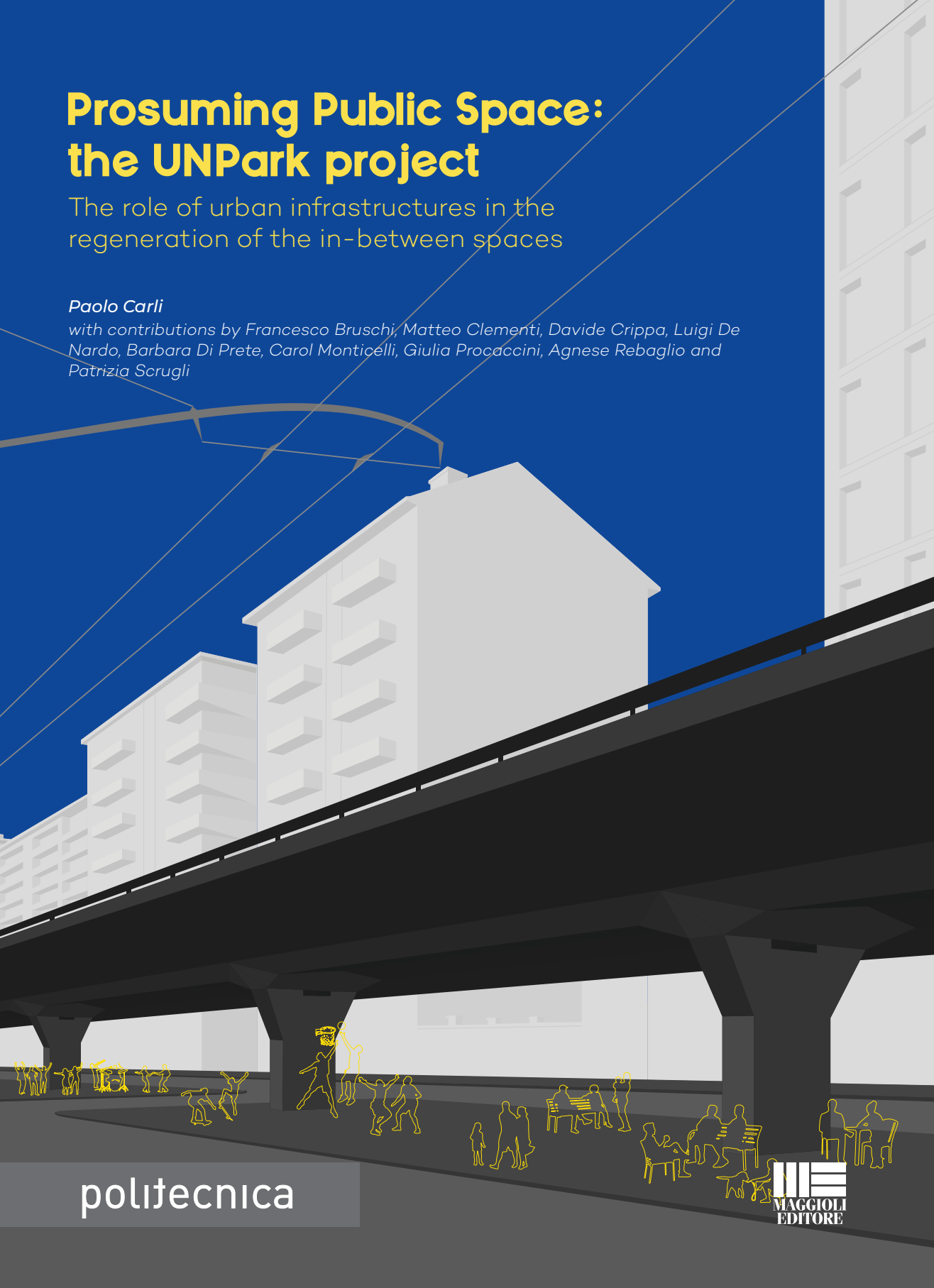


Prosuming Public Space: the UNPark project

The role of urban infrastructures in the
regeneration of the in-between spaces

Paolo Carli

with contributions by Francesco Bruschi, Matteo Clementi, Davide Crippa, Luigi De Nardo, Barbara Di Prete, Carol Monticelli, Giulia Procaccini, Agnese Rebaglio and Patrizia Scrugli



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Prosuming Public Space: the UNPark project illustrates the experience of the Urban Nudging Park research project, funded by the social responsibility program of the Politecnico di Milano through the competitive call Poli-social Award 2019. The book returns the complexity that characterised UNPark: a research by design project, in the wake of tactical urbanism, on the theme of the role that urban infrastructures could have in the regenerative processes of the in-between spaces.

Indeed, UNPark has been a transdisciplinarity effort which took shape through a temporary urban tactical intervention and a study about the possibility of transforming the current parking under the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass, in Milan, into a multifunctional space equipped for social activities, including street sports.

Prosuming Public Space: the UNPark project is a monographic book, with thematic chapters by the members of the work team, that proposes, in addition to recalling the research work phases, reflections on the city during the pandemic, on the co-design, on the multifunctional regeneration of the urban infrastructures, and about the needed transdisciplinarity in any urban design intervention.

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I. The Urban Nudging Park

Paolo Carli

I.1 AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

It is not easy - not even for me after almost two years as its Scientific Coordinator - to introduce the *UN-Park - Urban Nudging Park* research project, due to the number of activities carried out, the nuances and insights it uncovered, the amount of knowledge and expertise it involved, the multidisciplinary approach that was necessary and the vibrancy of the working group and the Partnership as a result of their diversity. Not surprisingly, in the Part 2 of this book, space is given to thematic chapters by the Team's members, relating to specific aspects of *UNPark* (urban regeneration and environmental planning, upcycling and reuse and recycling of materials but also of infrastructures, open data and air quality monitoring, co-design and tactical urbanism, etc.), which allow us to go into detail on the choices and strategies of the project, which would otherwise be impossible to summarize in a fluid and linear narrative of this experience of integration between theoretical and field work. The goal is to demonstrate the constant "multidisciplinary hybridisation" that occurred during the research project, which made it possible to obtain the expected outcomes and ensure the materialisation of a field intervention, however temporary, which was innovative



