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Landscape Accessibility: Spaces for Accessibility or Spaces for Communication?

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Abstract

This article gives an overview of contemporary studies on landscape accessibility. We focus on the broadened meaning of the term, where accessibility is not delimited with territorial access. The overview of landscape accessibility is widened by post-structural approaches. Discursive, socio-political and semiotic aspects are introduced, and the examples of different emerging conflicts, such as exclusion, segregation, or the creation of different social identities, are presented. In the discussion, additional need for understanding accessibility as the creation of spaces for communication is argued pointing to the valuing of conflicting meanings in accessibility-inaccessibility opposition.

Keywords: Accessibility, Law, Power, Property, Exclusion, Border, Discourse, Urbanization

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Contents

1 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to introduce contemporary studies concerning landscape accessibility. The approach is not limited by territorial access only – accessibility influenced by natural conditions has not lost its importance and will be discussed in a separate paper. While writing this paper, the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland that sent ash plumes all over Europe and grounded most of the airplanes made the importance of physical accessibility issues even more apparent – places usually rather close were suddenly almost inaccessible or out of reach altogether. The problems of physical isolation which are seasonally (Palang *et al.*, 2007) or permanently common for remote places such as islands or mountain areas were those days experienced by all travelers in Europe. The influence this event has on landscape – also in terms of physical access – remains to be seen in the coming years.

Antrop (2005) lists accessibility as one of the four major causes of landscape change, together with urbanization, globalization and natural calamities. According to him, whether people can reach a place or not often defines a site selection. Accessibility influences urban development, functional specialization of a place, such as a market place, harbor or defensive place; the growth of a place and the development of its economical or political power. Areas that are not easily accessible by people are often characterized as stable natural landscapes (Antrop, 2005, p. 26). Besides natural access, this quotation also brings forward the importance of creation of meaning in accessibility itself by asking questions, who defines landscape accessibility, or how accessibility is made useful in the landscape? Asking these questions, accessibility might be understood from the discursive point of view, highlighting subjective and interpretational characteristics.

This paper offers an introduction to the discursive concept of landscape accessibility, including socio-political approaches. Mostly, this kind of re-contextualizing of accessibility is caused by general globalization processes and neo-liberalist market-oriented discourses. These landscapes are governed by privatization, market forces, individualism and commodification of social life (see Slater, 2003, p. 76). The discursive approach of accessibility reviews landscape practices, where people themselves are aware of ideologically or socially constructed meanings. The overview is mainly made according to critical literature of landscape studies, caused by global restructuring of the economy and its competitive environment (Abrahamson, 2004; Paloscia, 2004b). These processes are the cause of a localized, heterogeneous and fragmented world, which create different conflicts and inequalities (Eade, 1997).

The overview is divided into two parts. First, the definition of accessibility is given, and its broadened context is introduced. Then, the historical-materialist approach of accessibility is presented. The paper describes how differently identified and resourced groups are incorporated within the structured material options of living. An overview is also given of the urbanization process, which has, due to different user conflicts, caused the need for more complex approaches of accessibility. Secondly, the post-structural discourses of accessibility are introduced with emphasis on legality and everyday practice. In the post-structural approach the historical-materialist perspective is widened with the possibilities of subjective discursive construction of accessibility in landscape, where the importance of the communicative context between different understandings is underlined. Special emphasis is given on the legal aspect of accessibility, where also moral contents are disputed (see Pow, 2009). The literature for the overview is chosen from the scientific article databases by searching for the term *accessibility*, and supplemented by related literature on social and political discussions in landscape studies.

Hinchliffe (2003, p. 209) argues, 'It is to say that the natures that we (possibly rightly) want to include in landscape histories and geographies are unlikely to be innocent. Nor are they likely to be accessible as a set of unmediated (or even mediated) primary properties.' The communicational aspect is the cornerstone for developing a democratic urban ethos (see Hinchliffe, 2003). In the discussion part we want to address the communicational aspect of accessibility. This view is

presented having in mind the more complex meaning of accessibility. Here, besides territorial meanings and different political power structures, also social constructive possibilities from the point of view of the landscape's everyday practice, with the importance of subjective agency, are described.

