

Berlin FvL's Methodology

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The general methodology of Berlin Lab is based on an ethnographic approach and includes methods from qualitative sociology, architecture, urban design, and geography. In Berlin, the co-production process started years ago as the result of various negotiations and engagements of varying coalitions formed in 2014. Therefore, we will not lead the initiatives or promote discussion, round tables, or workshops but rather accompany the already-planned meetings and future events organized by the ZusammenStelle (Rathausblock coalition) and the Forum Rathausblock. Thus, we attend the monthly meeting of the Forum, the weekly Sprechstunde (consultation hour) at the Rathausblock, or the activities organized by the initiatives based at the Dragonareal, such as Bündnis Feuerundflamme, among others. Although we seek to be as non-participants as possible and observe from an outsider's position the development of the Modell project, we are aware that our mere presence in the meetings or workshops categorizes us as participant observers. Thus, our participation in the regular meetings of the Forum and upcoming workshops organized by the university or district coalitions is limited. Yet, we conduct interviews with the citizens, grassroots initiatives, and institutional actors.

We aim to understand what kind of social groups (either young collectives, people with a migrant background, older German men, or female participants) are brought together by the co-productive process and how the coming together of the different agents involved in the co-productive process, such as the citizens, the bottom-up initiatives, the coalitions, and the institutional characters, produce space. Therefore, we conduct participant observations and observe who is engaged, who participates in the processes, and who is not fairly represented and why.

Moreover, to understand the intricacies of cooperating and the complications involved in finding a common goal towards which initiatives could align and join forces, we conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews with the stakeholders and founding members of the initiatives. Furthermore, we interviewed governmental actors to achieve a multi-scalar perspective of the co-productive process. We aim to gain knowledge of the authorities' view of co-productive processes, thus, easing vertical communication and turning it more horizontal.

The Rathausblock as a case study, but also as an urban lab and concrete place/site is mapped to understand how and why this space brings people together. Beyond analyzing the social dynamics between actors, during the monthly Forum sessions and the activities carried out weekly, such as the consultation hour (Wednesday) or the pottery course (Tuesday), among others, the stakeholders' use of space is examined and mapped. Moreover, the vastness of the Rathausblock and the multiplicity of events and meetings it hosts present an ideal scenario where to study the spatial appropriation of certain actors, their customization of space, or the way they adapted and manipulated it to fit their needs. Finally, desktop research, research of secondary sources, media, and grey literature produced and based on and about the Rathaus Block are investigated.

In the graphic, black represents the existing actors (such as the bottom-up initiatives, citizens, and institutions) and their place of interaction, which takes place at the monthly meeting of the Forum Rathausblock (depicted in the center). The Fairville Lab, represented in red, studies each of the actors by executing qualitative semi-structured interviews. To investigate their interaction in space, inequalities, and power dynamics settled in the co-productive process, the lab requires ethnographic observation of the social dynamics as well as thorough mapping of the actors' use of space.

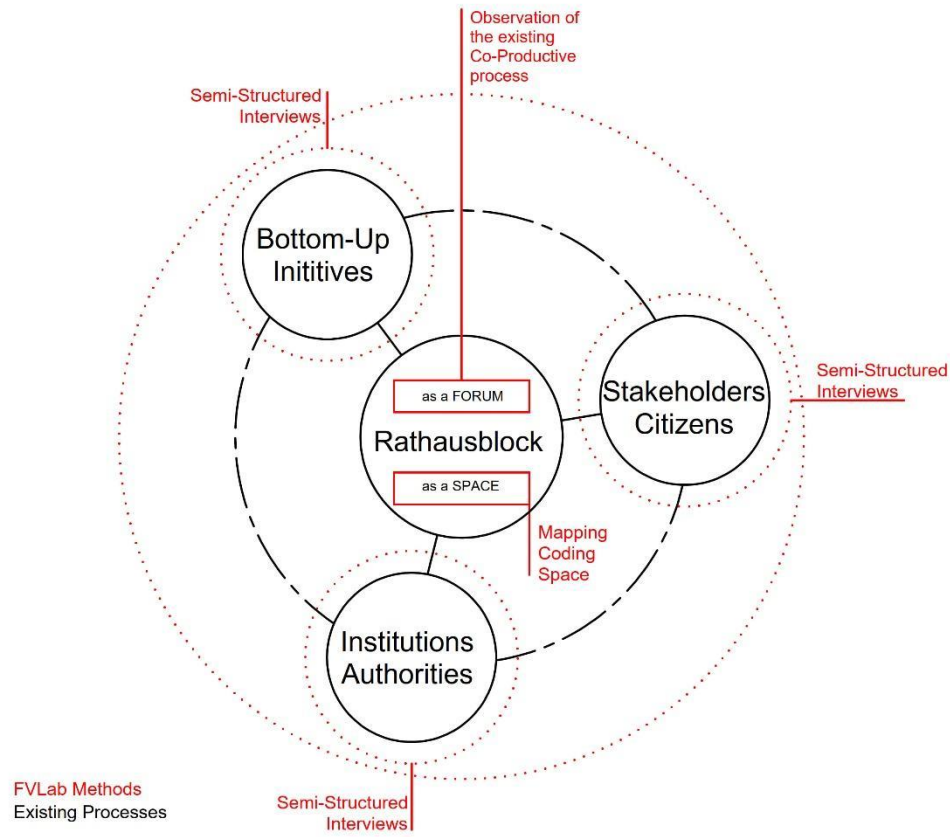


Figure 1: Berlin FvL's Methodology, Source: Berlin FvL