FIGURE I.1 - The Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass, 2021
(Source: UNPark/
Matteo Di Giovanni)

in terms of its location and the corresponding impact, as well as the methods of its implementation and the participation by citizens, particularly during the pandemic. This book stems from the experience of fieldwork during the UNPark - Urban Nudging Park project which began in March 2020 and ended in November 2020, coinciding exactly with the Coronavirus pandemic period. The funding for the research came from the *Polisocial Award 2019 - Sport and Social Inclusion* which the project won in December 2019 as part of the *Politecnico di Milano's* social responsibility programme. UNPark has been a multidisciplinary effort which took shape through work on short-, medium- and long-term scenarios and a temporary field

See also II.1

intervention divided into two phases (*MUE:SLI/FURNISH and UNPark/FREESTYLE*), a study into the possibility of transforming a current car park under the *Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass* in Milan into a multifunctional facility equipped for social activities, including *street sports*. In addition to detailed research on scalable international case studies of experiences of regeneration of urban mobility infrastructure in other settings, the *UNPark* project promoted and organised measures to engage the residential population in:

1. the co-design of the temporary pilot event;
2. the implementation of a network of citizens who were (environmentally) responsible through air quality monitoring;
3. experimentation with new models for the collection, reuse and recycling of materials for the design of social spaces;
4. the communication of the international experiences collected and catalogued for the purpose of creating a shared, informed vision of the genuine possibilities for the transformation of the Overpass.

See also XII.6

The main goal of *UNPark* was to propose a new debate to the city of Milan which put the theme of infrastructure for mobility at the top of the urban agenda, including its roles and impacts on the life of people from an environmental, social and economic point of view; weighing up the often misunderstood and specific impact that urban linear infrastructure may have on the regeneration of its surroundings, through strategies of integration and multifunctional transformation, and of mitigation of the impacts that it has generated over time on the life of citizens: an example of which would be the *Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass*, a vehicular viaduct spanning almost 2km through the heart of Milan's established urban fabric.

Accordingly, UNPark saw the participation of architects, designers and urban designers, engineers, experts in urban metabolism, in materials sciences, in Nature Based Solutions, in light architecture and tactical urbanism, in IT and many other disciplines, all belonging to five different Departments at the Politecnico di Milano; who were assisted and supported by a partnership comprising further external experts, citizen volunteers, institutional partners, stakeholders and sponsors.

The research was conducted by the *UNPark Team*, a Politecnico di Milano working group consisting of Paolo Carli from the *Department of Architecture and Urban Studies* (DASU) as Scientific Coordinator and Luigi De Nardo from the *Department of Chemistry, Materials and Chemical Engineering "Giulio Natta"* (CMIC) as Project Manager; alongside Patrizia Scrugli, Matteo Clementi, Claudia Reati and Ilaria Tosoni (DASU); Carol Monticelli, Giulia Procaccini and Ahmadiana Amirhossein from the *Department of Architecture, Built Environment and Construction Engineering* (ABC), Barbara Di Prete, Agnese Rebaglio, Davide Crippa and Emilio Lonardo from the *Department of DESIGN*, Francesco Bruschi from the *Department of Electronics, Information and Bioengineering* (DEIB) and Massimiliano Cason Villa (CMIC).

I.2 THE UNPARK PARTNERSHIP

In order to ensure the feasibility in terms of citizen engagement, the successful implementation of the temporary pilot project and the most direct and detailed knowledge of the territory and the beneficiaries, once the UNPark proposal was drafted, efforts were made to put together a partnership that included institutional representatives that were responsible for the ur-

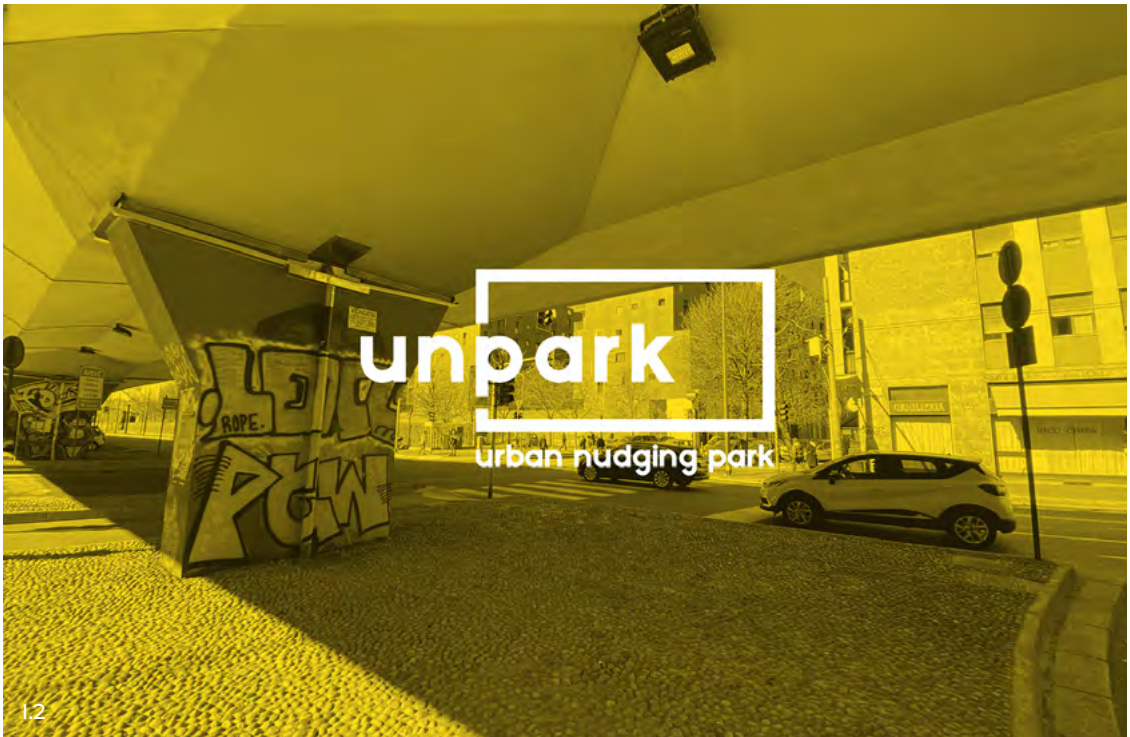
ban interventions, local bodies linked to the themes of UNPark that were most involved and engaged with the residents of the neighbourhoods, and sponsors that were relevant to the project. The Municipality of Milan's *Department of Urban Planning, Green Spaces and Agriculture* (Advisor Demetrio Scopelliti) and *Department of Participation, Active Citizenship and Open Data* (Councillor Lorenzo Lipparini and Eugenio Petz) and *Municipality 8* (President Simone Zambelli and Councillor Paolo Romano) became institutional partners of UNPark and co-funded its activities in view of their interest in its outcomes in accordance with their policy goals. The field intervention, which was divided into two phases (*MUE:SLI/FURNISH* in from 3 to 6 December 2020 and *UNPark/FREESTYLE* from 18 to 26 September 2021) can actually be attributed to the Municipality of Milan's "*Piazze Aperte*" (Open Squares) project and more generally to its policy of active citizen participation in urban regeneration by way of the *Accordi di Collaborazione* (Collaboration Agreements) which was launched by the *Giunta* (municipal council) during Beppe Sala's first term as Mayor of Milan (2016 - 2021). The European research project *H2020/CAPSI Open4Citizens* and the *Textiles Hub* at the Politecnico di Milano also co-funded UNPark given their interest in specific aims of the project. The former was interested in the collaborative aspect of the production of geo-referenced open data on air quality; while the latter was involved in the implementation of the temporary pilot event under the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass, with the aim of testing certain textile solutions for the exhibition design of the materials produced by UNPark. The *Liceo Scientifico Statale Piero Bottoni*; *ICS Rinnovata Pizzigoni, Milano in Alta Quota Citizen Committee*; *L'Impegno ARCI Club, Assicurazioni Vittoria, Radio Popolare*, the *OSG2001* sports club, the *Soulbasket* sports club; Italian Catholic Guides and Scouts Asso-

