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Cities and Self-organization

Carlo Cellamare

The explosion of self-organization

In the contemporary city, we are today more and more witnessing different practices and processes of “re-appropriation of space”: regeneration of empty buildings, spaces of cultural production, urban gardens, green areas given renewed significance and re-shaped public spaces, and so on. Beside this, we could also mention experimentations that are activating new social services and welfare spaces, and finally squatting projects, which are defining different modes of co-existence, housing and service provision.

This is a vast field of activity and experience, with the widespread involvement and the leading role of the inhabitants, organized or not in committees or associations, and other local actors. Such experiences are both illegal and legal, and question the relationship and the very meaning of the institutions.

We should even consider in particular micro-practices that are able to broaden and transform the city from the bottom up, alongside more stable forms of social production. A specific kind of “city making” built upon a mix of practices, social relations and modes of local activation.

As a consequence, the way we are looking at the city is radically changing: questioning the relationship between the State and the citizens, these processes of re-appropriation are re-configuring both the mechanism of place making as well as the organization of social relations and local services, thus questioning the very concept of “public” and “publicness” in the city.

These practices of re-appropriation are representing different modes of city organization as well as different cultures of action/policy making in the contemporary city. They are also representing different modes of what “public” means in the city: some practices of re-appropriation are acting as collective actions that take into consideration the mechanism of social inclusion, while others are acting in a way which could be described more as private, or specific to some groups only, rather than designing public/collective actions.

In many cases, these are practices and processes of re-appropriation of the city that are also processes of resignification of spaces and production of places. Among these practices,

many of them are re-opening spaces or re-activating some specific territories/neighbourhoods benefiting from very localized creativity and capitalizing on social relations that are fully embedded in local societies.

We should also critically consider that practices of re-appropriation are often substituting the role of local policies and in some case promoting actions that are illegal/informal in a context where institutions are losing financial capacity as well as accountability.

These experimentations are so focused on action that are simultaneously redefining the modes of social conflict as well as the routines and spaces of citizenship participation. These practices can be considered sites where to experiment and shape political capacity, thus questioning the very functioning of local democracy.

This context gives us the possibility to critically analyse the processes of re-appropriation that are changing the contemporary city, not only in big cities but also in small localities. We should be attentive to possible points of strength but also to ambiguities and challenges linked to these experimental processes.

First of all, considering the tension between the possibility to define different models of local activation and cultural/political production and, at the same time, the problematic erosion of the capacity of institutions in answering local needs. We should consider whether practices of re-appropriation are de facto substituting the role of institutions as well as weakening the transformative impact of traditional social conflict.

Some cities like Rome are strongly shaped by these practices and this condition is being mirrored all around Italy and Europe. If we consider the Global South, some of these practices have historically played a relevant role in the production of local economies as well as in shaping parts of the city (Hou, 2010; Mehta, 2004). This pushes us to consider the role of more structural dimensions in the critical analysis of re-appropriation practices.

In the current climate of weakening welfare states, we should consider whether and how these practices of re-appropriation are substituting the important role of institutions, thus reinforcing neoliberalism, and, as a consequence, an unequal distribution of disadvantage.

Self-organization in the history of the city

Self-organization has always existed; it has been a fundamental component of the city. It was often the ordinary way of construction and evolution of the city, where the interventions of authority and political power were concentrated in some spaces and in some works of the city. Self-organization was placed within the evolutionary principles of pre-modern society.

Modern society, above all starting from the constitution of the modern States and the relative monarchies (but the democratic States have not been different in this), has instead tended to control or to absorb such processes (Bourdieu, 1994). In this sense, modern society has introduced all forms of control of space, which can be traced back to the logic of the panopticon (Bentham, 1791; Foucault, 1975; Scandurra, 2003; Decandia, 2008).

The same urban planning, although born with the needs of good management of the city, the solution of the health-sanitary problems of the cities in rapid growth, the rethinking according to mobility and efficiency, represented in many ways a form of control of space, as well as management of the soil regime. Haussmann's Paris is the best known and most striking example (Scandurra, 2001; Harvey, 2003).

Even more, modern society has introduced categorization, and consequently separation and dichotomy, between institutions (here understood in the sense of State institutions, as functional apparatuses of the modern State) and inhabitants, in turn categorized as citizens, and more later as residents. In the modern State, the introduction of specific duties changed the relationship with the city. On one hand, such duties were defined in terms of the exclusive roles of specific state apparatus to which the decision is delegated with regard to certain aspects (thus related to jurisdiction and authority), in particular in the management of the city. On the other, they were considered as specific professional skills for the definition (interpreted in an exclusively technical sense, but in reality always also political) of those same aspects delegated and made exclusive to specific categories of subjects specially trained (engineers, architects, planners, etc.). Such transformation has determined a great process of expropriation of the capacity for transformation of the city by the inhabitants, and even of the design capacity to think it (and of the connected creative possibility). Alongside this

dynamic, we recognize a process of autonomy of the political, as a dimension in itself with respect to the evolutionary processes of the social, often constituting it as a category managed by a group of experts and expunged from the ordinary life of the inhabitants.

Despite all, self-organization has survived, has continued to live in the ordinary life of the city although in conditions of subalternity, often considered illegal, putting back into question that separation between institutions and inhabitants¹.

On the opposite, as we said before, today we are facing with an explosion of experiences of self-organization, even beyond the dimension of protest and the great social and urban movements that have characterized all the continents, from the Arab Spring to protests in the squares of Greece and Turkey to the great movements that have gone through New York and the United States (Harvey, 2012a, Graeber, 2007). Above all in countries where people experience the inadequacy of local institutions and administrations and their inability to respond satisfactorily and according to the public interest to the social needs that emerge in urban contexts, the territories tend to develop widely self-organization forms and overcome the autonomy of the politician and, in particular, of the institutions. They even aim to manage without them.

These processes must also be read within a change in the political and institutional context. In fact, in conjunction with a strong and prevailing affirmation and action of a neoliberal-style society, it is emerging a progressive orientation of the State to support such models and trends. The State seems often to be more allied or dominated by economic forces and private interests (and therefore the political dimension is subordinate to the economic one) than committed to protecting the public interest of citizens. This orientation of the "public", which is part of a historical process of retreating of the welfare state since the 80s of the last century, is so strong that citizens often perceive the State apparatus, and in particular local administrations, such as the main enemy to face. Within this context, we can also better understand the growing attention that, in different ways

1 Even in cultural terms, in the context of urban planning as a discipline and scientific research, a different tradition has been kept alive, which found in Geddes (1915) and in many other scholars its main representatives (Paba, 2010).

and in different contexts, has been addressed to the theme of the “common good” and “common goods”, and more extensively of the *commoning* processes. Therefore, if the modern State had expropriated the capacity for planning and collective management of their life contexts due to a “superior” public need, today it is seen as the less adequate interpreter and no longer have people recognized its capacity for define a “public interest”. Faced with this problematic loss, it is therefore clear and profound the need to reconstruct processes that define a public and collective dimension of coexistence. Similarly, the need to reconstruct “community” dimensions of coexistence within diversities emerges with force, where social relations gain centrality to qualify daily life.

Finally, the forms of self-organization also represent an overcoming of participation as it has been progressively interpreted. The participation of citizens in the collective and political life of the city has a noble and very important meaning. The difficulties and distortions of the concrete experiences have disqualified it, disappointing expectations, creating processes more characterized by the construction of consensus if not the development of forms of “social buffer” with respect to problems and conflicts, causing great frustration and increasing the distrust in administrations. Faced with dissatisfaction with participation, when transformed into a farce, forms of self-organization are a way of seeking solutions in autonomy.

Discussing self-organization

As a consequence of this evolution of the political and social processes that cross the cities, there are different dimensions, not always co-present, that we can grasp in the experiences of self-organization.

Firstly, there is a dimension linked to the spontaneous process of the inhabitants of use and management of the living context, of the construction of the city and of the production of both physical and symbolic, both material and immaterial space, of self-organization in daily life, of care and management of the places of collective life. To interpret these processes, to grasp the “structural coupling” between space production and re-signification processes, we need to develop an approach able to read and interpret urban practices, and the world of signs and meanings that they carry with them. As Castoriadis (2001) said,

«the symbolic leans on the material».

A second dimension is linked to the contestation of the prevailing models and of the dynamics of political, social and economic transformation of which we spoke previously. It is often activated starting from resistance to forms of urban speculation, from the reclaiming of disregarded rights and better urban living conditions, from opposition to subaltern urban development models to prevailing economic and private interests, which are part of the extractive capitalist dimension (Mezzadra, Neilson, 2017), of the commodification of the city (Harvey, 2012b), of biopolitics (Foucault, 2001). Not remaining in the dimension of pure resistance, these experiences develop strong planning and tend to practice alternative perspectives. All this gives rise, in the first place, to a strong political intention, a clear stance towards the prevailing cultural and political models, which generates a re-appropriation of the city's spaces and their re-signification. Secondly, as we said, it is an action not only of resistance, but also of construction of alternatives. Although supported by a deep critical reflection, the dimension of action prevails in these experiences. The realization of change is a fundamental objective². In this dynamic, it is to recognize that such experiences have the ability to construct a real and meaningful politics. Thirdly, they constitute the attempt, as far as possible, to build spaces of autonomy, which others define spaces of freedom, i.e. spaces where rules of coexistence defined by alternative models and values take place³.

2 The dimension of "constituent processes" is often associated with the concreteness of the objectives. In reality, there may be some distortion in this perspective. The "constituent" character of self-organization processes is often associated with the definition of new and / or alternative "institutions". This objective, which nevertheless has an important political character that should not be underestimated and aims at thinking and constructing alternatives also in the institutional field (also for obtaining a formal recognition), is criticized because it can bring back to the same problematic and critical issues in which the structures of the State apparatus. Therefore, the same "institutional" character is questioned and constitutes the problem, although it could be developed through participatory or commoning processes.

3 In this regard, it should be noted that these are not spaces without rules or criteria of cohabitation, although these may not be explicit or defined. Taking up some elements of the debate in the previous note, these are "dismissing" rather than "institutional" or "constituent" processes. They aim at deconstructing the formal rules (and also the implicit social models) of the "established society" (Castoriadis, 1975), because in this historical moment it is much stronger, with the fundamental objective of not remaining subordinate and conditioned and

The third dimension is completely different and can easily generate distortions. However, it is often dictated by practical needs and is also found in very radical experiences, such as squatting experiences and housing movements. This is the need to make up for the shortcomings and / or absences of the public administration, to give concrete answers to urban and social problems in a context of progressive retreat of the welfare state. Some examples are the construction of autonomous responses to the housing problem (squatting experiences, but also the illegal housing or large slums all over the world), or to the lack of green areas and public spaces (from which the great proliferation of self-managed green areas and shared gardens), up to the theme of work. It is clear that this (implicitly) substitute action of the shortcomings of the public administration must be accompanied by recalling it to its commitments and tasks. However, this dynamic generates some distortions. Firstly, there is the risk of creating a social buffer, although this may be unavoidable. Given the lack of listening and response from the public administration, social need is urgent and calls for an answer. Unintentionally in this way, the public body is relieved of a problem and there is a risk of reducing social conflict. Secondly, in autonomously seeking answers to problems, “only those who make it go forward”. There is the risk of putting in difficulty the weaker subjects (except when the forms of self-organization expressly aim at mutual aid, as in the struggle for the home) and give space to the stronger ones, generally represented in the contexts of hardship and poverty by illegal economies and organized crime. Thirdly, there are open spaces for the re-examination of what the public interest is, which can be guided by a profound and serious political reflection, but can also emerge from unregulated processes dictated by private interests (as often happens in the territories of unplanned built areas). In fact, there are several “public cultures” (Cancellieri, Ostanel, 2014). The differentiated character of political processes and positions can cause possible distortions, if not

creating spaces of autonomy. However, this does not mean that these are pure deregulation spaces, but rather the attempt to create the conditions to be able to develop autonomous processes. These will then structure coexistence and “life forms” (Agamben, 2011), in their turn “generative”. Although starting from quite different cultural and political assumptions, the reflection on “generativity” (Magatti, 2012) actually fits into this path.

also anti-democratic dynamics. The same “popular economies”, born in South America as an alternative to extractive capitalism, give space to ambiguities that now put them under critical lens (Gago, 2015).

Because of this third dimension, the experiences of self-organization can today be characterized by profound ambiguity. Their interpretation does not arise in the wake of a romantic or apologetic vision, but leads to a critical approach, based on discernment, on the ability to critically read practices and processes of self-organization through the values and ideas of the city they bear.

Self-organization as a structural fact and the relationship with politics

The historical process of development of forms of self-organization calls for some considerations and some questions. A first consideration is the recognition, unlike what happened in modern society, of the multiplicity of subjects that build the city and “produce space”. To make the city are not only institutions or economic forces, but many other active subjects, who may also have the ability to be or become protagonists, in some cases with better outcomes and modalities of the institutions themselves.

The question is therefore “who is caring for the public interest if the institution does not do it any more?” and how it is then produced and defined. The city is a “field” *à la* Bourdieu, a place of conflict between these forces, where spaces of autonomy can be built.

The second consideration is that self-organization is a structural fact⁴. It is not just an anomaly, a factor of protest, but a form by which society reorganizes itself.

Self-organization is (or has returned to be) a fundamental engine of “making city”, not only in terms of care, maintenance and responsibility of the local living space, but also in terms of “production of space” in all its dimensions, material and immaterial, of a structural factor that builds the city. The question is rather whether this structural character is linked

⁴ In reality, if self-organization is a structural fact, it can still be considered a question. In this contribution, we do give an affirmative answer to this question. In some ways, it can be considered a recognition of a constitutive factor, of its founding role.

to the recognition of existing ordinary practices and political intentions that construct spaces of autonomy or if it is rather the consequence of the change in the ways of acting of state structures and the retreat of the *welfare state*. In the latter case, the prospect is the disintegration of the city as a *polis* and as *civitas*, as an organic body that - despite its differences and conflicts - is self-governing and produces its own culture of coexistence. It follows a situation in which, on one side, the social subjects, especially the weaker ones, are abandoned to themselves and, on the other, we must develop a difficult path of reconstruction of the "common good" in a context of preponderance of economic forces and functionalization of social skills and abilities to the "extractive capitalism".

A final consideration is to highlight how the experiences of self-organization are social laboratories and of cultural production. They are today the spaces where the production of politics and political culture takes place. In this sense, such spaces are today to be enhanced because those ones where the future can be thought (Appadurai, 2013).

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Searching for an “enabling” space. Dialogues and bridges between institutions and self-organization practices for a collaborative territorial planning and management

Adriana Goni Mazzitelli

This *Tracce Urbane* issue takes inspiration from the International Conference *Cities and Self-Organization*, held on December 2017 in Rome, Italy, in collaboration with Sapienza University of Rome and the AESOP – Association of European Schools of Planning. The seminar aim was to contribute to the debate on the conceptualization and experiences of self-organization in the history of planning theory and in contemporary practices. We introduce here some relevant statements emerging from the debate and some interesting connections between the several contributions, focusing on the central theme, among the urban self-organization debate¹, of what we called a possibility of creating an “enabling space”.

With Francesca Cognetti and Luca Lo Re, we defined the “enabling space” as the “context that allows to ‘make’ and to participate”, an “enabling” character for everyone, because it requires each one to get out of their own frames and routines, to find collective solutions to deal with common problems and satisfy their needs, interests and expectations. Therefore, it has to do with forms of redistribution of power and the creation of a new culture of urban government; working on inclusive processes able to valorise social and institutional capabilities, to reinforce them, but also able to create new ones.

If we search for this concept in the history of planning, we need to understand how ancient forms of self-organization were gradually deleted from the planning practice and theory as well as from the government system. As Lidia Decandia stated in a key speech of the Conference², modernity and rationality in territorial planning avoid to consider local cultural practices, memories, identity, and other ancient knowledge that give populations the autonomy and sovereignty in the govern of their

1 See the general introduction by Carlo Cellamare to the items and debate on “Cities and Self-organization” in this issue.

2 The fourth issue of *Tracce Urbane* journal will be dedicated again to the debate on “Cities and Self-organization”, with several papers focusing on powers and terrains of ambiguity in the field of urban self-organization today. A specific contribution by Lidia Decandia on such items will be published there, too.

commons.

However, after permanent, but silenced critics from different planning schools and planners, like the advocacy planning school with Paul Davidoff, the controversial book of Jane Jacobs, the provocations of John Forester, the European reflections on collaborative planning from Healey and Innes, problems remain still open. And although similar critical movements has been acting in the rest of the world as well, like the Latin America Urban Movements for the right to housing and the right to participate in the transformations of the city, which allowed great programmes on cooperative housing systems or the birth of Participatory Budget. (Goñi Mazzitelli et al., 2013)

It seems necessary to search into the past the reasons that make self-organized practices survive and challenge power structures that oppressed them, as well as understand how rational planning try to annihilate (consciously or unconsciously) cultural practices and the protagonism of the ordinary “man” in the design and management of his environment (Scandurra, 1995).

As Lewis Mumford (2002) stated in his studies on the city in history, at the very beginning human societies had already been developing settlements fully integrating social relations and wills with physical interventions. In order to underline how absurd could be to separate this dimensions, he suggested a question: «What did come before: the social relations and cultural practices as commerce, religion, war, or the buildings created by humans to develop them, markets, temples, walls?» He introduced a clear example with the transformation of trade between populations. For him the materialist theories that consider the city as cause of new ways of economy were not correct. Instead, he proposes that cities allowed improving those self-organized social practises, as trade existing relations, with its physical form and geographical position, reinforcing human actions, which began long ago before cities.

If we observe history in a diachronic way, we can understand that urban revolution and the consolidation of modern forms of Government, take thousands of years, allowing that cultural traditional practices, as Lidia Decandia stated, as traditional parties, rituals, and community actions continue to exist with the most diverse forms of self-organized practises inside cities and towns.

It seems as if, apart from the continuous changes that create structures and super structures in social and economic organization (Lévi-Strauss, 1972), there is a cultural level in which the main components of human behaviour and its relations stay alert, looking for spaces of freedom each time a new organizational and political system has been created. As the French anthropologist Pierre Clastres (1976) stated, there is a “common wisdom” in self-organization that reject power structures, and be alert about the dangers that power accumulation can create for peaceful and balanced life. This “common wisdom” survived many tragic and violent periods in history, always with the certainty that it is necessary to go beyond social structures and laws when human rights were threatened. After imperialism and colonialism, which gave an unusual acceleration to cities building, the most important breaking point for urban studies and urbanism were without doubt the industrial times. As Patrick Geddes advised, observing the first industrialization process of consumption of natural resources, capitalism produce a new absolutely abnormal phenomenon and break the harmony between life cycles and anthropological action. He warned in 1915, «Unless, we use planning, rooted in identity and memory, incorporating clean technologies in order to preserve nature and natural resources, we could completely destroy our planet» (Geddes, 1915).

Although Geddes was a critical voice in the chore of the time, he proposed that as Stone Age has two periods, Paleolithic and Neolithic, the Industrial Age could also have two periods: Paleotechnic, with a dirty technology as the one use in UK, and Neotechnic, with clean technologies, represented by German movement in planning. At that time, many urban researchers believed the German Movement could take this challenge of a clean and organized urbanism, in order to preserve natural resources. Nevertheless, none of them criticized the vertical and hierarchical way of town planning, as long as they believe, following the modern science models and the capitalism principles, that the condition of human life should improve significantly in cities design and manage by experts, as well as by private investors.

Where have been self-organized movements and practices at that time? As many references in Urban Studies show us, they never disappeared and they never were absolutely co-opted by

the growth of the city. The benefits of economic growth of cities, especially after the industrialization, were not for everybody. At that time, the world was full of social injustice. In Europe, marginal conditions of work, as Peter Hall stated, were creating inner poor neighborhoods that began to develop organization for claim their rights as well as for solving their everyday life problems. In recent times, David Harvey (2012) underline, developing Marx theories, that capitalism have always had economic crisis, and in that moments the consciousness of the exploitation by the proletariat were stronger, creating greater conflicts and reinforcing this movements of self-organized practices.

Nevertheless, as Marie Helene Bacque and Yves Syntomer (2011) stated, the quick institutionalization of social crisis in the last century, by the consolidation of the *Welfare State*, do not allow to think in real new ways of bottom up governance, that means a real structural power turn. Susan Fainstein and Scott Campbell (2003) pointed out how crisis are also the moment in which the majority of population, particularly in cities, claim for more State solutions, reinforcing the centralization of the transformative changes needed to go beyond moments of social vulnerability, in the public institutionalized power.

Nowadays, sophisticated and technocratic procedures in policy making, corruption, and lack of participatory processes, as Lawrence Susskind and Marianella Sclavi (2011) underline, are creating a general mistrust in the whole State system. In the long term, it will take to an end the original “social pact” that in the XIX century made representative democracy emerge as the better, fairly and more equal system to govern the commons.

An autonomous system?

We realized that debates around self-organization seem to describe practices outside the common rules, outside the dominant parameters of action, as well as outside the dominant ways of governing our commons. Does this mean that we need to be outside the Democratic System? Self-organization in relation to whom or what? Shouldn't the democratic system be one of the most advanced in the world, able to act the principles of freedom, equality and represent the diversity in society?

From colonialism to industrialization onwards, a new world geography has been designed by international economic

powers, changing borders among urban, productive, leisure areas in a scale of functional landscapes, leading to a “urban theory without an outside”, in Neil Brenner’s (2014) words. Furthermore, it is a system where this power co-opted, all over the world, the different forms of Public State in a so evident way that there will be not one square meter of land without “value” or “use” any more. In this uneven geography the struggles from people that are completely let outside the system, or even inside but in a weak position, as minorities, are also creating a self-organized system with an agenda that implies to change also the ways in which democracy works currently. Therefore, as the representative democracy system couldn’t be the mainly answer nowadays, the participatory or deliberative democracy, if we need to make a transition phase, could be a bridge, but only – as Francesca Cognetti stated – if they have a required position in order to co- create projects and participate in the management of them.

As Amartya Sen (2004) remembers us, the democratic system was successfully imposed thanks to the fact that many deliberative forms of governance already exist in many parts of the world. The ethnocentrism implicit in Colonialism did not let the local forms of self-organization and socio-political organization all around the world to survive. However, the extraordinary human aptitude to create and re-create self-organized responses to their needs are always present, planners should bring them in the field of territorial studies in order to develop their potentialities for reverse the unjust current conditions.

The enabling space at *Tracce Urbane*

The contributions to this issue of *Tracce Urbane* evidence how difficult could be to study self-organized practices, as long as they are in continuous transformation to not being co-opted by the system, preferring to remain sometimes undefined or to get structured in a limited way. As Sophie Watson remembers us in her opening of the *Focus* section, we have to take into account these fears, because is true that the relation to antagonism is not well managed in the current political system. Furthermore, she states that the role of planning is crucial here. Instead of seeing the city as a clear and rational space to be planned, what is required is a recognition that planning takes place in messy and unpredictable settings that are «complex and contentious,

fluid and uncertain, historically and politically fraught». Forester (1999) calls this “a critical pragmatism”, to draw attention to the issues of difference, privilege, and power which shape city and political engagement.

Therefore, we need to imagine a new democratic politics whose aim is not to eliminate passions or differences through rational debate. It is rather to mobilize these passions towards new forms of democracy. Taking Chantal Mouffe studies, Watson refers to the need of a project of “radical and plural democracy”.

Following these studies, we promoted an exchange about the current situation in contemporary city, where we are witnessing different “practices of re-appropriation of space” and self-organization: participatory planning processes, regeneration of empty buildings, spaces of cultural production, urban gardens, renewed green areas, public spaces re-design through practices of commoning. Beside this, we could also mention experimentations that are activating new social services and welfare spaces, modes of co-existence, housing and service provision, or critical movements that analyse current ways of urban and global economy and propose a critical consumption, a fair trade, and other forms of creating an alternative economic development.

As Francesca Cagnetti stated, building an enabling space could be possible if, on one hand, the “public” recognize, in the design and planning processes, the social skills and leading role that different groups have in their territories, accept innovations in terms of involvement and create permanent changes in the ordinary structures of management of the public policies. It should develop new procedures and techniques. On the other hand, local actors themselves should be able to pursue traditional conflictual but also subsidiary logic, learning to be the protagonists of a shared process of defining the public / collective interest. Collaborative processes have to be considered processes that potentially work both on the “social activation” and on the activation of institutions.

The contributions in this number tackle a wide variety of topics as long as these experimentations are focused on actions that are simultaneously redefining the modes of social conflict as well as the routines and spaces of citizenship. Can these practices shape political capability to build a local democracy with a bottom up approach as well as update institutional habits

and norms?

After Watson's contribution, *Focus* section develops the reflection with Antonio Raciti's article *Counteracting Ingrained Practices of Community Development in the US South. The Case of Klondike/Smokey City in Memphis TN, USA*. We can immediately understand how complex could be to think about these processes just in terms of public policies. The article refers how, starting from top down experiences focused on trying to rebuild declining neighborhoods from the inside, governments create programmes involving neighborhood networks. It follows the

«Special Impact Amendment to the Economic Opportunity Act in 1966 that establish community-based organizations to strengthen, support, and implement projects, especially related to housing and aimed at filling the empty gap left by the private and public sectors in providing affordable options for the most disadvantaged. Over time, those organizations changed their areas of expertise and operation, embracing a more comprehensive approach to neighborhood development and encompassing activities such as job generation, neighborhood infrastructure development, educational program creation, and so on. Maintaining this broader mission, they have been playing a fundamental role in addressing neighborhoods' concerns, supporting and expanding people's self-organization practices, and challenging existing power structures, especially when these have prevented those in need to access the abovementioned resources. Since the 90s, in fact, mechanisms of CDCs' co-optation have strongly characterized the US context deeply transforming the legacy of all of those powerful insurgencies existing in inner city neighborhoods. The erosion over time of the "community alternative" has often disempowered all of the initiatives once robustly carried out by CDCs and similar groups. In this scenario, enabling spaces lost their transformational power being controlled by co-opted entities whose power force has been cannibalized by existing power structures».

A similar situation was experienced in Italy with the Community Development projects that Francesca Leder describes in her article *City and Territory: practises of community self-organization in the Western Sicily. Danilo Dolci and the Study Centre for Employment (1958 - 1968)*. Danilo Dolci practises, which worked well at that time, are inspiring youngsters nowadays, because of the essential messages about the power of self-organized practices, if they are used as a form to get autonomy and make free local cultures and resources from ancient forms of oppression. From Leder's article, a figure came out that was as much interdisciplinary in his approach. He reached a complete

freedom to use anthropological and performance methods to amplify injustice situations lived by fishermen and peasants, as completely rational in his analyses and objectives that implies to acquire essential rights, as work, education and health by the poorest Italian villages of Sicily.

Perhaps if we incorporate more literature as the one of Danilo Dolci in our territorial studies, we can understand how difficult had been to conquest civil rights, as well as how bottom up territorial planning and organization could be possible if we work closely to people in places. The community development practises teach us, as Dolci stated, that «Revolution is right, but could not be at once, the way in which we make it is essential». The practises he developed became an international reference, as long as he broadened the scale by working on what he called organic planning, creating a network of development centres co-managed by local communities and involving large territorial areas and resources. Although it seems a very concrete and individual mission, he created a social movement and he was in touch with planning intellectuals as Carlo Doglio and then Adriano Olivetti and Giancarlo di Carlo. The main conclusion that Dolci's experiences suggested, and that the interesting article of Leder presents, is that only a network of local self-organized communities, could deal with the continuous challenges that an unequal economy and natural disasters (as earthquakes) create in marginalized territories.

The situation changes a lot in the years, as Francesca Cognetti stated during the seminar. Terms such as inclusion, partnership and participation characterize projects and policies in the recent literature of urban transformation and social cohesion. The involvement of inhabitants, local communities and organized committees, as well as a wider network of public and private actors, in the government of the city, seems to be a consolidate step, at least in rhetoric, and it has also influenced in some cases norms and planning tools.

However, learning from experiences from USA or from the community development practises in Italy, it seems increasingly evident the need of clear protocols in the collaborative processes, which have to include ways of interaction among a plurality of actors, giving some warranties that the processes are creating a new political and administrative organization, a new governance, where contractual power of local groups is real and goes beyond

specific programmes and political will. (Lussault, 2013).

Giusy Pappalardo and Filippo Gravagno develop this issue in their article *Beyond dichotomies, in the search for a common path toward social-ecological care: Lessons from the Simeto River Agreement in Sicily, IT*. There are many contexts where communities and institutions do not have a strong background of collaborative practices, due to many factors, isolation and extreme contentiousness, among others. Regardless various phases of conflict, the challenge for territorial planners should be that each process and each partnership find its own path, the most sincerely way to being together, built on a dialogical methodology, which involve gradually institutions at various levels, as well as design new democratic institutions for citizens' participation.

All these reflections are leading us to the search for a new model. Should it be participatory or deliberative democracy, or a completely different one? We need to rethink both the role of the institutions as well as of the citizens, and the relationships between the different actors interacting within the construction of a territory.

As Stefania Ragozino, Andrea Varriale and Gabriella Esposito De Vita propose in their article *Self-organized practices for complex urban transformation. The case of Bagnoli in Naples, Italy*, territories react to global phenomena of crisis and austerity and related policies imposed upon them. In Naples, as in other European cities, the wave of opposition against such phenomena is something that regards not only activism and protest movements, but also the city administration. Whereas it is too soon to say whether this development of urban politics constitutes a trend, the fact that several cities in Europe have embarked on similar ventures at least shows that it is not exceptional.

Following the Brazilian sociologist Ana Clara Torres Ribeiro (Ribeiro in Berenstein Jacques, 2012), we should consider important to appreciate some practices of self-governing being as radical, as they want to be. As long as conflicts should not be seen as a negative issue, because they talk about diversity and the need of arenas, in which their reasons are listened. She propose to be alert in not trying to immediately "translate" and "materialize" the reasons of the conflict, but live the tension in order to understand it, therefore taking the necessary time and

approach to let the intrinsic dynamics of the conflict develop. Otherwise, to ignore or to not open really the space for listening and understanding deeply these reasons, could weak the processes, and allow to one of the most common phenomenon in this fields, which is the instrumentalization of participatory initiatives. As Cognetti stated, many new collaborative processes do not necessarily correspond to higher openness and inclusiveness of weakest populations, minorities, or marginalized groups. The fear to conflict, or to lose the control of the situations are putting under risk the real collaboration, which could change into a 'procedural form' that leads to the loss of its innovative tension. The article by Alice Ranzini, *Too much capable? Reflections over the recognition of local actors capabilities in the urban regeneration processes in marginal contexts*, demonstrates how difficult could be to pass from theory to practices if real processes were not promoted. She states, «The case of Giambellino Lorenteggio redevelopment plan (Milan) shows some critical aspects in terms of opportunistic approach to local actors' enablement, asymmetry of power and approach to urban regeneration». In her words, it has to do with a deeply rooted rational tradition in professionals and politicians inside governments, which use each opportunity to retake the power of decision about who has the right to participate, who are "capable" to decide in planning.

This is one of the paradoxes of a lot of these experiences stated Francesca Cognetti: they could be reduced to 'weak' forms of collaboration, by making a 'selected access' arena in the sense that only those forces (institutional, private, third-sector entities and associations) that have instruments to access to planning and design process are involved. Therefore, there is not a significant redefinition of power relations in the structure of representative democracy. The paradox is that collaboration itself can become a way of exclusion, especially of the weaker actors, who do not have "instruments" in these logics to represent themselves.

However, are we ready? Do we have an awareness about the need of these new figures in planning? Is our education aware of the need to make experimental teaching and learning in the fields of urban and territorial planning? As Alice Ranzini demonstrates, the professionals that work in the Local Government have the opposite idea of the professionals in the field, which work with people.

Thais Tronocoso and Paola Bernstein Jacques give a significant contribute to this discussion on the role of teaching planning and design issues at University. They refer most of all to Latin America, especially Brazil, but something similar happened in many other Planning Schools around the world. Essentially, they underline in their article *Deviations and Thresholds: teaching as a field of experimentation for other practices of urbanism*, the need to

«Think critically about teaching as an expanded field of experimentation, based on a series of other less positivistic, simplifying or homogenizing methodological experiences that may attempt to encompass the multiplicity, heterogeneity and complexity of contemporary cities. It is a proposition that puts at the centre of the teaching (and professional practice) of urbanism the relationship with the practitioners of the city, their experiences, the other rationalities and norms in relation to the hegemonic models, the dynamics of self-production and self-management, and, first and foremost, the disputes they prompt».

In the *Observatory* section we have three important contributes that examine different practises from many countries, mainly in the North, referring to the international debate about how self-organized practices could be consolidated and create gradually new real alternatives in different topics. On one hand, Marianella Sclavi, Agnese Bertello and Stefania Lattuile start from the discussions about how the galaxy of experiences of deliberative democracy can be gradually transformed into a new way in which Democracy is produced and practised. In their article *Consolidating a "constitutional localism" in Italy, a new governance that seems unbelievable*, they remember us that in 2001 the principle of subsidiarity was introduced in the Italian Constitution. This means that a new actor, individual or associate citizens, was recognized in the multilevel governance system, not just for vote in the elections or at referendum, but also for organize and make proposals for the common interest, each time they consider it necessary. They underline the graduality of changes connecting this issue to what happened almost ten years later in Bologna, which signed its first regulation about "Share Administration", that means different forms of "collaboration agreements" allowing citizens to take care of specific items, projects and proposals of their neighbourhoods. However, not all the European contexts are taking ahead these

processes in a transformative way. Chiara Cacciotti and Luca Brignone, in their article *Self-Organization in Rome: a map*, analyse what is happening in the Capital of Italy with self-organized groups that deal with housing, evictions, squatting, social and cultural activities, urban gardens, play yards and edible gardens. They use mapping tools in order to identify where these practises are located in the city, creating a platform able to update a very dynamic situation that changes every year. Their survey identifies spontaneous initiatives, lively spaces related to neighbourhood life and different experiences on informal housing. On one hand, they underline that the majority of these spaces are concentrated in the poorest and more popular neighbourhoods, which also have a strong history in self-organization, from labour parties until today. On the other hand, they raise a topic, which is a central question in self-organized studies, a “let it be” approach from government. It means that, although in Rome there are a conspicuous number of experiences, as the map shows, there are not policies or funds to support them, not even programmes to think in a coordinate new geography of social, cultural and housing innovative projects responding to real social needs. Just a silent consensus to allow their existence that costs great conflicts in the city, as long as they are not recognized at all, not in their problems solution character, nor in the complexity that self-organized practices create in urban environments if they are not think in an integrated manner. For example, the fundamental self-organized solution to housing and marginality processes that represent squats are creating great tensions in neighbourhoods by the lack of planning of their urban impact. This means making that people living there compete with locals for the use of social services as public schools, health or even precarious jobs, without a serious restructuring and update of the welfare system. It is a “liquid” governance, as Carlo Cellamare called this roman style of not getting part to real urban challenges.

On the other hand, we have a growing phenomenon of self-organization cooperative experiences in economy as developed in Daniela Patti and Levente Polyak’s article *Funding the Cooperative City. From knowledge network to local action*. As they underline in their article,

«European cities are conceived more as investment opportunities than as places

to live or to work. The financialised city, buildings are “no longer something to use, but to own (with the hope of increased asset-value, rather than use-value, over time). Becoming targets of speculation, many former sites of welfare and cultural services (hospitals, schools, parks, theatres, cinemas) have become endangered species, calculated as potential buildable square meters instead of potential contributions to life quality. As a result, entire neighbourhoods in cities like London have become completely inaccessible for lower and middle classes, not only due to the rising rents but also because of the disappearing public amenities».

At the basis of their research, they have the question: «Which could be the alternative model to a capitalist economy to avoid what in Europe and all around the world are changing the face of traditional urban centres into just commercial areas?». The article presents a collection of experiences that in recent years have become laboratories of new forms of living, working, learning and collective exchange. These civic spaces face many difficulties in establishing stable economic structures, or lack financial buffers to secure their long-term operations and relative autonomy, however a variety of actors, practices, models, mechanisms and opinions are trying to address these difficulties in order to strength local economies by keeping profits in neighbourhoods and ensuring spaces against public privatization.

How could the State support these alternative practises in order to make their work have a positive impact in the city, without enclose their spontaneous character and their political value? Coming back to Focus section, in their article *Producing the just city: Self-organising Urban Labs for the re-appropriation of public spaces* Valeria Monno and Angela Barbanente present the experience of Urban Laboratories developed in Puglia under the *Bollenti Spiriti* youth program of Puglia Region. They analyse how

«several local governments have created or co-produced urban laboratories [...] to imagine or implement new ways of urban transformation and management both for responding to the quests of the neoliberal city and to contrast problems of social polarization and erasure of public spaces associated to urban involution. In both cases, urban labs spring from and share a co-production perspective on the form of collective action and an experimental approach to urban policymaking (Evans and Karvonen, 2014). They are open and highly interactive spaces with multiple purposes ranging from the production of fresh knowledge to the promotion of social innovation and exploitation of creativity and entrepreneurship, as they emerge in the city of everyday life. Citizens and

institutions, old and new actors, without any preclusion or rigid attribution of roles and tasks, co-produce collectively experiments of urban transformation through non-hierarchical interactions. Urban labs offer a space and a possibility of networking to the myriad of experimental city-making practices, which are spread, and taking place in very different fields of action, places and scales. Openness, co-production, creativity and networking have made urban labs symbols of a new form of city making beyond the well-established urban planning traditions».

Finally, we need to wonder if we are in front of an articulate alternative to the current system, or just some specific problems in specific areas, for which communities are self-organizing to deal with. The present issue of *Tracce Urbane*, therefore, focuses on this reflection, discussing the characteristics of processes, actions, collaborative interventions looking at what they have generated in terms of new skills, new organizational practices, new ways of interacting, debating if we are in front of new perspectives in the long term period. The answer is still open.

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IN DIALOGO/CONVERSATIONS

Interview to Gabriella Esposito De Vita and Stefania Ragozino
edited by editorial board of Tracce Urbane

Q: Which aspects do we define in our research to consider such experiences as experiences of self-organization?

A: Could be good to start from the internal self-organization of the AESOP Thematic Group Public Space and Urban Culture (AESOP TG PSUC) of which, currently, Gabriella is the Main Coordinator for the period 2017-2019 and Stefania is one of the Responsible Members for Public Relations subgroup. The group works since April 2010 with the initiative of Sabine Knierbein (Associate Professor, TU Vienna, Austria), Ceren Sezer (Architect and urban planner, TU Delft, Urban 4, Netherlands) and Chiara Tornaghi (Reader, Coventry University, United Kingdom). The main aim of the group is to generate an international and interdisciplinary exchange between the research and practices on public spaces and urban cultures. By doing so, it aims to support research, planning and a design agenda within the AESOP community, and beyond. All this effort has been pursuing on a voluntary base that distinguishes our approach to work, cooperate and create synergies with European and extra-European colleagues, institutions, associations and activists.

During the Rome meeting “Cities and self-organizations” (11th-13th December 2017), in which participated AESOP TG PSUC members such as Gabriella Esposito De Vita (IRISS CNR, Italy), Sabine Knierbein and Elina Kranzle (TU Wien, Austria), Marianita Palumbo (EHESS, France), Stefania Ragozino (IRISS CNR, Italy), Mohamed Saleh (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, The Netherlands), and Burcu Yigit Turan (Uppsala University, Sweden), a strong synergy emerged between the two groups that co-organized the meeting, the TRACCE URBANE Network and the AESOP TG PSUC, especially with regard to common research themes and engagement methodologies. Sophie Watson (The Open University, UK), who was invited as mentor of the AESOP TG PSUC to contribute to the debate about the self-organizations, gave an inspiring lecture useful to decode these “unsettled and turbulent times” in which complexity, interconnectedness, chaos and uncertainty are increasing more and more. Emerged items were *collaboration* needed for successful self-organizations in cities, *social objectivity* constituted through acts of *power*, constitution of *identities* in a precarious and vulnerable terrain of political

practices, and importance of *difference* and *compatibility* of the power forms.

In our experience, to assess an experience as one of self-organization we consider firstly a general disaffection with government due to growing inequalities and increased displaced people, both aspects concerning with definite *autonomy* and *authenticity* from institutions and private bodies to pursue alternative objectives (Bridge & Watson, 2010; Hillier, 2002). Secondly, we can consider different aspects such as possible forms of *antagonism* and *agonism* (Mouffe, 2013) with regard to top-down approaches that exclude marginal communities or bypass them and to *conflicts of power relations* (Albrechts, 2003; Knierbein & Viderman, 2018), possible forms of *collaboration* and *interaction* among local actors/city users/activists to face austerity urbanism and uncertainty (Bridge & Watson, 2003) and to reuse common goods that are not used, degraded or not appreciated by expressing their *right to the city* (Brown & Kristiansen, 2009; Esposito De Vita, 2018; Novy & Colomb, 2013; Ostrom, Burger, Field, Norgaard, & Policansky, 1999; Ragozino & Varriale, 2018; Tayebi, 2013), as well as innovative way to consider and integrate *cultural and gender diversities* (Watson, 2013).

Q: Interaction with institutions: what kind of interaction do these practice have with institutions (dialogue/negotiation, conflict, ...)? What are the main strategies/objectives? Which are the limits and the ambiguities of these strategies?

A: With regard to this issue, the Rome meeting has highlighted two main themes: collaboration processes and dichotomy between formality and informality.

It was interesting the contribution of Paola Cannavò (University of Calabria, Italy), "CO-Roma, enable collaborative processes in the city", who presented, concretely, the «possibility to activate new governance forms that follow the transition from participation, with a consulting value, to the collaboration, with a deeply managerial character», and the model of a "Collaborative City". The two examples discussed, LabGov and Agenda Tevere Onlus, are experiments in which a collaborative process has been applied to create a dialogue between local actors and «define open and collaborative governance models to co-produce and co-manage common goods and services for the territory». She

assured that the reuse of common goods needs «new strategies and the energy of a community to be regenerated and used». Besides, these bottom-up processes necessitate implementation by local administration to be sustainable.

Also the contribution of Angela Barbanente and Valeria Monno approached this issue presenting the dichotomy between strengths and weaknesses of the “Urban Laboratories”. These forms of interaction between citizens and institutions are structured around the concepts of *social interaction* and *urban production*. They could be considered both a (democratic) way through which it is possible to re-appropriate of the city as a public space and a place of control and injustice «where citizens are used to offset the progressive disappearance of opportunities for urban democracy and social support through the welfare state». With regard to the dichotomy between formality and informality, a lot of experiences were linked to this issue, more than others the case of *multi-factory* Officine Zero, who declared – conversely to the main part of social collectives – the willingness to be constituted in a more formal way as an association. In this way the activist and free-lance workers group could apply to calls for projects and funds, as well as be recognizable in the turbulent economic and political Italian scenario. This group has attempted to be supported by the public administration in the process of public utility declaration for the area without success. They looked for a proactive dialogue that they find consistently only with the University of Rome and with some experts because of the impending presence of a big private body that aimed to invest in that area. The lecture of Sophie Watson offered some points of reasoning also in this perspective. In her opinion, different power forms should be compatible to each other in order to make urban, social and economic processes softer and more polite.

Q: Which kind of “community” are these processes producing? Are they creating new political communities or reducing social conflict?

A: We can say that urban self-organizations promoted community that are more informed and more stimulated with regard to economic, political and cultural scenario. Taking part to a self-organization means also obtain knowledge and competencies needed for a community that has to be able to co-produce externalities and share collectively the obtained results.

New political communities or reducing social conflict? It is hard to answer objectively. Sophie Watson spoke about the «importance of differences that cannot be ignored» and cited the idea of stranger (Simmel, 1908) to discuss the necessity to overcome barriers and obstacle of co-habiting this dynamic contexts.

In a wider sense, the Rome meeting has highlighted the strong linkages between the social production and the place in which the process occur. For example, the contribution of Ana Carolina C. Farias (ISCTE, Portugal) assumed the «production of space as a social production» representing the case of the BIP/ZIP Program – Priority Intervention Neighbourhoods and Zones (2011). This program aims to «rehabilitate and revitalize areas of the city through community-based actions that foster improved quality of life and territorial cohesion». In the examples reported by Paola Cannavò, the proactive role of the community is relevant for the success of the agenda, so that the Tevere River Park needs to start from «the creation of community spaces in key points, strategic to the activation of the regeneration process» in order to involve the territory in this transformation process by defining a shared scenario. This protocol tends to a process of social change based on a private/public covenant leading towards a more resilient city and society.

Angela Barbanente and Valeria Monno (DICATECh, Italy) presented the experience of “Bollenti Spiriti”, a program promoted by the Apulia Regional Government in 2005 as part of youth policy. Through a new way of doing economy – «from urban involution to generative policies» employing while ensuring the city – they started from young people to involve local actors and citizens in the recovery of public buildings in order to build a “small community defences” where is possible to face the urban involution caused by neo-liberal policies and practices.

Q: Are they producing new and innovative institutions (if it is possible) or just making bad institutions more accountable?

A: The socio-ecological elements such as environmental resources and decisional processes around them could be a field to observe how new and innovative institutions and new governance models could be formed in order to solve the dichotomy between conflicts and collaborative approaches. Filippo Gravagno and Giusy Pappalardo (University of Catania,

Italy) presented the case of projects developed within the framework of the Simeto River Agreement, which is both a «River Contract, a Plan for Local Development and an experiment to enforce participatory democracy along the decision-making processes in Sicily. [...] The Simeto River Agreement is an agreement between ten municipalities, the University of Catania, and a coordination of about fifty local NGOs under the umbrella of the so-called Participatory Presidium, with the aim of innovating the governance of common goods with a polycentric and multilevel approach. The broader goal is to allow synergies – through resilient organizational structures – amongst a variety of actors». The experiment was designed as a grassroots experience and today is a pilot case of complex partnership with public institutions. Innovation within institutions is a key question within the current scenario. Urban challenges such as the abandonment of industries and productive facilities, the shrinkage of the public investments in local development initiatives, the needs of more effective urban regeneration processes, the increasing of cultural diversities, request innovative approaches within the institutions and renewed tools for enhancing dialogues among communities, activists, social workers as well as economic actors.

Q: Can we witness a learning process both at institutional level and at community based level?

A: The rich parterre of practices and experiences presented in December during the Rome conference and the proactive discussion developed throughout the sessions with a very involved audience, offered a multilevel and multifaceted perspective to read the interactions between institutions and communities. In a few cases have been witnessed a virtuous cycle of awareness of the publics, in particular at municipal level, regarding civic economics processes and support to self-organized initiatives. Nevertheless, the mutual learning process seems to be discontinuous. As frequently happens, some frontier experiences promoted as informal and self-organized initiatives by activists, artists and cultural associations, informal movements and communities re-discovering their own crafts traditions, have been implemented within the city strategies by local governments. As well as, innovative policies have been designed by municipalities for enhancing community

engagement and local capacity building.

As scholars, we have been requested of observing, assessing and interpreting current processes on the one hand, facilitating, transferring and sharing tools with the territory, on the other. The December meeting offered this opportunity to our communities of scholars, institution representatives and activists.

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**Intervista a Patrizia Di Girolamo,
Unità Contratti di Quartiere e Rigenerazione Urbana Comune di Milano
a cura di Luca Lo Re**

L'intervista proposta si sviluppa dentro una riflessione sullo spazio abilitante nel campo delle politiche urbane, mettendo al centro il tema del rapporto tra la produzione di politiche da parte delle istituzioni pubbliche e le diverse forme di autorganizzazione che si sviluppano nelle città. I problemi che sorgono rispetto alla definizione di questo spazio che abbiamo scelto di definire "abilitante", si legano all'incontro e allo scontro tra soggettività e pratiche spaziali diverse, ponendo la questione di quale significato e quale senso diamo alla nozione di sfera "pubblica". Se da un lato la dimensione pubblica si costruisce attorno alle procedure delle istituzioni statali in quanto garanti rispetto al loro mandato politico e amministrativo di una visione generale che incide sui singoli territori, in altri ambiti attraverso uno studio accurato delle pratiche sociali è possibile rilevare un interesse pubblico sempre più forte da parte di esperienze che nascono e si sviluppano al di fuori degli schemi istituzionali. Per questo motivo l'intervento di una figura interna ad un ufficio tecnico comunale sembra opportuno per approfondire quali sono le problematiche, le difficoltà, le contraddizioni ma anche le possibilità che le esperienze dirette di lavoro nella progettazione e gestione delle politiche urbane riproducono.

L'intervista è stata rivolta all'architetto Patrizia Di Girolamo, che gestisce l'Unità Contratti di Quartiere e Rigenerazione Urbana presso il Comune di Milano, con l'obiettivo di proporre una riflessione sul tema delle relazioni tra istituzione pubblica e soggetti che lavorano nei territori. In questo caso il suo contributo si inserisce nell'esperienza specifica dei Laboratori di Quartiere del Comune di Milano e nello specifico in una nuova progettazione che sta ridefinendo (2016-2018) il compito e il funzionamento dei laboratori ponendo la sfida dell'autonomia gestionale e progettuale.

I Laboratori di Quartiere, nati per accompagnare i lavori di riqualificazione urbana all'interno dei contesti ERP (attraverso il finanziamento del programma Contratti di Quartiere), si inseriscono all'interno di contesti urbani ad elevata fragilità sociale (economica, disagio psichico...) caratterizzati da incuria ed abbandono degli spazi, diffusione di fenomeni di illegalità,

sensu di disgregazione dei rapporti di vicinato e crescente sensu di insicurezza legato all'abitare. In questo quadro, si individua come elemento di criticità la difficoltà di relazione e di costruzione di reti di collaborazione capaci di promuovere progetti di miglioramento di questi contesti.

Per questo, l'obiettivo che definisce il nuovo programma di lavoro è volto ad intraprendere un ulteriore percorso di riattivazione di processi virtuosi attraverso la costruzione di legami ed il rafforzamento delle reti locali. Il tema dell'abitare costituisce il focus centrale su cui concentrare le attività dei laboratori, proponendo una sua declinazione spaziale, sociale e culturale, capace di leggere problemi e opportunità che emergono dai quartieri interessati dalle attività dei laboratori. Questo permetterà di considerare l'abitante come "soggetto attivo" che vivendo quotidianamente un contesto territoriale è in grado di leggere i problemi, individuare delle risorse e agire per applicare delle soluzioni. Il ruolo dei laboratori si caratterizza in questo caso per l'azione di innesco attraverso la promozione di attività sociali e aggregative che riflettano nuovi modi di vivere e di progettare lo spazio in modo condiviso e innovativo. Il laboratorio si presenta come spazio catalizzatore che attraverso l'incontro e la condivisione costruisce comunità di pratiche in cui vengono messi in campo le capacità di produzione e trattamento dei beni collettivi detenuti dalla società civile, nella necessità di valorizzarli ed esercitarli in autonomia.

D: Quali forme stanno assumendo l'autorganizzazione urbana e territoriale? Quali aspetti e caratteristiche assumono queste esperienze rispetto al ruolo e al lavoro che è svolto all'interno di una istituzione pubblica?

R: Prima di questo incarico ho diretto un ufficio tecnico di un Comune dell'hinterland milanese, il Comune di Bollate, e in quel caso avevo una visione complessiva della gestione di un territorio. Nel mio lavoro mi occupavo di gestire gli aspetti urbanistici: edilizia privata, ambiente, ecologia, lavori pubblici. Questo permetteva una visione generale e strategica sui territori, che diventano sempre più complessi. Il mio percorso formativo in questo settore inizia con una laurea in architettura e specializzazione in politiche urbane, con particolare riferimento alle politiche abitative. Lo studio si è rivolto all'analisi e alla sperimentazione di nuovi approcci istituzionali al tema dell'abitare

e quindi dei modelli di abitare in città, con un focus specifico sull'edilizia residenziale pubblica. In questo quadro si colloca la mia esperienza di gestione dei Contratti di quartiere nel Comune di Milano. I Contratti di quartiere hanno introdotto degli spunti nuovi al ruolo e agli strumenti della pubblica amministrazione. Il tema della casa e la risoluzione dei problemi a questa connessi non si affronta più soltanto riqualificando i luoghi e le strutture residenziali, ma prendendo in carico anche cosa sta dentro questi luoghi. I Contratti di quartiere penso possano essere considerati come uno dei primi approcci integrati per affrontare temi diversi che si rilevano nello spazio urbano e che fanno riferimento alle condizioni sociali, alle relazioni economiche e personali. Si sviluppano nei primi anni del 2000 in un quadro di riferimento nazionale, come strumento di intervento integrato, sottoscritto dal Ministero delle infrastrutture e dei trasporti, dalle Regioni competenti e dai Comuni che avevano aderito ad un bando per la presentazione dei programmi attuativi. Con uno sguardo storico a quello che rappresenta l'edilizia popolare, uno dei primi strumenti con cui ho avuto modo di relazionarmi sono stati i piani di zona. Quella che può essere considerata la vecchia scuola dell'urbanistica diceva che bisognava utilizzare uno strumento generale sulla città e sul territorio, attraverso cui la mano pubblica definiva il suo modo di vedere la città. In urbanistica questo aspetto si concretizzava nello zoning. Le amministrazioni decidevano, in forma autonoma, quali pezzi della città dovevano crescere, con quali funzioni e con quali prospettive. La città si organizzava partendo da una visione che distingueva i pezzi di città consolidata (zona A erano le zone storiche, zona B consolidate ma non storiche, zona C quelle di espansione urbana dove costruire...). Questa lettura, che si collegava ad una legislazione nazionale come per esempio la legge n.1150 del 1942, rifletteva un ruolo delle istituzioni pubbliche, molto forte. Ogni Comune era libero di decidere, ma all'interno di regole ben precise, non esisteva una procedura negoziata con i privati. L'urbanistica non era contrattata in quel periodo storico, non c'era autonomia di gestione e di relazione con un privato, c'erano appunto delle zone che definivano le tipologie di interventi attuabili e prescritti. Le istituzioni pubbliche dichiaravano le opere e gli interventi da realizzare, tutto quello che non era previsto non si poteva realizzare. Poi si è assistito ad un cambio concettuale, che ha visto la città non

più distinta in rigide categorie e zone, ma letta in un quadro di riferimento articolato, utilizzando strumenti diversi di lettura e quindi di definizione delle politiche. Rispetto alla visione precedente, gli interventi che non si possono realizzare vengono indicati mentre si ha maggiore libertà nel poter definire quello che si intende realizzare come opera o trasformazione. Questo ha permesso un'apertura alla contrattazione con il privato, che può proporre all'istituzione un programma di interventi o un singolo intervento. Il processo di relazione tra il soggetto privato e l'istituzione cambia, verso un modo di costruire insieme la città, partendo anche dai bisogni.

D: Quali pratiche, strumenti ha introdotto l'attore pubblico nelle strutture amministrative e nel management? Come andare oltre le esperienze virtuose? In che modo queste pratiche stanno costruendo o stanno contribuendo a costruire una cultura della collaborazione, dove è possibile riscontrare questi risultati?

