

## Integrative Urban Design Game as a Method for Creating Liveable Urban Ambients

Tatjana Mrđenović

(Tatjana Mrđenović, Teaching assistant, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Architecture, Bulevar kralja Aleksandra 73/II,  
tmrdjenovic@arh.bg.ac.rs)

### 1 ABSTRACT

Complexity of urban environments implies new methods that can design urban ambients in sustainable manner. This means that urban design and urban planning must work together in order to achieve flexibility for liveable urban ambients in the process of sustainable urban regeneration. Problem and research questions that guide this work are: How to achieve this kind of disciplinary, interdisciplinary and participative cooperation? Is it possible to overcome main obstacles of interest based urban development? Do traditional methods of urban design and urban planning can achieve the integration? The aim of the paper is testing the “Integrative urban design game”, the method applied in the process of urban regeneration of Bač Fortress Suburbium, regarding its possibilities to frame and integrate different rationalities into a coherent future. Different rationalities come from variety of actors and stakeholders in the community seen as carriers of urban vitality and identity. The hypothesis is that the method is in the relation with local context and level of social capital in local communities. Therefore, the expected results of the paper will (dis)prove the integrative “power” of the method using case study as a methodological approach of measuring the level of acceptance and integration among different group of stakeholders.

### 2 INTRODUCTION

The multilevel dimension of urban design and urban planning and their mutual overlapping in contemporary urban paradigms create rich area for integration of the positive sides of both disciplines in the process of urban regeneration. Urban regeneration is framed by sustainability as “youngest” urban paradigm (Reeves, 2005). Sustainability seeks to integrate aspects, aims, and spaces of “older” paradigms providing liveable places. Furthermore, urban regeneration of protected ambients emphasises the need for this kind of integration. Most would say that it is a subject of integrative protection, however, by my opinion the issue goes beyond this concept. The argumentation for this is in the institutional dimension of sustainable development, crucial for the provision of Healey’s “soft infrastructure” and objectification of different worlds into coherent whole.

Therefore, the aim of the paper is to discuss the question when urban design and urban planning should work together to build the institutional space for achieving sustainable places in protected urban ambients. This will be researched by analysis the results of a workshop: “Participatory approach in urban design of public spaces of Bač Fortress Suburbium” held in August 2010 as a part of Summer school of Architecture in Bač. The workshop used the innovated method “Integrative urban design game” (Mrđenović, 2010) to experiment its possibilities to integrate different rationalities in participatory process, as well as to build soft infrastructure for place making. Also, the data acquired from the Report on the results of “Summer school of architecture in Bač 2010”, (Architecture, 2010) will provide a base for the conclusions.

In line with this in the first chapter I will discuss the integrative aspects of urban design and urban planning in situations when they should work together, as well as their relation to integrative protection. This discussion will be leaded by multilevel dimensions of the disciplines to produce sustainable, rich and liveable spaces. The second chapter will examine the “Integrative urban design game” regarding its power of integration. It will be analysed from the perspective of making linkages between urban design and urban planning using different methods and techniques form both disciplines. The type of the linkages that method can provide in the community are by my assumption in the relation to the level of community social capital. Conclusions should prove the previously presented hypothesis.

### 3 URBAN DESIGN AND URBAN PLANNING: INTEGRATIVE DIMENSIONS?

#### 3.1 Overlapping dimensions

The discussion between urban design and urban planning is related to favoured urban paradigm in specific socio-economic context. Therefore, both disciplines can be practiced as blue prints, achieving expected results in top-down instructive process of policy decision making. This paradigm is usually seen as rational -

positivistic one where hierarchy of planning system is deterministic and strict. On the other hand, the disciplines could be practiced as iterative and integrative processes of achieving mutual consensus among relevant stakeholders. These processes are practiced in collaborative and sustainable paradigm. Sustainability evaluates urban design and planning solutions by the quality of process, regarding the level and type of participation. These I would say antipode positions of urban design and urban planning in different paradigms mostly make assumption and opinion that urban planning and urban design have strict boundaries. I believe that these boundaries are rather dashed than solid.

