

Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna
in cotutela con Università KU Leuven

DOTTORATO DI RICERCA IN
Sociologia e Ricerca Sociale

Ciclo XXXI

Settore Concorsuale: 14/C2

Settore Scientifico Disciplinare: SPS/08

Understanding the Dynamics of Social Cohesion and Bottom-linked Governance
Social Streets in Trento, Verona and Ferrara

Presentata da: Dott.ssa Giulia Ganugi

Coordinatore Dottorato

Prof. Antonio Maturo

Supervisore

Prof. Antonio Maturo

Co-Supervisore

Prof. Riccardo Prandini

Supervisore

Prof.ssa Constanza Parra Novoa

Co-Supervisore

Prof. Pieter Van den Broeck

Esame finale anno 2020

Acknowledgments

Many times, I have imagined the moment in which I would thank all those people who crossed my life during the last five years while I was facing one of my biggest adventures. That moment has finally arrived.

My gratitude goes first to Professor Riccardo Prandini and Professor Pieter Van den Broeck, who continuously supported my study and research with their own different but complementary deep competencies. They both contributed to shape my professionalism, teaching me how to be always meticulous and curious. I want to thank Professor Frank Moulaert for accepting my request to visit him and his research group. Without him, the enriching period that I spent at KU Leuven would have never started. Moreover, he has been constantly present both with his natural rigor and his witty jokes when I needed his help to solve some theoretical or methodological nodes. I thank as well Professor Chris Kesteloot, who donated me his time and his knowledge in the form of precious advice. My sincere thanks go to Professor Antonio Maturo and Professor Constanza Parra Novoa for their continuous availability and encouragement. I would like to thank, eventually, all those professors whom I met in Bologna, in Leuven, or around Europe and who have been inspirational to me even with a few suggestions, feedbacks and thoughts.

I have profound gratitude towards the numerous citizens of Ferrara, Verona, and Trento who participated in my research. Above all, the administrators and the members of the three Social Streets that welcomed me. I entered the groups as an observer and I left them as a member. Besides citizens questioning the current social justice and trying to find improvements for themselves and their neighbours, I found warm-hearted, open-minded and trustworthy people. I shared with them values, beliefs, opinions but also simple free time and pleasant chats. I would like to mention all of them, but they know whom I am referring to.

Within the academic world, I found a lot of colleagues who became friends and important reference points to me. I do not know how I could face many situations without Veronica: she has been and she is at my side daily and for this I thank her. Manuela shared with me the initial steps and the various discoveries we made about the Ph.D.'s life. I thank her constant honesty and directness that helped me to accept unpleasant moments and situations with a bit more cynicism. Thanks for being good, funny and interesting journey mates go to the other Italian Ph.D. students in my course: Anna, Sofia, Federica and Gianluca. Regarding the P&D research group in Leuven, I can simply say that, from

the first moment, it became a big, colourful, dynamic and never-annoying family. All its members have a place in my heart and in my memories for different episodes, challenges, obstacles and laughs that we shared. Carine, Layan, Sofia, Carmen, Alessandra, Angeliki, Natalia, Liliana, Jan, Annette, Ruth, Maritza, Ide, Bobby, Michael, Loris, Giorgos, Alireza, Seppe, Liyuan, thank you all for being part of my personal and professional growth.

I realise to be a lucky person when I turn back and think of how many friends I could count on during the last five years. First of all, I thank Anna for sharing with me her strength, independence, and irony. She took care of me when everyone else was too far to do it. I thank Eleni for being always ready for a chat and for having the great power to make me feel her closeness despite we are kilometres away most of the time. I thank Anna H. for bringing the Bulgarian sun and her lovely smile in my Flemish life. I thank Carla for our quick beers and pizzas and for the moments stolen from work hours. I thank Elena Leo because although we met rarely, our friendship has always been fresh and alive. I thank Meme for sharing with me the most beautiful travel I have ever done and because she supported me during the dialogue with my inner me and during the most difficult period of my Ph.D. I thank Valli and Rufus for reminding me to look always at the bright side of life. I thank Sara and Martina for our cinemas, ice creams, aperitives and concerts. Last but not least, I thank Chiara, my Friend, for being my long-time mate and for never abandoning me, even when I was so unbearable to keep everyone distant. You all have been my magic trick to overcome disappointment, tiredness, and melancholy with joy, happiness, relax and love.

I am grateful to Davide who accompanied me along the last year, keeping my hand, releasing my daily tensions and showing me his – and mine – world from a new perspective.

Eventually, I would like to thank my family, who believed in me also when I did not. I thank my grandmother for listening to all my stories and updates even if she really never understood what my daily job was made of. I thank Giacomo who, besides being the brother to argue with, has been a friend, a flatmate, and occasionally a “partner in crime”. I thank my father for his veiled sweetness, which, despite being silent and reserved, is one of the strongest I have ever received. I thank my mum for her shining and intense vitality, and her capacity to understand me and everything around me better than anyone else. She has been the refuge where I could always reload the determination to go ahead and achieve what I had started.

Many years ago, the writer Karen Blixen formulated a sentence that became my motto: it takes courage to be happy. Courage that may take diverse shapes: the courage to make choices and accept their consequences, to bring forward beliefs and ideas but also to change them if necessary, to consider obstacles as new opportunities. All the people I mentioned here gave me courage, in different ways and in different moments, but they all surely contributed to pursue this journey and to shape this immense satisfaction.

Contents

Illustrations	xi
Introduction	15
Chapter 1. Understanding social cohesion and governance of public space: gaps in the literature	25
1.1. Social cohesion in the neighbourhood	25
1.1.1. Basics of social cohesion	25
1.1.2. Dimensions of social cohesion	28
1.1.3. Gaps in the literature	33
1.2. Commoning the neighbourhood	35
1.3. Civic activism and urban citizenship	42
1.4. Governance as interactions and interdependences	46
1.5. Conclusions	49
Chapter 2. The perspective of Social Innovation: the reflexive-recursive dialectics of social cohesion and the governance of public space	51
2.1. Social Innovation	52
2.1.1. Social cohesion as socio-political <i>problématique</i>	54
2.1.2. Fulfilling collective needs: commons	56
2.1.3. Empowering communities: towards a mutually shaped citizenship	57
2.1.4. Transforming socio-political relations: bottom-linked governance	60
2.2. From SI to the strategic-relational approach: actors, institutions, and structures	62
2.3. The reflexive-recursive dialectics applied to social cohesion	65
2.3.1. The rival explanation	65
2.3.2. The alternative perspective	66
2.4. Conclusions	72

Chapter 3.	The fieldwork: Social Streets, research methods and pilot cases	75
3.1.	Why a case study?	75
3.2.	Social Street as case study	76
3.3.	Why multiple case studies?	79
3.4.	Operationalization and research methods	81
3.4.1.	Empirical categories	81
3.4.2.	Methods	83
3.5.	Innovative streets in Belgium as pilot cases	94
3.5.1.	Living Street, Ghent	95
3.5.2.	Future Street, Antwerp	97
3.5.3.	Findings	98
3.5.4.	Lessons from the pilot cases	105
3.6.	I'm Giulia and I'm researching the Social Streets	106
Chapter 4.	The Social Street Residents in San Pio X Street and surroundings, in Trento	109
4.1.	The little book house	111
4.2.	SferaChangeUp and PGZ "In My Neighbourhood: Participatory Regeneration"	122
4.3.	Goodbyes and reflectivity	132
4.4.	The poems mailbox and the showcase	139
4.5.	Silences	144
4.6.	Overview	148
4.7.	Methodological appendix	152
Chapter 5.	The Social Street Residents in Pitteri Street and surroundings, in Ferrara	155
5.1.	Meetings, activities, and enthusiasm	157
5.2.	The pact for green areas of Pitteri Street and surroundings	168
5.3.	Internal disappointments and the Pact for Roveroni Park	177
5.4.	The neighbourhood gang	183
5.5.	Overview	190
5.6.	Methodological Appendix	195

Chapter 6.	The Social Street Residents in Twenty September Street, in Verona	199
6.1.	The first and silent beginning	200
6.2.	The second and louder beginning	206
6.3.	Networks and hubs	213
6.4.	Ideas becoming slowly realities	222
6.5.	Overview	235
6.6.	Methodological appendix	240
Chapter 7.	Analyzing the dialectics of social cohesion and governance for public space	247
7.1.	Resuming the analytical framework	248
7.2.	The reflexive-recursive dialectics of social cohesion, shared culture, collective care, citizenship, and governance in the Social Streets	251
7.2.1.	The Social Street of San Pio X Street in Trento: the perverse effect of citizenship practices on shared values and commons	252
7.2.2.	The Social Street of Pitteri Street in Ferrara: the impact of governance transformations on practices of citizenship and commoning	256
7.2.3.	The Social Street of Twenty September Street in Verona: The role of shared cultures and values in triggering practices of commons and citizenship	258
7.3.	Social Streets as Social Innovation	260
7.4.	Lessons for current and future research	263
References		265

Illustrations

Figures

2.1	The four mobilized concepts under the lens of Social Innovation perspective	62
2.2	The reflexive-recursive dialectic of individual or collective actors and institutions	64
2.3	The reflexive-recursive dialectic applied to the concepts of shared culture, commons, citizenship, and urban governance	67
2.4	The reflexive-recursive dialectic applied to the interrelation between shared culture and urban governance	68
2.5	The reflexive-recursive dialectic between shared culture and urban governance enriched by the intervening variables of commons and citizenship	70
2.6	The overall reflexive-recursive dialectic among the four mobilized concepts: shared culture, commons, citizenship, and urban governance	71
3.1	The Italian cities where the three Social Streets are located	80
3.2	Example of the mapping activities, done by the Social Streeters during the focus groups	91
3.3	Example of the mapping activities, done by the Social Streeters during the focus groups	91
3.4	Example of the mapping activities to represent the citizenship perceptions of the Social Streeters participating in the focus groups	93
3.5	Example of the mapping activities to represent the citizenship perceptions of the Social Streeters participating in the focus groups	93
3.6	Methodological techniques used in each case study	94
4.1	The distance of San Pio X Street from the city centre	109
4.2	San Pio X Street and the arches of the local railway	112
4.3	Street cleaning at the ViviAmoSanPiox event	120
4.4	Representation of Step 1 and Step 2 of the SSt development	122
4.5	Final result of the redevelopment process of a public wall in the neighbourhood	127
4.6	Representation of Step 2 and Step 3 of the SSt development	132
4.7	Representation of Step 3 and Step 4 of the SSt development	139

4.8	Inauguration of the showcase and poetry mailbox	142
4.9	Representation of Steps 3, 4 and 5 of the SSt development	144
4.10	The banner that the Municipality of Trento has donated to the Dog House	147
4.11	Representation of the SSt development	151
5.1	The distance of Pitteri Street from the city centre.	155
5.2	Type of private houses in Pitteri Street	158
5.3	Representation of Step 1 and Step 2 of the SSf development	167
5.4	Representation of Step 2 and Step 3 of the SSf development	176
5.5	Representation of Step 3 and Step 4 of the SSf development	183
5.6	Palmina's mapping exercise	184
5.7	Simone's mapping exercise	184
5.8	Silvano's mapping exercise	185
5.9	Laura's mapping exercise	186
5.10	Representation of the SSf development	194
6.1	The distance of Twenty September Street from the city centre	199
6.2	A spot in Twenty September Street	201
6.3	Representation of Step 1 and Step 2 of the SSv development	206
6.4	Emma's mapping exercise	209
6.5	Representation of Step 2 and Step 3 of the SSv development	212
6.6	Patrizia's mapping exercise	213
6.7	Filippo's mapping exercise	213
6.8	Representation of Step 3 and Step 4 of the SSv development	221
6.9	One of the many social dinners of the SSv at the Nani garden	226
6.10	The group of Recup volunteers	232
6.11.	Maps of two SSv participants' citizenship perception	234
6.12.	Maps of two SSv participants' citizenship perception	234
6.13.	Representation of the SSv development	239

Tables

3.1	Basic characteristics of the three Social Street chosen as case studies	81
3.2	Operationalization of social cohesion	82
3.3	Operationalization of commons	82
3.4	Operationalization of citizenship and urban governance	83

3.5	Methods addressing each theoretical concept such as framed in the whole reasoning, in order to answer the research question	93
3.6	Conditions taken in account to answer the research question	104
4.1	Individual and collective actors, taking part in the research	153
4.2	My messages posted on the SSt Facebook group	154
4.3	Participant observation of the SSt life, activities, territorial and social context	154
5.1	Individual and collective actors, taking part in the research	196
5.2	Members of the SSf participating in the focus group	197
5.3	My messages posted on the SSf Facebook group	198
5.4	Participant observation of the SSf life, activities, territorial and social context	198
6.1	Individual and collective actors, taking part in the research	242
6.2	Members of the SSv participating in the focus group on May 17th, 2018	243
6.3	Members of the SSv participating in the focus group on May 19th, 2018	243
6.4	Members of the SSv participating in the focus group on May 26th, 2018	244
6.5	Members of the SSv participating in the focus group on May 28th, 2018	244
6.6	My messages posted on the Facebook group of SSv	245
6.7	Participant observation of SSt life, activities, territorial and social context	245

Boxes

4.1	The Region Trentino Alto Adige and the City of Trento	109
4.2	Reading suggestions	110
4.3	The population of San Pio X	113
4.4	The districts in Trento	115
4.5	The urban development of San Pio X	116
5.1	The Region Emilia-Romagna and the City of Ferrara	155
5.2	Reading suggestions	156
5.3	The Bologna neighbourhood and Pitteri Street	161

5.4	The Urban Center	164
5.5	The Regional Law 3/2010 and the funded participatory projects of the urban Center	165
6.1	The Region Veneto and the City of Verona	199
6.2	Reading suggestions	200
6.3.	The Veronetta neighbourhood and Twenty September Street	202

Introduction

In 1930, Louis Wirth suggested a cautious approach not to merge indistinctly urbanism and the physical – rigidly defined – entity of the city. Within urban studies, indeed, the distinction between “the city” and “the urban” is imperative. Wirth writes: «Urbanism as a characteristic mode of life may be approached from three interrelated perspectives: 1) as a physical structure comprising a population base, a technology, and an ecological order; 2) as a system of social organization involving a characteristic social structure, a series of social institutions, and a typical pattern of social relationships; and 3) as a set of attitudes and ideas, and a constellation of personalities engaging in typical forms of collective behaviour and subject to characteristic mechanism of social control» (Wirth 1938, pp. 18-19). In other words, the urban condition has since long gone beyond the boundaries of the city, bringing together distant spaces, events, and people across the globe. It can also be understood as the realm of (modern) everyday activity (Dellenbaugh *et al.* 2015).

