ID 1592 | THE CITY FROM BELOW

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1 CHILDREN, TEEN-AGERS, AND THE URBAN SPACE

According to Ansell and Smith (2008, p.1), children's position within a nation or culture holds an "immense symbolic significance". This is to say that how a society conceptualises and provides for its children represents a strategic domain in which complex social, political and moral agendas are mobilised (Freeman, 1997). Some childhood theorists go further and suggest that focusing on concepts of children and childhood is essential to understand a society or social context as a whole (Jenks, 1982; 1996; James & Prout, 1997; Corsaro, 2005). Nevertheless, however, even though children and kids are citizens to all intents and purposes (and with their own needs and rights), on the one hand, their mobility across the city – as non-drivers – is strongly reduced (Miere, 2008), so that their "right to the city" (Lefebvre, 1968) is denied in practice (see: Bozzo, 1998; Dolto, 2000; Moro, 1991); on the other hand, they usually are substantially excluded from decisions concerning the urban spaces of their daily life since they are considered as non-adults, 'still-in-progress entities' having no voice (Scoppetta, 2014a; see also: Alldred, 2000 as well as Spivak, 1994). But it is worth remembering that, after all, the well-known definition of sustainable development explicitly refers to "future generations" (WCED, 1987). Therefore, the exclusion of children and teen-agers from decision-making reveals the vagueness of such definition – "starting from how needs are to be defined and anticipated, and by whom" (Pellizzoni, 2012) – as well as the problematic character of sustainability itself.

Paradoxically, at a time of rapid demographic change, while in Western countries their proportion of the population is reducing more and more (Harper & Levin, 2005), children and teen-agers are experiencing "unprecedented" (id.) levels of intervention into their lives, for instance in the form of academic expectations, surveillance and restrictions on their already limited mobility. In this sense, it has been argued that this is an "era marked by both a sustained assault on children and a concern for children" (James et al., 1998). Many studies (see e.g.: Valentine & McKendrick, 1997), in fact, show that the presence of children and teen-agers in public space has become less evident due to an increase in parents' fears based on the perceived risks in public space from both strangers and heavy traffic (Gill, 2007; Lee, 2001) – where the former have a different and more relevant social meaning, but they often tend to remain hidden behind the latter. At the same time (and ironically), (especially male) children and teen-agers from about 9 to 13 years old daily walk across an immense virtual but extremely realistic Los Angeles – a landscape of advertising for actually existing products – by killing (or being killed) in all imaginable and unimaginable ways, by making robberies and illegally accumulating money in order to buy weapons, cars, apartments, drugs (to be sold) and various luxury objects (with well visible brand names) as well as female bodies (prostitutes) and by becoming familiar with thieves, fraudsters, (usually Mexican) prostitutes, drug addicts or dealers. This is the case of the widespread GTA V (5th edition of Rockstar's video-game "Great Theft Auto"), which cost about 256 million $, has earned 815,7 million $ in the first 24 hours after the listing, and has exceeded one billion in the first three days of sale and over 15 million copies sold (11,210,000 only the first day), with 75 million copies sold worldwide (until 2013) .

However, despite their virtual but daily experience, the relationship between children and teen-agers and the city is defined problematically in terms of the need to protect them against the city's perils (see: Valentine & McKendrick, 1997): following a more general trend (I refer to: Beck, 2006), the urban neighbourhood appears predominantly as a threat to their development and an undesirable socialising context. As a result, keeping children and kids 'off the streets' is assumed to serve their individual development, safety and wellbeing. Such an attitude reveals that what Zinnecker (1995) defines as the ideology of the "bourgeois childhood" has become a generalised pattern, an important condition in acquiring the necessary cultural, social and personal competencies and skills to be able to get on in society. This means that children and teen-agers are constantly involved in a broad range of pre-organised pedagogical settings and that institutional socialisation is seen as essential to 'normal' socialisation (Kampmann, 2004). Children's and teen-agers' everyday activities and spaces are therefore structured in a pedagogical sense: they spend most of their time in institutionalised settings such as home, school and recreational institutions (Kampmann, 2004; Rasmussen, 2004) providing them with well-controlled

