

Co-designing for whom? Exploring the benefits of city-led participatory creative practices in disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Madrid

Hurtig, Milagros

Department of Design, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway
milagros.hurtig@ntnu.no

doi.org/10.21606/iasdr.2023.224

This study examines who benefitted from city-led participatory design practices in disadvantaged neighborhoods. After the neoliberal crisis in 2008, discourses on creativity evolved from art projects aimed at pursuing economic growth to art projects with social and cultural aspirations. Participatory art projects are practices where the public is involved in the design and production of the artwork. Urban governments in Europe have used participatory art due to their assumed potential to enhance citizen engagement. However, there is a lack of critical and evaluative insight regarding the implementation and after-use of codesign practices and their inclusionary or exclusionary effects on local communities. The three-year public art program Imagina Madrid (2017 – 2019) was analysed to shed light on these debates. Attention is paid to the disadvantaged contexts where these practices took place and to the communities for which these practices are developed. Using a Case Study Research (CSR) approach, observations and in-depth interviews were conducted with public authorities, artists and designers, and citizens. Findings indicate that codesign practices can have outcomes contrasting initial objectives and do not always benefit local communities. The paper argues for participatory art to be always situated in practice to exercise greater sensibility in order to maximize the benefit of disadvantaged groups in local contexts. This study contributes to expanding the knowledge on the use of co-designing, as well as offers insights into which elements of public art practices are beneficial for amplifying social impact.

Keywords: *codesign, public art, creative placemaking, public space*

1 Introduction

After the neoliberal crisis in 2008, discourses on creativity evolved from art projects aimed at pursuing economic growth to art projects with social and cultural aspirations. Similarly, design discipline is performed with growing awareness of the social responsibility practitioners have and the impact of the practice in society (Cooper, 2017). In this context, urban governments across Europe have been increasingly utilizing a collaborative approach to city making (Healey, 2003). Programs for



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International Licence](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

neighbourhood redevelopment have been promoted engaging citizens, creatives, and diverse stakeholders in the process, where they are invited to think about the future of their neighbourhoods (Markusen, 2010). Such projects often aim to empower local communities, by giving voice to marginalized inhabitants through the medium of art and culture (Sharp et al., 2005). Even though, these practices have become increasingly present in western planning agendas (Matarasso, 2019), there is not enough inquiry into the actual impact they have. There is a lack of critical and evaluative insight regarding the implementation and after-use of these creative practices and their inclusionary or exclusionary effects on local communities (Hall et al., 2001).

The aim of this article is to investigate the benefits and challenges of participatory creative projects when implemented by city councils, in order to contribute and extend participatory design and co-design theory. Co-design or participatory design for this research are relational processes which bring designers, citizens, and people not trained in design to collaborate (Sanders & Stappers, 2008). When co-designing is concerned with the future of cities, it calls for the engagement of actors from diverse sectors (public, private, academia, non-profit, community), and with different backgrounds (formal or informal expertise) (Cruz et al., 2022). In this regard co-design require integrating diverse (and sometimes contradicting) knowledge, values, aims, and skills. The RQ that have guided this investigation are:

- RQ1: Who benefit and is empowered from the use of city-led co-design projects in disadvantaged neighbourhoods?
- RQ2: With respect to present and future contexts, what are the implications for enabling more socially and culturally just urban development for these neighbourhoods?

This article is based in the analyses of the case of Imagina Madrid (IM), a three-year public art program (2017-2019) developed in Madrid (Spain). At first glance, IM sounds promising. It was presented as an open invitation to citizens from the city's peripheral areas to imagine and design new futures for their neighbourhoods. The observations on participatory creative practices encouraged by IM left learnings that can be useful for future designers engaging or enabling other co-design processes. Participatory design is always complex, relational and contextualised. Participatory design and co-design are used as referring to same processes in this paper.

The first section of this article reviews issues of participatory design when implemented by city officials and will unpack issues related to the impact of these practices. The methodology section describes how a CSR approach was used to contextualise, observe and interview stakeholders, as well as analyse the results of participatory design projects. Finally, a discussion is presented with findings raising questions of inclusion and justice when committing with co-designing. Hopefully, the conclusions will be valuable inputs for practitioners, policy makers and organizations engaging in participatory processes in which creativity is seasoned.



Figure 1. "The neighbourhood is ours" Notebook of one resident from Usera, January 2021. Source: Author.

2 Theoretical Foundation

2.1 The role that public art has had in urban regeneration.

In the last 40 years, culture has become a significant driver for urban regeneration and renewal (Evans, 2002). Most literature on cultural geography focuses on how governments have capitalized culture to pursue economic growth (Miles & Paddison, 2005), especially between the 1980s and 2010. Developers and politicians saw arts and culture as niche markets (Zukin, 1998) to the point that the word 'Creativity' became one of the "major buzzwords in the new economy and came to replace heavy industry and commodity production" (Bishop, 2012, p.14). Culture became a key driver to attract international investments, new firms, corporations, and tourists (Florida, 2002).

