New Urban Languages

Re-Imaging the City after the Knowledge-based Turn

EDITED BY ROSSELLA SALERNO E DANIELE VILLA

NUL

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For further information on the Conference programme and a complete list of speakers and presentations, please visit:
www.newurbanlanguages.eu

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Imagine the City Beyond the Visible

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To have another language is to possess a second soul
Charlemagne

The contributions that make up this conference begin from the rebirth of a series of questions in the multi-faceted scientific community of urban studies. The basic approach that we would like to propose it's about the tentative to reformulate themes related the construction of knowledge, in urban analysis, which may be able to address rising critical areas, in recent years.
Some open questions we have set ourselves can be summarized in this way:
-is it possible to overcome well-established quantitative epistemologies that, sometimes, generate visions of cities not able to interpret complex phenomena ?
-it makes sense to go back to re-examine the role of the forms of representations in the era of shared knowledge and of images as a pervasive media?
-what is the new role, with a wide hermeneutic meaning, that languages may have in the description of urban transformation?
-can we develop analytical tools able to overcome prosaic urban rhetoric now become ineffective?
-how can we renew our attitude towards ICT, when related to our way of interpreting the city and especially the way citizens have to experience it, to emerge definitively from years of fascination and subordination?

Starting from these critical areas I think we should emphasize two of the keywords in the title of the conference: Knowledge and Languages.
Rising issues about the nature of knowledge accumulated in the urban studies means, perhaps, uncover the Pandora's box; this is why one of the aims of this conference is to explore the different forms of construction of urban knowledge, thinking it as a partial, incomplete, sometimes hidden, sometimes quite impossible be mapped.
Patsy Healey, in her brilliant research on urban complexity and relational aspects in urban planning, allows me to emphasize the core of these concepts:

«The production of knowledge is thus not about the accumulation of information but about the development of understanding through the creation of meaning. » *(Healey P., 2007)*
We pushed a debate among many scientific fields (architectural design, geography, sociology, urban planning, heritage studies, history of the city, etc.) precisely for ensure plural visions first of all on interpretative subjects that can not be explored with self referring attitude.
The complex relationships that bind cities to collective urban imaginary are the cultural background from which we started and where we go back: we are convinced that decades of interpretations, mostly of a quantitative nature, as rooted in positivist epistemologies, have produced a lot of distortions and misunderstanding that underlie a widespread inability to understand what will be the city of tomorrow and who are the new, and not-well-known, actors that are generating and sharing new urban knowledge.
The contribution of our keynote has allowed us to begin to answer some of the basic ambiguity, making it easy to build a debate within the four sections of the conference. This also allowed us to give more evidence to some of the hidden challenges that may arise bringing together new languages and new ways of interpreting the city.

We have, first, the duty to deal with many urban transformations (physical, social, economical) that are not fully understandable and perhaps remains impossible to trace, to be easily defined, mapped, re-drawn, and described. The research will remain, willy-nilly, partial and incomplete, inside a context increasingly characterized by discontinuity and shifting perspectives.
These are some of the reasons that have made us put emphasis on the role of issues related to representation and its evolution trends:
"Representation and Perceptions of the Changing City" is the title of our first session. Knowing how to work with images is one of the strengths, and sometimes, one of the weaknesses of urban researchers, architects and planners, so we have decided to centre the theme of the first session about the larger issues of visual worlds. Tie representation and perception means not only to look at images but at their communicative role, finding ways and forms in which citizens can interact with urban imaginary through visual worlds.
The matter, however, cannot be placed on a floor too easily moved to the Future, here therefore that past and future come back in the second session: "Visualizing the Past, Imagining the Future". In this session of the conference the construction of urban knowledge is related to the qualitative category that we manage with greater difficulty: time.
The communication issue is, however, a crosscutting theme in this work, a theme that could not avoid dealing with technological developments and major changes that are generating the way we live, perceive and describe the city.
This is one of the reasons for a specific session dedicated to ICT as, first of all, not neutral tools, getting through rhetoric that want us to forget the problems hidden behind the futuristic revolution of the Web Age. The last session, "New Urban Metaphors", contains, in a nutshell, most of the themes of this conference: the discussion of epistemological strategies that invest urban studies, planning, the reformulation of the professional roles, the growth of demand for inclusion by the population.

Downstream of some of the most interesting and wide discussions within the various sessions, it seemed clear that is exactly the specific theme of social inclusion that allows us to offer some conclusions that open up new challenges: the interplay between analysis, representation and communication, in the reading of the cities in transformation concerns, more and more clearly, the possibility of expanding the population of relevant players, a crowd asking to be part not only of the decisions on the future of the city, but also of descriptions and shared representations of the urban landscape, within a different multitude of physical social times:
«La question essentielle de ces territoires internes, espaces sociaux, est peut-être celle tu temps, de la durée. Temps de la construction matérielle […] temps des usages, aussi, qui ne son pas nécessairement conformes aux distinctions initiales, ni animés par les même rythmes. Temps de la maturation et de la mise en place d'une urbanité. » *(Roncayolo M., 2002)*

That's also why images, descriptions and languages struggle to be effective interpretative tools if they continue to be an adaptation of 'expert' knowledge, born by linear forms of translation of typical positivistic mechanisms. Look beyond forces us to rethink this kind of widespread knowledge that rises from the communities, from the citizens, through unexpected forms of hybridization, which needs to be revised and made understandable, clear, shared and that may allow a genuine enrichment of our research.
With this in mind we can also review some of the most common definitions of heritage, particularly in urban settings, trying to include a number of new horizons, only apparently featureless, that still deserve to be explored.
«Le patrimoine n'est pas seulement l'exceptionnel; il se nourrit du quotidien, du banal ou presque, mais il est processus plus que simple conservation et capable de ce fait de peser le devenir de la ville.» *(Roncayolo M., 2002)*

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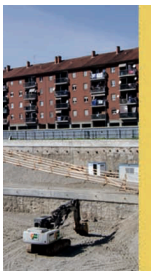

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Languages and Representations: interpretation tools in city changing

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To introduce the seminar works dedicated to *New Urban Languages. Re-Imagining the City after the Knowledge-Based Turn,* I wish shortly recalling our starting point, eight years ago, in 2005, our previous seminar about a similar topic: *Rappresentazioni di città* (2005), organized with Daniele Villa, where in the debate the attention had been put on the pervasiveness of images, first of all on digital images, in building new urban imaginary, or respect other traditional narratives, coming for example from literature…
An intriguing painting by the Futurist painter Crali - after chosen for the cover of the proceedings - made up the leitmotiv of that seminar: the reason of the choice was why the painting, realized in 1938, is a clear celebration of the expectations addressed to technology at the beginning of Nineteenth century, expectations regarding the renewal of language, the desecration of classical myths, praised of the speed of the machine.
In a broader way our idea was that some images can play the role of metaphor for the multiplicity of the looks on the contemporary urban landscape; the zenithal view of the map, the perspective view, the path between the surfaces of the city, summarize some different points of view: from the specific look of architecture and urban planning, to that one at "ground level", shared by professionals but also by the inhabitants of the city, up to a closer inner city look, that is the sight exploring the maze and, ultimately, trying to unravel the tangled skein of urban living.
So a picture, made up often of manifold forms of representation, can been considered, a figurative expression, a metaphor of different points of view about the city, and how representations could help us to foresee city changes, city uses.
Often, in fact, an image – just like a map – tells us better than a thousand of words (though not always…): starting now from the idea of representation as a "tool" to convey discourses about the city, we are interested to broaden the debate not only considering images.
But more than in the past, even telling, narratives, languages communicating both tangible and intangible aspects of the city: so the aim pursued by the current seminar is exploring the relationships, in a broader sense, between representations and city, asking if new languages are arising, if their uses and practices can be interpreted as clue, sign…, critical issues of new urban imaginary.
Not much research has been carried out so far on imaginary urban in Europe, especially as regards the medium and small cities (see «European Studies» 23 (2006) *Urban Mindscapes of Europe*). Urban policies are based mainly on the physical and socio-economic data, and as regards qualitative, look with interest the

analysis of the needs of citizens and then use surveys on opinions and attitudes (especially stakeholders). An analysis of urban imaginary and related languages can be resources which, if analyzed, could instead act as a catalyst to allow the urban policies to intercept the needs and aspirations of the people.
As in the previous conference we were wondering if there were, in the contemporary world, images just as effective to anticipate the changes taking place through the digital, today also it is impossible not to see how new languages are tightly connected to innovative technologies.
In this sense, the "internet revolution" involves both the ability to connect a growing number of individuals, and the ability to use language that can be simplified by using communication tools for easy accessibility.
As a result of the changes introduced by the network and social media, at least two questions become relevant:

- First, groups of people can communicate more quickly and more easily than in the past, promoting and sharing use of the city and lifestyles (through ICT);
- In second place, this type of information can result of some use to designers and planners in preparing housing solutions.

The connection between innovative techniques of representation and communication possibilities given by the social networks allow the creation of images, easy to communicate, easy to understand, and ultimately more immediate to share.
So the potentiality of local/global communication, conveyed by technologies, takes us into one of the most important aspects of the contemporary city.
The production of information conveyed through digital device by groups of people, shows uses, preferences, ideas, images, leading to shift our focus beyond the physical dimension of urban transformation in the direction of the potential that the network can offer: the most evident result is that the coincidence of cities and communities, urban forms inherited from the past is now in the process of radical transformation.
The Italian geographer Franco Farinelli noticed about this topic, that the city to day is "selective" and therefore discontinuous, fragmented, and therefore inconsistent and not isotropic and, as regards the global city, space and time don't explain almost anything .Furthermore, the appearance of topography, the visible, is a bare from which it derives nothing more plausible and practical about how the world works. Somehow the suggestion arising from this words, is to take in consideration, to re-connect material and immaterial, tangible and intangible aspects of the city and, to conclude, Farinelli sees a kind of brutality in the modern definition of city, made up of collection of things, founded on the distinction between what is material and what is immaterial (see *Geografia. Un'introduzione ai modelli del mondo*, 2003)
In our perspective, urban imaginaries, including media and cultural representations of meanings and memories, are crucial as they emphasize desire, fantasy and they are as important as the built city, the "material", the "real" city…
So this point of view opens interesting sceneries about local realities.
About the issue: "Awareness of differences in taking in consideration "the new urban", I agree with Morgado e Eckardt in the introduction to collective book *Understanding the post- industrial city* (2012), when they affirm: "The efforts of readdressing the concept of urban development and planning is related to a perspective that takes the local particularities into account and hereby addressing a weakness that both post-Fordist and post-modern urban theory, often, is not touching."
So, for this seminar, from our point of view, a key point is:

- How telling, or how representing these local peculiarities and how make this new forms of cities visible?

