Participatory research of public space in the fluvial landscape of the city of Valdivia, Chile.

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OUTLINE:

Background & context
Objective of project
Methodology
Preliminary findings
Conclusions & Perspectives
BENEFITS of URBAN RIVER SYSTEMS:

- Recreation & sports
- Tourism
- Transportation
- Education
- Microclimate
- Climate change strategies

QUALITY OF LIFE
river-related activities: 19th and early 20th century
Popular beach
Las Ánimas, 1956
Valdivia is expanding towards urban wetlands and river banks

> PROBLEMS:
- Illegal occupation of urban wetlands
- Privatisation of river banks
Key drivers of landscape change:

• natural factors (erosion, coastal transformation, floodings...)
• human factors (socio-economic changes, design interventions, planned & unplanned urbanisation)
OBJECTIVE

Investigate how natural and socio-economical transformations affect the public use of river banks in residential areas.
METHODOLOGY

Multidisciplinary approach: methods of urbanism, ecology, ethnography and landscape architecture

> Participatory approach / Itinerary method (Petiteau, Pasquier, 2001)
> Spatial-visual analysis of the existing landscape
itinerary method
(Petiteau and Pasquier, 2001):
walking with a person while speaking about his/her experience/relation with the same place.
itinerary method
(Petiteau and Pasquier, 2001):
connecting space, environment and objects to the person experiencing them
**PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

Memories connected to the place:
- use of the river & beach
- Public and legible access
Spatial-visual analysis: structure of the landscape
natural and socio-economical transformations have limited the use of river banks: loss of access and visibility (lack of design/maintenance)
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

However, this condition of poor access contributes in some places to the conservation of animals and plants.
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Areas perceived by inhabitants as insecure and *no man’s land*, absorbing uses the city rejects or prohibits.
CONCLUSIONS & PERSPECTIVES

Nevertheless, inhabitants still have strong memories of the place

→ potential for developing an urban waterfront with the community to revive their river banks
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THANK YOU

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The identity of urban river banks is constructed by:

- the relationship between a city and its river throughout time
- its physical characteristics
- its dominant use
- the human activities that take place

Modifications of the river landscape may affect the significance, perception and use of rivers and their banks established by the inhabitants throughout time.

(Tweed and Sutherland, 2007)