Therefore, the point that I stand for is the one where urban design is seen as multidimensional process of subjective-imaginative, communicative-creative, interdisciplinary and technical activities (Madanipour, 1996). Also, urban planning seen as a process in contrast with blue-print planning has its communicative-creative, interdisciplinary and technical dimension (Healey, 1997). The subjective-imaginative and creative dimension of urban design is powerful integrative force regarding different kinds of integration. As it is presented the most of the process of urban design and urban planning are overlapping. Therefore, urban design is also seen as decision making process that goes through the phases of strategic planning. This dimension equalizes the discipline to urban planning. Most would ask: So, what is the difference between urban design and urban planning? I would answer the imagination of urban designers. And this is crucial for making quality of places nevertheless the theory in which we explore and practice urban design and planning.

I would say that urban design and urban planning are overlapping in all dimensions except subjective-imaginative (Figure 1). This dimension is essential for the process of quality place making in sustainable regeneration. According to the principles of New Urbanism these qualities are: "...neighbourhoods should be diverse in use and population; communities should be designed for the pedestrian and transit as well as the car; cities and towns should be shaped by physically defined and universally accessible public spaces and community institutions; urban places should be framed by architecture and landscape design that celebrate local history, climate, ecology, and building practice..." (CNU, 1996).

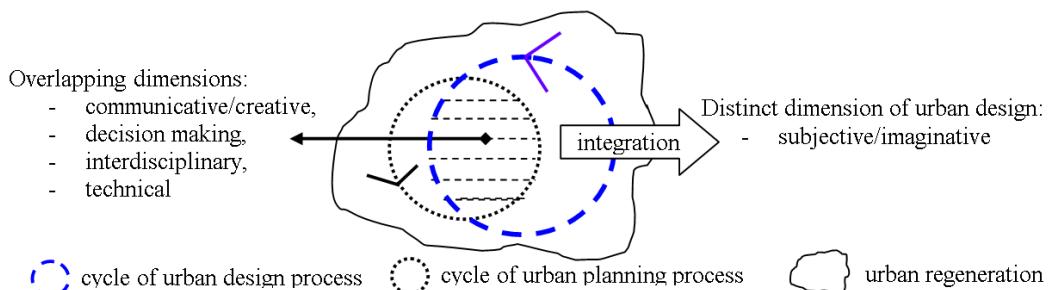


Figure 1: Overlapping and distinct dimension of urban design and urban planning in the process of urban regeneration

By my opinion these qualities are achieved in the overlapping areas, leaded by imagination of urban designers. According to Landry, Harvey, Jacobs, Dovey the imagination of urban designers is crucial for quality place making, integration and rationalization of different ideas and creativities in wide participation process practicing Dovey's "power-to" rather then "power-over" in the creative milieu for open communication(Landry, 2005) (Jacobs, 1992) (Dovey, 1999). This integration leads to Harvey's "making sense together" for Habermas's communicative action (Harvey, 2007) (Habermas, 1984).

### 3.2 Integrative urban design and planning regarding protection

As it is said urban design and urban planning should work together in order to achieve quality of place making in urban regeneration. The integrative dimension lies in urban design, particularly in the imagination of urban designers as artisans. By my opinion all the other dimensions have "corrective" role in rationalization of urban designers' imagination and social creativity. Therefore, urban design seen as a process plays an integrative role in urban regeneration, as well as between two disciplines (Mrdenović, Integrative Urban Design in Regeneration - Principles for Achieving Sustainable Places, 2011) (Mrdenović, Urban Design and Urban Planning in Global Positioning of Local Identities, 2011) (Mrdenović, Urbana regeenracija zaštićenih ambijentalnih celina u kontekstu održivog razvoja - Podgrade Tvrđave Bač / Urban regeneration of protected ambients in the context of sustainable development - Bač Fortress Suburbium, 2011). From this point after I will look on two disciplines as "fused /united" (Figure 2) regarding

achieving betterment of urban regeneration. Also, I will call them using term Integrative urban design. This will be especially important for the discussion of their role in urban regeneration of protected urban ambients. The attribute ‘protected’ will lead discussion among “fusioned disciplines” and integrative protection.

