

# ASSIGNMENT: FINAL PROJECT

In this pdf, you can find my written report and a link to my final product is in the point 6.

**1) Topic:** Activate empty public spaces in the city by citizens outdoor alternative activities.

I selected two problems in my city:

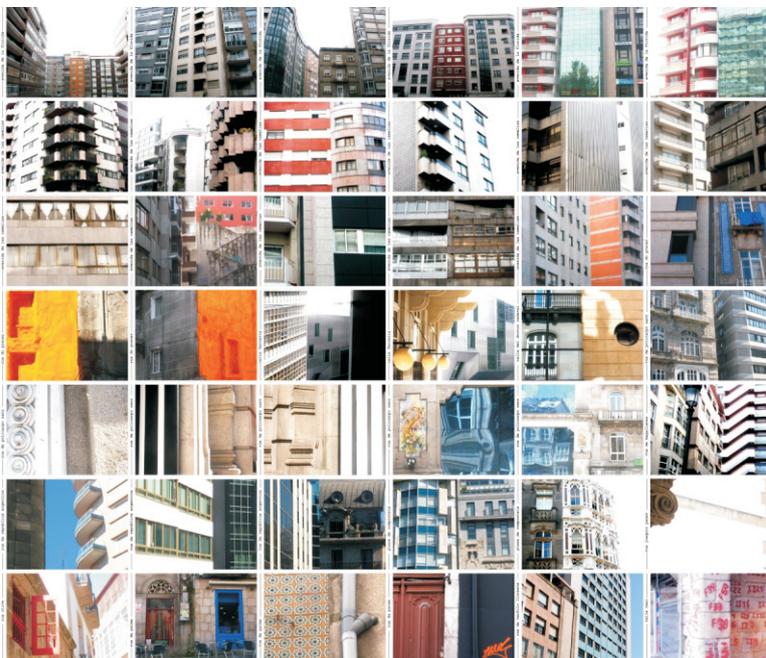
- 1) The quite high number of empty urban public spaces among residential zones. Because of the crisis, the number of them is still permanently growing.
- 2) The fact that there is quite no place for alternative outdoor activities for citizens within residential zone. I am thinking about non-consumerism, slow lifestyle actions based on social direct interactions like relax point, solar cooking point, dancing point, city grill point, hula hop point, picnic point, interchange points (the objects but also knowledge or cuisine recipes) etc.

For a project, I wanted to explore how technology can help resuscitate and activate empty public spaces within residential zones by implementing there outdoor alternative activities proposed and carried on by citizen.

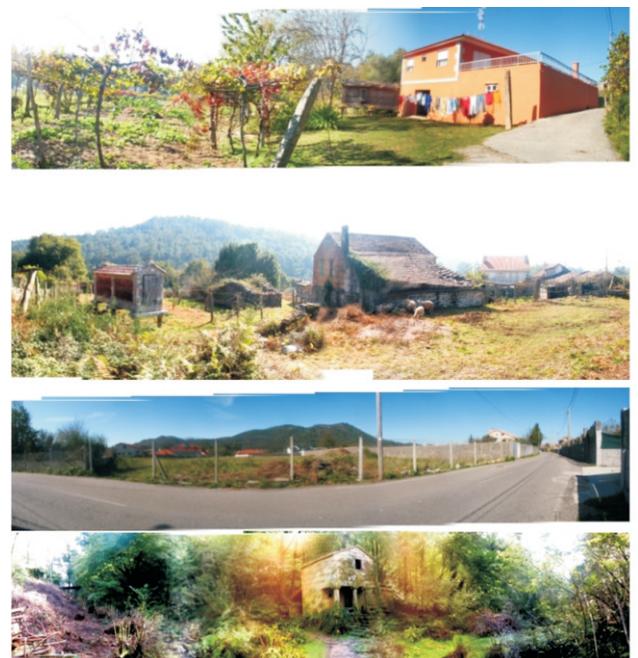
I was looking for the solution how to link those two issues using technology. I was trying to find the solution linking those two issues and using technology which will facilitate fluid flow of informations based on real-time data collection giving app that will enable to activate those public space and respond to real social needs of people.

**2) What:** As I am from not technical background (I am an artist / designer), I've learnt a lot exploring the topic. I was looking for the most appropriate tool which will respond to my needs. After research, I've decided to try to design mobile app. So I learnt how the mobile application works. I explore this topic quite deep to be able to draw basic diagram activity and kind of history how it will work in use. All of that, you will be able to see in my final project (link in point 6). I've also learnt a lot about analysis methods related to social media and spatial issues. I also explored, unknown for me up to this course, topic about the possibilities of implementation of open data available publicly and making the analysis with them.

