Public art for whom?
Exploring the benefits of city-led participatory art practices in disadvantaged neighborhoods of Madrid

Master Thesis

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Abstract

This research examines who benefits from the use of city-led participatory art projects in disadvantaged neighborhoods. After the neoliberal crisis in 2008, discourses on creativity evolved from art projects aimed at pursuing economic growth to art projects with social and cultural aspirations. Participatory art projects are practices where the public is involved in the design and production of the artwork. Urban governments in Europe have used participatory art due to their assumed potential to enhance citizen engagement. However, there is a lack of critical and evaluative insight regarding the implementation and after-use of these creative practices and their inclusionary or exclusionary effects on local communities. The three-year public art program Imagina Madrid (2017 – 2019) is analyzed to shed light on these debates. Attention is paid to the disadvantaged contexts where these practices took place and the communities for which these practices are developed. The primary data source was 22 in-depth interviews conducted with public authorities, artists, and citizens, accompanied by participatory research. Findings indicate that participatory art projects can have outcomes contrasting initial objectives and do not always benefit local communities. This thesis argues that participatory art is always a situated practice, and thus, greater sensibility regarding local contexts is essential for maximizing the benefit of disadvantaged groups. This study contributes to expanding the knowledge on the use of participatory art practices, and it offers an insight into which elements of public art practices are beneficial for maximizing social impact.

Abstrakt

In dieser Studie wird untersucht, wer von den von der Stadt geleiteten partizipatorischen Kunstprojekten in benachteiligten Stadtvierteln profitiert. Nach der Finanzkrise im Jahr 2008 hat sich der Kreativitätsdiskurs von Kunstprojekten, die auf wirtschaftliches Wachstum abzielen, zu Kunstprojekten mit sozialen und kulturellen Zielen entwickelt. Partizipative Kunstprojekte sind Praktiken, bei denen die Öffentlichkeit in die Gestaltung und Produktion des Kunstwerks einbezogen wird. Stadtverwaltungen in Europa haben partizipatorische Kunstprojekte eingesetzt, weil man davon ausgeht, dass sie das Engagement der Bürger fördern können. Es mangelt jedoch an kritischen und evaluativen Erkenntnissen über die Umsetzung und Nachnutzung dieser kreativen Praktiken und ihre ein- oder ausgrenzenden Auswirkungen auf lokale Gemeinschaften. Das dreijährige öffentliche Kunstprogramm Imagina Madrid (2017 - 2019) wird analysiert, um Licht in diese Debatten zu bringen. Das Augenmerk liegt dabei auf den benachteiligten Kontexten, in denen diese Praktiken stattfanden, und auf den Gemeinschaften, für die diese Praktiken entwickelt wurden. Die primäre Datenquelle waren 22 Tiefeninterviews mit Behörden, Künstlern und Bürgern, die von partizipativer Forschung

begleitet wurden. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass partizipative Kunstprojekte zu Ergebnissen führen können, die im Widerspruch zu den ursprünglichen Zielen stehen, und dass sie nicht immer den lokalen Gemeinschaften zugute kommen. In dieser Arbeit wird argumentiert, dass partizipative Kunst immer eine situierte Praxis ist und daher eine größere Sensibilität für lokale Kontexte wesentlich ist, um den Nutzen für benachteiligte Gruppen zu maximieren. Diese Studie trägt dazu bei, das Wissen über den Einsatz partizipatorischer Kunstpraktiken zu erweitern, und sie bietet einen Einblick in die Elemente öffentlicher Kunstpraktiken, die für eine Maximierung der sozialen Wirkung von Vorteil sind.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Problem Setting and Research Question

After the neoliberal crisis in 2008, discourses on creativity evolved from art projects aimed at pursuing economic growth to art projects with social and cultural aspirations. Participatory art or community art, in this thesis defined as public art projects, are practices where the public is involved in the design and production of the artwork (Lacy, 1995). They have their roots in social movements of the 70s, but after 2008, they have increasingly been institutionalized and strategized for urban regeneration processes. These city-led participatory art projects use art as a vehicle to democratize the production of the city. Ideally, the artists are facilitators of citizen's imaginations, as citizens are deemed the protagonists of such processes.

The assumptions underpinning these creative practices are many, and they range from being efficient catalyzers of social cohesion to fostering identity construction (Miles 1997; Rose 1997; Sharp et al., 2005). Urban governments in Europe have used participatory art due to their assumed potential to enhance citizen engagement (Hawkins, 2011). Such projects are aimed to empower local communities, as these practices can give voice to marginalized inhabitants through the medium of art and culture (Sharp el al., 2005). Indeed, these practices have become increasingly present in western planning agendas (Matarasso, 2019). However, there is not enough inquiry into the actual impact they have. There is a lack of critical and evaluative insight regarding the implementation and after-use of these creative practices and their inclusionary or exclusionary effects on local communities (Hall et al., 2001). The primary motivation for choosing this topic is the discrepancy between advocacy from the professional field supporting public art practices and the lack of scholarly research on their impact.

This thesis analyzes the case of *Imagina Madrid*, a three-year public art program (2017-2019) developed in Madrid, a city that particularly suffered from the economic crisis of 2008. At first glance, Imagina Madrid sounds promising. It is presented as an open invitation to citizens from the city's peripheral areas to imagine new landscapes for their neighborhoods. **This research attempts to unravel who benefits from the use of city-led participatory art projects in disadvantaged neighborhoods.** Two hypotheses have been formulated to guide the research process. The first one is that despite the importance attributed to participation, such projects rarely become an empowering asset for the inhabitants and users of these neighborhoods. The second one is that tensions between social and artistic goals often occur in city-led participatory art projects.

This study joins a strand of research from the last 20 years investigating participatory art practices for urban regeneration (Hall et al., 2001; Miles, 2005; Miles & Paddison, 2005; Sharp et al., 2005; Hawkins, 2010; Zebracki, 2010, 2014; Pollock & Sharp, 2012; Bishop, 2013; Miles, 2013; Miles & Paddison, 2014; Matarasso, 2019). The focus of this research is the impact of participatory art

practices that public institutions sponsor. Attention is paid to the disadvantaged contexts where these practices are encouraged and the communities for which these practices are developed. The methodological framework of this investigation was adjusted to generate data indicating the impact these practices have on local communities. It represents a contribution to the field of research by showing how it can be attempted to measure social impact.

This investigation looks at the triangle between artists, citizens, and public authorities and observes public art practices as cultural negotiations determined by power relations. It does not seek to underestimate the political capacity of these practices, but it will show how processes under the same name can have contrasting and opposing outcomes. This study contributes to expanding the knowledge on the use of participatory art practices, and it offers an insight into which elements of public art practices are beneficial for maximizing social impact.

Finally, the findings and conclusions offer reference points for policymakers and for organizations who develop these projects by illustrating what was successful and what was not in the Madrid context. Learnings can also be applied to similar contexts, and they can help design future cultural policies destined to upgrade disadvantaged neighborhoods. They also raise awareness for artist communities and politicians about their role in implementing participatory art projects, indicating how to best empower the most fragile voices. The following chapter outlines the theoretical framework used to develop the research design and answer the aforementioned research question.

2 *Literature Review*

This literature review comprises two chapters. The first chapter analyses the role of culture in urban redevelopment processes while examining related critiques and adverse effects. The second chapter will document the shift of the creative paradigm after the economic crisis in 2008/2009, from art projects pursuing economic growth to community art ones inspired by social and cultural aims. This chapter follows by situating the resurgence of public art as a communal tool, focusing the discussion on participatory art practices. It will identify the complexities and tensions within participatory processes and examine the debates on the political potential of public art.

2.1 The role of culture in urban regeneration

2.1.1 The role of culture in landscapes of deindustrialization

In the last 40 years, culture has become a significant driver for urban regeneration and renewal (Evans, 2002). Most literature on cultural geography focuses on how governments have capitalized culture to pursue economic growth (Miles & Paddison, 2005), especially between the 80s and 2010. From the

1980s onwards, the world economy shifted towards its neoliberal phase (Harvey, 1989). Neoliberal ideology “is based on the belief that open, competitive and 'unregulated' markets ... represent the optimal mechanism for socio-economic development” (Peck et al., 2009, p2). Urbanization policies contributed to the expansion of the world economy, and social distributive logics were replaced by market-rule ones (Peck, et al., 2009). Cities around the world changed in dialectical processes of deindustrialization and globalization (Harvey, 1989). Economies would no longer be based on manufacturing labor, and they would be marked by sectors such as tourism, business, financial services, and creative industries (Scott, 2006).

Furthermore, in late capitalism Harvey described how governments would support the spread of the neoliberal doctrine (1989). Their activities would be not anymore linked to the provision of services but to an entrepreneurial stance of inter-competition and local development (Harvey, 1989). Within this context, culture became strategic for channeling flexible accumulation (Miles, 2005). Developers and politicians saw arts and culture as niche markets (Zukin, 1996) to the point that the word 'Creativity' became one of the “major buzzwords in the new economy and came to replace heavy industry and commodity production” (Bishop, 2013, p.14). Culture became a key driver to attract international investments, new firms, corporations, and tourists (Florida, 2002).

2.1.2 The economic rhetoric of culture-led urban regeneration may have caused drawbacks

The paradigm mentioned above affected cities' urban landscapes, which can be viewed by walking through every global city today. Urban cores increasingly embody commodified environments, showcasing upscaled public spaces, redeveloped and homogenized to the point of losing their distinctive identities (Zukin, 2009). Art projects under the aim of their entrepreneurial capacity and competitiveness, like flagship-art projects or landmark architecture for city marketing or beautification, have been reproduced all over the globe (Evans, 2002). These have been used to create new attractive and vibrant spots in cities, prepared to receive massive tourist waves (Miles & Paddison, 2005). This logic has been replicated everywhere, as in Bilbao with the Guggenheim museum designed by the star architect Frank O. Gehry, or in Madrid with the extension of Reina Sofia museum, designed by Jean Nouvel in 2005 (Patachi, 2015).

Scholars showed that the economic rhetoric of culture-led urban regeneration may be short-sighted and may have caused drawbacks (Zukin, 1996; Bassett et al., 2005; Lin & Hsing, 2009; Miles, 2005, 2013). These initiatives are motivated by economic revenues; they support private interests without considering possible adverse outcomes (Markusen, 2006). The authors referenced above are critical of how these large projects affected the city landscape and contributed to expanding the

neoliberal city and values. They reinforce power structures, patterns of segregation and favor the interests of corporate elites by neglecting the interest of disadvantaged groups (Mclean, 2014). The uneven urban development of culture-led development has resulted in universalization of one culture over another, loss of local cultural meaning (Lin & Hsing, 2009), gentrification and displacement (Zukin, 1996; Scott, 2006; Pratt, 2011; Cameron & Coaffe, 2005; Ley, 1996; Lees, 2000).

2.1.3 Creative policies have contributed to the displacement of disadvantaged inhabitants.

The construction of new landmark museums, development of cultural quarters, or big cultural factories, like Matadero–Madrid, in the City of Madrid, have been used to upgrade existing urban areas.[1] However, as was mentioned in the previous section, culture-led regeneration has provoked negative impacts. These projects rely more on (blind) faith and constructed visions that appear not to look beyond the short-term physical impacts on the landscapes they create (Evans, 2002). Some of these initiatives could have been successful, yet empirical evidence suggests effects of social segregation, exclusion, and displacement, particularly amongst cultural minorities and disadvantaged social groups (Evans & Foord, 2003).

Culture-led redevelopment is often associated with the displacement of an existing population, subordinating their demands and needs to benefit more profitable ones (Pratt, 2011). Rising property values occur in parallel with these exclusionary practices, ultimately catering to well-off social groups (Miles, 2013). Those who arrive have higher income and hold instead a different cultural capital (Lees, 2000). There are processes of artistic gentrification documented by Zukin (1987, 1996) in Soho, New York. Other scholars analyzed how the presence of artists in undervalued residential areas also ignited gentrification processes (Ley, 1996; Cameron & Coaffe, 2005). Neighborhoods in Madrid, such as Malasaña and Lavapiés, have also suffered artistic gentrification and expanded tourism supported and reinforced by public policies (Sequera, 2013). Not only are people displaced from public spaces they once considered theirs, but also there is a loss of authenticity that is compensated by a "re-created historical narrative and a commodification of images" (Zukin, 1996).

The label 'creative' has also been used by local governments, following culture-led urban regeneration projects, while producing processes of social displacement (Pratt, 2011). Some scholars have analyzed and criticized the implementation of creative city policies in Madrid (Navarro Yáñez, 2013; Mcdonough, 2014; Gonick, 2010; Sequera, 2013). They state that creative city paradigms (Pratt,

[1] Matadero-Madrid, 'The Slaughterhouse' is a significant cultural facility with several buildings inaugurated in 2007, located in Arganzuela District. Carrillo refers to the historical development of Matadero-Madrid, in relation to the broader urban renewal intentions for upgrading the area (2008).

2011) have a dark side: the distribution of cultural markets reproduces socio-spatial inequalities within cities (Navarro Yáñez, 2013), and they also replicate the culture and images that represent a few (Pratt, 2011). Creative city policies contribute to the neoliberal production of space, reaffirming existing power structures, meanings, and values while excluding the agency of other groups and denying the cultural value of those marginalized (Navarro Yáñez, 2013).

2.1.4 The urban landscape is increasingly homogenized, and it narrows the cultural expression of disadvantaged groups.

Scott identifies a problem of the increasing commodification of cultural values:

> "At the dawn of the twenty-first century, a very marked convergence between the spheres of cultural and economic development seems to be occurring," and as he goes on to warn: "a deepening tension is evident between culture as something that is narrowly place-bound and culture as a pattern of non-place globalized events and experiences." (Scott, 1997, p.2 in Evans, 2002, p.134)

Scott is referencing the subjugation of local meanings and cultures through processes of globalization and the inherent difficulties associated with exchange value.

Another outcome associated with culture-led regeneration is the homogenization of the urban landscape. Cities are increasingly designed to appeal to the public and their consumption patterns (Zukin, 2009). Urban landscapes have increasingly been designed to cater to the emerging creative classes (Scott, 2006).

For Richard Florida, the key to progress, a synonym of economic growth, is on attracting the aforementioned creative class (2002). The new and growing sectors, such as the creative and knowledge industries or business and financial services, demanded young creative and high skilled professionals. Florida encouraged governments to attract these young creative consumers, profiling an appealing and vibrant urban environment where they would like to live (Florida, 2002). The buildings and public spaces are shaped and reproduced according to the taste of some, over the needs and lives of others (Miles, 2013). Public spaces have increasingly been privatized and profiled to the spirit of rent and profit, reducing any expression of conflict or disorder (Swyngedouw, 2017).

Scholars are critical of this form of urban development, maintaining that cultural landscapes should be local treasures (Zukin, 1996). In essence, art production should not be divorced from the social context being produced (Zukin, 1996). Garcia echoes this sentiment: "the emphasis must lie in providing a platform for the local communities ... to express their views and expectations" (Garcia,

2004, p.324 in Evans, 2005, p.976). Nevertheless, models of urban regeneration adopted by local governments have resulted in standardized landscapes, displacing local symbolic values (Lin & Hsing, 2009). Lin warns us about governments' challenges when conferring local meanings to landscapes of increasing competition (Lin & Hsing, 2009). He highlights the importance of linking regeneration projects with local cultural spaces and place identity (Lin & Hsing, 2009, p.1321).

Creative city narratives have also failed to recognize and value the natural and existing diversity in cities (Pratt, 2011). Pratt argues against a universalist notion of creativity and in favor of *"*a socially, cultural and economically embedded and situated one*"* (Pratt, 2011, p.123). He also highlights a contradiction of contemporary societies, where "cultural diversity is celebrated, but the neoliberal doctrine of creativity promotes sameness" (Pratt, 2011, p.123). Young observed that global imposition of decontextualized best practices exacerbates inequalities given the already divided state of society (Young, 1990 in Pratt, 2011). "Creativity is a specific and situated activity; it is not a universal one*"* (Pratt 2011, p.126). Brenda Parker also examines the intersecting inequalities that creative city policy and planning frameworks naturalize (2008). Pratt calls for a more sensitive cultural and urban planning, attentive to the redistributive outcomes and to the actual impact these experiences have produced (Pratt, 2011): "What we are arguing is that the local conditions require of policymakers a more inventive, or creative, response based upon hard evidence rather than hope and rhetoric" (Pratt, 2011, p.126).

2.2 Taking over urban development through public art practices

2.2.1 Introduction: The economic crisis in 2008/2009 conveyed new alternatives to democratize the production of the city

> "The Spanish state, 2008–May 2015: unemployment rates approach 25% and 50% among young people. Eight million are living in poverty, according to official figures. The second-highest rate of childhood malnutrition in Europe. The highest rise in economic inequality of all states in the OECD. Some 3 million empty homes and about 184 families evicted from their homes every day." (Moreno-Caballud, 2015, p.1)

In 2008 neoliberalism showed its cracks, the most pressing spatial issues included the privatization of public space, police violence, the housing crisis, surveillance, lack of ecological and "green" spaces, and the repercussions of mass tourism: gentrification, loss of local history and speculative corruption (Pereira-Zazo & Torres, 2019, p.220). This pressing social, urban, and cultural landscape arose a joint

claim for constructing cities for people and not for profit, channeling urgent social needs instead of economic surplus (Marcuse et al., 2009). Cities worldwide, from London, Copenhagen, Paris, Rome, Athens, Reykjavik, Riga, New York, and Madrid, erupted in demonstrations, strikes, and protests (Marcuse et al., 2009).

The economic crisis of 2008/2009 was also crystalized as a crisis of democracy. The right for participation was the most vigorous claim amplified through the massive social movements in 2011. In Madrid, a citizens group known as the 15-M took to the streets and claimed the right to be recognized to create a shared future. The main motto during the protests was "Real democracy, Now!". Moreno Caballud saw the 15-M not only as a product of institutional and economic crisis but as a transformative cultural discussion, where the philosophy that had been constructed (and naturalized) to "make sense" of the world started to be questioned (2013). Authors claimed that the wakes of this movement are constantly reappearing in the cycle of social movements (Moreno-Caballud, 2015; Pereira-Zazo & Torres, 2019), and in the last years, they progressed into institutional structures (de la Fuente & Walliser, 2018).

Social breakdowns (like Occupy Movement in 2011-12 or the 15-M in Madrid) have produced alternative ways of constructing urban realities (Miles, 2013). These initiatives have had different forms and names - participatory public art, artivism, socially engaged art, community art, and collaborative art (Bishop, 2013) - yet they all refer to projects inscribed in creative discourses involving social aspirations. In the last 20 years, an increasing body of literature has surged that recognizes strategies rooted in discourses of culture and creativity but shift focus away from the logic of the market economy. Attention is now given to projects that prioritize social or cultural outcomes over profitability and commercial success. This creative (re)turn is documented by Miles and described as a possible new post-creative city paradigm (2013). He recognizes an opportunity to re-assess the idea of a creative city and its implicit values (Miles, 2013). This research is focused on learning more about the impact of these creative practices. This chapter will define, review, and analyze participatory art experiences, discuss their political potential, demonstrate the complexities of participatory processes, and discuss the underlying power dynamics every cultural negotiation has.

