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Corrado Trombetta

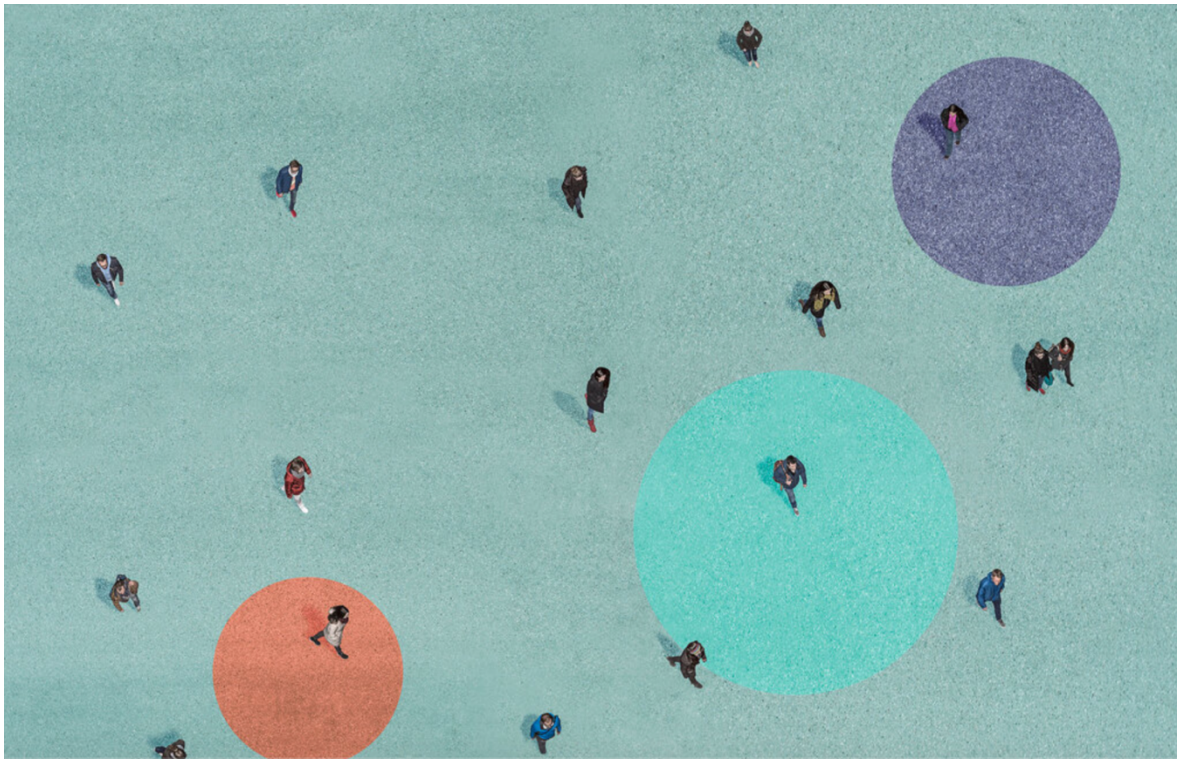
Dottorando:
Federica Antonucci

Tutor:
Michele Trimarchi

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI REGGIO CALABRIA
"MEDITERRANEA"
Dipartimento Architettura e Territorio

Tesi di Dottorato

Public space and re-appropriation strategies.
Culture and the right to the city.



Sommario

Introduction

This research aims at making the effort of studying and conceptualising the urgencies and strategies of re-appropriation of public space. Besides, it focuses on the role of civil society and local government in the creation of a new type of commons, that we could define relational commons.

The nature of this theoretical exploration is extensively interdisciplinary, and its contributions are multiple. It encompasses, with such an effort, urban planning, economics, cultural economics, sociology and economic geography trying to grasp from each of them their point of view and acknowledgement concerning the enquiry on public space and its importance.

While writing, the main challenge was to understand the different approaches of each discipline to stand the diverse interpretations of the same object of analysis that are already composed by different levels: the people, the politics, the local government and some other financial issues.

At the same time, the research objective was also to investigate the origin of the social value arising from the everyday struggles and forms of aggregation that are marking this specific historical period. The complexity of this issue required the adoption of a solid theoretical framework. In such a framework the most reliable interpretation is that elaborated by Elinor Ostrom with reference to commons. This thesis aims at adding a small insight to its possible application to social controversies as a source for value.

Hearing about commons should not sound particularly new to the reader. This topic is getting increasing popularity embracing theories that range among several disciplines: economics tries with several attempts to take part to the current debate bringing values such as culture and identity at the centre of the discussion to overcome the traditional

idea of homo oeconomicus that emphasises the binomial idea value-price.

"Society has no price and so has no value" (Standing, 2019). That is what neo-liberalist theories have preached so far: the economic value was measured only by price and what had no price, had no value (Brenner & Theodore, 2005). Therefore, over the past years, neo-liberalism agenda was all about privatising what was not supposed to generate value. By dismantling invaluable assets, which means to sell whatever stands apart from the market, they believed to give life to a more prosperous society following the monetary logic ruling global economies. By adopting this approach, an infinite variety of goods susceptible to new values' definitions have been left apart, depriving our societies of the most important value: the social value. While the economic theory puts attention on transactions and oversees things and processes of life that are extremely common and important to people, there is another point of view for the observation of social phenomena which considers elements as closeness and trust as central qualities to everyone's life. Public space is one of those neglected goods.

Over the years, due to the increased industrialisation of societies, urban spaces have changed their face. There has been a continuous reshuffling of the dynamics between public, social and private, with a marked increase in inequalities, dispossession and therefore conflicts. Everything risk to fall into the trap of the market, where even culture, feelings and relationships become commodities (Carrieri, 2015).

The thesis is divided into four chapters, that respectively build the blocks to answer the main research question and the following sub-questions: which are the available re-appropriation strategies of public space that citizenship can embrace? Why collective moods arise and to what extent they are useful in making and maintaining specific kind of urban commonalities? Discussing the conditions of such processes, we should refer to what has been identified by David Harvey (2012) with the name of commoning. How different actors join together in a common governance of a specific public space? Or to put it differently, which resources contribute to increasing social capital in a given urban setting?

The first section aims to deeply reflect on the notion of public space and its evolution over the years. In a situation where deep transformations cross contemporary societies and affect cities and their population, a crucial challenge seems to enrich and better

articulate the public sphere. Public sphere comprehends a variety of realms, among which political, social and infrastructural activities that take place on it.

Public space is a paramount and crucial setting for the public sphere. What happens there seems to have no equals. As a matter of fact, over the last years and increasingly at a fast pace, public space is returning to be the stage of claims (Mitchell 1995). Far in the past, public squares were an example of encounter and exchange according to the Greek idea of the agora and the Roman Forum. Nowadays also according to the academic literature, we deal with a somewhat public space renaissance: after a persistent tendency which led spaces to be space of representation of governments rather than people and citizens, they are returning to be sites of resistance.

Consequently, planning, structuring and managing public space becomes a complex and multifaceted duty. The usage and management of public space are functional to the production of a sane and vibrant public sphere. The public space analysed in this research, combines elements of social and spatial dimension, with the aim of approaching the enquiry not only in terms of physical space but also as site of social interactions.

The second chapter tries to answer a second question: who owns the city in an era of corporatizing access and control over urban land and corporate buying whole pieces of cities, which is transforming what is small and public into massive and private across so many cities around the world? Interdisciplinary scholars and a range of social movements reclaim control over decisions about how the city develops and grows and to promote greater access to urban spaces and collective resources for all cities' inhabitants. In other words, the right to the city, as articulated by the French philosopher Henry Lefebvre (1968) which has manifested in efforts by urban policymakers around the world to give more power to city inhabitants in shaping urban spaces. (Foster and Iaione 2016).

Those collective resources are not meant just as spaces and infrastructures, but also as an array of services and goods that belong to citizenship as a whole. The term 'collective' sounds crucial in this analysis. 'Collective' refers to something shared among a community interested in taking care of that particular good because its use can generate benefits at 'collective' level. Within the economic theory, those goods are publicly

provided and known as public goods. While the mainstream economic theory defines public goods, the definition of goods adopted in this thesis has to do with social dynamics: in this sense, the collective becomes function while the public becomes a requirement. Characteristic of the public is being somehow neutral and potential, while the collective is inclusive and therefore political.

These latter respond to a dual feature: they are typically non-rivalrous and non-excludable: meaning that one's consumption of a good or service does not prevent another individual from consuming the same good. Secondly, the non-excludability of such goods refers to the impossibility of excluding a certain person or group of persons from using it. As a result, restricting access to the consumption of non-excludable goods is nearly impossible. These goods' analysis encounters a significant problem of inefficiency, namely the issue of 'free-riding' and the difficulty of reaching the optimal provision. The problem with public goods is that society needs them even if they fail in the market. Lately, the provision of these services and goods of public interests has been increasingly left aside by public administrations. So, what happens when the State fails in public goods provision? Which strategies and actors enter the scene?

Grassroot movements, political actors, new forms of public-private collaborations are the new agents and shareholders dealing with this problem. Spottily (but more and more congenial to new societies) worthy initiatives are flourishing all over, even though they often remain undeveloped due to either lack of representation or hostility in accepting them from the top. However, this imperfect overlapping could be much matched by increasing the amount of the so-called social capital, bridging bottom-up initiatives and top-down interventions.

The third section of this research approaches the theory of commons. It has considerably developed since the publication of Hardin's tragedy of commons back to 1968 and even more with the works of the Nobel Prize Elinor Ostrom. The theory of commons has been the object of studies and reformulation over the years, and many fields of application of the theory have emerged.

Commons in our times encompasses natural resources and yet public services and amenities, social justice systems but mostly our cultural and intellectual life. Commons signify something that is shared and universal, of general understanding and stake.

Lately, the word 'commons' has been increasingly associated with the collective activity of working in the commons: even in the Magna Charta, dated 1215, the idea of commoning as a fundamental aspect of the commons as the place where the commoners undertake collective actions is particularly emphasized.

The notion of common good finds its origin in a dual principle: on the one hand, it has to do with a somewhat public interest, whereas on the other it deals with the sustainability of our resources. The traditional idea of a common resource argues that these latter are non-excludable and rival. Not surprisingly, there have been growing apprehensions that many resources have become enclosed as a result of the implementation of political and economic policies which privilege private ownership and management regimes.

In the urban context, a similar apprehension has emerged as unequal outcomes have accompanied rising urban populations in terms of spatial ordering and their access to standard and essential services and rights. The doctrine of urban commons involves political and social struggles, albeit paradoxically it can raise problems in terms of excludability as well.

The implementation of neoliberal forms of urban governance has led to several forms of urban enclosures and the creation of gated enclaves of advantage and consumption resulting in cities becoming "spaces of political inequity, social and economic deprivation and sources of environmental damage" (Hodkinson, 2012). This has given new life to the discussion on the commons and shifted the concept to the urban setting.

Over the last years, the urban commons have been adopted as a re-appropriation strategy of neglected, abandoned, and many times denied public spaces. The use of space has become paramount in the claiming for fundamental and primary rights to the city, rights that are not affected by commodified financial and political urban stakes. The urban commons are born to produce an accessible and open space to the public and indeed, to put it with Ostrom's words, the appropriators highlight its value—physical and symbolic—as crucial access to shared resources to re-create a sense of publicness. This process raises many problems in terms of governance and rights' allocation among users.

In claiming such spaces as common goods, what emerges is a new relationship between the world of people and the world of goods, for many times deeply entrusted to market logics. According to this view, the accent is no longer placed on the owner; in contrast, it falls on the role that a certain good play in society (Rodotà 2012).

The fourth and last section of this thesis looks at the analysis of two commoning experiences in the Italian scenario. The chapter examines two different cases which are at the stake of the contemporary debate, intending to understand straightforwardly and comprehensively how public spaces have been re-appropriated by active groups of citizens dialoguing with the local administrations. Also, it focuses on how the classical theory of urban commons overcame the need for the mere physical aspect of the space, adding the element of social relations as a crucial node to the physical boundary of the space itself: not by chance, within the economic interpretation of commons, the level of information grows with the proximity to space. This analysis paves the way to the study of cultural commons that increase their value through their use and therefore overcome the problem of resource depletion. These latter base their existence on commonality and intangibility. Although not the subject of this thesis, it will be interesting to deepen this connection in future research.

With regards to these two experiences, it is essential to notice that the following analysis does not aim at classifying them, nor evaluating them in terms of success or failure, even though it might be seducing to interpret the results in terms of "what could have been done better". This last section aims to comprehend the process that emphasizes and strengthens the relational nature of urban commons, and how and to what extent public administrations may contribute to this transition. Are these kinds of commons effective and self-reproducible?

The work concludes opening a dialogue for a new interpretation of social movements and commoning experiences in public space. It overcomes the category of public goods and tries to give a new meaning to the concept of relational commons by conceiving them as able to redistribute responsibilities to its actors and to reformulate the rationale of urban governance and its policies.

This thesis is a theoretical work. Yet, it pursues its conceptual objectives using an empirical approach to the analysis of re-appropriation strategy in public space. Some

limitations showed up during this long research, and some others remained hidden and paved the way to new studies. At the end of this journey, missing briquettes could be added to the analysis to enrich it and, of course, it can be considered as a small contribution that aspires to be part of the conversation on public space.

Chapter 1

Reclaiming public space. A matter of publicness.

1.1 Introduction

> *The freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities is one of the most precious, yet most neglected of our human rights. So, how best then to exercise that right*?" (Harvey, Rebel Cities).

When I first think about space, it suddenly springs to my mind the tiny public garden just down the street of my apartment, in the city where I live. I can see it from my window; it is colourful, noisy, disordered and spontaneous. In my picture of space three elements are there: a public dimension where something catching my attention and my memory happens, a private dimension where I usually spend my rest-time and something in between that connects the two. So, we have a public garden, an apartment, a street.

Interestingly enough, the first picture I see is the one representing a space of crowd, a space populated by different actors such as children, elders, teenagers, women and men, that is to say, more generally people. This space is far from being what each of us could call a comfort space, a space where being hidden in our privacy, where we can chill after a long working-day; it is far from being a comfortable space. Indeed, it could be cold and rainy during winter or hot during summertime, but still, it is the first space I think of. This made me reflect that space for me assumes a somewhat value, probably the same value which has for the others living it.

Walking down the crowded streets of my hometown, which I left for some years, I am not able to find anymore many old and familiar places that sometimes I can no longer get my bearing: instead of my school library where we used to gather after school, in its place I see a close shutter and no one hanging in front of. Instead of my favourite cinema in the neighbourhood where I grew up, another close shutter is staring at me. I could list similar spaces for many lines further, but this to say that spaces, as we imagine them, are not anymore there and together with the citizens' way of living and dwelling have been brought away and changed.

The space I think of has to do with what people do, feel, sense and come to articulate as they seek meaning in their daily lives. All this is slowly disappearing, and the retreat to private interests is rapidly gaining ground, neglecting day by day the publicity of our lives, and with such a faster peace we are getting used to the new forces ruling our societies. As Harvey suggests, we don't have to wait for the big revolution, but we can make our revolution on a daily base: there is still time to make that space what we want it to be and the right to the city indeed, is this. It is a right of each of us to access to the resources embodied by the city, but first of all, it is "a right to change and reinvent the city more after our heart's desire" (Harvey, 2012).

1.2 The role of public space in everyday life

Public space is a crucial asset to our cities. The history of public space comes from far away in the past, and its existence and role have been progressively rooted in the broader notion of cities. It all happened when men, trying to find their own space in the environment, started to craft services for their selves and places (mostly public) that nowadays we can name cities. But when did it happened? Edoardo Salzano argues that that moment has arrived when relations among man-work-nature have been changed. The necessity of an organised life's model and setting have determined the rise of cities (Senn, Salzano, & Bernoulli, 2006).

Modern cities carry with them contemporary urban questions upon relevant social themes, among the others: social justice, social housing and urban rights. Over the years, public space seems to have lost its feature, which is by nature, to generate human and social behaviours able to guarantee values as tolerance, openness and collaboration among peers to help those

in needs (Annunziata, 2012). Before being open and accessible, public space is the space where relations and interactions take shape, and it constitutes a favoured point of view to observe the lines of fragmentation and cohesion which define it.

The term public space is often used to denote a specific kind of place in the city as at the same time to refer to a particular space which is available, at a given time, for collective actions and public debates. This latter interpretation of space has been named by some, procedural approach and takes distances from what usually scholars identify as the topographical approach (Iveson, 2007).

Within the literature on urban studies, existing frameworks for public space enquiries highlight some important differences with regard to the way public space is conceptualised. One of the key distinctions in understanding of public space deals with the geographical dimension of it. Infact, there are at least two dominant approaches to the analysis of public space that drive the urban studies branch: a topographical approach and a procedural approach (*ibidem*).

The term public space often indicates a particular spot or kind of place in the city, such as squares, parks, that are, or should be, open to the public. For many scholars belonging to the topographical approach, access to these places is vital for addressing a/the public and to be addressed as part of the public. By contrast, a different school of thought, namely the procedural approach, addresses to the term "public" a slightly different meaning: public space is any space available to be used at a given time for collective actions and debate.

Indeed, what is relevant in cities it is not just a matter of impressive and good-looking buildings or places, rather the space in between makes sense of forms and trigger the engagement among its inhabitants and the community as a whole. Urbanists have long held the view that the physical and social dynamics play a central role in the formation of publics and public culture. If in physical terms, public space is successful, this space will make feeling individuals included, and it will become a social space for society itself. Put it this way, public space becomes the space of the public (Mitchell, 2003).

Individuals make the public, and each of them occupies a particular room in space. Hence, an additional level of space dimension must be added: in fact, each of us occupies a position in the physical space as in the social space. The individuation of the body is thus a result of going through a socialization process (when the position in social space is marginal or precarious, the

result tends to foster social exclusion), where social relations have shaped the singularity itself. This socialization process allows individuals to acquire knowledge and experiences about their choices and behaviours as well as of others to define their position in space.

Bourdieu named habitus the system of dispositions belonging to a certain one. So social space, according to Bourdieu, is the locus of coexistence of social positions and it forms the basis of the viewpoints of its occupants. This social space tends to be transformed into something material and physical, in the form of a specific arrangement of agents and properties. It follows that the division and design of this space will be the symbolic expression of that space of relations (Bourdieu, 1983).

1.2.1 How public is public space?

The principal argument when it comes to public space deals with the challenge to understand the meaning of publicness. Several approaches have been used within the literature to address features and significances. Although publicness is a difficult concept to measure, several scholars have tried to make their contribution. As we will see in next pages, a simple and frequent metric might examine public space is to consider its degree of freedom, that is to say when and where free access is permitted. The concept of access seems essential due to its relationship with the idea of a collectively as owned shared resource that might be jointly used or even possessed. We will develop this concept in the further chapters by bringing into the play the theory of commons.

However, at this stage, it seems relevant to explore this broad topic adopting different angles of enquiry. To start with Varna and Tiesdell attempt to conceptualize publicness with regards to the behaviours adopted by individuals in public, Madanipour suggests going through the examination of publicness across three dimensions: access, agency and interest (Manadipour, 1999). This time, access refers to the ability to occupy a place and to the activities contained in it, whereas agency deals with the locus of control and decision-making present and eventually, interest refers to the targeted beneficiaries of decisions impacting the use of and behaviours within a space. (Németh, 2012).

Instead, a more interesting approach has been adopted by Kohn (2004) describing the idea of publicness with three criteria: ownership, accessibility and intersubjectivity. Someone else

could alternatively spell this latter as the encounters and interactions which could more easily happen on a particular space rather than in others. How relationships take form changes following several factors, possibly depending on the setting of the supposedly public space. This seems somewhat relevant to our purpose if we imagine that the publicness relies on the interdependency among who inhabits, use and create the space.

Thus, in other words, we could say that the "who" and the "how" are generated by the "what" (Iveson K. , 2007). This said, I would argue that any model of publicness should account for both the material and the conceptual realms, that is to say for the physical space itself and how different social actors transmit meanings.

1.3 Public space in thoughts and practice.

The idea of public sphere unveils several definitions and roles. The public sphere has to do with political discourses, with an economics discourse and lastly with the representation of powers. (Fraser, 1990)

There are, of course, numerous definitions of public space, distinguished by issues of ownership, access, use and control. Public spaces need to be understood as historically and socially contingent, and particular attention needs to be given to the specific practices through which public space is produced, spatial structures are transformed, and urban meanings redefined. By urban meaning, we define the *structural performance assigned as a goal to cities in general by the conflictive process between historical actors in a given society*. (Castells, 1983, p. 303)

The historical process of defining urban meaning determines the characteristics of urban function: i.e. cities defined as colonial centres had as a primary function the use of military force and territorial control. Hence, we can define the urban function *as the articulated system of organisational means aimed at performing the goals assigned to each city by its historically defined urban meaning.* (Castells, 1983, p. 303) For instance, that could be the case of a city defined as a capitalist machine, which would subdivide its functions between the extraction of surplus value in the factory the reproduction of labour-power, the extraction of profit in urbanisation, for instance through real estate, the organisation of the circulation of capital in the financial institutions, the exchange of commodities in the commercial system and the management of all the operations in the directional centres of capitalist business.

Jointly, urban meaning and urban function determine the urban form, that is the symbolic spatial expression of the process that materialize as a result of them. Insofar as we talk about the spatial expression of spaces, the very first notion origins from the Greek Agora and its function as "the place of citizenship, on open space where public affairs and legal disputes were conducted."

The Agora, just like the Roman Forum, was both a political space and a space of exchange and entertainment where decisions were taken, and bargains made. It provided people with a meeting place, where citizens, foreigners and all categories of dwellers were encouraged to communicate through a formally unmediated interaction. This idea of publicness was what Iris Marion Young defined as a normative ideal of public space where freedom and participation in public life led to promote a democratic politics of inclusion. She argued that in public space one could share different urban experiences, defined by conflicting rights to the city. By contrast, those public spaces instead of being inclusive were rather exclusive (Fraser, 1990) because citizenship and hence the right of being part of public life was denied to a numerous group of people, i.e. slaves, women and foreigners[1].

The need for translating public space as a socio-political place in physical terms emerges within the Enlightenment era when planning was driven by the typically human awareness of influencing people's social behaviours through architecture[2] (Miles, 1997). Whilst medieval streets were the gaps between buildings, and the symbolic element of the cathedral was the primary factor structuring urban forms and meaning, in the Baroque cities, they have then become avenues of processions[3]. The shape of the city came to represent a concept of order, as it were, illustrated by the built city. Hence, planning became the dominant approach to city development during the period from Baroque to Enlightenment centuries, superseding the *ad*

[1] This idea of separation and thus order, was already visible in the urban settings of Greek cities, expressed by the orthogonal streets pattern aimed at planning cities' zones. (Miles, 1997)

[2] During the Post-War period, the Netherlands saw the birth of a new term "maakbaarheid" as the maximum expression of this new school of thought. We could translate it as Social Engineering, identifiable with the capability of elaborating social models such as Welfare State or innovative citizenships' forms, developed through large-scale social engineering project (Mayer, Van Bueren, & Bots , 2005).

[3] In medieval cities, signs and religious symbols were extremely important. This was because the urban meaning was based upon the religious relationship between peasants, lords and God, with the Church as intermediary (Bridge & Watson, A Companion to the City , 2002).

hoc growth of the medieval city and replacing the sacred traditions of archaic cities with the imperatives of power (*ibidem*).

Still nowadays, the giant skyscrapers are anything but symbols of power of money over the city through technology and self-confidence and are the cathedrals of a period of rising corporate capitalism (Castells M. , 1983).

In 1859 the Spanish architect *Ildefons Cerdà* was the first to report in a text simultaneously both the terms "urban planner" and "urbanism". Albeit people have always lived-in cities, at a certain point the new modern life started requiring a more specific understanding of cities. During the XVIII century, Europe was a crucial strategic point insofar migrations and the newcomers were mostly young and poor people in search of jobs and opportunities.

If on the one hand, the economic crisis was taking over European cities; on the other hand, health issues were at the sake of the planners mentioned above. Interestingly enough, the first planners were anything but engineers, whom on behalf of a common supreme interest, tried to use innovative strategies to address citizens' issues and needs.

A century later, memories from E.P. Thompson and a very young Engels told us about a wholly transformed scenario, which most interested the U.K. In particular, in cities such as Manchester and London, the industrialism was modifying lifestyles and giving birth to a strong classes' division and social stratification. Interestingly enough, the working class's behaviours and their languages were not completely overlapped and resting time down the streets or in the canteens was such a critical moment of their existence (Sennett, 2018). Dreams and expectations were genuinely relying on social and interpersonal contact.

In any event, a relationship and hierarchy between historical meaning, urban functions and spatial forms are established. Many scholars have shown how cities have been transformed to address political, and citizenships issues and planning becomes something to purge the unclean, to abolish the past and to celebrate the future. Planning over history has also been a matter of power. (Miles, 1997).

To conclude cities have always been shaped by different but inter-connected processes that we could name as follow: conflicts over the definition of urban meaning the adequate symbolic expression to adopt; conflicts over the proper performance of urban functions and these conflicts can arise both from different interests and values or yet approach about how to

perform a shared goal of urban function.

1.3.1 Space as matter of powers

Such a point when it comes to public space's features is represented by its nature of being injustice and thus, uneven. A general understanding came to prevail that public space is not given, on contrast it is continuously evolving, and its feature of being accessible to all leads public space to be thought as profoundly democratic. (Bodnar, 2015).

According to Harvey, public space must be understood as a gauge of the regimes of justice extant at any particular moment. In this sense, public space is a space of justice, not only the place where the struggle happens, rather is the place in which it is implemented and represented. In "Space of Hope", he identifies two classes of utopian vision in contemporary societies. As first, there are utopias of spatial form, which are the traditional utopias that seek to specify a spatial form, an arrangement of people and things on the earth, that is fully even. Once the form is specified, arrangement of relationships and things are achieved.

The second form of utopia is what Harvey calls the utopias of the social process. This structural vision dates back to Marx's theories. According to him, there is a utopianism of free-market ideology which is a utopia of social progress: "give free markets room to flourish, then all will be well with the world" (Harvey D. , 2000). At the same time, there is another kind of social progress utopia in which class struggles upset social order until the moment in which they achieve to expropriate the oppressive powers of expropriators. At the basis of this, utopia stays the need for social struggle to structure and shape social justice in space.

Yet, many other elements have contributed to shaping urban public space, and the predominance of economic powers played such a paramount role. Undeniably, capitalistic needs have required a constant expansion, "so that when an existing pattern, blocks further growth, the landscape must then be reshaped around new transport and communications systems and physical infrastructures, new centres and styles of production" (Harvey D. , 1993).

Indeed, the Marxist theory of urbanisation, have seen the urban dimension as the spatial extension of capitalism, hence the main stage of capital accumulation. The industrial revolution in the XIX Century changed the topography of the time significantly. Houses for the new

working class had to be provided. Eventually, flows of people had to be organised not just in their commuting to the factory but also for the time allotted to labour reproduction. This led to a twofold circuit of capital in the urban dimension, that soon became the space where means of production and reproduction moved in a dynamic relationship with the flow of consumer goods. In such setting, urban dwellers became at the same time labourers and consumers, and public spaces were seen as setting for productive leisure with the sole aim of nurturing the reproducibility of labour with 'collective consumption' being a crucial element of the urban process.[4]

1.3.2 Public space and the struggle for rights

The main question worth to ask is about who has the right to the city and its public space and how this right is determined. Lastly, how these rights' allocation gives form to social justice, being aware of the importance of urban life is somewhat different from being mindful of the right to urban life, and we must remember that urban life needs to be preserved and it has only been won through concerted struggle and then after the fact guaranteed in law.

Quoting Lefebvre, we can build up our discourse, starting from the assumption that cities are oeuvres (works), and all citizens are involved in the participation process. He has always thought that cities were considered public in contrast to the countryside, which reflected a private dimension. This theory sees its roots in Marx's

[4] Other scholars have argued on the role of public space, its exploitation and purposes in terms of living it. Jane Jacobs in her book The Death and Life of Great America Cities, argues against the necessity to construct spaces with the aim of creating functional systems: according to her, strict planning solutions would have hold back sense of community. For Jacobs, cities would have need more inclusive, mixed and spontaneous spaces. Oppositely, Mumford was concerned about those disordered spaces where categories were not defined. He thought, by contrast, that in in order to overcome the capitalistic vision of space, people needed to fell represented in that space within they were fighting and which they were struggling for.
The idea of neighbourhoods in Jacobs blows up with such a strength, talking about those areas within people were facilitated to encounter and exchange in the wake of what Ferdinand Tonnies called Gemeinshaft. In Jacobs's opinion, it is in the local dimension that democratic practices lay due to a deep sense of community and belonging embedded in dwellers. Talking about cities' dimensions, in Aristotele's the city's dimension had to allow that "a yell coming from one side of the city should be heard on the other side" and by saying that he meant that a space is democratic when all citizenship is able to actively participate to public life. The openness's celebration of spaces developed by Jane Jacobs, where open means fluidity, ability to think and act out the box, spontaneity, was hardly contested by Mumford's view of cities. In his opinion the disorder of places can't face crucial problems as races, classes, ethnize or religion. Disorder itself, is not able to regulate space nor citizenship by itself can be self-disciplined. So, in his opinion, cities needed to be framed in ties and laws, and in order to be space of social justice, equity and wellbeing urbanism must act with a pre-structured order. (Sennett, 2018)

idea of *idiocy*, which is not referred to as people's intelligence instead of the privacy and homogeneity of rural life. It is basically for this reason that cities were to be considered crowded and places of heterogeneity. Public, thus, requires exchange and chaos, with its density and vibrant atmosphere[5] (Mitchel, 2003).

Nonetheless, when it comes to public space, what suddenly blows up to mind are crowdy and over-populated squares and streets where people walk in haste everywhere, according to Lefebvre approach, we can assert that cities and hence streets, parks, squares, corners and so forth, are works (*oeuvre*). As a consequence, it wouldn't be wrong to think of them in terms of product. Yet, a product of what? How are public spaces produced, assuming that they are so? Don Mitchell in his article "The end of public space" argues that public space is the product of competing ideas about what constitutes that space, hence order and control or free, and who constitutes the public (Mitchell, 2003).

Lefebvre has introduced two exciting approaches to the reading of public space: the so-called representational space and a different idea of pubic space can be labelled as the representation of space. What did Lefebvre mean by that? By the latter, the philosopher meant a controlled and ordered space where users must feel comfortable and safe. Often, public space arises as a representation of space, but once users are in there, they also become part of representational space. By this, I mean what Lefebvre used to name as appropriated space either space-in-use. Even though the nomenclature adopted, any public space origins from a conflict of visions that had been kept over it, on the one side by those who look for a controlled and tidy space and on the other side by those who seek for a spontaneous and unmediated contact, which could also lead to insurrections and fights. (Fraser,1990)

An essential feature of public space is, eventually, space for representation. A space for representation is a space where social groups by claiming their rights seek to find

[5] Arendt in one of her most famous books The Human Condition, arguing on public space and how assessing it, uses density as a measure since her arguments assume that just density of places can produce the freedom of anonymity. For her, being anonymous is an essential requirement to be equal in the public realm. In Arendt's view, all human activities are conditioned by the fact that men live together, but it is the only action that cannot even be imagined outside the society of men. Acting alone, he would lose his specifically human quality. This unique relationship between action and together seeming fully justified through Tommaso D'Aquino: homo est naturaliter politicus, id est, socialis: "man is by nature political, that is, social"(Arendt,1998).

a way to represent themselves and become public. This is particularly clear when Mitchell, arguing in his book "The Right to the City", tells about the struggle over the People's Park in Berkley which had led homeless to be cut off from being public users of a public Park. As far as homeless people couldn't represent themselves in public space, thus as a legitimate part of the "public", they would remain unheard and at society's margins. This mechanism of legitimation goes for any social group belonging to the society. As aforementioned, public spaces do play such an essential role in contemporary societies and according to the quoted authors, we can say that public space is about a normative and shape-free, abstract space where the public is organized and represented. Normative because, as Habermas argues, is the space where the social and political encounter occurs, allowing then civil society to access institutional structures of power within a society (Fraser 1990)

The public assumes a political connotation when fights for rights of inclusiveness and citizenships and according to this view, Habermas make a distinction between the public sphere and public space. The first as a universal set of conditions in which democracy occurs, and due to the unexpressed materiality of this space for its purposing, the realm is such an extended term to define it. Overlapped to this intangible public layer, public space positions itself as actual ground within politics happen.

