УРБАНА ИНФРАСТРАУКТУРА ЗА ХИЉАДУ СТВАРИ. ПРОЈЕКТИ КОЛЕКТИВНОГ КАРАКТЕРА У ЈУЖНОЈ ГРАНАДИ

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Апстракт:

У садашњем социоекономском контексту, а посебно у градовима јужне Европе, један од основних циљева урбанистичког планирања јесте стварање јавног простора као колективног добра који квалификује, обликује и осмишљава урбане функције. У саставу „јавног" кључна је улога колективних објеката у граду. Рад предлаже и даје одређене базе које би могле помоћи при редефинисању и разумевању објеката јавног карактера у граду. Циљ је да се искорите препознате могућности као и инструменти за њихово правилно инсертовање у динамично урбано окружење, да се сачувају предности од сфере приватног, реактивирају вредности географије и хармонична очитавања која је наследио пејзаж. Све су то аргументи који су изложени и храњени пројектима и искуством планирања у граду Гранади. Они нуде прилагођавање самог значења пројекта и уводе могућност активнијих и корисних градских садржаја.

Кључне речи: урбана инфраструктура, колективне форме, пројекат, јавни простор, урбанизам

URBAN FACILITIES FOR A THOUSAND THINGS. COLLECTIVE FORM PROJECTS IN THE SOUTH OF GRANADA

Abstract:

In the current socio-economic context, and particularly in the cities of southern Europe, one of the essential objectives of urban planning is the production of a public space as a collective good that qualifies, shapes and makes sense of urban functions. In the composition of "the public" the role of collective urban facilities is key. A tour of certain bases that could help redefine the understanding of public urban facilities is proposed. The aims are to make the opportunities profitable and the instruments for its correct urban insertion flexible, to rescue benefits from the private sphere and to reactivate the geography and the harmonic readings that the landscape inherited. They are all arguments that are exposed and fed by the project and planning experiences in the city of Granada. They offer a readjustment of the meaning of the project and introduce the possibility of more useful urban facilities.

Keywords: urban facilities, collective forms, project, public space, urbanism

1. INTRODUCTION.

It can be said that the city is a conglomerate of urban structures that have developed throughout history. However from its origins, it is clear that it´s structure is far from being an illogical set of elements. If we observe the "urban sculptures" of the sculptor Miquel Navarro, we find a good repertoire of possible 'order between things". Relative position between two or more pieces, repetitions, series, oppositions, creations of concentration points, extensions of low density etc., are directly related to the logical operation of the territory in which the city is situated and in relation to each observational period. This also includes all the contemporary contradictions, where many different types of urban logic overlap and sometimes produce results that are very difficult to read.

By observing cities or ancient foundations, we can take as an example of one of the mechanisms or contrasted logics referred to above, the way in which Miletus (479 years b.c.) organized the structure of the public form in connection with its natural geography [1]. Thus, the reading of its urban map clearly reveals the richness of its concatenated open spaces, and the link that these sets established with the bays of the coastline. At that time, the main public buildings of the city contoured around this sort of "square of squares" that, logically, needed to be located here in order to facilitate possible relationships with other cities that had natural ports.

There are many good examples of cities, real or theoretically planned, that have aimed to suitably locate the main urban facilities by taking advantage of both the natural geography of the area and the geography configured by urban facts.. These cities take into account the shape of the territory and the requirements of the community while allowing an integrated reading of the settlement. We could emphasize here, the benefits of insisting on this approach. For instance, the central position and the way of solving the sloping location of the Garnier Industrial City (1904); the position of town halls, theaters and main libraries, on the tops of the small hills of the new towns designed by Alvar Aalto (Seinäjoki, 1952-1969, Bjoernholm, 1959, Rovaniemi, 1963-1965); the communication between the central roundabout for territorial access and internal main distribution of the city, and the civic center of Tapiola (1951) (that was designed around a semi-open and elevated central plaza. We could also include the interesting symbiosis between Plateau Beaubourg square and the Georges Pompidou Cultural Center in Paris (1977); the relationship between port and waterfront and the central facilities in Trieste, or the same naturality in the Praça do Comerço in Lisbon with respect to the Tejo River, as a city-river connection place, or others waterfront projects like the Alvaro Siza design for the Pendino neighborhood in Naples (1987) or the contest for a new interior port of Badalona (2003) by Manuel de Solá-Morales, etcetera.

