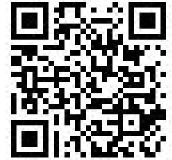

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CHAPTER 1

WHAT WOULD A 'DIVERCITY' BE LIKE? SPECULATION ON DIFFERENCE-SENSITIVE PLANNING AND LIVING PRACTICES☆

Camilla Perrone

ABSTRACT

The contemporary city is a field with a myriad of problems that require deep reflection and the questioning of habitual ways of thinking and acting. This chapter examines some of these, while seeking a path – or perhaps a way out – in order to deal with the difficulties linked to the most pressing emergent phenomena: the multiplication of new citizens, the complicated mosaic of differences, the spread of voluntary communities and the requests for recognition in a socially diverse and multiple society.

☆The title of this chapter indirectly quotes the title of a seminal article by Dolores Hayden entitled 'What Would a Non-Sexist City Be Like?' published in C. Stimpson *et al.* (1980) (Ed.). *Women and the American city*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (and in many other places over time). By making this quotation, I want to pay homage to the author, but also to consciously evoke the many forms of diversity making up the city which, 30 years later, have now been recognised.

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The reflections brought together in this chapter leave behind mundane literary routines, imprisoned in the clichés of the discourse on post-modernity, to single out a 'field of practices' that is enigmatic but at the same time constitutes and generates a new idea of urbanity. DiverCity (Perrone, 2010) is the literary and evocative figuration that recounts this set of practices. The figuration uses a 'play on words' between diversity and city, in which the two concepts are understood as entities with a one-to-one correspondence, an ontological interconnection. DiverCity is the outcome of a process to produce and exchange multiple, plural, interactive (built up during the action), expert and experiential knowledge.

Keywords: Multicultural planning; practice turn; cities of differences

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary city is a field with a myriad of problems that require deep reflection and the questioning of habitual ways of thinking and acting. This chapter examines some of these, while seeking a path – or perhaps a way out – in order to deal with the difficulties linked to the most pressing emergent phenomena: the multiplication of new citizens, the complicated mosaic of differences, the spread of voluntary communities and the requests for recognition in a socially diverse and multiple society.

The reflections brought together in this chapter leave behind mundane literary routines, imprisoned in the clichés of the discourse on post-modernity, to single out an enigmatic 'field of practices' that is enigmatic but at the same time constitutes and generates a new idea of urbanity. DiverCity (Perrone, 2010) is the literary and evocative figuration that recounts this set of practices. The figuration uses a 'play on words' between diversity and city, in which these two concepts are understood as entities with a one-to-one correspondence, an ontological interconnection. DiverCity is the outcome of a process to produce and exchange multiple, plural, interactive (built up during the action), expert and experiential knowledge. Before I continue, in these introductory notes it may be useful to dwell a little on the meaning given to the concept of diversity. I will also try to explain why DiverCity – the sum of the values and meanings of diversity and city – can be seen as the framework of the 'new epoch of everyday life' and why the

concepts, practices and issues dealt with in the essays gathered in this chapter seem to be situated in this same new domain.

We can say that the word 'diversity' sums up a particular attention to the potentialities that difference holds for planning if the logic of contrast and defence connected to the identity/difference pairing (defending identity, fear of difference) are overcome. Diversity has become a constitutive and positive category of post-modern planning and, as Bhikhu Parekh (2000) claims, it is fundamental for recognising the interculturally constituted aspects of a local society. As such, it is closely connected to the discourse on the epistemology of multiplicity proposed by Leonie Sandercock (1998a, 1998b) as the cognitive method underpinning the planning of multicultural cities. Accordingly, we could also say that what makes up the main ingredients of the concept of diversity are precisely the modes of knowledge (meant as the exchange of knowledge) and the forms of interaction and transaction (Bentley & Dewey, 1946; Friedmann, 1973, 1987) between the communities and cultures correlated to these modes of knowledge. In this outline, diversity also alludes to differentiated forms of rationality, including experiential, intuitive and local knowledge, based on practices of dialogue, listening, observation, contemplation and the sharing of knowledge expressed in an iconographic way and in other symbolic, ritual and artistic manners (Bridge, 2005). A few words are not enough to get across the complexity of this concept, but they may perhaps help to build the framework to place the topics dealt with below.

Therefore, to pick up where we left off, *DiverCity* is at the same time the bedrock of (transformative and proactive) 'difference-sensitive' planning and the (highly imaginative) frontier of the difficult route to deal with those enigmas (of multicultural planning) which – if recognised and valued – could open the doors to new planning potentialities.

My line of reasoning is set out in four stages. In the first, I gather some short considerations from a planning viewpoint on the image of the segmented city, meant as one of the outcomes of post-modernity. These considerations are put forward as the antithesis to a new and emerging image of, again post-modern, urbanity. It is an urbanity expressed from a different perspective: that of *DiverCity* meant as the follow-up to the concept of the city of differences, the place for experimenting a new epistemology of multiplicity and praxis.

The second topic tackled in the chapter starts from this latter concept and tries to explain how attention towards urban living practices and interaction (as a tool of knowledge and therefore of planning) has been reflected in a real and proper epistemological turn in planning (the practice turn).

Anticipating the multiplicity turn, it is the milestone in 'difference-sensitive' planning.

The third stage tries to focus on some enigmatic aspects of multicultural (or 'difference-sensitive') planning and proposes them as the terrain to challenge practices. I make a sort of list – at times evocative, at times suggestive, at times normative – of the problems, resources, practices and possible projects which make up DiverCity's domain of reference.

The final part of the chapter is devoted to rebuilding the images and perspectives that literature has attributed to the post-modern city and multicultural planning, respectively. They all come together to outline a new scenario that has only just been discovered and is yet to be defined: that of DiverCity. It is fuelled by the hope that there can be a new imagination in the field of planning and that this can lead towards models of knowledge and action that are made richer, fairer and more effective by resources of creativity, and the people and (new) communities' emotions and desires.

