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Track 1: Creating healthy and liveable places

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The importance of virtual spaces in making socially sustainable cities for young adults: understanding their digitally mediated experiences at VIVID Sydney and links to loneliness

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Abstract

Urban open spaces have long been recognised for supporting urban dwellers' social well-being and fostering interactions; however, they are also becoming testing grounds for technological solutions, which affects how these spaces are used and experienced. Technology enables these spaces to be smarter places; nevertheless, it is a double-edged sword that may affect the sociability of a place and reinforce urban dwellers' loneliness. Starting as 'Smart Light Sydney' in 2009, VIVID Sydney is a yearly outdoor light festival that features light sculptures, multimedia projections, and interactive installations in Sydney's public realms. This study investigates how VIVID Sydney influence young adults' use of public spaces and their experiences of loneliness. Loneliness, defined here as an unwanted negative feeling, is not only an emerging public health issue that can lead to depression but also a widespread social phenomenon that might have been affected by the city environment.

Drawing from Kinsley's concept of 'virtual' geographies and 'technicity', I position the VIVID Sydney Light Festival not only as a cluster of temporary light projects but also as a set of digital-based activities. These activities involve interactions between people, artworks with digital features, and open spaces, blurring the boundaries between real and digital spaces. Analysing 12 in-depth interviews with young adults, a technology designer, and an event organiser, I find that VIVID Sydney: 1) makes public spaces more attractive to go for young adults; 2) serves as a social event that young adults can go multiple times with different people; and 3) mediates their experiences through personal devices, potentially impacting loneliness. This study emphasises the virtual aspects of urban spaces and contributes to discussions on socially sustainable cities for young people.

Keywords

loneliness, public spaces, young adults, smart cities, festivals

How well do parks and open spaces cater for adolescents' mental wellbeing? A study of planners' perceptions from Melbourne, Australia

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Abstract

Parks and open spaces can provide mental wellbeing benefits via pathways including restoration, physical activity and social cohesion. For adolescents, these spaces also function as sites of interaction and retreat. Both purposes serve important developmental and wellbeing needs, and permit young people to safely express their identity and freely test their independence, away from adult supervision and control. However, negative public attitudes towards teenagers in public space and the exclusion of young people from planning processes mean that built environment professionals may not prioritise adolescents' wellbeing needs when designing parks and open spaces.

The author surveyed open space planners and designers working in Melbourne, Australia (n=49). Respondents rated the extent to which parks and open spaces within their municipality catered for the wellbeing needs of older adolescents, and to what degree they planned these spaces with this cohort's needs in mind. To supplement the survey, the author conducted interviews with planners (n=14), undertook content analysis of 31 open space strategies, and made field observations.

Parks and open spaces in Melbourne do not cater well to older adolescents, especially girls and young women, which echoes similar findings from the UK. Furthermore, existing spaces cater better for adolescents' physical health than their mental, sensory and spiritual health needs. While planners consistently rated their intention to accommodate adolescents' needs higher than the extent to which existing spaces met those needs, they still prioritised physical health over mental wellbeing. Reasons stated include a historical precedent of privileging male sport, restrictive standards and policies, and conflicts with ecological and economic drivers of park design.

Parks are health resources and social spaces. To better address older adolescents' mental wellbeing needs, planners can use targeted engagement approaches to capture young people's experiences and constructions of place that allow for exploration of social, symbolic, emotional and spiritual meaning.

Keywords

Mental health and wellbeing, Parks, Adolescents, Urban planning, Healthy cities

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Opportunities and challenges of integrated urban development using the example of the Evaluation of the INSEK Nuremberg on the waterfront

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Abstract

Although spatial development and planning are now firmly established as an area of human geography research, evaluations of the implementation of spatial development policy concepts are still a rarity. Existing evaluations, especially of integrated urban development concepts, are mostly based on the city itself and focus on a simple set of methods, which is not equivalent to a detailed study within a scientific framework. However, INSEKs can make a contribution to resilient and future-orientated development in an urban context. In addition, even the INSEKs formulated differ greatly within and between municipalities: while some cities formulate clear areas, other concepts name the entire urban area as the project area. The objectives and sub-areas also differ. As a result, each study is unique and must be adapted to the local conditions and the formulated content in each case. This article evaluates the integrated urban development concept for Nuremberg on the waterfront by reviewing the implementation of the formulated strategic projects and analysing the impact on citizens. This work is based on the previous research proposal, the evaluandum, interviews conducted, a site visit and photo documentation.

Keywords

Integrated urban development , Evaluation , Nuremberg, Structural implementation, Citizen impact

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Exploring relationships between GBGI exposure and satisfaction and quality of life in Bristol

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Abstract

Mental health, particularly for urban populations, is a growing public health concern. Understanding how people relate to and feel a sense of belonging in the urban environment is therefore an important research agenda. There is growing evidence about the importance of green (e.g. parks, trees), blue (e.g. lakes) and grey (e.g. travel routes) infrastructure for the health and wellbeing of urban residents.

This paper reports on the results of a RECLAIM Network Plus project exploring the relationships between Green-Blue-Grey Infrastructure (GBGI) and a range of health and social outcomes in

neighbourhoods across Bristol (United Kingdom). Using GIS and statistical analysis (logistic regression) we explore relationships between GBGI features and self-reported health, wellbeing and neighbourhood satisfaction from the Bristol Quality of Life Survey between 2011-2022. Multiple GBGI factors such as tree density, distance to quality green and blue spaces, and the presence of historic buildings and transport infrastructure are considered, as well as more subjective measures including satisfaction with GBGI and frequency of use.

By exploring relationships between different GBGI and self-reported quality of life we aim to be able to better understand the importance of these features for improving people's lives and reducing inequalities within neighbourhoods and across the city. The evidence we produce we hope will further our understanding of how citizens relate to their urban environment and will help more inclusive decisions to be made by local councils about investment to ensure that all residents, wherever they live, benefit from GBGI which enhance quality of life for urban communities.

Keywords

GBGI, Quality of life, Health and wellbeing

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Public spaces for changing communities

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Abstract

University open spaces serve multiple purposes, extending beyond academic activities inside classrooms and buildings. These spaces facilitate daily transitions between classes, provide areas for relaxation and social interaction, and offer dining options. In essence, university open spaces are not just functional but are vital to enhancing the overall student experience and well-being.

The well-being of any campus community is closely linked to the quality of its spaces, particularly regarding livability, healthiness, accessibility, and inclusivity. Thoughtfully designed public spaces can greatly improve the quality of life for students, faculty, staff, and even visitors. Numerous studies highlight the role of these environments in promoting effective learning by supporting both mental and physical well-being. They offer essential spaces for rest, socialization, and informal learning, making them integral to daily campus life.

As university campuses become home to increasingly diverse and growing communities, it is crucial to design public spaces that meet the varied needs of these populations. These spaces must be adaptable to cultural changes, ensuring they remain welcoming and suitable for all. Equally important, these spaces must be capable of responding to the evolving dynamics of campus life and potential social or environmental risks, supporting sustainability in its threefold meanings.

Based on these premises, this study, part of the "LOVE Sapienza: Livable, Enjoyable, and Attractive Spaces for the Community and the PRIN 2020 SUMMA - Urban Impact Unit - research projects, both under the author's responsibility, aims to establish guidelines for creating resilient, healthy, and flexible spaces. It explores best practices for designing inclusive public spaces on university campuses and proposes a new methodology to meet the evolving needs of campus communities.

Keywords

Public spaces, Healthy places, Campus communities, Resilience, Flexibility

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Interrupted landscape. Chasms like new tangles of life

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Abstract

The present study aims to investigate the complex and articulated interactions and correspondences between the chasms, which frequently affect the territory of Rome and the fill soils that characterize the stratigraphy of the subsoil. Through the observation of the accelerations and decelerations that define the appearance or concealment of these phenomena, the question we intend to investigate is the dialogue, the interdependence, between the vortices, or temporal entanglements, and the fluid and moving geological layer. It is a matter permeable to impulses, the interface of a sphere of forces, agents, that act directly on its composition, formation and destruction. The articulation and modification that takes place in the landscape suggests a reversal of course for the project, that is, the coexistence of endogenous and exogenous forces welded together in an ecology of "disturbances". The materialist approach recognises the geological layer as a source of energy and evolution, marking the end of one phase and the beginning of another. In this perspective, rupture is also constitutive, implying the embrace of impermanence, vulnerability, evanescence and disruption. The 'punctured space' becomes a condition of existence and modernity characterised by fluidity and fragility. To establish balance, the world can be seen as a metastable space in which energy accumulated and generated over time can unhinge and subvert the conventional stigma. The coexistence between humans and "earth-beings" is proposed as a necessary scenario, in which metamorphosis makes it possible to overcome binary relationships between different scenarios and projects and the imposition of radical, solutionist positions. The suspension of the project and familiarization with fluidity involves the willingness to engage in the processes underway and to correspond with them. If the project continues to be blind, rigid, immobile to the fluidity of matter, suspension instead proposes itself as listening, an attentive gaze, it is suspending to **feel** a state of consciousness induced in us by the external world through the senses or any affective state arising in the soul.

Keywords

soil, time, agent, perturbation, fluidity

Understanding stakeholders' influence in creating healthy places

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Abstract

The core determinants of health are associated with many aspects of the built environment: housing, transport, public realm, community infrastructure and greenspaces can all influence population health and wellbeing. Ensuring that healthy environments are designed and built can be challenging in what is a complex system involving many stakeholders. Understanding stakeholder influence is important when seeking to influence healthier place-making.

This paper presents insights from an embedded researcher working in local government in a major English city from 2020 to 2024. They worked with the design team for a new spatial regeneration framework. This included extensive early-stage public involvement, and developer meetings. The embedded researcher also conducted observations with elected councilors and local government officers during policy discussions for updating the city's local plan.

The case study explores the scope of influence for decision-making by local government, the public, and developers for 11 core determinant of health issues which reflect the categories of a Health Impact Assessment that the embedded researcher used in the regeneration project. This involves: housing quality and affordability, access to health and social infrastructure, access to open space and nature, air quality and noise, accessibility, active travel and road safety, crime and community safety, access to healthy food, access to work and training, social cohesion, minimising use of resources, and climate change.

Developers appear to have most direct influence on urban development decisions, especially housing design, while local government must balance facilitation and control of development. Despite aspirations for healthy urban development by local government, practical delivery issues may result in trade-offs between quality and quantity of new homes. Local communities have least influence, although their views can inform aspects, when invited to contribute, such as improving public greenspaces. Understanding this influence is important to avoid public mistrust in urban development processes and support productive engagement.

Keywords

Stakeholder influence, core determinants of health, regeneration, planning policy, embedded research

Multi-disciplinary embedded research: an emerging methodology for health-related research

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Abstract

From 2020 to 2024 an embedded researcher worked part-time in Bristol City Council. This was a secondment, at no cost to local government, as part of a six-year, transdisciplinary, university-led research project called TRUUD ('Tackling Root Causes Upstream of Unhealthy Urban Development'). The project sought to understand the complex system of urban development decision-making and influence policy and practice for healthier built environments. The embedded researcher was based in the local government's regeneration team, with close links to planning policy and public health. They had a public health academic background, alongside experience in public, private and third sector organisations.

The embedded researcher acted as a bridge between academics and practitioners to understand decision-making in urban development, and identify opportunities for co-designed interventions to support healthier place-making. This resulted in two main interventions:

1 - Using health evidence to inform a spatial regeneration framework. Collaborating with health economists they were able to demonstrate the health, and health economic, impacts of environmental changes. For example, showing that a new urban park could bring £21 million additional benefits, compared to dispersed greenspaces across the area. This supported the case for inclusion of a new park as an option in the regeneration framework.

2 – Learning from local planning authorities to support healthier local plan policies. This led to publication of new guidance on healthy local plans in England, in collaboration with the Town and Country Planning Association.

The embedded researcher approach has provided opportunities to learn from practitioners, in partnership with academics, so that research is relevant and impactful. Bridging across public health and urban development disciplines was important to help understand different languages and ways of working. Multi-disciplinary embedded research therefore provides opportunities to tackle complex public health challenges associated with the built environment.

Keywords

methodology, embedded research, multi-disciplinary, co-production, interventions

Garages and Driveways: An Adaptable Neighborhood Infrastructure

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Abstract

Residents of America's single-family home neighborhoods have adapted their car-oriented built environments in resourceful and creative ways. Yet, adaptations of garages and driveways are relatively underexamined. Garages have sparked moderate attention from pop culture, architects, and housing planners as "programmable" spaces that can jumpstart billion-dollar tech revolutions or contribute to the toolkit of local housing affordability strategies, while attention to driveways is sparse.

This research advances this conversation by using a qualitative mixed-methods approach to answer four questions about residents' adaptation of single-family home garages and driveways: 1) How often do residents use garages and driveways for purposes other than to park cars? What kinds of uses are present? 2) What might drive residents to use garages and driveways in these ways? 3) How might these uses affect residents and neighborhoods? I answered these questions through a thematic analysis of over 6,100 photographs of single-family home garage and driveway adaptations in 13 diverse neighborhoods in Phoenix, Arizona and 58 interviews with stakeholders representing neighborhood, planning, and real estate industry perspectives.

The findings help to theorize these spaces as an adaptable neighborhood infrastructure that may enhance household and community wellbeing. I show that a sizable minority of residents used these spaces for purposes other than to park cars and articulate a holistic typology of adaptation that includes expression, consumption and production, housing, recreation, social engagement, nature restoration, and surveillance. Choices to adapt are motivated by incompatibilities between housing designs and lifecycle changes, economic opportunities and stressors, and desires to engage with neighbors. Adaptations may enable social connectedness, physical activity, and income generation and wealth building but also fuel anxiety about ruined aesthetics, reduced parking capacity, and safety hazards. Together, these findings reveal that single-family home garages and driveways are an overlooked infrastructure worthy of integration into frameworks of neighborhood systems.

Keywords

neighborhood, housing, adaptation, wellbeing

Climate-pocket parks for healthy historic environment

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Abstract

At the current, climate and ecological emergencies have regenerated new urban design perspectives for a more resilient city. Effective strategies have been produced to mitigate historic environment by promoting green infrastructures and transforming small open spaces into pocket parks. Research findings, developed at the University of Florence, stated that “pocket parks are well-designed small urban spaces with, or without, green elements, for urban quality, and urban resilience, wellbeing, connectivity, diversity and flexibility of use, whose creation should follow urban distinctness, sense of community, and should respect local people’s needs as the privileged beneficiaries of such places”^[1]. Recent studies show that more healthy small spaces of large potentiality can face climate emergency and other urban risks by implementing specific design approach. In turn, climate-pocket parks must be designed under sustainable and ecological criteria for more resilient purposes and qualitative upgrading.

The aim of this paper is to show a city-structuring of small open spaces for high-quality urban lifestyles within the Florence UNESCO Area. Revitalization and strengthening of small open spaces and streets can be a great opportunity for a more challenging historic environment. Planning and design by improving air quality, reducing urban traffic, urban heat islands and heatwaves, greening streets, cycle and pedestrian ways can address effective decision-making to increase open space value, liveability, accessibility, and well-being. Studies show that different aspects related to comfort sensation (thermal, visual, acoustic, air quality) in urban areas and the role of pocket parks, and their architectural features are considerable to mitigate urban microclimate and human subjective perception. Moreover, designing for climate-pocket parks one can consider potentiality of green infrastructure approach for healthy environment, protection and safety.

[1] Babalis D (2020) A new typology of pocket parks: inspiring small spaces for changing cities. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers– Urban Design and Planning*.

Keywords

climate-pocket parks, urban transformation, green infrastructure, healthy historic environment

Reducing Health Effects from Gas Stoves for Older Adults with Asthma

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Abstract

Asthma has many known indoor environmental triggers, as evidenced by approximately 18 million adults with asthma in the U.S. (CDC, 2014). Asthma aggravation is caused by many known indoor environmental triggers, including nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM), which are emitted when cooking with gas stoves. Home intervention studies have demonstrated that air purifiers with HEPA/carbon filters reduce indoor PM and NO₂ concentrations more effectively than ventilation hoods (Paulin et al, 2014; Maestas et al, 2019; Cox et al, 2018; Rice et al, 2018). However, very little is known about NO₂ and PM concentrations from using gas stoves and the concurrent reduction in both pollutants when using air purifiers. This research answers the following questions: 1) will the use of HEPA/charcoal filtration decrease NO₂ and PM levels from cooking in homes with gas stoves; 2) does reductions in PM and NO₂ improve respiratory symptoms and reduce health care utilization in asthmatic older adults? 3) will adding the typical multi-trigger environmental and educational interventions further improve respiratory symptoms and reduce health care utilization in older adults with asthma? We completed intervention in the homes of 71 low-income older adults (ages 55+) residing in public and private subsidized housing. Assessments were conducted in English, Khmer, and Spanish. Health assessments included collecting data on respiratory health outcomes pre- and post-intervention (questionnaires on symptoms, asthma control, quality of life, medication use, and doctor/ER/hospital visits). Environmental assessments included evaluation of PM and NO levels, asthma trigger activities and exposures pre- and post-intervention (questionnaire, home survey, environmental samples). Results indicate that HEPA/charcoal filtration interventions significantly decrease NO₂ and PM levels emitted from cooking in homes with gas stoves and reduce health care utilization and improve respiratory symptoms and adding the multi-trigger environmental interventions further improve some respiratory health variables.

Keywords

Healthy Housing, Environmental Health, Asthma

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Emerging spaces of grassroots neighbourhood healthcare in the UK

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Abstract

As politicians in the UK attempt to turn their narrative away from ‘austerity’, the aftermath of cuts to public welfare spending will be felt long after this soundbite has dropped from the political vocabulary. The austerity project, at least, a decade long, has brought cuts to individual benefits, to local government, and underfunded the struggling public health sector, leading to visible privation in local neighbourhoods.

Yet and simultaneously, community action has responded/reacted to this absence. One manifestation is new locally run community centres of care that inhabit the spaces of local government neighbourhood services axed through austerity. These everyday spaces – albeit few in numbers – are making positive contributions to mental, physical and social health, often in the most vulnerable areas.

Based on a notion of staying with, and by drawing on previous ethnography and current work with communities in south Wales, this study aims to witness the diversity of this 'hidden' community work that is helping to create healthy and liveable cities from the ground up. By acknowledging the multiple healthcare activities associated with these places –including state funded projects alongside informal and innovative actions – and by mapping the multiple motivations behind them – e.g., out of necessity, through coercion and for care - and why they are important, local definitions of what constitutes a 'healthy' place emerge. Furthermore, understanding how these places and their activities sustain themselves – e.g., short-term funding, volunteerism, asset stewardship - sets out the roles and responsibilities for these new community 'institutions'.

This work seeks to celebrate the work of these communities without judgement yet, by problematising current efforts to support them, turns to policy makers, politicians and government to question what new social contract is being constructed, and what new lines are being drawn between what lies within the scope of government and what lies beyond.

Keywords

Austerity, Community action, Community assets, Community Asset Transfer

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Exploring Care Ecological Landscape for Home-Based Medical Patients and Care Resource Networks: A Spatial Analysis in Taiwan

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Abstract

As Taiwan's elderly population increases, so does the demand for home-based medical and long-term care services. However, there is limited understanding of how individuals' utilization of these home-based services relates to the local care resource networks within their residential areas. The health and care needs of elderly individuals are complex and multifaceted; environmental factors impact individuals, while individual needs, in turn, influence how the environment responds to their care requirements.

This study employs the social ecological model, integrated with concepts from medical geography, to examine whether individuals using home-based medical care reside in areas with adequate

medical and care resources, the utilization rate of these resources, and the availability of surrounding care resources that form a care network. By considering spatial geographical differences, this research aims to preliminarily map the ecological landscape of community care networks for home medical care.

The study utilizes data from Taiwan's National Health Research Institutes' prospective research project (HOLISTIC) and includes a purposive sample of 423 cases in a cross-sectional ecological study. Data were collected from November 2019 to July 2022 using structured questionnaires. Care resource data were gathered from Taiwan's OD Portal open data on long-term care units and were integrated for spatial analysis at the county and city levels.

Research methods include descriptive statistics, spatial autocorrelation and geographically weighted regression(GWR) to investigate the relationship between patients' care status and surrounding care resource networks in different regions. It is anticipated that there will be geographical spatial correlations between patients' quality of life and the availability of neighborhood care resources. The findings aim to illustrate the care landscape shaped by home-based medical care utilization and to provide recommendations for government planning of spatial distribution and service capacity in care facility placement.

Keywords

social ecology, medical geography, home-based medical care, care landscape, spatial analysis

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Urban austerity, real estate and public-common partnerships in post-welfare cities

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Abstract

This contribution proposes to discuss the commoning processes issued by the participatory management of public buildings involving local administrations, associations, social cooperatives, informal groups of citizens and social movements. In the context of permanent urban austerity, public real estate valorisation can be seen as a way of establishing a post-welfare system in response to public services reduction. Indeed, in the years following the economic crisis, calls for projects and public policies emerged promoting the participatory management of disused and underused public buildings. Those calls encourage citizen groups to propose projects that address accessibility and develop activities of public interest. Nevertheless, we propose to look at those participatory managed assets as a “heterogeneous set of networks, sites and actors whose nature can be asymmetrical, uncoordinated and uneven” (DeVerteuil, 2015: 10).

Through ongoing ethnographic research on the cities of Bologna, Turin, Grenoble and Saint-Étienne (ANR-22-CE55-0002 CARE), we aim to contribute to anthropologies of austerity (Powers and Rakopoulos, 2019). We observe how, in some situations, forms of post-welfare services are

produced. These are more or less explicitly oriented to the production of alternative forms of well-being in contemporary cities, questioning the uncared-for existing infrastructures. What kind of social well-being and liveability can those participatory processes implement? What kind of social, political and physical spaces does it produce? What is their relation to public policies and urban transformations? To draw answers to these questions, we will use comparative analysis of local policies, observations of forms of governance, biographical histories of participants and spatial analysis of the spaces.

DeVerteuil, G. (2015). *Resilience in the post-welfare inner city: Voluntary sector geographies in London, Los Angeles and Sydney*. Policy Press.

Powers, T. and Rakopoulos, T. (2019), "The anthropology of austerity: An introduction", *Focaal—Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology*, 83: 1–12.

Keywords

austerity, post-welfare, public asset, commoning

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The Accessibility of Wild swimming spots in the UK

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Abstract

Wild swimming, defined as swimming for pleasure in natural waters, has increased in popularity among UK residents since the emergence of Covid-19, with an estimate of 2.1 million people preferring to swim in open water, e.g. lakes, lochs, rivers and seas (Swim England, 2019). Wild swimming is also associated to better physical and mental wellbeing, through improving immune functioning (Huttunen et al., 2004), reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease (Guthold et al., 2018), and helping to cope with anxiety and depression (Tipton et al, 2017). Nevertheless, there is a question about the degree of inaccessibility of those wild swim locations, and whether there is a potential to maximise their accessibility to the public. Accordingly, this study investigates the degree of accessibility of wild swimming in the UK, using quantitative data of swimming spots provided by two online platforms (mobile apps). This data is thereafter explored in relation to the residential populations of each Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) - a geographical classification used in the UK Census - where each swimming spot is located. Based on the GIS analysis of the datasets, findings suggest that only two percent of the UK population has walking accessibility to the 991 wild swim spots reported in this study, when we assume a walking distance (service area) of 800 metres from those swimming spots. This percentage could be increased with minimal changes in policies and regulations concerned with banning swimming in some urban areas, as presented in the qualitative case study of the Bristol harbour. The research provides useful insight for policy makers, urban planners, local authorities and metro mayors to improve the

provision of urban wild swim locations, especially when considering its physical and mental health benefits.

Keywords

Wild Swimming, Accessibility, Healthy Living, Urban Policies

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Rome and the 15-minute City challenge: toward a more livable and inclusive city?

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Abstract

In contemporary times, and especially since the Covid-19 pandemic, the idea of a healthy and livable city has been synonymous with the concept of the “15-minute city.” This model aims to reduce commuting, lower carbon emissions, and enhance the everyday livability of urban spaces. The pandemic revealed stark inequalities among neighborhoods in modern cities, not only in terms of access to services but, more critically, in the varying spatial quality and access to public spaces between historic areas and modern zones.

Within public policies that promote subsidiarity and proximity - a growing trend across Europe - Rome has seized the opportunity to launch programs and projects that strengthen polycentric development and local identities across its municipality. The current city administration, through the establishment of the ‘Department of Decentralization, Delegated Services, and the 15-Minute City,’ has recognized administrative decentralization as “an essential and central value [...]” embodied in initiatives like the urban regeneration program “15 Districts, 15 Projects for the 15-Minute City.”

This initiative has led to a practical reflection on different ways to create healthy and livable places within the dispersed city, where the redesign of open spaces becomes crucial for accessibility to the services of a proximity-based city.

How does the concept of the 15-minute city adapt to this metropolitan urban context? This paper explores this question by examining the Masterplan developed by U-Space Studio for the Labaro neighborhood, a low-density residential area in Rome’s 15th district. The study focuses on the challenges and strengths of modern city morphologies, highlighting opportunities offered by certain types of open spaces - such as parking lots, which serve as “lost spaces” with a secondary role in the urban structure yet are essential for its functionality - as potential new public spaces for proximity-based living.

Keywords

15-minute city, proximity, public space , parking lots , metropolis

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Food diversity and accessibility enabled urban environments for sustainable food consumption: A case study of Brisbane, Australia

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Abstract

Food overconsumption is being addressed increasingly in the policy agendas of many advanced economies to achieve sustainable consumption. Yet, few studies define and research sustainable food consumption, particularly in understanding socioeconomic and environmental challenges and opportunities in urban environments. This paper evaluates 500 online surveys conducted in Brisbane, Australia, to explore public perceptions of food consumption and the underlying challenges and opportunities. A key finding is the co-existence of over- and under-consumption prevailing over the traditional focus on unhealthy food overconsumption. The challenges of affordability, access to healthy foods, limited retail options, and increasing carbon urban footprints complicate food consumption as a demand issue more conditional to the socio-spatial characteristics of urban environments. Opportunities for sustainable food consumption also arise in high health awareness and willingness to change dietary habits if facilitated by improved urban food provisioning. We argue that food diversity and accessibility-conducive urban environments can help transform food consumption by enabling enhanced access to affordable and nutritious foods, diversified food retail options and variety, and reduced food waste and loss-associated carbon emissions. To do so means improved global equity in food consumption and carbon footprint can optimistically reduce global food demand by 9% and generate better environmental outcomes, positively contributing to the UN's Responsible Consumption (SDG12) and Climate Action (SDG 13) for 2030.

Keywords

food consumption, urban sustainability, healthy food, urban environment

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**Disassembling the 15-Minute City:
The Role of Density and Diversity in Achieving Sustainability**

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Abstract

In the context of exacerbating climate change, cities have been identified as the torchbearers in the effort to combat climate change because of their immense capital resources and their significant

role in anthropogenic global warming. As a result, new urban concepts have emerged, one of which is the 15-minute city model. The 15-minute city seeks to achieve sustainability and liveability by creating neighbourhoods that offer accessibility to essential services within a short walk or bike ride. The concept uses city characteristics such as proximity, density, diversity, and digitisation as essential means to achieve the 15-minute city model. The proximity and digitisation pillars have thoroughly been explored. However, the nature of density and diversity in the 15-minute city is still unclear. This gap in 15-minute city research seems to have caused the development of some barriers in policy implementation in some UK cities such as Bristol, Birmingham and Oxford, aiming to incorporate the 15-minute city in their local plan. Therefore, this research asks a key question: How can density and diversity (pillars of the 15-minute city model) be accounted for to achieve sustainability in terms of local planning policy?

A mixture of qualitative and quantitative data will be required to achieve the objectives. A set of measurable Quality of Life indicators will be developed. To evaluate the correlation between density, diversity and QoL, GIS simulation and regression model will be employed. Scenario analysis will establish a framework for integrating density and diversity into local planning policies. Lastly, a Proximity analysis will be conducted to verify the results. This study will culminate in a framework incorporating density and diversity into local plans, helping achieve sustainability goals.

Keywords

15-minute city , density , diversity , planning policy , quality of life

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Socially Sustainable Urban Spaces After Dark, An approach for an enhanced experience in Stieg Treanter Square.

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Abstract

The author observed a discrepancy in lighting and city beautification measures between affluent and less privileged neighborhoods in Stockholm. After consultations with the local community through a Facebook group and a night walk, Stieg Treanter Square was chosen as a case study, and it was renovated in 2019 as one of the crime prevention measures. Under the assumption that the urban configuration in the square after dark negatively affect users' perception of safety and fail to meet their needs, this research aims to employ social research methods to **evaluate** the application of social sustainability in the urban context through developed social sustainability indicator and to **explore** solutions that can address users' needs during both day and night.

The social research involved input from 52 questionnaire participants, 4 interviewees, 50 workshop participants, 3 municipality workers, and 2 shop owners. The workshop focused on engaging the underrepresented users and showed that teenage girls were the user group most affected by feelings of unsafety. The data was thoroughly analyzed and synthesized with site analysis and literature review to comprehend the current situation and users' needs.

The research revealed that crucial elements for users were either poorly lit or not lit during dark times, while less important elements or pathways were excessively lit, creating sharp contrasts that possibly impaired visibility and contributed to reduced safety. Finally, a set of lighting principles for the square was proposed, including socially focused lighting, which is supplementary lighting that highlights valuable elements to the users. These principles support the vision that lighting in busy urban spaces should promote social sustainability after dark, emphasizing that the urban context matters during the day and night.

This research aspires to contribute with a participatory and inclusive approach that could serve as an instrument for municipal policymakers.

Keywords

user needs, community engagement, social sustainability, urban lighting

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Vienna: Psychopolitical Urbanism

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Abstract

Mental health problems are on the rise. Especially since the Covid-19-pandemic, many people suffer from depression, anxiety, or other mental disorders. Psychiatric care infrastructures like mental health hospitals have to deal with capacity limitations, assisted living is in high demand and out-patient treatment cannot be provided for everyone. Vienna is no exception in this development. In the last years, the number of people on sick leave for mental health reasons rose exponentially while capacities of psychiatric care increased on much lower levels.

The reasons for mental health problems are manifold. Yet many recent philosophical works argue that they are also consequences of neoliberal technologies of power that capitalize on the human psyche. They argue that today people are obliged to be self-active in how they pursue their lives – that they need to optimize their human capital, indulge in the consumption of emotions, or gamify life experiences. Self-activity is understood as pivotal for neoliberal power.

This is bad news for urban design. For many decades now, the laying out of cities sought to make inhabitants take active roles in shaping urban environments. Self-activity was a good thing. In the last years, urban developments in Vienna largely centered on people's participation in planning processes, relied on inhabitants creating their own meaningful relationships with urban spaces or sought to foster unexpected social encounters with others. Therefore, the question arises whether such urban design paradigms actually incite the opposite of what they were set out to do – creating a good life.

This paper seeks to map out the fault lines of urban design which a critical reading of urbanism against psychopolitics opens up in the case of Vienna. It attempts to provide contours of thought

based on which self-activity as engendered by the city may be seen as reinforcing or mitigating mental disorders.

Keywords

Mental health, Neoliberalism, Self-Activity, Urban Design

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The crisis of ageing in hostile political economies: exploring community action amongst older people in South Wales

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Abstract

Ageing populations are considered one of the most acute and pressing challenges today, demanding increasing attention in policy and research. Yet, these challenges have received relatively little attention from critical geographers, who could otherwise provide new and important conceptual and practical insights.

Neoliberalism has largely determined the discourse on ageing, where older people are often understood as a burden on public resources and as economically unproductive, a discourse that has framed older people through a deficit lens. A more critical perspective can challenge these discourses, re-framing the nature of the crisis and the solutions to it.

Critical geographers have been particularly attentive to the role of community action during different crises—such as the COVID pandemic and periods of austerity. The theories and practices of the Diverse Community Economies and the Commons has been particularly attentive to the grassroots social support systems and relations that people develop to meet their needs. Building upon these theoretical framings and their explicit feminist approaches, this research explores the solidarities, social action, and institutional alternatives that are emerging in response to the crisis of ageing in the diverse geographies of South Wales (including urban, peri-urban, and large towns). Through qualitative research with community organisations, networks, and groups in South Wales, this research highlights the valuable role that retired people play in supporting each other and their wider communities. By reframing older people as active and valuable agents in their communities, rather than as unproductive or a burden on public resources, this research can provide new insights into the challenges and solutions to ageing societies as the crisis unfolds.

Keywords

ageing, community action, commons

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Restoring blue & green urban infrastructure for a healthier Dhaka city

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Abstract

Dhaka city is one of the densest cities in the world. Its economy is booming, and the city has gone through immense urban infrastructure development. Like most metropolitan cities around the world, Dhaka has also faced a constant rise in population influx through decades. With development comes a series of problems which need to be addressed, and for Dhaka, policies and development have been focused more on roads, highways, housing -to give the city a modern urban look. Dhaka, being a city in a deltaic plan has had a fluid landscape comprised of wetlands that changed with the seasons. Wetlands and greenery play a key role in the urban health and environmental wealth of a city for good living. This research discusses how the environment of the city - the blue and green infrastructure network of the city, if restored can make the city and better for living. Post the pandemic, it is essential for the health of city dwellers to have greenery, open spaces, parks, and waterbodies to rejuvenate themselves. It is difficult for a dense city like Dhaka to have new infrastructure introduced, and thus restoration of the existing infrastructure is the only way to make the city healthy once again. The eco-system services can be used as a tool to revive and restore the urban green and blue infrastructure by focusing research and betterment of urban governance and the current policies of different private and government stakeholders.

Keywords

urban environment, city health, urban planning, green & blue infrastructure, eco-system management

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Perceived Safety of Cycling to School with Children in Ireland : Insights from Parents

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Abstract

Increasing active travel is an important part of the green transition. Cycling has many benefits, including reductions in carbon emissions, air and noise pollution, and improved physical health. Encouraging children to cycle can lead to a lifelong behaviour, and one way to establish cycling as a routine activity is to cycle to school. However, road safety is a major concern for cyclists of all ages in Ireland. The aim of this study was to identify factors that influence parents' perception of safety when they cycle to school with their children.

We collected data from parents who cycle to school with their children through an online survey and two focus groups. The online survey contained multiple choice and open-ended questions, while the focus groups used a semi-structure conductor. The quantitative survey data was analysed using descriptive statistics and chi² tests, the qualitative survey and focus group data were analysed using thematic analysis.

The survey collected 342 responses (52% female), and the focus groups had 10 participants (70% female). In the survey 43% of respondents indicated that they felt safe while cycling to school always or most of the time. However, 25% of respondents felt rarely or never safe. The thematic analysis of the qualitative data revealed challenges to parents associated with four overarching themes: road infrastructure, conflicts with other road users, coping mechanisms and other components such as gender. Within these themes, major challenges highlighted by parents were ill-adapted or absent bike lanes, violations of traffic regulations and lack of enforcement, and behaviours of drivers. Coping mechanisms included cycling on footpaths, using longer or alternative routes and stopping children from cycling altogether.

Our study shows that while some parents perceive cycling to school as safe, major challenges exist and these impact current and potential future cycling behaviours in Ireland.

Keywords

cycling , safety, schools

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Integrating Small-Scale Fisheries into Urban Climate and Energy Policies: A Pathway to Resilient Coastal Cities

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Abstract

The effects of climate change, such as rising sea levels, extreme weather phenomena, pollution, and environmental degradation, are experienced globally, particularly in metropolitan coastal regions. This has compelled cities to persist in adapting to and mitigating climate change, notably through implementing diverse policies, including sustainable energy initiatives. Nevertheless, the tactics and regulations implemented by the government frequently exclude marginalized communities, including the small-scale fishing community residing in the city's coastal regions. In fact, small-scale fishing communities have a crucial role in sustaining urban food security and preserving the ecological equilibrium of coastal regions. Taking a study case in Indonesia, this study investigates the interplay of urban climate concerns, the vulnerability of small-scale fisheries, and the imperative to integrate these issues into climate adaptation methods. The study emphasizes that these communities are disproportionately impacted by climate change while simultaneously contributing to greenhouse gas emissions through fossil fuel-dependent behaviors,

particularly in their fishing activities. This study used a mixed methods approach, using surveys and interviews with small-scale fisherfolks in coastal cities in Indonesia.

The research findings indicate substantial deficiencies in climate programs that do not cater to what the small-scale fisheries community needs. The absence of access to renewable energy intensifies their vulnerability and restricts their capacity to enhance urban sustainability. Moreover, this research underscores the dual advantages of incorporating small-scale fishing into climate policies: mitigating emissions via sustainable energy implementation and enhancing community resilience to climate effects. Policy recommendations encompass targeted interventions, including subsidized renewable energy technologies, community-led energy initiatives, and participatory urban climate planning to guarantee inclusivity. The study identifies deficiencies in current policies and emphasizes the capacity of small-scale fishing to significantly contribute to developing healthy and sustainable urban coastal ecosystems.

Keywords

urban coastal cities, small-scale fisheries, climate resilience, Indonesia, climate policies

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The Dual Role of User Density in Public Places: Pathways Through Perceived Affordances and Crowding on Willingness to Visit

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Abstract

Urban public spaces are vital for creating healthy and livable cities, offering opportunities for leisure, sociability, and community well-being. However, balancing vibrancy with challenges like overcrowding and overtourism remains a persistent issue. While some places suffer from overtourism, others lack vitality. Despite the advancement in research on crowding and the social benefits of public spaces, the dual role of the presence of other people in shaping these dynamics received limited attention.

This study adopts a theoretical approach to examine how the presence of others influences perceptions of urban public spaces and willingness to visit. Using visual-based methods and mediation analysis, we aimed to empirically test the dual pathways through which user density reduces acceptability of density (i.e., norm-based approach on crowding) and facilitates social learning of the "affordances" - opportunities for activities and experiences provided by a place with a social context. A total of 120 participants will evaluate images of urban parks and squares in Hong Kong with four varying visitor densities. The mixed-experimental design includes two steps: 1) participants assess perceived affordances for one density level of a location (between-subject; avoiding knowledge gain from a prior trial), and 2) participants evaluate density acceptability and willingness to visit across all levels for the same location (within-subject). Brief post-survey interviews will provide qualitative insights into participants' evaluations. Mediation analysis via

structural equation modeling will quantify the pathways through which visitor density impacts willingness to visit.

This research can provide a theoretical explanation on phenomena such as self-congestion and the polarization between overcrowded and underused spaces. It challenges traditional frameworks that focus solely on promoting liveliness or managing "social carrying capacity," instead promoting new approaches to urban design and management. Implications may include leveraging real-time density information or design cues to highlight affordances, fostering healthy, vibrant, and socially sustainable urban environments.

Keywords

Presence of people, Social learning, Crowding, Mediation analysis, Public places

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Local Livability Models as Impact Assessment Tool for Nature-Based Interventions

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Abstract

The concept of livability combines architecture, urban design, and urban planning with social and behavioural sciences (Caves and Wagner 2012, 2018). Since the 1950s, researchers tried to describe design strategies and guidelines by analysing how people use the urban environment and by assessing their needs and expectations (Mirzahosseini and Mohghaddam 2021). Those studies resulted in the growing popularity of livability as a concept for planning in future cities (Ahmed et al. 2019, Moore 2004). Building on existing studies and indexes (Badland et al. 2013, Giap et al. 2014, Mercer 1999, Okulicz-Kozaryn 2013, Pacione 1990), we propose a site-specific approach to measuring livability, related to desired impacts of nature-based interventions on the local population's wellbeing and health (Domaradzka et al. 2022). Within the framework of our international projects, we monitor health-focused urban interventions in several European pilot sites to assess the NBS-related livability change through the multidimensional set of social and urban development indicators. Our theory-driven, but practice-oriented livability model allows for site-specific diagnosis and consider different local needs, expectations, and general challenges. We treat livability as a place-related and anthropocentric concept, concerning the 'here and now' of a specific place and the community of its users. Based on the livability principles available in the literature, we decided to focus on aspects that directly relate to health and wellbeing through green space design, accessibility, available infrastructure, services or functions. Those aspects are grouped into seven categories for which we collect pre and post-intervention data: 1) sense of safety, 2) multifunctionality, 3) contact with nature, 4) comfort of use, 5) walkability, 6) friendliness, and 7) sense of place. Next, we prepare site-specific livability models for each pilot location to analytically grasp the complexity of urban interventions' impact on local residents, and relate it to the quality of green space in their neighbourhood.

Keywords

livability, health, wellbeing, nature-based solutions, impact assessment

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Public Spaces for Collective Wellbeing: Co-Designing Ecological Connectivity for Healthy Urban Environments

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Abstract

Urban areas are a primary threat to delicate **ecological balances**, calling for an urgent need to rethink the way in which we design these environments, their transformation holding the key to develop healthy territories. In this context, public spaces—and consequently their design and planning—are crucial in addressing the wellbeing of all living systems. Concepts such as "One Health" expand the understanding of healthy spaces including human and non-human entities, presenting unprecedented design challenges: from citizens to designers or policy-makers, together with their governance and ecological structures.

Although human societies worldwide are increasingly aware of the impact of these global challenges, pathways to enable them to take an active role in rethinking the design and role of the spaces they inhabit are not always clear. Therefore, dynamic, collaborative, multidisciplinary, and multiscalar approaches to urban landscapes must aim not only to mitigate anthropogenic impacts on ecology but also to position ecology and **co-creation** as active components in shaping resilient, healthy urban environments.

This paper discusses an experimental methodology to embed both nature's and the human collective needs into design, culminating in practical strategies for ecologically connected and co-managed public spaces. Specifically, this methodology detects and amplifies beneficial ecological connections within urban areas, thereby enhancing the ecological performance of the system as a whole, using this then to support the co-design of life-centered, socially-inclusive **resilient public spaces**.

The paper explores work conducted within a research and educational environment, showcasing results from a research-by-design process on Santa Coloma de Gramenet in Barcelona. This body of work contributes to sustainable urban development and social wellbeing through the implementation and actuation of practical evidence based and design methodologies, while also aiming to explore new governance arrangements and decision-making processes, envisioning future cities as **data-driven** platforms for actively implementing solutions to improve the territory's wellbeing.

Keywords

Ecological connectivity, Healthy territories, Resilient public spaces, Co-creation processes , Data driven design

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Youth-Led Placemaking: Co-Designing University Campus Spaces with Students

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Abstract

In the aftermath of COVID-19, UK universities face the challenge of adapting campus spaces to meet the diverse needs of students and staff. Research has long highlighted the importance of physical spaces in enhancing student learning, satisfaction, and experience (Matthews et al., 2011; Strange et al., 2015). Recent discussions stress the need for collaboration between universities and students in co-creating these spaces, fostering ownership, social value, and wellbeing (Lundstrom et al., 2016; Samura, 2018).

This paper presents findings from a research project at a university in Birmingham, UK, conducted with 13 international postgraduate urban planning students. The project focused on reimagining an underutilized green space to design informal learning and recreational areas to enhance student wellbeing. Central to the project was a participatory, peer-research methodology, where students researched their peers, fostering engagement, empowering participants, and promoting community (Lushey et al., 2015).

The study followed a three-phase, mixed-methods approach. First, the project was integrated into a placemaking module within the curriculum, providing mentorship on relevant theories and research methods (Natarajan et al., 2023). In the second phase, a campus event included walking interviews and photo-elicitation activities to capture student experiences. Finally, the data informed a university-wide online survey to explore these findings further (Hagemann et al., 2024).

While focused on campus design, the project's outcomes extend to the wider urban context, offering insights into how youth-led initiatives can contribute to the wellbeing of public spaces. It demonstrates the potential for young people to design and implement spaces that positively impact cities (Shtebunaev et al., 2023).

Keywords

Wellbeing, Interactive methods, Young people, Participation, Active citizens

Maintaining the pipes: Gendered sanitation practices and the notion of 'health' in central Shanghai

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Abstract

Adequate access to sanitation sets a foundation for multiple UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG6 (safe water and sanitation for all), SDG5 (gender equality), SDG10 (reducing inequalities) and SDG11 (sustainable communities). While academic and policy attention have been primarily focusing on the materialised infrastructure transformation, the improvisation, resilience, and negotiations resolve around sanitation remains largely overlooked.