Within the study of the urban, the concept of public space has taken a specific place. Public meant to the Greeks *synoikismos*, which is also the word for “making a city”. The first part, *syn*, is coming together; and the second, *oikos*, was a household unit, something between a family and a village, better captured by the word “tribe”. The term does not only refer to put people together functionally; it literally means to bring together in the same place people who need each other but worship different household gods. The image of people needing each other functionally without sharing the same values reflects exactly the diversity and complexity of modern cities. As such, public space is understood as constructed through people’s uses and through interactions between them, which have various symbolisms and meanings. Public space, like any space, is socially produced and not a fixed thing, as is recognized increasingly in social sciences and geography, as well as urban planning and housing studies. For Arendt (1958), public space is not linked to any specific location: it is a form of collective being, of commons, that serves and is constituted by active participation and collective engagements. Habermas (1991) describes public space as the sphere of communicative action on the basis of rational critical dialogue among equals. That the city is a specific realm that creates the possibility of such a public space to function as a political idea is the starting point for Richard Sennett (1992). Gehl and Svarre (2013) note that public space is everything that can be considered part of the built environment and consequently public life should be

understood in the broadest sense as everything that takes place between buildings, to and from school, on balconies, seated, standing, walking, biking, etc. According to him, the public space is everything that happens “outside”. Therefore, when I mention urban and public space, according to both the social and geographical perspective, I refer to the abstract, constructed, civic and political conceptions of space.

Problem statement

Today’s urban public spaces seem to be confronted with numerous issues. The speed and the extent of evolving phenomena, such as social and economic exclusion, safety and crime, neighbourhood fragmentation, degradation of the built environment, individualization, migration, technological development, to name a few, have become increasingly problematic, complex and interrelated in many cities. Almost all Western European countries are facing problems with respect to a decreasing quality of life of local communities in urban neighbourhoods, including: depreciation of the housing stock; increasing social conflicts; rising pressure of supermarkets, shopping malls and e-commerce on the trade of artisanal shops; increasing consumption of the city by commuters, city-users, and tourists not living in the cities; erosion of social texture by excessive gentrification.

Among these phenomena, this research focuses mainly on two criticalities: a) pressure on sociability and b) the lack of common places supporting public life and living together. To explain what sociability is, Simmel describes the progressive process of intersecting social spheres in everyday and urban life. At the beginning of our lives, all of us experience a familiar and household dimension, that is relatively indifferent to the individuality of each and imposes a close coexistence with others who have not been chosen freely. Afterwards, we enter other environments, that are shaped by the affinity between the members who attend them. Affinities can be professional, gender or ethnic-related, religious, and provide the impulses and the interests that produce sociality as reciprocity between individuals (Simmel 1969; Federici and Picchio 2013). However strong urbanization, increased mobility, and development of information and communication technology (ICT) have gradually been producing a social order in which the traditional ties of community have been replaced by anonymity, individualism, and competition. The city indeed represents the place where weak ties of organic solidarity – to say it with Durkheim (1893) – build bridges between social groups and territories, while strong ties of emotional bonding erode, generating mechanical solidarity. The city

is hence the place where anonymity, individualism, indifference, and distance develop (Forrest and Kearns 2001); where information technology, new virtuality in social networks and greater fluidity and superficiality in social contact are further eroding the residual bonds of spatial proximity and kinship (Forrest and Kearns 2001). Castells (1997; 2008) denounces how processes of privatization, residualization, and globalization produce a dissolution of shared identities and how the space of flows takes over the space of places. Resuming the theory of social spheres by Simmel, Wellman formulates the concept of networked individualism, that is the shift from living in “little boxes” to living in networked societies. Members of societies of little boxes deal only with fellow members of the few groups to which they belong. All of these appear to be bodies with precise boundaries for inclusion. On the contrary, in networked societies boundaries are more permeable, interactions occur with diverse others and linkages switch between multiple networks (Wellman and Hampton 1999). The result is an individual who has the freedom to choose her networks, but who is also alone and totally independent in her decisions.

Usually, sociability is produced in public spaces. However, together with the reduction of togetherness (Amin and Thrift 2002), also public spaces decrease in quantity and lose their socialization function. Indeed, the urban spaces and services of common interest undergo a period of deep crisis, which is determined by two factors. One factor is the deficit and decline of public or collective spaces, in suburbs and in central areas, and in the moment of transformation of facilities and during their maintenance. A second factor occurs when citizens gradually lose their interest and attention for the urban public spaces, perceiving them as nobody’s or local authority’s places, rather than everybody’s places or common spaces (Iaione 2015b). Saskia Sassen recently and provocatively queried: «who owns the city?¹». One of the strongest critiques of contemporary urban development is that public officials in cities around the world are commodifying and selling to the highest bidders the collective resources of the city, trying to face the phenomenon that Foster (2013) calls regulatory slippage referring to the decline of the level of local government control or oversight of the urban resources. In fact, the cities we live in today, are private in many more respects than we might normally acknowledge. The privatization of public spaces can be traced in a variety of phenomena, from entirely gated communities to just gated parks to which only residents have the key, or private consumer spaces like shopping malls and entertainment centres (Blokland 2017). These

¹ Sassen (July 2018), lecture, Summer School CityLab in Antwerp.

spaces are exactly what Augè calls *non-lieux* (2009), because not filled by history, relations, and meanings.

In this regard, the Italian economist Becattini (2015) advances a strong critique against the modernization of territory, meaning the functional adaptation of places to the productive and reproductive cycle of industrial capitalism. According to this scholar, capitalism has dismembered the living body of places in many monofunctional sites: the large factory, the dormitory neighbourhood, the great infrastructures for the transport of people and goods, the huge sites of mass consumption and entertainment. A portion of *space* has been assigned to each of these sites, burying the *places* underneath (Becattini 2015). This process is tightly correlated with the loss of bonds between communities and territory, the second factor of the crisis of public spaces mentioned by Iaione.

The concept of territory includes both a spatial-geographical dimension and a social-political dimension. The modernization of territory, indeed, provokes also the loss of environmental knowledge and awareness of inhabitants. The more they abandon the care of places, the more they transform, from communities aware of the reproductive rules of their living environment to massified individuals. The local territory is no longer known, interpreted, enacted by the inhabitants as producers of reproductive elements of the biological and social life (neighbourhood, community, and symbolic relations) (Becattini 2015). Eventually, besides privatization, the last consequence of these processes is the depoliticization of public spaces, in the sense of closed to contestation, dispute and differential claims (Mitchell 2003; Somers 2008).

As a reaction, however, forms of participation and social action are increasing, together with the tendency of re-embedding, that is to shape again territory-founded communities (Nuvolati 2014; Becattini 2015). Today, there is a powerful intellectual and social movement to reclaim control over decisions about how the city develops and grows and to promote greater access to urban space and resources for all urban inhabitants. In many cities, we are witnessing the growth of, and interest in, a range of micro-spatial urban practices that are reshaping urban spaces. These practices include actions such as guerrilla gardening and community gardening; housing and retail cooperatives; flash mobbing and other shock tactics; social economies and bartering schemes; movements to occupy abandoned buildings for a range of purposes, and more. They all have in common the exploration of alternative urbanities within the existing city, occupying urban spaces and injecting them with new functions and meanings (Iveson 2013). This happens because «while globalization began to shake national spaces as the privileged scale of

intervention; other scales (the local, regional or urban) became more conducive, both in generating a sense of identity and belonging, and as privileged spaces for social, economic or political action» (Moulaert 2010, 6). The local scale – strong because it increases actors' capacity of action – is reasserted in reaction to the failure of centralized institutional systems and to market privatization of common places. It is through places that social actors vindicate their development, wealth and justice claims (Van Dyck and Van den Broeck 2013). In a nutshell, contemporary movements challenge the mainstream order. They are neighbourhood-centred, but they also conjugate community and identity concerns with claims for equality, collective consumption, and universal rights. They all struggle for recognition and empowerment, thereby challenging the established distribution of power and the existing governance structures. Moreover, although with a strong path- and place-dependency that plug them into the diversity of needs and challenges of particular communities, they have the potential for bridging local action with international networking at a global scale (Moulaert *et al.* 2010).

While reshaping urban space and tackling governance relations of power and responsibility, these movements are influenced by and influence the social cohesion of neighbourhoods and cities at large. In fact, sense of belonging and place attachment to the local dimension, on the one hand, and the empowerment of communities or the alternative use of urban spaces, on the other hand, are strictly interrelated. If forms of participation and social action may or may not affect social cohesion in cities – and vice-versa, also local governments have a role in fostering social cohesion or in favouring/hindering social movements. National and, especially, local policies may concern practices of active citizenship to favour citizens' participation in the urban decision-making; or they may enforce tools and strategies to engage citizens in the care of common resources; or they may set the premises to collaborate with civil society organizations to enlarge the urban governance. On the contrary, policies can also deny the role of citizens; or they can block every possibility of concertation with actors outside the main power relations; or they can plan urban spaces that discourage social and political *ensembles*.

The phenomena described so far evolve in the context of a profound transformation of the representative form of democracy (Rosanvallon 2008; 2011). Traditionally the representative democracy has two main characteristics: the electoral system and the capacity of this system to produce common goods. Since at least two decades, the contemporary democratic regime has entered a new phase in which its two main

characteristics are not blended together anymore. Indeed, in front of formal maintenance of liberal democratic institutions, we experience a dissolution of widespread opportunities for people to participate actively in the definition, negotiation, and production of what traditionally is defined as general interest. According to Pierre Rosanvallon, the social and institutional developments of democracy create a different type of democracy, that he calls counter-democracy, characterized by “organized distrust” and indirect powers scattered in the society (2008). However, in front of a pervasive loss of legitimacy and trust in politicians, the counter-democracy does not result in revolutionary movements aimed to gain power. On the contrary, the purpose is the fragmentation and control of the power by making it transparent and accountable. In fact, in a world marked by uncertainty, the ideology of the construction of a common world seems to be replaced by an ideology of transparency, that becomes more important than the truth or the idea of general interest (Rosanvallon 2008). The lack of general interest is also caused by the multiplication of identities, interests, and needs, both in the population and in the political representatives. Therefore, although citizens are increasingly conscious of the way in which they are governed, and despite the fact that they want to be listened to and their views to be taken into account, the problem is the inadequacy of a global understanding of the problems related to the organization of a common world. Thus, every citizen may feel lost in the multitude, without perceiving the influence and the power in his hands and in his voice (Rosanvallon 2008; 2011).

Research question

The contemporary phenomena sketched above are eroding solidarity, boosting social and political exclusion, closing spaces of socialization, contestation, and negotiation, and preventing parts of the population from exercising any political power. Within this framework, my research aims to contribute to the current model of democracy, by re-signifying individuals’ social lives with collective political meanings, showing a way to empower citizens and presenting pathways to alternative solutions for shared governance of public spaces. To achieve this, I aim to understand the interaction between social cohesion and citizens’ access to and governance of public spaces. How do the dynamics of social cohesion and governance of public space develop? This overall question generates additional secondary questions. Does social cohesion contribute to improved care for public spaces? Does the empowerment of communities or the alternative use of urban spaces increase social cohesion? Does better governance of public spaces create

social cohesion among citizens? Do public regulations and policies for the governance of public spaces foster or hinder citizens' participation in urban decision-making? Does the involvement of citizens in urban governance for public spaces increase social cohesion?

