# PRODUCTION OF SPACE, SPATIAL JUSTICE, AND THE RIGHT TO THE CITY - A COMPLETE FRAMEWORK FOR PLACE-BASED REGENERATIVE GOVERNANCE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Synthesis Overview: The Spatial Dialectic of Regenerative Governance

The escalating crises of global capital—characterized by systemic overaccumulation and uneven geographical development—have rendered traditional models of urban planning obsolete. The current global urbanization process, defined by neoliberal enclosure and the relentless pursuit of exchange-value, necessitates a profound and radical reorientation of governance. This report establishes Place-Based Regenerative Governance (PBRG) as the definitive theoretical synthesis required for designing spatial counter-hegemonies. PBRG is defined as the active socio-spatial practice of transforming capital-driven **Abstract Space** (Henri Lefebvre) into socially productive **Differential Space**.1

This transformation is not incremental; it requires two parallel, synchronized movements. First, there must be a systematic disruption of the mechanisms of **Accumulation by Dispossession (ABD)** (David Harvey) through anti-speculative structural interventions. Second, it requires the institutionalization of **Procedural Spatial Justice** (Edward Soja) by vesting democratic control over the urban surplus and securing the collective right to produce space. The failure to address both the economic engine of capital accumulation and the ideological framework that permits it results in localized resistance that is easily co-opted or reversed.

### The Regenerative Mandate

Regenerative governance mandates a paradigm shift away from incremental "sustainability" or "resilience" efforts that merely greenwash or optimize existing capitalist spatial logic. It requires a fundamental commitment to **co-production** (moving beyond token participation) and the permanent, legal prioritization of **use-value** over speculative exchange-value.2 This commitment must be embedded in the legal and financial mechanisms governing land use, ensuring that the spatial output serves human need and collective welfare, rather than functioning primarily as an outlet for fixed capital investment.4

### Key Design Patterns in Brief

The PBRG synthesis culminates in an implementation toolkit focused on structural, non-recuperable change. Key design patterns include the utilization of **Community Land Trusts (CLTs)** 5 as permanent anti-speculation anchors and the proactive deployment of **Anti-Displacement Guarantees (ADGs)**. As evidenced by failures like the High Line, protective measures must be anticipatory, securing affordable housing parcels and resident protections *before* infrastructure improvements are even designed, thereby insulating vulnerable communities from the subsequent wave of green gentrification and cultural displacement.6 This proactive approach ensures that the Right to the City is realized as a claim to collective production, not merely access to consumption.

## PART 1: LEFEBVRE'S SPATIAL THEORY: THE PRODUCTION OF DIFFERENTIAL SPACE

Henri Lefebvre's core contribution is the assertion that space is not an empty container but a complex, contradictory social product. Understanding how this space is produced is prerequisite to designing regenerative alternatives that challenge the hegemony of capital.

### 1.1 The Full Triad: Space as Social Product and Process

Lefebvre's Triad of Spatial Production analyzes the dynamic, contradictory, and reciprocal relationships among three moments that continually shape and reproduce space. Under advanced capitalism, this relationship is not balanced; it is hierarchized, leading to the domination of abstract, calculable space.

#### 1.1.1 Spatial Practice (The Perceived)

Spatial Practice refers to the immediate, everyday routines, habitual uses, and lived experiences of the inhabitants. This encompasses the physical movements, flows, and utilization of space—the material base of social life. It is the realm of the body, rhythm, and immediate interaction with the built environment, shaping how people navigate and utilize the city in their daily existence. In the PBRG framework, governance must begin by deeply observing and valorizing existing spatial practices, understanding them as the fundamental material reality that capital attempts to regularize, commodify, and homogenize through planning.

#### 1.1.2 Representations of Space (The Conceived)

Representations of Space constitute conceptualized space, encompassing abstract planning, scientific measurements, cartography, regulatory codes, and professional expertise. This is the dominant ideological framework used by architects, planners, city engineers, and state elites to describe, manage, and ultimately control space.7 Under capitalism, Representations of Space have ascended to dominate the entire triad, reflecting and enforcing the needs and priorities of finance capital and political elites. These elites produce and shape space for economic production and social reproduction, enforcing their control in their own interests.7 The PBRG must fundamentally critique and reject the fatalistic notion, often held by design professionals, that their "representations of space become space" and that design holds deterministic power over culture and behavior.2

#### 1.1.3 Representational Spaces (The Lived)

Representational Spaces refer to space as lived directly through images, symbols, dreams, art, and the imagination of inhabitants. This is symbolic space, imbued with emotional and historical meaning, often operating as a counter-space or realm of resistance against the monotony and control imposed by the planned environment. These are the spaces where collective memory, political counter-narratives, and the potential for radically different forms of social life are symbolically maintained, resisting the quantification of the conceived space.

