

- *“Let us then abandon the simplicity of separation and give unity its due. Let us abandon the self- mutilation which has been our way and give expression to the potential harmony of man-nature. (...) Man is that uniquely conscious creature who can perceive and express. He must become the steward of the biosphere. To do this, he must design with nature.”* (McHarg, 1969)



Nature and the city:

Redefying urbanity through
urban riverfront transformation

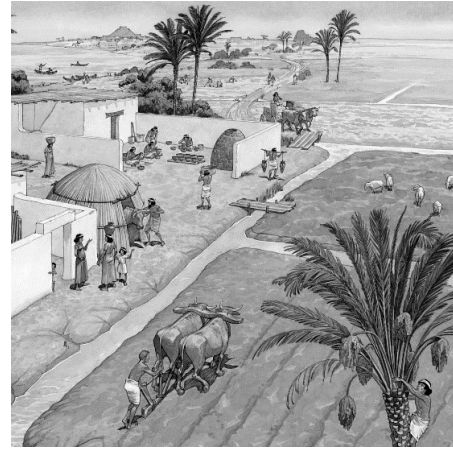
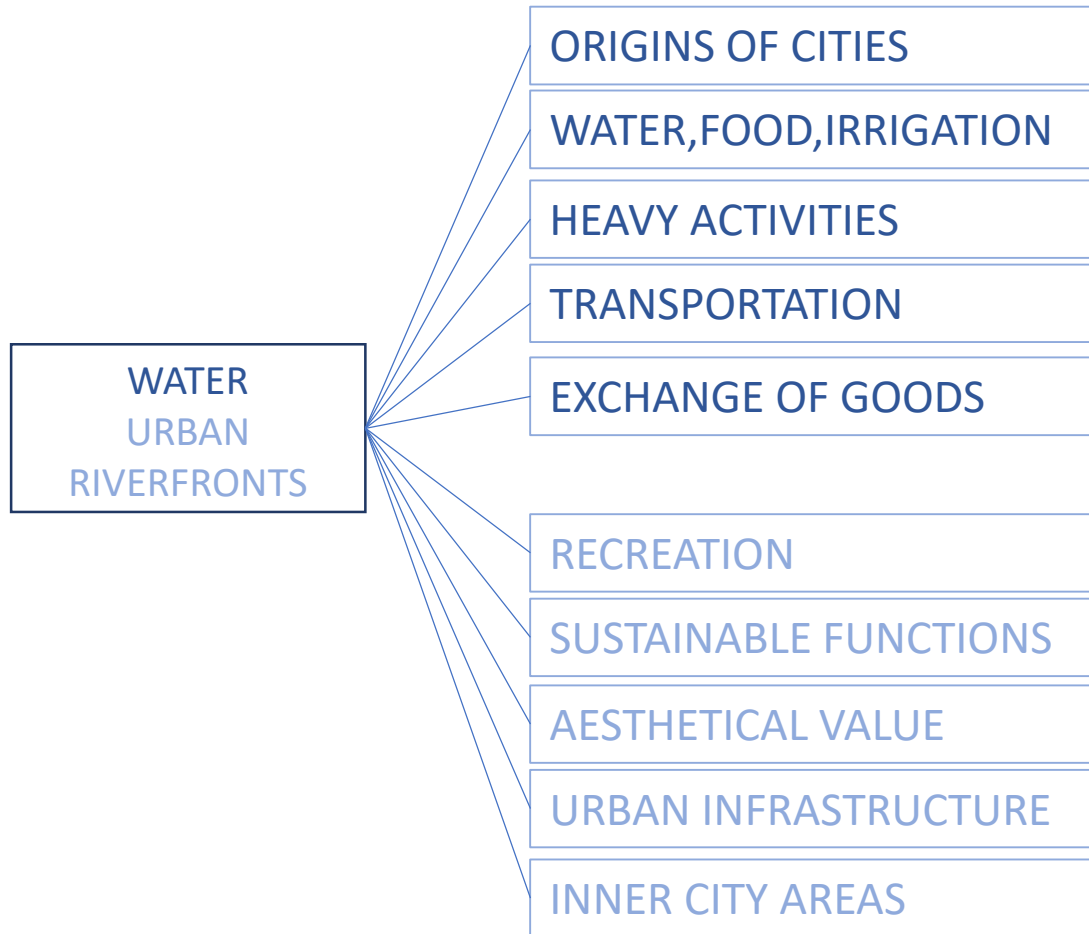
Ksenija Krsmanovic, Juan Luis de Las Rivas
Universidad de Valladolid

