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The metropolitan plural city

Antonio Taccone^{a,*}

^a*Department of Heritage, Architecture, Urban planning, Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria, Italy*

Abstract

An inclusive metropolitan city can be considered as a urban system that changes by designing social, economic, and environmental innovative responses which enable it to withstand social change in the long term.

It is a city that produces significant economic opportunities taking advantages of the political trend, or particularly following the adoption of Law Delrio, of the policies of composition of metropolitan cities which cause expectations and priorities at all policy levels. Precisely, once established, metropolitan cities will be able to carry out essential purposes and build a more integrated urban policy and a ethical urban development planning.

The constitution of inclusive policies should be part of the process of implementation of metropolitan city since the beginning, both in the chief town, and beyond.

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1. Introduction

The issue of the contrast to social segregation in the urban area, a contest which is characterized by large migration flows, constitutes a very topical and relevant problem that needs to be addressed with the participation of stakeholders who can jointly work towards in both projects of urban planning and socio-cultural integration.

Our society is constantly changing and is now considered “multi-ethnic”.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +39.(0)965 169 6403.

E-mail address: ataccone@unirc.it

Social changes within the cities are due to the impact of migration flows, which bring opportunities and stimulus for the implementation of new processes that take into consideration the different cultures, in order to provide a higher urban quality.

For the last several years, field research has focused on social transformations.

As far as back in the 1977, Christopher Alexander (Fallanca, 1997) turned his intention to one of the pattern for the maintenance of ethnic neighborhoods within the cities.

That originated a critical debate. His approach was interpreted as a form of maintenance of social segregation, but was later intended as an inclusive policy where cities could interact with one another and cultures co-exist.

In the design of several Mediterranean cities, or in the urban interpretation settlements, it is possible to identify different methods and strategies useful to maintain and promote conditions for multi-ethnicity.

Several cities already contribute to urban design with preservation and promotion of the heritage cultures and ethnic groups.

The newly aroused multi-ethnicity demand requires new approaches and large cultural openings. In order to create a break in the current trend towards the homologation of the way of living, before planning existing spaces it is necessary to reckon with customs and traditions, and a new awareness of areas and cities in the most peculiar way.

A strategy that gathers territory development and new city requests, is required in order to focus on a new model of development, based on sustainability of interventions and multi-ethnicity working towards a cultural growth.

The purpose is to trigger strategic transformation processes, characterized by a strict preservation of the individuality and a proper redesign of the existing, in the belief that our urban areas, for their peculiar landscape, characterized by a legacy settlement whose historical sedimentation proves a millenarian coexistence of different cultures, deserve an ambitious project.

The aim for this plan is a place in which the articulation and shapes of spaces, both public and private, constitutes a mirror of complex identity, and where we can recognize many architectural and urban connections about which every inhabitant can find himself, and understand the bond with territorial and cultural context wider than the one he lives in.

In this process of redesign, a real cultural progress, particularly evident in the new urban entities as the metropolitan cities, may be represented by the constitution of Territorial Laboratories, that are centers dedicated to deal with residents, migrants and citizens' complaints, and fulfill their needs.

It is a new information system, dedicated to citizens, which provide urban policies build with joint participation of the whole community, citizens and experts coming from different cultures, in order to create a feeling of belonging and citizenship.

Metropolitan Territorial Laboratories set as several urban centers, could be actively involved in the constitution of metropolitan city networks (Fallanca, 2008). They could be seen as poles and instruments of "communication on the city", oriented towards citizens and organizations, and people who can offer a significant contribution to the search of potential, purposes and needs of the metropolitan identity.

A new way, coherently with the latest trends of urban planning, not only to inform but mostly to share ideas, purposes and projects about the development of cities and metropolitan areas. A new cultural turmoil is active in the governance of local authorities as well.

Participation process in the design of urban plans become mandatory. The local laws identifies them as laboratories. This allows to combine actions for the construction of the metropolitan plural city, designed to both citizens and migrants.

This innovative policy of close collaboration and participation of citizens in the transformation of places and urban contexts, can be realized in specific areas, public help desks, or small urban centers where hosting conferences, meetings, projects and requests for the requalification and the transformation of the cities, in order to support the planning of innovative policies in which citizens can work together and cooperate at the transformation of places and urban contexts. The implicit purpose is to allow every citizen, starting from the migrants, to know and live better their own city, to trigger a virtuous process able to offer instruments to wonder about the city, and have the chance to promote initiatives oriented to the construction of new scenarios for a plural city.

Under these influences, many local administrations already embarked on this new path dealing with citizens and joint participation so that it is not a one-off action but it could be followed up.

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