

# UAIG (Urban Areas of Illegal Genesis)

(re) living to (re) integrate

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## **Abstract**

This ongoing research intends to develop a strategy for the (re) qualification of the public space in the UAIG (Urban Areas of Illegal Genesis), through the introduction of an intervention methodology – collaborative participatory processes.

The strategies of intervention in the public space have launched new challenges to research in architecture. In a demanding society with strong participatory and collaborative citizenship, public space increasingly assumes an important role in urban practices.

The lack of public space in areas of illegal genesis in Metropolitan Area of Lisbon (MLA), shaped the PhD research question: How public space make UAIG's (re) living to (re) integrate it in Lisbon Metropolitan Area dynamics?

Participation means the collaboration of people pursuing objectives that they themselves have defined. A public space is one which, in its design and in its use, stimulates a sense of belonging to a wider community beyond the bounds of the strictly private sphere. It is, then, a scenario that fosters contract between difference people mixing uses and meeting place for individual and collective interests.

The answer is to adopt methods and instruments that allow the creation of a methodology for the analysis of a great transversality of scales – territory, neighbourhoods and public space.

This research aims to contribute to a generic model of good practices applicable to any process of requalification of the urban space of the UAIG.

**Keywords:** UAIG, participatory processes, public space, methodology

## **Introduction**

Over time formal and informal city definitions have been altered or acquired different meanings in the various fields of human activity (Lutzoni, 2016) (Hernández, 2010). Since the 1950s the world has witnessed a phenomenon of rural exodus, large population flows moving to cities in search of better living conditions. However, cities have not capacity to respond to population demand, leading to informal growth of parts of metropolitan territory (Llyod, 1979).

In Portugal, in the 60's housing alternative was developed, on the margins of the formal market, in rural areas on the outskirts of Lisbon. The phenomenon is denominated clandestine neighbourhoods (Salgueiro, 1972) (Lobo, 1989) until 1995, where it is later designated by UAIG, due to law 91/95 of September, with the introduction of the exceptional regime for the urban reconversion of urban areas of illegal genesis.

The UAIG that derive from unlicensed buildings, in disrespect or perversion of the legislation regarding territorial planning. As a result of illegal subdivision processes on land owned or promoted by local authorities. The neighbourhoods are the result of self-construction and perennial materials and self-

urbanization of the population, and occurred overnight, being immediately inhabited in order to hinder possible demolitions.

The location of the UAIG evidences relations with the space morphology and its proximity to the metropolis, there are already some studies that reveal the location of UAIG in the MLA (DGOTDU, 1996) (Rolo, 2005) (Raposo, 2009) (Gonçalves, Alves e Nunes da Silva, 2010).



Figure 2: “Conjuntos Habitacionais Clandestinos na Região de Lisboa” (Eugen Bruno, 1984)

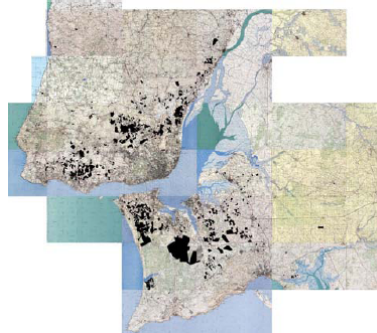


Figure 3: Mapping UAIG (Helena Rolo, 2005)



Figure 4: Mapping UAIG (Isabel Raposo, 2009)

Participation and the idea of collective are increasingly valuable in contemporary discourse and architectural practices (Arnstein, 1969) (Giancarlo de Carlo, 1970) (Habraken, 1972) (Hamdi, 1995, 1997, 2004, 2010) (Sanoff, 1990) (Spinizzi, 2005). Several experiences in the practice of urban requalification at the international level allow legitimizing the paradigm shift (BIG, Topotek1, Superflex, 2012) (Zuloark, 2010) (Ermacora, Bullivant, 2015). The publications on this intervention perspective have been multiplied, expressing the growing disciplinary interest in the field of architecture, especially in the requalification and transformation of informal settlements. There are several architects who value community participation in the strategy of intervening in public space, taking it as a point of spatial, social and cultural relations and identity and cohesion (Rosa, 2011, 2013, 2015) (Andreini, Casamonti, Giberti, 2012) (Jáuregui, 2010, 2012, 2013).