developmental opportunities and preparing them for their future role in society. As a result, children's and teen-agers' use of time and space is dominated by a busy (institutionalised) leisure agenda, sometimes accompanied by leisure stress, leaving very little room for informal interactions (and for informal public spaces). This, moreover, also leads to the fact that many (not only urbanised) children and teen-agers currently live a spatially segregated life and the public realm is kept out of their everyday life as public spaces fall outside adult control and are therefore seen as a problematic influence on children's and teen-agers' socialisation. Despite the shift occurred in general planning theories and practices from Modernist 'rational' approaches based on zoning and functional separation to a more complex view of cities and societies, what concerns children's and teen-agers' urban space still remains anchored to the old logic based on separation and aimed at control. Such separate spaces clearly mirror the ways in which contemporary cities are organised according to a generational order, i.e.: the pattern regulating the relationship between adults and children, where childhood is represented in a double Apollonian-Dionysiac perspective, the former to be protected into 'safe' fenced areas; the latter to be tamed as it pretends to occupy adults' urban spaces (see: Harden, 2000; Holloway & Valentine, 2000; Valentine, 2004; Zeiher 2003; see also: Alanen & Mayall, 2001). In this sense, children may be seen as social actors provided with a "pre-determined spatiality" (Satta, 2012b; see also: 2010; 2012a).

More generally, on the one hand, we find the progressive reduction of public open spaces, where a worrying example in this sense is given by a series of regulations regarding public spaces promulgated within the frame of Tony Blair's so-called 'urban renaissance' , all aimed at fighting youth crime, but actually including within the notion of 'crime' a wide range of behaviours (e.g.: skateboarding) (see: Charman & Savage, 2002; Flint, 2006; Flint & Nixon, 2006) thus revealing the (re)emerging of a sort of (neo-Victorian?) "moral panic" (Rogers & Coaffee, 2005) with a special focus on the young population. On the other hand, we find detailed designed age-based spaces devoted to children only, which are rhetorically promoted as giving them space, whereas, by contrast, such often fenced spaces – oases in the jungle of the city, safe heavens in dangerous public space – actually subtract them the city space as a whole.

2 THE MODERN DISCOURSE ON CHILDHOOD, AND PLANNING AS AN AUTONOMOUS 'TECHNICAL' DISCIPLINE

Following Hendrick (1997a), the children/adults divide can be interpreted as an inheritance of the radical economic/social changes due to the industrial revolution, when – although until then highly valued as unskilled low wage-earning labour force (see: Pollock, 1983) – children's and teen-agers' widespread employment started to be publicly opposed (mostly by the middle and upper classes) and working class children and kids became subject to a discourse that viewed them as worth protecting as future assets to society. A more skilled labour force, however, precisely was what industry needed. Aries (1962) underlines how, in the mid-19th century, European upper classes generated an age-based hierarchy which was institutionalised as a dichotomous power relationship between adults (rational, complete and superior by nature of being fully grown) and children (irrational, incomplete and inferior), which mirrored the existing divide between upper and lower classes. In addition, the notion that if left to itself the child would become feral and wayward was influenced by longstanding ideas about original sin that regarded the child as evil, base and corrupt (Cunningham, 2006). At the same time, however, the child was also described as innocent and pure. Such twofold notion of children's natural waywardness or goodness, representing negative or positive qualities lost by adults, still remains embedded in modern Western ideas of childhood (Lister, 2005).

Whereas, traditionally seen more like small adults, children and teen-agers of the lower classes had always worked amongst adults; with these shifting concerns, child labour suddenly started to become synonymous with exploitation: "children here are represented as the victims of super-exploitation who were rescued from the predations of capitalism by the combined influences of social reformers and moralists and by the certain economic transformations which shifted demand away from unskilled towards more skilled and educated labour". In this way, "children were relocated (displaced) in 'childhood' – an idealised and romanticised state" (James et al., 1998).