In the current socio-economic context, and particularly in the cities of southern Europe, one of the essential objectives of urban planning is the production of a public space as a collective good that qualifies shapes and makes sense of urban functions. In the composition of "the public" the role of collective urban facilities is key. A tour of certain bases that could help redefine the understanding of public urban facilities is proposed. The aims being to make the opportunities profitable and the instruments for its correct urban insertion flexible, to rescue benefits from the private sphere and to reactivate the geography and the harmonic readings that the landscape inherited. They are all arguments that are exposed and fed by the project and planning experiences in the city of Granada.

They offer a readjustment of the meaning of the project and introduce the possibility of more useful urban facilities.
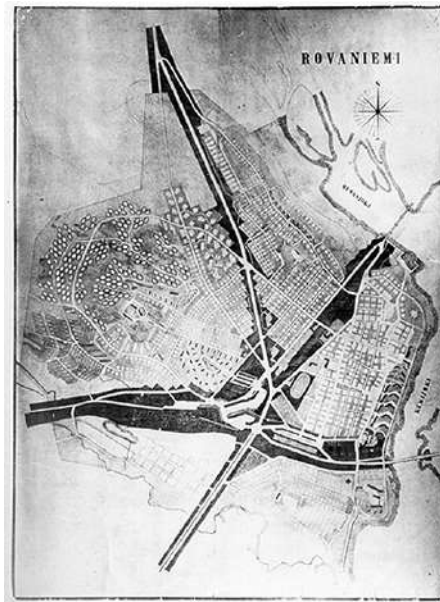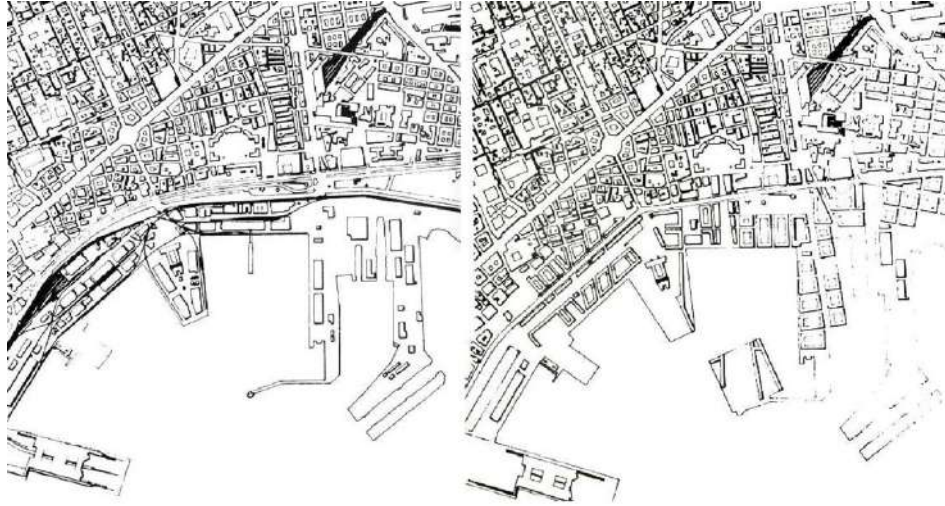

Figure 1. Master Plan for the reconstruction of Rovaniemi, in Finland. Alvar Aalto, 1945. Source: http://julkisetteokset.rovaniemi.fi/teokset/poronsarvikaava1.html

Figure 2. Plan of the city of Miletus, according to Gerkan. Source [2] in http://ciutatmilet.blogspot.com.es/2011/11/introduccio.html