In our perspective, representation, representations, interpretations, narratives, descriptions are likely to contribute to understand the changes taking place, to seize in the global/local dialectic a new and different need of relationship with the places:
Paradoxically, this is also expressed by digital technologies that more and more from "anywhere, anytime, anyplace" seem to be directed to the "geolocalized information".

I am going to conclude, quoting the words of Jude Bloomfield:
"The memory, history and identity of a city are not the emanation of an enclosed, hermetically sealed, 'pure group' and their past, but the ongoing social construction of people with diverse histories whose lives intersect a specific place. Therefore the urban imaginary is also inherently *intercultural* but located, cosmopolitan but rooted" (see *Researching the Urban Imaginary: Resisting the Erasures of Places*, in «European Studies» cit.).

Keynote

Many voices but no plan? Planning the city in the field of diverse narratives
FRANK ECKARDT

Why governance will make urban design better: Dealing with the communicative turn in urban planning and design
ROBERTO ROCCO

Survey and Regeneration of the Historic District Jeddah, KSA
LIVIO SACCHI

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A critical survey and a design proposal for Al Balad, the Historic District of Jeddah, KSA

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Abstract — An agreement between the Al-Turath Foundation in Ryadh, KSA and Tecturae srl, Florence, Italy, in cooperation with the Municipality of Jeddah and the Department of Architecture of the Università degli Studi "G. d'Annunzio" of Chieti-Pescara, Italy, has made possible the urban and architectural survey, the construction of an interactive database and a final design proposal for a significant part of Al Balad, the historic district of Jeddah and for some of its most outstanding buildings, such as the celebrated Nasseef House. The survey has been executed using a Laser Scanner and a Total topographic Station, in strict scientific and technical cooperation with Dr. Osama bin Mohammed al Jawahri of Al-Turath, the Municipality of Jeddah with Eng. Sami Saleh Nawar, and the students of the King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah and of the Summer School of the IRCICA, Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture, in Istanbul. Though spoiled by recent constructions of debatable quality, this area is - still nowadays - an extremely interesting mix of different building types, illustrating a very significant stage in the city's history, when its merchants successfully conquered local and foreign markets and when Jeddah started to act as the main gateway from the Red Sea to the Holy Cities of Makkah and Medina. Our project aims at the preservation of its rich and fascinating built heritage and at the rediscovery of its lost relationship with the once nearby harbor on its west side and with the modern city all around; in addition to this, we also wish that the renovation of Al Balad may constitute a significant step toward KSA's green leap forward, demonstrating that properly upgraded historic districts can be not only more pleasant and appealing to visitors and pilgrims, but also smarter than most recently built suburbs.

Keywords: Digital survey; Heritage; Urban regeneration; Restoration.

Al Balad

The Historic District of Jeddah represents an interesting example of the Islamic urban and architectural creativity; it bears a significant testimony to a very specific cultural tradition and to a living civilization; it is also a very peculiar mix of different building types that contribute to an architectural ensemble which illustrates a significant stage in the city's history. Quite a few areas of the Historic District meet the

conditions of integrity and authenticity (authenticity is expressed through a variety of attributes including: form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting). It is also very important to note that the entire area is very lively and densely if not as attractive, because of its present state, for tourists as well as for the inhabitants of "modern" Jeddah: the people that live and work in Al Balad form a very interesting anthropological mix of various immigrants coming from Africa, the Middle East and other Asian countries. Our project aims at the conservation of the entire Historic District, prolonging the life and the integrity of its architectural Survey of the historic trails characters, its built forms, its constituent materials, its original colors. A subtle cultural sensibility and a deep critical know-how are evidently requested in order to correctly read and interpret the built architectural and urban heritage. In the end, Al Balad should and will become a very interesting and lively area, highlighted by a variety of historic religious, commercial and residential buildings that form an extremely rich urban pattern, clearly different and easily recognizable from the modern parts of the city. A mix of religious, residential, educational and commercial buildings will also include showrooms, ateliers, galleries, exhibition halls, offices, boutiques, craftsmen shops, schools, little hotels etc.: the result will be an exciting and creative neighborhood, very attractive for the locals specially for young people) and their different activities, but also open to the international trends and influxes, in a very similar way to what can be found in many successful and tourist oriented Italian and European historic towns. Hopefully, many Saudi Arabians will start reconsidering their now quite scarce interest in Al Balad and will move back to Old Jeddah, where their ancestors were once based. But, most of all, we must not forget the importance of carefully keeping the precious, cultural identity of the place, of its architectural and functional characters, in a more general attitude aiming at showcasing the rich, traditional western Saudi Arabian culture of the Red Sea Coast. The chosen methodology will be the same that has been used in similar projects in Italy and elsewhere, aiming at the conservation of urban diversity (in terms of building types, materials and functions), an extremely difficult quality to achieve in new interventions; the strengthening of civic pride (people living there must feel that they are part of a deeply rooted community, that they are citizens and not city-users of Al Balad); the creation of a sustainable environment (the buildings should produce more energy than they request etc.); and - last, but not least - the transformation of Jeddah's Historic District into a very attractive and deeply rewarding area not only for its inhabitants, but also for millions of pilgrims and foreign scholars and tourists flocking to Jeddah every year from all over the Islamic world.

2. The Nasseef House

The construction of the Beyt Nasseef House on old Jeddah's main street, Suq al-Alawi, began in 1872 and was finished by 1881. This grand residence - built for Omar Nasseef Efendi, governor of Jeddah at the time and a distinguished member of one of Jeddah's oldest, wealthiest and most respected merchant families - housed for decades all the members of the clan and their staff. Commerce has traditionally been Jeddah's principal activity and, over the centuries, has brought wealth to its inhabitants. This prosperity was reflected in some outstanding homes, large structures lavishly decorated. The four-storey high building (at the front, seven at the back), was the tallest in Jeddah until the 1970s. From the upper terraces visitors can enjoy the most beautiful and comprehensive view of the Old City. People used to call the Nasseef House "The House with the Tree" because it was the only house in Al Balad that had one - a neem tree (Azadirachta indica) - on the little square on the north of the house. Jeddah entered a new era in 1925, when King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, after a siege, extended his rule to the city, bringing security and growth. Within a decade, the city spilled over the restrictive walls, expanding in every direction. In the same 1925, the King requisitioned the historic building while his palace was being constructed - hence the name of its location, King Abdul Historical Square. The house was used as a royal residence and received many illustrious guests. John R. Bradley, author of Saudi Arabia Exposed: Inside a Kingdom in Crisis, in the 1920s described it as a "kind of social salon", as consuls and merchants gathered there. The King also modified some of the interiors and transformed the stairways into ramps that were said to be used by camels. In 1975, the Saudi government bought the house and designated it as

a historic landmark. It was first transformed into a library with 16,000 books; since its renovation, it has been used as a cultural center for lectures and exhibitions, also housing an interesting cultural and heritage exhibition. The books were finally given to the Central Library of King Abdulaziz University. Nasseef House has over a hundred rooms, some of them containing remarkable art works. Besides works on wood, others on tiles can be seen as well as Arabic calligraphy. The design style, influenced by the Ottoman taste, is clearly related to stylistic elements found along the Red Sea, in Egypt and other East African countries. The house has an irregular plan of rectangular rooms arranged around a central hall. The main entrance is from the north, while there is a second entrance from the west, traditionally used by women. After climbing a flight of stairs onto a small platform in front of the house, one enters into a large entry hall (dihliz), that opens to the central hall. To the left and right of the entrance hall there are some smaller rooms that occupy the northern corners of the house.

The west entrance opens straight into the central hall, while several smaller rooms are arranged around a small corridor that connects to the central hall on the east. A similar group of rooms occupies the southwest corner of the building. Directly opposite the main entrance hall is a large and interesting stairway system. Both the entrance hall in the north and the stairway in the south jut out from the façade. Two large rawashin occupy the front facade above each other. Point clouds from laser scanning connecting the two levels above the main door with their large and beautifully crafted wooden structure. A second smaller stairway in the southeast corner of the house may have had more of a service function as, further up, the kitchen lies in this part of the house.

The layout of the main rooms such as the entry hall in the north with the two smaller corner rooms to its east and west, the central hall and the large stairway are all traced to the floors above. On the fourth floor there is a large terrace on the outlines of the entry hall, while the rooms to the left and right are built as lofty structures with large windows covered with wood lattice from the outside. The terrace itself is screened from external view by a wall with many windows.

The fourth floor rooms, except in the southeastern part, are covered by flat roofs at different levels, some usable as terraces. On the fifth floor the kitchen resides above the main stairway in the middle of the southern part of the building. A light pavilion-like wooden structure (kushk) rises above the building on the middle eastern part, thus giving the Nasseef House seven floors (depending on how you count some of the intermediate or offset floors). This was used for resting and sleeping in, making the most of cooling breezes at this height. Although larger and more important than most other structures on the preservation list of Al Balad, Nasseef House is similar in design and construction techniques. The foundation and walls are built entirely with coral taken from the seashore or from the surrounding hills, which were below sea level millions of years ago. The coral blocks were held together with mortar made by mixing sand and lime, which was produced by firing coral in large vats. The floors of each level were constructed by laying unhewn wooden poles side-by-side and covering them with palm matting and mortar. Structures built with these materials were not only cheaper than those built with stone, but also surprisingly durable. Department Director Sami Saleh Nawar, a civil engineer by training, noted that after more than a century of hard use, with hundreds of people occupying the house at one time, the building is still structurally sound, a testament to the durability of traditional building techniques and materials. As an example, he cites the wood used in building the house. In a hot and humid climate such as that of Jeddah, wood usually does not last long before succumbing to the ravages of moisture and insects. To protect it, the wood was coated with a liquid extracted from the Al- Bisham plant found in the mountains. Shark oil was also used for the same purpose. The resulting brown stain was an effective preservative.

