

Social media platforms and knowledge exchange.

TRAHERE project as an instrument for the transmission of heritage culture.

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Abstract

The urban scenarios outlined by the environmental and economic crisis have driven on a planetary scale, on the one hand, the unstoppable gentrification of the cities’ most central neighborhoods, with ongoing attacks on the architectural and urban heritage; on the other hand, growing associationism committed to cultural and environmental values that demands the Academy a greater collaboration and tools to talk with the administrations. An emblematic case is that of Arganzuela, one of the three districts affected by the rise and decline of industrialization and, particularly, by the irruption of the railway first (19th century) and the M-30 ring road after (1970). The burying of these infrastructures from 1989 with the operation Pasillo Verde Ferroviario (PVF) and 2003 with Madrid Río allows for the sketching of new scenarios. The TRAHERE (TRAin HERitage REuse) project looks into the abandonment state and disaffection of public spaces of the PFV using social media networks as connecting and communicating platforms with the participatory neighborhood fabric to promote its regeneration. The challenge is to turn the concept of results transference into a more inclusive one of knowledge exchange, which implies a methodological change in research, with an integrating and inclusive outlook that encompasses documentary and cartographic analysis, urban photography, spontaneous and railway botany, interviews with the involved social agents, and post-production of the results in various formats, all of them agglutinated and/or referenced with the project website, for its dissemination and exchange on social media platforms.

Case study: The Green Railway Corridor. Associationism and democracy.

The Green Railway Corridor was carried out between 1989 and 1996 through the 1st Modification of the General Plan, with the inception of a Consortium created by RENFE (Spanish National Railway Network) representatives and the Town Hall. The work entailed the regeneration of an 8 km long urban corridor, between Puente de los Franceses in the Moncloa district and Delicias station, in Cerro de la Plata (Fig. 1). It was the consequence of the industrial fabric decline and the obsolescence of the single-track railway contour line intended for transporting goods. The process starts

from the Municipal Management Planning Office in a climate of heavily politicized democracy construction. In fact, the burying of the railway line constituted the opportunity for more impartial growth, in line with planning aimed at balancing the existent differences between a privileged northern Madrid area and a depressed and underdeveloped working-class southern one. The city discovers the difficulties of continuing to grow towards the north, according to 1929 Zuazo-Jansen's plan guidelines, due to the existence of Fuencarral and Hortaleza neighborhoods, among other things. Therefore, the development opportunities show up in a wide stripe of the city in a transformation phase, with abandoned urban plots and empty interstitial areas, due to the industrial sector decline. The possibility of designing and shaping a new city with public parks, public facilities areas, and housing, is prefigured in a new development in the southwest of the capital [Sambricio, 1998].

In this democratic transition environment, the role of neighborhood associations that were protesting, among other things, against the dangers derived from the presence of surface roads, was relevant.

In the following decades, the associative fabric has continued to grow, getting involved in the recovery and appropriation of disused industrial containers such as Matadero, nowadays a cultural center, the Fruit and Vegetable Market, and the Tabacalera (former tobacco factory).

Social media platforms act as an aggregative and communication tool.