Figure 3. Interventions in the Pendino neighborhood, in Naples, designed by Alvaro Siza in 1987: Previous state / State after the interventions. Source [3].
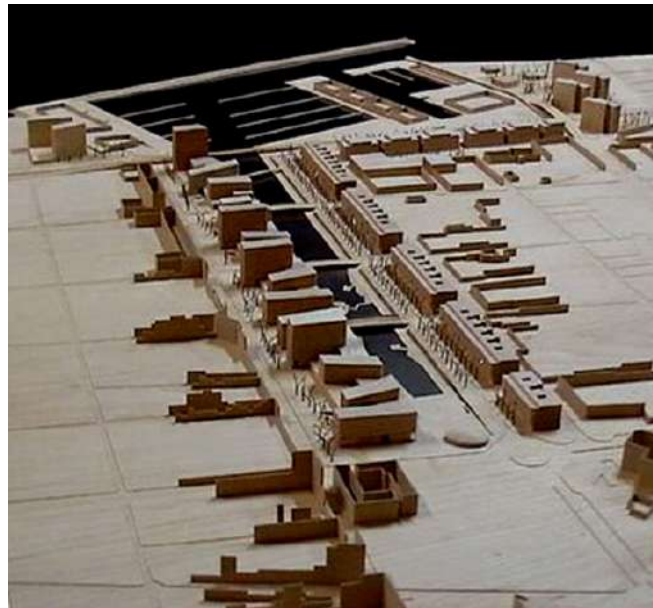
Figure 4. Model for the project of the new urban port of Badalona, by Manuel de Solá-Morales, 1989-2003. Source: http://arquiscopio.com/no-voy-a-hablar-de-la-obra-de-manuel/?lang=ru

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Figure 5. Urban project for the communication between territorial access and the Tapiola civic center (Alvar Aalto, 1951). Source: http://www.vaestoliitto70.fi/img-53.html

Figure 6. Hall Twon in Seinäjoki (Alvar Aalto, 1958). Source: http://larryspeck.com/2011/02/02/seinajoki-town-hall/

2. THE PERIPHERY: A TERRITORY FOR ARTICULATION.

The periphery is precisely an urban area that is usually created by the addition of individual projects. Each one of these urban projects has been positioned in a diverse way, producing a sum of different residential systems in terms of size, typology, sections of urbanization, etc. In southern Spanish cities, like in other Mediterranean countries (Portugal, France, Italy, Greece, the Balkan countries or central European countries, among others) a very close relationship was established between the city and its surrounding area.). If we look closely at them all, the first peripheral growth was superimposed on the agricultural tissue (or in coexistence with it). By contrast, this was not the case in the urban growth model represented by the kind of development known as "*los ensanches*", that was led by Barcelona' (Plan Cerdá, 1956), and also implemented in other cities such as Madrid (1860), San Sebastián (1864), Bilbao (1876), or Valencia (1884), among many others in Spain [4].

Taking into consideration a broader vision of the definition of 'periphery', we must overcome its semantic origin as a simple opposition to the idea of 'center' [5]. However we must go further and ensure the meaning corresponds to a concept of "exploding" urbanisation, coinciding with scales of functionality rather than territorial scales [6]. Nowadays the territory is defined as a polycentric, fragmented and discontinuous model, a confused city-region with a varied and changing distribution of functions between the Inner City and the Outer Cities [7]. These 'first peripheries' or 'peripheries of agrarian base' fit into this current definition, and are a feature of Southern European urban settlements.

However, despite the confusion inherent in the periphery as a type of territory -a kind of weakening of the urban space-, referential spaces where the citizen gradually finds his place in the city are contained in the current periphery. This can be seen clearly in the case study of the city of Granada presented in this article. It is more apparent in the Southern District of the city which is a conglomerate of mainly residential neighborhoods located to the south of the River Genil which crosses the city from East to West [8].

In order not to be confused by these consubstantial overlaps in the agricultural based peripheries, it is essential to understand how these areas were formed. In this sense, features of preexisting geography such as roadways and paths, plots, vegetation, crossroads, small agricultural buildings, etc, are preserved. These borders between the urban pieces are, in many cases, responses to the inherited urban traces. Urban interstices, more difficult to define than other spatial stereotypes, have become, paradoxically, the best places to encounter the intensity of the community [9]. This is why this set of internal borders plays a fundamental role in the collective form of these urban areas.