2.2.2 Reviewing experiences public art as a communal tool

There are diverse ways in how public art has been conceptualized. For Schuermans et al., public art is performed or materialized in streets, squares, and other public spaces, instead of being displayed in museums and galleries (2012). In that case, the publicness of a public art piece is defined by where it is located. For many decades public art mainly referred to statues and monuments located in the public space. However, Suzanne Lacy, performative artist, and feminist activist, differentiated

between the traditional public art projects associated with sculpture and installations and a *new genre of public art,* also known as community art, where the focus is on the process instead of the workpiece that is produced and the public is involved in the design and production of the artwork (Lacy, 1995). The latest conceptualization of public art is the one taken to develop this research. This expanded field of public art centralizes practices of collaboration, interaction, and the work's engagement with the context (Hawkins, 2011). Public art is understood not by where it is located but by whom and how it is produced. Every time this research mentions public art, it refers to a process of participatory art, also known as practices of community art or socially engaged art.

Community art projects are regularly commissioned by city councils and catalyzed by activist groups and local associations for social and cultural reasons rather than economic ones (Schuermans et al., 2012). Whereas economic claims often underpin conspicuous flagship projects with huge budgets (Schuermans et al., 2012), community art has gained currency in smaller scale neighborhood-based regeneration projects (Hall & Robertson, 2001, p.8), typically but not exclusively, outside central city locations (Hall, 2003). Public art can be either complicit in or critical of exclusive, uneven development (Hall, 2003; Miles, 1998). Community art involves the participation of the public rather than observation and focuses on the process rather than the art piece in itself. Sharp et al. see the process and the methods through which artistic and cultural interventions are practiced as key in determining their inclusionary or exclusionary nature (2005). The shift from "outcomes" towards "processes" sheds light on those communities "who have been marginalized in mainstream urban histories" (Sharp et al., 2005, p.1007). Hall also sees as the primary focus of these projects the audiences (Hall, 2007). These public art projects have become more frequent; however, they have had their roots back in social movements of the '70s.

2.2.3 The institutionalization of participatory art practices

Matarasso sheds light on the historical background behind participatory art, linking its roots to the community art movement in the 70s (2019). For him, these practices have a political and grassroots origin, with young activists engaging with communities to co-produce a specific art project (2019). This practice fostered conversations around entitlement and questioned notions of cultural authority (Matarasso, 2019). Matarasso, in his book '*A restless art*,' highlights how in the last years, the concept of participatory art has become more and more frequently used to define practices similar to those concerned with community art. Even though these practices have existed since the 70s, after the crisis of 2008/2009, they have been institutionalized and normalized in current policy-making (Matarasso, 2019).

In 2013, Arts Council England launched Creative People and Places (CPP)[2]Declaring that "everyone has the right to experience and be inspired by art and culture." The approach involved people in local projects, planning, and decision-making through community art practices (Matarasso, 2019, p.23).

In the Netherlands, community art has been recognized in national cultural policy since the early 2000s. It is a cornerstone of the Leeuwarden 2018 European Capital of Culture program. The International Community Arts Festival in Rotterdam[3], a legacy of that city's year as capital of culture in 2001, is probably the most significant community art event in Europe (Matarasso, 2019, p.23).

In Spain, La Caixa Foundation finances art programs for social purposes, including participatory concerts, theatre, and exhibitions. It also finances Apropra Cultura[4], an initiative that supports visits to cultural venues by people using social services and community centers (Matarasso, 2019, p.24). In 2007 Matadero-Madrid launched *Intermediae*, a program that encourages participatory public art projects in the city. Intermediae has grown after the crisis in 2008, opening alternatives to the creative sector of the city. They promoted several projects and aided diverse artists, creatives, architects, and designers from Madrid. Institutions worldwide have increasingly capitalized public art projects, as they have had great advocacy, conceived as crucial practices to strengthen the communitarian net and empower citizens through the use of art.

2.2.4 The assumptions underpinning participatory art practices and the lack of evidence of the impact they have

The assumptions underpinning participatory art practices range from being efficient catalysts of social cohesion and social inclusion to fostering identity construction (Miles 1997; Rose 1997; Sharp et al., 2005). Sharp et al. showcased how public art practices can result in inclusionary of certain groups but exclusionary of other groups simultaneously (Sharp et al. 2005).

Claire Colomb distinguishes between two practices that produce different benefits, one regarding *cultural democratization*, as "the broadening of access to conventional culture through outreach activities," and other aiming at cultural democracy, which "take as a starting point the community itself and seek to build self-confidence and empowerment through the facilitation of artistic practice" (Bailey et al., 2004, p.49; Colomb, 2011, p.4).

In a similar line, Matarasso says that the impact of public art practices is more substantial if they emerge from the community itself (2019). Some authors still argue that social goals remain subordinated to an agenda of economic development, social control, and place management rather

[2] https://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/
[3] https://www.icafrotterdam.com/
[4] https://www.apropacultura.cat/

than social justice or empowerment of marginalized communities (Stevenson, 2004, p.129). Hall and Robertson also criticize the few voices admitted into the public art debate and to what extent this narrows its publicity (2001).

Scholars have criticized the lack of evidence on the impact of public art (Hall et al., 2001), and they are skeptical about its potential. Culture-led regeneration seems to be more about rhetoric than fostering a more just urban reality (Miles & Paddison, 2005, p.834). There has been much advocacy for the regenerative capacities and the potential of public art, but there is a lack of data on these practices' real impact (Hall et al., 2001).

Miles refers to the "shortfall" between expectations and reality (Miles, 2005). Furthermore, Garrido observes that it is challenging to acknowledge the impact of public art practices because they are inserted within "multi-layered and multi-centered creative lineages, reaching far beyond the response to immediate goals" (2020, p.2).

Claire Bishop also makes a valuable observation regarding the difficulties in understanding the impact of these practices once they are over: "casual photographs of people talking, eating, attending a workshop or screening or seminar tell us minimal, almost nothing, about the concept and context of a given project" (Bishop, 2013, p.5). It is hard to provide reliable evidence of the affective dynamic between artists and the public.

Difficulties are also introduced by the essentialist claims when using some terms, for example, identity, place, and community (Hall & Robertson, 2001). Such claims cannot acknowledge these concepts' contested, fragmented, and mutable nature (Hall & Robertson, 2001). Something similar is presented with words such as creativity or imagination, which are often used as if they would have a universal meaning to creativity, annulling other ways of cultural expression (Scott, 2011). Scholars also found problematic the misreading *of place* in public art practices, which from an essentialist view, is prone to depoliticize the dynamic, historically, and socially bounded nature of an experience concerning a given space (Hall & Robertson, 2001, p.19). Participatory art is complex, relational, and a contextualized process. Scholars have also discussed the potential of participatory art to give voice to marginalized communities in processes of urban development. There is a broad academic discussion between scholars revolving around the political impact participatory art has and is the focus of the next section.

2.2.5 The discussion on the political potential of participatory art for urban change

A new genre of public art, drawn by Lacy, is a reaction against the commodification of art by markets and institutions and reflects a critical position in re-visioning social values against capitalistic and

patriarchal ones (Lacy, 1995; Miles, 1997). Artists use public art and public space to articulate and communicate their interests and identities (Hawkins, 2011) or act as catalysts for other people's creativity and political imagination (Miles, 1997). Through a public art process: "the audience can create alternative spaces—whether material, virtual or imagined—within they can identify themselves, perhaps by creating a renewed reflection on community, on the uses of public spaces or our behavior within them" (Sharp et al., 2005, p.1004). In a similar line, Pinder argues that the use of creative practices permits the creation of "new meanings, experiences, relationships, understandings, and situations," and that it can "question, re-function, and contest prevailing norms and ideologies" (Pinder, 2008, p.730). It offers a tactical resource through which alternative urban futures, other than those prescribed by capital (Miles, 2005), can be explored and created, especially in the context of everyday life (Hawkins, 2010). Miles refers to a hypothetical urban future in which:

> "Diversity and difference are celebrated, the publicness of public space is reclaimed, dwellers are empowered to construct different meanings of the city and in which change is seen as a continuing condition ... the project is not the construction of utopia, for most utopias are authoritarian in the brittleness of control they require to maintain their stasis, but the reconstruction of everyday life and rediscovery of joy in city living." (Miles, 2005, p.18)

Sharp et al. also celebrate diversity identifying an inclusive city as one that gives *"*expression to the multiple and shifting identities of different groups ... and avoids the cultural domination of particular elites or interests" (2005, p.1006). There has been much support for the potential of change that the use of arts has; however, there are also critiques around the idealistic and romantic beliefs they often embrace without critical thinking and analyzing empirical evidence (Hall & Robertson, 2001).

Authors like Matarasso point out that the potential of change these practices have is diminished when they are designed by institutions (2019). When the arts are used for urban redevelopment, an entire machinery is installed and activated for public art production (Phillips, 1988, p.100 in Hall & Robertson, 2001, p.20). It involves the negotiation of:

> "a complex bureaucracy of briefs, budgets, multi-stage competition and selection procedures, health, safety, and insurance constraints, and selection committees comprising commissioners, curators, other artists, public art agencies, administrators, and community representatives ... The result of this 'machinery' is the production of bland, unprovocative art

> that offers neither critical disruption nor artistic risk or challenge." (Philips, 1988, p.100 in Hall & Robertson, 2001, p.20)

Pollock and Sharp also refer to the tensions within urban regeneration between "imagined futures, aspirations and expectations and the practical realization of events on the ground" (2012, p.3074).

For other authors, the political potential of public art relies on the degree of commitment of local communities to the processes, how and when they engage (in different ways) in 'participation' (Hawkins, 2011). The accent on the relational nature sheds light on the interactions between the community, the site, and the artists, instead of the art in itself (Zebracki, 2014). Conventional roles are re-defined:

> "the artist is conceived less as an individual producer of ... objects than as a ... producer of situations; the work of art as ... a commodified product is re-conceived as an ongoing or long-term project with an unclear beginning and end, while the audience, previously conceived as a 'viewer'... is now repositioned as a co-producer or participant." (Bishop, 2013, p.2)

For Zebracki et al., public art has one fundamental purpose: "the publics of the artwork's intended space" (2010, p.794). Sharp et al. agree by saying that "it is by focusing attention on the democratic processes ... and the extent to which these are inclusive that we can ... appreciate the role of public art in urban regeneration" (2005, p.1006). Hawkins highlights the importance of engaging with the context, arguing that the more the work responds to the local specificities of the site, the more significant the impact it has on present communities (Hawkins, 2011). Claire Bishop refers to a 'social turn' in the art field, and she argues that "these practices are less interested in a relational aesthetic than in the creative rewards of collaborative activity" (2013, p.2). In this context art, leaves aside its aesthetics requirements and is anchored as a form of "unique communicative and social power" (Cieri 2004, p.2 in Pain, 2004), "offering 'spaces of self-representation and articulation' for unheard and unseen groups" (Herman and Mattingly 1999, p.210; Tolia-Kelly 2007 in Hawkins, 2011, p.472).

2.2.6 The complexities to create meaningful channels between citizens and institutions and between citizens and artists

For Hawkins, the capacity of change in public art practices has resided in *how* participation is anchored (2011). Even though participation has widely been integrated into planning strategies, not always imply a beneficial process for the citizens.

> "For its advocates, participation improves the quality and legitimacy of decision-making, creates active citizens, shifts power, and addresses a 'democratic deficit' by increasing community and social capital. However, recent critiques have posited that participation often amounts to little more than tokenism." (Pollock & Paddison, 2014, p.88)

This section discusses the tensions and limitations of city-led participatory practices.

On the one hand, Claire Bishop questions ideas of collaboration by arguing that participatory art practices, even though they are rooted in "socialist contexts," often understand participation as inherently opposed to capitalism; rather than "reinforcing the collectivist dogma of dominant ideology" (2013, p.4). On the other hand, Mayer identifies how public discourses of grassroots regeneration programs sometimes tweak the purpose of participation to the extent they are designed to encourage the development of a specific space, rather than the political empowerment of the people taking part (2013).

In the same line of thought, Pollock & Sharp showed how participation often encourages aligning citizen agency with institutional and government objectives rather than allowing communities to forge their own direction (2012). This is viewed as a domestication of the transformative potential of participation (Pollock & Sharp, 2012, p.3066), and it happens when individuals are included in pre-existing institutional forms of decision-making (Pollock & Sharp, 2012). In this context, participatory art practices do not engage with the people they supposedly include or involve, whether as "participants" or "collaborators," on an equal basis (Koh, 2020). In these cases, participation – between agencies and the public, between artists and community or agencies and artists – might involve negotiation and deliberation, but not necessarily a sharing of power (White, 1996 in Pollock & Paddison, 2014).

Time constraints can also be a pitfall in participatory processes. Public art is often relegated to specific temporality (e.g., having to respond to a schedule for deliverables and outcomes), which is not correspondent to the required to build trust (Pollock & Sharp, 2012). During the development of public art processes, participants and artists work together, building a community. A similar concern was raised by Zebracki et al. when analyzing a community art project in Amsterdam (2010). He states

that public art research and public art policy are overlooking three deficiencies: *"(a) a lack of recognition of actors' perspectives.* He observed how tensions arise in the production of public art by the contrasted *ambitions* the diverse actors (as citizens, public officers, and artists) have. *(b) a lack of geographical contextuality.* Public institutions often overlook art project's spatial setting. *(c) a lack of temporal perspective.* He highlights time as an essential of public art production, arguing that there are three stages in the time horizon of participatory art projects: preparation, implementation, and evaluation (Zebracki et al., 2010, p.793).

Institutions often neglect the complexities and power relations underpinning any participatory art process. When these practices are delivered by centers of power, their purposes, goals, and methods might be dictated from outside rather than negotiated between the people concerned (Matarasso, 2019). The taken-for-granted role of speaking for the disadvantaged can distort legitimate claims of urban democracy (Koh, 2020). Feminist and post-colonial researchers have also been critical of the inherent power relations within the collaborative and communicative planning discourse, which often misreads the diversity of identities and drives minority groups apart (Listerborn, 2007). Fraser suggests that the processes through which cultural (or symbolic) injustices tend to arise are fundamentally "rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication." Developing this, Fraser identifies the overarching injustice of cultural injustice, of "being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture and/or hostile to one's own" (Fraser, 1995, p.71).

Pollock & Sharp highlighted that participatory art practices might be part of a more extensive regeneration program, arguing that:

> "the increased expectation placed on community-driven initiatives but in a climate of major cuts to public services results in a parallel 'function ambiguity' in which the terms participation, empowerment, and community pervade the rhetoric but, in practice, the extent to which they are realized on the ground remains a moot point." (Pollock & Sharp, 2012, p.2065)

Furthermore,

> "While properly managed processes can help to maximize a sense of ownership and even empowerment, if these processes are interrupted for whatever reason, this can have negative consequences for the communities involved and for future attempts at community participation." (Sharp et al., 2005, p.1017)

Finally, Mayer identifies a problem with the actual distances and divisions within those affected by contemporary forces of dispossessions, as artists and citizens in disadvantaged neighborhoods (2013). Mayer differentiated between two groups: one composed by the (racialized) *global proletariat* and the other by progressive or radical (often middle-class-based) *activists*, and argues for more awareness and critical reflexivity about class and privilege within movements (Mayer, 2013). She sees contemporary crises as opportunities to re-assess and re-habilitate those gaps by recognizing the difference between privileged city users and a growing *advanced marginality* (Mayer, 2013). Public art policymakers, researchers, and public art producers have overlooked the contrasting positions of diverse groups participating in the production of a public art process, and with it, the existing asymmetries determined by power.

2.2.7 Conclusions: participatory art practices as cultural negotiations

Cities are sites of cultural negotiation and contestation (Miles, 2013). There is no one urban culture but many different subcultures constantly negotiated in the city's public spaces (Zukin, 1996, p.290). Urban settings are actively made up by relational and spatial practices of different groups; however, only a few are represented in the public space, whereas other groups are constantly marginalized from them (Beebeejaun, 2017). The concept of the *public* itself has relied upon excluding different groups over time (Beebeejaun, 2017). Zukin warns us about the risk of succumbing to a visually seductive, privatized public culture prescribed by capital. She encourages citizens to question normalized "representations" (Zukin, 1996). Luis Menor points out that those spaces that are not adjusted to the mainstream parameters of beauty are stigmatized (2017). Miles & Paddison also identified the danger of a manufactured culture drawn by "specialists" and the "powerful" (2005).

There is a colonizing culture imposed as a resource of domination. Nonetheless, culture is also a socially constructed process, fragmented and dynamic, that happens on the micro-level through daily life experiences (Zukin, 1996). Every group has the right to "be in public spaces, to use them in certain ways, to invest them with a sense of their selves, and to claim them as theirs and to be claimed in turn by them" (Zukin, 1996, p.11). One of the most precious but most neglected of our human rights (Harvey, 2008). Indeed, public art can be a powerful tool to engage with unheard groups and make them an active part of the city's design. However, this research will show that not always serves to this end. Participatory art implies complex cultural negotiations between artists and citizens, authorities and artists, and authorities and citizens. Zebracki et al. argue that artwork becomes public when there is a negotiation between different social groups. ”If negotiation among diverse social identities is not invited, then the artwork is not public” (2010, p.786). This research aims to further

understand participatory art practices as processes of cultural negotiation by identifying winners and losers and observing to what extent they become a beneficial asset for the communities where they are developed. The next chapter explains and justifies the specifics of the research design and its methodology.

3 Methodology

This MA thesis is a qualitative and embedded single-case study (Yin, 2018) that examines public art practices, unpacking questions around the benefits these practices generate. This chapter has two parts. The first one explains the researcher's perspective, unpacking concepts of situated knowledge (Haraway, 1991) and PAR (participatory action research), valuable lessons on how to approach the object of study. The following section will clarify the methodological framework and the methods employed to answer the RQ in the following section.

3.1 Research Perspective

3.1.1 Explaining researcher positionality

To develop this research, theories on situated knowledge have been a valuable source to understand the relationship with the object of study. Along with other feminist researchers, Donna Haraway deconstructed the idea of objectivity, shedding light on the partiality that every research, thought, or contribution has (Araiza Diaz, 2020). They reacted to the claim that knowledge production is universal and neutral by declaring that researchers produce every knowledge in specific circumstances and those circumstances shape it (Rose, 1997). The literature reviewed has also referred to the oppressive nature of universalistic views, as they claim only one perspective to be valid. Feminist researchers think that *reflexivity* can be an exercise to unpack universalistic claims (Rose, 1997). "By reflexivity, I mean those introspective aspects of thought that are self-critical and self-consciously analytical" (Moss, 1995, p.445). McDowell applauds "greater self-consciousness about research methods" (1992, p.400). Cindi Katz demands "conscious awareness of the situatedness of our knowledge" (1992, p.498). These feminist researchers are asking for more attention and awareness of one's position when defining knowledge. Recognizing positionality and reflecting upon the relationship with the object is a "key practice for grounding knowledge" (Haraway, 1991, p.193).

