

## **For a Democratic Planning: the ancient borough 'San Cristoforo' in Catania**

### **SHORT LEAD INTRODUCTION**

The ancient borough 'San Cristoforo' in Catania: a 'community spaces' local policy as opportunity of democratic planning facing globalization-related issues, in a 'fourth world' Mediterranean area. A case study about the reduction of social inequalities and the empowerment of local communities, in dynamic evolution, achieved through a project of their common life spaces.

### **TAKING A POLITICAL STAND**

My dissertation is divided into two parts. In this part I declare my position as political planner. In part two we review history, analysis and project hypothesis of the case study to explore the suggestions we may draw for planning in a 'fourth world' area. We hope to give further opportunities of equity planning rather than have a cynical resignation in the face of global forces.

We are interested in the politics and ethics of an equity planning practice. Planners are agents of society, and their actions affect society. We point toward a concept of 'political' planners, a profession that is 'politically sensitive and practically pitched'<sup>i</sup>. By this point of view we think that institutional opportunities, as planners, are a lot: we chose how and where make projects, we identifies problems, we produce technical analysis, we protect some interest and fight others, we select strategic objects and subjects. Consequently we believe that planners might seriously strengthen democracy: they can contribute to human integration and the alleviation of poverty, they can work to help the urban population most in need; they can choose issues that threaten or benefit some people instead of others, they can resist injustice, they can empower citizen communities, they can use communicative action to give voice and power to civil society and to reduce conflicts, they can educate people to a solidaristic conscience. Working with democratic ideals means provide opportunities and care for citizens most vulnerable, improve services and the availability of housing, jobs and health, improve the quality of urban life for all citizens, strengthen neighborhoods.

### **Globalization**

"Planning in a More Globalized and Competitive World" is the current theme in the world geopolitical, cultural, and economic conflicts. Global economy operates automatically, invisibly, and inexorably, destroying democratic ideals. The globalization effects are articulated at geographical, cultural, economic and political level and at different scales. Therefore our actions have to be articulated at different levels, in order to create an heterogeneous but fair world where differences are values. Planners have to explore new practices in light of a larger process of structuring a more equal world for surmounting global challenges. We know that only all political forces, together, could alter the structure of the political economy. But we believe that planners may diminish, but not end, inequality.

Our challenge is to build, in our cities, a fair society that will contribute to equal world development process. We can contribute to a democratic growth, that is dedicate, first, to the regeneration of urban areas and neighbourhoods in crisis. Our goal is to educate citizens to a solidaristic human conscience. "The city's principle challenge is to *succeed in living together*, among those who are *similar* and those who are *different*"<sup>ii</sup>.

This is, maybe, the only way that will allow us to move towards a world development not under economic and political global forces (strong and uncontrollable) but according to socialization democratic processes. Inside the cities we have the possibility to start processes of mutual learning and respect of 'integrated differences'. Inside the cities we can experience a new education that approaches civil society to political institutions. The city is the scale in which we can persuade people to have confidence in public administration, and to believe that their desires will be listened. In particular as far as the western contemporary

cities, the possibility of a democratic development necessarily requires the revitalization of the 'subaltern' city. In order to fight global conflicts and to guarantee a future stability, we don't have to be worried about economic development or planning tools but about the gap between dominant and subordinate city and the lacks of balance. Obviously in the cities of the South, like those of Sicily, the difference between the two cities is greater and the effects of an unequal development are mainly visible, also because the public institutions have been mainly absent.

In reading the following case study everyone could gain greater understanding about the problems and possibilities inherent in the democratic planning. We hope to encourage other planners to work addressing issues of equity.

## **CASE STUDY: SAN CRISTOFORO**

### **Choice**

The case study is the subject of my doctoral thesis (that will be finished in November 2003) which is part of a wider research conducted by the 'Laboratorio per la Progettazione Ecologica ed Ambientale del territorio' (Dipartimento di Architettura e Urbanistica - Università di Catania).