R: In questo nuovo quadro per un tecnico che segue un processo di trasformazione in una città non si tratta più di guardare soltanto l'aspetto fisico, ma analizzare anche altri elementi e componenti che facciano emergere problemi ed opportunità. Con i Contratti di quartiere si è innestata la necessità di seguire un processo partecipativo, necessario a comporre il programma di realizzazione delle opere di riqualificazione urbana che si sarebbero realizzate. Il rapporto con il cittadino diventa necessario per capire come attuare il programma di opere e la scelta delle opere. Le interlocuzioni con i cittadini servono a capire quali opere possono servire e rispetto a quali bisogni. L'attuazione del processo partecipativo ha incontrato molte difficoltà di realizzazione, sia per gli aspetti nuovi che introduceva e che non riusciva ad essere gestito dalle istituzioni, sia per una questione legata al tempo, in quanto sarebbero stati necessari tempi più lunghi per lo svolgimento. Questo ha determinato il sorgere di strani meccanismi di partecipazione, per cui in alcuni casi si interloquiva con poche associazioni, considerate rappresentative di un territorio, piuttosto che con gruppi di abitanti, con le istituzioni scolastiche o i rappresentanti della zona. Le scelte che hanno definito i progetti esecutivi sono state poi ulteriormente riviste nei progetti definitivi. In questo ambito si colloca il ruolo e il lavoro dei Laboratori di Quartiere che sono stati finanziati dal Comune di Milano per accompagnare

la realizzazione delle opere programmate di riqualificazione. I Laboratori di Quartiere nati come ambito di attuazione del Piano di accompagnamento sociale dei processi di riqualificazione urbana, sono stati nel primo periodo di lavoro sommersi dall'urgenza dell'apertura dei cantieri, con tutto quello che ne derivava dovendo seguire la mobilità degli abitanti. Quando in un secondo momento la presenza dei cantieri si è consolidata, lo spazio di relazione si è venuto a determinare. Ma se si fossero immediatamente date delle aspettative alte agli abitanti, ci sarebbero stati rischi di rottura nel coinvolgimento, con problemi nella costruzione del rapporto fiduciario. I quartieri periferici inseriti nel programma dei Contratti di quartiere (Gratosoglio, Mazzini, Molise-Calvairate, Ponte Lambro, San Siro) scontavano un passato di totale assenza di manutenzioni.

D: Rispetto al tema delle interazioni con le istituzioni, che tipo di interazione hanno le istituzioni con le pratiche di autorganizzazione? Quali sono le strategie di relazione e gli obiettivi che si pone una istituzione?

R: Penso che si possa parlare di tre momenti diversi che si sono susseguiti. Un primo momento in cui l'amministrazione decideva e il cittadino non riusciva ad avere un ruolo concreto, un intermedio nel quale istituzioni e cittadini (in cui includo anche il privato economico finanziatore) hanno provato a interloquire per trovare una quadra, e la situazione, che credo sia quella odierna, in cui l'amministrazione pubblica tende sempre più a delegare ambiti e ruoli alla città, stimolando forme di autorganizzazione o tentando di rafforzare esperienze già in essere. Io ritengo che il ruolo della mano pubblica deve essere ancora presente e che la linea guida di cura degli interessi pubblici debba essere molto chiara. L'esperienza che racconto e che rappresento riguarda il ruolo che i Laboratori di Quartiere stanno assumendo in questo momento, diverso rispetto al lavoro svolto nell'erogazione di servizi di accompagnamento sociale in un programma di lavori pubblici nei diversi contesti di quartieri con residenzialità pubblica. La sperimentazione che in questo ultimo anno si sta avviando, intende operare un passaggio nella gestione degli spazi e delle funzioni dei laboratori, abilitando una rete di soggetti e realtà territoriali, di associazioni.

Lo stesso indirizzo penso si possa leggere nel ruolo che le fondazioni e il capitale privato acquisisce oggi anche rispetto

ad interventi di tipo sociale. Il mio punto di vista è abbastanza critico rispetto a questi processi, rilevando una debolezza piuttosto che un punto di forza. Una mancata visione politica, intesa come policy sulla città, che esprime la difficoltà di cogliere la complessità che la città esprime. Io credo che si debbano trovare delle formule per governare questi processi di autorganizzazione, provando a costruire obiettivi comuni al servizio e a garanzia della città. In particolare, una guida pubblica può mettere al riparo dal pericolo che organizzazioni più forti sia economicamente che su altri versanti (management, strumenti e capacità progettuali) possano dettare le regole. Il problema che vivono le istituzioni pubbliche si riflette nella lentezza dei processi a causa di meccanismi e passaggi che complicano, per questo molte funzioni tendono sempre più ad essere affidate all'esterno dell'amministrazione.

Un altro esempio esplicativo di questa tendenza si riflette nei progetti che l'amministrazione comunale sta realizzando per il recupero degli immobili sfitti di proprietà privata. Per far fronte alla richiesta costante di case e ai tempi molto lunghi previsti dalle liste, il tentativo è capire quali sono tutte le strutture abitative presenti in città che non vengono utilizzate anche a causa della crisi immobiliare. Si chiede quindi di riutilizzare questi spazi abitativi a disposizione per un affitto a canone abitativo, calmierato quindi concordato, e con accordi finanziari che introducono il contributo di banche o fondazioni private a sostegno di queste operazioni finalizzate ad ampliare e diversificare l'offerta abitativa. In pratica si chiede al privato di rispondere al bisogno abitativo, in un contesto in cui le regole del mercato impediscono il soddisfacimento di tale bisogno. Si innestano regole di approccio diverse, in quanto il mercato e le sue regole di funzionamento devono dialogare con proposte abitative di carattere sociale. Il privato rispondendo a questo tipo di sollecitazione e richiesta, pone in questione il peso dei suoi interessi. Il canone concordato non può rispondere alle esigenze di tutti quei nuclei familiari o quei soggetti con livelli alti di fragilità sociale, che non solo non possiedono i mezzi per corrispondere al prezzo del mercato immobiliare, ma hanno anche bisogno di servizi di inclusione sociale e di accompagnamento. Questo tipo di approcci pone un problema di differenza tra welfare puro come sostegno a quei soggetti in condizione di povertà e forme di delega di gestione pubblica anche al privato. Bisogna negoziare

le regole di questo rapporto tra l'istituzione pubblica, il privato e le diverse forme di autorganizzazione. La delega di diversi ambiti di gestione pubblica ai privati, come nel caso della risposta al fabbisogno di case, oppure la cura dello spazio pubblico e la riqualificazione dei quartieri pone la necessità di trovare dei regolamenti, in modo che si possano distinguere quindi degli ambiti di intervento, quelli delegabili e quelli che non si possono delegare.

D: Secondo te queste esperienze sono in grado di produrre delle forme istituzionali innovative o riescono soltanto a migliorare o supportare i limiti delle istituzioni già esistenti e operanti?

R: Bisogna comprendere affondo in quali ambiti e filoni si stanno determinando i vari tentativi di collaborazione. Il caso del regolamento dei beni comuni mette in rilievo il tipo di lettura che viene fatto di spazi e situazioni diverse. Il giardino dato in gestione ad un'associazione, non può essere comparato al grande edificio dato in gestione per lo svolgimento di un'attività. Se le forme di cittadinanza attiva si fanno promotrici di progetti in cui la cura e la sensibilizzazione all'uso condiviso dello spazio del quartiere o del condominio sono centrali, e migliorano la consapevolezza di essere legati a questi luoghi e di gestirli in modo diverso, è possibile leggere questo come un aiuto al lavoro di un'istituzione pubblica, quindi compito dell'amministrazione potrà essere quello di supportare queste iniziative per gestire meglio le procedure. Cosa ben diversa è trasferire queste forme di collaborazione in casi dal mio punto di vista diversi come nelle situazioni in cui si intraprende un'acquisizione di una proprietà o di un immobile. Se i processi non vengono controllati il rischio alto è quello di agevolare la concorrenza tra diversi soggetti e gruppi, piuttosto che la collaborazione. Il quadro delle forme di autorganizzazione urbana, in particolare delle pratiche di gestione di spazi per l'erogazione di servizi ibridi, pone il problema delle diseguaglianze e dei rapporti di forza soprattutto tra quelle forme organizzative formali, e dotate di statuti, bilancio e capacità progettuali (Cooperative sociali, Fondazioni, Associazioni di rilievo nazionale) e gruppi informali di aggregazione di natura spontanea (Comitati di quartiere, piccole associazioni locali) e ancora poco strutturate che non riescono a competere con gli altri per accedere alle risorse e agli spazi. In questo momento non ci sono strumenti adatti di controllo di

questi processi. All'interno del quadro amministrativo comunale la Direzione Periferie sta avviando un ragionamento sul capire, almeno per quanto riguarda i vari contesti periferici di Milano, cosa continuare a gestire all'interno delle istituzioni e cosa invece aprire ad ambiti di collaborazione e co-gestione. Esiste per esempio un paradosso sulla questione dei beni e degli spazi. Un elemento importante che si riscontra sul tema dello spazio è il modo di procedere seguendo due passaggi consecutivi che secondo me producono delle contraddizioni e non generano cambiamento. I beni e gli spazi disponibili di un comune sono soggetti ad una prima fase di valorizzazione economica quindi vengono immessi sul mercato per capire chi può essere interessato a fare un'offerta economica. Soltanto se lo spazio non interessa e quindi si configura come residuale, è possibile passare ad un'assegnazione e predisporre un bando per funzioni e attività sociali, in cui non è prevista una valorizzazione economica.

Un caso particolare con cui mi sto confrontando riguarda una serie di spazi commerciali che si trovano al piano terra di due complessi di edilizia residenziale pubblica, nel quartiere Gratosoglio collocato nella periferia sud di Milano. Su questi spazi sotto le due torri di Via Saponaro, (due stabili residenziali di proprietà di ALER – Azienda lombarda di edilizia residenziale) insiste la destinazione commerciale, ma si presentano totalmente abbandonati da anni. In questo caso risulta poco produttivo destinare questi spazi per attività culturali o sociali soltanto in forma residuale. La possibilità di consentire nuove funzioni e nuove attività, non può essere frutto di scelte secondarie, piuttosto dovrebbe attivarsi un processo di coinvolgimento e un'analisi accurata del contesto, per comprendere il problema e le possibilità di riutilizzo. Non si può pensare che la partecipazione sociale sia opportuna come strumento ultimo quando non riesco a fare altro di uno spazio. Il ruolo delle istituzioni pubbliche deve essere quello di analizzare i contesti e conoscerli per saper prefigurare delle trasformazioni e sostenerle con delle risorse. Il bene pubblico e quindi il ruolo delle istituzioni pubbliche non possono essere destinati esclusivamente alla valorizzazione, perché si crea una stortura. Piuttosto il compito importante deve corrispondere allo studio e all'analisi dei contesti e delle possibili attività e servizi. Il fine delle istituzioni pubbliche non deve essere rivolto ad un guadagno ma alla progettazione dei

servizi rivolte alla collettività cercando di prefigurare aspetti, funzioni e possibili interessi.

D: Cosa definisce il carattere abilitante di una pratica? Quali sono le caratteristiche di un processo di collaborazione? Come viene ridefinita la relazione tra Stato, privato e comunità?

R: Lo strumento della delega non è sicuramente adeguato ad operare delle trasformazioni nei processi. Inoltre, la differenza che io vedo tra attore pubblico istituzionale e attore non istituzionale è l'espressione ancora di interesse pubblico vs particolarismo. La riqualificazione di un giardino riguarda un gruppo specifico di abitanti e di soggetti. Queste forme di autorganizzazione e di partecipazione dal basso, incontrando una struttura più forte, come nel caso di fondazioni o organizzazioni che io definisco di un livello intermedio (non è l'ente pubblico ma neanche il singolo cittadino) che hanno alle spalle finanze, competenze, strumenti di azione, progettualità, non so fino a che punto saranno in grado di costruire delle visioni realmente rivolte al bene pubblico, o piuttosto saranno orientate a specifici obiettivi di interessi particolari.

In questa nuova fase di programmazione e gestione dei Laboratori di Quartiere, stiamo cercando di sperimentare un diverso posizionamento dell'istituzione pubblica, intermedia tra questi due mondi fin qui descritti come pubblico e privato, istituzionale e autorganizzato. Il Laboratorio di Quartiere, quale ambito di sperimentazione, deve poter mantenere questa funzione/posizione. Riprendendo le sue funzioni di presidio locale di riferimento in un complesso programma di riqualificazione, come i Contratti di quartiere, può promuovere e gestire progettualità condivise con gli attori e i gruppi che lavorano nei contesti territoriali, mantenendo il suo rapporto con l'amministrazione pubblica. Questo consente al laboratorio di essere forte e avere come obiettivo il miglioramento della qualità dell'abitare. Il ruolo dell'amministrazione comunale andrà a ridimensionarsi, ma non si svilupperà una delega completa di funzioni e di progetti. I gruppi territoriali sviluppano delle azioni diverse, perché dovrebbero impiegare risorse per ristrutturare gli edifici di residenzialità pubblica per rispondere al bisogno abitativo? Le attività di aggregazione, di cura e di coinvolgimento che costruiscono non possono incidere su tutto. L'obiettivo del Laboratorio di Quartiere è rivolto a far

confluire progettualità diverse e costruire una rete di soggetti che in collaborazione con l'istituzione pubblica sia in grado di migliorare le pratiche di abitare la città. In questo senso sono fondamentali le diverse declinazioni di abitare che provengono da chi si autorganizza nella città, rifunzionalizzando spazi nuovi per produrre socialità e cultura, cambiando forme e destinazione d'uso degli spazi (mercati comunali che diventano biblioteche di quartiere, piuttosto che portinerie sociali in luoghi di commercio). L'abitare include aspetti molteplici e complementari che non si esauriscono con la qualità delle strutture abitative e con l'offerta di case. Ma contemporaneamente penso sia necessario restare dentro una cornice in cui il patrimonio pubblico non può essere alienato a favore di privati.

D: In queste esperienze e nello specifico nello svolgimento del programma dei contratti di quartiere, noi possiamo riscontrare un processo di reciproco apprendimento e scambio tra il livello istituzionale e quello basato sulla comunità locale?

R: Anche il mio ruolo e le mie competenze sono cambiati. Nel corso del tempo la costruzione di legami relazionali con i soggetti territoriali mi ha aiutato a definire un rapporto fiduciario, un riconoscimento della reciproca posizione e situazione. Si impara tanto e vedo la necessità di uscire di più, per andare nei quartieri della città, apprendendo nuovi elementi utili per molte scelte che si fanno nella definizione delle politiche. Capacità di ascolto, ma non fine a sé stesso ma per recepire all'interno delle politiche degli obiettivi che provengono dai territori. Questo passaggio ha come difficoltà la sua stessa veste istituzionale che viene in molti casi resa oggetto di diffidenza e al contrario di aspettative molto alte. Sul posizionamento delle istituzioni pubbliche pesa ancora la lontananza e la distanza che viene percepita dai soggetti del territorio.

Il loro incontro si caratterizza anche per una diversità di tempi. Le richieste di interventi o le proposte di attività che provengono da ambiti o progetti di autorganizzazione urbana registrano tempi molto più veloci e immediati rispetto a quelli in cui invece l'istituzione pubblica è in grado di operare. La diversità di tempi crea un cortocircuito nei diversi tentativi di collaborazione, da un lato spingendo a forzare procedure e prassi burocratiche, dall'altro sottoponendo i processi di organizzazione a fasi di controllo e ridefinizione.

La prima forma di apprendimento che credo si stia realizzando riguarda la consapevolezza che non esiste una distanza acquisita tra istituzioni e soggetti del territorio. Questo aspetto si misura però con la fragilità della relazione su cui si posa, per questo non bisogna mai fondare il rapporto su aspettative difficilmente raggiungibili.

Ritornando al ruolo dei laboratori, questo si basa sulla costruzione di un rapporto fiduciario dal basso. L'obiettivo è fare delle cose insieme, ponendo al centro la questione delle risorse e del tempo. Il risultato è lento a realizzarsi, in quanto esiste un problema di linguaggio che deve essere calibrato, trovando dei codici nuovi su cui far incontrare il ruolo dei soggetti autorganizzati e gli strumenti delle istituzioni in termini di norme e possibilità. Bisogna imparare ad usare uno stesso linguaggio traducendo gli aspetti tecnici, tali da essere resi comprensibili, collegare le istanze che provengono dalle diverse forme di autorganizzazione in un quadro più ampio. La capacità di relazione dei laboratori mira a sapersi adeguare al contesto cercando di parlare un linguaggio teso alla comunicazione, per abilitare ruoli e azioni.

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DIETRO LE QUINTE/BACKSTAGE

Enabling spaces. Quali ponti tra istituzioni e cittadini per pratiche di governo collaborative?

Francesca Cognetti

Abstract

Il testo propone una riflessione che, a partire dall'osservazione dei campi ormai consolidati della partecipazione promossa dalle istituzioni e delle pratiche collaborative nate in seno a movimenti e società, costruisce un terreno di scambio, là dove questi ambiti vengono spesso visti come separati. L'interesse è di porre l'attenzione sulle condizioni per cui si possano generare spazi di confronto e co-progettazione, che richiedono a tutti i soggetti coinvolti di uscire dai propri frame, e quindi di apprendere nel corso del confronto. Questi possono essere ambienti altamente collaborativi, ma anche molto conflittuali, sedi di relazioni di potere, posizionamenti politici a più scale, livelli diversi di rappresentatività. Per questa ragione, la formazione di nuovi orientamenti verso obiettivi comuni non è mai un esito scontato. Enabling spaces in questa prospettiva sono arene in cui sperimentare e formare la capacità politica "di tutti", sfidando così il funzionamento stesso della democrazia locale.

The article reflects on the potential relationship among institutional participatory policies and different practices of re-appropriation of space and self-organization. This vast field of activity and experiences, seen not in opposition but in a continuum, challenges the roles and meanings of the institutions and civil society. These experiments are focused on action that simultaneously redefines the modes of social conflict as well as the routines and spaces of citizenship, as well as of the institutional habits and norms. This new collaborative perspective sees pressure for experimentation and consolidation by the institutions, but also by the inhabitants and other actors. The article investigates under what conditions this collaboration is generated, where the production of knowledge is the result of a multiplicity of shared practices. The enabling sites where these shared practices may eventually unfold can be considered as arenas where to experiment and shape political capacity, thus challenging the very functioning of local democracy.

Parole Chiave: Capacitazione, Partecipazione, Riappropriazione, Conflitto

Keywords: Capacitation, Participation, Reappropriation, Conflict

Processi partecipativi o pratiche collaborative?

Negli ultimi venti anni si è assistito anche in Italia alla sperimentazione, diffusione e successivo consolidamento delle pratiche di natura partecipativa, in particolare all'interno degli strumenti di governo territoriale a diverse scale, da quella della riqualificazione urbana alla dimensione della pianificazione strategica. Un riconoscimento annunciato anche da alcuni testi nel campo dell'urbanistica, legati all'idea del piano e delle

politiche come processo di interazione e all'utilità della presenza di arene di natura deliberativa aperte a una molteplicità di soggetti per trattare temi di efficacia di politiche (Balducci, 1991). Un terreno, quello della partecipazione, che nel suo graduale irrobustimento e conseguente riconoscimento come ambito rilevante per le politiche, sembra avere perso parte della carica iniziale, volta alla possibilità di generare contesti decisionali più aperti e inclusivi.

Da una parte infatti, l'approccio partecipativo, in particolare in Italia, ha rappresentato una discontinuità rispetto agli orientamenti dell'urbanistica più tradizionali, segnando la possibilità di una apertura del contesto - ritenuto per molto tempo esclusivamente tecnico e di governo - a pratiche politiche e di cittadinanza più ampie.

Dall'altra, una certa pervasività di strumenti e metodi di natura partecipativa, a fronte di una non altrettanto validità in termini di condivisione delle scelte, ha iniziato a sollevare dubbi circa l'efficacia dell'approccio e la possibilità di un suo utilizzo così esteso.

Si sono quindi introdotte molte prospettive critiche alla partecipazione, che muovono da quello che alcuni definiscono un "incubo" (Miessen, 2010), una "tirannia" (Cooke, Kothari, 2001) o un "sospetto" (Bobbio, 2016).

Anche in contesto italiano si stanno facendo emergere le ambiguità o le conseguenze controintuitive dell'allargamento del processo decisionale - e si sta diffondendo una forma di pensiero che porta a considerare la partecipazione come una alternativa tra molti possibili strumenti di policy, da adottare solo dopo una valutazione attenta dei suoi costi e benefici (Mela, 2017).

Viste queste premesse, è bene considerare la progettazione partecipata come policy tool, cioè portatrice di una concezione concreta del rapporto tra politica e società (Lascoumes e Le Galès, 2009); questo ci permette di sottrarla alla sua riduzione a tecnica e procedura efficiente di "coinvolgimento" dei partecipanti, valida in generale e sempre, a prescindere dai contesti entro cui si applica. Inoltre, mettere l'accento sulla sua natura di "dispositivo progettuale", ci aiuta a problematizzare la natura degli attori coinvolti (politici, tecnici, sociali) e delle loro interazioni e a rimettere al centro la partecipazione come strumento di policy design, che seleziona attori, interessi,

opportunità, risorse e problemi (Cognetti, 2012).

D'altra parte, al di là degli ambiti più strutturati, molti si soffermano su pratiche e dinamiche di costruzione collaborativa della città, che spesso si manifestano negli interstizi del governo urbano, anche di quello di natura partecipativa.

Un tema, quello delle pratiche collaborative, che sembra avere assunto oggi maggiore spessore, diffusione e praticabilità, anche grazie all'allargamento a molti campi come quello dell'attivazione di servizi ed economie, dell'abitare e della trasformazione urbana, della promozione di coesione sociale e animazione culturale.

Tutte queste esperienze rimandano alla condivisione come elemento per rigenerare luoghi e legami, e sono più vicine al concetto del "fare insieme" e della "attivazione dal basso", che a quello di un "percorso partecipativo strutturato" (Bianchetti 2014; Savoldi, 2014).

In questa prospettiva, nella città contemporanea assistiamo a forme anche molto diverse di pratiche collaborative in cui la riappropriazione dello spazio entra fortemente in relazione con i legami tra le persone: rigenerazione di edifici vuoti, progetti di produzione culturale, orti e giardini urbani, servizi di welfare, luoghi della nuova produzione.

Questo è un vasto campo di attività ed esperienze che vede il coinvolgimento diffuso e il ruolo di guida dei cittadini, individualmente o in forma associata.

Tali pratiche e processi sono stati sempre presenti, con gradi e modi diversi nelle città (Balducci, 2004; Donolo, 2005), ma oggi emergono con una particolare evidenza, non solo perché alcune linee di ricerca (e anche orientamenti politici) rivolgono loro una specifica attenzione, ma anche perché costituiscono un panorama estremamente ampio, e che si allarga progressivamente (Cellamare, Cognetti, 2014; 2017).

Vista la recente diffusione, viene da chiedersi se queste pratiche stiano guadagnando "una nuova *actorship* che si confronta con esperimenti creativi per fare città" (Perrone, 2016), e quanto questi spazi siano realmente autonomi e contrapposti alla legittimità della sfera pubblica.

Spazi abilitanti e forme di apprendimento

La condizione attuale sembra quindi oscillare tra una sensibilità ormai matura da parte delle istituzioni per quello che riguarda

i temi della partecipazione, legata a molte esperienze avviate e a nuovi interrogativi circa l'uso pervasivo di strumenti di natura deliberativa e una diffusione di progetti legati all'attivazione degli abitanti, individualmente e in forma associata, che sembra costituire una nuova tendenza culturale spesso a mio avviso troppo schiacciata sul "*Do it yourself*" (quindi in assenza delle istituzioni – o in opposizione-).

Da una parte si propone che i cittadini partecipino all'interno di contesti di discussione, confronto e coprogettazione proposti e gestiti dalle amministrazioni (spesso non direttamente presenti all'interno dei processi, ma supportate da delle figure di facilitatori), dall'altra si pensa che la società possa con intelligenza "fare da sé", producendo beni pubblici e risposte "dal basso" ai problemi della città, favorendo il protagonismo e l'innovazione sociali.

Vorrei in questo testo proporre una prospettiva che ribalta questi termini, alla ricerca di un terreno di ridefinizione che ragiona sugli "spazi abilitanti" deponendo l'interesse su ambiti intermedi alle due polarità, dando forma non tanto alle valenze della partecipazione come strumento di deliberazione quanto alle sue potenzialità come strumento di dialogo tra saperi diversi (istituzionali, esperti, del cittadino comune) e come strumento di apprendimento e capacitazione dei soggetti coinvolti.

Gli spazi abilitanti in questa prospettiva sono arene in cui sperimentare e formare la capacità politica "di tutti", sfidando così il funzionamento stesso della democrazia locale.

Guardando a questi spazi, quelle che si aprono sono delle forme di ridefinizione tanto delle abitudini e dei luoghi della cittadinanza, quanto delle routine e delle norme istituzionali. Quello che si configura è un campo che richiede un grosso sforzo di ridefinizione legato alla comprensione reciproca e allo scambio, attraverso iniziative che attivano risorse, forme di sapere, capacità e interessi magari riferiti a contesti specifici, ma che possono aprirsi alla costruzione di quadri di senso più ampio (ad esempio legati a legacies relative alle capacità degli attori).

Si tratta del formarsi di "palestre di collaborazione" tra narrative, doti, logiche organizzative e culture diverse. Queste palestre sono legate a migliorare le capacità, attraverso attività volte alla comprensione dei caratteri di potenziale cambiamento di uno specifico territorio, quindi attraverso forme di messa a fuoco

comune di ciò che fa problema e delle possibilità di trattamento. Richiedono a tutti gli attori di condividere i propri presupposti e in qualche misura di essere disponibili a ridiscuterli.

La dimensione abilitante si lega fortemente a specifici contesti di apprendimento collettivo che mi sembrano essere un passaggio fondamentale per mettere persone e soggetti nelle condizioni di imparare, innanzitutto dalla pratica dello scambio.

Gli *enabling spaces* hanno alcuni caratteri specifici, che ho messo a fuoco nel tempo attraverso molta pratica sul campo, e che richiamerei in tre punti.

Sono contesti che *mettono in campo una complessa interazione tra persone e gruppi* (portatori sia di diversi frame di comprensione sia di vari posizionamenti sociali, culturali e di potere). E' questo quindi innanzitutto un campo relazionale, in cui si possono irrobustire le relazioni di fiducia e di cooperazione, cioè la possibilità di potenziamento del capitale sociale e del patrimonio di relazioni di uno specifico luogo.

Sono *contesti fluidi e incrementali*, legati alla possibilità del cambiamento delle posizioni e dei punti di vista attraverso il tempo, i processi di interazione e di esplicitazione del conflitto. Questo prevede che attraverso scambio e confronto si possano cambiare posizione e punti di vista dei singoli in un "percorso di mutuo apprendimento che si genera attraverso il riconoscimento di un campo dove voci e interessi diversi possono essere negoziati, dove il conflitto può essere visto non come barriera ma come problema trattabile" (Padovani, 2016, p. 40).

Sono *contesti che producono una nuova conoscenza* (che non è scientifica e non è comune) esito della costruzione di ponti tra mondi (e non sommatoria dei saperi). Questo spesso implica lo sforzo relativo alla possibilità che tutte le forme di conoscenza siano legittime in modo da generare buone domande di politiche, e quindi ambiti di *sensemaking* in cui sono messi in discussione i codici stessi dell'interpretazione (Weick, 1997). Parlare di *sensemaking* significa intendere l'indagine come costruzione continua di conoscenza che prende forma quando le persone danno senso, - retrospettivamente, ma anche con capacità di previsione e invenzione sul futuro - alle situazioni in cui si ritrovano (Cognetti, 2016).

Un *enabling space* può essere quindi un ambiente altamente collaborativo, ma anche molto conflittuale, sede di relazioni di potere, posizionamenti politici a più scale, livelli diversi di

rappresentatività. Per questa ragione la formazione di nuovi orientamenti verso obiettivi comuni e condivisi non è mai un esito scontato.

Se questo è l'orizzonte, è necessario ripensare sia il ruolo delle istituzioni che dei cittadini e le relazioni tra i diversi attori che interagiscono con la costruzione di un territorio. Da un lato, le istituzioni devono disporre di nuove capacità per agire all'interno di processi orizzontali, in cui gli amministratori sono attori all'interno dei contesti, al pari degli altri. In un processo di collaborazione l'apparato amministrativo dovrebbe accettare innovazioni in termini di coinvolgimento, chiedendosi da un lato come migliorare e sostenere le capacità che i territori esprimono e dall'altro come consolidare nuove sensibilità di tecnici e responsabili politici. Inoltre, le sperimentazioni dovrebbero creare cambiamenti duraturi nelle strutture ordinarie di gestione delle politiche pubbliche, che potrebbero sviluppare nuove procedure e strumenti, apprendendo.

D'altra parte, gli attori locali dovrebbero essere in grado di perseguire una logica non solo conflittuale ma anche sussidiaria, imparando ad essere i protagonisti di un processo condiviso di definizione dell'interesse pubblico e collettivo, possibilmente a fianco di altri soggetti.

I Living Lab come reti abilitanti

Attraverso questo percorso gli attori, al di là delle caratteristiche e dei ruoli, sono portati a intraprendere una strada che ha un carattere "abilitante" per tutti, perché richiede a ciascuno di uscire dai propri frame e dalle proprie routine, per costruirne di nuovi.

Si tratta di avviare processi complessi che richiedono a tutti nuove intelligenze, competenze e sensibilità: all'operatore pubblico una nuova apertura e attenzione verso la costituzione di ambiti e strumenti di progettazione multilivello e multiattoriali; agli esperti una idea di progetto aperta e inclusiva in cui città e territorio divengono supporti per una impresa collettiva che si sviluppa nel tempo; ad abitanti e forze locali un ruolo attivo e propositivo al di là delle storiche inerzie e contrapposizioni; agli attori urbani sensibilità e attenzione verso importanti opportunità da cogliere.

In questa prospettiva è centrale non solo il ruolo degli abitanti, ma anche quello dei soggetti: organizzazioni intermedie come

associazioni, cooperative, imprese creative, comitati di abitanti che diventano i primi interlocutori e il tramite verso una partecipazione più diffusa.

In qualche misura quindi il progetto abilitante è innanzitutto la formazione e l'alimentazione di una rete collaborativa che promuove visioni e politiche. La rete, più che una premessa all'attivazione del processo partecipativo diviene esito, incerto, del percorso.

Troppo spesso, infatti, si dà per acquisita la capacità degli attori alla collaborazione e allo scambio trasversale; spesso non trattando una dimensione conflittuale latente, dinamiche competitive, posizioni antitetiche e difficilmente concilianti.

Un lavoro di attivazione e alimentazione della rete si può rivelare uno strumento capace di trattare il tema del conflitto e della frammentazione tra soggetti territoriali, costruendo uno spazio permanente di confronto, occupandosi della qualità delle relazioni, eventualmente rafforzando la coesione interna.

Vuol dire anche, non solo lavorare alle connessioni orizzontali, ma anche a quelle verticali attraverso la cura degli scambi con i più diversi livelli istituzionali che per mancanza di prassi, distanza di linguaggi e visioni, "vuoti" nelle agende politiche rischiano di rimanere muti e distanti.

Può voler dire infine lavorare alla apertura delle reti locali ad altri soggetti, esterni ed inediti. In territori locali che spesso esprimono autoreferenzialità e chiusura, questa può essere una mossa per abbattere un certo isolamento, permettendo sia di ricollocare istanze specifiche in un quadro cittadino, sia di generare un movimento di avvicinamento e di eventuale ingresso di nuovi attori all'interno della rete locale.

La prospettiva è quella di lavorare al rafforzamento di un "soggetto collettivo ibrido" via "azione locale", un soggetto nuovo – ma radicato localmente – che si costituisce attraverso una attività di indagine volta alla progettazione. La formazione di questo soggetto avviene infatti non tanto su processi di natura deliberativa (spesso al centro di molti processi partecipativi), ma attraverso l'azione e il confronto sulle possibilità di cambiamento. La palestra di collaborazione interroga così i processi di costruzione di pubblico, come prova di democrazia (Crosta, 2003; 2007).

Questo è un orizzonte di senso molto ambizioso, perché è legato alla possibilità che nel corso del processo, non solo si aprano spazi

di apprendimento, ma anche di costruzione e rafforzamento di network, come di generazione di nuovi protagonismi (individuali e collettivi).

Questi spazi abilitanti, sono emersi in alcune recenti riflessioni sulla partecipazione come “urban living labs” (Concilio, 2016) o “*think tank* di quartiere” (Laws, Forester, 2015): spazi che da una parte prestano attenzione alle disuguaglianze strutturali e alle dinamiche di scala urbana che prendono corpo nei territori, dall'altra curano le condizioni locali perché avvengano dei cambiamenti come la costituzione di nuove coalizioni per lo sviluppo delle comunità, il rafforzamento di leadership e la costruzione di capacità.

Sono ambiti temporanei di democrazia locale, una trading zone che agisce come “scambiatore” per il dialogo tra differenti sub-culture (Balducci, 2013), costruendo ponti e coerenze tra mondi differenti (municipalità, istituzioni diverse, associazioni, gruppi di cittadini, individui, ecc).

Lavorare sulle capacità, a volte sul conflitto

Si tratta quindi di costruire ambiti entro i quali le persone abbiano la possibilità di vivere percorsi di emancipazione, lavorando alla cura di beni comuni. Ciò implica assumere come obiettivo quello di “abilitare le comunità” o, per usare la terminologia introdotta da Sen, di aumentare la *capability* (Sen, 2000). Sono relativamente pochi gli studiosi e i *practitioners*, in Italia ma non solo, che usano la prospettiva delle capacità come riferimento principale nel campo della riqualificazione urbana; che guardano a programmi in grado di promuovere opportunità di espansione delle libertà individuali e collettive attraverso lo spazio (Khosla, Samuels, 2005; Reardon, 2006; Laino 2009).

Attraverso l'approccio delle capacitazioni, che possiamo dire essere un approccio che lavora al rafforzamento di reti e di capacità degli attori, i territori sono interpretati come laboratori di sperimentazione sul futuro: il futuro, infatti, diviene un «fatto culturale» (Appadurai, 2014) contrapponendo all'“etica della probabilità” quella della “possibilità”. La prima “porta il rischio in spazi di emergenza e di sofferenza”, mentre la seconda “può offrire una base più estesa per il miglioramento della qualità della vita e accogliere una pluralità di visioni della nuova vita”.

Esistono infatti disparità significative tra le persone in termini di capacità di autorappresentazione, di qualità delle risorse che

sono in grado di fornire, delle conoscenze pratiche sul problema da trattare e della capacità di formulare adeguatamente le proprie idee di cui il processo deve farsi carico.

L'abitudine a partecipare e la capacità di condividere risorse e sviluppare un approccio al pensiero progettuale non appartengono a tutti; pertanto, è importante che un processo collaborativo si faccia carico delle reali possibilità di espressione e scelta sviluppate all'interno del processo stesso. Abilitare vuol dire quindi generare contesti che consentono di "fare" e costruire visioni di futuro, dando più potere alla società ma assumendo anche l'incarico di aumentare le opportunità delle persone per soddisfare i loro bisogni, interessi e aspettative.

La questione non riguarda solo le forme di redistribuzione del potere e la creazione di una nuova cultura del governo urbano; si tratta anche dell'opportunità di lavorare su processi inclusivi in grado di valorizzare le capacità sociali e istituzionali, di rafforzarle, ma anche di crearne di nuove.

Il rischio, altrimenti, è quello di creare un'arena ad "accesso selezionato" nel senso che sono coinvolte solo quelle forze (istituzionali, private, entità del terzo settore e associazioni) che hanno strumenti per accedere al processo di progettazione, quindi non avviene una significativa ridefinizione delle relazioni di potere e dei ruoli. Il paradosso è che la stessa collaborazione può diventare una modalità di esclusione, specialmente degli attori più deboli, che non hanno strumenti per rappresentarsi.

L'"approccio alle capacità" pone un accento particolare su questi aspetti nella prospettiva della "giustizia sociale di base". Solleva una domanda fondamentale sulla democrazia: come creiamo contesti di ascolto, scambio e apprendimento che mettono ogni persona nelle condizioni di fare ed esprimersi? Questa apparentemente semplice domanda pone questioni importanti sulla creazione di opportunità per tutti, sulla difesa della libertà di scelta, sulla attenzione alle dinamiche relative a disuguaglianza e discriminazione.

Si tratta di mettere a punto in forma ampia gli strumenti collaborativi, facendo in modo che la conoscenza non diventi un fattore di nuova esclusione sociale, ma un elemento attivo di inclusione attraverso l'alimentazione di uno spirito critico diffuso, l'accesso a strumenti per capire dinamiche complesse, la comprensione di questioni di carattere globale anche a partire da fatti quotidiani.

Le teorie sulle capacità, sottolineano inoltre che queste spesso sono “abilità combinate” (Nussbaum 2011), che si esprimono non solo attraverso le caratteristiche degli individui, ma anche tramite uno scambio con un ambiente sociale, economico e politico. L'enfasi sulle capacità, come equilibrio tra l'espressione interiore di sé e la possibilità di uno scambio (collaborativo o conflittuale) con un ambiente esterno, è un punto centrale sui processi collaborativi.

Per questa ragione credo che parlare di diritto alla partecipazione ponga anche l'accento sull'utilità di forme aperte di conflitto, come occasione per alimentare uno spirito critico diffuso, per esplicitare le posizioni e argomentare differenti punti di vista. Intravedo infatti un rischio legato al riferimento allo spazio abilitante come luogo conciliante, volto a pacificare i conflitti e a costruire, magari in modo più sensibile, luoghi di costruzione del consenso; trappole in cui, per preservare relazioni avviate e piccole posizioni di potere acquisite, si rischia di non praticare posizioni oppositive più radicali. In alcuni casi, invece, l'abilitazione potrebbe proprio derivare da un processo non collaborativo ma conflittuale. E' difficile leggere oggi la città come spazio pacificato; in contesti fortemente marginali e polarizzati le condizioni di vita, spesso vissute attraverso meccanismi segreganti quotidiani, non possono che accendere contrasti; e la stessa città contesta potrebbe essere il luogo di un nuovo apprendimento collettivo.

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FOCUS/FOCUS

The Challenges of collaboration and democratic participation in turbulent and unsettled times

Sophie Watson

Abstract

Il paper propone nuovi strumenti per pensare all'auto-organizzazione nelle città, sottoposte, a mio parere, ad una crescente instabilità e turbolenza. L'importanza di pensare l'auto-organizzazione nelle città è tanto più rilevante negli attuali contesti economici e sociali dove si assiste, in più parti del mondo, al ritiro dall'impegno e dall'investimento pubblici da parte dello Stato; fattore che ha un impatto sempre più negativo sui cittadini, in particolare sui soggetti più vulnerabili. L'auto-organizzazione è allora un'importante risorsa per il futuro se le città vogliono restare luoghi inclusivi, giusti e sensibili ai bisogni locali. Tuttavia, tale auto-organizzazione può essere veramente significativa ed efficace solo se condotta in modo collaborativo e democratico, coinvolgendo quante più persone possibili, in particolare quelle le cui voci restano spesso inascoltate. Nel far ciò, è importante riconoscere quanto tale coinvolgimento e partecipazione democratica non siano sempre consensuali; piuttosto, il conflitto è inevitabile e potenzialmente positivo, poiché le persone apprendono a riconoscere le loro differenze, spesso implicite nelle dinamiche di potere, e a negoziare soluzioni condivise.

This paper proposes new key ways to thinking about self-organisation in cities in what, I suggest, are increasingly unsettled and turbulent times. The importance of thinking about self-organisation in cities is all the more salient in the current economic and social context where in many parts of the world there is a withdrawal by the state from public involvement and expenditure, which is impacting on urban citizens, particularly those who are vulnerable, in increasing negative ways. Self-organisation is thus an important and key direction for the future, if cities are to remain inclusive, just and responsive to local needs. Yet such self-organisation can only be truly meaningful and effective if it is conducted collaboratively and democratically, involving as many people as possible, particularly those whose voices are not often heard. In so doing, it is also important to recognise that such involvement and democratic participation are not always consensual; rather conflict is inevitable and potentially positive, as people learnt to recognise their differences, which are often implicated in power, and to negotiate solutions together.

Parole chiave: Partecipazione democratica, Instabilità, Conflitto

Keywords: Democratic participation, Unsettled, Conflict

We are living in increasingly unsettled and turbulent times, where the imperative to find new ways thinking about cities, and contributing to them as activists, planners, architects and policy makers is ever more urgent. In this context, self-organisation

in cities is highly relevant. This is all the more important in many parts of the world where neo liberal economic thinking is dominant and where we see the state withdrawing from public involvement and expenditure. As a result, voluntary, non-statutory and citizen led initiatives have expanded to respond to the need for the public or social housing, welfare and community services, and other public goods that once were provided by the state. Self- organisation in cities is thus the way of the future if cities are to remain inclusive, just and responsive to local needs. What I want to suggest in this paper is that there is no meaningful self-organisation in cities without some form of collaboration and democratic participation.

Let us turn to: how can these turbulent and unsettled times in cities be characterised? First, over the last decade there has been growing inequality within cities, and across regions and countries. Rising house prices and the lack of affordable housing for people on low and middle incomes renders large numbers of people dependent on high rent levels, or forced to live in far flung suburbs or rural locations at some distance from their place of employment. At the extreme end growing numbers of homeless people are consigned to temporary shelter on city streets and underpasses, or temporary settlements, dependent on diminishing services or the kindness of strangers. Secondly, there is a growing number of people displaced from their place of origin, due to political or religious conflict, persecution or lack of resources. Many of these refugees find themselves without accommodation and employment and vulnerable to exploitation in their place of arrival. There is evidence that climate change and environmental degradation – lack of water, pollution and desertification- is contributing further to the movement of populations, a trend that is likely to continue and deteriorate over coming years. Third, we see increasing disaffection with traditional democratic governments and institutions, often expressed in hostility towards the metropolitan elites and experts, which is manifest in the rise of populist movements from the US to countries across Europe. Such a disaffection, I suggest, potentially has serious consequences for the future of democracy. To date, liberal democratic societies have been ill-prepared to confront the present challenge, often unable to grasp its nature. As a result, we see the growth of populism, right wing movements, racism, and a lack of tolerance to others

who are different. Fourth, societies are becoming increasingly complex, interconnected, unpredictable and uncertain. Such complexity and uncertainty present serious challenges for city planners and urban policy makers.

This, then, is the context for thinking about collaboration and self-organization in cities. Much of the focus on collaboration and compromise within studies of governance and partition overlooks both the reality of conflict and its potentially positive effects. Instead, there is a normative assumption of agreement and compromise, which overlooks and ignores differences and tension. Assumptions of consensus typically underpin the highly valued notions of participatory democracy. Addressing this requires particular attention to how power relationships influence the processes of governance and the role of civil society in balancing the influence of the private sector on the state. It also calls for a better understanding of conflict and collaboration as mutually reinforcing elements of an ongoing political process, where conflict is a not only unavoidable but also a necessary aspect of participation and engagement.

Chantal Mouffe's (2013, 1999) writing is helpful here. Mouffe suggests that -"deliberative democracy" is a commendable aspiration, which confronts the problems of an interest-based conception of democracy, which is inspired by economics and which is skeptical about the virtues of political participation. Theorists who are interested in developing notions of deliberative democracy, according to Mouffe (1999, p.745-6) aim to introduce questions of morality and justice into thinking about politics. This involves looking for new meanings of traditional democratic notions such as autonomy, sovereignty, and equality. However, as Mouffe argues 'their aim is to reformulate the classical idea of the public sphere, giving it a central place in the democratic project'. What matters in this notion of democracy is reason and rational argument rather than interests or an attempt respond politically to majority preferences. Habermas (1962) is one such thinker who emphasizes the importance of rational debate, typically in the public sphere of the coffee house, where deliberative democracy is based on notions of communication and people have their say - according to classical notions of democratic theory, in particular the concept of popular sovereignty. Benhabib (1996, p.70) similarly argues for a democratic theory which

attempts to bring together rationality with legitimacy seeking a 'common good' that is compatible with the sovereignty of the people (Mouffe, *ibidem*). Such a formulation is based on the assumption that common interests can be agreed through the processes of rational collective deliberation between free and equal individuals, who all have the chance to initiate debate and question the assigned topics of the conversation, and all have the right to challenge the very rules of the engagement and procedures (Benhabib, *ibidem*). But as feminists have been quick to point out this ignores the inequalities that derive from gender power differences, and the same argument could be made on the basis of other differences such as race and ethnicity, that are also embedded in inequalities of power.

Mouffe (2013), in her work, in contrast, takes seriously the dimension of power, and extends this to consider its ineradicable relation to antagonism. Instead, she suggests that the notion of a public sphere which is devoid of power and antagonism within which a rational consensus is imagined as the outcome involves the denials of some conflict as inevitable in the formation and performance of collective identities. For this reason, the traditional model of democratic politics is inadequate since it fails to recognize this. Rather, the question of power, Mouffe argues is central to the conduct of political debate, and in my view central to living with differences in the city- which are crucial to the question of self- organization. The city and its public spaces are ultimately spaces of politics and power, which act to include some social groups while excluding others. Public space can never be a neutral space where all people have equal access at all times, it is bound to be a space of contestation and conflict, even if these conflicts are sometimes resolved. But any resolution is bound to be temporary and impermanent, or maintained through constant attention to the differences of power that are constituted and played out in the public realm. Identities are necessarily formed and constituted in the spaces of the city, themselves vulnerable and precarious and shifting. This approach that I am advocating involves a displacement of the traditional relations between democracy and power, which, following Mouffe, accepts that power relations are constitutive of the social. Acceptance of this proposition opens up the question not of how to eradicate power, but rather to think about, and work with, forms of power that are compatible with democratic values

rather than destructive of them. This is to acknowledge that power relations are always present and need to be transformed in the interests of what Mouffe refers to as the project of “radical and plural democracy”. In this notion of politics, others who are different from ourselves are not conceived as some kind of enemy that needs to be destroyed, but rather as an “adversary,” whose ideas we listen to and possibly struggle against, in sometimes relations of antagonism. In this way of thinking, the objective of democratic politics is not to eliminate passions or differences through rational debate, rather, it is to mobilise these passions towards new forms of democracy.

Thus differences have to be negotiated. In the context of urban politics, I suggest that antagonistic differences to those that are different from oneself or one’s group, often occur as a result of fear of others who we don’t understand, or whose culture is not familiar- the fear of the stranger (Kristeva, 1991). This can lead urban dwellers to cut themselves off from others in gated communities, or behind walls, and refuse to engage with others who are they see as threatening. One of the challenges of self-organization in cities is thus to break down these visible and invisible boundaries that are erected between one group and another, creating soft rather than hard borders between places to open up spaces of engagement. It also involves acknowledging relations of power and addressing a sense of powerlessness that many people feel, particularly in the context of a lack of education, employment or income. It also means addressing the question of representation in the political and public spaces of the city, noticing who gets to speak and who gets to represent who. So often it is only the powerful voices that are heard.

Finally, moving on to self-organization, there are many examples of positive self-organization in cities, as this collection of papers attests. Many of these initiatives are in the less obvious and more liminal spaces of the city. This is important to emphasize since these are often overlooked in the analysis of more formal and institutional forms of organization. The US theorist Robert Putnam’s thesis in *Bowling Alone* published in the early 2000s, was influential in arguing that there we were witnessing the end of communal life. His conclusion was reached by studying organizations such as bowling clubs which had seen a substantial drop in membership. But what he ignored and overlooked are all the many places and spaces where these

take place. Ironically Emma Jackson (2017) in her ethnography of a London bowling alley, found that these were spaces which represent and bring together differences in new and exciting ways. In a similar way, geographers have mobilized the notion of community economies to make visible often marginalized and diverse economies which offer new forms of radically democratic economic organizing in diverse communities (Gibson-Graham 2006). The role of planning is crucial here. Instead of seeing the city as a clear and rational space to be planned, what is required is a recognition that planning takes place in messy and unpredictable settings that are 'complex and contentious, fluid and uncertain, historically and politically fraught'. Forester (1989) calls this "a critical pragmatism", to draw attention to the issues of difference, privilege, and power which shape the city and political engagement.

In many cities there is a long history of the re-appropriation of space and different forms of self-organization. The 1970s was a vibrant decade of urban politics of this kind across Europe, and in many other countries, where mainly young activists took over city spaces, squatting empty properties and creating new forms of communal living and working. With the rise of the women's movement, and Black movements in the US and British cities particularly, new organisations were set up in liminal spaces of the city to construct alternative forms of collective action and to respond to urban and social inequalities. Thus, we saw the growth of women's refuges, community playgrounds, city farms, cooperative housing initiatives and so on. Many of these survived, but the following decades also saw a decline in their success with the rise of the neo-liberal state across Europe, as central governments adopted punitive practices to close down these initiatives and withdraw some of the funding that supported them. In the recent period, there has been a resurgence of urban practices of re-appropriation of space" and self-organization, where in cities such as Rome empty buildings are being regenerated and new spaces of cultural production are opening up. With the growth of environmental movements over the last two decades there has been a renewed interest in creating urban gardens and making use of liminal and marginal spaces of the city which have been neglected- alongside railway lines, under bridges, adjacent to derelict buildings and so on. New public spaces are emerging, and new forms of community

and social organising are taking place. These exciting initiatives are explored in other papers in this collection, which reveal widespread social engagement of a new array of actors and communities discovering and creating new 'commons' and new ways of living. These forms of collaboration provide hope for the city as a space of self-organisation and a radical democratic politics that engages the diverse populations that now inhabit many cities of the world.

Yet it remains important to think about the questions posed earlier in this paper. How to create these spaces and organisations without excluding some groups? How can urban citizenship be constructed in such a way to be open to those that are different from those engaged in their construction? How can different groups have their interests met, and also be represented? Questions of how to engage in democratic debate that does not shut down some voices or force consensus where none exists need to be addressed. How to build political capacity amongst marginal urban actors? In this it is important to recognize the heterogeneity of urban populations rather than impose some imagined homogeneity. It is important also to recognize the complex socio-cultural and political histories of place, recognizing the specificity of each unique locality and taking this into account when constructing and imagining different futures. These are questions that need to be considered. Self-organisation in cities is here to stay. What matters is to ensure that it is conducted democratically and collaboratively to include all the diverse actors that participate and inhabit city spaces.

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Counteracting Ingrained Practices of Community Development in the American South. The Klondike/Smokey City Case in Memphis TN, USA

Antonio Raciti

Abstract

Negli Stati Uniti lo sviluppo di comunità è diventato, nel corso del tempo, un ambito di lavoro molto dibattuto all'interno del quale agenzie non governative intrecciano le loro iniziative volte al miglioramento dei quartieri con quelle proposte e attuate dalle autorità pubbliche. Questo paper analizza i principi e alcune delle questioni problematiche e irrisolte legate alla retorica dello sviluppo di comunità attraverso il caso di Klondike Smokey City, un quartiere Afro-Americano di Memphis (TN, US). Più specificatamente, il paper evidenzia alcune lezioni imparate durante un processo di ricerca orientato all'azione portato avanti durante le fasi iniziali di una partnership che ha coinvolto la *Klondike Smokey City Community Development Corporation* e il Dipartimento di *City and Regional Planning* presso l'*University of Memphis*. Il paper riflette su come approcci di ricerca in pianificazione ispirati alla ricerca-azione possono essere conducenti nell'affrontare alcune delle più importanti sfide fronteggiate dalle organizzazioni di comunità.

In the US, the field of community development has become an increasingly contested terrain where non-governmental entities routinely integrate their neighborhood improvement initiatives with those proposed and implemented by public authorities. This paper analyzes the assumptions and some of the problematic and unresolved issues tied to the rhetoric of community development by exploring the community-based development efforts of the Klondike Smokey City (KSC) community, a historic African American neighborhood in Memphis, TN. In particular, this paper highlights some of the lessons learned during an action-oriented research process carried out by a newly established partnership involving the KSC Community Development Corporation (CDC) and the City and Regional Planning (CRP) Department at the University of Memphis. This paper reflects on how alternative approaches to planning scholarship inspired by action-research might be conducive to revealing and addressing some of the most challenging issues faced by self-organization practices.

Parole chiave: Comunità, Sviluppo di Comunità, Ricerca-Azione, Auto-Organizzazione

Keywords: Community, Community Development, Action Research, Self-Organization

1. The “Community Alternative” in the US

Over time, the construction of enabling spaces – defined as those in which new forms of collaboration between subjects

of different institutions, agencies, and community groups are established to generate creative bridges for planning and management (cfr. Tracce Urbane, 2017 conference call, track n. 2) – has been interpreted in several ways and various forms in different contexts across the world. In the US, starting in the mid-60s, the community development movement generated very specific forms of enabling spaces aimed at encouraging collaboration between poor peoples' organizations and government structures. Since the Special Impact Amendment to the Economic Opportunity Act in 1966, there has been an increasing number of non-government agencies whose primary role has focused on rebuild declining neighborhoods from the inside (Bratt, 1989). Community-based organizations had initially been established to implement projects, especially those related to housing, by filling gaps in the housing market left by private and public organization's inability to provide affordable housing for the most disadvantaged. Over time, those organizations changed their areas of expertise and operation, embracing a more comprehensive approach to neighborhood development encompassing such activities as: job generation, neighborhood infrastructure, educational programming, and so on. Pursuing this broader mission, CDCs have been playing a fundamental role in addressing neighborhoods' concerns by supporting and enhancing people's self-organization practices, and challenging existing power structures, especially when these have prevented those in need to access the abovementioned resources.

In particular, CDCs have sought to act as a counterbalance to the power block by putting pressure on the establishment to achieve "equal partnerships" with economic elites (Shearer, 1989). Similar community-based institutions had been very active until the mid-70s when inner city communities across the US started to decline. At the national level, this period corresponds with the establishment of Community Development Corporations (CDCs), which were originally created to formalize the existence of community-based power blocks seen as the only "community option" (Clavel et al., 1997) to counteract the well known alliances between private and public elites well conceptualized by the concept of the "growth machine" (Molotch, 1976). The idea that local services and subsidies can be provided by community based organizations

(Clavel et al., 1997) has been very successful in those contexts where social conflicts on the ground were acknowledged, internalized, and pushed forward by local CDCs. Maintaining a strong connection to the larger public base, CDCs' work has been reflected, in a number of cases, in the agendas of local elected representatives, showing how the community alternative proposed by this model was able to influence municipal decision-making processes (Reardon, 1990; Clavel and Wiewel, 1991; Forester and Krumholz, 1990).

While examples of successful CDCs can be found across the US, the CDC model has been greeted with significant disbelief. Not only urban scholars, but also community activists have been concerned about the increasing distance between formalized community organizations (such as CDCs) and the broader people's base. This preoccupation has prompted many academic studies to look at the numerous tactics deployed by power structures to co-opt community based organizations (Marris and Rein, 1967; Piven and Cloward, 1979; Gittell 1980; Stoecker, 1997). Since the 90s, mechanisms for CDC co-optation have significantly undermined the transformative power of grassroots organizing and community-based development organizations working in many of America's inner city neighborhoods. The erosion over time of the "community alternative" has often compromised or derailed the initiatives once robustly carried out by CDCs and similar groups. In this scenario, enabling spaces lost their transformational power by being controlled by co-opted entities whose power and influence has been significantly diminished by existing power structures.