Thesis outline

To unravel these questions, I review the concept of social cohesion, focusing mainly on sociology, political science, and urban studies. The main limit of the concept, emerging from the literature review, is the predominance of the social dimension, that does not address disagreement, conflict, and above all, their organization. In order to fill the gap and to shift towards a more political perspective of social cohesion, I broaden the concept with the collective care, political and governance dimensions. Therefore, I proceed by reviewing the literature on commons, citizenship, and governance that concerns the access and the governance of public spaces amid urban contexts. While enriching the concept of social cohesion, none of the literature streams investigate how practices of commoning, urban citizenship and arrangements of governance produce, reproduce and organize social cohesion (chapter 1).

I thus mobilize a new perspective, that contributes to conceptualizing the different meanings of social cohesion and that organizes social cohesion, commons, citizenship, and governance in a single framework, allowing to analyse them through the same lens. This perspective is the theory of Social Innovation (SI), where the innovation is both the product as solutions to specific needs and the socio-political processes that influence, and are influenced by, these same solutions, with a particular concern for social inclusion and social justice. After a literature review of the concept of SI, I apply this perspective to each of the four mobilized concepts. SI explains social cohesion as a *problématique*, able to combine both social and political dynamics focusing on the governance of e.g. decision-making processes, conflicts, inequalities, and power negotiations, consider the place and time specificity of the context, and blend the views of the multiple urban actors.

Moreover, applying the lens of SI gives relevance both to the individual and collective agencies which have potential transformative power and to the contextual set of practices, norms, and constraints in which actors are embedded. I briefly go through the definitions of actors, structures and institutions within the SI perspective to focus then on the relationship between actors and institutions, explained and framed by the strategic-relational institutionalist approach. The latter refers to the dynamics between actors and institutions as reflexive-recursive dialectics, based on reciprocal influences. Therefore,

after highlighting the insufficient understanding of neoliberal politics, I mobilize the strategic-relational institutionalist approach to look at the wider dialectic dynamics between social cohesion and governance of public space, and among their various socio-political dimensions. This process allows to deepen the comprehension of the real dynamics by focusing on how the dialectic between social cohesion and urban governance develops, how practices of commoning and citizenship intervene within this dialectic, why citizens reclaim the custodianship of public spaces and why they reinvent spaces, why they feel the need to gather in public spaces, but also how the governance of public spaces is organized, and how the local governments involve citizens in the governance of public spaces. Thus, chapter 2 completes the analytical framework, that I then apply to the case studies.

In chapter 3, I present the phenomenon of Social Street and the reasons that drove me to choose it for the application of the analytical framework. Moreover, I address all the choices concerning the research methods, by clarifying the specific function they have during the study. I expose two Flemish projects served as pilot cases in order to finalize the preparation of the data collection phase. The analysis of the material collected on the Italian fieldwork is subsequently presented in chapters 4, 5 and 6. I reconstruct the development of the three Social Streets object of the study, by following the salient events and periods of the neighbourhood groups. The aim of the analysis is using the theoretical concepts mobilized and showing the interactions between the different dimensions of social cohesion, on the one hand, and between the social cohesion and the governance of public space, on the other. The empirical chapters are also interspersed with synoptic boxes, useful to deepen the geographical and demographic context of the area in which the Social Streets are located and the political and administrative situation of the three Italian cities.

The conclusive chapter 7 resumes the entire research project, recalling the problem statement, the analytical framework and the empirical case studies. By following different paths of development, the Social Streets shed light on different components of the framework and permit to detect the reflexive-recursive dialectics embedded both among the dimensions of social cohesion and between these dimensions. Afterwards the chapter reflects on the innovative potential of Social Streets according to the definitions of social cohesion as *problématique* and bottom-linked governance. The entire analysis, eventually, shows the inadequacy of both the rationalist and structuralist approach in addressing the pressure on sociability and the lack of common places supporting public

life and living together. The real complexity of society is much more complicated and both social cohesion and governance of public space are embedded in wider and reciprocally influential dynamics, belonging to the socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural spheres.

Chapter 1.

Understanding social cohesion and governance of public space: gaps in the literature

Starting from contemporary problems regarding the weakness of social ties among individuals in urban contexts on the one hand and deficient (governance of) common places, this research aims to understand the mutual interactions of social cohesion and citizens' access to and governance of public space. Starting from social cohesion, in this chapter, I review the literature on the concept, concentrating mainly on sociology, political science, and urban studies². I explain the limits of this literature, which I overcome by integrating the concept of social cohesion with the dimensions of collective care, politics and governance and the concepts of commons, citizenship and governance. Therefore, whereas in this chapter the analyzed literature offers a predominantly 'soft' social perspective of social cohesion, the framework taking shape in the second chapter includes also a political perspective, allowing for conflicts, power redistribution and negotiations.

1.1. Social cohesion in the neighbourhood

1.1.1. Basics of social cohesion

According to the Oxford dictionary, social cohesion is the action, or fact, of holding firmly together or forming a unit. It is the situation when the members of a group or society are united. Indeed, a cohesive society occurs when all the component parts somehow fit and contribute to society's collective project and well-being, and conflict between societal goals and groups, and disruptive behaviours are largely absent or minimal. Although this definition is clear, it is also very broad. When trying to be more specific, there is no single way to conceptualize social cohesion. From the moment that the concept represents the internal bonding of a social system, whatever form this may take – a family, a group, an organization, a university, a city, a state or a society as a whole – social cohesion assumes also many different dimensions, depending from what perspective it is looked at. In the last ten years, at least, the issue of social cohesion has caught great interest both from politicians and the intellectual world. This concern can be

² Although during my readings I came across economic dissertations and psychological or anthropological perspectives, I decided not to include them in my framework.

attributed to three reasons: social cohesion is viewed as a condition of political stability and security, and consequently the way through which addressing immigration and integration; it is considered as a source of wealth and economic growth, also strengthening a country's international weight; social exclusion from the labour market or weak social ties and feeling of solidarity within private networks may have the effect of increasing public expenditure. Social cohesion hence is often regarded as a remedy for many societal problems such as individualism, marginalization, disparities and changing norms and values (Berger-Schmitt 2002; Van Marissing *et al.* 2005).

The European Union defines it, together with economic cohesion, as an expression of solidarity between the EU Member States and their regions, aiming to achieve balanced socio-economic development throughout the EU. The cohesion policy of the EU was incorporated into the EC Treaty by the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 and since then a variety of operations have been financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund. Every three years, the European Commission presents a report on progress made towards achieving economic and social cohesion and the part played in this by EU policies. For the programming period 2014-2020, cohesion policy is the EU's second largest budget item³. The Directorate General of Social Cohesion (DG III) works specifically to foster social cohesion and promote the improvement of the quality of life in Europe for the genuine enjoyment of fundamental human rights and the respect of human dignity. In Italy, social cohesion often overlaps with territorial cohesion and the attempt to reduce economic disparities between north and south of the country. The Department for territorial cohesion has been assigned in 2005 for the first time, but it has not been confirmed by all governments that run the Republic so far. One of the last national programs is implemented by the Assessor for Cohesion in agreement with the European Commission to foster cohesion between the European Union's regions by reducing existing disparities. The program addresses four southern Italian regions – Campania, Apulia, Calabria, Sicily – in the field of childhood and elderly care⁴. Moreover, from 2015 the International Observatory on Social Cohesion and Inclusion organizes a yearly conference called Social Cohesion Days to favour the debate among politicians, researchers, organizations and civil society and to trigger a shared reflection about policies, guidelines, and needs of contemporary society⁵.

³ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/glossary/e/economic-and-social-cohesion; https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/cohesion-report/: visited on 10/12/2018.

⁴ <http://www.interno.gov.it/it/temi/territorio/coesione-sociale>: visited on 10/12/2018.

⁵ <https://www.socialcohesiondays.com/en/international-observatory-on-social-cohesion-and-inclusion/>: visited on 10/12/2018.

The attempt to distinguish between State-related aspects (macro dimension) and neighbourhood-related aspects (micro dimension) of social cohesion is complex. However, this exercise can be useful in order to focus on those dynamics and social processes that arise among individuals – such as neighbours or residents of the same City – and that contribute to affecting the collective organizations and structures in which these individuals are embedded. According to sociologists, political scientists and urban scholars, social cohesion involves building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income and generally enabling people to have a sense of commitment, and desire or capacity to live together in some harmony (Jenson 2010). According to Jenson (1998; 2010), social cohesion has five dimensions: a) belonging: relatively to collective identities through which individuals share values and feel committed to the community; b) inclusion: relatively to economic institutions – the market above all – and to who has access or who is marginalized from fully participating in those institutions; c) participation, relatively to the role and responsibility of the local scale and the third sector in remaking governing practices to promote cohesion; d) recognition: relatively to institutions that recognize differences; e) legitimacy: relatively to maintain the legitimacy of those public and private institutions that act as intermediary agents assuring connections among individuals and shaping collective constructions. Similarities are drawn by Kearns and Forrest (2000) analyzing social cohesion as 1) common values and civic culture, that enable communities' members to identify and support common aims and objectives, and share a common set of moral principles and codes of behaviour through which to conduct their relations with one another; 2) social order and social control, meaning absence of general conflict within society and of any serious challenge to the existing order and system; 3) social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities that are achieved through the redistribution of finances and opportunities between groups and places; 4) social networks and social capital which develop through socialization processes and mutual support mechanisms mostly based on family and kin at a local level; 5) place attachment and place identity which increase people's adherence to common values and engagement in common projects for the well-being of the community. Therefore key aspects of the concept are the strength of social relations, networks and associations; the sense of belonging to the same community and place; the extent of participation and claim of citizenship; the extent of disparities, social cleavages and social exclusion in a society; the socio-economic and the ecological justice (Forrest and Kearns 2001; Berger-Schmitt 2002; Eizaguirre *et al.* 2012; Novy *et al.* 2012).

The latter – social and economic justice – is strongly related to the national dimension and cannot be addressed or pursued at the neighbourhood scale. In contrast, social relations, sense of belonging and place attachment are descriptive of social cohesion at a local level. Civic and political engagement, eventually, is the connection between the micro and macro dimension; it represents the moment in which common values and identities take shape in collective instances. Abandoning the national dimension of social cohesion, the next sections focus on the neighbourhood and urban dimension of the concept.

1.1.2. Dimensions of social cohesion

«At neighbourhood level, [...] social cohesion is concerned with the interactions between residents and the extent to which their lives can exist first in harmony and second with a growing level of feelings of togetherness» (Dekker and van Kempen 2009, 111). At this scale, aspects of social cohesion are social networks, neighbourhood attachment, and civic culture of common values. The social networks dimension refers to the structured multiplicity of social links between individuals or their positions. If the links between individuals consist of both strong and weak ties, these social networks are not only supportive, but they also give people new opportunities. Social networks include availability and frequency of social relations to friends, relatives, and neighbours; social support exchanged within these informal networks in case of needing help in special activities, personal or financial problems (Berger-Schmitt 2002; Dekker and Van Kempen 2009). The dimension of neighbourhood attachment refers to people's identification with a certain neighbourhood, either because they are attached to its physical appearance or because they feel part of the social networks there. This type of attachment to the local place results in a feeling of being part of local society and a willingness to cooperate with others to reach a common goal. Indeed, the civic culture dimension represents the interest of participating in collective projects and well-being. The participation in local community life may eventually develop in broader participation in processes of decision-making regarding urban aspects.

In order to investigate the extent of social cohesion at the neighbourhood and community scale, the sociological literature often focuses on concepts which are implied in the definition of social cohesion itself. These concepts are sociability, sense of belonging, place attachment and civic engagement and are useful in understanding the dynamics of the formation of bonds and communities among individuals. Simmel's

concept of *sociability* represents the purest form of affiliation among human beings, potentially being the foundation of weak and strong ties in neighbourhoods or other urban contexts. Sociability is based on reciprocity, on equal and democratic interaction and on respecting times, spaces and willingness of themselves and others (Turnaturi 2011). Sociability in its pure form has no ulterior end, no content and no result outside itself. It is possible under three conditions: 1) The exclusion of what is objectively important for individuals but is not commonly important for other; 2) The exclusion of other aims apart from the same sociability; 3) The preponderance of the joyful and playful aspect of sociability. «The pleasure of the individual is always contingent upon the joy of others; here, by definition, no one can have his satisfaction at the cost of contrary experiences on the part of others. [...] This world of sociability [is] made up of beings who have renounced both the objective and the purely personal features of the intensity and extensiveness of life in order to bring about among themselves a pure interaction, free of any disturbing material accent» (Simmel and Hughes 1949, 257). Hence, sociable relations are not purposive bonds that people engage in voluntarily. According to Blokland (2017), the derivation of the word from the French *sociabilité* and the Latin etymon *socius* – ally, associate – suggests that sociability encompasses both affinity and affectivity. Affinity relies indeed on the recognition of similar values or ideas, on the mutual understandings of the social. Affectivity appeals to joyful or painful feelings. Ideally, affective relations are free of obligations because their only purpose is congeniality. In reality and especially in friendships and families, people may experience moral obligations and social pressures. «It is for the sake of special needs and interests that men unite in economic associations or blood fraternities, in cult societies or robber bands. But, above and beyond their special contest, all these associations are accompanied by a feeling for, or a satisfaction in, the very fact that one is associated with others and that the solitariness of the individual is resolved into togetherness, a union with others» (Simmel and Hughes 1949, 254-255). According to Simmel and Hughes (1949), everyone has an impulse to sociability that distills the pure essence of the associative process as a value and a satisfaction.

