Liverpool's Meanwhile Spaces:

Re-imagining growth, and the value of values

Charlotte Ulvang Larsen

Master's thesis

Department of Social Anthropology

University of Oslo

June 2020

Liverpool's Meanwhile Spaces:

Re-imagining growth, and the value of values

ABSTRACT

What does it mean for a city to progress? What does *growth* entail for those who wish to make the city a healthy, sustainable, and good place to live? This thesis is based on six-month ethnographic fieldwork in Liverpool, England, conducted in the spring of 2019. My aim is to give an understanding of how futures are imagined within the context of a changing urban environment. I look at how a grassroot community of social entrepreneurs, artists and creatives who have made a home in industrial ruins rub up against private development companies who see possibilities in the same urban landscape.

Future-making projects may seem overlapping yet at the same time causes friction. For behind a shared rhetoric of growth drawing on values like community, sustainability, cultural expression, wellbeing and social cohesion, lie contradictions and diversity.

The activities in the grassroot projects demonstrate their visions of what a good life in a city entail through moving bodies, sensing, playing, and building networks. I argue that through these activities, the grassroot engages in a politics of the subject that has the potential to create new identities and modes of being in the world that potentially challenge capitalisms ontological status as the only way for humans to inhabit the earth and society to be constructed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CONTENTS

FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

Imagine an area where musicians rub shoulders with photographers, artists, fashion designers, digital agencies, architects, film-makers, young entrepreneurs, recording studios and there's a bunch of drinking holes and eateries, nightlife venues, internationally acclaimed arts festivals and galleries to drop-by on. That's us, [the Baltic Triangle] ... Quietly, under the radar, just getting on with our stuff.

Liverpool Baltic Triangle, (n.d.). Community Interest Company

After 6 years we have finally got permission to start using the [Baltic] Green for activities, plantings, trees, flowers, pallet builds, benches, tables, art, sculpture, music, community, carnival – what do you want? Want to help us and make this place a community, a neighbourhood: join us!

Community artist Tristan / WARPliverpool (2019), organisation for art in post-industrial spaces.

These vignettes illustrate some of the ways in which urban futures are imagined. They describe with pride and optimism of what kind of progress is envisioned for the Baltic Triangle. But it was not always like this. 20 years ago, the Baltic Triangle in Liverpool was a rough industrial estate turned red-light district, neglected and dilapidated. The area started to change in the early 2000s as artists moved in, taking over the warehouses for art, culture, and music projects. Recent years have seen an increase in large scale residential schemes. And with new development projects comes new promises.

One particular site became the interest of my thesis. The Canary Street[1] property situated on the edge of the Baltic Triangle has been of interest to developers for a decade where urban visions of development are imagined. Companies have tried and failed, and for the last three years the site has sat empty. The latest development company that has taken over the site has kept citizens of Liverpool informed through regular Tweets throughout the last two years as the project has been in progress that soon; 466 apartments, 37 townhouses, 12.000 square meter commercial space, 4000 square meter office space, and a city park will be built on Canary Street (The Great George St. Project [GGP], 2019d), making up a multi-million pounds project. If the numbers are not convincing you, then the company's promise of revitalization, inclusion and social transformation might. Regular Tweets with statements of visions and intent for the empty property paints a lovely picture:

> *Landscaped gardens, wide footways, a cycleway, the latest in urban agriculture technology, and edible planting. All with the health & wellbeing of the local community, new and existing, firmly at the core.*
>   - (GGP, 2020a).

> *Following years of decline, [Canary] Street will be revitalised with apartments, family homes & creative workspaces for businesses to grow.*
>   - (GGP, 2020b).

> *This is the place where evolution, imagination and ambition knit together. [The Canary Street Project] is bringing to life new places to live, work, create and play (...)*
>   - (GGP, 2019a).

I came to Liverpool in January 2019 to study vertical farming, aquaponics[2] and urban food production among social entrepreneurs. I was welcomed by Farm Urban during my six months fieldwork – a social enterprise engaged in indoor vertical farming, research, education, and community outreach. I learned a lot about their work. During this time, I also

---

[1] Name has been changed.
[2] A form of food production where fish and vegetables are grown in a closed looped system.

became interested in the area in which Farm Urban was situated, the *Baltic Triangle*, located a 15-minute walk south from Liverpool's small and compact city centre.

As empty urban landscapes lie derelict in cities all over the world, actors on all scales imagine their potential. In the Baltic Triangle, developers, grassroot community[3], Community Interest Companies (CIC's), local government, and a new creative and digital industry – all have a stake in shaping their urban futures. Visions may cause frictions, as I will show in this thesis, but they are also intertwined and may overlap, as one can gather from the statements above, all drawing on the language of community. A sense of community, green spaces, and cultural expressions are undeniably good features of any city. Sometimes visions become realized, and sometimes they remain as hopes of an urban future yet to come, or building on remembrances of the past.

Imagining the city is not just about visions. People are at the same time caught up in ideology and the practical implications of the economic, political and social environment in which they find themselves. In this thesis I will show how overlapping visions of what a good life in the city entails, hide ideological interests from view, and at the same time is part of making new citizen subjects based on the specific local context of the Baltic Triangle. What does it mean to grow, as a business, as a community, or as a city? What constitutes progress? And who has the right to define it? When actors on the grassroot level enter into what they experience as an ambivalent collaboration with multi-million-pound private development companies, they do not only enter into a relationship with a specific company but also one of global capitalism. In this context, what is the value of *values*? By showing how the Baltic Triangle's grassroot community is linked to a global financial market I aim to connect levels of abstraction, and to point to the paradoxes of space, temporality and language. My main research questions are:

What happens when actors on different hierarchies of scale with interest in shaping their urban futures use overlapping language of community, but have disparate understandings of value(s)?

What are the paradoxes that different urban future-making projects hide from view?

In urban development, how do capitalist value come into being?

---

[3] I will refer to the grassroot in the Baltic Triangle as people and groups engaged in local level activities. More specifically I include Farm Urban; participants in community projects; residents; the first artists who moved into the area; and similar groups and organisations that collaborate with each other.

3

THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

This thesis relies on multiple theoretical influences and scholars. In the following section I will give an overview and a brief discussion of the main literature and theoretical inspiration that informed the analysis of my ethnographic material. They centre around capitalism, work and labour, value(s), commodities, social and cultural capital, and urban planning and development. The authors sited have not all made it directly into the thesis but their perspectives are important contributions to anthropological theory that forms the foundation of this thesis and therefore deserve to be mentioned here.

Capitalism

Capitalism can be experienced as a prevailing force that dominates much of the world as we know it today, unifying all corners of the earth. It has fascinated and preoccupied anthropologists for decades and produced a vast body of literature. On a general note, some anthropological accounts describe pre-industrial societies' transition into a capitalist economy, or when money is introduced and given context specific meaning (e.g. Polanyi, 1944; Taussig, 1980; Bohannan & Bohannan, 1986; Hutchinson, 1992). Insights from these accounts are relevant to my analysis in that they argue how a capitalist society is not something that come into being by itself – integration into a capitalist economy and ideology is an active process that takes *work* before it may become naturalised as the way society is organised, which I will later argue. This is one of Karl Polanyi's points in *The Great Transformation* from 1944: the market cannot arise from self-regulation, there has been a political project enforcing market principles. Polanyi shows how a 'free market' developed in Britain in the 1800s and how British society reacted to the market forces that came to dominate economic life. By giving a historical account he argues that the economy was previously not considered a thing in and for itself, but embedded in social obligations such as community and kin. The great transformation, to Polanyi, was a 'disembedding' of economic practices and principles from society and its social dependencies in order to create a sphere of pure economic transaction. It involved commodification of land, labour, and money – what he calls 'fictitious commodities'. Market principle became generalised and hegemonic in the modern world, and involved a change in how people view themselves as human beings, where selling one's own labour power for wages as a free individual became naturalised.

Within anthropology there emerged a debate on which theories and method was most fruitful in the study of economic life between the substantivists and formalists. Hann and Hart (2011) calls it the golden age of economic anthropology that flourished in the decades after World War II. The substantivist school, which Polanyi belonged to, argued that economic life could not be studied without looking at its embeddedness in social institutions, contrary to the formalists who emphasised how economic life should be studied through a more formal lens of mainstream economic principles (Hann & Hart, 2011). In this thesis I will argue that seemingly impersonal markets and economic life is not a thing in itself but entangled and even dependent on social relations.

When thinking about impersonal markets and economic life as socially embedded, it is also relevant to keep in mind discussions of economic life as organised through different *spheres of exchange,* which several anthropologists have argued for, where conversion between spheres is made difficult by moral barriers (e.g. Barth, 1967; Bohannan & Bohannan,1986). Fredrik Barth (1967) shows how through entrepreneurial thinking some are able to exploit the value discrepancies between social and monetary spheres of exchange to maximize personal monetary profit. This thinking may be similar to how private development companies appropriate the value that exists as social relations among the grassroot in the Baltic Triangle for self-serving monetary profit.

Since the global feminist movement that started to take hold in the 1960s and 70s, a growing number of anthropological scholars have studied the role of women's work both inside and outside the household and challenged how labour, such as in the home, has been treated as subordinate to wage work (Hann & Hart, 2011, pp. 79-80). These critical accounts of women's role in the economy have also been crucial in offering a counter discourse to the dominant capitalist discourse (Gibson-Graham 2006, p. xi). As part of my discussion in subsequent chapters I will similarly show through empirical material how the hegemonic economic model is challenged by agents who are seen as having only an indirect and symbolic value to the overall economy. I will position the work of the grassroot not as reproducing a capitalist labour force, or as secondary to a system based on capitalist accumulation, but as a potential and reconfigured community economy organised around other principles and values than that of 'rationality', 'efficiency' and 'productivity' that characterises a capitalist model and ideology.

Modern capitalism, in its most simple definition, is making money with money (Hann & Hart, 2011, p. 145). By this definition, the private development company described in this thesis is a capitalist enterprise. Marx is probably known as one of capitalisms biggest critics,

focused on exploitation of labour where capitalist profit-making is based on extracting surplus value from living labour. Perhaps best defined in the factory, by selling their labour for wages, workers are removed from and cannot recognize themselves in the product they produce. The wage acts as a separation of the worker from the product he or she made, thereby causing alienation (Harvey & Krohn-Hansen, 2018, p. 14). This is relevant to how I differentiate the work of the grassroot compared to private development companies, and of how value come into being, which I will discuss below. In contrast, the grassroot activities I describe in this thesis is non-alienated, such as an artist who creates an art work can see himself or herself in the finished product.

To Marx, capital is strictly economic in form of money (Hann & Hart, 2011, p. 144). I will however argue that the actors in this thesis possess several different forms of capital – or resources. Pierre Bourdieu (1986/2011) includes what he calls social and cultural capital as well as economic capital, all three being convertible to each other. The actors I came to know in the Baltic Triangle had varying degrees of social, cultural, and economic capital, thereby varying degrees of symbolic capital, which Bourdieu (1989, p. 21) writes is "economic or cultural capital when it is known and recognized", not explicitly as capital, but "recognized as legitimate competence" (Bourdieu, 1986/2011, p. 84). I will use Bourdieu's concepts of capital and argue that the cultural wealth and social relationships and networks possessed by the grassroot are seen as resources or assets with potential for economic accumulation.

Work, labour and value(s)

In this thesis I will discuss grassroot projects that consists of volunteer work, work with art, and self-employment, and their relation to capitalist economic practises. I will refer to the grassroots' activities as *work,* but sometimes simply as *activities,* such as art projects, or activities like planting seeds on community days. I could have called the grassroots' activities for *labour,* but as social anthropologist Susana Narotzky (2018, p. 29) asks, is labour a useful concept for anthropology today?

A typical distinction between labour and work in the social sciences is labour "defined as human efforts which pertains to capitalist relations of production", while "work describes the rest of human expenditure in relation to non-capitalist realms" (Narotzky, 2018, p. 29). Typically, then, labour is most often associated with capital and also capital accumulation,

while work is not. By this distinction, work and labour can also be seen related to dichotomies such as market/non-market and capitalist/non-capitalist.

What I do not want here, by making this distinction between work and labour, is to reinforce a notion of labour leading to 'real value' and work as secondary or subordinate to labour. Inspired by the work of the two feminist economic geographers under the pen name of Gibson-Graham[4] (2006), I will in fact argue that the grassroot activities are *not* simply marginal to activities leading to capitalist growth, but a 'community economy' emerging through bodily practices, discourse, local connectivity and social networks. I classify the 'human efforts' by my informants as non-capitalist, non-commodified and non-alienated, and will argue that this work is carried out centred around values such as social and environmental sustainability, cultural expression, and a sense of community. These values are what brings the grassroot together in the first place. But also, their work is not only *based* on certain values, but their work also *produces* these values.

Here it becomes necessary with an important distinction between *value* and *values,* as these two terms are often used interchangeably. American anthropologist David Graeber, whom I will refer to in this thesis, points out that since the 1980s, anthropological scholars have used the same terms to describe both commodities that are sold on the market, such as the 'value of an apartment', and values as "our ideas about what is ultimately important in life" (2013, p. 224). The difference between the terms is connected to work and linked to my brief discussion above. To make the distinction clearer, Graeber (2013, p. 224) notes that value is produced when labour is commoditized. So, the value of an apartment is based on the total wage labour that went into producing it, and its value is measured in the form of money. When labour is *not* commoditized, which is how I have characterised the grassroot projects, we are speaking of *values,* according to Graeber (2013). Based on Terence Turner (in Graeber 2013, p. 225), I suggest that if the symbol of labour in a capitalist system is formalised and socially recognized in the form of money, then the (less formalised) but equally socially recognized 'labour' of the grassroot is symbolised as an ethos and a sense of community. Compared to economic value, an ethos is intangible and immeasurable (Collins, 2017, p. 6).

Related to this is the concepts of gifts and commodities, widely explored in anthropology, and useful to think with. There is no *one* definition of commodities. Marx's idea of commodities is that shaped by capitalism: alienated – "disengaged by their makers and at the mercy of market transactions" (Tsing, 2013, p. 22). In our case, an apartment sold in the

---

[4] Kathrine Gibson and Julie Graham.

7

Baltic Triangle is alienable in that the contractors who built it is separated from the product of his or her labour. In capitalist societies it is money that "stands for alienation, detachment, impersonal society" (Hann & Hart, 2011, p. 82). The absence of money thus brings labour into in the more personal realm outside the market. I will not explicitly focus on *gifts*, but the principle behind theories on the subject informs my analysis on an implicit level in that I explore what some scholars identify as alienated and non-alienated, and commodified and non-commodified, and economic *value* and moral *values*. In this realm I have relied on the work of American anthropologist Anna Tsing (2013). She asks a simple yet encompassing question: how does capitalist commodities come into being? She takes a processual view, similar to that of Appadurai (1986) and Kopytoff (1986) when she argues that things can move in and out of a commodity phase. Based on ethnographic material on the matsutake mushroom, Tsing (2013) argues that a thing is not necessarily a commodity from its birth. In fact, its life can start as a gift, but then has to be translated or converted in order to become a commodity. This does not happen by itself, according to Tsing. It takes *work*. How capitalist value come into being became one of the guiding questions in my own research when thinking of the connection between the grassroot projects and the emerging private development projects happening in the Baltic Triangle.

In their feminist critique of political economy, Gibson-Graham (2006, p. xiii) explore alternative economies to capitalism and identify various economic relations that sustain livelihoods, not just related to the formal markets, wage labour, and capitalist enterprise but also nonmarket, unpaid, and non-capitalist economic activities which they point out makes up most of the world's economy in both rich and poor countries. For instance, there can be commodity-producing enterprises that are non-capitalist. The authors write that such combinations should not be surprising, for commodities to them "are just goods and services produced for a market; they can be produced in a variety of exploitative or nonexploitative noncapitalist organizations" (Gibson-Graham (2006, p. xiii). This take on what they call 'diverse economy' will be part of my subsequent discussion.

In this thesis I will argue for how commodification of an ethos and a sense of community is taking place in the Baltic Triangle. After being converted to a commodity, the ethos and the cultural and social capital have the potential to become financialised, meaning that they are not just sold on a market, but become "*interest bearing* as part of their commodity cycle or circuit" (Bracking, 2020, p. 213, emphasis original). Salemink & Rasmussen (2016, p. 4) notes that with neoliberalism, commoditisation has penetrated every sphere of life, reducing even human bodies into financial values (e.g. Sharp, 2000). By

keeping this distinction in mind, I aim to show how financial (interest-bearing) *value* circulating on the global market is made through commodification of *values* (community, wellbeing, social cohesion, sustainability) – in this way connecting the non-capitalist activities in grassroot projects with that of a global financial market. In the last two chapters I will have a critical discussion of this link.

Forms of capitalism

Instead of assuming one universal theory one can speak of *types* of *capitalisms* in late modernity, based on exploring "the context and meaning of variation in capitalist activities" (Blim, 2000, p. 28). For instance, one can argue that Norwegian capitalism is not the same as American capitalism, because of the "particular social realities" in which it grows (Hann & Hart 2011, p. 147). 'Classic' capitalism is often associated with industrial capitalism based on capital, labour, and production; typically factory work. The Baltic Triangle used to be a site of industrial capitalism, which had been described to me in interviews with older residents living in the area, who had been working in the factories in the 1950s and 60s.

Consumer capitalism, neoliberal capitalism, real estate capitalism, could all have been appropriate terms to analyse the unfolding development in Liverpool. While classification is no doubt useful in many instances when analysing the social world, it is not crucial to the arguments that I shall make. What is most important is capitalism's hegemony and ontological status manifested in a general discourse, which I will start to question. What I believe the types of 'capitalisms' have in common, as anthropologist Karen Ho claims finance capitalism is about, is "power relations and unequal clashes of differently valued social domains with diverging visions of the world" (2009, p. 34). This formulation might be just as valuable here as a definition, as it tells us something crucial about capitalism as I will discuss it in this thesis. Indeed, the urban spaces in the Baltic Triangle are infused with diverging visions of the world, related to what kind of development the different actors want for society. Part of my argument is based on the premise that urban spaces as sites of capitalist projects must be maximising profit in order to exist in the long-term, seen from the hegemonic economic model, but contestation in these spaces centre around what kinds of citizen subjects one ought to be to partake in the growth narrative of Liverpool.

Property and urban development

The Baltic Triangle has seen a transformation in the urban landscape the last couple of years in terms of real estate development. The old industrial estate, which roughly up until 2010 was ignored by investors and neglected by the city council[5], has become increasingly attractive to developers due to its low land value and potential for real estate development. It was the empty spaces of land, derelict buildings and low rent that had also attracted the artists in the beginning of 2000s which I believe contributed to the area's attractiveness, which then became the beginning of a gentrification process. As developers moved in, land values rose.

It is no exaggeration to say that Liverpool has undergone a much-needed renaissance in terms of urban restructuring that partly started quite successfully with the port area and the Albert Docks in the mid 1980s. Physical regeneration of different parts of Liverpool the last 30 years has no doubt played a part in the city's success story (Parkinson, 2019). Lately, Liverpool has seen a big increase in planning proposals, investment and development schemes, many of them private initiatives but encouraged and facilitated by Liverpool City Council through *Regeneration Liverpool[6]*.

Low & Lawrence- Zúñiga writes that "transforming urban landscapes typically serve the interests of political elites and monied interests – indeed, the city is often envisioned as a site for the production of value – symbolic and monetary (…)" (2003, pp. 20-21). This view is at the centre of my analysis in terms of what urban spaces represent and come to mean to the actors with stake in shaping their urban futures, and what kind of value is assigned to activities in such spaces. The grassroot is *one* actor in the contestation of urban space. The other main actors are private development companies. In that regard, some simple definitions are necessary. What is real estate development? A classic definition entails "the process of adding value to real estate" or property (e.g. Peiser, 2015, p. 12). Some scholars have taken a more critical approach to development, such as Michael Levien (2018), arguing that development does not include improvements in the majority of the lives of the rural population, but is sustained by their dispossession. I will briefly touch upon the topic of dispossession in chapter 5, as it is *one* way to think of the difference between having control of land and being in possession.

---

[5] However, the area was on the council's radar. In 2004, Liverpool City Council were looking to create official managed prostitution zones in Liverpool. Jamaica Street in the Baltic Triangle was identified as a suitable site (BBC, 2004).
[6] Regenerating Liverpool offers services like assist with land acquisition, help with the planning application process, and funding grants, etc. (Regenerating Liverpool, n.d.).

I will refer to *developers* throughout this thesis, and with that I mean "the entrepreneurs who create and produce real estate (Peiser, 2015, p. 12). A development project often involves financial risks to the developer and its investors, and the process includes "buying the land, designing the product, arranging financing, obtaining public approvals, constructing the building, leasing, managing, and ultimately selling the completed project" (Peiser, 2015, p. 12). I will refer to development throughout the thesis most often in a narrow and practical sense of the word; real estate development. In addition, development is typically understood as economic, "usually [with] the assumption that the model of such economic development is a capitalist or 'neo-liberal' one" (Clammer, 2015, p. 1).

A key inquiry that will guide my analysis is: how do private development companies 'add value' to their projects? I believe one of anthropology's merits is to be able to point to and show through ethnography how seemingly straight forward economic behaviour and transactions are indeed intertwined with sociality and culture. This question will be answered by looking at the company's relation to the grassroot community and Farm Urban with whom I did my fieldwork.

Property and development are often given a strict practical treatment outside anthropology, in law, bureaucracy, economics, and so on. I will however question the concepts themselves. The terms property and development are frequently used in a naturalised way by lay people, government, and scholars. If one is to imagine a community economy and use of urban space as non-commercial, then looking at concepts such as ownership and property versus access and commons is fundamental.

When writing about development and urban space it is hard to forego *gentrification.* While gentrification is arguably going on in the Baltic Triangle and questioned by some of those who work in the area, I have not analysed my material explicitly through this concept, but acknowledge that it is a path I could have taken. There exist some good accounts on gentrification within anthropology (e.g. Checker, 2011; Herzfeld, 2010, Perez 2002). Late Marxist geographer Neil Smith (1982, 1996), whom I will refer to a couple of times, has made large theoretical contributions on gentrification which have had a significant impact on anthropology students in the same field (Low, 2017).

Space will not allow me to give an extensive account on urban anthropology. In general, anthropology was for a long time concerned with studying small-scale societies in non-urban contexts. Urban studied in the early 1900s saw the city as "being made up of adjacent ecological niches occupied by human groups in a series of concentric rings around the central core" (Low, 1999, p. 2). There is no doubt that the research perspective has

11

changed since then. With increased urbanisation in the 1960 came a new interest to study urban processes, and with the self-critical "decolonizing movement" in anthropology in the 1970s and 80s, many anthropologists turned home to study their own home base, which often meant studying their own cities (Jaffe & de Koning, 2016, p. 3).

Cities are complex, and can seem like a daunting and chaotic object of study to anthropologists. But understanding the changing world in which we live is critical, and the cities are a big part of that, as an estimated 68% of the world's population will live in urban centres by 2050 (United Nations, n.d.). Low notes that "[t]he city as a site of everyday practice provides valuable insight into the linkages of macro processes with the texture and fabric of human experience" (1999, p. 2). While it perhaps in some ways is easier to study small groups or areas ethnographically, and like myself, in some ways came to be limited to a post-industrial working-community neighbourhood in Liverpool, I have also tried to show how the grassroot, their projects and their human experiences are tied to larger processes such as capitalist change and global financial market and investments.

THESIS OUTLINE

Chapter 2 introduces my field site and the social enterprise where I did my fieldwork, and a discussion of method. The following chapters are organized around three different actors who participate in *projects* as a way to articulate and shape their urban futures. I have chosen to build my argument from more empirically based in chapter 3 and 4 to increasingly more analytical in chapter 5 and 6. At the same time, each chapter is meant to give a different perspective on place, temporality, community, and the meaning of growth in the context of urban development.

Chapter 3 is a view from 'the ground', based on participant observation and empirically centred around the urban community food and culture project that Farm Urban decided to do in collaboration with a private development company. I will present three cases: a planning session and two community events, giving the reader an insight into how urban futures are imagined by Farm Urban and their project participants and what kinds of values are imbued in the meanwhile space they find themselves in.

