

Agency of Transformation ----- let people involved, encouraged

Introduction

'How yellow in Manchester' is a live project of Building initiative team in Manchester, people faced that problem of 'zone in transit' which is deprived. In this area the park, public infrastructure is less accessible. Caused by the market-led policy of Manchester government from 1980's the infrastructure are mainly designed for business interests and specific socio-economic groups, and these features tend to accumulate in the same regenerated and new commercial and residential districts of city. These areas are subtly or sometimes very explicitly separate. (Building initiative team, 2008)

The architects are try to throw the idea of yellow space which means the space can be used to make the space and public resource in these zones are accessible and used. They use 'yellow trail in Manchester' as phenomenological approach and get people involved to explore the city. The aim is to encourage people to go into their city and look at it in a different way. (Building initiative team, 2008) This essay is focus on this live project and attempt to discuss the architectural research group as an agency of transformation in the architectural praxis.

Agency of transformation

The architectural research community involves the power and responsibility to act as intermediaries on behalf of other. (AHRA, 2008) In the live project of 'How Yellow in Manchester' (following use 'Yellow' as shortened form) the research team tried to involve people into project to encourage them to see their city in a different way, and try to question the different policy during urban process. In 'Yellow' research group show the idea of 'bottom-up', they thought people can invent their own practices of 'insurgent citizenship' in new ways, for new reasons, and with new results. (Building initiative team, 2008) In this process the architectural research group helps and teaches people to establish their ways of exploration, thinking and participation in the city life. Architectural research group acts as intermediary enhances the people's ability of participation in urban life.

Follow above description I have two main points to discuss: the architectural research group as an agency of transformation in the architectural praxis is for what, what it faced. These two points are overlap together, they can not be solely discussed. Because they are each other's result and reason, during their interaction they generate the effect of agency.

For what

This idea is abstract everyone would have their own aim when they faced different project with different clients. From the Agency Conference Helen Mallinson from London Metropolitan University give me a very interesting idea 'Air right'. It explores the philosophical boundaries of agency on behalf of the speechless air. It questions the limited system to the capable of taking

moral responsibility for people's actions and dominions. (AHRA, 2008) This generate many complex questions and these question would make my discussion been clearly after solving out different questions.

Architect as one agency which is also my position, I work in this boundary, it is consist by financial, law, professional responsibility, social responsibility. Architect face the edge in urban physical environment and social edge, and the same time face the edge of themselves. Architect's ideology, it influences my design and way of management design.

So ask it again for what? Enlighten by the idea of 'air right' who own the city, is government, investor or citizen? In 'Yellow' research team is more concern about the people who have less chance to access to the public infrastructure. Because they living in the 'zone in transit' most of them are disadvantage groups, they do not have the ability to access to the social resource. Caused by a variety of reasons from society the character of democratic citizenship has severely diminished. (Hoffman, High-Pippert, 2005)

Dose the agency only work for the groups who have the right or not to the city? The idea of public participation has a potential risk that idea of participation has been limited in this moral system which is only take the disadvantage groups into account like an errantry. The participation is the branch of democracy, which is not only concern about the disadvantage people, but different groups in the city. Agency is not a community with bias only work for the specific group. Agency should serve as a valuable training ground for democratic citizenship, offering members the opportunity to experience democratic debate and the rules which this debate generate. (Hoffman, High-Pippert, 2005)

By weakness of the citizen, they do not have enough ability, knowledge, technology right and resource to support them join in the policy making discuss. (Hoffman, High-Pippert, 2005) Those limitations astrict their ability and idea of participate in policy making. Even they have the chance to do so. This is also the 'Yellow' emphasized to encourage the people think about alternative strategies of planning culture, during this project people gain the ability to think about the urban process. (Building initiative team, 2008)

From the real life can see that the government and the market are not enough to make a civilization. The civic participation also need the support from the government, architect. In both Agency Conference and 'Yellow' there are few words about what government has done or assisted. The term of transformation has two meanings, one is translate things to make people understand, another meaning is evolution of the things. (AHRA, 2008) The architectural research group one hand work for the disadvantage groups and uneven development area to make them have chance and ability to access the social resource, another hand it should narrow down the gap between government and citizen to make citizen have chance to really join in the policy making which is directly or indirectly relate to their life.

After the agency encourages and helps people have the knowledge and ability to discuss the distribution of social resource, it also needs to build up a ground or culture for people negotiate

with government. This is a network to establish the cooperation between different groups and government.

However, not all political scientists believe that increased levels of political involvement will translate into increased social capital or a stronger civil society. (Hoffman, High-Pippert, 2005)

The political involvement provide a ground for people participate the policy making process, but they do not have the directly right to influence the decision.

‘Citizens want to know that they will have the opportunity to participate if they should ever be motivated to do so, and they want to know that the power of their elected representatives could be checked by their own political power. This last point is key, as it helps explain how it may appear as though citizens desire political influence and involvement.’ (Hoffman, High-Pippert, 2005)

People want to be involved in urban process, they also desired to influence the urban process. Not only the private enterprise desires the individual interest, citizen also desires the self-interest. They want the creation of a political community capable of transforming dependent, private individuals into free citizens and partial and private interests into public goods. (Hoffman, High-Pippert, 2005) Every group is based upon a narrow reading of self-interest and tries to bring their interest into public good.

