

Sustainable Communities and Landscape Architecture

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Summary

The need of sustainable communities is high also due to an enhancing population growth rate that contributes on its turn to world natural physical and biological resource exhaustion. The thought of increasing the living standards gained a fast critical dimension in last 50 years. However, it is basically important to think about the way the future generation life should be affected by what we are currently doing. It became more and more obvious that mankind cannot go further on with the old already expired developing models because, under present conditions, during the following one hundred years, the exhaustion of natural resources should occur. At the same time, the damaging effects of human activities on the environment are increasing as a consequence of in time gathering of polluting emissions and severe accidents. The main issue is the human being adapting capability with its limits and its latent possibilities, reaching the conclusion of existing some limits specific to human species, determining the corrective responsibility regarding directing of the technological development so that to be in compliance with human well being and survival. In order to particularly improve the dwelling environment and generally surrounding environment, in last decades, it is advocating for a close multi-disciplinary cooperation and for an active involvement of town planners by specific contributions.

Keywords: pollution, sustainable communities, multi-disciplinary cooperation, landscape architecture, sustainability.

1. INTRODUCTION

The need of sustainable communities is high also due to an enhancing population growth rate that contributes on its turn to world natural physical and biological resource exhaustion. The thought of increasing the living standards gained a fast critical dimension in last 50 years. However, it is basically important to think about the way the future generation life should be affected by what we are currently doing. It became more and more obvious that mankind cannot go further on with the old already expired developing models because, under present



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conditions, during the following one hundred years, the exhaustion of natural resources should occur. At the same time, the damaging effects of human activities on the environment are increasing as a consequence of in time gathering of polluting emissions and severe accidents. The main issue is the human being adapting capability with its limits and its latent possibilities, reaching the conclusion of existing some limits specific to human species, determining the corrective responsibility regarding directing of the technological development so that to be in compliance with human well being and survival. In order to particularly improve the dwelling environment and generally surrounding environment, in last decades, it is advocating for a close multi-disciplinary cooperation and for an active involvement of town planners by specific contributions. Two requirements are outlining in the over-industrialized contemporary societies. One of them consists of the demand to dwell in small, intimate and unpolluted communities, and the other one consists of the demand to have yet provided all the advantages of a large metropolis: facilities, technical equipment etc. However, it became obvious the fact that it cannot be scientifically sorted out the urban and metropolitan environment aspects without previously solving the delicate social and economical issues such as poverty, social injustice, chance inequality of all society members. For the time being, the surveys are trying to set up only general future trends acknowledging the present limited possibilities of urbanistic forecasting and recommending a principle attitude: the man to be the main concern. The main aim is the individual, his personality and aspirations within an urban area affecting comfort and life quality, as well as a human evolution support.

2. FOREGROUNDS

In view of a sustainable development through future local policies, the involvement of specialists and population in various activities should allow the following generations to benefit of the same resources the people have and use nowadays. Even though the term *sustainable development* bears a series of ambiguities and confusing sources (mainly in construction area where the sustainability term usually leads to life span of a building or its components) it is equally true that it is all about a determining stake for planet future, for our society model and, at a smaller scale, for professions in architecture and town planning domain. It is still a long way to cover, regarding the improvement and prevention of all kinds of pollution. The measures are minimal related to environment damaging rate: for example, many companies suggested their one methods of estimating various product impact on environment; in some countries, a ban on using certain general human health and environment damaging materials was set. Most important is also the way the user assumes his responsibility in order to identifying, self training and



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implementing current practices that should favor a high rate of comfort and life quality, a high living standard.

Generally, it was structures three types of sustainable development approaches:

1. Economical approach – based on the concept of maximum revenue flow generated by keeping the benefit producing value stock;
2. Environmental approach – centered on biological and physical system setting; the focus is on maintaining and reinforcing the system capacity to adjust to changes and not on preserving an “ideal” static state
3. Social-cultural approach – is trying to balance the cultural and social systems promoting poverty and discrimination removal, involving the provision of future generation rights and their development in an harmonious social-cultural environment

In this respect, we could say that landscape architecture has the needed tools of operation, incorporating all three approaching types. In view of sustainable development, the judicious proposal of architecture and urbanism projects can be correlated with those of landscape architecture regarding:

- Protection, improvements and rehabilitation of built environment
- Protection and rehabilitation of built patrimony
- Rehabilitation of some areas and districts by applying environmental landscape architecture projects, using salubrious, non-polluting, durable materials
- Improvement of public spaces in collective habitat areas
- Rehabilitation of urban contact areas, related to requirements expressed by residents
- Providing facilities for leisure, contact and public education
- Increasing personal, public and private goods
- Reducing the urban area pollution degree
- Improving the technical-edilatory equipment

Presently in Romania, there are rather few investors interested to create a pleasant and coherent environment by landscaping architecture projects, intensifying the architectural value of built framework and giving force and significance to urban spaces. On an international level, there are such landscaping action programs under implementation and even well finalized. Most of such programs are trying to apply the sustainable development concept. Romanian proposals, few in number, are addressing to cultural rehabilitation and revaluation of some valuable urban areas, aiming at the final objective of integrating into European cultural space. Unfortunately, the landscape architecture is not given much credit in spite of its proven potentials. The profession of landscape architect is coping with present helplessness of surpassing the debate stage regarding the concrete application of proposals effectively fighting the world pollution.



