

# **Babylonian Social Engineering**

## How Contemporary Public Space can Learn from New Babylon

*Gijs van Oenen*

Essay – January 1, 2008

**Philosopher of law Gijs van Oenen detects a 'socially engineered utopia' in the New Babylon project and other work of the Situationists. In light of political social engineering and of our behaviour in contemporary public space, he sees New Babylon as a 'playground'. He calls for an understanding of social engineering in spatial terms, so as to promote the interactive capabilities of human beings.**

The socially engineered society was born in the 1970s and 'expired' in the 1980s. For such a short-lived phenomenon, it managed to acquire a remarkable historical significance. Perhaps because the socially engineered society had been 'a long time in the making' and, after its demise, lives on in societal consciousness, be it only as a sort of phantom pain. In this article I shall attempt to draw up a diagnosis of the socially engineered society, via an anamnesis that, from a political as well as an artistic standpoint, goes back to the 1950s, and stretches on both fronts to the present day as well.

Initially, social engineering made its entrance in art: in Situationism, and in particular in Constant's New Babylon. About half a generation later social engineering was mentioned in the political sphere, only to disappear barely ten years later, or in any event to be unrecognizably transformed. The renewed interest in Constant's work over the last ten years shows to what degree social engineering – insofar as it still exists – must now be understood in spatial terms. As a result, architecture and technology literally begin to 'play a role' in the shaping not only of public space itself, but also of norms and behaviour within that space.

## 'The Making of' Political Social Engineering

The Dutch term *maakbaarheid* (social engineering), or *maakbare samenleving* (socially engineered society) is of recent vintage. It only crops up for the first time in the public discourse in the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>1</sup> Odd, actually, for philosophers have a tendency to equate modernity and social engineering;<sup>2</sup> even I myself recently argued that social engineering is a product of the French Revolution.<sup>3</sup> The explanation for this apparent contradiction is also philosophical, at least Hegelian: social engineering can only be understood when its demise is already underway, by the twilight, in other words, in which Minerva's owl takes flight. The fact that society understood itself as socially engineered for only a short time is perhaps due to the fact that it exists only in and through the activity of its engineering, a capacity for self-formation and self-production it loses when this capacity becomes self-reflexive and realizes its potential of being accessible to all. Enlightenment and modernity entailed the promise that everyone could and should be responsible for the shaping of communal life. The realization of that promise, which ultimately took place in the 1960s and 1970s, simultaneously signified its demise. Jan Willem Duyvendak and Ido de Haan, in their 1997 collection on social engineering, in fact speak of the 'tragedy of the concept of the socially engineered society'.<sup>4</sup> The tragedy, I would add, lies primarily in the fact that it falls victim to 'too much of a good thing', just as in tragedy the hero falls victim to an overreaching, a taking-too-far (*pleonexia*) of a notion that is in itself right or necessary.

The first manifestation of social engineering, albeit under a different name, is represented by the measures Franklin Roosevelt instituted in the 1930s to stabilize economic and social relations in the USA after the disruptive crisis of the late 1920s. Of course this was a controversial, ideologically charged programme: with his New Deal, Roosevelt was going against the prevailing liberal doctrine of contractual freedom and economic self-determination. And he joined a new current in economics, which under the leadership of Keynes and later Galbraith argued that government could and should deliberately conduct economic policy.

This, in essence, was the impetus for a broader development in public administration, in which the concept of 'policy' became central. Policy is a product – perhaps even *the* product – of the socially engineered society. If one aims merely to order society, maintain the law and perhaps wage war, one can make do with 'politics', that is to say postulate laws and regulations and punish violations thereof. One who aims to *make* a society, however, needs policy.

Policy actually is, or to put it a better way, *does* the following: transform political decisions from a fact into a process, a process in which people – politicians, bureaucrats, citizens – are addressed as parties involved. The premise of policy is that to make a decision, and if need be to sanction it is not – or no longer – enough. In order to realize decisions, it is necessary that the 'parties involved' actually *become* involved. They must be informed about the purpose and the backgrounds of political decisions; they must actively contribute ideas and cooperation.