As do most traditional homes in old Jeddah, the Nasseef House has exquisite exterior woodwork. Instead of ordinary windows, all openings are covered with wooden grills known as mashrabiyah and projecting bay windows with internal seating known as roshan. Most also have a special sitting area on the roof known as kharajah. The elaborate latticework that covered all three allowed an unhindered circulation of air without compromising privacy. It also served as the principal exterior decorative element for most buildings and, as such, incorporated complex and beautiful patterns. Although the most common color for exterior wood in these old buildings is the brown stain left by the preservative, many are painted turquoise or green. One of the doors is painted an unusualgreen color - almost certainly an

aniline dye. As most old buildings in Jeddah, the house served not only as the home of the owner, but also as a place of work. Walking along the souqs and alleyways of old Jeddah, one sees many such structures with a shop, workshop or storage area on the street level and living space above. The Naseef House had storage rooms on the street level as well as on the fourth floor.
The urban and architectural survey of a significant part of the Historic District of Al Balad has been made using a scientifically coherent methodology and a strict working program. The survey made use of a Laser Scanner and a Total Topographic Station - it has become more and more frequent to use the Laser Scanner in conjunction with the Total Station: the two methods (though showing big differences: the laser automatically surveys something like 2000 dots per second; the total station requests more attention by the operator and takes a longer time for each point) can successfully integrate. The targets necessary for the 3D laser scanning, were positioned in order to achieve the point clouds, basically locating them at the main crossings, in squares, streets and other public areas. The general survey of the historic district started with an exhaustive photographic documentation and with sketches that refer to the present state of the architectural and urban fabric. The photographic documentation, fully showing all the buildings in the case study area, has been carefully analyzed and compared with the metrical survey and the existing cartography. Laser scanning associates high resolution pictures (10 Mpixel) to the points representing the 3D geometry of the buildings and the public spaces around them. To each laser impulse has been associated the RGB value of the digital image, allowing thus the recognition of the geometries of the scanned objects and a reliable mapping of cracks and other pathologies. The purpose of a 3D scanner in the architectural and urban survey is to create "point clouds" to describe the buildings' geometric shapes. These points can then be used for the 2D or 3D modeling of the object (a process called reconstruction). In fact, 3D scanners share several traits with cameras. Like cameras, they have a cone-like field of view, and like cameras, they can only collect information about surfaces that are not obscured. While a camera collects color information about surfaces within its field of view, a 3D scanner collects distance information. Therefore, the "picture" produced by a 3D scanner describes the distance to a surface at each point in the picture, allowing the identification of the 3D position of each point. For most situations, a single scan will not produce a complete model of the subject. Multiple scans, even hundreds, from many different directions, are usually required to obtain information about all sides of the subject. These scans have to be brought in a common reference system, a process that is usually called alignment or registration, and then merged to create a complete model. The scanner can thus collect a very huge amount of data, allowing the survey of any architectural example, even very complex and decorated ones, as is the case in Old Jeddah, within a square grid that can guarantee a resolution to 6 x 6 mm, through which it is possible to draw the exact geometry of the surveyed object. This technique offers the possibility of getting a 3D data bank (usually quite heavy, requesting thus equally sophisticated and advanced computers) which may eventually work as an excellent basis for developing any further project. In a post-production phase, it is possible to get the 3D point clouds; to get the textured mesh; to rotate the point clouds to obtain 2D ortho-photos, very useful for mapping the drawings of the elevations and for evaluating cracks and pathologies of the facades; the make the 3D model (that can be used, with standard CAD software, for the documentation and calculation of surfaces, volumes, sections, elevations, for monitoring future changes in the urban fabric etc.

2. The regeneration of Al Balad

As we have anticipated, our project aims at the conservation of the entire Historic District, prolonging the life and the integrity of its architectural characters, its built forms, its constituent materials, its original colors. A subtle cultural sensibility and a deep critical know-how are evidently requested in order to correctly read and interpret the built architectural and urban heritage. As it is the case for Saudi Arabia and other different areas in the Middle East and in the Mediterranean basin, Italy has been continuously inhabited since very ancient times; its historic cities are universally recognized among the most valuable urban models of humankind; the quality of life that the historic, central districts of some of our cities can boast is rated at the highest ranks in the world urban competition. Italian experts, though sometimes

overcome by the huge quantity and the great artistic quality of their extraordinary built heritage, have usually been quite successful in preserving and restoring historic towns as a whole. The result of all this is that, though post-war Italian suburbs share the same problems (and ugliness) of many other contemporary cultures around the world, the Italian historic urban legacy is still nowadays very successful among its citizens and extremely appreciated and looked after by tourists coming from all over the world. It's understood that the built heritage is not and should not be considered a heavy burden on the municipal finances, but an exciting opportunity to exploit – not without a quite high degree of cultural sensibility - for the future of the entire local community. As we anticipated, the Historic District in central Jeddah should also be a significant part of Saudi Arabia's green leap forward. Our current way of life, in Saudi Arabia as anywhere else, is clearly unsustainable, and that which is not sustainable does not continue. Our cities have to rely on renewable resources, they must be dramatically more ecologically sustainable and we have the challenging task to redesign them in order to achieve an entirely different kind of civilization. A green city can have a great, positive impact on the planet's future. The idea of a green city can coexist perfectly well within a historic district. A well redesigned historic district won't just help comfortable people become prosperous, it will also meet its inhabitants' most basic needs – from clean water and adequate housing to education, healthcare and other social services – way better than spread out, car dependant suburbs do. Designers (architects, engineers, urban planners, technicians etc.) have to know the place well in order to make it better, because a given urban-planning tool never works for every city, and because the more we know and love a place, the more we want to participate in determining its evolution. This is the reason why the Italian architects and planners involved in this design proposal must strictly keep cooperating with their Saudi Arabian colleagues in order to share an exciting, common vision for the future of Al Balad. Central Jeddah will thus experiment a great variety of challenging and entirely new issues, like, for example, new forms of urban farming: people will be able to produce a significant percentage of their food using their small gardens, their terraces and green roofs and the little public, green areas. These areas, with their abundance of shade trees, will act as passive means of cooling, blocking hot sun rays from the houses.

A high density - which is very much part of the Saudi Arabian as much as Italian urban tradition - is extremely important for achieving a more general urban efficiency: though contradictory, a dense compact neighborhood like Al Balad uses less energy and spews less pollution. People can walk or bike, and everything gets cheaper and easier to provide: electricity, sewage and other basic services. And when more people share these services, they all have far less of an impact on the city and on the planet. We all know that we have to build in existing communities - it's the so-called infill housing - in order to have comparatively minimal impact on surrounding ecosystems, since the most damage has already been done there. Jeddah, as any other contemporary metropolis, has to fight hard in order to limit the urban sprawl and increase the quality of its urban life: improving air and water quality, creating safe, vibrant and friendly neighborhoods and becoming a walkable city, at least in its central areas. The new houses that will be built here and the old existing houses that will be competently and creatively renovated, will adopt solar panels to bring clean energy and refrigeration and will make good use of the rainwater that occasionally floods the city; passive solar energy will also make use of existing conditions and natural methods like conduction and radiation to heat the water; discarded hardwood coming from existing buildings that have to be demolished can be reused in new constructions; a Re-Building Center will hopefully be opened in order to provide a vast selection of readily available material coming from these previously discarded buildings. The renovated houses, properly designed ad hoc, will be more flexible, adaptable and interactive than the old ones; smart home technologies, for example, can easily be proposed in a renovated historic district; geothermal pumps may also be adopted in order to achieve a natural cooling of the indoor temperatures: these and other similar design strategies, will produce homes that act not only as a passive shelter, but as an efficient, active service system, keeping up with its inhabitants' demands for a comfortable and convenient space; in the end they will prove eco-friendly but also wallet- friendly. Housing must be dedicated to a range of incomes and mixed with offices, shops and a wealth of beautifully designed, low maintenance green spaces: community gardens and playgrounds. Everything will be on a human scale to make pedestrians, aged, disabled and children feel

welcome. We have to make walking not only easy but pleasurable. Shopping areas and public transit must be within a five-minute walk of every home. Public transit and walking, under the right circumstances and with appropriate long-term public policies, can serve as viable alternatives to reliance on the automobile. We have to discourage car ownership and invest in making public transportation safe, cheap and reliable. We have to protect key views of the many historic buildings that abundantly dot the area and introduce green roofs, rain gardens and green facades in order to reduce the heat-island effect, decrease ground-level ozone and limit the understandably very high demand for AC. At the urban scale, for example, permeable pavements can be used in order to preserve all the functionality of regular pavement eliminating the downsides: they will allow the rare rainwater to filter through into the ground, preventing street flooding and keeping urban greenery healthier, with less work and less water. Effective water technologies must obviously become a very important part of our design proposal: the homes of this neighborhood will be part of a new, natural urban system. In the end, Al Balad should and will become a very interesting and lively area, highlighted by a variety of historic religious, commercial and residential buildings that form an extremely rich urban pattern, clearly different and easily recognizable from the modern parts of the city. A mix of religious, residential, educational and commercial buildings will also include showrooms, ateliers, galleries, exhibition halls, offices, boutiques, craftsmen shops, schools, little hotels etc.: the result will be an exciting and creative neighborhood, very attractive for the locals (especially for young people) and their different activities, but also open to the international trends and influxes, in a very similar way to what can be found in many successful and tourist oriented Italian and European historic towns. Hopefully, many Saudi Arabians will start reconsidering their now quite scarce interest in Al Balad and will move back to Old Jeddah as their ancestors once did. But, most of all, we must not forget the importance of carefully keeping the precious, cultural identity of the place, of its architectural and functional characters, in a more general attitude aiming at showcasing the rich, traditional western Saudi Arabian culture of the Red Sea Coast. The chosen methodology will be the same that has been used in similar projects in Italy and elsewhere, aiming at the conservation of urban diversity (in terms of building types, materials and functions), an extremely difficult quality to achieve in new interventions; the strengthening of civic pride (people living there must feel that they are part of a deeply rooted community, that they are citizens of Al Balad and not city- users); the creation of a sustainable environment (the buildings should produce more energy than they request etc.); and - last, but not least - the transformation of Jeddah's Historic District into a very attractive and deeply rewarding area not only for its inhabitants, but also for millions of pilgrims and foreign scholars and tourists flocking to Jeddah every year from all over the Islamic world.

3. The silent witness of history

The Saudi Arabian built heritage is among the priceless and irreplaceable assets, not only for the Saudis, but for humanity as a whole. The loss, through deterioration or disappearance, of any of these most prized assets constitute an impoverishment of the heritage of all the peoples of Africa and of the world. Since the adoption of the UNESCO Convention in 1972, the protection and conservation of cultural heritage also constitute a significant contribution to a sustainable, future development. Based on the principles of the

1964 International Charter on Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (the Venice Charter), it is our specific duty to identify, study, protect, conserve, present and transmit to the future generations of a built heritage of outstanding universal value, promoting the application of the most advanced theories, methodologies and scientific techniques. This valued architectural heritage is also of seminal importance for the collective psychological life of Saudi Arabia: a Nation needs deep and meaningful cultural roots. The built heritage works as the Nation's soul, it physically represent its cultural spirit. No country is able to confidently look at the future without respecting the past.

