

## **The building of public space and the insurgent citizenship in Palermo**

Daide Leone<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

The idea that a city is no longer the expression of an average value of necessity, but it is an arena in which different actors face and meet each other is a new (post-modern) metaphor interpreting the urban space (Sandercock, 1998, 2003; Fincher & Jacobs, 1998; Sibley, 1995; Milroy, 1992). The difficulty of imagining urban policies and, also, new shapes for the city to ensure and augment this function is an issue of the actual city, and it remains hard to do.

Very often, the difficulty of interpretation of this paradigm justifies “doing nothing” which is typical of the administration of some cities, including Palermo. In this sense it is particularly interesting observation of what is happening in Palermo, where, compared to a general lack of political and physical interventions, we are witnessing a fervent self-organization “from below” to (informally) build some pieces of the city.

In Palermo, the lack of urban policy has stimulated a mobilization that amplifies the self-construction in the reuse and maintenance of city spaces. The construction of the physical elements that affect the public space by citizens’ groups, “clandestinely” organized, together with the construction and occupation of public spaces by users of the city are the mirror of a post-modern use of the city. In this sense it is useful to study the case of Palermo with its informal characteristics trying to encode a taxonomy of actions that take place on and in the city. An initial categorization of the nature of the actions that take place in the city is listed below:

- Physical and durable actions
- Demonstration Events
- Replacement of basic services

The research focuses on the stories of different stakeholders acting on the city of Palermo trying to understand the organizational arrangements and strategies underlying interventions, following a search method described by Forester (1999) in which the stories take on a role for the understanding of problems. The aim is also to trace how the actions promoted by the new intangible technologies of web 2.0 material affect on the actions of the city.

A second taxonomy concerns how the movements, that affect the city, organize themselves. In this way It’s possible to understand what aspects has to be increased to generate appropriate urban policies to govern the transformation of the city through post-modern city metaphor. These categories are:

- Communication on Internet
- Contacts and telephone
- Gathering places

In the background is the belief that the multiplication of opportunities for discussion among people is able to increase people’s intelligence and, in some way to subsidize one of the functions typical of cities that have had since their “invention”.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dipartimento di Architettura sezione città territorio e Paesaggio, Università degli studi di Palermo

Together with utilitarian functions, defense, trade and exchange, the city had, until now, a further and fundamental function: to boost the intelligence of man.

This is one of the peculiarities of the city, but it is also one of the functions less noticeable by the people because it is a consequence of living together and of the generation of community rather than a primary and founding of the city. That is to say: Innovation is a consequence of the cities, but is not perceived as a cause of their foundation. In this sense, no wonder the need to delineate the boundaries and conditions of the creativity that puts this function of the city in the foreground. According to one of the planning mainstream, that has been developing the 90s especially in the U.S. (Florida, 2003; Landry, 2000), this function is amplifiable engaging creative elements in the social texture of the city.

The city is the necessary condition for the construction of all the innovations of mankind (Mumford, 1961; Benevolo, 1993) because it can multiply the thoughts of men. Moreover, the production of thought has created the conditions and requirements to allow the accumulation of knowledge to spread it on from generation to generation.

Using a metaphor, which sees the city as a brain capable of generating innovation and people like ganglia, we are witnessing a real revolution in which the needs of neighbourhood (Synapses) characteristics of the city are flanked by the new possibilities due to information technology. In this sense we are witnessing a phenomenon that builds new creative energy in the city, but runs the risk of loose some of the reasons for the existence of the city itself.

From another point of view it's clear that not only the quality of ganglia is useful to augment the innovation capabilities of a city, but the quality of connections (Synapses) is important too. For that the actions, which act directly on the public spaces of the city, are quite important, because they substitute the local administration in managing the transformation of public spaces and so, in a way, they build sense of communities (Lo Piccolo, 2008; Fera, 2008).

The paper tries to overcome the Creative City strategy for urban regeneration in which the urban policies wants to attract creative people (musicians, artists, etc.) to ensure the urban renewal.

This paradigm, although considered one of the mainstream of contemporary planning, has some critical issues both for the durability of the interventions that concerning the ability to encourage creativity self-generated by the city itself. the metaphor of the creative city does not explain the reasons that led some cities, at certain times, to be especially creative by building physical products and traditions that are perpetuated (durability) and are an expression of local culture.

In this framework the insurgent citizenships, as described by Holston (1998), have a strong role because they operate informally on the public spaces of the city building defining a new way of acting in the city.