See also IV by Di Prete,
VI by Rebaglio, VIII by
Monticelli and Scrugli
in Part 2

See also IX by
Procaccini and
Monticelli

See also VII by
Clementi and Bruschi
in Part 2

See also X by Crippa, Di
Prete and De Nardo in
Part 2



ciation – *Milan Group 20*; the business *ESO - Ecological Services Outsourcing*; the start-up *Soulfood Forestfarms Hub Italia*; the fab-lab *Ideas - Bit Factory*; and the photographers *Matteo Di Giovanni* and *Lorenzo Masotto* also collaborated in the partnership in various capacities (as stakeholders, partners, volunteers, etc.). Almost all members of the partnership became signatories of the Collaboration Agreement with the Municipality of Milan for the implementation of the temporary pilot event that they worked on under a portion of the *Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass*, with varying levels of involvement and responsibility, in addition to contributing to the planning of the intervention and the itinerary of sporting, entertainment and cultural activities provided, and also ensuring the smooth running of the same, monitoring the area at all times in order to prevent undesired use, including in light of the social distancing rules that were in effect at the time due to the pandemic crisis.

FIGURE I.2 - The UNPark research logo (Source: UNPark)

See also VIII by Monticelli and Scrugli in Part 2

See also XI.8

I.3 UNPARK STEP BY STEP

After having introduced the actors involved on the scene, it is time to illustrate, for clarity, also the articulation of the UNPark project, both in terms of research themes and Work Packages, and for subsequent temporal phases of field work, under the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass.

The phased time scan, thanks to a linear story, easily returns the effort made by the UNPark Team to achieve the expected results in the almost two years of work. However, it fails to fully convey the complexity of the themes and methodologies underlying UNPark. While, on the other hand, the mere description of the UNPark Work Packages structure would make it difficult to understand the temporal aspects of field work, unfortunately also linked to the Coronavirus pandemic. The six WPs of UNPark are, in fact, closely connected to each other, often temporally coincident, and are articulated in the multidisciplinary logic inherent in the main theme of the research itself (the regeneration of urban infrastructures).

This has made it possible to reach a strong trans-disciplinary dimension thanks to the sharing of conceptual and methodological references among the members of the UNPark Team, so that the respective disciplinary perspectives are integrated up to “transcend themselves”. Furthermore, also the widest possible expansion of the vision of the problem to be addressed by UNPark, the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass, through the involvement and inclusion of both specialists outside the academy, and stakeholders deeply linked to this infrastructure, thanks also to the continuous direct confrontation between the members of the UNPark Team (see here the WP3), has allowed access to a sort of trans-disciplinary dimension of field research.

See also X by Crippa, Di Prete and De Nardo

The UNPark Work Packages were:

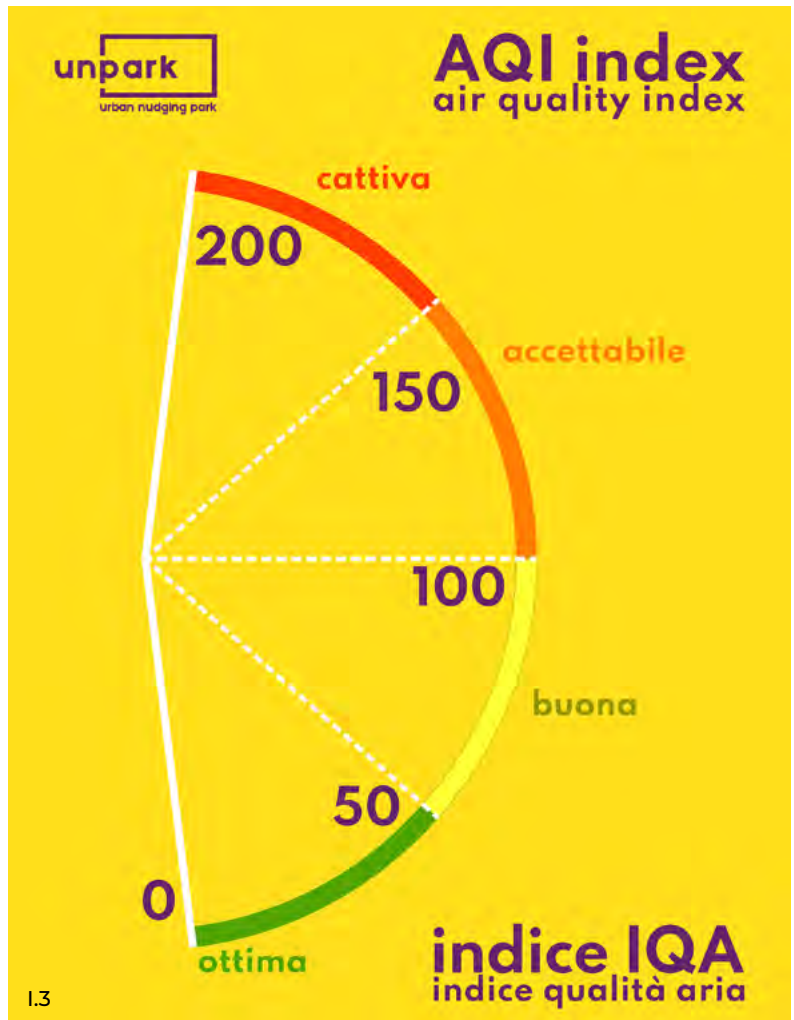
- WP1. Project Management,
- WP2. Feasibility Study,
- WP3. Experimentation and Innovation,
- WP4. Environmental Quality Monitoring,
- WP5. Pilot Project,
- WP6. Communication.

The first and last WP, functional to the success of the project, had the purpose of organizing and scheduling the times and phases of the project, also through communication and dissemination, organizing work-progress meetings, both among the members of the Team and together the UNPark Partnership. Great attention was also given to the publication of scientific articles, the organization and participation in seminars and congresses on UNPark topics, with the aim of disseminating information on the project and its progress, as well as making it known to citizens. Instead, the WP2. Feasibility Study was based on the collection of the stakeholders' needs and the development of the solutions identified in the subsequent WPs. The WP2, thanks to its methodological component of scalability and replicability of the project, has allowed an in-depth analysis of the maintenance status of the Overpass and the integrated system of the solutions that emerged during the subsequent phases of UNPark. Although transversal to the entire UNPark research project, the theme of the transdisciplinarity of the solutions to be implemented, both in the temporary pilot project (WP5), and in the possible medium- and long-term project scenarios on the Overpass, is nevertheless in WP3 that it has found a "space" in which to be experienced. And it is precisely in this "space" that the follow-ups of the UNPark project and new syner-

See also II.2

*See also IX by
Procaccini and
Monticelli in Part 2,
and XI.6 in Part 3*

FIGURE I.3 - Dashboard for Air Quality Index in real time
(Source: UNPark/Volpe, Scrugli)



gies and collaborations have been activated. WP4.Environmental Quality Monitoring is also linked to the previous WP from the point of view of the production of medium- and long-term project scenarios, thanks to the survey and measurement of the resources available around the Overpass: from the mapping of its potential production of energy by photovoltaic and its natural lighting, the quantity of water that can be captured by the roofs and on the ground, up to the potential emission of solid urban waste from the existing built fabric; thus identifying solutions that can be

I.4

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unpark



UNPark | Urban Nudging Park | Polisocial Award | Politecnico di Milano
 gruppo di ricerca: Paolo Carli, Luigi De Nardo, Francesco Bruschi, Matteo Clementi, Barbara Di Prete,
 Carol Monticelli, Agnese Rebaglio, Davide Crippa, Emilio Lonardo, Giulia Procaccini, Patrizia Scrugli

implemented in the project and providing guidelines for their scalability. The WP4 has also favored the engagement activities of the residents in order to create a network of inhabitants for the collection of open data on the quality of the air near the Overpass. The UNPark Team has in fact self-built 4 sensor (control units), then distributed in as many volunteer homes near the Overpass, and a dashboard dedicated to the display of the AQI index (Air Quality Index) derived from the open data collected by the installed sensors. An initiative that has created great involvement among the inhabitants and which took place thanks to the fundamental contribution of a citizen, Piero Volpe, who was very involved in the self-construction of the AQI dashboard, together with the UNPark Team. WP5, the one relating to all activities about the organization, design, preparation and conduct of pilot interventions in

FIGURE I.4 - A postcard for the kick-off meeting Ready, Steady, Go!, 25.09.2020 (Source: UNPark)

See also VII by Clementi and Bruschi

the field, is however the real core of UNPark research. The WP5.Pilot Project concerned all the metaproject activities, implementation, development and participatory planning of the temporary transformation of a portion of the spaces under the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass (between via Plana and via Bartolini), trying to converge there a broad sharing with the inhabitants, thus making them protagonists of the process. The pilot project in the field constituted a test of the strategies that emerged in WP3.Experimentation and Innovation, becoming fundamental work material for the WP2.Feasibility Study and, in general, for the development of the research topic on the multifunctional regeneration of urban infrastructures for mobility.

However, before going into the issues related to the implementation phases of the pilot project on the field of WP5, it is advisable to also mention the several occasions, organized by the Team or in which it participated by invitations, for dissemination about the UNPark project, and the theme of the multifunctional regeneration of infrastructures. In addition to the fundamental “kick off” meeting of the project, *Steady, Ready, Go!* (25.09.2020), held in a public venue for live music, near the Overpass, and in which, in addition to many citizens, many exponents of the whole Partnership of UNPark showed up, the following were organized:

- A digital event, in collaboration with “DOS - Design Open Spaces”, for the Fuorisalone/Milano Design City 2020, from 28 September to 10 October 2020, which consisted of an augmented reality “exhibition” of international projects related to urban infrastructures and public space, activated under the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass.
- A networking session, after evaluation of the proposal, entitled “Recoding urban infrastructure” (20.11.2022), inside SUM2020, the 5th Symposium

- on Urban Mining and Circular Economy.
- The invitation at the “AnthroDayMilano - Public Anthropology in Milan” (20.02.2021), in which the UNPark case study was illustrated in all its facets.
- A conference, entitled “UNPark - Upgrading Urban Infrastructure” (18.03.2021), with well-known experts (Francesca Arcuri of Mobility in Chian, Laura Gatti of Studio Laura Gatti, Gianluca Ruggieri vice president of ènostra, Emanuela Seregini of Project Automation), in the context of the Milan Digital Week 2021.
- The invitation to the conference Spazio pubblico in trasformazione (Public space in transformation) (09.09.2021), in the cycle “abitare la prossimità” (living in proximity), at the BASE for the Salone del Mobile 2021, to present the intervention UNPark/FREESTYLE.