**The Capitalist Hierarchy of Space**

The functioning of Abstract Space relies on the established hierarchy: the conceived space (expert planning and legal codes) subjugates the perceived space (everyday use) and attempts to neutralize the lived space (symbolic resistance). This hierarchy is necessary because it allows capital to rationalize space strictly according to profitability, enabling systemic measurement and control.1 Regenerative governance must enact a reversal of this hierarchy—the lived and perceived experiences of inhabitants must dictate the conceived plan, moving authority from centralized expertise to localized, co-productive creation. The imposition of dominant spatial forms, resulting from the powerful seeking control, is precisely the function PBRG must dismantle.7

Table Specification: Lefebvre's Triad and the PBRG Mandate (Part 1.1)

| **Moment** | **Lefebvre's Terminology** | **Dominant Form (Abstract Space)** | **Regenerative Goal (Differential Space)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The Conceived | Representations of Space | Homogenized, Measured, Technical Plan 1 | Co-Produced, Open-Source Strategies 2 |
| The Perceived | Spatial Practice | Disciplined Routine, Regulated Flow | Appropriation, Rhythmic Diversity |
| The Lived | Representational Spaces | Neutralized, Symbolic Consumption | Counter-Space, Site of Resistance and Imagination |

### 1.2 The Dialectics of Spatial Contradiction

Lefebvre utilized the inherent conflict between Abstract and Differential Space to map the necessary trajectory of political struggle within the urban realm.

#### 1.2.1 Abstract Space

Abstract space is defined by its characteristics of homogeneity, abstraction, quantification, and the standardized system of measurement employed by capital and the state. It functions as the dominant space in contemporary society.1 Its primary function is to facilitate exchange-value (profit generation) and institutional control, serving as a "master space" designed to subordinate all local or specialized spaces to a broader, unified system of empire or global capital accumulation.1 Political struggle against Abstract Space is therefore not merely a fight against concrete physical forms, but a direct assault on its ideological foundations—the belief that space is neutral, empty, or simply a container—and its techniques, such as standardized zoning and global finance metrics.

#### 1.2.2 Differential Space

Differential space stands in opposition to the Abstract. It is characterized by heterogeneity, contradiction, and the valorization of difference—the local, the specific, and the social meanings embodied in place. Differential space emerges spontaneously as "contradictory space" or "counter-space" arising from the fissures and contradictions within abstract space itself.1 This occurs following the dissolution of old social relations and the necessary generation of new ones.1 Differential Space is inherently relational and political, offering an ethical foundation that resists the singular, universal solutions often imposed by modernist urban transformation efforts.2 For PBRG, the requirement is to move beyond waiting for spontaneous emergence and to actively *design* differential space, utilizing open-source strategies and mandated co-production.2

**Systemic vs. Spatial Struggle**

The struggle against Abstract Space must be framed as a systemic challenge to the *system of measurement* that subordinates local spaces to the "master space" of global capital.1 This means that PBRG strategies must incorporate fundamental changes in legal valuation and property rights to fracture the quantifiable, exchange-value logic that underpins Abstract Space. The inherent contradiction within Abstract Space, where it harbors the seeds of differential space 1, signifies that regenerative governance must fundamentally alter how land value is determined, shifting the metric from standardized speculative profit to localized, collective use-value.

### 1.3 The Right to the City (Complete Theory)

Lefebvre conceptualized the Right to the City (RTC) as a radical demand for collective mastery over the means of urban production, serving as a comprehensive resistance against the city's reduction to a site of mere spectacle and consumption.

#### 1.3.1 Appropriation

Appropriation is the central material principle of the RTC. It is the active, transformative process of reorienting the city away from its function as an engine of capital accumulation and toward its role as a supportive element in cooperative social relations among inhabitants.3 This necessitates the dominance of use-value (inhabitance, social needs) over exchange-value (speculation, profit). Successful appropriation is specifically defined as demonstrating that use and use-value are fundamentally capable of dominating exchange and exchange-value.3 This is the radical rejection of the consumerist role into which citizens are cast by contemporary urban spatial production.8 Appropriation requires structural, legal protection. Institutional mechanisms like Community Land Trusts (CLTs) 5 represent an institutionalized form of appropriation because they legally excise land from the market, securing permanent use-value and preventing its alienation for speculative exchange.

#### 1.3.2 Participation

Within the Lefebvrean context, participation means authentic, non-alienated involvement in shaping the built environment. It transcends token consultation and refers to the right of inhabitants to genuinely influence and inhabit their surroundings, linking back to the lived dimension of Representational Space.

#### 1.3.3 Production

The most radical component of the RTC is the collective right to physically and ideologically *produce* the urban fabric. This means moving beyond merely using existing infrastructure to actively redesigning the fundamental social relations, legal frameworks, and physical forms governing that infrastructure.2 Co-production—shared creation and responsibility—is the practical manifestation of this right, ensuring that communities are creators, not just consumers, of their environment.

### 1.4 The Urban Revolution & Planetary Urbanization

#### 1.4.1 Defining the Urban Revolution

The Urban Revolution, in Lefebvre's terms, signals the historical moment when society becomes so thoroughly urbanized that all significant social and economic relations are articulated through an urban lens. This revolution involves the paradoxical "implosion" of the traditional city center and the "explosion" of urban forms and functions across the broader landscape. This dynamic suggests a deep, systemic crisis point and, simultaneously, a radical opportunity for societal restructuring.