Thus, public space is much more than a formal and spatial definition, it is determined by behaviours that aggregate collective urban experiences (Arendt, 1958) (Merlin, Choav, 2010) and considered a factor of identity, memory and community cohesion (Jacobs, 1961) (Lefebvre, 1974). In order to better understand the importance of the public space in the UAIG and the impact on the life of the inhabitants, it is fundamental to reflect on authors such as Whyte (1980), Gehl (2000, 2010) and studies of Project for Public Spaces (1975 -).

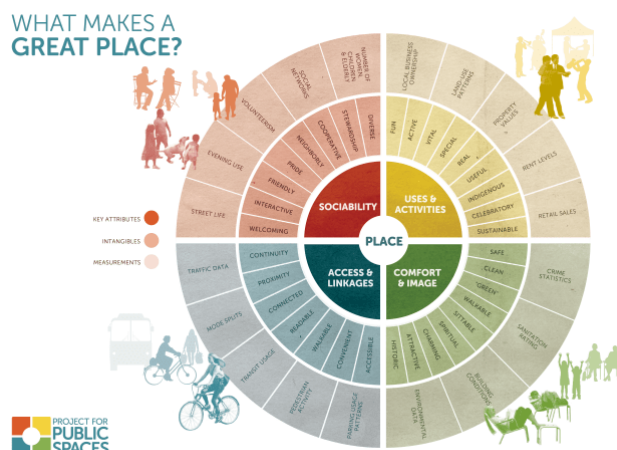


Figure 1: What makes a great place? (Project for Public Spaces, 1975 -)

The general objective of this research is to develop a strategy for the (re) qualification of the public space in the UAIG, through participatory processes, having as object of study the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon, investigates the integrated transformation of the urban design of neighbourhoods clandestine, based on the assumption that the public space is decisive in the spatial, social and cultural relations of identity and values of belonging.

It is aimed to achieve the following three specific research objectives:

- Study the object of intervention by mapping the territory of the UAIG in the MAL currently, geo-referenced in time and space;
- Identify conditions – social, cultural, economic, spatial and formal, and expectations – desires, needs and aspirations of the residents, for the creation or restructuring of the public space of clandestine neighbourhoods, denominated UAIG;
- Analyse and classify good practices of intervention – internationally and nationally, to define, test and validate intervention strategies in the public space of informal territories inserted in urban contexts, in order to promote sociability and sustainability.

The aim is thus to (re) living the public space, in order to strengthen the identity and social cohesion in the UAIG. As well as (re) integrating these territories into the metropolitan dynamics, insofar as they manage to create memories and relations of sociability between the community and others.

## **Methodology**

The present research project requires the critical analysis of a wide transversely of scales – the territory, the neighbourhoods and the public space, having as study area the MAL. To achieve all the proposed objectives it is necessary to carry out a pilot experiment to requalification the public space of UAIG and adopt a methodology divided into seven stages:

- Literature review;
- Urban planning practices to the local scale;
- Mapping and interactive visualization;
- Analysis of public space;
- (Re) qualification the public space;
- Validate the research process;
- Norms and procedures;

## **Literature review**

In the literature review, we intend to prepare a critical review of the literature on the four greater research topics: UAIG, informal settlements, participatory processes and public space. It is intended to investigate the origins of the themes, the different evolutionary variants, the experiences of the spaces and how the participation of the community can change the dynamics of the places.

The study of UAIG will focus on the knowledge of the subject of intervention, in particular on the historical, geographic, social and morphological framework, analysing, among other things, research work already carried out by different disciplinary areas, such as: Isabel Raposo (2010, 2011, 2012), Pedro Chula (2014), among others.

The study of informal settlements will allow contextualizing the portuguese case in the international panorama, reflecting on intervention strategies adopted and planned for these territories, analysing, among others, the fieldwork already carried out by Marcos L. Rosa (2011), Marco Casamonti (2012) and Massimiliano Giberti (2012).

