

# Book of Contributions

A joint event of EU Human Cities partnership and AESOP Thematic Group Public Spaces and Urban Cultures

**Ljubljana, May 24th - 26th 2017**

Hosted by Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (UIRS) and University of Ljubljana, Faculty of architecture (UL-FA)

## ***PUBLIC SPACES FOR LOCAL LIFE***

***Shared values in diversified urban communities as a foundation for participatory provision of local public spaces***

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**Ljubljana, July 2017**



## FROM THE CALL OF ABSTRACTS

### Background

European partnership *Human Cities* (2008-2010, 2010-2012, 2014-2018) is addressing the issues of participatory approaches to contemporary urban design. A particular focus is on bottom-up initiatives that self-organise in order to improve public spaces in their living environments. Important pillars of the project are research, experimental and educational activities related to public spaces. The main goal is two-fold: to help citizens develop the affinity to common urban spaces and strengthen their approaches to participatory re-design of these spaces, as well as to advance the theoretical foundations in the field of participatory provision of urban public spaces. It also stresses the importance of shared values of community members in relation to public urban spaces, among others empathy, wellbeing, intimacy, sustainability, conviviality, mobility, accessibility, imagination, leisure, aesthetics, sensoriality, solidarity and respect.

The AESOP Thematic Group *Public Space and Urban Culture* values a critical and constructive dialogue on the processes relating to series UNSTABLE GEOGRAPHIES – DISLOCATED PUBLICS (2016-2018) that equally involves researchers and practitioners, locals and guests. The proposed umbrella topic aims to explore and rethink relations among different concepts and meanings related to, on the one hand, cities facing austerity, crisis, and a variety of migrational patterns, and, on the other hand, a civic response in the form of emerging practices of self-organization, social innovation, and planners' investments in building solidarity, hope, and trust. The topic has been approached in a dialectical manner and conceived as a dynamic framework that allows for the exploration of various (relational) aspects of public spaces and urban cultures, as well as socio-theoretical approaches to critically investigate and shape these spaces and cultures.

### Theme

The current scenario in which the city is affected by austerity policies, crisis and dramatic migrational flows, it would be useful to approach to the public space agenda taking into account two main issues:

- Practicing more inclusive pathways for provision of public space, including engagement of marginal and minority groups;
- Experimenting long-term circular process in which public spaces' economic dimension could be adapted to cater for increasing solidarity, environmental concerns and critical heritage studies.

If the urban renewal process is to be undertaken in a participatory way, the regeneration strategies shall be built around the values shared by local inhabitants and different stakeholders, such as NGOs, and local businesses. This call expresses the need to reflect on the distinctive social and cultural values expressed in public space, resulting in the finding that place attachments and identification with places are differently experienced and encountered by individuals and groups. The main obstacle is being the neoliberal drift that, by spreading individual and strictly private interests, is excluding instances of more vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

In order to address these challenges from various perspectives, UIRS has been developing and testing various approaches to participatory and socio-cultural improvements of urban public space. Since 2014 it has been working on the issue jointly with three other partner institutions: civil initiative *Skupaj na ploščad!* (self organized group of local people in Ljubljana's neighbourhood of Ruski car trying to improve the conditions of neighbourhood's public spaces), Museum of Architecture and Design – MAO (national institution dedicated to rising awareness of the importance of high quality design of urban space) and Department of Urban Planning at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Ljubljana (main national institution educating future urban planners). The local partnership tests new methods and techniques to better understand the needs and aspirations of local inhabitants towards their living environments (<https://humancities.uirs.si/en-gb/>). The on-site activities within the Human Cities project have started in 2015 already and are on-going with major events to take place in Ljubljana in May 2017.

A three-day Ljubljana event in May 2017 is structured in three interrelated activities: a seminar, a workshop and a field-trip. The main purpose is to address the questions of revealing the values and expressions of more and more diversified urban communities as an important step-stone to a more inclusive provision of local public spaces. Several questions will be discussed during the forthcoming Ljubljana meeting:

- How to (re)design and (re)organise local environments with socially, economically and ethnically more diverse communities in order to improve their capacity to act as a medium of social cohesion?
- What kind of urban design solutions are robust enough to stand the changing nature of value systems over time?
- How shall established methodologies (interviewing, perceptual mapping, cognitive mapping etc.) be upgraded/combined with new technologies and social networking media? What is the general usefulness and real value of the new ICT and crowd-sourcing in revealing people's attitudes towards their living environments?
- How can partnerships of local initiatives, residents, local and city authorities, urban planners and other players be maintained in a long term and transformed into a long-lasting cooperation forms for improving local public spaces?
- What could be research practices in public space that offer an investigation into different perceptions/attitudes of social groups?

The contributors are invited to address these issues from various perspectives based on their practical and/or theoretical work. Thematic sessions will be organised upon the duly received abstracts.



## Important Dates

**Deadline for abstract submission is Monday 6 March 2017.**

Please submit an abstract of 200-250 words along with a max 100 words biography (Word Document format) to [humancities@uirs.si](mailto:humancities@uirs.si), the abstract outlining (1) issue/research problems, (2) its relevance for the conference theme, (3) background, (4) methodology and (5) expected results. Authors will receive **notification regarding their abstracts and a format for submitting the full papers by Friday 10 March 2017.**

**Deadline for full paper submission is Monday 24 April 2017.** Full papers will be published in an electronic version in a form of a conference book of papers. The authors of the selected papers will be encouraged to prepare their contributions in a form of scientific articles for the publication in the thematic issue of a scientific journal *Urbani izziv / Urban challenge* as a part of a post-conference production (<http://urbani-izziv.uirs.si/en/Urbaniizziv.aspx>).

## Preliminary Program

DATE 2017		JOINT HUMAN CITIES AND AESOP TG PSUC MEETING
Wednesday 24 May	morning	Arrivals
	afternoon	13:00 Human Cities & AESOP joined seminar <i>PUBLIC SPACES FOR LOCAL LIFE</i>
	evening	20:00 Official dinner
Thursday 25 May	morning	9:30 Workshops at <i>Ruski car</i> neighbourhood
		14:00 Picnic Lunch
	afternoon	15:00 Human Cities exhibition opening
	evening	19:00 BIO Ljubljana 2017 opening
Friday 26 May	morning	9:30 Human Cities Technical meeting
		14:00 Lunch
	afternoon	16:00 Field trip by boat: Ljubljana Embankments & Public Space Improvements
	evening	free and/or Departures
Saturday 27 May		Optional program and/or Departures

## Fees

**Participation in the event is free of charge.** Ljubljana meeting is interdisciplinary and targets to include actors with different perspectives. The main objective is to provide various insights and perspectives on public spaces therefore submissions from academics, practicing professionals and any interested person from any background are warmly invited.

## Organizing and scientific committees

### Organizing committee

- Héloïse Gautier, Sciences Po Rennes, France
- Nina Goršič, Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Blaž Jamšek, Civil initiative *Skupaj na ploščadi!*, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Natalija Lapajne, Museum of Architecture and Design, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Biba Tominc, Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Damjana Zaviršek Hudnik, Civil initiative *Skupaj na ploščadi!*, Ljubljana, Slovenia

### Scientific committee

- Alenka Fikfak, Faculty of Architecture, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Weronika Mazurkiewicz, Gdansk Politechnical University, Gdansk, Poland
- Matej Nikšič, Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, Ljubljana, Slovenia
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## Contacts

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or use the general email address of the event [humancities@uirs.si](mailto:humancities@uirs.si).

## Related links

Human Cities website: [www.humancities.eu](http://www.humancities.eu)

Association of European Schools of Planning, Thematic Group for Public Spaces and Urban Cultures:  
[http://www.aesop-planning.eu/blogs/en\\_GB/urban-cultures-and-public-spaces](http://www.aesop-planning.eu/blogs/en_GB/urban-cultures-and-public-spaces)

*\* This is a draft version of Book of Contributions of the Joint event of EU Human Cities partnership and AESOP Thematic group Public Spaces and Urban Cultures, held in Ljubljana on May, 26<sup>th</sup> 2017.  
The contributions to this book were peer-reviewed.*

## Contributions

**01**

**Food spaces seen as new public spaces/shared places. Research proposal for a 'public city'**

*Sara Basso*

*University of Trieste, Department of Engineering and Architecture, Italy*

**02**

**Collective Spaces of Informal and Formal Markets as Drivers of Self-Organization Processes of Urban Growth in Emerging Cities: Learning from Onitsha, Nigeria**

*C.V. Chukwuemeka, K. Scheerlinck, Y. Schoonjans*

*Urban Projects, Collective Spaces and Local Identities Research Group, Department of Architecture, Campus Sint-Lucas, Ghent, Belgium*

**03**

**Climate adaptive public space 2.0**

*Valentina Crupi*

*University of Trieste, Department of Engineering and Architecture, Italy*

**04**

**The Potential of Self-Organized Communities in the Urban Regeneration: Izmir Historic Centre, Turkey**

*Merve Demiroz*

*Polytechnic and University of Turin, Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning (DIST), Italy*

**05**

**Civic engagement in public spaces of contested places, the case of *Rione Traiano* in the Soccavo Quarter (Naples, IT)**

*Stefania Ragozino and Gabriella Esposito De Vita*

*Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development (IRISS), National Research Council Italy (CNR), Italy*

**06**

**The role of open space in urban neighbourhoods for the healthy childhood and active ageing**

*Katarina Ana Lestan, Barbara Čerňič Mali and Mojca Golobič*

*University of Ljubljana, Biotechnical Faculty, Department of Landscape Architecture, Slovenia  
Urban planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia*

**07**

## **Trieste: Laboratories on Welfare Spaces in Council Housing Estates. The University as an Intermediate Actor for City Making**

*Elena Marchigiani*

*University of Trieste, Department of Engineering and Architecture, Italy*

**08**

## **Project of Renewal and Regeneration of the Planina Neighbourhood, Municipality of Kranj**

*Ales Petercel*

*Local neighborhood office renovation Planina, Kranj, Slovenia*

**09**

## **The common created public spaces, the case of Warsaw Local Centres (Warszawskie Centra Lokalne)**

*Marta Popaszkiewicz (Rusin)*

*Warsaw University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Urban Design and Rural Architecture and Planning, Poland*

**10**

## **Finding the “Local Green Voice”?**

### **Waterfront Development, Environmental Justice, and Participatory Planning in Gowanus**

*Zeynep Turan*

*Milano School for International Affairs, Management and Urban Policy, Italy*

**11**

## **Beyond ownership – Renewal of public spaces in residential neighbourhoods of postsocialist cities**

*Zala Velkavrh and Alenka Korenjak*

*KD prostoRož, Slovenia*

*AESOP TG PSUC & HUMAN CITIES  
LJUBLJANA MAY 2017*

*PUBLIC SPACES FOR LOCAL LIFE*

# ABSTRACTS

## Food spaces seen as new public spaces/shared places. Research proposal for a 'public city'

*Sara Basso*

*University of Trieste, Department of Engineering and Architecture, Italy*

### Abstract:

The activities and processes linked to the production, preparation, sale and consumption of food have the power to change many areas in the contemporary city: not only the undefined and unstable outskirts bordering the 'urban countryside', but also the many gaps and unused areas that, through food, can become places to be shared by citizens. Based on this, the aim is to discuss the following issues: - sharing processes related to food can have a strategic role in the redevelopment of urban suburbs, particularly in council housing neighbourhoods ('public city');- the 'implicit planning' of these processes may provide useful inputs to update planning tools in order to define new types of public spaces.

A variety of reflections lead to the conclusion that the decline of public spaces is due, first and foremost, to their inability to represent an increasingly fragmented and diverse society. In view of this, food recreates the primeval sense of sharing, which encourages new forms of self-promoted public spaces. Innovation of these spaces can be found in the ability to activate or enhance not only social, but also economic and cohesive social relationship networks, that are capable of breaking down the mechanisms that lead to isolation, closure and marginality that often affect peripheral council housing neighbourhoods.

**Keywords:** food spaces, accessibility to open spaces, urban project

# Collective Spaces of Informal and Formal Markets as Drivers of Self-Organization Processes of Urban Growth in Emerging Cities: Learning from Onitsha, Nigeria

*C.V. Chukwuemeka, K. Scheerlinck, and Y. Schoonjans*

*Urban Projects, Collective Spaces and Local Identities Research Group  
Department of Architecture, Campus Sint-Lucas, Ghent, Belgium*

## Abstract:

This paper is embedded in a PhD research project with the objective to obtain insight on the making and use of collective spaces of informal and formal markets in Onitsha, Nigeria. Markets in Onitsha exist as informal and formal markets, grouped in accordance with their evolution trajectories and relationship with institutional hierarchies. These markets thrive as a network of trading units, spread across the city and its periphery. The growth of the markets is alongside the exponential population surge of what is supposed to be Nigeria's second densest city amidst inadequate conventional city infrastructures. The paper explores how these markets and their constituting collective spaces -understood as emergent infrastructures- are inextricably interwoven with the self-organised urban growth and material flows in the city. The paper also traces the pace of urban transformation and the city's reactions to demands of contextual, economic, social and cultural forces. The paper contributes to the discourse on emerging cities development processes and fosters critical strategies for sustainable urban growth.

**Keywords:** Onitsha, Informal and Formal Markets, Collective Spaces, Self-Organisation Processes of Urban Growth, Urban Transformations



## Climate adaptive public space 2.0

*Valentina Crupi*

*University of Trieste, Department of Engineering and Architecture, Italy*

### Abstract:

The need to react to the new environmental issues is leading to innovative spontaneous actions that find their place in the marginal sites of cities. Bottom-up initiatives such as de-paving, cool-roofing and guerrilla gardening, which through site-specific actions can contribute to reduce some of the climate change impacts, often have a significant effect on the quality of public space. The uses of these spaces by local communities as places where to test new forms of coexistence with nature offer the opportunity to approach complex themes – such as climate hazards and resilience – in the everyday dimension of those who live in cities.

In addition, new technological frontiers impose important changes in the uses of the city: spontaneous interventions are not limited to complaints and thought exchanges, but work in a proactive way initially on social networks and are later translated into real and concrete transformations of public spaces.

Through the lessons of several case studies in the USA and the EU, this article aims to identify the tools and spaces that these initiatives employ to reconfigure the city's cross-spaces in a new type of public space, where the ecological will of the community is manifested and tools 2.0 can contribute to develop new values and collective identities.

**Keywords :** climate change, tactical urbanism, public spaces

## The Potential of Self-Organized Communities in the Urban Regeneration: Izmir Historic Centre, Turkey

*Merve Demiroz*

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Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning (DIST), Italy*

### Abstract:

Nowadays, the role of self-organized communities has becoming increasingly significant in the regeneration of urban heritage. Turkey, as a country having diverse cultural heritage sites, has experienced the 'rapid' urban renewal in the historical centres with the current legislative change. Although the interventions with these new changes have subjected to various criticisms by professionals, the recent Izmir History Project launched by the municipality provides potential to stimulate community participation. This paper presents an overview for the processes/achievements/challenges of the self-organizing communities in the renewal of cultural heritage and explores the potential of Izmir History Project in terms of the community participation. As the main motives for the self-organized communities in the regeneration cultural heritage, are mostly on the re-use of public buildings/open spaces; the paper contributes to conference theme by providing two aspects. The first is overview of cultural/economic/social/innovative values they create and the challenges on the way. The second is exploring different dynamics in the context of Turkey and Izmir. Existing research has recognized the critical role played by the social capital and public policies in respect to community achievement for the heritage renewal. Izmir Historic Centre exemplifies the different dynamics of social capital including the established tradesmen organizations, inhabitants and the Syrian immigrants. This paper follows case study approach with in-depth literature review for the different experiences and the investigation of Izmir History Project. This investigation takes the form of legislative framework, planning documents and project applications. This will enhance the understanding of community participation and their role on shaping the public space in the historical centres.

**Keywords:** Urban Regeneration, Cultural Heritage, Community Participation, Izmir Historic Centre

## Civic engagement in public spaces of contested places, the case of *Rione Traiano* in the *Soccavo* Quarter (Naples, IT)

*Stefania Ragozino and Gabriella Esposito De Vita*

*Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development (IRISS),  
National Research Council Italy (CNR), Italy*

### Abstract

This paper aims at reflecting on the role of self-organised initiatives in public spaces carried out in contested places of cities where urban regeneration process needs to be accompanied by social inclusion initiatives, solidarity flows and environmental concerns.

In these context the most vulnerable segment of the population, women, babies and the elderly, is frequently segregate and gets used to underutilize public spaces for lack of services, neglect and security issues. Starting from the 2008 economic crisis, austerity on the one hand and neoliberal urban redevelopment programs on the other have increased disadvantages groups and their segregation and marginalization. Part of the scientific debate and urban practices is dedicated to civic economics, urban activism and participatory processes as counterpoint to the above-mentioned trends.

Within the framework of an action-research campaign in this field, developed by the National Research Council of Italy (CNR), a case study have been developed in a social housing area of Naples (Italy), the Rione Traiano neighbourhood, in order to capture the complex overlapping of urban, social and cultural issues. In this area a non-profit organisation is active, *L'Orsa Maggiore*, engaged in educational and social activities, inclusion protocols, training and civic activation. Cooperating with this organization, a methodology for interaction and civic engagement based on Community Planning has been tested to collect, prioritise, and translate into proposals instances as expressed by the community.

**Keywords:** public spaces, civic engagement, urban regeneration, Naples, community planning

## The role of open space in urban neighbourhoods for the healthy childhood and active ageing

*Katarina Ana Lestan, Barbara Černič Mali  
and Mojca Golobič*

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*Urban planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia*

### Abstract

The quality of life of children and the elderly in towns is directly conditioned by their physical activity. Healthy ageing does not result only from life style in the old age period, but starts already in the childhood. Children are exposed to the risk of physical inactivity, manifested in their lower physical fitness. The aim of the project is to evaluate urban residential areas from the aspect of possibilities for physical activity of children and the elderly and the relation between physical characteristics of the space and its use. Qualitative approach was used in the empirical part. The formal method of focus groups with children and elderly was adopted to include the mapping exercise by the participants. On the aerial and topographic maps they identified the points of risk at their daily paths, the structures in the space that represent mental barrier or those points that they perceive as pleasant. The results serve as an input for a list of criteria defining the quality of outdoor spaces in school districts to be used by the local communities to support designation of spatial plans.

**Keywords :** Public health, open space, spatial planning, healthy ageing, healthy growing up, physical activity

## Trieste: Laboratories on Welfare Spaces in Council Housing Estates. The University as an Intermediate Actor for City Making

*Elena Marchigiani*

*University of Trieste, Department of Engineering and Architecture, Italy*

### Abstract:

During the 20th century, in Trieste (as in the rest of Europe) council housing estates were laboratories for translating Welfare State policies into large quantities of public spaces and equipment: houses, schools, playgrounds, sport facilities, health districts, parks. Today, going back to work in these contexts means reflecting on how this huge stock shows multiple problems. Here, poor spatial quality and lack of maintenance encounter an increasing demand for social and health assistance, due to the economic crisis, the changes in social structure, the proliferation of needs that often struggle to find answers in traditional public policies. Strong is the necessity to re-think the forms and meanings of spaces and services (from physical layout to management), in order to re-build collaboration between institutions and citizens.

Based on research and experiences of interactive urban design developed by the University of Trieste with the support of public and third sector actors, this contribution reflects on: the need to re-orient welfare policies from a quantitative, functionalist and abstract attitude to a solid integration with the qualities of their physical setting; the importance and the role of intermediate actors within processes of urban renewal characterized by bottom-up and top-down actions; how these processes invite to re-think the forms and scales of urban design solutions in relation to the emerging of new social and economic conditions and ways of living indoor and outdoor common spaces.

**Keywords :** Public City; Welfare Space; Urban Regeneration; Interactive Design; Public Action

## Project of Renewal and Regeneration of the Planina Neighbourhood, Municipality of Kranj

*Ales Peternel*

*Local Renewal Office of the Planina neighbourhood, Kranj, Slovenia*

### Problem:

Housing neighbourhood Planina has been listed as a functionally degraded area of City municipality of Kranj. Having 52 ha of open surfaces, more than 140 blocks of flats and about 16.000 inhabitants it represents one of the biggest highly dense urbanized areas of Slovenian cities, and is facing multilayered and inter-related problems nowadays: lack of parking spaces, low usage of public transportation, aged urban furniture, low energy efficiency of buildings, lack of quality public spaces and programmes for various age groups of inhabitants etc.

### Relevance:

A case of good practice strengthens an efficient city management and implementation of sustainable urban development strategies which assures comprehensive, integrated, innovative and participatory approach to solving complex urban issues for inhabitants and other important stakeholders (municipal and state agencies, business sector, professionals, civil society etc.).

### Background:

An example of good practice is backed in a Measure No 6.4 of the Sustainable urban development strategy of City municipality of Kranj 2010. This is a long term document addressing sustainability goals, contributing to a more effective usage of energy in households, development of urban mobility for the improvement of air quality in cities and efficient use of space in urban areas.

### Method:

Using various tools and methods (such as questionnaires, interactive maps installment,

organization of exhibitions about development of the neighborhood, citizens' assemblies, organizing inhabitants in working groups, implementation of concrete projects for improvement of life in the neighborhood etc.) to achieve active involvement of inhabitants into a process of preparation of comprehensive regeneration plan and revival of Planina neighbourhood.

### ***Results:***

In cooperation with inhabitants, project partners as well as based on the analysis of the results, data, activities, proposals and guidelines for future calls we designed a plan. In accordance with the plan we will set up Sustainable Mobility Centre, Centre of Urban Sports, Family Centre in the neighbourhood, we will revitalize the pedestrian&cyclists' under-passes, we will set up a thematic connecting path and the Local Regeneration Office.

## Spatial Data and Interaction Technologies in the Public Participation

*Tomaž Pipan*

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### Abstract:

The complexity of contemporary city stems out of numerous positions of interpretations demanded for it. The two more relevant to this conference are the augmentations of cities through digital technology and the ever more present participation requirement in the spatial management and planning debate. The digital technologies are promising efficiently running cities and better decision-making through bigger volume and better detail of information. The participatory direction, a more levelled playing field for different players and stakeholders, and a wider consensus. Both have limits. The first in the myriad of produced data that makes the digital city unreadable to decision-makers without the help of specialized professionals. The second in forming and keeping the consensus between a large numbers of stakeholders.

This paper will explore how these limits can be addressed. Recently the interactive environments are promoted to improve the established urban planning and participation methodologies. They promise to increase the participation of actors and to render digital spatial data more accessible for the decision making process. This paper will compare two examples of participatory interactive digital tools that use spatial information in a new way to bring it closer to decision makers and public actors. The first example developed at the Chair for Sustainable Planning and Urban Design, Technical University Berlin and second developed at the Changing Places Group, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and used by the CityScienceLab at the HafenCity University Hamburg.



## The common created public spaces, the case of Warsaw Local Centres (Warszawskie Centra Lokalne)

*Marta Popaszkiewicz (Rusin)*

*Warsaw University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture  
Department of Urban Design and Rural Architecture and Planning, Poland*

### Abstract:

Developing cities have undergone radical changes every day. Rapid development - new investments, buildings, infrastructure - changes the character of streets, squares, neighbourhoods and whole metropolis. However during a fast process of development, it is almost impossible to avoid problems such as fragmentation of urban tissue, disintegration of cityscape and above all losing the spirit of place, which is mainly rooted in the network of public spaces. Nowadays we are facing the question: how to design public spaces to take into consideration needs of its users and local communities, experience of NGOs, knowledge of experts and authority of municipality, to maintain or even emphasize their character.

One of rapidly developing cities is the capital of Poland - Warsaw. Its network of public spaces do not keep pace with the development of entire metropolis. As the solution for that problem came the project of Warsaw Local Centres (pol. *Warszawskie Centra Lokalne*), which aims to enhance the quality of public space on the neighbourhood level. The project was prepared by the non-governmental organisation The Warsaw Branch of the Association of Polish Architects (pol. *Oddział Warszawski Stowarzyszenia Architektów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*) for one of the units of Warsaw City Hall and consists of the research and analysis prepared by experts with the active participation of inhabitants, architects and planners.

The paper will elaborate that establishing partnerships of residents, local and city authorities, NGOs, experts and architects and support them in analysing, discussing, planning and designing local public space might contribute an extra value as the tool for socially and economically diverse community.

**Keywords:** public space; participation; Warsaw; Warsaw Local Centres

## Finding the “Local Green Voice”?

### *Waterfront Development, Environmental Justice, and Participatory Planning in Gowanus*

*Zeynep Turan*

*New School’s Milano School for International Affairs, Management and Urban Policy, Italy*

#### **Abstract:**

Waterfronts in urban areas are precious—their location makes them valuable for commercial, industrial, residential and recreational uses—and if they become significantly polluted, although there is political will for environmental clean-up, debates unfold over re-development plans. This contestation hinges on the nature of development and decision-making; the question is often portrayed as “what to build,” but given the socio-economic consequences, implicitly it is “who to build for.” Traditionally business interests and government have negotiated, often in secret, to determine waterfront development, but the public have increasingly demanded a role in making decisions. Local communities have been especially active in this regard as they usually have the most at stake—development will affect everything from housing to employment; from access to services to traffic; from the character of the neighborhood to the quality of life. Moreover, the central concern is whether re-development will benefit the public, including the worry that locals end up being displaced. This situation has also been exacerbated by the growing impacts of climate change as this requires adapting waterfronts to account for a rise in sea levels. To address the ecological afflictions as well as the political-economic challenges, the local green voice must be found—a method for distilling the views of communities on issues of development in the context of environmental clean-up, to promote ecological and social-political sustainability.

This essay provides a model for participatory planning as a vehicle for calibrating environmental protection with the views of local communities. The first section defines the problematic and key concepts. The second section unpacks the case study of Gowanus, a neighborhood in Brooklyn featuring a waterway that had infamously been subject to extraordinary dumping and is undergoing intensive re-development. The third section examines the engagement of locals in re-development decision-making. The fourth section analyzes the

merits and limits participatory planning in development. The final section postulates ideas for bolstering local participation and promoting sustainability.

12

## Beyond ownership

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### Renewal of public spaces in residential neighbourhoods of postsocialist cities

*Zala Velkavrh and Alenka Korenjak*

*KD prostoRož, Slovenia*

#### Abstract:

Our contribution addresses renewal of public space in socialist residential neighbourhoods. Even though these spaces are not central public spaces, they represent the immediate living environment for a high number of residents in postsocialist cities and are thus the epicentre of local life for social groups with limited intra-city mobility and limited financial resources. In Slovenia, denationalisation and privatisation affected these spaces: result is fragmented and contested ownership; the discrepancy between spatial and ownership patterns; and lack of public and private funds for renewal. We accomplished 16 interviews with experts and various stakeholders on the topic of public space in residential neighbourhoods and carried out five panels with municipality employees in five Slovenian cities. They identified a range of obstacles that prevent the improvement of public spaces and that could be categorised in the following fields: finance, ownership, urban planning, maintenance, legislation, social changes, communication. This signals that the issue of public space in residential neighbourhoods in postsocialist cities is extremely complex and could not be reduced solely to the issue of changing ownership. Besides the solutions proposed by our interlocutors, we suggest the approach of soft urban renewal and local urban regeneration offices as a suitable solution. Such offices can establish cooperation among the various stakeholders involved in management, maintenance and renewal of public spaces. This is even more crucial in a situation like Slovenian, where ownership is fragmented among many, relatively weak, actors. We will compare cases from Vienna, Copenhagen and Slovenian cities.

## Proprietary legal aspects of the living environment in multi-dwelling residential neighborhoods

*Andrej Pogačnik*

*Slovenia*

### Abstract:

One of the important aspects of the state of the art of public spaces in residential areas is privatization of these spaces. After the change of social system into a democratic one cheap privatization of once social housing was enabled. But the question of the ownership of the surroundings of the apartment blocks remained unregulated until recently. The law on establishing so called floor ownership (named ZVETL) has allowed the privatization of the surroundings of blocks of flats - their accesses, driveways, lawns, playgrounds, car parkings, places for waste collection, etc. Here we face a dilemma over to what extent it is appropriate to privatise such areas from the urban planning, social, legal, economic, environmental point of view. To the smallest extent, or shall once more a principle of “all is of everyone” be introduced. but this time co-owned by the owners of property in a respected building, neighbourhood part or even whole neighbourhood.

The author offers a variety of options in terms of maintaining important public components of the living environments and the privatization of immediate surroundings at the same time. The latter also for a reason of a serious shortage of parking spaces, the desire and need for urban gardens, etc.

The method is empirical as the author draws from many-year practice as a court expert for urbanism, where he had to provide appropriate solutions by himself. The results will be presented via simulations in different environments across Slovenia.

## Human Cities\_Challenging the City Scale

*Josyane Franc, Cité du design Saint-Etienne, France*

Human Cities\_Challenging the City Scale is a European project, co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of The European Union 2014-2018, exploring the way in which the inhabitants reinvent the contemporary city through experimentation and applied research. Human Cities is a multidisciplinary platform of 12 European partners\* led by Cité du design Saint-Etienne . The concept was created in 2006 by the Belgian association Pro Materia.

With Human Cities, our focus is to analyse, test and implement the process of engaging people in challenging the city scales and creating vibrant urban environments adapted to new ways of life. We believe that the keys to success for cities are in their human values, shared creativity and design experimentation.

Since 2014, the project has achieved a strong cooperation between the partners and with their local creative communities. They produced a research work, workshops, conferences, and urban experimentations in all the cities. This will be visible through 9 exhibitions in the main European design events and international publications. Moreover, it created a strong awareness amongst European creative professionals about new forms of urban practices involving creators, inhabitants, researchers and institutions. Together they are inventing and promoting contributory models of place-making and collective services for the city.

In Saint-Etienne, the Human Cities project reinforces the characteristics of this city as creative laboratory. The Cité du design stimulated the creation of multidisciplinary groups acting to involve the inhabitants in the transformation of their city: revitalizing vacant shops and commercial streets, creating shared public spaces and installations in a district under renovation. Through community building, creative tools, and learning by doing principles, a strong collective mobilization has been created to enhance the urban environment with and by the users.

The Biennale Internationale Design Saint-Etienne 2017 showcased these local initiatives and the European project with dedicated exhibitions, workshops, conferences and talks with the partners and visitors of the event. The next challenge is to give legacy to these valuable experimentations to establish new principles of shared urban planning in European cities.

\*12 partners: Cité du design Saint-Étienne [FR] ; Politecnico di Milano, Milan [IT] ; Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, Ljubljana [SI] ; Clear Village, London [UK] ; Zamek Cieszyn [PL] ; Design Week Belgrade [RS] ; Pro Materia, Bruxelles [BE] ; Aalto University, Helsinki [FI] ; FH Joanneum, Graz [AT] ; Association of Estonian Designers, Tallinn [EST] ; BEAZ/Bilbao-Bizkaia Design&Creativity Council, Bilbao [ES] ; CultureLab, Bruxelles [BE].

## Human Citizens on the road

*Ewa Gołębiowska, Zamek Cieszyn, Poland*

Hard to believe, but at the moment there is no train and bus station in Cieszyn. Precisely, the old bus stop is demolished and the old train station is under reconstruction. We have to find temporary solutions for the city transport, which would help us wait until the new building of the station is open. That would probably happen spring next year.

In our small historical town finding good solutions to this challenge is not easy. First location of the temporary bus station prepared by the City, was good for travelers, but definitely not for citizens. Inhabitants of the street where the station was located, protested. Conflict broke out very fast, but we, in Castle Cieszyn, have discovered that the problem can be turned into a chance for improving the quality of service in the city.

This process has different participants: local government, bus owners and private drivers, passengers all age and professions, local small business - nothing better for connecting people in honest service design :)

The City has decided to find the new location for a temporary station. This time we had a chance to be included into the process of moving it. We have started with preparing the visual communication, in both versions: on paper and in the public space. We have included the observation of people's needs and behaviors, then we moved on to designing the bus stops surrounding. The new „Bus Station” is located close to the Castle Cieszyn, so this work became our daily experience and joy.

It was not an easy decision to change the main topic of our action. Earlier we were focused on old town revitalization - but life gives us new scenarios. We are happy building the Human Cities experiment so close to real people needs.

What is even more important, thanks to this positive experience with design, our City has decided to build the complex visual information system for tourists and citizens.



*AESOP TG PSUC & HUMAN CITIES  
LJUBLJANA MAY 2017*

*PUBLIC SPACES FOR LOCAL LIFE*

## ARTICLES





# Food spaces seen as new public spaces/shared places. Research proposal for a 'public city'

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## 1. FOOD AND THE CITIES: AN URBAN QUESTION

Positive data lead us to acknowledge that even the relationship between food and the cities today is a relevant urban matter; It is just as evident that this very question can and should intertwine with better known problems like accessibility, social differences and mobility. (Calori, Magarini, 2015; Secchi, 2010; Secchi, 2013).

For a long time, in fact, different researches and studies have amply demonstrated how sustainability and survival of the urban spaces, are strongly linked with food production and distribution cycles. (Cheema G. S., Smit J., Ratta A., Nasr J., 1996; Mougeot, 2005, 2006; FAO, 2009, 2011; Morgan 2009; Steel, 2013; de Zeeuw, Dreschel, 2015) [1]. The knowledge that these cycles should become again part of the 'life cycles' of a city, make us find new convergence strategies between the rural and the urban world. This can happen also through new designs, that despite following well known paths, might push us to find new ways of viewing things, both sustained and encouraged by European programmes and even more global directions. (Fao, Who, Un-Habitat, Horizon 2020). La Grand Pari(s), Agropolis München, Active Nature, etc., offer visions of a city where the natural habitat and the buildings recreate themselves together, by exploring ways of mutual contamination, perhaps too easily dismissed

as pacific coexistence. [2].

If we distance ourselves from these sugar-coated visions, we can actually really see in these food cycles, an important opportunity, through good practices, to recreate virtuous relationships between man and nature, and re-educate ourselves to the idea of space. These practices might be linked with physical health, with the care and maintenance of everyday life spaces, and with waste management. Food, therefore, offers the opportunity to re-introduce the idea of the organic cyclic nature of our cities, as well as re-accustom ourselves to more inexpensive life-styles, to ascetic practices (Osti, 2006) after abundance seasons. The legacy of abundance is easy to find in the squandering of resources and in the damages to the environment, which we should urgently fix by experimenting with new alliances, demanding more ethical behaviours, expecting transparency in production, distribution and selling processes.

Not only this. Food becomes an instrument of repossession and reconfiguration, as well as a ‘natural domestication’ of the urban dimension. Renown are, for example, the lunches organized by the Collectif group etc, during the realization of their projects [3], or the different experiences of the urban picnics, as extemporaneous means to claim back squares and public places [4], or, yet again, the aggregation moments enhanced by continuous farming spaces by Katrin Bohn and André Viljoen (Viljoen, Bohn, Howe, 2005) to demonstrate that food preparation and consumption can bring along a convivial and sharing climate in those inactive, forgotten or forlorn spaces.

These spaces can be conquered: until now they are degraded, little lived, non-used places. The idea of food can be reconquered too: finally accessible and not necessarily elitist and exclusive.

When seen in this manner, food assumes the noble role of ‘morale regime’ in the numerous forms of an “everyday routine that gives substance to human relationships with an aesthetic that becomes tradition, ethics, shared rules [...] habitus that gives life a unanimous and communal sense” (La Cecla, 2015: 127): therefore, the spaces where the food experiences can become real, can really aspire to become places where to exercise a new urban democracy and where to put to the test the proactive urbanism.

## 2. ‘PUBLIC CITY’ AND FOOD SAFETY: SPACES, RIGHTS AND JUSTICE

The sharing of food can have a strategic role in the regeneration of the suburbs, especially in the council housing neighbourhoods. (‘public city’)

Watching the areas of our ‘public cities’ (Di Biagi, 1986) through the ‘food lens’, could help in showing unexpected potentialities of originals and innovative projects. If by now, food is acknowledged as ‘urban matter’, the different neighbourhoods become areas where to recombine their relations with the city, while exercising, within its spaces and its inhabitants, social interaction and urban democracy. Spaces and food cycles can work as means to redesign

and reinforce relationships, even economic ones, both at a large and small scale; they can reconfigure and reactivate forgotten places; they can, again, introduce the idea of waste in people's customs while at the same time sensitize them to awareness about the use or re-use of their life spaces, ecologically re-adapting them and increasing their resilience.

The relation between food and council housing areas looks little explored still. Yet different clues seems to tell us that food can be the way to activate shared processes of physical, social and urban re-qualification of these city areas. Small, yet significant experiences, made in Italy through surveys in the most suburban areas, or in the 'public city' (LaboratorioCittàPubblica, 2009; Olivetti, Metta, Lambertini, 2014), show us that food can work as a catalyst: can create closeness among people, can diminish the differences, can promote conversations and exchanges [5]. Food can become a way of undoing those mechanisms of isolation and closure within the neighbourhood, or those connected to the prejudices towards its spaces and inhabitants.

For quite some time, in other contexts, *food security* and *affordable housing* are two areas where public institutions, associations and dwellers collaborate in synergy towards activities that have the re-qualification of the neighbourhoods as a goal. In Great Britain, United States and Canada there seems to be a heavier presence of eating habits problems (with serious consequences on public health and economy). These Nations have found in the idea of food, one of the leverage to improve the life conditions in low-cost dwellings. Some of the good practices put in place in the cities of these three Countries, that for some time now have been shining for their promotion of the *food policy*, show the potentiality of relations between food and 'public city'; even though these experiences were conducted in culturally very far apart contexts, they suggest useful indications on how to regenerate somewhat the suburbia in our cities.

In New York, in London, as well as in Vancouver and Toronto, research reports, investigations, surveys and guidelines (e.g. Meisenheimer, Emerson, 2015; Ostry, 2012; Population Health, 2013; The Food Commission, Sustain, 2005), underline a close interdependence between food insecurity and council housing neighbourhoods, where people with low wages end up cutting down on food expenses in their monthly budget. The urban question that put into comparison food and low-cost dwellings can be reconstructed through relations among security (food and social), justice (social and health), public health (prevention, reduction of risks among elderly people, children, poor families). Reading these documents can give us elements to reconstruct this question and suggests, moreover, possible solutions to undergo shared paths of social and urban re-qualification, starting from the food question.

The food insecurity (Ostry, 2012; Population Health Vancouver, 2013; Meisenheimer, Emerson, 2015) [6] in this context is reduced to only two kinds of factors: individual (i.e. not having enough knowledge and competence to adopt correct eating habits) and environmental, like for example lack of money, or the fact that in the area there is no shop selling fresh food (like in the *food deserts*), or the fact that it is impossible to physically get there, the lack of public

transport, or more generally, physical barriers that make it impossible for people to travel everyday to get to the food and buy it. These elements, defining a specific social, physical and economic disadvantaged condition, are then compared to a more general frame, where the risks of the climate change and the scarcity of resources (energy, water, etc.) urge us even more to find in the food, the very field where we can intervene to increase the sustainability and the quality of the urban spaces, as well as improving the life conditions in the cities. The problem is then described as part of a more complex urban question: "Now more than ever, we need to grow more food, closer to where we live, that is tasty, wholesome and nutritious, that enhances rather than destroys the environment we depend on, and that satisfies people's need for a secure and trusted food supply." (Sustain, Women's Environmental Network, 2008:1).

Starting from these premises, accessing wholesome and quality food is a right that forces us to recognize food security and food justice as equals, and consequently, to find in the food a way to obtain some social justice: food initiatives on a community bases can therefore help in reducing exclusion and inequality. (The Food Commission, Sustain, 2005).

What appears relevant is how these initiatives, more or less directly, act upon the many spaces within the different neighbourhoods and the cities: from the big open spaces to the small ones, from the empty shells of buildings to the roofs, to those places, close to our everyday life, like balconies and windowsills.

Thus the interlacing between food practices and physical transformation practices can converge in the bigger and more integrated regeneration processes of neighbourhoods. Public bodies and institutions, associations, cooperatives and more importantly, the dwellers can participate in these processes, by being involved in actions that have to do with their everyday home life, by finding in these rituals, and the other food sharing opportunities, the highest success factor to the initiatives

### 3. COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS: SPACES AND PROCEDURES

In the various city areas, there are different "*community food projects*" (The Food Commission, Sustain, 2005; Sustain, Women's Environmental Network, 2008) structured principally along directions that concur to configure inclusive regeneration procedures, open to the whole city.

In details, the initiatives are organized along these action lines:

**-physical space transformations.** These initiatives have a double goal: on the one hand, re-qualification of the abandoned public spaces within the council housing neighbourhoods, that are physically and socially degraded; on the other hand, actualization of different strategies to involve the inhabitants in their transformation, so that a process of identification can spark up,

together with the appropriation and the looking after of the spaces themselves.