#### 1.4.2 Brenner’s Thesis: Planetary Urbanization

Neil Brenner and Christian Schmid's thesis of Planetary Urbanization extends this concept, positing that ‘urbanization’ is no longer geographically limited to specific dense centers. Instead, it is a pervasive, operational process spanning the entire globe, fundamentally erasing the conceptual distinction between ‘city’ and ‘countryside’.9 This profound geographical shift demands that PBRG adopt a planetary perspective. Governance cannot be confined to arbitrary municipal boundaries. Analysis must include how vast, integrated "operational landscapes" (e.g., remote resource extraction sites, peri-urban agriculture, distant infrastructure, digital data centers 11) are instrumentalized by capital and state power, and how these landscapes are also continually remade and re-appropriated through everyday practices.9 The implication is clear: the struggle for Differential Space and Spatial Justice must be waged across these diverse, integrated terrains, directly challenging the synchronized coordination of capital and the state visible in these expansive, non-traditional urban spaces.9 If urbanization is global, localized spatial resistance (Part 3.2) must be strategically coupled with larger institutional and regional reforms. A network of CLTs, regional land banks, and cross-jurisdictional governance structures are thus necessary to scale organizational capacity to match the scale of planetary capital flows.

## PART 2: DAVID HARVEY: CRISIS, ACCUMULATION, AND THE SPATIAL FIX

David Harvey provides the essential political economic framework, grounding spatial analysis in the inherent, unavoidable crisis tendencies of capitalism and its geographical manifestations.

### 2.1 The Crisis of Overaccumulation and the Spatial Fix

#### 2.1.1 Crisis Tendency and Geographical Expansion

Capitalism constantly generates surplus capital and surplus labor that often cannot be profitably reinvested or absorbed within the existing productive cycle—a state known as overaccumulation. This structural problem necessitates external or geographical solutions.4 The **Spatial Fix** is the mechanism by which capital temporarily resolves this crisis: accumulated surplus is invested into the built environment, creating fixed capital (infrastructure, real estate, urban renewal).4 This locks the capital into a specific physical form for an extended period, displacing the crisis geographically and temporally. The fixed nature of this capital investment links business cycles directly to cycles of fixed capital investment, making real estate crashes a common trigger for broader economic crises, such as the one observed in 1973 and 2008.4

#### 2.1.2 Uneven Development

The deployment of the spatial fix ensures that development is inherently and necessarily uneven. Capital flows into and out of regions in a continuous process of creative destruction, generating boom/bust cycles. These cycles produce geographical differences (e.g., the 'rent gap' resulting from planned disinvestment followed by subsequent speculative reinvestment), which are prerequisites for the continued viability of the spatial fix.

#### 2.1.3 Current Manifestations: Digital and Urban Fixes

The limitations and eventual failure of previous spatial fixes, such as the postwar suburban model, necessitate new forms of geographical absorption. Contemporary fixes focus intensely on dense urban infrastructure, digital technologies, and flexible working environments.11 This includes the **Digital Spatial Fix**, where capital surplus is directed into digital spaces—such as high-frequency trading infrastructure, social media, and virtual worlds—to increase profit rates and absorb surplus value.11 A critical warning associated with the spatial fix is its addictive nature: while it temporarily alleviates a past crisis, it inevitably lays the groundwork for future crises and reinforces the systemic compulsion to repeat geographical expansion.11 PBRG, therefore, must be understood as crisis resistance. Since urbanization is a major channel for absorbing surplus capital 12, regenerative governance must strategically close off this channel. By prioritizing use-value and non-speculative land tenure 5, PBRG actively blocks the formation of fixed capital investments intended solely to soak up financial surplus, thereby undermining the primary engine of the spatial fix.

### 2.2 Accumulation by Dispossession (ABD)

Accumulation by Dispossession (ABD) describes the suite of neoliberal practices used since the 1970s to centralize wealth and power by stripping assets from public and private entities.

#### 2.2.1 Mechanisms of Centralization

Harvey identifies four core practices driving ABD: **privatization** (turning public goods into private assets); **financialization** (treating housing, land, and infrastructure as complex financial assets); the strategic **management and manipulation of crises** (turning economic downturns into opportunities for asset capture); and direct **state redistributions** (subsidies, tax breaks, and policy favoring capital over labor).13 The state plays a crucial, essential role in ABD, acting as the agent for enforcing privatization, facilitating financialization, and redistributing wealth upwards.13

#### 2.2.2 Gentrification as Localized ABD

Gentrification is the localized spatial manifestation of ABD. It uses financial speculation—capitalizing on the 'rent gap'—to displace existing use-value populations (long-term residents, local businesses) in favor of higher exchange-value uses. This process is often actively abetted by the state through rezoning, publicly funded infrastructure projects, and selective enforcement (e.g., Green Gentrification 6). The financialization of land is the critical weapon linking Abstract Space and ABD. Abstract space permits land to be quantified and treated as a homogenous, tradeable financial commodity, facilitating speculative bubbles and massive rent extraction.