Policy thus mobilizes, and not primarily based on force or duty, but based on insight and persuasion. This makes policy a characteristic expression of interactivity. Initially it was the bureaucrats within public administration who had to be persuaded, but at a later stage – the early 1970s – it was citizens as well. They too should not be abruptly confronted by policy, but instead become involved in its creation, understand its rationale and cooperate in its implementation. All this, on the one hand, based on democratic motives of active citizenship, participation and involvement. But on the other hand, and certainly not in the last place, on motives of efficiency. Policy contributes to the creation of public support, as it is called. With this the paradigm of social engineering is fully embraced: government and citizen design and realize society in unison.

As an institutional expression of this, the Social and Cultural Planning Office of the Netherlands (SCP) was founded in 1973, an initiative of Joop Den Uyl's government. On the one hand this acknowledged that in this new era the government could no longer simply consult the older Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (the cpb, founded in 1945) ; it needed more insight into opinions and practices as they existed in the democratizing and pluralizing society. On the other hand, the appellation 'planning office' remained intact, indicating that 'social engineering' remained a question of central leadership and planning of society by government. The two aspects were merged by the then-director of the scp, Louis van Tienen, in his characterization of planning as a 'deepening of democracy', through which 'everything and everyone can be taken into account'. It was not planned politics that was undemocratic, but in fact unplanned politics, for it did not take the desires and needs of the population into account.<sup>5</sup> The institution of the SCP indicated that social engineering had become reflexive and self-aware and was to be approached through planning. At the same time, it was felt at the time that reflexive social engineering goes hand in hand naturally and seamlessly with democratization, a utopian idea that would not survive very long.

The founding of the scp also provided a fine illustration of the initial phase of interactive administration – and with it, as I shall argue, also the beginning of the end of the socially engineered society. In this the perceptions, opinions and practices of citizens became relevant factors in political decision-making about societal reform. In other words, they were significant in the formation of 'policy'. The opinions and attitudes of citizens were no longer seen dichotomously in terms of 'passivity' or 'resistance' to what was decided in politics. There was a recognition that a diversity of opinions existed and that this, in principle, was a legitimate expression of the particular way that modern citizens, according to their own lights, attempt to shape their lives. Society can only be 'made', or socially engineered, when this diversity is kept in mind; policy planning can then anticipate and take into account societal feelings, reactions and oppositions.

Initially this was kept entirely in the hands of the government itself. Although they were no longer merely passive, and were already pluriform to a certain extent, citizens were still primarily objects of politics. In the 1970s, however, citizens quickly turned themselves into subjects of politics – or as it came to be called in contemporary administrative jargon, they became 'co-producers of policy'. They took the initiative. They did not merely wait passively, but rather began to form and express their opinions themselves – asked or not, desirable or not. This new spirit was expressed in sit-ins, demonstrations and new social movements. On the one had this created a new form of politics, in which the outspoken citizen is central. On the other hand the main interlocutor of this outspoken citizen was still naturally the government; this was the entity to which one directed one's complaints, desires, plans and objections. The government might do everything wrong, but in principle was capable of doing everything right.

## Social Engineering in Art

The artistic counterpart, or forerunner, of the scp had been created 15 years earlier, in the form of the 'Situationist city', <sup>6</sup> and in particular Constant's New Babylon project. <sup>7</sup> New Babylon too had been painstakingly designed so as to provide the maximum opportunity for individual development to everyone. It too was a reflection of an extreme philosophy of social engineering, which was not only socially but also to a large extent technologically situated. In this, New Babylon fit into the spirit of the late 1950s: technology was widely thought capable of resolving all major problems of society. In the post-Marxist utopia of New Babylon, human labour, hitherto always carried out with great difficulty, throughout history, to 'make' the world and make it available to man, would be replaced by technology, such as the robot, for instance. Human action and dwelling would be facilitated everywhere by technology. As such, this already entailed that the distinction between human and technological practices would fade and that this would usher in the cyborg – at the time still under Asimov's quasi-Cartesian formula, 'I, robot'.

