The participatory agenda

A post-critical, anticipatory intervention

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ABSTRACT

In this article we address the participatory agenda defined as outreach in Danish national cultural policies, tracing specificities to other Nordic and EU cultural policies as well (Bell & Oakley 2015). The article investigates the discursive link that these policies establish between participation, democracy and transformation, and argue that a range of paradoxes emerge once the agenda is translated at local cultural policy levels or by different institutions and adopted into daily practice. The thesis is that the agenda is a configuration
of the “culture complex” as outlined by Tony Bennett (2013), which is to be understood as an “assemblage” of cultural apparatuses under the national policies’ reframing of “Bildung” as “participation”. We argue that that this complex has to be challenged in order for the participatory agenda to take a more – “radical” – democratic direction. Grounded in ideas of a “radical democracy” (Mouffe, 2014) and the “radical institution” (Bishop, 2013), respectively, we focus on key terms in the participatory agenda such as “access”, “agency” and “ownership”, and pursue a conceptual intervention in terms of a “post-critical”, “anticipatory” analysis and practice (Rogoff & Schneider, 2008). The intervention addresses three cases, illustrating three different cultural settings: a) non-profit, “free” art spaces b) the (art) museum, c) the so-called culture regions.

Keywords
participation | outreach | access, agency | ownership | paradox | radical democracy | anticipation | post-criticality

INTRODUCTION
In this article we explore the participatory agenda in Nordic cultural policies, as defined in the Danish national context and announced in The Danish Reach Out-program (2008, 2012), from the perspective of radical democracy and applying an anticipatory, post-critical approach.

The core national policy papers present “participation” as a strategy for attracting more visitors and addressing them in new ways that invite them not only to visit, but also to contribute, co-create and cooperate. The agenda revises previous cultural policies as a means of “democratization”, to “transform” both individuals and societies. The established discursive link between participation, democratization and transformation is reiterated in different cultural policy settings, for instance in the yearly Danish museum survey, in particular the 2014 issue of Museums. Knowledge, Democracy, Transformation (Lundgaard & Jensen 2014). In this study we argue that the participatory agenda constitutes a basic ambiguity as well as a set of more specific paradoxes that emerge when the agenda is made into practice.

In order to critically investigate and challenge these paradoxes we claim that it is necessary to refigure the concept of democracy as driver of transformation, as well as the concept of critique itself. We draw on political thinkers of “radical” democracy (Agamben, 2010; Rancière, 2010; Mouffe, 2013). In the wake of the crisis in modern welfare societies and new global activisms they challenge the pressure on democracy and the need for “democratizing democracy” to move towards a different – “radical” – democracy that is also a direct and emotionally invested democracy. We further base our argument on cultural theorists who wrestle with the idea of “radical” art and the “radical” institution (Rogoff & Schneider, 2008; Raunig 2009; Möntmann 2009; Rogoff 2012; Sternfeld 2013; Bishop 2013). They advocate an embodied, affective, and rela-
tional non- or more-than-representational communicative modus that is also a “post-critical”, “anticipatory” modus by which cultural institutions can embrace new forms of experience, knowledge and social interaction. They focus on terms such as “access”, “agency” and “ownership”, which are all part of the participatory agenda, and ask how they come to include those excluded from public culture and institutions (see in particular Rogoff & Schneider 2008; Rogoff 2012, 2013). They argue that this would imply a conceptual intervention and anticipatory re-appropriation of such keywords, which they see as a post-critical approach (distinguishing between criticism and criticality).

CRITICALITY AS ANTICIPATION

In this article we confront the participatory agenda, as it is manifested in Danish cultural policies, as well as in other, Nordic and European social-liberal societies (Bell & Oakley 2015) with a radical – agonistic – politics as phrased by Chantal Mouffe (2013) and an anticipatory, post-critical analytic practice as expounded by Irit Rogoff (2012, 2013). Drawing on Tony Bennett’s work on cultural policies in modern welfare states, we understand the participatory agenda as a present-day outcome of “the culture complex” (Bennett 2013). This complex arises from the tension between, on the one hand, the ideals of equality and liberty and, on the other hand, the social reality of inequality and necessity which it is supposed to address. As such it takes the form of “Bildung”, ie freedom and equal opportunities through education, maintained by a cultural apparatus of knowledge, institutions, procedures etc. “Bildung” is what gives legitimacy to social-liberal government as a principle of self-governance, a “conduct of conduct”. We argue that the participatory agenda can revitalize the notion of Bildung without necessarily challenging the cultural apparatus and the way it operates. As Bennett states, the cultural apparatus also comprises an assemblage of different minor apparatuses, ripe with paradoxes and thereby open to contestation, – which is the purpose of agonistic politics (Mouffe, 2013).

