

Section 6 – Partecipazione e movimenti sociali

Panel 6. The Resilient City. Actors, Practices and Problems.

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Cities, in the context of neoliberalism, witness processes of dualization, widening the gap between "winners" and "losers" of globalization. The latter are increasingly exposed to vulnerability and social exclusion and pushed to the edge of the city.

Strategies of adaptation, resilience and resistance of citizens are developed, in this context, to face and react to an economic and social experience more and more shaped by vulnerability, uncertainty, precariousness, atomization.

Resilience is expected to foster social innovation, mutualism, cooperation, to reverse the neoliberal dismantling and commodification of public services, to oppose gentrification, to promote new kinds of economic, social and political relations. Indeed, resilience is a quite ambiguous concept, that is usually associated to very different experiences and practices and that revealed to be easily re-absorbed in the neoliberal ideology, instead of opposing to it.

Does Resilience refer to grass-root mobilization and community self-organization, practiced by the subalterns? Is it expression of a form of bottom-up re-politicization? Is Resilience an useful concept in order to grasp with the strategies used by inhabitants to pursue the "right to the city", against privatization and commodification?

Or, on the contrary, does the rhetoric of resilience describe an adaptation and a fully acceptance of neoliberal ideology, reinforcing its effects. That is, do resilience strategies counteract or provide individual and collective instruments to deal with gentrification and turistification, privatization and commodification of public services, fragmentation and precarization, accepting that there is no alternative?

Indeed, a plurality of experiences labelled as examples of resilience, with special reference to the practices of economic, technological and social innovation commonly described making reference to the paradigm of the "sharing economy", or to the rhetoric of the "Smart City", seem to be instruments of the upper class to strengthen its power or, alternatively, instrument by which an impoverished middle class and popular classes seek to adapt and survive, in the face of a deterioration of working and living conditions.

The panel hosts contributions that deal, with a critical approach, with empirical analyzes or theoretical reflections, on the "plural faces" of resilience practices.

In particular, the panel is open to contribution that critically investigate a plurality of practices of innovation, adaptation and resilience, wondering if and how they express an alternative to the neoliberal model, founded on commodification, privatization, competition, with the effect of widening inequalities and the dynamics of exclusion, and how much, on the contrary, they oppose this model, contributing to mobilize conflict, to experiment alternative model of cooperation, to recreate public spaces and services, opposing the processes of gentrification, privatization, and commodification and claiming the "right to the city".

A further aspect to be investigated is related to the relation between grass-roots practices and institutional change. That is, to the analysis of the impacts of practices of resilience and mutualism on political systems at the local level (such as the more or less explicit and conflictual cooperation of some organizations of urban social movement with local administrations), as well as at state level (experiences of political organization and/or electoral competition structured on actors involved in mutualism on an urban scale) or transnational (creation of networks of actors, institutions, reliant / resistant).

Both case studies and comparative studies are welcome.

Contributions can be submitted in Italian and in English.