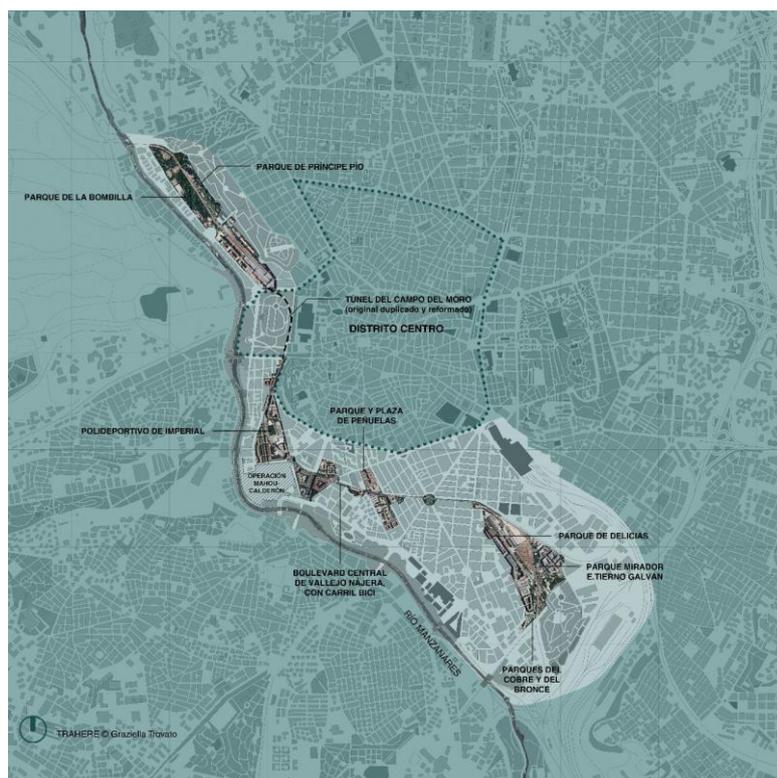


Fig. 1. The Green Railway Corridor (© TRAHERE)

Loss of industrial fabric and disaffection

In general, the set of railway facilities will be seriously compromised by the Operation that chooses to replace the patrimonial milestones with a symbolic framework of Masonic origin, whose meaning is ignored by the citizenry and is not related to the city and its memory (Racionero 1994).

At approximately 30 years from its conception, we find a heritage built in a deterioration state due to the lack of maintenance, unknown to a large part of the citizenry. We ask ourselves: What are the causes of this ignorance and lack of care? In the first approach, we can say that: nowadays, the Green Railway Corridor lacks a recognizable identity; the structural elements and milestones of the PVF have a monumental nature, not related to the city's historical memory, although fragments of its railway past, which are disconnected from its original fabric and meaning, might exceptionally appear. They are perceived as individual elements, indifferent to the urban fabric and its inhabitants.

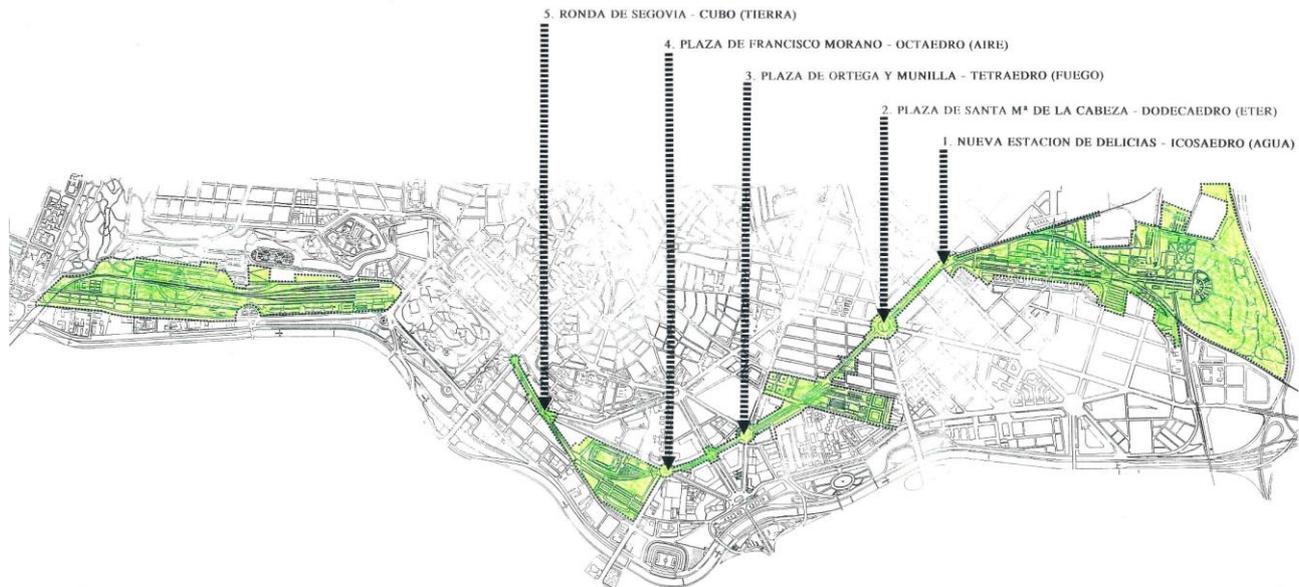


Fig. 2. The Green Railway Corridor's Geometry Avenue (Consorcio Urbanístico Pasillo Verde Ferroviario de Madrid).