3. SHARED MANAGEMENT OF URBAN FACILITIES.

It is worthwhile carefully reading the reflections on urban facilities written by Portas, Domingues and Cabral [10] with respect to the contemporary territorial and urban situation. Many difficulties in implementing urban facilities are described. These difficulties also have an impact on the objectives that the administration can set when it comes to working with the city's facilities. The text confronts these widespread problems in our cities from different points of view:

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The diversity, the specialization, the location, the typology and the quality of the urban facilities, translate into new urban hierarchies and redefine the role of the agglomerations. These processes take place both in the geographical context of insertion of their territories and influential societies, at the national territory level, or at the most extensive level of internationalization.

At a time of deep transformation of the social state the great diversity of institutions are managed directly by the central state, by the municipalities, by mixed formulas, by associations, by private entities, etc. In this context, programs to promote new facilities, at least, have to tackle two different challenges:

Related to the "facilities system", it is necessary to overcome barriers set long ago -through guardianships, for example, or by over-standardizing operating modes - and take advantage of network economies that facilitate the design and operation of transversal projects […].

Nuno Portas, Álvaro Dominguez and Joao Cabral. Text excerpted from their paper "Critical dimensions of territorial politics", [10].

3.1. URBAN FACILITIES FOR MIXING

From the point of view of city behavior, urban facilities are basically for public use. We could say that such public use contains two urban dimensions: one that brings together, on the one hand, the generic characteristics corresponding to its quality for general urban use to serve the collective; and also, on the other hand, that quality which reflects the specific characteristics given by its detailed use, its range and spatial context.

From the sum of its generic quality as a public utility, on the one hand, and its spatial specificity, on the other, we can provide a series of key points to establish its relationship with the urban environment in which it is inserted. These points should be borne in mind for any initiative that tries to implement collective and public uses. They are the following:

1) Firstly, an urban facility -a school, a kindergarten, a library, a theater, a civic center, or hospital, a cinema- must be seen as meeting a social need but also as a project. This means that placing a facility like this in the city is an opportunity to build the city in a better way. It is also an opportunity to generally reflect on the urban condition of this settlement, considering the relationship between place and territory. It must, therefore, comply with superficial parameters. . However it must do more than that. It must be an example of a period of time and a kind of society, a way of understanding social and urban relationships. This means the capability of acquiring sensibilities: environment, accessibility, urban comfort, etc. Requests for new facilities arise during the planning of an urban sector which must adhere to the Master Plan. If they are not part of the master plan they may need to be integrated in a special planning phase as they have an impact on the corresponding projects in the public space related to them.

2) Secondly, facilities must be seen as "containers for urbanity", which means taking care of the possible accesses, areas of arrival and exchange for all kinds of functions and flows; the urban edges, the contact with the limits, the physical and visual relationship to the contours of the city, etc. It also means that they have the ability to connect the urban fabrics and develop the urban identity of the neighbourhood. An urban facility must respond to its

status as a remarkable entity for collective and social use with the capacity to build urban identity. This means taking advantage of the capacity to identify citizens with their environment, from both a geographical and a historical point of view, in relation to the landscape and the natural resources.

3) Thirdly, urban facilities, in general, can, and should, be seen as a powerful urban network. This means that they must be understood from their specific problems but also as a system of linked points. They must become a positive development of the urban condition, transmit information and energy from the public sphere, and introduce their collective functions in the city. In another sense, urban facilities need to incorporate the city in their own spaces. Working on network facilities involves molding each one of them according to its role in the network and recognizing the existence of isolated pieces. The networks are built and improved by interacting with the other city networks and the territory (the network of public spaces, mainly the natural or environmental network, the infrastructural network, the commercial network, etc).