Our design proposal, which includes a scientific survey and a restoration project, aims at the most accurate conservation of this urban complex, prolonging the life and integrity of its architectural

characters, its built forms, its constituent materials. It also includes the guidelines for the future life of his historic area, in the belief that architectural ensembles of the past request a contemporary role in order to fulfill new functions that respect the original design and, at the same time, guarantee their survival to the advantage of future generations. The transformation of Al Balad into the active focus of the religious, cultural, political and touristic life of the city of Jeddah, showing in the newly restored buildings' interiors the lavish collections of the Saudi memorabilia, will provide the noblest future for this magnificent buildings, silent witnesses of the Saudi Arabian history.

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Why governance will make urban design better. Dealing with the communicative turn in urban planning and design

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Designing and planning cities are profoundly political activities. There are no purely value-free or 'technical' solutions to urban problems: all decisions in urban development are political decisions insofar they must involve choice, negotiation, friction and divergence and occasionally agreement that enable action. The figure of the neutral and unbiased planner or designer who has ready-made solutions for urban problems is a fallacy. In this article, I explore the concept of governance and its implications for urban planner and designers, enabling them to connect spatial strategies and designs to an understanding of the political economy of places. This ought to enable spatial planners and designers to assign specific roles to different stakeholders involved in specific plans, projects and interventions, hence improving the suitability of their proposals, increasing support and facilitating implementation. But this is not enough: I also argue that planners and designers must reach out to different types of knowledge and get away from their own expert communities in order to gather relevant knowledge that will allow them to perform their tasks better. Including non-expert knowledge in planning and design processes helps produce more relevant, valid knowledge and counteracts what Foucault called the discourses of the expert agents.
Expert discourses are an integral part of existing structures of power (and sometimes, of oppression). They muffle non-expert voices that are outside power structures and often cannot find channels to be heard. When heard, they are often disqualified. By constructing knowledge in a networked way, including 'non-expert' voices, planners and designers could perhaps escape excessively one-sided or biased positions, hence making their proposals more relevant and realistic.

Keywords: governance, knowledge, politics of the city, role of planners and designers, planning foundation

1. Bringing politics back to design and planning studies

In his carefully crafted critique of the 'Smart City' concept during the conference 'New Urban Languages' (DAStU, Milan, June 19-21, 2013) the Swedish professor of social and cultural geography Ola Söderström claimed that big data modelling (in the fashion proposed by the advocates of the Smart City concept) does

not tell us how to govern our cities, because it seems to exclude the political dimension. Söderström claimed that we still need politics in order to steer decision-making in complex democracies. In a summarised way, the essence of his talk was 'we need to bring politics back to the centre of the discussion on how to manage our cities'.

Frank Ekardt, professor of urban sociology at the Bauhaus University in Weimar, speaking at the same conference, suggested that we must pursue a *renewed kind of politics* where not only the self-proclaimed 'expert' voices are heard; we need to understand the power of multiple narratives and step out of exclusive expert knowledge to be able to incorporate other innovative and diverse knowledges into decision-making processes.

Following on their steps, I put forward the idea that we must bring politics back to the centre of the discussion on urban development, while acknowledging the very essence of politics, that is, the variety of points of view and objectives that must be coordinated in order to enable action.

In order to do so, I would like to discuss the role of planners and designers in complex democratic arenas, where communication, negotiation and consensus seeking seem to be crucial. In other words, I would like to discuss how urban planners and designers can step out of their expert knowledge and incorporate other kinds of knowledge in their doing, while acknowledging that planning and designing are eminently political activities.
But why should we 'bring politics back to the debate'? And what is the role of planners and designers in doing so?

In order to explore possible answers to those questions, we must firstly acknowledge the emergence of governance as a concept that helps us understand the political economy of places and the architecture of relationships that guides actions in urban development. My hypothesis is that understanding current governance and designing new governance structures will help us deliver better spatial plans and designs. Secondly, I propose we explore the connections of the idea of governance and urban planning and design. In the concept of governance, we can find levers that will help us redefine our roles as urban planners and designers in the realm of politics. But what is governance?

2. What is Governance?

It is widely acknowledged that "(…) sustainable development requires concerted attention to social, ecological and economic conditions" (Magis and Shinn, 2009). In other words, the understanding has grown that "for sustainability to occur, it must occur simultaneously in each of the three dimensions" (economic, social and environmental) (Larsen, 2012). This holistic conception of sustainability informs us that urban planning and design must also work towards democracy-building and the delivery of social, economic and environmental justice, which are essential conditions for social sustainability. In order to understand governance systems and improve performance of urban planning and design in delivering social sustainability and spatial justice, we must acknowledge the normative and the descriptive dimensions of governance.

In the normative dimension, the great sectors of society (civil society, public sector and private sector) ought to be in 'positive tension' simultaneously applying and suffering pressure from one another. In doing so, they keep each other in check, providing mechanisms to guide and check their actions and to promote mutual accountability. The underlying argument is that societal forces keep each other in check, compelling actors to be accountable to each other. This relationship is dynamic, as actors continually find new positions in relation to changing objectives and newly formed coalitions of interest. It is possible to understand this model in relation to actions or sectors in urban development, where actors might coalesce around objectives but will disperse once those objectives are attained or when their focus changes.

The problem with this model is that of accentuated power asymmetry. Not all actors have an equal voice in the political arena and there will be those whose views or wishes are not taken into account. Often, actors are disqualified because of their lack of expert knowledge. This is described by Michel Foucault as a tool for the legitimisation of existing power structures, through the construction and reinforcement of truths that reinforce and legitimise those structures. Those who are within those structures are considered 'competent' to express their views, mostly because they have the formal (accepted) training to do so, or because they have the political influence that makes their voices heard.

These are what Foucault called 'speaking subjects' or competent subjects. Foucault defined discourses as "systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak" (Foucault, 1977). Expert discourses are an integral part of existing structures of power (and sometimes, of oppression). They muffle non-expert voices that are outside power structures and which often cannot find channels to be heard. When heard, they are often disqualified because they come from non-experts or people whose knowledge is not recognised as valid knowledge. There are various instances of knowledge that is not recognised as such, i.e. the knowledge of the oppressed about the mechanisms of their oppression, the knowledge of children about what they need to grow and learn, the knowledge of women about the ways in which cities should be organised to make the lives of families better. By constructing knowledge in a networked way, including 'non-expert' voices, planners and designers could perhaps escape excessively prevalent or biased positions, hence making their proposals more relevant and realistic to those they are intended to.

This normative dimension of governance contrasts with a descriptive or explicative dimension, where these relationships must be described in relation to real practices. In the explicative dimension, we must find real relationships between actors that influence decision-making. This is necessary if planners, designers and other agents of urban development wish to effectively shape the attention and steer the actions of a myriad of actors towards acceptable or desired outcomes.

Governance systems appear within the framework of formal and informal institutions and the rule of law. The rule of law provides the framework for the public sector, the private sector and civil society to exist in certain forms and in certain relationships with each other through formal institutions. But the recognition has grown that formal institutions are only a part of what constitutes the architecture of social and political relationships. A large part of this architecture is constituted by informal institutions, as defined by Ostrom (2005) which are a result of norms-in-use based on culture and tradition. These aspects help us explain informal institutions, but also behaviours like patronage, nepotism, corruption and ingrained practices. In short, they help us explain governance structures 'in practice'.

The understanding of this architecture of socio-political relationships implies the recognition that planners cannot 'enforce things by decree' and designed blueprints are ineffective in the long run. Instead, urban plans and designs must take governance networks into account in order to shape the attention of the public and of policy makers, help them define priorities and courses of action and influence the actions of a multitude of agents who are located across levels of decision making and of organization (multilevel governance) and in different networks of agency (network governance). Moreover, actors need not necessarily be embedded in hierarchical institutional structures, but scattered in formal and informal institutions, which brings us back to the necessity to include non-expert and non-institutional voices in decision-making circuits.

In other words, governance refers to 'the emergence of a policy-making style dominated by cooperation among government levels and between public and non-public actors and the civil society, where there must be sustained co-ordination and coherence among a wide variety of actors with different purposes and objectives from all sectors of society' (Papadopoulos, 2007). This entails a multilevel dimension and a networked dimension. Multilevel governance 'Involves a large number of decision-making arenas,

differentiated along both functional and territorial lines and interlinked in a non-hierarchical way' (Eberlein and Werwer, 2004). Network governance is the arena where policy making and implementation are 'shared' by politicians, technocrats, experts, dedicated agencies, authorities, semi private and private companies, the public, NGOs, etc which constitute networks of intertwined relationships and of policy and decision making across levels, territories and mandates (Papadopoulos, 2007).

This is rather distant from spatial planners and designers' former stance of superciliousness of professional knowledge, which resulted in prescriptive, normative and mostly inflexible plans and designs. In short, the awareness that urban planners and designers are inserted in and must understand complex systems of governance has grown, and this has unveiled new roles for planners in spatial development in relation to multi-level and network governance where deliberation, bargaining and compromise are the central elements in effective policy-making (Sehested, 2009).

It seems sensible to assert that understanding multilevel and network governance will strengthen the quality and effectiveness of decisions taken and designs made, because these will undoubtedly enjoy a higher degree of output legitimacy, their content is likely to be more appropriate, they are likely to be better accepted by target groups, and they will probably be technically more adequate and ethical. In short, decisions and designs are likely to be more politically and technically realistic (Papadopoulos, 2007).

However, this understanding implies the recognition that governance systems are never perfect and the ways they are understood and dealt with have a deep effect on the quality of our democracies. Papadopolous (2007) points at a possible deficit of democratic accountability of governance structures. Among other shortcomings, Papadoulos points at the weak presence of citizen representatives in governance networks, their lack of visibility and distance from the democratic arena, their multilevel nature which makes their understanding and management an almost unworkable challenge and last but not least, the prevalence of 'peer' forms of accountability, the expert voices or speaking agents described by Foucault, which hamper democratic debate.

Accountability refers to the attribution of responsibility and mandate, and the possibility of check by other parties involved. In network governance, it is difficult to attribute responsibility and mandates and eventually difficult to hold anyone accountable because of the 'problem of many hands' in policymaking and implementation. This is because for agents to be held accountable, they must be identifiable as accountability-holders and they must belong to arenas where there is prospect of sanction. Networks dilute responsibility among a large number of actors, making it difficult to attribute responsibility and enforce sanctions.