These initiatives act on different scales and tend to reconfigure the spaces as collective encounters public spaces. They include the wider city farms, (places with a strong educational force that they apply thanks to different events: the welcoming of the volunteers celebrations, school trips, etc.) [7]; the more traditional allotments (small cultivable fields in urban contexts, rented out by the council authorities, with the objective of improving the access to fruits and vegetables as well as satisfying the more unusual tastes determined by different ethnic origins); the well known *garden plots* and *edible landscaping*, (these too managed both individually and collectively by the people residing near by); to the smaller and more common *ornamental borders*, ('left-over' edges where it is possible to cultivate edible or ornamental plants).

In many cases the transformation of the open spaces becomes an opportunity to open up the borders, finding new relations, social ones as well, with the urban context they are set into.

Let us take the 'Abundance' project, set in Brixton, London. The vague land surrounding the buildings have been used as a space to realize vegetable gardens for the inhabitants. The success and the wide interest that this initiative enjoyed, started the question of the involvement of the non-resident too, and how to manage and distribute the products.

On a smaller scale, together with the more common *roof gardens* and *window boxes*, there are other colonization actions of the domestic spaces closer to the houses.

In London the initiative *Food Up Front*, for example, has helped the residents of a council housing area to cultivate lettuce and other edible plants on the balconies and the steps leading up to each house [8].

While in the *Vacant-Land* project, the re-use of bin-lining material (normally used for the collection of masonry waste) has made it possible to colonize empty spaces in the suburban areas of the city, transforming them in areas fit for socialization, games, cultivation, collective barbecues [9].

All in all, these initiatives bring to mind the idea of 'accessible health': many of the activities, in fact, can improve the health conditions of the residents, thanks to a regular physical activity and more contact with nature.

- ***Intervene on food processes***: these initiatives aim to affect the access to food, distribution and selling cycles, in a way that favours the people. For example they intend to constitute either new self-organized groups, or to become part of well-established circuits, in order to reduce the commercial mediation, and help the poor and disadvantaged consumers to access quality food.

Within these projects we find food-co-operatives, share-a-car schemes, food-delivery schemes, all oriented to intervene on the processes, like: the constitution of cooperatives to buy fruits, vegetables and food, wholesale; sharing transport to reach the markets; activities to distribute the food together with boxes of vegetables and fresh food with lorries adapted for mobile food-service.

- **good practices** for an equitable and efficient functioning of the access to food and its production and distribution cycles: in this case we are talking about initiatives that aim to spread a deeper knowledge and awareness of the food consumption and distribution processes and their environmental relevance, as well as offer, through a proper educational activity, new job opportunities for unprivileged subjects.

In many cases, they offer opportunities to recover empty or under-used spaces in office buildings. In this way not only the residents can access them, but also they become locations where different activities can take place: distribution (*lunch club*), open education activities (*breakfast clubs* to help the children get used to a healthy breakfast, *cook-and-eat demonstration, share a recipe*), as well as training encounters about waste reduction of the low-cost or given-for-free food. (Meisenheimer, Emerson, 2015) [10].

Other examples of the kind are the *community cafes*, started by social businesses and managed by charity companies, where sometimes it is possible to organize food service training courses.

- **Involvement strategies** to facilitate, through sharing experiences of consumption, production and distribution of food, the inclusion in the community of disadvantaged people (unemployed, immigrants, disabled people, etc.)

In other cases still, the goal is to promote the integration between people with different ethnic origin: they can find within the food handling, a terrain for mutual exchange and even friendship.

The Association Bolton at Home and the group Social Housing Arts Network have started the project *Growing – Cooking – Sharing*, dealing with social housing. Within this project the artist Sarah Butler engaged the inhabitants and the new residents of Brightmet in Bolton, especially exiled people, in a “getting to know your neighbour” experience, exactly through activities like the cultivation of vegetables and cooking of dishes in the tradition of the diverse national origins: an exchange of experiences and contextual knowledge that promoted social closeness and reduced the distance among people, also the very far apart individuals [11].

- **reassessment of the economy scale**. The starting and the layering of plural initiatives about food, helps in activate collaboration networks and ‘economic solidarity’. These networks become a potential support towards the activation of innovative business projects based on ethical micro-economies, linked to the contexts, that are about the very production, processing and distribution cycles of food and other products connected with food.

In many of the previously analysed documents about the relationship between food and council housing neighbourhoods, the importance of the weaving of relations between public subjects and associations appears evident, and improves the ability of attracting fundings and starting new economies. All of this even without taking into account the ethical side at the base of many of these initiatives that push the enterprises to take on more of a social responsibility, as well as offering real opportunities for the regeneration of the local economies through new jobs and



education (The Food Commission, Sustain, 2005).

Obviously, very often in these documents is highlighted how efficient projects requires an integrated approach, namely, different actions should converge together in order to simultaneously raise the interest of the different fields (The Food Commission, Sustain, 2005).

#### 4. FOOD AND SUBURBIA: WHAT SPACE?

What can we learn from these experiences and what are they suggesting?

Firstly, we learn to look at these spaces in the ‘public city’ in a new perspective: read through the food filter, they reveal new potentialities and opportunities for original and innovative projects, giving shape to places shared by the people, potentially eligible as new public spaces ready for the whole city to enjoy.

A first perspective gets preparation and consumption of food, close together: practices that build relations among the inhabitants and between residents and the environment, to fill the emptiness, today very present in our neighbourhoods.

Originally destined to services and facilities for public use, these are the places where the social and domestic interaction should have taken place. This interaction should have insured the habitability of the new city areas as well as their necessary urbanity.

Today we know how these public spaces are the very places that ended up generating the problems: either because they never got made, or were left only half built, or because they got run down by the passing of time, the social evolution of the residents, or the changing of their needs and expectations. Shut down rolling shutters and barred or walled up doors are the very signs of that emptiness that come from desertion and neglect. They tell us about ground floors where we used to find those proximity services that should have made these neighbourhoods vital. Or, again, they tell us about spaces destined to become ‘centre’, yet never took off as such, and are today the symbol of the inevitable decline.

The idea of re-using them is by no means a new one (in many cases these spaces are being re-used to give assistance to elderly people that are lonely or sick) [12], why then, not thinking about these places as the ideal setting for inviting people to rediscover food as the trigger for education and socialization?

Spaces where ‘foreigners’ and ‘locals’ can mutually learn to know each other through the cooking and preparing of food, or where the children can be educated to the discovery of it and its fully aware use.

Where, again, the elders can give new value to a traditional food culture, also through the communication with younger generations.

Then, truly these closed up and forsaken places could acquire the potential to be generators of



a new urbanity, diluting the rigidity of the difference between the inside and the outside, between public and private, between individual and collective; expanding the homely characteristics on to the external space.

The second perspective creates a dialogue between the food spaces and the mediation spaces, often in-between-spaces with neither role no name, inactive and neglected spaces, that are often embezzled by the residents or used in a wrong way (Basso, curated by, 2015; Di Biagi, 2013).

It is within the informality (also intended as the ‘absence of form’) that we can see the potential for their modification, even transient, yet able to start up ideas of possible alternative and shared uses.

We do not intend here only the ‘in-between-spaces’ that can be properly used, thanks to the environmental permeability (the recurrent case of the land destined to vegetable gardens), but also those materially hostile, non-ecological spaces, like hard concrete surfaces, that could welcome practices of food consumption or communication about food handling.

These spaces could make good use of their impermeability: a hard surface becomes an unexpected blackboard, the use of words and games as communication instruments between far apart worlds.

Finally, a third perspective considers the food spaces as ways of rebuilding the relationship between suburbia and the city, as well as suburbia and the large natural areas.

Today, agriculture practices can redesign and liven up the torn edges of our towns. Urban vegetable gardens, as well as other forms of cultivation derived from geographically and locally descended cultural traditions [13], offer themselves as opportunities to reconquer our natural backgrounds, too often only a mirage, a horizon too difficult to reach because of its impracticability or scarce attraction.

Thus the spaces for food production would earn a chance to become a way of ‘social approximation’, but also approximation towards a more natural dimension, in many cases hidden or absent.

This could be the occasion to think about the formation of wider networks on our territorial scale, ecological-environmental networks, as well as production ones. An invite to imagine the different parts of our ‘public city’ as exchange knots of short supply chains, and to think about these open spaces as ‘markets’, ready to welcome the products of a production background to be rediscovered and valued.

Another perspective, crossing the previous ones, suggests the possibility of considering the food places as places for conquering (or re-conquering) the spaces of our rights, both in the ‘public city’ areas and elsewhere. A right not only to dwell in a place, but a more general right to be in a city (and being a citizen), here intended as a possibility of sharing its spaces and resources, accessibility to their fair use, possibility of acting upon them with responsible use, care and management.

#### 4. BY WAY OF CONCLUSION. A REFLECTION UPON THE PROJECT: FOR A NEW IDEA OF PUBLIC SPACE.

The observing of the council housing neighbourhoods and their spaces through the ‘food lens’, becomes an opportunity to articulate another, and more general reflection upon form and nature of the public space in our contemporary cities.

The examples and the hypothesis put forward till here, converge in acknowledging a ‘public’ character to the spaces where there are activities connected with food (production, processing, education, consumption, selling, etc). This ‘public’ character is justified by the fact that they can be interpreted as ‘accessibility facilities’. Thinking of the public space in these terms, means appreciate its sense and value as a place that offers opportunities to share:

- **practices** (collective or individual), here intended as practical and active ways for the transformation and the maintenance of the different places;
- **knowledge structures** and therefore the possibility to obtain an individual or collective emancipation that can develop in the affirmation or widening of the rule of law: not only towards the specific places, but also towards the city at large;
- **resources** (landscape, environment, culture, food...) in economic, material or simply perceptive terms;
- **construction of innovative paths** (social and economic), able to actively affect the configuration of new economies;

Such a wide and transverse meaning offers the opportunity to renovate the considerations about the public space project, starting from the recognition of the role that the food spaces can have, not only in the re-qualification processes of the council housing neighbourhoods, but also in the reconfiguration of the more complex systems of the open spaces at urban and territorial scale.

The growing attention given to proximity agriculture as a means of designing urban composition (Mininni, 2012; Viljoen et al., 2015), show us that the food perspective is the one that can renovate techniques and spaces of the designing actions.

It could be useful, to this purpose, to try and specify some of the research themes, (in which one can glimpse the potential to open new and fresh ways to experiment), and to specify the intervention fields already found by observing the ‘public city’.

The first perspective takes into consideration the food spaces, in the sense of ways of constructing a *complex urban welfare infrastructure* (Calori, Magarini, 2015; Dansero,

Nicolarea, 2016), where those policies and actions, dedicated to inhabitants and spaces, are mixed together in a new perspective of social sustainability.

Beyond conviviality and the pleasure that generally accompanies the act of eating, the food can become the means to start or strengthen new active, rather than passive, welfare networks in the marginal areas. In fact these areas are often afflicted by problems that go beyond the actual materiality of these spaces, and instead involve the inhabitants, more often than not part of weak social categories (elders, unemployed, occasional workers, poor families, etc.)

The entire food chain, from production, to education, distribution and consumption, offers job opportunities and positively affects people's health, both expanding people's knowledge about a healthy nutrition, and promoting open-air activities that induce better life styles.

This infrastructure finds a concrete translation in a complex set of settings, at different scales, where the open spaces of the council housing neighbourhoods, because of their potential accessibility, can carry out an important and strategic role.

At a smaller scale, the food spaces become an opportunity to reconfigure the composition scheme of the public city areas, especially within *the relations between open and built space*.

In the first place, facing the question of the ground indifference. This fact often characterizes this kind of buildings, but it is not always a defect in the design. This design theme is linked to a question that Kevin Lynch had already raised in his last reflection about environmental problems, the one about the back of the buildings (Lynch, 1991).

His reflection is very actual nowadays, because of the spreading of the appropriation, use and care practices of the proximity spaces in the residential areas, where these very spaces have found the opportunity to enhance and rationalize themselves, thanks to the numerous projects based on the active participation of the residents (Cognetti, Conti, 2012; Metta, Olivetti, 2016).

The question of the back of the buildings opens up to non-so-trivial design issues, that can shake up the composition principles of these areas and, going into details, even the relations between the internal, intimate and private spaces, and the open ones, promoting the care and activation of places that otherwise risk to remain vague, because of the very indefiniteness of their design.

The question of the 'backs' is a theme that can be equally applied to our ordinary city, namely the territorial expansions that happened in the last thirty years, characterizing many of our cities, often lacking quality in their supposed urban neutrality.

Over this, the american artist Fritz Haeg, using Lynch's lesson, through his edible garden design, shows us how these can become a powerful means to subvert the anonymous and repetitive order of the American grid (Haeg, 2008).

Other projects (Paans, Pasel, 2014), instead, more pivoted on the re-qualification of the council housing neighbourhoods, suggest that the re-design of the backs can contribute to improve habitability and attractiveness of the common spaces, if adequately thought out in their

materials: like fences, access systems, borders made with vegetation in order to form permeable filters between different settings, etc.

The relation between the built and the open space can be reckoned from a design point of view, also considering the shells and the ground floors as ‘mediation spaces’ in which one can find large or small ways of sharing: from the transformation of corridors and communal galleries into vertical gardens, where one can cultivate, for example, aromatic herbs, to the empty rooms at ground level converted in communal kitchens, community cafes, etc.

Collectively used minimal spaces, able to significantly improve the everyday, ordinary experience of living, amend the heaviness of the inevitable hostility of certain crossing zones between the home intimacy and the vague, anonymous dimension of the external areas.

And finally, a third project theme highlights the strength that small productive spaces, inserted in the open spaces have in designing *forms of mediation between neighbourhoods and the city*, and contribute to the building, at a bigger scale, of more complex nets and ecological systems.

Thus the food perspective invites us to read again those parts belonging to the ‘public city’ and the suburbs in general, finding in the apparent fragmentation and disorder of different forms of colonisation and appropriation of vague and/or abandoned spaces, a resource to start a shared project towards redesign and development, from the bottom up, of the many spaces that have ecological potential (Mininni, 2012).

A more specific designing translation urge us to recognise, exactly in these cultivated spaces, the means for a landscape mediation at an urban scale, that can be functionally thought again as spaces for productive practices, as environmental doorways towards the ecological balance, or, as perception spaces about the act of ‘crossing’.

By getting the far away close by, and the close by approachable, the food spaces can function to redesign and strengthen the social and physical nets, in the different neighbourhoods as well as in the cities, both at the small and at the bigger scale.

They can, again, contribute to modify the everyday habits of the residents, at the same time guiding them to aware practices of use and re-use of their life spaces, that could be progressively reconfigured in a more ecological key, with an improvement of their resilience.

By reducing distances, guaranteeing accessibility and encouraging knowledge, the food spaces, both in those council housing neighbourhoods and in the city, put themselves forward again to assume, as already was in the past, the role of rightful places: ‘right spaces’ that become real in new shapes where rituals and the time necessary for preparation and consumption can continue to offer the comfort of a constancy that renovates itself through change.

## 5. NOTES

[1] Among the many reflections and researches already developed on this subject, one can see, for example Mininni, 2012; Marino, Cavallo, 2014; Palazzo, Nobile, a cura di, 2012; Falletti, a cura di, 2012.

[2] For a critique review of these projects see Pellegrini, 2015.

[3] Like for example in the projects 'Cafè sur place' and 'Centrale Merguez': these and other similar experiences are available online at <http://www.collectifetc.com/realisation/>

[4] See, for example, <http://www.ecologos.it/portfolio-items/picnic-urbano/>

[5] There are the research projects in the 'public city' areas in Italy during which the participation moments happened through the rituality of the sharing of the food, often exactly in those open spaces belonging to the very areas where the project or survey were taking place: see Metta, Olivetti 2016

[6] The food insecurity is described as impossibility of physical and economic access to a sufficient quantity of safe and nutritious food, so as to encounter the necessities and food preferences of different people and guarantee them a healthy and safe life. The reference comes from the definition formulated during the Fao World Food Summit of 1996.

[7] See for example: Stepney city farm, London, <http://stepneycityfarm.org/>

[8] Every family registered in the programme, receives a cultivation kit box with compost, seeds and a practical guide, while street volunteers give support with competence and advice on the sowing and gathering. See <http://foodupfront.org/>

[9] The project, active since 2007, has transformed 21 sites in the London suburbs. See <http://www.what-if.info/websites/>; <http://www.vacant-lot.info/>

[10] *Breakfast club* is a system that sees to the distribution of low-cost breakfasts for school children, trying to improve health, reduce the number of latecomers and prevent truancy. It can also give low-cost healthcare. The initiatives like '*cook-and-eat demonstration*' are generally conducted by nutritionists and intend improving competences and guarantee a healthy nutrition, actions that can lead to obtaining a professional education and a job. Thanks to the exchange/sharing of recipes (*share a recipe*) this project can help people to share experiences.

[11] More information about the project can be found online at <http://www.socialhousingartsnetwork.org.uk/advocacy-document/>

[12] In Trieste, for example, there was a significant programme: Habitat- Microaree, initiated in 1998 thanks to an alliance among Trieste Council, the local Health Service and Ater (Territorial Firm for Residential Building). Among the initiatives, the realization of a neighbourhood service called 'Portierato Sociale' that gives assistance, help for the residents, etc. <http://www.ater.trieste.it/?cat=70>

[13] In Trieste one can find the 'pastini', characteristic terracing of the karstic coast, cultivated with grapevines or olive trees, next to the neighbourhoods closer to the Karst plateau. See Pellegrini, 2015.

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# Collective Spaces of Informal and Formal Markets as Drivers of Self-Organisation Processes of Urban Growth in Emerging Cities: Learning from Onitsha, Nigeria

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Onitsha is a commercial city of more than two million residents (NPC, 2009), strategically and geographically located along the lower part of river Niger in south-eastern region of Nigeria. It has a history of trading dated back to the 17th century (Okeke, 1997). Onitsha is a city mainly inhabited by Igbo ethnic nation; the third largest ethnic nations of Nigeria (NPC, 2009). There are more than 250 other ethnic nations with different languages in Nigeria (Blench, 2012). In the 1960s, Onitsha could boast of having the biggest open air market in the whole of West Africa as trade further expanded (Okeke, 1997). Unfortunately, the Market and the city suffered from the Biafran civil war (1967 - 1970) and regressed. The city was politically abandoned by the military dictatorships and political instability that ensued for the next twenty-nine years (1970 - 1999). Today, the markets in Onitsha have grown from a single market to a conglomeration of different various markets with specialised trading cores. There are more than twenty specialised Markets, a population increase from seventy-seven thousand residents in the 1960s to a population of two million residents within the current metropolis. (NPC, 2009; UN-HABITAT, 2009; UN-HABITAT, 2012). During the working hours of the weekdays, Onitsha city often doubles in its population to almost four million because of the burgeoning economic activities and material flows in, out and through the city. The reason is because the city is a



gateway and transportation node to the other emerging urban agglomerations of south-eastern Nigeria serving a population of more than sixty million people – about a third of Nigerian population (ibid.). Trading and commercial activities is spread everywhere in the city, blurring the boundaries between residential, commercial, industrial and administrative districts.

On the other hand, the city is plagued with lack of pipe borne water supply, epileptic electricity supply from the national grid, poor waste management, traffic congestion, uncoordinated and poor internal circulation, security challenges, and illegal settlements. However, there appears to be a very organised network of self-organised entities that run the markets, transportation systems, security of goods and services; while the city grows at an astronomical rate. This growth is not in accordance to the institutional framework prepared for the city and is dominated by the emergence of these market cores in almost every corner of the city. This paper introduces Onitsha city, the markets in Onitsha and the contextual background of this emerging city in Nigeria. The contextual interpretations would be an update on the previous research (Chukwuemeka, 2014) as the transformation going on in the city is rapid and the dynamics of the growth is not yet comprehensively understood. The paper starts with the urban history of Onitsha, contextual analysis of the city in the Nigerian state, urban analysis Onitsha - nevertheless limited to market areas- and cultural reading of spatially bound social networks within these market spaces. The study will cite examples from two largest markets from the conglomeration of the markets. These examples are designated in accordance with their evolution trajectories and relationship with institutional hierarchies of governmental authorities. The paper reveals the self-organisation processes of Onitsha markets and how collective spaces of informal and formal markets drive the phenomenon and the pace of transformation of the city.

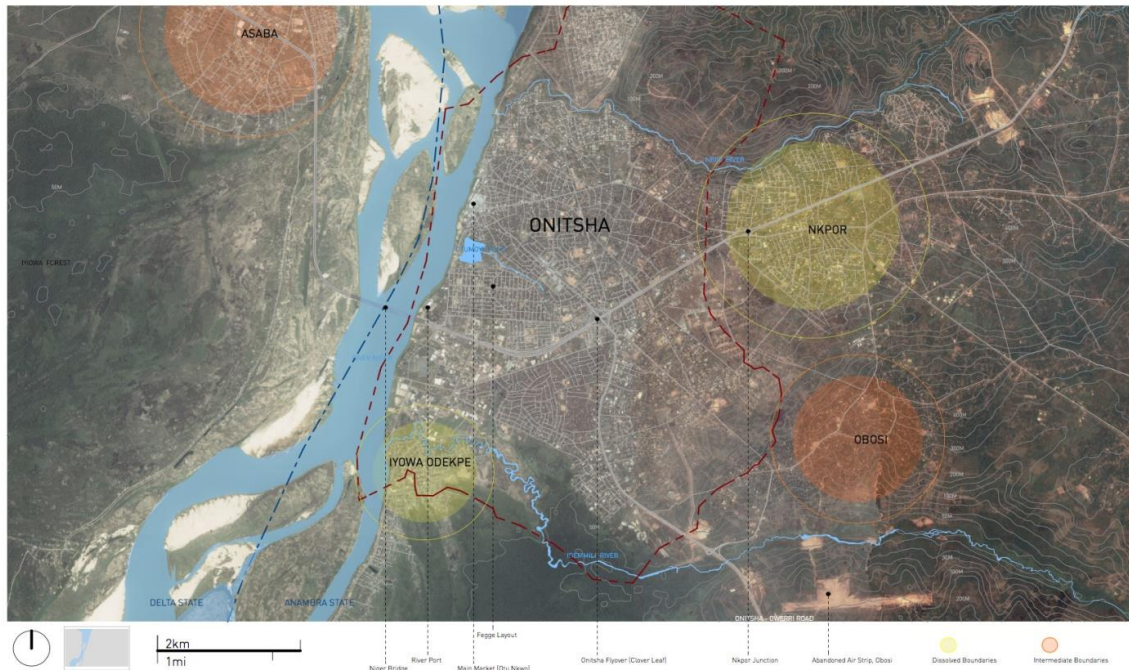


Figure 1.1: Satellite Image of Onitsha (Source: IKONOS, 2013)

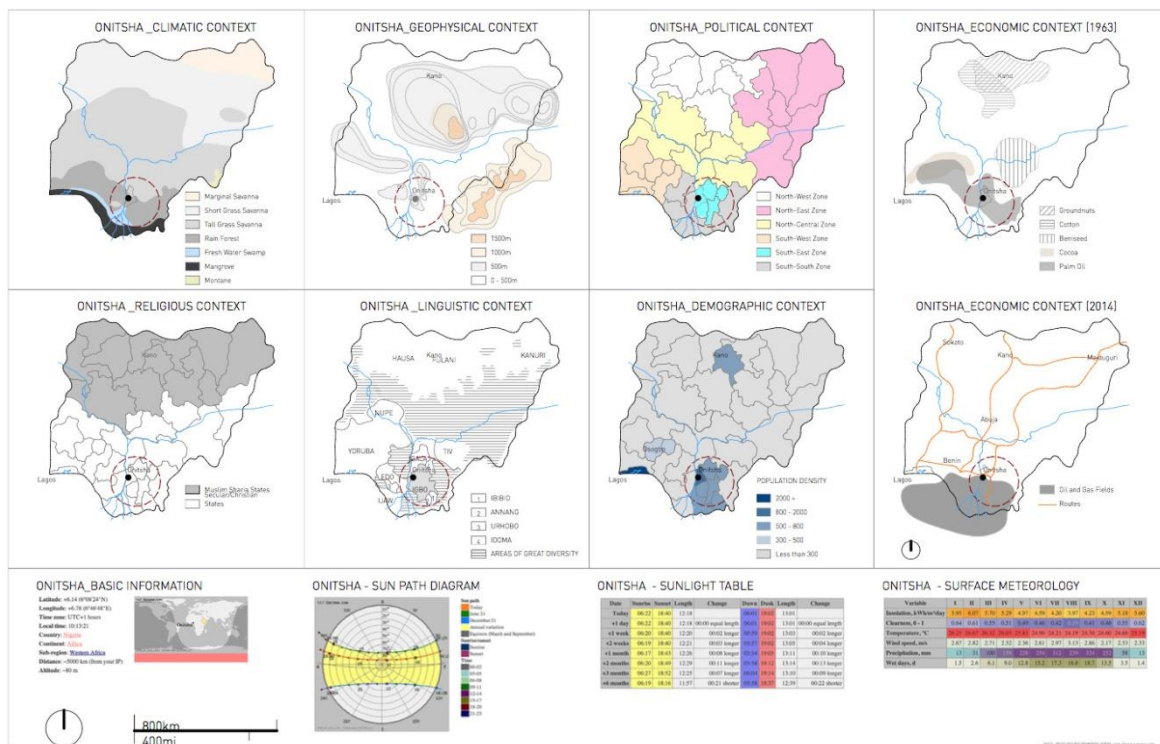


Figure 1.2: Onitsha in Nigerian Contexts (Vincent Chukwuemeka) (Source: NPC, 2009; CIA World Fact Book, 2014; & FAO, 2009 )

## 2. ONITSHA: URBAN GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE EMERGING CITY

Onitsha just like most cities in Africa has defied the conventional laws of planning and with little studies of what constitutes the seemingly similar characteristics. On first arrival to the city from western and northern region of Nigeria after crossing the historical river Niger Bridge, one is confronted with an animated urban environment with distinct commercial character. Sales of variety of goods with both local and international origins, strong local and cultural identities, gyration of motorcycle and tricycles, kaleidoscopic images and concomitant sounds of commercial advertisement, fumes of combustions mixed with pungent smells of waste and aroma of foods emanating from unsuspecting sources. Scenes of informal traders niching on opportunities of urban voids, slow traffic, their symbiotic appendages with formal markets – image of a ordered structures of wealth in a disordered city. However, on closer examination, there are structures of organisation as one traverses closer to the city and through the markets. The chaotic image of Onitsha stems from juxtaposition of complex dynamics of trading activities, mobility, vernacular constructions; and in absence of conventional city infrastructure. There are markets spread across the city and these markets exist in formal and informal units creating different emerging systems (Johnson, 2002; Prigogine & Stengers 1984). The conglomeration of these markets constitutes the fundamental infrastructure of what has become the most integral part of city. Trading is the most important economic activity ranging from open-air shops to warehouses located strategically in the city with consideration to access and flexibility of material flows. Onitsha like 'most cities in Africa', is in permanent state of crisis, because of unfathomable levels of deprivation, cruelty and routine dispossession of the citizens by the existing political systems. Consequently, it has involuntarily resorted to a self-organised transformative urban tactics (Pieterse et al., 2013; Parnell, 2014; Simone, 2004; Davis, 2007; & Myers, 2011). Most of these cities in Africa have complex contexts and historical dimensions that are difficult for governance and stakeholder synergies; hence demand special interventions. However, there is no single 'recipe' for these desired interventions. The complexities shaping these cities includes; political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental forces. The visible and hidden forces, material flows, ingenuity, creativity and entrepreneurial energy playing out within the collective spaces of informal and formal markets determine the growth patterns of the city.

Onitsha is one of the most important emerging cities in Nigeria shaped by history and has bewildered keen observers with the uncontrolled urban growth. Taking reference from presence of British colonials till the independence of Nigerian state in 1960, the city's most challenging period was during the economic and political subjugation of south-eastern region of Nigeria after the Igbos lost severely in the brutal Biafran pogrom that claimed almost three million lives; which were mostly women and children. (Achebe, 2012). The inland river port was closed. The

southern functional wharfs on bight of Biafra were also closed off from commercial activities serving Onitsha and other inner cities of the south-eastern Nigeria. These measures were put in place by the State actors in deterrence to another attempt of secession of Biafra State. The southern coastline was however restricted to petroleum products and Lagos on the western region of Nigeria was made the de facto international gateway city to Nigeria. The only functioning wharfs open to commodities importation and exportation are only in Lagos from 1970, the time of reunification of the Nigerian State till date. This single decision radically redefined the material flows in and out of Onitsha city and surrounding cities. Almost all commodity goods travel about 400km by road from Lagos to Onitsha. The long distance forced most of the traders to locate their outlets in Lagos nearer to the wharfs. New urban appropriations and market emerged in Lagos since most citizens from the defunct Biafra lost their land rights in other Nigerian cities including Lagos. This is one of the scenarios that was difficult for Rem Koolhaas to grasp, in his Harvard Project on the City (Lagos) (Koolhaas, 2005). Koolhaas identified Alaba market as a self-organised wealth system in the heart of Lagos. Interestingly, Alaba Market is an extension of Onitsha Markets to a multicultural, diverse and international environment for better business exposure. Scholars have presented an alternative view of Rem Koolhaas' Lagos Project and have actually explained in details of the major issues that he failed to look at while studying Lagos. They have rightly described his project as an individual architect's experience with the city, rather than a historically situated documentary about a city in Africa. (Gandy, 2006; Godlewski, 2010; Fourchard, 2011; Ikioda, 2013).

Urbanisation and population is surging in African continent. Nigeria's population alone is estimated to reach 400 million by the year 2050 with more than 70% of the population below the age of 40 years. Faced with exploding population, depleting resources, environmental degradation from the resources, scholars and professionals are challenged more than ever to rethink the role of informality in societies of emerging cities. Considering a scenario with teeming and youthful population with high unemployment rates, ethnic tension, weakening of Nigerian Petrol-State from the waning oil prices, religiously motivated restiveness in north-eastern Nigeria disrupting annual farm seasons and brewing grievance for another secession of Biafran state; this is a potential disaster in waiting if this trend is not reversed effectively and efficiently. Nigeria presently with 56.2% of total size of its economy belonging to the informal sector has the largest size of informal economy in sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, this region of the continent also shares the highest concentrations of informal sector in the world. (Mörtenböck & Mooshammer, 2015). The role of urban markets (both informal and formal) in this scenario are very crucial. Informal markets operate on edge of urban conditions – technological changes, political changes, inequality, conflicts and exhibit great sense of flexibility and adaptability. This has been relatively demonstrated in the catalogued of number of variations of informal markets as a phenomenon with relatable characteristics to Onitsha (Mörtenböck & Mooshammer, 2015).



The formal sector in Nigerian economy has systematically and continuously failed to provide jobs in the increasingly populated urban areas. Especially in multi-ethnic contraption laced with complex communication, economic, security, administrative, political layers and most of all; the historical dimensions of each of these layers. The informal sector on the other hand has been extremely important for sustenance of jobs in Nigerian cities and other emerging cities of global south but are on constant assault from the State actors (Sassen, 1994). Studies have shown that criminalisation of these activities is certainly a wrong strategy. (Sassen, 1994; Bhan, 2009). There is a need to redefine informality because this it is not limited to only the poor and low classes of people in the city. Furthermore, informality presently, is also not limited to the ambits of legality unlike the International Labor Organisation's definition in 1972 report (ILO, 1972). In fact, there is informality in the upper echelons of the society from financial capitals to political relationships (Tonkiss, 2012). What is happening in this harsh treatment meted out to whatever that has the 'informal' label is a case of power definitions. In most cases, these attacks are carried out only when the 'informal' becomes successful and some larger forces become interested in seizing the success. This is paradoxically executed mostly under judicial means and mostly under the pretext of informal activities competing with 'formal' economic entities. (Mörtenböck & Mooshammer, 2015). In Nigerian cities like Onitsha, the informal activities have manifested as trading activities and have found niches in collective spaces of Markets. Scholars have also identified the importance of the informal markets as public places providing opportunities for upward social mobility for most vulnerable groups in cities around the world (Watson, 2006; Janssens & Sezer, 2013; Mele et al., 2015). In Onitsha, the informal markets were crucial in the economic resurgence of the Igbo nation after the Biafran war. Taking advantage of cultural flexibility, the women with historical emancipatory roles among the Igbos played the most significant roles in contributing to the household income generating activities. (Achebe, 2012).



Figure 2.1: Onitsha in 1962 (Source: A Mighty Tree, 2011)



Figure 2.2: Head Bridge Market in 2012 (Photo: Nairaland)

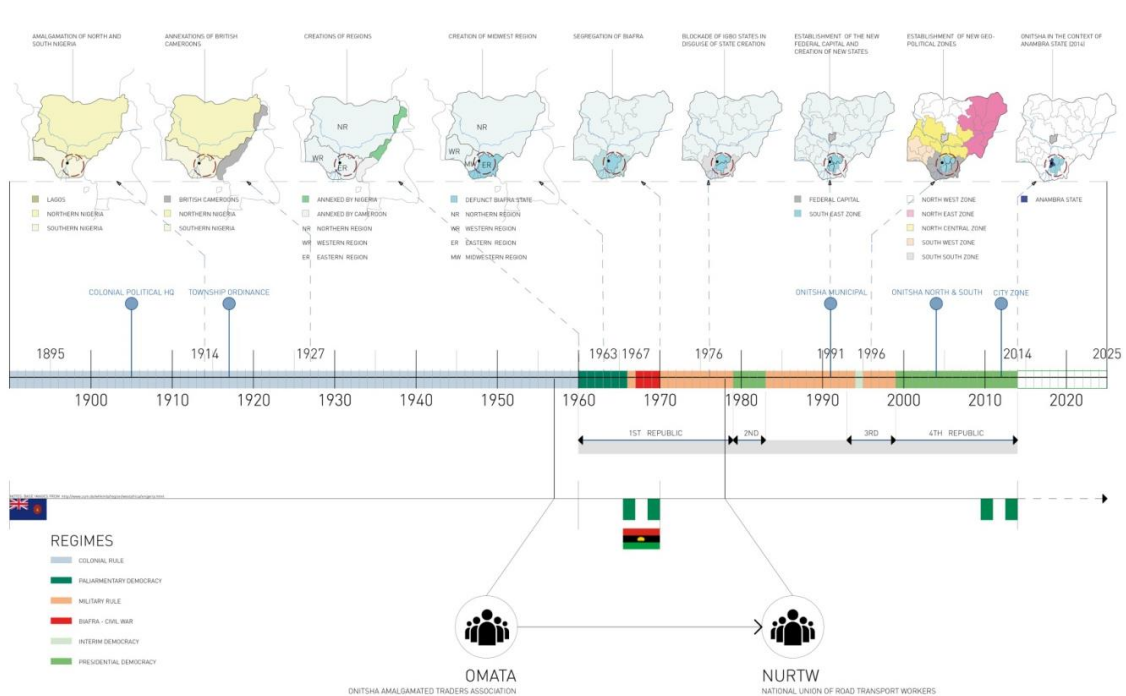


Figure 2.3: Onitsha Political Timeline (Illustration: Vincent Chukwuemeka) (Source: WHKMLA, 2013)

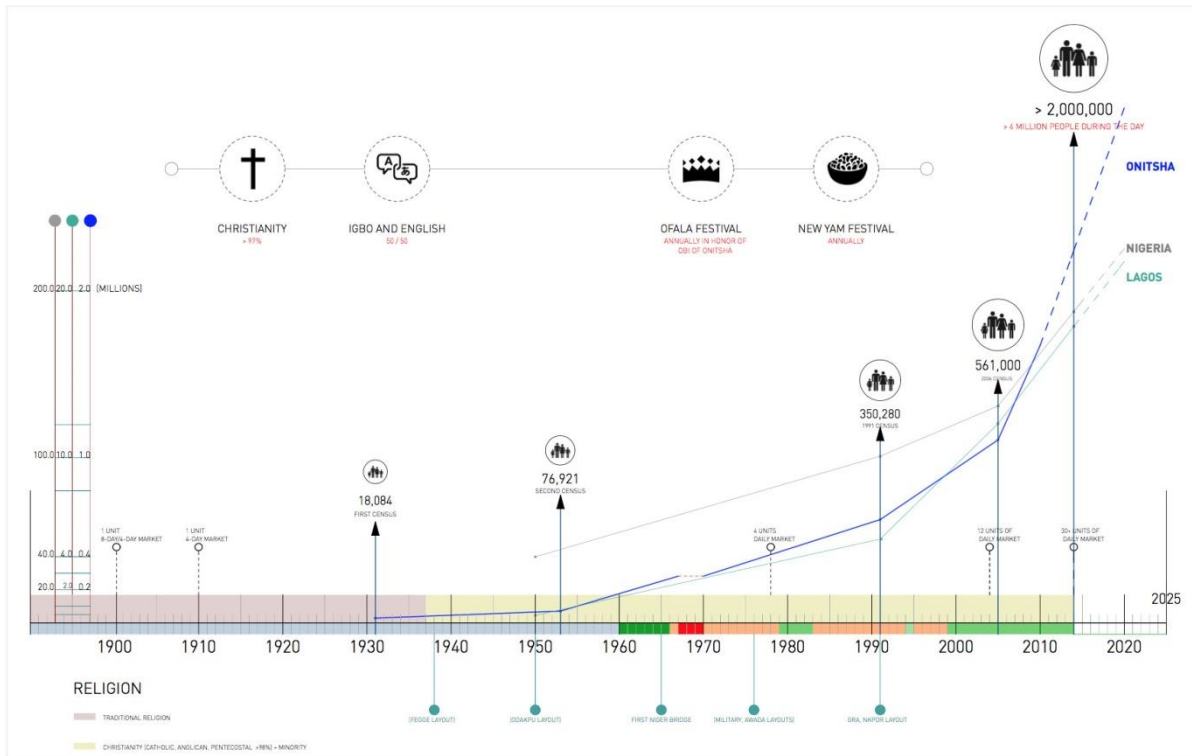


Figure 2.4: Onitsha Demographic Timeline (Illustration: Vincent Chukwuemeka) (Source: NPC, 2009)

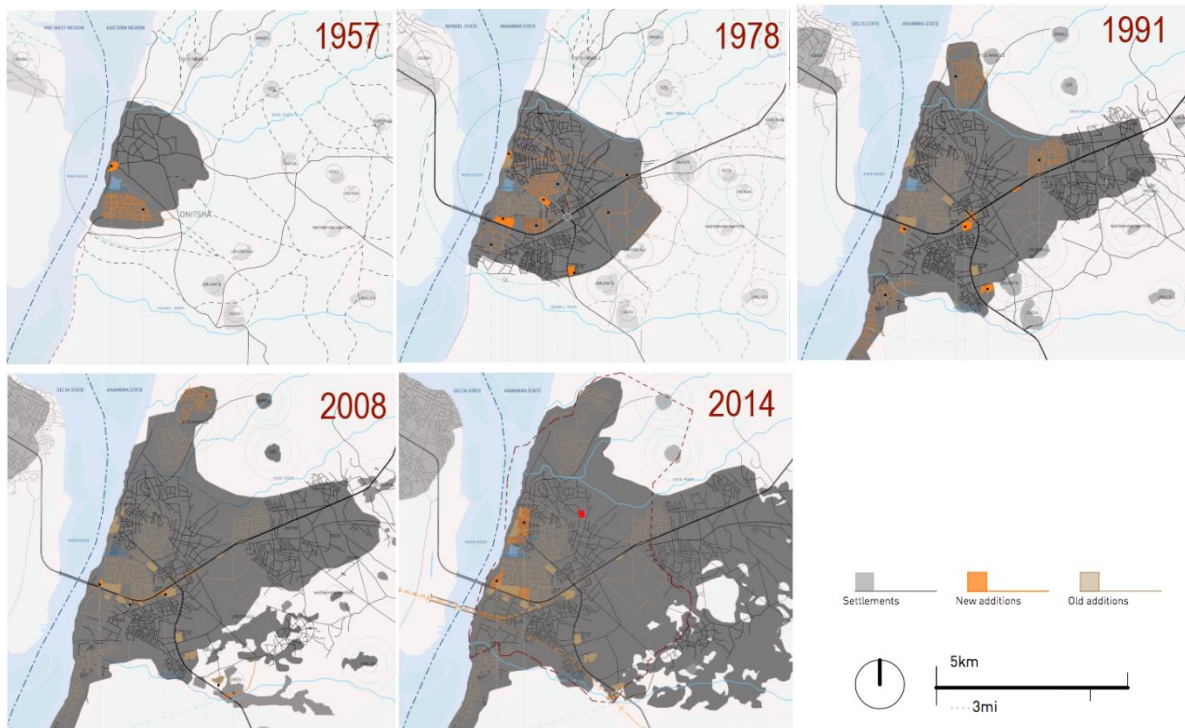


Figure 2.5: Onitsha Urban Growth (Illustration: Vincent Chukwuemeka) (Source: A Mighty Tree, 2011; LAND-SAT, 1991; IKONOS, 2008; IKONOS, 2013; GOOGLE Map, 2014)

### 3. ONITSHA: MARKETS AS PUBLIC SPACES FOR LOCAL LIFE AND LOCAL IDENTITIES

Markets are often organized along social institutions as what De Landa describes as ‘city distribution systems’ (De Landa, 2000). These social institutions determine how materials and energy flows through a city. In other words, according to De Landa (2000), these social institutions plan or map strategies of both time and space which enables formation of wider networks in the systems. (ibid.). Markets in Onitsha, with several social institutions maintain strong ties to global trade routes connecting other parts of Nigeria, including other cities of the bordering countries to Nigeria. The languages of transaction are mostly in Igbo, Pidgin, and English. The market is the culmination of the what recent studies have described as ‘African Informal Urbanism; demanding a re-evaluation of pedagogy, language and culture of practice to understand the urbanisation phenomenon (Mingas, 2012). Within these markets lies myriads of collective spaces that act as catalysts for extensive urban complexes of productivities to emerge, but these complexes generally vanish after each use (Guattari & Deleuze, 1987). Complexes of mobility, material flows, spatial appropriation, and social expressions. In Igbo culture (Achebe, 2010), the market is a fundamental part of the Igbo society and has metamorphosed to what is seen in Onitsha today. The markets serve as a social, economic and spiritual public and collective places. Historically, the markets serve as the calendar system of the society. Four market days; (Eke, Orie, Afor and Nkwo) make a week. These days are shared by neighbouring and distant communities. It is organised in a way that each community adopts a day among the four market days for its trading activities. The bigger markets trade every sixteen days or longer intervals, while the smaller markets trade every four days’ cycle. The philosophy behind this system is a pacific one. Before the arrivals of the British colonials, the people believed that conflict springs up between societies without trade and have developed a system where goods can be interchanged at intervals. This practice is still ongoing till today and currently a two-calendar system is adopted: the seven-day calendar system for the daily and formal activities in the region while the traditional four-day calendar system serves for cultural and traditional obligations like marriages and festivals.