In view of the comparative vision between two sports centers in the southern area of the city of Granada (see figures 7 to 10) we can find examples of the predisposition of the facility to serve many things at the same time. Through urban observation of the functioning of space and of human action, you can check that certain singular spaces can be recognized as "successful places" from a social point of view. A successful place is a space that works in favor of confluence, exchange and the plurality of relationships. In them, citizens are both identified with and represented by the environment, beyond opting for necessary services. From a disciplinary point of view, the project of urban facilities, to a greater or lesser extent, allows freedom of use and appropriation, since the facilities are configurations of urban architecture that contain elements of the past that are of cultural and historical value.

4. GRANADA AND IT´S GROWTH SOUTH.

In order to understand how Granada developed, it is necessary to know the circumstances that influenced its urban growth. Granada is an inland city, to the east of Andalusia in the south of Spain. It is an historic city in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, on the edge of an alluvial deposit space created by the River Genil valley. For many centuries, Granada remained physically concentrated in this area. It was not until the early twentieth century that the city was forced to grow and cross the rivers.

Three sectors can be recognized in the city: the central historical and cultural sector, a district to the north separated from the center by the Beiro River, and finally, the "Southern District" on the other side of the River Genil.

These lateral districts have been and continue to be the urban growth zones of the city. However, they were urbanised with very different urban typologies. In both sectors, although more intensely in the south, small rural and residential settlements have served as a basis for development in peripheral Granada, and have conditioned, as we will see, the general urban form of the city.

All of this shows a city which is very open and filled with possibilities at both peripheries (to the north and to the south). However, its urban center is very closed and univocal, conditioned by serious prejudices about its own urban form or its future urban evolution.

3.2. THE SOUTH AS AN URBAN STAGE.

The Southern District of Granada was planned urban development out from the city centre, before assuming the sprawl-type accelerated development that has shaped the metropolitan area in many other European cities.

This kind of 'historical periphery', undervalued during its early years, was at the time claimed as a powerful field of experimentation. The Urban periphery was considered to be the stage on which to develop contemporary urban life. It was defined as a space of hope, where there was affordable housing and spacious facilities [11].

The periphery also meant that the city went from being a place completely accessible on foot, to being a space that required other means of transport and new infrastructure in order to move around freely. It became a place with a significant increase in population, a place that needed to incorporate new roles, new uses, new scales and new urban types.
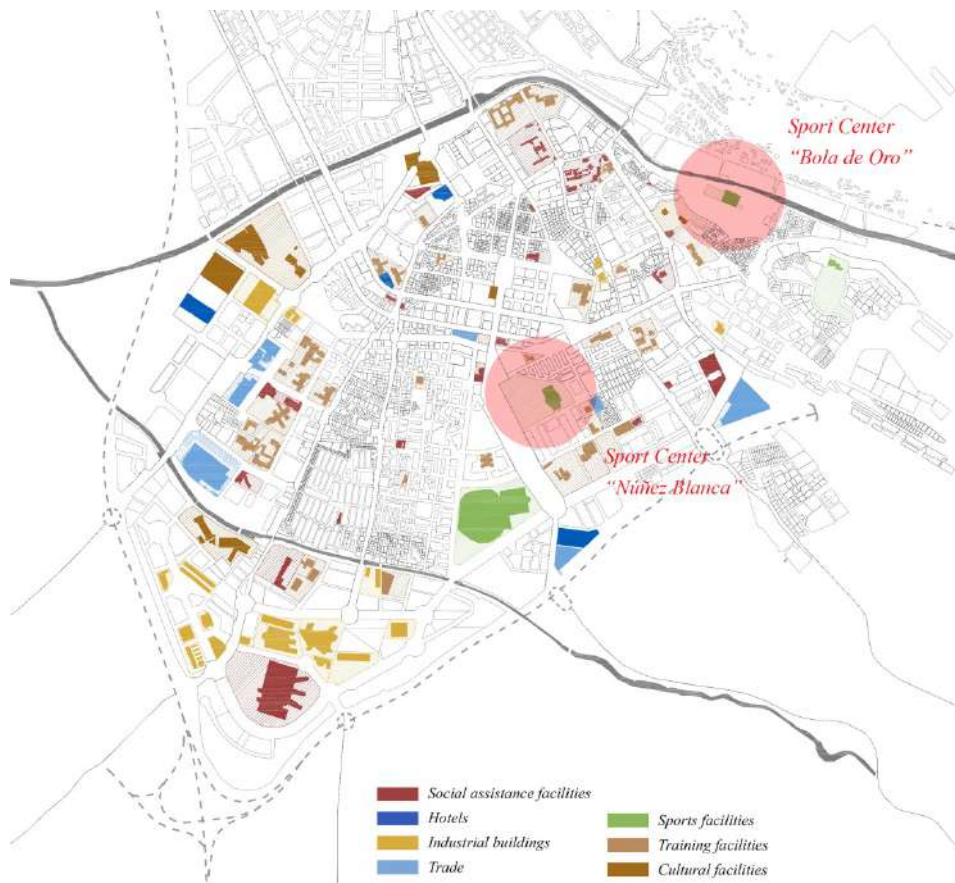