2 The broadened concept of accessibility

Let us start with the definition of accessibility. *The Dictionary of Human Geography* defines *accessibility* through the concepts of 'territoriality' and 'mobility'. Accessibility is the easiness by which people can reach the desired activity sites, such as those offering employment, shopping, medical care or recreation (Hanson, 2009, p. 2). The dictionary also describes accessibility through telecommunication developments and mass-media (Hanson, 2009, p. 2–3), where the meaning of accessibility is, besides spatial aspects, broadened by social influences and by the communicational mobility.

In this paper we broaden the overview of accessibility with the accessibility-inaccessibility opposition and add a conflicting character to this term. The term 'accessibility' is not confined with any strict territorial or material borders like fences or signs – 'private area' or 'keep out', but rather with the purpose to understand the general socio-political context behind these signs. Adding the aforementioned opposition, our purpose is to understand how accessibility can be newly analyzed and discussed. This opposition allows us to include topics like 'gated communities' (Hook and Vrdoljak, 2002; Abrahamson, 2004; Libertun de Duren, 2006; Vesselinov *et al.*, 2007; Fahmi and Sutton, 2008; Van Melik *et al.*, 2009; Rosen and Razin, 2009) or 'gentrification' (Márquez and Pérez, 2008; Vesselinov, 2008) into the analysis.

Similar updates may be noticed in the current boundary-territory studies in political geography, where boundaries are not handled only as a static, unchanging features of the political landscape, but they have their own internal dynamics, creating new realities and affecting people's lives. Boundary studies are connected with alternative disciplinary approaches, where boundary is simultaneously understood as a geographical and social construct (Newman, 2003, p. 124). Sack and Paasi have treated territories as social constructions (see Paasi, 2003, p. 111). The concepts of territory and boundaries control functional elements like the control of space, and symbolic dimensions, like social identity. They express the links between space, power and knowledge (Paasi, 2003, p. 109).

In this overview the focus on accessibility is justified by the discursive economic, cultural, social and subjective strategies, which influence directly material and social landscape formations. These critical perspectives of accessibility are offered within an historical materialist approach. As this approach does not focus on the possibilities excluded in defining the accessibility, these aspects are highlighted in this paper within a post-structural approach.

3 Historical materialist approach

It might be argued that defining accessibility affects how specific landscape reflects to us; how it looks, and which kind of functions it creates. Landscape lost its neutrality when it became a strategic concept in city planning together with the renovation of historical city neighborhoods and preservation of historic buildings in the 1970s (Wohlleben, 2008), when cultural industry developed within the planning of cultural economy. At that time the neo-liberal values started to dominate in economy. They were oriented to public-private partnerships and entertainment industry (Rofe, 2004; Julier, 2005; Walker, 2007). In the literature of critical geography the works of Harvey (1990); Lash and Urry (1994); Massey (1995) consider accessibility to have a great influence. Harvey (1990) emphasizes, for example, cultural and ideological restructuring, which

has caused the production and marketing of images and the movement from the production of goods to the production of services. The increasing significance of reflexive subjectivity has caused reflexive modernization and affected not only the subjects, but also the objects involved in mobility. The issues of power and inequality are explicitly addressed by Massey (1995), who argues, that the mobility and control of some groups can actively weaken other people. The time-compression of some groups can undermine the power of others (quoted in Eade, 1997). Jacobs and Fincher (1998) have made criticism towards the right to use space, concentrating on the topics of housing, suburbia, the inner city, ghettos, gentrification, social polarization and urban social movements. In the context of pastoral and rural environments, Olwig (2002) and Cosgrove (1984) have studied conflicts between the desire for rational explanation and organic biological wisdom, between city and pastoral, and between state and community (see also Bender, 1993). Mitchell (2001) has explored the ways in which contemporary public access to the countryside in England is being subverted by vested interests and the ideological power of private property.

Property relations, led by discourses of institutionalized planning politics, are related with the contextual meaning of law. These are claimed to underpin and determine the values and motives, as well as the market structure (Adger and Luttrell, 2000; Liebcap, 2009). Discursive or symbolical aspects could be seen as strategic tools for the support or resistance of landscape accessibility. Discourses become more powerful when they are supported and opened by the institutional planning politics and understood and acknowledged in the wider sociality (see Delaney *et al.*, 2001). Private property enables policies on housing (see the case study of Iran in Keivani *et al.*, 2008). For example, Gülöksüz (2002) has studied the relationship between state law and property-based social relations unfolding in the process of the formation of private property in urban land. The socio-spatial impacts of property-led redevelopment on China's urban neighborhoods in the context of changed everyday value have been studied by He and Wu (2006).