#### 2.2.3 Counter-Strategies Against Dispossession

Effective counter-strategies must directly target the four practices of ABD. This involves resisting privatization through the assertion of commoning and public ownership; de-financializing land and housing through mechanisms that limit profit extraction (e.g., fixed-equity models); and demanding democratic accountability for state policy. Community Land Trusts 5, for instance, are explicitly designed to counteract the financialization mechanism by stabilizing markets and preserving community-level affordability permanently.13

### 2.3 The Right to the City (Harvey's Development)

Harvey transforms Lefebvre’s philosophical ideal into a material demand inextricably linked to class struggle and political economy, providing an actionable political objective.

#### 2.3.1 Changing Ourselves by Changing the City

For Harvey, the RTC is fundamentally the right to **radically change ourselves by changing the city**. This revolutionary project requires a process of simultaneous social and spatial transformation, moving beyond mere access to demanding control over the creation of the urban environment.

#### 2.3.2 Democratic Control over Urban Surplus

The core, political demand of the RTC, as developed by Harvey, is the insistence on **greater democratic control over the production and use of the surplus**.12 The urban process acts as the primary channel through which accumulated surplus capital is deployed (the Spatial Fix). Establishing democratic control over this deployment through urbanization is thus central to the RTC.12 The neoliberal project is explicitly oriented toward privatizing control over this surplus.12 Therefore, the fight for the RTC serves as both a political ideal and a working slogan capable of unifying disparate struggles around the fundamental question of who commands the necessary connection between urbanization and surplus production and use.14 This quantitative shift in control provides the measurable goal for PBRG: designing governance mechanisms that effectively capture, tax, and democratically direct surplus value (such as land value increases resulting from public investment) away from private speculation and toward collective use.15 This synthesis of Lefebvre’s qualitative appropriation (securing use-value) and Harvey’s quantitative surplus control (funding use-value maintenance) is critical for regenerative success.

## PART 3: SPATIAL JUSTICE AND RESISTANCE MECHANISMS

The theoretical framework must integrate mechanisms for achieving spatial justice and translating momentary resistance into permanent structural change.

### 3.1 Edward Soja’s Spatial Justice

Edward Soja argues for the centrality of geography in critical social theory, asserting that justice itself possesses a fundamentally spatial dimension.

#### 3.1.1 Space as a Causal Dimension of Justice

Soja reframes the understanding of space, moving it beyond a passive container or stage to recognize it as an **active force shaping human life**.16 Consequently, both justice and injustice are directly produced by and within spatial arrangements, manifesting in forms such as residential segregation, unequal access to vital resources, and vulnerability to environmental hazard.

#### 3.1.2 Distributive and Procedural Justice

Spatial justice is understood through two dimensions 16:

1. **Distributive Justice:** Focuses on the fair allocation of, and access to, public goods, resources, and services throughout the city (the *what* and *where* of goods).16
2. **Procedural Justice:** Focuses critically on *how* resources and public goods are negotiated, planned, designed, and managed.16 PBRG must prioritize procedural justice, as it directly confronts the non-democratic nature of the dominant **Representations of Space** (the planning process controlled by elites).7

#### 3.1.3 Measuring Unjust Geographies

To be effective, the struggle for spatial justice requires empirical rigor. This involves moving beyond simple demographic mapping to create metrics that accurately measure indicators of spatial exclusion, vulnerability to displacement, and differential access to life-sustaining infrastructure, thus enabling targeted, evidence-based intervention.

**Procedural Justice as Counter-Strategy**

The failure of many conventional progressive planning efforts stems from a failure of procedure—consulting without granting real power, allowing expert representations to dominate.2 By emphasizing procedural justice, PBRG validates the essential need for tools such as community veto power and co-production mandates (Part 6), which institutionalize the collective right to negotiate and manage the urban fabric, thereby fulfilling Lefebvre's collective Right to Production. PBRG must legally mandate power-sharing in planning and ensure that community members are compensated for their time and input, making engagement an ethical requirement of the planning process.6

### 3.2 Michel de Certeau: Tactics vs. Strategies

Michel de Certeau provides the conceptual tools necessary to analyze and categorize the relationship between institutional power and everyday resistance.

#### 3.2.1 Strategies: Institutional Power and the Proper Place

Strategies are the actions of the powerful who possess a 'proper place'—a foundational base of operations (e.g., a physical headquarters, institutional boundaries, legal statutes, or zoning maps) from which they can calculate, manage, and accumulate gains. Strategy relies on mastery of space and time. Examples include city planning commissions determining street layouts 17 or corporations owning physical property and utilizing complex financial instruments.13

#### 3.2.2 Tactics: Everyday Practices and the "Wig"

Tactics are the domain of the non-powerful. They operate *in the space of the other*—the environment created by strategy—relying on the "offerings of the moment".17 Tactics are characterized by the "art of making-do" (*bricolage*), which involves using existing systems in clever, unintended, or cooperative ways.17 A classic example is *La Peruk* (the wig), where an employee diverts company time to personal tasks under the guise of work—they do not steal product but successfully appropriate time for personal use.18

#### 3.2.3 The Limits of the Tactic

A crucial limitation of tactics is that they cannot achieve long-term victory because they have no place to accumulate their winnings.18 They are fleeting and situational. If a tactical victory were institutionalized and secured, it would cease to be a tactic and become a strategy itself.18 Regenerative governance must be understood as the strategic (accumulative) capture of successful, momentary tactical acts (Lefebvrean appropriation).3 The spontaneous moment of subversive use (tactic) must be swiftly protected by an institutional structure (strategy) to prevent its erasure.18

### 3.3 Tactical Urbanism and Temporary Autonomous Zones (TAZs)

#### 3.3.1 Strengths and Limits

Tactical urbanism (e.g., pop-up parks, temporary markets) and Temporary Autonomous Zones (TAZs) are potent, immediate acts of spatial appropriation that challenge the homogeneity and official Representations of Space.17 They serve to prove potential use-value. However, their fundamental limits lie in their temporary nature; without a structural anchor, the accumulated social capital and use-value gains are easily reversed or co-opted. The resistance risks being aestheticized and absorbed as transient novelty by capital.

