particularly in the *Refill* study. In Riga, the mediator communicated between owners and users who didn’t ‘speak the same language’. In Bremen and Ghent, the mediators saw it important to translate and filter citizens’ ideas and needs for policymakers. *Trust-building* was further mentioned as an important aim of mediation work in some of the *Refill* interviews. The mediators felt it was



Figures 68–69. Community action for cleaning and maintenance in *Lastādija*, Riga. The interviewee from *Free Riga* found it essential to encourage the temporary users to take responsibility for the temporary use properties and divide responsibilities between the tenants and the mediator. Photos: Lastādija.

‘[Our] learning ... [was] that ... more clear responsibilities, that it’s less work, less management for guardians, that the community takes part [in] the management, self-manages part of the things that they can do ...’

Mediator, Refill study



Figure 70. Sharing spaces between temporary users in Bremen. Photo: ZZZ

important to demonstrate trust in the temporary users by granting them some autonomy and responsibility in agreed-upon ways (Ghent, Bremen, Riga). In addition, gaining trust from all stakeholder groups was seen as essential condition for the mediators' negotiation power and credibility. In certain instances, however, mistrust between the owner and mediator had created barriers for TU (Bremen).

A further relevant activity to improve collaboration was *dividing responsibilities* between the users, mediators and other parties. This was mentioned as important, particularly in the *Refill* study (mainly Riga, also Ghent and Bremen). In Riga, the mediator had learned, through experience, the importance of drawing limits to their own responsibilities and stating these clearly in contracts. In both Riga and Bremen, the mediators specifically aimed at stepping back and gradually giving more responsibility to the users after giving them more support in the beginning.

Curating and selecting users, partners or TU activities were demonstrated in both empirical studies. These activities were seen as relevant to enhance the synergies and collaboration among the temporary users but also to build coherent sets of activities in the TU sites, often around a chosen theme. The different mediators had, however, varying degrees of agency to influence selections. *Kera* provided detailed experiences of inevitably power-laden selection processes involving negotiations between property owners and city administration to balance their preferences and priorities concerning preferred actors and activities. This involved, on the one hand, matching the identified needs of users with the broader aims of the municipality and the economic and practical concerns of the owners, and, on the other hand, to overcome some owners' prejudice towards specific actor groups. While the *Refill* mediators reported less detail on curating or selecting activities, the mediator from Riga emphasised curating public and socially engaged initiatives as one of their primary concerns, which served many of the owners' interests as well. Forms of curating were also mentioned by the other *Refill* mediators.

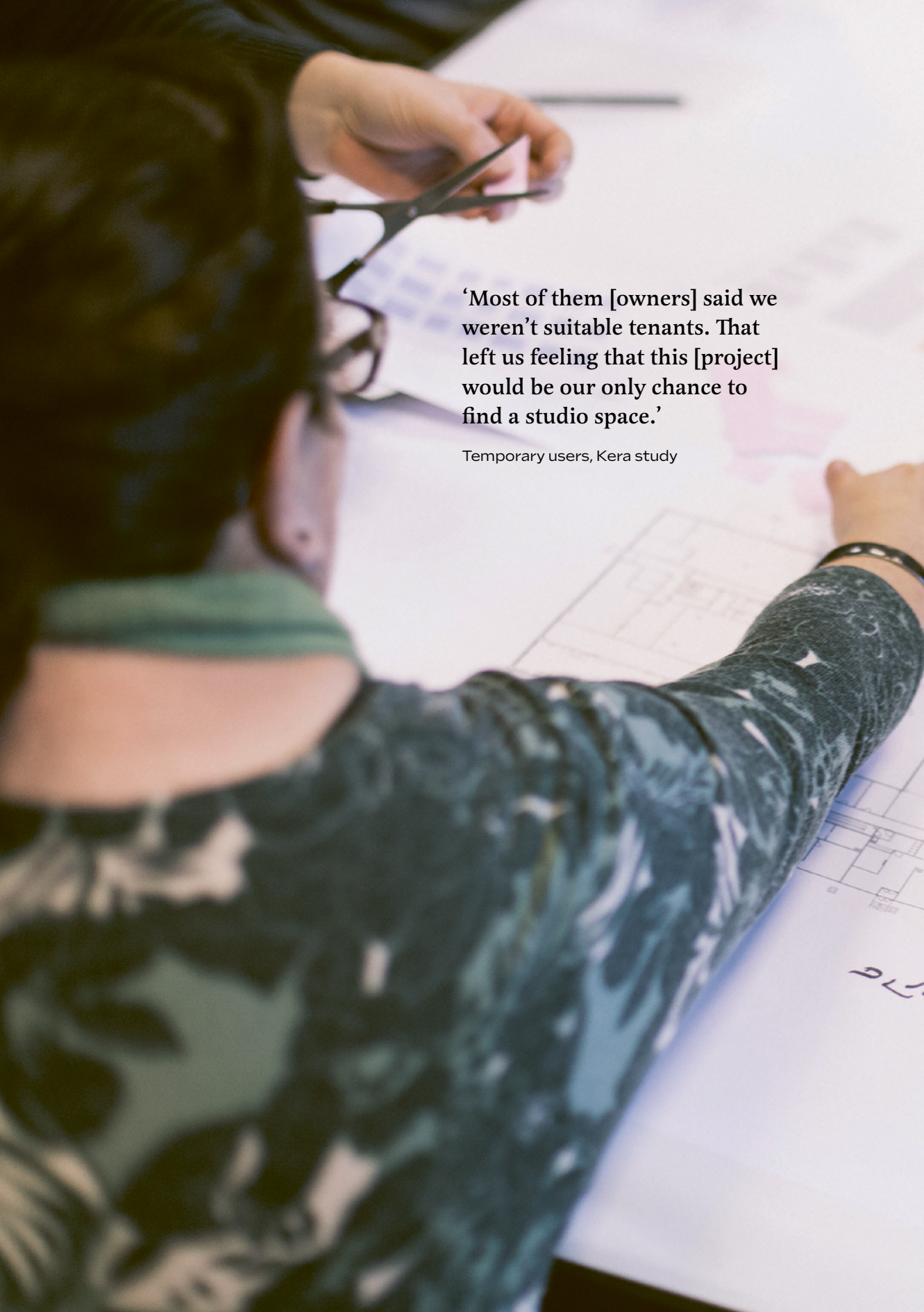
Building alignment was a further important and socio-politically complex activity group, which also involved conflicts, controversies and power struggles. This involved *aligning interests*, *negotiating controversies* as well as *resolving conflicts*. Such socio-politically contested activities became particularly evident throughout my involvement in the study of *Kera*, while similar more controversial or conflictual experiences were not observable in equally evident ways through the interviews in *Refill*.

Aligning interests and negotiating controversies in order to find compromises between or within groups was demonstrated particularly strongly through the detailed experience of mediation labour in *Kera*. On the one hand, balancing the needs and preferences between potential users became quite a complicated activity. On the other hand, negotiations with the property owners on the possibility of initiating temporary use concerned contradicting values, conventions and priorities and cultures between different actor groups. While the *Refill* interviews could only touch the surface of related issues, the Ghent mediators reported their role in finding a balance between different desires and needs of users in order to be fair towards all and to avoid unfair competition between temporary users and other local actors in the neighbourhoods.

Overall, the mediator work in *resolving conflicts or disagreements* was evident in both empirical studies. In Ghent, the mediator reported having to step into conflict situations between temporary users, residents of the neighbourhood and owners to make the parties speak to each other and find a resolution. In *Kera*, mediation involved a challenging and time-consuming process of negotiating among the potential users to overcome old disagreements between user groups who were competing for available public funding.

6.2.2 Negotiating the structural conditions in TU

In addition to the complex dynamics between multiple actors described under the previous role, temporary use faces challenging structural conditions. As elaborated in Chapter 2, the conditions are constituted by the institutional ‘regimes’ of real-estate, planning and regulation. The conditions include not only formal ‘rules’, such as zoning codes and permissions, building regulations and economic frameworks, but also entrenched patterns of expertise, knowledge, thought and action, which create barriers to change. As the findings from the empirical studies in this research suggest, mediators play an important role in renegotiating such conditions in order to enable TU. Nevertheless, considering the understanding of transitions as slow, long-term processes, it is good to remember that the timeline of the studies here, particularly *Kera*, allowed the observation of rather small-scale



‘Most of them [owners] said we weren’t suitable tenants. That left us feeling that this [project] would be our only chance to find a studio space.’

Temporary users, Kera study



Figure 71. Co-ideating the use of vacant office spaces in Kera.
Photo: Johannes Romppanen

changes concerning structural conditions. In light of the literature, these may be understood as small steps within a longer-term process.

The sets of literature reviewed and analysed in this thesis provide relevant starting points for a clearer understanding of this mediator role and the underlying dynamics. The UST literature is illuminating here in helping to understand the inevitable struggle between niche (such as TU) and regimes, particularly as the regimes involved in urban development are seen as entrenched and resistant to change (e.g. Filion, 2010; Dotson, 2016). Therefore, enabling temporary uses that require less development-intensive environments and a different local order necessarily requires negotiating some of the structural conditions of the regimes. The UST literature draws attention to the pivotal role of ‘intermediaries’ in contributing to such change, for example, through ‘destabilising regimes’ (Matschoss & Heiskanen, 2018), articulating visions (Kivimaa, 2014) or elaborating different models (Hargreaves et al., 2013). From a more micro-level perspective, PD literature addresses related political questions concerning agonism, for example, through making spaces of confrontation in multi-stakeholder collaboration processes (Disalvo, 2012). Conceptualisations of agency in architecture literature further highlight the potential of architectural work as a critical, transformative and ‘transversal’ practice that can challenge existing institutional structures or policies (Petrescu, 2005; e.g. Awan et al., 2011).

In relation to these themes from the literature, the findings from both empirical studies suggest **negotiating the structural conditions** as a necessary mediator role in TU. This role was more clearly evident in the *Refill* study. To a lesser extent, *Kera* provided some detailed examples of addressing structural barriers and formal arrangements within the limits of a two-year project. While the *Kera* study provided evidence of stretching some of the local regime conditions to enable temporary rental for alternative activities, some of the *Refill* mediators were also contributing more strategic-level change of practices, conventions, or rules involved in urban development and administration. The two empirical studies demonstrated how mediators negotiated structural conditions ranging from formal or legally bind-

Figures 72–75 (this and next spread). Negotiations with stakeholders, particularly the property owners, were among the key mediation activities in *Kera*. Photos: Johannes Romppanen





‘We sometimes do ... things in the grey zone. It’s the go-between ... But it is a grey zone. But that is what we want as a city, that people can experiment. If you only go by the strict rules, you cannot do temporary use or things like that.’

Mediator, Refill study

ing structures and norms, such as regulations or policies, to more implicit conventional and entrenched understandings of practices, models, expert roles, contracts, and so on. Below I will describe the activities in more detail, dividing them into **strategic-level**, **legislation-level** and **operational level activities**.

The **strategic-level activities** included *negotiating and aligning visions* as well as *advocating policy development*. These activities were not among the most strongly demonstrated, but they were mentioned, for example, by the *Refill* mediators in Bremen and Ghent. The Ghent mediators explained that TU in their city was connected to strategic goals promoting creative and experimental activity, which gave the mediators a mandate to negotiate exemptions from regulations. Similarly, in Bremen, the mediators were in a regular contact with city administration and politicians to negotiate and navigate among the different aims and goals. As the *Kera* study concerned only a two-year project, vision-alignment was demonstrated at the project level. This meant negotiating the project vision, goals and brief with the commissioner, during which I matched the broader goals laid out by the city with what I considered to be feasible goals in practice within the timeline and resources of the project.

Through **legislation-level activities**, the mediators addressed building regulations and permissions concerning TU. Particularly at issue were the interpretations of regulations and shared conventions on their application in practice. These were seen as key challenges within TU and mentioned particularly in the *Refill* interviews. Three of the *Refill* mediators (Ghent, Nantes, Bremen) mentioned the challenge of fitting TU to existing legislation and regulations concerning, for example, security or fire safety. Thus, mediators were engaged in *finding creative ways to operate within existing regulations* (Nantes) as well as *negotiating exemptions from regulations* (Ghent, Bremen). The city of Ghent had a considerably flexible approach to circumventing regulations for TU. Thus, mediators could formally negotiate an agreement to operate on a ‘grey zone’ or apply a ‘pop-up regulation’ to allow exemptions from regulations for three months. In Nantes, on the other hand, the mediator had become an expert in negotiating unconventional interpretations of regulations for the temporary repurposing of spaces within the strict French legislation. The Nantes mediator particularly mentioned that this work was resource-intensive and required special expertise.

In *Kera*, an important administrative issue observed was the need to renegotiate municipal permission policies on repurposing spaces. In the city of Espoo, the fees to acquire permission for repurposing spaces within the zoning plan were significantly high, even for the duration of a few years. This became an obstacle for individual temporary users. During the project, a negotiation was started with the responsible authorities to reconsider the policy concerning permission fees, but a change in policy was not possible within the project timeline.

Within *Refill*, Riga was an exception in that building regulations were not conceived of as a major challenge for TU. However, the mediator role was important in *finding incentives for TU*. The mediator in Riga discovered an existing policy of property tax reductions for properties with ‘public benefit’ activities, which became a clear financial incentive for owners to consider TU as a viable alternative.

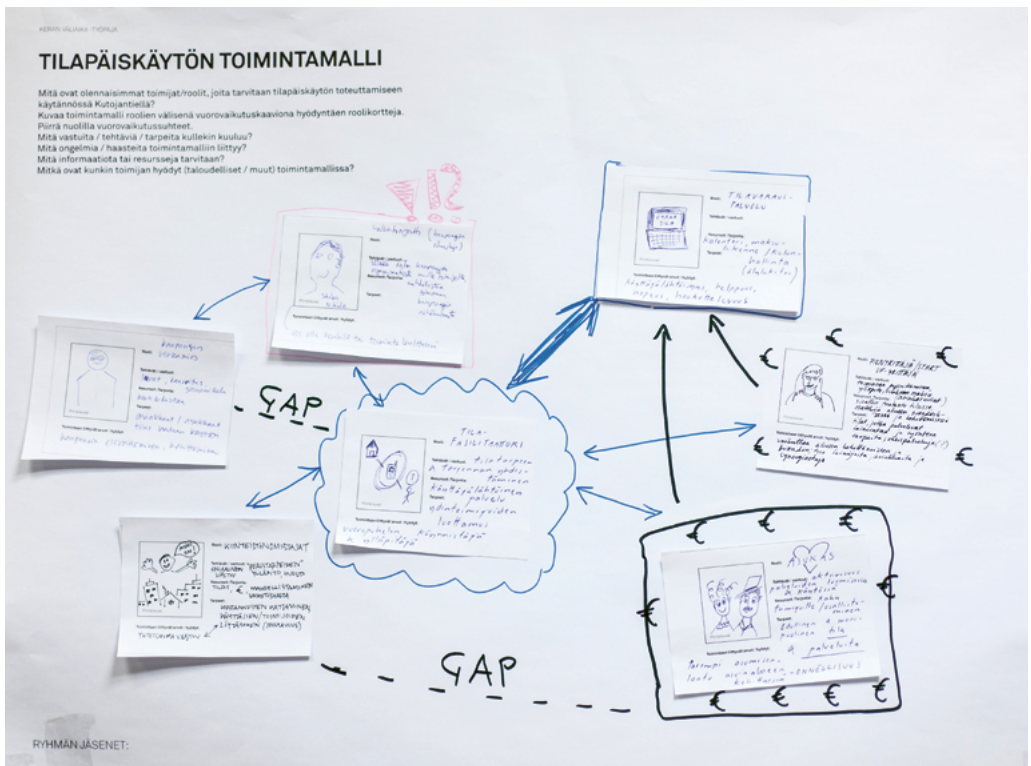
Within both empirical studies, the mediators further engaged in several **operational-level activities**, aiming at developing and modifying existing ‘models’. These could be business models, operational or planning models, or contractual arrangements within TU. In all the empirical studies, the mediators engaged in *developing and negotiating models* in various ways. Within *Refill*, the Nantes mediator had developed a unique model of property development, in which temporary use was considered an integral phase of development. Within this model, the company *Samoa* (also responsible for TU mediation) owns the land, plans its redevelopment and later resells it while benefitting from temporary use as a transitional development phase. In Riga, the mediator had also developed a novel business model around TU whereby they offered a ‘guardian’ service for property owners through the temporary use of vacant properties. In addition, they were testing a ‘co-development’ partnership with owners, which would give the temporary users more agency to influence long-term development and earn part of the profit.

In turn, the *Kera* study provided detailed experiences of the challenges related to conventional rental models, which often fail to accommodate the

Figure 76. The kick-off workshop in Kera included a working group of temporary use experts to ideate a new operational model for TU. Photo: Johannes Romppanen / Urban Dream Management.

‘People always argue that the property owner would earn at least some rent so it would be better than nothing, which is not true in terms of real-estate valuation ... Have you thought about this ... is the valuation model wrong?’

Rental manager of a property investment company, Kera study



demands of individual users interested in small spaces. Thus, I developed a proposal for a flexible rental model for TU, which, however, the owners were not ready to experiment with. In *Kera*, another challenge with existing models was identified concerning the prevailing standard model of real-estate valuation, which encourages owners to hold properties vacant. However, it was outside my agency as a mediator to pursue changes to such a model within the project timeline.

Besides developing models, the mediators in both empirical studies were active in *elaborating contract terms and conditions* to cope with the temporal uncertainty of TU, to keep prices low or to make the spaces accessible to a variety of users. Within *Refill*, the mediators had tailored specific rental contract types for TU, deviating from traditional contracts. For example, the contracts could allow other than monetary forms of compensation. In Riga, the users could take part in maintenance work, and in Ghent, residents could take other responsibilities to cover for their use of vacant space. In Bremen, the mediators offered very short-term contacts to allow diverse users to test spaces at a low threshold. Many of the *Refill* mediators (Nantes, Bremen, Ghent) further mentioned the importance of agreeing on the intended duration of TU beforehand, because the unclarity of the duration may become problematic for both owners and users (as observed in Ghent). However, leaving room for open-endedness and change of plans was seen as necessary, because the conditions for redevelopment often cannot be known beforehand (Nantes). Importantly, most of the *Refill* mediators mentioned that the rental prices for temporary use were kept as low as possible, often being around 50% of normal market rents.

Within *Kera*, contracts were also a concern. As a mediator, I was able to negotiate exemptions to contract terms even if higher-level structural issues were beyond my agency within the project. For example, I negotiated some adjustments to standard commercial rental terms, such as a small discount on rents and deposits, a free first month and a shorter minimum contract term.

6.2.3 Building capabilities for TU

The two previous mediator roles were demonstrated strongly in both empirical studies and sets of literature. In addition, a third role became evident through the empirical findings, which is also connected to several inter-linked theoretical themes: participation, empowerment, experimentation and learning. Participation and empowerment were clearly evident theoretical themes from early on in this research, as discussed in architecture and PD. In addition, learning and experimentation became more prominent later on as they were strongly highlighted in the UST literature. However, these themes were not explicitly addressed in the research questions while conducting the empirical research. Nevertheless, activities related to these themes were observed and demonstrated in the empirical findings, even if less strongly than those under the two previous roles. Identifying these themes in the empirical data and from the sets of literature is thus a sign of drift within the research process. Therefore, I propose the third role as tentative and as a potentially relevant area for further research.

Empowerment is a key thread of argumentation in TU literature, as TU itself is understood to empower heterogeneous sets of users to contribute to urban development (Nemeth & Langhorst, 2013). In architecture, empowerment is similarly highlighted in discussions on agency and related conceptualisations of work, as discussed in Section 3.2. For example, a ‘spatial agent’ is understood as ‘one who effects change through the empowerment of others, allowing them to engage in their spatial environments in ways previously unknown or unavailable to them, opening up new freedoms and potentials as a result of reconfigured social space’ (Awan et al., 2011, p. 32). Furthermore, ‘niche empowerment’ has received wide attention in the transitions literature, and the role of intermediaries in niche empowerment has been extensively studied. In UST, particular aspects linked to intermediation in this respect also include learning and experimentation. PD literature further includes related discussions on experimentation as a way of developing alternative visions that reveal and make ‘space’ for questions, controversies and opportunities that may have an impact on social change in the longer term. Participation itself is a further theme that connects empowerment, learning and experimentation in PD discourse.

In the empirical findings, activities related to these themes – empowerment, participation, experimentation and learning – were all connected to developing the capacity of the different actor groups concerning TU. This

included, for example, enhancing the agency and capabilities of the users, or developing enabling conditions through advancing new learning and understanding across actor groups. I have grouped such activities under a tentative role formulated as **building capabilities for TU**. Below, I will describe activities related to **capacity building, knowledge production, experimentation** and **participation**. Activities connected to learning, experimentation and empowerment were brought up quite clearly by the *Refill* respondents, even if they had not been explicitly addressed in the interview questions. To a lesser extent, the *Kera* study also demonstrated aspects of learning, experimentation and empowerment. While these activities were not among the most strongly demonstrated ones in either study, this may also be a consequence of the research questions.