The paradigm mentioned above affected cities' urban landscapes, which can be viewed by walking through every global city today. Urban cores increasingly embody commodified environments, showcasing upscaled public spaces, redeveloped and homogenized to the point of losing their distinctive identities (Zukin, 2009). Creative city narratives have also failed to recognize and value diversity in cities (Pratt, 2011). Pratt argues against a universalist notion of creativity, in favour of a socially, cultural and economically embedded and situated one (Pratt, 2011, p.123).

2.2 Taking over urban development through co-design practices

The economic crisis in 2008/2009 conveyed new alternatives to democratize the production of the city. In the last 20 years, an increasing body of literature from different disciplines has surged recognizing strategies rooted in discourses of creativity but shifting focus away from the logic of the market economy. Emphasizing projects that prioritize social or cultural outcomes over profitability and commercial success. Ehn (2017) calls this moment a third collective turn in design, whereas Manzini (2015) highlighted the role of designers as facilitators of social innovations.

Co-design involves the participation of the public rather than observation and focuses on the process rather than the outcome (Sanders & Drein, 2019). It is through a process with the end-users that the solution is created. Sharp et al. (2005) saw these processes and methods through which artistic and cultural interventions are practiced as key in determining their inclusive or exclusive nature. Similarly, Liz Sanders also argued that in participatory design the value is on the interactions originated

throughout the design process, seeing greater potential on collective creativity, rather than individual ones (Sanders & Stappers, 2014). Pinder also sustains that creative practices allow the creation of "new meanings, experiences, relationships, understandings, and situations," and that it can "question, re-function, and contest prevailing norms and ideologies" (Pinder, 2008, p.730).

When implementing participatory design, art can be a vehicle to convey the relations produced throughout the design process. In this context art, leaves aside its aesthetics requirements and is anchored as a form of "unique communicative and social power" (Cieri 2004, p.2 in Pain, 2004), "offering 'spaces of self-representation and articulation' for unheard and unseen groups" (Herman and Mattingly 1999, p.210; Tolia-Kelly 2007 in Hawkins, 2011, p.472). In these processes designers or artists function as facilitators and respective communities design futures for their neighbourhoods according to contextual needs. However, authors like Manzini (2015) have identified the danger that these practices on the ground face when they are institutionalized. When creative practices are used for urban redevelopment, an entire bureaucratic machinery is installed and activated for public art production (Phillips, 1988, p.100 in Hall & Robertson, 2001, p.20).

For other, the political potential of participatory creative practices relies on the degree of commitment of local communities to the processes, how and when they engage (in different ways) in 'participation' (Hawkins, 2011). Time constraints can also be a pitfall in participatory processes. Co-design, when commissioned by cities, is often relegated to specific temporalities (e.g., having to respond to a schedule for deliverables and outcomes), which are not correspondent to the required time to build trustful and reliable relationships (Pollock & Sharp, 2012). A similar concern was raised by Zebracki et al. when analysing a community art project in Amsterdam (2010). He stated that the following deficiencies are prevalent in public art research and public art policy making: "(a) a lack of recognition of actors' perspectives". He observed how tensions arise in the production of public art by the contrasted ambitions the diverse actors (as citizens, public officers, and artists) have. "(b) a lack of geographical contextuality. Public institutions often overlooked art projects' spatial settings. (c) a lack of temporal perspective" (Zebracki et al., 2010, p.793). These observations are missed out in co-design literature, assuming that creatives have the required sensibility to navigate among cultural diversities of stakeholders.

When these participatory practices are delivered by centers of power, their purposes, goals, and methods might be pragmatic and externally-driven, rather than negotiated between the people concerned (Matarasso, 2019). "If negotiations among diverse social identities is not being facilitated, then the artwork is not public" (Zebracki et al., 2010, p.786). This research aims to further understand participatory creative practices as processes of cultural negotiation by identifying winners and losers and observing to what extent they become a beneficial asset for the communities where they are developed. The next section explains and justifies the specifics of the research design and its methodology.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research approach

A Single Case Study Research approach has been chosen for Imagina Madrid (IM) to focus on holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events within the confines of space and time (Schoch, 2020;

Yin 2003). IM was a program encompassing nine co-design processes in peripheral neighbourhoods of Madrid (promoted between 2017 and 2019). However, only four of those nine were selected as sub-units for extensive analysis (Yin, 2018). The cutting was made after the first interviews to public servants and artists, considering their perceptions as most “successful” or “interesting” projects.

