



01

Cantieri

A CURA DI ENRICO FORMATO E ANNA ATTADEMO

ATTI DELLA XXVI CONFERENZA NAZIONALE SIU - SOCIETÀ ITALIANA DEGLI URBANISTI
NUOVE ECOLOGIE TERRITORIALI. COABITARE MONDI CHE CAMBIANO
NAPOLI, 12-14 GIUGNO 2024

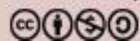

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Learning, Shared, Empathic Cities. Digital and social transformation of our habitats

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Abstract

The digital revolution changes that affect key aspects of our intellectual, cultural, and ethical relationships with our living environments and our own relational spaces. These dynamics require a new kind of innovative and hybrid vocabulary. A new actant drive to act, which is both operational and operative, more holistically qualitative – defined through actions (and operations) that are strategic and tactical at the same time (Oper-actions). The new approaches to the contemporary multi-city as a more sensitive and processual environment in which Citizens and City-Sens, City-layers and City-fields, City-agents and City-agencements (new social collectivities and connectivities) and new interactive communities) can be combined in this networked “shared logic” (in common and in community), which is decidedly co-actant. A new “mediation logic” as a new type of capabilities and spatialities intended to favor new strategic bottom-up responses that are immediate and exchanged in real time. The goal is to propose new multi-functional and multi-level active – “co-active” – scenarios, coming from the operational assessment of new inform(ation)al models that are more open, dynamic, co-participated and innovated. The theoretical gaze is presented through the presentation of three funded projects in which the GIC-lab - DAD-UniGe research unit is involved: RAISE which works on innovation ecotemes; Mobiquity which looks at the new physical and digital accessibility to public transports; and reCITYing which investigates new practices to reactivate through art, the sleeping giants of our cities.

Parole chiave: community, collaborative urban design, information technology

1 | New urban processes

«In this new, definitively dynamic and interactive understanding of our collective environments (a condition they have always had but which has become more pronounced in recent decades, moving beyond the old stable and gradually progressive conceptions of their development processes) lies in fact the true revolution of our time and the basis of a shift in logic and thought, more open to the capacity for interaction, happening now in all that relates to the conception of space and the definition of our environments of existence and relations» (Gausa, 2013: 6-13).

The research group GIC-Lab - Genova Intelligent Contexts Laboratory - an urban and territorial research laboratory ascribed to the Department of Architecture and Design of the University of Genoa, founded by Manuel Gausa and currently composed of Manuel Gausa, Nicola Valentino Canessa, Emanuele Sommariva, Giorgia Tucci, Chiara Centanaro and Chiara Maresca, aims at the operational interpretation of the contemporary urban territory according to a dynamic and qualitative approach starting from a reading of the different informational levels and scales: spatial, functional, social, technological, environmental and cultural. The approach appeals to a new mutable, dynamic, complex, evolutionary, and networked “systematicCity”, which is more relational (transversal), intelligent (holistic), imaginative (creative) and leans

¹ Manuel Gausa, Chiara Centanaro are part of RAISE Innovation Ecosystem. Funded by the European Union - NextGenerationEU and by the Ministry of University and Research (MUR), National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), Mission 4, Component 2, Investment 1.5, project “RAISE - Robotics and AI for Socio-economic Empowerment” (EC500000035).

toward a new conceptual logic (more strategic and informational), in which the ancient “urban swing” or “urban needlework” would be based not only on the continuity of building plots but on the capacity of new integrated network models². In this multisystem approach, the paper analyzes three funded research projects as sites of innovation: RAISE - Robotics and AI for Socio-economic Empowerment³, ReCITYing - Reactivating unused urban spaces through architecture and arts⁴, CiD - Creative Food Cycles⁵. Each project addresses issues or methodologies tested in previous funded projects. Thanks to the results obtained by the project KAAU⁶, RAISE e MObiquity⁷ funded projects were developed: KAAU project has built a relational platform between universities (research units) and entrepreneurial industry (dynamic companies), derived from Erasmus Knowledge Alliances. The approach to the development of a new Advanced Urbanism paradigm comes from the innovatory processing combination between the terms information and interaction, understood in all its dimensions, spatial environmental, social, technological and cultural. The ongoing project ReCITYing carries on the research born with the Resilience project on the reactivation of spaces from participatory processes and co-design with the inhabitants of the urban spaces to be reactivated. Starting with the European project Creative Food Cycles (Fig. 1) on reducing waste generation through recycling and reuse in everyday life and to test within the academic design community new products and materials derived from food waste and to organize creative events to raise awareness of the impact of food cycles in our cities⁸, the research team laid the groundwork for the development of the European project CiD - Circular Design for bio-based innovation towards climate-neutral cities. The construction site is not just a physical place but a process of transformation, in which the methodologies of co-creation and knowledge become an integral part of the activity.