We took the decision to analyze San Cristoforo neighborhood in Catania (Sicily) because of ethical and political reasons. Our case study is, in fact, about a 'fourth world' area, a symbol of marginality condition: abandoned by institutions, poor, and neglected. We have, therefore, chosen to follow the necessity to make an equity planning work, based on democratic criteria. Our choice also hides the hope to open new looks towards this city area, new points of contact between the well-to-do city and 'the other one', in order to avoid the devastating plans promoted, now as in the past, by Public Administration<sup>iii</sup>.

### **Neighbourhood Analysis**

We consider urban problems complex and ambiguous: they are rarely well defined; and data are rarely adequate. But planners don't solve problems they interpret ethically and politically them. Planners, with their interpretation, affect society's welfare, therefore they have to rely on the value systems cultural and ethical traditions of their society. For this reason we tried to expand the knowledge base of planning through an 'epistemology of multiplicity'<sup>iv</sup>. We tried to know, and work with, as many people as possible. We talked with planners, lawyers, and academics, public officials, private owners, and civic group. We have contacted people who work, operate and live in this area (social workers, community association, teachers, social groups as well as NGO etc.) to understand their dreams and needs. We tried to be friendly and open with inhabitants. We utilized a process of listening to local know how and to non-professional knowledge, and of reflection on practical inhabitants actions and life-styles.

Consequently the evaluation criteria that we have utilised are various and belong to an integrated and multidisciplinary approach. We strength analysis by using outside expertise, as social-psychological aspect<sup>v</sup>, integrating political judgements with professionals analysis, using our personal and multidisciplinary skills. Anyway we have tried to know inhabitants values, aspirations and life styles, using their visions, frames, perceptions of the places and dreams, with the aim to contributing to make their dream and their 'state of being'<sup>vi</sup> come true.

Our analysis are therefore based on historical research, imagines, discussions, photographs, plans, maps, social data, law, interviews and questionnaires, undertaken both quantitatively and qualitatively.

We elaborate this analysis with the aim to further developing our knowledge about construction process: historical shape process (physical, social..), relationships between physical and social features (typological studies, technical constructions, social times<sup>vii</sup>,...) and the evolution of the relational process taking place in the area.

However as for educational aim, we have to admit that we don't have educational planning tools, and we don't know its risks, results or modalities. As planner we don't have a real acquaintance about socialization models. Therefore we present only an hypothesis.

## Historical background

The historical and morphologic analyses we have lead, carried out to identify, inside the neighborhood, diverse areas (called 'tessuti'<sup>viii</sup>) characterized by different construction processes.

The neighborhood known today as San Cristoforo, was a rural area just under the Middle-Age walls.

In 1669 suffered for a natural disaster: the eruption of the Etna volcano. Wholly covered up by the Lava, the area began a Bishop's Court ownership. In 1760 it was divided in three part and given on 'long lease' (enfiteusi) to the City, the church and an aristocratic family, on condition that new residents pay a very low rent. This urban area is, therefore, a byproduct of the segregation of poor people with low land values.

His physical development went forward without anything that could be called public-serving city planning.

Through the centuries, the City produced many plans. Unfortunately, planners and policy makers have always been particularly concerned about the renewal of Catania according to their values system, and they have consistently followed their interpretation of "quality of life." In particular rational planners were obsessed with the idea to control modes, styles, times and dimensions to develop this area (and the whole city), while inhabitants continued to find self ways of building. This part of city has always been considered dangerous, unhealthy and bad, therefore the plans seemed to provide a way out of aesthetic and wealth problems.

Urban reformers created plans to eliminate the misery by destruction or renewal governed by rational codes. They said it was in the interest of low-income tenants, but plans served no local need. The development proposal for this area haven't been wholly realised; while much of the urban renewal developments were related to the other part of the city. Catania has been a regular feature of capitalist city development from the start, which expansion gave the land in certain sections, particularly the central ones, an highly increasing value; it followed only elite's needs and interests, and forced out the lowest-rent functions and lives.

Our area was out of the walled cittadelle and its planning rules. In spite of the urban renewal plans, this neighborhood developed indifferent to sanitary, economical and hygienic parameters, building regulations and schemes of the bourgeois city. The quarter have reproduced pre-capitalist and informal modes of productions. Spontaneity and self-construction have shaped his urban form.