Figure 7. Urban facilities in the Southern District. Location of the two sport centers presented as case studies. Source: Own elaboration.

3.3. THE SOUTH AS AN ARTICULATION OF TERRITORIES.

Beyond a spatial area, this place on the left bank of the River Genil is a kind of city in itself. This type of city in Spain emerged mainly in a historical moment of urban growth that some cities experienced before others. This urban development implied a change in urban mentality where the new development was integrated "into the pre-existing city.

It was the beginning of an urban model where the landscape began to respond to more than one single urban logic. The territory was increasingly more difficult to read: an urban condition compounded by a fragmented landscape, the consequence of a sum of individual projects lacking the necessary cohesion.

Nowadays, the city spreads and disperses through the territory and the periphery acquires a central position. It thus becomes the main space for exchange between the metropolitan area and the historic center, while maintaining its role as a place in transformation.

5. TWO SPORTS CENTERS IN THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GRANADA.

Sometimes deficiencies in urban design can cause rigidity. This is the reason why, paradoxically, the absence of urbanization can facilitate the exchange between urban facilities and the city. In this manner, the citizen's activities can define the spaces around facilities. This arises more naturally in environments that lack definition. Based on this, we could think of our future projects as attempts to imitate the spontaneity with which many of these fragments of periphery have led to a better urban and social cohesion.

In Granada we have an urban area that is basically well-served. Since the arrival of democracy in Spain, four decades ago, and the strengthening of municipal power, municipalities have been claiming equal opportunities for all cities. At the same time, internally, there has been a "democratization" of the different districts of the cities themselves. We are referring here to the emergence of all kinds of facilities and "neighborhood centers", which have served to meet the demands of the inhabitants in each neighborhood.

In general the actions carried out by the local and regional governments are positive: distributing the urban services equally and responding in a balanced way to each area of a city. However, in some cases, when planning has not been accompanied by an integrated vision these actions have become paralyzing elements. In many instances, although the facilities are necessary, they are provided based on the need to meet a compulsory quota of public investment designated for an individual area rather than taking into account a strategic approach for the overall area. In the majority of cases, urban facilities do not take advantage of the spatial and urban potential. They are planned and designed without the required attention to the urban priorities or "key situations" of each context, some of them, opportunities and spaces conquered in past epochs: "*In equal measure to imagination and initiative, changing streets requires eternal vigilance, and hard-won gains must be defended.*" [12].

Figure 8. Ortho-photography of urban context of Sport Center "Bola de Oro". Source: Own elaboration from Google Maps.

Figure 9. Ortho-photography of urban context of Sport Center "Núñez Blanca". Source: Own elaboration from Google Maps.

4.1. ASSESSMENT OF TWO SPORTS CENTERS IN THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GRANADA FROM AN URBAN PERSPECTIVE.

Sports facilities have become catalysts for activities and collective meetings. They respond to the current social diversity by offering multiple sports activities for all age ranges and profiles of people. This intense activity generates constant comings and goings throughout the day every day of the week. The sports centers open almost all day and stimulate social dynamics not only through their different functions but through the different programs of activities that can be found in them. This is a constant process that generates flows and

needs in the environment and neighborhood. In order to meet these needs (In the case of municipal facilities) a lot of new services arise around them: cafeterias, sports shops, supermarkets, children's games, etc., which develop to meet needs and to take advantage of the collective dynamics that have arisen.