It is worth noting, however, that the modern discourse on childhood and adolescence has been developed precisely during the same historical period in which even urban planning emerged as an autonomous

'technical' discipline proposed as a "cure" for the "disease" (Calabi, 1979) of the "monstrous" (Munford, 1961) industrial metropolis and as bearer of progress and improvement of living conditions. According to Benevolo (1985), the new discipline, by self-representing itself as "a sort of St. George killing the dragon" (Secchi, 2002), was able to play a reformist role in-between revolutionary impulses and reactionary repression through the elaboration of a series of 'spatial devices' (such as social housing, schools, public open spaces) constituting the fundamental elements of a (public) "positive material welfare" (Lanzani & Pasqui, 2011, p.32) that, until then, had been entrusted to (private) charities. The emerging of both planning and the new understanding of childhood seem to be related to what Bernardo Secchi (2002) has defined as "one of the deepest anxiety of Modernity" concerning the worrying transformation of the 'common people' into a threatening 'crowd', within which it was no longer possible to clearly distinguish between "classes laborieuses" and "classes dangeures" (Chevalier, 1958; more generally, see: Scoppetta, 2014a). Such an anxiety is clearly expressed by the flourishing of the 'monstrous' literature of the period – think of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's, Oscar Wilde's and Stevenson's literary works – as well as Charles Darwin's evolutionary theories that fuelled concerns about both 'civilisation' and questions of mental and physical handicap, evolution and solutions to poverty, with a special focus on the effects of the environment on the development of child's mind, leading to further evidence for the distinctiveness of (working people's) child's 'primitiveness' with respect to the 'civilised' (middle class) adult.

Therefore, social reformers, who also theorised an educational role of planning , sought to remove working class children from the adult worlds of work, to 'civilise' them through education: schools would transform the wild nature of the working class child (often even through physical punishment) into a deferential being, by replacing child’s familial and social knowledge with another one, more appropriate and worthwhile (Hendrick 1997b).

The idea of the urban fenced play-gardens emerged as part of modern concerns about childhood. It was strictly linked to both public health and educational policies. Both in the USA and Europe (Frost & Wortham, 1988), however, play-gardens were intended as constantly supervised by adults, mostly local residents and parents, but later also by professional supervisors, who also organised activities there: given the general focus on children’s health and motor development, playgrounds were designed to make children exercise and develop their motor skills, while also providing them with fresh air within the city (see: Hartle & Johnson, 1993). It was just many years later that advancement in psychology, psychoanalysis and psychiatry as well as concepts from the field of developmental psychology – and particularly Piaget’s (1973; see also: 1951) notion of the "naturally developing" child, i.e.: the assumption that children are 'natural' phenomena that implies a "figurative" thought as well as a distinctive "operative" intelligence – led to the idea of children and teen-agers as a class of being with specific needs, desires, rights and an innate potential capacity for reasoning, and of adult society as responsible for supporting their growing up. Such approach informed post-War attitudes towards children as individuals and concepts of child-centred learning (see. e.g.: Montessori, 1972), as "children [...] constitute an investment in the future in terms of the reproduction of social order" (James et al., 1998).

On the planning side, instead, in her seminal work, Jacobs (1961) marked a shift away from the idea of fenced playgrounds, as she underlined how children learn the fundamentals of social urban life by being able to live and play in the streets, as facing the unpredictable events taking place in the world is an essential component of children's and teen-agers' development (Hart, 1986). In fact, the separation of children’s playground from the adults’ urban spaces as well as the rigid division among different ages not only prevents lively inter-generational relationships, but this also denies the idea of spontaneous, creative and self-organised games in the urban space, being fenced playgrounds the sole place in which the right to play (for adults too!) is allowed. Furthermore, too often mass-produced equipments in children’s gardens and playgrounds not only tend to influence their design but they also imply a passive idea of children’s and kids‘ games as a monotonous unchangeable and mechanical practice that prevents children from experiencing an imaginative self-construction of their own space (for instance: based on the inventive use of objects trouvés). In this way, such kind of fenced and controlled children’s gardens, where only pre-determined actions are allowed, keep them from autonomously managing their space and time and seem to be designed in order to construct passive subjectivities.

