Pandemic drive for synchronized smart political atmospheres

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Abstract

The etymology of the word atmosphere connects in our view the COVID-19 with the "airquake" concept of Peter Sloterdijk, materialized as consecutive to gas warfare and media-curated order of the postmodern era. This new "airquake '' overlaps the invasion of social networks power and deliberately sought globalization. In order to prepare our plead for synchronizing smart atmospheres, we explore the concepts of smart limit and smart place as derived from interdisciplinary architectural and technological approach, together with the new concept of smart political atmospheres, exploring further C. Borch's statement that "atmospheric design is intimately related to power".

We will complete in contradistinction the spherical trilogy proposed by Sloterdijk. E-governance is an aspect of a recently emerged sphere of the technological smart leap. This might be the ultimate one and we will define it as a meta-sphere, because it combines all the features of the sphere trilogy. This meta-sphere shares characteristics with the binomial user-technology bubble, the plurispheres of interdependent but self-sufficient modern environments, and with the broad ideological sheltering macrosphere of belonging-together that the internet offers.

The foam of smart atmospheres is no longer vague, but shaped by the meta-sphere of technology control. Atmospheres defined by visual, acoustic, aromatic, haptic, political, informational and architectural characteristics, will suffer a shift as a response to the pandemic, from collective to individual, from hierarchical to distributed (Elmer). This will limit it's architectural and multisensory sides to those related to homes, but will expunge politics and technology to a paradoxical familiar-remote field.

We see necessary synchronizing e-governance with these pandemic segregated immunity fields; synchronize is the generic word that correlates e-governance persuasion, decrease of the technology gap, andragogy and architectural staging in order to attain the larger objectives of efficient "management of possibilities"(Foucault).

Keywords*: smart place, smart atmosphere, meta-sphere, e-governance, synchronize*.

1. Main

1.1. Atmospheres

We choose to start this plea for a so-called synchronization of architectural atmospheres, by searching for meanings in the etymology of the word "**atmosphere**" composed of atmo - the Greek ἀτμός - atmos with its own meaning of vapors, and another Greek word σφαῖρα *(sphaira),* with the meaning of ball or globe. To the extent that we venture to find similarities between Greek and Sanskrit, we will reach a deeper meaning, in Sanskrit the closest term is that of *Atman* with the meaning of soul or inner self, inner voice. It's interesting how we can reconnect this group of sounds with the German word atmen, which means to breathe. In the same way, the closest phonic term to the sphere in Sanskrit is *Sphur* - to effulge, to radiate, with the associated noun *Sphuran* - brightness, enlightenment, superposed on a parallel meaning of throbbing, palpitating. It is difficult to overlook the phonetic similarity of the two words in Greek and Sanskrit, and we can thus move on to the valences of the word atmosphere that have become of interest today: self-effulgence, or reflection, self-radiation towards outside. The atmosphere is a term about the perception of the outside by the human psyche, and at the same time a radiation of the soul, of the psyche outside itself.

We find this term of great interest in the current pandemic context through its ability to influence human behavior. A visionary, P. Sloterdijk [17] highlighted in 2009 several types of hazard, so-called "**airquakes**'' by contradistinction with "earthquakes", defining the hazard related to phenomena with specific propagation, through the air: phenomena that do not lethally affect the body of a being, but the environment in which it lives, as examples given the use of poison gas during the First World War, or the prevalence of media induced misinformation or manipulation, another type of degraded environment, that of information. ”Atmoterorism”, at its extreme limit, is a type of terrorism linked to atmospheres, an anthropic hazard that turns the enemy's environment into a weapon aimed at him, e.g. Sarin gas use. This visionary theory of the German philosopher offers us the possibility of a very interesting classification of the current pandemic, as "airquake" - an unknown disease, possibly deadly, transmitted by air.

This pandemic changes all the atmospheric components, from the physical ones (the level of pollution and greenhouse gases) to the subtle ones, perceived and generated psychologically, through the competition of several aspects of modern life: technology, politics, identity. This shift in the quality of global atmospheres can be understood as having the quality of an ideological anthropological hazard superimposed on the medical type, because there remain unresolved issues related to the lack of local and global synchronization of human life atmospheres. Through the characteristics of the global response to the pandemic, interest shifts from the atmosphere of social and urban space, the outer place, to the little-considered atmosphere so far, of personal housing, which becomes atmosphere-generating and at the same time receives both material and psychological external influence. There is a migration, using Elmer's scheme, from a hierarchical social system to a

distributed system, from the collective to the individual character of any decision. This will limit architectural and multisensory perception happenings to those related to homes, but will expunge politics and technology to a paradoxical familiar-remote field.