Capacity-building activities were in both studies directed mostly at empowering the temporary users to be active in taking responsibility and developing TU activities themselves. Common activities across both empirical studies were *advising users* (Ghent, Riga, *Kera*) on technical and contractual issues or other formal and legal arrangements. Two of the *Refill* mediators also described their efforts in *empowering the users to take responsibility* (Bremen, Riga). Even though many of the mediators in both studies were clearly involved in advising and supporting the users, their work on knowledge production and experimentation, as explained below, also aimed at building up the capacities of all actor groups concerning TU.

Knowledge production activities reported within the empirical studies included *gathering and disseminating knowledge* in the form of studies, reports and conferences. All of the *Refill* mediators were part of a broad EU network focusing on knowledge exchange amongst European TU actors and municipalities involved. The Bremen mediators were also engaged in disseminating knowledge through publishing books and reports about their work. The Nantes mediator frequently hosted visitors willing to learn about their urban development model. In *Kera*, writing reports, such as a background study and final report, was officially part of the mediator brief. As a mediator, I also engaged in disseminating knowledge about the project and advocating TU elsewhere outside the project. Furthermore, *identifying needs of users* was mentioned as important by the *Refill* mediators in Ghent and Bremen and was similarly part of the work in *Kera*. In Nantes, the mediator also saw that, importantly, experiences of temporary use can *generate new learning or new understanding* among actor groups, including temporary users and regime actors.

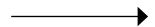


Participatory activities engaging the broader public were in the *Refill* study also linked to experimentation, learning and empowerment. In many of the *Refill* cities, TU was understood as a channel for the direct participation of residents and other local actors. The mediators (in, e.g. Ghent, Nantes, also *Kera*) were engaged in *organising participatory events* to identify needs, to find temporary users or to ideate TU activities in new locations/sites. In Nantes, TU was linked to a programme of experimentation of new uses of public spaces, which was under the mediator's responsibility. In Ghent, the mediators organised open calls or idea competitions for central locations that attracted more public interest. Besides such more formally organised ways of participation, some of the *Refill* mediators also saw it as particularly important to be easily reachable, to reach out to diverse people and *engage in a dialogue with citizens* (Ghent, Bremen). Therefore, participation was linked to keeping different channels open for local actors to express their ideas, opinions or needs.

Figure 78. A discussion with cultural and political actors and entrepreneurs to find ideas for revitalising the central Bremen. Photo: ZZZ

Figure 79. Residents in debate with the deputy mayor in Ghent. Photo: City of Ghent

Figure 80. Experimentation and temporary use are an integral part of *Samoa's* urban redevelopment strategy at *Île de Nantes*. The former shipbuilding halls, *Les Nefs*, have served for 15 years a public space accommodating various events and activities as part of the redevelopment of the area. The grand mechanical elephant, which can take 50 passengers on a ride, is part of the art project *Les Machines de l'île*. Photo: Jean-Dominique Billaud/Samoa.



‘Transitional uses are
pretexts, often, to ... both
side[s], learning to ... oblige
some services to get into a
new way of thinking.’

Mediator, Refill study







Chapter 7



Figure 81. A neighbourhood event in front of *De Wasserij* in Ghent, as part of the temporary use of the former laundry building. Photo: City of Ghent.

7. Contributions and conclusions

This doctoral thesis has sought to contribute to the theorisation and analysis of the understudied and emerging phenomenon of mediation in temporary use. It has done this by developing systematic and nuanced articulations of socio-political roles in mediation and by outlining the underlying conditions. The four original papers have elaborated on related perspectives on mediation and the socio-political conditions in TU using four adjacent fields of literature brought together in these introductory chapters: temporary use, architecture, participatory design and urban sustainability transitions. To further investigate and articulate mediation work and roles in practice, I have studied mediation in practice through two different epistemological standpoints: a practice-based study of my own mediation practice in the study of *Kera* and qualitative interviews of other professional mediators in the study of *Refill*. The findings from these studies are explicated in papers 3 and 4 and further cross-cutting findings presented in the previous chapter.

By bringing together perspectives from four sets of literature, the thesis has explained the nature of mediation work in TU as essentially spatial, social and political, with an explicit focus on the socio-political. In Chapter 2, I have outlined the socio-political characteristics and conditions in TU through the literature in PD and UST, concluding that TU involves com-

plex structural conditions and multiple actor groups at different levels, with asymmetric power relations and contradicting values, interests and motivations. In Chapter 3, I have further explored conceptual articulations of the related work and roles through reviewing literature on socio-politically engaged architectural work and ‘intermediary’ roles in UST, emphasising their contribution to niche development and regime change. Chapter 6 comprises a presentation of the cross-cutting empirical findings in relation to the different perspectives of the literature. By way of the investigation cutting across sets of literature and empirical studies on and through practice, the thesis has formulated three socio-political roles in mediating temporary use: (1) *brokering the collaboration and partnerships between actors*, (2) *negotiating the structural conditions in TU* and (3) *building capabilities for TU*. These three roles are further elaborated on with nuanced descriptions of the activities they comprise in Section 6.2.

As stated in the beginning, this thesis has been motivated by the claimed potential of temporary use and related mediation work to contribute to urban transformations moving towards sustainability. Arguably, TU can contribute to fighting the urgent climate and resource crisis by utilising existing and otherwise redundant spaces, thus drawing attention to the potential of their extended use and the need to build less. TU also contributes to social sustainability by offering diverse groups a concrete opportunity to engage in urban development and shape places that provide a ‘difference’ (see, e.g. Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2017) to market-driven and commercial developments. Overall, as argued in UST literature, related civic and grassroots phenomena contain a potential for broader and more systemic change if provided with the support and the right conditions to flourish and grow.

The main focus of the thesis is on the socio-political roles of actors (such as architects and designers, including individuals and organisations) mediating TU. By elucidating socio-political mediator roles and underlying conditions in TU, the research draws particular attention to changing professional work and roles in architectural design in the context of sustainable urban development. The focus on the socio-political aspects of mediation work highlights the contrast to what is traditionally understood as, or known about, architectural work. While the spatial connection in TU is evident, the aim here has been to open up architectural work beyond the spatial, thus addressing a research gap and introducing a novel perspective. For these reasons, this research nuances particular aspects of mediation work beyond space and at a particular scale.

Concerning the current critique of mainstream architectural practice, the elaboration of socio-political roles in this thesis can be seen as an example of how some architects may be able to break free of their traditionally tight dependency on the real-estate business and planning regimes. Instead, architects might challenge the conventions of such regimes by promoting the reuse of existing spaces and inviting a more heterogeneous array of actors to contribute to local urban development. As elucidated in the example of *Kera*, such an approach requires proactivity when such jobs may not be readily available. Given that mediation is a nascent type of work, it may provide architects (or other mediating practitioners) more agency in briefing (see, Park-Lee, 2021) for their work. This could be seen as an opportunity to negotiate the regime conditions that frame architectural work and urban development.

The elaboration of mediation roles and activities in the thesis provides evidence, even if subtle, of how mediators may engage in stretching or even transforming some of the unsustainable premises, conventions and rules of the regimes of urban planning and development. The three mediator roles and the detailed instances of mediation demonstrate how mediators can contribute to conditions that enable alternative uses of spaces that do not fit the preferences of profit-driven and speculative urban development or the rigid planning and regulatory conditions. However, concerning the agency of mediators to achieve substantial changes within regimes, it is necessary to understand that such transitions are slow, complex, and long-term processes, taking shape over decades. Therefore, as will be further explained below in Section 7.2, the temporal scope of the qualitative and practice-based studies here is limited for observing substantial structural changes through mediation. The mundane activities of mediation described in this thesis should thus be seen as steps within a longer-term process.

The mediator roles and conditions described in this thesis can be relevant to diverse academic and practitioner audiences. The following sections will discuss the cross-cutting contributions and implications for different audiences, the delimitations of the research and suggestions for future research.

7.1 Cross-cutting contributions

This doctoral thesis offers a set of conceptual and practical contributions that are relevant to different academic communities but also to municipalities and practitioners in architecture, design and urbanism. Given the scarcity of scholarship on TU, much less TU mediation, and with practice outpacing research in professional development, I have identified a wide gap where new research is needed. In the thesis, I have chosen breadth and synthesis across fields of scholarship and practice in order to map out a common ground, as there is no established canon in this area. In addition, I have delved deeper into the roles and activities in TU mediation with the aim of providing a better understanding of the emerging phenomenon in practice. Therefore, the strength of this work is, firstly, in its breadth and in the building of (tentative) bridges across a wide research gap, given the circumstances of scant and nascent research. Secondly, the work also offers a detailed and systematic articulation of mediator roles.

The main academic beneficiaries of this work include scholars in temporary use, architecture and participatory design, and potentially also urban sustainability transitions. Other audiences include architects, designers, other urban practitioners, and municipalities interested in developing approaches to support inclusive and adaptive forms of urban development and governance. Below, I will explain the main outcomes and contributions of this research linked to the different audiences.

A more abstract-level conceptual contribution of this research is the elaboration of the nature of mediation work in TU and its underlying dilemmas as essentially spatial, social and political. While this thesis draws on existing theoretical and conceptual arguments, it contributes to a clearer understanding of the complex, socio-political work in TU by bringing arguments together from different fields. From architecture, the thesis brings the understanding of emerging socio-politically engaged spatial work. From PD, it brings a nuanced, practice-oriented and micro-level understanding of conflicts and power issues inherent in collaboration between multiple actors in the public and urban realms. UST has been relevant for characterising such conflicts and tensions not only between individuals but also at different levels, clarifying the structural conditions, power asymmetries and the different social, economic and political positions of actor groups in-

volved. Furthermore, the literature on intermediation in UST has allowed a more detailed and systematic elaboration of *roles* in TU mediation. Overall, the bridging of related concepts from the different sets of literature to map out a common ground for further investigation of the understudied field of mediation in TU is itself a contribution.

An ‘intermediate-level’ (see Redström, 2017) conceptual contribution is the systematic and nuanced articulation of professional roles entailed in mediation through the framework of roles presented in Chapter 6. In the original papers and these introductory chapters, I have elaborated on the socio-political roles through different fields of literature and across two empirical studies. As a result, the thesis has developed categories and a vocabulary at different levels of abstraction in order to articulate the roles and activities. Furthermore, through the rich sets of empirical accounts provided in the papers, I have brought to life, illustrated and exemplified these ‘dry’, theoretically-generated roles in practice. These specific vocabularies and conceptual articulations of mediation developed in this thesis are new, particularly in a TU context.

The combination of two different epistemological standpoints in the two empirical studies is a practical contribution and a unique aspect of this research. The personal practice-based study and the qualitative interviews of other practitioners bring together ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ knowledge of a similar phenomenon and allow the development of refined and detailed knowledge of mediation work and its roles. At the same time, they support the identification of some common aspects of the roles from somewhat different contexts. While both the interview study of *Refill* and the practice-based study of *Kera* provided relevant contributions in the individual papers, their combination allows even more dimensions. The combination of theoretical categories and the empirical ‘thick descriptions’ based on insider and outsider perspectives form different dimensions of this research, which are potentially relevant to different academic and practitioner audiences.

Bringing these disciplinary and practical perspectives together in a TU context is a contribution to TU scholarship but also to other academic audiences. For scholars interested in architectural and design work, the systematic and nuanced elaborations of socio-politically engaged and spatially-oriented work provide a relevant conceptual and detailed understanding of changing expert work concerning urban planning and development. For PD scholars, the thesis provides possible extensions of areas where par-

ticipatory and collaborative design can be relevant. Compared to existing applications of PD, TU provides a spatially, temporally and socially extended domain, in which the work transverses different scales and involves multiple stakeholders across niche and regime levels in complex, 'live' settings.

A further audience for this research might be scholars in urban sustainability transitions. For this audience, the research provides applications of transitions thinking in a spatial context, which has been somewhat underrepresented in UST. The empirical studies here provide an example of a very rigid regime of urban planning and development and the application of the knowledge on intermediation in such a context. In addition, the nuanced description of mediator activities here adds a new dimension to the discussion on transitions and 'intermediation' in UST. While the vocabulary describing roles in UST is sometimes rather pompous and unrefined, the elaboration of mundane aspects of mediation work here demystifies and tones the discussion, and reveals the slowness and complexity of mediation work.

For practitioner audiences, such as architects, designers or other urban practitioners, the elaboration of mediation roles provides relevant knowledge of socio-political work, roles and competencies involved in managing and steering urban change, such as temporary use. By positioning mediation as a potential role for architects, I do not intend to suggest it as being the exclusive domain of architects only. On the contrary, as the elaborations of socio-political roles here indicate, mediation exceeds architects' traditional training and professional ethos - as well as the legally regulated or protected aspects of their work concerned with building design. Future professionals in this field will necessarily need cross-disciplinary training and collaboration. Nevertheless, some aspects of TU work benefit from architects' particular expertise and skills, such as spatial sensitivity, technological and legal knowledge, and the understanding of scale and planning process. At the same time, some of the socio-political roles and activities identified here connect more to contemporary PD, such as those related to 'framing and staging' the collaboration and negotiation between multiple actors, addressing conflicts, and fostering the agencies and skills of different participants. In addition, mediation work might benefit from competencies of many other disciplines, including communication, law, management, or real-estate business. Given the multiple competencies required in such work, it is also useful to remember that the terms 'mediator' and 'actor' here refer to both individuals and organisations. Thus,

mediating actors might be organisations or organisational units, including multidisciplinary teams.

As a practitioner, looking back at this doctoral research, I can say that the research has been beneficial for my own practice (and potentially also future practice) in many ways. For example, the literature reviews on the complex and challenging issues arising in practice have brought a deeper understanding, a more critical perspective on the complex political and power questions involved in TU, and an awareness of what types of changes may be possible to achieve with a given timeframe and conditions. In addition, investigating mediation roles beyond my own experience and in other contexts added a broader understanding of the possibilities and challenges and the necessary capabilities to develop in future. Having touched on different ways in which mediator organisations can be positioned and funded also helps in contemplating how mediation might be organised in the future.

Lastly, knowledge on mediation in TU can be very relevant for municipalities that aim at supporting adaptive, inclusive and collaborative approaches in urban development, such as temporary use. Municipalities may be interested in procuring mediation work or further developing such competence and roles within municipal organisations. Currently, many municipalities, particularly in Finland, lack the necessary resources and knowledge for handling such work. Therefore, the roles and activities elaborated here can be directly useful for municipalities to more fully comprehend the competencies and resources needed in such work as a prerequisite for successful procurement and briefing. This knowledge might be equally relevant to progressive property owners struggling with vacancy and willing to develop more sustainable approaches beyond the business as usual. However, insofar as mediation is a type of work procured or resourced by regime actors, this inevitably brings further questions concerning the mediators' agency to challenge such regimes.

7.2 Delimitations and recommendations for future research

Besides the opportunities made possible by the particular research design choices in this doctoral research, as discussed in Chapter 4, there are inevitable theoretical, methodological, and practical delimitations. Below, I will elaborate on these delimitations and suggest directions for future research.

Firstly, it has been beyond the scope of this thesis to go very deeply into the theoretical foundations of the four discourses involved. As the thesis transfers knowledge from academic fields and practice, it has not been feasible to explore individual discourses or their foundations in great depth. Instead, the thesis generates new knowledge by bringing together different discourses and practices. The choice of the three fields of scholarship (besides TU) is naturally also limited and influenced by academic and practical contexts (see Section 4.1). There may be other fields of scholarship also relevant for theorising and analysing mediation work and roles in TU, but these have been beyond the scope of this thesis.

Secondly, there are methodological limits inherent in practice-based and qualitative research concerning the chosen empirical methods in data collection and analysis and generating the framework of roles presented here, besides the particular benefits discussed in Section 4.3.3. As stated above, I acknowledge the situated, partial nature of this kind of knowledge production, the influence of subjectivity and normative values inherent in this type of research (particularly the practice-based study) and my dual role as a 'practitioner-researcher'. While the practice-based approach offered benefits in the *Kera* study, including unique access, deep involvement, as well as insider and expert knowledge, the time constraints of being a practitioner and the conditions set by the commissioner and property owners partly affected the scope and consistency of data collection. At the same time, the interview method in the *Refill* study also had its limits in terms of knowledge production. In addition, there were practical limitations in the *Refill* study, including time constraints of the respondents and some language barriers. Nevertheless, methodological triangulation between the two studies was a means to increase trustworthiness, decrease subjective influences and the limitations inherent in individual methods.

Given the methodological differences between the two empirical studies, as mentioned in Section 4.4.3, I acknowledge that the studies are not directly comparable. While the qualitative interviews and the practice-based study address mediation at a different level of depth, taking different epistemological standpoints, and in varying local contexts, they touch on related aspects of the same phenomenon. Despite the contextual variation, the empirical findings also relate to broader issues of urban sustainability transitions. The synthetic cross-examination done in these introductory chapters has had the purpose of generally discussing related aspects from the studies and papers together in relation to the conceptual themes and mediator roles identified in the sets of literature, thus adding breadth to the research beyond the individual studies.

Thirdly, the temporal and contextual scope of the empirical studies here is also limited. The study of *Kera* was bounded by the locally situated and unique conditions in a two-year project (including a particularly defining position of the private property owners, the local planning context and constraints concerning my position as a freelancer, limited involvement time-wise, and budget). However, together with the *Refill* study that addressed the work of mediators in other contexts, the overall research design allows for the interpretation of findings across a broader range of geographical and governance contexts, types of mediating organisations and timelines of mediation. As the framework of roles presented in Chapter 6 is theoretically generated, based on a larger array of empirical evidence (particularly that in intermediation) through literature reviews, the framework itself is intended to allow applicability across contexts.

The temporal scope of the two studies also limits the types of change that were possible to observe within this research. Section 6.2 provides examples of the scale and levels at which changes through mediation in *Kera* and *Refill* were observable. Changes occurred in operational models, contracts, legislation, and policies. In addition, learning, experimentation and collaboration processes contributed to generating new understanding and capabilities among actors concerning TU. Based on the broader potential of TU and related civic-based urban initiatives as argued in UST literature, such micro-processes of change described in this thesis can be seen as small steps within a longer process. The studies also demonstrate that the mediators' agency to achieve changes depends on their affiliation and the temporal scope of engagement. In the two-year project of *Kera*, my agency as

a freelance consultant was somewhat limited in this respect. At the same time, most of the *Refill* mediators had a more permanent or long-term position and affiliation to either public administration or real-estate regimes. Thus, the *Refill* study included more examples of mediators being able to influence structural issues over a longer period of time.

Concerning the individual sets of literature fields in parts of this doctoral research, as presented in the papers, each field has limits concerning its applicability and scope in relation to TU. For example, in Paper 4, the intermediation literature was used to develop a typology of roles, assessed against data from the *Kera* study. This analysis suggested that the scope of roles as articulated in the intermediation literature may not perfectly match temporary use mediation, even if most of the roles in UST were found quite relevant. Therefore, the additional cross-cutting examination in these introductory chapters was considered important. Notably, the framework of roles presented in Section 6.2 draws together aspects from all the sets of literature and both empirical studies to provide a more coherent understanding of socio-political roles in mediating temporary use. Nevertheless, the framework presented here should be seen as tentative, because it has not been peer-reviewed and published beyond these introductory chapters.

Given these limitations, there are multiple ways to continue research on TU mediation in the future. Recommended work might include expanding to other empirical studies of temporary use and mediation, involving different geographical and governmental contexts, other types or phases of temporary use and mediation and possibly more longitudinal scopes of research. Future work could also include applying other methods to study mediation. Concerning design research, a possible future extension of this research might involve going more profoundly into some specific roles described here, e.g. studying particular design methods relevant for performing such roles. Further recommended future work would include a deeper theoretical grounding of the roles presented here, expanding to other fields of literature for theorising TU mediation, or a deeper examination of the socio-political conditions. Besides focusing on mediation itself, relevant further research extensions might also touch on architectural education, with the aim of effectively preparing graduates for work in this developing professional field. Such research might include an audit of curricula in architecture schools to ensure they include a sufficient level of cross-disciplinary training and socio-politically relevant competencies, such as those implied in the elaboration of roles and activities presented in Chapter 6 and Paper 4.

Overall, this doctoral thesis draws important attention to the socio-political dimensions in emerging architectural design work in the context of urban development, such as TU mediation, and its broader potential to contribute to socio-ecological sustainability in cities. I argue that paying attention to the socio-political dimensions of work concerning our built environment would offer important insights for developing more adaptive, resource-efficient and inclusive approaches for designing, planning, operating and governing our built environments. As argued, such approaches may potentially contribute to a broader transition towards more sustainable urban development.