3 DESIGN FOR WHOM?

At the beginning of both the so-called Italian 'economic boom' and the uncontrollable and often illegal sprawling growth of the city of Rome (among the many, see, e.g: Insolera, 1962;), Vittoria Calzolari and Mario Ghio (1961) published an unfortunately too easily forgotten research-work, which is largely acknowledged as the first Italian contribution to the minimum provision of green open spaces and leisure facilities. By showing a gap which appeared as really hard to bridge, this work was based on a detailed comparison of educational provisions (in terms of school buildings and related green and sport areas as well as of educational systems) between the Italian (and, particularly, Rome) and the highly welfarist Northern European cities, such as Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Zurich, Ulm. This is a work that should be considered as a possible new starting point for the integration of both place-based and people-based planning and design approaches as well as for a general spatial rethinking of the welfare system. Italian planning scholars usually use to connect this work to the concept of 'standard', which considers public services in quantitative terms, but this is a reductive misunderstanding. In fact, even if such word was not fashionable at that time, this is a book that is about what we today use to call 'urbanity', since it stresses the role of public schools (to be connected to both open spaces and public libraries) within urban neighbourhoods, by addressing their design in terms of both spaces to be devoted to young citizens and inter-relationships between these spaces and the neighbourhood as a whole. During the turbulent and unruly rent-guided growth of the city of Rome to highlight the existence of children and teen-agers and the need to better consider (in explicit terms of 'urban infrastructure') public spaces, structures and contexts within which young people operated meant linking together the issues of education and citizenship. In this sense, one could say that Calzolari's and Ghio's work expressed the zeitgeist of the period, as the research was published at the threshold of the so-called 'season of centre-left' , which was marked by a series of ambitious reforms aimed at modernising the country (including the education reform, which brought the threshold of compulsory education from 10 to 14 years old). In the following years, on the one hand, Vittoria Calzolari – an extraordinary figure of a politically and socially engaged planner, who became the assessor for the historic centre (1976-1981) with the leftist major Giulio Carlo Argan and who was also among the first Italian landscape scholars (see: Calzolari, 1999) – actively participated in the debate on social services (see: Cederna, 1965) carried out by the Italian Women Association (UDI) by framing the topic of urbanity within a gender perspective, in a country in which a rapid urbanisation process was occurring, with women' shifting role as emblematic of the consequent social changes in terms of life-style and values. On the other hand, Mario Ghio was involved as an external consultant in the Commission on Planning Stardards, which had been established at the Ministry of Public Works and finally led to the planning standards decree on minimum quantity of public services and facilities per inhabitant .

Since the 1980s, however, the concept of 'standard' started to be criticised as a merely quantitative approach, but this was due to a misunderstanding of Ghio's and Calzolari's seminal work, as its 'translation' in normative terms led to a trivialisation. In fact, while acknowledging the new emerging needs, the decree tended to reduce them to questions that are defined on the basis of the answer which are already provided by the institution, where the quantitative approach corresponds to the performance compatible with the self-reproduction of the administrative apparatus (Tosi, 1984). As a result, such a trivialisation have ended up to hide the most interesting aspects of Ghio's and Calzolari's work.

The first one consists of Calzolari's interest in a notion of 'perception' (deriving from gestalt psychology) aimed at privileging both processes of symbolic construction and a figurative language, in order to search for "the psychological and sensual effects of the physical form" (Lynch, 1960) as opposed to functional achievements, strictly linked to the traditional idea of 'satisfaction of needs'. Not surprisingly, Vittoria Calzolari – who participated at Lynch's research on the "Image of the city" as a Fullbright fellow at Massachussetts Institute of Technology (see: Calzolari, 1960; 1955a; 1955b; 1956) – was precisely the one who introduced Lynch's work in the Italian planning debate , which at that time was still dominated by a regulatory and quantitative approach. Even with respect to US urban studies tradition – which was still hegemonised by Durkheim's approach, aimed at linking together the construction of meanings of the physical forms with supra-individual and generalising symbolic representations – Lynch's work constituted a real innovative approach, as it was aimed at dealing not only "with form itself, but with form as it is seen and used by humans" (Lynch, 1960; see also 1984). In addition, the choice to assume a 'mobile' point of view, thus mimicking the physical experience of travelling, clearly expresses an interpretative orientation towards an understanding of the "other times of reciprocity and relationship, which are countless, smaller and, in some cases, even insignificant, but also present in people's life" and that differ from the

"continuous and durable reciprocity [...] objectified in unitary configurations" (Simmel, 1903) characterising what Alexander (1975) calls the "natural" historic city.