Taking Shanghai as an urban paradigm in the global south, my ethnographic study investigates everyday sanitation infrastructure maintenance and repair in three of Shanghai's century-old communities. Since the early 20th century, central Shanghai was connected by British-developed drainage system to support modern hygiene practices within the International Settlements (governance by the English and French). These politically privileged settlement enclaves are now areas where infrastructural transformation lags behind due to insufficient public funds. I will first push back against the common perception of infrastructure being silent and durable by foregrounding its increasing fragility. Ethnographic observations and interviews then demonstrate durabilities that revolve around sanitation. Women are being affected disproportionately as they have explicit biological and health needs.

My discussion relates infrastructure maintenance and repair to the wider notion of feminist geography. The, sometimes permanent, temporary condition of making do with various forms of sanitation affects especially older women and women of child-bearing age. I argue that these gendered experiences are driving informal actions to maintain, repair, and improve sanitation infrastructure on an everyday basis, and that sanitation is made and practised differently depending on intersecting socio-economic capitals. Consensus of appropriate sanitation is accompanied by and in turn shapes the tacit knowledge of 'health'. Effective interventions to sustainable sanitation transformation therefore would require the incorporation of grounded knowledge in planning, design, and policy making. Participation at the community level is critical to form healthy infrastructure practices.

Keywords

Urban transformation, Sanitation infrastructure, Maintenance and repair, Urban Health, Feminist geography

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Abstract

Growing evidence suggests that access to green spaces benefits mental health, yet teenage girls often face barriers to using these spaces, and their voices remain largely absent from green space design. Understanding adolescent girls' perspectives is crucial for designing spaces that work for them, reducing health inequalities and creating inclusive outdoor environments.

Through workshops with socioeconomically and culturally diverse girls aged 11-18 in Haringey, London, we explored their experiences of, preferences for, and barriers to using green spaces. Researchers and community partners engaged participants in mapping exercises, design activities, and discussions about their ideal green space. Local authority stakeholders were also interviewed to understand implementation contexts, especially amid resource constraints and climate pressures. Data from workshops, interviews and observations were analysed to identify key themes around inclusive design, safety, social spaces and sustainability. Participants' input directly informed recommendations for designing mental health-supporting green spaces.

During the workshops, girls prioritised social spaces that felt safe and welcoming, with seating arrangements supporting group interaction while maintaining privacy. They emphasised the importance of lighting, clear sightlines, and adult presence without surveillance. Cultural and religious considerations affected preferred times and activities. Girls valued opportunities for creative expression and community connection through gardening but highlighted the need for sustained organisational support rather than solely youth-led maintenance. Local authority stakeholders identified funding, maintenance and competing land use demands as key challenges.

Girls contributed valuable insights for designing inclusive green spaces that could support their mental wellbeing. Their perspectives emphasised the importance of addressing systemic barriers to access while creating adaptable spaces that enable positive social interaction and connection with nature. Findings suggest the need for whole-system approaches involving sustained community partnerships rather than isolated interventions.

Keywords

adolescent mental health, co-design, gender inequality, green space, public involvement and engagement in research

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Urban transformation of historical industrial city: heritage conservation and place-making in Sheffield

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Abstract

The urban transformation of historical industrial cities in the UK was greatly promoted during the urban renaissance time. 'Urban renaissance' was a government policy which was enacted following the findings from the Lord Rogers' Urban Task Force report. The urban transformation includes transformation in urban planning, housing, urban design, urban revitalisation and regeneration, etc. Among these aspects, the transformation of physical urban environment is the most obvious, for example, public spaces were built or rebuilt with quality design. These changes happened mostly because of the emphasis on place-making or an application of the place-making theory in design and planning practice. The city of Sheffield, which is well-known for its steel manufacturing industry, possesses an abundance of industrial heritage as well as urban heritage. For example, the Kelham Island Conservation Area is one of UK's first industrial conservation areas to be designed. It locates half a mile north of Sheffield's City Centre and has now transformed from an industrial heartland to a modern neighbourhood. Besides this, the redesigned public spaces around Sheffield city centre exert much influence on improving city's liveability and vibrancy. For example, the 'Gold Route' plan connected seven quality public spaces around Sheffield City Centre, which creates an impressive gateway space for visitors and public spaces for people's social activities. Sheffield has now successfully transformed from 'a steel city' into a city that is vibrant and suitable for living. Such transformation is attributed to the goals that are established in Sheffield's urban planning and conservation strategies and the consistent efforts in the city's place-making and planning practice. This paper aims to study how heritage conservation and place-making help with urban transformation of Sheffield and provide feasible approaches that could sustain such transformation.

Keywords

place-making, urban transformation, urban heritage conservation, public space , planning strategies

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Creative collaborations, the role of cultural organisations and the arts in the wellbeing of People with Refugee Experiences.

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Abstract

This paper examines the role and potential for art and creative activities to support the wellbeing of people with refugee experiences (PRE) in Bristol, UK. It draws on the experience of Arnolfini, a contemporary arts centre in Bristol, as a focal case study. Recognising that PRE individuals can benefit from participation in creative activities, the authors examine the motivations, objectives, and benefits of these programmes, centring on areas of social, civic, and mental health wellbeing. In this way the paper seeks to advance the understanding of arts-refugee collaborations and the role and potential impact of cultural organisations engaging in these critical global challenges.

Keywords

Health, Refugee, Art, Creativity, Cultural organisations

Track 2: Regenerating the city

2

Adaptation of residential spaces in historic old cores of India based on socio-economic factors: A case of Bowbazar, Kolkata

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Abstract

In this research, the adaptation of residential spaces in old historic neighbourhoods based on the living patterns of the residents has been critically analysed. The case of a household residing in a 100-year-old residential building in the core of Kolkata has been considered for this research. The once historically organically developed, now dilapidated old city cores (like Kolkata) are characterized by low temporal modifications and relatively poor living conditions, often aspiring residents to move to newer/ planned parts of the city. However, the house residents selected for the research have opted to stay in the same location since 1919 (105 years from today). The research has been done uniquely by creating a 'respondent-specific event mapping' by interpreting information from the 76-year-old oldest surviving resident of the house and verifying it with the old statutory documents (and photographs) available with the family during the 176-hour-long interview session over 8 months. The data gathered thereafter was used to generate (a) User-time-event mapping, (b) Space utilization-User-Time Event mapping, and (c) Physical Conditions-Time-Event mapping, respectively. In addition to this, temporal changes during special occasions were also considered. This research reveals that in the case of such old buildings, the residents develop an intimate relationship with not only the neighbourhood but the space itself, which in itself is a motivation not to leave the house despite liveability challenges. The aforementioned phenomenon is also connected to the temporal changes related to major life events like marriage/death in the family. The research is significant since it defines the architectural planning of a residential space from a temporal perspective, which itself is dependent on social attributes. In addition, the methodology of this research involving research from a user narrative (perspective) can also serve as an inspiration for interpreting the adaptation of spaces in the old city cores.

Keywords

Historic old neighbourhoods, Kolkata, Space Adaptation, Space Utilization, Temporal

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From the Financial Crisis to the Pandemic and Beyond-A Grounded Analysis of Local Impediments to Sustainable Urban Regeneration in Athens

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Abstract

After more than 10 years of dealing with the repercussions of the global financial and humanitarian crisis, Greece is following a reconstruction process towards economic growth. In 2020, developmental efforts were abruptly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although many saw the emergency as a shock, threatening to critically deteriorate the public-debt ratio (Nikiforos, 2020), the Athenian mayor considered it an opportunity to reintroduce the city to the “global competition for investments, tourism and talent”, through design-led urban regeneration (LSE, 2021, 1:02’35”-1:14’42”). Nevertheless, some of the most ambitious projects have been considered unsuccessful by almost 90% of the population (Lialios, 2020).

To understand which factors prevent sustainable growth and internal confidence through design-led urban regeneration, the research is theoretically drawing on scholars like Degen (2017) and Hubbard (1996). According to them, global trends and strategies, like the urban renewal efforts, can be obstructed by temporal and experiential dynamics related to the various localities, their special characteristics and the interplay of culture and capital. To understand the (post-)crisis Athenian particularities, the research methodologically used grounded theory, conducting more than 60 semi-structured interviews with experts, residents, shop owners and employees, planning bodies and the Municipality of Athens. The participants revealed several elements which are thought to hinder the successful implementation and public acceptance of urban design projects, ranging from deep political contestations related to the years of the crises to mistrust in the institutions and the decision-making processes. The research discusses possible policy-related steps towards more successful and sustainable urban regeneration.

Keywords

Urban regeneration, Public Space, Post-austerity, Post-pandemic, Urban Design

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Urban regeneration at the crossroad? (I)

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Abstract

The reflection on integrated urban regeneration in Europe has taken a lot of room over the last decades. This policy, set up in the late 1980s, contributed much to addressing major problems in European cities and opened paths that modernized governance styles and statutory frameworks to deal with urban obsolescence. At present, however, urban regeneration, understood as a public policy, seems to be losing relevance in political discourses. Rather a “degressive evolution of the concept” towards “urban renewal” focused on physical renewal in which the private sector plays an important role seems to be observable. This happens in a time when the many challenges we face are evident in cities, ranging from positive energy districts, green urbanism, shortage of housing to an endless reinterpretation of the arrival city (migration). This leads us to suggest that putting into place policies and instruments for urban regeneration is as relevant and necessary as in the past. This session aims to open a space for this reflection around these topics:

- Theoretical reflection on the role and meaning of urban regeneration in the present period. Is urban regeneration an evolving concept?
- Which urban regeneration policies and instruments are necessary to face current EU/global/national/urban challenges?
- Which is the role of the different government levels from an evolutionary perspective?
- Innovation in urban regeneration
- Role of local communities and private actors in urban regeneration
- Main trends in urban regeneration. Can we identify mainstreaming elements that constitute the base for an urban regeneration taxonomy? Or do we recognize a diversity of practices and approaches?

This session is linked to the EURA working group on Urban Regeneration and proposed in synergy with the action of the Jean Monnet Chair RegenEU (UPM) and the Department of European Planning Cultures (TU Dortmund).

Keywords

urban regeneration, urban transformation, national urban policies

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Welcome to the night: Nighttime amenities, travel to consume, and urban economic spillover

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of nighttime economic stimulation on travel behavior and business operations within a consumer city, focusing on three primary research questions: 1) How does the nighttime economy reshape the frequency, timing, and radius of travel for consumption? 2) What is the persistence of nighttime vitality in terms of business operation and agglomeration?

3) Can advancements in safety technology enhance nighttime economies, spill over into urban spaces, and stimulate the local economy?

To address these questions, we exploit an exogenous shock from the establishment of night markets and utilize ride-hailing data in Chongqing, China. We employ a Difference-in-Difference (DiD) methodology and a Bartik-like instrumental variable (IV), leveraging the establishment of six night markets within downtown Chongqing from 2015 to 2016. Our high-frequency, spatially disaggregated data on 0.37 million commuting and consumption-related trips provide insights into the agglomeration forces arising from nighttime economies. Further incorporating business records of 0.45 million merchants from 2015 to 2017, we capture the persistent impact on local businesses to meet the shifts in household consumption patterns. Additionally, we utilize the unanticipated safety technological improvement on the ride-hailing platform in June 2016 to investigate the role of safety in nighttime consumption travels.

Our findings reveal that night markets immediately attract more consumer visits, evidenced by increased frequency, flexibility, and travel radius associated with nighttime consumption. These shifts are sustained over time, prompting businesses to adapt by reducing prices, enhancing service quality, and extending operating hours. The influx of new businesses alters market composition, including merchant density, diversity, and turnover rates. Improvements in ride-hailing safety technology further motivate nighttime travel-to-consume activities. Night markets also generate externalities by restructuring neighborhood businesses, encouraging trip-chaining, and inducing traffic congestion. Collectively, night markets drive local economic growth by bolstering consumption, increasing employment opportunities, and boosting tourism.

Keywords

Nighttime economy, travel behavior, consumption amenity

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Heritage-led Urban Regeneration through Community Narratives of Everyday Places

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Abstract

Nowadays, urban regeneration strategies increasingly recognise the importance of community participation at all stages of the process. However, this approach has received several criticisms. First, community participation often occurs within a profit-oriented framework, in which community involvement is used primarily to establish legitimacy. Secondly, various community groups may have different perceptions of a place, and planners may have difficulty integrating these distinct perspectives. Often, this issue is more apparent in everyday, local-scale places that lack adequate planning resources and are underexplored by research frameworks but are integral

to the built environment. To address these challenges, this research adopts a heritage-led regeneration approach as a place-based solution. Heritage-led regeneration involves surfacing the historical and socio-cultural layers of a place to enhance cities, engage communities, and respond to the changing needs of locals. Heritage in everyday areas reflects shared community values, histories, and long-standing collective practices in place-making and, therefore, can operate as an avenue for addressing participatory regeneration conflicts.

This research examines Loughborough as a case study to discuss the potential of heritage-led regeneration strategies that are based on community narratives of local places. The study promotes heritage not only as a physical asset but also as an everyday practice embedded in communities' lives. Using literature on different heritage types and people-place theories, the research develops a conceptual framework of perceptions formed through interactions with heritage. Semi-structured and thematic analysis interviews are conducted with residents to determine which people-place criteria resonated with them most when discussing heritage assets in the town. The findings reveal two key insights: How communities perceive heritage in their everyday environments often differs from formal definitions, which can result in the underperformance of heritage-led regeneration efforts. Additionally, the research illustrates how urban heritage can be used to mitigate conflicts in participatory regeneration and enhance urban socio-cultural capital.

Keywords

Heritage-led Urban Regeneration, Urban Heritage, Everyday Places, Community Participation

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Struggling against increasing discontent: A critical evaluation of regeneration policies

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Abstract

Abstract

This paper aims to answer the question: "To what extent have regeneration policies introduced in recent years addressed the increasing discontent in communities?" To achieve this, it critically evaluates contemporary policies and practices designed to improve the economic, social, and spatial conditions of places that feel left behind, neglected, or ignored.

The review of recent policies shows that although efforts have been made to address these grievances, they often fall short of addressing the complex and interconnected drivers of discontent. Furthermore, they fail to enhance the affected communities' capacities to face future challenges. This paper argues that many regeneration policies, particularly those targeting urban, regional, and rural areas, are constrained by the limitations of previous approaches, and in some

cases, even exacerbate existing issues. Rather than offering transformative solutions, these policies frequently remain superficial, failing to tackle the deeper sources of discontent.

To create meaningful and sustainable change, the paper advocates for a fundamental shift in both the content of regeneration policies and the policymaking process itself. It emphasizes the need for strategies prioritising proximity politics (local engagement), transparency, and equitable governance.

Keywords

discontent, regeneration , left-behind, proximity politics

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Towards a Microdistrict Renaissance: An Alternative Approach to Urban Revitalization in Central & Eastern Europe

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Abstract

Microdistricts, the large-scale residential areas built across the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War, continue to remain a defining feature of urban landscapes in post-socialist countries. Designed to provide affordable housing and support social equality and cohesion, these developments — ranging from the Soviet brezhnevka to the Czechoslovak panelák and beyond — represented the pinnacle of urban planning under state socialism. However, the challenges these microdistricts face today vary significantly by country, complicating efforts for their revival in the 21st century. This paper provides a comparative analysis of the microdistrict and prospects for their regeneration across Central & Eastern Europe (CEE), focusing on the unique socio-political and economic obstacles facing individual countries. In Bulgaria and Romania, high levels of corruption have undermined urban redevelopment efforts, with public funds often being misallocated or siphoned off to various actors, impeding meaningful infrastructure upgrades. These issues are then exacerbated by both inefficient governance and widespread political apathy, thus limiting the potential for large-scale renovation projects. In contrast, East Germany's Plattenbauten face a different set of challenges. After being absorbed into West Germany, intensified liquidation of industry and the undertaking of major neoliberal reforms occurred, both of which hindered any effort towards maintenance and renewal that was not explicitly spearheaded by the private sector. Despite these country-specific challenges, the concept of the microdistrict aligns well with contemporary New Urbanist frameworks, such as the 15-minute city model, which emphasizes pedestrianization, mixed-use spaces, and highly localized services, all themes that are core characteristics of the microdistrict as well. This paper argues that microdistricts can be revitalized to meet goals of urban sustainability in the 21st century, while simultaneously addressing spatial inequalities from city to city across the former Eastern Bloc.

Keywords

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The green gap: Theorising uneven development in the sustainable city

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Abstract

Across the Global North, green-sustainable-resilient development has become a new planning orthodoxy. With investments in low-carbon transit systems, brownfield regeneration, and densification, cities strive to create green growth and remain competitive in the fierce international competition over public image, capital investments, tourists, and well-off residents. However, sustainability investments are rarely equally distributed.

In this paper, we combine insights from Tampere (Finland) and Edinburgh (Scotland) to revisit Neil Smith's influential rent gap theory in relation to the uneven development of sustainable urbanism. We show that, in both contexts, sustainability gives state subsidised urban development a moral legitimacy without doubt. Greenness, in this sense, functions as a high-level justification for city boosterism and speculative development itself, where the urban growth machine can continue unabated. In areas reframed as sustainable, land values increase significantly. This is especially clear where state investment in eco-friendly transport infrastructure and brownfield regeneration opens up land for potentially profitable development.

Importantly, sustainability is uneven in two key ways: first, some neighbourhoods are (re)developed sustainably, and others are not. Second, the relation between parts of the city is therefore changed, and the symbolic, cultural, and economic gap between neighbourhoods is heightened. Sustainable urbanism is thus crucial for reputational symbolic hierarchy and the connection to land and real estate values. As such, we argue that green gaps—the difference between an urban present declared unsustainable and an urban future framed as sustainable—must be thought of in relation to the rent gap as a significant factor shaping the uneven development of the sustainable city.

Keywords

Rent gap, Sustainability, Green gap, Urban development

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Does urban redevelopment decrease housing affordability for directly displaced households?

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Abstract

In this paper I explore the impact of redevelopment-induced displacement on housing affordability and household economic well-being, focusing on urban redevelopment projects in Switzerland. Research in the U.S. has shown that forced displacement and evictions lead to lower income and housing stability, as households experience reduced earnings following an eviction. Yet, the cost of housing in relation to households' earnings has been underexplored in these studies. For example, households may pay more for housing due to increased rent prices which decreases housing affordability and leads to increased economic hardship. Research on housing affordability and rent burden (i.e. households pay more than 30% of their incomes on rent) has shown that the number of cost burdened households has been increasing over the past years and that those affected make significant cutbacks on essential goods, work longer hours, or remain in unaffordable housing because they cannot afford to move. I bring together the two strains of literature and explore whether displaced households pay more for housing by asking: Does forced displacement decrease housing affordability? And finally, how do displaced households adapt to increased rent-burden? To answer these questions, I study forced displacement due to urban redevelopment projects in urban areas in Switzerland, where about 60% of all residents rent their apartments. Rent regulations do not allow for rent increases in existing tenancies but in new tenancies landlords are allowed to set rents to neighborhood-level rents which leads to a gap between the average rent in existing tenancies and market-rate rents. This situation makes Switzerland an important case to study how renters deal with housing costs in case of a forced relocation. Therefore, the paper contributes to understanding the complex economic challenges displaced households face and provides implications for housing and urban redevelopment policies aimed at minimizing the negative effects of displacement.

Keywords

Urban redevelopment, Displacement, Housing affordability, Rent burden, Gentrification

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Urban rehabilitation and social innovation in Lisbon

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Abstract

This study seeks to explore the interconnections between three central themes – urban rehabilitation, social innovation and new workspaces – through an interdisciplinary approach to Lisbon (municipality).

The study suggests that the public sector could play a significant role in achieving sustained positive outcomes in these areas. The research comprises an examination of relevant policies,

governance structures, and urban planning documents, in addition to conducting spatial analysis and observations, spatial analysis of open-source data and interviews with stakeholders.

The findings appear to substantiate the primary research objective, suggesting that a systematic public intervention, aligned with citywide visions of local plans and involving robust community-led connections in a participatory and collaborative approach, may facilitate the processes of urban rehabilitation and social innovation, mainly through the creation and development of new workspaces.

The study is available notably in Morgado, S. (2021). Urban Rehabilitation, Social Innovation, and New Working Spaces in Lisbon. *Sustainability*, 13(21). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132111925>)

Keywords

urban rehabilitation, social innovation, Lisbon

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War-forged Cities and Vulnerable Communities: (non)sustainability of transformed everyday practices (cases of de-occupied cities in Ukraine)

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Abstract

The study focuses on the impact of war on urban space and the well-being of communities in Ukraine. Drawing on the cases of Kherson and Izium, it explores the scale of destruction, human losses and distortion of the demographic structure caused by Russian aggression.

The central theme is the transformation of everyday practices and the appearance of a "new stability" - adaptation to extreme conditions that would be considered extreme instability in peacetime. The research examines the changes in social needs caused by changes in the gender and age structure and the priority of security, as well as the possibility of meeting them in conditions of limited resources.

Particular attention is paid to the growth of local activism motivated by altruistic practices and the transformation of public spaces - the transition to new ways of living and existence in the city without traditional urban advantages. The authors analyze the simplicity of the structure of personal and social needs and practices, which leads to the feeling of "Groundhog Day" (daily repetition of the previous day) for residents of cities under constant shelling (with the formation of personal fatalism?)

The study aims to conceptualize urban change and the challenges of post-war recovery, suggesting new approaches to postconflict urban policy. By using a combination of qualitative (interviews,

observations) and quantitative (statistical analysis, spatial analysis) methods, it seeks to contribute to understanding the long-term effects of the war on Ukrainian cities and to developing effective strategies for their recovery. The findings of the study will be useful for urban planners, policy makers, and humanitarian organizations working on Ukraine's recovery.

Keywords

urban space , community vulnerability, local activism, local resilience, postconflict urban policy

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Urban Regeneration, Heritage, and Residential Mobility in Shanghai's Longtang Neighborhoods

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Abstract

Urban Regeneration, Heritage, and Residential Mobility in Shanghai's Longtang Neighborhoods

Since the start of China's "Transformation Era" in 1978 —known as the "Chinese Miracle" for its rapid economic growth and urbanization— Shanghai has experienced profound shifts in population dynamics, urban form, and socio-economic structure. As the city has grown from its historical roots as a treaty port in 1834 to a global economic hub, contemporary regeneration policies increasingly emphasize balancing growth with cultural preservation (Shanghai Master Plan 2017–2035). However, the case of Shanghai's historic Longtang, which are dense, lane-style neighborhoods integral to the city's social fabric, illustrates the tension between development and the preservation of socio-spatial identity.

This study draws on 30 interviews with long term local residents, exploring their experience of regeneration and neighbourhood change. Specifically, it highlights how the relentless focus on urban regeneration, while fostering economic vibrancy, can also disrupt traditional communities and the social cohesion inherent to these areas. The paper argues that Shanghai's regeneration strategies, while economically driven, frequently overlook the socio-spatial needs of heritage neighborhoods, leading to often unintended consequences that hinder inclusive urban growth and deepen inequalities.

By focusing on the Longtang as a case study, this research stresses the importance of adopting place-based urban policies that consider both the socio-economic and cultural dimensions of regeneration. It suggests that Shanghai's policies could benefit from a more balanced framework that promotes sustainable development while preserving neighbourhood identity and addressing social disadvantage. Ultimately, this work contributes to broader debates on urban regeneration, advocating for policies that respect and sustain Shanghai's distinctive cultural landscapes within

China's rapidly evolving urban system, while offering insights that may inform regeneration efforts in other culturally significant urban spaces worldwide.

Keywords

Shanghai, residential mobility, neighbourhood

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Regenerating city under urban austerity: the real estate asset as a potential device to design a post-welfare cities

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Abstract

In the context of austerity urbanism (Peck, 2012), from the end of the last century and in many European cities, the disposal of public real estate has been considered a 'standard practice' to reduce local public debt. In recent years, with the consolidation of the idea that austerity is a permanent and omnipresent condition, the management of public real estate has become a way of setting up valorization processes involving local administrations, associations, social cooperatives, informal groups and social movements.

Indeed, in the years following the economic crisis, calls for projects and public policies have emerged to encourage the participative management of disused and underused public buildings, thereby encouraging a wide range of actors to develop projects that address accessibility and activities of public interest. Through ongoing ethnographic research in the cities of Bologna, Turin, Grenoble and Saint-Étienne (ANR-22-CE55-0002 CARE), we observe how these processes, although different in terms of funding, implementation methods and participatory devices, highlight the construction of a highly territorialized bottom-up social system (Mendes, 2013).

Through this research, we therefore question about the absence of a strategic spatial dimension (architectural and urban) in these municipal programs, which suggests a real difficulty in developing a coherent plan on a city scale. On this basis, the aim of the contribution is to explore the link between these processes and their ability to design a regeneration project on an urban scale. The aim is therefore to study whether and how this 'hidden' bottom-up welfare system shapes the image of a livable, collaborative and inclusive contemporary city.

Keywords

Austerity urbanism, Public real estate, Bottom up welfare, Urban planning strategy

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Measuring the health and wellbeing outcomes of housing regeneration initiatives: A comparative study of selected neighbourhoods in Plymouth, UK

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Abstract

Abstract for proposed paper for Track 2: Regenerating the City

Measuring the health and wellbeing outcomes of housing regeneration initiatives: A comparative study of selected neighbourhoods in Plymouth, UK

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Abstract

Despite substantial investment in housing-led area-based regeneration schemes in the UK over the last thirty years, there is a sparse, mixed and inconsistent evidence base about the long-term health and wellbeing impact on affected communities. As a result, policy decisions and political judgements about future regeneration projects are often based on perceptions rather than on evidence. Using case studies of regeneration projects in Plymouth (Devonport and North Prospect), the aim of this paper is to address this evidence gap through the utilisation and integration of existing data sources held within Plymouth City Council's Public Health Department to better evaluate and inform future area-based housing regeneration. While demonstrating some beneficial health outcomes, these data were not especially strong or universally positive over the 20-year timeframe of this research project. Indeed, the methodological issues and limitations of undertaking such evaluations were emphasised, which offered some critical reflections about post-regeneration impact studies.

Key words: Health outcomes; housing regeneration; post-regeneration impact studies.

Keywords

Health outcomes, housing regeneration, post-regeneration impact studies

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“Shrinking Smart”: a new planning concept for managing urban shrinkage and population decline

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Abstract

Urban shrinkage and urban regeneration are strongly tied, especially in European context. Urban shrinkage scholarship has long investigated the concept of smart decline as a possible way to address the challenges, faced by cities that lose population and deal with its associated effects. The presentation outlines the main findings from a comparative research between the cases of Leipzig, Bilbao and the province of Zeeland, tracing the way that the three examples handled different dimensions of urban shrinkage and regional population decline. By analyzing urban planning and (regional) policy making through a policy benchmarking framework, the research defines the dimensions of a new planning concept under the label of “Shrinking Smart” which provides applicable instruments and scenarios for cities (and regions) experiencing shrinkage. By critically examining the planning approaches from the three examples (between 2000 and 2015), the research defines the new planning concept of “Shrinking Smart” with three variants of applicability – the Citadel, the Aspiring Phoenix and the Lifeboat. The proposed approaches to urban shrinkage and population decline provide specific recommendations to planners and policy makers in shrinking cities and regions, spanning economic and demographic development, as well as climate change adaptation and resilience considerations while at the same time integrating the notions of managing decline and quality of life. The planning concept of “Shrinking Smart” provides applicable solutions for cities (and regions) that deal with the consequences of post-industrial development as well as similar long-term expected changes, such as the transition to more sustainable forms of production. By integrating a strong social dimension, the planning concept also focuses on managing the consequences of urban shrinkage on the remaining population in cities, providing specific approaches to planning and policy making that also address social issues and quality of life, providing a link to the framework of inclusive prosperity.

Keywords

urban shrinkage, planning concept, Shrinking Smart

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Regeneration or Gentrification? A critical examination of the Corridor Development Project in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Urban development in Ethiopia is highly politicized, particularly in Addis Ababa, the capital city undergoing a significant “regeneration” through the corridor development project. This expansive and expensive initiative spans 132 kilometers across eight corridors and encompasses 2,817

hectares, aiming to revitalize a city that advocates describe as “ailing” and “messy.” The project aspires to enhance infrastructure, connectivity, and the overall quality of life for residents. Key improvements include expanded roadways, pedestrian pathways, integrated drainage systems, and the restoration of historical sites. In addition, plans entail the construction of over 4,000 residential units for those requiring relocation. While the project promises numerous advantages—such as reduced traffic congestion, improved public transit, increased green spaces, and the ambition to make the capital “the Dubai of East Africa”—it has also sparked significant concerns regarding potential “gentrification.” Critics argue that the emphasis may be disproportionately placed on superficial changes that merely “mask poverty” rather than addressing the underlying socioeconomic challenges. The rapid development and relocation of residents from affected areas could alter the demographic and ethnic landscape, as well as the character of neighborhoods. The city administration maintains that the initiative is designed for inclusive development and sees critics of the project as naysayers. This paper aims to explore the diverse viewpoints and perspectives surrounding the extensive corridor development project based on interviews with various stakeholders, observations, and document analysis, highlighting both its potential and pitfalls while emphasizing the importance of equitable development for every resident.

Keywords

Urban Renewal, Development, Livability, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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State-Led Approaches to Urban Regeneration: A Comparative Study of Built Heritage Conservation in Kenya and England

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Abstract

State-Led Approaches to Urban Regeneration: A Comparative Study of Built Heritage Conservation in Kenya and England

Governments around the world use urban regeneration projects to boost economies and address social and spatial differences, especially in cities shaped by economic and social changes from the mid-20th century. This study looks at how state-led approaches to urban regeneration in terms of built heritage conservation differ between Kenya and England.

Both countries have linked built heritage conservation with urban goals like sustainability, economic growth, and social inclusion, though the extent of government involvement and the focus on heritage as a regeneration tool differ, initiatives like the UK’s Levelling Up program which aimed at revitalising towns and cities through heritage assets, and the Nairobi Rivers Commission in Kenya demonstrate these approaches in action. This paper examines case studies from Nairobi, Kenya, and Bristol, England, investigating how government-led regeneration efforts interact with the cultural value of heritage buildings, influence conservation strategies and affect community

engagement. By comparing decision-making processes in these separate settings, the study identifies factors affecting the success and limitations of state-led approaches. This analysis is based on policy documents and is further supported by interviews with urban planning professionals.

The analysis also draws distinctions between England's national top-down policies and Kenya's more locally adapted, community-driven efforts. This research sheds light on how these approaches affect urban inequality and suggests ways to better integrate heritage into urban renewal plans, offering practical advice for policymakers and urban planners interested in matching economic development with the protection of heritage in both developed and developing countries.

Keywords

Heritage, Regeneration, Policymakers, England, Kenya

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When walls speak. An analysis of the graffiti slogans of Porta Palazzo in Turin (Italy).

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Abstract

Drawing on post-foundational theory and political philosophy (Rancière, 1999; Crouch, 2004), many urban scholars question how cities are increasingly denoted by post-political 'condition'. This work contributes to the ongoing discourse in urban studies on the 'post-political city' (among others: Swyngedouw, 2009; Wilson and Swyngedouw, 2014; Di Felicianantonio and O'Callaghan, 2020; Novák, 2021; Da Schio and van Heur, 2022). The scientific debate so far has underscored that the 'post-political' seems to be an integral feature of modern urban life. Yet, empirical analysis reveals a more nuanced landscape, where acts of dissent within urban spaces can challenge the idea of a 'post-political city' by default. Among the various forms of urban dissent, graffiti slogans offer a unique perspective when examined through the lens of post-political theory.

To support this argument, I analyze the case of Porta Palazzo in Turin (Italy), an urban area experiencing profound social and spatial transformation. Over two years of fieldwork were followed by careful engagement with some graffiti creators and other local stakeholders. The graffiti slogans in Porta Palazzo convey resistance to what is perceived as a consensus-driven urban transformation project, which has accelerated the neighbourhood's gentrification and touristification in recent years. Drawing on Rancière's theories, the relationship between 'politics' and 'police order' plays out dynamically on Porta Palazzo's walls as graffiti slogans against the gentrification process are created, altered, and removed.

Keywords

graffiti, gentrification, dissent, post-political city

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Regeneration of War-Damaged Ukrainian Cities. Goals, Possibilities, Approaches

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Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to analyze the current planning practice in Ukraine against the background of the comparison of theoretical principles of spatial planning and planning approaches, to compare it with the requirements of planning in the European Union, and to propose systemic changes in Ukrainian planning practice so that the post-war urban renewal takes place in accordance with EU principles and rules. Ukrainian cities are undergoing unprecedented damage due to the Russian invasion and in many places' complete destruction of the building stock. Although the end of the war and Ukrainian liberation are not yet in sight, it is already time for Ukrainian cities to begin preparing for their reconstruction. And this renewal should be based not on the old Soviet planning approaches and practices, which are unfortunately still ingrained in Ukrainian planning, but on the modern European concept of urban planning. However, for this to happen, it is necessary to immediately start preparing Ukrainian planners, city administrations, and other stakeholders for the requirements, methods, and standards that urban planning, renewal, and development in the European context brings. The paper deals with the issue of knowledge base transfer from planning, urban renewal, and development to Ukraine, preparation of pilot projects, and their evaluation. The sources of data for the processing of the topic and evaluation of how to approach knowledge transfer are both the theoretical planning bases applied in the EU and the practical results of the project for Ukrainian universities from 2024 and the pilot case studies that emerged from them. Methodologically, the article is based on the analysis of pilot case studies compared to theoretical approaches to planning contemporary European cities.

Keywords

city , regeneration, Ukraine, post-war

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Urban regeneration at the crossroads? (II)

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Abstract

The reflection on integrated urban regeneration in Europe has taken a lot of room over the last decades. This policy, set up in the late 1980s, contributed much to addressing major problems in European cities and opened paths that modernized governance styles and statutory frameworks to deal with urban obsolescence. At present, however, urban regeneration, understood as a public policy, seems to be losing relevance in political discourses. Rather a “degressive evolution of the concept” towards “urban renewal” focused on physical renewal in which the private sector plays an important role seems to be observable. This happens in a time when the many challenges we face are evident in cities, ranging from positive energy districts, green urbanism, shortage of housing to an endless reinterpretation of the arrival city (migration). This leads us to suggest that putting into place policies and instruments for urban regeneration is as relevant and necessary as in the past. This session aims to open a space for this reflection around these topics:

- Theoretical reflection on the role and meaning of urban regeneration in the present period. Is urban regeneration an evolving concept?
- Which urban regeneration policies and instruments are necessary to face current EU/global/national/urban challenges?
- Which is the role of the different government levels from an evolutionary perspective?
- Innovation in urban regeneration
- Role of local communities and private actors in urban regeneration
- Main trends in urban regeneration. Can we identify mainstreaming elements that constitute the base for an urban regeneration taxonomy? Or do we recognize a diversity of practices and approaches?

This session is linked to the EURA working group on Urban Regeneration and proposed in synergy with the action of the Jean Monnet Chair RegenEU (UPM) and the Department of European Planning Cultures (TU Dortmund).

Keywords

Urban Regeneration, Urban Transformation, National Urban Policies

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Crema 3C: knowledge and territorial identity for the re-regeneration of abandoned places. The case study of the Ex-Olivetti.

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Abstract

The term "regeneration" combines the morpheme "re" with the verb "to generate," suggesting an iterative process over time. In recent years, urban planning refers to interventions aimed at revitalizing degraded, abandoned, or undervalued areas. This strategy seeks to rebuild spaces for the community, redistribute opportunities, and reuse local resources, improving quality of life and urban prosperity. Urban regeneration, however, requires a comprehensive transformation that must address a multiplicity of urban issues, not only physical aspects but also the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of the area.

The experience of recovering the Ex-Olivetti building in Crema exemplifies how regeneration requires this dual condition to trigger effective urban transformation. The building, once the site of typewriter production, has been reused multiple times over the years, first as a university, then as an educational institute, before ultimately being abandoned again. These early regeneration efforts focused solely on the building itself, without defining a comprehensive strategy that also addressed the surrounding context; such a focused approach thus prevented the initiation of a deep and lasting regeneration of the area, leading to subsequent abandonment.

Today, the project "Rigenerando Crema 3C: Connection, Knowledge, Community," in collaboration with the Municipality of Crema, aims to promote a holistic regeneration of the entire Ex-Olivetti area. The initiative aims to create an urban knowledge path designed to connect the area to the city's historical center, establishing a new urban focal point. Moreover, urban catalysts along this path allow the community to approach and reconnect with a previously identity-defining element. At the end, this experience highlights that knowledge, connection, and community are the three fundamental pillars upon which to base a lasting and meaningful urban regeneration intervention capable of triggering a true transformation in the urban landscape.

Keywords

iterative process, urban re-regeneration, territorial identity, connection, community

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Performing Arts as a Tool for Promoting Inclusive Growth in Urban Spaces: A Study of India and Europe

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Abstract

Inclusive growth in urban spaces refers to fostering environments where economic, cultural, and social opportunities are equitably accessible to all residents, regardless of their socio-economic, cultural, or demographic background. As cities worldwide grapple with the challenges of rapid urbanization, environmental degradation, and social inequality, performing arts emerge as a dynamic medium to foster cultural vitality, inclusivity, and sustainability. They have long been recognised as a powerful medium for cultural expression, education, and social evolution. Through accessibility, engagement, and community-building, performing arts can bridge divides, promote equity, and empower communities. This study explores the intersection of the Cultural Ecosystem Services and Urban Sustainability Model (CEUSM) as a theoretical framework, Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and inclusive growth in urban spaces emphasising the transformative role of performing arts initiatives in urban India and Europe. From the data analysis of arts-based NGOs, city government reports and cultural festival reviews, the contribution of performing arts to social inclusion, cultural preservation and economic opportunities for marginalised groups is evident. This study concludes that integrating performing arts into urban planning can transform cities into hubs of inclusive growth, emphasising the need for policies that prioritise arts-based community engagement. The insights from India and Europe will provide valuable frameworks for leveraging performing arts as a tool for sustainable and inclusive urban development globally.

Keywords

Sustainable cities, Urban Spaces, Inclusive Growth, Performing Arts , CEUSM

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Public Open Spaces in Residential Neighbourhoods – state and perspectives for regeneration as tool for liveability improvement: study of Leskovac, Serbia

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Abstract

Public Open Spaces (POS) in residential neighbourhoods have an important role in the network of open spaces in cities and represent key points for residents' everyday activities. The City of Leskovac (Serbia) was the textile industry centre in the Socialist period, during which several housing estates were built in the city. Later in the post-socialist period - transition period, informal settlements were built, and during the last 10 years, there have been several new developments in the city. Large housing estates (LHEs) that were built during the Socialist period are characterised by huge surfaces of POS with very generous green areas. Unfortunately, over the years these areas were left behind and in the case of some settlements were completely devastated. Because of unresolved ownership, there were no interventions or regeneration projects to improve the POS in these LHEs. In the case of the estates built later, demand for parking lots influenced the loss of green areas – especially within the estates in the city centre. Regarding new construction, open spaces are mainly in private ownership, they are not in good condition and their main purpose is parking. Since POS represent an important element in the city, they are part of city green

infrastructure and play a significant role in improving overall life quality, this paper discusses current state and different typologies of POS in the LHEs in the city of Leskovac. POS in analysed LHEs are neglected and marginalized, their physical structure is degraded and they have negative impact on residents well-being. Based on that, this paper aims to investigate opportunities and challenges for regeneration of POS in the different neighbourhoods in Leskovac as a tool for improving life quality. By improving the current state of POS, it is possible to increase liveability and contribute to creation of healthy and sustainable cities.

This research was supported by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia, #GRANT No. 7572, Reclaiming Public Open in Residential Areas: Shifting Planning Paradigms and Design Perspectives for a Resilient Urban Future—RePOS

Keywords

Public Open Spaces, Regeneration, Liveability, Large Housing Estates, Healthy and sustainable cities

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Resisting neo-liberalism? State-orchestrated urban regeneration funding programmes in Germany

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Abstract

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed a policy shift in many industrialized Western countries, marked by wide-ranging neo-liberal reforms that began in the UK and the USA. Neoliberalism generally entails an increasing role for the private sector and a reduction in state intervention, including social welfare programs. Urban regeneration has been one of the areas strongly impacted by globalization and neo-liberalism. At the national level, several European countries previously implemented explicit urban regeneration programmes but have since abolished them for various reasons or moved towards more ad hoc and experimental models.

However, the influence of neo-liberal approaches varies depending on local contexts, with a distinction between neo-liberal theory and place-specific practices of neo-liberalization. Although politically Germany is politically a federal country, where major decisions are typically left to individual municipalities, the federal state has played a leading role in defining and implementing nationwide Urban Regeneration Funding Programmes (URFP) over the past five decades.

Through examining URFP, we argue that these programs contribute to long-term continuity in urban development goals despite political dynamics, strengthen the focus on social welfare, and promote solidarity by addressing spatial disparities among federal states. In this process, the

federal government, despite the decentralized organization of URFP, has orchestrated systematic measures in a largely top-down manner, supported by the active responses from federal states and municipalities.

Keywords

urban regeneration, funding programme, federal government, neo-liberalism, Germany

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A spatial analysis of the urban form and tourist elements in the main cities of the Basque Country

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Abstract

In recent decades, European cities have experienced a significant expansion of urban tourism, with visitors increasingly concentrating their activities within specific areas of each destination. In this context, the urban form emerges as a key factor in shaping and guiding the tourist experience. This study explores the relationship between urban form and tourism in the Basque cities of Bilbao, Donostia/San Sebastián, and Vitoria-Gasteiz. Using spatial analysis techniques based on Geographic Information Systems (GIS), the research addresses two main questions: How do components of the urban form shape the spatial patterns of tourist activity in a destination? and Which spatial and morphological characteristics associated with the urban form of the destination facilitate the identification and characterization of tourist districts in the selected case studies?

The findings reveal that variables such as the configuration of tourist paths and nodes, the proximity between attractions, the concentration of heritage-protected buildings, and natural constraints, including topography, play a critical role in defining and differentiating tourist districts. By highlighting these spatial dynamics, the study offers new insights into the role of urban form in structuring tourist zones and contributes to the ongoing discussion on urban tourism dynamics.

Keywords

Spatial analysis, urban tourism, touristification, indicators, Bilbao

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Urban inequalities in Southern Europe: new geographies and policy challenges

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Abstract

In the last twenty years, the condition of urban population has been particularly affected by critical events such as the financial crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic, the climate emergency or the rise of different geopolitical tensions. Consequently, cities find themselves at the crossroad between the struggle to achieve a healthy and sustainable future and the need to tackle emerging socio-economic disparities, marginalisation processes and conflicts.

Despite a long tradition of welfare policy to reduce spatial inequalities, serious social marginality, often associated to physical degradation and environmental risks, is still a striking reality within a number of European urban areas, especially in the Southern regions. Overall, the spread of inequalities within urban areas is aggravated by the lack of appropriate cognitive tools to understand and measure the phenomenon, reducing the capacity of local government to provide proper policy instruments to tackle the situation. To promote a better understanding of spatial inequalities within cities, evidence suggests that a multidimensional approach is highly needed, which means taking into consideration various interlinked processes and resources that can affect urban development, belonging to factors that include housing, infrastructures, the environment, and many others.

Drawing from the preliminary results of the research project “Mapping the new Spatial Inequalities within Southern European Cities”, and from international case studies of cities in the South of Europe (e.g., Athens, Lisbon, Naples and Palermo), the session seeks to open a discussion around a series of relevant questions for urban scholars and policy-makers:

- What are the new forms of urban inequality?
- How can urban disparity be measured through quantitative and qualitative indicators?
- To which extent, (spatial) knowledge about urban inequalities can be transferred into policy tools?
- Which models are emerging to counteract spatial inequalities within cities?