According to the above, the location of these facilities in terms of their plots and the configuration of the exterior space is a crucial factor in being able to develop the urban energy generated around the building and extend it to its urban environment. The combination of activities exponentially increases the interactions, as observed in these two cases described below. Both of them were part of the construction of a system of facilities in an urban area that needed to be developed. The improvement they brought to community life and the gradual increase of more complex community relationships would lead to the transformation of its environment.

The *Bola de Oro* Sports Center is located on the left bank of the Genil River, at the end of *Carretera de la Sierra*, a main street leading out of the city. It was planned on a closed flat space between the hills of the valley and the river itself. It was conceived as an isolated element, avoiding more general urban plans along the banks of the river that the urban planners of Granada tried to carry out a number of times in the 20th century.

Figure 10. General view of the Bola de Oro Sports Complex. Large equipped public space surrounds the sports center on its rear side. Source: Own elaboration.

It is evident that the different factors that influence this area such as neighborhood, riverside environment, leisure and pedestrian atmosphere as a corridor of public space have yet to be understood. In this area we continue playing cat and mouse, without noticing the relevance of improving the quality of space. The conflicts between the different local governments are obvious. Each one of them has wanted to make too many decisions in too short a time frame. In this manner they have placed conditions on the future options, limiting the possibilities of a more general understanding of the banks of the Genil River. The residential buildings placed around it should have been studied and facilities including the sports center should have been better represented and given a more influential role in the organizing of this place.

For its part, the *Núñez Blanca* sports center is located to the right of the old *Carretera de la Zubia* and provides facilities for a series of very dense residential units from different periods of the second part of the 20th century. It is, however, a unique venue that internally distributes the space between an athletic track, open courts, and the central building that

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includes multi-sports courts and indoor pools.

This sports center was developed as a singular project and has all its bordering spaces well organised. To the north it allowed for the consolidation of a pedestrian axis that provides access to all the small streets of one of the first social housing developments in the south, the *Mirasierra* neighborhood of the early 70's. To the east, it contains a small square that connects three different streets, all of them the main pathways of three small urban fabrics of different times. The square also connects to the entrance and car park of the biggest supermarket in the area. Finally, access to the sports center is through a wide sidewalk, a kind of public space which provides great freedom of movement and is located next to the athletics track, which is at a lower level and can be observed to the left of the entrance.

Figure 11. Access Square the Núñez Blanca sports center, El Zaidín neighborhood.
Source: Own elaboration.

Here we have a project strategically designed to take up a territory and resolve its own limitations. The urban design tries to take advantage of the difficulties to make the implementation of the facility an exercise in conciliation. In this way, the sense of perspective of the pedestrian street is recovered; the relationship between the main access and the squares of dense neighborhood to the east is also defined in a proper way. Finally, the representative public function of the urban facility is achieved and feeds the small rear square and the landscape around it.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The urban plan and urban design of the facilities in a historical periphery like the one that we have explored in Granada could lead to, for example, the renovation of first generation commercial structures; the recovery of basic agricultural roads in the foundation of the urban district; the revitalization of axes of geography; or the revision of foundational urban plots, among other possibilities. These should be the fields of action for urban projects composed of a collective strategy that creates better balance between urban fabrics. In this sense, the reflection on urban facilities goes through an accurate selection of investments, both in terms of effort and capital. The principle aim should be the strengthening of the relationship between urban form and geography. Secondly, it is fundamental to give the key role to certain urban and territorial corners within the city that can act as guides for the urbanization of other neighborhoods in the near future.

We need to present urban plans and projects on neighborhood participation that can be
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used to formulate a good set of adequate questions. This would allow a process of reflection on the relationship between the social, political and economic needs of the neighborhoods and cities to start. It would be an opportunity to face new and old challenges. It would be a chance to reveal central places and key elements of urban design that are often hidden under layers and layers of bureaucratic urbanism, but that in essence have been demanding to be seen for a long time.

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