Our analysis of the participatory agenda takes the form of an anticipatory intervention as suggested by Rogoff and Schneider (2008) and Rogoff (2012), 2013, and as enacted by Raunig (2009), Möntmann (2009), Sternfeld (2013) and Bishop (2013). We consider their method to be discursive intervention, which draws on and transgresses critical theory by reclaiming basic liberal terms such as freedom, liberty and democracy. This approach is influenced by the work of the leftist historian of political ideas Quentin Skinner, whose empirical research explores the performative relationship between conceptual change and political innovation and how it has created the modern, liberal state (Skinner, 1992). So it is a performative action that aims to transform present conditions while struggling with them. In her recent Radical Museology (2013), the art historian Claire Bishop emphasizes that the very concept of the radical has to be re-appropriated to engage a present day public. In terms of the radical institution/museum, it has to imply a break with the principle of representation in art and cultural commu-
nication, the aim of which has been to communicate what is and has been, rather than what must come – to the benefit of well-established social groupings and a cultural hegemony. Her intervention aims to turn the radical museum into a space for addressing people’s everyday life and concerns, as well as their hopes and dreams. This means re-actualizing museum collections, opening up the institutional space and forming links with local communities and other (like-minded) partners. Rogoff and Schneider (2008) expand on the process of an anticipatory, “aspirational” and embodied communicative mode far from the pre-scripted modes, seen in many realizations of the participatory agenda today. What these contributors share is the idea of the ambiguity of the cultural policies of participation and that wrestling with them is “agonistic”, in Mouffe’s meaning of the word, or “dissensual”, in Jacques Rancière’s sense, constituting a complex of adversaries to form a “conflictual consensus”. This can be understood as an agreement of disagreement in the service of radical democracy. Working with the radical institution also means going along with agonistics, re-directing it towards the post-representational and radical democracy.

In the article we elaborate on this framework, focusing on the concepts of access, agency and ownership, respectively, in relation to three different cases: a) a curatorial project in collaboration with non-profit art spaces b) an exhibition space in an art museum, c) a group of regional, urban art projects. Whereas the core concepts are chosen from the key theoretical framework, the three cases are taken from our research project on participation in cultural policies and communication, which explores different institutional settings. The cases are chosen to each reflect a re-conceptualization of the keywords. They are not meant to be representative in their own right, but to serve as a tool for discussion and exploring criticality as anticipation. The three cases have varied structures: the first one outlines a “real-life” intervention of a planned double exhibition of lesser known artists and artworks in a non-profit, non-institutional setting; whereas the second presents an embodied, anticipatory analysis of the much hyped exhibition of Olafur Eliasson’s Riverbed at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art; and the third an “agonistic” analysis of a series of regional urban art projects, Place-making, in the culture regions (Metropolis Oresund) in which the researcher was involved.

“ACCESS” REFRAMED AS EMBODIED CRITICALITY AND INHABITATION

Outreach policies, as well as academic discourse on participation, have tended to focus on identifying “best practices” and defining ways of talking about and

1. The three cases relate to the three involved sub-projects of the three post-doc researchers: a) Charlotte Prestegaard Schwartz b) Mette Thobo-Carlsen c) Hjørdis Brandrup Kortbek. The overall project as well as the subprojects are recorded on the website http://www.sdu.dk/om_sdu/institutter_centre/ikv/forskning/forskningsprojekter/kult

2. This case is based on a planned intervention: a curatorial experiment to be realized in the beginning of 2017. Conversation I to take place at Officin and Conversation II at Sixteyight Art Institute, both in Copenhagen. The “conversations” are come about in collaboration with these two non-profit, public exhibition locations.
implementing participation in different institutions and contexts. Nina Simon (2010) has been highly influential in Denmark, as well as in other Nordic countries, because she questions how cultural institutions can reconnect with the public and demonstrate their value and relevance in contemporary life. Her main recommendation is that institutions should encourage social inclusion, give voice to visitors, and engage them in co-creative projects.

