

## The Online Oslo Workshop March 11, 2021: Curating change in deep cities

Task: “Project meeting (II) (Oslo, Norway) Validation of WP2-WP3 approaches, discussion of preliminary results WP1” ,

March 11, 2021 12.00 pm – 3.00 pm

### 1. Introduction: aims and scope for the workshop

Short introduction by NIKU followed with a discussion by all.

The goal of the Workshop: What do we want to achieve/discuss/scope of this workshop?

We could start with how we envisage the final outcome i.e. the digital toolbox to do and to be. Based on this we can then specify the actions of each WP. Since the core output and aim is the digital toolbox

– maybe we should start with the vision of the toolbox – whom we want to use it; how; why’ in what format. This will be very helpful for sharpening the work in the other WPs so that it directly fits the digital toolbox. For instance, how would the participatory system dynamics modelling be one of the many participatory tools of the digital toolbox? Questions like this would be useful to shape a clear idea of how we want the toolbox to look like.

20 min

**Break:** 10 min

### 2. A discussion background: NIKU presents key topics from D.1.1. working paper

Presentation by NIKU, supplemented by UCL. Discussion by all.

How to approach theory in the project as epistemological outlook? For what reasons? Which theories would be relevant in the project, more particularly for understanding the uses of system dynamic thinking as complex social system (hard vs. soft science)? What would be of epistemological key concerns for heritage-led regeneration?

60 min



*Tagging message at a Nordic ‘Starbucks-like’ coffee house chain at Grünerløkka in Oslo, Norway: “Stop-the-gentrification” (of our neighborhood), signed by “A” for Anarchists. Photo: T. S. Guttormsen.*

A background of the project was presented by PC (NIKU). This first section highlighted that urban heritage management follows similar trajectories of the planning trends applied in a particular context and time. Current planning is moving into more participative methods in which cultural heritage could contribute with methodologies for better understanding social meanings and values and their correlations to the interactions in urban spaces.

TG (NIKU) presented how social sustainability has been approached by heritage led urban regeneration projects. A trend changing from top-down to bottom-up approaches was highlighted. The theoretical presentation focused on System Dynamics and the concepts that are considering for modelling and the assessment of [social] change. Additional theoretical approaches were suggested as basis for the research:

- Critical Realism as epistemological basis for systemic thinking
- Critical urban theory was proposed to better understand social and urban processes. Five points were proposed as guides for the discussion of the purpose of toolbox, but also as aspects to be addressed in the case studies.
- Assemblage theory to go into social aspects more in depth whilst avoiding reductionism.
- Constructivist Grounded theory as valuable for participatory approaches

KF (UCL) indicated that the theoretical proposition has some misconceptions:

- Participatory systems dynamics is not different from Grounded Theory.
- Within system dynamics there are two approaches quantitative and qualitative
- The data drive the theory and research does not start with an initial hypothesis (GT approach).
- The tools resulting from this is useful for policymakers because it focuses on the identification of problems.
- Contestation aspects requires the involvement of stakeholders to identify challenges.

Therefore, it is important to refine the process of identification of challenges with stakeholders. The toolbox should combine both qualitative and quantitative data if its to become a tool for policymakers.

She also indicated that the research already has proposed questions and the questioning of the methods as being top-down or bottom-up is should not focus on the method per se but to recognize that it comes from the approach guiding both the purpose and the person using the method.

TG asked Kalliopi to point out critical aspect to use from SD and comment on open and close systems.

Kalliopi has used the approach with more qualitative approaches and the differences of open and close systems are not her expertise. However, she mentioned that her research is focused on qualitative approaches in SD and heritage values. She has focused on the identification of cause and effects and the SD helps to direct the focus on dynamics and interactions. Research of this type concludes with a hypothesis of what may be happening in an urban heritage context over time. This helps to understand the dynamic and changing processes. This supports how people values change and can help policymakers to revise their assumptions in which decisions are based. Rather than focusing on the model it is the thinking process of interconnections and their changes over time that is useful.