The relation to the object changed along the research process. I first selected the case of Imagina Madrid because I saw an exemplary model of participatory art, through which artists were involved in the production of public space along with citizens. In my hometown of Buenos Aires, I had developed a background related to art interventions, creative practices, and participation. The

collective that I worked with had been hired by the cultural authority of the city and had taken part in discussions similar to the ones that brought Imagina Madrid to life. Initially, I did not doubt that creativity and artistic practices were a way for citizens to engage, reclaim and imagine their own public spaces and that the primary beneficiaries of such practices were the citizens. However, this research made me reconsider my thoughts and beliefs. When I started doing my fieldwork, my perspective was sympathetic towards the vision of the artists and public authorities, with whom I found myself to share interests, ways of living, and cultural codes. My position shifted throughout the process and by getting closer to the citizens and the life in the neighborhoods. The inequalities between actors in the cultural negotiations, promoted by city-led participatory art practices, became increasingly evident. Haraway's approach has become a relevant guide to sort and understand the distances and boundaries between the actors I interviewed over the past year. Exercising reflectivity has also been helpful to distance me from the cultural norms and empathize and integrate with the most fragile voices throughout the process.

3.1.2 Participatory Action Research

The methodological approach for this research empathizes with strategies associated with PAR (participatory action research), which is based on the need to recognize that social science must be committed to the social, economic, political, and cultural transformation of its environment (Villasante, 1998). “The keystone in participatory research is that it involves those conventionally ‘researched’ in some or all stages of the research” (Pain, 2004, p.652). Orlando Fals Borda theorized on PAR, questioning the relation between subject and object of study, understanding both as catalysts of action and change (2013). PAR is concerned with understanding the *researcher-researched relationship* not as antagonistic but as people connected to each other, with different lived realities and worldviews. The researcher and those involved engage in collaborative work based on egalitarian dialogue to formulate practical outcomes and new forms of understanding. The connections between this methodological approach and the respective MA thesis will be further explained in the subchapter *Participant observations: the case of Usera.*

3.2 Research Methods

3.2.1 Introduction

The case study of Imagina Madrid has been chosen to develop the inquiry. Imagina Madrid was a program encompassing nine public art processes in Madrid (promoted between 2017 and 2019). However, only four of those nine were selected as sub-units for extensive analysis (Yin, 2018). The

four experiences present different perspectives, contexts, and forms regarding the dynamics between the artists, the public spaces, and the citizens involved that have been key to further detecting and understanding the relative benefits and impacts of participatory art practices. Regarding the research design, which is presented with a timeline in figure 1, a mix of diverse methods was used to collect data. The primary source was in-depth interviews conducted with those involved in the production of public art pieces. At the same time, visits to the sites have been done from the beginning of this research, generating ethnographic observations of the four neighborhoods chosen. In the case of the neighborhood of Usera, a more profound process with the local community was carried out using participant observations. Finally, a mix of sources has enriched data collection through desktop research.

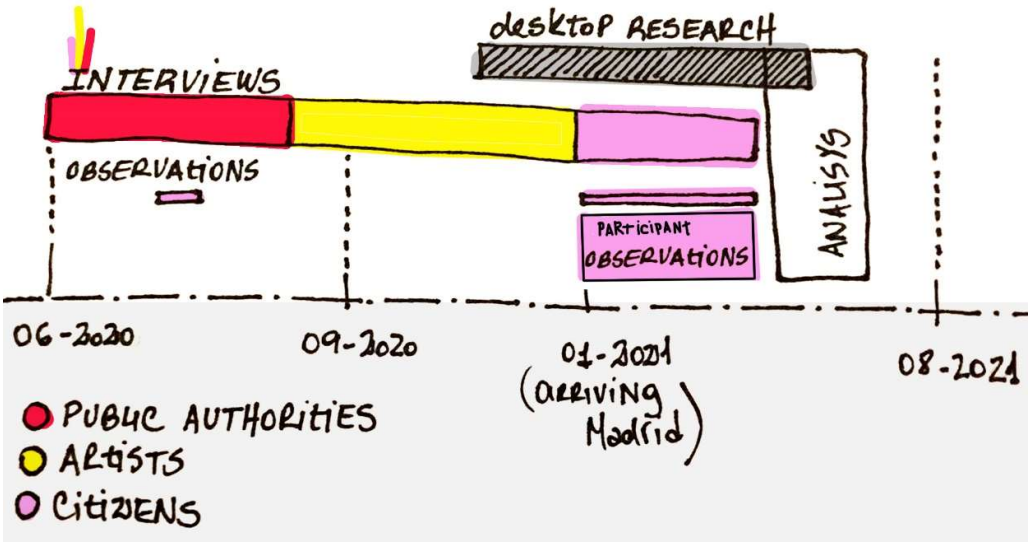

Figure 1: Data collection between June 2020 and June 2021. Credits: by the Author

3.2.2 The selection of the case study

The case study Imagina Madrid was selected because it was accessible in a variety of ways. On the one hand, it happened in Madrid, one of the cities where I would be for six months due to the 4Cities course. Spanish is my mother tongue, which made the entire process more accessible. Furthermore, I was lucky to be introduced to the coordinator and creator of Imagina Madrid through a mutual friend, which was pivotal to having access to information, interviews, and direct contact with the people involved. On the other hand, Imagina Madrid represented an integrated empirical experience, where public art, participation, and public space production overlapped. From the beginning, the program of Imagina Madrid showed its potential as a valuable source to further understand public art processes.

The sub-selection of the four subunits was determined by my first conversations with the organizers of the program. I pre-selected the most "interesting" cases, tagged this way by public

authorities. Approaching the public art experiences selected as "interesting" *or* "successful" was followed by curiosity towards why and based on which criteria some processes were defined as better than others. The selection continued intuitively. In July 2020, I planned a trip to Spain to visit the public spaces where Imagina Madrid had been developed. I chose four final districts and projects through those visits and the data collected beforehand: *Usera, Vallecas, Arganzuela,* and *Tetuán*.

3.2.3 In-depth interviews

In depth, interviews are a reasonable approach to gather data of a social phenomenon "where different individuals or groups involved in the same line of activity have complicated, multiple perspectives" (Johnson & Rowlands, 2012, p.101). They allowed me a *deeper* understanding of Imagina Madrid while learning the meanings of participant's actions (Johnson & Rowlands, 2012). In-depth interviews were held with four groups identified among the research: *public authorities, artists, citizens,* and *experts*[5]*.* Twenty-two in-depth interviews were conducted: 6 with public authorities, 8 with artists, 6 with participants, and 2 with experts; which can be observed in table 1 in Appendix A, identifying the dates when they were conducted and the role and relation with Imagina Madrid. The first interviews were held in the summer of 2020. I started by interviewing public authorities, where conversations had a more open structure, with no clear guidelines. The open dialogues contributed to better understanding and framing the contextual settings of Imagina Madrid. At that point in time, neither the RQ nor the focus of the research was clearly defined.

Interviews with artists were conducted in August, September, November, and December 2020, prioritizing those involved in the projects I selected. At this point, the interviews were semi-structured, following a guideline of questions and topics (Johnson & Rowlands, 2012). I alternated between online and offline encounters. Most of them were conducted via Zoom, while I could meet some artists in person during my stay in Madrid.

When I arrived in Madrid (January 2021), I developed my third group of interviews associated with the citizens. The first contact with participants was through the artists by the snowball effect. They brought me in contact with the citizens they were working with during the public art processes. In some cases, the connection was easy; however, in other cases, as in the case of Kópera, the artist preferred not to introduce me to the neighbors for personal matters.[6] In these cases, I looked for names or associations involved in the projects, and I contacted them through social media (such as

5 Two experts were interviewed, an expert on street art in the context of Madrid and one on public participation and new urban activists.

6 This research will show how the relationships between artists and citizens are not an easy and natural bond. They must be constructed, and generally, tensions arise; in some cases, those tensions had been overcome; in others, the tensions persisted once the project was over, for example, the case of Kópera.

Facebook groups or LinkedIn). When I had the opportunity to have interviews in person, I arranged them on-site, as a way to observe and know which cafes they would go or use, as Herzog explained, the location and who decided where interviews are held are relevant aspects when analyzing a social phenomenon (Herzog, 2012)[7]. The last group of interviews was conducted with experts in street art and/or public participation.

3.2.4 Observations

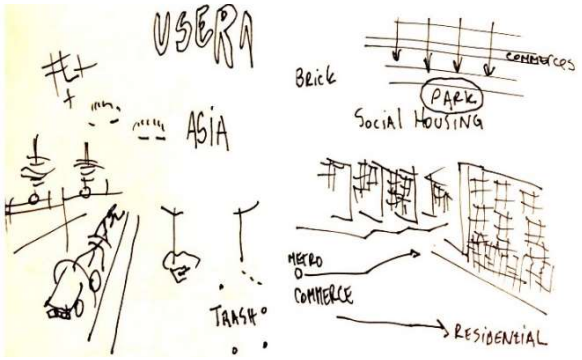

Figure 2: Observations. Credits: by the Author (2020)

The observations were undertaken during my first trip to Madrid (in July 2020) and later on, during the semester in Madrid. Walking around the neighborhood, listening to casual conversations between residents, observing, and drawing were mixed methods used during these journeys. The courses at UCM and UAM[8] were also helpful to grasp knowledge about the city and its socio-cultural context.

3.2.5 Participant observations: The case of Usera

As was introduced in the previous sections in the specific case of *Usera*, a more profound process was encouraged to understand further and contextualize practices of public art in disadvantaged neighborhoods. This process started organically when making my first approaches to get closer to the citizens. I first contacted neighbors from Usera district through existing Facebook groups.[9] Primarily, this research was designed to develop workshops with neighbors, understand their dreams and ambitions, and come to know the existing uses they made of the neighborhood's public spaces. Initial plans were using the data collected to contrast with the resultant public art projects and the fabrication of imaginaries encouraged by Imagina Madrid. Two associations replied to the posts in the Facebook groups, and a meeting was held with both of them in January 2021.

In the first meeting, three people arrived. The three were men, young (around 30 years old), and active actors in their neighborhood. Both associations (*La Union de Almendrales*[10] and *Asociación Vecinal La Mancha*[11]*)* have a long history in the area of Almendrales (an inside neighborhood of Usera

[7] "The interview location ... becomes an integral part not only of the findings and their analysis but also of the construction of the reality under study and the consolidation of cultural knowledge." (Herzog, 2012, p.207)
[8] Universidad Complutense de Madrid and Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
[9] I used two Facebook groups: "Usera City, la Nuestra..." and "Soy de Usera, Y qué..."
[10] https://avlaunionalmendrales.wordpress.com/
[11] https://avlamancha.wordpress.com/

district). The three of them knew about the process of Imagina Madrid, even though two were not actively involved, and one of them had worked as an intern in Imagina Madrid during the development of the program in 2017. The meeting started with me explaining the MA thesis objectives and formulating my intentions and research design. It continued with them discussing their work and ambitions for the neighborhood. They communicated to me about a process they were hoping to activate to strengthen the community fabric. They wanted to encourage an urban diagnosis, as an open process, to grasp their neighborhood's ambitions and complexities better. This process had a dual intention.

On the one hand, it was an excuse to catalyze and unite the social fabric in the neighborhood. Which, according to them, was being threatened by new political cycles aligned with right-wing parties. At the same time, organizations were disseminated and undermined by individual agendas. Having a more united vision would strengthen their voice to resist processes of dispossession. On the other hand, they created a shared narrative on the neighborhood's necessities, challenges, and opportunities from a grounded perspective.

Once I got to know these characters, my ambitions for fieldwork shifted. I realized I was the one coming from *outside* and that this research would not make sense if I would have imposed my agenda without empathizing and understanding the process these people were trying to encourage. At this moment, I decided to change my methods, becoming an active part of the process the neighbors were pushing, learning from them, and involving myself in their procedure. I actively participated as an observer in three workshops (details about these meetings in Appendix B).

Figure 3: Exploratory walk May 2021.
Credits: by Claire Griffith

They organized one encounter per month, and the goals of each meeting varied. The organizers also rotated in order to have different people guiding the space. Some topics and activities done throughout the workshops were related to *thinking about the neighborhood in five years*, constructing an *actor's map*, and *revising old urban diagnoses made in the past to update them*.

Figure 4: Exploratory walk May 2021.
Credits: by Claire Griffith

In each meeting, more neighbors or organizations were included. I was in charge of organizing the fourth meeting, and we made an *exploratory walk*, where the goal was to give a spatial dimension to the discussions that emerged in previous meetings. The first meeting we had was in January, and the last encounter I took part in (the exploratory walk) was on May the 22nd.

The whole experience carried out with the neighbors of Usera made me reflect on my methods and position towards the project. I was looking for a methodological framework that would adjust to this process, and that is how I arrived at concepts of PAR (Participatory Action Research). PAR posts that the "observer has an impact on the phenomena being observed and brings to their inquiry a set of values that will exert influence on the study" (Baum et al., 2006, p.854). I was no longer observing, and I found myself involved emotionally and intellectually with the studied object. Their voices and perspectives have been vital in thinking and reflecting on the benefits of public art production and reconsidering artists' role in city making and the relationship between citizens and institutions.

3.2.6 Desktop research

Finally, I carried out general desktop research, using three primary sources: policy documents, social and press media, and the project's blogs. To further understand the whole institutional and political framework, I analyzed public documentation. For example, the strategic plan of the city, issued by Ahora Madrid for the electoral period between 2015-2019[12]. Cultural policies were also studied, as the PECAM 2012-2015 (Hacia el Plan estratégico de cultura del Ayuntamiento de Madrid 2012-2015[13]). More specific to the case, the document with the competition rules was a valuable material, where the main guidelines of the program Imagina Madrid were drawn. Finally, the post-evaluation made by two cultural practitioners, Jara Blanco and Javier Rodrigo, '*Arte y Ciudad, El programa Imagina Madrid como laboratorio de practices situadas*'[14] (2019) was also a valuable source, where the nine projects are thoroughly reviewed through institutional lenses. The document unpacks strategies for improving future cultural policy-making based on the extended analysis of the nine projects developed by Imagina Madrid (Rodriguez & Blanco, 2019, p.10).

Another fruitful source was various kinds of online media, i.e., the social media channels and website of Imagina Madrid[15], where there is updated information (until the end of the program, 2019), essential to reconstruct the experience. Video material on the respective Youtube and Vimeo

[12] The full document in the following link
[13] Translation: Towards cultural strategic planning for the city of Madrid (2012 – 2015). The full document is in the following link.
[14] Translation: Art and the City, Imagina Madrid as a laboratory of situated practices. The full document is in the following link.
[15] https://www.imagina-madrid.es/es

channels, with interviews, conversations, events, and conferences organized during the program's development, offered further insight into Imagina Madrid. Media sources, such as online newspapers or blogs, were also vital in understanding the public discourses and narratives around the public spaces and the projects. It is important to note that the artistic interventions were limited to a one-year extension. When this research began, the various processes of public art had ended. Photos, articles, and videos of public access were crucial to grasp the everyday life of the projects and reconstruct the processes.

3.2.7 Limitations

This research analyses the participatory processes in which the protagonists are the citizens, and this MA thesis concludes by criticizing the lack of power citizens have to affect public art processes. As mentioned at the beginning, concepts of PAR have been considered in the methodological approach. However, it was certainly not feasible to apply many tactics usually included in PAR due to the lack of time and resources. E.g., the findings were analyzed only by the researcher, without any involvement of the researched community. In addition, the transcriptions of the interviews were not double-checked with the informants. The time frame in this research was short, difficulting meaningful channels for participation. Constraints were also faced when reaching the citizens, whereas the artists that took part in the program were delineated; the citizens were more challenging to identify, and it was a long process to contact them. This research is also aware of the exclusionary character universalistic notions have; a weak point is presented in the generalizations done during the research. For example, generalizing the “citizens," the "artist," and the "public authorities" and organizing them in three groups might be ignoring possible inner fragmentation and the contrasted interests within these three groups.

The Covid-19 context has also been challenging for grounded fieldwork in general, making challenging social and physical encounters between people. For example, the workshops conducted with neighbors had a limitation on the number of people allowed. Furthermore, people that decided not to take part because of the risks regarding their health, unfortunately, were not integrated into the research process (e.g.:the case of elderly citizens or mothers, that were required to be at home because of interruption of schools)

4 Case Study

In this chapter, a brief city profile of Madrid is offered, followed by an outline of the Imagina Madrid project and a detailed account of the four projects chosen for analysis.

4.1 City Profile

Madrid is administered by two bodies: the *Ayuntamiento* (City Council) and the *Comunidad Autonoma* (Autonomous Community), which integrates the city of Madrid and 20 other adjacent jurisdictions. Between the 1950s and 70s, Madrid experienced its most significant population growth so far. In only two decades, the population rose from 1.5 million to 3.1 million, mainly ignited by rural to urban migratory flows (Zamora López, 2002). The number of inhabitants in Madrid has remained stable since then. Instead, the peripheral jurisdictions have seen an increase over the last decades.

After the death of Franco in 1975, Spain made a political shift to re-insert the country into the global community. Rapidly the country became a center of globally competitive corporations (Guillén & García-Canal, 2010), and Madrid, as the capital, had a crucial role. In the 90s, Madrid showcased a new image of a modern metropolis and became a center for multinational capital accumulation (Gonick, 2010). The city experienced increased activity in the construction and tourism industries and the services sector, promoting a model based on knowledge and creative economies (Mcdonough, 2014). Leal and Sorando studied these changes concerning the deindustrialization process and its impact on the labor force, retracing the Spanish Capital's increasing social polarization and fragmentation (2019). Sequera and Janoschka analyzed the locally specific adaptation of neoliberal urban policies in the Spanish city. They highlighted the active roles that the national state and the city administration had in fostering policies aligned with the interest of capital and private corporations (2015)[16]. Changes in the economy came along with discussions of creativity inspired by the likes of Richard Florida (2002). Public-led cultural strategies to attract tourists and economic revenues, like the development of new museums, or notable cultural events, have guided the overall cultural policies encouraged by the city.

> "The city needs the drive of the creative class, and the center must receive the talents that will trigger economic competition. The new creative classes, university students, and small-scale R+D[17] entrepreneurs will be extremely well received in the cent*er."* (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2011, p.55 in Sequera & Janoschka, 2015, p.380)

[16] Gonzales et al. listed some of the actions the Spanish state followed in the last decades. E.g.*, essential changes in urban planning legislation that favored the liberalization and revalorization of land, a firm commitment to the so-called "entrepreneurial" urbanism through solid coalitions between financial entities, developers, and local and regional authorities, substantial public investments, insignificant events, and large-scale singular projects, with their essential complement of large infrastructures (airports, railroads, ports, highways)* (2015, p371).