#### 3.3.2 Integration: From TAZ to CLT

The role of tactical action in PBRG is to function as the *ignition* for strategic production. If a TAZ successfully demonstrates a community need (e.g., for shared green space), the CLT or a permanent commons governance model must be immediately deployed to institutionalize that TAZ's use-value (Lefebvre's Right to Production).5

### 3.4 The Spatial Commons and Enclosure

#### 3.4.1 The Second Enclosure Movement

The contemporary process of turning shared social, natural, and urban resources into private, financialized commodities is referred to as the second enclosure movement. It is driven directly by Accumulation by Dispossession (via privatization 13). This process now extends beyond tangible resources like land and water to include digital commons (data) and vast operational landscapes integral to urbanization (e.g., energy grids).9

#### 3.4.2 Governance Principles for the Commons

To overcome the limits of the tactic 18, PBRG requires spatial institutions that strategically accumulate social capital and use-value outside of market dynamics. The Spatial Commons provides this ground, but requires specific governance principles: shared access (anti-exclusionary), collective maintenance (stewardship), and institutionalized anti-speculation covenants (non-transferability of land rights). PBRG must shift focus from simply managing public assets to actively **governing spatial commons**, requiring new legal definitions of collective ownership that restrict both state and private corporate control.

## PART 4: SYNTHESIS - SPATIAL PRODUCTION FOR REGENERATIVE GOVERNANCE

PBRG provides an integrated theoretical framework, intervening simultaneously at the ideological, economic, and institutional levels.

### 4.1 The Integrated Framework: Production + Accumulation + Justice

The theoretical core of PBRG maps the causal chain of spatial injustice and identifies three linked intervention points.

**The Chain of Hegemony:** **Abstract Space** (Lefebvre's ideological system of measurement and control, conceived by elites 1) facilitates **Accumulation by Dispossession** (Harvey's economic engine of privatization and financialization 13), which manifests as **Unjust Geographies** (Soja's outcome of unequal distribution and non-democratic procedure 16).

**The Tripartite Intervention:**

1. **Production (Lefebvre):** Attack the ideological foundation of Abstract Space (Representations of Space) by mandating co-production.2
2. **Accumulation (Harvey):** Attack the accumulation process by insulating land from the market via permanent anti-speculative mechanisms.5
3. **Justice (Soja):** Attack the outcome and procedure by ensuring democratic control over resources and mandating equity.14

The failure of urban reform often lies in addressing only one point (e.g., only distribution via housing subsidies, ignoring the engine of accumulation). PBRG demands simultaneous intervention across all three vectors. Proactive anti-gentrification planning 6 exemplifies this synthesis: it uses structural tools (land banks, responding to ABD) based on a principle (securing use-value/appropriation) to ensure procedural justice (protecting existing residents).5 Failure to link the ideological analysis (Lefebvre) with the economic imperative (Harvey) results in progressive design that is easily co-opted.

Table Specification: Regenerative Governance Framework Synthesis (Part 4.1)

| **Core Theory** | **Primary Problem** | **Regenerative Goal** | **Policy Mechanism Example** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Production (Lefebvre) | Dominance of Representations of Space 7 | Replace Abstract with Differential Space | Co-production mandates, adaptive zoning, Open-source design 2 |
| Accumulation (Harvey) | Accumulation by Dispossession (ABD) 13 | Democratize control over urban surplus 12 | Value capture, Regional Land Banks, CLTs 5 |
| Justice (Soja) | Unjust Geographies/Procedural Failure 16 | Achieve Procedural and Distributive Equity | Stewardship Veto, Anti-displacement guarantees 6 |

### 4.2 Design Principles for Differential Space

Designing Differential Space requires explicit resistance to the standardization and quantification inherent in Abstract Space.1

#### 4.2.1 Priority of Use-Value over Exchange-Value in Land Use

All regenerative design and planning decisions must be rigorously evaluated against the criterion of use-value dominance. If a design choice, such as the specification of luxury amenities or exclusive retail, significantly elevates speculative exchange-value, thereby increasing displacement pressure, it must be rejected in favor of robust, adaptive use-value infrastructure.3 This is the necessary material manifestation of the Right to Appropriation.

#### 4.2.2 Mandating Co-Production over Token Participation

Regenerative design mandates shared creation. This requires a "designer's simultaneous withdrawal from rational problem solving and deterministic solutions" and an engagement with open-source strategies where users are co-producers of the urban space.2 Co-production moves beyond simple collection of community input; it requires shared authority, shared funding, and shared risk.