It have always been a vibrant but poor home for low- income residents, particularly working-class group (as mansions, craftsmans, fishermans, etc.), but also for industry owners. The most important planning initiatives came, not from the planners, but from landlords (industrial companies, etc.) and residents (as worker class). Manufacturing-based, rural, industrial and little commerce economy have been the key to borough's development, which shaped areas with different characteristic. The private planning which took place produced a mixed residential and industrial or rural communities. Therefore different housing typologies have coexisted for different centuries: low-class and bourgeoisie.

Unfortunately, the city has undergone a process of deindustrialization and manufacturing declining which produced a wave of housing abandonment. Now much of the land vacated by industry is being taken over by waste facilities or illegal activities.

Historically, people in this neighborhood have suffered the worst consequences of institutional abandon.

It has been considered outside the official map and marketplace. Past as today planning proposals overcome democratic means, answering to elite needs. These reinforce the value and power of central places, and contribute to the urban hierarchy. The mayor improvements in the quality of life continue to occur mostly in upper class neighborhoods. The City government doesn't move toward more equitable policies, it works to preserve some privileges. It invests large sums to restore Cathedral Place when limited resources could satisfy greater needs elsewhere. 'Would this be the most efficient and equitable solution given the enormous deficits in public expenditures throughout the city'<sup>ix</sup>.

### **Society: Communities and public spaces**

The selected neighborhood is now considered part of the historical centre of Catania, with a population of over 20 thousand inhabitants. Is a poor, neglected and isolated area target for "Mafia" crimes. His economy is today based on craftworks, mansions, commercial, and illegal activities. Petty crime and permeating mafia are special concerns for that area. High rate of early leaving school, minors at risk or already on probation and unemployment, is accompanied by urban decay and a high proportion of people (included immigrant) living in very bad housing conditions<sup>x</sup>. Growing poverty rates have combined with deterioration, not only housing, but also open spaces conditions and widespread tax of delinquency and abandonment to create a public spaces crisis.

All our analysis suggest that on one side people seems to be shamed of the bad reputation of the neighborhood; aware and resigned to their isolation and poverty. Add to the problems attendant to poverty and discrimination, such as lack of access to adequate health care, housing and education, they have high rates of disease as well as lower life expectancy. They still accept reproduction of known behaviors (premature weddings, numerous sons,..) and they are accustomed to the public actions only as repressive actions, controls, or phenomena of political aids related to election waves. Therefore they don't organise around their issues and complaints at all. They don't believe in public administration nor in their voices.

On the other and, residents are proud of a pedestrian scale borough, a central area, where everyone recognizes and helps each others.

It seemed clear to us from our earliest analysis in this area that its society has different levels community organizations based in strong ties of loyalty, reciprocity and solidarity. There is a macro level, where each community is assigned a wide physical area (called with the name of a meaningful place). Each big community has different micro-communities, whose life is carried out around "hybrid" form of public/private spaces – common spaces privatised, public courtyards, small public squares or alleys - built and managed by community members. It is there, outside the ancient 'walls', a marginal city with accessible public places first arose in the streets and little courtyard. These vital places are a byproduct of the segregation of poor people. Poor micro communities were forced to create and use areas of common use. People who do not have hygienic services big rooms, or air-conditioned apartments turn the streets and sidewalks into extensions of their private households. People created and managed "public" places, that fused public and private space, in a way that is far from practices of land speculation, political subdivision and regulation. Those particular private/public spaces, as well as all popular spaces, emerged spontaneously in the big landed property: those are the courtyard with recreation as well as commerce or domestic activity, open areas where children play and women talk, etc. These spaces are extensions of and transitions to individual houses, and function as common areas. These allow communities to locate themselves according to community values, criteria and lifestyles; to identifies itself, and share not only a life space, but a situation of co-presence.