Creating the parallelism with Maslow's psychologist hierarchy of needs (1968), interpersonal relations are a central feature of human well-being. Love and belonging needs appear after hunger, safety, and other basic needs, but before self-esteem and self-actualization. The need to belong, that is forming and maintaining at least a minimum quantity of interpersonal relationships, is innately present among human beings

(Baumeister and Leary 1995). People experience a *sense of belonging* when they feel connected to their co-residents and their home area (Forrest and Kearns 2001). The sense of belonging is not simply a feeling and not a stable stage, but it is more the outcome of practices, performances, and social practices. Thus, it is a socially constructed and embedded process in which people reflexively judge the suitability of a specific place as appropriate given their social trajectory. In this sense, belonging is elective: individuals attach their own biography to their chosen residential location so that they tell stories that indicate how their settlement is pertinent to their sense of themselves (Blokland 2017). The sense of belonging may result in different types of ties – weak or strong, durable or fluid – that Blokland (2017) sums up as relational settings of belonging. Relevant is the difference between sense of belonging and sense of community⁶: we can feel that we belong somewhere even though there is not any community there or we are not aware of it, or we may feel at home but community members still do not include us. The practice of belonging does not presuppose a community, nor does it necessarily contribute to it.

Indicators of sense of belonging in literature (Baumeister and Leary 1995; Forrest and Kearns 2001; Turnaturi 2011; Bacon 2013; Blokland 2017) are: if I moved away I would be sorry; I have friends in this neighbourhood; there are people I can turn to; there are people who care about me; neighbours ask me to watch their home, loan some food, take care of their kids, talk about personal problems, visit them at home, give them information about activities; in the shops they know what I want. This time using a psychological concept, Lofland uses the term «familiar strangers» (1998, 60) to indicate «the person who is not personally known but, because of a shared daily path or round [...] is recognizable». Familiar strangers may strongly increase the sense of belonging due to their both socio-psychological and cultural relevance. Moreover, there is evidence of a correlation between belonging and health: those who know more people in their local neighbourhood tend to be happier than those who do not (Jenson 1998; Bacon 2013).

Living in the same area, experiencing the same urban context, walking the same streets is key to building attachment to the place. People living in the same neighbourhood indeed share one common factor: the place they call home. Turnaturi refers to these types of bonds with «flexible solidarities» (2011, 30), that are based on the simple spatial proximity of co-housing the same space. What turns those spaces in socially practiced

⁶ The concept belongs to the studies of community psychology (among others: Chavis and Wandersman 1990; Nasar and Julian 1995; Perkins and Long 2002; Kim and Kaplan 2004; Volker et al. 2007; Plummer et al. 2009; Tsai 2014). The sense of community is strongly related to social networks and sense of belonging to the local community, but it misses the passage to collective identities and civic participation.

places is the presence of people who share common activities and routines. Besides producing sense of belonging, the sociability practices that occur daily in that place may generate also a process of identification with the place⁷ (Turnaturi 2011). Many different concepts have been developed to describe the emotional link people establish with places that are especially important for them: topophilia, rootedness, place dependence, place identity, urban identity, social urban identity, place attachment, sense of place, settlement-identity, place congruence (Hidalgo 2013). For sake of clarity, I use place attachment. *Place attachment* thus refers to people's feeling of being linked to their co-residents and to the area in which they live⁸. It is related to the feeling of security, the construction of self-esteem and self-image, the bond with people cultures and experiences, and the maintenance of a group identity (Altman and Low 1992; Nuvolati 2002; Kim and Kaplan 2004; Dekker and Van Kempen 2009). The attachment may derive by people factors and/or place factors (Kearns and Forrest 2000). Further, it is not only those who are physically present locally who feel attachment and responsibility towards a place but also those linked to the place for other reasons – e.g. job, hobbies, relatives, etc.

Indicators of place attachment in literature include: I think my block is a good place for me to live; I feel at home on this block; I expect to live on this block for a long time; I have the sense of being comfortable, familiar and “really me” here (Cuba and Hammon 1993; Perkins and Long 2002). Actions such as doing things that one likes in that place and preferring the place to other places are signs of place attachment (Hidalgo 2013). The duration of residence is always considered: living in the neighbourhood for a longer time and feeling rooted in it. In this case, residents express that the neighbourhood somehow represents their personality to a certain degree (Felbinger and Jonuschar 2006; Manzo and Perkins 2006). Place attachment also implies community satisfaction, sense of connectedness, sense of ownership, feeling of pride in the residential area and its appearance. Eventually place attachment is determined by social control items such as wanting to be involved in neighbourhood improvements, feeling in control of the sidewalk in front of the home, willingness to join a block association; belief that their

⁷ The relevance of spatial dimensions is the reason why I chose not to build my reasoning on the concept of social capital (among others: Coleman 1988; Putnam 1993; 2000; Jenson 1998; Perkins and Long 2002; Leyden 2003; Lelieveldt 2004), even if it often partially overlaps with social cohesion. Social capital, indeed, does not give enough account of the interrelationship between citizens and neighbourhoods, whereas these aspects are central in my research.

⁸ Since place attachment is often referred to neighbourhoods, I rather clarify that neighbourhood is not meant here as a physically defined lot with precise and objective borders. Neighbourhood corresponds instead to the place called home. This feeling strongly depends on individual's spatial practices, that are obviously different for everyone. The more a person moves and knows her urban surroundings, the bigger is the area which she identifies as her neighbourhood.

neighbours would talk to neighbours and/or call the police when they see misbehaviour (Brown *et al.* 2003). Residents feel secure in their place of residence when they know what to expect, when they know exactly whom to be careful around, whom to confide in, whom to avoid and why (Blokland 2017). There are many positive consequences of place attachment: people are better adjusted, feel supported, relate more fully to other people, aspire to goals beyond their own personal interests and have stronger levels of social support and social connectedness (Dekker and Van Kempen 2009). Starting from the scale of neighbourhood, attachment may lead to engagement to a city, to caring about what happens in a city so that the inclination to participate in local – civic and political – activities increases (Kearns and Forrest 2000). Researches have brought evidence out that place issues are critical to community participation and development (Manzo and Perkins 2006; Perkins and Long 2002).

According to Dahlgren (2006a; 2006b), engagement generally refers to subjective states: it indicates a mobilized, focused attention on some object. In this case, the object is the place of residence, the neighbourhood and consequently the group of people living there. Therefore, since engagement is anchored in the individual whereas neighbourhoods – and in general urban areas – belong to the public and political realm, the perspective needs to shift towards collectivities. «For engagement to become embodied in participation and thereby give rise to civic agency, the subjective states that express engagement need to connect with practical, do-able situations, where citizens can feel empowered» (Dahlgren 2006a, 30). The only way for this to happen is that the engagement of singular citizens is predicated on them being connected to others by civic bonds so that citizens have the opportunity to become involved in public life in meaningful ways. (Delli Carpini 2000; Dahlgren 2006a; 2006b). Practices of sociability, sense of belonging and place attachment contribute exactly to establish civic bonds and create a civic culture, that is values, norms, and beliefs shared by co-residents of the neighbourhood in order to maintain a good quality of life. This means experiencing forms of social solidarity and interest in the well-being of the other residents and the urban environment (Dekker and Van Kempen 2009), but also developing civic actions to improve some aspects of common life (Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014). Trust in the city council and/or in local community groups, willingness to work together with others to improve the neighbourhood or to solve emerging critical issues are widespread indicators of *civic engagement* (Docherty *et al.* 2001; Dahlgren 2006a; 2006b; Gil de Zùniga *et al.* 2012; Macchioni *et al.* 2017). Describing civic engagement aspects, Forrest and Kearns

(2001) point out the features of an engaged community: empowerment, participation, associational activity, and common purpose, supporting networks and reciprocity, collective norms and values, trust, safety, and belonging.

1.1.3. Gaps in the literature

The dominant perspective of social cohesion accounted in the examined literature is merely social: it does not address agreement and disagreement, agonism and antagonism, and above all, it does not tackle their organizational and institutional dynamics (Miciukiewicz *et al.* 2012). As such, social cohesion mainly refers to harmony and shared values, a general direction towards which society should evolve. This perspective is generally a-political: it neglects how difference is overcome and conflicts or decision-making are organized and subsequently governed. The negotiation of rights and duties belonging to citizens is not mentioned. The empowerment of excluded and detached communities is not considered. The modalities through which citizens get attached to a place or to the community are not elaborated. As such, a very fundamental issue is missing: how social cohesion is socially produced, reproduced and governed?

In order to answer to this question and to proceed beyond the a-political conception of social cohesion, which mainly focuses on the social dimension of social cohesion i.e. the shared civic culture among people, I broaden the concept with three new dimensions: a) collective care, b) politics, and c) governance. Besides other elements, social cohesion is characterized by the sense of belonging and the place attachment towards a local community and territoriality. This type of attachment to the local place appears to result in a feeling of being part of local society and a willingness to cooperate with others to participate in collective projects and to reach a common goal in terms of well-being. However, the literature on social cohesion does not consider how individuals develop feelings of attachment and belonging, through which practices they share values and norms, or how these feelings – or their absence – impact the same social cohesion. The latter neither tackles how groups develop, organize and manage common projects and resources. Therefore, the *dimension of collective care* allows adding in the analysis commons and commoning institutions, that highlight the link between feelings of attachment/belonging and the engagement of communities in practices of stewardship and custodianship.

It is then useful recalling another part of social cohesion: practices of sociability, sense of belonging and place attachment contribute to establish civic bonds and create a civic

culture, that is values, norm, and beliefs shared by co-residents of the neighbourhood in order to maintain a good quality of life. And also: features of an engaged community include empowerment, participation, associational activity, and common purpose, supporting networks and reciprocity, collective norms and values, trust, safety, and belonging. The engagement that individuals develop on the base of common values, cultures, and projects coincides with the step out from the private sphere to the public one: it represents the moment in which common values and identities take shape in collective instances. Within the urban environment, this engagement is likely to take shape in caring public space, or in any case in participating in the governance of the *res publica* – the governance of the city: this is exactly the way by which individuals become “public”, by which they become political being and, therefore, citizens. The *political dimension* thus is necessary to enrich the conceptualization of social cohesion by adding the reflection about inclusion and exclusion, about empowerment and disempowerment, about negotiation and exchange of rights and responsibilities among different urban actors. These processes imply also taking into account innovative and alternative solutions that may develop counter-hegemonic social-political practices. The political perspective of social cohesion thus stops being only consensus-oriented and starts to talk about exclusion.

Commoning institutions and the negotiation of citizenship entail intrinsically some kinds of organization among the community of commoners or among diverse urban actors. However, social cohesion does not account for the production and, consequently, the organization of the same cohesion. Hence the *dimension of governance* permits analyzing the organization of social relations, commoning practices, and citizenship formation, as well as conflicts and exclusion. In this sense, the governance of common resources and the governance of rights and duties of citizenship may have an impact on the resulting social cohesion of the population. The civic culture shared by a group, on the basis of social ties, feelings of belonging or attachment and civic engagements (i.e. social cohesion) may affect the governance models, influencing the extent of citizens’ participation or the constancy of the commitment in taking care of commons.

I address the dialectic between social cohesion and urban governance specifically in the next chapter. In the remainder of this chapter, I proceed to review the literature on the concepts of commons, citizenship, and governance, brought in the framework by integrating the concept of social cohesion with the dimensions of collective care, politics

and governance. The literature review accounts for the way in which these concepts are mobilized to address issues of social cohesion and of governance of public spaces.

1.2. Commoning the neighbourhood

The concept and the analytic paradigm of commons are not recent: mankind has traditionally organized valuable resources through collective management regimes, most having to do with kinship and/or local community. To Bollier (2002), the commons is the default mode of economic organization around the world and throughout history, even though market exchange has always existed and has steadily grown at the expense of the commons. Since the 1500s, the commons has been subjected to countless private enclosures, at least within the industrialized world (Bollier 2002). According to Ostrom, analyzing commons implies a double perspective: commons as a resource or resource system, independent from any particular property rights; commons as a property-rights regime, meaning a legal regime shaped by a jointly owned legal set of rights (Hess and Ostrom 2007; Iaione 2016). Thus, the commons is distinguishable from private goods, which combine exclusion, sub-tractability, producing also rivalry; and from public goods, which combine non-exclusion and non-sub-tractability. Commons and private goods share the sub-tractability since every unit of the resource which is consumed can no longer be consumed by someone else. On the contrary, in most cases, public goods can be consumed multiple times by several persons⁹. The difference with private property is that commons cannot be divided among their users, either because it is physically impossible, or because the costs of subdividing the good are too high. This latter characteristic is shared by public goods (De Moor 2012; Oakerson and Clifton 2015). The definition of commons given by Ostrom and referring especially to Common-Pool-Resources is well known: natural and human-constructed resources in which (i) exclusion of beneficiaries is costly or difficult and (ii) exploitation by one user reduces resource availability for others (Ostrom 1990; Ostrom *et al.* 1999). Rules limiting the access to the common resources and defining rights and duties for its management are needed, together with a set of eight principles, summed briefly here: a) clearly defined boundaries of the common goods; b) rules in use matched to local needs and conditions; c) individuals affected by these rules participate in modifying the rules; d) the right of community members to

⁹ Even if water and climate are examples of public goods that are being exploited, over-consumed and ruined.

devise their own rules is respected by external authorities; e) established system for self-monitoring members' behaviours; f) graduated system of sanctions available; g) community members have access to low-cost conflict-resolution mechanisms; and (h) internal governance organized in a nested structure with multiple layers of activities (Ostrom 1990; Ostrom *et al.* 1999). The presence of rules regulating individual use rights is what differentiates common goods from open access goods.