#### 4.2.3 Resistance to Homogenization and the Valorization of Local Difference

Differential Space thrives on contradiction and heterogeneity. Design must integrate and celebrate diverse, sometimes contradictory, social uses, consciously acknowledging the messy, symbolic, and often unplanned elements of Representational Space.1 This is the explicit, physical rejection of the "master space" ideal that seeks to impose a singular, unified spatial order.1

#### Design Pattern Box: Principles of Porous Boundaries and Adaptive Programming

Porous Boundaries: Architectural and landscape design must employ flexible, non-exclusive edges (e.g., shared courtyards, ground-floor uses that fluidly transition into the public realm) to resist enclosure and encourage fluid spatial practice (tactics).17

Adaptive Programming: Space must be designed for potentiality, allowing for multiple, contradictory uses over time.2 Fixed, single-purpose design is a primary indicator of Abstract Space imposition.

### 4.3 Anti-Gentrification Architecture and Structural Solutions

PBRG approaches anti-gentrification as a fundamental structural design mandate, not merely a mitigation effort applied after market mechanisms have taken hold.

#### 4.3.1 Community Land Trusts (CLTs) as a Non-Recuperable Fix

CLTs are the most structurally effective anti-speculation tool available, as they permanently remove the cost of land from the market. They function as critical anchors that stabilize housing affordability indefinitely in both gentrifying and historically disinvested markets.5 By legally decoupling the value of the building (which can be sold for limited equity) from the value of the land (which is held in trust), CLTs disrupt the speculative engine of accumulation and ensure land tenure permanence.

#### 4.3.2 Anti-Displacement Guarantees (ADGs) and Right-to-Return Policies

ADGs are crucial procedural mechanisms requiring mandatory implementation *before* any infrastructure or design work commences.6 These may include guaranteed right-to-lease policies for displaced small businesses or subsidized mortgages/rents for original, low-income residents. The success of the 11th Street Bridge Park model confirms the absolute necessity of setting up robust property and tenant protections ahead of time, often via home buyer’s clubs and dedicated local support.6

#### 4.3.3 Veto Power and Land Use Decision-Making

While local control is critical for procedural justice 16, unstructured veto power often risks empowering privileged local residents (NIMBYism) to block necessary housing density and inclusionary development, thereby reinforcing existing unjust geographies.19 PBRG must implement a specific model of **Stewardship Veto**—a mechanism that grants veto power *only* to marginalized, dispossessed, and historically vulnerable populations against projects that demonstrably threaten their displacement or increase vulnerability, while restricting its use by privileged residents to block pro-density and inclusionary zoning.

### 4.4 Integrating Spatial Theory with Constitutional Principles

PBRG requires embedding its spatial mandates into constitutional and municipal legal frameworks to ensure permanence.

#### 4.4.1 Reframing Property Rights: The Social Function of Land

The framework requires a legal shift away from absolute private property ownership (derived from Lockean liberal principles) toward a system that legally prioritizes the social and ecological function of land.3 This means rewriting planning and property law to explicitly recognize the collective right to produce space and demanding higher social obligations from landholders.

#### 4.4.2 The Spatial Bill of Rights

A comprehensive PBRG must codify the Right to Appropriation 3 and the Right to Production (co-creation), linking them directly to non-discrimination based on residential status. This provides legal protection for the collective democratic control over the urban surplus, making it structurally difficult for the state or private capital to easily roll back social and spatial gains.12

## PART 5: FAILURE MODES AND COUNTER-EXAMPLES

Regenerative governance must be designed with an exhaustive understanding of how capital and state power actively attempt to co-opt, neutralize, or reverse genuine spatial reform efforts.

### 5.1 When Spatial Resistance Fails

#### 5.1.1 Co-optation and Absorption of the Tactic

Momentary successes of spatial resistance, such as temporary street markets or vibrant urban art installations, are frequently co-opted. They are transformed into aesthetic commodities or marketing tools for the neighborhood, leading to the "branding" of rebellion. This often precedes or accompanies gentrification, where the resistance itself becomes the selling point, paving the way for capitalist accumulation.

#### 5.1.2 The Enclosure of the Commons

If tactical wins are not rapidly institutionalized (Part 3.2), they suffer legislative or financial erosion, returning collective resources to private or highly regulated state control. The failure to codify the spatial commons allows for the continued enclosure movement fueled by privatization.13

#### 5.1.3 Token Consultation vs. Shared Power

The procedural failure of relying on mere consultation, without granting structural veto power or control over the urban surplus, results only in the illusion of participation. This failure to implement procedural justice 16 ensures that the resulting plans inevitably reflect elite Representations of Space 7, allowing development to proceed according to the logic of capital.

