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CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

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III. INTERNATIONAL CITY PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN CONFERENCE

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THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SUSTAINABLE URBAN MOBILITY PLANS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSULTATIVE DEMOCRACY IN CITIES

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Abstract

The strategy of a city that targets on sustainable mobility is usually related to the global objective for environmental protection or with the aesthetic objective for regeneration of the local urban environment. However, there is an extremely important dimension of the policies for sustainable mobility that hasn't been highlighted as much as it should. This aspect is the stimulation of the interest of the city's inhabitants in the community, the increase of their participation in local decisions, the strengthening of democracy. Dewey had pointed out, from 1927, that invasion and gradual destruction of local collectives and face-to-face communication was the immediate source of instability and indifference that (already) characterized the democratic American society. The inhabitants now choose areas that are away from the old dense and multifunctional neighborhoods, no longer accessible on foot from the city center and with no other land use than residences. Local stores of the neighborhood or the center of the city created a sense of unity and community to the citizens, by representing their own shops, they felt familiar and also

had become a daily social gathering, a component of their local identity. The big scale of urban development limits the person's ability to participate, because the person is unable to get to know the whole of the urban space, but mainly he is mostly unable to follow his evolution. All cities that achieved participation of an appreciable number of citizens in the decisions and their events were small-sized cities. The topic of this paper is related to a specific research question on how the sustainable mobility could contribute towards the building of a consultative democracy in the cities.

INTRODUCTION

Traveling from one part of a city to other is a time-consuming and fatiguing process (Beria and Grimaldi, 2014). But most importantly, it is energy-consuming and expensive (Vlastos and Birbili, 1999; Bakogiannis, et.al., 2014; Tomanek, 2017), since the cities are expanding spatially and the distances are getting longer. As a result, as many urban diffusion phenomena are enhanced, it becomes more difficult for citizens to organize their day-to-day movements and meet, and consequently the variety of activities recorded in the public neighborhood area and their urbanity tend to decrease, while the same is true when it comes to the quality of life of residents (Vlastos, 2004). Internet penetration into the lives of citizens contributes to this direction as people are increasingly seeking virtual contact, utilizing a range of social media tools (Wellman, 2008), in comparison with direct communication, which has traditionally taken place in the public domain cities. The upsurge in the use of social media in recent years, however, must not detract from the importance of another factor, that of the domination of motor vehicles in the streets of cities. Indeed, people, while they move in the public domain, they are surrounded by motor vehicles (Kyriakidis, et.al., 2017; Kyriakidis and Bakogiannis, 2018), without having the opportunity of stopping in order to interact with other citizens (Vlastos , Barbopoulos and Milakis, 2003). Somehow, an antisocial behavior arises and anxiety is created on movements (Kenworthy and Laube, 1996). The Traffic planning, unconsciously, has become a basic parameter of social organization of cities (Vlastos, 1993), in which the human presence, is no longer visible, in contrast with the presence of cars. Political decisions of another era were those that contributed the change of sections of European cities. Some neighborhoods and their suburbs instead of being designed with the logic of their centers, creating mental images that seem to have sprung from paintings, a view that Baudrillard (1986/2004 in Mantas and Defner, 2017) underlines for the European city, are designed with the emphasis on motorized traffic.

On the contrary, the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) aspires to change the current reality and to create an environment that favors social contact as the foundation of democracy. According to Rupprecht Consult - Forschung & Beratung GmbH (2016), SUMPs are Strategic Plans, based on existing planning practices, and taking into account the principles of integration, participation and evaluation in order to meet the needs of mobility of people, today and in the future, for a better quality of life in cities and their surroundings. According to Jans Gehl's (2010) book entitled "Cities for people", modern urban design principles require the integration of the human dimension as a prerequisite that SUMPs attempt to achieve and they aim not only to adjust the city's profile in landscaping terms, but also to influence citizens' attitudes in a way that promotes more responsible mobility behaviors and diminishes car-dependency. The four principles outlined in Gehl's 2010 book ensure that human activities are concentrated in developed structures while the fifth principle relates to improving the quality of the urban area to extend the time that people spend outdoors.