I round off the chapter with some final notes which open up new roads of research.

The reflections gathered in the chapter tread along the boundary between disciplines in the search for new tools for post-modern planning; I make comparisons with the literature and international practices while trying to suggest routes for action and to build new research questions.

In sum, this chapter gives a portrait (one of many) of the contemporary city through images from the literature. It rebuilds figurations and visions of post-modernity and thus outlines the stages along the route to reconciliation between rational and interactive knowledge. Dilemmas and paradigms alternate in what appears as a virtuous game between different or opposing realities.

FROM SEGMENTED CITY TO DIVERCITY

The post-modern city comprises an abundant set of interactions among individuals, groups, ages, genders, cultures, religions and rules for using places and things. It is a complex setting which hosts opposing and contradictory landscapes described by two dominating and negative images of post-modern urbanity. The first is that of a city in which fear of the other induces defence mechanisms and activates devices of social control and selective distribution of resources. The second, also negative, is that of a city that hosts conflicts on the use of the land and practices to expel diversity. The two together produce, in turn, the suffocated image of a post-modern urbanity whose pixels remain fragments that are put together according to

introverted and self-referential logics (*Segmented City*). At times they are leftover spaces, the outcome of defensive strategies (which in general correspond to pieces of the 'poor people' city); at times intentionally closed spaces, to defend against poverty, insecurity, the unknown (which in general correspond to pieces of the 'rich people' city);[1] at times they are pieces of historical cities, isolated from the urban body to which they belong, in which consolidated and new citizenships seek an extremely laborious dialogue, to no avail. Then pieces of gated, secure cities are interspersed with pieces confined to the sidelines of the urban area and society: segments of rich and poor cities alternate; images of an urbanism are given to us by the literature in expressions such as *private cities* (Glasze, Webster, & Frantz, 2006) and *gated communities* (Akinson & Blandy, 2006).

However, there is also another image of the post-modern city – an image that is often neglected. It is that of a potential (changing) city, which desires a different outlook, needs difference-sensitive planning and is able to recognise the potentialities and enzymes of a new post-modern urbanity – this time positive (Amin, 2002; Fainstein, 2000; Friedmann, 2002; Sandercock, 2003; Sennett, 1994;) – in everyday practices (de Certeau, 1990). This image is also a social construct produced by the mesh of unique, at times sacred and even erotic relations (in the sense in which Iris Marion Young defines the bodies' relationships with the aesthetic appearance of the urban matter and its vibrant interactive rhythms) (1990).

This image represents that very type of space that de Certeau defines as the domain of organisational practices (1990), in which the concept of everyday life can be exercised to generate new urbanity.

Imagined in this way, the new dimension of the post-modern city takes on the characteristics of a 'low' space – once again to use the words of de Certeau – as opposed to the panoptic and distant high city, the city of pretence and visibility, which homogenises and cleans up the imperfections of daily life. It is constituted as a space perceived and built by bodies; as a real, dynamic, changing city, the domain of the everyday, of all those practices outside the geometric space of theoretical constructions. Above all this 'other image of the post-modern city is expressed in practice, rather than through its concept (or its project). It is revealed through multiple and diverse dynamics that act and exist together, and is given substance by the cultural complications and power relations generated by the cultural and economic effects of globalisation. In the end, we can define it with its new name: *DiverCity*, a name that expresses a new, concrete and this time practicable horizon of Cosmopolis, the post-modern utopia devised by Leonie Sandercock (the forerunner of multicultural planning) (1998a).

DiverCity is a city of differences, full of opportunities and cognitive, interactive and planning potentialities. At the same time it is made of 'thousands of plural bodies [y] in their diversity and wealth of genders, ages, lifestyles and consumer styles, sexual preferences, religions and spirituality, geographical and cultural origins, conditions of physical and mental health, levels of income and social position' (Paba, 2010, pp. 11–12, own translation), and Others to Man: 'gods, machines, animals, monsters, creepy crawlies, women, servants and slaves, and noncitizens in general' (Haraway, 2008, p. 10).

LIVING PRACTICES AND INTERACTIONS

The attention towards living practices as tools of sense-place building and diversity domain design causes us to ask ourselves about their very nature and the role that they play in building DiverCity.

If we can uphold that DiverCity is made up of interactions, cognitive exchanges, human and non-human bodies, inter-acting and self-acting things, pro-activity and potentialities (and many more things besides), then we should perhaps imagine that the practices (through which each of the things listed above becomes a social action) are ontologically constitutive of DiverCity.

Coming to our aid in this direction is the epistemological *practice turn* (Schatzki, Cetina, & von Savigny, 2001), which, following the debate around other significant turns in post-positivist epistemology,[2] opens new perspectives on the topic of city making through practice, or the city *as* a practice. In this case, it is the city of differences and the impetus needed to understand that it comes from another gnoseological approach: the epistemology of multiplicity (Holston, 1998; Sandercock, 1998a). This epistemology is rooted in the recognition of differences and settled factors in the domain of a particular type of practice, which Holston and Sandercock, respectively, define as 'spaces of insurgent citizenship' (pp. 37–56) and 'insurgent planning practices' (pp. 129–159) (minute practices, self-promoted by the inhabitants and new citizenships in the interstices of power).

Therefore, at this point it can be deemed consolidated that practices (in the city of differences) play a primary role in cognitive processes. However, we must also ask ourselves how these practices can be recognized, dealt with, enhanced, investigated and also oriented in the best way. In this sense, the planning perspective seems to be the most suited, above all if we take into account a certain approach that tends to consider planning as a field of practices in which the protagonists of the planning action (all the inhabitants

of DiverCity) assume a new responsibility in recognising the city as a common asset, a plural dimension of action (Crosta, 1998).