A central idea in Situationism was that of a 'unitary urbanism', aimed at extricating urban life from the private, social or political conventions that kept it fettered. It was inspired by the *dérive*: 'the wandering that undermines the structure of the city, by creating ephemeral environments that are beyond the reach of any centrally organized authority.' This wandering is made possible on the one hand by a massive architectonic and technological complex of corridors, towers and platforms, and on the other hand by a societal and technological complex in which labour has been superseded by 'free time' in which human beings can develop creatively.

New Babylon is the quintessential example of the Situationists' attempts to use modernist ideas and materials in a playful and less formal way, in order to create a built environment that would encourage people to actively create their own environment, instead of adopting the position of passive consumers of efficient, functional designs. New Babylon is a world that literally and figuratively surpasses the spheres of labour and production. The models and sketches of this dream world show a potentially infinite network of 'multilevel' corridors linked by even larger 'nodes' – approximately like today's airports – so that users are 'free to play'.

The whole design of the complex invites wandering and 'playing'; in a sense it compels it. New Babylon is the paradoxical built environment in which the *dérive* has been elevated to a norm and even facilitated through planning. New Babylon does not feature or facilitate habitation. Everywhere, the passer-by is 'encouraged', or actually even obligated, to literally create his or her own environment or atmosphere via an advanced system of 'air conditioning', in order to fully 'make' the environment according his or her self-developed insights. Whereas the (traditional) modernist city was designed for productive use, New Babylon, in an ironic twist, 'produces' non-productive behaviour, such as wandering and playing. In one stroke, New Babylon – on paper, and in the form of a model – represented both the beginning and the climax of the idea of the socially engineered society. And actually its immediate demise, as well.

## 'The Undoing of' Political Social Engineering

The interactive enthusiasm that characterized social engineering at its height underwent a radical transformation in the 1980s, which we can sum up as instrumentalization and institutionalization – both possibly inevitable consequences of spontaneous and more or less unregulated enthusiasm. This also explains the oft-heard accusation of 'betrayal' of earlier ideals, the way Christopher Lasch, for example, describes the 1970s as a betrayal of the 1960s in *The Culture of Narcissism*, widely read at the time. The institutionalization of interactivity actually represents the societal and political acknowledgement of its significance.

In the 1980s, therefore, we witness the rise of 'efficiently negotiating administration', that is to say a method of politics or administration that views this interactivity more as a strategic process than as a communicative process. Involvement becomes primarily understood as 'stakeholding', and stakes have to be negotiated; public opinion-making and democratic representation play at most a secondary role in this. This transformation in the democratic experience, incidentally, originates from both sides. For both the government and the citizen, an increasingly instrumental attitude goes together with an undiminished democratic or interactive engagement. That is to say, both sides increasingly consider such engagement self-evident and indispensable.

At the same time, however, there is a rapidly progressing lack of orientation. This applies to politics, in which the concepts of left and right begin to lose their clear meanings. Leftist thinkers begin to wonder whether their aims can be best achieved through the state or through private initiatives ('the market'). And it also holds for society, a phenomenon that British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher explicitly declares to be a mirage ('there's no such thing as society'). Thatcher's statement describes not so much a fact as a liberal trend. Emancipated citizens increasingly express criticism of collective arrangements and, in their interactivity, begin to focus more on their own interests, with the nimby activist as the best-known product.