In this context, a number of organizations, internationally, promote the idea of switching to cities more independent from the car and more compact, since as an urban model compact city is considered to be more sustainable (Barbopoulos, Milakis and Vlastos, 2005; Portokalidis and Zygouris, 2011; Lim and Kain,

2016; Mouratidis, 2017; Kyriakidis and Iliadis, 2018). The European Union, in particular, promotes the implementation of SUMPs through a series of guidelines, such as the 2007 Green Paper "Towards a New Culture for Urban Mobility", the 2011 White Paper "Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area - Towards a Competitive and the Resource Efficient Transport System, and the 2014 Draft Report on Sustainable Urban Mobility, while they are still remaining high on its agenda through new financing mechanisms (e.g. the new Financial Framework of EU about Research and Innovation "Horizon 2014-2020", which finances both SUMP actions and actions to implement sustainable energy mobility). Indeed, an announcement of the European Commission (913 / 17.12.2013) signalled the mandatory enactment of SUMPs to small and medium-sized cities in the Member States. It is estimated that SUMP may be a requirement for the disbursement of urban transport resources (e.g. infrastructure projects, "clean" buses, ITS systems, etc.) and their implementation should therefore be addressed as an opportunity to acquire more sociable cities.

DESIGN OF URBAN MOVEMENTS BY CITIZENS FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT. IS IT POSSIBLE?

Democracy is a political system aimed at a society that considers each person's individual views to be of importance for political decisions. It requires people to appreciate the view of their neighbor, to know him, to understand him. There are two basic considerations about democracy: the one is as a field of confrontation of ideologies and views with the aim at the dominance of the most correct ideology and the other one is as a field of synthesis of ideologies and views with the aim of creating the right policy. The second approach, also known as a consultative democracy, is clearly more difficult to be achieved in modern cities, but it is that form of democracy which is clearly capable to mobilize today's citizens who are distant from the politics, giving them a real opportunity in policy-making and they cease to be proverbial interlocutors when it comes to validate premeditated decisions. At the same time, it gives them an incentive to devote time for developing a collective conscience that must exist between citizens and enables them to arrogate the final decisions and to claim with greater force their realization.

This research paper deals with the way in which SUMPS can contribute for developing a consultative democracy in cities. Although this assertion could be strongly criticized, on the one hand because SUMPs are a spatial planning tool and on the other hand because it can be considered that such a form of democracy is not possible, on the contrary, it is necessary to investigate this issue for two reasons:

(a) It is not just a typical spatial planning project but a single policy plan where the citizen is invited to participate actively in its implementation and to take note of what is proposed.

(b) In the history of the European city, cases of consultative democracy with the public space or some "third places" have been recorded as areas of social and political expression. The cases of "The Speaker's Corner" in Nottingham, UK (Kyriakidis, 2016) and the political cafés in France (Berenson, 1984; Rigogne, 2014), where the exchange of views was a key issue for human interaction, are characteristic.

Therefore, the question is how SUMPs can contribute to this.

HOW CAN THE SUMPS ACTIVATE THE CITIZENS?

As discussed above, a key issue is the way in which design tools like SUMPs can activate the public, promoting the development of consultative democracy. The question was approached bibliographically focusing on how to organize and implement them.

In assessing, objectives of SUMPs are to produce a new urban environment (DIez, et.al., 2013) and thus, citizens should have the opportunity to participate in something so important for their city and their lives in it. The parallel linking of the urban environment with a number of issues such as health and air quality,

which are key points that are expected to be improved following the implementation of a SUMP through interventions such as the promotion of physical exercise and the bicycle for urban travel, is an issue that enhances social participation in the planning process (Shokoohi and Nikitas, 2017; Skagiannis, Goudas and Rodakinias, 2017).