[17] R+D is referring to small firms and entrepreneurs in the knowledge industry

One of the largest and latest cultural urban development projects was Matadero–Madrid, an enormous cultural container located in the south of Madrid's inner city, inaugurated in 2007.

Political decisions favoring a global and creative city profile defined the urban development that the city has had. Madrid is one of the most unequal capital cities in Europe, and it translates to its spatial configuration (Leal & Sorando, 2019). Such spatial divisions exacerbated the sharpening inequalities throughout the social strata, underlining a growing resistance among the masses to the dominant neoliberal ideology.

These pressing trends spilled to the streets with the social mobilizations in 2011, known as the 15-M social movement (Walliser, 2013). People tired of being left out from planning agendas and pressured by the increasing economic crisis, went out to the street calling for the right to be involved and demanded "Real democracy, now!" (Pereira-Zazo & Torres, 2019). 2015 set a shift from the traditional political scene installed in Madrid, towards a more democratic political frontier (Rius-Ulldemolins & Gisbert, 2018). The political coalition of Ahora Madrid Composed by several left-wing parties and a municipal civic platform) (de la Fuente & Walliser, 2018), led by *Manuela Carmena*, emerged in the 15-M movement and won the 2015 city council elections, breaking decades of hegemony by Partido Popular (Conservative party) (de la Fuente & Medina Garcia, 2019). This change affected traditional institutional structures and brought new people into roles of governance. Ahora Madrid lasted for four years until 2019 when Partido Popular was reinstalled in power.

One of the main guidelines of Ahora Madrid was participation; to establish a more transparent, participatory, and inclusive governance model (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2016). Ahora Madrid encouraged diverse projects, such as implementing participatory budgeting[18] and strengthening local forums. These efforts have been combined with a process of decentralization of power from the City Hall to the District Boards (Velasco & de la Fuente, 2016) and "the creation of mechanisms to allow relocation and distribution of public resources in the territory following social and urban vulnerability criteria" (de la Fuente & Medina Garcia, 2019, p.4). During their time in power, the financial resources of existing institutional spaces for participation were strengthened, for example, the case of *Intermediae*, the institution in charge of Imagina Madrid.

[18] The web Decide Madrid launched in September 2015 and was an open software developed by the City Hall itself, "*this virtual public space allows residents to join debates and voting sessions, as well as propose and back proposals and contribute to specific policy- reviewing debates triggered by the administration*." (de la Fuente & Medina Garcia, 2019). https://decide.madrid.es/

4.2 Imagina Madrid

Figure 5: Imagina Madrid, nine spaces to transform
Credits: Intermediae (2018)

Imagina Madrid is a public art program coordinated by Intermediæ[19]. The Imagina Madrid program explores alternative forms of intervention in urban space through processes of collective creation between citizens and artists (Imagina Madrid, 2021) and was launched in Madrid in 2017. Three leitmotifs guided the development of the program: explore new ways of building the city through art; explore new models of collaboration between artists, citizens, and the public administration and the transformation of public policies through community art processes (Soundcloud Imagina Madrid, 2018). There are some precedent programs, also organized by Intermediae, such as Paisaje Tetuán[20] and Paisaje Sur, which proved to be beneficial for the social setting of marginalized neighborhoods (Interview E-1, 2021). However, Imagina Madrid vastly expanded these previous experiences, both in budgetary and spatial terms, selecting nine sites in 8 districts with a budget of 60 thousand euros for each of the projects.

To articulate the program, Imagina Madrid made a public call, open to "creators, artists, and professionals interested in exploring new models of imagining, inhabiting and building public space" (Imagina Madrid, 2017). In November 2017, the terms and conditions of the call were published, and during the following months, they collected 147 ideas, choosing a final number of 22. Figure 6 shows a timeline with the overall development of the program. The jury selected three ideas for each public space, encouraging a negotiation process between the three artists and the citizens. In January 2018, the co-design meetings took place, where citizens and artists discussed the final projects in a two-day

[19] Intermediae is a space devoted to socially engaged artistic practices. It was launched in 2007 and has become a key cultural venue in Madrid and a national and international benchmark for contemporary culture that specializes in developing art and community projects (Intermediae, 2021). Intermediae offices are located in Matadero-Madrid.

[20] Paisaje Tetuán aims to develop an experience to explore the possibilities of improving the urban landscape of Tetuán through artistic interventions, it was developed in 2013, and Intermediae also promoted

session. It inaugurated the results in the chosen public spaces between September 2018 and April 2019.

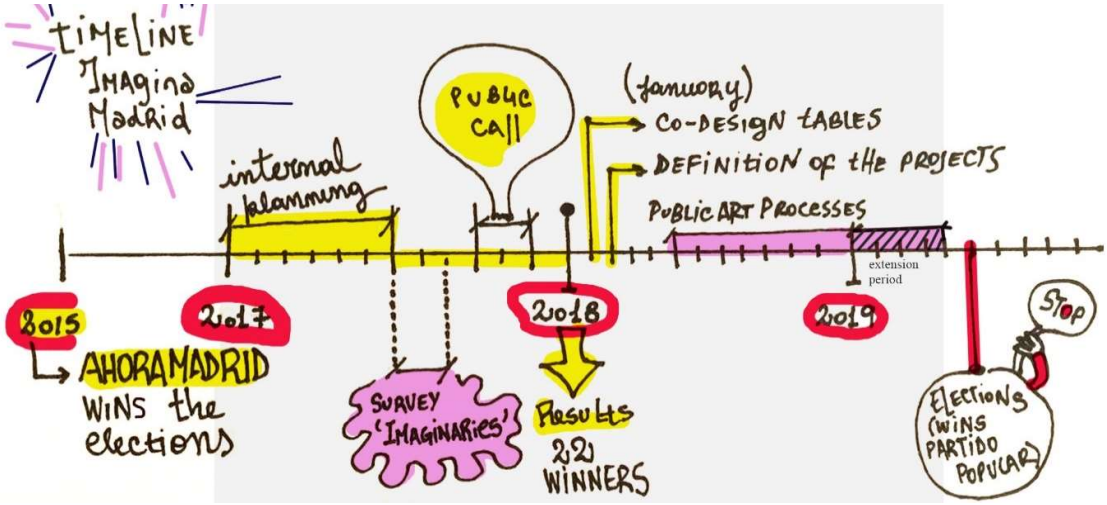

Figure 6: Timeline Imagina Madrid. Credits: by the Author

4.2.1 The neighborhoods chose to develop the program of Imagina Madrid

Imagina Madrid was developed in nine public spaces in the City of Madrid. All those spaces were considered as disadvantaged, according to an index[21] of vulnerability developed by the Municipality

Figure 7: Almendrales neighborhood.
Credits: by the Author, January 2021

[21] A public document issued in 2018 explains and develops the composition of the indicator

(Interview PA-4, 2020). They correspond to *peripheral* areas outside the historical center of the city. The city has developed the indicator of vulnerability to direct public policies and planning practices (Interview PA-4, 2020), pursuing a more nuanced urban development and recognizing the abrupt contrast between some and other areas of the City of Madrid (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2018). In collaboration with the department of urbanism of the Municipality, the team of Imagina Madrid chose the nine public spaces. This decision aligned with other projects of decentralization of culture, such as planning programs at the municipal level during the electoral period 2015-2019[22] (Interview PA-3, 2020). Some variables that affect the rating to define a place as disadvantaged are the number of migrants living in the area, unemployment rates, number of public subsidies in the area, the value of the rent, and educational level. The most disadvantaged districts, according to the index, are *Puente de Vallecas, Villaverde, Usera, Carabanchel, Latina, Villa de Vallecas* and *Tetuán* (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2018).

In figure 8, the reader can observe the districts affected by the vulnerability index. The city has historically developed, favoring the neighborhoods located in the north, coinciding with where the more advantaged classes live. A high economic contrast defines the more disadvantaged south and the more prosperous north of the city of Madrid (Leal & Sorando, 2019).

In the south, a concentration of the population carries unskilled jobs, traditionally, the working-class areas (Martinez & Leal, 2018), which corresponds to the composition of the neighborhoods being analyzed (Usera, Tetuán, and Vallecas). Historically, these neighborhoods have been marked by the absence of public institutions and the lack of public investment. E.g., access to public services (such as proper sanitation systems or public transport connectivity) arrived late in these areas.[23] Even though they have been neglected sectors of the city (Carabanchaleando, 2017), they are also defined by an effervescent neighboring fabric. The neighbors' associations and civic organizations in these marginalized areas have been critical drivers for the local urban development and are an active voice defending the rights of marginalized groups. This research focuses on four specific projects developed in four different districts where the program Imagina Madrid was encouraged: Tetuán, Usera, Puente de Vallecas, and Arganzuela (Marked with yellow in figure 8). In the following section, each subunit of analysis is further described for the reader to define each public art process.

[22] For example, Veranos de la Villa, an event generally and historically organized in the city center of the city, which during this electoral period, is organized at the district level.

[23] The metro arrived at Almendrales (a neighborhood in the district of Usera) in 2007. The extension line from Puente de Vallecas to Villa Vallecas was made between 1994 and 1999. Before that, these areas were segregated from the city center.

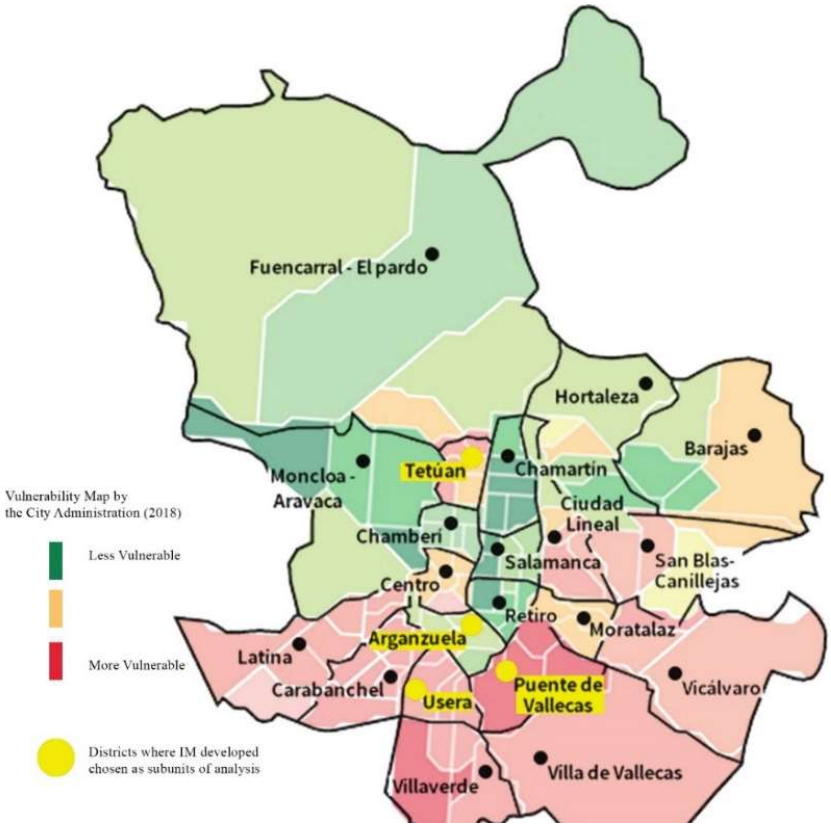

Figure 8: Map with the selected districts in yellow. Credits: by the Author with the use of a vulnerability map issued by the Municipality (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2018)

4.2.2 El Beso[24], the project developed in Tetuán

In the beginning, two artists won the public call, but they did not arrive at a common understanding, and the jury chose the Project of Toxic Lesbian to be developed (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019). Topete Street is in the neighborhood of Bella Vista in the district of Tetuán. This area is known as *the little Caribe* because of the significant presence of migrants from the Dominican Republic (Intermediae, 2021).

The proposal was to visualize personal narratives and memories of women living in this area, accentuating those not usually represented in the public space (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019). The initial point was the stigmatization around the street Topete and the existing public imaginary related to insecurity (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019). The public art project was inspired by cyberfeminism[25]; it

[24] Translation 'The Kiss.'
[25] The concept comes from the cyberfeminist Manifesto for the 21st century published in 1991 by the Australian artists VNS Matrix: https://vnsmatrix.net/projects/the-cyberfeminist-manifesto-for-the-21st-century. Cyberfeminist artists develop their actions in the physical space and respond to the new technological and virtual culture.

comprised the design of a Net.art[26] Piece with emotional narratives of women living in this neighborhood (Toxic Lesbian, 2021). A physical implementation in the public space supported the Net.art piece consisted of a canvas with women's quotes and photos. The project mixed the generation of face-to-face and virtual spaces to relate the material stories of women (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019).

Toxic Lesbian had previous experiences practicing public art (Interview A-1, 2020), which was reflected in confidence in carrying out the project. To approach the neighborhood, she defined a group of social workers, constantly present to connect and bond with the public. Between March and July 2018, a set of actions aimed at giving women visibility, recognition, and participation was carried out (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019). All this collected material took the form of two last projects. A last exhibition was installed on Topete Street itself, with 20 large-format boards on facades, balconies, and shop windows (figure 9). In addition, there was the publication of a Net.art work showing all the material collected through a virtual walk along Topete Street (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019).

Figure 9: Las mujeres toman la calle Topete by Toxic Lesbian. Credits: Imagina Madrid (2018)

The community of El Beso, after Imagina Madrid, kept working together (Interview A-1, 2020). They developed a second exhibition in the Maravillas Market in 2019. The artist kept in touch with the women that took part. During the lockdown, they had meetings and even applied for private funding to keep developing related projects in the district of Tetuán (Interview A-1, 2020).

4.2.3 Fiestas Raras[27], the project developed in Usera

The three artists chosen to develop Fiestas Raras were: *Fran Quiroga, Pasajes de Cine* and *Improvistos*. Fran Quiroga has an academic background in political science. Pasajes de Cine works in the field of audio-visuals and cinema. Improvistos has a background in landscape architecture. The Pradolongo Park in the south of Madrid was the starting location of the project, an area with great socio-cultural diversity that materializes in a multitude of heterogeneous uses and the existing impressions around the park, associated with narratives of insecurity (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019). Despite coming from

[26] The Access to the Net.art piece is no longer available, but one can see a representation in the following YouTube video.
[27] Translation' Weird Parties'.

different professional fields, they worked together to transform the negative imaginaries of Pradolongo park using, as an excuse, the organization of a *party.* The artistic practices varied (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019). The three collectives took a managerial role as organizers of the celebration, which was a strategy to interact and connect with local actors. For the team, the hybridization between the weird and the festive allowed a generative process involving many associations and artists (Interview A-2, 2020).

They organized themselves in commissions during 2018 and the beginning of 2019. Each commission was in charge of organizing something for the party (e.g., one commission for the food, another one for the music). The commissions were directed by people from the neighborhood (a local organization) and the artists (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019). The workshops and actions resulted in a final colorful party (figure 10), a day during which the area attached to the lake of Pradolongo park became a lively meeting place (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019).

Figure 10: La fiesta Rara Pradolongo Credits: Imagina Madrid (2018)

Last but not least, the artists wanted to explore an academic dimension of the process they were promoting. Therefore, they released a publication about the festivities and public celebrations, the public space, and everyday activities. The name of the book is *'La fiesta, lo raro y el espacio público'*[28].

4.2.4 Kópera, the project developed in Vallecas

The three artists who carried out Kópera were *Inprozess, LHRC* and the collective V*ivero de Iniciativas Ciudadanas* (VIC). All of them had a background in architecture. The public space was the *mirador* Payaso Fofó in the neighborhood of Palomeras Bajas in Vallecas District. The artists took as a starting point the under-used and deteriorated *mirador*[29] (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019).

[28] Translation: The party, the weird, and the public space.

[29] Parts of Vallecas are higher than other parts of the city in Madrid. Mirador refers to the public spaces in higher areas where one can have an overview of the city.

The proposal was to create an opera, which usually is associated with elitist cultures, and bring it to a working-class neighborhood. The script was used to voice out stories representing the neighborhood (Interview A-3, 2020). The artists took the role of producer, managing and coordinating the process. Other artists from the neighborhood participated in the artistic production, for example, fabricating costumes, dancing, or acting (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019).

Figure 11: Video de Kópera. Credits: Imagina Madrid (2018)

The entire process of the project was split into numerous development stages—the first one comprised a research process to meet neighborhood agents and get information for writing the script. An event was organized to present the project, and, between May and June, the first script was written based on interviews with local agents. In autumn 2018, once the script was approved, the production began. A division of tasks and local coordination was established: the choir, with weekly rehearsals; the acting, through rehearsals with professionals and workshops; the costumes, with collaborative workshops (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019). As the complexity of the production increased, the project deadlines had to be extended, delaying the final event (figure 11), which was postponed until March 2019.

The project released a publication of this performance, where one can read the script and find photos of the final event. One neighbor collective now is developing a similar project in Vallecas: La Zarzuela del Kas.[30]However, the artists involved in Imagina Madrid are not part of it.

4.2.5 En Sintonía[31], the project developed in Arganzuela

The artists involved in En Sintonía were *La Parcería Infancia y familia* and *Grupal Crew Collective*. The first one is an organization working with matters of care, gender, and childhood, whereas the second one is a platform exploring social interactions through music and sound exploration. The public space was a square named Rutilio Gacís, in Chopera neighborhood in Arganzuela district. The starting point was a square affected by conflicts of use, stigmatization and narratives of fear, and the lack of dialogue between the users and residents (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019). The proposal was to activate the park as a

[30] More about this projectProject in the following link.
[31] Translation 'In Tune.'

space for intergenerational encounters. They developed an extensive cultural agenda in the park, allocating the children and the families to the project's core (Interview A-7, 2020) (figure 12).

In the first phase, during the co-design discussions, there was not much neighborhood participation. In response, a strategy was established to approach the neighborhood through a mediator, who accompanied the project until the end (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019). The decisions of the artistic team of En Sintonía went through weekly coordination meetings between the teams and the mediator, which allowed them to understand the work context and build the cultural program that energized the square between April and December 2018 (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019).

En Sintonía ended on time (in December 2018), but during the following six months of 2019, it maintained its presence in the park through a mediation team and a series of activities. In June 2019, the project evolved, taking the name of NODO (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019) as an additional space for culture and community creation in the neighborhood. This space represented the continuation of the project. Even though NODO had to close during the pandemia, they still have continued with their activities until today, in another space some blocks away at Rutilio Gacís, which recently opened (Interview A-8, 2020).

Figure 12: Verbenita En Sintonía. Credits: Imagina Madrid (2018)

The following page presents a comparative charter where the four subunits are synthesized in one unique layout for ease of use by the reader. This MA thesis will now continue to analyze correspondent findings regarding the benefits of city-led and creative practices.