We started a deep analysis of such places in the whole neighbourhood, since we considered those as an opportunity of democratic actions. We have used theories that talk about the 'experience of place' or the 'image of the city', 'new urbanism' and 'environmental sociology', to understand how residents perceptions affect the use and manage of public spaces; physical and social dimension analysis related to public owns and controls, access, use, safety, ecc. So we tried to know their perceptions individual and collective, conscious or unconscious; their dreamed, imagined, sacred and symbolic public places. All our analysis suggest that communities have therefore preserved and developed identity, solidarity, familiar and affectivity values, a social network characteristic of informal pre-modern modes of spaces production. Social, often familiar, ties make up communities enabled to persist, to help each others, to pursue a difficult life. Public place, is a meaningful concept evolved in tandem with historical and cultural changes. But here public spaces still maintain a pre-modern means. This is a pre-modern society which created positive relationships between built-up environmental and human environmental. Residents, in spite of planning, continue to find ways of caring and appropriating the common spaces, public as well as private, to fulfil their needs and desire.

In particular women are negatively affected by marginality and poverty, which is why in community struggles they have taken leading roles to defend their private-public spaces. At the end we have identified different kind of such micro-worlds (communities and related spaces) on the basis of the diverse characteristics (different interaction levels, different typologies,...) suggested by analysis.

### **Globalization related issues**

Globalization is not only an economic process of integrating national economies into world markets, it is a phenomenon that includes also different social, technological, and cultural processes with relevant effects on physical space. Globalization increase forms of marginality. The global system complicates the decision-making process creating also a fragile balance between the social network and the modes of construction. The international economic system creates a large number of poor people, who maintain a competitive labour market and increase the gap between rich and poor. This gap ensures that neighbourhoods as San Cristoforo remain segregated, and poor.

Contemporary cities are characterized by an image of opulence and wide consumer choice, social inequality, neighbourhood segregation, and the preeminence of private space. An important factor in global development have been an emphasis on individualism. Community identities, cultures, values are disappearing. Relationships between communities and places have been damaged by the modern developments models: new ways of living and perceiving times and spaces. Globalization risk to create public space based on a divorce between its context; the dissolution of traditional social relations (direct and physical contact, personal and slow meetings, etc.,) and the birth of intangible network<sup>xi</sup>; the disappearance as public space as space of physical and social relationship. Some people also suggest that communications technology are destroying physical public spaces. We don't believe it. We don't accept this facile interpretation of globalization. We think, in fact that local markets, political traditions, and cultures play an important role in public places transformations<sup>xii</sup>.

Exploring the positive or negative impact of globalization on our local society in its relationship with private-public places, we find out that this area still represent an example of segregation where individualism doesn't exist. Traditional features of public spaces survive close to new modern relationships. But the risk is that, also in this area, we will assist to the disappearance of the traditional community and identities references and to the breakdown of positive relations between society and built-up environment. Common spaces started to deteriorate. The origin of decay is lied within the new global modes of production and life. In particular new generations are disorientated, they are losing references. Influenced by status symbol, and imagines of opulence and consume, through communication media, they dream a modern life style: big houses with big rooms, parking, gymnasium, discotheque, etc. In the last ten years this phenomena, added to growing delinquency rate, have facilitated the abandon of the neighborhood. Recently lacking satisfactory levels of security, design, amenities, or 'modern' aesthetic appeal deters community members from using and managing as in the past. Many property owners had lost interest in their holdings and had walked away from their property to rent them to immigrants and to go to live in 'modern' neighborhood. Houses are abandoned and vandalized. Some public spaces are becoming more and more removed from their control. They are often abandoned, or affected in many aspects. But the quality of some public spaces life has deteriorated in large part due to the expansion of auto and scooter use. Streets and courtyard where children could play are now used as parked cars. Some squares are dangerous for traffic especially due to teenager running with their scooter all day long. Such spaces usually have the following highly visible symbols of this deterioration: broken sidewalk, inhospitable microclimates, no functional amenities, poor maintenance, etc. The other ones are virtually privatized by communities, with the consequent lack of the neighborhood's cultural and social values (solidarity, sense of community, memebership,...) and the destruction of social community network<sup>xiii</sup>.

But, maybe, planners can manage these risks.

Unfortunately this civil society doesn't have the force to pretend public assistance in dealing with drug corners, unsafe places, trash and vandalism, all problems that negatively impact residents' personal sense of safety as well as overall community livability. They would like

the City to control demolition and to give money for cleaning, trimming and maintaining vacant lot and open spaces, to realize parks for children, etc..