In the last twenty years, many criticisms have been formulated towards Ostrom's theory, together with different perceptions of what commons mean and include. For sure the focus given to rural environments and contexts strongly limited the veracity of Ostrom's definition and principles, which do not consider the existence of other types of resources and other forms of communities managing the resource. Secondly, in Ostrom's classification, there is a "scale problem" at work. As we change perspective, the whole nature of the common-property problem and the prospects of finding a solution change extremely. What looks like a good way to resolve problems at one scale does not hold at another scale. Even worse, good solutions at one scale – e.g. the local – do not necessarily aggregate up, or cascade down, to make for good solutions at another scale – e.g. the global (Harvey 2011). Eventually, Ostrom's eight principles only concern the internal governance of a community managing the common resource. Besides the fourth one that mentions the right of community members to see their rules respected by external authorities, there is not any other reference to the external governance which develops around the management of commons and involves the community and all the other actors of the broad society. These relationships imply processes of negotiation and often multi-level arrangements that have to be thoroughly analyzed within the development and maintenance of commons.

Referring to different theorizations of commons, in the literature there are plenty more recent definitions and classifications. Among others first is the distinction between old and new commons, where the latter are various type of shared resources that have recently evolved or have been recognized as commons. New commons are constantly created. They are usually human-made and technology-driven, existing at global, regional and local scale (Hess 2000; 2008; Bollier and Helfrich 2012; Caffentzis and Federici 2014). The rise of new commons signals alarmed reactions to increasing commodification, privatization, corporatization, and unresponsive governments, adding the enclosure of the same new commons, implying the gradual or sudden decrease of accessibility of a particular resource. The reasons for the enclosure are many: privatization,

commercialization, new legislation, increased scarcity through overconsumption, which can be brought about from new populations, natural disaster, neglect, etc. (Hess 2008). Examples of new commons are scientific knowledge, technological software, solidarity economy and, in general, a world of new social relations coming into existence based on the principle of communal sharing (Siefkes 2009; Bollier and Helfrich 2012). New commons can be further sub-divided in many sectors, among which frequent overlaps occur: cultural commons, urban and neighbourhood commons, knowledge commons, social commons, infrastructure commons, market commons, and global commons (see Hess 2000; 2008 for a detailed literature review). Levine draws another distinction between libertarian commons and associational commons. In the former, anyone has a right to use, and sometimes also to contribute to, some public resource. The latter exists when some good is owned and controlled by a group: the owner has the right and power to limit access, but he sees himself as the steward of a public good and as such, it sets policies that are intended to maintain a commons¹⁰. Within the sector of urban commons, so-called “public goods” are included, meaning both tangible and intangible resources, such as the air we breathe, sanitation systems, parks and squares, transportation systems, schools, waterways, garbage, streets, etc. The urban “commons” generally shares with traditional public goods both a lack of rivalry in consumption (not rivalrous) and lack of excludability in access to and enjoyment of their benefits (not excludable) (Gidwani and Baviskar 2011; Foster 2013). Therefore, urban commons are those shared resources within the territory perimeter of a city, even if this simplification brings many problems up, such as – among others – the impossibility to define clearly the borders within which a territory has to be considered urban, in opposition to rural peripheries. Moreover, some authors use urban commons to describe whole cities as resources for people living in them, and to assert that all urbanites have a right to an equitable usufruct of cities within the principles of sustainability, democracy, equity and social justice (Harvey 2012; Susser and Tonnelat 2013; Foster and Iaione 2016).

Since I consider none of the above commons’ conceptualizations fully inclusive of all various type of resources and organizations established to manage them, I rather prefer to underline the importance of place-specificity, historical moment and socio-cultural

¹⁰ I found Levine’s theory of associational commons at this link: <http://bit.ly/2LQzXZA>. The pdf document does not contain any details about the references of the paper. Other works of Peter Levine are: *Civic Renewal and the Commons of Cyberspace*, 2001, in *National Civic Review*, 90(3), pp. 205-212; *Can the Internet Rescue Democracy? Toward an On-line Commons*, in Hayduk R. and Mattson K. eds. 2002, *Democracy’s Moment: Reforming the American Political System for the 21st Century*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

context in giving the connotation of commons to a broad range of resources. Thus, more generally, a commons is some kind of public resource, accessible to all members of a community and often constructed by them. The notion of the commons is based on altruistic cooperation, collaboration, and communication and it involves people operating on a collective rather than merely individualistic level (Hardt and Negri 2009). Cumbers defines the commons as «collective spaces created “outside” of the workings of capital where different social relations and norms, based upon reciprocity, trust, and care – rather than individualism, competition, and self-interest – can be nourished» (Cumbers 2015, 63). In addition, common spaces are those spaces produced by people in their effort to establish a common world that houses, supports and expresses the community they participate in (Stavrides 2016). Harvey describes the commons as «an unstable and malleable social relation between a particular self-defined 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, 73). These latter definitions contain the three interlinked components of which every commons is made: a) the resource; b) the community – called commoners – who is involved in the production and reproduction of commons and who has access to it; c) the institutions – called commoning practices – for regulating those resources; institutions that are constituted by the collective actions and the social processes which create and reproduce the commons (De Angelis and Stavrides 2010; Dellenbaugh *et al.* 2015; Huron 2017)¹¹.

Considering the nature of the projects analyzed as case studies in this paper, the three components are now deconstructed, referring to the urban environment, played and shaped by urban actors. Concerning the first aspect – the resource – urban commons are all shared urban resources that, as mentioned above, can take many different shapes. However, it is fundamental to highlight the specificities of urban commons¹², namely what makes different commons in cities being unified by their urban collocation. First of all, whereas one of the typical social dilemmas for commons is the over-consumption of the resource, in the case of cities both the commercial and subjective value of a particular place may increase by being used and shared. The act of commoning does not detract but rather increases values: no city would even be a city without the inhabitants actively using its spaces. In fact, consuming the city is nothing but the most subtle form of its production

¹¹ Corvo et al. (2015) include a fourth component: the use value created through the social reproduction or preservation of these common goods.

¹² Even though not using the division between urban and rural commons or any other category, I refer to “urban commons” to indicate their position within the territory of the city.

(Borch and Kornberg 2015, 7-8). In the same way, urban commons are not simply out there, but they are first produced and then constantly reproduced. Other peculiarities of urban commons depend on the number of actors involved – thus their countless characteristics – and the contested character of the resources themselves: if we think about entities such as the ecosystem, water, and electric supply, road usage and qualities like silence, actually urban residents are often not aware of them as commons. Besides, in the face of a large number of users, benefits for individuals who invest in commons are small. Considering that several kinds of social differentiation and division, such as class, gender, ethnicity, race, or occupation, create different relationships to commons resource, the formation of diverse groups appreciating the various aspects of these resources differently is natural. Furthermore, the heterogeneity of stakeholders – citizens, non-profit, private companies, public institutions – acting around urban commons produces cross-sectoral collaborations, enhancing the possibility for the state to be the regulating and monitoring authority (Kip 2015). Finally, urban commons have two distinctive challenges: first, the ongoing need to negotiate boundaries and solidarities and, secondly, the exigency for urban commons to expand in order to match and outdo capitalist urbanization (Kip 2015; Stavrides 2016). This process, called as “expanding commoning” by Stavrides (2016), constantly invites “newcomers” and thus transforms the community from which commons are produced as well as those who are not simply attracted by and integrated into it but who essentially become co-producers of a modified common world.

The issues of defining boundaries on the one hand and expanding the community involved in managing the commons directly bridge to the second dimension of commons: the community. Cities are in the middle of a rapid process of change, where the boundaries between private and public can shift daily. Thus, boundaries are not fixed, rather, using Stavrides concept of “threshold”, they are there to be crossed (Stavrides 2016). Again, according to Stavrides, however, it is not only boundaries that are modified under urban conditions, but also commoners’ subjectivities, who have to be open to welcome newcomers and to become always newcomers themselves (Stavrides 2016). From the perspective of the commoners, boundaries mean first and foremost knowing who are “the others” with whom they have to share the resource. Therefore, generally speaking, the commoners are the people who produce and preserve the commons and the activities that constitute and reproduce it (O’Brien 2012; Caffentzis and Federici 2014; Borch and Kornberg 2015). Resuming the idea of expanding commoning, «an expanding community of commoners needs not be envisaged as a well-organized machine that can

integrate new parts into its always-improving functioning; rather it can be understood as an artifice of collective bricolage which people always mend, and even enjoy in doing so, and which is being shaped and used according to their needs and dreams» (Stavrides 2016, 158).

Institutions of commoning are the last dimension of commons. It should sound clear already that commons involve in any case “being-in-common”, that are those collective practices experienced by a community. Thus, commons need communities: without sufficiently robust communities of people willing to create, maintain, and protect them, commons are at risk of failing (Gidwani and Baviskar 2011). However, this is not sufficient to explain the bond between the community and its common resources. Object and subject cannot be separated: commons are not given but produced and the community is a vital and dynamic element of the commons (Turnaturi 2011; Donolo 2012; Iaione 2015a; Caffentzis and Federici 2014). For instance, a square is not a commons in and of itself only because it is part of the urban space. It rather becomes a commons due to its nature as a place for social access and interpersonal exchanges and through the (non-commodified) appropriation, the care, and the sharing of the square itself. No one can expect to possess a square, it is only possible to aspire to be an active part of the small ecosystem of that square. Therefore, it is unimaginable to separate the physical features of an urban space considered as a common resource from the social ones. For Arendt, urban space is a form of collective being, that serves and is constituted by active participation and collective engagements (Arendt in Blokland 2017, 120). This attribute of commons – being constituted by social practices – is the reason why Linebaugh (2009) introduces the verb “commoning” to capture the concept of commons as an activity, a process which is continuous and requires participation. Commoning describes better the idea that the commons is not only a product, usable at the end of the production process, but it is also the production process itself (Hardt and Negri 2009). As Stavrides puts it, it is through practices of commoning, practices which define and produce goods and services to be shared, that certain spaces are (treated as) common spaces (Stavrides 2016). By encouraging encounters and negotiations through which forms of sharing are organized and common life takes shape, these practices importantly produce also new relationships between people. Thus, the existence of an interrelated link between commons and communities becomes visible: «[Commons] is both a concrete product of collectively developed institutions of sharing and one of the crucial means through which these institutions take shape and shape those who shape them» (Stavrides 2016, 7).

Therefore, whereas commons need communities to be produced and managed, communities are formed, developed, and reproduced through practices of commoning, that is acts and forms of organization oriented towards the production of commons.

Commoning as an activity is often associated with either protest movements or groups dedicated to providing an alternative resource, or with groups engaged in reclaiming land for a particular purpose in which they are all directly involved. According to Harvey, collective actions constitute the social quality of the city: «through their daily activities and struggles, individuals and social groups create the social world of the city, and thereby create something commons as a framework within which all can dwell» (Harvey 2012, 75). Indeed, by considering the whole city as a commons, which includes institutions of commoning addressed to the production of the city itself as commons, then it is consequent that the city is claimed to be produced and shaped by all its users. Harvey's conception points out what Henri Lefebvre has called the right to the city on behalf of its inhabitants: a common right rather than an individual one (Harvey 2008). In this case, it is not the ownership that is held in common, but the right to use and access the city, namely what Lefebvre calls the right of participation and the right of appropriation. The former maintains that inhabitants should contribute directly to all decisions that produce urban space in their city; the latter includes the right of inhabitants to physically access, occupy and use urban space (Purcell 2002). According to Mitchell (2003) the right to the city can also be translated as the right of groups and individuals to make their desires and needs known, to represent themselves to others and to the state as legitimate claimants to public consideration. The right to the city has been depicted by various interpretations, such as the right to voice, to difference and to human flourishing (McCann 2003) or as the legal permission to be in a city, to enjoy public spaces and services, to shape and change cities by residents' collective actions (Castañeda 2012) or, generally, as the right to be part of city's creation and of the decision-making processes shaping the lives of inhabitants and the collective resources in which they all have a stake (Harvey 2008; Ertuna-Howison and Howison 2012; Foster and Iaione 2016).

