Self-organized urban development and urban activism

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Content of the lecture

- What is self-organization?
- What is the role of self-organization in urban development?
- How to deal with urban activism as a planner?

Self-organization in planning theories

- System theory in planning

(Michael Batty, Juval Portugali)

= Mechanism → Dynamics of urban processes and morphology

- Post-structural planning theory

(Beitske Boostra, Gert de Roo, Jean Hillier, Judith Innes)

= Actors → Interaction, different rationales

Self-organized urban development

- **Everyday life practices** which make changes in the physical and social construction of urban space (de Certeau, 1984; Kuoppa, 2016)

- Self-organization in which people take **action outside formal organizations** (also NGOs), for example tactical urbanism and urban activism (Faehnle & al., 2017; Hamdi 2015;)

- **Public participation** (Innes & Booher, 2009; Healey, 1995) that takes place in formal urban planning and decision-making processes.

Self-organized urban actions

Examples and contributions in Helsinki

Something new, something old, something borrowed…
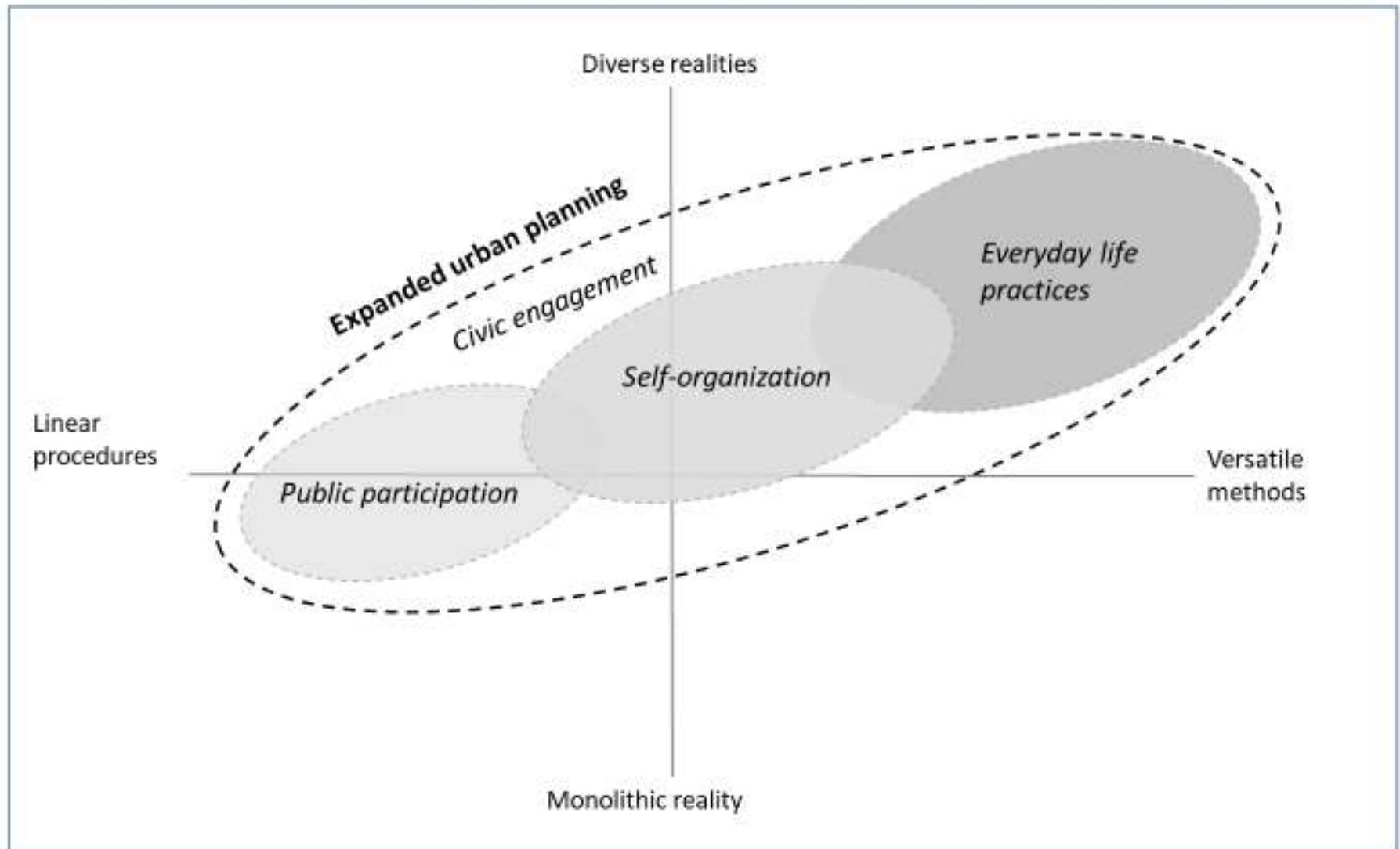
→ Local identity and place-making

→ Co-production of urban space and real-estate development (also co-housing)

→ Urban management and maintenance

Relationship between planning and self-organized urban development?