Markets in Onitsha exist as informal and formal markets, grouped in accordance with their evolution trajectories and relationship with institutional hierarchies. This paper will focus on insights from two biggest markets – (i) Main Market which derives its name from the location of the first market in Onitsha from time immemorial. This was largely an informal market when looked at from the lenses of formal political governance. This market has nevertheless over the years undergone transformations by formal additions of other units to it. (ii) Head Bridge Market which also derives its name from the river Niger Bridge. The core of this market was built under the auspices of the federal government in 1979 in agreement with traders at Onitsha.



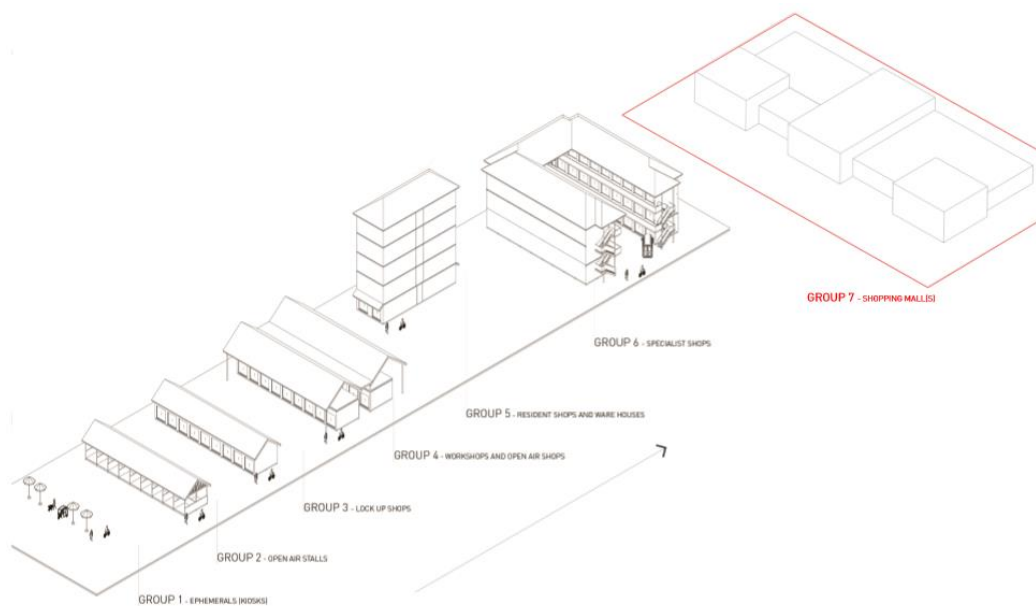
However, it has also been transformed by multiple additions of informal units. These markets, each spanning over more than 4 square kilometres have evolved as spatial materialisations of the forces, flows and self-organisation processes of the market systems (both informal and formal) within the urban context of Onitsha. These markets are not only locations of material flow exchanges but also of monetary nature from local to global scale (Mörtenböck & Mooshammer, 2015). The structural relationships between the informal and formal markets are symbiotic. These relationship structures are both internal and external. Internal when rules are defined by guilds or local actors. In this case, the informal markets adjust to the available resources and social alliances specific to a time and place. External when rules are defined by the State or greater external political forces. The informal markets in this case becomes fluid, adopts a local identity and weaves into social institutions within the markets. A good example is currency exchange markets and how they influence material flows from abroad, creating infrastructures of emergence for demand and supplies.

Peter Mörtenböck and Helge Mooshammer (2015) in *Informal Markets Atlas* have mapped locations of various informal marketplaces in some categorisations such as Notorious Markets, Post-Conflict Markets, Border Markets, Interstitial Markets, Container Markets, Recycling Markets, Wayside Markets, People's markets and Hipster markets. In this compilation, these markets are named using the most conspicuous activities. The naming of the markets does not comprehensively describe the meaning of these markets to the localities they represent. The informal market situation in Lagos for example, is categorised as recycle market at Alaba or people's market at Oshodi. But this descriptions are insufficient. Alaba Market like most markets in Lagos, are formal markets with strong political presence. In fact the name is 'Alaba International Market' signifying its global connections. In Lagos, market organisations could dictate to state governor their choice of municipal chairperson candidates. (Grossman, 2016). Markets in emerging cities in Nigeria wield enormous political power and negotiates often from positions of strength. In Onitsha, markets have even greater power than they do in Lagos. This is because all traders both informal and formal are interlinked under unifying political organisations. Among all the catalogued markets in the *Informal Markets Atlas*, it is evidently clear that these informal markets share common characteristics that is observed in Onitsha; - a skillful handling of indeterminacy making informal trade successful (Mörtenböck et al., 2015). Informal markets have the potential to thrive in plurality of possibilities and networks of diversity. (Amin, 2008). Markets in Onitsha are locations of social cohesion encouraging a melting pot of different scales of diversities (of goods, people, ideologies, languages). Markets in Onitsha acts as pacifying grounds for what in other parts of the city manifest as inter-ethnic hotbeds. Markets are not only locations of monetary exchange but where sustainable urban strategies surfaces in the form of spatial compactness, intense productivity (manufacturing and trading in same place), recycling (up-cycling), and strong community relations.

Markets and the self-organised social entities that run them have given property rights in most

Nigerian cities where it is lacking. The function of governing structures that run these markets have shown an immense political influence they have on the governmental authorities (Grossman, 2016). The city is shaped by the constant struggles presented by these markets between the institutional hierarchy of State actors and self-organised mesh of social institutions in the markets. The locations of these markets are strategic in the city and physical access is a major consideration. In Onitsha, the markets are located along the major road transportation network that cuts across the city. The Markets in Onitsha embody the major economic activity in the city. The ownership models of these markets have also undergone transformation within the last years. During the pre-colonial times, the market was collectively owned by the communities. This was altered afterwards when the markets and the control of trade was seized from the communities and each member of community was assigned a place to trade. Today, there are collective stakeholder arrangement among organisations, individual traders and in some cases by the governing authorities. These Markets acts as attractors and has provided platforms of interaction with governing authorities in the form of social institutions set up in accordance with materials of trade, location of individual shops, size of trade, type of services provided and local communities memberships. Markets in Onitsha provide opportunities for the unemployed urban poor and have also given women and minors real economic power. There is also an apprenticeship system where young men and women will learn a trade, get a start-up grant from their 'master/mistress' after usually five years of service. The new business venture could be either continuation of their bosses' line of trade or a new branch to expand further links to where their bosses had not been able to cover.

Markets in Onitsha also provided platforms for co-operative associations where individuals use collective funds as grants with zero interest, often rotationally and from different traders to go into business, build community schools, hospitals and even sent youths to universities instead of bank loans. These markets served as economic mobility platform and local infrastructure, lifting several of lives from abject poverty. Albeit the economic importance of these markets, they also serve as public functions for the traders and not just the visitors. Parents invite their children to the markets after school hours. Friendships are built. Formal markets in Onitsha open from 7am in the morning and close at 6pm in the evening. The informal markets however do not have a specific opening hours but rely on situational opportunities. For most of these families in the formal markets, the whole day is spent in these markets and therefore spend their leisure hours inside the markets. There are entertainments, restaurants, bars, locations for watching events like footballs, local foods being hawked from one lane of the market to another – a myriad of symbiotic arrangements between informal traders and formal traders constituting a complex formation of collective spaces. These spaces at intermediate scale and are interwoven in everyday lives of inhabitants of Onitsha.



*Figure 3.1: Onitsha Market Typologies (Illustration: Vincent Chukwuemeka)*

#### 4. ONITSHA: COLLECTIVE SPACES OF INFORMAL AND FORMAL MARKETS (MAIN MARKET AND HEAD-BRIDGE MARKET)

Collective spaces are not synonyms for semi public/private, threshold or transition space. Its main attribute is to be shared and accessed, including private as well as public properties. Collective spaces exude different meanings when there are demonstrated multiplicities of access, territorial boundaries and uses. (Scheerlinck, 2013). In Onitsha, collective spaces of the informal and formal markets are intertwined. At first glance, the streets appear to be the domain of informal markets. A clear distinction must be made here based on visibility of these markets; what I would describe as peripheral informal markets and traversal informal markets. Peripheral because it operates within the recognisable thresholds of territorial boundaries (Habraken, 1998) Traversal informal markets are more complex. It has both physical and social presence and adopts a fluidity of sequential gaps and overlaps (Scheerlinck, 2013) of accesses, uses and formations. This type of informal markets defines the material flows in the city. Collective spaces in Onitsha markets are territories of symbiosis between informal and formal markets. The informal markets depend on the spatial structural configurations (Hillier, 1996) provided by the formal markets whereas the formal markets depend on informal markets as a buffer from State interferences. Collective market spaces in Onitsha cuts across the overall layout of defined formal boundaries of markets and also within the identified typologies. Collective spaces are the underlying structural fabric of the markets – in both informal and formal markets. John Habraken (1998) structured the urban fabric in three orders as; physical order, territorial order

and cultural order. These are indispensable contribution in the reading of urban fabric and built environment and sets the first stage of for the investigation at Onitsha. However, this is limited in reading the uses of collective spaces of informal markets since these uses are intertwined in Habraken orders. Helge Mooshammer and Peter Mörttenböck (2015) developed another important distinction which are: mobility, land-use and transnationality. These distinctions, like the Habraken orders, however are on macro level and engages at the intersections of operations of these markets.

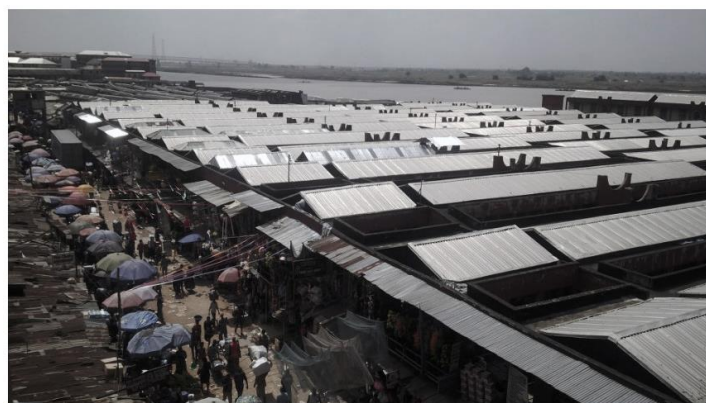
Collective spaces of informal and formal market in Onitsha spans across transportation nodes, visceral networks of functional spaces and forms, and concentric social spheres of collectivity, composed of territorial sequences and formed from the self-organisation networks of organised wealth that run the city. In the latest typological developments of markets in Onitsha, very formal and typical of contemporary monolithic styled shopping malls, collective spaces here are interiorised and inverted. (Scheerlinck, 2013). The manifestation of collective space in a mall is one with structural accesses to the different boxes of shops within a larger box of built-form with stricter territorial control. Informality is not present in this enclosure. While the functional operation of collective market spaces is time bound, that of informal market spaces are based on opportunistic scenarios. For example, informal market can spring up on a non-formal market day so far as the enabling conditions of profitability and flexibility are met. The understanding of collective spaces of informal and formal markets will require a layering of physical, social, cultural, economic and political framework within a specificity of territorial definitions. During the daily closure of the market, the informal traders begin to form corridors from the core of the formal markets towards the transport nodes and stretching to the residential streets as well. This temporal activity of trade is a sequential transition of intensity of uses before the emblematic silence of departures. The markets define the locations of transport centers for arrival and departure platforms. There are public transportation nodes in each market with different sections for goods and for materials. The long-distance travel nodes are found strategically situated around the 'clover leaf' interchange that is conspicuous on the satellite image of the Onitsha city. However, these Market spaces in some instances generate a lot of pedestrian traffic creating an emergent shared space which provides ample contact and safety (Jacobs, 1961) and have guaranteed reasonable security inside these markets. It can be remarked often that the market sidewalks are safer than the 'external' streets of Onitsha because the markets have their own security and law enforcements segments in place.

The presence of diversity of people, goods and mingling of material flows produce rhythms of relational possibilities – of use and function, resonance, structures of spatial organisation and multiplicities. (Amin, 2008). These constant dynamics among the commuters, the buyers, the traders, the service providers, the residents around these markets, define the rules of spatial ordering and control. This reflects the complex uses of collective spaces of the designated markets. The typologies of the identified market cores include both artisan markets and

commodity markets. The architectural character and composition of the market buildings are shaped by economics. This is even extended to the design of the shops in some typologies that consists of cubes of approximately 3m in length, width and height and enveloping material is determined by the goods to be sold and operations at of the shop. For example, the perishable goods are mostly open shades. The ones with valuable goods are concrete buildings to protect from theft and fire accidents. The utilitarian typology for the residential shop houses seen almost everywhere in the city were adopted by the residents to maximise the use of scarce plots of land and for productivity. It is a place where practicality and convenience defines location of facilities and activities of trading, housing, transport, manufacturing, warehousing and services. Within the framework of streetscape territories project (Scheerlinck, 2012), a wider strategy is adopted in unravelling the physical, territorial and cultural parameters that define the human perception, appropriation of streetscapes, detailed uses of collective spaces. For the designated markets, it will include the delineation of these spaces regarding proximity, permeability accessibility, programmatic adjacencies, strategies of densification, readings of non-functional spatial qualities, and functional delimitations (Scheerlinck, 2012). The research will further examine the infrastructural linkages and cultural parameters that define the local identities and hierarchies of institutional organisation (Hayden, 1997; Hou, 2013; Onyegiri & Diogu, 2004; Schoonjans et al., 2008).



Figure 4.1: Main Market (Photo: Vincent Chukwuemeka)





*Figure 4.2: Main Market (Photo: Vincent Chukwuemeka)*

## 5. ONITSHA: SELF-ORGANISATION PROCESSES

In most parts of the developing world, the dysfunctional characteristics of the dominant governing systems in solving the citizens' problems have given rise to self-organised systems (Harvey, 2014). The hierarchy (of formal State actors) and self-organised mesh (of marketers, transporters, service providers) run parallel to each other in Onitsha. In some cases, opposite to each other when there is clear conflict of interests in the city. In this case, often taxation, spatial appropriation and land uses. The formal governing authority have a delicate relationship with the marketers when taxation is concerned. There has been an explosive reaction from traders during the control of markets and trade by British colonials. These were mainly women and at some point, were taxed heavily which led to a revolt against warrant chiefs by women groups established to fight off external influences of the British colonials through the 'indirect rule'. The most prominent of this event was in another commercial city, 153km south of Onitsha named Aba. There was a revolt (Aba Women Riot) which has been identified as the first of its kind organised by women in all British colonies during the 1920s (Forrest, 1994).

The self-organisation processes of urban growth in Onitsha are dependent on individual aspirations that is relevant on collectiveness of larger social networks. The biggest achievement of informal traders lies in the creation of a unique 'common good'; the establishment of a market environment which provides the traders the ability to cultivate relevance within an already structured formal spaces. There are three active conglomerates of organisations, that are integral to the self-organisation processes of Onitsha. These organisations derive members from the markets, transporters and residents and are interlinked. 'Markets-based' organisation is the Onitsha Markets Traders Association (OMATA). It was formed in 1957 to protect traders interest against the government of the day and the external influences. The membership of this association is based on type of trade, commodity, place of trade and volume of trade. In fact, it has multiple layers of social connections and sub groups. OMATA collaborates with private and public authorities in building new markets with further fragmented ownership models. This organisation has participated in the construction of all the currently, 28 different markets in Onitsha and counting. 'Transporters-based' organisation is the Nigerian Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW). Shortly after setting up outlet markets in Lagos during the apex of dictatorship in Nigeria, OMATA also went ahead to establish a transport outlet to protect their goods transported via road networks across the country. This transportation body was to later become NURTW after they went into alliance with other motorists and transporters from parts of Nigeria in 1978 (Forrest, 1994). It has till date maintained relevance in Nigerian highways with extension from freights to passenger transportation systems. The spin-offs from

these socio-political and economic body gave rise to the formations for transport organisations in the whole of Nigeria because they needed a political platform to protect their goods along the highways. The third organisation is the 'Resident-based' association. These association are fragmented in relation to different constituencies, districts and streets. There is however a connection and relationship with each other since the memberships are mostly shared by the same actors. A cumulative and somewhat monopoly of market, transport and real estate has radically transformed the city of Onitsha and propagated the rapid urban growth.

The collective spaces under the influence of these three social structures define the pace of transformation and these social structures must negotiate with the State apparatuses to a favourable extent. These organisations also redefined the urban planning and zonal laws of Onitsha city and forced the hand of politicians to serve the larger public's right to the city (Bhan, 2009; Harvey, 2014; Lefebvre, 1996). One instance is the largest informal residential area of the Onitsha city, called Okpoko District. This is the densest neighborhood in city with mostly the traders and apprentices as occupants. It is strategically located in proximity to transport nodes, services and access to the markets. Okpoko District lies on the flood plains and was considered unsafe for habitation due to the seasonal floods from overflowing rivers. However, initial attempts by the governments to move the people based on safety considerations was voided by the three organisations and the government was forced to initiate the construction of drainage canals to divert the threatening floods. These forms of power struggle come into play because these organisations have the potential to punish any politician that oversteps the delicate lines of power. These spheres of influence and activities generate the collective spaces of the markets, which in turn define the urban growth processes and patterns of the city.

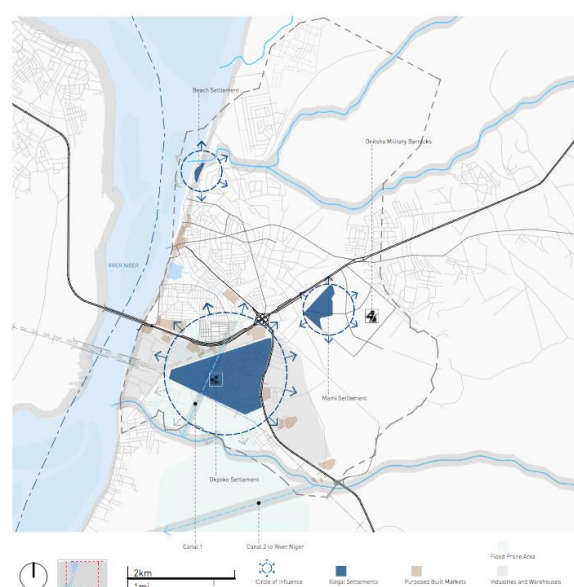
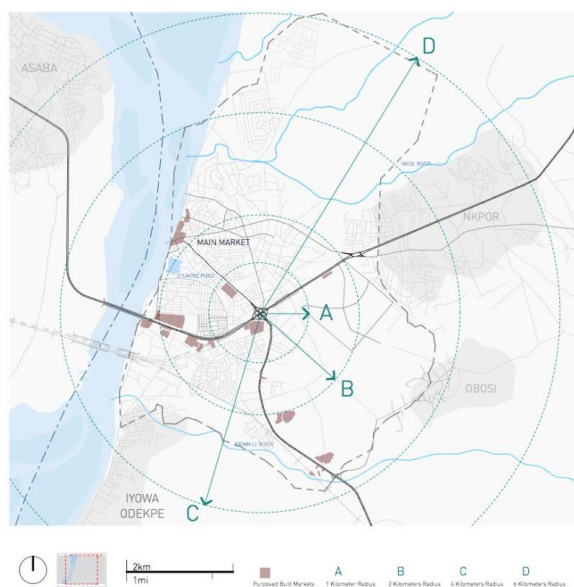


Figure 5.1: Mobility - Access Radii (Illustration: Vincent Chukwuemeka)

Figure 5.2: Illegal Settlements - Okpoko and Barracks Settlements

(Illustration: Vincent Chukwuemeka)

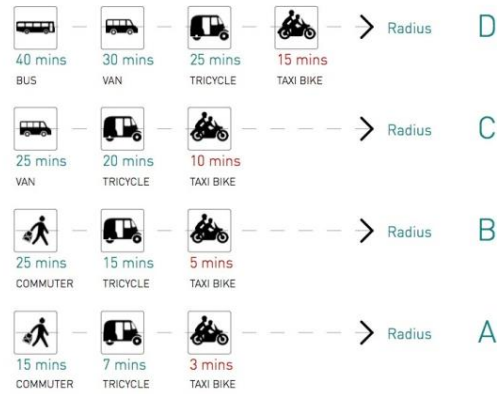


Figure 5.3: Mobility - Typology (Illustration: Vincent Chukwuemeka)



Figure 5.4: Mini Vans for Traffic Manoeuvring (Photo: Vincent Chukwuemeka)



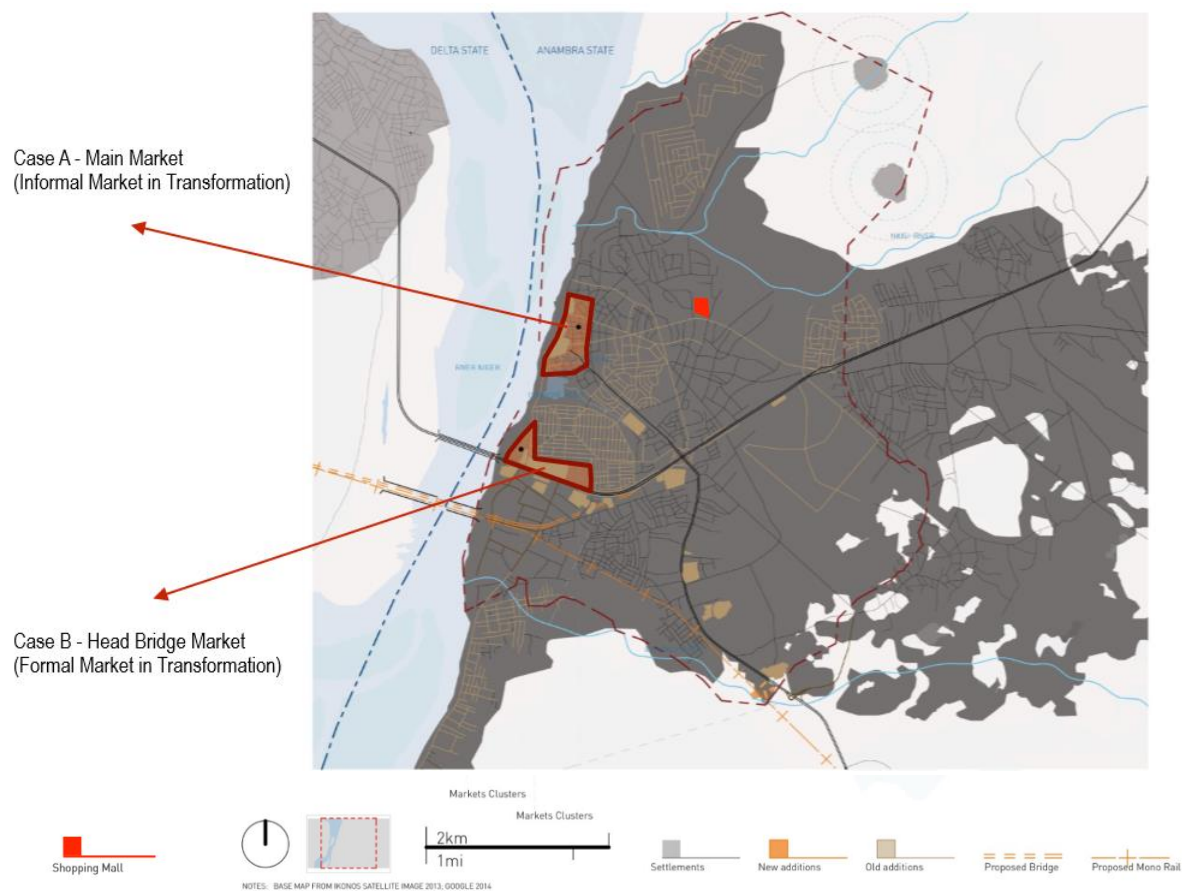


Figure 5.5: Case Studies A and B (Illustration: Vincent Chukwuemeka)

## 6. CONCLUSION

Onitsha markets are run by super self-organised wealth systems interconnected to each other in a network of mesh because of traders' collective actions, citizens' aspirations, and the overall material flows of the system. The constantly emerging markets however, are physical phenomena of Onitsha in response to the forces, that shape the flows of materials in Onitsha urban space. The urban growth of Onitsha is very dependent on the growth of the markets and the expansion of collective spaces. Collective spaces of informal and formal markets in Onitsha embody the self-organisation processes identified in the study and hence drive the urban growth. This phenomenon manifests in urban multiplicities highlighted in this text. Moving forward, further research with focus on the two market units already mentioned and will strive to understand the uses of these collective spaces. The current orthodox planning strategies currently adopted in Onitsha appear obsolete. This is based on little understanding of mechanisms of informality in Onitsha. Consequently posing challenges which are not limited to uncontrolled urban footprints, inefficient planning and difficulty in developing functional urban management policies. Understanding of the logic of socio-economic infrastructure like the markets in Onitsha through the study of collective spaces of (Main Market and Head-Bridge

Market) and how they play out in urban space, will contribute to the discourse on emerging cities of Africa and the rest of the world.

## 7. NOTES

Figures (1.1-5.5) & Data updated from Master Thesis Project. (Chukwuemeka, 2014).

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## Climate adaptive public space 2.0

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The environmental issue, determined by anthropogenic factors and global warming, today more than ever raises new challenges for the contemporary city where urban planning and design are called upon to find solutions, but it also calls for new project “forms” and new ideas of public space. This is made evident by the emergence, in the last 10 years, of a growing number of innovative bottom-up experiences<sup>1</sup>, promoted or carried out by inhabitants but also by citizen groups, activists, businesses or non-profit organizations, and intended to operate in crisis situations. Known as DIY Urbanism, Planning-by-Doing, Guerrilla Urbanism or Tactical Urbanism (Lydon & Garcia, 2011), these informal actions use low-cost and small-scale interventions to catalyse long-term change in the city. The typical short-term temporal dimension of this initiatives, in contrast to the longer time frames of “strategic planning” (De Certeau, 1984), has seemed to find new ways of transforming urban spaces, outlining strategies for a conscious and shared project of common good, and helping to take care and protect urban territories from environmental hazards.

## 2. APPROACHES AND TACTICS OF INTERVENTIONIST URBANISM

From the lessons of several experiences developed in North America and Europe, it is possible to recognize four approaches which bottom-up initiatives use to face climate change effects. The first one is related to increasing the quality of urban greenery and promoting spaces with a strong environmental value; the second works to enhance the community knowledge of environmental questions; the third acts on pavements and the impervious surfaces of the city; the last one wants to re-appropriate and redefine public soil.

### *Community initiatives approach 1 – Taking care of urban green spaces*

Collective actions aiming to regain possession of a city’s forgotten areas are not new, bearing in mind the Guerrilla Gardening movement or the American Community Gardens in the ’70s. But with the growing awareness of climate change impacts, today the attention to urban greenery by the community in order to maintain green space, increase biodiversity and conserve wildlife habitat seems to draw upon the added value of undisputed environmental benefits. A “green” that has not only decorative and social functions but also considerable ecological

<sup>1</sup> For further information about this initiatives, see: *Tactical Urbanism, Vol. 1 (Street Plans, 2011); Tactical Urbanism, Vol. 2 (Street Plans, 2012); Tactical Urbanism, Vol. 3 (Ciudad Emergente, Street Plans, 2013); Tactical Urbanism, Vol. 4 (Codesign Studio, Street Plans, 2014); Tactical Urbanism: Short-term Action for Long-term Change (Lydon, Garcia, Island Press, 2015); Tactical Urbanism, Vol. 5 (TaMaLaCa, Street Plans (Forthcoming); The Planner’s Guide to Tactical Urbanism (Pfeifer, 2013); NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (NACTO, Island Press, 2013); The Mem x Manual: A Practical Guide to Reimagining Your Neighborhood (Livable Memphis, 2014); People St Kit of Parts (Los Angeles DOT, 2015); Vision Zero Cities (Transportation Alternatives, 2016); Public Space Stewardship Guide: A Toolkit for Funding, Programming, and Maintenance (City of San Francisco, Street Plans, MJMMG, 2016); Quick Builds for Better Streets: A New Project Delivery Model for U.S. Cities (PeopleForBikes, 2016); Slow Your Street: A How-To Guide for Pop-Up Traffic Calming (Trailnet, 2016); Planning By Doing: How Small Citizen-Powered Projects Inform Large Planning Decisions (Gehl Studio, 2016), and the San Francisco Plaza Materials Catalog (San Francisco Planning, 2016).*



significance to mitigate, at the local scale, some of the effects due to climate change. Parks, tree-lined avenues and gardens can play an important role in terms of adaptation and mitigation (COM 2009 147/4, IPPC 2014, EEA 2012, UN-Habitat, 2014), since they are able to improve the soil's ability to store carbon, act on the urban microclimate and detain rainwater flows thus reducing flood risks.

Exemplary of this approach are the initiatives of City Repair, a non-profit organization based in Portland, Oregon, working for the Mallory Avenue Community Enrichment Centre – a church, homeless centre, canteen and a community meeting point. With the help of a group of volunteers, this community has been working together to transform the parking lot in front of their building into a green space for the production of vegetables, a storm water management system and a venue for concerts, events and gatherings. Or, the *12000 raingardens in Puget Sound* project which aimed to install twelve thousand rain-gardens in Seattle by 2016 in order to capture and filter polluted runoff from roofs and hard surfaces to prevent flooding. So far, the initiative has proved successful in early community rain-gardens: the thirteen gardens off 8th Ave, those of Delridge neighbourhood, and the flower-beds of the Eatonville School District and Medical Billing Services parking lots. Here, teams of volunteers gathered inhabitants from the neighbourhoods to build gardens capable to detect the excess rainwater and, at the same time, improve the quality of public spaces. *596 Acres*, a public education project aimed at making the New York community conscious about their land resources, has turned Java St. Community Garden into a green space where it is possible to learn notions of urban gardening, grow vegetables and enjoy the nature; A Small Green Patch is now a community garden and a point of direct sale of crops; the Patchen Community Square has become a place where to learn making compost.



## Taking care of urban green spaces

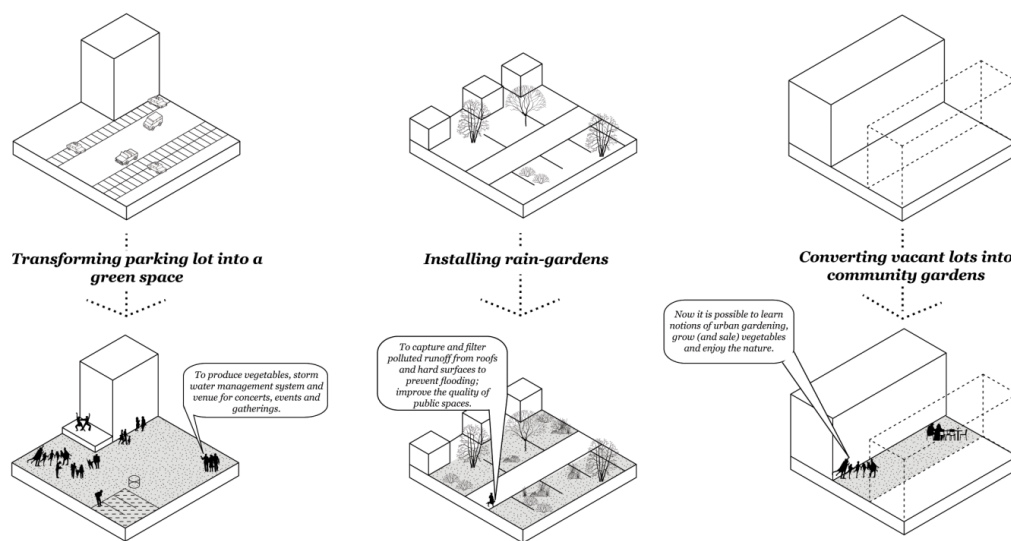


Figure 1: Tactics of "taking care of urban green space" approach (illustration: V. Crupi). L  
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## Community initiatives approach 2 - Increasing the knowledge of places perceived as fragile

To this family of projects belong those initiatives for the mapping and knowledge of places perceived as at risk. An example is represented by the interactive public art project *Insert\_Here*, conceived by Eva Mosher in collaboration with 350.org, which uses the know-how of neighbourhood communities to find solutions to climate change. The project invites residents to place large yellow "Insert\_Here" arrows (Insert *climate solution* here) in their local

surroundings where they want to “insert” a solution to climate change. “Insert *community garden* Here” (but also *Green Open Space*, *Compost Project*, *Youth Garden*, *Youth Farm*) in the forgotten spaces of the Brooklyn waterfront to strengthen neighbourhood communities and at the same time improve air quality through new green spaces; “Insert *Vegetable Garden* Here” in an unused lot not far from Preston High School, for providing a healthier choice for children’s lunches and lowering fossil fuel levels by limiting van deliveries. By placing the arrows along the daily routes of migratory people (and on an online interactive map), citizens can share their proposals with the community.

A lot of platforms and apps allow to create interactive and dynamic maps for inventorying trees in cities (e.g., UrbanForestMap) and reporting degraded green areas, such as the DecoroUrbano.org social network: through it, every citizen can report and share issues of degradation, discomfort and poor maintenance in cities. As users, all you need is a smartphone and download the dedicated app. Once in place, people can take pictures and report problems related to waste, vandalism, neglect, traffic disruptions, illegal signage and billboards thanks to the geolocation system. It is an open data platform, therefore public and visible to everyone.

#### Increasing the knowledge of places perceived as fragile

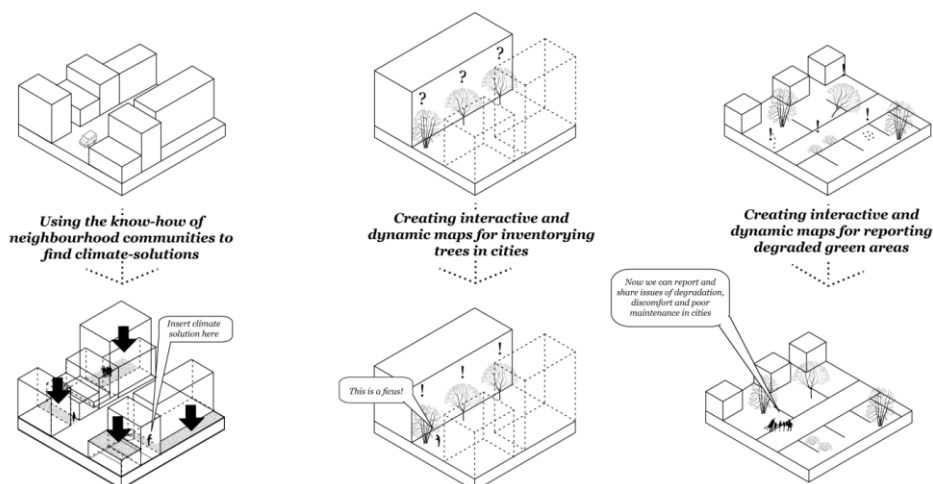


Figure 2: Tactics of “increasing the knowledge of fragile-perceived places” approach (illustration: V. Crupi)

### Community initiatives approach 3 - Depaved and cool surfaces

This family of initiatives includes those urban practices acting on impervious city surfaces that contribute to several environmental problems (Schueler, 1994; Arnold & Gibbons, 1996) affecting the natural water cycle (precipitation, infiltration, runoff and evaporation), leading to qualitative and quantitative problems of water resources and worsening the urban micro-climate (heat island effect). Not surprisingly, many spontaneous initiatives focus on soil and asphalt surfaces, through direct practices such as depaving and making cool surfaces. City Repair has

launched the *Depave* project to promote the elimination of paved areas in the city, reducing the pollution of sewage and rivers and increasing the amount of land available for agriculture, restoration of habitats and urban development of native vegetation. In these many projects, the areas chosen for depaving generally included church parking lots (Word & Spirit Church, Calvary Church), school outdoor areas (Chief Joseph Elementary School, James John Elementary School) and cultural centres (Disjecta Interdisciplinary Art Center). All projects were realized in collaboration with the local community and documented by rich photographic online repertoires (Flickr.com, Picasa.com). This commitment was not limited to the retraining of open spaces, but also - and above all - to the building of a sustainable community culture.

Millions of roofs are made using tar and absorb large amounts of heat during the summer months. Paints capable of reflecting sunlight make it possible to significantly reduce the temperature both inside and outside the building. Roofs become the preferred surfaces for those practices promoting the adoption of cold surfaces: associations like White Roof Project and NYC °CoolRoofs map roofs and coordinate volunteers for the realization of white roofs in order to reduce carbon emissions and energy. The *Look Up and See Green* student initiative in Portland develops ideas on rainwater harvesting, using the Urban Centre Building roof for the growing of vegetables and as a meeting place for the Portland's student community.

#### Depaved and cool surfaces

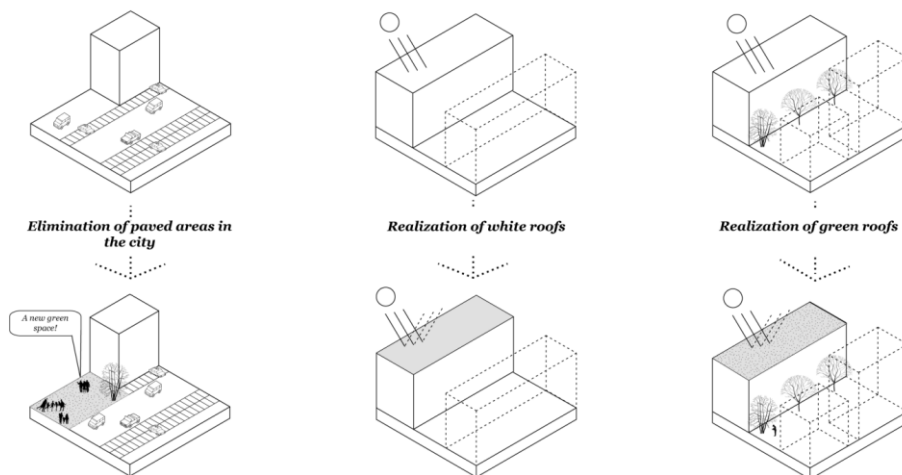


Figure 3: Tactics of "Depaved and cool surfaces" approach (illustration: V. Crupi).