Stockholm, October 23, 2019



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Introduction: Water and origins of cities



Historical perspective: city-river relation

- Cities and rivers are closely linked; they coevolved and shaped each other in different ways, urban rivers present part of history, identity, collective memory
- In last 150 years urban rivers have gone from decline and abandonment to resilience, recovery and cultural appropriation
- Relation between city and its river offers a [perspective for understanding the relation between the city and nature](#)
- Rivers play essential role in RENATURALIZATION and in urban development in last decades (*Rivers lost, Rivers regained: Rethinking cities-rivers connection*, 2017)
- Robertson (*The Three waves of globalization: A history of Developing Global Consciousness*) connected to expansion and mercantilism 15, 16th century
- In the 19th century docks, ports and deposits, riverfronts lost their larger significance as a public space: **INDUSTRIAL CENTER**, in 20th century: technological development led to relocation of the port and industrial areas out of the city center: **DECLINE AND DECAY** riverfront became the no-go area in the city and the barrier for the citizens to reach the waterside

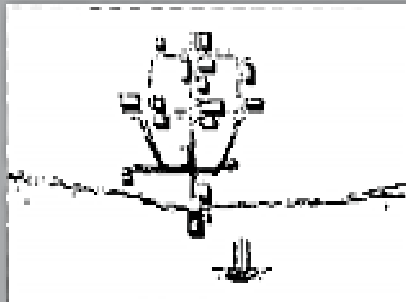
Direct contact with shore

Ports and docks formation

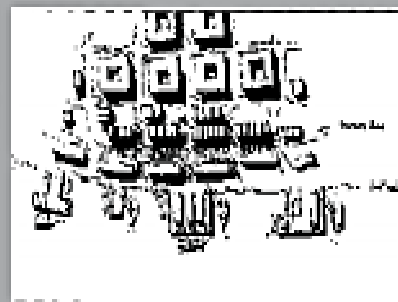
Industrialization

Relocation and abandonment

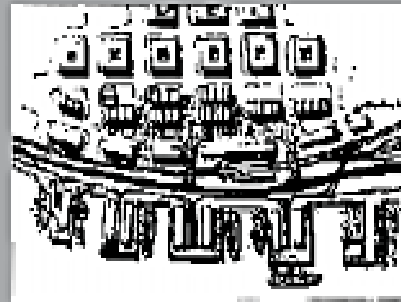
Reconnecting city and its waterfront



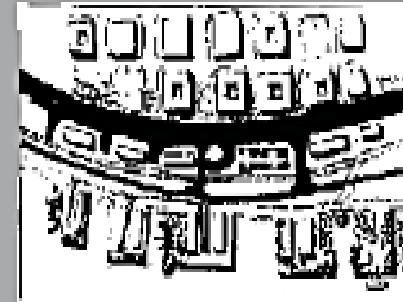
SETTLEMENT



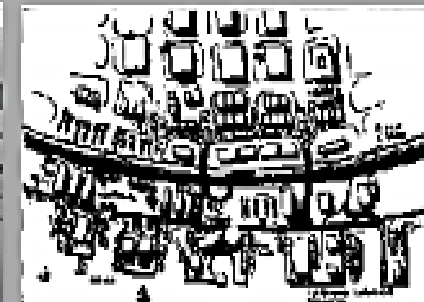
A PORT IS ESTABLISHED



CITY DETACHES



DECLINE



REDISCOVERY

Planning perspective: Major changes in 20th century

- In last decades of the 20th century major changes evident and frequent, urban waterfronts underwent functional and morphological transformations
- Urban development practice shifted from social to more economic objectives and from national to international market competition
- City authorities world-wide were creating policies for urban transformations in order to tackle with ongoing social and environmental problems
- Urban growth followed by an increase of population; inner-city decay and economic decline were the main issues: urban regeneration strategies found their major implementation at the inner urban riverfronts
- The chapter of postmodern cities has been opened with international practices aiming to achieve a **sustainable city**
- Free market liberalism and tendencies for economic growth that spread around the Western world: planning underwent changes towards the formation of a neo-liberal approach
- Brundtland report in 1987, the General Assembly of the United Nations brought questions about long-term environmental strategies and agreed on the common need for a new type of growth that is socially and environmentally sustainable
- Agenda 21 (Earth Summit Rio 1992), Aalborg charter 1994, Leipzig charter 2007, UN: SDG



Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development

Our Common Future



United Nations
1987



I.C.L.E.I
Local
Governments
for Sustainability

Renaturalization: what happened in planning discourse?