### **Differences and similarities of insurgent citizenship in Palermo**

The term "insurgent citizenship" is introduced by Holston (1998) with the intent to criticize the system of rational comprehensive planning typical of the '70s and

deriving from the tradition of CIAM. The insurgent citizenships are considered as a response to the stiffness of a template-directed plan. In the Italian context and even more in the southern, the reaction to a too rigid schedule (according to a controversial justificatory perspective) has been evident in a series of informality whose apex is the illegal building.

In the cities of southern Italy, the struggle between the blueprint and the informality of the city, seems to have been won by the latter. The city of southern Italy is the expression of other forces that don't express, the logic, languages and tools of Planning (Inzerillo, 1984; Cannarozzo, 2000; Zanfi, 2008). In this case urban spaces has constructed through the tension of three forces: on the one hand, the public project of the city (the blueprint), on the one hand the needs of citizens, and on the other hand, the criminality will of managing the spaces. These three actors contributed in shaping the landscape of Italian southern city. The use and construction of public space are the expression of these forces that often retreat, leaving unused space for manoeuvre, in which groups of organized citizens can express themselves.

In the case of Palermo insurgent movements, rather than confront the results of rational comprehensive planning, tend to answer to the construction and organization of a city whose spaces are defined between the management of organized crime and administration of public administration. In the folds of these managements there are spaces left by the conflict and not governed, managed and designed by none of these two forces. In these areas the phenomena of insurgent citizenship is moving, tending to remember the responsibility of local administration to ensure the common good. Planning has accepted the need for participatory pathways to act on the public space of the city, reducing the gap between the blueprint of the city and the needs of citizens. Forester (1989, 1999, 2005) and Healey (1997) as well as many others, as Innes (1995, 1996), Innes & Booher (1999), Fischer & Forester (1993), have defined the critical nature of this type of participatory approach especially as regards the choice and selection of stakeholders and the will to build consensus around prebuilt projects.

In the case of Palermo, however, there is an overcoming the paradigm of participation in favour of direct action on urban places over which there are not actions by public decision-maker.

In Palermo, the issue of ethics of inclusion, (Bonafede & Lo Piccolo, 2010) is "tackled" by the local decision maker audience through inaction, this, for years, provided an opportunity for organized crime to move on urban space and this is the condition that generated the reaction of insurgent movements.

Palermo is a complex case in which the fluidity is evident between the three forces above expressed. Urban spaces left without care and functions are the privileged arena for the expression of insurgent movements, when these spaces are not already a criminal arena.

## **The insurgent movements in the city of Palermo**

The cases explored in this brief paper concern the movements that act directly on the public space by giving a physical transformation. The various movements were collected in a multimedia map that identifies the sites of transformation and provides links to websites and videos that describe the actions<sup>2</sup>. The tendency to physical modification of public spaces exceeds the need of interaction with the administration and proposes actions that take place according to specific rules and procedures. The cases collected are far from each other for what concerns the spaces of the city on which they act, how to organize and objectives that arise, however, several cases have in common the desire to be subversive in the use of the city and by mode of action almost clandestine.



Figure 1 QR code use it with your smartphone to see the on line map

What makes these actions unique is to act with the purpose of building and shaping the public space. This occurs without conflicts because the citizen groups operate on marginal spaces in which it is expressed the indifference of the forces that govern the city.

The cases include:

- The Guerrilla Gardening actions and the Palermo flowerbeds,
- The Santa Rosalia Gardeners actions on the neighborhood Albergheria in the historical center of Palermo,
- The Committee for the collective good actions,
- Stories of struggle for the re / opening of parks and public spaces in cities,
- The Mafia physicalization use of public space;

We chose to bring a clearly negative example in the use and physical transformation of public space because the act physically and permanently over the city is not without problems. The insurgent movements, trying to respond to a lack of administration, are interpreters of a collective good that is not unique, is not codified and is elusive.

Along with these actions, the city of Palermo is the theatre as many other cities, within which other events are happening, that have subversive demonstration purposes and unsettling use of public space. The flash mob events are the best known of this trend, but they tend to do this demonstration also structured events such as Saddles of Stars, Critical Mass (Carlsson, 2002) and Milonga Blitz, which animate parts of the city with unusual uses. Saddles of Stars and Critical Mass are aggregations of cyclists that travel along a path in the city pointing out the existence of alternative ways to move over the cars, the milonga blitz is a collective time to dance that takes place in some public spaces in the city. These are just some

---

2

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF&msa=0&msid=212981471588689928612.0004bde05eccf1e5f7a14>

examples of structured multi-functional public space can absorb very different uses. However, these uses are unusual manifestations of the simple need for expression, but not physically change and lasting space, while the actions of the insurgent movements are becoming dependent on these characteristics.

