



# The Relevance of Informal Sport Facilities in the Urban Scenario

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# The plan of the research

- Theoretical point of view
  - Recent history of the body
  - Recent history of town planning
  - Connections between Body and town planning
- Applicative point of view
  - Four cases, several projects investigated by the point of view of
    - The body facilitating environments
    - The experiences of participative planning involving young people
- Barcelona
- Ferrara
- Paris
- Jyväskylä and other towns in Finland



# Fields and categories

## Fields of research

Body, City Planning,  
Participation, Young People  
(The Sport and Visibility  
sub-fields inside the main fields).

## Six transversal categories:

gender, cultures, periods of city planning,  
age groups, space and place,  
political matters related with urban spaces.



# Methodology

- Qualitative research broadly referring to Ethnographic approach
  - Multidisciplinary (on history, philosophy, sociology, town planning, sports)
- Methods
  - Documentary research
  - Qualitative interviews
    - Structured and semi-structured (*The influence of the language on the structure*)
    - The scapes (Appadurai) and the environments
    - The interviewees : key informants (Context, Project, and Action informants)
  - Observation and participative observation

# Aims

To investigate

- the effectiveness of experiences of participative planning of public spaces involving citizens, **especially young people**, in the four study cases
- the body facilitating environments



# Hypothesis

## Hypothesis

to investigate the connections between the body and the methods of town planning

## Question

how did the town planning consider the body in the past, and how does it take care nowadays of the body of everyday movement?



# The Body and Town Planning

Main themes on town planning  
strictly linked with the Body

- from 18th to the first part of the 20th Century:  
Hygiene and Green spaces

*“bringing clean air and water and sunlight back to the city were the main aims of good town planning” (Mumford, 1961)*

- nowadays: Sustainability



# The Body and Town Planning

Main themes and approaches during the last decades  
on Town planning

## Sustainability

- Traffic calming
- Shared Spaces
- Active City as a current, topical theme

emphasize expression of the body and responsibility as the main frame of urban safety and liveability.

The urban landscape which derives from those approaches, encourages walking, cycling, and post modern activities





# The Body and Town Planning

## Traffic calming



# The Body and Town Planning

## Shared Spaces





## Active city: risks and opportunities



# The Body and Town Planning

Social construction of the space: people walking, playing, seating  
(Goffmann, Lefebvre, De Certau)



*“a city is rendered worthless without people. It simply cannot exist because it needs people to make a city” (De Certeau, 1984)*

*young people live the public space as an embodied space*

# The Body and Town Planning

The possible answer to the hypothesis is

*The body, whether it is highlighted as an indicator or disregarded, remains crucial in the social construction of the space and in town planning*



# The Participative Processes and Young People:landmarks

- The **participation** is one of the elements with which a **space** can become a **place**, thus implementing the feeling of belonging of the citizens and influencing the vision and the perception of a space (de Certau 1980, Eichberg 1998), Bale ( 2000, 2002)
- Skeffington Report (1969)
- The seventies  
(participation and sustainability – Urbanes Wohnen-Urban Living)
- Towards an urban renaissance (Rogers, 1999, 2005)
- White Paper on Youth (2001)



# The reasons of the choice of the four cases

Town planning history

Planning decisions **and** provisions about  
liveability in the **recent past**

Participative processes







# The comparative study



*The study is not ended, it is in a phase of finalization.*

*It's very difficult to identify and compare the situations due to the large number of variables*

*nonetheless*

*an ongoing qualitative tentative of comparison is presented in the next slides.*

*With reference to several authors (Duverger, 1967; Lijphart, 1971; Ragin, 1989; Scheuch, 1989; Sartori, 1991; Smelser, 1982 ) we can call the tentative*

*“comparative microanalysis of different systems”*





# A tentative of qualitative comparison of the cases



	Town planning history concerning public space	Town planning and general provisions (mobility, sport facilities) in the recent past concerning the body	Current use (mobility, sport) and respect of the public space	Confidence and attitude towards public administration	Legislation about town planning participative processes/real procedures	Participative processes Adults/YP/Children Bottom up Top down Methods/Technologies	Results Processes
BA	Relevant Since XIX C.	Relevant and partially contradictory	Highly differentiated and entropic	Critical confidence Debate	Allowing	Top down Bottom up Processual dimension Informal appropriation	Highly differentiated Accomodation and assimilation
FE	Relevant since XV C.	Relevant Decreasing in quality	Disregarded Not facilitated High	Low confidence Complaint	Compulsory - Facilitating for public areas/discouraged	Top down Action-research	Scattered Unplanned Standardized
FI	Relevant since XIX C.	Relevant	Facilitated Very High	High confidence	Facilitating (New Land's Law)	Top Down/ Monitoring/ Technology	Effective Planned Standardized
PA	Highly relevant since XIX	Relevant	Facilitated High	Attitude to Discuss	Facilitating (ZAC)	Top down/ Monitoring	Effective Planned Differentiated