Keywords

urban inequalities, southern europe, spatial analysis, policy tools

Beyond the pathological, towards a paradigm of care? Decoding narratives, instruments and processes of urban regeneration in Italy

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Abstract

In 1997, Amin and Graham reported "*a veritable deluge of newspaper and magazine reports now addresses urban crises and 'regeneration' processes*", whose descriptions oscillate between gloomy predictions of "urban doom and optimistic portrayals of an urban renaissance" (p. 411), often with the aim of obscuring complexities. Decades later, their insights remain pertinent: governments continue to pursue urban "rebirth" (Furbey, 1999), frequently driven by neoliberal agendas (Pinson, 2022). Building on the critical perspectives by Porter and Shaw (2009), this study explores the multifaceted concept of "regeneration" as it unfolds in different urban realities, particularly in Italy, where fragmented urban agendas have received little attention compared to British and American contexts. The Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) — part of the NGEU — could be a defining moment for Italian urban policy. Central to this research is a critical analysis of the biomedical metaphor in urban regeneration, which portrays the city as a sick body (Baeten, 2001, 2002; Vicari, 2009). By integrating the ethics of care, this study reimagines regeneration as a relational and transformative process affecting urban spaces, social dynamics, and governance structures. Employing relational and new institutionalism theories (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Giddens, 2014; Healey, 1999; Jessop et al, 2008; Khan et al, 2013; Rydin, 2021), it assesses the metaphorical, instrumental, and socio-spatial narratives that influence regeneration. Focusing on Palermo, this study investigates whether the PNRR promotes a paradigm of care or reinforces pathologizing views of urban issues. The study aims to introduce the ethics of care as a relational and spatially-informed lens in urban studies; examine the discursive and material impact of PNRR initiatives on urban imaginaries, potentially shifting away from pathologizing approaches; and evaluate how regeneration policies unfold locally in Palermo, moving beyond traditional urban regeneration models. Methodologically, it combines literature review, critical discourse analysis, and ethnographic fieldwork.

Keywords

urban regeneration, urban care, PNRR, Palermo, discourse

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Defining a Socio-Ecological Approach to Vacant Land: Innovative Projects in Terrain Vague, from Theory to Practice

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Abstract

Contemporary cities face challenges such as climate change, ecological emergencies, public health crises and the pursuit of spatial justice. Certain overlooked urban spaces, often dismissed as negative or devoid of value, hold potential and opportunities for innovative urban solutions. Known as *Vacant Land*, *Terrain Vague*, *Urban Voids*, or *Brownfields*, these neglected urban spaces are frequently underutilized, lacking specific functions, but where spontaneous nature thrives providing ad-hoc ecosystem services, and which are appropriated by diverse communities for informal uses. While theoretical literature addresses their potential, the connection between theory and practical application is limited, with a lack of organized frameworks to analyse associated strategies and policies. Such a framework could be instrumental in analysing the benefits, strategies, and policies associated with these spaces. Although usually perceived as mere assets for economic gain, often sold, built and developed just for profit, over the past two decades, innovative projects have emerged that challenge this profit-driven view, underscoring a shift toward a socio-ecological approach. This approach values the spontaneous qualities and informal uses of terrain vague spaces, integrating formal projects while preserving their unique characteristics, promoting and considering both environmental sustainability and public health.

This paper proposes a socio-ecological framework through a comparative analysis of selected case studies. It begins with an introduction and definition of a socio-ecological approach derived from theory, followed by three case studies exemplifying this approach: Cody Dock (London), Regador (Lisbon), Krater (Ljubljana). Each case is analysed based on criteria such as scale, socio-ecological goals, community participation, and management models. The findings examine the interaction between theoretical principles and real-world practices, exploring these practices potential.

By systematically organizing these emerging practices and drawing from diverse case studies, this paper seeks to offer actionable insights that can inform both policy and practice in reimagining the potential of terrain vague spaces.

Keywords

vacant land, terrain vague, urban ecology, community participation, urban regeneration

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Plastic or Elastic: exploring the spatial scramble generated by the reorganisation of strategic economic functions after the Pandemic

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Abstract

The session aims at exploring the spatial "scramble" generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, looking at this latter as one of a long series of crises challenging the established spatial organization of the economic base of cities in the contemporary world. The papers presented will focus in particular on the renegotiation of space produced in the sphere of three main economic fields which have been crucial for cities in Europe before COVID (manufacturing and logistics; culture and leisure; Higher Education) and their potential for the transition, within an urban perspective.

COVID-19 has worked as an accelerator disrupting several entrenched socio-economic mechanisms and dynamics. The session moves from the hypothesis that as well as significant changes have been generated in the production-organization-fruiting of space. These processes of "re-negotiation of space" could also significantly impact the production of the "urban", undermining its role in connection to key and consolidated economic functions of the XX-century city.

The session questions whether these changes can permanently restructure spatial practices and imaginaries, providing the ground for more just and sustainable spatial fixes. Moreover, it aims to investigate if recovery policies promoted by public actors within the EU Recovery Fund are playing a role in supporting a less space-blind transition. Finally, it seeks to contribute to planning theory and practices by investigating how spatial planning can find a new role and perspective in dealing with the post-pandemic perspective. Moreover, it will reflect on how these findings can contribute to feeding a transition arena able to feed a more just and sustainable transition, within a policy-design perspective.

In so far, the session proposed has a strong synergy with TRACK 2 scope, contributing to exploring processes of urban regeneration, with a specific focus on the constitutive (or not) role of the "urban" in the transition.

Keywords

transition, recovery, urban, economic base of the city

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Caught in Transition: Older Residents' Experiences of Waiting for Change in Manchester's Regeneration Efforts

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Abstract

Urban regeneration initiatives aim to revitalise areas suffering from prolonged disinvestment and decline by enhancing environmental, social, and economic conditions. However, these efforts often face significant challenges in areas with a history of stalled or failed projects, leading to resident distrust and a sense of abandonment. This study examines the complex relationship between residents in “left-behind” neighbourhoods and local councils, focusing on how this dynamic influences trust and attitudes toward current and future regeneration efforts.

Through a detailed analysis of ongoing urban regeneration projects in Manchester, this research uses ethnographic and participatory methods to capture the perspectives of older residents—an often-overlooked demographic—in communities undergoing rapid change. By prioritising their voices, the study seeks to understand how past experiences with regeneration influence current perceptions and engagement levels.

Through interviews with regeneration stakeholders, the project also investigates the specific challenges that arise in state-led regeneration efforts, particularly when these initiatives are executed as joint ventures. Such partnerships can create both opportunities and tensions, as different stakeholders navigate the complexities of balancing economic goals with community needs.

By centering the experiences and contributions of older residents, this research sheds light on the roles of community organisations in shaping the regeneration process through local governance. Ultimately, this study aims to provide insights into fostering more inclusive, trust-building approaches to urban regeneration that acknowledge past experiences and prioritize meaningful resident participation.

Keywords

Regeneration, Ethnography, Governance, Urban

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Symbolic Upgrading in Urban Regeneration: Insights from the Xiaoxihu Neighborhood

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Abstract

Urban regeneration in China is a socio-spatial process that supports government efforts to transform neglected inner-city neighborhoods. This process aligns with the concept of Symbolic Upgrading (SU), an overarching dimension of gentrification including architectural, social, and functional updates. In China, Symbolic Upgrading involves political and administrative efforts, cultural projects, media posts, and self-organized events by shopkeepers, visitors, and residents. Over Xiaoxihu’s 10-year regeneration, state interventions have gradually realized initial goals of

Symbolic Upgrading, revealing early-stage gentrification effects, particularly through waves of commercial transformation into boutiques, cafes, and art-related retail which are indicative of initial phases of commercial gentrification and the influx of a young and local creative class.

This study examines SU's impact on the neighborhood's social and commercial transformation, a central objective of Xiaoxihu's regeneration. The research addresses three questions: How was Symbolic Upgrading prioritized as the regeneration project's primary goal? What was the process of Symbolic Upgrading? How did Symbolic Upgrading influence commercial transformation? Desk research on policy documents, planning records, media reports, and academic literature suggests that this goal was driven by a bottom-up demand for change and a shift towards preservation-oriented regeneration. Elements of Symbolic Upgrading are initially identified through a literature review, then analyzed through direct observation in the study area, including participant observation, photographic documentation, and interviews with stakeholders and experts. An indirect approach through document analysis, provides further insight by evaluating official media, developer WeChat accounts, shopkeepers' social media, and academic literature to understand how different social subsystems record their experiences and interpret the upgrades. To assess changes in Xiaoxihu's commercial infrastructure—including retail, gastronomy, and service facilities—empirical research via usage mapping was conducted, followed by an analysis of SU's influence through an impact model.

Keywords

Symbolic Upgrading, Commercial Gentrification, Historic Neighborhood, Urban Regeneration

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MICRO-FACTORIES. The role of urban manufacturing spaces and digital fabrication for a new model of decentralised bicycle production.

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Abstract

Cities have increasingly lost their productive capacity and autonomy, shifting away from proximity-based urbanism and the coexistence of self-sufficient, diversified activities that once fostered strong local communities through local production and responsible supply chains.

However, urban resilience has enabled cities to adapt to crises and maintain economic agency, creating opportunities for skilled employment. The European Union's "Bringing Europe Closer to People" strategy underscores the importance of robust local communities in fostering proximity-based cities, strengthening economies, and reducing environmental impact. Within this framework, sustainability and urban mobility emerge as strategic priorities, with bicycles playing a

pivotal role. To fully realise this potential, investment in urban manufacturing spaces for bicycle production is essential.

Additionally, advances in digital fabrication, such as 3D printing and robotics, have driven a shift from mass production to mass customisation, enabling products tailored to individual needs. The ability to produce locally on demand challenges traditional manufacturing models, while democratising access to digital fabrication tools enhances cities' productive capacities, fostering innovation and economic resilience.

This study establishes an atlas of European urban bicycle manufacturing spaces, derived from a comprehensive analysis of diverse examples. The selected urban manufacturing spaces prioritise sustainability, innovation, and the integration of production within the city fabric. Key criteria include proximity-based manufacturing, alignment with local needs, and contributions to environmental goals such as reduced carbon emissions.

The findings highlight how micro-factories embody decentralised production, fostering locally tailored solutions and stronger connections to end users. They align with broader urban strategies like the '15-Minute City', driving economic and social regeneration. By framing a model for decentralised bicycle production, this paper reimagines urban manufacturing as integral to sustainable and resilient cities, demonstrating how small-scale, networked production supports environmental and economic objectives on both local and regional scales.

Keywords

Micro Factories, Proximity Based Urbanism, Digital Fabrication, Urban Resilience, Local Production

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Place-framing of urbanity in the regeneration of Kalasatama, Helsinki

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Abstract

Taking the increased importance of narratives, visuality, and symbolic representations in urban planning and development as starting points, this presentation analyses the regeneration of Kalasatama, Helsinki, one of the largest regeneration projects in Europe. In Helsinki, "social space" has been introduced as a new domain of planning, and *urbanity* is widely accepted as a common planning goal, both on the level of statutory and non-statutory planning. This presentation seeks to understand the use of the concept of urbanity in informal, soft planning of Kalasatama, by critically studying the discursive production of urbanity through an analysis of planning documents, marketing texts, and public discussion of the regeneration of Kalasatama.

Planning research has typically concentrated on the processes of planning. This presentation aims to understand the contents of planning, and more specifically, the narratives and discourses used

in informal soft planning. The concept of place-framing is used to analyse discursive planning of Kalasatama, and three place-frames of constructing urbanity are identified. Place-framing of Kalasatama aims to affect the socio-economic future of the area by presenting a narrative of wealthy neighbourhood with authentic, historical roots and plenty of possibilities for cultural consumption. Based on the findings, there is a need to better understand the role of discursive production of space in regeneration, and place-framing seems to be a promising approach for analysing the socioeconomic implications and political meanings of regeneration and soft planning.

Keywords

urbanity, soft planning, discursive planning, place-framing, urban regeneration

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‘My Neighbourhood’: Public space regeneration in the consolidated suburb

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Abstract

Public space projects have been widely used as leverages for urban regeneration processes, focusing on local-scale transformation. Despite this, its provision and distribution are fairly concentrated in central or special development areas, not addressing ordinary urbanization areas, such as suburbs.

This presentation explores public space regeneration in the suburbs, using a specific programme from Almada municipality as a case-study. Located in the Lisbon Metropolitan Region, Almada was once a network of small towns, many focused on fishing, food and industrial production. However, since the mid-20th century, it has become part of Lisbon’s suburbanization process. Urban expansion was a rapid, often illegal development, leading to a mix of diverse communities and building styles but also producing fragmented, poorly infrastructured urban fabrics in need of requalification.

The “My Neighbourhood” (O Meu Bairro) programme is a local authority response to these issues. It seeks to improve public spaces in neighbourhoods across the municipality, each with unique communities and building types, addressing leftover spaces and deficiencies of suburban growth at the local scale. The programme entails a participative perspective of the residents in the selection of the intervention sites and the discussion of design schemes.

This presentation will explain the design process behind these projects, provide an overview of the ten proposed designs, and analyze one case-study in detail to assess the strategies used and their goals. By examining the production process of the intervention area, we will identify issues from the original design and demonstrate how public space can address them. Using maps, archives, interviews, and site surveys, the project's impact will be evaluated. Finally, we will assess whether

the “My Neighbourhood” program meets its goals and discuss its efforts within urban regeneration processes.

Keywords

public space, suburban settlements, urban design, urban regeneration

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Gentrification and Commercial Standardization in Barcelona's Superblocks: Transforming Public Spaces and Neighborhood Identity

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse the commercial gentrification occurring within Barcelona's new Superblocks, pedestrianised zones that reshape the city's urban landscape. By focusing on the transformation of these areas, the study examines how the commercial offer has changed by improving these public spaces. Enhancing the quality of these public spaces has increased foot traffic and diversified the profile of visitors. This shift is spurring a corresponding diversification in commercial services, with businesses increasingly adapting to meet the demands of new and varied patrons. The transformation, however, is creating a feedback loop where increased visitor attraction and changes in commercial offerings mutually reinforce one another, leading to a degree of commercial standardization.

Through secondary and primary data, the study will connect the changes in the Superblocks area with the commercial and retail dynamics of the rest of the city, tracking changes in commercial establishments before and after the transformation. Additionally, the research explores shifts in the neighbourhood's cultural identity, noting how newer businesses are replacing older, traditional ones. It also examines the role of vacancy rates and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in accelerating these changes.

Finally, the study underscores the role of the local Association of Merchants and Professionals, which advocates for commercial activities that prioritize residents' needs and work to preserve the neighbourhood's commercial identity. By examining these dynamics, the research aims to provide insights for urban planners and policymakers, highlighting strategies to balance commercial development with cultural preservation, enhance social value, and guide sustainable, community-oriented urban regeneration efforts.

Keywords

Superblocks, Commercial gentrification, Public space design, Cultural identity, Merchants association

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New generation thermal networks for the regeneration of neighbourhoods in Madrid: the case of Arganzuela

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Abstract

In the past decades, Spanish cities have experienced an accelerated change of the energy model, as a consequence of the European policies on decarbonization to mitigate the effects of climate change. Its main manifestation is the progressive electrification of urban energy supplies (building, services and industry), moving from a hierarchical distribution scheme, highly dependent on remote production with conventional energies, to a different model based on the use of renewable energy sources and closer proximity between production and use.

Currently, the new building of Spanish cities reaches in most cases carbon neutrality, if not in many occasions positive energy. In contrast, if we focus our analysis on old buildings, although there are cases of buildings being rehabilitated to improve their energy efficiency in cities like Madrid and Bilbao, much remains to be done in the regeneration of neighbourhoods because, in general, integral regeneration involves addressing not only building and energy efficiency issues but also accessibility and improving the urban environment.

In this context, the latest generation of urban heating and cooling networks (4GDHC) offer a great opportunity to give meaning to actions for urban regeneration of older neighbourhoods, channelling investment into new infrastructures that will enable In addition to meeting low-emission requirements, ensure equitable access to clean energy.

In order to address the problem described, the paper presents a general model of neighbourhoods regeneration from an urban and energy perspective. It uses the potential of a polynuclear thermal network with heat pumps to integrate renewable and residual energy produced in its environment. This theoretical model is applied to the five neighbourhoods of the Arganzuela district (150,000 inhabitants) and the results obtained are discussed, as well as the possibilities for improvement.

Keywords

renewable energy, urban thermal networks, model of urban regeneration, Madrid

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Participatory Processes for Urban Regeneration in Southern European Cities: The Community Network of the 8th “Circoscrizione”, Municipality of Palermo, Italy

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Abstract

Since the mid-20th century, cities in developed and developing countries have undergone profound and often surprising transitions. Their economic foundations, social composition, physical landscapes, and modes of governance have been transformed, challenging traditional intervention models. In response to these difficulties, local governance is increasingly required to adopt alternative practices, characterized by a bottom-up approach. This involves active community participation mechanisms aimed at addressing social vulnerabilities, improving the quality of neighbourhoods, and fostering community ties and new relationships between stakeholders and urban governments.

In light of these dynamics, many policy strategies have been implemented at local, regional, national and supranational levels in an attempt to regenerate and redefine urban trajectories. Among these interventions founded on the place-based approach to local development, which emphasizes *inclusive growth* by identifying, mobilizing and harnessing specifically local potential, one such example is the community actions being conducted by the 8th Circoscrizione of the Municipality of Palermo in Italy. This sub-municipal administration is initiating the construction of a network of local stakeholders and services to reimagine and redesign the relationship between institutions and citizens, in part through a community mapping process. By adopting a multi-stakeholder partnership, these initiatives aim to produce the framework of the critical issues and the projects planned by local actors, to be represented as an input for further urban and social regeneration processes.

The present contribution aims to explore the potential of a bottom-up cooperation model implemented in this context, integrating public, private, voluntary and academic sectors. It focuses particularly on measures addressing social disadvantage in fragile contexts, while also highlighting the criticalities and tensions (both latent and explicit) that characterize this highly vulnerable Southern European territorial setting.

Keywords

urban regeneration, participation, community network, local governance, southern europe

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Commodification of public spaces and the transformative potential of artistic practices as tools for participation

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Abstract

This paper explores the intersection of the commodification of public spaces, social participation processes, and the potential of artistic practices to advocate for collective access to public spaces. Focusing on Lisbon, the research investigates how the increasing commercialization of public space—driven by urban development, tourism, and privatization—affects the social fabric of the city, arguing that artistic practices can serve as a powerful tool for advocating collective access to public spaces and engaging citizens in participation processes. Through creative interventions, communities can reclaim and redefine public space, asserting their rights to co-create urban environments. The paper examines how these artistic practices can not only disrupt the commodified logic of public space but also promote inclusivity by empowering citizens to become active participants in urban transformation. Ultimately, the research argues that these practices hold significant potential to promote inclusivity and participation in addressing the inequities perpetuated by the commodification of public spaces, offering a more democratic model of urban development.

Keywords

Commodification, Public Space, Participation, Arts, Lisbon

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Touristification processes in coastal rural villages: a case study of the Province of Palermo, Sicily

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Abstract

In recent decades Sicily has faced a progressive demographic erosion in its inner areas, already characterized by precarious economic and social conditions. This has been accompanied by a significant decline in population density, particularly among the working-age population. This situation has led to the abandonment of entire areas and a process of socio-economic desertification which is beginning to extend even to coastal areas, especially those with rural characteristics. On the other hand, some rural villages, particularly those located along the coastline, have become the focus of "valorization" interventions tied to intense forms of touristification. These processes, often promoted through speculative privatization, result in the loss of the villages' original characteristics and further depopulation. These interventions, carried

out without the democratic participation of local communities, take place in the absence of planning by local administrations and in territories excluded from national cohesion policies, such as the National Strategy for Inner Areas, due to the coastal context of the territory analyzed.

Given these premises, this paper aims to reflect on this paradoxical condition and, more specifically, on the socio-spatial impacts of externally driven and/or (apparently) unregulated urban regeneration interventions. These initiatives, neither governed by state administrations nor rooted in place-based processes, risk causing further distortions in territories already deeply affected by peripheral dynamics and marginalization. The paper first describes municipal-level data regarding demographic trends, tourism activity, and the rural, peripheral characteristics of the municipalities surrounding the town of Partinico, in the Province of Palermo, Sicily. Also, it examines the critical issues observed in the specific case of Borgo Parrini, in relation to the urban transformation processes that have taken place there.

Keywords

inner areas, touristification, peripherality, rurality, privatization

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Unexpected connections. Multilocality and new urban practices.

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Abstract

This paper proposes a reflection on the activation of places through 'unexpected connections' between practices that emerge through the mixing of long and short networks, with reference to cases in the Italian region of Veneto that are particularly significant in terms of overcoming the centre/periphery and urban/rural dichotomies.

In the context of the continuous reconfiguration of socio-spatial relations and ways of observing them, it is possible to see how urban practices, understood as time-space routines, draw territories that constantly transcend given boundaries (of neighbourhoods, cities, regions, states...), connecting even very distant places, stages of multi-local life paths to which new meanings are attributed.

These urban practices can be seen as prefigurations of possible futures, and suggest ways of dealing with the difficulties of urban governance in fragmented societies.

Keywords

urban practices, urban regeneration, multilocality

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Innovative approaches to urban regeneration: design strategies for two challenging neighborhoods in Milan and Rome.

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Abstract

The paper investigates the approach and the contents for the urban regeneration of two challenging neighborhoods in the cities of Milan and Rome, as part of a design experience in the "Students Reinventing Cities" international competition.

The competition is promoted by the C40 global network and the city governments. It invites students to develop ideas that innovate neighborhoods' spaces and daily practices, making them more thriving and greener. C40 aims to introduce to public administrations innovative approaches and tools for urban regeneration and then share them in the network. Cities grab this opportunity to welcome new ideas and solutions for long-standing challenged neighborhoods. In the meantime, they seek to direct the public agenda's attention to them and test the citizens' response to possible public intervention on the ground.

The 2022 call for Milan promotes the physical and functional redesign of a flyover located in Corvetto, a marginal but attractive neighborhood. The call required to apply those proximity principles inspired by the 15-minute city model. The following year the competition called for the development of a neighborhood plan for Marconi, a semi-central area in Rome, characterized by a high residential density and a very scarce presence of public space.

Relevant issues emerged in both design explorations. The first concerns the treatment of public open spaces; in the Milanese case it's an asset to be rethought and reactivated, in Rome it's a scarce resource to be qualified and recaptured. Secondly, citizens' involvement was fundamental in both experiences. They guided us through the daily life of the neighborhood, made us aware of its needs and advanced suggestions. Finally, in both proposals an implementation plan has been included, to guide the stakeholders in the urban regeneration process and to adjust the project itself, in the face of future needs while focusing on inclusive growth.

Keywords

Urban regeneration, Competition, Public space, Implementation plan, Participation

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An introduction to Bristol's Business Improvement Districts

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Abstract

This presentation will provide an introduction to the work of the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) here in Bristol and for those unaware of the work of BIDs give an insight into how this unique partnership model funds improvements to towns and cities in the UK.

A BID is a defined area in which business rate payers vote to agree to pay a levy into a fund for a fixed period. This levy is used to deliver projects under themes laid out in a business plan which will benefit businesses and the community, over and above those services delivered by a local authority.

Bristol is set to enhance its business landscape and drive economic growth through a landmark new city-wide Business Improvement District (BID). With an investment of circa £18 million over five years, the proposed Bristol BID aims to unite the existing Bristol City Centre BID, Redcliffe & Temple BID and Broadmead BID under one vision, strengthening the city's economic vitality and reputation. If approved by businesses at the ballot in June, the new BID will officially launch in November 2025.

The proposed BID builds on a shared mission to create a unified, thriving city. The initiative will streamline resources, boost investment and amplify the collective voice of over 1,000 businesses, similar to the operating model of other major UK cities including Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester, Cardiff and Newcastle.

The new Bristol BID will focus on four core delivery themes, each designed to benefit businesses, residents and visitors:

Experiences & Promotion

Safe & Supported Communities

Clean & Welcoming

Sustainable & Green

Keywords

Business Improvement Districts

Track 3: Smart city governance driving green and digital transitions

4

Locally-Driven Transformation of Public Innovation Initiatives within the Smart City – the Experience of Bogotá’s Public Innovation Labs

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Abstract

Under the vague but propagating umbrella-term “Smart City”, we see the implementation of multiple versions of so-called “smart” urban policies with similar conceptual roots and goals, yielding significantly different implemented forms, largely due to the unique urban assemblages within which these policies land or develop. This phenomenon of transformation and territorialisation of Smart City policies demonstrates strong links to the concept of policy mobilities, which examines how a policy idea transforms and mutates as it travels from one site to another, becoming de-territorialised from its original formulation and re-territorialised in a different context. Not only are new policies and initiatives launched, and de-/re-territorialised, but pre-existing policies may be transformed or restructured according to trending policy ideas and political interests.

This paper explores how longstanding policy initiatives can be reshaped over time through local factors driving the territorialisation of “smartness”, using the case of public innovation laboratories in the district of Bogotá. Public innovation labs follow a longer trajectory of innovation labs, living labs, fablabs and similar concepts, originating in the Global North, but since disseminated and adapted worldwide. Within Bogotá, such publicly funded labs have their roots in decentralised networks of Telecentros, and the national Plan Vive Digital programme in the early 2010s, but have since been advanced and reformulated by the municipal government and local actors, now firmly embedded within the city’s Smart City plans, demonstrating a durability not present in other Latin American cases. The paper focuses on the role of local factors and actors in driving the transformation of this urban policy within a continually changing context of external pressures, trends and politics, and what lessons this case may have for the agency of local actors in other Latin American cities.

Keywords

Policy Mobility, Smart City, Bogota, Public Innovation, Innovation Lab

Equitable Digital Transitions: Applying Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Theory to Smart City Development

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Abstract

The integration of digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and information and communication technologies (ICT), into urban governance presents both transformative opportunities and critical challenges. While smart cities have the potential to promote more equitable, sustainable, and efficient urban environments, the rapid adoption of these innovations can also deepen existing inequalities, especially among marginalized populations. Using Rogers' (1962) Diffusion of Innovation Theory as a guiding framework, this article explores how smart city initiatives can facilitate just digital transitions by focusing on three essential dimensions: *the stages of innovation diffusion* (knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation) can be applied to urban planning and governance frameworks to promote digital inclusion and equitable participation in smart city initiatives, *the categories of adopters* (innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards) and *the characteristics of adoption* (relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability). The discussion examines how these factors influence the spread of digital innovations within diverse urban populations and impact the digital divide through secondary data and case studies from global smart city initiatives. It argues for a human-centered, equitable approach to innovation diffusion, and suggests that understanding the dynamics of adoption categories and the specific characteristics of innovations is central to how inclusive governance and collaborative approaches, particularly with those at risk of exclusion, can support meaningful smart city transitions with social justice as a core pillar of digital transformation.

Keywords

Digital Inclusion, Smart cities, innovation diffusion, digital transformation, urban governance

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Disaster Management Governance in Neo-Liberal States: The Praxis – Practice Debate

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Abstract

Urban areas have been believed to be 'engines of growth' (Molotch, 1976). It has been observed that this axiom holds ground across different geographies. India has seen similar trends in growth catapulted by its rise in the service sector. Furthermore, most of this development is concentrated

along its 8000 km long coastline which houses 20% of its urban population (Rani et al., 2015). However, the coastal areas are extremely prone to hydro-meteorological hazards. Policy makers have interpreted this as a governance problem and have addressed it through 'corporatization of urban governance'. Critical theorists believe that the declaration of 100 Smart Cities (23 cities are from the coastal region) by the Government of India reflect the neo-liberal agenda of the state (Das, 2020). This study attempts to assess the disaster governance activities undertaken by the Smart Cities and the revealed agenda behind such capital investment made by the state. The study adopts a case study research approach to understand the efficacy and accessibility of all public investments made under the aegis of Smart Cities Mission (SCM). A case of the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) of Greater Visakhapatnam region was taken for the assessment. The ICCC acts as the nervous system of a Smart City integrating data collected from different Internet of Things (IoT) installed across a city. It can be seen that the debate on equitable distribution of such infrastructure is valid and reflects the latent aspiration of state to safeguard revenue generating land uses. However, it was also seen that total losses incurred due to natural disasters have significantly reduced. *Sachivalayas* - a form of local government was used for information dissemination, incident reporting and outreach pre/post disaster to counter the limitations of existing infrastructure. This indigenous improvisation emerged as a new format of disaster governance.

Keywords

Disaster governance, Smart Cities, Natural Hazards

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Digitalization of Urban Mobility: Case of Poland

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Abstract

The presented paper contains the findings from 20 biggest Polish cities on the issue of digitalization of urban mobility. It researches how the cities transform their mobility systems with a use of smart technologies, in what fields they can be used and what are the main driving forces of this process. The research is based in the quantitative and qualitative methods including the analysis of statistical data, study of cities' documents and in-depth interviews with policy makers of the cities. In the first part it gathers the known and used digital solutions in urban mobility with an aim of building their catalogue, and theoretical framework for the study. In the second part it examines the public transport, and electronic tickets, live time passenger information, and intelligent transport systems. Next area is parking policy, in which the digital solutions help to find the parking lots without cruising, or make the payment for parking easier. Also the solutions for cycling like digital bike renting, or counting of bikers will be analysed. Final part of the analysis is devoted to travel planning and digital MaaS schemes. The paper also outlines what are the advantages and new possibilities that smart technologies bring. It analyses what solutions were implemented and how they changed the urban mobility and what new challenges they bring.

Keywords

Urban Mobility, Public Policy, Smart City

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Transforming Campus-Based Climate Action Plan into Citywide Environmental Resilience: Initiatives for a Smart City in Tetovo, North Macedonia

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Abstract

In this paper, we examine the implementation of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) initiated by South East European University (SEEU), aiming to understand how different approaches contribute to environmental improvement in a city grappling with air pollution. Building on CAP and the Air Quality Monitoring project funded by two international institutes, in using the triple helix model for smart cities (Lombardi et al., 2012) we analyse how potential collaboration of multiple actors i.e. academia, government, and industry can significantly strengthen urban environmental governance in effectively dealing with air pollution. We employ a mixed-methods approach, combining a quantitative analysis of emissions and energy consumption statistics with a qualitative analysis of citizen experiences in environmental monitoring, by introducing a citizen science approach i.e. having installed low-cost sensors in their homes. The results show that SEEU's integration of energy-saving technologies—such as geothermal heat pumps, photovoltaic solar plants, automated lighting, and data-driven monitoring systems—has contributed to a 35% reduction in its carbon footprint, moving toward a 2030 goal of carbon neutrality (Abazi et al., 2011). Whereas engaged citizens share positive experiences and greater awareness of air pollution. Our research offers a contribution by highlighting the potential of integrating academia and technology with community collaboration to drive sustainable urban development in Tetovo. We argue if this approach is to be utilized by the local government in addressing both environmental challenges and social equity a more resilient urban future will be achievable.

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Lombardi, P., Giordano, S., Farouh, H., & Yousef, W. (2012). Modeling the Smart City Performance, *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 25(2), 137–149.

Keywords

Climate Action Plan, Air Pollution, Smart City, Environmental Resilience

Reflecting on 'Colouring Dresden': A Citizen Science Project at the Intersection of Data, Politics, and Urban Research

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Abstract

Citizen Science Projects (CSP) are emerging as innovative approaches to urban research and practice. This paper reports on the data-driven CSP 'Colouring Dresden' in Germany through the lens of Critical Data Studies (CDS). 'Colouring Dresden' is an ongoing CSP, which was inspired by the 'Colouring London' platform developed in the UK. The CSP forms part of the global Colouring Cities Research Programme (CCRP), an international network organized by the Alan Turing Institute in London. The term "Colouring" refers to the visual representation of buildings, which are coloured after data entry by the users. 'Colouring Dresden' has become part of the recently launched permanent research data center of the non-university research organization Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development (IOER) in Dresden. Inspired by the Critical Data Studies (CDS), the authors reflect critically on the *data*-driven practice of 'Colouring Dresden' and argue that the CSP needs to address more intensively issues of politics, political change, and strategy. CDS-scholars urge CSP-partners to be aware of the 'political nature' of their projects. However, this claim requires some conceptual specification. In case of 'Colouring Dresden', the paper adopts a micro-oriented approach that emphasizes two key areas of reflection: 1) situating the CSP in institutionalized politics in Dresden and 2) paying more attention to the selectivity of the project agenda ('framing selectively').

Keywords

Citizen Science, Critical Data Studies, Politics, Political change, Strategy

Rethinking Urban Safety: A Review of The Impact of Security Measures on The Human Sense of Safety and Socio-psychological Wellbeing

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Abstract

Cities globally are evolving security strategies to address urbanisation and globalisation, increasingly integrating technology to enhance urban safety. Technology integration has introduced a new layer of urban security, transforming how people perceive and experience safety in public open spaces. However, these advancements introduce complex issues, including

unintended consequences for how people use and interact with these spaces. This research examines how advanced security measures are reshaping perceptions of safety in urban public spaces. This study investigates the interplay between environmental design and technological security systems on residents' safety perceptions, well-being, and socio-psychological experiences in public spaces. Through a comprehensive literature review, the study will explore how the meaning of safety evolved and how existing security strategies and their implementation are impacting people in their daily living. The implications of this review point to the need for a better understanding of creating safe spaces that prioritise both security that integrate technology and physical design elements, and user needs to feel safe. The findings could influence future urban design practices, providing a new perspective on the perception of safety in public open spaces.

Keywords

Physical Design of built environment, technological security systems, open public spaces, safety perception

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Inclusive urban services: A human rights imperative

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Abstract

This paper examines the city as a complex arena for rights, particularly the right to access urban services. Marginalized communities, especially immigrants, face significant barriers in accessing and exercising their rights when interacting with public urban services. As a critical component of cities, these services should be accountable to their citizens, ensuring accessibility and inclusion for all. Drawing on Lefebvre's "The Right to the City" and Stavrides's "Towards the City of Thresholds," we explore the city as a complex ecosystem of social, economic, and cultural interactions and intersections where the application of rights, particularly for marginalized groups, is often hindered by systemic inequalities and discriminatory practices.

By integrating these perspectives, we propose a balanced approach that values both offline and online modes of public service delivery. We emphasize the need to consider the existing urban inequalities and the diverse perspectives and experiences of the rights of all city residents, including their access to digital infrastructure and public services. Drawing on the insights and evidence from the easyRights and Città-IN projects, we highlight the critical role of human rights literacy in the design and delivery of public services. We propose practical guidelines to address this challenge at both the operational and policy levels, emphasizing the need to address the digital divide and ensure equitable access to digital services, aligning with the European Commission's Digital Compass vision for a digitalized EU by 2030. Ultimately, we contend that by integrating human rights principles into urban planning, we can significantly advance this field's theoretical and practical dimensions toward a more just and inclusive approach to enable us to have a more

nuanced understanding of spatial inequalities and empower marginalized communities in shaping their urban environments.

Keywords

Accessibility, Digital transition, Human rights literacy, Urban services

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City Information Modeling and Smart Urban Governance: Paradigms for Sustainable Cities

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Abstract

The rapid evolution of urban information systems and the growth of cities have increased the complexity of urban environments, impacting the socio-spatial structure due to the large volume of data involved. Emerging technologies offer new opportunities, such as City Information Modeling (CIM), a paradigm that supports urban planning through information systems capable of monitoring and evaluating sustainable development indicators by creating three-dimensional information models. This paper presents the initial findings of a doctoral research project based on the Design Science Research method, aiming to explore the potential of CIM as a tool to support urban governance and planning, establishing strategies to build more sustainable, resilient, and smart cities. The study proposes a CIM conceptual framework and a methodology for constructing a Urban Digital Inventory model to assist in the analysis and management of complex urban data and to create smart urban ecosystems through the integration of 3D models and analytical tools. The methodology includes a theoretical review of CIM and emerging technologies, followed by the creation of a CIM model designed to consolidate spatial and non-spatial data, supporting the visualization and analysis of urban indicators. The research discusses applications of these models in urban analysis and governance, aiming to enhance smart city management processes. Initial results show that the proposed CIM has potential to improve urban governance, especially in visualizing and analyzing complex data and identifying key stakeholders. In practical scenarios, the model facilitates the monitoring of critical indicators such as land use, territorial occupation, and identification of vulnerable areas. The study suggests that adopting the CIM in urban governance could drive the transformation of urban centers into intelligent ecosystems, utilizing advanced data analysis, three-dimensional modeling, and data-driven decisions. The integration of computational tools aims to contribute to urban planning, with a focus on diagnostics, urban spatial conceptions and decision-making.

Keywords

City Information Modeling, Urban Governance, Smart Cities, Urban Digital Inventory, sustainable

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Empowering Smart Urban Governance through Citizen Observatories: EU Initiatives Driving Green and Digital Transformations for Sustainable Urban Futures

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Abstract

This panel will reflect on the pivotal role of three ongoing EU-funded initiatives in collectively shaping smart urban governance by engaging citizens in green and digital transformations. Drawing on insights from GREENGAGE, Urban ReLeaf, and CitiObs, the panel will explore how Citizen Observatories play a crucial role in engaging communities for environmental monitoring, creating healthier urban spaces and fostering a more participatory governance structure.

As cities face escalating challenges from climate change and urbanization, there is a growing need for governance models that are both inclusive and data driven. These three projects leverage interactive socio-technical tools to place citizens at the heart of urban governance, allowing them to actively monitor, share insights, and co-create solutions to critical urban issues. Additionally, these projects emphasize the vital importance of data reliability and trustworthiness in community-sourced data. Ensuring the quality of such data is essential for their uptake in decision-making and urban planning. Finally, the projects collectively showcase a model where technology, citizen science, and policy intersect, enabling public authorities to draw on community-sourced data to develop responsive, localized urban policies that resonate with local needs and expectations.

Attendees will gain a holistic view of how Citizen Observatories can become integral to creating healthy and sustainable cities, providing a foundation for impactful, sustainable change through smart governance that advances green and digital transitions across Europe's cities and regions.

Keywords

Digital democracy, Smart governance, Citizen sensing, Digital technologies

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Advancing Smart Governance for Sustainable Urban Transformation through Citizen Observatories and Digital Collaboration across European Cities and Regions

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Abstract

With urban areas increasingly facing the need for sustainable transformation, the EU-funded Innovation Action GREENGAGE (HORIZON 2022) sets forth an innovative framework to drive smart governance towards green and digital transitions. At the heart of this initiative are the Citizen Observatories (COs), co-created governance and policy labs that bring together technology providers, academics, local planning agents, and civic innovators. These COs are designed to support the European Green Deal within a digitally enabled governance ecosystem, fostering transparent, collaborative decision-making between authorities and communities. GREENGAGE's approach enables smart governance through digital platforms that facilitate citizen-sensing activities, interactive storytelling, and data-driven experimentation within the scope of its COs. Through tech-enabled, co-creative research, GREENGAGE supports regenerative place-making, and addresses issues like environmental degradation, poor air quality and lack of sustainable mobility.

In its initial phase, GREENGAGE maps socio-political landscapes in five pilot locations - Bristol, Copenhagen, North-Brabant, Gerace, and Turano Valley - identifying critical planning challenges in response to delivering objectives of the European Green Deal. This phase aims to build communities of practice, set project scopes, recruit stakeholders, define technology and data requirements. As the project advances, thematic co-exploration with citizen-based data collection, followed by the co-analysis and co-interpretation of the gathered data, aim to foster a shared understanding of urban needs and solutions. This process also entails validation of citizen contributions against public administration records for transforming the resulting insights into actionable policy recommendations that drive sustainable, data-informed urban growth. GREENGAGE's phased approach thus creates a dynamic, inclusive framework for continuous learning and policy adaptation, setting the stage for impactful community-driven and digitally empowered transformations in each pilot installation.

Keywords

Digital democracy, Citizen sensing, Smart governance, Digital technologies

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15-Minute City Driving Urban Transitions – European Lessons for a New Governance Model

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Abstract

Effective urban governance is crucial in realizing the full benefits of the twin digital and green revolutions promoted by visions of the 15-Minute City. City planners across Europe are facing a common challenge to develop effective planning solutions for a deeply uncertain future and influence the transformative capacity of cities to transition towards carbon neutrality. Delivery of the 15-Minute city as a net-zero neighbourhood highlights the importance of resilience and

adaptability in urban planning whilst throwing into sharp relief the limitations of existing urban governance models, demonstrating the urgency for new solutions. A new urban governance aims to secure the "win-win" policy co-benefits supporting climate change mitigation actions from a top-down perspective, allied to bottom-up open governance promoting co-design and co-development of urban plan solutions. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have great potentials to become crucial enablers of this new urban governance supporting the development of tools and methodologies that simultaneously address top-down integrated urban planning and also promote open governance service and the co-design of planning solutions. This proposal draws on the author's participation in EU-funded smart city governance research and innovation projects over the past decade to explore initiatives by the European research community to realise these new governance potentials via projects including:

- **GREENGAGE** - Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal (Horizon Europe Innovation Action, European Commission, 2023–2025)
- **TAP** - Triple Access Planning for Uncertain Futures (JPI Urban Europe 2021– 2024)
- **CURE** – Copernicus for Urban Resilience in Europe (Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Action, European Commission, 2020 – 2022)
- **SMARTICIPATE** - Smart Services for Calculated Impact Assessment in Open Governance (Horizon 2020 Innovation Action, European Commission, 2016 – 2019)

Keywords

City planning, 15-Minute city, Governance model, Co-development and design, EU research and innovation projects

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Smart Urban Systems, Radical Planning and Dilemmas of Environmental Justice in India

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Abstract

Smart cities are a new paradigm of developmental transformation in the 21st Century for cities across the world. There is no universally agreed definition or conceptualization of the notion of Smartness and Smart cities, and cities around the world have developed their operational models of Smartness at the intersection of Urban Planning, Technology-based transformations - primarily digital, Urban Municipal Service Delivery, Policy, and Governance, eventually shaping the design of the built environment at all levels.

Smart Cities Mission in India has been a unique endeavor disrupting the conventional planning approaches in the post-independence scenario and bringing a radical shift in the paradigm creating space for multidisciplinary praxis with initiatives such as the place-making marathon, Nurturing

Neighbourhoods Challenge, Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs), Freedom to Walk Cycle Run, etc. This has been instrumental in not only addressing the issues in bigger metropolitan cities but also in smaller cities across diverse geographies making it an unprecedented paradigm for even smaller cities to define their unique visions and priorities and not necessarily follow the developmental pathways of the bigger cities.

However, the questions of environmental justice still cast a dilemma on the effectiveness of this mission in addressing the current challenges faced within India and globally. This research will bring to light the tensions between the emerging multi-disciplinary praxis and its limited responsiveness to the vast environmental sustainability canvas, with specific emphasis on the smaller towns often the sites of extreme ecological contestations.

Keywords

Smart Cities, Radical Planning, Environmental Sustainability Transitions and Justice, Other Smartness, Digital Transitions

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The quest for smart urbanism and transformation of public services. Insights from Poland.

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Abstract

City policymakers implement smart urban solutions and technologies to boost citizen engagement, policy effectiveness, and quality of life. These solutions present vision of the future, with technology as the primary solution, claiming to enhance public services through management optimization while addressing policy dilemmas such as safety vs. privacy and efficiency vs. accessibility (Sadowski and Bendor, 2019; Joss et al., 2019). Additionally, smart urbanism emphasizes citizen-centric design and co-production, raising dwellers expectations toward service quality and efficiency (Cardullo & Kitchin, 2019). However, as city leaders prioritize smart urban solutions, the digitalization of public services may not necessarily lead to improved service accessibility or quality and can foster 'technology conservatism' rather than promised transformation (Tan, Crompvoets, 2022).

Our presentation will discuss the results of the project “Right to the smart city: the impact of new technologies on quality of life, social relations, and urban policy.” The project aimed to examine the effects of technological development on urban life, exploring how technologies influence city development and policies. We focused on exploring citizens’ expectations of technologies and deconstruction of the implementation process of smart urban solutions (IoT, digital platforms) and digital services in different policy branches (health, care, environment, safety, transport) applied in Polish cities.

We found that many city dwellers believed that technology can increase authorities' capability to govern and address public issues, but also expressed concerns about the potential impacts on freedom and democracy. While our case studies show no evidence that technology in researched city services threatens democratic processes or freedom, the improvement in governance capacity was less than anticipated, with questionable impact of social problems. During presentation we will discuss issues in smart urban solution design and implementation (e.g., focusing on service delivery rather than core problems, tokenism, data-managerism, digital narratives) and present good practices of smart urban solutions.