Figure 1 | New materials and products made from food waste by CIG-Lab group within Food-Cycle research.

2 | From the construction site to the reclaiming of spaces through the arts

Starting with the Resili(g)ence project, part of a work promoted by the 2014-20 URBACT III European program “2nd Chance - Awakening the Sleeping Giants” which involves for Genova the Dipartimento di Architettura e Design of Unige with the technical support of the City of Genoa, to redevelop and enhance

² Gensà M., Gualart V., Müller W. (2004), *Hiperatalaya. Territoris of Research*, Actar Publishers, Barcelona.

³ RAISE is set to develop an active innovation ecosystem around Robotics&AI technologies, to support the innovativeness, economic and social development of the Liguria Region

⁴ ReCITYing - Reactivating unused urban spaces through architecture and arts. CREA-CULT-2023-COOP-2, European Cooperation projects.

⁵ CiD - Circular Design for bio-based innovation towards climate-neutral cities - Erasmus+ programme. CiD will develop a radical approach to relate design, circularity, and urban transition.

⁶ KAAU - Knowledge Alliance for Advanced Urbanism Erasmus + program

⁷ MObiquity - shared solutions for safe and inclusive mobility, aims to reduce the public transportation accessibility gap for Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRM), which inevitably also constitutes a gap in terms of opportunities to access essential activities and services. This objective is achieved by pursuing three distinct complementary interconnected strands: improving accessibility to transportation services, facilitating safe travel in urban space, and engaging end users in improving transportation services/infrastructure. project has a significant focus on the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the IoT paradigm declined in terms of sensors and wearable devices to define.

⁸ Gensà M., Pedici S., Casazza N. V., Tucci G. (2020), Creative Food Cycles: A Cultural Approach to the Food Life Cycles in Cities, Sustainability 2020, volume 12, issue 16, 6487, <https://doi.org/10.3390/s12166487>

the former Gavoglio barracks in a co-design process, the methodology for the ReCITYing project was identified. The reactivation of the spaces was ensured through events that brought citizenship into the abandoned spaces (Fig. 2). The physical construction site became a yard of innovation and creativity, where the use of new technologies, artificial and human intelligence during temporary events represents a research-action programme to promote local co-creation potentials and the development of creative hubs.



Figure 2 | Workshop activities within the Former Gavoglio barracks during the Rebel Matters Social Barriers III.

ReCITYing has the ambition to create a platform for knowledge creation and exchange of experiences on temporary reuse practices to define co-creation of spaces. Aimed at young creatives and professionals from architecture, design and arts, policy makers and local social enterprises, the project promotes the short-term action to leverage social participation and co-creation for the regeneration of unused, closed or private urban spaces and buildings into artistic laboratories as new cultural incubators, open to the city. Temporary reuse represents both an operative tool and a shared method to contribute European vision on knowledge creation as well as on transnational circulation and skills exchange between design professionals and performative artists working with local communities. Temporary reuse is multi-fold and site specific with a strong necessity of social engagement, audience development and communication. At European level, a common logical framework and a recognised procedural roadmap for temporary reuse strategies is not a consolidated praxis both in urban agendas and policy makers' guidelines. The choice of host cities has been made on two criteria: the presence of buildings/spaces partially or totally abandoned for long periods before stakeholders manifest the interest in re-appropriation, the presence of a significant vacant stock/areas within or in the immediate proximity of the urban context.

