

## **Well-sized public spaces**

**Moura e Sá, Frederico; Carvalho, Jorge**

Unit of Social, Legal and Political Sciences

University of Aveiro, Portugal, [fredericomsa@ua.pt](mailto:fredericomsa@ua.pt), [jcarvalho@ua.pt](mailto:jcarvalho@ua.pt)

Phone/fax numbers: 00351 234 372484

There have been numerous accounts of an alleged crisis of public spaces throughout the globe, giving form to what Banerjee has described as a narrative of loss. However, and believing that public spaces, in particular streets, are still the main places of a city - as Jacobs considers its most vital organs - it is urgent to change the perspective of how they are being projected/dimensioned.

This paper aims at contributing for developing a novel method to determine/dimension small-scale public spaces.

It starts from the point of view that the current paradigm in the production of public spaces generally fails to strengthen the collective character of cities, since it is predominantly characterized by an overall vision as well individual practices of unrelenting capitalization of real estate assets.

The purpose is to use a functional approach to demonstrate objectively the importance of determining the size of public spaces according to expected usage loads.

The construction and the application of the model to different urban contexts, brings out the obvious:

the territory matters! Naturally different urban forms, densities and land uses, have different expectations and functional needs of public space.

The final results show the potential of the model, namely in contexts of urban expansion, renewal projects and in the production and/or revision of the legal framework for projecting public spaces.

The model represents the first step of an investigation process that aims at creating a new projectual tool for dimension and design public spaces.

**Keywords:** public space, usage load, urban design