BUILDING AN EQUITABLE FUTURE THROUGH MAKERSPACES BY FOSTERING COLLABORATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES WITH MAKERS: *5 CASES FROM LONDON*

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INTRODUCTION

Makerspaces are a unique phenomenon that has been influenced by various movements, including the **Arts and Crafts**, **Do-It-Yourself**, and grassroots **hacker** traditions. This presentation focusing on the analysis of makerspaces as an emergent social phenomenon in constant evolution. There is increasing popular attention and academic studies about makerspaces, which define them from different points of view. This case study is a part of **PhD dissertation** on makerspaces focusing on the analysis in the constant evolution through community, space and production trilogy. The study encompasses **five makerspaces situated in the city of London**, United Kingdom. London holds a significant position in the realm of makerspaces due to its distinctive status as a global city and a thriving hub for innovation and creativity.

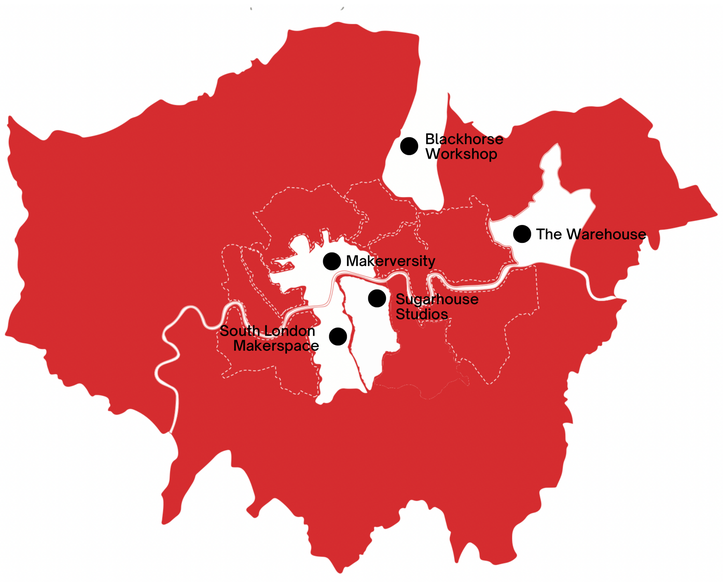

Figure 1. Selected cases located in the city of London map

OBJECTIVE

The primary objective is to establish a connection between theoretical and empirical research, highlighting makerspaces as collaborative spaces that contribute to the democratization of design and fabrication. This emphasis encompasses sustainability and new technologies within urban contexts.

Figure 2. Blackhorse Workshop

METHODOLOGY

The case study methodology has been employed for guiding the data collection. The data was organised based on themes addressing discourses community, space, and production in accordance with the researcher's epistemological view derived from the domains of **communication studies** and **architectural discourse.** The data gathered from:

- semi-structured interviews / podcasts
- field notes of researcher
- makerspace matrix based on websites, reports
- architectural drawings / floor plans

CASE ANALYSIS

Although makerspaces have different member demographics, financial structures, and equipment, they all have the common characteristic of their roles in how they would like to **serve their communities**. It is critical to remind the differentiation between the maker community and the local community, also can be defined as neighbourhood. On the other hand, contributing to entrepreneurship may not be the major role expected from makerspaces. They can also make a difference in community development and have a social impact, such as building environmental sustainability or endorsing circular economy.

Figure 4. South London Makerspace

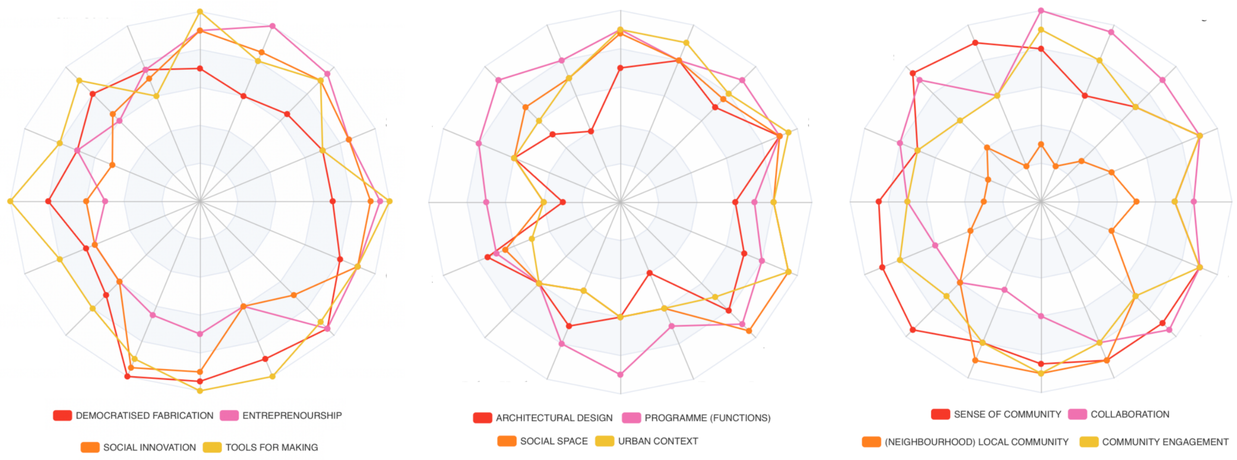

Figure 3. Radar Charts on distribution of lenses on *production, space and community* according to interviewees

FINDINGS

There are three primary findings as a consequence of the cases. First, makerspaces positioned **making** at their heart as a physical space that developed specific social relationships within their community. Furthermore, it was observed that indirect connections, such as collaborations and democratized fabrication, can stimulate innovative approaches to making and enable connections among makers. Thus, the significant role of makerspaces within the realm of capitalism, with a focus on production, needs to be emphasized. The materials, value chain, skills, techniques, and even technology employed by makers hold the potential to transform the perception of capitalism as knowledge is shared and exchanged among makers and the broader community. Second, makerspaces can become, and later challenge, **thirdspaces** by fostering more innovative, meaningful and collaborative productions of space. Third, makerspaces are defined through **identities** which are constituted within a system of social relations. Therefore, a makerspace can be: a community with an entrepreneurial mindset in the city, a collaborative environment empowering innovators, a community-led workshop with online visibility, an open-access factory for everyone to co-create or a hub for cross-disciplinary studios with a social network (Yardim Mericliler, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Makerspaces have the ability to provide a collaborative environment by bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds and skill sets, thus facilitating interdisciplinary collaborations and the exchange of knowledge. These collaborations within a makerspace are defined by Roschelle and Teasley as a "mutual engagement of participants in a coordinated effort to solve a problem" (1995, p. 2). Furthermore, Garside (2019) discusses how mastery of technological knowledge and skills can transform makerspaces into intellectual grounds where individuals can create using accessible technology while engaging in constructive collaboration. The potential of makerspaces to promote entrepreneurship and innovation, leading to positive impacts on economic growth and job creation, is evident. Additionally, many makerspaces operate under a collaborative, open-access model, fostering a sense of community and shared ownership among their members.

REFERENCES

Garside, C. (2019). *The positioning of makerspaces in relation to government educational policy and curriculum.*
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