In this perspective, planning incorporates differences as resources of the relation between community and places. It sums up an interactive dimension and separates forms of communicative, transactional and proactive rationality which interpret the urban traces of diversity: customs that interweave and overlap in the same place; deferred forms of belonging; the new citizenships' trajectories; the multiple and non-situated incidence of bodies that cross territories and draw plural geographies there.

Planning practices are, therefore, also practices of difference and can become landscapes of multiplicity as well as accumulations of social capital. They are not the result of the play of individual actors, but the outcome of multiple interactions that can transform living spaces into common assets. The gradient of diversity incorporated into each of them merely corresponds to the enigmatic, uncertain and changing dimension of DiverCity.

This awareness is perhaps the most important passage towards defining a difference-sensitive (democratic, multicultural, 'just') and radical planning approach.

MULTICULTURAL PLANNING ENIGMAS AS DIVERCITY DOMAINS

Of course there is much 'wicked terrain' where one might get caught in multicultural planning, without recognising that routines can be overturned or a creative solution tried out. And perhaps it would not be a real help to list them all and build a catalogue of warnings or hypothetical solutions in order to make up for the level of uncertainty in contemporary planning. Nevertheless, we can still make an attempt, and it is useful to do so. And it is precisely by following up this intention that below I propose and describe at least some of this 'enigmatic terrain (*DiverCity domains)*, which while on one hand may frighten and contain the field of action of planning, on the other may instead offer opportunities for planning practices in multicultural cities.

Handling Multiple Knowledges

The *first* enigma of multicultural planning concerns the question of the intrinsic plurality of knowledge: knowledge cannot only be the domain of experts, whether they be scientists or planners;[3] on the contrary, it belongs

to the array of actors and settings that characterise post-modernity. 'Handling multiple knowledges' (Rydin, 2007, p. 55) is the first watchword that should be incorporated in planning for multicultural cities in the awareness that knowledge can assume a range of forms that are almost always coexistent – at times exercised according to contradictory energies – and never overruling. Therefore, planning can be at the same time local and non-local, experimental and contextual, scientific, objective and generalised. Above all (it should be) interactive, if with Rydin (and her new planning orthodoxy – 2007), we accept the idea that interactive and cognitive devices are put into play at the heart of planning, between planners and stakeholders, oriented towards building consensus.[4]

Many scholars agree that the main task of planning that is sensitive to (multicultural) differences should be to bear comparison with the multiple dimension of knowledge and, in this sense, Leonie Sandercock's theory of the epistemology of multiplicity (1998) offers convincing answers.

However, the enigmatic point concerns the ways in which the different forms of knowledge can be involved and connected to each other in order to produce an effective change in the decision-making process. The answer in the literature suggests placing trust in the decision-making and collaborative approaches that are based on exploring the local communities' values and the relations of trust between the parties. Nevertheless, there are some good arguments for calling this orientation into question, which therefore anticipate new dilemmas in planning practices.

The fundamental issue that Rydin underlines (right after the lines of argument in favour of decision-making approaches) concerns the difference between involving many voices and involving multiple knowledges. Following the author's reasoning at least, there is a substantive difference between the two different operations; while the collaborative approach allows the first type of comparison to be made, it does not guarantee that the second will be too. 'Handling multiple knowledge' implies a more complex process than making a comparison between different actors in contexts oriented towards mutual learning, for the simple reason that shared knowledge is often rooted in very different life experiences. What is more, these different experiences cannot be communicated completely through a consensus-building process or by reaching an agreement.[5] The 'knowledge claims', as Rydin defines them (2007, p. 56), should become a constitutive element of (multicultural) planning and be singled out and differentiated from the other kinds of requests or needs that the actors express.

The planning activity's specific task would therefore consist of – again according to Rydin's (convincing) proposal – dealing with two constitutive

operations: 'opening-up', namely giving a voice to the different requests at the beginning of a communicative planning process, and 'closing-down' (Rydin, 2007, p. 58), namely recognising the 'knowledge claims' in the phase in which the action plan is carried out. While there are numerous theoretical lines of argument on the first operation, including argumentative and radical approaches, many issues regarding the second remain open, which are not defined well even by the author. Indeed, in an attempt to work on the concept of testing the knowledges, the author builds a complex definition of cognitive categories (empirical, processual, prophetic and prescriptive: Rydin, 2007, pp. 63–66), which are definitely interesting but could still perhaps be considered very enigmatic.

A response in this direction comes from the epistemological model proposed by Hardin based on ordinary people's knowledge. The author likes to define this model as 'street-level epistemology' (Hardin, 2003, p. 214), and opposes this knowledge to that of the 'super-knower' in search of the scientific truth. Hardin starts from the assumption that most of ordinary people's knowledge is not structured in a decoded manner and is rarely compatible with the traditional epistemological criteria. In fact, street-level epistemology concerns the subjective and personal dimension of knowledge and refers to the usefulness rather than the justification of a truth.

When traced back to this new picture, the concept of 'knowledge claims' proposed by Rydin acquires greater relevancy and becomes really crucial if referred to the pragmatic dimension of epistemology and above all to its sphere of existence, that is, a social context greatly conditioned by differences.

Useable Creativity

The *second* enigma of multicultural planning refers to creativity as a guide to change (Albrechts, 2005).

Although on one hand it seems evident that planning needs creativity in order to deal with and imagine the future, on the other it is still difficult to understand how creativity can actually be used in multicultural planning. If we continue to consider planning a purely regulatory undertaking or a problem-solving practice, it is very probable that we will risk neglecting its creative potentialities which are instead the prerequisite for every planning practice wishing to be defined as transformative. On the other hand, in absence of a specific meaning of creativity, it seems to be risky to anchor the planning process to its hypothetical creative qualities.