All the theory, system, organization, technology, is try to make the participation of citizen is accessible and sustainable. Both of these techniques, although making potentially useful contributions to, also suffer from severe limitations. (Hoffman, High-Pippert, 2005) Because the urban life is a dynamic balance system, different groups would have conflict or cooperation, and this relationship is changeable and unstable. The urban process is labyrinthian under the interaction of different powers. (Simmie, 1974)

What Do the People Really Want?

To make the participation sustainable there are four motivations that encourage people to participate the urban process. The basic motivation is material benefits, such as jobs, career advancement, or help with a personal problem. These benefits are citizens could accrue only if they actually participated in the activity. This benefit of participation is more tangible hand the other two selective benefits of social gratification and civic gratification. With social gratification, citizen receives the enjoyment of working with theirs and the excitement of politics as a reward for anticipation. Civic gratification as an act of participation itself has a sense of duty or fulfilling a desire to contribute to the welfare of community. The final motivation is the desire to influence policy outcomes, when people the outcomes that come from the implementation of desired policies. (Hoffman, High-Pippert, 2005) ‘Yellow’ based on these motivations to encourage people join in the research process, make people feel their right of the city. They desire participate the decision relate to self-interest.

How to make participation sustainable?

From my view it seem like people built up a bridge to connect both sides of river, the river divides the land and they both form the edge of themselves. In urban environment architect deal with different edges built up context between each other or tries to narrow down the gap between different edges. Citizen is not only demand equality of chance to get the social resource, but the equality of chance to share social resource. Citizen really care is the benefit that direct relate themselves, for daily life they do not need such high level policy as national policy or regional policy. These policies are too far from them, although these policies would have long term affect to nation. They concern about the policy relate to their job, house, urban environment which they can see. So the agency is work at this level as a 'bottom-up' organization to assistant people to participate and influence the urban process. (AHRA, 2008)

It is a branch of decentralized system. This decentralized system is delivering the right from national level or regional level to urban level. In this small scale everyone can get into the act, unimpeded by centralized bureaucracies, and can compete for a market share through ingenuity and local adaptation. From New- liberal view the individual is much more active, flexible to make suitable choice to face the complex situation. Through the competition the social resource would be optimize redistribute.(Cole, 1995) But from the urban life we see the distribute is not equal, from the 'Yellow' the infrastructure are concentrate on the commercial area or new resident area toward special interest group, and the same time the old or poor area get less access to infrastructure. (AHRA, 2008)And caused by the uneven development the private investment or government investment are more attracted by flourishing area. Competition is market activity, this is the power of urban process rely on. The mainly responsibility is due to government who charge the social resource redistribute. Urban level is basic level of a national management, but highest level normal citizen relate to. Architectural research group work as agency of transformation should narrow down the gap between local government and citizen, and built up the communication between local government and citizen. Most people want to understand their own systems and feel responsible for their own destinies, not be mere economic cogs. (Hoffman, High-Pippert, 2005)Some researchers said there is a need to create more places in the public sphere where policy recommendations can be transferred to official and accountable institutions of government for further discussion. (Hoffman, High-Pippert, 2005)

Citizens want to have the opportunity to participate if they motivated to do so, and they want to check urban process by their own political power. In 'Yellow' if people have the ability to discuss the policy making and social resource redistribute, they would be more positive to participate the urban process. The agency should involve each with potentially competing interests, this case offers a particularly rich opportunity to examine the competing motives that animate participation in urban process. (Hoffman, High-Pippert, 2005)

Another important aspect of citizen participation involves how much technical knowledge citizens possess or should be expected to possess in order to participate in urban process decisions. Agency is like an information exchange system to transfer and share the views between local government and citizen. (Garnett, Ecclesfield, 2008)The yellow trial like a vehicle for delivering conception of participation, awareness planning culture to the people who do not have enough knowledge,

information, skill, ability to participate.

Collaborative networks can provide innovative strategic tools for institutions concerned with changing their processes and using their knowledge and understanding to make the most effective use of emerging technologies to enable change. (Garnett, Ecclesfield, 2008) During the policy making there are many policy-driven priorities, such as capital, droit , knowledge. Technical knowledge could be that the shared priority is as important as the actual priority positions. (Hoffman, High-Pippert, 2005) Personal civic gratification for political participation was possible.

If participants sense that others fail to share in their views, the possibility for exit is significantly increased. Given the diversity of interests represented in the city, (Hoffman, High-Pippert, 2005) dealing with what is likely to be an equally consideration of priorities. The rapid development of new technology support to learners to learning, social networking software increases in the range and scope of search and recreation knowledge. (Garnett, Ecclesfield, 2008) The agency needs to have internal networks that leverage its constituent knowledge, and external networks that it uses both for communication and for accessing the knowledge of others. (Garnett, Ecclesfield, 2008)

Conclusion

If communities are to be given authority over their energy system, they can decide what they prefer and then put that decision into effect, decision-making authority would lose the control of the city, none government is willing to do so. After the political system established the right has distributed to different groups. As an architect my job, responsibility, right was limited in this scope. We live and work in different boundaries established by other and ourselves. As time processed people get used to these boundaries, during this process different groups caused by right distribution would have different response to current system. People can criticize the current work system the vote and the public voice form this indirectly participation of the urban design or plan. But the planning or design right is stably hold by the planning institution, the institution is respond to the city development and at the same time also response to the citizen. This is a complex and incompatible problem it can not solely solved by architect or planner. This problem needs to discuss at high level of urban design. Architect as one type of agency is work at own work boundary to solve the problem can be reached.

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