Chapter 2. Public space in transition

This chapter includes a review of the international literature on public space, and it is divided into five sections. First, the definition and dimensions of public space are reviewed to introduce the research topic and determine the boundaries of the research. In the second section, the changing nature of public space is described through an analysis of the effects of societal shifts (e.g., economic, sociocultural and political) on public space. The next section specifically examines the concepts of co-production of public space and POPS, which is a type of co-produced public space. Following an overview of the research topic, additional information is provided regarding the context of rapid urbanisation and post-socialism. A research gap is identified at the end of the literature review, and it is described in the final section.

2.1. Public space – definition and dimensions

The term "public space" has multiple definitions because it has been studied within a variety of disciplines (Neugebauer & Rekhviashvili, 2015). The broad meaning and varied conceptualisation of the term may cause confusion. The fact that different authors have used different terms (e.g., urban public space, public space, public place, public realm, public sphere) without offering a clear definition or interpretation further complicates the situation. Many authors have been vague in their use of these terms in relation to one another (Varna, 2014). It is a daunting task to define public space; however, an attempt must be made to determine the boundary of the present research. A review of the literature indicates that there are a number of key dimensions used to define public space, including ownership, management, accessibility, and inclusiveness. These four dimensions will be discussed in depth in the following paragraphs.

Ownership, which defines the legal status of a space, is the most straightforward dimension by which to define public space (Langstraat & Van Melik, 2013). According to De Magalhães (2010), this dimension does not 'necessarily refer to public ownership, but to the rules and mechanisms through which a variety of stakes in a particular public space are recognised in its governance, and through which conflicts and disputes between different stakes can be solved' (563). Indeed, the fact that a space is publicly owned does not guarantee that it possesses the essential qualities of a public space (De Magalhães, 2010). Some public spaces are provided and maintained through state ownership, but private ownership is also possible. In fact, public life increasingly occurs in privately owned settings including cafés, bookstores, bars, and other small private locations (Oldenburg, 1989). Similarly, Worpole and Knox (2007) have argued that 'gathering at the school gate, activities in community facilities, shopping malls, cafés and car boot sales are all arenas where people meet and create places of exchange' (4).

Ownership, in many cases, is directly related to operation in that publicly owned spaces are publicly operated and privately owned spaces are privately operated (Németh & Schmidt, 2011). However, there are also spaces in which ownership and operation are mixed. Hence, four combinations are possible regarding ownership and operation of spaces: (a) publicly owned and operated; (b) publicly owned and privately operated; (c) privately owned and publicly operated; and (d) privately owned and operated (Németh & Schmidt, 2011). In recent years, spaces characterised by mixed ownership and operation have become increasingly popular (Katz, 2006).

Maintenance, another important dimension of public space, can be divided into three categories, i.e., cleanliness, provision of amenities and the practice of control (Lee & Scholten, 2022). The maintenance of a space refers to the manner in which a space is cared for on a daily basis and the provision of amenities in the space (Langstraat & Van Melik, 2013). A well-lit, clean, and inviting public space in which amenities for basic needs are provided encourages access and use, whereas a lack of amenities and over- or undermanagement may discourage access to and use of the space (Varna & Tiesdell, 2010). Maintenance can also refer to the practice of control in a space (Langstraat & Van Melik, 2013) through overt techniques (e.g., the presence of surveillance cameras and security guard) and more subtle cues and codes (Whyte, 1988). However, the presence of control does not reduce the publicness of public space; rather, the determining factor is the purpose of control (Varna & Tiesdell, 2010). For example, the posting of a set of rules does not

affect publicness negatively if the aim of the rules is to exclude anti-social behaviours. However, the setting of rules in a public space becomes problematic if the aim is to protect the interests of the powerful.

Accessibility is another significant dimension of public space, as evidenced by several definitions in the literature. For example, the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM, 2001, as cited in Van Melik, 2008) offers a notably broad and inclusive definition of public space as 'all freely accessible spaces' (2). Similarly, Orum and Neal (2009) define public space as 'all areas that are open and accessible to all members of the public in a society in principle, though not necessarily in practice' (2). Carr et al. (1992) also emphasises accessibility by stating that public spaces 'are usually open and accessible to the public' (50). Accessibility includes whether members of the public can reach and enter the space, as well as the amount of effort required to do so (Varna & Tiesdell, 2010). Public spaces that are well located within a city's movement pattern are likely to attract people (Hillier, 1996). The design of public space is another important part of accessibility. Entrances or thresholds are seen as a barrier; thus, public spaces that do not have such physical entrances have greater potential for use (Langstraat & Van Melik, 2013). Visual accessibility is also a crucial factor in that public spaces can only be used if they are visible from the outside (Lee & Scholten, 2022).