Assuming that these actions are certainly a creative element for the city, the effort that we are trying to do is to understand what are the factors that give rise to these forces and how they can design policies that can encourage these creative self-generated movements from the social context of the city, and how it's possible to prevent the problem of possible conflicts caused by the change in the public space. To better understand the sphere of influence has moved to the changes that were widely shared by citizens, who have generated very little opposition from the community, but this state of things it's not always possible. The actions on public space have shown how, doing something / anything is still preferred by citizenship in relation to doing nothing.

### **The Guerrilla Gardening actions and the Palermo flowerbeds**

The Guerrilla Gardening is a form of radical gardening, which operates on the public flowerbeds degraded in the city. The movement was born in the 70s in the U.S. with the intention of operating on exposed sites where it was forbidden to act.

The first example of this is due to Liz Christy who has worked in New York working on a lot was empty with a garden that is still retained by citizens and is henceforth part of the city's parks department.

An example, which has even led research in formal actions, is the Garden of Eden, that was started once again in New York by Adam Purple. The garden, created in the space left by the demolition of some lots in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, has continued to grow until 1986 when it was destroyed<sup>3</sup>. From a formal point of view, the garden is a very interesting case: its circular shape is able to grow without limit, compared to the blocks town, it always retains a recognizable form. In a sense, the implicit project of this garden is a metaphor of a plant that can continue to grow, while its architectural counterpart is the spiral of the museum of unlimited growth by Le Corbusier.



Figure 2: QR code Use it with you Smartphone to see a related video

he actions of the beginning had a strong symbolic sense facing with areas of private property. The aim of these interventions was, in fact, to struggle against excessive privatization of space in the city, while, in Italian and current configuration, the actions of guerrilla gardeners are oriented towards maintenance and new significance of public space. The early actions in New York are a model which inspired by the actions of disobedience by guerrilla gardening. The movement of guerrilla gardening

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-VfBvdzgQxY>

in Palermo began to operate in 2011 and scored nearly 50 operations on the flower beds in the city, they are public spaces in which the degree of conflict is quite low, because are abandoned by local administration and are useless for the criminal organization. Even in Italy guerrilla gardening are disobedient regarding the legislative framework, at least they clash with the Civil Code rules, governing the occupation of public land, but also with the Article 347 of the Penal Code that punishes the usurpation of public function.

The two years of activity by Palermo Guerrilla Gardeners have led to an evolution of the mode of action: the early actions had, in fact, had a demonstration function, aimed to highlight the lack of maintenance and care of public green spaces, new initiatives bring out the clear intention of wanting to create communities around the actions of re-signification. The events are an invitation for people to deal and take possession of their public spaces. To do this, the most recent actions have been carried out by a communication campaign and preventive involvement with the residents. This will produce more lasting effects on the city.

The involvement of citizens takes place the week before the event and activities include leafleting in condominiums and a signal on the site chosen warning the imminent arrival of a new garden. The direct participation in an event of Guerrillas increases the interest of the neighbourhood towards this strange action, which is illegal, it happens at night in the flowerbeds near the houses, which for years have been left neglect. People fall curious and realize a revolutionary concept: they, too, can take care of public space. The evolution towards actions on public space and the lack of enforcement actions are evidence of the limited sense of ownership of public space and the consequent neglect in which it is.

The mode of organization of the movement and aggregation of the guerrillas are held mainly on the Internet, through social networks. This mode of virtual aggregation gave the opportunity for a real and physical mobilization exercise. The social Network, in this case, has subsidized the typical function of the city to provide a space for formation of ideas, which are generated in a virtual space through a comparison of experiences and desires of people. Interestingly, these modes of aggregation encourage physical action on the city, but it is also worth noting how the city as an organism that can produce innovation by connecting intelligences is now in competition with other tools.

### **The Santa Rosalia Gardeners actions on the neighborhood Albergheria in the historical center of Palermo**

The actions of the Santa Rosalia Gardeners are also ascribable to the movement of guerrilla gardening, but this group has decided to focus on a specific part of the city of Palermo, retracing more closely the mode of action of the beginning of the movement that concentrated their actions on a specific place for a long time, like the Garden of Eden stated previously or Green Guerrilla by Liz Christy.