SJ (SU) understand how the model can be useful for policymakers to see interrelated values and communicate them. However, she still has questions regarding the possibilities for the theoretical propositions of assemblage theory and critical theory aspect to bring the dissonance aspects with and open-endedness. What concerns her is the potential predictive nature of a model, whilst the processes of social values and meanings continue to change.

Another question was posed regarding the possibility of the systemic model to accommodate for instance the direction of the assemble theory. Her understanding was that the SD proposes that society can be understood through structures, and that might create some issues if we are going for an assemblage approach which is removed from structuralist approaches.

KF (UCL) clarifies the misconceptions of qualitative researchers when it comes about the concept of a “model” and their usages. She further clarifies that predictions are not an output for a model. A systemic model rather helps to understand and capture the dynamics and interactions involved in changes of heritage such as uses and the heritage associations that emerge. It produces a method, a

tool (not a theory) to understand the dynamics whereas the theoretical propositions by Torgrim can provide the framework for interpretation.

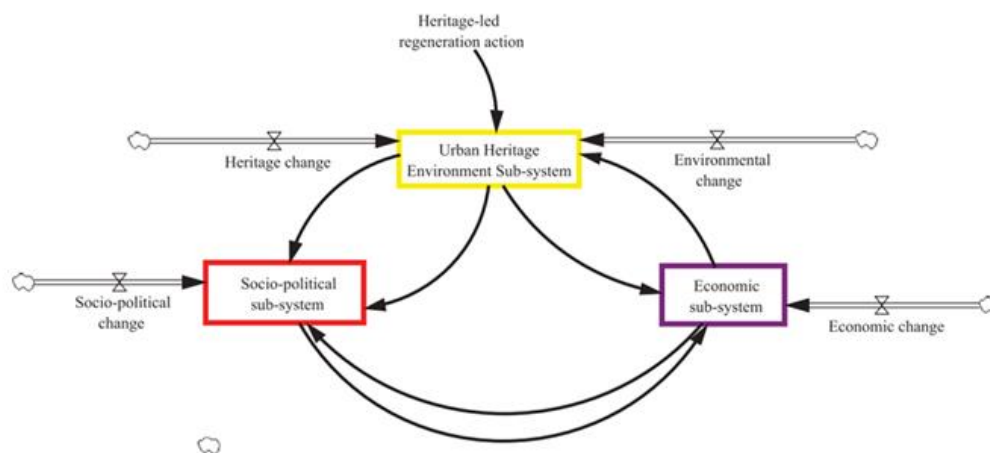
As an answer to SJ questions she further clarifies that the structure of a SD is no linear, she sees the model as complementary.

MN (UF) asks about the role of the heritage experts on the development is of this participative SD model and how does our heritage knowledge about the past and how the past produces some of the materiality of the urban environment we are analysing affects the participatory model since this is a top-down knowledge?

KF (UCL) In any method we chose we will need to reflect on our methods and values as experts. This is something that is relevant to any theory and research method we decide.

AP (UBC) Suggests taking the conceptual framework from Kalliopi to organize the other subsystems and their dynamics such as wellbeing and other concepts involved in our project. And suggest using a multi stakeholder driven approach to start breaking down a top-down visions of heritage experts. Instead of thinking of only involving the local community.

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**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework of urban heritage systems. Diagram by the authors.

KF (UCL) Welcomed the suggestions and emphasized that local organizations already helps to set the ground for engaging people more collectively. Asks to all:

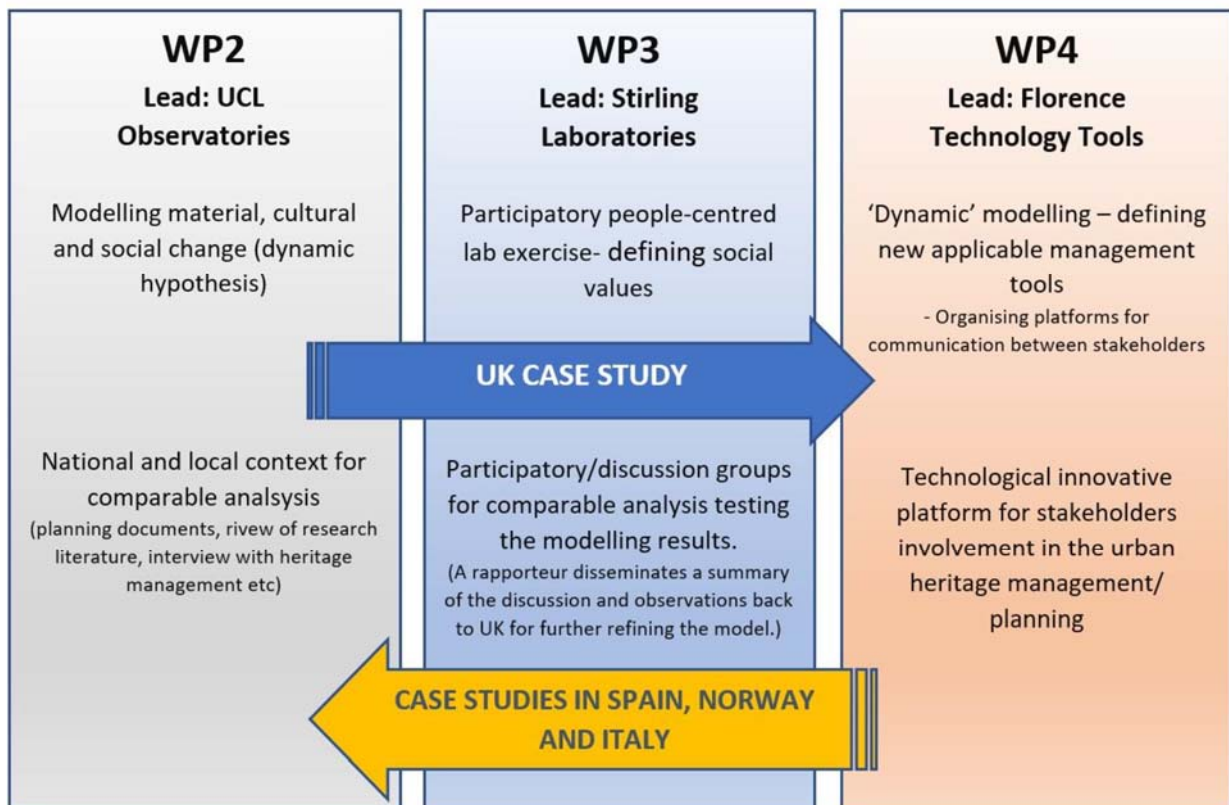
- What is the toolbox for?
- Who will be use the toolbox? (need to deconstruct the end user and the purpose to help narrow down the work we will do)

### 3. How to do it: From systems dynamic (SD) complexities to digital toolbox.

Introduction by UCL on the need in WP2 for discussions on how to link participatory and digital approaches. Discussion by all on relevance and approach in CURBATHERI

- How to include participatory analysis in systems dynamic modelling?
- How to include technologically innovative platform as dynamic modelling?
- How to use case studies (observatories) vs. UK labs?

1 hour and 10 min



KF (UCL) reminded the keywords and aspects of the research proposal to guide the clarification needed for the core research aim:

- to understand how change is a value and demonstrate that? And how this contributes to the sustainable transformation of a place.
- What do we mean by social sustainability?
- What is urban transformation? It has a lot of different dimensions.
- Do we want a collection of methods?
- Do we want tools to help them identify the values and history of a place? What why is this important?
- What is our core problem question? How we can best refine this problem through participatory system.

If we are to create and additional tools it would be useful to focus on the interlinkage of variables such as values, community, connection, social-wellbeing, deep heritage.

Highlights the need to refine the domain of research.

**Stopped at 1:50 min left**

#### **4. Summary and concluding remarks – the way forward.**

Short introduction by NIKU followed with concluding remarks from all

- What have been decided so far?
- Other challenges and comments for considerations?

20 min