The co-presence of institutional powers and the trade-driven dimension of public space should have led, ideally, to an anarchic encounter of the market and public space to create a vibrant and interactive public space. On the contrast, the space has been increasingly narrowed down, giving birth to new "dimensions" of public space. On the one hand, spaces of gathering have been replaced by places created to maintain order and security and on the other hand "festive spaces" aimed at transforming the users in consumers have flourished all over. (Mitchell, 2003)

This phenomenon is what Richard Sennett named as the "death pf public space". In the name of safety, comfort and profit, of course, politics and social interests have been shifted in commodified space made to sell. Struggles, conflicts, a game of strength between openness to foster inclusion and closure to remark differences, many times behind the slogan of security, are feature that have led the transformation of public space over years (Boyer, 1992).

The philosopher Iris Marion Young has argued that political theorists who heighten the value of community often construe the public as a realm of unity and mutual understanding, but this does not cohere with our experience of public space. In fact, in her view, in public space, the encounter, might or might not, happens with people who differ from us and most of the time, those who are different might necessarily be struggling for a place in that public.

Indeed, the ideal conception of public space as publicness and openness has never really been implemented whether perceived as so. Following Habermas's theory on the public sphere, a juxtaposed strand of literature has strongly supported an alternative vision. Scholars such as Joan Landes, Mary Ryan and Geoff Eley assert that Habermas's belief on publicity is far from being real. On the contrast, despite this rhetoric, the public sphere rather than being built on an idea of inclusion is a matter of exclusion. Landes argues that for her exclusion is based on gender, whereas Geoff Eley by reaffirming what Landes says, points out the rooted process of class formation led all the genders exclusions. Indeed, the public sphere was nourished by the civil society, which was itself, composed of associations and the so-called voluntary groups. The result was a vast network of clubs and associations of any kind, (such as, professional, cultural, civic) anything but accessible to all. (Fraser, 2019).

his brief excursus is functional to our purpose by showing how the public sphere has always been made by conflicts and by the struggle for rights, participation and representation. Many other examples show how the fight for civil and social rights have featured the evolution of public space as the stage of claim on different levels such as the feminists, racial, for gender equality, anti-capitalistic and many others[6].

This analysis shows how albeit the noised absence of formal political incorporation through suffrage, a variety of ways of accessing to public life were considered and there was a multiplicity of public arenas.

[6] Mary Ryan has documented a brilliant reconstruction of women run to equal rights through different strategies and option. It is interestingly to see that albeit ones belonged to upper classes, women as a category were still left apart. So, in the case of elite bourgeois women, to participate in public and political life, they started to set up women-only associations. In a way by copying men behaviours and circles and by adding some features of the female domestic life, they got close to proper public life participation. Whereas others less lucky, involvement in public and political life was achieved by supporting roles in male-dominated working-class protest activities.

In Fraser's view, dealing with a vast single arena could lead to an, even more, exacerbated segregation, in fact in that case members of subordinated or less-powered social groups would have no room (arenas) for deliberation among themselves about their needs and issues, strategies and proposes. In a situation like this, they would have no venues in which undertake debates, and they would be less likely to find space to raise voice and express their thoughts. Doing so, they would become less able to stand and protect their selves onto a common space. Yes Nancy Fraser, as a direct consequence of this sort of separation from the public, marginalized social groups tended to give birth to "subaltern counterpublics", some kind of alternative stages of discussion. Participation means being able to express thoughts and rights and thus building up identity through idiom and style.

A crucial matter when it comes to democracy and a somewhat democratic public space is that they tend to rise when the idea that a substantial basis unifies society is abandoned. The social order and our shared condition of human beings turn into an enigma and therefore, become open to contestation. Even though social questions are settled, but no question can be forever excluded from politics. Nor can the problem of society itself ever be finally resolved. To be democratic, society and public space must remain a question. For Lefort, public space implies an institutionalization of conflict as, through a limitless declaration of rights, the exercise of power is questioned (Lefort, 1998).

As Henri Lefebvre in the of "the right to the city," Lefort interweaves public space with rights. He makes the two inseparable and strictly related to what they both call "quality of life". Lefort uses the concept of quality of life as arguments for equal opportunity. The argument for equal opportunity rests upon the claim that each individual ought to be able to exercise the capacity to make certain choices and to do so, they must have equal access to social resources such as education, health and material stability. Framed in this way, the struggle for a better quality of life could be a struggle for a more equitable distribution of social resources. These latter designate a society's health. A "well society" treats all people with equal dignity. All have equal rights, access to resources, the opportunity to voice opinions and sufficient income to meet their needs.

1.4 Definitions of public space

City's streets, parks, squares and other shared spaces are functional to collective well-being and possibility, to the formation of civic culture and political struggle and deliberation (Amin, 2008). Put it differently, it could be said that space is consistently made of relations and composed of two dimensions of space: the social and physical one. When people live the space, this latter becomes a space of sharing of actions, encounters, gestures: in other words, a shared space, namely social, where dwellers can freely access and collectively owned. To put it differently, a space for the public and publicly governed.. (Manadipour A. , 2003) When it comes to public space, several factors concur to make it so. Briefly, the next lines will take into consideration some of them more precisely.

First of all, the term "public" has democratic connotations and implies openness, accessibility and participation.[7] Open public spaces are also those in opposition to closed spaces: accordingly, open spaces are streets, parks, squares whereas malls, libraries, town halls, swimming pools, clubs and bar are closed. By openness, public space is seen as not exclusionary, wholly or at least partially inclusive and thus universally accessible. There could be people who decide, spontaneously, to avoid using public space, whereas some others who want to live it and finally, people who need to use it.(Gidley, 2013)

Train stations are certainly an example: usually, these places are used by people in need (such as homeless, drug addicts, migrants and many others) as relational spaces, places of recovery or proximity places of primary services. But if boundaries in a way constitute spaces, then public space assumes a meaning just in relation with exclusionary. Indeed, as Nancy Fraser argues, the public sphere is itself a strategy of distinction.

Let start defining the term accessibility. Accessible spaces are those considered welcoming towards strangers (i.e. people who are not used to hang in that specific area). Free spaces are also those which people have comfortable access to, i.e. if the entry is allowed to disable people or if there are no restrictions at the entrance or gate enclosing

[7] Although characteristics of spaces have been proposed, in terms of identification of public space, many problems arise due to a considerable amount of debates on it. So, the above-mentioned features are not necessarily reliable but since the diversity of public spaces available nowadays any rigid definitions leave room to exceptions which represent new challenges.

it. Strictly related is the concept of comfort.

Comfortable does not just refer to objects and items we deal with in our daily private life, such as chairs, sofa or similar features. When it comes to public space, by comfort, we mean the capacity of people act as and feel themselves in that specific context. To facilitate this process, some strategies and actions have increasingly been underpinned by administrations and civil society to achieve these objectives; using the arts to bring people together, to stimulate communities to gather, to debate and to meet is one these solutions. Not surprisingly, those kinds of interactions have been subject of studies for years, and mostly human geographers have addressed to social interactions the label of sociability: the intersection between people, space forms a sense of togetherness (Massey D. , 2005).

Understanding why people engage in a commonplace and decide to spend time in there, requires such an extended analysis, throughout it a possible reader would eventually understand why public space is so valuable and means that much nowadays. The concept of 'participation' has been widely used in the discourse of development. It has referred to participation in the social arena, in the 'community' or development projects. Increasingly, however, the concept of participation is being related to rights of citizenship and democratic governance, managing shared space. In this view, participative spaces are those in which communities share practices to empower it[8].

1.5 Public space and its features. Evaluating the space

The meaning of public space may seem obvious, but the reader could root this label either in the physical features of a specific area, or in the institutional structures and policies affecting a place, or finally in the types of uses and activities undertaken in the space. The nexus between public sphere theories and studies on public space is a critical issue to understand the different natures of publicness, of public and common space, and lastly

[8] The International Association of Public Participation defines participation pragmatically: 'public participation means involving those who are affected by a decision in the decision-making process. It promotes sustainable decisions by equipping partakers with the information they need to be involved in a meaningful way, and it communicates to participants how their input affects the choice'. And again: according to Roberts, participation is 'the process by which members of a society (those not holding offices or administrative positions in government) share power with public officials in making substantive decisions and in taking actions related to the community. These definitions sum related work on civic engagement, political participation and citizen engagement, but most importantly, imply how working with citizens, regardless of the engagement tools used, modifies traditional institutions of politics and policymaking.

of public and social life in space.

It may happen that even when public space is entirely accessible to all, some of the users tend either to avoid that space or to discourage other groups from using it (Mehta, 2015). What happens some other times is that users separate themselves in public space, even if thought as the space of encounter, participation and amicable, social behaviours.[9]

The impact of urban settings and the sense of spaces has always had a substantial impact on individuals' behaviours, and as a matter of fact, historically spaces in cities were used as space to serve basic survival, entrainment needs and to perform several political, religious, commercial, civic and social functions. Society has evolved, and many of those activities, such as simply meeting or discussing, have been translated in the private realm, leaving to public spaces other domains. However, despite the tendency to privatization occurred so far, public space plays a fundamental role in increasing tolerance by making people meeting and watching cities' daily life and can provide the settings for the learning cosmopolitanism(Low, 2000).

According to the quality of spaces, they are able to support, facilitate and promote social life, as an important complement to our private, home and work spaces, in order to satisfy needs for contact, communication, play and socialization (Oldenburg, 1989).

Hence, one could say that a vibrant public sphere requires a vital public life, or in other words, a well-integrated and drilled society which experiences public spaces with such vitality is a whole seed to let flourishing a vibrant and active public sphere. If this is true, we should also be aware that assessing variables independently from the context in which what we are studying is inscribed, could lead to biased results.

In fact, as Sennett argues, context is the urbanist's equivalent to biology's concept of habitat. Both terms refer to a set of organisms sharing the same space, so to say that habitat is about who is inhabiting it, just like an ensemble of buildings do the contexts

[9] The theme of personal space is a crucial concept for anthropological studies, in particular scholar such as Edward Hall, who discussed the cultural dimension of using and interpreting space by different people. Hall classified interpersonal relationships in public space. According to him, there are at least four categories: intimate, personal, social and public. With a proper understanding of the spatial behaviour and needs of people in general and their variety among different cultures, he believes that cities design can create congenial environments for diverse urban populations and avoid many problematics ordinarily occurring in social spaces. (Hall & Du Gay, 1996).

of a particular place. To put it differently, a city or neighbourhood setting is the context with which planners deal when they start planning. Before digging into the main approaches within the analysis of public realm and the public sphere, it is worth to spend some words on the assessment of public space to better understand how its shape can affect human behaviours. Jan Gehl, intending to evaluate those spaces, has divided human activities in necessary, optional and social. Going to work or school can be considered as necessary; instead, optional activities are those carried on in the spare time and that deal with leisure, whereas the latter are a result of high levels of social actions. Meanwhile, especially the first set of activities need to be accomplished despite environmental conditions, differently social activities result positively affected by external elements. For this reason, it seems crucial to assess which characteristics play a role in helping social dynamics.

Inclusiveness and open access

Inclusiveness is undoubtedly one of the first indicators when it comes to asses public space. As we know, it is the arena of participation, collective voice and shared interests, but it's also the stage where differences emerge. Hence, as Mitchel said, "the appropriation and use of a space by a group to fulfil its needs makes the space public" [10](Mitchel, 2003). Also, the range of activities allowed and sustainable on that space may determine the inclusiveness of that space and the discussion on which actions and behaviours are deemed appropriate in space are such a crucial way to shape human behaviours.

Security

Although safety or security is, among many, one of the main concerns for public space and a sense of protection may be reached by using control measures, many times the result can be even worse. Over-securitization and not-necessary police-controls could make perceive the space as unsafe as well[11] (Davis, 1990). There are certainly many ways to cope with

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[10] Meaningful activities, able to empower symbolic and cultural identification, are useful to foster sociability. Studies in phenomenology suggest that by satisfying day-to-day needs, environments encourage repeated visits and increased frequency of use that translates into a familiarity with the environment and become a routine, creating a sense of place and place-attachment (Seamon, 1980).

[11] The perception of security when it comes about spaces is affected by how people feel the space. The space around the body has been called personal space; this latter is the space perceived as an extension of the body. It is a space that is emotionally charged and helps regulate the spacing of individuals (Sommer, 1969).

security measures ranging from actively using the space and giving it life through actions to "decorate it" by the presence block watch signs yard decorations and private plantings. (Perkins, Meeks, & Taylor, 1992)

Comfort

Comfort is a broad category, and the feeling of comfort in public space depends on many factors such as levels of safety, familiarity with the place and people, convenience and many others. But as some of the features mentioned above, studied as separate indicators, comfort seems to only refer to the physical and environmental aspects that produce an impact on space (Mehta V. , 2015).

The comfort of space is the ability for people to be themselves in the public realm. One of the greatest joys of going to public space is so that people can express themselves fully. This might involve meeting new people, rekindling with old friends, participating in activities in the space or interacting with the public art in the space[12].

It has been demonstrated that even climate factors such as sunlight, are rather important to make public space attractive. So open spaces, terraces, parks, gardens and gathering places all around could facilitate the process. In the third section of the research, we will get back to green spaces as mean to an end, that is to say as places to foster social activities and relations[13].

Pleasurability

Spaces become pleasurable when they are imageable, have a high level of spatial quality and sensory complexity. According to Lynch, places, cities, spaces are associated to what he called "imageability" and defined it, as the "quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in a given observer" (Lynch, 1960). He found out that places with high environmental imageability were pleasurable and perceived as comfortably.

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[12] Indeed, one example of being comfortable in a public space is engaging with public art. In Chicago, the Bean Sculpture is an excellent example of where people are pleased to express themselves. Public art tends to create a very comfortable atmosphere to express their true selves and interact with the objects while bringing out the best in people.

[13] In addition to robust infrastructures against weather issues, public space needs to provide activities and standing exemplars of behaviours that may happen in the public space within its cultural context. To do so, the urban design needs to be anthropometrically and ergonomically sensitive (Croney, 1971).

When defining public space, several levels of analysis are overlapped. Each level provides the tools to increase a certain sense of space thanks to which identification and recognition allow people of getting closer to something public and of the common domain.

Sociability

Many scholars in human geography have explored the idea of sociability in the public sphere. It is the interactions people have in public space and the connection these forms between the person and space. This might include the social networks people form on the street or city squares. Generating an opportunity for people to meet new people in public space is essential because this adds to the sociability of space. Having social events in the public space, such as concerts, performances or hosting movies are also a great way to get people to engage with one another. This creates a connection between the space and the people in it, forming a sense of togetherness in the space (Massey, 2005).

Uses and activities

Activities are the fundamental structure of lots of great places: they are the reasons why people visit in the first place, and why they keep returning. Activities are also what makes a place unique or special. When there is nothing to do in a place, and it is empty and unused, that is a sure sign that something needs to change.

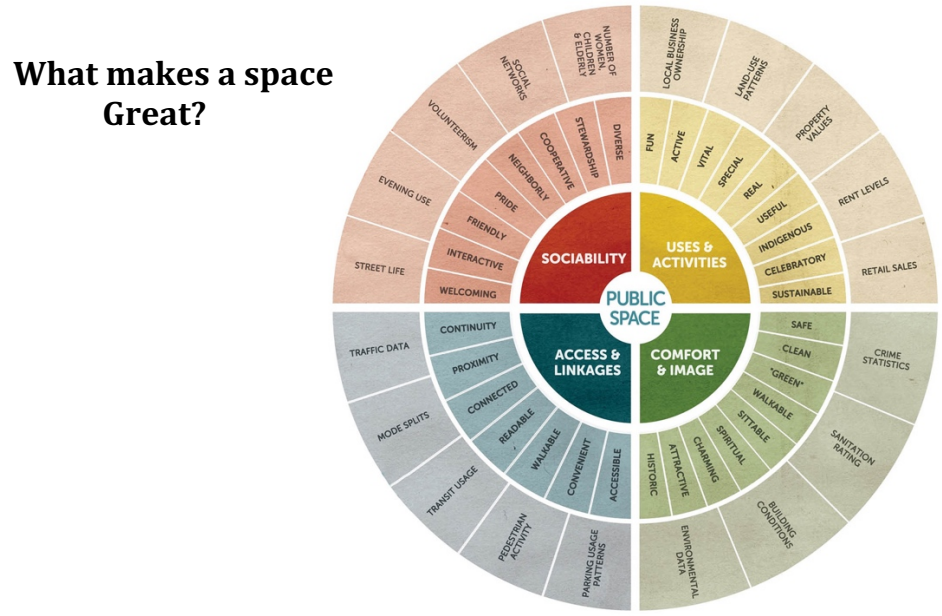

Figure 1. What makes a space great? Elaboration from Project from Public spaces

1.6 Problematization of public space

Over the last centuries, the concept of public life has changed many times, and debates upon it are at the stake of several disciplines still now. At the time of the French Revolution when political philosophers used the word public, they first referred to the ongoing shift that society was experiencing from court-based power to urban power, that is to say from court to the city. Thus "le publique" (the public) had not the same meaning so far. It was anymore referred to the workings of royal power, instead was something self-constituted (Bridge & Watson, 2002).

Many scholars and theorists now argue that although a specific interest in studying public space has been renewed in modern studies, nonetheless the variety of public functions that public space fulfils is being progressively reduced (Sorkin, 1992). However, it is without any doubt that space is still essential in the urban fabric and public life, even if differently shaped; they still play a role, and that's enough to stimulate a debate on such a complex issue. Cities are a mosaic of different spaces whose meaning is defined by their function as part of the overall city and the experience and imaginations citizens have of them. Indeed, for most of its inhabitants, much of the city is unknown territory, imagined rather than experienced through habitual movements.

Public space has always played an essential role in sustaining what we can call the public realm. There is a rather important feature of space which refers to its outstanding capacity of being a social-psychological environment, that is not duplicated elsewhere and does not refer to an aspect of urbaneness (Lofland, 1998), while to its capacity to be a permanent basis, or environment, composed of persons unknown to one another.

Most recent theories on public spaces see public space not anymore as the crucial element for contemporary cities' development, but as a required stock for the social and psychological health of modern communities (Mehta V. , 2014). Public spaces need to be understood as historically and socially contingent, and particular attention needs to be given to the specific practices through which public space is produced.

Over the years and due to the increased industrialization of societies, urban spaces have changed face. The public realm has become the space of suspicion, competition and retreat into self and Sennett argues, Western societies have changed the character of the public realm and encouraged a retreat into private life.

From cities made by multi-fold dimensions, capitalism has separated out the multiple social ties of community and made social exchanges specialized and one-dimensional in forms of urban association (Tönnies, 1957). This tendency has led the public realm to be a stage for impersonality and rationality, leaving aside the spontaneity and the disorder proper of the public realm, allowing people to bring in fears and mistrust. Not surprisingly, the texture of fear in public space has changed over the years, and both design and legal approaches to order have advanced. As a consequence, space is perceived as potentially not inclusive and unsafe. And indeed, the concept of inclusiveness paves the way for several discourses upon who is or is not included in this space according to the existence of presumed rights or conditions.

1.6.1 Who owns the space?

The issue of the accessibility to and inclusion in public space has been faced from many points of view, ranging across many disciplines. Literature gives us a comprehensive collection of hints and problematization which a reflection can be based upon.

Examples of this struggle can be found everywhere in time and space: the role of women in space, the acceptance of diversity and the claim of tolerance, the co-habiting of different social groups within an even space and many other examples. Public space, such as streets, parks, squares and more in general public soil, due to the co-presence of different categories of inhabitants who live it, tend to become a place rich in contradictions and conflicts.

Different contradictions for different publics: for example, according to the Victorian morality, women were usually kept away from living street-life, but despite all, those streets were still a place outside home, a place of freedom far from the male chauvinistic feeling of the private realm (Modan, 2008). In fact, women were often excluded from public life because they were not considered necessary to carry out public affairs: their job was to look after home and family affairs. This suggests that the streets, and therefore the public space, was far from being the place of women's freedom. Paradoxically, however, those spaces constituted an escape route and alternative to the constraint of domestic space controlled, albeit indirectly, by male supervision.

Mostly in Western cities, the demarcation between public and private has become increasingly more blurred. The feminist movement has identified this alteration with the tendency to address public spaces behaviours and activities proper of the private ones by exposing private practices, such as domestic tasks usually confined in private spaces. Interestingly enough, feminists are not alone in this claiming for a space of representation; for example, the LGBT community, as a minority group, has suffered and still do, to find a fitting identity in public space.

Yet, cases of de-representation and exclusion are everywhere. In fact, in many cases, women and men all social classes have been and still are excluded for racial reasons. In stratified societies, unequally empowered social groups tend to develop unequally valued cultural styles. By referring to stratified societies, we mean societies whose basic institutional framework generated unequal social groups in structural relations of dominance and subordination. The result is the development of powerful informal pressures that marginalize the contribution of members of subordinated groups both in everyday life contexts and in official public spheres (Fraser, 1990). It is important to make an impression on public space both as an affirmation of identity and political statement (Watson & Murphy, 1997).

Newer urban planning discourses have carried out this contradiction, and notions on public space as open and impersonal became rooted in design and planning of western cities, resulting in an idea of space as ordered and rational, leading public space to become a neutral space.

On the contrary, new social theories on public space have tried to subvert this approach, highlighting the significant role of relations and encounter in space to overcome exclusionary issues. Scholars as Richard Sennett have written pages arguing that heterogeneous spaces, as the stage on which different groups meet into performative encounters would have contributed to avoid social groups' differences and fight again rationality and distinctions[14] (Sennett, 1970).

Nonetheless, the problematization of spaces has emerged in term of the ambiguity of space. According to some, problems could arise in terms of the development of multiple public dimensions and the proliferation of spaces of representations might give life to an increased degree of irreconcilable differences jeopardizing a sane integration and a model of liveable society. (Fraser, 1990) Exclusive public realms could foster exclusion by decreasing sense of identification with the public and thus eroding interaction in urban places (Bridge & Watson, 2002).

1.6.2 Privatizing public space

Commodification and privatisation have been identified as two main trends in the transformation of public space so far leading to its decline. Political and economic pressures have increasingly boost privatisation of space, making its production and reproduction a vital asset to economic development (Van Deusen, 2002).

In first instance, spaces have become places of exclusion rather than inclusion, reinforcing social boundaries ideologically and materially through social status, political identity and the ability to consume. (Van Deusen, 2002) Secondly, spaces have turned to be profit-oriented

[14] The connection between encounter and public space must be sought in all the real things happening in space. Indeed, according to Jane Jacob, the only the everyday space of the city can constitute a public space. (Bridge & Watson, 2004)

areas; increasingly faster the so called Dysneyfied spaces, that is to say, enclosed atrium rather than a courtyard, or a shopping mall replacing streets and so on, has scattered all over. Traditional public space was being co-opted in the process of a-geographical generalised urbanisation. The power of capitalism has thematised and commodified spaces as sites of consumption, leaving some unsolved questions like: "Who were the public of these lost public spaces, who was included and who excluded and for whom where these public spaces formerly more public?" (Deutsche, 1996).

Consumerism and consumption have played a central role in the construction of the contemporary city model. By the end of the last century, consumption has been understood as to mean and driving force of any urban social changes. Since such a considerable investment in both consumption and urban regeneration happened to be capitalised, public space had to be securitised for the investments' turnover. This led urban renewal projects to become business strategies to categorise publics as potential consumers. Consequently, the need, or apparent need, of consumers to feel secured and comfortably in space has driven the last urban design policies. Safety, which is more than feeling safe from crime, has been translated into policy as the securitisation of space became a central element of urban regeneration.

This sense of secureness has been exploited as an excuse to set up a sort of social control to address citizen's behaviours, many times at the expenses of social groups considered as dangerous. After the terroristic attack of September 11, 2001, the city of New York has been transformed in a Big Brother-like scenario with surveillance cameras widespread and a significant portion of public spaces closed off for much of the day. As pointed out by Don Mitchell, the context of this transformation was not sprung by the threat of terroristic attacks as told, instead it had to do with the fear of conventionally judged inappropriate users such as homeless, drugs dealers, loitering youth (Mitchell D. , 2003). Those users, so that to say inappropriate, are easily identifiable as non-consumers, thus not targeted in the marketable characterization of new cities.

As a result, urban regeneration and business strategies have started to be increasingly overlapped, and public spaces have become theme parks made of malls and s consumers friendly sties; spaces customized to make room to a certain sort of public life that serves the interests of a wealthy and formal economy (Bridge & Watson, 2004).
The chance to affirm identity in public space still depends on the relation between powers, which are by nature conflictual and public space by nature; it is more likely to be fluid, unstable

and constituted by space of difference (Bridge & Watson, 2004). It is easy to forget that public spaces flourish through diversity and the lack of it, could slowly kill it (Bodnar, 2015).

In the sum of this brief reflection, I found asking myself: what kind of spaces are nowadays available?15 Is it any more truthful keep hoping to have expectations on a public space in which one can be both public and anonymous? Has public space become a luxury good we can no longer afford?

1.7 Public sphere and public realm

Relations between public space and the public sphere have been at the stake of scholars for years, and still, literature is questioning about a proper definition of that. It is helpful to define our terms starting from some of the main schools of thought, which can be identified in three prominent authors: Hannah Arendt, Jurgen Habermas and Richard Sennett (Amin, 2008).

Firstly, we should start by defining what the public realm is. Although it is still a topic of discussion and accordingly with disciplines and scholars, public realm tends to assume different shades of content. However, it can be said that public realm coincides with a place where people meet each other, or to put it differently the generation of an area of social life (Lofland L. , 1989).

When it comes to the complex, and sometimes controversial, analysis of public realm, crucial is to point out that a difference between the so-called public realm and the private one exists. The amount of knowledge discerns this distinction that people own about each other. As in families, within the private realm, all the inhabitants are endowed with perfect knowledge of the other group's members, whereas in the public realm that knowledge is incomplete and joins to anonymity. Public realm holds a multifaceted dimension certainly generated by its

15 Today internet and technologies have affected the public realm paving the way to some sort of cyber-public realm, and these renewed private/public spaces are the stage for new and different publics. Indeed, nowadays there are physical spaces that have nothing to do with the human presence, and this is possible, partly, due to the actual values we attribute to the role of people's social relations and behaviours in our everyday life. Expectations, possibilities, desires have changed throughout the years and what cyberspace offers is a limitless and space-less space where the comfort of our places everything is possible (Bridge & Watson, 2004).

physical form, which could explain why the debate upon it has always been linked to cities: in this dimension squares, streets, buildings, markets, theatres and many other spaces of aggregation are the stock of elements through which the exchange takes place. Indeed, when it comes to the public realm, the most critical aspect is what happens in it.

To approach public realm theories, we will start by the contribution of Hannah Arendt. She was a political theorist who wrote about power, authority, democracy and totalitarianism. In her book "The human condition" she examined different conceptions and enactments of the human activity finding their roots back in the ancient societies. A whole part of her work has been dedicated to the private and public realms enquiry. According to her, in ancient civilisations, a private and a public realm articulated the individuals' life. The first one used to deal with the sphere of personal life, while the latter was the "site of action".

The public realm, Arendt argues, is a matter of politics, an ideal space of freedom and an extent in which one could distinguish oneself through great works and deeds. In the public realm, all citizens should have equal rights and voice (Arednt, 1998). To do so, mandatory is to cut off personal particularities and private circumstances, to branch out new dialogues. Her thoughts on the notion on public spaces as equal and free space, where no differences appear, have contributed to rethinking cities as something more intensive and complicated than several local and social groups cohabiting a shared space.

A second milestone in the public sphere's studies is undoubtedly represented by Habermas and his definition of the public sphere as "the sphere of private individuals coming together as public" (Marcuse & Habermas, 1978). His notion of the public sphere considers, just like Arendt does, public relations as rooted in and consequence of discourse and communication. Differently from Arendt's postulate, he thinks the job's identity and class's belonging essential elements that individuals should bring as background once encounters happen in the public realm. Indeed, he honestly considers those elements as leading economic interests to face (Habermas, Lennox, & Lennox, 1964). Indeed, he honestly considers those elements as leading economic interests to face. According to Habermas, the public sphere is an ideal of unrestricted rational discussion of public matters. This stage of the debate must respect some unavoidable conditions: it must be open and accessible to all, merely private interests need to be kept outside of this common stage, and inequalities of status are meant to be bracketed and mostly, discussants deliberate as peers (Fraser,

2019). Thus, the result of such discussion would be the formation of a public opinion, that is to say, a strong feeling of stewardship of a somewhat common good.

He singles out that the public is not necessarily tied to a town centre, instead of according to society's evolution and development, new spaces are emerging as producers of the public. In his view newspapers, through their capacity to implement dialogues and exchange, can be considered as a new public realm. This happens because of the rapidity with which public life in society is evolving. Any medium, or even able to raise discussion and open up communication between strangers is worthy of being conceived as public realm. (Marcuse, Habermas, Lubasz, & Spengle, 1978) It happens quite often in recent literature to argue about a new identity of the public realm, and occasionally, scholars have identified this change as the end of public space, as we know it so far. It would not be wrong asserting that developments in communications and technology have transformed the very nature of public space. Some argue that new frontiers for public space have been opened up.

Those new spaces could have replaced the traditional, material and physical spaces with sort of virtual gathering, forums, blogs and other technologies such as radio, television, etc. These new spaces are becoming the stage on which debates on politics and public life activities take place. If on the one hand, it can be said the newspapers have gained such an important role in what might be called "public" by contributing to the construction of national publics (Habermas, 1898), on the other hand, defining broadcasts, talk radio, and media in general, the new public space is not an unproblematic move (Mitchel, 2003).

Following this perspective, it becomes interesting raising other questions on the actors allowed to have the right to participate in this new public. To a certain extent, we could also ponder whether the idea of publicity should still require a material dimension, that is to say, being part of the public even by distance (Roberts, 1994). One might also want to understand if being part of the public could require not really being in the public.[16]

The third approach developed by Richard Sennett move the first steps from the

[16] A branch of the literature identifies even with talk shows new commons places (or realm) that produce a common sense "going public today, means going on air". This is to say that, according to certain authors, the materiality of public space has been overestimated and new arenas are arising: Habermas actually affirms that today newspapers and magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere.

consideration that significantly ordered environments harm inhabitants' worldviews and affect awareness and political consciousness. As far as concerns public life, Sennett believes that public life in contemporary societies finds a common root in the ancient societies' public life. He argues that today public life has also become a matter of formal obligation.

His approach has more to do with cultural issues rather than political, meaning that the core interest of his research is social behaviours among people in space17. Spaces which are most possessed of these powers – provoking role-playing and this Teatro of public life – are multifunctional rather than monofunctional. That is to say, that disorder in public is something that causes the impulse, the freedom to be disorderly in public, and provokes more vivacity in public spaces. Thus, the privatization of space occurs by making it monofunctional. The more the relationship between the disorder of public spaces and conventional behaviours can be exploited and encouraged, the merrier general life is enhanced.18.

1.7.1 From public space to public sphere

When it comes to the public sphere in terms of space of general discussion as well as policy formations, crucial is the role played by public relations within a democratic society. As we will see in the next chapter, the concept of social capital does much in this sense, and it will be shown how public sphere, civil society and public relations contribute to commons achievement and are strictly interconnected (Sommerfeldt, 2013).

As seen above, it can be said that the public sphere does play a paramount role in democracies' development. For many years, the public sphere has been described as

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[17] Sennett's approach due its attention on social relations and people's behaviours has been called "the performative school".