The Santa Rosalia Gardeners actions take place within the historical center of Palermo. This area, paradoxically marginal (Lo Piccolo & Leone, 2008; Cannarozzo, 2000, 2008) is proposed as an ideal playground for the resignification actions proposed by the Gardeners. The empty spaces in the district are still often the outcome of the collapse of the Second World War, while the historic fabric of the medieval matrix has been replaced by partial demolition, the result of nineteenth-century project of the city continued throughout the twentieth century. These interventions have created a space in which schizophrenic hybridize languages and functions.

In this arena Santa Rosalia Gardeners move, since the choice of name, evoking a poetic situationist. The reference to Palermo the patron saint is a pretext to ensure the involvement of citizens and the people using as a protective heritage the sanctity of Santa Rosalia. The reference to the Saint offers a consonance between the symbol most sacred and untouchable for Palermo and public spaces left without care, questioning, from a semantic point of view, affection and sense of belonging that is manifested in public spaces.

The group's activities began in 2010 with the recovery of a flower bed on G. Barbieri street, between Porta di Castro street and the Mongitore street<sup>4</sup>. The group consists of residents and not, their choice to act on the neighbourhood Albergheria reveals the intention of highlighting the abandonment of public space and the peripheralization of a location physically in the centre of the city, but consistently ignored by the institutions. The Gardeners activity will be consolidated with the recovery of Mediterraneo Square, an urban void formally indistinct outcome of the collapse of a building unit, owned by the church<sup>5</sup>.

In this space the detailed plan for the Town Centre provided accommodation to green, but the use, before the Gardeners, was parking and landfill. The self-generated expression of the sum of the wills of individuals (parking and landfill) denounced a need and a necessity, while the field work by the Gardeners, the fact of dialogue with its citizens, has



Figure 3: QR code Use it with you Smartphone to see a related video



Figure 4: QR code Use it with you Smartphone to see a related video

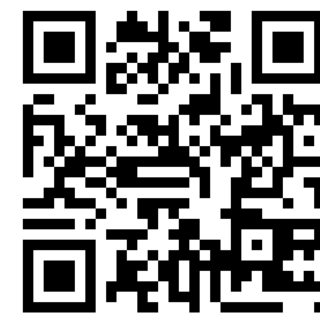


Figure 5: QR code Use it with you Smartphone to see a related video

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://vimeo.com/40713786>

<sup>5</sup> <http://vimeo.com/40713785>

created a shared understanding of the collective good which managed to go beyond the sum of the individual to become an expression of convenience goods (either the construction of the square). This empowerment should be the basis of institutional interventions on the city, because the generation of community is the only guarantee for a long-term management of the spaces.

The last intervention involving Gardeners, relates to a small garden space owned by the Institute for Independent Social Housing Palermo<sup>6</sup>. This space has been created within a unit buildings partially collapsed. This space created, but never opened and managed, was privatized and became a landfill before being recovered by the Santa Rosalia Gardeners. The story, in this case highlights an important aspect of these movements, rising as opposing forces, have an interest to do things, but not to be institutionalized.

The Gardeners were contacted by the result of their disobedient actions carried out around the garden, but they could not have direct management on the garden because they are not formally binding, or want to become. The garden was, therefore, assigned to the management of an formally association that has transferred the management informally to Gardeners.

This qualification of the story highlights an important aspect of spontaneous committees that act on the city. The purpose of most of these, in fact, is highlighting the need for public action and the Institutional city and not the will to replace it, as they tend to make associations formalized. To be clear the will of the formal associations of the third sector is to manage some parts of the public city, while the willingness of informal associations is to highlight the need for direct government intervention over the city. For this reason, the ethical approach to the work on public space is deeply different. From the point of view of urban policy this, leads us to consider carefully the generation of policies that tend to institutionalize the insurgent forces of a city. In many cases it is more appropriate to use these social forces such as the launch for institutional policies, in other words according to their side without overlapping groped or worse to attract them in an institution groove.

The mode of organization of the group are manifold and set up a more complex communication strategy refined than other groups. Social networks are used to gather ideas and organize group activities, a site is a sounding board to share and explain its nature and inspiration, and a newsletter keeps participants updated on the activities.