Although it is obvious that WP5 was the Work Package that temporally structured the entire research project, being the actual implementation of the intervention in the field, contrary to all predictions, one of the fundamental goals that the UNPark Team had set itself; it is easier to articulate UNPark temporally, starting from its interventions in the field, and from the activities that these involved, and which were already foreseen by WP5. The UNPark pilot project was the result of a series of operations and meetings, scheduled in stages:

- phase I - FURNISH: November 2020 - December 2020;
- phase II - Participation/Co-design: January 2021 - April 2021;
- phase III - Drafting of the UNPark/FREESTYLE Pilot Project: April 2021 - July 2021;
- phase IV - Implementation of the UNPark/FREESTYLE Pilot Project for Open Squares: July 2021 - September 2021.

FIGURE I.5 - Poster for the conference UNPark - Upgrading Urban Infrastructure, 18.03.2021 (Source: UNPark)

I.5

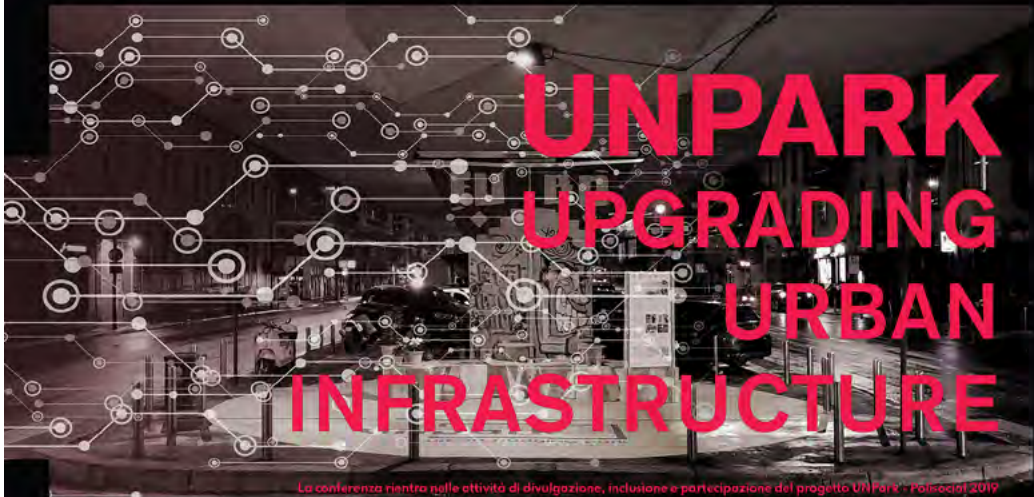


UNPark - Upgrading Urban Infrastructure
 Quali sono oggi le modalità più innovative per reclamare, rigenerare e usare lo spazio pubblico in città in modo più equo e sostenibile?

UNPark cerca di rispondere a questa domanda grazie a esperti internazionali di e-parking e mobilità alternativa, di energia e ottimizzazione ecologica della città, di infrastrutture urbane verdi e pianificazione e grande scala. A partire dal caso studio del viale Siroli - Maria Carmela Milano, UNPark propone una riflessione sul potenziale di innovazione verso la multi-sostenibilità (basata su resilienza urbana, seconda funzione, città in sviluppo, colore, le barriere e della city smartness).

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- 10.30 Introduzione ai temi della conferenza**
Paolo Carli (Politecnico di Milano)
- 10.45 E-parking, monitoraggio ambientale e trasporti**
Emanuela Seregni (Project Automation)
- 11.00 Efficientamento energetico urbano e produzione locale di energia**
Gianluca Ruggieri (Università dell'Insubria/è nostra)
- 11.15 Sharing Mobility e mobility on demand**
Francesca Arcuri (Mobility in Chain, MIC)
- 11.30 Infrastrutture urbane verdi**
Laura Gatti (Studio Laura Gatti)
- 11.45 Conclusioni e tavola rotonda**

È possibile partecipare iscrivendosi al seguente form obbligatorio: <https://forms.gle/gWWj9zVtppvK49hu9>

Intervengono:

Francesca Arcuri
 Mobility In Chain

Ingegnere aerospaziale specializzata in tecnologie sostenibili, è consulente senior e project manager di Mobility in Chain dal 2009, dove si occupa di pianificazione sostenibile e sistemi di mobilità innovativi, con un focus sul rapporto tra pedoni e veicoli, oltre che su soluzioni di sharing mobility e soluzioni on demand.

Laura Gatti
 Studio Laura Gatti

Paisaggista di formazione agronomica, lavora da oltre venti anni nel settore della progettazione e della gestione di aree verdi pubbliche e private. Specializzata in arboricoltura urbana, in tetti e pareti verdi, porta avanti, oltre ai suoi lavori professionali, studi e ricerche sul ruolo del verde in ambito urbano.

Gianluca Ruggieri
 ènostra

Ricercatore di Fisica Tecnica Ambientale presso l'Università dell'Insubria, si occupa da sempre di meccanismi di incentivazione dell'efficienza energetica. È vicepresidente di e nostra. Con Fabio Manfredi ha pubblicato Civiltà solare. Altresonomia 2016.

Emanuela Seregni
 Project Automation

Informatica e Proposal e Project Manager presso il reparto di Progettazione & Sviluppo Piattaforme Informatiche di Project Automation SpA (Italia), dove segue progetti di innovazione nei diversi ambiti di business aziendali: monitoraggio ambientale, mobilità e trasporti.

Modera per il team UNPark:

Paolo Carli
 Politecnico di Milano

Ricercatore di Tecnologia dell'architettura presso il Dipartimento DASTU del Politecnico di Milano, si occupa di progettazione ambientale a scala urbana ed è il responsabile scientifico della ricerca UNPark - Polisocial Award 2019.