**3) Where:** This project is in Vigo, Galicia, Spain. The city is located by the ocean and from the shore, the city rises to the top. In the part along the wharf of port, the residential area starts with high and densely located buildings. This is quite big part of the city. The districts located on the edges of the city have completely different character. They have small, more traditional houses placed in the middle of super green areas. They seem to be more village then the city. I decided to concentrate on that residential zones in my project as there is a noticeable lack of places for outdoor actions for citizens.



*I) The residential part of the city.*



*II) The districts on the edge of the city.*



III)



IV)



VII)



V)



VI)



VIII)

III) Huge, most of time empty, concrete area just in front of City Council of Vigo. IV) Totally empty area with great views, just next to City Council of Vigo. V) Grassy, steep site surrounded by not ended constructions because of the crisis, is totally cut off from the world but is located along one of the main streets in the city center. VI) Small grassy area behind the buildings, partly used by new site of urban vegetable garden which actually block out the mentioned area. VII,VIII) One of the big amount of empty buildings in Vigo with a few urban public spaces next to him which are now covered by rubbish or overgrown by bush ( VII: view from the one of the main streets just next to huge viewpoint area towards the ocean | VIII: view from the interior of the abandoned building )  
 \*All photos are made by me.

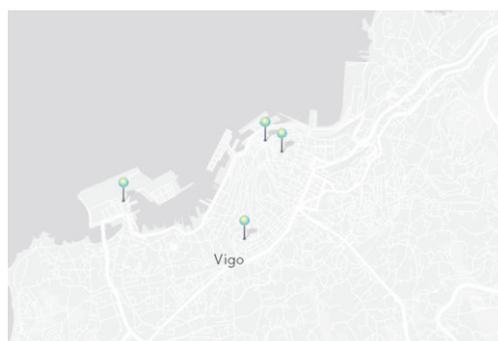
**4) Who:** I was trying to engage various people regardless of age, gender, origin etc. I decided to focus of involvement them in conversation via social networks. So asked various questions to people from different groups from facebook and also I posted various questions on Twitter. On Twitter, I posted questions linking specific @usernames in each tweet that were the most visible and active in my scraped results with hashtag #Vigo.

**5) How:**  
**a. Data Analysis:** I made various data analysis. On the one hand, related to empty urban spaces. On the other hand, related to outdoor activities. As I mentioned above I did spatial data analysis and social media data analysis. I was thinking about alternative outdoor citizens activities which are going now in residential zones in Vigo. After research, I found that there are mainly two types: urban vegetable garden and bio-healthy areas. I research manually the directions of them and I made several spatial analysis with ArcGIS tool.

As I result of social network analysis I obtained the list with activities that there is a lack in the city. Here some of the most often mentioned activities: outdoor reading workshop, dancing point, alternative cinema outdoor point, talks point, outdoor area to read, outdoor reading club, outdoor citizen courses point, social circle point, solar cooking point. As I saw that activity of reading were mentioned often, I did manual data research and via social networks in a search of activities related to that. I discovered some seasonal open-air lecture events.



IX) There are 37 bio-healthy areas. According to City Council, there are 5 more in the nearest plans. On the map are visible those in center.