3.2 Research methods

In depth interviews allowed a deeper understanding of IM while learning the meanings of participant's actions (Johnson & Rowlands, 2012). Twenty-two in-depth interviews were conducted: 6 with public authorities, 8 with artists, 6 with participants, and 2 with experts. The first interviews were during the summer of 2020, they were conversations with public authorities with an open structure and no clear guidelines. The open dialogues contributed to better understanding and framing the contextual setting of IM. Interviews with artists were semi structured, following a guideline of questions and topics (Johnson & Rowlands, 2012). The contact with participants was through the artists by the snowball effect, and in cases where this was not possible, the contact was made through Facebook or other social media platforms. The interviews were transcribed, and a thematic analysis was conducted by the author. This helped understanding the different perspectives the actors had respecting a topic, depending on the position they had had when engaging in the process.

At the same time, visits to the sites started from the beginning of the research, generating ethnographic observations of the four neighbourhoods chosen. In the case of the neighbourhood of Usera, a more profound process with the local community was carried out using participant observations and workshops. This process started organically when getting in contact with two local associations of the neighbourhood. The author joined a community driven process, being a participant observer of four workshops hosted by these associations (La Union and La Mancha de Almendrales). Some topics and activities conducted during the workshops were related to thinking about the neighborhood in five years, constructing an actor's map, and revising old urban diagnoses made in the past to update them. The first meeting was in January, and the last was on May 2021. Photos and notes were taken to register, these were analysed and condensed into reports which were sent to the neighbours for the final approval. Finally, a mix of sources has enriched data collection through desktop research.



Figure 2. Participant observations: workshop organized by neighbours of Usera, January 2021. Source: Author.

4 Case Study: Imagina Madrid

Imagina Madrid is a public art program coordinated by Intermediae¹. The program explores alternative forms of intervention in urban space through processes of collective creation between citizens and artists (Imagina Madrid, 2017) and was launched in Madrid in 2017. Three leitmotifs guided the development of the program: (1) exploration of new ways of building the city through art; (2) exploration of new models for collaboration between artists, citizens, and the public administration and (3) transformation of public policies through participatory creative processes (Soundcloud Imagina Madrid, 2018).

In November 2017, the terms and conditions of the competition were published, and during the following months, they collected 147 ideas, choosing a final number of 22. Figure 2 shows a timeline with the overall development of the program. The jury selected three ideas for each public space, encouraging a negotiation process between the three creatives (from arts, architecture, design or other backgrounds), and citizens. In January 2018, the co-design meetings took place, where citizens and artists discussed the final projects in a two-day session. It inaugurated the results in the chosen public spaces between September 2018 and April 2019.

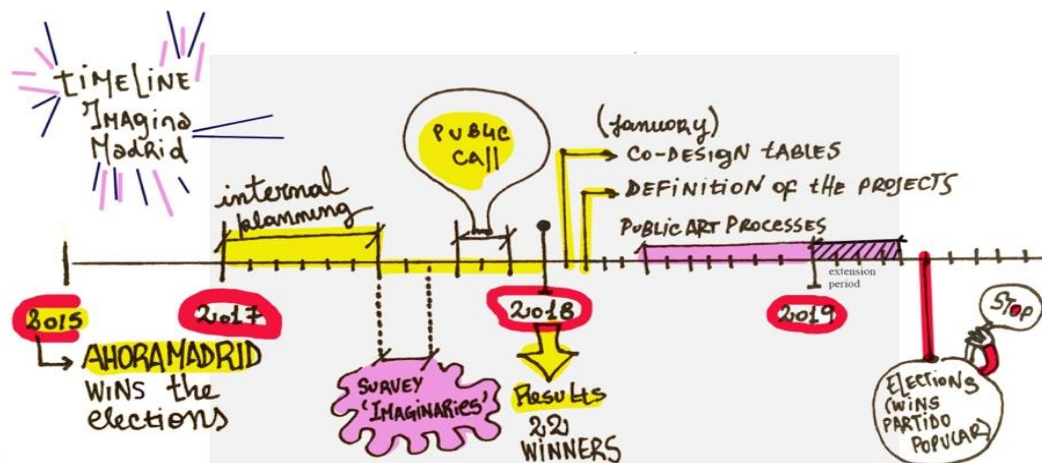


Figure 3. Timeline of the public art program Imagina Madrid. Source: Author.

Finally, Imagina Madrid was developed in nine public spaces in the City of Madrid. All those spaces were considered as disadvantaged, according to an index of vulnerability developed by the Municipality. They correspond to peripheral areas outside the historical center of the city. The city has developed the indicator of vulnerability to direct public policies and planning practices, pursuing a more nuanced urban development by recognizing the abrupt contrast between some and other areas of the City of Madrid (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2018). Four districts from nine were chosen as sub-units of analysis to conduct the inquiry: *Usera, Vallecas, Arganzuela, and Tetuán*.