This is why Albrechts attempts to grasp the essence of the concept of creativity while suggesting its specific definition for planning. He considers

creativity a prevalently social process that stimulates the ability to see problems, situations and changes in a different way and invents and develops futures imagined as the response to these problems. He asks himself about the relationship between planning and creativity; about the forms of reciprocal usefulness; about which culture of governance can motivate creativity's entry into planning; about what the planners' skills and attitudes should be; and about the techniques for prompting structural changes and determining desirable futures.

The kind of creativity that Albrechts proposes refuses to accept that the current way of doing things is necessarily the best, and it frees itself from the concepts, structures and ideas that are nothing but a process of continuity. In fact, it is precisely the concept of discontinuity that guarantees that the barriers of 'reasonableness' will be broken down to leave room for the rule of a creativity that can imagine the future as something radically and structurally different from the present reality or from its continuation, something that transcends feasibility and derives from 'desirability'.

This inclination towards creativity, in Albrechts' notion fuelled through the 'collective action of scenario building' (Albrechts, 2005, pp. 260–261),[6] fundamentally requires a new 'mind-set' (Albrechts, 2005, p. 262) inspired by the desire to explore new concepts and new alternatives meant as different, *multiple futures* rather than variations on the same theme. All of this is based on three fundamental preconditions: that planning is not an abstract and analytical concept, but a concrete practice, an inseparable part of the social reality; that a long-term perspective and short-term actions come together to form a virtuous combination; and that the institutions and technicians consolidate their trust in the creativity of the new citizenships and in the practice of hybrid formulas of democracy.

Spirituality in Planning

The *third* enigma of multicultural planning, or, as defined by Leonie Sandercock (2006), 'The Paradox at the Heart of Planning', is spirituality. It is the quality that should be given priority in any form of planning that aspires to deal with diversity.

The practitioners' spiritual qualities should have some main characteristics: extraordinary openness and the willingness to take part in millions of conversations; the ability to be fully present in each of them; a mental sensitivity that relies on the emotions and opposes the bureaucratic professional attitude of listening; the perception of interdependence on each

other and perception of the importance of relationships and compassion; a genuine sense of magic and sacredness and the awareness that in order to enhance the best qualities in each one of us we need to use celebratory forms – rituals and arts – namely the set of tools that distinguishes the various forms of 'artistry of mind'. Therefore, one could almost deduce that spirituality in planning is akin to a way of being in the world: fully involved and aware of the things around us. Fundamentally, it configures the way in which we interact with each other in a relationship- and connection-building process and sums up a balanced and holistic approach to knowledge and perception of the world.

In Anhorn's view (2006), spirituality in planning practice concerns two dominating spheres: 'self-nourishment' and building connections. The first alludes to three fundamental qualities, which are self-awareness, the ability to get fully involved and intuition. Instead, the second refers to mutuality, rituals, listening, mythology and stories, to the ability to build relationships and bridge differences, to the possibility to express oneself in a comfortable and welcoming space and the ability to work with potential, or rather with what is not yet here and is a horizon towards which to mobilise one's own spiritual qualities. Within such a broad and to some extent utopian perimeter, the enigmatic and inescapable nature of spirituality as a planning quality seems to be indisputable. So how it can be included in planning practices remains the exclusive domain of a particular style (of planning) meant as communicative action that enables exchange among 'a thousand tiny learnings'. Therefore, while on one hand any recipe about the meaning of spirituality or the ways of putting it into practice would rid it of its dilemmatic nature, on the other it would annul its generative ability. More than anything spirituality is a challenge for those planners who act in the context of differences: simply being aware of its necessity is a first and irreplaceable learning for planning.

Design that Enables Diversity

The *last* enigma in multicultural planning (at least among those selected in this chapter) concerns the design dimension of *DiverCity*.

To date, speaking of difference has meant dealing with a series of complex problems in the urban discourse. These have touched on policy theory, the social sciences, and many other fields of knowledge, in the search for those cognitive energies needed for the setting of difference: planning stories and voices, models, forms of citizenship, images of a mongrel city, insurgent

practices, the multicultural perspective, the epistemology of multiplicity and many more things. And in all these fields, no real response has ever really been given in difference-sensitive planning practice except in terms of orientations, facts, testimonies, cultural approaches, dilemmas, appeals to change the system of values (such as Watson's appeal for a pluralistic understanding of society – 2006) and appeals to reformulate the paradigms of planning (such as Burayidi's proactive multicultural planning-2003). Within the literature on the relationship between urban planning and cultural diversity (Burayidi, 2000; Fenster, 2004; Forester, 2009; Jacobs & Fincher, 1998; Low, Taplin, & Scheld, 2005; Paba, 2010; Parekh, 2000; Pestieau & Wallace 2003; Qadeer, 1997; Sandercock, 1998a, 1998b, 2003), it is really hard to trace actual suggestions as to how to transfer the theoretical issue arising from difference to concrete planning practices.

Nor does a glance at urban design theories give any more satisfaction, however small. In the same way as planners, urban designers (the new urbanists, the supporters of smart growth, sustainability theorists) consider diversity a planning goal and sometimes even the only way of counter-balancing the tendency towards segregation. Others dwell rhetorically on the words 'diversity' and 'mixed-use' (these days, as Talen upholds, as overworked and over-investigated because their effective complexity is neglected – 2006a), while adopting them as the guidelines for their projects. Nevertheless, their responses, albeit apparently more concrete than the responses given by planning and hooked up to recognisable 'urban individuals', continue to be shaky, limited to small segments of the problem and fundamentally not suitable for the complexity of the challenge.