Keywords

smar city, digitalization , smart urbanism

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Working towards the alternative: the institutional logics of the citizen-led smart city

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Abstract

There are alternative perspectives on smart city development. State and corporate-led 'top down' approaches are often contrasted with more grassroots-led 'bottom up' perspectives. A key aspect of this debate relates to whether citizens can meaningfully be involved in state and corporate-led smart cities, or whether alternative approaches might offer more fertile environments for citizen involvement in the smart city. One strand of this debate takes an institutional approach. This approach examines the formal and informal understandings, beliefs and practices that shape the institutional context within which smart city activities take place. This context can provide institutional logics that structure the trajectory of smart city development towards or away from citizen involvement. Drawing on work in Mexico City, and on recent literature in the field, this paper extends existing approaches to develop a competing institutional logics approach to a citizen-led smart city. It does so by linking institutional logics to institutional work in a way that is novel to this debate. The analysis entails conceptual development that charts plausible routes to citizen-led smart city. The analysis is rooted in practice in Mexico City, and has broader relevance to debates about smart city development in the Global South.

Keywords

Smart City, Citizens, Mexico City, Grassroots, Institutional logics

Track 4: Regulating the city: Planning and beyond

6

Is increased awareness linked to less vulnerability? Linking heatwave vulnerability and climate plan quality in Hungarian settlements

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Abstract

Hungarian settlements faced and will face huge challenges regarding extreme heat events due to their inherent vulnerability because of the aging population, the below-average health status of inhabitants, and lacking local resources for managing effective healthcare systems. Meanwhile, an increasing number of municipalities have published their local climate plans or integrated climate adaptation issues into urban development strategies. This study aims to analyze the connection between plan quality and heatwave vulnerability in the case of those Hungarian settlements that submitted their climate strategies to the Covenant of Mayors over the last five years. The applied methodology has two main pillars: first, a qualitative plan quality assessment method focuses on heatwave-related structural and content issues across the published local climate strategies. Second, an indicator-based quantitative method contributes to revealing the relative position of the selected municipalities across all Hungarian settlements concerning their overall heatwave vulnerability scores. The main hypothesis is that the overall climate vulnerability and plan quality go hand in hand concerning the selected municipalities. Besides the comparative methodology, this study shed light on the main strengths and weaknesses of the selected local plans. The study can fill an existing literature gap by focusing on the most conscious Hungarian settlements and applying a mixed methodology to reveal connections between plan quality and quantitative heatwave vulnerability scores.

Keywords

climate adaptation, plan quality, heatwave

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Evaluating the Impact of Land-use Features on Property Crimes in a City: A Case of Nagpur, India

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Abstract

Our research focuses on property crime prevention, lying at the intersection of urban planning and environmental criminology. Understanding how land-use features influence the geographical distribution of property crimes in urban areas is vital for crime prevention strategies. This study explores the impact of various land-use features on property crimes in Nagpur, India. Drawing on evidence from previous research, we hypothesized that land-use features are causally related to the occurrence of property crimes. We examined three types of property crimes—robbery, burglary, and theft—and assessed the role of eighteen distinct land-use features across 341 sub-zones as per property crime density in Nagpur. These sub-zones were identified by using Kernel Density Estimation (KDE), where we calculated the location quotient (LQ) for both property crimes and land-use features. Multiple linear regression models were employed to analyze the relationships between these variables. The results demonstrate that different property crimes are significantly influenced by specific land-use features, offering valuable insights for crime prevention in urban areas. Our findings suggest targeted strategies for urban planners to reduce property crimes through informed land-use planning.

Keywords

Urban Planning, Location Quotient, Robbery, Burglary, Theft

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The Last Place: Security of tenure among the last regulated tenants in the UK

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Abstract

In the UK an activist called Helen Holdsworth protected thousands of elderly, private tenants' in rent-controlled accommodation from being targeted and displaced by developers. Before she died in 2006, she founded The Campaign for Fairer Fair Rents, which fought against the extortionate rent increases that forced regulated tenants to leave their homes, and successfully campaigned for the government's 1999 maximum fair rent order. Regulated (or secure) tenants are those in the UK private rental sector (PRS) that have been renting their homes from before 15 January 1989, their rent is capped, and they are protected from no-fault evictions. Given the date of deregulation, these renters are an older demographic in the UK. Using in depth interviews from some of the last secure tenants (of which there are estimated to be less than 75,000) I explore both the implications of this security, including experiences of harassment or neglect from landlords waiting for these tenants to die, as well as the strength of secure tenancies to challenge corrupt landlords and create lifelong homes. Given the decreasing number of these renters, now is the time to reflect on how best to introduce rent control and wider regulation in the UK that protects tenants in the PRS. I will also be drawing on global comparisons of housing precarity and regulation. This research develops new knowledge about security in relation to housing tenure and contends that in-depth research on the lived experiences of those in the last secure tenancies should be central to

discussion about future controls and how they might work in practice. In doing so, this paper advocates for an alliance between private renters suffering housing precarity and older regulated tenants holding on to their rent-controlled homes.

Keywords

security, rent control, older tenants, private rental sector, United Kingdom

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Regulating Urban Resilience: The need for Interconnected Standards and Responsibilities for climate change resilience for the UK Urban areas.

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Abstract

The infrastructure on which cities depend is increasingly vulnerable to disruptions and damage caused by extreme weather events worsened and made more frequent by climate change. Furthermore, as our infrastructure systems become more interdependent single failures can lead to multiple or cascading failures across systems. There are no official standards of resilience, however the National Resilience Strategy sets out the need for an evaluation of resilience to inform decision making around adaptation planning and a holistic resilience standard that acknowledges interdependencies across infrastructure systems has been called for by the National Infrastructure Commission.

Responsibility for resilience and adaptation planning is currently shared between government agencies, private sector companies and utility providers, businesses and individual property owners. There are some 427 public bodies and agencies working under the legal frameworks set by the 24 ministerial government departments – none have a minimum standard for climate change resilience. The wider context driving the need for a resilience standard involves identifying how infrastructure makes cities habitable and prosperous, understanding how the effective operation of a city's infrastructure supports the determinants of wellbeing, and setting out the socioeconomic consequences of a lack of resilience.

This paper investigates the issues around the establishment of a place based holistic resilience assessment framework, the range of infrastructure that arguably must be included, the establishment of an ex-ante benchmark reference point, the indicators and metrics to be utilised, the extent of disruption to be anticipated and the types of forecasting output that can inform town planning decisions and adaptation pathways. The paper will investigate how such a tool will give city planners the ability to understand where people are at most risk of disruptions, or being displaced, and why, recognising cross sector interdependencies, and setting out the consequences on noncompliance with the standard or resulting forecast's recommendations.

Keywords

resilience, adaptation, planning, climatechange, infrastructure

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Landlordism as regulatory evasion: Critical reflections on rental market

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Abstract

In Montreal, as a result of banning short-term rentals in residential units, a landlord rezoned their triplex from residential to commercial, and legally evicted its tenants under ‘change of destination’ pretenses (CBC News, 2023). In an attempt to reduce the number of bad-faith evictions, British Columbia, tightened ‘renovictions’ laws, and in the aftermath, the main tenant legal assistance centre reported skyrocketing ‘own-use’ evictions (Gold, 2024). These cat-and-mouse attempts in cities’ rental housing stock are reflections of attempts to regulate private rental housing in a context marked by a significant influx of capital chasing returns above what is possible within the letter and spirit of existing housing regulations.

States shape the broad parameters of housing contexts in general and landlord-tenant relations in particular through various regulations and policies (August, 2020; Bernt 2022). However, given the pressure renters and rental markets are under, these regulatory parameters do not seem to serve their function, with landlords constantly seeking to evade them to maximize profit. In this paper, we argue that one reason for these inefficiencies is that regulatory evasion is central to the very practice of landlordism. Departing from the theoretical understanding of landlords and tenants as opposing classes with the central antagonism being the control of housing as the key means of social relation (Kerrigan & Wachsmuth, 2024), this paper seeks to present landlordism as inherently seeking regulatory evasion as a means of maximizing profit and control. To illustrate this argument, we use three empirical examples making use of interview and housing data with a focus on Canada, in which changes in regulations lead to landlords pursuing even more covert and ‘creative’ tactics to maximize profits: own-use evictions, short-term rentals, and condominium conversions.

Keywords

Landlord-tenant relations, housing, landlords, housing regulations, housing governance

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Green infrastructure in selected cities. Legal and organizational issues

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Abstract

The presentation will provide a legal and comparative context on the formation of green infrastructure in geographically, culturally and politically diverse cities. Based on the conducted research and theoretical analysis, key similarities and differences related to the formation of green infrastructure in cities by spatial policy tools will be presented. In particular, the author will refer to examples of cities from Brazil, Mexico, Ghana, Australia, Iran and Poland. The case study of Poland will be presented in more depth. It will be determined how green infrastructure is shaped in strategic documents and legal acts, and what spatial barriers exist in this regard. There is spatial chaos in the Polish spatial planning system, and a significant number of legal instruments are not effective at the local level. The analysis of institutional weaknesses mandates broader reflections on the factors shaping and limiting the possibility of developing green infrastructure in cities. It should be emphasized that this analysis will go beyond the case study of Poland. The factual and legal status of Poland will be compared with selected spatial planning systems from other countries of the world.

Keywords

green infrastructure , green spaces , public spaces , spatial planning

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Translating mixed tenure planning to social cohesion: post-occupancy urban design management of the Generations Block in Helsinki.

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Abstract

Lack of clarity around roles and commitments of stakeholders in urban design management of mixed tenure housing is often claimed to cause social tensions within them. The potential of delivering spatially and socially balanced mixed communities is thus compromised. There has been little research on strategies in integrative negotiation management in planning, construction and operation of mixed tenures to ensure their social cohesion.

The initial idealistic goals of successful tenure integration are often lost during the development process. This paper focuses on evaluating urban design management of stakeholders in the post-occupancy operation of the Generations Block in Helsinki in light of the original design intent of urban social sustainability.

The case is part of a large scale harbour re-use masterplan in Helsinki's Jätkäsaari district. It is a group construction project by three different community, student and affordable housing developers, where residents are united through commonly managed and shared spaces. The main actors' ambition to integrate residents of different tenure and generation groups through communal living is unique in Finland.

The main research question is: How to orchestrate the activities and expectations of various stakeholders (social housing providers, residents, developers, planning authorities) involved in the post occupancy operation of mixed tenure schemes to drive urban social sustainability?

This case study will proceed via semi-structured interviews with stakeholders relevant to and involved in its post-occupancy operation. Data analysis will proceed inductively through thematic mapping of stakeholders' interests and responsibilities against the inceptive objective of creating a socially cohesive mixed tenure community. The expected findings will deliver an explanatory model for urban design management of mixed tenure housing in the rationale of social sustainability. This case study forms part of a doctoral research with other cases from the UK and Poland focusing on the planning and delivery phases.

Keywords

urban design management, mixed tenure housing, social sustainability, communal living

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The urban axis of EU Cohesion Policy in Spain (2014-2020). Complementarity between statutory and strategic planning?

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Abstract

The urban axis of the Cohesion Policy is recognized as a lever for introducing changes in the urban policy of the Member States. The literature has addressed the influence of this policy on the Europeanisation of urban regeneration in different countries. However, the effect of the strategic nature of this policy field and the need to complement it with statutory planning instruments (to give rise to a physical change in neighborhoods relative to their building density, morphology, uses, etc.) has not been sufficiently addressed. This work focuses on this issue by studying the urban axis of the Cohesion Policy developed in Spain through the Integrated Sustainable Urban Development Strategies (EDUSI) 2014-2020. The analysis is situated within the literature that reflects on the complementarity between urban planning and strategic instruments, contributing to the debate in force in the Spanish framework and the EU reflection on the Cohesion Policy urban dimension for the post-2027 period. The results show a low complementarity between these two types of instruments in the EDUSI, giving place to regeneration projects with a restricted capacity to address the physical problems of the neighborhoods.

Keywords

Strategic planning, Statutory Planning, Cohesion Policy, EU Urban Policy, Urban Regeneration

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Global Urban Policy: What happens when we 'see like a city' in policy analysis?

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Abstract

This pre-organised panel showcases ongoing conceptual and empirical work in urban policy analysis. Participants include contributors to a forthcoming edited volume, *Global Urban Policy* (University of Michigan Press): David Kaufmann, Mara Sidney, Loren Landau, and Raffaele Bazurli.

We argue that to understand contemporary societal transformation, and political and policy processes more generally, the policies that cities create and implement are essential objects of study. Urban policy analysis is relevant not simply because of the high rate of policy activity happening in cities, but also because these policies highlight dimensions of political life that are more visible within cities but that also operate at other scales. For example, confrontations between public and private property, between power and justice, between participation and exclusion, wealth and poverty take physical form in cities.

Despite the clear importance of cities and urbanization processes, a specifically urban policy analysis has not emerged. Our colloquy addresses the gap by presenting work that develops and demonstrates concepts and frameworks for urban policy analysis, and applies them empirically. Conceptually, we argue for urbanizing the study of public policies and 'seeing like a city' by detaching our analysis from their nation-state focus. Urban political processes and the policies that emerge are likely to differ from processes and policies at other scales, requiring different approaches to analyzing them, consonant with what we see in urban studies literature. We therefore consider how a ground-up urban policy analysis can be built from urban conceptual and empirical work. Speakers will present insights from case studies sited in many parts of the world, including cities such as São Paulo, New York, Barcelona, and Johannesburg.

Keywords

policy, planning, governance

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Enhancing Urban Resilience to Extreme Rainfall: Integrating Land Functions and Retarding Basins in Kaohsiung's Flood Management

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Abstract

With the increasing impacts of climate change, the frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall have increased significantly, challenging urban flood management. On July 23, In 2024, Typhoon Kemi struck Kaohsiung City in the southwestern Taiwan district, which was more severe than 2009's Typhoon Morakot. Flooding in the urban area led to traffic paralysis and flooding into houses in the lower regions.

Although Kaohsiung has built 25 retarding basins with a total retention capacity of 4.98 million tonnes, an over-reliance on these basins neglects flood retention and infiltration functions of natural land. Engineering solutions alone, with inherent capacity limits, are insufficient for managing extreme rainfall, exacerbating economic and property risks.

Therefore, this research aims to elevate the importance of land in stormwater management by analyzing land use changes in the Ai River, Houjing River, and Dianbao River basins between 2006 and 2022. It explores how changes in land use and consequent changes in these basins' storage and infiltration capacity can affect stormwater management. Additionally, In each sub-basin, what are the differences between the three basins as a result of changes in land use, infiltration, and water storage functions, taking into account the location and capacity of the detent basin?

The results of this research are expected to demonstrate that combining natural land with stormwater regulation and retarding basins can enhance Kaohsiung's resilience to extreme rainfall, restoring natural infiltration and retention capabilities and improving stormwater management efficiency. The study concluded that different water management strategies should be developed for various land and basin characteristics.

Keywords

Extreme Rainfall, Stormwater Management, Land-use change, Urban Resilience

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Plans, targets and impacts: challenges facing planning in Australia

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Abstract

Australia faces substantial challenges in managing urban growth and a housing affordability crisis is one of the most significant of these. It is at the forefront of much political debate at all levels of

government and statutory planning is seen by some as a major cause of the crisis and by others as one of the most important means of solving it.

While the construction of new dwellings is widely accepted as the foundation for improving housing choice and affordability, there are profound disagreements over the type (detached or apartments), the location (peri-urban greenfield or urban consolidation), the forms of tenure (freehold, strata, private or public rental) and the appropriate design and construction standards of new housing.

All three levels of government set targets for new dwellings and at State and local levels these are then typically incorporated in statutory plans. These plans are sometimes disputed and often subject to legal and political challenges as, of course, are subsequent planning decisions made about specific development applications for new housing.

While debates continue over the causes and responses to the crisis, there is more widespread acceptance that current construction rates for all types of new dwellings are falling well short of all targets. This presentation explores the role of planners in the public and private sectors and at different levels of government in responding to this shortfall and crisis. It reflects on the professional capacity of planners to work successfully in this challenging environment and in particular on the relationship between the technical skills needed, for example to model growth, identify areas suitable for new growth and assess the likely impacts of new developments and the professional values applied in balancing the interests of different stakeholders in developing and implementing plans.

Keywords

Plans, Targets, Impacts, Challenges, Australia

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Landowner-driven densification: Understanding motivations and regulatory influences in suburban densification

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Abstract

The densification of suburban areas presents a significant yet often underexplored opportunity for sustainable spatial development. While municipalities and developers tend to focus on large and medium-scale development projects in core areas of cities, suburban areas are primarily changing through small-scale projects, driven and decided by private landowners. These projects often occur with limited municipal intervention and focus more on self-interests of landowners. Although these processes typically only involve single sites, the cumulative effect of these projects can lead

to substantial change in the built environment. The role of private landowners as key actors in suburban densification raises regulatory and governance questions, as these projects often unfold outside of traditional planning processes. It remains unclear which factors lead to landowners considering densification and how regulatory factors influence these projects.

To address this, qualitative interviews are conducted with suburban landowners in Germany who have either chosen to densify their plots or who own vacant land with potential for densification but have not yet pursued it. The aim of the interviews is to understand the landowners' decision-making processes regarding densification and to identify the factors influencing private landowners in these choices. The research explores the impact of institutional and regulatory contexts, the roles of actors such as planners, developers, and neighbours and, lastly, the landowners' personal motivations, such as their attachment to the land.

The findings provide important insights into how landowners make decisions that ultimately shape suburban development, contributing to a deeper understanding of their roles and interests in this process. The insights highlight how regulatory control, or a lack thereof, is shaping the outcome of suburban developments. A better understanding of landowner motivations and soft densification processes could provide municipalities with better opportunities to align landowners' interests with local planning strategies, potentially steering individual projects toward broader sustainable development goals.

Keywords

Suburban densification, Landowner agency, Land use regulation, Germany

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Urban developments as a palimpsest of society's values

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Abstract

The concept of the city as a *palimpsest* is increasingly used within urban studies to describe cities as sites of multiple layers, built up over time. In this paper we develop this idea further, exploring how we can examine urban developments as a social (as well as physical) construction of the contemporary decision-makers' perceptions of the values and concerns of society, and how these have been shaped by particular interests – hence seeing such developments as a *palimpsest* of planning systems and associated legal frameworks.

Using housing developments in the UK to illustrate the arguments, the paper seeks to show how developments built during specific time periods reflect the values held by society at those times, and thus seeks to answer questions including: Why do we plan as we do, build what we do, conserve what we do? What townscape/urban morphology/countryside does this create, and what

does this tell us about ourselves (as a society), our values, our interests and our concerns? Conversely, what does it preclude – development which takes proper account of climate change, or seeks to deliver social equity, or homes which can be described as truly liveable?

It further seeks to distinguish between what has been called a “palimpsestic” vs. a “palimpsestuous” (Dillion, 2005) approach to reading the city, or analysing the process of layering vs. the outcome of that layering; and how this in turn helps us to further unpick and unpack the development process.

Keywords

Policy, Layering, Housing, Planning

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Regulating for Public Benefit in Private Sector-Led Brownfield Regeneration: The Role of Planning Mechanisms in Green Square, Sydney

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Abstract

As cities increasingly rely on private sector property development to take a leading role in brownfield regeneration, the regulatory frameworks established by local authorities play a critical role in shaping the quality and sustainability of both public spaces and private development. In contexts where public land ownership is minimal or absent, these frameworks become essential in facilitating the provision of public streets, parks, and community facilities to support healthy and liveable urban environments. This study examines the relationship between planning regulations and built outcomes in Green Square, Sydney, Australia—a large-scale regeneration project where regulatory planning has been pivotal in ensuring the delivery of high-quality, coordinated public realm in a context of disaggregated private land ownership.

Through a case study analysis, this research investigates how specific regulatory and governance mechanisms—including development frameworks, agreements with private sector developers, public realm guidelines, design competitions and design review panels— have influenced the provision and quality of public spaces in Green Square. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study incorporates document analysis, spatial assessments, and interviews with local authorities, developers, architects and community stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of using regulation to guide private-sector-led delivery and funding of public realm, infrastructure and community facilities.

The findings highlight three key mechanisms through which local authorities influence the provision and quality of public spaces and infrastructure: (1) upfront master planning to determine

public realm and infrastructure requirements; (2) agreements with private developers regarding the provision of public realm and infrastructure; and (3) the establishment of design standards for the public realm. The Green Square case study provides valuable insights into the role that regulatory interventions can play in enabling public outcomes in private-sector-led urban regeneration, and collaboration among public and private actors in fostering healthy, inclusive, and sustainable cities in a time of austerity.

Keywords

Brownfield regeneration, Planning regulation, Public realm, Austerity urbanism

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How and why do municipalities regulate urban environments: Comparison across Europe

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Abstract

The rapid growth and increasing complexity of European cities underscore the critical need for local land-use planning to ensure sustainable urban environments. Essential for the implementation of strategic spatial planning goals, municipal-level regulations directly shape cities by controlling their physical components, such as building height and density, while also managing allowed activities and uses. However, European land-use regulations remain poorly understood in both theoretical and practical terms, while their diversity further complicates systematic analysis and comparative research.

Comparative research on regulations is vital for fostering a better understanding of differences and commonalities among countries' approaches to allow for more effective collaboration, knowledge exchange and the development of best practices in the EU. For this, a clearer grasp of the "how" and "why" of land-use regulations is crucial. We look at the "how" as practices through which regulations are implemented and enforced, and the "why" as the underlying principles and objectives driving regulatory decisions.

Our study addresses these questions by examining how local land-use planning regulations are prioritised and the extent to which they pursue efficiency and equity objectives across 31 European countries. Based on an online survey of planning professionals and academics, we found clear priority hierarchies of local regulations, revealing which regulations are common and areas where regulatory approaches differ the most. We also discovered which regulations and regulatory approaches more broadly are efficiency and/or equity-driven and how this varies among European countries. Preliminary results show that the discovered patterns add to existing comparative research on European planning, such as that on Planning Families and the COMPASS project, while also challenging some of their underlying assumptions. Thus, we expect that the findings of this study will support further systematisation of comparative research on European land-use regulations.

Keywords

European local planning, Comparative research, Planning regulations, Priority hierarchy, Efficiency and equity

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Integrating biodiversity-friendly design codes into municipal land use planning : Barriers and enablers in creating sustainable regulations

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Abstract

Integrating biodiversity into urban planning is essential for fostering healthier, more sustainable cities. To understand how cities are shaped by rules and regulations, it is crucial to examine key land use instruments, such as building and zoning regulations, which prescribe where and how development occurs and where green spaces are preserved. Establishing regulations that strengthen biodiversity requires insight into how blue and green considerations are addressed by various actors at different stages of the policy process during land use plan revisions.

This study explores how six medium-sized Swiss municipalities have incorporated biodiversity-friendly design codes—such as minimum green space ratios, tree requirements per square meter, and rooftop greening—into their building and zoning regulations. To enhance the effective enforcement of these regulations, it is vital to identify specific formulations that receive broad political support. These formulations can range from general principles to precise, measurable indicators.

Using a mixed-methods approach that includes interviews and document analysis, this research examines how different actors' roles, problem perceptions, legal mandates, and discretionary power influence the extent of biodiversity integration. The findings reveal that, while biodiversity is gaining recognition in urban planning, it often competes with other critical urban challenges, such as climate adaptation and the need for densification, which can limit the space available for urban green areas.

By shedding light on the pathways and outcomes of land use plan revisions, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how urban governance can better balance ecological and developmental goals, ultimately supporting the creation of more sustainable urban environments.

Keywords

Sustainable urban planning, Biodiversity-friendly design codes, Land use regulation

Reliquia, Reliquat, Road remnants. Unveiling spatial consequences and regulations behind expropriation for public utility

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Abstract

The concept of expropriation for public utility has ancient origins, stemming from Roman law and evolving over centuries as societies developed formal governance and land ownership systems. This mechanism has played a crucial role in the extensive infrastructural development of many European cities, particularly during the 20th century. Frequently, however, the area expropriated does not align precisely with the land impacted by the intended transformation. This discrepancy, often called “residual space,” is known in many countries as a “road relic” (from Latin Reliquia, French Reliquat, Italian Reliquato).

This contribution seeks to illuminate the concept of “relics” by exploring the deeper meaning behind this term and the historical context from which it derives. It analyzes the term’s connotations, drawing parallels with similar concepts in territorial and landscape studies, such as in De Sola Morales’ “terrain vague,” Clement’s “third landscape,” Barbieri’s “infraspace,” in the French “Paysage de la friche,” and Alan Berger’s “Drosscape.” Additionally, it examines the origins of these spaces by investigating the inefficiencies in infrastructures construction and situates them within the broader notion of space, highlighting the limitations imposed by development models

These infrastructural “frictions” reflect broader regulatory challenges and variations in how jurisdictions manage and reintegrate these underutilized spaces into urban landscapes. By uncovering the latent potential of these road remnants, this study offers a comparative analysis of expropriation practices, and their spatial consequences, across various European case studies. It aims to challenge conventional perceptions of these spaces as mere byproducts of infrastructure projects

Ultimately, the research advocates for a reimagined approach to expropriation—one that not only addresses the needs of infrastructure expansion but also fosters a more integrated, holistic approach to urban landscape stewardship.

Keywords

expropriation, mobility-infrastructures, residual-spaces, public-private-property, road-remnants

Territorialized Planning as a Tool for Urban Equity: The School Network Reorganization in Rio de Janeiro (2012–2016)

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Abstract

Urban planning and regulation play essential roles in promoting social equity and addressing socio-spatial inequalities. Policies that reorganize public services, such as the school network, can transform not only access to fundamental rights but also positively influence urban mobility and spatial organization. However, it is necessary to evaluate whether these policies were effectively implemented in a *territory-based* and *people-based* manner, incorporating active community participation in their design and execution, or whether they remained confined to a technical-administrative spatialization logic (Barca et al., 2012; Davoudi et al., 2008).

Between 2012 and 2016, Rio de Janeiro's municipal school network underwent reorganization based on planning micro-areas aimed at bringing schools closer to students' homes and optimizing educational resources. This reorganization improved accessibility and efficiency in the distribution of educational infrastructure. However, debates have emerged regarding whether the process adequately incorporated the participation of local populations—an essential component of a truly territorialized policy, as highlighted in the literature on the subject (Figueiredo et al., 2010).

This ongoing study explores the relationship between educational planning and territorial urban regulation, analyzing how sectoral policies can contribute to the socio-spatial organization of cities. The research adopts a descriptive-exploratory approach, analyzing official documents and theoretical literature on territorialization and policy implementation to understand the broader impacts of locally implemented public policies (Campos, 2011; Soja, 2009).

Keywords

Urban planning, territorialization, spatial justice, public policies, education

Track 5: Enhancing democratic governance in changing cities

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Cities and the defence of democracy

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Abstract

This panel brings together an international group of EURA scholars who have been actively examining the role of cities in defending democracy in different countries and contexts in recent years. The panel discussion will scrutinise the nature of the attacks on local autonomy and, most important, explore the efforts cities are making to resist centralising pressures. Democracy is certainly under attack. In more than a few countries far right politicians are seeking to undermine long-established constitutional and democratic norms. The evidence suggests that authoritarian governments often take steps to weaken alternative sources of power within society and, as part of this, to diminish the power of elected local governments and to weaken the influence of citizen voices.

The scholars participating in this pre-organised panel ran a session on ‘How cities are countering the radical right’ at the EURA 2023 Conference in Reykjavik. This was well-attended, and was followed up by a similar successful session, involving additional scholars, at the EURA Conference (held jointly with the UAA and ENHR) in New York City in April 2024. Panel members are currently preparing a book on this topic – Lackowska, Long, Aksztejn and Tosics (eds) *Cities against democratic backsliding*. Insights from this book, which will be published by Bristol University Press in 2026, will be drawn on in the discussion. The panel will highlight examples of ways in which bold civic leadership can strengthen the power of elected local governments. The panel relates directly to the core theme of the conference because, if cities lack power they will be unable to create healthy and sustainable cities.

Keywords

City leadership, Local democracy, Resisting authoritarian policies, Countering populism, Local/central relations

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Exploring Stakeholder's Perceptions of Throughput Legitimacy in Sustainable Urban Mobility: The Case of Kristiansund City Package

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Abstract

This study examines the role of throughput legitimacy and democratic innovations in implementing contentious sustainable urban mobility (SUM) policies. Recent scholarship indicates a decline in public satisfaction with political representation, posing significant challenges for the legitimacy of policies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Implementing such policies, particularly in the urban mobility sector, often encounters public resistance, underscoring the need for governance processes that ensure transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability. Focusing on the Kristiansund City Package in Norway, this research explores how state and non-state stakeholders perceive the potential of democratic innovations, such as citizens' assemblies, to bolster throughput legitimacy.

This study aims to extend theoretical frameworks on political legitimacy by investigating throughput legitimacy—an underexplored dimension within the SUM literature. Throughput legitimacy, which emphasises the quality of decision-making processes, aligns with the principles of democratic innovations. By incorporating diverse citizen voices, these innovations are proposed as mechanisms to enhance procedural legitimacy in policy implementation, a concept not fully integrated into current SUM discussions.

Using semi-structured interviews, the study addresses three core questions: How do stakeholders perceive the role of throughput legitimacy in SUM policies? How might democratic innovations enhance this form of legitimacy? What are the perceived challenges and opportunities in integrating such innovations in policymaking?

The anticipated findings seek to advance the theoretical discourse by clarifying how throughput legitimacy can influence public acceptance in contentious SUM contexts. Additionally, the study seeks to contribute to the broader literature by examining the interplay between democratic innovations and legitimacy in SUM, particularly within a small-city setting. By offering insights into how procedural improvements can mitigate public resistance, this research will most likely provide valuable perspectives for both scholars and practitioners, potentially informing the development of more robust and publicly supported SUM frameworks.

Keywords

throughput legitimacy, democratic innovations, sustainable urban mobility, city package, contentious measures

Understanding the role of local government - perception of municipal councilors

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Abstract

L.J. Sharpe (1973) suggested three major values of local government: autonomy, participation and effectiveness. In our paper, based on extensive survey of over 30,000 respondents from over 20 European countries, we check which of those values are perceived as the most important by municipal councilors. Do they focus first of all on democratic values or economic performance in service provision? Which factors explain different choices, ranging from individual characteristics (age, gender left-right wing location of political profile) to country traditions? And how this choice is inter-connected with various changes in local government context, especially territorial reforms? One may expect that territorial amalgamation reforms have been easier to implement in countries in which the main role of local government is perceived through effectiveness of local service delivery. In countries in which local democracy is more in a focus, territorial reforms may be opposed much stronger.

Keywords

municipal councilors, local democracy, local autonomy, effectiveness of public services

Bridging the Divide: Using Listening Exchanges to Address Polarisation on Local Climate Action

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Abstract

A key challenge facing society in the 21st-century is increasing polarisation relating to a range of policy issues, including climate change, health promotion and sustainability (Fainstein and Novy, 2023; Khan, 2024). To address these challenges, many governments have introduced policies such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), which in some cases have divided opinion and evoked strong emotional reactions (Parker and Dobson, 2023; Gössling et al, 2024).

This paper explores a new method that offers the potential to alleviate some of the community tensions and address polarisation surrounding policies such as LTNs. The method involves “Listening Exchanges” which bring together two people with opposing views, supported by a facilitator, to express their lived experiences and to engage in deep listening and repeating back. Ten pilot “Listening Exchanges” were carried out in Oxford (2024), to explore the potential for this method to bridge the gap between two people who consider themselves to be on opposite sides of the LTN debate.

The project revealed considerable scope for common ground and common values between people who take ‘opposing’ sides in relation to LTNs. The evaluation demonstrated that such face-to-face exchanges, involving storytelling and recounting of lived experiences, allow individuals to better understand each other’s perspectives, values and motivations and reduce antagonism. In a policy context, the principles of listening and exchanging experience could potentially be harnessed in community consultation. Policy makers could understand different perspectives that divide the public and generate trust between community members and decision-makers. This could strengthen inclusive decision-making in policy development.

As local authorities and wider society face increasingly challenging policy issues in the coming years, be they related to climate change and net zero, or the housing crisis and pressure on urban development, community engagement methods that can address polarisation such as Listening Exchanges, will become ever more valuable.

Keywords

‘Listening Exchange’, community engagement, polarisation, Low Traffic Neighbourhood, Oxford

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Planners' trust in citizens: Implications for participatory planning

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Abstract

In an era of collaborative and participatory planning, citizens and public planners are frequently expected to collaborate. Reciprocal trust is heralded as pivotal for collaborative processes such as citizen consultations. While there is a large body of research on citizens’ trust in planning and planners (vertical trust), public planners’ trust in citizens (reversed vertical trust) has received relatively limited scholarly attention. To address this gap, this paper draws on a recent survey among public planners in Swedish local governments (N=524). We seek to foster a better understanding of the implications of planners’ trust and distrust in citizens for consultative and participatory processes in public planning. Our results indicate that planners with greater trust in citizens are more willing to include citizens’ perspectives in planning processes and support citizen participation concerning controversial or complicated planning issues. Further, planners with

limited trust in citizens express a higher demand for control measures on consultative processes (such as random selection of participating citizens).

Keywords

Participatory planning, Trust, Democratic innovations

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Towards Democratic Sustainability Governance: a systematic review.

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Abstract

Academic consensus cries for a democratically, legitimate and socially just sustainability transition. Previous research has emphasised the essential role of local government both in enabling democratic citizen engagement and in the enforcement of sustainable development policies. This sets local governments at the forefront of promoting sustainability and ensuring that sustainability policies are addressed democratically and considered just and legitimate.

Democratic aspects of sustainable development are getting increased attention in sustainable transition studies. Literature often refers to the need for stakeholder involvement, citizen participation, collaborative planning, and co-creation to promote sustainability initiatives that also are territorially sensitive particularly related to socio-economic and demographic diversities. However, currently, there is no systematic framework that scrutinises how these theories and concepts relate. Therefore, there is an urgent need to further develop an understanding of and clarify the concept of *Democratic Sustainability Governance*.

This paper explores how Democratic Sustainability Governance can be conceptualised as an umbrella concept for related theories and practices. We ask *what is the current state of the art of democratic local governance of sustainability?* We answer this question by systematically reviewing the peer-reviewed academic literature, particularly on local governance. The literature review is carried out by following the PRISMA statement for systematic reviews and maps the central themes of the concept. The paper further addresses questions of how different (and which) regional perspectives are addressed, are differences depending on the size of the community (rural/urban, small, medium and large cities), and how this concept relates to other established concepts (such as co-creation, citizen participation and good governance). Finally, the paper contributes with a synthesis of the current state of the art of Democratic Sustainability Governance on the local scale, as well as a conceptual framework that can be used in future empirical research.

Keywords

Democracy, sustainability governance, local governance, sustainability transition

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Exploring the critical potential of urban space produced in authoritarianism: Mega-space hegemony in Urban China

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Abstract

Chinese urbanisation is often understood under the authoritarian and developmental framework. Amid China's growing global role in planetary urbanism, I propose to explore the critical potential of urban space produced by this authoritarianism to understand the diversity of democratic practices and further envisage democratic urban governance in both China and the West.

By identifying a characteristic spatial typology in urban China: mega-space, I investigated three urban projects embodying material bigness in spatial production. They cover the state-led designing of a civic building, the private management of a commercial project, and the grassroots engagement with urban narratives. These projects demonstrate a spatial hegemony that is stabilised by the power triangulation of state dominance, diverting the state from oscillating between binary conditions as passive revolution towards what Koohass describes as the 'market economy minus democracy'. This hegemonic condition implies the potential of democratic practices by engaging with the authoritarian spatial production.

Mega-space hegemony reveals diverse agencies that cannot be simply reduced to the state, thus helping to deconstruct the power triangulation of authoritarian urbanisation for envisaging alternative approaches to urban democracy. From a global perspective, mega-space hegemony can also be subsumed under the framework of 'China as a method' (Shin et al. 2022) in the post-(neoliberal)hegemony era. Mega-space is a method to expand China's developmental authoritarianism on a global scale as well as a corresponding urban arena that incubates critical discourse. Meanwhile, it is an epistemological invitation to explore democratic practices without the necessity to reference Chinese exceptionalism or Eurocentric critiques of capitalism.

Keywords

spatial hegemony, urban China , democracy , authoritarianism

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“Planners have a heart, too” – How emotions impact democratic governance for local transformation

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Abstract

Urban planning is always confronted with “wicked” problems, characterized by diffuse problem definitions, competing interests and contradictory objectives. This is particularly true for local transformation towards sustainable development goals. One important conflict is the preservation of green spaces in times of high demand for new housing. Planners who seek to find practical solutions are often met with emotional protest by citizens’ action groups. Urban transformation gets extremely difficult when these conflicts prevent a trustful cooperation among urban stakeholders.

This paper draws attention to the role of emotions in planning conflicts both on the sides of planners and of citizens’ action groups, and it suggests that the regulation of emotions – and in particular, the emotional need for recognition – might be important yet often overlooked impact factors in democratic governance for local transformation. The paper presents findings from a field study, based on the analysis of interviews, documents, and observant participation, which focused on a local conflict over the development of a number of currently green or vacant plots in a German city. The paper shows the contradictory effects of emotions on the conflict: While planners tend to insist on their professional role as rational experts and to delegitimize emotional protest by citizens’ action groups, they admit that “planners have a heart, too”, and that they, too, are emotionally involved in the conflict. Members of citizens’ action groups, in contrast, feel appalled by planners who – from their point of view – show no empathy, and find relief and support in their groups which provide mutual recognition and reassurance. The paper shows how these patterns are reproduced in encounters and how they prevent any kind of conflict resolution. It finishes with the question how to overcome these patterns and how the role of emotions in planning conflicts might be addressed.

Keywords

Urban planning, Planning conflicts, Sustainability transformation, Emotions, Civic initiatives

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Breaking down barriers: power, knowledge and planning in urban transformation

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Abstract

A shifting social and economic landscape is driving cities to become more resilient, sustainable and inclusive. This transformation must involve people, and many city authorities are aspiring to engage citizens more actively in decision making and to rebalance power in city governance.

However, this aspiration faces significant challenges, particularly amidst growing citizen disillusionment. This paper adapts the Berkana Institute's Two-Loop Model to analyse the coexistence of two 'systems' in urban governance: a dominant system directing urban change, characterised by stability and order, and an emergent system enacting urban change, comprising a vibrant web of citizens activities. The dominant system prioritises bureaucratic efficiency through consultation processes aimed at fairness and transparency, but often fails to meaningfully incorporate citizen inputs, perpetuating power imbalances and marginalising voices. By contrast, the emergent system, while vibrant and innovative, can suffer from fragmentation and lack of broader impact, as citizens actively participate in matters directly and indirectly affecting their lives but do not influence city-level decisions. It seems unlikely that engagement, where citizens have meaningful involvement, influence and accountability in urban governance, can occur within either system, so the challenge is in navigating the interplay between them and addressing their underlying complexities. To achieve meaningful engagement, we find that power imbalances, fragmentation and communication barriers must be addressed. Overcoming power imbalances and communication barriers requires resources to build knowledge-infrastructure and democratic capability. This involves valuing, mobilising and translating the knowledge generated by citizen research, action and planning. Fragmentation, on the other hand, can be addressed by enabling and connecting actions, knowledge and plans. This can share experience, reduce emotional burden and identify cross-area and city-wide actions to supplement local action. Ultimately, effective governance should focus as much on enabling and connecting citizen action as it should on mobilising knowledge to foster meaningful engagement and drive change.

Keywords

Governance, Engagement, Citizens, Power

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Analysing and evaluating co-productive planning practice in Germany

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Abstract

Co-production, which refers to multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnership with citizens, is an increasingly popular concept in planning literature. There are several dimensions of co-production and attempts have been made to gain a comprehensive understanding of the concept in planning including the development of Co-7D-framework which includes 1) actor; 2) reason; 3) input; 4) output; 5) phase; 6) means; and 7) context (Lee et al. 2024). The concept is also more and more found in planning practice in Germany where co-production is seen as a key principle for good urban development policy. It is, however, open to question to what extent co-production is achieved. Thus, the aim of the research is to analyse and evaluate co-productive planning practice in Germany. Co-7D-framework is applied along with document analysis and expert interviews to analyse a number of case studies. The research gives an insight into how urban spaces are co-produced. Furthermore, it provides a spectrum of co-productive planning practice. Based on the

research findings, policy implications are provided as to how to achieve a higher level of co-production in planning.

Keywords

Co-production, Planning practice, Co-7D-framework

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Conflict as a driving force towards intrinsic collaboration? Insurgent citizenship practices in contemporary urban development in Zurich, Switzerland

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Abstract

While collaborative approaches in urban planning have faced criticism as potential smokescreens for genuine decision-making, they remain deeply embedded in planning practice, particularly in democratic societies. For instance, the Swiss law on spatial planning (revised in 2014) stipulates the crucial principles of bottom-up interaction among various administrative bodies, subsidiarity, and autonomy of the local administration. Such vertical cooperation, emphasising the importance of the local level in planning decision-making, opens the way for organising horizontal interaction among many stakeholders in an inclusive, participatory and democratic manner. As a result, cooperative planning is considered a norm in the Swiss planning context, underpinned by the overall political system of direct democracy.

Nevertheless, influenced by neoliberalism, Swiss planning practice increasingly confronts challenges of gentrification, social exclusion, and distorted power geometries. This shift has compromised genuine cooperation, with planners either openly supporting pro-development agendas or masking exclusionary practices under pragmatic justifications, ultimately jeopardising the protection of public interest.

The recent developments around the Tueffenwies area in Zurich illuminate the approach, strategies, and tactics employed by the local community to persuade both politicians and planners to embrace alternative visions instead of unilaterally proposed solutions. Beginning with the neglect and ignorance of community demands by the political and professional elite, the in-depth qualitative case study also highlights major bottlenecks in achieving effective cooperation, identifying key allies and opponents, and exploring avenues for compromise. Most notably, the community's efforts to preserve the essence of the Tueffenwies area led to institutional changes in the city planning department, including the establishment of an additional office responsible for communication with interested parties. Therefore, the critical case analysis provides insights into refining the mainstream planning approach by moving beyond 'declarative' collaboration and fostering a genuine appreciation of the transformative potential of agonistic engagement.

Keywords

radical democracy, civic activism, cooperative planning, Zurich

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Local Social Sustainability and Political Leadership

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Abstract

The paper explores the conditions and potential for addressing social sustainability within local representative democracy. Local government plays a key role in the translation of knowledge into concrete strategies, measures and instruments, and the literature on social sustainability points to political involvement as fundamental to local implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, the same literature indicates that local governments struggle to operationalize social sustainability, and, consequently, to adopt and implement policies that addresses the social sustainability of their communities. Against this background the paper asks how information from participatory processes affects elected officials' understanding of social sustainability, and whether the framing and content of this information have a bearing on their willingness and ability to address such issues.

Through workshops with local councilors in three Norwegian municipalities, we have examined how information generated about or by community residents is assessed by local councilors. In the workshops the councilors have been exposed to different sources of information about disadvantaged areas in their municipalities, i.e., socioeconomic data, survey and focus group interviews with residents, and the outcomes of cocreation processes involving various community stakeholders. The councilors have been asked whether and to what extent the information contributes to a clearer understanding of what social sustainability means in a particular context, and to propose or evaluate concrete strategies and measures to address issues of social sustainability.

Our findings suggest that the councilors assess the information along a knowledge transfer versus responsiveness continuum, and that their understanding of local social sustainability, as well as their perceived ability and willingness to act, are greater where participation is conceived as solidaristic and complementary to representative democracy. In particular, the councilors are receptive of information that is action-oriented, but not prescriptive, i.e., that leaves room for political priorities.

Keywords

social sustainability, political leadership, participation, responsiveness, knowledge transfer

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Still Trying to Understand Urban Participatory Governance: Exploring the further institutionalization of citizens dialogues in Göteborg, Sweden

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Abstract

This paper revisits the city of Göteborg to explore a decade of participatory and deliberative governance arrangements (PGA) in urban politics. Based on observations between 2010-2015 (Tahvilzadeh 2015) of the contents, roots, and motives behind PGAs, this paper revisits the “what” and “why” of citizen dialogues. The participatory turn emerged as a city-wide strategy for increasing citizens influence on policy issues as part of an egalitarian agenda, amidst the centralization of sublocal city-districts units. The framework for PGAs was vaguely institutionalized and open for contradictory motives, spanning from enhancing political equalities and responsabilization for austerity governance. Ten years on (2023-2027), deliberative ideals are professionalized and institutionalized and accentuated given further centralization through the elimination of city district units. More professionals and entrepreneurs are working with citizens dialogues and deliberative policy communities are more present and capacious.