The elaboration of mediation roles and activities in this thesis provides some evidence, even if subtle and limited, as to how mediators may engage in stretching or even transforming some of the unsustainable premises, conventions and ‘rules’ of real-estate and planning regimes. This is particularly relevant in TU, given the complex set of interests involved in the formal deployment of temporary uses in many cities today. Here, the role of mediation seems all the more important in strengthening the agency of TU, for its part, to contribute to regime change in urban planning and development, rather than being inescapably mobilised to serve the agendas of existing regimes. Based on the evidence provided in this thesis, I argue that mediation is essential in addressing this controversy. However, the question needs to be more thoroughly investigated in future research. Therefore, the broad and integrated conceptual and empirical work proposed in this thesis is a necessary first step in mapping out a previously understudied area and laying the groundwork for future research concerning professional roles in sustainable urban development.

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Original research papers

Paper 1

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Architect/Designer as 'Urban Agent': A Case of Mediating Temporary Use in Cities

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ARCHITECT/DESIGNER AS ‘URBAN AGENT’: A CASE OF MEDIATING TEMPORARY USE IN CITIES

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, urban transformations have required new work approaches and roles for architects and designers. These expand beyond the design of physical objects, buildings or urban plans, to include the mediation of more complex and controversial processes and collaborations. Negotiation among various kinds of actors has become central, and this challenges traditional expert roles and power relations in architecture and design. This paper draws upon two cases of professional experience and ‘research through design’ to elaborate the role and work of architects/designers in mediating the temporary use of space. Temporary use is becoming a central and strategic component of urban development today, and it involves direct engagement of citizens and various local actors. In recent research, the importance of ‘mediators’ or ‘agents’ for temporary use has been identified but not explored in greater detail. We draw on participatory design and architecture discourses to conceptualize the architect/designer’s role in mediating temporary use, taking the concept of ‘urban agent’ as a point of departure.

INTRODUCTION

Urban planning is struggling to cope with a range of new urban phenomena. Societal and environmental challenges are impacting cities in various ways that call for more flexible planning and strategies for adaptable use of buildings and spaces (f.ex. Mäntysalo et al 2015, Krueger & Gibbs 2007). This puts pressure on traditional modes of urban planning and on business-as-usual prioritization of newly-built developments. Temporary use of space (TU) – understood as “temporary activation of vacant or underused land or buildings with no immediate development demand” (Lehtovuori & Ruoppila 2012: 30) – is becoming increasingly recognized as an approach to more flexible and resource-efficient urban development. Researchers recognize many potentials and benefits of TU as an agile approach and as a platform for active and direct engagement of locals (f. ex. Lehtovuori & Ruoppila 2012, Oswalt et al 2013). Planning for TU work, however, far exceeds the traditional competencies of professional architects (Oswalt & Misselwitz 2004) and there is a need to better understand their work and role in planning for TU.

‘Mediation’ is a term used in previous research to describe the emerging role of architect/designer specialized in TU (f.ex. Oswalt et al 2013). The term articulates the need for interaction among potential users, property owners and public authorities. However, we argue that this term does not fully capture the socio-spatial complexity and controversial, power-related aspects of the architect/designer role in TU.

Mediation of temporary use involves complex forms of negotiation among stakeholders with diverse interests at stake within power-laden processes of setting priorities and making decisions. Some discussions within contemporary participatory design and architecture discourses provide relevant characterizations of such work, particularly where such discussions overlap. The collaborative, dialogic and controversial nature of this

work is partially addressed within participatory design (PD), for example in contemporary discussions of PD work involving ‘things’, ‘infrastructuring’ and ‘agonistic space’. TU work also expands beyond the traditional role of a spatial designer, architect or planner, and challenges typical power relations and expert roles within planning and real estate management. Contemporary discussions of agency, power and expertise in architecture discourse are relevant here.

Drawing from such discussions in contemporary PD and architecture, our point of departure is the term ‘urban agent’ which we consider to be more apt than ‘mediation’, in capturing the complexity of the architect/designer role in TU. Oswalt and Misselwitz (2004) originally used the term ‘urban agent’ in the context of the temporary use of Palast der Republik in Berlin. In architecture discourse, the notion of ‘agency’ has further been developed to articulate issues of power and expertise in architecture (Awan et al 2011). Related concepts such as the ‘double agent’ and ‘urban curator’ are also relevant. Bridging across such discussions in PD and architecture here, we discuss examples and implications including power-related aspects of the architect/designer work and role in TU.

Methodologically, we draw in this paper upon personal experiences of professional work in TU. Two cases from the work of the first author – hereafter referred to as “I” – from the Helsinki urban region elaborate the work of mediating temporary use and implications for roles. These cases are now being incorporated into my doctoral studies following a ‘research through design’ approach (Koskinen et al 2011). This paper, thus, is a first elucidation of professional practice in terms of some relevant literature and preliminary analysis.

ELABORATING THE WORK AND ROLES IN MEDIATING TEMPORARY USE

To further exemplify the architect/designer role in TU, my own professional practice has included a variety of tasks, concerns and issues. This includes building, selecting and sustaining actor networks and empowering them to build their activities, negotiating with a variety of stakeholders over controversial issues, enabling and coordinating the temporary use of space, taking care of public communications and running various related workshops. This work is riddled with contradictory and competing interests. Throughout, issues of power are implicit in how selections, interpretations, priorities and decisions are made, how goals are aligned, by whom, and for what/whose benefit.

Below we will discuss this work and role in relation to concepts from PD and architecture. These concepts are helpful to understand and explore themes and issues, which have emerged from preliminary analysis of cases from my work practice in TU. These include the open-ended, complex and controversial nature of the work as well as issues of power, agency and expertise.

CONCEPTUALIZING THE WORK OF MEDIATING TEMPORARY USE

In mainstream participatory design, work is often characterized as facilitating participation processes with end-users in product or service design projects. However, some contemporary approaches within PD discuss more open-ended processes characterized by long-term collaboration and complex negotiation with various kinds of stakeholders and conflicts of interests (f.ex. Miettinen & Hyysalo in review), particularly as PD overlaps with design for social innovation (Hillgren et al 2011, Mazé 2014). It is in these discussions that the concerns of temporary use overlap with those of PD, and PD becomes relevant for conceptualizing the work of mediation in TU.

To grasp the *open-ended* and *processual* nature of PD work, recent discussions involving Actor Network Theory have conceptualized the social as well as material design work and the expanding spatial and temporal scale of PD. Ehn, for example, has discussed a shift in design from ‘objects’ to ‘**things**’, referring to the etymology of the word from Pre-Christian Nordic governing assemblies. Things, as socio-material assemblies of humans and non-humans around matters of concern or controversies (Ehn 2008), can also characterize the networks, collaborations and negotiations central to TU. While related to material/spatial design concerns, the work of TU is also social in its network building, communicating and negotiating.

The notion of ‘**infrastructuring**’ has been developed in PD to further articulate an open-ended approach. Infrastructuring is seen as an ongoing process of building long-term relationships and collaboration with various stakeholders and aligning participants and resources around shared things (Ehn 2008, Björgvinsson et al, 2010). In the context of Malmö Living Labs, Björgvinsson et al argue: “Infrastructuring entangles and intertwines potentially controversial ‘*a priori* infrastructure activities’ (like selection, design, development, deployment, and enactment), with ‘everyday design activities in actual use’ (like mediation, interpretation and articulation), as well as ‘design in use’ (like adaptation, appropriation, tailoring, re-design and maintenance)” (Björgvinsson et al 2010: 3). This characterization is also apt for TU and further highlights the controversial nature of the work.

Concepts such as ‘**agonistic space**’ further clarify this issue, in which design/architecture has a role in addressing *controversies* rather than achieving consensus (Mouffe 2000, Björgvinsson et al 2010, Hillgren et al 2011, Keshavarz & Mazé 2013). In TU, mediation involves handling controversies among multiple stakeholder groups, each pursuing different narrow interests. In creating the conditions for TU, which in Finland is an emerging practice, various controversies often need to be overcome. Thus the mediator has a leading role in driving processes of

selection, interpretations and interventions, and steering the stakeholders' interactions and views. Whether or not the work succeeds in producing a concrete outcome, it always involves discussion and debate among different parties, which may through time lead to new understanding, new policies and practices.

While 'things', 'infrastructuring' and 'agonistic space' are particularly useful in elucidating the social work of PD and TU, further dimensions of power, material and spatial issues are at stake. For example, discussions of agonistic space elaborate the *non-human entities and agencies* in the work of handling contrasting views and agendas. In PD, 'non-human actors' are typically design artifacts, for example as used in design games (f.ex. Ehn 2008). TU, however, requires a broader understanding of the non-human aspects. Besides design materials or physical spaces, in TU, regulations and policies are key non-human participants. These can often be very controversial as there are no regulations tailored for temporary use in Finland. Thus, the interpretation of regulations (done by humans) becomes an important – and powerful – aspect in the work of TU.

These outlined concepts are useful to elucidate the complex socio-material work of mediating temporary use. It is much more than facilitation or mediation, but a complex, open-ended, and controversial process, involving the creation, interpretation and steering of diverse publics, human and non-human actors.

CONCEPTUALIZING THE 'URBAN AGENT' AND OTHER POTENTIAL ROLES

From an architectural point of view, temporary use challenges a traditionally space-centered understanding. Like contemporary PD, TU is also a socially, culturally and politically engaged practice. Within recent alternative architectural discourse, relevant conceptions of practice are emerging.

The primarily spatial expertise of the architect/designer is challenged in formulations of their role as '**urban curator**'. In contrast to the traditional work of master-planning, Petrescu (2005) sees participatory architecture and planning as a curatorial practice. She argues that the urban curator is a mediator rather than a master, whose role is to connect and align interests. Further, Schalk describes how, in urban curating, "the role of the architect has shifted from the creator of objects to the mediator between actors, forces, processes and narratives" (Schalk 2007: 159). Seen as 'architect-user' the architect may even lose control and become one of the participants (Petrescu, 2005). Such concepts further develop the mediation by articulating power-related issues of expertise, mastery and control.

Complementing our point of departure in the term 'urban agent', notions of '**spatial agency**' further articulate agency itself. Elaborating this via interpretations of Actor Network Theory and Giddens (1987), Awan et al (2011) shift attention from the spatial product of architecture to politically and

socially-situated processes. Dictionary definitions of 'agency' point to the capacity of an actor to act in a given environment, or the capacity of exerting power. The 'spatial agent', on the other hand, is defined by Awan et al as "one who effects change through the *empowerment* of others, allowing them to engage in their spatial environments in ways previously unknown or unavailable to them, opening up new freedoms and potentials as a result of reconfigured social space" (Awan et al 2011: 32, our italics). Thus, the concept of 'spatial agent' broadens the role not only in terms of the social and political context of the work but also regarding whom architects serve as agents, including the agency of those others.

Architecture differs from design in that its roles and responsibilities are not only regulated by tradition and culture but also by professional and legal codes. For example, the UK definition of architect's role, as stated in the Client Architect Agreement, is to "*act as the client's agent for the project and as required under the selected building contract*" (Dodd 2011: 55, our italics). The formal import of the architectural role entails particular attention to and theorization of roles in architectural discourse (Mazé 2007), in which issues of expertise and power are explored and debated.

The responsibility of the architect as 'spatial agent', for example, is argued to include others than the paying client. To challenge the formally-defined role of the architect, Dodd (2011) and Muf (2001) have further developed the notion '**double agent**' to depict their daily struggle between delivering outcomes to a paying client and pursuing other socially, politically and culturally-relevant goals. This articulation is an important characterization of the actual work of the architect/designer (especially in the context of TU), that is, simultaneously working on commissions from clients and, at the same time, working on behalf of others that are sometimes opposed. This notion, thus, further elucidates the complexity and politics of agency, and complicates the role of architect/designer as both an 'activist' as well as an 'entrepreneur' (Muf 2001, Dodd 2011).

EXPERTISE AND POWER IN MEDIATING TEMPORARY USE

The mediator of temporary use does not don either the mantle of "the expert" nor the "professional" in a traditional sense. For example as concerned with 'things', 'infrastructuring' and 'agonistic space', mediating TU involves complex and controversial social, spatial and regulatory work in a process that is open-ended and involves diverse actors, agencies and expertise.

The role and responsibility of the architect/designer in such work exceeds that of formal definitions of the architect/designer role. As will be further elaborated through cases of temporary use below, many kinds of expertise are required, including that of a spatial designer, co-designer, negotiator, communicator,

advertiser, legal expert, digital engineer, urban planner and so on. The different kinds of expertise of participants and actors in the process must also be valued, without undermining certain professional competencies that are needed. Building on the term 'urban agent' as introduced in TU discourse to deepen and expand the notion of 'mediation', discussions of 'urban curator', 'spatial agency' and 'double agent' further elaborate how the architect/designer must negotiate issues of expertise and power in their work.

Through these discussions, the expanded nature of TU work can be articulated along with the role of the architect/designer, both in terms of what is the context of design, whom the architect/designer serves as an agent and what kinds of expertise are needed.

CASES OF KALASATAMA AND KERA: EXPERIENCES AS 'URBAN AGENT'

Examples from two cases below further elucidate the different concepts and roles discussed above. In addition, they further specify different tasks related to the mediation work, thereby addressing certain typical problems or gaps that I have identified in my analysis of temporary use within urban development.

The cases discussed here from the urban region of Helsinki are: Kalasatama Temporary (2009-11) in Helsinki, and Temporary Kera (2016-) in the city of Espoo. Kalasatama Temporary revitalized a former harbor outdoor area through temporary use while a large-scale residential and mixed-use neighborhood construction was started (see Lehtovuori & Ruoppila 2012, Vestermann Olsen 2017, Hernberg 2012). Temporary Kera is an ongoing project that aims to breathe new life to a logistics and business area of Kera, built in 1970-1990s, where the vacancy rate of offices is high.

These cases are from my own work as an architect/designer, in which I have worked professionally with urban development and temporary use for over 9 years. These projects have been brought into my PhD research, conducted through retrospective reflection (upon Kalasatama) and qualitative methods of documentation (in Kera). In my ongoing research, I follow a methodology of 'research through design' informed by qualitative research (Koskinen et al 2011) to analyze my own work practice. Both reflections and documentation (including notes, audio, photo and video recordings) are the basis of descriptions presented here. The discussion is based on preliminary reflection and analysis, which will be further theorized in a doctoral research context. In presenting examples below, I have used headings phrased in verb form. Thus, I try to formulate the work and role as active tasks through which I relate to the literature and concepts from PD and architecture discussed above.

KALASATAMA: BUILDING NETWORKS AS URBAN CURATING/INFRASTRUCTURING, NEGOTIATING CONTROVERSIES IN AN AGONISTIC SPACE

One of the main tasks in these TU projects has been to identify, select and connect actors and potential users of space into networks, and facilitate its long-term development. This has similarities to 'infrastructuring', where long-term networks are sustained, and the collaborative platform-building of 'urban curating'. In parallel, the mediator role has involved handling controversies between various parties, which relates to the concept of 'agonistic space'.

In Kalasatama Temporary, Part Architects, where I worked at the time, acted as a coordinator of temporary use of a former harbor area. The project was commissioned by the city of Helsinki.

Part's strategy, as coordinators of temporary use, was to create an enabling infrastructure, which would include minimum necessities for local people and urban groups to start organizing activities and then take responsibility of their own projects. Participation was launched through a public ideation brunch, in which 400-500 people took part. Then we started building a network of actors by contacting local urban groups that we had identified being active at the time. We helped them to organize the first public activities in the harbor. This work was not only social but also involved basic physical structures necessary for the activities: a water tank for urban gardeners, recycled marine containers to provide indoor spaces, electricity for events. Our aim was to create a snowball effect: through the initial events, people started visiting the harbor and got inspired, then more people wanted to start running activities, and Kalasatama gained popularity.

The nature of this work was new for municipal departments and constructors involved, but it also challenged our expert roles as architects. The event-like and spontaneous manner of the activities was rather unfamiliar to urban planning, and the construction department had to be convinced not to treat the whole area only as building site and make the place safe for visitors. Thus our mediatory role involved continuous negotiations. We facilitated communication between the temporary users and public authorities, but also negotiated between different municipal departments, and questioned certain conventions or interpretations about policies or land use. In many occasions the spontaneous character of the activities was difficult to match with the slow, risk-avoiding culture of the public administration. In this way, TU became not only a platform and infrastructure for collaboration between the actors, but also an agonistic space among a larger group of stakeholders, where various controversies over policies and conventions were handled.



Figure 1: The ideation brunch in Kalasatama was for most people their first chance to visit the empty harbor. Photo: Part



Figure 2: The opening of Kalasatama pedestrian and cyclist route in 2010.



Figure 3: Urban art projects, like this one by Napa Illustrations, were one of the first ways to invite people to visit the harbor.

KERA: DOUBLE AGENT NEGOTIATING OVER CONFLICTING INTERESTS AND POWER IN AN AGONISTIC SPACE

A core role for the mediator of temporary use is to mediate between the potential user and property owner, take care of contracts and build trust, responding to the needs of both parties (f.ex. Oswalt et al 2013). This can sound like the role of a traditional real-estate agent but, in my experience, this mediating task is more complex. It involves various kinds of stakeholders who have conflicting interests but also unbalanced power relations.



Figure 4: Self-built skate park in Kalasatama. Photo: Johannes Romppanen



Figure 5: Solar Kitchen Restaurant served food prepared with solar cookers. Photo: Johannes Romppanen



Figure 6: Opening of 'Ihana' container café in Kalasatama.

The **Temporary Kera** project is commissioned by the city of Espoo and run by my company Urban Dream Management. Kera is a quiet business and logistics area, which in future will be undergoing new development. Through temporary use, local actors are invited to revitalize the area before the long-term development takes place. The buildings in Kera are owned by private investors, which brings many challenges compared to publicly owned spaces. A common interest among property owners, potential users and the public sector is not always easy to find. In Kera, the negotiations

concerning the possibility of temporary use have proven to be challenging. TU as an approach differs from the traditional real estate business logic both in the sense of financial concerns and human resources operating small or short-term contracts (Hernberg, 2014). The municipality has a strong mission and understanding concerning the socio-cultural benefits of TU but in the end, property owners have the power over deciding whether the spaces can be opened for TU and for what price.

The stage of negotiation in Kera can be described as ‘agonistic space’, where the ongoing discussions hopefully will grow seeds of new approaches in futures, even if Kera would fail in temporary use. In building these negotiations, the mediator has an important and not neutral role in many respects: selecting who will be invited and which views are present, steering the discussion and thus influencing how the issues will be handled. People with different kinds of power take part: ownership of space, expert or leader position through their work roles, power over urban development, and so on. On the other hand, the potential users of space can only employ their agency if accepted by the property owners and if they have enough financial means, even if their potential would be recognized by the municipality.

KERA AND KALASATAMA: NEGOTIATING WITH NON-HUMAN ACTORS

A further important aspect in bridging PD and TU is the role and type of non-human actors involved. The public sector usually plays an important role in temporary use, either as client (as in both cases here), in some cases property owner (as in the case of Kalasatama) and always as provider and interpreter of *regulations and policies* that provide constraints for TU regarding health or safety issues, fire escapes, air conditioning, or the purpose of space, for example. These regulations and policies are powerful non-human actors. As there are no regulations concerning the “temporary” as such, regulation is subject to interpretations, which vary between municipalities and between individuals.



Figure 7: Street view in Kera. Photo: Susanna Ahola



Figure 8: Empty warehouse in Kera.



Figure 9 + 10: Besides negotiating with real estate owners, the mediation work in Kera has involved participatory workshops with potential users and other experts.



Figure 11: 50 people participated first Temporary Kera workshop, which was held in one of the empty buildings in the area. Photos 8-11: Johannes Romppanen

The Kera project involves negotiations about one typical bottleneck for temporary use: the official definition of the purpose of space. The municipality has collected considerable fees for changing the purpose of space in the documents, for example a warehouse space into sports use. For most temporary users, who are in need of affordable space, the fees will become an immediate barrier. Through this project, negotiations have been started between different municipal departments to discuss principles for dealing with this issue. This is also a typical controversy between municipal departments: the ones driving TU and the municipal building authority that controls the fees and permissions.

The architect's expertise typically includes responsibilities for following and applying building regulations. However, the mediatory work of TU involves not only knowing about regulations but also using this knowledge to question and develop current regulations, as there are not yet common policies for TU. If new regulatory policies are achieved, this can have an important systemic impact.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, the point of departure for exploring the new work and role of architects/designers in mediating temporary use is the concept of 'urban agent'. PD discourse helps to conceptualize the work practice of mediating TU and architecture discourse to elucidate the expanded and socio-material as well as spatial role of the architect/designer. Through reflection on my own professional and research practice, I have articulated common issues across different discourses, which can provide conceptual as well as practical for TU as an emerging and expanding field. My empirical experience as a practitioner has revealed perspectives upon some theoretical gaps that are not yet fully recognized, well-understood, or bridged across relevant literatures.