This approach is very similar to the radical thinkers and practitioners cited above. It is, however, also very task-oriented and with the risk of leaving only a prescribed participation on behalf of the visitor-participants (as is the case with Brown & Novak-Leonard 2011). One of the inherent imperatives is “accessibility”, suggesting that democratizing art means making it open for everyone to consume and identify with. Rogoff (2013) says of this demand that it reduces art to displayable objects and aesthetic consummation. She proposes that we – the visitor-participants – instead occupy the museum “less programmatically and more as inhabitations that last for the duration of our presence” (2013: 74), conceptualizing access as a mode of criticality (as opposed to criticism) and as “another modality of entry into culture, one that we construct for ourselves and in which we produce through a relation of active thought” (2013: 75). Rogoff views access as a particular encounter with art and with the ways we as visitor-participants are given opportunities to engage with thoughts, ideas, objects, artworks, materials and art statements in an exhibition or museum space. She refers to the sociologist Bruno Latour, whose conception of a critical mind is one that assembles and offers participants arenas in which to gather (Latour, 2004, 246). Against this background, Rogoff redefines access as gathering: a complex entanglement of practices and a processual conversation within art and with the public where boundaries between imagining, making, theorizing, questioning, displaying, being enthralled by, administering, and translating are blurred (Rogoff 2013: 72). As part of this re-conceptualization, the phrase “embodied criticality” replaces a traditional leftist engagement with critique, to imply a more active, political engagement in museum culture:

[…] Criticality is not to find an answer but rather to access as different mode of inhabitation. In the duration of this activity, in the actual habitation, a shift might occur that we generate through the modalities of that occupation rather than through judgement upon it. That is what I am trying to intimate by ‘embodied criticality. (Rogoff 2006: 188)

Embodied criticality, then, suggests that political realities can be diversified and that participation can embrace (new) democratic processes and outcomes. But how can this be transposed to the exhibition space and what kind of relevance does it give the art space and the art institution in the 21th century?

We argue that what emerges is a specific way of inhabiting an art space, as suggested by Rogoff with reference to Doreen Massey’s work on space. According to Massey, space is made out of interrelations and processes. It is a domain
of multiplicity and intrinsically political, because the way space and spatiality is perceived can challenge “the manner in which certain political questions are formulated” (Massey 2005: 9). To enter an art space is therefore to agree to participate in a conversation already going on at this specific site, which is continually evolving when new participants join in. The conversation can be implicitly critical and political, or it can be explicit with a critical and political statement as part of the artistic or curatorial setting.

The latter is the chosen strategy for two inter-related, upcoming art exhibitions in non-profit exhibition spaces in Copenhagen entitled Conversations I: Family, work, art, surroundings and Conversation II: Exchanging money for working space or money equals working space. These planned “conversations” address conditions for artistic production and art as an immaterial economy in a neo-liberal society. The first one is in an exhibition space, which functions both as an art bookstore and a production space for printing and binding books, and is inspired by artistic strategies from the institutional critique of the 1960’ies and 1970’ies. One of the presented works is Danish artist Mathias Saederup’s What is concrete world? (2015).

The figure shows the artwork as a text, written in white on the glass of a small picture. Underneath is a grid, composed of thin, black lines with a drawn black and white square containing an equally drawn pattern on the top. In the upper
right corner is a red photographic print of a fragment from a football game. The attached text is concerned with relations between institutions and their surroundings:

The institutions absorb extraneous disturbances. This will strengthen the fundamental identity of the institutions, the surroundings are being implemented, differences are dissolved in mutual identification and institution and surrounding are becoming one.

There is a subtle critical voice in the work to be extracted from the seemingly neutral statement of absorption. But what kind of institutions and what kind of surroundings are meant here? Probably it is about art institutions, since the artwork was on show at MFA Degree Show, Kunsthal Charlottenborg, in 2015. But what kind of surroundings then? Society, capitalism, neo-liberalism, local politicians, curators, art schools and academies, or art scenes? It might also be that it is criticality itself, which is absorbed and transformed by the art institution.

The text does not mention any tensions that might occur when the institutions absorb the “extraneous disturbances”; but it does articulate how entities and closed fields, wherein games or other kinds of relationships are taking place, are exposed to a process of flux and possible change. The work points at the institution and its surroundings as being part of the conditions for (art) production, but it does something else too. A link can be traced between this work by Saederup and the thinking of Rogoff. The attitude, the criticality and seriousness she is looking for lies in a motivation “to analyze a set of conditions while living out their realities.” Furthermore Rogoff insists on “inhabiting complexity without necessarily articulating it discursively or spelling it out in a didactic manner” (2013: 70). What is concrete world? does not itself confront the viewer with a straight political or didactic statement. The work is a spatial and critical reflection on significant and complex concepts – the institutions and their surroundings – that create the conditions for artistic production and shape the everyday life of many people.