The relatively sudden transformation of social life interests the architect through the opportunity to find solutions in the new paradigm in which the classic functions related to education programs, administration, commerce, offices all end up occupying the same place in space by digitally increased valence of the private home. Staging and re-decoration of interiors are the new ”it ” occupations among the young and the old, be they professional architects and designers, or simply citizens locked inside their own *coquille*, that was eight hours per day vacant before the emergency lock-down procedures.

In order to better understand the conditions for the emergence of a possible ideological hazard in this pandemic context, we will present again and anew some concepts specific to architecture, with their new variants given by modern society. These concepts are essential in defining a certain atmosphere and very sensitive to changes in the quality of atmospheres.

1.2. Places and limits

The place is a basic piece of the construction of an architectural theory, associated with each act of building and with each community living together, united by the permanence of the concept of "belonging together". If we were to propose a starting point for his understanding, the place could be seen in the same way as the American writer Robert Pogue Harrison, in the sense of the strange loop strange highlighted by Hofstadter [7], through his relationship with the soul (*atman*): “In the fusion between place and soul, the soul is a recipient of the place to the same extent that the place is a recipient of the soul ”[4]. The blunt definition of the dictionary is: a position determined in space. Here is the source of the search for meaning: a first critical question arises, namely, "determined by whom, in what way, for whom?". Another, more provocative question: "what is space?". From here begins an interdisciplinary adventure, because place and space are basic concepts of architecture and philosophy.

A natural step would be to be able to give this familiar word some definitions of equivalence: the place is a physically and theoretically delimited space; the place is a uniquely identifiable area; the place could be a unit of measurement of perception in architecture. A modern theory, rooted in phenomenology, of architecture adds over the layers of historical and constructive significance, the star concept of *genius loci*, a spirit of place that inevitably defines and influences the atmosphere of the place, the accumulation of perception with the consciousness of a *Geschichte* in the sense of Heidegger and a political-geographical situation at a given time. Moreover, we will continue by discussing a concept **smart place**, which unites the field of interest of the place as an essential working concept of architecture, with its corresponding data generated and analyzed in real time and the effects of analyzing this amount of data, respectively the self-regulation capacity.

In order to make friends with this abstract concept - the "place"- we can bring it closer by adorning it with **limits**. We can explain spatial limits (home, neighborhood, park), cultural limits (areas loaded with a unifying tradition), exhaustive limits (coordinates of the nature of longitude and latitude to define an exact geographical position) or atmospheres (places of street events, adoration of religious idols). Another kind of limit is the mentioned concept of Christian Norberg-Schulz, so familiar to the world of architectural theorists, *genius loci*. The Norwegian theorist nostalgically redefines this *genius loci* for the theory of architecture. A concept very adaptable to cultural entities, which draws its sap from the eloquence of tradition and is invoked to justify and imagine architectural atmospheres, helping to identify a place to another, in space and time, thus limiting it, but keeping and yet the ephemeral and immaterial character [13]: "Architecture means to visualize the genius loci, and the task of the architect is to create meaningful places, whereby he helps man to dwell." [14]

The defining element of place as seen in architectural theory is the boundary, the limit. We therefore justify the existence of the work-place by the existence of the limits that separate it and identify it from other places. But how can we explain a limit to **the intelligent place**? It is not limited to the geographical place or its construction, but to an entire evanescent and permeable virtual structure, through its ability to influence other places and other systems, or to self-influence, to self-generate. Influencing other intelligent places and influencing oneself, we find here the bases of visualizing a model that inferentially connects all intelligent places globally, recurrently, and determined by means of technologically generated algorithms.

A place is an existential space, defined by the limit of this space traveled in time. A smart place is similarly delimited, and digitally augmented in addition. The personal home is a smart place, because it meets all these characteristics, being of interest through the effect of its atmosphere on social life. We will refer to the home, in the sense of shelter and intelligent place, when we will use the term "place" from now.

The place and its limit, as essential concepts of architecture, would be interesting to study with methods that belong to science, especially when they are in deed connected to cybernetics and state-of-the-art technologies.

