

11. Innovative streets in Europe. Exploring practices and governance of alternative urbanities

Chairs: Giulia Ganugi (University of Bologna, giulia.ganugi2@unibo.it), Riccardo Prandini (University of Bologna, riccardo.prandini@unibo.it)

Format: traditional (call for abstracts and individual presentations of around 15 minutes)

Today's urban public spaces seem to be confronted with numerous issues and Western European countries are facing problems with respect to a decreasing quality of life of local communities in urban neighbourhoods. The urban spaces undergo a period of deep crisis, which is determined by many factors. One factor is the decline of collective spaces (Simmel 1969; Forrest and Kearns 2001; Amin and Thrift 2002), in suburbs and in central areas, in the moment of transformation of facilities and during their maintenance. A second factor occurs when citizens gradually lose their attention for the public spaces, perceiving them as nobody's or local authority's spaces, rather than everybody's or common places (Becattini 2015; Iaione 2015). A third factor is the commodification of urban collective resources by the public actors to face the "regulatory slippage" phenomenon (Foster 2013), referring to the decline of the local government control or oversight of the urban resources (Augè 2009; Sassen 2015; 2017; Blokland 2017).

Therefore, in the last decade, forms of social action are increasing, together with the tendency of re-embedding, that is to shape again territory-founded communities (Nuvolati 2014; Becattini 2015). In many cities, the growth of, and interest in, a range of spatial urban practices is reshaping urban places. Some of these practices deal with the street as the place where exploring alternative urbanities, re-appropriating public spaces and injecting them with new functions and meanings (Iveson 2003; Moulaert 2010). However, the general label of "alternative urbanities" hides a multi-faceted variety of elements, due to the hyper-diversity of contemporary urban contexts (Tasan-Kok et al. 2013; Wessendorf 2014). Therefore, some of these innovative practice conjugates community and identity concerns with claims for equality, collective consumption, and universal rights, by tackling recognition and empowerment and challenging the established distribution of power within the urban decision-making arena (Moulaert et al. 2010; Van Dyck and Van den Broeck 2013). Some others, instead, develop from individual claims for control and privatization of public spaces, or claims for personal safety in the neighbourhood, without then representing participatory and civic instances and without generating communities with collective identities and shared values about the common good (Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003; Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014).

There are many examples of socially innovative urban practices in Europe: among others, the Social Streets, mainly spread in Italy, but also in some European cities; the Living Streets European project fostering temporarily urban experiments in many cities, such as Brussels and Ghent (BE), La Rochelle (FR), Zadar and Ivanić-Grad (HR), Rotterdam (NL); the Toekomststraat (Future Street) in Antwerp (BE); the Play Streets in the United Kingdom. Even if characterized by different socio-political contexts and by different claims and concerns, all these innovative practices also need to face the issues connected to the local urban governance. Indeed, they confront with internal organization, institutional public actors, other civil organizations, existing urban regulations, market actors, etc.

This session seeks to explore, on the one hand, what types of community and individual/collective engagement take shape around these practices and, on the other hand, the dynamics between socially innovative practices concerning urban streets and the arrangements of urban governance within the spatial context of Europe. We refer mainly to the potential development of innovative models of governance, such as the bottom-linked governance (Moulaert and MacCallum 2019) and the experimentalist governance (Sabel 2019), analyzed as new forms of cooperation across territorial scales and networks in which policy and practice are not dictated from any one level of governance but transformed by the cooperation itself and routinely corrected in light of the ground-level experience of implementing them. The session aims at collecting mainly empirical contributions that analyse how the governance influences urban innovative practices and how the latter impact and, potentially, transform, the governance, by eventually reflecting on the sustainability and the scaling up/out of the innovative practices. The research carried out during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, focusing on the reactions and re-organization of innovative urban practices to face the emergency, are also considered.

References

- Amin, A., & Thrift, N. (2002). *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Augè, M. (2009). *Non-luoghi. Introduzione a una antropologia della surmodernità*. Milano: Elèuthera.
- Becattini, G. (2015). *La coscienza dei luoghi. Il territorio come soggetto corale*. Roma: Donzelli Editore.
- Blokland, T. (2017). *Community as Urban Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Eliasoph, N., & Lichterman, P. (2003). Culture in Interaction. *American Journal of Sociology*, 108(4), 735-794.
- Forrest, R., & Kearns, A. (2001). Social Cohesion, Social Capital and the Neighbourhood. *Urban Studies*, 38(12), 2125-2143.
- Foster, S. R. (2013). Collective Action and the Urban Commons. *Notre Dam Law Review*, 87(1), 57-133.
- Iaione, C. (2015). Governing the Urban Commons. *Italian Journal of Public Law*, 7(1), 170-221.
- Iveson, K. (2013). Cities within the City: Do-It-Yourself Urbanism and the Right to the City. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37(3), 941-956.
- Lichterman, P., & Eliasoph, N. (2014). Civic action. *American Journal of Sociology*, 120(3), 798-863.
- Moulaert, F. (2010). Social Innovation and Community Development. Concepts, Theories and Challenges. In F. Moulaert, F. Martinelli, E. Swyngedouw, & S. Gonzalez, *Can Neighbourhoods Save the City? Community Development and Social Innovation* (p. 4-16). Abingdon: Routledge.

- Moulaert, F., Martinelli, F., Swyngedouw, E., & González, S. (2010). *Can Neighbourhoods Save the City? Community Development and Social Innovation*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Nuvolati, G. (2014). Innovazione sociale, partecipazione e social street. *EyesReg, Giornale di Scienze Regionali*, 4(5), 130-134.
- Sabel, C. (2019). Sovereignty and Complex Interdependence: Some Surprising Indications of their Compatibility. In A. Lever and D. Satz (eds). *Ideas that Matter: Democracy, Justice, Rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sassen, S. (2015, November 24). Who owns our cities – and why this urban takeover should concern us all. *The Guardian*: <http://bit.ly/2RU8hYI>.
- Sassen, S. (2017). The City: A Collective good? *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 23(2), 119 -126.
- Simmel, G. (1969). Soziologie der Geselligkeit. In *Verhandlungen des 1. Deutschen Soziologentages vom 19. Bis 22. Oktober 1910 in Frankfurt am Main* (S. 1-16). Frankfurt am Main: Sauer u. Auvermann.
- Tasan-Kok, T., Van Kempen, R., Raco, M., & Bolt, G. (2013). *Towards Hyper-Diversified European Cities. A Critical Literature Review*. Utrecht: Utrecht University, Faculty of Geosciences.
- Van Dyck, B., & Van Den Broeck, P. (2013). Social Innovation: a Territorial Process. In F. Moulaert, D. MacCallum, A. Mehmood, & A. Hamdouch, *The International Handbook on Social Innovation. Collective Action, Social Learning and Transdisciplinary Research* (p. 131-141). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Wessendorf, S. (2014). *Commonplace Diversity: Social Relations in a Super-Diverse Context*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.