Chapter 4 takes the view from one of the Baltic Triangle's self-declared gate-keepers of the area's authenticity. It is based on a longer interview with community artists Tristan, a

key figure in the Baltic Triangle's 'original' artistic scene. Tristan's captivating and charismatic character along with his effort and dedication to the Baltic Triangle's community through project engagement, particularly within the arts, led me to use him as the epitome of the first artistic community that moved into the Baltic Triangle. I attempt to portray and analyse how he has felt the changes in the area since he first came there in the 1980s, and how he experiences and negotiates the emerging friction between the grassroot community, the new creative and digital industry, and the new private development projects that are taking place.

If chapter 3 presents a view from the ground, then chapter 5 explores a view 'from above', more specifically the top floor of the developers' offices. The chapter is based on an interview I did with the director of the Canary Street Development Project which will briefly show what a process of real estate development practically entails for the company, but I will take it further by questioning the concepts of property and ownership themselves. I will argue that property development is not just done through economic transactions but dependent on the diversity of social and cultural relations that has made a home in capitalist ruins in order to move forward.

Chapter 6 continues my interview with the Canary director, but move into a wider discussion on the meaning of growth and of progress, and the values realised in the Baltic Triangle's meanwhile spaces. I will show how visions simultaneously overlap and collide, based on a common discourse of revitalisation, community, and wellbeing, which brings out a deeper question on what kinds of (economic) citizen subjects one ought to be in order to being a valuable member of society.

FIELD AND METHOD

LIVERPOOL – THE POST-IMPERIAL CITY

Situated on the North-West coast of England overlooking the Irish sea as well as the river Mersey, Liverpool was always destined to be a port city teeming with maritime activity. The world's first commercial wet dock opened for shipping in Liverpool in 1715, in comparison, London's first dock did not open until around 75 years later (Merseyside Maritime Museum [MMM], 2019). The port soon became part of a global trade network, first in the transatlantic slave trade between Europe, the Americas and West Africa, which made Liverpool extremely wealthy. The first slave ship arrived in the 1740s and for 70 years, two million slaves were transported through Liverpool until slavery was abolished in 1807 (McIntyre-Brown, 2001). Slave trade was later replaced by growing commercial trade networks with India, China and South America (Giles & Hawkins, 2004, p. 5) and saw Liverpool become a massive importer of raw materials (Parkinson, 1985, p. 10). While the city struggled with poverty, the port activities made Liverpool merchants stupendously wealthy. Liverpool had a huge economic and social growth at this time, and it soon became the second greatest port in the whole British empire and attracted entrepreneurs and scholars from other parts of Europe (McIntyre-Brown, 2001, p. 21). Already at this point, Liverpool was becoming a melting pot.

It was not just slavery and commercial trade that made up Liverpool's maritime traffic. The city also became the largest emigration port in the world. It was mostly European emigrants leaving for America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa (MMM, 2019). Between 1830 and 1930, nine out of a total of 40 million European emigrants left from Liverpool in search of better lives. Most of them would only pass through Liverpool once in their life, coming from Northern Europe or Ireland (MMM, 2019). *Hope* became an important sentiment in the city – Liverpool was a meanwhile place where the first steps on a long journey were made. Some decided to stay in Liverpool, again contributing to a broad variation in culture and communities (Pye, 2017, p. 32). Those who decided to stay contributed to a

massive growth in population size; only in the ten years between 1831 and 1841 Liverpool's population grew by 43% (McIntyre-Brown, 2001, p. 21).

Imagining Liverpool 150 years ago, the docks would have been teeming with life. Goods would be coming in from all over the world and handled by the many local dock workers employed in the maritime sector. The goods would be bought and sold, processed, sorted, stored, and/or transported – cotton being the biggest import (Giles & Hawkins, 2004, p. 5). In the mid 1800s, 45 % of all export value in Britain was handled from Liverpool, and the city's role in national and international trading networks was unprecedented at the time (Giles & Hawkins, 2004, p. 3). The associated warehouses were a big part of this, which brought in the most revenue for the city (Pye, 2017, p. 31). The redbrick Victorian warehouses and factory buildings are a defining feature of the city today.

Liverpool was in other words an extremely progressive and well-connected city for its time: an enormous amount of people and goods were passing through from all over the world. In addition, the first steam powered, inter-urban railway was established between Liverpool and Manchester in 1830. It was designed to transport both passengers and goods, boosting trade and industry and improving communication (Science and Industry Museum, n.d.)

The 1930s depression upon world trade was the start of Liverpool's economic problems (Parkinson, 1985, p. 9), and by 1940, unemployment rose to two and a half times higher than the national average (Parkinson, 1985, p. 11). When World War II hit, Liverpool's position as a strategic port made it a key target. Damage from the bombings was tried rebuilt after the war, but regeneration projects were not successful because soon after, a wave of economic decline hit the city (Sharples & Stonard, 2008). What happened?

Most importantly, Britain's global empire lost its status at the same time as a decline in British manufacturing (Sharples & Stonard, 2008, pp. 76-77). Every major English city suffered a recession, but Liverpool was hit with double force because of its overdependence on the port and its associated activities. The port had been crucial for Liverpool's economy for hundreds of years and left a great legacy, but was now subject to changes in technology. These changes included a rise in air transport, which contributed to undermining the maritime transport (Sharples & Stonard, 2008, pp. 76-77), and technological advances changed how the goods were handled at the docks. The unskilled labour was no longer done by manually but mechanised with elevators, conveyors, hoppers and silos (Giles & Hawkins, 2004, p. 57) – thereby leaving many dock workers unemployed.

Connected to the declining maritime activity was the warehouses which lost their significance as they were replaced by containers for storing goods. The docks, warehouses

15

and factories became redundant, vacant, and soon derelict. Liverpool was deteriorating. Windows were boarded up; grass and moss grew in the cracks as if trying to reclaim the city to nature. Walking around in Liverpool at the time of my fieldwork I could still see these 'rough edges' manifested as reminders of what once was. But alongside boarded up warehouses the city boasts of impressive architecture that remains from Liverpool's height of prosperity, such as the magnificent and iconic buildings at the waterfront, the Three Graces, built in the beginning of the 1900s.

However, Liverpool's hardship was not over. Another economic decline hit in the 1970s with the global recession, causing large-scale unemployment and with it came social unrest. Just in the 6 years between 1975 and 1981, unemployment rates went up from 9.2% to 20.1% - double the national average at the time (Parkinson, 2019, p. 51). Liverpool's population – 800.000 after World War II – sank to 463.000 by 1990 (Parkinson, 2019, p. 51). Plants were closing down and moving their manufacturing elsewhere, linked to Margaret Thatcher's new neoliberal regime. Liverpool's manufacturing industry was particularly vulnerable as production was mostly controlled by a few external – not local – private firms, who pulled out production as recession hit, which seemed to bring Liverpool's industry close to collapse (Parkinson 1985, pp. 11-12). The city came to be seen as too risky for private investment, which intensified the city's decline. At the same time, the 1980s political climate was volatile. The election of a Conservative national government resulted in cuts in public expenditure. This caused a political reaction in Liverpool where the Militant Tendency controlled the Labour council between 1983 and 87, and then threatened the Conservative national government for money – throwing the city into near chaos (Parkinson, 2019, p. 21; 51). The Toxteth riots in 1981, and the Hillsborough football tragedy in 1989 where 'drunken Liverpool fans' were blamed for the near 100 deaths and hundreds of injured, damaged the city, particularly its outwards image and pride (Parkinson, 2019, p. 51; Duckenfield, 2019). Liverpool has had a turbulent history. But how is the city faring today?

LIVERPOOL TODAY

Liverpool's population is close to 500.000, 50.000 less compared to its neighbour Manchester (UK government, 2019). Liverpool city region is made out of 5 districts with a total population of 1 551. 400 in 2018 (UK government, 2019). Liverpool today is perhaps best known internationally for its football clubs and to be the home of The Beatles. Tourism has

been booming the last few years, making Liverpool the 5th most visited UK city for international visitors (Inclusive Growth Plan, 2018, p. 11).

However, Liverpool's image is still recovering from its turbulent past as its self-image took a hard hit during the recession. It was a drastic, unprecedented plummet. Liverpool was no longer the proud, world leading port city it once was, but a city of despair. The media exacerbated the problem, depicting Liverpool as fraught with crime, riots, strike, drugs, poor housing, and unemployment (Parkinson, 2019). It was undeniably true – Liverpool were suffering greatly – but the recovery of its outward image is still taking place today. Despite the prejudice and clichés lingering from the 80s and 90s, the city has grown more self-confident. Focus on socio-economic issues has slowly been replaced by optimism. Public Regeneration programs initiated by local government were important in restructuring the city physically (Parkinson, 2019). Winning the European Capital of Culture award in 2008 gave the city a boost in confidence.

There is still a long way to go. 45 % of Liverpool's neighbourhoods rank as some of the most deprived areas in England, child poverty affects over a third of the city's children, road casualties are above national average, and 23,4 % of resident workers earn below the Real Living Wage (Inclusive Growth Plan 2018, pp. 12-13). Despite of this, Liverpool has been called a success story of urban regeneration – physically, socially, financially, and politically (Parkinson, 2019, p. 2). Situating Liverpool in history and its contemporary situation acts as a context for the moment in time I will describe and discuss in this thesis.
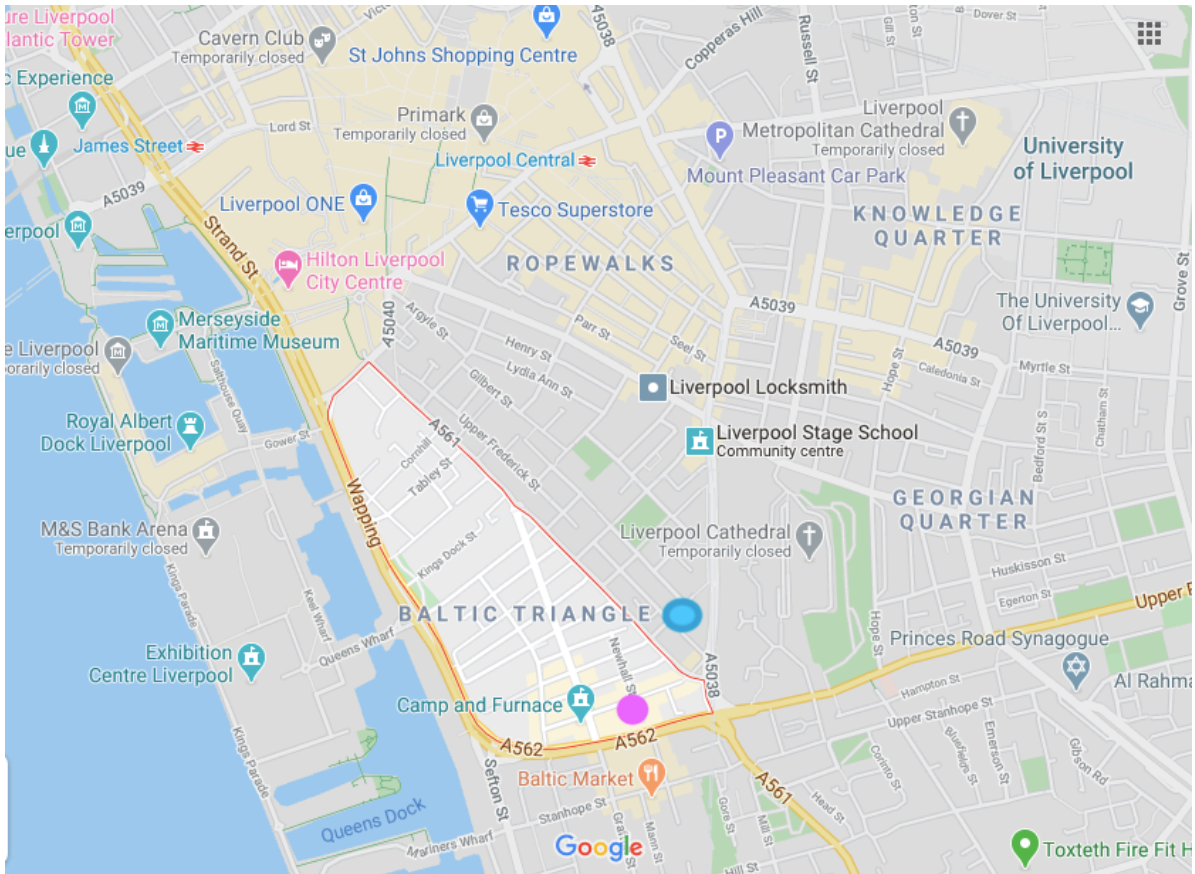
Figure 1: Map of Liverpool central, Baltic Triangle outlined. "The Basement" in pink circle, the Baltic Farm site in green circle. Source: Screenshot from googlemaps.com

Figure 2: Scene from the Basement. Source: Private photo

A TRIP DOWN THE BASEMENT

The Baltic Triangle is one of Liverpool's up-and-coming neighbourhoods, and the place where I spent many, many hours of my fieldwork. Large, imposing redbrick warehouses and industrial sheds characterise the area's raw and rough look. Graffiti adorns the walls. Any time of day, a tourist stops and position herself between the big turquoise graffiti wings so her friend can take a picture. The warehouses that stood empty and derelict since the late 1970s have now been renovated and converted into creative spaces for small start-ups and entrepreneurs. What better place than the once forgotten part of the city where the rent is cheap and the vibe is right?

Most mornings I walk the cold streets to work. Cars and people are moving about, ready to start the day. Remains of last night's fast-food is strewn across the pavement and plastic litter of all varieties are doing a ballet performance in the air. I pass all the ongoing construction work – the workers have already been up for hours. Loud noises from the lorries, cranes and high-pressure drills have become a well-known sound on my daily walk to work. So has the sight of all the new developments, mostly student flats; almost finished; half-finished; or just about to start. In not long, the Canary Project will tower over all of them.

Down one of the main roads – Jamaica Street – past the worn-looking skate park, I turn the corner onto Greenland Street. The names are a testimony to Liverpool's role in world-wide trade through hundreds of years. I stand in front of a restored redbrick 6 storey warehouse that once used to be a sugar factory. The entrance leads into Liverpool Life Sciences UTC (University Technical College) – a school that specialises in science, healthcare and engineering. One cannot tell from the outside, but here - down in the school's basement – is where plants and ideas grow and values are cultivated.

In the foyer I say hello to Sheila, sign in, and put the orange lanyard around my neck. The interior of the school gives off a strange energy with its cold grey and red colours, but as I take the flight of stairs down to the basement, the energy changes immediately. Bright, pink light floods the big, rectangular space that make up Farm Urban's headquarters – "the Basement" – with its columns and exposed brick walls and ceiling. The front part functions as an office space with work desks, five computers, and a little lunch corner. The far end of the basement is inhabited by more than humans. This is where the plants are nurtured, from when they are nothing but seeds full of potential till they grow up to be examined, admired, and perhaps also eaten. Not all of them make it. That is part of the process. It is an experiment.

What are the best conditions for chives? What makes parsley thrive? Or on the more experimental side: what is going on with the saffron?

After the seeds get sown they are put in the warm, humid nursery-tent to grow. When they are big enough they will be transplanted into one of the vertically stacked hydroponic towers. Not much of what is going on in the Basement resemble traditional agriculture. In this tucked-away underground food lab there are no vegetables grown in the ground with the sky and sun as their ceiling. Instead, Farm Urban's plants grow in foam-filled beds in plastic towers, row upon row. With added nutrients in the water that circulate in the system, LED-lights, and controlled temperature, this delicate system is kept in balance.

Simon, Farm Urban's dedicated botanist, is playing his beloved folk music over the speakers while he walks around in his usual attire; shorts, chequered shirt and Birkenstocks, tending to his plants. He is always busy but never seems to be stressed out. Simon is calm soul, only 22 years of age but wise for his years. The day before, I had agreed to meet him down in the Basement at 10 a.m. to do some practical farm work. On this day's agenda we were to have a look at the lettuce which seemed to have gotten some sort of fungi.

"How can you tell?", I ask, as they look fine to me.

"I can see it…" He thinks for a moment. "The roots are a different colour; more brown-ish than of white, and more tangled up in each other".

With my untrained eye I look closer. "Yeah, I can see they look different from the healthy ones, the roots have got a different texture – mushy in a way". Then, to give me some hands-on experience in hydroponic farming, Simon instructs me to take out the fungi-infested lettuce from the towers and throw them in a container.

"We'll give those to the rabbits".

"Which rabbits?" I ask confused and look around me. Simon tells me he sometimes gives the lower quality produce to the local vet so it does not go to waste. He takes some of the sick lettuce aside to examine it further. He is puzzled by the way the roots appear, with little white things on them that resemble grains of coarse sand. Simon suggests I can move some of the other plants in the towers around to make it look lusher and more abound now that most of the lettuce has been taken out – in the process getting my hair stuck in the tape that is supposed to catch flies, not anthropology students. He laughs at my clumsiness. "Good luck getting that out, it doesn't come off easily!". While I worry about my hair, Simon is on to other things. He tends to the edible flowers in the tower next to me: "They are quite temperamental these flowers. They have a life of their own". It is with little comments like that that I know Simon is the born botanist. His love for and fascination with the green, living

world – whether it is in the mountains in Wales where he frequently hikes or in a basement in the city – is baked into the fabric of Farm Urban.

I soon learned that Farm Urban is driven by a belief in certain values, such as environmental sustainability, physical and mental wellbeing, and transparency and open access knowledge production. The activities in the Basement had not made anyone rich. Quite the opposite. At the time of my fieldwork only two out of ten people were drawing a modest salary from their operation, the rest was funded through various government and university funding programs. Farm Urban's wealth did not lie in economic capital. Instead, my colleagues were rich in knowledge; in social networks; and possessed an image of 'trendiness' by being an innovative organisation growing greens in the Basement. Farm Urban's values manifested themselves in every little mundane activity we did during my fieldwork. It was not salient to me at the time that Simon's decision to offer the bad lettuce to the vet was made on the basis of his values, values that were part of so much more than Farm Urban, and perhaps stretching beyond, out into a global financial capitalist market.

ON METHOD

Liverpool will 'suck you in', locals told me. Poets, artists, musicians and eccentrics from all corners of the world have for centuries washed up on Liverpool's shores and never left. Once you come here you will always keep coming back, was the saying.

My first few months in the city were interesting and quite intense. The main reason was the steep learning curve in Farm Urban's work days. The first months were actually spent adjusting to my new environment with a mix of fascination and homesickness. Some things stood out to me more than others; the large amount of homeless people living on the streets everywhere in the city centre, many living semi-permanently tents; and the ubiquitous litter-problem on the streets, both big contrasts to my home city of Oslo. As a northern coastal city, the relentless wind and frequent rain from every possible direction admittedly caused some swearwords and had me go through at least one umbrella every month. But what Liverpool lacks in good weather it makes up for big-hearted people, which I suspect is the reason why so many people fall in love with Liverpool, including myself. Scousers are known to be warm, friendly and down-to earth. They are honest, love to talk, and always happy to help. Being called 'love' and 'babe' by the clerk at the check-out counter of any establishment is

the most natural thing in the world and after 3 months I realised that 'Liverpool had sucked me in' just like people had warned me about.

Access, language, and life in the Baltic Triangle

This thesis is based on six months fieldwork in Liverpool. I was interested in learning more about new ways of growing food in urban areas and found Farm Urban, a social enterprise in Liverpool that looked very promising. Their immediate response was positive. After some weeks of email correspondence, a Zoom-call and a two-day visit in December 2018, I packed my bags and moved to Liverpool in January 2019.

Farm Urban had already welcomed several students to work with them ever since they launched their business in 2014, but I was the first anthropology student. Peter and Hans, the two co-founders, told me it would be interesting to have an anthropology student with them as they were open to see their organisation from a different (and even critical) perspective and learn something from the experience. Because of this, gaining access was relatively straight forward. I was welcome to ask any questions I wanted and they were always answered. I was received as a full-worthy member of the Farm Urban team and treated as such.

Three other young women started working in Farm Urban at the same time as me, which I saw as a benefit since all four of us went through a steep learning curve. I was surprised at the short time it took to feel a part of the 'family'. The other newcomers commented on this as well; "I feel like I've known ye for a really long time! It has only been a week!".

At the time of my fieldwork we were between 8 and 10 colleagues. Peter and Hans, both from scientific backgrounds, had founded the business together in 2014. Peter is raised in Liverpool, has studied cellular biology and ended up with a PhD in epigenetics. Hans also has a PhD, centred around quantum chemistry, molecular graphics and supercomputing. In addition to being computer genius he is musical, spiritual, and would probably describe himself as a 'hippe' at his core. Together with Peter, who Hans claims is more goal oriented with a sense of business, they balance each other out perfectly. Together with Joan, who is responsible for the educational side of Farm Urban and impeccably coordinates every single activity down to the last detail, they make up the managing team of Farm Urban.

My other colleagues all came from different backgrounds and aged between 20 and 29, slightly younger than Peter, Hans and Joan who were 32, 39 and 36. Almost all of us were

students or interns – me included – some PhD-students, other on master's level, and then there was our botanist and our bee-keeping expert funded through government programs. Together we made up a relatively tight knit gang who worked together but also spent time with each other on our free time.

I found a flat in the city centre where I lived together with the owners; a married couple in their 40's both in a creative line of work who often travelled. The flat was only a 15-minute walk from the Basement and the Baltic Triangle neighbourhood. This meant that I got to know the area quite well. Most days I went to the Basement around 9:30 to help out with whatever I could, depending on what was on the agenda for the day. Having a set time every day let me get into a routine as well as learn about my colleagues' typical work day, although there was usually something new every day. As the air-quality and lack of sunlight made it hard for any of us to spend a whole day in the Basement without getting a bit tired, Farm Urban had access to a work space on the second floor of a collective work studio. We would conduct some of our meetings there, and sit together but work on our own things.

I also spent a lot of my *free time* in the Baltic Triangle. There I signed up to local yoga studio in a converted old gun factory where I went most days. I did drop-ins at the local gym housed in an industrial shed. I frequented the Baltic Triangle's bars, eateries and venues housed in various renovated redbrick warehouses together with my Farm Urban friends. I would sit in local coffee shops – 'cool' and 'hip' would be a fair description of them – with a cappuccino to write, conduct interviews or just general people-watching, feeling like I was blending in with the Baltic Triangle's clientele of young, white 'creative' professionals.

On rare sunny days I had lunch outside with Farm Urban friends on one of the few green patches left in the neighbourhood or on the edge of the worn-looking, graffitied skate park on Jamaica Street. All of these activities and more made me into as much of a local as I could hope to be in six months. I particularly felt this when I walked down the street and often bumping into people I knew, stopping for a chat.

My English is fluent so language did not pose a problem to me. It was a conscious decision to conduct fieldwork in an English-speaking country because with a precious six months' timeframe I did not want to spend the majority of my time gaining language proficiency. I hoped instead that already knowing the language would help me to delve in deep from the start. However, Scouse dialect is markedly different from, say, southern English. I had trouble keeping up when Scousers talked fast among themselves because of the strong dialect (exacerbated when not addressing me directly) mixed with unfamiliar cultural

references and fascinating local slang. Sometimes I would ask them to slow down and explain, which they always happily did.

I was lucky that an Irish friend of mine in Oslo told me to look up his best friend, Mat, when I got to Liverpool. Mat had moved to Liverpool 12 years ago and set up a successful ice-sculpturing business. He became my best friend outside of Farm Urban and we regularly spent time together. Even though Mat is interviewed in my study, I considered him a friend 'outside' of my research and his place a home away from home, and a welcome pause in the flow of fieldwork tasks.

Participant observation, interviews, and 'hanging out'

Anthropology as a social discipline is heavily based on ethnography, which Raymond Madden describes as seeking "to understand human groups (or societies, or cultures, or institutions) by having the researcher in the same social space as the participants in the study" (2017, p. 16). I had chosen Farm Urban and the people that worked there as my object of study, and my field site.