The final dimension of public space is inclusiveness, which refers to the degree to which 'a place meets the demands of different individuals and groups' (Langstraat & Van Melik, 2013, 435). Public spaces that are designed for and used by different types of users are considered inclusive (Langstraat & Van Melik, 2013). As Franck and Paxson (1989) assert, 'the greater diversity of people and activities allowed and manifested in a space, the greater its publicness' (131). The core elements of inclusiveness include the specific physical configuration and design elements that support use of and activity in a public space. Inclusive public spaces accommodate users' needs for comfort, relaxation, passive and active engagement, discovery, and display (Carr et al., 1992; Carmona et al., 2010). Public spaces must allow for spontaneity and unscripted, unprogrammed activities in order to encourage engagement, play, and discovery (Stevens, 2007). The notion of "loose space" (i.e., adaptable, unrestricted, and multifunctional that are both ad hoc and planned; see Frank & Stevens, 2006) is well suited to inclusiveness. Interestingly, public space that 'might appear more public to some might feel less public to others' (Németh & Schmidt, 2011, 12).

In summary, there is no one-size-fits-all definition of public space. Therefore, public space should be considered a multi-dimensional concept with a range of possible dimensions. There are four different models of measuring the publicness of public space that take a multi-dimensional approach:

- Cobweb model by Van Melik, Van Aalst and Van Weesep (2007)
- Tri-axial model by Németh and Schmidt (2011)
- Star model by Varna and Tiesdell (2010)
- OMAI model by Langstraat and Van Melik (2013)

Each of these models is based on a multifaceted definition of public space. Failure to meet the requirements of a single dimension does not necessarily categorise a space as private (Kohn, 2004). These models are useful because they enable measurements of the publicness of public space, which in turn allows comparisons of the publicness of different public spaces.

2.2. The changing nature of public space

Public spaces are produced by and within a society, as sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1990) has claimed. As society changes, so does public space. Public space has undergone a number of transitions over time and will continue to evolve in the future. Societal shifts can be classified as economic, sociocultural, and political (Asbeek Brusse et al., 2002, as cited in Van Melik, 2008) and each of these shift types has specific effects on public space. In this section, these dynamics and their effects on public space will be described.

Global economic changes have led to increased investment in public spaces because such investments have proven to be economically lucrative (Van Melik, 2008). Cities compete nationally and internationally so that they can accommodate investments, businesses, tourists, and high-income residents (Madanipour, 2003; Gospodini, 2006; Groth & Corijn, 2005; Short & Kim, 1999), and impressive buildings and events alone are not sufficient (Van Melik, 2008). The presence of public spaces that connect buildings and activities is an important factor for people and companies seeking a new location (Madanipour, 2003). Hence, cities invest in public spaces to make themselves look safe and appealing while also providing a variety of amenities and facilities expected by citizens (Madanipour, 2003). Businesses have also reaped economic benefits from the creation of public spaces (Punter, 1990).

Safe and entertaining public spaces attract people to an area and generate increased economic activity as people spend money in cafés and bars (Van Melik, 2008). Developers often seek to include public space within schematics for new properties while retaining their ownership and maintenance responsibility.

Sociocultural dynamics are closely linked to the trends of individualisation and multiculturalism, both of which have contributed to an increase in the differentiation of urban lifestyles (Florida, 2002). Accordingly, desires and demands related to public space have become differentiated, meaning it is difficult to design neutral public spaces (Van Melik, 2008). In today's heterogeneous society, individual users of public spaces have diverse and competing interests, which may lead to conflicts (Carr et al., 1992; Lofland, 1998; Zukin, 1998). According to Goss (1996), one should not 'blame festival marketplaces for failing to provide equal access to all members of a mystical general public – which does not and cannot exist in an ethnically and class-divided society' (231). To cater to the different needs of the public, therefore, diverse public spaces (e.g., vibrant and commercial, serious and civic, peaceful and relaxing) are created to serve the different needs of the public (Carmona, 2019).

