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Evidence-Based Participatory Urban Practices



The presentation is part of the evaluation procedure for promotion to the rank of Professor.

Abstract

The increasing complexity of urban environments underscores the need for more adaptive, data-informed, and methodologically rigorous planning processes. Evidence-Based Design and Planning (EBDP) offers a promising response by embedding empirical evidence as a continuous and iterative component of design and planning, grounded in the principle that decisions should rely on verifiable knowledge and remain open to refinement. In this sense, EBDP provides a robust analytical basis for informed and accountable planning decisions. Despite its potential, the operationalisation of EBDP varies widely across planning contexts. Its effectiveness depends not only on methodological robustness but also on data availability, technical capacity, institutional cultures, and -critically- its ability to engage with local contexts and lived experience. Against this background, this presentation interrogates how EBDP can be operationalised as a context-sensitive process that meaningfully incorporates stakeholder and citizen participation. It proposes a methodological framework that advances Evidence-Based Participatory Urban Practices, understood as iterative processes through which analytical evidence and experiential knowledge are jointly produced, validated, and translated into spatial action. The framework operationalises EBDP as a participatory workflow in which spatial analysis is developed, discussed, and iteratively refined in dialogue with stakeholders, transforming analytical outputs into shared references for deliberation and scenario evaluation. Drawing on applied research case studies in Cyprus, the presentation illustrates how this approach strengthens the relevance, legitimacy, and actionability of spatial evidence, contributing to more transparent and informed urban decision-making.

About the speaker

Associate Professor at the Department of Architecture at UCY, Leader of the Society and Urban Form (SURF) research lab and co-coordinator of the MA Design for Social Innovation. Research interests aim to address the inherently complex relationship between spatial configuration and social phenomena, with a focus on evidence-based participatory urban design, urban inclusion and accessibility to public space, and the ways the above are channeled to inform a transdisciplinary architectural pedagogy. Underpinning research work is a commitment to societal impact and a collaborative approach aiming to address urban challenges in close collaboration with society, stakeholders, government bodies, and policymakers. Among her works is the co-edited book *Evidence-Based Urban Design and Planning-Principles, Practices, and Prospects*, (Forthcoming, Springer), several book chapters and scholarly articles in the Journal of Urban History, the Journal of Urban Design, the Buildings & Cities journal and Archnet-IJAR: International Journal of Architectural Research. She has chaired international conferences such as Space Syntax, the International Seminar on Urban Form (ISUF) and the European Network of Housing Research (ENHR). She has coordinated research projects including the Horizon Europe “Twinning Towards Research Excellence in Evidence-Based Planning and Urban Design”, the Erasmus+ KA2 “Education in Living Labs: Participatory Skills for Sustainable Urban Governance” and “Knowledge Alliance for Evidence-based Urban Practices” and has participated as coordinator of the UCY team in several others including the Marie Curie ITN Horizon 2020 “RE-DWELL: Delivering affordable and sustainable housing in Europe”.

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