### **The Committee for the collective good actions**

The actions of this committee are distinguished by a reasonable approach to design interventions, even before the demonstration. The purpose of the group is to create community around physical transformation projects. Their main interlocutors are the schools and aggregations of citizens who are asked to take the first step in working to

---

<sup>6</sup> <http://vimeo.com/41490759>

apply the action of the group. The instruments used are those of participatory planning, through which change is being proposed public space of the city.

In this case, actions do not focus only on urban green spaces, but come to define the furniture and made changes in the appearance of public space. The main purpose of the actions is to create a culture of collective good overcoming personalism and particularism. In this sense the action of the Committee is an interesting experience in the various reality of the insurgent citizenships in Palermo. The organization of events pass through a request by groups of residents who contact the committee to start along the path of participatory planning. The actions propose the construction of participated microarchitectures and paths of road adoption. In both cases, actions are proposed as a demonstrative element to increase the awareness of the collective good. The aim is to place under a way attention to act on the urban space based on the involvement of persons. Involvement modalities define a framework of action that requires a certain maturity from the citizens engaged, for this reason the Committee's actions were concentrated in some parts of town where the themes of participation are more mature and understandable.

Even for what concerns clandestinity of actions, the Committee has some positions less disobedient than other committees described. The need to make changes in physical space, in fact, has set up authorization procedures to achieve true partnerships with local authorities, as for intervention in Mario Francese square. Other work carried out on semi-public spaces or in which the use is public, but the property is private, have been carried out without the need of permits.

The Committee involvement Tools go through a web site that collects and amplifies the results of actions and social networks. However, the mode of action of the committee define it as a more restricted group when compared to other physical action has a prevalence of project action.

The Committee is proposed as a guide for building projects and urban micro-transformations in the city. His design approach provides a formal quality that no other movements have, but it puts on the background the direct and self building actions on the city and citizen involvement in the construction of public space.

### **Stories of struggle for the re / opening of parks and public spaces in cities**

This section of the research brings together the experiences of insurgent citizenship that have highlighted the need for open public spaces of the city whose design process and construction is already completed or to be defined.

The physical actions on the city of Palermo are concentrated in certain areas that catalyze the insurgencies of citizenship. These locations represent physical evidence of the inefficiency of the local authority with respect to the need for maintenance of public spaces. Parks, theaters, meeting places, squares, docks already made are often left hanging waiting for a use. It seems more important that you do things rather than

use it. In Palermo, places physically retrained expect even decades before finding a use and before being opened to the public.

The story of the opening of the Park Ninni Cassara is the most valid to describe what often happens. The large green area, close to a very marginal district, has been the subject of a redevelopment began in 2005 and completed in 2009, but its opening in November 2011, should not be a decision of the local administration, but it's a consequence of citizens committee action. Even between some difficulties, the park has become a particularly enjoyed place capable to renew a part of the city, generating flows of visitors who reach a marginal area of the city.

Based on the successful experience of Park Cassara were born other initiatives that seek to pursue the opening of new public spaces with different instruments. The theme, as already mentioned, is slightly different than the other cases exposed. In this case is asked to the administration a specific question about a clear target. The municipality is placed in front of its faults and is asked to respond with consequent actions. The most direct derivation of the dispute over the Cassarà park is the movement that takes care of acqua dei Corsari park, also finished, but never really inaugurated<sup>7</sup>. In this case, the current administrative vacuum has not yet produced results, but the media tools and legal pressure are the same in all the two parks stories.



Figure 5: QR code Use it with you Smartphone to see a related video

They have a different story, the actions born around the Uditore park and Luparello Fund in which the request of citizens' groups has been structured around places not yet built or planned. In particular, the Uditore park is an area where it was constructed an action of participatory planning to arrive to formally define the park. In this case the action of the committees was not antagonistic to the administration, that was an entity with which talk to get the actual construction of the park. In the case of Fund Luparello, however, the action arose in relation to the defense of green agriculture from Italia Nostra association, in relation to speculative uses proposed for the area, however, in contradiction with the master plan. The actions on cultural spaces have focused, in recent months, around two places strongly connoted: the Garibaldi theater and Cantieri culturali della Zisa. Very often some spaces have a strength and a legacy to connect these energies that are generated around them by taking a strong symbolic value (Kohn, 2001). Notwithstanding the reasons, the claims and the history of the movement, is important in this short paper, to outline what are the tools and channels used to build the insurgent movement or to facilitate the participation of citizens and movements to build dialogue between the Committees and other institutions. The two things go hand in hand and feed each other. In the case of Cantieri Culturali della Zisa antagonistic actions resumed places

---

<sup>7</sup> <http://vimeo.com/40727333>

and thoughts about an area already well equipped for the culture, but tragically unused. Reflections are channeled into a series of focus groups that summarize the results of the meetings. This mode of action has brought such a credibility to cause the Commissioner who administers the city to grant the use of the cinema of cultural sites to the Committee itself.