In this new scenario, while CDCs have become increasingly entangled with the power block through various forms of co-optation, they have been expected to serve as the 'watchdog' for more formal organizations carrying out localized self-organizing initiatives that could help restoring communities' agendas. This has prompted some to reflect upon the broad range of obstacles occurring in similar circumstances, concluding that self-organizing remains very limited because "there's only so much self-sacrificing you can do" (Herbert, 2005) to counteract existing power structures in order to achieve results that are sufficient to affect structural change. In these circumstances, what type of work is needed to fill the

gap caused by co-optation dynamics and the lack of resources and power among informal groups committed to work for the restoration of a community alternative in the public arena? In what follow, the case of the African American neighborhood of Klondike Smokey City (Memphis, TN) is presented as the epitome of a place where the initial existence of a strong “community alternative” has been slowly undermined by social dynamics that intertwined co-optation of local community groups with all of those initiatives carried out by local groups to restore the former glory of a tight-knit African American community in the face of significant disinvestment, outmigration and economic distress. After introducing the KSC Neighborhood and its phases of growth and decline, the paper shares an account of the work that has been carried out by the partnership established between the local KSC CDC and the CRP Department at the University of Memphis. Some hypothesis based upon this work are shared to encourage others to reflect upon the possibility that researchers-in-action might have in working within similar arenas where old models for establishing enabling space are becoming increasingly problematic. The paper concludes with a call for the importance of questioning taken-for-granted assumptions on existing enabling spaces and highlighting both the challenges and opportunities for approaching the activation of enabling spaces in severely distressed communities, such as Klondike Smokey City, in a new way.

2. The Klondike Smokey City Community

The Klondike and the Smokey City communities trace their roots back to the often-dual nature of American inner-city neighborhoods. On the western side of the community, the traditional mixed-race urban environment, where the sharing of the neighborhood space between blacks and whites reflecting the cultural and economic subjugation of people of color; on the eastern side, one of the first and most flourishing self-sufficient African American communities, where residential buildings and retail businesses were owned and managed by the new rising African American community. The western Smokey City neighborhood was settled, in fact, as a traditional neighborhood where African Americans worked as butlers, maids, and drivers for white families, however, it was fundamentally transformed during the 60s as a result of the construction of Interstate 240.



Fig. 1- The maps shows the boundaries of the entire KSC Neighborhood as it is today. In lighter gray, on the west side, the old footprint of Smokey City community; in darker gray, on the east side, the old footprint of the Klondike Community.

The Klondike neighborhood was one of the first and most flourishing self-sufficient African American communities in the South whose residents were making a good living in the first companies employing African Americans in semi-skilled and skilled manufacturing positions such as the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company and International Harvester.

After desegregation laws began to take effect during the late 60s and 70s, while white families were abandoning the Smokey City community ‘white flying’ to the numerous Memphis suburbs, the local demographic of the two former separated communities became quite homogeneous in terms of race and class (cfr. Connerly, 2002). These were years of great accomplishments for these two neighborhoods that generated some of the most successful business leaders, community activists, and elected officials contributing to the African American history of the entire Greater Memphis Region. In 1970, Jesse James, one of the most prominent African American leaders of the Klondike community and owner of one of the first black-operated grocery store in town, founded the Klondike Civic Club. The Club, whose leaders

and members were active in the Memphis Civil Right Movement, played a fundamental leadership role during the period immediately following desegregation, effectively advocating for legislation to advance African American rights and struggling for the implementation of these new laws.

The organization of the Civic Club in the 70s is the ultimate expression of a community with a strong community organizing and self-empowering drive. This was, in fact, the 'hotbed' of civic and cultural innovation where new accomplishments for the African American community were achieved for the very first time. The Klondike Elementary School was, for example, the first school in the south that implemented school integration policies. The local community center was built and named after the work of community activist Katie Sexton, a well-known and respected woman leader in the Memphis Civil Rights struggle and co-founder of the Kennedy Democratic Organization, the Black Memphis organization founded in 1969 where many of Klondike's leaders contributed progressive ideas to the broader civic debates on economic and community development. In 1973, some of the leaders and founding fathers of this grassroots movement became deacons of the newly built Vollintine Baptist Church, which became the cornerstone of the KSC community. It was established to create a faith-based institution with the explicit aim to preserve, support, and enhance the grassroots social justice work being done in the neighborhood.

2.1 The Resistance through the Decline

Since the 80s, a series of plant closings, ongoing public and private disinvestment, political negligence, and public indifference transformed the once-vibrant and proud Klondike Smokey City neighborhood into one of the most environmentally, economically, and socially distressed communities in The Bluff City. Uniform Crime Reports and Census data revealing high levels of crime, joblessness, poverty, and physical deterioration along with increasing number of stories of household despair, violence, gangs, and abandonment were regularly reported in the local press and in key-informant testimonies prompting many observers to abandon hope in the neighborhood. Unfortunately, these negative press stories tended to overshadow positive stories of neighborhood organizations carrying out activities promoting the well being of the KSC community. Neighborhood

schools, religious institutions, non-profits organizations, and local fraternal groups struggle every day to restore order and a positive sense of community in this once vibrant African American community.

At the beginning of the 90s, KSC was transformed from a community of proud long-term homeowners to an area of transient renters many of whom had little connection to the community. This transformation was caused in large part by endogenous factors such as the fact that many of the senior residents left and the majority of the young people attracted to the neighborhood lacked the resources to invest in the community. These internal factors were complemented by parallel exogenous occurrences such as the completion of public housing programs (HOPE VI for the most part), which forced poor people to relocate into subsidized private market-rate housing complexes. The declining KSC became a perfect relocation site for these former public housing tenants whose complexes were being demolished. In 1996, the Klondike Neighborhood Organization and the Klondike CDC were established with the aim of reclaiming the neighborhood by carrying out community development initiatives that could generate needed public and private investments in the neighborhood. The grassroots events and activities organized by these two organizations ranged from social events to various forms of community organizing and confrontational meetings with city officials aimed at pressing public officials to re-engage the local planning agenda of the Klondike Smokey City organization. Actions by these two main organizations that were coordinated by Alma Morris, President of the Klondike Neighborhood Association and former City Council candidate, have been complemented by continuous block-by-block organizing undertaken by very active block clubs – such as the Klondike Boosters and the Klondike Eastside Block Clubs whose members were committed to reclaiming the neighborhood and pushing the city to take responsibility for the evident physical decline of the neighborhood.

2.2 The Legacy of the “Club(s)” and the CDCs’ Cooptation

While these community organizations were committed to putting KSC back on the local political agenda, the main city development agency – the Memphis Housing and Community Development (HCD) Department responsible for addressing

major neighborhood challenges appeared unwilling to invest public resources in KSC. During the mid-90s and early 2000s, a large amount of public funds and resources were dedicated to the implementation of HOPE VI projects (carried out by HCD in collaboration with MHA) whose main goal was to rid inner-city Memphis from public housing. While this public housing-centered city revitalization effort was underway, the Memphis Housing and Community Development Department's leadership made several promises to the KSC community. While community efforts focused on encouraging the city to support initiatives aimed at revitalizing the neighborhood, the actual public involvement in these KSC initiatives remained very limited. The community's ongoing requests for assistance did not parallel city agencies' actions, whose responses were limited to scattered interventions: public expenditures for non public housing neighborhood development projects were maintained under the total control of HCD, whose contribution to KSC remained limited only to a modest amount of discretionary funds needed to support the day-to-day operations of the recently established Klondike CDC.

In the first years of the 2000s, the former director of HCD strongly suggested to the KSC leaders that they coordinate and pursue their redevelopment efforts through a single organizational entity that could better respond to community's needs while at the same time enhancing the neighborhood's capacity to collaborate with the city and its HCD agency. The idea of having a large CDC in charge of a target area with precise boundaries and a large service territory was a conventional practice followed by HCD during these years. This strategy served as a device to achieve tight control of the city through the creation of a system of control and co-optation of local CDCs. As a matter of fact, the city was divided up by HCD into districts whose designated CDC leaders maintained a strong connection and loyalty to the main HCD leader, who was expected to take care of the future of communities, such as KSC, through the provision of Community Development Block Grant and Tax Incremental Financing funding. Following the HCD director's suggestion that they bring their neighborhood improvement efforts together under one organizational structure, the Klondike Smokey City CDC replaced the former Klondike Neighborhood Association and the Klondike CDC, as the primary vehicle for community renewal in the area. In 2008 the KSC CDC was invited, along with many other CDCs

across the city, to join a new citywide venture called the Greater Memphis Partnership. This partnership featured a formal collaboration among various city agencies, representatives of the most well resourced Memphis philanthropic foundations, and a selected number of community-based organizations represented by strong and well-established CDCs. Representatives of the partnership led the Greater Memphis Partnership Steering Committee, which also included CDC leaders representing all of Memphis' neighborhoods. Using participatory techniques such as theme-focused meetings involving representative from the partnership and one-on-one interviews with 60 community stakeholders, the partnership drafted the Greater Memphis Neighborhood Plan in 2009. This plan identified three top-ranked neighborhoods whose needs did not outweigh opportunities, so that investments could still be seen as successful in these areas. Using the same rationales that underpinned often-criticized government planning practices from the 30s and 60s such as redlining and planning shrinkage (Aalbers, 2014), the 2009 Greater Memphis Neighborhood Plan established the conditions for a strategy in which a selected number of community leaders place the city's neighborhoods in one of three categories based upon the level of physical decline, economic distress, and social disorganization present. Their approach limited funding for the city's poorest neighborhoods while concentrating on those with moderate levels of distress.

Since the publication of this plan, the KSC CDC and its designated target area have experienced the negative consequences of this planned strategy. As repeatedly came up during key-informant interviews, lack of investment in affordable housing, streets, parks, infrastructures, and maintenance of public spaces brought the KSC community to be forgotten by the majority of recent public planning ventures. The KSC CDC, like many other CDCs in Memphis, remained trapped in the limbo created by the Blueprint's top-three neighborhoods selection process and the already existing wealthy areas that remained attractive for public and private capital flows. Moreover, in the specific case of KSC this condition was exacerbated by its geographical location wedged between the western Uptown Development where HOPE VI programs had already cleared the way for private housing development, and Crosstown Concord, the Mid-town megaproject focused on turning a former Sears Building into a mixed-use

facilities.

The type of planning generated by the Greater Memphis Partnership substantially set the conditions for KSC-like neighborhoods to remaining in undesirable limbo for any future investments. While this vicious mechanism remained in place, new promises from HCD's leadership kept feeding the populist hopes of a brighter future to come for neighborhoods such as KSC. In hoping to avoid the political challenges and financial costs of embarking on a comprehensive planning effort, HCD hired an urban design consulting firm in 2013 to generate a plan focusing on proto-typical housing development demonstration projects, and the generation of mixed-use urban nodes with economic activities right at the edge of the KSC thoroughfare. Once again, the main agency paying the cost of the planning process never followed up on the recommended implementation strategies. Today, after more than 10 years since the KSC CDC was created, the KSC neighborhood remains neglected while public investments and resources are spent in the immediate surroundings. Interviews with key-informants refer to this dynamic as a flip in the air, constantly prioritizing public expenses elsewhere and waiting for trickle-down effects generated by surrounding developments. A stalemate has taken place in the neighborhood – as in many others – for years now, following the departure of the very powerful former director of HCD.

2.3 Creating New Enabling Spaces in KSC?

In the fall of 2015, the executive director of the KSC CDC was looking for “technical assistance” to support and expand the various activities that the CDC was carrying out in the KSC neighborhood. The fact that for so many years the city had continued investing in the outskirts of the KSC neighborhood was the main factor that prompted the CDC to ask for technical support in identifying planning strategies that could fill the gap left by the city's failure to invest in the community. The CDC's main concern was to re-concentrate city attention (and investments) from the outskirts of the KSC neighborhood to its core, trying to re-establishing the once thriving urban environment that local residents once enjoyed.

During initial meetings and conversations with the CRP Department, CDC's preliminary ideas were mainly focused on two main elements: (1) to conduct a history project that could

unveil the historical legacy of the neighborhood, and (2) to further the urban design initiatives contained in the plan previously generated for KSC during one of the HCD planning processes. While these initiatives were initially seen as fundamental to building an economic development plan for KSC, the newly established partnership started to question the narrow focus of them and proposed to initiate a larger planning process that could reach out to the broader KSC community to explore possibilities for urban regeneration not contained in the recently completed HCD plan. As a matter of fact, if on one side the history project and the advancement of the urban design plan were seen as proactive initiatives proposed by the CDC, it also appeared that those very same initiatives were replicating rooted practices of community development from the late 90s. Acknowledging the problematic issues associated with those practices, the newly established collaboration launched a new course of action aimed at exploring what other alternative practices could complement the two previously proposed redevelopment strategies advocated by the CDC.

2.4 Enlarging the Margins of our Action

Following an approach to planning research inspired by action-research, in the fall of 2015, the CRP Department engaged two classes from the MS in City and Regional Planning Program (the Comprehensive Planning Studio and the Historic Preservation Planning Seminar) in a highly participatory planning process aimed at shaping the KSC Community Development Plan. Over the course of the semester, the partnership conducted door-to-door interviews, neighborhood history research, and historic and current socio-economic and physical conditions analyses. All of the results of this work were constantly shared with local stakeholders during various community meetings, allowing the definition of possible priority initiatives and a common vision for KSC to emerge. During these events, two major topics were brought to the attention of the partnership's leadership, and repeatedly came up when people were interacting on possible strategies to address community needs. The first topic confirmed the initial attention given by the KSC CDC to the community history. Combinations of interviews, archival research, and moments of shared findings revealed the reach history of the KSC African American community. In particular, the historical

research highlighted the existence of all of those elements of the urban fabric, the life of all of those individuals, and the memories of collective events and community stories that made KSC so unique and important to the African American legacy in Memphis. Beginning with the 1920's, the community shared the story of all of those who were born and grew up in one of the first black-owned neighborhoods in Memphis. Moreover, KSC emerged as the first African American neighborhood where busing policies were implemented successfully, where the "Memphis 13" (the first 13 children going to integrated schools) started their journey. It was also the place where blacks owned not only their houses but also local businesses that were thriving during the same years in which KSC was established. But most of all, it was one of the most important sources of inspired leadership for the Memphis and Southern Civic Rights Movements. The local Civic Club was the place where many of the most prominent leaders of the African American community started their careers in the emerging Memphis Freedom Struggle.

The rich history of the KSC community was recognized as an invaluable asset upon which to build a healthy, equitable, and sustainable future for the community. Participants in the newly established community/university partnership aimed at establishing a reclamation process that could help the black community regain its control of their neighborhood both in terms of ownership and stewardship. Interviews revealed that although a lot of properties appeared to be vacant, many former residents and their heirs currently maintain properties in the community despite the fact that they do not live in the neighborhood today. For these families, as well as for all of those blacks who used to have some connections to the KSC community (relatives, friends, places to go to, etc.), the neighborhood is still viewed today as the symbol of their community's self-determination legacy. They all maintain emotional connections to various places in the neighborhood: connections that are embodied in their vivid memories and in all of the old photographs, documents, and papers they have been scrupulously keeping. However, all of those memories come alive every Sunday when the members of this community – today scattered throughout the city – travel to KSC to go to their church on Vollintine Street, which is the only physical place where they still gather.

Individual interviews have consistently pictured a community that

was fragmented and dispersed all around the City of Memphis over time. However, the intangible connections to places in KSC, the community's Sunday ritual, and the more formal connection to the neighborhood in the form of ownership of parcels, an abandoned building, or part of a property represented the constellation of relationships that individuals maintain with KSC. During community meetings and public events participants shared their skepticism about the typical model of neighborhood re-development, where developers spend time and capital in assembling abandoned or rundown properties in order to finance, design, and build "from scratch" a new urban community. Instead, they were willing to find and embrace strategies of neighborhood development based on the vast system of community assets already present in the community.

2.5 Generating a Plan

Toward the end the fall semester of 2015 and throughout the spring semester of 2016, the partnership focused on the identification of planning strategies that could better address problematic issues that had emerged throughout the process.



Fig. 2 - Discussion during one of the KSC community meetings organized during the planning process.

While the planning process was underway, a major course of action that gained a lot of attention from participants in the process was the one (among the others identified in the plan) focused on the enhancement of the quality of the built environment. This strategy combined the rehabilitation of historic properties, the celebration of the black legacy, the infill development of vacant and abandoned properties, and the provision of new affordable housing units.

All of these elements were contained in a strategy that was viewed as the main mechanism aimed at re-enforcing and re-establishing lost and/or weak relations between the African American community and their old neighborhood. This strategy developed through the community process was framed within an asset-based community development paradigm (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1996), which although not new in literature, was very innovative for the KSC context. Asset-based community development is based on the idea that change can grow from the inside of the community through incremental steps that keep economic, human, and socio-cultural development strictly intertwined.

Following this approach, this strategy featured the undertaking of a community mapping and a direct organizing campaign for identifying and re-engaging former owners to promote the transformation of historic properties into high-quality affordable housing units, eliminate “slum-ownership”, and re-enter into the market all the rundown properties, maintaining community control of this process. It was designed to, firstly, mobilize the larger community around ideas prioritized during the partnership process and, secondly, to use a community land trust (CLT) model as the major technical planning tool to implement community control over the reclaimed land and properties. The first part of the strategy was seen as the major engine to launch a process aimed at enabling change into a distressed and forgotten place; the second part was seen as the potential solution to maintaining land in the hands of the former residents, landowners, and all of those KSC-connected individuals who still care about the future of KSC.

3. Reflecting on Enabling Spaces

Although the plan did not proceed with the implementation phase, a modest part of the community moved forward with

the implementation of a small CLT strategy, following guidance proposed within the planning process. Throughout the process, from the moment when the partnership opened up a dialogue on possible alternatives for collaboration to the moment of the proposed CLT for KSC, some turning points are important to reflect upon in order to generate relevant lessons contributing to the discussion on enabling spaces for community action in KSC and elsewhere. A more general reflection is related to the nature of the process that was established by the KSC-CRP collaboration. While there was a very precise scope of service used to reach out to the university by the CDC, the way in which this preliminary collaboration was handled had the high intentional purpose to unsettle taken for granted assumptions on procedures and methods of work. In other words, while it appeared that the CDC had a precise idea on what to do, an initial phase of dialogue between the two parties in this collaboration was necessary to reframe those ideas. This phase was designed to establish an exploratory process, in which – without having precise agendas and constraints – participants had the opportunity to figure out things about themselves, their community, and their relationship with the KSC neighborhood to nurture and craft future strategies built on those relationships.

Moreover, this process was aimed at strengthen the relations between the larger community and the organization that has been in charge of the community development initiatives in KSC. The proposed CLT was, in fact, a strategy that built upon the previous exploratory phase, encouraged the CDC to embark in a completely different direction from the ones presented in the past in KSC. Using endogenous resources and assets, instead of exogenous ones, the CLT became the tool purposely designed to create actions based on the agreement of a set of values and visions that emerged during the very uncertain preliminary phase of the planning process. In other words, the CLT was a highly intentional planning action designed to (1) encourage the implementation of a community-based value-centered project for the restoration of the urban fabric, (2) re-envision the role of the CDC while re-opening the process of understanding the future of the KSC with the larger public.

This particular project was designed to be a very intentional action to create an important new enabling space. As a matter of fact, the CLT implemented through an asset-based approach

has tried to re-orient some of the local, and more generally, practical problems associated with this technical planning tool. On the one side, while the city has been looking at strategies to assemble land in distressed communities to accelerate the process of reintroducing the very same land in the private market (through the local Land Bank and city-wide non-profits such as the Blight Authority of Memphis, BAM), the KSC community had not found a way to productively participate in these city processes. On the other side, while community actions have historically played an important role in the shaping and maintaining of the KSC neighborhood, they had recently exerted less influence in affecting the more structural neighborhood development procedures undertaken at the city level, and corroborating CDC's actions in advancing a strong community-based agenda for neighborhood redevelopment.

4. Concluding Reflections

While the KSC neighborhood is still struggling to secure a "fair share" of public investment for their inner-city community, some lessons from this partnership might be shared to contribute to the local planning efforts and to a more general conversation on the establishment of enabling spaces.

Firstly, although limited in time and achievements, the collaborative process between the KSC CDC and the CRP department was able to open up an important arena for generating collective knowledge to inform planning actions that can be considered new in the context of KSC. This has favored the creation of a public space to question the rooted dynamics of community development. The presence of community development structures in KSC (like the CDC) and a strong emphasis on community development by the city do not necessarily insure a value-centered and community-based process for local development. Exploratory processes led by third parties institutions might infuse the creation of innovative patterns created on the disruption of rooted existing procedure. Secondly, in exploring the KSC history, one of the main elements emerging from the research was the relevance of community development practices over the course of the last sixty years and the impact these have had on the neighborhood. However, part of the story revealed the top-down stories counterbalancing those successes. In particular, the KSC case shows how the structural

system has changed to counteract community-based practices, establishing structures and leaderships that have cannibalized all the potentials of “community alternatives”, leaving to the unpowered the heavy burden of initiating and maintaining community development through self-initiatives. While the more recent part of the KSC story confirms that for these initiatives, it is very difficult to re-balance power mechanisms and re-claim the transformative power of “community alternatives”, the CRP involvement reveals that these initiatives can be seen as seeds of change. These embryonic forms of change are effective only if they are supported and expanded through collective processes aimed at addressing more structural problems affecting the public decision-making process and the institutional management of community development practices. In the KSC case, the university played an important role, but other forms of third parties research initiatives might be relevant too. More generally, public academic institutions have the resources and capacities (and some level of obligation) to help in creating enabling spaces not only in support of self-organization initiatives, but to affect public decision making weather using corroboration, collaboration, or disruption when necessary. Finally, the most likely usable technical tool that seemed to be helpful in the creation of the strategy for KSC was the establishment of a community land trust. While this has been identified as the tool to implement a resident-sensitive planning strategy, in other communities’ settings other tools might emerge as more feasible and suitable for specific local problems. The underlining assumption, though, is that whichever tool is selected for use, it should be generated through an endogenous community process that creates a course of action designed throughout the exploratory phase of sharing collective values, principles, and visions. Regarding this last point, the difference between a planning “tool built for” a community as compared to a “tool built with” a community can’t be overemphasized. In the specific case of a CLT, this glitch has been highlighted by a last trend in community development research on the possibilities and missed opportunities of CLTs (Williams and Pierce, 2017). More specifically, this research-in-action embraced the idea that planning innovation is possible when projects stem off of highly uncertain collective processes: navigating the uncertainty of the first exploratory phase, the process led the group to build

the pattern for a CLT with an asset-based approach. Mirroring the missing link of the community in building CLTs across the US (DeFilippis et al., 2017), the KSC case is an example on how existing planning tools and procedures can be meaningfully applied only when their goals are clearly shared in a collective setting. Otherwise, there is a strong risk of confusing ends with means, contributing to the perpetration of existing systems of powers instead of advancing the goals for which those very same tools were created in the first place.

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Beyond dichotomies, in the search for a democratic dialogue toward social-ecological care: lessons from the Simeto River Agreement in Sicily, IT

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Abstract

Nelle società contemporanee, le crisi ambientali e sociali possono essere lette come due facce della stessa medaglia, in relazione con la crisi degli ordinamenti democratici attuali. Per superare tale condizione, è oggi necessario sperimentare nuove forme di governance basate su percorsi condivisi tra comunità auto-organizzate e istituzioni per produrre azioni responsabili ed efficaci nella tutela dei socio-ecosistemi. Come far sì che ciò accada, in contesti dove comunità e istituzioni non hanno alle spalle un'attitudine consolidata a intraprendere percorsi collaborativi? Il paper propone alcune riflessioni che emergono da un processo avviato nel 2008 dal LabPEAT dell'Università di Catania e alimentato mediante uno specifico approccio alla Terza Missione universitaria, ispirato ai paradigmi della ricerca azione. Il processo è stato condotto attraverso una partnership di lungo termine con la comunità della Valle del Simeto (Sicilia Orientale). Nonostante diverse fasi di conflitto, la partnership ha costruito una relazione dialogica con le istituzioni – a vari livelli – esitando nel 2015 in una sperimentazione in corso, il Patto di Fiume Simeto.

In contemporary societies, environmental and social crises arise as two faces of the same coin, in concert with the crisis of current democratic systems. Innovative forms of democratic governance are needed for facing these crises. This requires the search for a common path between self-organized communities and institutions toward more responsible and effective actions for taking care of social ecological systems. How can this be done, in contexts where communities and institutions do not have a strong background of collaborative practices? This paper reflects on a process that has been set up since 2008 by the LabPEAT of the University of Catania and developed thanks to a specific approach to the institutional academic Third Mission, inspired by the paradigms of action research. The process has been conducted through a long-term university-community partnership. Regardless of various phases of conflict, the partnership built a dialogical relationship with institutions at various levels, ending up in 2015 in an ongoing experiment, the Simeto River Agreement, in Eastern Sicily, IT.

Parole Chiave: Governance democratica, Comunità auto-organizzate, Terza Missione Universitaria

Keywords: Democratic governance, Self-organized communities, Third Mission of Universities

1. Introduction

When «No is not enough», as Naomi Klein states in her last work

(2017), urban planners – together with all those researchers interested in the field of cities and landscape – have the responsibility of exploring new spaces and tools for change, for an ‘enabling yes’.

Scholars have often faced *querelles* whose dichotomies seemed to be insurmountable: between conflicts and collaborative approaches (Flyvbjerg, 1998), between public/private management of resources (Ostrom, 1990), and so forth. Dichotomies cannot always frame the complexity of contemporary challenges. For instance, the spread of derelict areas in rural and urban peripheries is a tangible sign of a lack of public as well as private resources. It is also a tangible sign of a lack of direct interest in taking care of something that was previously considered wealth (it may be a brownfield, an abandoned farm, an empty building, a deserted area, etc.). At the same time, these marginal spaces are also being reborn as opportunities to experiment, in practice, with new forms of urban and rural resistance against the distortions of contemporaneity. In this worldwide scenario, various groups of grassroots actors are taking initiative to restore such areas with a community-based approach to sustainability (Agyeman and Angus, 2003).

Planning scholars have long discussed the kind of relationships grassroots groups need to develop with institutional bodies. In some cases, the civil society may seek to collaborate with institutions (Healey, 1997), rather than constantly fighting against them; in other cases, active citizens may pursue the aim of denouncing the limits of mainstream approaches of governments and planning (Yiftachel, 1998). Derelict areas are places where these dichotomies do not always work; rather, it is necessary to explore ways that allow the achievement of common goals for their revitalization, overcoming barriers and bridging differences (Holling et al., 1995, Forester, 2009). This is even more compelling in recent decades. As a matter of fact, we witness a constant rising of environmental and social crises that are emerging as a permanent condition for contemporaneity. Although environmental and social aspects have typically been investigated through separated fields of expertise, they need to be understood as a whole (Beck 1992; Gunderson 2001). Thus, we assume that environmental challenges and social crises have arisen as two faces of the same coin; also, we assume that environmental and social crises are connected with the crisis of

representative democratic systems.

It is then possible to observe that environmental and social crises cannot be easily solved where institutions and communities have gone through harsh conflicts and they have not been able to collaborate (e.g. 'Not In My Back Yard', or 'NIMBY' cases, environmental justice issues, and so forth; Fischer, 2000; Agyeman et al., 2003; Martinez-Alier, 2003). Differently, it is more likely that environmental and social crises are solved where communities and institutions are able to dialogue and to collaborate (Ostrom, 1990; Ostrom, 2010; Healy, 2003, Ollson et al., 2006). In these contexts, it is possible to observe various cases of new experimental forms of governance within democratic institutions.

In the light of this wide debate, we argue that facing environmental and social crises in derelict areas is mostly a matter of democracy. Consequently, we argue that one way for overcoming environmental and social crises may be the design of new democratic institutions for citizens' participation and for sparking a meaningful dialogue among various grassroots and institutional actors (Smith 2009; Mathews 2014). In other words, the search for a common path between local communities and institutions challenges the democratic structures for governance, first of all. To find a common way toward more responsible and effective actions for taking care of social ecological systems requires rethinking democratic institutions.

How can there be innovation of democratic structures for governance, in contexts where communities and institutions have gone and still go through several harsh conflicts?

The authors have explored this broad question through direct engagement in a long-lasting partnership in the Simeto River Valley (Eastern Sicily, IT), between: a) the University of Catania; b) a network of grassroots associations at the very beginning of the process; c) a network of associations and institutions in subsequent years.

As a matter of fact, in 2008 the partnership has started as a self-organized effort (Alfasi and Portugali, 2004; Innes et al., 2010; Van Meerkerk, 2013; Boonstra, 2015) between the local community and the University of Catania. Then, the partnership evolved into an institutional setting, called the Simeto River Agreement (SRA), within the framework of the Third Mission of Universities for public service and community-engagement

(Inman and Schütze, 2010). Specifically, the SRA is a voluntary act that the LabPEAT of the University of Catania, a coalition of about 50 local NGOs under the umbrella of the so-called Participatory Presidium and 10 municipalities entered into 2015. The partnership is aimed at experimenting, with new organizational structures for democratic institutions - at various levels and centers of governance (Ostrom 2010) - how to take care of derelict areas in a specific social-ecological system, the Simeto River Valley. Developed in the widest watershed of Sicily, the Agreement has been designed as a river and landscape contract (Pahl-Wostl, 2002; Pizziolo et al., 2003; Bastiani, 2011; Micarelli and Pizziolo in Bastiani, 2011) as well as a bottom-up strategic plan.

The Agreement has been generated as a practical experience inspired by the paradigms of action research (Whyte, 1997; Given, 2008; Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Saija and Gravagno 2009; Saija, 2014; Saija, 2017) and oriented at accomplishing the Third Mission of the Universities for public service and community-engagement, with a focus on service learning and the empowerment of local communities (Reardon, 1998; Reardon, 2005). The aim is to allow practices of participatory democracy that may positively contaminate the current representative democratic system beyond the conflicting dichotomies that paralyze local development. Nevertheless, this ambitious experiment is encountering various obstacles along its way of implementation.

This article discusses how a specific approach to the Third Mission of Universities may support self-organized communities in strengthening their democratic dialogue with institutions in derelict areas through new forms of governance. After an overview of the thematic debate about the relation between the institutional Third Mission of Universities and self-organizational practices, the authors present the main lessons drawn from the ongoing process of building and reframing the SRA.

What approach to Third Mission for Universities can help self-organized communities in enhance the democratic governance of derelict areas?

Self-organization of communities is a key-aspect for local development; beyond various definitions and theoretical frameworks (Alfasi and Portugali, 2004; Innes et al., 2010;

Van Meerkerk, 2013; Boonstra, 2015], there are some pivotal aspects that characterize self-organized practices. First, they are moved from a strong voluntary and self-motivation of the involved actors that generally are bounded in networks. Also, self-organized practices are nurtured by active local interactions inside networks, a distributed control of the process of self-organization, and the capacity to learn from the experience of self-organizing. Self-organization inside local communities is an important precondition for building up processes of innovation of democratic governance in derelict areas. But self-organization alone is not always enough to be effective for the full revitalization of social-ecological systems. As already stated in the introduction, a co-evolution of the democratic dialogue between self-organized communities and institutions is necessary. But usually, neither communities nor institutions are aware of the need to reframe the mechanisms of their interaction and dialogue to face environmental and social challenges. This awareness cannot easily arise without a 'third subject' that may act as a catalyzer for change. Who has then the role of facilitating these innovative processes for improving our democratic systems?

In its institutional role of Third Mission, Universities can act as catalyzers for enhancing the process of democratic governance. The expression "Third Mission,"¹ which has recently gained attention in Europe², identifies the necessity of linking research and education with local development. Scholars are currently discussing goals, strategies and tools as well as indicators for measuring the effective impact of their activities aimed at opening up the divide between the academia and the local contexts where the academia itself is merged³. Although there is general agreement on the necessity of developing the Third Mission as an integral commitment of Universities, there is not a univocal approach to the way the Third Mission is practiced.

1 See, for example, the *Green Paper Fostering and Measuring "Third Mission" in Higher Education Institutions*, 2012

2 While in the United States, for example, the mission of "service" within the academia has been already fully developed in past years, e.g. within Land Grant Universities that have been established with the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890.

3 This topic has recently been embraced by the whole academia also due to the rising attention paid by assessing commissions such as ANVUR in Italy (Italian Agency for University and Research Evaluation), standing as a priority in the agenda of Departments.

Specifically, mainstream cases have been grounded on an economic/utilitarian dimension. Although the governmental sector and civil society have been acknowledged as important partners⁴, industries still remain the most common partners for implementing agreement based on the so-called 'Transfer of Technologies'. But, if the goal of the Third Mission is enhancing the democratic dialogue between communities and institutions - especially in those contexts where local development is challenged (Gravagno and Pappalardo, 2015) - a more complex approach is needed. It is necessary to move from the mere 'Transfer of Technologies' to a holistic 'Sharing of Knowledge'. This requires a shift in the way teaching and research are conducted, toward a more circular and maieutic approach (Freire, 1970; Dolci, 1996) in the co-production of knowledge. In this sense, Universities are called not just to apply and disseminate research findings. Universities are rather called to educate *and* advance knowledge working tightly *with* community-based actors and institutional actors.

This is consistent with the aforementioned paradigms of action research⁵ that may guide the way Third Mission is developed when it comes to the enhancement of the democratic dialogue between communities and institutions.

In following sections we examine how this approach to Third Mission has catalyzed the process of experimenting with new forms of democratic governance in support of a self-organized community, that has shifted from an exacerbated conflict against institutions to an 'enabling yes' through the Simeto River Agreement. The SRA has been developed in a highly distressed context from an environmental and social standpoint. Before the start-up of the SRA, the community had completely lost trust in institutions, especially at the regional level. As a matter of fact, the public decision-making process was extremely distant

4 The literature about the Third Mission usually shows the necessity of a triple helix (researchers, representatives, and entrepreneurs, as in Leydesdorff and Etzkowitz, 1996) in order to trigger development, adding the governmental sector to the nexus universities/industries. Years later, the role of civil society has been recognized as an essential "forth helix" (Cooper, 2009) for allowing long-lasting development.

5 As anticipated in the introduction, various authors such as Whyte (1997); Reardon (1998); Reason and Bradbury (2001); Reardon (2005); Given (2008); Saija and Gravagno (2009); Saija (2014); Saija (2017) have long discussed the paradigms of action research

from the real needs expressed by the community. Also, the local community needed to increase its relational and self-organizational capacity for acting as a 'community'. After a brief background of this story, we focus on these aspects discussing some crucial nodes of the SRA.

Exploitation and conflict as preconditions to the Simeto River Agreement: the social-ecological background

In the last century, the Simeto River Valley has gone through a history of exploitation and drastic transformations. The River (113 Km long) has run freely for millennia with abundant flows, supporting a vital ecosystem⁶. But after World War II, things changed drastically. As has happened with the majority of the rivers in the world, the Simeto River's natural configuration has been reshaped and highly modified through anthropic transformations. Large-scale agricultural activities and the fertilized agricultural soil, as well as the inefficiency of the waste treatment plants and the runoff from the growing urban areas, have impacted the riverine ecosystem. As a consequence, the river's minimum flow has been highly affected and water quality has been lowered. Concrete structures and engineered modifications of the basin have heavily altered the riverine ecosystem⁶. The violence to the River went together with violence throughout the community, worsened by mafia interests and affairs in the Simeto area⁷.

At the beginning of 2000, the environmental crisis of waste was

⁶ For example, in the '70s a huge reservoir, the Lentini Lake (12 km² wide, the widest lake of Sicily and the largest artificial lake of Italy) was built impairing the natural flow of the River and so forth; in the same years, the mouth area started being drastically urbanized, mostly with illegal settlements for resorts that have destroyed the pre-existing dunes; etc.

⁷ For example, during the '80s, the area around the 3 towns of Adrano, Biancavilla and Paternò was known as 'the death triangle' because of the high number of murders for mafia affairs that has been executed in that area. It has already been widely discussed (Armiero et al., forthcoming) as the history of environmental exploitation of the basin has been amplified because of the presence of obscure relations of power, known as the mafia, related also with the weakness of democratic Institutions that have governed Sicily in the last decades. As a matter of fact, the mafia itself has drained economic resources operating transformations of the Simeto River since the 1950s, the same time when the mafia began to be structured in Eastern Sicily. Along the years, the mafia also entered the institutional system and became one of the reasons for a broad malfunction of democracy.

the straw that broke the camel's back. In those years, the EU Regions had to implement waste management plans to address the growing production of garbage, but the Sicilian Region arrived to the point of declaring a state of emergency. In 2001 Salvatore Cuffaro was elected governor of the Sicilian Region and also became the commissioner for the waste emergency. In 2002, a Regional Waste Management Plan was issued; it identified the construction of 4 waste-to-energy facilities for the non-recyclable portion of solid waste that would be managed by private actors. One of these facilities was to be located inside a Special Area of Conservation close to Simeto River main course. There were concerns that the plan was also connected to mafia interests. A 'Coalition' of grassroots associations self-organized against the waste management plan to defend the Simeto River and its social-ecological system⁸. The campaign, carried out by the Coalition, was the beginning of a conflict between governmental and non governmental representatives: the former moved by business-related interests and the latter animated by a common rebuttal against a highly exploitative plan connected with mafia affairs (Saija, 2014). The mobilization against the incinerator in the Simeto area was successful and the Cuffaro waste management plan was never implemented⁹.

Community and institutions regain ground for a democratic dialogue: why the Third Mission of Universities matters

The Coalition of associations had said 'no' to the status quo institutional decision-making process, having definitively lost trust in institutions, especially the ones at the Regional level. From the beginning, their self-organizational effort (Alfasi and Portugali, 2004; Innes et al., 2010; Van Meerkerk, 2013; Boonstra, 2015) was based on a strong motivation to take care of the environment. However, their 'no' was not enough. The Coalition knew it was necessary to move forward beyond the opposition to the Regional Waste Management Plan. In a first phase, the

8 The Cuffaro plan generated mistrust from the grassroots because it was in antithesis with the approach of reducing waste and supporting recycling; it was creating a private monopolistic regime and - above all - there was a real risk of mafia infiltrations in the business. Details of this story have already been widely discussed in Saija, 2014.

9 On January 2011, Salvatore Cuffaro has been condemned for aiding and abetting.

Coalition contacted the University of Catania– LabPEAT¹⁰ – asking for expertise in the lawsuit against the incinerator, as well as for the implementation of the River Park. At the beginning, the Coalition assumed that the protection of the River and its ecosystems was related to the institution of a River Park. In our interactions we (engaged scholars and community partners) debated for a long time about how to transform the idea of instituting a River Park into something different¹¹. As a matter of fact, our joint work was aimed at building a collaborative process in order to face the social-ecological challenges of the Valley and to find possible ways for regenerating this social-ecological system. Initially, we (engaged scholars) started the partnership with the aim of supporting the self-organized community to strengthen local interactions and start a common learning process through our common experience. Together, we (engaged scholars and community partners) have learned from the practice of working collectively (Freire, 1970; Dolci, 1996; Whyte, 1997; Reardon, 1998; Given, 2008; Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Reardon, 2005; Saija and Gravagno 2009; Saija, 2014; Saija, 2017) how to frame possible visions and actions for community-based sustainable development of the valley (Agyeman and Angus, 2003). Progressively, we all have collectively built up a process of the Third Mission inspired by action research. Not only was community engagement our purpose; we realized that also a strong interaction with governmental agencies was necessary. We decided to develop an experiment aimed at renewing relations between communities and institutions, in an attempt to build more democratic organizational structures . Our joint work then evolved into the proposal of the Simeto River Agreement. As already stated, we have structured the Agreement

¹⁰ Environmental and Ecological Planning and Design Lab.

¹¹ As we were focusing on the necessity of «democratizing democracy» (De Sousa, 2009) through the democratization of knowledge, we underlined the importance of opening up the experts VS laypersons divide, promoting a 'non-technocratic' approach to our collaboration (Gravagno, Saija, Pappalardo, 2011). We developed a 'Community Mapping Initiative' aimed at contaminating local knowledge with experts' knowledge and at rebuilding the relations inside the community itself through the act of mapping together (Pappalardo, 2017). Our joint work has collectively produced a system of knowledge, projects and actions aimed at improving the Simeto social ecological system from the bottom.

as a river contract¹² aimed at encouraging local development. Within the University-community partnership, we have reflected on the necessity of including more actors in order to be more representative of the Simeto community¹³. Also, our debate focused on the limits of the current interaction between the community and the governmental institutions.

As a result, we have chosen – as the core of the Agreement – to design and test a new governance structure aimed at innovating democratic interactions between communities and institutions. The governance structure has the ambitious commitment of organizing the process of social-ecological regeneration and of contrasting the mafia dynamics and interests in the Valley.

The Agreement has progressively been built from 2010 to 2015 thanks to the mutual interactions with various actors that have been gradually engaged into the process. The first Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2012; it was set up in order to collect the willingness and commitment of the grassroots associations and Municipalities in a collaborative effort to build the Simeto River Agreement. In May 2015, the Agreement was signed and it contains a proposed structure of a new governance system. The specific objectives of this new governance system are clearly defined in this document, including a system of common values, knowledge, rules and projects related to the Simeto River and the rural and urban areas along it. Additionally, the Agreement defines the organization of the proposed governance system.

The Participatory Presidium, established in February 2015, is an umbrella organization created in order to coordinate more than 40 non-profit associations and dozens of citizens and actors in

12 We refer to the wide debate about River Contracts in Europe and Italy (Pahl-Wostl, 2002; Pizziolo et al., 2003; Bastiani, 2011; Micarelli and Pizziolo in Bastiani, 2011) that are related to specific EU Directive such as the 2000/60/EC 'Water' and the 2007/60/EC 'Flood Risk'

13 The term 'community' is something that the authors still question in its essence. Referring to the local community in the Simeto Valley, one can argue: what are the boundaries of this community? Who is part and who is excluded and by what mechanisms of power? Are the most underprivileged persons involved? Various authors (such as Harvey, 1996; Agyeman et al., 2003; Martinez-Alier, 2003) have full discussed the relationship between environmental and social justice. The aim of this article is not exploring these questions. Other manuscripts are in the process of being issued with a focus on identifying the dynamic of actors within the 'local community' in the Simeto Valley.

the third sector that are involved in the process of building up the Agreement. The active members of the Presidium are committed to listen to the needs and wishes of the Simeto community and to organize community-based actions. With this aim, the Presidium promotes a democratic dialogue with institutions, which occurs mainly in the Assembly of the River Agreement.

The Assembly is the core of the governance system; it is the political body where the decision-making process within the Agreement occurs. The components of the Assembly are: 10 mayors on behalf of the 10 Municipalities located along the Simeto River; 2 members of the Participatory Presidium; and 1 scientific coordinator on behalf of the University of Catania.

These 13 members are meant to be the spokespersons on behalf of the community, but the Assembly tries to be something more. In order to overcome the mechanism of representative democracy and delegation, Assemblies are public events; each citizen can take part in them and can propose specific focuses and actions through the collaborative process within the Participatory Presidium. As a matter of fact, the idea of establishing the Presidium and the Assembly responds to the need for a permanent instrument to increase and maintain the involvement of various community actors to guarantee their participation in the Agreement's decision-making process and organize the various contributions within transparent and accountable bodies.

Finally, in order to implement the deliberations of the Assembly, the Agreement is also organized through an executive commission, an international scientific committee and an operative lab. This system of bodies constitutes the governance structure for the Agreement and functions as a tool for facilitating participatory democracy (Smith 2009; Mathews 2014).

The Agreement has built various multi-level interactions (Ostrom 2010). The first interaction occurred with the Sicilian Regional Boards, in order to build a collaborative process for managing hydrological risks through the Flood Risk Management Plan (according with the EU Directive 2007/60/EC) and the River Basin Management Plan (according with the EU Directive 2000/60/EC). EU Directives recommend the maximization of actors' involvement in setting up the planning process. Regional officers that were responsible for the aforementioned plans tried to set up focus groups with Municipal officers and some other

local stakeholders. The outcomes of these outreach activities was not significant due to a very low level of engagement and participation. Consequently, the Simeto River Agreement decided to support the Regional officers through a more specific set of focus groups with Municipal officers and public meetings. The level of participation in both planning processes rose drastically. With respect to the Risk Management Plan, this was due to a contextual event that occurred in May 2015: the overflow of the Simeto River due to an intense rain and, above all, because of a lack of coordination between all the authorities in charge of dams and reservoirs along the River. The Agreement was able to insert specific local issues that had not been considered in the Regional planning process before these events. Also, the Agreement worked for increasing the level of citizens' awareness of the need to mitigate hydrogeological risk in urban and rural settings and adapt to severe rainfall due to overall climate change.

At the same time, some representatives of the Simeto River Agreement met with the Regional officers in charge of the River Basin Management Plan. They agreed to start a structured participatory process involving local communities through the Agreement's activities in order to enrich the contents of the River Basin Management Plan and to allow its broad dissemination. As a consequence of this set of multi-level activities, the Agreement organized a workgroup among the various Municipal officers in charge of the projects related to the hydraulic and hydrogeological infrastructures. For the first time this working group was committed to the production of a master plan – representing the 10 municipalities involved in the Agreement – to the coordination of the projects and the management activities of the aforementioned infrastructures.

Moreover, the Agreement organized a community-based process for mapping the areas of high hydraulic danger. For this purpose, 6 public meetings were conducted with the objective of constructing an open GIS that could be updated through crowdsourcing. Alongside these activities, a Life project was presented to the EU and approved: this Life project centers on community resilience and increased awareness with the structured involvement of schools as catalyzers for community engagement.

Also, the Agreement was selected as an experimental case for

the National Strategy for Inner Areas, a program of the Italian Government. In this framework, actors from the local level (associations and municipalities) built a co-design process with institutional actors from the provincial, regional levels and the national one. The objective was to identify a strategy that can strengthen economic and social cohesion with the support of a multi-fund set of economic resources that the National and the Regional agencies have allocated for Inner Areas¹⁴.

Self-reflections on the Simeto River Agreement

After almost a decade of work, the Agreement tried to collectively accomplish some broad goals and mid-term outcomes. Nonetheless, the process has gone through various phases of distress and pitfalls. One main overall goal was to improve relations within the community itself to strengthen self-organization. This goal was partially accomplished through the creation of the Participatory Presidium, which was an attempt to involve more laypersons and organize a variety of perspectives and interests into a 'common voice' for the Simeto Community. The Presidium tried to transform the established practice of delegating actions for change into a more direct proves of involvement in co-creating the changes. The Presidium has produced a variety of bottom-up projects - such as the 'Bio-district of the Simeto Valley'¹⁵, and fully contributed to institutional projects - such as the EU Life on resilience - proposing specific community-based actions.

As a pitfall, we have experienced difficulties in organizing the complexity of the social relations through a brand-new body – the Participatory Presidium – that operates only on a voluntary basis.

Another main goal was to improve trust and relations between the self-organized community and institutions at the local, regional,

14 Specifically, the Simeto Area would benefit of 3.7 euro of National funds - plus EU Regional Development Funds, EU Social Funds and EU Community Led Local Development Funds for about 30 millions of euro - to be spent in the next 3 years 2018/2021. This set of economic resources will be used for improving citizens' services - such as education, wealth, mobility - and for encouraging sustainable local development.

15 The Bio-district of the Simeto Valley is an organization focused on the rural cycles (production/sell/consumption of high quality local products of the Valley), e.g. promoting Community Supported Agriculture, Participatory Guarantee Systems, and so forth.

national levels. This goal has been partially accomplished through the participation in specific regional and national planning processes, such as the regional hydrological risk and watershed management plans and the National Strategy for Inner Areas. In this respect, these programs were relevant because the community had the opportunity to work closely with representatives from various institutions that wanted to experiment with a different way of working inside institutional structures. These programs tried to promote and implement a process of listening to the community's needs and projects rather than just planning top-down. Also, the Agreement attempted to produce an integrated vision to address the challenges of the Valley with a holistic approach. These opportunities allowed us to experiment with a multi-level collaborative process, although not immune to the persistence of several conflicts along the way. Indeed, we have seen a large divide between the initial declared intentions and the actual outcomes of the aforementioned programs. They had little capacity to transform the real community's needs in an efficient set of actions, up to this point. This is partially due to the rigidity of the EU funding mechanisms, as well as to the opacity in decision-making processes that still characterizes several institutional bodies.

Recall that the mafia affairs – that notoriously affect Sicily¹⁶– are able to flourish where there is no real transparency and accountability of public administrations and substantial involvement of the whole community in public decision-making processes.

Consequently, the ambitious mission of the Agreement is to overcome the democratic divide between institutions and community within the public decision-making process. For this reason, the new proposed governance system is an important experiment that can become a long-lasting opportunity for sustaining anti-mafia in Sicily. The attempt is to nurturing the culture of active citizenship as anti-mafia in the public decision-making processes throughout community, undertaking processes that involve various actors, especially youth.

After 10 years of work, we have seen the resilience and co-evolution of this process, proved by its mid-term outcomes despite of pitfalls. We believe that the resilience of the

16 For an excursus, see e.g. Dickie, J. (2011). *Blood brotherhoods: the rise of the Italian mafias*. UK: Hachette.

Agreement is an accomplishment itself, as the Agreement is mostly conducted by volunteers. Through this process, we have tried to create the best preconditions for a meaningful and long-lasting common way for social ecological care. This common way needs to be traced and sustained by functioning and strong democratic structures that community and institutions agree to build, including the University in its role of Third Mission. These structures – roughly tested through the Agreement itself – are our proposal for an ‘enabling yes’ to a renewed approach to care (Klein 2017) of social ecological systems.

Conclusions

The article has discussed achievements and pitfalls of what started as a self-organized experiment from the grassroots (Alfasi and Portugali, 2004; Innes et al., 2010; Van Meerkerk, 2013; Boonstra, 2015) in partnership with the LabPEAT of the University of Catania, and it has become today a more complex partnership with public institutions in the form of a river and landscape contract (Pahl-Wostl, 2002; Pizziolo et al., 2003; Bastiani, 2011; Micarelli and Pizziolo in Bastiani, 2011) as well as a bottom-up strategic plan. We argue for the necessity of fostering self-organization to improve relations between community-based actors (such through the Participatory Presidium) and between community-based actors with institutional actors (such through the Assembly of the Simeto River Agreement). We highlight the necessity of reframing the role of the Third Mission of the University aimed at public service and community engagement (Inman and Schütze, 2010) in those contexts where local development is challenged (Gravagno and Pappalardo, 2015) with approaches inspired by the paradigms of action research (Whyte, 1997; Reardon, 1998; Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Reardon, 2005; Given, 2008; Saija and Gravagno, 2009; Saija, 2014; Saija, 2017) We have argued the importance of reflecting on the necessity of renewed approaches for the Third Mission of Universities in order to allow for the care of derelict areas.

Various questions¹⁷ can be answered through the discussion of the ongoing experience of the Simeto River Agreement. First,

¹⁷ We specifically refer to a set of questions that arose during the International conference ‘Cities and Self-Organization’ held at ‘La Sapienza’ University of Rome, 11-13 December 2017,

if one asks what constitutes experiences of self-organization, we argue that first of all the Simeto River Agreement has been mostly a voluntary effort. It has been an attempt to improve democratic institutions through the experimentation of a new form of governance, starting with strong grassroots input. The Participatory Presidium was proposed as a self-organizational tool for: a) creating a 'common voice' on behalf of the various grassroots contributions from the involved actors; and b) for developing practices aimed at increasing the level of awareness and collective learning inside the local community. This is consistent with the main characteristics of self-organization: strong self-motivation; high levels of local interaction; distributed control; learning from experience.

The Simeto River Agreement demonstrates the necessity of having a 'third subject' to catalyze such a process. We argue that what we have accomplished reflects a specific approach to the Third Mission of Universities inspired by the paradigms of action research. Following Freire (1970) and Dolci (1996), we have tried to develop a maieutic¹⁸ approach, which has been aimed at raising the awareness of community members with respect to their self-organizational potential, as well as at arousing more openness of institutional actors toward community engagement. The benefits of this interaction are two-fold. On one hand, the intense 'Sharing of Knowledge' has primarily been a bi-directional exchange of experience and mutual learning that has enriched not only the various actors, but also the University itself. On the other hand, the local context benefits from the direct engagement of the University as a 'third subject' that can facilitate the interaction between communities and institutions. If one asks what kind of interactions (such as dialogue, negotiation or conflict as in Flyvbjerg, 1998 among others) have emerged through the overall process, we argue that conflict, dialogue, negotiation and collaboration between governmental and non-governmental actors have all been crucial elements. They have been operating with a strategic long-term and adaptive vision for nurturing a new system of governance through the practice

18 As in Pappalardo (2015), the maieutic approach can be defined as «the ability of activating critical thinking, rather than transferring notions. According with the Socratic dialectical method [...] lighting up a possible way for gaining knowledge, rather than imposing preconceived, yet partial, forms of knowledge» (p.155)

of active citizenship and deliberative democracy. Also, if we ask, what kind of 'community' is this process producing? Is it creating new political communities or reducing social conflict? Although the term 'community' has to be questioned in each specific stage of the process, as it is an evolving concept, we can say that the process of the Simeto River Agreement has certainly produced a new political community. This political community is identified with the Participatory Presidium and it is an evolving group that changes along the way. This political community is based on a deep sense of active citizenship. It is able to go through conflict (Fischer, 2000; Agyeman et al., 2003; Martinez-Alier, 2003), dialogue, negotiation and collaboration (Ostrom, 1990; Ostrom, 2010; Healy, 2003, Ollson et al., 2006) with an awareness of how these approaches contribute to the evolution of democratic public decision-making processes (Forester, 2009). Conflict has been used as a spark for igniting the process at the very beginning, and also in other phases of the process itself; however, it has not paralyzed the dialogue. Rather, in this case, conflict has been the reason for starting a dialogue among various actors. In this respect, the new political community is not aimed at reducing social conflict but at allowing democratic dialogue to emerge through a more mature and aware approach to conflict.

Is the Simeto River Agreement a new democratic institution or is it an attempt to make institutions more accountable? The Simeto River Agreement is a voluntary act that has not been implemented due to a compulsory law. As a consequence, it does not establish a new institution. It is rather an experience that tries to overcome the vacuum of the current Regional and National regulatory frameworks related with democratic participation within decision making processes. This is one of the current limits of the Italian and Sicilian governmental system: participation is mostly a declaration of intents that has not been sustained by any specific laws, differently than in other Italian Regions. In other words, in Sicily participatory activities are not usually framed within an institutional setting and are not usually sustained by economic resources; consequently, participatory activities are usually not efficient and enduring.

The Agreement has been set up to experiment with practical strategies for structured participation in decision-making processes, with the aim (among the others) of making institutions

more accountable. Further experimentation is still needed in order to reach this goal.

