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Special Session S.15 | **Rethinking public space and planning strategies in
urban and post-suburban areas for regenerating livable environments**

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**Local-Based Strategies as planning tools for making places and liveable
environments in peri-urban territories**
(Extended abstract)

Introduction

Sociodemographic statistics show that most of the population lives in the surrounding commuting zones of the cities, what strongly justifies an urbanistic territorial focus on the suburban/peri-urban areas. New urban practices and theories position these post-suburban [1] areas as self-standing territories, vital to the sustainable urban ecosystem and no longer solely dependent on the central city. By rethinking peri-urban regions not as peripheral extensions but as integral components of a sustainable urban fabric, it is needed to redefine the way urban and suburban integrated planning should be approached.

During the last decades a new social and cultural dynamic has been developing in the suburban areas, characterized by a population that lives and works outside these areas, alongside with a population that lives and works in the peri-urban areas to which is added a retired population (+60 Generation) both living and staying all day long in these areas. In fact, this "permanent resident" population shows a tendency to increase, configuring the formation of a new socioeconomic and cultural logic that requires stronger governance structures and better institutional planning, which improve the capacity to stimulate economic activities and sustainable land-use.

If we intended planning is primordially aimed at solving questioning problems and inducing structural changes, planning processes must make a contribution not only to substantiating these changes but also to mobilising the social forces necessary to fulfil the proposed policies (Albrechts, 1991) [2].

The circumstances described above accentuate the need to continue betting on the trend of recent decades of the polycentric city, which enables access to all public and private services and facilities in an easily accessible area, preferably on foot or by public transport, from the places of residence, also promoting local commerce.

To the historian of science Thomas S. Kuhn, "under normal conditions the research scientist is not an innovator but a solver of puzzles, and the puzzles upon which he concentrates are just those which he believes can be both stated and solved" (*Apud* Gleick, 1998, p. 37) [3].

The puzzles we have to stated and solved is the urban fabric, mostly made of public space, it was built not under urban concepts of the pre-industrial or eighteenth-century but as a

disruptive interpretation of the CIAM functional city, which image is frequently made of complex and entropic spaces, even chaotic areas.

In face to these new spatial patterns of the cities of today and tomorrow that differentiate them from the cities of yesterday our planning methodology is close to the concept of the Unitary Urbanism [4], formed from the experience of this terrain and also from existing constructions.

Therefore, urban regeneration of neighbourhoods as a whole, especially public spaces, is essential to facilitate soft mobility and the quality of environments, in order to encourage encounters and human relationships within the neighbourhood. This improves citizens' well-being, not only through the special qualification of local public spaces and intermediate spaces of contact between housing and the street, but also by mitigating the effects of air pollution and noise pollution.

Nor should we forget the importance of mixed uses in urban planning, which for decades has been based on segregation, creating predominantly residential areas as opposed to others with a predominant or exclusive tertiary use, such as offices, shopping centres or industrial use. Committing to the proper integration of compatible uses is a contributing factor in achieving a quality urban space with environmental, social and economic sustainability criteria.

Place- Based approach with Subject Analysis

According to the New Leipzig Charter [5], the place-based approach as to be seen as an overarching principle for all places and policy sectors. To respond to all these challenges and to explore them as new opportunities to reconceptualize urban public space design based on governance strategies and co-creative processes.

Many analyses are made on the factors that implicitly assume that changing the factors that generate the city the regeneration will be achieved. Nevertheless, if the factors or attributes complement each other the analysis should focus the entities of subject that consubstantiate the place – based approach.

Taking into account this reality we propose to present in this paper a project methodology structured in to Local-Based Strategies (LBS) which will enable to deliver the project's objectives by fostering participatory processes in community co-creation processes involving local stakeholders (e.g. citizens, artists and science researchers, municipalities, public and private companies, ONG, universities).