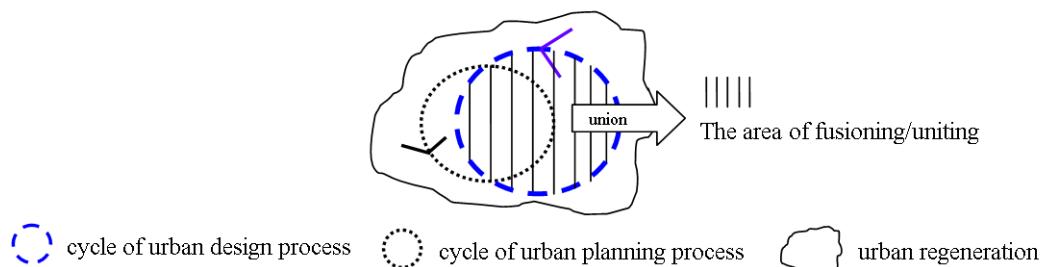


Figure 2: The area of “fusioned/united” disciplines of urban design and urban planning creating the process of Integrative urban design

Integrative protection as a discipline is in line with international documents on UN, EU and ICOMOS level that seeks to “bring life” into protected urban areas according to the principles of sustainability (UNESCO, 2005), (ICOMOS, The Stockholm declaration, 1998) (ICOMOS, The Nara document on authenticity, 1994) (ICOMOS, DECLARATION OF TLAXCALA, 1982) (ICOMOS, Resolutions of the Symposium on the introduction of contemporary architecture into ancient groups of buildings, 1972)(EU, 1996). This means integrative protection, also integrates different sectors of sustainability: economy, society, environment and institutions through encouraging public participation to be active in the promotion of cultural heritage in line with contemporary concept of cultural tourism (Dojčinović 2005). This kind of integration leads to promotion and protection of non-renewable resource like cultural-historic heritage. This process also leads to social cohesion among local people, who brings life into physical structure, and who are carriers of social and knowledge of past times. This is essential for holistic approach between past, present and future and our responsibility to preserve past and present cultural practice for future generations (Figure 3).

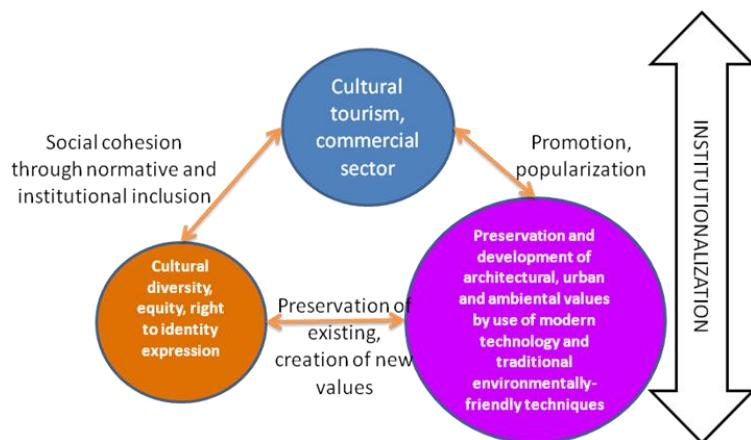


Figure 3: The model of sustainable development for the regeneration of protected urban areas (Mrđenović, Urbana regeenracija zaštićenih ambijentalnih celina u kontekstu održivog razvoja - Podgrade Tvrđave Bač / Urban regeneration of protected ambients in the context of sustainable development - Bač Fortress Suburbium 2011)

This holistic interpretation of cultural goods is the best described in Stockholm declaration: “These rights assume the need to recognize, appreciate and maintain heritage, and to improve and respect a framework for action. They assume appropriate development strategies and an equitable partnership between society, the private sector and individuals to harmonize interests affecting cultural heritage, and to reconcile preservation with development.” (ICOMOS, The Stockholm declaration, 1998) . According to the previously discusses I rise a question: What is the role of the united urban planning and urban design (integrative urban design) in development of protected urban areas if integrative protection already covers it?

By my opinion the role is in Lefebvre’s “spatial reproduction” (Lefebvre, 1991) of “social and knowledge of past and present times” creating place that brings contemporary life into past structures, interpreting past activities and enabling them into space. This ”place making thing” is crucial for the pivotal role of “united disciplines” in protected ambients, as I claim for “new universality” in “golden unity” for “colourful

fragments" (Mrđenović, Urban Design and Urban Planning in Global Positioning of Local Identities, 2011). Here, integrative protection has a corrective, rational, role regarding what should or should not happen in the place. In line with this, the process of creating the place should be leaded by integrative urban design. According to Amsterdam Declaration: "...conservation calls for artists and highly-qualified craftsmen whose talents and know-how have to be kept alive and passed on." (EU, European Charter of the Architectural Heritage, 1975). It seems like integrative protection and integrative urban design are in conflict, both creating liveable places in protected ambients. In further discussion I will make these fuzzy issues more clear regarding the process. Figure 4 gives more clarity to this fuzziness.

