Creative And Smart Public Spaces

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Abstract

Creative and smart public spaces are today’s meeting platform of an urban and architectural dimension, of a social and cultural, economic and ecological level. Smart cities and its places have strong urban effect. These sites with strong identity associated with historical monuments and values have potential to become pulsing poles. Contemporary urban designers’ creativity is focused on completing public spaces. It is important to offer a vital functional level, alternatives for usage of public space. The fixed point - in creative smart public spaces - is focused on the concentration of cultural values with potential of creativity. Participation of residents and participants of activities in the design process of public spaces of city invites to more dynamic urban life. This way, participants form their own relationship to the city and a map of identification spots. Creative and smart cities, streets, places and other public spaces are the most attractive urban positions that galvanize its development through its creative and smart economic processes, cultural identity and through smart development.

Keywords: creative and smart public spaces, participation, smart points, urban vitality
1. Introduction
Creative and smart public spaces are today’s meeting platform of an urban and architectural dimension, of a social and cultural, economic and ecological level. Receiver of a public space affects a user’s evaluation. A city and its public spaces’ visitors enter the dialog with its creators by processes of feeling the environment and by the steps of perception. This feedback is irreplaceable today. Urban designers, architects, designers, sociologists, urban geographers and local authorities expect the acceptance and traffic. This depends on experiencing the quality of city public and smart spaces in smart cities. Definition according to EUROPEAN SMART program (TUWIEN, 2015) is given by this topic: A Smart City is a city well performing in 6 characteristics, built on the ‘smart’ combination of endowments and activities of self-decisive, independent and aware citizens.

![Smart City characteristics](image1.png)

Figure 1. Smart City characteristics

“The most urgent challenge of smart city environments is to address the problems and development priorities of cities within a global and innovation-led world… Smart city Smart Cities and the Future Internet solutions are expected to deal with these challenges, sustain the innovation economy and wealth of cities, maintain employment and fight against poverty through employment generation, the optimisation of energy and water usage and savings, and by offering safer cities. However, to achieve these goals, city authorities have to undertake initiatives and strategies that create the physical-digital environment of smart cities, actualising useful applications and e-services, and assuring the long-term sustainability of smart cities through viable business models.” (Schaffers at all, 2011)

We can see in this time new approach of scenarios for the smart city. As we have noted there are many smart city initiatives: The development of new cities badging themselves as smart, the development of
older cities regenerating themselves as smart, the development of science parks, tech cities, and technopoles focused on high technologies. The development of urban services, new urban intelligence functions, the development of online and mobile forms of participation. (Batty at all 2012)

"One of the characteristic features of poor quality urban structure is clearly the lack of public spaces and their diversity. These are a meeting places and an important phenomenon for the quality of life in individual municipalities."(Czaffkí, Tóthová, 2016) Only with the cooperation city - creators - users, expectations of public spaces design can be outperformed. Participation as a dialogue process has catches the eye of teams of professionals and institutions. If it is well realized, it brings expected effect. Accepted, evaluated and implemented citizens´ opinion makes up a life-bringing power of an urban creativity. Here, spontaneous processes of users and the creative processes of experts meet up. In last years, the creators are more and more interested in participating on projects with site surveys, dialogues with residents and other users of a place, with information of tourists’ footsteps and with associated institutions engaged. Within this open game a complex overview on needs in public space can be detected.

2. Smart City And Place Branding

A matter of ecological quality and tools of economic evaluation of smart public spaces is integrated in the design process. Whole spectrum of attitudes accenting the highest priorities of a place leads to a term place branding - a process of highlighting the significance of a place. "Branding is not just about one logo or a strap-line, it´s about coordinated activity and a joined-up approach to attract all the city´s audiences." (Salman, 2015)

Awareness of a place /city increases with the rise of a qualitative impact on its users. In coincidence, an economic power of a place /city and the attractiveness of its poles increase as well. A strategic level of a place branding acts as a dynamic factor for the design process of public spaces aiming to economically pump the potential of a smart place /city. A successful place brand may change a common place into an attractive one that is highly visited by tourists and that bring popularity, benefits from mobility and economy. Attractiveness brings smart people to living places.