[18] Together with the anthropologist Clifford Geertz and the sociologist Erving Goffman, they care of what people smile for, which clothes are trending and why, ways of interacting either avoid interactions, the reason why certain places are chosen to gather and others, on contrast, is a place of silence and loneliness. Through this lens, they were able to enter in dialogue with architects, urbanists and professionals who were directly involved in the city planning, to be aware of the visual dynamics which lead the social process. (Bridge & Watson, 2002)

something in between the state and society, and albeit it doesn't have the power to produce any governmental decisions, however, this nature has been thought as a counterweight to the state while sustaining democracy (Fraser, 1990).

The public sphere preserves democracy as it helps to balance social stability, and it is relevant for political conduct. The public sphere is a site for the production of networks able to transmit information and points of view to formulate those discourses that could be critical to the state (Habermas & Benhabib, 1996). The power of this social dimension of public space is to scrutiny ideas and thoughts arising from the public, and once these have been through this process, they become more likely to affect policy and decision-making due to their public interests. So, it won't be wrong affirming that a multi-voiced public sphere is central for the functioning of democracies.

The public sphere, to properly serve its nature, needs principles of publicity. Habermas called it *Offentlichkeit*. Translated in English, *Offentlichkeit* sounds as "openness". The term refers to the need for space of being open either accessible to all. But most important, it relates to the concept of making something public or to have a public discussion (Kleinstüber, 2001). To have a public discussion, public deliberation is required. Publics engaged in publicity are so because they believe in the transformative power of discourse, and according to Asen, the public may adopt a publicist orientation as opposed to an isolation orientation, which implies proactively engaging in public life via communication.

Put it this way, the public sphere functions as a medium to express the public interest. To this purpose, public relations are fundamental to guarantee the existence of diverse interests in the public sphere, as they serve to provide a fair debate on public issues. The public sphere represents the potential for people organizes in civil society to alter their conditions of existence (Calhoun, 1993). Public spheres of debate arise only with active participation and commitment of civil society[19].

[19] Density and numbers are crucial elements in the rise of a public dimension. Why has public space been chosen to be the stage of the public sphere? Density and numbers are part of the answer. Sociologists such as Simmel argue that density intensifies actions and numbers have a sociological significance. In fact, while the proponents of urban civility would say that big numbers and density can instill the need to adjust and to take care of the others, Hannah Arendt identifies as enabling moment the one in which community comes together and exploits its "ability to act in concert". (Arendt, 1970) By acting collaboratively together in public space, that space all in a sudden becomes "more public". Let's consider for a while the Occupy Wall Street Movement: on their website, they say "Occupy Wall

At this point, it is easy to understand why civil society plays a crucial role in making emerging democracies. The public sphere and civil society are not interchangeable synonymous (Downey & Fenton, 2003). Civil society surges itself as space, space wherein multidimensional society individuals and groups are free to gather in networks independently functioning and can mediate between citizens and the state. By being considered as an element of nation-building, or using other words, the primary tool to build up an open and inclusive space configurable as public space, it enables the appearance of interpersonal and intergroup relationships based on trust. It can be now easily argued that if civil society is the process of interactions that lead to relationships built on trust, then is the leading producer of social capital and to empower its functions in the public sphere.

1.8 Conclusions

Since the engine of the class struggle is engulfed, the city as a whole has entered a crisis. It is a more general metaphor for the spatial dislocation of social conflict, mainly since - with the dissolution of the large factory and the advent of a form of production spread over the territories - the stakes of struggles are living spaces as well as times.

In the following chapters, I will try to guide the reader throughout a reflection upon new values of space emerging lately, and new actors and strategies are triggered to give life to a new form of appropriation, the rise of a modern civil society that re-claim and re-gain space to produce society, community and culture. Over the years, public space has experienced different phases and has survived many cycles; the space of representation has lost its vigour, and sense of community has weakened.

As repeatedly pointed out by David Harvey, urban public space is particularly subject to neoliberal exploitations, and new political tactics to counteract are increasingly needed.

Street is a leaderless resistance movement with people of many colours, genders and political persuasions. The one thing we all have in common is that we are the 90% that will no longer tolerate the greed and corruption of the 1%. We are using the revolutionary Arab Spring tactic to achieve our ends and encourage the use of nonviolence to maximize the safety of all participants. Wall Street in commons peoples' imaginary corresponds to the abstract idea of finance or at maximum to an urban district of New York City. When the movement has started to protest that space had come to a new meaning and being perceived as concrete physical space. By the squatting action, although illegally, space has been transformed becoming a street of lively conviviality of less transitory traffic of people and of a common cause (Bodnar J. , 2015).

Starting from Lefebvre's right to the city, the criticisms enlightened further in the reading, will not just cope with the claim of public space but it will try to involve active civil society in the decision-making process of citied to guarantee free and growing access to urban spaces (Iaione & Foster, 2016).

Chapter 2

The value of space as collective dimension

2.1 How to extract value from public space

Public space and more specifically the urban space have largely been the object of controversy: how spaces are used, for whose benefit for and to whom these spaces belong to has become crucial in the policy debates and at the heart of many urban movements, as shown in the previous chapter. In a situation of profound transformation affecting our societies, the challenge to understand how to better articulate the public sphere by extracting values through the experimentation of new strategies and solutions.

Saskia Sassen asks: who owns the city in an era of corporatizing access and control over urban land and corporate buying whole pieces of cities, which is transforming the small and public into large and private across so many cities around the world? (Sassen, 2001). Interdisciplinary intellectuals and a range of social movements reclaim control over decisions about how the city develops and grows and to promote greater access to urban spaces and collective resources for all cities' inhabitants. In other words, the right to the city, as articulated by the French philosopher Henry Lefebvre, which was manifested in efforts by progressive urban policymakers around the world to give more power to city inhabitants in shaping urban spaces. (Foster & Christian, 2016)

Those collective resources are not meant just as spaces and infrastructures, but also as an array of services and goods that belong to the citizenship. The term "collective" is crucial in this analysis. Collective refers to something that can be shared within a community interested in taking care of that certain good, because its use brings to a positive impact at "collective" level. Within the economic theory, those goods are publicly provided and

known as public goods. These ones respond to a dual feature: they are typically non-rivalrous and non-excludible: meaning that one's individual consumption of a good or service does not prevent another individual from consuming the same good; secondly, that if any person X in a group Xn . . .X., . . .X consumes it, it cannot feasibly be withheld from the others in that group.[20] (Cowen, 1985)

Typical public goods are national defence, healthcare systems, infrastructures of many sorts, education, and culture and the arts. This analysis encounters a significant problem of inefficiency, namely the issue of 'free-riding' and the difficulty of reaching the optimal provision. The problem with goods that are 'public' is that society needs them even if they fail in the market. They fail rules, but people still demand them. Lately, the provision of these services and goods of public interests has been increasingly left aside by public administrations. So, what happens when the State fails in public goods provision? Which strategies and actors enter the scene? Grassroots movements, political actors, new forms of public-private collaboration are the new agents and shareholders dealing with it.

Consequently, on the one hand, there is a public goods' highly risky provision (from an economic point of view) and tend to market failure. On the other, there are spottily (but becoming more and more congenial to new societies) worthy initiatives which, often, remained undeveloped due to either a lack of representation or hostility in accepting them from the top. At the same time institution's creative capacities, for what innovation in the public sphere is concerned, could be significantly increased if combined with a consistent amount of the so-called social capital. In this view, the development process based on horizontal subsidiarity[21] principles and addressed towards the generation of non-

[20] The equivalence, public space-public good, has been explored by different scholars in accordance to different approaches. Among the others Ilaria Vitellio expresses it clearly in her text "Spazi Pubblici come beni comuni"; she explains that in order to split up the double dimension of space, the economy theory comes to help. In fact, before defining space as economic good, crucial is to deeply understand its nature. Bauman sees the wash house as the perfect place to argue upon public space, since it is the place that, once, women used to actually wash their clothes and at the same time where they talked and exchanged information and knowledges about motherhood and their private life. This image pictures the multifaceted identity of spaces: a physical place where things can happen and a place to craft a collective moral code. Among the theories that have influenced the practice of planning, the one adopting public goods' glance seems to be the most efficient. In fact, it allows to translate the physical dimension in economic features and to transmit the public dimension of space in the figure of the State and a modern citizenship. Indeed, the first characteristics, i.e. being the place of and for all can be read as non-excludability and non-rivalrous features of public goods. (Vitellio, 2005)

[21] The debate on subsidiarity is still evolving, albeit its pivotal role. The most recent definition highlights the importance of a strategic interdependency among civil society and public administrations at local level

conventional public services can be seen as both necessary as challenging and unproductive.

I found in scholars as Frischmann or Donolo interesting approaches in defining and studying collective resources' management by shifting point of view. When it comes to public goods, arguments are usually focused on the supply side, leaving unanswered many questions. On the contrary, a demand-side approach could pave the way for new insights; for example, we could start asking "What drives the demand side of these resources?" and yet "How should demand-side drivers affect public policy?" (Frischmann, 2012). Indeed, over the last years a different demand of public goods, i.e. social cohesion, sustainability and sociability, has emerged led by new desires and needs to cope societal issues and to reconstruct a renovated public sphere (Donolo, 2005).

Under these terms, a demand-side approach should facilitate a better understanding of the reasons why over the last years although plenty of initiatives have emerged, most of them have resulted in unfruitful dialogue among "institutions" and "society". This has led to reactions from civil society, sometimes ending in abandoned or neglected spaces occupied illegally. Among many, examples are Teatro Valle Occupato of Rome and MACAO of Milan[22]. Good examples of such a situation are those participatory experiences in which great investments in terms of analysis of public needs and hearing of social requests have poor expected results. In the public goods' provision scenario, a school of thought has strongly argued that a co-governance made by many actors (institutions, civil society) for the production of public goods should be necessary and this is the case, for example, of the cities of Bologna or Mantova.

in order to explore new possibilities of integration to cope urban and societal challenges. Horizontal subsidiarity plays in a wide range of actions, involving at different scale and levels public administration and social actors. (Cottino & Zeppetella, 2009)

[22] Respectively, Teatro Valle Occupato and Macao of Milano are two different examples which point out how a range of actions are undertaken by civic society to raise voice against privatization and unmet needs. On May the 5th 2012, a group of artists and professionals in the field of culture have occupied a 33-storeys abandoned skyscraper, which soon became Macao or "The New Centre for Arts, Culture and Research". Same faith awaited Teatro Valle in Rome, when back in 2011 a theatre of the Eighteen century was occupied in the heart of Rome. The theatre had closed that year after the abolition of Ente Teatrale Italiano, which was the main public funding body within the Italian Theatre sector. In this case, the occupation was supposed to last few days, but instead the theatre has remained occupied for three years, until August the 11th 2014, and by that time, the occupants, who defined their selves as "communards", developed a range of activities based on arts and culture. More detailed information about the case will be provided in the further chapter of this research.

In this chapter, we will analyse the role of public administration in the creation of the so-called social value: usually it is about experiences dealing with temporary use of public spaces where experimentations that combine the flexibility of traditional urban planning and design of public space take place. On the one hand, the analysis of this kind of interaction processes between public institutions and social organisations shows that, under favourable circumstances, abandoned spaces for example, or neglected area of cities, can function as a catalyst of local creative energies and incubators of social projects. On the other hand, the analysis of those experiences can be useful for spotting out some critical points in social reuse processes, and for addressing relevant questions on the issue of innovation in the public sphere.

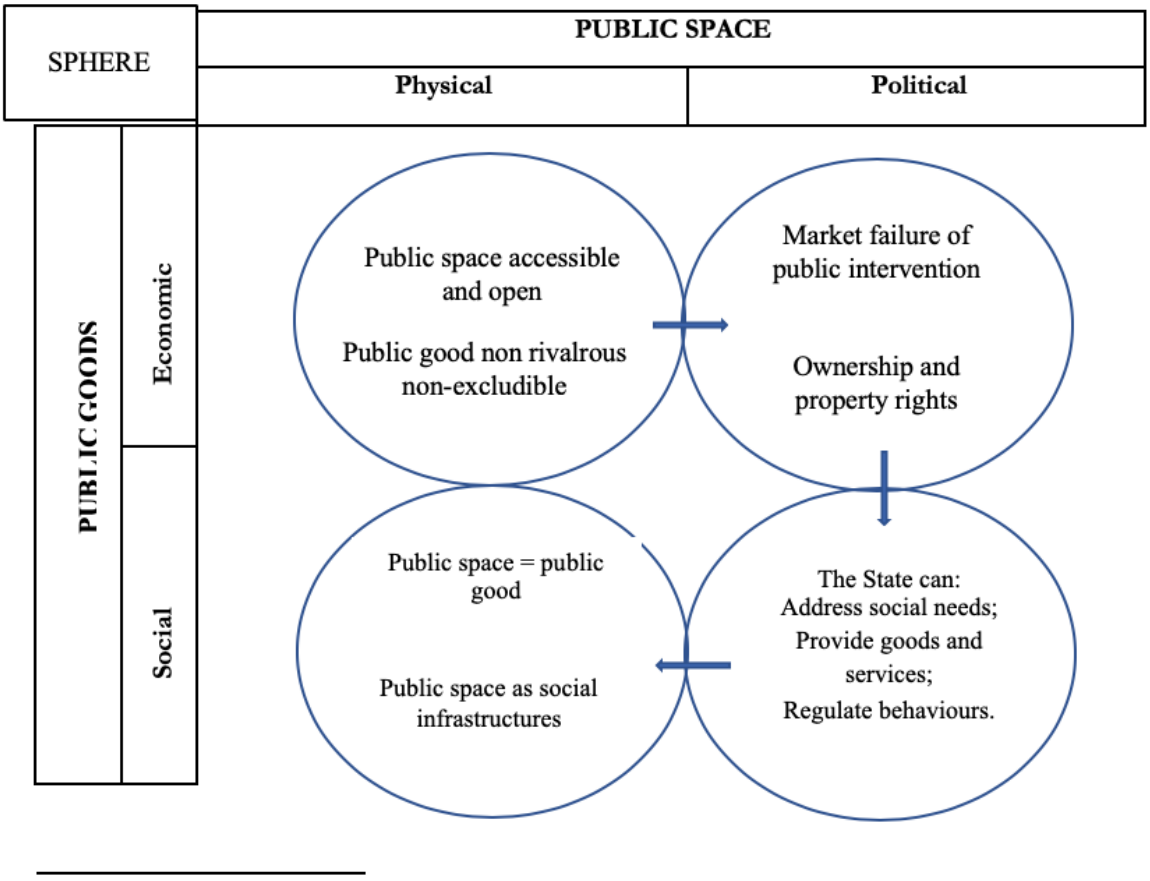

Figure 2: Degree of publicness.

2.2 Space of values, value of spaces.

Space matters, although for a while, it has been nearly forgotten. For many years we have

reflected on the power of new technologies shortening distances among places scattered all over the world and to tear down barriers among people. In principle indeed, in the pre-industrial paradigm, spaces were featured by an overlap of public life and private life. Private life happened in public space: the population was practically illiterate, and within the cities, the lack of technologies for the broadcasting and news had to circulate by moving among co-present human beings via the spoken word[23].

Then it was the time of telecommunications, afterwards television entered in the privacy of our home and the idea of publicness and sharing started to slowly disappear. Then, the time of the worldwide web arrived and not only the accessibility to a common space of knowledge become routine in people's daily life but also necessary. That space, the virtual space, suddenly turned to be the space of encounter and an essential instrument to boost commercial and business agreements and scale up the market. Eventually, more often public spaces tended to be neglected by the collective interest.

> As Bolter and Grusin put it: *"… digital network, cyberspace remediates the electric communications networks of the past 150 years, the telegraph and the telephone; as virtual reality, it remediates the visual space of the painting, film and television; and as social space, it remediates such historical places as cities and parks and such nonplaces as theme parks and shopping malls."* (Bolter & Grusin, 1999.)

Nowadays we are experiencing a sort of nostalgia accompanied by a new way of understanding places: indeed, we found out that when it comes to development and

[23] A cardinal characteristic of cities before the late eighteen centuries was that a significant part of their social life occurred in public space. Social life and public life were overlapped in the pre-industrial city to a remarkable degree. Of course, this was a matter of necessity rather than choice. Given the technology available to them, living in the public realm was for cities' dwellers out of necessity. In fact, communication happened in the presence of masses: they found out that communicating simultaneously with many people was more efficient than a one-to-one communication, due to this the ubiquitous institution of the town crier. To find an audience, the town crier went into the city's public realm; to hear news, announcements and information. Without telephones also personal messages had to be delivered personally. To communicate to anyone outside one own's household, one had to leave the household and walk through the public realm until one reached the home or workplace of the message's recipient. Thus, most of the people moved from one place to another in the city and doing so they needed to be in and of the public realm. But not only, in fact, but the same necessity also occurred for a myriad of activities: shopping, political, religious, entertainment and so forth. In sum, before the industrialisation era, cities are overwhelmed by activities in space and characterised by the dominance of public life. When the Industrial Revolution began, new possibilities for enlarging as strengthening private and public dimensions started to unfold. In particular, two characteristics are crucial: the innovations in the form of transportations and innovation in terms of construction and communication. Together these two elements made possible the separation of the workplace from residences contributing to create a retreat in the private sphere.. (Lofland L. , 1998)

growth, it is even a matter of spaces, as physical dimension, and that cities play a central role in contemporary societies discourses (Micelli, 2019). For many years, the debate on the importance of spaces have been focused on the ratio between the quality of life and opportunities measured on the chances that big cities offer in terms of possibilities, i.e. employment and services. Modern cities at the forefront as New York and San Francisco are considered more exciting and marketable than other smaller centres in the same country. The same applies to cities like Copenhagen or Oslo compared to cities like Naples or Porto. Discrimination has nothing to do with the beauty or historicity of places, but rather with the inhabitants' perception of the quality of life. But usually, this tends to depend on various factors: ease of travel, the efficiency of infrastructure, smog, perceived income.

These considerations led to some reflections, that there should be something beyond beauty and aesthetics that makes cities worthy. The narration based on the attractiveness of places has been told for a long time, and it has played a crucial role in setting criteria and rules of the game. For cities to be attractive, they should gain a competitive advantage[24]. How to do that? For example, by fostering new investments and starting new projects and initiatives.

City branding is one of the drifts which has brought cities to grow in terms of images, neglecting too often their real meaning. City branding has reached its peak during the 1990s and the early 2000s, by making intensive use of culture, creativity and art as a rhetoric tool able to represent cities (D'Ovidio & Cossu, 2017). Indeed, globalisation accompanied and fuelled by, the rise of urban neo-liberalism has accelerated the rate of urban change, demonstrated most visibly by how cities have sought to reconfigure themselves to be more competitive. In general, even cultural policies implemented over the last decades have fallen in the market trap, led by a strong post-industrial vision,

[24] The notion of competitiveness origins from the transformations' era which affected cities, mostly in the northern part of the word. Be competitive was seen as a winning strategy to stand among the spreading urban poverty. The increasing unemployment led cities to be increasingly more focused on finding new receipts to boost economic development. Occupation and provision of services were mainly considered as successful ingredients. Some cases were more successful than others and the key factor was identified in the city governance. However, since the beginning the notion of competitiveness seems blurred and fuzzy. It has been taken for granted that many cities have lost their competitive advantage even though it's not clear what the assessment indicators assigned were. In general, the positive results obtained by cities were mainly addressed to territorial policy and efficient and effective governances. ((Cremaschi, 2009)

focused on culture as a tool to create economic profit. The spread of such physical change has had direct consequences on the public space-defining cities. Consequences have been the rise of waterfronts, outstanding museums and artificially creative neighbourhoods where residents risk to be kicked off. In the global market where all cities want to rank among top positions in the world's ranking, paradoxically they ended to be each other's mirror (Paddison, 2013).

In his book "The Rise of the Creative Class", Richard Florida points out that the rise of a creative class and the concentration of technology, talent and tolerance are efficacious ingredients to make cities successful. Although considered within the policymaking discourse, yet the creative city of Florida lacks many crucial aspects. By adopting this glance, Florida has finished characterising his work with a too strict classic economic approach. Borrowing from the views of Charles Landry and Franco Bianchini on the creative city, he just considers in his analysis of how economic policies could have been enhanced by cultural means, reducing culture to be simply an economics matter. (McGuigan, 2009). Over the years several indexes have been created to assess the competitiveness of cities based on the different values and aims; the one elaborated by Florida[25], the so-call "Bohemian Index", to quote him: it is a "*measure of the concentration of working artists, musicians and the like in given are*as" To illustrate the point, he says, *"Seattle, New York and Los Angeles top the list with more than nine bohemians per thousand people*" (Florida, 2005).

Moreover, recently the idea of competitiveness and attractiveness in cities has resulted being strictly linked to the one of creativeness. This relation finds appropriated reflections in Peter Hall's book *Cities in Civilization Culture, Innovation and Urban Order*. He questions the reader and himself: what is considered nowadays to be creative? Is it something dealing just with the arts? Can the circular economy be read as the creative process of producing value? Is sustainable energy an innovative way of re-use of available resources? In Hall's view, since cities have always been the places where human creativity flourished, creativity is a whole of great arts, human thoughts, technological breakouts and new modes of value production (Hall, 1998). Besides, in the calculation of the analysis, it must also be considered that the value of the city may also depend on the identity of the community

[25] Florida has also elaborated what he calls a 'Coolness Index' that correlates with all the other factors that make for successful places: 'high-human capital individuals, particularly young ones, are drawn to places with vibrant music scenes, street-level culture, active nightlife and other sources of "coolness" (Florida 2005, p. 101)

which in turn generates a value capable of influencing the attractiveness of places.

2.2.1 What value?

For years, metropolises measured their success in purely economic terms such as jobs creation, rising incomes and wages, the number of corporate headquarters, or the extent of high-tech industries. Considerations as "*Given that more than 50% of the world population lives in urban areas, tackling the problem of urban development and urban sustainability is placed in the context of recognizing the role of cities as economic engines and thus cities enter into a fierce competition to gain attention, influence, attract investments, tourists' flows, residents* and *talents*" (Popescu, 2011) have gained stage and started to use as benchmark for cities analysis. To do so, grids within which inscribing and comparing all these elements have seemed crucial. Cities have faced many changes over the years, but mainly that dealt with a population transition from suburban areas to the city centres and a general increase of the population. On the other hand, it is progressively evident that cities have become more entrepreneurial in nature, character resulting both from their policies and actions. Thus, public-private partnerships which are nowadays enjoying increasing popularity among governments facing insufficient resources for growing public investment needs started their expansion in the `80s as an instrument for public policies aimed at urban development.

Today, urban areas enter the market directly, as economic actors, unlike the situations in the past when they had just an intervention role in case market collapsed. Moreover, a third trend is identified with the urbanization affecting big cities and leaving minor cities aside. All being said, many indexes have been formulated to evaluate cities worldwide: "Places Rated Almanac" for example refers to 333 metropolitan areas, and their ranking is sorted out according to nine factors: cost of living, employment, crime, health, environment, transportation, education, arts and climate; yet, there is the World Knowledge Competitiveness Index either the Global City Power Index and many others (*ibidem*). Another index, recently delivered by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, aimed to evaluate cities' performances is the Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor. This latter is a strategic tool to assess cities' value and performance. It is built on 29 indicators relevant to 9 dimensions, reflecting 3 major facets of the cultural social and economic vitality. The qualitative component includes key facts and manifestations of

cities' cultural and creative assets to illustrate and complement the quantitative evidence. These touch on features ranging from the main cultural sites, artistic institutions or live events to the development of policy strategies and infrastructure (e.g. funds, tax incentives, creative incubators, fab labs) that demonstrate a city's commitment to supporting culture and creativity.

However, recently other things have entered in the picture of space' calculus attributing different meanings and sense; new economic theories are overcoming the standard binomial price equals value. Traditional economics equates value with a price; price is the exchange value that a certain good can realize in the exchange market. Everything can be priced, and everything can be exchanged. Moreover, classical economics explains that goods also have a use-value that alludes to the usefulness of a good, or in the case of cities to space (Klamer A. , 2017).

2.3 Planning the space

Planning is the way we shape space over time (Stein, 2019); Planning is the functional way to express policies (or political expressions) and planning is also about governing and controlling. Not surprisingly planning has been defined a way to have some sense of how to secure the future (Gilmore, 2017) Planning happens on different scales and for different scopes, might it be for individuals planning their life's conditions, might it be for business planners to better achieve their goals or for communities and movements to design strategies for survival and resistance. Resistance in space refers to the so-called relational space (Sennett, 1977) rather than to the normative space, which takes form according to definitions or rules and regulations. Resistance has to do with the accessibility of space, meaning the right of more people to be in a space and being allowed to temporary living it. Forms of re-appropriation of space arise when one has the right to manipulate it by going through it and using in accordance with her wishes. Lynch (1965) said that making a space public means increase the capacity of people to exercise rights: going from A to B and doing things during the journey, eating and seating as well as those forms of situational appropriations, like dancing or cycling, or even just walking. In the Italian experience, laws as 125/2008[26] foresees

[26] Law July 24th, 2008, n. 125 upon urgent measures in the context of public security

specific bans upon the use of public space, i.e. it is forbidden to play ball games either lay on public benches (Satta, 2014).

As a consequence, planning of space has followed these tendencies designing what has been called crusty and prickly spaces of the cities that concur to create new geography of space of interdictions (Ostanel & Cancellieri, 2014). Thus, the result is a city hostile, aimed to create exclusion. If on the one hand this idea of planning is implemented to generate an urban order by making cities clean and tidy, on the other hand, the perception and feeling provoked by spaces' aesthetics are increasingly vanishing. Disorder of space contributes to creating dynamism, whereas ordered spaces tend to lose their epitome (Lofland L. , 1998).

The necessity of generating a change in the urban settings, such as in our daily life, emerges from the need as from the wilfulness of a certain action. If the reasons for planning are not anchored in the feelings, desires, wishes, needs of the community, then many troubles in terms of result could arise during the process. For more than a century, planners have been the employer of the State or private actors called to make important decisions about the ways our cities and towns function and they started to map and survey to design infrastructures to move people and products and channel investments. We were told that it was all about preserving and protecting the common good (Stein, 2019).

It's interesting to see how, eventually, talking about public space ends in talking about a common good. Relating public space and commons is a crucial point stressed by academics over the last years, and the debate is still open. This passage could be helpful to understand the reason why different actors are rushing to find new solutions to govern public space. This space is so important as it is essential for what Lefebvre called the right to the city, and that has been re-formulated as the right to urban life. Since the way public space is shaped and structured has to do with people's interactions and with inhabitants' ways of dwelling and socializing, it's hard to find something more "common" than a locus where dwellings life is built (Negri & Hardt, 2009).

2.4 Do relations in public space have value?

Once assumed that the real value of space has to do with what happens within the space, then a subsequent step in our analysis will deal with trying to assess this value to understand

why public space has become so important for city planners and related professionals.

Not every good within the economic analysis is subject to the same value's assessment. Although years of liberalism policies have emphasized the idea of the binomial value-price, and economic analysis springs from the essential condition of scarcity of resources and look at the world in terms of demand and supply, consumption and production, costs and benefits. This means that economic analysis focuses upon the fact that resources are exhaustible and by the commanding figure of homo-oeconomicus that world has become a matter of market (Morson & Schapiro, 2017).

That is what neo-liberalistic theories have preached so far: the economic value was measured only by price and what has no price, has no value. Therefore, over the past years, neo-liberalism agenda was all about privatizing what was not supposed to generate value as neo-liberalism economists intended. By dismantling invaluable assets, meaning selling everything standing apart from the market, they fought to give life to a more prosperous society following the monetary logic ruling global economies. By adopting this approach, an infinite variety of goods susceptible to new values' definitions have been left apart. Certain goods do not follow market rules, and this happens because they generate externalities and spillovers effects, they feature non-rivalry and non-excludability, or they have technical features consumers are endemically non-aware of (Blaug, 1987)[27].

In which terms can we talk about externalities? The answer lies in the analysis of social life and the "rules" governing these relations. Hirschman as economist brings at the stake of the economic theory different types of goods, or resources, that are likely to be treated as anomalies with the economic framework because non-instrumental in achieving an outcome relied upon materialize with certainty" (Hirschman, 1985) . Those relations are non-intentional but characterised by a sort of actions' fluidity and produce something additional than standard values. It can be said that the effects deriving from their consumption exceed

[27] Externalities is an economic concept, nowadays very popular on a everyone's mouth. Positive externalities are known with the technical name of spillover effects which stem from the consumption of a certain good. In this frame, we should consider public goods. Why public goods should produce spillover? When it comes to public goods, such a big problem arises although if they fail in the market yet are demanded by the society. Public goods are education, health, culture and many others that provide with their use benefits to the society. Consumption of this these goods is "worthwhile for society, particularly when beneficiaries are productive in ways that themselves generate social benefits" (Frischmann 2012,40).

"the consumption value but still, they by definition are values (Frischmann, 2012).

In this framework, it is not easy to separate the end from the mean, and it is not unusual finding in the literature approaches which consider among the classifications of goods concepts as friendship, love and other virtuous "things" that are those for whom people strive for. Economists do believe in their calculus values others than just what lies under monetary logics and if proceeding with scales. Klamer uses a worthwhile metaphor to explain the concept of extra-market value. He points out that taking care of our home it is pretty much similar that taking care of our societies, on a different scale. He refers to the idea of Oikos as opposed to a house. House is something related to numerous and concrete. You own a house, which is tangible. If you sell it, you earn money. Instead, Oikos doesn't have anything to do with the physical dimension, rather what matters is the quality of it. To give another example, the anthropologist Stephen Gudeman speaks of the base instead of Oikos, but the concept doesn't change. Oikos is the place where we grow and where we live and what makes us become who we are. So, the home appears to be such a good metaphor to express what an organisation or a society is about (Klamer, 2016).

Quoting Hirschman, "It is not enough for this discipline to attempt an adequate account of man's instrumental activities – a vast area indeed – while leaving the other, somewhat murky regions alone? Up to a point such limitation made sense. But as economics has grown more ambitious, it becomes of increasing importance to appreciate that the means-end, the cost-benefit model is far from covering all aspects of human activity and experience" (Hirschman 1985, 14).

2.4.1 Relations as capital: new forms of investment

The problem at this stage is how to make sense of these goods and try to understand how to manage them. Frischmann offers a valuable approach to study these new elements worthwhile to the reasoning. From his theory it emerges a new category of good, purposeful to define what explained above: he talks about social goods as those bearing social value that market cannot grasp (Frischmann 2012).

Frischmann distinguishes social goods in four sub-categories: non-market-goods, merit goods, irreducibly social good and lastly social capital. First ones are those goods, which

result needful for human beings such as natural resources, or cultural meanings, language and knowledge and are not purchased in the market[28].