Unfortunately our City Government is interested in upper-class neighbourhood issued (cathedral Place, etc.,) instead of in inequalities between different urban areas.

Some activities already managed by community organizations are shown in the accompanying photos.



## **POSSIBILITIES**

### **Aims**

We press in favor of various collective spaces rehabilitation proposals as an opportunity for a democratic planning: to reduce the social inequalities and to empower<sup>xiv</sup> local communities with the aim to optimizing local resources (identities and pre-capitalist modes of production), favoring a bottom-up globalization, and redefining the relationship between citizens and institutions.

We point to opportunities we believe planners have to end to environmental inequities by serving those most in need and expanding choices for those who have few. Planners have more possibilities to define purpose, to show such good practices of intervention and to play a key role in public owned spaces. Therefore, let's start with this spaces, beginning by considering 'public spaces' as a resource rather than merely a space.

First of all, rethinking public spaces, we want to protect peculiarities and innovations related to these spaces and its society: identities and pre-capitalist modes of production and life. The project is founded upon a local development which want to preserve and develop relationship between human social and built-up environmental in order to built a 'territory of differences' made up of 'places'<sup>xv</sup>. Community identities (based on solidarity, strong sense of place, familiar and affectivity values, etc.), as the places in which are expressed (their care, management,...), are the characteristics of a social relation network – maybe existing in many other popular borough – that we defend against an economical and cultural hegemonic

system, the 'Integrated World-wide Capitalism' (Felix Guattari) of contemporary cities. Against the modern modes of city production and against a development made by images and status symbol. A strengthening of local identities is required against the risk of social and environmental degradation, places massification and homologation; against the contemporary prototype of public spaces model (such airports, commercial centers, ...). We work with the aim to creating local self-sustainable development and the empowerment of existing social networks for a bottom-up globalization. Making cities better have to be viewed as making better use of the local physical and human resources, posing the issue of equity rather than efficiency or aesthetic.

But new developments should reflect the existing community context by responding to the challenge posed by new life styles and producing new forms of belonging through new modes of relation in accord to the transformation of local values and identities.

Secondly, we believe that cultural, physical and social differences have to be preserved in the globalization era because of homogeneous and amassing or individualistic processes remove the possibilities of a democratic education and society. The project I describe want to enhance co-operation between neighbourhoods groups and public administrators, developing a part of the city that might otherwise be completely overlooked. Therefore the program for community spaces regeneration is also an opportunity for redefining the relationship between the citizens and the Public Administration. Only positive relations between inhabitants and institutions can produce a new balanced and fair world.

### **Scale and Tools (micro-scale for participation and learning process)**

At local level planners could improve socialising democratic processes: learn people to develop their sense of belonging to and of responsibility towards the global context.

Starting at local level we could develop techniques of 'participation' for spatial planning based on a approach to learning. These techniques allow to transfer responsibility and power to communities and to valorise the patrimony of knowledge of the inhabitants. Involve ordinary citizens community in all steps of the planning process to transform them in co-operative action groups motivated by their grievances. Participation may be a form of direct democracy, promoting involvement in the planning process of people who want to become social actor taking responsibilities; creating 'active' and 'well informed' citizenship'. Therefore supporting the collaborative learning process we would like to transform communities in 'communities of practice', in order to give them the possibilities to know their aspiration and 'state of being', to develop their own vision for the future, and to give them forces and tools to involve itself in processes that affect their lives, against resignation. Inhabitants participation is a way of legitimizing different conflictual decisions which are normally taken by political institutions; is a way to involve civil society in decision making process, in order to build confidence and close relations between society and politicians.

Public spaces self-construction and maintenance may also bring together people of different age and ethnic groups and help empower community spirit. Communities have to recognize that developing their own plan can be an important part of realizing their dreams. The purpose is to develop their own vision for the future and build consensus around it. 'Perhaps community-based planning can help create institutions at the community level capable of planning. Perhaps it can help tip the unequal balance of local political power towards communities, even if it cannot overturn it.'<sup>xvi</sup>

Starting from their perceived problems level, our role is to provide technical assistance such as grant requests or facilitation with public institutions. We have to act as mediators of conflicts to build participated vision of common good and to provide as a wide range of alternatives as possible, leaving communities free to define their own needs and opportunity and choice solutions. We could create communities that are more liveable, improve common spaces safety and reduce dumping and vandalism stimulating their sense of belonging to their public/private spaces: involving woman, children, local workers by meetings, discussion, communicative and problem solving processes, with public institutions. We could try to reinterpret new network organizations through common spaces, that might be spaces of memories, of historical value and of innovation.