In an environment in which people are primarily focused on themselves and their own interests, in which the collective orientation on values and goals has become subordinate to individual autonomy and in which 'society' evokes above all the frustration of one's own individual plans, it is no surprise that this society begins to be perceived as a threat. Society has changed from a reassuring organizer of welfare to a source of potential dangers and threats. This transformation was thematized by Ulrich Beck in the mid-1980s as the 'risk society', in his book of the same name that came out one month after the fall-out at Chernobyl.

In the process, the whole concept of 'society' as the object of collective formation, administration and deliberation loses its positive meaning. It now acquires a negative meaning instead: an incalculable collection of others. Whereas the socially engineered society was still predicated on a mutual trust between government and citizen, in the neoliberal society this has been replaced by mutual distrust. Whereas the socially engineered society was still a whole of citizens and institutions that lent itself to design through collective deliberation, the neoliberal society manifests itself as a fragmented collection of individual fractional interests and an 'unsurveyable' and difficult to govern whole of societal processes – a conglomerate that can not be 'made' but at most disciplined, controlled and punished.

We might also say that social engineering has not so much disappeared as taken on a different, negative meaning. As Pierre Rosanvallon says: citizens no longer dream of taking over power in order to exercise it; instead they are intent on weakening it or making it 'transparent'.<sup>8</sup> Whereas in the philosophy of social engineering policy is still made from a drive to reform society, based on collective deliberation about objectives, the intention of policy is now defensive: government measures are now meant to protect citizens from

what threatens their individual pursuit of self-actualization. Building on this, we can argue that a loss of social engineering coincides with a demand for security.

Social engineering thus makes way for security. Or we might also say that security is the distorted guise in which social engineering manifests itself in the risk society. After all, people still believe in social engineering in the sense that risk analysis and risk management are thought to be possible, whether through further technological management and limitation of dangers, or through repressive and proactive action by the government, through police and judiciary action, in other words. Both possibilities imply a loss of trust in the capacity of people to guide their own actions based on the norms that, in the era of social engineering, were in fact embraced as an expression of the success of emancipation.

People may still be emphatically convinced of the capacity and the importance of making choices themselves, but at the same time they believe less and less that this enables them to exercise any meaningful influence on society. Or that such influence is still worth pursuing for individual citizens, or even a positive value at all. We still want to be explicitly involved in the process of policy and decision-making. But at the same time we have few illusions about, and little interest in, the concrete results of such processes. Interactivity itself now seems more important to many citizens than the goal that was initially pursued by engaging in this interactivity.

One consequence of this interactive frustration – or as I also call it, interactive metal fatigue – is that citizens no longer can or want to take the organization of their common environment into their own hands. An operative situation emerges that goes beyond interactivity, whereby interactivity is now merely a question of 'going through the motions' – albeit that these motions, as stated earlier, are still seen as a significant achievement. Because they are no longer able to put these capabilities into practice, citizens begin to hold others responsible for civilized intercourse in the public sphere. In this way they are indicating that they no longer consider themselves able to produce the interactive capabilities necessary to act according to public norms to which they themselves, as emancipated and outspoken citizens, subscribe. This self-declared incapacity to behave socially forms the core of what I call 'interpassivity'.<sup>9</sup>

Interpassive tendencies can be identified in various domains of political and societal life. Interpassivity, however, is intrinsically related to the problem of security because the outsourcing of citizenship capacities is a significant cause of the emergence of the whole thinking and perceiving in terms of security. We could even define security, in principle, very simply as the 'outsourcing of citizenship'.

If we now ask, 'outsourcing to what or to whom?', a significant part of the answer is 'not to interactive institutions anymore, but to prescriptively organized environments'. In other words, to the built environment, to the objects and structures all around us.

## The Legacy of New Babylon

As previously stated, the founding of the Social and Cultural Planning Office in 1973 marked the advent of interactive administration, and with it both the climax and essentially the demise of the socially engineered society. It is no accident that the establishment of this office coincides almost exactly with the evaporation, around 1972, of Situationism, as it was represented by Guy Debord in the 1960s in particular, and with the dismantling of the New Babylon project in 1974. From the 1980s onward the societal problems and contradictions described above, which were in essence already visible in the design of New Babylon, or which become visible in retrospect, began to manifest themselves. Such as galloping individualization, problems of governance in public space, and an 'atmospheric' form of control over the living environment.