This first category has become very debated, yet according to some authors, merit goods can be considered as those goods that societies deem desirable, meaning that satisfy merit wants. Due to conditions of incomplete knowledge within a market context driven by consumer dominance, these goods end to be under-evaluated and therefore, under-provided. Examples of merit goods are heritage, healthcare, education and historical sites. Because of their desirability, to avoid market failure corrective public policies' interventions are envisaged to prevent market failure (Head, 1966). Merit goods are demanded because of their feature of producing a sort of common value which also contribute to making positive externalities that consumptions of them has on the other's utility, in case of interdependent utility (Frischmann 2012). At the same time, it must be taken into account that, there is a risk of over-production related to the 'owners' of the concept of 'merit': if hooligans believe that their football team is their priority and the democratic process listens to their voice, this could imply a transfer of resources towards a 'chosen' merit on the part of noisy groups, even real majorities

Irreducibly social goods are those social goods that challenge the notion of society as a collection of individuals. The key characteristic appears to be that their value is necessarily social and not decomposable. These goods have an inherent social nature to the extent that they enable participation in activities of cultural and social values. As last category of social goods, Frischmann names social capital[29]. This latter is a multifaceted concept which has been largely developed from several disciplines and has received increasing attention from

[28] Non-market goods are usually taken for granted by people even though such a big value has attributed to them, sometimes exceeding their lifetime too. Within the cultural economics theory, such goods are hard to asses; this because individuals' preferences tend to diverge from community's preferences. Example of this goods are bequests and existence values. (Throsby, 1999)

[29] Historically, the notion of capital has such a long tradition; we owe the term capital to Karl Marx and his conceptualization. For him, capital is part of the surplus value captured by capitalists or the bourgeoisie who control production means, in the circulations of commodities and moneys between the production and consumption processes (Lin, 1998). In this circulation workers are paid for their labour and they can access to commodities' market by purchasing food, shelter, clothing and so on. In this vein, they have been given the possibilities to survive, if only those commodities would haven't been sold on the consumption market a higher price. In the capitalist scheme, capital embeds two aspects: on the one hand, it corresponds the surplus value generated by the capitalists under the form of product of process; on the other hand, it represents an investment on the part of the capitalist with expected return in a marketplace. It is also understood that the investment and its produced surplus value are in reference to a return/reproduction of the process of investment and of more surplus values. It is the dominant class that makes the investment and captures the surplus value. Thus, it is a theory based on the exploitative social relations between two classes.

the economic side thanks to the contribution of Putnam[30]. Regardless the glance adopted, social capital considers interpersonal relations a driver of growth and development as is seen as good able to enhance social dimension (Frischmann, 2012). According to the scale of analysis, social capital assumes different connotations and meanings, but a common trait is the consideration of interpersonal relations as a resource where trust plays a significant role. For our purposes, social capital is seen as a proper capital good that enhance the effectiveness of social dynamics. Coleman says that social capital initially stems from social theory and from the far-reaching idea that social relationships are resources that help people to act effectively (Coleman, 1998). In general, investments usually refer to something which is employed to obtain a return on it. Physical capitals are an investment of resources that can be used to produce a flow of future income, and this kind of capital if on the one hand contribute to opens up to several opportunities, on the other hand, can constrain others. Now the problem with this kind of investment, led by biased interests is the possibility to generate more harms than benefits, due to the upheaval of the hierarchy of values of our time.[31]

If we now consider human capital, as defined by Schultz or Becker, it represents a kind of investment with an expected return as well. Human capital is the acquired knowledge and skills that an individual brings to the activity (Ostrom, 1999). Not differently, cultural capital, as Bourdieu argued, is a kind of investment as well. It represents the investment on the part of the dominant class in reproducing a set of symbols and meaning. Now paradigm is changed, and the new masses can invest themselves and acquire specific capital without being induced by the dominant class. Nevertheless, social capital can yet be considered as a sort of investment with expected returns, but this time the investment is made on social relations generating value. If on the one hand, social capital is regarded as a resource and a good, on the other hand, its demand is difficult to derive. To overcome that, Frischmann suggests deriving it from social activities and participation in social systems.

Nonetheless, these above-listed goods distance themselves from the theory of the private-

[30] See *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (1993) and *Bowling Alone* (2000).

[31] The dark side of physical capital, to use Ostrom's words can be better explained by using some examples. Investing in a weapons facility increases the quantity of physical capital existing at a particular point in time, but the product of this form of physical capital is the threat of human destruction. For further considerations of this topic, consult Ostrom E., Social capital: a fad or a fundamental concept? in Social Capital. A multifaced perspective, 1999.

public goods, and they appear to be as attractive as them in appealing terms. Public administrations within the more significant aim of social innovation are trying to invest in creating social capital to achieve results in terms of social outcome. Not surprisingly new forms of social enterprises are emerging all over, sometimes in the way of public actor and sometimes as private, some other in the way of urban regeneration actions. If relations are then goods-producing a somewhat value that gives itself shape to a valuable space, it makes sense thinking that richness of a certain space derives from the community who lives that space.

2.5 New approaches to the public infrastructures

"In a well-designed and well-managed public space, the armour of daily life can be partially removed, allowing us to see others as whole people. Seeing people different from oneself, responding to the same setting in similar ways creates a temporary bond". Public space, if properly organized, offers the potential for social communion by allowing us to lift our gaze from the daily grind, and as a result, increase our disposition towards the other" (Rivlin, 1992, p. 344)

Some years ago, an exciting analysis carried out by Robert D. Leighninger about the Roosevelt New Deal in the context of its analysis of public space, explained that the American citizens' life would not have been the same without the intervention of Franklin Roosevelt. In fact, during the Roosevelt administration period, a brief but rich commitment to public buildings has produced many of the works that nowadays we call public spaces, and that still now we use as so. He argues "It would be only a slight exaggeration to say that there is hardly a community or a citizen in the country who has not benefited in some way from the facilities constructed during this time." And he keeps saying "In addition to the roads, bridges, schools, counter houses, hospitals, waterworks and post-offices – traditional infrastructures- that most people might think of when asked about the New Deal, there were also parks, museums, swimming pools, community centres, playgrounds, coliseums, markets, fairgrounds, tennis courts, zoos, botanical gardens, auditoriums, waterfronts, city halls, gyms, university unions and numerous other kinds of structures built across the country. They constitute an immense legacy of what might be called cultural infrastructure underlying our public space." (Robert D. Leighninger, 1984)

Infrastructure, as above mentioned can be considered as traditional infrastructures and play

a crucial role in society and generate a substantial value. Same do un-traditional infrastructures. A new concept of infrastructure includes an alternative range of them, just to name some of them, Frischmann have encompassed among them environmental and intellectual infrastructures. (Frischmann, 2012) It is interesting at this point focusing on the idea of environmental infrastructure with regards to the city and its spaces.

2.5.1 City as infrastructure

The environment can be seen as a natural infrastructure that supports life on earth, yet the natural environment serves as a critical form of capital, that usually is identified by economists as natural capital. It functions instrumentally as input into such a big range of human and natural goods but also services, which encompasses a long list such as human health, recreation and scaling up the quality of life (Frischmann, 2012). Environment as complex reality comprises many interdependencies being a multi-faceted organism. The complexity of relationships occurring among the different elements and the spatial range of benefits produced make valuation and management of this infrastructure particularly tough. Accurate valuation and effective management require appreciation of the full range of different activities, uses, and processes that generate value.

Typically, environmental infrastructures are mixed infrastructures that produce private, public and social goods; those have mainly been discussed above. As they produce those goods, as well users tend to generate a host of public goods which however are hard to identify and then to quantify and assess. These types of good generate value through mechanisms and not necessarily through consumption. Now extending the gaze to a town or a tourist destination, it is possible to note how similar relations occur. Indeed, many communities depend on their resources to sustain their economy, culture and identity *(ibidem)*.

Cities, according to this definition are complex infrastructures made of social networks and relational systems able to absorb investments and increase their value (Pennella, 2007). To say it differently, Pennella uses the concepts of network and nets to shed light on the definition of cities as infrastructures. A set of nets is essential to define chances and possibilities, but if they do not work in function of something else, the result will be

somewhat different from a network. Networks are the infrastructures featured with specific or flexible functions. Why are infrastructures relevant to our purposes? Because they set out the conditions to have strategies to activate changes and development. The value's assessment of cities explained through an algebraic equation, V=N+M, where: "V" corresponds to cities' value made of "N", which stands for innovative actions or projects, "M" for relational goods.[32].

Hence, the production and research of new functionalities are crucial to re-design the role of cities. The value of them as infrastructure is built on their elasticity, to face new processes able to revitalize social reproduction. Within these infrastructures it can happen that relations are not invested to boost and empower a sense of community (bridging)[33], rather through an internal development of social capital (bonding). Infrastructures' openness and capacity of cohesion among different actors, such as environment, context and society seem to be a key factor, due to its feature of acting as transformative force generating new social infrastructures able to transform and re-creating spaces and a sort of ecology of relations (Venturi & Rago, 2016). At this point, it would not be going out of a limb saying that cities, made by spaces and relations can be identified as social infrastructures, following the previous categorisation[34]. After all, even a hard science as physics teaches that relations and bonds among molecules are necessary elements without which the matter of them would not exist. As well, social and communities' fabric is essential to empower the value and role of spaces. Indeed, social infrastructures are not just schools, hospitals and those public goods as described by Leighninger, as instead all the communitarian assets assuming the value of common good (Tricarico & Zandonai, 2018).

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32 The nomenclature follows the Italian alphabet, letters in this sense could seems without reference.

33 Bridging features of social capital means inclusive qualities of social capital. Bridging, which obviously derives from the word bridge, has to do with the ability of connecting things. Thus, thanks to this characteristic, it is easier to connect social groups that would remain left aside. Bridging is such an important requirement for social capital. Without it, social capital would tend to develop just bonding tendencies, that contribute to strengthen relations just among the members of that single group. (Bartholini, 2008)

34 The definition of social infrastructure is being borrowed from the literature within the urban studies field and deeply developed in the work carried out by Paolo Venturi e Flaviano Zanodai in VENTURI, P., ZANDONAI F., Dove. La dimensione di luogo che ricompone impresa e società. Egea, Milano, 2019.

2.5.2 Managing and providing infrastructures

In the previous chapter, I have primarily argued that public spaces have experienced decades of evolutions and such a confusion has been made in terms of definitions, especially as the forms of public space today are diverse and far more complicated than traditional parks and squares. (Zhang & He, 2019)

In addition, since public space is an essential public good, the production of this space boosts many actors to participate in this production actively. On the one hand, public spaces, like streets, bridges, squares, parks and all those elements enclosed within the city framework are providers of economic power and profit; on the other, due to an increased civic sense and the relevance of the so-called social outcome, is bringing this theme at the very centre of contemporary debates. Due to its economic features, in order to encourage the provision of these spaces, the government uses incentive systems, incurring in the risk of treating spaces as commodities exploiting them to answer to predetermined logics aimed at increasing their mere economic value.

2.6 An urban regeneration renaissance?

Nowadays, the expression of urban regeneration seems to function as a universal answer to any social challenge. The term regeneration is commonly used to identify a range of diverse urban processes: bottom-up experiences which are usually inscribed in a specific space/area, resounding top-down projects, simple interventions of urban décor, either re-appropriations' strategies of public spaces or social activations (Ostanel E. , 2019).

If on the one hand, this variety of solutions and possibilities sheds light on a definition of unique lexicon upon that idea of urban regeneration as something arising from practices and local experimentations, on the other hand, there is a real risk of exploiting this as a trend in a strategic vision approach, able just to catch media's attention and economic and human resources *(ibidem)*.

Urban regeneration refers to such a wide ambitus, briefly according to several perspectives a variety of definitions are now provided. For example, in the UK, the Government has described regeneration as a set of activities that reverse the economic, social and physical

decline in areas where the market will not resolve without government support. A broader view foresees urban regeneration as comprehensive and integrated actions leading to resolution of urban problems aimed at improving the economic, physical, social and environmental conditions of an area, subject of changes. But broadly speaking, urban regeneration encompasses the following themes:

- property-led physical approach, where a major retail-led or mixed-use scheme is expected to have a multiplier effect on the local economy (Dixton & Marston, 2003);

- urban form and design perspective which highlights the role of the relationship between sustainable development and urban form (Burton, Jenks, & Williams, 1997);
- Cultural industries approach, which emphasises the importance of creative and cultural media industries as vehicles for regeneration (Florida, 2004);
- Health and well-being perspective, which takes into consideration the role of well-designed spaces can have on neighbourhood health and liveability (Barton, Grant, & Guise, 2003) ;
- Community-based, social economy approach, which highlights the importance of involving local communities in decision making and developing social capital networks (Thomas & Duncan, 2000).

Indeed, this list is not exhaustive and does not comprehend all the approaches, but it is useful to set up a framework of action. In recent times the model of urban regeneration has acquired yet another meaning: urban regeneration is something dealing with a complex social process able to produce impacts on space and time, where rights to use spaces are multiplied and evenly distributed among publics, strengthening the accessibility and reinforcing the sense of community and where public space becomes itself a resource (Ostanel, 2019).

2.7 New publics for a renovate urban space.

Being public is not simply a matter of being in public (Iveson, 2007). Cities are, first of all, a matter of practices and forms of living together within the urban space. This space is to be intended as the projection of social relations creating the patchwork of challenges and new formulations of future paradigms. Since it is thought as diffuse and spread space among all the dwellers, despite age, gender and nationality, it can be said that cities are not just containers made by architectural skylines, on the contrary talking about cities means considering a sort of civic soul. It could be argued that civic soul coincides with that sense of *civicness* and care that people have with regards to something worthy for them. If I assess as personal value walking in a clean and green street in the middle of my city, I will be probably more willing to keep that space as I would like it to be.

The same mechanism can be reproduced according to different scales. For instance, in the intimate sphere of my home, to live happily daily, families as a whole try to undertake communal decisions all family members try to do their best to maintain peace and well-being within the domestic walls. On a bigger scale, we vote to be part of the decision-making process of our societies and to feel represented by authorities. Cities with an adequate level of urban cohesion, dweller's satisfaction, good sense of *civicness* and effective services infrastructures are those with more significant economic growth.[35].

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[35] Citizens are the ultimate actors in defining public life, in taking decisions on whether managing time, duties, actions and reactions. All these things happen in a specific dimension, which many times coincides with a shared-common space. Space is made by two main elements: the space itself, with design and functional features and all the people who actually live that space and the infrastructures which regulate and facilitate living it. In other words, we could say a cognitive level and a relational level. It won't be too hazarded identify and call dwellers by borrowing a term from social sciences "human capital" and understanding the role of social capital in forging human capital or quoting Coleman *the effect on the creation of human capital in the next generation.* (Coleman, 1988). Social capital, according to this view become a core foundation for understanding how individuals achieve coordination and overcome collective-action problems to reach higher levels of economic performance. In one of his most famous study, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Putnam, 1993) Putnam evaluates the institutional performance of twenty Italian regional governments using surveys, interviews and a diverse set of policy indicators. His central finding is that wide variations in the performance of these governments are closely related to the vibrancy of associational life in each region. In northern Italy, where citizens participate actively in sports clubs, literary guilds, service groups and choral societies, regional governments are "efficient in their internal operation, creative in their policy initiatives and effective in implementing those initiatives." In southern Italy, by contrast, where patterns of civic engagement are far weaker, regional governments tend to be corrupt and inefficient. Putnam explains this relationship between strong networks of citizen participation and positive institutional performance in terms of "social capital" -- the

Indeed, participation has become a hegemonic term of reference (Settis, 2018) and one of the reasons why contemporary cities greet actions underpinned by a range of first-time social actors. aimed at solving social challenges without being inscribed in rigid role of function frameworks. (Cottino & Zeppetella , 2009)

From the merge of these different actors, in some cases, new spaces have been created throughout a co-creation process based on the final aim of value's distribution. So different strategies have gained ground, sometimes involving a public-private partnership, sometimes merely private or merely public, and some other times even a so-called social enterprise. Usually, those processes arise with regards to specific sites to be renovated, which function as a time bomb to foster social processes; but it happens that even in the absence of a space of action, strategies to activate neighbourhoods, public space and urban areas work as a catalyst of changes. In recent years such a long list of case studies has reported the intensity and the frequency of these actions, usually publicly led, aimed at creating an impact upon the competitiveness of cities: many results have brought gentrification cases, new and different urban-social tensions and finally forms of exclusion. (Tapda Berteli & Arabaci, 2012)

A variety of urban spaces can be used and mobilised as venues of different kinds of public address. Often, the idea of public address is connected to the physical idea of circulation and accessibility, meaning that just an open and accessible space can be really public. Nonetheless, accordingly, to Iveson, we should not fall into the trap of considering urban public address just as places relying on a simultaneous co-presence of social agents. In other words, the cities' contribution to public address cannot be reducible to the gathering of crowds and flows of people. This tendency, which could be easier to achieve, is often seen in urban actions (Iveson, 2007).

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networks, norms of reciprocity and trust that are fostered among the members of community associations by virtue of their experience of social interaction and cooperation. He argues that social capital has a positive impact on governance because it allows community members to overcome the dilemmas of collective action which would otherwise hamper their attempts to cooperate for the purpose of bettering social life. The implications of Putnam's findings are profound. Social scientists are now obliged to add social capital to the list of key variables they consider when trying to explain political and economic phenomena. Students of political culture are forced to expand their symbol- and tradition-focused accounts of the impact of culture to accommodate Putnam's more structuralist perspective. And researchers of all stripes are challenged to follow Putnam's example by integrating quantitative and qualitative data in their analyses.

2.8 Tools and strategies from a European Perspective

Starting from the above assumptions, at such a fast pace, the literature on urban studies has started questioning on the need of diverse solutions to cope with crucial social challenges and activate the community within the changing process. In this framework the tool of social innovation actions has been put at the stake of policies' debates. If on the one hand many scholars have addressed to neo-liberal forms of urban governance the privatizations and enclosures of public spaces, on the other hand problems of social exclusion, poverty and social justice have contributed to enlarge the debate on cities[36].

Within the European Union context, the last twenty years of interventions have promoted policies aimed at analysing and trying to solve societal challenges. This process culminated in the publication of two Urban Communications by the European Commission Towards an Urban Agenda in the European Union (Commission of the European Communities, 1997a) and Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework for Action (Commission of the European Communities, 1998a). Lastly, and the holding of an EU 'European Urban Forum' in Vienna in November 1998. The objective was to embrace an urban perspective in the European policies able to integrate different levels of policies adopting a holistic approach to face social problems (Atkinson, 2001).

The Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union has been introduced with the idea of an area-based approach. This latter works as a tool of urban regeneration in deprived areas; it is based on a multifaceted approach comprehending the integration of economic, social, cultural, environmental, transport and security aspects. Following documents on the topic of in-need cities are the URBAN I (1994-1999) and URBAN II (2000-2006) documents. Published in 2004 *the Rotterdam Acquis on Urban Policy Economic* stresses the idea that cities must be competitive, with a high level of social cohesion and environmental quality. Cities must become liveable spaces, spaces of choices and spaces of cultural identity (Ostanel E. , 2017).

[36] Social justice is based on the value of human rights, a concept with a long history, but perhaps one most fully articulated by the 30 articles of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. These rights include rights such as to life, security, equality, freedom of information and expression and the right to education. These include freedom from intrusion by the state and persons in the exercise of rights; the right to assembly and association and the right to participate in the cultural life of the community. Social justice is a social contract allowed upon by the people who are subjected to it. As such, for social justice to prevail, spaces must exist to converse and question whenever the contract is threatened or when the contract needs to be increased (Duncum , 2011)

Many other policy documents are provided by European Authorities making the concept of urban policy central as a priority. In 2007 the Leipzig Charter saw the light before the 2010 Toledo Declaration: both of them promoted the importance of the environmental issue. Eventually, within the new European programme 2014-2020, increased attention has been put toward the place-based approach and an integrated urban development approach; by adopting this broader view, cities become central in a comprehensive methodology focused on a cohesion policy as an inner issue of urban areas. According to this view, urban regeneration could be adopted as a cornerstone strategy of cities' re-appropriation. (*ibidem*) So, over the last year the problem of public space has tried to be "solved" with strategic instruments based on territorial development and urban actions, focusing once again on the competitiveness of spaces and cities, rather than on the capacity of places to find their own endogenous tools and strategies.

In this framework, the Sopra-national discourse does play a role in the decision-making process of enhancing public space by providing public services and goods. Despite all, the risk is that social justice, social cohesion and wellbeing's principles remain stuck on a rhetoric level rather than activating participation processes and boosting a sense of belonging into civil society

2.8.1 Social innovation and the debate on public space.

Within the European context and given the solutions mentioned above adopted by policymakers to cope with the creation and enhancement of a new public value, it is now time to introduce social innovation as an exciting topic of discussion upon these themes. What does social innovation mean? And yet, what has social innovation to do with the public value creation?[37]

Social innovative strategies have emerged over the past decades with regards to innovative

[37] The concept of public value is the core of economic theories and several definitions have been addressed to it. According to Moore, the concept of public value refers to whatever is actually undertaken and produced by agencies utilizing public resources. (Pastore & Corvo, 2019) However, there is such a disagreement about what is or should be considered as public value. By reference, public value is determined by collectively desired social outcomes that are expressed through democratic processes. Yet, public value is seen as a contemporary attempt to articulate how organisations contribute to the commons good.

processes dealing mainly with economic and technological spheres; nowadays in the light of the new considerations on public space value's and its related social relations, the term social innovation touches the realm of the social sciences.

Despite a broad debate, when it comes to social innovation, there is such an agreement about the framework within which these strategies are inscribed. Social innovation is a pool of social practices that aim to meet social needs in a better way than existing solutions. These ideas are created to extend and strengthen civil society. Social innovation may act in parallel with the institutional apparatus:

When we talk about Social Innovation, we refer to finding acceptable progressive solutions for a whole range of problems of exclusions, deprivation, alienation, lack if wellbeing, and also to those actions that contribute positively to significant human progress and development. SI means fostering inclusion and wellbeing through improving social relations and empowerment processes: imagining and pursuing a world, a nation, a region, a locality, a community that would grant universal rights and be more socially inclusive. Socially innovative change means that improvement of social relations-micro relations between individuals and people, but also macro-relations between social groups and classes. It also means a focus on the different skills by which collective actors and groups play their role in society. (Moulaert, MacCallum, Mehmood, & Hamdouch, 2013)

Hence, by adopting this perspective, it seems reasonable to argue that social innovation is, on the one hand, a strategy aimed at converting the spatial dimension. In contrast, on the other, by transforming social and spatial relations in its field of action, it concurs to modify and allocate powers and resources to guarantee the most efficient outcome possible. Consequently, the social innovation field is undoubtedly crucial to the aim of this research. Are social innovative strategies able to boost social capital and extract value form the governance of a certain public space?

According to Frischmann, essential for the well-being of societies is to provide further attention on the so-called public goods and services demand, rather than on their supply: by this glance social actions, conflicts and mobilisations end to be functional tools to define new levels of governance. Over the last years, increasingly more and more projects and efforts have been focused on interventions towards specific and defined spaces, namely primer's spaces: in these sites, new relations and partnerships are established subverting the traditional vision of the urban project. This urban project should be reassessed and re-launched through the engagement of existing resources such and relations and flows of people.

For this reason, it sounds coherent talking about processes rather than projects to set up virtuous mechanisms to let emerging social capital aimed at implementing social and structural regeneration. Not surprisingly, space, might it be public or private, works as a catalyst: on the one hand to activate resources to claim a higher level of social justice as on the other, space can increase exclusion as well. Indeed, space in general and public space, in particular, can be interpreted as a powerful tool to claim rights as well as to create exclusion.[38]

A more precise definition of such spaces can help us to elaborate a newer and broader idea that goes beyond the simple label of publicness. What does belong to the publicness realm? A practice or action thought as the public should deal with the ability to promote the accessibility to a common -public- domain to different publics. To put it differently, social and spatial experimentations become public when their nature bring them to provide benefits to others than just to the community in which they have been created. In the end, public practice is so if it allows for goods and services for those who are not directly involved (Savoldi, 2014). Having said this, it seems appropriate questioning upon the strategies able to provide (govern) this public good (space) to guarantee its production and reproduction.

2.9 Commons and the space

"*The commons are our collective heritage, our common- wealth, our collective knowledge and traditions of sharing in society […] Shrinking the commons lowers living standards and worsen inequalities. To reduce inequalities and strengthen citizenship it is vital to revive the commons. […] To revive ethos of the commons, we should strive to create, and bequeath to coming generations, new commons based on communities of interest and communal forms of management that respect customs of sharing and preserving natural, social, cultural, civil and knowledge resource. The commons can only be safe if there is strong democratic governance.*" (Common Chart. Standing, 2019)

Nobel Prize Elinor Ostrom in her book "Governing the Commons" provides a different approach to the governance of public -common- goods. The common's theoretical framework will be further studied in the next chapter to drive the attention upon the

[38] As Putnam explains there are two forms of social capital: social capital can have bonding or bridging features. A bonding social capital emerges when within social groups a sense of insecurity comes among people not involved in the network. On contrast, a bridging social capital can strengthen relations among groups promoting reciprocity and mutuality. (Puntam, 2000)

government's strategies of public space; Since the production of space and new forms public goods has changed over the last years and it has been shown how increasing the numbers of actors involved in the space making-process have grown -also due to a more exigent and participative community-, consequently the debate on space and goods of public interest changes stage, shifting from the policy-formulation arena to one of the social practices.

We have learned so far that public spaces in the cities, which are by nature complex infrastructures, are difficult to manage. Three main features make city space's management a tiresome feat.:

1) it is a sharable and depletable resource;
2) there is a multiplicity of users and outputs;
3) since outcomes are not well reflected in the market, they are hard to identify.

Considering social practices as inner actions of the broader city shared framework model's offers the chance to investigate an efficient model of public goods' provision critically: the definition of activities able to produce spill-overs toward different communities no matter if and how much involved permits to consider the action (or practice) itself as a multiplying element of goods and services within a regenerated society claiming a new public dimension (Bianchetti, 2014).

Chapter 3

From the urban commons to commoning as social practice.

> **"***The commons are our collective heritage, our common- wealth, our collective knowledge and traditions of sharing in society […] Shrinking the commons lowers living standards and worsen inequalities. To reduce inequalities and strengthen citizenship it is vital to revive the commons. […] To revive ethos of the commons, we should strive to create, and bequeath to coming generations, new commons based on communities of interest and communal forms of management that respect customs of sharing and preserving natural, social, cultural, civil and knowledge resource. The commons can only be safe if there is strong democratic governance*."
>
> Common Chart. Standing, 2019

3.1 Introduction to the Commons

The debate on commons and *commoning* has grown exponentially at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In the 1990s, it was virtually non-existent, apart from the neo-institutional contribution of Elinor Ostrom and other scholars interested in the field. Cities are the most consistent and successful attempt of the human species to re-create the world they want to live in; consequently, it also became the world they are henceforth condemned to inhabit (Harvey, 2012). In a certain way, cities are the mirror of human being and eventually, end up by representing the view that each community has of itself.

As pointed out in the previous chapters, spaces are the site where people of all sorts and classes mingle and produce a common, together. Not surprisingly commonality has been at the stake of urbanists' discourse for years, and among the scholars involved in the common studies, we can find someone identifying the metropolis as a factory for the production of the commons (Hardt & Negri, 2009).

The idea of commons comes down from the past and moves its first steps from Garret Hardin's seminal article "The tragedy of commons". Before going on with our discussion it seems useful to spend some lines on the very beginning of the common's field of study. The seminal paper by Hardin represents the threshold beyond which every discussion was brought, emphasizing the controversial issues related to the delicate balance between benefits and costs.

On the contrast, as a response, in her book "Governing the commons" Elinor Ostrom identifies some social and anthropological factors that can tackle the commons matter. Indeed, she showed that individuals could and indeed often join in collective actions to manage common property resources for individual and collective benefit. More importantly, she was trying to demonstrate that the external authorities' intervention to save Common pool resource [39] problems was far from being the only way to sort this out. This perspective is the one we will adopt developing this chapter.

However, questions on commons are always conflictual and contradictory: this is because often political and social interests lay behind these conflicts. But on the contrary, we will see that these conflicts may be reduced in a situation where commons entail open access, without restrictions. This is the case of cultural commons which involve the production of labour and the means of future participation, that is to say for example the language we create to establish relationships or the social norms to better articulate a pattern of connections. Due to their prevailing intangible nature, cultural commons are not subject to the logic of scarcity, and moreover, due to their nature, the benefits generated by cultural commons for individuals tend to increase the more they are used (Carbone & Trimarchi, 2012). Therefore, neither exclusionary uses nor social control can play a role in cultural commons. We will see how these commons are built over time and open to all.

Traditionally, the important distinction among public space and public good stands in the

[39] Typically, when referring to Commons, we do refer to natural resources such as fisheries, forests, grazing areas (Ostrom 2019), namely Common pool resources (herein after CPRs). Indeed, as both Hardin and Ostrom explain, CPRs are characterised by the fact that they are non-excludible but rivalrous, that is to say that the use of these resources by one person diminishes what is left for others to use. So, dealing with CPRs means addressing free-riding challenges. According to her, CPRs commons is a resource that appropriators can use and whilst doing so, they contribute to diminish its value.

notion of ownership: public space and public goods have always been a matter of power and public administration, and such spaces and goods do not necessarily meet the public interest, and hence they do not result in the creation of a commons. Throughout the years, the history of urbanisation has been largely influenced and affected by the provision of public goods by either public or private sector as means for capitalist development up to the extent of the wider skill of shared goods behind the tight public goods definition (such as education, social housing, water and so on) in order to cope with class conflicts and struggles. While these public spaces and public goods mightily contribute to the features of the commons, it takes action on the part of citizens and people to appropriate them or to make them so. There is always a struggle when it comes to the governance of public space, by whom and for which interests this is regulated. The struggle to appropriate it for commons purposes is still going on, but in order for the community to protect the commons, it is vital to safeguard the number of public goods that underpin the features of the commons. Therefore, given the diversity and the multiple identities of the population, the commons can be intended as a modifiable social relation between a social group and those aspects of its actually existing or "yet-to-be-created social and or physical environment deemed crucial to its life and livelihood" (Harvey, 2012, p.73)

3.2 The theory of Commons

As Ugo Mattei argues, one the main perils faced by the idea of commons is that too often it is considered as a mere utopia (Mattei, 2015). This statement leads to a first question: what are we talking about when referring to commons? Frequently happens that they tend to be considered as an unrealistic and unattainable model of property and management that struggle to find a practical application.

The theory of commons, made-up on the observations of governance models of herds, aquifer systems and other natural resources, highlights many crucial aspects of collective management, among the others: the need of reciprocity, trust and reputation (Ostrom, 2006). These findings are particularly interesting when it comes to public space governance. Dilemmas in contemporary societies arise in terms of usage rights' allocation. The debate oscillates between two currents of thought: on the one hand, it is argued that collective resources' exploitation/governance should be undertaken by the State to maintain closer control over

the resources available, on the other the privatisation approach is seen as a possible strategy to avoid overexploitation and risk of depletion, although many times privatisation can lead to other drifts such as gentrification.

Of this notice are many authors such as Robert J. Smith, who wrote about the paramount role of privatization to avoid the tragedy of commons, arguing that the more a resource is collectively owned, the fewer individuals take care of it. Of the same advice was Mancur Olson (1971): within his collective action groups' theory, he argues that in order to act collectively for a common purpose, groups need to be made of a small number of participants. According to him, when individuals receive social benefits besides their engagement, they tend to free-ride: these behaviours lead them to be excluded and denied of rights either to produce a negative effect in the good provision. Privatisation can imply the creation of private property rights (i.e. intellectual property rights) and usually private property rights' aim is to position the good on the market to be bought and sold. However, a third intermediate strategy can be found in the collectivisation, which involves the government taking over and make the use of the commons subject to public law. As we will see more in-depth later, the urban commons, in fact, find their existence in between these approaches.

However, evidence will show that globally neither the state nor the market can guarantee the productive exploitation of natural resources in the long run if cooperation among the actors is not taken into account. Interestingly enough, among the commons' literature, many examples report that a strong or even a military control over collective resources would have been functional to profit goals and efficiency[40]. In fact, according to the original theory, individuals tend to make selfish choices within a short-term perspective, running the risk of negatively affecting the community as a whole. This means that when appropriators, to quote Ostrom, appropriate collective resources without a sufficient level of communication, the appropriation is fostered up to the maximum extent. In other words, when communication is not enough, the appropriation appears to be an arithmetic multiplication of individual ownerships, without limitation of any sort. Whereas, when individuals can communicate, usually more social benefits are achieved and the more they discuss, the more the agreement tend to be just.

[40] Theories on the strict State control ca be found in Carruthers and Stoner (Carruthers & Stoner, 1981) writings, as in Heilbroner (Heilbroner, 1974) and Ehrenfeld (Ehrenfeld, 1972)

In addition to this, Ostrom argues that reciprocity is a natural legacy human being have been provided with, as much as they are inclined to naturally learn social ties and to overcome and deal with such a range of diverse social issues on the daily life. Behaving reciprocally means that positive actions, that is to say, actions producing positive externalities, are encouraged to be implemented through positive feedback from the recipients. For instance, feedback can be provided in terms of reciprocal positive actions, that can be put in place in response. On contrast, actions that produce negative spill-overs in the Commons' framework approach tend to be punished and not reproduced (Janssen & Ostrom, 2006).