In another case study, the law of footpaths, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic has been interpreted as a positive consequence of interaction on a community level, for example in reducing reliance on motorized transport, where rural context defines access to the countryside as providing mobility networks for local residents (Morris *et al.*, 2009). Mitchell (2001) has studied the change of the legal structure of public space in American cities through the implication of anti-homeless laws. Gated communities are also claimed to be a strategy for the sense of community (Wilson-Doenges, 2000). Gated communities of post-communist Poland have been analyzed from the discursive linguistic and spatial perspectives by Gasior-Niemiec *et al.* (2009). For a good overview about the gated communities, their inner organization and grasping accessibility in the urban environment in Beijing (see Wu and Webber, 2006).

Besides material values the role of accessibility lies in the meaning of creation of social statuses, cultural capital, atmospheric feeling and collective memory (Moran, 2004; Czepczyński, 2008). Sennett (1986) has developed a sensory analysis of accessibility. He has pointed out the widening gap between the public and private experiences which affect how we relate to others in public spaces. Sennett has concentrated on the city and the senses by showing how the physical spatial order, social relations and the public imaginary of places are intricately linked by underlying sensor regimes. Contemporary urban regeneration projects often use sensuous power and ideologies, which work through a network of associations between the material and the social world in public space. Sensuous meanings are more dispersed and fluid, infiltrating the daily life of individuals in more complex and insidious ways (see Degen, 2008, p. 55–56). About social exclusion from a phenomenological approach see also Bude (2006).

Social rights contain moral values and social expectations. For example, social expectations proved to be the predominant predictor of people's willingness to follow the rules, which determine the people's behavior evaluation and the perception of the respective behaviors. A collective self-obligation for example could increase the acceptance of rules and regulations to a greater extent (see Seeland *et al.*, 2002). Abrahamson (2004) stresses that power relations and discourses of

difference are directly connected to the contribution of the constitution of identities, which could cause social oppression and exclusion. For example, 'crime-fear' is analyzed as operative in the construction of providing a series of warrants for broader projects of alternative social ordering. Foucault's term *heterotopia* is used in analyzing the security-parks, where a 'rights of privilege' might be linked up to discursive strategies (see for example the case study of gated communities in post-apartheid South-Africa in Hook and Vrdoljak, 2002). The threat of terrorism has been manipulated in the United States to achieve political results that reinforce the established power structure. It has limited the residents' right to the city which is visible in the restriction on their use of public spaces (see Marcuse, 2006).

Studies have also been made on the institutional implications of the racialized discourse, the racist expression of spatial location and the consequent marginalization of groups of people in the framework of producing urban peripheries, slums, segregated spaces and gentrification (see Goldberg, 2001). Oppression and exclusion goes back to the level of everyday practice and personal, subjective contribution to accessibility. On a higher level these everyday contested landscapes are connected to social terms like class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, nation or race (Eade, 1997; Berking *et al.*, 2006). Those whose appearance is different in some manner may be singled out for scrutiny and may be denied entry and be subjects to diminished access to streets, sidewalks, squares and parks (Kirby, 2008).

Specific attention is also paid to the textual, semiotic and symbolical meanings, where language, cultural, social and educational aspects are included in defining accessibility. For example, often just a renaming is a tool to redesign neighborhoods (Beauregard, 1993; Zukin, 1995), where a definite social group creates narratives to give a new meaning to the material environment and present them as everyday environments (Julier, 2005). Green planning has influenced the development of eco-villages, creating new milieus in the neighborhoods (Brand, 2007); or the concept of bohemianism through music stores and book stores has a special significance in the cultural and symbolic economy (Metzger, 2008, p. 388). In creative industry, the most known milieu combination is the 'creative milieu' (Florida, 2008; Landry, 2008), where the importance of the creative social potential in planning is stressed. Aesthetic perceptions of landscapes also play an important role in the contextual meaning of accessibility. Landscape perception contains different values, as it is shown in the conflict of farmers and naturalists about biodiversity and socio-economic circumstances (see Natori and Chenoweth, 2008). Ryan (2006) has focused on studies about discourses of rural landscape presentation. He analyzes the valuation of rural landscape in suburbanization by planners, homebuilders and local citizens. One of his main arguments is that rural landscapes are under tremendous pressure from residential development as people are drawn to the scenic beauty, access to nature, and quieter lifestyle of rural living. Similar results appear also in an Estonian study by (Palang and Peil, 2010).