An interesting (although enigmatic) approach instead seems to be the slant focussed on by Emily Talen. The author upholds that it is the planners, designers and urbanists' task to create the conditions in order for difference to be able to express itself in its multiple forms. *Design that enables diversity* is the expression that sums up this approach and is also the title of one of the most effective articles written on these topics (Talen, 2006a).

It is no coincidence that Talen comes to this conclusion after analysing a selection of case studies (urban districts) in which the causation (dictated by the social sciences and mixed-land use theories) between the form of district, social organisation and location of the diversity is systematically contradicted by the reality or instead only occasionally and randomly confirmed (Talen, 2006b). From her study, the author derives a fundamental indication (and also a definition of the limits of urban design's efficacy): it is not possible to design places that create diversity because this would imply retroactive knowledge (and therefore limitation) of the forms of diversity to

be designed for; instead it is necessary to design places that permit the expression of multiple and often unforeseeable forms of diversity, and thereby create the conditions for the development of endless potentialities (including cognitive potentialities).

Design that enables diversity is a design that does not offer models but relationships, which does not impose rules but suggests the multiplication of practices by exposing itself to the creativity of difference; which does not respond to the rules of a formal code, but to the standards of a social statute written through individual and collective practices of cooperation.

In this framework, *DiverCity* therefore becomes the outcome of planning practices inspired by the idea of building hospitable, flexible places that are adaptable to the different requirements, and that, above all, guarantee the reproducibility of what we could consider the most important urban resource: *diversity*.

DIFFERENCE-SENSITIVE PLANNING: IMAGES AND PERSPECTIVES

Images

The literature has suggested many images of post-modern urbanity to the collective imagination. And it is precisely some of these that, to different degrees of emphasis, contribute to underlining some of the aspects constituting *DiverCity*. It is interesting to try to list them, however briefly, in order to understand the breadth of the cues that this terrain of action/research gives to the route towards a new planning imagination. A new, highly imaginative dimension of planning sees multiculturalism, the concept of social justice and multiple publics as its constitutive elements (Sandercock, 1998a, 2003a). A planning in which forms of rationality, comprehensiveness and scientific objectivity are replaced by forms of experimental, intuitive and local knowledge, based on the practice of listening and dialogue, and expressed through symbolic, ritual and visual methods.

What the theory proposes are fundamentally 'images' of a creative sensitivity in planning. Images built in the sphere of the imagination where many things can become real, beyond our everyday experience, where the ability to imagine a radically different future from the known order of things breaks the barriers of convention: in other words, the sphere of utopia.

Utopian thought in planning has a tradition that starts from far off. However, some of its most interesting exponents are contemporary authors. If we are to start, as we indeed should, from Owen and Fourier, Proudhon and Morris, Kropotkin, Howard (and many more), and, for some aspects at least, Mumford and Wright, it is possible to arrive, as John Friedmann (2002) also upholds for example, at two other generations of *utopian thinkers*: the generation of Jacobs, Lynch, Schumacher, Illich and Bookchin and the most recent generation represented by Dolores Hayden and Leonie Sandercock. What makes the utopia of these authors attractive resides above all in its constructive rather than in its critical dimension. One could say that the first has absolute prevalence over the second, in the intent to design a 'realisable utopia' outside the consolidated limits of planning and alternatively to the indeterminacy of the future.

The attempt to interpret the world and give it some 'useable' images has often moved on the boundary between utopia and planning. In the era of post-modernity, this attempt also has to face up to the new challenge of multiplicity. And in the effort to seize upon this challenge, portraits and visions have been produced that head towards revealing the trends, depth and development of this multiplicity. Some of these – prevalently those drawn up by the more audacious expounders of post-modern thought – have become stimuli for trying out a new planning practice, while others have worked as a bridge between one theoretical approach and another, and others still have simply remained as exercises of visioning on the future.

In the text entitled *Towards Cosmopolis. Planning for Multicultural Cities*, *Cosmopolis* is the image of post-modernity through which Leonie Sandercock (1998a) describes her utopia for the new millennium. As the author herself defines it, *Cosmopolis* is a place of building the mind. Here planning language is extended to define the outlines of an emerging (insurgent) paradigm, and room is found for a creative multiplicity of topics and horizons: social justice, politics of difference, multiple and insurgent citizenships, heterogeneous publics (such as realising a form of plural civic culture – Young, 1990), and finally also multiple community ideals (meant as *resistance communities* based on the rejection of homogeneity and the search for a coalition policy – Hooks, 1990).

Mongrel City is the metaphor that the same author of *Cosmopolis* (Sandercock, 2003b) uses to define and symbolise a new urban condition, in which difference, alterity, fragmentation, splintering, multiplicity, heterogeneity, diversity and plurality prevail over other images. It is akin to the sphere of action of multiculturalism policies. In the text entitled *Mongrel Cities in the 21st Century*, the author reflects on the elements making up her

multicultural project for the twenty-first century. She sums them under two different, complementary aspects: thought inspired by the dialectical category of identity/difference and a multicultural perspective as the device for dealing with the constitutive 'culturality' of human beings. And she dwells on this latter aspect in particular, owing to the heightened multiculturality of society and the consequent emergence of the topic of multiculturalism. In substance, she presents the 'multicultural perspective' as an attempt to interpret post-modernity. It inspires her thought towards a proactive approach to the dialectical pairing of identity/difference.[7]

'Togetherness in difference' is the image used by Richard Sennett (1994) to express his desire (while jumping onto the back of a trend that was already underway) for a civic culture based on intercultural interaction in addition to the tolerant indifference of an apparent togetherness. Togetherness in difference puts across the image of post-modernity in which the dominant effect produced by the intercultural encounter between different systems is to expand the intellectual and moral horizons of each culture (which on their own could only interpret a limited range of human capacities and emotions).