Yet, while PGAs are part of egalitarian urban agenda it is still an open-ended practice. The paper concludes that understanding the functions of PGA necessitates both a systemic and an organizational analysis. From a systemic point of view, trajectories of racial neoliberalization of urban governance both impede and make necessary legitimacy enhancing practices beyond existing tenets of representative democracy and bureaucratic professionalism. As racialized inequalities are exacerbated due to variegated neoliberal urbanism, government needs more sensors for responsivity with its' inhabitants to increase legitimacy and problem solution capacity. From an organizational standpoint, the functions of PGAs is much a matter of 'bureaucratic politics'. Meaning that the real masters of democratic engineering are agents on in management, planning and street-level bureaucracies, and crucial for its realization are organizational norms, values, and interests of professionals. “Dialogue” is in practice formed by administrative units and their logics, and logics emerging through negotiations between administrative units.

Keywords

citizen participation, urban governance, deliberative democracy, participatory democracy, racial neoliberalism

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Democracy Radar: A Reference Framework for Designing Democratic Innovations in Urban Governance

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Abstract

Although political agendas address citizen participation as central to tackling multiple crises through urban governance and planning, there remains a significant gap between discourse and reality. Indicator 11.3.2 of Sustainable Development Goal 11 (2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development), which focuses on Sustainable Cities and Communities, seeks to measure the "proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically" (United Nations, 2016). This indicator was almost eliminated, not only due to lack of data, but also due to lack of understanding of these frameworks.

The mechanisms that make up these frameworks are known as democratic innovations (DIs) and aim to transfer power to citizens, promote socio-spatial justice, foster inclusion and strengthen trust. They include participatory budgeting, citizen assemblies, e-democracy, public-common partnerships, and others. Understanding how DIs are designed can contribute to transforming democratic institutions toward a new paradigm of urban governance.

This work proposes a reference framework for analyzing the institutional designs of DIs. This framework aims to: i) guide design choices aligned with intended objectives; ii) capture the diversity of variables that determine the functioning of DIs; iii) facilitate learning and knowledge transfer across different DIs, contexts, and cities; and iv) link institutional design to contextual dependency.

This work is expected to support policymakers and planners in choosing designs that align with their objectives and contexts, provide tools to municipal technicians for adjustments in processes, such as correcting gaps in inclusion and improving communication with citizens, and assist citizens, activists, and civil society organizations by facilitating the renegotiation of choices that restrict participation, in order to achieve greater decision-making power. Finally, this work is expected to contribute to the field of knowledge by offering a robust framework for evaluating and comparing democratic innovations.

Keywords

urban governance, democratic innovations, institutional design, evaluation framework

Participation in decision-making processes: Varying democratic arrangements in urban development projects

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Abstract

Input-based participation is important in urban development to ensure the knowledge, engagement and ownership of citizens and stakeholders. However, too much input could threaten local governments' ability to ensure long-term perspectives. Balancing input- and output-based participation thus seems to be a crucial task for local governments. While many scholars see a trade-off between input and output, this article understands the output-side as an arena for different types of participation. The balance therefore depends on which model of participation is chosen. In this article, the theoretical point of departure is based within the co-creation/co-production literature, while also drawing on democracy theory. The aim is to explore the balance between input-based and output-based arenas for participation in urban governance. Thus, addressing the following research question: What kinds of democratic arrangements are in play in complex and radical urban development projects? The discussion is illustrated by a qualitative case study of three urban development projects in Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands, where each project was catalysed by a critical juncture. These junctures then led to a mix of participation arrangements which encompassed different level of institutionalization of the participation process.

Keywords

Urban governance, Representative democracy, Participation, Co-creation, Case study

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Shaping the public spaces: practices of urban planning, decision-making and conflicts in Ukraine

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Abstract

In recent years, much of the public spaces in Ukraine have been passed through rethinking and transformation. This is due to the fact that many of the public spaces in one way or another still retained the traces of the Soviet past by their organization, functions, design and aesthetics. But apart from the post-Soviet transformations, active changes similarly occurred in all other public spaces, causing multiple debates on implemented conceptions and their effects, new designs and functions, introduced and eroded spatial practices. Reshaping of public spaces is typically accompanied by a number of conflicts appearing with regard to proposed ideas, announced

solutions or discovered facts as well as decision-making process – availability of public discussion and civic engagement, consideration of the position and arguments of the involved parties, usage of the planning tools to balance the needs, interests and ensure a long-term perspective of the changes.

In this research, based on several public spaces in Ukraine, we analyze transformation practices and related public discourses, debates over proposed decisions and urban planning projects, thus illustrating how decision-making process and tools used affect the representation of various groups and the outcomes of transformations. Using the analysis of decision-making through official documents and projects, media screening and in-depth interviews, we show how exclusion of certain groups is produced.

The study shows that in most cases the public engagement is formal, whilst real debates arise as a result of transformations. Mostly, implemented solutions are populist by their nature and appeal to the needs of the majority of residents, rarely relying on long-term discussion or other forms of interaction, architectural competitions and original projects, instead duplicating typical approaches. Thus, we illustrate the need for a critical rethinking of transformations and decision-making, their impacts on developing more inclusive urban policies and urban spaces in Ukraine.

Keywords

public spaces, transformations, Ukraine, public debates, conflicts

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Dilemmas in urban participatory governance

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Abstract

This paper explores contemporary urban governance, emphasizing the dynamic interactions between local authorities and civil society. Recent years have seen policymakers across Europe increasingly engage intermediary organizations to address various socio-economic and political issues. This shift reflects an understanding that urban governance is about more than just the strategies of formal institutions and elected officials; it is a complex arena where negotiation and shared authority play crucial roles.

The paper highlights the dual nature of urban participatory governance: while it can enhance legitimacy, informed decision-making, social cohesion, and policy responsiveness, it also presents challenges. Issues such as unequal representation, process complexity, decision deadlock, resource intensity, and the potential for short-term populist pressures can undermine these efforts.

Additionally, the study addresses several ontological dilemmas inherent in participatory governance models. These include unconscious manipulation by facilitators, the unintentional marginalization of certain citizens, normative romanticism, reliance on mediation, the exclusion of disadvantaged groups, and the elitization of activism. Each of these issues reveals underlying tensions in how participatory processes are conceived and executed, often influenced by simplistic dichotomies that overlook the complexity of power relations, policy entrepreneurship, and technical expertise.

The paper concludes by proposing an integrated vision for participatory governance that emphasizes autonomy, coherence, and relevance. This includes a roadmap to foster inclusive participation, hybrid engagement models, realistic goal-setting, resource allocation, adaptive approaches, feedback loops, and balanced short- and long-term objectives. The goal is to create sustainable governance structures that support inclusive and responsive urban governance within a coherent and accountable framework.

Keywords

Participatory Governance, Urban Policy, Social Cohesion, Power Dynamics, Local democracy

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Learning to innovate: Schools and knowledge infrastructures as Civic Hubs in fragile neighbourhoods and their Implications for social inclusion

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Abstract

As several studies have shown, fragile neighbourhoods are often marked by educational poverty and social exclusion, exacerbating different forms of inequalities (e.g. Nieuwenhuis, Hooimeijer, 2016; Boterman et al. 2019). Beyond serving as educational institutions, schools are essential nodes for neighbourhood vitality and can become platforms for testing new, inclusive community engagement models that do not leave the most vulnerable behind (Aernouts, Cognetti and Maranghi, 2023).

In neighbourhoods, schools have the potential to be catalysts for developing innovative educational and collaborative practices. These practices not only support social innovation (Bragaglia, 2021), but also directly address the specific needs of marginalized populations, fostering inclusion and community empowerment. This paper explores initiatives that strengthen the relationship between knowledge infrastructures (schools and universities) and urban spaces, examining how schools can become a civic hub and also facilitate “living lab” experiences in neighbourhoods (Nesti, 2018). The study reflects on collaborative activities undertaken by the AuroraLAB-Politecnico di Torino action research laboratory with a primary school in the Aurora

district of Turin, Italy. Established in 2018, AuroraLAB has been developing a collaboration and service-learning process with the Parini School over the past few years, resulting in several achievements: the school's participation in the European project TONITE-UIA, the development of a Collaboration Pact, workshops involving school children and university students, and a reflective process on the role of schools in fragile neighbourhoods through focus groups. Starting from the AuroraLAB case study, this work aims to explore the opportunities for considering schools as potential civic hubs for building shared solutions and enhancing social inclusion, particularly in neighbourhoods facing significant challenges.

Keywords

schools, social innovation, fragile neighbourhoods, civic hub

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Social Housing Neighbourhood Climate Action Plan: Assessing Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

In the context of the current global environmental and climate emergency, cities have increasingly become optimal sites for developing policies and plans that support climate action and carbon neutrality. This shift has led to growing interest in the role of urban neighbourhoods in addressing local climate change impacts through democratic, community-driven mitigation and adaptation efforts. Neighbourhood-scale, bottom-up initiatives offer valuable opportunities to place communities at the centre of climate action. However, local authorities face significant challenges, as these initiatives often struggle with limited authority, economic resources, and sustained community participation needed to maintain effective programs.

As many cities face rising social inequality, it is essential for municipalities to address both social and climate priorities. In this context, the ability to evaluate and prioritise which neighbourhoods engage in climate action—and, within these neighbourhoods, to identify which groups participate in and benefit from these efforts—has become crucial. Prioritising climate action scenarios that enhance the well-being of affordable and social housing neighbourhoods is especially important, as many of vulnerable social groups reside in these neighbourhood in metropolitan suburbs.

The primary interest of the research is exploring how climate action policies and practices at the neighbourhood scale can contribute to and accelerate carbon neutrality within cities. The research focuses on social housing neighbourhoods, examining how municipalities converge and balance climate action targets with priorities for energy justice and social inclusion for vulnerable social groups.

By selecting Rome and Bristol as case studies, this research aims to investigate varied approaches across distinct contexts—from making commitments to climate change mitigation and adaptation, social equity, and community participation to implementing these commitments and forecasting their impacts. The study seeks to understand the challenges and barriers faced in evaluating cross-sector and cross-scale policy interventions, selecting the best transition scenarios and assessing the potential outcomes.

Keywords

Climate Action Plan, Social Housing Neighbourhoods, Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies, Community Participation

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Centring community leadership in urban climate action: Learnings from Bristol's Community Climate Action project

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Abstract

Over the last five years, communities in Bristol have developed a citywide model for community-led climate action, leading the way in delivering new approaches to addressing key issues in the city such as food, nature, transport, waste, green jobs and skills, energy and buildings. Through the [Community Climate Action project](#), 17 community partners have co-produced strategic community climate action plans with local people. These have been developed as part of a capacity building programme for diverse local community organisations, coordinated by Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership (an independent place-based climate action network) and in collaboration with city partners including the local council and climate and nature organisations. This critical mass of community plans (from communities of place, demographic communities and a community of interest) provide a mandate for strategic climate action, developing a pipeline of community-led projects for investment and helping to realise a just transition to net zero.

A key element of this model is its unique focus on both climate and social priorities, nurturing community leadership on these issues in the city, and using creativity to engage more, and more diverse people. The development and piloting of a [Community Leadership panel on Climate and Just Transition](#), reviewing city and regional strategies and initiatives from a community and just transition perspective has been key to ensuring that community insights are valued in decision making and city-governance and that strategic initiatives are fit-for purpose, and this continues to evolve as we test and learn about the approach.

In this presentation, we share insights from this approach in Bristol, including the impact achieved by community partners, as well as some of the learnings, challenges and key ingredients for success when it comes to replicating this approach in other places.

Keywords

Climate action, Community, Just transition, Leadership, Co-production

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Appropriate local planning spaces for place-sensitive urban development - the increased use of non-statutory neighbourhood planning in Denmark

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Abstract

Denmark is currently experiencing a remarkable development in the use of neighborhood level non-statutory planning spaces to deal with holistic place-sensitive urban development. Earlier studies have conceptualized similar phenomena as ‘soft spaces’, often situated in-between formal levels of planning (Hansen et al 2022, Haughton et al. 2010, Allmendinger and Haughton 2009). However, the Danish case clearly illustrates the building of local soft spaces in parallel to, and often deliberately in combination and supplement to, statutory local level urban planning. In a current research project, we have screened the entire country for this phenomenon and registered 1,090 examples. They are holistically oriented and co-creative neighborhood level strategies and plans integrating a mixture of paradigms, hence not being dominated by developer-led approaches but including wider social, environmental and climate perspectives. This is remarkable, as Denmark has a decentralized planning system with significant local planning powers and strong statutory local planning with both strategic and land use regulatory instruments. It is even more remarkable considering that it is almost entirely the municipalities themselves who facilitates and helps to build those ‘extra’ planning spaces in collaboration with local communities. We are currently studying 13 in-depth cases; however, we can already see how such plans are used to create a more accessible local planning language, build new local governance spaces, build bridges between top-down strategies and bottom-up citizen social needs, and renew and innovate statutory planning. Multiple crisis and sustainable development agendas are increasingly entering local settings and fostering more complex and diverse local strategy-making initiatives. On the other hand, while such plans can be argued to be fit for purpose and more appropriate, links between statutory and non-statutory planning spaces are continuously a challenge, and the widening use of such plans is also increasing the need for coordination between the non-statutory plans themselves.

Keywords

Space for Communities to Grow: Exploring Participative Research Methodologies for Action on Greenspace Deprivation

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Abstract

What greenspace do diverse urban populations need to grow and flourish? The provision of greenspace for public health has been foundational in urban planning. Health benefits of urban greenspaces are increasingly well evidenced and their positive impacts may be greatest for those suffering social deprivation. In the UK, people identifying as Black Asian and ethnic minority disproportionately suffer overcrowded living conditions, have poorest health outcomes, and are overrepresented in communities identified as greenspace deprived. This project investigated the potential of using the Same Skies Walk, Talk, Eat method to establish community members' perceptions of, and preferences for action on greenspace deprivation, views that are not typically part of greenspace deprivation studies.

Using social media platforms and word-of-mouth recruitment, community residents and investigators jointly planned four walks through two ethnically diverse West Yorkshire neighbourhoods identified as statistically greenspace deprived. The walks, which we filmed, allowed in depth discussion, private and group conversation, concluding with a shared meal in a local restaurant. At the film screening, guests heard residents' stories of their lives, challenges faced in using and improving greenspaces, and how residents' political actions to improve their communities were often thwarted by disjointed processes within local government.

There were challenges. No-one from the organisations responsible for greenspace management in the deprived areas attended the walks or the film screening. In spite of policies identifying openness to community views and participation, there was no clear route for this grassroots initiative to engage with local government decision making.

However, we propose Same Skies Walk, Talk, Eat methodology is suitable for wider use in addressing urban greenspace inequality, informing effective action and greenspace needs assessment. It allows for the collection of rich data through the multigenerational inclusion of grassroots organisation representatives and community members in the planning, execution, and analysis of the events.

Keywords

greenspace, deprivation, inclusion, co-production

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The curious participation and design processes of Catujal and Manjoeira in the Portuguese Revolutionary Process

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Abstract

The experience of the Portuguese Local Support Service (Serviço de Apoio Ambulatório Local—SAAL) epitomises the national revolution of 1974–75, allowing poor city workers to reclaim the right to housing and the city. This presentation discusses the Catujal and Manjoeira Estates, built in this context, in Loures (Lisbon Metropolitan Area - LMA), by brigades led, in both cases, by the architect Francisco Pires (Pitum) Keil do Amaral. In Catujal, we find a rapidly growing area with illegal construction, while in Manjoeira there is a distinctly rural context, far from major urban centres. In both cases, the technical teams found solutions that stemmed from the genuine needs of the population, which was only possible by involving them in the decision-making process. Regardless of its origin, this fervour, which has generated a sometimes romantic view of SAAL, can be said to be its greatest legacy: taking the discussion around habitat out of the intellectual circuits of the press and into the actual streets that were taking shape. Indeed, this was the first and only time in Portuguese modernity that urbanisation was—for better or for worse—decided from below, by the organised working classes, and that alone makes it worthy of close attention, especially when it was successful. We aim to provide an observation of these cases, attempting to highlight the process of cooperation that linked those designing the habitat with those who were to live in it. Through the cross-referencing of archival material, on-site visits, and interviews with the architects and residents, we seek to bring to light two cases where participation and transdisciplinary work were crucial for territorial development and the construction of habitat.

Keywords

Housing, participation, history, suburban, rural

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Place leadership and co-creation in urban regeneration: How place attachments shape perceptions of legitimacy

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Abstract

Place leadership involves mobilising multiple actors, facilitating relations and generating a shared vision for local and/or regional development. In urban regeneration processes, place leadership intersects with and is enacted through spaces of co-creation, offering mechanisms of participatory and collaborative governance. Such spaces are however plagued by legitimacy challenges, especially as informal spaces bringing together different interests and, in a context of urban regeneration, where relationships to the urban fabric and city centres are changing. The legitimacy of such spaces is significant for place leadership as it raises questions around inclusivity, accountability and efficacy.

In this paper, I explore perceptions of such legitimacy from inside and outside the co-creation space. I argue that the legitimacy of co-creation approaches within urban regeneration exceed questions of institutional or platform design and management, and also emerge from and involve local place-based identities and attachments to place, including memories and affective experiences. To do so, I examine how place-based attachments inform perceptions of a forthcoming urban regeneration project and the spaces and structure established to implement it.

I draw on a case study of the regeneration of a 20-acre, half-demolished shopping centre in the Nottingham city centre in the UK. The regeneration process included online public engagements commencing in 2020, and the formation of an independent multi-stakeholder advisory group to digest citizen and expert inputs and develop a vision and delivery plan for the site. Analysing 27 interviews with various actors, I argue that place shapes perceptions in two ways: producing a temporal orientation towards both past and future, and a scalar orientation towards both local and global. These orientations influence how people perceive the legitimacy of the co-creation process, with implications for place leadership.

Keywords

place leadership, co-creation, urban regeneration, public engagement

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What creativity? A critical approach to urban innovation and inequalities

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Abstract

More than two decades ago, Richard Florida introduced, not without controversy, his well-known theory on creative classes and cities. Since then, the concept has influenced the debate on the movement of artists, designers, and technology workers around the globe. However, the emphasis on urban growth models associated with creativity has been subject to criticism. The proliferation of urban districts and cities celebrated for pushing forward urban innovation is considered one of the major drivers of worsening socio-spatial inequalities today. In contrast, grassroots groups and movements raise their voices in the public debate and often adopt creative means, which fuels an urgent question: what is the role of creativity today in the city? Theoretically, I align with the

Lefebvrian understanding of creativity as a means to subvert the (re)production of dominant ideologies. Accordingly, daily routines should be interrupted by collective efforts that challenge established norms and enable people to inhabit – and claim ownership of – the city in new ways. Through this lens, I engage with critiques of Florida’s conception of creativity to analyse the role of creativity in Lisbon. A focus on the last decade provides unique insights spanning from the impacts of the austerity measures (2011-2014) to the unprecedented acceleration of the local economy, mostly driven by international investments in the real estate and tourism sectors. In recent years, political discourse and the provision of new infrastructure for the creative class have positioned Lisbon among the top global destinations. Yet, alongside this enthusiasm, the past decade has also seen a significant rise of grassroots forces against spreading injustices by reinventing their repertoires of action. Based on the insights drawn from the case of Lisbon, this paper aims to advance the theoretical debate on creativity by unpacking the concept in connection to pressures for innovation and backlashes of increasing inequalities.

Keywords

Creativity, Inequality, Movement, Capitalism, Lisbon

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Democracy in Architectural Aesthetics: Reconciling Public Preferences, Expert Independence, and Governance Challenges in Urban Development

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Abstract

Several studies suggest that there is a discrepancy between public preferences on architectural aesthetics and the actual design of new urban areas. People generally favour new urban developments designed in 'classically' and 'traditionally' inspired architectural styles, regardless of income level, gender, political ideology, and ethnic background. Nevertheless, contemporary examples of such buildings are few in Sweden (which constitutes the empirical focus of this paper), as well as in many other European countries. In comparison, “Modernist” architectural expressions are much more prevalent. Thus, the public's architectural preferences do not seem to guide the actual aesthetics of new urban buildings in any considerable sense. In other words, *ceteris paribus*, there is a lack of *democratic responsiveness* in urban architectural aesthetics because the actual design of urban buildings does not respond to the wishes of the electorate.

In a current paper, I analyse and map out different positions on this issue in the Swedish public architectural debate. On the one side of the debate, they view the discrepancy between the actual building and the preferences of the public as constituting a democratic problem. On the other side, they argue that it would be populist to allow the public, through political influence, to govern architectural aesthetics, as this would jeopardise key democratic values such as independent experts and free artists. This debate is thus characterised by different – but at the same time *prima facie* reasonable – democratic and ethical principles.

This paper examines this democratic conflict through the lens of governance in urban development. It explores how city leaders might navigate tensions between representative and participatory democracy while addressing public demands for aesthetic responsiveness. By framing architectural aesthetics as a governance issue, the study offers insights into how urban planning can balance public engagement with independent expertise, contributing to democratic legitimacy and inclusive urban environments.

Keywords

Urban governance, Democratic responsiveness, Architectural aesthetics, Public preferences, Participatory democracy

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Selective inclusion: how Indonesia's smart city program serves marginalised community

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Abstract

Research on smart cities progressively focuses on achieving inclusive urbanism. Shifting away from a technology-centric approach, scholars and policy makers started placing greater emphasis on a citizen-centric perspective which prioritized on inclusivity technology adaptation strategy and community participation. Inclusion generally indicates the democratic principle of engaging a greater number of people in policymaking, resulting in more equal and legitimate decisions. conversely, the involving all urbanites in all urban development matters would be inefficient because a time consuming, active, and strategic process of 'relationship-building' to achieve specific shared outcomes. The exclusion are more likely for marginalized communities. Our study aims to uncovers factors influencing selective inclusion of marginalized communities in smart city programs. We conduct a comparative case study of two marginalized communities in Indonesia's smart city program: Malang Heritage Kayutangan Kampung and Magelang Logo Kampung. We find selective inclusion, which is smart city managers intentionally include communities and community members to deliver pre-established policy goals, while excluding those not fitting the objectives and procedures. The intentional factors relates to the institutional rules of Indonesia's smart city program, which selectively include community initiatives within the framework of governmental objectives. While the history of conflict and power imbalance are unintentional factors that created social exclusion.

Keywords

Smart city, selective inclusion, Marginalised Community, Indonesia

"The Va Cabanyal Participatory Experiment: The struggle for inclusive urban governance in the Regeneration of El Cabanyal"

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Abstract

Va Cabanyal was a participatory process designed to obtain EU funds to address the urgent regeneration needs of El Cabanyal in Valencia that took place from September to December 2015. While the main one was to obtain financing from the EU to start working on the area's regeneration, the second aim of the strategy was to initiate a process beyond this European call that would be the basis of a new form of urban governance, in which neighbours would be not only objects but also active agents in the regeneration of El Cabanyal. This paper argues that Va Cabanyal epitomises the challenges of fostering inclusive urban governance in diverse and contested neighborhoods. Through the Va Cabanyal process, the local administration sought to repair years of neglect by introducing participatory urban renewal strategies that encouraged collective decision-making. However, the process revealed significant tensions surrounding legitimacy, inclusion, and the socio-spatial dynamics of neighborhood renewal.

This paper explores how Va Cabanyal became a site of dissensus, with diverse stakeholders—including long-term residents, activist groups, Roma communities, and squatters—competing to define the neighborhood's future. Central to these debates were questions about the right to participate, the risks of gentrification, and the need for equitable regeneration. While the initiative aimed to integrate diverse voices, it often replicated existing power imbalances, marginalizing certain groups and reinforcing hegemonic perspectives. Drawing on extensive fieldwork, interviews, and participatory observations, the study examines how the participatory framework both facilitated and constrained the emergence of new political subjectivities. It interrogates the inherent tensions between consensus-building and the diverse, often conflicting, aspirations of stakeholders. This analysis contributes to discussions on just urban governance, offering insights into the complexities of designing participatory processes that genuinely empower all voices in shaping urban futures.

Keywords

Participatory processes, Democratic Urban governance, Urban regeneration, El Cabanyal

Data Driven Democracy: Integrating Geodesign and Deliberative Democracy for Enhanced Collaborative Planning

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Abstract

The current planning paradigm centers communication, collaboration and public participation. It brings diverse stakeholders into a shared dialogue aiming for equitable outcomes while reframing planners as facilitators. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) have revolutionised this process, fostering Planning Support Systems (PSS) that integrate data-driven approaches into collaborative planning. The most prominent concept that bridges both collaborative planning and GIS lies under the umbrella of geodesign. It found global success in facilitating the collaborative planning in an interactive, data driven way. Despite the multi-scale application that characterises the geodesign approach around the globe, its critiques are focusing on the lack of the data of the qualitative aspects of participation and the collaboration barriers between stakeholders. Therefore, achieving a fully communicative-collaborative and truly inclusive planning process remains challenging due to the difficulty of eliminating power imbalances and preventing potential manipulation. To tackle these issues, many collaborative planning scholars highlight the significance of deliberative democracy as a key element of the planning process. Deliberative democracy offers the political framework necessary for enhancing communicative-collaborative planning. It helps address these issues by creating a more fair and inclusive decision-making process. The deliberative approach surpasses traditional collaborative approach by including diverse views and recognising differences among participants. This paper aims to examine the gap between geodesign and deliberative democracy, two significant approaches in contemporary planning. By investigating their individual strengths and limitations, this paper examines the intersections and gaps between geodesign and deliberative democracy, and it explores how their integration enhances collaborative planning efforts.

Keywords

Collaborative-communicative Planning, Planning Support System, Geodesign, Deliberative Democracy

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Enabling Collaborative Governance of Urban NbS: Emerging Insights from Seven European City Practice Labs.

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Abstract

In the past decade, advocacy and research for advancing urban Nature-based Solutions (NbS) have grown significantly. By enhancing ecosystem services, these solutions hold the potential to provide social, environmental, and economic benefits for all, towards more sustainable and resilient cities. However, achieving this goal without perpetuating or exacerbating existing inequalities remains challenging. Top-down, hierarchical, and monocentric governance dominated by single perspectives fails to address the multifaceted and interrelated causes of environmental injustices and the inequitable distribution of urban nature and its benefits. To unlock just and sustainable urban transformations through NbS, an alternative and collaborative mode of governance—one that prioritizes procedural and recognition justice by democratically integrating diverse perspectives, knowledge, and needs into decision-making—is urgently needed. Thus, this research explores the experience of seven European city practice labs, part of the research and innovation project JUSTNature, in experimenting with changing approaches to enable a more just and collaborative governance of NbS. Through a circular and reflective self-monitoring and evaluation methodology composed of cyclical qualitative open-ended surveys to foster ongoing learning, the study sheds light on challenges, opportunities, and best practices for enabling a more just and collaborative governance of NbS. The experience and lessons learned from Bolzano, Chania, Gzira, Leuven, Merano, Munich, and Szombathely can help guide future cities and related projects on how to facilitate and ground such a theoretical concept in inclusive and concrete actions.

Keywords

Urban Nature-based Solutions, Collaborative Governance, Europe, Environmental Justice

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Bridging intentions with actual outcomes: drawing lessons for meaningful collaboration within participatory processes for urban transitions

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Abstract

This paper explores arising tensions and contradictions in participatory planning against the backdrop of strategic spatial planning. This is significant as the field of planning has shifted from traditional land-use planning to area-based, actor-driven and process-oriented planning. The aforementioned tensions are explored through the term “meaningfulness”, a sensitizing concept that is frequently used in planning practice and literature to capture an unmet desire in these processes. This paper offers grounded insights on how actors experience meaningfulness, or the lack thereof, while participating in collaborative processes within an urban development with sustainability transition goals. This paper builds on the argument that participatory processes can be meaningful when they offer opportunities for worthwhile activities through which citizens can contribute and care for their living environment through care, stewardship, maintenance and repair. The research argues that actor intentions, or commitments to action, and their evolution in collaborative spaces can offer lessons for designing meaningful collaboration in participatory

processes. These intentions are studied through the concept of “pragmatic registers” which have been adapted in this research as an indicator for transformative social innovation as opposed to their original conceptualisation in the literature as a tool for the sociological critique of participatory processes. These pragmatic registers are used to analyse data collected through action research by the author within a deliberative participatory process involving the transformation of an industrial district in a Dutch city. The research maps three pragmatic registers to illustrate the transformation of intentions in the process and draws new lessons for meaningful collaboration, namely, a) embracing uncertainty in urban transition projects – scenarios as opposed to normative “frameworks”, b) creating novel institutional arrangements that allow impacting socio-spatial context like facilitating community-benefit agreements, and c) using multi-value creation as a guiding objective as opposed to participative or deliberative democracy.

Keywords

meaningful collaboration, participatory planning, pragmatic registers, social innovation, sustainable transition

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Democratic innovation and Weberian organizational structure

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Abstract

Some municipalities tasked with managing spatial planning policies have appointed specialized staff members whose roles are dedicated to incorporate democratic innovations into the municipal offices and their policies. These staff members take up a role of translators, coordinators, metagovernors and facilitators. In this article, we will denote these functions with the general notion of “spiders” – as they perform important network activities within the municipal organization and outwards, towards actors in civil society and private sector. We also refer to them as boundary spanners.

However, the characterization, interpretation, and historical evolution of these metagovernors can vary significantly, impacting how democracy is enacted in the realm of spatial planning. Consequently, our aim is to investigate what the role of spiders imply, how it is performed, integrated, and institutionalized, and to understand their role for democratic innovation – not least their function as bridge-builders connecting the democratic innovation to the every-day-practice of the municipal organization. Moreover, the role of these spiders may also evolve over time or be challenged internally within the organization or externally by other governance actors within the network.

In this article we study local level institutional innovations in four cities (Gdynia in Poland, Drammen in Norway, Genk in Belgium and Tilburg in the Netherlands) analysed within CONTRA research project. The basis for the article is looking at the “spiders” found in municipal offices in

these countries at different “degrees” on the spectrum of democratic innovation versus traditionally institutionalized element of local administration. Our main research question is about the effectiveness of their role(s) and its preconditions.

Keywords

bureaucracy, democracy, innovation, urban governance, institutions

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Keep calm and deliberate. Rise and falls of public participation initiatives - the Polish experience

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Abstract

Public participation, after a period of admiration for its new forms and tools, is undergoing a crisis all over Europe. Many researchers have outlined barriers related to low transparency and complexity of decision-making processes, difficulties in access to information, distrust, social inequalities, which all result in decreasing social mobilization. In an everyday life we are facing many negative clichés about public participation: “it is a way of sharing responsibility for the decision making process”, “it is just a fashion, not a real need”, “public participation instead of added value slows down the whole process”, “random people are not able to participate” etc.

Instead of listing other disadvantages and dark sides of public participation we are coming with research questions. Which participation tools are willingly and which are less willingly chosen by local authorities and by local communities? Why? How do centrally imposed regulations impact the scale and scope of locally implemented public participation tools? How does Weberian local administration cope with the implementation of innovative projects in the field of participation?

We answer these questions on the basis of a quantitative survey of Polish local governments (N=200) and a case study of one specific urban conflict. Although there are plenty failure stories we try to pick up positive efforts to strengthen inclusive decision-making in the city – both – proposed by the local authorities but also bottom up initiatives.

Keywords

public participation, innovative tools, Poland, local government

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Urban parks in dialogue: a comparative analysis of citizen participation models in Portugal and Brazil

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Abstract

This work comparatively analyzes the models of citizen participation in two recent urban public park projects: Quinta dos Salgueiros in Porto (Portugal) and Parque Capibaribe in Recife (Pernambuco, Brazil). Based on analytical categories such as local governance models, adopted participation tools, co-management models, and identified conflicts and consensuses, the paper aims to foster a dialogue between the two approaches to identify challenges, complementarities, gaps, and learned lessons. The results are interpreted within the sociocultural context, and points of convergence between the two scenarios are considered, such as the recent policies promoting green areas in both cities and their vulnerability to the effects of climate change. As a theoretical lens for our analysis, we start with the concept of collaborative governance, which broadens the role of policymakers and places negotiation processes at the heart of decision-making, formally involving actors external to the state and public administration (Ansell & Gash, 2008). We also consider the concept of local governance networks, in which local governments are understood as "network coordinators" (Stoker, 2011), and their effectiveness depends on personal and institutional trust among local stakeholders (Silva et al., 2022). Furthermore, we explore the potential and challenges of territory-based platforms for deliberation between politicians and citizens (Agger, 2021) and discuss how these experiences address the challenges of embedding participatory governance (Bussu, S. et al., 2022). Without losing sight of the tokenization risks of participatory processes, based on the experiences of these two projects developed in distinct sociocultural contexts, we aim to reflect on the role of citizen participation in governance models that, while different, share the potential to promote democratization and co-production of public spaces.

Keywords

citizen participation, urban parks, local governance networks, collaborative governance, public spaces

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Building Healthy, resilient and sustainable communities: lessons from a participatory budgeting programme

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Abstract

Building Healthy, Resilient & Sustainable Communities: Lessons from a Participatory Budgeting Programme

This paper explores the impact of participatory budgeting on the health and well-being of individuals and communities, with a focus on reducing inequalities through a community-based initiative under the Well London programme. Participatory budgeting empowers local citizens to allocate a portion of public funds to projects they believe will enhance their lives and communities. While extensive research highlights its role in advancing democracy, governance, transparency, and accountability (Cabannes, 2004; Reames, 2006; Shah, 2007; Boulding and Wampler, 2010; Cabannes and Lipietz, 2015; Brun-Martos and Lapsley, 2017; Godwin, 2018), there is a comparatively limited exploration of its impact on community health and wellbeing (Campbell et al., 2018).

Findings from this study suggest that participatory budgeting acts as a catalyst for empowering residents through capacity building, fostering self-esteem, self-confidence, and a sense of self-worth. It enhances a sense of belonging, reduces isolation, and promotes healthier lifestyle choices. These outcomes contribute to strengthening community spirit and increasing community participation. Insights from the Well London programme reveal that many participants engaged in volunteering, pursued further education, or improved their employment prospects, addressing key social determinants of health. Such engagements ultimately contribute to reducing inequalities and creating reciprocal benefits for both individuals and the broader community (O'Mara-Eves et al., 2013; Touchton and Wampler, 2014; Matosevic, 2013).

This study argues that participatory budgeting can potentially improve the health and well-being of communities and, by extension, the sustainable future for local systems by positively influencing individuals. Its insights offer valuable implications for addressing interconnected global challenges and advancing health equity on a larger scale.

A reference list is available on request.

Keywords

Participatory budgeting, Governance, Community-based, Health & Wellbeing, Inequalities

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Broadening public participation in city governance: coproduction needs funding and social inclusion reforms in terms of government, and political trust

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Abstract

Examining the interplay of power dynamics and inequality within the realm of the UK and city governance, and public participation in schemes such as neighbourhood planning. Examining the

intricate and complex relationships between participatory planning, representative democracy, and issues with broadening public participation in urban planning. This paper looks at social inclusion, in terms of the importance of honouring democratic values of social justice, and political trust in urban planning. Neighbourhood planning, for example, as a grassroots initiative, claims to empower local communities in shaping their built environment. However, the very messy, entangled nature of power within central and local governance reveals structural, deep-set societal challenges that impact the accessibility of participatory planning, and representative democracy, and levels of social inclusion. The paper explores the nuanced ways in which power operates, influencing social disadvantage, including marginalised voices and equitable involvement in community engagement in decision-making. This impacts initiatives such as neighbourhood planning and has implications on entrenched power dynamics on political trust within communities. What part does living with high and growing inequality levels (Dorling, 2024) play in understanding the impact on low political trust and public involvement in civic life. Local government funding models need something of a renaissance, to bring urban renewal, to enable and facilitate broader, deeper public involvement in a quality, meaningful way. This needs structural reform to coordinate and manifest, via reform of all government departments at a national, Whitehall level and Councils, in terms of new and well-funded Social Inclusion Units.

Keywords

governance, social inclusion, funding, equalities, local government

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Framing Power Dynamics in Territorial Governance: The Case of Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) policy in Lisbon

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Abstract

The Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) initiative is a multi-fund, place-based, and citizen-centred policy launched by the European Commission in the 2014–2020 community programming cycle. As an evolution of the LEADER programme which started in the 1990s exclusively for rural areas and expanded to coastal settings in 2007, the CLLD policy encompassed urban areas in its scope.

Both instruments have, theoretically, aimed at the empowerment, capacity-building, and participation of local communities as agents of territorial development (European Commission, 2020). Local Action Groups (LAGs) – polities composed by a myriad of public and private actors – were established to represent these communities. In practice, their role as territorial development agents is under research. Conceived to be a spatial-temporal fix (Harvey, 2000), and a state

rescaling (Brenner, 2004) mechanism, capable of channelling EU investment to pressing local issues, the impact of LAGs actions is facing growing critical scrutiny.

Against the backdrop of ongoing Europeanisation processes and a soft turn in planning theory and practice, we focus on an urban Lisbon LAG, specifically set for the CLLD 2014-2020, to examine the merits of such critique. In particular, we outline a research design to support a critical inquiry into whether, and how, this LAG constitutes, or not, an example of state rescaling, performative imaginary, spatial-temporal fix, and multilevel governance.

Findings show that the transfer of power and responsibilities has been hindered, especially in comparison to both European Commission and LAG expectations, thus raising a set of relevant questions in terms of the CLLD instrument's actual impact in Portugal.

Keywords

Community-Led Local Development (CLLD), Local Action Group (LAG), Participation, Territorial Governance, Polity

Track 6: Strategic thinking for city futures – looking beyond city boundaries

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Towards Sustainable Development in China's New First-Tier Cities: An SDG 11.1-Based Indicator System for Aging Challenges

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Abstract

This study aims to build a comprehensive indicator system to assess sustainable urban development in China's New first-tier cities, with a focus on SDG 11.1. Facing the challenges of a rapidly aging population, these cities are at the forefront of balancing economic and infrastructural demands with sustainable urbanization goals. This study examines economic resilience, urbanization patterns, and housing affordability to create a framework that highlights how aging population affect urban sustainability. The indicator system will combine insights from individual behavior and broader economic trends to offer practical guidance for policymakers. Ultimately, this study aims to support policies and planning strategies that address aging-related challenges while promoting long-term, sustainable growth. This study offers a clearer perspective on sustainable urban development by providing tools that can be adapted for other cities dealing with similar demographic and economic shifts.

Keywords

SDG 11.1, sustainable urban development, aging population, indicator system, China

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Sociotechnical Imaginaries of the urban subsurface - opportunities for strategic thinking for Stockholm's future

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Abstract

The urban subsurface is increasingly positioned as a final urban frontier - a multifunctional but non-renewable resource that holds great potential to contribute to sustainable and resilient cities. Strategic and holistic planning of the subsurface is required to manage this complex and dynamic resource and realise its potential. In this paper, we investigate Stockholm's current underground

planning praxis and its possibilities for strategic thinking on urban futures. Despite a long history of underground use, extensive expertise and favourable geological conditions, the status of subsurface planning in Stockholm is currently highly fragmented, both in its practices and policies. Thus, from a governance perspective, the space beneath the city can be considered a vertical hinterland: used, abused and neglected - yet essential to the functioning of the city. Responding to a wider research gap on the political relations of the development of the urban subsurface, the paper examines specific imaginaries through the lens of three case study sites, exploring intersections with themes of volumetric territory, speculation, and uncertain futures. We do so by analysing interviews and workshops with Stockholm's urban practitioners to chart emerging and established sociotechnical imaginaries of the underground. In particular, we explore how mainstream visions of the subsurface, framed and perpetuated by dominant cartographic tools, constrain strategic and creative use of its potential and must be understood as co-producing urban environments. In this way, the stability of imaginaries rooted in dualistic conceptualisations of the invisible subsurface, which marks it as an inert, solid - a nothingness that provides space for the city's unwanted urban equipment - is deeply problematic. Alternative pathways to strategic thinking are investigated by mapping nascent imaginaries, collaborative practices, and multifunctional futures. This layered analysis highlights ways to bridge the vertical city boundary for long-term and holistic planning of the urban subsurface.

Keywords

sociotechnical imaginaries, Stockholm, urban futures

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Upside Down City: Streets Above Ground

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Abstract

In addition to the current trend of densification of urban functions, it is necessary to free the land from hard surfaces, which will solve many problems related to rainwater filtration into the ground, thermal footprint, but most importantly, it will allow nature to pass unhindered through the city between individual buildings. The buildings, designed as high-rise towers with a minimal footprint on the ground, are versatile modules that provide various urban functions and are connected by bridges. These bridges, together with the space of the towers at the height of the bridges, form a street with all its activities. Thus, the bustling street is removed from the nature below. Down above ground, there are easy paths for walking and communicating with the nature. We can get down from these paths to the ground when we really need it. This concept allows us to share one of our most precious resources with the nature - land. Given all existing infrastructure cannot go above ground, the need for horizontal movement must be reduced. Placement of vertical farms with artificial lighting inside the modules, frees up land areas occupied for agriculture, eliminates the need to transport products to the city, and materials and machinery back, which makes roads connecting them unnecessary. The presence of farms allows filling the inner unlit space of the

modules, making the base area larger and increasing the thin lighted layer, which can be used for housing, offices, educational institutions. Individual modules should be allocated in clusters, which being connected by streets including all communications, together with underground ones, can exchange resources among themselves. They are maximally closed systems for the use of resources and offers for people, i.e. the exchange between clusters and other locations is minimized and can be carried out by light above-ground transport and by air.

Keywords

Streets above ground, Sustainable city, Vertical farms

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Strategic Flood Resilience Beyond City Limits: Insights from Hull, UK and Calgary, Canada

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Abstract

Global flood risk is increasing due to climate change, rapid urbanisation and city population growth. Hull, UK and Calgary, Canada, are two cities vulnerable to flooding. This comparative study examines how the two cities operationalise urban flood resilience beyond their boundaries, highlighting the strategic and boundary-spanning approaches each city adopts in the face of climate-related challenges. It argues that cities must adopt adaptable, collaborative approaches considering broader spatial and ecological networks, ultimately shaping effective flood resilience policies extending beyond traditional city limits. The research employed a participatory methodology to explore how regional contexts, governance frameworks, and transnational influences shape flood resilience strategies in supporting sustainable city futures in the two cities. Data was collected between January and August 2023. It involved ten key informant interviews and a serious game approach in which local authority representatives in each country played the "Just Flood Resilience Co-op" game. The serious game approach enabled data to be collected through three in-game logs, three debrief interviews, and 21 post-game surveys. In Hull, the key informants included four representatives from the Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and Flood Risk Management representatives. In Calgary, the key informants included six City of Calgary Flood Resilience Leads. Findings show that Hull's flood resilience strategy has shifted from city-focused infrastructure to regional collaboration, leveraging partnerships like Living with Water and the Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. With a cohesive regional governance model, Calgary coordinates flood management across river basins, highlighting differing boundary dynamics and emphasizing integrated approaches to urban flood resilience. The study recommends cohesive governance structures addressing complex urban flood risks, with lessons applicable to both cities and similar urban regions globally. Ultimately, engaging with and understanding local, regional and national interconnections is critical to city futures and maximising the role of cities in addressing climate-related challenges.

Keywords

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Mass Tourism in Malia: Towards a Decolonial Model for the Lassithi Plateau

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Abstract

Tourism has been a crucial pillar of the Greek economy for decades. Following the end of the Greek Civil War, political and economic strategies included programs and agreements aimed at reforming the state, with the tourism sector playing a key role in this development. In recent years, especially in the post-pandemic period, the tourism sector has recovered, attracting investments that have fueled construction activity, particularly large-scale hospitality projects in Greece's peripheral regions, such as the islands.