What is concrete world? aspires to be what Gerald Raunig terms an “instituent practice”, that is a transversal practice “linking social criticism, institutional critique and self-criticism” (Raunig 2013: 176). Such a link will, according to Raunig, develop “from the direct and indirect concatenation with political practices and social movements, but without dispensing with artistic competences and strategies, without dispensing with resources of and effects in the art field” (Raunig 2009:11). Raunig questions what the function of artistic production is in this new transversality (Raunig 2013: 176). On a micro level Saederup’s work gives one answer to this question. By focusing on the function of artistic production it can be argued that Saederup in What is concrete world? re-works accessibility as access in terms of a mode of embodied criticality. This re-working democratizes art beyond “inclusiveness” or “art for everybody” towards a more direct democratic engagement, similar to Rogoff’s concern about “how democracy can take place in unexpected places that we need to learn how to read as such” (Rogoff 2013: 70).
AGENCY REFRAMED AS DEMOCRATIC “ASSEMBLY”³

Museums engage in participation work with agency by giving their visitor-participants influence and a public voice. However, many exhibitions and educational initiatives end up making the visitor-participants play their part as “good” citizens in a choreographed democratic game that does not allow to fundamentally influence the structure of the artwork, exhibition or institution. Nora Sternfeld states that:

After all, a democratic understanding of participation entails being able to participate in the decision-making process that determines the conditions of participation, decision-making and representation. (2012: 3–4)

So why bother participating if it doesn’t really change anything? Critics like Sternfeld and Rogoff both depart from the notion of the exhibition as a space of traditional political representation and claim that participation can do more. Museum participation is said to have a potential to empower the visiting public through an agency that might lead to social change, as well as a thorough re-imagination of the idea of the modern museum as a democratic public institution. This paradigmatic shift has been conceptualized as a transformation from “an informing to a performing museology” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2000: 10) or a “post-representative” museology, as Sternfeld (2012) puts it. It directs our attention away from the museum as a representation of valued objects and objective values to the museum “as a space of agency and possibility” (Sternfeld 2012). The exhibition, then, is less a medium for the transmission of pre-defined and already known knowledge and more an open social field for critical knowledge production, unpredictable actions, and social experiences. Latour believes that the crisis of representation in art is a complementary phenomenon to the crisis of representative democracy in cultural institutions, politics and public life (Latour 2007: 107). According to Latour, we must look to new and more mobile and changing democratic forms and forums which bring a public to gather around important matters. Art exhibitions, like nature and landscapes, may constitute such “gathering” or “assembly” where visitors as a collective of participants can speak and act publicly.

A current tendency is to stage immersive environments for the viewers to invest in and connect with on a physical, affective and sensory level. In Autumn/Winter of 2014–2015, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebæk in Denmark staged an exhibition experiment called Olafur Eliasson: Riverbed curated by the museum and the Islandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson. The exhibition consisted of four spatial sections spread across the museum. Only the main art installation Riverbed is discussed here. Entering the exhibition in the South Wing of the museum, the visitors walked through a wooden box-like corridor that led them into the installation Riverbed (2014). The installation stretched across the entire length of the South Wing, transforming the galleries into a vast, rocky Islandic landscape with a stream run-

³ This case is based on a formal collaboration with Louisiana and its research department.
ning through. The physical construction of the exhibition site made the visitors embark on a rather strenuous journey.

Riverbed was a very monochromatic installation that affected the visitor-participants in various ways. Entering the installation, they found no explanatory texts on the walls or any authorized itinerary or directions to follow. The curatorial strategy was to leave out almost any kind of contextualizing information about the artist or the artwork and any kind of interpretation in order to emphasize the collective and physical experience of the walking visitor-participant. You might say that the exhibition decentered the curatorial control, thus leaving the discursive framing process open for the visitors to participate in. The curatorial message was to be co-created, experienced, performed, negotiated and discussed.