- CIAM: Rise and fall of functional urbanity (Gidion, 1941, Sert 1942, Le Corbusiere, 1943)
- Contemporary city built with functionalist coordinates
- 8th CIAM “Heart of the City”(1951) proposing humanization of urban life
- As a reaction to functionalist city, Hough offers a critique to the urban design that shaped modern city: lack of ecological values

The dissatisfaction with existing (functionalist) city resulted in criticism:

- Lack of urban quality
- Functionalists’ zoning and loss of cities’ identity
- Preservation of urban heritage in historic centers
- Emergence of the design of public space (Cullen, 1961, Krier, 1979)

Beginnings of the change

- In 1960s important changes in perception of nature within cities and environmental issues (change in values), awareness of Earth's fragility
- Between 1960-90s a small group of environmental designers have been forming new discourse based on principles of designing with nature (McHarg, Hough, Lewis...)
- Traditional design by that time failed to create urban quality, need for new perspective on urban environment
- Existence of the global environmental crisis is acknowledged and environmentally sustainable development is seen as an URGENT NEED in top of decision-making agendas` (Radovic, 2009)

Urbanity in postindustrial society

- City in need of conceptual redefinition
- The problem is that all cities look alike
- In this context new urbanity is being formed around:
 1. The role of nature in urban areas (McHarg, 1969)
 2. Impact of new technologies in urban design (Mitchell, 1999)
 3. The role of social talent in the development of cities (Florida, 2005)

- In postindustrial city, the “forgotten” or “backyard” landscapes of vacant inner city areas become new focus of urban design interventions



- Problems: environmental view is essential in shaping cities and problems of larger regional context have roots in cities and should be solved there (Hough, 1995)
- Challenge was to overcome dichotomy between manmade and nature: cities where people live and “wild”-non-urban, where is nature (legacy of pre-industrial and modern cities)
- **THE PRODUCTION OF THE SPACE** is framed by key concepts of **GLOBALIZATION, SUSTAINABILITY AND URBANITY.**



Hough, *Cities and natural process*, 1995

Globalization



- Theories open the huge list of the possible definitions of the term. It could be seen as a stage in progressive evolution of humankind but at the same time as a process of decline and a way to homogeneity
- Today, more and more places are created as a result of travelling unsustainable patterns that are dictated by global markets
- The ideology includes the free market, belief in non-differentiated progress, universal democracy, universal human rights. However, the spatial projections of those ideologies look alike
- Built environments produced by global capital are projection of value system that is often described as “Western” where local and particular are lost and became global and general
- Globalization and imperative of sustainable development demand sensibility for LOCAL
- Threat of simplifying social complexities to the free market demands (consumer’s world). From one side beneficial free flow of the capital, goods and people, on the other, destructive form of neo-colonialism

Sustainability



- Speaking about sustainable urbanism we speak about environmental, social, economical SUSTAINABILITY. Environmental crisis addressed in numerous books in 1970s. Environmental agendas included questioning of emergent neo-liberal thinking
- Brundtland report from 1987
- Krocknberger and Thorman, 2000: “...a dynamic process that enables people to realize their creative potential and improve quality of life in way that protects and enhance Earth’s life support systems (fresh air, clean water, healthy soil and nature protection)”
- The question is how to implement spatially those definitions?

Urbanity



- Cities reflect the highest and the lowest of human civilization (they are sensitive reflection of broad societal values or projection of the society on the ground. This is what determines urban (Lefebvre, 1996)
 - The term is culture specific, is very qualitative
 - “Urbanity- knowing to make the city, knowing to live the city” (Paris exhibition, 1980) and a synonym for urban culture (Zijdervald, 1998)
 - It implies critical IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY, PLACE, SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, CULTURE
- 1)Functionalists (with CIAM) defined what means urbanity: as a reaction- established need for more human city 1) historic center and 2) public space
- 2)Crisis of city itself: urbanity vs. city redefinition (in terms of scale and functions in postindustrial society)
- 3)Eco-urbanity: as improvement, in two ways: eco-functionalism and regeneration in inner city and city region



à la recherche de l'urbanité

savoir faire la ville, savoir vivre la ville

BIENNALE DE PARIS
manifestation internationale des jeunes artistes

URBANITÉ :

ORIGINE DU TERME : Au moyen âge «urbanité» signifie «gouvernement d'une ville»; ultérieurement «qui a un caractère urbain». Progressivement vers l'époque moderne, le terme signifiera «agrément, obligeance, serviabilité, civilité ou entre beaucoup d'affabilité, de savoir vivre et d'usage du monde». («Le respect d'autrui et de soi-même s'appelle à juste titre de l'urbanité» - Giraudoux).