Finally, through our direct experience as engaged-scholars in a long-term university-community partnership based on action research, we have taken part in a learning process where all the involved actors – including ourselves – have exchanged specific and diverse types of knowledge and expertise. The network of associations learned the importance of going beyond conflict; to strengthening enduring alliances between various organizations that used to work separately, dialoging with local, regional and national institutions, and constructing a strategic long-term vision for their action (Forester, 2009). The governmental institutions learned to collaborate at a multi-level scale and within the same level (Ostrom, 2010), to listen to various community members' needs and expectations and to build a fruitful dialogue with them, and finally, to recognize the significant role of active citizenship in democratic decision-making (Smith, 2009; Mathews, 2014).

We, as engaged scholars, have learned that theory needs a continuous adaptation to practice: drawing from Schön (1983), we have experienced that practice requires specific skills that cannot be acquired without a full immersion into practice itself. As a consequence, we highlight that more practice-oriented learning activities are needed within the current Italian academic curricula.

Finally, this article has discussed how an Italian University has responded to its institutional role of Third Mission with a specific approach inspired by the paradigms of action research. As we have already said, this approach has specific benefits, as well as challenges. It requires significant effort in terms of fieldwork and human resources. One question remains: will it still be possible to undertake such activities of the Third Mission given the changing conditions of Italian Universities, especially if cuts of public funds result in cuts of human resources?

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Troppo competenti?

Riflessioni sull'abilitazione delle competenze degli attori locali nei processi di rigenerazione urbana di contesti marginali

Alice Ranzini

Abstract

Il riconoscimento e l'attivazione di saperi differenti per la rigenerazione dei territori è da tempo un campo aperto di riflessione e sperimentazione per gli studi urbani. Mentre la ricerca appare impegnata a costruire contesti di senso nuovi in cui sperimentare la contaminazione con forme altre di sapere sia teorico che pratico, i processi istituzionali di costruzione di politiche sembrano faticare a scardinare ruoli e visioni consolidate.

L'articolo, ripercorrendo le fasi della interazione tra rete locale e istituzione per la riqualificazione del quartiere ERP Giambellino Lorenteggio a Milano, si propone di analizzare gli esiti del processo rispetto al riconoscimento della competenza progettuale espressa dai soggetti territoriali. Al contempo, mettendo in luce alcuni nodi critici della vicenda, l'articolo riflette sulle dinamiche di interazione tra istituzioni e reti locali e sulle sfide aperte alla revisione degli approcci consolidati alla rigenerazione urbana.

Despite a longstanding tradition of studies and research, non expert knowledge recognition and activation represent a challenging unsolved question. However, while 'in the field' research practices seem to be fertile contexts open to contamination, the institutional initiatives still express a strong trust in the expert technical-theoretical knowledge, with many difficulties in innovating visions and approaches. The case of Giambellino Lorenteggio redevelopment plan (Milan) shows an attempt to raise practical forms of knowledge at the level of the political and institutional debate with the aim of produce a new shared meaning of the urban transformation process. Beside the innovative and interesting outcomes of the research and consultancy phase, the process shows some critical aspects in terms of opportunistic approach to local actors enablement, asymmetry of power and approach to urban regeneration.

Parole Chiave: Competenze non esperte, Rigenerazione urbana, Partecipazione

Keywords: Local expertise, Urban regeneration, Participation

Da tempo gli studi urbani hanno problematizzato 'l'avanzata degli attori' (Moccia e De Leo, 2003) riconoscendo il contributo di una pluralità di conoscenze e soggettività nella costruzione del territorio. Una consapevolezza che ha fatto emergere importanti interrogativi in termini di ridefinizione dei rapporti di potere tra *policy makers* e *policy takers*. In Italia, l'attenzione ai contesti organizzativi spontanei in relazione alla produzione di beni pubblici dal basso (Balducci, 2004) ha costituito un campo di

ricerca che si è posto criticamente nei confronti delle pratiche di democrazia deliberativa emerse tra la fine degli anni '90 e l'inizio degli anni 2000. Una stagione di partecipazione 'debole' (Cognetti, 2007) rispetto alle aspettative di compartecipazione della società alla definizione della sfera pubblica che ha riproposto, nei fatti, opposizione e asimmetria tra conoscenza esperta e saperi comuni. Oggi, il dibattito sulla partecipazione 'attraverso il fare' (Laino, 2012; Perrone, 2016) sembra avere suscitato un rinnovato interesse nell'incontro con i temi della rigenerazione urbana, sollecitato dall'intraprendenza di reti locali attive in territori rimasti ai margini dello sviluppo urbano per decenni. In questi contesti, la domanda di rigenerazione si esprime nella richiesta di riconoscimento e valorizzazione di un patrimonio diffuso di pratiche che esprimono nuovi significati dell'abitare, ridefinendo l'appartenenza e la cittadinanza su basi più materiali e interculturali.

L'emergere di forme di rigenerazione dal basso, ha coinciso con la tensione di una parte della disciplina a costruire contesti di senso nuovi in cui sperimentare l'interazione con altre forme di sapere, sia teorico in una prospettiva interdisciplinare, che pratico (Cellamare, 2008; Cognetti, 2016; Laino, 2012; Magnaghi, 2000; Paba, 1998; Saija, 2016). Percorsi di co-produzione e co-responsabilizzazione degli attori che partecipano ad un processo di produzione di conoscenza sociale e allargato¹.

Al contrario, i processi istituzionali sembrano ancora fortemente presidiati da saperi 'forti' di derivazione tecnico-teorica (Calvaresi, 2016), nonché da un'attitudine 'ideativa' (Laino, 2003) alla progettazione urbana. L'innovazione dei *frame* istituzionali si trova depotenziata da una concezione di rigenerazione urbana ancora fortemente legata alla spazialità dei luoghi (Bazzini e Puttilli, 2008) governata dall'urgenza di riempire il vuoto, in cui il rapporto tra expertise e decisione pubblica può connotare fortemente l'esito dei processi.

Una posizione che sembra perdurare nonostante la crisi della competenza 'esperta' (Friedmann, 1993; Illich *et al.*, 1977; Sandercock, 2004) di fronte alla crescente difficoltà di proporsi come guida e interprete della società. L'aumentata complessità delle questioni e il clima di sfiducia verso la politica hanno reso necessario alle istituzioni dotarsi di un apparato tecnico

¹ Un'attitudine alla ricerca come *progetto sociale e politico* (Perrone, 2016:17) che in Italia ha una tradizione importante rimasta minoritaria Laino (2012) che sembra oggi ricevere nuova attenzione.

di protezione delle proprie scelte, conferendo nuova centralità politica all'esperto (Collins e Evans, 2002; Fischer, 2009; Forester, 1998), deputato a rafforzare, se non a sostituire, gli argomenti politici - il piano etico e valoriale - con argomentazioni tecnico-scientifiche - il piano cognitivo. Una 'politica dei fatti' (Pellizzoni, 2011b) che *depoliticizza* gli argomenti delle istituzioni e *politicizza* quelli della scienza, costruendo intorno alle diverse posizioni quadri oggettivi, *credibili e assunti come veri*.

Questo approccio applicato alla rigenerazione urbana riduce pertanto quest'ultima a dominio esclusivo delle discipline tecnico-architettoniche, marginalizzando le forme altre di sapere 'pratico' (Vino, 2002) come, ad esempio, quelle potenzialmente espresse dalle coalizioni locali.

Facendo dunque riferimento al contesto italiano, il campo della rigenerazione urbana sembra offrire l'occasione per reinterpretare la domanda crescente di inclusione nei processi decisionali da parte degli attori locali come una richiesta di abilitazione di competenze pratiche maturate nei territori 'al margine', dove cioè multiproblematicità sociale, distanza dalle politiche e abbandono istituzionale rendono necessaria l'attivazione dal basso. Il termine abilitazione, nel senso proposto, fa quindi riferimento alla richiesta di riconoscimento del contributo delle reti locali allo sviluppo e alla tenuta sociale di territori complessi e multiproblematici, come sono oggi le periferie urbane, identificando le pratiche dal basso come parte costituente del territorio e non solo come sua narrazione².

Territori e reti competenti. Il caso della riqualificazione del quartiere Giambellino-Lorenteggio

Il quartiere Giambellino-Lorenteggio è uno dei più grandi comparti di edilizia residenziale pubblica di Milano, rimasto - fino ad oggi - senza alcun intervento significativo di riqualificazione. È un contesto che soffre delle più tipiche problematiche

² L'articolo è esito di un percorso di ricerca che si interroga sul ruolo e sulle pratiche di attivazione delle reti locali per la rigenerazione di contesti urbani marginali. Le fonti utilizzate per la ricostruzione del caso comprendono, oltre a documenti ufficiali, anche una serie di interviste semi-strutturate ad attori del territorio e rappresentanti istituzionali sul caso specifico. L'articolo si nutre anche degli esiti di un lungo periodo di osservazione partecipante dei contesti di relazione orizzontale, confronto e coprogettazione tra i soggetti locali protagonisti della vicenda reso possibile dal coinvolgimento personale dell'autrice nell'Associazione.

della periferia pubblica contemporanea: decadimento delle architetture, invecchiamento della popolazione, concentrazione di profili sociali deboli, alti tassi di disoccupazione e di inabilità al lavoro, elevata presenza di abitanti stranieri, forte frammentazione sociale. Collocato sul confine sud-occidentale della città, il Giambellino-Lorenteggio si presenta come una bolla di marginalità sociale che fatica a trovare un proprio ruolo all'interno di un settore urbano in rapida trasformazione nelle sue funzioni, popolazioni e immagine pubblica.

In questo contesto fortemente critico e compromesso si è consolidata una rete attiva e coesa di attori locali³ attraverso numerose esperienze di ricerca-intervento, animazione e presidio territoriale. Una rete caratterizzata da una interessante prossimità tra operatori, attivisti e abitanti dovuta alla molteplicità di ruoli ricoperti dalla maggioranza dei componenti. Questa condizione di *coestensione* tra rete locale e territorio ha connotato le progettualità sociali sviluppate sul territorio di una vocazione fortemente politica, mettendo al centro del proprio agire il tema dell'ingaggio personale.

Spazi di sperimentazione da una politica mancata

Il percorso di mobilitazione della rete locale del Giambellino-Lorenteggio, intorno al tema della rigenerazione del quartiere, ha origine in seguito al mancato inserimento del comparto del Lorenteggio tra le aree destinatarie della politica dei Contratti di Quartiere (2003-2004). Alcuni soggetti, ancora oggi al centro della rete locale, avendo maturato una solida esperienza di indagine sociale e intervento⁴, avviano un percorso di attivazione di comunità ed *empowerment* civica, con l'obiettivo di sperimentare nuovi meccanismi di ingaggio e autorganizzazione

3 Partecipano a vario titolo alla rete locale: cooperativa Azione Solidale, cooperativa Comunità del Giambellino, cooperativa Spazio Aperto Servizi, associazione Dynamoscopio, associazione Le Radici e le Ali, Consorzio Commercianti Mercato Lorenteggio, SICET, Unione inquilini, Biblioteca Lorenteggio, Comitato Genitori Narcisi, i gruppi informali di abitanti le Mimose, Giambellmamme e Giambellgarden.

4 Si veda, ad esempio, la ricerca 'Il legame sociale al Giambellino' condotta da Comunità del Giambellino e Caritas Ambrosiana con la direzione scientifica di Aldo Bonomi (2001); il progetto di coesione sociale 'Giambellino, un quartiere per crescere', condotta da Comunità del Giambellino in collaborazione con la parrocchia S. Leonardo Murialdo, finanziata attraverso il "Patto Locale di Sicurezza" del Comune di Milano (2006).

degli abitanti che fossero di contrasto alle dinamiche di allentamento dei legami sociali e di solidarietà interculturale e intergenerazionale e del senso di appartenenza territoriale. Un percorso di animazione territoriale, presidiato dalla storica cooperativa sociale Comunità del Giambellino⁵, dà corpo ad una rete ampia e variegata di professionisti, abitanti e volontari⁶. Da questa esperienza nasce nel 2012, a seguito di un percorso complesso di concertazione tra tutte le componenti sociali del territorio, l'associazione 'Laboratorio di quartiere Giambellino Lorenteggio': una proposta di accompagnamento sociale alla rigenerazione di contesti urbani marginali alternativa agli approcci 'professionali'⁷.

«In Giambellino l'obiettivo era quello di costruire insieme agli abitanti anche il senso di quello che si faceva. La definizione di coesione sociale non è mai stata data a priori ma costruita insieme agli abitanti stessi. E il senso che diamo all'associazione oggi è molto legato al quel percorso, a quello che era emerso negli incontri di formazione con Pier Giulio Branca al gruppo promotore di abitanti e operatori... L'idea che la coesione sociale non è mettere insieme

5 Comunità del Giambellino nasce nel 1979 come organizzazione di volontariato. E' l'unica cooperativa a Milano ad aver concentrato il proprio intervento su un unico territorio.

6 Un percorso che troverà sponda per sperimentarsi come *community hub* nel progetto di coesione sociale 'Punto e Linea' finanziato da Fondazione Cariplo (www.fondazionecariplo.it/it/storie/servizi/punto-e-linea.html).

7 L'obiettivo del percorso era sviluppare un ambito di attivazione locale che non fosse gestito come un servizio erogato da professionisti ma un percorso innestato sulle possibilità e sugli interessi reali degli abitanti. La fase costituente dell'Associazione è stata pertanto orientata alla formazione di un gruppo promotore misto di abitanti e operatori attraverso un percorso di autoformazione e autoriflessione - che ha visto anche il contributo di Piergiulio Branca, psicologo di comunità - che mettesse tutti i partecipanti nelle condizioni di confrontarsi su aspetti valoriali e di senso del progetto per tradurli consapevolmente in modalità di lavoro e organizzazione interna dell'associazione. Questo approccio inclusivo e capacitante è stato codificato come metodologia del lavoro di comunità propria dell'associazione, il cui cuore è costituito da un momento annuale di progettazione e programmazione delle attività sociali che l'associazione svolge in quartiere. La modalità dell'assemblea territoriale si sviluppa in due momenti in cui il gruppo promotore convoca il quartiere a progettare servizi e attività invertendo una logica di fruizione passiva dell'intervento sociale. Durante l'Assemblea gli abitanti si confrontano con gli operatori delle realtà sociali del quartiere in gruppi misti per sviluppare proposte condivise. Alcuni principi sono stabiliti a tutela dell'inclusività del confronto (rispetto dei tempi e delle capacità, apartitismo, laicità e antizazzismo) e alcuni criteri condivisi strutturano la valutazione della sostenibilità e della inclusività delle proposte.

persone che già hanno delle competenze, dei talenti ma attivare chi fa fatica anche se è in forte disagio sociale. Questo è stato l'aspetto caratterizzante del nostro Hub rispetto agli altri [cfr. nota 6]. (...) e sono questioni che trattiamo ancora adesso»⁸.

Conflitto

Nello stesso anno, diviene pubblica la notizia dell'esistenza di uno studio di fattibilità - avviato tra il 2009 e il 2010 - per la riqualificazione del quartiere, esito di un tavolo di lavoro congiunto tra Comune di Milano, Aler e Regione Lombardia. Lo studio preliminare simulava l'applicazione dello strumento dei fondi immobiliari per l'*housing* sociale come meccanismo di finanziamento per la riqualificazione del comparto, prevedendo l'abbattimento di una porzione del patrimonio immobiliare esistente, che sarebbe stato solo parzialmente ricostruito in regime di ERP.

Di fronte al 'fatto compiuto' (Cefai, 2007) i soggetti che si erano fatti promotori del percorso di comunità danno vita a una fase di mobilitazione conflittuale che organizza, intorno al presidio del Laboratorio di Quartiere Giambellino Lorenteggio, una rete ampia di soggetti e istituzioni solidali cui aderiscono soggetti molto diversi e potenzialmente inconciliabili (associazioni cattoliche, reti del volontariato, gruppi politici extraterritoriali, sindacati, cooperative sociali, rappresentanti istituzionali).

Alla fine del 2012 si costituisce il comitato DRAGO - Dare Risposte Al Giambellino Ora, autonomo dall'Associazione Laboratorio di Quartiere Giambellino Lorenteggio. La prima azione significativa consiste in una petizione popolare contro l'abbattimento del comparto ERP e in una campagna di controinformazione sugli esiti del progetto di riqualificazione. Grazie alla presenza all'interno del comitato di figure con competenze tecniche e di un corposo lavoro di documentazione dello stato del quartiere accumulato negli anni dai volontari dei presidi territoriali, il comitato acquisisce una grande legittimità di azione, sia nei confronti della base sociale che verso le istituzioni, dimostrando di governare la discussione sia sul piano politico sia su quello tecnico, in questa fase declinato prioritariamente sul mantenimento delle quote ERP.

⁸ Intervista a Luca Sansone, abitante, educatore presso il CDE Creta (coop. Azione Solidale) e presidente dell'Associazione Laboratorio di Quartiere Giambellino-Lorenteggio dalla fondazione al 2018 (29 gennaio 2018).

Per tutto l'anno 2013 il comitato DRAGO si fa portavoce di un percorso di emersione delle istanze del territorio e delle priorità di intervento per il quartiere, definendo i punti imprescindibili per il futuro intervento⁹. Un momento di ampia partecipazione intergenerazionale e interculturale che si esprime durante le riunioni settimanali e in occasione delle numerose iniziative aggregative, di protesta e di interrogazione pubblica dei rappresentanti istituzionali.

Dopo due anni di mobilitazione, il progetto di abbattimento viene pubblicamente abbandonato, con una dichiarazione dell'Assessore alla casa Daniela Benelli in occasione di un'assemblea pubblica nel mese di novembre 2013.

Collaborazione

A fine 2013 il Comune di Milano decide di finanziare interventi di supporto all'Amministrazione nell'individuazione di nuovi scenari di trasformazione per alcuni quartieri definiti 'a rischio'. Tra questi è inserito anche il quartiere Giambellino-Lorenteggio, sebbene non fossero ancora previsti stanziamenti di risorse per la riqualificazione. L'intento della pubblica amministrazione è, in questa fase, quello di ricostruire uno spazio di confronto e dialogo con il territorio, dimostrando un atteggiamento aperto all'ascolto delle istanze locali¹⁰.

I soggetti più rappresentativi dell'associazione Laboratorio di Quartiere Giambellino Lorenteggio avviano un percorso di concertazione interna per concorrere al bando comunale. Un momento di costruzione di alleanze strategiche sia territoriali che extraterritoriali orientato alla costituzione di una cordata che potesse, allo stesso tempo, fornire garanzie di tutela delle istanze locali nel processo ed esprimere una competenza tecnica riconosciuta dalle istituzioni. La prima condizione è assoluta assicurando il coordinamento del processo da parte della cooperativa sociale Comunità del Giambellino e l'inserimento nell'*equipe* di una figura di operatore sociale *freelance* molto

⁹ In particolare: mantenimento delle quote di ERP sia in termini di slp che di numero di alloggi; blocco totale degli sgomberi nel comparto e attivazione della commissione di valutazione degli stati di necessità (art. 34 comma 8 LR 27/2009); bonifica dell'amianto in tutto il quartiere; mobilità degli inquilini interna al quartiere.

¹⁰ Intervista a arch. Patrizia Di Girolamo Responsabile Servizio Contratti di Quartiere e Rigenerazione Urbana, Direzione di Progetto Sviluppo e Coordinamento Strategico Piano Periferie (21 novembre 2017).

riconosciuta; la seconda attraverso il coinvolgimento di un gruppo di ricerca del Politecnico di Milano.

La proposta della cordata territoriale è la sola a presentarsi e risulta vincitrice.

Abilitazione

L'intervento, che prende il nome di V.A.L.E. - Vivere Abitare Lorenteggio ERP, propone una ricerca sulle forme dell'abitare nel quartiere ERP articolata in momenti di indagine sul campo, elaborazione di dati quali-quantitativi e momenti di ascolto e condivisione con il territorio allargato. Un progetto che assume nel tempo la forma di un percorso di ricerca-azione, caratterizzato da un approccio microsociale all'indagine dei contesti abitati con una forte caratterizzazione interdisciplinare, rappresentata dai diversi profili professionali presenti nell'*equipe*. L'esito è costituito da un dossier analitico quali-quantitativo di dettaglio alla scala del cortile e da una serie di rappresentazioni complesse di sintesi che mettono in relazioni diverse variabili che concorrono a determinare la condizione e l'esperienza attuale dell'abitare nel quartiere. Lo stato manutentivo dei caseggiati, ad esempio, è stato valutato affiancando la rilevazione degli interventi edilizi di manutenzione ordinaria alle pratiche di cura e di intervento di 'autorecupero' da parte degli inquilini; i dati sociodemografici - estratti dall'Anagrafe del Comune e di Aler Milano - sono stati incrociati con la rappresentazione dei significati sociali e culturali attribuiti agli spazi. Attraverso l'interazione e l'osservazione ravvicinata, sviluppata con la pratica etnografica, il progetto ha riconosciuto quelle forme minute di cura e di risposte autoprodotte dell'abitare quotidiano definendole 'competenze di cortile': l'incrocio, cioè, tra attivazione di buone pratiche di vicinato, attività di manutenzione spontanea e capacità di rappresentanza. Attivando uno sguardo *emico* sulla condizione di abitabilità del comparto ERP, la ricerca ha costruito una rappresentazione del territorio complessa e multidimensionale, come contesto trasformato e abitato in cui le pratiche sono al contempo espressione di 'domande d'uso implicite' (Crosta, 2010) e 'soluzioni' in atto.

Durante il percorso di realizzazione della ricerca, il comitato DRAGO agisce in modo complementare a quello dell'*equipe* di lavoro, in un continuo rimando tra 'atteggiamento critico' e 'interessato' (Santoro, 2017). Pratiche conflittuali di mobilitazione

degli abitanti e sperimentazione di nuove forme di dialogo con le istituzioni committenti si alternano in una relazione di reciprocità.

Nel mese di dicembre 2014 il Comune dichiara pubblicamente la disponibilità allo stanziamento di 15 milioni di euro per la rigenerazione del quartiere Lorenteggio, subordinando il proprio impegno ad un pari investimento da parte di Regione Lombardia. La dichiarazione sancisce, nei fatti, l'alleanza con i gruppi locali, mentre Aler e Regione Lombardia, proprietari delle aree del comparto ERP, risultano figure assenti dal dibattito, non riconoscendo le istanze sollevate né dalla ricerca né dalla mobilitazione.

Grazie al ruolo di pressione istituzionale esercitato dal Comune di Milano, nel marzo 2015 Regione Lombardia dichiara di indirizzare una quota dei fondi comunitari destinati alle aree urbane sulla sola area del Giambellino-Lorenteggio. Il finanziamento si compone di diverse fonti per un totale di 85 milioni di euro¹¹ a cui si aggiungono le risorse provenienti dal bilancio del Comune di Milano.

L'approvazione del finanziamento permette al gruppo locale di ricevere un nuovo incarico, da Regione Lombardia¹², a supporto della redazione delle linee guida del progetto preliminare (*masterplan*) per la riqualificazione. I soggetti locali diventano così gli esperti del territorio: co-autori con le istituzioni delle priorità di intervento del progetto di riqualificazione del quartiere:

«E' stato faticosissimo sia il rapporto con la rete locale che con l'amministrazione, però è stato anche il momento più alto della nostra capacità di fare...io non mi sarei mai aspettato che ci ascoltassero così tanto. 'Ma voi cosa ne dite di questo, cosa pensate di quello?'. E ogni volta avevamo la responsabilità di esprimere l'opinione per conto di tutta l'equipe e di tutto il quartiere. Una grandissima

11 Il finanziamento plurifondo corrisponde all'attuazione dell'asse V 'Sviluppo urbano sostenibile' del POR FESR 2014-2020 presentato dalla Regione Lombardia nel 2015. E' così ripartito: 53 milioni provenienti dal POR FESR, 1 milione e 950 mila euro dai fondi POR FSE, 5 milioni dal PON Metro.

12 L'incarico, che prende il nome di 'Progetto Laboratorio Lorenteggio 2015' consiste nel supporto all'incarico di assistenza tecnica inerente le «Attività propeedeutiche al servizio di accompagnamento finalizzate alla redazione del *masterplan* del quartiere Lorenteggio in attuazione dell'asse V del POR FESR 2014 - 2020», affidato da Regione Lombardia a Infrastrutture Lombarde spa con il supporto della società di progettazione urbanistica CAIRE. Documenti disponibili online sul sito del Comune di Milano nella sezione "Riqualificazione dei quartieri: Riqualificazione quartiere Lorenteggio" (ultimo accesso maggio 2018).

responsabilità».¹³

In tal senso il masterplan si costituisce come lo strumento di raccordo tra territorio - cittadini e organizzazioni - e pubblica amministrazione.

Nel 2016, però, il percorso subisce una brusca interruzione, coincidente con l'elezione del nuovo sindaco, Giuseppe Sala, e il conseguente cambio di giunta, in linea con l'orientamento precedente¹⁴. La progettazione dell'intervento viene riportata entro arene decisionali strettamente politico-istituzionali, riaffermando la centralità dell'alleanza tecnico-politica nella conduzione del processo. L'*equipe* territoriale viene estromessa dal processo che andrà a determinare, nei mesi successivi, le scelte di operativizzazione del *masterplan*.

Abilitazione delle competenze locali. Alcuni nodi problematici

L'ipotesi di rigenerazione del comparto ERP ha attivato un percorso di emersione della rete locale come attore collettivo, portatore di competenze proprie e agente di politiche. Attraverso uno strumento ordinario - un bando per progetti di intervento territoriale - si è presentata l'occasione per una rete di soggetti della società civile di tradurre la propria expertise di lavoro sociale, costruita negli anni, entro uno strumento capace di parlare direttamente alle politiche urbane; di sviluppare attraverso la pratica di ricerca-azione una capacità di interazione multilivello (Ostanel, 2017), costituendosi come nuova rappresentanza del territorio; di aprire uno spazio di *co-progettazione* con le istituzioni, produttore di nuova conoscenza. Al contempo però, la vicenda mette in luce alcuni nodi problematici - nel processo, nella definizione di competenza e nell'approccio alla rigenerazione urbana - su cui sembra interessante riflettere, per comprendere il senso e le sfide dell'abilitazione delle competenze degli attori locali nei processi di rigenerazione urbana.

Il primo nodo problematico attiene alla dimensione processuale con cui avviene il riconoscimento delle competenze non esperte.

¹³ Intervista a Dario Anzani, coordinatore dell'*equipe* VALE e operatore della cooperativa Comunità del Giambellino, 13 novembre 2017.

¹⁴ In questo cambio amministrativo il presidente del Municipio 6, Gabriele Rabaiotti, viene eletto Assessore alla Casa del Comune di Milano nella giunta del sindaco Sala.

Il percorso di co-progettazione con la rete del Giambellino-Lorenteggio non è stato concepito, come spesso accade, come un processo inclusivo all'origine. Il riconoscimento delle competenze dei soggetti territoriali non ha infatti costituito il presupposto per l'avvio del processo, bensì è avvenuto nel corso dell'interazione con le istituzioni, in cui alcuni passaggi hanno segnato la progressiva apertura a soggetti non formalmente titolati ad intervenire progettualmente sul tema della riqualificazione del quartiere¹⁵. In primo luogo l'*expertise* generata nella fase di conflitto. La conquista di uno spazio di ridefinizione delle scelte politiche a partire dal riconoscimento delle istanze del territorio è stata possibile, inizialmente, attraverso la produzione di informazioni rilevanti sulle ipotesi iniziali di riqualificazione, che ha permesso sia il rafforzamento della *leadership* di alcuni soggetti nel quartiere, sia il riconoscimento del gruppo locale da parte delle istituzioni. La contro-*expertise* (Pellizzoni, 2011a) 'tecnica' prodotta dal comitato DRAGO nell'analisi dei rischi sociali dell'intervento di demolizione ha reso evidente l'impossibilità di gestire il conflitto su un piano politico-retorico, spingendo le istituzioni a impegnarsi per ricostruire un dialogo collaborativo con il territorio. In secondo luogo, il coinvolgimento dell'università. Il passaggio da comitato ad *equipe* di ricerca ha richiesto alla rete locale di costruire una '*trading zone*' (Balducci e Mäntysalo, 2013) in cui reperire alleanze abilitanti sul piano tecnico-professionale. Di fronte al riconoscimento della scarsa autorevolezza attribuita alle competenze degli operatori del territorio, la credibilità dell'istituzione universitaria funge in questo caso da garanzia della qualità tecnico-scientifica degli esiti di ricerca, permettendo al gruppo locale di essere riconosciuto come esperto e non esclusivamente come *voice* (Hirschman, 1970) del territorio. Solo in ultimo la conoscenza locale ha costituito l'oggetto specifico del riconoscimento. Attraverso questi tre passaggi abilitanti, il processo si è orientato all'attivazione di una competenza *engaged*, vicina cioè alla quotidianità del territorio e interessata alla sua valorizzazione.

¹⁵ Solo a seguito dell'identificazione del finanziamento per l'area del Lorenteggio, la Regione Lombardia stabilisce, che «occorre avviare parallelamente all'incarico di master plan relativo alla riqualificazione edilizia un incarico di accompagnamento sociale di ausilio e supporto al processo di condivisione con i residenti del quartiere nella definizione degli interventi di riqualificazione urbana del quartiere» (Regione Lombardia, Bollettino Ufficiale, Serie Ordinaria - Martedì 12 maggio 2015, sezione C, pagina 14).

Il processo mostra dunque un problema di *occasionalità* e di *strumentalità* dell'attivazione delle competenze locali. Se la vicenda del Giambellino-Lorenteggio può sembrare comune - ovvero ci mostra che i percorsi di mobilitazione dal basso hanno pattern ricorrenti e possono eventualmente determinare l'inclusione degli attori locali nelle arene di *policy* (Cefai, 2007; Pellizzoni, 2011a; Cottino, 2009) - la posta del riconoscimento di competenze proprie ai soggetti 'non esperti' è fortemente determinata dall'alto. L'attivazione della consulenza da parte del gruppo locale può essere interpretata, infatti, se non come semplice modalità di gestione del conflitto, come un'abilitazione strumentale di un gruppo di soggetti in quanto portatori di un patrimonio di relazioni pregresse che hanno mobilitato intorno al progetto - in modo formale e informale - un patrimonio di conoscenze altrimenti impossibile da attivare nei tempi e con le modalità di un intervento istituzionale tradizionale. L'esclusione dell'equipe locale dalla fase di progettazione esecutiva ha comportato che le informazioni recepite nella fase istruttoria non costituissero un impegno formale per le istituzioni, portando una ridefinizione arbitraria degli interventi e delle scelte sviluppate in fase di co-progettazione. Questa modalità di gestione del processo non solo ha, nei fatti, invalidato le ipotesi progettuali elaborate in fase di accompagnamento al *masterplan*, ma ha anche creato un problematico clima di sfiducia tra abitanti e gruppo di ricerca, indebolendo la credibilità di quest'ultimo come rappresentante di un interesse comune. L'inclusione delle rappresentanze territoriali è stata mantenuta distante dalle arene decisionali politiche, ridimensionando la portata innovativa del percorso e producendo frammentazione laddove aveva costituito terreno fertile per rafforzare la rete locale e le sue capacità progettuali.

La vicenda della riqualificazione del Giambellino-Lorenteggio mostra dunque l'esistenza di un'asimmetria di potere ineludibile nei processi di interazione verticale, che la natura occasionale della relazione contribuisce a rafforzare.

Se consideriamo come paradigmi di valore quelli dell'*amministrazione condivisa* (Arena e Iaione, 2012), un intervento pubblico dovrebbe costituirsi come un terreno fertile non solo per trattare i problemi di un territorio in termini di dotazioni urbane, quanto come occasione per rivedere le relazioni *top-down* in una prospettiva di 'inclusione abilitante'

di tutti gli attori della filiera di *policy*. L'interrogativo aperto attiene allora alla possibilità di concepire l'abilitazione degli attori locali come un processo aperto e continuativo, evitando che i momenti di allentamento del confronto costituiscano interruzioni irreversibili del percorso, con effetti critici in termini di frammentazione e disgregazione delle relazioni orizzontali, oltre che di quelle verticali.

Le dimensioni di occasionalità e strumentalità del processo aprono anche un interrogativo rispetto alle modalità con cui le istituzioni si fanno 'di parte'. Se l'abilitazione degli attori locali è un prodotto eventuale dell'incontro, l'intraprendenza e il *commitment* (Venturi, 2017) di questi ultimi costituisce, allora, il solo discriminante per determinare la reale possibilità da parte di soggetti non esperti di vedere le proprie competenze riconosciute e messe al lavoro. Un'ipotesi tanto interessante quanto rischiosa, poiché mentre valorizza le capacità proprie di alcuni soggetti o reti, rafforza *leadership* e *expertise* già formate più che offrire uno spazio di capacitazione diffuso. Il nodo problematico, in questo caso, non è rifiutare un approccio di parte in nome di una pretesa neutralità del Pubblico, quanto più costruire le condizioni affinché l'istituzione possa dotarsi di criteri di riconoscimento delle competenze dei territori per essere consapevolmente 'di parte'.

Il secondo nodo problematico riguarda la definizione di competenza rilevante per la rigenerazione urbana assunta dalle istituzioni all'interno del processo. Il caso del Giambellino-Lorenteggio mostra un fraintendimento intorno al significato attribuito alle competenze della rete locale. La 'competenza locale' è stata recepita nel processo con l'accezione di 'conoscenza del locale' e non di *capitale creativo* maturato da soggetti non esperti attraverso la risoluzione di problemi, che si esprimono anche localmente, in una condizione di risorse scarse. L'interrogazione degli attori del territorio appare attivata, dunque, non in una dimensione *collaborativa* (Collins e Evans, 2002) per il trattamento delle problematiche del territorio, bensì in una prospettiva di aggiornamento degli strumenti conoscitivi dell'operatore tecnico - in questo caso CAIRE e Infrastrutture Lombarde - che, titolato alla gestione del funzionamento del processo progettuale, guida l'attore pubblico. Il tecnico è nei fatti il solo attore agente della pianificazione. Questa concezione rigida di competenza è particolarmente rilevante

in quanto riporta in luce uno dei nessi fondativi della questione dell'abilitazione delle competenze non esperte: la relazione, cioè, tra conoscenza e potere. Se guardiamo infatti al significato linguistico del termine, "competenza" nell'uso comune indica la capacità di un soggetto - individuale o collettivo - di gestire una situazione grazie al possesso di conoscenze ed esperienza, che, qualora siano riconosciute, ne legittimano il coinvolgimento in un dato contesto di intervento (Cottino, 2009). Appare chiaro allora come il riconoscimento eventuale di molteplici espressioni di competenza implichi necessariamente l'attribuzione di legittimità ad altrettante razionalità e sensibilità, che stanno al di fuori del dominio della teoria della disciplina. L'attivazione della rete del Giambellino-Lorenteggio ha messo in luce l'esistenza di una competenza 'del territorio' che si esprime a diversi livelli non gerarchici tra loro - dal singolo abitante, alle organizzazioni, alle reti collaborative - nella tensione generativa e trasformativa delle pratiche di convivenza e di intervento sociale quotidiano. Una modalità di agire per il miglioramento delle dotazioni di un territorio che ha sviluppato una capacità che è allo stesso tempo adattiva alle condizioni, inclusiva delle diversità, creativa perché tesa al cambiamento. Una competenza pratica che non si genera come fatto isolato e non tende all'universalismo, bensì emerge nell'atto stesso dell'abitare, nella prossimità e nella cura quotidiana delle relazioni. Una competenza *plurale*, dunque, fondata su un sapere «non tecnico perché interessato alla situazione come un unicum, alla individuazione di significati che sono propri di quella situazione e non di altre, a valutare le condizioni di applicabilità delle tecniche» (Vino, 2002). Il riconoscimento di questa competenza comporta l'attribuzione di un ruolo di progettazione che si pone concorrente a quello attribuito all'*expertise* tecnica - intesa come conoscenza tecnico-scientifica di derivazione teorica, codificata, trasferibile e universalistica. L'incontro tra queste due forme di competenza ridefinisce la centralità della tecnica - il potere - attraverso una diversa legittimità di intervento, una diversa *pertinenza*. Il portato innovativo della co-progettazione risulta, in questo caso, depotenziato da una interpretazione riduttiva del ruolo possibile delle competenze non esperte dentro percorsi di rigenerazione urbana.

Il terzo punto di attenzione riguarda la *concezione* di rigenerazione urbana. La vicenda del Giambellino-Lorenteggio richiama

a monte un tema di approccio ai processi di trasformazione territoriale che appare ineludibile per poter affrontare un discorso sull'attivazione delle competenze e la partecipazione dei soggetti locali. Se infatti il dibattito sulla rigenerazione urbana è oggi ampio e variegato, i processi in atto - istituzionali, ma non solo - non riescono di fatto a costituire un nuovo *paradigma* di pensiero e azione, continuando a mantenere una certa ambiguità circa quali siano gli obiettivi di cambiamento profondi della rigenerazione e quali competenze siano attivabili entro questi processi.

Gli esiti della ricerca VALE e del successivo lavoro 'Laboratorio Lorenteggio' hanno espresso, entro uno spazio rinnovato di azione e confronto con le istituzioni, la proposta di un paradigma di intervento differente: il progetto cambiamento è subordinato al riconoscimento delle tensioni diffuse di trasformazione del territorio che si propone di sostenere e accompagnare. La scelta di questo approccio connota il processo di rigenerazione urbana come emersivo e non eterodiretto, affermando la necessità di riconoscere i semi di quella progettualità implicita delle pratiche quotidiane (Cellamare, 2008) che esprime - costantemente - tensione al cambiamento. La *descrizione* del territorio diventa la *comprensione di un sistema di relazioni* di reinterpretazione continua dell'ambiente da parte di 'attori del cambiamento' (Magnaghi, 2001), ovvero degli abitanti che interpretano il patrimonio territoriale attraverso la cura.

Questa visione ha una diretta implicazione su due piani.

Il primo, metodologico e di approccio alla produzione di conoscenza per la decisione: l'attivazione delle competenze locali implica di pensare l'azione di soggetti 'non esperti' come concorrente a quella del progetto, abilitando cioè le capacità e le proiezioni trasformative dell'abitare quotidiano.

La competenza di trattamento delle istanze territoriali e di rigenerazione territoriale non si esprime, allora - esclusivamente - attraverso la padronanza di strumenti tecnici e conoscenze teoriche ma in una disposizione alla prossimità ai contesti, che permette di mettere in campo un processo di apprendimento specifico attraverso operazioni di: riconoscimento delle competenze sociali che producono pubblico dal basso; emersione delle competenze latenti quotidiane e contestuali; inclusione di differenti approcci al trattamento dei bisogni. Un approccio che, dotandosi di *descrizioni dense* (Geertz, 1973),

rinuncia alla pretesa di oggettività e neutralità per immergersi totalmente entro nuovi contesti della conoscenza che diventa necessariamente *implicazione*.

Il secondo, di processo: l'abilitazione delle competenze locali richiede di attuare una revisione radicale dei ruoli e delle razionalità che guidano i processi di costruzione di politiche pubbliche «rivolto particolarmente contro il surplus di repressione, autoritarismo e tradizionalismo, che comunque ogni istituzione si trascina dietro, se non altro per la sua lunga storia» (Donolo, 1997:227).

L'attivazione delle competenze delle reti locali indica la possibilità di abbandonare la separazione tra urbanistica e fatti sociali per 'rivedere il dominio esclusivo della razionalità' ridimensionando il ruolo del tecnico e immaginando ruoli alternativi per lo sviluppo e la progettazione del territorio (Bottaro e Cellamare, 2001:12).

Il processo di rigenerazione urbana non è chiamato, quindi, a produrre nuove soluzioni quanto più a rinnovare gli approcci con cui le risposte sono prodotte, ammettendo 'nuovi spazi di libertà per l'istituzione e gli attori sociali che intervengono nel processo' (Donolo, 1997) basati sulla possibilità di redistribuire responsabilità e poteri attraverso il confronto tra saperi diversi. Un approccio questo che assume ancora più rilevanza entro contesti territoriali segnati processi di indebolimento materiale e immateriale delle comunità e delle reti locali. Agire riconoscendo la capacità creativa e trasformativa delle interazioni quotidiane che strutturano il territorio corrisponde ad uscire dai confini dell'azione istituzionale - che interpreta le condizioni di marginalità e fragilità esclusivamente in termini di deprivazione materiale - per fare emergere molteplici attribuzioni di senso e significati dell'abitare che altrimenti andrebbero dispersi. Entro ambiti di forte deprivazione materiale e sottoesposizione ai processi di produzione del capitale conoscitivo per le decisioni, porsi il problema di costruire spazi di valorizzazione abilitante per figure non esperte significa concepire la rigenerazione urbana in primo luogo come un percorso di rafforzamento del capitale politico dei territori, sostenendo modalità alternative di costruzione delle decisioni. Un processo 'transattivo' (Friedmann, 1973) che deve condurre ad uno spostamento radicale del concetto di 'competenza'.

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Producing the just city: Self-organising Urban Labs for the re-appropriation of public spaces

Angela Barbanente e Valeria Monno

Abstract

Nella città contemporanea, le forme di riappropriazione da parte dei cittadini di spazi urbani degradati e abbandonati sono molto cambiate. Alle consuete forme antagonistiche di autorganizzazione dei cittadini si sono progressivamente sostituite nuove forme basate sull'interazione fra cittadini e istituzioni. Queste hanno suscitato grande entusiasmo in quanto considerate capaci di aprire possibilità di recupero di spazi urbani abbandonati, inimmaginabili utilizzando approcci top-down o dialogici. Enfatizzandone le potenzialità trasformative, non si è indagata la possibilità di rafforzamento del controllo e dell'ingiustizia sociale, o di uso dei 'cittadini' per compensare la scomparsa di opportunità di democrazia urbana e di politiche di welfare.

Indagando il programma della Regione Puglia "Laboratori Urbani: vecchi edifici per giovani idee", il contributo riflette sulla capacità di queste forme interattive di autorganizzazione di favorire una riappropriazione civica delle aree urbane in abbandono realmente democratica, rivendicandone il carattere di 'spazi pubblici'.

In the contemporary city, the forms of re-appropriation of degraded and abandoned urban spaces by citizens have profoundly changed. Usual antagonistic forms of citizens' self-organisation have been increasingly replaced by new forms of interaction between citizens and institutions. These have arisen great enthusiasm as innovative urban policies that seem to open up the possibility of recovering abandoned urban spaces, which was unthinkable in the logic of top-down or dialogic approaches. In many cases their transformative potential was taken for granted, and has not been explored the possibility that such policies become means of control and injustice, and spaces where 'citizens' are used to offset the disappearance of opportunities for urban democracy and social support through the welfare state.

Assuming the program of Apulia Region "Urban Laboratories: old buildings for young ideas" as case study, our paper reflects on the ability of these interactive forms of self-organization to favour the emergence of real democratic civic re-appropriation of abandoned areas by claiming their character of 'public spaces'.

Parole chiave: Laboratori Urbani, Autorganizzazione, Ri-appropriazione, Spazio pubblico

Keywords: Urban Labs, Self-organisation, Re-appropriation, Public spaces

1. Can Urban Labs promote the re-appropriation of urban public spaces?

Contemporary cities are shaped by capitalism, and are always changing (Lefebvre, 1991), but in the last thirty years, they have been modified in a capillary way by a pervasive, creative-destructive

neoliberal economic restructuring (Moulaert, Rodriguez and Swyngedouw, 2003; Harvey, 2005). This has transformed the same idea of a city into nothing more than an incoherent set of spaces (Sassen, 2014) dominated by the free market and inhabited by the precariousness of its inhabitants' lives. By paraphrasing Geertz (1983) such a process of transformations can be defined as urban involution. It is characterised by the disappearance of urban common spaces as a result of a process of appropriation by capital that is necessary to guarantee the conditions for the production-reproduction of capitalist relations (dos Santos Junior, 2014). In such a process, public spaces are continuously abandoned, subtracted from communities and put on the market as areas available for more profitable uses or substituted with quasi-public recreational spaces (Hajer and Reijndorp, 2001). With the material disappearance of public spaces, the political and social meaning of public spaces in urban life also disappears, leaving in their place fertile conditions for the diffusion of processes of disempowerment and disenfranchisement determined by the erosion of the welfare state and the transformation of basic rights such as the right to work or to housing into structural uncertainties accompanying people's lives.

Therefore, as the commodification of cities proceeds through neoliberal transformation, a new polarisation of urban spaces emerges which is no longer based on the centre-periphery dualism, but rather on the attractiveness of places and people. Urban space becomes highly contradictory, ambivalent and individualised. On the one hand, cities seem to be open to everyone and offering happiness, things and spaces at no cost, on the other, large and small cities have now their own consumerism areas, fortified enclaves and "interdictory spaces" (Davies, 1998) that exclude anyone who is considered threatening or unsuitable because of his/her social class, ideas and cultural position (MacLeod and Ward, 2002; Sassen, 2014). Beyond the myth of attractiveness, cities become populated by interstitial spaces, places «that look empty and appear as though they no longer have any use» (Hudson, Shaw, 2009:3), suspended spaces waiting for appropriate flows of money.

At the same time, the continuous shrinking of spaces of democracy, co-optation and de-politicisation of urban policy-making, and the associated erasure from them of crucial issues such as social justice, have discouraged citizens' activism. The

coupling between trends of commodification and polarisation on the one hand, and the erasure of public space and de-politicisation of urban policy-making, on the other, undermines some of the taken-for-granted *rights to the city* and weakens the capacity of contestation of disempowerment and disfranchisement processes by urban inhabitants, as individuals or groups. The consumer and fragmented city prevails over the common good.

In such a context, and in order to cope with the challenges or the unjust dynamics raised by urban involution, several local governments as well as groups of citizens have experimented new forms of re-appropriation of public spaces. These are different from the usual antagonistic forms of contestation and/or collaborative dialogues between citizens and public institutions. Often considered too ideological or vulnerable to co-optation (VanHoose & Savini, 2017), these practices seem unsuitable to obtain immediate as well as meaningful and enduring social changes. A myriad of experimentations, for example based on DIY (Do It Yourself) or performative acts, have led local communities to obtain immediate and relevant results in terms of provision of public service or spaces.

In particular, several local governments have created or co-produced urban laboratories to capture or trigger both organized and latent citizens' creativity in order to imagine or implement new ways of urban transformation and management both for responding to the needs of the neoliberal city and for contrasting problems of social polarization and erasure of public spaces associated to urban involution. In both cases, urban labs spring from and share a co-production perspective on the form of collective action and an experimental approach to urban policy making (Evans and Karvonen, 2014; Karvonen and van Heur, 2014). They also draw on the idea that an urban lab can «change the knowledge-production process that underpins urban change through a recursive process of experimentation and policymaking, and that its appeal as a mode of governance is based largely on this transformative promise» (Evans and Karvonen, 2014). They are open and highly interactive spaces with multiple purposes ranging from the production of fresh knowledge to the promotion of social innovation and exploitation of creativity and entrepreneurship, as they emerge in the city of everyday life. Citizens and institutions, old and new actors, without any preclusion or rigid attribution of roles and tasks, co-produce collectively experiments of urban

transformation through non-hierarchical interactions. Urban labs offer a space and a possibility of networking with the myriad of experimental city-making practices, which are spread over and take place in very different fields of action, places and scales. Openness, co-production, creativity and networking have made urban labs symbols of a new form of city-making beyond the well-established urban planning traditions.

However, if urban labs can be considered spaces of action aimed at enabling the re-appropriation of urban space they still remain a controversial issue. On the one hand, they are reported as an opportunity to face the contradictions of contemporary cities, to avoid a distorted use of participation, and enact a more just transformation and management of urban space. On the other hand, they are described as places of social control and production of injustice, and spaces where 'citizens' are used to offset the progressive disappearance of opportunities for urban democracy and social support through the welfare state. When examined in practice, urban labs seem to open up the possibility of recovering or regenerating abandoned urban spaces that are unthinkable in the logic of top-down or dialogic urban transformation. However such capability is not the same as a process of re-appropriation of public spaces, at least as declined in the Lefebvrian tradition.

In the following sections, we reflect on the potentialities of urban labs to enact processes of re-appropriation of urban space, with the aim to find some directions for producing a more just city than the neoliberal one, and to inquire into possible roles for local governments. In such spaces of action, is the role for government necessarily incompatible or opportunistic? Or is it possible to imagine a role that advocates empowerment of marginalized groups, offers opportunities to those who do not have sufficient resources to self-organize, and allows non-predefined relations to evolve independently from government action? Is it possible for government bodies involved to play a role that does not destroy self-organizing abilities, openness and creativity?

In the first part our paper delineates the key characteristics of the concept of re-appropriation to which we refer. In relation to this, we highlight the crucial need of problematizing the meaning of self-organisation and its exclusive association to citizens' autonomous practices of self-organisation. In the second part the paper focuses on the experience of Urban Laboratories (Urban Labs) developed in Apulia under the Bollenti Spiriti youth program.

This is a typical case of controversial practice that raised criticism (Romano, XX) as being part of the roll-out of neoliberalism and at the same time is considered a model of successful innovative practice. After highlighting some key points of the political vision underlying Urban Labs, the idea and experience of Urban Labs are discussed by focusing on the ExFadda Urban Lab. In the last section, the paper draws attention to some peculiarities of this experience focusing on the different forms of re-appropriation of public spaces that it implies.

2. Re-appropriation and self-organisation

What makes urban labs sites of re-appropriation of public space? Any possible answer to this question requires some explanation concerning the meaning of re-appropriation. From our point of view, it has to be related to the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1968; Harvey, 2008). In such a perspective, re-appropriation is an act of reorientation. «It reorients the city away from its role as an engine of capital accumulation and toward its role as a constitutive element in the web of cooperative social relations among urban inhabitants» (Purcell, 2003, 149). It implies a meaning of accessibility to urban space that includes an antagonist content that opposes the dynamics of commodification of urban space, a collective vision of urban space based on urban participation in it as autonomous citizens or groups of citizens, and the power to change urban space following their own desires. While we retain these dimensions as crucial to re-appropriation of urban space and therefore to deal with our research topic, we contend that in the contemporary city the re-appropriation of public spaces can no longer be exclusively associated to citizens' autonomous practices of self-organisation. In debating this topic it is crucial to know if urban labs are sites favouring forms of self-organization aimed at boosting social innovation and delivering services, or if they are also aimed at triggering a radical change which directly copes with the wide range of injustices characterising the contemporary city, and in particular with issues concerning social polarisation and the exclusion of the most vulnerable citizens from urban life.

3. Problematizing self-organisation

The notion of self-organization has recently been getting increasing attention from the spatial planning community. It takes on different meanings coming from diverse scholarly frames and

disciplinary perspectives. As a consequence, spatial planning research has framed self-organization in different terms, which do not necessarily appear mutually-exclusive. A deep-rooted line of research is based on the science of complexity. In this perspective, self-organization is a descriptive-interpretative concept that can assume explicative power. It generally hints at the unpredictability, instability, and uncertainty of urban system dynamics. It is essentially based on the interpretation of cities as living, open, complex and thus self-organising systems that change from the bottom up (Portugali, 2000; Batty, 2005). It challenges linear assumptions that are traditionally part of the planner's perception of the world (De Roo, 2016). In such an approach, self-organization is defined as the «emergence and maintenance of structures out of local interaction, an emergence that is not imposed or determined by one single actor, but is rather the result of a multitude of complex and non-linear interactions between various elements» (van Meerkerk, Boonstra & Edelenbos, 2013, 1632). From a paradigm to understanding the emergence of order from chaos in physics and chemistry (Prigogine and Stenger, 1984) or the autopoietic self-reproduction of living systems in biology (Maturana and Varela, 1992), the science of complexity has become a perspective to interpret and address the dynamics, flows and uncertainty of systems. As such, in the field of spatial planning it has been gradually embracing broad and open theoretical frameworks and research lines, which sometimes appear intertwined but are not always consistent (for example, De Roo, Hillier and Wezemaal, 2012).

Rather than being used to explain the dynamics of transformation of urban systems or to identify specific forms of social action, the concept of self-organization is increasingly arousing principles and methods to innovate spatial planning forms and procedures. Dissatisfaction with the established interpretation of public participation as an institutionalised part of planning processes (as for example in Alexander 2008) contributes to motivating emergent interest of planning scholars in self-organising practices. For example, in Innes & Booher (2010) the study of complex adaptive systems and the inadequacy of established decision-making process with such systems, underlies the idea of a collaborative rationality as the ability to manage decision-making situations characterized by multiple, interdependent stakeholders through rational collaborative deliberations. These

appear to be able to loosen the constraints within the social-institutional structures and open spaces for more adaptive decision-making processes. From a point of view revolving around the uncertainty and unpredictability of complex systems, self-organization is looked on favourably as a way to loosen a strong planning regime and produce workable alternatives in the face of growing inability of the state to respond effectively and adequately to social-environmental changes. Here the focus is on proposals for more flexible, adaptive, and dynamic planning approaches (Hillier, 2011; Davoudi, 2012) or for radical reform of regulatory instruments centred on substantive-qualitative planning model (Alfasi, Portugali, 2007) or simple abstract and general relational rules that enable society itself to be highly flexible (Moroni, 2015). The ongoing budget cuts are causing the growing consideration of self-organization as a political ideal. In such a perspective, «'the system' with its endogenous and ingenious principles of self-organisation (i.e. the market and civil society) » is distinguished from «'interventions' as carried out by some agent alien and exogenous to the system (i.e. the state) » (Uitermark, 2015). In such a perspective, the state is not considered as a foundation or an integral part to urban and social systems. Its role becomes to accept and encourage the self-organising abilities of communities and particularly the market.

A different tradition of research on self-organization refers to radical/insurgent planning. As is well known, the protagonist of Friedmann's visioning is an autonomous, self-organizing civil society, active in making claims, resisting and struggling on behalf of the good city within a framework of democratic institutions (2011, 158). The insurgent (planning) practices, representing an assertion of legitimacy by marginalised groups, challenge the assumption that the state is «the only legitimate source of citizenship rights» (Holston, 1998:39).

In fact, a growing variety of practices emerge. In the global North they involve local groups and communities in the recovery of degraded and abandoned urban spaces, neighbourhood regeneration, housing production, the provision of services or cultural development among others. In the global South such practices may be an expression of antagonistic forces that contest the state but also the market in efforts to counter a failure to provide homes and jobs (Meth, 2010). But the complete lack of any kind of mediation renders extremely fragile these forms

of antagonist action which state the issue of control over key collective resources (Melucci, 1996). The asymmetries of power hinder the proper functioning of public participation in radical/insurgent planning too (Monno and Khakee 2012). On the other hand, promises of an inclusive citizenship in neoliberal governance are often illusory (Miraftab, 2009), and insurgent practices can assume multiple, contradictory, and repressive forms in everyday living places (Meth, 2010).