From the urban design point of view, especially squares are those places where one can perceive the space spontaneously by living and remembering certain symbols. User creates a set of sensations that are processed and evaluated then. One needs a clear orientation for sure movement; clear identification for making decision and to choose how to use the space. The most intense experiences are well remembered and then used to evaluate the given space. The one is willing to
return to favorite places; thus the tourist preferences rise. An integration of a man within a place and city is significantly accelerated by the popularity of a place. The more the identity is possessed by a place, the more interest it recalls.

A quality environment encourages to social interaction. That is why squares in excellent location in city are ideal "open spaces" for meeting, for resting, for observing and watching the architectonic scenery, for being a part of a cultural happening. In the context of current quick time-pressure days, the squares in the space of a city can be the right motivation for stopping by, relaxing and spending time alone or with friends. These aspects are historically confirmed and nowadays inevitable. (Gehl, J., Gemzoe, L., 2002)

It gives a way to work on and finish its qualities to have a relation to a place with strong identity. These days, strong magnets in the form of simple figures are immensely pushed forward. It is only natural that a man of a 21st century overloaded with news, information, offers, who is stalled with the city life and his own life, is subconsciously searching for simple "stoppers". Thus the mark, ad and a pictogram acquire its meaning.

By them, the most striking and best known figures are recalled within the complexity of a city: dominants, historical monuments and happenings, parks, riverbanks; also renowned shopping malls, sports halls or recreational facilities. Important footsteps on the urban structure with material or non-material basis are packed by these pictures into logos in its best known title of its urban characteristics.

This magnet symbolizes and attracts public attention, tourists and businessmen. Cities present their strength and attractiveness in their logo. "However, only when such a city narrative is filtered through communication codes and other drivers like reputation, uniqueness, fascination ... or through a conscious policy of city representation (where visual components are equally relevant), we can consider we are fully approaching the field of integrated city branding." (Ahn, Y.-J. et al, 2016)

The most prestigious cities of the world are struggling for the biggest attractiveness by which they demonstrate its economic impact. According to UNCHS Habitat II Conference Documentation 4, urbanized areas in the developed countries make out 91% of whole economic production and provide 89% of all job opportunities. (UNCHS Habitat II Conference Documentation). Today cities are under pressure of growth, settlement expansion. However, they should not only be a quality solution for employment and luxury life; today they are also a source of potential threatening the living environment. 75% of land pollution comes from cities. (According to: Final report Urban Tasks Force: Towards and Urban Renaissance. London, 1999). But the urban dimension of a quality does not focus so much on prestige and economic impact as much, although it is its integral part. Smart public spaces
are a matter of a wide scientific audience and it has got something to say about the image and the city popularity as well.

In traditional schemes of urban visions and public spaces design, an emphasis is being given to the dimension of a social interaction. The social interaction and a focus on the pedestrian horizon have brought the public spaces design back to its original role: a place for a human, a place for people. By this, the basic spatial phenomenon of a square was enlarged in the definition and in use. It is not just a classical square anymore, firmly tectonically determined. Smart cities and its places with strong urban effect, have become a strong social square with great influence.

Not only tectonics and top design makes quality squares, but also a nice fine atmosphere, vistas and views and good cafe fulfil it. Somewhere in the background, a concept with cunning composition and ideal proportions, urban basic rules and a symbiosis between city and natural features is hiding. This used to be a recipe for good nets of public spaces in many European cities. Grand axis, squares, boulevards and parks of Paris in the idealism of so called great presidential projects from the 80’s and the 90’s of the 20th century gave a significant impulse for next fantastic projects and realizations of public spaces of European town. The initiation came from social events of whole-world scale, like Olympic Games, World Youth Day and others. Barcelona in the 90’s of the 20th century was offering public spaces with the footstep of a tradition, with Catalonia's character and modern dynamism. (Kratochvíl, 2012)

![Figure 2, 3. Lively street front of La Rambla in Barcelona followed by Gaudi’s building La Pedrera](image)

La Pedrera is an intersection of exterior and interior, takes tourists from rush of La Rambla through a dynamically formed corner building and its courtyard to the roof public space with view over the city.) photo by Silvia Bašová
In the context of intuitive sensations and evaluations of a receiver, there is a simplified seeing: good, nice, fine, bad, busy ... but very substantial remarks. A visitor in environment appreciates unequivocal movement towards the goal, the mood and fine pedestrian accessibility as just scale parameters. Tourists are attracted not only by physical quality of space, but also by the footsteps of historical events, significant personalities and plots associated with spaces of a city.