Participatory design discourse helps to understand the work of mediating temporary use as a complex, dialogic practice, which deals with not only collaboration but also controversies, in an open-ended process. On the other hand, TU contributes to the contemporary PD discussion of a complex, spatially and temporally extended field of practice, in which the extent of participation is much broader than facilitation and where further meanings of 'non-human actors' are involved.

Architecture discourse further helps to understand how the new roles for architects/designers are developing and expanding beyond the legally-defined or traditionally-understood roles. This discourse opens up questions of agency, power and expertise. The mediating practice involves negotiation between various actors who have different power positions, and on the other hand the potential actors who can only use their agency in this context if given access to spaces. The

mediator of temporary use has to serve different "clients", not only the paying one, but also influence the views of the powerful stakeholders in order to empower the powerless ones. The mediator's role is far from neutral, instead the mediator is actively pursuing certain goals (mostly but not only those provided by the client), through careful planning and preparing of negotiations, workshops and communications, through making selections in network-building and through interpreting regulations.

The analysis and conceptualization here is preliminary and much more knowledge is needed to understand the phenomenon of temporary use and the challenges and opportunities it brings to urban planning. TU offers a direct channel of engagement compared to traditional and prescribed ways of participation in planning, which have often been criticized as tokenistic (Arnstein 1969, Till 2005, Boenstra & Boelens 2011). Moreover, TU can be seen as an arena of fundamental reinvention of urban values (Lehtovuori & Ruoppila 2017, Harvey 2012). Therefore the work of TU can be seen as a inescapably bound up in challenging and changing the traditional power relations in urban planning and opening up new ways for bottom-up development complementing those that are traditionally top-down and 'master'-planned.

In this context, the urban agent's role is necessary. Through handling controversies, the typical dynamics in the real estate or urban development process can be challenged and changed. The mediation of temporary use may open up urban or real estate development to new kinds of groups and empower new actors to use their expertise and exert their agency. There are also limits to the architect/designer power – final power over decisions still typically remains with property owners or municipalities. As understood in the concept of 'agonism', however, the possibility for those previously unseen and unheard to reconfigure the process is not only a basic condition of democratic participation (Keshavarz and Mazé, 2013) but is an opening for TU to redesign the conditions for architecture and planning.

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Paper 2

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Agonistic Temporary Space – Reflections on ‘Agonistic Space’ across Participatory Design and Urban Temporary Use

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ABSTRACT

Recent discussions in Participatory Design around infrastructuring and particularly ‘agonistic space’ offer useful concepts relevant to other fields facing similar issues regarding public settings and related conflicts and contestation among stakeholders. In this paper, ‘agonistic space’ is used as a conceptual lens to discuss overlapping issues across participatory design and ‘temporary use’ of space, which is an emerging approach in architecture/planning addressing urban change and land use. This paper focuses in particular on the socio-spatial struggles characterizing ‘expanded PD’ and temporary use. Furthermore, concepts and issues within discourses and practices of temporary use are identified, which can further expand PD discussions of ‘agonistic space’. The paper thus identifies connections between the two practices, which can be a basis for future further research.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **Human-centered computing** → **Interaction design** → Interaction design process and methods → Participatory design

KEYWORDS

Infrastructuring; Agonistic space; Temporary use of space; Architecture, Urban Planning; Participatory planning

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1 INTRODUCTION

Participatory Design (PD) has been expanding from workplaces and workshops to more public settings. Living labs, for example, are more complex, open and ‘live’ spaces, yet intentionally still somewhat controlled and protected. Such settings, in this paper referred to as ‘expanded PD’, have entailed new understandings and discourses concerning a shift in PD from the design of physical objects towards ‘things’ understood as assemblies of humans and non-humans around matters of concern or controversies [1,2]. ‘Infrastructuring’, a key concept in the expanding landscape of PD today, is understood as staging and maintaining these assemblies in open-ended collaboration processes [3,4].

The notion of ‘agonistic space’ is discussed in relation to such infrastructuring processes, which involve a variety of stakeholders. The concept of ‘agonism’ [5,6], explored as ‘agonistic space’ [3,4], ‘agonistic design things’ [7], and ‘design for dissensus’ [8], clarifies how design can address controversial issues and allow a polyphony of voices rather than aiming at consensus. These discussions can be usefully applied to new areas of discourse and practice beyond PD as well, such as ‘temporary use’ of space (TU). In recent decades, TU has emerged as an approach to more flexible, resource-efficient and inclusive urban planning [9-11]. TU is understood as “temporary activation of vacant or underused land or buildings with no immediate development demand” [12, p.30] and as “low-cost adaptations of the urban fabric that also involve circumvention of conventional urban planning rules and approaches.” [13, p.2] (Fig. 1-3).

The expanded PD discussion bears many similarities and overlaps to that in TU. Particularly the concept of ‘agonistic space’ is useful in understanding the contradicting interests, conflicts and tensions between different stakeholder groups in TU. As a channel for local participation, TU broadens the scope of actors who can be involved in urban development [14-17]. Thus, PD discussions are highly useful and relevant not only in TU but also more broadly in participatory planning, in which design and architecture have been criticized for being too much driven by consensus and thus not genuinely democratic [18-21].

Particularly issues around the distribution of power and including emergent publics through experimental practices [22-23], are related to agonism and interesting to explore across PD and TU literatures. Despite many overlaps, however, the conditions in which PD and TU occur are quite different, and thus TU also provides further opportunities to reflect upon and

expand discussions of 'agonistic space'. In comparison to the expanded, 'live' and public contexts of expanded PD, TU occurs in even more complex and uncontrollable, real-life urban settings, in which many formal and informal processes are underway simultaneously, and diverse stakeholder groups are involved in different ways (such as temporary users, property owners, authorities and politicians). As TU is related to broader issues of urban planning and municipal policy, various administrative and political decisions have a big influence on TU [24-25]. In comparison to PD, particularly spatial and temporal aspects of TU provide opportunities to expand discussions on 'agonistic space'.

This paper focuses in particular on the socio-spatial struggles characterizing expanded PD and TU. The concept of 'agonistic space' is a conceptual lens for discussing aspects of such struggles and identifying similar/different issues as discussed across PD and TU literatures. Furthermore, the paper draws upon relevant discourses in TU to further challenge and develop discussions on 'agonistic space' in PD. The aim of the paper is not a robust theoretical analysis but the identification of connections between the practices, as a basis for my future PhD research, in which I explore TU through my 'Research through Design' practice [25] (Fig.1-3).

2 ELABORATING TEMPORARY USE AS 'AGONISTIC SPACE'

The concepts of 'infrastructuring' and 'agonistic space' discussed in PD offer useful and important aspects that are relevant for understanding and conceptualizing TU. For example, 'infrastructuring' conceptualizes the mediatory role of design in an open-ended process of building long-term collaboration with various participants [1, 3]. 'Agonistic space' further clarifies how design can have a role in addressing controversies and conflicting voices among a variety of stakeholders [1,4]. 'Agonistic space' is useful in understanding TU, which inherently involves large groups of stakeholders with competing interests and agendas [25]. Particularly power-relations in TU are identified as one area that needs further theorizing [13, 26]. However, there are also certain characteristics of TU relevant to 'agonistic space', which are not discussed in PD and thus need to be further elaborated, particularly the spatial and temporal aspects. Space – as in 'agonistic space' – is usually addressed rather metaphorically, whereas in TU, physical space itself is at the heart of tensions and conflicts, as space is the object of negotiation, regulation, planning and ownership. Temporally, TU projects tend to have a longer timeframe than in PD, and they are further related to even longer term urban planning.

In this section, I will first elaborate aspects of agonism that are relevant across PD and TU, particularly those related to conflicts, distribution of power and experimentation. Then I will expand to spatial and temporal aspects of TU that need to be more fully considered and developed.



Figures 1-3: As an architect I have been working professionally for 10 years with TU. The cases in fig 1-3 are now the subject of my 'Research through Design' practice [25]. Fig. 1,3: "Kalasatama Temporary" revitalised a former harbour area in Helsinki, Finland, through curated events and citizen activities. © Johannes Romppanen. Fig. 2: Temporary Kera looked for solutions to reinvigorate vacant office and logistics spaces in Espoo, Finland. © Maarit Kytöharju / Meidän Festivaali

2.1 Aspects of agonism relevant across PD/TU

PD discourse has a history of trying to conceptualize the socio-political dimensions of participation in design, drawing on different concepts across a range of social and political philosophies. Early in PD there were several approaches informed by Marxism [27] and, more recently, by theories of agonism and dissensus from political philosophy. Related and other theories inform parallel discussions in planning and architecture. The sections below highlight some conceptual intersections/connections between PD and TU.

2.1.1 Acknowledging and exposing conflicts

Discussions on 'agonism' in PD and related discussions in TU open up the capacity of design and architecture/planning, to open up spaces of contestation, and expose ongoing conflicts between competing value systems. The concept of 'agonism' articulates a condition of disagreement and confrontation between interests and actors in society, which is seen as fundamental to democracy [5-6]. Consensus, on the other hand, is seen as a stabilization of power, which always entails some form of exclusion, and thus it is problematic as a goal driving

participation. Keshavarz and Mazé point out that conflicts and contradictions are “labeled as threats rather than understood as the essential condition of democracy itself. In this way, consensual forms of political participation can be argued to be incapable of achieving more equality and emancipation” [8, p.11].

The problem is also identified by critics of formal participatory planning, who argue that official, legally required forms of participation are often “tokenistic” [21] and aim for consensus and legitimization of already made decisions [14]. Thus, if participation is disguised as democratic, it is used in fact as a means of control and a way to depoliticize planning [18-19].

Many authors suggest ways for design to foster dissent and contention within participatory processes, such as in ‘agonistic space’. DiSalvo’s definition of ‘adversarial design’, which also builds on agonism, is illuminating: “Perhaps the most basic purpose of adversarial design is to make these spaces of confrontation and provide resources and opportunities for others to participate in contestation” [28, p.5].

In TU discourse, issues similar to ‘agonism’ are addressed as ‘conflicts’, in discussions on ‘right to the city’ and ‘differential space’, drawing from for example Marxist philosopher and sociologist Lefebvre [23, 29-32]. TU’s potential to address conflicts is linked to its capacity to increase and differentiate participation in urban change and land use. Németh and Langhorst discuss the capacity of TU “to expose the ongoing conflicts and contestations between competing value systems, interests, agendas and stakeholders, be they economic, social, ecological or cultural” [33, p.147]. Hillbrandt further points out how temporary uses can be sites of resistance and insurgency, where alternative sets of values can be demonstrated and formal planning decisions questioned [14].

2.1.2 (Re)distribution of power

‘Agonistic space’, and related concepts such as ‘agonistic design things’, are a useful lens for examining and negotiating the (re)distribution of power among stakeholders, which is identified a key issue in PD and also TU literature. In design for social innovation, Emilson & Hillgren discuss “whether an agonistic design thing can be a kind of extended knowledge alliance that can include more heterogeneous actors and, consequently, their knowledge and their experiences” [7, p.65]. They also argue “that an agonistic design thing might be of relevance when engaging in social innovation, and that this requires redistributing power and resources” [Ibid, citing 34].

In TU, tensions related to power, ownership and access are evident. For example, the redistribution of power in handing over temporary spaces to / from users are key points of tension. Temporary use empowers those actors that are traditionally excluded from urban planning decisions and occupation [33]. In a standby point of urban development, the users of temporary spaces can be transferred the power over the use and maintenance of space [23]. However, this legitimization of people and activities is challenged if temporary uses are suspended in favor of more profitable development [23,31,33]. The criticism concerning exploitation of temporary use(rs) views

TU ultimately as an instrument for commercial development and gentrification, which inevitably leads to displacement of the temporary users [22,31,36,37].

TU discourse is quite polarized in this respect and more nuanced understandings are called for [13,26,31,35]. Thus, ‘agonistic space’ provides a useful lens for exposing and further addressing the tensions and dynamics between empowerment and exploitation, experimentation and displacement in TU, in more nuanced and detailed dimensions.

2.1.3 Alternative visions through experimentation

Experimentation is a further element that connects expanded PD and TU. Experiments and prototypes are discussed as an integral part of how PD can address agonism and how emergent publics can be acknowledged and included. Similarly, TU is identified as an experimental approach that can challenge formal urban planning and which has potential to create ‘alternative urban futures’ [17, p. 506] through experimental activity.

In the context of Malmö Living Labs, Hillgren et al [4] discuss prototypes as ‘agonistic space’, where ‘things’ can be acted out, revealing questions, controversies and opportunities that can have impact for social change in the long term, even if they might not be able to produce tangible outcomes in the short term [see also 7, 38]. Binder et al suggest an approach of ‘democratic design experiments’: “Hence, participatory design, or rather collaborative design practices, may well be seen as democratic design experiments extending the forms of mediation and representation in politics through *thinging* and the making of publics” [39, p.156]. Thus, experimentation serves as a channel to expose controversial matters and to give voice to those that are usually unheard.

Temporary use is similarly characterized as an experimental approach into urban development. Németh and Langhorst see TU as an “instrument to encourage more realistic, pragmatic, and incremental approaches to urban transformation” [33, p.149], which accommodates testing of a wide range of uses and their effects. In this way, they suggest that “spatial planning and design could begin to operate more in terms of a continuous editing process of urban transformation” (ibid). This experimental and iterative approach is linked to participation: “Urban vacant land may render visible the role of the neighborhood resident as co-author of the spaces and places they inhabit and as empowered participants in urban development processes” (ibid).

These above discussed aspects of conflict, (re)distribution of power and creating alternative visions through experimentation are examples of how PD and TU discourses potentially overlap regarding ‘agonism’ even if different theoretical frames and vocabularies are used. However, there are aspects of TU that are not adequately discussed in PD and thus TU can further help elaborating and deepening the discussion on ‘agonistic space’. In the next section I will discuss the spatial and temporal aspects in TU, which need to be more fully considered and developed concerning ‘agonistic space’.

2.2 Expanded spatial and temporal aspects of temporary use

As discussed above, there are interesting and revealing conceptual overlaps between discourses of TU and extended PD. Yet, the conditions in which PD and TU occur are quite different. Thus, TU also provides opportunities to challenge and expand discussions on 'agonistic space', as shortly outlined below in relation to some of the spatio-temporal aspects of TU.

2.2.1 Spatial dimensions of temporary use

Physical spatial dimensions of TU are particularly interesting concerning 'agonistic space'. In PD, 'agonistic space' might be understood to refer to space on a conceptual level, as in 'design space' [40] rather than a physical space. In TU, on the other hand, physical space is the concrete site of agonism itself as the place, where temporary use activity occurs, but also as the object of negotiation, regulation, planning, ownership, interpretation, and so on, as will be explained in paragraphs below.

TU involves negotiation about access and ownership to/of space. The users of temporary space gain temporary "ownership" or power over the use of space (within limits) [23, 33]. Affordable space can enable new activity and open up possibilities to groups such as art and culture, new business, youth, immigrants and so on [11]. However, for what purpose the space can be used, by whom, how long, for what conditions, etc. becomes an object of regulation and negotiation, where authorities and owners have decision-making power [24-25].

The physical qualities of space can inspire users and prompt ideas on how it can be used, but also restrict the activity through regulations and technical requirements. Use of space is regulated in the zoning plan and building codes. Temporary use is an interesting case concerning regulations, at least in Finland, as there are no specific regulations concerning the temporary. Thus, regulations are subject to interpretation and can be negotiated, but also used by the authorities as a tool to execute power [24-25].

Agonism in TU can thus materialize in specific tangible and spatial as well as social interactions regarding ownership, regulations, conflicting values and goals and the role of TU in longer-term planning and development.

2.2.2 Expanded temporal aspects of TU and planning

Temporary use of space is usually connected to longer-term urban (spatial) planning of an area. Understanding agonism is key here, as TU can be an important way to introduce and handle agonistic issues concerning planning and participation.

Planning also gives a further temporal dimension to TU, which is mainly considered 'short-term' from urban planning perspective, which impacts decades of future ahead. Yet, what is considered 'short term' in planning context is much longer-term than 'long-term' in PD discussions concerning 'agonistic space' and infrastructuring. The timeframe of TU can vary from weeks to years or even decades.

The word 'temporary use' or 'temporary land use' itself is open to debate. Some criticize the term 'temporary use' as dismissive, arguing that the term "has real impacts on policy and

planning decisions", leading to 'temporary use' being considered secondary to market-driven development [35, pp.38-39]. In this way, the intrinsic values of TU as 'differential space' (and thus, 'agonistic space') are not acknowledged properly. Whether TU can have real value in exposing alternative views and critical discussion about planning decisions, or genuinely serving as a tool for experimenting the future, is not quite clear.

These spatial and temporal aspects of TU open up very concrete challenges in terms of ownership and access, legal / structural factors, conflicting values and goals, and temporal dimensions. All these are also connected to broader issues of conflicts and distribution of power among different stakeholders, as well as the role of TU in experimentation and creating alternative urban visions. The physical temporary space itself, with its limitations and possibilities, can be seen as a very concrete 'agonistic space', where diverse and alternative voices, practices and visions can be expressed and prototyped. Thus, TU as 'agonistic temporary space' has potential to expose controversial issues about urban planning, development and policy for critical discussion and to make spaces where disagreements and confrontations can be handled in productive ways.

3 CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, I have discussed how concepts from participatory design, particularly that of 'agonistic space', are useful in understanding and conceptualizing issues that are under-explored within the discourse on temporary use, such as the conflicts related to power relations and experimentation in TU. This paper has focused on complementary relations between expanded PD and TU, including overlaps, gaps and differences, where notions of agonism and related 'designerly' approaches are useful. I have further opened up the discussion to expanded spatial and temporal aspects of TU, which provide opportunities for broader understanding of 'agonistic space', from which PD might also learn.

These conceptual considerations regarding 'agonistic space' in TU also open up more concrete and practical questions. For example, agonism in TU can materialize in tangible spatial as well as social interactions, such as the following: 1. Handing over the ownership/power to/from users in the beginning and/or end of TU process, and related contracts, 2. Interpreting regulations, which are tailored to concern the 'permanent', 3. Conflicting values and goals between users, owners and planners, 4. Decision-making within the municipality, f.ex. building authorities' vs. cultural services' views and goals. PD approaches building on 'agonism' can be a way to bridge conflicts and expose controversial matters in these situations. Therefore, design interventions in concrete situations such as the above are further areas to explore relations between PD and TU in my future research.

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Paper 3

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Mediating 'Temporary Use' of Urban Space: Accounts of Selected Practitioners

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MEDIATING 'TEMPORARY USE' OF URBAN SPACE: ACCOUNTS OF SELECTED PRACTITIONERS

Hella Hernberg

ABSTRACT

'Temporary use' of vacant space is becoming increasingly recognized as an approach towards more flexible, experimental, and resource-efficient urban development and as a channel for local initiatives and participation. In recent research, the importance of 'mediators' for temporary use has been identified but not explored in greater detail. The mediation of temporary use can be seen as an emerging approach and practice for architects, designers, or urban planners. This work expands beyond the material or spatial aspects of traditional architects' or planners' work, as it includes more sociopolitical dimensions, such as handling complex relations and collaborations among various actor groups.

This article is based on four qualitative interviews of selected established and experienced temporary use mediators in European cities: Ghent, Bremen, Nantes, and Riga. To elucidate the everyday work, emerging competencies, and challenges found in the emerging area of temporary use mediation, this article presents descriptive accounts of temporary use mediators' work. These accounts identify some relevant contexts and conditions of mediation work as well as illustrate the work and roles of the selected mediators and their relations between main stakeholder groups. In addition, based on a thematic analysis of the interviews, the article discusses three core themes in temporary use mediation: managing and building relationships among actors; bridging conflicts; and disrupting dominant traditions, values, and norms in urban planning and development. Linking these themes to relevant theoretical concepts and discourses, the article further points out potential areas for future research.