Within this frame, there has been a resurgence in the number of commoning movements initiated by citizens, activists, artists, and designers. Increasingly more people have started to claim a shaping power over the processes of urbanization. In literature, these have been given a variety of names such as Do-It-Yourself (DIY) urbanism, grassroot / everyday / participatory urbanism.

1.3. Civic activism and urban citizenship

Commoning movements and participatory forms of urbanism have also inspired researchers in studying what has mainly been called active citizenship, or differently as new forms of citizenship, urban centred and achieved by individuals, in opposition to the nation-based and received citizenship. Active citizenship has various and complex motivations and covers a wide area of issues. In general, it is «the capacity of citizens to self-organize in a multiplicity of forms for the mobilization of resources and the exercise of powers in public policies for the protection of rights to achieve the end of caring for and developing common goods» (Moro 2002, p. 8). In this contribution I do not address the huge amount of works about active citizenship and social movements, focusing instead on urban-achieved citizenship and organizations of civic activism. This type of groups seeks neither the visibility nor the impact on public opinion through the use of spaces such as streets and squares, which instead characterizes collective action. The main reason is that they do not arise to protest but to solve directly and efficiently specific issues. Organizations of civic activism are networks made of weak and low-intensity ties. Membership forms are impalpable or non-existent. Often the leadership is informal, as well as rules, procedures and decision-making processes. Another distinctive element of civic organizations is their concern over post-materialistic values and aspirations that are linked to the individual dimension; an element that is totally in opposition with traditional instances of class – or any other type – movements (Moro 2010).

Coming to the evolution of citizenship, historically citizenship is a constructed set of rights and duties that organizes the type of belonging to a society or political community identified as the state (for an historical analysis of citizenship transformations, see Somers 2008). Citizenship is thus linked to national sovereignty and relates to the possession of specific rights, involving obligations of institutions to respond to citizens entitlements, and specific duties such as complying with the law, paying taxes or learning enough to be employable (Garcia 1996; Moro 2002, Costa 2005; Smith and Guarnizo 2009; Novy *et al.* 2012; Smith and McQuarrie 2012). Marshall (1950) defines citizenship as the status which confers full membership in a society. According to him, what citizenship does is (a) reducing risk and insecurity; (b) elevating civilized life; (c) bringing about equality of status which he sees as more important than equality of income; (d) providing a common experience and therefore a common culture; and (e) operating to legitimize class differences. Therefore, citizenship becomes a method of inclusion which in principle

gives people who differ in age, sex, beliefs or colour of skin the same basic entitlements (Garcia 1996). Under a different point of view, citizenship is a mechanism of state control and rule precisely through the production of difference via the allocation of rights and entitlements to various groups (Guarnizo 2012). Finally, a function of citizenship is defining the boundaries of state responsibilities and differentiating them from those of markets, of families and of communities (Jenson 1998). The civic dimension of citizenship comprises both property rights, and expressive and legal rights such as freedom of speech, freedom from assault, and equal treatment under the law. Political citizenship is defined as the right to participate in the exercise of political power, whereas social citizenship includes workplace rights as well as entitlements to a modicum of material and social welfare guaranteed by the State.

Today, this national idea of citizenship is hardly questioned by worldwide relevant phenomena, such as migrations, processes of globalization/localization, the lack of effectiveness of public administration, the crisis of welfare systems and the market penetration within the public and civil sphere, the crisis of consensus in political leadership and the decreasing capacity to compromise. Within this context, many individuals and social groups have fully or partially opted-out of political participation and have chosen either other forms of political action or plain rejection (Swyngedouw 2005). They have searched for a new sense of belonging different from the national membership and the national labour market participation. At the same time, political rights have become unequal with numerous denizens sharing urban spaces with citizens: indeed, although in principle citizenship is universal in its definition, in practice it fails to include all members of societies (Garcia 1996; Eizaguirre *et al.* 2012). It is increasingly evident that formal citizenship does not coincide anymore with substantive citizenship (Garcia 1996; Holston and Appadurai 1996). Moreover, the shift from government to governance requires innovative ways to interrelate diverse actors and to involve citizens (Moro 2002). These challenges, therefore, invite to take on a post-national perspective of citizenship, by including its dynamic and processual characteristics and, different levels of belongings, that range from the local to the global scale. According to Moro (2010), the transformations of citizenship concern not only the concept as a status (i.e. its juridical, social and political content) but also the concept as a practice, namely the universe of people who are qualified by the citizenship itself. Within this second sphere (citizenship as practice), transformations occur in the individual dimension and in the collective one. For the individual, rights, membership, and type of participation change,

whereas in the collective dimension various forms and practices of citizenship are emerging, e.g. the citizenship of gender, the multicultural citizenship, the local and the global one, the electronic citizenship and the corporate citizenship (Moro 2010).

As mentioned before, the city has become the subject and the object, at the same time, of different claims of transformation by many movements, organizations, activists and social groups, all looking for a new mode of operating that is more politically democratic, socially just and overall representative of the diversity of lived experiences. These groups make demands on urban issues, use central places in cities to express themselves or call for regulations of the local state. Therefore, by focusing on these processes, there seem to be good reasons to reconnect citizenship with cities and to perceive it as practice and participation (Painter 2005; Blokland *et al.* 2015; Del Sesto 2015). Acted by these groups, citizenship is dynamic and reflexive, with citizens reinterpreting the basis of their collective life by new forms that correspond to their evolving needs and ideas. Citizenship thus becomes the practice of remaking notions of urban life itself, where contexts, motivations, and resources are continuously in the making (García 2006; Blokland *et al.* 2015), fragmented and negotiated by diverse urban groups (Harvey 2003; 2008). Another factor that contributed to re-draw the boundaries of citizenship practices at an urban or local scale is the decentralization of welfare systems, increasingly relevant in the definition of the social dimension of citizenship (García 2006; Kazepov 2014; Prandini 2013; 2018). Precisely to underline the prominent role of cities as political territory, Kazepov refers to *cit(y)zenship* reminding the urban origins of the concept in its etymology. Within this approach, rights are linked to the residence and lived presence in urban space as being the most important central fact of urban membership, giving the privilege to a mode of belonging beyond legal citizenship and place of birth. (Purcell 2002; Isin and Nielsen 2008; Smith and McQuarrie 2012; Merrifield 2013). The attempt is to advance from an essentialist and exclusionary concept of national citizenship which continuously produces outsiders towards a scale-sensitive and inhabitant-centered conception of citizenship. Urban citizenship would guarantee equal participatory rights and integration at the local level, regardless of national status, passports or legal documents (Baubock 2003; Uitemark *et al.* 2005; Novy *et al.* 2012). Parallel to this down-scaled definition of citizenship is the emphasis on social processes, meanings, and identities that produce the citizenship itself. The engagement of residents in claiming and negotiating powers and responsibilities makes citizenship becomes less a pre-determined set of rights that status-holders possess, whereas it becomes more a status that is earned

by specific types of conduct (Rose and Osborne 2000; Isin and Turner 2002). According to Garcia: «the notion of citizens does not derive its identity from some common ethnic and cultural properties but rather from the praxis of citizens who actively exercise their civil rights. Here ethnos is replaced by demos» (1996, p. 17). Therefore, the status of citizens is no more passively received, rather it is achieved by individuals as the result of agency activation and active participation (Dahlgren 2006b; Macchioni *et al.* 2017). Moro (2002) sums up these concepts by stating that citizenship is the exercise of civic participation, through the negotiation of powers and responsibilities of citizens, in the arena of public policies and in the context of governance.

Nevertheless, urban citizenship entails many critical issues about its conceptualization. First of all, it is not clear how to delimit the borders of cities: what is included in the urban territory? Who does belong to the city and who instead is excluded? Besides, also the policies to regulate the entrance towards and the exit from the city are not defined: who gets the status of citizen? Only who owns the *jus domicili*? Secondary, some scholars among which Nicholls and Vermeulen (2012) have objected that a consistent part of claims for a right to the city is actually the claim for rights through the city. They argue that social movements make use of the city as an important arena for political projects that however transcend the local realm and can even be of global significance: thus, the adjective urban loses its connotation. Furthermore, the term urban citizenship seems to imply that cities by themselves create entitlements, which actually is not what is happening in European cities. The degree of autonomy that local citizenship systems have and the resources at their disposal still rely to a large extent on overall regulations existing at the national level. Therefore, also the attempt of García (2006) to re-ground practices of citizenship to institutional settings by using the term “urban and regional forms of citizenship” is not sufficient. Despite the emerging plurality of actors claiming rights and engaged in urban governance, indeed, the power of the state is not necessarily diminished and contemporarily municipalities do not become autonomous political communities but remain subdivisions of the national territory (Baubock 2003; Garcia 2006; Kazepov 2014). Urban citizenship lacks not only institutional grounding but also consideration of transnational and global processes, such as the Europeanisation, the space of flows concerning capitals, people and goods, migrations and the development of mega-cities. At the same time, however, global citizenship remains highly idealistic because there is no political movement or bodies which enforce global citizenship rights or new types of multilevel governance taking in account such high level as the world (Novy *et al.* 2012).

Besides, another limit of transnational citizenship is the even higher difficulty for citizens to become active participants to decision-making and to the creation of their living environment. Eventually, in a substantial range of contributions on urban citizenship, the attention is always referred towards part of the population totally excluded by the possibility to receive the status of citizenship, such as immigrants and refugees. Nonetheless, also local residents are often excluded by governing processes that concern directly their place of residence. The spread of participatory practices organized by urban institutions does not necessarily imply a real involvement of citizens in the governance or effective empowerment of them (Van den Broeck 2019). Indeed, these participatory projects often are only a bullet written in Municipalities' proposals to gain funding more easily and then implemented without really listening and considering citizens' voice. Furthermore, citizens' participation in public policies is not always encompassed in the governance approach, producing what Moro (2002) calls "governance-" and "not-governance-situations".

1.4. Governance as interactions and interdependences

The issue of participation directly links to the concept of governance. The ancient root of the word governance belongs to the Greek *kubernân*, that is conducting a ship or a wagon. In Plato's works, the term indicates the government of men and from this moment it crosses the political history in its Latin form *gubernare*. As a general frame, governance always pertains a decision. It is applied to any field where a mix of competences and functions creates complex structures of decision. At a high level of abstraction, governance can be defined as a co-production mode of decision-making among many types of actors, within different institutional contexts, through diverse decision-making procedures. As social cohesion, the governance notion has been applied to a variety of fields at different territorial levels and within diverse contexts. The literature counts many conceptualizations of governance such as meta-governance or multi-level governance (Jessop 2002), governance-beyond-the-state (Swyngedouw 2005), we-government or collaborative governance (Iaione 2015b), global experimentalist governance or polycentric governance (Sabel and Zeitlin 2008). Whereas acknowledging that the concept of governance may refer to new forms of government, outside the traditional democratic-representative governmental arenas, the current study is based on a broader

social-political perspective, that looks at any process of decision-making within all organizational spheres of society.

According to the first stream, governance can be defined as a process of transformation in the exercise of government functions from state-centred to multi-centred policy-making (Moro 2002, Diedrichs *et al.* 2011). In contradiction to forms of government, governance is not characterized by a hierarchical structure, rather by the interaction between the State and other actors embedded in public/private decision-making networks (Mayntz 1999). These networks are presumed to be woven around principles of openness, participation, accountability, and subsidiarity. Thus, governance involves the mobilisation of social groups, institutions, private and public actors forming alliances and engaging in collective projects. To Schmitter «governance is a method/mechanism for dealing with a broad range of problems/conflicts in which actors regularly arrive at mutually satisfactory and binding decisions by negotiating with each other and co-operating in the implementation of these decisions» (2002, 52). The EU defines governance as a process through which citizens may collectively solve problems and needs of the society, using governmental practices as a tool. Moreover, it adds that opening the process of decision-making to new stakeholders who are consciously interested in their role and position within the urban arena is essential to achieve a transformation (BEPA 2001). In a nutshell, this type of understanding governance has a concern for a state reorganization in multi-layered systems of policy-making and policy delivery (i.e. welfare and social care) and the opening up of the policy process to the input of non-state market and civil society actors. This version of governance has been studied in terms of policy formulation at national and sub-national level (Kooiman 1993; Rhodes 1997; Diedrichs *et al.* 2011), in the European arena (Bulmer 1994), as well as in the context of international relations (Rosenau and Czempiel 1992).