These dynamics of investment in tourism have a range of effects on both the landscape and natural resources. More specifically, this development model fosters the monoculture of mass tourism, increasing demands on natural resources for both the construction and operation of this newly built infrastructure while "consuming" the landscape. Besides that, part of the mass tourism concept is also the exploitation of cultural heritage elements as touristic attractions for profit purposes, which negates them from any other alternative functionality. This situation not only adds pressure to current environmental challenges but also degrades the quality of life in local communities. On a policy level, there is an absence of regulatory measures to control or limit these developments, as demonstrated by the New Special Spatial Framework for Tourism 2024.

In the case study of the Lassithi Plateau, the tourist sector already exploits windmills as part of the local cultural heritage and tradition. This research paper aims to explore how windmills beyond serving as tourist attractions could play a pivotal role regarding strategic and sustainable spatial planning at the scale of the local community. How repurposing windmills could tackle current environmental challenges and contribute to developing a productive landscape that supports and organizes the local community?

Keywords

Tourism, Windmills, Community, Productive landscape, Natural resources

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The Future of the Subsurface - Perspectives on the role of the subsurface for a sustainable (urban) future

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Abstract

In July 2024, the UK Government Office for Science published a report on the ‘Future of the Subsurface’. This is the first comprehensive document produced by a governmental body on the issue in the UK. In the light of increasing claims on subsurface space for infrastructure, storage, geothermal energy and natural resource extraction, such as groundwater for water supply, the question begs how a sustainable use of the subsurface can be ensured. While geological underground models and construction records provide frameworks for understanding the current and potential future characteristics of subsurface space, the complex relationship between geological conditions and human uses and demands is not well understood. Moreover, governing underground space can be complicated as it involves conflicting objectives, interests, goals and regulatory frameworks. One key objective therefore must be to conceptualise and implement new, more holistic approaches to the governance of the subsurface taking into account its diverse uses and various (human and natural) stakeholders’ claims. Additionally, as climatic changes will affect life particularly in urban areas, putting certain functions underground could support climate change adaptation efforts.

This multidisciplinary panel, with panellists’ backgrounds ranging from planning, political science to geology and engineering, will highlight some of these issues and discuss potential consequences of unsustainable subsurface use, for example the impacts on groundwater. The aforementioned report by the UK Government Office for Science will work as anchor point for the panel. Perspectives from other European countries such as Switzerland will help to reflect about transferability of insights and approaches. With this panel, we want to highlight that the subsurface should be recognized as an integral part of the human habitat and stimulate more research on the topic in urban studies.

Keywords

subsurface, governance, climate change adaptation, sustainable planning

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Urban Planning and Stormwater Management in Rome. Guidelines for an operational integration between the Basin and the Local Plan.

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Abstract

The Metropolitan City of Rome is a conglomerate of 15 *comuni* with a total surface area of over 1200 km². It occupies about 3% of the surface of the Appennino Centrale Basin, to which it is administratively circumscribed, being the largest commune of which it is composed.

From the 1930's to the present, it has undergone an enormous demographic expansion, favoured by the 1931's Regulatory Plan, increasing its territorial extension tenfold until today (Oliva, 2000).

With regard to the preservation of water resources, the Piano di Bacino (Basin Plan), besides being the most *sovraordinato* of all the instruments regulating the territorial governance in Italy, is the normative instrument that has prescriptive and managerial attributions over them, being in order of subordination, the communal level (livello comunale) four levels below it.

Even though solid legal structures are necessary in complex realities (Romano, 2020), it is also important, in the face of climate change and urban realities subjected to an anthropisation that blocks the metabolism of the biotopes where cities are built, to find operational mechanisms (McVicker, 2024) that streamline the operational relationship between levels of governance when it comes to managing natural resources, among them water.

An operational integration carried out within the framework of an strategic planning to allow the consolidation of solid infrastructures durable beyond contingencies, from a Green Based perspective that takes into account the qualitative restitution of the Nature Based structural solutions (Andersson et al., 2014; Verburg, Selnes & Verweij, 2016).

Within this framework, this contribution aims to synthesise some guidelines for the operational linkage between the *Piano di Bacino* and the *Piano Locale* of the city of Rome (NPRG, 2008), in order to favour a systemic consolidation of Green-Blue Infrastructures, that mitigate adverse physical and social events and favour urban resilience through a sustainable urban water governance.

Keywords

stormwater management, urban planning, water governance, sustainable drainage systems, green-blue infrastructures

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Targeting health evidence at critical upstream decision-making: Findings from the TRUUD research programme

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Abstract

The root causes of unhealthy urban development are far upstream, spread throughout highly complex systems covering many sectors and stakeholder groups. In this session we will share some of the key findings from a major UK research programme, *Tackling Root causes Upstream of Unhealthy Urban Development* (TRUUD), which for the last five years has been identifying, developing and testing multiple ways to prioritise health at key points of decision-making.

The session will begin by providing a quick overview of the research, highlighting key changes in political, policy and practice contexts, and sharing the main learnings on identified problem areas and solutions. It will then showcase learnings from two key areas of research development: i) a new economic valuation database and tool that links urban form to health outcomes and associated costs; and ii) understanding of the law in local government in relation to the use (or not) of Health Impact Assessment (HIA). There will be 30 minutes at the end of the session for a plenary Q&A. Through participating in the session audience members will have the opportunity to share their priorities for upstream changes and identify opportunities for action.

TRUUD is funded by the UK Prevention Research Partnership (UKPRP), which funds novel research to prevent non-communicable diseases and health inequalities. TRUUD is one of its major programmes of research and the only one to focus on major property development and transport planning. It is a 6-year research consortium (2019-2025).

Keywords

Urban development, Upstream, Health, Root causes, Systems approaches

Track 7: Inclusive Futures and Spatial Practices

7

Urban Integration and the Lived Experiences of Muslim Women Refugees in Bristol

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Abstract

This research critically examines the spatial integration challenges faced by Muslim women refugees in host cities, with a particular focus on Bristol, UK. Muslim women refugees, particularly those from conflict-affected regions such as Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia, confront unique and intersecting barriers related to gender, religion, and ethnicity. These challenges significantly shape their experiences as they navigate the urban environment, influencing their integration into the host society.

Using Bristol as a case study, the research explores how factors such as housing, transportation, and public space design impact the spatial integration of Muslim women refugees. Discriminatory practices, including racism and Islamophobia, particularly in public spaces and transportation systems, restrict their mobility and access to essential services. The visibility of religious attire, such as hijabs, often subjects these women to surveillance, discrimination, and harassment, further exacerbating their sense of insecurity and exclusion. These experiences hinder not only their participation in the public life but also their ability to form social connections and establish a sense of belonging in their new communities. The research investigates how local spatial planning policies and urban environments in host cities either contribute to or mitigate these challenges, affecting Muslim women refugees' overall well-being and integration outcomes.

Through the application of feminist grounded theory and photovoice methodology, this study captures the lived experiences of Muslim women refugees in Bristol, providing a comprehensive analysis of how spatial planning and urban policies influence their daily lives. The research seeks to inform more inclusive and equitable urban planning practices that recognize and address the specific needs of Muslim women refugees. By identifying barriers and proposing policy recommendations, the study aims to contribute to the creation of urban environments in Bristol where these women can navigate their surroundings safely, access resources equitably, and rebuild their lives with dignity and support.

Keywords

Spatial Integration, Muslim Women Refugees, host cities, Intersectionality

The concept of home – Liminal experiences of young people with a second-generation migratory background

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Abstract

Rising worldwide interest in the meaning of home is reflected in recent multi-disciplinary research. Traditional normative concepts of home as a stable, settled place and identity have been unsettled through contemporary social processes such as globalisation, technological advances and increasing global, transnational movements of people.

Contemporary research focuses on the relationships between physical scale, place(s), spaces of belonging, identity and power, human space(s), virtual / rhetorical space(s), and hybrid space(s). Two fundamental aspects of home are material place and imaginaries, based on feelings of belonging and alienation which are considered innately spatial and reflected in the materiality of domestic architecture and design, processes and practices of homemaking, environmental props and daily routines, spatial requirements and uses, and social relations.

The collection of narratives and visual representations of the concept home experienced by young people with a second-generation migratory background, a systematic inquiry and methodology based on qualitative research using grounded theory, will extend existing research through the addition of new, previously unheard voices.

The main research concern is to uncover the participant group's spatial experience within their urban architectural / built environment, and the associated material and imaginary aspects of the concept home through the exploration of domestic architecture and spatial arrangements; everyday life and material culture; and the relationship between micro, meso and macro environments and their links to other experiential levels. In conversations, participant observations and video / photography or art workshops the participants will be encouraged to express their ideas and concepts – to understand and uncover shared fundamental themes uniting the spatial experiences of home for young second-generation migrants from diverse backgrounds and life situations.

Keywords

Home, Architectural Phenomenology, Place, Migration, Cultural Geography

Co-designing Net Zero Strategy in Conservation Areas: Pilot Study of Sea Mills Conservation Area

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Abstract

Despite the widespread acknowledgement of the role of local communities in net zero transition, the approach in areas designated as Conservation Areas is predominantly expert driven with limited involvement from the local communities. Conservation Areas in England are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. To protect the special character, there are stricter planning control in place in Conservation Areas which is perceived to have a negative impact on the uptake of climate change adaptation measurements (energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements) for houses located in Conservation Areas (Fetzer, 2023), which are around 2.8 million houses (Historic England, 2021). This presentation interrogates the challenges that the local communities face in transitioning to net zero in Conservation Areas by reflecting on the findings from engagement workshops with a selected Conservation Areas in Bristol, Sea Mills. The intention of the workshops with Sea Mills' local community were to better understand the challenges that the local community is facing in adapting their homes and to co-design solutions with the local community. This presentation will share learnings from this project by concluding that it is through collaboration with local communities and adopting grassroot approaches that the challenges of net zero transition in designated heritage areas can be addressed.

Keywords

Conservation Areas , Net Zero Transition, Co-designing solution , Sea Mills, Bristol

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The Post-Creative City? Navigating inclusion, exclusivity, and the future of urban cultural policy.

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Abstract

The 'creative city' mantra has continued to garner policy attention in numerous cities across the world. The UNESCO creative cities network identifies creative and cultural industries as important drivers for local and regional development. While this current policy landscape has been

welcomed by those early advocates of the creative city agenda, numerous flash points have since developed around how accessible these cities are - indeed 'inclusion' in the broadest sense has been central to the idea of the creative city. While local and regional development takes on numerous characteristics and can be measured in numerous ways - the very real outcomes of these policies is mixed at best. Front and centre is the paradox that some cities, or city regions, who enact policies to be 'creative' have also - perhaps not coincidentally - become places of exclusivity. High rents, creative and cultural organisational competition, and more have driven both the human and financial cost of interacting with, and being a part of the communities that represent, the so called 'creative city'. Are we now looking at a moment in time where cities are becoming 'post-creative'; where inaccessibility has overtaken inclusion as a driving force; where development means economic growth and creativity becomes a buzz, empty, word. This panel seeks to interrogate the idea of the post-creative city and its implications; for policy, practice and people.

Keywords

Creative Cities, Creative Industries, Post-Creative Cities, Urban Policy, Inclusion

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Navigating Public Spaces: Analyzing Women's Experiences and Safety in Urban Environments

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Abstract

As urbanization continues to expand in developing countries, understanding how different demographics, particularly women, navigate public spaces is important for encouraging inclusivity and safety in city environments. However, studies focusing specifically on women's experiences in these contexts are limited. This research analyzes how women navigate and experience public spaces, focusing on urban parks, through the lenses of safety, access, and comfort. By examining the intersections of gender, class, and culture, the study investigates how urban infrastructure can either promote or hinder women's mobility and participation in public life. The research includes safety walks with women in an urban park in Karachi, Pakistan, and spatial mapping of "unsafe" zones to identify areas of concern. Additionally, interviews with architects and urban planners will be conducted to facilitate the development of gender-sensitive urban environments. The expected result of this research is to uncover the women face in public spaces and to offer practical recommendations that promote inclusivity and safety in urban planning practices.

Keywords

Public spaces, Safety, Women

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The Metropolitan Gym. Living together as a bodily exercise in Les Halles, Paris

paola briata

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Abstract

The paper stems from long-term research on planning and everyday multiculturalism and an ongoing methodological reflection on urban analysis where ethnographical approaches ‘for designers’ (Cranz, 2016) mix with policy analysis. At the same time, this work aims to contribute to streams of research that look at life in contemporary cities as a form of ‘coexistence among strangers’ where living together and getting used to differences is seen also as a ‘bodily exercise in the space’ (Amin, 2012).

In this direction, the paper introduces a work on people, places, and practices carried out from February to July 2024 at the Nelson Mandela Garden in Les Halles, Paris.

Les Halles is a very interesting area as its centrality in the geography of Paris, but also its relevance as an infrastructural node for the Ile de France Region makes it a daily place of coexistence of very diverse populations such as commuters, local residents, and tourists from all over the world. Moreover, Les Halles is one of the few places in central Paris where young people living ‘beyond the périphérique’ (the ring road running around Paris, constituting a physical and a mental barrier between central Paris and its banlieue) feel comfortable, and spend time without ‘feeling different’ (Truong, 2012; Bacqué 2021).

The work introduces a fine-grain analysis of the practice of everyday life in Les Halles and, at the same time, reconstructs the story of the area in terms of planning and projects from the 1970s to the present time. The paper's main argument is that Les Halles represents a sort of ‘metropolitan gym’ where people can get exposed and trained to differences, but this specific value of the place has often been denied if not repressed by plans and projects for the area.

Keywords

Spatial policies, Everyday multiculturalism , Spatial practices , Les Halles, Paris

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Decoding Decolonisation in Post-Colonial India through the Spatial Practices of the Coastal Fishing Community in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

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Abstract

This research begins with the question of what it means ‘to decolonise’ and how to understand decolonisation not as a metaphor but as a means to material transformation (Tuck and Yang, 2012). Currently, the language of decolonisation is weaponised by the authoritarian right-wing ruling government in post-colonial India favouring the dominant narratives, spatial imaginaries and practices. This often makes invisible the voices, everyday experiences and spatial practices of those marginalised at the intersections of caste, class and gender – the subaltern counter-publics. Therefore, it becomes crucial to critically analyse who is mobilising the use of the term and countering it by understanding it through the practices of those who are rendered invisible. This research looks at the radical practices of inclusiveness, resistance, solidarity, and their spatial dynamics and imaginaries, that emerge from the coastal community of Thiruvananthapuram against a state-corporate-led Port development. Vizhinjam Port is projected as ‘India’s Gateway to International Transshipment’ and has support from the political and economic elites. The area’s indigenous fishing community is among Kerala’s most disadvantaged groups and is protesting against the project’s impacts of privatisation, displacement and environmental degradation. The Indigenous community, mostly Mukkuvar–Christian (officially Latin Catholics), have their origin in Dalit conversions and face caste-(religion)-based discrimination and the process of ‘othering’ within the civil society. Guided by feminist and decolonial geographies and using spatial investigation and Indigenous and activist-led knowledge, this research challenges a state-centric narrative and captures the multiplicity of stories, spatial experiences and practices of resistance and solidarity that are often silenced. Through in-depth interviews, spatial mapping and observations from across the villages in the Thiruvananthapuram coastal belt this research offers alternative narratives about marginalised communities and places by exploring their experiences, perspectives and activism to understand environmental degradation (coastal erosion, biodiversity loss) and dispossession (privatisation, loss of homes).

Keywords

Decolonisation, Space, Resistance, Solidarity, Development

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Basic Income, Artist Precarity, and Urban Work Futures

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Abstract

Artists are precarious workers, often navigating a combination of gigs across industries to maintain a semblance of financial stability. Recognizing this as both institutional failure within the arts industries and as symptomatic of the increasing precarity of low income workers more broadly, local and city governments as well as arts organizations are launching basic income programs to support artists in their regions. Basic income for artists programs are expanding across the US and EU, including in New York State, California, Minnesota, and Puerto Rico. Programs provide artists a

set monthly stipend over a period of time lasting one to two years and have been receiving increasing publicity as field advocates publish evaluations of the work.

As the basic income for artists trend continues to expand we ask a series of interrelated research questions about impacts on artists' daily lives and alignment with other worker movements: What is the potential impact of these initiatives on shifting artists perennial status as precarious workers? How do artists participating in these programs align their actions with other labor equity movements in this time of diminishing wages? To address these questions we conducted a review of industry pilots and evaluative research as well as interviews with key artists and program leaders involved in artist basic income work. We expect to find that as basic income for artist programs are growing in popularity there is room for research and policy to shape their scope and impact to benefit both artists and imagine new work futures. We find that artists are uniquely positioned to leverage for greater systems change in support of pay equity by virtue of both their cultural capital in society as well as their creative skills in risk taking and navigating uncertainty.

Keywords

basic income, artists, creative placemaking, democracy

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Basic Income and the Urban Precariat: A Capabilities Approach

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Abstract

Basic income programs promise all-purpose support for precarious workers. Scholarship on precarious work identifies a large and diverse set of problems impacting millions of workers, ranging from low pay to platform work, to multiple jobholding, to just-in-time scheduling. Global growth in precarious work suggests both the increased salience of basic income as a response and, crucially, a growing base of political support for scaling the current crop of urban basic income pilots into large-scale policy. We argue that each segment of the precariat stands to derive benefits from basic income in overlapping but distinct ways that require critical evaluation and theoretical framing. This paper undertakes that task, using a capabilities approach.

Using Nussbaum's expanded list of capabilities to enumerate and organize heterogeneous facets of precarity, we (1) link common features of precariousness to 10 core capabilities, such as control over one's environment and bodily autonomy; (2) identify similarities and differences among commonly afflicted populations, in a broad range of professions from home health care workers to artists; and (3) identify documented and possible ways basic income can build precarious workers'

capabilities. Drawing on in-progress and complete primary and secondary research, we expect to find that basic income provides especially strong benefits for populations facing income volatility, and that no-strings-attached cash directly enhances the capabilities of health, emotions and affiliations. The results will point to new geographies, policy frames and alliances through which to expand (support for) basic income.

Keywords

Democracy, Labor, Cash transfers, Social policy, Economic development

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On Not-Walking: The Diminishing Urban Drama of Street Vending & Contemporary Planning Policy

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Abstract

People walk (in) the city – they appropriate the streetscape to suit their needs and demands amid the spacetime. Despite being the ‘image’ of Bangkok’s streetscape, street vending faces multiple dimensions and layers of challenges in everyday practice, particularly their spatial settlement characteristics. For example, being on the footpath is considered pedestrian blockage by the municipal office, stopping on the roadway is considered traffic obstruction, and settling on private property means trespassing. This legal conundrum, however, results from an unsupportive planning policy that often views cityscape only as cartographic practice, dismissing the inclusion of street life at eye level and contributing to its diminishing nature. Moreover, the background research shows the underlying complexity lies in the foundational way of thinking rooted in the linguistic lexicon, pencilling how terms like ‘sidewalk’ or ‘walkway’ are used and understood. Hence, this complexity and contradiction in civic operation underlines the differential definition and values placed toward public space, suggesting a gap in our understanding of civic planning.

Essentially, these counter-public forms of thinking embody socio-political and spatial appropriation over the years. To a certain extent, the vendor’s iconic fleeting nature is partially the ‘walk’ in protest of the unequal spatial relations penetrating the lenses used in conducting and applying the policy planning. Nonetheless, their silenced voice is critical when studying the ephemerality of street life. By regarding the notion of walking (and not-walking) through the creative mapping process, the paper investigates Bangkok’s gastronomical context against the socio-political fabric of the urban drama. With overarching research on urban informality, it asks how the vendors walk, why they walk, and why their walk is critically crucial in our understanding of planning toward the inclusive and equitable future of the just city.

Keywords

Cities, Inclusivity, Informality, Global South, Street food

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Reclaiming possibilities of placemaking: Cases of people-led public spaces in Glasgow and Birmingham

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Abstract

Concerns over the decline of public spaces are widespread and often centred on the processes of spatial production established and controlled by structures of power, such as planning systems or the financial market. Initiatives led by people tend to be overlooked or reduced as consequences of the shortcomings of the planning system. However, these initiatives are intentional acts that appropriate not only the physical spaces, but also the means by which they are produced. This paper explores the processes of people-led public spaces (PLPS), whose transformation are primarily led by collaborative efforts of ordinary people reflecting the diverse realities of urban life. Through a qualitative multiple case study approach, four cases of PLPS in the cities of Glasgow and Birmingham, UK, are used to identify and discuss the factors and circumstances that enable or deter the creation of PLPS.

Through a framework of six dimensions of public space, this paper showcases that aspects often considered under threat within a narrative of decline and crisis are found in these cases: the opportunity to interact with strangers, a platform to form and express identity and collective networks, to encounter differences and find common ground. These spaces illustrate that re-orientating decision-making processes from established powers to those inhabiting those spaces, is not only possible but necessary to fully claim urban life and therefore, the right to the city.

As PLPS transform spaces reflecting people's identities, aspirations and needs, agency over their environment is reclaimed, and other possibilities and understandings of public space are represented. Ultimately, investigating these processes leads to the discussion of who has the right to participate in the transformation of the city. Therefore, this research argues that PLPS initiatives need to be understood as platforms that challenge and reshape urban power dynamics, rather than as consequences of the planning system.

Keywords

public spaces, placemaking, people-led

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Inclusive City: Understanding the determinants of well-being among diverse migrant groups in a megacity

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Abstract

In line with the conference theme 7, this paper explored the multi-dimensional well-being perceptions of different groups of migrants in their everyday lives in a growing city, Chittagong of Bangladesh. For building an inclusive sustainable city, it is crucial to understand the specific needs of diverse populations. The establishment of Export Processing Zones (EPZs), expansion of the manufacturing industry, and employment possibilities centered around the port in Chittagong have drawn migrants from all over Bangladesh. Interestingly, Chittagong also hosts a substantial number of ethnic minority migrants originating from Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), who carries distinct identity compared to mainstream Bengali community. The migration experiences of ethnic minorities, women and the challenges they face in megacities are largely understudied. Understanding their concerns about integration and wellbeing in the city is crucial. Through photo-voice (N=10) with different groups of migrants it elicits their perceptions of well-being and identifies what factors have constricted or promoted their well-being. While Bengali migrants prioritise better jobs, housing and free childcare centres, ethnic migrants emphasise the need for improved children's education, garbage collection, access to religious activities in their well-being consideration. Ethnic migrants also achieved better well-being and quality of life outcomes as they have better access to jobs in EPZs, organized religious and cultural activities, political networks, strong community ties, the establishment of financial cooperatives based on ethnic identity. Women perceptions of well-being also found to be different from men influenced by social values linked with dominant religion.

This research can enhance the understanding of the integration processes of different migrant groups including ethnic minorities into urban planning and policymaking so that all community members benefit from urban development. The importance of the research lies in its relevance to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as SDG-11, SDG-8, SDG-3.

Keywords

Migrants, Well-being, Ethnicity, Gender, Inclusive

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Prefiguring a More Inclusive and Sustainable City: Collaborative Housing and the Reclaiming of Urban Spaces in Italy

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Abstract

The retreat of the welfare state and the increase in inequalities over the last fifty years in Italy have led to a «habitability crisis» (Grazioli, 2022) that affects the entire housing ecosystem. These processes are accompanied by a new conception of housing, both in policy (Ferri *et al.*, 2017) as in the claims of housing rights movement (HRM) (Grazioli, 2021), which emphasises the interconnections between housing, social and service aspects (Belotti and Bricocoli, 2024). In this context, new forms of collaborative housing are emerging, characterised by two main approaches. The first approach (top-down or bottom-linked) is promoted by institutions through public-private partnerships, to revitalise neighbourhoods through participatory processes. The simultaneous pursuit of social inclusion and economic return leads to a contradiction usually resolved in favour of the latter. The second approach (bottom-up) is advocated by HRMs, e.g. Radical Housing Project in Bologna, which engage in collective self-renovation and commoning of abandoned urban buildings, and actively counteract the social exclusion of disadvantaged segments of the population, especially migrants. The informality of these realities exposes them to stigmatisation and/or invisibility in both urban regeneration projects and housing literature, hindering the full recognition of their potential as a crucial social innovation in the current polycrisis. HRMs develop their own discursive space that criticises the ideology of participation and inclusion (Lefebvre, 1970) as well as the processes of commodification, in a country where there is no right to housing. They propose urban inhabitants as legitimate unionising actors in negotiating the use of urban resources and spaces (Grazioli, 2021) and housing occupations as urban commons that offer an alternative to neoliberal urban regimes. In this way, they prefigure (Monticelli, 2022) more inclusive and sustainable ways of living, governing and planning the city.

Keywords

collaborative housing, housing right movement, prefiguration, social innovation, urban commons

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Connecting the present to the future: The potential of urban adaptation imaginaries

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Abstract

Adaptation to climate change in urban areas is characterised by diverse, ambiguous, and sometimes even conflicting approaches. Understanding the needs and perspectives of local stakeholders, particularly, climate-vulnerable populations is crucial. Positive futures thinking, focusing on aspirations of future adaptation, has emerged as a promising approach, particularly

when used in a participatory way. However, challenges arise when translating the abstract concept of climate change into these futuring approaches, as local communities often struggle to conceptualise climate change beyond their everyday experiences. We propose “urban adaptation imaginaries” as a framework to address these challenges by situating adaptation within existing social, environmental, and political contexts. We suggest that these imaginaries can broaden the focus of climate action beyond technical solutions, fostering an understanding that emphasises learning, justice, and inclusiveness. Despite this potential, inconsistent terminology and methodologies around positive futures thinking and imaginaries hinder practical, interdisciplinary applications. To address these gaps, we critically review scientific literature on urban adaptation imaginaries to establish their relevance for enhancing positive futures thinking, especially in embedding social, cultural, and political dimensions within adaptation planning. Our study identifies three insights gained by integrating urban adaptation imaginaries into current futuring approaches: (1) encouraging a context-sensitive, relational approach to adaptation; (2) promoting justice and inclusivity in early planning stages; and (3) supporting learning that accommodates the experimental nature of urban adaptation. We discuss potential methods, such as art-based approaches, simulations, and experience-sharing, to make these imaginaries tangible and actionable. Additionally, we examine the application of urban adaptation imaginaries in two case studies, one in Bristol, United Kingdom, and one in Malmö, Sweden. These case studies illustrate how imaginaries help bring communities together to envision heat resilient futures, thereby fostering a shared, aspirational yet practical approach to adaptation that aligns with local realities and goals.

Keywords

urban adaptation imaginaries, positive futures thinking, relationality, social justice, learning

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Using the arts to unlock urban adaptation imaginaries

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Abstract

Experts and practitioners around the world need to collectively and inclusively establish what adaptation should be like, bringing in different narratives that paint a diverse picture. This, however, is not an easy task because we are experiencing a crisis of collective imagination, where ways of thinking about adaptation are gridlocked. Beyond doomsday scenarios or technological and artificial intelligence-dominated futures, there is a general incapacity to tangibly imagine the governance or social aspects of our cities. In our work, we use imaginaries to trigger the imagination and help discover the different conceptions of urban adaptation. Imaginaries are here defined as collectively defined narrative devices that allow thinking and dreaming about desirable futures and forms of social life, and provide guidance on how to manage the present. In recent years, there has been a proliferation of art-based approaches as a tool to better understand and

communicate complex environmental, social, and cultural challenges. Also, art has been claimed to be a relevant asset in adaptation decision making, helping to identify context-specific narratives of adaptation and localised goals for on-the-ground action. In our work, we introduce the use of images to think about what cities would look like in the future. Images open the door for emotions, which are necessary when engaging with complex concepts that involve risk and uncertainty. Furthermore, images are not language-specific and thus contribute to a more global and inclusive negotiation exercise in which knowledge hierarchies involved in highly technocratic adaptation processes can be lessened. Through a Q-method study, we examine how 100 climate adaptation practitioners across 37 countries conceptualise adaptation. Our findings reveal four distinct adaptation imaginaries: *green city*, *sustainable lifestyles*, *climate emergency*, and *technocracy*. Our findings also reveal how socio-demographic factors, such as geographic location, experience, and gender, shape these perspectives.

Keywords

urban adaptation imaginaries, art-based approaches, Q-methodology

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Exploring Radical Feminist Urbanism Imaginaries

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Abstract

Feminist urbanism and mainstreaming gender-sensitive planning have long been discussed to move towards equitable and inclusive places and spaces in academia and practice (Greed, 1994; Reeves, 2004; Dutton et al., 2022). However, the majority of the exploration and discussion of these topics has focused on why it is more broadly important, sharing tools and approaches or highlighting local examples of where gender-inclusive practices are taking place (Dutton et al., 2022; ARUP, 2022; Horwood & Morphet, 2023). This work is important, but what it demonstrates is that gender-sensitive planning is not considered to be a mainstream approach, can lack a critical understanding of intersectionality, and often does not lead to tangible outcomes. Building on this work however, there is an opportunity to pause, reflect and reframe discussions to imagine what a more equitable future could be. While the discussion of gender mainstreaming, and more recently gender-sensitive planning have become more widespread – the actual tangible implementation of these vital practices is still severely lacking. It is also proving hard to define what a feminist urbanism looks like, and instead feminist imaginaries may be a collection of creative and collaborative pedagogies that centre the needs of those that traditional institutions would have rejected (women/gender diverse people/disabled people/people of colour) (Watt, 2021). The session offers perspectives on feminist imaginaries, and feminist utopias; as a radical response that has the potential to tackle systemic issues of gender – and other - inequality.

Questions

1. What is being done on gender inclusive urbanism (UK and outside)?
2. Who is at risk of being left out of feminist imaginaries?
3. Why does this need to be reconsidered and reimagined?
4. What could feminist imaginaries and utopias look like?
5. How can they be achieved?

Keywords

Feminist urbanism , Gender inclusive planning, Intersectionality, Feminist imaginaries, Equitable places and spaces

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Teen Girls, Digital Technologies, and Public Space: Co-creating Inclusive Active Spaces in Birmingham

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Abstract

Teenage girls represent an often-overlooked group in urban planning, where male-dominated design processes prioritise men's needs, leaving young women with fewer inclusive and welcoming public spaces. Patriarchal structures and the gender imbalance in urban planning professions contribute to the design of environments that lack comfortable, active, and social spaces tailored to the needs of teenage girls. Most youth facilities are limited to skate parks, Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs), and BMX tracks (Make Space for Girls, 2023). This oversight is reflected in the decline in girls' participation in public physical activities following primary school, with research from Women in Sport (2019) revealing that girls disengage from physical activities by the end of primary education.

This paper, part of a broader doctoral study, investigates how digital technologies—including augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and gaming—might bridge this gap by facilitating the co-design of inclusive urban spaces. Previous research has demonstrated the effectiveness of VR in replicable contexts, such as collecting user experiences from patients during the design of ambulatory pathways (Rivière et al., 2024). Through these tools, teenage girls can participate actively in the planning and creation of spaces that encourage physical activity and social engagement.

Focusing on the urban context of Birmingham, UK, this paper discusses the potential of digital interventions to improve active public spaces for young women and to inspire more inclusive urban planning practices that address the needs of traditionally underrepresented groups.

Keywords

Digital technologies, co-design, Teenage Girls, Active Spaces, Inclusive Planning

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Reimagining Milan: Integrating Intersectional Approaches to Gender-Inclusive City Planning

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Abstract

The urban environment has predominantly been shaped through technocratic practices that have often reinforced existing power dynamics and overlooked gender as a critical factor.

Moving from the foundational questions of how cities can embrace diversity, equality, and accessibility, this study explores how to embed a gender perspective into the urban analysis of Milan.

The research advocates for three interwoven dimensions necessary for building a more inclusive city: a spatial interpretation of intersectionality, recognition of bodily diversity, and the development of open, unbiased urban data. Through an intersectional feminist lens, this study deconstructs the category of "woman" in urban discourse and reinterprets existing public data on Milan. By incorporating gender-disaggregated data and variables that capture how the overlapping and intersecting systems of oppression affect different demographics, it will highlight areas where traditional urban designs may fail to address daily needs. This approach provides a new understanding of diverse actors' social and spatial practices, revealing new dimensions of Milan's urban organization.

After identifying specific areas in Milan that present challenges from a feminist perspective, the research applies participatory mapping and sensory-based methodologies to study selected areas in the city. This participatory process illustrates how complex identities and bodies interact with Milan's public spaces, empowering local communities to contribute directly to data generation. These methods uncover the intersection between inclusivity and boundary conflicts while fostering spatial practices that inform inclusive urban futures.

The findings from this critical case analysis underscore the need for a planning framework that is open to diverse encounters, enabling inclusive, reciprocal urban spaces. By focusing on Milan, this study offers insights into broader urban practices, proposing methods to reimagine urban analysis as a more inclusive and reciprocal process that values women's lived experiences.

Keywords

Gender Planning, Intersectional Analysis, Gender-Disaggregated Data, Milan

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Urban Conservation for Social and Environmental Justice

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Abstract

The conservation of the urban environment is a fundamental aspect of sustainable city management. However, urban conservation practices often remain heavily expert-driven (Belcher, Short, and Tewdwr-Jones, 2019, p.425) and professionally led (Wood, 1995), prioritising the preservation of physical structures (buildings, settings) (Fairclough, 2006) over the diverse voices, practices, and activities of multiple publics. This approach also fails to recognise the social meanings embedded in places (Barrett, 1996; Lesh, 2020) and the need for a more inclusive and dynamic account of a place's cultural and social values. This panel seeks to address the importance of incorporating underrepresented voices—both human and non-human—into urban conservation efforts, challenging traditional power dynamics (Graham, 2016), and exploring how urban spaces can better reflect diverse ecological and cultural histories.

This panel aligns well with **track 7 - Inclusive Futures and Spatial Practices**. The discussion about how conservation planning can involve underrepresented voices and practices in place management can strengthen the track's overall interest in overcoming inequality in symbolic and spatial relations. The following questions will frame the panel discussion:

What role does urban conservation play in promoting justice with local communities, their experiences and voices, still excluded from planning processes?

What methods and approaches can help us capture the plurality of views about the management of our past?

How can urban conservation become a tool for social reflection and challenge cultural hegemony?

Keywords

Urban conservation, Hidden and underrepresented voices, Inclusive futures

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The Practice of Urban Industrial Landscapes: Mapping Invisible Spaces and Reciprocal Relationships in the City of Vienna

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Abstract

Urban industrial landscapes often have close links to supra-regional or global territories, but little or no connection to their immediate surroundings. They follow the logic of supply chains, economic demands and technological requirements, but hardly embed other (urban) needs in their built environment. These circumstances often result in spatial and social disruptions with their nearby context or even encapsulation of these landscapes within our cities. It is at their edges that industrial areas and other urban uses and users meet, sometimes leading to idiosyncratic encounters, contrasts, tensions and even to conflicts. Urban industrial areas are practically 'invisible' to a large part of the population (human and non-human), because they are not easily accessible, and they often become barriers in the urban fabric, separating both physically and socially.

This paper examines the spatial phenomena and social dynamics of urban industrial landscapes in relation to their neighbouring surroundings, as little is known about their urban integration and reciprocal effects. Using the city of Vienna as an example, the fringes of exemplary industrial areas are explored through an artistic-cartographic mapping of their urban morphology and through visual collaborative field research on site. This multi-layered mapping is an intermedial, processual and performative practice that transcends the conventions of traditional cartography. It not only encounters these fringes, but also explores them, making them tangible and interpreting the found realities and collective memories and result in a visual socio-spatial register of the urban juxtapositions explored.

Since the beginning of industrialisation, the histories of industry and cities have been closely intertwined and in constant flux. It is necessary to better understand both industry and cities, their past and present, and their interdependence, in order to find out how urban industrial landscapes shape our cities, what potentials lie within them, and what possible futures might look like.

Keywords

Urban industrial landscapes, Mapping, Visual methods, Industry, Productive city

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Inclusive Cities Through Neurodivergent Lenses: Reimagining Public Spaces

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Abstract

Cities are places of complex coexistence where humans' diverse social, cultural and cognitive profiles intersect in shared public spaces. However, as urban centers increasingly emphasize inclusivity, the unique challenges faced by neurodivergent individuals in navigating these environments are often overlooked, highlighting the need for greater attention to their experiences (Lavigne et al., 2024; Vanalo, 2023; McAllister et al., 2022; Kenna, 2022). This paper explores neurominority as a form of counter-public (Warner, 2002), investigating how the unique spatial practices of neurodivergent individuals challenge conventional approaches to urban design and raise critical questions about whose experiences shape inclusivity in city planning.

This study investigates how neurodivergent individuals navigate and experience Warsaw's public spaces, questioning how truly inclusive these environments are and uncovering new approaches to urban design that embrace diversity. The study employs in-depth interviews and walking interviews with neurodivergent individuals to gather first-hand insights into their experiences of sensory, spatial, and navigational challenges in the city. Preliminary analysis of Warsaw's strategic urban policies further assess how accessibility measures either accommodate or overlook neurodivergent spatial practices, inadvertently reinforcing normative spatial imaginaries.

Initial findings suggest that neurodivergent individuals may face significant sensory and navigational obstacles, particularly in crowded, non-green public areas, where dominant design norms fail to accommodate different ways of processing space. While some general accessibility measures—such as universal design principles and digital platforms—might offer unintentional benefits, they often do not address the specific needs of neurodivergent populations. By highlighting these gaps, this paper proposes a rethinking of inclusivity in urban design to include neurodivergent perspectives as alternative spatial practices.

Keywords

neurodiversity, neurominority, inclusivity, public spaces , city

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Beyond zoning, the bioregional outlook

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Abstract

"We were stripped of our ties to the soil - those connections that framed action and thus made practical virtue possible - when modernisation cut us off from the land, from labour, from flesh, from soil and from the grave. The economy into which we have, willingly or unwillingly, been absorbed, often at great cost, turns people into interchangeable chunks of population governed by the laws of scarcity".

With these words, Ivan Illich criticizes a territory that has become illegible due to its progressive division into 'pieces,' where productive functions dominate spatial organization, and productive activities are detached from resources.

In France, starting from the 1960s, a tool for productive territorial infrastructure was implemented: the *Zone d'Activité Économique (ZAE)*. As areas designated for establishing enterprises within a specified perimeter, outside inhabited centers, ZAEs have expanded consistently and have become a significant factor contributing to the peri-urbanization of the French territory. Their impact on soil artificialization and the fragmentation of agricultural land prompts us today to question their ability to sustain and enhance the territory in the long term.

After introducing the economic, environmental, and social process of disconnection between activity sites and territory, this communication proposes a "territorialist" approach. This approach aims to establish a synergistic relationship between production and local resources in a post-growth perspective. It envisions a future that embraces forms of development rooted in endogenous characteristics and territorial specificities, focusing on the production of sustainable and lasting wealth/

From the fragmentation caused by zoning, a more holistic and integral vision emerges, delving into the depth of the soil. This vision considers the entire complexity of the region and is capable of considering the territory in its living interrelationships.

Beyond zoning, could the bioregional outlook be a possible framework for envisioning a post-growth perspective?

Keywords

Bioregion, Territorialist, Productive territory, Zoning, Trading Estate

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Agonistic Urbanisms: Inclusive Futures through Spatial Practices in El Clot

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Abstract

This paper explores how dissensus, materialised through alternative spatial practices, can act as a catalyst for inclusive urban imaginaries that include those often left behind in the mainstream urban development. The paper examines *El Clot* in El Cabanyal, Valencia, Spain, a marginalised, unregulated space that becomes a site of contested meaning and transformative practices, challenging exclusionary urban frameworks.

In *El Clot*, informal and collective actions led by Roma residents and the Cabanyal Horta initiative demonstrate how neglected spaces can be reimaged into inclusive enclaves. Roma residents have transformed derelict areas into spaces of social interaction, using informal seating and repurposing voids as extensions of their homes. These everyday acts resist the symbolic and material neglect imposed by institutional frameworks, asserting their right to inhabit and shape public space. Similarly, Cabanyal Horta has turned *El Clot* into a vibrant urban garden and community hub, combining ecological practices with grassroots participation. This self-managed initiative blends collective gardening, local food production, and open social spaces, redefining *El Clot* as a place of shared ownership, ecological stewardship, and inclusive identity.

These spatial practices do more than contest exclusion—they embody symbolic urban futures that are open, pluralistic, shaped by those otherwise marginalised in urban regeneration processes. By fostering solidarities across diverse actors and ecologies, these practices offer a model for co-creating spaces that resist gentrification and market-led regeneration, while advancing equitable and ecocultural urban imaginaries. Drawing on critical theories of agonistic pluralism and dissent (Mouffe, 2005; Swyngedouw, 2008; Žižek, 2002), this paper highlights the potential of unregulated and liminal spaces like *El Clot* to act as laboratories for inclusive urban futures, demonstrating how grassroots spatial practices can transform neglect into opportunity and dissent into solidarity. It argues for planning methodologies that embrace conflict and collaboration to create cities where no one is left behind.

Keywords

Inclusive Urban Futures, Agonistic Urbanisms, Alternative Spatial Practices, El Cabanyal, Urban Imaginaries

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The right to the city in fragile urban contexts: Counterfactual public spaces and informal social practices in Palermo's ZEN neighborhood

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Abstract

Urban planning and design practices of Public Housing neighborhoods built in Italy starting from the 1960s have generated public spaces that can be described as rigid and undefined (Jacobs, 1961) lacking services and collective areas, and inhabited by fragile and marginalized social groups. The absence of public resources and the structural weakness of local administrative actions have led to the abandonment of these spaces, which have become symbols of physical and social decay, feeding fixed, dominant, and negative narratives.

In this context, *undefined* public spaces become the object of spatial practices and informal uses responding to community needs, acting as forms of exercising the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1968) and addressing structural shortcomings of urban policies. However, these practices often face severe forms of stigmatization, control, and repression (Low, 2002).

Against this background, the study examines the case of Palermo's ZEN public housing neighborhood, characterized by high levels of socio-economic fragility. Built in the 1970s, ZEN is emblematic of the failure of public housing policies in Italy.

By analyzing ongoing conflicts between institutional policies and grassroots actions, and between mainstream narratives and stories of survival, the study critically reflects on the counterfactual dimension of the neighborhood's public spaces. These spaces are re-imagined (and transformed) by communities through disobedient and radical practices blurring the distinction between the illegal and the legitimate.

This highlights the tension towards transforming the neighborhood into a multifunctional system, where public space plays a fundamental role in exercising the right to the city, remarkably reconciling the conflicts between individual and collective needs.

Based on these considerations, the study reflects on the contraposition between different imaginaries of public space—normative and generative—and the ability to recognize, regulate, leverage informal uses in fragile contexts, as processes of urban regeneration and opportunities for fostering collective awareness and solidarity.

Keywords

Counterfactual public space, spatial practices, informality, Palermo, ZEN

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Autoethnography of a Home: Unpacking Storage Practices for Enhanced Wellbeing

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Abstract

The home is a critical element of the city, and to foster healthy, sustainable urban environments, design must begin at the domestic level. This study explores how material possessions shape domestic spaces, emphasizing how homes designed with a focus on storage practices can significantly enhance the wellbeing of inhabitants. Through autoethnography, the author examines how her own home was designed around a storage framework that accommodates possessions while promoting a sense of wellbeing.

The research engages household members and frequent visitors in reflective dialogues, positioning the home as an architectural probe. By comparing storage strategies in the author's home with those in visitors' homes, the study uncovers diverse storage practices and their implications for housing design. The methodology integrates autoethnographic narration, architectural drawings, and detailed documentation of storage practices across rooms, with personal narratives from all inhabitants providing deeper insights into the design process.

Amid growing environmental challenges and social inequities, this multi-method approach demonstrates how homes designed with integrated, visible storage solutions can play a pivotal role in improving wellbeing. The home becomes a retreat—a space to recharge, nurture, and recover—where well-designed storage systems help declutter the environment, fostering a calm and restorative atmosphere. This study highlights how such practices contribute to healthier, more sustainable homes and promote the creation of inclusive, equitable urban environments.

Keywords

home, material possessions, autoethnography, housing design

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Interactive Documentaries as a Tool for Inclusive Dialogues in Design Practice and Education

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Abstract

In the face of monumental challenges such as population ageing, climate change, and social inequity, designers have a crucial role as changemakers. One promising area of practice is designing inclusive cities, which requires amplifying diverse voices through participatory methods like co-design, place-making, and community-led practices. These approaches often employ tools

such as visual mapping, observational methods, participatory design kits, and digital media. Among these tools, the documentary format—which has been evolving into digital and interactive forms—has a rich history of driving community-led change by exposing systemic injustices and fostering dialogue among stakeholders.

