Urban Planning as Architecturing Urban Diversity

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ABSTRACT

It is widely accepted that planning in order to make cities competitive and cohesive in the global economy has to capture the multiplicity and diversity of all urban vital forces and fix them in a strategy able to steer the urban future development. In the dominant governance way of producing competitive cities, community participation, partnerships, negotiations are widely considered efficient tools for capturing such vital forces.

It is our conviction that this approach utilizes vital forces eventually made available by not large diversities, thus enhancing the risk that diversity merely represents segregation and marginalization of other relevant sources of urban life. In fact, it mainly privileges knowledge bases which are "shared" thus excluding emergent, latent knowledge bases, knowledge bases of not-large diversities, which can rather represent the germ for innovation eventually overcoming the monologic competitive urban model.

Some questions arise: what are the vital forces shaping our cities in individualised societies? Do we have different modes to recognize them? Are such vital forces traceable back to the so called urban stakeholders?

In this paper we challenge the conception of planning as tool for breeching knowledges, specifically knolwedges of few individuals, and explore how to rethink planning in order to capture latent, or emergent, forces which are hardly included in structured planning processes. We think to such forces as distributed, dispersed knowledges. We look for a new conception of planning starting discussing what should be considered knowledge in planning, what "knowledge for planning" to look for and what chance we have to manage it.

Finally, the contribution introduces the concept of urban planning as architecturing the urban social diversity which does not pretend to steer the future through a static although flexible representation and reflects on the crucial relevance of such conception as a phenomena able to empower the interaction of individual energies which would differently stay latent. Architecturing means discovering and giving a

chance to orchestrate virtual spaces where the connection of individuals and communities, singular and collective cognitive energies can give rise to the immaterial infrastructure for urban cohesion.

Key Words: urban planning, architecturing urban diversity