ImAgina Madrid

District:	**Tetuán**	**Usera**	**Vallecas**	**Argenzuela**
Name of the project:	El Beso	Fiestas Raras	Koopera	En Sintonía
Photo Public Space				
Photo Project				
Artists:	Toxic Lesbian	Fran Quiroga / Improvistos / Paisajes de Cine	VIC / Inprozess / LHRC	Parcería Infancia y Familia / Grupal Crew
Public Space:	Topete Street	Pradolongo Park	Miradores in Palomeras bajas	Rutilio Gacís park
Starting point	The initial point was the stigmatisation around the street Topete and the existing public imaginary related to insecurity.	Great sociocultural diversity that materialises in a multitude of heterogeneous uses and the existing imaginaries around the park, associated with narratives of insecurity.	The artists took as a starting point the under-used and deteriorated mirador.	The starting point was a square affected by conflicts of use, stigmatisation and imaginaries of fear, and the lack of dialogue between the users and residents.
Proposal:	The proposal was to visualise personal narratives and memories of women living in this area, accentuating those that usually are not represented in the public space.	Transform the negative imaginaries of Pradolongo park using, as an excuse, the organisation of a "party".	The proposal was to create an opera, which usually is associated with elitist cultures, and bring it to a working-class neighbourhood. The script was used to voice out stories representing the neighbourhood (Interview A-3, 2020).	The proposal was to activate the park as a space for intergenerational encounters. They developed an extensive cultural agenda in the park, allocating the children and the families to the project's core.
Artistic practices:	The public art project was inspired by cyber feminism , it comprised the design of a Net.art piece with emotional narratives of women living in this neighbourhood (Toxic Lesbian, 2021) and a physical intervention in the public space which consisted of canvas with written women's quotes and photos.	The three collectives took a managerial role as organisers of the celebration, which was a strategy to interact and connect local actors. For the team, the hybridisation between the weird and the festive allowed a generative process from which to involve many associations and artists.	The artists took the role of producer, managing and coordinating the process. Other artists from the neighbourhood participated in the artistic production, for example fabricating costumes, dancing, or acting	They encouraged a cultural program that energised the square between April and December 2018, relying on occasional collaborations of external artistic agents
Now:	The community of El Beso, after IM, kept working together. They developed a second intervention in the Maravillas Market in 2019. The artist kept in touch with the women that took part. During the lockdown, they had meetings and they even applied for private funding to keep developing related projects in the district of Tetuán.	Last but not least, the artists wanted to explore an academic dimension on the process they were promoting. Therefore, they published research about the festivities and public celebrations, the public space and their normativities The name of the book is "La fiesta, lo raro y el espacio público"	The Project released a publication of this performance, where one can read the script and find photos of the final event. One of the neighbour collectives involved now is developing a similar project in Vallecas: La Zarzuela del Kas , although the artists involved in IM are not part of it. Two of the artists continued working together on a similar project in another neighbourhood in the city of Madrid.	En Sintonía ended on time (in December 2018), but during the following six months of 2019 it maintained its presence in the plaza through a mediation team and a series of activities. In June 2019, the project evolved, taking the name of NODO. NODO had to close during the pandemia, but they still continue with their activities in another space some blocks away at Rutilio Gacís, which recently opened.

Table 1: Comparative charter of the four projects promoted by Imagina Madrid. Credits: chart made by the Author. Figures: Imagina Madrid website. Text: Blanco & Rodrigo (2019)

5 Findings and analysis

5.1 Chapter A) Looking at how the studied spaces are being transformed

5.1.1 The spaces where the program took place are already being transformed.

As mentioned in chapter three, Madrid is one of the most unequal European capital cities, with the highest social segregation figures within the population (Leal & Sorando, 2019), which is also expressed spatially. Gentrification refers to the process in which a different population displaces the traditional population living in a particular location with a higher socioeconomic status (Clark, 2005). In Madrid, these cycles of gentrification have taken place over 20 years, radically transforming central neighborhoods such as Malasaña, Chueca, and Lavapies (Sequera, 2013). Arganzuela, is the first district attached to the center to the south of the city, and in recent years also underwent significant transformations. It was directly affected by the urban renewal of Madrid Rio[32] (figure 14) and Matadero[33] (figure 13). Since then, the prices in rent only went up, changing the profile of the people living in the area (Feinberg & Larson, 2019). A study made by Sorando and Ardura showed how people living inside the almond (the city center of Madrid)[34] are progressively moving to peripheral neighborhoods (2021). Young professionals who live in the city center are forced to move to adjacent neighborhoods because of the pressure on

Figure 13: Matadero-Madrid. Credits: Diario de Madrid (2017)

[32] Madrid Rio is a high profile urban renewal project developed in the south of the City of Madrid, inaugurated in 2011. It is a park of 120 hectares constructed over the undergrounded highway M30.

[33] Matadero-Madrid is located in an area in Arganzuela on the Manzanares River on the southern edge of the city and one of the anchors of the Madrid Río project. First constructed in 1911, it originally consisted of 48 pavilions that made up what was once an abattoir and livestock market and one of the most iconic industrial establishments in Madrid that was used until 1996 for these original purposes. After a brief stint in the 1990s, when the stalls for cattle were converted into the headquarters for Spain's National Ballet and National Dance Company, the complex, and the Madrid Río, began to be seen as anchor projects for the city leader's redevelopment of the city center's southern perimeter (Feinberg & Larson, 2019)

[34] The central almond refers to the area of Madrid located within the confines of the M-30. The ring road traditionally comprised seven districts of Centro, Arganzuela, Retiro, Salamanca, Chamartín, Tetuán, and Chamberí. The reader can see figure 8.

prices in central locations. Those pushed further to the second ring in the metropolitan area correspond to lower educational levels (Sorando & Ardura, 2021). The article identifies Usera and Tetuán incipient gentrifying processes and shows many people leaving the districts, representing the poorest and most fragile inhabitants (Sorando & Ardura, 2021). One resident of Usera said when referring to Matadero-Madrid:

Figure 14:Madrid Rio. Credits: Flickr La Citta Vita (2011)

> "The uncool part is that it is a gigantic pole of gentrification and it pushes, and it has already pushed Arganzuela, and it is pushing down here… Almendrales (a neighborhood in Usera district) is being gentrified… before there was nothing, industrial land, and they changed it, and now there are apartments for half a million euros, and they call it Madrid Rio, and it is cornered between Vallecas, Usera, and Villaverde."(Interview C-3)

Something similar has been taking place in Vallecas. One citizen referred to the fluctuation in the rent he has suffered over the last years:

> "I am amazed that this neighborhood is not hyper-exploited; it is five steps away from Madrid (referring to the city center)… Here the rent is brutal… they throw you out. I live with my daughter… and I was paying 380 euros for the two of us, now we are at 500 euros. I talked to my landlord the last time, and I told him, you have raised it 120 euros… why? 'Because I can." (Interview C-6)

In the workshops with the neighbors of Usera, they also expressed that gentrification was one of their primary concerns. One neighbor said, "I have been from Madrid all my life, but they are expelling us little by little" There are many signs that point to neighborhoods like, Arganzuela, Tetuán, and now also Vallecas and Usera are becoming the new "*hot spot for real estate businesses.*[35]" According to the citizens, the concept of gentrification is present in their everyday life in the

[35] Like the in the following press article.

neighborhoods. Public art practices are inserted in broader planning agendas, and they occur in public spaces that are already being transformed. This, in turn, influences which benefits will result for the communities where these practices are developed. The following section will analyze the transformations of the following public spaces by discussing the spatial complexities that became present in Imagina Madrid projects.

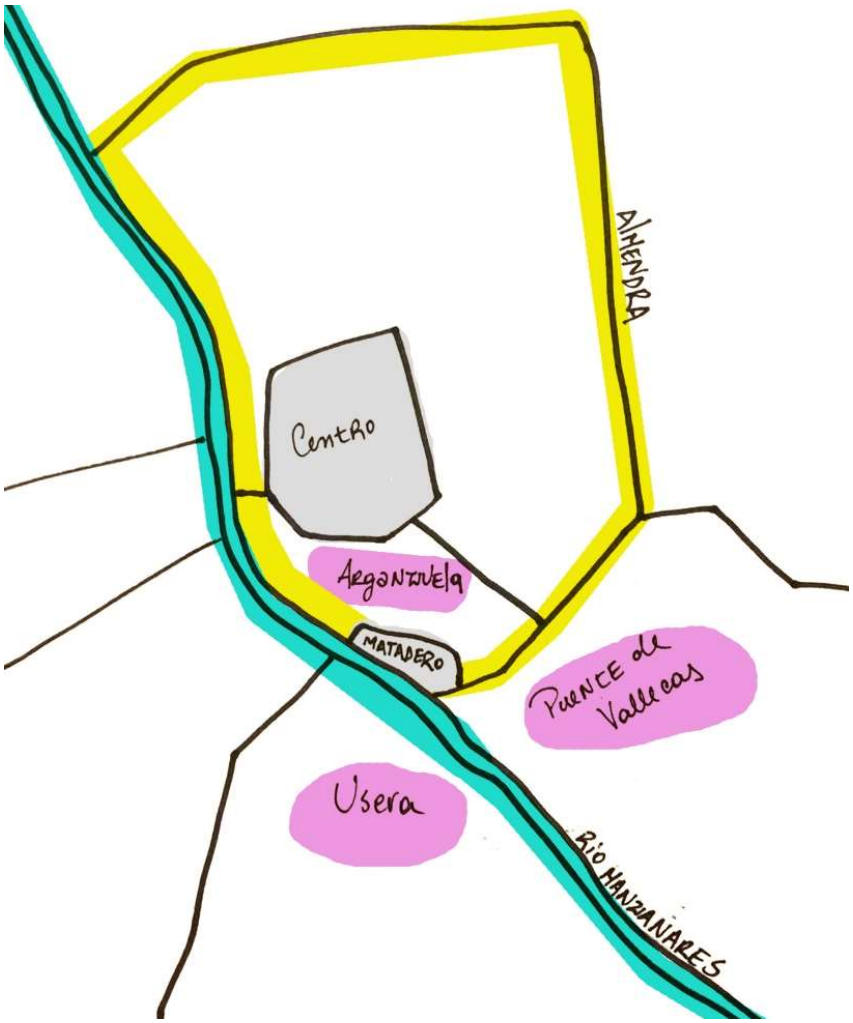

Figure 15: Map Madrid. Credits: by the Author

5.1.2 Imagina Madrid's public art processes: producing new realities or new images?

The four neighborhoods chosen to develop my analysis on practices of public art are highlighted by similar complexities. In three of them (Kópera, El Beso, and En Sintonía), there was a similarity in the narratives around the public spaces. Not only were they considered deprived areas by the authorities, but they also had a preoccupation with the reputation of those areas as stigmatized neighborhoods of the city. The issue of stigma became present in diverse forms as the potential of cultural practices to mediate with these complexities was considered. Public authorities and artists who conceived this program agreed that culture and arts could be a powerful tool to catalyze urban change. One public authority said: "Cultural practices can transform spaces in the city. I would say difficult spaces because they were abandoned or deprived or stigmatized. We wanted to intervene in the way of seeing those spaces" (Interview PA-3). The neighborhood's complexities were similar, although the artists who commissioned the projects faced the participatory art processes in contrasting ways.

Figure 16: Kópera in Project for Public Spaces. Credits: Imagina Madrid (2018)

A resident of Usera considered the benefits of belonging to a place that is stigmatized. He recognized negative narratives of the neighborhood as a way to slow down displacement processes: "This neighborhood is fortunate to be one of the most vulnerable of the city… and that implies that there is insecurity and drugs, and those things do not call families with money, who want to make a new life in a cheaper neighborhood" (Interview C-3). Contrary to the resident's perspective, the artists who developed Kópera saw stigma as the central problem, and it was approached using a

Figure 18: Miradores. Credits: Madrid Turismo (2021)

Figure 17: Kópera, the big event. Credits: Imagina Madrid (2018)

performative art process. One artist referred to the ″change of face″ the neighborhood needed, "for example, Vallecas is historically related with crime, drugs, and insecurity; this project could bring a *cultural face* by showing that these artistic processes can also happen in these neighborhoods" (Interview A-5). From the artists' perspective, the art process could be a way to create another type of image and narrative around Vallecas instead of those prevailing. The project produced messages of vitality and creativity through the medium of art and culture. The strong images Kópera had allowed greater media attention, national and international, compared with other Imagina Madrid projects, as shown in figure 16. Indeed, the project temporally achieved the transformation of a place with no cultural programming nor infrastructure and generally underused (figure 18) into an impressive (one-day) stage (figure 17). The images produced, the day of the intervention are highly seductive; however, the question for this research is about the benefits these practices leave when the accent is on the *image* instead of the *process*. The issue of stigma uncovers more profound complexities and is not something that can be immediately changed. One resident of Vallecas said by referring to the public art project:

> "The idea was excellent; we removed the idea of Vallecas or Tetuan or Argenzuela as dangerous or unsuitable places for good people by doing something artistic. The basic concept is great, but eradicating this collective thinking is difficult; you have to give more concrete tools." (Interview C-5)

Figure 19: Painting a mural with En Sintonía. Credits: Imagina Madrid (2018)

When these practices are not maintained and only stay for a short period, their capacity to negotiate with deep local processes needs to be taken into consideration. There also were some complaints of the neighbors not taking care of the cleaning of the space (Blanco & Rodrigo, 2019) once the show was over, nor the artists, nor the public authorities. On the one hand, the images of Kópera traveled around through the press as an impressive and temporal transformation of the public space. On the other hand, these counter images of them after use only locals know.

The project En Sintonía also challenged the negative narratives around the square Rutilio Gacís, but with a completely different approach than the artists of Kópera. The artists behind En Sintonía tackled the existing tensions in the place through a long and smooth process, trying to engage with the different groups. They rented and went to live in a shop next to the park (figure 20). The primary driver of the project was to face the complexities in the park through "care." One artist said:

Figure 20: En Sintonía finds a shop in front the park. Credits: Imagina Madrid (2018)

> "If instead of focusing attention … on social stigma … you speak from care, you will start working from a seed that is closer to everyone and with which it is easier to relate, and from there you can build something more positive." (Interview A-7)

The project En Sintonía was one of the few projects that continued once Imagina Madrid was over. Public authorities, artists, and citizens agreed in the transformation the neighborhood had and in the active role of the artists in the local community.

Figure 21: Event in Rutilio Gacís by En Sintonía. Credits: Imagina Madrid (2018)

When observing the benefits these practices produce, it is clear that public art processes are more consistent when they engage in the complexity of understanding why some images are being

created over others. Resorting to stigma is an effortless way to avoid critical thinking about the real reasons things happen in specific neighborhoods and the prevailing inequalities between different parts of the city (Carabancheleando, 2017). En Sintonía, contrary to Kópera, did not have a loud impact on the local press; the artists were not interested in creating other images of the space but more in creating a community. The accent was on the people and not on the physical element. Paradoxically, one artist of En Sintonía referred to the difficulties they faced to sell themselves and to show the work that was being done (Interview A-7). The artist perceived not having generated such powerful images (as in the case of Kópera) as a weakness. In a paradigm that defines culture and arts as a product (Zukin, 1996), when artists move away from the capitalistic conception of arts and encourage something different, they face a cumbersome journey to explain and show their work. Contrasting the processes behind Kópera and En Sintonía, the first one was based on a significant one-day event. In contrast, En Sintonía took the form of a variety and multiple smaller cultural events (figure 19 and 21). In the next section, the discussion on the transformation of these public spaces continues by analyzing the administrative pitfalls the artists had to face to develop public art practices.

5.1.3 The public space in Madrid and the limited possibilities of transformation

The temporary character of these practices challenged the notion of urban planning as something rigid and permanent. Public spaces in Madrid have a strong regulation on what is legal or what it is not. Forms of control and laws that might not be visible but affect the city's experience (Menor, 2017). The local administrations have been more concerned with configuring public spaces in favor of local economic dynamization, and therefore capitalist production, rather than in favor of social reproduction (Swyngedouw, 2017), most significantly the years before the government of Manuela Carmena. The electoral periods of 2007-2011 and 2011-2015 encouraged a strict law punishing all street art, graffiti, or intervention in public space with no public authorization (Menor, 2017). An expert on street art, when referring to Madrid, said:

> "Experiences like Imagina Madrid part from a tough context from the normative, in a city that since 2009 had hardened everything that had to do with artistic practices… zero tolerance. The mayor, Ana Botella[36], sanctioned that regulation for the public space, which was part of a global process that tried to understand cities as a tourist attraction and any artistic practice that was not subject to ideas aligned to the sale of the city had no place. Then total obedience was demanded from the citizens … anything that challenged that idea, either because of

[36] Ana Botella was the mayor of the City of Madrid between 2011 and 2015.

> ignorance or rejection, was left out … anything that happened in the street was banned … with huge fines." (Interview EX-1)

The program of Imagina Madrid challenged their own institutional regulations, and they had to face a whole administrative machinery (Hall et al., 2001) that was not prepared for such uses of public spaces as can be public art practices.

Public authorities and artists had several observations on their difficulties attempting public interventions and wishing to freely use the street and the parks. One public authority said:

> "For example, when we wanted to decentralize, the first thing the managers of the parks did was to tell us that no events had been held there. We had many meetings with them, explaining that they were not massive but were performances of controlled capacity so that the parks did not suffer. The permits, the payments, the forms of processing the payments were different." (Interview PA-3)

Even though the artists were directly connected to public institutions, they struggled with the police to demonstrate they were allowed to use the space occasionally. Indeed, one of the hypotheses of Imagina Madrid was to transform public policies through communitarian art. The focus was not only allocated outside in the public space but also inside the institutional borders. Imagina Madrid coordinator said they wanted to test "If cultural processes can be used to transform public policies," and he continues: "For example, the permissions to be in a park, to cook in the street, everything is arranged" (Interview PA-1). The administrative and legal frameworks that shape the space are relevant when analyzing these public art practices. As mentioned in the literature review, participatory art has been institutionalized and are more frequent in the last decades. However, in the case of Madrid, they are not legally or administratively integrated, provoking long and tedious bureaucratic procedures. The *long, administrative, centralized, large, technical, bureaucratic, slow, static systems* contrast the nature of public art practices as *ephemeral, decentralized, small, flexible, light, spontaneous, organic*. There is a tension between these two logics, and in Imagina, Madrid was constantly present. The benefits could come in the long term by modifying those rules that over-control space.

5.1.4 Conclusions: how the spaces where Imagina Madrid took place were transformed through practices of public art.

When analyzing the benefits these practices provoke and how they transform the space, it is relevant for this research to contextualize. The public art projects of Imagina Madrid are encouraged in

neighborhoods that are already being changed, as was mentioned in the first section of this chapter. The critical question in this research is how these public art processes can strengthen community ties, networks, and associations to be more prepared to struggle against processes of gentrification and defend their neighborhoods. When he replied to the question of how he imagined his neighborhood in the future, a citizen replied: "I imagine it with popular organization... with neighborhood's

Figure 22: Neighbor association La Mancha. Credits: by the Author (January 2021)

organizations that have more and more recognition and social significance" (Interview C-4). Public art processes can have a dual and ambivalent role. They can promote interaction and strengthen the local communitarian fabric of the neighborhoods, but they can also work as an engine contributing to a broader gentrifying context. Especially when these practices are developed to claim a transition of the public space's image, from a "stigmatized" image of the traditional working-class or poor or migrant to a cool cultural-artistic neighborhood. The ″cultural face″ artists want to give to these areas in the city is very suggestive of the historical connection between artists and gentrification, yet, it is difficult to determine to what extent these practices collaborate on displacement.