Additionally, members of the public have become increasingly concerned with safety. As Ellin (2001) has argued, 'we no longer go out to mingle with the anonymous urban crowd in the hope of some new unexpected experience or encounter, a characteristic feature of earlier urban life' (875). Although crime is concentrated in specific locations, fear and insecurity are widespread (Brunt, 1996, as cited in Van Melik, 2008). Developers have addressed security concerns by providing enhanced security measures in public spaces. In addition to direct security measures (e.g., supervision by security guards and installation of surveillance cameras), several indirect measures (e.g., hide-approach and the installation of sadistic street furniture) are in use (Van Melik, 2008). Secured public spaces have been developed as people go to controlled areas such as shopping malls, sport arenas, and theme parks.

The trend of increased security has highlighted concerns regarding the privatisation of public spaces. Indeed, scholars such as Michael Sorkin (1992) and Nan Ellin (1999) warned the privatisation of urban space and the subsequent loss of public space in the United States and other parts of the Western world. As Loukaitou-Sideris (1993) described, '[…] privatization is not simply a change of delivery system of a public amenity; it is a process in which the meaning and purposes of public open space are redefined and reshaped in the context of changing socio-economic and political relationships' (160). The key

issue of privatisation is that individual private landlords who own and manage private-public spaces can restrict access and control activities in those spaces (Minton, 2006). This issue is controversial issue, and some scholars have argued that the fact that a space is private rather than public 'does not determine either its quality as a place, or its potential role as part of the public realm' (Carmona, 2010, 161).

Finally, political dynamics include democratisation, decentralisation, and the rearrangement of the public and private spheres. Democratisation is achieved by involving the public in decision-making processes regarding public space. By doing so, the government may gain public support for policies and financial cooperation such as tax payments (Van Melik, 2008). Decentralisation and rearrangement of public and private spheres are connected. Due to a lack of available state money, the nation-state often shifts the responsibility for public spaces to local authorities. However, local governments alone are unable and unwilling to bear sole responsibility for public space, due to limited financial resources for investing in public spaces (De Magalhães, 2010; Langstraat & Van Melik, 2013). Thus, local authorities increasingly cooperate with non-municipal actors such as private companies to develop public spaces (Loukaitou-Sideris & Banerjee, 1998; Zukin, 1998; Banerjee, 2001; Carmona et al., 2010). This approach saves government expenses and contributes to the creation of more spectacular and well-maintained spaces.

Scrutiny of the existing research reveals that economic, sociocultural, and political dynamics have important effects on public space. Economic dynamics have increased the quality of public spaces, whereas sociocultural dynamics have led to public spaces that are diverse and secure. Political dynamics have resulted in co-produced public spaces that rely on the engagement of various actors. In summary, contemporary public space constantly evolves to adjust to societal changes, and new forms of public space lead to critical debates.

2.3. Co-production of public space and POPS

Changes in the use and production of public space reflect wider societal changes. In the previous section, three characteristics of contemporary public space that reflect changes in society were discussed (i.e., high quality, diversity and security, and co-production). This section further examines the

concept of co-production of public space and describes POPS, which is a specific type of co-produced public space.

Public space is often regarded as traditional public good (Van Melik & Van der Krabben, 2016). The public sector, particularly local government, is thought to be the party responsible for public space provision and management. However, local governments increasingly lack the budget, incentive, and capacity for public space provision and management, particularly in densely populated cities where public space congests and degrades at a fast pace (Webster, 2007). One solution to preserve the quality of public space is to actively involve private actors (Berding et al., 2010). A wide range of stakeholders have been brought into public space provision and management. These entities share the costs, rights, and responsibilities of public space with the local government (Van Melik & Van der Krabben, 2016). Co-production differs from privatisation in that it implies cooperation rather than a complete transfer of responsibility to the private sector (Stolk, 2013, as citied in Van Melik & Van der Krabben, 2016).

The boundary between public and private spheres regarding public space has become increasingly blurred as a wide array of organisations and people have become involved in the provision and management of public spaces. Many examples of co-produced public spaces exist, particularly in liberal welfare states such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Public-private partnerships for the project organisation, financing, and ownership of public spaces have become increasingly common (Carmona et al., 2019). As a result, various kinds of public spaces have newly emerged. The concept of hybrid space has evolved to encompass the different types of public, semi-public, semi-private, and private spaces (Nisse, 2008). Some examples include business improvement districts, POPS, and conservancies. The remainder of this section will examine the concept and function of POPS.