The second interesting aspect of Calzolari's and Ghio's work consists of an understanding of the proposed 'urban infrastructure' not only in terms of planning and design of physical spaces, but also in (immaterial) terms of highly inter-sectoral urban policies to be developed within a broader perspective that considers both the physical and social dimension as strictly inter-connected (in this sense, see: Ghio, 1964). But the most important aspect of their work consists of taking the point of view of the users of the spaces to be designed, i.e.: the future generation which the notion of sustainability (WCED, 1987) also refers to. Too often, in fact, the concept of 'urban quality' is emphasised, but it usually tends to be merely intended as 'quality of design', while it is rarely explicitly affirmed who such quality is for . Calzolari's and Ghio's child-based perspective has strongly influenced a still on-going action-research on the involvement of children and teen-agers in planning and design activities, whose findings are presented here .

4 MAPPING THE CITY FROM BELOW

Recent years have witnessed an increasing interest in planning processes based on the involvement of children in design activities (e.g.: within partecipatory workshops). Such involvement could be utilised as a sort of 'litmus test' to evaluate the sustainable perspective of the project, as it gives voice to weak actors. Children's technical contribution (see: Tonucci, 1996; Paba, 1997) to planning and design activities can be particularly fruitful as not only they "bear specific needs" (Paba, 2001b; see also: 2001a), but they are also provided with a 'different sight', which means a specific 'experienced knowledge' of urban spaces. Furthermore, they are also involved within the network of "weak ties" (Granowetter, 1983) of the neighbourhood level, where people are "within sights" (Mumford, 1968. p.35) and a "democracy of proximity" (Bracqué & Sintomer, 2002) may be possible. Finally, children's distinctive spatial behaviour tends to be subversive since it is able to resist the usual "production of urban space" (Lefebvre, 1974) of late capitalism, and this fits well with a different and more political claim for sustainability. Thus, children's sight 'from below' can help planners in anchoring sustainable alternative visions to the local dimension of daily practices (Mc Kendrick, 2009). Especially if framed within and sustained by a learning path (e.g.: through workshops strictly inter-related with school programs, with particular reference to subjects such as geography, drawing and natural science, but also literature and music), their skilled involvement in planning activities can fruitfully contribute in re-imagining the city as an inter-active cognitive potential (see, e.g.: Sandercock, 2003) that lies within the daily social practices structuring urban spaces (De Certeau, 1990). In this sense, not only children's participation can force planners towards a more responsible approach to the resources and commons to be preserved for the future generations: their different sight can effectively help planners in placing "diversity as the cornerstone of their prescription for urban reform" (Talen, 2006a; see also: 2006b), i.e.: enabling diversity through planning and design.

A real and effective involvement of children in participatory practices, however, requires an understanding of their own distinctive language. In fact, as Poli (2006) underlines, space is usually thought as a real, objective and external construction, as a mere container of objects that exists in everyone's mind. By contrast, space actually is the result of a slow cognitive development that derives from perceptions, experiences, culture, individual and collective history. In this sense, the geographical Euclidean space, where objects are placed following an exact metric relationship, does not exist: it is nothing but a whole of logic calculations which are elaborated by our mind in order to organise our perceptions about the territory, where objects independently exist (Dematteis, 1985). Therefore, the ontological security of a map as a map cannot be automatically presumed, as its 'truth' mirrors the ideological frame of its creator, so that a place has a different meaning that depends on its uses and users: a non-cultivated field, in fact, has a different meaning for a developer who want to build or for a group of kids who want to play football.

Spatial concepts such as 'distance' and 'proximity' clearly show the ways in which space is a highly subjective social construct, as the former is related to notions of foreignness and the latter rather concerns familiarity: the distance from a place which is known as enjoyable will therefore be perceived as shorter than that from a sad place (e.g.: a cemetery). In the same way, the physical experience plays a relevant role, as a distance will be differently perceived if the street slopes downwards or upwards. Furthermore, although time plays a relevant role in the perception of space (a distance, in fact, can be measured by the time needed to cover it), geometrical maps usually ignore it as well as they cannot capture the complexity of real space, as what is represented of an object is nothing but its measure.