The functioning of **an intelligent place** can be seen by analogy with that of a living organism: it generates data and information, even having the ability to synthesize them, it can be experienced both physically and digitally; at the same time, he gathers the information he metabolizes and can self-regulate according to it. We cannot talk about reproductive capabilities, but an interesting phenomenon is observed, especially in recent months dominated by the effects of the pandemic: an intelligent place can be projected outside its physical boundaries, in countless lines, and is extensively perceived or experienced visually, audibly and informational from any distance, through technological interfaces and with the help of the common will of the members of society. We can talk about places that already virtually circumscribe multiple other places, with a tendency to globalize the smart place.

The role of **the intelligent limit** is even more interesting, somehow resulting from this virtual generalization of the place it brings into existence. Permeable or perhaps repressive, discretionary or imposed, the intelligent limit should in itself be an object of study. The phenomena of information exchange make it possible for the collected data to be used in any other intelligent places that depend on this data. We can adjust the level of indoor lighting according to sensors that measure the intensity of natural light, but the data provided by these light sensors can be used at the territorial level in conducting studies on the evolution of energy consum, or studies on the global atmospheric qualities, or maybe the effects of climate change. These studies will return data to other smart place systems, or back to the basic system, the original smart place. The limits of the intelligent place are, in the extreme, subject to disintegration, paradoxically, for the benefit of its prosperity.

1.3. Neutral identity as a risk factor

The globalization of the intelligent place in parallel with the disintegration of the intelligent limit, is a phenomenon with potential for antropic hazard of ideological type. This, superimposed over the pandemic conditions that impose a low physical limit in terms of space, is interesting to look at from the perspective of catastrophe theory in mathematics.

We applied the theory of catastrophe to the relationship between the congruence of values for the social and the governing environment, and the **identity of the intelligent place**, with a bifurcation factor considered to be the increasing level of control ceded to technology, where e-governance may draw. This mathematical theory helps us to analyze how allowing an increase in the control exercised by technology (this undebatable new idol) can affect the evolution of intelligent place atmospheres, by creating conditions for shifts (negative or positive) in the degree of social acceptance of this control. This characteristic of unpredictability in behavior is the premise of a potential anthropogenic hazard.

A determining factor of this leap is the value of the **identity of the place**. Awareness of the importance identity of the place has, must lead to concerns about the assessment, preservation and prediction of this identity which has an organic nature by being impermanent, but can be reproduced indefinitely through rehabilitation, conservation, restoration and raising that are *sine qua non* acts of sustainable development.

The identity of a smart place can vary freely between two opposing boundaries. We assimilate the positive value with a strong identity, sustained over time by the continuity of collective memory, a real cultural or ethnic representation and the authenticity and multitude of data in local and foreign exchanges. These cumulative characteristics can be visualized in the form of a three-dimensional urban mandala, the three dimensions being geography, culture and information. The negative value is given by the dismantling of the feeling of belonging, by the loss or destruction of cultural values and by nonexistence or lack of credibility correlated with the manipulative intentions of the information that constitute inputs-outputs. Between these two extremes, the identity passes through a value range of the *no*

man's land type which, in our conception, does not constitute a minimum of identity, but a neutrality specific to new places artificially implanted or rooted in tradition but inorganically rehabilitated, without authentic cultural landmarks or which can be mastered over time, driven and administered by scientific methods and technology.

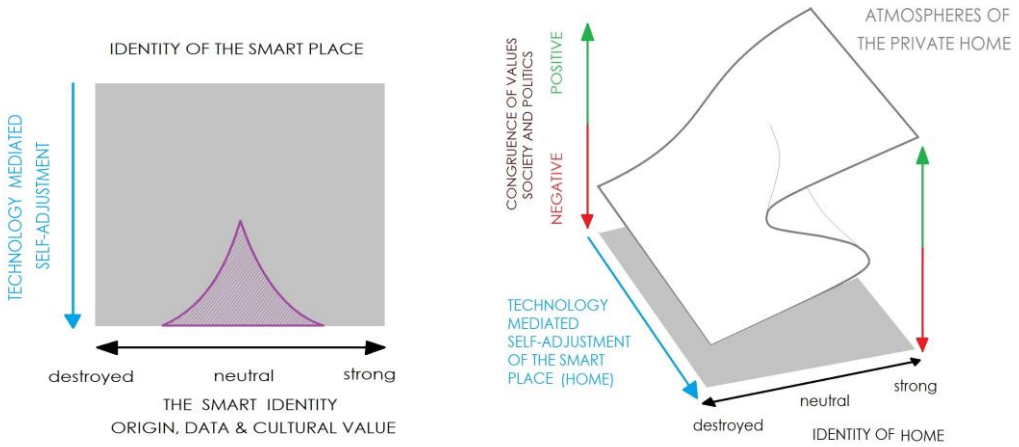

Fig. 1 and **2.** Catastrophe Theory - the cusp of unstable smart atmosphere behavior.