A couple of months into my stay in Liverpool I became more and more interested in the surrounding area where Farm Urban was based, and the changes that were happening there. I expanded the boundaries of the field to include the Baltic Triangle and the other actors with interest in the area's development. It is important to stress that an ethnographic 'field' is not something already existing 'out there'. It is a combination of the mental construction of the ethnographer which is 'good to think' with, and a geographical and social space which together make up the investigative space (Madden, 2017, p. 39).

Under the practice of ethnography, participant observation is the most important method. It entails to "do as others do, live with others, eat, work and experience the same daily patterns as others" (Madden, 2017, p. 16). From the very first day at work with Farm Urban I emerged myself in their work; participating, observing, asking questions, and 'hanging out'. Spending time in the Basement with my colleagues, doing what they were doing and not just observing, let me experience first-hand the daily activities of Farm Urban. The tasks were many and varied. I did practical farm work with Simon, which included sowing, propagating, harvesting greens from the vertical towers, and cleaning the systems. I also participated in workshops on aquaponics and 'the future of food' for primary school

children and older students, either in the Basement or travelled out to schools as far as Wales. In these situations, I was performing a job as well as being a researcher and felt like a productive member of the team. I also helped produce material for the educational workshops. I participated in team activities such as meetings, planning- and brainstorming sessions, and collective sessions of tidying and clearing the Basement and in preparations for projects and events. A lot of my time was spent just 'hanging out' in the Basement. I would work on my own things like write field notes or transcribe interviews, chat to my colleagues and ask them questions, and have lunch, and many, many cups of tea.

During my fieldwork there were some events that stood out as 'cases' where participant observation proved very valuable. Three of them are described in chapter 3. The majority of my data was gathered through participant observation and everyday conversations, but I also conducted interviews. Interviews, ranging from the informal to the formal, are a pivotal part of doing ethnography. However natural a conversation seems to be, it usually contains some degree of instrumentality, because the ethnographer can be regarded as a recorder who is always 'on' (Madden, 2017, p. 64).

As Spradley notes, ethnographic interviews can best be thought of as "a series of friendly conversations (…)" (1979, p. 58). These 'friendly conversations' took place anywhere and at any time, like hanging out in the Basement, having a beer, driving from A to B and everything in between. Hanging out with a colleague, I would sometimes intentionally introduce a question on a topic I was interested in knowing more about. These could be considered informal interviews (Bernard, 2006, p. 211) where I would jot down what I could remember from the conversation as soon as possible.

I conducted ten formal interviews, some *unstructured* and some *semi-structured* (Bernard, 2006), that I recorded and transcribed, all ranged from 20 to 120 minutes. These interviews were pre-planned, and it was clear to both parties that it was an interview. Some of them, particularly with Farm Urban colleagues, were unstructured in that I would have some topics I wanted to cover but still open ended (Bernard, 2006, p. 210). With my colleagues I knew I had several chances to interview them or ask further questions, so there was ample time to let them speak freely (Bernard, 2006, p. 211). On night outs, some of my Farm Urban friends would ask jokingly, "is this going in your thesis?". It was rarely unclear to me what information was fit or unfit to include as data material. However, I would always ask at the end of the conversation if it would be okay to include it in my thesis if I found our chat relevant to my research.

The other interviews I recorded were *semi-structured* (Bernard, 2006, p. 212), but I would argue that the difference between any type of ethnographic interview is not always clear-cut. My semi-structured interviews were of people I knew I only had one chance to meet with, typically high-profile people of the community that had limited time to talk to me (Bernard, 2006, p. 212). In these situations, my questions were more focused and based on a list I had prepared, yet I did not try to exercise too much control (Bernard, 2006, p. 12) in order not to miss what the other was interested in telling me about. The semi-structured interviews were typically done in the last months of my fieldwork as I knew better who to interview and what to ask them, as my research topic became more focused towards the end.

While not all of the interviews made it directly into my thesis they were equally useful in that they gave me an overall understanding of Liverpool, its history, people's life and experience of living or working in the Baltic Triangle, and acted as a foundation for further exploration. One interview was a longer one of local historian professor Michael Parkinson who through a long carrier has written numerous books on Liverpool's history with a focus on local politics and economy. I will refer to his published work and to our conversation throughout the thesis. I also interviewed to local sisters in their 60's who has lived on the edge of the Baltic Triangle their whole life, telling me about how the area has changed during their lifetime and how they experienced growing up there. I met the director of two Community Interest Companies (CIC): the *Baltic Creative* and *Liverpool Baltic Triangle CIC,* both companies invested in shaping the development of the area as a mediator between developers and the creative community. It would have been valuable to include these organisations directly in the thesis, but in lack of space I made a conscious decision to leave it out. In addition, I went around talking to local businesses, residents, music venues and people on the streets – all of which were more casual conversations.

The interviews there done on the basis that I wanted to gain as much insight into life in Liverpool and the Baltic Triangle and the activities going on there. Particularly at the beginning of my fieldwork, I did not know which of my data would become most relevant as the research evolved both in the field and as I came home to analyse the material that derived from my experiences in Liverpool.

I also did data collection online. Farm Urban vigorously used the communication platform *Slack,* where I was included from day one with my own profile. *Slack* was where we shared ideas, articles, and kept each other updated on what each of us were doing. I also followed Canary's Twitter account, the development company which I will briefly introduce in the next chapter, to gain insight into their rhetoric and how the company was promoting the

development project. I kept myself generally updated on what was going on in the Baltic Triangle through online newspapers and various websites of Community Interest Companies in the area. The central library and city museums were good sources of information on Liverpool's history. This data became useful to me in understanding the city and made me reflect on how history has shaped Liverpool's economy, politics and culture.

Clarifications, limitations, and ethical considerations

Before I came to Liverpool I was interested in studying particular forms of urban farming (hydroponics and aquaponics) and human engagement with it, and Farm Urban's understanding of future food production. I was prepared to not stick rigorously to this topic but let my experiences guide me as well as follow what my informants found important in their work lives at Farm Urban. This outlook brought me down a path slightly different than what I had originally prepared for. I decided to follow the unfolding relationship between stakeholders with interests in the Baltic Triangle, more specifically a private development company and grassroot actors, and their views on urban futures. Farm Urban became my point of entry to this topic and most of my ethnography comes from time spent with my colleagues. This is where I gained access, and for many months I treated their work as the main focus in my research. It took three months before I started interviewing other actors in the area and so I expanded my research to include them.

In addition to data collection among the grassroot I also conducted an interview with the director of the development company, what anthropologist Laura Nader (1972) calls "studying up". It involves studying the powerful and not just those that can be considered marginalised. This brought me valuable insight to how the company viewed their role as an actor of change and transformation in the Baltic Triangle and I believe shaped the direction I decided to take in my analysis.

Chapter 4, as mentioned in the thesis outline, is based on a longer interview I did with community artist Tristan. He became a key informant, and whom I in some respects have treated as a spokesperson for what he sees partially as the Baltic Triangle's dispossessed artistic community. I want to clarify that I do not think he represent a whole community or *one* unified view of the world, but I have presented and analysed his perspective as another voice of grassroot projects.

I hesitated to invite myself to meetings where the co-founders met with collaborators outside Farm Urban. While I got to tag along to some of them as a silent participant, I believe it was not always suited to join meetings where I did not have an active role. I suspect that merely sitting there and observing and writing in my notebook would make the 'outsider' subjects uncomfortable and perhaps not speak as freely as they would otherwise, perhaps compromising the meeting. This was my own caution. On a couple of occasions, I asked to come along, and I would tag along when invited, but mostly I did not. Sometimes I would ask my colleague who had participated what the meeting was about and would gratefully always receive some sort of overview.

As an anthropology student I was prepared to feel like the odd one out, which I also often did. It was not because I did not feel at home or included, but because my research was very different and unusual from the others in Farm Urban. Since several of my colleagues were doing research themselves, albeit in a different field, I wanted my own research to be valuable to Farm Urban. It was something I did not completely come to terms with, but I helped out in any other way that I could, which doubled as my own participant observation.

None of my informants wanted anonymization, so I have not done so fully to hide their identities. Several of my colleagues were very positive to be mentioned with full name, but I have still chosen to use pseudonyms as a general consideration. All names have been changed except for the Baltic Triangle's spaces and places, Farm Urban, the Baltic Farm project, all the development companies mentioned except for Canary, and public profiles Jayne Casey and community artist Tristan. I have not included data that I have deemed too sensitive, such as some informants' private opinions or speculations that I was told was confidential.

As I was conducting my fieldwork, Britain under prime minister Theresa May was in an uncertain political position – in the process of potentially leaving the European Union. It did not practically affect my research to any noticeable degree, but I occasionally discussed Brexit with friends and colleagues.

I ended up writing about 'community', so a question one might ask is: what about the local resident community? What about minority groups, as Liverpool has one of the oldest black communities in the country? (McIntyre-Brown, 2001, p. 57). What about the families and the children, or the issue of poverty and marginalised groups? My position as a young, white, female, single student affected how I constructed my field, and I believe in general affects the way I perceive the world. My time was mostly spent together with my Farm Urban colleagues, all white and grown up in England, and relatively young, ranged from 22 to 40

years old. Age-wise I found myself somewhere in the middle. Only Peter was married with three children. In that respect we were a homogeneous group with similar interests, political views, and life status. I believe this narrowed my horizon to include the work life of a young generation of creatives in the Baltic Triangle. The other reason my focus ended up where it did, despite writing about community, is that again, I came to Liverpool to study Farm Urban, aquaponics and urban farming, and social entrepreneurship. Family life or local residents did not seem relevant to my topic at the time. It was not until later that I decided to pursue what I did. Another reason why I have not included local residents, except for one case, is because of access. Up until the last couple of years (with the newly developed residential schemes, mostly students) the area has had few residents except some social housing on the edge of the Baltic Triangle. However, I fully acknowledge their presence and their resignation and (dis)interest in the development that was happening in their neighbourhood. The few residents residing on the edge of the Baltic was not thematically relevant as urban development was not originally on my research agenda. I did talk to local residents to hear their view of the developments that were happening, but most were sceptic and even hostile upon being approached by me. At the time it was not the difficulty of access that decided my choice but my anthropological interest. At the end of my fieldwork, however, and particularly after I arrived back in Oslo, I felt it could be interesting to include the local residents' perspective more than I have, despite the difficulty in access. I also believe that their scepticism and resignation, and lack of information on new real estate developments, which they communicated to me, tells us something about their marginalisation and invisibility in the larger scheme of urban development. Some of them had been forced to move to housing on a different street as their house was being demolished. A different study could have looked at Liverpool's remaining 'invincible cracks' of marginalised groups and their treatment by local government and private real estate investment.

PLANTING SEEDS

Community gatherings and cook-out evenings will be at the centre of this project, providing a sense of community and wellbeing that will enhance the balance between physical and mental wellness.

- From the Baltic Farm vision document. (Baltic Farm Liverpool, 2019).

This chapter explore how Farm Urban imagine their urban future through one particular community project in the Baltic Triangle. The project encapsulates important questions around what it means to be a member of society whose wellbeing, social connection, and sense of belonging matters to the subjects who engage in community activities. In the context of the lived reality of cities, what are peoples' different needs, and how can they be met? I will attempt to answer this question from the perspective of Farm Urban and the project participants by looking at how values manifest themselves in speech and action. Their idea of what a good life in the city entails encompasses building a sense of community grounded in place. At the same time, their activities are transient in nature as their visions rub up against powerful interests with their own stakes in shaping urban futures.

A MEANWHILE SPACE

The big Anglican cathedral towers in the background. It is a crisp Saturday morning in March and I am standing at the site of the planned *Canary Street Development Project* looking out at the five acres of weeds, wild meadow flowers and bushes in the otherwise empty landscape. The whole site is walled in by a two-meter-high wooden fence with cars rushing past on the other side, their sound muffled by the enclosure. The enclosure also makes it difficult for outsiders to see the space nor the eight large sycamore trees in the south east corner that have managed to survive in the Baltic Triangle's otherwise rough concrete landscape. Three years from now it will all look different.

I am curious to know what the site will look like when finished so I scroll down the articles I can find online. The developers call it a 'regeneration site', to which they mean that

after decades of being empty the property is to be given new life; revitalised, and transformed. The computer-generated images are clear, but it is still hard to imagine the magnitude of the development project. I see images of the planned Canary project featuring several high-rise buildings – the highest being 18 storeys – and a linear park, the whole scheme situated just on the edge of the Baltic Triangle, connecting China Town, Ropewalks (city centre), and the Georgian Quarter. The text informs me that the final scheme will consist of apartments, townhouses, commercial space for shops, restaurants and bars; office space, a hotel, underground parking, and a linear park. But not yet. While the Canary developers are waiting for final planning permission from the city council, the developers are looking to do something on the site – to fill it with activities or a small project that will enhance the scheme's overall vision. The announcement went out on their website:

> CALLING ALL ARTISTS, INNOVATORS & CREATIVE THINKERS. We're not waiting until the final brick is down to introduce creativity, collaboration and excitement. While the development is in progress, we're opening [the project] up to you, inviting proposals for temporary creative use. (GGP, n.d. a)

In comes the *Baltic Farm*, a temporary creative food project consisting of an urban farm and cultural event space. The idea took shape when Farm Urban met Naomi Baker, a young woman in her 20's with a creative background in arts. At the time of my fieldwork she was working as Canary's community advocate, trying to establish good relationships between Canary and the Baltic Triangle's local residents. It was after all in their backyards the new major development scheme would be built. In the new partnership with Farm Urban she would act as creative director on the Baltic Farm and focus on events, workshops and collaboration with the local artistic community, whilst still working as Canary's community advocate.

Farm Urban and Naomi teamed up with restauranteur Leo Holmes, who with 20 years of experience from the hospitality industry would be creative director of all food and beverage output. Since the project to a large degree would evolve not just around growing food but also preparing, selling and hosting events around food, Leo would bring much valued expertise. Farm Urban, in turn, would bring their knowledge on urban farming, community engagement, and collaboration networks into the project. To the Farm Urban crew, the Baltic Farm project would be a good way to combine their passion for urban farming with their mission to engage people in sustainable food practices.
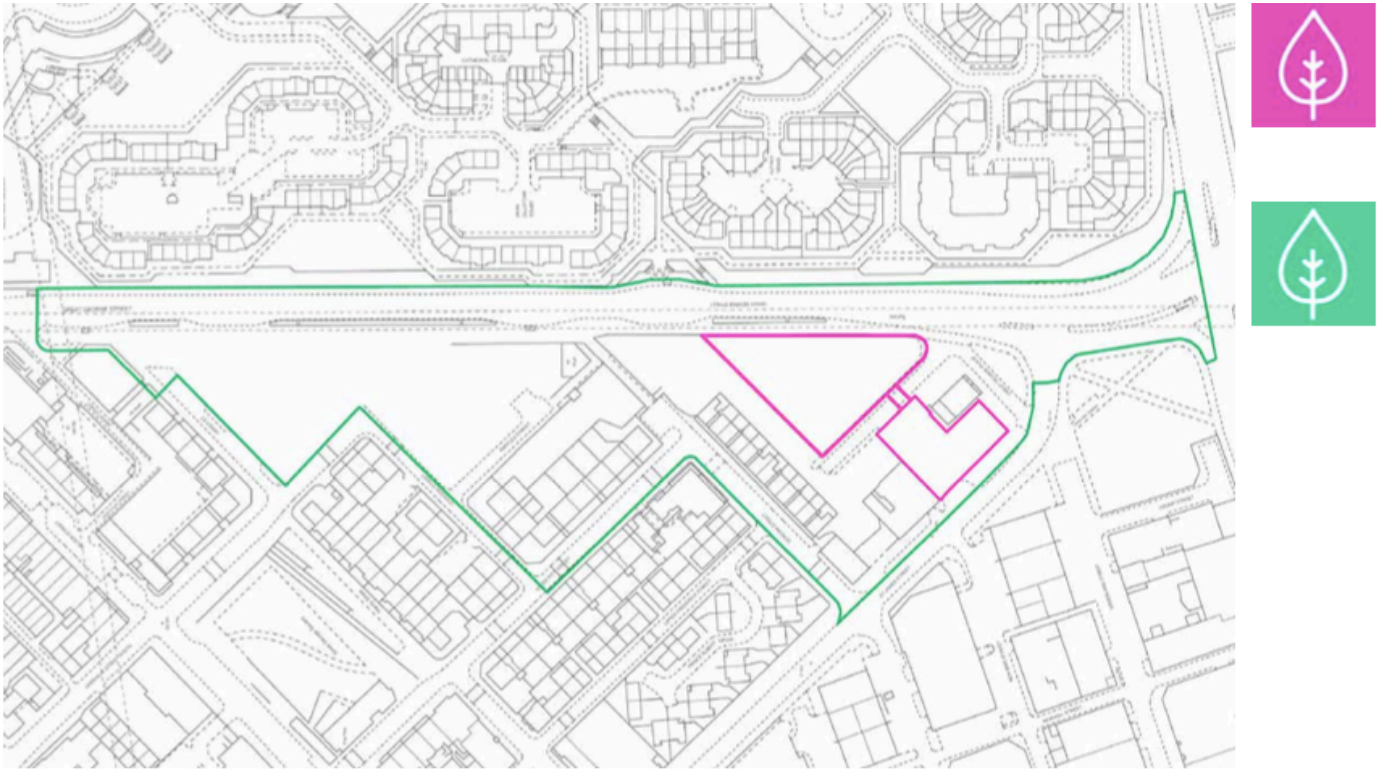
Figure 3: Canary Street property in green, Baltic Farm site in pink. Source: The Baltic Farm (2019)

Figure 4: Image of the planned Canary Street Development. Source:The Great George St. Project (2020c)

Peter, Farm Urban's co-founder, would act as the managing director of the Baltic Farm, bringing with him the Farm Urban team to oversee the practical vertical and in-soil farming. The collaboration between Farm Urban, Naomi and Leo was shaping up to be an exciting one, each partner bringing with them their own set of expertise and knowledge.

Canary had given the Baltic Farm project their full vote of confidence:

> [The Canary Street Development Project] is committed to support The Baltic Farm and we will continue to encourage it to grow and empower the surrounding communities and businesses alike. (The Baltic Farm Liverpool, 2019).

The whole Canary Street property measures five acres in total, about 20.200 square meters. Construction would commence in three connected locations with each their own timeframe. In a rough estimate, phase 1 was planned to be completed within one year; phase 2 completed within the next two years; and phase 3 within three years. The agreement was that Canary would provide the land and the funding to build the Baltic Farm in phase 3. This meant that for three years, the site would be at Farm Urban, Naomi and Leo's disposal to set up and run the Baltic Farm as a temporary 'creative food and culture project'.

What would happen to the farm after the end of three years when the developers would take back the site? That is a question I will not attempt to answer a priori. Neither can I describe the construction process of the Canary project nor of the Baltic Farm, as neither took place during my fieldwork. Instead, I sketch out the planning, organising and the community events that we held which were supposed to lead up to the opening of the Baltic Farm. With these ethnographic accounts I hope to show what valuable use of the temporary site in the urban landscape entailed for the grassroot. For these next sections, there is an underlying question to keep in mind. *If you had a space in the middle of the city to do and to fill with anything you like, what would it be?*

SHARING VISIONS: THE PLANNING SESSION

It happened very quickly. Once Farm Urban, Naomi and Leo had decided to do the Baltic Farm project, the timeframe from planning meetings to the expected opening was relatively short – only a few months apart. The funding would be coming straight from Canary so the money was in principle ready for contractors to be hired once Canary had received planning

permission from the city council. Excitement filled the basement, ideas were floating between us and there was a general sense of enthusiasm among my colleagues.

A month into my fieldwork I was part of the planning process that involved meetings and brainstorming sessions. One of those meetings took place in the Basement, one month before the Baltic Farm's intended opening in March. A day was set aside to give everyone in Farm Urban, including myself, an update on what Peter, Leo and Naomi had come up with so far and to further discuss and plan the project with the rest of the team. Divided into three sections, the meeting is to give the reader an idea of how the Baltic Farm was envisioned pre-construction and to show what building a sense of community entailed to those who were involved.

Visuals

A 9:30 start a Wednesday morning, eight of us from Farm Urban have come into work as usual, but today we are joined by Naomi and Leo. There is a slightly different energy in the Basement this morning, as if the ordinary work day has been injected with excitement over the possibility of a whole new project. After everyone have been sorted out with drinks we gather around the stand-up desk to get our first visual of the Baltic Farm. Standing at the end of the desk, Peter takes us through a PowerPoint presentation on the current plans of the project with slides showing carefully planned drawings. The presentation informs us that the Baltic Farm's biggest construction is called the community canopy (to be installed by professional contractors) made up by a large, spacious $300m^2$ greenhouse-like construction with flexibility to be adjusted into section to fit community gatherings such as concerts, weddings, and movie-nights. It looks inviting with greenery, canopies and lanterns hanging across the high ceiling. One part of the space will be dedicated to a canteen/café. The presentation shows a seating area with long-tables and benches which is well thought through; Leo points out is sitting down to eat together at long communal tables helps initiate conversations, in contrast to your typical restaurant where individual tables do not facilitate social interaction with people you do not know. If you come to eat on the Baltic Farm, he tells us, you will end up making new friends as well as having a meal.

Onwards with the presentation, Peter tells us the site will also house a 'makers and innovators space' consisting of studios and small huts for local artists and creative makers to work and display their products. At another part of the site, metal rectangular containers will

be filled with urban farming practices: vertical hydroponic towers growing lettuce and herbs to supply local residents, restaurants, and the on-site canteen. Someone also mentions that growing in containers comes with the benefit of being easily moved after three years.

Next, we are shown drawings of a community vegetable garden and wildflower meadow which local residents and primary school children will be able to make use of. Naomi has set up a mood-board on Pinterest[7] with ideas in the form of inspirational pictures of spaces and people interactions, and invites us to add our own ideas to the board.

The excitement I felt before the meeting was only reinforced by the presentation. The concept sounded almost too good to be true. Could it be possible to transform the urban wasteland on Canary Street into this green oasis in just a few months – a space where everyone would feel welcome?

Promotion

All the planning will eventually lead up to the kick-starter campaign where the project will be officially announced with a promotional-video. In that regard, Naomi has consulted a friend of hers who professionally makes video advertisements and promotional videos for companies and has agreed to potentially make one for the Baltic Farm.

To get an idea about her friend's previous work, Naomi shows us a couple of sample videos – one is an advertisement for a sports-company. The short video is a flux of fast-moving images; the scene jumping from one to the other every half a second, never focusing on one single point but moving along with intense, pumped-up music. Once the video has finished we all turn quiet. I break the silence by blurting out that it hurt my head slightly from the intensity of it all. Luckily, Hans rescues my boldness by saying that the vibe of the video feels completely wrong. While the video maker is talented, Hans says, it gives off a wrong feeling of what Farm Urban is about. Roughly half of us murmur consent to this: commercial and fast-paced will not give an accurate picture of the ethos that the Baltic Farm will be built around, quite the opposite. The farm is imagined as a tranquil, green space – an antidote to the hectic life in the city. We all agree to this. We talk around the video for a bit and Peter invites us to send him links to other example-videos of styles and moods that will better fit the farm's image.

---

[7] An online social media and image sharing platform, an "interactive web-board" where you can "pin" your interests.

Figure 5: Canary Street / Baltic Farm site. Source: Private photo.

Figure 6: Image of parts of the planned Baltic Farm. Source: Jesset (2020).

Activities

After another round of tea and coffee for everyone we move on to the brainstorming session. I soon learn it is Farm Urban's preferred method of working. It is a team exercise that Peter swears to – it brings everyone's ideas out in the open and from there we can identify and agree on the 'best' ones based on a voting system. The question that needs answering today is: 'What kind of activities we can organise at the Baltic Farm?', with the underlying question being: 'what activities can create a sense of community?'.

Peter tells us we have three time-pressed minutes to individually write down anything we can think of on colourful post-it notes in one or two words preferably, "as many ideas as you can". I realise I can imagine anything I want for the Baltic Farm and potentially have it realised in a few months' time. It feeds the excitement. What do I wish for? What is the city lacking that the Baltic Farm can provide?

After eagerly scribbling down our ideas we are ready to present them to the group. Peter explains to those of us who are new to this exercise that "just read up what you have written on the post-it and elaborate what you mean if it's not self-explanatory and place it on the wall. If someone has written a similar idea then place it next to theirs".