#### Community initiatives approach 4 – Re-appropriation, re-signification and awareness rising of the public soil

Acting directly on waterproof coating is not the only informal planning option to improve the quality of an environmental urban context through paved public space, though. There are a lot of initiatives that are re-appropriating car spaces for sustainable uses. The *Pavement to Parks* project, for example, occupies two or three parking spaces to create temporary plazas where to

sit and enjoy various qualities of green or to park bicycles; the *Park(ing) Day* initiative recovers spaces dedicated to cars and increases the vitality of a local road; *Open Street* provides a safe space for walking, cycling and other social activities, promoting local economic development and increasing awareness of the car effects on urban life; *Pavement Plaza* recovers underutilized paved areas in new public spaces; *Pop Up Café* promotes outdoor seating in parking lanes; *Street Fair* offers opportunities for socialization and interaction among citizens by providing products and services to companies for the local development; *Park Mobile* adds green spaces to roads. The costs of these initiatives, generally reduced by the use of poor or recovery materials, are usually covered by local sponsors. These activities, occupying urban asphalt surfaces, suggest new areas for rest and recreation and act on the quality of public space. Most of them have also developed synergies between institutions and social partners, evolving from temporary actions to regular situations replicated over time.

### Re-appropriation, re-signification and awareness rising of the public soil

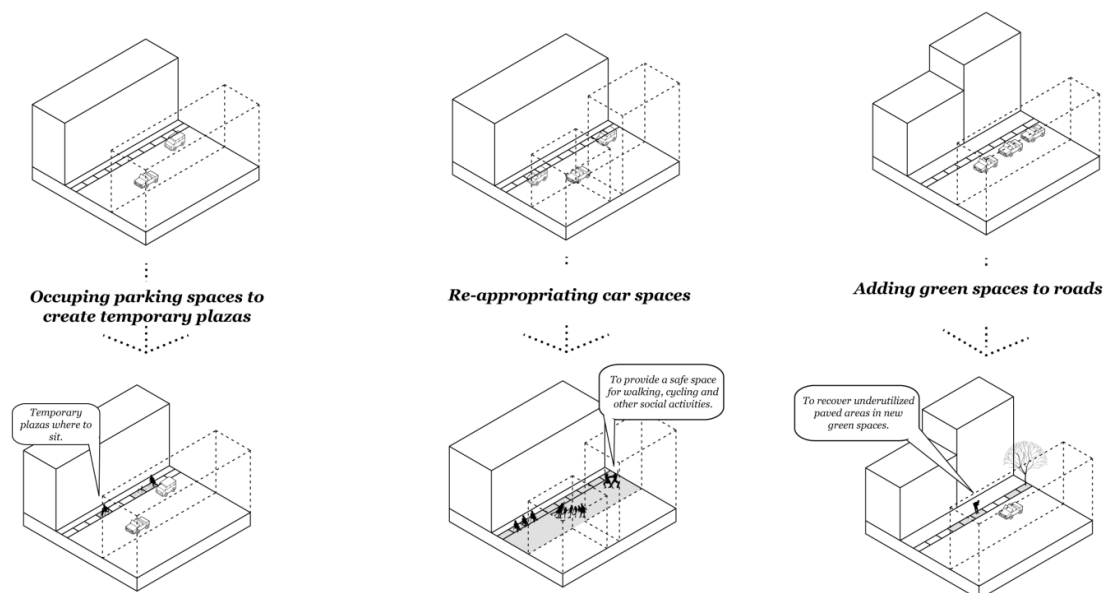


Figure 4: Tactics of “Re-appropriation, re-signification and awareness rising of the public soil” approach (illustration: V. Crupi).

## 3. THE ROLE OF WEB 2.0 IN BOTTOM-UP URBAN PRACTICES

Web 2.0<sup>2</sup> (O’Reilly, 2004) and the new hi-tech tools (smartphones, tablets) caused an upheaval

<sup>2</sup> As defined by O’Reilly (2004), Web 2.0 is the set of all those online applications allowing a high level of interaction between website and user such as blogs, forums, chats, wikis, media sharing platforms such as Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo, social networks such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter; etc. It typically is the result of appropriate web programming techniques and web applications related to the dynamic web paradigm, in contrast to the so-called static Web, or Web 1.0.

in the organization of bottom-up actions.

First of all, the access to a large number of e-learning platforms favoured the evolution of the *bricoleur* figure (Levi-Strauss, 1966), understood as “who makes things work by ingeniously using whatever is at hand, being unconcerned about the proper tools or resource” (Thayer, 1988, p. 239), who now specializes using the web as their main tool. Public digital platforms permit, for example, to learn how to recognize plant species (*Urban Tree Key* project); collaborative digital manuals like wikihow.com explain step by step how to take care of the green (*How to create a rain garden? How to depave?*); and practical advice blogs instruct on how to recover forsaken green spaces (*Guerrilla Gardener's Blog* and *Hanging vegetable garden in plastic bottles*); the *Field Guide to Phytoremediation* book provides a DIY online manual to reclaim contaminated lots<sup>3</sup>.

This change of paradigm can also be seen in the advent of social networks and crowdsourcing, the new tools for sharing information on places, in two perspectives: they represent both the collective intelligence of those who live and know their city in its daily dimension; and the way administrators and government groups make citizens aware of some important environmental issues occurring in their town through apps and portals. In fact, the internet allows to access information and global databases, to share knowledge on urban spaces and to detect the places where the inhabitants' wishes and needs could be manifested. Thanks to Web 2.0, people are given the ability to create interactive and dynamic maps for data sharing (*UrbanForestMap*, *OpenTreeMap* and *TreeKIT*) or report degraded green areas (*DecoroUrbano.org*). These data are transformed into dynamic maps and information accessible to citizens, authorities, organizations and companies, and become active contributions (crowdsourcing and collective intelligence) by individuals or organizations for the knowledge of the territory, representing otherwise uncharted indicators of the state of everyday places and denouncing environmental emergencies in the city. The *OpenTreeMap* platform (but also the *TreeKIT* app, a system of measurement, mapping, and managing of urban forests), pointing towards the creation of an inventory of city trees taken through community data entering, provides an interactive map of a neighbourhood's tree population. Users can add information and photo galleries while a software for the identification of tree species automatically calculates the ecosystem performance (greenhouse gases, water, energy, air quality) based on the parameters entered; these data are eventually shared with local authorities and organizations. For these reasons, the reviewing of citizenship active phenomena can lead to new and real information on the urban spaces which they gravitate to, and which are fundamental for the development of a conscious project of land protection and care. By denouncing a state of abandonment they identify those areas most sensitive to the impact of climate change. The risks caused by flooding, urban heat islands and other effects due to climatic change are transposed in these areas in a state of neglect and disuse.

<sup>3</sup> The initiative has also launched *Field Lab*, an experimental garden in South Bronx, to learn to revive the various remediation techniques.

If, on the one hand, these practices highlight the spaces in which the ecological community will find its form, on the other hand, they are important sources of information about the territory on which they act. The technological evolution and the information accessible at any place and time are leading to substantial change in the citizens' habits of participation in city life towards an ever greater ecological issue. Smartphones and tablets have enabled the spread of these initiatives quickly and intuitively through apps, widgets and social networks that allow a – virtual – participation anywhere and anytime. Interviews, manuals and documentaries are uploaded on specialized portals (Vimeo, YouTube, Flickr, Picasa, ...) and shared. A thumb up or down and a forum where you can leave feedbacks allow discussions and create even remote relationships. *AirCasting* is a platform for recording, viewing, mapping and sharing environmental data via smartphones. Users can enter their local measurements of sound, temperature, humidity, carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide, and share their data via the *AirCasting* crowd-map with the aim of creating a series of available data. *Urban Eco Map* develops Co2 emissions awareness (*How is Amsterdam Doing? And See what's Happening in your neighbourhood*) and promotes a sense of community (*Are you part of the solution?*) suggesting actions able to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases in cities (*Do it now*). On their website, one can find a table to organize the effort objectives, costs and impacts, and plan actions depending on transport, energy and waste management, suggesting possible practices to reduce car use, energy and waste. Selecting the actions that are taken into account, you can view the results and share them on Facebook. A dedicated section shows the tools offered by the municipality to achieve the intended purposes.

One last aspect of this change in urban practices is that these tools can allow to transform local actions into global diffusion. Thanks to new technologies and the internet, local actions are no longer isolated episodes within cities, but they take up a relevant reticular size with strong environmental components, combining a response to the impacts of climate change with a rethinking of urban “potential” public spaces to an ecological, social, cultural and symbolic scale. A variety of devices (smartphones, tablets) and countless possible applications (apps) test the city's smartness with micro-initiatives able to reimagine the use of real urban places and the construction of new urban geographies.

#### 4. TOWARDS THE DEFINITION OF A NEW TYPE OF PUBLIC SPACE

The impact of these practices on habitats seems to be showing the emergence of a new type of public space with a strong socially oriented character, in which a community's ecological demand can be displayed. If temporal events (flash mobs, artistic-cultural installations) mostly externalize in institutional (more visible) public spaces, physical actions reveal themselves in



any informal open spaces instead. The experiences identified often act on a non-traditional public space that can be detected:

- in residual service areas such as traffic islands, sidewalks and flower beds in parking areas (*City Repair, 12000 raingarden in Puget Sound*). A space that is public but not of the public, with precise functional features but without any environmental or social value; through “care” initiatives, it becomes the place where it is possible to show the community’s ecological and social demand;
- in gutter spaces and marginal areas, vacant lots, or those places that have previously hosted specific functions but which, over time, have been forgotten leaving a physical and social vacuum. Important places of memory, where the community, through actions of re-signification (such as those of *596 Acres* and *Insert\_Here*), denounces a state of deficiency and a renewed desire to weave social relations. Fragments that, once occupied, reactivate and become living parts of the city;
- in the street and in parking lots, which are one of the preferred places for transformation acts initiatives (*Park(ing) Day, Open Street, Pavement to Plazas, Pop Up Cafe, Park Mobile, ...*) in favour of safe spaces for walking, standing or sitting. Actions often temporal, but having significant implications in the design and quality of public space;
- in the flat roofs of public buildings, which represent a strong collective vocation space. Although accessible selectively, these are places where one can establish relations with neighbours (*White Roof Project* and *NYC °CoolRoofs*) or users sharing similar interests (*Look Up and See Green*);
- in public spaces of destroyed neighbourhoods that have suffered devastating effects as a result of extreme weather events; these become places where to experience practices of appropriation and signification by the community (*Make It Right Foundation, Faubourg St. Roch*).

All these spaces have a strong social significance, due to a growing awareness and shared responsibility about the environmental crisis. Traditional public spaces, marginal areas and residual landscapes can be today united (and re-read) by an ecologically oriented project aimed to make them safe from environmental hazards and to create new places of “living together”. The uses of these spaces by local communities as places where to experiment with new forms of coexistence and closeness to nature offer an opportunity to approach complex themes – such as those of climate change and resilience – with the everyday dimension of those living in cities.

The use and reuse of spaces make up visions and creative reallocations of those (central and non-central) spaces perceived in some way as abandoned by daily experience and routine. These (micro)practices of creative reshaping of urban spaces, implemented through everyday tools

(smartphones, tablets ...), allow to rebuild new public space geographies and experiment a different use of the city. Thanks to active citizenship processes, these spaces become potential elements for joint physical and social forms of public space. In fact, these are marginal spaces deeply (and unconsciously) inherent in everyday life that, once reactivated, may trigger new relationships among people, activities and parts of the city. Collective actions, working on areas that are particularly sensitive to the impact of climate change, are able to identify those places, resulting from a stratification of cultural, economic and social circumstances and representing a continuously shifting image of the communities to which they belong; they are spaces of the public, and through actions of care and re-appropriation, they acquire a central role in the life of the neighbourhood.

The spread of collective practices of re-appropriation highlights types of common spaces that are important in the construction of «urbanity» (de Solà-Morales, 2010), in which the ecological wishes of a community are shaped, and for that connote a strong social character. And it is here, in fact, that the relationship between public consciousness and urgent environmental issues will come to the surface, where a renewed *civitas*, a collective consciousness oriented to environmental awareness, gives “publicness” (Madanipour, 2010) to the “void” of the city. And urbanity no longer occurs only in a specific and defined location, as in the past, but it is free to unfold everywhere (Innerarity, 2006). In this perspective, the definition of “public spaces” can also apply to those places of the contemporary where projects intervene to protect, defend and adapt to climate hazards; where the environmental issues are intertwined, even spatially, with the social and economic ones; and where new values and the identity of a society more attentive to environmental issues are expressed.

Observing the public space from the standpoint of resilience, therefore, allows to recognize a variety of spaces that for their ecological, social and cultural role are the bearers of a new ethics and aesthetics of public space – adaptive to climate change.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

These actions can be considered as tracks that allow reconstructing the ways in which citizens respond to the environmental crisis. An answer “from the bottom” to the ecological issues that follows different, but highly interrelated, paths. In this practice, it is possible to recognize:

- the support and spread of new lifestyles geared to new demands and to the pursuit of a different well-being: - measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the promotion of transports other than car (car sharing, carpooling) and alternative economic models for sustainable growth (urban farms, “zero kilometre” food products), - actions to raise awareness on environmental issues against energy consumption (Energy days), - improvement of air



quality in an urban environment (de-paving and cool roof actions, guerrilla gardening);

- a shared demand for a *common good* that produces protection and conservation actions. With the growing awareness of the impacts of climate change, an attention to green uses by the urban communities today has an added value with undisputed environmental benefits. The *green* has not only a decorative function, but also considerable ecological significance in terms of adaptation and mitigation, inasmuch as it improves the soil's ability to store carbon, acts on the urban microclimate, improves air quality and detains rainwater flows;

- the emergence and spread of a new culture of adaptation to the changing environmental conditions that reflects in lifestyles (with spatial outcomes) but also in the development of new tools for sharing experiences and knowledge (for example, open source learning platforms, and so on). The internet and Web 2.0, in fact, make it easy to collect data and needs of individuals while permitting to have access to information and global databases; but also to share knowledge of the places and to detect the places where the will - and needs - of the inhabitants are manifested.

## 6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## The Potential of Self-Organized Communities

# in the Urban Regeneration: Izmir Historic Centre, Turkey

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The past decades have seen that communities are increasingly becoming effective actors in the decision-making processes through the deliberative democracy concepts in the collaborative planning. The existing body of knowledge about community participation in the urban planning is extensive and describes some hard and soft infrastructure through the participatory processes. According to Healey (1997), hard infrastructure includes the planning system, political institutions and governance forms; whereas the soft infrastructure involves specific strategy making activity such as the existing milieus of communities and actors, their capacity to interact, the areas which debates take place, and the way policy discourse are framed (Savini, 2011). The community participation and its forms have been also issued in the field of cultural heritage regeneration as an emergent debate both in the international and national context of Turkey (Chirikure and Pwiti, 2008; Watson and Waterton, 2015; Ecemis Kılıç, 2008). Different practices have described context depended hard and soft infrastructure also available in the cultural heritage regeneration and conservation of the historic cities as a bottom-up processes.

Sacco and Blessi (2009) claimed that compelling factor in the bottom-up processes is embedding the dynamics in a model and in comparable policies which allows flexible governance stress on harnessing co-ordination and co-operation within the various actors. In the issue of urban revitalization, rising concepts of bottom-up approach include heterogeneous initiatives established on sustainability and social responsibility. This leads to go beyond the focus of participation from the institutional aspects to the community based civil networks. Currently, public spaces, in most cases cultural heritage places, have been managed by the communities through the grass-root participatory processes sparked by the ineffective policies of local government granted these spaces as abandoned or under-used areas (Micelli and Mangialardo, 2016; Rabbiosi, 2017). Before the recent entities within the community organizations, the local policies were mostly tended to the supply-side of the regeneration processes. Nevertheless, providing facilitative commitments for the private firms to invest and operate these public spaces has not created robust investment area in which the private enterprises are willing to devote. This trend has been chiefly associated with the effects and constraints of global crises in the real estate sector. Thus, the outcome has raised the number of abandoned or under-used public buildings which stimulate the citizen groups or association to actively participate in the decision and operation processes of regeneration of these spaces.

A recent study by Micelli and Mangialardo (2016) involved in fifteen bottom up practices for

rehabilitation of the public properties suggested that the achievements of the self-organized communities have been led by the existence of the powerful social capital, central location where the social capital is more powerful, varied typical features of the buildings (military barracks, old factories, ex-schools etc.), leading curators and supportive juridical conditions. In this sense, the heritage assets located in the north Italy such as Milan, Bologna and Turin have become the prominent for the achievement. The majority of the heritage assets are former entertainment (theatre), industrial, military (barracks etc.), education (ex-schools etc.), residential or health complexes. These functions have been converted to the art and cultural centres, public bazaars, public/private offices and collective working place or the mix-uses of these new functions in respect to the certain community requirements and most of the time is for the temporary use. The concession of the implementation and management of these new functions have been given to the self-organization communities by the related institutional bodies and occasionally supported by the specific regulations by municipalities (Micelli and Mangialardo, 2016).

That said, the phenomenon of social capital has gained critical attention to create the synergy among the citizens who are able to advance bottom-up practices in urban regeneration studies. For many years, the phenomenon has attempted to be described in many sociological and economic studies (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1995, 2001; Fukuyama, 1995; Serageldin, 1996; Di Pasquale and Glaeser, 1999; Glaeser et al., 2002) and the definition suggested as “consisting of a shared pool of norms, informal rules, conventions and practices connecting members of a group and allowing them to co-ordinate their actions in order to reach common interest goals” (Sacco and Blessi, 2009). The characteristics of social capital is varied and its general features could be grouped into three; ‘bonding social capital’ which implies a homogenous society with close links to each other’s, ‘bridging social capital’ indicates weaker connections among distinctive community groups and associations and ‘linking social capital’ describe the different levels of power and social status (Bull and Joles, 2006). Discerning the different dynamics of social capital plays demanding role in the self-organization communities in order to follow their emergent mechanism and maintenance.

The bottom up practices has been intensely practiced in the international context which in most cases has recognised by the legislation. One example is from south of London, England, which is the regeneration of Caterham Barracks. The urban regeneration project of the Caterham Barracks has been developed and managed by co-operation in local community, a private developer and the district council. The case has been self-organized by the presence of Catherham Barracks Community Trust, where local community has the responsibility to improve and manage community facilities and play key role in the regeneration processes. To better understand the mechanisms of emergence and evolution into vital collaborations of the self-organization community, Meerkerk et. al (2013) analysed the significant features of the Caterham Barracks Regeneration Processes. Thus, they reported that the achievement of the project depends on i) primary events threatening the identity of the area, ii) boundary spanning which are critical individuals linking the different actors among public, private and civic networks, iii) mutual adaptation of roles when the established role of institutions changed with new actors and ii) simplifying legal frameworks. In the Caterham Barracks regeneration project, the S106 legislation obligates the private sector to invest in the local community and facilitate the community trust efforts in the regeneration processes (Meerkerk et. al, 2013). In Italian context, this recognition has brought forth by the Sblocca Italia Decree clause 24 (2014) claiming that ‘facilitation of measures for the grass-roots participation on the defences and valorisation of territory.’ With this degree, the municipalities can prepare specific regulations for the bottom-up procedures and further make the self-organized



communities authorize for management of the public buildings (Micelli and Mangialardo, 2016).

Meerkerk et.al (2013) summarized the definition of self-organization communities as ‘the emergence and maintenance of structures out of local interaction, an emergence that is not imposed or determined by one single actor, but is rather the result of a multitude of complex and non-linear interactions between various elements’. This definition supports the understanding of self-organization communities as a helpful concept in the urban regeneration processes due to its emphasis on the dynamics within urban systems and the interactions among distinctive stakeholders that would (re)generate new models and duties in the established institutional network. Yet, the emergence of the self-organization communities and their role in the system has been mentioned in some critical urban studies. As pointed out by Tonkiss (2013) “keeping vacant sites warm while development capital is cool” could be advantage for the public and private actors to stimulate economic benefits onwards. The critiques claimed that these organizations could be roll over with the neo-liberal aims and strategies of the governments (Rabbiosi, 2017).

## 2. REGENERATION OF URBAN HERITAGE IN TURKEY AND IZMIR

After the legislation of ‘Urban Renewal Act’ No: 5366 in 2005, most of the conservation areas in the big cities designated as Urban Renewal Area in which the Metropolitan Municipalities have authority to make implantation. The increasing number of huge renewal projects in the historic centres of Istanbul and Ankara has caused to criticisms and protests in terms of their competency to intervene in the cultural and social value of the heritage places. Recent implementations, e.g. Sulukule Urban Regeneration Project in İstanbul, the projects executed in the Ulus Historic Centre Urban Renewal Area in Ankara, have caused to be lost in original urban pattern, architectural characteristics of the heritage places as well as the features of existing social structure. Aside the impacts on the actual spatial and social patterns, the act No: 5366 has been react against its conflicts in the definition of the concepts for cultural heritage and the tasks/duties of the institutional bodies which leads to promote central approach in the processes.

Izmir, as a city holding the third ranking in Turkey, after Istanbul and Ankara, designated as urban renewal area in 2007. Beside the experiences in İstanbul and Ankara, the new Izmir History Project, launched after the conservation areas designated as urban renewal area, offers different concepts by its main objectives of achieving “governance”, “participation”, “innovation” to encourage dialogues among all the stakeholders in the urban regeneration. The new vision of the historic centre considers the enhancement of public spaces is crucial to create synergy and successful dialogues among the stakeholders (Kutlu et.al, 2016). From this perspective, the İzmir History Project would be evaluated in terms of the processes to organize, operate and design the regeneration activities in Izmir Historic Centre.

## 3. IZMIR HISTORY PROJECT

Izmir History Project has been stimulated by the debates in Izmir Culture Forum, 2009, in which one of the visions that Izmir should be considered as being a cultural capital across the Mediterranean region. Discussions in the forum resulted after one year later in preparation of the ‘Izmir History Project Design



Strategy Report' by İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, the Office of Historic Environment and Cultural Values. In the report, the main objective of the project has announced as to strengthen the relations of İzmir Citizens with the historic and cultural values in the city (3<sup>rd</sup> edition İzmir History Project Design Report, 2016) and it has developed new concepts and definition for the process. Likewise, experiences through the İzmir History Project can be claimed as one of the pioneer examples in the context of Turkey by its particular emphasis on the community participation. In order to promote participatory processes, the municipality has divided its organizational scheme into three branches that are the branch of organizations in the participatory processes, the branch of project management and the branch of the design in the historic centre under the Office of Historic Environment and Cultural Values.

In the strategic report, the project area covering 248 Ha has been divided into nineteen character regions. For each region, the participatory workshops have been preparing to gather the opinions and contributions of the different community groups, universities, NGOs and related public bodies for assessing the problems and potentials. After these meetings, the İzmir Metropolitan Municipality has been preparing operational plans for the character regions. Two operational plans have already proceeded containing Hotels District, Synagogues Region, Anafartalar Street 2nd Stage, Agora, Kadifekale, First and Second Circle Residential Areas. These operational plans have not incorporated the decisions for each lot in the character regions; on the other hand, it has included point projects at macro and micro scale (İzmir History Project Operation Plans 2015, 2016). According to the recent interview (2016) with the manager of the Office of Historic Environment and Cultural Values in İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, this piecemeal projects aim to vitalize the development for the urban blocks they are located in. Afterwards, the municipality have been disseminating the operational plans and the branch of organizations in participatory processes have organizing the workshops to enhance dialogues among the different stake-holders consisting academicians, public institutions, NGOs, and the users by getting feedbacks.

Later the operational plans advanced, the design process of the specified projects has been starting with co-operation of the universities and the branch of project management in the Municipality. This branch is in charge of the issues on the project implementations which are executed in the universities. Meanwhile, the branch of the design in the municipality has been developing the studies in the İzmir Historic Centre by organizing workshops with inhabitants, preparing thematic maps to analyse the current values in the project area. Conforming to the requests of the inhabitants, the design process has been opening accordingly. The branch of the design has hitherto organized the workshops to collect community ideas for the design of public spaces such as Agora and Emir Sultan Park. Based on the thematic analyses operated by the branch of the design, Kök Basmane Project have been found in 2016 as a social innovation network aims to document the gastronomic culture of the inhabitants which can further contribute to conservation and regeneration of this heritage place.

İzmir Mediterranean Research Institute was established in the Metropolitan Municipality in 2009 by taking into account İzmir Culture Forum that framing the city as one of the Mediterranean cultural capital. The role of this research centre is to boost studies on the history and culture of İzmir. Very recently, an initiative has emerged within this centre as the Initiative of İzmir Culture and Art that address to raise attention about cultural studies in İzmir which gives particular interest to the İzmir History Project. The initiative has been publishing periodical in which they disseminate the cultural and art works in İzmir related also to the works of İzmir History Project since 2015.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The Izmir History Project has significant potential to become a role model for the other heritage places by providing experience of active participation in the regeneration processes with the various groups of stakeholders including users who are from the different parts of Turkey and very recently from Syria. The citizens of Izmir have powerful social capital which they can share it lively public spaces in this traditional port city. With the attempts of Izmir History Project, which has peculiar concepts, planning tools, organizational schemes and implementation processes, Izmir historic centre requires to be researched through spatial and social analyses and competent evaluation. This can be stimulated, firstly, enhancing the public spaces where people can interact and support dialogue which is the main aim of the project.

However, using the legislative framework, the model for ownership, the process and constraints of the ownership change, the financial models, and the tasks and roles of the each stake holder have been still in progress. In the project area, five different conservation master plans are valid to manage diverse type of conservation areas such as urban, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> degree archaeological sites. How these plans will work with the implementations according to strategic reports and ad hoc piecemeal projects would be one of the major questions of these processes. This may cause to conflict for the main aims of the project which propose holistic approach for the urban regeneration.

The other significant questions will be about the ownership models how new developments will affect the historic centre by considering huge investment projects nearby such as Kulturpark located in the northern part and managed by the big private company. In addition to this, how will be the ambiguous roles of the TARKEM (Incorporated Company of Historic Kemeraltı Construction, Investment and Commerce) to regenerate the economic, social and cultural values. At least but not least what will be the methodologies to analyse, document and evaluate of this historic urban landscape in terms of spatial and social patterns and what will be the motives of potential community organizations to regeneration processes.

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# places, the case of Rione Traiano in the Soccavo Quarter (Naples, IT)

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

By reflecting on the role of self-organised initiatives in public spaces carried out in contested places, the regeneration processes have been studied in terms of social inclusion initiatives, solidarity flows and environmental concerns.

In contested places, unemployment, literacy rate, and poverty cohabit or are in conflict and produce insecurity and antisocial behaviours often due to organised crime. In deprived context, public spaces are frequently inaccessible for the most vulnerable segment of the population - women, babies and the elderly – due to physical decay, lack of services, neglect and security issues. The austerity policies related to the 2008 economic crisis and the increasing neoliberal drift are progressively excluding, from the planning strategies and the urban policies, needs and instances of more vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. As counterpoint to this trend, a relevant part of the scientific debate and the urban practices is dedicated to civic economics, urban activism and participatory processes. One of the main aims is to identify new typologies of urban actors capable of engaging vulnerable and segregated people, playing the role of mediator between institutional bodies and citizens and supporting medium or long term grassroots proposals (Carr et al., 1992; Madanipour, 2011).

The scientific horizon in which the research process has been included is the intermingling of community planning approaches and tools for collecting needs and demands, and the spatialisation of the results within an urban design process (Madanipour, 2006). Aiming at promoting this perspective within the consolidated participatory processes (Healey, 1997), in terms of reaction to the neoliberal privatisation of the public realm, the field of interest regards the reclaiming of spaces and places by local communities and city-users (Atkinson, 2003; Gehl, 2011). Community empowerment and social capital activation are the pivots of this revised approach to design.

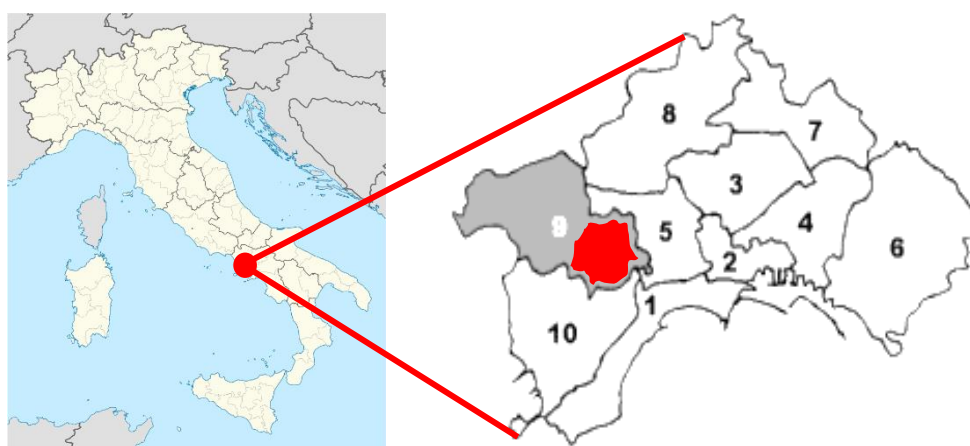
Moreover, social activation can be geared not only to listening and interpreting instances, but also to creating humus for bottom-up initiatives, where communities play a proactive role by investing energy, creativity and resources in transformations of space and public facilities in the area (Jacobs, 1961). Among the various initiatives in this direction, we mention the USA cases of Community Development Corporation (CDC) with the participation of the inhabitants in the activities of networking, promoting ideas and directly investing human and economic resources in order to enhance regeneration processes and place branding (Gittell & Wilder, 1999; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008; Skinner, 2011). An interesting example is the experience in an area with strong identity but characterised by socio-economic decline and physical degradation: Jamaica Plain in Boston (USA). In this context, communities have started a debate on the goals to be pursued and according to the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA)<sup>4</sup> have identified some possible areas suitable for promoting different pilot projects. One of the main initiatives developed in the area, the Brewery Samuel Adams, is particularly successful as, in addition to hosting a niche production line and a beer museum, it acts as the "forum" of the neighbourhood and business incubator for small and medium scale economic initiatives that express the local character. This economic initiative with private investor involved, which are strongly motivated by place branding aims, is the smart response to the need for exploiting endogenous resources and local cultures (Esposito De Vita et al., 2012a).

By reflecting on these mature overseas experiences in terms of social activation and participation in regeneration processes, it was chosen to focus attention on approaches and tools useful to gather the instances of public space accessibility and, more generally, of community-led regeneration. The focus is promoting both the sense of belonging to the places and the desire to become active part of the transformations of its own neighbourhood. To pursue this goal, it has been chosen to develop a participatory protocol that tends to exploit the already well-developed experiences by supporting and enhancing social activation. The protocol will be developed through an incremental process of fieldwork experiences in different contexts and with different components of the communities involved.

At each stage of the trial, priority is given to an aspect of the participatory process and the intermediate results form the basis of discussion for the next jigsaw puzzle. In the first step of fieldwork, illustrated in the next pages, we chose to deal with the complex context of Naples – in Southern Italy – which offers opportunities of reflection regarding cultural gaps in gender issues, lack of accessibility of public spaces, organized crime control of social housing neighbourhoods, on the one hand, and a vibrant environment of grassroots movements, activists and social support networks, on the other.

<sup>4</sup> The BRA has been established by the City of Boston in 1957 with the aims of promoting, managing and controlling urban transformations in partnership with stakeholders in the areas involved.

The case study area is an emblematic neighbourhood of the social housing experiences, the largest in Italy, whose construction was started in 1960: CEP *Rione Traiano*<sup>5</sup>, included in the district of *Soccavo*, within the 9<sup>th</sup> Municipality of Naples. This area appears to be of great importance in the Neapolitan urban scenery and presents social and spatial dynamics and drifts that allow meaningful reflections (Figure 1). In this area, a dialogue was firstly initiated with non-profit associations operating in the area and then with the community in order to address the relationship between vulnerable and public spaces and to test an interaction and activation methodology aimed at collecting, hierarchizing and translating the instances expressed by such subjects within urban regeneration proposals.



*Figure 1: The City Council of Naples and its ten municipalities, the ninth with in red the district of Soccavo (source: Elaborated starting from Wikipedia and City Council of Naples)*

This social housing neighbourhood has been chosen for its complex overlapping of urban, social and cultural issues and for the presence of a social cooperative, “*L’Orsa Maggiore*”, engaged in educational and social activities, inclusion protocols, training and promotion of civic activation. Following its wake and engaging women and babies of *Rione Traiano*, a methodology for interaction and civic engagement based on Community Planning (Wates, 2014) has been tested to collect, prioritise, and exploit proposals for urban regeneration. The framework is the wider action-research methodology started in 2013 on this territory by the researchers of the Italian National Research Council (CNR). Thanks to *L’Orsa Maggiore*, researchers have established a dialogue with engaged women regards security issue, non-conventional use of public space, priorities for every typology of users and have stimulate them to think differently about their underused public spaces.

<sup>5</sup> CEP, “*Coordinamento di Edilizia Popolare*” means Coordination of social housing



In this context, challenged by issues related to the organised crime, the research group have developed a listening campaign, in order to identify, develop and share these perspectives regarding public spaces as privileged expression of common interests (Amin, 2008; Carmona, Heath, Oc, & Tiesdell, 2010), social capital (Habermas, 1991; Rodotà, 1978) as well as cultural capital in the contemporary city (Florida, 2003; Fusco Girard & Nijkamp, 1997). This listening campaign is articulated in the “institutional phase” – dedicated to collect instances of key stakeholders and long term strategies of the decision makers, and the “community phase”, developed by meeting inhabitants, activists, local stakeholders in order to give the floor to their needs: accessibility, quality of life, opportunities, cultural exchanges (Bonnes, Bonaiuto, Nenci, & Carrus, 2011).

The expected result of the interaction sessions is twofold: the development of the engagement methodology and its spatial expression to be generalised on the one hand, the embeddedness of the action-research and the involvement of activists and associations in building public realm regeneration trajectories, on the other hand.

The remainder of the work presents in detail the listening campaign and the fieldwork developed in the *Rione Traiano* area (2), the planning history and current trends of the Soccavo quarter (3), the Urban Renewal Plan (3.1), the fieldwork developed with the Cooperative *L’Orsa Maggiore*, and then concludes with some considerations.

## 2. THE LISTENING CAMPAIGN AND THE FIELDWORK

The research process, based on the case study approach (Yin, 2009) has allowed us to proceed through a spiral path based on continuous feedback and subsequent validations in the field comparison. It has led us to focus on the issues to be addressed, to define criteria for prioritising the topics, and to identify the case study area and the procedures to be followed.

The fieldwork has started by linking the themes of accessibility, usability, and recognisability of public spaces with instances collected from local communities in terms of the quality and quantity of space and services offered and in terms of their perception. The focus of the survey was the definition of the engagement and interpretation methodology that would maximize the results of the participation and translate them into shared trajectories of transformation and adaptation of open public spaces or for public use, including by activating bottom up initiatives.

Regarding the issues of accessibility, usability, and recognisability of public space, in order to enhance the inclusiveness of marginal subjects within the process, the aim is to define a procedure that allows to collect instances from the different components of the community and share their hierarchisation and spatialisation.



According with the preliminary data collection regarding the structure of the population, the screening of the social networks as well as the visual analysis in the area, as access key to the local community instances regarding the accessibility to public places, the women of the *Rione Traiano* area have been chosen. The reasons of this focus can be summarised as follows:

- In the Neapolitan context, in particular in the deprived districts, due to the lack of public services for families, the women develop a complex system of activities and paths related to the children and the elderly care in the everyday life.
- In the above areas, frequently there is a lack of participation of women within the planning and decision-making processes despite their active role within the social networks in terms of cohesion and support, due to traditional cultural gaps.

In order to identify the study area and the most suitable approach to interpreting the theme and translate it into the identification of shared priorities for the adaptation of urban public spaces, a debate and active observation session was opened by participating in thematic meetings, focus groups in different neighbourhoods, and dialogue with the associations operating in the territory.

A wide-ranging dialogue on issues such as social barriers, migrants' inclusion, urban security, accessibility and usability of public spaces has been developed (Garcia-Ramon, Ortiz, & Prats, 2004). This dialogue resulted in a fruitful interaction for defining the most suitable sphere and the most appropriate engagement method to achieve the expected results. In the first stage of fieldwork, in order to develop the focus within the category of public spaces, the neighbourhood-scale parks were chosen, due to their defined boundaries, functions and technical requirements. After this pilot campaign, in order to develop the discussion and to complete the engagement methodology, other typologies of public space will be identified in the Neapolitan urban contexts: within the fringe areas, the historical centre and the waterfront.

According to the needed requirements, a consolidated community planning toolkit has been identified and adapted as interaction platform, in order to capture the hidden demand for public spaces. For the specificity of the case, which involves action in a public space in a Neapolitan neighbourhood characterised by social deprivation and decay in physical make-up, and the need to maximise interaction with women in the neighbourhood, regardless of the level of education or social awareness, we chose to start with the Ketso method. This method, developed in the 1990s with the aim of supporting the bottom up process of local development of some villages in South Africa, aims to enhance creativity in interaction, avoiding the globalization-effect of top down institutional programs. The word "ketse" means action in the local language; the method is supported by a colourful, practical and reusable toolkit that facilitates the development and sharing of ideas among people of different skill levels (Tippett & Farnsworth,

2009). The method has also been experimented in California (USA) since 1997 and is currently one of the research tools in the field of doctoral activities at the University of Manchester (UK).

The Ketso is structured to address issues essentially and communicatively and to stimulate the critical sense of the participants. The original instrument has been contextualized by reworking the kit through captivating and eloquent graphics, capturing the attention, and an essential language in order to allow deep understanding of the issues to the totality of the participants. Such adaptations were discussed with the representatives and members of one of the involved associations.

The non-profit association *L'Orsa Maggiore* ([www.orsamaggiore.net](http://www.orsamaggiore.net)) has been selected as an interlocutor for the interaction for the role played in the social and educational field who have invested for creating an initiatives for combining job creation, cohesion and solidarity, awareness regarding rights and opportunities, protection of the marginalised people and access to personal services. The association operates at the social-educational center *Centro Socio Educativo Nosengo*, within the district chosen for the fieldwork, the 9<sup>th</sup> Municipality of the City of Naples.

In the first phase of fieldwork, the Ketso method was shared with the volunteers and social workers of the Cooperative; the discussion led to the definition of appropriate adaptations that were implemented in the procedure in order to deal with the dialogue with the community of women in the neighbourhood and to discuss with them the possible lines of transformation.

According to this preparatory work with the activist of the Cooperative and through the exchange of opinions with other stakeholders working in the same context, the range of possible solutions has been defined, in order to offering the possibility of let creatively emerging non-codified aspects. The output of this pre-testing phase was the elaboration of the context-friendly toolkit, whose application offered reflection on the physical form of the space, its management, the relationship among communities and institutions, as well as strategies for the involvement of neighbourhood women in the decision-making processes.

### 3. SOCCAVO: HISTORY OF AN ENCLAVE IN NAPLES

According with the analysis of the literature, the screening of the current urban plans and policies, meetings with planners involved in the city of Naples and semi-structured interviews to representatives of institutions and associations, the district of *Soccavo* has been chosen for its characteristics in terms of planning issues, morphological and social structure. It is located in the Northern area of Naples into the Ninth Municipality and represents the Western boundary of *Campi Flegrei* volcanic area; it was one of the most ancient rural villages of Roman era close to *Neapolis* – first nucleus of the city of Naples.

From a built environment perspective, the district can be described through four sectors whose boundaries are street and other infrastructures (Figure 2). The first one is the historical area, developed between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Century along a street axis with a dominant typology consisting in rural houses open towards farmland at the back. Small buildings of at least three floors were overlooking the main street as well. The passage from public to private space takes place in courtyards accessible with archways often used as parking. There are few cases of private gardens. Between 70s and 80s of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, to the North and South of the historical site a residential area have been developed (sector two and three), whose main street is *Via dell'Epomeo* – the commercial area of the whole district. Its recurrent urban form is composed by blocks closed or quasi-closed with buildings from three to six floors. The main part of ground floors overlooking the street is dedicated to commercial use; public green areas are rare.