This thought appears to be particularly consistent within the public space context. Reciprocity, reputation and trust are those elements that the Commons theory states to be solid bricks to build a collaborative management cooperation's model. When it comes to public space as previously pointed out, problematics arise in terms of governance, and this prompts the reflection about the collaborative exchange between public administrations and civil society. Indeed, despite positive initiatives, i.e. open-air cinema, public streets and squares stewardship, volunteering and many others, undertaken either by citizens' movements or more structured groups of activists, these latter tend to be too often stopped through restraining public administration's policies. Thus, these public administration's behaviours push the model toward the failure generating a lack of trust and reciprocity, which leads to an increasing loss of reputation in the institutions.

3.2.1 Social commons as way of interaction

Social relations govern people's daily life, regulate societies and public life affecting the way cultural and intellectual lives are conceived: in fact, when people tend to engage, work together or simply sharing something in common, they become part of a somewhat commonality, made by uses and habits which can become social norms.

Commons in our days encompass natural resources and yet public services and amenities, social justice systems but mostly our cultural and intellectual life; this means of course that social relations could be considered commons as well. When it comes to commons, as the previously mentioned, despite the resource we look at, we should remember that these goods are accessible to all (they are non-exclusive) but they allow for rivalry. For this reason, economists tend to see

great problems for the sustainability of the commons, due to free-riding behaviours. An example can be found in the whales swimming in the sea. Notably, whales are a common good, but at the same time, their hunt is such a lucrative activity. When a limit in whales' hunting is established, hunters tend to hunt as many whales as they can in order for them to collect the most numerous amount possible, thus exceeding the limit. This point seems crucial since for this reason commons are considered as market's failure in the standard economic analysis (Klamer, 2016).

Commons signify something shared and universal, of general understanding and stake. Lately, the word "commons" has been increasingly associated with the collective activity of working in the commons: even in the Magna Charta[41], the idea of commoning as a fundamental aspect of the commons as a place where the commoners undertake collective actions is particularly emphasised. According to the economic standard goods' categories, if commons fail in the market, shared goods are not affected by this problem. As we have seen, shared goods can be considered knowledge, music, art, but also community. Therefore, the practice of shared consists of all activities and interactions that are aimed at producing and sustaining the shared good itself. As Klamer argues: "The shared good stands for the practice that constitutes itself" (Klamer, 2016, p.76).

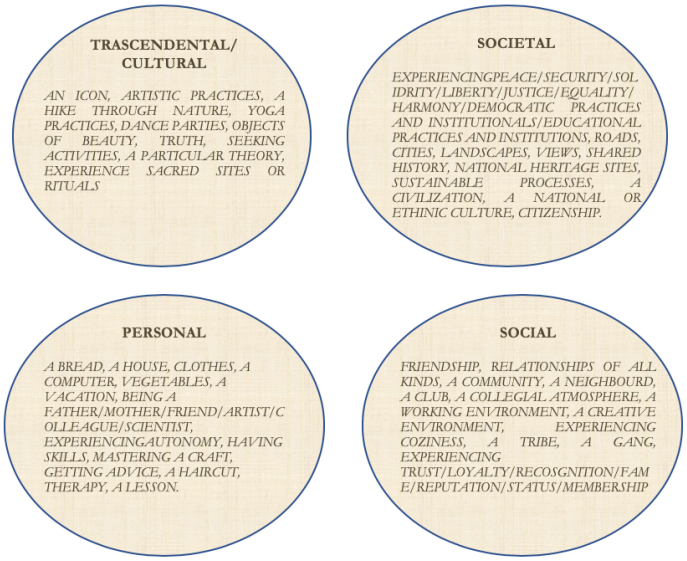
3.2.2 Shared goods or common goods?

A shared good gets its value from ongoing practices aiming at facilitating the emersion of its value. What does it mean? Friendships is a practice in the sense that in order for them to support it, individuals involved in it need to do certain things. That could be talking, share important experiences or simply spending time together. When saying valorising a good, we mean realising values, whatever the value we refer might be, but we must bear in mind that due to their nature, goods such as friendship are at the end considered as exclusive goods. In fact, as much you can improve the conversation and make an effort for the people involved to feel more included and stimulated, yet the benefits will affect just the ones sharing that good.

On contrast, people can generate value within a wider scope, as the societal could be. For

[41] The Magna Carta is a document dated 1217: the charter placed implicit limits on the exploitation of natural resources and paid attention to the need to reproduce and preserve those resources.

instance, through the creation of music, artistic environment, website or social space, individuals commit their selves to a societal goal. The four domains of shared goods elaborated by Klamer helps to distinguish the four areas of action. He divides the purposes of our actions within four different domains, and by differentiating to the scope, he suggests that it comes easier to assess the quality of goods and understanding the notion of commons and shared goods. Although, a rigid distinction has been operated by the author, nonetheless some insights can help to narrow down the discourse on commons.



Source adapted from Klamer A. (2016), Diagram For domains of shared good, Doing the right thing. A value based approached, Society of economics and culture and Ubiquity Press, p.83.

The practice of creating a societal value can be identified with a commons (Klamer, 2016). In other words, a commons is everything from which you take advantage by participating in and contributing to it, although paradoxically by replicating the same actions. Thus, according to this view, a commons is available to anyone willing to make an effort, and it is most likely to a practice which stands apart from the market, and it is not for sale. People can make use of the commons without anything in return, and this is the reason why Hardin's theory takes over.

Anyway, by remaining a social practice, commons allow non-contributors to benefit from it, despite their participation. This is the case of Wikipedia, on open source, made some for the community. Creative and cultural commons, as we will see below are affected by the same openness features and do not have excludability and rivalrous characteristics. The noun commons contains the Greek terms *koinia* which encompasses the following features: free

participation, sharing a common purpose, acting with a sense of togetherness, mutuality and social relations must involve a sense of fairness.
According to this fact, we can conclude that commons can be any setting where communal activities happen. To put it in other words, without community, commons have no reason to exist, and thus without community commons do not exist (Standing, 2019). The role of communities is crucial in the production of commons due to their intrinsic features, that is that they need to be thought of as reproduction resources rather than a thing tending to depletion.

3.3 Public interest and common goods

The idea of commons is certainly rooted in our culture, and when we mention the commons, we do refer also to a private property on which the non-owners have certain rights and uses. At this point, we should need to define the non-owners as 'commoners' (that is to say people who appropriate and use the space) and explain their usage right[42]. In fact, some of the commons can be seen as areas where albeit people live, they do not own the land, but still they benefit from it. Indeed, the important point when it comes to commons, is that also the non-owners have right to share it. What happens, in reality, is that law and use merge into a more fluid movement: the usage becomes the entitlement source.

The notion of common good finds its origin in a dual principle: on the one hand it has do to with the above-mentioned public interest, whereas on the other, it deals with the sustainability of our resources. On a political level, we are more interested in the first element. A common good is indeed the citizenship backbone and strictly related to the human being community wellbeing (Settis, 2012). Interestingly enough, the U.S. Declaration of Independence (1776) claimed the purpose of governments was to secure the rights that all people have to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness". That declaration ushered in a new era for governments

[42] Specifically, with regards to the Italian framework, it is possible to recognize different approaches in terms of collective ownership: public goods and the so-called collective properties. If we think about the commons as ethic and civil value, both of the ownership's models can be encompassed in these two definitions. However, attention must be put toward the concept of collective properties, which origins from the idea of "civic uses". This particular case finds its roots in a crucial historical function: indeed, first of all they are the legacy of an ancient tradition of collective resources' shared management, which highlights the community's value in spite of the individual dimension. Secondly, civic uses taught us that a forward looking contribute to avoid depletion and the tragedy of commons. Civic uses both in public and administrative law, present the collective rights of use and enjoyment of certain goods as one of the three cases which, together with the state property and the property itself, craft the notion of public property (Capone, 2018)

and peoples across the globe with aspirations of liberty and happiness (Musikanski & Polley, 2016). With regard to the theory of Commons, for much time, it was considered whatsoever opposed to the pursuit of happiness, which happens to be thought as an individual accumulation of utility, since the notion of commons positions itself in contradiction with private property's principles in the individualistic framework of exclusive rights.

According to Howard Kaminsky, this dichotomy has been strengthened over the years due to societies features and beliefs: he argues that the common goods' culture, as Mattei argues, is for its nature elitist, whereas the proletariat individualism as leading factor of masses' pursuit of happiness results a more diffused and easily embraceable idea for most of the people (Kaminsky, 2003). If this can effectively describe the American society, it also true that such juxtaposition does neither fits the genealogy nor the nature of commons goods and the related pursuit of happiness. On contrast, the theory of commons does not deny the pursuit of individual happiness, which finds its realisation in the collective effort.

Plato argues that individual happiness can be reached by setting general and shared rules among individuals, which finds expression in something capable of making people feel included and recognised: happiness is achieved in the good governance of the civil community which must be considered in its entirety. If instead the private owners become hostile instead of allies, they will drag themselves and the whole city to ruin, ultimately removing its part of happiness. Aristotle as well, although with a different perspective identifies the happy life - that is what nowadays we can detect as the good quality of urban and social life- with a better polis: that is to say, "a polis brave, wise and just". In order for the polis to be so, paramount is the absence of contrasts among individuals: polis and individual happiness are intensively coincident. Over the XII century, Thomas Aquinas follows in the reasoning stressing the idea of "bonum commune civitatis", which by nature overcomes the individual "bonum commune" due to the intrinsic human being's social feature (Settis, 2012).

In this view, shared happiness becomes a compulsory ingredient to accrue the quality of urban life, empowering and giving back collective, and thus individual, rights to the citizenship. To say it with Standing words: "there is something comforting about the commons: their quality of just being there, part of our society, that adds to our sense of belonging" (Standing, 2019).

3.4 The role of culture in generating the Commons

Strategies of re-appropriations of urban domains arise every day at a fast pace. The heart of the debate bits around the notion of publicness. As previously said, making a space public implies many different visions and results. For the research purposes, we do refer to the possibility of individuals to exercise their multiple space rights' (Lynch, 1981)that range from activities such as walking, sitting, eating to situational actions, so defined, which encompasses performances, i.e. dancing, singing and eventually to cultural and recreational activities.
Important is being aware of the difficulty of analysing and comparing the different initiatives spread throughout the places and carried out by different actors; in fact, these practices focus on several scopes, but commons trait is their ability to stop a somewhat taken-for-granted practice of space production to undermine the space's use and value (Cellamare D. , 2019)[43].

Generally, the re-appropriations of urban public space are related to a specific temporal and spatial dimension*, hic et nunc*, as in the case of illegal and extemporaneous demonstrations that we will explore in the following pages. But at the same time, some appropriations highlight the role of practice in the public arena. Thus, to make the practices spatial and let them appropriate the space, it seems crucial to shed light on the relation between space and community. In this vein, culture has played a role: cultural productions have led many of these re-appropriation strategies: someone has addressed to culture the function of welding between crisis and territories (Bonomi, 2013). This happens because culture carries such a big legacy in terms of creativity, resistance and strategies of action that can be adopted and reproduced within the public policy framework; simultaneously culture have a subversive and regenerating power which foster territorial development (Cancellieri, 2011).

Under all this, it seems interesting to introduce the concept of cultural commons adopting the approach firstly elaborated by Charlotte Hess and among the others Guy Standing, Enrico Bertacchini and Walter Santagata. Cultural commons are tangible and intangible forms of culture understandable as intellectual resources shared by the members of a certain community,

[43] This point is of particular interest due to its ability of acting as value multiplier: as Trimarchi and Carbone argue, individuals can become consumers while being producers of value. Indeed, cultural phenomenon tend to stimulate a regenerative process of both the actions: in fact, the addiction process of culture's consumption and production, generates a critical mass of cognitive elaborations and stimulates consumers to produce and effective response to their expressive need as the natural outcome of the cultural consumption experience (Trimarchi & Carbone, 2012)

that is to say for example the arts like music, literature, poetry, drama and so on. As so, cultural commons are thought as an agglomeration of cultural resources and activities that own a symbolic intellectual link to a specific community or territory (Bertacchini, Bravo , & Marrelli, 2012).

Consequently, when it comes to cultural commons, the emphasis it is given not just with regards to a somewhat accumulation of cultural capital by a certain community, rather to the attributes and structure of the social interactions between its members, who share and contribute to producing cultural productions. As Hess suggests, cultural commons are pretty different from what has been previously named CPR: in fact, differently from the latter; cultural commons are open and accessible. Indeed, access to culture is a common right, i.e. poems, music and paintings can be played and reproduced without limit, at least in the privacy of domestic walls. Denying this right contributes to a societal impoverishment. Similarly, the arts and culture more, in general, provide people with a collective experience that increase mutual tolerance, encourages cooperation and engagement (Standing, 2019)

Following this, we can conclude that cultural commons are shared resources; but being a shared resource implies the involvement of social dilemmas for its provision, just like the normal public goods do. In this case, social dilemmas deal on the one hand with the free-ridings problems explained in the previous chapter and on the other with cultural commons' mechanism of reproduction for the transmission to the next generations (Bertacchini, 2012). Therefore, the lack of agreement, new ideas or obstacles of different nature can interdict the nourishment of culture, examples of this can be an artistic community break-up, a language which slowly disappears. Moreover, conflicts may also arise when subgroups develop with different views about the future development of the common culture.

3.4.1 The three dimensions of cultural commons: culture, space and community.

For us to deeply analyse cultural commons, starting from Bertacchini's approach, we could study them along three dimensions: culture, space and community. These three categories help us to inscribe the new commons in an innovative category, which encompasses different forms of

cultural expression produced by various communities in several contexts (Hess, 2012). Indeed, the cultural dimension is likely to be a resource managed and produced in a commons-like framework, whereas the spatial dimension refers to the environmental characteristics wherein interactions take place. Instead, the latter which is built upon the symbolic and identity dimension of certain groups finds its roots in the cohesiveness of its members and their involvement in the cultural process. But in the end, why culture seems to be such a strong driver in the commons creations?

There are at least two reasons functional to the reasoning: the former deals with its anthropological meaning of the social expression and thus as a producer of symbols and values in which individuals can recognise themselves. More specifically, beliefs and practices tend to generate a sense of belonging to a common goal and naturally boost the birth of reciprocal and collaborative behaviours. The latter considers culture in a functional sense, in fact, it always happens to be the resulting product of a group of people and in every form requires a degree of human interactions. At the same time, culture[44] acquires value when produced and consumed: just like urban commons, its consumption contributes to add value. This given, the structure and dimension of the community are crucial to understanding how culture expresses the way individuals use the environmental and social conditions strategically.

A prerequisite of the Ostrom's theory singles out the presence of boundaries as necessary for a sustainable use of the commons: the existence of boundaries, either physical or symbolic. Indeed, sustainable co-existence of cultures results harsh without limitations ((Bravo, 2012). In the original theory, boundaries are essential for communities to develop and maintain their own peculiarity in response to social and environmental constraints. In this sense, we can say that boundaries have always been essential in the physical and geographical dimension of spaces.

However, interestingly enough, when it comes to cultural commons physical limits, such as boundaries, lose importance and the linkage between members and the characteristics of the community become the relevant framework for understanding the cultural commons dynamics. To give an example, videogames and online games more in general fall in the cultural commons

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[44] Throsby (1995) defines culture as "set of values about the nature of the human condition that expresses fundamental beliefs about human identity and the place of mankind in the universe".

category; as we know, proximity requirements are not essential for individuals to be part of the community. In this case, interactions between individuals become relevant and contribute to make them members of a certain community. What emerges is a constant evolution in the communities' nature, they tend to be unstructured and no longer static shapes in favour of relational constructs often based on ties and relentlessly in a state of flux.[45].

This premise allows us to make a distinction between a community and a simple network of disconnected individuals. Therefore, the constitutive dimension of a community in these new forms of cultural commons would be identified in the mutual orientation of its members, the shared identity around common interests, projects, sense of reciprocal dependence and active engagement. The tragedy of cultural commons stands in the risk of disappearance or a somewhat enclosure, i.e. when festivals or cultural traditions are forced to the end, the cultural commons tend to vanish because the shared resource becomes no longer available.
So, contrary to the standard commons where overuse generates the good's extinction, in this case, the more they are used, the more their value will increase. To sum up, we can conclude by saying that in order for the cultural commons to be produced, shared practices must be empowered and self-produced by the community.

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[45] This research is carried on under unusual and unexpected conditions. The conclusion of this work is facing the fight of the entire world against the Coronavirus epidemy, a strong viral pandemic, which is spreading thought the globe. In addition to the human tragedy and the constant raise of death the living generations are passing through, the role of public and social life in our future daily lives are at the stake of debates upon the future of our cities. Cities, as we were used to knowing it, are no longer there and urban and collective spaces have disappeared. While on the one hand, private and public spaces have been inverted and we feel secure within our domestic walls and guilty when crossing the outside public space, on the other the social and public arena is changing shape again. Marcell Mauss in *Essai sur le don: Forme et rasion de l'èchange dans les sociétés archaïques* argues that the domestic environment makes us individuals, but it is the public realm that makes us subjects (Mauss, 2002). This is certainly true, and it is the argument moving this research but as the needs of the individuals change, so do the meanings behind behaviours. Human beings are social animals, and as much as they pretend to live selfish and individualistic lives, eventually, they need to be part of a social environment.
The Coronavirus quarantine and isolation's measures are affecting citizens daily lives: cities are empty and social distancing is being practiced with the aim of avoiding the risk of contagion: the result is that struggles for socialization and gathering places are increasingly emerging. As in the case of cultural commons, the current scenario is highlighting the need for new modalities of interactions since the physical proximity has been interdicted. This fact points out a crucial aspect of the new commons theory that is the stewardship of the most precious commons resource: the socialization. Despite the restrictions to the physical public space, a new social space is emerging through other re-appropriations strategies. Indeed, people are putting in place new forms of relations online when offline is prohibited. We are facing tight grassroots movements all over the world that led by a strong sense of civics and collaboration work together toward a common purpose, using tools like words, online initiatives, artist expressions and also practical help. This strong sense of community shows that physical boundaries are no longer necessary when shared practices producing positive effects on society as a whole are in place.

3.4.2 Sense of community and social practices

Imagining the city as a cobweb, kept together by strands, we can picture the commons as an aggregation node within it. The knots within a weave can hold the various threads of fabric together, but too large or intricate knots can also grab the surface of the fabric. In the city, the nodes are made up of disparate elements with a strong, distinctive character. The knots are the spots around which public and social life is articulated and those knots take place in public space.

Therefore, if urban public space remains the site where public life is consumed, and the imagination and sense of identity of citizens are shaped, what is still missing is a proper investment to stimulate the rise of the quality urban life[46], which apparently has more to do with a cultural and social investment rather than economic. It cannot be expected that a culture of living together can flourish if the raw material of the community offers ever more torn and degraded scenes. In recent theories on urban space and the measurement of its quality, reference is often made to the presence of shared practice. Why do shared practices seem so relevant in the urban quality discourse? We all agree that social and cultural quality both in public spaces and in cities are hardly measurable, and this seems one of the reasons why policymakers, for example, struggle to detect them and unleash it. At the same time, ideas are important as well. Successful ideas deriving from ongoing discourses have the power to make themselves realizable and able to be disseminated (Collins, 2004).

[46] Quality of urban life is certainly a debated definition: usually this term is not used to describe physical features but to describe all the relationships and the dynamics: thus, the definition of urban quality of life is multifaceted and complex rather than linear and elementary. When defining urban quality of life, element as quality, quality of life, sustainable development, urban planning, urban quality of life must be taken into account.
Generally speaking, quality is one of those words used by everybody, but to which is harsh to address a definition; however, quality is frequently used to designate the attractiveness or the excellence of the product or with the regards to the urban dimension, to spaces. Strictly related and particularly relevant nowadays is the theme dealing with the quality of life and although has been the focus of many studies, a common definition has not been reached. Yet it can be said that within a context, a given time, place and society some agreements can be reached on what constitutes quality of life. To put it differently, people's needs and the fulfillment of their aspirations and needs can be defined as the sense of community, inclusiveness and sense of belonging, For this and other reasons, the desire to improve the quality of life in a particular place or for a particular person or a group is an important focus of attention for planners (El Din, Shalaby, Farouh, & Elariane, 2013)

Cities need to be empowered by activating their space through citizenship, cultivating a practical method that allows this process. If we agree on this, we can identify the practices that people share as encouraging ways to achieve this result (Klamer, 2016). A practice denotes what people do in a given society, and it is descriptive and reproductive of certain discourse[47]. Indeed, the city is above all a matter of practice, of giving shape to a common feeling in the urban space. In fact, space can be defined as the projection of social relationships and as a challenge in building a shared future (Cellamare C. , 2018).

A good standard of urban quality relies on different values than purely economic ones. We could also say that economic value is generated by the achievement of others, like social and cultural values. Indeed, it seems that objectives as reciprocity, friendship, relationships and co-creation, in general, cannot be determined just by merely quantitative measures. People generate a range of goods and services by getting involved in networks, actions and activities and the outcomes produced to contribute to keeping the city vibrant and while improving the social quality of life[48] , i.e. by getting closer with the neighbours cleaning the streets or the public garden, they play a role in increasing the general wealth of the city. As a consequence, the issue cities face is to cultivate a practical method that allows them to see increased their urban qualities substantive.

[47] At the beginning of the French Revolution, health and sanitary conditions in France were miserable as in the rest of Europe and the Country was desperately in need of reforms, yet a deep economic crisis was at the core of the institutional stakes. Right after the end of the Middle-Age, the black plague ended to murder a third of the European population and when, thereafter, cities started to grow again in terms of inhabitants and dimension, hygienic conditions were still a legacy of the previous era. In London due to the high rate of population growth, new housing solutions were required, and more houses meant more pollution, contributing to increase the already existing unhealthy environment. A common belief addressed the risk of infection to airborne contagious, whereas the epidemy cause needed to be found in the streets' cleaning standards. Just then, a bunch of engineers realized that in order to overcome that decay, by acting as city's craftsmen, they could have been entitled to provide better life's conditions. Therefore, new smooth flooring flourished throughout cities with the aim of facilitate the cleaning. Why am I telling you this story? This is just to say, that the underlying belief was that by making the streets cleaner, inhabitants would have been less keen to make them dirty again, producing a sense of stewardship for something of common interest. And so, it was. Likewise happened in Paris, through the introduction of the so-called pissoir at the beginning of the IX century. Once again, by providing tools and chances they were trying to induce a somewhat healthy practices, able on the long term to impact positively on the society as whole. Apparently, it seems that they suffice with the purpose and the knock-on effect on dwellers paved the way for the creation of an open and livable common space, namely social space (Sennett, 2018).

[48] Quality of life as paramount achievement for cities has become so relevant in the global discourse that the European Commission has tracked the quality of life in cities since 2004 and the United Nations has stressed the importance of the qualitative impact on urban life by funding studies and projects based on social inclusiveness, sustainability and participation.

3.5 Urban common as re-appropriation strategy

So far, we have identified the commons according to different features and degrees of accessibility and reproducibility. In fact, it has been said that a typical commons' expression emerges under the shared practices' shape. We have also previously said that commons have both tangible and intangible features, and when the theory is applied within the urban context, features of materiality imply a physical co-sharing presence of places. This fact leads to a co-usage of spaces, where the humans encounter nourishes the raise of the sociality. In this vein, it becomes possible talking about the urban commons

As hurriedly above mentioned, the urban commons are such a wide topic, which moves its first steps from the notion of Commons as developed by Nobel prize Elinor Ostrom. Applying the theory of Commons to the urban studies seems to make a little sense, due to the intrinsic characteristics of commons themselves. Typically, when referring to Commons, we do refer to natural resources such as fisheries, forests, grazing areas (Elinor , 2006), namely, common-pool resources (hereinafter CPRs). Indeed, as both Hardin[49] and Ostrom explain, CPRs are characterised by the fact that they are non-excludible but rivalrous[50],that is to say that the use of these resources by one person diminishes what is left for others to use. So, dealing with CPRs means addressing free-riding challenges. According to her, CPRs are resources that appropriators can use but whilst doing so, they contribute to diminish its value.

Within the urban studies, the notion of commons has been applied to cities and space, defining the urban commons as collectively shared resources, usually physical urban space[51], that are subject to the same rivalry and free-rider problems. Therefore, when it comes to the urban level, more questions than solutions arise in terms of rules and ties that could weaken free-riding

[49] The idea of commons comes down from the past and moves its first steps from Garret Hardin's famous article "The tragedy of commons". The seminal paper by Hardin represents the threshold beyond which every discussion was brought, emphasizing the controversial issues related to the delicate balance between benefits and costs.

[50] Rivalry and excludability are features belonging to all economic goods' categories. According to their nature, i.e. public, private or club goods, those two characteristics may change. As far as concern CPRs, they are not excludible but rivalrous. This means that one's individual consumption of a good or service does not prevent others from consuming the same good, whereas being rivalrous means that the use of these resources by one person diminishes what is left for others to use.

[51] Urban commons have been identified also as community goods or local common goods beyond the typical dichotomy state/private property rights: indeed, in this kind of situation the urban communities, which take shape of collective and informal groups, can play a role as an example of a model of social organization, based on values and motivations different than self-interest of *homo-economicus* (Łapniewska, 2017).

behaviours.

Now, a sublevel in the theory of Commons can be identified with subtractive and non-subtractive resources, that is to say, that non-subtractive resources are those whose use does not reduce other's consumers' benefits. This is the case of knowledge, for instance: using shared knowledge does not affect the pool "knowledge", unless legal tools as property rights, copyrights and licenses do not regulate this (Landes, 2019). Consequently, does this distinction fit in the urban context? If we consider the urban domain, on the one hand, we should take into account elements such as roads and infrastructural systems, therefore since the available space for traffic diminishes by adding a car, we can argue that we are dealing with a subtractive resource (Kornberger & Borch, 2015). Yet, on the other hand, how could a city be a city without inhabitants using and living it? How could a public space be called public, if denied to the inhabitants? So, changing perspective, it won't be wrong arguing that the act of consuming the space contributes to increasing its value rather than decreasing it.

The consumption of a private good implies the destruction of its value, for example eating an ice-cream will decrease its value because its price goes down. But on contrast, the value of public space depends on its publicness: the less the space is lived by the public, the more its value decrease, whereas more things happen within it more it will be valuable. At this point we can say that the value of space depends on additional factors than space itself, that are proximity and density: proximity to other buildings and density of activities. That is to say, that surroundings adjectives give light to it and the relation of space with other elements make it worthwhile (Howard, 1965).

Within the urban framework, a fertile way to think about commons is as relational commons where the usage and the consumption are both constitutive elements of the production of the urban commons. Consuming space is indeed a form of production. This happens because only human interaction can grasp the cognitive value that these spaces let emerge. Are children playing in public gardens depleting that space? Are skaters using or abusing car parks? As many times happens, such a discrepancy marks theory and practice.

In fact, looking at the last years, urban commons have been adopted as a re-appropriation strategy of neglected, abandoned, and many times denied public space. The use of space has become paramount in the claiming for essential and primary rights to the city, rights that are not affected by commodified financial and political urban stakes. The urban commons are born

to produce an accessible and open space to the public and indeed to put it with Ostrom's words, the appropriators highlight its value -physical and symbolic- as key access to shared resources with the aim of re-creating a sense of publicness. This process raises many problems in terms of governance and rights' allocation among the users.

In claiming such spaces as common goods, what emerges is a new relationship between the world of people and the world of goods, for many times deeply entrusted to market logics. According to this view, the accent is no longer placed on the owner; in contrast, it falls on the role that a certain good plays in society (Rodotà , 2012). The debate on commons is nourished by the experiences of grassroots movements that give back subjectivity to widespread urban goods threatened by financial or real estate speculation. The relationship between political spaces and citizenship, understood as a practice of democracy, as a set of acts rather than as a stable condition (Nielsen & Isin, 2008), constitutes one of the leitmotifs concerning the growing privatization and profitability of the collectively produced value.

As Mitchell shows, urban movements always demand a space of representation, a space where the agenda of public discourse can be challenged or re-directed by raising voice in the political forum (Calhoun, 1992). In this sense, we can say that urban spaces are appropriated as public spaces, political spaces for debate and production of discourses. The right to exercising rights seems to take shape above all in the right to access public space under practical and symbolic forms.

However, such re-appropriation strategies run the risk to address rights to an elitist and restricted group of people. Let us consider occupied social centres, small communities based on specific territorial areas or abandoned building converted in illegal social housing; all of these initiatives tend to be partially public or even exclusive. This can happen due to a prolonged soil's occupation which gives birth to uses and habits belonging to a certain community: that being so even though collective, that space would be lived as private (Brighenti, 2011).

Therefore, the risk of these processes of appropriation of urban space is to produce areas closed from the outside, of self-closing social, with the result of including peers and excluding the diversity. In this vein, the urban commons deviate from the classical commons theory and due to their specificity, they could restrict the degree of openness especially when located in and limited to closed building with openness and sharing features. In these cases, the appropriation

itself risks becoming a different form of privatization / communitarisation of urban space. But it is also true that we all have need to make room for it, to find spaces of identity and sharing that make you feel at home. How can we 'manage' this ambivalence?

First of all, we should start by observing that the public living our cities is not homogenous. Rather societies experience a plurality of audiences: in fact, cities are populated of citizens, residents, tourists, immigrant groups, students, elderlies, women among the others. As a consequence, these categories can face conflicts and divergent needs. We are therefore coping with a plurality of re-appropriations, and it is essential to wonder whether such manifestations are aimed at voice-empowering or rather to a redistribution of internal powers that these places and practices shape (Ostanel & Cancellieri , 2014).

3.5.1 Shared practices and urban commons: preliminary conclusions

At this point, following the above reasoning upon the rise of urban commons and shared practices increasingly spread all over the city, we should investigate whether differences or similarities exist between the two. Actually, when speaking of urban commons, we do refer to the relation capital registered in urban production, positive externalities that are anything but the territorial relationships among individuals: those relationships rely basically on features as proximity, reciprocity, collaboration and mutual exchange. The relational value collectively produced by the space is therefore central to thinking, identifying and claiming commons starting from the urban context.

It is precisely in the context of commons movements' that the concept of commoning starts to circulate and to be brought into focus with greater clarity. Also, in the analysis of the urban commons, it seems clear that the dichotomy subject/object is absorbed in a whole element: the community which produces and takes care of the commons is simultaneously producer and consumer, according to Lefebvre thinking (Lefebvre, 1968).

In such a respect, the urban commons seem to share with the intangible assets of public interests, besides the characters of non-rivalry and non-exclusion, also those referring to a spontaneous but closed community able to attract multiple forms of engagement with respect to the value chain generated by the resource. In light of the emersion of these communities not

strictly related to the spatial fixity and proximity, the urban commons in many ways are similar to the commons of the intangible, especially when we refer to spaces aimed at producing a cultural and social outcome. These spaces of production, although locally placed, generate relationships spread all over the city. In this vein, it is possible to identify the practice of commoning as a shared practice. That being said, to develop shared practices, clearly need a supportive environment able to foster the intersection of the cultural and social sphere, which ultimately benefit the urban economy and would position cities in a more civilised system.

However, some cities are succeeding in this process, whereas others do not. So, it seems interesting to reflect upon the actors able to undertake the initiative in developing them. In the following pages, we will analyse the role of social dynamics and collective actions in the creation of the so-called social value extracted and produced within the commoning framework. Furthermore, we will observe that interactions processes between public institutions and social organisations, under favourable circumstances, could enable abandoned spaces or neglected area of cities, to function as a catalyst of local creative energies and incubators of social projects. Yet, examples of those experiences had reportedly failed in the collaboration of public administrations and civil society: many times, a too discretional political power has ended up arresting the creation of collective experiences.

3.6 Alternatives to the commons: squatting and occupation

From the previous pages, the need for somewhat alternative management of public and common spaces emerges with such clarity. An eternal struggle between public administrations, civil society and binding ties pave the way to different scenarios. When the State is absent, and civil society's needs don't meet top-down policies' interventions, illegal and extreme appropriations' strategies take over.