¹ Intermediae is a space devoted to socially engaged artistic practices. It was launched in 2007 and has become a key cultural venue in Madrid and a national and international benchmark for contemporary culture that specializes in developing art and community projects (Intermediae, 2021). Intermediae offices are located in Matadero-Madrid.

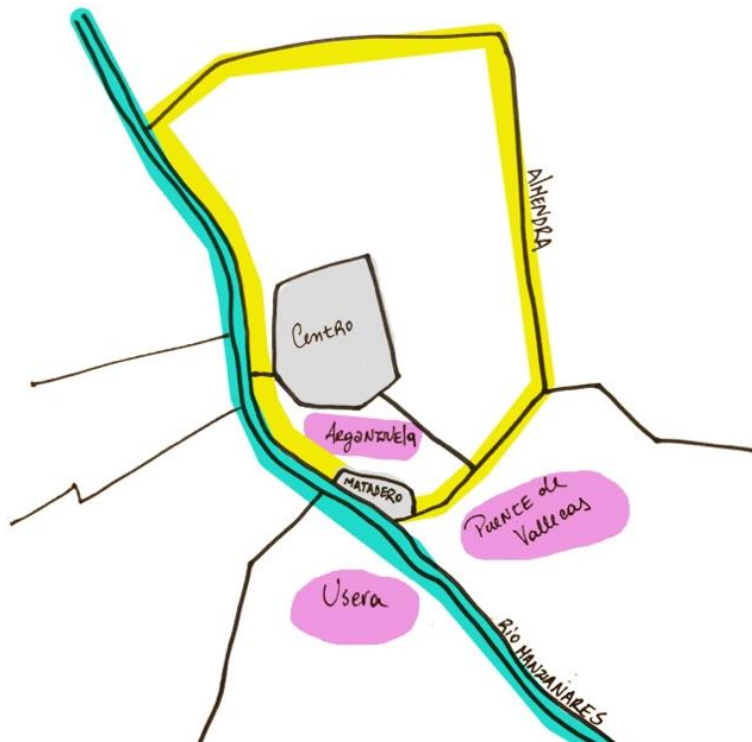


Figure 4. Map of Madrid. Marked in pink three of the neighbourhoods chosen as sub-units of analysis. Source: Author.

5 Findings

5.1 Looking at how the spaces are being transformed.

Madrid is one of the most unequal European capital cities, with the highest social segregation figures within the population (Leal & Sorando, 2019), which is also expressed spatially. A study made by Sorando and Ardura (2021) showed how people living inside the almond (the city center of Madrid) are progressively moving to peripheral neighborhoods. Young professionals who lived in the city center were forced to move to adjacent neighborhoods because of increasing prices in central locations. Usera and Tetuán, were identified as neighborhoods with an incipient gentrifying process and it showed how an increasing number of people were leaving the districts, representing the poorest and most fragile inhabitants (Sorando & Ardura, 2021).

The four neighbourhoods were chosen not only because they were considered deprived areas by the authorities, but also because they had a bad reputation and as such were stigmatized as notorious neighbourhoods of the city. This stigma became present in diverse forms and functioned as a stimulus and mediator of creative practices to address a wide variety of complexities.

One resident of Usera paradoxically considered the benefits of belonging to a place that is stigmatized. He recognized negative narratives of the neighbourhood as a way to slow down displacement processes: "This neighbourhood is fortunate to be one of the most vulnerable of the city... and that implies that there is insecurity and drugs, and those things do not call families with money, who want to make a new life in a cheaper neighbourhood" (citizen - men around his 35).

On the other hand, the artists who developed Kópera (in Vallecas – a neighbourhood with similar characteristics) saw a stigma as a central problem, and they were battling it using performing art. One

designer referred to the "change of face" the neighbourhood needed, "for example, Vallecas is historically related with crime, drugs, and insecurity; this project could bring a cultural face by showing that these artistic processes can also happen in these neighbourhoods" (designer – men around his 45). From the artists' perspective, the participatory process could be a way to create another type of image and narrative around Vallecas instead of those prevailing. However, the designer was more concerned about installing an image than in the process of negotiation between residents in order to reach their own image. The question in this case is, who (citizen or designers) benefit from those newly produced images? The designer stated:

"When there is a collaborative aesthetic, a thousand different things can happen, but we (the designers) devised a concrete aesthetic... We had devised everything. There were moments we had a conflict: where that creative part of how we imagined the project ... was tensed by other people in the project who imagined it in another way."



Figure 5. Place in Vallecas that was transformed during the public performance. Source: Madrid Turismo (2021) & Imagina Madrid (2018).