On the one hand, indeed, they aid in developing a new mindset and ideas aligned with the type of groups, such as professionals, artists, designers, or other creatives, who are not the ones being displaced. On the other hand, the temporary character could have potential, as they do not upgrade the urban environment. When there has been significant urban renewal investment, the coming gentrifying forces are stronger, more aggressive, and more challenging to resist. These temporary changes work on the social and cultural aspects instead of the physical ones. Through working with the local communities, these practices seem to strengthen the local ties, promote agency and make stronger neighborhoods able to resist future market-driven synergies. However, by observing the different cases studied, they do not always serve this end.

5.2 Chapter B) Looking at the imbalances in the cultural negotiations promoted by Imagina Madrid

5.2.1 Each neighborhood where Imagina Madrid took place has its structure and its madness.

Figure 23: Más conozco el centro, más me gusta la periferia. Credits: Carabancheleando (2020)

Each neighborhood where Imagina Madrid was developed is characterized by its local meanings, logic, and people. "Each neighborhood had its structure and its madness" (Interview C-5). Usera, Vallecas, Tetuán, and Arganzuela are districts marked by an identity construction independent of the center of Madrid. Chapter three mentioned the urban development of these neighborhoods, affected by the absence of institutions and the effervescence of the popular fabric. Furthermore, the correspondent neighborhoods are also composed of numerous cultural profiles, making up a complex cultural landscape. In the case of Tetuán and Usera, they are both districts with the largest migrant populations. People coming from non-European countries represent over 20%[37] of the entire population in both districts. The citizens see themselves represented by their neighborhood, having an emotional affection and differentiating Vallecas or Usera from Madrid. One Vallecano[38] said: "Don't make a show of me; Vallecas is a complex neighborhood, those of us who are from here are from here, and those from outside are from outside" (Interview C-4). Imagina Madrid ignited a discussion regarding tensions between the center and the periphery. Periphery, for this research, is not necessarily a geographical point but a symbolic one (Carabancheleando, 2017). Taking cultural assets and resources to historically marginalized areas was a clear focal point of Ahora Madrid. However, some theories must be revised in a discussion on democratizing culture. The action of "taking from" and "putting in" can

[37] This data has been elaborated based on data provided by the City Administration of public access. Data calculated up to the January the 1st 2020.
[38] An informal way to say someone from Vallecas.

neglect the existing symbols, meanings, and understandings of culture existing in each district, which differ from those in the city center.

5.2.2 From the center to the margins: artists' views imposed to the neighbors

The citizens of the city's peripheral areas tend to feel less represented by the cultural expressions from Intermediae or Matadero. One public officer referred to this gap:

> "Medialab[39] represents the center in its most pejorative sense: the glamour, the resources, everything opposed to the invisibility of the peripheries… the fact that it was a public institution… the fact that the proposal was not well understood, words like prototyping, experimentation, were received very distantly." (Interview PA-6)

In the public call of Imagina Madrid, the jury selected 22 final projects. Generally, the creatives were from the central areas of the city. In the four subunits concerning this research, none of the artists selected from the neighborhood where the projects were going to be carried out. One program coordinator also referred to the bureaucratic procedures they had to respond to, which narrowed the possibilities on the variety of 'artists' they could accept as participants. He said: "We are told that we can only hire artists, we cannot hire activists, NGOs, associations or sociologists… so it limits the funnel of participation, integrating only those who consider themselves artists. A cobbler does not belong to a cultural sector" (Interview PA-2). The lack of access for peripheral groups to the public bidding is defined from the starting point asymmetries in the posterior negotiations.

By analyzing the four subunits of Imagina Madrid, it became clear that the main protagonist in a public art process is not always the public (Zebracki et al., 2010). Although theory suggests the artist's role is one of mediation, this was not made clear enough during Imagina Madrid. One neighbor of Vallecas expresses this feeling by saying:

> "There are people who have excellent ideas but no one to do them with, and then… they open the window and look at some neighborhood, and they say, we have to do it there! And they arrive, and they don't have any roots, they don't have any knowledge of the dynamics." (Interview C-6)

[39] Medialab Prado is an institution similar to Intermediae.

In Fiestas Raras, the artists used their financial resources on a *recognized*[40] visual artist to produce the whole visual identity of the project. However, there are contrasts in between the definition of a *successful* aesthetic between actors. When referring to the project, one citizen referred to the distances between the symbols, images, and discourses used by the artists and the reality of the neighborhood of Usera. Two of the citizens I interviewed recognized distances between the "too abstract" images and the realities in the neighborhood. One citizen said:

> "at the time of the execution, much of the groups that used that park were not considered, the offer was extra-terrestrial, a program that can be given in Matadero, but it was of such an abstract artistic level, and so disconnected from the realities of Usera … A cultural level was raised … which is not that the people of Usera are ignorant." (Interview C-3)

Figure 24: Fiestas Raras. Credits: Imagina Madrid (2019)

The asymmetries start when the artist is designated as the expert and the citizens as the ignorants (As denoted before in one of the citizens). Another neighbor from Vallecas said: "Architects have always been regarded by the locals as the experts" (Interview C-5). The hierarchical relationship weakens the agency of the citizens to decide, take action and appropriate the piece of art. In Fiestas Raras, there was clear ownership of the work of art from the side of the artists defining how the "art" should be. One citizen said:

> "Anyways, you can see that I have little artistic sensitivity, which makes me a brute, an ignorant person. On the other hand, I know it's a lie because, after all, we all have an artistic vein, but, you know, mine is quite different." (Interview C-3)

[40] Both of the artists that worked in the project mentioned hiring a *recognized* visual artist and the intentions of the images selected.

The way of doing and perceiving art on one side of the city or in the periphery can be different from other parts of the city, for example, in the center. As Scott said, creativity is a situated process and is not universal (2011). The problem arises when there is no reflection on why one way of *doing art* is more legitimate than the other. On the other hand, there was a lack of discussion during the entire development of the program regarding these cultural distances and the spaces created to develop meaningful channels between a set of diverse people. As explained in the methodological chapter, I carried out a walk with the neighbors of Usera. I told them I was going to create a flyer to promote the event. To relieve me of work hours, they took a step ahead and made the flyer independently. When I saw the image that they produced, I faced tension regarding the aesthetic identity of the project. Figures 25 and 26 show the contrast between both flyers. In my consideration, the one designed by the neighbors was not an 'appealing' flyer, yet, it had another added value. The flyer produced by the neighbors reflected their process of doing and their codes of representation. That value is more important when engaging in a participatory public art process. "The emphasis must lie in providing a platform for the local communities ... to express their views and expectations" (Garcia, 2004, p.324 in Evans, 2005).

Figure 25: Flyer by the Author
Figure 26: Flyer by neighbors. Credits: Asociación La Unión y Asociación La Mancha de Almendrales

5.2.3 From the margins to the center: when residents make the project their own

Through the workshop of Usera, another interesting point came up from the voices of the citizens. One of the activities was an imaginary exercise. They tried to imagine their neighborhood five years from now. One of the participants raised the concern of achieving "cultural autonomy." This was related to being able to manage the cultural assets of their neighborhood independent of the public authorities. They saw a potential to give strength to the local artistic fabric and local cultural spaces. More specifically, one citizen criticized Imagina Madrid as *doubling* the cultural programming already existing in the neighborhoods without providing a means for locals to develop their own projects. Another neighbor from Vallecas said:

Figure 27: Workshops in Usera. Credits: by the Author

> "Here there is also a lot of cultures... we do things, if there are neighbors who have a music group, let them do it ... let's manage ... sometimes you can get resources from the administration, well ... sometimes you don't even ask for it." (Interview C-6)

Claire Colomb (2011) referred to this discussion when contrasting cultural democratization practices and those related to cultural democracy. The first one is related to taking cultural assets from a center to the periphery. The second one is related to creating spaces where the starting point is the communities to develop their own artistic process.

In this regard, the processes sponsored by Imagina Madrid also contrast in between. Some artists were more aware of the cultural distances with the neighbors and their role as *outsiders*. The artist of En Sintonia said:

Figure 28: Topete female community: El Beso by Toxic Lesbian. Credits: Imagina Madrid (2018)

"The first step was to know where we were landing. What happens when you grab artists and throw them in a square, pull someone's parachute, and they land there … the first question that came up was where we had landed?" (Interview A-7)

The artist of El Beso in Tetuán was also conscious of her role as an outsider, and she encouraged a consistent process to engage with the local context. The clear protagonists of El Beso were a group of around 50 women from the neighborhood. The project comprised taking the voice of these women into the public sphere. El Beso exhibited a positive example of creating a bond between artists and the local community (figure 28). The accent was not on the visual aesthetic the project would have but more on the process. Still today, the artist is in contact with the local community, and they continue working together. The women I talked with felt the project was their own. One of them is from Colombia, and she told me about the possibility of making an exhibition in Colombia. She said: "And now the project is that El Beso is leaving Spain and we are going to Latin America… And I want it to arrive in Colombia. I'm going to promote it long before, so everyone can come and see it" (Interview C-2). She said she fell in love with the project.

Figure 29: First encounter: El Beso by Toxic Lesbian. Credits: Imagina Madrid (2018)

As part of the process, El Beso integrated the figures of *mediators* (social workers). The artist decided to allocate money to a good mediation team that can constantly be present in the neighborhood. She mentioned initial rejection by the community as the primary barrier. However, this was eventually sorted out through a situated activity, focusing on being present and facilitating exchange between the residents, the mediator team, and the artist (figure 30).

5.2.4 Conclusions: the imbalances in the cultural negotiations promoted by Imagina Madrid.

Public art, for this research, represents a cultural negotiation, where there is a transition of power from the artists to the citizens. Those with less power are located at the center of the discussion. However, they do not always respond to these power dynamics by analyzing Imagina Madrid's public art processes. There are structural and determinant cultural disparities between the different actors

that interact in a public art piece and a lack of reflection regarding each actor's privilege, especially on the side of the public authorities and the artists (Mayer, 2013). Codes and local meanings from the neighborhoods are valuable and need to be acknowledged, not underestimated. The role of the artists in a participatory project such as Imagina Madrid is to facilitate others' creativity and imagination (Miles, 1997), rather than envisioning themselves the role of arts. The imbalances between actors were not properly managed from the standpoint of the public authorities. Still, they were relegated to the artist's sensibility, and tensions arose from giving the artists themselves a great deal of autonomy in envisioning the role of arts in their projects. The absence of a clear framework defining the actors' roles and the program's aims made communication difficult. One artist said:

> "Part of the tensions were in how we understood the participatory process … In general, when I work, I like to have a framework in which I can move … where the people who participate and I are aware of that porosity and how far it goes."(Interview A-2)

The input of the citizens was often neglected, being the weaker voice in the process of negotiation. The role of the artist and the projects, in some cases, ended up being more "extra-terrestrial," as coming from outside and imposing a way of representation that lay in stark contrast with the vision of the local communities. However, in some cases, the artists understood the process of public art differently. In El Beso, the communities in the margins were the focus and the neighborhoods, the starting point of the transformation process.

Figure 30: The work of Mediators in En Sintonía. Credits: Imgagina Madrid (2018)

Mediators (social workers) helped navigate and alleviate possible tensions, possibly arising from the complexities of social relations between actors (figure 29). Creativity is not universal, it is a process, and it is local. However, when the process results in something collective, it might not be so appealing in *commercial* terms, but it has a more significant impact on the community once the artist leaves the space. A well-adjusted and foresighted process is key for determining inclusionary or exclusionary dynamics (Sharp et al., 2005) and is the focus of the next chapter.

5.3 Chapter C) Looking at the participatory processes of public art in Imagina Madrid

5.3.1 The tensions between aesthetic and participation

This research aims to assess the benefits of public art practices at hand and to detect if *winners* and *losers* emerge from inherent cultural negotiations. In the case of Kópera, tensions arose during the negotiation of the project. "Vallecas is a neighborhood of rock! Of punk", said one neighbor interviewed. "People did not know what an opera is" (Interview C-5). At the same time, and from the artist's perspective, there were difficulties in making the neighbors understand they (the artists) were the ones with the final decision, including when a conflict about the aesthetic concept of the project arose. One artist said:

> "When there is a collaborative aesthetic, a thousand different things can happen, but we devised a concrete aesthetic… We had devised everything. There were moments we had a conflict: where that creative part of how we imagined the project … was tensed by other people in the project who imagined it in another way." (Interview A-5)

Figure 31: Kópera. Imagina Madrid (2019)

As shown with Kópera, there was disunity on how the neighborhood was going to be represented. In the end, the *artists*[41] were (even though many of the citizens taking part in the production were also artists) the ones that carried greater weight to conduct the project. One neighbor express:

[41] Those who commissioned the public art projects

"It's hard for an artist to say … well, now this is going to change … but … you're going to profit from a social story… it's not an artists' competition; it's doing something that has to impact the neighborhood. And you only see that it has repercussions on a spectacular level, not on a social level." (Interview C-6)

In the case of Kópera, there was a clear aesthetic ambition, one artist said:

"I think it is an artistic project; I don't think the strong point is the participation… Conceptually it was well worked, there was important artistic work, and the participation was given in a way that was quite oriented to the final product. Not openly." (Interview A-5)

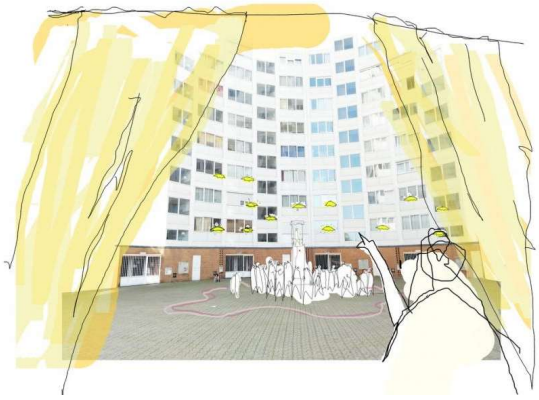

Figure 32: Kópera in Archidaily. Imagina Madrid (2019)

The accent of the project was on the *artistic* side rather than on the *participatory* one. The aesthetic suddenly was threatened by participation, which generated disagreement between the artists and the citizens. The controversy stemmed from mixed opinions on how to envision the artistic process conceptually. This is a great discussion in public art literature: How to delimit the boundaries of the negotiation? Hall et al. (2001) criticized the few voices admitted into the public art debate and to what extent this narrows its publicity. Miles wrote that public art is not about controlling "an image to be constructed, but more about the re-construction of everyday life images" (Miles, 2005, p.18).

Wondering about a *unique* image of the project is linked to the historical approach creativity has had. The need to create something *spectacular* is related to building a consumable product. That is why it is essential in public art practices to take a step back on the aesthetics and prioritize the commons. When the project seeks to be *unique*, the nature of participatory art (as something for and with the citizens) is undervalued. However, this is challenging. Although artists may be critical, they have developed their careers, life, ambitions, and way of doing in a capitalist context. This poses a challenge to separate culture or arts from the historically commoditized image attached to. The same with the logic emerging from places such as Intermediae or Matadero-Madrid. Based on conversations with the neighbors, they commented about going to Matadero-Madrid the day of the

co-design workshops when the program was being initiated, which showed a distinct contrast to their everyday lives. They referred to this venue as *"incredible," "clean," "modern,"* and with *"free food"* (Interviews C-5, C-6), expressing a contrast with their own daily life or with what they are used to. It is not that they are not creative people, but one version of creativity is being standardized as universal, which places art on the side of consumption. The benefits of this paradigm are always capitalized on by those who decide upon that (not) universal norm. In contrast, the people in the neighborhood (the poorer) are the non-creatives who do not understand how the city should look, even when city-making occurs in their settings.

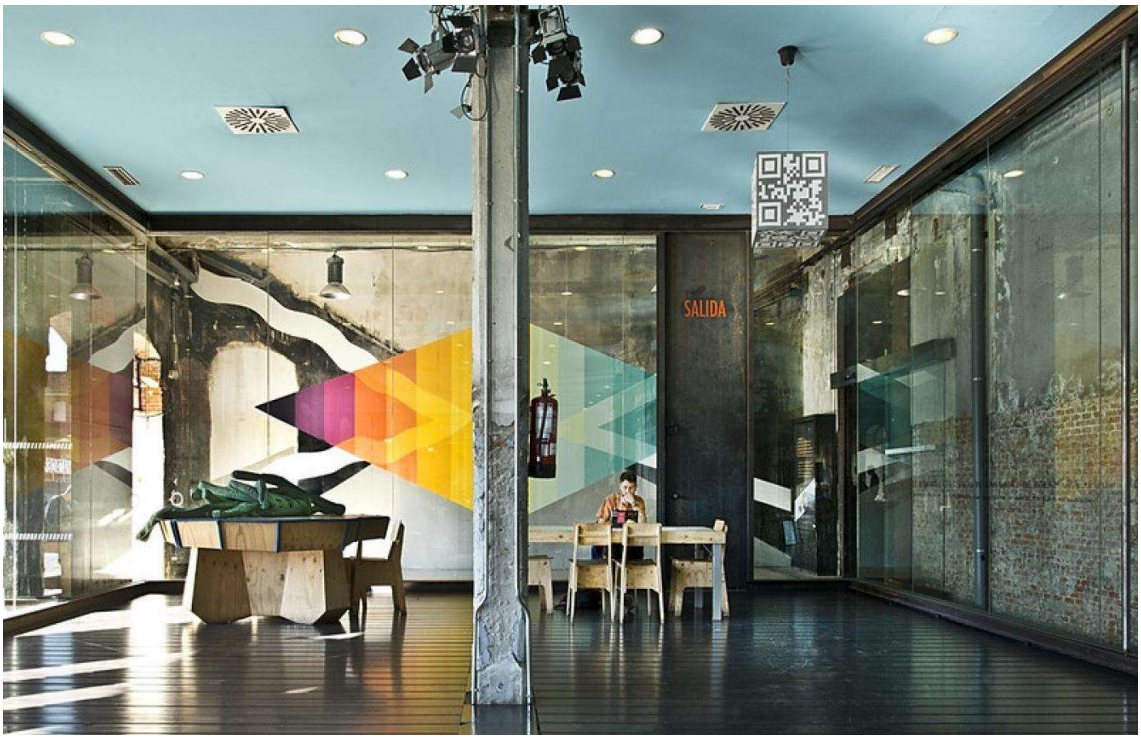

Figure 33: Intermediae offices. Matadero-Madrid (2020)

5.3.2 Reviewing Imagina Madrid as a participatory process

Imagina Madrid's three goals were to experiment with new collaboration models between artists, citizens, and public authorities (Imagina Madrid, 2017). Imagina Madrid had some precursor programs, but it was the first of such scale. The previous experiences were only in one or two neighborhoods for a shorter period and not incorporating such a high number of actors. Imagina Madrid was an ambitious bet. Once Manuela Carmena won power, the upscale of participatory strategies were possible. Collaboration and more horizontal representations were models developed with 15M and after. From the beginning of the program, collaboration was a structural motto. In the public call, it said:

"The projects will be the result of the work … of those participants whose ideas have been selected ... in negotiation and dialogue with the needs and desires of the neighbors and users of the public spaces that are the object of the call" (Imagina Madrid, 2017)

Figure 34: Co-design workshops. Credits: Imagina Madrid (2018)

An evident and quickly noticeable learning process the program underwent was that collaboration is complex and takes time. The processes developed in Imagina Madrid faced some problems. On one side, there was an optimistic intention on generating *new ways* of producing the city, an imposed optimism calling for a collaborative process of imagination based on collaboration frameworks. However, there was no attention on the hierarchies between actors, as was shown in previous sections. There were no clear guidelines on how the relationship with the neighbors should be maintained. The program also raised some critiques as not presenting a clear legal framework on which the working groups would be based (articulating the different proposals) (Todo por la Praxis, 2019). Nor clarity on the financial organization for decision-making (Todo por la Praxis, 2019). It was subordinated to the artists. One of the public authorities showed frustration on how the process developed in some cases*:* "many people with a lot of desire propose collaborative spaces, and they do not know how to collaborate, neither at an empathic level, nor a methodological level, nor at a professional level" (Interview PA-1) Indeed, participation is not a simple process, it responds to commitment and construction over time.

