KEEPS THE PUBLIC SPHERE ANCHORED TO SOCIAL CHANGES.

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from the regulatory approach (land-use regulation) to the «soft» (Faludi, 2010) and «synaptic» (Scoppetta, 2012) dimension of planning theory;

3 (interrelated) research paths explored since the end of the ‘70s: networking, governance, rescaling;

European policies and visions: learning dimension as a basis for further implementation, physical and social aspects strictly inter-connected

but

a “stellar” distance still remains between urban planning and social practices, formal projects and true life, “shadow” and official «production» (Lefebvre, 1974) of urban space, and the continue irreducible re-emerging of what formal planning tends to exclude (de Certeau, 1980).
difficulties in abandoning a (also professional) “mythical” role of planner by making space for further social actors; planners (and academic research) too often «intricately involved in framing and re-framing property markets» (Adams & Tiesdell, 2010); bureaucratic and sectoralised administrative context (too often collusive or, at least, concentrated in preserving its fragment of corporative power); each administrative step can correspond to a «dis-regulation» (Donolo, 2001): a hypertrophic characteristic of formal system, used by particularist circles; the latter strengthen their power of intermediation and the production of non-decisive regulations: preserving ad infinitum their power by multiplying the opportunities that allow the mediators to mediate.
Final result of a 2-years Italian (publicly funded) academic research (carried out at the University of Roma Tre) aimed at individuating a “scientific” methodology for regenerating (already existing) urban deprived peripheries: a 1000 x 1000-meters “rational” grid (whose origins are attributed also to “the Etruscans”), with a central place obviously located in the centre (where, otherwise????).

See: http://www.urbanisticatre.uniroma3.it/RICERCA/cerasoli_periferie_cittalia.pdf
distrust towards the «suspicious intentions» (De Carlo, 1980) of the rhetoric on civic engagement in planning processes;


«system maintaining» and «system transforming» (Chawla & Heft, 2002) approaches.

the «collaborative rationality» (Innes & Booher, 2010) ends to support the structure of hegemonic power, as it supposes mainly cooperative interactive networks and tends to deny the existence of conflict.
urban voids caused by structural changes: de-industrialisation and the emerging of the so called “new economy”;

large remained unused urban containers caught between the complexity of decision-making and speculative expectations: resources diverted from cities and places of insecurity;

repopulation of such free-zones by spontaneous, creative and often illegal and temporary actions reflecting the self-organising capacity of urban communities and their minorities.
the network of re-appropriations on the left side of river Tiber in Rome, overlapped to the zoning of the masterplan

- in blue: the former industrial areas close to the river Tiber (in some cases restored and used by the Third University of Rome);

- on the right, in red: the “garden city” working-class neighbourhood of Garbatella (risks of gentrification);

- in yellow: the network of (more or less temporarily established) free-zones.
new urban actors generally excluded or undervaluated by the traditional planning practices and urban policies,

their presence may enhance the general cultural diversity of an urban area by introducing those uses that the existing urban form, property values, institutional regulations had previously precluded.
post-industrial “free zones” and “creative” activities as a driver of attractiveness of the city: the Richard Florida’s theory (2002);

new role of urban cultural policies in both consumption-oriented and production-oriented version;

from flagship projects and city marketing to the “construction” of mutations in the social behaviours and lifestyle (Zukin, 1995): a new post-industrial identity (Cochrane, 2007);

«culturalisation of entrepreneurialism» (Ribera-Fumaz, 2009) as part of the new «cognitive capitalism» (Moulier-Boutang, 2007), based on the «convergence of economic and culture» (Garcia, 2004);

«goods and services whose consumer appeal is derived pre-eminently from the fact that they transmit non-utilitarian aesthetic and semiotic signals» (Scott, 2007);
the cultural dimension as empowerment (in the sense used by Friedman, 1987) or as an “instrumental” goal?????
creative **milieus** in those areas (and related to those themes) left unplanned: contested and “waiting” spaces in-between different projects and city ideas;

a case of **post-fordist production** exploiting niches of amortised investments for accelerating their re-commodification and optimising their economic potential by cultivating new consumer groups?

both creative actors and unused spaces as «the few remaining pools of untapped resources» (Colomb, 2012a), **new goldfields of symbolic capital** fitting well to neoliberal demands?

parallels between creative re-appropriation and **earlier waves of gentrification**?