The spatial reference of these specific projects at the level of municipalities or functional units is another parameter that enhances the possibility of participation of the inhabitants because, according to Vlastos (2004), in order to interest and involve residents in specific projects in their city, they must know their city, and the scale of reference should keep their interest alive. In the new approach that comes to the fore in the context of the implementation of the SUMP, the scale of design approaches the scale of the citizen. There is a shift from all the cities or metropolitan areas that have been studied by a group of transport engineers, assisted by a team of city planners with the aim of facilitating the flow of traffic, and currently the focus is on upgrading the public space by creating green routes, pedestrian paths, united public areas, cycling routes and many infrastructure projects for mild movements with a centre on the neighborhood. This design which is based on the policy of integrated urban regeneration, is based on the collaboration of teams composed of both transport and urban planners as well as architects, topographers, social psychologists and geographers. Already the scientific "opening" of new specialties reflects the tendency of the SUMP inspirers to integrate citizens into the design process. Indeed, it is the city's inhabitants and visitors who are called upon to approach the above issues, identify the problems and give their own solutions to them. Specialized analysis tend to be more comprehensible to the public, by illustrating indicators and statistical analysis where necessary, and by removing one-dimensional approaches based on mathematical models, load numbers and motor vehicle flows.

Strengthening the role of neighborhoods street segments in the same direction. In fact, through the SUMPs, integrated programs are being promoted. Through the urban regeneration of road axes or the addition of new public transport links, the spontaneous development of local centers is possible, by attracting leisure and commercial land uses and stimulating the social character of neighboring public spaces (Nobis, 2010). The neighborhood acquires a collective identity, enhancing human contact. All means of sustainable mobility (pedestrian, bicycle, collective means of transport) enhance social contact between people in the same neighborhood (Saelens, Sallis and Frank, 2003).

These issues raise, from the outset, the importance of public participation in the process of implementing a SUMP. However, this is made even more apparent by observing the stages of implementation of a SUMP, which are presented in Figure 1. It is necessary for the team of experts to communicate with the stakeholders even for the early stages of a SUMP implementation (Step 1.6), in order to identify conflicts and identify prior to how they may affect the planning process. In this context, the study group is invited to organize the way of community engagement (Step 2.3), which can be based on a set of traditional and innovative methodological tools. The first results of this active participation are already evident from the second planning phase, where the team of experts and citizens develop a common vision as well as ideal planning scenarios (Steps 4.1 and 4.2). In the third stage of the SUMP, residents are now called upon to present their ideas to practitioners that will generate effective and ideal measures for the SUMP (Step 6.2). Securing high quality interventions is, in the fourth part of the project (Step 9.1), the key demand for this practical public participation in the planning process. Indeed, engaging the people is a requirement for local authorities to be assured about the acceptance of proposed measures (Step 10.2). Finally, people participates as an active indicator on the progress towards and monitoring of SUMP objectives.

The above points highlight the importance of establishing an open procedure where all residents of the cities or functional units that produce SUMP are eligible to participate. However, in order to better coordinate planning, it is necessary to identify key stakeholders and primary stakeholders. The reason for this is to focus on identifying possible conflicts or alliances that can make a significant contribution to the progress of the design process. Typically, such examples may relate to the diversification of the scope of the design and the type of interventions related to the availability of resources. The procedures that are used to implement this action include:

Identification of stakeholders as well as their dynamics and goals.

Determination of weaker factors that may be required to be strengthened in the course of the process.

Attempt to develop alliance design with the aim of avoiding, as far as possible, conflicts with local entities that may affect a large part of the public to overturn the SUMP forecasts. At the same time, through alliances with strong local entities, such as cycling, sporting and landscaping clubs, parishes, professional associations and citizens' associations, an easy planning of a simple strategic co-ordination of the potentially involved entities can be achieved and promote easily the process.

Development of strategic participation and coordination between stakeholders. Such a strategy should be developed after studying the profile of the population groups involved, so that the tools to be used and the way the coordination is done will find the best results. In order to obtain the profile of the groups it is necessary to study their demographic, social and economic characteristics.