# The body facilitating environments



The focus of the speech is on the **informal or semi structured public spaces** which become body facilitating environments allowing everybody to practice physical activity and sports

A body facilitating environment, together with information, sensitization, and educational actions, can play a crucial role in the promotion of the practice of physical activity, sports, and active lifestyles for everyone



## The body facilitating environments: a classification



Referring also to the classification used in the IMPALA project (Rutten, Abu-Omar, Frahsa, Gelius, 2010):

- Sport facilities
- Infrastructures and recreational areas designed for LTPA/PA, (Leisure Time Physical Activity/Physical Activity)
- Infrastructures or urban spaces that might be used for LTPA/PA,

And going further on the analysis of **the last two...**



## The body facilitating environments: a classification



From the double point of view of the **town planning** and of the **use of the infrastructures** and environments, we can classify them as following:

- Part of the historical heritage of the town (parks, walls...)
- Recent interventions/additions
- Objects of informal appropriation, places hard-won by “human bodies”

In every case the main distinction is between environments allowing and environments not allowing the expression of the body

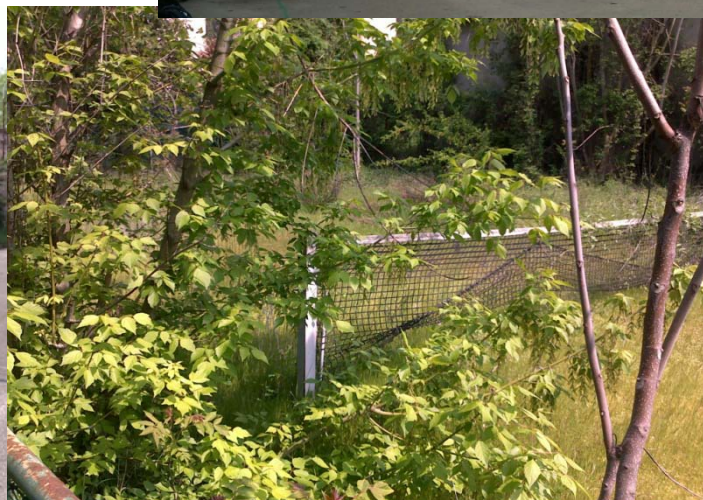


# The body facilitating environments: a classification



Part of the historical heritage of the town (parks, walls...)

- Preserved
- Rehabilitated
- Abandoned/disregarded





# The body facilitating environments: a classification

## Recent interventions/additions

- Specialized (playgrounds, skate parks, jogging/walking paths...)
- Not specialized (sidewalks, cycle paths, green areas...)







# The body facilitating environments: a classification



Objects of informal appropriation, places hard-won by “human bodies”

- Body “traces”, paths
- Light modifications
- Heavy modifications





What this classification is useful to measure?

*The real **will** of policy makers in promoting and enhancing environments suitable for every kind of physical activity*





# The urban landscape: examples



Paris: Promenade Plantée

Barcelona: Foixarda

Ferrara: the walls

Finland: Jyväskylä, Kerava, Kemio, Lauttasari

Footbridges: Passerelle Simone de Beauvoir and  
Portugal

# Paris: Promenade Plantée







# Barcelona: Foixarda





# Finland: Lauttasari, Huhtasuo, Kemio, Kerava





# Ferrara: the walls





# Footbridges: Paris

## Passerelle Simone de Beauvoir





# Footbridges: Portugal

## The wooden footpath on the beach



# Criteria of Monitoring and Evaluation of the Cases

*The aim of the research was: to investigate the effectiveness of experiences of participative planning of public spaces involving young people in the four study cases*

Quality and width of the involvement (e.g methods, ladders)

Time of construction/realization of the interventions

Maintenance of the interventions (both built and social environments) during the years.

Monitoring

Growth of social awareness (e.g. availability on participating in participative processes in the future) (Suomi, 1998)





# Provisional Conclusions



## Most successful factors

- Tailoring projects and procedures for the specific context;
- The inter-sector cooperation within the PA, main cause of failures;
- The intelligently flexible management of policies concerning public space
- The strong attention to the processes and the monitoring;
- The motivation to involve citizens in planning more sustainable environments.

# Provisional Conclusions



## About future policies

An adequate active and participative environments can be seen as an “**adapter** created between [...] people and the rest of the local community” (Gretschel, 2002) and the sense of involvement created as the basis of personal belonging to the local community.

Working in this perspective, the role of PA needs to change **from producers of infrastructures** to **provider of involvement services**.