5.3.3 Constructing meaningful channels for participation takes time

Figure 35: Co-design workshops. Credits: Imagina Madrid (2018)

Collaboration and participation are such buzzwords that the process to encourage meaningful channels of communication is underestimated. One critique some artists raised was perceiving Imagina Madrid collaboration as something "forced*":*

"This collaborative model of Imagina Madrid is interesting, but I think it forced the collaborative practice. I think these practices have to be given in a much more organic and gradual way, and if they flow, they flow… It was like they married us." (Interview A-2)

Many of the artists involved expressed emotions related to *fatigue, tiredness, and intensity* (Interview A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5). Generally, the time planned for the project was not sufficient, as it required more time than they expected to enter the neighborhoods and bond with local associations. Several projects asked for a period extension.

Figure 36: Female community El Beso. Project by Toxic Lesbian. Credits: Toxic Lesbian (2021)

One of the public authorities said: "these processes, if they are planned over time, can make changes in the city, and in fact, two of them transformed two environments that were stigmatized" (Interview PA-3). The two projects she referred to are those two that persisted once the program was over. In En Sintonia, they stayed for two more years in the neighborhood, and the community created by the project El Beso has continued working together. They were two experiences that achieved a transformation in space. However, in the beginning, all the artists expressed severe difficulties when they arrived in the neighborhood.

Constructing a meaningful relationship with the communities was challenging work, which was overcome after several weeks of being in place. One artist said:

"When we arrived with our flying saucer to the neighbourhood ... And the project was presented in the neighborhood associations ... we had a lot of confrontation ... the mediators, had a lot of professional delicacy, they mistreated them ... that was the welcome ... we did not wrinkle ... but it was tough." (Interview A-1)

The artists of En Sintonía described a similar feeling:

"When we rented the place, people had a lot of distance, they looked at us: 'are they from the bar?' … they didn't call us by our name... 'Ah! There are the artists on their side and us

on our side'. We started in April, and the first demonstration of affection of the community was in September." (Interview A-8)

En Sintonía and El Beso's projects expressed a period of resistance and the efforts to sort initial barriers.

After reviewing the public art processes encouraged by Imagina Madrid, time seems to be vital to constructing real participation channels. Another critical question is what happens once these practices are over and the artists leave the neighborhood. One public authority said: "in the end, it ends up becoming a bit of an imperative: you have to participate!… and the biggest complexity is how to give continuity. To make sure that those projects… would not stay in that single experience" (Interview PA-6). Once these practices are over, what is staying in the neighborhoods needs to be allocated to the center of the discussion. When reflecting on the results, some public authorities claimed that the political period of four years was not enough to make these practices grow. Participation is a practice that needs to be constructed over time, is not something that happens immediately.

Figure 37: Rutilio Gacís in a cloudy day. Project En Sintonía. Credits: Imagina Madrid (2018)

5.3.4 Public art practices are limited by the lack of an institutional culture for participation

Over the years, neighborhood development strategies implemented in Madrid by government bodies have not been beneficial to most of the local population. Even though most of the citizens interviewed were sympathetic to Ahora Madrid, they all communicated the feeling of distrust when the City council entered the neighborhoods (Interview C-3/4/5/6). A public officer said:

"At that time in Madrid, there was a boom in participation. And in some districts, there was this tiredness or suspicion, or rejection of the fact that the institutions were once again proposing a participatory process from outside for these neighborhoods… it was difficult because of this resistance… moreover coming from the center." (Interview PA-6)

Figure 38: Local Forums. Credits: Diario Madrid (2017)

The government in power from 2015 to 2019 embraced change and provided new political guidelines. Still, the previous governments had been marked by a conservative and neoliberal ideology that constantly neglected these populations. It is understandable that the first reaction towards public–led initiatives would be rejection. One neighbor said: "This neighborhood organizes alternative parties. We don't like the parties organized by the administration. Here, there is always a culture of protest" (Interview C-6). Links between institutions and citizens need to be culturally (re)constructed.

In chapter 3, it was mentioned that one goal of Ahora Madrid was to promote participation and more transparency. Imagina Madrid was not the only program developed in disadvantaged neighborhoods fostering participation; others were happening simultaneously. However, public authorities and experts agreed that the political period of Ahora Madrid was too short to enable these strategies and measure their impact. "The last legislature was very short... you need a longer period to make it all work... For the development and coordination with the neighborhood bases, you need time" (Interview PA-4). The limitations to enabling participation became evident not only by the lack of channels between institutions and citizens but also by the lack of existing communication mechanisms within institutions. One public authority said:

"one difficulty we posed was that the fabric should connect, collaborate, articulate, and so on, but then we didn't do it within the institution... internally the different lines of work we had were not articulated between each other, and I think this is a great difficulty, I didn't know what the colleague sitting next to me was doing."(Interview PA-6)

A culture of governance that relies on participation is reflected in the whole machinery working around public art (and city-led) practices. In the case of Madrid, it became clear that

institutions are still designed to enable centralized, hierarchical, and conservative processes instead of more horizontal and collaborative forms.

5.3.5 Participation: unpaid work?

Even though the projects were in peripheral neighborhoods, the administrative bureaucracy favors a centralized system of cultural consumption. The impact on the involvement of citizens could have been more significant if administrative bureaucracy had been designed to integrate civil society from a holistic perspective. For example, it was difficult for the artists to buy materials or make small purchases in the neighborhoods where they were working. When referring to the challenges she faced, a public officer said:

> "The difficulty of being a public institution, which has rhythms that are not those of a neighborhood. Or some logics that prevent us from working from the concrete and the situated, from the everyday life, like the fact that we couldn't buy the materials we needed for the projects in the shops of the neighborhood." (Interview PA-6)

Some artists also expressed similar concerns regarding the pitfalls they faced when buying small things in the neighborhoods and having the public returned. Applying for re-funding meant a great deal of bureaucratic hassle that often disrupted the flow of the artistic process.

The money they had for each project was not a small budget: 60.000 Euros. One artist referred to the amount as "*una pasta*[42]!" (Interview A-1), showing that it was a generous amount for a nine-month project. An amount that is otherwise allocated within the neighborhood's administrative boundaries would offer more balanced benefits. For example, small shops and businesses in the retail sector or the creative industry of the district would have benefited if the graphic designers, architects, or other artists hired as sub-contractors on the projects had been from the affected area. In this way, the general citizenry of the neighborhoods would be positively affected by the seldom attention paid to the periphery, not just those directly involved in the projects. Sometimes, the artists attempted to consider these groups mentioned above, whereas in other cases, no attention was paid (as it was not a prerequisite in the project's specifications).

In the case of Kópera, the artists had problems regarding the budgeting and administration of the project. The boundaries between 'who is being paid' and 'who is doing this for their neighborhood' were unclear. The artists, on their side, had a clear picture and high standards on how the opera should look like. The project grouped local artists such as actors and actresses, costume

[42] *pasta* is an informal way to refer to money in Spanish.

designers, and musicians. At some point, the (local) artists felt their work was not being adequately recognized. One artist said:

> "There was a level of stress that I don't want to live again… we lacked clarity, and how to deal with the budget. There was a feeling as if we were taking advantage of something … There was criticism from one political group to another saying that the Kópera project did not care for the local artists." (Interview A-5)

Figure 40: Kópera. Credits: Imagina Madrid (2019)

Residents from Vallecas were frustrated with the time they were spending on the project and the absence of a reward. One of the neighbors said: "And I think that we have reached this point, that whoever governs… it doesn't matter because in the end the poor stays poor, the rich stays rich". The benefits were not clear enough, as they were not evident to all the participants. The citizen continues by saying: "it is very easy to talk about citizenship, and in the end everything is free, everything is voluntary… the concept of citizen participation is very much confused with everything is free, and of your time" (Interview C-5). When these practices are

Figure 39: Kópera chorus. Imagina Madrid (2018)

developed, the focus is not on the economic reward but the social or cultural impacts. However, as this experience shows, the public needs to know what they are taking as a trade-off from their investment time.

5.3.6 Conclusions: Looking at participatory processes of public art in Imagina Madrid

This chapter identified tensions regarding the artistic character of the work, which ends being negotiated through the participatory process. One of the citizens of Vallecas said: "I am also an artist, but please, the objective is not the result of the show, it's the process"(Interview C-6). In public art practices, the artist is not free; they need to negotiate with the public, which is not an easy journey. In Kópera, this became evident in the increasing misunderstanding between the artists and the citizens. Imagina Madrid was an ambitious bet that compressed different models of collaboration and participation in a period of one year. The artists needed time to understand each other, and more time was required for the relationships between the citizens and the artists to grow. The two projects achieving the most significant transformation of the public spaces persisted once the program was over. Creative practices need to be maintained over time to impact the neighborhood's social fabric significantly. Otherwise, suddenly the artists leave, abandoning the community, which can have a harmful effect on the setting or contribute to feelings of frustration. What was clear for this research is that in the end, the benefits that these practices can generate in the neighborhoods are more significant when the accent is on the process instead of being in the arts itself.

5.3.7 What is left behind?

After studying the four participatory art experiences, this research concludes that all the projects analyzed left impacts to a greater or lesser extent, benefiting the communities in the neighborhoods. In En sintonía, they evolved into a cultural center that is still active today in Arganzuela. The community of El Beso continues to work together and has developed new projects in and outside Tetuan. Fiestas Raras left a publication, and in the case of Vallecas, there is a current project that evolved from Kópera, known as Zarzuela del Kas. Two years have passed since the end of the program. The four experiences have transformed into other citizen initiatives, which continue to grow. However, the political context in Madrid changed, and the conservative party was reinstated in the dominant position of political power.

Since then, similar participatory practices, such as Imagina Madrid, have been interrupted and neutralized. Practically all the neighbors and artists expressed their bewilderment and fear of the new political scenario. Two citizens interviewed became unemployed shortly after our meeting due to budget cuts in public funding. Some artists expressed difficulties finding new funds to carry out their activities since Ahora Madrid left the government. One artist said: "The new mayor, there is a rumor that says 'I am not going to allow more parties in the park" (Interview A-7). The neighborhood associations expressed their discontent at finding themselves (again) in having to exist without state protection. One citizen said: "We had aid, but with the new government that aid has been lost. The

right-wing parties do not bet on these things, and unfortunately we have to fight how we can" (Interview C-1). The initiatives that emerged from Imagina Madrid, without institutional care, are endangered. What stays is hope, expecting that what Imagina Madrid could cast light on could be maintained and transformed into future stories of resistance.

6 Discussion and conclusions

When observing the benefits creative practices generate, the relevance of contextualizing them to local conditionalities became apparent. As mentioned in the first section of the fourth chapter, these practices are never produced in neutral spaces. The disadvantaged neighborhoods where Imagina Madrid was developed were already experiencing processes of transformation. The urban landscapes of traditional working-class areas, such as Usera, Vallecas, Arganzuela, and Tetuán, are increasingly being gentrified, and the have-nots are the most affected. Participatory art projects aiming for urban regeneration can have positive and negative outcomes simultaneously. They have the potential to contribute to a new civil imaginary for these peripheral areas of the city, but for whom? Largely, those images are in line with cultural representations of young professionals, designers, artists, and other creatives—less with other alternative and marginalized cultural forms, such as low-skilled workers or migrant backgrounds. Giving a *cultural face* to the neighborhoods, using public art, can reproduce or even increase existing inequalities, disregarding one culture for another, especially when the project's focus is on the image instead of the process. The opportunity to reclaim public spaces for marginalized groups is often lost, and the artists are set as the experts who know what should happen and what should not.

In Imagina Madrid, artists, citizens, and authorities came from different socio-cultural backgrounds, representing other parts of the city. These differences impacted the projects substantially (for example, negotiation processes and aesthetic ambitions) and were often underestimated by public art practitioners. Imagina Madrid ignited a discussion regarding the tensions between the center and the periphery, literally and figuratively. A lack of reflection regarding the privilege some actors had, especially on the public authorities and the artists' side, became apparent. The action of 'taking from' and 'putting in' can neglect the existing symbols, meanings, and understandings of culture existing in each district, which differ from the logic in the city center. Sometimes, the artists were more aware of their role as outsiders than in others, as in El Beso. After observing the four participatory art experiences, it became clear that mediators (social workers) were vital to sorting cultural discrepancies and better involving citizens in the public art process. Mediators came from a social science background instead of an artistic one. They were present, on-site, building

trust and making citizens feel confident about their role during the public art process. Participatory art experiences applying a greater sensitivity to the social perspective of the project, instead of an aesthetic one, were more beneficial for the local groups. Therefore, the process through which public art is produced is crucial to determine its level of inclusivity.

In participatory art, tensions between social and artistic goals may be present, as in Kópera, where the need of the artists to control the aesthetic identity of the project reduced the possibilities of the citizens to affect the process. Typically, in participatory art projects, artists are not autonomous in their decision-making; they have to negotiate with the community on the vision for the artwork. The negotiation between artists and citizens is the most valuable element of participatory art practices. However, collaboration is complex, and it takes time. The participatory art practices sponsored by Imagina Madrid showed that participation did not happen immediately. The projects that achieved greater positive transformation in space for the local community were the two that stayed and remained once Imagina Madrid was over. Creative practices need to be maintained over time to achieve change.

Generally speaking, governments focus on allocating resources in privileged city sectors, thereby marginalizing peripheral communities. The unexpected presence of artists, money, and institutions in peripheral neighborhoods ignited rejection from citizens and social organizations. Gradually, this was sorted out through the growing bonds between people involved in Imagina Madrid. Greater attention is also required on the after use of these practices, questioning what happens once the artists leave the public spaces. Abandoning the space once the program finishes are likely to have a disempowering effect on locals, increasing their frustration and reinforcing a rejective stance towards public institutions. Participation takes time, and it also needs to be culturally constructed.

Madrid's institutional and legal frameworks favor a centralized, commercialized, corporate and conservative culture, instead of decentralized, diverse, organic, and smaller alternatives. Nonetheless, Ahora Madrid promised to open a more democratic urban frontier. This proved difficult since there were close to no legal pathways for public art production. Artists and authorities had to face a bureaucratic machinery to make use of the public spaces. Which, in the end, diminished the benefits they could have in the neighborhoods, notably because of regulatory laws barricading the flexibility and scope of projects. A further concern was illustrated regarding the tedious, slow, and bureaucratic procedures artists had to face to make small purchases in shops in the peripheral neighborhoods, where the practices were being developed. If artists were compelled to use the money inside the administrative borders of each of the districts, local groups would be indirectly affected and financially benefited (e.g., by buying materials for the regular activities in the small shops next to the correspondent public space). Similarly, suppose all the artist sub-contracts had to be sourced from

within the addressed neighborhoods. In that case, cultural distances could also have been minimized by having people involved in the projects that intrinsically understand the complexities of their neighborhood. For future public art policymaking or public calls to artists for similar programs, rigorous specificities regarding how and where artists can use the budget are recommended. Also, greater attention should be paid to who has access to these public calls and which voices or profiles are being neglected.

Finally, the objectives of these cultural programs need to be formulated more clearly. Otherwise, the loose and undefined goals diminish the impact they can have in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Imagina Madrid transferred too much responsibility and authority to the artists' sensitivity to how they would engage with citizens. From the beginning of Imagina Madrid, there were asymmetries and hierarchies between artists, citizens, and authorities. Tensions arose during the program because the boundaries of participation were not outlined. This resulted in the citizens being the first ones gradually pushed out of the process. Clearer objectives and frameworks on why and how participation should be developed could contribute to a more balanced approach. Participation is seen as a transfer of power to weaker groups by making them part of the city's production. The experiences of Imagina Madrid showed how participatory processes did not challenge power structures simply because of being 'collaborative.' More attention from the authorities is required for future policymaking to the power and hierarchies between artists and citizens. When commissioning participatory art practices, it might be helpful to favor artists or art collectives that have showcased social responsibility and sensitivity in their past work.

Participatory art makes sense when they activate empowerment processes and strengthen care networks and local struggles. Participation suddenly became an imperative, and we forget why we participate. We participate in arriving at more equitable spatial configurations. Giving voice is not a one-day event; it is a configuration of more open and porous forms of governance as a whole. This takes time. It is good that these practices exist and are being adjusted and promoted, and people are getting involved. However, they must understand and respond with sensitivity to the contexts where they are being implemented. Public art always is a situated practice.

The thesis process allowed us to glimpse some alternatives for future research. More academic efforts are needed to deepen knowledge of the social impact of participatory art practices. Specifically, focusing on methodologies that can be applied by researchers and integrated into the improvement of public policies. It would also be relevant to analyze the potential that these practices offer to alter institutions. Imagina Madrid aimed to test and understand the limitations of normative frameworks within institutions. However, it remains uncertain how powerful they are in questioning and driving a project of change. It would be advisable to carry out other studies that also ask about

the benefits that these practices leave in the communities, but with the possibility of carrying out the study simultaneously with the correspondent participatory practices.