New Babylon was intended as a playful environment that lends itself to an infinite number of transitory contacts, whereby one hops from one temporary meeting place to the other in an idealized form of interactivity. This mobility and detachment would create new worlds and establish new communities. According to Constant, the New Babylonian 'at any given moment in his creative activity is himself in direct contact with his peers' and 'all action loses its individual character'.<sup>10</sup> Yet Constant's own sketches of the project offer – in the eyes of today's reader – an entirely different impression: that of lonely, lost individuals who can no longer find any direction or goal and, in the immense spaces of the project, are primarily searching for themselves. They never seem genuinely engaged with anything or anyone; in fact Peter Sloterdijk calls them 'flux existentialists'.<sup>11</sup> One might say that the principles of *dérive* and *détournement* were implemented a little too fundamentally in the design, so that any form of substantive social engagement quickly – indeed – 'derails'. Or, in the risk society, turns into its opposite: today, public spaces modelled after New Babylon are those quintessentially perceived as 'unsafe'.

The change in the character of the public space, in part because of the rise of the media, is partly responsible for this development. As Rem Koolhaas argues in 'Generic City', in the new metropolis, the 'generic city', an 'evacuation of the public domain' is taking place. The generic city is perhaps 'liberated from the captivity of center',<sup>12</sup> but it is now kept in check by other mechanisms. Whereas television used to be the way to turn an unsurveyable human mass into an audience, the situation is now reversed: the mass is made surveyable by an extensive system of live cameras. Public spaces are increasingly being subjected to monitoring and surveillance in this way – Ctrl-[Space], as the ZKM in Karlsruhe so cleverly thematized it in 2002.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, there is the atmospherics of New Babylon, an aspect in which the project explicitly and strikingly preludes Peter Sloterdijk's notion of 'spheres'.<sup>14</sup> New Babylon is conceived as entirely isolated from the outside world, which makes total control of the environment possible, precisely in terms of 'atmosphere', of regulating light and air conditions. In this regard too it forms a model for the contemporary development of urbanization, in the sense that the strongest forms of urbanization are now taking place in tropical regions and thus that the *governmentality* of these cities will be more a question of air conditioning than of politics.<sup>15</sup>

In this case too this control is cast in highly individualistic terms. In New Babylon everyone can form a small atmospheric 'bubble' for himself, a little private habitat, in public space – approximately what Sloterdijk calls 'foam', and what for the modern, mobile and threatening environment René Boomkens has christened 'capsularization': an 'immunizing' disconnection from the environment.<sup>16</sup> This can take place physically, by way of the automobile, for instance. But today it is increasingly electronics that produce the 'membranes' with which we form our own 'virtual' foam particle or capsule: the mobile phone, GPS, MP 3 player. The environment can even do this for us or in our name. Through

electronics and the Internet, this creates what is now called Ambient Intelligence: the environment that anticipates our presence by adapting to our personal preferences, in terms of light, air and sound – a radicalized form of 'air conditioning', in other words. But this personalization of the environment is ambiguous, because it simultaneously opens countless opportunities for surveillance and control;<sup>17</sup> at the same time, it is a quintessential example of the outsourcing of citizenship and of a new form of (inter-) passivity.