UN NOUVEL USAGE APPARAÎT VERS 1980 : Il veut désigner un ensemble de critères de qualité de l'organisation ou de la création urbaine développés en réaction contre les ravages dues aux pratiques courantes de l'urbahisme du «mouvement moderne» (massivement appliquées durant les années 50, 60 et 70) et contre les déviations technocratiques issues de la «Charte d'Athènes» (1933) ou de diverses doctrines fonctionnalistes qui privilégient les dimensions mécanistes, quantitatives et matérialistes des villes et suscitent par divers «zonages» la ségrégation des hommes, la fragmentation abusive des espaces et du temps. C'est pour se démarquer de ces procédures de l'urbanisme dit «moderne» (qui ont engendré une véritable aliénation urbaine et suscité la perte d'identité de la cité) que l'usage nouveau du terme «urbanité» est proposé en alternative pour désigner une qualité nouvelle de l'usage et de l'aménagement des villes et de leurs potentialités architecturales et humaines. Ce nouveau sens du mot fait volontairement référence à sa double signification (voir ci-dessus) originelle et moderne. («L'urbanité, c'est le savoir faire

la ville et le savoir vivre en ville»; thème de l'exposition de la «Biennale de Paris» en 1980). Cette double connotation tend à associer des références à la tradition et au savoir-faire de «l'art urbain» et à de nouvelles dynamiques sociales inspirées par le savoir-vivre d'une «convivialité» citadine. L'urbanité procède d'une civilité, d'une affabilité à l'égard de la ville existante qu'elle ne cherche pas à évincer mais au contraire à valoriser, à associer à ses démarches. L'urbanité peut aussi bien consister à réhabiliter ou enrichir un vocabulaire architectural basé sur un héritage communautaire (par exemple, la composition urbaine faite de variations sur les thèmes des rues et des places) qu'à favoriser l'émergence d'un nouveau sens civique amorcé par les «lutes urbaines» en faveur d'une démocratisation de l'usage de la cité et des choix de construction (ou de re-construction) de la ville, d'une participation des usagers aux destinées de leur quartier ou de leur ville.

DÉFINITION DU TERME : «L'urbanité» : qualité d'une organisation urbaine illustrant l'identité d'une ville, sa mémoire, ses conflits, ses changements. Qualité d'un espace ou d'une architecture exprimant et laissant s'exprimer les projets et les comportements des différents acteurs sociaux. Qualité de pratiques sociales agissant sur l'espace et l'architecture. L'urbanité tend à mettre en relation l'homme et la ville à travers une culture et le «génie du lieu». L'homme et la ville peuvent être dotés d'urbanité.

ECO URBANITY

- Environmental sustainability together with social sustainability in urban context make eco-urbanity
- INTEGRATIVE approach in order to achieve true sustainability: nature +human +environment +culture
- Eco-urbanity presents a sensibility and responsibility for environmentally and culturally sustainable future and cities (Radovic, 2009)
- To redefine urbanity so it fits in new demands for sustainability means to consider urban that embraces an environmental imperative

Hough, *Cities and natural process*, 1995
Places for people, activity and social contact



How do cities cope with the challenge of creating an
economically viable, socially just, environmentally sustainable and livable
mixed-use city for the 21. century?

- From the beginnings of human settlements, water has a crucial role in establishing the balance between the natural, urban and social life in the city; functional and aesthetical value: visual, audial, tactual, psychological, climate and recreational welfare
- Belongs to everyone: public space
- Specific spatial meaning as the particular open place where built and natural meet forming a specific urban landscape
- In ages of heavy industrialization, cities have turned their back to the riverfronts, leaving them as irrelevant “backyards” and excluding from their identity and public life
- In the context of the 20th century, with the increasing urban density, industrialization, bad living conditions and urban expansion, the presence of green areas restarted being desired in the urban environment. The idea of nature in the city was connected to health, well-being and commodity. Water elements and urban riverfront sights present a major potential for creating blue-green belts and might affect in that way to a more healthy and quality living
- Riverfront projects offer a standpoint from which processes happening in the city could be observed, they testify the complexity of urban challenges and demands of the local context