The project will develop activities in 4 pilot cases:

- Genova - abandoned public complexes/heritage buildings: the Albergo dei Poveri
- Barcelona - rural heritage vacancy/rural voids: Parc Agrari de Llobregat
- Hannover - unused industrial archeology/brownfields: Lindener Hafen
- Maribor - historical housing/building stock vacancy: Gosposka street

Each project will use different art forms: a set of recursive co-design actions promoted by an open call aimed at young creatives and professionals (architecture, design, urban planning, performative arts) that will work in groups with local policy-makers and stakeholders. The research group is working on the reactivation of the Albergo dei Poveri (Fig. 3). The aim is to temporarily reuse a portion of a partially abandoned heritage building in order to promote civic participation by means of ephemeral stages and installations in the main courtyard and porch (Corridoio delle Donne) to promote a living theatre action. The workshop combines three approaches:

1. design creative indoor/outdoor configurations applied to Albergo dei Poveri as a stage for artistic performances of spatial installations, thus opening-up an underused wing of the building to the public
2. to foster capacities of young creatives, makers and artistic performers from the very beginning to develop cultural dialogue and experience exchanges
3. to co-design a place-based artistic performance to define multifunctional reuse through cultural regeneration strategies (staging, performative arts).



Figure 3 | Different logos for the 4 pilot cases and Albergo dei Poveri courtyard.

3 | Enabling technologies and co-created spaces through the continuous digital construction site

The Raise project is set to develop an active innovation ecosystem around Robotics&AI technologies, to support the innovativeness, economic and social development of the Liguria Region. The Ecosystem is organized with a structure for Hubs, 5 Spokes and Work Packages (WP). The research group is part of Spoke 1: Urban Technologies for Inclusive Engagement. The objective is to develop solutions that improve the level of engagement and quality of interaction among individuals and with the urban context. The project aims at building infrastructure able to communicate to its citizens about well-being: the quality of the urban environment is defined by many parameters each affecting the subjective well-being of the individuals interacting with and in the city. The “human status” and the “city status” are then coupled to design personalized services and smart interaction devices able to react to the status of the physical context in which they are used in a multiscale view. A technology integration phase is complemented by a work that addresses policy-making activities, with a special focus on inclusion and inclusive growth in urban areas. This level of decision-maker-citizen relationship project is WP5 of which the group is a part. The work of PA-citizens interaction and citizens’ engagement and identification of design-driven solutions for urban regeneration strategies aims to implement data-based policymaking in urban areas, involving policymakers and citizens in transparent and participated processes addressing inclusion and inclusive growth. The activity takes place within the Living Labs as places to accelerate the process of adoption of the technology solutions in a co-design process.

The action developed have been carried out to define the logical framework both for the collection of Lesson-learned of international best practices (Open Catalogue) and the application of site-specific studies in selected territories where to test living labs for the users experience and perception of robotic and AI technologies and their interfaces in daily life scenarios. Given the necessity to verify the spatial impacts of demonstrators, qualitative mappings on multiscale perspective, from the city to neighbourhood scale (15-min city) has been introduced to select common infrastructural and socio-spatial invariants. Methodologically the action is based on a recursive set of processes: critical cartography, user experience map, user stories, identification of touchpoints, urban nodes, construction of user scenarios for AI an tech adoption of demonstrator projects, definition of scalability and replicability criteria in other territories of the Ecosystem. The activity has been tested in the pilot case of the Learning Campus “Villaggio del Ragazzo” Cogorno – Chiavari, selected for the applicability of multiple local and territorial demonstrators where 40 participants selected between local institutional stakeholders, PA and citizens has been involved in Open days participatory planning session to trace needs analysis, user personas and acceptance models. For the definition of guidelines on user personas to foster PA-citizens interaction on May 13, 2023, an in-situ day was held to conduct preliminary socio-spatial analyses necessary with sample interviews to assess users’ perception of critical issues and intercept possible needs. Seven thematic paths were identified: Sports Spaces and Sports Fields, Skate Cycle Path and Urban Mobility, Historical-Cultural Itineraries, Commercial and Work Spaces, Green Spaces, Daily Shopping, Neighborhood Services.

On 27 May 2023 focus groups were organised in the place: the goal was building experiential journey maps through participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Each focus group was organized with

actors from economic activities and one P.A. official (as a first-level stakeholder). A total of 40 participants were reached in 7 focus groups. The creation of individual journey maps (Fig. 4) dedicated to the representation of the processes traversed by the subjects observed and interviewed in the course of their fruition activities with user experience map become a tool for analyzing different key points (touchpoints) and to understand how to include, in the purpose of Raise, technological elements to support or improve in the process of use of the spaces considered.