In representative democracies, we might speculate that elected officers are the ultimate accountability holders and that elections are the ultimate test of accountability: the hanging sanction is non-reelection. But in networked governance structures or arrangements, the role of elected officials is often not central in the decision-making processes. Policy networks are largely composed of bureaucrats, policy experts and interest representatives, who are often only indirectly accountable to citizens and sometimes only accountable to their peers (other experts) (Papadopulos, 2007). Similarly, plans and designs are likely to be conceived by many hands in governance circuits that do not allow for non-expert participation. Even when a plan or design is assigned to a mastermind designer or planner, it would be incredibly naïve to believe that one mastermind can control all aspects of the design and implementation if there is no coordination of how knowledge is produced and implemented in an inclusive democratic way.

But we should not narrow the issue of accountability to that of democratic control, because other forms of accountability are equally important: administrative accountability, fiscal and legal accountability, for example (Grant and Keohane, 2005). Moreover, decisional procedures in policy networks are often informal and opaque as this facilitates the achievement of compromise. This is what has been described as

the 'politics of problems' (problem solving politics) oriented towards a backstage network of knowledge and decision-making, which is preoccupied with finding solutions for practical problems. This is in opposition of 'politics of opinion'; the traditional politics in the media, party struggles and ideological assertions made to win over the electorate. This is made all the more complex by governance structures cutting across decision levels (e.g. federal states, emerging city-regions, but also international institutions like the UN, European Union and the IMF).

The point here is how to include non-expert knowledge into formal governance circuits, rather than ignoring it. This is an important point, because we must acknowledge the fact that not all knowledge is valid, relevant or desirable. Non-expert knowledge must be inserted into democratic formal circuits of debate, verification and validation, where some sort of consensus seeking is practiced.

In summary, the figure of the mastermind planner and designer is a fallacy. This fallacy, produces distortions in the way urban planning and design are taught in our schools. Future planners and designers are led to believe they have supernatural control over the processes that shape our cities. They are taught to have an irrational belief in the effectives of their designs and plans, without any evidence on how they are enacted and implemented in practice. In order to explore these ideas further, I will use the concepts of soft and hard infrastructures, which I borrow from the American geographer Edward Malecki, for whom "public and private sectors, and their interactions, are sustained by soft and hard networks. To be effective, these networks must operate at the global, national, regional and local scales, gathering knowledge via social interaction, that is, through 'soft' networks" (Malecki, 2002).

3. Soft and hard infrastructures in the city

Soft and hard infrastructures are expressions open for interpretation. Hard infrastructures are easily understandable as the physical environments and places where life occurs. But what are "soft infrastructures"? An understanding of soft infrastructures could perhaps include cultures, political structures and institutions or the way these things are articulated and bound together by values, rules, traditions and conventions. Together they conceivably form the soft infrastructures that inhabit (and produce) physical space.

My argument is that urban planners and designers must understand how soft and hard infrastructures interact in order to deliver effective plans and designs. They must try to understand how governments (and most specially formal spatial planning systems and spatial intervention practices) interact with civil society and the private sector for the production of space. This is of course what we mean by 'governance'. Governance is an effective shorthand to express the complexity of interactions between soft infrastructures in the city.

The correlation between hard and soft infrastructures in the production of space is diachronic and mutual. Hard infrastructures simultaneously produce and are produced by soft infrastructures. Space is socially constructed, as Henri Lefebvre so masterly argued in his 1974 book "The production of space". On the other hand, space influences, shapes and conditions human interactions, as champions of environmental sociology have argued.
The interactions between society and space are complex and to a large extent indomitable, as they cannot be fully understood and managed (at least not with the tools we have currently at our disposal). Moreover, even in times of "big data" and "smart cities", we must still acknowledge the importance of governments and formal planning as steerers of urban development. We must also acknowledge the role of politics in urban development and accept that urban planners and designers have a political role. Bringing politics back to design and planning studies, as Söderström's suggests, is crucial in order to avoid the irrational belief some designers and planners seem to have on the effectiveness of architectural and urban designs

and plans to "solve" social conflict; without any real understanding of and without any real connections to large social and economic processes and decision-making structures.

Urban space is essentially the space of politics, as Plato and a host of other thinkers have stated. It is the space of dispute and conflict, but also of negotiation, cooperation and cross-fertilization of ideas[1]. All decisions concerning urban development are political decisions, since they must be negotiated among different parties that often hold conflicting views. But here again, the problem of power asymmetry is crucial. Understanding and promoting networked governance might help us tackle power asymmetry, because governance responds to problems of knowledge formation and communication.

As we argued in the previous section, one of the main critiques to formal urban planning and design is that they are discourses of power and control. After all, they are technical discourses conceived by specialists working mostly in bureaucracies at the service of power structures that promote inequality. As we argued before, this creates a bias in the way urban development is conceived and enacted. The voices of those deemed incompetent are not heard and therefore their knowledge is not incorporated in the way cities are planned and designed. Democracy and participation are perhaps the answers to this bias, but in practical terms, governance structures must be adapted or re-designed to accommodate 'other' knowledges in the way plans and designs are made. This is the point made by Frank Ekardt in his talk at the conference 'New Urban Languages'.

The resulting multiplicity of points of view responds to fundamental issues in urban development and in governance structures: accountability and legitimacy. Because decisions are taken in opaque behind-door structures and are protected by the veil of the 'competency' of professional planners and designers, they are likely to deliver plans and designs that do not respond to the true needs and wishes of those outside the tight circles of power. In short, decisions are likely to be less effective in delivering desired results (i.e. socially sustainable plans and designs).
Habermas' theory of practical knowledge identifies human interaction as 'communicative action' and describes the political world as a basically communicational world. In this sense, a truly political debate needs to incorporate multiple voices in order to be legitimate and effective. My point here is that urban planners and designers must design processes of participation and incorporation of multiple voices INTO their plans.

We must do that if we want to preserve the public nature of our cities and deliver relevant plans and designs that increase public goods. Despite the increasingly corporate nature of urban development, the city remains essentially 'public', even if the public sphere and the public man are under siege (Sennett, 1993). What I mean here is that cities are the product of collective, largely uncoordinated undertakings and they are, in this sense, 'public', even when the best results of that collective undertaking remain accessible to very few. In order to make these coordinated undertakings relevant to many, steps must be taken to ensure the inclusion of many voices.

In this sense, urban planners and designers must move away from ideas about the supernatural power of their plans and designs to direct urban development, and develop a more modest and realistic understanding of their roles and capabilities in helping stakeholders achieve their own objectives, while delivering public goods for all.

This should not mean a withdrawal of planners and designers or that urban development should be left to the forces of the market. Rather on the contrary, designing new forms of inclusion and fair procedural justice, to use Fainstein's concept, implies designing better and more democratic institutions and

[1] As Jane Jacobs has brilliantly theorized in her book "The Economy of Cities", and new economic geographers have been busy investigating ever since.

improving coordination. My argument here is that urban planners and designers must be aware of their role as possible designers of fairer processes of participation and democratic city-making.

Conclusions

It is my profound belief that the task of urban designers and planners is not only to deliver the plans and designs that will shape the physical world (the hard infrastructures), but we must also simultaneously design the soft infrastructures that will allow those designs and plans to take place effectively and democratically. But what do I mean by the design of soft infrastructures?

I believe that while understanding governance is crucial, it is not enough. Planners and designers must be able to design new relationships between civil society, the private sector and governments *in relation to the plans and designs they wish to propose*. For instance, if a new housing scheme is put forward in the form of drawings and regulations, designers and planners must be able to answer the questions of what, by whom, when and how are these designs going to be implemented. They must try to incorporate non-expert knowledge that is relevant for their actions to enlarge the democratic scope of their actions. Designs and plans must be anchored on a firm understanding of the role of stakeholders and the socio-political context where these plans and designs take place. Designers and planners must understand legal systems and existing forms of partnership and financing. But most importantly, they must also be able to propose new forms of knowledge formation and participation, partnership and financing. This implies a complete overhaul in the way we teach urban design and planning today.

Research is essential. Nothing can be done without knowledge about the context, the issues present and the solutions that have been tried elsewhere. But research is also not enough. Designers and planners teachers and students must also be able to reach out to other forms of knowledge that are not in books, papers and statistics, but in the minds and doings of people, investors, politicians and citizens. There must be a large measure of activism involved in spatial planning and designing, as we move away from the utterly ludicrous idea that expert knowledge alone has answers for the incredible complexities of urban development. Without understanding and acting upon the soft infrastructures of the city, we will not be able to deliver hard infrastructures that work in the real world.

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Many voices but no plan?
Planning the city in the field of diverse narratives

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This article discusses the general possibilities of creating knowledge for urban planning. It assumes that planning as all other fields of knowledge production is embedded into the logics of narrative structures. This implies a certain type of knowledge that can be analysed as part of larger narratives of rationality and modernity. In a contemporary sociological understanding these narratives play a function in society and therefore reflect the societal positioning of planning. As programmatic, authoritarian and crisis narratives are dominating the planning field; new forms of knowledge production are yet to be comprehended. The article points out in which way planning will be confronted with new types of knowledge beyond the existing narrative structure and it will discuss what these innovations might imply.