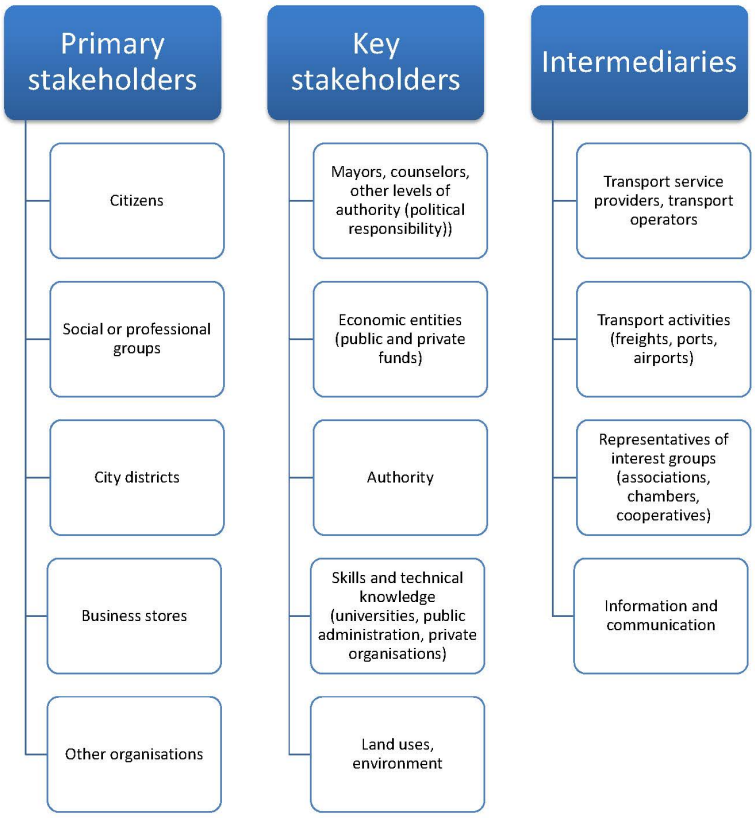

Figure 2 shows diagrammatically the stakeholders involved in the process of implementing a SUMP. To promote consultative democracy, however, as noted earlier, the focus is on the citizen as an individual and the way in which he can participate in the planning. So far, reasons have been given to motivate each individual citizen to do so, as well as the design phases in which this can be done. In the next section there are two tools, which have already been used in cases of SUMPS in Greek cities, which contribute to the promotion of consultative democracy.

4. CROWDSOURCING AND CONSULTATIVE DEMOCRACY

In recent years, the European Commission has established a series of projects that are based on crowdsourcing techniques. In these projects, citizens have been used as "sensors" (Pödör, et al., 2015). Indeed, in many recent projects across Europe, people contribute to the provision of geospatial information (Stojanovic, Predic and Stojanovic, 2016), through the use of mobile devices such as smartphones (Ganti, Ye and Lei, 2011; Xiao, et.al ., 2013; Bizjak, 2012 in Papadopoulou and Stratige, 2014; Pödör, et al., 2015), without bearing any costs to the institutions that evaluate and analyze it (Schweizer, et al., 2011). These projects are mainly associated with the collection of environmental data as a result of the ratification of the Aarhus Convention (UNECE, 1998); and its integration to the European legislation (Directive 2003/35/EC), where the need for access and participation of citizens in decision-making processes with an environmental footprint, is stressed (Bakogiannis, et.al., 2018).

In this model, citizens can participate in the process of analyzing the current situation in the study area by collecting data using their smartphones. These data may vary. Typically, as mentioned above, the use of

such techniques focuses on collecting environmental data, such as noise levels and air quality. In four cases of municipalities in Greece implementing SUMPs (Municipalities of Zografou, Kallithea, Kozani and Drama), direct data collection process by volunteers took place for these two types of data, to exploit on the one hand the understanding of the current situation and, on the other hand, their use as indicators before and after intervention. In the case of noise data recording, the Sound Meter app was used, while in the case of air quality data recording, the free HackAir app was used (Bakogiannis, et.al., 2018). The number of volunteers participating in each city varied according to the specific characteristics of the city and the time constraints for the implementation of the project. However, given the fact that the degree of reliability of collected crowdsourced data is of great significance, as there is a lot of discussion in terms of crowd sourced data quality (Apostolopoulos, et.al., 2016), it is proposed that the number of volunteers to be as large as possible. Thus, the data will be more reliable and public participation will take place to a greater extent. For this reason, a range of tools can be used to attract volunteers, such as social media campaigns, which, according to Dimitriadis and Tzortzakis (2010), are essential tools for the successful completion of modern information campaigns.