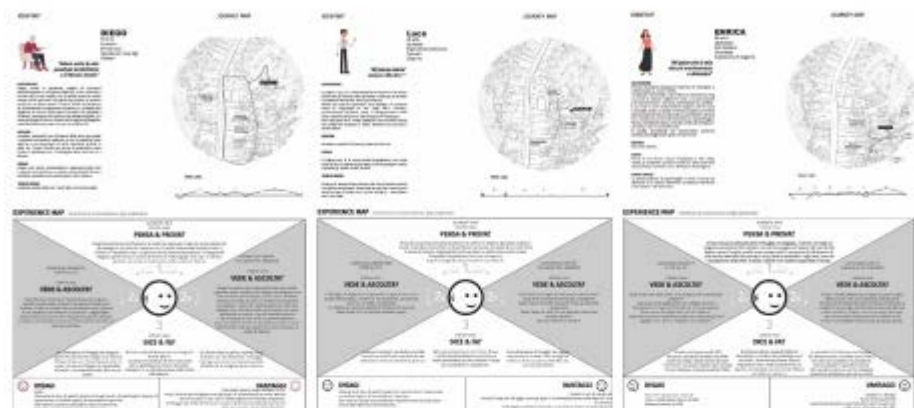


Figure 4 | Individual journey maps and user experience map.

4 | The continuing education worksite for building new models of Circular Design

CiD - Circular Design for bio-based innovation towards climate-neutral cities - Erasmus+ programme. CiD will develop a radical approach to relate design, circularity, and urban transition. Its innovation in co-reaction and flows of knowledge focuses on an operative model which merges novel methods and concepts in design with circularity principles and circular economy in order to drive cities climate-neutrality and urban transformation to sustainability and resilience. The innovation ecosystem of the CiD Erasmus+ Innovation Alliance will develop multidisciplinary models of teaching and learning with an entrepreneurial spirit and enhanced social responsibility, as well as the transfer and uptake of its achievements beyond the project. The Alliance aims to innovate education through the interdisciplinary combination of three sectors and their linkage to cultural, economic and natural sciences expertise, as well as to a wider socio-economic environment: the urban design sector (focus on urban strategies for an urban circular innovation system, including new forms of engagement and sharing in community infrastructures for materials, energy, knowledge, innovating the use of natural resources for construction linked to proximity and regional economies, the architectural design sector (focus on bio-based facade systems and materials in overall circular building design schemes, considering buildings as bio-machines), and the product and service design sector (focus on new tools for green living, using waste from other fields of bio-economy)—thus boosting innovation. The Innovation Alliance CiD brings together on a unique platform HEIs, VETs, RTOs, companies, sector and civil society organisations, incubators and investors in order to create an Innovation Ecosystem for the co-creation of knowledge and to accelerate the transfer of research and innovation to education. The actors create together systemic approaches to define, articulate, and transmit skills for Circular Design. Innovation in education is built on new models on how to improve green, digital, and resilience skills in Circular Design, with a sense of initiative and entrepreneurial mind-sets. The Innovation Alliance foresees a clear transnational approach with 11 partners from 8 countries across Europe. Important and innovative education and training providers: Leibniz University Hannover (LUH) with its Institute of Urban Design and Planning, Institute of Advanced Architecture of Catalonia (IAAC), University of Genova. Three further partners complement with specific expertise: ALDA as a NGO of +500 municipalities and civil society organisations active for sustainability, ERSILLA, Biology Department of the National Research Council Italy (CNR). As associated partner Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

5 | Conclusions: Multicity and innovation yards

All the researches presented can be yards of innovation to contribute to the processes of reappropriation and knowledge of urban space by citizens. Each construction site, as well as the researches, become models of experimentation and innovation that have given rise to different strands of research on cities through declinations: Spiral, Sense, Resili(g)ent, Learning, Dream, Slow, Agro-myx, Biophilic, Land-Link, Co-, Re-. In this light, the RAISE project is part of the sense-city strand, the ReCITYing project is within the co-cities and learning-cities strands, and the CiD project in the learning-cities and Agro-myx-Cities.

The projects become sites of continuous innovation, where the common factor is the search for innovative processes of reactivating urban contexts through creative and transdisciplinary practices. The design of new relationships in these innovation yards leads to the construction of new approaches to the contemporary multi-city as a more sensitive and processual environment in which Citizens and City-Sens, City-layers and City-fields, City-agents and City-agencements (new social collectivities and connectivities and new interactive communities and conductivities) can be combined in this new networked “shared logic” (in common and in community), which is decidedly co-actant.

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