The discursive cultural dilemma of accessibility is, for example, connected to the topic of heritage. In cultural industry the historical building environment is a tool for creating nostalgic environments with the purpose to adapt old buildings to contemporary needs and to give them commercial appearance (Willis, 2005). The historical preservation of urban and rural landscapes has been studied from different perspectives and grappled with the question how to handle the commercial development, because the increase of tourists and the identification of the young generation have shown the possibility of sustainable development. At the same time commercialization changes the heritage environment itself by showing the conflict between preservation and contemporary practices (Wang and Lee, 2008). The tools for creating heritage environments are both material and narrative, such as building style, building material and design (Saleh, 2000; Ziller, 2004; Hasse, 2005; Manzo and Perkins, 2006). The main conflict has been between environmental and historic preservation projects and modern planning (Long, 2009). Old urban inner city neighborhoods have been profoundly influenced by the creation of touristy commercial environments (Shenjing and Fulong, 2007). At the same time, vernacular urban landscapes are often ignored

by the urban municipalities, where the question of power and ideology remains, for whom and for which purposes the vernacular architecture becomes valuable as heritage (see Brumann, 2009).

4 Urbanization

In natural environments the main conflicts of accessibility-inaccessibility are connected with property rules and with conflicts in biodiversity. The drivers of biodiversity conflicts are analyzed in five habitat types: agricultural landscapes, forests, grasslands, uplands and freshwater habitat, where a multidisciplinary approach of conflict management is described (Young *et al.*, 2005). More studies have been made on the wetlands concerning the conflict of accessibility and property values (see Adger and Luttrell, 2000) on water resources (Aguilera-Klink *et al.*, 2000), on the eutrophication problem and its spatial dimensions (Peuhkuri, 2002) or on the recreational use (Bell, 2000). In forests, the major conflict is about the changes in forest management, such as changes in ownership patterns, transportation systems or changes in planning strategies (Young *et al.*, 2005; Bell *et al.*, 2007).

In the rural and natural environment, decentralization and extension of private rights to land have created mechanisms by which local alliances of landowners, governments, and the broader rural population encourage rapid urbanization of the countryside surrounding major cities (Wasilewski and Krukowski, 2004). Property values and management problems are often connected to physical indivisibility and over-exploitation (Adger and Luttrell, 2000). The conflicts influenced by property restitution contain inherent conflicts and contradictions of restitution. For example in the case of Germany it has been studied how restitution is connected with the administrative organization (see Blacksell and Born, 2002).

As it emerges, the urbanization process itself causes conflicts in landscape. Urbanization is indirectly connected to the flow of tourism and recreation. More recently eco-tourism has become a fast growing economic sector (Young *et al.*, 2005). Studies have been made on conflicts in recreation, outdoor tourism, nature conservation, and management of the environment (Bell, 2000; Young *et al.*, 2005; Bell *et al.*, 2007). In recreation, there are mainly two types of conflicts in landscape accessibility. The first one lies between users, like, for example, a walker could feel disturbed by a mountain biker or a dog owner. The second type is the conflict between users and environmentalists; like the natural balance being threatened by certain activities (Seeland *et al.*, 2002). Accessibility is not the only problem when talking about recreation or tourism and natural resources, but also when talking about recreational activities themselves, like hunting, crowding, berry or mushroom picking, sports, which is a challenge to managers (see further Bell *et al.*, 2007).

Direct expressions of accessibility and urbanization are connected with road widening projects and ownership patterns (Young *et al.*, 2005) especially in the context of US-American landscapes. Given the popularity of motorized vehicles in the USA, conflicts between these and the natural resources are a constant theme requiring management action and monitoring (Bell *et al.*, 2007). The changing social expectations have increased the demand for motorized access and recreational use (Wilson, 2008). To name more case studies, two road-widening projects in highly developed urban areas in London, England, and Kaohsiung County, Taiwan, are examined to uncover how property owners and tenants have reacted against the adversity brought on by the uncertainties of compulsory purchase. In this case study the evidence shows that instead of passively accepting the government-set cash compensation, a significant number of property owners and tenants have taken legal, market-oriented, and even political measures to reduce their possible loss, in addition to their appeal for a higher compensation (Lin and Lin, 2006).