Interactive documentaries (as known as i-docs or web documentaries), defined as “projects that engage with the real and use interactive digital technologies to realise this intention” (Aston et al., 2017), are particularly suited to capturing and presenting lived experiences. Their polyphonic, co-creative, and non-linear qualities make them powerful tools for representing diverse perspectives and fostering solidarities. This study explores how I-docs can enhance participatory design practices and education, particularly in the context of planning inclusive urban futures.

Through an analysis of exemplary projects such as *Field Trip*, *The Shoreline Project*, *The Quipu Project*, and *Highrise*, the study examines how i-docs integrate marginalised voices—both human and non-human—and their relationships with place. These projects reveal i-docs’ potential to document counter-publics, challenge normative narratives, and create spaces for dialogue.

The study argues that i-docs can foster inclusivity, polyphony, and empathy in design processes. Their co-creative nature aligns with principles of agonistic governance, facilitating engagement with under-represented groups and promoting reciprocal relationships between diverse stakeholders. By incorporating i-docs into design practice and education, designers can envision more equitable and inclusive urban futures.

Keywords

i-docs, interactive documentaries, inclusivity, design practice, design education

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Radical Encounters: Rehearsing inclusivity in/of Cultural Spaces

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Abstract

Cultural spaces often position themselves as vital social and cultural infrastructures, echoing the right to engage in culture as a principle of just and diverse cities. This ethos underpins policies that emphasize inclusivity, often putting pressure on designing inclusive spaces rather than questioning the mechanisms through which culture is redefined, redesigned—or, in some cases, neglected—and the conditions in which encounters take place, including confrontations, exchanges, and co-existence take place.

While the ecologies of cultural spaces and the importance of inclusivity have been emphasised, the narratives and politics that guide this inclusiveness—including decisions on funding distributions, recognising dominant voices, privileges, intolerances, and conflicts, and acting upon

the stigma and racism towards 'others'— remain underexplored. Highlighting strange encounters and their role for the future is particularly important in the current political climate, and for the cities across the UK, where experiments in creating culturally inclusive spaces are often limited to representations (e.g., diverse governance and audience).

This research proposes creative embodiment as a methodology to examine inclusivity beyond representations, focusing on moments, events, and opportunities of encounters where communities of strangers, operating under asymmetrical power relations, visibly coexist and interact. Drawing on performance theory and practice, it reconceptualises the "stage" (Not a place to be – but a place to be-long), the "subject" (which finds meanings in co-existence of others), "rehearsal" (practicing confrontation, exchange, or refuge), and "improvisation" (navigating the complexity of vulnerability, and resilience).

Through this lens, the study investigates where and how encounters can unfold and the conditions under which access to culture can be reimagined, designed and practiced. By integrating embodiment into the discourse on inclusivity in urban spaces, this research repositions practices of place-making as a transformative and politically engaged pursuit to shape cultural spaces.

Keywords

Inclusivity, Encounters, Cultural spaces, Embodiment, place-making practices

Track 8: Designing accessible cities: towards low-carbon and inclusive mobility futures

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Quantifying the role and prominence of nature in cycling experiences and practices in the West of England

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Abstract

Cycling and nature offer individuals health and wellbeing benefits, as well as the potential to contribute to local, national and global sustainability goals. Sometimes cycling and nature coincide, e.g., cycling through ‘natural’ landscapes or on urban greenways, but the role that perceived nature plays in cycling experiences, outcomes and decision-making has not been sufficiently quantified. In addition, the potential of cycling to afford opportunities for nature connection has been under-explored. This paper presents findings of the first phase of a doctoral research project using mixed methods, which comprised a survey of adult residents of the West of England who had cycled recently ($n = 260$). This phase of the research aimed to contextualise further qualitative findings within a pragmatic interpretivist approach. It also represents a context-specific attempt to build on existing literature by quantitatively measuring the different ways in which nature plays a role in cycling experiences in a specific local area. The characteristics of the sample are presented and compared with those of published national representative surveys. Findings, based on primarily descriptive analysis, indicate that nature is a motivation to cycle for a substantial proportion of participants. The vast majority reported nature contributed prominently and positively to their cycling experiences at least sometimes, and that nature connectedness ‘pathway’ experiences were common across different cycling activities. Nature enhanced desirable cycling experiences and outcomes such as wellbeing, enjoyment and a sense of escape for most cyclists. Many of these findings were more widespread among female than male participants, and during leisure and sport cycling more than cycling for transport. Overall, nature plays an important and positive role in many cycling experiences in the West of England, especially for leisure and sport cycling.

Keywords

Nature, Cycling, Wellbeing, Nature Connection

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“The Greater Good”: social impacts of mitigation policies in marginalised areas Case study of the East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood (EBLN)

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Abstract

My study is at the intersection of Just Transition and Just City scholars. Applying a green lens to the debate surrounding justice and public policy, it qualitatively produces a case study of a sustainable urban mobility policy implemented in one of the most deprived areas of Bristol – the East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood (EBLN).

The EBLN is a regulating traffic scheme to improve air quality and reduce driving emissions. The analysis starts from a clear vision of the Just City (from Fainstein, Harvey, etc.) in which public investments produce equitable outcomes rather than supporting those already well-off. Starting from this vision, the analysis employs the theoretical framework of the Capability Approach (Sen, Nussbaum, Robeyns, etc.) to understand the social impacts of the policy on the highly socioeconomically diverse neighbourhood. Through the Capability Approach, the study investigates whether all people impacted by this policy have the choices, opportunities, and abilities to be able to transform the changes introduced by the policy in resources.

Through the analysis of approx. 85 documents, a Stakeholder Engagement phase and a substantial body of Primary Data generated through a year-long weekly Participant Observation exercise while volunteering at the neighbourhood's Community Centre and the Thematic Analysis of approx. 30 semi-structured interviews with different actors involved, the research contributes to the understanding of social justice in mitigation policies' by giving voice to people directly involved and impacted by it, especially socially and economically vulnerable residents. It produces a narrative of policy values and outcomes and understands controversial practices of sovereignty in the context of dispossession.

In doing so, it produces a narrative of the hidden voices to understand what more -or else- would need to happen to make the transition to a low-carbon economy and its profound revolutionary potential, an advantage to a more sustainable, equal and inclusive society.

Keywords

Low traffic neighbourhoods (LTN), Capability Approach, Social Justice, Just Transition, Qualitative analysis

Exploring Public Preferences for Urban Street Redesign: A Visualization-Based Stated Choice Experiment in Switzerland

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Abstract

Urban street redesign initiatives are increasingly popular as cities aim to foster environmental sustainability and reduce car reliance by promoting active mobility. However, the acceptance of specific transformations often faces challenges due to public concerns, including NIMBYism and loss aversion regarding existing amenities. This study investigates public preferences for urban street redesign through a large-scale stated choice experiment, examining different built environment attributes such as infrastructure, environmental, and social elements. Utilizing a representative sample of Swiss residents (N=5,991), we employ both 2D and 360° visualizations to explore how variations in street design impact three outcomes: overall acceptance of redesign, willingness to live in, and willingness to cycle on redesigned neighborhood and main roads. Findings reveal a strong preference for green space, particularly in enhancing the livability and appeal of neighborhood roads, while main roads benefit more significantly from dedicated cycling infrastructure. Results suggest that presentation format influences perceptions, with 360° visualizations enhancing the social appeal of redesigned streets. This research provides insights into the elements shaping public acceptance of urban transformations and highlights the importance of incorporating greenery and social spaces alongside infrastructure improvements in designs for active mobility.

Keywords

Urban street redesign, public acceptance, cycling infrastructure, survey experiment, public preference

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Equitable Mobility Solutions for People and Goods: Mitigating Congestion in the Historic Commercial Hub of Bara Bazar, Kolkata

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Abstract

Congestion is a persistent issue in urban areas, driven by increasing urbanization and growing need for mobility. It poses significant challenges, worsening environmental conditions and reducing residents' quality of life. Addressing this requires inclusive and equitable mobility solutions that cater to all residents and businesses. Despite the existence of various studies, there is limited research on solutions specifically tailored to developing countries. In urban city centres diverse

transport modes and limited infrastructure complicate the situation. To create sustainable mobility solutions, the research emphasizes novel methods of citizen and stakeholder engagement, co-creation of mobility plans, and the role of local communities in fostering socially innovative, context-specific approaches tailored to developing countries. The study highlights the need to address traffic in commercial hubs taking a case study of Bara Bazar, not only for improving traffic flow but also for supporting local businesses, improving accessibility and fostering a more pedestrian-friendly environment. The research aims to identify the causes of congestion, assess the feasibility of strategies, and evaluate user acceptance through data-driven analysis. Solutions include optimizing the Right of Way (ROW), enhancing walkability, managing vehicle use and parking, and implementing controlled vehicular access. Methodologically, the study uses primary data gathered through stated-preference surveys that capture stakeholder perceptions for decongestion, and analysed using a multinomial logit model to predict the impact of various strategies. Simulation modelling further validates the effectiveness of these measures. While stakeholders are open to parking pricing, there is resistance to congestion taxes despite their potential to curb traffic demand. Successfully decongesting Bara Bazar could provide a model for managing congestion in other densely populated commercial hubs in India and similar settings globally. The research highlights the potential of context-specific congestion management strategies to improve economic activity, environmental sustainability, and quality of life in crowded urban areas.

Keywords

Congestion , Accessible cities, Walkability , Stakeholder engagement

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Urban Slowness: Exploring Alternative, Inclusive and Sustainable Mobile Rhythms in an Era of Speed

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Abstract

In a world that seems to be accelerating incessantly, both material and immaterial speed pervade various aspects of contemporary urban life, including human mobility. Since the second half of the 20th century, mobility scholars have argued that speed of movement is closely tied to socio-spatial (in)justice and issues of sustainability, energy, and equity (see Illich, 1974). Speed is inherently relative, as it can be measured in terms of faster or slower rhythms; nonetheless, scholars have often highlighted the predominance of fast speeds in the collective cultural imaginary, manifesting in both material (i.e., speed of movement) and immaterial (i.e., speed of life) dimensions. In this context, the rhythms of human mobility are increasingly driven by the imperative of fast speed, leading to a dissolution of a sense of place and resulting in fragmented time, a-spatiality, and overall distorted experiences of space and time.

This paper provides a theoretical reflection on the unintended effects of (fast) speed of movement on urban life quality and considers slower rhythms as potential indicators of human and environmental health and well-being. Adopting a multidisciplinary perspective that intersects urban design, sociology, and environmental psychology, this paper explores the conceptual relationship between mobility rhythms and the diverse affective experiences of space they generate. It positions slowness as an alternative to speed and as a democratic, inclusive form of rhythm, arguing that slow and active mobility bring numerous benefits for both humans and the environment, as well as in their interaction—from reducing carbon emissions to enhancing social engagement and deepening affective connections with place. Ultimately, it contends that slowness should not be framed as an ‘either-or’ choice between fast and slow; rather, it advocates for broadening the spectrum of speeds through the establishment of both material and immaterial slow zones in urban space and citizens’ mobile practices.

Keywords

slowness, mobile rhythms, urban mobility, person-environment relationship

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Inclusive sustainable city planning in Zambia: Assessing the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in Lusaka’s built environment

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Abstract

In Lusaka, Zambia, persons with disabilities (PWDs) continue to encounter significant accessibility challenges in urban spaces, hindering their full participation in society. Despite Zambia's legislative framework, including the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2012, significant gaps remain in public infrastructure, such as inadequate ramps, inaccessible public transportation, and poorly designed public spaces. These issues hinder PWDs’ access to essential services like education, healthcare, and employment. This study explores the infrastructure accessibility challenges faced by PWDs in Lusaka's built environment through a meta-analysis of existing literature. With an emphasis on mobility and visual impairments, the meta-analysis entailed a comprehensive search and review of research on disability inclusion and urban accessibility, giving priority to sources published in the last ten years as well as those examining similar contexts in low- and middle-income nations. Studies were assessed based on relevance, methodological rigor, and findings regarding accessibility needs, challenges, and solutions. The results were synthesized to identify common barriers and inform recommendations. The findings highlight the need for strengthening policies, improving infrastructure, and raising public awareness to create a more inclusive environment. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate how inclusive and sustainable city planning can address the challenges faced by PWDs to promote equitable urban development and emphasize the importance of involving PWDs in the planning process to ensure their needs are effectively met.

Keywords

Inclusive city planning, Persons with disabilities, Accessibility, Sustainable development, Lusaka Zambia

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From Policy to Practice: Enhancing Infrastructure Projects in Italy with EU Nature Restoration Law

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Abstract

The recent adoption of the European “Nature Restoration Law” marks a significant advancement in environmental protection and ecosystem conservation within the EU. This law, which mandates the restoration of at least 20% of the EU’s land and sea surfaces by 2030, is a foundational aspect of the EU Biodiversity Strategy and aligns closely with broader sustainable urban and infrastructure development goals.

For Italy, this presents a crucial opportunity to rethink and improve the design of large-scale infrastructure projects, which have often proceeded with insufficient consideration of environmental and ecological factors. Despite the importance of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes, these have lagged behind the ambitious goals of the EU Strategy: new infrastructure projects contribute to an 8.4% increase in land consumption, challenging the EU’s commitment to halting land degradation, particularly in high-value agricultural and biodiversity-rich areas.

Under this legal framework, ecosystems and biodiversity gain formal protection, underscoring the urgency of habitat restoration and the ultimate goal of halting land consumption. In addition, the latest report by Italy’s National System for Environmental Protection (SNPA) highlights the direct and indirect impacts of land use on ecosystem services and biodiversity. This points to the need for comprehensive assessments of ecosystem services at the planning stage, ensuring that landscapes and biodiversity receive adequate protection.

In parallel, the UK’s Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) approach offers a complementary framework for infrastructure sustainability, requiring a quantifiable increase in biodiversity as a prerequisite for project approval. Together, the Nature Restoration Law and BNG introduce a transformative

perspective in environmental legislation, promoting a new awareness of biodiversity's critical value and the importance of ecosystem services.

This paper examines the integration of these strategic approaches within infrastructure planning, aiming to establish a framework that supports both the mitigation of environmental impacts and the active restoration of ecosystems.

Keywords

Sustainable Infrastructure , Nature Restoration Law, Ecosystems Services, Environmental Impact Assessment, Biodiversity Net Gain

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Assessing Safety Perceptions at Dublin's Public Transport Stops: A CPTED-Informed Approach Using Street View Imagery

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Abstract

In public transport, commuters' perception of safety is fundamental to promoting and sustaining its use. Past research indicates that the condition of the built environment and infrastructure in and around public transport stops significantly shape these perceptions of safety. In this context, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) provides a theoretical framework linking built environment features to the perception of safety; however, limited studies have applied CPTED specifically to public transport, particularly to bus stops. This could be due to manual field observations posing a challenge, as they are time-consuming and have limited spatial coverage. This study investigates the feasibility of leveraging novel data sources, primarily Street View Imagery (SVI), to assess and develop built environment safety-related indicators for Dublin bus stops grounded in CPTED principles to address this challenge.

This study develops a comprehensive list of indicators aligned with the seven principles of CPTED, which can be gathered using data sources such as SVI, Point-of-Interest (POI), OpenStreetMap (OSM), Land Use (LU), and survey data. These indicators are extracted using semantic segmentation and are standardised using min-max and negative min-max scaling to develop a scalable built environment perception index. Additionally, the study employs betweenness centrality to examine the spatial distribution and the importance of bus stops in Dublin, examining the relationship between built environment indicators and stop importance.

The initial results indicate that SVI effectively captures a substantial portion of CPTED-based indicators and can be a viable data source for safety perception studies. This study contributes a scalable safety perception index for public transport grounded in CPTED principles, leveraging novel data sources with some limitations. As a foundational step, this study advances safety-related research in public transport and urban analytics.

Keywords

Safety Perception, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), Street View Imagery (SVI), Public Transport, Semantic Segmentation

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Advancing Perceived Safety in Public Transport: Opportunities in Data and Analytical Methods

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Abstract

Across the globe, commuter priorities in public transport are shifting from cost-benefit evaluations to overall service experience, with the perception of safety emerging as a critical factor. Negative perceptions of safety—while approaching, waiting, or in transit—deter usage despite tangible benefits. While safety studies have a robust history, advancements in geospatial technologies, data analytics, and machine learning are transforming the field. These innovations enable dynamic and precise insights for nuanced understanding; however, their integration into commuter safety-related research in public transport remains limited, leaving significant potential untapped.

With this focus, this study provides a comprehensive review of the existing literature on perceived safety in public transport, structured around three core objectives. First, it analyses existing studies to explore how perceived safety is conceptualised, defined, and studied, focusing on the methodologies and approaches employed. Second, it examines how innovative data collection and analytical methods—such as geospatial mapping and participatory approaches—have been utilised to capture commuter safety perceptions. Finally, it identifies the potential for integrating advanced data collection, mapping, and analytical techniques to enhance the future perception of safety-related research.

Upon multiple screening, this review synthesises insights from 52 studies (2012–2024) on perceived safety in public transport, categorising safety into public transport-specific, commuter-specific, and contextual dimensions. The studies reveal an interplay of safety factors, with 63% focusing on physical and environmental aspects, 54% on operational factors, and 44% emphasising gender-specific concerns. These frequently intersected with social factors (48%) and psychological factors (43%), highlighting safety perceptions' complex, interconnected nature. The review identifies significant gaps, such as the limited integration of novel data sources and advanced analytical techniques, while also highlighting the opportunities these advancements present for advancing safety-related research.

Keywords

Perceived Safety, Public Transport, Safety Outcomes, Gender-Specific Concerns, Commuter Behaviour

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The future of car ownership in urban areas

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Abstract

Electric vehicles (EVs) are necessary but not sufficient for decarbonisation and urban development. A reliance on EVs would perpetuate a system of car dependency, with its associated negative impacts of resource depletion, inequity, physical inactivity, road danger and land take. Vehicle electrification itself entails uncertainties in supply chains, depreciation, the relative price of fuel, insurance, government incentives and these all interact with city-specific needs for infrastructure, regulation, urban space and balancing complex needs.

This panel will examine the future of private car ownership and alternative models of car access in cities. Who will own a car? Where? And how? Evidence is emerging from cities research (e.g. [Kirschner & Lanzendorf](#), 2020, [Kuss & Nicholas](#), 2022, [Liu et al.](#), 2024) on novel policies encouraging and enabling urban residents to shed their car and rely on active, shared and public modes instead.

The panel will share evidence from their research of cities around the world which are testing innovative practices to break the cycle of car ownership including:

- **Delivering the EV transition;** evaluating the automotive sector capability to supply city-suitable EVs for urban populations, whilst retaining a financial viability. Evidence considers consumer expectations, required behaviour change and the wider system of EV-led automobility (Parkhurst, in press).
- **What shapes demand for car ownership at household level;** evidence on shifting household car ownership over the life course, impacts of life events and personal circumstances, life-style preferences and city transport systems (Clark et al. [2016a](#), [2016b](#)).
- **Systematic review of empirical research into zero-car households** (Toy et al., in press) and analysis of Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) 2022 Cities data highlighting factors that influence zero-car households and innovative practices of cities trying to reduce car dominance.
- **Evidence on the use of behaviour change interventions** to reduce car dependency in a context of uncertain future costs of ownership

Keywords

Car ownership, Travel behaviour, Electrification, Urban mobility, Transport inequality

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Exploring the everyday mobilities and social worlds of older people and the implications for social connectedness

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Abstract

Many older adults experience the challenges of social isolation and disconnection, while ageing in their homes, neighbourhoods and communities. It is projected that nearly 2 million people in England aged over 50 will be feeling chronically lonely by 2026, with those living alone and experiencing long-term illnesses or disabilities, and with reduced mobility at greater risk. A key challenge for policymakers, planners and service providers concerns how we can design environments and plan for older people's diverse social and mobility needs, whilst recognising inequalities that make participation in community life easier for some than others.

Collaborating with Re-Engage, a charity whose mission is to reduce the social isolation of older people, this paper will present findings from a research project that seeks to enhance the social environment evidence base within planning. Drawing on creative, qualitative and spatial methods, this project will consider the role of the built environment in providing opportunities or challenges for social connectedness, and to identify recommendations which could enhance older adults' social experiences in urban contexts, particularly as they engage in community mobility. This project aims to diversify the planning policy evidence base, to capture some of the more intangible and subjective components of the social environment, which are often more important to older people themselves. This community engaged research will offer valuable insight and advance the knowledge base of planning policy and will provide recommendations which could better support older people to age well in place.

Keywords

Older People, Community Mobility, Social Connectedness, Ageing Well in Place, Lived Experience

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Reducing transport inequality by improving accessibility in Palermo, Italy. An effort in vain?

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Abstract

In the face of the long-lasting challenges that our societies must deal with, it is more urgent than ever to change our mobility practices. Many cities witness pressing levels of deprivation and marginality that are propelled by an interplay of factors that range from socio-economic, land-use, climate, housing, and mobility. Consequently, the convergence between city and transportation appears as a significant strand of urban planning studies that can support policymakers to address urban development and the creation of more healthy and sustainable cities.

Urban planning paradigms such as Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and the emerging City of Proximity models (Bertolini, 2010; D’Onofrio & Trusiani, 2022) emphasize the importance of spatial accessibility in reducing urban inequalities (Fransen & Farber, 2019). Eventually, to fully address these challenges, it is crucial to consider the role of mobility behavior change alongside spatial factors. At the same time, local authorities have been implementing innovative active and sustainable mobility policies to improve human well-being and environmental quality.

In this regard, this study attempts to shed light on the factors at play to reduce transport inequalities and create more healthy cities, by integrating spatial and socio-cultural features. This is done by focusing on Palermo (Italy), one of Southern Europe’s most well-known cities for highly car-dependent mobility patterns. On the one side, the paper presents a general assessment of the city’s accessibility conditions and urban functions distribution, as well as a review of a series of local governance practices including (pedestrianization policies, infrastructural investments and other sustainable mobility initiatives). On the other side, it draws into people’s feedback on their mobility habits and views on the city’s urban mobility scenario.

The overall outcome of the research resides on the insights that can help policymakers to develop accessibility-driven policy tools and consequently promote more sustainable mobility options and finally improve spatial equality.

Keywords

transport inequalities, walkability, accessibility, urban mobility, Palermo

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Heat Risk Assessment for Elderly commuters in a hot desert city corresponding to transit infrastructure availability

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Abstract

Urbanization and Climate change led risks and hazards are challenging the resilience of urban systems. This situation is especially complex in low- and middle-income countries with resource inequality. People who are outdoors for work, commute and other purposes, are at maximum exposure to different climatic health hazards and extreme weather events such as heat waves, cold waves, heavy precipitation or cyclones. As per latest IPCC reports, EWEs impact demography

disproportionately in terms of age, gender and economic resources. Elderlies, children and pregnant women are found to be the most at risk group in such cases. Keeping this in consideration, this proposal aims to formulate a comprehensive heat risk assessment framework for elderly commuters (HEAT SAFE) in a hot dry desert city Jodhpur, India considering travel pattern, infrastructure availability, and heat-health status with respect to microclimatic conditions. Lack of a heat risk management plan and inadequate transit infrastructure can either impact mode choice decisions of the elderly commuters or make them susceptible to heat related health risks. Cities situated in extreme climatic conditions need special attention towards framing a heat risk management plan and ensuring suitable transit infrastructure such as adequately shaded pedestrian walkways, or cycle tracks as well as thermally and comfortable bus shelters and ancillary facilities. For a city in a hot-desert climate, extreme heat coupled with dryness and dust storms can exacerbate the adversities of any commuter in general. The focus is on identifying and developing data driven evidence based appropriate heat risk assessment framework and a heat risk management plan to ensure optimum thermal conditions for the elderly commuters during outdoor trips.

Keywords

Extreme heat, Outdoor thermal discomfort, Elderly commuters, Transit infrastructure availability, Hot-arid

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Universal Accessibility and Walkability Indicators: Towards More Inclusive and Sustainable Cities

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Abstract

Urban territories reflect the evolution of mobility systems, which frequently tend to consume public space and take people's space for themselves. The emergency to combat climate change and the urgent need to reduce carbon emissions have highlighted the impact of sustainable and inclusive urban planning, aligned with the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda. In this context, the participatory processes and the development of social cohesion and carbon reduction indicators are becoming increasingly important.

Universal accessibility indicators have emerged as essential tools for promoting more socio-just and inclusive cities. Victor Pineda (2014) defends accessibility as a fundamental right, necessary for the full participation of all citizens, including people with disabilities and the elderly. This view is in line with spatial justice, as described by Edward W. Soja (2010), who argues that it is fundamental to have equitable distribution of urban resources. For her part, Susan Fainstein (2010)

emphasizes the importance of public policies that promote equal access to services and infrastructures.

Transport decarbonization and walkability are central in the process of reducing the urban carbon footprint. Jeff Speck (2012) and Jan Gehl (2010) advocate that cities designed to be walkable reduce the use of motorized vehicles and encourage active and sustainable urban lifestyles. This concept challenges public policies to encourage soft mobility infrastructures.

This paper explores the connection between universal accessibility indicators and walkability issues, focusing on the New Walkability App presented at the Walk 21 Lisbon Conference. The tool aims to support the development of more just and sustainable environments, monitoring spatial justice and promoting the active inclusion of all. The approach facilitates the continuous monitoring and evaluation of spatial justice and, at the same time, seeks to promote the active inclusion of all people, regardless of their physical and sensory abilities.

Keywords

Universal Accessibility, Walkability, Spatial Justice, Sustainable Urban Planning, Public Policies

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Measuring the Impacts that Logistics Facilities Have in the Urban Environment and the Community, The Case of Chicago

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Abstract

The increasing demands of e-commerce and consumer expectations for rapid delivery have led to the growing importance of proximity logistics, prompting companies to position warehouses closer to city centers. Even though this strategic placement of warehouses within metropolitan areas is critical for efficient logistic operations, reducing transportation costs and delivery times, it presents challenges such as proximity to vulnerable populations, heightened exposure to noise and emission pollution, greater health risks, and increased traffic congestion during certain times.

This study explores logistic facilities linked to e-commerce in Chicago's Statistical Metropolitan Area, which is in the Midwest of the United States and holds the third largest urban core of the United States. Data related to the location of the e-commerce logistics facilities was obtained by gathering public data from MWPVL International. To understand the societal impacts, vulnerable populations living near these facilities are identified by using U.S. Census Bureau Data. To analyze the environmental effects, this study focuses on indicators that have been linked to the transportation industry: particulate matter 2.5, diesel particulate matter, and nitrogen dioxide. This data was gathered using public records from the Office of Environmental Justice of the Environmental Protection Agency. Finally, traffic data was collected from the Travel Midwest database, which holds historical records for vehicle and truck traffic in Chicagoland. Further

indicators are being generated to understand the proximity of these facilities to the existing built environment and their impacts on urban freight policy.

Preliminary results show that in urban areas, logistic facilities are usually near vulnerable populations. And areas with logistic facilities portray more vulnerability than the areas that do not allow such developments. Furthermore, the PM 2.5 emission is higher in areas that have populations with low-income minority communities, and this level decreases around areas where there are predominantly more white and wealthier communities.

Keywords

Logistics Facilities, Equity, Environmental impact, Traffic impact, Freight policy

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Exploring the Role of E-Cargo Bikes in Decarbonising Last-Mile Deliveries: A Case Study of Bristol

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Abstract

The rapid growth of online shopping has significantly increased last-mile delivery demands, making it the most inefficient and polluting segment of the supply chain. This rise in e-commerce has led to a surge in van movements, with a 106% increase in miles travelled by delivery vehicles in the UK over the past decade. Poor optimisation of vehicle load factors and high rates of failed deliveries exacerbate the problem, contributing to traffic congestion and increased carbon emissions. Last-mile deliveries now account for a substantial share of urban greenhouse gas emissions, highlighting the urgent need for sustainable solutions to address these challenges.

This study explores the potential of e-cargo bikes to decarbonise last-mile deliveries and reduce van movements in urban areas, focusing on Bristol as a case study. The research adopts mixed-methods, including interviews with e-cargo bike delivery operators and experts in the UK, alongside an online survey capturing public perceptions and preferences towards e-cargo bike deliveries in Bristol.

Key objectives include identifying the enablers and barriers to the adoption of e-cargo bikes for last-mile freight and understanding their role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Stakeholder interviews provide insights into operational challenges, infrastructure needs, and policy implications, while the public survey highlights consumer attitudes, awareness, and willingness to adopt such delivery services.

Findings aim to inform urban freight strategies and promote sustainable delivery solutions, aligning with national decarbonisation targets. By addressing operational, societal, and policy-level barriers, this research contributes to the growing discourse on green urban freight systems. The study has been conducted by the Centre for Transport and Society at the University of the West of England and supported by a student internship programme. Results will contribute to policy and practice for sustainable urban logistics.

Keywords

decarbonisation, sustainable urban logistics, e-cargo bikes

Track 9: Greening the city

9

Green Infrastructure, Urban Regeneration and City Living

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Abstract

With the profound and accelerating decline of the High Street as a place for retail traditionally supported by high levels of footfall and chain retailers, there is an emerging trend of urban areas introducing urban greening as a way to try to improve a range of environmental and social factors including increasing dwell time, socialisation and footfall alongside people's physical and mental wellbeing.

This paper, which focuses on the findings from a BBSRC-funded impact project, critically evaluates the economic and environmental impacts of urban greening in a post-industrial landscape (West Bromwich). It examines the emerging implications for theory and practice and develops policy recommendations whilst reflecting on the broader changes in the funding landscape for post-Covid repurposing of urban centres

Keywords

Green infrastructure, Urban wellbeing, Urban Centres, City living

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Urbanization as Stressor of Public Urban Green Spaces (PUGS) Shrinkage – A Spatial Enquiry of PUGS in Kolkata, India

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Abstract

Rapid urbanization and densification in Developing countries have led to shrinkage in public urban green spaces (PUGS). Many Indian metro cities are unplanned and organically evolved, for instance, Kolkata which houses 4.5 million people. The growing population pressure and its consequent physical and social infrastructural demands have resulted in shrinkage of PUGS (Byomkesh et al., 2012). At present, per capita accessible PUGS in Kolkata is 0.52sq.m, much lesser than the prescribed 9sq.m per capita by World Health Organization (TNN, 2018). This study attempts to investigate the relationship between urbanization pressure, PUGS distribution

and the resulting shrinkage of PUGS at ward level (smallest administrative unit of Urban Local Body) in Kolkata Municipal Corporation. The pressure of urbanization is expressed using the Land value per sqm (LV). This explicitly indicates at demand for land resources primarily for housing needs. Additionally, the ward level shrinkage of PUGS is measured by reporting the difference in PUGS area between the timeframe 2015 and 2024. It is observed that the public greenspaces are encroached and mostly transformed into built use. Findings revealed that Gini coefficient increased from 0.899 (in 2015) to 0.903 (in 2024) indicating high skewness in greenspace distribution across the wards. Infact, 45.8% of Kolkata's PUGS are concentrated within 13 wards, while 19 wards are completely devoid of PUGS. Although the spatial distribution of PUGS is random, PUGS shrinkage is spatially autocorrelated (Moran's $I=0.02$, $p<.05$). Moreover, average LV per ward has a significant positive correlation with share of PUGS ($r=0.221$, $p<0.001$), and total shrinkage of PUGS ($r=0.174$, $p<0.05$) in each ward. However, there's no significant relationship between the PUGS share and shrinkage. Besides, bivariate spatial autocorrelation (Bivariate Moran's $I=0.052$) reveals that higher LV of neighboring wards significantly increase PUGS shrinkage in a particular ward.

Keywords

Public Urban Green Spaces, shrinkage, urbanization, land value, spatial autocorrelation

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Manipulating soil microbes and soil type to improve stormwater management capacity of a newly-built vertical greenery system

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Abstract

Urban environments are increasingly challenged by stormwater due to expanding impermeable surfaces. Vertical greenery systems (VGS) have emerged as a nature-based solution to mitigate the ecological impacts of urban runoff. This study provides empirical field evidence to optimize VGS to enhance runoff retention and improve runoff quality. In this study, we investigated the effects of substrate type (sandy loam and reed-based substrates), plant growth-promoting microbe (PGPM) inoculation in the substrate, and varying growing conditions (simulated rainwater quantity, air temperature, and substrate moisture). Our findings demonstrate that PGPM inoculation significantly enhanced the stormwater retention capacity of the VGS, regardless of substrate type. It was most likely achieved through enhanced above-ground and below-ground plant growth. Contrary to our hypothesis, PGPM inoculation didn't influence the water use efficiency of the VGS. However, it notably reduced the total loads of nutrient and metal elements in runoff primarily by reducing runoff quantity rather than their concentrations. On the other hand, the two substrate types did not differ in the runoff retention capacity of the VGS, and the sandy loam substrate facilitated a higher water use efficiency, which can be attributed to the enhanced growth of plants in this substrate. The impact on runoff quality was primarily dictated by the type of substrate used; concentrations and total loads of nutrients and metals were considerably higher in

runoff from the reed-based substrate, which has a high organic matter content. Higher simulated rain quantities and substrate moisture levels increased runoff leaching, whereas elevated temperature improved water use efficiency. Additionally, high substrate moisture boosted both concentrations and total loads of the most elements. In conclusion, this comprehensive study highlighted the importance of integrating suitable substrates with microbial modification in VGS design to effectively manage urban stormwater, providing insightful and practical measures to contain urban stormwater risk by using VGS.

Keywords

plant growth-promoting microbes, runoff quality , runoff quantity, vertical greenery system, field experiment

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Introducing wildflower meadows for biodiversity, climate and wellbeing in an airport setting: Assessing preferences and acceptability at Luton Airport, UK.

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Abstract

Research highlights the biodiversity, climate and wellbeing benefits of introducing meadow-style planting in urban spaces, and land managers across Europe and more widely are now introducing wildflower meadows in areas formerly managed as amenity grassland. Urban publics are increasingly willing to accept planting with a wilder aesthetic, yet there is currently a lack of research focusing on public attitudes to meadow-style planting in an airport setting.

We addressed this in partnership with Luton Borough Council, assessing public attitudes towards annual and perennial meadow scenarios versus the baseline amenity mown grass along the Luton Airport Approach Road, to inform the site's future planning and design in support of the sustainability and green infrastructure goals of the airport. Using an online questionnaire to assess participants recruited via social media and within the airport terminal (n=122), we questioned how biodiverse, attractive, and mentally restorative the annual and perennial meadow scenarios were perceived to be against the baseline scenario. Both meadow scenarios presented an improvement on the baseline across metrics, with annual meadows preferred overall. Introducing meadows had little impact on the mentally restorative quality of the setting for participants overall, yet more nature-connected individuals perceived the perennial scenario to be more aesthetically pleasing, restorative and biodiverse than individuals with lower nature-connectedness scores.

Our findings indicate that in an airport setting land managers should introduce both annual and perennial meadows in areas currently managed as amenity mown grass. This can deliver multiple benefits, enhancing human aesthetic appreciation, biodiversity, and climate resilience.

Keywords

Wildflower meadows, Aesthetics, Mental Restorativeness, Perceived Biodiversity, Nature connectedness

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“I’m a better version of me!” Physical activity in different natural environments: parkrun participants’ motivations, preferences, and wellbeing benefits.

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Abstract

If equitable, inclusive greenspace interventions are to be designed and delivered to motivate wider urban publics to experience the life-enhancing benefits of physical activity, we need to understand what motivates people to practise physical activity in a natural environment, the perceived benefits, which greenspace characteristics are most preferred, and by whom, including more deprived, inactive populations. We investigate these gaps in collaboration with *parkrun*, conducting post parkrun questionnaires (n=246) in situ at 3 *parkrun* events purposively sampled to capture participant response to physical activity across a range of natural and built settings with contrasting local public health profiles: urban new town; inner London; rural Lakeland with mountain views.

Physical fitness was the dominant initial motivator for *parkrun* participation overall (n=93%). Once engaged, participants appreciated the synergistic benefits of *social connectedness* and *stress relief*. Women experienced these benefits most acutely and BAME participants in the deprived inner London setting most valued *parkrun* as a source of *physical fitness* and *stress relief*. If health inequalities are to be addressed, public health professionals and *parkrun* need to focus on novel approaches to motivate women and BAME participants in deprived areas where people are more likely to suffer mental ill-health and to be obese. Participants across all settings expressed strong preferences for natural over built environments, with greenspaces as the most preferred setting. Opportunities to exercise next to water were appreciated at the microscale. GI policymakers should prioritise parks and greenspaces as life-enhancing resources worthy of funding, investing in the wellbeing value of water features within parks and greenspaces at the microscale.

Keywords

Physical activity, Greenspace, parkrun, health and wellbeing, inequality

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Small-scale green infrastructure: Values, opportunities, and tensions

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Abstract

The environmental and social (and by extension, economic) value of urban green spaces has become more apparent in recent years, whether that is for human health, carbon capture, pollution control, water management, climate change resilience, or biodiversity (Dobson, J., Harris, C., Eadson, W., and Gore, T, 2019. Sinnett, Smith, and Burgess, 2015). However, the value of micro-scale green spaces (as opposed to assets, e.g. trees) is not as well established (Navarrete-Hernandez and Lafan, 2023), with a tendency to place emphasis upon larger/strategic site areas in consideration of Biodiversity Net Gain strategy/approaches, nature recovery strategies/networks, health and wellbeing analysis, and recreation and leisure considerations (via parks etc). Further, small site considerations may be challenged by complex/unknown/absent land ownership. Despite this, these smaller sites offer potential value to biodiversity and human health/experience which merits interrogation.

This paper will present research which seeks to explore how to identify and quantify the current and potential human and ecological (individual and, potentially, networked) value of micro-scale green infrastructure. And, how human and ecological value interface and create challenge/conflict in micro-GI space curation, purpose, use, and characteristics.

The intention of this research is to establish a proof of principle approach via case study investigation to evaluate the value of micro-scale green spaces. This will bring together aspects of ecosystem services-ecology, pollution prevention, culture, aesthetics, and planning policy/practice etc, researched via interfacing human and ecological research lenses. Existing data sets (including soils, habitats, land ownership etc) will be identified and explored, identifying data gaps. Together with primary data collection involving owner / user experience interviews to support an evidence base on which to draw initial project conclusions.

The project seeks to contribute to the GI discourse with a small-sites specific consideration of social and ecological urban green space value.

Keywords

Green Infrastructure , Biodiversity, Health, Policy, Governance

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Green plans in Italy as a strategy for urban regeneration

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Abstract

The relationship between natural and man-made space has always been a dualism between built and green, never in conflict. For some time now, pressure on greenery and the ecosystem has increased, reflecting on the potential of 'Landscape urbanism', which proposes a contemporary city made up of interconnected green areas. A continuous network of nature, increasing wooded areas, equipped green areas, ecological areas, etc. Furthermore, the ecosystem services provided by green areas support the ecological integrity of cities and protect the public health of citizens.

Planning and management, represent fundamental factors to foster opportunities for growth and enhancement to make cities more resilient and able to counter and mitigate climate change, in the short and medium term. A response that comes from some urban policies that start from the instances of the WHO Toronto Charter, where the priority is the health of citizens, using green to define quality and interpreting nature as a tool for health prevention in relation to the lived environment. Green is also fundamental from an energy, ecological, social and economic point of view.

One perspective is that of 'Green Infrastructure Plans' or 'Forestation Strategies' and other actions, anticipated by some international capitals. In Italy, without a regulatory imposition, many cities are adopting 'Green Plans', not only to regulate or manage the ordinary, but to design real green cities, whose strategies are based on green infrastructure and nature-based solutions. This is the case of Bergamo, Padua, Pisa, Prato and Senigallia, which will be presented in the paper, through the report of a scientific research in progress, which focuses on the quality of the city and the complex strategies pursued, comparing, both in terms of scales of intervention and areas of action, the results obtained in terms of environmental well-being and quality of life.

Keywords

wellness, green, plan, regeneration, urban design

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Exploring the influence of greenspace use and associated factors on mental health outcomes among university students in the UK

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Abstract

Aim: To contribute to the existing literature by providing substantial evidence on how people's interactions with greenspace influence their mental health outcomes before and after entering university.

Background: Research suggests that greenspaces offer numerous health benefits, helping to mitigate some of the negative impacts of urbanization, such as reducing and managing depression and anxiety. However, what is not yet understood is whether students' engagement with greenspaces changes after entry into university and whether that affects their mental health outcomes such as stress, depression and anxiety.

Methodology: Three waves of survey questions were administered to students: before university entry (T1), after three months in university (T2) and after six months in university (T3). Regression models were generated to understand which factors predicted students' use of greenspaces and mental health outcomes.

Results/Findings: Students' mental health generally declined after entering university, with a statistically significant increase in depression. Greenspace use varied across time points, with the highest everyday use recorded at T1, followed by T3 and T2. After starting university, more students used greenspaces once a month or less. Proximity to greenspace and using it for social interaction predicted regular use before and after university entry. Outdoor engagement for learning new things also predicted increased greenspace use and green exercise after university entry. Female students experienced more stress before and after university entry, while weekly greenspace use was linked to lower anxiety. Higher neighbourhood trust predicted reduced stress after university entry. Other mental health predictors varied across time points, indicating the complexity and evolving nature of these predictors over time.

Conclusions/Recommendations: This study supports previous findings on students' mental health challenges and highlights that greenspace interactions are also significantly impacted. The results suggest that promoting positive perceptions of neighbourhood and greenspaces, in general, can encourage active engagement, improving students' mental wellbeing.

Keywords

University , Students, Mental health, wellbeing, nature

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The strength of weak structures. Water and the reshaping of the XXIst century city: a Grenoble insight

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Abstract

In this communication, I would like to compare two theoretical proposals that are rarely used together. On the one hand, the “*strength of weak ties*” theory developed in the 1970s by a major figure in the new economic sociology, Mark Granovetter (1973); on the other, the recently

developed “*weak structures*” theory by the famous architect and urban planner Paola Vigano as part of a more global reflection on what she calls “*the horizontal metropolis*” (Vigano et al., 2019). The first, by distinguishing between “*strong ties*” (necessary for affective communities) and “*weak ties*” (organisers of epistemic communities) within a network, seeks to better characterise the functioning of relational structures by postulating that the strength of weak ties lies precisely in their capacity to better orchestrate exchanges, encounters and forms of communication conducive to social cohesion. The second, by differentiating between the “*strong structures*” inherited from modernity (transport infrastructures, hydraulic and energy macrosystems) and the “*weak structures*” (such as blue spaces and infrastructures), which are vulnerable, omnipresent and endowed with the “*capacity to shape contemporary cities and territories, despite its heterogeneity, fragmentation, and the separation between spaces and functions*”, invites us to “*question current urban development models and, ultimately, their potential for adaptation*” (Vigano, 2023). By studying a number of paradigmatic situations sampled in the Grenoble metropolitan area, I aim to show how, today, water territories appear to be *in vivo* and *in situ* laboratories for the socio-ecological transition underway. By combining an analysis of the spatial uses of water with that of landscape urbanism projects designed to make hydrographic structures and former flood embankment systems livable, my aim is to explore “*the strength of weak structures*”.

Keywords

Weak ties and structures, blue infrastructure, socio-ecological transition, landscape urbanism, reshaping cities

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Will anything “green” do? Examining the evidence base linking ecological biodiversity and human health.

Heather Rumble

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Abstract

There is mounting evidence that exposure to greenspace and interactions with nature are good for the physical health and mental wellbeing of humans. But what does “nature” mean in this context?

As we head towards the 6th mass extinction of species on the planet, how much does ecological biodiversity (the richness and range of species and their genes) matter for human health? If ecological biodiversity matters, what are the important mechanisms and experiences that we should capitalise on and protect, particularly in urban areas where most human populations reside?

The answers to these questions have implications for species conservation, the design and stewardship of urban green/blue infrastructure and for other factors that impact our potential interactions with non-human residents of the city.

This talk discusses the underlying theories underpinning our relationship with the diversity of life on the planet and examines the current evidence base that is attempting to disentangle “nature”, ecological biodiversity and human health and wellbeing.