Simon goes first while we others listen respectfully in a semi-circle. We then move over to Hans, who reads up 'power bikes', and explains it as people can come and cycle on stationary bikes hooked up to a power supply, in that way getting a workout in a social environment while at the same time contribute with renewable energy to power the farm.

After a few rounds the white wall is full of colourful notes with a wide range of suggestions, such as open mic nights, jamming sessions, flea markets, furniture building workshop, community cooking events, and live drawing. By now we see clusters of topics starting to emerge, centred around gardening, food, music and art, workshops, education, and potential collaborators. Several of my colleagues have added names to people or businesses they think can make a good collaborating partner, widening Farm Urban's social network even further. Collaboration with individuals, entrepreneurs, companies, organisations, and other enterprises who share Farm Urban's ethos is a defining feature of Farm Urban. During my fieldwork, every single day, either Joan, Peter, or Hans, or all three of them had meetings with potential collaborators. Some were locally based, some in other parts of the country, and some in other parts of the world. Farm Urban's network literally stretched out across the globe and kept expanding every day based on their eagerness to share, learn from others who had both succeeded and failed in urban farming, and seeing how working together with

similar businesses could make Farm Urban grow their social impact. Farm Urban considered itself both local and someday, hopefully global. Growing fresh vegetables close to consumers would always be a localised practice. Knowledge, however, could be shared across the world.

Back in the planning session, Leo suggests that the farm should offer subsidised classes as not everyone can afford to pay full price for an activity. "And how about a monthly resident meeting? Then we can hear peoples' ideas and ask what kind of offers they'd like". No one is left out; from baby yoga and mum and baby retreats, to mental health classes with animals, to activities for the elderly. The last thing we do is a round of voting where each of us puts a sticker next to our favourite ideas. And with that we have taken hundreds of ideas and trimmed them down to a handful.

These ethnographic snippets from the planning meeting give us some insight into how the Baltic Farm was envisioned in its early stages and how growth to Farm Urban meant to expand their business through social networks focused on sustainability. The project was imagined to be inclusive, engaging, and empowering. The next step was to host the first community event a couple of weeks from the planning meeting to create publicity around the project and get local residents, businesses and anyone else interested engaged before the actual opening that would take place towards summer time.

THE BALTIC FARM COMMUNITY EVENT

Preparations

A Scouse accent sounds "right gang, let's do a quick briefing before we start, just to make sure everyone knows what they're doing". Peter is our leader figure but claims he does not like being 'the boss'. It suits him though, he has a certain presence that draws people in. Leo, Naomi, and the ten of us from Farm Urban gather around for the briefing on the Baltic Farm site before the visitors and volunteers arrive, and then we unload the van with all the equipment, tables, chairs and the little bits and bobs that we need for the day. We have invited friends, family members, Canary Street developers, investors, and local residents to come and join us in a day of activities.

Naomi is hanging up laminated drawings of the Baltic Farm's final look to give the visitors a visual of what the site will look like in a few months' time once it is finished. The drawings create anticipation. Can this urban landscape – empty, hidden from view by an

enclosure and reclaimed by weeds – be transformed into a green oasis in just a few months? The drawings are the same as the ones presented to us at the meeting: a huge event space in a greenhouse-like construction; a garden; trees with seating areas underneath; containers for urban hydroponic vertical farming; food stalls; and bee-hives on the roof. However, this Saturday is about getting the community engaged and spread the word about the project by doing low-key activities like litter-picking, sowing and propagating, mixing compost, and move soil.

A green flyer with the Baltic Farm's circular logo with a leaf in the middle was made specially to announce this Saturday's activities: "JOIN US. Come meet the team, find out more and tell us what you think". Community ownership – that is, asking local residents and businesses what they think – is an important aspect of the Baltic Farm. As Hans had told me earlier: "the project is for the community, not for us [at Farm Urban], that is why we have to ask them what *they* would like the space to be about". To facilitate this, Naomi has made two 'blackboards' for the visitors and volunteers to write down in colourful chalk any ideas or questions that they might have about the project.

The first thing the Farm Urban team set ourselves out to do before the volunteers arrive is to clear the site from the biggest physical impediments in the otherwise empty, but littered landscape, such as the large metal boards that lay in a pile between the trees. They had supposedly been left there from the previous development company who had big plans for the site three years ago. That was until they went bankrupt and ran off with all their investor's money, as the story went. The only living things there now is a myriad of spiders, beetles and worms that have made a home underneath the boards. And they are not happy to be disturbed. I start to pick up some of the litter around my feet before Joan interjects quickly: "just leave it for now, so the volunteers will have something to do when they get here".

A few of us from Farm Urban carry the metal boards, while trying not to squish any of the insects, over to a more secluded part of the site where they will not be seen by the visitors. Joan has decided it will look better if they are out of the way. "Let's save those boards for later though", Peter says. "We can use them for the bottoms of the raised vegetable beds".

To take down the wilderness factor slightly, we also clear weeds around the entrance gate using shovels, though it feels like the more I weed the faster it grows back. The earth worms are suddenly everywhere. I remember something I had learned in science class. "Doesn't the worm grow back if you cut it in half?" I ask Hans as we are working side by side. "They do. But that's not a reason to cut it in half!" he exclaims laughingly and makes a

cutting motion with his shovel. And then, after a couple of hours of preparatory work we are ready for the visitors to arrive.

Litter, soil, and symbolic acts of place-making

The biggest task of the day is moving soil. A few days earlier, about 20 tons of soil was dumped outside the gate of the Baltic Farm site. The plan today is that this soil then needs to be moved *inside* the gate and onto the site. It is to be used at a later time to make vegetable patches and raised beds for the vegetable garden, Peter tells me.

Twenty tons of soil, when dumped on the ground, looks about the same size as a car. Heavy too. The lucky volunteers that have started to arrive around 2 p.m. are handed a shovel or a wheelbarrow. Self-confidently I grab a shovel and start filling the barrow, but soon conclude that I might be better suited for something that requires less endurance and switch over to wheel barrowing. Turns out it is not so easy either, trying to manoeuvre it through the gate and onto the site and dump it in the growing pile that Peter and Joan have chosen. I decide that it does not matter that I fall over or tip the wheelbarrow in all kinds of wrong directions At least we have something to laugh about.

We work in an assembly-line fashion; some do the shovelling and some the transporting, everyone seem to be in high spirits. Trying not to sound negative, I ask what we are going to do with the mountain of soil at a later time: "We're putting all of the earth in this pile now, but should we not take it where it's supposed to go right now instead of moving it twice?", thinking it is 20 tons after all.

"Yeah," Joan tells me. "We're not sure where everything is going to go yet. I think we'll just dump it here for now, and then next time we'll use some of it for the vegetable beds".

"But, we'll need to move the vegetable beds again too, won't we? When the farm construction starts?"

"Yes, probably, because it's hard to tell now where they'll fit".

It was not easy to plan everything. I had to ask Peter a few days later, "why could the truck not just have dumped the earth inside the gate?", as ten men and women were wheeling and shovelling for a couple of hours. "Could we have done it in an easier way?" I ask. Peter tells me it was mostly for practical reasons as the gate was too narrow for the truck: taking down the gate and some of the fence would have been a day's work for two people with

skills, "rather than, you know, a way to engage…" I finish the sentence for him, "twenty people with no skills".

While I immediately questioned the efficiency of what we were doing, I soon realised this was not the point of our activities. It did not matter how many times we moved the soil. In the end, it would all have to go in order to make space for the big Canary development. No one knew exactly what the site would look like in a month, in a year, or in three years' time, or what precisely our efforts would amount to. But we had the encouraging images of the farm to keep us motivated and enthused, imagining what the space could become while we worked on the land. Moving the soil gave us something tangible to do on the day. The transience of our activities could be seen as a waste of time, or it could be seen as symbolic acts for the volunteers to do while waiting for the 'proper' Baltic Farm to be constructed. Today we were putting in the work, side by side, embodied and socially engaging.

Apart from the Baltic Farm team and our families and friends, most of the other volunteers had showed up from the surrounding area or the local business community out of interest in the project. The Canary developers had also come to the event and mingled with everybody else with a definite air of egalitarianism. In fact, I had not realized they had been present that day until someone from Farm Urban mentioned it later. In other words, they did not stand out much unless you knew who they were. That the developers showed up was undoubtedly important for them in terms of what the event represented: to show that they cared about the local community and to show support in the project.

Naomi's friend, the camera man, goes around the whole day filming people, particularly the children, engaging in various activities. This will later be put together into the Baltic Farm's promotional video. It will be displayed on the farm's website and on social media, and Canary will be able to use it for their own promotion of the Canary Street project. The video will demonstrate what the developers claim are important values to them, according to their Tweets: vibrant green spaces, creativity, and a true sense of place and community (GGP, n.d. b).

The volunteers that are not engaged in moving soil help out with litter picking – another time-consuming task. All around the site, litter is pretty much everywhere; glass and plastic bottles, cans, plastic bags, a surprising number of single shoes, children's toys, diapers and smelly mystery bags which content I do not want to know. Farm Urban have supplied trash bags and litter picking tools. We also use gloves, but it does not stop me from carrying the most questionable items with outstretched arms in front of me with a sceptical wrinkle on my nose.

41

Sweet looking kids are playing on the site, getting dirt all over them by mixing compost. Fredrick from Farm Urban are looking out for the kids while the adults are watching fondly and chatting among themselves. Fredrick shows them the trick behind it which is to take one part soil and one equal part horse manure and mix it in a bucket. The kids are over the moon with this task and it is by far the most popular activity. Something so simple yet generating so much joy. It is the perfect picture for the camera man.

Together with Camille, Erasmus student from Belgium, I am in charge of the propagating station where everyone have the opportunity to sow the Baltic Farm's first seeds. Farm Urban has chosen basil and kale for the occasion. The kids get to write their name on a sticker which they attach to their own tray, the intention being they can feel part of the process and on the next Baltic Farm event see the progress of *their* basil and kale and trace the plants journey. It was a simple activity but embedded in it was Farm Urban's core values: engage and inspire people in sustainable food production, health and nutrition.

Around 4 p.m., Leo starts setting up for lunch: a proper Mexican fiesta. There is something about food that acts as a social glue more than anything else: a tortilla chip dipped in salsa; a hearty stew with beans and rice; beer and wine for the adults – nothing tastes better after a couple of hours spent out in fresh air. The whole day encompassed sensing, thinking, feeling, and moving bodies.

Figure 7: Baltic Farm event. Mixing compost. Source: Baltic Farm Liverpool (n.d.)

Figure 8: Baltic Farm event. Picking chamomile. Source: Baltic Farm Liverpool (n.d.)

"A nice little story"

Since the Baltic Farm event, Peter has been quite busy so we do not have a moment to sit down together until two weeks later. We go for lunch in Siren, a local place in the Baltic Triangle, and since we have been there a couple of times before we order our favourite warm halloumi salad.

"I didn't get a chance to talk to you after the Baltic Farm open day event. How do you think it went?" I ask Peter.

> I was actually very pleased with it, because of the weather, and it was super short notice, just a week to tell people, so I thought the turnout was really good. I liked the whole vibe of it as well. It felt nice. It felt authentic. And I was actually surprised by the number of people that showed up and wanted to be a part it.

"Yes, I think we were well over 50 people", I comment.

"Yeah. And I also thought it was quite good to get local people and developers on the site together, so that they could see what we are bringing in, and that [local residents] can see that [the developers] are bothered".

"What was it that you were hoping to get out of the event?" I ask.

> I think it was just… One: to let people know who we are and what our current intention for it is. And also, let [people] ask questions; 'what do you want to see here, what are your ideas?' Because I don't want [the surrounding community] to feel [the Baltic Farm] is just done *to* the area or we've just decided that 'this is just what we are going do'. I think it needs some elements of that but also, I want to keep it as open as possible for [people's input].

Peter continues:

> I think the important thing is that the Baltic Farm is open to suggestion, and the Baltic Farm can in some way carry on into the final [Canary] development. So as much as we get into the farm now, we can hopefully translate that into the final scheme in some way.

Peter was fully aware of the time-scale of the Baltic Farm project, but hoped that the sense of community being fostered there would be included in the final Canary development scheme, one way or another. I then ask Peter: "The actual work that got done that day, was that very important?"

"The actual physical work?"

"Yes".

"Yeah, I think it was actually equally, like, practically physically important, but then actually probably more so… symbolic. But it is like, yeah, that 20 tons of earth that needed to be moved – ". I interrupt him:

"Was it 20 ton?!"

> They said it was, but I think it was more like 15. And then all that litter that needed picking. But it is kind of the way that it was being done that was important. Everyone got stuck in, you know, it shows what you can do with lots of people that are all bought in to the same *vision*, and working together. And then also the food at the end, I just think it was a really nice little…

He thinks for a moment, "story… and day".

I agree with Peter: "It was. And such nice food. And beer. The perfect ending".

> It felt good, didn't it? And all the activities were finished just in time for [the food]. It was a real sense of achievement. Nothing was left, you know…what we set out to do that day we did, and we had nice food and a beer, and a conversation after.

> I think the Baltic Farm as a project here will just be amazing for this community and this space, and for Farm Urban. It allows us [Farm Urban] to come out of the Basement and be more visible and start to engage with a lot more people.

The Baltic Farm event was about community ownership and involvement through socially engaged and embodied activities, and Peter felt the first Baltic Farm event had been quite successful. It was practical work, but as he said, it was the way that it was being done that was important – everyone bought into the same vision.

THE SECOND BALTIC FARM EVENT

I was not easy to say when the Baltic Farm would be up and running. On a short pre-visit to Liverpool in December 2018 I learned the opening was intended for March 2019. It soon became clear that the farm would not be ready to open in early spring after all. This was the beginning of a series of postponements. The hold-up was to a large degree due to a lack of

clear signal from the city council to start construction on the Canary Street property in phase 1. And without Canary, there would be no Baltic Farm. While Canary was working on attaining planning approval from the council; Farm Urban, Naomi, and Leo decided to regularly host events on the site to keep the community engaged and hopes up.

For various reasons there was only one other Baltic Farm event during my fieldwork. It was hosted a Saturday in July, 4 ½ months after the first event, which it resembled in most respects. It was announced through social media and word to mouth some weeks in advance. The message on flyer was similar to the previous one: "Join us, come meet the team and get your hands dirty!" along with the farm's logo. The Baltic Farm also got media publicity as Peter was interviewed during the event by a local radio station, telling them about the project.

Volunteers have showed up on the site to spend the day doing physical activities like litter-picking, decorating bee-hives with potato stencils and colourful paint, weaving with yarn and branches, and sowing seeds. We also make raised beds for planting vegetables in. My job today is to serve the fresh, homemade ice tea that Naomi has brought for the volunteers. The jugs make out a delicate presentation with different flavours, colours, and stalks of fresh mint. The warmer spring weather has caused a rapid growth of weeds and wild flowers around the site. As part of minding the drink station I pick chamomile with the kids – it is growing in abundance on the pile of soil we had moved on the last Baltic Farm event.

I am hesitant: "Are these not daisies, no?" I have never seen chamomile before, let alone foraged for it. The kids are certain and Naomi reassure me it is most definitely chamomile. I learn its sweet and distinct fragrance. We collect the flowers in wicker baskets and Naomi shows me how to brew pots of fresh herbal-infused tea to be served along with the ice tea. Every activity that we do, even brewing tea, is thought through to reflect Farm Urban's ethos, in this case sustainable, fresh, and healthy, using our bodies and our senses.

More litter have accumulated on top of the litter and recycling that we had already collected on the last Baltic Farm event in February and not yet removed. Surprised, I ask Peter why it is still lying there. He explains it as unpractical and time-consuming to remove it from the site, and it is not enough trash to fill a skip and drive it to the tip. Instead, we have to clear the site of litter again. This time the Baltic Farm team, including myself, clear the worst of it before the volunteers arrive. Perhaps it would have been discouraging for the volunteers to show up and clear the litter they had already cleared 4 ½ months previous.

As we work I talk with Fredrick and Noah about the fact that we just keep moving things back and forth. We have a little joke about "that's the Farm Urban way"; moving things from A to B because it is what makes most sense to Peter and Joan at the time.

I ask Joan, "why are we moving this pile of litter again now, making a new pile that's only ten meters away?"

"This trash is right in the eyeshot for when people walk in the gate, I think we should just get it out of the way". It would not look good, she concludes, for which I have to agree with her.

While minding the drink station I have the chance to talk to some of the volunteers. One is a woman in her 50's who is interested in the idea of urban farming and is telling me she has visited another place in Liverpool that does hydroponic farming. As we are standing there chatting we look out across the weed-covered site now teeming with activities.

"You know what would be perfect for this space right here?" she asks enthusiastically and points. "Apple trees. I can really picture an apple orchard."

I carefully try to explain that apple trees will not make sense in a meanwhile project of three years. Her idea of what the empty urban landscape could become was not compatible with large scale development projects, and it illustrated that neither the Baltic Farm's temporary existence nor the contrasting permanence and magnitude of the big Canary development project was not well known to everyone that day.

Around 3:30 p.m. Naomi starts setting up the food; fancy looking Italian pizzas and a massive tapas-spread with vegan food she has made herself: falafel, beetroot hummus, potato salad, olives, berries, and fruit – an impressive and delicate social media friendly presentation. People help themselves and mingle around; we have compostable plates, napkins and utensils. Like the last event, food, drinks and music create a nice ending to a physical day's work for everyone that have participated.

WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED COMMUNITY?

Sometime after the first Baltic Farm event, I asked my friend Mat, who had been a hero shovelling soil, what he thought of the community day and the project.

> I think the potential is there for something really cool. (…) They would need a cool café or farm shop. If they made it a creative space, had evening events with chilled live music. There is a massive gap in Liverpool's creative community since 'Mellow Mellow' closed. A hippy, veggie, vegan, outdoor, camping kind of crew. Most of my friends are in that bracket. If there was somewhere for volunteers to seriously farm and hang out and have low key, music, arty evening vibes and help sell great food to

Liverpool people – then it could really work. But if it doesn't have evening or creative hangout-vibes, then I don't think the reward is great enough to create a strong and reliable community.

"What does 'creating a strong and reliable community' mean?"

Creating a sense of community is about having somewhere to hang out that isn't home. Somewhere you feel comfortable, know people, have a communal activity or interest, can eat, and ideally drink. Like it's at the [Climbing Hangar]. Or the Kazimier back in the early days. They have a great community.

From the ethnography presented in this chapter and my friend Mat's last formulations, it becomes clear that we are talking about *values*, which we can recall, to Graeber is "our ideas about what is ultimately important in life (…)", and they derive from non-commodified labour (2013, p. 224). Value is what people hold in high esteem (Graeber 2001). In everything that I participated in with Farm Urban, certain values were always the core from which they acted from. The planning session and the Baltic Farm events I partook in (and all other work by Farm Urban) was a demonstration of values through their speech, actions, and imaginaries. The values they stressed were those of physical and mental wellbeing, environmental sustainability, belonging and social connection, and creative outlet. Their creative efforts (work) was not only non-commodified, but non-alienated and non-capitalist. The obvious one is the volunteer work on the Baltic Farm, but also the activities on the finished farm, which would use the surplus, if there would be any, to reinvest in activities for the community. In addition, activities such as the power bikes Hans was suggesting, harvesting your own vegetables from the garden that you yourself had sowed, making something in a workshop to take home (for a small fee), or eating a communal meal, was non-alienated. The whole project was encouraged to be built by embedding social relations into its fabric and having people to take ownership of the process and see the product of the work they put in.

The values realised through the Baltic Farm activities are perhaps not immediately associated with a market economy. After all, there were no wages involved, and no obvious relation between shovelling soil and economic value. These observations bring about two points that will be expanded in subsequent chapters. I have based the first one on Tsing (2013) who argue how capitalist value come into being through using non-capitalist social relations to create the skills and resources it needs to function. I will attempt to show the link

between the Baltic Farm subjects' (grassroots) embodied and socially imbued activities and visions with the private development company they were collaborating with.

The second point involves the grassroots' activities in relation to a ubiquitous understanding of economic life as only related to a capitalist economic model (Gibson-Graham, 2006). The Baltic Farm activities showcased a different mode of being and occupying urban spaces in terms of what place-making and community meant. In the beginning of this chapter I asked: what are people's different needs in the context of urban living, and how can they be met? I have attempted to answer this question from the perspective of those engaged in the Baltic Farm project. The farms' brochure sums it up broadly and in their own words:

> *Our vision is to create a socially-transformative, community-embedded urban farm*
> *and cultural events space that and connects our local community, builds a local food*
> *network, fills homes with fresh local food and creates engaging and meaningful jobs.*
> (The Baltic Farm Liverpool, 2019).

The project was a way to put visions into action, except not completely on their own terms. For mixed with a wish to create a socially-transformative community-embedded farm was an awareness (to most) of the grassroots' temporary possession of the urban site. Yet, it did not seem discouraging to Farm Urban and the others who participated. Through the Baltic Farm project, 'possible lives' and futures were imagined by. The project was saturated with hope and optimism about what could happen next. But it also came with the consequences of contributing to a growth – whatever that meant to those involved – that contradicted their own vision. I will explore this in chapter 5 and 6. First, I shall turn to my interview with community artist Tristan and his perspective of the Baltic Triangle's development, how he sees his role in shaping it, and what art projects can tell us about the meaning of 'community'.

4:

THE GATE-KEEPER OF COOL

The industrial estate of the Baltic Triangle makes up a multiplicity of contested spaces where visions of urban futures collide and diverge, particularly manifested through projects. Based on a longer interview with Tristan, a local community artist, I will take a closer look at the frictions that arise in the meeting between different actors that all have an interest in growth, development, community, and the futures of their urban lives.

THE BEAUTY IN DERELICTION

When I started working with Farm Urban I did not know much about the Baltic Triangle other than the fact that Farm Urban's headquarters was situated in that part of Liverpool. After having spent most of my time in this area during my fieldwork I could not help but be fascinated by its rough edges mixed with cool hang-outs, and the extreme optimism and pride in the creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation that seemed to be flourishing among those who worked there. The Baltic Triangle is the new emerging "Livercool", (Parkinson, 2019, p. 145), and typically described as 'hip and trendy', and 'up-and-coming' by the media, such as in national newspaper *The Times* putting Baltic Triangle on the list of "20 coolest places to live in Britain" in 2017 (Whateley, 2017).

     The Baltic Triangle is an eclectic mix of the old and the new. It is not hard to imagine what the area used to look like 30 years ago – an empty and derelict industrial estate. Nor is it too hard to imagine what it used to look like when the Baltic Triangle was an integral part of the city after the war. Liverpool was not doing very well financially at the time, but saw a short-lived rise in manufacturing jobs brought around by new government policies in the 1950s and 60s. The factories were in use, as it had been described to me from elderly residents working in them; and there were schools, a hospital, pubs, and shops to cater for the local community. However, it did not last long as a global recession hit soon after (Parkinson, 2019, p. 23). During the period of austerity that reached its peak in the 1980s, the Baltic

Triangle lost most of its residents. The last couple of years it has seen increasing investment in apartment block housing, particularly student accommodation.

Despite these developments, the Baltic Triangle is still a place for small and medium sized independent businesses, both old and new. Some traditional businesses such as mechanics, metal beaters, repair shops and independent retail units has managed to survive the rough 80s, working out from garages or converted warehouses. Kay Bee Door Centre is one of the oldest local business in the area, and for about 30 years has been conducting retail from one of the large industrial sheds on Jamaica Street. I stopped by on my way home from the Basement one day to have a chat. The picture they painted me of the area some 20 years ago was stark: prostitution, and crime that made you think twice before you left your van unsupervised outside the shop. Tommy, one of the clerks, described it as he remembered: "It was a war zone… not literally, but… it was terrible. Just derelict. It was a ghost town".

