

Tensions between top-down and bottom-up processes in the renewal and regeneration interventions in Naples

Gabriella Punziano

Post-doctoral Researcher - Gran Sasso Science Institute, Social Sciences Unit – L'Aquila -
gabriella.punziano@gssi.infn.it

This paper provides some insights contributing to the governance processes toward the creation of a *future urban agenda* of the city of Naples. In line with this purpose, the paper focuses on the phenomenon of urban renewal and regeneration and how *top-down* or *bottom-up* processes interact through the shaping of empty spaces, here generically defined urban voids. The transformation processes that would affect urban and social processes inevitably have to face up with some tensions that consist of claims about a range of socio-spatial “rights to the city” (Lefebvre, 1996). It is, more generally, the right to experience the spaces of the city, to feel part of them, to feel themselves responsible for them, and above all to manage these spaces. However, the set of urban and social conflicts, which generally involves citizens, inhabitants, movements, governments, but also other institutions, generate specific clusters that fight on oppositional goal in the ultimate aim of revealed or undermined the legitimacy of local city governance. In this sense, urban and social conflicts can be both understood as a negotiation of authority, prevalence, and strength of the images of cities and the development trajectories that emerge from the vision assessed by the different groups that experience the city life. Since Naples is a large and complex metropolitan city—transgressive and full of conflictual dynamics—it is difficult to talk about its dynamics in manage the local governance of spaces and way of experience life in these spaces. Taking into account this reflection, with the intent to understand some complex phenomena that modify appearance and character of the city space, the aim of this paper is to give a sense, a shape and a dimension to specific urban and social processes that directly affect local city governance. These phenomena are renewal and regeneration experiences—both in urban and social sense—linked to the actions of a multiplicity of actors that implements *top-down* and *bottom-up* interventions on the city space interact through the shaping of *empty spaces* here generically defined *urban voids*. For return the considered complexity, this study uses a visual methodology to investigate the fragmented space of mining behind the analysed processes. The implemented technique go through the collection of data on renewal and regeneration processes by mapping these starting from a series of interviews to key informers involved in these processes and from them particular perception of events, dynamics and use, reuse and meaning attributed to the city space. Through this technique, it is growing a general spatial reasoning about the images of the city that the multiplicity of local actors have in mind. What arise from this way of reasoning are contrasting and very different points of view of city perceived as fragmented in many specific sections affected by dissimilar degree of *urban void* connotation. The collected result allows us to conceptualize a typological scheme of future development trajectories for the city. In addition, a step forward to the constituted typology is to go in depth on a specific part of the city, in order to understand more closely the local dynamics shaping local governance: the *Old Town*. After the presentation of this specific case, what it is reached are open questions rather than real conclusions that helping in shape the research lines on which forthcoming attention is needed in the desire to develop a more articulated discourse aimed at creating a *Future Urban Agenda for Naples*. Moreover, all these elements can become useful instruments through whom it can be possible to learn from the urban and social conflicts and dynamics, from the practice of governance and from the struggles of everyday urban and social life.

© by the author(s)

Paper presented at the RC21 International Conference on “The transgressive city: Comparative perspectives on governance and the possibilities of everyday life in the emerging global city” Mexico City, 21-23 July 2016. <http://rc21-mexico16.colmex.mx/index.php>