'Politics of local liveability' is the expression used by Amin to propose an image of intercultural togetherness, enriched by his emphasis on local negotiations of difference, managed in the 'city's micro-publics of banal multicultures' (Amin, 2002, p.13). He starts from the assumption that immigration phenomena and the manifestation of ethnicity are what make up globalisation and are what, at present, are reshaping the spaces of social relations in many ways. The image of peaceful togetherness has to take note of this phenomenon and encourage social, multicultural and multi-ethnic mixing, beyond the limits of globalised localities (communities without community) (Amin, 2002, p. 16), and extend the language of policies to alternative modes that include culturally diversified systems of meaning.

'The Good City'[8] is the image of utopia recounted by John Friedmann (2002) in his text entitled *The Prospect of Cities*. In the book the author shifts from the concept of citizenship to the concept of a multiplicity of citizenships, from the expansion of spaces of democracy to insurgent practices, from analysing the effects of places and power relations to the fights against what he defines – borrowing the words from Held (1995) – as '*nautonomy*' (the opposite of autonomy).

The Good City is the citizens' city, and it is up to the citizens to decide among themselves how a common good can be pursued, and through which process, so long as it is open and not imposed or declared while ignoring the voices of dissent. The central point of Friedmann's line of argument (and

The Good City) concerns the citizens' political and natural relationship with their city in a context of a political practice that contributes to the realisation of each citizen and their fundamental right to human flourishing.

Among the many images that are useful in understanding the concept of plurality running through positivist epistemology, some more than others contain what we could define as the *radical power of a vision*, or its capacity to anticipate transformative actions.

'The Just City' is one of these. With this image, its inventor, Susan Fainstein (2000, 2010), proposes a radical vision of interaction (also meant as managing conflict in order to claim rights) as the element constituting the city of differences, in the awareness that progressive social change derives from power exercised by those who have been deprived of it. The Just City theory is based on the concept of extending participation to 'disempowered groups', and on the concept of equity between differences of gender, race and sexual inclination. The persuasive dimension of The Just City rests on an idea of an enterprising state that not only sponsors welfare practices but prevalently creates the conditions for the production of wealth. It is a state that sponsors a project for the future which promotes the empowerment of the poor and the cheated through the involvement of the middle classes. These ideas are particularly fertile if referred to contemporary societies which are defined by the contribution of cultures and peoples in search of their own dimension of life, survival strategies and forms of self-determination. The Just City therefore interprets a new stage in planning. Alongside the principles of equity and well-being, it incorporates diversity and participation as tools to improve the quality of life in the context of a global and capitalist economic policy.

Perspectives

If there is such a wealth of highly imaginative suggestions in the literature, this should ring some alarm bells: new perspectives are needed that are sensitive to the language of everyday life. Besides, one of the aspects constituting the epistemology of multiplicity concerns the nature of the cultural perspectives that underlie professional practice and orient theoretical research. They correspond to the capacity to take plural views, while making conceptual reformulations and trying out contextual strategies. Planning stories give us at least three of these views, which seem to effectively interpret the need for a speculative turn with respect to the cognitive trajectories of modernity: the *multicultural perspective* (Parekh,

2000; Sandercock, 2003a); the *transactional perspective* (Bridge, 2005); and the *gender perspective* (Fainstein & Servon, 2005).

How to use them in a complementary and effective manner is perhaps another big enigma. However, they are unavoidable 'tools' to build DiverCity.

The multicultural perspective drawn up by Parekh and Sandercock works on the ways in which to structure a political life in accordance with the reality and desirability of cultural diversity. Hence, it works on a defined sense of belonging, not on the basis of shared ethnic or cultural characteristics, but in relation to a political goal agreed by the community. It is proposed as an attempt to interpret post-modernity – a sort of inspired thought oriented towards a proactive approach towards the dialectical identity/difference pairing.

The proposal by Parekh (2000),[9] the 'inventor' of this speculative device, interprets multiculturalism as a cultural and political opportunity, as well as a progressive necessity and fact of post-modern society called to the attention of policies and planning.

As appears evident, the question revolves around the political bearing and public/collective recognition that societies choose to give to cultural diversity and the deriving social practices, both in terms of rights and in terms of participatory potentialities.

In his investigation of the concept of multiculturalism and consideration of its social implications on community practices, Bhikhu Parekh (2000) outlines a scenario in which two parallel processes encounter and fuel each other: the multiculturalisation of existing traditions and the emergence of a tradition or a multiculturally constituted culture. In a multicultural society, cultures continually come into comparison with each other, both formally and informally, both in the public and the private domains. Guided by curiosity, comprehension and even incomprehension, they enrich and transform each other. Even when their interaction is limited, sensitivity towards other traditions becomes awareness of their single specific aspects. Over time these cultures tend to make up a composite culture, in which their structural characteristics are all separately redefined. Like all cultures, the culture created from intercultural exchange (interculturally created) and constituted by a multiplicity of cultural contributions (multiculturally constituted) develops in an unpredictable manner. It is defined by broad and not universally shared contents; it is the product of the intercultural dialogue needed for the survival of any culture; it has an enormous potential.

The interpretation suggested by Parekh lays down the bases for defining the outlines of a multicultural governance that is as absent as it is necessary

for planning practices and policies. In this sense, the assumption of a multicultural perspective is the turn needed in order to pursue a model of multicultural 'good governance'. It is a turn that inevitably has to be supported by three issues: the premise according to which human beings live in a culturally structured world; the awareness that it is impossible to lead a culturally self-contained life in contemporary social contexts; and the assertion of the plurality intrinsic to every culture, even primitive ones.