POPS are 'a mechanism to increase provision of public space, particularly in densely built-up urban areas' (Lee, 2020, 1). These spaces are also referred to as "bonus plazas", because builders receive additional floor-area ratio in exchange for providing and maintaining publicly accessible spaces at the street level (Smithsimon, 2008). The provision of POPS in New York City in 1960s was the first instance where the public goal (i.e., delivery of public space) was met by private builders in order to achieve planning and zoning goals (Smithsimon, 2008; Kayden et al., 2000; Whyte, 1988). The idea of POPS has become increasingly popular and has since been implemented across the United States and around the world (Kayden et al., 2000; Whyte,

1988). Banerjee (2001) has described three key trends that contribute to the rise of POPS: (a) increased use of the market to provide public goods and services; (b) growth of transnational corporate power and prioritisation of the global economy over local public interests; and (c) technologically advanced forms of communication that have altered the character of social relations and redefined traditional conceptions of place and location.

By definition, POPS are hybrid spaces. The government defines the public right to the space and sets rules about the use of the space, whereas the market invests money and is in charge of providing and maintaining the space. The degree of citizens' involvement in POPS varies considerably in different cities and countries. In New York City, for example, non-profit organisations such as Advocates for Privately Owned Public Space and The Municipal Art Society of New York have collaborated to revitalise new and existing POPS by bringing together various actors such as residents and civic artists (APOPS et al., n.d.).

POPS are 'no different than public space in the sense that they are publicly accessible and useable' (Lee, 2020, 3). Although privately owned and managed, POPS must be open to the public as per agreement with the local government, and they are required to meet common standards for public spaces. POPS have several functions that benefit citizens, as summarised by Kang et al. (2009). First of all, the original function of POPS is to provide walking space and resting area. Since POPS are scattered across cities, they can benefit residents by offering a place to rest and interact with others. Secondly, from an ecological perspective, POPS conserve natural resources and improve the environment. Additionally, POPS function from an architectural perspective as outdoor spaces of buildings that connect to the lower part of buildings. Finally, from an urban design perspective, POPS connect the surrounding area and improve the cityscape. In all, POPS are co-produced public spaces that serve various functions in urban areas.

2.4. Urban transformation as context

The previous sections provided an overview of the research topic, and this section describes the transitional context in which the research topic is embedded. Transformation is a broad term that is often used as a metaphor for societal change. Researchers and practitioners rely on vague definitions of transformational change. However, Iwaniec et al. (2019) distinguish between two types of transformation—unintentional and intentional—based on

whether the outcome of an event is intended or not. Unintentional changes are often undesirable and unforeseen side effects that typically follow a disruptive event such as a war or natural disaster. The literature related to unintentional change examines how events transform a city or allow for transformation. In the scholarly literature, the dominant framing of unintentional transformation of cities focuses on forced transformation and mitigating undesirable changes or adapting to disturbances (Folke et al., 2010; Crépin et al., 2012). However, disruptive events can also create opportunities for intentional transformation. For example, the process of urbanisation involves multiple political, economic, and social drivers that can encourage local government, private investors, and reformers to promote and implement change in a city (Harvey, 2000). Such changes (e.g., toward economic growth, environmentally sustainable development, and social justice) can be classified as intentional transformations. The research examines public space in the context of both unintentional and intentional transformation. It not only examines how certain events or planned interventions produce unintended effects in relation to public space but also illustrates how cities may use such consequences as an opportunity for sharing their responsibility with other actors. The following paragraphs will provide a review of the literature related to two relevant contexts: rapid urbanisation and post-socialism.

The term "urbanisation" refers to the demographic process of shifting a country's population balance from rural to urban areas (Jenkins et al., 2007). Currently, half of the global population lives in cities; two-thirds of the world's population is predicted to live in urban areas by 2050 (United Nations, 2018). Migration to towns and cities may be motivated by several factors, including economic opportunities, education, disaster, famine, and war. Conventional economic theories of urbanisation and migration explain urban growth as a function of economic development, whereas traditional social theory emphasises push and pull factors (Jenkins et al., 2007). Urbanisation is not a new phenomenon, but it has increased significantly in the past 200 years since the Industrial Revolution.

The short and rapid history of industrialisation and subsequent urbanisation is a common pattern in East Asian countries. Many of these countries have reached a level of industrialisation in the past few decades that took countries in the West at least a century to reach (Miao, 2001). Accordingly, East Asian countries have seen both rapid urban expansion and population growth. The total urban land of the East Asia region grew from 106,000 square kilometres in 2000 to 135,000 square kilometres in 2010, and the total urban

population of the region increased from 579 million in 2000 to 778 million in 2010 (World Bank Group, 2015). This rapid transition has had an enormous impact on the physical environment due to the increased number of people and their activities, as well as the increased demands on resources and services ranging from housing to transportation access. It is a daunting task for the public sector to provide a rapidly increasing population with sufficient resources and public services.