Figure 1 – Neighbourhood representation based on home-school daily route, with ‘emotional landmarks’ (school, friends’ home ...) drawn in a different way

Historical maps were different: subjective perceptions, symbols and narrations were part of the representation of space. Ancient maps represented a "hodological space" deriving from the Greek hodòs ('path') (Janni, 1984), wherein the perception of spaces follows a line according to a 'route perspective', as in the case of the well-known Tabula Peutigeriana. Cadastrial maps required the physical experience of walking across the territory, so that a variety of local measurement systems derived from human pace and eyesight (Farinelli, 1981).

Figure 2 – ‘Roma in forma de lione’ (‘Rome in form of a lion’): a medieval symbolic representation of the city of Rome.

A 'genealogical' inquire can clearly show how geometrical cartography has been progressively naturalised and institutionalised across space and time as a particular form of scientific knowledge and practice following the emerging of modern national states. Maps, as Harley (1989) suggests, are a tool for the exercise of external power, in which plans and intentions of powerful agents become realised. But maps are also provided with a power which is internal to cartography: it consists of the ability to categorise the world and normalise certain views of it, thereby influencing us at the level of meaning and experience. Many critical theorists from the Frankfurt School onward have echoed Weber’s argument that the development of modern capitalism has been tied to that of an instrumental rationality in human relations and communication, with maps as one the most powerful and pervasive tool. Spatial sciences, in Lefebvre’s (1974) view, are primary agents in the reproduction of capitalism: as they interfere, through a

sort of inner colonisation, with the possibilities in everyday life through the use of space, by pre-judging the subjective world according to rational/bureaucratic typifications. According to Corner (1999), in fact, territory does not precede a map, as space becomes territory through bounding practices that include mapping. Thus, given that places are planned and built on the basis of maps, space itself is nothing but a representation of the map: the "differentiation between the real and the representation is no longer meaningful", as maps and territories are co-constructed, being the former not a reflection of the world, but its re-creation (see also: Baudrillard, 1994).

Analogies exist between historical and children's representations, as the latter do not imply Lefebvre's (1974) "espace conçu" ('conceived space'), i.e.: space as a mental construct, the space of "savoir" ('knowledge', i.e.: expert knowledge), the (abstract, geometrical) "representation of space". Children's representations rather refer to both Lefebvre's "espace perçu" ('perceived space') and "espace vécu" ('lived space'), being the former (real) space as (materially practiceable) physical form and the latter the space of everyday life and social relations, which is produced and modified over time through its use and whose understanding refers to "connaissance", i.e.: informal or local forms of knowledge (involving symbolism and meaning) that is gained though personal experience. In this sense, as it is at the same time both real and imagined, such "space of representation" is both the medium and the outcome of human spatial relationships (see particularly: Iori, 1996). Children, in fact, do not draw what they 'know', but rather what they daily experience, without a clear distinction between reality and fantasy, as their representations (especially at the level of nursery and primary school) consist of a non-structured non-hierarchical dis-homogeneous whole of objects and events – also including a dream or a nightmare, a desire or a fear, a sketch from a television program or a landscape from a video game – to be organised through a cultural process into their own 'mental archives' by using a non-detailed typological and often two-dimension representation, where the aim is to classify rather than to describe the real object (see: Pierantoni, 2001). §