5.2 Looking at the imbalances of the cultural negotiations promoted by Imagina Madrid.

The participatory design processes sponsored by IM have different outcomes and were organized in different ways. Some artists were more aware of the cultural distances among the residents and their role as outsiders. One of the artists of En Sintonia (In Tune) said:

"The first step was to know where we were landing. What happens when you grab artists and throw them in a square, pull someone's parachute, and they land there ... the first question that came up was where we had landed?" (artist – woman around 40)

The artist of El Beso (The Kiss) in Tetuán was also conscious of her role as an outsider, and she encouraged a consistent process to engage with the local context. The clear protagonists of El Beso were a group of around 50 women from the neighbourhood. This became clear in the interviews where they expressed ownership to the project. Still today, the artist is in contact with the local community, and they continued working together. As part of the process, El Beso and En Sintonia, both integrated the figures of mediators (social workers). The artists decided to allocate money to a mediation team that was constantly present in the neighbourhood. They mentioned initial rejection by the community as the primary barrier. However, this was eventually sorted out through a situated

activity, focusing on being present and facilitating exchange between the residents, the mediator team, and the artist. One of the artists said:

"When we rented the place, people had a lot of distance, they looked at us: 'are they from the bar?' ... they didn't call us by our name... 'Ah! There are the artists on their side and us on our side'. We started in April, and the first demonstration of affection of the community was in September" (social worker – men around 40)



Figure 6. The work of mediators in En Sintonia. Source: Imagina Madrid (2018).

Something that became evident is that tensions between the artistic and social goals emerged throughout the participatory processes. In the case of Kópera and according to the artist the emphasis of the project was more on the artistic side rather than on the participatory one. In this regard, the aesthetic side was even being threatened by the required negotiation that resides in any process that is participatory. This generated disagreement between the artists and the citizens. The citizens sometimes they felt they did not have enough space for doing and deciding the future of the projects. One citizen recognized this tension:

"It's hard for an artist to say ... well, now this is going to change ... but ... you're going to profit from a social story... it's not an artists' competition; it's about doing something that has to impact the neighborhood" (Resident – men around 38)

Therefore, when co-design processes relied on the creation of an image, instead of on the relational aspects of the negotiation, the accent was on the product that was being created and not in the process. This reinforced a paradigm where the goal is to sell a consumable product, instead of on the social and cultural revenues. When implementing city-led participatory design, and the goal is social, it is needed that artists or designers take a step back on the aesthetics. This does not mean necessarily to resign to the aesthetics, but to understand that the concept guiding the artwork is the fact of being collectively created with others non-recognized as designers. This happened more clear in the cases of En Sintonia and El Beso, where relational interactions were prioritized, conveying in the empowerment of the participants.

5.3 Looking at the participatory processes of public art in Imagina Madrid

Evidently and noticeably, collaboration was perceived as complex and time consuming within the program. On one side, there was an optimistic intention on generating new ways of producing the city, an imposed call for a process of collective imagination. However, there was little attention on the hierarchies between actors. There were no clear guidelines on how the relationship between artists and residents should be maintained. The program also raised some critiques for not presenting a framework on which the working groups could be based (legally, organically and administratively) (Todo por la Praxis, 2019). There was no clarity as well on the financial organization and in the decision-making procedures of each team (Todo por la Praxis, 2019). Most of these decisions were subordinated to the artists.

One of the public authorities showed frustration on how the process developed in some cases: "many people with many desires propose collaborative spaces, and they do not know how to collaborate, neither at an empathic level, nor a methodological level, nor at a professional level" (Public Authority – men around his 40). Collaboration was often perceived as something "forced":

"This collaborative model of Imagina Madrid is interesting, but I think it forced the collaborative practice. I think these practices have to be given in a much more organic and gradual way, and if they flow, they flow... It was like they married to us." (artist – men around his 45)

Generally, the time planned for the project was not sufficient, as it required more time than they expected to enter the neighbourhoods and bond with local associations. One public authority said:

"in the end, it ends up becoming a bit of an imperative: you have to participate! ... and the biggest complexity is how to give continuity. To make sure that those projects... would not stay in that single experience" (public officer – women around her 40).

Beyond time constraints, the impact on the involvement of citizens could have also been more significant if administrative bureaucracy had been designed to integrate civil society from a holistic perspective. Even though the projects were in peripheral neighbourhoods, the administrative bureaucracy favours a centralized system of cultural consumption. For example, it was difficult for the artists to buy materials or make small purchases in the neighbourhoods where they were working. When referring to the challenges she faced, a public officer said:

"The difficulty of being a public institution, which has rhythms that are not those of a neighbourhood. Or some logics that prevent us from working from the concrete and the situated, from the everyday life, like the fact that we couldn't buy the materials we needed for the projects in the neighbourhood shops."