Responsabili:
Paolo Carli, Patrizia Scrugli

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I.4 COLLABORATION AGREEMENT AND THE UNPARK/FREESTYLE FESTIVAL

Due to the complexity and demands of the temporary UNPark/FREESTYLE Festival event under the Overpass, it was necessary to obtain the highest possible number of signatories of the Collaboration Agreement with the Municipality of Milan¹, integrating the partnership with the aim of having, in addition to a safe and well-managed platform, interesting contributions produced by the signatories themselves by sharing their skills and expertise, including: *Associazione Auser di piazza Prealpi*, *Scuola di ballo Bendy Dance*, *Bar di via Plana 32*, *Associazione italiana per la promozione del Disc Golf*, *Associazione Skate-Mi* and the *Associazione Giovanni Testori*. Lastly, as sponsors, three companies offered prizes for three competitions created for the students of the UNPark project's Partner Schools.

The school competitions were split by school level: the primary school competition focussed on children's drawings of their vision for the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass with a prize of art supplies provided by *Koh-I-Noor Italia*; the middle school competition's theme was sport under the Overpass with a prize of vouchers for sporting goods at *Decathlon* retail outlets; lastly, the theme of the high school competition was ready-made design and upcycling of elements of urban furniture through the use of recycled materials, with a prize of products (handbags and rucksacks) from the company *Volverup*, which were manufactured using former PVC sheets from lorries.

As might already be clear, the main achievement of UNPark was the successful organisation, delivery and conclusion of the UNPark/FREESTYLE event from 18 to 26 September 2021. Although it was one of the activities that required the most effort, resources and energy, the event made a contribution to the city, if only

See also VIII by Monticelli and Scrugli

¹ *Agreements between the Municipality and citizens, associations, bodies, schools etc. are the means through which social, recreational and entertainment activities could be held on public land free of charge, as part of the Office for Participation, Active Citizenship and Open Data's (Assessor Lorenzo Lipparini) policies and strategies.*



I.6

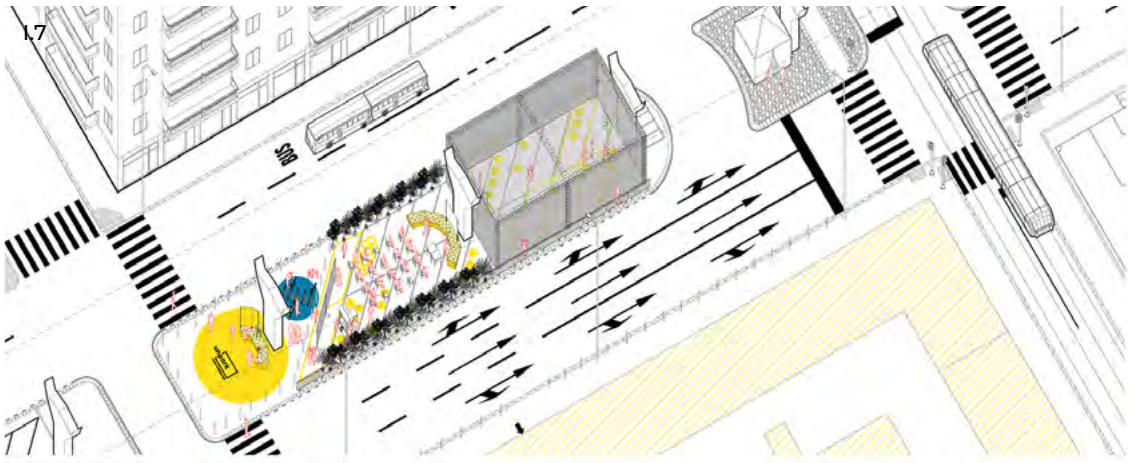
See also XI.9

FIGURE I.6 - The MUE:SLI/FURNISH installation, December 2021
(Source: UNPark/Paolo Carli)

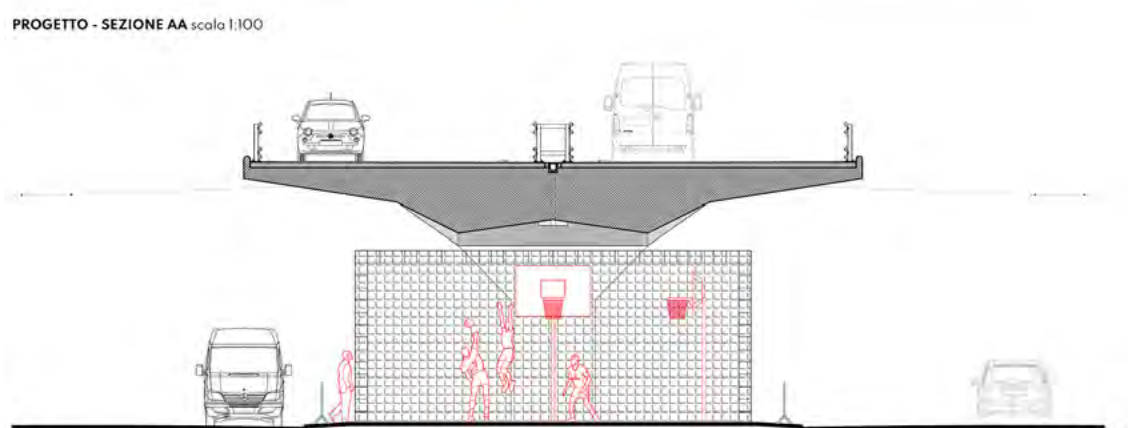
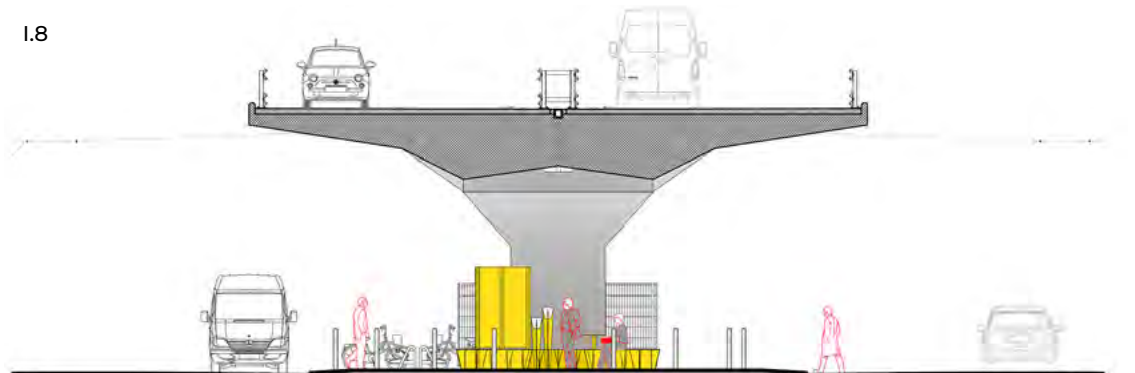
FIGURE I.7 - Axonometric view of the space set-up project for the UNPark / FREESTYLE Festival, September 2021
(Source: UNPark/ Patrizia Scrugli)