This was not unique to the Baltic Triangle. The whole of Liverpool was facing deep financial and socio-economic problems at the time, but since 1990s slowly started to turn around (Parkinson, 2019). In Liverpool in general, this urban regeneration took a top-down approach with national and EU government sponsored regeneration programs (Parkinson, 2019, p. 46). The Baltic Triangle was the exception – it was a transformation through a bottom-up process growing organically from the grassroot. In general, there was no public intervention but instead a regeneration initiative led by the private sector (Parkinson 2019, p. 145). With only three-quarters of a mile in size, the Baltic Triangle now houses over 500 firms across 30 venues, employing over 4000 people. Most of these businesses are in the digital and creative industry, such as publishing, IT, advertising, music, graphics, fashion, gaming, software and computer services, and cultural and leisure sectors (Parkinson, 2019, p. 144). How did the Baltic Triangle go from being a neglected and derelict industrial urban space to become the regenerated cultural hub it is today where social entrepreneurs like Farm Urban have made a temporary home?

Figure 10: The Baltic Triangle. Typical industrial sheds, Anglican Cathedral in the background. New developments to the left. Source: Private photo.

Figure 9: Baltic Triangle, typical street. Source: Private photo.

As stated, it was a bottom-up process. The first people to see potential in the Baltic Triangle were the artists. I was being told from several sources that Jayne Casey, who is still considered quite the Liverpool icon, had been an important forerunner in bringing arts and culture to Liverpool and particularly to the Baltic Triangle. To avoid the artists being pushed out as developers and banks were increasingly buying up properties, Jayne decided to buy a part of Greenland Street with money from one of her first art projects to then dedicate back to the arts. Jayne had stated in an interview that "I knew that all the property was in public ownership, so I started haranguing people to give us this area, and that we would put money into a trust for the artists and then as development happens, we will never get thrown out" (Frankie, 2019). What Jayne described was a typical process of gentrification, which she aimed to stop, as she had experienced it before: "the area takes off because of our creativity but then the developers move in, and then you have to leave" (Frankie, 2019). Jayne stated she saw "beauty in dereliction" (Frankie, 2019). And so had increasingly many others.

DIRTY ARTS AND MEANWHILE SPACES

A day in May, I find myself sitting in a popular coffee-spot housed in the typical converted industrial shed, waiting for Tristan. After half-an hour and with no answer to my last email I come to believe he has forgotten our meeting. Disappointed, I walk back to the Basement around the corner, only to receive an apologetic email 5 minutes later that has me running back to the café. With his *laizzes faire* attitude, I learn that bohemians are not controlled by time, at least not from the perspective of a Norwegian.

From reading about Tristan online I had seen his photo so I recognize him at once. His scruffy suit, bowler hat and blacked rimmed glasses are characteristic features – you could say he is a cool-looking fellah. He greets me with a big smile and throughout our chat his good humour and easy laugh is infectious.

Born in the south of England, Tristan moved to Liverpool almost 40 years ago and now consider himself a true Scouser – without the accent. From the time he arrived in the city in 1982, Tristan had worked on art projects and with what he called "hard-to-reach communities" like long-term unemployed youth in other parts of Liverpool. As his work dried up in that area he came to the Baltic Triangle about ten years ago when there was nothing around except for the art-institution Jayne Casey had set up. He tells me:

Liverpool in the 1980s when I turned up was a very dark place, it seems like that now, suffering from epidemics of heroin and a lot of long-term unemployment going on. Large areas had all of their industrial base taken away. And there was no work anywhere in those areas. And areas like [the Baltic Triangle] that's just on the edge of town was sort of forgotten about. And it was very easy, anyone could come along and basically throw up [a building] … I call it *Thatcher-techture* -

I laugh at his phrase as he continues: "as in Margaret Thatcher's legacy. It looks like sort of architecture for people with shoulder pads and so on. Not terribly sophisticated or adventurous, but somehow 'blingy', trying to show off and it doesn't really work now". I understood that while Liverpool was suffering at the time, not all intervention was equally well received, particularly those which did not fit his image of an authentic Liverpool.

Then, after inquiring about his coffee that has failed to materialise and a slight tangent about a French documentary about Liverpool he had starred in, we come back to his story.

One of the first things Tristan did when he came to Liverpool was to organise a street festival. He then persuaded John 'the shed-man' to lend him a warehouse. "You know the one?" he asks. "It's the one that now has the radio station with a lot of construction. At the time it was empty".

"I think so".

"It was being used by builders who'd been kicked out of their houses by their wives and needed somewhere to sleep. They were sleeping there plus I think there'd been a crop, someone who was growing dope in there", he tells me matter-of-factly. "So I took it over, I converted it a little bit, gave it to artists. We did artistic activities in there for about a year, then John wanted it back". It was a meanwhile space he had access to, knowing it was temporary.

Now in his 50's, Tristan has memories of a time when the first artists moving into the area had made a home in the Baltic Triangle but had been pushed out by the new creative and digital industry. He made a clear distinction between people in that industry and what he called the 'pure artists'. In an article in *Vice,* Tristan tells the reporter what summed up this sentiment:

In Liverpool, the culture has always grown in the cracks (…). But what we've seen happen since Liverpool was the Capital of Culture in 2008 is a land grab that has resulted in these cracks being polyfillered in. There's not many people left in the Triangle who could be called a *pure artists*. It's mostly app developers and web

designers. I mean no disrespect to these guys, but other artists have had to move back into their garages to work. (Horne, 2014, my emphasis).

Tristan separated the two categories of creatives. What was the difference? He did not explicitly elaborate in the article, but it was clear that while the pure artists had temporary access to urban spaces, the app-developers and web-designers had found a more permanent home. Similar to Jayne Casey, Tristan wanted to do something about the fact that the first artists were being pushed out of the area in the early 2000s. He tells me that "[t]here were artists in some of these [warehouses], but the rent went up and up and up, and eventually they were pushed out". I comment that it was a slightly different Triangle now then what Tristan had first encountered back in the 80s, to which he agrees:

> yes, [the artists] had just started. There were painters and … makers … But they were not making enough money, whereas the core creative industries; the video makers; the people involved in the commercial advertising and the promotion world … where able to raise the funds, they were getting the contracts with industry. So, to some extent, I saw the arts being moved out of the area at that point and I began to look for *meanwhile spaces* to rectify this (…) as a representative for the dirty arts.

"Dirty arts?" I asks, although I have a faint idea.

"Dirty arts are…" He pauses for a moment. "They're artists that use paint, who need to cut – this is why it's dirty – people that need to cut things up and make smells and leave saw dust in the area; glue; solvents; and make loud noises," – Tristan demonstrates by making a drilling sound with his voice and continues: "grinding noises and stuff like this. Which doesn't sit well with people who want to stare at a screen and 'tappy tappy' away", he ends, imitating someone typing on a laptop. I look self-consciously over at my open MacBook on the table. Then Tristan goes on to say that they too, are "being beautifully creative, but in a very different manner, so we needed spaces for [the pure artists]". In other words, they were two quite different manners of working; one embodied and tangible, the other less so. The fast-growing digital sector that Tristan claimed had pushed out the 'pure artists' worked in a different matter, tapping on their computers and staring at the screen, in his words. In contrast, the 'pure artists' made art with their bodies – it was a practical way of working: 'dirty', noisy, and messy. The same could be said about the work we did on the Baltic Farm community events, shovelling soil, mixing manure, and smelling and tasting chamomile, to name a few. The whole process of place-making and value-creation by the grassroots in the Baltic Triangle was physical, sensory, social, and rooted.

The two forms of working also created two different products: the grassroot was mostly concerned about creating *values* through non-commoditised creative efforts, such as a sense of community, wellbeing and so on – that had use-value to those involved. The digital and creative industry, in contrast, produced commodities for the market, thereby having both an economic exchange-value and a use-value. As Tristan had commented in the beginning of our talk, while the pure artists had trouble making money on their dirty arts, the video makers and 'promotional people', in contrast, managed to get contracts with the industry because that was where there was money to be made. In other words, economic profitability was the determining factor of the activities' viability and determined who got to have a permanent place and who was 'given' meanwhile spaces. The industry were the ones who could afford to pay the rent. In addition, the artists that Tristan was talking about had different *needs* than the ones 'staring at their computers':

> [The 'pure' artists] don't need heating, they don't care too much about facilities as long as they've got space of their own … That is why *meanwhile spaces* comes in. We can take over a building after it's used or has been unused for some time, and be able to use it for a range of artistic purposes.

One of the spaces Tristan managed to get a hold of he ran for eighteen months, but adds without any air of bitterness that "the trouble with meanwhile-spaces is that you always have to give them back when they want to develop them".

 "What do you set up in these spaces? They're not very permanent", I remark, implying that it is limited what you can do in a year and a half.

"No, it can't be permanent, you can't raise funding on it. So it is very hard to make money out of them". Tristan explains that he would spend the first six months making the warehouse inhabitable and safe, and then create publicity around the project, which also takes time, particularly without enough money to do so. After this process, time is nearly up. Without money for tools and contractors to go in and restore the space in a couple of months, it becomes hard. "We haven't really got the money [to go in fast]", he acknowledges. Tristan hinted to that the best situation would be to be in possession of spaces open for temporary art projects, but never having to worry about being 'kicked out' by developers. It meant keeping the warehouses in their 'raw and authentic' state without too much renovation, and I suspect it was because it is in the 'nature' of dirty arts to be done in basic and rough conditions with room and space to be creative. He had set up an organisation, WARPliverpool (n.d.), for the specific purpose of "[opening] up post-industrial spaces for creatives, culture and the arts":

'permanent meanwhile spaces'. His temporal understanding of space and his creative efforts were based on his opinion of how cultural expressions should be cultivated in a certain way. But, he lacked economic capital do follow through on 'permanent' meanwhile spaces. Farm Urban also lacked economic capital to do big projects, but in contrast to Tristan, an opportunity had come along to do the Baltic Farm project with start-up funding from Canary. Working with private real estate developers was mainly seen as positive by Farm Urban in that it created opportunities (receiving funding to put their *visions* into *action*) despite the fact that it was 'a meanwhile project' and they would have to move. But with this followed ambivalence. It created feelings among some of my colleagues about the collaboration going against Farm Urban's ethos, as I will elaborate on in the next chapter.

The Baltic Farm project, and Tristan's work with art projects and the artistic community, both of whom I have classified as the grassroot, were similar in that they imagined growing sideways, through social relations. Competition, arguably a defining factor of capitalism, is necessary to survive as an enterprise, which in turn implicates continuous economic growth. With the grassroot, there was no inkling of competition between each other. Tristan admitted that dirty arts, which was an integral part of his subject identity, had trouble competing with creatives that had contracts with 'the industry'. While Tristan was supportive of the creative and digital studios and the work that was being done there, he remarks that "they took what I was doing and turned it into a commercial package. It is sort of the story of this… It becomes less creative at its core".

While the creative and digital industry also valued a sense of community, as I had been told and read from many sources, their growth also contained an element of economic expansion and a promotion to the outside world to grow the industry and grow Liverpool's economy, which picking chamomile, planting trees and making dirty arts did not with a first glance, belong. This is not to make an objective judgement on which sense of community is better than the other, for which there is none. The concept is subjective, contingent on who is doing the appraisal. As David Graeber (2013, p. 224) observes, values resist comparison. There is no mathematical formula to compare one 'sense of community' over the other (even though people make such comparisons all the time in everyday life, as Tristan in some ways demonstrated). While money is comparable because of its universal equivalent, "the value of "values", in contrast, lies precisely in their lack of equivalence; they are seen as unique, crystallized forms" (Graeber 2013, p. 224). 'Community' was subject to evaluation dependent on which perspective the appraisal came. Or in other words, to which group one felt belonging.

TWIRLING TREES AND THE VALUE OF LAND

After Tristan greets a man that just entered the café – he seems to know most people that walk in the door – I ask how many meanwhile space he has at the moment.

"I have none. Well, the Hobo-Kiosk can kind of count as a post-meanwhile space -"

I interrupt him, "it *was* a meanwhile space?"

"It *was* a meanwhile space, yes. For two years [me and my wife] ran it as a meanwhile space". This meant that Tristan did not have to pay rent for it in that period. He continues: "when they needed rent we thought: what can we turn it into? We needed income, to be frank. We were doing this for free and we were paying to do it – we had no money. So, we said: 'what can we do with it?' Well, basically, we'd hand it back to them and they – ".

I brake in again. "Who are *they*?".

"They are the landlords".

"Private landlords?".

"Yes. Private developers who built and developed the whole place". But for those two years, Tristan ran it as a meanwhile space – a shop that sold art and nick knacks. When the developers wanted the space back, Tristan had to turn it into something commercially viable. Today, the place is called Hobo-Kiosk – a quaint, eccentric, slightly weird bar and art space situated a few meters down the road from the café we were sitting in. I walked past it every day on my way to the Basement.

"I come at this from different angles", Tristan says. "We shouldn't shy away from the commercial, or making money out of these things, because, you know, our ultimate purpose is to create a socially engaged activity which has an effect on the surrounding environment".

I understood him to say that making money was not the problem, as long as the activities were socially engaging. It would even be preferable, because in the end, everyone need to make a living. Unless the Hobo-Kiosk was commercially viable it would be hard to keep it as it was. If Tristan could still contribute in a socially valuable way then it was a good thing, even if it meant playing ball with people, or companies, he would not normally engage with.

Back to the interview, Tristan comes out of (what he thinks is) a digression and interrupts himself. "Let me step back a second". I listen eagerly. What is it about the Triangle that makes it so intriguing to some, so sought after, so valuable? To whom is it valuable, and why?

"It was very interesting, because [the Baltic Triangle] was being *sold* as being the most creative and culturally exciting area in the North-West and then, you know- "

"And still is, isn't it?" I interject.

Yeah, well, they say it is, but I think – I'm sorry to say that I can think of places in countries and cities that's got far less glamour than Liverpool, which has got far more engaged concept of how to bring the creative together and create an area that is more vital. Because the next stage of what happened was – so we don't have a street scene, we just have a cold, dark, industrial state at night, and it's still like that. But what happened was that we had the 2008 [winning European Capital of Culture award that] stimulated land prices, right. So, the land prices began to shoot up. We've got some of the most expensive land values of anywhere in the country outside of London.

"Liverpool?"

"Yeah, bizarre! And [the Baltic Triangle] is overtaking the city centre for land value prices".

"Really?"

It's kind of like the wild west. You know, what you can do? The point about this is that land value is not based upon, say, putting up a unit like this [café and creative office hub] and putting in creatives, it's based on putting up a ten story off-plan funded apartment complex.

Tristan's phone rings and he picks up, the person on the other end seems to be asking if he is coming. "I'll be ten more minutes". Time is relative and Tristan keeps talking for another forty-five, to which I counted myself lucky. He is an engaging story-teller.

What he had just said was that land value was not determined by little hang-outs and work-spaces for creatives and independent businesses, like the one we were sitting in, but on large-scale residential schemes, which in essence were able to compete with similar enterprises. What he had also said was that the Baltic Triangle was still being *sold* as one of the most exciting places to set up shop in this part of the country. Once made into a commercial package and sold to potential investors, developers, other creative and digital companies, and the visitor economy, it had taken on an economic value that had changed the cultural authenticity he had been integral in building.

In 2017, the Baltic Triangle had investments worth of £62 million on site, with a future £600 millions worth of planned investments (Regenerating Liverpool, 2017). As Tristan postulated, land became valuable as one apartment block after the other were being

built and pressure to develop and financially invest in the scare land, increased. The taller the building the higher potential revenue per square meter. The value he was referring to in the above statement was economic. Much of that money, he speculated, came from foreign investors with little interest in investing in the wellbeing of the community. A crucial point here is that land value, measured in money, was the deciding factor of who had a long-term place in the urban spaces. Yet the capitalist projects were transient; capital went in and out of the city. To the grassroot, it did not matter how many millions were on site, for it did not contribute to the sense of community they imagined. In fact, to Tristan, it was incongruous even pernicious to it. "Most of the developers are in and out, and they don't stay (…). Every architect and every developer should have to live in every building that they build", Tristan tells me. "They will go back to Hong Kong and they will never visit here again, they will just sit there and take the money. So, the money comes in, the money goes out. Money doesn't stop here, doesn't churn".

I had heard several other people comment on the fact that areas like the Baltic Triangle had a strange economy: a substantial amount of money was coming into the city but then going straight out again. I asked local historian Professor Michael Parkinson about this when I went to talk to him in his office one day; about private investments and its role in Liverpool's economy. He observes that the city is "capital rich and revenue poor". While you can see cranes in the sky and be optimistic that the city is doing well financially – private money is coming in and development is taking place – the local government has no revenue and is facing difficulties just keeping basic services going. Tristan had the same notion: apartments in the Baltic Triangle were all sold as investment packages to people in places like Edinburgh, London, Hong Kong and Dubai, and he adds that developers "are not buying these to have an investment to the city but they are purely financial investments [for their own gain]". It is as Pérez (2002, p. 39) notes on residents and gentrification, in our case it is grassroot projects that "struggle to maintain neighborhood use value, while city government, private developers and other powerful interests usually regard the city as a "growth machine," a generator of surplus accumulation invariably benefitting urban elites".

Tristan mentions the Canary Development Project specifically, whose board had apparently broadcasted that the Baltic Triangle was voted the best place to live in Britain, which did not sit right with him: "And I was part of that, you know. I feel really offended that they took what was essentially, you know, we tried to make this place a better place – I can't even afford to get my jacket repaired", he says indignantly, pointing to the rip under his arm.

"And then along comes somebody that's only interested in, frankly, to build something for their own money".

It was an acknowledgement of Tristan's relation to private development companies: they were capitalising on the community he had been integral in building. This is central to the argument I will make in the next chapter, that relates to how capitalist commodities gain value. Moreover, it was seemingly two levels of scale in terms of where they operated; crudely put, one was a circulation of capital in a global market (foreign investment in development schemes), and one was embodied work in warehouses. As part of the next two chapters I will explore this notion from 'above' from the perspective of Canary.

As mention above, Tristan's community engagement in the Baltic Triangle's grassroot community involved the organisation he had co-founded, WARPliverpool, In a post on WARPliverpool's Facebook page there is a picture of a new planned development scheme at the top of Greenland Street next to the Basement. In the text underneath, under the headline "Landmarks and mental health" in capital letters, WARPliverpool remarks sarcastically:

> Hooray - another victory for the planners in ripping apart our health and mental wellbeing for the sake of the pockets of a few. In case you don't recognise this site - and why would you, its [*sic*] the twirling trees site (…). No more will you have this 'hinge point' of greenery and variation to navigate by, to lift the spirits, to make you feel less of a cog in a machine. But another 'wonder' of glass and prefab built architecture is going to rise in its place, replacing not just the 'twirling' trees but a small copse of mature trees behind them. The replacement will trap and hold the pollution, create a wall to block our view and feed the investors in Dubai or Hong Kong or wherever else they've managed to raise the funds for it... Hooray!

It was clear that to Tristan, his vision of urban futures collided with planners' and investors' visions for the Baltic Triangle. To him, a community was built on values such as nature, health, and mental wellbeing. It was fundamentally a question of what kind of city citizens would want to live in. Who benefitted from the developer's visions? The statement from WARPliverpool was a comment on capitalisms tendency to concentrate political and economic power in the hands of the few. Tristan chose trees over pre-fabricated architecture. What he was reacting to was that investors and developers were not interested in the needs and wants of the local community, but acting out of economic interests out of Hong Kong and Dubai. Like the lady on the Baltic Farm event who imagined apple trees for the Canary Street site, Tristan used the 'twirling' trees to represent what he considered important to him and others that spent time in the Baltic Triangle. As he said, the developers were in and out, and

so was the money, "it doesn't, stop here, doesn't churn". Hence, there was a transience, impermanence and fluidity in capital investment made in the Baltic Triangle, whereas the trees were metaphors of rootedness.

THE GATE-KEEPERS OF COOL

Back in the café with Tristan, three men walks over to our table to greet him. They seem to be faint acquaintances inquiring about the Hobo-Kiosk that Tristan runs down the road. "It's a little bohemian hang-out; old school pub …", he tells them. "I say 'Liverpool bohemia' because it goes back to when I first came here. Kind of strange décor and interior inside it, just a great place to have conversations".

"What's it called?", one of the guys ask.

"Hobo-Kiosk. Let's see if I've got a card; I'm always running out of them". After the men say goodbye, Tristan's phone rings. He is wanted on all fronts. "Sorry, Charlotte", he apologizes. "This is a good example of how these things work. A lot of this goes on!". Tristan was referring to the interruptions, which in some respects were not interruptions. Instead they were a perfect example of what the Baltic Triangle and Tristan himself was about: building networks and maintaining social relationships. He had said something similar in an interview I had read:

> I can walk across Liverpool in 20 minutes, but its [*sic*] rare to get far without being caught in the little whirlpools and eddies of human discussion. This can be infuriating if you're late for a meeting, but from these chances come all manner of new initiatives". (Shore Projects, n.d.).

His activities were akin to building social capital – if we take it to be a network of connections consisting of lasting social relationships which need to be produced and strategically maintained. These social relations again, can be directly used for both short term benefits (such as asking for favours) and long term (gaining official rights to something) (Bourdieu, 1986/2011). Tristan had built his whole life's work on his eccentric sociability which he constantly reproduced through a series of exchanges, such as the one I witnessed in the café, or the myriad of connections he made through his art projects.

How did Tristan hope to influence the investments coming into the Baltic Triangle – to keep the cultural identity he had been part of building – based on the benefits he could draw from his rich social capital? I had read a different interview with Tristan where he stated

that to influence development he used what he called *leverage* and *soft power.* I was curious to know what he meant by this, so I ask him, to which he replies: "I suppose it's part of that *culture engine* quality, which is *me* (…). I was thinking about a term that creates culture. Culture for me is about *community, social cohesion, mental wellbein*g".

The cultural engines were the ones who made things happen. They were the drivers of certain types of cultural expression – which the wave of developers were excluded from on one level, as they lacked this cultural capital themselves, but benefitted from on another level, by appropriating it, a point I will expand on in the next chapter. In contrast, Tristan illustratively did not have money to mend the rip in his jacket – clearly short of economic capital, in Bourdieu's term (1986/2011).

The culture Tristan was speaking about was created on the ground, in the midst of things. Community, social cohesion, and mental wellbeing were the same kinds of values stressed in the Baltic Farm project by Farm Urban. It was about community empowerment. Tristan goes on to say that one should not strive "to create something that only looks very good, but that also feels very good; that has purpose and communication ability, but also *gives great value to the people that are doing it* (…)"

Urban space, whether filled with large scale development projects or community hang-outs, was supposed to give value to the people themselves – to those who were doing the 'work'. If developers were coming in with a vision and blue prints of something that only looked good, they had failed. To Tristan, culture was not something you could slap on an already existing entity: "How do we begin to justify the importance of culture …?", he asks rhetorically. "Culture is not just art, it is not just a surface, it is not a varnish applied to already successful communities or groups of people". Culture was *made* by someone, and embedded in those makers. From earlier statements we can gather that he meant someone like himself, as a cultural engine. Culture was seen as worth preserving, or at least protecting in its clash with outside interests. The *Vice* article where Tristan was interviewed, mentioned earlier, had the descriptive headline: "Don't Let Dickhead Developers Kill Liverpool's Club Scene" (Horne, 2014). It was not just thought so by Tristan. I could read online news articles with headlines like "New masterplan aims to *save* the Baltic Triangle" and statements about how an esteemed London design firm was "hired to create a masterplan to *save* the *soul* of the Baltic Triangle" (Houghton, 2019, my emphasis). So, what was Tristan's role in this, if he did not design or write masterplans?

Tristan saw himself as inhabiting a certain form of non-commoditized culture that was being created in engagement with other people and the environment around him. Working

with developers seemed inevitable if he wanted to be part in the evolving Baltic Triangle scene, but he could do so by bringing himself into the mix and try to shape investment by participating and using the symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1989) that he had: "I can parley my talking; my ideas, into some form, getting in front of people. I can use that to get on to meetings. This then moves me up the chain of commands. I can get access to symposium and conferences; I can get my words heard".

"Because of your work?"