The fluidity of these creative practices challenged the notion of urban planning as something rigid and permanent. Public spaces in Madrid are strongly regulated on what is allowed and what is not (Menor, 2017), this appeared in some interviews as a complain. Even though the artists were directly connected to public institutions, in some cases they struggled with the police to demonstrate they were allowed to use the space occasionally. Indeed, one of the hypotheses of Imagina Madrid was to transform public policies through participatory creative practices. The coordinator of IM said they wanted to test "If cultural processes could be used to transform public policies," and he continued:

"For example, the permissions to be in a park, to cook in the street, everything is arranged". The administrative and legal frameworks that shape the space are relevant when analysing these practices.

A culture of governance that relies on participation is reflected in the whole machinery working around public art (and city-led) practices. In the case of Madrid, it became clear that institutions are still designed to enable centralized, hierarchical, and conservative processes instead of more horizontal and collaborative forms.

6 Discussion

When observing the benefits creative practices generate, the relevance of contextualizing them to local conditionalities became apparent. These practices are never produced in neutral spaces. The disadvantaged neighbourhoods where Imagina Madrid was developed were already experiencing processes of transformation. Co-design is always relational and should be contextualized. The urban landscapes of traditional working-class areas, such as Usera, Vallecas, Arganzuela, and Tetuán, are increasingly being gentrified, and the have-nots are the most affected. Participatory projects aiming for urban regeneration can have positive and negative outcomes simultaneously. They have the potential to contribute to a new civil imaginary for these peripheral areas of the city, but for whom? Largely, those images are in line with cultural representations of young professionals, designers, artists, and other creatives—less with other alternative and marginalized cultural forms, such as low-skilled workers or migrant backgrounds. Giving a cultural face to the neighbourhoods, using public art, can reproduce or even increase existing inequalities, disregarding one culture for another, especially when the project's focus is on the image instead of the process. The opportunity to reclaim public spaces for marginalized groups is often lost, and the creatives are set as the experts who know what should happen and what should not.

In Imagina Madrid, artists, designers, citizens, and authorities came from different socio-cultural backgrounds, representing other parts of the city. These differences impacted the projects substantially (for example, negotiation processes and aesthetic ambitions) and were often underestimated by creative practitioners. Imagina Madrid ignited a discussion regarding the tensions between the centre and the periphery, literally and figuratively. A lack of reflection regarding the privilege some actors had, especially on the public authorities and the artists' side, became apparent. The action of 'taking from' and 'putting in' can neglect the existing symbols, meanings, and understandings of culture existing in each district, which differ from the logic in the city centre. Sometimes, the designers were more aware of their role as outsiders than in others. After observing the four participatory experiences, it became clear that mediators (social workers) were vital in sorting cultural discrepancies and improve citizen's engagement in the public art process. Mediators came from a social science background instead of an artistic one. They were present, on-site, building trust and making citizens feel confident about their role during the co-design process. Participatory experiences applying a greater sensitivity to the social perspective of the project, instead of an aesthetic one, were more beneficial for the local groups. Therefore, the process through which the collaborations are produced is crucial to determine its level of inclusivity.

In participatory creative practices, tensions between social and artistic goals may be present, as in Kópera, where the need of the artists to control the aesthetic identity of the project reduced the possibilities of the citizens to affect the process. Typically, in participatory design projects, designers

are not autonomous in their decision-making; they have to negotiate with the community on the vision for the artwork. However, collaboration is complex and time-consuming, it is not easy and it demand efforts from the professionals to engage in these negotiations.

The participatory creative practices sponsored by Imagina Madrid showed that participation did not happen immediately. The projects that achieved greater positive transformation in space, from citizens' perspectives, were the two (En Sintonia and El Beso) that stayed and remained once Imagina Madrid was over. The experiences citizens perceived as for the positive impact in their community were the ones better anchored to the local context. Creative practices need to be maintained over time to achieve change.

Artists and authorities had to face a bureaucratic machinery to make use of the public spaces. This, in the end, reduced the benefits they could have in the neighbourhoods, notably because of regulatory laws limiting the flexibility and scope of projects. A further concern was illustrated regarding the tedious, slow, and bureaucratic procedures artists had to face to make small purchases in shops in the peripheral neighbourhoods, where the practices were being developed. Instead, if artists were encouraged to use the money inside the administrative borders of each of the districts, local groups would be indirectly affected and financially benefited (e.g., by buying materials for the regular activities in the small shops next to the correspondent public space). Furthermore, all the artist sub-contracts should also be sourced from within the respective neighbourhoods. In that case, cultural distances could also have been minimized by having people involved in the projects that intrinsically understand the complexities of their neighbourhoods. For future public art policymaking or public calls with respect to creative programs or similar, rigorous specificities regarding how and where artists can use the budget should be recommended. Moreover, greater attention should be paid to who has access to these public calls and which voices or profiles are being neglected.