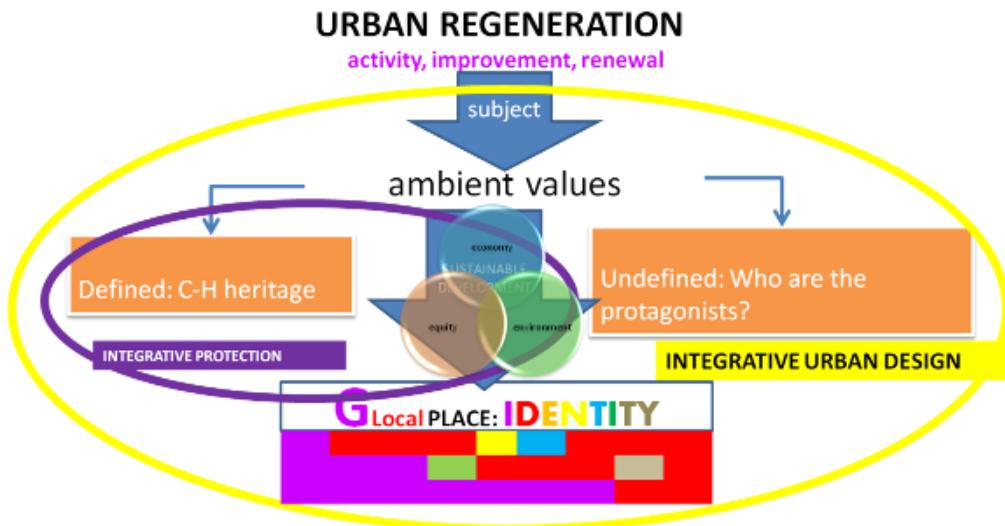


Figure 4: The relation among urban regeneration, urban design and integrated protection (Mrđenović, Urbana regeenracija zaštićenih ambijentalnih celina u kontekstu održivog razvoja - Podgrade Tvrđave Bač / Urban regeneration of protected ambients in the context of sustainable development - Bač Fortress Suburbium 2011)

This question is related to the favoured urban paradigm in the process of urban regeneration. The need for protection calls for rational and positivistic approach, when experts put standards and assure their implementation; while collaborative approach assure sustainability of protected urban ambients, creating "liveable places" that carry past tradition, urban forms, morphology and contemporary ones oriented towards future development fitting into wider plans and policies. According to Gospodini: "...it can be said that urban space morphology and urban design are gradually becoming significant parameters or resources in urban tourism development." (Gospodini, 2001). Therefore, I believe that the type of the urban regeneration process (more rational or collaborative) as well as used methods in the process will make clearer picture on the discipline that should have a leading role in the specific phase of the urban regeneration process.

## 4 INTEGRATIVE URBAN DESIGN GAME: THE UNITY POWER

### 4.1 New method for integration

I will now introduce the "Integrative urban design game" (Mrđenović, 2010) as a new method firstly used in the workshop: "Participative approach in urban design of public spaces - Bač Fortress Suburbium" (Mrđenović, Workshop: Participative approach in urban design of public spaces - Bač Fortress Suburbium / Radionica: Participativni pristup u oblikovanju javnog prostora - Podgraje tvrdave Bač, 2010). The workshop was a part of "Summer school of Architecture in Bač 2010" with a mission to create Healey's "soft infrastructure" (Healey, 1997) through educational process on sustainable urban regeneration and integrative protection among local and regional stakeholders. The method went through different phases of "fusioned disciplines" using various methods and techniques seeking to integrate them creating "new golden unity" (Mrđenović, Urban Design and Urban Planning in Global Positioning of Local Identities, 2011) for Habermas's "communicative consensus" (Habermas, 1984), and Landry's "creative milieu" (Landry, 2005) towards achieving quality of future public spaces.

Related to the discussion in the previous chapter the method integrates different types of methods and techniques supporting wide range of purposes in the multidimensional process of sustainable urban regeneration. In general my criteria for systematization of the methods are based on their support in:

- Phase of integrative urban design,
- Level collaborativeness,
- Type of rationality.



Figure 5: Gradual - incremental creation of the mimicry model of future public space of Bač Fortress Suburbium as a result of Integrative urban design game (Mrđenović, Workshop: Participative approach in urban design of public spaces - Bač Fortress Suburbium / Radionica: Participativni pristup u oblikovanju javnog prostora - Podgrade tvrđave Bač, 2010)

Regarding this I would say that integrative urban design and integrative protection use different methods according to the criteria. The former uses both rational and collaborative in all phases of the process, while the latter uses more rational and expert ones due to its corrective and normative role in the process of promotion and protection of built cultural-historic heritage.