Micro-level is the level at which participation may link up the processes of self-management of our private-public spaces, because of complaints - therefore learning process - start at this level, inside community.

"A private and public sphere (...), as a space where private problems become connected in a meaningful way (...) to create instruments which are quite effectively collectively managed to relieve individuals from poverty endured privately; the space where ideas come about and take shape such as 'the public good, 'a just society', or 'common values' "<sup>xvii</sup>.

These spaces can become 'public spaces' in the Dewey's mean, where it is used the word 'public' not as an adjective but as a becoming subject of an interactive process : 'the becoming public is a process by which both the public as an object (endowed with a purpose and meaning) is constructed, and the public (as a collective actor) is constituted"<sup>xviii</sup>. They become spaces of 'rights', where inhabitants have the possibility to control and participate to the city construction processes, mixing individual action and democratic collective action; 'learning spaces' which enable participants through interaction to experiment actively their action effects"<sup>xix</sup>.

### **Selected areas: analysis and sustainability**

The micro-worlds (communities and related spaces) knowledge process we have chosen required very long and patient time, therefore we couldn't apply it to the whole neighborhood, but only to a part of it – where we had more neighborhood contacts - leaving aside areas of deep differences.

Using tools and methodology opened to multidisciplinary approaches, we analyzed the fundamental differences, as heritages<sup>xx</sup>, between these micro-worlds.

Social – physical - cultural Heritage:

Genetic rules of physical development (city-owned parcels...); Settlements models and laws of growth, (dimensions, typology, materials, techniques, social class); Formal and informal regulations and state law (illegal or legitimate public spaces appropriation;...); Relationship between community and built-up environmental (affectivity levels, collective actions; availability to take care, ...); Outside relationships (access; permeability;...).

Visioning – dreamed Heritage:

Imagines, frames, symbols, rules, etc.

Social – economic Heritage:

Local identities (as economical resources); Economic know-how (traditional agriculture; ...); Productive activities (self-production of built-up systems, local transformation of agricultural product and foodstuffs, craftsmanship); etc.

Therefore the measuring of objective data have been mixed with the resident's cultural and social values, symbols and life styles: the time they spend in public places, the disponibility to take care of some places (cleaning, tree watering, ...), the existing form of collaboration for managing part of the proposals.

Consequently we arranged the 'micro-worlds' by different categories of 'urban sustainabilities'<sup>xxi</sup> : possibilities of urban renewal actions through the verification of social, physical, economic and juridical resources. Then we hypothesized possible projects for the different micro-worlds categories (at different levels, with different priorities and actors,...)

### **Places of 'Rights' as a Democratic opportunity**

We propose to change the state law regarding property, to favorite the local law. Flexible local juridical systems, created by a democratic process, might create new 'rights' and belonging modes. We look for flexible legal instruments to codify different kind of uses, access, care, ecc.

Overcoming the traditional public spaces uses and rules beyond the regulatory planning approach, we propose to create new forms of collaborative governance between institutions and civil society. Direct relationship between local authorities and residents should guide physical planning and urban policies.

Helping the residents themselves to document specific needs in such open areas mantaining, lot clean-up, street and sidewalks repairs, abandoned houses demolition, tree trimming and planting. We want to provide empowerment for our citizens, giving them

possibilities of maintaining, operating, supervising, direct control and some patronage for their community spaces<sup>xxii</sup>. Then legitimate appropriateness through local and temporary standards or regulations. Attitudes about public spaces ownership may change in order to experiment new models of rent, temporary and community ownership. Strengthen existing tenants' rights in order to illegal evictions and reduce harassments of renters. Give subsidies and authorizations to legitimate and stimulate public spaces self-constructions and maintenance activities; instruct communities about acquisition procedures about community spaces.