Finally, the objectives of these cultural programs need to be formulated more clearly. Otherwise, the loose and undefined goals diminish the impact they can have in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Imagina Madrid transferred too much responsibility and authority to the designer's sensitivity to how they would engage with citizens. From the beginning of Imagina Madrid, there were discrepancies and unfavourable hierarchies between artists, designers, citizens, and authorities. Tensions arose during the program because the boundaries of participation were not outlined. This resulted in the lower-income and less-fortunate citizens being the first ones gradually pushed out of the co-design process. Clearer objectives and frameworks on why and how participation should be developed could contribute to a more balanced approach.

Participation is seen as a transfer of power to weaker groups by making them part of city making. The experiences of Imagina Madrid showed how participatory processes did not challenge power structures simply because of being 'collaborative.' More attention from the authorities is required for future policymaking to the power and hierarchies between designers and citizens. When commissioning participatory design practices, it might be helpful to favour artists, designers or art collectives that have showcased social responsibility and sensitivity in their past work.

Participatory creative practice makes sense when they activate empowerment processes and strengthen care networks and local struggles. Participation suddenly became an imperative, and we forget why we participate. We participate in arriving at more equitable spatial configurations. Giving

voice is not a one-day event; it is a configuration of more open and porous forms of governance as a whole, which takes time. It is good that these practices exist and are being adjusted and promoted, and people are getting involved. However, they must understand and respond with sensitivity to the contexts where they are being implemented. Public art always is a situated practice.

References

- Araiza Díaz, V. (2020). El pensamiento crítico de Donna Haraway: complejidad, ecofeminismo y cosmopolítica. *Península*, 15(2), 147-164. [*Donna Haraway's Critical thinking: complexity, ecofeminism y cosmopolitanism*]
- Ayuntamiento de Madrid. (2018). Metodología para la elaboración del índice de vulnerabilidad territorial de barrios y distritos de Madrid. Methodology for the elaboration of the territorial vulnerability index of neighborhoods and districts of Madrid.
- Bishop, C. (2012). *Artificial hells: Participatory art and the politics of spectatorship*. Verso books.
- Cieri, M. (2004). *Irresolvable geographies*. Rutgers The State University of New Jersey-New Brunswick.
- Cruz, M. G., Ersoy, A., Czischke, D., & van Bueren, E. (2022). A Framework for Co-Design Processes and Visual Collaborative Methods: An Action Research Through Design in Chile. *Urban Planning*, 7(3), 363-378.
- Drain, A., & Sanders, E. B. N. (2019). A collaboration system model for planning and evaluating participatory design projects. *International Journal of Design*, 13(3), 39-52.
- Ehn, P. (2017). Learning in participatory design as I found it (1970–2015). In *Participatory Design for Learning* (pp. 7-21). Routledge.
- Evans, G. (2002). *Cultural planning: An urban renaissance?*. Routledge.
- Florida, Richard L. (2012). *The rise of the creative class, revisited*. New York :Basic Books.
- Hall, T., & Robertson, I. (2001). Public art and urban regeneration: advocacy, claims and critical debates.
- Hawkins, H. (2011). Dialogues and doings: Sketching the relationships between geography and art. *Geography compass*, 5(7), 464-478.
- Hawkins, H. (2011). Dialogues and doings: Sketching the relationships between geography and art. *Geography compass*, 5(7), 464-478.
- Healey, P. (2003). *Collaborative planning in perspective*. *Planning theory*, 2(2), 101-123.
- Herman, T., & Mattingly, D. J. (1999). 15 Community, justice, and the ethics of research Negotiating reciprocal research relations. *Geography and Ethics: Journeys in a Moral Terrain*, 209.
<https://todoporlapraxis.es/imagina-a-costa-de-que-i/>
<https://www.madrid.es/UnidadWeb/Contenidos/Publicaciones/TemaServiciosSociales/IndiceVulnerabil/indicevulnerabilidad.pdf> (Accessed August 2021)
- Imagina Madrid, Intermediae. (2017). Bases de la convocatoria de ideas para la elaboración de proyectos colaborativos de intervención en el espacio público, a través del arte, la creación y la cultura para la mejora y activación de nueve espacios públicos urbanos de la ciudad de Madrid, dentro del programa cultural IMAGINA MADRID. [Dictionary of the peripheries: methods and autonomous knowledge from the neighborhoods Bases of the call for ideas for the development of collaborative projects of intervention in public space, through art, creation and culture for the improvement and activation of nine urban public spaces in the city of Madrid, within the cultural program IMAGINA MADRID.]
<https://www.mataderomadrid.org/convocatorias/convocatoria-de-ideas-imagina-madrid>
- Light, A., & Akama, Y. (2014, October). Structuring future social relations: the politics of care in participatory practice. In *Proceedings of the 13th Participatory Design Conference: Research Papers-Volume 1* (pp. 151-160).
- Johnson, J. M., & Rowlands, T. (2012). The interpersonal dynamics of in-depth interviewing. *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft*, 99-113.
- Manzini, E. (2015). *Design, when everybody designs: An introduction to design for social innovation*. MIT press.
- Markusen, A., & Gadwa, A. (2010). Arts and culture in urban or regional planning: A review and research agenda. *Journal of planning education and research*, 29(3), 379-391.
- Matarasso, F. (2019). *A restless art. How participation won, and why it matters*. Digital edition. London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. *Viitattu*, 15, 2020.
- Menor Ruiz, L. (2017). Arte urbano y políticas públicas en la ciudad contemporánea: el caso de Madrid. [Urban art and public policies in the contemporary city: the case of Madrid.]