Inventory and atlas heritage with use and/or reuse of what exists. The role of social media platforms

One of the main goals of the research has been to connect with the associative fabric of the neighborhood and get them involved through interviews and field visits of the analysis of the urban context and its heritage. The elaboration of the lost and existing heritage Atlas has been proposed since the beginning. The latter, with use and reuse, as an associationism tool: to offer factual data for the claim of heritage as a public interest asset.

This way, the associations themselves, in particular, the Imperial Railway Green Corridor Association, have taken it upon themselves to use social media platforms, especially Twitter and Instagram, as a means of convening the neighborhood in the case of visits, as well as to publicize the results of the investigation. The research team has tried to carry out a post-production process of the results by producing videos that provide data on the case study area and its heritage, interviews with the involved parties, and a flight over the PVF. All of them are linked to the project website and its social media platforms (YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook).

The purpose is not to reminisce but rather to "move" and raise awareness toward a new attitude in the heritage area (Trovato 2022). In the case of Madrid, we are pleased to detect a change in environmental policies with an integrating approach in operations such as Madrid-Río, the recent remodeling of Plaza de España, or, at a regional level, the future Urban Forest. However, when it comes to architectural heritage in general and industrial heritage in particular, this continues to be the object,

in most cases, of speculative processes with little attention paid to its typological, landscape, and urban values.

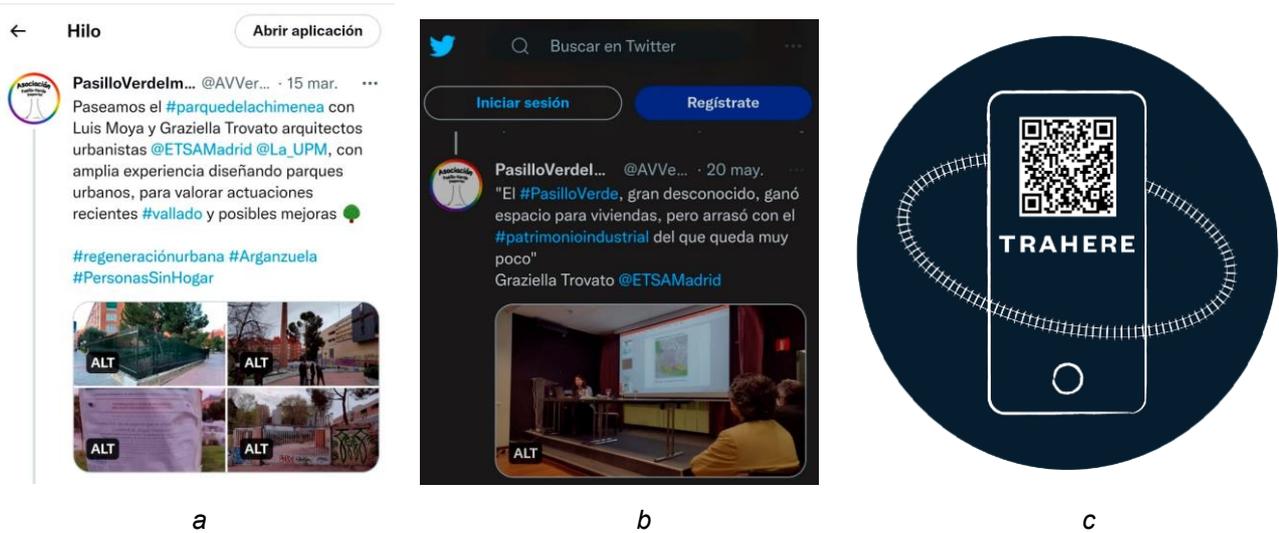


Fig. 3. TRAHERE Project in Social media platforms. a) and b) Twitter as a means of convening the neighborhood (Asociación Pasillo Verde Imperial) in the case of visit as well as to publicize the results of the investigation; c) TRAHERE Logo in social media as YouTube Channel and Instagram (© TRAHERE).

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