KEYWORDS

Temporary use of space, urban planning, participatory design, mediation

INTRODUCTION

‘Temporary use’ (TU) of vacant space is an emerging response to contemporary cities’ struggles with climate change, demographic and infrastructural change, economic challenges, and participation. TU is becoming increasingly recognized as a flexible, experimental, resilient, and resource-efficient approach to urban development. Temporary use is understood as a ‘temporary activation of vacant or underused land or buildings with no immediate development demand.’¹ Thus, it enables the use of spaces that have lost their former function and wait for decisions affecting their future.² While the duration of TU can vary from months to several years, it is characterized as an in-between stage in development.³ As an emerging approach, TU challenges traditional processes in urban planning and development, which have been criticized as too concerned with long-term perspectives and permanence.⁴ Furthermore, as a channel for local initiatives and participation, TU is understood as a valuable way to empower actors that are traditionally excluded from urban planning decisions.⁵ For planners, architects, and designers, TU opens up new kinds of work practices and approaches, which expand beyond the material or spatial. These new approaches include more sociopolitical dimensions, such as the ‘mediation’ of complex relations, collaborations, and competing interests among actors.⁶

In recent research, the importance of ‘mediators’ in temporary use has been identified but not explored in greater detail.⁷ This article starts to address part of this gap by presenting accounts of selected established TU mediators in European cities: 1) Neighbourhood managers in the City of Ghent (Belgium), 2) ZwischenZeitZentrale (ZZZ) Bremen (Germany), 3) SAMOA, Nantes (France), and 4) Free Riga (Latvia). The guiding research questions for this article are: How do practitioners account for their experience of mediating TU? What are some relevant contexts and conditions for their work? How do mediators handle relations and address potential conflicts among different stakeholder groups?

The article is part of my doctoral research, which explores the sociopolitical and material nature of TU mediation as an emerging area for architects/designers, which extends beyond traditional competencies related to the design of physical objects, spaces, or urban plans.⁸ TU mediation also has the potential to challenge the traditional power relations and expert roles in urban planning and to open up ways for more adaptable and inclusive processes of development.⁹ In order to understand the socially and politically complex dimensions in TU mediation work, some discussions in adjacent

fields, such as participatory design (PD) and sustainability transitions, are relevant. For example, discussions on ‘infrastructuring’ in PD conceptualize the mediatory role of design in an open-ended process of building long-term collaboration among a diversity of actors.¹⁰ The concept of ‘agonism’ in PD further helps to advance an understanding of aspects of disagreement and confrontation within TU.¹¹ Furthermore, recent discussions on intermediaries in sustainability transitions elaborates the bridging role of intermediary actors between emerging and more stabilized actors.¹² Architectural discussions on agency, power, and expertise are also relevant for understanding TU mediator roles within urban planning.¹³ These discussions provide a background for the empirical study presented in this article.

Methods and Selection

This article presents descriptive accounts of TU mediators’ work based on four in-depth (one- to two-hour-long) qualitative semi-structured expert interviews¹⁴ with professional practitioners from four European TU mediating organizations. The article further discusses the results of a thematic analysis of the interviews, in which a ‘cutting and sorting’ method was used to identify themes¹⁵ and concludes with potential directions for future research.

Within the context of my doctoral research, TU mediation is pursued through two main methodologies: ‘Research through Design’ (RtD)¹⁶ and qualitative research. The RtD approach is based on my own professional practice focused on mediating temporary use,¹⁷ from which I derive different orientations, materials, accounts of my own practice, and conceptual dimensions. The scope of the qualitative interview study presented in this article has been informed by orientations from my RtD practice and crafted with the aim to understand common and different struggles between mediating practitioners, especially regarding the social and political dimensions.

The written accounts and quotations in this article were presented to the interviewees for possible clarification via email. In addition, the level of anonymity used in this article was discussed with the interviewees at the beginning of their respective interview and confirmed after having read the written accounts.

As mediation of TU is an emerging field, there are not many established professional practitioners in this area. The mediating organizations selected for the study are partners of REFILL, which is a leading network focusing on

such practices in Europe,¹⁸ and in which I have been a local expert and advisor. Through REFILL, I selected key articulate and experienced practitioners who have carried out a number of projects, including failures and successes, over more than five years. The selection comes from cities mainly in Northern Europe, in which there are some inevitable differences and specificities in terms of politics, governance, history, and economic situation. Thus, this study does not rely on a direct comparison of work contexts and conditions. Nevertheless, with the practitioners' experience as the unit of study and analysis, the selection enables some common denominators. Through elaborated qualitative accounts of practitioners, which are accounted for as situated and embodied, the aim is to shed light on the characteristics of their work practices and point out relevant areas for further research.

ACCOUNTS OF MEDIATORS IN PRACTICE

I met with mediators from four different TU mediating organizations in March 2018 in Ghent, Belgium, where the mediators took part in the final conference of the REFILL EU project.¹⁹ Acknowledging my own role as both practitioner and researcher, I did not attempt neutrality but considered the interviews partly as peer-to-peer conversations. Three of the interviews took place in local cafes and one at the mediators' office. The interviews were conducted in English, which was not the native language of any of the interviewees, nor of myself. All of the interviews followed a similar protocol flexibly (see Appendix 1).

In this section, I present descriptive accounts of how the selected TU mediators experienced their work and roles. The section starts with a short overview describing the different contexts and backgrounds and follows with four individual accounts. In each account, I discuss the mediators' role and main tasks, their relations including formal arrangements and potential conflicts with main stakeholder groups, and the related skills and motivations behind their work.

Overview

The selection of mediating agencies comes from cities in mainly northern parts of Europe: Ghent (BE), Bremen (DE), Nantes (FR), and Riga (LV). There are some differences and specificities in terms of politics, governance, history, and economic situation, but also contextual similarities. In both Bremen and Nantes, temporary use is related to the loss of traditional industries, namely the closing down of shipyards.²⁰ Today, both cities already have a rather

long-term experience with temporary use: the city of Bremen employed their first temporary use agency for one district in 2007, followed by the founding of ZZZ as an outsourced temporary use agency for the whole of Bremen in 2009.²¹ In Nantes, the history of temporary use dates back to 2003, when the organization SAMOA was founded to be in charge of the urban development of the former port area Île de Nantes.²² Similarly, Ghent has had experience with temporary use for over ten years, and the first TU cases were connected to the urban renewal of former industrial sites.²³ Riga, on the other hand, had been the fastest growing capital of the EU until it suffered a severe economic crisis in 2008, which led to large-scale vacancy and freezing of the property markets. The TU mediating NGO Free Riga was founded in 2013 and has evolved from citizen activism towards an independent professional service for private property owners.

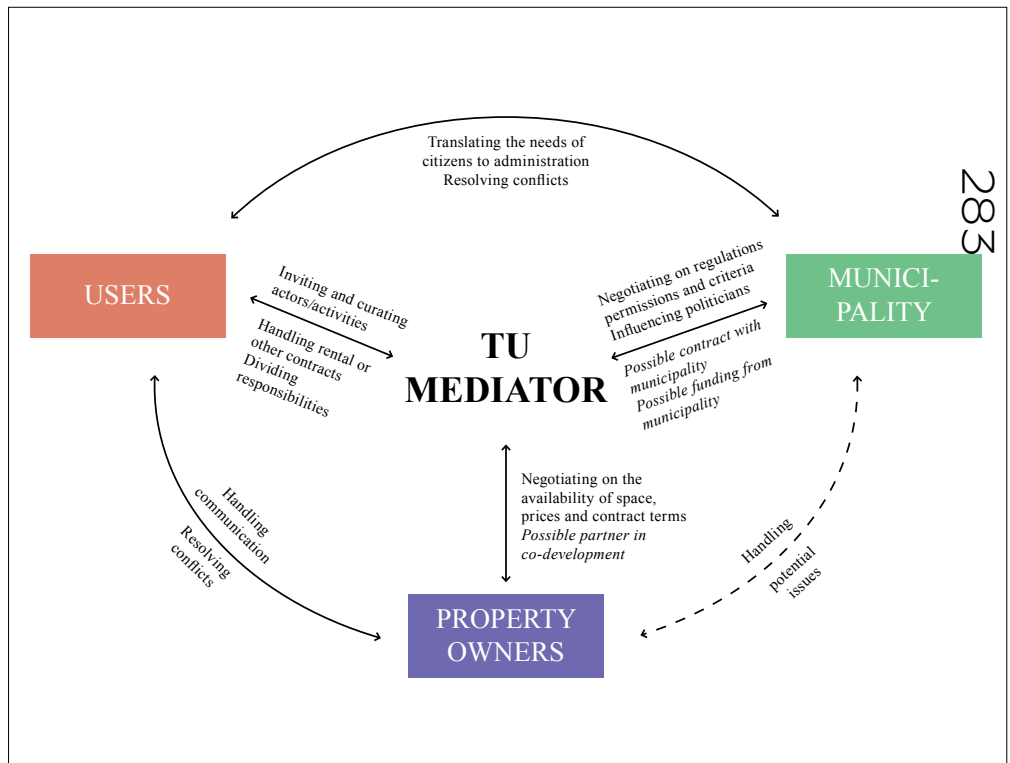


Figure 1. An overview of generic TU mediator tasks and affiliations in relation to the stakeholder groups, based on the four interviews.

As an overview, I have listed some characteristics of the four mediating practices and their contexts in the table below. It is worth mentioning the differences in the mediating agencies' relation to the municipality and related funding: the agencies' positions vary from being located inside a municipal department (Ghent) to having contract and either full (Bremen) or partial (Nantes) funding from the respective municipality, to being an entirely private organization (Riga). As a result, the mediating agencies' roles and relations to the most important stakeholder parties are somewhat different.

Despite contextual differences, there are also commonalities in the selected mediators' work and tasks (see Appendix 2). Their core tasks related to TU mediation consist of handling the relations, collaborations, contracts, responsibilities, and potential conflicts between main stakeholders. The mediators also curate users and facilitate collaboration among them. Despite their varying relations with the municipality, connections to administration and policymakers are important in order to be able to negotiate on various legal, financial, and administration questions regarding temporary use. Figure 1 simplifies and summarizes the generic tasks of the mediators as an overview, while the accounts below reveal more rich details of individual mediators' work.

Interview with Two Neighbourhood Managers from Ghent (BE)

I met with two neighbourhood managers (NMs), who work as civil servants at the municipal Policy Participation Unit in Ghent. The interview took place at their office on the morning of a workday. We were rather tight on time and the meeting took about one hour. One of the interviewees had to leave earlier for another meeting, after which we continued with one neighbourhood manager.

The interviewees work in a team of fifteen neighbourhood managers, who take care of twenty-five different neighbourhoods in Ghent. The Policy Participation unit, which was established in 2003, is placed under the direct responsibility of the mayor, and it has an official mandate on mediation between citizens, other municipal departments, and politicians.²⁴ Temporary use is linked to their three main activities: information, participation, and co-creation.

Mediator Role and Tasks

The main task of the NMs, as described by the interviewees, is to know their neighbourhood: to engage in dialogue with the users (residents, businesses, and other organizations) of different neighbourhoods, and to detect needs within the neighbourhood. They further described how it is important to

be reachable and in contact with the citizens in both formal and informal ways: ‘We go into the neighbourhood, we participate in initiatives that people organize or other organizations . . . also walks in the neighbourhood, drinks.’ According to the interviewees, the temporary use of available vacant spaces is one of their ways to answer the needs discovered, as well as to strengthen the identity of neighbourhoods.

Relations with Users

According to the interviewees, a vacant building or site may be opened to neighbourhood initiatives to match needs identified in a neighbourhood. If the location is public and central rather than residential, then the initiatives are selected through an open call, based on the proposal’s relevance for the neighbourhood or city. Match-making events can also be organized to further support collaboration among potential users.

Our colleague organized this match-making event where everybody who had a proposition, or wanted to do something in *Nest*, could meet up with each other, they could pitch their proposition to each other and to the city. And they also, we also wanted them to, make alliances.

If a TU project is organized in a residential area, the interviewees pointed out that project organizers should come from the same neighbourhood. For citizen initiatives, the vacant space may be offered for free through a ‘management contract’, where necessary rules, responsibilities, and the intended duration of the TU are stated. The users take care of running costs such as water, heating, or electricity. If the user is a business, then a small rent is charged.

Finding a balance between different desires and treating people fairly was a challenge for the interviewees. For example, they found it essential to avoid unfair competition between temporary users and other businesses and services in the area, while trying to stimulate creativity at the same time.

They [the temporary users] do get some sort of income and that is allowed. But they cannot get rich by receiving a free building from the city. So, it’s a difficult balance. Because then you have other bars in the neighbourhood who say, ‘How much rent are they paying? Do they have all the licenses?’

In Ghent, the intended ending of a TU project is explicitly agreed on in the beginning, according to the interviewees. However, projects may at times

continue much longer than expected in the beginning, which can sometimes be a challenge. Some temporary users can get tired of continuing a voluntary project that was intended for the short term, while other users may insist on a permanent or long-term contract.

Relations to Owners

According to the interviewees, temporary use projects in Ghent have been organized in both publicly and privately owned buildings in the city. If the owners are private, then the NMs cannot handle the rental contracts or calls for initiatives, but they can have an advisory role. For example, they can give advice to a private owner and help to communicate with the temporary users to make sure the activities fit the neighbourhood and don't harm the neighbours. In cases where the temporary users were not from the same neighbourhood, the interviewees had experienced conflicts where they had to step in to find a resolution.

My role in that one was to go and talk to the organizers, we got the police involved and other services from the city, [to] not to tell them that they couldn't do it anymore but to explain that they were in a neighbourhood, and they had to take into account the neighbours and the people living there . . . Then I also went to the private owner and said, 'There are some troubles, can you go and talk to those guys?', and I went to talk to them as well. And then with the police and other services, we put the neighbours together with the organizers, to talk . . . Then we came to some agreements.

Relations to Administration

While the NMs' relations with citizens are essential, relations to administration also play a big role. The interviewees described complex negotiations within the administration and across municipal departments, for example on the interpretation of regulations in order to adapt spaces for a new use. Their repeated examples of a 'grey zone' indicate particular flexibility towards regulations in Ghent. According to the interviewees, there are strategic goals promoting TU as a creative and experimental activity, which may override certain building regulations. Yet, exemptions to regulations have to be negotiated and explicitly agreed on with the responsible civil servants.

I think we don't have regulations and we sometimes do . . . things so it's in the grey zone. It's the go-between . . .

And then we started looking for other, creative solutions and laws and licenses . . . and a lot of city departments and services came together, and we were thinking about how can we keep them there, in the grey zone. But it is a grey zone. But that is what we want as a city, that people can experiment. If you only go by the strict rules, you cannot do temporary use or things like that.

Skills and Motivations

Based on the interview, the NMs of Ghent come from diverse backgrounds. The interviewees are from criminology and linguistics, while other NMs are from communication, political sciences, architecture, bioengineering, and so on. ‘We have all been cast quite well in our neighbourhoods. This is a fit. It’s a great job,’ explained one of the interviewees.

The NMs’ accounts further revealed a strong experience of their role in between the actors. They described their role as ‘brokers’, but also as ‘glue’ and the ‘middle of a sandwich’ within the administration and politicians, as well as between users and the municipality.

That is our–my broker role as well to say ‘I know the neighbours are complaining, but there are maybe 10 people complaining, there are 200 people not complaining. Let’s see what we can do to . . .’, so the mediator role in these kinds of projects is important. So, we . . . have our network with citizens in our neighbourhood with the partners, with the organizations, but also within the City of Ghent administration, we need our network of colleagues who we can call . . . And the policymakers [are] also our network. We know all the aldermen, we have to know them and have to be able to contact them.

She feels like a sandwich between the city administration, she feels like she’s the middle of a sandwich where you have the citizens and then the city administration and the policymakers and we are in between.

Interview with a Founding Member of ZwischenZeitZentrale Bremen (GE)

The meeting with a founding member of ZwischenZeitZentrale Bremen (ZZZ) took place in a cafe at one of the temporary use sites in Ghent. The interview took an hour and a half.

The ZwischenZeitZentrale Bremen (ZZZ) is a temporary use agency commissioned and funded by the City of Bremen, Germany. The ZZZ was founded in 2009 after a public tender for a city-wide temporary use agency. Its roots are in the architecture collective AAA (Autonomous Architecture Atelier), which was founded in 2006 by three architecture / urban planning students with a passion to organize participatory projects in public space.²⁵ The interviewee is one of the founders of both AAA and ZZZ.

Mediator Role and Tasks

According to the interviewee, the ZZZ acts as a mediator renting vacant spaces in Bremen from various owners to temporary users. At the same time, they work in daily contact with the city administration and politicians. The interviewee's account of the ZZZ's work focused on their relation to the users of the temporary space: his essential goals were related to connecting people, finding synergies, and creating 'platforms'. Furthermore, he saw the mediator's role as a 'filter', translating ideas from the users to the administration.

We're the filter of the active people. . . . Our passion is to bring people in new ways together.

We go everywhere and we are everywhere, and people can call us in the night. We are reachable, it's very very important.

Relations with Users

The interviewee explained that the ZZZ uses various channels to reach out to people of different ages and social groups when a new TU project starts. Open invitations can be sent through various media channels (social media, newspapers, TV), followed by a tour of the site and a workshop to find out about people's ideas. He mentioned different means to connect to the surrounding neighbourhood of a TU site, such as urban walks, workshops, and open door events.

The ZZZ aims, according to the interviewee, to make spaces affordable for diverse groups and to encourage public activities in TU projects. Tools for keeping prices low include renting very small spaces (starting from a copy room of 1.5 m²), encouraging users to share spaces, and offering short-term contracts. At first, the temporary users are usually offered three-month rental contracts, which also make the spaces accessible to users who simply want to test their idea and move out, or who don't have the funds to plan for the longer

term. Other users may consolidate, and the TU project itself may last several years. The interviewee pointed out that, after the first formal steps, the mediator should 'give up control' and encourage users to take more responsibility.

Relations to Owners

The ZZZ rents empty spaces from owners to users at their own risk. As their work is funded by the city, they don't charge a commission from rents, the interviewee explained.

Because if we do so [charge a commission], there's no trust, cause then the people said, 'hey aha, aha, you pay this very low rent and then I must pay, this is . . . huh?' . . . It's equal rights for the users and us, and we're not the broker or the real-estate firm to earn money. Ok, it's a lot of work, but we're paid by the city.

According to the interviewee, the ZZZ's first TU projects were organized in publicly owned spaces. Nine years later, in 2018, half of their owner partners were private and the owners had started taking the initiative to approach ZZZ. However, there have been difficulties in convincing private owners to rent out vacant spaces. Because of the bookkeeping and bank crediting system, keeping spaces unused can be more profitable for owners than renting them below market rents. In order to convince private owners of the potentials of TU, the interviewee had argued for benefits such as enhancing the security of the building, raising the positive media coverage, and getting potential buyers' interest through TU activities.

However, the interviewee explained that collaboration with public property owners is not always simple either.

They gave us space but not so much . . . Yes. Crazy. Because there are many many public spaces empty. But . . . the real estate firm, the outsourced real estate firm . . . said to us, 'Okay, you support squatters.' Then they cut the co-operation. They didn't give us real estate, buildings, or housing. And this is difficult.

Relations to Administration

The interviewee further described the role of ZZZ as 'informal administration' as they are commissioned by the municipality. He explained that ZZZ is in daily contact with the administration and has monthly meetings with

a steering group, including members of six municipal departments. In the steering group meetings, the ZZZ mediates the ideas and aims of citizens to the administration and politicians, and they discuss potential risks and problems, laws and safety issues. The interviewee further mentioned different kinds of contractual arrangements, which help to enable temporary use within the German bureaucracy and legislation. He explained how working with the administration is not only about understanding real estate, but about 'soft skills'; it's a complex task of navigating among the different aims of six responsible departments as well as politicians.

There are different targets and different aims . . . Every department has different politicians [in] power. . . . And when we want to change something, it's [a] very . . . strange situation, but you cannot do something well if you don't have the helping hands from politics, so . . . it's necessary to have people from politics and also from the administration level.

Skills and Motivations

The ZZZ consists of a 'diverse team' with different personalities and capabilities. According to the interviewee, this is essential in order to be able to communicate and negotiate with different kinds of stakeholders and the public. While the educational background of the founders of ZZZ is in architecture, urban planning, and cultural studies, the interviewee emphasized that they are 'not normal architects or urban planners'. However, he found traditional architect's skills, such as reading plans, understanding spatial structures, and spaces, necessary. Nevertheless, 'soft skills' required for dealing with the complexity of social situations seemed essential for his work.

The interviewee described his job as 'urban curator', 'dreamer', 'connector', and 'passionful urbanist'. He emphasized that his goal is to bring diversity to the city, open up alternatives for commercially driven urban development, discover people's ideas, and bring people together. He cited 'trust to the people and trust to the owner' as the most important principle in his work. The search for alternatives was clear in how he described what the ZZZ is *not*: they are 'not real-estate brokers', 'not a normal office rental firm', and 'not top-down'.

Interview with a Head of Projects at SAMOA, Nantes (FR)

I met with a 'head of projects' of the urban development agency SAMOA at a cafe in Ghent, in the afternoon between her official meetings in Ghent and

traveling back to France. The meeting was the longest of the four and took almost two hours.

The SAMOA (Société d'Aménagement de la Métropole Ouest Atlantique / West Atlantic Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency) is a 'Local Public Company' in charge of urban planning and development of Île de Nantes, a former industrial harbor site. Samoa works on publicly validated aims with both public and private funding.²⁶ The interviewee described Samoa's model of urban development as follows: Samoa buys the land, makes plans, and builds infrastructure, and later resells the land or building rights to private constructors. While waiting for permanent development to take place and before reselling the property, Samoa takes the opportunity of time windows of five to ten years and rents available buildings for temporary use.