In fact, urban reformers, activists and civil society look beyond the State to find alternative ways and forms of resistance to make claims on urban resources and city space as "commons". These claims can emerge under different shapes such as illegal occupations, public assemblies, demonstrations up to structured dialogue with the public administrations. In such manifestations, it lays a deep sense of common stake or public interest with regard to a particular resource deemed common value (Foster & Iaione, 2016).

Quite often the emersion of such manifestations arises as a reaction to a missing action of the public administration, and in the light of such an absence, occupations are undertaken by the ones feeling neglected by the urban strategy. Back in time, social housing occupations have been the most known and have probably then paved the way to several other experiences, ranging from self-management urban green areas to the rise of urban gardens, re-converted libraries in the space of public leisure and consumption, sports centres addressed to the public use and so on and so forth. Many of these occupations have happened under an illegal regime: it would be interesting to reflect on the term "illegal". If public goods and services are underprovided, or even denied to the citizenship, who should be responsible for a public disruption? When the State is absent, is it reasonable to imagine a third kind of public ownership, that could be named as commons?

History is full of examples of squatting and illegal occupation: in 2001 the Occupy Movement brought the attention back on the movements that started to occupy public and private space to manifest dissent (Lenna & Trimarchi, 2019). Therefore, squatting is an action aimed at claiming space and rights back, either on several occasion, a tool to give new life to abandoned and neglected areas of cities. More importantly, occupations are often organised to shed light on a political message by exploiting the public function of a certain space. For example, by occupying abandoned buildings, urban movements try to create an alternative to the State power and escape from the normalization of predetermined mechanisms. Resistance movements act through initiatives of sharing, autonomy and togetherness initiatives[52], and not surprisingly using Castell's words: sharing is the way through which social networks empower and connect these movements.

3.6.1 Cultural spaces and occupations: claiming urban spaces.

Due to the proximity and knowledge of certain urban spaces, I believe that on overview of grassroots urban movements and squatting initiatives can be showed and explained by briefly telling about two cases in Rome aimed at re-creating a different way of living urban spaces, which will become urban commons..

[52] For Castells autonomy means working in hybrid spaces which are both public and urban; togetherness means the desire to work collectively but not necessarily within a community (Castells M. , 2000).

What is interesting in these examples is that despite the legality of the actions being carried out, the resources have been reclaimed by the practice and the experimentation of different forms of governance, in both cases based on the strong engagement of communities (Lenna, Trimarchi 2019). Indeed, despite the small urban scale such initiatives seem to take on importance due to their capacity of answering to specific urgencies and needs, fighting against the financialization of cities and giving the right back to the citizens to govern their own spaces.

Although, examples of illegal occupations can be found all over the world, from Spain to Chile, Denmark and in many other places, in Italy the case of Cinema America Occupato has been considered as a virtuous one. Rome, which is the national capital and historic centre of Italy, has become over the years a cosmos of inequalities, speculative investments and gentrifications' drifts. In 2012 the emblematic occupation of Cinema America brought the attention upon a group of activists who were seeking to reclaim a specific urban space as a way to fight austerity and enclosures (Lopez & Sarran, 2017).

3.6.2 Cinema America Occupato

Cinema America is one among the other cinemas in my neighbourhood closed lately; beyond the importance of the cinema institution as cultural producer itself, specifically in the Roman context, cinemas play a paramount role in public life articulation[53]. In this case, the occupation of the movie-theatre was carried out primarily by students who decided to march in 2010 against the public administration's decision of slashing the part of public budget destinated to culture's public expenditure.

In fact, in the cultural sector, this trend was particularly acute due to the persuasion that those spaces with lack utility are deemed to be commodified[54]. Right after the 2008 financial crisis, the

[53] The importance of cinemas in the Roman context finds its tradition in the postwar time, when during the economic boom, cinemas played a very important role. They were the site of contestation, the place where societal contradictions took place through the screen and were negotiated in the "commedia all'italiana".In more recent times, during the late 70's Rome has experienced a significative cultural activities plan implemented by the Cultural Affairs Department operating as part of the Mayor's cabinet. Estate Romana is the major event recalled; it was organized by the architect Renato Nicolini with the aim of stimulating and forcing the productive and emancipatory capabilities of urban space. The term emancipation let us think about the idea of practices able to emerge without specific policy or political intervention but just through will and communities' wishes (Lopez & Sarran, 2017).

[54] At the time of budget's cuts, the government decision was taken in accordance with the Minister implementation plan of spending review. These measures had a particular impact within the cultural sector, targeting activities ranging from performances and exhibitions, education and research, in order

cinema was supposed to be converted in an underground parking and a condominium of apartments. Interestingly enough, Cinema America was lived as apolitical occupation, with no expectations in terms of political presumptions or aspirations, whereas many other realities experiencing squatting and occupations are led or supported by politics.

Anyhow, the cinema has received attention from many exponents of the national cultural scene and together with the occupiers they succeed in saving the space. Furthermore, as a sign that this action has resonated with locals, small shops around it re-opened to give the occupants a place where to gather after being evicted several times from the police. Actions like this do not depend simply on the kindness of people, rather a belief in a common stake make people join for collective purpose.

As we will see also in the Teatro Valle experience, this kind of demonstrations led by a strong attitude to engage communities, to protect and to take care together of a certain space or good can be defined as *commoning*.

3.6.3 Teatro Valle Occupato

On June the 14th 2011, a group of theatre professionals occupied Teatro Valle in Rome, an ancient theatre built in the eighteen centuries. After the abolition of the Ente Teatrale Italiano, which used to be the main public funding body of the Italian theatrical sector, protests against the cuts started, and the occupation was supposed to last for few days. On the contrast, it ended after three years. During that time, the communards managed to keep open it and used it as a common space where living, working and programming a series of activities culturally related. In this particular case, the Teatro Valle situation was led by two different albeit correlated aims: on the one hand the will to keep producing cultural contents and on the other, in order for the theatre to stay open, coming up with a new financial model able to sustain it.

As previously said, since 2008 the financial balance of Italy was going through a deep crisis and the public expenditure for the cultural sector decreased from 0.9% of the GDP in 2009 to 0.5%

for the government to cope with the international financial crisis and reduce the Italian public debt. This austerity was accompanied by an intensive campaign of privatization of public services and goods up to the referendum on the ownership provision of water utilities. (Belingardi , Caleo, Giardini, & Pinto, 2014)

in 2011[55] and despite the invitation for international firms to invest in the Italian cultural heritage, this strategy failed leading many cultural institutions to shut down. Those were the years of the recurring expression "Cultural heritage as Italy's oil", that is to say a profitable source on which investing and making profit. In this light, with the precise purpose of avoiding the dichotomy public/private and the risk of seeing the theatre exploited for capital reasons, the theatre professionals decided to occupy it and made the case for the cultural common as an alternative governance (Borchi, 2016). Despite the struggle for raising funds, the idea of culture as commons implies a scenario in which community exchange, debate and inclusion are opposed to the culture as a product, where market values assess the value of culture.

3.6.4 Some differences and similarities

Albeit with consistent differences, both cases represent crucial examples in crafting the urban commons. Significant to note about the Cinema America experience is the willingness of the collective to engage the administration in the process of commoning as a necessary partner functional to their purpose; Cinema America finds itself in the unenviable position of having to co-opt the practices and strategies of the radical antagonist movements that have historically animated the political struggles for the 'right to urban spaces.' In other words, their activities manifested as a depoliticized version of the cultural arena make urban space become a pacified territory, thereby reproducing cinema as a non-oppositional and acritical practice (Castells, 2012).

Teatro Valle Occupato on the other hand by substituting and taking over the role of the administration proved that a grassroots activity group could build a successful cultural organisation and adopting the approach based on the governance of space as commons. When it comes to commons, as it will be further explored, a first necessity is to understand commons as an applicable model to real-life circumstances. For this reason, in order for Teatro Valle[56] to avoid the private selling, they ended to open up a dialogue with the administrations and took the decision to convert the illegal occupation in a foundation provided with a proper statute. This proves that illegal occupation, although moved by noble intents, may not be sustainable in the long run.

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[55] Figure taken from Eurostat Eurostat Data Explorer website. 2016. 'General government expenditure by function'. For more information go to http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/showdo?dataset=une_rt_m [Accessed March 2nd, 2020].

[56] At that point, Teatro Valle Occupato was no longer considered as public theatre, rather it was managed by a group of activists who named the collective after the theatre's name.

3.7 From urban commons to commoning as social practice

So far, the practice of commons has been analysed trying to take into consideration as many shades and degrees as possible, to understand the recent urban movements and social unrest. Lefebvre's idea of taking part to the *oeuvre* construction constitutes the ground for the common's theory: in fact, principally commons deal with the social question, highlighting the paramount role that social features play in making the commons growing. This social dimension is thus made of sociality, which involves individuals' relationship. Hence it can be argued that the commoning as a social collective element is what contributes to creating the commons (Euler, Johannes, 2018).

Many are the authors that use the concept of commoning referring to the commons as social practice; among the others, Meretz, Linebaugh, and Helfrich are important landmarks. How commoning might actually be defined, it is hard to determine. Nevertheless, a fundamental aspect of modern societies is the increased will of individuals of taking part to the living environment: in fact, through their engagement, they manage to actively play a role in the common resource's preservation being led by a recovered sense of civic responsibility. (Lenna, Trimarchi, 2019).

As seen, commons thus can be considered so when taken into consideration in relation with other elements; to put it differently they become commons only when in connection with people or communities and their self-given norms and rules of use (Euler, 2018). In fact, commons do not simply exist, rather they are created: they depend and rely on the relations, the type of interaction that people develop with each other and with the good itself.

More clearly the Anglo-Saxon approach, rather that adopting the commons framework, uses the notion of urban commoning as relational resource which characterizes contemporary societies. Indeed, commoning deals with a noun that involves a fluid dimension taking into account actions and processes rather than results. The strength of the commoning process relies on the performative and choral practice able to bring together unknown people within a spatial realm making the city not only the setting but also the means to collectively experiment with possible alternative forms of social organisation (Di Feliciantonio & Aru, 2018)

In the end, we could define the commoning process as the opportunities for individual growth and self-development by combining the search of shared solutions and meaningful activities with extended and deepened relationships, and the creation of material abundance with the care for others and for nature. Living together like this was and still is practised to various degrees all over the world. In the process, commoning has to be repeatedly scrutinised, updated and rehearsed in order to remain embedded in everyday life. This can never be taken for granted and needs a suitable framework which currently we can rarely find (Bennholdt-Thomsen, 2012).

3.8 Dimensions of commoning: voluntarism and peers' self-organization

Interconnectedness is one of the main elements that features social relations. These relations express themselves through actions such as talking, listening, engaging together and many others; these kinds of actions are keener to be reproduced daily. This makes sense when we talk about the formation of commons, as only a certain routine seems to be able to actually construct social forms that depict a minimal degree of stability so that one can speak of a commons.

Commoning practices importantly produce new relations among people: they encourage creative encounters and negotiations through which forms of sharing are organized and common life takes shape. Commoning practices do not simply produce or distribute goods, but essentially through co-production, they can create new forms of social life. Common space is a set of spatial relations produced by commoning practices.

However, crucial here is understanding the reason why the spaceless dimension of commoning can play an even more effective role: indeed, these relations can be organized and modelled through a different pattern. Space is not a vital element anymore to make the commons arising if not supported by other elements that give life to it. If they are organized as a closed system which explicitly defines shared space within a definite perimeter, it can run the risk of corresponding just and exclusively to a specific community of commoners. Commoning is a process that could be shaped by a social rivalry that often leads to historically contingent and ambiguous results: commoning may be fenced in within the limits of a specific community that explicitly tries to keep the commoning products and advantages for its members only. This is

why, as we shall see, enclosure through literal or symbolic barriers of a community's common space may signal the death of space-commoning (and commoning through space).[57]

On the other hand, if they take the form of an open network, on contrast it might emerge an always-open community able to communicate and exchange ideas (Stavrides , 2016).. In this vein, in such a respect it is important to emphasize the concept as a process of openness of those who share common worlds opening the circles of sharing to include newcomers, opening the sharing relations to new possibilities through a reconsideration of sharing rules and opening the boundaries that define the spaces of sharing. Expanding or opening common spaces directly expresses the power that commoning as a practice has to generate new forms of social life and the rise of a culture of sharing. Indeed, the threshold of spatiality acts as an important passage which connects while separating[58].

Hence, considering the commons (common urban spaces) as threshold spaces opens the possibility of studying practices of space-commoning that transcend enclosures and instead open innovative scenarios towards new commoners and inclusive social experiences. In fact, it is not just about the sharing of a certain space, considered as a resource or an asset; rather, it deals with a set of practices which explore the emancipating potentialities of sharing. The result is a common space which can be configured as a concrete product of collectively developed institutions of sharing and one among the crucial means through which these institutions take shape (*ibidem*).

3.8.1 The a-physical dimension of commons

[57] Common space, declined as acts of spatial enclosure, may end up either as collectively private space, i.e. the outdoor space of a gated community or as public space managed by authorities which act in the name of a community: examples can be the space of town square or a municipal park. In both cases, the closed common space might tend to "corrupt" the common and to block the potentialities of the practice of commoning.

[58] Thresholds might appear as boundaries which separate an inside from an outside, as, for example, in the case of a door threshold, but this act of separation is always and simultaneously an act of connection. Thresholds create the conditions of entrance and exit, prolong, manipulate and give meaning to an act of passage. This is why thresholds have been identified in many societies by rituals which attempt to establish the inherent possibilities of the crossing. Guardian gods or spirits dwell in thresholds because the act of passage is already an act that draws into potential connection an inside and an outside. Entering can be taken as an intrusion and exiting can convey the stigma of ostracizing.

The discussion upon the birth, the raise and the role of commons in contemporary societies has been carried on exploring the different scenarios and tools that the new citizenships have adopted to re-appropriate of their right to culture, to spaces and the city (Harvey, 1990).

As previously said, the understanding of commons origins in the form of common-pool resources, but the underlying classification of goods was criticized for ignoring the importance of the social processes at hand. In fact, the difficulty of the costs of exclusion was argued to be a social dimension that depends not only on the characteristics of the goods themselves but crucially on the respective demand, potential substitutes and "on how the good is supplied and at what levels it is produced" (Cowen, 1985). This was supposed to make clear that commons are not simply a type of goods but that their social dimensions must be taken into account when it comes to their analysis.

Whereas it is clear that the physical attributes of the resources and products at hand are important and shape the social practices that relate to it, the classification of goods seems to be rather unconvincing to the commons' description. Thus, a second impulse has been taken up to formulate the concept of commons in terms of social practice: the commoning practice. Coincidently lately, the entire world is experiencing a radical shift of paradigm with regards to the notion of publicness we dealt with so far. What is emerging is the fact that CPR, as developed in Ostrom writings, do not suffice with the contemporary model of social life. The spatial resource has now become the outcome of what could be defined the relational commons, made of relations among individuals, which share interests, ties and purposes for them to achieve a common goal.

Hence, new models of public space governance highlight the role of actions within space, rather than merely considering the space itself. In fact, contemporary societies should face the rise of a new commons, named commoning, produced and sustained by the communities. History has thought that when the public value is in danger due to enclosures of different nature, regenerative mechanisms are the only tools available to craft that value again. We could say that commons and thus commoning are generative[59], in other words, they are capable of continuous inventions about the right to re-create resources, meaning, tools and contents with the changing characteristics of the involved communities (Lenna, Trimarchi, 2018).

[59] Generativity, recovering the original meaning of the word as meant by Husserl -generativität – is about life, about becoming and the generation of possibilities, as well as their emersion and across generations.

3.9 The role of public administration in managing public space

Often, it might happen that when it comes to public resources' management, as space could be, civil society appears reluctant in collaborating with the public administrations: this can happen for many reasons, among the others running the risk to be flattened by strict ties and rules. At the same time, the above-mentioned forms of commonality when lurking of any kind of mediation between the actors involved could lead to forms of exclusion. This might be the case of physical urban commons created and raised by a specific community which is deputed to its maintenance; in fact, sometimes the commonality feature of these experiences may deny or limit the participation to more than one category of inhabitants. These sharing practices, by relying on factors as identity and belonging to a certain group, tend to end up as elitist and self-segregated initiatives which produce an impact on restricted areas. (Ostanel & Iannuzzi, 2015).

Rather, the aim of shared practices and commonalities in public space should be the even distribution of rights and resources to the designated right-holders, which is the citizenship as a whole. (Bianchetti, 2014). Within this scenario, scholars and policymakers have been wondering to what extent public administrations should play a role in fostering this process. On the one hand, we could agree that a degree of transparency, might it be internal or external to the institutional level, should be required to simplify the inner decision-making processes in the evaluation both of the collective recourse's allocation and the spillover effects expected, and yet to guarantee long term sustainability. On the other hand, particularly concerning the institutional layer, issues may arise in terms of tools to adopt when public administration comes in, and it can be challenging to elaborate a homogenous discipline to cope with several cases avoiding the risk to set a precedence.

In addition to this, the risk of inscribing the commons experiences within a juridical framework represents an excessive of normative production that could benumb their real essence, and which is mean an end. Indeed, untying relational bonds could provoke the devaluation of the commons themselves. On the other, a universal recognition within a clear category has been interpreted by some as the only way to develop a unique re-appropriation movement.

As pointed out within the previous paragraphs, questions upon public space often emerge in situations that could be named "regulatory slippage"(Foster, 2011), when the local government or private owner management of a resource disappears for various reasons, including relational choice of abandonment, for instance, in case of high costs of maintenance, or restrictions'

enforcement or finally due to negligence and careleness. In a well-known essay of more than two decades ago, Gerald Frug brings up a dual definition of cities, functional to frame the notion of the city within a bigger dimension. He sums up his theory with the notion of cities as 'creatures of State' and 'creature of communities' (Frug, 1980)[60].

This latter approach to the idea of the city allows rediscovering the social origin of cities while dealing with the law of the city (right to the city) in a new way. As previously recalled, to prompt the emersion of this atypical reality is the growing State's inability to adequately respond to social demands, especially at the local scale; as a consequence, cities reacted to with re-use of urban goods against decay and abandon. Municipalities had started to be constantly challenged by social experiences that, even when out of the circuits of legality, took on importance because acting in spaces and places that had fallen into disuse or that were in a state of neglect, reactivated their use for social purposes (Giglioni, 2017). In the following lines, we will try to figure out terms and conditions of the possible valuable interventions underpinned by public local authorities to grasp and return value to the public.

A consistent and effective public intervention should be intended as a strategic way to learn from the change while making it public, just and universal through a normative path able to guarantee rights and justice to the citizenship (Donolo, 1997). This is particularly interesting for the commons' framework as they represent the social acting premises and at the same time, they are the results of the social actors' interaction, even when random or unexpected.

In such a respect, it is important to highlight the role of this unexpected yet random encounter that happen in space, or even better in public space. As we have singled out throughout the research, public space has some historical function which can be identified with basic survival, entertainment, commercial, civil, political, social and religious life. The randomness of what happened within the space seems rather crucial when it comes to the construction of systems of social infrastructure made by communities and its social capital. In fact, randomness and fortuity are typical and important elements of socialization that belong to almost exclusively to public space. For instance, Baudelaire's flaneur, as well as the Situationist International,

[60] With regards to this dichotomy, needless to say is the fact that after the affirmation of the nation-States between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, the first legal concept has clearly prevailed since States have removed municipal experiences and undifferentiated functions of the public State tasks in a condition of narrow instrumentality. Thus, the passive role of cities was due to the logic of endowing the cities with the infrastructures from the States to affirm citizenship rights, administrative ability, the efficacy of decisions and deliveries of public services (Giglioni, 2017).

embraces change as a resource, and this can also apply to simpler situations of everyday life. Miles says: "The street offers casual encounters, the possibilities of engagement, the adoption or relinquishing of a personality." (Miles, 2000) and on the same note, Lefebvre developed the notion of "moments", as those creative acts that go against the normative approach of urban planning (Porter & Shaw, 2013). This is to say that all these moments, encounters have in common they not just happen in public space, but moreover that public space is the only space where they can happen. Consequently, we can argue that public space cannot be replaced and the feeling of being together is the most special whereas normal elements that can be sought and found in public space, the most resourceful element we own.

Going back to the administration discourse, in this vein, public institutions should be thought as a functional infrastructure of the social acting, in other words, they should represent places where collective actions are imagined and shaped. For public authorities to be effective in finding balances and solutions to cope with civil societies' conflicts, actions would be more effectively crafted if built upon cases' observations. In this view, public authorities become part of the social movement learning by doing and doing by learning, avoiding the risk of merely top-down interventions. First of all, institutions change as the result of the communicative action of the different social actors who can contribute to change the institutional structure: there are several active change strategies where public policies to prove somehow effectively, regulators should accept the option of some institutional change. Precisely, it is the way in which the social question is analyzed that can contribute to changing institutional forms (Ostanel, 2017).

Interestingly enough, Donolo introduces the notion of 'active politics', which appears resourceful within this framework: indeed, with the term active politics, we do refer to real processes aimed at enhancing active and dormant actions that need specific comprehension beyond a mere regulation. This seems particularly important due to the blurred nature of collective actions that merge political and social matters, in fact relationships, interpretations and actions play a fundamental role in the analysis of these phenomenon. Among others, this is one of the main reasons leading part of the researchers to focus on bottom-up experiences able to craft 'ad hoc' institutions. The objective is to learn from negative solutions adopted so far, working for new responses to address unheard needs (Sen , 1999).

3.9.1 Redesigning the regulatory toolbox: a new way of shaping public authorities

Despite the differences arising among legal framework differences' of each country, we can observe that such a big debate on the institutions' design of public authorities is at the stake of policymakers, governments and activists all over the world, due to its ability to include civil parts and enabling new tools of governance allowing partnerships and alliances. Many are the authors questioning upon the need of experimenting a diverse institutional form (Arena & Iaione, 2015) what they define informal public law (Giglioni, 2017). With this expression we refer to situations with inadequate structuring of the network of public powers able to satisfy the claims and expectation of the various social actors (Foster, 2009).

By looking closer especially to the Italian case scenario, mainly three models of informal public law can be summed up in accordance with the above-mentioned experiences: part of the literature has extracted from the empirical cases a three-category model. Borrowing from Giglioni, a first one has been named "the tolerance model". This label is certainly useful to our purposes as it shows with clarity the delicate situation of conflict between positive law and case of uncertainty where informality and illegality tend to overlap. These are the cases in which social experiences are usually simply tolerated. In such circumstances, the positive law has a soft effect, because relationships developed primarily on a political level, tend inevitably to be solved in one of two ways: either by conveying the social experience through one of the forms of the innovation tool of the new informal public law (these policies and tools will be discussed below) or by ending the informal social experience producing the expansion of the positive law. Anyhow, beyond the outcome interesting to note is that before it occurs, conditions exist in which illegality is tolerated. Even though from a legal perspective, this can never be considered as an acceptable legal condition, yet the fact remains that public authorities continue to uphold a temporary informal relationship of co-existence with such social experiences.

On a different level, as we are about to see in detail, Giglioni labels "original legal qualification model" a totally different solution which in these lines will be briefly reported and later on studied in depth. Within this model, the original and uncommon answer to recognizing social experiences of general interest have been undertaken by the public administration to deal with the unreleased form of public space management. Starting from the experience of the former Filangeri Asylum of Naples, a well-known complex located in the city centre, the local public

authorities have adopted a resolution declaring that specific type of property a civil urban asset[61]. The Filangeri case will be exhaustively discussed in the next chapter, yet the essential features of this resolution require some attention. The fundamental fact to know is that the city council resolution which has entrusted to citizens' committee the use of goods meant exclusively for collective enjoyment, is that through this original qualification, which appears extraneous to any definition of overt law, they recognise forms of self-management on the part of organised social groups which the local administration guarantees to the community. Self-management involves the recognition of civic communities that through democratic assemblies and self-determined acts make decisions to determine the use of goods qualifying for civic use and related activities (Giglioni, 2017). As far as these collective organisations are involved, public local authorities become supporters and guarantors toward the community itself. This solution precisely embodies one of the possible forms of that "informal public law" which goes hand in hand with positive law, by granting to social experience a full legal qualification.

In this direction, a third model is represented by the well—known pact of collaboration instrument. By adopting this pact, municipalities have chosen to approve the regulation for the collaboration between municipalities themselves and their citizens for managing common urban goods. As we will see soon, the first example is the Bologna one, adopted back in 2014. In general, under the terms of the pact of collaboration is intended a resolution made by the local government in the form of a general regulation, which at the same time states the legitimacy of the pacts themselves and offers a general discipline that allows the use (potentially) of any good or space on condition of ensuring their collective use. We could consider this action as institutional craftsmanship.

At first glance, in order for public authorities to rethink themselves in a new and effective way, a balance between formality and informality should be achieved in both processes and outcomes. Indeed, what emerges here is a special version of order without law, whereby rules of hard law[62] emerge disregarding law as formal source, that is to say that they concur to establish a system aimed at more effectively serving general interests. In any case, the administrative practices arise due to public administration's inability to provide suitable response to certain social demands and expectations. Especially in Italy, many recent studies have highlighted the administrative inefficiency with regards to the public law. The void between formal abstract law

[61] See the decision of the Naples Municipal government no. 893 of 2015, concerning just the former Filangieri Asylum, which represents a sort of paradigm for the next resolutions the Municipality adopted.

[62] The term hard law refers to legally binding obligations that are definite and that delegate authority for interpreting and implementing the law.

and real law is not linked by arguing that on the one hand, the latter belong to world of facts and on the other hand, the first refers to raising experiences spontaneously produced: hence, innovative solutions to cope with this gap are needed.

3.9.2 A collaborative governance for the commons

To put in effect a collaborative governance model for the commons' management, it seems particularly important to define roles and actions to be undertaken by the different actors. Public powers morphology should be thought of as wide and open platform, as an ecosystem within reach of citizens, communities and groups in order for them to cooperate with public authorities for a common interest. Over the years, the commons' management has always dealt with a vertical and self-centeredness public decision-making process based on control and leadership dynamics (Iaione, 2017) whereas attention is now increasingly put on the idea of civic intelligence. In other words, civic intelligence is the way through which citizens are made capable of cooperating to care, re-regenerate, manage and produce the commons.

To achieve this change and turn private citizens, inactive citizens, especially in Italy within the legislative framework, the above-mentioned pact of collaboration act has been identified as an adequate solution to set up a collaborative institutional ecosystem. One the one hand because these pacts enable citizens to develop and express their stewardship with such an autonomy and on the other hand, public administration can maintain control and manage the urban spaces entrusting the collective dimension. At the same time, while reshaping public powers to foster and guarantee a process of publicness, the underneath idea is to develop a model able to provide within the cities' spaces, new places of social practices' experiments.

When it comes to pacts of collaboration, the most famous example is the well-known Bologna Regulation on Public Collaboration for the Urban Commons[63].

[63] http://www.comune.bologna.it/media/files/bolognaregulation.pdf

Box. 1.1 The Bologna regulation on Public Collaboration for the Urban Commons

The Constitution art. 118, in implementation of the subsidiarity principle, states that the local authority has to sustain and enhance the civic participation in order for citizens to concur to reach a global and collective interest.
In May the 19, 2014 the Bologna Municipality has adopted a legal to enable citizens and administrators to collaborate with the aim of taking care and re-generate the Urban commons good of Bologna. The regulation, made in collaboration with Labsus and Monte di Bologna and Ravenna Foundation, within the project "City as common good" represents a tool for the Municipality and the citizenship to implement the horizontal subsidiary principle and, at the same time, to model a reference-set of initiatives and situations to adopt.
The Regulation of Public Collaborations are the necessary juridical framework to enforce the pact of collaboration' acts. These instruments guarantee the collaboration among citizenship and public administration with the aim of taking care and enhancing material and immaterial goods (also digital goods) through participative and deliberative procedures. After being implemented, three laboratories have been organised in order for the pacts to be shared and undertaken and while writing the norms, the communication phase was starting.

From 2014 the pacts of collaboration provide a new instrument to enforce their sense of stewardship: The Bologna experience was born to address some autonomous private initiatives emerged intending to take care of commons and neglected spaces. Examples are several green areas, and self-made urban gardens spread among the city. Pacts' of collaboration aim is to discipline the relation State-Community; different from both a standard administrative agreement and a contract; it can be figured as a policy guideline, tool of soft accountability aimed at achieving a common objective.

Interestingly enough, the collaboration pacts are thought and written in accordance with a few principles that recall the ones belonging to the commons' theory. In fact, they are based on:

- Mutual and reciprocal trust, which means that local administration and civil society are positioned on a same level, and due to this closeness, local authorities are able to delegate to the citizenship responsibilities and duties.

- Informality, that it is the way through which the public decision maker comes out from the strict legal framework made of bureaucratic constraints and compliances that tend to slow down processes and changes.
- Transparency and public evidence, which are both of them paramount for reaching and engagement reasons and foster civic attention and participation.
- Communication and information, that help public authorities to tell and spread the mission and the idea leading the ongoing processes. In particular, both of them are crucial to avoid asymmetrical information risks and facilitate the exchange among the actors involved.
- Civic autonomy, this last might be considered as the most innovative feature of the pacts. The community as whole becomes the main actor of the process, being the one to pursue the common interest by acquiring public autonomy. The common goods paradigm' is based on participative and democratic tools that enable the single communities to identify the goods to care and set up shared and collaborative responsibilities.

3.9.3 The right of civic and collective use of goods

Local authorities and the State are to be considered as exponential bodies of a particular community. This means that by law they might residually be given the care of the interests of the community as a whole. Thus, a new concept of space emerges the space of the enjoyment of life, instead of the space of the government of lives. The processes that normally lead to individualisation of the societies tend to set up a space of freedom and autonomy for individuals' actions (Bang, 2005). Hence, for this reason, urban life gains value as space where people can be able to give meaning to their living and experience limits and opportunities (Melucci, 1998).

Both the sense of living and acting of human beings is relationally produced rather than being originated from institutional structures. Nowadays, increasingly the individual action tends to coincide with the creation of common and social space, on the one hand, for controlling ends and, on the other, as a stage of self-organisation. So, all these experiences show how our times face the crucial essence of an everyday public (audience) with particular attention on daily life as shared and collective action. (Ostanel & Iannuazzi, 2015). Nevertheless, too often the expectations do not meet the facts, and many cases end to be excluding experiences rather than

inclusive: a range of rescaling practices in fact risk to miss their mission being unable to produce 'voice' and collective empowerment and on contrast, they call them out from a collective dimension (Hirschmann, 1975).

To avoid this risk, the rights to civic and collective goods, mainly adopted in Naples, seems to establish a new relationship between citizens and institutions, citizens and urban spaces able to highlight on the one hand all the public action's limits affecting social and urban dynamics and on the other hand giving strength to the bottom-up social force leading the new citizenship. The main difference that emerges between the pact of collaboration and the right to civic and collective goods is the legitimacy for the public administration to recognise autonomy and independence to existing forms of self-organisation. Actually, it is a different tool that local authorities and public governance have started to adopt in order for them to reconvert a pre-established relationship between the state and social movements. It seems interesting to note that what is increasingly emerging is the challenge to scale-up private initiatives to a collective scope through the crucial mediation role of the institutions.

Chapter 4

Two experiences of commoning in Public space

4.1 A new urban order

More than ten years ago, Mike Davis, in *Planet of Slums* (Davis, 2006)[64], argued that the majority of the planet population would have moved to the urban areas. Indeed, this started to happen right after the Second World War and, in a while, cities have become the cradle of demographic growth.

As a matter of fact, the population in the world is presently growing at a rate of around 1.05% per year, meaning that the current average population increase is estimated at 81 million people per year. Consequently, cities represent the space of life in which human beings reflect their identity, habits, well-being and, thus, survival. Mainly within developing countries, for the population to see their wealth rising, urban centres have started to sprawl up to the rise of thirty million inhabitants' cities affected by the capitalistic disease and the pursuit of an endless richness.

According to Davis, the new urban order, as he names it, is featured by strong social and economic disparities within the cities and among them: in fact, many of the built-up areas keep growing without any urban plan and with the result of being affected by a sense of fear and disorder.