- Miles, S., & Paddison, R. (2005). Introduction: The rise and rise of culture-led urban regeneration. *Urban studies*, 42(5-6), 833-839.
- Miles, S., & Paddison, R. (2005). Introduction: The rise and rise of culture-led urban regeneration. *Urban studies*, 42(5-6), 833-839.
- Pain, R. (2004). Social geography: participatory research. *Progress in human geography*, 28(5), 652-663.
- Pinder, D. (2008). Urban interventions: art, politics and pedagogy. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 32(3), 730-736.
- Pollock, V. L., & Sharp, J. (2012). Real participation or the tyranny of participatory practice? Public art and community involvement in the regeneration of the Raploch, Scotland. *Urban Studies*, 49(14), 3063-3079.
- Pratt, A. C. (2011). The cultural contradictions of the creative city. *City, culture and society*, 2(3), 123-130.
- Press, M., & Cooper, R. (2017). *The design experience: the role of design and designers in the twenty-first century*. Routledge.
- Sanders, E., & Stappers, P. J. (2008). Co-creation and the new landscapes of design. *CoDesign*, 4(1), 5–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15710880701875068>
- Sanders, L., & Stappers, P. J. (2014). From designing to co-designing to collective dreaming: Three slices in time. *interactions*, 21(6), 24-33.
- Sharp, J., Pollock, V., & Paddison, R. (2005). Just art for a just city: Public art and social inclusion in urban regeneration. *Urban studies*, 42(5-6), 1001-1023.
- Schoch, K. (2020). Case study research. Research design and methods: An applied guide for the scholar-practitioner, 245-258.
- Sorando, D., & Ardura, A. (2021). Desplazamiento: la gentrificación como proceso de expulsión en Madrid. *Documentación Social*, 1(1), 1.
- Sorando, D., & Leal, J. (2019). Distantes y desiguales. *Reis: Revista española de investigaciones sociológicas*, (167), 125-147.
- Soundcloud Imagina Madrid. (Hosts). (2018). *Interview a Juan López Aranguren, Mercedes Álvarez y Casilda Cabrerizo, del equipo de coordinación de Imagina Madrid* (No. 1) [Audio podcast episode]. In Intermediae. <https://soundcloud.com/user-441874889/imagina-madrid> (Accessed August 2021)
- Todo por la Praxis. (2019). ¿IMAGINA A COSTA DE QUÉ? [Imagine to what cost?]
- Yin, R.K. (2003), *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 3rd ed., Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications*. Sage.
- Zebracki, M., Van Der Vaart, R., & Van Aalst, I. (2010). Deconstructing public artopia: Situating public-art claims within practice. *Geoforum*, 41(5), 786-795.
- Zukin, S. (1998). Urban lifestyles: Diversity and standardisation in spaces of consumption. *Urban studies*, 35(5-6), 825-839.
- Zukin, S. (2009). *Naked city: The death and life of authentic urban places*. Oxford University Press.

About the Author:

Milagros Hurtig (Argentina, 1990) has experience working in participatory processes for urban regeneration and is a researcher in the field of placemaking, citizen participation and gender-sensitive planning. In Buenos Aires, she has been part of the Urbanismo Vivo collective, focused on the creation of inclusive and active public spaces. She is now PhD Candidate for NTNU University (Norwegian Technical and Science University) exploring the challenges governments face to systemically embedded placemaking into city making and concerned on how to improve inclusivity of marginalised groups into these processes.

Acknowledgement: This paper was only possible thanks to the openness of the residents, and neighbours from Usera, who have shared with me their process and insights. Furthermore, this was a result of a two years research process supervised and guided by Tatiana Debroux, to whom I am deeply thankful. Finally, I want to

recognize the work of my former supervisor Andre Liem, who has invested his time and knowledge in aiding me to finalize the work.