Here I would point out again the role of integrative urban design (fused disciplines) in this process, which is assuring liveable places with specific glocal identity making them recognizable on global map. On the other hand, integrative protection should prevent the ‘dark side’ of globalization that is by Nara document characterized as homogenization of cultural expressions. “In a world that is increasingly subject to the forces of globalization and homogenization, and in a world in which the search for cultural identity is sometimes pursued through aggressive nationalism and the suppression of the cultures of minorities, the essential contribution made by the consideration of authenticity in conservation practice is to clarify and illuminate the collective memory of humanity.” (ICOMOS, The Nara document on authenticity, 1994) Therefore, the Integrative urban design game is in line with the one of the document’s suggestion to develop innovative methods and processes that will treat cultural heritage in integrative manner according to local context. (ICOMOS, The Nara document on authenticity, 1994).

“Integrative urban design game” seeks to play among various interests and rationalities in fair manner using Habermas’s “communicative ethics” (Habermas, 1984). In that play it integrates different processes of urban design, such as the subjective-expressive, social-creative, social-communicative, technical-rational, and interdisciplinary. The aim of this method is to develop different types of rationality in wide community participation process towards achieving the quality of place using a creative game in the visualization of space. The method applied on Bač Fortress Suburbium is rationalized in the key segments of the process, using argumentative and expert methods. In this way, it created ‘future image’ of the place through its spatial visualization, using three-dimensional and two-dimensional presentations, drafts, drawings and text, different expert methods of polling, interviewing, context analyses, morphological analyses, as well as collaborative methods that support argumentation by use of different diagrams such as problem tree and tree of aims and measures (Figure 5).

The essence of “Integrative urban design game” is to establish a relation between different types of rationality, as well as between the phases of the urban regeneration process. As a method, it implies a continual procedure in the development of social creativity, as well as its rationalization. In the light of creating the conditions for communicative action in the regeneration processes and unity of reality fragments, the method integrates the advantages and disadvantages of the two most present paradigms in urban decision-making, the rational-comprehensive and collaborative; changing the role of urban design in the integrative processes. Therefore, in the situations of urban regeneration of protected urban ambients the method is appropriate for shaping the places in overlapping area of urban design, urban planning and integrative protection (see Figure 1) using mimicry three-dimensional model of present, and future place bringing into light the richness of cultural diversity of past, present and future times through wide participation. This mimicry model is also a polygon for integration of different types of appropriate methods, as well as phases of the process (Figure 5).

## 4.2 The power/acceptance of the method

In this chapter I will argue the method regarding its power to integrate different rationalities, values, cultural practices and interests into coherent whole, through its acceptance and level of participation among relevant stakeholders on local and regional level. The basic data will be acquired through analysis of the workshop as a case study, as well as on the Report on the results of “Summer school of architecture in Bač 2010”, consigned to the Ministry of education and science in 2010, by University of Belgrade – Faculty of Architecture (Architecture, 2010). It is important to emphasise that Municipality of Bač is national, multiethnic and multicultural community.<sup>1</sup> According to this fact In the workshop participated relevant stakeholders on regional and local level representing cultural diversity:

- “Province Institute of Cultural Monument Protection”,
- “Directorate for Urban Construction of Bač Municipality”,
- “Tourist Organization of Bač municipality”,

<sup>1</sup> According to the records of Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia in Bač municipality live: 47.33% Serbs, 0.35% Montenegrians, 5.02% Yugoslavs, 0.04% Albanians, 0.02% Bosniaks, 0.01% Bulgarians, 0.06% Bunjevci, 6.18% Hungarians, 0.07% Macedonians, 1.35% Muslims, 0.55% Germans, 1.98% Roma, 3.55% Romanians, 0.04% Russians, 0.06% Rusyns, 20.02% Slovacs, 0.05% Slovenians, 0.57% Ucrainians, 8.65% Croats, 0.83% Czechs, 3.27% uncomited. (RGZ, 2011)

- "Fund Centuries of Bač",
- "Radio Bačka" and
- Local population of Bač Suburbium.