Quoting Jane Jacob: *There is a wistful myth that if only we had enough money to spend, we could wipe out all our slums in ten years, reverse decay in the great, dull, gray belts that were yesterday's and day-before-yesterday suburbs, anchor the wandering middle class and its wandering tax money, and perhaps even solve the traffic problem. But look what we have built with the first several billions: low-income projects that become worse centres*

[64] Mike Davis, Planet of Slums, Feltrinelli, Milano 2006.

of delinquency, vandalism and general social hopelessness that the slums they were supposed to replace. [Jacob, 1961, p.4]

Although these few lines were written more than fifty years ago, things appear almost unchanged, and within the de-territorialisation process involving our societies, a re-appropriation process led by active citizens movements is taking over. To rediscover the nature and meaning of our cities, this chapter will explore how groups of dwellers, acting as commoners, have struggled to fight against the depersonalisation and alienation of urban spaces (Capone, 2020). In fact, it is by looking closer to those spaces of urban resistance that it becomes possible to glimpse the real nature of cities which should be found in the act of living.

But what does 'living' mean? We can try to imagine and associate the idea of using and living by connecting the concept of living to those of having (possessing) and enjoying. The bird's nest illustrated by Illich is a clear example. If we figure a bird's nest, we can see crossed little twigs picked up all over, put together to compose it. The nest becomes the bird's space of life; this space is the result of an accurate awareness of the environment, since birds examine the tree and scour the area to make sure that their eggs will not be in danger. By this exploration, birds can set up distances and closeness with the outside: by doing this, they can establish a dialogue between the inside and outside dimensions. Within this exchange, their life takes place. (Illich, 2013).

When it comes to urban space, the practice of living and stewardship of urban public spaces tends to coincide with the idea of staying and inhabiting. Living the space. The Greek term *oikodomia* can come to help. In fact, this word is composed of *òikos*, which means home and *domeìn*. This latter is particularly interesting because on the one hand serves a virtuous alternative to the more frequent *òikos-nomìa*, and mostly because by doing so it emphasises the practice of well making (i.e. making cities) in contrast to the concept of organisation and administration (urbanistic rules and laws) proper of the word *nomein*. According to this, *oikodomia* starts meaning the art of making a place feel like home (*ibidem*).

Suddenly, this term becomes exceptionally significant due to its intrinsic meaning of making a home, which is what the birds do by building their nest; it is a continuous learning process, within which vital relations with space and who lives the space are constantly woven. If these

relations run out, space is perceived as estranged and without identity; for this reason, it is crucial to be aware that the human territoriality deals with the physical survival as much as the social and cultural one. (La Cecla, 1993).

Not surprisingly, it is from a strong sense of living as adaptation to the environment, that public space is actually originated: indeed, this happens through a recognition process of the individual, while at the same time and in the same space many individuals, which make a community, go through the identical process, but together. Without the presence of public space, this process could not exist. Public space is the stage where a collective takes place, it is the rise of a shared dimension which allows human beings to coexist by the virtue of diversity. As Hannah Arendt says, the public sphere is therefore the common world that gathers individuals together and yet prevents their falling over each other (Arendt, 1999).

> *What makes mass society so difficult to bear is not the number of people involved, or at least not primarily, but the fact that the world be- tween them has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and to separate them. The weirdness of this situation resembles a spiritualistic seance where a number of people gathered around a table might suddenly, through some magic trick, see the table vanish from their midst, so that two persons sitting opposite each other were no longer separated but also would be entirely un-related to each other by anything tangible.* [Arendt, 1999, p. 39]

Consequently, if only one is excluded from the urban realm or isolated, the risk of jeopardising the collective and the relational dimension of the city becomes exceptionally high. Therefore, the feature of publicness decreases and the chance to create a liveable urban space fails.

> *The vita activa, human life in so far as it is actively engaged in doing something, is always rooted in a world of men and of man- made things which it never leaves or altogether transcends. Things and men form the environment for each of man's activities, which would be pointless without such location; yet this environment for each of man's activities, which would be ponintless without such location; yet this environment, the worold into which we are born, would not exist without the human activity which produced it, as in the case of fabricated things; which takes care of it, as in the case of cultivated land; or which established it through organization, as in the case of body politic. No human life, not even the life of the hermit in nature's wilderness, is possible without a world which directly or indirectly testifies to the presence of other human beings. All human activities are conditioned by the fact that men live*

> *together, but it is only action that cannot even be imagined out-side the society of men.* [Arendt, 1999, p. 18]

For this and many other reasons, the right to the city has gained a preeminent role in the contemporary debate. As Lefebvre has argued, this the right of not being excluded from the urban reality. According to this, the right to the city means that citizenship as a whole has the right to co-produce the urban space and therefore, to establish those relationships able to increase the quality of living.

4.2 Methodology and reading guide

This chapter takes a close look at the commoning experiences. I will look at two different cases which are at the stake of the contemporary debate, with the intention of understanding in a straightforward and comprehensive way how public spaces have been re-appropriated by active groups of citizens dialoguing with the local administrations. Also, I will focus on how the classical theory of urban commons overcame the need for the mere physical aspect of the space, adding the element of social relations as a crucial node to the physical boundary of the space itself: not by chance, within the economic interpretation of commons, the level of information grows with the proximity to space. Such an evidence is particularly important in the light of the previous definitions of commons: for instance, David Harvey considers common space as a relation between a social group and its effort to define a world that is shared by its members (Stavrides, 2015). In this chapter I will try to explore if space-less relations can be considered as diverse and new commons themselves.

Before delving into the two experiences, it is essential to notice that the following analysis does not aim at classifying the experiences, nor evaluating them in terms of success or failure, even though it might be seducing to interpret the results in terms of "what could have been done better". When it comes to human beings, flexibility, openness, and reversibility are essential. The aim of this section is to understand the process that brings urban commons to become relational commons, and how and to what extent public administrations may contribute to this transition. Are these kinds of commons functioning and self-reproducible?

4.3 Two experiences of commoning

Grande come una città

GRANDE COME UNA CITTÀ

L'ex Asilo Filangeri di Napoli

The purpose of conducting an analysis of two different cases, although with many elements in commons, is to understand how experiences born from dissimilar contexts and with diverse boosts have given life to new public common spaces. The idea is to use the commoning experiences as nodes that highlight and isolate the lattice of relations that occur with specific regard to a certain place. Several problems have been encountered with regard to the choice of the cases: this because of time, funds and a combination of causes, that we could define "motley crew[65]" (Caves, 2003). Moreover, the choice had to follow specific criteria in order for the cases to be coherent with the whole work, that are being in a relation with public administrations, being open and in evolution. Surely, the idea of picking cases which are permanent or have an undefined but surely long-time horizon ahead is beneficial towards the pursuit of 'normality', following the idea that weak ties[66] foster strong connections (Granovetter, 1973). Everyday practice of the so-called commoners (Hodkinson, 2012) is a constant that have led the investigation, on the one hand looking closer to their institutional bonds with the local administrations and, on the other, keeping the focus on the ordinary life that regulate social relations and thus public life.

For my purpose, I have chosen two different but consistent experiences, and each of them is relatively new and in an experimental phase. Among the two, the Ex Asilo Filangeri in Naples is the oldest one, born nine years ago. The second case, Grande come una città in Rome is more recent, date back to 2018.

The cities hosting the two cases are both major cities in Italy and both of them are positioned in the central part of the country. To have an approximation on what to expect in terms of participation and size of the initiatives, one can draw an idea in terms of density, extension and position.

[65] The motley crew is the idea that complex creative aims need different skills to produce value. This concept is usually applied to the creative industries area and in particular to filmmaking. In fact, according to the author film development and production include many roles which include producers, directors, writers, storyboard artist and many others. The motley crew principle has implication for innovation and the creative output of organisations.

[66] The author argues that the strength of a tie is probably a linear combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy, and the reciprocal services which characterise the tie. Each of these is somewhat independent of the other, though the set is obviously highly interconnected.

CITY	EXTENSION KM²	POPULATION
NAPLES	1.171 km²	3.084.890
ROME	1.285 km²	4.342.212

Table 4.1 Demographics of the two cities. Sources: ISTAT, 2019.

More specifically, the Ex Asilo Filangeri is located in a central Naples' neighborhood called San Lorenzo which has an extension area of 1, 42 km² and a population of 49.275 inhabitants. On the opposite side, Grande come una città is based in a semi-peripheral area of the city of Rome, in the III Municipality which has an extension of 98 km² and a population density per mq² of 2.095,8.

The setup of the analysis is conceived as an inquiry of the role of public administration and local civil actors in the re-appropriation of public spaces. The first stage of the analysis is aimed at acquiring a sufficient understanding of the context. In order for the research to pursue this aim, I started to actively participate to the initiatives held by the two organisations: the 2020 has been a particular year due to the coronavirus pandemic that has affected the entire world, hence many manifestations have taken place online rather than on site.

Assessing the urban commons as a specific form of commons can be hard, whereas the evaluation of urban practices should prove much easier. This happens due to the magmatic feature of the disciplines usually studied within the commons phenomenology, but also considering that the social value generated by the commons experiences is not at the stake of policy makers, due to its non-monetary return. For example, when it comes to urban studies, the DNA theory is largely adopted (Votsis & Haavisto , 2019).

The theory of urban DNA has been frequently applied to describe how a set of urban growth parameters may encode the manner in which cities evolve in space and the spatial shape they take as they do so. This theory ends up to cluster two categories of indicators: livability and sustainability. The former is a subjective concept often measured with quality of life indicators

that refer to well-being, whereas the latter is usually explained by the three-pillars concept, in which social, economic, and environmental aspects determine a system's sustainability and how it ensures that the coming generations are taken into account as well.

Within the quality-of-life indicators' literature, problems often arise in terms of interpretation of the indicators themselves. In fact, thinking about the urban context, we suddenly realize that cities deal with economic, ecological, political and cultural issues, that are often faced with rapid and short-term solutions rather than with long-term planning. This happens because the administrations and policy makers, who should be in charge of addressing cities and citizens' needs, through economic, ecological, political and cultural policies, end up adopting effective and immediate solutions to reach more consensus, rather than embracing a long-term perspective that could bring virtuous results.

Nevertheless, whether in the long or short term, the products' policies need to be administrated. The more significant is the impact produced in terms of growth and development, the broader the assessment of this impact will be. When making an assessment, the data and characteristics of the case are studied in depth. In the example of urban space, the management's relations of this asset are crucial indicators

Not surprisingly, urban growth both at macro and micro-level are strongly influenced by the urban governance. (Shelley, Jantz, & Goetz, 2003). Hence it seems efficient studying the urban commons through the assessment of the urban governance and the experiences that have been generated (Votsis & Haavisto, 2019).

Accordingly, the aim of urban governance should be also boosting civic participation, that is becoming more and more important in cities' development and urban space management. In fact, beside public and private goods these goods determine local development, because it is symptom of sense of reasonability for the city and the right to the city (Sobol, 2017). In fact, it would not be wrong to say that civil society can be actually seen in terms of organisation of public life: residents decide and act together about the future of the community as social system. Tocqueville describes civil society as a sphere of mutual relations between citizen who act together for the common good in a framework of a social system (de Tocqueville, 1996). As a consequence, these have been taken into account as elements of the analysis in this elaborate.

A second phase of the case study has been set-up as in-depth unstructured interviews conducted

with either actors of the commission or implementation process, or people who could give an insightful contribution about the features of the space or other relevant details. I talked to artists, activists, civil servants and participants in general. The sampling followed rather spontaneously the so-called snowball interview (Bryman, 2015).

Here below, it follows an example of what snowball interviews mean within the sociological methodology research: during my first interview with regard to the Ex Asilo Filangeri, it emerged that the internal organization and schedule of the programmes was addressed to a certain group of people, which chair the public assemblies held each Monday. It appeared to me that an interview to someone involved in that could have helped my analysis, so I asked the interviewee if he could help me find the next person to interview. And so, it happened[67]. The third phase of the study consisted in a comparison of the information obtained by the interviews, publications and press coverage.

The chapter examines two experiences, displaying all the elements of the exploration: a preliminary description of the content of the cases study, the critique of the cases elaborated with the mash-up of the interviews results and the information obtained through readings and participation to programmed events. At the end a general discussion will be offered in order for the reader to detect the complex of the bundle of relations that give life to the creation of urban commons. The two cases will bring different ways of re-appropriating public space. Surely differences and similarities will emerge, and probably among the two cases, one could appear more eloquent than the other. It is important to bear in mind that the aim of the analysis is far from ranking the two stepping back from the question which is the most successful way of re-appropriation, whereas the underneath objective is to explore the role of citizens, public relations and public administrations in the creation and management of the commons.

[67] In disciplines such as sociology and statistics research, snowball sampling is a nonprobability sampling methodology where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. Hence, the sample group is said to grow like a rolling snowball. As the sample builds up, enough data are gathered to be useful for research.

4.4 Grande come una città

4.4.1 Conception

The third municipality is located in a semi peripheral area of the city of Rome; it has such a wide extension and it goes form Città Giardino along the Aniene river up to the city ring road. The neighbourhood is a highly populated area with more than 205.000 inhabitants, that makes this place bigger than Cagliari, Parma and Trieste.

Figure 3. The map of Rome municipalities.

To a closer glance, right in the heart of the neighbourhood stands a coffee shop, which is always open, and a kebab shop next to it. Just above the two rolling shutters a bright sign saying: *La felicità non si paga, si strappa*[68]. Within the crowded intersections of streets and squares, cultural and collective spaces run low: in fact, there is just one library, a very tiny theatre and a cinema. Just behind the neighbourhood skyline, a massive mall arises where every year more than eighteen million people decide to cross the threshold to shopping or eating or walking through the air conditioned and artificially enlighten corridors. Usually people spend three hours and half on average inside shopping centres, twice per week!

Accordingly to what said above, as far as the III municipality is concerned, one could easily picture a slice of actual public city, wherein by night it is harsh to meet someone down the street, whereas

[68] This Italian slogan could be translated as "Happiness is not for paying, it is all about grabbing.".

on contrast, a cathedral in the desert (the shopping centre) open until late night, it is full of cars going in and out. Few questions spontaneously come up: is this the urban development model that urbanists and policy makers have imagined for an entire neighbourhood? Is this the way inhabitants are supposed to live their spaces?

Federico Tommasi, Keti Lelo and Salvatore Monni have written an interesting essay about the inequalities in the city of Rome (Lelo, Monni, & Tomassi, 2019). Divided in 26 maps, they highlight how cultural, economic and social disparities are distributed in the entire area of Rome: as they call it, they investigate the metropolitan social geography of the city. Interestingly enough, in the map n.9, mapping the cultural offer of the city, it is clear that the III municipality is among the others, one with the minor concentration of cultural spots.

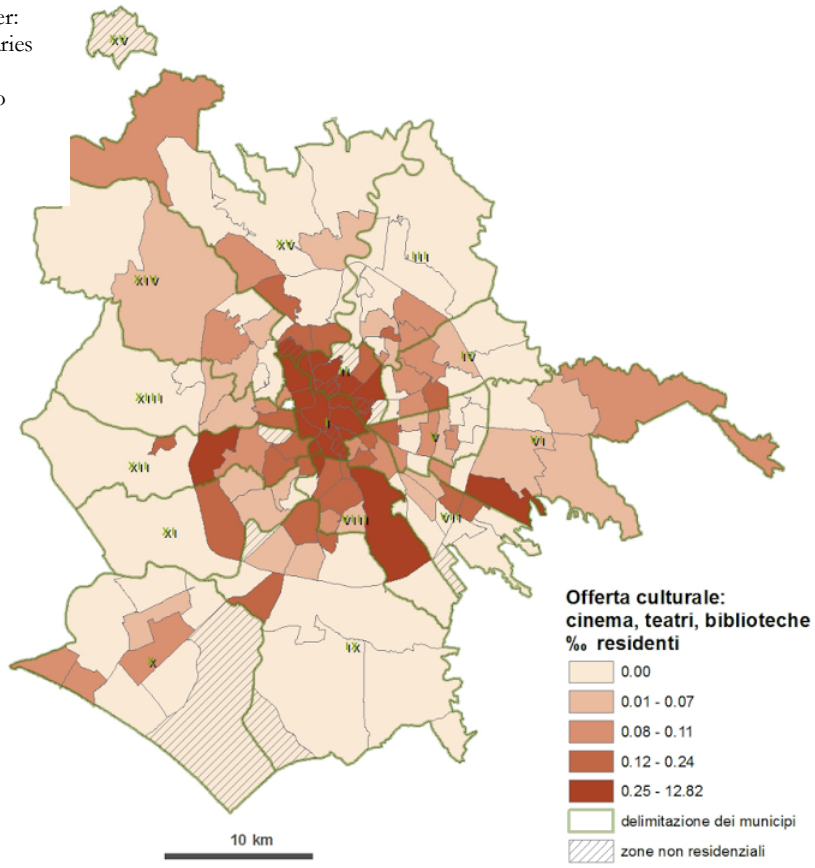

Figure 4. Cultural offer: cinema, theatres, libraries %residents. Source: www.mapperoma.info

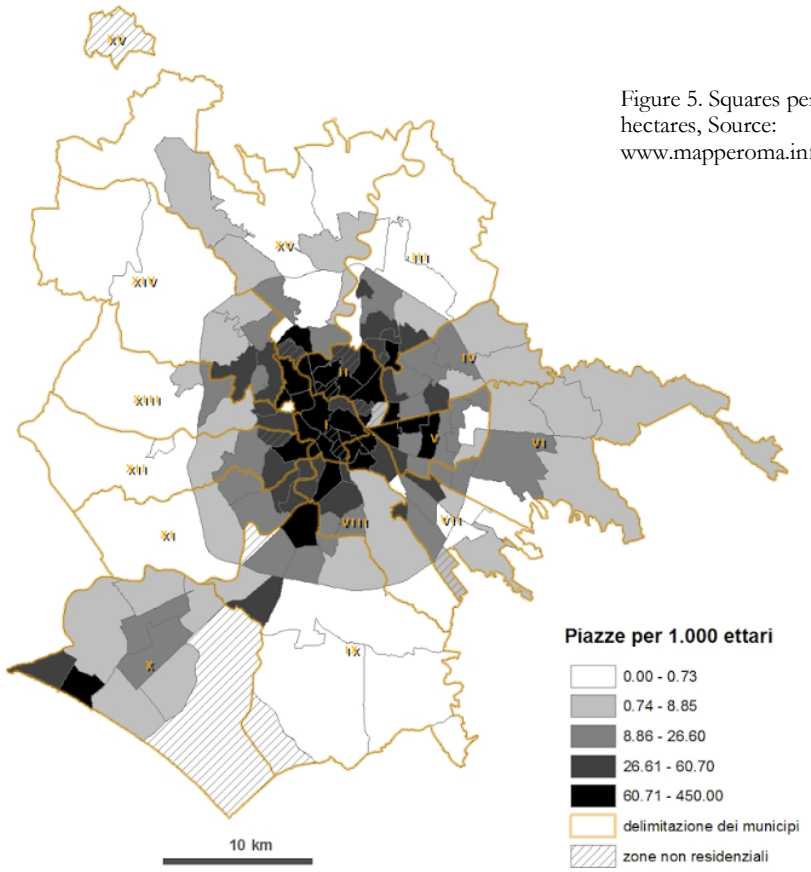

Figure 5. Squares per 1.000 hectares, Source: www.mapperoma.info

Furthermore, as the second map shows (figure 5.) the number of squares decreases moving away from the city centre. Indeed, squares portray the grade of sociability, formal, informal and even fortuitous encounters that happen in public space. As largely argued in the previous chapters, these spaces of exchange and encounter represent a crucial infrastructure, namely social infrastructure, to create and increase the so-called social capital. The city centre and the old popular suburbs crawl with strong social relations and a number of public participation occasions, due to their density and intense human and social capital they have inherited from the past. On contrast, one could observe that dwellers of the newer suburban areas, both the richest as the poorest, since they are located far from cultural nodes and lack in services and public and collective spaces, weaker relations have been built among the people. As a consequence, relational goods seem to be less consumed.

4.4.2 Content

From the verb "to participate": as athlete, I can barely recall the number of times that I have been told "the important thing is taking part".

To an accurate view, the deep meaning of the word *participate* deals with the act of actively taking part, being interested, being part of something bigger, join together with the others[69]. With regard to Grande come una città, at the stake of the participants there is more than a match, rather the stakes are the citizens as a whole. Participating to public life is a right as a duty, mostly in a period of representative democracy's crisis as the current one is.

The Grande come una città experience is not an isolated attempt of the III municipality dwellers to re-appropriate of their space of living. The name Grande come una città, which literally means "As Big as a city", has been chosen in order for the non-residents and mostly administrators to understand that living the neighbourhood mean thinking at a bigger scale, enlarging the scope and reformulating policies and practices able to reflect a wider cultural, social and urbanistic dimension.

[69] Definition from the Treccani dictionary online.

Before delving into the case study description, in order for the reader to inscribe the experience within a proper context, I will briefly introduce the political scenario that has characterised the rise of Grande come una città.

Back to 2016 administrative election, Virginia Raggi (Movimento Cinque Stelle, M5S) becomes Rome's Mayor and the same party wins also the III municipality. After a short time, the municipality council is defied, and new elections are announced. At the primary election, the left-wing party elected, nominates Giovanni Caudo as Municipality president. With him, the role of councillor will be given to Christian Raimo who has always been involved in the social activist scene while being at the same time an intellectual and journalist. His ambivalent role enabled the inception of Grande come una città, despite the unstable and weak reality of the Roman social movements.

After two years, in 2018, a group of people led by the municipality councillor of culture, started to organise cultural and political events in order for the neighbours to have a proper common space wherein discuss about their district life. Some assemblies later, on September the fifth, in a first official meeting, the idea of setting up a more structured network arises. The underneath idea was that the process is much more important than the result: they started looking at other realities and chose to adopt the NGO model based on the social multiplier effect. Within the social cooperation world, instead of building a school or a well, cooperants try to work on the education and the learning process to provide tools and knowledge. By doing so, they try to strengthen the process to guarantee different results. For this reason, Grande come una città has chosen to focus on people, rather than specifically on the projects.

In accordance with the interviewed voices, the experience is to be intended as a space of reflection and discussion, as a bottom-up practice and public goods and spaces re-appropriation's movement aimed at renovating the interest for the public decision-making process at a territorial and municipal level. After several attempts, this time the organisation has taken shape rapidly and spontaneously.

Key factors of success were on the one hand a well-organised calendar of cultural and political events and on the other the creation of more than thirty working groups, some of them specifically dedicated to the network's management. But essential element was a deep and reciprocal trust relation among the actors.

To match the puzzle, it is important now to dedicate few lines to the actors that have played a role in this context. In fact, three are the level to be considered:

1) Public administration

2) Active participants

3) Groups of civil society

Three layers, three stakes and three different ways to act. Since the experience arises from the initiative featured by a dual dimension because of the political role of the promoter, the two first layers tend to be initially overlapped. In fact, the promoter is both the councillor of culture, as an intellectual active participant in the roman reality. So, the public administration role is basically represented by the councillor of culture, whereas the second category encompasses a number of associations, movements and activists in general. Among the others, many intellectuals such as journalists, writers, actors, moviemakers, scholars, artist have joined the cause.

Since the initial purpose was simply to meet new people and talk about common interests within a public, open and accessible space, as in the ancient time used to happens, a new *agorà* was about to born. Civil society's response did not take a long time to arrive, and in less than one year more than 700 people overall were involved. In order for the citizenship as a whole to be involved, the organisation is now creating a participated agenda to reach and engage more public with the aim of involving in the project people who are directly and indirectly informed about Grande come una città.

Interestingly enough, despite the initial boost came from the administration itself through the role of the councillor, at the beginning many obstacles have been put from the public authorities to the development of this network. Even though the wide consensus reached, conflicting behaviours have characterised the relation among the administration and the groups of activists. If on the hand the organisation did not succeed in communicating the social value and the power of such a bottom-up political project, on the other the contradictions related to the twofold role of the councillor ended up – unavoidably - to weaken the struggle of the movement.

In this case, instead of merging different but virtuous forces, the administration's choice was to separate formal, i.e. top-down, and informal, i.e. bottom-up, actions. Since Grande come una città lacks any institutional bond, beside a weak support from a council's group, it is becoming increasingly hard to keep the organisation alive. In addition to this, Grande come una città uses urban public space as stage of action which, albeit being freely accessible, it is full of conflicts due to its pluralistic nature. The interviewed have reportedly said that the fact of not having a physical, closed space, i.e. building, that can be recognised by the users as place of aggregation blemishes the movement and slowly can lead to a relentless collapse.

Even if many activities carried out during the last year have been planned and presented together by both the movement and the administration, their relation is still too weak. Yet, crucial despite it, is the deep intention ok keeping this experience independent from any political flag with the aim of giving life to actual public space of action open and inclusive. At the end of the second year, they figured out that a dialogue made of comprehension, trust and mutual help should be undertaken with the local authorities.

4.4.3 Organisational aspects

As every organisation with such a number of participants, Grande come una città deals with organisational aspects, which may sometimes affect the well-functioning of the movement itself. As first step, due the lack of a proper headquarter, they set-up an online group of discussion: at the beginning the group was made by a hundred participants now increased up to seven hundred led by the purpose of creating something that could be reconducted to an open community (Capitini, 1950).

The online group initial aim was to coordinate the 34 roundtables born during the process. Interestingly enough, the participants' age ranges from 24 up to 90 years old. This latter data denotes that the age is not a relevant factor in this context, even if when it comes to social activities and aggregation's moments similar people tend to stay together. This point makes me think that despite biased ideas, the need of social relations and sense of belonging to a certain idea goes beyond the prefigured categories.

The groups are divided in Organisational, Communication and Thematic groups:

Organisational groups	*Communication groups*	*Thematic groups*
Administrative: The organizational secretariat plays a coordinating and supporting role, both for the internal activities of the groups and for public initiatives	**Social Network and website management**: Follow-up and communication on social media on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.	**History**: Organisation of lectures and meetings to explore the problems of history and its public use.
Funding: The group was founded with the aim of providing an information service to citizens and associations that populate Grande come un città, in order for them to find funding's opportunities. The group is open to anyone who wants to participate or report funding opportunities that they deem useful to share.	**Press**: It promotes the events of Grande come un città through the preparation of press releases to be sent to newspapers. It also deals with the press review	**Literature**: Public lectures and seminar cycles organisation for adults and children in unconventional public spaces and schools.
Participation: the group works on the selection, design and promotion of processes and practices to increase the active participation of citizens in the cultural agenda of the municipality.	**Creative campaigns**: It promotes artistic language with forays, actions, blitzes, installations, flash mobs, creative disputes to convey social content and create communication campaigns for all groups of Grande come un città.	**Science and nature**: conferences, meetings, experiential workshops and moments of reflection organisation, where to deepen knowledge and, at the same time, stimulate discussion on scientific and environmental issues.
Programming: Draw up and keep updated the procedures aimed at streamlining and facilitating the construction, organization and communication of calendar initiatives.	**Transcription**: It records, transcribes and publishes all the interventions of the speakers, so that events and open lessons remain common heritage open access.	**Urban public space mapping**: they are creating a map of places and spaces of the town hall, recognized for their particular historical or cultural interest, which can be used or recovered for activities aimed at citizens. They survey open spaces, such as squares, gardens, parks; closed, such as associations, organizations, parishes, schools; and also places that have not yet

		been valued as common spaces but which could be, such as the gardens around the metro stations, the stairways of the Garden City, the many buildings abandoned and in disuse for years.
		Commons goods: Focused on identifying, within the Municipality, public and private spaces to be enhanced as goods available for common use. Furthermore, the group's aim is to imagine new political and legal tools to promote active citizenship for the care of common goods.

Usually, people participate to more than just one roundtable and take actively part to the initiatives' setting and care. Reportedly, Grande come una città engages such a pluralistic public contributing to the presence of a various and multiform human capital that accrues the experience value. Lessons learnt from the literature teach that for individuals' diversity is a constituent and condition of human freedom, in fact diversity enables them to see their own culture and identity from outside. At a greater scope, for the wider society, recognizing the value of diversity is the precondition for an ongoing cross-cultural dialogue that mediates conflicts within the community (Baubock, 2000).

Within this context, the organisation of such a wide group can be particularly challenging. Managing such a space means many different things and encompasses several aspects: firstly, it means a continuous exchange of the neighbourhood with the aim of including and creating a sense of belonging. In fact, while I was attending a public assembly it happened hearing residents living in the surrounding areas, complaining about the noise and the chaos all around. In fact, organisation sometimes can also be synonym of conflict; the spaces' choice passes through some questions: to whom these urban public spaces belong? Which identity do they represent?

As in every collective occasion of discussion, a Q&A time emerges and it can be a harsh duty to deal with: in order for Grande come una città to keep functioning, on the one hand the need of rules and a somewhat structure arises, whereas on the other

crucial is to find a balance to avoid the risk of adopting a model of exclusion within which part of the potential participants reject the experience because it is perceived as far from them.

"After two hours of fun, engaging, interesting listening, at the end of the meeting I thought I did well to leave the house and find myself conversing nicely with unknown people"

Cit. A third municipality dweller

4.4.4 Objectives

First aim of the initiative was to give back spaces and rights to the urban citizens inhabiting that area of the city. To make it happen, important was to organise initiatives and activities able to strengthen sense of community through a programme of civic pedagogy, which would have been permeable across different categories of inhabitants, residents and non-residents.

In accordance to what emerged from the interviews, engagement and sense of community find their roots in a collective desire of community adhering to the principles of subsidiarity, equity, inclusiveness, social justice, which happen to be in contrast with the enhancement of the individual sphere typical of our times. The desire to cultivate emotional relationships, exchange, conflict, coexistence with respect for individual differences. The desire to participate in a social and political urban laboratory able to contribute to the development of a sense of stewardship by the community for the community itself.

Just like it seems, this appears to be such an ambitious project and in order for the organisation to keep the practice alive, specific objectives such as simplification tools and easier processes have been put at the stake of the forthcoming agenda. Challenging in this sense is to combine ties and rules with spontaneous and informal participation.

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4.4.5 Discussion

In conclusion, Grande come una città is a network created by a group of inhabitants that after a long time of neglected and abandoned spaces within their neighbourhood by the local authorities, have decided to retake control of their spaces. Nonetheless, a regional law on common goods was issued in 2019, paving the way in the Lazio region as well to a more comprehensive collaboration between the different stakeholders, the solution chosen by the network results far from the so-called shared administration governance. Interestingly enough, for the very first time, this law takes into account not the good itself as space of particular and collective interest for historical and cultural reasons, whereas it considers the function of spaces for the sake of the community. This means that by safeguarding a specific building through the status of common good, the public administration recognizes its collective function and guarantees the existence of civil and collective rights

In an era where many people risk of being affected by a loneliness disease, the initiative's strength has been identified in the power of recreating social bonds. Indeed, it has been studied that factors such as loneliness and social isolation, just like biological and natural factors, harm our health, both mental and physical. This fact should let us think that taking care of relations is such an essential duty that each of us carries: this process goes beyond the network of relatives we usually see, but encompasses all the casual and unexpected encounters we make down the street, at the supermarket, in the squares and all over in public space.

Streets and their sidewalks, the main public spaces of a city, are its most vital organs.
-Jane Jacob

Evaluating the impact of such factors can be difficult, and it can end up with a social impact assessment framework, which is a very blurred theme. If on the one hand essential within the social impact evaluation is the quantitative element that allows policymakers to estimate which policy can bring more effective results also in terms of spillovers, on the other hand, this way of thinking seems working within the economic framework. The evaluation practice might run the risk of erasing the specificity of each initiative, due to the need for inscribing elements in cells and grids to be assessed.

Consequently, sides and peculiarity tend to chamfer, for them to not going beyond the boundaries.

Summing up the interviews' results, it has emerged that public space is hardly definable: spaces become public in so far as they are walked, crossed and lived. Accordingly, for the space to be crossed, people need to cross it. When people live the space, they participate in their origin. So, participation makes a space public. When something happens in the space, people tend to notice it and thus, recall it. This process generates a somewhat memory association to the place that gives life to a collective image. Spaces are not public themselves; something needs to happen: the way spaces are filled with people, events, order, disorder, queues, markets feature the space.