Mediator Role and Tasks

The interviewee works as one of six heads of projects at Samoa. She described that she is in charge of construction services, under which temporary use is included, as well as Île de Nantes Expérimentations, which are participatory experiments testing different uses on public spaces. Regarding temporary use, her work involves planning and carrying out renovations to adapt buildings for temporary use, negotiating on regulatory and other issues requiring public validation, taking care of financial balances, organizing the selection process of tenants, and handling rental contracts.

Relations with Users

The interviewee recalled how TU was initiated at Île de Nantes: In 2003, the newly founded Samoa occupied the empty warehouses of the train manufacturer Alstom as their own office and started seeking others to share the large building. The location had a bad reputation at the time. Thus, Samoa looked for new neighbours through their own networks, mainly within creative fields, and Alstom became a cluster of creative and cultural industries. Later, other TU projects at Île de Nantes were curated as clusters of related fields.

As rental contracts in France are very rigid and there are few options to choose from, the interviewee explained that Samoa's solution was to utilize a 'precarious occupation agreement', which is meant for a maximum twenty-three-month duration.²⁷ This contract type allows both parties to end the contract 'quickly and safely' without long notice times or fines, which are typical for other French contract types. Thus, this contract allows space for

uncertainty. Despite the twenty-three-month limit, the interviewee mentioned that TU projects had eventually lasted even up to ten years. In some cases, the activities had consolidated at a new location afterward.

The context is that we are not sure what the urbanization is going to be, so during this time of [the] project, we have the opportunity to use those spaces, but it could be for three months, two months, one year, five years, twelve years, we don't know. And the fact that we don't know give[s] us the right to have a derogation of these classical contracts.

The interviewee further described her responsibilities related to citizen participation, which are linked to TU. She is in charge of Île de Nantes Expérimentations, which is a process of co-programming and prototyping new uses for public spaces or vacant buildings together with citizens. Being involved in participation and planning simultaneously has made it important to draw the limits of her and Samoa's responsibilities.

We will again be a little bit clearer on what we are able to do and what not. Naturally, if somebody again speaks about social bonding and so, we won't make like, 'I don't wanna hear that', but we will get the link to the dedicated services to participate [in] it. So we are, more and more, learning that we are kind of just facilitators on lots of things.

Issues of Ownership

Being the owner of vacant buildings during TU, Samoa can directly benefit from TU and take learning from one project to another. According to the interviewee, TU has enabled Samoa to keep buildings waiting for redevelopment, even with low rents, while not having to worry about squatters or pay for security. However, it has been hard work to keep prices low for TU. She explained that recently their profit expectations from the city had changed, which will put pressure on pricing and may eventually affect the variety of possible user types within TU.

Relations to Administration

Within fifteen years, Samoa has become, in the interviewee's words, an 'expert on how to occupy old vacant places with the French rules'. Strict building regulations had caused a lot of technical difficulty in her projects, particularly in accessibility and fire security. Therefore, creative problem solving and negotiation skills were essential in handling regulations to enable TU.

The interviewee vividly illustrated various complexities in Samoa's relation to administration and politicians. Regular meetings with *the governance* are held on different levels and different intervals. Public validation is required for both strategic level decisions and small details. She pointed out that Samoa has a political mandate to do things in unorthodox ways, but this approach is not always welcomed in administration.

Often, it's complicated because they [the administration] have the feeling that we are not doing [it] the classical way, and that's true. . . . Sometimes they are attracted to the fact that it's not as usual . . . and sometimes they're just [like], 'No, I just don't care.' . . . And we say, 'But you pay us to make things different and to have a specific ambiance and image on the island' . . . and so it can last years. Yes, no, yes, no, until . . . [we] have a politic[ian] decide it. But do you realize that you have to go to politics to choose the lock of a bike!

Despite the frustration and workload, the interviewee felt that the results had been fruitful: participatory experimentation and temporary use together had contributed to new ways of learning together and making some public services think differently.

Transitional uses are pretexts, often, to . . . both side[s], learning to . . . oblige some services to get into a new way of thinking, and that's probably the most interesting thing in those kinds of projects.

Skills and Motivations

Two-thirds of Samoa's employees, including the interviewee, are specialized in urban planning and development, and one third in economic development. With experience from various kinds of architectural work, the interviewee seemed proud of her current work but unhappy about the workload. 'It's exhausting. . . it's a little bit too much for now.'

Interview with a Founder of Free Riga (LV)

The interview with a founding member of Free Riga took place at a cafe in the historical center of Ghent. The interviewee was busy with a work deadline, but we found time for a discussion of almost an hour and a half.

Free Riga is an independent NGO, which offers a 'house guardian' service to owners of vacant properties in the Latvian capital. The interviewee described

how Free Riga had evolved since 2013 from a voluntary project towards a professional ‘guardian’ service, which is still developing. The start push for Free Riga came in 2013 through the ‘Occupy me’ campaign, in which stickers were put on empty buildings in order to raise concern for the high vacancy rates before Riga’s year as European Capital of Culture.²⁸

Mediator Role and Tasks

The interviewee told me that he had been responsible for framing Free Riga’s business model as a ‘guardian service’ for property owners. He described that Free Riga offers to maintain spaces and reduce costs for property owners, as well as to curate public, socially engaged initiatives that will make the properties more attractive and potentially raise their value. The users are offered affordable space for their initiatives. In return, they take part in small-scale renovation or maintenance work. The interviewee further explained that Free Riga covers different taxes and costs for the owner and also handles communication and contracts between users and owners.

Relations to Users

The users of Free Riga’s spaces are called ‘residents’. According to the interviewee, they pay a ‘membership fee’ instead of ‘rent’ in order to emphasize the sense of community. The fee equals roughly half of market rents. The interviewee mentioned that the residents are responsible for organizing socially active projects or events in the neighbourhood, but that they may also live or work in the spaces. The residents also take part in small renovations and maintenance work in return for the cheap membership. The interviewee described how Free Riga had gradually learned to draw the limits of their ‘guardian’ role and to divide responsibilities, which are now explicated in contracts. He pointed out that as guardians, Free Riga aims to ‘curate, then step back’, gradually encouraging the residents to take more responsibility or even to become guardians themselves.

That was learning from the third phase that . . . more clear responsibilities, that it’s less work, less management for guardians, that the community takes part [in] the management, self-manages part of the things that they can do . . . and also that the community selects itself that it kind of fills some roles immediately.

The residents of Free Riga are invited through open calls via social media and Free Riga’s other networks. The interviewee described how they had tested

various facilitation methods for the selection process over the years. One of their recent methods, where applicants demo their project ideas together, encourages the applicants to find partners, and thus the community can self-select itself.

An important aspect of mediation, for the interviewee, is to handle communication between the users and owners, who generally don't 'speak the same language'. He also mentioned various experiences of conflict between the owner, user, and other parties. For example, there had been disagreement on suitable activities, or users not taking care of their responsibilities of maintenance work. Some users had experienced troublesome encounters with existing residents of deprived neighbourhoods, and thus mediation was important in order to advocate new activities to existing residents. As a mediator, Free Riga had also developed useful connections with authorities and the police in order to resolve conflicts and problems.

A bus with Swiss activists from Basel, squatter[s], social activists came to [the] opening of this *Pushkin 11, P11* house . . . and then the local Russian inhabitants [were] like, 'Uh, I read what this is [triggered by a rainbow-coloured PACE flag], stay away from my children.' You know, mediating the inhabitants [so] that they understand that it's actually nice, police coming because [the] bus, the Swiss activists' bus, was standing in the middle of . . . this very public field . . . So, police coming, then having to go to municipality to this eastern district commissioner, politically also responsible, [and] explain to him, he says 'Ok very nice what you're doing, we're letting you go because you have [such] good projects'. He knew me from before.

Relations to Owners

Free Riga mainly collaborates with private property owners, without public funding. The interviewee explained that in the economic context of Riga, there are smaller-scale property owners who are short of funds and concerned about the costs of vacancy, and thus interested in alternative solutions for their property.

According to the interviewee, a contract with Free Riga offers the property owners significant cost reductions. The owners can get a 90 per cent reduction of property tax through the public benefit status of Free Riga. The interviewee explained that property taxes for 'degraded buildings' have recently become very high in Riga, which has put a lot of pressure on property owners.²⁹

Through their experiences in temporary use, the members of Free Riga have become aware of the potential of TU to raise property value. Being concerned that temporary users also should profit from the fruits of their labour, the interviewee has recently been prototyping a ‘co-development’ deal with some owners.

We are interested in not being just people who gentrify and [the] owner gets millions but share somehow part of this value.

In a co-development contract of five or more years, as explained by the interviewee, Free Riga profiles new activities with the owner and develops ideas for the future, while also earning a share of the increased value. The other option for owners is a ‘temporary use’ deal, in which the owner gets tax reductions but takes more risk regarding content, as Free Riga selects activities based on their own interest.

Relations to Administration

Free Riga doesn’t have a contract or close relations with the administration, nor do they receive public funding, as do the other mediators in this study. The interviewee explained that in post-Soviet society, ‘getting space from public office is cumbersome and slow’ and the public sector has ‘limited resources to subsidize civic society’. However, he had some fruitful experiences of collaborating with the public administration. For example, he described having ‘co-discovered’, with the property department’s director, the existing policy of tax reductions for properties that are leased for public benefit organizations. This had a significant financial impact on Free Riga.

Based on the interview, the administration context of Latvia and Riga seems looser in terms of regulations as compared to the three other cities in this study. For example, the interviewee explained the technical installations in their buildings:

. . . paying some technician to get water through [the] neighbouring house into this house, through [the] old heating pipe actually . . . State is not controlling so much.

Skills and Motivations

The professional background of the interviewee is in business and civic activism. He described that Free Riga combines the backgrounds of its

founders in business, art/culture, and facilitation of collaboration. Although their service is directed to property owners, the interviewee proclaimed his passion towards ‘how people can create the city’. He emphasized that the social aim of Free Riga is to provide cheap space that allows more time for people to pursue their passions and meaningful projects with a community. In this way, he wants to contribute to a ‘freer city’.

COMMON THEMES IN TU MEDIATION WORK

The accounts of four European temporary use mediators presented in the previous section highlighted the interviewees’ experiences of their work and role as mediator, their relations between main stakeholder groups as well as skills and motivations behind their work. This section will further discuss common themes that were derived from a thematic analysis of the interviews.

A thematic analysis of the interviews was carried out by applying a ‘cutting and sorting’ method.³⁰ In the thematic analysis, relevant parts were selected from the transcripts, cut out, and grouped. Based on keywords from the excerpts, preliminary categories were created. After several rounds of rearranging the categories in relation to each other, twelve subthemes were derived. The subthemes were explained in writing based on the included excerpts and keywords. Finally, the twelve subthemes were regrouped under three main themes.

The three chosen main themes highlight common issues and concerns in TU mediation work, focusing on the sociopolitical dimensions. Based on the analysis, the common tasks, concerns, and issues of the mediation work include managing and building relationships among actors and actor groups as well as bridging conflicts. Furthermore, it is characteristic of TU mediation to challenge and disrupt dominant traditions, values, and norms in urban planning and development. These main themes will be discussed below, with relevant sub-themes marked in italics.

TU Mediation as Managing and Building Relationships among Actors

Managing relationships and issues among stakeholders became evident as an important aspect of mediation work based on the interviews. This work included handling contracts, balancing demands, resolving conflicts, negotiating on contradicting interests, and finding compromises among actors and actor groups. For example, the mediator was needed to communicate between parties who didn’t ‘speak the same language’, such as the owner and users

(Riga). Some of the interviewees saw themselves as mediators of citizens' ideas and needs towards policymakers (Bremen, Ghent). Furthermore, many of the interviewees had a role in community building or curating the user community, as well as facilitating collaboration and finding synergies among actors.

Building *trust* was mentioned as essential in mediation work. Many interviewees found it particularly important to build trust towards the temporary users or citizens by giving them some freedom and responsibility within limits (Ghent, Bremen, Riga). Earning trust from stakeholder parties was considered a prerequisite for the mediators' credibility and negotiation power. Conversely, a lack of trust between the owner and mediator had made TU difficult (Bremen).

Some of the interviewees described a feeling of *in-betweenness*, either as a connector of parties or as personally squeezed in between, as was illustrated by the metaphors of 'filter' (Bremen), 'glue', and 'in between the sandwich' (Ghent).

TU Mediation as Bridging Conflicts

The mediators in this study described experiences of *conflicts* as well as contradicting interests or values between stakeholder groups. There is an interesting contradiction about the need for trust mentioned above, within inherently 'agonistic' social conditions.³¹

Conflict situations were mentioned between the temporary users and the residents of the surrounding neighbourhood (Riga, Ghent), between the mediator and the owner (Bremen), between the users and the owner (Riga), and between the mediator and the public administration (Nantes, Bremen). The reasons behind the conflicts were often related to differences in understanding, contradicting views and values, as well as different traditions and cultures of the different parties. Typical were also contradictions between the aims of one group and the limits of existing regulations, policies, or financial arrangements.

In terms of resolving conflicts, several approaches were described, such as putting the conflict parties together to talk (Ghent), a mediator negotiating with the responsible parties (Riga), a mediator balancing the demands of the different parties (Ghent), or long negotiations within the administration (Nantes). Furthermore, it was mentioned that through initial disagreements, the TU approach had in some cases contributed to new learning and understanding among stakeholder parties (Nantes).

TU Mediation as Disrupting and Challenging Dominant Traditions, Values, and Norms

As an emerging and experimental approach, temporary use is understood to challenge traditional longer-term processes³² and typical power relations in urban planning and development.³³ The TU mediators interviewed in this study illustrated challenges that emerge in practice as a result of introducing unconventional ways of operating and of bringing new actors into a field dominated by rigid frameworks and values of the urban administration and the real-estate business.

In some of the accounts in this study, the TU mediator roles were somewhat identified in relation to TU as an *unconventional or experimental approach* (Nantes, Ghent). This gave the mediator a certain mandate on negotiations on experimental policies or exemptions from regulations. However, the mandate given by politicians was challenged within the existing frameworks of legislation and real-estate business as well as the everyday of municipal administration (Nantes, Bremen). Thus, achieving unconventional solutions required a lot of groundwork and technical understanding along with creativity and negotiation skills.

On a practical level, the mediators' experiences showed how there is often a need to *renegotiate building regulations, economic frameworks, contracts, and policies* in order to enable TU. Some interviewees had been influential in terms of discovering existing policies to benefit TU (Riga), contributing to flexibility regarding regulations (Ghent, Bremen), or finding creative solutions to operate within strict legislation (Nantes). Ghent had a particularly flexible approach to regulations with their agreements on the 'grey zone' and the 'pop-up regulation', allowing exemptions from regulations for three months. While the interviewee from Bremen reported difficulties in matching TU with the traditional business logic of property development, interviewees from Nantes and Riga had developed alternative business strategies in the benefit of TU.

The *temporal uncertainty* of TU brings further challenges and risks. Most interviewees dealt with them by making clear agreements about the intended duration of TU, while leaving room for open-endedness and change. The 'precarious occupation agreement' (Nantes) and the '12-month permission paper' (Bremen) were examples of adapting to the existing legal framework in uncertain conditions. In practice, these tools seemed to applied loosely with an open ending despite an initially clearly defined timeline.

The interviews further provided examples of how TU can disrupt typical urban planning processes by *giving temporary users more power to influence long-term development*. For example, the co-development model of Free Riga tested how temporary users could become partners with the owner in developing long-term solutions and earning part of the increased property value. In Ghent, the NMs tried to ensure the impact of TU on long-term development so that successful activities would be continued even after TU itself ends.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This article has elucidated the practice and reality of temporary use mediation work through accounts of selected TU mediators as well as identified themes that reflect common issues and concerns in their work. This qualitative study provides evidence that mediation is necessary for TU processes. As previous research lacks both nuanced practical-level understanding and theoretical conceptualizations of TU mediation work, this article has started approaching this gap through a qualitative study of four TU mediators' work.

Through rich, qualitative accounts, this study has illustrated how TU mediation extends beyond the traditional competence of architects, planners, or real-estate agents. Besides work on spatial, architectural, contractual, or legal matters, the sociopolitical dimensions of the work are complex and fundamental. The complexity of the work is a result of operating between diverse stakeholder groups, which often have contradicting interests, values, and traditions. These complexities also reflect how TU, as an emerging practice, challenges institutional and economic frameworks at the larger scale of urban planning, development, and administration.

The previous section presented three themes derived from a thematic analysis, which highlight common issues and concerns in TU mediation work. Below, I build on those themes to indicate possible avenues for future research, which link the themes to potentially relevant theoretical concepts and discourses.

- **TU Mediation as a New Work Area for Architects, Planners, or Designers**

This study has elucidated the sociopolitical dynamics of relation-building and management among stakeholder groups. They emerge in TU as fundamental and complex, yet they extend beyond the core competencies of architects or planners. In order to understand, arti-

culate, and practise such relationship management, other adjacent fields such as participatory design (PD) and sustainability transitions offer some relevant conceptualizations on the collaborative and dialogic nature of such work³⁴ and the work of ‘intermediaries’ bridging between actors in situations involving communication problems and different interests or culture.³⁵ Also relevant for conceptualizing the new role of architects as TU mediators are discussions of agency, power, and expertise in recent architecture discourse.³⁶

- **Agonism and Conflict in TU Mediation**

In this study, mediators reported conflicts in TU mediation at the scale of stakeholder relationships. The examples from this study provided evidence that TU has the capacity to open up spaces of contestation and expose ongoing conflicts between competing value systems.³⁷ Building on ‘agonism’ as discussed in PD³⁸ and related concepts such as ‘adversarial design’,³⁹ TU mediation could further develop ways to open up spaces of contestation and to bridge conflicts within urban planning and land use.

- **TU Mediation as Catalyzing Transitions towards More Sustainable Urban Planning and Development**

This study provided practical examples of how TU as an emerging practice can disrupt existing dominant frameworks and traditions within urban planning, development, and administration. There is a need to further understand and support the role of TU mediation in catalyzing these transitions. Recent literature on intermediaries in sustainability transitions provides useful discussions of intermediaries as key catalysts that speed up change towards more sustainable sociotechnical systems by linking emerging and mainstream actors as well as activities, skills, and resources.⁴⁰

Within the emerging area of TU mediation, this article has started addressing a gap in research through descriptive accounts of TU mediation work. In addition, the article has planted seeds for future work with a discussion on themes highlighting core issues and concerns, as well as considerations of future research. Through a better understanding of mediation in TU, it can be possible to influence larger scale transitions in urban planning and land use, thus contributing to more adaptive, resource-efficient, and participatory approaches in urban development.

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APPENDIX 1

Interview Guide

Research question: What is the role of the mediator?

Q1. Where is the mediator needed? What are the core tasks and capabilities needed?

Q2. What are the limits of the mediator's agency?

Q3. How does the mediator address relations, conflicts, contracts, etc., among different stakeholder groups?

Interview questions:

Background questions (20 min.)

About the organization and the mediator role

How did you end up working there? What's your job description?

What are the **tasks, responsibilities** of the mediator?

Who do you work with? Who are the main stakeholders?

Thematic questions

1. Owners (20 min.)

How do you handle relations between owners and users?

What kind of contracts? Terms, responsibilities, etc.?

How do you motivate owners to open up spaces for temporary use?

Have there been any conflicts or disagreement regarding owners?

2. Users (20 min.)

How do you work with users? Are there any curator activities involved? What kind of support/services do the users need?

Do users take specific responsibilities compared to traditional tenancy agreements?

How do the users benefit from temporary use?

Have there been any conflicts or disagreement?

3. Public sector (authorities) (20 min.)

How is your organization connected to the public sector?

How much regular contact do you have to the administration?

What kind of mandate do you have?

Have you had issues with regulations?

Do you get public funding or other support?

Why does the municipality (not) support temporary use?

APPENDIX 2

Mediating Organisation	Organization Type	Funding	Ownership of Property for TU	Contracts and Rental Arrangements	Level of Rent	Specific Instruments / Policies	Responsibilities	TU Activity Types	Professional Background
Neighbourhood managers, Ghent	Public sector (Policy participation unit)	Public	Mostly public, some private	'Management contract' or rent, free or low cost	Free or low rent plus running costs	Fund for TU, 'pop-up regulation' for < 3 months	Neighbourhood participation, mediating TU	Diverse neighbourhood projects or small business	Diverse
ZZZ Bremen	Private, commissioned by the city	Public	both private and public	Various, rent or 'loan agreement'	Varies	'permission paper' for TU < 12 months	Mediating TU	Diverse: cultural, business, socially responsible	Architecture, Urban planning
SAMOA, Nantes	'Local Public Company'	50% public, 50% private	SAMOA owns the properties	'Precarious occupation agreement'	50-70% of market rent	'Île de Nantes Experimentation'	Urban planning + economic development, mediating TU, participation	Creative and cultural industries, start-ups, media	Architecture, Urban planning, Economy
Free Riga	NGO	Private	Mostly private	'Membership' with users, 'collaboration' or 'co-development' contract with owners	Membership is 50% of market rent + some maintenance work	90% reduction of property tax for public benefit activity	'House guardian', 'co-development'	'Public benefit activities', including art, culture, and neighbourhood projects	Business, Art, Culture

Table 1. An overview of the characteristics and contexts of the mediation practices in this study.