Keywords

Health, Wellbeing, Biodiversity, Ecology, City

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Assessing Ecosystem Service Values and Spatial Patterns of Urban Green Infrastructure: A Case Study of Tainan City

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Abstract

This study investigated the willingness of local residents to receive compensation for ecosystem services (WTA) in small-scale urban green infrastructure (UGI). The main objective of the study is to identify the factors that influence individual compensation expectations. With increasing urbanization and demand for green space, small-scale urban green infrastructure has become increasingly relevant to urban development. It is crucial to understand its ecological value. Through a survey, the study primarily employed the Choice Experiment (CE) approach to evaluate residents' preferences for three types of ecosystem services: cultural, regulating, and supporting. In addition, socio-economic factors are considered to identify the main drivers of these preferences. Finally, the study will investigate the combination of the most significant indicators as well as regional variation.

The goal of the study is to pinpoint significant ecological and socio-economic factors that affect residents' WTA for small-scale UGIs. These variables could include socio-economic characteristics like income and education, understanding of ecological benefits, and proximity to green spaces. The results of the study will provide some evidentiary information for urban planners to develop WTA strategies that take into account the preferences of the general public, which will improve resource allocation, boost public participation, and promote sustainable urban growth.

Keywords

Urban green infrastructure, Ecosystem service functions, Spatial combination, Value assessment, Choice experiment

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A Green Utopia? Delivering Green Infrastructure through Major Residential Development

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Abstract

Successive governments have set ambitious targets for the delivery of new housing, with the Labour administration aiming to facilitate the delivery of 1.5 million homes over the next parliament. With regards to their location, the expectation is that a significant proportion will require the use of previously un-developed greenfield land, with the resulting schemes being major in terms of their size. In addition to ensuring an appropriate quantity, there has also been growing attention towards improving the design quality of major residential development. Building for Life, the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code have successively played a role, with house builders being expected to positively contribute to the multiple facets of good design. One of these facets involves the delivery of green infrastructure, with house builders and their designers being expected to positively contribute to the provision, and accessibility, of wide-ranging green and blue assets across their sites. Although house builders seem to recognise the broad benefits that green and blue infrastructure can give rise to, outcomes on the ground seem mixed. While some schemes have been congratulated for what they have been able to achieve, other projects have been derided for the opportunities that have been missed. The reasons for this variability seem unclear, with a range of possible contributory factors. The complexity in process, and the number of actors involved, seem to provide some explanation, a view that is being explored through doctoral research that is exploring national stakeholder attitudes and the implementation of several major residential projects in South Gloucestershire in the West of England. The paper will present emerging themes from the literature review, findings from a national survey and associated focus groups, and initial analysis arising from case study analysis.

Keywords

Green infrastructure, Housing development, Implementation

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Creative community approaches to blue green infrastructure integration

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Abstract

Blue green infrastructure (BGI) can help to prevent flood risk by storing excess rainwater and slowing the flow of flood waters. It can also help to reduce the impacts of climate change by reducing air pollution and providing shade, for example. BGI can also bring a wide range of health and wellbeing, social, economic and cultural benefits. Yet, our understanding of how to deliver BGI

which brings these multiple and interconnected benefits is limited. Furthermore, despite the importance of community engagement in the delivery of BGI, there is evidence to show that this is not effectively being used to inform climate adaptation measures. In addition, the role of community engagement in the planning of BGI is poorly understood. This risks creating infrastructure which does not consider the socio-cultural values of a place and could result in inappropriate change. Thus, to ensure BGI is accepted within communities, while stimulating a desire to care for such interventions, there is a need to better understand how communities can become involved in the process. To meet this objective, the author developed a way of engaging with communities, using Lego® and a range of craft items, to help them to generate ideas for BGI which brings multiple benefits for people, place and the environment. The process results in a series of ideas for BGI interventions which can be further developed and tested by the wider community, in partnership with local authority planning staff and/or researchers. The purpose of this presentation is to provide more information on this process, the lessons learned and recommendations for future iterations of the process.

Keywords

blue green infrastructure , community engagement

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Resilient Cities for Beyond Humans: Multispecies Justice Goals of Nature-Based Solutions in Urban Cities

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Abstract

Nature-based Solutions (NBS) leverage healthy ecosystems to protect communities, optimize infrastructure, and safeguard a stable, biodiverse future. While the U.S. federal government promotes NBS for local climate change adaptation, local implementation has historically prioritized human well-being over ecological benefits. This study investigates how municipal NBS initiatives can effectively serve both human and biodiversity needs through a multispecies justice lens—an approach that extends justice beyond human communities and recognizes Indigenous knowledge in environmental stewardship. We analyzed NBS initiatives in the sustainability plans of 10 major U.S. cities: Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Columbus, Oklahoma City, Louisville, Baltimore, Milwaukee, and Atlanta. We developed a comprehensive coding scheme to categorize NBS activities (including parks, community gardens, and riverbank restoration) and their stated objectives (biodiversity conservation, human well-being, and climate resilience). NBS initiatives were classified into three categories: "nature for nature" (primarily ecological focus), "nature for culture" (emphasizing human-nature relationships), and "nature for society" (prioritizing ecosystem services). Our analysis revealed four key findings: 1) cities predominantly deploy NBS to enhance human well-being rather than biodiversity, 2) some municipalities incorporate biodiversity objectives into their sustainability plans, 3) few cities adequately embrace multispecies justice principles in their planning approaches, and 4) two cities emerged as leaders in terms of

biodiversity goals: Baltimore excelled in "nature for nature" initiatives, while Milwaukee demonstrated strength in "nature for society" initiatives. This study concludes with recommendations for incorporating multispecies justice into urban NBS strategies, providing a roadmap for more comprehensive and equitable sustainability planning. By adopting this broader framework, cities can better align ecological preservation with human well-being, creating more resilient and inclusive urban environments.

Keywords

Nature-based Solutions, Multispecies Justice, Local governance, Sustainability plan

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Urban Blue-Green Areas: Synergies Between Climate Adaptation and Biodiversity Conservation for Resilient Cities

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Abstract

As urban population grows, cities face increasing challenges from climate change and biodiversity loss, which undermine urban ecosystem services like temperature regulation, flood control, and habitat provision. Urban Blue-Green Areas (UBGA), such as parks, rivers, and green roofs, are critical for enhancing urban resilience by providing these services. While some UBGA can support climate adaptation or biodiversity conservation, others offer synergies, addressing both goals simultaneously. Research highlights that policy mixes integrating both climate adaptation and biodiversity conservation for UBGA can strengthen resilience by tailoring solutions to specific local needs.

This study investigates urban policy instruments in balancing synergies and trade-offs between climate adaptation and biodiversity conservation. Through a literature review, we compile two matrices mapping UBGA types and ecosystem services linked to climate and biodiversity literature, with a total of approximately 1,500 articles. First results show, that by comparing these matrices they reveal similarities and differences in policy focus; for instance, biodiversity-related literature links “habitat and human well-being” predominantly with parks, while climate literature emphasizes “habitat and water provision” in relation to trees and forests.

Our analysis then will focus on cells with unexpected findings to examine how specific policy instruments address these areas. By categorizing instruments as procedural, administrative, operative, or evaluative, we compared policy approaches to understand how synergies and trade-offs are managed across different UBGA and ecosystem services.

This paper makes three contributions: (1) emphasising the role of UBGA in combined climate and biodiversity policy approaches, (2) exploring the under examined overlap between these two urban

challenges, and (3) offering insights for planners and policymakers to foster synergistic approaches, reduce silos, and manage trade-offs for more resilient cities.

Keywords

urban resilience, blue-green infrastructure, climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation

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Planning Urban Green Spaces for Health Equity: Developing a Socio-spatial Perspective

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Abstract

Extensive research has demonstrated the health benefits of urban green spaces (UGS) for city residents. However, the uneven distribution of green spaces across urban areas, along with differing individual resources, preferences, and evolving needs over time, means that citizens do not have equal access to UGS and/or the health benefits they provide. Thus, this study identifies how different social groups face variable equity challenges and how those might be resolved. As a foundation, restorative environmental theory and biophilia theory offer a lens through which to understand and assess the process by which individuals derive health benefits from UGS. Yet, these theories predominantly highlight the universal advantages of UGS for human health, often overlooking variations in individual preferences and needs regarding surrounding UGS, as well as the unique challenges that some groups face due to socioeconomic status or physical limitations. While studies have documented disparities in UGS distribution across social groups, particularly among ethnic minorities and low-income families, there remains limited understanding of how unequal provision of UGS results in inequitable health benefits for vulnerable groups and what factors drive this inequality in the ways people experience UGS. Drawing upon a social justice approach, this study uses a mixed-methods approach that combines observation, GIS analysis, interviews, and document analysis to capture both objective and subjective perspectives on the experiences of residents in different communities and the disparities in health benefits derived from UGS. The findings inform our understanding of how to promote the creation of equitable UGS, expand our understanding of how green spaces support health across diverse populations, and contribute to a broader discourse on social justice by addressing health inequities.

Keywords

Urban Green Spaces, Health Equity, Social Justice, Environmental Justice, Marginalised Groups

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Improving the design of urban green areas through landscape planning tools. A case from southern Italy

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Abstract

The urban environment is seldom associated with landscape planning, as it is primarily conceived and developed at the regional scale. However, in certain cases — particularly territories without planning and strategic orientation at larger scale — we can observe a close relationship and significant influence of landscape planning at the municipal level.

In the Italian context, landscape planning is superordinated to all land use and sectoral plans at both regional and municipal levels. However, its actual capacity to guide urban transformations depends on the specific contents of each regional landscape plan. In the case of the Puglia landscape plan, three out of the twelve general objectives are aimed at improving the landscape quality of settlements and urban spaces; in addition, the theme of redevelopment of degraded urbanisation (e.g. productive areas, rural sprawl, tourist platforms) is across the other objectives. Furthermore, due to its multiscale nature, the plan includes strategic provisions capable of significantly directing urban design and rehabilitation in landscape terms, thereby contributing to the development of green infrastructure, among other aspects.

In its implementation, now ten years in, several urban spaces have been transformed considering these guidelines, leading to a general shift in the design approach regarding urban peripheries. Through the investigation of practical case studies, with this research we want to examine the effectiveness of integrating landscape objectives into the transformations of the existing city using quantitative and qualitative indicators. These data aim to represent this change and to gain a deeper understanding of how landscape planning can contribute to promoting healthy cities through the appropriate design and distribution of green spaces within the urban fabric, and lastly through effective governance. Additionally, the research will identify the limitations and prospects for multiscale integration between landscape planning at different levels and specific projects oriented towards urban space.

Keywords

landscape, green infrastructures, urban plan

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Urban Greening Adventures: A Lively Look at the Tangled Path of Projects in Taipei

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Abstract

Within the recent decade, Taipei has launched several projects for greening across different scales. The proposed and ongoing projects provide detailed instructions for installing more greenery on private and public buildings, by increasing green coverage and improving the status of existing parks, for cooling purposes. This work provides a detailed lens on the tangled path of how these multiple urban greening-related projects are being managed, including the main objectives, how and which crucial stakeholders are involved, and the emerging difficulties in practical realities. The paper draws on five interviews with practitioners across both public and private sectors, revealing how different stakeholders struggle with the progress of urban greening, and the barriers they have encountered in the process.

The identified barriers are complex and context-specific. Silos between different departments have become a limitation during the acquisition of public land use, while at the local level, there often appears to be a lack of acceptance and a reluctance to innovate. It is evident that communication and collaboration between the different stakeholder groups are crucial aspects to be resolved, including the importance of translating terminology and knowledge into a common language to enable effective engagement between public bodies and local communities. This requirement is in line with the recent emerging advocacy of 'green collar workers', who are being promoted due to the increasing demands for eco-friendly plans.

Through understanding the challenges in Taipei, the authors propose effective plans and objectives that can produce pragmatic solutions for different stakeholders while achieving the highest value of urban greening benefits.

Keywords

urban greening, Taipei, green space, climate change

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Targeting the water-energy balance to provide thermal comfort in cities: A bowen-ratio and albedo driven framework

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Abstract

The Urban heat island (UHI) phenomenon exacerbates heat stress in urban areas. With the increasing risk of heatwaves and droughts, urban resilience should be maximized to counteract heat-related public health issues and thermal comfort. This study examines how the local energy balance can be manipulated through the local water balance and green cover enhanced

evaporative cooling. Despite the extensive research on urban greening, a framework is lacking for the quantification of evaporative surfaces in urban design, including their integration with nature-based stormwater management for different climate zones. Therefore, this research aims to develop a framework to meet different cooling targets by transforming sensible heat into latent heat through evapotranspiration (ET). Three climatically distinct cities: Copenhagen, Singapore, and Jeddah are examined through their solar radiation patterns and water-energy balance dynamics. Moreover, the framework proposes three cooling targets (50%, 65%, and 75%) based on varying Bowen ratios and different albedo (surface reflection) factors. The result will show how the changes in cooling targets and albedo range impact the calculation of city-specific evaporative surface areas and water storage needs, factoring in predicted drought intervals. This approach provides urban planners with measurable targets for enhancing urban cooling through green initiatives to prepare climate-resilient cities for the future.

Keywords

Urban heat island mitigation, Nature based stormwater management, Thermal comfort, Green coverage

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Nature and nature-based solutions: values, environmental education and co-creation. A case in the Global South

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Abstract

Nature-based solutions have the potential to provide multiple benefits both to society and nature. The interplay of anthropic needs and that of the environment is mediated by what is considered nature and the values attributed to it. The 'nature' in nature-based solutions is locally dependent and must be contextually considered from problem sets through to NBS design, implementation, and governance. In addition, co-creation methods must be adaptable and drawn from the interactions of place and people. Deriving from the research undertaken under the Polisocial 2022 Project 'NBSouth_Nature-based solutions for climate adaptation in the Global South', the presentation will reflect upon the co-creation process employed with the community of Paranoá, Brasília-DF, Brazil. Paranoá is a low-to-medium-income area with high levels of soil sealing and low vegetation cover. It is highly vulnerable to increased urban temperatures, droughts, and floods due to climate change. The presentation discusses the methods employed and results obtained on how nature is seen by local inhabitants, its values, and their expectations of how this understanding should inform the development of any nature-based solution for the area. This will be followed by the analysis of the co-creation process implemented to co-define a green infrastructure proposal for the area, including key NBS. The results show the importance of engaging in co-creation processes from a double vector perspective: understanding the socio-cultural characteristics of the community and maximising the input of local knowledge in co-design

activities, but also the significance of environmental education so the plurality of nature values and services ecosystems can provide may be unlocked for both people and non-human beings.

Keywords

nature-based solutions, green infrastructure, urban planning, nature, co-creation

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Barriers to green space use among Nigerian young people.

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Abstract

The main objective of this qualitative study is to explore the barriers to green space engagement among young people in Nigeria with the aim of improving their use of these spaces. While green space is shown to benefit mental wellbeing, studies have shown that young people are not drawn to the use of green space. Understanding how young people use green space is crucial to identifying the barriers and enablers to green space use among young people. Meanwhile, many studies on green space use among young people are focussed on the Global North, resulting in a gap in knowledge in the Global South. Data were generated from an in-depth focus group with young people in Abuja Nigeria, aged 18-29 years. This found that that young people use green spaces first for socialising and physical activity. The study revealed the barriers to green space use among young people in Nigeria to include the 'hardware' and the 'software' components. The hardware components include lack of access, lack of design characteristics to attract young people, lack of equipment to support physical activities among others while the software component includes lack of awareness on the benefit of green space use. The findings suggest that there should be an integrated approach to green space planning and design in order to improve use among young people. This approach should address barriers as well as create awareness on the benefit of green space use. Furthermore, co-designing green space with young people could result in green spaces that may entice young people to use.

Keywords

Parks, Green infrastructure, Healthy places, Co-design

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The Impact of Urban Greenspace (UGS) Exposure on Neurodivergent Children’s Mental Health and Well-being in A Forest School (FS) Setting.

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Abstract

Engagement with natural environments is linked to enhanced physical and mental well-being amongst children, yet the specific impact on neurodivergent children (NDCH) remains limited. In the UK the Forest School (FS) is an alternative education model that allows children to engage in regular activities in natural settings. Evidence from recent studies suggests that FS participation benefits children physically and psychologically and supports learning development over indoor educational programs. However, the impacts of FS initiatives on NDCH’s mental health and well-being have received insufficient attention, as has the role of different FS settings and landscape features as drivers of children’s interactions and well-being.

We address these knowledge gaps by investigating 1) The role of the current FS’s setting types in the delivery of FS activities, 2) How current FS practices activities are meaningful for NDCH, 3) Identifying best practices in FS as perceived by parents, children, and FS providers, particularly considering the impact of setting types. The study adopts a qualitative, participatory Appreciative Inquiry (AI) methodology to engage 12 NDCHs, 12 caregivers, and 4 practitioners in a collaborative exploration of effective FS practices. Data collection includes site visits, on-site observation, and interviews with FS providers, NDCH and their caregivers.

Exploratory visits and interviews revealed diverse FS settings, including vegetation density, water elements, and terrain complexity. Interviews with FS leaders highlighted that such characteristics significantly influence children's engagement and accessibility. Leaders emphasized that dense vegetation encourages exploration, while water features support sensory and communication skills development, particularly beneficial for NDCH.

This study investigates the efficacy of FS practices in enhancing NDCH’s well-being, aiming to develop a best practice manual or set of recommendations. The resulting recommendations will guide FS practitioners, educators, and policymakers in implementing adaptable, alternative settings that uphold essential FS principles, supporting inclusive and effective engagement across diverse educational environments.

Keywords

Forest School, Greenspace, Mental Health, Neurodivergent Children, Wellbeing

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Understanding the relationships between sensory biodiversity traits, human aesthetic preference and affective response in urban greenspaces

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Abstract

An extensive body of research now highlights the benefits of biodiversity, nature and spending time in greenspaces for human health and wellbeing, yet there is still a lack of understanding of the role of sensory biodiversity traits as drivers of human response. Sensory biodiversity traits are the aspects of biodiversity that impact human senses, including seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting, which may be the critical drivers of human wellbeing, rather than species diversity per se. We address this gap by asking i) How important are sensory biodiversity traits (SBTs) as drivers of aesthetic preference and affective response in urban greenspace?; ii) What are the synergies between traits and can trade-offs be identified?; iii) Is there a relationship between perceived biodiversity, human aesthetic preference and affective response in urban greenspace? We use a two-stage, mixed-method approach: first, we investigate the role of SBTs in human responses to nine greenspace types across three urban parks in Sheffield: Endcliffe Park, Weston Park, and Meerbrook Park through a self-guided sensory park-walk survey; second, we examine the mechanisms and pathways linking SBTs and human responses through three focus group studies. A pilot was conducted in October 2024 with 33 participants in Endcliffe Park to refine the research tool and process. Understanding SBTs can help to increase the positive effects of contact with nature, and to mitigate the negative ones, therefore, strengthening the link between biodiversity and human health. This knowledge is crucial for creating policy decisions that maximise social, human wellbeing, and ecological value in a win-win-win with our urban living environment.

Keywords

Sensory biodiversity traits, Aesthetic preference, Affective response, Urban greenspaces

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Peatlands as Urban Lifelines: A Framework to Resolve Unclear Land Ownership Challenges and Enhance Urban Resilience

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Abstract

Cities are under pressure due to climate change and development and need a new vision of greenspaces beyond urban boundaries. Wetlands, forests, and peatlands serve as crucial greenspaces, providing ecosystem services like carbon sequestration, flood mitigation, and

temperature regulation, which can enhance urban resilience. In tropical regions like Southeast Asia, peatlands are particularly significant due to their extensive carbon storage capacity and ecological importance. Indonesia, home to some of the most extensive peatlands globally, hosts these critical ecosystems near major cities such as Palangkaraya, Pontianak, and Banjarmasin—greenspaces that support urban sustainability. These natural landscapes contribute to mitigating global climate change and are vital for ensuring the resilience of urban areas. However, the ability of these peatlands to act as urban resilience assets is hindered by unclear land ownership. Unregulated land use from these issues exacerbates peatland degradation and poses significant environmental, social, and economic risks to nearby cities.

This paper builds upon an integrated approach by presenting a framework for understanding how challenges related to land ownership could restrict the sustainable management of peatlands and their roles as vital greenspaces. Integrating geomorphological, geographical, and socio-ecological perspectives systematically identifies institutional and environmental constraints that weaken conservation efforts. Hypothetical scenarios, based on literature and case studies of effective and poor peatland management, highlight the urban impacts. These examples demonstrate that addressing ownership challenges is crucial to unlocking the full potential of peatlands for urban climate adaptation and resilience.

This study provides a robust analytical basis for recognizing the linkage between urban sustainability and the governance of rural ecosystems. By presenting a sustainable approach for integrating peatlands into urban resilience planning through a methodologically rigorous framework, it offers valuable guidance for both policymakers and urban planners.

Keywords

Tropical Peatland, Urban Resilience, Ecosystem Services, Land Ownership, Sustainable Management

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Unpacking governance barriers and enablers for city-civil society collaborations in urban green infrastructure. Lessons from Munich

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Abstract

Urban green infrastructure (UGI) governance faces complex challenges throughout idea development, implementation, and management phases due to the diversity of actors involved - city administrations, market actors, environmental and research organisations, and, non-legally bound civil society groups. Effective **collaboration between city administrations and civil society** through co-design, co-creation, and co-management is particularly crucial when UGI is

intended for civil society use. These partnerships can create reciprocal benefits, including more democratic decision-making, alignment of civil society initiatives with urban strategies, and expanded resource access for civil society. However, city-civil society collaborations in UGI remain inconsistent, varying widely across urban contexts.

These collaborative dynamics are shaped by **governance modes**, ranging from **hierarchical** to **non-hierarchical**. Studies aiming to understand barriers and enablers do so without differentiating those unique to each mode from those common to all governance modes. This lack of distinction overlooks **shared barriers that may indicate systemic issues**. Recent studies often focus solely on non-hierarchical modes, emphasising civil society's role, resulting in an understanding of barriers unique to this governance mode. Consequently, solutions derived from these studies risk focusing only on overcoming barriers relevant to one mode while neglecting those impacting others.

To address this issue, we conducted an analysis of seven UGI interventions in Munich, representing different governance modes across three development phases, identifying **five governance barriers and a single enabler** influencing both hierarchical and non-hierarchical modes. These barriers include limited communication on collaboration opportunities, ownership of knowledge, reduced personal motivation, and ambiguity in insurance and responsibilities, with an enabler focused on appropriate instruments for collaboration.

These findings offer insights for strengthening UGI governance by fostering more effective city-civil society collaborations across all phases, regardless of the UGI governance mode's type.

Keywords

UGI governance, barriers, enablers, city-civil society collaboration

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Exploring domestic garden identities: Personal histories from older people in the Netherlands.

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Abstract

Domestic gardens are spaces imbued with meaning, expression, and identity. Gardening behaviours change throughout people's lives influenced by social, cultural, and historical contexts, but explorations on garden identity across the life-course remain limited. This paper seeks to explore garden identities across their life-course in the Netherlands by investigating older people's personal histories through thematic analysis. Oral history interviews (n=20) were conducted in 2019 with residents living in Breda and Tilburg, two medium-sized cities in the south of the

Netherlands. The findings suggest that garden identities change over time and are likely to be developed during childhood. Gardening, garden trends, and socio-economic factors can influence and change garden identities. This paper addresses a gap in existing literature and explores garden identities, underscoring the importance of gardens across the life-course to liveability and sense of self. It argues that valuing everyday objects like gardens helps to plan and design green, liveable, and inclusive neighbourhoods in cities.

Keywords

domestic gardens, identity, oral history, gardening, life-course

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Designing for a green lifestyle: The case of Greenhouse in Malmö, Sweden

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Abstract

As urban areas continue to grow and densify, there is an increasingly urgent need to explore different ways to green our cities. One solution to urban greening that has emerged in recent years is the incorporation of vertical gardens in high-rise buildings. Apartment buildings such as Bosco Verticale in Milan and Tree House in Singapore utilise green walls and green roofs to integrate nature and greenery into the built environment in dense urban areas. However, not only has the environmental impact of such projects been questioned, but they have also been criticised as tools for green washing as well as drivers of green gentrification. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to explore alternative ways of incorporating gardening into multifamily housing design by focusing on the Greenhouse, a green lifestyle apartment building located in Malmö, Sweden. Unlike the luxurious condominiums of Bosco Verticale and Tree House, the Greenhouse in Malmö is a public rental apartment building owned and managed by one of the largest municipal housing companies in Sweden. By incorporating various design features such as built-in planting beds on balconies and a dedicated workshop for gardening in each apartment, the Greenhouse is designed to facilitate an environmentally friendly lifestyle centred on urban gardening. Drawing on both theory of affordances and practice theory, as well as empirical data collected from a qualitative survey, interviews with key stakeholders and document reviews, this ongoing study seeks to explore to what extent housing design can encourage a more environmental-friendly lifestyle and whether purpose-built green lifestyle housing constitutes a practical solution to urban greening. Initial findings suggest that while the housing company is responsible for managing the communal spaces, the success of the Greenhouse is largely dependent on the everyday practices of the individual residents and their interaction with the built environment.

Keywords

Green architecture, housing design, urban gardening, lifestyle housing, sustainability

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Understanding green space attachment across the life-course: Personal histories from older people in the Netherlands

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Abstract

Green and blue environments play a crucial role for human well-being and quality of life across the life-course. Understanding people's emotional and psychological connection with green/blue environments may hold meaning in reconnecting people with nature and further enhance their quality of life. Given that people perceive, use, and value green/blue environments differently throughout their lives, policymakers, environmental planners and landscape architects can prioritize the creation of multifunctional and intergenerational greenspaces that support individuals across all age groups. It remains unclear how and why people, independent of their life-stage, develop and maintain an emotional connection to green/blue environments. This exploratory study explores the role of personal experiences and memories in developing and fostering green space attachment across the life-course, focusing on older adults' personal histories. Through oral history interviews with 20 residents in Breda and Tilburg, the Netherlands this study uncovered the diverse ways in which personal experiences and memories influence present day greenspace attachments. The findings indicate that people form green space attachments across the life-course, independent of their life-stage and greenspace typology. People can develop multiple attachments to different greenspaces across the life-course; attachments are developed by meaningful life experiences and maintained by frequent visits to chosen green/blue spaces and by feelings of remembrance and nostalgia. Participants also perceive green spaces integral to their local environment underscoring the role of greenery in people's everyday lives. Understanding the significance of green space attachment using personal histories can inform urban planning initiatives and landscape design to support the creation of multifunctional and intergenerational greenspaces.

Keywords

personal histories, older people, green space, place attachment, life-course

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Thermographic analysis of green wall and green roof plant types under levels of water stress

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Abstract

Urban green infrastructure (UGI) plays a vital role in mitigating climate change risks, including urban development-induced warming. The effective maintenance and monitoring of UGI are essential for detecting early signs of water stress and preventing potential fire hazards. Recent research shows that plants close their stomata under limited soil moisture availability, leading to an increase in leaf temperature. Multi-spectral cameras can detect thermal differentiation during periods of water stress and well-watered conditions. This paper examines the thermography of five characteristic green wall and green roof plant types (*Pachysandra terminalis*, *Lonicera not. Hohenheimer*, *Rubus tricolor*, *Liriope muscari* Big Blue, and *Hedera algeriensis* Bellecour) under different levels of water stress compared to a well-watered reference group measured by thermal cameras. The experiment consists of a (1) pre-test experiment identifying the suitable number of days to create three different levels of water stress, and (2) the main experiment tested the suitability of thermal imaging with a drone to detect water stress in plants across three different dehydration stages. The thermal images were captured analyzed from three different types of green infrastructure. The method was suitable to detect temperature differences between plant types, between levels of water stress, and between GI types. The results show that leaf temperatures were approximately 1-3 °C warmer for water-stressed plants on the green walls, and around 3-6 °C warmer on the green roof compared to reference plants with differences among plant types. The insights are particularly relevant for UGI maintenance strategies and regulations, offering valuable information for sustainable urban planning.

Keywords

plant thermography, thermal infrared data, leaf temperature, thermal cameras, green infrastructure

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Gender and urban greenspace: how gender and safety perceptions affect mental health experiences in urban greenspaces

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Abstract

Exposure to urban greenspaces can support psychological restoration. This paper examines the role of gender in restorative processes. First, we review theories and evidence from psychology, epidemiology and feminist urbanism on how gender socio-cultural norms, attitudes, and behaviours, roles and relations, stereotypes, expressions, identity and sexual orientation, as well as certain sex-related factors, can affect experiences in public space. Several potential barriers to women's and gender minorities' experiences in urban greenspaces are identified. These relate to visit characteristics (transport accessibility and mobility patterns, frequency, time, social context and purpose of visits), experiences of contextual features (perceived and objective safety, the quality and maintenance of urban greenspace, infrastructure features), and several top-down

person and group-based experiences (personal meanings, majority dynamics and group belonging, intersecting sociodemographic and personal characteristics).

Second, we focus on safety perceptions, and present results from a series of experiments conducted with UK residents, testing restoration in different nature settings and the role of gender, fear, and social threats. Our findings show that women reported higher perceptions of danger and fear, especially in dense environments. Women were also concerned about social dangers, while men were not. Overall, the person-environment fit in urban greenspaces might be lower for women, potentially reducing the restorative and psychological benefits of urban greenspaces for women and gender minorities.

From a policy perspective, tackling such potential barriers, notably safety concerns, is crucial to ensure greenspace benefits for every socio-demographic group, guided by the feminist urbanism principle that if public spaces are good for women, then they will also be good enough for everyone.

Keywords

greenspace, gender, mental health, psychological restoration

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Valuing biodiversity in multi-functional urban development and environments: Learning from the BiUrbs project

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Abstract

This pre-organised session brings together a multidisciplinary team of academics and practitioners to share learning from the three year BiUrbs project. In common with many countries the UK is struggling to reconcile nature recovery with the need for greater numbers of homes, at higher densities. In England, there have been long standing planning policy requirements to protect, restore and enhance nature, new rules to achieve a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, and a suite of standards, tools and guidance to support this endeavour. Despite this nature is often not prioritised in new development. One of the main barriers to achieving biodiverse new development that is often cited is the cost of delivery, resulting in concerns over the financial viability of the scheme or the need to balance biodiversity against other policy agendas such as affordable housing. However, the perceived or real costs of delivering biodiversity can stem from a myriad of factors including upskilling staff, setting aside land for nature that might otherwise be used for housing, materials and maintenance.

The overarching aim of the BiUrbs project is to improve the understanding of the economics of biodiversity within the built environment and how urban redevelopment can best be designed, managed, and delivered to support its conservation and enhancement. This panel will share findings from the research, organised in five presentations, followed by a discussion on a topic many countries across Europe are facing:

- A review on incorporating the social benefits of urban biodiversity in spatial planning and valuation tools.
- Nature positive planning: a comparative exploration of how nature planning tools support biodiversity conservation decision-making.
- Debates on the cost of biodiversity: multi-stakeholder perspectives on delivery in new urban development.
- Transition to more healthy and biodiverse urban developments? Multi-stakeholder perspectives on biodiversity offsetting.
- Learning from BiUrbs - Better urban planning to integrate biodiversity.

Keywords

Green infrastructure, Urban biodiversity, Nature-based solutions

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The effects of urban shrinkage on urban green space planning: a comparative study

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Abstract

While increasing urbanization is certainly a valid motivation for examining urban green space planning, there are also a number of cities, both in Europe and around the world, whose populations are decreasing, or have decreased, rather than growing (e.g., Hartt, 2018; Wolff and Wiechmann, 2018). These 'shrinking' or 'shrunken' cities often face financial and governance challenges - and have also been framed as potential sites of opportunity for green space planning (see, e.g., Galster, 2019; Schilling and Logan, 2008). Using the concept of urban green infrastructure as an evaluative lens, this paper examines urban green space planning in two case study cities and considers how it has been affected by the process of urban shrinkage. The case study cities are Porto, Portugal and Buffalo, New York, USA. With populations of around a quarter of a million each, the two cities are of similar size, but have different strengths and challenges, as well as having experienced different degrees and types of shrinkage. A mixed methods research approach is used, which focuses on qualitative methods - planning document analysis and semi-structured interviews with local stakeholder - and is supported by a quantitative method, namely longitudinal spatial analysis. The findings suggest that, from a physical perspective, preexisting urban conditions may be as relevant as population change in terms of whether shrinkage presents new opportunities for greening. From a planning and governance perspective, greening is seen as a

means of improving the attractiveness of cities, among other objectives. Special attention will be paid to the strategies used by, and in, cities to create new green spaces and maintain existing ones.

Keywords

shrinking cities, green infrastructure, urban green space, mixed methods

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Ultra urban trees in bioretention strips in Baltimore

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Abstract

Ultra urban trees in bioretention strips in Baltimore

Over a decade of public and private investment into green infrastructure in Old Goucher, Baltimore led to a significant improvement in the health of urban, local trees. One of the types of the GSI's implemented in this urban neighborhood were bioretention strips.

These solutions have provided additional water (through rain gardens and curb cuts) to urban trees from semi pervious and impervious surfaces. Additionally the bioretention strips have infiltrated stormwater. The importance of additional water seems to be crucial for the urban trees to survive heat waves and droughts. Stormwater capture, soil moisture products, and water retention products allow urban trees to rely on additional water to survive climate change and urban heat island effects.

Based upon the experience of Old Goucher, another disenfranchised community in Baltimore, the Broadway East neighborhood was awarded a grant by the US Environmental Protection Agency to build similar low cost, high impact bioretention strips and study them with scientists from the Baltimore Social Environmental Collaborative (BSEC). The project will focus on the built

environment for urban trees to help them mitigate temperature, urban flooding and water pollution. The undertaking will address different interventions (removal of impervious surfaces, installation of permeable hardscape, soil health study, low tech water retention products and solutions) and monitor, study and analyze data “before and after”.

Keywords

Green stormwater infrastructure (GSI), ultra urban trees, temperature mitigation, storm water mitigation, urban heat island

333

The promise and reality of the Garden-Suburb: Reappraising ‘town-country’ merger in London and Lisbon

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Abstract

The Garden Suburb, typically made up of single-family homes with gardens, was initially designed to combine suburban living with green spaces. Over time, it adapted to different urban densities while maintaining its pastoral ideals. Recently, it has been reevaluated for its sustainability potential and its role in promoting cleanliness and privacy, while contributing to a more biodiverse environment.

This presentation explores the origins and evolution of the Garden Suburb, emphasizing how the idea was transformed by being implemented in different contexts. It then examines modern adaptations of the model in urban planning, particularly for working-class housing. Case-studies from two cities, London and Lisbon, will be analyzed in a comparative manner, assuming that the latter received a direct influence from the former.

In London, the Garden City concept emerged in response to the overcrowding and poor living conditions of the late 19th century. The early years of the London County Council (LCC) as well as the ‘Homes Fit for Heroes’ programme, which provided better housing for returning soldiers, will be examined. In Lisbon, industrialization came later, but urban planners also promoted the Garden Suburb as an ideal housing solution for the growing urban population. Here, industrial housing estates indirectly financed by the State, and the programme of ‘Housing for Poor Families’ will be analyzed.

A morphological analysis will assess both built and unbuilt spaces, highlighting green areas. Contemporary photographs and Google Earth images will be used to evaluate changes in these estates. How have these areas changed over time? What factors prompted these changes? More importantly, have they succeeded in creating urban spaces rich in greenery and biodiversity?

The goal of this presentation is not to dismiss the Garden Suburb model, but to understand what conditions are necessary for it to create sustainable, biodiverse urban environments that fulfill its original vision.

Keywords

garden suburb, greater london, greater lisbon, urban morphology, urban sustainability

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A study on the impact of the Biodiversity Net Gain approach on urban wildlife at a local scale

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Abstract

As of 2020, the physical mass of all the world's anthropogenic built infrastructure outweighed the world's living biomass (Elhacham, et al., 2020). Within the UK we have experienced dramatic declines in biodiversity. This has led to the introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

BNG is a quantitative approach to development with the aim to leave biodiversity in a measurably better state (DEFRA, 2023). Urban species add value to our green spaces; spilling out into our gardens and streets where we live. It is important to understand how habitat delivery influenced by the BNG approach has the potential to impact local species.

This study investigated the impact of BNG on four urban species found in the south-west of England; hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, and slow worm *Anguis fragilis*. To achieve this, habitat suitability scoring against UK Habitat types was applied for each species.

When looking at the overall net change of the sampled applications, the key results suggested different outcomes between the species. Common pipistrelle benefitted from 32.31% increase overall in suitable habitats on-site following the developments proposed. This is in contrast to the 5.82% on-site habitat delivery for hedgehogs. The increase in suitability for house sparrow and slow worms was similar at 14.43% and 12.19%.

These findings were not found to be statistically significant; this is considered to be likely due to the low sample size (no. 30) limited by the availability of sufficient BNG data within applications at the time the study was conducted.

Initial findings suggest that species-specific design alongside the BNG approach may be an important consideration within delivery of developments. This merits further study, as there is opportunity to benefit from the standardised data available as a result of mandatory BNG.

Keywords

BNG, Species, Urban Design

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Unlocking the relationship between students' experience in greenspace, nature connectedness and pro-environmental orientation

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Abstract

Spending time in greenspace is positively associated with nature connectedness and pro-environmental behaviours. This is particularly important, with the ongoing climate crisis and biodiversity loss. A sense of connection to the natural world is influenced by childhood experiences of nature. University is a transitional stage from childhood to adulthood, hence crucial to developing environmental responsibility. Considering the importance of greenspaces for sustainability, universities can therefore have an important role to play. Students represent the future generation of decision-makers and are at a crucial stage in their lives where their behaviours are shaped.

This study, therefore, aims to explore the relationship between use and experience in greenspace, nature connectedness and pro-environmental orientation in university students. To achieve this, qualitative data was collected about two British universities (the University of the West of England and the University of Bristol) students' use and experience of greenspaces, design of greenspaces, students' sense of nature connectedness and its effect on their pro-environmental orientation.

Research methods include observation, photo-elicitation, and walking interviews. Literature suggests that greenspaces are under-used among students. Hence, for greenspaces to contribute to sustainable behaviours, we need to better understand how the student population experiences them, and what encourages their use and experience of nature within these greenspaces.

Findings reveal that students in both universities use greenspaces to relax and promote wellbeing. Furthermore, mechanisms like noticing nature, contact with nature, and emotional attachments enhance students' sense of nature connectedness. This, in turn, promotes their concern for the environment, though it does not always lead to environmental behaviours.

Research findings can assist universities and municipal authorities, both hosts to students, in tying education practice and policies to the landscape planning and design of greenspaces that will better attract students to use them, potentially enhancing their nature connectedness and encouraging pro-environmental orientation.

Keywords

Greenspaces, nature connectedness, experience, pro-environmental orientation

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Residential development, and biodiversity loss in the densifying city: creating more diverse living environments?

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Abstract

The pressure for urban consolidation remains a strong driver for planning in cities internationally. In New Zealand as elsewhere the demand for new and more affordable housing is resulting in the intensification of residential development. However, in New Zealand, there is deep-seated resistance to density that is deeply entrenched in its psyche. The hitherto dominant housing form of single storey detached housing with a large garden, is no longer supportable in the face of a diversifying urban population growth and the need for more ecologically and socially sustainable patterns of development. Cities are under pressure to intensify and to move towards denser, housing typologies. New Zealand government policy and legislation supports densification. Planners, developers and urban designers are challenged as to how to react, often responding by supporting the building of poorly designed residential developments that significantly reduce urban biodiversity.

We acknowledge that intensification is appropriate and an essential part of creating more sustainable cities. In doing so we make the case that density does not need to exclude nature; done well, medium-density housing can provide biodiversity opportunities. In this paper we demonstrate the scale of the housing crisis and its current and future impact on urban biodiversity if it follows a business-as-usual scenario. We propose alternative ways to support biodiversity, especially native biodiversity in medium density housing developments. Finally the paper describes a tool developed as part of the People Cities and Nature project that specifically evaluates biodiversity in residential developments, with a particular emphasis on supporting native biodiversity. New Zealand's biodiversity is unique, developing in isolation, containing many rare and endemic species (i.e. found nowhere else). Thus it is fragile, so it is particularly important to provide homes and habitats in its cities that enable its unique wildlife and its people to coexist.

Keywords

Urban intensification, Cities, Biodiversity loss

Track 10 Conference Wide

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Introducing EURA Conversations - a new international space for urban scholars to exchange views

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Abstract

Please join us if you would like to participate in a conversation with scholars in many other countries on the future of cities and urban studies. In early 2020, when the COVID-19 virus drastically altered life in Europe, Robin Hambleton and Ignazio Vinci submitted a proposal to the EURA Governing Board to create a new digital space for EURA members to discuss the impact of the pandemic on cities and communities. Much of Europe was under lockdown at the time. The Governing Board welcomed this suggestion, not least because it offered a way of keeping international academic exchanges going, notwithstanding the major restrictions that the virus placed on travel and face-to-face dialogue.

Launched in May 2020, the EURA Conversation series set out to provide a democratic arena to share experiences, offer reflections and encourage international exchange among urban scholars, not just about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cities, but also to consider how cities and communities in different countries and contexts were responding in creative ways to this calamity. The series has been a great success. By November 2024 some 66 EURA Conversation pieces – meaning short opinion articles seeking reactions - written by urban scholars from more than 25 countries have been posted. As the series flourished EURA expanded the editorial team, and the scope of contributions has also been enlarged.

We hope very much that you can join this discussion with the Editors about the future direction of the EURA Conversation series. We welcome junior/emerging scholars as well as more experienced colleagues.

For more on EURA Conversations: <https://eura.org/conversations/>

Keywords

International exchange, Conversations, Looking ahead, Future of cities

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Meet the Editors of *Urban Research and Practice*, the *Journal of Urban Affairs* and the *Journal of Race, Ethnicity and the City*

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Abstract

Please join us at our editor hosted panel session relating to key urban studies journals

Urban Research and Practice, published in association with EURA.

Journal of Urban Affairs, published in association with UAA

Journal of Race, Ethnicity and the City, published in association with UAA

Launched in 2008 ***Urban Research & Practice*** is a well-established, vibrant and cross-disciplinary journal with a focus on urban studies, that publishes a wide range of original academic research articles along with innovative articles on policy and practice. Over the past 17 years the journal has sought to bridge the intellectual and geographical ‘divides’ that exist in the field of urban affairs, specifically the North/South divide, the East/West divide, divides between distinct academic disciplines, and divides between urban researchers, policy makers, practitioners and activists. The interests of and reach of the journal have expanded during this time as global urban scholarship has grown and new voices and topics have emerged.

Since it was first published in 1979 the ***Journal of Urban Affairs*** has been one of the leading journals in the field of Urban Studies. It publishes research on urban research and policy analysis, including metropolitan and community problems, urban society, and assessments of policies for change in the urban milieu. It publishes research that uses cutting edge quantitative and qualitative methodologies, research that is comparative and has a global reach and that is of interest to both academics and practitioners.

As the newest of the three journals the ***Journal of Race, Ethnicity and the City*** is making a significant mark in advancing our collective knowledge about how race and ethnicity shape our cities and neighborhoods and inform our urban experiences on a global scale, and, in turn, how urbanization contributes to the social construction of race and ethnicity. ***Journal of Race, Ethnicity and the City*** explicitly focuses on race or ethnicity in an urban context, addressing the enduring and increasing conflicts over race and ethnicity in modern urbanized societies.

The “Meet the Editors” session is an opportunity for all conference attendees to meet and talk with the editors of these journals. During the panel session we will discuss the policies of the journals and as editors our motivations and ambitions for the future directions of our journals. There will be an opportunity to hear about research articles and special issues as well as the practice and policy sections of ***Urban Research and Practice***. The Editors will answer questions about the journals, discuss the submission and review processes, and provide attendees with advice on how to increase the likelihood of publication.

We would be delighted to interact with junior/emerging scholars as well as more experienced colleagues as we work to shape the future of the journals.

For more on Urban Research and Practice: <https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/rurp20>

For more on the Journal of Urban Affairs: <https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/ujua20>

For more on the Journal of Race, Ethnicity and the City: <https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/urec20>

Keywords

Journal, Publications, Future Directions of Urban Scholarship

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