Self-organizing practices often represent a response to the inability of the state to provide services and equipment and create minimum conditions of urban liveability (Cellamare, 2016). But they are also a way to legitimize the incessant dismantling of the welfare state through the government's retreat from sectors in which it has traditionally played a vital role (Nederhand, Bekkers and Voorberg, 2016), and to make use of the self-organizing capacities of citizens to provide services in new ways. Self-organization practices are considered also a way towards a 'productive' use of people's self-motivation to achieve more socially embedded results in terms of heterogeneity and diversity in urban development, against government policies supported by comprehensive systems of control and accountability that destroy creativity and produce «standard, uniform guidelines for conduct, to which large groups of actors and citizens must submit themselves» (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011).

The same terrain unlocked by the difficulties (and failures) of the neoliberal state to face changes and meet social demands, opens the way for completely different processes. They encourage the emergence of 'autonomous geographies', i.e. «spaces where people desire to constitute non-capitalist, egalitarian and solidaristic forms of political, social, and economic organization through a combination of resistance and creation» (Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006). These include social centres, eco-villages, alternative currencies, food production, housing cooperatives and self-education, and experiments in non-hierarchical organization and consensus-based decision-making. On the other hand, they inspire new government approaches to spatial planning promoting small-scale, flexible and short-term interventions that undermine the capacity of public governments to oppose increasing socio-economic inequalities across city-regions (Savini, 2016).

A number of practices of self-organisation are increasingly developing under the benevolent gaze of government institutions

or even with their support. In such cases, the traditional boundaries between state, market, and civil society are quite fuzzy. Self-organization practices, which are presented as antagonistic and emancipatory, can be unacceptable from the point of view of social justice, because they do not offer the possibility for participation to those on the margins. Furthermore, time is a key variable for investigating these practices. Experiences which are initially presented as antagonistic and emancipatory forces, can evolve into collaborative experiences or become important for the market. The practice of 'alternative' economies, which limit the general neoliberal logics of waged work, corporate control and privatization, reveals ambiguities in the dichotomies between market and autonomist logics (Vanolo, 2013).

In this new world the concept of self-organization has ambivalent, evolving, and even contradictory practical implications: self-organization is a part both of the neo-managerial thinking, with its emphasis on the ability of continuously adapting to change, and the antagonistic thinking, with its accent on resistance to oppressive systems of government. To make the analysis more appropriate to this new world, and therefore criticism and proposals more effective, it is necessary to overcome the hackneyed debate over liberalism vs. statism (Boltanski and Chiappello, 1999), to distinguish and reveal differences in what is obscured by the use of fuzzy concepts or approximate analyses, and focus on the substantive issues implied by the right to the city and social justice.

4. Investigating Bollenti Spiriti Urban Labs

Investigating Bollenti Spiriti Urban Labs as a self-organising process of re-appropriation of urban spaces that continually evolve is a complex task. In many circles, both at a regional and international level, among policy makers and ordinary people, it is considered a successful initiative, a best practice, a sort of flagship of a specific style of policy-making developed by the Apulia regional government in the field of youth policy and beyond this specific field. The Bollenti Spiriti Urban Labs initiative was identified as a best practice for the European Year of Creativity and Culture 2009. In 2013, it was included among the 100 best urban regeneration experiences in Europe within the 100EUrbanSolution initiative, and in 2017 in the inventory of good practices of youth work and entrepreneurial learning in EU Member States (EC,

2017). The story of the ExFadda Urban Lab, on which we focus in section 5, has been considered a best practice too (WWF, 2013; Campagnoli, 2014). However, success and failure are not suitable categories for developing an analysis on unique, ambiguous and uncertain processes of re-appropriation of public spaces and, in any case, they cannot be used to analyse constantly changing realities such as Bollenti Spiriti initiatives. Urban Labs involve self-organising processes that assume a hybrid form, continually evolving alternate phases of frenetic and creative activities with moments of stagnation or even profound crisis, and therefore avoid definitive judgment of success or failure. On the other hand, the choice of methods and categories of analysis is tentative, since Bollenti Spiriti Urban Labs are characterised by a hybrid form of self-organisation based on co-production processes. It is difficult to label such a variety of activities using one definition among those abundantly offered by the literature on self-organization, urban labs, or co-production. This applies even more to the case study on which this paper focuses: the ExFadda Urban Lab. Social innovation, social or community enterprise, self-help, co-production, are all definitions that capture only part of the processes, projects, and activities, which are being developed in the ExFadda. In practice, the individual categories, and the attributes with which we try to describe them to encase them in a model, risk being reductive.

Therefore, we have analysed Urban Labs as processes of re-appropriation of urban spaces focusing on their conceptual pillars, their activities and interactions among actors. Following this idea, we have been developing research based on systematic analysis of the Urban Labs' experiences underway. This paper is part of this research. Here we discuss an example of particular interest: the ExFadda Urban Lab. This was selected because it has been effective for five years, with particular emphasis on "not planning anything" and continuously expanding activities. Although from this case study we cannot draw general conclusions on the role of urban labs for the re-appropriation of public spaces, it can give some indications on the potential of Urban Labs within a policy framework that encourages self-organising practices.

4.1 Bollenti Spiriti Urban Labs: old buildings for young ideas

Bollenti Spiriti (Hot Spirits) is a program launched by the Apulia Regional government in 2005 within the framework of youth policy.

This policy can assume different perspectives, some of which mirror how the government perceives the role of young people in society. Bollenti Spiriti is the first regional policy in Apulia where young people are explicitly targeted. Traditional Italian programs targeting young people have been characterised for a long time by a particularistic approach, and a focus on preventing deviant behaviours and unemployment, rather than developing youth creativity and innovation potential for the benefit of their own individual lives and the society. Bollenti Spiriti differs from these characteristics. It abandons the problem-oriented perspective and takes with conviction the view of considering young people as a resource in society. As imagined by its creator, Guglielmo Minervini, young people are not a “problem to be mitigated”, but a “resource to be activated” by emphasizing “their talent, energy and the desire to participate”.

Minervini was deputy president of the Apulia Regional Government from 2005 to 2015. He had profound knowledge of young people, especially of more vulnerable ones or with special needs: since the 1980s he has been the promoter of many social, youth, pacifist and civil disobedience initiatives, and as founder of the association “Casa per la Pace” in Molfetta has taken many young people away from crime.

Bollenti Spiriti is based on the idea that in contemporary society the State is no longer sovereign: the concentration of power, and its management from above, has been shattered. This implies «a radical exodus (i.e. which touches the root) of the conception of power: from an instrument to control society to a lever to act change. Or, even, from a chain of control to a platform for change. From a means to manage social needs to an open application to free widespread energies. From a tree to exercise command to a facilitator that eases processes. From concentrated power to shared power» (Minervini, 2016). This is the core of “generative politics”. Its «key word is co-power. (...) Because it takes a lot of power, the power of each person, in fact, to rewrite a vision of the future».

Bollenti Spiriti is not a “una tantum” (one-off) policy that has broad mandates and wide target populations. It includes a number of different initiatives and actions. One of the most important initiatives is “Urban Laboratories: Old buildings for young ideas”, for the rehabilitation of abandoned public buildings and their transformation into places to support youth creativity. This

used different tools and financial resources: national funding for Urban Policies and Youth Policy, European Community (European Regional Development Fund 2007-2013), and regional budgets.

“Urban Laboratories: old buildings for young ideas” started in March 2006. The purpose of the initiative is the refurbishment and reuse of abandoned public buildings (such as schools, factories, warehouses, market places, military barracks, slaughterhouses, and so on) to be used for activities supporting youth creativity. The buildings are then referred to as “laboratories”. Each Urban Lab has its own purpose and thematic activities: arts, performances, local traditions, new technologies, training and other initiatives, also in the form of/together with entrepreneurial activities.

Urban Labs aim to create public places with adequate infrastructure where young people can meet to put in practice, develop and experiment creative activities. They involved 169 municipalities (of the 258 in the Region) that made available 150 buildings that have been rehabilitated and equipped to become spaces for young people.

Urban Labs has contributed to the development of project-design activities at local level, promoting active citizenship and civic dialogue. The Open Space Technology and on-the-spot visits have enabled the development of creative actions among public bodies, NGOs and other associations supporting young people.

Young people have come closer to local governments and made suggestions for the use of public spaces. This has created also difficulties in cooperation and even mistrust between local authorities and young people. In this regard, it is to be highlighted that the regional program authority played a mediating role between the local councils and youth actors also through capacity building initiatives addressed to the managers of the Labs. Specifically, a regional resource center called CrLab (regional center of services to support Urban Laboratories and public spaces for creativity) was created at the end of 2012 (Morciano et al., 2016). The development of the Urban Labs initiative was strengthened and enlarged thanks to other initiatives for young people included in the Bollenti Spiriti program mentioned above, as well as other policies for social inclusion of disadvantaged people.

4.2 The governance structure

The system of governance adopted by the Bollenti Spiriti program

to sustain Urban Labs as self-organising processes is really simple (Fig.1). It involves as key actors the regional and municipal governments, the managing authority and young people, the latter being the true essence of the Labs. In particular, the regional government is the enabler of the process. It orientates the constitution of the Urban Labs through its vision, principles and guidelines. However, it never interferes with private or public organisations, associations and ordinary citizens who are the other actors involved in a laboratory. Urban Labs are developed by young people and other private actors and public institutions which interact according to such a governance system. In order to preserve Urban Labs' autonomy the governance frame has been continuously monitored and adapted. The team responsible for the design and implementation of the program has consistently addressed the following key questions: (a) how to make it possible for the government bodies involved in the Urban Labs governance system to play a role that does not destroy youth self-organizing abilities, openness and creativity? (b) How to preserve the self-organizing practices over time? (c) How to balance between social and creative goals and to adapt the governance structure to the continuous evolution of Urban Labs?

In particular, the continuous monitoring of Urban Labs has helped the regional government to adapt its role in the co-production process limiting it to that of enabler agent. Thus, it has gradually evolved towards the creation of a sort of hub specifically aimed at supporting the development of horizontal relationships between young people. More problematic appears the role of the municipal government.

Currently a prominent role is played out by the municipal government that has several tasks to accomplish: from the selection of the old building to be transformed into an Urban Lab to design of the rehabilitation project; it also has to select the managing authority through a public competition and interact with the entrepreneurs who have to carry out the rehabilitation project. It also monitors the Urban Labs activities.

The managing authority has a very important role. It has in its hands the success of the Labs. Its management plan must be open to everybody to allow every actor -inside and outside the Urban Labs- to be part of the process of co-production concerning the cultural activation of the territory. Young people are the brains, the creative minds that have to change their own and other people's

quality of life and, through their activity, possibly re-signify the urban space in its multiple dimensions: social, cultural, physical and economic.

The relationships among these actors are in some ways hierarchical but such a hierarchy does not imply a top-down approach. On the contrary, the hierarchical governance structure seems to express the need to maintain strong autonomy at all levels of action. In particular, it seems to be aimed at preserving the autonomy of young people so that they can organise or let 'things' self-organise.

A systematic evaluation of youth participation in the Urban Labs initiative proved that such a governance structure largely generated the expected outcomes in terms of cultural opening and obligation of the local councils to give young people a voice, as well as in terms of «the ability to activate a process of discovery, stimulus and support to young people's capabilities for both the design and the management of Labs» (Morciano et al., 2016).

5. The ExFadda experience

The ExFadda Urban Lab is located in San Vito dei Normanni, a municipality of 20,000 inhabitants, where young people have few job opportunities, poor social mobilization capacity, and low power in negotiation vis-à-vis public authorities. At the same time, in this town the few public spaces are in a state of abandonment, exposure to degradation and vandalism, because of the lack of ideas about their future use. Even when public buildings or areas benefited from public funding that enabled their recovery and maintenance, they fell back into the spiral of neglect due to the lack of social processes to support the physical transformation of places and their effective management. Some of these publicly-owned buildings are located in the historic centre and are of cultural and architectural value (San Vito dei Normanni, 2017).

The ExFadda Urban Lab was established in a former winery housed in a building of 3,000 square meters plus one hectare of garden, owned by the municipality and abandoned for about 50 years. A group of local companies and associations led by a communication company got management of the public space, with a grant of 50,000 to be used for the rehabilitation of the building.

After a difficult start that lasted about a year, the arrival of Roberto Covolo the new project manager, triggered an innovative process,

consistent with the basic idea behind the regional program. His background includes skills in the field of community building, community animation and youth policies. He had also work experience in the department of the Apulia Region responsible for youth policy.

For him, the process of transformation of a public space into a laboratory consists in opening a public space, making it inhabited, and taking care of it. For this to happen, people have to do something. Having no idea of how to use it is key to the permanence and evolution of the laboratory as a self-organising process. The new manager “opens the door” of the ExFadda to all the local people who may possibly improve the place with their ideas and skills. In a post-ideological era, for him it is vital to activate different experimentations that can give birth a new political project. He thinks «... we need policies that focus on social innovation because it is essential to have a sustainable welfare, which produces work and contrasts widespread poverty. In times of strong inequalities, welfare is crucial to keep up our country». Three main pillars have to sustain any ExFadda initiatives: a focus on people needs, who are regarded as knowledge resources with great potential for self-mobilization; the interpretation of action strategy not as achieving a predetermined target, but as the opening of processes aimed to develop activities in the place; the sharing of responsibilities for the design and implementation of any initiative not only to strengthen participants’ capacities and skills but also to instil courage in those who have to start and develop them. The search for economic sustainability for the activities promoted, be they entrepreneurial or cultural or socially-oriented, is a survival strategy in a society that excludes and denies fundamental rights, decent work and basic services. In this way, over the years it has become a social space in which many young people have had the opportunity to develop entrepreneurial, cultural, and entertainment projects and initiatives (e.g. World Music Academy, Music in Crib, XfOTO, Music Room, Ingeniously, La Manta, School of Parkour Niten, Club Fencing “Carlo Alberto Lotti”, Faddanza, School of Yoga Padma, XFood Social Restaurant, ExFadda Coffee, Radio ExFadda, YEAHJASI! Brindisi Pop Fest) and acquire professional skills. Currently, ExFadda is a place where anyone can propose an idea and, with its feasibility having been examined collectively, try to start it together with the existing network of the Laboratory.

Among the many activities, some are symbols of this laboratory's philosophy. XFOOD is one of them. It is a social restaurant started from the collaboration between ExFadda and the Consortium of Social Cooperatives Nuvola that employs a staff composed of people with disabilities both in the kitchen and in the dining room. This activity aimed at empowering marginalised groups of people emerged because of cooperation with the Regional Government. Its beginning was supported in training and job coaching by the Apulia Region in 2011 through the Program "Integrated innovative projects for the social inclusion of disadvantaged people". All furnishings are the result of restoration workshops, carpentry and tailor-made by local workers with the participation of XFOOD project's young people and citizens.

The World Music Academy is another experiment. It is a school of ethnic music. It trains professional musicians, basing the teaching on new generation methods applied to ethnic and other instruments. This school of music starts with the reversal of the traditional way of conceiving an organization that provides services: the children of the school are not considered as simple users of the courses but together with their families, as potential allies. Progressively the idea of creating an orchestra co-designed and co-funded by the pupils' families and the school emerges. The presence of about 200 students gives the possibility to create of a "community orchestra" named "Banda larga", which is formed by young musicians and co-managed by families, associations, businesses and local authorities. "Banda larga" is conceived as an activation and participation device in which the responsibility is shared between its protagonists. Primarily the students and their families. The task of teachers is «to facilitate participation, enhance intentions and proposals, guarantee access to all forms of contribution, and design a model of open and democratic governance». Families are involved in the strategy development, in the investment choices, in the concrete organization of events (performances, concerts, short tours etc.), in the quest for economic sustainability for the "Banda larga".

6. Urban Labs and the just city: some ingredients

As we have seen in the previous sections, re-appropriation of public spaces can no longer be strictly associated with autonomous and self-organised processes through which citizens oppose modes of government that favour urban involution. Urban

Labs are a symbol of the ambiguity and ambivalence of such a change that is characterised by the emergence of hybrid forms of self-organisation based on co-production between citizens and public institutions. Bollenti Spiriti Urban Labs show some of the well-known structural limits of Urban Labs as providers of public services, but, at the same time, some experiences such as ExFadda, offer some insights to turn those limits into opportunities of re-appropriation of public spaces, be it in a provisional and evolving way.

Laboratori Urbani: Chi fa cosa

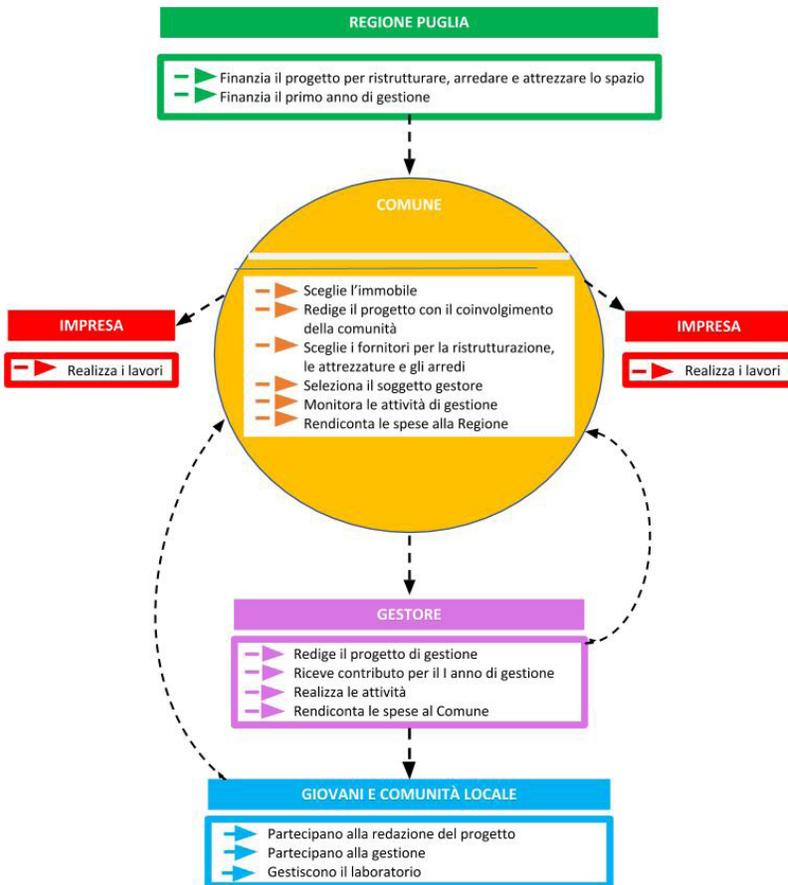


Fig.1- The governance model

Undoubtedly, in Bollenti Spiriti too, Urban Labs have to cope with the neoliberal approach to co-production, which delegates to citizens the provision and management of crucial public services and the burden of their capacity/incapacity of self-organization and innovation. However, the generative perspective on politics that inspires this initiative and its goal to produce community is crucial to avoid the neoliberal drift of Urban Labs. Instead of reproducing the usual coupling between public services and economic growth (Evans and Karvonen, 2014) the idea of Urban Labs as laid out in Bollenti Spiriti and put into practice in ExFadda is led by values of community, sociality and solidarity, and a conception of urban space as a common good.

The ExFadda Urban Lab in San Vito dei Normanni creates job opportunities for young and disadvantaged people. At the same time, it is a site that activates and mobilises ideas that construct a way of inhabiting even a small town, which actively opposes urban involution. Certainly, the need of economic sustainability implies the risk of giving preference to initiatives related to cooking and recreation that lack innovative content and indulge market demands. Yet, being aimed at constructing solidaristic communities, Bollenti Spiriti Urban Labs actively contrast fragmentation and social injustice. In the case of ExFadda, the creation of a company also becomes a tool for social inclusion and reduction of inequalities: it offers opportunities for young talents and disabled people, it delivers services that such a small community could not have according to the supply/demand market logic, it creates places that can connect individuals and the local community while remaining open to external inputs.

Although Bollenti Spiriti Urban Labs cannot eliminate the often-unjust rules characterising the production of the contemporary city and the labour market, nonetheless, they are interstitial public spaces in which experimenting the construction of alternative community economies and ways of living public spaces. Working in a generative policy framework, the re-appropriation of urban space is not only limited to the occupation of abandoned and degraded physical spaces, which are taken away from a destiny of privatisation, which is giving them away to private buyers in order to replenish increasingly lean state and municipal budgets. Bollenti Spiriti Urban Labs subtract spaces from the precariousness of the labour market, break the spatial polarisation dynamics, and offer public spaces to

citizens. ExFadda create new jobs for young and disadvantaged people and actively experiments an “in situ” (Besson, 2018) alternative way of producing the city.

If seen from this point of view, the ExFadda experience also reveals how Urban Labs can become a *third space* (Soja, 1996): a space of emancipation and challenge to injustices. These Labs are a part of a program, which acts in the context of a neoliberal city and tries to change such a city from the inside by promoting a collective construction that is not grounded on a pre-defined idea of public spaces. According to a crucial concept in self-organising systems, the program makes public spaces emerge from collective activities carried out in interstitial sites of the city. Because of this, an Urban Lab is not only a geographical area where a number of functions are given and used, but also a place where people can come together, socialize and give meaning to that place. A place that promotes a sense of belonging and participation in urban life that opposes the different kinds of injustice of the contemporary city. From this point of view, Bollenti Spiriti Urban Labs contributes to mitigating spatial polarisation and a use of participation limited to single selected phases of urban development.

Within Bollenti Spiriti Urban Labs and ExFadda the re-appropriation is an everyday experimentation which subtracts space from the precariousness of work, from the land market, breaks the vicious circle of spatial polarisation and offering public spaces in which to relearn the political and social relevance of public services and spaces. From this point of view, Bollenti Spiriti shows that Urban Labs can contribute to contrast the neoliberalization of urban space by revitalising a city’s «role as a constitutive element in the web of cooperative social relations among urban inhabitants».

Although in Bollenti Spiriti self-organization does not emerge from antagonism, Urban Labs developed within this initiative can have the same potential as other collective actions aimed at widening citizens’ right to the city. Urban Labs do not only include the possibility of accessing the material immaterial resources of a city, occupying a physical place and imagining a different type of urban life. They offer an occasion to construct a different type of urban life and challenge the unjust city in the everyday life.

7. Conclusion

Urban Labs can be part of the roll-out of neoliberalism (Peck and Tickell, 2002; Brenner and Theodore, 2002) or they can create spaces for the social re-appropriation of the city depending on the ideas on which Urban Labs are developed. As the experience of ExFadda shows, the Bollenti Spirit's conceptualisation of Urban Labs can contribute to re-appropriation of public spaces by promoting community economies and enlarging the traditional perspectives on the right to the city.

Regional and local governments can play a part in such a process of re-appropriation of public spaces. Through Urban Labs they can avoid reducing their role in supporting weak populations, lessening social inequalities, and, at the same time, promote the recovery of abandoned and degraded areas in order to create new public spaces in the interstitial 'vacuums', which are (still) useless and unproductive for the neoliberal city.

In Bollenti Spiriti, as required by a generative politics, the role of local governments in the coproduction process is shaped in a way that cannot inhibit self-organising practices of re-appropriation of urban spaces. The structure, openness, and adaptability of the governance system supporting Urban Labs have been designed to limit local governments' power and influence in any Urban Labs. However, interactions between the laboratories and local governments are an important part in their development and in need of further improvements. The creation of tools and devices specifically aimed at developing horizontal relationships between young people is important. So far, it has given them support in the face of local governments when these were against experimentation and innovation, distracted or diverted by their own interests, linked to well-established procedural routines and clientelist practices.

In such a policy framework, the re-appropriation of urban space is not only limited to the occupation of abandoned and degraded physical spaces. Urban Labs subtract spaces from the precariousness of the labour market breaking the spatial polarisation dynamics and offering public spaces to citizens.

If committed to generative politics and coproduced through adaptive governance structure in which local governments function as hubs, Urban Labs can strengthen the right to the city. It enlarge the possibility of access to the material and immaterial resources of a city, help people to imagine and construct a

different type of urban life that challenges the unjust city and break away from the dynamics of involution characterising everyday life in it.

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**Self-organized practices for complex urban transformation.
The case of Bagnoli in Naples, Italy**
Gabriella Esposito De Vita, Stefania Ragozino, Andrea Varriale

Abstract

L'attuale clima di instabilità politica ed economica rallenta e complessifica le trasformazioni urbane e la loro gestione politica. Al contempo però, l'"austerità urbanistica" spinge le città a sperimentare alternative inedite di policy-making, che a loro volta possono prevedere l'inclusione di attori nuovi nel policy network rilevante. L'articolo esplora i possibili risvolti di pluralizzazione e democratizzazione della gestione del cambiamento urbano analizzando le diverse configurazioni di attori coinvolti nella trasformazione dell'ex zona industriale di Bagnoli, a Napoli tra il 2002 e il 2016. Nel 2015 il governo nazionale ha avocato le competenze di pianificazione e di esecuzione del progetto per Bagnoli. In risposta a tale intervento, diversi movimenti sociali hanno intensificato le loro iniziative per contrastare le modalità e il progetto proposto dal governo nazionale, ritenuti rispettivamente non democratico e "neoliberale". La compatibilità delle rispettive posizioni e alcune considerazioni pragmatiche, hanno portato ad una peculiare costellazione che ha visto importanti rappresentanti dell'esecutivo cittadino allinearsi con le posizioni dei movimenti sociali e contro il governo nazionale. Tale configurazione, si ritiene, ha reso possibile l'ingresso di attori normalmente esclusi dal circuito di policy-making e costituisce pertanto un'innovazione del paradigma di pianificazione urbana.

The current political instability and economic uncertainty slow down and complicate urban transformations and their correspondent decisional processes. At the same time, however, "austerity urbanism" pushes cities to explore alternative policy-making approaches that might include new actors in the policy network. We investigate this democratic potentiality by analyzing different configurations of actors (2002-2016) that have been participating in the over two decades-long, and still incomplete, transformation of a former industrial area in Bagnoli, in western Naples (Italy). In 2015, the central Government took over the city's planning competences over the area. In response, several social movements have intensified their action against what they regard as an unchecked, "neo-liberal" transformation of the area. The compatibility of the respective views, as well as pragmatic considerations, led to an alignment between movements and the city and to their joint opposition to the Government. This configuration, we argue, makes room for usually excluded actors and is thus an innovative way of urban policy making.

Parole Chiave: Rigenerazione urbana, Governance, Movimenti sociali

Keywords: Urban regeneration, Governance, Social movements

1. Introduction

The nexus between the crisis and urban austerity is usually

understood as a process whereby a diminishing spending autonomy leads to the shrinking of political space and to the deterioration of urban livelihoods. Not only is the scope of urban politics reduced and predominantly absorbed by the management of the crisis, but the few strategies of urban development that remain available are usually managed in a technocratic fashion and removed from democratic scrutiny. Importantly, austerity does not impact all social groups equally. Often carried out under the banner of “fiscal consolidation”, austerity measures typically translate into the de-funding and slashing of welfare programs, public services, and public employment. As the primary beneficiaries of public expenditures, poorer citizens are targeted disproportionately (Hastings, Bailey, Bramley, & Gannon, 2017; Peck, 2012).

Certainly, therefore, urban austerity is a selective reduction of citizens’ ability to decide how the city should be shaped. But it is not only that. Austerity policies rarely go uncontested. Such contestation are potentially innovative (Davies & Blanco, 2017; Fuller & West, 2016; Hilbrandt & Richter, 2015; Hou & Knierbein, 2017; Mayer, 2013; Tonkiss, 2013). The present crisis has prompted cities where the perceived failure of traditional, technocratic ways of governing urban space to give room and legitimize new political configurations and experimentations: Lisbon was Europe’s first major city to have a full-fledged participative budgeting (Allegretti & Antunes, 2014). Paris’ current Mayor, Anne Hidalgo, pledged to allocate about 5% of the city budget (over 400m€) through participative budgeting by 2020, in what is so far Europe’s largest participative budgeting project in absolute terms. Experts warn that social issues such as affordable housing or urban poverty are not tackled by the projects proposed by Participative Budgeting, which focuses instead on minor, quality-of-life interventions such as the repair of flowerbeds or street pavements (Madénian, Scully, 2018). Variation and difference across countries are substantial. For example, the majority of cities practicing participative budgeting in Germany (74 out of 96, considering only those with population larger than 40 thousand) discuss the *entire* city budget. In the context of financial austerity, however, the reduced democratic potential afforded to such initiatives is defined by some as “capitulation of local policymaking” (Amrhein, 2012). Local elections in 2015 in Spain saw the rise of Mayors who expressed

precisely the resentment against austerity politics that have been implemented by traditional parties. In Madrid and Barcelona, anti-establishment Mayor experimented with new ways of absorbing political inputs from the citizenry with online referenda and by a continued proximity with activist groups. In Italy, Bologna and Naples introduced city-level regulation for citizens to operate and manage public property as “commons” in 2014 and 2012, respectively. In this sense, the contestation against austerity seems to have taken off the ground of grassroots and landed into town halls.

These cases force us to rethink the nexus between the economic crisis, austerity, neoliberalism, and other “global” forces and local phenomena concerning urban politics and policies. While the dense web of economic relations across countries and cities facilitates the spread of economic policies and ideologies, cities are not only on the receiving end of that nexus. As we have seen, cities often resist and react to such pressures.

Therefore, we conceptualize the crisis as double-edged entity: partly a questioning and abandonment of accepted practices, partly the occasion for innovation in terms of social and political dimension. We define “innovation” as requiring two elements: the inclusion of new actors in the decision process, and new procedures for place-based co-decision making (Figure 1).

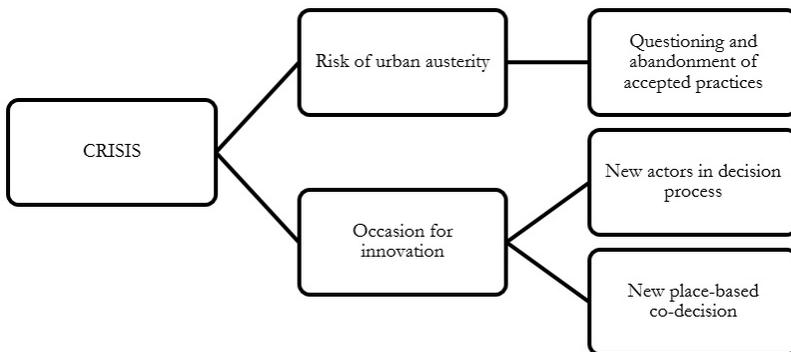


Fig. 1 – The double chance of the crisis (Source: authors, 2017)

This paper analyzes the unfolding of different policy-making approaches within the crisis by looking primarily at the network of

actors involved in the decision and by comparing the composition of that network before and after the onslaught of the crisis.

This research investigates how, and to which extent, the crisis prompts innovative ways of deciding about urban space. How do citizens respond to the crisis, and how is their ability to change the city articulated in a context of crisis? Does an increase in civic engagement translate into higher or lower degrees of social conflict?

Broadly speaking, the crisis generated issues that are shared by different geopolitical contexts such as decreasing of incomes and employment, restriction of bank credit to families and enterprises, slump in market and houses prices with the progressive worsening of families and enterprises expectations affecting consumption and investments. In this uncertain scenario, each country reacts according to its own economic, political, social and cultural characteristics. For this reason, we resorted to a qualitative place-based methodology, derived from Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) in order to contribute to theory through data collected from empirical analysis of local context.

The analysis of the selected case of Bagnoli (Naples, Italy) is a longitudinal study that seems particularly useful to elaborate on whether the increased mobilization and visibility of social movements and civil society is a type of fruitful innovation that emerge from the crisis. It is based on previous work focused on the emancipatory models of participation in planning (Ragozino & Varriale, 2018). The recent mobilization in and about Bagnoli is part of a city-wide framework in which relevant experiences of social movements and civic initiatives are establishing innovative ways of taking part in political debates and decision-making processes (Dines, 2000; Gargiulo & Cirulli, 2016; Vittoria & Napolitano, 2017). The article is structured as follows. First, we present the methodology used to track and analyze the evolution of the networks of actors who impacted – or sought to impact – upon the transformation plans. Secondly, we present the area of Bagnoli and summarize the latest phases of its post-industrial transformation (1990's-2016) through the Stakeholder Analysis. In the third part of the article, we present the findings of the Stakeholder Analysis, and offer our interpretation on. In the conclusions, we reflect on whether the changes in Stakeholder Analysis may help us imagine new ways of manage urban transformation in a time of economic

and political crisis.

2. Methodology

Due to the locally embedded responses of policy makers, local communities and organizations, as well as privates, we set the research questions with a grounded-based approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), which «discovers theory from data systematically obtained from social research» (Glaser & Strauss, 2009: 1). One of the requirements for a solid research in this approach is the possibility to access the empirical field directly, in order to analyze the ways how «truth is enacted» (Addelson, 2009).

In order to identify an effective case to study, we used the following criteria:

- 1) Presence of unresolved issues (related to planning, housing, dismantled areas, unemployment);
- 2) Possibility to observe different constellation of actors over a long period of time;
- 3) Presence of conflicts between political, economic, and social actors;
- 4) Presence of non-institutional actors (activists and other civil society actors).

The lengthy and still unaccomplished transformation of an industrial area in western Naples (Bagnoli) fits these criteria. The case of Bagnoli allows us to observe a fairly stable scenario (in terms of physical transformation) before and after the onslaught of the crisis. Although the closing of the plants and the pending transformation process suggest that Bagnoli is a territory in crisis, the structural problems caused by the economic and real estate crisis of 2008 and 2011 affected the area by changing its assets as discussed in the following paragraphs.

Besides and beyond the goals articulated in the several planning tools that have been dedicated to the area, it has been possible to observe how the roles and the interaction patterns between actors have changed.

In order to understand whether and if the structural issues of the crisis have affected and stimulated new forms of innovation, this analysis focuses on the role of actors involved in the transformation process and their behaviors. A Stakeholder Analysis was carried out to characterize the roles taken up by a selection of actors and their mutual relationships in 2016 and 2014 – when a combination

of economic and political factors led to the seismic changes in the governance for the transformation of Bagnoli. This method was used in an attempt to achieve an advanced knowledge of actors, of their intentions, personal interests and their interactions (Varvasovszky & Brugha, 2000). It helps to understand the degree of influence that urban actors have in the political and decisional process as well as in the regeneration process of places.

Actors included in the analysis are those involved in the process at different level from local (City Council of Naples, local associations, self-organized social movements, and privates) to the national level (central Government represented by the national agency Invitalia, the Government-appointed commissioner and the control room). They have a direct engagement in the regeneration issues and have directly affected decisional process and public opinion.

Starting from key actors, the set has been enlarged through a “snowball technique” (Farquharson, 2015) by asking interviewees about other stakeholders with considerable influence in the regeneration and/or in the decisional process. The empirical research process is iterative in order to monitor the fluid changes that occur simultaneously in the network of actors and of the political and economic context.

This analysis covers the time span between 2002 and 2016, which has been divided in two phases. Each is characterized by different implementing bodies, Bagnoli Futura and Invitalia, respectively (Table 1).

Time phase	Phase A (2002-2014)	Phase B (2014-2016)
Implementing body	Bagnoli Futura <i>Urban Transformation Company</i>	Invitalia <i>National Agency</i>

Table 1 – Time phases (Source: authors, 2017)

For each phase, three elements were considered: planning tools, actually implemented physical changes, and the relevant urban actors.

The stakeholder analysis took place in the following steps:

- 1) Identifying different components of the policy issue in the two time phases;
- 2) Identifying and approaching actors involved (iterative analysis);

- 3) Elaboration of collected data and building of actor maps;
- 4) Discussion.

2.1. Data Collection

The phase of data collection lasted from October 2013 through May 2016, the purpose being that of continuing to monitor the situation for a longer period of time. At present, researchers are collecting updated information to develop the next phase regarding the period 2016–2018. The collected data is composed of primary and secondary resources. The former includes face to face semi-structured interviews put to representatives of different groups of actors. Almost two authors as interviewers facilitate the meeting particularly if there is more than one respondent (Varvasovszky & Brugha, 2000). Before starting, an agreement around issues of confidentiality and way in which obtained information will be transformed into data and be used has been submitted and the possibility to record the meeting has been negotiated. All interviewed actors were firstly contacted via email through the institutional account of the National Research Council of Italy – Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development (CNR IRISS). They were briefly informed of the nature of the research and asked to be interviewed as observer, rather than actors. The latter regards published documents, planning tools, projects for the area, public tenders, judiciary ordinances and internal regulations of organizations. With regard to unofficial documents, face to face interviews provide a good opportunity to gain internal documents. Collected primary and secondary resources have been enriched by active observation through several site visits in different days of the week and different times of the day; participation to several institutional events, meetings and events organized by local activists, photographic survey, field notes, and collection of electoral materials.

Until May 2016, the authors interviewed 19 actors, among the following categories: local politicians, entrepreneurs, professionals, activists, researchers, and former factory workers. Some actors have been interviewed multiple times during the entire fieldwork to monitor such reactions and new trends. All materials have been archived according to the subject on paper and in digital form. By elaborating collected information, researchers identified and selected actors who

have a direct engagement in the regeneration issues and have directly affected decisional process and public opinion, then they built a matrix monitoring involvement, influence/power, position and impact of issue on each actor (Varvasovszky & Brugha, 2000) (Figure 2). The selected actors are: *City Council of Naples*, *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.* (the society which led the dismantlement of the industrial area and its transformation process from 2002 to 2014), *Invitalia* (a joint-stock company of the Ministry of Economy), *Government-appointed commissioner* and Control Room (a tool created by the Government through the *Sblocca Italia* Decree), *Bagnoli Assembly*, *Iskra Collective*, *Bancarotta Collective* (self-organized social movements), *Science Centre and Arenile Resort* (private bodies).

This data, together with urban planning details, are the starting point to draw the two actor maps referred to 2014 and 2016 based on the degree to which they were able to influence the regeneration of the area, and their position vis-à-vis the relevant regeneration plan.

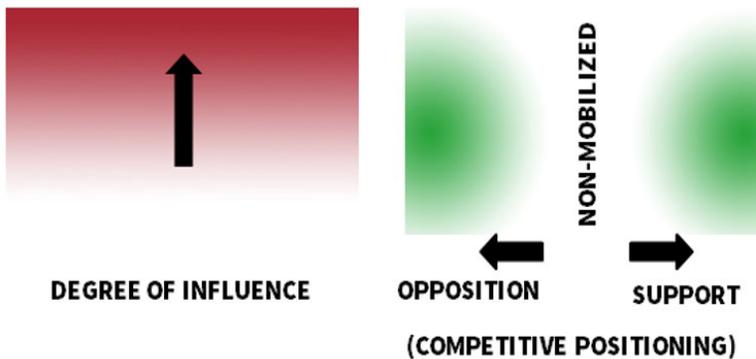


Fig. 2 – Map format and variables (Source: Ragozino, 2016)

The actors are located in the graph according to an estimation of their influence on the transformation, and on how they relate to the transformation plan (oppose, neutral, favor). Incidentally, the plans implemented by *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.* (2005) and by *Invitalia* (2016) differ in content, but are substantially similar for

the modality of implementation. Opposition and support should thus be understood not only as directed towards the content of the plan, but also towards the way it is to be implemented. These maps, shown in the following paragraphs, will be compared to each other in order to develop some reflections with regard to research questions.

3. Planning and politics in contemporary Bagnoli

The former industrial area of Bagnoli has been subject of an intense scientific and political debate since many years mainly for its evolution as an industrial district located in a place of the city of Naples of valued natural environment – the *Campi Flegrei* volcanic area (Andriello, 2003; Andriello, Belli, & Lepore, 1991; Di Dato, 2016; Lepore, 2017). In ancient times, the area was used for thermal baths and agriculture while it was a beach resort in early eighteenth century. With the application of the plan for the industrialization of the city, in the first part of twentieth century, it became place for heavy industry of the Italian Government. During the '60s, the industry had its highest numbers of employees (8800). In the '80s foreign demand for Italian steel decreased. The factory was shut down in 1992, leaving behind a huge polluted area on the sea and over 2100 unemployed workers (Figure 3).

The former industrial area of Bagnoli makes up 15% of the homonymous district, which hosts 24.000 inhabitants. It is the place where a series of legal obligations converge, which makes Bagnoli a difficult area to plan (and to study) (Figure 4).



Fig. 3 – Current view of former industrial area of Bagnoli (Source: Ragozino, 2016)



Fig. 4 – Regulation layers (Source: Ragozino, elaboration from Google map image, 2016)

The transformation of the former industrial area in Bagnoli started with its closing in 1992 and, as of spring 2016, is still ongoing. During the '90s, the transformation was managed with a traditional, top-down approach, with limited and largely ceremonial attempts to listen to the local population. This phase was also characterized by a certain degree of cooperation between municipal, regional, and national Government levels. Since the mid-2000, however, the transformation has come to an impasse. Evident discrepancies between local, regional, and national levels of Government emerged in that period, and last until today. In 2015, the national Government averted the city's planning competences and appointed a commissioner. For its national economic significance, the national Government included the transformation of Bagnoli in a set of high-priority interventions benefiting from Government funding. The importance of Bagnoli for the city administration, and in the city's political debate, is equally hard to overstate. Making matters even more complex, the city administration has joined several urban social movements in different battles and demonstrations against the Government's takeover of the transformation plan – as presented in the following paragraphs.

3.1. The industrial Bagnoli

The heavy industry in Bagnoli was part of Italy's earliest and most substantial attempts to address its "southern question", i.e. the persistent economic gap that separated the south from the center-north of the country. The first significant steelworks

appeared in 1904. After gaining momentum during Italy's war efforts, the industry started declining by the late '60s. Already in 1972, the city's urban plan decreed that the future of the industrial area – by then still very much alive – was to eventually host light manufacturing facilities and non-polluting industries. When the last active industry closed down in 1991, the land, the coastline, and the seabed were found to be polluted with heavy metals. The central Government created and funded an ad-hoc company, called Bagnoli S.p.A, to carry out and oversee the requalification of the area including a relevant operation of land reclamation.

The remediation process, started in 1996, proceeded slowly. A major amendment to the city plan, dealing specifically with Bagnoli, was passed in 1998. It prescribed that the former industrial area be replaced by a 120ha wide urban park. It also prescribed that, after the remediation of the soil, the area would host “integrated urban settlements”, a type of mixed-use built environment combining dwelling, economic activities, welcome centers and commercial (Figure 5).

By 2000, while the dismantling and the sale of the industrial facilities were (nearly) completed, the remediation of the land had not been started yet. Two years later, only 30% of the remediation had been completed.

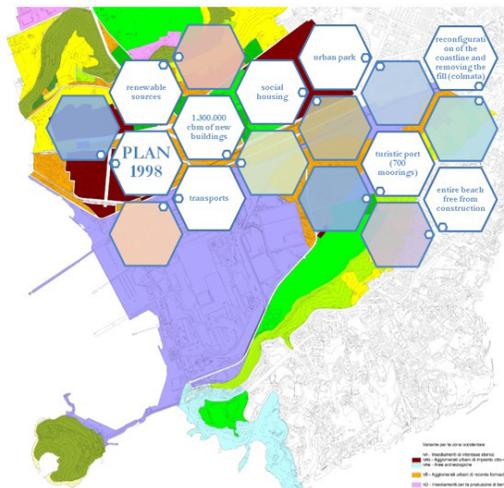


Figure 5 – Amendment to the General Plan passed in 1998 (Source: Ragozino, elaboration from City Council of Naples, 2016)

3.2. Bagnoli Futura S.p.A. (2002-2014)

In 2002, the municipality of Naples replaced Bagnoli S.p.A. (the society created in the 1996 to implement the Bagnoli Plan) with a new public utility company, called *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.* The latter was a so-called “Urban Transformation Company” (*Ita. Società di Trasformazione Urbana*), entirely financed with public funds, whose goal was to buy and remediate the former industrial area (about 340ha), to plan and carry out the detailed interventions on the territory, sell the areas destined to private actors and manage the public works.

The Executive Urban Plan, detailing the implementation of the General Plan, was passed in 2005. Its main goals were the remediation of the area, the conservation of some of the industrial buildings as industrial architecture, and the construction of some hosting facilities (conference center and a wellness center), a body of water replacing a previously planned touristic harbor, housing (both public and private), parking lots, and rail transportation (Figure 6).



Fig. 6 – Executive Urban Plan of 2005 (Source: Ragozino, elaboration from City Council of Naples, 2016)

The transformation started in 2007 with the opening of three construction sites: the Park Gate, the Sports Park, and the Turtle Point. By 2010, however, only 65% of the remediation

had been completed. The delay was due to several changes in the original remediation plan, each of which had to be analyzed and approved by the relevant authorities. Furthermore, the 2005 Executive Urban Plan modified the zoning of some areas, which then needed new methods of remediation. In the same year, the open bid for the sale of the land was deserted. According to the management of *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.*, private investors were discouraged by the mix foreseen by the plan (30% of the land for residential purposes and 70% for tertiary and commerce), which would no longer be adequate to the current situation of the market (Di Dato, 2016).

Political misalignment between the city and the regional authority led to a new deadlock. After two mandates in which the Campania regional authority was held by the center-left, the 2010 elections brought in a candidate from the center-right. Few months into his mandate, the new president cancelled more than 100 acts signed by the previous administration, on grounds that these were not economically sustainable. Several of such acts concerned Bagnoli. This blocked the flow of funds to Bagnoli Futura. At the city elections of May 2011 an independent leftist is elected as Mayor of Naples, thus interrupting a nearly 20-years-long rule by the center-left. Few months later, in 2011, the Court of Naples ordered the seizure of some areas, claiming that these had not been properly remediated. In January and February 2013, large parts of the Science Centre of Bagnoli were burned, while other parts of the area are vandalized. In April 2013, a new and larger investigation, initiated by the district attorney, leads to the seizure of the whole area. Twenty-one members of the Board of Directors of *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.* are placed under investigation for “natural disaster”. *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.* was mired in financial problems, too. One of its largest creditors, a public company called Fintecna, requests that *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.* finally pays the price it owed (59mln€) since it acquired Fintecna’s land. In December 2013, the Mayor responded by decreeing that Fintecna carry out the remediation of the area at its own cost. Unable to repay its debts to Fintecna, *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.* is declared bankrupt in May 2014.

The graph “Phase A” (Figure 7) synthesizes the relevance of the most important actors involved in this phase of the process (before the compulsory administration, with Bagnoli Futura).

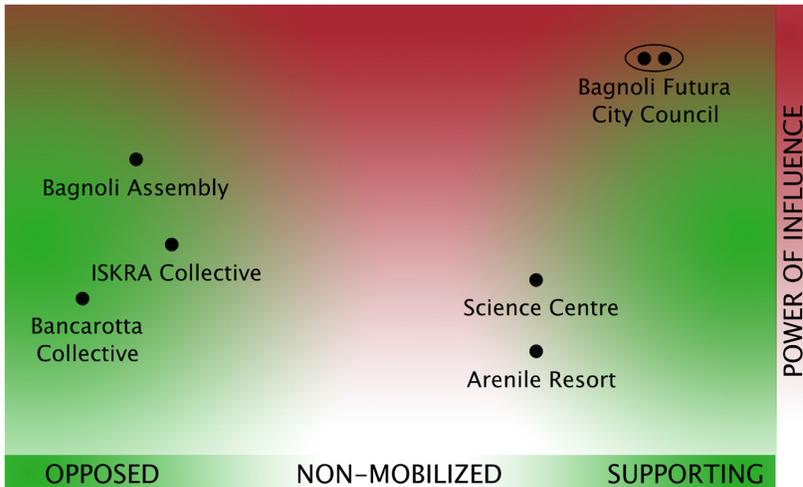


Fig. 7 - Actors map, phase A (Source: Ragozino, 2016)

On the top-right quadrant (high influence, support) we have the *City Council* and the society *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.*. The latter was publicly funded, and its board of directors was nominated by the city administration. Since its goal was to steer the transformation, and given its financial size, it is hardly surprising that it is both highly relevant to the transformation and supportive of the plan. We have placed the *Science Centre* in a more neutral portion of the graph, it is more limited in scope, in the sense that its interest in the transformation plan are mostly concentrated to its own future in it. A particularly pressing issue for the *Science Centre* is its location. Its building on the shoreline, of which the main part was burned down in early 2013, stood against the prescription of the zoning plan, but was allowed to stay until the center's investment would have been absorbed. Even so, after the arson, the director of the center declared that the Centre would be re-built "where it once stood". In the same place we have one of the largest private actors of the area, the *Arenile* beach resort. Like the *Science Centre*, the *Arenile* was granted a concession and allowed to remain on the seafront until it would amortize its investments. Similarly, its concern for the transformation of the area is limited to its own commercial activity. It has a favorable view of the tourism and market-led transformation project, but is not as supportive of the plans to create a public beach on the

shoreline.

In the lower, left-hand quadrant (low influence, opposition) are the *Laboratorio ISKRA* and the *Collettivo Bancarotta*, which are two of the most prominent groups of activists, and *Assise di Bagnoli*, a local coordination assembly for activists and interested citizens. While their opposition to the transformation process has been consistently high (the *Collettivo Bancarotta* was indeed created out of concerns for the emptying-out of the post-industrial district), their degree of influence has been for most of this phase limited. Their activities focused on awareness-raising campaigns, protests, and general denunciation of the risk of the area being “again” exploited by powerful firms. In one occasion, however, they managed to transform their grievances into policy. They collected enough signatures in favor of keeping the coastline “free” for a public beach. This call was sanctioned by deliberation issued by the *City Council* in September 2012. While an important success, this deliberation remained largely symbolic, since in order for the beach to become actually accessible, the seabed and the coastline would have to be remediated. Another factor limiting the influence of the social movements is that their primary target was the city administration, while Bagnoli is decided upon by a plurality of Government layers. The city administration, as we have seen, does not act alone for the transformation, but depends financially on higher institutional authorities (the Region of Campania and the central Government) and on private actors, is subject to investigations and seizure of land, and has other limitations of administrative nature. All these factors mitigate the force of their opposition to the transformation, when going through the city administration.

3.3. Bankruptcy of Bagnoli Futura, compulsory administration, and rise of activism (2014-2016)

The relations between the Mayor of Naples and the central Government quickly deteriorated. Although they had agreed on a roadmap just in August 2014, by September of the same year the national Government passed the *Sblocca Italia* decree (133/2014) that, among other things, put the transformation plan for Bagnoli under compulsory administration: all competences for the planning, physical interventions, and supervision of the transformation are concentrated in the hands of a Government-

appointed commissioner. This made the municipality of Naples no longer relevant to the transformation. An amendment to this decree, approved in November of the same year, gave the city administration the right to have its own proposals considered. However, the Mayor declared that the city had been illegitimately stripped of its planning competences, and that this amendment did not substantially change that. He would not participate.

Isolated by the central Government and by the most powerful economic actors involved, the Mayor was, however, close to the groups of self-organizations in the area. Although both the self-organizations and the Mayor could be defined as “far left”, this ideological proximity has not always translated into cooperation. The case of the self-organizations’ battle to have a free, public beach in Bagnoli illustrates this point well: earlier on in his tenure, the movements had clashed against the Mayor, claiming he had not been supportive of their battle for guaranteeing full accessibility to the beachfront of Bagnoli. Only in a second phase did the City Council absorb the self-organizations’ input by legislating that, upon completion of the remediation, the shoreline would become a freely accessible beach.

In the same year, the municipality was asked to prepare a new amendment to update the existing planning regulation. The commissioner is nominated only in September 2015, one year after the decree was passed.

By the end of 2015, the remediation of the water and soil surfaces has not yet been completed. In the former industrial area, most of the buildings have been demolished, while surface and subsoil have been remediated by 50% only. In the southern portion of the area, which hosted the “Eternit” industry, only 30% of the remediation has been completed.

The graph (Figure 8) synthesizes the configuration of actors in the 2016, i.e. after the transformation has been put under direct supervision of the national Government. The most striking novelty is the appearance of a new, powerful entity: *Invitalia*, the national Government’s investment agency who manages almost all credit facilities of the central Government supplied to enterprises and innovative start-ups and since 2014 has the role to reclaim and re-launch industrial areas in crisis. The transfer of planning competences and thus the removal of the discussion over the transformation of Bagnoli from the (heated) city-wide debate is in line with arguments on post-crisis neoliberal policies which,

at the same time, reduce the space for political confrontation and make room for investments and land speculation. When the central Government put the transformation of Bagnoli's under its direct control, it nominated *Invitalia* as the “executive agency” for the area. Its powers exceed those of the previous, city-level agency, *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.*: *Invitalia* can not only plan the physical transformation of the area and sell its land, but it can also build on it directly. Importantly, its statute clearly states that it is “open” to private capitals. We placed *Invitalia*, the Government-appointed commissioner and the control room in the top-right quadrant, since its power and its role of promoter of its own plans would not allow any other choice. The second evidence is the new position of the *City Council*, it has moved on the other side on top of the self-organizations evidencing the opposition to the Governmental block.

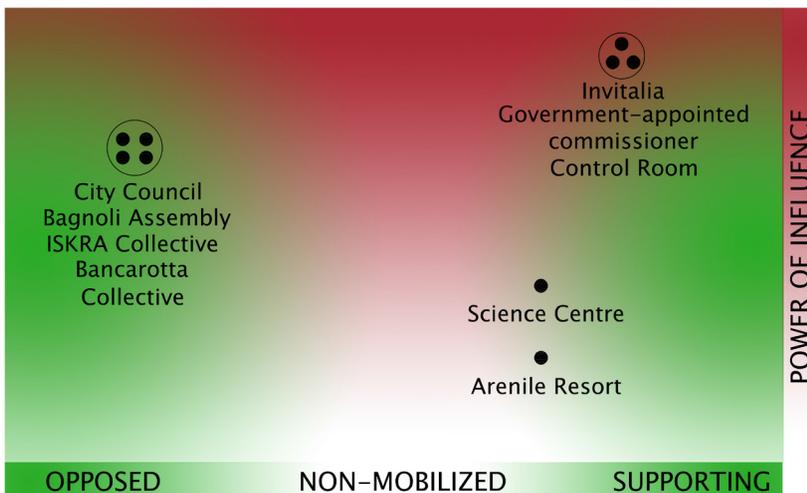


Fig. 8 – Actors map, Phase B (Source: Ragozino, 2016)

4. Output and findings

As mentioned above, the researchers compared the first and second map by composing a third graph to highlight the differences (Figure 9). These are: the rise of *Invitalia* as the main actor in the transformation, the opposition of the *City Government*, and its convergence with the local self-organizations.

As was mentioned above, the appointment of the commissioner sidelined the *City Council* of Naples. On this point, however, it is important to make a distinction. While the Municipality of Naples has been factually sidelined, this had an almost opposite effect on the symbolic level. In other words, it has increased its appeal as one of the few who stood in opposition to the central Government, in a phase (Autumn 2015) in which the Prime Minister was far by the dominant figure in the national political landscape. This image was politically significant not only for the Neapolitan audience, but for the national one as well. Locally, perhaps the most immediate consequence of the municipality's diminished role was its increasing display of cooperation with self-organized social movements in Bagnoli. The opposition of the municipality and the social movements against the commissioner and, by proxy, against the Prime Minister, took new forms, and rose in visibility. This is perhaps best exemplified in a protest march held in April 2016, in which social movements demonstrated alongside two prominent members of the city Government against the Prime Minister, who visited Naples to illustrate the Government's transformation plan (Figure 10).