The participatory processes will focus on the methodology of intervention in the public space of these informal settlements, analysing several methodologies already performed in these spaces, including the works of Jorge Mário Jáuregui (2012), John Turner (1976), among others.

The public space will allow to observe behaviours and reactions of the community in the experiences of the space, providing indicators of the quality of life and how the architect can contribute to its promotion, analysing among others, the fieldwork already done by Jan Gehl (2013).

### **Urban planning practices to the local level**

At this stage of the research it presupposes an intensive framing and analysis of local urban planning practices. Data collection of intervention practices in the public space in informal settlements, at national and international level (Europe and Latin America), including community participation. An interactive taxonomy of participatory practices, taking into account the multiple dimensions of the views of the project authors. Measurement of good practices and structuring of intervention strategies to be applied to the pilot experience in UAIG.

### **Mapping and interactive visualization**

It is intended to map the currently delimited UAIG, in the 18 municipalities that make up the MAL, area of study, creating an interactive chronology (years 60, 70, 80), referenced in GIS, in time and space (location), with images, videos and photos and with some statistics socio-demographic information (census 2011) and morph typing using classification criteria: 1| UAIG with allotment permit issued; 2| UAIG with reconversion of municipal initiative; 3| UAIG with reconversion of private initiative; 4| UAIG without process initiated of reconversion; 5| UAIG without urban redevelopment. When mapping, it is possible to verify the evolution of UAIG in the territory (origins, consolidation and interrelationships with the environment) and interactive form. The visualization of these data will allow to select a municipality, using several criteria of analysis (date approval of the UAIG delimitation; state of allotment; total area lots, among others). For the municipality will be carried out a data analysis in network, through an interactive diagram (type Kumu.io). After to choose the municipality, the cases of intervention of this municipality are selected, through selection criteria – morphological, social, environmental and economic, using the same tool of the selection of the municipality – interactive diagram (type Kumu.io).

### **Analysis of public space**

In this stage we intend to analyse the cases of intervention selected in the previous stage, through a quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative analysis will involve a set of technical theories of analysis of the special configuration of the built environment (type space syntax) (Hillier and Hanson, 1984) and morphological evolution (Lynch, 1960). Criteria for analysis will be used, such as: accessibility, mobility, habitability and scale of intervention. Qualitative analysis, direct observation, will go through inquiry techniques (questionnaire and interviews); mapping of courses with a sample of residents; to identify desires needs, aspirations of local residents and community participation (Nambi, 2010) (Gehl, 2013). When analysing the UAIG of a municipality, it is intended to select the public spaces more favourable to the pilot experience.

### **(Re) qualification the public space**

The fifth stage involves (re) qualification the public space, selected and analysed previously, through community participation conducting interviews, workshops, models, having several criteria for (re) qualification of space – comfort, integration, scale and observation. Realization of full-scale prototypes through digital manufacturing processes. At this stage, we intend to do the pilot experiment, to verify the whole process so far proposed.

### **Validate the research process**

This stage is to test/validate the all process, implementing the solution at least in a case of intervention. The process ends with a new quantitative and qualitative analysis. Realize interviews and videos to understand the satisfaction of the population in the participation of (re) qualification of the public space.

## Norms and procedures

The last stage of the methodology involves the definition of norms and generic procedures for the introduction of bottom-up processes that promote a sustainable citizenship and co-governance in the UAIG in MAL.

## Expected results

Although the increasing critical reflection on how the quality of public space can improve the well-being of people in urban space at different levels, in Portugal, the dimension of the requalification of public space in UAIG has been sent for second plain.

The results of this investigation are a generic model of good practices applicable to any process of urban space requalification of UAIG.

In this research project we intend three specific contributions: 1| scientific contribution, to put the theory into practice, rethinking the discourse on the strategies of making architecture in the contemporary context and the urban practices of intervention in clandestine neighbourhoods; 2| contribution to MAL, through a new vision of UAIG; 3| contribution to the UAIG and to the municipalities, altering the urban requalification processes, with the introduction of bottom-up processes that promote a sustainable citizenship.

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