LBS 1 - Most of peri-urban areas result in an un-controlled and uneven **unplanned expansion often triggering a poor built public space**, frequently identified as “no places” or “empty spaces” characterized by their lack of quality and culture significance. There is a need to create sense of belonging, citizenship, public participation and collective responsibility in suburban areas. This requires new urban rehabilitation strategies that provide comfort, safety, habitability and quality to their built environment. To achieve these aims we defend the rethinking of management systems by designing and testing different design scenarios (balancing parking, pedestrian sites, shared mobility option) for a balanced and safe urban space for all citizens, ensuring efficient and sustainable use of urban space by implementing dynamic curb side management systems.

LBS 2 – We can **improve urban connectivity and accessibility** by embedding multimodality transport systems and shared mobility services to reduce dependence of private owned vehicles, promote sustainable mobility, and support achieving climate neutral cities. This implies the introduction of alternative transport modes that contribute to the decarbonisation and the change of the mobility paradigm based on the use of private car. The Cost Benefit Analysis of smart solutions to address poverty accessibility in sub-urban areas will secure their sustainability, competitiveness and demonstrative effectiveness. To do so we propose the integration of drones which will mean a very important change in urban planning and in the

design of cities. The drone is an important element for transporting people and goods and will dominate our lives in the future. The urban implications are important and it will affect urban planning. Spaces must be provided where drones land and take off and are parked require rethinking urban design.

LBS 3 – The bridge between the worlds of art and science are even higher in peri-urban areas as public spaces were not designed to accommodate citizens needs but rather the result of an uneven and unplanned growth. The project methodology involves **transforming underutilized urban spaces** into vibrant green spaces through the integration of nature-based solutions (NBSs) and promoting creativity and art in urban spaces by beautiful and adaptive designs that reshape social liveability, increase urban activities and ‘urban art’, repurpose underused areas, and create a renewed sense of belonging and community.

LBS 4 - The methodology includes practices that ensure inclusivity among all citizens, especially when considering vulnerable groups in a **Co-creation framework for inclusive urban planning**, that will develop a groundbreaking methodology ensuring equity, inclusivity, and representation in urban planning by revising existing co-creation state-of-the-art, adapting them to develop a participatory framework that actively includes vulnerable groups. It will take advantage of EU peri-urban areas and their specific context to develop strategies based on field activities and understand how to actively include them in the co-creation processes (e.g. elderly, minorities).

Discussion

Urban centres and their peripheral areas correspond to distinct urban phenomena, whose re-design of the urban space needs to be studied in an integrated way but taking into account their own morphological and social identities. By embracing these dynamic processes, there is a need to explore new urban paradigm, moving beyond rigid traditional planning models. Urban self-organization was one of the evolutionary principles of the pre-industrial city. Its social function was interrupted when modern society introduced a new institutionalized model of urban planning. The community-based self-organizing governance model, often referred to as Self Organizing Collective (SOC), teaches us about the contribution of civil society to public policy reform.

Expected results

The proposed research aims to achieve the following results:

- Development and implementation of solutions for a smart urban public space design to support urban public space regeneration and reallocation as well as more liveable and resilient urban environments.
- A more efficient and fair use of urban space through the dynamic management of space in general and of the curb side in particular, according to varying needs and functions.
- Reduce the pressure on public space thanks to reduced parking needs and integration of off-street space use in the overall public space concept.
- Improve the liveability of peri-urban territories, recognizing their increasing importance as dynamic social, economic, and territorial realities of medium and major European cities.

Conclusion notes

To achieve the goal of making places and liveable environments in peri-urban territories the research proposes seeks re-design the urban public space with LBS originated by the principle of proximity, applying new emerging methodologies about entropic urbanistic patterns to integrate the suburban/peripheral areas in a general sustainable urban fabric.

By embracing these dynamic processes, the project seeks to establish a resilient and adaptable urban paradigm moving beyond rigid traditional planning models to achieve a more efficient and fair use of urban space through an methodological approach linked to specific local objectives.

References:

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