A second reference to the necessity to adopt differentiated perspectives on the multiple urban manifestations comes from the *transactional* rationality theory drawn up by Gary Bridge (2005). If post-modernity puts aside rationality and its limits, at least those that are perceived and decoded, to leave room for the manifestations of an apparent 'irrationality', thought beyond the post-modern will seek a new dimension of rationality that enables the manifestation of differences and is able to establish a proactive dialogue with them.

The very idea of reason, 'attacked' on many fronts and in particular called into question by the turn of difference and its manifestations in the domains of the body, language, culture and the unconscious, regains central importance in the dimensions of the relationship between city and difference, going beyond the threat of the exclusivity (on one hand) and homogenisation (on the other) exercised by positivist rationality.

The chapter by Bridge slots into the reflections on the limits of a certain conception of post-modernity that interprets the city as an endless place that cannot be mapped, a post-human environment and an assembly of emerging elements. Contrary to those who propose urban orders based on stability and identity; capital, power and surveillance logics; and rational planning to deal with these effects, Bridge outlines a conception of urban space (urban space *after* the post-modern) which reflects the distribution of difference and the consequent pluralisation of power. To do so, he leans on philosophical pragmatism and its recent developments centred on two themes of post-modern thought: (1) recognising differences and (2) the meanings of communication and discourse after the communicative turn in philosophy. He shows how, by reading pragmatism in a certain way, it is possible to derive an interpretation of rationality that can live with difference and is related to the nature of the urban space that hosts it. It is a rationality that overcomes the dichotomy between communicative and instrumental, abstract and lived (Lefebvre), strategic and tactical (de Certeau), disciplinary space and heterotopy (Foucault), system and lifeworld (Habermas), the public and private domains and space of flows and everyday life (Castells). Instead, of all these entities, this rationality interprets the relations and situational

interactions in a both discursive and non-discursive space of communication. Therefore, beyond irrationality's post-modern stigma, Bridge builds and legitimises a performative rationality whose primary essence is expressed by its capacity to connect and interpret the diversity between the times and spaces of communication and action, in other words, a *transactional* rationality.

The third perspective seen as a distinctive feature in an epistemology of multiplicity is the gender perspective (Fainstein & Servon, 2005). It is marked both by the contribution given by the voices of Judith Butler, Mary Parker Follet and Jane Addams, and by the texts of an immense amount of critical literature, which it appears dutiful to recall.[10] It intervenes creatively in the disciplinary gaps and thus influences the practical approaches and theoretical reflections of many contemporary scholars. This perspective brings about many scientific enigmas and brings some of the most important claims of post-modernity to planning. Indeed, it explicitly contaminates the relations between knowledge and planning and invades the disciplines of spatial planning, urbanism and some of the topics explored more widely in the sector literature (public space, housing, economic development, transport, etc.). The gender perspective (plus, to an equal extent, the multicultural and transactional perspectives) belongs to the set of attempts to renew the image and usefulness of planning in dialogue with the progressive and post-modern claims.

In substance, there are two stages along the way to crediting the gender approach in planning: (1) defining the gender perspective and its epistemological potentialities in relation to gender diversity (in addition to the exclusively female dimension) and (2) incorporating the new gender epistemology into planning theory (Jacobs & Fincher, 1998; Sandercock, 1998a, 1998b; Wekerle, 1999; Young, 1990).

The first aspect is oriented towards recognising the multiple dimension of gender and both the intrinsic and the socially constructed transactional diversity of the genders. Attention to gender also comes to include manifestations of a *trans-gender* and *in-gender* kind. It is no longer a matter of paying attention to selective gazes: the gazes of women, minorities, blacks, immigrants and so on, but also, and above all, to the gazes that include all these contemporary and multiple dimensions of experience. It is a sort of 'transactional gendering' as the dimension constituting 'transactional bodying'.

The second aspect instead concerns the role of the new epistemic authority of gender and its possible declensions for planning. Many essays that can be ascribed to this second aspect reason around the active and radical role of the epistemic trajectories of gender, while highlighting the necessity to expand the epistemologies at the basis of practices and

reassessing the local knowledge and gender experience. Among the 'loudest' voices I must mention those of: Leonie Sandercock (1998a) with her alternative story of planning and epistemological recognition of insurgent practices; Tovi Fenster (2004) with her specific attention towards gender spaces and the constitutive role of cognitive gender practices; Iris Marion Young (1990) with her reflections on distributive justice and the politics of difference; Jane Jacobs (Jacobs & Fincher, 1998) with her explorations of the transformative dimension of difference applied to the life practices of women, foreigners and children; Gerda Wekerle (1999) with her reflections on the relationship between gender planning, local knowledge and insurgent citizenship practices; and Susan Fainstein and Lisa Servon (2005) with their gendered survey on gender, oriented towards finding new domains and directions in planning theory by rereading the relationship between feminist philosophies and planning practices.

FINAL REMARKS

Although the road followed thus far has been long and perhaps also boring, there is no actual reward for the reader. The impression is that the initial question of 'what would a DiverCity be like?' has remained substantially unanswered.

In part this is true of course, in part it is not. On one hand, DiverCity is the terrain that still needs exploring: this is the assumption that accompanies the reason for this chapter's existence, and just a few paragraphs are by no means enough to describe such a complex 'subject'. On the other hand, DiverCity can be the positive frontier for everyday living practices: it is the bedrock of planning in multicultural cities and therefore in some way a recognised and desired scenario, at least in the practices and generous literature that belong to this domain.

Through this long line of reasoning, what I have tried to do is to fill in the gap between these two extreme points, while trying to dwell on the methodological sticking points, epistemological leaps, perspectives and visions that in more than half a century have built the foundations of DiverCity, brick after brick.

It will be those same living practices, practices of place appropriation, participation and claims that will complete this collective work of art.

However, in the future it would be important to try to reflect on one question, starting from a fundamental characteristic of DiverCity, namely

the fact that it is the visualisation of an idea (a scenario) designed by and implemented through interactive proactivity.