Doubting the clearly expert design of a public space is based on a level of its user and his final satisfaction. According to Balmer and Wang (2016) no agreement about a redesign of public spaces can be achieved without the dialogue between local authorities, high quality urban design and users’ intuitive needs. Real steps have to be taken to reach successful "city branding". At first, positive information on visible changes in a city has to be given to start this dialogue. Citizens are willing to enter the reconstruction process if the city asks them about their opinion and when they can be a part of the creative process. Complexity of functions and qualitative parameters are important for smart cities already in the concept phase of urban design and ideas of local authorities. City branding should not be at the service of advertisement and economic power of city, but truly "burn for the city and its residents" in the sense of urban quality and sensible pride of users and citizens. Smart cities with identity are those popular and searched for because of their strong identity and clever offers. Strategic vision and implementing all levels of participants of city forming processes initiate a prestige of a settlement, so the city quality can rise without threads of megalomania that has reached many contemporary metropolises. Smart economy and smart environment with evident effect is about balance of urban, social, landscape parameters of a city and by achieving the balance, economic growth develops complementarity and continually.

Creativity and participation in city shaping from the point of view of:
concept of a city as whole
public spaces design
visitors and residents
make up presumption and a frame for process of dynamic growth of a quality city.

3. Urban Designers´ Input In Public Spaces Transformation
Urban design is not the only platform for transforming the spatial structure of important public spaces in smart cities anymore. It is an element from the process and legal aspect; furthermore it is becoming a lively part of a dialogue about the city and its priorities, especially when squares and pedestrian zones are being transformed. An urban design not only technical database, he even enters the opinion
of users before presenting variety of solutions to them. More dialogues do not mean less expertise; it brings dynamics in integrating the participants into design process of a certain place. The dialogue between the city, professionals, project creators and inhabitants comes from a democratic thought and it follows the thought on: to find an ideal mutual solution; even though an ideal one does not exist, it is up to urban designers and architects to bring the philosophical ideas from „res publica“ and „res economica“ to „civitas“, to the fundamental essence of urbanism, with the urban –developing character, vitality and to the spatial stability of creating conditions for creative activities.

Figure 4. True City, Krier, L. – „civitas“. (Krier, 2001)

4. Creativity And Public Space
Public space is an outstanding place for meeting. Types of visits depend on prevailing function as well as how to use the space in different ways: various pedestrian tracing, opening directions of pedestrian movements towards the goal. Compositional design is focused on perceiving whole thing, with an emphasis on compositional categories. In historically shaped environment, the frame is already given. However, it can be further replenished and completed. Pedestrian’s horizon and his perception of context are helpful then. Practice has proved that it is appropriate to proceed from smaller nodes
towards bigger, from narrow to open, from smaller accents to evident dominants. City-forming cluster is balanced and fine for the pedestrian. It offers valuable city substance with quality spatial orientation. Contemporary urban designers’ creativity is focused on completing public spaces. It is important to offer a vital functional level, alternatives for usage of public space. Many "main squares" have taken the role of year-round social scene. The same space acts as a concert stage in the summer, as a market platform during Saturdays, as a place for Christmas markets in winter, as a free tourist arena other times. Lots of park squares are being found as new attractive spots with options for relaxing on the lawn, by the water jets, provided with jungle gyms and outdoor facilities, with reading room or cafe pavilions. Functional variability of such spaces invites visitors and makes up lively nodes. These nodes are taken as oasis and places to stop by in today’s hectic swirl of big cities.

These nodes emphasize Kevin Lynch already at 60-teeth of the 20th Century on the spatial analysis of three American cities. Lynch points on visual Image of a city, the emphasis on urban aesthetic aspects at the time of departure from functional city. (Hrůza, 2011) In smaller towns they reanimate the structure and form scenes for informal social contacts. Squares also host important feasts and festivals. Access roads leading to squares with mostly pedestrian - but also mixed - traffic form significant factor for activating the square itself. In the topic of public spaces, the fact that this substantive includes not only parks, squares and other meeting points, but as well most often used connections, daily walked lines leading to the goal of our route, should not be left behind. (Kristiánová, Marcinková, 2015)

Creative public spaces concentrate vital functions on the square and in the whole urban structure.