In this case it was established a relationship arduous but healthy between the institution and insurgent citizenships. Where the local authority takes note of the demands coming from below and give room to the inurgent movements. Where all this will lead is unclear, but certainly boosted and increased production of confrontation and thought on the city. Listed below are the main tools and strategies used by movements to pursue their claims and the main channels used to engage participants.

#### **Cassarà and Acqua dei Corsari Parks**

- Proposals and involvement actions for the citizens
  - Class action and legal notice act against the Municipality asking specific answers for the non-use of the spaces,
  - Demonstrative actions
- Main communication channels
  - Social Network

#### **Uditore Park (U'Parco)**

- Proposals and involvement actions for the citizens
  - Participatory planning,
  - Collaboration with the institutions
- Main communication channels
  - Internet site
  - Social Network

#### **Fondo Luparello – Italia Nostra**

- Proposals and involvement actions for the citizens
  - Awareness Actions,
  - document processing and scientific research to illustrate the situation of the site
- Main communication channels
  - Internet site
  - Social Network

#### **Garibaldi Theatre**

- Proposals and involvement actions for the citizens
  - Demonstrative actions (shows and happening) to improve the urban culture policies
  - Verification of the procedures for awarding public spaces of the city to associations.
- Main communication channels

- Social Network
- Word of mouth

### **Cantieri culturali della Zisa – The factory that we want**

- Proposals and involvement actions for the citizens
  - Participatory planning,
  - Communication and descriptions on the sites
  - Physical actions for revaluation of the site
  - Development of a manifesto about the culture policies in the city
- Main communication channels
  - Internet site
  - Social Network

One of the preconditions generating insurgent movements such as those just described, is the presence of a strong speculative and intellectual context that has no methods and possibilities of work and expression and as such has the ability to regenerate the city using antagonistic actions and creative able that are underused.

To fully understand what happens in these places and through these movements has chosen to include in the text refer to certain videos that seem to be able to describe more fully the emotion that is also present in these movements.

### **The Mafia physicalization use of public space**

The decision to conclude this survey with a pejorative use of public space is clearly provocative. You can not equate actions created to pursue the common good of an idea born from the will to manage and take profit from the public spaces, however, should highlight how the actions on public space are formally similar, so put a planter on a sidewalk is a similar action to put the bollards on a parking lot (as we shall see later), but they are well apart the aims pursued.

The Mafia is a complex organization, a powerful lobby with the specific characteristics also on the scope in the urban and city management (Cannarozzo, 2000, 2004, 2008). The main and the most unjust, perhaps, is to focus its attention on predatory goods that have little market value, but a high marginal value.

It is for vital goods, to be clear:

- Water,
- The air,
- The urban space
- ...

All these goods are shared by definition, are so common that their market value tends to be very low, but they are necessary so that their marginal value, or value that is assigned when the good is scarce, it is very high. The state, guarantor of such goods, not always claims their public nature.

In these folds the Mafia is organized to manage and pay for these goods to those who do use them, exerting a very strong power and coercion.

Very often these enforcement mechanisms are real but invisible.

The Mafia handles most of what is not managed and monitored daily by state and local authority: car parks, public spaces, water, garbage. This happens for various reasons, sometimes the state abdicates its role clearly, other times it simply fails to honour its commitments.

This hood above the town is not seen, acts on connivance, on coercion and conventions. But sometimes it happens that the management of criminal territory discloses even through physical signs. The extortion demand of lace Parking is a small sign and, basically, is possible to avoid it, but if an obstacle occupies the public space, which an operator authorizing the parking lot removes, is a different matter.

In the historical centre of Palermo if you want to park your car in a public road you can find some bollards, you expect a few seconds and it comes a "gentleman" who "authorized" to park by moving the bollards (also public) he took care to be taken from a restricted area and arranged in good order. The Mafia does not almost ever see!