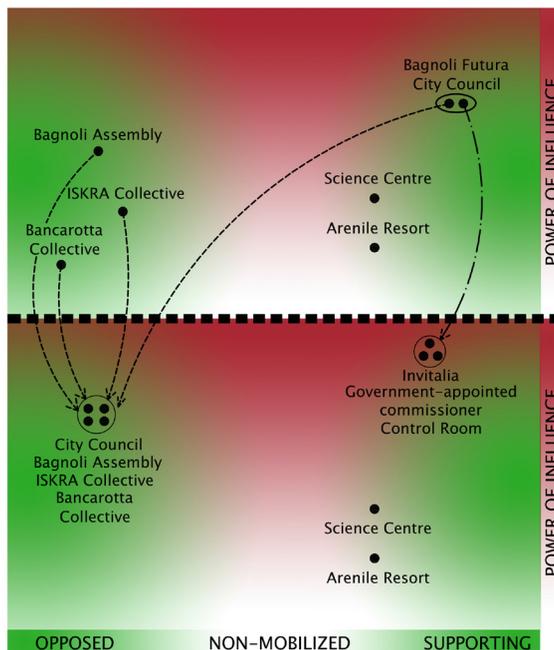


Fig. 9 – Actors network, cross-phase comparison (Source: Ragozino, 2016)



Fig. 10 – Activists in the former industrial area (Source: Bagnoli Libera, 2016)

5. Discussion

The case of Bagnoli is a complex one, and one that has economic, political, and social significance. Limiting the analysis to the question whether cities during the crisis may create with innovative, and potentially more democratic ways, of managing urban space, we offer the following considerations. Firstly, the elements of novelty and innovation are deeply contextual, and typically result in how territories react to the externalities of the crisis, most importantly the economic crisis and austerity policies imposed upon them. In Naples, as in other European cities, the wave of opposition against such phenomena is something that regards not only activism and protest movements, but also the city administration. Whereas it is too soon to say whether this development of urban politics constitutes a trend, the fact that several cities in Europe have embarked on similar ventures at least shows that it is not exceptional. Secondly, the element of innovation is clearly present, in that new actors have forcefully entered the otherwise closed circle of policy-relevant actors, albeit in a mostly oppositional manner. For the case at hand, however, there have also been instances in which some of the grievances articulated by activists (such as the creation of a public beach, and the removal of a stretch of land created during the industrial era) have been included in the final plans for the area, despite the wide autonomy of the Government commissioner. It has not been possible to conclude whether

the commissioner has absorbed these claims in an attempt to mitigate the conflict in Bagnoli, or whether such provisions would have been part of the new plan anyway. This leads to the wider question of how effective these new configurations of power are. The mismatch of scales of action (local for the activists and the city administration, and national for the commissioner) is certainly an element that speaks against this hypothesis. As was mentioned above, however, due to the extraordinary nature of the latest governance settings, it is difficult to know exactly from where the inputs of its plan derive. The third question, which we leave open, is whether these new configurations are positive, or rather detrimental, for cities in crisis. This is an intrinsically political question. On a minimum level, however, we argue that the self-organized scene in Bagnoli has at least succeeded in mobilizing citizens and in bringing several themes into the political discourse. As a consequence, it has become politically costly to decide upon them without any dialogue with the population. Regardless of the spatial outcomes, this seems to us as a positive result of the (often confrontational) interaction between the many actors involved in the city.

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Deviations and Thresholds: teaching as a field of experimentation for other practices of urbanism

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Abstract

Nonostante le numerose critiche verso il funzionalismo e razionalismo esacerbanti l'urbanistica moderna, le basi metodologiche su cui si è consolidato il campo disciplinare degli studi urbani non sono ancora state completamente affrontate e messe in discussione. Il contesto brasiliano mostra come, nella maggior parte dei corsi di laurea di architettura e urbanistica, queste basi - ereditate dal XIX secolo - sono tutt'oggi operanti e non si sono sufficientemente problematizzate. La spinta più purista, positivista, funzionalista e teleologica che segue una certa idea di progresso tecnico è ineludibile, inasprisce il concetto di pianificazione ed è diventata egemone nel campo della pianificazione urbana. Accanto a questo orientamento, un'altra linea di pensiero, anch'essa moderna, critica gli eccessi del funzionalismo e le semplificazioni concettuali interne all'urbanistica, una disciplina scientifica che ha cercato soprattutto di controllare, ordinare e limitare la complessità dell'esperienza urbana. La nostra proposta è quella di recuperare questo dibattito critico per ripensarne la pratica e, soprattutto, l'insegnamento dell'urbanistica come un campo ampio di sperimentazione, fondato su una serie di indagini dagli approcci metodologici meno positivisti, semplificativi o omogenizzanti e che cercano di capire la varietà, eterogeneità e complessità delle città contemporanee. Si tratta di una proposta che mette al centro l'insegnamento (e la pratica professionale) dell'urbanistica, il suo rapporto con chi vive la città, le loro esperienze, gli incontri con altre razionalità e norme in relazione a modelli egemonici, a dinamiche di auto-produzione e auto-gestione e, soprattutto, le novità e le criticità che apportano.

Despite the countless criticisms of the exaggerated functionalism and rationalism of modern urbanism, the modern methodological foundations on which the disciplinary field of urbanism has been consolidated have not yet been fully questioned. In fact, in most undergraduate courses in architecture and urbanism in Brazil, these bases, inherited from the 19th century, remain operative and still do not seem to have been sufficiently problematized. That modern orientation, more purist, that follows a certain idea of technical, ineluctable progress, which exacerbated the notions of order and control, became hegemonic in the field of urbanism. However, another modern line also criticizes the excesses of functionalism, and its simplifications, in urbanism itself as a scientific discipline that sought to control order and thus limit the complexity of the urban experience. Our proposal is to return to these pertinent criticisms in order to think of urbanism and, above all, its teaching as an expanded field of experimentation, which is based on a series of other less positivistic, simplifying or homogenizing methodological experiences. This paper argues that it is by tackling urbanism in this way that greater insights into the multiplicity, heterogeneity and complexity of contemporary cities can be gained. It is a proposition that puts at the center of the teaching (and professional practice) of urbanism the relationship with the practitioners of

the city, their experiences, the other rationalities and norms in relation to the hegemonic models, the dynamics of self-production and self-management, and, first and foremost, the disputes they prompts.

Parole chiave: Urbanistica, Insegnamento, Sperimentazione

Keywords: Urbanism, Teaching, Experimentation

Other moderns

Despite the countless criticisms of the exaggerated functionalism and rationalism of modern urbanism - and its main “manual”, the so-called “Athens Charter” or the construction of the modern city *par excellence*, Brasília - criticisms that became more current from the 1960s, with the end of the CIAMs (International Congresses of Modern Architecture)¹, the main methodological bases on which the disciplinary field of urbanism was consolidated have not yet been fully questioned. Indeed, in most undergraduate courses in architecture and urbanism in Brazil, they remain operative, even in proposals that seek to deal with issues considered critical to modernist functionalist urbanism. These include how best to tackle history and memory, the vernacular and the popular, or even the extent to which the population should be involved. Moreover, the methodological questions of our disciplinary field, inherited from the 19th century², still do not seem to have been sufficiently problematized. This is as true for today’s so-called corporate urbanism, which is hegemonic all over the world, and geared to the interests of the market (new urbanism, strategic planning, for some), as it is for the necessary critical and militant counterpoint to it, namely seeking to meet the interests of the inhabitants, which could be called collaborative urbanism (participatory urbanism, self-management, community, etc.).

1 On the history of the CIAMs and their criticism, particularly the situationist, see, among others, the presentation of the *“Apologia da Deriva”*, organized by one of the authors (Jacques, 2003), or Barone (2002), on the critical perspectives of Team X.

2 Since the emergence of urbanism as a theoretical and practical discipline in the 19th century, this disciplinary field is related both to different processes of hygiene, order and control, which are sometimes very authoritarian, of intervention in the existing ancient cities, and, starting in the 20th century, various zoning and separation plans of the new modern cities. In this first century of its existence, the discipline has been dedicated, predominantly, to seeking the antithesis of urban “disorder”, namely “the order” as Françoise Choay showed in the 1965 classic, *“L’Urbanisme, utopies et réalités”*.

The following question still hangs in the air: if the disciplinary field that has already sprung up is thoroughly modern, could there be a “non-modern” urbanism, especially after the end of the modern movement in architecture and urbanism (that of the CIAMs)? Moreover, this question emerges in the most radical criticisms of modern functionalist urbanism, for example those made precisely by those who decreed its end, as Team X (which even held a very amusing symbolic burial of the CIAM), or even by the situationists, who used the idea of detour and *dérive* as critical tools³. In the disciplinary field of urbanism (but also in that of architecture, which is still clearly modern in its more functionalist and formalist sense), especially in its practical exercise, but also in how it is taught in universities, modern methodologies linked to an idea of technical progress have been naturalized. In addition, some terms have been inherited, e.g., from the old hygienist discourses with their medical metaphors, such as the famous “diagnosis”. These continue to be used even by those most critical of the renewed hygienist processes of social cleansing that are linked to processes for spectacularizing and gentrifying contemporary cities.

We suggest starting by deviating from this question of there being a “non-modern urbanism” to another: the one that refers to what modern heritage or modern tradition the field of urbanism is said to be still demanding. Without a doubt, the disciplinary field of urbanism largely kept in step with the more purist, positivist, functionalist, teleological, modern trend that follows a certain idea of a technical and ineluctable progress. This exacerbated the notions of order and control, which are central at the moment that urbanism emerges as a scientific discipline of practical intervention. However, another modern aspect, especially in the inter-war years, already criticized this notion of progress, which was thought as an uncritical technical development. For example, this was done brilliantly by Walter Benjamin, one of the leading thinkers of this other modern, critical tradition, in his theses on history⁴. The criticisms of the excesses of functionalism, of its simplifications, and of urbanism itself as a discipline that sought above all to control, order, and which thus also limit the complexity of the urban experience were already present at the very peak

³ See, in this regard, the aforementioned collection of texts of the situationists organized by one of the authors, Jacques (2003).

⁴ See: Benjamin (1985).

of modernity (and even internally within the academic discipline itself, which was then under construction). These criticisms amounted therefore to a critical modern detour from the idea of progress.

Our proposal is precisely to return to these pertinent criticisms, in particular at the very moment when they were violently interrupted (mainly by fascism and Nazism in Europe), in order to rethink our disciplinary field. For this, we need to think of urbanism as an expanded or widened field (as Rosalind Krauss proposed for sculpture⁵). This thinking is based on other less positivistic, simplifying or homogenizing methodological experiences that can encompass the multiplicity, heterogeneity, and complexity of contemporary cities. Most of the methodologies still used today, in particular those of urban apprehension, are no longer able (or perhaps never have done, or even attempted) to do so.

Patrick Geddes - a biologist, a botanist, a Scot, who was close to Darwin and Kropotkin and known as one of the inventors of sociology ("*civics*"), was also a geographer and an anarchist - was a generalist, and is regarded as one of the founding "fathers" of urbanism⁶ as a "science of the cities". He played an active role in consolidating this discipline at the start of the 20th century. It is important to retrieve his proposition of an interesting distinction between heredity and heritage: heredity concerns finding when our ancestors determine us, and heritage is what we use when we choose our ancestors⁷.

5 See: Krauss (1984).

6 The term already used at that time was urbanization, in Romance languages it was mainly urbanisme, e.g. urbanismo in Portuguese, and in the Anglo-Saxon world the term most used was urban planning. In several countries, including Brazil, urban planning began to form a field of knowledge of its own which was independent and interdisciplinary. It works with the regional scale (while urbanism in certain cases, as in Brazil, in line with the "doctrine" of the CIAMs, in practice, became a question of scale and a monopoly of architects).

7 It is interesting to note how Patrick Geddes was important at the start of the 20th century which was when this academic discipline was constituted and consolidated. He was a strong supporter of attentive observation of the existing cities. This was called a "survey", which some authors erroneously translated as "diagnosis". Geddes' ideas resurface in the 1950s - including the republishing and translation of his books - at the initial moment of criticism of the excesses of modern functionalism. This was especially made by a group of modern-day architects of the new generation, Team X, particularly by the English married couple, the Smithsons. Already in the 1960s, this was taken up by the so-called participationist architects, such as John Turne, another Briton. In Brazil, his ideas resonate with Carlos Nelson Ferreira dos Santos,

At least since the introduction of the “urban survey” - based on observing what cities underwent the first most violent processes of modernization - created by Geddes in the early 20th century, urbanism has operated by using montages to carry out its urban analyses. Geddes used to travel to get to know cities. For example, he undertook urban surveys that also tackled ethnographic research, particularly in his long journey through India. Starting with him, surveys (or analysis of the urban pre-existences) began to be conducted before the urban plans and projects. This is why he proclaimed: «Survey before the plan!». In addition to city shows (exhibitions), Geddes created the “Outlook Tower” (a kind of “observatory” of the city) in Edinburgh; he mounted several exhibitions; and also published books, such as the famous *Cities in evolution*, published in 1915. Geddes proposed a «synoptic concept of study» of cities by «seeking to recognize and use all points of view - scientific, artistic, historical - and from these to interpret the course of future development of the city and its possibilities».

Especially in his proposal for a traveling exhibition on cities, which included a series of boards to which new images were added, for each new city visited, to the montages (which were lost in the Emden shipwreck during World War I), the type of montage that Geddes used to apprehend and understand cities was always a heterogeneous and heterodox mixture not only of different disciplinary fields but also of different temporalities and narrative forms. Modern urbanism, starting with the CIAMs (in particular CIAM IV, 1933), made the montages, as a form of apprehending cities, more and more uniform (the famous modern “grille” proposed by Le Corbusier to be “applied” in all cities). Thus they became, especially in the more specialized and functionalist practice of urbanism, a type of montage by similarities, which seeks any unity or totality whatsoever, or even a way of legitimizing dominant narratives already given. In effect, he created a standardized, homogenizing type of montage and transformed it into a model to be followed for any city, of any culture. In other

who was known for his urbanization, with popular participation, of the Brás de Pina favela - which resisted expulsion in the midst of the military dictatorship. Interest in Geddes’ ideas seems to re-emerge also today, judging by the recent publication of an issue of the French magazine *Espace et Sociétés* (167, n 4/2016), entirely dedicated to Patrick Geddes, under the title of *Patrick Geddes en heritage* (Biase et al, 2016), from which Geddes’ notions of inheritance and heredity have spread out, as pointed out in this paper.

words, he prioritizes montage simply as a “formal procedure” to the detriment of montage as a “method of knowledge.” Montage by differences differs from the Corbusian montage because it is a method of knowledge, a method of creation, of problematizing questions that emerge during the process itself, i.e., it is not only an exhibition or illustration of ideas already given. It was practiced in the interwar period by some modern avant-garde intellectuals (especially by the surrealists) and in particular by a constellation of artists, writers or theoreticians in the 1920s and 1930s⁸. These included Sergei Eisenstein, Bertold Brecht, Walter Benjamin, Georges Bataille and Aby Warburg - and more recently, Georges Didi-Huberman, an art historian and professor of visual anthropology at the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* (EHESS) in Paris. Didi-Huberman updates the question of modern editing, in particular in its form of an atlas of images (which started with Warburg), in several of his lectures, lectures and publications, but also in his practice as a curator of exhibitions⁹. The resumption of montage as a form of knowledge vis-à-vis the complexity of contemporary cities is something that we have been exploring theoretically and methodologically in recent years, among other forms of knowledge and critical propositions about the city, in particular in the teaching of urbanism, as we shall see later.

Thresholds: the complexity of contemporary cities

In approaching the teaching of urbanism, it seems to us crucial to have, as a reflexive horizon, some questions that, to a certain extent, prompted its emergence as a science and which today seem to us so distant (considered as a ‘thing of social scientists’): what is “the city”? What is it made of, by whom and for whom, and, especially, how is it done or how does one stop doing it? In fact, perhaps one of the most perennial dimensions inherited (in

8 «Montage was to be a method of knowledge and a formal procedure born of war, capable of apprehending the ‘disorder of the world’. It would mark our perception of time since the first conflicts of the 20th century: it was to have become the modern method par excellence» (Didi-Huberman, 2007, our translation).

9 Didi Huberman was the curator of a large exhibition entitled “ATLAS How to carry the world on your back?” at the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid in 2010, which circulated in Germany and then was split into a series of smaller exhibitions with photographer Arno Gisinger which then circulated in France and also in Brazil.

the sense of heredity imposed and not as a choice) of the modern tradition that has become hegemonic has been the totalizing perspective of “city” that still informs a good part of the teaching and practice of urbanism. The contemporary re-editing of the city’s approaches as a ‘problem’, as ‘crisis’, as ‘chaos’ refers to such an essentialist approach, in which the concept presents itself as universal, naturalized, and everything that escapes being encompassed by it is configured in its reversal or its denial¹⁰.

Complementarily, there is also the perennially of what Lepetit (2001) called a “functionalist paradigm” that spread throughout the world and which is still said to be present in current studies and interventions on “the city”. This establishes a unilateral relationship, a direct correspondence between the social space and the material organization of the city: «strong determinism [which] asserts the coincidence between the organization of an urban territory and the characteristics of the society that inhabits it». Such a “legacy” necessarily refers us to the question of the disciplining of the “lower classes” for which the intervention and organization of urban space is used. This has guided practices and reflections in the field of urbanism for at least two centuries: «The whole range of reformist practices affirms the coincidence between the territory and the community that occupies it: to organize one thing is to order the other; to think of one is to think of the other » (Lepetit, 2001:75-78)¹¹.

In dealing with large cities, especially those in Latin America and Brazil, the transformations experienced in the last four or five decades have been investigated, described and analyzed by the most diverse fields of urban studies. However, among architects and *urbanists*, these general explanations of “the city and its crisis” seem to prevail, their projections almost always being anchored on “inaccessible totalities from an empirical point of view - the ‘big city’, the ‘global urban’, the ‘metropolis’, ‘de-territorialized urbanization’ (Cordeiro and Frugoli, 2011:19)¹² and,

10 A reflection in this sense was developed by one of the authors in Rosa (2014).

11 Since at least the 19th century, redefining notions of the constituent elements of urban order and social discipline have been constructed by interventions that articulate *urban order* and *social order*, due to the perception that the former would result in the latter.

12 On avoiding such “inaccessible totalities,” the epistemological endeavor is derived, however, from not slipping into a fragmentary perspective, of the city as a “mosaic,” or reduced to “localisms,” as Smith (2002) warns. There is still a whole fundamental reflection on how such a totalizing notion of “city”

above all, dichotomous approaches founded on categories such as 'informality', 'illegality' or 'anomie'. These continue to face the various socio-spatial dynamics and non-hegemonic territorialities exclusively by using the key ideas of 'absence', of 'lack' and legitimizing interventions and violence of all kinds. In contrast, the city that emerges from empirical research, ethnographic approaches and didactic experiments based on what we reflect on here, presents itself as a potent field of transits, mediations and disputes in which different temporalities, spatiality and social universes are articulated - not without conflicts¹³.

Such methodological - and, above all, epistemological - experiences seek to understand the complexity and power of contemporary cities, with special attention being given to the project of inequalities in Brazilian urban space. This is in addition to re-examining dichotomies and self-explanatory categories (such as segregation or exclusion) and from the perspective of there being socio-spatial dynamics in constant movement, thereby producing and disputing the city at its margins and, therefore, continually shifting them. The intention is not to affirm by saying this that there are no socio-spatial boundaries by which to delineate the territories, the processes and the urban experiences in question. Rather, we propose that reflection be engaged on in terms of the notion of "threshold." (Agier, 2009; Telles, 2013)¹⁴. Thresholds suggest relationships, passages, transitions - notions which pertain to the orders of space, but also of time. It is from this perspective that Walter Benjamin proposes a strict differentiation between frontier and threshold: more than to contain and maintain, to delimit and separate (as the frontier

was constructed from a Eurocentric referential, which does not correspond to the multiple reality of the urban facts in today's world, and thus a cultural decentralizing of urban studies is necessary, as Agier (2017) indicates.

13 Although the trajectories of practical-professional, research and didactic work of the authors are distinct, there is a clear approximation in these terms of the empirical and experimental dimension and of the interdisciplinary and liminal studies (especially with respect to history and anthropology), which converges to a joint activity in the research group Laboratório Urbano. As to how some examples of this unfolded, see, for example, Jacques (2001), Rosa (2014), or the various studies produced within the scope of the Laboratório Urbano (www.laboratoriourbano.ufba.br).

14 The reflection on the notion of "margins" and "thresholds" has been developed by one of the authors (see Rosa et al, 2017; Rosa, 2018) in a research project entitled *Liminal urbanities: housing and socio-spatial dynamics on the margins of the city*.

does), a threshold is said to be defined as a transition zone, which is not strictly defined, and which refers to flows and counter flows, indeterminate places and times and indefinite extent, «a betwixt and between, a gray zone that smelts categories and mixes oppositions» (Rizek, 2012). They lie between the possibility of an open future - “transition zones” - and the managerial down-trodding of life - “detention zones”.

Arantes (2000), reflecting on contemporary Brazilian cities, proposes the notion of “threshold zones”: social places conformed by a diversity of categories and social subjects, territorialities and sociability that overlap and intertwine in a complex way, not only in space, but also in time. These zones are said to result from time-space references, «produced in the conflicts and sociability called marginal». Alternatively, in the words of Ribeiro (2010) the creation of “unstable territorialities” in (or above) excluding urban policies and their materiality in the city, which are associated with the emergence of relations and tensions between different rationalities, norms and territorialities in contemporary cities.

From this perspective, an epistemological inversion is proposed in the sense of deconstructing (or at least adding tension to) the totalizing and functionalist paradigm that still guides, to a great extent, the practice and teaching of urbanism and, above all, urban projects in Brazil: to regard the city as a “category of social practice” (Roncayolo, 1978; Lepetit, 2001) by taking into account the existence of different “regimes of urbanity”, which would require, in critical and propositional terms, attention being given to the “multiple ways of” making a city (Paquot, 2006; Agier, 2009). Going beyond paying attention to everyday life (as proposed by authors as distinct as Henri Lefebvre or Michel de Certeau, and which is also presented here as a kind of methodological and epistemological premise), this is mainly about an operation, which at one and the same time is analytical and political. The aim is to invoke, recognize - and to learn to dialogue with - the presence and action of “the many others” in the city, to use a well-known expression coined by Ana Clara Torres Ribeiro. This is about a proposition that puts at the center of the teaching (and professional practice) of urbanism the relationship with the practitioners of the city, their experiences, the other rationalities and normativities in relation to the hegemonic models, the dynamics of self-production and self-management, and, above all, the disputes they bring about.

Having said that, would it be possible to think in terms of “liminal urbanities”, without dealing with the qualitatively other, only as a target of intervention? How can we overcome the difficulties historically placed in the field of urbanism in order to apprehend, understand and narrate these thresholds (spaces-times-bodies) in the constitution of the urban? To what extent can such questions be addressed in the teaching of urbanism, thus outlining - perhaps - the possibility of shaping an urbanism that is also liminal?

It is in this sense that a kind of methodological and epistemological decentering (or denaturalization) becomes necessary, thus seeking other ways of understanding and working. This need arises from this complexity inherent in contemporary cities and their “thresholds”, thereby grasping them as a fertile base (which, in our view, is inescapable) for the teaching and practice of urbanism in Brazil¹⁵.

Deviant methods: process and experimentation

We know that the tools, instruments and methods linked to the project, especially in urbanism, are no longer (or have never been?) sufficient to understand the complexity of contemporary cities and, in particular, of our Brazilian cities, which are still so segregated and unequal. We have long needed, especially in national cases such as those of ordinary people occupying land, of favelas and of other self-constructed spaces (but also in the vast territories of “social interest” which the state has semi-produced), to invent, to create and to explore new methodologies, new tools, and to exchange with other disciplinary fields. We need to do this in order to be able to think of the project as a more complex, collective process, and not only as the result of one author, of a great demiurge architect of the “star system”. These authors are mostly men, white and from rich countries, who have produced huge monumental and spectacular works, made to be shown in glossy photographs, usually with no inhabitants, in international magazines.

¹⁵ Margareth da Silva Pereira, a lecturer at Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, in an interview with the *Revista de História* (2010, our translate), states that in Brazil, “we accumulated the wisdom of the between 500 years ago.” Taking this approach seriously is one of the methodological and epistemological propositions that we have been undertaking from the idea of “threshold”: what wisdom is this? How can we make the dialogue with “technical”, “academic” and “professional” knowledge? How can we learn and teach other dimensions of urbanism from this “between”, from these “thresholds”?

More interesting than looking for a single “new” methodology to be applied and replicated – thereby setting experiments or other procedures in a plaster cast, or worse, creating models or recipes – would be for us to work in order to broaden the field of knowledge of architecture and urbanism and start thinking about the project in its “widened field”, based also on its disciplinary thresholds. Perhaps the most interesting path of learning to follow (“met-hodos”, a path that one follows) is precisely to multiply the possible pathways, to make them tensor with each other, based on methodological experiences that always deviate, errant, which do not know, *a priori*, where they will arrive. The perspective of thinking about the project as an open process that operates within a widened field, and of thinking about the process in a free and plural way, can indicate to us a denser understanding of the complexity of contemporary cities. This understanding arises from the dissensions and the permanent tensions, which consider and recognize the conflicts and various disputes of forces in the disciplinary field and in the city itself.

We question the model which is deeply rooted in project teaching that this would be the “solution” to be achieved for certain previously “diagnosed” problems (again, this is about an approach inherited from that hegemonic modernity, which is still oriented by a notion of development associated with the idea of progress), usually proposed by teachers, for which it would be enough to mobilize certain skills and technical knowledge and synthesize them in the language of drawing (technical drawing, in particular). Without disregarding the importance of such technical training, we have attested in practice to its insufficiency for dealing with this complexity, with these “liminal zones”, with the various “regimes of urbanity”, and with the socio-spatial realities (and disputes) of Brazilian cities: this is about proposing other perspectives of formation – that are critical and reflexive, thereby invoking the “craft of thinking” as a priority dimension that is complementary to all others, among the many possibilities that are laid out such as “craftwork” in architecture and urbanism. Moreover, arising from the project teaching and, thus, to seek other thresholds, between disciplinary fields and forms of approaching the urban, by regarding the project as the students’ autonomous and dialogic investigation and experimentation.

Autonomy in the didactic construction and, above all, in learning is therefore, in this case, a kind of methodological presupposition,

which crosses the various experiences carried out by the authors in different moments and situations, but which characterize a perspective of collective work of the research group *Laboratório Urbano* (PPG-AU/ FAUFBA), mainly by articulating teaching-research-extramural. The methodologies proposed are possible (but not predetermined) paths for the trajectory of learning: contrary to the understanding of project as the (final, finished) product - a methodological target at which to aim -, the pathways through the experimental methodologies proposed, in particular in the Atelier 5 of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the Federal University of Bahia¹⁶. These vary each year according to the themes or territories to be worked on, and also in step with the internal dialogical construction of the teams of teachers and graduate students at the university teacher stage, and with the very class of students. These pathways are also variable depending on the choices made by each work group, in direct relation to the city and with its most diverse practitioners: that is, they are woven in uncertainty, in incompleteness, and into the process itself.

They are woven, above all, into the learning of collective, dialogical and collaborative (and, why not say, often conflicting) work from which this teaching proposal is structured: the exercise of the debate of ideas, dialogue in dissent, of the collective exposure of troubling issues and discoveries are a fundamental part of this process. These are based on the counterpoint to the notion of individual authorship, on the relational dimension of the practice of project and on the perspective of the social and interdisciplinary activity of the urbanist architect. More than a construction in which teachers delimit scopes and stages of finite exercises in themselves, it is about a process of mutual exchanges and learning (between teachers and students, between students and the city, but especially among teachers, students and the interlocutors/ inhabitants/ and users) that are established throughout the procedural course of investigation in which the project is constituted.

The hustle-bustle of the city, its inhabitants and their practices of self-production and self-management of everyday space and life

16 Atelier 5, at FAUFBA, can be considered the only moment, during the undergraduate course in architecture and urbanism, in which the projective teaching of urbanism is realized. There are different groups of Atelier 5, with different approaches, which, in fact, is officially entitled "urban and regional planning".

(de Certeau, 1980) has been one of the fundamental elements of this experimental and deviant construction. Walks, meanderings, strolls, diverse displacements, ethnographic approaches, urban insistences, interlocations with residents-users-practitioners, participant observation, active listening, interactive games and workshops, and picking up fragments and memories, to mention some of the most diverse field methodologies worked on these experimentations. In dialogue with other disciplinary fields, but also with other groups and teachers of the disciplinary field that have been creating and experimenting with methodologies worldwide¹⁷, there have already been several forms of students' corporal approach to the city, and to the territories to be worked on in reflective-propositional exercises. This is about an approach which, more than being focused solely on the technical formation of "urbanists" (which we also do not steal from ourselves, even though account must be taken of the limitations of class hours to be set aside, on most architecture and urbanism courses in Brazil, in the field of urbanism¹⁸). What is proposed is to instigate the critical - and propositional - apprehension of contemporary cities as an indispensable formation (considering the inseparability between the production of architecture and the production of the city) even for those architects who do not intend to be active professionally only on the urban scale, as urbanists *stricto sensu*¹⁹.

The very delimitation of the territorial cut-offs to be worked on by the groups sets out from this embodied interaction with the city, without the prior definition of a technically established "polygonal" (which creates limits), being technically established (almost always

17 For example, some of the national and international partners of the Laboratório Urbano, such as the Laboratoire Architecture Anthropologie - LAA and LIEU network (ENSA - Paris La Villette), Center de Recherche sur l'espace sonore et l'environnement urbain CRESSON and AMBIANCES network (ENSA - Grenoble), Laboratorio Arti Civiche - LAC (Roma Tre), or, also, the Laboratório de Estudos Urbanos - LEU (FAU-UFRJ) and the LEAUC (IAU-USP), which only cites a few of these.

18 Figueiredo *et al* (2013).

19 And here we get close to the reflection proposed by Pallamin (2009, emphasis added): «As you see, much of the architects' craft, of what they do (or do not do), and the disposition with which they do it is based on the the understanding that they have on the '*construction of the city*', and on the socio-political terms of this construction: what is destroyed, is excluded, is eliminated or is exalted in it. To situate oneself critically in this field is among the most pressing tasks for the present exercise of architecture, if it is taken as something more than the mere positive affirmation of the state of how things are».

randomly from the point of view of the uses of the city and creating or reinforcing boundaries, limits and spatial segregations): they are established from the dynamics of apprehension and synthesis, and vary their modes of establishment and their scales according to the territories, issues, situations and dialogues worked on. The investigative outcomes are therefore territorialized, situated and still use cross-references and tensions between the histories, data, policies and official legislation and the narrated stories, memories and processes of self-production and appropriation of the spaces in question, as well as their normativities and documental sources. This thus brings up, as a fundamental element for critical reflection and proposition, the dimension of the various rationalities (and their operative dimensions, when applied) and urban temporalities (and the various future projects that are intrinsic therein, the raw working material of urbanists ever since the discipline began).

As a fundamental part of this mutual learning of the project as an open process, the dimension of synthesis and communicability - transmission, translation, narrative (as opposed to the idea of representation *stricto sensu*) is also the result of questioning, investigation and invention. What is decisive is the question of narration, and what we call urban narratives as a form of transmitting experiences and urban apprehensions, and thus of causing tension and dispute between macro- and micro-narratives in relation to the production of territorialities and urban subjectivities. The project itself, in this procedural sense, can be understood as narrative²⁰. Moreover, the continuous exercise of producing transient syntheses (graphic, textual, imagistic narratives in varied scales and dimensions) throughout the various stages of methodological experimentation that conform the teaching and the learning in this Atelier 5 of FAUFBA, more than fixing a reality (or a "diagnosis" on it), end up not only transmitting or translating what was learned, but also create, manufacture, and create other times and spaces,

²⁰ It is worth going back to the idea of "narrative urbanism", which has been theoretically and empirically constructed by Adriana Goni, an associate professor of urban studies and planning at the Universidad de La Republica de Uruguay, according to a lecture recently given at FAUFBA, at the invitation of the Laboratório Urbano, entitled *Beyond borders: narrative urbanism, art and architecture*. Also Sandercock (2005) reflects on the relationship between narrated stories and urban planning (also as a narrative), thereby problematizing some of its methodological dimensions.

thereby delineating at each stage the propositional outcomes. They are configured as the learning of « a balancing act in which the circumstance (place and time) and the speaker him/herself take part, a way of knowing, manipulating, arranging and 'putting' a so-called moving of a set» (de Certeau, 1980). Starting with the articulation, overlapping and rearrangement of these accumulated transient syntheses, several cartographic (including the corpographic) dimensions are explored, thereby relating the various layers of apprehensions, narratives, bodily experiences, images, territorialities, temporalities, data, policies, histories or memories of urban experiences, and thus seeking to make other possibilities of understanding and proposition for the territories, the city and the very practice of urbanism.

We propose, in this context of urbanism and urban project teaching as a field of experimentation, to take up again the idea of montage as a method of knowledge that was carried out by modern thinkers, as presented previously: a type of urban montage²¹ that does not set out from ideas already given, of ready-made nexuses, simply to legitimize them. On the contrary, what is sought is to find possible nexuses not yet known during the practice itself (exercise or game) of the montage (process of montage/ dismontage/ remontage), because it acts from the differences, without seeking any kind of unity or totality. This type of montage attempts to separate what is normally collected and to connect what is usually separated, and, thus, ends up dismantling the more functionalist and simplifying but also the more formalist and purist forms of thinking about the very notion of project and the very disciplinary field of urbanism - a kind of dismontage of certainties, naturalizations, and widely settled simplisms. A dismantling, also, of functionalism and formalism, of the forms of thinking still inherited, as has already been said but bears repeating, from a modern positivist and teleological tradition.

Once the project is viewed, as proposed, as an open process that aggregates a multiplicity of momentary, polyphonic configurations, there would be no possibility of any final, fixed unitary synthesis,

21 On the issue of urban montage proposed here, in particular, from Walter Benjamin, Georges Bataille and Aby Warburg, see the text *Urban Montage* in volume 4 of the collection «Methodological Experiences for Apprehending the Contemporary City» (Jacques, 2015), the introductory text of the research study «Contemporary Urbanism: nebulae, montages and gestures» (awarded a PQ1 / CNPq scholarship).

that is, a rigid and doctrinal methodology. The methodologies, in the plural, would always be provisional and ephemeral, deviant and errant. Another type of knowledge is possible by renouncing a single methodology, from recognizing that in order to contemplate a multiple “object” - such as the complexity of cities - we must accept the impossibility of a single method, and explore methodological and theoretical multiplicity. This is a more complex form of seeing, composing, assembling, thinking, proposing, and dismantling any kind of unity, any kind of fixed, sedentary or sedimented certainty, and remounting a multitude of other forms of apprehension and other ways of understanding complexity that can lead to other forms of conception, project, and intervention.

It is certain that this experimental and procedural character, which has some of its mottos in its deviations and uncertainties, is built under risks and difficulties (of which there many) and, above all, is characterized by a certain uncertainty and also anguish (not only among students, but also among teachers). Add to this the fact that “slow thinking”, the longer, slower temporality of the processes of apprehension/ reflection/ narration/ proposition and the construction of the necessary links to dialogue in alterity (approximation to territories and their daily goings-on, exchanges between local and popular knowledge, practitioners’ and academic knowledge) contrasts sharply with the time of the “permanent urgencies” of Brazilian cities. There are also concerns about the disciplinary thresholds, since interdisciplinarity, besides power, also has its limits, and is not an unrestricted practice, as Lepetit (2001) teaches. These are, however, questions, the reflexivity of which is built into didactic practice (which is always articulated to the research dimension). Another occasion is needed for looking at these in greater depth as to do so here would go beyond the limits of this text. It is worth saying, for now, that dealing with such risks, difficulties and anguishes is part of what we consider to be an important form of learning in order to be active vis-à-vis the complexities of contemporary cities and their “liminal zones”.²² So that we think of the urbanism and urban project in a more complex and broader way, i.e., as it is a form of knowledge production, cultural creation, social transformation and also of critical and political action, it will be necessary to exercise more and

²² We are inspired by the propositions of Jeanne Marie Gagnebin (2006) and Cibele Rizek (2012), both in dialogue with Walter Benjamin’s writes.

more new experiences, full of uncertainties and unpredictability. Exploratory research in an architecture and urbanism project or the experimental process of project as a research process, as knowledge production, is fundamental to underpinning a less simplistic teaching of project in architecture and urbanism courses, so that future urbanist architects do not use project as a simple uncritical tool to try to solve old problems, problems that have already been formulated. Instead, and to the contrary, they should enable students to think about project critically, as an instrument that is able to problematize new questions, to create other possibilities, new tools and instruments, to formulate new methodologies, and also to build other bases for new demands that have not yet been thought about as well as to create innovative public policies.²³

Furthermore, a more in-depth discussion of the policy dimension of the project itself as an instrument of power would be necessary,

23 Despite being a subject that has not yet been sufficiently explored, some studies have already contributed to show the importance of the processual project as a research in the field of architecture and urbanism and, in particular, the co-implication between research and project teaching (and here we cite only two, by way of example: Reyes, 2015; Cellamare, 2011). More recently, we can also see there has been a significant increase in initiatives (no longer at the cutting edge as in the past) that promote the important bringing together of project research and university extra-mural activity - such as the experiences gathered in the publication organized by UCL Urban Lab around the project *Cities and Methodologies* (Campkin; Duijzings, 2016), or those promoted by the various groups mentioned in the note 20 above, many of them presented in editions of REDOBRA (www.redobra.ufba.br). In Brazil, this has been done by creating or consolidating both public offices (or model offices - the EMAUs) in several of our schools of architecture and urbanism and also by the new residences in technical assistance in architecture and urbanism and other instigating initiatives (highlighting the experience of the AU+E Residence in the FAUFBA itself, or the Ateliers "Ensaio Urbanos", promoted by the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of São Paulo), such as the so-called "insurgent" or "conflictual" urban projects and plans, which lead to the discussion about the project for university extra-mural work (such as the experiences of the "Planos de Bairro" promoted by the Lugar Comum group, also from FAUFBA, among others). This not only makes it possible for our schools, especially public-sector ones, to fulfill their social role (which is also political) in a fuller way, but also to open up new interesting perspectives, often with interdisciplinary teams of teachers and students, for experimentation and innovation in project methodologies, in particular in the so-called collective or participative projects or even those of social interest. Reflective deployments and a greater publicity of these experiences and their processes become more and more fundamental, such as the recently books edited in Brazil: Bienestein *et al* (2017) and Oliveira *et al.* (2016), to name but a few of them.

particularly in the case of urban projects, which are always inseparable from public policies. However, this will remain to be done on a future occasion given the limits of this brief text. To instrumentalize, to provide more theoretical and, above all, methodological support for research in project and its more experimental exercise, should also be seen as a critical proposal to destabilize some more consolidated forms of thinking and intervening in contemporary cities. We must not forget that the theory and methodology of projects, as well as the discussion about teaching projects, are also critical and necessarily political actions. There is still a lot to do for our cities in Brazil – since their spaces, especially the public ones, are involved in permanent and sometimes violent disputes – and project as a process, which is at the same time, reflexive, critical and propositional and is an important instrument in the field of knowledge of architecture and urbanism.

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**Città e territorio: pratiche di autostrutturazione comunitaria
nella Sicilia Occidentale. Danilo Dolci e il Centro di Studi
e Iniziative sulla piena occupazione (1958 – 1968)**

Francesca Leder

Abstract

Per coloro che si occupano di 'autorganizzazione urbana' il confronto con l'esperienza di Danilo Dolci in Sicilia costituisce un passaggio obbligato. A distanza di oltre sessant'anni dal suo avvio (1952) il 'progetto siciliano' costituisce una lezione imprescindibile, ricca di spunti di ispirazione. Anche la sua attualità è un dato inconfutabile: ne sono testimonianza tanto le cronache giornalistiche, quanto le indagini più accurate, tutte con il loro porre l'accento sul dramma irrisolto del degrado delle periferie di alcune realtà urbane, l'inarrestabile violenza sui più deboli il divario crescente tra ricchezza e povertà, gli sfregi all'ambiente, lo spreco di risorse non riproducibili. Un quadro problematico, geograficamente distribuito sul territorio italiano, con picchi di gravità al Sud, da cui emergono, oltre a sacche di irrisolta arretratezza, l'incapacità delle amministrazioni pubbliche di mettere in campo politiche in grado di interpretare i bisogni emergenti e di collaborare con le comunità locali per costruire assieme possibili vie di soluzione.

For those ones who are interested in urban self-organization the confrontation with Danilo Dolci's experience has to be consider a necessary step. The 'Sicilian project', after more than sixty years from its start (1952), remains, even now, a fundamental and inspiring, but also highly topical, lesson. This is witnesses by both the daily news, as well by in-depth studies they never stop to underline the unsolved tragedy of the deterioration of the marginalized neighborhoods in many urban areas; nigh hopeless spiral of violence against the weakest ones; the increasing gap between richness and poverty; the defacement against the environment; the waist of un-reproducible natural and cultural resources. A problematic picture, geographically spread on the Italian territory, but even now much more diffused in the South, caused by different kind of social and cultural backwardness, but also by the public institutions and their incapacity in answering insurgent local needs, as well as in engaging their communities to build together solutions.

Parole chiave: Pianificazione dal basso, Maieutica popolare, Sviluppo di comunità

Keywords: Bottom up planning, Folk maieutic, Community development

L'urbanistica, quella intesa come disciplina al servizio dello sviluppo delle comunità locali, ha un ruolo centrale nell'esperienza di Danilo Dolci. Per questa ragione, in un contesto nel quale si è inteso ragionare sulle forme dell'autorganizzazione urbana, è sembrato utile ripercorrere le tappe più significative del lavoro di questo importante attivista

sociale¹ nella Sicilia degli anni a cavallo del boom economico. Un lavoro imperniato sulla ricerca di vie efficaci per contribuire al riscatto di masse di dimenticati alle quali né la politica locale né quella nazionale del tempo dedicavano la dovuta attenzione, temendo (come è poi in realtà stato) che quell'enorme dramma sociale mutasse in scandalo, e lo scandalo in aperta condanna delle classi dirigenti locali e nazionali a cui andava imputata la palese incapacità (o mancata volontà) di affrontare e risolvere tali problemi.

Il mio contributo intende rileggere alcune iniziative promosse da Dolci e il suo gruppo di collaboratori incrociandole con quelle di altri gruppi attivi in quegli stessi anni in altre realtà (altre zone della Sicilia ma anche in Calabria, Basilicata, Abruzzo): luoghi e situazioni accumulati dagli stessi caratteri di forte marginalità nei quali hanno preso forma alcune interessanti sperimentazioni di autorganizzazione comunitaria i cui promotori (italiani e stranieri) hanno avuto rapporti di scambio e collaborazione con Dolci, ispirandolo o venendone ispirati².

Si tratta di iniziative con almeno un tratto comune: sono state fortemente aversate dalle élite locali e guardate con grande diffidenza «per quella continua ibridazione di argomenti e di motivazioni ora tecniche, ora, come si usava dire, educative» (Morello, 2007, p: 72-73). Del resto è vero anche, come sostiene Vincenzo Borruso, medico siciliano, tra i primi collaboratori di Dolci, che “fino all’approvazione della legge 266/92 nessuna norma regolava le iniziative di volontariato” e che, negli anni '50 e '60, periodo che corrisponde al massimo impegno di Dolci nel campo dell’assistenza primaria alle popolazioni povere locali, molte delle attività di volontariato solidale venivano attuate «senza che nessun documento ne sancisse le finalità

1 Si ricorre qui a un termine che, se aiuta a fare sintesi, non rende però appieno la poliedrica vocazione di Dolci come educatore, sociologo, ma anche scrittore e poeta. Per una biografia sintetica si rimanda a: Barone G. (2000), *La forza della non violenza. Biografia e profilo biografico di Danilo Dolci*, Napoli: Libreria Dante e & Descartes.

2 Un’occasione per rivisitare le esperienze italiane di sviluppo di comunità è offerto dal convegno promosso dalla Fondazione Adriano Olivetti a Sorrento, nel marzo del 1968. Tra i casi illustrati in quella sede: il Progetto Sardegna; il Progetto Pilota per l’Abruzzo; il Progetto Avigliano; il Progetto Comunità nel Canavese; il Centro di sviluppo di comunità a Palma di Montechiaro; il CECAT; il Progetto Molise; il Progetto di Borgo A Mozzano. Fondazione Adriano Olivetti, Busta: Convegno di Sorrento 1968.

e il modo di assistere e di associarsi»³. Critiche dell'epoca che tornano, non di rado, anche oggi, ma che non intaccano il valore dello sforzo compiuto da Dolci nel cercare una via diversa alla soluzione dei problemi che in quegli anni affliggevano i paesi della Sicilia occidentale.

Fare i conti con questo capitolo della storia del nostro paese significa, come minimo, riflettere su cosa sia mancato a quelle realtà sul piano del sostegno sociale prima ancora che di quello economico (gli investimenti come ben sappiamo non sono certo mancati), per riuscire a emanciparsi da quella terribile situazione. Quali le alternative messe in campo e da chi⁴. Quali gli orizzonti mai esplorati, per paura di turbare gli equilibri politici e culturali e quali le pesanti conseguenze per il Sud, in primo luogo, ma anche per l'Italia tutta, di quel mancato sviluppo⁵.

Significa, ragionare sull'attualità di quell'approccio culturale, per molti versi ancora acerbo e confuso, che già però rimarcava i limiti della cosiddetta "urbanistica tradizionale" che impediva di pensare, anche progettualmente, il rapporto tra luoghi e abitanti. Rapporto che invece è al centro dell'operato di Dolci, costruito tramite l'uso di pratiche partecipative, mai sperimentate prima di allora nel campo della pianificazione territoriale e urbanistica, centrato sulla comprensione – da parte di tutti e non solo degli esperti – dei problemi che interessavano quelle zone e l'attivazione di forme di creatività relazionale⁶ ad uso di una possibile risoluzione.

Ritornano allamente le parole pronunciate da Pietro Calamandrei pronunciate in difesa di Dolci e dei suoi collaboratori, durante il primo processo subito per aver promosso il 30 gennaio 1956 uno sciopero della fame per protestare contro la pesca

3 Borruso V. (2016), *Medicina, salute e volontariato*, Piazza Armerina (En), Nulla Die pp. 19-20.

4 Morello M. (2007), *Governare la quotidianità: i sindaci di Sicilia*, Milano: Franco Angeli. Si intuisce, dalle parole della Morello, quanto quella stagione pionieristica caratterizzata da vari indagini sociali e prove di sviluppo di comunità abbia rappresentato per una certa parte di cultura locale un'incursione impropria nelle faccende locali.

5 Lanaro S. (1992), *Storia dell'Italia repubblicana*, Venezia: Marsilio, pp. 223 – 306.

6 Pizziolo G. (2012), *Paesaggio e comunità: riaffiora il pensiero di Danilo Dolci*, in Corsani G., Guidi L., Pizziolo G., *Verso la città territorio. L'esperienza di Danilo Dolci*, Firenze: Alinea, pp. 33 – 38.

di frodo che distruggeva il lavoro e le scarse fonti di reddito dei piccoli pescatori della zona, al quale avevano aderito più di mille persone ritrovatesi assieme nella spiaggia di San Cataldo a Trappeto. Uno sciopero seguito a distanza di due soli giorni dal cosiddetto 'sciopero alla rovescia', un'iniziativa di lavoro volontario, ispirato all'art. 4 della Costituzione⁷, promosso per sollecitare il ripristino della cosiddetta *trazzera vecchia*, la strada che dal paese portava in campagna, del tutto impraticabile durante l'inverno con conseguenze gravi per il lavoro dei contadini e delle loro famiglie⁸.

«Qui e fuori di qui – affermava Calamandrei – siamo in molti a pensare e a ripetere che la cultura, se vuol essere viva e operosa, qualcosa di meglio dell'inutile e arida erudizione [...], non deve rinchiudersi nella torre d'avorio senza curarsi delle sofferenze di chi batte alla porta di strada. Tutto questo lo scriviamo e lo diciamo da decenni, ma tuttavia siamo incapaci di ritrovare il contatto fraterno colla povera gente [...]. Il popolo ci sente come di un altro ceto: sospetta che questa fraternità di parole sia soltanto oratoria. Per Danilo no. [...] Egli ha fatto quello che nessuno di noi ha saputo fare. Per questo sono venuti qui da tutta Italia gli uomini di cultura a ringraziarlo: a ringraziarlo di questo esempio, di questo riscatto operato da lui, agnus qui tollit peccata di una cultura fino a ieri immemore dei suoi doveri» (AA.VV., 2006: 117-118).

Danilo Dolci e la sua Sicilia.

Tra i meriti riconosciuti a Dolci c'è sicuramente quello di aver offerto una speciale lettura del territorio: i protagonisti dei suoi racconti (i contadini, i pescatori, le loro famiglie, i bambini) sono infatti lenti attraverso le quali egli suggerisce di guardare questa terra difficile e straordinaria assieme.

«Questa terra – scrive Dolci – è come una delle tante sue bambine bellissime nei vicoli dei suoi paesi, bellissime sotto le croste, i capelli scarmigliati, nei cenci sbrindellati: e già si intravede come, crescendo lei bene, tra anni quel volto potrebbe essere intelligente, nobilmente vivo; ma pure si intravede

7 «La Repubblica riconosce a tutti i cittadini il diritto al lavoro e promuove le condizioni che rendono effettivo questo diritto. Ogni cittadino ha il dovere di svolgere, secondo le proprie possibilità e la propria scelta, un'attività o una funzione che concorra al progresso materiale o spirituale della società», Costituzione italiana, art. 4.

8 La cronaca dei fatti che hanno preceduto l'arresto di Dolci e successivamente del processo che ha dovuto subire sono raccontati da Goffredo Fofi (2006) in *Perché l'Italia diventi un paese civile. Palermo 1956: processo a Danilo Dolci*, Napoli: l'Ancora del Mediterraneo, pp. 31 – 35. Il volume ripropone una parte dei testi contenuti nel volumetto uscito nell'agosto del 1956, *Processo all'art. 4*, Torino: Einaudi.

come in altre condizioni quel volto potrebbe rinchiudersi patito e quasi incattivito» (Dolci, 1960: 18).

Una lettura che è racconto e insieme strumento di analisi ad uso di chi, come lo stesso Dolci, all'inizio della sua esperienza, ancora non conosce bene il contesto in cui è chiamato a operare e per questa ragione intende studiarlo a fondo per coglierne l'essenza.

Danilo Dolci, com'è noto, non è infatti siciliano. Nasce a Sesana (Trieste) nel 1924 da padre italiano, impiegato delle ferrovie dello stato, e madre slava. Si stabilisce in Sicilia solo all'inizio del 1952, all'età di 27 anni, dopo un paio d'anni di *apprendistato* nella comunità di Nomadelfia, fondata da Don Zeno Saltini, tra Fossoli (Carpi) Grosseto⁹.

La scelta della Sicilia, e di Trappeto in particolare, come avrà modo di dire e scrivere lui stesso, non risponde a una ragione specifica: abbandonati gli studi (era a un passo dalla laurea in architettura) mosso da una forte crisi interiore, decide – anche grazie agli stimoli ricevuti dai molti amici milanesi e dalla frequentazione della Corsia dei Servi di Milano (dove entra in contatto con padre David Maria Turoldo) e poi di Don Zeno a Nomadelfia – che dedicherà la sua vita ad aiutare 'gli ultimi' e tra costoro non possono non rientrare gli abitanti di quel paese Trappeto sulla costa occidentale siciliana («il più misero che avevo visto») dove il padre, per alcuni anni, era stato capostazione e dove lui, adolescente, appassionato di studi classici, aveva trascorso le estati, tra il 1940 e il 1941, visitando i siti archeologici della Magna Grecia.

«[...] sognavo di fare l'architetto: ho studiato con quello scopo, ma poi, via via avvicinandosi la guerra, vedendo i fascisti, i nazisti intorno, mi sono domandato effettivamente cosa volevo fare, perché cominciavo a capire che un architetto avrebbe lavorato solo per i ricchi, per chi aveva soldi, e non per chi non aveva né case né soldi; occorreva dunque fare un altro lavoro, prima dell'architettura e prima della cosiddetta urbanistica» (VALPIANA, 1995: 3).

Il ritorno in Sicilia, lo stabilirsi a Trappeto, sembra soddisfare il bisogno di Dolci di vivere un'esperienza non ben delineata nei suoi obiettivi, a metà strada tra missione umanitaria e attivismo sociale: un tratto che manterrà a lungo e che costituisce la sua

⁹ Per approfondire si veda tra gli altri RINALDI R. (2003), *Storia di Nomadelfia e di Don Zeno*, 2 voll., Grosseto: Edizioni Nomadelfia.

forza ma anche il limite del suo operato, alimentando critiche, come si diceva prima, tanto dei potentati locali quanto di vari ambienti della cultura e della politica nazionale¹⁰.

Il contesto in cui Dolci si trova a operare, dopo la radicale decisione di lasciare il Nord, coincide – geograficamente parlando – con un territorio (la Sicilia occidentale) la cui struttura sociale è contraddistinta dalla pesante influenza dei proprietari terrieri e dei gruppi clientelari spesso intrecciati con quelli mafiosi, sui piccolissimi proprietari agricoli, i braccianti e i pescatori. L'economia locale si basa sull'agricoltura e sulla pesca, entrambe insufficienti per offrire alla popolazione locale condizioni di vita dignitose.

Si tratta di aree fortemente sottosviluppate dove la presenza dello Stato è debole, se non assente, comunque assoggettato ai poteri locali, e dove la Chiesa, con le sue capacità di condizionamento dell'opinione pubblica, contribuisce a mantenere la popolazione in condizioni di desolante arretratezza¹¹.

A Trappeto, fa sapere Dolci agli amici che lo sostengono attraverso i numerosi comitati sorti in Italia e all'estero, «non v'è una strada che sia una strada, non ci sono fogne, non ci sono giornali, non una farmacia, non un telefono, non un bagno, la miseria più disperata»¹². Ma Trappeto non è un'eccezione, quanto piuttosto un triste paradigma di una situazione molto più diffusa, inimmaginabile, e di certo non accettabile, per un paese come l'Italia che si avviava a inaugurare la fase più intensa e frenetica del suo sviluppo.

È dunque questo il territorio scelto da Dolci per dare inizio alle sue iniziative che hanno come scopo principale quello di combattere la rassegnazione delle classi più deboli e di imprimere in queste la forza di un cambiamento perché si possa affermare la partecipazione civile.