Wallin 2019

There are many paths to urban development…

Case Herttoniemi
(2005 – 2019)

The Herttoniemi Center –
The local detail plan 2005 and 2011

Herttoniemi metro and bus station

Roihuvuori Community Yard

Self-organized planning and co-production

Planning and design

Con-
struction

Manage-
ment

How to deal with self-organization in urban planning?

Dealing with self-organization as a planner
-   **Acknowledging diverse realities and urban complexity**

Planning is not a procedure.

It is an illusion of control.

In a world of dispersed realities, the planner´s realm is
merely one of many
- and often detached from local ones.

Lesson I – Locality first

The comprehension of complexity in urban planning.

Metropolitan spatial planning is important, but if it does not function locally, it cannot benefit the region.

Interest in planning should be turned to:
- the ways people live (e.g. consumption and mobility)
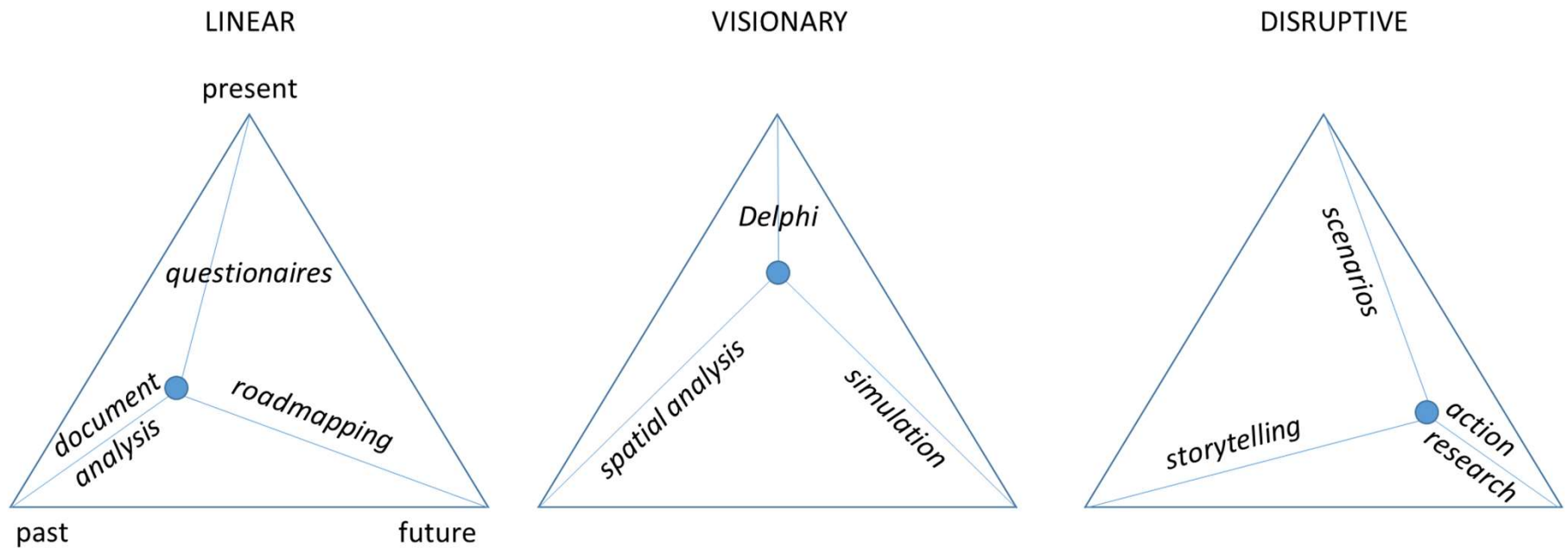- the existing urban structure and its functions in local scale.

Lesson II - Triangulation

Urban planning solves best simple problems.

But there is a need of versatile methodological competence that builds capacity to understand urban complexity.

→ How to navigate in the meshwork of spatial analysis and planning data?

Knowledge production for exploring and managing urban complexity (Wallin 2019)

Chronotopes of planning illustrate the use of different data gathering and analysis methods versus the aim and usage of the outcomes .

Lesson III - Empowerment

Urban planning cannot resolve all urban problems – and it does not define the outcome of the urban development.

Self-organized urban development can develop new but also provide stability that steers the regional and city-level initiatives more efficiently than urban planning.

Therefore, urban planning should enable people to take actions in their own neighbourhood by creating meeting places, providing public space for gatherings and urban actions.

Thank you!

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