In the following photos you can have the exclusive privilege: see the hood of the mafia of the city, where to park on a public space you have to ask permission to a person who has taken the bollards for the mobility of public properties and uses them for his private purposes with which appropriates public space. All this happens while the city is moving normally, and all is normal. This fake outrage of normalcy is another feature of the Mafia.

Perhaps this story does not speak of the great Mafia, who organizes one of the lace and peddles drugs, but talks a lot of relationships with rights and in particular with the public space that's in the city of Palermo.

Compared to virtuous cases that have been exposed previously is also assists in this case to a modification of the public space, but with very different purposes. It is also important to understand how the public space in Palermo is an arena within which they move a lots of different forces that do not all contribute to the definition of the common good.





## Conclusions

The attention to the argumentative turn in planning outlined by Fincher and Forester (1993) is the framework that has structured the exposure of very different cases presented in this paper. The methods of research and action on the field in many cases allowed interacting directly with the movement coming to tell a story that is emerging as a revolution that comes to design autonomous geographies (Chatterton, 2006, 2010, Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006). However, it remains in the background a strong effort making claims to whom would be appropriate to give an answer in terms of urban policies.

The insurgent citizenships of Palermo are describing a path positively creative for regeneration of public space not promoted by urban policies. In this sense the schedules described by Florida (2000) in which creativity is a tool and a strategy to compete with parts of a city in decline, and even by Landry (2003) in which creativity is seen as a force capable of fighting some effects of globalization, are overcome and integrated into a new vision where creativity blossoms into independence as long as there are some preconditions. The spontaneity of the creativity is in continuity with the passing of the formulas set out by the urban marketing Palestino (2009) as ingredients and conditions to open paths of urban creativity.

The preconditions, encountered in Palermo cases, relate primarily to a technology shift that has been strengthened and structured in recent years.

The development of social networks has, in fact, given the opportunity to simulate and enhance an important social aspect of the city having a multiplicative effect of the ideas together with a sum function of thought.

The arrangements of the Internet already described by Castells (2001) in fact allow not only to add ideas and thoughts in a container, but to generate comparison on the same having a multiplicative effect. This has always been a function delegated to public places and is one of the preconditions for self-organization of insurgent movements. The second condition is the availability of a social and cultural context of high level that does not find room for expression and representation. The third is a state of disuse or underuse of public spaces. The fourth is the lack of cultural policies that generate a strong "hunger" of events, ideas and thoughts. These conditions are all present in the actual context of the city of Palermo and they are a very local expression and hard to find in other cities. The comparison of the reported cases

shows that none of the movement is free of an organization that passes through the social networks and the Internet. This has at least two aspects: on one side accentuates the features of the hedonistic contemporary society, and the other helps to organize thoughts and gives order to the history of outbreaks by providing a clear framework for those who decide to approach them.

Many questions remain suspended: the first one concerns the role of virtual communities. It is not clear how long these communities will need to get to propose a physical action on the city or if they do not come to a point of dematerialize their protest too.

It is an extreme example, but that should be taken into consideration because the city is risking to lose the primacy of the function to be an enhancer of intelligence in favour of virtual social communities. At present, the city seems to be a theater in which its occurrence and the casual relationship between physical and people seem unavoidable, but it will always be so?

The second aspect concerns the manner in which you can promote generation of creative energy self-produced, or what are the most effective policies to do so. In this case what is important and necessary, beyond spells and saving, is the ability to listen to the local authority to be able to build a dialogue with the insurgent forces of the city to prevent situations of conflict, but for channeling energies into durable paths and sustainable over time.

The insurgent movements described are deep affinities with the work of Danilo Dolci in Sicily in the 50s and 60s, especially with the reverse strike of 1956 in Partinico. In that case the principle was to strike working against unemployment. The action of Dolci, achieved by a process (Calamandrei, 1956), has many similarities with those conducted by insurgent movements.

Beyond the physical and tangible actions on the territory, the example of Dolci helps to understand how the generation of a conscious thought and creativity is the main legacy, more profound and lasting action to fight like those insurgent movements, even in the face to a lack of institutions.

## **References**

Benevolo, L., 1993. *Le città nella storia d'Europa*. Bari: Laterza.

Bonafede, G. & Lo Piccolo F., 2010. Participative Planning Processes in the Absence of the (Public) Space of Democracy. *Planning Practice and Research*, 25: 3, pp.353 – 375.