Finding solutions in the accessibility conflict caused by urbanization is not easy due to different interest groups. Difficulties in finding solutions to the urbanization problem may be introduced with the example, where people produce sprawl by moving to urban fringes for many of the same

reasons that municipalities want to preserve these edges as green space. The terms in which urban greening is often cast may present internal inconsistencies that may be particularly problematic in solving some of the social and environmental problems associated with sprawl in the first place – as these paradigms may be instrumental in reproducing these problems and their attendant landscapes (Cadieux, 2008).

The discursive historical materialist approach shows that the question of accessibility involves more than spatial mismatch, and many moral questions emerge in accessibility–inaccessibility opposition. In the next chapters further subjective interpretative perspectives of the creation of landscape's accessibility through the post-structural approach are opened. Within this focus the purpose is to address the meaning of relational communicative man/material environment value as the condition of defining accessibility. From the moral point of view, the values of the post-structural approach are especially important to emphasize because of the creation of access for contested accessibilities.

5 Post-structural influences

The post-structural approach values the understanding of different power mechanisms with the further aim to reshape them. The purpose of the discourse is to blur geographical boundaries. It questions how power is realized across space. Foucault has the predominant influence on contemporary accounts of power and space within political geography and its related fields, although the writings of Said, Derrida, and Deleuze have all played a role (Allen, 2003, p. 101). Social, political or cultural discourses are strongly connected to the understanding of how we commonly understand reality (see further Delaney *et al.*, 2001). For example, the concepts of 'access', 'commons', 'crime-fear', 'terrorism' or 'race' can be used in different ways in discursive context. They provide vocabularies to debate a new public right to space (Mitchell, 2008). Through introducing a specific discourse, it is possible to influence accessibility according to the desired direction in the landscape.

The post-structural theory is connected with representational practices. The possibility of alternative political imaginaries drawn up in opposition to the dominant political discourses is recognized, although broadly understood in terms of resistance against domination rather than empowerment through association (Allen, 2003, p. 102). In the post-structural discourses a subjective character is highlighted. In this vein, next, the contextual meaning of legal accessibility and the possibilities of everyday practices are introduced.

6 Legal accessibility

From the post-structural point of view, law is not seen as an objective and equal planning strategy, but can be found on the everyday level by understanding its identity and values. Law is directly connected to the creation of living environment. Law is understood not as an instrumental force, operating on society, but produced in and a production of the social world. Therefore, it is questioned, how law is defined in institutions or in science; or accepted in everyday life, influencing the real, symbolical or psychological access to landscape (see Delaney *et al.*, 2001).

Very often the meaning of place depends on the political institutions and practices, especially when a place is identified as a certain 'type' of place (Gustafson, 2001). Blomley stresses that when law is spatialized, it can play an even more significant role in constituting legal consciousness. Spatially defined environments can serve to reflect and reinforce legal relations of power that code, exclude, enable, stage, locate etc. Here the spatial marker of property, like a fence, plays an important role in shaping a particular sensibility toward spatial use, access, rights and privileges with helping to produce particular forms of legal subjectivity (see Blomley, 2005a).

Blomley (2001a,b, 2003, 2005a,b) has studied materialization and visual communication of legal rules. He has written a theoretical introduction to spatial accessibility. Blomley (2003) has investigated the connections between law and place and their relativeness, property rules and public-private relationship with the purpose to understand how the power relations are put to work in the landscape. His argument that social reality is based on law is also the main theoretical basis for this paper. In his interpretation, the definition of law lies not in objective categories, but in contextual social relations. Law produces a particular understanding of the world, shaping people's beliefs concerning their own identity and their relationship to others. In this context, the law could be handled as a weapon and as a mediator. Specific regulations refer directly to the constellation of social relational power, where normalities are produced in tangible socio-spatial constellations (see Frers, 2006). The contextual meaning of law is important for the further connecting of different meanings and consequences, analyzing property rights, regulations and socio-cultural symbolical meanings.

To mention some contemporary researches containing the discursive problematic of accessibility, an introduction to contemporary studies on urban accessibility of German scientific background in English can be found in *Negotiating Urban Conflicts: Interaction, Space and Control* (Berking *et al.*, 2006). The book discusses the territorialized significance of the production contested politics of space with the topics of post colonialism, diaspora cultures, cultural homogenization and spatializing identities. Imageries of cities containing institutional and everyday-life related imagining and image engineering, exclusion, surveillance, security and strategies of spacing have been described and analyzed. Berking (2006) has studied the peculiar interplay between agency and territoriality within the global-local interplay.

