



 UrbanMetaMapping



UrbanMetaMapping Semester Talks: Summer Term 2024 via zoom, 11.00 - 12.00 (CEST)

Registration via: talks.urbanmetamapping@uni-bamberg.de

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Defining Partnership: Navigating the Social Relationship of Participation in Heritage Conservation Practice

In heritage conservation planning, equitable participation, particularly involving socially vulnerable groups, is a chronic issue. Indeed, the Arlington County, Virginia Historic Preservation Program encountered this quandary when coordinating community consultation efforts for their Master Plan update in 2020 and 2021. Though heritage practitioners and scholars encourage making room for socially vulnerable groups at the proverbial table, socially vulnerable groups' participation is constricted by sociological processes of inequity and dominance such that dichotomies of stakeholder (i.e., non-expert) and expert shape struggles for authority to influence the outcomes of heritage conservation planning. Consequently, Rico (2017) suggests that heritage practitioners and scholars "look more closely at how the methods we use inform or shape the idea of the stakeholder and our heritage subjects in general." Embracing this proposal, this presentation uses critical reflection as a tool to examine the concepts of heritage, citizenship, and participation, and an analysis of the Arlington County Historic Preservation Program's Master Plan Update community outreach initiatives to explore the following questions: What are the contours of the social relationship of participation in heritage conservation practice? How can conceptualizing participation as a social relationship help heritage practitioners and scholars better serve and empower socially vulnerable communities? In attempting to answer these questions, I argue that by understanding the social relationships of dominance and inequity that characterize heritage participatory processes, heritage practitioners and scholars can better assist socially vulnerable groups in creating strategies that position them to "negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional powerholders" (Arnstein 1969)—or Partnership.



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