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ECO-URBAN PLANNING

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Excerpt from "Urban Morphology and sustainable development. Issues of sustainable urban development"

Sustainable city, which could also be called eco-city is one that promotes and develops an urban form whose construction and maintenance requires minimal resources, focusing on the efficient use of energy, water and materials and the recovery and use of waste. Sustainable city also becomes a structured and flexible organization to better manage resources and improve the quality of urban life. The sustainable city can take many forms but the common characteristic is to respond to ecological criteria and quality of life.

The sustainable city is an adaptable and innovative city, two concepts that must drive change. "Building sustainable cities is intrinsically build an adaptable city, which characterise itself by the diversity of the natural and artificial environment" (OECD 1996). Adaptability applies to buildings that should be amenable to multiple uses and frequent changes in the urban space that needs to be recycled, to the behavior of citizens and producers of goods and services who must include new environmental data, to the administration and implementation of policies that need to be open to partnerships, transversality, and to collective designs. Adaptability for OECD depends of the development of innovation.

The compact city should not be seen as a singular model, a standardized unipolar city that can be implemented easily within existing cities. Instead, we must recognize that there are many _ urban forms that can be called sustainable. The challenge for the politicians is to develop the most appropriate type for a particular local context (Guy and Marvin 2000). The search for a sustainable urban form may have to be redirected towards the search for a certain number of _ urban forms that respond to the variety of existing models and contexts of implementation, which have been identified (Jenks et al. 1996). The choice of Planning and design depend much on the characteristics of the city or region and are different depending on the cases (Frey 1999). The major work is not to design a new ideal form of city but to "redesign to " existing cities and take into consideration that cities are unique in their structures and forms and that it seems easier to develop urban planning strategies adapted to context.

Propose such models of development require an understanding of the impacts of different forms and their ability to deliver future profits (William et al. 1996). In fact, the conditions for a successful sustainable urban development are known. In European countries, the strategy is to reduce the environmental footprint while ensuring to everyone, wherever it resides, a good quality of life. To progress in the reflection and action for sustainable urban development, it is important to recognize the impact of the different urban fabrics on the perception of the quality of the living and the residential satisfaction of the households. It is possible that dense tissue, consumes less soil, are less polluting, but they may be more polluted and less attractive in terms of quality of life.

Different versions of the compact city - polynuclear (monofunctional or polyfunctional) or linear - have in common the idea of increasing urban densification around places more accessible to public transport. Densification of the inner city centre, the regeneration of waste sites, that is to say, everything that constitutes the "reconstruction of the city on the city," but also the policies of de-concentration in dense cores appear as major strategic orientations of the management and development more sustainable of cities. They allow a more measured land use and optimize the management go of technical networks; they influence modal shift, the average trip length and the production of pollution.

This densification through the reconstruction, however, is devoid of meaning if it is not linked to other policies. The issue of density must be linked to discussions on residential and urban models. As Scoffham and Vale (1966) point out, the density does of no importance unless it is attached to the built form. Similarly, the densification is meaningless unless it is coordinated development of public transport, but also to the quality of public spaces connecting them. The model of the compact city can not be applied without taking into consideration other development goals, and to do so, several strategies can be proposed: arranging secondary centres, integrating urban planning and management of transportation enhancing public areas and improving urban services. In all cases the densification must be differentiated: it can not be the same everywhere, but it must be, in all cases, of quality...

The concept of eco-urbanism allows to articulate these principles consistently and this approach for addressing the management and transformation of urban spaces in a perspective of sustainable development.