Keywords: narrative, planning, cities

The city has been often compared with a text. This way the city has been described obviously by a metaphorical approach. It is part of the common jargon in architecture and urban planning to use different metaphors for describing, projecting and explaining cities. The use of the metaphor of the text therefore appears not to be of a different kind as metaphorical sentences which formulate the city in terms like "surface", "stage", "motor", "noddle point" and others. The idea that the city is like a text that can be read and further written on however might lead more than other metaphors to more profound reflections on the very basis of knowledge on cities and its dependency of language in general. In this article, the intellectual debate from other fields of academic considerations about the metaphorical character of knowledge is translated to the area of urban studies and planning in particular. With a much focalized reading of some intellectual debates in the humanities about the conditions for creating insights, the very profound idea of knowledge about the "urban reality" is contested. As it will be argued, the assumption of having access and sometimes a professionalized and more privileged knowledge to the reality of the city will be challenged by an alternative attitude which insists on the plurality of approaches to urban life. These approaches, including the professional ones, are however all the same with regard to the "grammar" of its construction that is they are all considered as creating – in one way or the other – a narrative on the city. The very nature of narratives has implications on the perception, representation and creation of

knowledge (Mitchell, 1981). By identifying the narrative character of knowledge production in urban studies, by no means it is intended to state that then the so-created knowledge is irrelevant and fiction only. When observing the role these narratives have in society, the societal functions of them are becoming overwhelmingly clear. Despite their narrative character, these "stories" are imposed to society as a means of construction of reality that is believed to represent reality itself. In the history of urban planning different modes of constructing narratives can be contextualized with regard to the overarching frames of society in which they can either play an authoritarian, programmatic or a conservative role.
In the article, the logic of narratives and its impact on our understanding of the world will be developed first. It will then show which function narratives have in society in general, before applying these insights into the field of planning studies. The article thereby wants to promote a view on planning which leaves discussions behind on the "truth" of different narratives about creativeness, globalization, sustainability etc. It rather argues that all these are narratives which serve societal purposes but do not have a "closer" tight to urban reality than others. In a democratic manner of planning and urban life, the competition of narratives thereby is assumed to be a crucial factor. By focusing on prevalent and at this moment predominate narratives of crisis in all sphere of society and with regard to different aspects of social and political life, it seems to be important to show that they are as well to be understood in their narrative structure and their societal function as narratives.
In stepping away from the pure analysis of the construction of narratives, in a following step the author wants to contextualize the production of knowledge in times of the so called knowledge and information revolution. It is believed that the new forms of interconnectedness have a decisive impact on the creation of contemporary forms of knowledge production. A few mayor aspects will be identified which are deriving from very recent observations in the "knowledge society". It will be discussed how knowledge on cities could be created in a way that enables planning cities again, beyond the character of its being bound to narrative interpretation and generation.

1. What are narratives?

Despite the fact that the visual appearance of the city seems to be the most direct and unfiltered appearance of urban life, the significance of the visual now appears to be accessible in a way that does not require any kind of pregiven context of understanding. This context mostly derives in different manners and can be composed of various forms of information. It seems to be, in the first place, a matter of knowing more or less about a place so we can understand its meaning more or better. This is the very basic argument for the installation of specialized experts who have the role of safeguarding the particular knowledge about urban space. The enthronization of experts might indeed be an effective manner to elaborate existing knowledge in an abstract process but it apparently is not the result of the existential aspect of the places themselves. In other words, physical and urban spaces do not inherit a knowledge that has to be discovered and decoded. They do not "speak" in one way or the other to the observers. Their significance only exists in the communication among the observers. In this way, the idea of a language of architecture is a misleading phrase as it implies that there is something existing as an objective truth about a place or architectural object that is embedded in the object itself and needs only to be interpreted in a sophisticated approach. If the assumption about the "essentialist" significance of place would be correct, than the understanding of how significances can change over time, because of personal differences and of cultural diversity would be lacking. If a place can be understood without language and communication in a wider sense, but instead by prima facie impression than it is impossible to explain why not all observers interpret these objects in the same way.
It is therefore apparent that the act of observation and of giving meaning to a place depends on the communication that has been joined before entering the situation of observation. For the analysis of the construction of meaning in cities and of places it will be thus important to take into consideration that presituative communication has set the frames for the acts of interpretation of concrete places.
Obviously, the logic of creating meaning is a complex individual and social process that cannot be

described in a elaborated manner in this article, as it would be necessary. Still, there are many different wide ranging intellectual debates attached to the question of signifaction. Nevertheless, it is necessary to shortcut the necessarily more differentiated disputes in the humanities and social sciences about the nature of communication and the way the construction of meaning has to be sketched. As a way forward, it will be suggested to relate the discussion in urban planning and architecture to those intellectual movements which are seemingly offering understandings that are close to the field of urbanism in its practical and analytical proceedings. A review of considerations from those other academic disciplines remains to be undertaken and will open up a critical reflection on the following proposal of thinking.

In line with especially those approaches in philosophy that are often categorized as neo-pragmatism (cp. Swartz, 2009) by authors like Hans Joas or Richard Rorty, the starting point for the explanation of the diversity of significances in the urban observation derives from the insight that there is no way of making a claim about a reality that is not part of the human symbolic system. Looking on mankind in an anthropological manner, than it needs to be recognized that although reality can be accessed in a non-verbal manner by using the given senses, the experience as such remains unimportant if it is not given a particular meaning. Human beings are considered to be – at least in our epoch – destined to sense making. This is apparently true for the daily life activities where an intrinsic logic of realizing objectives occupies most of our time in one or another way. Less apparent, this can be also said to the search of people for giving their life in general some, more general meaning. In many discourses, the assumption can be supported that between those two spheres (daily life and general sense making), the necessity of coherence appears to be crucial. As Bruno Bettelheim (cp. Hanstein-Moldenhauer, 2004) had worked out already long ago, this might be the reason why children need to fairy tales. Other authors who for example looked on how adults tell about their life, have noticed that the desire for autobiographies and the high interests of the public for the biographies of more or less celebrities is driven by the essential need of human beings to construct sense that gives life a coherent meaning (Bruner, 1987). In medical science, the lack of a coherent narrative is regarded as the psychosomatic reason for illness (cp. Gunaratnam, 2009). In literature, many examples are given about how important the finding of words is to rescue people from become insane and to be able to cope with atrocities of the most severe form. Shakespeare's story telling about Laetitia stands out as an example for the fictional narrating, while the writings of Jorge Semprum and his experiences in Buchenwald are a powerful testimony of the break of civilization of today. As all these examples from the wide fields of culture show, meaning is embedded into language not in a loose way but into the communicative act of storytelling. These stories are individually enacted but they are by no means to be regarded as arbitrary tools for sense making. In fact they are produced as "narratives" and need to be understood as paradoxical result of modernization.

Especially for the modern man, experiences are bearing less immediate understanding and consequently less importance. Modernity can be seen as a process where the symbolic interpretation of life becomes a crucial act of self-constitution. In a very contrastive perspective, the traditional society might be described as offering an understanding that does not require a kind of individual sense making, the emergence of the modern society can be characterized by its plurality of possible roles and its pressure on individuals to not delegate responsibility to external forces but to proclaim the emancipation of those forms of manipulation. With the European tradition of Enlightment the responsibility for one's own intelligence lies in the hand of the person itself. This requests the reconstruction of existing narratives which has meant the appearance of the intellectual in a classical sense as writer in the 18th century. Victor Hugo or Charles Dickens and later other authors in Europe have soon discovered their role as not only describing contemporary and thereby urban life, but telling thereby a story that served the public to find new ways to give orientation in the chaotic days of early modern Paris or London. These narratives are at the same time real and fiction. They only "work" as they deliver an adaptable narrating of the life that the public sees developing in front of their eyes. The fictional part of it offers a possible way in the narrated city that the reader potentially could choose, like not following the rules. It is therefore also the birth place of detective stories as Edgar Allan Poe famously was celebrated for at that time. This fiction serves as reconfirmation for the reader that it is better to not follow a different track.

The construction of narratives in literature allows understanding their societal nature. They are part of the

more profound attempt of the modern reader to find orientation in a society which burdens each individual with the task of sense making. Society organizes sense-making in a way that routinizes these mental needs by defining roles (author, publisher, reviewer, reader and more) in its organizationally aspect and content wise. The more they seem to be close to reality the better they work. First of all, it is the genuine structure of narratives which are convincing readers of its truthfulness. This is especially grounded in the parallel order of time. Life and books have a beginning and an end. But this is at the same time a reduction of complexity, as nothing really happens in life with a clear starting point (On which day did you start to learn to read?) and endings are appearing before they come visible for which cancer is the frightening counter-experience. Time lines in stories thereby serve as lessening the complexity of (urban) life as do the personages described in them. Narratives thereby establish a limited set of actors, define their roles and set the agenda of the problems that they have to cope with. With these forms of lessened complexities, in sum, narratives enabling the mostly emotional and unconsciousness reflection of existing options how to make sense in modern life. They serve as defining problems, roles, expectations and are limiting the perception on what needs to be part of the story and what not. Attempts in modern literature to break with the limitations of narratives are today highly appreciated by literature connoisseurs and regarded as classics like James Joyce work on Dublin or Döblins Alexanderplatz, but their montage technique which breaks the timeline-structure to some extent, have never found a broader audience. Apparently those more avant-garde narratives do not serve the societal need for enabling decision making for the most people.

2. Narratives of planning

With the focus on the "narrative part" of modern life, urban planning and architecture in the modern city need to recontextualised in some most profound directions. A call for the recognition of the narrative character of urban planning does not imply to suggest just another sort of narrative but to more profoundly argue in favor of future analysis of planning with regard to its principal and sociological foundation as acts of communication. To avoid any kind of misunderstanding, it has to be underlined that such an attempt does not argue in favor of existing theoretical approaches metaphorizing the city in one way or another. Another misleading idea would be to reduce the insight on the nature of society as being narratively constructed to merely the assumption that communication has influences on how planning is organized. In a more radical manner, the basic point of departure of a planning analysis in the light of the "narrative turn" implies that there is no alternative thinkable to the fact that all human activities are symbolic acts and create meaning only in the field of the communicative interpretation of these acts. For most of the existing approaches in urban planning, this will mean a profound blow. The underlying understanding of planning is that we can organize a cause-and-effect relationship with the reality outside of the communicative space. A plan in this way of thinking can be only – in different ways and to varying levels of outcome - realized or not. This idea of planning is correct in that regard that plans effect reality but it leaves unclear what reality is. In other words, the activities of planning are only understood in their intentions if they are embedded into symbolic representations that are communicated. Planning activities are always part of a larger communicative setting. The idea of a plan itself is the construct of a consensus that is pre-given that not only defines the reading of the legend but the meaning of planning itself.