Another method that can enhance the direct and active participation of citizens in the design of a SUMP is the development of a crowdsourcing web-platform. This action is another crowdsourcing practice. Citizens are not required to collect data, but to provide ideas on the plans to be implemented in their city (Bakogiannis, et.al., 2018). In this way, residents are invited to contribute to the analysis of the existing situation after providing ideas, identifying specific problems. Such applications have been implemented in many overseas countries, with examples being the CityMakers platform in Paris and the Nexthamburg platform in Hamburg. In the four municipalities mentioned above, 264 users participated overall, in the platforms that were constructed, and presented a total of 166 ideas, which they organized under specific thematic categories, like: walking, cycling, public transportation, urban green spaces, fleet management, e-mobility, urban planning, etc.

Similar actions have been designed to apply to the municipality of Rethymnon in Crete, where the SUMP implementation process has begun. The results of this case, combined with the results of other cities when the participatory processes will be completed, are expected to give a clear picture of how and how far consultative democracy has been promoted in local communities. In any case, the results so far show a clear interest from local communities in participating in the decision-making process with SUMP playing an important role in this. It seems that the new design model can work so effectively that future practices can also be applied to urban planning and design so that the projects proposed are fully responsive to the needs and attitudes of the inhabitants.

CONCLUSIONS

SUMPs consist of planning tools for the cities' public spaces with an emphasis on transportation choices, which has been significantly promoted in recent years in the framework of the European Union's policies for a compact and sustainable city. In Greek cities, SUMPs are another challenging new concept that, although accepted in theoretical terms, in practice they have not yet been implemented through organized interventions. For that reason, the current timing is the most appropriate for exploring a series of issues related to how citizens should be involved in the planning process.

Taking all the above into consideration, as well as the low level of active participation of the citizens in the planning process, the question that was dealt with in this research paper is whether through SUMPs it is possible to promote active community engagement in the implementation of projects and through it to cultivate consultative democracy. This question is particularly important in case of Greece and several

European countries, where peoples' engagement is limited to accepting or rejecting some design solutions through formal consultations and is not expressed in a more active way.

In order to investigate this question, a literature review, a study of good practices and Greek cities case studies implementing SUMPs took place. From the above, important conclusions emerged that can be summarized as follows:

Consultative democracy is based on the synthesis of ideologies and opinions in order to formulate an appropriate policy. This, although traditionally done through live discussions, in the case of the SUMP, it is proposed through a web-platform that strengthens the personal view. In the next phase, the dialogue could be further enhanced through the ability of one user to respond to another, because so far, the platforms in the cities presented did not provide such a potential. Even so, however, there is dialogue and free expression of every interested citizen, which is an essential aspect of consultative democracy.

In democratic regimes, each member has the right to say and to design and participate in the planning that is made for him. This is done through procedures of direct collection of data from volunteers. As a volunteer, any interested citizen may express interest and the process is very simple. In this way, he is actively involved in the design, which he understands best, just like the current situation while before he was just an observer of what is proposed for his city. Thus, it is easier for him / herself and his / her social environment to understand specific design solutions that may be suggested by the team of experts.

In addition to the above points, which demonstrate two ways of strengthening consultative democracy through SUMPs, the objectives and the object of these projects are the central elements in proving this case. The emphasis on the human scale and the neighborhood, and the implementation of proposals through projects that are readily perceived by every citizen is a key parameter that makes SUMPs an opportunity to strengthen the active role of citizens in the day-to-day life of the city. Similarly, if public participation was the same in a traffic study that would be more spatial, the result that would come from the social point of view would not be the same.

As a result, SUMPs are an opportunity to capitalize the knowledge of promoting active social engagement. The use of a range of innovative tools, combined with traditional tools, can help to maintain the sense of participation in the SUMP design process and enable citizens to participate in collectives and voluntary actions.

The above proves that although the issue of traffic and urban planning, as proposed to be combined through SUMPs, can have positive effects on the social aspects of local communities as well. Although, as a first step, the objective of public participation is to accept interventions and to promote successful planning measures, it is ultimately found that the result may be wider for the collectives involved. Therefore, the conclusion that emerges from this overview of the issue is that consultative democracy can be promoted through the implementation of a SUMP; however, there should be a coordination of actions in order to activate the public and diffuse knowledge and information.

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CAPTIONS OF VISUAL MATERIALS

Figure 1. The SUMP planning cycle. Source: ELTIS, 2013.

Figure 2. Schematic representation of participants involved in the process of implementing a SUMP. Source: Lever Consulting 2018

SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

SUMP: Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan

EC: European Commission