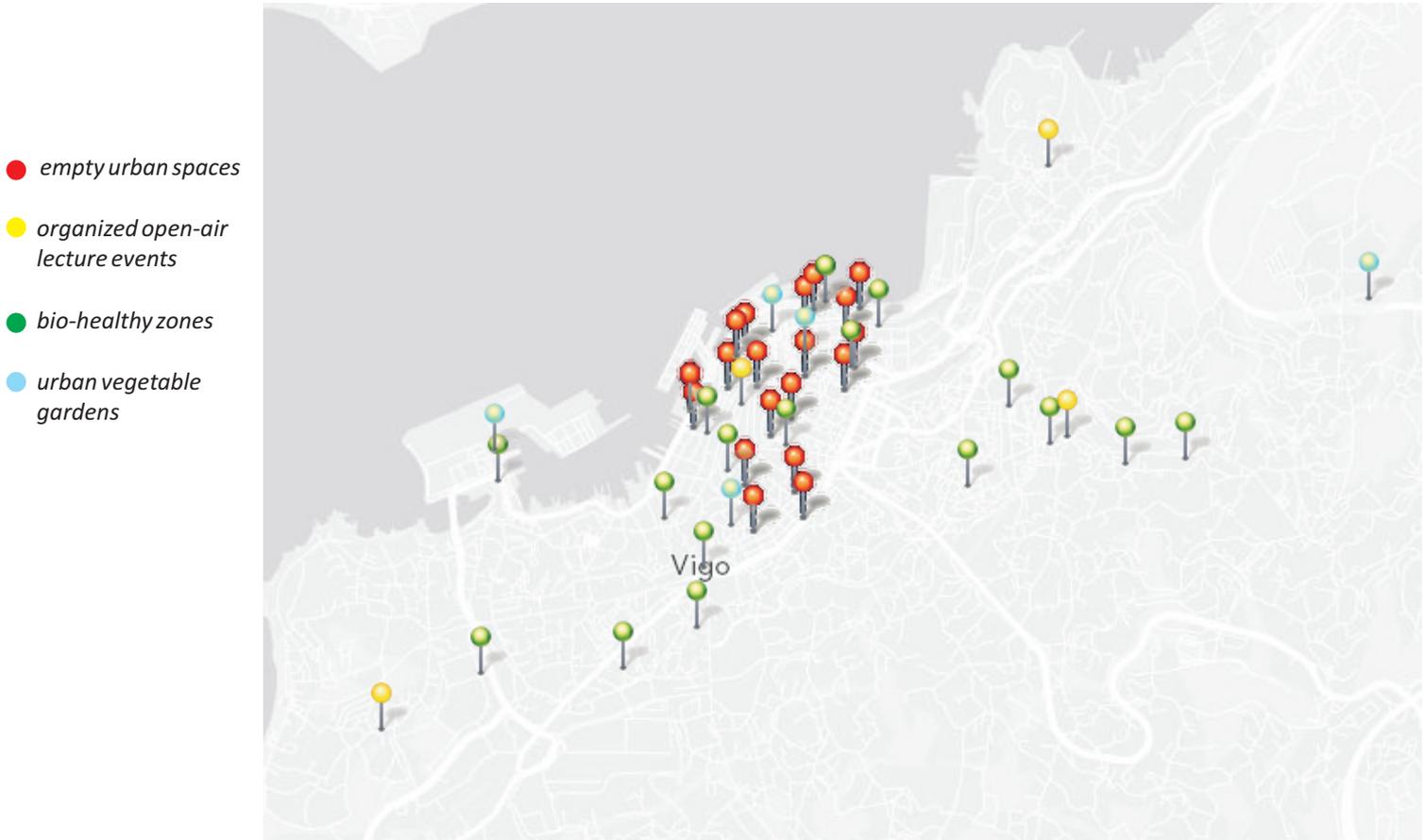
X) There are 4 urban vegetable gardens up to now. According to City Council, the number will grow.



XI) The places with organized open-air lecture events.

\* What is important to mention here is the fact that those three activities are organized by city authorities and with a big amount of public money. The healthy zones are free. But for participate in urban gardens, you need to have a course (with a fee of 5 euros) and then you need to reserve your place there. Up to now, all places are reserved. All seeds are free provided by city.

Then I compared above-mentioned points with empty locations that I found around the city. As example I selected 20. I also used that 20 points in STREETSEEN challenge. So I have the result which of those places where most and less voted. (more about that I write in point 5c).



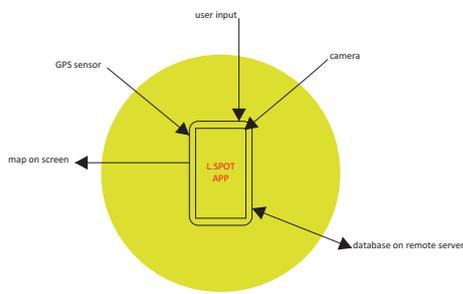
*XII) The distribution of above-mentioned activities in relation to exemplary empty urban spaces.*

What I've learnt from my analysis is the fact that most of proposed up to now outdoor activities are organized by city authorities. I discovered also that they are organized in city center old part within bigger squares or in park areas. All bio-healthy zones are located just next to green areas or next to playgrounds. It is interesting that those areas are in the less voted group of pics that I proposed to my visual survey. It shows that there are really a lack of places for social interaction in residential living zones. For doing sth outdoor, now there is the need to go to the city center or to park or beach area - so it is a kind of trip to do...

Another fact that pay my attention is that, that for these outdoor activities city paid a lot of money. And there is no spaces for temporary outdoor actions that do not have really special permanent and expensive stuff. I think that people should be encourage to start and carry on their own ideas of activities that can involve more citizens and produce more interactions, creating somehow new citizens network around the city. This way giving feedback where the future facilities can be provided by city. But in my opinion, sometimes is no need to have special urban furniture and facilities to make activities...I think that is more about people and their ideas. And of course about the places where they can implement them!