It should therefore come as no surprise that politics today, to a significant extent, can be understood as spatial planning, and that in 2002 a Netherlands Institute for Spatial Research began operating alongside the Social and Cultural Planning Office. This new planning office exercises, in a certain sense, an institutionalized version of what the Situationists called 'psychogeography': 'the study of the specific effects of the geographic environment, whether consciously organized or not, on the emotions and the behaviour of individuals.' It too, viewed from this standpoint, deals with the *dérive*, described by Debord as 'a technique of passage through various ambiances'.<sup>18</sup> Of course Constant and Debord did not foresee or intend that New Babylon, the *dérive* or psychogeography should become a form of science of control or surveillance. And we could still argue that, for example, its very floating character makes the *dérive* a form of – interpassive! – resistance against surveillance and control science, and perhaps even forms the core of criticism in the twenty-first century.<sup>19</sup> Yet there is no doubt that psychogeography has a great future, primarily as the science of the directive design of public space.

If we extrapolate this further, we might also say that because of this development, 'objects are starting to show us the way', an idea that dovetails with the work of Bruno Latour.<sup>20</sup> This could be called a 'new New Babylon'. In this environment, it is the objects, and more generally the physical design of the space, that leads us or compels us into behaviour we are no longer able to bring ourselves, as a result of our interpassivity. These can be simple objects like speed bumps, roundabouts or hotel keys, or 'vandal-proof' upholstery on public transport, glass panels kept clean and whole in Publex bus shelters, but also chip-operated turnstiles for public transport or biometric systems that regulate access between different physical or institutional spheres.

This is, on the one hand, a menacing form of 'control', in which our behaviour is monitored and guided by systems and no longer by interactively developed and internalized norms. Objects not only instruct us in how to move and behave, but they also 'tell' researchers and detectives how to reconstruct these movements and behaviours, as the popular television series *Crime Scene Investigation* shows us night after night.

On the other hand, viewed more positively, the 'intelligent environment' is a form of 'support' that the objects provide us with. They help us to achieve the behaviour that, in principle, we would like to display, but are not (or no longer) able to. While we still use the objects instrumentally, and in that sense are still in the grip of the modernist philosophy of social engineering, we have achieved a curious about-face: it is the technological objects that have to help us remember our human norms, that have to help us remain human. We have indeed come a long way since Isaac Asimov: instead of the robot developing a sense of self, of 'I', it is now the robot that has to teach us to say 'I'.

And perhaps it goes even further. Perhaps the intelligent environment can lend us not just moral support, but also free us, in the expressive sphere, of our obsession with a public space that must be secured. The revival in interest in New Babylon also has to do with the playful quality that was characteristic of this project, and of Situationism in general.<sup>21</sup> The same is true of the comparable project by the English architect Cedric Price in 1960- 1961, 'Fun Palace'. Price had in mind a 'laboratory of fun', in which an almost unlimited design of the environment would also be possible, for the benefit of artistic and relaxing activities



such as dancing, making music and acting on stage. The original design was never realized, but a more modest version was, under the name InterAction Centre in the Kentish Town area of London.<sup>22</sup>

The challenge to architects, urban planners and spatial designers, then, is to maintain or even introduce this play dimension in the public spaces of the future, which will inevitably be mainly attuned to interpassivity and capsularization. This challenge has already been taken up by Liane Lefaivre and Henk Döll, who raise the urgent question of how 'playgrounds' can be established in the present-day city.<sup>23</sup> They see playgrounds not as isolated, incidental spaces purely for the activities of children, but rather as a 'network' of places in the city that are kept 'open' by and for what you might call their potential for play. In this view, inspired by Aldo van Eyck, the public space itself forms a 'polycentric net' that fills open spaces throughout the city and thereby invites one to a temporary 'playful sojourn' in all kinds of locations.

This also seems to me the best lesson for the present out of the more or less tragic history of New Babylon: how can we create playgrounds in public space – in the literal and the metaphorical sense – that promote the interactive capabilities of human beings and thereby contribute to their being able to act in accordance to their own norms. Then we will have made something of the socially engineered utopia of Constant and the Situationists after all.

**Gijs van Oenen** teaches in the Department of Philosophy of Erasmus University Rotterdam, where he directs a research programme on 'Interactive Metal Fatigue'. He publishes widely on citizenship, the rule of law, illegality, safety and security, public space and democracy.