Calamandrei, P., 1956. In difesa di Danilo Dolci, Firenze: Quaderni di Nuova repubblica.

Cannarozzo, T., 2000. Palermo: le trasformazioni di mezzo secolo. *Archivio di studi urbani e regionali* n. 67. pp. 101 – 139.

- Cannarozzo, T., 2004. Palermo: il martirio di un piano orfano. *Archivio di studi urbani e regionali*, 80. pp. 123 – 143.
- Cannarozzo, T., 2008. Palermo: cronache del terzo millennio. *Archivio di studi urbani e regionali*, 93. pp. 183 – 211.
- Carlsson, C., 2003. *Critical Mass: Bicycling's Defiant Celebration*. San Francisco: Ak press.
- Castells, M., 2001. *The Internet galaxy*. Oxford: Oxford University press.
- Chatterton, P., 2006. 'Give up activism' and change the world in unknown ways. Or, learning to walk with others on uncommon ground, *Antipode*, 38(2), pp. 259–282.
- Chatterton, P., 2010. So What Does It Mean to be Anti-capitalist? *Conversations with Activists from Urban Social Centres*. *Urban studies*. 47: 6, pp. 1205 – 1224.
- Fera, G. 2008. *Comunità, urbanistica, partecipazione. Materiali per una pianificazione strategica comunitaria*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Fincher, R. & Jacobs J. M. Eds, 1998. *Cities of Difference*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Fischer, F. & Forester, J. Eds, 1993. *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning*. London: UCL Press.
- Florida, R., 2003. *L'ascesa della nuova classe creativa. Stile di vita, valori e professioni*. Milano: Mondadori,.
- Forester, J., 1989. *Planning in the Face of Power*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Forester, J. 1999. *The Deliberative Practitioner: Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Forester, J., 2005. *Mediation in Practice: Profiles of Facilitators, Mediators, Coalition – and Consensus-builders*. Ithaca, NY: Department of City and Regional Planning, Cornell University.
- Healey, P., 1997. *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*. London: Macmillan.
- Holston, J., 1998. Spaces of insurgent citizenship, in: L. Sandercock (Ed.) *Making the Invisible Visible: A Multicultural Planning History*, pp. 37–56. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Innes, J. E., 1996. Planning through consensus building: A new view of the comprehensive planning ideal. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 62: 4. pp. 460 – 472.
- Innes, J. E. & Booher, D. E., 1999. Consensus building and complex adaptive systems: A framework for evaluating collaborative planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 65: 4, pp. 412 – 423.
- Inzerillo, S. M., 1984. *Urbanistica e società negli ultimi duecento anni a Palermo. Crescita della città e politica amministrativa dalla "ricostruzione" al piano del 1962*.

Quaderno n. 14 dell'Istituto di urbanistica e pianificazione territoriale della facoltà di Architettura di Palermo.

Kohn, M., 2001. The Power of Place: The House of the People as Counterpublic. *Polity*. Vol. 33: 4. pp. 503-526

Landry, C., 2000. *The Creative City. A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*. London: Hearstscan.

Lo Piccolo, F., 2008. Planning research 'with' minorities in Palermo: Negotiating ethics and commitments in a participatory process. *Planning Practice and Research*, 23: 2. pp. 187 – 209.

Lo Piccolo, F. & Leone, D., 2008. New Arrivals, Old Places: Demographic Changes and New Planning Challenges in Palermo and Naples, *International Planning Studies*. vol. 13: 4, pp. 361 – 389.

Milroy, B. M., 1992. Some thoughts about difference and pluralism, *Planning Theory Newsletter*, 7/8(summer/winter), pp. 33–38.

Mumford, L., (1961) *The City in History*, San Diego: Harcourt Inc.

Palestino, M. F., 2009. Creativity as a strategy to recover: learning from Scampia. *Int. J. Sustainable Development*. 12: 2/3/4. pp. 264 – 274.

Pickerill, J. and Chatterton, P., 2006. Notes towards autonomous geographies: creation, resistance and self-management as survival tactics, *Progress in Human Geography*. 30: 6. pp. 1–17

Sandercock, L., 1998. *Towards Cosmopolis: Planning for Multicultural Cities*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Sandercock, L., 2003. *Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities of the 21st Century*. London: Continuum.

Sibley, D., 1995. *Geographies of Exclusion. Society and Difference in the West*. London: Routledge.

Zanfi F. (2008), *La città latente*, Milano: Bruno Mondadori.