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8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A: Interviews

Code	Actor	Role and relation with IM		Gender	Date	Mode
PA1	Public Authority	Coordinator of IM		Male	20/04/2020	Zoom
PA2	Public Authority	Coordinator of IM		Male	24/07/2020	Zoom
PA3	Public Authority	General Director of Urban Landscape and Cultural Heritage Intervention (of the Ministry of culture of the city Administration) during the electoral period of Ahora Madrid. IM depended on this area.		Female	04/08/2020	Zoom
PA4	Public Authority	Planning department of the city Administration		Female	04/08/2020	Zoom
PA5	Public Authority	Hired to elaborate the post-evaluation of the program Imagina Madrid		Female	01/10/2020	Written
PA6	Public Authority	In charge of a paralel project for the city Administration related with participation. The name of the project is: Experimenta distrito.		Female	01/02/2021	Zoom
A1	Artist	Toxic Lesbian, in charge of the project El Beso in Tetuán	https://www.toxiclesbian.org/	Female	07/08/2020	Offline
A2	Artist	Fran Quiroga, In charge of the project Fiestas Raras, in Usera	http://franquiroga.gal/es/	Male	02/10/2020	Zoom
A3	Artist	Improvistos, In charge of the project Fiestas Raras, in Usera	-	Female	15/10/2020	Zoom
A4	Artist	VIC (Vivero de Iniciativas Ciudadanas) In charge of the project Koopera, in Vi	https://vicviverio.net/	Male	27/10/2020	Zoom
A5	Artist	LHRC In charge of the project Koopera, in Vallecas	-	Male	25/01/2021	Zoom
A6	Artist	Sub-contract to develop the musical direction of the Opera	-	Male	14/05/2021	Offline
A7	Artist	La Parcería In charge of the project En Sintonía, in Argenzuela	https://laparceria.org/comision-infancia-y-familia/	Female	14/10/2020	Zoom
A8	Artist	La Parcería In charge of the project En Sintonía, in Argenzuela. He developed the role of mediator, as a connector between the artists and the neighbourhood		Male	21/01/2021	Offline
C1	Citizen	She took part of the project El Beso		Female	13/08/2020	Zoom
C2	Citizen	She took part of the project El Beso		Female	09/08/2020	Offline
C3	Citizen	He has an active role in a neighbour's association in Usera		Male	16/03/2021	Offline
C4	Citizen	He took part of the project Fiestas Raras in Usera		Male	19/01/2021	Offline
C5	Citizen	She took part of the project Koopera		Female	10/05/2021	Offline
C6	Citizen	He took part of the project Koopera		Male	13/05/2021	Offline
EX 1	Expert	Luis Menor - Expert in the production of street art and graffity in the context of Madrid		Male	04/08/2020	Zoom
EX 2	Expert	Domenico Di Siena - Expert on participation and new urban activisms		Male	04/03/2021	Zoom

List of interviews during the research process
Table made by the author

Note for consent:

Estimada/o,

Muchas gracias por participar de la investigación "Arte público para quién? explorando el uso de prácticas de arte participativo en barrios periféricos de Madrid." Forma parte del programa académico Estudios Urbanos 4Cities - (https://www.4cities.eu/)
La investigación comenzó en Junio 2021 y durante el proceso se realizaron un total 22 entrevistas. Se realizaron entrevistas a actores involucrados en la producción de arte público: autoridades públicas, artistas y ciudadanos.

El objetivo de las entrevistas fue entender y re-construir las experiencias de arte público impulsadas por Imagina Madrid entre el 2017 y 2019. La pregunta que guía la investigación es: quién se beneficia de las practicas de arte participativo?.

Toda la información que se proporcionó a través de las entrevistas es de carácter estrictamente confidencial y se guardarán en el anonimato. Será utilizada únicamente por la investigadora, Milagros Hurtig, y no estará disponible para ningún otro propósito, sólo por fines académicos.

En el caso de las figuras institucionales aparecerá la relación que tenían con el programa Imagina Madrid, es decir el cargo que ejercían cuándo Imagina Madrid se desarrolló.

En el caso de las artistas se hará referencia al nombre del colectivo. En el caso de que la /el artista sea una persona física aparecerá el nombre artístico.

Los datos globales recopilados pueden ser vistos por la dirección del curso o por los supervisores de tesis con el fin de evaluar el desempeño de la investigadora, siempre guardando confidencialidad y anonimato de las participantes. Los resultados de este estudio se le informarán y serán publicados con fines académicos, pero se presentarán de tal manera que las participantes no podrán ser identificadas/os.
En el caso de los artistas involucrados, las entrevistas aparecerán codificadas, sin nombre, refiriendo al nombre del colectivo, o al proyecto correspondiente.

Agradezco su colaboración y saludo cordialmente,

Milagros Hurtig
milihurtig@gmail.com
Venecia, 28/08/2021

Para preguntas legales fundamentales en relación con la investigación de los estudiantes, póngase en contacto con el Oficial de Protección de Datos de la Universidad de Viena, Dr. Daniel Stanonik, LL.M. (verarbeitungsverzeichnis@univie.ac.at). Además, existe el derecho a presentar una reclamación ante la autoridad de protección de datos (por ejemplo, a través de dsb@dsb.gv.at)
*Obligatorio

The interviews

The interviews are codded and anonymous. The consent was requested to the interviewed. I also openly expressed the research question and my reasons behind this research. They all were conducted in Spanish.

8.2 Appendix B: The participatory workshops

1st meeting: Meeting with two neighborhood associations

Who: La mancha (Santi) & La unión (Fidel y Javier)
Date: 27/01/2021
Concept:
I met them to know their work in the neighborhood. They want to start a process with other associations/collectives / people / joining forces. Fidel, he participated in Imagina Madrid, he worked as an intern, he wasn´t very informed on the specific project developed in Usera. He felt it wasn´t very aligned with the neighborhood's identity, and some people didn´t feel represented. He commented how he recognized 'friends' of the artist and people from other neighborhoods through the photos on the day of the event. He also said some other projects might be more successful, like En Sintonia.

Participatory workshop 1

Organizers: Two local associations organized 1 workshop
Title: Imagining our neighborhood in 5 years' time.
Participants: 11 people participated, and I join the meeting as an observer.

Date: 30/01/2021

Photos:

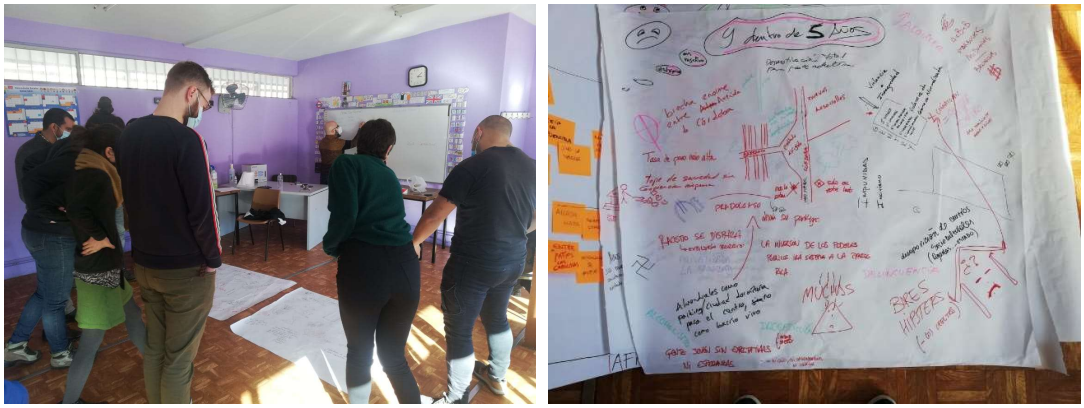

Figure 43: Workshop 1 Usera, 2021. Credits: by the author

Summary: The meeting had the objective of setting the basis of a common neighborhood diagnosis as general guidelines for them to pursue. There are many associations in the area, but they all follow different agendas; they want to unite objectives and make a common plan to have more strength toward claiming their rights.

Three dynamics structured the meeting.

- A presentation of each of the people present, name and why they were there.
- An activity named 'Imagine your neighborhood' They worked divided in two groups. It was an imagination exercise, where they though on potential future scenarios, one extremely positive and another extremely negative. They had to put down in paper ideas, about how their neighborhood would look like in 5 years if everything was meant to be as their ideal picture, on the other side of the room, the rest of the group was working on the most pessimistic future prospect. Each group worked on a big and common poster. After 15 minutes, they exchanged posters, taking as a basis what the previous group did, doing a change of mind set, from negative to positive, or at the other way around. The result was two big posters, one with ideas of how the neighbourhood ideally would look, and the other the worst-case scenario of how the neighborhood would be in five years of all the bad things are exacerbated.
- The last activity was a common actors map in which they organized the actors according to the level of institutionality (informal to formal) and the level of proximity (if they have contact or not)
- The last activity and to close the encounter, they fixed the next steps and a day for a next meeting.

Positive scenario:

They thought about a neighborhood in which intercultural pride is celebrated and where the working class is well organized. They imagined a wall bearing real state speculation. In five years, salaries would upgrade. The young people are united; they organize festivals and popular parties to share and eat together. The older population is also with greater possibilities and opportunities in the neighborhood; they have different activities. In an auto-sustainable neighborhood, where you can stay, is not necessary to go to the city center seeking cultural or social services. Streets replace the cars for the people, biking and public transport are prioritized as main ways of commuting. The urban environment is upgraded, as the housing of the oldest parts of the neighborhood. Pradolongo is transformed in a main cultural and social center, with a network of different activities for all diverse groups.

Negative scenario:

The neighbors perceive this difference between the two areas as threatening. They recognized a division and an increasing segmentation between two areas in the neighborhood, one recognized' as the 'traditional and older part and another one as the newest constructed years later, the housing of these last buildings were constructed for a public with a higher socioeconomic status than the original people living in the area. They imagined a tall wall dividing both areas in the future.

The unemployment rates in the poorer part would crazily increase; this would bring consequences in the built environment, creating more and more deterioration and violence, increasing the perception of unsafeness. The neighborhood would look dirty, the institutions would disappear, all the investment would go to the richer part, and public services would be privatized. The stop of the subway in the poorer area would disappear. All this situation would bring more and more racism, producing the feeling on the locals that the guilty is on the new population that arrived in the latest years (mainly Latinean). The traditional bars and cafes would closed because they can´t afford the services (which were privatized) and they would be replaced by new hipster bars or international brunches like Starbucks or Mcdonalds. Young people would not have expectations nor hope for a dignified future. The park of Pradolongo would be transformed into massive parking lots.

Some observations:

- The people that participated are not traditional neighbors, and there is a new population in the last years arriving at the neighborhood. The neighborhood has been receiving a young population that was previously living closer in the city center.
- Some comments on the latinean population arrived in the last years.
- There has been a replacement of the older referees and figures for younger characters inside the neighbor associations.

- They don't know well how to approach migrant newcomers Latinean, Chinese and Maroccan communities.
- Each group defends its necessities—the young for the young, the old population for the old population. There is no representation of many groups that also are living in the neighborhood.
- They do not feel public institutions close to them.
- About Imagina Madrid, They referred to the project of Imagina Madrid as a parachuting initiative. External to their necessities or reality. There were a few people the day of the event, and from the photos they could identified ‘‘friends’ from the organizing team and not many regular people from the neighborhood. They felt it was so ‘weird’ that they don´t felt identified with it.

Final Document:

EL ALMENDRALES DEL FUTURO
NUESTRO PROYECTO DE BARRIO

Las organizaciones vecinales y sociales de Almendrales tejemos ideas, proyectos y procesos para que un barrio con estas características sea una realidad para todas las personas que lo habitan:

Justo

Queremos que desaparezcan las causas de la desigualdad que afectan a derechos tan básicos como el empleo, la vivienda o la alimentación, que sobre todo sufren las mujeres. Apostamos por un desarrollo económico que se apoye en los comercios y las capacidades locales, y en unos servicios públicos con recursos suficientes para garantizar la salud, la educación y la protección social.

Sostenible

Es urgente fortalecer el transporte público, usar los vehículos privados solo en casos inevitables, y moderar la presencia de los no residentes que saturan y aparcan en nuestras calles. Los grandes parques de nuestro entorno (Pradolongo, Madrid Río y Lineal del Manzanares) son una oportunidad para respirar y vivir de una manera más sana, como lo debería ser el uso peatonal de otras plazas y calles de nuestro barrio.

Diverso

Almendrales está compuesto por muchas personas que primero vinieron de otras provincias de España, y luego de otros países del mundo. Esa diversidad cultural, racial y religiosa, pero también de edades, géneros e identidades supone una oportunidad para convivir desde el respeto y el rechazo a cualquier tipo de violencia y discurso de odio.

Cuidado

La basura o el deterioro del espacio público hacen la vida más difícil, sobre todo a quienes se desplazan para comprar, acompañar a dependientes o tienen movilidad reducida. Un barrio limpio es una obligación para las administraciones, pero también una responsabilidad de todo el vecindario al que se debe concienciar a través de campañas para cuidar Almendrales y el Planeta.

Activo

La participación política y comunitaria debe traducirse en un tejido asociativo más cohesionado, con capacidad para construir desde la reivindicación, pero también desde lo festivo, el ocio y el desarrollo de una vida cultural que nos haga más felices.

SI SUEÑAS ALGO SIMILAR, SI TE QUIERES JUNTAR A SUMARLE IDEAS, PROFUNDIDAD, TIEMPO, GANAS...
A ESTAS PROPUESTAS: ¡AVÍSANOS!
Red Almendrales(Y+)(AV La Mancha-AV La Unión)

Participatory workshop 2

Organizers: La mancha (Santi), La unión (Fidel y Javier) , Resistencia Usera, Entrepatios, Pradolongo

Date: 12/03/2021

Summary:

The objective is to continue advancing in the process of neighborhood empowerment. The group was enlarged, with three other organizations present. First, they made a presentation (per organization).

Two neighbors presented a diagnostic work with information collected from different sources regarding the neighborhood of Almendrales. We were divided into four groups:

- Nationalities and environment
- Employment and women
- Generations
- Income

During the workshop, we had to think about how to broaden the diagnostic themes: what information is missing and how to access it?

Some observations:

Data by the Municipality of Madrid of foreigners and naturalized citizens do not include cultural diversity. Main cultural groups in the neighborhood: Chinese, Bolivian, Ecuadorian. Fiesta de la Pachamama, held every year. There is no one from these communities in the group. The neighbors had a sense of touristification. Negotiations of the Chinese communities with the government to highlight the area as a Chinatown. New signs, more advertising, more signage, which were not there before. One of the neighbors identifies Chinatown as a barrier to gentrification, but not to touristification. There is a project to pedestrianize Dolores Barranco. Garbage is said to be dirty, but the higher income neighborhoods generate twice as much garbage; how can this be? It could be that the frequency of collection and maintenance of public spaces is much more efficient in the wealthier sectors.

Some quotes:

'Están recortando todos los dinamizadores'

'Hay que reconocerle a Manuela Carmena'

'Es lo que pasa en los barrios del sur, nada está conectado con nada'

Hay una frontera violenta que se llama Av. Córdoba, del otro lado hay el triple de renta, todo cambia, no sólo el número, pero tambien el tipo de construcciones.' (Maje)

'Empiezan a haber bares que no son baratos' 'Yo que soy de Madrid de toda la vida, nos van expulsando poco a poco'

Exploratory Walk

Goal: The walk takes place within the framework of the neighborhood process being carried out by two associations in the Usera neighborhood: La Mancha and La Union. In January, the organizations began a collective process of diagnosis of the neighborhood to understand from the base the imaginaries around the neighborhood. An open and collaborative process in which several associations, groups, and individuals, concerned about improving their neighborhood, are already agglomerated. Today, we find ourselves in a social and cultural context in which neoliberal policies and mercantile logics threaten the neighborhood and community fabric. That is why we understand the value of these processes. Urban Femina joins in participating by providing tools to territorialize in space certain debates that emerged: such as coexistence, multiculturalism, gentrification, social innovation, neighborhood struggles and resistance and public space. This tour will be carried out from a feminist perspective, transversal to our way of understanding and seeing the city.

Photos:

Figure 44 and 4: Exploratory walk 2021. Credits: Claire Griffith

Conclusions (Made with neighbors):

On Saturday, May 22, 2021, neighbors of Almendrales took a walk organized by the La Mancha and La Unión Neighborhood Associations in collaboration with the Urban Femina collective. The walk was an opportunity to observe the neighborhood from gender and feminist urbanism, sharing ideas about care, diversity, and inequality.

Twenty people participated in the walk and shared their vision on the problems and opportunities of Almendrales. These were some of the conclusions shared:

Importance of neighborhood struggles for the right to housing and the rest of public services claimed since the neighborhood's origin (health, transportation, water and sanitation, energy)—the unique role of women as caregivers of family and community life.

Deficiencies in terms of accessibility for people with reduced mobility and excessive presence of vehicles. The width of the sidewalks in the streets around Dolores Barranco makes it especially difficult for wheelchairs, strollers, or simply for two people to walk side by side. At the same time, it is not clear which pedestrian routes do not have steps or height differences. These elements alter the urban experience for people with disabilities or older adults. Likewise, there are no clear Braille and good signs for the visually impaired. The neighborhood should contemplate the different bodies that are present in the public space.

Great inequality between the areas of the neighborhood separated by Avenida de Córdoba. The neighbors on both sides of this street have a different socioeconomic profile, but they also have a specific conception of community life conditioned by the design of the houses, the streets and their commercial fabric. There is a clear physical barrier that helps to alter the socio-spatial perception. The sense of fragmentation and threat is present in the neighbors in the face of the clear socio-economic contrast, especially in the older population, who saw and experienced the struggle for housing.

A companion raised concerns about the high number of clandestine brothels (increasingly present) in the neighborhood. In general, they are women exercising prostitution in precarious conditions and, many times, exploited. Without a clear and solid support network. It is necessary to pay attention and develop strategies to ensure that the relevant authorities properly address the issue. To make visible, empathize and contribute to the struggle for the rights of sex workers.

The role of children in the neighborhood was discussed during the walk. The spaces for play are reduced and are in deteriorated quality. In the same way, the quality of the sidewalks and the lack of pedestrian clarity limit the bodies in the space. The children are also discouraged from being active and key actors in the development of the neighborhood. A colleague raised the alert to a cultural center with a free program with activities for girls and boys. It would be interesting to corroborate this and think about an agenda for children shared between different associations and organizations present in the neighborhood. At the same time, we recommend carrying out specific activities for children regarding them and their neighborhood and their needs and going for a walk, being them the protagonists of the space. We often think we understand their needs, but this does not always correspond to their imagination.

In the neighborhood, there is a generational contrast between those younger new people and historical neighbors. The walk was enjoyable as a space of encounter and solidarity between these

two experiences of the neighborhood. The memory and the images that the older neighbors provided us with a historical perspective, crossed by data and emotionality. The contrast of these narratives with the city today is an exciting trigger for future experiences or projects.

The idea arose between talks of using the walk as a tool and inviting different people, actors, organizations from the neighborhood to invite them to a free meeting in the public space, sharing their view, what places they use, what problems they encounter. This could work as a strategy for coexistence and, at the same time to strengthen the community fabric.