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²⁵ Hasemann et al., *Building Platforms*.

²⁶ Île de Nantes (see note 22).

²⁷ Jégou et al., *Reuse of Vacant Spaces*; Tytgadt, *A Journey through Temporary Use*.

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Paper 4


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'Holding Properties Vacant Is Resource Stupidity': Towards a Typology of Roles in the (Inter)mediation of Urban 'Temporary Use'

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'Holding Properties Vacant Is Resource Stupidity': Towards a Typology of Roles in the (Inter)mediation of Urban 'Temporary Use'

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ABSTRACT

'Mediators' are becoming recognized as necessary actors in managing complex socio-political dynamics in the 'temporary use' of vacant spaces. However, 'mediation' remains understudied and undertheorized in temporary use scholarship. To better articulate mediator roles in temporary use, I review literature on related 'intermediary' roles in 'urban transitions' literature vis-à-vis temporary use practice. Thereby, I propose a typology of roles in (inter)mediation and elucidate selected roles in practice. By articulating how mediators align interests, build networks and negotiate the conditions in planning and development, this article draws attention to changing professional roles in planning and sets a basis for future research.

KEYWORDS

Temporary use; urban planning; urban transitions; mediation; intermediation

Introduction

Complex global challenges such as climate change and resource depletion are putting pressure on cities to develop flexible modes of urban planning and adaptable use of the existing built environment. In recent decades, the 'temporary use' of vacant spaces and properties has become recognized by urban scholars and planners as a potential approach for addressing such issues in the Global North, notably Europe (Bishop & Williams, 2012; Oswald *et al.*, 2013; Henneberry, 2017). Scholars appreciate temporary use as an adaptive, resource-efficient and experimental approach to urban regeneration (Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2012; Galdini, 2020) and as a channel for local initiatives and participation (Németh & Langhorst, 2014). Further interpreted as a part of a broader transition towards iterative and process-oriented forms of planning (Oswald *et al.*, 2013; Honeck, 2017), temporary use addresses the argued incapacity of prevailing planning practices to accommodate complexity and uncertainty in today's cities (e.g. de Roo & Boelens, 2016).

The term 'temporary use' implies interim, often user-driven activation of vacant properties or spaces pending political or development decisions (Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2012). Since the early 2000's, a field of scholarship has emerged to study the potentials of such uses in planning (Haydn & Temel, 2006; Oswald *et al.*, 2013). While the term itself is ambiguous and the duration of such uses can range from months to years, even decades, it denotes a difference from the typical regulatory and temporal scope of

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planning targeted to ‘permanent’ land use. The potential impact of temporary use is, however, not limited to being an interim solution. Instead, many scholars draw attention to its capacity to reimagine the future potentials of places (Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2012; Andres & Kraftl, 2021) and to renegotiate existing structural conditions (Honeck, 2017). A recent example of such an approach in Finland is the revitalization of an underused office and logistics district, ‘Kera’, in the Helsinki metropolitan area with local cultural and sports actors as part of a longer-term urban transformation process.

Although many cities have introduced efforts to facilitate temporary uses or integrate them within formal planning (Honeck, 2017; Christmann *et al.*, 2020), temporary use practices face many tensions and barriers. Firstly, they struggle within the structural conditions of planning and development, including stringent zoning practices, building codes and conventional business models and liabilities involved in real-estate development (Gebhardt, 2017). Secondly, temporary uses involve multiple actors with asymmetric power relationships and contradictory motivations (Andres, 2013; Németh & Langhorst, 2014). Temporary use can provide opportunities for diverse local actors to demonstrate alternative values and visions beyond profit-driven developments (Groth & Corijn, 2005). Yet, for developers or planners, temporary use may ultimately serve quite the opposite goals. Recently, scholars have paid critical attention to the potential co-optation of temporary uses in favor of neoliberalism (Tonkiss, 2013), gentrification (Bosák *et al.*, 2020) or city marketing (Colomb, 2012) and the precarity of users (Madanipour, 2018). Evidently, temporary use operates within particularly complex and contested socio-political conditions.

Temporary use also entails changing professional roles. ‘Mediation’ is emerging as a professional role for actors who navigate the socio-political complexity involved in temporary use (Oswalt *et al.*, 2013; Patti & Polyak, 2015; Jégou *et al.*, 2018). While ‘mediators’ are recognized as necessary actors in temporary use (Henneberry, 2017), their work exceeds the traditional training and competencies of architects, planners or other professionals typically involved in planning and development (Hernberg & Mazé, 2017). However, despite growing interest, there is scant academic literature on mediation in temporary use.

To date, mediation has been explored mainly in non-academic reports on temporary use (e.g. Jégou *et al.*, 2018) and accounts by practitioners themselves (Berwyn, 2012; Hasemann *et al.*, 2017). Such reports demonstrate various types of mediators, ranging from activists to more established actors and organizations. Examples include private ‘agencies’ such as the *ZwischenZeitZentrale* Bremen (Hasemann *et al.*, 2017; Hernberg, 2020), new public sector roles such as the ‘neighborhood managers’ in Ghent (Jégou *et al.*, 2018; Hernberg, 2020), online platforms and NGOs (Jégou *et al.*, 2018). The work of such actors can range from facilitating the relations between property owners, temporary users and authorities, advising and negotiating technical and legal issues, to lobbying government (Berwyn, 2012; Oswalt *et al.*, 2013; Jégou & Bonneau, 2017). Overall, the emerging discourse provides some worthwhile yet preliminary elaborations of mediation practice in temporary use. However, there is a need for more systematic, theoretically grounded and empirically relevant studies to better understand and articulate this emerging phenomenon.

Therefore, to contribute to the theorization and analysis of mediation in temporary use, the objective of this article is to develop a systematic and nuanced articulation of mediator roles in temporary use.¹ To address this objective, this article asks the following research questions: (1) How can we understand and articulate ‘roles’ in mediating temporary use? (2) In what ways are such roles performed by practitioners? Evidently, ‘role’ is a key aspect in focus here, which I will treat in more nuance in terms of activities, understood here as part of roles, as I will explain in more detail below.

To systematically articulate mediator roles, this article turns to literature in an adjacent field, ‘urban sustainability transitions’ (Wolfram *et al.*, 2016; Frantzeskaki *et al.*, 2017), where related work and roles of ‘intermediary’ actors have been elaborated recently (e.g. Hargreaves *et al.*, 2013). This emerging field (here also referred to as ‘urban transitions’) cuts across disciplines including urban studies, policy, planning and geography, discussing the role of cities in advancing long-term transformations towards sustainability. Previously dominated by socio-technical discourses focusing on energy, water and transport infrastructures (e.g. Hodson & Marvin, 2009; Bulkeley *et al.*, 2011), scholars in the field have recently emphasized the role of civic and grassroots initiatives in advancing sustainability (Buijs *et al.*, 2016; Frantzeskaki *et al.*, 2016). Thus, urban transitions discourse resonates with temporary use by addressing related socio-political dilemmas, including the complex dynamics and wide range of motivations of multiple actors involved in urban transition processes (e.g. Hodson *et al.*, 2013).

Although urban transitions is a heterogeneous field, some key concepts from transitions research² are widely used. These include ‘regime’, constituting the dominant societal functions and ‘rules’, and ‘niche’, from which radical innovations emerge (Geels, 2002; Smith *et al.*, 2010). In transitions research, the concepts of niche and regime are important for conceptualizing change and related socio-political dynamics. Characteristically, niche-level innovations struggle to break into the mainstream, while regimes actively resist change (e.g. Loorbach *et al.*, 2017). These concepts help to elaborate the dynamics and power-relations between levels and the tensions entailed in advancing change within established institutional contexts. Recently, transitions scholars have drawn attention to the potential of intermediary actors in advancing change (e.g. Kivimaa *et al.*, 2019a). This article finds the elaborations of ‘intermediary’ roles within urban transitions relevant for articulating mediation in temporary use.

Elaborating the ‘niche’ and ‘regime’ in temporary use helps understand the conditions underlying (inter)mediation. In transitions research, the concept of ‘regime’ articulates power and stability, representing dominant ‘rules’ that guide actors’ perceptions and actions. Such rules include shared beliefs, values, routines, regulations and capabilities (Geels, 2004, 2011). Regimes are characterized as highly persistent yet not necessarily coherent (Geels, 2004; Fuenfschilling & Truffer, 2014). Within temporary use, we can identify several powerful regimes. Firstly, the real-estate regime involves incumbent investment companies and standard economic and operational models. Property owners may prefer holding properties vacant due to rent expectations, valuation standards or responsibility concerns (Gebhardt, 2017). Secondly, planning and regulatory regimes regulate land use through zoning and building codes, which usually concern ‘permanent’ uses, thus subject to interpretation concerning temporary use (Hernberg, 2014; Gebhardt, 2017). Furthermore, entrenched patterns of knowledge, thought and action create barriers to change within such regimes (Filion, 2010; Dotson, 2016).

'Niches' are understood as the locus for path-breaking innovations and alternatives, which may challenge regimes and seed wider change (Raven *et al.*, 2010). Niches 'shield' the development of innovations from regime conditions (Smith & Raven, 2012). Yet, particularly grassroots innovations struggle within the conditions they wish to transform (Smith *et al.*, 2014). Similarly, temporary use can be understood as a niche-level or grassroots phenomenon that struggles to operate within regime conditions while simultaneously challenging them. Ways of shielding temporary use from regime conditions include low rents, specific contract terms or circumventing regulations (Gebhardt, 2017; Stevens & Dovey, 2019). Hence, conceptualizing temporary use as a niche-level phenomenon clarifies the socio-political struggle vis-à-vis regimes and the need for mediation.

Therefore, to systematically articulate mediator roles in temporary use, this article draws on recent studies in urban transitions which elaborate related 'intermediary' roles in theoretically and empirically grounded ways. Such studies provide relevant articulations of intermediaries navigating between multiple interests (Hodson *et al.*, 2013), empowering niche development (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2013) and potentially disrupting prevailing regimes (Matschoss & Heiskanen, 2018). In this article, I analyze the articulations of intermediary *roles* in such studies against a case of temporary use mediation practice. As a result, I propose a typology of roles in (inter)mediation. I will use 'mediation' and 'intermediation' as related terms in temporary use and transitions discourses but introduce (inter)mediation as a combination term.

Lastly, to build a more nuanced understanding of the theoretical (inter)mediation roles in temporary use, I elucidate selected roles through the case, 'Temporary Kera' (abbr. 'Kera'), in which I studied my work as a mediator commissioned in a recent temporary use project by the municipality of Espoo, Finland. The project goal, linked to broader municipal sustainability goals, was to revitalize a suburban district struggling with vacancy. *Kera* was selected as a case for several reasons: As a recent, recognized European temporary use project, to which I had unique access as a practitioner, the case demonstrates nuances of mediation work and the evolving nature of the professional mediator roles. Displaying challenging niche-regime dynamics and conditions for temporary use, *Kera* was a relevant context for studying mediation. In *Kera*, the real-estate regime was particularly skeptical of the temporary use approach, while the potential users were in great need of affordable spaces. Furthermore, the municipal zoning policies and permissions presented barriers. To address such barriers, mediation work involved brokering between actors, aligning interests and negotiating the conditions for temporary use. Throughout the project, other participants urged the property owners to address the 'resource-stupidity'³ of holding properties vacant.

Materials and Methods

To address the objectives and research questions articulated above, this article brings together knowledge from urban transitions literature and a case of temporary use practice to articulate roles in mediating temporary use. The methodological stages are described below.

To systematically articulate roles in (inter)mediation, I reviewed literature on intermediary roles in urban transitions, focusing on studies in urban grassroots and energy contexts that explicitly investigate intermediary roles. By identifying similarities and differences across the roles articulated in such studies, I developed synthetic categories of roles and comprising activities. In an integrative analysis, I further assessed these categories against coded data from the temporary use case, *Kera*.

The case study of *Kera* followed a qualitative, 'practice-based research' approach (Vaughan, 2017) to investigate my practice and engagements as a mediator in the project. Acknowledging my dual role as a researcher-practitioner, I formulated separate goals in the research plan and project contract. The project commissioner signed permission for collecting data within the project, and all informants were asked to sign informed consent. To collect data, I used ethnographic methods (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) and semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The data include field notes, reflections and project logs, transcripts of audio-recorded meetings, workshops and interviews, and a survey with temporary users. To analyze the data, I used a 'process coding' technique (Saldaña, 2009) to identify categories of mediator roles and activities.

In an integrative analysis, I examined the synthetic role categories from urban transitions literature against coded categories from the case, *Kera*. This was done to investigate whether and in what ways the theoretically constructed roles were demonstrated in the case, assess the meaning of the terms in a temporary use context, specify and differentiate the role and activity categories and identify potential gaps in the theoretical categories. As a result of the integrative analysis, I developed a typology of roles in (inter)mediation, presented in detail in Figure 1. Through the case, *Kera*, I further elucidate nuances of selected roles, demonstrated strongly in the case. The strength was estimated by the number of coded excerpts from the case corresponding to categories of the typology (see Figure 1).

I acknowledge that this research approach involves the influence of subjectivity, 'situated' local conditions (Haraway, 1988) and 'partiality' of knowledge production (Harding, 2011) as inherent in practice-based and case study research. However, the practice-based approach has the advantage of providing unique access to 'insider' knowledge, seen as relevant for understanding an emerging phenomenon in-depth (Gray & Malins, 2004, p. 23). I am also aware of the influence of normative values of socio-ecological sustainability inherent in temporary use and urban transitions scholarships, also given in my commission in *Kera*. Hence, particular attention to the less powerful groups of 'users' and 'niches' is reflected in my analysis.

Articulating Roles in Urban (Inter)mediation

Recent non-academic reports on temporary use practice (e.g. Jégou *et al.*, 2018) have started using colloquial terms and loose formulations to describe the roles of mediating actors. Mediators are identified as necessary in 'arbitrating conflicts' (Oswalt *et al.*, 2013, p. 247), trust-building (Oswalt *et al.*, 2013; Hasemann *et al.*, 2017), translating (Rubenis, 2017) 'negotiating,' 'moderating' and 'communicating' between actors (Oswalt *et al.*, 2013, p. 231, 247; De Fejter, 2017, p. 17). Additionally, mediators advise temporary users and negotiate on regulations, permissions and contracts (Oswalt *et al.*, 2013; Rubenis, 2017). Furthermore, mediators can contribute to reducing structural barriers for temporary use (Berwyn, 2012) through lobbying government (Hasemann *et al.*, 2017), developing new collaborative

governance structures (Patti & Polyak, 2017; Matoga, 2019) or giving a voice to bottom-up initiatives (Matoga, 2019). Such reports offer useful yet preliminary elaborations of mediation roles and activities ranging from mundane to more strategic contributions.

Related studies in urban transitions offer a more mature and systematically developed vocabulary to articulate ‘intermediary’ roles, which I argue as useful for further elaborating ‘mediator’ roles in temporary use. Therefore, this section reviews literature on transition intermediaries vis-à-vis temporary use mediation practice to articulate roles in (inter) mediation.

To first clarify the theoretical understanding of ‘role’, I draw on transition scholars Wittmayer *et al.*'s (2017) review of the concept of role in social interaction discourse (Turner, 1990; Collier & Callero, 2005; Simpson & Carroll, 2008). Wittmayer *et al.* describe roles ‘as a set of recognizable activities and attitudes used by an actor to address recurring situations’ (2017, p. 51). They further consider roles as evolving and negotiated social constructions, which can be used as a ‘vehicle for mediating and negotiating meaning in interactions’ (2017, p. 50). For the purposes of my analysis focusing on articulating roles in this article, I take the understanding that *roles* comprise *activities*, which are recognizable, purposeful and recurring, yet negotiated and evolving.

Intermediary Roles in Urban Transitions

‘Intermediary’ is a term widely used to characterize actors with an in-between position, increasingly studied within urban transitions (e.g. Hodson *et al.*, 2013). This literature has its roots in innovation studies and science and technology studies (e.g. Baum *et al.*, 2000; Howells, 2006). Within urban transitions, particularly studies focusing on urban grassroots (White & Stirling, 2013), spatial (Valderrama Pineda *et al.*, 2017) and energy (Hodson & Marvin, 2009) contexts address complex socio-political dynamics related to those identified in temporary use.

Various types of actors can be understood as intermediaries. Examples include national-level organizations, independent professional actors (including architects) and small-scale civic networks (Fischer & Guy, 2009; Hyysalo *et al.*, 2018; Kivimaa *et al.*, 2019a). Moss asserts that a commonality of different intermediaries is the ‘relational nature of their work’ (2009, p. 1481). Hodson *et al.* further describe such actors as ‘mediating’ between multiple actors and interests across levels and scales (2013, p. 1408). Despite such commonalities, Kivimaa *et al.* point out that different types of intermediary actors and activities are needed in different transition phases (2019b) and levels (2019a). The scope of action of intermediaries may further vary depending on conditions such as their funding source, organization size, affiliation or the duration of their involvement (Kivimaa, 2014; Mignon & Kanda, 2018).

Scholars have identified a wide range of roles and activities by which intermediaries can contribute to urban transitions processes. There is increasing evidence of their roles in advancing niche development. For example, Hargreaves *et al.* (2013) recognize intermediaries as important in sustaining and consolidating grassroots innovations that are particularly vulnerable and struggling within regime conditions. Kivimaa (2014) analyzes intermediaries’ roles in energy transitions, identifying how they advance niche development through articulating visions, building social

networks and contributing to learning. Geels and Deuten (2006) highlight the role of intermediaries in aggregating knowledge to make niches more robust. Yet, other scholars emphasize the need to better understand the diverse, conflicted realities of local niches (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2013; Seyfang *et al.*, 2014).

In transitions literature, niche development is perceived to stimulate change within regimes, potentially contributing to their ‘reconfiguration’ or ‘destabilization’ (e.g. Geels, 2012). Yet, fewer studies have explicitly addressed the intermediaries’ roles in destabilizing regimes. Smith *et al.* (2016) assert that intermediaries can take an antagonistic stance to reveal and potentially transform regime structures. Intermediaries are identified to contribute to regime change by ‘destabilizing regime rules’ (Matschoss & Heiskanen, 2018) and ‘alleviating institutional barriers’ (Warbroek *et al.*, 2018, p. 2). Hargreaves *et al.* (2013, p. 877) also recognize their role in ‘brokering’ between niche and regime. Furthermore, Hodson *et al.* (2013) suggest that intermediary work can range across strategic and project-focused roles.

The emphasis on niche empowerment, regime change and destabilization in the literature reflects underlying normative values but also suggests that transition intermediaries are not always neutral middle actors. Instead, they may strongly advocate specific goals (e.g. Orstavik, 2014). Nevertheless, their agency to influence change varies based on, for example, their affiliation and resources (Kivimaa, 2014; Parag & Janda, 2014).

My analysis of intermediary roles focused on the terminology describing roles and activities across the above-mentioned literature. A shortcoming in the literature was that some terms describing roles remained rather abstract due to a lack of empirical detail. To assess such terminology in the temporary use context, I examined the roles vis-à-vis the case of *Kera* through an integrative analysis (see Materials and Methods).

A Typology of Roles in (Inter)mediation

As a result of an integrative analysis across the literature on intermediary roles and the temporary use case, *Kera*, I propose a typology of roles in (inter)mediation. The typology outlines six role categories, divided into sub-categories of activities, in line with the above-mentioned definition of roles. The roles are differentiated by their emphasis on niche development vs regime change and a project-oriented vs strategic purpose. The vocabulary in the typology follows that in the urban transitions literature. The empirical case has influenced the assessment of the terms and the differentiation of specific role and activity categories in the typology. The **roles** and accompanying *activities* are overviewed below and described in detail in Figure 1, with all references.

The role of **Aligning visions** (a) is understood to concern articulating shared visions across niches (Seyfang *et al.*, 2014) and negotiating broader-scale visions (Hodson & Marvin, 2009), also linked to efforts to destabilize regimes (Kivimaa, 2014). Thus, this role concerns vision alignment across levels and scales. This role comprises activities of *negotiating visions and strategies, articulating needs and expectations* and *advancing sustainability aims*.

