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8 Research Paths For The City Feltrinelli Camp 2018

**A cura di
Paola Piscitelli**

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UTOPIE

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Feltrinelli Camp 2018

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About this book

The first edition of Feltrinelli Camp took place on February 16th and 17th, 2018, two days of closed-door workshop in the field of urban studies. One hundred young researchers and practitioners with international background gathered into the large luminous space of the multifunctional hall in Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli to discuss the present and future of cities. Eight thematic tables were the center of the exchange of research and professional experiences, as well as of discussion and debate, issues, mapping exercises, sketching, generation of new ideas, claims and arguments. The eight working table attempted to conceptualize proposals for solutions to crucial problems affecting our cities. Each thematic table corresponded to a theoretical and practical challenge to be solved in relation to a bundle of issues.

The following publication collects and returns the most relevant outputs of the two days and is divided in two different volumes:

- 1) the former, collected in this eBook, includes the specific points of view of the coordinators of working tables in relation to the thematic challenges of the conference. Eight experts offered their own contribution to the conceptual redefinition of the questions, both on the basis of their experiences and skills and of the close confrontation with the other participants to the Feltrinelli Camp. Eight reports curated by eight rapporteurs, thus, summarize the results of the discussion at the table. The reports contain at least three key issues related to the main challenge and three possible solutions responding such issues. Some of them contain a

proposal that could be possibly considered as the legacy to About a City - Places, Ideas and Rights for 2030 citizens, the festival about cities and citizenship by Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli.

2) the latter proposes some cases studies and research proposals related to the the eight themes constituting the backbones of the working tables by some of the camp participants.

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2. Realizing potential urban landscapes

Realizing potential urban landscapes in the era of planetary urbanization

Francesco Curci

In a completely urbanized world where the relationship between urban and rural is strongly stressed and subjected to processes of progressive crumbling (Brenner and Schmid, 2011) one of the main challenges for urban design, planning and policies is the creation of landscapes able to feed and regenerate urbanity, meaning by this the symbolic infrastructure (Zijderveld, 1998) that needs appropriate socio-economic conditions and spatial solutions to survive within a highly pervasive and differentiated urban condition.

Production and regeneration of urbanity, indeed, is a game of assignment and reassignment of social value to infrastructures, buildings and spaces that, even when socially produced, do not contribute – or have ceased to contribute – to socio-economic inclusion and integration. Especially where urbanity is weakened, latent or unexpressed, urban landscape should be understood not only as transformative potential of (planetary) urbanization processes (Brenner and Schmid, 2015) but also as the expression – and in some ways the materialization – of deliberate and targeted efforts to strengthen the symbolic and rational bonds that are typical of cities.

Indeed, what continues to make the difference between urban and non-urban is not simply a matter of size, density, morphology, heterogeneity and lifestyles; it is rather something that has to do with socio-economic and cultural complexity of what we continue to call 'city' making a metaphorical use of a word that has progressively lost its meaning during the twentieth century (Friedmann, 2002).

The healthy and fair perpetuation and renewal of this complexity, which certainly belongs only to a part of what we now call 'the urban', is one of the main challenges of contemporary 'urbanism' (Lèvy, 2012) which has to cope with fragments of the twentieth-century city and more recent urbanization patterns that are experiencing a critical re-definition under the current capitalism phase.

In particular, it is possible to recognize two lines of thought and work in relation to the unexpressed potential of urban landscapes: one related to spaces and infrastructures to which we must reassign meanings and values after that they have lost their original ones (industrial heritage, business districts, theme parks, dismissed facilities and power plants, as well as public housing estates and assets taken away from criminal organizations); the other related to portions of late-twentieth-century urban fabric that have never achieved a proper level of dignity and quality capable of contributing to the production or reproduction of urbanity (sprawling residential suburbs, industrial districts, tourist and second home settlements).

In discussing this topic, it is not possible to overlook some evidence:

- first, the importance of the contexts (both in spatial-positional and socio-political terms) with respect to the actual possibilities to build feasibility frameworks and implement urban transformations truly capable of producing an urbanity upsurge;

- second, the need to act on the concepts of public space and infrastructures as a preferential channel for urbanity reproduction;

- third, the weight that creativity and innovation (both in endogenous and exogenous terms; Florida, 2002) should have in any transformation process oriented to the strengthening of urbanity;

- fourth, the inescapability of contemplating the ecological and environmental dimensions in any transformation process of contemporary urban space;

- fifth, the awareness of the inability of the 'sharing economy' and 'platform economy' (Srniceck, 2017) to profoundly affect the quality of urban space and their only apparent capability to enhance urbanity;

- finally, the need to contrast, even through urban projects, the growing forms of social inequality and polarization that characterize the current urban societies.

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