Riverbed presented an unusual museum landscape, which might make people feel hesitant about how to act. Many, children as well as adults, chose to explore the space by touching the stones, perhaps stepping into the stream of water, sensing the dusty quality of air and artificial daylight, listening to the sounds of footsteps, looking at the others, gaining eye-to-eye contact, watching their movements, listening in on their conversations. The collective atmosphere of the installation allowed the visitor-participants to experience the space and feel, think, and react in very different, perhaps conflictual ways (some felt bored and excluded, unable to contribute and be part of the event). The exhibition space was obviously not conceived as a medium of representation, but reconstructed as a medium for social engagement and performative
enactment; a dynamic social space for finding your own pace, gathering, sensing, walking, thinking and talking.

The lack of curatorial control and intent in *Riverbed* made the exhibition site a social space with a shared affective atmosphere that the shifting audiences could feel very differently about and act very differently in. The installation *Riverbed* was staged as a three-dimensional environment, an immersive structure that surrounded the visitor-participants and moved the situation beyond the authoritative discourse of representation. By way of dislocating the physical walls of the galleries, the installation pushed the boundaries of the institution in a very concrete way. It showed the performative agency of art to intervene and reimagine the surrounding institutional framework in which the production, mediation, and experience of art is normally embedded. In *Riverbed*, the visitor-participants were not learning *about* art but learning about social world-making *through* an embodied, performative and critical engagement *with* art and the institutional environment.

Eliasson himself has stated that “the way you walk through a museum is a way of co-producing the museum, of making it real” (2010a: 34). Instead of being critical through observation and analytical judgement, walking became an opportunity for the visitor-participants to embody an art practice beyond the given order of the museum and set in motion new perceptions and feelings. The reframed South Wing of Louisiana was sketched out as an open, dynamic, uncircumscribed social field of physical movement and social interaction that repositioned museum-walkers to play an active role as navigators, way-finders and meaning-makers. Museum-walking was staged as a collective way of “living out” step by step, of inhabiting – as Rogoff puts it – a post-representative public museum space where something unexpected, something that has not been predefined can happen. *Riverbed* seemed to suggest that a shared sense of embodied sensory and affective knowledge is a regular force that moves us, the public, to actually perceive, think, talk, and act in a public space in a different way.

In a modern museum like Louisiana, the visitors usually become part of a democratic community of consensus, values and “good taste”. The affective atmosphere in a modernist museum is typically one of seriousness, of individual contemplation, and quiet conversation. “When we feel pleasure from such objects, we are *aligned*”, says affect theorist Sara Ahmed (2010: 37). Good feelings and good habits move the public body in the “right” direction for the sake of the common good (Ahmed 2010: 35). *Riverbed* sketches the contours of a future museum space with a public of “museum bodies” that act and react in less governable, disciplined, or “skilled” ways to seek out and test the new limits, conditions, and effects of the future museum space. *Riverbed* imagines a modern art museum like Louisiana to be a catalyst and a public forum for new contemporary less predictable forms of social action. *Riverbed* suggests that cultural institutions like museums are not passively representing cultural values and social identities but are actually political places able to create new
publics and new ways of assembling and “being together” in public space. The museum-walkers were staged as an autonomous, heterogenous, and “dynamic network of moving and acting subjects (…) each visitor’s behavior influences the surroundings and thus the perception of the other visitors” (Latour 2007: 105). In that sense, the exhibition allowed for a performative form of collective or “we” that emerges and disappears when we no longer share the same space:

Collectivity is something that takes place as we arbitrarily gather to take part in different forms of cultural activity such as looking at art. […] Furthermore that performative collectivity, one that is produced in the very act being together in the same space and compelled by the same edicts, might just alert us to form a mutuality which cannot be recognised in the normative modes of shared beliefs, interests or kinship. (Rogoff 2002: 127)

The visitors formed a diverse and arbitrary group of mobile and variable participants who didn’t have to disclose their identity (age, class, ethnicity etc.), tastes, interests, values, or beliefs in order to experience art and engage in the collective efforts to re-negotiate and produce new relations. It stated that participation in the museum experiment is not all fun and games, but has the potential to make the visitors powerful agents in a critical and collective mode of participation that anticipates an alternative perhaps more contemporary way of being-institution. The exhibition anticipated a critical mode of participatory museum culture with a performative power to live out alternative museum futures and actually make the museum an agent of societal change.