**b. Design:** Describe the key design elements of your project.

I had an aim to design a mobile application. After research and various analysis, I designed L.SPOT App. Here the schemes which explain key design elements:



map on screen showing added points

size of the point depends of level of activity there



#### L.SPOT APP:

- add new point to map
- add photo
- add description
- propose your activity

- follow the point
- set alert to specific point
- allow to be localize publicly in selected points
- be notified when someone is your selected points

It is connected to GPS. Application is running in the background when it detects that user is closed to the location that is followed by him, others users that follow this location get notifications. Everyone will be able to also add a new locations and new forms of activities. It might be possible with the app to fix meetings for specific locations with specific suggested activity on a given day / hour or design own route through the places where something going on (in a dynamic way based on real time data).

This kind of project will have an objective to activate existing empty spaces and give the places for people. And also aims to increase the awareness about the nearest surroundings.

### how this project would improve your city?

The L.SPOT app aims to link empty urban public spaces with people who look for spaces for their outdoor alternative activities and facilitates social interaction between them.

In the long term, the project aims to increase people's awareness about their surroundings. Additionally, it can serve for decision making in the process of converting temporary facilities into permanent. This way, the permanent structures, that city plans to implement, will respond to real needs of people and base on real-time feedback from users

#### c. Challenge:

I participated in Hyperlapse, StreetSeen and Social Media Scraping / Analysis.

The task related to social media I did with more general tag 'mapping' and I did spatial analysis to know where are the people who are talking about mapping issues.

Two first challenges I did for my final project.

Hyperlapse video shows mainly two types of terrain. The part located below is the residential and densely developed. Above it, there is a park with the remains of the fortifications. I chose this location because I'm interested in the difference in the character of these areas and the types of public spaces / its properties that within them exist and permanently come into being because of constant changes (most of them unexpected and caused by negligences, destructions, demolition etc). Here the link: <https://vimeo.com/66465983>

StreetSeen survey I did with a question: Which space is better for new alternative outdoor activities?

<http://streetseen.osu.edu/studies/pleasant-urban-spaces/vote>

I had 851 votes up to the time for my conclusions. I compare the properties of the most voted and less voted public spaces, trying to find out essential differences and words with which I can describe them. I chose a few variables: type of surface, given ordered public space / need to be designed, closed area / integrated into city, next to buildings / open terrain, kind of street next to it, presence of trees, presence of urban furniture, environmental quality of the space, intimacy / busy, existing functions next to it.

### *The most voted:*

All proposed images with abandoned spaces were voted much more than all grassy areas in parks. All areas are without a grass with pavement or concrete surface. There is not a big amount of trees there, only a few giving a shadow and located next to the given public space (not in the middle of).

We can distinguish two groups. On the one hand, those with the more intimate character being hidden or visually separated areas. They have often side walk around and are not next to the busy street. On the other hand, those more open and empty urban areas, coming into being after demolitions. Here the fact of being close to wider street does not seem to be important.



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### *The less voted:*

We can distinguish two groups. On the one hand all areas between residential buildings with lawn or given urban furniture. They are also next to various services and have the busy street next to it or parking place. All of them are more or less designed, without any empty space being kind of transit places for quick rest between shopping or on the way home – office. They are more busy areas and not separated from the streets.

On the other hand, we have the grassy group with all pics from parks. The open green areas with a lot of trees. There is not a building next to them. Often the terrain is steep. Most of them have trees and not a typical square shape, being more of an irregular kind of area.



The results give very positive feedback that people really care about their city and do not want to have “dead” places in their living urban space.

It is interesting that the stereotype most often repeated by city authorities that people would like to use green areas, is not confirmed in this survey. It is the result that seems to be very positive. I interpret this fact as growing awareness of the people that the empty, abandoned or just unused more urban spaces (not just parks) we can also revive by the new activity. It is obvious that people feel the need to fulfill the holes created in by the demolition of abandoned houses or on the big empty, unused areas.

The results are surprisingly clear. That the people want to activate the areas that are more intimate or easily abandoned and unused among their living space. There is no need of urban furniture there and the regular space is needed for those social interactions.

**6) Final Product: LINK: <https://vimeo.com/67000422>**

**My final product is video animation which shows the concept of L.SPOT APP.**

**It has an aim to explain the problems which I want to solve. Then it shows the possible situation how the app can be used. I show also the activity diagrams which explain the functionality. And app in use.**

**7) I worked on this project by myself.**