The stronger the place has an identity, the higher the chance of coordination of social aspirations with the ethics of local policies. The more the identity of the intelligent place is indifferent, even until its annulment, the more the place will be lived with frustration, rejected and left to decay (neglect, depopulation, crime) with the help of undebated unethical policies.

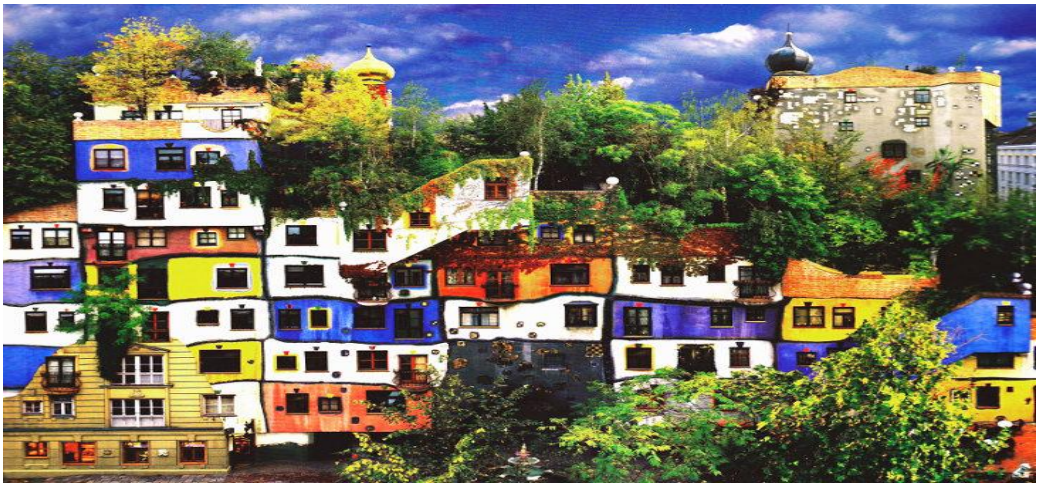

Fig. 3. Positive architectural identity of the place - Hundertwasserhaus, Kegelgasse, Vienna, Austria
Source:https://inhabitat.com/hundertwassers-incredible-living-building-hosts-more-greenery-on-its-facade-than -original-land /

Fig. 4. Neutral architectural identity of the place denied by owners - Block of flats, Ferentari, Bucharest, Romania
Source: https://www.google.ro/amp/s/www.vice.com/amp/ro/article/bjdnbd/unde -the-family-evacuated-of-boron-has-arrived

This theoretical application is a plea in favor of the current current of architecture, having avant-garde supporters like Peter Zumthor, a new approach to living space with the full engagement of all the senses, dethroning the absolute supremacy of sight, and putting in a new spotlight on the intuition that gathers its subtle and subliminal information from all sources of sensory reception: hearing, smell, haptic interaction, atmosphere. This atmosphere, intelligent or not, is what gives the strength and resilience of the intelligent place, it is that quality that an individual can evaluate instantly, without even distinguishing all the constructive or visual details of this place. The intuition of the atmosphere of the place is probably related to the evolution of our species, to the survival instinct of *homo sapiens* put in front of an opponent equipped with the same sharp weapon of intelligence, the other man. This intuition can also be manipulated, but this is the subject of another discussion.

1.4. The smart metasphere or smart political atmosphere

Identity is a defining factor of the atmosphere of the place, and the atmosphere is always defined by a plethora of aspects related to architecture, senses, cultuel, history, politics and digital world. All these components can be divided into two major classes, a material class, physical (architecture and sensory perception) and an informational class (overlapping cultural, historical, political and digital characteristics of the place). Smart political atmospheres are very subtly defined by all these factors, and it is not enough to look at a photograph to intuit the atmosphere of that place, because we will lack determinations related to some essential senses like smell and hearing, or the vibration given by this continuous connection. and interconnection with the political sphere, media and internet,

always subliminally linked with the *id* of the place, the culture or traditions still followed, the perceived and happened history, *Geschichte* in the sense of Heidegger.