Fig. 5,6. Bratislava, Slovakia, happening on “Štúr street”, car free day “Goodbye summer” (photo by Silvia Bašová)

To handle and galvanize the potential of these places and cities in just way can bring outstanding cultural impact. Similarly as cities with title "cultural city of Europe", creative public spaces integrate
values and attract the development, too. They are the adrenalin sites and so the position and expansiveness may affect the surrounding urbanization.

Concentration of activities in nodal spaces of squares and courtyards is important for forming the volumetric-spatial relations in such facilities. Creative usage of city scene is effectively made up of two principles: urban and designers’ draft and the participants’ goals. This way, the vitality of a square attracts plot participants and provides the city with wanted attractiveness. World cities ranking WCRR 2016 points to a dominant role of European big and middle sized cities. Vienna’s leadership claims great balance of classical city concept connected with perspective cultural-social development aiming at strong urban and technological infrastructure (Mercer’s Quality of Living Rankings). Contemporary revitalization concepts of squares life lead to putting and emphasis on pedestrian movement, activation and reanimation of actions, on completion of bike paths and on nodal places to stay offering services in the pedestrian flow. One node is not enough in vast areas; a system of city-forming nodes interconnecting the spaces is needed. Diversity of a place can achieve readable structure via such vital routes.

Urbanists, economists, local authorities and city halls, varied professional groups and educational institutions are concerned with the topic of creative parameters of cities and their creative quarters. “The principle of density regulation is also as a way towards sustainable city growth.” (Vitková, 2014) The emphasis given on urban regeneration and optimum urban climate culminates more and more in the place of meeting - in the public spaces of central city sites.

5. Case study and methodology
A sport-recreational area Kuchajda, a locality of a broader centre of Bratislava, situated by the Vajnorská street, which is a radial road with the potential of higher urbanity, was pointed out for the purpose of revision of the contemporary condition of urbanity and vitality. The area is known for a lake, a football stadium, a sport hall and a shopping centre Polus. Remaining built-up area is of a residential, administrative and polyfunctional character (mixed-use), along there are various private sports grounds. Disparate area with a low intensity of built-up functions as a brownfield with a predestined use character for sport and recreation, specified for a broader public. The fact of impassability and opacity in the area interferes with the entrance and use of the area.
5.1. The phase of assumption

- Compositional and functional-operational basis of the given location point to strong potentials for the reformation of the area in sense of intensification of the built-up area, a higher city-formation and a functional attractivity.

- Primary urban axis and land axis in the area is a supporting compositional skeleton for urban completion.

Figure 7. The photo of a contemporary state, 8. hierarchy of the urban and land axes in the area, 9. schwarzplan with the lines of parterre

5.2. The phase of modification of the area and filling of the central spaces

Figure 10. a) potential for completion of squares, b) scheme for land urbanization, c) design for public spaces connectivity
5.3. Design phase:
The new central plaza of Kuchajda area is in both designs opened into the whole area in a conjunction of two compositional axes, which enables access to other public spaces:

- Social plazas and streets, active, smart and creative points (on the line to the railway station “Nové Mesto”)
- Leisure time, recreational locations by the sport centres as loose public spaces
- Integrated recreational leisure time completions integrated into the habitable structure

Dynamics of connection of public spaces is in crossing of urban and natural axes, in reformation of a decaying stadium in the middle into a multifunctional social-recreational area with differentiated plazas, streets and blocks. This new urbanity loosens from playgrounds to the leisure time background of lake Kuchajda.

Urban spaces like this demand of an attractive design; that is why there is a space for smart and creative places and points:
6. Findings for smart public space and its participants

Transformation of the area opens up for the public, it is an area without fences, defined by the entrances through city classes and street corridors. Linear and nodal public spaces form a hierarchical structure and graduate towards the central plaza in the area. These places invite for a walking or cycling movement, bind up too in a close recreation in contact with a Kuchajda lake and in various activities of a social and sport value. Stops on foot paths are locations for positioning of smart design points (boxes, bars, games, show cases, delivery stations, workshops and exhibitions). small design concert stages and sport tribunes are significant for the growth of social contacts too.