Narratives of planning in general are not different than other narratives. The provocation of this thought lies in the fact that there are fictive and imaginary sides of planning which the tradition of rational planning would not have systematically reflected on. In the long run of proposing a planning philosophy which serves enlightened intentions, planning tries to avoid any kind of subjective, arbitrary or not-rational motives which would disable effectiveness and objectiveness. The history of this rational approach in the modern science world shows however that the prerogative of objectiveness is a narrative in itself. What it partly covers without any intention to do so or what it partly defends with a democratic legitimation is the question of power and its relation to the selection of certain narratives in favor of others. A longer argument needs to be worked out here, to place this insight into the analysis of the historical longitude of narratives and their persistence beyond biographical or situational importance. This thought can be linked

to the gouvermentalité that Foucault was considering (cp. 2003). Sociologically, the contemporary meaning of narratives in planning needs to be seen in the actual field – to use a metaphor of Pierre Bourdieu – of social forces as well, so that individual narrative in planning can be regarded as a societal part of the individual habitus that goes beyond pure personal experience.
It is especially in urban planning that narrative forms of knowledge production are predominant as they are reproducing the time line logic as in literature. Planning can hardly be thought of without the sequencing of different activities. The before-and-after-schemes of planning are seemingly not to overcome. It is therefore that Ruth Finnegan (1998) underlined that planning is intrinsically representing a story telling about the city that is based on binary codes. Besides the time lining, romantic evaluations of urban life are at the core of planning. The romanticism lies in the necessary judgment on the identification of perspectives to the better. No planning can be conceptualized that does not want to lead out of the dark to a better future. The narration of planning thereby implies a magical and partially mystical part as it cannot exist without any kind of dared idea about the future. In how far prediction about the future can be based on scientific knowledge remains not reflected and taken rather for granted, as the narrative of science seems to be the only plausible one that lessens the burden of simplifying complex realities to time lines. This process of simplification however makes planning narratives vulnerable for critic in a way that alternative planning narratives cannot simply be discussed but have to be accepted as more innovative because their using new magical words which are not to be found in the up-to-then existing narratives. New narratives ("gentrification", "Zwischenstadt", "creative city", "smart city" etc.) are breaking ground not because of a more sophisticated understanding of certain aspects of urban life but rather as a result of an emerging new elite representing new powerful social groups. The new narrations are remaining vague and are often based on the story telling of single cities. The role of the new elites consists in the generalization of these local experiences and the interpretation of this general narrative in other local contexts.
Planning studies and theories so far have paid little attention to the narrative structure of their field of research. There are different reasons to be mentioned to explain this obvious lack. Here it should be mentioned only that many discussions in planning journals and at conference are trying to contribute to one or the other narrative, applying them to a certain case area or are critically rejecting one narrative in favor of another. Often, the discussion about the narrative structure of planning is opposed by the wish of many discussants to be "close" to practice and an analysis on a level of meta-theorization is regarded as complicating participation in planning processes. As a consequence, there is little self-observation in a systematic way about the similarities and differences about the prevalent narratives in planning. For a further research in this direction, however, it might be helpful to distinguish between programmatic, authoritarian and crisis narratives. The later will be given more attention here as it has become the overarching discourse since the threating crash of the financial markets and the Euro crisis. These categorizations are argued for as they might give orientation with regard to the different roles and embedding they have and, at the same time, what kind of society they represent. In a rough manner, authoritarian and programmatic narratives differ mostly with regard to the free competition of narratives in a society. Programmatic narratives are presented by one part of society which either newly emerged with a single topic that has been so far neglected or was of lesser importance, or it needs to be seen as an attempt of a competition about the leading voice in planning and architecture. Since the appearance of single issue movements in the late seventies, the programmatic narratives have meant a step away from authoritarian narratives and authoritarian forms of planning. It has been proven successfully that single issue movements and elites can enter the upper level of society and planning if they are not attempting to "take it all" but look for their space in the governance structures existing. Although often claiming a "turn" and more ambitious ideas of change, social, environmental, gender, feminist, gay and other minority groups have been able to more or less extent to join planning discourses but generally have not altered the grand narrative of modern planning. In the later nineties however the programmatic narratives came less from up-to-then underrepresented social movements but from rather powerful groups of experts, councilors, academics, private business and growth coalitions. In short, narrating the city became a business and many social groups who firstly argued for narrative competition now see that more

resourceful elites use the opening of the planning discourse for their particular interests. Academics are – sometimes unwillingly and unconsciousnessly – a crucial role in it. In the years 2000, the construction on local identity politics as a way to sell the city in marketing and promotional terms sometimes is the only area where the competition on the best programmatic narrative has been left. It is apparent that little or no deliberative element can be found in that. In cases where as in Germany many cities have undertaken broad discussions on their urban narrative (Leitbild), the results have had nearly no practical outcome and the narratives were replaced by simple slogans (City of Science Göttingen, Documenta Stadt Kassel, Green city Hamburg etc.). These narratives are constructed to give legitimation for single projects or for public support for one particular field of urban life, mostly in economy or culture. The critical discussion about programmatic narratives remains as an all-including narrative no longer appears to be realistic, although their rhetoric always to the "bonum commune" and pretends to be positive for all. Programmatic narratives therefore are creating a myth, as they are hiding the fact that the programmatic approach always legitimizes a choice between different options and consequently creates winners and losers. No one asks about the future of those people who are not creative in the "creative city"-discourses. When priority is given to, for example, culture investment, how than can social burdens existing or newly created by this narrative been buffered? A new narrative implies a shift in the public spending priorities. This is exactly the point of critic possible than for the next narrative or the next elite group with their narrative, demasking the existing as too expensive, not in the benefit for all and as being ineffective. In this way, programmatic narratives could become measurable and the merging of programmatic narratives is possible, if political arenas are present to syncretize competitive narratives. Modern societies however are always at risk, that these forms of competition are set to an halt when narrative elites are having the chance to define the role of the competition and thus declaring newly arriving narratives as "irrational", "illogical", "not scientifically", "too expensive" and so forth. If a political culture of a city monolithically believes in the modern narrative of progress than paradoxically it starts to produce its own idiosyncrasies and tries to systematically exclude factors that could disturb the simplification of the time line of modern planning, always improving urban life. Authoritarian narratives are trying to convince the public with a very precise and at the same time total planning. Master plan and detailed plan are the two sides of the same coin. As part of the rational planning however these plans remain strangely vague when it comes to the argument of planning at all. While programmatic planning is required to make a better argument in competition with others, the authoritarian planning avoids this kind of competition in either not giving any kind of reasoning – why does Stuttgart 21 really needs an underground station, why Istanbul a third bridge – or they remain mystically unclear and there is glance in the eyes of politicians and planers when they talk about it. The authority does not stem from argument but rather from their centralized role as having a better access to and understanding of the urban realities than the general public has. Like mystical priests, a promise for a better life (Slogan of the Shanghai expo: Better life, better city) is given which cannot be measured and does not proliferate us with potential criteria for controlling the fulfillment. Today's most authoritarian planning narratives can be found in the area of techno determined planning as it is the case of the e-city or smart city.

3. The crisis narrative

A third category of narratives appears to be of a different kind and becomes increasingly important. Since the reports of the "Club of Rome" and the recognition of the ecological limits of growth, the impression that the modern societies are undergoing a more or less visible phase of crisis, have become a powerful narrative. The visibility of the crisis is subject of permanent reflection and has become a kind of constant subtle emotional background which steps forward from time to time. The narrative of crisis is, as also programmatic and authoritarian narratives are, not a narrative of planning as such, rather is planning deeply embedded into it. It is important to underline that this is not simply a reaction of planning departments on fiscal limitations that are occurring when a crisis is declared. Of course, this is happening as well and this part of the crisis narrative is the most sensible for actors in the field of planning. What

remains without much reflection is the fact that the narrative of crisis is the very basis of planning in general, as it is part and consequence of the modern narrative from the beginning.
This becomes obvious when a closer look on the idea of "planning" is taken in the history of modern ideas. When in the year 1755 the city of Lisbon was destroyed by an earthquake and presumably more than 100,000 people lost their lives and daylong fire bursts destroyed the Portuguese capital in a horrible manner, the foundations of the European intellectual world were also trembled. Due to the then arriving public sphere in the European capitals and beyond, the reports about this disaster were the first which required a narrative of understanding and explanation. Not before has a broader European public been informed about such a tragedy beyond national borders. What is apparent is that the reports did not only lead to intellectual reactions of Goethe, Voltaire, Kant und Lessing, but that the intention to report on something that lies far beyond the world of experience so far appeared only in fairy tales and even Goethe asked (in a rhetoric way) in has "Faust" why one should take note of those faraway people of Turkey. Reporting about the Lisbon earthquake was already the result of a new narrative in Europe which sought to construct concrete reports to exercise the new way of reflecting sense making. In the 18th century, the narrative of the ancien regime faded out slowly and the request for a new way of giving sense to the individual and common life grew stronger. Natural catastrophes were for Voltaire and others the sign for the lack of the intellectual authority of the aristocrats and the church as they cannot explain why within a few minutes time such a disaster can happen. A call for modern and rational explanations of earthquakes and natural disasters in general would be more adequate and so the reasoning was given for seismography and geography to be developed. The starting point for rational explanation was motivated by the belief that nature and its horrors can be tamed and controlled. Science needed to be seen as a tool for human planning that overcomes the tragedies caused by nature. Still, the optimistic belief and the positive effects of scientific approaches rests in the hope that human suffering can be lessened or even avoided. Rational planning is in this regard not different from medicine and engineering. What followed historically seemed to support the optimistic view on the rational abilities deriving from scientific approaches, so that we can say that people are no longer without protection in the face of disasters and catastrophes. Obviously many products of disaster planning and management are seemingly helpful in the event of catastrophes. The rational narrative has produced a broad vocabulary of rescue plans, flight points, emergency stations etc. The financial part for the infrastructure that is part of this narrative can be regarded as impressive also. In many planning projects, the prerogatives for these kinds of spatial arrangements are given highest priority.
The narratives of crisis, catastrophe and disaster have been little contested since the early days of its establishment after the Enlightment and rationality have become the mayor narratives of the modern society. In a way they can be understood as variations of the same grand narration on the idea of a society that can be planned and controlled not to suffer from nature. The ecological critic that the idea of controlling nature has the perverse effect of destroying the natural basis of human life conditions, did not alter the predominance of it, as the critic is integrated by beliefs in more effective technologies. The sociological reflection, most prominently by Ulrich Beck (1986), showed that the idea that the rationalization of life can be further uphold and that only the "side effects" needs to be targeted, however, leaves out the omnipresence of risks deriving from a technological construction of our world.
The emergence of the "risk society" emphasizes the transformation of crisis into risks the basic rationale remains the same. Both, crisis and risks are part of a larger narrative that human behavior is the basic factor to be controlled. The notion of probability, introduced by the enlightened science in general, goes to the extreme as it puts responsibility of the taming of and coping with crisis on the individual. The risk thereby dissolving the communality that crisis situation are mostly implying. Having failed to calculate risks can have disastrous consequences for individual and they have to learn to manage the probability balances every day. Passing the street now, taking up this mortgage now, marrying this partner etc. This reasoning is permanently repeating individual risk balancing which in case of failure can be harmful. A crisis however is not based on this risk individualization but constructs a narrative for ordering a socially interrupted functionality. As in modern society, functionalities are constantly reshaped and thereby creating "disorder", the crucial question is when, why and by whom such a situation can be defined as "crisis". The alternatively available narrative of risks that identifies personal responsibility needs to be set