In Anglo-American critical geography, studies have concentrated on the law, which is understood in the context of legality in social everyday life. It goes deeply into the dialogue between law, justice and space to see which actual practices, in relation to which social or political projects and social space are produced, maintained or transformed (see Delaney *et al.*, 2001). The participative context has been introduced by Hutter (2007), who has analyzed human right standards, police legitimacy, ghettos, white ethnic enclaves, assimilation, hyper-segregation, urban renewal, housing, gentrification, homelessness, gender roles, public space, gays and lesbians' spaces and consumerism.

In the United Kingdom, a collection of essays *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Bender, 1993) discussed the politics embedded in landscape. The book gives an overview of ideological and political adverse landscapes, including an array of different alternative voices. Conflicts of places are opened from postmodernist vs. modernist discourse, as well as from the point of view of visual and representation theories, the creation of commercial environments, increasing isolation and surveillance of the working class estates and gendered spaces.

One of the most thorough studies on how law and justice have shaped the Nordic landscape was published by Peil and Jones (2005); summarized also by Jones (2006). Peil and Jones underline that landscapes are indeed locally the result, among other things, of complex human responses to both local customs and central legislation. Legal geographies also extend the way nature conservation limits access, and also creates conflicts (Eiter, 2004).

Discursive theories of landscape accessibilities are based on the argument that institutional legal practice is simultaneously subjectively created meaning, where, while forcing its main values into the wider society, accessibility is dependent on agency and power. But the creation of conditions for agency lies in the understanding of different political mechanisms in landscape, with offering further participation possibilities. Therefore, the meanings of everyday landscapes should be highlighted, as the everyday landscape is the stand, where the re-shaping of the meaning of accessibility takes place.

7 The meaning of everyday practice

In the post-structural approach everyday practices should be handled as political activities, where social conflict is understood as an important tool to reclaim rights, resist and subvert. Participation is a key solution to decide about accessibility (see Abrahamson, 2004). Blomley (2005a) has emphasized the lack of studies on the ways people actually navigate and apprehend the spatial dimensions of law, such as property, being one of the pioneers in this topic. A good introductive literature for the context of accessibility of everyday practices is still de Certeau (1984), *The Practice of Every Day Life*, which analyzes accessibility from the everyday spatial level.

Several studies have led to the question of fighting concerning accessibility on everyday material level, where solutions have often been supported by the resistance movement and participatory planning (Abrahamson, 2004). For example LULU (Locally Unwanted Land Use) and NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) are marking citizenship resistance against institutional planning practice politics (Matthiesen, 2002, p. 173); or urban vegetable gardens could be interpreted as class resistance against public policies in managing urban development, being under the pressure in the urban sprawl (Domene and Sauri, 2007); or development of informal backyard dwellings influenced by South-African housing policy (Lemanski, 2009, p. 472). Other examples to be named are, e.g., in the case of Spain the value of the feminist perspective in successful remodeling of the quality of public spaces (see Garcia-Ramon *et al.*, 2004); or social building has been interpreted as a form of citizenship resistance against the postcard view of urban environments (see the discussion in Sandercock, 2004).

Public spaces have often excluded different social layers with design practices to make some people feel unwelcome, which uphold social tensions and inequalities. Here accessibility lies in moral behaving, where everybody is welcomed in public space as long as they behave appropriately (Van Melik *et al.*, 2009). For studies about the misconduct in city spaces through the Panhandlers, Skid Rows, and Public-Space Zoning see Ellickson (2001) (see also Figures 1 and 2).

The development of the Berlin area along the river Spree and the Media Spree Project (see Louekari, 2006) have caused many social conflicts, including besides physical accessibility, also struggles of social identities. Many local resistance movements have been created.

In the context of social access also studies of gentrification, even of rural gentrification, and of its discursive construction are made (see Phillips, 2005). Of course, in cities that develop more and faster, as the case study of Mumbai shows, peri-urban areas are used as a land reserve fund for relocation programs in order to relegate the poor outside the city central areas (Zérah, 2006).