FIGURE I.8 - Sections of the space set-up project for the UNPark / FREESTYLE Festival, September 2021
(Source: UNPark/ Patrizia Scrugli)

temporarily, while dealing with its many problems, its numerous administrative, decision-making and technical levels through its citizens and local resources. Besides being a temporary event in an urban space unlike the previous schemes of the Municipality of Milan's "Piazze Aperte" project, as a dilapidated area under an Overpass, UNPark/FREESTYLE was above all a three-day festival, preceded by a week of preparatory works in the area by citizens, professionals and technical experts from the Municipality, in which the sporting, social and cultural associations of the neighbourhood crossed by the Overpass could show the public their activities, their work in the field and demonstrate their potential, recapturing an urban space normally merely used for parking through a great deal of effort. The forerunner to FREESTYLE was the MUE:-SLI - Mobile Urban Elements for Sport Leisure and Inclusion project in December 2020, when the UNPark Team won the European call *Fast Urban Responses for New Inclusive Spaces and Habitat (FURNISH)* which was financed by *EIT Urban Mobility*, receiving a grant for the digital fabrication production of mobile urban elements (MUE) which met social distancing



2



rules, and obtaining permission from the Municipality of Milan to temporarily install the equipment produced under the Overpass, at the beginning of the portion that would later be developed for UNPark/FREESTYLE, to conduct interviews and surveys with citizens, both before and after the installation, and to decorate the junction between viale Monte Ceneri and via Plana with graphics and colouring. It was the first opportunity for UNPark to reclaim public space, or rather create it where before there was none, together with citizens.

I.5 PROSUMING PUBLIC SPACE

The choice to use the phrase “Prosuming public space” as the title of this book clearly demonstrates and summarises in very few characters and in an immediate manner, along with the other keywords of the project (codesign, public space, process innovation, infrastructure, urban regeneration, multiscalarity, multifunctionality, Urban Mining, Wasted Architecture, Reuse/Recycle/Upcycle and others), some of the conclusions at which UNPark arrived through UNPark/FREESTYLE, direct fieldwork experience with citizens and the public administration and the comparison with the processes that underlie the international case studies collected previously. UNPark therefore made it possible to gauge the possibilities of urban infrastructure and its latent potential (Burnham, 2018), with the concerns, the *status quo* and the routine of the city’s daily urban management. The term “prosumer”, a *portmanteau* of “producer” and “consumer”, has a peculiar history given that it derives from North American environmentalist movements of the 1970s, referring in particular to agricultural and energy communities which only became codified and defined in the 1980s in relation to (at the time) the potential for extreme

personalisation of products in the field of mass manufacturing, thereby emphasising, mainly on a marketing level, the collaboration between the producer and the consumer in the manufacturing process, in order to achieve perfect and total alignment (Ahluwalia, Miller, 2014). The concept was then developed further in recent years when it found great relevance and impetus because of the internet and the sharing economy, but also because of localised self-production of solar energy which, by rendering the product intangible and immaterial (information, services, software, NTF, energy, etc.), overcomes the ontological problems posed by the production of tangible goods with regard to their personalisation². “Prosumer” is therefore a fertile concept rich in insights and especially if applied to the urban planning of public spaces and the “production of cities”, where, once again, mass production is not involved. Indeed, if used in its original and community sense, “Prosuming public space” means protecting everyday space alongside citizens, with the dual aim of involving them in the planning process but also in the promotion of the design in particular, and making them responsible for the management of the public space and the activities that can be carried out there. Whereas it is used in the sense of the extreme personalisation of products, like in the 1980s, the concept continues to be relevant regarding the design of public space, since the personalisation is the result of knowledge, the exchange of information and collaboration between the producer and the consumer, thereby introducing a new dimension to the collaboration between citizens, designers and administrators that goes far beyond tactical urbanism.

Lastly, if its most recent accepted definition referring to the digital world is used, the concept of prosuming of the city and public space refers to the strategies and technologies that are available today in order to make

² It is also worth mentioning the food communities and the Solidarity Purchase Groups, where, albeit on a very small scale, producer and consumer, sometimes, coincide. Just as it is worth pointing out the existence of the term *produser* (producer + user) which, however, is mainly referred to the production of online content (Bruns, 2007).

use of the city in the most efficient, least stressful and least alienating manner, like for example e-parking, electric mobility, sharing mobility and all such online services for the booking of spaces or the use of public space which makes it possible to jump the queues, to optimise our time and live more serenely in the city.

Furthermore, the *Coronavirus* pandemic has been a rude reminder over the last two years of how public space, its quantity and area, but above all its provisions and facilities and the flexibility of use can even become essential healthcare resources in the fight against emerging and critical phenomena (Gehlpeople, 2020). Unfortunately, as has already been mentioned, the UNPark research began on 2 March 2020, coinciding perfectly with the start of the Covid-19 pandemic which has rampaged through cities across the world over the last two years, often putting the UNPark Team in difficulty in terms of the work planned relating to engagement of citizens.