«entrepreneurial self-starters» or «**role models for a neo-liberal society**» (Lange, 2007)?

alternative informal creative activities to be framed within the neo-liberal shift from stable government-led urban service provision and regulation to **flexible governance** and increasing reliance on entrepreneurial private investments?
examples from the British case: the New Labour’s “zero tolerance” program:

- a «politics of behaviour» (Field, 2003): removing forms of «intimidation» and «tyranny» (Bannister et al., 2006) in public spaces?
- the “majority” as a specific target group: the «respectable» (Bannister et al., 2006) consuming urban dwellers;
- Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, Child Curfews, Parenting Orders: control especially over the youth;
- “quality” of public spaces: an extremely detailed design as «interdictory architectures» (MacLeod, 2002) of regenerated urban spaces;
- expectations of specific behaviours (Atkinson, 2003): non-consumption as a form of deviance?
- spreading of surveillance and control techniques, such as Closed Control Television systems.
acceptance of a **multiplicity** of compatible or conflicting outlooks, lifestyles, codes of behaviour and urban expressions is assumed as a prerequisite for creative innovation

but

planning **rigid** rules and "**zero tolerance**" for wild-side activities;

free-zones activities take shape in a place (a zoning perimeter)

but

they are organised around autonomous **networks** of like-minded participants;

creative activities/uses are intrinsically "**bottom-up**" (they cannot be created "top-down");

**temporarity** vs. long-term visions.
how should policies respond to bottom-up movements?

how should the free-zones – «micro-utopias under construction» (Paba, 2004), «spaces of insurgent citizenship» (Sandercock, 2003), «places of possibilities» (Lefebvre, 1968) – be facilitated in a way which preserves their own dynamics and characteristics?
free-zones as re-activation devices

- "colonisation" as an earthquake, flooding space with new activities and communication codes, upsetting established local balances and activating energies and competencies that are able to re-organise the area (but also to arouse strong oppositions and turmoil): sometimes an "event" as a pioneer tactic;
- rooting through a "graft": sowing, flowering, and harvesting;
- to be collected and cared for by a «community of practices» (Wenger, 1998);
- networking with other organisations and establishing larger coalitions.

TIME IS NEEDED!!!
emerging **deliberative** planning theories: new forms of interaction and innovative not codified answers and solutions to urban (social) problems (i.e.: “rational” grids);

city not only intended in a physical (material) sense, but also as a complex plot of **inter-subjective emotional inter-relations** which involves places;

allowing the construction of a local (not global) «**actionable knowledge**» (Argyris, 1996) enlarging the objectives of planning to the **production of social capital**:

**a subtle and contaminative path, which is difficult to lead within a model.**
a «visionary leadership» (Sandercock, 2003) for overcoming traditional and codified procedures and practices: time factor, risks in terms of political consensus;

from an only “material” renewal of spaces to a broader meaning of regeneration as empowerment;

ambiguities connected to «processes of construction of images» (Scoppetta, 2006; 2009);

risks related to gentrification;

regeneration purposes by the local institutions (traditional models of demolition/renovation of spaces for setting up traditional functions and/or conventional services) vs. the aspirations of the informally/illegally settled groups.
co-evolution of people and places

- negotiation as an **inter-active space** within which mobilising additional skills and expertise;
- ideas for project not derived from pre-established patterns, but as innovative **outcome** of both the area and the long rooting process of new activities;
- managing models deriving from the practical organisation and functioning of spaces;
- introducing **temporary uses**;
- radical **shift in public administration**: greater inter-sectoral and integrated approach;
- the involvement of creative resources of the society **not as a strategy of conflict anticipating/mediating** or as an action aimed at building consensus in advance on institutional initiatives.
means considering citizens not as passive recipients of services but as active agents, with knowledge, experiences, skills and abilities that are no longer exclusively concentrated within the institutions;

does not deal with the need of subtracting urban spaces to irregular, anti-social and dangerous activities according to a pervasive (presumed) “safety” demand (too often hiding not explicit interests of specific groups);

deals with the enlargement and re-conceptualisation of the public sphere by intercepting the new and not always easily decipherable social needs (Amin & Thrift, 2005) that have added to the well-known traditional ones, which are (were) normally faced by conventional services;

means keeping the public sphere anchored to social changes by abandoning the traditional (but no longer useful) logic based on the old concept of “needs” (which requires direct strategies) and rather privileging the opportunities for action, which refers to indirect strategies through which the new emerging needs may be intercepted.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!