The second perspective defines governance beyond the exercise of government between public and private actors looking at any form of continuing coordination of social relations characterized by complex, reciprocal interdependence (Swyngedouw and Jessop 2006). In this case, the most important mechanisms and practices of governance involve: (a) the anarchy of market exchange; (b) the hierarchy of imperative coordination in and through organizations, including the state; (c) the heterarchy of self-organization in networks; and (d) the unconditional commitment associated with love, loyalty, and solidarity (Swyngedouw and Jessop 2006, 12). Reworking on this, Manganelli *et al.* (2019) elaborate a definition of hybrid governance, that displays the intertwined

progressive development of different governance mechanisms: «Governance forms interact with each other in the space-time reproduction of governance systems, producing different modalities and degrees of hybridization among them. Hybrid Governance implies that the various forms of governance coexist in dialectical interaction with each other. It involves the articulation of affective, solidarity, spontaneous organizational and hierarchical corporate or state “governing” relationships» (Manganelli *et al.* 2019, 5). Therefore, governance systems take shape as a result of interactions among actors who form coalitions towards common interests and purposes even though belonging to different organizational spheres and representing multiple values and discourse (Gonzalez and Healey 2005). Consequently, governance implies the negotiation of powers and responsibilities among all actors participating in the processes and also those who are not included in decision-making arenas. One of the basic matters of governance is indeed the boundary of each actor’s agency and role, in relation to the agency and role of other actors. Reflecting the features of the current society, thus governance processes are also characterized by a high dynamism and multiformity in constant change.

The social complexity and the possibility/capacity for each actor to take part in governance represents two main criticalities that governance arrangements need to face. Firstly, people’s capacity to participate in decisions is often unequally distributed, with the consequent risk of I) giving an advantage to those with already higher levels of agency and voice; II) creating exclusive policy communities; III) lacking transparency and accountability in decision-making processes. Secondly, one of the critical elements is constituted by the scale of representation of all actors – public, private, civil society ones, market ones – participating in networks of governance: indeed, they «have widely diverging mechanisms of deciding on representation and organizing feedback to their constituencies [proving] to be extremely difficult to disentangle the lines of representation through which groups claim entitlement to “holder” status or are assigned “holder” status» (Swyngedouw 2005, 2000). The scale of governance is equally crucial since the geographical scale or level at which forms of governance are constituted and their internal and external choreographies of participation/exclusion clearly affect the outcome of the decision-making process. Another relevant risk is public institutions’ passivity, that is the possibility of emerging passive subsidiarity, where social responsibilities and functions are delegated to civil society without establishing adequate mechanisms disciplining public-private relationships, defining general interest aims and allocating enough resources (Kazepov 2010). Eventually, borrowing Swyngedouw’s expression (2005), this

emerging governance-beyond-the-state has a Janus-face: on the one hand, it may indeed conduct to a greater openness to innovation, social inclusion and empowerment; on the other hand, it does not guarantee enough democratic accountability.

1.5. Conclusions

Aiming to address the interactions of social cohesion and citizens' access to and governance of public space, this chapter analyses the literature of social cohesion, especially focusing on its dimensions at the neighbourhood and community level. At this level, social cohesion literature focuses on the interactions between residents and the extent to which their lives can develop in harmony and with a high level of togetherness. Social cohesion emerges through social networks, neighbourhood attachment and shared civic culture. The perspective accounted in the examined literature, however, is mostly social and a-political. It does not address agreement and disagreement, agonism and antagonism, and above all, it neglects how difference is overcome and conflicts or decision-making are organized and subsequently governed. The negotiation of rights and duties belonging to citizens on the basis of a shared civic culture, as highlighted by social cohesion literature, is not mentioned. The empowerment of excluded and detached communities is not considered. The modalities through which citizens get attached to a place or to the community are not elaborated. As such, the fundamental issue of social cohesion production, reproduction and governance is missing.

In order to address and fill these gaps, I bring in three new dimensions: a) collective care, b) politics, and c) governance. Since the literature on social cohesion does not consider how individuals develop feelings of attachment and belonging, through which practices they share values and norms, or how these feelings – or their absence – impact the same social cohesion, the *dimension of collective care* allows adding in the analysis commons and commoning institutions, that highlight the link between feelings of attachment/belonging and the engagement of communities in practices of stewardship and custodianship. The engagement that individuals develop on the base of common values, cultures, and projects coincides with the step out from the private sphere to the public one: it represents the moment in which common values and identities take shape in collective instances. This engagement is likely to take shape in participating in the governance of the *res publica* – the governance of the city: this is exactly the way by which individuals become “public”, by which they become political being and, therefore,

citizens. The *political dimension* thus enriches the conceptualization of social cohesion by adding the reflection about inclusion and exclusion, about empowerment and disempowerment, about negotiation and exchange of rights and responsibilities among different urban actors. This perspective of social cohesion stops being only consensus-oriented and starts to talk about exclusion. Although commoning institutions and the negotiation of citizenship presuppose some kinds of organization among the community of commoners or among diverse urban actors, social cohesion does not account for the production and, consequently, the organization of the same cohesion. Hence the *dimension of governance* permits looking at and analyzing the organization of social relations, commoning practices, and citizenship formation, as well as conflicts and exclusion.

Therefore, I proceed by reviewing the literature on commons, citizenship, and governance that concerns the access and the governance of public spaces amid urban contexts. Despite enriching the concept of social cohesion by adding the three missing dimensions, none of the literature streams investigates how practices of commoning, urban citizenship and arrangements of governance produce, reproduce and organize the shared values, norms and culture of social cohesion, or how the organization of social cohesion impact these cultures, practices and arrangements. The relation between social cohesion and the governance of urban spaces is not addressed. I thus need to bring in a new perspective, that contributes to overarch the presented limits in literature. This perspective, presented and deepened in the next chapter, is the theory of Social Innovation.

Chapter 2.

The perspective of Social Innovation: the reflexive-recursive dialectics of social cohesion and the governance of public space

The previous chapter already turned to the concepts of commons, citizenship, and governance in order to fill the gaps and import the care, political and governance dimensions into the reflection. As such, I need a perspective that covers two other functions: 1) the conceptualization and operationalization of different meanings of social cohesion, to include both the civic and shared culture and the governance arrangements of social cohesion itself; and 2) the organization of social cohesion, commons, citizenship, and governance in a single framework, that allows to analyze them through the same lens.

The approach that I consider appropriate most of all is the one of Social Innovation (Moulaert *et al.* 2013). Social Innovation (SI) explains social cohesion as a *problematique*, able to combine both social and political dynamics focusing on the governance of e.g. decision-making processes, conflicts, inequalities, and power negotiations, consider the place and time specificity of the context, and blend the views of the multiple urban actors. Moreover, setting SI as a framework adds a temporal and transformative dynamic to the whole reflection and allows to investigate the innovative potential and sustainability in the long-term of the social practices that I intend to study.

I proceed thus with a literature review of the concept of SI, including the definition employed for this work. Then I describe the perspective that SI applies to each of the four mobilized concepts – shared culture, commons, citizenship and governance, underlining also the great prominence that within SI both actors and institutions have in influencing innovative processes. This idea is further developed by the strategic-relational institutionalist approach (Van den Broeck 2011). The model of reflexive-recursive dialectics allows overcoming the inadequacy of both rationalist and structuralist urban approaches in understanding the relationship between social cohesion and urban governance.

2.1. Social Innovation

The concept of Social Innovation (SI) has a long history: it has been defined in various ways, in different contexts, and by different fields – e.g. economics, business studies, technology and innovation, social anthropology, sociology, and politics. The word innovation comes from the Latin verb *innovare*, composed by the particle *in* and the verb *novare*, that means “to make something new”. The adjective *novus* derives from this verb and means “to alter the order of things established to make new ones”.

To recall just a few classical references, Weber (1968) defined the relationship between the social order and innovation by the impact on social changes of behaviours initially considered to be abnormal. Durkheim (1893) upheld that social regulation was important to consider in order to fully understand technical change. In the 1970s and 1980s, Chambon and other French scholars analyzed the relationship between innovation and the social pressures related to the big transformations of that period: they advocated that SI arises as the satisfaction of specific needs by the collectivity, in opposition to the intervention of the state (Chambon *et al.* 1982). Schumpeter acknowledged the fundamental role of innovation and structural change in the organization of society and the role of the entrepreneur as a driver of development. Their understanding of SI was then referring to innovation in the organization of work and of society.

Afterwards, considering the different conceptualizations that SI may take on, researchers of the Stanford University generally defined it as a more effective, more efficient and more sustainable solution to a specific problem, thanks to its capacity to produce values not solely for individuals but for the whole society (Phills 2008). There are many disciplines that have dedicated their researches to SI, overlapping and creating permeable boundaries between their theories and terminologies. The first two identifiable streams of literature on SI are the Anglo-American entrepreneurship studies and the Euro-Canadian social economies (Moulaert *et al.* 2017). The former is based on the business innovation and organizational management sciences, achieving prominence in the last decade as a response to the accelerated retreat of the welfare state after the global financial crisis (Mulgan 2007; Lawrence *et al.* 2014; Sabato *et al.* 2015). The SI concept that entered the European Union agenda in the 2000s belongs to this stream. Here SI is stated as the immediate solution to the pressing social issues citizens are confronted with. SI is considered as innovations that are social in both their ends and their means. Specifically, it is defined as new ideas (products, services, and models) that simultaneously meet social

needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other words, they are innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance society's capacity to act (BEPA 2011).

The Euro-Canadian stream is more theoretically diverse and rooted in the emancipatory ideals of social and solidarity movements, developed through the new approaches to community and neighbourhood development. For this approach, SI offers the means not only for meeting social needs but also for political mobilization among vulnerable and marginalized communities (Haxeltine *et al.* 2016; Moulaert *et al.* 2013; Oosterlynck *et al.* 2013; MacCallum *et al.* 2009; Moulaert and Nussbaumer 2005). Another approach looks at the role of the third sector and the social enterprise as sites of, or generators of SI, criticizing state bureaucracy and imagining alternative means of meeting the needs of citizens and fostering lasting social change (Klein *et al.* 2016; Martinelli 2017; Avelino and Wittmayer 2016). Another focus of SI literature is creativity: among others, Mumford (2002) examines how new ideas about the organization of social relations are developed and implemented by creative individuals to produce social change. Andr  and Vitale connect SI to artistic endeavours and to the building of creative milieus in which creative energies and diverse forms of expression are released to generate collective political action (Andr  *et al.* 2009; Vitale 2010). Having already mentioned the line of research that links SI and technology, both as social processes underlying technological invention and social effects of technological change, the last body of literature to add to the list refers to SI as a concept and not as a practice, by presenting meta-theoretical, historical and critical perspectives on SI discourse and its influence on contemporary policy and practice (Godin 2012; Jessop *et al.* 2013).

Among all the definitions and theories summed up above, this work is framed within the one that draws attention both to solutions to specific needs and to socio-political processes that influence, and are influenced by, these same solutions, with a particular concern for social inclusion and social justice. SI then occurs when collective action achieves three main forms of change, alone or in combination: a) the satisfaction of human needs – material and immaterial – that are not considered, either because not yet or no longer perceived as important by the market or the state; b) the empowerment of marginalised social groups, through the enhancement of socio-political capabilities and through the (re)creation of identity, thereby increasing their visibility, recognition, access or voice rights; c) changes in social, power and governance relations, that enable the above satisfaction and increase the level of participation of deprived groups in society

(Moulaert *et al.* 2005; 2010; 2013; Moulaert and MacCallum 2019). The first dimension, product-oriented, is often the medium to achieve the latter two, more process-oriented. In this case, the concept of empowerment means not only individual participation and self-determination through alternative development (Nussbaum 2003), but also the capacity to elaborate collective visions and intentions: the most successful socially innovative initiatives enable their constituencies not only to be heard, but also to actively pursue and achieve their inclusion in service delivery systems, decision-making processes, or the labour market (Moulaert *et al.* 2010). Regarding changes in governance, all relations among social groups within the community and the broader society across different institutional and spatial scales are involved: e.g. among different scales of government and among civil society, the state, and the market sectors. Therefore, the focus shifts from SI as a product to SI as a process, with great prominence to social relations, which make SI not a smooth process but an arena for deliberative decision making with a transformative power based upon spatial negotiation of various public spheres (Jessop *et al.* 2013). Social innovation thus does not simply happen in a spatial context, but consists of the transformation of spatial relations, which are context and spatially specific, spatially negotiated and spatially embedded (Moulaert 2009). Consequently, SI forms, dynamics, and impacts are highly contextual and depend on the place-specific socio-economic structures and institutions, as well as on the latter's temporal trajectories. However, the territorial specificity is not only defined by this path-dependency and context specificity; there is also the role of contingency and the casual and micro-agency effects that occurs in specific territories, carried out by different actors and becoming constituent characteristics of the context (Moulaert *et al.* 2010).

2.1.1. Social cohesion as socio-political problématique

I look now at the mobilized concepts through the lens of SI. So far, I reviewed studies that depict social cohesion mainly as the action of holding firmly together a unit, referring to a state in which components stick together to form a meaningful whole. I already outlined the inadequacy of this definition and the inadequacy of the a-political version of social cohesion. According to Eizaguirre *et al.* (2012), social cohesion loses its political value when concepts such as equality and justice have been substituted by an emphasis in European¹³ and national policies on belonging, inclusion, participation, recognition,

¹³ About the increasing attention that social cohesion gains as a key concept in European policy and research, see Novy *et al.* 2012. The concept enters the public agenda as a correction for market failure, when the welfare state started to erode. In this specific conjuncture, social cohesion became a political issue

legitimacy absence of conflict or social control. «The emphasis on social cohesion highlights the desire to maintain social peace in a context of a decline in redistributive policies, a failure to recognize diversity and the delegitimation of democratic mechanisms» (Eizaguirre *et al.* 2012, 2007). This trend further misses the point that social conflicts and divisions are not necessarily destructive of social order. It neglects that forms of conflict constitute key elements of the process that brings people together in relationships (Harloe 2001).