OWNERSHIP REFRAMED AS SUBJECTIVE ENGAGEMENT 4

During the last thirty years public art has been used as a tool in urban regeneration (Cornwall 2004; Goodlad et al. 2001; Hall & Robertson 2001). One of the benefits of participatory public art projects is their capacity to enhance “ownership”. The term ownership is used in a broad sense to connote belonging, attachment and responsibility (Sharp et al. 2005). Contemporary public art projects are about engaging local citizens in urban environments (Rogoff & Schneider 2008; Sharp et al. 2005). According to Sharp, Pollock and Paddison, ownership bridges places and people and “public art should be able to generate a sense of ownership forging the connection between citizens, city spaces and their meaning as places through which subjectivity is constructed” (Sharp et al. 2005: 1003). Rogoff and Schneider maintain that ownership is primarily a matter of imagination, an act of determining space and time, a rule of production. In order to own, one needs to construct oneself as a coherent and self-identical subject and sustain it over a certain period of time and in relation to a certain territory (Rogoff & Schneider 2008). When public art means a joint engage-

4. This case is based on selected parts of two regional contracts (Fyn and Metropol Øresund) during which Hjørdis Brandrup Kortbek has functioned as “critical friend” as phrased by one of the partners.
ment of artists and citizens in public space, the autonomy of art is transgressed and both artists and citizens become “responsible subjects” (Cornwall 2004; Goodlad et al. 2001; Sharp et al. 2005). However, a basic paradox resists between democratic processes based on representation and the ambition of subjective ownership.

This case investigates how the concept of ownership is articulated and operationalized in the cross-municipal public art project Placemaking. The project was initiated by the cultural partnership “Culture Metropolis Oresund” and facilitated by the consultancy Råderum – Mobile Office for Public Art in 2015. Eight municipalities around Copenhagen participated in Placemaking. The intention was to explore how participatory art can be used as tool in urban development (Råderum 2014, 2015). Based on theories of public art (Sharp et al. 2005) and subjectivity (Weibel & Latour 2007), we explore how ownership is manifested in Placemaking and how the basic paradox of representation emerged.

In an introduction to Placemaking Råderum asks: “Is it possible that values such as safeness, solidarity and ownership can have more room and impact in urban space in the future? And can temporary, artistic and physical experiments and events be essential in the daily behavior of and interaction between the citizens in urban space?” (Råderum 2014: 4). Råderum connects “security, solidarity and ownership” with public art, inscribing the project in “the social turn” within contemporary art: while people participate in the aesthetic, the aesthetic participates in the social (Eriksson 2014; Jackson 2011). The social turn is a performative turn where the art piece connects to daily life and urban space and ideally “enact democracy” (Samson & Schwarzbart, 2014). Or as Weibel and Latour would argue: “Democracy is a phantom of bodies, a deceptive illusion of bodies, a dynamic network of moving and acting subjects” (Weibel & Latour 2007: 105). But how did such an enactment come about in Placemaking?

In 2014 Råderum asked cultural consultants from the eight participating municipalities to each choose an urban place with an obvious social challenge: for example insecurity, lack of identity, or lack of “life”. After the eight Placemaking-sites where chosen, Råderum arranged a two-day bus trip visiting each site. Two curators from Råderum worked with the cultural consultants, citizens from the eight municipalities, who had responded to the open invitation, and four selected artists or group of artists hired to be part of the projects. The selected places were, for example, a dark pedestrian and bicycle tunnel, an empty playing field, and a park frequented by drug abusers.

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5. The municipalities involved were: Farum, Frederiksværk, Greve, Gribskov, Helsingør, Hillerød, Køge and Roskilde.
7. The artists were: Karoline H. Larsen, Helle Hove and Christian Elovara Dinesen. The artist group was: Buro Detours.
Råderum called the bus trip “a baton” (Frederiksen 2016) in order to express the dynamics of the whole project and the encounters between people and places (Kwon 2004; Samson 2015). In an introduction to the bus-baton Råderum writes under the headline “Ownership by responsibility”:

The citizens are responsible to show and tell the history of the place, its qualities or lack of it […]. The citizens are requested to invite the rest of the group they are representing or others they might think are important to give the rest of the participants an understanding of exactly their place. (Råderum 2015)

The participating citizens were supposed to be representatives of their particular groups and their relationship to the places in question – telling their stories of their place.