Building social networks to support niches (b) is a socially complex role. In transitions literature, network-building is understood as central for niche development (e.g. Kivimaa, 2014; Seyfang *et al.*, 2014), while the social interactions may also involve regime actors. This role involves activities of *building networks and facilitating collaboration, gatekeeping* as well as *configuring, arbitrating and aligning interests*.

Brokering partnerships between niche and regime (c) is a role through which intermediaries can *introduce new actor configurations* that may disrupt existing power relations and conventional practices (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2013; Matschoss & Heiskanen, 2017, 2018; Warbroek *et al.*, 2018). The role involves *bridging value-based gaps and building trust* between actors involved. Other activities include *coordinating partnerships, elaborating terms and conditions* and *developing new models* (e.g. business or operational).

Negotiating regime change (d) articulates a role through which intermediaries may explicitly address structural barriers for change and elaborate related ‘regime rules’ and institutions (Smith *et al.*, 2016; Matschoss & Heiskanen, 2018; Warbroek *et al.*, 2018). ‘Rules’ are understood here as regulations, permissions or institutional practices. Activities include *negotiating ‘regime rules’, redeveloping institutions* and *advocating policy development*.

The role of **advancing learning** (e) is also understood as key in niche development (e.g. Geels & Deuten, 2006). This role comprises activities of *gathering and aggregating knowledge* across local contexts, *communicating and disseminating* and *capacity building* (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2013; Kivimaa, 2014; Seyfang *et al.*, 2014). Other activities include *experimenting and piloting* as well as *promoting niches via inspiring examples* (Kivimaa, 2014; Matschoss & Heiskanen, 2017).

Coordinating project activities and resources (f) is the most neutral role in this typology (Geels & Deuten, 2006; Hargreaves *et al.*, 2013; Warbroek *et al.*, 2018). The accompanying activities include *project design, coordination and evaluation* and *managing and identifying financial and human resources*.

The proposed typology outlines a broad scope of potentially relevant roles and activities in (inter)mediation, assessed for their relevance in temporary use. The roles are not mutually exclusive nor exhaustive. Neither are they intended as a universal ‘job description’ in (inter)mediation. Instead, they present a range of potential roles, the combination of which may vary across individual cases and contexts of (inter)mediation. The following section further elucidates selected roles in the case of *Kera* in more detail.

Elucidating Mediator Roles in Case *Kera*

To bring to light nuances of temporary use mediation on the ground, vis-à-vis the typology overviewed above, this section elucidates selected roles in the Finnish temporary use case, *Kera*. The accounts below illustrate selected roles from the typology that resonate strongly with the case. In *Kera*, mediation focused largely on addressing the challenging socio-political dynamics between and within niche and regimes during an initial phase of temporary use. The case thus resonated most with the roles of *building*

(a) Aligning visions ¹		(b) Building social networks to support niches ^{1,10,11}		(c) Brokering partnerships between niche and regime ^{5,6,7,8}	
(Inter)mediation activities	Mediator activities in case <i>Kera</i>	(Inter)mediation activities	Mediator activities in case <i>Kera</i>	(Inter)mediation activities	Mediator activities in case <i>Kera</i>
(a1) Negotiating visions and strategies ^{2,3}	Negotiating project goals and vision Connecting temporary use with formal planning	(b1) Building social networks and facilitating collaboration ^{2,3,4,5,6,8}	Organizing and facilitating workshops and meetings Matchmaking between potential users	(c1) Bridging value-based gaps and building trust ^{5,6,7,8,9}	Negotiating with property owners on temporary use Addressing controversies Translating and communicating
(a2) Articulating needs and expectations ^{3,4,6}	Formulating the project brief	(b2) Gatekeeping ³	Creating social platforms Planning for public participation and events	(c2) Introducing new actor configurations ^{6,7,8}	Introducing operators to property owners
(a3) Advancing sustainability aims ³	Advocating sustainable property development	(b3) Configuring, arbitrating and aligning interests ^{2,3,8}	Selecting and inviting participants and partners Aligning and configuring criteria for selections Handling social dynamics and tensions	(c3) Coordinating partnerships ⁵	Marketing spaces
(a4) Gathering and aggregating knowledge ^{3,4,5,6,7,8}	Identifying suitable spaces for temporary use Background research and project reports	(b4) Identifying and managing human resource needs ³		(c4) Elaborating terms and conditions ⁵	Operating the rental of temporary spaces
(a5) Communicating and disseminating knowledge ^{3,4,5,7,8}	Briefing, identity building (of the temporary use site) Communicating and sharing knowledge	(f) Coordinating project activities and resources ^{5,6,10}		(c5) Developing new models ^{5,6,7}	Negotiating on contract terms and conditions Developing a rental model for temporary use
(a6) Capacity building (advice, support and training) ^{3,4,5,6,9}	Advising users in technical or regulatory issues Helping users to formalize groups	(f1) Project design and evaluation ^{3,4,11}	Brief-making Gathering feedback	(d1) Negotiating 'regime rules' ^{7,8,9,11}	Negotiating on regulations, permissions or conventions Reinterpreting regulations for repurposing spaces
(a7) Experimenting and piloting ^{3,4,7}	Helping users to formalize groups Gathering feedback from experiments	(f2) Coordinating project activities	Helping temporary users find funding Locating resources for the mediator's future work	(d2) Redeveloping institutions ^{9,7,8,11}	Helping formalize groups into associations Identifying new roles
(a8) Promoting niches via inspiring examples ⁷	Benchmarking	(f3) Identifying and managing human resource needs ³	Identifying needs and connecting with supporting actors/resources	(d3) Advocating policy development ^{6,8,9}	Advocating temporary use in forums outside the project
(a9) Advancing learning ^{1,10}				(d4) Negotiating regime change ^{6,7,8,9,11}	

Figure 1. A typology of roles in (inter)mediation.

This typology differentiates six role categories (a to f) and comprising activity categories (a1 – f4). Corresponding activity categories from the temporary use case, 'Kera', are shown in columns on the right, also indicating the strength of resonance with the typology.

¹Schot & Geels, 2008; Van der Laak et al., 2007

²Hodson & Marvin, 2009

³Kivimaa, 2014

⁴Seyfang et al., 2014

⁵Hargreaves et al., 2013

⁶Warbroek et al., 2018

⁷Matschoss & Heiskanen, 2017

⁸Matschoss & Heiskanen, 2018

⁹Smith et al., 2016

¹⁰Geels & Deuten, 2006

¹¹Geels et al., 2016

social networks (b) and *brokering partnerships between niche and regime* (c). Below, I illustrate these roles and related activities and instances of mediation in *Kera*. Furthermore, [Figure 1](#) displays all activity categories from the case with the typology.

Conditions and Dynamics in Case *Kera*

The *Temporary Kera* project (2016–18) took place in a suburban office and logistics district in the city of Espoo, located in the Helsinki metropolitan area in Finland. The district was facing a growing vacancy problem; its buildings were outdated but in reasonably good condition. I was commissioned as a mediator in the project by a coalition of municipal culture and urban development departments in Espoo. The commissioner's goal was to initiate agile, bottom-up revitalization of the underused properties before plans for longer-term redevelopment were implemented.

The conditions for mediation in the case were constrained by several factors, including the available budget and project brief negotiated with the commissioner, but also the local regulatory and planning context and the involved regime actors' values and motivations. Concerning the planning and regulatory regimes, cities in the Helsinki area have had a tradition of stringent zoning and regulatory practices. In *Kera*, building regulations were not directly a barrier for temporarily repurposing the vacant spaces. Instead, it was a question of interpreting technical requirements in some of the buildings. Moreover, the permissions for repurposing spaces within the zoning plan involved high transaction costs, which were a barrier for individual users. Nevertheless, the commissioner representatives had ambitions to challenge some of the conventions in planning and development. They actively advocated swift concrete actions for initiating urban transformation with local actors, putting hope in temporary use to experiment with such an approach in practice.

Actors in the real-estate regime in *Kera* were private property owners, including leading Finnish property investment companies and local subsidiaries of international property investors. The property owners were rather skeptical of temporary use as a relatively unfamiliar approach in the Finnish real-estate sector. Consequently, the potential temporary users, here understood as niche actors, had faced great difficulty finding affordable spaces. This group included individual artists, event organizers and sports associations – quite unequal as negotiation partners with the corporate property owners. Thus, the socio-political dynamics in the case were characterized by asymmetric power relations, mismatching motivations and values and social and economic distance between actors.

Therefore, initiating temporary use in *Kera* can be seen as emblematic of niche-regime contestations in a Finnish temporary use context. A key challenge was to find ways to initiate temporary use within conditions dominated by real-estate and planning regimes.

Elucidating Selected Mediator Roles in Case *Kera*

Building Social Networks to Support Niches (b)

Addressing social dynamics to support temporary use was an important part of mediation work in *Kera*. This work entailed *building networks* of temporary users and *facilitating their collaboration* (b1). Other activities were *gatekeeping* (b2) to select participants and partners, *configuring* selection criteria, *aligning interests* and *arbitrating* between actors or actor groups (b3).

Building Social Networks and Facilitating Collaboration (b1). As a mediator, my work concerning network-building and collaboration involved *organizing and facilitating workshops and meetings* and *matchmaking between potential users*.

While planning the project, I *organized and facilitated a kick-off workshop*, in which 50 people participated. The workshop took place in one of the underused buildings, where we planned to pilot temporary use. The workshop helped to identify interested users and their needs concerning spaces. However, the owner of the building soon withdrew from the project, and mediation continued with negotiations with other property owners (see c1).

Over a longer timeframe, *matchmaking* took over as a time-consuming priority. As the property owners were concerned about the workload of renting small office units to individuals, I helped users build groups to rent larger units together. In public viewings, I mapped the interested users' needs and interests while also encouraging them to become proactive in group-building. The matchmaking work took place over months, involving complicated social dynamics, numerous meetings, phone calls and group emails. This process also revealed critical gaps concerning the need for an 'operator' to manage rental contracts (see c3) and a flexible rental model (see c5).

Configuring, Arbitrating and Aligning Interests (b3). Besides network-building, mediation work in *Kera* involved *configuring and aligning interests* between actor groups and *arbitrating conflicts* between temporary users competing over funding or specific spaces.

Aligning interests between the municipal commissioner, the property owners and the potential users became necessary while framing the temporary use project and activities. While I prepared suggestions based on background research, decision-making entailed aligning the priorities of municipal representatives and property owners with the needs of the potential users. Although cultural actors and artists were the main groups interested in the available spaces, some property owners were quite prejudiced towards them, and the commissioner representatives were indecisive about their priorities. The local CEO of an international property investment company explained their worries about the existing tenants' response towards 'hipsters', arguing '*we don't want to lose the foundations of our rental income.*' Consequently, artists had faced great difficulty with finding workspaces, as a ceramic artist reported: '*Most of them [owners] said we weren't suitable tenants. That left us feeling that this [project] would be our only chance to find a studio space . . . I think it was your [the mediator's] engagement that made this [rental agreement] possible.*' My contribution as a mediator was to find a compromise between actors to enable first temporary use experiments, which might generate further learning.

Brokering Partnerships between Niche and Regime (c)

Besides addressing the social dynamics to support temporary use, another key mediator role focused on brokering partnerships between niche and regime actors to alleviate initial barriers for temporary use. I understand 'partnerships' here as contracts and agreements (such as rental contracts), funding or collaboration partnerships. In *Kera*, brokering work involved *bridging value-based gaps* (c1) in negotiations with property owners, *introducing new actor configurations* (c2) and *coordinating partnerships* (c3). The experiences also revealed a need to *develop new rental models* (c5) and *elaborate related terms and contracts* (c4).

Bridging Value-based Gaps and Building Trust (c1). To enable new partnerships in *Kera*, mediation work involved *negotiating with property owners* and other actor groups to *address controversies* and develop shared understandings and compromises. Furthermore, *translating and communicating* needs and requirements was necessary to bridge the distance and build trust between actors and actor groups.

Negotiating with property owners took over as an essential priority after one of the most prominent property owners had withdrawn from the project due to air conditioning problems. Despite growing vacancy, most property owners were skeptical about temporary use and reluctant to find new ways for addressing the issue. Instead, their primary concern was the longer-term redevelopment of the underused properties. The owners presumed that temporary use would generate extra work, risks and added maintenance costs without enough financial profit – as one rental manager put it, ‘*terrible costs, little income and a lot of trouble*’.

The negotiations with owners also revealed a critical structural issue concerning real-estate valuation. As the prevailing valuation model is based on rental income, holding spaces empty maintains property value while lowering the rents would decrease the value – on paper. One of the rental managers explained: ‘*People always argue that the property owner would earn at least some rent so it would be better than nothing, which is not true in terms of real-estate valuation ... Have you thought about this ... is the valuation model wrong?*’

Other actors, including the municipal project leaders, argued instead for the potential of temporary use to increase property value in the longer term, claiming that the current valuation model is indeed problematic. While I had limited agency as a freelance consultant to influence the property owners’ decisions, the municipal project leaders generated pressure towards temporary use by withholding longer-term redevelopment permissions for even five years. Through negotiations, two property owners agreed to test small-scale temporary rental.

Introducing New Actor Configurations (c2). A significant gap identified in *Kera* was the lack of a specific actor to *operate rental contracts and payments* and possibly create a joint marketing and booking platform. Such activities were beyond the scope of my work, due to the specific legal requirements attached to ‘real-estate agents’ and the potential longer-term commitment extending beyond my contract. Therefore, I searched for potential operators and *introduced these actors to property owners*. An organization specialized in operating ateliers for professional artists took over the operational task in one of the buildings. However, negotiations with other actors, such as startups, did not result in collaboration with owners.

Coordinating Partnerships (c3). Having developed an agreement with two property owners in *Kera* to test small-scale temporary rental, I continued *marketing the spaces* while looking for a professional operator.

Within the small project budget, I *advertised spaces* via social media and public events that were part of the project. I arranged public viewings together with the rental managers. This work took time and involved complex dynamics in matchmaking between users (see b1). Within six months, I found groups of users within the fields of arts, culture and sports for three office premises and a larger, 3000 m² warehouse space.

To enable the renting of larger spaces for individual users without an operator, I resorted to substitute solutions, such as helping users found an association ('ry' in Finnish) to act as the formal main tenant. This solution had many problems, including risks and responsibilities for association members. Nevertheless, such experiences provided learning for the potential development of future models in temporary use.

Developing New Models (c5). In *Kera*, the property owners' traditional operational models did not easily accommodate temporary use. Hence, there was a need for *developing a flexible rental model*. Based on my previous research and the experiences within *Kera*, I developed a proposal for such a model, including a step-by-step system to start renting parts of larger spaces for an initial period while still looking for more tenants. The owners, however, deemed the proposal too risky. Instead, we agreed on smaller adjustments to contract terms and conditions concerning rental and deposit prices, contract duration or included renovations.

Discussion and Conclusions

'Mediation' is emerging as a field of professional work that addresses the complex socio-political dynamics and structural barriers identified in temporary use. This article has sought to contribute to the research in this understudied and undertheorized field by articulating the roles and activities involved in mediating temporary use.

As a result of an integrated analysis across literature on urban transition intermediaries and temporary use practice, I have proposed a typology of roles in (inter)mediation. The typology outlines six mediation-related roles and comprising activities, tested concerning practice-relevance in temporary use and differentiated into levels and categories. The roles range from learning, network-building and brokering to aligning visions and renegotiating 'regime rules' involved in planning and development. Thus, the typology suggests a broad range of potentially relevant mediator roles, the scope of which may vary depending on local contexts and conditions of temporary use.

Through a Finnish temporary use case, *Kera*, I have further elucidated nuances of selected roles in practice. The empirical accounts have shed light on socio-politically complex mediator roles in initiating temporary use in a local context, where mediation entailed building social networks, aligning interests and brokering between actors to enable temporary use. Regarding the typology, the case strongly demonstrates the roles of network-building and brokering while providing more subtle evidence on other roles concerning learning or regime change. This may be partly due to the limited scope of the case, as further discussed below.

The case further demonstrates the nature of the roles as evolving and negotiated in interaction with other actors, as suggested by Wittmayer *et al.* (2017). In *Kera*, the content and scope of the mediator roles were negotiated continuously with the project commissioner. The scope of roles was limited in terms of resources and my short-term involvement as a freelance consultant. Yet, the roles also changed from our initially agreed understandings due to actions and decisions by the property owners and the commissioner's changing perceptions.

There are inevitable delimitations concerning the typology and the role of a single case in this study. Firstly, it has been beyond the scope of this article to delve deeply into the theoretical foundations of the main sources and the temporary use and urban transitions discourses. Secondly, methodological limits concern the above discussed ‘partiality’ and ‘situatedness’ of the practice-based research approach and the role of the single case, which sets some limits for interpreting the implications. Here, the case of *Kera* represents an initial phase of temporary use in a local context, characterized by a mismatch of interests between key actors and a strong position of the private property owners. Inevitably, mediation in other cases, contexts or phases of temporary use will involve other context-specific characteristics. Nevertheless, the nuanced elaboration of the contextual conditions here is relevant for understanding mediation roles in challenging strong, conventional planning and real-estate regimes. Moreover, the typology itself is based on a broad literature review and thus intended as applicable on temporary use mediation across local contexts.

Thirdly, the integrated analysis indicated potential gaps in the scope of roles in the typology vis-à-vis temporary use. While the case demonstrated all roles of the typology to varying degrees, it also revealed some activities that did not perfectly match the typology. This indicates that some new roles or activities might potentially be added or some terms reformulated based on further empirical studies on temporary use. However, my decision here was not to add new categories or alter the terms in the typology, based on one case.

Given these limitations, the typology proposed in this article is not intended as closed or finalized. Recommended future research would include expanding the study of mediation to other cases of temporary use, involving different geographical contexts and regime conditions, different phases of temporary use, or other research methods. Future work could also include a deeper theoretical grounding of the typology itself or seeking additional literature in other disciplines possibly relevant for further theorizing such mediator roles.

Through a systematic and nuanced articulation of (inter)mediation roles in temporary use, this article draws attention to changing work in planning, where mediation is an example of distinctly dialogic and socio-politically engaged work. Such work extends beyond the traditional, largely spatially-oriented competencies and training of professionals involved. By elaborating related roles and competencies, this article provides important implications for municipalities aiming to procure such work and for the future development of professional education in planning or architecture.

A better understanding of mediation can be important for cities aiming to develop more adaptive, inclusive and resource-efficient approaches in urban planning and development. Closer attention to the complexity of interests through mediation might increase the recognition and representation of niche actors, such as the temporary users. As implied in urban transitions scholarship, (inter)mediation involved in negotiating structural conditions or building new partnerships between niche and regime might ultimately open up avenues for temporary use to challenge the real-estate and planning regimes in more profound ways. This would make more concrete the claims by scholars on the potential of temporary use in advancing systemic changes in planning and

development (e.g. Oswalt *et al.*, 2013). Overall, the integrated analytic work proposed in this article is a necessary first step in mapping out a previously understudied area, and thus, a basis for further research.

Notes

1. This article forms part of my doctoral research, in which I study mediation through the ‘practice-based research’ of my own work as an architect mediating temporary use in Finland and through qualitative interviews with other professional mediators.
2. The term ‘transitions research’ refers here to the field of scholarship studying long-term socio-technical transitions (e.g. Geels & Schot, 2010). The field borrows insights from various disciplines, including science and technology studies, evolutionary economics, sociology and institutional theory. Recently, transitions thinking has been applied in a broad range of disciplines. ‘Urban sustainability transitions’ draws on both socio-technical and socio-ecological system studies (e.g. Berkes *et al.*, 2002).
3. Quotation from a participant at a meeting in the case *Kera*.

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Mikael M. Jensen
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Figures 82–84. Instances of mediation from the project *Temporary Kera*, including a stakeholder workshop and a tour of vacant spaces in 2016. The project aimed to revitalise the suburban office and logistics district of *Kera*, located in Espoo, in the Helsinki metropolitan area. In this thesis, I investigated my own work as a mediator in the project in the practice-based study of *Mediation in Kera*. Photos: Johannes Romppanen



ESPOO

KERA

HELSINKI

'Mediators' are increasingly seen as necessary actors in enabling and developing 'temporary uses' of vacant spaces – such as adapting empty offices, hospitals or industrial spaces for artists, entrepreneurs or residents. Despite the recent proliferation of temporary uses in many cities of the Global North, they face complex challenges in practice.

The thesis investigates mediation as an example of architectural work moving beyond building design towards managing socio-politically engaged processes, as part of sustainable urban development.

As a cross-cutting finding, this thesis articulates three roles for mediators in temporary use: they broker the collaboration and partnerships between actors, negotiate structural conditions and build capabilities for temporary use. Overall, the thesis highlights socio-political aspects of professional work concerning urban development today. Thus, it provides relevant knowledge for municipalities and practitioners aiming to advance sustainable, inclusive and adaptable forms of urban development.



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