10 È nota la profonda diffidenza manifestata da Angela Zucconi, ad esempio, direttrice del Centro di Educazione Professionale per Assistenti Sociali (CEPAS), la scuola fondata da Guido Calogero nel 1947 e finanziata da Adriano Olivetti. La Zucconi rimproverava a Dolci un metodo di studio e d'azione non "scientifico" e una conseguente impossibilità di intervento secondo metodi già sperimentati e riproducibili.

11 Stabile F.M. (1999), *I consoli di Dio. Vescovi e politica in Sicilia (1953-1963)*, Caltanissetta-Roma: Salvatore Sciascia Editore

12 Dolci D. (1968)

Dolci e l'azione sociale

«Ignorante come ero dei problemi del Sud, ignorante di tecniche di lavoro socioeconomico (all'università avevo studiato architettura, ma i rapporti tra gli uomini mi interessavano oramai di più che le armonie delle pietre) lavorando con i contadini e coi pescatori, partecipando la loro vita dal di dentro, mi guardavo in giro» (Dolci, 1968: 14-15).

L'operato di Dolci, inizialmente, si traduce in aiuto spontaneo agli amici contadini-pescatori¹³. L'obiettivo è però più ambizioso e corrisponde all'idea di diventare interprete dei bisogni di questa gente attraverso ricerche sul campo poi divenute saggio-denuncia come *Fare presto e bene perché si muore* (1954)¹⁴ seguito a poca distanza da un altro testo, ugualmente importante dedicato agli esisti dello studio del quartiere Spine Sante di Partinico, il più povero del paese, pubblicato con il lungo titolo *Quanti altri s'impiccheranno quanti altri impazziranno quanti altri morranno disgraziati a Partinico* (1954)¹⁵ divenuto poi il capitolo dedicato agli aspetti socio-sanitari di Banditi a Partinico (1955).

«Il brigantaggio – scrive Dolci – la fame, la mancanza di igiene, l'analfabetismo tengono da secoli la maggior parte dei nostri fratelli di qui in un penosissimo stato; ma quando torna l'inverno, per moltissimi, non per episodici casi come avviene per lo più altrove, per quasi tutti la vita diventa un'agonia. L'inverno scorso ho visto con i miei occhi anche un neonato morire perché affamato, tra centinaia di casi dolorosissimi [...].

Possiamo evitare che questi bambini siano costretti a lasciare le scuole a sette otto anni per aiutare il padre nel lavoro. Possiamo evitare che le galere si riempiano. Possiamo evitare che la morte spadroneggi [...] C'è un delitto di omissione verso questi nostri fratelli di cui dobbiamo pentirci e redimerci. C'è un atto di amore da compiere subito per salvarli e salvarci. [...] Subito. Non si può aspettare. Aspettare significa far cadere altre vittime» (Dolci, 1954: 10-11).

Una parte importante del riscatto, secondo Dolci, può avvenire solo avendo cura dei propri luoghi (gli ambienti di vita – la casa, le strade del quartiere), preservando e valorizzando le risorse

¹³ Una preziosa testimonianza dell'attività di Danilo, in quei primissimi anni di permanenza a Trappeto e Partinico, è raccolta da Fresco G. (1954), *Due pescatori siciliani raccontano la storia del Borgo di Dio*, Milano: Staia.

¹⁴ Dolci D. (1954), *Fare presto e bene perché si muore*, Torino-Firenze: De Silva.

¹⁵ Dolci D. (1954), *Quanti altri s'impiccheranno quanti altri impazziranno quanti altri morranno disgraziati a Partinico*, Palermo: Luxograp

ambientali e naturali (in primo luogo l'acqua), costruendo spazi di incontro per la comunità (biblioteche, centri civici). Ma non può esserci pieno sviluppo, vera emancipazione, senza alcuna presa di coscienza (collettiva) delle cause della propria marginalità. Da qui la scelta di far conoscere all'opinione pubblica nazionale e internazionale la povertà alla quale era condannata la popolazione siciliana, e in particolare di denunciare le morti dovute alla fame, mascherate per vergogna e dunque sempre negate.

Lo farà amplificando la voce dei protagonisti e invitando a visitare quei luoghi osservatori esterni.

«C'è un delitto di omissione verso questi nostri fratelli, di cui dobbiamo pentirci e redimerci. C'è un atto di amore da compiere subito per salvarli e salvarci. C'è da muoversi subito. A estremi mali estremi rimedi. Voglio fare penitenza perché tutti si diventino più buoni. Prima che muoia un altro bambino di fame, intanto, voglio morire io. Da oggi non mangerò più finché non ci saranno arrivati i trenta milioni necessari a provvedere subito il lavoro ai più bisognosi e l'assistenza più urgente agli inabili» [Dolci, 1954: 11]

Lo sciopero della fame, introdotto da Dolci, dopo la morte per stenti dell'ennesimo bambino del paese, è un fatto inedito nel panorama mediatico nazionale che scuote le coscienze e induce alla mobilitazione molti intellettuali, grazie anche all'intervento esemplare di Aldo Capitini, tra i primi a rispondere all'appello lanciato da Dolci¹⁶, e a farsi carico, attraverso la fitta rete di amici e di sostenitori, di dare risposta a quelle istanze che ruotavano attorno a bisogni essenziali: occuparsi della salute della popolazione, dell'istruzione dei bambini, favorire la continuità del lavoro investendo sulle infrastrutture di collegamento (le strade) e sulle reti idriche per approvvigionare le terre, potenzialmente fertili, ma concretamente aride, e pressoché

16 «[...] gli dissi che non aveva il diritto di morire, prima che egli non avesse informato sufficientemente noi tutti della situazione, e lo pregai perciò di sospendere il digiuno», Capitini A. (1968), *Attraverso due terzi del secolo*, in Schippa L. (a cura) (1992), *Scritti sulla nonviolenza*, Perugia: Protagon, p. 11. A questo accorato invito Dolci risponde con una lettera, datata fine ottobre 1952, nella quale scrive «Carissimo, ho sospeso, e forse finito, per questa volta, il digiuno come Franco [Alasia] già ti ha scritto. Pare che provvedano immediatamente o quasi, le autorità siciliane. Ti mando a parte quanto abbiamo stampato (molto poco) circa il nostro muoverci. Appena potrò, tra qualche mese, credo, verrò da te. Ti abbraccio in Dio. Tuo in lui Danilo», Capitini A., Dolci D. (2008), *Lettere 1952 – 1968*, a cura di G. Barone e S. Mazzi, Roma: Carrocci, p. 27.

improduttive. E poi ancora: combattere la mafia, emancipare i contadini dalle regole feudali di gestione delle terre (enfiteusi) e combattere la pesca di frodo nel Golfo di Castellamare dove arrivano ogni giorno motopescherecci fuorilegge che praticano la pesca di frodo e «tolgono il pane a 8000 persone»¹⁷.

Nel frattempo l'attività avviata da Dolci assume, per così dire, carattere stanziale: vengono comperati due ettari di terreno per costituire, su modello di Nomadelfia, il nucleo di "Borgo di Dio", e su progetto dello stesso Dolci, una casa-asilo per i bambini più bisognosi di Trappeto e l'Università popolare per assistere gli adulti e avviare programmi di educazione così da arginare l'analfabetismo¹⁸. Le risorse per svolgere le attività provengono esclusivamente da donazioni private.

Il lavoro da portare avanti è complesso: da un lato bisogna vincere l'imbarazzo della popolazione locale e spingerla a denunciare lo stato di miseria in cui è costretta a vivere, ma anche le violenze e i soprusi che subisce. Dall'altro c'è da superare la barriera dell'incredulità dell'opinione pubblica nazionale e internazionale corroborata dalle azioni di censura messe in atto dalle istituzioni locali (civili ed ecclesiastiche), per impedire ogni forma di pubblicizzazione e denuncia dei problemi sociali cronici che affliggono la Sicilia e più in generale le regioni del meridione. Da questo importante lavoro di ricerca-azione, realizzato anche grazie all'aiuto di giovani del luogo e di alcuni primi collaboratori¹⁹ emerge un

17 Dolci D. (1955), *Banditi a Partinico*, Bari: Editori Laterza, p. 220.

18 «Noi continuiamo tutte le nostre attività, tra cui: [...] Università popolare concerti. Nella seconda casa, domenica 28 febbraio, Lamberto [*Borghì, n.d.r.*] che insegna pedagogia all'Università di Palermo, terrà la prima conversazione. Inizia oggi la biblioteca popolare» *Ibid.*, p. 221.

19 Nella premessa al primo capitolo del saggio, *Relazione su Partinico*, preparata in occasione dell'intervento al 'Congresso internazionale di studio sulle aree arretrate' dell'ottobre 1954, si legge «A chi arriva da Palermo, o per la strada di mare o per l'altra alta della montagna, con l'anima dilatata nella visione del golfo, e passa sulla strada che attraversa la cittadina per andare a Segesta e ad Erice, Partinico è, in privilegiata posizione, il centro di una zona intensamente coltivata, tra il feudo e il mare. Chi indugia anche per le strade interne, tra i mucchi di immondizie che si accumulano per giorni e giorni, cercando di scansare gli improvvisi getti di rifiuti, nota bambini spesso sporchi e selvatici, fasce di lutto e storpi in coppia insolita: ma pensa che dove le vie si infossano buie, nei grossi sobborghi metropolitani, la morte è maggiore. [...] Più che parteciparvi i risultati di uno studio già compiuto, vi diamo alcune notizie, per invitarvi a una collaborazione: ché in pochi siamo, privatamente ci muoviamo tra le due diffidenze più opposte tra una popolazione in tale stato

quadro analitico disarmante, sotto vari fronti, ma utile per maturare il convincimento, fondamentale nell'ottica della spinta all'autorganizzazione, che l'arretratezza e la marginalità aumentano in rapporto al diminuire delle difese sociali, ovvero della capacità di partecipare, anche nelle forme più semplici, alla vita pubblica.

«Alcuni giudicano opportuna la nostra attività di informazione ma deleteria la cura intima per il nostro prossimo più ferito in quanto "ritarda con palliativi il rinnovamento della struttura". Rivoluzione: d'accordo. Non si può rimandare a domani il disoccupato che cerca lavoro perché ha i figli alla fame. Rivoluzione e subito. Ma il modo della rivoluzione è essenziale. Se seminiamo piselli non nascono pesci. Se seminiamo morte e inesattezze non nasce vita» (Dolci, 1955: 219).

Molte delle battaglie condotte in quegli anni da Dolci e i suoi collaboratori hanno al centro il tema dell'acqua: una risorsa presente nel territorio di cui però si fa spreco non potendo di accumularla d'inverno (per mancanza di un apposito vaso) e destinandola solo a pochi d'estate favorendo così lo sviluppo di poche e molto fortunate aziende agricole. La battaglia più nota è certamente quella per la costruzione della diga sul fiume Jato, un corso d'acqua che nasce dalle alture di Monte La Pizzuta (Piana degli Albanesi) e scorre per 32 chilometri solcando la vallata da cui prende nome e attraversando ben sette territori comunali prima di sfociare sul golfo di Castellamare, a Ballestrate. Si tratta della prima di una serie di importanti iniziative popolari per promuovere una forma concreta di "pianificazione democratica" che poneva al centro della discussione collettiva la realizzazione di un grande vaso (circa 500 ha) che avrebbe potuto risolvere i cronici problemi di siccità. Si trattava di un'opera fondamentale per lo sviluppo economico del territorio e, in quanto tale, poteva costituire, come da subito aveva prospettato Dolci, l'occasione per ridare fiducia agli abitanti del luogo offrendo loro la possibilità di riscattarsi dalle forti pressioni e dai condizionamenti di natura eminentemente mafiosa. E non è dunque un caso che la realizzazione della diga, già programmata da tempo, fosse stata a lungo bloccata dai proprietari dei terreni i quali da un lato non volevano veder ridotte le loro proprietà, dall'altro

che lo studiare [...] ci pare spesso un lusso di cui si dovrebbe aver rimorso» (Ivi, p. 24).

miravano a indennizzi molto più alti di quelli offerti dalla Cassa per il Mezzogiorno.

Riformare la pianificazione

La consapevolezza dell'importanza di una grande azione strategica che mirasse a ridurre il divario tra zone sviluppate e zone depresse del paese era molto presente nel dibattito pubblico di quegli anni e trovava sintesi nello «Schema di sviluppo dell'occupazione e del reddito in Italia nel decennio 1955 – 1964» (Roma, Ministero del Bilancio gennaio 1955), meglio noto come 'Piano Vanoni', dal nome del ministro democristiano che lo aveva promosso. Si trattava di un programma economico-sociale centrato sulla diminuzione della disoccupazione, sulla riduzione del divario del reddito pro-capite tra Nord e Sud e su una maggiore distribuzione sul territorio di poli industriali. Il piano era, in estrema sintesi, l'espressione di un grande impegno collettivo volto a rispondere ai problemi concreti di un paese che, uscito dalle emergenze della ricostruzione postbellica, si preparava a dare avvio a quella grande trasformazione che avrebbe accompagnato il 'miracolo economico' del decennio successivo.

Questo è anche il momento in cui il lavoro di Dolci, compie un importante grande passo in avanti nella ricerca della propria legittimazione culturale e operativa e diventare così uno dei principali punti di riferimento a livello nazionale nel campo dello sviluppo locale.

Gli strumenti materiali per mettere in atto questo scatto vengono forniti dal Premio Lenin per la pace attribuitogli nel dicembre del 1957²⁰.

Pur consapevole delle pesanti critiche che questa scelta avrebbe generato²¹, Dolci, con il benestare di alcuni amici tra

20 Il "Premio Lenin internazionale «per il consolidamento della pace tra i popoli»" era stato istituito nel 1950 e costituiva la risposta sovietica ai premi Nobel per la pace. Il premio che aveva anche una dotazione economica (16 milioni la cifra attribuita a Dolci). Veniva assegnato da un comitato internazionale scelto dal governo sovietico alle personalità che avessero "rinforzato la pace tra i popoli".

21 Si vedano, ad esempio, le posizioni assunte da Gigliola Venturi animatrice dell'Associazione Iniziativa Sociale (AIS), principale 'regista' delle iniziative di Dolci a partire dal 1954 interrotte bruscamente verso la fine del 1958 anche per questa specifica ragione e di Ignazio Silone, coordinatore della Associazione per la Libertà della Cultura che per qualche anno aveva offerto

i quali Zevi e Vittorini, decideva di accettare il premio per dare autonomia economica alle proprie iniziative e avviare, in questo modo, un programma di lavoro più stabile e organizzato. In un panorama politico di dilagante sospetto, nel quale il timore per l'avanzata del fronte comunista spingeva persino le gerarchie ecclesiastiche, in particolare monsignor Ruffini, cardinale di Palermo, «verso il rafforzamento di un centro destra [...] se non proprio verso un governo autoritario cattolico su modello franchista della Spagna»²², è indubbio che l'accettazione da parte di Dolci del premio Lenin assumeva un valore politico ben preciso e fortemente destabilizzante.

E del resto sembra non esserci altra via per superare i limiti di un'azione semplicemente assistenziale:

il progetto a cui pensava Dolci era molto più ambizioso: egli puntava alla costituzione di un centro, denominato successivamente 'Centro Studi e Iniziative per la piena occupazione', contraddistinto da varie sedi dislocate nel territorio attraverso le quali operare per trasformare la Sicilia occidentale, area terribilmente arretrata ed esposta ai fenomeni mafiosi, in un vero laboratorio nel campo dello sviluppo economico e sociale²³.

«[...] impedire lo sfruttamento – afferma Dolci in un importante saggio del 1965 dedicato alla rifondazione delle regole della convivenza civile per la costruzione di un mondo nuovo – non è solo un problema strutturale, non si risolve una volta per sempre, ma anche problema di partecipazione e di verifica dal basso, in sempre nuove e adeguate forme [...]. Le forme cambiano a seconda delle diverse condizioni: non si tratta tanto di trovare le forme perfette, di cristallo, la città del sole, quanto di saper passare via via alle forme vive necessarie; di saper mettere a punto chiaramente, esattamente, le

a Dolci sostegno economico e organizzativo. Molto significativa, a questo proposito, appare la lettera che Silone scrisse a Dolci l'8 gennaio 1958 proprio per manifestargli l'imbarazzo che derivava dalla scelta di accettare il premio. Per una ricostruzione di questa vicenda si veda RAI A S. (2011), *Danilo, il premio Lenin e altre storie*, in *Educazione Democratica*, n. 2/2011, pp. 131 - 134.

²² Stabile M. (1999), *I consoli di Dio. Vescovi e politica in Sicilia (1953 - 1963)*, Caltanissetta - Roma: Salvatore Sciascia Editore, p. 50.

²³ È il punto di vista di Paolo Sylos Labini, docente di Economia Politica all'Università di Catania (1957 - 1960), responsabile di una serie di ricerche sullo stato dell'economia siciliana. Su questo specifico aspetto si veda Sylos Labini P. (1965), *Le radici della mafia in Sicilia, deposizione pronunciata dinanzi alla Commissione parlamentare d'inchiesta sul fenomeno della mafia in Sicilia*, pubblicato in Sylos Labini P. (1970), *Problemi dello sviluppo economico*, Bari: Editori Laterza, pp. 179-190.

diverse posizioni, facendole comunicare» (Dolci, 1965: 27 - 28).

I nodi attorno ai quali ruota il lavoro di Dolci sono essenzialmente: 1) lo sviluppo di una coscienza collettiva basata sulla maieutica reciproca, ovvero la definizione di un processo di condivisione delle esperienze individuali finalizzato alla risoluzione comune dei problemi mediante la scoperta delle capacità creative del gruppo; 2) la nonviolenza come forma di rispetto dell'altro, da cui deriva anche l'opposizione alla mafia e ai suoi codici violenti; 3) l'educazione dei bambini e dei ragazzi, ma anche degli adulti, in un'ottica non solo di lotta all'analfabetismo, ma anche di opportunità di rigenerazione sociale; 4) gli interventi per il miglioramento delle condizioni abitative, e di conseguenza per il miglioramento delle condizioni igienico-sanitarie della comunità, come presa di coscienza del valore della dignità individuale e di gruppo; 5) infine, per quanto riguardava le iniziative per lo sviluppo economico dell'area, la definizione di un piano intercomunale che interessasse le valli dei fiumi Jato, Belice, e Carboj (antesignano, potremmo azzardare, del contratto di fiume) impostato sui principi della *pianificazione organica* per favorire il miglior utilizzo delle risorse del territorio e dare la possibilità ai contadini di costituirsi in cooperative così da dotare il loro lavoro di più mezzi e strumenti di tutela.

L'intento generale è quello di sperimentare possibili modalità di coinvolgimento delle comunità locali, parte integrante del processo di pianificazione, e promuovere azioni dal basso mediante l'attivazione di cinque centri (Menfi, Corleone, Roccamena, Trappeto e Cammarata - successivamente chiuso) oltre al principale insediato a Partinico. Nei centri sono impiegati tecnici agrari, assistenti sociali e giovani volontari con specifiche capacità. Tra i centri satelliti particolarmente attivi risultavano quelli di Roccamena (coordinato da Lorenzo Barbera e centrato sul tema della pianificazione territoriale della Valle del Belice²⁴) e Menfi (particolarmente attivo nell'attività di produzione vitivinicola grazie alla costituzione, nel 1963, della prima cantina sociale. "Il Progresso", sotto la guida di Michele Mandiello).

Nel 1962 le persone impiegate sono alcune decine: oltre ad un nutrito gruppo di italiani e di siciliani ci sono esperti e volontari che provengono dall'Inghilterra, dagli Stati Uniti, dalla Svezia e

²⁴ Si veda: Barbera L. (1964), *La diga di Roccamena*, Bari: Laterza.

dalla Svizzera.

Tra le diverse attività promosse dai centri una parte importante riguardava la formazione di quadri, ovvero preparare giovani diplomati o laureati intenzionati a lavorare per questo progetto ai quali veniva offerta la possibilità di completare il proprio percorso formativo grazie ad attività sul campo e a seminari tematici molto spesso condotti dai migliori esperti a livello nazionale e internazionale nei diversi settori: economico, educativo, agronomico, ecc.

«In zone ferme o che non avanzano per moto proprio (se mai per laterale assimilazione di quel poco che arriva da molti altrove prodotti), occorrono anche fatti nuovi, che diano esperienza che il cambiamento e lo sviluppo sono possibili; occorrono shock intensi, piccoli e grandi [...]» (Dolci, 1974: 103).

Lo spreco

Gli anni '60, come già detto, inaugurano un periodo molto intenso per le attività di Dolci. La sua battaglia assume una connotazione profondamente diversa rispetto a quella delle fasi iniziali concentrandosi nella denuncia alla classe dirigente di essere corresponsabile dello stato di arretratezza in cui vive la popolazione siciliana. C'è un nesso molto forte tra potere mafioso, arretratezza sociale e mancato riscatto. In Dolci cresce la consapevolezza che le condizioni della popolazione non potrà mai migliorare se non si affrontano le questioni più scottanti, se non si comincia a denunciare ciò che impedisce a questo territorio e alla sua gente di costruire un futuro diverso, un *mondo nuovo*.

«Noi viviamo e lavoriamo [...] in una zona ove la violenza fisica e psichica, i soprusi, l'imporsi sugli altri, lo sfruttamento del debole, sono non solo fatti di ogni giorno e di ogni aspetto della vita locale, ma addirittura delle cause fondamentali del sottosviluppo. La violenza è allo stesso tempo cause ed effetto dell'arretratezza materiale. Per superarla, per creare una vita più umana, non crediamo basti semplicemente influire sui fatti economici. [...] Perciò non bastano le dighe che daranno al contadino il pane quotidiano: ci vogliono anche le scuole nuove per i figli, un diverso modo di convivenza umana, in cui la violenza non sia più considerata giusta e necessaria» (Centro Studi e Iniziative, 1961: 12 – 13)

Spreco è il concetto messo a fuoco con maggiore consapevolezza in questi anni riconoscendo in esso la funzione di indicatore della crisi tra cultura e ambiente, dato tangibile del mancato sviluppo.

Una parola chiave che riassume la gravità della situazione, tema cardine delle varie azioni pubbliche messe in campo da Dolci e alla quale dedica un importante convegno internazionale tenutosi a Palma di Montechiaro alla fine di aprile del 1960 per presentare e discutere gli esiti di uno studio sulle condizioni igienico-sanitarie del paese realizzato dal medico parassitologo Silvio Pampiglione. È da questa importante iniziativa culturale e scientifica, ampiamente documentata dalla stampa nazionale e internazionale, che prenderà vita il 'Centro Consultivo per lo sviluppo sociale di comunità di Palma di Montechiaro' promosso da un sacerdote cattolico olandese, Salvinus Duijnste, esperto di 'social welfare'²⁵ allargando così il fronte delle azioni sul campo per promuovere lo sviluppo sociale.

Allo spreco, nelle sue diverse sfaccettature e nelle sue diverse esemplificazioni geografiche (Cammarata, Palma di Montechiaro, Corleone, Roccamena, Menfi) Dolci dedica un crudo e appassionato saggio, pubblicato nel 1960 da Einaudi, nel quale raccoglie le indagini condotte dai suoi più esperti collaboratori documentato con le bellissime immagini del fotografo francese André Martin già collaboratore di Ernesto De Martino²⁶.

L'incontro con Doglio

A dare corpo alle idee promosse dal Centro di Partinico contribuisce, sul finire di quello stesso anno (1960), anche un urbanista italiano di formazione anglosassone, Carlo Doglio, già membro del Gruppo tecnico di coordinamento urbanistico Canavese voluto da Adriano Olivetti e corrispondente dall'Inghilterra della rivista «Comunità»²⁷. Per Doglio, che si era

25 Per l'esperienza che si sviluppa a Palma di Montechiaro, in parallelo alle iniziative promosse da Dolci si vedano: Gorio G. (1976), *Pedagogia socio-comunitaria*, Padova: Cleup; Leone G. (1993; Leone G. (1993), *Territorio e società in Sicilia negli anni Cinquanta e Sessanta nelle esperienze di Danilo Dolci, Tullio Vinay e Salvinus Duynstee*, Palermo: Anvied; Boissevain J. (2013), *Fraction, Friends and Feast: Anthropologica Perspectives on the Mediterranean*, Berghahn Books.

26 Dolci D., *Spreco. Documenti e inchieste su alcuni aspetti dello spreco nella Sicilia occidentale*, Torino: Einaudi, 1960.

27 Dolci conosce Doglio attraverso i canali olivettiani e in particolare Bruno Zevi. Dolci approfitta della volontà di Doglio di voler far rientro in Italia da Londra, conseguita la laurea, per proporgli di occuparsi dell'impostazione e del coordinamento del di un piano territoriale per la Sicilia occidentale. Doglio accetterà documentando l'avvio di quella esperienza in un testo *Quaderno di*

avvicinato all'urbanistica attraverso il sodalizio con Giancarlo De Carlo conosciuto durante la Resistenza, la pianificazione territoriale è

«intesa allo stesso tempo come veicolo per dare forma a un nuovo rapporto tra la comunità e il suo contesto di vita, basato sull'empowerment sociale, sulla trasformazione profonda dal basso, attraverso lo sviluppo della democrazia diretta, delle strutture della vita associativa e dei rapporti di produzione, e come strumento per mettersi alla prova sul terreno, nel confronto diretto con la società locale, che lo spingerà prima a far parte del gruppo incaricato da Olivetti di redigere il piano territoriale del Canavese e, successivamente, a collaborare con Dolci in Sicilia» (Mazzoleni, 2006: 17).

La visione utopistica di matrice socialista-libertaria di Doglio si traduce nella volontà di organizzare sul territorio una serie di centri animati da comitati di cittadini impegnati nella pianificazione come strumento di azione quotidiana in stretto contatto con le istituzioni pubbliche per sollecitare quest'ultime ad essere sempre più vicine alle necessità della gente (Comitato Intercomunale della Valle del Belice). Una modalità di intervento che ben si adattava alla 'maieutica' promossa da Dolci, così come agli esperimenti di inchiesta/azione già avviati²⁸. Anche per Doglio bisognava procedere da uno studio dei luoghi, costruito sulla base di dati scaturiti e condivisi mediante il dialogo con gli abitanti, per poi definire un programma di iniziative orientate a far crescere il loro senso di responsabilità mediante il diretto coinvolgimento nella gestione dell'azione pubblica per lo sviluppo.

Secondo il progetto messo a punto da Doglio le strutture dei centri dovevano lavorare in modo cooperativo, utilizzando gli strumenti e i metodi tipici delle pratiche di sviluppo di comunità sino ad allora sconosciuti agli urbanisti, soprattutto italiani, perché ambito di azione e di dominio del lavoro sociale e delle esperienze a questo collegate. L'obiettivo è infatti quello di sviluppare un progetto di pianificazione, definita anche 'urbanistica libertaria', ispirata a Kropotkin, Geddes e Mumford. Una «pianificazione dinamica, in cui è massimamente sollecitata la partecipazione dal basso e in cui si realizza il più intimo rapporto e raccordo, tra base e centro, sia in termini

Sicilia, pubblicato in *Comunità*, n. 90, 1961.

²⁸ Dolci D., *Urbanistica e pianificatori dal basso*, in *Urbanistica* 42-43 (1964), pp. 148 - 150.

umani che in termini territoriali»²⁹.

Il rapporto tra Dolci e Doglio in realtà non funziona: troppo diversa la loro formazione, il loro background culturale e anche il loro modo di porsi di fronte alle cose. Questo tentativo si trasforma ben presto in una sorta di malcelata competizione per l'affermazione della strategia da adottare per lo sviluppo del territorio e la scelta di percorrere strade diverse, anche se per moltissimi aspetti del tutto parallele³⁰.

Il terremoto del Belice e la chiusura di un ciclo

Gli anni '60 sono segnati da numerose e importanti tappe nelle battaglie per l'emancipazione del territorio della Sicilia occidentale, tanto sul fronte della pianificazione, quanto su quello dell'affermazione di una democrazia più compiuta.

Il contesto in cui il Centro fondato alla fine degli anni '50 opera, le difficoltà economiche sempre presenti, i dissidi con i collaboratori (anche con lo stesso Doglio), la critica sempre più aperta ai notabili locali, rendono il lavoro più difficile da organizzare e da gestire.

C'è poi l'idea di ritornare in possesso del Borgo di Dio a Trappeto, visto che giace in disuso da anni dopo che l'ANIMI non ha più gestito le attività di assistenza ai bambini. Si pensa di creare un nuovo 'Centro di formazione per la pianificazione organica': un luogo di formazione e aggiornamento dei quadri tecnici locali progettato dal giovane architetto milanese Giorgio Stockel.

Il progetto, avviato, viene interrotto bruscamente la notte tra il 14 e 15 gennaio 1968 dal quel violento terremoto che colpisce la Valle del Belice. Le vittime sono molte centinaia. Migliaia le persone che restano senza casa. Le energie, in quei primi frangenti, devono essere impiegate per portare soccorso alla popolazione dei centri più colpiti. All'impreparazione istituzionale, che si dimostra ancora una volta incapace di governare la situazione, superata la prima emergenza viene opposto un piano per tutta l'area che risponde alle necessità della ricostruzione e insieme dello sviluppo democratico.

Oltre a ciò, tra l'aprile e l'agosto del 1969, a Trappeto, si tiene il seminario internazionale 'Città-territorio' a cui partecipano e aderiscono studiosi nazionali e internazionali: un importante

²⁹ Leone G., cit. p. 45.

³⁰ Sull'esperienza di Doglio in Sicilia si veda Doglio C., Urbani L. (1972), *La fionda sicula. Piano dell'autonomia siciliana*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

incontro con al centro quattro principali questioni: 1) l'urbanistica nella città-territorio; 2) l'azione-rivoluzione nonviolenta e la pianificazione organica; 3) il lavoro di gruppo nella città-territorio; 4) l'economia nella città-territorio.

Il lavoro di Dolci e del suo gruppo, pur in queste enormi difficoltà, dunque non si interrompe. Eppure non riesce a scalfire la lentezza della ricostruzione che sembra non avviarsi mai e per la quale cresce la protesta popolare³¹. Per questo, il 25 marzo 1970, dal Centro studi e iniziative di Partinico, vengono trasmesse notizie via radio (la *Radio libera della nuova resistenza*) per denunciare le gravi condizioni della Sicilia colpita dal sisma e la fase di stallo in cui versa la ricostruzione. La Radio, dopo alcune ore di trasmissione clandestina verrà chiusa a forza dalla Polizia. Una chiusura che, come già altre volte era accaduto nel passato, diventerà l'occasione per trovare nuove vie e nuovi terreni nei quali operare³².

Il racconto si chiude qui, alle soglie degli anni '70. Le trasformazioni sociali ed economiche che hanno interessato l'Italia nei vent'anni di operato di Dolci, con le quali con le quali lui stesso deve fare i conti, sono profonde e per certi aspetti irreversibili. Ma la crisi non tocca solo le iniziative portate avanti da Dolci. È un po' tutto quel filone di studi e di iniziative ad averne risentito, come documenta il convegno promosso dalla Fondazione Adriano Olivetti nel marzo 1968 e intitolato *Attualità e inattualità nei progetti di sviluppo comunitario* a cui partecipano tutti i protagonisti di quelle esperienze, ma non Dolci impegnato ad aiutare le popolazioni del Belice colpite dal terremoto.

Una crisi profonda e palpabile attraversa il pensiero di coloro i quali avevano creduto di poter contribuire a un cambiamento concreto che le vicende politiche ed economiche italiane, e non solo, sembravano aver impedito.

Malgrado tutto ciò non si esaurisce la spinta per l'affermarsi di un nuovo modo di pianificare il territorio che ci giunge come

31 Sul tema si vedano tra gli altri: Cagnoni F. (1976), *Valle del Belice terremoto di stato*, Milano: Contemporanea Edizioni; Riboldi A. (1977), *Lettere dal Belice e al Belice. Le speranze tradite. I bambini scrivono e i politici rispondono*, Milano: Mursia; Barbera L. (1980), *I ministri dal cielo. I contadini del Belice raccontano*, Milano: Feltrinelli; Susani C. (2008), *L'infanzia è un terremoto*, Bari-Roma: Laterza.

32 Si pensi ad esempio all'esperienza di Radio Aut fondata da Peppino Impastato a Terrasini che in qualche modo si ispira a quella voluta da Dolci.

occasione per riflettere sul ruolo assunto dall'urbanistica nell'agire quotidiano, sulla possibilità che l'urbanistica, così profondamente cambiata nei suoi principi iniziali, riesca ancora a concorrere in modo positivo allo sviluppo sociale e alla difesa del bene comune. L'attualità dell'esperienza di Dolci emerge di frequente nei nostri dibattiti e non di rado ispira anche le nostre esperienze progettuali. Di certo aiuta a comprendere, una volta di più, come i confini della nostra disciplina, in un'epoca in profondo cambiamento sociale e politico, debbano essere considerati sempre meno rigidi (richiamiamo qui l'idea del *piano aperto*, come lo intendeva Doglio), più fluidi, a costo di perdere il dominio del nostro campo d'azione. Ciò che cediamo, non verrà disperso. Potrà invece trasformarsi in una nuova via da intraprendere per superare l'incertezza dell'attualità e soprattutto in ricerca del senso da dare al nostro agire³³.

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OSSERVATORIO/OBSERVATORY

Self-Organization in Rome: a map

Luca Brignone e Chiara Cacciotti

Abstract

Durante gli ultimi anni, diverse ricerche sono state realizzate a Roma sul tema dello spazio e dell'autorganizzazione e molte di queste contengono importanti mappature. Tuttavia, questi processi sono molto dinamici e la situazione a Roma cambia ogni anno. Per questa ragione a novembre 2017 abbiamo deciso di realizzare, per della conferenza "City and Self-organization", tenutasi a Roma a dicembre 2017, un aggiornamento della situazione dell'autorganizzazione romana, legata all'utilizzo dello spazio, attraverso una mappa, al fine di comprendere meglio la portata e i significati del fenomeno. Le principali domande alla base del contributo sono: perché, anche se questi spazi sono così numerosi, non riescono ad influenzare le politiche urbane? Perché sono concentrate prevalentemente in alcuni quartieri della città e cosa rappresenta questa concentrazione? Quali sono le loro caratteristiche rispetto ad altri contesi europei? In che misura riescono a cambiare le istituzioni pubbliche?

During the last years many different researches regarding social spaces have been realized in Rome, sometimes containing different maps representing these experiences. Nevertheless, these processes are very dynamic and the situation of Rome changes every year. For this reason in November, 2017 we decided to realize, during the International Conference "Cities and Self-organization" held in Rome on December 2017, an updated map of all the self-organization experiences within the city of Rome in order to better understand the reach and the meanings of this phenomenon. The main questions at the base of the present research are: why, even though these spaces are so copious, are not they able in influencing urban policies? Why are they concentrated mainly in some specific quarters of the city? What are their features compared to others European cities? To what extent are they able to change the public institutions?

Parole chiave: Autorganizzazione, Mappatura, Politiche Urbane

Keywords: Self-organization, Mapping, Urban policies

Introduction

During the last years many different researches regarding social spaces have been realized in Rome, sometimes containing different maps representing these experiences. Nevertheless, these processes are very dynamic and the situation of Rome changes every year. For this reason in November, 2017 we decided to realize, during the International Conference "Cities and Self-organization" held in Rome on December 2017¹, an updated map of all the self-organization experiences within the city of Rome in order to better understand the reach and the meanings of this phenomenon.

¹ The Conference was organized by DICEA department (Dipartimento di Ingegneria Civile Edile e Ambientale) of Sapienza, University of Rome, on 11th-12th-13th December 2017.

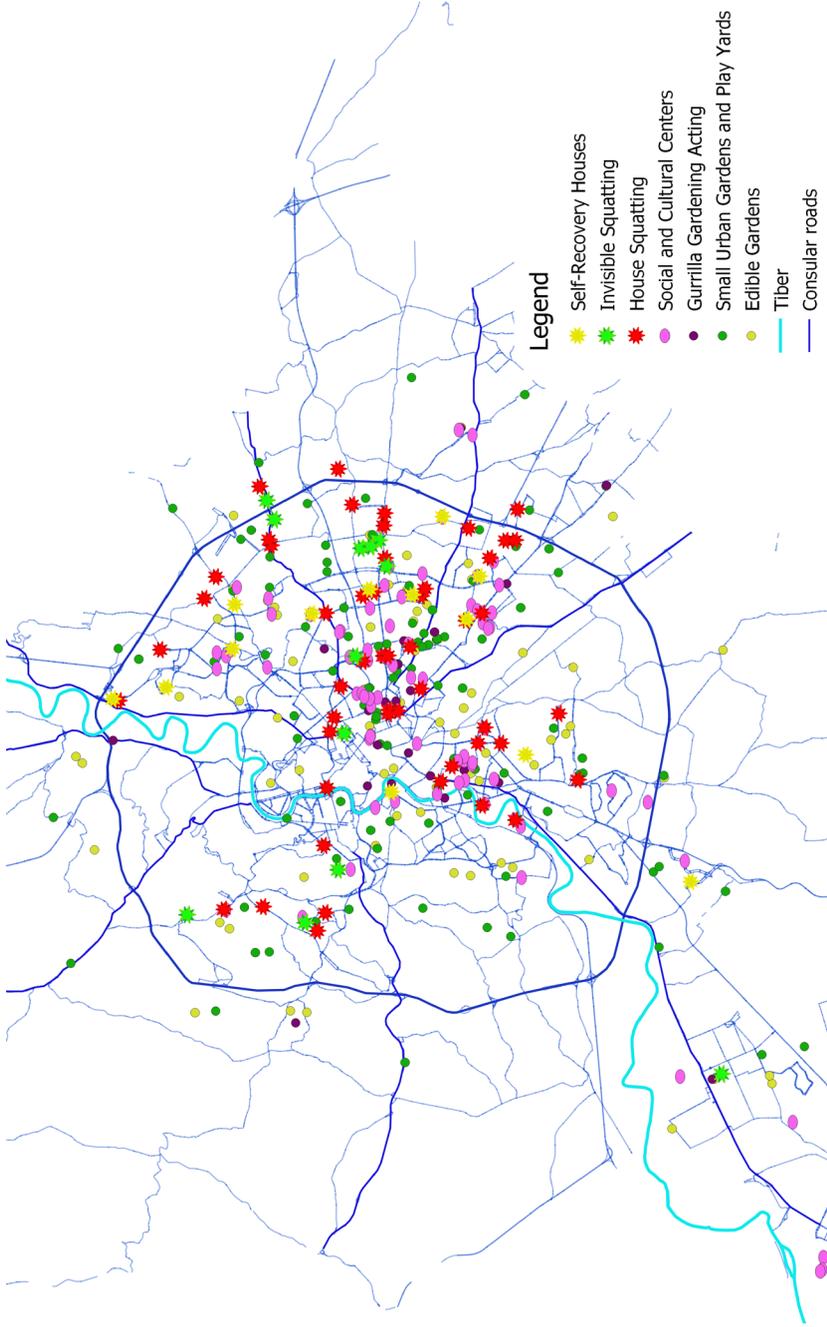


Fig.1- Rome and the Self-Organization

The map has been made with a GIS software, georeferencing and intertwining different kinds of data: for the green urban areas, we decided to start from the map realized by the association *ZappataRomana*²; for the social and cultural centers, we used the data of the associations *ReTer - Reti e Territorio*³ and the ones from *romattiva*⁴, which is a network of Roman social centers which has on its website even a list with all of his members. The same has been made for the house squatting, starting from a map realized in 2013 within a PhD thesis (Pisano, 2013) and from an act of the City's Administration dated 2016, the so-called *Delibera Tronca*. In both cases we tried to update and cross-check these data with the local news online newspapers of the last few years, in order to verify the presence of each space or the occurrence of evictions.

Considering all the possible self-organization processes, we decided to analyze only the ones related to physical spaces. This choice has been made in order to keep the focus on the space, inasmuch the object of socio-spatial urban conflicts and point of contention between re-appropriation of urban commons and commodification through neo-liberal processes.

The red, yellow and green stars represent three different kinds of house squatting. The red stars represent the house squatting experiences organized by three different housing struggles organizations of the city with different modes of action and political values. They are the Blocchi Precari Metropolitani (Precarious Metropolitan Blocks, born in 2007); the Coordinamento cittadino lotta per la casa (Citizens' Committee for the Fight for Housing), born in 1988; Action, created in 2002 but born in 1999 under the name Diritto alla Casa (Right to Housing).

The yellow stars represent all the public buildings converted into residential dwellings through a shared process between the public administration and the citizen's committees: in these cases, the City Administration realizes the first stage of the conversion, while for the second stage (the conversion of the internal flats) the City Government issues a Call addressed to committees, whom realize the conversion. The funds come from the City Government, the Region and the State.

2 <http://www.zappataromana.net/mappa/>

3 <http://www.reter.org/#zoom=11&lat=5144517.75099&lon=1388172.87049&layers=B00FFT>

4 <https://romattiva.wordpress.com/centrisocialiroma/>

The green stars represent some of the spontaneous squatting experiences in the city: in other words, that kind of squatting not organized by any committee or coordination. It is very complicated to identify these places, especially in a city like Rome. In this case, we decided to consider a municipal act known as Decreto Tronca (2016), in which these spaces are reported for evicting purposes but probably they are more than the ones visible within the map.

The pink ellipses represent the social and cultural centers and they often coincide with some house squatting experiences; the violet, green and yellow points represent respectively the Guerrilla Gardening Action, Small Urban Gardens and Play Yards, and the Urban Vegetable Gardens.

Social Centers and Housing Struggles, a long (Roman) history

At first glance, it would seem that the Social and Cultural Centers and the House Squatting in this map are the natural result of the 2008 economic crisis.

In fact, the financial downturn of the last ten years seems to have become a sort of universalistic explanation of almost all the various forms of urban exclusion, including phenomena like migration flows and housing emergency (Pozzi, Rimoldi, 2017) which today are closely interrelated especially in a city like Rome. This interrelation and - at the same time - this spread throughout the Roman territory of these experiences are, in fact, the results of a process much more historically relevant than it seems to be. Many researchers have tried to point out this relevance (Mugnani, 2017) and someone has tried to highlight the specificity in this sense of the recent Roman history both of the struggles over housing and the development of social centers (Mudu, 2014b). Others, from an anthropological perspective, have underlined the impact of these projects on domestic spaces and how the idea of *vicinato* (an intermediate social and physical place between a private home and his neighborhood) has changed throughout the years also thanks to some house squatting movements (Vereni, 2013) and how, at the same time, they often represent a surrogate of welfare state (Ibid, 2015b). For this reason, in order to better understand the map, it could be useful to try to outline the historical phases of this two phenomena together with how and why they often overlap.

At national level, in the last sixty years we have witnessed a

significant increase of the number of dwellings for housing together with a decreasing trend of the whole population (Aureli and Mudu, 2017:501). This apparently contradictory process went hand in hand with a progressive rise of policies encouraging home ownership and dismissal of public assets, culminated in the late 1990s in the so-called *cartolarizzazione* (securitization), a financial arrangement aimed at selling public assets, especially buildings owned by public bodies like State Social Security Systems (*enti previdenziali pubblici*) converted into marketable goods. Nevertheless, the result of this process is that Social Housing today is largely absent from the political agenda of the Italian Capital city: its history, since the very beginning⁵, was characterized by a will to strengthen class differences along the demarcation of “productivity” (Vereni, 2015a) with the result that a large amount of citizens (almost always those groups which are most in need) have been excluded to these policies.

After the Luttazzi’s Law and the creation of IACP (Istituto Autonomo Case Popolari) and also during the Fascist Regime, the subjects of housing policies were primarily the middle class families while shanty town dwellers, unemployed and immigrants from Southern Italy were ghettoized in the so called “*baraccamenti ufficiali*” after being evicted from the city center (Vereni, 2015b).

From the post war period, the Christian Democrat Party held the roman political power uninterruptedly for almost thirty years “allied with the same landlords and real-estate speculators active during the dictatorship [...] and additionally supported a new generation of *palazzinari*”⁶ (Mudu, 2014a:65): an alliance that helped to continue along the same political path regarding housing and that will be formalized in 1962 into the approval of the new Urban Master Plan of Rome, whose goal was also “to stimulate further real-estate speculation with the intention of developing the city to accommodate up to five million inhabitants (the population at the time was 2.278,882)” (Ivi :66).

In this way, a large amount of housing blocks was built between the historic city and the *borgate*, sometimes pretty close to the

⁵ The Luttazzi’s Law (1903) is considered the first step in Italy towards the birth of public housing. It assigned the task to the municipalities in providing for the housing needs of the poorest inhabitants.

⁶ *Palazzinaro* is a roman slang term used to indicate the most famous roman families of builders and owners of several buildings in the Capital.

already existent illegal housing constructions (*abusivismo*) and not designed as integrated parts of the city. This process marked the birth of planned suburbs (*periferie*), areas that from their genesis and during the 1970s and 1980s became not only places of residence but also sites of production of alternative cultures: it is within these contests that experiences like social centers and housing struggles were born.

Following the analysis made by Pierpaolo Mudu (2014a; 2014b), it is possible to identify three phases both in the development of social centers and in the one of housing struggles in Rome. The first generation of social centers (during the second half of the 1970s) was strictly linked to a series of national pro-housing initiatives; after that period, in Rome, Mudu identifies a first phase between the 1985 and 1989 within which almost all the projects were related to *Autonomia Operaia* and located in suburban areas as the result of a precise choice against the real-estate speculation and the concentration in the historic center of all the cultural services and activities.

The second phase was after the 1990 mobilization of university student against the reform of the Italian University system, and according to Mudu the most interesting innovation about this period is that people started to visit and participate to the social centers activities even if they didn't live in that neighborhood. New sympathizers were actually attracted thanks to an increased visibility also in terms of communication strategies (like posters and big musical events). This increased number of visitors marked, in fact, a change in the internal demography of social centers that continued afterwards also during the third phase (after the anti-G8 demonstrations in 2001) although a significant rise of the internal disagreements.

Interestingly enough, the Roman history of the struggles over housing has a similar threefold partition together with some elements in common with the social centers one. First of all, it was born after the Second World War (1950s-1960s) and this first stage was actually directed by the PCI (the Italian Communist Party). Their main aim was to integrate all the peripheral neighborhoods to the city, together with the request of a legal planning of the house building and the legalization of the illegal houses built until then by poor people (Tozzetti, 1989). After that battle and the revoking of the Fascist Law N.1092/1939 (better known as *Provvedimenti contro l'urbanesimo*), the second

phase of this struggle started from the latter part of the 1960s and it was headed mostly by extra parliamentary organizations like *Autonomia Operaia* or national association like *Unione Nazionale Inquilini Assegnatari*: while the second promoted squatting as a means to negotiate with Institutions, the first attacked also private housing and was strongly settled in the social and political climate of those years (Mudu, 2014a:71). The third and last phase can be identified from the late 80s onwards, when squatting became in fact a permanent feature of the city and new associations⁷ - that are still active today - were created. There are at least three new features about this new wave of squatting: the first is a spacial change occurred in the choice of the squatting locus, which are mostly abandoned public buildings like schools or former public offices sometimes very close to the center of the city (unlike the first phases); the second is the internal demography of these contexts, within which there are a significant number of foreign immigrants and in general middle class people or families, both Italians and foreigners, whom can't afford to pay a rent anymore (Pisano, 2013); the third is the formalization, even if in many different ways, of a self-organization process aimed at managing the internal cohabitations and at the same time at organizing the external political claims (for example, all the squatters share to participate in political demonstrations on Human Rights and urban issues).

Map's interpretations

The first aspect to consider and that from our point of view deserves a reflection is the location of these spaces, above all the houses squatting and the social and cultural centers: they are located mainly within the south and the east area of the city, the post-Fordist ones of the Capital. Even though Rome has never been an industrial city as Milan or Turin, during the second half of the nineteenth century it had some important factories in the neighborhood of Ostiense, within the south quarter, while after the Urban Master Plan of the 1962-65, the east quarter was supposed to be the industrial axis of the city. The industry didn't

⁷ As previously stated, at the moment the three most active and relevant associations in this sense are *Coordinamento cittadino lotta per la casa* (Citizen's Committee for the Fight for Housing), born in 1988, *Action* (2002) and *Blocchi Precari Metropolitan* (Precarious Metropolitan Blocks, 2007).

last enough to make the economy of the city dependent on this sector like the public and the services ones (D'Albergo, Moini, Pizzo, 2016), but in these quarters there are still some former factories and the surrounding neighborhoods arose as working class ones.

We cannot say if it was the availability of such vacant spaces inherited by the former industries, or rather the popular origin of these neighborhoods to trigger the relation with these squatting realities (probably both); anyway, we think that it is possible to read these self-organization experiences in the light of some global processes tied to the de-industrialization, the restructuring of the contemporary economy and the recession of welfare state in favor of a neo-liberal agenda by the public institutions. In this sense, Rome is not strictly readable as a city of the Global North (Sassen, 2010), inasmuch it had not a strong industrial economy and the transition between the Fordist economy through a Post-Fordist one was not so marked. On the other hand, if we compare the informality characterizing a consistent part of Rome's management with the literature dedicated to the Global South (e.g. Fernandez-Kelly and Garcia 1989; Portes et al. 1989; Rao, 2013) we can track some relations, because of the tolerance of these practices as they are seen as alternative forms of survival strategies.

According to Pizzo and Altavilla, the division between Global North/South is not helpful and «what counts are the conditions under which they [illegal practices] emerge» (Pizzo, Altavilla, 2018:177). According to this perspective, it would be interesting to analyze these “conditions”, and in particular the role of the public institutions in managing self-organization's practices. The two authors (Pizzo, Altavilla, 2018), for example, argue that informal practices⁸ sometimes are useful for maintaining the status quo in socio-economic relationships. Some reflections in this sense could start from analyzing the public policies adopted in the two areas containing the highest number of social and cultural centers of Rome: Ostiense, in the south quarter, and Scalo San Lorenzo and Pigneto, in the east quarter. In both these areas the City Government invested in requalification programs during the 90s triggering processes ascribable to gentrification

⁸ It is important to distinguish the concept of informal, illegal and illicit, but for summary reasons we refer to the text of Pizzo and Altavilla. Anyway, self-organization can belong to all these three categories.

(Marinero, Daniele, 2014; Scandurra, 2012). Were these social and cultural centers functional (involuntarily) to a rent increasing in that areas?

Following this kind of analysis, we can stress the second thing that is possible to notice looking at the map: the amount of the mapped spaces. They are so copious that they should have a strong impact on the city's policies, but the relation between the public institutions and the instituting society that these self-organization experiences are producing is very ambiguous, dynamic and contradictory. We can try to put light, in a very concise way, on this constant dialectical tension between the institute society and instituting society through three aspects related to the three different kind of spaces analyzed:

1) City's regulation for the self-management of green urban areas

The city of Rome has around 45 million square meters of green areas scattered around its territory and articulated in different typologies, like parks and gardens, and it has a historical difficulty in managing them. Since many years, different associations and committees are asking for a city's regulation for the self-management of these areas, following the model of other European and Italian cities. In 2012, it was established a coordination between the City Government and a coordination of associations in order to elaborate a regulation, with the support of technicians and universities. Today, after different guidelines approved by the city government (throughout three administrations), it still misses an official regulation.

2) Self-recovery for House Squatting

Rome has a long history of housing struggles, but it has never been able to face the issue and nowadays it has only the 4.3% of social housing against the European average of 13.7% (Global City Report, 2011) and around 30.000 families suffer from housing problems, while 5.000 live in a squatting (Caritas, 2017). What is interesting, looking at the map, is the number of self-recovery houses compared with the other illegal and informal house squatting: they are only 11. Furthermore, these spaces are converted with the same processes of the recovery of the former self-made (illegal) housing, a kind of process that probably is useful also for maintaining the status quo in socio-economic relationships (Pizzo and Altavilla, 2018).

3) City government resolutions for the recognition of Social and Cultural Centers

The history of the last three decades of the relation between the public institutions and the social centers in Rome is paradigmatic of the paradox and the ambiguities of this issue. The first act regarding the use of the public property was promulgated in 1983, but it wasn't until the 1995, after the first two years of administration of the left-center wing, that the City Government approved a resolution named *Delibera 26*⁹ which was related to the social use of the public properties: with this act some social centers could use those properties paying only the 20% of the market value of the spaces.

After the financial crisis of 2008 and the following austerity policies, the public discourse about valorization and privatization in order to reach the budget balance begun to put under pressure the public institutions: in 2014 an act named *Delibera 219*¹⁰, a guideline for the new regulation, introduced the principle of the public call for the use of the public properties (860 of them are considered unavailable properties¹¹) with the criteria of the social and economic assessment. Hence, the first important struggles between the movements and the new left-center wing administration started. But the biggest paradox appeared the following year: the Court of Audit, a public and independent agency, by the hand of a general regional vice-prosecutor, proclaimed a revenue damage for the act of 1995, reporting the public officials responsible for that act for millions of euro and, consequently, the social centers for 20 years for being in arrears: the social centers received penalties of tens of thousands euros. One of them arrived to 6 million euros of penalty¹². In that year, the 2015, the *Delibera 140*¹³ was proclaimed by the City government and it led to the eviction of different centers and to the resignation of the vice-mayor of Rome.

Today there is an open struggle between the movements and the public institutions and the issue is still open: recently another

9 https://www.comune.roma.it/PCR/resources/cms/documents/CC26_1995.pdf

10 <https://www.comune.roma.it/PCR/resources/cms/documents/DGCDelib.N219del23.07.2014.pdf>

11 The public properties are divided in unavailable and available (according to the article n.828 of the Italian Civil Code): the firsts ones can be used only for public purposes.

12 <https://ilmanifesto.it/sfratti-e-sgomberi-un-anno-dopo-roma-non-si-vende/>

13 https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/DGCDelib_140_20151.pdf

act of the Court of Audit of the judges deleted the first one of the prosecutor ¹⁴ and interestingly this happened in the same period in which the movements and the associations were organized in a network named “*Decide Roma*” (Rome decides) and they decided to organize a big common protests under the slogan “*Roma non si vende*” (Rome is not for sale). Anyway this act is not executive, because the intervention of the new city’s administration is mandatory in order to make it effective.

Conclusions

In all these cases, self-organization experiences in Rome are very different in internal organization arrangements and political mindsets. Sometimes they just have an oppositional role towards the misrule of the city, but the risk could be to justify the absence of public institutions in providing the citizens with a welfare state system or even to become functional to the maintenance of the neo-liberal current socio-economic system. At the same time, they offer autonomous responses to social needs and they are able to provide services to the neighborhood inhabitants or to the roman citizens themselves.

Overall, there is an undoubtable fragmentation and inability to create a unique political network on these political and urban issues, but this fragmentation is the result - as we have seen - of a very complex historical and political process and it has to do with the many ways in which people live and see a city like Rome. This complexity is both the cause and the effect of an ongoing negotiation among associations, citizens and Institutions.

To summarize, in Rome it seems that self-organization doesn’t correspond to a unique and unambiguous political project on the city; nevertheless, these realities try to carry out some interesting everyday reflections and practices upon what it means to make politics in the city, with or without the institutional counterpart. In doing so, they actually contribute to the de-naturalization of a hegemonic and neoliberal way to inhabit the city.