Social potential in cities is directly linked with socio-cultural potential and fluently passes to expression of citizens´ lifestyle, with expression of high local identity. local authorities´ offer to cooperate with creative society and participate with local residents galvanize stereotype in urban and spatial planning and change it into public spaces via smart strategy to living cores of cities.
URBACT – (European Territorial Cooperation program aiming to foster sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe) evaluates this way in the article „What’s behind the City Scene? “ Integration of social innovation: Through a few examples we can see that the integration of social innovation implies a shift from command and control to brokering and engagement between all players, stimulating social initiatives and creativity within the public sector. In the cases observed here, city governance has become less directive and more participative and co-produces with stakeholders and communities. One important thing is that all the exceptional spots have to be marked. The aim is not to give complex information with all the places, but to highlight those special (where the heart takes us).

Figure 16. Design of a Smart public space like compatible dialog (by Lucia Štefancová)

"If a man leaves a town, it becomes a fantasy. Whichever city, New York, Chicago and its citizens seem unreal from a distance." Miroslav Marcelli (2015) argues by this sentence philosophical reflection about city and it’s inside stories inside minds of participants. To participate on completion of public spaces is an urban activation bonded with local residents’ mobilization. Actual participants are those interfering with them daily. Their lives in the space mobilize reactions to city problems. The other side: city and urbanists enter the process in certain legally specified steps. Boredom of legal steps is thus solutes via participants in workshops and creative entries. Connection of a city and its living society signalizes interest in opinions of those implemented in the spatial planning. The more the citizens are integrated in public spaces completion, the tighter the relationship with the city they form. A set of tools for evaluation of environment perception can be made:

- perception map
- statistics for potential uses
contentment surveys and surveys about the vision of a space ... etc.

The city perception map is a simple tool that enables discussion with citizens about how do they look at the city they live in and how do they use its open spaces. They draw individually or in groups the city’s /town’s shape into the simplified map that represents or copies a geographic map. The following discussion depends on the number of participants and expected come-outs: the structure can be more or less complex and detailed (selection of spots for redesign /common debate, sharing the city values, local stories). “Legibility, mapping, meaning and experience of the space are all significant issues that need to be readdressed in order to understand how the new image of the city is forming.”(Al-Ghamdi-Al-Harigi, 2015)

What is needed for quality facilitation?

- explain well what are the goals of a meeting
- clear description of place categories and ways how to mark them into the map.
- make the atmosphere relaxed (break the shame feels caused by the need of precision, beauty, stress from comparison)
- during the process, encourage the participants and check if they understand their quest and accomplish it
- help presenting maps of all the participants or groups
- according to the arrangement with the organization, bring the meeting to expected results (e.g. chose the prioritized places that must be revitalized)

Community planning demands

- good information
- varied types of participants
- flipchart or drawing papers, marquees, crayons, place with tables and chairs, refreshments
- processed and distributed enrolment, presented findings, work with the come-outs

What do you get? A list of strengths and weaknesses, public and stakeholders’ opinion, new inspiration, summary for further reflections...

7. Conclusion

Creativity supports the vitality of a place. Urban structure vitality growth affects the completion of most important urban places significantly. As the vitality of big cities leads to rather speeded up dynamic concentration than to vital valuable substance, squares and public spaces are their picture /reflection. As a result of this phenomenon, a city is under the pressure of economic wellbeing instead of social, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of its residents... And footprints of such dynamic concentration are visible right in its accelerated poles. (Bašová, 2014)
City friendly spaces significantly affect the visitor and the visit rank and popularity of certain spaces. Parameters vitality and creativity of public spaces are associated with:

- vital uses of buildings and spaces
- concept of pedestrian zones
- creative scenes of public spaces
- creative cultural events
  - spaces users’ participation

Figure 17. Steps to vitality and creativity of public spaces, (by Lucia Štefancová)

Steps to vitality and creativity of public spaces:

- Supply and modeling space for democratic forum
- Participation of direct citizens, associations, activities for the creation of an area
- Experimental offer of such areas
- Cultural formation through artistic presentations
- Creative and smart public spaces are the most attractive urban positions that galvanize its development through its creative and smart economic processes, cultural and creative industry and through smart development. They achieve growth and development in spite of economic crisis and guarantee the cultural diversity. Creative urban spaces affect the attractiveness of a city and a space by its design and functional vitality and they can increase the visitors’ ranks. Maintaining the parameters of human and socially-democratic model of a city is expected. Participation in completion process of public spaces can be related with its creative potential. These are options how to implement institutions and open society into the city life in groups with more citizens than simply professional members.
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