

Proximity-making at 15Min

How does the 15minC contribute to social connection enhancing proximity?

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Recent fortune of a concept from the tradition

The 15-Minute City concept received much attention following the mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo's campaign for re-election in 2020. Inspired by previous planning models such as the Garden City, the Neighbourhood Unit and Transit Oriented Development, the 15minC concept was introduced by Carlos Moreno in 2016, aiming to provide people with all necessary amenities within a 15-minute walking (or cycling) distance from their homes.

The implementation of this approach contributes to: a) enhancing housing, working, healthcare/caring, education, commerce, and entertainment at the local scale by reducing the need to commute for daily needs—and therefore contributing to reducing health and environmental impacts—and b) increasing opportunities to strengthen social relations of proximity.

Currently, several cities around the globe have implemented the model in their spatial, environmental or transport planning strategies. However, these first examples have highlighted some critical issues that need addressing, mainly in suburban areas where urbanisation patterns differ from the more consolidated urban centres. In these areas, the spatial-temporal continuity is challenged by the presence/absence of rapid transit infrastructures, gated settlements, shopping and leisure mega-centers, and a lack of public services. Also, inequalities in the starting conditions play a crucial role in the transition towards a new spatial organisation and require different levels of approach in conceptualising and delivering any possible intervention to meet the 15minC concept.

A critical reasoning

There is a current surge of criticism of the 15-minute city model based on the argument that this can be used as a Controlling tool.² We argue that no individual freedom is constricted by a more capillary

¹ The Biennale is promoted, amongst the others, by Italian National Planning Institute, the City of Rome, and the Italian National Institute of Architecture, and it is delivered in partnership with UN-Habitat - United Nations Human Settlements Programme and hosted by the University of Roma Tre.

² "Fifteen-minute cities are suffering their 15 minutes of fame", Financial Times, February 24th, 2023

[Are 15-minute cities a good idea or the work of UN greenist devils?](#)

[15-minute cities: mundane planning concept or global conspiracy? – podcast](#)

[One Tory MP's fear and loathing for the 15-minute city has no foundations](#)

[Fifteen-minute cities are suffering their 15 minutes of fame](#) Financial Times

distribution of essential services nor by strengthening walkability, bicycle networks and public transportation. Instead, we are keen to explore how we can leverage human-scale proximity using the 15minC principles articulated in current urban policies to facilitate the transition towards more ecologically and socially sustainable cities—that respect and respond to local contexts.

Students are asked to articulate their critical reasoning through a three-step exercise:

(1) to gain familiarity with the topic (theoretical roots, recent formulations, application models, examples of urban policies promoted by local governments in different cities around the world) starting from a provided reading list;

(2) describe actual conditions in a city neighbourhood, highlighting the physical and social factors that influence neighbourhood relations in the observed context

(3) critical analysis of urban policies and actions promoted by local governments, checking whether and how initiatives consider the observed specificities.

Two groups of students from each University will present their critical reasoning during the final online workshop.

The University of RomaTre student will analyse the area of the "Zona dei Colli" (Ponte di Nona-Lunghezza) at the western end of the city of Rome. The chosen area is one of 15 sites chosen by the Capitoline Administration for implementing the 15minC model, financing the drafting of a master plan and delivering public works (valued at 1M€).

Students From Curtin University will present their understanding of Edgast street, in the suburb of Thomastown, in the northern Fringe of Greater Melbourne, based on the critical interpretation and application of the 20 minutes neighbourhood policy and present their response.

References

https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/How-to-build-back-better-with-a-15-minute-city?language=en_US

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Sisson Patrick (2023), "Meet the 15-Minute City's Cousin: The 20-Minute Suburb", *Planning Magazine*, Jan. 26, 2023

Whittle Nathalie (2023), Fifteen-minute cities are suffering their 15 minutes of fame, "Financial Times", Feb 24, 2023 <https://www.ft.com/content/abe2314b-d65c-40f4-a148-765de193cd8a>

[The '15-minute city' backlash is part of the great climate change conspiracy theory](#) Financial Times.pdf