"Because of my work with street-art and my reluctance to go away and my ability to talk to anybody, and my cheek and my walking up to people in meetings and saying 'hi, I'm Tristan, I do this'". There was no writing of documents or plans, but a faith in his own ability to affect outcomes by being in possession of something others considered valuable. It was not just social capital, which I got a glimpse of in the café, but cultural capital as well (Bourdieu, 1986/2011). Tristan's cultural capital, that is his tastes, symbols, ideas and preferences, was seen as an asset by developers and could thereby "be strategically used as resources in social action" (Scott, 2014). He was considered the epitome of the coolness of the Baltic Triangle, which was confirmed when the boards of different companies considered him worth listening to. Tristan was known by more people than he himself knew, and as Bourdieu reminds us, people such as Tristan "are sought after for their social capital and, because they are well known, are worthy of being known (…)" (Bourdieu, 1986/2011, p. 88). However, how far did his social and cultural capital get him in terms of long-term benefits?

Tristan tells me, expressing without too much resignation that his use of soft power to keep the pure, artistic community in the Triangle have a strong temporal aspect to it: "And these things give you leverage and it gives you soft power. And then from that you get a 40.000 square foot glass factory for 18 months (…)". Whatever he possessed in himself – the image of strangeness and coolness that was highly sought after by developers – attracted the visitor economy and investors, and was supported by the city council, did not get him more than meanwhile spaces. Tristan also had sympathy for the council because according to him they too had trouble parleying with private developers, particularly since the council was under a lot of pressure economically and private development was seen as part of the solution to their financial issues:

> It's very hard [for the council] to fight a developer with millions of pounds at their disposal, of course, because the money that you are fighting with is tax-payers money.

So you shouldn't take on anything you can't win. And how do you guarantee you win? It's a real though one for the council. So I have a real sympathy for it.

His own use of soft power had less at stake, and trying to shape the investment that was coming into the area was better than being squeezed out:

"I want to get access to [the new, young creative people]; give them the tools to be able to get out there and *do it* and *make it*, and so on. And that's what I want to join developers together with the creatives and say: 'we can make something *cool*'", he says, emphasizing the word cool. Tristan could receive the new young creatives into the Baltic Triangle while guarding them at the same time, as a 'middle-man'.

"That's soft power", he says to conclude the answer to my question. "'Cool' is perhaps the biggest expression of soft power that you can get. But everybody wants to be cool".

Here is one thing I say: … people say: 'What are you?' And I go: 'I'm bohemian'. And they say: 'What's a bohemian?' And I say: 'A bohemian is what a hipster would like to be when they grow up, but we're not going to fucking let them, because we are the arbiters and the gate-keepers of cool, and we'll be cool on our death bed, when we are 90 years old we will be cool. We will still be crying out for drugs and for strangeness and for new opportunities and young people. And we will never stop, you know, making and creating and doing things, because we cannot help it. And we will die penniless and lonely and maybe, you know, drunken and drugged up. That's what happens to bohemians; we get crushed under the wheel of commerce, because hipsters come along and steal all of our ideas, but they can't steal cool. They *try*, they talk about cool, they use cool, but they ain't cool. You know, we are cool. And we know what cool is, and we're not sharing.

I laugh at his concluding rant. "That's a good ending".

"Yeah, that is a very good ending".

Projects

This chapter provided a different grassroot perspective of community projects and meanwhile spaces. Tristan was more sceptical than Farm Urban towards the developers' activities in the area as a self-declared gate-keeper of 'cool' – a form of cultural capital that he claimed could not be stolen, and then trying to influence the temporality of his own activities through use of

symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986/2011, 1989), that is, a recognition of his status and value in the Baltic Triangle.

The Baltic Triangle had many projects on site. Some were generating economic value through financial investments in real estate development projects (for instance newly built student accommodation), rubbing up against grassroot projects that were building community and producing values such as social belonging, and physical and mental wellbeing. As I will show, these values were not only cherished by Farm Urban and by Tristan. They were ubiquitously circulating as a common discourse among all of the stakeholders in the Baltic Triangle with interests in shaping their urban futures through projects, from grassroot to developers to local government. In the two subsequent chapters I will take a closer look at these discursive practises and approach the concepts of property, meanwhile spaces, and community from a different level by 'studying' up.

<u>5:</u>

PROPERTY, OWNERSHIP AND 'A SITE WITH BAGGAGE'

This chapter is based on an interview I did with the director of the Canary Street Development Project. We are now moving slightly away from the grassroot, who with their embodied work created a sense of community in the Baltic Triangle's urban spaces, and take a seat in the developers' offices. What is it that private development companies, and local government, see in the same urban landscape? I will argue it is private property, by enclosure of public land, and potential future financial profits. I will question these notions, and show that property and what is often considered exclusively economic exchanges are entangled in social and cultural relations in the past, present and the future.

'TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS OF CONTROL'

I had for months been trying to set up an interview with the director of the Canary Street Development Project, Reece Wilson, ever since Farm Urban decided to collaborate with the company. After 3-4 last minute cancellations and rescheduling's on his end we finally manage to meet in Canary's offices in the central business district. Wondering what meeting with a director of a multi-million pounds private development project will be like, I walk in slightly intimidated.

Six floors up and I find myself in a lobby area with a corporate feel; it is bright, white and empty except for the reception desk at the entrance. Reece comes to greet me and instead of going into his office he leads me down to a seating area further down from the lobby while we joke about the fact that we are finally able to meet after so many months. He explains he has been extremely busy lately, flying off to London last minute.

As we sit down next to each other on the sofa the intimidation I had felt upon entering evaporates. Reece is down to earth, looks surprisingly young for the position he holds and dressed in a light blue collared shirt and jeans. And like most Scousers I have met, just as friendly, warm and open.

"I haven't really been able to make much sense of who owns the Canary Street site now and who owned it before", I begin, hoping Reece will be the one to clarify the ownership mystery to me. He starts to explain, but I soon admit apologetically that I am not following. The workings of property rights are quite foreign to me and a bit more complicated than I had expected.

"That's alright, no worries", he says with a gentle laugh, obviously not bothered by my confusion. Reece figures props is the best way to make a novice understand property rights, so with a couple of books that are lying on the table and a pen from his shirt, Reece moves them around as he explains: "Liverpool City Council owns the freehold of the land", he tells me, which in property jargon means the council owns the land outright. Every development company that has taken over the site has done so by buying a long leasehold *over* the freehold, which means to buy a lease on the property for a fixed period of time through a legal agreement (UK government, n.d.).

"North Point Global had the lease prior to us. Before them, Urban Splash had it. So, the lease has been transferred a number of times off the city council [who ultimately owns the land], so… The lease is a tradeable asset", Reece explains, and continues to say that "[Canary has] taken a long leasehold over the [council's] freehold, which gives us control of the site for the next 250 years. I'm sure we'll be well dead by then!", he exclaims, and we laugh at the obvious fact.

Canary had bought and now owned the lease for 250 years after which it would be returned to the council. It was not an inconsequential amount of time, and it surprised me that it was possible. One could argue that a long-lease of a quarter of a millennium was as good as owning the land outright. What would Liverpool even look like in 250 years?

Reece and I were talking principally about *property* and forms of ownership, although neither Canary's official statements nor Reece during our chat explicitly used the word 'property', but instead referred to the land as 'the site', 'the 5 acres', 'the scheme', 'the development' and 'the project'. However, as Carol Rose notes, "[p]roperty is making a claim *that others recognize"* (2004, p. 279, emphasis original). She holds that this is done within property *regimes,* such as through custom[8] or through law as legal claims – and Canary belonged to the latter. If property is making a claim that others recognize, are there other ways than through law and official rights?

---

[8] For a good analysis of property and custom, see Keir Martin (2013).

Salemink and Rasmussen (2016, p. 7) articulate a common distinction between 'property' and 'possession' that is useful here. They refer to *property* "as a legal category that refers to specific rights to something", which Canary already had by owning the long-leasehold. *Possession*, on the other hand, is the "the actual use or inhabitation of something". If someone is in the possession of something, it follows that the 'object' can also be *dispossessed*. West (2016) reminds us that dispossession in everyday terms is often referred to as material; "putting people out of possession or occupancy, or taking something away from them that they own", and observes that "for something to be taken away, somebody has to do the taking" (West, 2016, p. 12). Based on the distinction between property and possession, Salemink and Rasmussen note that dispossession "can take place in situations where property rights are claimed over things that might have been in possession without legal property rights; in such situations, appropriation inevitably means dispossession" (2016, p. 7). By this lose definition, appropriating the grassroots' temporary possession of land can be seen as a form of dispossession.

Common scholarly definitions of property involve "the rights held by persons (or groups of persons) in material and immaterial things (…)" (Hann, 2015, p. 153). While I believe definitions are often helpful, I agree with Humphrey and Verdery (2004) when they suggest that instead of searching for a definition, examining the *concept* of property can be more useful, such as looking at "how this concept works, who uses it, for what purposes, and with what effects" (2004, p. 2). Canary was referring to the land as 'the site', although embedded in this was a concept of property, as their claim went (largely) unquestioned by surrounding resident and working community[9] (Rose, 2004, p. 279). While the city council ultimately owned the land, Reece spoke of Canary's '250 years of control' now that the company owned the long-lease. The concept of property was also implied when Canary erected a fence around the site. Following Humphrey and Verdery (2004) we may ask: for what purposes and with what effects?

Although 'property' does not refer to land exclusively, land is more easily turned into property compared to other things, as it does not move, and cultural markers like fences can be erected around it (Rose, 2004, p. 280). What does a fence symbolise? The purpose of

---

[9] There were several protests against the Canary development, such as the Bishop of Warrington arguing the Canary development scheme would obscure the view of the Anglican cathedral from the waterfront (Tyrell, 2019). I want to note that it was not the concept of ownership that was questioned but what the property would be used for.

material markers here, I argue, is to signal a claim has been made, indicating ownership. The effects of it being that someone was included, and someone else kept out.

Canary's control of the site was, for the most part, recognized by the surrounding resident and business community through the fact that the company had bought the long-leasehold, received planning validation from the council, and had erected a fence around the whole site. However, one of the few local residents that was interested in talking to me – a middle-aged woman residing on the edge of the Canary Street property in social housing — told me she had complained to the council when the enclosure was first put up as it was blocking the public footpath she used every day on her way to the bus stop:

"[The developers] blocked footpath with fences so we couldn't walk there anymore", she pointed as we were standing in her front garden. "They can't do that, it's public property. I called the council! I take the bus every day, they can't expect me to walk all the way around [the property] to get to the bus stop when it is right there [30 seconds from my door]!", she exclaimed. Her protest was not on the concept of property itself but on who the footpath actually belonged to. The council granted her complaint and opened up the path, for it was in fact public property. Local tenants' use of the footpath was a form of possession, who with their everyday use were inhabiting the space through their movements. As Chris Hann points out, property is not just a "technical institution", it "expresses the fundamental norms and values of a society, such as equality, freedom and justice" (Hann, 2015, p. 153). What I take from this is that even in brief encounters around property, equality and justice were questioned.

Physical markers were not the only way to lay claim on the urban landscape. When it came to grassroot projects, all the actors I had encountered in the Baltic Triangle – whether the grassroot themselves, organisations, or developers – spoke of *access* to *meanwhile spaces* and temporary use. The effect of this, I suggest, was that it implicitly reinforced private development companies assumed authority, connoting the companies had the opposite: *ownership, permanence* and *control*, thereby establishing an unequal power relation. In other words, fences and official property rights were not the only signifiers of ownership – so was rhetoric. Paradoxical to this, there was another rhetoric that was circulating, which I will soon elaborate on.

I suggest that the material and nonmaterial claims of ownership discussed above did not have the desired effect to establish and communicate ownership, as Canary did not seem to have the control Reece spoke of yet, judging by the slow progress of the project. Canary took over the site 2018, and as I finalize this text it has become June 2020 and the Canary

Street property is still sitting empty[10]. All except for Farm Urban's raised vegetable beds amidst the wild meadow flowers. The developers' material, legal and linguistic claims could be seen as ways to legitimize possession and signal ownership, which in turn meant someone else's dispossession. Canary's 250 years of control through ownership was essentially privatization of land. Could the land have been kept as commons, dedicated to long-term art or culture projects or permanent grassroot establishments? I speculate that it was difficult for the council to keep tracts of land for non-commercial purposes, as the council was working on a very tight budget and in desperate need of revenue. Most evidently, funds from national government had been cut by a substantial amount[11]. But, the council also still struggle with its own revenue base, as Michael Parkinson brought to my attention when I had a chat with him. Its property income is too low, because there are too many poor houses and not enough businesses. One of the draws of development is that the city can get more expensive housing that will pay more taxes, and more businesses that will pay higher business rates to compensate for the drop in national support. The pressure to let private development take place is growing continuously, and has been ever since the 1980s when there was a change to a conservative government that brought Liverpool close to municipal bankruptcy (Parkinson, 1985, p. 10).

The question of privatization of commons, or public land, and permanence versus meanwhile access, is in other words not straight forward. Understanding urban spaces in the Baltic Triangle and the actors involved means to connect the 'local' to the 'global'. The contestation of land was made up of a convergence between collective imaginaries of community on a grassroot level, private developers' search for profit, and what one may call neoliberal processes (cut in government funding, increased privatization of public goods, and competition) that heavily affected local government's decision to open up for increased private investment. Moreover, private ownership of land contrasted heavily to the grassroots' temporary possession of land (250 years versus the Baltic Farm's three years), and affected what was practically possible to grow and cultivate in meanwhile spaces. Yet, visions of social and cultural continuity and community remained.

---

[10] By this time, Reece had also left the company to work on a different project.
[11] Liverpool City Council suffered a 64 % reduction in government funding between 2011/12 to 2019/20 (Inclusive Growth Plan 2018:10).

71

CULTURAL CAPITAL AS A RESOURCE

Despite the temporal aspect of Farm Urban's and Tristan's activities, it did not hinder their efforts in building a sense of community, nor imagining it. The apple orchard envisioned by the Baltic Farm volunteer, or Tristan's protective attitude towards the 'twirling' trees were good metaphors of *rootedness,* and environmentally and socially sustainable *growth.* As the Baltic Farm's vision document opens with: "The Baltic Farm is a creative food project *rooted* in Liverpool's Baltic Triangle" (The Baltic Farm Liverpool, n.d., my emphasis). But rootedness was contradictory to the inherent temporary existence of meanwhile projects, and both Farm Urban and Tristan were crucially aware of the time-limit to their projects. So, while trees could not grow in meanwhile spaces, the grassroots' collective imaginings of community could. But what did the terms 'meanwhile uses', 'meanwhile sites', and 'meanwhile projects' mean to Canary – terms that seemed to be circulating in a naturalised way in everyday language in Liverpool?

Back in the bright lobby in the central business district, I prod Reece on the subject. "What exactly do you mean by these terms?"

"It means it's temporary. It means we are building the big scheme, but *meanwhile,* we are going to do *this",* Reece explains, referring to the Baltic Farm project, and elaborates:

> We've got a five-year program to build the whole [Canary] scheme, and what we don't want is the site just being redundant. (…). The Americans call it a 'transitional use'. It is just a temporary use of an area. Some people put a temporary-use clause on [with] no meaningful future on the site when the development comes forward. (…). What we are trying [to do] with *our* meanwhile use is to create a use that we want to incorporate in the scheme in its permanent conclusion.

"So it's not going to be *only* meanwhile?" I ask for confirmation.

"No, no", Reece assures me.

> What will happen is that the Baltic Farm will take a permanent unit, a retail unit maybe, and they will operate some of the public realm within the whole space, cause it's five acres so it's a big site. They might move around that site in a meanwhile fashion (…), [but] they won't just be kicked off at some point. Hopefully they have a permanent home there. Which is want we want them to do.

Sitting there on the sofa with Reece, I did not doubt his personal earnest wish of including the Baltic Farm into the finished scheme – making the three years into a more permanent situation for the community project. However, a different statement by Reece, this time in the Baltic Farm's official brochure, brought the temporal meaning of the community project into a slightly different light. It read: "The *ethos* of The Baltic Farm will not be destroyed after 3 years; the vision is that the *cultural asset* and *relationships* will be maintained and nurtured into the final development" (The Baltic Farm Liverpool, 2019.). It was clear that Canary considered the Baltic Farm's ethos a potential asset, or resource, which in one way or another would be embedded into the final Canary scheme of residential, office and leisure space.

Behind common definitions and understandings of resources lie the idea that a resource is a *source* with a potential to make or do something else, like ore into iron, through a dynamic transformation between the resource's past and future as it realizes its potential (Ferry & Limbert, 2008, pp. 5-6). But "nothing is essentially or self-evidently a resource", they are made through a "social and political process, and resources are concepts as much as objects or substances. Indeed, to call something a resource is to make certain claims about it (…)" (Ferry & Limbert, 2008, p. 4). This view aligns with resource economist Zimmerman's take on it, who maintains that a resource is not fixed or already given, as others might argue, but "dependent on the needs and wants of the appraiser" (Richardson & Weszkalnys, 2014, p. 12). How did the grassroot and developers differ in their appraisal of culture and social relationships?

In an endnote, Ferry and Limbert (2008, p. 20) add that a resource can be considered valuable in and of itself, not only through what it has the *potential* to become. Indeed, the cultural assets and social relationships was seen as inherently valuable by the grassroot, such as when Tristan stressed that the art activities should *feel* good to those who were doing them. I want to argue that comparatively, the cultural assets and relationships that Reece was referring to were not primarily "valued as forms of wealth in and for themselves" (Ferry & Limbert, 2008, p. 20) by Canary. Instead, they were seen as valuable in what they had the potential to become: an ethos that could live on in the final development with the potential for capital accumulation, that is, "growth of productive capital" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. 157) (such as rent income from the office spaces).

How exactly did the Baltic Farm's ethos, or Tristan's image of 'cool' for that matter, have the potential to grow circulating capital, such as rent income from Canary's office spaces? The question can be put differently. Would a potential tenant pay more or less if the Canary scheme was in a less 'happening' part of the city, for instance an area that did not

possess the image of 'cool'? Would investors and buyers be more or less inclined to get involved with the Canary scheme if the company had not shown potential buyers the promotional video from the Baltic Farm events where we were shovelling soil and 'performing community'? It is difficult here to make a precise judgment of this. Suffice to say, it was a form of 'value-adding' that did not particularly cost the private development company money, but the potential economic returns *could* be substantial. In other words, and if so, a conversion from cultural and symbolic capital to economic return would take place.

It was not that everyone was oblivious to the abstract and potential economic value of their own activities in regards to developers. My friend and Farm Urban colleague Larry and I were sitting in the local gin-garden around the corner from the Basement one day after work, and I asked him a couple of questions about the Baltic Farm project. Larry was of the opinion that Farm Urban had 'sold out' by working with Canary. I had to ask what he meant by this, and he tells me: "Giving your name to someone else to do what they want and advertise with in order to get money, that's selling out", and elaborates:

> [Canary] gives us a tiny bit of land [to set up the Baltic Farm], use Farm Urban's name, makes them look good and makes them look more appealing to investors. They are posting things on their Instagram that doesn't really go with our *ethos*. They are looking for investments, using *us* as a reason why people should invest.

The ethos that both Reece and Larry were referring to was contested in that both found it valuable, but in each their own way. It was an ethos that had been carefully crafted through Farm Urban's embodied, social work. As a non-commodity it resisted commodification. What Larry was reacting to was the potential conversion of Farm Urban's non-alienable value into a capital asset.

MOVING FORWARD

The Canary Street site had changed hands several times. As Reece had mentioned, the long-leasehold was a tradable asset Canary had bought from a company called North Point Global who owned it prior to Canary. North Point Global, in turn, owned the lease through a sister company they had set up with the purpose of holding the lease for them; The New China Town Development Project (NCD). Reece explains that this is not an unusual structure in development companies – less risky for North Point Global in case something was to happen

to the sister company. And something *did* happen. *The Guardian* reports that the £200 million NCD project collapsed[12] and North Point Global lost the investors' deposit money, many of whom were based in China and Hong Kong (Wainwright, 2018). As expected, the investors were not happy, particularly because, as the investors claimed, they were led to believe the project was backed by the city council and thought it was a safe investment (Houghton, 2017). The council, whose representatives – including Liverpool mayor Joe Anderson – had initially travelled to China to promote the NCD project (and other development projects in Liverpool) (Wainwright, 2018), was after the collapse eager to see a new company take over the site and "get it back on track", as the Deputy mayor of Liverpool stated (BBC, 2017). Mayor Joe Anderson commented to a local newspaper after the collapse of the NCD project that "The responsibility lies with the agents that have sold them these apartments and the vision that everything is wonderful. And clearly it isn't. But the city or me can't be blamed for that" (Houghton, 2017).

The Baltic Triangle's meanwhile spaces was where visions of urban futures – manifested in projects – met, overlapped, diverged, and even collided. The foreign investors' "vision that everything is wonderful" was based on economic opportunities in the Baltic Triangle's empty urban landscape, thinking the planned development schemes were good investments. To Tristan, as we can recall, the foreign investors were not doing it to the benefit of the (working and resident) community, but purely for financial gains. The difference then lies in what was invested and what was hoped to be returned. One was financial investments hoping to give financial returns in the future, while the other was investments of socially imbued work hoping to create a sense of community. In Graeber's (2013) sense, it was (economic) value versus values. But as I will argue below, these visions were not separate but entangled with each other.

The next thing that happened was that Canary put a bid on the site and a planning proposal application, which as we know, got granted. Reece tells me that the easiest way for Canary to get control over the site was to buy the failed NCD company and the long-leasehold along with it, and most crucially, changing the name of the project. Reece tells me that "[it's] a site with baggage so straight away it makes everybody nervous. I think if you took all that baggage away and just looked at it on its true merits, [it would be different]". Stated differently, if the purchase was a strict economic transaction, there would be fewer issues. But it was *not* a pure economic exchange. And the lease was not simply 'a tradable asset' in cold

---

[12] Along with two other development projects in Liverpool by North Point Global (Houghton 2017).

economic terms. It was entangled with an unsettled past; with international investors; thereby with public scrutiny, which gave the council further hesitations, all together making up entanglements that Reece referred to as 'baggage'.

"The council seems a bit sceptic towards the project", I comment, referring to the hold-up. It was many months since Canary had hoped to start building, yet nothing had happened on the site. Reece tells me the delays are mostly because of the council's practical concerns towards the project:

> [The council has] got issues concerning highways and noise pollutions for residents that exist along the street (…). [T]hey need proof to show how we're going to do it. Some of that is tricky. Some of that they won't agree with. So you've got to have an argument, and that's where its jammed. They like the farm, they like the *vision*, they like what we are trying to do, the social impact, all that. But if a thousand people turn up, what are you going to do with them? You know, some of it is probably over-thinking it, but it exists as potential issues, so that's where we're at at the moment.

The *vision* that Reece was talking about – epitomized in the Baltic Farm – had succeeded in winning over the council's scepticism towards developers – the council's issue was of a practical nature concerning parking and noise complaints to protect the local resident and working community from negative impacts from the development. It had been a long bureaucratic process for Canary in order to set its plans in motion. But in addition to manoeuvring the legal landscape, Canary also had to deal with some social consequences since the site came with 'baggage' after the previous development company had left a trail of angry investors. Reece tells me: "We had to negotiate in Liverpool and calm everything down. Like: 'you had an issue with these guys, but we are not them'. So, it was a mechanism in doing that". While Canary had gotten the previous development's bad repute along with the exchange, it was still the easiest way, Reece explains.

"Was there no way around it?" I ask.

"No, there was no way around that. There will be a resolution. I'm just not sure what that resolution is going to be", he confirms with a gentle laugh, no doubt something he has pondered. "It's a tricky one. We understand [the NCD investors'] position and frustration, but we're not the previous developers and we probably need a bit of acknowledgement for that – a little bit of slack-cutting to enable us to move *forward*". What did it mean for a development project to move forward? What lay in the future that Canary imagined? And how did the company hope to get there?

Capitalism has a dynamic tendency to expand, as it is based on "imperatives of enterprise competition and capital accumulation (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. 3). Capitalism is in other words intrinsically growth oriented. As a capitalist enterprise, despite directors' personal motives in community benefits, the ability to move into the future rests on the imperative of successful economic returns, and capitalist accumulation. Standing in Canary's way was the 'baggage' that Reece had referred to, which among other things consisted of a bad reputation. While Canary had property rights and the law on its side to execute the development project, it did little to help its reputation. Was it as Larry said, had Canary 'bought' Farm Urban's ethos and were now using it to improve their own image?