It is interesting how, through the atmosphere raised to the rank of intelligent atmosphere, the foam [7] of smart atmospheres is no longer vague, but shaped by the **metasphere** of technology control. We further distinguish the definition by Sloterdijk: we inhabit a society that is best described as a foam, a concentration or even overpopulation of bubbles, which has as characteristics: a high complexity, a high degree of entropy and lack of a center of reference. The constituent elements of postmodern foam are these bubbles, microspheres that are supported in an interdependent and codependent structure, at the same time inaccessible to each other and inseparable from each other. Sloterdijk describes this structure as chaotic, inspired by the concept of "connected isolations" imposed by the architecture group Morphosis.

Fig. 5. Bucharest Dristor blocks of flats - foam example in urban landscape

This formation, this abstract concept applied at the social level, describes us, with the greatest accuracy, the society of the moment, in which each of us builds a microsphere, a world of our own, a home, but these personal worlds do not intersect, although some the others. Therefore, this pluralistic formation has no meaning, purpose or immunity in itself.

Urban housing is a very telling example of social foam. At the same time, they become of great interest in the pandemic context, as absolute physical support, for all human activities, in case of imposing absolute isolation measures. Homes are no longer simple sets, they are no longer limited to the role of *backstage*, but become intelligent places par excellence, of an unprecedented complexity, all the more exposed to ideological hazard. Housing units remain, both in their vertical development and in their horizontal development, communicating microspheres but completely cognitively inaccessible to each other. As places per se, their particular atmospheres are influenced by the type of identity (negative, positive, neutral) and political circumstances. At the same time, urban housing is self-generating its own

atmosphere, by connecting to the smart urban and regional atmosphere, radiating this atmosphere created, in the sense of the etymology initially discussed, in this smart social atmosphere.

In the current pandemic context we can contemplate this orb, a recently emerged sphere of the technological smart leap. This might be the ultimate one and we will define it as a metasphere, because it combines all the features of the sphere trilogy as seen by Sloterdijk. This metasphere shares characteristics with the binomial user-technology bubble, the plurispheres of interdependent but self-sufficient modern environments, and with the broad ideological sheltering macrosphere of belonging-together that the internet offers. Currently, the defensive role of architecture is undermined by the access to information given by the Internet correlated with the society's own predisposition to misinformation. However, a solution can emerge from the holistic approach, because so far we have approached the material political atmospheres strictly materially and spatially. Using the space-time unit, we can address the current situation by analyzing the second term, applying the concept of time over intelligent atmospheres. How is time a relevant topic in this case?

1.5. Synchronizing smart political atmospheres

We have determined the identity of the place, i.g. of the home, as essential in maintaining a stable smart atmosphere. We have shown that we can interpret the neutrality of the identity of the place as a risk factor in the dynamics of intelligent atmospheres. Is there a factor that can flatten the effect of catastrophic behavior, the way that in the mathematical theory we reach the butterfly chart?

The identity in general and that of this microsphere of the home in particular, has another aspect, which we call the ability to **synchronize**; it is a tendency and a need to relate in harmony with the other microspheres within the metasphere - the intelligent political atmosphere. "Synchronize" is the generic word that correlates e-governance persuasion, decrease of the technology gap, andragogy and architectural (recently enhanced) staging in order to attain the larger objectives of efficient "management of possibilities" (Foucault).

We consider the time factor interesting to apply once relative to the course of human life, and on the other hand relative to the evolution of technology seen as a development over time of the process from Lotek (low-tech) [18] to Hitech (high-tech). The adult human character with decision-making power has a temporal evolution marked by ages, from youth to old age. The technique used by the community (smaller or larger, in our case the family) has evolved historically, or even during the life of the characters, from the traditional technique, based on empirical knowledge and manufacturing, to advanced technology, industrial, digital, with the corresponding marking of the industrial revolutions culminating in the last, the fourth.

Time relative to human life and relative to the progress of technology is an important factor for the identity of the intelligent place, which exists as an atmosphere in the field of perception (always prone to prejudices of experience),

experimentation (facilitated or not by hand) and information (digitally accessible). The moment (in time) of "intuition" and "irradiation" of the atmosphere is defining for its quality.