Within this case study, as the maps have previously shown, we can observe how the number of free spaces of encounters, i.e. streets, squares and urban areas, tend to diminish toward the periphery, reducing the proximity and the closeness dimension. The public spaces' decrease tends to coincide with the increasing urbanisation that affects the peripheral areas of the city and the spreading process that cities are facing. As a result, throughout the years the third municipality has passed through a desertification process, where residents moved away looking for a more cohesive and alive space.

After the network's creation, it has emerged that spaces once perceived as meaningless, such as empty squares or bleak streets, are now perceived from the residents as interesting places: not only the new generations have moved back to the neighbourhoods, but a much more collaborative and mutual behaviour has been adopted. The need of physical space as a place of agglomeration is certainly increasingly demanded, since the coronavirus pandemic as shown, being a movement able to reactivate a public sphere growth, it is still too weak and yet not sufficient to make the organisation alive through the different political era we will go through.

Of course, the risk of uncertainties and difficulties that can have repercussions on trust, both amongst the citizens themselves and towards the institutions do exist. However, the most relevant concern emerged from the interviews interests the relationship with the municipality which, although it has been defined as positive by the majority of those interviewed, is, at the same time, perceived by some others as an intermittent

spokesperson which first proposes a relationship of exchange but then sometimes disappears and does not guarantee the necessary support.

4.5 Ex Asilo Filangeri di Napoli

The question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from that of what kind of social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire. The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human right

David Harvey, Rebel cities. From the right to the city to the urban revolution

4.5.1 Conception

Back to 1572 the so-called Ex Asilo Filangeri, situated in Naples, was originally a craftmanship factory that belonged to the San Gregorio Armeno monastery, where the Benedictine nuns lived. In the first post-war period, the building was sold to the Countess Giulia Filangeri of Candida and it soon became a boarding school for young orphans. After the 1980's earthquake, the Asilo was abandoned and then renovated to be entrusted to the Universal Forum of Cultures Foundation, which in Naples from 2013 to 2015 was supposed to "finance" a series of major events.

Contrary to the previous case, Ex Asilo is located in a very central area of the city, named San Lorenzo, which is where the traditional nativity scenes are made by craftsmen, exposed and sold to the tourists. Indeed, San Lorenzo is such a crowded place, where tourists and residents walk, eat, or simply spend some time. The area is full of restaurants, bars, B&Bs and according to the people I have interviewed to investigate the case, the entire area has been largely regenerated. In fact, regeneration does directly imply an

improvement of the neighborhood's quality of life, whereas on the contrary it might end up excluding a portion of the residents that have lost spaces of socialisation.

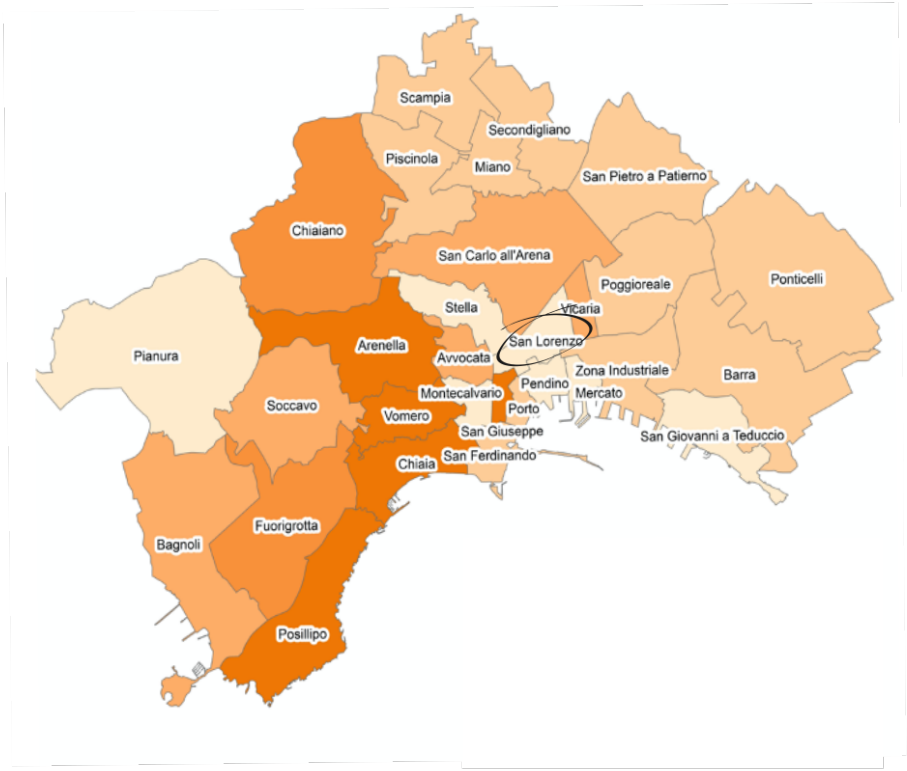

Figure 7. Map of Naples' municipalities.

To give a more accurate picture of the place itself, it is interesting to look closer at the structural configuration of Naples as a whole and some details about San Lorenzo. The area has 5.168 inhabitants which represents the 1.7% of the total population. According to what emerged from the interviews, the street where the Asilo is located is particularly calm and noiseless; It is not surprising therefore that many residents show a certain intolerance toward the activities carried out in Filangeri.

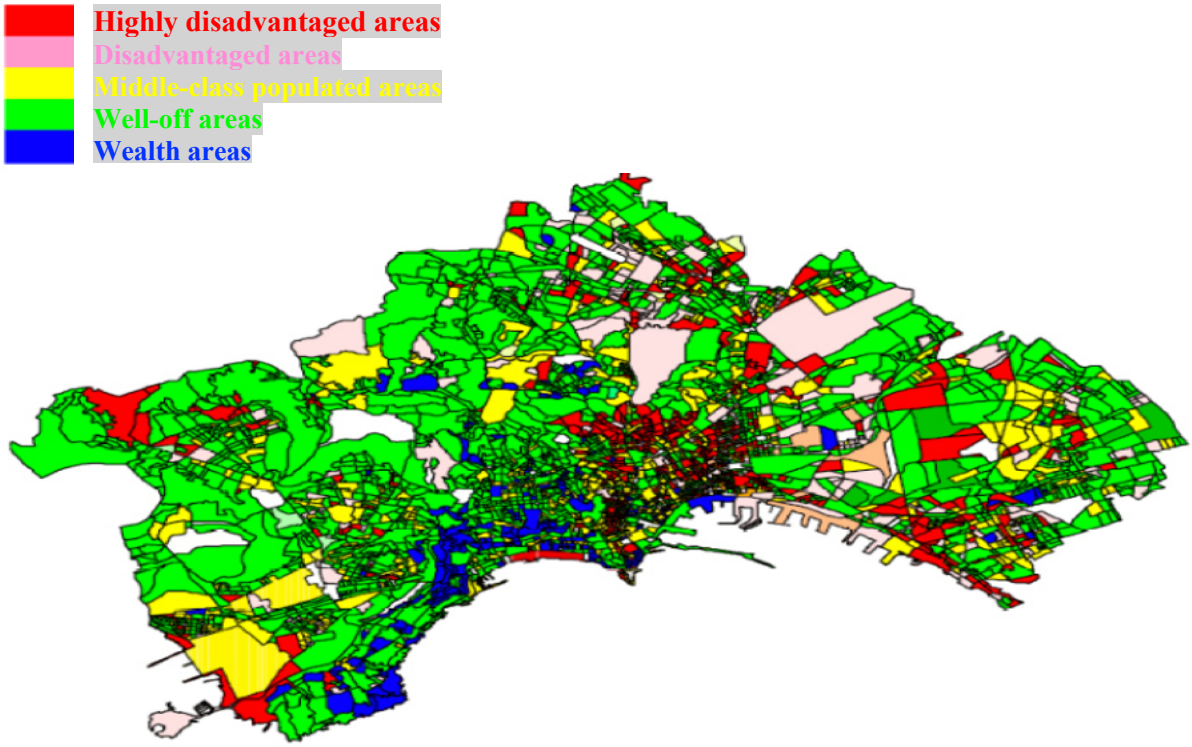

Figure 6. Naples social and economic population distribution, source: Comune di Napoli. https://www.comune.napoli.it/home

Despite its central collocation within the city of Naples, the surrounding area deals with disadvantages and poverty. The accessible spaces, namely urban public spaces, are spread homogeneously among the neighbourhood, but the way individuals live the space has been changing due to the massive tourists' increase that the city is facing. Among the others, being a place of gathering and socialization is on the Asilo success key.

Yet the Asilo's history is framed in a much more complex picture: in fact, such a robust ecological movement was carrying on continuous demonstrations in defence of the territory, the environment and the regional landscape. Together with many others, the Campania region has suffered from an industrial scenario made by criminality and toxic wastes landfill. In those years of contestations, two critical acts have been underpinned: on the one hand, the Environmental Code becomes effective, whereas on the other the Rodotà Commission on Common Goods is set-up. At the same time, the crucial referendum against water's privatization succeed, and this result paves the way for the Commons Goods path.

All over Italy movements for the re-appropriation of Common Goods, as functional goods able to address civil and social rights, start to raise the voice. From this perspective research and culture had been the driver in defence of the environment, the landscape and the territory, and many activists saw in the Common Goods a political and cultural space to weave new alliances and continue to "conspire", to breathe together, with the new emerging subjectivities.

This time to open the way to a new season of struggles is the movement of the art's workers, with a series of occupations of theatres, neglected or abandoned buildings. It is worth remembering a few dates. On 12 and 13 June 2011 the referendum for public water was voted; the following day, June 14, the Teatro Valle in Rome was occupied.

On March 2012 the 2nd, a large group of "immaterial" workers, namely cultural workers, occupied the building known as the former Asilo Filangieri, in the heart of the decumani of the Greco-Roman city.

During the last years, the prevailing logic and blockbuster events ended up draining the emersion of more locally shaped cultural activities, for artistic and cultural independent production. The occupants claimed spaces for experimentation, means of production, places where the workers of art, entertainment and culture could self-govern and autonomously producing art and culture, whereas at the same time reproducing the conditions to freely researching. They wanted to break the pathological link between art, culture and political power: for them to succeed, the first thing was to have a collective space and means of production, that give workforce dignity and identity. Occupying the so-called commons goods (Mayntz, 2002) means not only creating a collective image of a cultural city but also reclaiming public space as humus of free thoughts, ideas, debate and sense of togetherness.

According to the literature and to what explained so far, commons encompasses also social relations between a social group and a resource, material or immaterial, crucial for the life and livelihood of the social group (Harvey, 2012). To be truly emancipatory, the relation between the members of the social group must be as horizontal as possible, as well as its decision-making process, while the relation between the social group and the resource must imply a non-commodification of the resource (De Angelis, 2003).

However, it is the crucial nature of the social relation that contains the truly emancipatory force. This crucial nature shifts the concept of Commons to a place of collective need and becomes the reason why social groups have to collectively reclaim or self-produce those resources and defend them against any form of privatisation (Federici & Caffentzis, 2013). Through this understanding, the concept of Commons expands the range of initiatives that used to go under this name, including social movements, solidarity and cooperative economic practices, community-based economic practices, self-managed buildings and public spaces.

4.5.2 Content

The Asilo Filangeri occupation suddenly becomes a garrison and, over time, leads to a dialogue with the municipal administration. What was once, born under the definition of collective gradually dissolved, after a slow awareness, in a much larger city assembly, already very present since the beginning.

During that period, in Naples, in 2011, the new-born De Magistris council had included in the municipal statute a first recognition of the Common Goods but still linked to the definition proposed by the Rodotà Commission in 2007-'08[70]. Condition, this one, which opened to potentially interesting scenarios but was still far from the recognition of an idea of common goods as self-governed by the citizenship. In particular, the first official document of the Municipality that recognized that of the former Asilo Filangieri as a form of experimentation was just issued three months after the occupation, on May 24 (Resolution No. 400/2012).

At this point, the collective that manages the Asilo Filangeri decides as the first thing to establish a public assembly held every Monday'. The assembly's participation was very numerous with multiple voices and listeners. A variety of listeners means a multiplicity of

[70] Common goods are goods for consumption: not rivals but exhaustible, such as rivers, lakes, air, beaches, natural parks, forests, environmental goods, wildlife, cultural goods,(including image rights on the same goods), which, regardless of whether they belong to the public or private sector, express functional benefits for the exercise of fundamental rights and the free development of people. Therefore, the law must guarantee in any case the collective enjoyment. The legislative decree statues that where the ownership of these assets is public, they shall figure out of business, except in cases where the law allows the possibility of granting them, for a limited duration in any case.

visions offered. The city was already participating with a direct and composite voice. Not only that, but all the thought produced, and the progress made on the legal level would not exist today without the laborious practice of a community that has gathered around that good.

Interestingly enough, after a while, the collective finds in public Monday assembly that a group of people, namely the primary and first stakeholders of the Asilo project, run the risk to appear as elitist and exclusive due to their managerial role and the same time main stakeholders. This being so, they decide the disband the group and try to remodel the assembly on the agora shape: the Asilo's doors are always open and walkable.

Besides, the second reason that causes collective' break is the risk that the Municipality would recognise the assembly leading group as the "managing entity". The idea was instead to have a space that was not assigned, but public.

The second phase deals with the legal form to adopt, and in the wake of previous experiences, whether using the Foundation form as the Valle occupants did or choosing other options. The idea that guides the entire process is that the concept of ownership coincides with the concept of the publicness. This is to say that while the publics live manage the space, are at same time the Asilo's owner. In this ownership belong to the collectivity as whole.

Initially, the municipality proposes to separate the space, some of the building floors should go to the municipality and others to a representative group of the movement. At this point, several issues arise: it is necessary to rethink the proprietary nature of the space?

What does public and private property mean? What does public administration mean when the existing relationship is that which binds it to a property? Can the Public Administration behave concerning the property as a private owner? Or when we talk about public spaces must the connotation of the relationship change?

Can the Public have a different function from that of the owner? Typically, the Public Administration plays the guarantee function on behalf of the community. At this point, the activists started to think about the Asilo as a public space, where people can go in and out, and while crossing the space, they make something happening. As it happens

on public space, while crossing the Asilo, citizens self-organize themselves and become a community. This is the main distinction between this experience and other common goods.

In general, the Municipality mediate the relationship between the goods and the community. This latter interprets itself as the formal owner of those goods, as its unique manager and administrator. Civic Use overturns this logic. The community undertakes to use the property inclusively and openly according to a body of rules that the Civic Use Declaration contains.

Goods are functional to respond to fundamental needs and rights and to do so, forms of self-management and self-government are necessary. Under these assumptions, it is possible to speak of civic use. Requirements are to ensure openness and inclusivity for the forthcoming years.

The interpretation that scholars, jurists and activists close or internal to the events of the kindergarten have managed to define on state property in the perspective of Civic Use is that the owner and manager, i.e. the Municipality, is a body that governs through third parties, where the third parties are the communities themselves, the citizens, the people. The public guarantees rules of autonomous production, participating for example in the guarantee bodies and the responsibility related to the accessibility of spaces (such as fire regulations, the opening and surveillance of the premises).

In detail, the Declaration has two main features: firstly, it identifies an informal community, therefore not a series of individuals but a changing and too open community, potentially infinite; secondly, it states that the organs of self-government, including the main one (the steering assembly), have the power to modify the rules, i.e., through an aggravated procedure, they have the power of self-regulation. Therefore, even though a static regulation de facto misses, community can modify the rules over time to allow them to adapt them to the practice, but through a particular procedure that enables the guarantees to give at the time of their constitution not to be undermined.

Moreover, issues of ordinary and extraordinary maintenance are also exhaustively established by the Regulations for Civic Use. This regulation is particularly important as

it declares which and to what extent responsibilities in terms of legal and economic aspects the Administration carries on.

A working table was opened with the municipality, and in 2017 a resolution was passed to recognise the new formula, also providing for an internal reorganisation of the municipality's staff, creating a sort of shared city laboratory. As a consequence, councillors and administrative officers attend meetings and assemblies creating a commons process based on a language education.

> *We tried to make a real translation activity, we learned the language of the institutions, and we taught the institutions our language. It was an attitude, ours, that did not take "no" as an answer, but if there was a "no" we tried to go and remove the obstacles that led to that "no". Then we tried to think about what were the possibilities that, with regard to the points that were essential for us, could remove those blocks. If as activists we say that the result is positive, as jurists and researchers we say that it is even more favourable because it has allowed all of us to confront ourselves with public executives and therefore to be right inside the administrative law, to understand what happens concretely when specific rules are changed.*
>
> *Nicola Capone_ Asilo Filangeri Activist*

The Asilo success does not depend just on the space identity, but also to its ability to guarantee the hybridization of people with different cultural, regional and professional background. At the same time, the strong bond with other territorial and national spaces and movements that in the variety of expressions were thinking about these issues, have made the Asilo a worth noting model.

To sum up, these responsibilities are established in the declaration: the Administration is responsible for ordinary and extraordinary maintenance, utilities and caretaker

expenses; the "self-governing workers" community, on the other hand, is responsible for the out-of-pocket costs related to all the activities that take place within the space, and therefore expenses related to the provision of tools and equipment for production and cultural practices, also taking on the daily care of the good.

The Municipality has justified this, based on four years of cultural activities and productions carried out at the Asilo by demonstrating that the social income, the value indirectly produced, exceeds the total amount invested in the space. The cultural and social value, which cannot be quantified numerically, has a much more significant impact than the maintenance of the property.

4.5.3 Objectives:

Everything is still to be built, but a space of possibility is now open. As David Harvey and his Lefebvrian spaces of possibility argues, the spontaneous come together in a moment of "irruption", when several heterotopic groups suddenly see, even for a fleeting moment, the opportunities of collective action to create something radically different

This is the purpose, the mean and the end of the Asilo Filangeri initiative. Due to the innovative legal act that the Administration has decided to issue, two paths are determined for the identification and management of the common goods. On the one hand, the entrusting of an asset to a certain group of citizenship using a call for tenders; on the other the creation/identification of real civic development environments to be destined for collective urban civic use by reference communities that regulate themselves autonomously within the framework of constitutionally guaranteed rights.

Future perspectives foresee the provision of a more incisive legal intervention to structurally make the goods open to collective use and enjoyment. On this occasion, it is necessary to look at the last resolution produced, n. 458 of 10 August 2017[71]. With this administrative device, the urban planning aspects take on central importance. Those

[71]https://www.comune.napoli.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/16783/UT/systemPrint

aspects are crucial because through them, the Administration can make up the city and remodel the functions of the goods.

In this resolution, there are several innovative aspects. First of all, public goods are considered as the backbone of the public city and represent the key elements for the promotion of sustainable development policies in the urban environment; secondly, the valorisation of municipal property is understood as a process through which it is possible to give greater social value to the good, increasing its level of use by the community. From this point of view, the Administration recognises the high social and cultural value as well as the positive economic externalities generated by the civic use of an unused public good, which involves not only the users of the space, but also the neighbourhood and the city as a whole.

Civic and collective uses, recovered and adapted to the context of the city, thus become functional to the possibility of urban transformation provided for by the current urban planning regulations, as they represent "actions to protect and safeguard the soil and public goods, with attention to urban quality in the broadest sense of the territory.

4.5.4 Organisational aspects

The procedural and organisational process of the Asilo is essentially articulated in the public assembly which has some tasks:

- definition of cultural and artistic fields;
- relations with other social, associative and institutional realities;
- providing tools to guarantee wide dissemination of the planned activities;
- creation of the thematic planning tables;
- identifying spaces and areas to be destined to activities;
- crafting a proposal to provide the space with the means of production necessary to carry out the activities through purchase, exchange, construction or another suitable form;
- promotion of fundraising and crowdfunding initiatives in support of activities and projects;

Administrative officers join to the public assembly to guarantee a dialogue between the actors. Reportedly, the interviewed have said that, as time goes by, their presence to the assembly started to decrease.

As the previous experience told, The Asilo Filangeri organises its activity in working tables and each of them deal with a specific subject. In the list there are some permanent tables, whereas according to the people' participation some others are set-up.

Tables	
The arts scene table	The arts scene table of the Ex Asilo Filangieri is a public and open table that takes place every week to which theatre operators, artists and anyone interested is invited to participate. The table aims to conceive and organize the theatrical activities within the Asilo; it intends to encourage the meeting and cooperation based on the principles and practices developed in more than a year of self-management during which the community of cultural, performing arts and immaterial workers has expressed the need to re-appropriate spaces and means of production to be able to continue to serve professions strongly compromised by cuts in culture and more generally in public spending
The Armoury table	The Armoury welcomes painters, sculptors, set designers, video artists, performers, photographers, curators, art historians and, more generally, all those who have an interest in a shared path that has visual art as common ground, to encourage the meeting and cooperation between artists. The creation of physical spaces for sharing one's design and construction work is the idea behind the Armoury and, more generally, the kindergarten. Sharing tools and skills according to a mutualistic practice is the most effective way to free oneself from a closed, limiting and limited circuit system and to build a radically different one, open and accessible, which can give value to one's skills and desires. To this end, various ateliers are being set up, rigorously accessible to anyone wishing to collaborate with their means and abilities in the overall project.
The infrasuoni table	Infrasuoni is the table that, inside the Asylum, takes care of the music and sound-related aspects: cultural policy lines, event planning, contacts and communication, technical aspects. In addition to managing "isolated" proposals and events related to the musical field, Infrasuoni deals - giving it a priority - with projects that fall within the guidelines of the Asylum and the group, which aim to support the activity of artists, to create connections and profitable and positive relations, and to foster local and national cultural growth.

The Synergy Table	The Synergy Table - born between the meeting of 'Social Table' and 'Garden Table' - has the function of facilitating interaction, reception and development of individual and collective themes, questioning the subsequent the relationships and social ties' nature. Whether it is a matter of creative recycling of waste to opposing the logic that defines some individuals as "social waste", either to encourage opportunities for shared practices and seminars or finally to deepen the discourse on otherness and to reduce the space that separates "We" from "Others".
The self-government table	The self-government table for the writing of the "civic use" regulations aims to study the public, private and common goods forms of government's evolutions. In particular their purpose is to guarantee the satisfaction of citizenship fundamental rights and it is therefore connected to the experimentation of innovative self-government forms'**.**

4.5.5 Discussion

In conclusion, the Ex Asilo Filangeri is such a crucial experience within the common goods' framework.

First of all, because a wide group of activists made of people with different background have together re-appropriate of spaces that they valued as important: in this case, Naples was missing cultural spaces due to the strong privatisation policies underpinned by the previous administrations and the city was suffering this lack. Indeed, the cities' identity passes by the role of culture. Not surprisingly culture is able to create a sense of identity and belonging. Places of culture are dynamic infrastructures that generate and add extra value to cities, and this value can be multiplied if shared and reproduced by the a collective. This value could be produced in public space, which is *par excellence* the place where the exchange and encounter happens.

Secondly, the Filangeri has paved the way for a new type of shared administration. On the one hand, it has managed to impose itself on the administration and to give back to the city spaces that are public, open, inclusive and which also respond to real needs and requirements. That has been possible thanks to the significant push of active citizenship and a strong network of associations and movements supporting the cause.

On the other hand, it has established a relationship of mutual support with the public administration based on principles such as trust and transparency; the administration acts as a subsidiary to the subsistence of the good and listens to future demands and possible scenarios

In this manner, cooperation becomes a necessary working principle against the atomization of lives within globalised individualism. In fact, while the commoners do it by re-articulating the relations among the social group's members that manage the resource. Municipalism does it by re-articulating the relation between citizens and public institutions. Cooperation between the two is fundamental to strengthen their mutual trust and to enhance participatory public planning and policies. This cooperation, based on reciprocity and solidarity, allows the social group to strengthen collective identities and struggles

To conclude, I would argue that when it comes to commons goods 'management, there are at least two layers of complexity to deal with. Both can be enclosed in the concept of temporal finitude. On the one hand, the temporality of the Commons is linked to the fact that these community-based initiatives tend to be extremely precarious. They often grow on the margins of legality and formality, like the different housing and cultural occupations, and therefore their existence varies on the owners and local administrations' decision to tolerate them; often they cannot rely on self-sufficient economic models, they are based on precarious funding and they rely on the voluntary work of the members of the social group; they often do not own the spaces where they are located, finding themselves at the mercy of real estate speculation. (Bianchi, 2018) The temporality of Municipalism depends on the fact that this political project is linked to political cycles whose continuity is not guaranteed. Hence, finding a balance able to associate these two actors seems the only way to enhance the commons role's strength.

Conclusions

Lessons learnt

Each generation doubtless feels called upon to reform the world. Mine knows that it will not reform it, but its task is perhaps even greater. It consists in preventing the world from destroying itself.

Albert Camus

At the beginning of this research, the reader was asked to see through my eyes the space I was describing. Recalling my first words, I highlighted some features of the space such as colours, noise and crowds.

The space I think about has to do with what people do, feel, sense and come to articulate as they seek meaning in their daily lives. The indispensable element to make everything work, indeed, are the people. Everyday wanders, memories, movements and encounters. The sparkle of a city is given by the way it is lived: humans create the space in which they make their lives (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1991).

In my experience, I became aware that there is something in common among life of different generations. In an era of political disenchantment in which my generation has often been the object of criticism in terms of values, duties and interests, it appears evident that some "fetishes" of a political nature and struggle for rights are part of everyday agenda and institutions.

Some observers highlight the growing combination of indifference and cynicism of contemporary society, interpreted as an occasional aggregation of 'fallen men', as Sennett (1977)describes us. This sense of inadequacy and suffering that seems to govern our time has so far produced an act of rebellion that is too weak. Why has a sense of brotherhood not been triggered in the sharing of material, social and symbolic condition?

In such a respect, the most suitable perspective to analyse the everyday struggles and forms of aggregation that are marking this precise historical period and constantly with

their actions produce a surplus of value for the society as whole, is the evaluation of the social value. To achieve this objective, crucial for me was understanding in depth how to maximise the extraction of such a value in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

While looking for the most adequate theoretical framework to adopt, the first lesson we can learn is that value does not generate itself but emerges when third parties do something to make it happen. Drinking a cup of milk or attending a concert are such a different thing: while I attribute a somewhat value to the milk as beverage, I like drinking in the morning, attending a concert becomes a valuable activity because of the sense I ascribe to it and the value produced from the activities made together with other people.

Not surprisingly, the concept of value is ambiguous. I would argue that values are relational concepts that means that they are at work in the interaction among people and, moreover, in the relations that individuals and things have. So, it seems that it is all about social interactions.

At this point, the most suitable framework to conduct the analysis falls on the notion of commons that is able to explain the ongoing and shared practices that constitute public space. Indeed, individuals happen to be central in the activation of the societal value chain. However, it is important to bear in mind that social relations play an important role both in the construction of commons when they act in synergy and when they give rise to conflicts.

The study on public space brought out relational practices as the main aspect of interest and one of the aims of this research is to welcome the increasing attention among scholars in the relational aspect of commoning as a practice. Likewise, urban commons are driven be the aim of assuring the provision of a good or service without the intervention of either the State or the market. Consequently, a group of people, namely the commoners, attempt to protect a resource constructing excludability on a non-excludable good. However, the question arises spontaneously: is this type of self-organization able to meet the challenges that are faced every day in today's cities? How could the urban commons transform the urban?

To understand the commons as having the possibility of an alternative, just and inclusive urban order, I locate the urban commons in between the space drawn by changes

coming either from the top and the bottom. Finally, to investigate this topic, it was necessary to dig in the valuable lessons we can get examining urban common in real life. such as how and why they emerged, how they are maintained and how they are transferred. In order for the research to move a step forward, crucial is the focus at the governance level, exploring the solutions adopted by both realities: public administrations and bottom-up self-organised experiences.

Within my exploration over the last years, I have observed that cities have become increasingly crossed by processes of re-appropriation, by widespread forms of self-organization, by self-managed activities and initiatives, by new practices of coexistence and by movements that try to build a different and new idea of the city.

It is an extensive turmoil that affects, albeit differently, all the cities of the world: from urban gardens to self-managed green areas, from residential occupations to reclaimed factories, from reactivated cultural production sites to the many self-produced services in the city. Not only that but in recent years we have seen the proliferation of several social initiatives and widespread planning: all these practices are not only forms of space re-appropriation but also and above all, processes that give new meaning to places.

These are expressions of the territories and inhabitants' vitality, both in an organised and non-organised form. Simple practices of resistance have given rise to sweeping actions that concretely produce the city, questioning the post-industrial paradigm that has accompanied the social-urban development of recent decades.

At the end of this work, some observations have brought out that these experiences are in the bulk of cases filled with ambiguities, difficulties and contradictions as a result of an uneven operation of a welfare state approach, a public abandonment of the territory and at the same time a disengagement of politics and institutions from public life.

To expand the theoretical endeavour, I took into account two different cases of the so-called commoning experiences that allowed to enlarge the scope of observation and set up some final conclusions. Each of the two experiences offers a particular information about how the commoning practice functions in relation to factors such as space, timing and institutional bonds and that it does so as a commons. In fact, not surprisingly in the

case of the relational commons, the value is created by the users, namely, the commoners in connection with the physical space and its external providers.

Objectives achieved

This dissertation aimed to achieve several objectives. First, to offer a contribution to the analysis of the urban commons and the new practice of commoning eliciting a lively and responsive debate. With the focus on civic relations in public space and their interaction with local authorities, the transforming notion from the urban commons to relational commons has been developed. Second, with specific regard to the cases taken in example, a deeper understanding of the importance of active movements and the readiness to open up a dialogue of mutual listening and exchange is proposed.

The domain of commons reveals details of the functioning of these experiences and explains why relations occurring in public space are so important. But the major purpose of this thesis is based on the idea that economic science should get back to its origin of reading the values of things and re-value the importance of culture. The research aim is to leave open the way for future researches and continue contributing to the conceptualisation of the urban commons as crucial element of change in our society.

Last considerations

One of the consequences of globalisation and post-industrial paradigm policies is that they have paradoxically resurrected the importance of the territorial and community dimension: territories, neighbourhoods and suburbs play an increasingly important role in everyday life. These are the places of experimentation, where the social innovations, from which the most significant impulses come to life.

The regeneration of places is a process that enriches economies and relationships. However, at the same time, it is a slippery ground to cover: the challenge is to involve intangible assets such as the participation of citizens in the decision-making processes and social cohesion in this process: today both of them are in danger because of the growing social inequalities and harsh conflicts that risk to become irreversible.

On the contrary, cohesion and openness are decisive elements as they act as generative mechanisms, capable of giving life to the new social infrastructures, which are the real community assets, and transforming spaces into places, humus of social relations indispensable for life in social and economic growth.

At this time, given all these arguments in such a respect it should be clear why this investigation was carried out as thoroughly as possible the world of common goods as a means of re-appropriating public space. If we observe on the one hand the different experiments in progress and on the other hand the administrative production related to the common goods, even if some contradictions are alive, we can notice at least four fundamental characteristics.

The first is that in every experience of common goods there has been an informal and open community that has begun to use a space, even if only to make it available to the neighbourhood and exercise the right to meet and speak publicly.

The second one concerns the ability of a community to collectively and autonomously define the use of the space and the decision methods suitable for that space. This has been possible through juridical instruments able to safeguard the good while also protecting the heritage of the future generations, and moreover, to guarantee accessibility, usability, inclusiveness and impartiality, thus establishing the conditions for a collective, plural and not exclusive use of the good.

The third consists in the fact that the public administration has been able to interpret the experiments in progress and consequently has changed the use of the real estate, recognising it as common goods, i.e. as goods functional to the exercise of fundamental rights and socially relevant needs, as well as to the free development of the person in his or her ecological context.

The fourth is the recognition by the public administration of the autonomous capacity of the communities of reference. This recognition is significant because in this way the legislative instruments elaborated in the different experiences become a way of using a part of the public space, they become a shared asset and a way of the whole community.

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