While it may be true that the social dimension of everyday life is perhaps the constitutive element of DiverCity, it is also true that, as with every project, the DiverCity project needs its tools of expression and representation. While remaining anchored to a sociological perspective, according to which plans, policies and designs have no meaning unless they are used by people and integrated into their frames of life, it nevertheless becomes strategic to try to reflect on the power of visualisation that designs and maps can exercise in building DiverCity.

In a recent paper, Terry van Dijk (2011) dwells precisely on analysing the power of designs as catalysts of interest, agents of transformation and storytellers. By reusing the storytelling method introduced to planning by Throgmorton (2005), Dijk tries to build a bridge between planning and design while acknowledging the capacity of designs to contain, recount and themselves be stories and therefore also be builders or expounders (before planning and before decision-making) of social planning. In fact designs (again in Dijk's idea) visualise possible futures without saying which one should be chosen. They help communities to define the spatial reality in which they live and to become aware of places. Above all they mobilise the emotions, which are also what guide people in building a future scenario, rather than a rational and objective resolution. Dijk says, 'my first contribution to existing rhetorical planning thought is the idea that design deserves to be understood as a particularly powerful form of storytelling because it is central to devising and sharing credible and appealing stories about regional futures' (Dijk, 2011, p. 126). But the most important thing of all, he concludes while underlining the importance of interactive design construction of a tool for pre-visualising and building the future: 'Rather than merely serving a formal procedure that produces decisions, they may be a form of social learning that induces chains of anticipative action. After people have seen these designs, they can no longer see the region as they did before. Making and sharing plans is a sense-making process through which expectations and anticipatory behaviour are created' (Dijk, 2011, p. 141).

DiverCity therefore needs its interactive designs in order to come into being. They could perhaps be precisely the 'design that enables diversity' that is as desired by Emily Talen as it is still invisible. All this takes my reasoning towards other fields of work (community mapping theory and practice) which, albeit very popular and containing a wealth of experiences and methods, are nevertheless still not ready to effectively support the challenges opened up by diversity.

NOTES

1. I use the expressions 'poor people city' (the city of the disempowered, the excluded) and 'rich people city' in a purely evocative and not a scientific manner.

2. The response of planning to the concrete, multiple and interactive dimension of 'making the city' is condensed into what the literature [in some of its seminal authors such as Friedmann (1987), Holston (1998), Forester (1989), Healey (1997), Schön (1983, 1990); Fischer & Forester (1993), Sandercock (1998b)] defines as epistemological turns, differentiating them using different names according to the period, planning approach or emphasis given to one cognitive attitude rather than another: the *argumentative turn*, *reflective turn* and *communicative turn*. An addition to this path of reflection on the epistemology of planning is the essay on the *practice turn* written by Schatzki et al. in 2001.

3. In the context of policies, we can find some restricted networks (bounded networks as well as epistemic communities and communities of practice) which operate with the intent of building knowledge through processes that involve scientific experts and practitioners (Haas, 2001; Wenger, 1998; Rydin, 2007).

4. In her article, Rydin sums up the three main forms theorised for building consensus: negotiation and mediation among interests (Innes, 2004); communication among stakeholders (*collaborative planning*) (Healey, 1997); and empowerment of the weakest subjects (*radical planning*), which does not necessarily mean consensus at all costs (Sandercock, 1998a, 1998b).

5. In this connection, Innes underlines how consensus-building does not necessarily have to result from the 'strength of the best argument', but from a process of collective storytelling (Innes, 2004).

6. Scenario building is one of the innovative techniques that Albrechts proposes to guarantee a new domain of creativity in planning. He interprets the scenario as a narrative description of a possible state of development. He identifies two types: 'the exploratory scenario' that leads to a desired future starting from past and present trends and 'the normative scenario' that builds the bases for a desired future (Albrechts, 2005, pp. 255–256). He considers the scenario-building technique particularly suited both to representing images that set out the hopes and shared desires for a place and to stimulating networks between sectors, organisations and groups that can collaborate in building a common future.

7. See next paragraph.

8. 'The Good City' is, in turn, defined by other images: 'the Good City 1: Theoretical Consideration'; 'the Good City 2: Human Flourishing as a Fundamental Human Right'; 'the Good City 3: Multiply/city as a Primary Good', 'the Good City 4: Good Governance' (Friedmann, 2002, pp. 103–118).

9. The concept of the multicultural perspective was subsequently taken up again by Sandercock (2003) and divided into 10 points. Here are the most important ones, in the author of this chapter's opinion at least:

'My multicultural perspective for the 21st century is composed of the following premises:

- The culture embeddedness of humans is inescapable. We grow up in a culturally structured world, are deeply shaped by it, and necessarily view the world from within a specific culture […].

– 'Culture' cannot be understood as static, eternally given, essentialist. It is always evolving, dynamic and hybrid of necessity […].
– Cultural diversity as a positive and intercultural dialogue is a necessary element of culturally diverse society. No culture is perfect or can be perfected, but all cultures have something to learn from and contribute to others […].
– At the core of multiculturalism as a daily political practice are two rights: the right to difference and the right to the city […].
– A sense of belonging to a multicultural society cannot be based on race, religion or ethnicity but needs to be based on a shared commitment to political community. Such a commitment requires an empowered citizenry […] (Sandercock, 2003, pp. 103–103).

10. Of the immense amount of literature on the topic, I consider it useful to quote some texts that are particularly 'compromising' for the study of a new epistemology of planning: Bridge (2005), Butler (1990, 1993, 1997), Duden (1994), Fraser (1992), Follet (1965), Golderger, Tarule, Clinchy, and Belenky (1986, 1996); Nussbaum (2000, 2001), and many more.

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