Evolution of green areas in Europe - a comparison between three urban areas

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Urbanization is a continuous and dynamic process which has a direct impact on ecosystems and their services provided to human society. Restriction of green areas greatly accentuates urban ecological risks, having an immediate negative impact on their viability and sustainability, on life quality and population health. Increasing population density in urban areas leads to an increasing need for space. Parallel to the tentacular development of urban agglomerations, structure, architecture and design have changed, at the expense of green spaces.

The development of urban areas in several European Countries (e.g. Romania, Portugal, Sweden, amid substantial demographic growth, it was made at the expense of green areas. Historical milestones of urban and peri-urban development are also key milestones in green space strategies, both in terms of development and conversion into different land-uses.

This article investigates the evolution of green infrastructure in three distinct countries in Europe. In western Romania (Timisoara urban area and its neighboring peri-urban zones) we investigate the strong correlation with the evolution of urban development and the strategies developed for improving the life quality. In central Portugal, we analyze the dynamics of green infrastructures in a peri-urban catchment close to Coimbra city Centre, driven by long term urbanization. In Sweden (Malmö city), we study the history of blue-green infrastructures such as sustainable urban drainage over the past two decades and application of this in the physical planning.

We will emphasize the main key milestones in green space strategies, similitudes and differences between three urban areas located in three different bio-geographical areas.

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