

Who Makes a Makerspace?
Makerspace Governance in Toronto, Ontario, and London, Ontario
By

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Montreal, Canada, 2016

As semi-public workshops where communities can use a variety of tools have emerged under different names, including Makerspaces, Hackerspaces, Hacklabs and FabLabs, academic research has studied the meaning and impacts of their practices. This thesis moves beyond this existing research by investigating the governance networks of eight Makerspaces in Toronto, Ontario, and London, Ontario through observation of the spaces and semi-structured interviews with space organizers. The study found that the investigated Makerspaces' governance networks were comprised of a wide variety of actors, ranging from non-human actors (noise, space, fumes, and tools) to formal governing institutions. The study also found that the municipal governments involved in the governance system were involved in a steering and guiding capacity to influence Makerspaces to move toward economic development priorities, and did not exercise their regulatory power in any observed cases. These findings highlight that research on Makerspaces should consider moving beyond investigating practices and toward how spaces are governed in unique contexts, as the practices of Makerspaces are dependent on their governance networks.

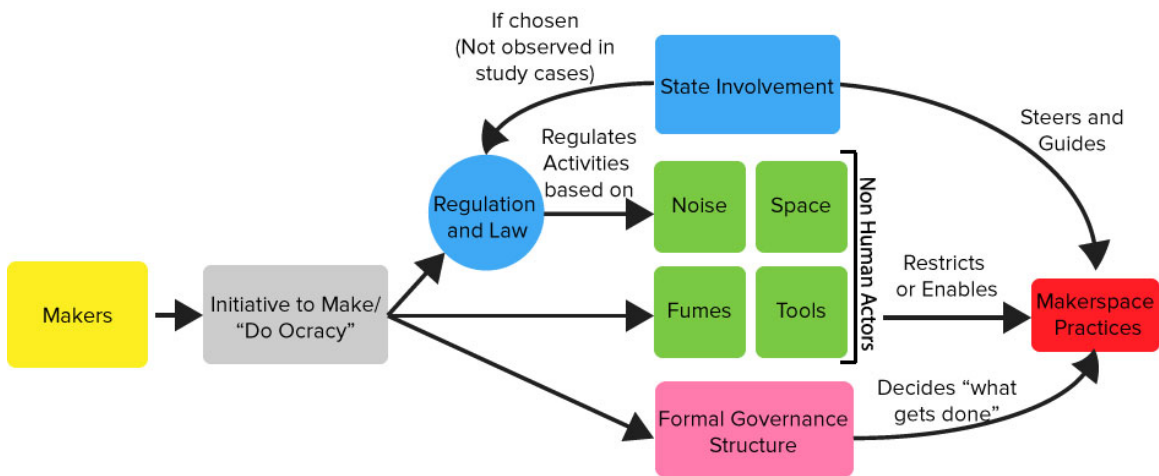


Figure 1: System Model for Makerspace Governance