However, if on one hand the pandemic and the lockdown made it extremely difficult to involve and work alongside citizens in order to address the aims of UNPark; on the other, they had the opportunity to demonstrate the overwhelming importance of urban space, especially public space, for the purposes of ensuring the sociality and the possibility of spending time outdoors in a densely populated city, despite social distancing rules. The idea of gaining as much public space as possible, without consuming land but rather recovering it from urban infrastructure (Urban mining), and therefore giving it a new role in the processes of urban regeneration (Wasted architecture), became an increasingly characteristic feature of the UNPark research over the months of work, in parallel with the evolution of the pandemic crisis, assuming a new relevance and centrality in the context of the aforementioned co-creation of public urban space (Prosuming).

See also III by Carli and Rebaglio

See also XI.7

See also VI by Rebaglio, and VIII by Monticelli and Scrugli



I.6 THE ADDED VALUE

“Prosuming public space” is understood therefore to be a higher level of participation and co-design of projects and solutions for the city, in which the citizen-beneficiary-stakeholder becomes central even in the construction phase (self-construction) and the management of the interventions (self-management). It is a sensitivity and vision of the city that the pandemic seems to have contributed to increasing, for example with the most recent international experiences of tactical urbanism (Armondi et Al., 2021), but above all with opinions and comments of international experts on the emergence of new post-pandemic uses of the city, the necessity for new rules for indoor and outdoor planning, and new activity models in urban space (FEEM, 2020). On the other hand, the theme that completely permeated the research work of UNPark was to explore the most congenial design approaches for

FIGURE I.9 - An indie-rock concert during the UNPark/ FREESTYLE Festival, September 2021 (Source: UNPark)

the evolution of the city and public space, to rethink the urban territory together with citizenship, with punctual but systemic interventions, synergistic with the context, reversible and temporary.

However, this means precisely outlining the methods and strategies used to harness this vitality through the engagement of the citizens and the partners in the co-design and planning activities for the FREESTYLE activation path; and how the local community networks worked together during the pandemic by hybridising virtual platforms and opportunities for rediscovery and exploration of the physical territory.

It therefore became essential to map the main environmental variables of the area crossed by the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass, with the intention of making information available to local actors with the aim of supporting potential procedures for implementing public space, through the use of open-source tools and the procedures used by the UNPark Team when analysing environmental variables of the urban area that interacts with the Overpass. This analysis therefore became a useful tool for the planning of the multifunctional regeneration of the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass outlined in medium- and long-term scenarios, where different planning approach strategies are collected on the theme of environmental comfort and in response to space requirements, flexibility of use over time and acoustic requirements, with regard to the problems of the contexts and the functions that can be integrated and implemented.

The very added value of the UNPark research project, however, was that of being able to test in the field the previously researched and in-depth strategies (both of engagement, process, and construction) in the UNPark/FREESTYLE intervention, becoming itself a very short-term scenario, with the rationale of overcoming tactical urbanism and moving towards a more definiti-

*See also VII by
Clementi and Bruschi*

ve but flexible approach to spaces under the Overpass. This was an operation that raised questions about the form/content dichotomy which makes it difficult to apply this model of temporary regeneration in complex and borderline contexts, because of the need to have skills and internal professional competences which are genuinely multidisciplinary and rare to find among groups of citizens, without the support of researchers and professionals. And it is precisely multidisciplinaryity which is the main theme of this research work, effectively demonstrates how UNPark employed many skills; acting on multiple scales and in many planning dimensions, the synergetic collaboration between academic, commercial and civil actors, but also the hybridisation of knowledge through the prototyping of Mobile Urban Elements by MUE:SLI/FURNISH, and the experiment conducted with the partner company ESO - Ecological Services Outsourcing, which explored the technological and aesthetic potential of integrated digital fabrication in reuse and recycling.

See also XI.8

See also X by Crippa, Di Prete and Ne Nardo

I.7 CITIES ARE LIVING-LABS

Without wanting to pre-empt anything in reference to the final Chapter *The Lesson Learned: Prosuming Public Space*, one thing that has been learned widely through the fieldwork, is that the city is much more than just a place of aggregation and concentration of a population: it is a catalyst for exchange, a hub of knowledge and a centre for the power production; and that without the citizens the UNPark/FREESTYLE project could not have existed.

The city is therefore the ideal laboratory in which to look for concrete solutions to the problems of the present and the future through design, taken to mean activities that look for responses to the current situa-

tion, generating valuable solutions for users. Indeed, cities are by definition places of interconnection and interaction, conditions that stimulate the development of innovative solutions and processes of transition (Concilio, Tosoni, 2018). In this vision, the issues of sustainability raised by mobility and the impact of its infrastructure on the quality of life of citizens forces the scientific community and institutions to adopt a design approach that must be able to overcome the current dimensions of a problem, towards a multiscale, multidisciplinary and multifunctional approach. However, the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass is still there, unchanged over 50 years, or probably in a worse state due to the volume of traffic it has sustained, the increasing size of vehicles, the wider deterioration of civic sense and its demanding maintenance.

Although UNPark never had the objective, nor the economic or physical possibility of impacting the Overpass in a permanent manner, it has however had the ambition of contributing to creating change, if only its own small way, by overcoming the static and inherent image that single-function infrastructure, like the Serra - Monte Ceneri Overpass, produces in the citizens that find themselves having to experience it passively. Indeed, even the name of the research project posed ambitious goals. If read as “to UNPark” it alludes to the removal of vehicles under the Overpass and to a diversification of the urban space, beginning with the belief that too much space in our cities is allocated to private vehicles, to the detriment of pedestrians and the quality of public space.

UNPark is however also the acronym of Urban Nudging Park, which alludes to its meaning of “to nudge”, that is to encourage by giving a light push, and therefore urging citizens and administrations towards change. But not only that, if it refers to the IT jargon “to un-park CPU”, that is to make optimal use of the

*See also II.6, XI.4 and
XI.5*



I.10

FIGURE 1.10 – The
Serra - Monte Ceneri
Overpass, 2021
(Source: UNPark)

CPU by disabling the Core Parking, UNPark becomes a metaphor for the collective as a processor that prepares the data and allows the computer, that is the city, to function. “UNParking” means to override the brakes that limit its expression, making citizens the true protagonists of the transformation of the city’s spaces (Lydon, Garcia, 2015).

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