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However, in spite of all gloomy forecasts and not so encouraging realities, landscaping architecture offers a hope to the urbanists. By virtue of the natural elements it operates with, the landscaping architecture can recover the city and its areas; it can give back its personality and health. Sensibly handling the land, water, vegetation and light always proved, in the past and present that the landscape architecture may be looked upon as a therapy and a way of saving the environment. What is more important is that it may promote the prevention of pollution and environmental issues. A ray of optimism is going over the negative effects of urbanization and pollution: it seems that they resuscitated the present day concern for landscape architecture solution, to the level of territorial arrangements. The scientific research programs developed in order to protect the environment give to landscape architecture an increasingly important status being called up to participate both in preservation, curing and rescuing the natural and artificial environment, e.g., the cities, as well as in preventing pollution by developing a sustainable and healthy framework.

Landscape architecture is increasingly aiming to its own specific and independent language. Summing up both art potentials and architecture and urbanism sciences, it is receiving a new expression mainly from the ever changing man-nature relation. Nature, in all its aspects, is form landscape architects a never ending and ever lasting new lesson on the universal principle of shape creation, a lesson they are trying to understand and to apply in their work. Nature reveals its composition and primordial "laws" that can become a basis for each of its projects. For a successful landscape architecture project, it is essential for the architect to understand and to know thoroughly the nature. The perspective solutions should be generated even by the virtues of landscape architecture as a whole. The big metropolis is no longer an option for mankind. A trend is becoming obvious for small town as a preference responding better to communities' integration. In these towns, the landscape architecture should play a major role in linking the urban areas and spaces and architectural pile. The ideal future human residence model may be a 5-10 000 inhabitant units, within the green areas, water, free space and sun light should prevail. The focus should be on defining an urban environment covering developments and facilities for collective contact forms and leisure. Congestion, agglomeration and pollution should be controlled. These communities should a sensible and non-contradicting response to the provisions of the 4 human settlement requirements: life, work, leisure and communication. Alongside of the multi-disciplinary team members, the landscape architects should perform the difficult but vital task for making to safeguard the environment against the danger and severe consequences of pollution. The duty of urban medium integration within a planetary ecology is a really titanic objective. The landscape architecture creations together with ecological and town planning architecture should generate a new type of urban spaces, a new type of towns, a sustainable universe. This universe is likely to be achieved as the landscape architecture became a subtle



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territory, covering a large area of subjects, directions and variations on different themes, complexly inter-relating.

The functions and attributes of elements the landscape design is operating with are proving the fact that the design is ecological, both in its nature and effects. The urban psychology specially outlines its large contribution to human psychic, which in fact is the most important ecological effect. One of the main ecological principles, we may say, of the urban composition science, to which the landscape science belongs also to, is also the one of reasonable integration into various urban site typologies. The reasonable integration into the urban texture, into various placement types of the landscape morphological elements through urban composition can facilitate getting multiple beneficial effects both for the city and for its inhabitants. The landscape architecture can be the territory of new compositional mixtures trying to reach to harmony of contraries: horizontal-vertical, open-closed, lightness-darkness, shade-semi-darkness, full-empty, straight-curve, ground-sky, ascending-descending, rest-action, nature-construction, reality-fiction, continuity-discontinuity, rhythmic-arrhythmic, symmetry-asymmetry, play-therapy etc. A carried out landscape architecture project should constitute a real educational, curative and energizing environment. By its qualities, it contributes to increasing the knowledge capacity of residents on an aesthetic, ethic, informational plain; it can confers rest and relaxation or can enhance or offer active energy. By these valences, it constitutes also as a "human space", as a space convincing, attracting, satisfying individual and collective interests that can wake and enforce the creative availability of residents contributing to change the urban awareness in a beneficial way.

3. CONCLUSIONS

In one of his wise aphorisms, Brâncuși once said: "It's not difficult cu create, more difficult to put yourself in the creation state..." In the field of landscape architecture, a creator can find great satisfactions by exploring some uncovered horizons, he can find the freedom of action and creation lost maybe in a daily routing, or may discover a way to place himself in the "state of creation" Brâncuși was talking about. Beyond the theories and theorization, we discover that, by its virtues, the landscape architecture is reaching to create new and more and more harmonious spaces integrated in the urban environment and into the surroundings, reaching to rehabilitate degraded and lost urban spaces, reaching to confer personality both to the cities and their inhabitants. Many contemporary landscaping interventions in the urban landscape, as well as in the natural one, are illustrating this process. The main goal would be that the human being, with its personality and its all aspirations, to be able to live in a balanced and harmonious environment, not damaging it by transforming it in a simple informational or mathematical element of a high tech drive, which started long ago to be out of the society control. For the



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third millennium, the landscape architecture creations can become the antidote of virtual reality in which it seems we are living in today, forced or freely, aware or unaware. This offer cannot act but in the context of certain major changes at the level of human collective consciousness attracting behavioral changes. The landscape architecture creations could contribute, alongside other things from other fields, to clear out a new urban consciousness helping us to live and to cohabit in the urban space, agreeing and communicating with each other by respect and mutual help. We could name it the Metamodern Consciousness of the third millennium.

Therefore, the main target of landscape architecture should be creating a harmonious and balances environment, in which the human being to find its personality and to fulfill all the aspirations, to live without being alienated. By its virtues, the landscape architecture should achieve to create new spaces more and more harmonious integrated in the urban environment and in the surroundings, to rehabilitate the degraded and lost urban spaces, to confer personality both to the cities and their inhabitants. Once again, we outline the idea that the landscape architecture offer cannot act but in the context of some major changes at the level of human collective consciousness. Only this new and necessary consciousness that we can name it the Metamodern Consciousness of the Third Millennium could produce changes at the human behavioral level, so that we can live and to cohabit in the urban space, agreeing and communicating with each other by respect and mutual help, understanding and respecting the city, the nature, the entire Mother Earth and its relations to the surrounding Universe.

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