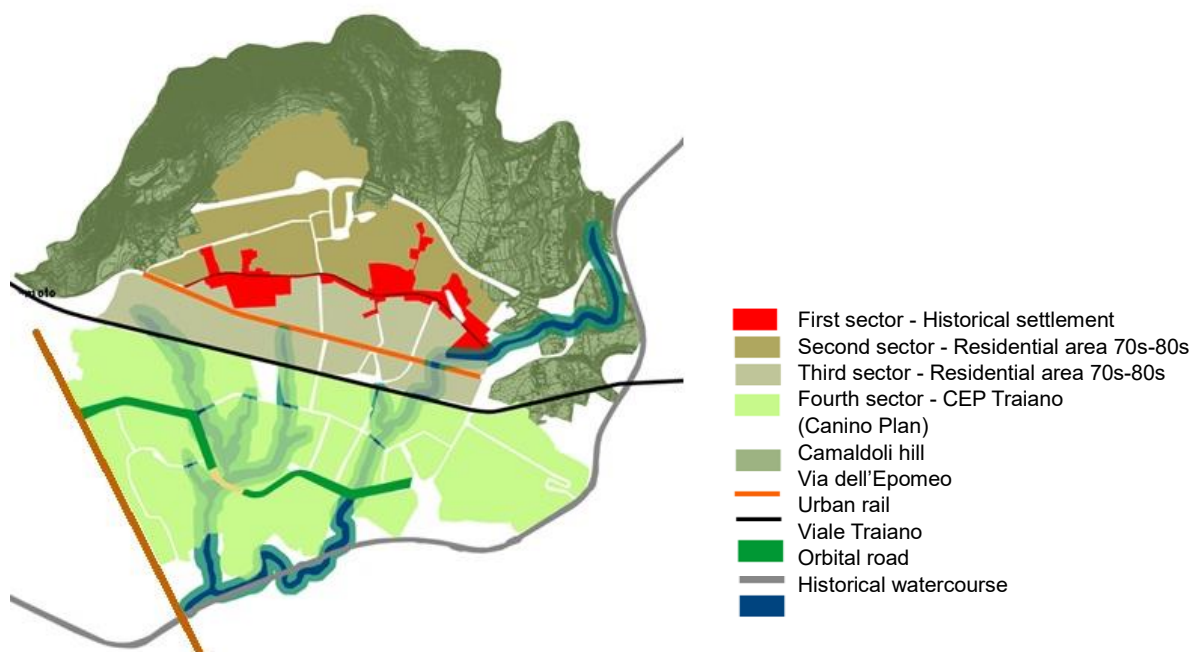


Figure 2: The homogeneous areas of Soccavo district with principal roads and infrastructures (source: Corvino + Multari, 2013)

The fourth one, “CEP Traiano” area (built between 1957 and 1972), is defined East by an orbital road, West by via *Nuova Cinthia* road and South by the metropolitan railway (*Cumana*). This social housing neighbourhood resulted by an unitary project developed alongside *Viale Traiano*. The concept of this street was a parkway built following the natural system of hills and green areas. This working-class neighbourhood, whose recurrent urban typologies are isolated blocks from three to thirteen floors, is characterised by a high level of privatisation of common spaces, within buildings and gated neighbourhoods.

Starting from 60s, the area is object of interesting urban experimentations that have stimulated the debate on urban policies and inclusive strategies within social housing (Belfiore &

Gravagnuolo, 1994; Esposito De Vita & Acierno, 2015; Petrella, 1989; Stenti & Ferlenga, 1993). The main project for the area is the so-called “*Canino Plan*” named after the architect Marcello Canino. The project retraced the utopic dimension of autonomous residential neighbourhood linking to more advanced urban principles – maybe inspired to the Vallingby model of Stockholm for dimensions, its strong relation with city centre and for its social dimension (Frediani, 1989). The project started from a 40-meter-wide avenue lined with trees, drawn on the false line of a US parkway, which was adapted to the existent distribution of hill ranges and from which seven residential areas came out. This parkway is called *Viale Traiano*. Collective activities, schools, park, multipurpose centre, occupied the centre of the area (Figure 3).

In the *Canino Plan*, an appropriate mix of uses was expected, with the presence of tertiary and commercial buildings that should have attracted the middle class with the opening of professional studies and activities for medical care and training. Moreover, in the same Regulatory Plan of '58, never approved, production, crafts and industrial activities had been envisaged at its immediate outline. The project also envisaged private intervention on vast areas, with the dual aim of absorbing the strong building pressure on construction companies and at the same time avoiding the risk of social homogeneity leading to ghettoization. Unfortunately, the private sector did not participate in the realisation of the residential area, scarcely attracted by inadequate incentive measures, with the exception of the only shopping mall that was built in the 1960s. During the early years of the neighbourhood construction, its deep valleys were used as abusive landfills for building material, so that *Canino* denounced to the administration what was happening and proposed a third version of the project (1964) with a lake in the central area to save what was left of the valleys. The project was never completed, generating a chronic lack of equipment and unplanned population growth. To aggravate the already fragmented social situation, in the 1980s, after the earthquake, groups from the degraded areas of the city moved to the neighbourhood, amplifying clutches that had already compromised the delicate social balance.

The original project has been betrayed because of the lack of public services, with the exception of a school and, concentrated in the central area, the Municipality building, a library, offices, police station, the neighbourhood park and a multipurpose centre. Although it is included in the Neapolitan built *continuum* and close to attractive urban poles, the neighbourhood appears as a morphological *insula*, surrounded by road infrastructure that acts as a barrier and makes it a sort of enclave.

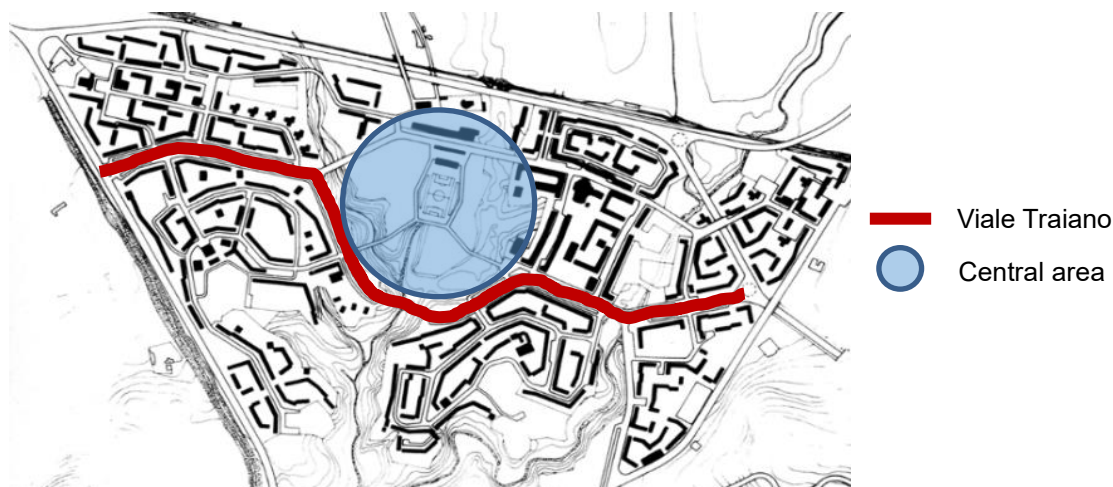


Figure 3: The Canino Plan (source: Corvino + Multari, 2013)

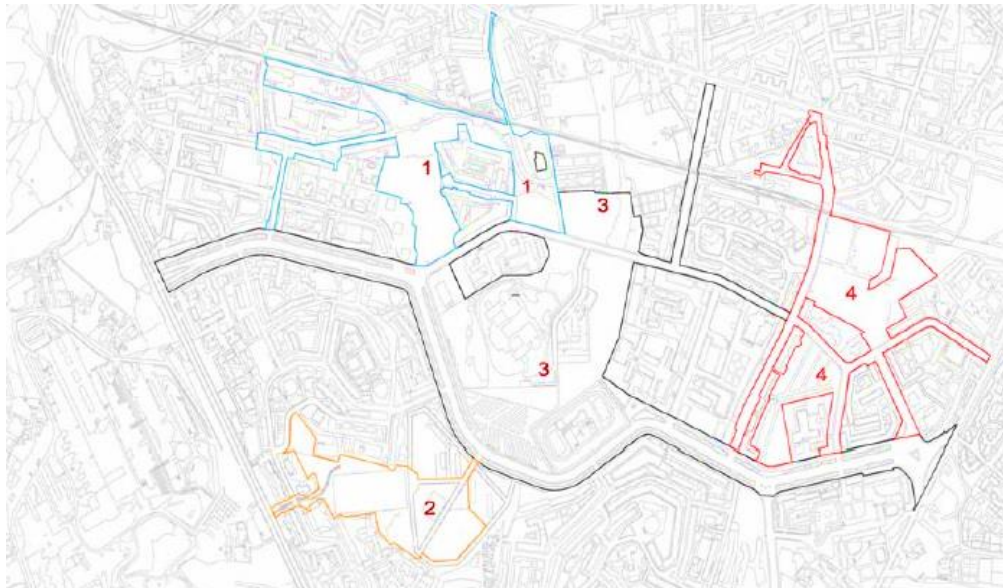
The entire *Soccavo* district, large five sqKm, includes a population of 48.000 inhabitants (2001 census). There are five kindergartens, six elementary schools, six middle schools, four high schools and one university complex. The unemployment rate is 35%; 2% of employees are employed in the primary sector (agriculture), 23% in the secondary sector (industry), and 75% in the tertiary sector (services).

The main issue of the area is the organised crime, which has a strong impact on every-day life by spreading insecurity. There would be more than a dozen drug trafficking areas located between parks, houses, basements, managed by a multiplicity of clans affiliated to the main organised crime “Camorra” clans. This attitude is a sort of brand of some areas of the district that are progressively abandoned and decayed.

The current urban planning tool, since its first design in 1998, indicates the *Soccavo* district as a "newly formed urban agglomeration" and prescribes for it the natural redevelopment for the central area, understood as "urban-landscape unit" and the reconnection between the various public and private buildings that make up it. These objectives are pursued through the design of a network of parks and the re-functionalisation of *Viale Traiano*. For the axis, which was born as a quarry of the neighbourhood, a redevelopment project has been set up on two squares constructed at the two terminals, pedestrian and cycling paths along the road, commercial service and cultural occasions, even outdoors, starting from the redevelopment and re-functionalization of the central area. Concerning the theme of the *Viale Traiano*, the 1998 urban plan refers to the Urban Renewal Program's forecasts, which include sporting and cultural services of great receptivity, accommodation and parks around the multifunctional centre, and



reconfiguration of the connection spaces in order to reintegrate into a unicum the services already present in the area. The final goal is to build a dense network of paths and poles equipped to connect to the rail network that can attract private investments (Gasparrini, 2003). The area of the Urban Renewal Plan, equal to 43 hectares, has been divided into four areas of which the fourth is being implemented (Figure 4).



*Figure 4: Current plan with indication of four field of the Urban Renewal Plan.  
(source: Corvino + Multari, 2013)*

### **3.1. URBAN RENEWAL PLAN – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 4<sup>TH</sup> FIELD**

The idea of the project retraces the thought of architect Marcello Canino, who told about the area that: "Rione Traiano was a unique case because it is well recognised how much difficulties there are in creating green areas within working-class neighbourhood. In the case of *Rione Traiano* the green areas naturally existed and it was sufficient to preserve it by putting them into the urban planning. For these reason, it was reasonable to think about a *parkway* that links these green areas, which include new districts of the neighbourhood". The project is based on the current concept of "landscape" aiming at reconsidering the planning per "part" by looking for an "urban project". It considers a specific integrated approach to Naples' issues and a well defined and ambitious idea of public space reinterpreting the idea of periphery within the metropolitan area of Naples, it provides a series of reconnections linked together by an

infrastructural rail system that will permit to live in different places of the city where specific stories and landscapes make different identities.

One of the main issues of the district, which regards security and antisocial behaviour, is faced up to consider Dutch Law, the “Police Label Safe Housing”, the more innovative in this field, which fixes clear performance rules for the design of working class districts in order to improve natural vocation mainly with regard to predatory crimes (robberies, thefts, aggression, vandalism), undermining urban quality and liveability. The reference to the circular metabolism and the regenerative city (Girardet, 2017) aims at creating a sustainable city, which means a more awareness of needed relationships among citizens, services, transport and energy programmes. This complex approach generates the following ecological-urban roles:

- Guarantying a balanced urban and environmental load;
- Providing adequate public and private green areas;
- Prescribing permeability indexes in land surfaces;
- Encouraging a constant increasing of planting.

With these premises, the project invests on a dens part of the city of Naples, socially diversified, where collective services, social and commercial activities as well as housing, become a pivotal point for the community. The project assumes planning indications provided for the area by redesigning the zoning and making the offer more complex, in which public and private spaces, housing, tertiary and services, green areas and infrastructures are homogeneously spread through the city. The “square-park”, located in a central area of field, is softly designed and directly linked to the public transport system. It represents the core area from which public kindergarten, tertiary and housing have access. The settlement system has been developed starting from the physical bonds in order to go through and link parts of the area. Every place needs to be recognised in terms of landmarks and points of view as well as in terms of urban interiors: spaces between houses, places of public relations, collective and green spaces (Figure 5).



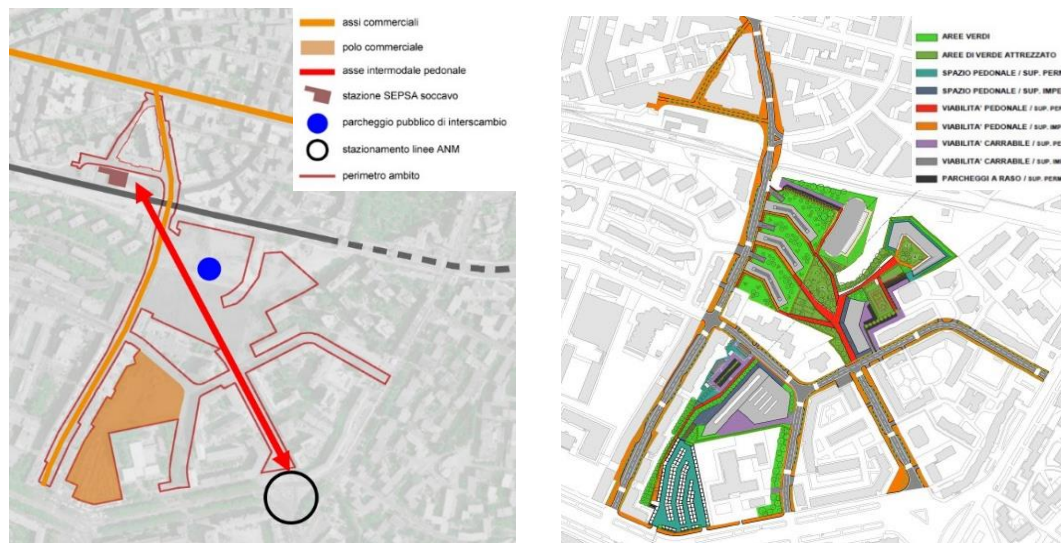


Figure 5 – Project Concept (source: Corvino + Multari, 2013)

The planned tertiary activities are public services (post office), basic tertiary (supermarket and commercial mall), services (professional firms, banks, laboratories) and playful tertiary (gyms and beauty centres). This mixed uses give the opportunity to increase occupation – 214 new jobs have been calculated – to throw down hierarchies between public and private city and to create a new part of the city based on public space and public services.

This field constitutes an *insula* that assumes the role of final pole of the “natural commercial centre”, with which shapes a “T” cutting the area from North to South (commercial axis in the Figure 6) (Comune di Napoli, 2013).





*Figure 6 – Plan of the project (76.500 sqm), details of the Public Park and Kindergarten. Buyer: City Council of Naples (Servizio Programma di Riqualificazione Urbana); Contractor: PA.CO Pacifico Costruzioni spa; Project by Corvino & Multari (architecture), Carmine Mascolo (structures), Elletti Partners Engineering (sustainability, energy and plants), Nicola Maione and Riccardo Caniparoli (geology) (source: Corvino + Multari, 2013)*

A particular focus has been dedicated to environmental sustainability in terms of energy saving, water saving and green ecological function, as well as protection against environmental pollution. Unfortunately, the project, completed in 2013, is still pending because of a lack of regional funds.

All these information have been collected thanks to the cooperation of Corvino + Multari (Vincenzo Corvino, personal interview, 4 April 2017, Naples).

#### **4. A WALL OF IDEAS FOR THE PUBLIC SPACE OF *RIONE TRAIANO***

This lack of concrete initiatives and of institutional actions to manage the social issues produces the resignation and indifference of inhabitants. Projects are still pending and nothing changes regarding the everyday life degeneration.

Within the area of Rione Traiano, there are enclaves of great discomfort even if the levels of crime reached by other peripheral Neapolitan areas are not reached (Ceci & Lepore, 1997; Esposito De Vita, Trillo, & Martinez-Perez, 2016; Laino, 2002). The social fabric presents dramatic extremes such as episodes of domestic violence resulting in homicides and raids due

to internal struggles for the power of control over the territory, the spread of drug addiction, and "harassment" practices against immigrant workers. These issues counteract the commitment of many women to get out of forms of ghettoization to re-occupy urban spaces and create opportunities for their children.

In this context, an event was promoted to experiment the proposed protocol and validate the results of the interaction methodology. The area chosen for confronting the community is the public park where women have been invited to take part to an organised event in order to identify the priorities for adapting spaces also to their needs of everyday life. The *Salvatore Costantino* Park is a fertile ground for experimentation in which the morphological characteristics of the public space are overlapped to the needs expressed by those who live – or could live – in the daily life. The park was built in the central block of Rione Traiano's area, adjacent to school complexes, at the headquarters of the Municipality, and in the area where commercial stores are thickening. It is fenced and paved by the parkway of the *Canino* Plan. During the site visits, on different days of the week and at different hours of the day, there was a small presence of pedestrians along the street and the high fence does not allow the visual perception of the green area discouraging pedestrian walkway. The park, designed according to well-established criteria, has functional areas inside it, and while is being in degraded conditions, posing major hygienic, and maintenance problems, it is frequented by cyclists, joggers and footballers and older players involved in the game of bowls. Women with children are generally less likely to be present.

Starting from this first picture of the state of facts, the interactive event was built by trying to promote a multi-layer action whose parallel plans intersected in the final synthesis (Shaftoe, 2012). The method chosen for the interaction chain has been adapted to the case by simplification: it has been chosen to graphically rework the kit and to take apart the essential issues through an easy-access scheme. In particular, a "wall of ideas" of 2.6x1 meter, which depicts the green space of the park, was prepared for the action involved, on which the essential issues that were attributed to:

- The definition of the ideal scenery through a quasi-dream representation;
- The highlight of the positive aspects of space in terms of space features and services offered;
- Identifying the negative aspects and obstacles identified in an adaptation of the area;
- The hierarchy of priorities to be pursued to ensure the enjoyment of the park.

The four thematic blocks of the Ketso method have been translated into four main semi-structured questions corresponding to four panels, four themes/problems and four colours. participants had some block notes in four colours on which they could pin the notes and finally position them on the wall of ideas. The four questions are as follows:

- In an ideal world, what would you like to see or live in the park?
- What is positive about the park's public space?
- What are the obstacles to future desires?
- Decide together priorities ...

Each question corresponds to four possible answers, three of which can be traced back to the possible intervention categories in the area, and one is open to gather any specific instances that have not emerged.

The "circle of ideas", which involved women from the neighbourhood, was facilitated by the research group. It was built by combining an initiative programmed by the Cooperative *L'Orsa Maggiore* with an event organized by Save the Children – “Eat healthy (*La Buona Tavola*)” project aimed at spreading virtuous behaviours with regard to nutrition – in order to test the model and at the same time to gather the instances of change advanced by the women of the community. Given the alchemy generated by the combination of different plans such as research and activism, space of ideas and public space, women and children, communities and societies (Habermas, 1991), and the enthusiastic responses of activists working in the area, the event will be included in the "The City We Want: An Interactive Public Space, Social Inclusion and Citizenship Rights" Programme of the Public Space Biennial 2013 (Rome, May 16-17-18, 2013).

While Save the Children's mobile unit involved children in the educational nutrition and educational game path, the research group organized the space for interaction on the lawn, among the trees, where participants could sit and start the dialogue. The event was attended by women-mothers of the district, students of Architecture (Federico II University, UPTA Degree Course) who were doing their thesis on *Rione Traiano*, visiting scholar of the Weimar Bauhaus (PhD student), representatives of the IX Municipality of Naples, with spontaneous interaction with other occasional users of public space. After the stage of the interaction space was set up, dialogue was initiated, animated by the association's activists and the group of researchers, which took place during three hours divided into four phases:

1. Introduction of the theme (by Cooperative representatives), objectives of the meeting and method (by the research group);
2. Identification of the participants by means of specially prepared paper figurines that the participants filled up with their own baptismal name and fixed on the "wall of ideas" panel (the registered participants were 34);
3. Activating dialogue and collecting responses by compiling the participants of the coloured "leaves" prepared in relation to each question block (145 filled leaves);



4. Spontaneous interaction with other park users, activists, students, and representatives of local institutions (Figure 7).



Figure 7 – The wall of ideas (source: Ragozino, 2013)

During the various stages of the event, participants progressively developed their own thinking, gaining more and more confidence in the theme and with their pro-active role in a community space such as the park (Figure 8).



Figure 8 – The debate around the wall of ideas (source: Ragozino, 2013)

The emerging issues can be traced to two macro-areas: adapting spaces and managing them. In the first group are some limitations of the nature of the park, which in everyday life emerge with force: an incorrect distribution of the benches that do not favour the conviviality; the shape of benches that appear dangerous during the play of children; the inadequate separation between functions and between routes that create overlapping uses that could be dangerous by mothers; and the absence of toilet facilities that discourages the use of the park by families.

On the other side of these physical and functional aspects, considerations of area management are important: lawn maintenance and equipment, cleaning, surveillance to stem antisocial behaviour (from gangs of domed teenagers to the management of pets). Dog breeding is defined as the aggression of young bands. These aspects contribute to disincentive the use of the park.

A node shared by all participants – engaged moms and passers-by – is the perception about the lack of will to intervene and of inadequacy of the institutions in facing the problems. The sense of abandonment is perceived higher if compared to urban policies focused on affluent areas. The debate with the President of the 9<sup>th</sup> Municipality, intervened in the last phase of the action together with the Social Policy Councillor, seems to give strength to the instances and leads some women to propose to be actively involved in preparing and signing a petition on priority emerged from the dialogue. Overall, interaction with neighbourhood activists, local institutions, local organizations and people living in the area, is the first step in a field-based research path designed to outline an effective engagement methodology in contexts of gender differences, conflict and marginality.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This paper have discussed the role of self-organised initiatives in public spaces carried out in contested places of cities where urban regeneration process needs to be accompanied by social inclusion initiatives, solidarity flows and environmental concerns. One of the major issues of the regeneration processes in context with marginalized and segregated components is to involve local communities in developing ideas, building opportunities and sharing resources for guaranteeing a real participatory process. These segregation and marginalization processes of vulnerable and disadvantages groups have been increased by austerity and neoliberal urban redevelopment programs.

In these context – where the most vulnerable segment of the population, women, babies and the elderly, is frequently segregated and gets used to underutilise public spaces for lack of services, neglect and security issues - civic economics initiatives, urban activism and participatory processes are flourishing as counterpoint to this trends. The action-research campaign developed by the National Research Council of Italy (CNR) is focusing to address the needs for participation in deprived areas as well as to develop approaches for including the marginalised and the self-segregated people in the process.

The case study in a social housing area of Naples (Italy) has been developed in order to capture the complex overlapping of urban, social and cultural issues. By interacting with the non-profit organisation, *L'Orsa Maggiore*, a dialogue has been established on educational and social activities, inclusion protocols, training and civic activation. Cooperating with this organisation, a methodology for interaction and civic engagement based on Community Planning has been tested to collect, prioritise, and translate into proposals instances as expressed by the community.

Through the interaction with the women of the neighbourhood, the event developed has allowed a dialogue to focus on precise themes and to associate the visual interpretation of public space with the qualitative "measure" of the demand expressed by the community. Priorities have been addressed by discussing with activists, moms and grandmothers, who develop complex activities and paths in their own territory. The austerity policies have increased the necessity of clearly prioritizing actions in order to enhance the effectiveness of plans and policies and maximize their impact on the regeneration.

The fieldwork, although limited in spatial terms and for the social sphere involved, was an important opportunity of engagement and discussion with the community also because it allowed to test the interaction method. The results achieved were framed within the planning process for the *Soccavo* district, which in its design components reflects the main issues emerging in the dialogue with the community.

The interviews with the designers of the Urban Renewal Plan enabled to highlight the importance of the original concept of the *Canino* Plan, which wanted to define an autonomous neighbourhood based on the natural presence of green areas. In this sense, the project developed in 2013 by Corvino + Multari has put the focus of the strategy on the landscape theme, internationally acknowledged, as well as being an environmental resource, also as a "public realm", that is, as a cultural heritage built over time by people that they recognise in a place to which belong. This has stimulated a great effort to work on public space as a collective place through which unlocking processes of ghettoization and social exclusion, starting from people's perceptions and then defining a suitable spatial technical solution.

This little experience of dialogue with the women of *Rione Traiano*, within an engagement activity that provided participants sitting in semicircle front of the "wall of ideas", allowed to develop the potential of the method. The interaction clearly showed the possibility of proposing shared answers by avoiding the likelihood of tokenism and dispersal of instances (Arnstein, 1969) as well as motivating participants to new actions. In the course of the discussion, the primary requirements have taken root in demands with regard to spatial and management nature, with particular reference to the possible intervention of privates, which could develop economic activities with general interest implications – for example sports activities, refreshments, concession for recreational events that would guarantee maintenance, cleanliness, attendance and the provision of sanitation facilities.

Equally constructive, the discussion with the graduated students of the Architecture faculty, whose explanatory tables with a quick view of the possible transformations, were allowed to receive real-time feedback from the women of the neighbourhood, offering them a physical interpretation of the proposed instances and a greater awareness of neighbourhood spaces. This aspect has been taken into account for the preparation of the next step on the field: Lynchian



Memory (Lynch, 1960) iconic elements will be introduced in the method of engagement to facilitate the display of the issues.

## 6. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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# The role of open space in urban neighbourhoods for the healthy childhood and active ageing

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Healthy growing up and active ageing are the themes that were neglected in the practice of urban planning during transition period in Slovenia, since with the transition in the market economy other motives of spatial planning are often in the foreground (Gazvoda and Simoneti, 2006), although urban planning emerged precisely with the purpose of assuring public health (Szczygiel and Hewitt, 2000; Kochtitzky et al., 2006; Barnes, 2008; Mumford, 1969). Recent collective building construction normally does not allow adequate physical activity to the most vulnerable groups of users, which are children and the elderly (Lestan et al., 2013). Environment that does not promote daily exercise with accessibility to services on food and facilities to spend time outside is an indirect cause for less healthy life style of children and the elderly (Artnik et al., 2012; Croucher et al., 2007; Holt et al., 2008; Sugiyama and Ward Thompson, 2008). Consequences for the vulnerable groups of city inhabitants are smaller physical efficiency of children, they become overfed (Strel et al., 2003; Starc, 2013), while the consequences for the elderly include larger number of falls due to smaller mobility and coordination and faster development of various forms of help at home or faster need for inclusion in retirement homes. (Filipovič-Hrast et al., 2012; Debeljak, 2009; Active ageing...2012).

To prevent falls, which are among the biggest problems related to the population ageing, beside safely arranged apartments also physical activity of the elderly is of vital importance (Strategy..., Emedi et al., 2012). In this respect also the wider living environment, promoting physical activity, is important (Barton and Tsourou, 2000). Already walking extends the probable life expectancy by five years, with the accessibility of parks and green streets near homes representing the contributing factor (Takano, 2003). The quality of life of the elderly in towns is directly conditioned by their physical activity: physical activity does not only extend the life expectancy, it also has positive effect on mental abilities, it prevents depression and improves the general satisfaction with life of the elderly, the feeling of happiness and positive self-image (Curtice in sod., 2005; Frumkin, 2003; Maas in sod., 2009; Telama in sod., 2005). Studies also prove that there is a connection between inactivity and frequent appearance of muscular and skeleton pain affecting the elderly population, which consequently increases the use of painkillers (Scudds et al., 2000). Beside positive effect on physical health, spending time outdoors has proven benevolent effects on the mental state of the elderly (Sugiyama et al., 2008). Further on, researches show the connection between greenery within neighbourhoods and socialising among residents, recreational walking and mental health. Indeed, the social aspect of green surfaces is of extreme importance for the quality of life of the elderly (Sugiyama et al., 2008).

Healthy ageing does not result only from life style in the old age period, but starts already in the childhood. Children are exposed to the risk of physical inactivity, manifested in their lower motor efficiency (Strel et al., 2003). A serious consequence of physical inactivity is among others obesity and the related illnesses, and their incidence among children and adolescents in Slovenia tripled from 1988 to 2013 (Starc, 2013). Modern neighbourhoods frequently do not allow the residents to spend time outdoors, socialise and play in direct vicinity of one's home. Thus, as an example, the time of active child's play is shorter in the neighbourhoods with low quality of outdoor surfaces. The environment also does not provide safe walk to school and the number of children being driven to school is increasing (Edwards et al., 2007, Strategy..., Angelus, 2012). The extent of physical activity of children is conditioned by their life style, and they preserve it also as adolescents and later on in their lives, sometimes even to their old age (Telama et al., 2005). Unfortunately, physical inactivity and obesity of children are almost certainly preserved also in the adult ages, which in the end translates also to the economic success of society (Artnik in sod., 2012; Ward Thompson in sod., 2012). Considering all the above facts, living environment is the most important factor for the development of healthy life style. The living environment quality related to the possibilities of healthy life style is an issue that connects both groups of vulnerable space users in the space as well as in the time timeline.

Healthy life style can be attributed to each individual's decision as well as to the possibilities to realise such decision in the physical and social environment. Children as well as the elderly belong to the most vulnerable groups, as their use of space for physical activity depends most on the immediately to their dwellings. Adult population may compensate lack of adequate outdoor surfaces with visits to gyms or more remote locations, while the vulnerable groups of users who live in an environment without safe, pleasant and adequately equipped outdoor surfaces have difficulties to remain physically active. Environment that does not promote daily movement with walking-distance services and spending time outside directly contributes to less healthy life style of children and the elderly. Standards of collective building development in the second half of the 20th century required much higher quality and extent of outdoor surfaces compared to the modern construction; recent collective building development does not allow the vulnerable groups of users to remain physically active. The Slovenian strategy of active ageing (»Strategy of the Elderly«), currently being prepared, does not emphasise enough the importance of healthy living environment also outside apartments. The same holds true for strategic spatial documents (Strategy of Spatial Development of Slovenia and Spatial Order), currently being upgraded. These documents promote congestion, internal development and urban renewal, which is in practice frequently realised by local urban interventions, mostly in the form of added building structures, frequently on account of open space. All this can have negative effect on the quality of the wider environment, e.g.: access on foot to daily required services is aggravated, the quantity and quality of green surfaces are reduced, etc.

The purpose of the project is to determine the quality of urban residential areas from the aspect of possibilities for physical activity of children and the elderly, the differences among them and the link between physical characteristics of the space and its actual use. Further on, we also wish to find out how children and the elderly perceive the space, what attracts them to spend time at certain outdoor surfaces and what the mental barriers are in a city that prevent them to e.g. walk to certain daily services or to a park where outdoor activities are possible (e.g. heavy traffic road, poor condition of sidewalks, inadequate safety in certain space, etc.).

It is assumed that children and the elderly perceive and consider school districts, which offer the users possibility of access on foot on their way to daily errands and proper quantity and equipment of green surfaces to spend time outside and socialise, to be of better quality.

## 2. METHOD

The main method introduced in the research is a focus group discussion. Besides the method included spatial analysis of the test areas as well as connection between discussion findings and space characteristics.

Test areas where school district among which six of them were chosen: Tone Čufar and Prule in Ljubljana, Tolmin, Trebnje, Žalec and Metlika. Selection of a school district as spatial unit for a detailed research depends on the accessibility of data from the SLOfit database, which includes data on physical and motor development of children and adolescents aged 6 to 19. Faculty of Sports of the University of Ljubljana cooperates in the collection and interpretation of these data. Since there is no similar database for the elderly population, the data are being collected from the existing researches, which were carried out by the Urban Planning Institute. Selection of given school districts outside the capital city is based on previous research of small Slovenian towns where the role of public space as urban development support was explored (Vertelj Nared, 2014).

This exploratory study employed focus group interviews to investigate the perceptions, use, and experience of youth with open space in their home surroundings as well as their attitude to recreation. Two focus groups were held in each district with participants aged 14-15 years, so that 12 focus groups were conducted in 6 school district. Each focus group lasted approximately 60 minutes and was digitally recorded. Number of youth in each focus group is ranging from 5 to 10, total number of all participants is 117. Due to the project is the work in progress, only focus groups discussions with children, that were organised in schools, were implemented. Their main intention were to find out the perception about recreation as important aspect of health and quality of children's life as well as subjective perception of the school district space. The next item of interest to find out was what is important when providing outdoor surfaces in neighbourhoods, and what conditions their use by individual groups.

Focus group discussion in each school was divided in two sessions. In the first step short questions were given to the group regarding the school paths they use each day, how do they reach the school – by feet, by school bus or otherwise, what do they do after school in terms of physical activity etc. In the second step graphic materials of the school districts were introduced. Digital Orthophoto (Source: the Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia, GURS) was used for that purpose on which the school of the individual district was in the middle, so that the environment displayed on the map was equally well-known to all participants. On the Digital Orthophoto they marked the points of risk at their daily paths or unpleasant spaces as well as those points that they perceive as pleasant. For unpleasant spaces orange colored marks were used and green marks for pleasant spaces. The points of risk represent the structures in the space that are perceived as mental barrier, e.g. unpleasant walk from A to B because of a certain number of roads, because no sideways are provided in part of the route or because they feel too exposed on the road, physically as well as psychologically, etc. Each mark on the Digital Orthophoto was linked to the short comment, which enabled creation of the database in further digitalization of the results. Participants also proposed specific spatial interventions where possible.

The marks on Digital Orthophotos as focus group results were followed by data transfer into a Geographical Information System (GIS) and classification of the parameter categories.



ArcView GIS 3.3 for Windows was used for this purpose. Every data input of a mark of one single person is described with parameters within the following categories: school, sex, colour of the mark, corresponding comment, activity and space categorie. “Activity” is a descriptive category that groups all different comments into more general classes: staying in the place, walking, gathering, avoiding the place, gym, swimming, ciclyng, playing. “Space category” summarizes all the marked places on the Digital Orthophoto into one of the classes: nature, city park, building, traffic, unpleasant space or smell, sport park, people, city or square. With the “activity” and “space categorie” the question of “what” and “where” is answered.

Graphical representation of the results combines three data levels: marks of children, their classification into classes and public open spaces in the city. Children marks are shown as given in focus groups, that is, with green and orange labels. These marks are classified into categories by the “space categorie”. Public open spaces in the city in small towns (Trebnje, Metlika, Žalec, Tolmin) are summarized by Vertelj Nared (2014) thesis, in Ljubljana city this data level has been newly generated with GoogleMaps web applications use as well as Digital Orthophoto. Classification would also be possible by the “activity”, but there are often many different activities on the same place which makes graphical representation more difficult. Classification by the "space categorie" along with color of labels that generally indicates whether the space is pleasant or not are graphically showing how do the youth percieve the school surrounding. Furthermore, with the overlapping method it can be determined how classification by the "space categorie" corresponds to the actual use of public open spaces.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the first part of focus groups are shown in the Table 1. It is a generalized view of the qualitative replies in numerical form, that was achieved with data processing in Excel application program, where Count function was used. The first column shows the arguments derived from the replies to the given questions.

Way to school is one of the ways that can significantly increase the daily rate of children’s activity. The share of those who are walking to school or are using other forms of active transportation, is the smallest in Metlika (48%), while children come to school the most active way in Tone Čufar in Ljubljana (100%). The answers includes all who are walking for at least 5 minutes, or have other forms of active transportation such as bicycle or scooter. There should be emphasized that children do not have equal opportunities for active way to school. Especially in rural areas school districts include villages in the surroundings of the small town, where the location of the school is. Commuters are dependent on transport. Besides, generalized responses does not allow to conclude whether school paths are in bad condition or dangerous. The latter would require more focused questionnaires.



Almost everyone in all six school districts are being active in their leisure time. School obligations mainly do not restrict children in doing so. Children in Tone Čufar school in Ljubljana report the most that there is not enough time to be active after school due to obligations they have. In principle, the proportion of those children, who is training something, is not bigger than active children in general. Organized training sessions are therefore not necessary factor for children to be active or not. It indicates that children in general have good physical habits.

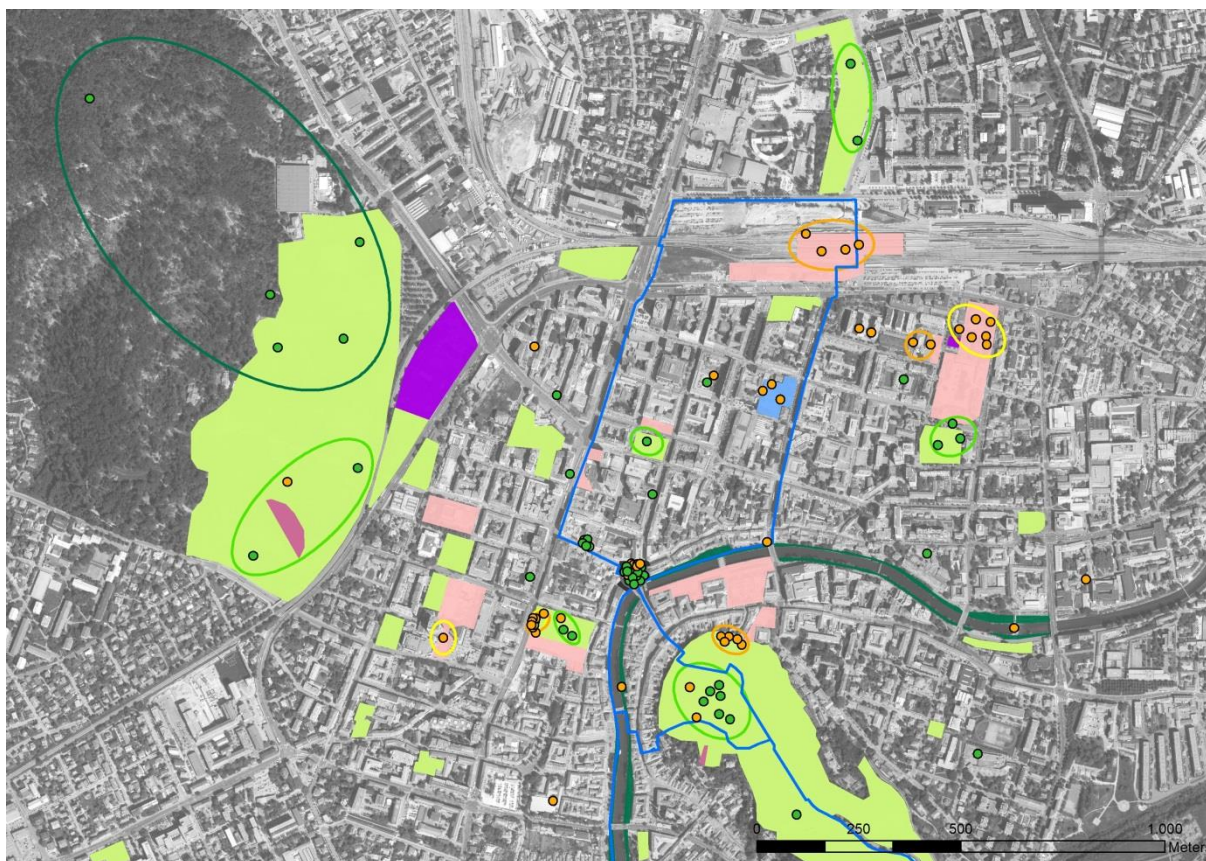
In school districts outside Ljubljana, the share of children who think that certain spatial arrangement or outdoor equipment would contribute significantly to the active leisure time, is much higher than in the capital. The least of such spatial interventions are missing in Prule (9%). In Ljubljana outdoor activities children are missing or for which there is no infrastructure are playgrounds nearby, arranged paths on the Golovec, tidy swimming pools, safe sidewalks and tree shade on the Špica park. In Trebnje skatepark is missing as well as swimming pool, volleyball court, archery club, downhill space, diverse and safe cycling routes, climbing walls, more trees in the park and even more parks to socialize, as there is too little playing equipment and it is often occupied. Besides in Trebnje children wish to have adventure park, jogging trail, more activities for girls and more activities in general because there is not much happening in the home town. In Metlika children would like to have football field, ski slope, paintball, baseball, rugby, riding school, dance club, outdoor fitness and new city park as well as cycle paths around Metlika. In Metlika fence against the refugees, which takes place along Kolpa river was highlighted as disturbing. Kolpa area is of the most importance for local people, since they regularly use it. In Žalec besides swimming pool, cycling routes and downhill are also missing, as well as carting, ice rink, motocross, ping pong, sport park, adventure park, jogging trail, horse-riding school, handball playground and new bigger city park with lots of greenery. In Tolmin they also miss swimming pool since Soča river is often too cold for swimming. Furthermore they are missing hockey, downhill and skate park, which was torn down. Along with all the wishes one of the pupils in Tolmin says, that it is more fun and there is more options if a lot of outdoor infrastructure is not offered.

