

A HISTORICAL VIEW ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUSTAINABLE CITY

Keywords: theory of urban design; sustainability; history of sustainability
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Section: Main session
Period: Modern

Cities play a definitive crucial role in the on-going discourse on sustainability, due to the fact that more than half of the world's population is living in urban agglomerations, causing a concomitant concentration of energy use and refuse production. However, in spite of its current urgency, the ideal of a sustainable city is not a new concept; it has a long history built on a variety of ideas on the improvement of the urban environment, which have been rethought and revised over the course of the last century. In fact, many of the considerations on the improvement of the urban environment that mark today's ideas on sustainable urban design can already be found in the urban development tracts and political, philosophical and social reform texts in medical, economic or political treatises of past centuries. Our interest in environmental thinking is placed within a historical frame and intends to be a critical analysis, whose innovativeness and uniqueness lies in the text-related research of the theoretical urban design discourse. The arguments of today's sustainability debate, namely, the permanence of structure, stability of the substance, and social balance, as well as providing construction material, ground sealing, water supply, drainage, ventilation, hygiene, garbage removal, traffic, greening, and land and energy needs will be the focuses of this session. This approach should make it possible to sketch out a comprehensive, problem-oriented presentation of the development of a sustainable urban design.

The aim of the session is to find answers to questions such as: which epochs are crucial for these debates, which are the relevant topics in specific periods, and which are the theoretical approaches to these problems. Another relevant aspect is the analysis of the shift of the main focal points and the change in terms, concepts and solutions. Based on such a chronology, the influence of new scientific and technical knowledge, as well as the significance of innovative thinking, can show the early history of the place of sustainability in urban design. The subject of the proposed session is the history of thinking about sustainability in urban design. The geographical and chronological scope of the research covers Europe and the United States of America within a time frame of three centuries, beginning with the Enlightenment. These ideas have had a definitive effect on today's image of sustainable urban design. Without the knowledge of their development and formulation, i.e. without historical awareness and experience, the current discussion would not really be understandable or assessable, i.e. sustainable.