The process of "Integrative urban design game" was created regarding following phases: (1) Preparation of the participative procedure, (2) Defining the desired future – visioning, (3) Analysis of problems and potentials, (4) Defining strategic objectives and measures for public space improvement, (5) Testing the place making solutions through mimicry model.

In the first phase the interviews and questionnaires for local people and relevant stakeholders were done as an expert method giving relevant inputs for further process cycle. The questions were structured regarding:

- The present usage of public space by local people: level, way and regime;
- The wishes and ideas of future usage of public space by local people: spaces for socialization, interaction among cultures, festivals;
- The memories on how the public space was used in past time;
- The existing and future plans and projects for the Suburbium regarding its protection and development: potentialities and obstacles.

These preparatory activities included field inventory like sketching, urban morphology analysis, photographing, measuring. The preparation phase gave a solid grounding for the workshop.

The workshop was held in Bač Fortress Suburbium and was designed as one and a half day training using "Integrative urban design game" as a method for consensus building through art and design. Therefore, the workshop had also, the educational aim. This leaded towards building capacity of local community on sustainable urban regeneration of protected urban ambients. The other phases of the process were done with high level of participation by all relevant stakeholders (see Figure 5) where the author of the method facilitated the process by encouraging creativity, argumentative discussion, making conclusions using text, slogans, images, sketches, 3D model and other types of methods and techniques. Also, students from Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade, students participants of "Summer school of Architecture in Bač 2010." enabled Landry's creative milieu through generating ideas and enabling their flow. In that manner the "Integrative urban design game" integrated different types of methods as well as different ideas, values, interest into "golden unity" of urban design of mimicry model of future public place (see Figure 5).

Also, the results generated by the method are and will be incorporated in future documents, plans and projects regarding Bač Fortress Suburbium. According to the Report on the results of "Summer school of architecture in Bač 2010" (Architecture, 2010), the results will be used mostly by the "Province Institute of Cultural Monument Protection", "Directorate for Urban Construction of Bač Municipality", "Tourist Organization of Bač municipality", "Radio Bačka" in their future activities and programs regarding the sustainable urban regeneration of the Suburbium and its promotion towards cultural tourism. Therefore, I can conclude that the method had powerful force regarding the integration of multicultural values, interests and ideas among stakeholders form public and civil sector ("Fund Centuries of Bač" has a role of financing activities and it is inside local authority), as well as among vertical integration of different institutional jurisdictions. Also, it integrated various types of methods and techniques that were tailored made according to specific socio-cultural and urban context. In line with this I can conclude that the method is more open than strict, giving a skeleton for adopting it to various urban contexts in the process of sustainable urban regeneration.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The discussion went through presentation of different options regarding fuzziness among disciplines of urban design, urban planning and integrative protection in sustainable urban regeneration. This foggy issue leaded towards further examination of overlapping dimensions among disciplines, their union and dashed boundaries. I conclude that urban design, seen as multidimensional process with subjective-imaginative dimension, has a leading role in place making and "bringing life" into protected urban ambients, making them liveable places. This process is supported by other dimensions regarding sustainable paradigm where urban design and urban planning are overlapping: communicative-collaborative, social-creative, decision

making-integrative, technical-positivistic. This overlapping area I call integrative urban design (Mrđenović, 2011). In line with this integrative protection has a “corrective role“ due to protection of non-renewable resources such a built cultural-historical heritage is. Therefore, the positivistic rationality in this type of urban regeneration should come from integrative protection, while integrative urban design should provide communicative consensus among different rationalities, values, cultural practices and interest bringing them into “golden unity“.

Also, the “Integrative urban design game“ as an innovative method (Mrđenović, 2010) integrates different types of methods and techniques that varies according to the phase of the process, type of rationality and level of collaborativness they support. The method uses mimicry three-dimensional model/skeleton of present place as a polygon for wide participation and creating creative milieu for communicative action. Therefore, the “skeleton“ is incrementally built by relevant stakeholders integrating their values using different expert, collaborative, argumentative, creative methods and techniques like: text, drawings, slogans, sketches, photographs, problem tree, objective tree; appropriate for each phase of the process. The analysis of the case and the report showed that the method was highly accepted among stakeholders as they plan to use its results in future. Also, the method used training as an instrument for building capacity and developing social capital in local community through interactive education. Finally, the method enabled creating liveable ambients through developing social capital, “soft infrastructure“ and creating a framework for future plans and actions regarding protection and promotion by stakeholders from public sector on local and regional level.

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