We could also ask institutions to give due reward to women daily engaged in common spaces life, involving them, with all the more reason, in designing and managing such spaces.

Population make these spaces life both lively and diverse. But just as the social groups are segregated so too are these spaces. New social pacts, related to the different levels common places, against community segregation, should be created. It is also possible to think about guide tours to the courtyards which are of important historical value. Those visits from around the city could help break down their isolation and improve their pride.

As part of the proposal we could also recommend that the City transforms, or allows and helps communities ,according to their request, to transform abandoned properties in green public spaces. A 'green project' may be realized, to develop existing phenomena: vegetables grown, old men tending their gardens (private as well as public), kids playing among green areas instead of asphalt plazas, reveal the local vegetation. Create security lighting could help in order to diminish illegal activities. Residents in these neighborhoods don't have big, clean or air-conditioned apartments; consequently they look for good and hot air in public spaces. We could, for example persuade them to plant trees and to take care about these (as some of them already do); create or improve picnic areas, recreational and playing fields.

## Limits

First, our project is only an hypothesis that lacks actions and their effects.

Secondly, we dealt with certain types of problems, mostly of a physical nature. But the problems that vex our neighbourhood –related to poverty<sup>xxiii</sup> – will not be cured repairing some open spaces. These problems deal with our economic and planning unequal systems. Maybe we pay little attention to the national and international political economic forces related to globalization issue, but we think that local planning provide some opportunities for equity-oriented work.

## CONCLUSIONS

We tried to present an hypothesis of planning devoted to the needs of the powerless in our city, because we don't resign in the face of human suffering and we believe that the only possibility of a fair development is a solidaristic human conscience.

In the end considering that it is necessary to look carefully into different approaches in different contexts, my personal contribution might offer suggestions to the demand for analysis, understanding and interpretation of the relationship among urban and social morphologies, in particular demands related to the transformation of 'community spaces' due to globalization.

I also think that my research allows to compare different development possibilities of one of a typical 'fourth world' example (in a developed country of the Mediterranean area, or in the World 'Souths') offering a perspective that can help in finding common values to the valorisation of local resources (as social identities) to reduce the gap between 'dominant' and 'subordinate' city, rich and poor.

This study might offer, I hope, a further opportunity to open up a discussion on the effects of planning at the local level related to the socializing democratic processes. Starting at local level planners could learn people to know the possibility of their state of being, and to develop their sense of belonging to and of responsibility towards the global context. That's one of the way for an 'integrated diversity'<sup>xxiv</sup> against the global political and economical forces.

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<sup>i</sup> Krumholz, Forester (1990)

<sup>ii</sup> Scandurra (200b)

<sup>iii</sup> Some recent plans have, unfortunately, the only scope of an economic-competitive development of our city, and recognise to this area only the value of having a strategic position between port, airport and historical center.

<sup>iv</sup> Sandercock (1998)

<sup>v</sup> Also related to professional interaction and limits. See the work of Donald Schön

<sup>vi</sup> Sen (1986)

<sup>vii</sup> As local calendar events, time spent in public spaces, ecc...

<sup>viii</sup> An Urban section that exhibit similar characteristics

<sup>ix</sup> Angotti (2000)

<sup>x</sup> Palidda (2002)

<sup>xi</sup> Borja, Castells (1997)

<sup>xii</sup> Angotti (1993)

<sup>xiii</sup> For example, communities, that used them to share water systems, now share a television.

<sup>xiv</sup> Friedmann (1993)

<sup>xv</sup> Ferraresi (2000)

<sup>xvi</sup> Angotti (1995)

<sup>xvii</sup> Baumann (1999) in Castelli (2001) pag. 228

<sup>xviii</sup> Crosta (2002)

<sup>xix</sup> Celino (2003)

<sup>xx</sup> Magnaghi (2000b)

<sup>xxi</sup> Busacca, Gravagno (2003)

<sup>xxii</sup> They ask for discotheque, children park, gymnasium, ecc.

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<sup>xxiii</sup> It would be possible to think about many other initiatives: build and repair infrastructures, provide energy conservation services, favourite industrial and commercial development, complete existing facilities and create new ones, reduce waste collection tax, and so on.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Angotti (1993)

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