### 5.2 When "Progressive" Spatial Design Fails

#### 5.2.1 Green Gentrification: The High Line Syndrome

Green gentrification is a potent example of progressive design failure. The creation of high-quality public green spaces, intended as public goods, dramatically increases surrounding property values, triggering displacement. The co-founder of the High Line, Robert Hammond, noted that the project contributed to "cultural displacement and middle class displacement," admitting the park was built for "taxpayers and homeowners," failing to consider the nearby low-income housing residents.6 A major mistake was the failure to anticipate the impact on local shops, which were driven out by subsequent rent increases.6

**Lessons Learned (Anticipatory Action):** The critical realization from the High Line and subsequent projects like the Atlanta Beltline is that park-making must be viewed as comprehensive community development, and protective strategies must be **proactive and anticipatory**.6 This means setting aside parcels for affordable housing, creating land banks, and protecting existing tenants *before* design commences, ensuring resources are targeted to the most vulnerable populations.6

#### Case Study Box: The Contrast of Displacement

High Line (Failure Mode): Reactive planning focused on aesthetic fixed capital; displaced local shops and culture due to increased rents, leading to community perception of exclusion.6

Atlanta Beltline & 11th Street Bridge Park (Proactive Model): Focused on comprehensive community development (jobs, housing, arts).6 Proactively secured property protections and engaged in deep, compensated community conversations (80+ meetings/year for the Beltline) prior to construction. The 11th Street Bridge Park established home buyer’s clubs and property protections before construction began.6

#### 5.2.2 Captured Planning

Planning processes, even those ostensibly designed for the public good, can become structurally captured by the interests that benefit from speculative real estate and financialization. When this occurs, the dominant Representations of Space continue to serve capital accumulation, regardless of the stated progressive goals.7

#### 5.2.3 Mixed-Income Housing as a Trojan Horse

Projects that prioritize a mix of market-rate units often drive up surrounding land values, inadvertently facilitating the displacement of lower-income residents, even while a small percentage of affordable units are provided on-site. The net spatial effect is often displacement and the imposition of Abstract Space homogeneity, demonstrating a failure of structural protection.

### 5.3 The Co-optation Problem

The most insidious failure mode is the neutralizing absorption of spatial justice language—terms like "equitable development" or "community engagement"—into corporate branding and municipal rhetoric without corresponding structural changes. This absorption neutralizes political demands while leaving the core economic logic of Accumulation by Dispossession intact.13

The only effective defense against co-optation is **institutional hardening**—the creation of non-recuperable legal instruments (like CLTs 5 or legally mandated democratic control over surplus 12) that are resilient to changes in political cycles and corporate interest. The spontaneous moment of urban change (Lefebvre/Harvey) 15 must be immediately codified into permanent, anti-speculative legal structures, or the temporary gains will be absorbed and repurposed by the capitalist spatial fix.4

## PART 6: IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT FOR REGENERATIVE GOVERNANCE

The implementation toolkit translates the theoretical synthesis into concrete, actionable methods for spatial analysis, design, and institutional governance.

### 6.1 Spatial Analysis Methods

PBRG requires analytical methods that move beyond traditional mapping to reveal underlying economic power structures and financial flows.

#### 6.1.1 Mapping Power and Financial Flows (The Accumulation Map)

The methodology involves tracing land ownership, debt holdings, mortgage securitization, and flows of fixed capital investment 4 back to the primary financial institutions and large corporate landlords. This reveals the infrastructure of Accumulation by Dispossession 13 and identifies the specific economic targets for policy intervention, such as divestment campaigns or targeted land value taxation.

#### 6.1.2 Reading the Palimpsest: Decoding Historical and Layered Inequalities

Effective analysis requires understanding that current spatial injustice 16 is a product of layered history. This involves analyzing historical decisions regarding segregation, redlining, and infrastructure investment choices that structurally prefigure current vulnerabilities. The built environment must be read as a physical record of past power relations.7

#### 6.1.3 Spotting the Rent Gap and Anticipating Accumulation

This technique identifies areas characterized by low capitalized ground rent (low property values) but high potential ground rent (high future market value due to proximity to amenities or infrastructure). This analysis allows for the crucial **anticipatory, proactive approach** 6, enabling governance bodies to target vulnerable parcels for public acquisition, land banking, and protection *before* the speculative wave of ABD begins.

### 6.2 Design Patterns Library (PBRG Patterns)

These patterns formalize the design of Differential Space, embedding anti-speculation mechanisms directly into the urban form and legal structure.

#### 6.2.1 Pattern 1: Community Land Trusts (CLT) and Stewardship Networks

CLTs provide perpetual separation of land ownership from structural improvements, permanently stabilizing affordability.5 This structure provides the structural foundation for use-value dominance 3 and serves as an accumulation device (strategy) for community wealth, overcoming the non-accumulative limits of tactical action.18

#### 6.2.2 Pattern 2: Porous Boundaries and Mixed-Use Appropriation Zones

This pattern mandates zoning and architectural rules that require ground floors to be highly adaptable, accessible to multiple user groups, and free from exclusive commercial covenants. This explicitly supports differential space and tactical appropriation, resisting enclosure and the homogenization of Abstract Space.1

#### 6.2.3 Pattern 3: Commons Anchors (Community Hubs with Anti-Speculation Covenants)

Physical hubs (e.g., affordable markets, community kitchens, shared childcare centers) must be designated as perpetually common property, governed by specific non-market covenants. This creates non-market social infrastructure necessary for comprehensive community development 6 and institutionalizes the collective Right to Production.

