CITIES IN A CHANGING WORLD:
QUESTIONS OF CULTURE, CLIMATE AND DESIGN

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Changing the City, Keeping the Context

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• Abstract (300 words):

It is increasingly perceptible a startling enlargement on the planetary growth of urban populations. U.N. experts agree that planet Earth already has more than fifty-five percent of its inhabitants embodied by urbanites, that is, by humans who live in urban environments. They say we have reached an anthropocene period, in which billions of urban people aim at attaining harmonious conviviality through the use of urban places. It is interesting to register that the preferred locus for urban places is typically cities, so this will necessarily imply the need for changes in urban design and planning in contemporary cities.

Changes, in cities, can usually involve two experiences, mainly by addressing two simple actions: inventing and reinventing places. Recent literature in urbanism is prodigal in presenting practical examples of the two circumstances, investigating them as ‘placemaking’, in the first case, and ‘resilience’ of disused spaces, in the second. In my personal writings I have observed both thoughts, reviewing them under two of their consequential patterns of spatial configurations: punctuated inventions and punctuated resiliencies. To illustrate the idea, it seems sufficient to simply refer to well-known urban-architectural symbols, such as Disneyland-Orlando or Pudong-Shanghai, in the first case;
and to NY-High Line or London-Tate Modern, in the second. All cases denote crucial morphological outcomes for contemporary urban design, one implying additional fragments to the urban fabric, but avoiding unwanted occupation of virgin peripheral non-urbanised land by a strict control of ‘planned’ sprawl; and other, by reusing urban land turned vacant by obsolete uses, reintegrating it back to the consolidated urban context as a new fragment. Now, this deserve further investigation, because it involves sustainability and resilience, two of the factors encouraged to be examined in the papers for this conference. The central assumptions of the paper will investigate such innovations, observing them both in global cities (such as London) and on the global south (such as Porto Alegre, south Brazil).

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

Professor of Urbanism at UFRGS (Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul), where he also served as Dean of the Faculty of Architecture; Received a Ph.D. in Architecture (UFRGS); an M.Phil. in Urban Design and Regional Planning (Edinburgh University); attended graduate studies at University College London. Published “Rethinking the Meaning of Place” (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); “Lugares de Urbanidade” (Brazil, 2017); “A Percepção de lugar” (Brazil, 2007); chapters: “Redesigning Brownfields” in Del Rio, V. e al. (Eds.), Contemporary Urbanism in Brazil (University Press of Florida, USA); Consultant Editor for The Encyclopedia of the City (New York: Routledge, 2005). Co-Rapporteur in ISOCARP (International Society City and Regional Planners Conference, Europe). Received Gerd Albers Award (ISOCARP) and ENANPARQ Award for Best Article. Keynote Speaker in 8th International Conference Psychology and Health, Xiamen (China 2020). Now retired, serving as Professor at PG Program in Architecture (UFRGS).