Back to our interview, I am surprised at Reece's transparency on Canary's intentions behind the Baltic Farm project. He tells me that

> [w]hat we want to try and do is get the local community *buying* into the vision [of the Canary Street Development Project]. And the Baltic Farm is part of that vision. It's about independent movements, it's about urban farming, it's about social impact and the benefits to the other stakeholders in the area. If we set that out early, people will associate our site and our scheme with that vision. And also, it creates an interest on site: something is happening, there is something to do, there are events to be held, and actually brings the community together to this area, which is a meanwhile use while everything comes *forward*.

What Reece said was that in order to move forward, Canary needed the local community on its side 'buying' into the vision – a vision epitomized by the Baltic Farm project. Reece acknowledged in his statement that he knew what sells: 'independent movements', 'urban farming', and 'social impact' – all of which were embedded in the concept of the Baltic Farm. Giving the community project a 'head start', as he said, was a strategy used ahead of time believed to improve Canary's image by being associated with the Baltic Farm.

On a pure economic level, how were financial rewards to be made? Reece and I did not go into the economic details in our talk, but some conclusions can be drawn based on general economic principles. Building the Canary scheme meant capital investment in the built environment, which inherently meant a long turnover period (Smith, 1996, p. 83). During construction time, for instance, the scheme would not generate revenue. Once finished, the fixed capital investments in the built environment would make a profit through sales and rental income (Smith, 1996, p. 83). Another way to make a profit would be to sell the lease before construction start, or just after, what one might call speculating, which was implied when Reece called the lease 'a tradable asset'. If Canary decided to sell the project

after completion, its economic value on the open market, what is called the Gross Development Value (GDV), was stated by Reece in a video on Canary's Twitter feed to be £220 millions (GGP, 2019c).

Was a joint collaboration with Farm Urban what it would take for the company and others like it to succeed in capitalist endeavours – attracting buyers to the 466 apartments and 37 townhouses, and business tenants to the 12.000 square meter commercial space and 4000 square meter office space? Reece seemed to think it was at least part of the solution. Hence, there was a connection, or perhaps a reliance, between the grassroots' activities – based on social relations – and Canary's intended capital accumulation. But while Canary could put a £220 millions price tag on their development project as the exchange-value, (as well as having a use-value to those who would buy and live in the apartments for instance), it was harder to quantify or put an exchange-value on the community projects taking place in the Baltic Triangle. Economic and social value were to different things, but still interconnected. Anna Tsing (2013) argues that all capitalist value come into being through social relations. In her article 'How Capitalist Value is Made Through Gifts', Tsing starts off with the following passage:

> Far from being a self-enclosed system, capitalism is unable to create most of the skills, relations, and resources it needs to function. Capitalist accumulation depends on converting stuff created in varied ways … into capitalist commodities. Capitalist commodities thus come into value by using- and obviating-non-capitalist social relations, human and non-human. (2013, p. 21)

This brings us back to the two previous chapters where I sketched out the work done 'on the ground' by the grassroots – whether it was shovelling soil, picking litter, or making dirty arts. What did the process of resource-making entail? In Ferry and Limbert's discussion on natural resources, resources transpire through a generative movement – active human labour – where external objects are transformed into a future resource (2008, p. 8). This is also an important point to Tsing (2013): converting non-capitalist social relations into commodities takes work. Through being ethnographically present with my informants I was able to learn and participate in that work. We were organising, planning, and showed up on Saturday mornings to fill the Baltic Farm site with activities we found meaningful. The activities were founded on and acted out from the grassroots' values and hoped to be reproducing those values (such as social cohesion, health and wellbeing). Yet not salient to us in that moment was our entanglement with capitalist relations.

Based on the last three chapters I have shown how values such as a sense of community, belonging, and cultural expression were cultivated by the grassroot and appropriated by Canary who saw the values as assets hoped to add value to the development scheme and thereby potential capital accumulation. I argued that claims on urban space were made and legitimized by the use of material markers, rhetoric, and property rights by the development company. Making meanwhile spaces into property, or a privatisation of commons, was a way of converting the grassroots' social and cultural capital into potential financial gains. So was the adoption and appropriation of the grassroots' ethos to attract buyers and investors. Similarly, Tristan felt his image of cool was being capitalised and commercialised, not only by developers but also the creative and digital industry. I have analysed how grassroot projects meet and diverge with real estate development projects in the Baltic Triangle. While the grassroot expressed some ambivalence and like Tristan, also opposition, they used their social and cultural capital as social agents to manoeuvre themselves in the urban spaces. For 'the right to the city', David Harvey writes,

> is not merely a right of access to what property speculators and state planners define, but an active right to make the city different, to shape it more in accord with our heart's desire, and to re-make ourselves thereby in a different image. (2003:941).

I will build on this statement in the next chapter. In Liverpool's meanwhile spaces, actors on different hierarchies of scales imagine their urban futures, and it involves some form of growth to all of them. I suggested how a language of permanence and meanwhile spaces potentially established an unequal power relation, but that it was not enough to move forward as a capitalist enterprise. Canary also needed to convert non-capitalist social relations to create the resources it needed to function (Tsing 2013). In the next chapter I want to analyse another strategy that Canary used in order to move forward, to grow, and to progress – whatever that entailed – by adopting a language of community, sustainability, revitalisation, and growth, and the implication it has on the grassroot activities' larger meaning in society.

6:

"COMMUNITY IS COMING": PARADOXES AND CONTRADICTIONS

In this last chapter I have focused on growth, for "[g]rowth remains an unquestioned "law" of capitalist development", writes Gibson-Graham (2006, p. 158). In a market-oriented society, can growth mean something other than capital accumulation? What are the values that different notions of growth are founded upon? In what follows I shall discuss the meaning of growth in the context of the city and point to the paradoxes and contradictions that a discourse of community and growth hides from view, and suggest a different way of interpreting grassroot projects – not as secondary or interdependent to capitalist practices and rhetoric, but as a changing politics of the subject.

PROGRESS

Sometime after the first Baltic Farm event I asked my friend Mat, who had participated, an open-ended question. "What does progress for a city mean to you? If you could decide, what would it look like?" His answer painted a picture of a community centred economy driven from below:

> It's hard for me to say what is progress for a city. Cities are unfortunately driven by capitalism (…). Even chunks of Sefton park keep getting sold to build property on. The land Farm Urban has is only temporary before they decide to build flats on it.
>
> Progression for me would be more locally grown food and locally made products. All in a greener and self-sustaining way. Chunks of the city would need to be bought by rich philanthropists who don't have profit as a driving force. Co-operative living complex's where everyone chips in to run and maintain their homes. Create something to make the people living there feel ownership and pride of it. Like I say. I can't ever see it happening. The only way I see cities progressing is becoming greener. But I don't think community will get better. A good old apocalypse would be the best way to restart society on a greater and more progressive path.

I also had a chat with my friend Larry from Farm Urban, and asked him what it means for a city to grow. His view was quite similar to Mat's. It involved self-sufficiency and social and economic sustainability. He tells me that "Personally, I'd say becoming more self-sufficient and sustainable in everything. More houses, jobs, and opportunity. Try and keep green spaces and the 'city-of-culture' vibe while expanding. Try and not turn into other faceless big cities like Manchester and London."

"What do you mean by expanding?" I ask for a clarification.

"Increasing the number of people who live and work here [in Liverpool]". As I knew Larry well, he did not really believe what he had just described to be possible. Then he says to me: "All the good and no bad, please. Just throw that unachievable utopia at me!"

"Ok, tell me the bad", I encourage him. "What would be the opposite of growth?"

"Selling out the property from underneath groups who rent it to turn it into overpriced housing and flats or chain stores and restaurants. [Selling it underneath] mainly the groups who are involved in the community or are independent businesses". And then he adds "getting rid of the green spaces". I understood him well. We had both enjoyed spending time in Sefton Park, and foraged for wild garlic and nettles in the gardens behind the cathedral. "Worst thing would be slowly selling off the heart and soul of the city for money and for more people. But that's gentrification all over isn't it".

"What about picketing?", I ask jokingly.

"Pissing into the wind, I think". To Larry, open protest was pointless.

IS 'COMMUNITY' JUST ANOTHER WORD?

Back in Canary's offices, I continue my interview with Reece. Canary's Twitter account, and Reece during our interview, expressed certain values he claimed were important to Canary's scheme, such as inclusiveness, community, and coolness. "It's not just one- and two-bedroom apartments aimed at a rental market" he tells me. "We've got town houses, one-, two-, three-bedroom, duplexes apartments. So, it's inclusive".

Reece explains that on a site the size of Canary Street it is important with a diverse mix of residents: "you've got families first time buyers, investors, renters; and that builds a community". Reece tells me that the Canary project will also include a diverse mix of

businesses, mainly independent ones, and he clarifies that it will not be "a Tesco or a McDonalds going in there, it will be your artisan bakery or your independent gin distillery, your [vegetable] shop. [That's the vision the council bought into]".

"I was picturing Starbucks and McDonalds and – "

"No, no. Cooler than that, cooler than that", Reece interjects, and reiterates: "It's not a McDonald's area, or a Starbucks or a Tesco. The balance will be shifted. Then you would argue: would that be a successful scheme?" I wondered the same. But also, what constituted a successful development scheme to Reece? Was it realizing (as in, putting into life) the values he had just put forth because they were important values to the community? Or was for it for economic gains? Perhaps it was both. He continues: "People don't want a Tesco or a Starbucks in that area. What they want is Jimmy's Coffee, because Jimmy… you know, is part of that community".

Artisan, independent and community were important key words to Canary's vision on what kind of businesses to include in its final scheme, and it was the vision Reece claimed the city council had bought into – a vision that Tristan and the Baltic Farm, again, epitomized. The Canary Street Development Project would according to Reece offer something new, cooler and more unique than the typical conventional shops, and in his words: this was what people wanted. And I believe, this is what would *sell*. But how would Canary offer something *new* in the Baltic Triangle? If Jimmy's Coffee was already a beloved part of the community, how did Canary's imagine itself to improve Jimmy's and thereby make the area better, cooler?

Canary's idea of improvement meant integrating existing businesses in the Baltic Triangle into the final scheme by offering them a place to *grow:*

> We've used a strap-line for the site, which is 'a platform to grow', which is quite interesting, because it's not only a platform to grow for the developments of the area, it's for businesses to come in and grow their business. (…) This is a platform for things to *grow* and *evolve* and become *mature* and that's across all spectrums. So supporting the independent businesses is sort of a sacred gateway policy and vision for us that we're not going to move away from.

The rhetoric used by Canary connoted a notion of the company as being an enabler of growth, offering a platform "to *grow* and *evolve* and become *mature"*. But again, what did Reece mean by these terms? They fit neatly into a discourse of biology just as much as a discourse of business. All three put together, it could sound like expansion was an *evolutionary* process,

inevitable for progress. The problem with this conception is that if societal progress is based on a biological mode of thinking, it naturalises what kind of growth that progress entails: *expansion*. Reece elaborates on what he thinks the Canary scheme can offer businesses:

> We want to provide a step-on space … I'm using [Jimmy's Coffee] as an example. It's a small unit. I'm not saying they do, but maybe they would want a bigger unit or another unit in that area that actually gives them the opportunity to [grow] in a slightly different environment that's still in sync [with the area], and keeping in the realms of what they are about … There must be loads of businesses that wants to do that as well as new businesses coming to the area – to ride on the success of the Baltic Triangle.

Embedded in Canary's offer of a platform for independent, artisan businesses to grow was the idea of expansion, such as giving Jimmy a bigger unit or an additional unit. Reece had also stated that he wanted to integrate the Baltic Farm into the public realm of the final development. Anna Tsing asks a pivotal question: "Why have people called expansion "growth" as if it were a biological process?" (2012, p. 506).

Tsing attempts to answer these questions by linking it to the historical context from which this notion emerged, going back to European colonisation of the New World. From the 15th century, the notion of 'expansion as growth' grew with the first colonial plantations (2012, p. 510). For the first time, cultivation of sugarcane was scaled up into massive plantations making it a huge success in terms of profit. The realisation of scalability's extraordinary ability for economic growth made the Europeans believe that progress was only possible through scaling up (Tsing, 2012, p. 513). Expansion was naturalised as "the way for humans to inhabit the earth" (Tsing, 2012, p. 506).

When Reece wanted to offer the grassroot a place to expand he demonstrated and reinforced a conception of growth as progress both through discourse and eventually through practice by giving businesses a place to expand, if the project went forward according to plans. As Tsing notes, "[b]usiness scalability is about expansion for growth and profits: this was a tenet of twentieth-century progress. (…). Like business, development was supposed to scale up. (…). Bigness was progress" (Tsing, 2012, p. 508). This belief is worth further examination. When discussing unquestioned truths and naturalised assumptions, Michael Foucault's discussion of *discourse* is useful. He reminds us of the establishment of certain truths as a way to exercise power. To Foucault, discourse is not just an ideology, but subtler, embedded not only in society but in *individuals* as a system of knowledge that even "determines the limits of thinking and acting" (Lewellen, 2003, p. 190). Institutions such as

83

prisons or hospitals, or disciplines such as psychiatry, establish 'truth' through discourse but in such a way that it is not recognized by the subjects to whom power is exercised (Lewellen, 2003). Framing growth as expansion, I argue, was one way to naturalise what growth in the urban context entailed; the success and progress of the Baltic Triangle, and of Liverpool was dependent on (economic) expansion. If the notion of discourse may seem a stretch to far in the context of capitalism, then David Harvey's 's idea of ideology can be used, although is not too far from Foucault is some sense. Harvey refers to ideology as a conceptual apparatus that "appeals to our institutions and instincts, to our values and our desires, as well as to the possibilities inherent in the social world we inhabit", that "becomes so embedded in common sense as to be taken for granted and not open to question". (Harvey, 2003, p. 5). Quite similarly, Gibson-Graham claims capitalism has become to have *ontological* status (2006).

Inspired by Foucault, Arturo Escobar (1988) takes a critical look at the development industry directed towards African and Lain-American countries, arguing that 'development' was a Western invention along with the category or label 'underdeveloped' nations. Simply, put, the West depict itself as having 'discovered' poverty for then to step in as a 'rescuer'. But this, Escobar (1988) argues, is just a way to legitimize intervention fuelled by political and economic interests, such as U.S. interests in opening up new markets and investment opportunities. His argument wakes parallels to the way Canary depicts itself as the revitaliser of what it sees as neglected, and as a provider of facilities it claims is 'much-needed':

> Following years of decline, [Canary Street] will be revitalised with apartments, family homes & creative workspaces for businesses to grow. Included is much-needed new office space, giving businesses in the digital, tech and creative sectors a place to call home. (GGP, 2020b).

I agree with my informants – grassroot and developers alike – that the empty Canary Street site (and other derelict industrial sites) in Liverpool were in dire need regeneration to improve the health and wellbeing of the surrounding community, bringing the spaces back into use. The question is not necessarily if the site needed regeneration, but what *kind*. Or rather, when we speak about development, regeneration. revitalisation, or growth of an area, who is it for? And what values are imbued in the process? I suggest the issue lays in who gets to define what development means, and what motives of power lie behind it. When capitalist development companies spoke of revitalizing the Baltic Triangle by providing 'much-needed' homes and spaces to grow – was that just a new form of 'imperialism', paving the way for economic and political self-interests (Escobar 1988), such as further capital accumulation?

Another Twitter quote from Canary stated: "The 'meanwhile use' refers to the short-term use of temporarily empty buildings or land until they can be brought *back into commercial use*" (GGP, 2019b, my emphasis). 'Commercial' was in other words depicted as an end-state; for as a capitalist enterprise, Canary needed consumers, buyers and tenants to their scheme in order to make capital accumulation possible. The value in question was thereby economic, and Canary presented itself as the provider of the material conditions that the 'community' needed in order be part of the growth narrative. I want to argue that compelling anticipatory statements and promises, typical for development companies and exemplified from Canary's website in bold eye-catchers: "*Community is coming*", "*Collaboration is coming*", and "*Different is coming*" (GGP, n.d. a), was a way for companies to communicate that they were not just a platform to grow, but the *authority* of progress, similar to the way Tristan considered himself the 'gate-keeper of cool'. However, to Canary, it was *within* a capitalist framework that growth was depicted as possible, whatever that meant to each party. As West puts it, with Marx and Engels, "ideology blurs and makes invisible (…) the structural conditions that keep some people in power and others disempowered" (West, 2006, p. 5). Notably, play on slogans like 'community', 'collaboration' and 'different' were values the city council set as a prerequisite for development projects in the first place, thereby setting the imagined visionary ideal to strive for, and at the same time, making it sound politically neutral and as a universal consensus (Checker, 2011). In addition, I suggest, by hiring an expert design firm to plan and design what was called 'a masterplan' to shape future urban development in the Baltic Triangle (Marketing Liverpool, 2019), and despite the council's claim of community involvement in the plan, the city council reinforced the notion that progress for the area was best in the hands of experts, what Escobar might call *institutionalization* of development (Escobar, 1988, p. 431), particularly by referring to it as a 'masterplan'. As we can recall, Tristan's way of influencing development was to 'parley with his talk and ideas', and using the symbolic capital that he had. Liverpool mayor Joe Anderson's comment to the masterplan was that planning was essential to "nurture [the growth of the creative and digital industry in the Baltic Triangle] to ensure its future as a major *engine in our economy*" (Marketing Liverpool, 2019, my emphasis). The ideology of growth as expansion (and capital accumulation as progress) was complicated by private developers' (and local government's) overlapping use of the grassroots' own language of values, such as sense of community, wellbeing, sustainability, making the ideology behind it more difficult to discern, and possibly

Perhaps a comparison is useful here to make my argument clearer. Since the 1980s and into the 2000s, individual freedom and dignity became the founding ideas behind the new economic and political model that was emerging, put forth by neoliberal opponents who claimed these values were under threat from state intervention (such as communism) (Harvey, 2005, p. 5). Individual freedom was an ideal strived for by grassroot movements as well as governments, in the U.S. particularly after 9/11 (Harvey, 2005, p. 5). In other words, freedom became a seductive ideal to the whole spectrum, but as Harvey (2005) argues, was disguising elites' political and economic interests.

Harvey (2000) points to the contradiction, which is well theorised by now, between the free market ideology and actual practice. Despite a rhetoric of 'markets' and 'freedom', the market is anything but free, as it requires strong state power to function. The point that I want to bring from Harvey is that, as he writes, "the utopian rhetoric of freedom, liberty, and markets conceals [the paradoxes and contradictions] so effectively that we often find it difficult to articulate the pattern of underlying coerced collaborations that otherwise stares us so blatantly in the face" (2000, p. 181).

In the case of Liverpool today, is the (utopian) collectively used and seemingly a-political language that draw on values like 'collective', 'commons', and 'culture' simply words, masking certain economic actors' quest for capitalist growth and political power? Was the Baltic Farm project, and Tristan's mediation with developers, coerced collaborations concealed behind a circulating mantra of community, that masked paradoxes and contradictions? There was no doubt that both Farm Urban and Tristan entered into these collaborations with ambivalence. But when project intervention is made to sound just (fair) through a language of universal cherished values, then perhaps it made it more difficult to discern the underlying collaborations that one might not otherwise have agreed to. The strong utopian rhetoric of community was, as the ideal of freedom, quite seductive, particularly when it was presented as a common ground. Tristan did not believe developers promise of revitalisation and community benefits. But the broader argument here is that a circulating language of community, wellbeing, culture and so on, becomes established as the visionary ideal to strive for across the whole spectrum of actors, even making it into a bureaucratic dialog between developers and city council (sending planning applications back and forth before approval). The problem then, is that the idea of 'community' in the context of development loses its meaning.

But if we apply Harvey's (2000) reasoning on the subject, what are the contradictions and paradoxes these collaborations conceal? I want to argue, with Tsing (2012), that values

such as sense of community and social connection and belonging, are small projects that resists expansion. They are quite literally non-scalable. "Ordinarily, things that expand change as they take on new materials and relationships" (Tsing, 2012, p. 506). But scalability refers to the ability to expand indefinitely without changing the framework. Therefore, making projects scalable takes a lot of work, and it takes ingenuity. And some things simply resist being scaled up. As Tsing succinctly puts it in the subtitle of her article: "The Living World is not Amenable to Precision-Nested Scales" (2012, p. 505). Her empirical example involves matsutake foragers in the forests of Oregon. Why are their activities not scalable? She argues it is because their labour is not standardised and alienated as in capitalist labour, and "[s]ince they come for their own reasons, it would be impossible to expand the work unit without transforming it" (Tsing, 2012, p. 518). For the same reasons, I want to argue that the grassroot activities were not scalable projects. They also participated for their own reasons, engaging in non-alienated work. To scale up would "cover up and [attempt] to block the transformative diversity of social relations" (Tsing, 2012, p. 523). What might a 'scaled up' community urban farm look like, or an art project, and why is it not possible? It is because such projects are inherently impossible to keep standardised and self-contained – impossible to keep them from forming relationships (Tsing, 2012, p. 507).

Perhaps rhizomes (root-tree system) are a good analogy here[13], as they expand horizontally under the ground, like Tristan and Farm Urban's social and cultural engagements, stretching out as a connected network of non-hierarchical assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000). But this is a different form of expansion than in a capitalist understanding of growth, because social life involves *change* as it expands. As Tsing notes, "[t]he whole point [of expansion as progress] was to extend the project without transforming it at all. Otherwise it would not have added to the universal prowess imagined as progress" (2012, p. 506). Did my Farm Urban friends see themselves as part of a capitalist growth narrative?

Both Mat and Larry's statements in the beginning of the chapter painted a different view of what growth meant. And to both of them, it was seen as a utopian vision. Yes, the city would perhaps be able to incorporate a few more green spaces, but 'community', as they saw it, could not grow stronger, because it went against the capitalist logic – a capitalist logic they

---

[13] Deleuze & Guattari (2000) make a clear distinction between trees and rhizomes. I used *rootedness* (connoting trees) earlier as a metaphor for the grassroots' resilience and groundedness in urban space, or a wished belonging to place. I think of rhizome more in the context of the way social and cultural capital is mobilised as networks and assemblages, and therefore not contradictory but both used to illustrate a point.

saw themselves inevitably encompassed by. But in their utopian vision, growth did not entail capitalist expansion or accumulation at all. The question is then, what were the grassroot doing, making art in derelict warehouses, or planting seeds in meanwhile spaces?

In the next section I want to expand on the notion of growth as expansion, which Tsing (2012) argues has become a naturalised way for humans to inhabit the earth, and capitalist accumulation as progress, and offer a different perspective by seeing the embodied, non-capitalist work in the Baltic Triangle as projects of non-capitalist development.

A POLITICS OF THE SUBJECT[14]

One of the quotes from Tristan read that the artists were being "crushed under the wheel of commerce". Whatever this quote connotes, I believe agency was present in his activities, but in a less obvious way than I perhaps expected. It was not so much about the grassroots' ability to fight for the right to occupy more than meanwhile spaces. Instead, as I showed, it took shape more in the form of use of networks, soft power and social capital. Their physical presence and embodied activities in urban spaces were important enough – they were acts of place-making and of possession – somewhat similar to fences in that they were physical signifiers of possession. But it was to a larger degree about the values that were enacted in these spaces through work.

By questioning what the grassroot were doing making art in derelict warehouses, or planting seeds in meanwhile spaces, I want to consider whether they were engaging in projects of non-capitalist development. As we can recall, I questioned my Farm Urban friends on the efficiency and logic of what we were doing on the Baltic Farm events, moving literally 20 tons of soil from one place to the other several times, or picking the same litter twice. I realised later that my own bias, possibly swept in a reality of capitalist values such as efficiency, rationality, and productivity (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 7), clouded my judgement of what was emerging: a community economy built to create community cohesion, belonging, ownership, sustainability, and so on. And because of the activities' lack of efficiency, rationality and productivity, and lack of an "inherent tendency to dominate and [expand]", they were thereby seen as "[failing] to measure up to the true form of the economy (…)", as Gibson-Graham notes (2006, p. 7), similarly to what feminist other scholars have pointed to

---

[14] Borrowed from Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. xv).

how work in the household is devalued as secondary to wage-work (Hann & Hart, 2011, p. 79). I want to argue, with Gibson-Graham, that the grassroots' activities were in the process of creating new modes of being, by "*cultivating subjects … who [could] desire and inhabit noncapitalist economic spaces*" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. x, emphasis original). In the 'cracks' of empty urban spaces, new subjects had the potential to come into being, imagining a community 'economy'. Could the citizen subjects in these spaces be seen not as buyers, investors, or customers, but social agents?

