



## Housing – A Critical Perspective.

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### **Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:**

**1. Paper / Proposal Title:** The Learning City and the University of the Neighbourhoods (UoN) – a documentation of making new forms of agencies available

**2. Format:** Written paper

**3. Author(s) Name:** Dominique Peck, Bernd Kniess, Christopher Dell, Anna Richter

**4. University or Company Affiliation:** HafenCity Universität Hamburg

### **5. Abstract (300 words):**

Our paper consists of three parts. Part one reflects on urban forms of knowledge in the making. From 2007-2013 the research and teaching programme Urban Design ran an experiment in urbanism as part of the International Building Exhibition 2013 Hamburg (IBA). IBA offered monetary resources and a lot with a derelict building. Contracted to return the empty lot to Hamburg's housing programme, the UoN's team tackled questions about capacities, superposition, uncertainties, luxury and economy in the residual use of the building. The Learning City served as a »strategic hypothesis« (Lefebvre 2014, p. 7) based on the noticeable tendency that a variety of actors tries to encourage an entrepreneurialism recoupling them with their own relevance in the city. The challenge of such an experiment is to render urban potentialities visible as an end of trajectories towards the strategic hypothesis of the Learning City. Consequently the first part of the paper presents findings from translating the experiment on site into political and administrative arenas articulating agencies beyond well-rehearsed practices of participation in urban development processes.

Part two addresses urban development as a disposition. Through the UoN its team was reporting to, sometimes sitting at the table with and enrolling leaders in urban development processes. Researching into current episodes of urban development the team can emphasize Keller Easterling's (2014, p. 21) argument that »detecting and developing the active forms that shape disposition is an essential skill of urbanists«. What unfolds opening the mere blackboxes of urban development processes are dispositions comprised of highly complex actor-networks and an aesthetic and political repertoire unfamiliar to most urbanists.

In part three the paper concludes by reassembling insights from part one and two around the motif of designing abilities to transform agencies immanent to objects and organisations more open to the reality of urban processes than any preconceived form of interaction.

Easterling, K., 2014. *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space*. London ; New York: Verso.

Lefebvre, H., 2014. *Die Revolution der Städte: La Revolution urbaine*. Neuausgabe mit einer Einführung von Kaus Ronneberger. Hamburg: CEP Europäische Verlagsanstalt.

## **7. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

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Bernd Kniess is an architect and urban planner. He lives and works in Hamburg. Since 2008 he is professor of urban design at HafenCity University Hamburg, where he is currently the dean of the new master program Urban Design. He was the head of the project University of the Neighbourhoods, the practice phase of which lasted from 2008-2014 and is still being continued to be researched. He is a member of the Northrhine-Westfalian Academy of the Sciences and Arts since 2009.

Christopher Dell

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Christopher Dell (Dr. habil.) works as theoretician and composer in Berlin and Hamburg. Dell holds a PhD in Organisation Psychology and a habilitation in cultural studies. He currently holds a position as Professor for Urban Design Theory at HafenCity University Hamburg. Previously, he taught at the University of Fine Arts Berlin, the Technical University Munich, Architectural Association London. He was part of the project University of the Neighbourhoods from 2008-2010.

Dominique Peck

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Dominique Peck is working in the field of urban design. Based in Hamburg he frequently joins changing collectives of professionals in architecture, art, design, theater, music and economics for different projects. Since October 2015 he is an academic staff member at the research and teaching field Urban Design at HCU Hamburg.

Anna Richter

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Anna Richter studied Sociology and English Literature in Bremen and New York before undertaking PhD research into the 'politics of participation' in the European Capital of Culture 2008, Liverpool. Now based in Hamburg, she teaches qualitative methods in the Urban Design Programme at HCU and is currently researching the notion of the 'social' in contemporary urban design discourse and practice. She is also a member of the Editorial Board of CITY: analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action.