THE PEOPLE DIMENSION IN CITY PLANNING
-on the importance of putting people first

Jan Gehl, Professor, Dr.hc, Arch. FRIBA, FAIA
20th Century:
Two new planning paradigms
-did everything to chase people out of the public spaces

Modernism  Car-invasion
”The good old Days!”
(From early days to ca.1933!)
CHARTER OF CITY PLANNING
CIAM group in Athens 1933
Introducing Modernism:

Allways separate areas for Living, Work, Recreation & Communication
Built by people – Built for people
Before: Focus on Spaces
In the old cities we always remember the spaces and maybe a few important buildings.
Modernism: Focus on Objects
Form must follow Fashion

In the new cities we remember a number of funny buildings but no spaces at all
The result being:
A good bye to concern for People & Social life
The result being:
A good bye to Human Scale
- in the same period the ‘Car Invasion’ took over city spaces worldwide

and the People were chased out
People are treated badly in cities all over the world.

- Greece
- China
- Italy
- Estonia
Most problematic conditions are found in Cities in Developing Countries

Dhaka, Bangladesh
Motorism: Another good by to Human Scale
What was known about quality for people by 1960? Virtually nothing
Jane Jacobs
1961

"The Death and Life of Great American Cities"
Short story of my life

1960

Graduated as Architect

The all time low point of City planning
Had to go back to Architecture School and study 40 more years
Sembra ma non è un «beatnik»

Da diversi giorni abbiamo notato un giovane straniero aggirarsi per la Piazza del Popolo. Abbiamo subito pensato: «E' beatnik» in Ascoli?

Ma il suo fare aveva qualcosa di particolare. A parte le misurazioni ed i rilievi con strani apparecchi ottici, lo straniero prendeva in continuazione appunti su tutti i passanti. Poi, chi era quel giovane, che aveva ricordato a tanti di studiare la forma e la vita delle piazze italiane da un punto di vista architettonico e sociologico, ha incluso la nostra Piazza del Popolo nei suoi itinerari.

Il giovane è simpaticissimo architetto, che si avvale della collaborazione della gentile consorte laureata in psicologia, si va chiedendo perché mai — nei centri storici italiani — con tanti vivi e belle strade munite, in popolazione insita a passeggiate sulle antiche piazze.

Saremmo interessati, al termine delle sue indagini, di conoscere se ha avuto l'arcano del nostro inaudibile «passeggia piazza». (Foto Eliga)
Research & books: Changing the mindset

7 books 1971-2022

41 languages
We form the Cities – then the cities form us
We form the Buildings – then they form us
We can make public spaces where people hate to be

And we can make public spaces where people love to be
After 50 years of research we now know how to make fine Cities for People
The wind is changing
By 2022 we have a distinct change in City Planning Challenges:

WANTED:
- Lively, Liveable City
- Sustainable City
- Healthy City
- A good City to be old in
A lively, livable City
Give People room to walk and to meet

People have always been City attraction No. 1
Sustainable City

The more we walk, cycle and use public transport the better.
“The Sitting Syndrome” makes it essential that we move more - and SIT less
Increasing number of elderly people

Already 20-25% elderly people in our cities
WANTED:
- Lively, Liveable City
- Sustainable City
- Healthy City
- A good city to be old in

Looking carefully after people in city planning will efficiently address all 4 issues
The wind is changing
”People oriented City Planning principles are being used in more and more cities across the world.

Good conditions for Walking, public life and bicycling are increasingly seen as elementary human rights”
Changing the mindset – Changing the Cities
SYDNEY, 2006 - 2020
Copenhagen, Denmark (1,5 Mio) 1962 – 2022: From traffic place to People Place - 60 years of people first policies!
Copenhagen from 1962....
An impressive culture of using bicycles has gradually evolved.

2018: 49% use bicycle for commuting
(2009: 38%)
What happens when you do all these dramatic changes to a City like Copenhagen

1. Copenhagen
2. Zürich
3. Helsinki
4. Stockholm
5. Tokyo
6. Vienna
7. Lisbon
8. Auckland
9. Taipei
10. Sydney

Your city may be rated one of the most livable Cities in the World (Monocle 2021)
Putting People First in City Planning relates directly back to who we are and what we are made for:

A slow, linear, horizontal, max 5 km/h walking creature – with a great interest in OTHER PEOPLE.
In conclusion:

PEOPLE CITIES

as first priority

* Its the simplest and cheapest you can do
* It creates better cities for everyone
* It is for cities in ALL PARTS of the World
* And you can start tomorrow