Even in government, a government who many, particularly on the left, expect to provide basic services to its citizens, there has been a change in discourse parallel to the shift in politics; mainly with Thatcher's neoliberal regime in Britain from the early1980s where individualism took precedence over unions, social solidarity, and public enterprises, to name a few (Harvey, 2005, p. 23). In Liverpool City Council's latest *Inclusive Growth Plan*, mayor Joe Anderson signs his foreword off with: "As citizens and *customers*, I hope you will join me on this journey" to grow Liverpool in an inclusive way (2018, p. 5, my emphasis). It is subtle, but a clear nod to how citizens are perceived. It is in line with how capitalism has changed in recent years; "the Western masses [who] now participate in capitalism primarily as consumers rather than workers" based on the shift from industrial production to a neoliberal model (Hann & Hart, 2011, pp. 152-53). Following this shift, citizens in much of the West are not mainly workers, as in a Fordist or post-Fordist model (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. 156) – but *consumers.* Or with Foucault, an objectification of human beings into certain subjects (1982), in this case stimulated by economic urban restructurings from production towards services, recreation and consumption (Smith, 1996, p. 8), as in the Canary project. My point is that in a scheme such as Canary's, despite a rhetoric of community, relied exclusively on people as financial economic citizen subjects, in contrast to the grassroot whose engagement centred around community ownership (like having volunteers help build the farm from the ground up). Hence, there were two fundamental disparate underlying views of what being persons entailed in a context of urban growth. One was individualizing, as economic subjects, one was collective, making up a community – but again, both using the same language, which made their disparity less visible.

The capitalist mode of thinking revealed itself in how urban space was conceptualised as being profitable (again), as when Canary stated to bring the site "back to commercial use"– commercial being an end-point, while grassroot activities were 'meanwhile'. In other words, in Farm Urban's and Tristan's occupation of meanwhile spaces lay a contestation of what valuable use of urban space entails, but even more importantly, a contestation on what kind of urban

citizen subjects one ought to be in order to be part of the growth narrative – whatever growth entailed, which is part of the point here. How are spaces inhabited, and what kind of collective subjects are they inhabited by?

There exist many examples of non-capitalist economies[15], both from rich and poor countries, contemporary and historically, so alternative economic activities to capitalism is nothing new. The issue, which Gibson-Graham focus on in *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew it)* (2006), is how alternative modes of being in the world is *only* understood in *relation* to capitalisms hegemonic status which, to put it crudely, runs the world. Even while imagining other modes of being and inhabiting urban spaces, it is still imagined in relation to capitalism, the authors argue. How can other economies be brought into light, and on their own terms?

Gibson-Graham (2006) points out that the presence of diverse economies is sorely lacking from the dominant economic discourse where capitalism is ubiquitous. As with the grassroot in the Baltic Triangle, while their activities were felt as inherently socially and culturally valuable to the community, were 'given' meanwhile spaces before being integrated into a capitalist economy, as Reece implicitly stated as necessary for progress. Or put differently, having a use value was not enough – exchange value was needed for 'progress'. To grow, evolve, and mature, was through this evolutionary discourse seemed to be depicted as inevitable, yet only possible within a certain economic and political framework.

Whichever way one decides to define capitalism, it is not to say that definitions related to the capitalist ideology in themselves are 'incorrect'. Instead, it is capital accumulation's ontological status that should fall under scrutiny (Gibson-Graham, 2006). This means to also look at the alternative economies this ideology *excludes*.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

What I want to do, based on the ethnography from the Baltic Triangle, is to open up a landscape of new imaginary possibilities where capital accumulation is not naturalised and seen as the thing that frames the way we inhabit the earth, but *one* mode of organising the way we live that also involve non-capitalist spaces. It is an exploration and discussion of visions of urban futures. The grassroot, I have argued, engage in "projects of non-capitalist

---

[15] Such as self-employed, cooperative, family care, housework, gift giving, and nonprofit (Gibson-Graham 2006:xiii), to name a few.

development" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. ix), where progress is not conceptualised as exponential economic growth, but a *horizontal* development. I believe horizontal development to be based on social relations, sustainability and embodied production of place that grow to the benefit of peoples' wellbeing, social belonging and connection to their urban environment, reinforcing cherished values that sustain not only economic life but also citizens' wellbeing[16]. I have shown that this was done by simple acts of place-making. Growth took place organically – the Baltic Farm being a fine metaphor for planting seeds (and new ideas) – through the use of networks, social engagement and sustainable practises. It is what Graham-Gibson notes, "[as] a practice of development, constructing a community economy is an ethical project acknowledging relationships and making connections, rather than a technical project of activating generic logics of growth" (2006, p. xv).

As I have argued, with Tsing (2013), a capitalist economy dependent on non-capitalist social relations to function, takes *work.* And this work, based on social relations, are indirectly part and parcel of making capitalism function. The other perspective to be offered here is that the same embodied and non-capitalist work can be seen as part of new imaginings, creating new subjects. Or as Gibson-Graham calls it, 'a politics of the subject', meaning a process of production

> (…) that takes into account the sensational and gravitational experience of embodiment. If to change ourselves is to change our worlds, and if that relationship is reciprocal, then the project of history making is never a distant one, but always right here, on the borders of our sensing, thinking, feeling, moving bodies. (2006, p. xvi).

I suggest that identifying as new subjects, that is, as simply social beings or as economic actors of non-capitalist development as opposed to consumers, can be a step towards a diverse economy. This in turn, I suggest with Gibson-Graham, can "[deconstruct] the hegemony of capitalism to open up a discursive space for the prevalence and diversity of noncapitalist economic activity world-wide" (2006, p. x). For as I have argued, being swept in a capitalist discourse of property law and ownership also needs challenging if new imaginings are possible, as with fences, they create barriers to possible imaginings of land and resources as commons based on institutional practises. Like the definitions of ideology reminds us, it is hard to think outside them.

---

[16] My argument is not that projects such as urban farms can replace the whole capitalist economy. Want I want is to bring non-capitalist and horizontal development to the fore as other ways of perceiving growth that is not necessarily only seen as secondary to or appropriated as a step towards further capital accumulation.

A new politics of the subject can be illuminated from Graeber and his reliance on the work of Dan Wolk (and Pierre Bourdieu) and of Terence Turner, suggesting that identity-based groups act in spaces or social "fields", "[e]ach imagined as a kind of game where the players are vying to accumulate some form of "capital", but at the same time, there is a higher level game, of dominance, subordination, and autonomy (…)" (2013, p. 228). Graeber writes that politics (based on Terence Turner here), which I believe took place in the Baltic Triangle's urban spaces, is:

> not just to accumulate value, but to define what value is, and how different values (forms of "honor," "capital," etc.) dominate, encompass, or otherwise relate to one another; and thus at the same time, between those imaginary arenas in which they are realized. In the end, political struggle is and must always be about the meaning of life. (Graeber, 2013, p. 228).

Where do we grow from here?

Based on the ethnographic material and subsequent analysis in this thesis, I have pointed to two paradoxes. The first is linked to temporality, in that private development companies have ownership over urban spaces and power to keep it in their permanent control, but their activities are fleeting and impermanent, aimed at capitalist growth and connected to a global financial market, always expanding. The grassroot in contrast occupy meanwhile spaces, but aim and hope for rootedness, and to build a resilient community. The actors meet in these meanwhile spaces, each with their own vision of how they think the city should grow. The second paradox is related to the first, for the actors are united by a seemingly politically neutral language of common values of revitalization, culture, community, and 'cool', that conceals a capitalist ideology of growth from view, leaving the grassroot with ambivalence on where to go next. However, there is agency in how the grassroot manoeuvre themselves as agents in the political urban landscape. It is done through projects of horizontal development based on social and cultural capital that are part of making new citizen subjects outside a capitalist hegemonic mode of thinking.

What comes first in deconstructing the hegemony of capitalism – changing practice, or changing rhetoric? And which is most powerful in challenging ideologies that "are meant to persuade, that guide people's actions and help them see and understand the world" (West, 2016, p. 5)? I do not believe I have the answer to this. As Fredric Jameson succinctly

observes, it has become easier to imagine the destruction of the earth than the end of capitalism; "perhaps that is due to some weakness in our imagination" (Jameson in Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. ix). Or as Mat after the Baltic Farm event told me in his own words: "A good old apocalypse would be the best way to restart society on a greater and more progressive path". There is hardly one right answer, and I do not assume I have the solutions. However, some directions can carefully be pointed to based on the analysis presented in this thesis. I suggest rhetoric, practice, and imagination must go hand in hand. Changing rhetoric can involve a deconstruction of private property's superior status to access and commons. Moreover, changing practice can involve local government's active community centred involvement, not only putting down guidelines and recommendations or facilitating private investment, but stricter policy in the use of urban space. And if these two things start to emerge, then the grassroots' visions of urban futures can perhaps go from being perceived as utopian to be seen as a real alternative to capitalisms hegemony. Growth then, hand in hand with visions of urban futures – the questions I wanted to discuss in this thesis – is in the Baltic Triangle, and perhaps other small-scale organic urban project movements, based on horizontal development through embodied work, and social and cultural capital. The role of meanwhile spaces temporality in Liverpool is tied up to how growth is depicted and imagined: as arenas imbued with different meanings and with different value(s). They are arenas where the local and global meet, "as projects", where small-scale and large-scale "world-making dreams and schemes" are localised (Tsing, 2000, p. 347). A sense of community, cultivated by grassroot projects in the Baltic Triangle, is nonscalable, and must therefore exist outside a capitalist hegemony, not within it. What is left is challenging growth as expansion, and expansion as progress by bringing horizontal development and self-sufficiency to the fore as a real alternative to capitalist practices, rhetoric and economy.

REFERENCES

Appadurai, A. (1986). Introduction: commodities and the politics of value. In A. Appadurai

(Ed.), *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective,* (pp. 3-63).

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Barth, F. (1967). Economic spheres in Darfur. In R. Firth (Ed.), *Themes in economic*

anthropology, (pp. 149-174). Routledge.

BBC. (2004, July 29). Red light zone sites identified. *BBC*. Retrieved from

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/merseyside/3936629.stm

BBC. (2017, July 14). Liverpool Chinatown: Council want £200m plan 'back on track'. *BBC*.

Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-merseyside-40598863

Bernard, H. (2006). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative methods*

(4th ed.). Lanham: AltaMira Press.

Blim, M. (2000). Capitalisms in late modernity. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 29, 25-38.

Bohannan, P., & Bohannan, L. (1968). *Tiv economy*. London: Longmans.

Bourdieu, P. (1989). Social Space and Symbolic Power. *Sociological Theory*, 7(1), 14-25.

doi:10.2307/202060

Bourdieu, P. (2011). The forms of capital. In T. Kaposy & I. Szeman (Eds.), *Cultural*

theory: An anthology. Wiley-Blackwell. (Original work published in 1986).

Bracking, S. (2020). Financialization and the Environmental Frontier. In P. Mader, P. D.

Mertens, N. van der Zwan (Eds.). *The Routledge International Handbook of*

Financialization. London: Routledge.

https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.4324/9781315142876

Checker, M. (2011). Wiped out by the "Greenwave": Environmental gentrification and the

paradoxical politics of urban sustainability. *City & Society*, 23(2), 210-229.

Clammer, J. (2015). *Art culture and international development*. London: Routledge.

https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.4324/9781315775555

Collins, J. (2017). *The politics of value: Three movements to change how we think about the economy.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (2000). *Thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia.* London: Continuum International Publishing.

Duckenfield, D. (2019, November 28). Hillsborough: Timeline of the 1989 stadium disaster. *BBC.* Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-merseyside-47697569

Escobar, A. (1988). Power and visibility: Development and the invention and management of the Third World. *Cultural Anthropology*, 3(4), 428-443.

Ferry, E. E. & Limbert, M. E. (2008). Introduction. In E. E. Ferry & M. E. Limbert (Eds.) *Timely assets: The politics of resources and their temporalities.* Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press

Foucault, M. (1982). The Subject and Power. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4), 777-795.

Frankie. (2019, April 26). Baltic Profiles: Jayne Casey. *Liverpool Baltic Triangle.* Retrieved from https://baltictriangle.co.uk/baltic-profiles-jayne-casey/

Gibson-Graham, J. (2006). *The end of capitalism (as we knew it): A feminist critique of political economy*. Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell.

Giles, C. & Hawkins, B. (2004). *Storehouses of Empire. Liverpool's Historic Warehouses.* London: English Heritage.

Graeber, D. (2001). *Toward an anthropological theory of value: The false coin of our own dreams*. New York: Palgrave.

Graeber, D. (2013). It is value that brings universes into being. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 3(2), 219-243.

Hann, C. (2015). Property: Anthropological aspects. In J. D. Wright (Ed.). *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (2nd ed.), (pp. 153-159).

https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.12218-4

Hann, C. & Hart, K. (2011). *Economic Anthropology: History, ethnography, critique.* Cambridge: Polity.

Harvey, D. (2000). *Spaces of hope.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Harvey, D. (2003). The right to the city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27(4), 939-941.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harvey, P., & Krohn-Hansen, C. (2018). Introduction. Dislocating labour: Anthropological reconfigurations. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 24(S1), 10-28.

Herzfeld, M. (2010). Engagement, gentrification, and the neoliberal hijacking of history. *Current Anthropology*, 51(S2), S259-S267.

Ho, K. Z. (2009). *Liquidated: An ethnography of Wall Street*. Duke University Press Books.

Horne, A. (2014, July 31). Don't Let Dickhead Developers Kill Liverpool's Club Scene. *Vice*. Retrieved from https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/dp9z4m/dont-let-developers-kill-liverpools-club-scene-729

Houghton, A. (2017, November 1). Mayor Joe: Don't blame me for New Chinatown collapse. *Liverpool Echo*. Retrieved from https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/business/mayor-joe-dont-blame-new-13842796

Houghton, A. (2019, January 15). New masterplan aims to save the Baltic Triangle. *Liverpool Echo*. Retrieved from https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/business/new-masterplan-aims-save-baltic-15677250

Humphrey, C. & Verdery, K. (2004). Introduction: Raising questions about property. In C. Humphrey & K. Verdery (eds.) *Property in Question: Value transformation in the global economy*, (pp.1-28). Oxford: Berg.

Hutchinson, S. (1992). The cattle of money and the cattle of girls among the Nuer, 1930–83.

American Ethnologist, 19(2), 294-316. doi: 10.1525/ae.1992.19.2.02a00060

Inclusive Growth Plan. (2018). *Liverpool City Council.* Retrieved from

> https://liverpool.gov.uk/media/1356877/mayoral-growth-may-2018-a3-spreads.pdf

Jaffe, R., & Koning, A. (2016). *Introducing urban anthropology*. London: Routledge.

Jesset, E. (2020, February 19). Baltic Farm plans approved for new Chinatown

> Development. *Liverpool Baltic Triangle.* Retrieved from

> https://baltictriangle.co.uk/baltic-farm-plans-approved-for-new-chinatown-

> development/

Kopytoff, I. (1986). The cultural biography of things: Commoditization as process. In A.

> Appadurai (ed), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspectiv*e (pp.

> 64-92). Cambridge University Press.

Levien, M. (2018). *Dispossession without development: Land grabs in neoliberal India*. New

> York: Oxford University Press.

Lewellen, T. (2003). *Political Anthropology: An Introduction* (3rd ed.). Westport, Conn:

> Praeger. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.uio.no

Liverpool Baltic Triangle (n.d.). Retrieved from https://baltictriangle.co.uk/about/

Low, S. (1999). *Theorizing the city: The new urban anthropology reader*. New Brunswick:

> Rutgers University Press.

Low, S. (2017). Public Space and the Public Sphere: The Legacy of Neil

> Smith. *Antipode, 49*(S1), 153-170.

Low, S., & Lawrence-Zúñiga, D. (2003). Locating culture. In S. Low & D. Lawrence-Zúñiga

> (Eds.), *The Anthropology of space and place: Locating culture*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Madden, R. (2017). *Being ethnographic: A guide to the theory and practice of ethnography*

> (2nd ed.). London: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi: 10.4135/9781529716689

Marketing Liverpool. (2019, January 15). City to develop masterplan for the Baltic Triangle.

Retrieved from https://www.marketingliverpool.co.uk/2019/01/15/city-to-develop-masterplan-for-baltic-triangle/

Martin, K. (2013). *The death of the big men and the rise of the big shot: Custom and conflict in East New Britain*. New York: Berghahn.

McIntyre-Brown, A. (2001). *Liverpool: The first 1000 years*. Liverpool: Garlic Press.

Merseyside Maritime Museum, [MMM]. (2019). On the waterfront. [Exhibition].

Nader, L. (1972). *Up the anthropologist: Perspectives gained from studying up*. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED065375

Narotzky, S. (2018). Rethinking the concept of labour. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 24(1)1, 29-43. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.12797

Parkinson, M. (1985). *Liverpool on the brink: One city's struggle against governments cuts.* Cambridge: Burlington Press.

Parkinson, M. (2019). *Liverpool beyond the brink: The remaking of a post imperial city.* Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Peiser, R. (2015). Real estate development. In J. D. Wright (Ed.). *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences.* Orlando: University of Central Florida.

Pérez, G. (2002). The other 'real world': Gentrification and the social construction of place in Chicago. *Urban Anthropology*, 31(1), 37-68.

Polanyi, K. (1944). *The great transformation*. New York: Farrar & Rinehart.

Pye, K. (2017). *Liverpool at work. People and industries through the years*. Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing.

Regenerating Liverpool. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://regeneratingliverpool.com

Regenerating Liverpool (2017, December). Baltic Triangle development framework.

Retrieved from http://regeneratingliverpool.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Baltic-Triangle-Development-Framework-Final-Version-Dec-2017.pdf

Richardson, T., & Weszkalnys, G. (2014). Introduction: Resource materialities. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 87(1), 5-30.

Rose, C. (2004). Economic claims and the challenges of new property. In K. Verdery & C. Humphrey (Eds.), *Property in Question: Value transformation in the global economy*, (pp. 275-296). Oxford: Berg.

Salemink, O., & Rasmussen, M. (2016). After dispossession Ethnographic approaches to neoliberalization. *Focaal*, (74), 3-12.

Science and Industry Museum. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.scienceandindustrymuseum.org.uk/objects-and-stories/making-the-liverpool-and-manchester-railway

Scott, J. (2014). Cultural capital. *A Dictionary of Sociology* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press. Retrieved from https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.uio.no/view/10.1093/acref/9780199683581.001.0001/acref-9780199683581-e-474

Sharp, L. A. (2000). The commodification of the body and its parts. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 29, 287-328.

Sharples, J. & Stonard, J. (2008). *Built on Commerce. Liverpool's Central Business District*. Swindon: English Heritage.

Shore Projects. (n.d.). *Tristan Brady-Jacobs*. Retrieved March 26, 2020, from https://www.shoreprojects.com/blogs/news/89153473-tristan-brady-jacobs

Smith, N. (1982). Gentrification and Uneven Development. *Economic Geography*, 58(2), 139-155. doi:10.2307/143793

Smith, N. (1996). *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*. London: Routledge.

Spradley, J. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Taussig, M. (1980). *The devil and commodity fetishism in South America*. Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press.

The Baltic Farm Liverpool (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.thebalticfarm.co.uk

The Baltic Farm Liverpool (2019). [Vision document]. *The Baltic Farm Liverpool*. Retrieved from https://da5d03ff-0d40-4e09-a641-5979579fc142.filesusr.com/ugd/ee565f_84d15024ccff4818b9e3de0c6d4e8b6a.pdf

The Great George St. Project. (GGP). (n.d.a). Retrieved June 1, 2020, from https://thegreatgeorgestproject.co.uk.

The Great George St. Project. (GGP). [@GreatGeorgeSt]. (n.d.b). *Tweets* [Twitter profile]. Twitter. Retrieved June 1, 2020, from https://twitter.com/GreatGeorgeSt

The Great George St. Project. (GGP). [@GreatGeorgeSt]. (2019a, February 7). *This is the place where evolution, imagination and ambition knit together. The Great George Street Project is bringing to life*. [Image attached] [Tweet]. Twitter. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/GreatGeorgeSt/status/1093536376073699329

The Great George St. Project. (GGP). [@GreatGeorgeSt]. (2019b, May 2). *The 'meanwhile use' refers to the short-term use of temporarily empty buildings or land until they can be Brought back*. [Image attached] [Tweet]. Twitter. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/GreatGeorgeSt/status/1123958458812960773

The Great George St. Project. (GGP). [@GreatGeorgeSt]. (2019c, May 8). *Neal Hunter talks about the gross development value*. [Video] [Tweet]. Twitter. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/GreatGeorgeSt/status/1126117809484894208

The Great George St. Project [@GreatGeorgeSt]. (2019d, December 10). *The Great George*

Street Project has today been approved by @lpoolcouncil Planning Committee Raising hands 3.5 hectares of new residential, office & commercial. [GIF attached] [Tweet]. Twitter. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/GreatGeorgeSt/status/1204362059871346688

The Great George St. Project. (GGP). [@GreatGeorgeSt]. (2020a, February 18). *Landscaped gardens, wide footways, a cycleway, the latest in urban agriculture technology, and edible planting. All with the health &*. [Image attached] [Tweet]. Twitter. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/GreatGeorgeSt/status/1229831724802224142

The Great George St. Project. (GGP). [@GreatGeorgeSt]. (2020b, March 12). *Following years of decline, Great George Street will be revitalised with apartments, family homes & creative workspaces for businesses to.* [Image attached] [Tweet]. Twitter. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/GreatGeorgeSt/status/1238150298192969728

The Great George St. Project. (GGP). [@GreatGeorgeSt]. (2020c, March 16). *Like many parts of #Liverpool Great George Street entered into decline, with post-war social housing suffering from poor design &*. [Image attached] [Tweet]. Twitter. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/GreatGeorgeSt/status/1239578940034990087

Tsing, A. (2000). The Global Situation. *Cultural Anthropology*, 15(3), 327-360.

Tsing, A. (2012). On nonscalability: The Living World Is Not Amenable to Precision-Nested Scales. *Common Knowledge*, 18(3), 505-524.

Tsing, A. (2013). Sorting out commodities. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 3(1), 21 43.

Tyrell, N. (2019, December 10). Controversial plans for city centre site approved despite warning it will change the skyline forever. *Liverpool Echo*. Retrieved from https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/controversial-plans-city-centre-site-17396448

UK government (n.d.). Leasehold property. *GOV.UK*. Retrieved from

https://www.gov.uk/leasehold-property

UK government. (2019, June 28). Population. *GOV.UK*. Retrieved from

https://liverpool.gov.uk/council/keystatistics-and-data/data/population/

United Nations (n.d.). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision. Retrieved from

https://population.un.org/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2018-KeyFacts.pdf

Wainwright, O. (2018, March 13). Edgy urban apartments, lavish promos – and a trail of

angry investors. *The Guardian.*

https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/mar/13/buyer-funded-development-scandal

WARPliverpool (n.d.). *About.* [Facebook page]. Facebook. Retrieved May 23, 2020, from

https://www.facebook.com/pg/warpliverpool/about/?ref=page_internal

WARPliverpool (2018, September 17). *LANDMARKS AND MENTAL HEALTH*

Hooray - another victory for the planners in ripping apart our health and mental

wellbeing for. [Status update] [Image attached]. Facebook. Retrieved from

https://www.facebook.com/warpliverpool/

WARPliverpool. (2019, September 19). *Come one come all... its ours. so lets make it work.....*

[Status update] [Image attached]. Facebook. Retrieved from

https://www.facebook.com/warpliverpool/

West, P. (2016). *Dispossession and the Environment*. Columbia University Press

Whateley, L. (2017). 20 coolest places to live in Britain. *The Times.* Retrieved from

https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/20-coolest-places-to-live-in-britain-qc8f28xvb