The contextual approach concludes how multilayered is the perspective that the term accessibility contains. Accessibility opens as an irresolvable puzzle. Therefore, for understanding the concept, it is not enough to handle accessibility through territorial landscape change only. For example, from a socio-political point of view, green light for some landscape activities could mean exclusion for other practices. In the discussion part about the value of including communicational matters as a meaningful aspect of accessibility is outlined. In this respect, landscape is understood rather as a man/milieu relationship (Berque, 1997), where people's activities are seen in relation with landscape's appearance. Here the creation of conditions for the participation in landscape is highlighted.

Figure 1: A way to criticize the urban development around the river Spree in Berlin, known as Media Spree Project.

8 Discussion: Spaces for accessibility or spaces for communication?

Already in the beginning of the 20th century, Friedrich Ratzel has pointed to the notion that a struggle for existence means a struggle for space (see Bassin, 2003, p. 17), which might be broadened as the main importance in the accessibility dilemma in landscape. Based on many different research papers one may argue that as the urban studies about accessibility are mostly critical and often get stuck in the conflict without finding final solutions, the studies of rural property values and managing conflicts between natural resources have been directed towards understanding the legal mechanisms and finding possible objective solutions. In these studies the understanding of different user perspectives and the creation of communication between conflict layers is crucial. In the context of environment protection and recreation, it has been suggested that the socioeconomic interests contain less conflict than it is sometimes supposed (see Bell, 2000). At the same time, one case study has shown how misinterpretation of the rights has caused deforestation, where landowners clear the forest to prevent squatters' settlements, where squatters clear the forest to gain formal property rights (Araujo *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, management solutions are much more complicated, when it concerns also subjective social purposes and conflicts between institutional planning and local actors. The problems of incompleteness of property rights in environment preservation and property values still remain (Liebcap, 2009). In this case the importance of 'bottom-up' approaches for resolving environmental dilemmas have been acknowledged, whilst politically there is the recognition that individual citizens hold the key to meeting critical environmental targets through changes in their lifestyles (Barr, 2008). Maybe the difficulty in finding appropriate solution in the urban context is caused by complicated and multiple structures of urban environments. Within the growth of the urbanization process, further difficulties in finding solutions in defining accessibility are seen also in the studies of accessibility in the natural landscapes.

Landscape accessibility contains multiple meanings and conflicting situations. Let us exemplify

it with the case of open space. Accessibility describes the qualitative meaning of open space, where open space is the environment, which by condition must have free access for everybody to use the place. More open spaces show supposedly a better quality of the urban environment, which could be reached, for example, through self-help planning, integration (Kreibich, 2000), and through community creation. It has been argued that when those qualities are missing, urbanity loses also its quality (see Borsdorf *et al.*, 2007). For instance, a Declaration for Urban Research and Action has called for the qualitative space dis-empowering global players, making profits unsustainable, no borders for people, autonomy and social justice in everyday life and liberating the urban imagination (see Paloscia, 2004a), which all refer to the support of equalized accessibility, and thus to the communicational aspect in urban spaces. Degen (2008) has claimed that a 'good public' space must provide access for the economy, but also ensure the ethics of engagement and the politics of representation. Looking at the recent developments in public space for a more positive perspective, one could argue that the center for participation in these new public places is potentially stretched, as manifold 'mobile publics' are accessing these spaces and through their presence are shaping the everyday politics of the city.

Still many difficulties remain. According to different understandings of accessibility, there are also different demands on what constitutes a public space. In some cases the implications of the creation of private spaces may be less dramatic than claimed, because there is also real life behind the gates (see Kirby, 2008). The unsolved question still lies in the rhetoric, where it is stated, that more 'public' access creates better public space. The effects engendered by attempts to 'domesticate' violence and the promise of security through criticism of segregation, gentrification and ghettoization themselves are based on spatial politics and thus encourage the creation of new boundaries and renewed marginalization. Here the focus lies on the given discourses in defining and introducing the meanings, in stabilization and maintenance of spatial arrangements and in the hierarchization (see Berking *et al.*, 2006, p. 9). Therefore, the purpose to give equal rights to all actors in landscape accessibility would be too idealistic. For example, religion can be politically manipulated and exploited, creating symbolic structures for one community, but can be perceived as threatening to others (Cooper, 2001). As Highmore (2005, p. 2) argues, rendering illegibility legible in the heterogeneity, in one social environment it creates insecurity and in another social environment it creates hope (Highmore, 2005, p. 5). This means that it is impossible to find equal access to open space adaptable to all stakeholders, but the meaning of the activity (Jacobs and Fincher, 1998, p. 2) has the priority.