*Table 1: Share of positive responses to claims that are derived from answers to the questions in the first part of the focus groups in the school districts.*

% (yes)	Ljubljana Tone Čufar	Ljubljana Prule	Trebnje	Metlika	Žalec	Tolmin
<b>Recreation on the way to school</b>	100,0	45,5	57,1	48,0	88,9	64,7
<b>Leisure recreation</b>	100,0	95,5	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
<b>Does schoolwork hinder youth at their leisure recreation?</b>	18,2	0,0	0,0	12,0	7,4	5,9
<b>Is training</b>	18,2	40,9	57,1	40,0	29,6	52,9
<b>I would be more active if specific outdoor equipment was provided.</b>	18,2	9,1	71,4	68,0	51,9	41,2

The results of the second part of focus groups are graphically showing all three levels of data: children's marks, classification of the children's marks and public open spaces (Source of the data layer of public open spaces: Vertelj Nared, 2014).

On the Picture 1 Tone Čufar school district is outlined with the blue line. Of course, children use a wider area of the city than the school district itself. Uncomfortable spaces for them are Metelkova street due to people ("strange people", "drug addicts") and railway station. As such it is also considered the pedestrian underpass at Kongresni trg due to the stench and people being there. Prešernov trg is perceived as a center for meetings from where they go onwards. In the same place the area in front of the church is being avoided, where homeless and drunks are gathering. The path above the puppet theater is perceived dark and uncomfortable, but city parks are generally associated with a positive feelings: in Tivoli and Rožnik they socialize and recreate, children are also staying in Tabor park and in the Northern City Park as well as on the Castle hill and Kongresni trg. Many public open spaces are not labeled, but in general, the outdoor activities of children overlap with them.

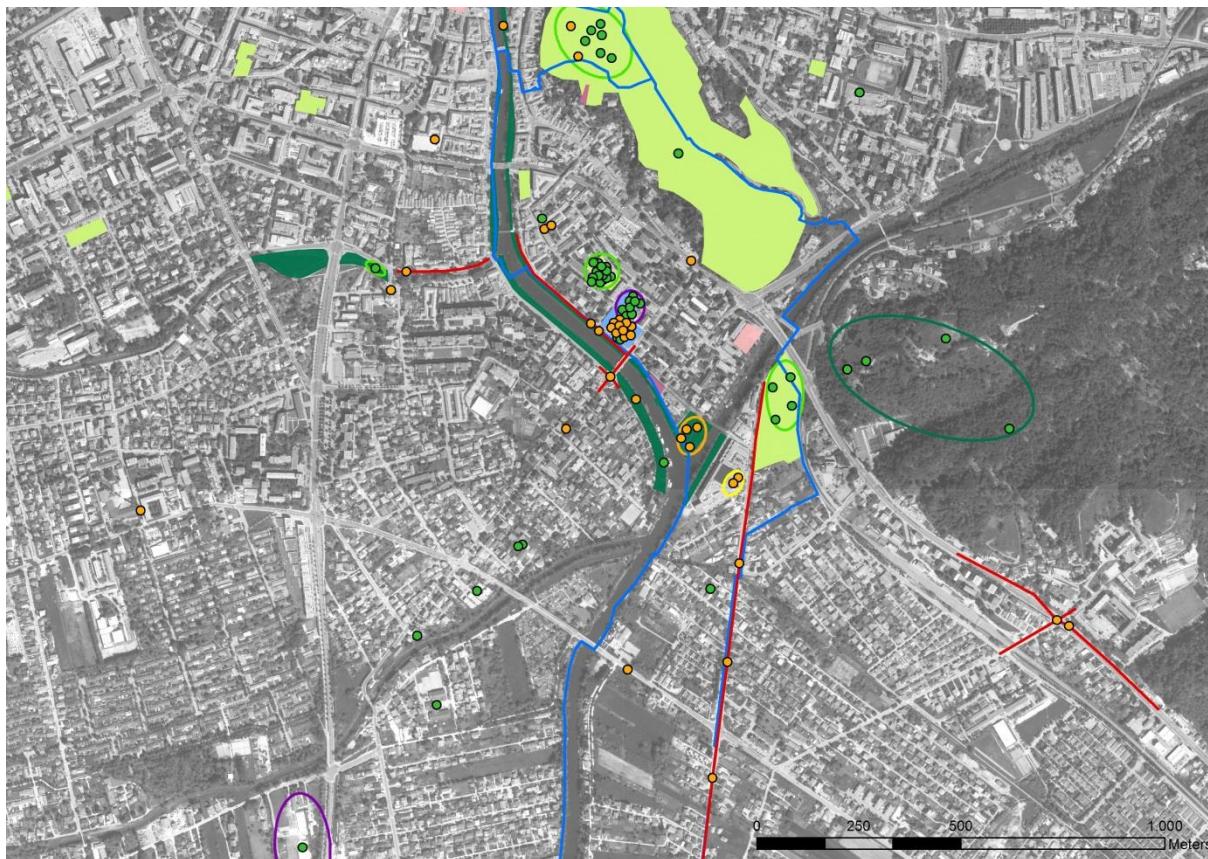


Picture 1: Overlapping of the children's marks on the Digital Orthophoto of Tone Čufar school district in Ljubljana city and their classification with public open spaces in the city (Source of the data layer of public open spaces: Vertelj Nared, 2014. Source of the Digital Orthophoto: GURS, 2016)

Picture 2: Youth from Prule uses open space in the city in less diverse way, but the fact is, that the Prule school district is much larger than Tone Čufar district so there are also children from this school who belong to the broader environment, as displayed on the map. The map shows only the northern part of the school district. This means that after school children could actively spend their time elsewhere, mainly around the home. Spaces being in use are the park at the school and the school playground, in addition, Botanical garden, Castle and Golovec are often occupied. Open spaces, which they consider to be unpleasant, are renovated Špica park, where tree shade is missing. Partly the castle hill in being uncomfortable due to some people staying there, such as homeless people or drunks. The most uncomfortable for children is the traffic, especially Ižanka road, which connects the southern and northern part of the district and which is considered dangerous. Besides, on some roads near the school cycling routes are missing. There is nothing in relation to open space of the school, which is marked with range of orange

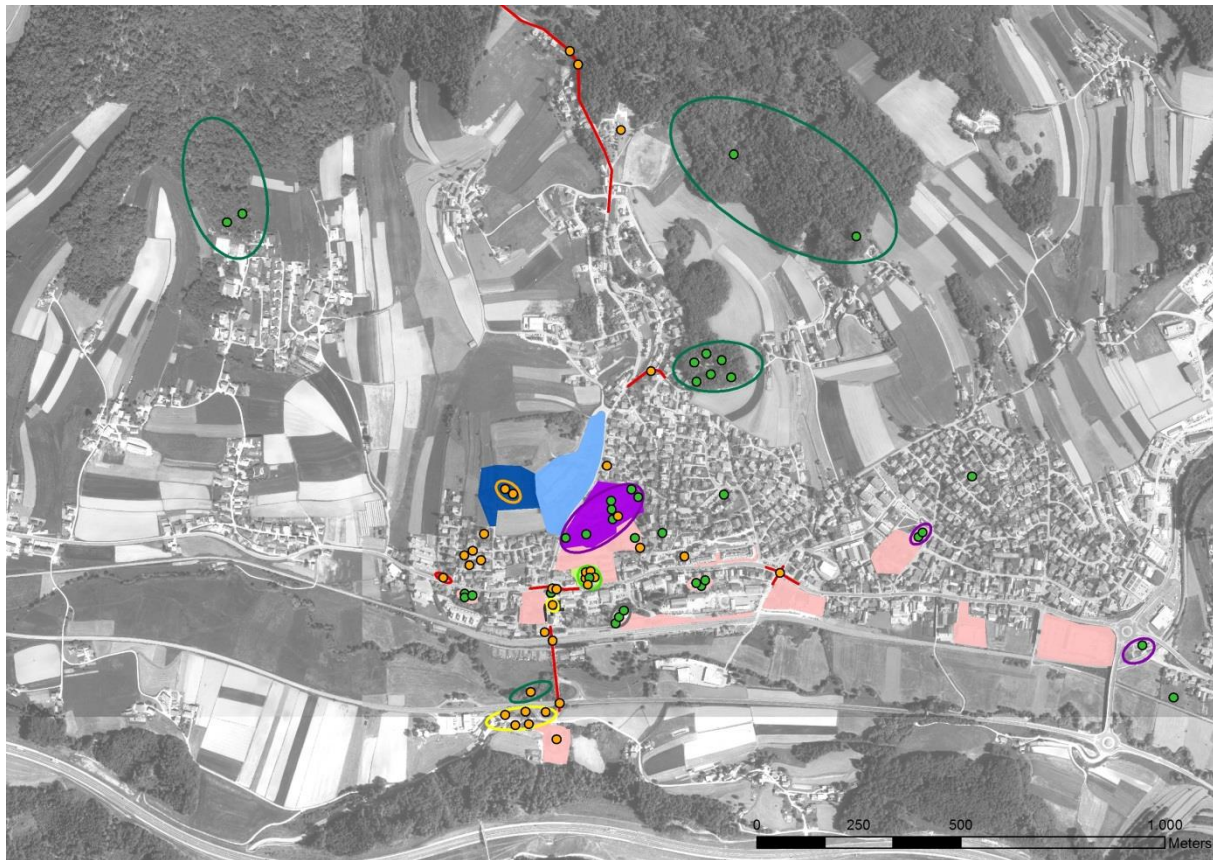


labels on the school building. Emphasis that orange labels must not be put on the school was followed after the focus group in Prule.



Picture 2: Overlapping of the children's marks on the Digital Orthophoto of Prule school district in Ljubljana and their classification with public open spaces in the city (Source of the data layer of public open spaces: Vertelj Nared, 2014. Source of the Digital Orthophoto: GURS, 2016)

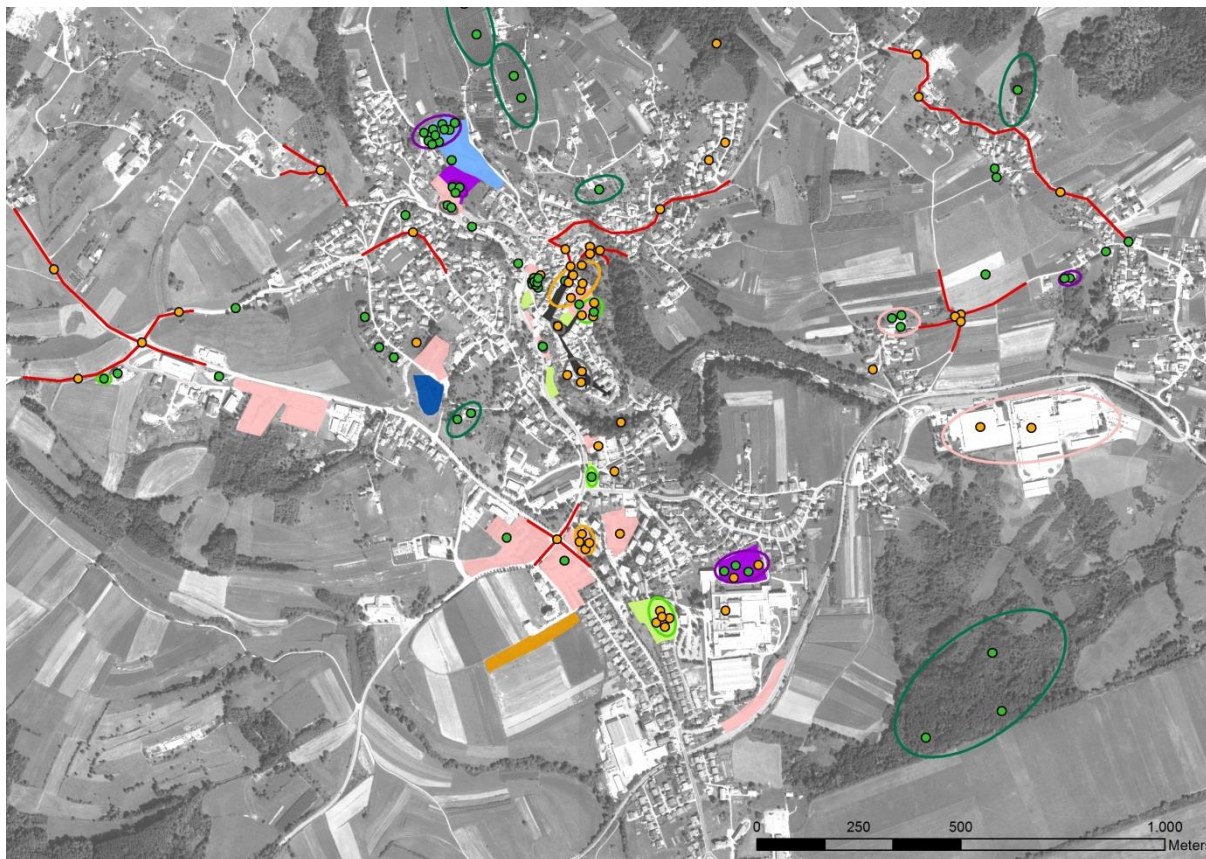
Picture 3: Forests nearby the city are used for recreation. Children also recreate on the sports field near the school. The area around the school was not marked at all but for some cemetery is being uncomfortable, because it is too close to school. Recently all the trees in the city park was cut down, which the children perceived as a great loss and made the city park connected to the uncomfortable association. Place by the water and castle on the south side is also marked as an unpleasant, since both spaces are not arranged for users. At the castle gypsies are those who are being avoided. Finally, also unregulated traffic is disturbing, such as road in the north due to fast driving and the bridge on the south of the castle due to unregulated sidewalk.



Picture 3: Overlapping of the children's marks on the Digital Orthophoto of Trebnje city and their classification with public open spaces in the city (Source of the data layer of public open spaces: Vertelj Nared, 2014. Source of the Digital Orthophoto: GURS, 2016)

Picture 4: The most common places to stay in Metlika city are the school playground and sports field near the school, as well as youth center and playground at Beti industry zone. Often but dispersed in the space children are using natural surroundings of the city. The city center around the castle is often associated with unpleasant feelings due to people ("drug addicts") and due to unpleasant cattle smell. City park in the south, among local people known as "Borštek" ("Little forest"), is unpopular as well. Industry buildings are not pleasant to see, besides certain traffic danger around the city is perceived disturbing. As such unclear corners, dangerous crossroads or roads where people drive too fast are marked. Speeding is dangerous especially in rural areas where local roads usually do not have sidewalks.

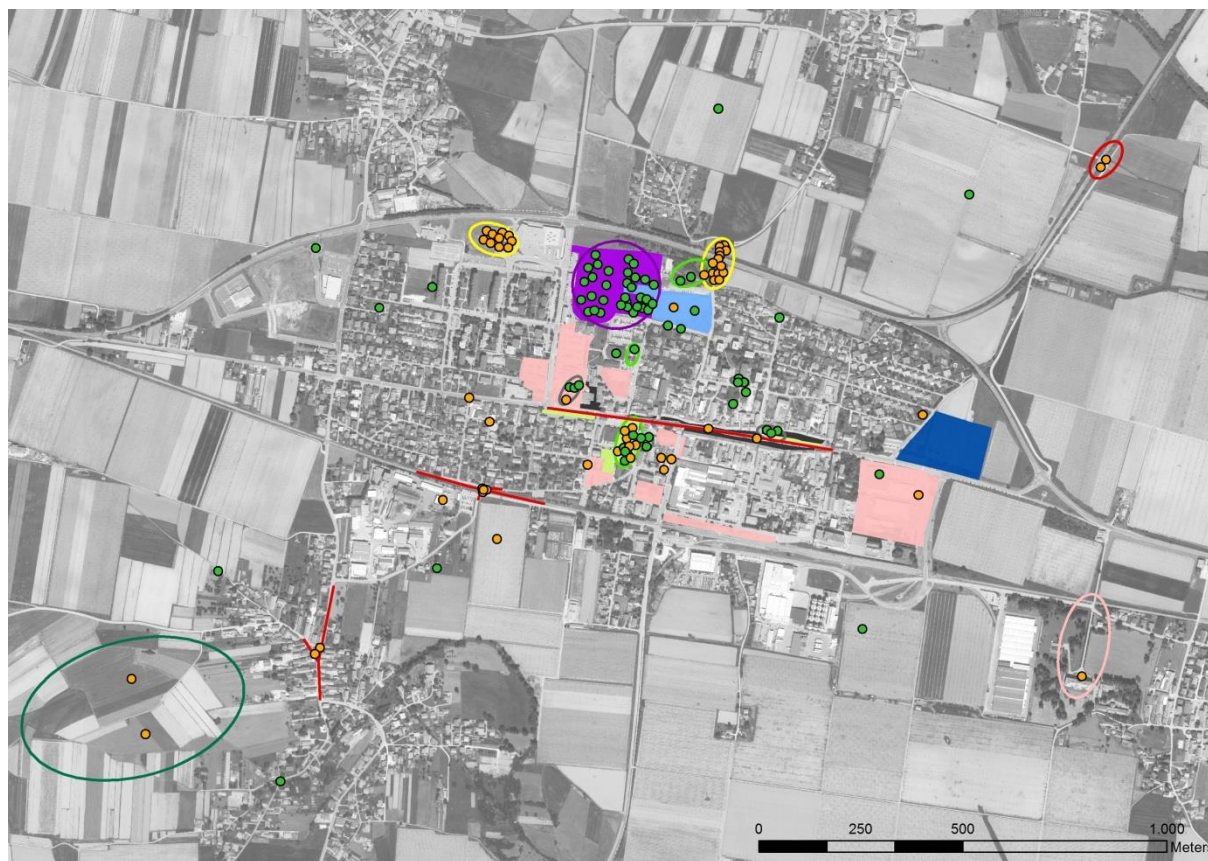




Picture 4: Overlapping of the children's marks on the Digital Orthophoto of Metlika city and their classification with public open spaces in the city (Source of the data layer of public open spaces: Vertelj Nared, 2014. Source of the Digital Orthophoto: GURS, 2016)

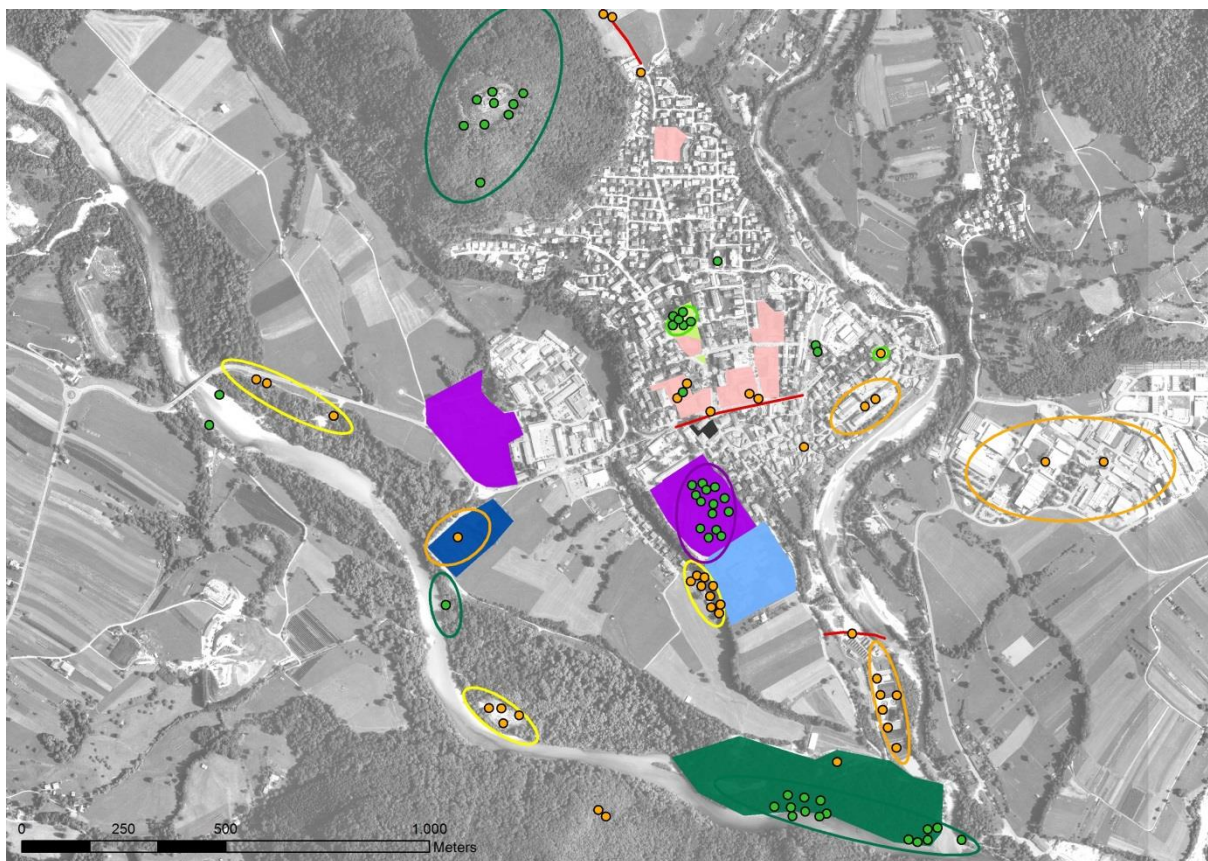
Picture 5: In Žalec the largest densification of the green marks is in the sports park in the immediate vicinity of the school. In the northern part of the school, where also a school route takes place, there is a bridge on the road, among local people also known as “Mavrica” (“Rainbow”). That bridge has unpleasant association due to drug addicts, which should be staying there. The second zone of avoidance due to drug addicts is on the north-west side of the school. In the city park, where the fountain of beer stands, mixed opinions are given. Some like it and love staying there, to others the fountain of beer and people that fountain attracts are disturbing. The road through the center is marked as dangerous, besides children are aware of the danger of crossing the train track. In the northern part surrounding of the town is associated with pleasant walks, in the south crop fields are perceived as a deserted place and therefore dangerous.





Picture 5: Overlapping of the children's marks on the Digital Orthophoto of Žalec city and their classification with public open spaces in the city (Source of the data layer of public open spaces: Vertelj Nared, 2014. Source of the Digital Orthophoto: GURS, 2016)

Picture 6: The advantage of the open space in Tolmin is the confluence of the Tolminka river and Soča river. Kids love to swim and socialize there, but are sometimes also disturbed by "strange people" and "drunks" who are staying on the river as well. Another natural feature is the castle on the hill, which is a popular destination for all participants without exception. It is used for recreation and view. Like in Metlika industry is associated with unpleasant feelings and as such also the sewage treatment plant at the Tolminka river and the slaughterhouse is perceived. Like in Žalec the sports park near the school is the most commonly used. On the west side of the school children avoid the area where drunks are staying. Despite the remarkable natural diversity of the city surroundings the city park is also used. In the category of disturbing transport, there is the slope in the north, which is hard to overcome by bike. Road through the center is perceived as dangerous, and a shortcut to the Tolminka, which was closed, is missing.



Picture 6: Overlapping of the children's marks on the Digital Orthophoto of Tolmin city and their classification with public open spaces in the city (Source of the data layer of public open spaces: Vertelj Nared, 2014. Source of the Digital Orthophoto: GURS, 2016)

## LEGEND

### CHILDREN MARKS

-  Pleasant area
-  Unpleasant area

### CLASSIFICATION OF THE CHILDREN'S MARKS

-  Nature / river / countryside
-  Park / playground / natural features in city
-  Building / industry
-  Traffic
-  Uncomfortable area / stench
-  Sports park / sports playground
-  People
-  City / square

### PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

-  City park
-  The central city square
-  Children's playground
-  Other sports playground
-  School playground
-  Cemetery
-  Allotment gardens in the city
-  Waterside areas
-  Open space in front of the buildings of societal importance

(Source of the data layer of public open spaces: Vertelj Nared, 2014)

Among all six districts Prule stands out for their lowest share of the spatial arrangements or programme that would add variety to children's leisure activities outside (Table 1: Share of positive responses to the claim "I would be more active if specific outdoor equipment was provided«). Besides, marks of the children in the district are highly concentrated in a few places. Both may indicate either a lack of motivation to participate in focus groups or it may indicate a lack of imagination or will to actively spend their free time. Naturally, these are only assumptions that should be verified. Another detail, which should be taken into account, is the Digital Orthophoto itself, which displays only a part of the school district so many of favourite places of the individual can be excluded. Tone Čufar school district is similar to Prule, it's open spaces are slightly more varied marked and children express a little more desire on the variety of program for active leisure time. In overall summary of the two sets of results it could be stated, that children from small towns (Trebnje, Metlika, Žalec, Tolmin) that have more contact with nature, are assessing the open space in the city and its surroundings in more varied way as well as they more creatively percept opportunities for active free time (Table 1: Share of positive responses to the claim "I would be more active if specific outdoor equipment was provided«).

The results of the focus groups reveal areas that cannot be estimated using only spatial analysis or field visit. On the one hand, it is expected that the industry is uncomfortable to see, on the other hand, opinions of the participants provide unexpected insight into the perception of the actual use of open space in the city. From the maps it is not possible to see, that for example



center of Metlika city stinks, or that one of the city parks is being avoided and other city parks are not in use. However, we must consider the fact, that all age groups of adolescents are not taken into account and therefore the results are showing unrepresentative share of the young population. Furthermore it would be interesting for example to compare children's opinions with the opinion of the elderly and to find out where the opinion match or diverge.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Focus group is a form of group interview and is suitable to gather qualitative data. The method includes an interview, observation and experiment at the same time and relies on communication between research participants instead of the usual dialogue between the interviewer and interviewees. In planning it is applied to identify the needs and positions of the local people on the chosen topic e.g. of planning policies, programmes etc. Group interaction is used as part of the method, which means that people are encouraged to talk to one another, exchanging opinions, experiences, anecdotes and commenting each others' points of view. The conversation usually gives details, that would not be expressed in another type of setting. The method can be used to examine not only what people think but how they think as well as why they think that way. This technique can be very engaging for participants, especially persons from communities who often do not have a voice in matters that affect them and as such it is the most suitable method to work with youth and elderly.

Despite some advantages of the chosen method also weaknesses of it should be taken into account. First, focus groups are often used as complementary methods. Due to the small sample it is difficult to ensure representativity and statistically valid results (Neuman, 2006). Secondly, it reveals an unofficial opinion of the participants on a specific topic so any further use of it should be carefully considered. The implementation of several focus groups in the most similar samples ensures greater objectivity (Miles Huberman 1994). Thirdly, participants' personality and background play a role in their willingness to participate. As demonstrated also in our focus groups, all participants do not participate equally, although they are encouraged to do so. Besides, several times it turned out that the group influenced the opinion of the individual. Even though a lot of data were obtained, these data do not represent the validity of quantitative statistical data and thus are not entirely objective.

By including children as interest groups in the planning process, spatial solutions can capture their perception of the environment. Further on, interaction with the physical environment represents their first steps in discovering the world and is an extremely important part of child's learning, which starts in the home environment or in their neighbourhood, and is later on upgraded with the school district. Children should be the basic criterion for planning neighbourhoods and the required interventions at the level of school districts, with

»walkability« as the focal point. Life in a city today includes many risks for small children, especially due to the increased motorisation. For this reason the network »Cities for Children« emphasises exactly that – children and their parents who take care of them should feel safe, which must be assured in order to motivate them to physical activity or active transport in a city. If parents feel safe, also the number of children driven to school should decrease (Angelus, 2012).

Care for healthy development of children is an investment into future, health and productivity of the whole society in the long term, and this adds wider dimensions to the education of children, extends beyond the responsibility of families and is transferred in the educational system, health care, urban planning and politics, which should be the groundwork of the integral health promotion (Zaletel-Kragelj 2007).

## 5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# **Trieste: Laboratories on Welfare Spaces in Council Housing Estates.**

## ***The University as an Intermediate Actor for City Making***

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### **1. THE PUBLIC CITY: A LONG HISTORY, EMERGING ISSUES, NEW PERSPECTIVES**

Trieste was still part of the Habsburg Empire when the first municipal body responsible for housing policies saw the light in 1902, one year before the Italian law for the establishment of Institutes for council houses was passed (see Di Biagi et al., eds., 2002; Di Biagi et al., eds., 2004). Whereas, during the 20th century (and, in particular, after WW2), council housing estates were among the urban materials that had the greatest impact on the construction of the city and of welfare policies, today many of these settlements – made of a large amount of dwellings, as well as of public services and spaces – show significant spatial and social problems.

Even though this *public city* does not reach the extreme disadvantaged conditions that can be recognized in many European contexts, in the capital of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region the situation of public peripheries is harder than it may appear at a first reading. Over time, urban growth has embedded them, but in the collective imagination they still belong to the "bad lands" (Dikeç, 2007), to those areas which have acquired a bad reputation for a variety of social, localization and spatial design choices made by public policies.

In Trieste, the public city records a percentage among the highest in the Country. The dwellings

managed by the Public Housing Agency (It. *Azienda Territoriale per l'Edilizia Residenziale di Trieste-ATER*) are about 13,000 (11% of the total number of available flats); here live 20,000 people (9% of the whole resident population), that is more than 41% of families staying in rented flats (see Public Housing Agency of Trieste, 2016)<sup>6</sup>. But, in spite of its dimensions, the offer is not able to match the demand for subsidized housing, as the number of applications expected on the new ATER call shows: approximately 6,000. This reaffirms a constant emergence and accentuation of poverty situations, which have close ties to demographic trends. As regards these trends, Trieste is anticipating some phenomena that soon will be mainstream across Italy and Europe<sup>7</sup>. It is among the Italian cities with the highest proportion of elderly residents, where progressive aging is associated with the growth of chronic diseases, a profound change in family profiles and the decline of young and working population. People over 65 years exceed 28% (data for Italy is 21.7%); but in council housing the average figure is up to 35%, while the number of single-parent households is 47% (compared with 32% in the rest of Italy). This means that almost half of the families have only one component and only one possible income (which, in 61% of cases, is less than 15,600 euro a year).

Built with the aim of answering to a pressing housing demand, today council estates are a ground where public policies are once again called to deal with many issues. Problems that are related to the dramatic re-emergence of the housing issue, to the perpetuation of choices that have led to the concentration of particularly vulnerable groups in the same neighbourhoods, to the need for renewal of dwellings and collective spaces. Moreover, the aim of ensuring an increasing number of people the opportunity to age at home here conflicts with the difficulty of re-configuring spaces in relation to the emergence of significant problems related to accessibility of services, especially for those suffering from reduced mobility (see Huber, ed., 2008). Even though still underestimated, these issues will have strong impacts on spatial design, healthcare and social assistance, public spending<sup>8</sup>. The challenge for public policies thus appears to be the definition of innovative and synergic interventions on the residential, social and urban context, focusing on the emergence of new forms (often widespread and voiceless) of discomfort and developing a reflection on the different ways of living in houses and open spaces, on the coexistence/conflict between the lifestyles and needs of different age, social and economic groups, on the demand for equipment and services that can guarantee autonomy to a larger number of people (see Barton et al., 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Unlike other national contexts where council housing is part of municipal competencies, in Friuli Venezia Giulia ATERs are regional economic public bodies. In Italy the weight of council housing is very modest (4-5%); the percentage of housing property rises to an average of 71.9%, while families on rent to 18%. These figures are in sharp contrast with the European framework: in France, the share of rent stands at 42% of the total of housing stock (19% is offered by council housing); in the United Kingdom, this number accounts for about 36% of the total (of which 17% is social leasing); in Germany, rent rises to 59.7% (with 19.7% covered by the public) (see Censis, Nomisma, 2015).

<sup>7</sup> For the EU Member States, between 2008 and 2060, forecasts predict an increase of the average age from 40.4 to 47.9 years. An increase is also to be expected in the share of population over 65 years from 17.1% to 30% (with a growth in absolute numbers from 84.6 to 151.5 million people) and in the population over 80 from 4.4% to 12.1% (corresponding to a growth from 21.8 to 61.4 million people) (see Giannakouris, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> A recent study on the Italian context shows that the health expenses of a seventy-year-old double those of a forty-year-old, and even triple those of a 30-year-old. In 2025, in Italy the rate of non-self-sufficiency in the population is expected to increase from around 4 to 6%, which is going to create enormous organizational and social problems (see Maino & Ferrera, 2013).

For some years now, in relation to these issues Trieste has been an important laboratory for developing new ways to *work on places and with people* (Donzelot et al., 2003). The protagonists are both the main institutional actors involved in the management of territorial policies (Public Local Health Agency, It. *Azienda Sanitaria Universitaria Integrata di Trieste-ASUITS*; ATER; Municipality) and the University. Purpose of this contribution is to outline this reflection, starting from some didactic and action-research experiences developed by the University of Trieste with the support of public actors and of the third sector<sup>9</sup>. A description ‘from inside’ of the studied neighbourhoods and of public policies will give the opportunity to explore specific issues: the need to re-orient welfare policies from a quantitative, functionalist and abstract attitude to a strong integration with the qualities of their physical setting (from Welfare State to Welfare Space); the importance and the role of intermediate actors (such as the University) within processes of urban renewal characterized by bottom-up and top-down actions; the need to redefine design approaches to the regeneration of welfare spaces in relation to the emerging of new social and economic conditions and of new ways of living. A more general assumption stands at the background of this narrative. Today, as in the past, the public city is one of the places where the “new urban question” – social inequalities, lack of mobility and accessibility, bad environmental conditions (Secchi, 2010) – are anticipating and stressing their impacts. Here innovative processes of spatial and social design, local communities’ empowerment, new forms of public and collective actions can be tried out. Policies and actions that, in the next future, will be useful for the regeneration of other parts of the contemporary city (see *Laboratoriocittàpubbliche*, 2009).

## 2. TALES FROM THE PERIPHERY

It is an October afternoon. With a group of students we leave for a survey to the council housing estate of Ponziana. The bus ride from the railway station is quite short. The neighbourhood is near a historic district of Trieste, with a recently refurbished and very lively square. But in Ponziana the atmosphere is different. Although we do not perceive a sense of isolation, there is not a square where people can meet. Only bars look out onto a mesh of streets without a clear hierarchy. Monica – the head of Microarea, settled in an office at the ground floor of one of the houses, where operators from ASUITS, ATER and the Municipality jointly work – tells us that the edifices were mostly built between the ‘20s and the ‘30s. They embrace green courtyards placed at a higher level than the road fronts, with no relations to the nearby context. In the ‘80s, another large council housing block was constructed, cutting the district in two, and enclosing a sequence of open spaces that are poorly designed and not used for their steep layout. Everywhere in the neighbourhood walking from one’s flat door to the street is very difficult.

<sup>9</sup> The focus will be on the results of the Atelier of Urban Planning at the fourth year of the Master Degree Courses in Architecture (2016-17, first semester), coordinated by Elena Marchigiani, with Paola Cigalotto and Lorenzo Pentassuglia.

For the elderly who live alone this is a very serious problem. Few buildings have lifts; the stairs have no ramps; sidewalks are not properly maintained. Equally problematic is the composition of the population: many inhabitants are former convicts or users of mental health centres; their incomes are particularly low; little is the willingness to share activities. Monica leaves us with a doubt: perhaps, if public spaces were *more welcoming and connected*, the life of the neighbourhood would be different. The quantity and potential variety of these spaces, as well as the presence of facilities (Ponziana has its own school complex), are not enough when their use as a system is impossible.

The next day we reach Valmaura. South of the city centre, where Trieste becomes a fragmented periphery, the complex of two tall constructions built between the '70s and '80s is the trace of a high-concentration collective housing model, confirming its spatial and social diversity from the context. Compressed between a ramp to an urban highway, an ironworks still in operation, private houses, large urban equipment, the two council housing 'dams' enclose courts and covered walks. In this case too, the quantity of collective spaces is generous but they are inhospitable, poorly furnished, empty of people; they do not facilitate aggregation or cure. Entrances to the doors are from the collective walks, often taken as deposits and perceived as unsafe. The same perception comes from the little used parking basement, on which the buildings stand. For the inhabitants of Valmaura (large families, in critical social and economic conditions), the few spaces of people-to-people relationships mostly refer to the provision of services: the Health District; the Nursery; the office of Microarea. For Ofelia and Alfio, who work every day in the District and in Microarea, the physical separation from the rest of the neighbourhood is one of the main problems and is emphasized by the wide road in front of the dams. The complex has been thought as having no architectural barriers (therefore many flats have been assigned to disabled people), but crossing the street where commercial activities are settled is extremely dangerous. This to show that *accessibility* needs to be tackled at different scales, both building and urban.

In the afternoon we move to Altura, on the edge of the north-eastern suburbs of Trieste. Here, the city climbs the hills. The bordering woods and peri-urban agricultural plots show great environmental quality, but no relationships with the district. The urban bike path passing through its central sector shows no integration to the settlement as well. If reaching Altura by public transport takes a long time, moving through the public and private housing units built since the '70s is even more complicated. In the upper part, at the entrance of the small supermarket at the core of ATER buildings, we meet Davide, our contact from the Microarea, already set up but still without an office. He tells us that he worked at Valmaura ten years ago, and now he has to start over again in another neighbourhood, from the direct knowledge of its inhabitants. Here, over 65 reach 39%; they have always lived and have aged in these houses. Some are still active retired people, but many are prisoners at home and have to pay their neighbours for bringing them medicines. Unlike Valmaura and Via Grego (of which I will write



shortly), in the higher part of Altura there are no stolen or abandoned cars and motorcycles, nor sale of illegal substances. The open spaces have well-kept plants and flowers; everything is very quiet and clean. Even though distances are short as the crow flies, jumps of several meters make *pedestrian activity limited to small stretches*. To reach the school, the church, the park and the skate park, the large central building that once housed the mall (today only a pharmacy and a bar), the sports fields, one needs to walk up and down many steps and take again the bus.

This is the journey that we make, together with Davide, to go down to Borgo San Sergio. In this neighbourhood, starting from the late '50s, the idea of several residential nuclei gravitating on a polycentric system of services has been translated into non-communicating islands, where processes of alienation and social composition have accentuated the condition of periphery within the periphery of the buildings still owned by ATER and the Municipality. Among them, in via Grego, we find the so-called 'Smurfs' home': a high-rise building with blue facades rising from a concrete pour, where ribbon windows placed next to the ceilings, the poor quality of flats and the lack of maintenance of external spaces are felt by the inhabitants as an increasingly bitter price. Lifts and accessibility are guaranteed, but the barriers among people are very strong because of the acuteness of discomfort (economic, social, cultural, health-related). Even the self-construction of small gardens has fuelled conflicts and the intolerance towards the forced togetherness, as well as a growing mistrust in institutions' work. In the last years, upgrading interventions of public spaces and facilities have been implemented, but they do not show any integration, as in the case of a large area at the back of the building where *many surfaces are still unresolved and equipment cannot be used for the lack of management*. Beyond these spaces, a broad strip of vegetable gardens has been assigned to private citizens: apparently this is a resource and a qualifying factor for the neighbourhood; in fact, it is perceived as an autonomous reality, where only recently the Municipality has sought to diversify uses and users by promoting the allocation of some plots to third sector associations.

### 3. TOWARDS A DIFFERENT WELFARE

These short tales strengthen the hypothesis that, especially in council housing estates, the re-thinking of public policies for community development has to be deeply intertwined with space-based interventions. In other words, *a different approach to welfare is necessary*.

Talking about "a different welfare" (de Leonardis, 1998) does not mean that the central role of public actors has failed or that less welfare is needed. On the contrary, "public service, public transport, public hospital, public school, etc., all this represents a form of extraordinary civilization that has been difficult to build ... [but] if this process of destruction of all collective structures is prolonged ... we will see still unnoticed and imperceptible consequences, because what you save with one hand you will pay with the other" (Bourdieu, 2005: 43-44). To face the

reduction of protection mechanisms and the growth of social insecurity (see Castel, 2003), the effort that is now required to public policies is fighting the risk of retraction through a profound re-thinking; moving from a subsidy attitude to a proactive approach to the many resources that receivers and contexts can put into play; contrasting the banal provision of sectorial services with an increasing care to living environments and to people's needs. In this process of renewal, *space matters*, and much more than a little.

To deal with these issues, a reflection on how and why public space has been the subject of a deep crisis in the public city is therefore of fundamental importance. Although the case study of Trieste appears to be an interesting frontline laboratory in the promotion of a highly territorialised dislocation of local welfare and public community services, in council housing estates the lack of social cohesion is evident. The words of institutional operators highlight the need for more integrated work on all well-being factors, especially on the spatial ones.