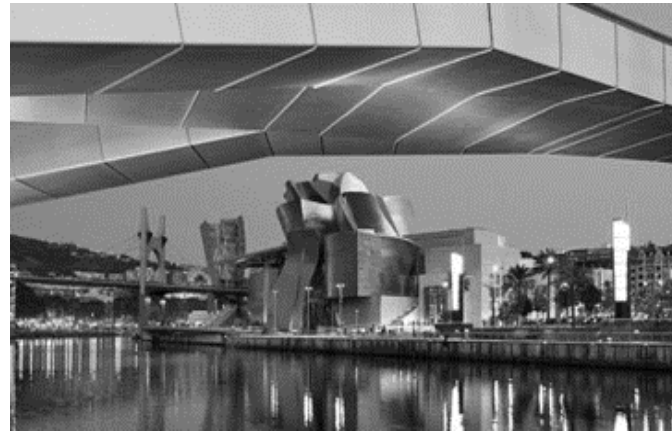


Urban practices: redefining urbanity through urban riverfronts

- Numerous successful examples of the riverfront regenerations world-wide lead us to the contemporary practices that testify the importance and relevance of the riverfront regeneration in current urban tendencies. Once implemented, it becomes the catalyst of the numerous processes happening in the city
- Nowadays, riverfront regeneration projects are aiming to rediscover new methods in planning, reconnect rivers with the city, recreate urbanity, rethink safety and most prominently, revitalize economy
- Many varieties in their urban role and complex urban development
- Several authors have classified different riverfront projects according to their role in the urban context

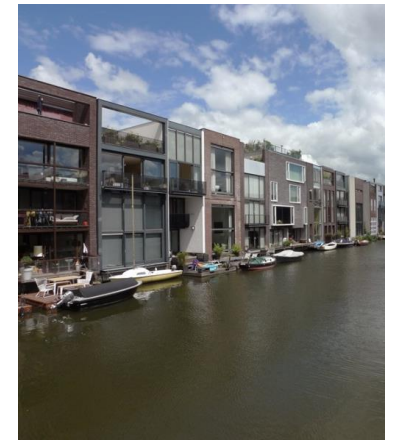
Integrated riverfront regeneration- urbanity as a new mixture of activities

- Culture-led development on degraded industrial site, improving innovation, infrastructure, commerce
- Particular form of PPP, innovative governance of Ria 2000



Residential riverfront regenerations- urbanity as livability

- Gothenburg Norra Älvstranden, Hammerby Sjöstad, Amsterdam Eastern docklands
- Large housing areas created on former industrial inner city sites



Symbolic riverfront regeneration- urbanity as identity

- Belgrade Waterfront, Bratislava Eurovea, Budapest Millennium City:
- Top down, multiparty approach with goal to develop new city center and new image of the city
- Development is driven by private sector, hard to achieve balance with authorities, people not always in favor of change



Findings

- This research on riverfronts showed so far:
- **Positive effects:** urban innovations, new design, improvement of water quality and ecology, provision of new housing and job opportunities, increase of the real estate property and new economic investments and finally reinforcing the relation between the city and the water through the new type of urbanity
- **Risks:** loss of identity due to the standardization of the interventions for all contexts (adoption of the model), the lack of correspondence between the initial idea and realized solution, the appearance of extraterritoriality due to creation of exclusively commercial and tourist functions, loss of public space, gentrification and prioritization of profit over urban quality of the project
- The successful urban transformations are shown to be those that recognize the different potentials of the changes, include the concerns of the citizens when planning, understand the local character
- From Brundtland report (1987) to Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015), **sustainability became the paradigm for defining a new kind of urbanity**
- Clear global aims have been established: inclusive, smart, sustainable, and diverse cities and regions (Territorial Agenda 2020, EU 2011)
- How is urban sustainability visible in cities?
- Urban design as an art and science enhancing the quality of physical environment (Mumford) has new roles: landscape architecture, ecological engineering and sustainable architecture are related to blue-green infrastructures vision, with nature based solutions, and with new role of urban and peri-urban agriculture



Thank you for
your attention!

”...only by designing and planning with nature and culture we begin to heal the landscapes and places of everyday existence- urban, rural, wild- in environmental and aesthetics terms”
(Steiner, Thompson and Carbonell, 2016)