

## Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Waiting for the car-age. Walkability in Suzhou Industrial Park, China

- **Format:**

Written paper / Presentation in-person

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- **Abstract (300 words):**

The developments of the super-fast massive urbanization in China are always planned for the Chinese car-age, sustained by the national leadership, which plans to solve the pollution problems by allowing only electric vehicles in the coming years. The development designed for cars, though, not only causes pollution, but strongly influences everyday behaviour and community practices and therefore individual and public health.

The car ownership in China involves a minority of families (less than one third than that in Europe) and is more a status symbol than an essential mean of transport, but if the Chinese economy continues to be strong and the government does not restrain car ownership everyday transit options will be shifting more and more from pedestrian and bicycle oriented modes to car-oriented ones.

Suzhou Industrial Park, 苏州工业园区, SIP, a New Town of 7000 ha in Suzhou metropolitan area, was planned in 1994 for the car-age to be fully realized. The master plan, in fact, is based on a road grid of minimum 400 m, creating super-blocks for compounds organized in neighborhoods units, each served by a community center, distributed every 800-1500 m. The master plan established an abaco of roads, from the widest 56 m to the smallest 12 m, meant to be pedestrian friendly: the road section includes almost always a sidewalk, a lane for bikes and a green strip between them and the carriageway.

This neighborhood pattern proves to be contradictory regarding the walkability and the bike-ability: the compounds are very large (900 m x 600 m is not an unusual dimension) and not permeable and the land use zoning is in mono-functional sectors. In addition some neighborhoods in SIP seem to be "waiting for traffic", so their road system is oversized and could be re-thought as it is the main public space resource of the town.

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Paola Pellegrini, PhD in Urbanistica at Università di Architettura di Venezia, IT, is Lecturer in Urban Design at Xi'an Jiaotong - Liverpool University, Suzhou, PR China.

Previously she was Visiting Associate in Urban planning and Design at Graduate School of Design, Harvard, and Lecturer at Politecnico di Milano, IT, and at Università di Architettura di Venezia, IT.

Paola Pellegrini is author of various essays and researches, recently about urban heritage in declining historical centers of medium-sized cities. In the past she was Research Associate under the supervision of prof. Bernardo Secchi at IUAV, focusing on city planning design tools – the "scenario construction" both as a cognitive practice and proper urban plan, new concepts of infrastructure for water and mobility design in sprawling metropolitan areas.

Paola Pellegrini has always combined academic research and professional practice; she was involved in the Structural plan of Antwerp, in the "Le grand pari de l'agglomération parisienne, marché de recherche et développement pour l'avenir du Paris métropolitain", in the Masterplan of Kodrina, the Municipality of Prishtina, Kosovo.

Recently she was both senior designer and manager of some European Projects, related to the development of territories with transport infrastructures and cultural heritage.