On the young - old axis (inexperienced vs. experienced) we find the so-called conflict between generations, which in connection with e-government, materializes through the opposition of attitude between young members of society (who have a relative apathy and lack of interest and information in connection with politics and administration, evident by absenteeism and declining turnout, accentuated in the pandemic context of 2020) and senior members of society for whom these topics are of great interest. Synchronization on this axis has on the one hand aspects of persuasion policies in order to stimulate the interest of young people in political and governmental events and in selecting the correct media information, in order to avoid misinformation and manipulation (the main means of manipulation are currently social networks, environment for the new *modus vivendi* of young people). On the other hand, the elderly and those who are interested and socially engaged in the democratic and electoral process, are the most disadvantaged in terms of access to technology and andragogy, especially on the use of information systems.

So we have a paradoxically apathetic social category of young people, with skills and know-how in technology, doubled by a high capacity to accumulate knowledge (rhetorically referred to as the millennials), and a social category of elderly (baby boomers) who are engaged in democratic conversation and discourse, but who have little knowledge of the use of technology. These two desynchronized categories are put more in difficulty, by the so-called social distance, more precisely physical, by isolation in the microspheres of their homes, resulting in a large social mass with difficulties in experiencing democracy and the benefits offered by e-government. We can make an argument for the above by contemplating the data regarding the turnout in Romania in 2020 in the parliamentary elections, where despite the important stake of the electoral act, we had another decrease compared to the last election year. We cannot say that the motivation would be the anxiety of illness, the media constantly reporting a worrying crowd of visitors in shopping malls and other public locations. We see as a reason the lack of synchronization, interruption of communication and mutual support, both material, psychological and informational, in the context of physical distancing.

These necessary policies to synchronize smart atmospheres can only start in the field of education, with a boost to the identity of the smart place by introducing in the curriculum compulsory education about politics and governance, starting at an early age, perhaps at the same age as children start using advanced technology (tablets, smart phone, etc.); the other half is to find optimal andragogy programs with an emphasis on mastering information technology, so that independent access to governance platforms and information can be done easily without age discrimination. As an example, the Romanian vaccination platform was almost inaccessible to use for appointments to older citizens, who mostly relied on younger relatives to schedule theirs.

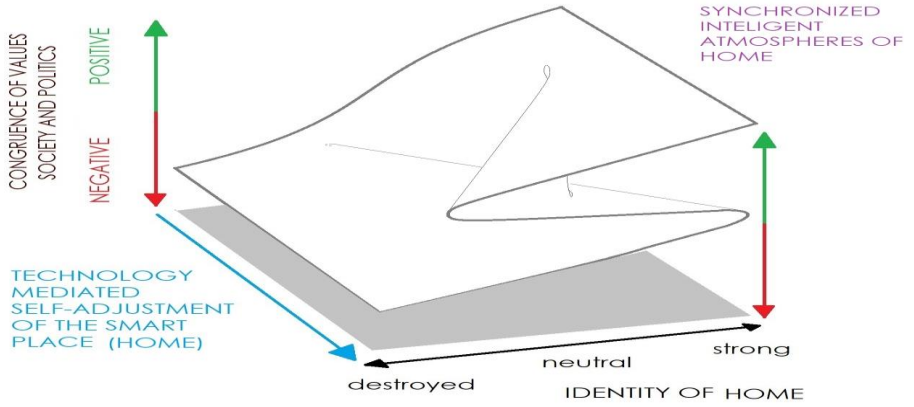

Fig. 6. The butterfly surface of behaviors resulted from synchronizing smart atmospheres

On the graph of surfaces generated by the behavior of smart atmospheres, following the introduction of the bifurcation factor of taking control by technology, we observe an intermediate area, a level representing behaviors so unlikely that can be ignored. Adding a new variation, a "butterfly factor", in the theory of catastrophe, we obtain a new family of behavioral surfaces, allowing the visualization of a way to overcome the uncertainty given by the cusp dual behaviour value. A drawing to help us in our visualization should contain five dimensions, but we can approximate a shape of the behavior surface if we keep two variables constant. A butterfly factor can generate a reduced area focused on the type of neutral identity (characteristic of most housing units that represent the places where most human activities happen in the lock-down periods characteristic of a pandemic such as 2020).

2. Conclusions

We interpret the possibility of this surface of balanced behavior as a chance for resilience in the most difficult psychological conditions, those of a neutral identity of the inhabited interior space, combined with the lack of social interaction, the takeover of technology (where e-government platforms might be perceived), and lack of congruence between personal values and those pursued by the administrative power. Synchronizing intelligent atmospheres together with moving the identity of places from the neutral zone can generate a social response that will ensure a better chance of survival in the event of a more dangerous pandemic event than in 2020.

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