#### 6.2.4 Pattern 4: Incremental Density and Participatory Upzoning

This mechanism rejects large-scale, top-down rezoning in favor of highly localized, incremental increases in density managed by neighborhood-level trusts. Crucially, the increase in land value resulting from this upzoning must be captured locally for dedicated use in permanent affordability funds. This design balances the need for housing provision (distributive justice 16) against the risk of privileged exclusion (NIMBYism) 19, while directly linking the Right to Production to immediate local benefit.

#### 6.2.5 Pattern 5: Productive Landscapes

The integration of functional ecological and economic production (e.g., urban agriculture, decentralized renewable energy generation, distributed water capture) into the public realm and infrastructure network. This ensures that infrastructure serves use-value and community resilience, rather than acting merely as non-productive fixed capital for surplus absorption (Spatial Fix).4

Design Patterns Library and Theoretical Links

| **Design Pattern** | **Function in Regenerative Governance** | **Structural Anti-Gentrification Role** | **Core Theoretical Link** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Community Land Trusts (CLT) 5 | Permanent affordability and wealth stabilization | Decouples land cost, neutralizes Accumulation by Dispossession 13 | Appropriation (Use-Value), Strategy (Accumulation) |
| Porous Boundaries | Fosters hybridity and shared use | Resists enclosure and capital homogenization | Differential Space, Tactics/Bricolage 17 |
| Commons Anchors | Institutionalizes collective maintenance/social production | Creates non-market dependent social infrastructure | Right to Production, Spatial Commons |
| Incremental Density | Locally managed growth and affordability capture | Stabilizes existing neighborhood fabric, prevents displacement pressure | Procedural Justice, Resistance to Representations of Space 7 |
| Productive Landscapes | Integrates food/energy into spatial practice | Ensures use-value resilience; resists becoming the next Spatial Fix 11 | Spatial Practice, Planetary Urbanism (Operational Landscapes) 9 |

### 6.3 Governance Mechanisms and Protocols

PBRG requires new political and legal infrastructure to institutionalize democratic control and procedural justice.

#### 6.3.1 Decision-Making Protocols for Co-Production

Protocols must be established that legally mandate shared authority between professional planners/developers and designated community entities (e.g., Community Land Boards). This structurally replaces the flawed consultation-only model, ensuring that design prioritizes the potentiality inherent in Representational Spaces 2 and genuinely enacts procedural justice.16

#### 6.3.2 The Stewardship Veto/Right to Refuse

This mechanism grants affected, non-dominant communities (e.g., low-income residents, tenants) the legally protected power to halt projects deemed harmful or displacing. This provides critical protection against the failures of captured planning and green gentrification.6 The structure of this veto must be carefully defined, ensuring it is used strictly as a tool for *protection* against ABD and spatial injustice, rather than a tool for *exclusion* of necessary density and social inclusion by privileged groups.19

#### 6.3.3 Value Capture Protocols

Value capture refers to municipal instruments (such as Land Value Taxes or special assessment districts) designed to capture the increase in land value generated by public investment (e.g., new infrastructure, transit lines). This mechanism directly implements Harvey’s mandate for democratic control over the urban surplus.12 The captured surplus must be explicitly directed toward funding permanent affordability (CLTs) and anti-displacement services, creating a closed, regenerative financial loop that recirculates wealth locally.

The legal codification of the Right to Return must be tied to these value capture protocols, guaranteeing former residents displaced by historical or current urban renewal (e.g., due to eminent domain) the subsidized right to return to permanently affordable housing units funded by the captured value.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The transition to Place-Based Regenerative Governance demands a holistic and structural approach that recognizes the deep connection between economic crisis (Accumulation by Dispossession), ideological control (Abstract Space), and resultant social inequity (Unjust Geographies).

The primary conclusion is that genuine spatial regeneration cannot be achieved through aesthetic upgrades or market-rate inclusionary zoning. It requires a permanent, legal excision of land and housing from the speculative market. The core struggle is the establishment of the dominance of use-value 3 over exchange-value, realized through institutional structures.

**Actionable Recommendations for Regenerative Governance:**

1. **Prioritize Proactive Structural Interventions:** Implement Anti-Displacement Guarantees (ADGs) and land banking programs *before* any public infrastructure investment is announced or commenced. This shifts planning from mitigation to genuine protection.6
2. **Institutionalize Appropriation:** Mandate the use of Community Land Trusts (CLTs) and permanent affordability covenants for all publicly subsidized housing and land transfers to provide non-recuperable security against financialization.5
3. **Codify Procedural Justice:** Legally embed the Stewardship Veto and co-production requirements, granting marginalized communities the power to negotiate and manage the design process. Compensate community members for their time and expertise, formalizing their role as co-producers of Differential Space.2
4. **Reclaim the Urban Surplus:** Establish robust Value Capture Protocols (LVT, special assessment districts) that democratically redirect the surplus generated by urbanization away from private speculation and into localized, non-market land trusts and community funds.12
5. **Scale Resistance Strategically:** Recognize that localized tactical victories must be immediately codified into strategic, accumulative structures (CLTs, Commons Anchors) to withstand the inevitable forces of capital co-optation.18 Governance must scale its cooperation to match the planetary scope of capital flows.10

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