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14 Because the properties were considered unavailable, so it was impossible to get a rent from them.

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Funding the Cooperative City. From knowledge network to local action.

Daniela Patti & Levente Polyak / Eutopian Research & Action

Abstract

Negli ultimi anni gli spazi culturali, sociali, comunitari ed educativi sono diventati laboratori per nuove forme di vita, lavoro, apprendimento e scambio collettivo. Tuttavia, questi spazi affrontano molte difficoltà nel costruire strutture economiche stabili, o mancano di ammortizzatori finanziari che garantiscano loro un'operatività sul lungo termine oltre a una relativa autonomia. Questo libro riunisce una varietà di attori, pratiche, modelli e meccanismi che affrontano queste difficoltà: il nostro proposito è quello di usare queste esperienze per aiutare e ispirare iniziative civiche nell'accedere al patrimonio comunitario, costruendo modelli finanziari stabili, rafforzando le economie locali mantenendo i profitti all'interno dei territori stessi ed assicurando gli spazi dall'oppressione e dall'economia estrattiva.

In recent years, cultural, social, community and educational spaces have become laboratories of new forms of living, working, learning and collective exchange. However, these civic spaces face many difficulties in establishing stable economic structures, or lack financial buffers to secure their long-term operations and relative autonomy. This book brings together a variety of actors, practices, models, mechanisms and opinions that address these difficulties: our intention is to use these experiences to help and inspire civic space initiatives in accessing community capital, building stable financial models, strengthening local economies by keeping profits in neighbourhoods and ensuring spaces against public oppression or the extraction economy.

Parole Chiave: Economia collaborativa, Proprietà condivisa, Occupazione locale, Trasferimento di conoscenza, Cooperazione di molteplici stakeholder

Keywords: Collaborative economy, Shared ownership, Local employment, Knowledge transfer, Multi-stakeholder cooperation

1. Introduction

For centuries, urban planning and development, had been an exclusively top-down process: the hegemony of modern state planning in organising environments according to pre-established principles, and the non-recognition of non-governmental contribution to shaping space has often provoked conflicts between public, private and civic actors. The increasing role of capital in the production of space gradually turned urban development into a lucrative enterprise, often with the close cooperation of a central power and private developers and financiers, such as in the case of Haussmann's reconstruction

of Paris in the second half of the 19th century: the production of space and urbanisation have become « one of the key ways in which the capital surplus is absorbed» (Harvey, 2010). With the crises of the 1970s including deindustrialisation and the growth of unemployment, and as a consequence of national policies forcing decentralisation and reduction of the welfare state, municipal administrations, traditionally the main clients and managers of major urban works, have gradually lost their leading role in planning and developing cities. This transformation, often described as neo-liberalisation, brought along a shift from «distributive policies, welfare considerations, and direct service provision towards more market-oriented and market-dependent approaches» (Waterhout, Othengrafen and Sykes, 2013:143).

In the context of increasing pressure on public administrations to become entrepreneurial, financial capital has had a growing role in shaping cities across the world. Easier access to mortgages provided by the relatively unrestrained financial markets prompted a boom in constructions in and around European cities, resulting in vast areas of new housing and office units, conceived more as investment opportunities than as places to live or to work. In the financialised city, buildings are «no longer something to use, but to own (with the hope of increased asset-value, rather than use-value, over time) » (de Graaf, 2015). When the exchange-value of buildings gains prominence over their use-value, they lose all relationship with actual needs and become acting «similarly to how financial products are being created and sold that have lost any connection with real production or a real economy» (Vanstiphout, 2012:94). Becoming targets of speculation, many former sites of welfare and cultural services (hospitals, schools, parks, theatres, cinemas) have become endangered species, calculated as potential buildable square meters instead of potential contributions to life quality. As a result, entire neighbourhoods in cities like London have become completely inaccessible for lower and middle classes, not only due to the rising rents but also because of the disappearing public amenities.

In this process, many urban functions have lost their status as a «social good, part of the commonalities a society agrees to share or to provide to those with fewer resources: a means to distribute wealth» (Rolnik, 2013:1059). Fed by pension funds, private equity and hedge funds, large sections of the real estate stock

(including housing) have become “fictitious commodities,” in a movement that has «transformed a ‘sleeping beauty’ — an asset owned by traditional means — into a ‘fantastic ballet,’ with assets changing hands through constant and rapid transactions». Under pressure from financial actors, many public bodies also began venturing out in affairs often unrelated to their responsibilities and capacities. Municipal departments and public companies began to perform as if they were financial actors themselves: Dutch housing associations began investing their capital at the stock exchange, while Berlin’s Bankgesellschaft got involved in speculative real estate investments. On the other hand, the complete domination of the public sector over economic life in Hungary led to real estate privatisation processes serving a small circle of oligarchs situated close to the government and local administrations.

2. Economic crises and the down-scaling of urban governance

The social costs of the financialisation of cities, most tangible in the lack of affordable housing and the cutback of social services, became even more amplified with the 2008 economic crisis and the public bailout of banks. While the millennium’s real estate crisis made its appearance at diverse segments of the cities across the world, touching housing, office buildings, retail spaces, community venues and public buildings, the austerity measures introduced after the eruption of the crisis by national governments and European institutions sought to reduce budget deficits by spending cuts, minimising labour costs, privatisation, downsizing local administrations and the reconfiguration of public services. Facing declining revenues and not allowed to run deficits, therefore struggling with significantly reduced operative budgets, many municipalities were forced to make budget cuts disproportionately impacting «the poor, the young, racialised communities and the elderly leading to the intensification of social-spatial segregation at the neighbourhood, city and inter-city levels» (Donald, Glasmeier, Gray and Lobao, 2014:4). The crisis also brought many speculative urban development projects to insolvency, turning buildings and entire complexes obsolete before they were even finished, leading to mass abandonment and vacancy.

In the context of the crisis, many local and cultural communities witnessed their spatial and economic resources diminishing with

the drainage of funding and the withdrawal of institutional support. Communities in disadvantaged and deprived neighbourhoods across Europe were particularly affected by austerity measures and the suspension or abandonment of key local services such as social care, childcare, education, health and the maintenance of communal spaces and infrastructures¹; as a response, many of these communities set themselves to create spaces and services on their own. Giving up on expecting help or cooperation from municipalities in some cases, or establishing new frameworks for cooperation with local administrations in others, these initiatives became proactive forces in shaping European cities by creating new community spaces and launching new social services through the establishment of a parallel civic infrastructure, addressing local needs with local solutions. While in many cities in Southern and Eastern Europe that struggled to maintain even some of their most basic infrastructures as the crisis hit national and local economies, community actors set themselves to fill the vacuum left by municipalities and states, many cities in Northwest Europe managed to weather the recession relatively well and “share” their services with communities in more coordinated, contractual forms of “governance-beyond-the-state.” (Swyngedouw, 2005:1991–2006).

These new forms of governance contributed to the formal or informal extension of the field of actors in urban development and to the outsourcing of «former public tasks and services to volunteer organisations, community associations, non-profit corporations, foundations, and private firms» (Purcell, 2009:145). This process supplied «individuals and collectives with the possibility of actively participating in the solution of specific matters and problems» through the «down-scaling of governance to ‘local’ practices and arrangements» (Swyngedouw, *Ivi*:1998) and the consequent responsabilisation of these individuals and collectives who set themselves to organise their own services and venues, often in formerly vacant buildings, underused areas and neglected neighbourhoods. The engagement of non-institutional and non-profit actors in renovating, operating and managing civic spaces brought participation to a new level:

1 For instance, the city of Rome lost about € 860 million of State subsidies between 2010 and 2013. This cut corresponded to a 10% decrease of cultural budgets, a € 222 million cut of the healthcare budget, and consequentially, a 46% price increase of public kindergartens (Comune di Roma, 2015).

instead of expressing consent or dissent related to a planned development project, or even contributing to the program or design of a new urban area, many communities took the initiative into their own hands and became developers – urban pioneers, spatial entrepreneurs or city makers – themselves.

3. The financial consolidation of civic spaces

One of the key dimensions of down-scaled governance is the community-led development and management of urban spaces. While in many countries, the economic recession culminated in a devastating foreclosure crisis², the corresponding escalation of non-residential property vacancy created possibilities in many European cities for alternative models of user-generated, community-led urban development processes, often through the adaptive reuse of empty buildings, spaces or land. In cities where a strong alliance of various actors created the right conditions and assurances, long-lasting structures and opportunities were created. In others, user-generated regeneration projects were instrumentalised and incorporated in institutional or for-profit development processes. Yet in others, in the absence of credible public actors, the non-profit private and civic sectors became guardians of public values, functions and services.

As space is a crucial component of community organising, social cohesion and cultural exchange, civic spaces accommodating gatherings and events of socialisation, activities of education, sport or work are key ingredients, “foundational institutions” of the public city (Rossi, 2013:1067–74). The buildings reclaimed for community functions vary in their profiles from “free spaces” through “houses of culture” to “co-working spaces,” and differ from each other in their organisational and management principles, accessibility, financial sustainability and political dimension. Certainly, it is not evident how to define “civic spaces” and to combine empty office buildings turned into incubators, theatres, school buildings, cinemas, gyms, social kitchen in a single framework, and to identify spaces that are situated between public and private, between spaces of living and spaces of work, without losing the critical perspective on the emergence and establishment of these spaces. What links them is that they all address the lack of existing facilities for

² The foreclosure crisis provoked significant political movements like PAH in Barcelona that gave the city’s mayor in 2015

social activities, welfare services, independent work and cultural exchange; participate in the discourse about reusing urban space for community purposes; acquire skills related to the renovation, management and governance of spaces; generate processes of cooperation and conflict with public and private property owners; and share their practices, models and tools through the multifaceted movement of “space pioneers,” “spatial entrepreneurs,” “city makers” or “commoners.”

The self-organisation of new spaces of work, culture and social welfare was made possible by various socio-economic circumstances: unemployment, solidarity networks, changing real estate prices, and ownership patterns created opportunities for stepping out of the regular dynamics of real estate development – as many cases in this book demonstrate. However, despite the growing institutional and public recognition of citizen-led urbanism and the values created by civic spaces in terms of social cohesion, welfare services and local employment, many community initiatives struggle to establish financial, economic and organisational models that would enable them to operate on a stable, sustainable, long-term basis. The many attempts across Europe to establish civic spaces through the occupation or the temporary use of vacant properties, for instance, face the challenges of eviction, instrumentalisation by institutional development processes, or exhausted resources and human capacities. This book aims at offering a variety of paths and models for those in search for solutions to these challenges.

Seeking to consolidate their presence in the regenerated spaces, many initiatives are increasingly looking into the power of the local community, the dispersed crowd and new financial actors to invest in their activities. In some cases, shared and cooperative ownership structures exclude the possibility of real estate speculation, in others, new welfare services are integrated in local economic tissues, relying on unused resources and capacities. The new cooperative development processes also witnessed the emergence of new types of investors, operating along principles of ethics or sustainability, or working on moving properties off the market.

While, in some cases, the public sector plays an important role in strengthening civil society in some European cities, by orchestrating emerging public-civic cooperation and providing start-up or match funding to community initiatives, many other

cities witnessed the emergence of new welfare services provided by the civic economy, often without any help by the public sector. In some occasions, community contribution appears in the form of philanthropist donation to support the construction, renovation or acquisition of playgrounds, parks, stores, pubs or community spaces. In others, community members act as creditors or investors in an initiative that needs capital, in exchange for interest, shares or the community ownership of local assets, for instance, shops in economically challenged neighbourhoods.

4. Models to share, the dilemmas of Big Society and questions of accountability

The civic spaces emerging across Europe that use experimental resources, structures and mechanisms to finance and sustain their operations, vary greatly in their positions to embrace or reject market dynamics, various forms of ownership or cooperation with political actors. However, there are many attempts to connect these dispersed sites to larger tissues of urban self-organisation: a great variety of events, discourses, cooperations, joint actions, policies and solidarity funds shape the emerging networks that increasingly challenge the status quo of urban governance and real estate development. Funding the Cooperative City is one of them.

Within these networks, some experiences proved to be particularly inspiring. First implemented in 2009 by ExRotaprint, an organisation successfully purchasing the compounds its members rented before, the model of ownership shared with anti-speculation organisations offered responses to dilemmas of gentrification, speculation and precariousness and has since been replicated by many other organisations, becoming an inspiration for initiatives aiming at changing the general policies of privatisation. The strategy to turn privatisation into an advantage for a civic space has proven a feasible path for many initiatives in Berlin as they were facing similar threats from the side of the municipality's real estate policy and large institutional investors and developers.

By the time the ExRotaprint model became internationally known and began inspiring citizen initiatives across Europe, the possibilities opened in the real estate market through the crisis began to close. With the end of the crisis, at least concerning the availability of financial capital, real estate markets began to

return to their pre-crisis dynamics. While this recovery signalled the end of a missed opportunity in some cities to exploit weaker demand and lower prices to build a more accessible property system, the return of investment capital brought about a housing crisis in Berlin and a return to the classic, investor-driven development mechanisms in many other cities. With less need for city makers who invested their energies during the crisis when vacant buildings were mushrooming, the much hailed extended governance of the crisis-time that included citizen initiatives as legitimate players in planning and development processes was partially dropped.

Although the real estate market's return to "normal" endangered many civic initiatives, many of them were equipped with tools and skills that enabled them to take the next step towards stability. The end of the crisis in Dutch cities and the Berlin real estate boom brought up the question of autonomy and ownership even stronger: how can initiatives without much capital move beyond the vulnerability of short-term tenancies and changing prices? In contrast with the ethos of urban living in Berlin or Dutch cities in the last decades of the 20th century, where renting enjoyed higher popularity, many initiatives found the answer in ownership or very long-term leasehold, but excluding private profit.

Although following the example of ExRotaprint, many civic initiatives across Europe began to contemplate cooperation with anti-speculation foundations and ethical finance organisations in order to buy their buildings, the model cannot simply be implemented anywhere: its adaptability depends on the ideal combination of low real estate prices, relatively transparent public real estate management, stable and suitable legal environment and high purchasing power. In addition, scaling up the work of ethical and community finance organisations, by extending solidarity fund networks to an international level might compromise the very principles of these organisations: personal connection with and overview of supported initiatives. Furthermore, the intervention of these foundations in privatisation processes at the invitation of various public administrations in Germany raises additional dilemmas: what are the accountability criteria for private organisations that act in defence of public values, services and non-marketable spaces but operate outside of democratic processes and public rules of transparency? What gives them legitimacy as safeguards of

civic spaces against private and public pressure? What makes their properties civic spaces and how can they, in cooperation with other actors, ensure the long-term sustainability of public values and spaces?

These questions inevitably generated important discussions about the role of various sectors in the “public city,” that is, a disposition that offers similar opportunities to all social groups: can civic actors or communities better manage spaces and services that traditionally belonged to the public domain? Or is the involvement of civic actors in providing public services just another way of privatising services and dismantling the public domain and its welfare services according to the “Big Society”³ model of the UK Tory government? Are civic spaces a competition for public spaces or an extension to them?

5. Conclusions

For principles of accountability, the extension of the public realm towards speculation-free spaces provided by private-civic cooperation should be joined by, but not overwhelmed by public administrations and public funds. If regulations of public-civic cooperation in the context of traditionally strong public administrations have been limited to right of use and have not yet created applicable shared ownership models, shared administration, as a way to share public responsibilities and resources with community organisations, citizen groups and public-minded private developers may prove to be an important model in creating community co-ownership over local assets and keeping profits to benefit local residents and services to ensure more resilient neighbourhoods and more autonomous civic spaces.

There are also converging aspirations at the European level. In the 2014-2020 period of European funding, new financial instruments and policies have been put in place to improve how EU funds may respond to societal needs on the ground. Because most of the population in Europe currently lives in cities, part of this attempt has been the increasing connection of the European Commission with urban areas, as the EU Urban Agenda seeks

³ “Big Society” was a slogan by former UK prime minister David Cameron with which he suggested that civil organisations take many social responsibilities off the shoulders of the state.

to do. The 2014-2020 ERDF Regulations⁴ identify the so-called articles 7 and 8, foreseeing forms of direct funding to cities, which should be co-managed with local stakeholders. With article 7, the EC has foreseen direct European funding coming to cities and no longer being managed by Regional intermediary authorities. For the shared administration of urban spaces and services, particularly relevant is Community-Led Local Development, an instrument foreseeing the co-management of European funding amongst a wide range of stakeholders, from public to private and civic, as it is currently being tested in the city of Lisbon. Another opportunity is provided by cities applying for grants to co-create activities amongst many stakeholders under the Urban Innovative Actions program: an example for this is the way the Turin Municipality works together with Cascina Roccafranca and the rest of the Rete delle Case di Quartiere. Although there is still a strong limitation in the adoption of such programs in many cities across Europe, their existence and the increasing awareness of stakeholders could provide an opportunity for their further spreading and effectiveness towards societal needs.

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⁴ European Regional Development Fund Regulations available online: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/legislation/regulations/

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**L'affermazione del "localismo costituzionale in Italia":
una nuova governance che a raccontarla non ci si crede**
Agnese Bertello, Stefania Lattuille, Marianella Sclavi

Abstract

"Localismo costituzionale" sta ad indicare un nuovo ethos civico e forma di governance che sposta il più grande numero possibile di decisioni pubbliche a livello di comunità, ancorandole direttamente al quadro di libertà e dei diritti garantiti dalla costituzione.

Rientrano in questa categoria una moltitudine di iniziative dal basso, di cittadinanza attiva che si propongono di affrontare questioni di interesse comune, dalla rigenerazione di edifici e territori in crisi, alla fornitura di beni e servizi, promozione di forme di turismo "slow" o alternativo, ecc. in modo partecipato e co-progettuale. La loro fioritura è in buona parte dovuta alla ormai palese incapacità delle strutture pubbliche tradizionali di gestire la complessità sociale e al riconoscimento che questo compito può essere meglio assolto favorendo la nascita e vitalità di organismi che vedono come protagonismo i diretti interessati. L'articolo descrive le tappe e gli sviluppi di questo cambiamento e ne sottolinea le dimensioni sovversive rispetto alla tradizionale concezione dei rapporti fra società civile e stato e fra iniziativa dei cittadini e "interesse generale". Il nuovo modo di governance viene descritto attraverso due specifiche esperienze, una al nord del paese, le case di quartiere di Torino e una all'estremo sud, una iniziativa che si è dimostrata vincente nell'affrancare i contadini sia dall'assoggettamento alla 'ndrangheta, sia allo strozzinaggio dei monopoli della distribuzione dei prodotti.

What is named "Constitutional localism" is a new civic ethos and form of governance that intend to shift the greatest number of public decisions possible to the community level - with a clear mission to promote locally the individual freedoms and rights guaranteed by the Constitution. A variety of initiatives and undertakings fall within this category, all run by groups of active citizens who address issues of the general good, like regeneration of abandoned buildings and public spaces, the creation of new job opportunities, giving birth to creative no profit or low profit economic initiatives like "slow tourism", "social farming" and the diffusion of alternative energy plants and so on. All of them are managed in a participatory fashion through a transparent process open to the local dwellers. Their proliferation is due to the by now manifest failure of the public institutions to deal effectively with social complexity and to the recognition that this task can be carried out better by undertakings and associations run by the local stakeholders with the non-intrusive help (only if and when asked) of public operators and powers. This paper describes the main steps and developments of what is seen as a real paradigm shift in the forms of governance from bureaucracy to trans (o post) bureaucracy, from capitalism to trans (or post) capitalism. The new model of governance is more concretely highlighted through the illustration of two specific experiences, one in the Nord part of the country, the "Neighborhood houses" in Turin and the other at the extreme South, an undertaking which succeeded in helping the local farmers to cast themselves free from both the subjugation of the 'ndrangheta and the loan

sharking of the big monopolies of the distribution network. And by illustrating how these results are achieved, it shows that they are beyond the ways and goals normally attainable respectively by both the profit and public sector.

Parole Chiave: Localismo costituzionale, Ethos civico, Governance, Cittadinanza attiva

Keywords: Civic ethos, New governance paradigm, Postburocracy

L'espressione "localismo costituzionale" appare particolarmente adatta per descrivere un vero e proprio, per quanto in larga misura ancora inconsapevole, cambiamento epocale in atto nella governance pubblica in questi ultimi anni in Italia.

"Localismo costituzionale" è una espressione che sta ad indicare un nuovo ethos civico e forma di governance che sposta il più grande numero possibile di decisioni pubbliche a livello di comunità, ancorandole direttamente al quadro di libertà e dei diritti garantiti dalla costituzione. Da più parti in Europa come negli Usa¹ si assume che le esperienze alle quali con questa espressione ci si riferisce siano dei laboratori di democrazia in grado di offrire una efficace alternativa al dirigismo neoliberista e all'universo di "solitudini connesse" di una società divenuta incapace di tessere rapporti di fiducia fra i suoi membri, esperienze capaci di promuovere la formazione di contesti di mutuo apprendimento e di incoraggiare la collaborazione nella diagnosi e co-progettazione di soluzioni creative ed eque ai problemi sistemici, primo fra tutti l'ampliamento esponenziale delle diseguaglianze economiche e sociali, tramite più democrazia e non meno.

In Italia l'atto che ha dato la stura a una moltiplicazione di esperienze che possiamo far rientrare in questa categoria è stato, nel 2001, l'introduzione nella Costituzione della Repubblica del principio di sussidiarietà, secondo la seguente formulazione: «Stato, regioni, province, città metropolitane e comuni favoriscono l'autonoma iniziativa dei cittadini, singoli e associati, per lo svolgimento di attività di interesse generale, sulla base del principio di sussidiarietà» (nuovo Titolo V, art. 118, ultimo comma).

¹ Vedi: *Healing American Democracy: going local*, di Mike Hais, Doug Ross e Morley Winograd, University of Cincinnati Press, 2018, *Conflict, Improvisation, Governance. Street level Practices for Urban Democracy* di David Laws e John Forester, Routledge, 2015 e *Politiche del Quotidiano. Progetti di vita che cambiano il mondo*, di Ezio Manzini, Ed di Comunità, 2018.

Due sono gli aspetti sovversivi presenti in questa formulazione: prima di tutto il riconoscimento che anche i cittadini e non solo le istituzioni pubbliche hanno il diritto di svolgere attività e prendere iniziative “di interesse generale”, ovvero di organizzarsi e agire non solo per motivi mutualistici, ma avendo come scopo il “bene comune”, il miglioramento delle condizioni di vita dell’intero territorio di appartenenza. E in secondo luogo che le strutture statali e la PA a tutti i livelli sono tenute a promuovere questo tipo di iniziative dei cittadini anziché bloccarle.

Come osserva Gregorio Arena, fondatore dei “laboratori per la sussidiarietà” (Labsus): «Si tratta di una formulazione che non legittima in alcun modo un ritrarsi dei poteri pubblici di fronte ad iniziative di interesse generale da parte dei privati, anzi prevede che tali iniziative diano vita ad un’alleanza fra amministrazioni e cittadini. L’amministrazione condivisa, appunto» (Arena, 2017: 121-128).

Per apprezzare la novità straordinaria di questa impostazione, basti pensare che l’impalcatura del diritto pubblico in Italia è ancora oggi in larga misura basata sulla premessa (formulata nel XIX secolo) che la imparzialità della PA deve basarsi sulla impersonalità e su controlli procedurali e che il dialogo fra poteri pubblici e società va visto come occasione di confusione e corruzione. Lungo tutto il XX secolo in Italia gran parte del ceto politico di ogni orientamento ha condiviso l’idea che quando si debbano prendere decisioni relative al bene comune non vi sia alternativa alla unilateralità e autoritatività del potere pubblico col suo lessico astruso e giuridicistico, mentre la stragrande maggioranza della gente comune considerava la profonda estraneità e inimicizia degli apparati statali rispetto ai propri mondi vitali come una specie di legge della Natura.

Per fare un esempio, prendete la modalità di amministrazione di un complesso di case popolari da parte degli Istituti Autonomi. Si tratta di edifici e aree circostanti che si trovano per lo più in un evidente stato di grave mancanza di cura e manutenzione con conseguenti disagi per gli abitanti, ai quali però è espressamente proibito occuparsene. L’unica cosa che possono fare è denunciare i danni alla amministrazione e aspettare che questa trovi tempo e modo di mandare dei tecnici per le riparazioni e la manutenzione. Questa condizione di forzato isolamento l’uno dall’altro degli abitanti e il loro assoggettamento a un sistema di regole standardizzate definite ex ante, dove il dialogo è sostituito

dal ricorso avvocatesco ai “disposti legislativi”, si appoggiano sul modello del vigente diritto pubblico e sono giustificati dalla premessa che l’attivazione degli abitanti/cittadini sui comuni temi che li concernono risulterebbe ingestibile, aprendo il campo alla conflittualità, ai favoritismi, al diletterantismo irresponsabile. La conseguenza di questo stato di cose è una profezia che si auto realizza: nel bel mezzo della paralisi gerarchica e burocratica gli unici a spadroneggiare sono i malavitosi mentre le uniche forme di intervento a disposizione della popolazione sono la lamentela, l’invettiva ed eventualmente la sommossa, essendo state loro sottratte la possibilità di tradurre il disagio in progettualità positiva e di allenarsi nelle arti di una buona convivenza. Quando i dirigenti di queste agenzie amministrative scendono fra gli “affittuari-amministrati” per un sopralluogo, non di rado vengono assaltati dalle proteste e la loro reazione è: «Vedete? La gente è irresponsabile e immatura».

All’inizio del secondo millennio, dunque, questo giuridicismo parruccone in virtù del quale i cittadini erano visti e trattati «come i fellah dell’antico Egitto» (direbbe Max Weber) ha subito una potente incrinatura e specialmente dal 2010 in poi (ci sono voluti circa dieci anni per incominciare a digerire la novità) si sono moltiplicate esperienze in cui gruppi di cittadini con la collaborazione di amministrazioni illuminate sono riusciti a rigenerare edifici dismessi e abbandonati e ad imprimere una svolta positiva in aree territoriali che sembravano destinate allo spopolamento e desertificazione, hanno messo in moto bonifiche bloccate da decine di anni, promosso iniziative di agricoltura sociale, la diffusione di impianti di produzione di energie alternative, il turismo di comunità, curato la manutenzione ambientale contro il dissesto idrogeologico, si sono occupati di recupero dell’edilizia tradizionale o del lancio del co-housing per l’edilizia sociale, in breve: hanno operato su una serie di fronti ognuno a suo modo cruciale per lo sviluppo del territorio e per il rafforzamento dei legami fiduciosi tra i suoi abitanti.

Questa sovversione della governance pubblica ha dovuto e deve tuttora combattere una serie di coriacee resistenze non ultima la fatica a rendere palese la importanza e radicalità del cambiamento a livello della opinione pubblica. Siamo ancora alle prime fasi fra quelle elencate nel famoso slogan di Gandhi: «Prima ti ignorano, poi ti deridono, poi ti combattono. Poi vinci». E tuttavia in questi ultimi quindici anni gruppi di cittadinanza

attiva sotto la guida di Labsus hanno fatto approvare un *Regolamento per l'amministrazione condivisa*² a un consiglio comunale dopo l'altro (siamo a circa 200), provvedimento che legittima rapporti dialogici e "non autoritativi" (è la fine del diritto pubblico come l'abbiamo finora conosciuto!) fra PA e cittadini, grazie al quale vengono quotidianamente stipulati decine di "patti di collaborazione" che autorizzano i cittadini ad occuparsi in prima persona di aspetti specifici di cura del proprio habitat. Una seconda gamba di questo cammino è stato il potenziamento delle cooperative sociali e la loro trasformazione in cooperative di comunità e "imprese sociali." Eccone la definizione all'articolo 1 della *Legge Delega Revisione della disciplina in materia di impresa sociale*:

«Tutti gli enti privati che esercitano in via stabile e principale un'attività d'impresa di interesse generale, senza scopo di lucro e per finalità civiche, solidaristiche e di utilità sociale, *adottando modalità di gestione responsabili e trasparenti e favorendo il più ampio coinvolgimento dei lavoratori, degli utenti e di altri soggetti interessati alle loro attività*»³ (D.L. 106/2016).

In questo caso gli aspetti sovversivi sono tre: primo si riconosce a un "ente privato" la possibilità di operare in vista della realizzazione del bene comune, fianco a fianco con gli istituti pubblici. Secondo, che esistono modalità responsabili e trasparenti di perseguimento dell'interesse generale, diverse dalle procedure burocratiche, che hanno invece a che fare con il coinvolgimento di tutti gli attori interessati. Terzo, si riconosce che è possibile operare in vista del bene comune con una mentalità e strumentazione che guarda agli esiti ed è capace di auto-correzione. In altre parole si riconosce che per affrontare problemi di convivenza complessi la burocrazia e la politica devono assumere una posizione laterale e favorire modalità partecipative di diagnosi e progettazione.

Su questo piano il DL appena citato è un atto importante non solo nella storia della legislazione italiana che la pone all'avanguardia a livello mondiale su questi temi, ma ancor prima a livello della cultura in senso antropologico, in quanto apre spazi inediti tesi a

2 Il primo *Regolamento per l'amministrazione condivisa* è stato redatto in collaborazione con un gruppo di funzionari della PA del Comune di Bologna e approvato dal consiglio comunale della città nel 2014 . Pubblicato come regolamento-tipo sul sito di Labsus, è stato scaricato da circa seimila persone.

3 Corsivo nostro.

valorizzare e sostenere:

«L'autonoma iniziativa dei cittadini che concorrono, anche in forma associata, a perseguire il bene comune, ad elevare i livelli di cittadinanza attiva, di coesione e protezione sociale, favorendo la partecipazione, l'inclusione e il pieno sviluppo della persona, a valorizzare il potenziale di crescita e di occupazione lavorativa, in attuazione degli articoli 2, 3, 18 e 118, quarto comma, della Costituzione [...]» (*Ibidem*).

Nonostante che la crescita sia di fatturato che di occupati confermi la sostenibilità economica oltre che sociale ed etica di queste esperienze, la strada verso una loro stabilizzazione è ancora molto in salita. Il cambiamento verso una governance post o trans burocratica e verso un modello di produzione low profit post o trans-capitalistico (perché di questo si tratta) è infatti così radicale da essere esposto in continuazione agli attacchi degli scettici di professione (“dura minga”) e alla eventualità che alla prima crisi di leadership ricompaia il parruccone di turno con il suo progetto di restaurazione. C'è quindi una certa urgenza che le pratiche di co-progettazione creativa alla quali si fa ricorso, vengano tradotte in protocolli, regolamenti, metodologie elaborate collettivamente sulle quali costruire un senso di identità, di appartenenza e reciproche solide aspettative di diritti/doveri. Sono in altre parole necessari nuovi rituali alla luce dei quali molte delle vecchie pratiche e relativi lessici appaiano a tutti per quello che a questo punto sono diventati: grotteschi.

Alcune delle esperienze sono più avanti nel lavoro di auto-riflessività, altre lo sono di meno, alcune hanno meglio elaborato e formalizzato gli aspetti giuridici altre quelli sociologici. Portiamo qui due esempi di cosa intendiamo, basati su due esperienze di indubbio successo in campi diversi: la produzione di socialità e servizi delle Case di Quartiere di Torino e l'affrancamento della produzione agricola dal dominio della 'ndrangheta nella Locride e Piana di Gioia Tauro grazie alla cooperativa sociale GOEL.

L'esperienza delle case di Quartiere di Torino⁴

Le Case del Quartiere di Torino hanno ormai una storia decennale alle spalle, eppure si tende ancor oggi a parlarne

⁴ www.retecasesdelquartiere.org Il testo che segue è tratto da Agnese Bertello: «Nelle Case di Quartiere di Torino, i segreti della post-burocrazia». In Susan Podziba. (2017). *Le nostre città: dalla corruzione alla democrazia partecipata*. Ipc Press, pp.129-134.

come di un progetto sperimentale; dalla prima CdQ del 2007 ad oggi si sono moltiplicate, arrivando a nove sparse per il territorio urbano, eppure ancor oggi vengono descritte come esperienze difficilmente ripetibili. Non è mancato neppure il coordinamento e la riflessione teorica: dal 2014 esiste una Rete delle CdQ di Torino ed è del 2016 un convegno *Abitare una casa per abitare un quartiere*, che ha visto una cinquantina di esperienze, nazionali e internazionali confrontarsi sui temi della rigenerazione urbana, del protagonismo degli abitanti, dell'innovazione sociale, del welfare di comunità di cui le Case del Quartiere torinesi costituiscono un modello di riferimento. In questa occasione è stato sottoscritto un Manifesto che sintetizza in dieci punti le linee salienti di una governance post burocratica⁵. Eppure rimane dominante l'idea che "queste sono eccezioni" e che gli esiti positivi sono principalmente se non unicamente dovuti alla presenza di leader illuminati capaci di attivare risorse latenti in quei quartieri e difficilmente rintracciabili altrove.

Create prevalentemente all'interno di edifici pubblici dismessi e ristrutturati grazie a finanziamenti privati (Fondazione Vodafone, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo) o provenienti da bandi specifici (Urban), le Case sono spazi a disposizione del quartiere, luoghi in cui associazioni del territorio, cittadini, gruppi informali diventano protagonisti con le loro proposte, le loro competenze, i loro interessi, bisogni, curiosità. Aperte da mattina a sera, sempre accessibili, dotate di bar e ristorante, a prezzi modici, le Cdq sono un luogo bello dove fermarsi senza che nessuno ti chieda di consumare, dove leggere, darsi appuntamento, proporre iniziative, partecipare a un dibattito, organizzare una festa, fare ginnastica, imparare il cinese, dare lezioni di tromba, riposarsi, scambiare due parole... Un luogo di incontri e di relazioni dove tutto ciò che accade nasce dalla proposta specifica di qualcuno – associazione, singolo individuo o gruppo, poco importa – del quartiere. Come racconta Renato Bergamin, direttore di Cascina Roccafranca, «quando fai fatica a trovare uno spazio nel calendario per tutte le iniziative impreviste che arrivano, allora

⁵ I 10 punti del Manifesto delle Case del Quartiere: 1. Luoghi aperti a tutti i cittadini; 2. Spazi di partecipazione attiva; 3. Luoghi accessibili, accoglienti, generativi di incontri; 4. Spazi di tutti, ma sede esclusiva di nessuno; 5. Contenitori di molteplici progettualità; 6. Gli operatori: competenti artigiani sociali; 7. Luoghi intermedi tra pubblico e privato; 8. Spazi alla ricerca del giusto rapporto tra autonomia economica e sostegno pubblico; 9. Luoghi radicati nel territorio; 10. Strutture con una propria forma di governance.

vuol dire che funziona». Ragionando su queste esperienze, su questa storia decennale, sono diversi i temi che varrebbe la pena approfondire: la ricerca di un difficile equilibrio finanziario, tra profit, non profit e finanziamento pubblico; le modalità di gestione, la presenza di veri e propri servizi sociali all'interno. Qui, però, quelli che ci interessa maggiormente toccare sono due: che rapporto si instaura con l'Amministrazione? Come ha imparato l'amministrazione a fare un passo a lato? E poi come fanno le CdQ a funzionare davvero? Cosa le rende un progetto davvero diverso?

Nel racconto che di questa storia ha fatto Ilda Curti, Assessore al Coordinamento delle politiche di integrazione, rigenerazione urbana e qualità della vita del Comune di Torino dal 2006 al 2016, durante il Convegno già citato, appare evidente la disponibilità a stare un po' a guardare quel che succede. «Quando è iniziata - dice Curti - nessuna delle persone coinvolte sapeva che sarebbero nate le case del quartiere». Curti sceglie un paragone originale e calzante per descrivere la genesi di questo progetto, come, aggiungiamo, di ogni progetto di democrazia deliberativa: quando si coinvolge il territorio, quando si mette un progetto nelle mani di altri soggetti, quello che si mette in moto è raffigurabile come una cellula totipotente, cellula cioè che può ancora diventare qualsiasi cosa, in cui il destino-funzione deve ancora esprimersi, manifestarsi: saranno ossa? Saranno nervi? Saranno sangue? Verso questa "potenzialità" occorre muoversi con rispetto e delicatezza, difendendo «questi luoghi da qualsivoglia intossicazione, al fine di proteggerli da uno sviluppo senza predeterminarne lo scheletro». In concreto, significa sburocratizzare e alleggerire la funzione territoriale della pubblica amministrazione, per stare al fianco e accompagnare chi svolge compiti di rigenerazione, di imprenditorialità, di innovazione; significa delocalizzare il potere e gestire i conflitti che questa delocalizzazione genera inevitabilmente, considerandoli strumenti di crescita collettiva.

Questa disponibilità e capacità di soggiornare in una situazione dai contorni indefiniti che caratterizza l'attività di una Casa del Quartiere a ben vedere funziona come un Open Space Technology. "Chiunque venga è la persona giusta" e "Qualunque cosa accada è l'unica che poteva accadere": questi due principi su cui si regge l'OST sono principi che raccontano bene come si sta dentro una Casa del Quartiere. Allo stesso modo, il lavoro di chi gestisce

una Casa del Quartiere, come quello del facilitatore dell'OST, è al tempo stesso invisibile, non invadente, perché non interviene sui contenuti, ma preziosissimo, perché crea le condizioni perché quei contenuti possano essere proposti e possano stare accanto ad altri, diversi, opposti, nel rispetto reciproco. Il facilitatore, nell'Open Space, come nella CdQ, tiene lo spazio, lo governa, lo preserva, garantisce che le regole fissate nel tempo restino salde. La capacità di accogliere, di far sentire accolte le persone, in maniera naturale, semplice e spontanea, per quello che sono e per quello che possono portare, se lo desiderano, è centrale nell'una e nell'altra esperienza.

Goel⁶

Questa intervista di Marianella Sclavi a Vincenzo Linarello presidente di GOEL si propone di mettere a fuoco il modus operandi controintuitivo che ha permesso a questa cooperativa sociale di capovolgere situazioni di assoggettamento alle cosche e di degrado economico sociale e culturale del territorio, là dove sia la impresa privata che la PA si erano dimostrate impotenti.

M. Partiamo mettendo a fuoco una situazione specifica di crisi e di disperazione per poi ricostruire i vari passi che hanno consentito a tutti i protagonisti di capovolgerla. Vogliamo capire bene in cosa consistono questi passi e fino a che punto la vostra collocazione nel "terzo settore" (come cooperative e imprese sociali) ha aperto possibilità che sarebbero state precluse o molto più ardue per un attore privato o pubblico.

V. GOEL è un gruppo di cooperative sociali e imprese che operano in diversi settori, per dimostrare che l'etica non è solo giusta ma può essere molto efficace. Prendiamo come esempio GOEL Bio, cioè la cooperativa di piccoli agricoltori non assoggettati alla 'ndrangheta. Situazione di partenza: i piccoli agricoltori locali sono ai limiti della sopravvivenza, strozzati da un sistema che vede da un lato i cartelli dei grossisti locali, dall'altro la 'ndrangheta la quale in cambio della propria "benevolenza" controlla il territorio, indica da chi acquistare o a chi vendere, chi assumere o licenziare, chi usare per qualsiasi investimento. Per assoggettare le aziende agricole la 'ndrangheta usa il

⁶ Il testo che segue fa parte di un "Dossier impresa sociale" predisposto per uno degli eventi organizzati da Ascolto Attivo srl al Padiglione Italia della XVIma Biennale di Venezia, maggio- novembre 2018, curato da Mario Cucinella.

pascolo abusivo, gli incendi, i danneggiamenti sistematici. A questo punto o vai dal “capo bastone” a chiedere cosa hai fatto di sbagliato e come puoi riconquistare la sua protezione o chiudi baracca e burattini. La denuncia alle forze dell’ordine potrebbe servire a promuovere una indagine giudiziaria, ma di fronte a così tanti reati molto più gravi spesso non se ne viene a capo, anche perché la ‘ndrangheta non interloquisce con la vittima, non chiede estorsioni. Dall’altro lato il sistema di intermediari locali ti costringe a vendere le arance anche fino a 5 centesimi al Kg, oppure le butti.

M. È un sistema sociale di assoggettamento che può essere *sconfitto unicamente mettendo in opera un altro, opposto, sistema sociale*. I rimedi usuali, tipo contributi a fondo perduto e incentivi e bonus all’agricoltura non intaccano questo sistema, anzi possono perfino favorirlo.

V. In effetti l’amministrazione pubblica può offrire degli aiuti economici o dei contributi ma questi vengono poi inseriti nel sistema locale malato. Quindi nel processo di cambiamento non si può non tenere conto di quello che giustamente hai chiamato “sistema sociale di assoggettamento”, che in Calabria è un vero e proprio “sistema di produzione della precarietà”. La precarietà non è un incidente di percorso; viene bensì prodotta e poi ne viene fatta la manutenzione sistematica. In quanto la precarietà crea dipendenza. La dipendenza consente il controllo delle risorse pubbliche e del consenso (dei voti). Gli autori e i manutentori di questo “sistema di precarietà” in Calabria sono soprattutto la minoranza ricca della ‘ndrangheta insieme alla massoneria deviata. Esse esercitano il controllo del territorio attraverso l’elargizione di risposte ai bisogni vitali di persone, famiglie e imprese in cambio di voti e consenso da rivendere successivamente ai partiti consenzienti e ai loro esponenti più importanti.

M. ‘Ndragheta e massoneria deviata da un lato operano per mantenere la precarietà e dipendenza e dall’altro si presentano come i benefattori e protettori dei loro soggiogati. Per uscire da questo assoggettamento bisogna uscire dalla precarietà e sfatare il mito che i poteri forti malavitosi siano i garanti dell’ordine e dello sviluppo economico.

V. Bisogna smettere di giocare in difesa. Smetterla con le proteste

e le lamentele relative all'essere abbandonati dallo stato centrale e locale, relative alle connivenze e così via e sul fare affidamento su continue promesse che sono sistematicamente "fake news", come si dice oggi. Il progetto GOEL nasce da tali constatazioni con l'obiettivo di divenire una piattaforma di cambiamento. La nostra gente non crede più nella parola; troppa violenza e troppe disillusioni. GOEL *realizza "fatti" imprenditoriali orientati a dare credibilità a precise proposte politico-culturali*. Tentiamo di "Fare ciò che si Dice e Dire ciò che si Fa", per consentire alla gente di riaccendere la speranza nel cambiamento. Per tale ragione ogni attività in GOEL non è mai casuale, ma diviene strategicamente orientata a "dimostrare" precise proposte politico-culturali di cambiamento.

M. Quindi l'impresa sociale ricostruisce il tessuto sociale solidale che è il vero anticorpo del sistema sociale 'ndrangheta, e attorno a questo consente anche alla impresa privata e alla PA di collaborare in modo efficace al cambiamento. Una delle tecniche particolarmente efficaci che avete messo a punto?

V. La "Festa della Ripartenza" si è rivelata uno strumento formidabile a questo fine. Ad ogni attentato della 'ndrangheta invece che annegare nella retorica del vittimismo, organizziamo una festa insieme a tutta la nostra comunità di supporto, per dimostrare a tutti, e in particolare alla 'ndrangheta, che grazie alla solidarietà che raccogliamo, l'attentato si trasforma in un'opportunità di crescita e di rilancio delle attività. La campagna stampa che organizziamo in questi casi ha come fine quello di obbligare i mezzi di comunicazione di massa a spostare il focus dalla denuncia di una violenza subita da una vittima impotente alla esistenza di una comunità forte, solidale e alternativa, in grado addirittura di fare uno sberleffo ai poteri malavitosi. Cito ad esempio il comunicato della prima festa della ripartenza, organizzata nel 2015:

«Con la Festa della Ripartenza GOEL vuole condividere con tutti la gioia della rinascita e la celebrazione dei simboli della legalità ripristinata. Interverranno personalità, istituzioni civili e religiose regionali e nazionali. Un ricco programma di musica, arte, teatro popolare, degustazione di prodotti biologici e ricette tipiche accompagnerà l'inaugurazione del capannone ristrutturato e del nuovo trattore».

Questo approccio controintuitivo ci ha permesso di mettere a

segno una pluralità di obiettivi: in primo luogo alla 'ndrangheta spiace aver i riflettori puntati e noi la mettiamo sotto i riflettori mostrando che ognuno di noi ha dietro una comunità e che il suo tentativo di impaurirci ha fatto cilecca; in secondo luogo questo tipo di risposta ha mobilitato una quantità di reazioni di solidarietà dai settori più diversi della società, per esempio abbiamo creato un piccolo fondo per aiutare la riparazione dei danni subiti; e infine questa reazione, diffonde una forza di speranza e di emulazione nelle comunità locali, che iniziano a pensare che allora la 'ndrangheta non è così invincibile come sembra.

Per concludere questo articolo: a noi pare che il "localismo costituzionale" collegando direttamente cittadinanza attiva e valori della costituzione, può sbaraccare una montagna di timori e pregiudizi e aprire la strada a situazioni in cui le "buone pratiche" possono guardarsi attorno e imparare: le Case di Quartiere forse adattando anche formalmente il modello dell' Open Space Technology come modalità di auto-diagnosi periodica e di coordinamento progettuale e tutti quanti, come succede in GOEL, a riconoscere la centralità dell'ascolto attivo quando il successo di qualsiasi iniziativa è impedito da un modo di produzione della convivenza non desiderato.

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STRISCIA/STRIPE

Indecorose abilità
Elena Mistrello

INDECOROSE ABILITÀ



QUESTA È LA STAZIONE DI MONZA.



NELLA PIAZZETTA DI FRONTE..

...C'È SEMPRE UN GRAN VIA VAI, E ANCHE TANTI RAGAZZI CHE PASSANO IL TEMPO SEDUTI SUI MURETTI. (SONO SOPRATTUTTO STRANIERI)



È DA UN PÒ ORMAI CHE LA POLIZIA È FISSA IN STAZIONE. IL COMUNE VORREBBE MANTENERE LA ZONA "DECOROSA" EVITANDO QUINDI CHE LA GENTE SI FERMA A "PIAZZARE"

NEL LUGLIO DEL 2017, UN RAGAZZO DI 21 ANNI DEL GAMBIA (CON PERMESSO DI SOGGIORNO) È STATO MULTATO. TAGLIAVA I CAPELLI NELLA PIAZZETTA, SOTTO AGLI ALBERI... LA MULTA AMMONTAVA A 1.000 EURO, IL REATO: "ACCONCIATORE IN FORMA AMBULANTE".



ELENA MISTRELLO '18

Elena Mistrello, nata nel 1990 a Sesto San Giovanni, vive e lavora in provincia di Milano. Illustratrice e fumettista, dopo la formazione in pittura presso l'Accademia di Brera, partecipa ad alcuni progetti in Italia e all'estero inerenti il disegno e le arti murali. Si occupa inoltre di educazione informale, tiene laboratori per ragazzi sul disegno e il fumetto. Dal 2012 fa parte del laboratorio di serigrafia autogestito Serigrafatti. Nel 2015 pubblica Milano Fermata Isolaper Graphic News.



PORTFOLIO/PORTFOLIO

Ocupação Prestes Maia

Eduardo Augusto Costa

Una volta laureato, ho adottato il linguaggio fotografico come strumento di studio e di ricerca per pensare alla città nelle sue complessità e contraddizioni. Sono quindi diventato un ricercatore che utilizza la fotografia e la cultura visiva come mezzo di ricerca. Senza pretese estetiche, il mio più grande interesse si è sempre legato al linguaggio documentario, ai suoi significati, meccanismi e temi di ricerca. Così, nel far uso della fotografia ho cercato di comprenderne i limiti, i problemi e le potenzialità, riflettendo su ciò che vediamo o che non vediamo - il visibile e l'invisibile; l'interno e l'esterno della cornice; il narrato e il non segnalato. In un modo o nell'altro, si tratta sempre di politica delle immagini.

L'occupazione di Prestes Maia si è compiuta nel 2007, nell'omonima occupazione organizzata dal Fronte per la Lotta agli Alloggi - FLM - nella città di San Paolo in Brasile. La disuguaglianza sociale brasiliana, presente nella vita e nei corpi dei suoi abitanti, ha qui un'espressione iconica. Il deficit immobiliare brasiliano ammonta a 6 milioni di immobili, ed è noto che allo stesso tempo ci sono 7 milioni di abitazioni vuote. Questo squilibrio è il risultato della speculazione urbana guidata da un'élite che detiene risorse materiali ed economiche e che è responsabile della radicalizzazione di questa situazione di disuguaglianza. Allo stesso tempo, la politica degli alloggi, sostenuta e finanziata da gruppi che detengono il potere, incoraggia la costruzione di nuove abitazioni nelle regioni periferiche, svuotando i centri delle grandi metropoli e i loro edifici. La disuguaglianza diventa efficace alla gestione degli spazi, cosicché la popolazione più povera viene allocata in quartieri lontani senza infrastrutture o strutture culturali. Ancora una volta penalizzati, le persone più povere si trovano ad affrontare lunghi spostamenti due o tre ore al giorno nei trasporti pubblici.

L'occupazione di Prestes Maia è un atto di resistenza a queste disuguaglianze. Organizzati in movimenti che combattono per l'alloggio, specialmente nelle regioni centrali, le famiglie dei disoccupati, i giovani lavoratori, i poveri, gli immigrati e altri gruppi sociali che vivono ai margini della società si organizzano in cerca di alloggi e di "dignità urbana". Occupano così edifici che

sono stati lasciati vuoti nei centri delle grandi capitali. Affrontano in questo modo la crisi politica, sociale ed economica, oltre a produrre nuovi modi di organizzazione sociale. In questo edificio ogni piano, abitato da gruppi di 6-8 famiglie, condivide alcune stanze come i bagni, la cucina e una grande sala comune. Allo stesso modo si organizza una biblioteca di comunità formata da migliaia di libri trovati nei cassonetti in città. Il movimento non affronta solo il sistema di esclusione sociale, ma presenta nuovi modelli di socialità per la grande metropoli.

L'occupazione di Prestes Maia passa spesso attraverso meccanismi di riacquisto e criminalizzazione. Soprattutto negli ultimi anni ha sofferto della riduzione dei diritti democratici a causa dell'*impeachment* della presidente Dilma Rousseff e della detenzione senza prove dell'ex presidente Lula. Ad ogni modo, i residenti di questa e di altre centinaia di occupazioni resistono e combattono per i loro diritti fondamentali. Questo saggio fotografico è un modo per dare visibilità a questa ingiustizia e pensare alla situazione urbana della grande metropoli brasiliana.

Desde o fim de minha graduação, tomei a linguagem fotográfica como uma ferramenta de estudos e investigação para pensar a cidade na sua complexidade e contradições. Portanto, sou um pesquisador que tem a fotografia e a cultura visual como meio de investigação. Sem pretensões estéticas, meu maior interesse esteve sempre ligado à linguagem documental, seus sentidos, mecanismos e temas. Assim, ao fazer uso da linguagem fotográfica, busquei entender quais os seus limites, problemas e potencialidades, para poder pensar sobre aquilo o que vemos e o que não vemos – o visível e o invisível; o dentro e o fora do quadro; o narrado e o não narrado. De uma forma ou outra, trata-se sempre da política das imagens.

O ensaio **Ocupação Prestes Maia** foi realizado em 2007, na ocupação homônima organizada pela Frente de Luta por Moradia – FLM – na cidade de São Paulo, no Brasil. A desigualdade social brasileira, presente na vida e no corpo de seus habitantes, tem aqui uma expressão icônica. O déficit habitacional brasileiro é ordem de 6 milhões de habitações e, ao mesmo tempo, sabe-se que existem 7 milhões de habitações vazias. Este

desequilíbrio é fruto da especulação urbana, capitaneada por uma elite que detêm os recursos materiais e econômicos e que é a responsável pela radicalização desta situação desigual. Ao mesmo tempo, a política habitacional, apoiada e financiada por grupos que detêm o poder, fomenta a construção de novas habitações em regiões periféricas, esvaziando os centros das grandes metrópoles e seus edifícios. A desigualdade se efetiva espacialmente e à população mais pobre destina-se os longínquos bairros periféricos, sem infra estruturas ou equipamentos culturais. Penalizados uma vez mais, os pobres passam a enfrentar longas jornadas de deslocamentos – duas ou três horas diárias – em transportes coletivos.

A Ocupação Prestes Maia é um ato de resistência a estas desigualdades. Organizados em movimentos que lutam por moradia, especialmente nas regiões centras, famílias de desempregados, jovens trabalhadores, pobres, imigrantes e outros grupos sociais que vivem à margem da sociedade se organizam em busca de moradia e dignidade urbana. Assim, ocupam imóveis que foram deixados vazios nos centros das grandes capitais. Deste modo, enfrentam a política social e econômica, além de produzirem novos modos de organização social. Cada andar, habitado por grupos de 6 a 8 famílias, compartilha algumas dependências como os banheiros, a cozinha e uma grande sala comunitária. Do mesmo modo, organizaram uma biblioteca comunitária formada por milhares de livros achados nas lixeiras da cidade. O movimento social não enfrenta, portanto, apenas o sistema de exclusão social, mas apresenta novos modelos sociais para a sociabilidade nas grandes metrópoles.

A Ocupação Prestes Maia passa frequentemente por processos de reintegração de posse e criminalização. Especialmente nos últimos anos, vem sofrendo com a redução dos direitos democráticos decorrente do *impeachment* da Presidente Dilma Rousseff e do encarceramento sem provas do ex-Presidente Lula. De todo modo, os moradores desta e de centenas de outras ocupações resistem e lutam pelos seus direitos básicos. Este ensaio fotográfico é uma forma de dar visibilidade para esta injustiça e pensar sobre a situação urbana das grandes metrópoles brasileiras.











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Canudos

Junia Cambraia Mortimer

Nel 1969, nel pieno della recrudescenza della dittatura militare in Brasile, il Dipartimento Nazionale delle Opere Civili costruisce la diga di Cocorobó presso il comune di Euclides da Cunha, nell'entroterra di Bahia, inondando i resti di Canudos.

Canudos, battezzato Belo Monte dal rivoluzionario leader Antônio Conselheiro, era stato distrutto nel 1897. Con la diga vengono costruiti anche stabilimenti temporanei per i professionisti responsabili delle opere di costruzione, tra cui residenze e strutture per il tempo libero. Tra queste si scorgono alcune case, allineate in un rigido ordine dal sogno moderno. Qui oggi vi abitano i residenti dei Canudos contemporanei - e le tracce, morbide, di insubordinazione, vivificano lo spirito quotidiano.

Em 1969, em pleno recrudescimento da Ditadura Militar no Brasil, o Departamento Nacional de Obras Civas construiu o açude do Cocorobó, no município de Euclides da Cunha, no sertão baiano, inundando os vestígios de Canudos. Canudos, batizada de Belo Monte por seu líder revolucionário Antônio Conselheiro, fora destruída em 1897. Para a construção do açude, construíram-se também instalações temporárias para profissionais responsáveis pelas obras, entre as quais residências e equipamentos de lazer. Ficaram algumas casas, enfileiradas num ordenamento rígido de sonho moderno. Nelas hoje habitam residentes da Canudos contemporânea - e traços, suaves, de insubordinação vivificam o espírito cotidiano.











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