apart. This implies that "disorder" cannot be traced back to one or the other decision or responsible person. The appearance of a "crisis" therefore needs a surprising starting point, the narrative starts as a hard boiled noir film with the scene of the victim lying on the ground. What now needs to be done is qualified as "reaction" and "emergency". There is no alternative to calling the doctor and trying to save her – it is mostly a beautiful woman who is in danger. For establishing the crisis narrative this moment of a shared understanding of the situation is decisive. It is a shared situation which individual victims. The role division in this narrative needs to be implied without ambiguity. The observers, the victims and the forces of rescue are narrowing down the complexity of the role diversity of the citizen. The implications of the crisis narrative are manifold, in principal it can be said however that an intrinsic logic is followed that leads to the restoration of the challenges social order. In this way, the crisis narrative serves as a kind of conservatism especially for existing authoritarian ways of planning. It stops the competition on what the best planning narrative would be and reemphasizes believe in the rationale of modernity and the control of nature, even when it is about social crisis. Moral support for the identified victims, increasing research on technological solutions and the assumption of potential warning systems are sophisticating the rule of the challenged narrative. As Martin Voss (2006) worked out, the narrative of crisis follows always a well know dramatology: Missed warnings, growing thread, underestimated impact, dramatic rescue, difficult restoration and finally emphasis on prevention. In this sequencing, the discussion of alternative ways of planning is systematically excluded. This narrative is so convincing because it might be the deepest rooted way of telling a story about suffrage in life. The crisis has not altered the experience of the catastrophe as it is mystically narrated in the antique world. Earth, Olymp and Hades have been regarded as unseparetely space which unites human life, the empire of the gods and the underworld. Catastrophes have been the moments where a sudden event (katastrophein) – for which the individual was not responsible – felt from one part of the world into the other. This led to permanent fear and mystical rituals. Alternatively the Greek drama offered a form of symbolical rescue which the individual could use to find a symbolic release. In the same manner, the contemporary narratives of crisis are constructing a line of storytelling that mountains in a dramatic moment. Emotional participation is ensured this way and the heroes of rescue can be followed as allowing the observers to let them act in an Ersatz way. Today, the stages of the drama are televisioned or blogged. The drama of the global spectacle allows us paradoxically to further pursue a life of "normality" where the social order in general needs not to be changed. In this regard the crisis narrative destroys the very precious moment of acts and feelings of solidarity which often happening in times of catastrophe and which bear potentially the chance for creating a more solidary city and society (Solnit, 2009). Instead, the dramatization of the crisis offers quick release by letting the heroes succeed and cleaning thereby the fears of the observers in an act of classical theatre (katharsis).

Knowledge today

The development of new information and communication technologies as such does not alter the structure of knowledge creation. Furthering, it will remain observable that the grand narratives of society are proceeding to be more detailed and sophisticated by these new means. Overoptimistic estimations of the liberties given by facebook and google etc. have certainly no longer backing when the interference with the existing state and market forces is seriously taken into account. While rejecting any kind of naïve technodeterminism, the opposite assumption that with these new technologies society loses its democratic basis might also be missing the point. What can we really observe so far about the consequences about the vast emerging knowledge society? It goes beyond the scope of this article to work out any systematic answer. What cannot be ignored that for both tendencies in modernity, which is: for a more emancipatory and at the same time a more authoritarian way of politics, there is evidence. The situation can be rather described by this very ambitious "use" of the new media.

When looking at the prominent examples of the last years like the Occupy Movement, the Arab Spring and the Brazilian and Turkish protest movements, one is likely to forget that these kind of social uprising have occurred in the West since the early eighties with the Peace Movement, then later with the Fall of the Socialist system and the tragedies of Tianmen Square and elsewhere. Without oversimplifying all these movements and their different agendas and coalitions of actors, it remains however a clear distinction to

the class struggle of the modern society. This has been noticed early by Manuel Castells who now looked on the contemporary movements in this way: „There were first a few, who were joint by hundreds, then networked by thousands, then supported by millions with their voices and their internal quest for hope, as muddle as it was, that cut across ideology and hype, to connect with the real concerns of the real people in the real human experience that had been reclaimed. It began on the internet social networks, as these are spaces of autonomy, largely beyond the control of governments and corporations (…) By sharing the sorrow and hope in the free public space of the Internet, by connecting to each other (…) individuals formed networks (…) They came together." (Castells, 2012, 14). With different graduation, certain aspects can be regarded as genuine parts of a transforming world society which is enacted by a subtle „participatory revolution" based on a demand for direct democracy, postmaterial values, pragmatic issues (often only one) and a reanimation of the urban realm. Seen as a weakness, these movements seldom have charismatic leaders (which they often refuse consciousnessly), no wider range of subjects and they do not integrate into the existing political system as "opposition". It might take long but in this way, the impact on the logic of diffusion knowledge is altered in a more profound way. The new information and communication technologies jump into the altered scheme of knowledge production. The creation of new social networks, forms of exchange and the omnipresence of "information" – which needs to be differentiated from knowledge – are firing on the process of creating a different kind of society, but they are not their origin. What can be observed is that these movements are most prominent urban and especially there powerful where middle class societies are left to seek a new narrative after they have achieved what the classical modernity offers as "happy ending": house, family, money. Sense making with this cliché modernity of shopping malls and gated communities apparently is not sufficient. Contemporary knowledge production is not simply proceeding by getting a formerly modern education and access to information. Knowledge today becomes embedded into the personality of the individual where it creates a superdiversity of options to progress with the question of making sense of life. The knowledge city in this perspective is not characterized by an economic predominance of those branches producing high tech or information equipment. It is rather a place where people construct a billion of new narratives with a new scheme of telling it. The dimensions of these new schemes are: Firstly, it is a personalized manner of reproducing oneselves as a profile on the net, for various other opportunities and as a bearer of a life story. Secondly, this narrative schmes are local. This implies that the reterritorialisation of generally available ways of seeing the world becomes a necessary act of constructing one's own biography. It needs to be legitimiced why one lives here (and not somewhere else), what that exactly means and how it fits into the profile everybody claims to be self-constructing. Thirdly, this knowledge production is urban. This means that it is highly mobile and does not continue on existing knowledge traditions but praises itselves to be an outcome of meeting the others in the city, meaning: that it synthesizes the knowledge of especially those who are different. The new social networks are the most tangible aspect of it but the urban lifestyle in general functions as a motor for the permanent incorporation of otherness into the personal understanding of the city and oneself. Synthesis rather than specialization creates the innovative aspect of the urbanity of knowledge (cp. Wood, 2013). Fourthly, knowledge is something that is no longer a mere abstract „know about" or „know how", but it becomes an experience and a feeling. It is more correct to say that the city is transforming the feelings of the narrative - as the drama in the crisis narrative, which overwhelms as, control and clarifies fear and unites as a community - into the emotionalisation of the city (Eckardt, 2013). In this regard, emotions are individualized offers of communication to other people and not directed to form "knowledge communities". Knowledge as emotion is personally directed and incorporated. It is a form of movement and depends on the act of synchronization with other bodies. In sum, knowledge today appears to be partially still pre-schematized by the existing grand narratives of modernity, rationality and technology. A few counter or alternative narratives have altered important parts of this master narrative like the sustainability or ecological narrative has done. More profound changes in the knowledge production seem to occur form the ongoing radicalization of modernity which leads to a knowledge production that explodes by the processes of individualization, localization, re-urbanisation, emotionalisation and incorporation.

4. Planning beyond narratives

As it has been made clear in this article, the contemporary situation in many fields of urban planning can be characterized by a contradictionary and paradoxically observation. One the one hand side, there seems to be a wide opening door for enabling more participatory and direct way of planning. Citizens in the most diverse cities like Belo Horizonte, Stuttgart, Istanbul, Alexandria, Madrid and others have raised their voice for alternative views on the sense of planning. On the other hand, these protests do not critically review the existing narratives of modern planning as such. Mostly, to say this in a much generalized way of observation, they are arguing for a competition of narratives: schools according to FIFA standards in Brazil, a Taksim square for public life and not for shopping etc. Paradoxically, the overall narratives in many (Western) societies can be characterized as a crisis narrative which is than translated into urban frames by reducing the impact of narrative competition and thereby reestablish authoritarian planning.
Restraining from the idea of a "hidden agenda" and all-explaining meta narratives, at least for the moment these contradictions and paradoxes might be left further unregarded. What might be more interesting to be discussed, what is really new in the long lasting participatory development in the progressed modernity. Here, there are new forms of knowledge production to be identified which partly allows to create insights into city life beyond the modern narratives of progress, conflict and community. The embodied, personalized and radically individual manner of knowledge production which we can see developing to some extent in all cities around the world, surely complicates the formulation of a new planning approach. What seems to be more the consequence of trying to understand this phenomenon, is that planning needs to be understood as a more personalized, emotion sensitive, body oriented field of communication which seeks tools for enabling experiences of connectivity, for learning from individuals on how to move in the city, and integrate the various narratives into one single life time that follows its own pattern of sense making. A new agenda for planning interrupts the competition of narratives as it includes this form of knowledge from everyday life in the unknown city of knowledge. The knowledge on how to plan the city is "out there" and not part of any kind of selective new form of telling about the city. In this way, the preparation for danger and to cope with risks is something that also is already developed by citizens but of course in their different margins of maneuver. The planning institutes have to get knowledge about the different ways of these risk management strategies. "Muddling through" might be the most important part for planners to learn from the citizens. It can be assumed that the identification of patterns and rituals the citizens develop will be a good starting point. The danger is thereby that planning cannot rest with a one time-shot on these patterns but need to closely communicate their observation and in this way opening up chances for alternations. If to avoid the reintroduction of authoritarian narratives, this communication needs to be self-reflective and transparent about the ideas of the planners about the sense of their doing.

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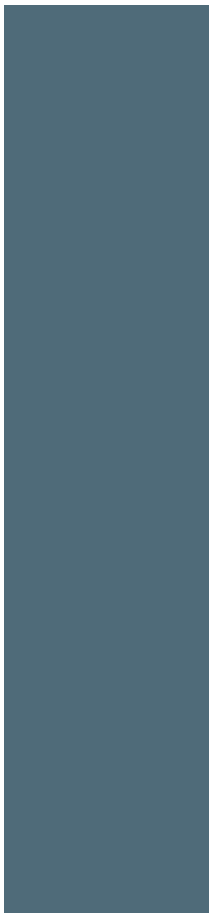

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