If one wants to define landscape accessibility, one needs to understand the institutional rights regimes, power strategies and values. It means that one needs to invest into the knowledge. This is also the condition for the communication process between the actors in landscape accessibility. For example, in the discussion of public space it is suggested, that public space and landscape should be seen as oppositional ideals that indicate how we regard the construction and purpose of the public sphere (Mitchell, 2001). In this concern the politics in places is connected with the activity in place, where place is understood as physical location and the context for action (Staeheli, 2003, p. 165). Therefore, direct everyday practice and appropriating it through material landscape are connected with the creation of accessibility (see Figure 2).

Blomley (2005b) brought up the important point that space is public, because the public sphere is formed, policed and contested, stressing especially the contesting layer. He emphasized the importance of landscapes of communication in claiming property, where property should not be understood as reaching individual ideas, but as the importance of communication and persuasion. The meaning of communicational conflict is shown in his studies in Vancouver, where reaching of property is based on material and visual construction of landscapes. The communicational aspect of accessibility could be effectively used, for example, by participation in the neighborhood gentrification, where different interest groups in landscape should have possibilities for offering their opinions and realize them in landscape. This is material production and discursive representation,

Figure 2: "We all stay". The abandoned artists' squat in a rapidly gentrifying area in Brunnenstrasse, in the Mitte district of Berlin.

which is often intentionally oppositional. The meaningful effect, in part, has been to inscribe different conceptions of land and ownership, which helps to open the resistance to gentrification (see Blomley, 2005b, p. 31).

To report some other good case study examples, it is easier to find studies in the context of natural landscapes, for example, the case study about the debate of water eutrophication and the fish farming industry in the Finnish Archipelago Sea in Southwest (SW) Finland. The definitions of the eutrophication problem and its spatial dimensions were thoroughly studied and the role of knowledge as a resource in the struggle over the definition is emphasized (see Peuhkuri, 2002). The participants also practiced solving conflicts yet preserving biodiversity through trying to understand the background of the conflict, and preventing it in the first place. In this study interdisciplinary manner and information exchange, early involvement of all key stakeholders, effective communication between parties, awareness raising and supported processes for their continued involvement, including feedback, monitoring and review are emphasized by the authors (see Young *et al.*, 2005). Management tools and information exchange are beneficial, but need to be adapted carefully to each conflict (see also Adger and Luttrell, 2000).

Showing the importance of communication and agency in the urban environment, one example may be brought from a historical study about the 1970s – 1980s of the Nauwieser Viertel in Saarbrücken, a small downtown neighborhood, where it was studied how differently sub-culture projects had influenced the neighborhood's milieu (see Metzger, 2008). From the current examples of the accessibility treated as the space of communication, one may bring in the case of Berlin,

where institutional deprived neighborhood's development projects like 'Social City' were created having in mind and considering the multiple voices of local residents' ideas and opinions (see Levine, 2004). Although a lot of criticism to this project has already been made (Marcuse, 2006), it is still a good example of an attempt of institutional planning to experiment with the neighborhood planning including local residents into the planning practice.

Figure 3: From the former squat developed Kunsthaus Tacheles, now in need of urgent eviction, which the users of the space could not afford.

9 Concluding remarks

Hinchliffe (2003) points to the inhabiting landscape, which is more than a human affair, and should also be recognized by the politics of landscape accessibility. He writes about the politics of inhabitation, which is not simply a matter of liberation of the oppressed, but it is also a matter of experimenting with styles of inhabiting, styles that manage to re-cover and recognize without covering everything. Landscaping as a textual practice can reinvigorate the politics of inhabitation (Hinchliffe, 2003, p. 215). Hinchliffe points to the construction of the worlds, while experimenting with the landscape. This is important in sense of showing, that the access to the territorial landscape is also discursive, where the social process itself has the meaning of an effect. Social meanings are mediated by the communication process (see Hinchliffe, 2003). Following the thoughts of Hinchliffe, who interprets society as an experiment, not as a contract, then, while conceptualizing landscape accessibility as the spaces for accessibility, why not supplement this concept with the spaces for communication?

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