After the baton Råderum linked each of the eight places to an artist or group of artists to realize the local Placemaking. The projects took very different forms in terms of engagement of local participants, from (some) citizen participation in idea development to (some) citizen participation in the specific configuration of the art piece. The vision was that each project should initiate a process of public participation but in so doing also respect the autonomy of the artist. The artists translated the experiences of the citizens and introduced them to an artistic interpretation of their place – for the purpose of developing the place and making art relevant to new audiences (Brandt & Frederiksen 2016). However, the representative role of the participants in the baton and the autonomy of the artists were antagonistic in several of the projects, undermining the sense of a broader collective and individual ownership in Placemaking.

Brook by Christian Elovara Dinesen. Placemaking in Furesø, Denmark. Photo: Anton Bestle
One of the eight municipalities participating in *Placemaking* was Furesø, a suburban area of Copenhagen, which chose to focus on an area called Farum Midtpunkt and in particular a cycle and pedestrian tunnel connecting the local shopping center with the area of social housing. The area is troubled by vandalism, the tunnel is considered unsafe, and several former urban development projects have been launched to make Farum Midtpunkt attractive to more well-off citizens (Survey Fures, 2015). The cultural consultant from the municipality explains the vision: “The place has great potential to be an interesting and characterful place, and we believe bringing in art can make it an experience to go through the tunnel and maybe actually stop over” (Frederiksen 2016: 74). The consultant assembled a local working group of three citizens and two members of the local Culture and Activity Center to work with the artist Christian Elovara Dinesen. He was appointed to meet with the working group and, based on their ideas, suggest an artistic intervention. The group discussed the character of the place, its history, problems and potential and learnt that there used to be a farm and brook on the site. Based on this local history, the suggested project was *Brook*: a canoe to be erected at the entrance of the tunnel combined with a high tech system with blue light and sounds of running water installed inside. However, the working group did not feel that *Brook* was a translation of their ideas. They were disappointed and did not feel involved in the realization of the project. The artist also got many negative reactions from local citizens, such as ”should it be art?” and threats of demolishment. Three days after the preview the blue light was stolen, the iron bar holding the canoe was cut, and the canoe was laid down.

According to Sharp, Pollock and Paddison, citizens’ ownership of participatory public art projects relies on them feeling included and getting engaged (Sharp et al. 2005). This did not happen in *Placemaking* in Farum. Nevertheless, seen from the perspective of antagonism, the different responses to the *Brook* from the smaller group of representatives and the bigger group of inhabitants, respectively, showed engagement with the possibility of forming a “conflictual consensus”. But after the artwork was vandalized, it was removed and nothing really changed, certainly nothing to make the place “an interesting and characterful place” tempting locals to “stop over”. The project shows the importance of the subjective perspective in ownership and that it cannot be based on representation by a few over a short period of time. As Weibel and Latour argue: “Democracy cannot be represented, it can only be “enacted”. The same is true of democratic art” (Weibel & Latour 2007: 105). Like *Riverbed*, *Place-making* did open up a political space of participation. However, it turned out to also be an agonistic space and both the municipality and the organization Råderum were unprepared to respond to this challenge. The artists were left like hostages in between. What can be learned from this case, we argue, is that thorough reflections on the interdependency of ownership, democracy, and subjectivity are needed in order for the participatory public art project to evolve.
CONCLUSION

This article has addressed the move towards participation in the form of outreach in national cultural policies and communication – taking Danish national cultural policies as our subject, but arguing that cultural policies in other Nordic and European countries and at the transnational, EU-level take similar paths. We have argued from the perspective of radical democracy and radical politics and applied an anticipatory, post-critical analytic approach that is also a discursive and communicative intervention into the core concepts and keywords of the participatory agenda. We have used this analytic and conceptual practice to open up the inherent ambiguity of the participatory agenda as a present-day outcome of the culture complex and the doxa of Bildung. We have revealed how the discursive linking of participation with democracy and transformation and the way it is anchored in key terms such as access, agency and ownership is bound to a hegemonic, representative democracy and institutional practice and initiated a performative re-appropriation through our aspirational, anticipatory mode of analysis. We have proposed a more direct, embodied and affective democratic engagement with public culture and cultural institutions. Secondly, we have argued that this might not mean big, immediate changes, but rather minor and modest, but nonetheless radical shifts in orientation of subjects and institutions, as well as a re-appropriation of seemingly self-evident, but nonetheless politically loaded terms such as access, agency and ownership. We have presented three cases in order to establish our core argument. The three cases are taken from different settings in which national policies are translated and made into practice and with which we have been involved during our research project on participation. They were chosen to present three different dimensions of the argument: intervention, aspiration and anticipation, and agonistics.

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