

Capturing Urban Memory with Sentient Data, Counter Mapping and Digital Methods

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(Editors)

Book of Abstracts

Online Section

7th International Landscape Archaeology Conference

*10 - 15 September 2022
Iași - Suceava, România*

Book of Abstracts. Online Section

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Editors:

George Bodi, Andrei Asăndulesei, Codrin Dinu Vasiliu,
Marcel Mîndrescu, Lucrețiu Mihailescu-Bîrliba, Ionuț Vasiliniuc

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Capturing Urban Memory with Sentient Data, Counter Mapping and Digital Methods

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Keywords: urban memory, dynamic-mapping, digital methods, archival practices, sentient data

Abstract: This paper puts forward a conceptual proposition that ties the discourses on ‘urban memory’ (Stillman and Johanson, 2009; Ringas, Christopoulou, Stefanidakis., 2011; Loughran, Fine & Hunter, 2015), sensory ethnography (Pink 2017), and counter-mapping (Crampton and Krygier 2018;) with digital methods (Rogers, Sánchez-Querubín, and Kil, 2015). As an ‘interventionist’ approach, we understand co-producing counter (dynamic) maps with local stakeholders (actors), coupled with sensory and sentient data as a way of capturing the memory of urban peripheral landscapes (through intervention and participation) and thus creating archival knowledge.

Urban memory is often understood as a form of collective memory that is constituted by individual experiences within the place itself and through its history and social environment (Ringas et al., 2011). With rapid changes in digital technologies, digital and material have become “inseparable and entangled in environments people move and navigate their lives through” (Pink and Fors, 2017). Memories are “evoked with material engagement with devices” which “opens up a field of sensory and affective engagement” research (ibid). While Pink and Fors propose to follow such engagement in a mundane and everyday setting, seen as a non-representational, phenomenological approach, we put forward a mixed methods approach that connects sensory and sentient data (as agents) with the larger environmental context.

Urban areas are often conceptualized as sites of ‘creative destruction’, in between stability and change, space (that can be developed) and place (that is lived in), often subjected to planning, regulation, and economic forces (Batty, 2007). This is especially true for urban areas that are located outside of the ‘center’ or in the cities’ periphery. These areas have experienced an endless cycle of deconstruction and reconstruction often witnessed and captured by local inhabitants, creatives, and activists. Currently, many of the peripheral areas are emancipating, bringing forward and openly communicating their complexities, values, and engaging various stakeholders in their regeneration efforts (which happens in a broader context of many European cities repositioning themselves in more polycentric and polyphonic ways, (Scott, 2015).

To be able to capture the memory of ever-changing, 'built a new' urban places, we put forward counter (dynamic) mapping using digital methods as complemented with sensory and sentient data generated through interactions with digital technologies. Building on Crampton's notion of maps (Crampton and Krygier, 2018), cartography is understood as existence (becoming) rather than essence (fixed ontology). Maps are therefore taken not as 'objects', but as performative practices. Digital methods, on the other hand, enable us to understand dynamic place-making, through 'tracing' the stakeholders (actors) and their relations overtime to capture the ways the urban environment gets performed.

To clarify with an example, in Spinoza Imaginaries Lab & Cafe situated in Amsterdam Southeast we have been capturing the ever changing urban environment in partnership with local stakeholders (actors), mapping their evolving relationships (and grouping) using the IssueCrawler and sentient data co-gathered by researchers and students, with the clear understanding that to be able to capture a place, it is important to map the vernacular knowledge of that place (imaginaries, including art, movies, unrealized plans and initiatives, etc.). We propose this mixed methods approach as an epistemological practice geared towards archiving the dynamic state of urban peripheral landscapes.

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Synaesthetic Landscapes: Searching for the Missing Senses

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Keywords: Palace, architecture, feelings, senses, 18th century

Abstract: In 1781 a book discussing the relationship between cats and dogs was published in Lisbon. Among the illustrations, there is a representation of a palace,

The 7th edition of the Landscape Archaeology Conference is the first edition to be organized in Eastern Europe. Starting from this realisation and the fact that landscape archaeology is a discipline that naturally glides through dogmatic disciplinary boundaries, we have decided that the word that would best describe it would be togetherness. Around this word we have gathered other seven that define the six main themes of the conference:

The first is *Responsibility* as it relates to our duty of paying attention not only to our immediate moment of existence but also to the identification and assessment of anthropic pressure on both built and natural landscapes.

The second is *Defragmentation*. This theme is an invitation to explore the different ways in which various thought traditions mold the way we think about humans, time, and landscapes.

Integration defines the third theme and it shifts the focus towards contributions exploring the interrelationship of human and natural systems.

The fourth word is *Sensitivity*. This theme forgoes rationality and is an opportunity to look at landscapes as affective rather than rational constructs.

Explanation and Understanding, our fifth theme, constitutes an opportunity to examine landscapes starting from quantifiable attributes to cultural constructs.

The final theme is defined by *Cooperation*. As Landscape Archaeology defies disciplinary boundaries, it poses unique challenges. Therefore, this theme welcomes contributions that focus on theoretical and technological multi-disciplinary approaches to the reconstruction of past landscapes.

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