### 3.1. PUBLIC SPACES: A VICIOUS CIRCLE

The neighbourhoods we are working on are the emblems of city ideas where, in the 20th century, the combination of flats, public spaces and services was taken as the foundation of project solutions. In Ponziana, the ground floors of residential buildings were conceived to host shared services, where the function of social aggregators would have to be amplified by their looking onto green courtyards. In Valmaura, services are integral part of the huge complex; here the density of housing and people has been assigned the task of creating a 'city effect'. In the districts of Altura and Borgo San Sergio, the arrangement of buildings on large open surfaces, dotted with a variety of public facilities, assumes – at least in theoretical terms – the role of connecting housing nuclei and inhabitants. But today, even though these models of city and of living together are different, the prolonged observation of the often unresolved relationships between the configuration of spaces and the practices that invest and transform them highlights similar and profound problems.

Despite the original intentions, in the public city the concept of *liveability* finds a reduced translation, whereas the significance of landscape as a social and cultural product (see Cosgrove, 1984) is replaced by the negation of constructive interactions among places, those who inhabit them, ways of giving them meaning. If the layout and dimensions of flats are often conceived and measured referring to a normalized family-type that permits little or no singularity, open and public spaces are developed as mere endowment of surfaces and functions. In other words, the living environment is deeply marked by an organization that aims at transforming the human multiplicity into a disciplined society (see de Certau, 1980). The urban design of neighbourhoods, the allocation of flats, the production and delivery of services to the population are characterized by a constant attention to classification, hierarchy and government of all forms of deviance. An attention that has led to the use of standard solutions (of a

typological and quantitative nature) for the project of spaces and of social-health assistance. Aspects of institutionalization are also particularly evident in the layering of public policies, oriented to the segregation of the most disadvantaged populations in these parts to the city.

Today, in public peripheries, the outcomes of a kind of *vicious circle of public action* can be therefore recognized: the choices made over time to deal with housing and social issues have contributed to strengthen the disconnection between people (intended as passive recipients) and spaces (reduced to mere consumer goods). Nonetheless, this decoupling has been frequently evaded by the many projects that, in recent decades and in a number of cities, have been specifically targeted at neighbourhood regeneration, through the implementation of a sheer set of predefined and sectorial interventions on open spaces, housing, inhabitants, services.

### 3.2. AN OPEN LABORATORY

Monica, Ofelia, Alfio and Davide work in council housing estates, in the frame of the programme *Habitat-Microareas. Health and Community Development*. The aim of this programme is the organization of a territorialised health system embedded in the different city districts, providing guidance for a whole set of services, alternative to hospitalization. The focus on the living environment as an important setting of social and health practices is thus taken as a major reference for public action, with the aim of reactivating the inhabitants' ability to participate in the transformation of forms and modes of service delivery.

The preconditions for this innovative impulse to reset welfare policies can be traced back to the pioneering process which led to the closure of the psychiatric hospital. Starting in 1971, the Trieste movement for deinstitutionalisation eventually succeeded in the final closure of the hospital, as well as in the design and approval in 1978 of the national reform of mental health (Law 180, the so called *Basaglia law*<sup>10</sup>) (see Basaglia, 2005). Over the years this has implied the activation of alternative territorial services, organising homes, job opportunities, places for leisure activities, social life and healthcare. The involvement of a multiplicity of institutional and non-institutional actors, together with the final users, called for intense interdisciplinary work within the city (see Breckner & Bricocoli, 2011), also through processes of occupation and self-recovery of spaces dedicated to new services. The intervention on the social habitat was recognised as a decisive element for building strategies aimed at promoting well-being, thus creating concrete conditions for the shift from “*places of care-taking*” to “*taking care of places*” (de Leonardis & Monteleone, 2007).

Since then, in council housing estates, growing demands in the provision of care have been a major responsibility of health services, not only in cases of acuteness and emergency, but

<sup>10</sup> After the name of Franco Basaglia, the director of the Trieste psychiatric hospital who led the movement.

mainly for long-term assistance. In these contexts characterised by high ageing rates, the massive increase of chronic pathologies today sets the evidence of a crisis in terms of economic sustainability and effectiveness of services mostly tuned on medical interventions provided by specialised institutions. For this reason, in 2005, the Public Local Health Agency of Trieste (now ASUITS) recognised, after a systematic survey, that the focus on healthcare had to be reconsidered in terms of creating better living conditions, marking an even more significant shift to an integrated approach to social determinants of health and urban dimension (see World Health Organization, 2012).

With ATER and the Municipality of Trieste, the experimental programme Habitat-Microareas was thus launched, giving a wider perspective to a former institutional Agreement signed in 1998. The programme first covered ten ‘micro-areas’ (today they are fifteen): parts of the city of Trieste, each with an average population of 1.000 inhabitants, characterized by a significant presence of council housing estates and by particularly high levels of health and social problems. The decision to combine the work of public institutions, usually in charge of supplying sectorial services, maintenance of buildings and open spaces, was taken on the basis of different strategic objectives: to optimise actions aimed at facing the impact on health of poor social and economic conditions (the so called ‘shortfall in health’); to allow people to age at home, in order to reduce the social and economic costs generated by a prolonged stay in hospitals or care institutions. In this sense, Habitat-Microareas offered the public actors involved a relevant opportunity to revise their organizational structure and everyday practices, thus promoting a reorientation of welfare policies in a situation of lack of extraordinary funds and shrinking of public funding.

Today, the programme has its own on-site reference point in each Microarea, usually in a flat owned by ATER. Here, a referent for ASUITS (usually a nurse), personnel from social cooperatives paid by ATER and Municipality, teams of volunteers collaborate on site. In order to meet a demand for services which is potentially limitless, Habitat-Microareas have adopted a radical change of perspective: the citizen is no longer seen as a mere passive consumer, but as a carrier of resources that can be activated in the construction of his/her own well-being. In this sense, bringing services inside the neighbourhoods and near their inhabitants has allowed the unfolding of a capillary work of direct contact and knowledge of health conditions, needs and potential social networks. On the basis of this work, it was possible to articulate different forms of intervention, to coordinate various services revolving around the individual and the family, to enable opportunities for socialisation. Targeting more equity in access to healthcare and social assistance has therefore resulted in the construction of *highly customised paths* that, *avoiding standardised and universalising modes of service delivery*, primarily focus on increasing the quality of everyday life of people with higher frailty. For the public actor, positive results have proved to be particularly evident not only in terms of improving general health, but also of reducing some important sections of public expenditure and of reorienting medical costs

towards interventions for community development. Nonetheless, the improvement of the liveability of public and open spaces still appears to be an issue to work on.

## 4. WORKING ON WELFARE SPACES

Similar to the dynamics of incapacitation that can be found in other highly institutionalized environments, in council housing estates many ordinary living practices are in some way disabled, as the misery of open spaces and of their uses witnesses (see Bourdieu, 1993).

If talking about a different welfare means recognizing the production/reproduction of social relationships as a central dimension in the provision and management of new services, the physical space in which such services take place plays a role that goes far beyond that of a simple function container. Returning to its quality and suitability means promoting a deeper transformation: from inhibitor of collaborative relations between people, to agent of social cohesion, place of those practices of interaction through which institutional actors and inhabitants build *urban commons* (see Marchigiani, 2015; Nussbaum & Sen, 1993; Sen, 1985). Given the multidimensionality of social disadvantage, moving from the concept of Welfare State to that of *Welfare Space* means driving the attention on the spatial features of well-being (Caravaggi & Imbroglini, 2016; Munarin & Tosi, 2014), but also and above all putting at the centre of the debate the conditions of *equality, social and spatial justice* on which the very notion of *urbanity* is founded, as well as the responsibility that – in ensuring these conditions – public (and in particular urban) policies play (see Fainstein, 2010; Secchi, 2013).

These are the issues on which the design experiences developed by students and professors of the University of Trieste have specifically focused, with the support of inhabitants, referents of the programme Habitat-Microareas, ATER and ASUITS. Their outputs show a twofold field of questions. On the one hand, they help to reflect on how an intermediate actor can support the construction of processes of listening and dialogue between institutions and citizens oriented to re-think public policies. On the other hand, they highlight specific themes and project sites where the notion of welfare space can find concrete translation.

### 4.1. A SLOW DIVING, A PROLONGED LISTENING, AN INTERMEDIATE PERSPECTIVE

Going back to work on the public city, with a design-oriented approach aimed at improving the quality of the physical layout of spaces and services, is not a simple operation. Here top-down solutions demonstrate their ineffectiveness, due to a frequent short-sightedness to local *social capital*. The sensibility of these contexts highlights the need to tackle the re-design of everyday

environment starting from the activation of a dialogue with those who live and work in the neighbourhoods. Here, resources and aspirations struggle to find expression but, once disclosed, they prove to be a valid support to try out unprecedented forms of active local and spatial welfare. In this perspective, the intent of *reflecting through action* that – since its beginning – has conveyed Habitat-Microareas, leading to reject a pacifying falling back on the repetitive application of institutionalized protocols, allows to assume this programme as an opportunity to build a stronger link between public action, spaces where it unfolds, people's empowerment.

This is the direction that, since some years, has oriented the didactic and action-research experiences developed by the University of Trieste (Bricocoli & Marchigiani, 2011, 2012; Marchigiani, 2008<sup>11</sup>, whereas the design explorations elaborated this year on Ponziana, Valmaura, Altura and via Grego stand as the phase of a collaborative process which is going to continue in the future<sup>12</sup>. Before focusing on a critical reading of their spatial outcomes, some reflections on the attitude that has orientated their organization are necessary.

We called all these experiences *laboratories*, in order to stress their value of places where, through *prolonged practices of interaction*, the participants could reflect on the local meanings and forms of public spaces and start conceiving together the actions necessary to their actual transformation. All laboratories were structured in order to promote dialogue among actors carrying different sets of knowledge (expert and non-expert). Through field work (interviews, surveys, mapping of social practices in the use of public spaces and services), design activities and exhibitions of their final results, students and professors, public and third sector actors, inhabitants were encouraged to *dive* themselves in neighbourhoods, to share and contaminate their perceptions, to *slow down judgment*. *Changing perspective* to look closely and to *listen* directly to people's voices, demands and expectations helped to get out of stereotypes, allowed to grasp not only problems but also opportunities, led to figure out solutions that were not stiffened into pre-established models and to focus on places and uses that were different from those which were usually recognized as 'strategic'. But if these were the common features, each laboratory/context showed specific issues and aims, according to its particular conditions and to the presence (or lack) of institutional projects and perspectives of transformation, highlighting the different roles that a design reflection can play.

<sup>11</sup> Between 2007 and 2008, three laboratories – Abitare Valmaura, Abitare Borgo San Sergio and Abitare San Giovanni – were organized by Elena Marchigiani, with the participation of a group of artists (project Public Art in Trieste and Surroundings, coordinated by Maria Campitelli). These first experiences consolidated the collaboration with ATER, ASUITS and some social cooperatives, matured in the frame of the national research program (2005-2007), The "public city" as a design laboratory. Guidelines for the sustainable upgrading of urban suburbs, coordinated by Paola Di Biagi and developed by the Universities of Trieste, Palermo, "La Sapienza" Rome, Napoli "Federico II", Milano and Bari. In 2008, the laboratory Abitare piazzale Giarizzole was organized by Elena Marchigiani and Massimo Bricocoli (Universities of Milano, Venezia "Cà Foscari"), in collaboration with the Microarea and ASUITS. In 2010, the three-year EU Lifelong Learning Program Demochange Cities led by Massimo Bricocoli offered the opportunity to organize a summer school in Borgo Zindis, at the outskirts of Muggia (Trieste), where the activation of a new Microarea was scheduled. The summer school was coordinated by Elena Marchigiani, focused on aging processes and saw the participation of professors and students of sociology, architecture and urban planning from the Universities of Milano, Trieste, Wien, Cluj-Napoca, Hamburg and Nicosia.

<sup>12</sup> In 2016 the University of Trieste signed an Agreement with ASUITS, ATER and Kallipolis Association for Social Promotion, aimed at developing research and design activities in the neighbourhoods covered by the programme Habitat-Microareas.



In the cases of Valmaura and via Grego, where the detachment of spatial configuration from social practices appears stronger and the situations of decay are more pervasive, the identification of places to work on was the outcome of an even slower and more gradual process. In this sense, the first laboratories developed years ago have proven to be fundamental to start breaking a silence due to the inhabitants' lack of confidence in the capacity and will of institutions to contrast deprivation. In these early experiences, collective walks, installations of Public Art made with residents, students and teachers of schools from the neighbourhoods, the construction of temporary gardens gave expression to local perceptions and helped to raise the awareness of available resources, recognizing the inhabitants' role of protagonists of collective creative performances (where desires emerge and place themselves in space), and of more conscious commissioners of future interventions. The results of these first explorations, albeit soft, have also been useful for public actors, who subsequently began to reflect on possible transformations in the light of a better knowledge of space relations perceived as problematic<sup>13</sup>. The projects developed over the past months by the University belong to this more mature phase.

The stories of the work done on Ponziana and Altura are different. Ponziana has a well-defined and articulated spatial layout; its stronger integration in the urban context, together with the needs expressed to the referents of Microarea and ATER, made design issues already explicit and localizable. Although for different reasons, Altura presents similar conditions. Here, the establishment of the Microarea has been associated with the participation of ATER and the Municipality to a national funding call for regeneration through social inclusion and urban renewal<sup>14</sup>. These activities produced an agenda of strategies for the reorganization of open spaces and services that, though still vague, provided a good starting point for the elaboration of more precise project solutions.

The design proposals sketched by the University – with the collaboration and, in some respects, under the 'mandate' of ASUITS, ATER and Microareas – are thus part of a *flow of practices*, that is trying to build continuous and bidirectional relationships between bottom-up and top-down processes. Given the short time for project elaboration that the participation in national and European funding today imposes on public institutions, the attitude is that of an early construction of a set of innovative and integrated design proposals. The aim is to gain time to promote public debate, refinement and review of those proposals before requesting funds and

<sup>13</sup> In 2014, the Municipality of Trieste (in particular the Urban Planning Department – whose political addresses were in charge of the writer from 2011 to 2016) co-promoted with the University of Trieste the design laboratory *An agricultural park in Trieste?*, open to students and aimed at the upgrading of the large area at the back of via Grego. The results of the workshop were the basis for the participation of the Municipality in the EU Interreg Italia-Austria call (which, however, was not successful).

<sup>14</sup> The call came out in 2015 under the National Plan for Social and Cultural Reclamation of Degraded Urban Areas (the list of funded projects is not yet available). At the same time, the launch of the new Microarea was accompanied by an action-research aimed at social mapping and commissioned by the Municipality of Trieste to a social cooperative.

proceeding to their executive translation.

Accompanying and supporting this path is among the roles that the University, as an intermediate actor, is playing while performing its so called 'third mission'. *Civil commitment and responsibility*: these are the keywords that led the decision to undertake a long and tiring process, of which the laboratories are a result and a work in progress. In the frame of this process, design inquiries enrich their inputs through direct confrontation with specific and real needs; help to collect proposals and return solutions that seek to imagine a different and more appropriate connection between spaces and people. At the same time, the project strengthens its critical ability, its cognitive and explorative potential; becomes a device for viewing, comparing and reflecting on possible and alternative scenarios; triggers and nurtures public discussion as part of a *civic re-education path* involving both civil society and institutions. A path that is aimed at activating new questions and images, first of all among the inhabitants, helping them to set aside commonplace and to develop tools to consciously exercise that "right to research" and that "aspiration to the future" which are a key requirement for expressing citizenship rights (Appadurai, 2004, 2013). But this path also addresses institutional actors, too often immersed in routines that leave small room for reflection and innovation.

#### 4.2. A POSITIVE AND DESIGN-ORIENTED APPROACH

The results of the design explorations developed in Ponziana, Valmaura, via Grego and Altura have produced interesting suggestions for a review of technical approaches and spatial devices for the regeneration of the public city. In contexts where high is the risk of further depletion, the project expressed an *obstinately positive attitude*. It did not intend to solve problems through easy recipes; it rather decided to address the issue of growing *vulnerabilities* by questioning and re-framing the very concept of welfare within a broader, integrated and contemporary approach to everyday living spaces. Spaces meant as complex sequences of places that, from the house, expand to the surrounding environment and equipment.

People are more vulnerable when living in a situation where their autonomy and ability to self-determination are threatened (see Ranci, 2002). That is, in spatial contexts that make it difficult to develop appropriate strategies to deal with the emergence of critical conditions: i.e. the difficulty of moving to reach services; the lack of outdoor meeting places where to share social practices. These spatial shortcomings make people increasingly dependent on social and healthcare assistance. And even when open spaces theoretically devoted to collective activities are available (courtyards, parks, sports fields, etc.), the rigidity of the solutions adopted to draw and equip them, their being fenced and managed according to rules and times conceived without consultation often constitute a powerful deterrent to the activation of inhabitants' practices of manipulation, re-invention, co-management.

In the public city, the establishment of collaborative practices has not, however, to be taken for granted. It finds opposition in the concentration of many forms of discomfort and deprivation, breeding defence mechanisms that sometimes lead to conflict, more often translate into self-closure (see Sennett, 2012). In these contexts, the concepts of community and sharing are frequently experienced as an imposition, not as a choice. To counteract the loss of the *technical skills for collaboration* – which are a strategic ingredient for new forms of welfare – the creation of social spaces, open to the dialogue between people driven by different interests and needs, is therefore a fundamental move.

Consequently, the work done with the students paid great attention to the most minute clues of spatial re-appropriation.

Recognizing the presence of uses and micro-transformations that enable to identify places of a daily living together provided important insights to improve their quality, through interventions that could be realized and managed also with the help of inhabitants. At the same time, the dialogue with the referents of Microareas enabled us to take into account existing and potential partnerships between people and services, both within the neighbourhoods and with the wider urban context. The general objective was both to identify sites of intervention (mainly open spaces, but not only) capable of re-building widespread and 'ordinary' conditions of comfort, and to overcome that functionalist reduction that – for too long – has referred technical and spatial solutions to individuals whose varieties of needs, desires, pathologies, fears and actions were read as a coded set of activities. Today these solutions appear totally inadequate to social practices that are increasingly marked by contradictions, molecular conflicts, continuous and unpredictable changes, inconsistent uses and temporalities (see Bianchetti, 2016).

During the field work, the direct contact with the inhabitants made the necessity to revise some commonplace and cultural clichés based on rigid categorizations very clear. First of all those hidden behind the standard use of the category 'elderly'. The probability of reaching the end of the phase of active and self-sufficient life cannot be simplistically reduced to a generalized age line. Rather, it must be seen in the biography of each person and be contextualised. While the elderly did express some specific needs, the discussion with other inhabitants and with the managers of Habitat-Microareas insisted on the design of spaces able to accommodate people of different ages, physical and mental health, gender, life styles, income levels. In other words, focusing the attention on the multiple relations between space and people means planning for all and for the – many and different – “phases of life” (Mumford, 1949).

Due to the difficult topography of Trieste, a common design issue emerged from the activities developed in the four neighbourhoods: the need to better *accessibility* as the focus of interventions matching the improvement of open spaces with the reorganisation of services open to the whole community. The work also showed the multiple dimensions and scales that the term accessibility can assume, highlighting its capacity to foster more inclusive design

solutions, and to re-activate the usability and connectivity potentials of a large – already existing – social and territorial fixed capital of spatial infrastructures and equipment. All the proposals shared an attitude of strong respect to the sensitivity of the different contexts, not imagining great works but projects whose spatial and social impacts derive from small actions, from their mutual consistency and the plurality of themes and ambitions they put into play.

In Ponziana, accessibility was intended as the result of a set of measures aimed at creating *a new system of spaces dedicated to soft mobility*. Its spine is given by the pedestrianization of a stretch of road, spreading on one side of the courts where Microarea is located and connecting commercial activities, the school and a large – now underutilized – parking area. From a space dedicated to the almost exclusive use of cars, the road turns into a linear square, playing the role of attracting new business, of hosting playgrounds and benches, of prolonging its design in the nearby courtyards. The road-piazza finds its extension in the green spaces among the most recent buildings, where a new park is dedicated to leisure, sports and to the artistic expression of young people in the neighbourhood. The pedestrian route ends in another wider green area, where spaces for outdoor teaching activities border a new connection to the bike track that passes through this part of the city, reaching up to Altura and beyond.

In Altura and via Grego, the issue of walkability showed to be strategic as well. The proximity to important environmental resources brought, however, its re-definition within a more articulated strategy of economic and spatial valorisation of peri-urban landscapes. Altura district on the one side and the building along via Grego on the other become the gates to a new agricultural park, accommodating spaces for production and didactic/social farming, open to the use of inhabitants and all citizens. The park is seen as an opportunity both to get these settlements out of their isolation, and to draw within them a network of paths that can better connect building blocks to bus stops (re-equipped to host info points and small services). In order to make these paths more alive and interesting, the proposal is to settle along them urban gardens, spaces for zero-mile food market activities, sports equipment complementary to those already existing. Working on different scales, the theme of *porosity* thus finds a specific declination in the *creation of a weave of interconnected public and private services and economic activities* the two neighbourhoods are now dramatically lacking. In this process, also spaces in-between buildings are dedicated to the production, sale and shared consumption of food, thus providing the opportunity to enrich the activities promoted by Microarea and to offer an important service to the elderly people who are not able to move from their homes to other parts of the city.

In Valmaura, finally, the landmark effect of the two tall buildings fed the inspiration to imagine them as a condenser of new functions of strong urban value, capable of attracting numbers of users from other parts of the city. By working on their vertical sections and by inserting new lifts connecting the road to the courts on the higher level, the proposal focuses on the settlement, along the covered walks and inside parking spaces, of commercial activities managed by private

actors in return to the provision of new types of services. The establishment of a gym centre thus offers the opportunity to coordinate with health facilities already run by the District and the Microarea (for this latter a better and more visible location is assumed); the creation of co-working spaces combines with the organization of training courses for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. The courts are re-read as outdoor extensions of these activities and as places where they offer themselves to the free use by residents. In this case as well, the interventions on the buildings belong to a frame of actions aimed at establishing new crossings within the wider urban area. The conversion of Valmaura *from a periphery to a new urban centrality* finds important support in the proposal of turning the street in front into a comfortable walking and cycling urban avenue, as well as in the longer term scenario foreseeing the realization of a park along the track system, where the recently approved Town Plan (2016) envisages the activation of a metropolitan railway line.

## 5. AN OPEN REFLECTION ON CITY MAKING

The interactions performed in Trieste among public policies, actors and urban design laboratories display significant relationships between the regeneration of spatial and social environments. These experiences offer concrete possibilities to reflect on the innovation perspectives that policies and projects can develop to face the challenges of the on-going social and economic transformations and to start defining new and more spatialized approaches to welfare.

Strong is today, for those who work in the public city of Trieste, the belief that true inclusion processes can reach their goal only if they focus on places that, also from a spatial point of view, are able to communicate the willingness to welcome, integrate, restore dignity to people. In these places, space becomes public again, both because it is the setting of policies that see the public actor as a protagonist (even if not unique), and because it fosters practices of capacitation and collaboration among the inhabitants, and between them and those who run services (public and private actors, third sector, etc.).

As the laboratories organized by the University demonstrated, today *making (or, better, re-making) cities* means not only going back to work on a rich material endowment of spaces and services, but also changing perspective and revising technical attitudes. Local design experiences highlight the need to take space rehabilitation as a tool to ensure welfare a precautionary and enabling qualification, through the promotion of positive lifestyles and the support to the development of human, economic and social capital. The different operational meanings given to the accessibility issue open up new perspectives on the integration of actions and fields of intervention that, too often, institutions tend to deal with in a sectorial manner. Public works and mobility; management of health, social and school services; actions for

economic development and business; strategies and tools for landscape and environment enhancement: the synergies among these ingredients offer relevant suggestions to think about new types of services and new spatial configurations for best accommodating them and promoting their efficiency. This is one of the challenges that, in Trieste, the public actors involved in the programme Habitat-Microareas are now faced with, by leaving the experimental phase for a more stable integration of the available staff and economic resources and by trying to re-orient their work to a more significant role in the construction of innovative regeneration and well-being projects.

Within a process of profound cultural renewal, the involvement of intermediate actors – such as the University – is strategic. The benefits of a social-oriented university activity are many. It is precisely because of their ‘third position’ that students and researchers can focus on intermediate spaces and actions more freely, with the aim to give expression to the needs of people who live and work in urban peripheries and to those weak interests that generally struggle to have voice (*civic engagement, interaction with public policies and construction of integrated bottom-up and top-down processes*). Moreover, thanks to the direct contact with spatial and social contexts, teaching and research have the opportunity to reflect on the various dimensions that the design of public space is today called to deal with in an integrated manner, opening up to new synergies with many resources and subjects (*actualize formation, re-think urban design theory and techniques*). No less important is the support that the University can give to *re-orient ordinary public action*, helping to break the institutional routines that frequently make public policies inertial with respect to the emergence of new conditions and issues. An intermediate perspective forces a more creative, ‘out of the box’ thinking; it thus allows to see unprecedented possibilities, to identify and manage new long-term cooperative games.

But this is not an easy process at all. It asks for serious and constant work from all the parties involved, the readiness to mutual learning and to the revision of consolidated positions (academy, institutional action, common knowledge) (Cognetti, 2016). In other words, it requires the difficult practice of seeking, from time to time and in respect to specific situations, the *right distance* that allows to collaborate while respecting and enhancing different points of view. Without this critical and reflective distance, however, the complexity of the challenges we have to face with is likely to undermine our ability to react.

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## Project of Renewal and Regeneration of the Planina Neighbourhood

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The project focusing on the Planina neighbourhood in the town of Kranj is an example of good practice, implementing a sustainable urban strategy that makes it possible to plan changes in degraded residential urban neighbourhoods according to the needs and wishes of their residents.

The starting point of the project was the Sustainable Urban Strategy 2030 by the Municipality of Kranj as a precondition given by the Slovenian government to the municipalities that wished to apply for EU funding within its Operative Programme for the Implementation of Cohesion Policy 2014–2020 (Integrated Territorial Investments). One of the objectives and priorities of this strategy was the measure 6.4 Affordable Housing and Friendly Residential Neighbourhoods. The purpose of this measure was to design an integrated and community-based approach to the renewal of neighbourhoods in this town. For the pilot project, the largest and also the most degraded neighbourhood in the area was selected – Planina.

The neighbourhood of Planina has 52 ha of open public surfaces, more than 140 apartment buildings and 12,500 residents and is one of the largest congested urban neighbourhoods in Slovenia. It was being built from the early 1970s to the mid-1980s and due to the lack of funding it was never finished. According to established criteria, the neighbourhood is classified as a functionally degraded urban area of Kranj, since it faces multi-layered and intertwined challenges. On the one hand, there is a lack of parking spaces, low use of public transport, outdated urban furniture, low energy efficiency of buildings, a lack of better children's playgrounds etc. On the other hand, many residents have a low social and economic status. The neighbourhood is facing the challenges of vandalism, multicultural and aging populations, as there is a lack of programmes for different age groups.

In line with the strategy, the objective was set out to design a plan for the renewal of the

neighbourhood according to the requirements of the residents. For this purpose, we have established a working group of professionals in different fields that started to function as the project office for the renewal and regeneration of Planina. In addition to experts from NGOs also several municipal offices, public services and local communities were included into operations of the project office, as well as other representatives of the public concerned. The project is coordinated by the Environment and Spatial Planning Office of the municipality.

The first task of the project was how to include as many residents as possible into the regeneration of the neighbourhood, in a way that would be as active as possible. For this purpose, we used different forms and methods of work (e.g. online and paper surveys, interactive maps, exhibition of the neighbourhood's development, meetings of residents) to gather information about the residents' needs and wishes. After having analysed this data, we organized working groups, composed of residents: 1. Children's Playgrounds, 2. Traffic, 3. Safety, 4. Green Surfaces, 5. Recreation, sports and intergenerational gatherings and 6: Urban Furniture.

These groups dealt with different problems or challenges in the neighbourhood and, above all, they were searching for possible solutions. The municipality provided an appropriate infrastructure for such work, the material and support staff, as well as the sources of information and support by the various experts, municipal departments and competent institutions. The workshops have shown that the residents desire a variety of changes to improve their quality of life, that they wish to have activities and programmes for all generations, that they require community spaces indoors and outdoors where such programmes could take place and that various municipal, governmental and non-governmental organizations could support them in this, since they are already active in this town. In addition to the support by other residents they wish to have also the help from a sort of a coordinating body or an office that would be active in the neighbourhood. And most importantly, the residents are ready to assume the responsibility and to organize different activities for the renewal of their neighbourhood.

The findings and suggestions of the working groups and the materials created by them were then presented, with the support of the mayor, to interested residents and to the wider public at an event celebrating the conclusion of the first set of (8) workshops. Based on these results, each of the groups was then given a small amount of money to carry out a mini project, mainly to draw the attention of other residents towards the specific problem and possible solutions. The mini projects (e.g. Braille labels on traffic light posts at most exposed junctions indicating the direction of the crossing, a garden with fruit and herbs on one of the lawns, an event to promote urban sports and to bring generations together, collecting suggestions by the residents on how to build a playground for children etc.) have been completed and presented by the residents at a public event entitled "A Day in May to Spend Together in Planina". This event has been organized with the help of different NGOs and it took place on a larger public surface. In addition to presenting the mini projects of the working groups, we had also other activities for

visitors and we had a public lottery with a mountain bike as a prize (donations) for all those who participated at our surveys. At the beginning of May, we organized an urban walk around the neighbourhood as part of the international action Jane's Walk. The theme of this walk was to visit locations seen in the famous film “Tu Pa Tam”.

Upon the initiative of one of the working groups, we started the first phase of the construction of a central playground for children. On the last weekend in August we invited the residents to take part at the final works that needed to be done for the playground to be concluded. We planted various shrubs, protected the equipment and put up warning signs. A week later we worked together with the municipality at the official opening of the first part of the planned central playground. At this celebration we organized workshops for children and their parents and we offered some refreshments.

In the new school year, we continued to plan and organize projects together with the residents and their working groups. We had many meetings between residents and the representatives of different municipality departments, local and national public services, companies that are in charge of managing apartment buildings and the local police.

In cooperation with young people and youth organizations that are active in this neighbourhood (or in the town), we organized an urban youth festival called “MiskoPlan” at which we presented the possibility of spending one’s leisure time in an active and creative way. The festival showed young artists and musicians that live and work here. Young people had the opportunity to exercise their skills on a pump track, on tracks for rollerblading and skating, at a graffiti workshop, slack line, a finger-fling game, at urban exercise and the like.

This was followed by a special issue of a magazine that we published together with young people. In this issue of the Scena magazine, they presented the youth scene, the problems that they are facing and their suggestions how to bring more life to the neighbourhood. We printed 500 copies and distributed them around places that are frequented by young people, at secondary and elementary schools, public youth organizations and at other places around the town.

The one year anniversary of the project office has been celebrated as we organized a two-day national consultation with the title “Urban Renewal: Good practice in Slovenia and in Europe.” This was a chance to highlight the challenges faced by local communities, the government and NGOs when it comes to renewing and regenerating urban areas (especially the degraded ones) but also when it comes to including the residents, local initiatives and the involvement of all interested parties. A renowned researcher of urban renewals in Europe, Dr. Yvonne Franz from the University of Vienna, and the architect Florian Brand, head of one of many local renewal offices in Vienna, shared their experience with renewing and reviving degraded residential neighbourhoods. Also our project was presented at this consultation and the participants



described it as a unique example of a good practice for a comprehensive approach to the renewal and regeneration of degraded urban areas in Slovenia. Participants of the consultation were representatives of NGOs, local initiatives and the professional public in the field of landscape planning and spatial management, representatives of the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and representatives of many Slovenian municipalities.

Ever since the project started, we took great care to promote our activities and to inform the residents about them on our website (<http://www.preplanina.si/>) and on a social website (<https://www.facebook.com/preplanina/>), as well as by publishing articles in local and national media. For this purpose, we designed the visual image and logo of the project. The events were constantly advertised in brochures, on flyers and posters that were displayed in apartment buildings, on public places and institutions. Several other Slovenian towns, ministries and professional associations invited us to present the project at round tables, professional gatherings and meetings.

Since January 2016, within the first part of the project, there have been 6 working groups with 35 residents each and in the second part, still active today, there are 3 working groups with 20 residents each. We organized 16 public events on the larger and on the smaller scale, attended by about 1670 residents and taking place on 10 different public surfaces and locations in the neighbourhood. Our partners were 5 municipal council offices, 9 public services on municipal and national levels, 4 local communities, 4 kindergartens, 3 elementary schools, 1 retirement home and 1 local secondary school, 10 nationally and locally active NGOs, 5 experts in different fields, 1 local company for the management of apartment buildings and several private companies.

In cooperation with the residents and project partners and based on an analysis of the results, data, activities, proposals and guidelines of future calls for tenders, we prepared a comprehensive plan in cooperation with the municipality on how to renew and regenerate the Planina neighbourhood. In line with this plan we will establish a Centre for Sustainable Mobility, an Urban Sports Centre and a Family Centre; we will revitalize underpasses for pedestrians and cyclists, establish a connecting theme footpath and the Local Renewal Office. This plan represents the first phase of attaining the goal of a comprehensive renewal and regeneration of the neighbourhood. Parallel to the first phase – elaboration of the plan, the second phase is already running – preparation of the tender documentation to obtain European cohesion funding. The final phase (carried out by the Local Renewal Office) involves the establishment and the running of planned programmes – coordinating active participation of the residents with local, municipal and other public and non-governmental organizations at the implementation and management of the planned programmes and ensuring that there are sufficient resources available for a long-term operation of the programmes.

The project focuses on searching for integrated solutions to reduce environmental, transport

and economic problems, issues of urban poverty, social exclusion and segregation, with the aim of strengthening social cohesion. It enables a comprehensive, participatory and integrated approach of including all stakeholders, thus bringing together the expertise and experience of the actors involved. It offers a possibility of influencing social change, including the change in the experience and behaviour of the residents; it provides equal access to information and relevant public services of general interest. It responds to the challenges of health and demographic change, as well as of migration. It encourages the development of local economy, the creation of new jobs, sustainable mobility, the use of public transport and it enhances the physical activity of residents. It supports the economical use of public land and the transition towards rational use of energy, while also encouraging the cooperation between the city and the government.

# **The common created public spaces, the case of Warsaw Local Centres (Warszawskie Centra Lokalne)**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This paper elaborates on the first part of research study on common created public spaces in Warsaw, which is going to be a basis for author's PhD study conducted on Faculty of Architecture of Warsaw University of Technology. The research develops public spaces which are the effect of cooperation between various actors.

After II World War Warsaw was rebuild basing on the assumption that its whole organism had public character and was treated as common good. However, public institutions could not afford such many public spaces to care about and today there are the area of conflicts (Chmielewski, 2002). Moreover during a fast process of development, Warsaw didn't avoid problems such as fragmentation of urban tissue or disintegration of cityscape, what might effect in losing the spirit of place, which is mainly rooted in the network of public spaces. Warsaw as the capital and the biggest city in Poland and its spatial problems might be a study case for various research on urban public spaces. Project of Warsaw Local Centres is perceived by its authors as a solutions for one of problems of Warsaw - uneven spatial and social structure (Domaradzka, & Domaradzki, 2015). The first - research and planning - part of the project gives a framework for further activities - common designing public spaces for local communities. That paper elaborates that first part of the Warsaw Local Centres Project.

## 2. METHODS

The first part of the research started from the literature studies and basic analysis of definitions such as public space and participation in planning public spaces, with reference to both - international experts and polish law. Then as the case study the author was working on the Project of Warsaw Local Centres (pol. *Warszawskie Centra Lokalne*). She based on literature - publication prepared by the Expert Group leading the project (Happach & Sadowy, 2015) and interview with Katarzyna Sadowy - the member of the Expert Group and the editor and co-author of mentioned publication. The author participated in debate on the winning project of one of the Warsaw Local Centres - Broniewskiego-Orszy Square, which was conducted during the pilot scheme of the Project. Basing on gathered materials, the author evolved the table to assign involved actors and their activities to the particular stages of the Project. Then the author prepared diagnosis and developed directions for further research.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

Jan Gehl (1987, 2011) writing about public space focused on social and recreational, necessary and optional activities, for which public space was an aren. Basing on his definition, public spaces are outside spaces, places for meetings, recreation, fun, play and relax - free time spaces. Gehl underlines that *Public space has a significant social meaning as a forum of exchange ideas and opinions*. In similar but less poetic way, public spaces are defined in polish law. The definition of area of public space is defined as area of exceptional importance for satisfying needs and quality of life of inhabitants. Moreover that space should facilitate establishing social relations thanks to its location and its functional and spatial features (Act on planning, 2003). In the following paragraphs it will be shown that the definition of Local Centres referred to the foregoing definitions of public space.

Participation is a process which ensure that the citizens have their voice while decision making. UN-Habitat emphasised that there is a need to use that to work effectively on public spaces (FOP, 2014). Tools of participation are not only surveys, commenting, expert working groups and networking, but also involving citizens in the defining of the strategies, designing of programmes, policies and plans, *leading to a consultative outcome that creates buy-in stakeholders* (Mabilog, 2013). This way of thinking about participation appeals to The ladder of participation developed by Sherry R. Arnstein in 1969 which shows eight-rung Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969). Eight rungs are divided into three levels - non-participation (manipulation, therapy), degrees of tokenism (informing, consultation, placation), degrees of citizen power (partnership, delegated power, citizen control) and shows gradation of citizen participation. Project for Public Spaces - non-governmental organisation and the leader in community-oriented public spaces designs - underlines that the lack of participation is one of the challenges which public spaces have to face (PPS, 2012).

## 4. STUDY CASE: WARSAW LOCAL CENTRES (POL. *WARSZAWSKIE CENTRA LOKALNE*)

### 4.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Warsaw Local Centres is a project commissioned by Department of Regional Development and EU Fund of Warsaw City Hall and prepared to pilot scheme by non-governmental organisation - The Warsaw Branch of the Association of Polish Architects. The task was to prepare the conceptual study of Warsaw Local Centres and was an expert task basing on research. It started from creating base of data and knowledge on local centres in Warsaw - both existing and potential, through analysis on the net of Warsaw Local Centres and particular cases to looking for scenarios of potential development. Moreover, the expert group picked 10 locations to pilot scheme (Happach, 2015).

The Warsaw City Hall is eager to realize the Project - in the Long-term Financial Prognosis (pol. *Wieloletnia Prognoza Finansowa*) of Warsaw City Hall till 2021 there is provided 50 mln złoty (about 12 mln euro) for the Project of Warsaw Local Centres. One of the Warsaw City Hall units - Economic Development Department - is a responsible unit for that task.

### 4.2. INVOLVEMENT OF VARIOUS GROUPS OF ACTORS

#### 4.2.1 Introduction

There are two stages of the Project - Research & Planning Stage and Realization Stage. It is probable that in the future might be more stages, f.e. evaluation. In the research, author was focused on the first stage. The level of participation is quite high in the Research & Planning Stage, what makes that part a good research field. During Research & Planning Stage there are several groups of participants involved and few types of activities they were involved in.

In the first stage of the Project there were mentioned such actors as:

- a. the Expert Group,
- b. experts, f.e. Sławomir Gzell,
- c. inhabitants,
- d. activists and representatives of NGOs, f.e. Joanna Erbel, Iza Kaszyńska,
- e. representatives of Warsaw City Hall, f.e. Michał Olszewski (v-ce president), Marcin Wojdat (secretary),
- f. units of Warsaw City Hall, f.e. Department of Regional Development and EU Fund, Architecture & Spatial Planning Department.

In the first stage of the Project, actors were engaged in several activities, among others:

- a. giving ideas and presenting them,
- b. participating in discussions,
- c. giving opinions,
- d. asking questions and answering them,
- e. analysing,
- f. conducting research,
- g. discussing effects.

#### ***4.2.2 Table: Involvement of actors in particular activities during Research & Planning Stage***

Below there is a table prepared by the author basing on literature studies, interview with member of the Expert Group and own observations.

Table is divided horizontally into commission and the first stage mentioned before. Vertically, in particular columns there are informations about:

- a. steps of a stage,
- b. working areas of each steps or events,
- c. actors who participated in each working area/event,
- d. particular activities they were involved in are listed.