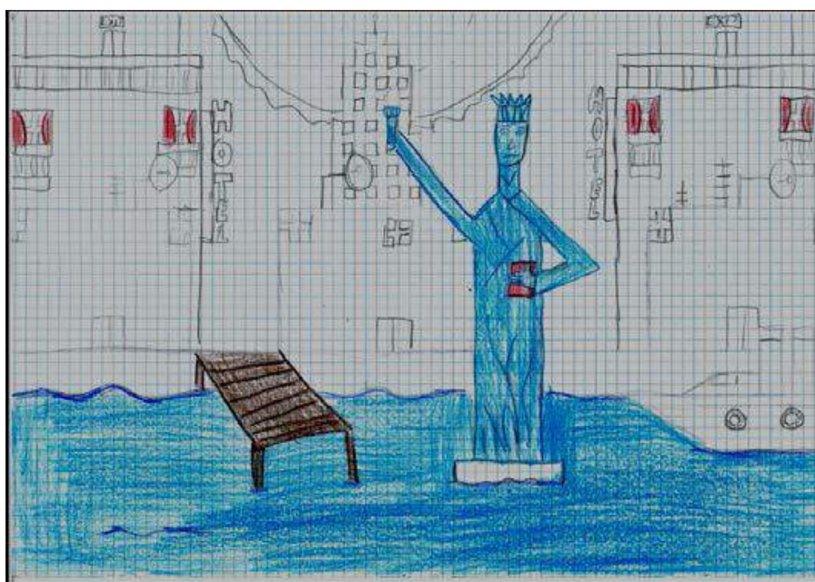

Figure 3 – The historical centre (of the city of Rome!) as seen by a teen-ager from the periphery.

In this sense, drawing is one of their own way for knowing the world by giving a name to each thing as ancient or primitive population did. In fact, as Chatwin (1988) tells us about Australian aboriginals,

> *"each totemic ancestor, while travelling through the country, was thought to have scattered a trail of words and musical notes along the line of his footprints […] these Dreaming-tracks lay over the land as 'ways' of communication between the most far-flung tribes. A song […] was both map and direction-finder. Providing you knew the song, you could always find your way across the country. […] In theory, at least, the whole of Australia could be read as a musical score. […] By singing the world into existence […] the Ancestors had been poets in the original sense of poiesis, meaning 'creation'. […] Aboriginals could not believe the country existed until they could see and*

sing it – just as, in the Dreamtime, the country had not existed until the Ancestors sang it".

Within such a framework, landmarks play a relevant role, as children's space is a sort of 'unknown archipelago' wherein some familiar 'islands', made by recognisable fragments, emerge.

As Lefebvre (1974) argues the more and more homogeneous and commodified space of our contemporary society is conceived before it is fully lived, and spatial practices, on which our knowledge of the world is based, emerge much more from representations and abstractions than from our daily experience, so that space itself becomes a representation – an overturning that Baudrillard (1994) calls "hyperreality" – by making us more easily manipulable by ideology. Differently, if space is constituted through mapping practices by weak actors, this means that constructing maps can positively 'activate' territory, by 'reconstructing' it over and over again. In this sense, understanding children's representational language through their involvement in planning activities could really help us to imagine smarter urban spaces that enable diversity and active citizenship.

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ID 1606 | THE MORE COMMERCIAL, THE LESS SAFE? –IMPACT OF COMMERCIALIZATION ON STREET SAFETY IN REVITALIZED DOWNTOWN AREA

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1 INTRODUCTION

Urban safety is one of the most important issues among sustainable development challenges. Over the past decade, the world has witnessed growing threats to the safety and security of cities and towns. These threatens, in terms of traffic accidents, traffic jam, environmental pollution, crime incidents, etc, have all brought severe challenges to place-making and management on urban space. Streets, the public space where people commute, walk, go shopping, stay, and live, has played a key role in making our cities safe and secure for generation to come. Topics of street security cover a series of urban safety issues, such as transportation safety, defense and security, psychological security, and so on, which are worthy of attention by city planners and urban designers.

Streets are important elements in downtown revitalization. Among the globe, infilled development of commercial and retail functions in old downtown cities has being contested as an effective revitalization approach to promote the vitality of neighborhood with various functions, but also as a growing threaten to local safety as well as an overburden to streets according to increasing tourist and traffic flows. There are abundant researches on gentrification trends as well as discussions on urban revitalization approaches. As the basic demand of local residents and immigrants, the security issues, however, are in lack of discussion. Although there is common sense that the entering of immigrants, commerce, and tourists have increased unsafety risks to local neighborhoods, very few scholars have investigated this topic and make scientific verification.

Shi-Cha-Hai Lake District, a typical historical conservation residential area in inner city of Beijing, is an exemplification of downtown revitalization in recent decades with its typical fabric of streets and public space. Nowadays this area is mixed with local residents and a large amount of boutiques, bars, retails, and restaurants. Taking Jin-Si-Tao area (JST as abbreviation in following paragraphs) as example, this