## Footnotes

1. The first academic reflections can be found in the collection *Maakbaarheid van onze samenleving*, edited by N. H. Douben (Baarn: AMBO, 1978).
2. René Boomkens, *De nieuwe wanorde* (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 2006), 9.
3. Gijs van Oenen, 'Democratie en straf na de maakbare samenleving', *Justitiële Verkenningen*, 33/ 8, 2007, 49.
4. Jan Willem Duyvendak and Ido de Haan (eds.), *Maakbaarheid* (Amsterdam: AUP, 1997), 173.
5. Jan Willem Duyvendak, *De planning van ontplooiing* (The Hague: SDU, 1999), 94. Honesty requires me to note that in 1978 Van Tienen, in his contribution to the collection *Maakbaarheid van onze samenleving* (see note 1), puts the pretensions of social engineering in quite witty perspective.
6. Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).
7. On this see Mark Wigley, *Constant's New Babylon: The Hyper-Architecture of Desire* (Rotterdam: 010, 1998). And compare with Deron Albright, 'Tales of the City: Applying Situationist Social Practice to the Analysis of the Urban Drama', *Criticism*, 45/ 1, Winter 2003, 89- 108.
8. Pierre Rosanvallon, *La contre-démocratie. La politique à l'âge de la défiance* (Paris: Seuil, 2006), 261.
9. Gijs van Oenen, 'Languishing in securityscape. The interpassive transformation of the public sphere', *Open*, no. 6 (Rotterdam/Amsterdam: NAI Publishers in collaboration with SKOR, 2004), 6- 16.
10. Constant, 'Outline of a Culture', in: Wigley, op. cit. (note 7), 162.
11. Peter Sloterdijk, *Sphären III: Schäume* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2004), 659.
12. OMA, Rem Koolhaas, Bruce Mau, 'Generic City', in: idem, *SMLXL* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1995), 1249- 1251.
13. Thomas Levin, Ursula Frohne and Peter Weibel (eds.), *Ctrl-[Space]: Rhetorics of surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother* (Karlsruhe/Cambridge, MA: ZKM/MIT Press, 2002).
14. Compare with Sloterdijk, op. cit. (note 11), 659- 667.
15. Rem Koolhaas, 'In Search of Authenticity', in: Ricky Burdett and Deyan Sudjic (eds.), *The Endless City* (London/New York: Phaidon, 2007), 320- 323.
16. Elaborated by Lieven de Cauter in *The Capsular Civilization* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2004).
17. Compare with Mike Crang and Stephen Graham, 'Sentient Cities. Ambient Intelligence and the Politics of Public Space', *Information, Communication, and Society*, 10/ 6, 2007, 789- 817.
18. Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography* (Harpending: Pocket Essentials, 2006), 81 ff.
19. Scott Lash, 'Power After Hegemony', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 24/ 3, 2007, 68.
20. See for instance Bruno Latour, 'From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public', in: Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (eds.), *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy* (Karlsruhe/Cambridge, MA: zkm/MIT Press, 2005), 14- 41. And compare with Huub Dijkstra, *Politiek vernieuwen. Op zoek naar publiek in de technologische samenleving* (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 2008).
21. Compare with Libero Andreotti, 'Architecture and Play', in: Tom McDonough (ed.), *Guy Debord and the Situationist International* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 213- 240.
22. Stanley Mathews, *From Agit-Prop to Free Space: The Architecture of Cedric Price* (London: Black Dog publishing, 2007).
23. Liane Lefaivre and Henk Döll, *Ground Up City: Play as a Design Tool* (Rotterdam: 010, 2007).

## Tags

Architecture, Urban Space, Public Domain, Control

This text was downloaded on April 2, 2025 from  
*Open! Platform for Art, Culture & the Public Domain*  
[onlineopen.org/babylonian-social-engineering](https://onlineopen.org/babylonian-social-engineering)