Table 1. Involvement of actors in particular activities during 'Commission' and the Research & Planning Stage of the Project of Warsaw Local Centres, by author

STEP	EVENT / WORKING AREA		ACTOR	ACTIVITY OF PARTICULAR ACTORS
COMMISSION				
1	Preparing the commission	Department of Regional Development and EU Fund, commissioned The Warsaw Branch of the Association of Polish Architects (OW SARP) to prepare conceptual study of Warsaw Local Centres.	Department of Regional Development and EU Fund, Warsaw City Hall	preparing the commission
2	Select experts for the expert group leading the Project	OW SARP assembled the group of experts consisted of architects, urban planners, sociologist, economists	OW SARP - The Warsaw Branch of the Association of Polish Architects (pol. <i>Oddział Warszawski Stowarzyszenia Architektów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej</i> )	preparing the Project - gathering the Expert Group
STAGE 1. - EXPERT TASK - PREPARING THE PROJECT OF WARSAW LOCAL CENTRES - RESEARCH & PLANNING				
1	Building the definition of Local Centre as a place for local community, to establish social and neighbourly relations and creating accessible and open space for common spending free time	proposing the definition of Local Centre	Expert Group - (architects, urban planners - Krzysztof Domaradzki (leader), Marlena Happach, Marek Sawicki, Aleksandra Wasilkowska, sociologists - Anna Domaradzka, economists - Katarzyna Sadowy), coordinator of publications – Karolina Andrzejewska-Batko – historian, coordinator of workshops – Marta Skowrońska - sociologist	preparing the methodology and time schedule, proposing the definition of Local Centre and its features, preparing the consultation with inhabitants / activists
		consulting it via internet and during working sessions	activists	giving ideas for definition and features of Local Centres
			inhabitants	giving ideas for definition and features of Local Centres
		1st working session – 25th February 2015 – debate with invited experts about definition, features and functions of Warsaw Local Centres	Expert Group leader – Krzysztof Domaradzki – architect, urban planner	leading the session, leading the discussion panel
			Joanna Erbel – local activist	invited expert, participant of discussion panel
			Sławomir Gzell – urban planner	invited expert, participant of discussion panel
			Marcin Wojdat – secretary of the City Hall of Warsaw	invited expert, participant of discussion panel
			activists	participant of discussion, filling the questionnaires

2	Gathering information on locations of existing and potential Warsaw Local Centres basing on the knowledge of the expert group and participants of working sessions	proposing locations of existing and potential Warsaw Local Centres and gathering information about it	inhabitants	participant of discussion, filling the questionnaires
			Expert Group	proposing locations of existing and potential Warsaw Local Centres and gathering information about it
		2nd working session – 4th March 2015 – presentation of proposed Warsaw Local Centres in 7 districts	inhabitants, activists	proposing locations of existing and potential Warsaw Local Centres via internet - e-mail, facebook, google maps
			Expert Group member - Anna Domaradzka - sociologist	leading the session
		3rd working session – 11th March 2015 – presentation of proposed Warsaw Local Centres in 4 districts, presentation about social economy	Expert Group member - Aleksandra Wasilkowska - architect and urban planner	leading the session
			Michał Olszewski - v-ce president of Warsaw	participating, giving opinions
			activists, representatives of NGOs	presenting locations of proposed by them existing and potential Warsaw Local Centres
			inhabitants	presenting locations of proposed by them existing and potential Warsaw Local Centres
		4th working session – 8th April 2015 – presentation of proposed Warsaw Local Centres in 7 districts	Expert Group member - Anna Domaradzka - sociologist	leading the session
			Expert Group member - Aleksandra Wasilkowska - architect and urban planner	leading the session
			Iza Kaszyńska - presenter, activist	presenting role of social economy in creating Local Centres
			activists, representatives of NGOs	presenting locations of proposed by them existing and potential Warsaw Local Centres
			inhabitants	presenting locations of proposed by them existing and potential Warsaw Local Centres
			Expert Group member - Katarzyna Sadowy - economist, architect	leading the session
			Expert Group member - Aleksandra Wasilkowska - architect and urban planner	leading the session
			activists, representatives of NGOs	presenting locations of proposed by them existing and potential Warsaw Local Centres
			inhabitants	presenting locations of proposed by them existing and potential Warsaw Local Centres

3	analysis on gathered material, verification of the established definition	Expert Group	analysis on gathered material, verification of the established definition
4	research on the typology of Warsaw Local Centres and their mutual relationships	Expert Group	research on the typology of Warsaw Local Centres and their mutual relationships
5	specifying problems and opportunities in transformation of Warsaw Local Centres and proposing scenarios of potential development	Expert Group	specifying problems and opportunities in transformation
		Expert Group	proposing scenarios of potential development
6	Choosing Warsaw Local Centres for pilot scheme (location meeting extra criteria enabling the realization in particular time and budget)	Expert Group - (Krzysztof Domaradzki (leader), Marlena Happach, Aleksandra Wasilkowska, Anna Domaradzka, Katarzyna Sadowy)	summarizing and presenting effects, helping activists and inhabitants in establishing criteria for choosing Local Centres, answering questions
		5th working session – 14th April 2015 – summarizing session	
		activists, representatives of NGOs	establishing criteria for choosing Local Centres to pilot scheme and asking questions to the Expert Group
		inhabitants	establishing criteria for choosing Local Centres to pilot scheme and asking questions to the Expert Group
		Architecture & Spatial Planning Department	answering the questions of Expert Group on particular locations of Local Centres
		Department of Regional Development and EU Fund	answering the questions of Expert Group on particular locations of Local Centres
	choosing locations for pilot scheme	Expert Group	analysing opinions of participants of 5th working session, choosing locations following criteria, basing on data from Architecture & Spatiala Development Department and Department of Regional Development and EU Funds and at the end choosing 10 locations for pilot scheme
7	Preparing model scenario of potential development of Local Centres	Expert Group	preparing scen+B33:E41ario of potential development of Local Centres which is link between planning and realization stages

### 4.3. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Basing on gathered material, the author conducted analysis and reached conclusions which are described below.

#### 4.3.1. The leading role of the Expert Group

The leading role in the Project had the Expert Group consisted of six experts:

- Krzysztof Domaradzki - architect and urban planner, professor at Warsaw University of Technology, member of OW SARP
- Anna Domaradzka-Widła - sociologist, assistant professor at Institute of Social Studies, University of Warsaw,
- Marlena Happach - architect and urban planner, the then president of OW SARP,
- Katarzyna Sadowy - doctor of economics, architect and urban planner, assistant professor at Warsaw School of Economics, v-ce president of OW SARP,
- Marek Sawicki - architect and urban planner, member of OW SARP,
- Aleksandra Wasilkowska - architect, urban planner, stage designer, member of OW SARP.

They were the most active group which was working in the first stage what is obvious because the Research & Planning Stage was the expert task commissioned them (through OW SARP - The Warsaw Branch of the Association of Polish Architects). OW SARP, on its own initiative, selected not only architects and urban planners but also representatives of sociology or economics. However, there was only one sociologist and one economist, who was also architect. During 5th working session there were comments that the Expert Group should have been extended on more sociologists, traffic engineers, businessmen, inhabitants, sport experts etc. From the one hand it might seem that the Expert Group is quite hermetic - consisted mainly of architects from OW SARP (5 of 6), but from the other hand the presence of expert from other specialities was not obligatory in the commission.

#### 4.3.2. Involvement of inhabitants and local activists

The Expert Group treated inhabitants and local activists as kind of informal experts, mainly while looking for locations of existing and potential Local Centres. They analysed many steps of their research together - inhabitants and local activists were invited to share their opinions about guidelines to prepare the definition of Local Centre, then to propose locations of them and even present those proposition during working sessions. Kind of informal partnership between The Expert Group, inhabitants and activists were established - basing on Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation partnership is sixth rung showing citizen power.

Going back to the Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969). Eight rungs are divided into

three levels - non-participation (manipulation, therapy), degrees of tokenism (informing, consultation, placation), degrees of citizen power (partnership, delegated power, citizen control) and shows gradation of citizen participation. The table below shows which levels (rugs) might be found during first stage of Warsaw Local Centres Project.

*Table 2. Activities from Research & Planning Stage in the Arstein's ladder of participation, by author*

ACTIVITIES FROM RESEARCH & PLANNING STAGE IN THE ARSTEIN'S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION			
RUNG	THE NAME OF RUNG	ACTIVITY	ACTOR
8	citizen control	not applicable	
7	delegated power	not applicable	
6	partnership	common preparing the map of Warsaw Local Centres	The Expert Grup, activists, inhabitants
5	placation	not applicable	
4	consultation	consulting definitions, methods etc.	The Expert Grup, invited experts, activists, inhabitants
3	informing	informing via internet (fanpage on facebook, website, City Hall biulletins etc.)	The Expert Group
2	therapy	not applicable	
1	manipulation	not applicable	

#### **4.3.3. Involvement of City Hall representatives**

The level of involvement of Warsaw City Hall representatives was rather low. Higher level of involvement presented representatives of Districts' Offices. That shows the character of the project - local, for districts' inhabitants.

#### ***4.3.4. Link between Research & Planning Stage and Realization Stage - scenario***

Prepared scenario (the model process of creating Local Centre) is a link between Research & Planning Stage and pilot scheme - first step of the next Realization Stage. It was worn-out after choosing locations for pilot scheme, what might have made the task of preparing it easier for the Expert Group. Scenario is divided into three stages: architectural and planning activities, activities connected with functions of Local Centre, consulting and participating activities. That division, especially distinguishing participation, shows how important are, in experts' opinions, consulting and participation processes in the process of planning and designing Local Centres. Both scenario and actual activities during pilot scheme are going to be very interesting material for further research.

### **5. DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

#### ***5.1. PILOT SCHEME OF WARSAW LOCAL CENTRES PROJECT***

That research is based only on first step of the Project of Warsaw Local Centres. It is important to smoothly move to the next phase of the research - analysing design processes of Local Centres chosen to the pilot scheme. Then researchers can check if assumptions of the conceptual study and scenario prepared by the Expert Group were taken into consideration by the authors of particular projects.

#### ***5.2. ACTORS***

First, next part of research might base on experiences and thoughts of the actors who took part in both - the Research & Planning Stage and in Pilot Scheme or engagement and ideas of new actors.. The line-up of the Expert Group changed between Stage 1 and Stage 2 (during the pilot scheme, each district has a responsible person in the Expert Group) - the interview with the members who participated in both stages about his feelings in retrospective would be valuable and is suggested for further research. Moreover, the research might also bases on the experience of activists and inhabitants who took part in both - the Research & Planning Stage and in Pilot Scheme. Interviews with them might be valuable. The Expert Group in the Stage 2 is only an advisory board, the leaders for further stages of the Project are Local Coordination Groups dedicated to work in particular districts / locations - interesting aspect to research is the partnership between them.

#### ***5.3. TOOLS***

Another aspect which might be subjected to deeper analysis are participation tools used in Stage



1 and Stage 2 - because of diverse character of stages tools might be hard to compare. However, it might be useful to prepare the base of tools for each stage of project - that one and similar ones.

## 6. SUMMARY

The research shown that participation processes are applicable not only during design process but also in the planning process on creating the network of public spaces. Moreover there several groups of actors who can be involved in. Multiplicity of directions for further research shows how much there might be learned about common created public space, not only in Warsaw but around the world.

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# Beyond ownership – renewal of public spaces in residential neighbourhoods of postsocialist cities

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Renewal of public space in residential neighbourhoods is specifically challenging in post-socialist cities, Slovenian cities being the case in point. Large proportion of residential neighbourhoods in these cities comprise of housing estates that were predominantly built between 1960s and 1980s and represent the most common type of urban housing. For example, approximately half of Ljubljana's residents live in such neighbourhoods (Rebernik 2002, 464). Public spaces in many of these neighbourhoods were planned generously compared to estates built after 1990. Even though these spaces are not central public spaces, they represent the immediate living environment for a large number of people. Specifically, public spaces in housing estates represent an epicentre of community life for social groups with limited intra-city mobility and/or financial resources like young families and senior citizens. In Slovenia, "social property", denationalisation and privatisation all affected the urban tissue in different ways, resulting in an unclear cadastral and ownership status of public spaces, which led to poor maintenance (Jankovič Grobelšek 2009) and fragmentation. On top of that we are seeing a slow renewal process, which is hindered by the lack of both public and private funding in these areas.

## 2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH METHOD

The motive for research came from the activities of prostoRož association in Savsko naselje, one of the first post-WWII housing estates in Ljubljana. The activities were part of a pilot project of integrated urban renewal, financed by the Municipality of Ljubljana and Creative Europe programme. Soon the process of regeneration of a single public space was obstructed

by the ownership issues. To understand why renewal of public spaces in similar residential neighbourhoods is such a difficult process, we posed ourselves the following research questions:

1. What are the issues related to management, planning and maintenance of public spaces in residential neighbourhoods as perceived by different stakeholders?
2. What solutions do the stakeholders identify as suitable? What actions could be taken to resolve the identified issues?
3. How can we raise awareness of the issues concerning public space renewal among decision-makers and other important stakeholders?

Research was conducted in two parts. In both parts, research activities were accompanied by awareness-raising activities to draw public attention to the issue. In 2015, we conducted 16 interviews on the topic of public space in residential neighbourhoods. We spoke with residents of the neighbourhoods, representatives of municipal authorities and relevant ministries, jurists, urban planners, architects and sociologists. 11 interviews were recorded, edited and published on the prostoRož YouTube channel. Other interviews were transcribed and all of them were published on a public blog. Beside the interviews, we collected cases from Slovenian neighbourhoods to illuminate the discussion, and published both reader comments as well as media responses on the project (KD prostoRož, 2016).

In 2016, we held five forums with municipality employees in Krško, Kranj, Nova Gorica, Celje and Kočevje. The discussions were transcribed, synthesised and sent back to municipalities. Individual discussions were compared and common issues were identified.

### 3. RESULTS

The analysis of interviews and forum discussions helped us to identify a range of issues that impede the renewal of public spaces in Slovenian residential neighbourhoods. The results show that the issues are extremely complex and could not be reduced solely to the problem of changing ownership. Below we summarise some of the most pressing issues and solutions, as proposed by interviewees.

#### *Public space ownership*

The unclear division of public and private property in public spaces is seen as the main obstacle to implementation of maintenance and renewal measures. Unsolved ownership cases, rising numbers of owners and increased fragmentation of ownership were also identified as pressing issues. Fraudulent privatisation of land, built up during socialism, still remains an issue.

Principally, a clear line needs to be drawn between public and private land. Municipalities need to find historical evidence that they own some of the land and that they do not have to buy it (back) from private owners. In terms of legal instruments, community property was proposed as a form of ownership of shared public spaces.

### *Planning for renewal*

The existing legal instruments and planning documentation (primarily “Municipal spatial plan” and “Municipal detailed spatial plan”) are unsuitable for the renewal of public space built according to modernist ideas. While the Municipal spatial plan is too general to protect smaller public spaces in residential areas, the financing of Municipal detailed spatial plan usually requires a big investor and can rarely be financed by a large number of small owners. Instead, public space renewal should be approached on a smaller scale. The scale of socialist residential neighbourhoods is too big to enable identification of residents with the space, so strategies of micro-scale identification should be pursued. Municipalities should plan public spaces primarily according to function, not ownership. In the same manner, stricter regulations need to be applied to prevent degradation of public space, even if it is privately owned. Particularly, municipality employees recognised that the quality of public space heavily depends on municipal traffic plans and car parking policies. While payable parking is a very unpopular political move, it is seen as a necessary measure to improve public space.

### *Financial issues*

Interviewees observed considerable lack of financial support for maintenance and renewal of public space in residential areas. There are no tax reliefs for private owners who keep the existing spaces open to the public and the municipalities lack the funds for maintenance and planning. Tax incentives for private owners of open public spaces are among the proposed solutions. On the other hand, municipalities should use European funding such as Integrated territorial investment (ITI) funds to tackle the problem of dilapidated public space and aid limited municipal budgets.

### *Maintenance of public space*

At present, the division of maintenance responsibilities among landowners is unclear. Newly privatised open public spaces represent new costs and responsibilities for owners who in many cases cannot bear new payloads. Owners of appertaining land (unit owners in multi-apartment buildings) do not cooperate in maintenance of public areas. Green public spaces are expensive to maintain compared to concrete or asphalt surfaces so public and private owners have little incentive to preserve the green areas if they are not protected. Rigid public service concession system raises the price of maintenance for municipalities. Among the most interesting solutions is a shift from fragmented appertaining land plots towards shared neighbourhood land, and the introduction of new neighbourhood services in ground floors to involve new actors in the

maintenance of public space. While municipalities should strive towards participatory maintenance mechanisms (not least to lower the costs), the state should allow for interventions in private property when wider public interest is affected due to poor maintenance.

### *Political and legislative framework*

Political climate influences spatial planning and as a consequence the quality of public space. Respondents note that proactive, high-quality public policies are rare in the field of spatial development. When legislation is adequate, supervision of law implementation is poor, partly due to unclear jurisdiction of public bodies in charge of spatial development. As spatial and environmental inspectorates struggle with lack of funds and qualified staff, many illegal activities remain unsanctioned. Two cases were frequently mentioned to illustrate these rather critical opinions. First is the national land register where, so far, some public spaces are still unregistered or the actual land use does not correspond to the one evidenced in the register. Second is the contested “Act on the Acquisition of the Strata Title of a Part of a Building on the Proposal of the Owner and on Determining the Land Belonging Thereto” (Slov. *ZVEtL*). The act focuses on appertaining land and the process of transition from public to private ownership. Interviewees agree that the juridical process favours private interest before public and that the state should intervene with new legislation and replace the act. However, municipalities should take on a more proactive role and protect the existing public spaces under the existing legislation as well.

### *Social context*

New values, such as individualisation and retreat to the private sphere, were also recognised as contributing to diminished use of public space. Residents are seen as being detached from public space and not aware that they co-create it. Three suggested measures that could tackle such attitudes are adaptation of public space to new needs, implementation of activities to encourage residents to spend more time outdoors, and improvements in public participation. There is enough public space in residential neighbourhoods, but its programme is unattractive to contemporary inhabitants.

### *Communicational aspects*

There seems to be a general agreement on the lack of culture of dialogue among various stakeholders. The state is seen as distanced from its citizens, and lack of communication is observed between the state and municipalities. Another obstacle to progress in spatial development is underdeveloped horizontal cooperation between departments on the municipal level and between ministries on the state level. Public debates that accompany displays of spatial plans are badly moderated. Transparent processes on all decision-making levels are seen as crucial to increase trust in public authorities. On a municipal level, vague political stances



are one of the biggest obstacles for high-quality spatial development. A system of priorities, clear vision and a set of objectives need to be shared among all municipal employees, therefore enabling the municipality to also communicate its vision externally. New tools are needed to improve and modernise public participation and involve residents in public space management and planning, since renewal cannot be implemented without cooperation of residents, who own parts of public space. Better channels need to be established for resident's initiatives. NGOs are seen as possible intermediaries in the process, and as enablers of new communication channels between decision-makers and citizens.

#### 4. DISCUSSION: WHERE TO START?

The broad range of issues and solutions identified by interviewees and forum participants shows that spatial issues on small, neighbourhood scales are embedded in a wider political, legislative and social context. Public institutions display a general disinterest in public spaces in residential neighbourhoods, which results in weak defence of public interest. The complex and still unfinished process of transition from a socialist to a neoliberal system complicates ownership issues and affects planning, legislative and maintenance-related aspects of public space renewal. However, the "post-socialist condition" cannot be blamed for many of the most pronounced problems in our research, notably those related to poor communication and lack of mechanisms for public participation. In accordance with proposals by some of the interviewees, we support the approach of soft urban renewal and Urban Renewal Offices (Germ. *Gebeitsbetreuung*) as a suitable solution. Following successful examples from cities like Vienna and Copenhagen, we propose that the soft renewal approach is even more valuable in the context of post-socialist cities. Urban Renewal Offices encourage various forms of self-organisation and support residents to actively engage in public activities. Among their main tasks are helping residents with problems related to building renewal, administrative and legal procedures. The active use of various participation tools and innovative communication channels builds a connection between decision-makers and residents. They also coordinate short- and long-term renewal projects in the neighbourhood (prostoRož 2015). Urban Renewal Offices can establish cooperation among the various stakeholders involved in management, maintenance and renewal of public spaces. Their connecting role is therefore even more important in a complex situation like we see in Slovenia.

\*Research on public space renewal in 2015 was conducted by authors, Irena Ostojić and Julija Vardjan with financial support from Creative Europe programme. Forums in 2016 were co-organised by authors and Senka Šifkovič Vrbica (PIC - Legal-Informational Centre for NGOs) with financial support from Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning.

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*AESOP TG PSUC & HUMAN CITIES  
LJUBLJANA MAY 2017*

*PUBLIC SPACES FOR LOCAL LIFE*

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

### **of participants to the whole event**

## SARA BASSO

Sara Basso, architect (2000, IUAV Venice), PhD in Urban Planning (2005, IUAV Venice), is full researcher in Town Planning at the Department of Engineering and Architecture of the University of Trieste, where she coordinates the Laboratory of Urban Design and she also teaches Urban Design and Planning. His main research interests are: - the study of the forms and the techniques of urban design as tools for the reading and planning of the city and for the upgrading of living spaces; - the analysis and the interpretation of the settlement and the environmental conditions of contemporary territories, particularly in north-eastern Italy; - the spatial, social and environmental regeneration of social housing neighbourhoods.

## BOŠTJAN BUGARIČ

Boštjan Bugarič (1976) is an architect, urban activist and editor focused on the research of the public space transformation, influence of migration processes on cities and recuperation of communities. He is the leader of kudc3.net. In past he was a coordinator for establishment of the Faculty of Built Environment at University of Primorska (2008-2012), a president of the Society of Coastal Architects in Koper (2009-2011). He collaborated as project manager at Wonderland - Platform for European Architecture, Vienna and as an editor at Architectuul, Berlin. Currently he works as researcher at University in Ljubljana, Faculty of Architecture.

## VINCENT CHUKWUEMEKA

Vincent Chukwuemeka (1984) studied architecture (B.Sc.Arch., 2005, Imo State University in Nigeria) and (MA.Arch., 2014, Anhalt University of Applied Sciences / DIA - Bauhaus in Germany). He is currently a PhD Candidate at the department of architecture, University of Leuven (KU Leuven) in Belgium. He has over 8 years of professional experience and worked with different architectural practices in Nigeria and Germany, executing several projects. His current research under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Kris Scheerlinck and Prof. Dr. Yves Schoonjans focuses on understanding the uses of collective spaces of informal and formal market spaces as emergent infrastructures and as catalysts for self-organisation processes of urban growth; using Onitsha Markets in Nigeria as case study.

## VALENTINA CRUPI

Valentina Crupi, architect and Ph.D. in Integrated Planning of Architecture and Civil

Engineering, is teaching assistant and researcher in Urbanism at University of Trieste and at IUAV Venice. Over the years she has collaborated with different architectural offices in Trieste and Barcelona and she has won national and international architecture awards. Her research interests are focused on environmental issues, with particular attention to the consequences of climate change on the open spaces of contemporary cities and the “forms” of their project.

## **MERVE DEMIRÖZ**

Merve Demiröz is a PhD Fellow in the Interuniversity Department of Regional And Urban Studies And Planning (DIST), Polytechnic and University of Turin, Italy. She got her B.Sc. in Urban and Regional Planning and M.Sc. in Conservation of Cultural Heritage from the Faculty of Architecture in Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey. Her research interests are mainly focusing on the urban morphology, conservation and regeneration of the cultural heritage places, role of the community participation in the conservation and the Historic Urban Landscape approach. Recently, she is following various case studies about urban heritage theory and practice, mostly from the Italian and Turkish contexts.

## **GABRIELLA ESPOSITO DE VITA**

Dr. Gabriella Esposito De Vita, PhD in Regional Sciences and UrbanPlanning, is senior researcher at the National Research Council of Italy(CNR IRISS) since 2001. She has conducted research into models ofsustainability for built environment with a focus on understanding linksbetween social transformations and urban pattern and is currentlycoordinating European funded research projects on policy design forplace-based regeneration processes, for social security and localdevelopment, published in circa 100 publications. Marie Curie Fellow at theNortheastern University of Boston and the San Diego State University (USA)(CLUDs Project), she has been granted for developing research projects onmulticultural interaction and conflicts as visiting scholar at the BERIUniversity of Ulster (UK) and the CEDEM University of Liege (Belgium).Gabriella has taught urban planning in several academic institutions andshe is supporting the international dialogue within the AESOP ThematicGroup Public Spaces and Urban Cultures as co-coordinator.

## **ALENKA FIKFAK**

Alenka Fikfak is Head of urbanism at the Faculty of architecture of the University of Ljubčjana. Her research experience is in spatial and landscape planning, planning of small settlements, rurism and rural architecture, regulatory plans for the regulation of non-urban settlements, evolutionary constants of a settlement culture undergoing renovation, with particular reference to the coastal region, models for revitalisation of degraded landscape areas and analysis of



trends of spatial development. She is working in EU projects/Programmes and has organised more than 30 architectural and urbanistical workshops for different local communities, as well as international conferences of Spatial Planning development and Urbanism: Smart urbanism 2012, 2013, 2014; Symposium Men and space 2014; Places & Technologies 2015; Theory and critic's in Architecture: 60 architectural reviews in Europe. She is a member of different national and international scientific and art committees.

## JOSYANE FRANC

Josyane Franc is the Head of International Relations for the Cité du design and ESADSE, the Higher School of Art and Design of Saint-Etienne, France. She was also a founding member of the Saint-Etienne International Design Biennial in 1998. Since 1989, she has promoted ESADSE and Cité du design by organizing international exhibitions, special projects, and developing partnerships in international design networks. She prepared the application for Saint-Etienne UNESCO City of Design, and she coordinates its program since the designation in 2010. She is coordinator of the European project Human Cities\_ Challenging the City scale led by Cité du design from 2014-2018 in the framework of Creative Europe /EU.

## HÉLOÏSE GAUTIER

Héloïse Gautier is a student in the French top School Sciences Po Rennes. She is studying the implementation of sustainable development in public, private and associative fields. Her research interests are focused on liveability of cities, natural resources management and agro-ecology. Such a course gives her the opportunity to meet professionals of environment, land and urban management, to implement projects and to experience internships. Currently she is working as an intern at the Urban Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, with the Human Cities team, to organize the Ljubljana international event "Public Spaces for Local Life" in May 2017.

## EWA GOLEBIOWSKA

Ewa Gołębiowska is the co-initiator and director of a unique design center as Zamek Cieszyn (the Castle Cieszyn). This is the place where you manage to combine design, innovative entrepreneurship and new technologies together with history and traditional craft. Ewa is an active design promoter. In her lectures and articles, she underlines the fact that design helps to create new possibilities, both in business and social projects. Since 2013 until 2017 she was the President of European Platform EIDD – Design for All Europe.

## MOJCA GOLOBIC

Prof. dr. Mojca Golobič graduated and earned a PhD in landscape planning at University of

Ljubljana, Biotechnical faculty. For 13 years she has worked as a researcher at the Urban planning institute of the Republic of Slovenia. Since 2003 she is affiliated with the University of Ljubljana, where she took a full time lecturing position in 2010 and the role of the head of the Department for Landscape Architecture in 2012. Her research work focuses in methodological issues of environmental and land-use planning, strategic impact assessments and relation between landscape and people.

## ILONA GURJANOVA

Ilona Gurjanova has been offering graphic design and design management services to the clients more than 30 years. As the president of a professional design organisation from 2004 Ilona has been partner to the private and public sector and active in the development of Estonian design policy. Ilona has been the main curator of several design projects in more than 12 countries and also she has initiated Size Doesn't Matter travelling exhibition, Tallinn Design Night Festival Disainiöö, Estonian Design Prize Bruno in 2006, Estonian Design House and participating in creation of Tallinn Design House. Currently she is lecturer at University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy and Tartu Art College, she has been board member of BEDA (The Bureau of European Design Associations) and EIDD Design For All Europe. Also she has been asked to be the jury member of international competitions in Slovenia, Lithuania and in European Best Logo competition. Also Ilona has written articles about design awareness for local media, given interviews to German, UK, Sweden, Finnish, French, Latvian, Russian and US media. Ilona has got Annual award of the Cultural Endowment in 2009, the Foreign Ministry's cultural award in 2017 and several endowments by Ministry of Culture.

## ALENKA KORENJAK

Alenka Korenjak is one of the co-founders of association ProstoRož and architectural office kombinat. arhitekti. She is a trained architect and has experience in designing public space projects, where cross-sectoral cooperation and communication with inhabitants plays crucial role. She is good at architectural planning, detailing and she possess knowledge on legal matters about temporary use, public space interventions, building and use permits. She is highly inspired by searching for new role of architecture in city making and she think that cultural sector already found ways to creating a link between inhabitants and decision makers.

## KATARINA ANA LESTAN

Katarina Ana Lestan, graduated in landscape architecture at University of Ljubljana, Biotechnical faculty. After graduating she worked for different companies and gained various working experiences from 2006 to 2011 (B2 d.o.o., Populus Spatial engineering d.o.o., Atelje

Ostan Pavlin architectural bureau, Landscape Architecture Janez Dolinar bureau). She worked on the project entitled *The role of urban green areas for quality of life* from 2011 to 2013. The project was conducted at the Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia. Since 2014 she has been employed at the Department for Landscape Architecture at University of Ljubljana, working on the projects *Identification of landscape features important for biodiversity in agricultural landscapes* and *The role of open space in urban neighbourhoods for the healthy childhood and active ageing*.

## ELENA MARCHIGIANI

Elena Marchigiani is researcher in Town Planning at the Department of Engineering and Architecture at the University of Trieste, where she teaches Town Planning at the Master degree courses. Between 2011 and 2016 she was Deputy Major at the Municipality of Trieste, first in charge of Public Works, Private Building and Housing Policies, then of Town Planning, Mobility and traffic, Private buildings, Housing Policies and Complex Urban Projects. Her research topics deal with a critical reflection on public action and policies, and on the construction of town planning and urban design tools (issues of landscape planning and design, urban renewal of social housing districts, activation of participatory and interactive processes).

## WERONIKA MAZURKIEWICZ

Weronika Mazurkiewicz (1990) is a member of AESOP since 2015. Besides finishing her master studies at Gdansk University of Technology she was also studying at University of Ljubljana (2011 and 2014) and continuing research at Vienna University of Technology (2013) and at University of Lisbon (2015). Nowadays she is finishing her doctoral thesis about „Tools for designing coherent neighborhoods in suburban areas“. During last years she started her own business Weronika Dettlaff DesignArch and went for two internships: baumann.dürr architekten office in Karlsruhe (2012) and Investment Environments Sp z o.o. in Warsaw (2015). Recently she works in architectural office in Gdansk (GRAPH31).

## MATEJ NIKSIC

Dr. Matej Niksic is an architect and urban planner specialised in urban public space and urban regeneration in relation to public participation issues. He works as a researcher at the Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (UIRS). Currently he leads Slovenian part of the EU Human Cities project and takes part in other European and national research projects. He is a teaching assistant at the Faculty of architecture of the University of Ljubljana. And an active member of AESOP thematic group Public spaces and urban cultures.

## ALES PETERNEL and VOJKO VAVPOTIC

Ales Peternel and Vojko Vavpotic are affiliated with the Local Renewal Office of the Planina neighbourhood in Kranj. It is a non-governmental interdisciplinary group of architects, social workers and a communications expert. The office was established in 2016 by the Municipality of Kranj with the aim of working together with the residents of the Planina neighbourhood, local communities, public services and institutions, local NGO-s and entrepreneurs in the process of inclusion of residents in the physical, social and economic renewal and revitalisation of their neighbourhood. It operates on a 58 ha large area which is divided into four local communities and presided by three different political parties.

## TOMAŽ PIPAN

Tomaž Pipan works as a researcher at the Landscape Department on the Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana. In 2014 he received his PhD from London Metropolitan University. His thesis "Capacity of Industry for Civic Culture" is, amongst others, a study of civic conflicts and capacities of their reconciliation in different contemporary cities based on production; from Dongguan to Detroit.

He was researching and teaching abroad and in Slovenia. His 10-year experience in developing integration and stakeholder engagement methods crucially contributed to formulation of integration method for the Smart Sustainable Districts project (Climate KIC, EIT). Under the Modelling City Systems (Climate KIC), he was leading a team of programmers and geoscientists to develop interactive decision-making and participation tool.

## ANDREJ POGACNIK

Andrej Pogačnik ph.d. ma.arch, gr. arch. is a retired university professor. After the graduation at the University of Ljubljana he reached his master's degree as Fulbright fellow at the University of Pennsylvania, USA. During 40 years he has been the head of the Chair for spatial planning at the University of Ljubljana and the head of the Graduate interdisciplinary studies in spatial planning. Since the foundation of AESOP he has been the representative of Slovenia in this organization. He published numerous university textbooks and scientific monographies in the field of urban and regional planning. The scope of his practical work encompasses several urban and regional plans. He has been awarded with numerous academic and professional prizes. Among them there is the most prestigious one in Slovenia - Fabiani's award for spatial planning.

## MARTA POPASZKIEWICZ

Marta Popaszkievicz is a PhD candidate at Faculty of Architecture of Warsaw University of Technology and architect in Archmagic - Paweł W. Graliński Architectural Studio. Her scientific interests' area is public spaces, especially ones which are an effect of cooperation between various actors - representants of Municipality, architects, urban designers, inhabitants and NGO's members. Her interest in public spaces comes from during Mentor & Student Research Lab (Gdańsk, 2014) - the common initiative of ISOCARP and scientific club LEM-ur, which she had pleasure to organize and be a part of. She was a participant, organizer or mentor during various polish and international workshops, among others: workshop in Izmir, Turkey (Erasmus Workshop, 2013), workshop in Nantes, France (DAAD, 2014), workshop in Gdynia, Poland (ISOCARP & AESOP, 2016) etc.

## STEFANIA RAGOZINO

Dr. Stefania Ragozino, Ph.D., is Temporary Researcher with the National Research Council CNR of Italy – Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development IRISS (Naples) working within the project “Place-based strategies for local development” (Scientific Coordinator Gabriella Esposito IRISS-CNR). She completed her Ph.D.

programme at the University Federico II of Naples with the Thesis titled “Operative Tools for the Historic Urban Landscape Approach.

Urban Regeneration through Social Enterprise in Devonport (UK)” (Tutor Prof. L. Fusco Girard, Co-tutors M. Clemente and G. Esposito De Vita).

She is an active member of the AESOP Thematic Group Public Space Urban Culture working in Self-Organized Management Network for the Public Relations. She has participated at national and international conferences and has produced contributions for national and international journal and books.

## KRIS SCHEERLINCK

Kris Scheerlinck (1972) studied Architecture (MSc., School of Architecture, Sint-Lucas, Ghent), Spatial Planning (Post Graduate, University of Ghent/KU Leuven), Urban Culture (Post Graduate, UPC Barcelona) and Urban Design (MSc., UPC Barcelona) and obtained his Ph.D. in Architecture and Urban Projects with Prof. de Solà-Morales and Prof. Ferrer as thesis directors (UPC/URL, Barcelona, Spain). For more than 15 years, he ran his own research and design practices in Ghent, Barcelona and New York, working on urban and architecture projects, interior, retail and exhibition design and ephemeral installations. He coordinated and ran design studios, workshops and taught theoretical courses in Architecture and Urban Design Programs at various institutions and universities in New York, Barcelona, Bratislava, Melbourne, Valparaiso, Cordoba, Guayaquil, Cuenca, Havana, Addis Abeba, Ghent and

Brussels. For the last 5 years, he directed the International Master of Science in Architecture Programmes (Programme in Brussels, “Urban Projects, Urban Cultures” and programme in Ghent, “Resilient and Sustainable Strategies”). He is currently appointed Vice-Dean for Internationalisation and member of the Faculty Doctoral Commission at the Faculty of Architecture. He directs an international research project on depth configurations in urban projects, called Streetscape Territories and promotes related PhD projects.

## YVES SCHOONJANS

Yves Schoonjans (1960) is a Professor in architectural history and – theory at the University of Leuven (Department of Architecture), Belgium. He received a master of science in architectural engineering at the University Ghent (1984). From 1985 till 1995 he had a private architectural practice with Gilles Van Bogaert. In his PhD-study (An 19th century eclectic discourse – social and architectural strategies to cope with abundance and diversity – University Ghent, Belgium) he tackles the way how the theoretical discourse on eclecticism is constructed. The research is focused in two intermingled lines. (1) The first line researches the ‘mechanisms on theory-building’ with a special attentiveness to the relation between theory and daily practice and the development of (ideological) discourses. In the research-methodology the focus is beside pure text also on other media and expression as images, construct of journals, manuals, artefacts, ... and their interrelations. Architecture is tackled as a wide cultural phenomenon and its relation to ideas, discourses and practices. (2) The second research line is closely linked to the first and brings it towards ‘modest heritage and local identities’. Heritage is seen here as what we inherit, or, the built that is constructing the city. Also, here the emphasis is laid on the development of informal and local discourses. Local identities play an important part towards understanding the existing fabric and the way it is appropriated, towards the use of collective spaces and sustainable urban development, interactive regeneration and adaptive re-use. He was involved as partner and lead-coordinator in different international programs (Erasmus, Mundus and ALFA) and participated in different project, especially in Latin America. Within the academic management he was Head of the education-section ‘History and Theory’ from 2002 to 2008, program director of the International Master of Architecture ‘Urban Cultures-Urban Project’ and the International Master of Architecture ‘Sustainable Architecture’ (2008-2010), member of the board and as such director of master-programs (2009-2013). From October 2013, he became vice-dean Internationalisation and vice-chair of the Research Department.

## LUKA SKANSI

Luka Skansi (1973), architectural historian, assistant professor at University in Rijeka. His research interests include Italian architecture and engineering of the 20th century, Russian and Soviet architecture and the architecture in ex-Yugoslavia. His wrote essays and articles on Carlo Scarpa, Aldo Rossi, Gino Valle, Costantino Dardi, Pier Luigi Nervi, Myron Goldsmith, Jože



Plečnik, Manfredo Tafuri, Nikolaj Ladovskij, Moisej Ginzburg, Peter Behrens, Vladimir Braco Mušič.

## **ZEYNEP TURAN**

Zeynep Turan /Ph.D. in Environmental Psychology, CUNY Graduate Center; MA in Architectural History and Theory, AA School of Architecture; B.Arch., Middle East Technical University/ is a visiting Scholar at the Milano School for International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy at The New School. As an architect and social scientist, he applies an interdisciplinary approach to analyze environment-behavior interactions and to visualize data through techniques such as GIS. From 2013-2016, he was Assistant Professor at Istanbul Bilgi University's Faculty of Architecture and conducted research on participatory design with a grant from Turkish Scientific and Technological Research Center, "User-focused Approaches to Istanbul's Waterfront Transformation." His current research interests include the transformation of public space, specifically waterfront areas, under neoliberalism and climate change pressures. Presently, he is working to get his license as a landscape architect and will focus on waterfront parks and brownfield remediation.

## **MAJA VARDJAN**

Maja Vardjan is an architect and curator. Following her time as creative director of the T5 Project Space gallery and the architecture editor of Ambient magazine, she now works as curator of architecture and design at the Museum of Architecture and Design (MAO). She is the author of the publication "Design in Dialogue" and curated the "Silent Revolutions: Contemporary Design in Slovenia" touring exhibition (MAO, 2011-2015). She also curated "Under the Common Roof", an exhibition on modern public buildings drawing from MAO's archive (MAO, 2013) and the exhibition Saša J. Maechtig: Systems, Structures, Strategies (MAO, 2015). She deserves much of the credit for the major changes of Ljubljana's recent iterations of the Biennial of Design. Together with Jan Boelen and Cvetka Požar she co-curated the 24th Biennial of Design, BIO 50. Currently she works on Faraway, So, Close, 25th Biennial of design with Angela Rui.

## **ZALA VELKAVRH**

Zala Velkavrh obtained a bachelor degree in marketing communication and PR and is currently finishing a postgraduate study of sociology at the University of Ljubljana. Since 2012 she is a member of prostoRož, a studio dedicated to exploring and improving urban public space in Slovenia and abroad. She works as project author and manager, communications coordinator and event organiser. She is a co-author of VOBI, a user-friendly digital guide through the

bureaucracy. Her articles on topics related to the sustainable urban development and civic engagement were published in Slovenian newspapers and magazines as well as professional journals.

## DAMJANA ZAVIRŠEK HUDNIK

Damjana Zaviršek Hudnik is an architect working in her architectural studio in Ljubljana. She is engaged in designing buildings and open public spaces, interior design and exhibition design. She promotes architecture as a discipline, sensitising members of the public about the importance of space. She responds to spatial issues by challenging both the contemporary lifestyle and our everyday habits, by bringing together various users of space and educating them, by launching initiatives for arranging neglected spaces and for temporary uses of urban space. Since 2013, she has been among the initiators of the “Skupaj na ploščad!” initiative, encouraging the residents of the Ruski car residential area to consider the potentials of their public open space and to participate in the process of its restoration and revitalisation. During the last three years, the “Skupaj na ploščad!” initiative planned and implemented several spatial interventions in the local residential area, aiming to make the space between the blocks of flats more friendly and to encourage the local residents to use it, offering them a possibility of socialising in public spaces. She sees participation in the Human Cities projects as an excellent opportunity to make her own activities in the residential district even more effective by gaining experiences and practices of other cities.