East Asian cities are also characterised by high population density. Large cities tend to attract additional population growth due to labour supplies, capital, and the concentration of infrastructure. In 2000, the urban population and population density of East Asian countries were denser than urban areas in other areas of the world, including Europe, Latin America, and North America (World Bank Group, 2015). The majority of urban areas in East Asia grew denser between 2000 and 2010. High population density, often coupled with high building density, has a strong influence on cities. Therefore, it is essential to understand the distribution and density of people in a city or country to ensure that appropriate resources and services are available where they are needed (Ritchie & Roser, 2018).

The trend of post-socialism also provides important context for this research. The political and economic transformation in Central and Eastern Europe following the fall of socialism has created a unique circumstance in time and space, and the influence of this transformation on urban space has provided ample opportunity for studies on urban transformation and urban planning in times of rapid changes. The most important post-socialist political changes include the revival of the multi-party system and free parliamentary elections. Another significant element of political transformation related to urban change is decentralisation. Important post-socialist economic transformations include the free flow of foreign capital investments and modern technology to Central and Eastern Europe (Kovács, 1999). As global corporations have expanded, the built environments of post-socialist cities have altered rapidly. Some neighbourhoods have experienced revitalization, whereas others have encountered social exclusion. Industrial areas have turned to ghost zones within months due to the closure of many state-run enterprises (Stanilov, 2007). Polarization and growing competition within the urban network of Eastern Europe have also impacted urban spaces. Cities, and particularly capital cities, have benefited from post-socialist urban transformation; however, other places such as socialist new

towns and traditional industrial centres have suffered recessions as a result of these transformations.

Some scholars have argued that the recent urban restructuring has caused post-socialist cities to lose socialist features and acquire capitalist forms (Häussermann, 1996). This argument seems somewhat valid, because many of the problems and processes that have become typical in post-socialist cities in recent years also existed in Western Europe two or three decades earlier (Kovács, 1999). Hirt (2006) has argued that built forms in post-socialist cities have changed to become similar to forms in capitalist cities, but differences exist in the pace and intensity of these forms. Moreover, Hirt explains that the causes of urban restructuring differ between post-socialist and capitalist cities. In the post-socialist context, an economic downturn, a rapid withdrawal of the public sector from housing production, and the breakup of large state building firms have all contributed to urban restructuring. The situation also differs between cities in Central and Eastern Europe. For example, reunification has created a unique condition of urban transformation in Eastern Germany. A factor that differentiates urban restructuring in Germany from that of other post-socialist countries in Europe is the strong support provided by the western part of the unified Germany (Wießer, 1999).

The political and economic restructuring since 1989 has changed all facets of society, which has presented difficult challenges for urban planners. A revision of planning theory and practice was required. One distinct feature of planning in the post-socialist context was a weakened position of the public sector in urban planning (Hirt, 2014). Indeed, public-led planning acquired a negative connotation in the post-socialist world because it was considered a vestige of the communist system. Urban planners also encountered a lack of hard instruments of spatial planning, such as enforceable development plans. Inexperienced planning bureaucracy both in new legal framework and in negotiating with private investors allowed investors to realize their plans (Nuissl & Rink, 2005). Property rights were redefined in favour of private interests, which further limited the capacity of the government (Stanilov, 2007). Nuissl and Rink (2005) have argued that even if planners had had proper instruments, they would not have been able to withstand the pressure from investors, because politicians and planners saw the changing political landscape as an opportunity for their cities. In a climate dominated by a social imperative of deregulation and market liberalisation, the process of privati-

sation was celebrated as evidence of becoming "Western" (Stanilov, 2007; Hirt, 2014).

2.5. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to define public space and highlight its changing nature. Public space is a multi-dimensional concept characterised by a range of dimensions, including ownership, maintenance, accessibility, and inclusiveness. Public spaces are produced by and within a society; as society changes, they constantly evolve. Three characteristics of contemporary public space result from economic, sociocultural, and political shifts: (a) high-quality public space; (b) diverse and secured public space; and (c) co-produced public space. A fundamental goal of the literature review is to identify research gaps. Studies exist regarding the impact of societal shifts on public space in general; however, less is known about the impact of a transitional context on public space, during which societal changes are more dynamic in pace and intensity. The present book is intended to address this research gap.