Thus, conflict and exclusion, together with forms of governance to organize them, need to be included in the conceptualization of social cohesion. Aware of this issue and of the blurry borders of social cohesion, SI interprets social cohesion as a *problématique*. In French, *problématique* is the presentation of a problem under different points of view that entail diverse aspects of the issue. The *problématique* comprises also the link among all its aspects. As such, social cohesion is a plural, scale-sensitive and multidimensional issue that can only be addressed collectively, that is by a democratic negotiation of interests and values. Analysing social cohesion requires considering a wide spectrum of processes and outcomes, modes of human behaviour, arrangements of governance, causalities, historical factors, and geographical patterns, that all together have produced cohesion, but also fragmentation and exclusion (Miciukiewicz *et al.* 2012).

Accordingly, although social cohesion can be addressed through a diversity of theories and concepts, the complexity of opposite but complementary issues always needs to be contemplated. Then, SI theory classifies four twofold issues: a) Socio-economy problematisation: social inequality and exclusionary dynamics with regard to access to resources and market versus solidarity in terms of redistribution and commitment to universal welfare rights; 2) Cultural problematisation: sociocultural discrimination and isolation, typical of cities as places of encounters between hybrid cultures versus common values and identity building within territorial communities; 3) Ecological problematisation: individual technological solutions, which are only affordable by wealthier citizens versus sustainability and ecological justice across cities and territories; 4) Political problematisation: elite politics characterized by consensus-oriented actions versus open and democratic arenas fostering participation and entailing conflict and negotiation (Miciukiewicz *et al.* 2012). Therefore, the SI perspective allows to expand the definition of social cohesion and to make it adequate for every socio-political

not only because of the ineffectiveness of existing social policies, but also by the refusal to apply alternative, more redistributive, policies. In this perspective, however, social cohesion is limited to a functional role in achieving and maintaining competitiveness.

investigation, that wants to give full recognition both of inclusive and exclusive mechanisms at the foundations of cohesive societies.

Within the current research project, while maintaining in the background the full complexity of social cohesion, I focus mainly on the cultural and political aspects of the concept. I adopt the following definition of social cohesion: «The capacity to acknowledge the existence of different social and territorial groups present in the city, their diverse and sometimes contradictory interests as well as the capacity for these groups to organise themselves and for the city to create institutions in which these groups can confront each other and decide about the city's future» (Cassiers and Kesteloot 2012, 1910). Bottom-up initiatives contribute to develop social cohesion when they try to bring back into the public sphere and into the mainstream political view concepts such as social justice. Urban administrative institutions implement social cohesion when policy intervention stops avoiding conflict and takes into account differences and conflictive positions (Eizaguirre *et al.* 2012). Using again the words of SI scholars: «Fostering social cohesion in cities means creating neighbourhoods and agglomerations where people live together differently or – more precisely – have the opportunity to be different and yet be able to live together» (Novy *et al.* 2012, 1874).

In this framework, analysing social cohesion through the lens of SI means taking into account all its dimensions: the pure social dimension related to sociability practices, sense of belonging, place attachment and civic engagement; the political dimension related to the negotiation of powers and responsibilities; the dimension of collective care concerning commoning practices of shared resources; the dimension of governance concerning the organization of all the above practices. In general, addressing the lack of social cohesion through the lens of SI thus means to recognize the necessity to challenge the hegemonic views, discourses, and institutional arrangements. This challenge can be strongly advanced by innovative arrangements of governance, practices of commoning, forms of citizens empowerment, and construction of shared civic values and cultures.

2.1.2. Fulfilling collective needs: commons

I already highlighted the importance of the collective care dimension into the conceptualization of social cohesion. This dimension helps, indeed, to acknowledge the dynamics related to the (re)production of feelings such as belonging to the community, being attached to the place, and being engaged in common projects, that influence both the extent of cohesion among the population and the governance of common resources.

Therefore, within this framework, the care of commons and commoning institutions is perceived as an integral aspect of social practices and relations.

Although the literature on Commons does not draw a clear link to the SI perspective, many commoning projects are considered innovative, implementing alternative solutions to various needs, especially those regarding the demand of different models of governance compared to the mainstream ones – market and state. Due to the innovative potential of commons, in fact, many empirical cases to which SI theory has been applied concern commoning practices (Moulaert *et al.* 2010).

One straightforward point of propinquity between the theories of commons and SI is well described by De Angelis, quoted in Dellenbaugh *et al.* (2015, 13-14): «[Commons] are non-commodified means of fulfilling people's needs». The first dimension of the SI definition is explicitly the satisfaction of human needs – material and immaterial – not otherwise met or considered. Then commons may clearly be an alternative means to satisfy communities' needs, concerning issues such as the participation in the governance of urban spaces or in the provision of the local welfare system, or the broadening of social networks against loneliness. Besides matching on this aspect, both Commons and SI accord great relevance to the role of local communities. The definition of commons implies indeed the community that manages the resource and the institutions that are activated by this same community to manage the resource (commoning). So, commons need communities, because without sufficiently robust communities of people willing to create, maintain, and protect them, commons are at risk of failing. However, it is also true that communities need commons to be formed, developed, and reproduced through practices of commoning. These dynamics entail firstly the awareness of a community's capacity to organize its norms and institutions around the commons, and secondly the capacity to raise its voice and impact on mainstream solutions and strategies. Here the communities' empowerment and the transformations of governance relations, described by SI, enter the logic, showing how practices of commons may be surely identifiable with socially innovative processes.

2.1.3. Empowering communities: towards a mutually shaped citizenship

In the first chapter, I state that the global and local processes have caused transformations of the traditional concept of national citizenship. The decentralization of welfare systems and the rise of bottom-up movements, especially in urban contexts, claiming rights to become active stakeholders of decision-making processes, led scholars

to reconnect citizenship with cities and to perceive it as practice and participation. The attempt of urban citizenship is to advance from an essentialist and exclusionary concept of national and received citizenship which continuously produces outsiders, towards a scale-sensitive and inhabitant-centred conception of achieved citizenship (Rose and Osborne 2000; Dahlgren 2006b; García 2006; Eizaguirre *et al.* 2012; Novy *et al.* 2012; Kazepov 2014).

If we consider citizenship as entailing the right to appropriate and modify the urban common places, and consequently the responsibility to take care of them, or also the right to be heard and to actively participate in the definition of collective needs and related potential solutions, then we realize how the empowerment of communities within SI projects may lead to improve the status of citizens. In SI theories, «citizenship is the main output but also the main input for innovation and social transformations» (Moulaert *et al.* 2007, 205-206). It is the output when innovative practices produce effective access to services and enacted spaces; in a nutshell, when innovative practices act as a tool to gain more rights of citizenship. Oppositely, citizenship is the input because radical innovations – to be such – need a real citizens' involvement in decision-making processes fostering their participation in restructuring those same processes (Moulaert *et al.* 2007; Martinelli 2017). Since social innovations rely on new forms of interaction between the state, private firms and civil society, generating new models of governance and assets of citizenship, Cucca and Kazepov (2016) acknowledge also a change in the type of decision-making processes: the participation shifts from a “decision making by talking” towards a form of “decision making by doing”.

Acknowledging this shift and recalling the limits of the urban conceptualization of citizenship¹⁴, I argue that it is useful to go beyond the dichotomies national vs. urban and received vs. achieved citizenship. What is absolutely needed is an overall perspective that takes into account the dynamicity and fluidity of the right to citizenship. Already in 2008, Somers introduces the idea of citizenship as «triadic assemblage of shifting institutional and discursive relationships and struggles for power among state, market and civil society» (Somers 2008, 20). In this view, citizenship is a combination of institutional relationships, technologies, political idioms, and rights-claiming practices that are always dynamic and contingent. Guarnizo (2012) develops a comparative, multi-scalar and fluid

¹⁴ See chapter 1 (section 1.3, pp. 41-42) for a full description of these limits: difficulty in defining the borders of cities, rights through the city instead than rights to the city, reliance on regulations existing at the national level, lacking consideration of transnational and global processes, higher difficulty for citizens to become active participants in governance, exclusion of parts of population from the status of citizens (immigrants, refugees).

approach at the intersection between human mobility, neoliberal globalization, and urban citizenship, focusing mainly on migrants. However, the approach is not further developed. Socio-political processes of the construction of citizenship status are not elaborated, nor are actors taking part in this mechanism portrayed. Another step further towards a more comprehensive conceptualization of citizenship, even though within the framework of public management, has been taken by Åkerstrøm Andersen and Pors (2016), who elaborate the idea of citizenship as potentiality. According to the authors, the issue is not only the willingness of citizens to claim responsibilities but also their capacity in imagining and creating new types of responsibility, that means indeed being more sensitive towards potential responsibilities. This hypersensitivity to new opportunities becomes useful for citizens themselves, for their families and, ultimately, for an indefinite collectivity.

Focusing on urban settings and commoning practices, the actors diversely participating in the governance of common resources might be numerous, ranging from individual citizens to collective actors of civil society, from private market companies to the public national government passing through the regional, local (neighbourhood) and transnational scale. Every actor has different roles: they might practice their citizenship as members of organisations, participants of demonstrations, writers of newspaper opinions, activists on facebook, etc. Even with a different awareness of their potential active role as city-makers, they all might have a stake in managing commons and in contributing to the wellbeing of the urban community. All contributions take part in the formation of a citizenship that is neither received by the “top” or achieved by the “bottom”, but mutually shaped by the interrelationships among all actors through which rights and responsibilities are negotiated and not only set by the legal status defined by states. Therefore, in every singular case, citizenship takes on different rights and duties. The elderly generation might feel totally citizens of their national country in memory of the patriotism matured during the wars, but it might feel absolutely far from the idea of Europe because it does not have a direct experience of what Europe means. On the contrary, a young student might feel herself a real European citizen because she has the possibility to travel across national boundaries to find a job, or to learn languages, without fully recognizing herself through a national identity due to the disappointment towards the political and social rights received by her country. For the same reason, people living for many years in the same city might have more and stronger links to Municipalities’ local representatives than to national politicians, developing more sense of belonging

towards the city than the State. Migrants might remain political citizens of their original countries but become social citizens of the welcoming one, though being integrated differently depending on the specific country. Logically, these different perceptions affect the expectations of citizens in terms of services and opportunities received by institutions, but also in terms of responsibilities that the same citizens are willing to take on for their city or State.

Moreover, citizenship may assume a different shape due to the attitude of governments. In the urban context, local governments may indeed be more or less available to assign part of their responsibility to citizens or group of citizens and to accept new actors within the governance arena. Eventually, the way in which rights and duties of citizenship are negotiated contribute to change its shape. Negotiations might occur thanks to informal and personal relationships among citizens and local representatives of the public administration, or they might be institutionalized by official regulations and policies. The trigger for activating new rights of citizenship can start from a group of citizens or in other cases from one single citizen or still from an actor of the civil society. The final shape of citizenship and the leading process towards it are therefore multiple. As SI theorizes, they are time and place dependent, assuming diverse contextually-based configurations.

2.1.4. Transforming socio-political relations: bottom-linked governance

In the previous chapter, I explain the choice to focus on governance as the continuing coordination of social relations characterized by complex, reciprocal interdependence among actors who form coalitions towards common purposes even though belonging to different organizational spheres. In this sense, governance implies the negotiation of powers and responsibilities among all actors participating in decision-making processes. An attempt to identify the potential for transformation thus needs to probe the existing governance relations, in order to organize the society in a way that also powerless and marginalized groups are empowered and enter political arenas. The innovative character of SI practices lies indeed «in their attempted transformation or re-appropriation – through participatory, grassroots-based, bottom-up actions – of governance institutions and spaces» (Moulaert *et al.* 2007, 203).

The relationship between SI and governance is twofold: the latter is both a framework and a field for SI. On the one hand, the development of socially innovative practices influences governance through the creation of new mechanisms, new collective actors

and new solutions; on the other hand, governance structures and dynamics have an influence on the capacity of different actors to develop socially innovative practices. In other words, when developing socially innovative practices, actors are framed in a particular governance context. At the same time, these processes of innovation can produce changes in that framework, generating more openness in decision-making (Pradel *et al.* 2013). However, it is not obvious that innovative experiences produce real changes in the culture of governance. In fact, although innovative processes may have the potential for lasting effects, they are also very prone to co-optation by hegemonic or dominant institutions (Moulaert *et al.* 2007), that have a fundamental role in favouring or hindering innovative projects. Since state practices are very difficult to transform due to their internal complexity and embedded power, SI needs to foster innovation also in representative democracy and governance of state institutions (Moulaert *et al.* 2005). Therefore, when governance innovations are not included in the dominant institutional framework, changes result only in singular episodes of governance. On the contrary, when innovative practices develop as breakthrough and sustainable within all organizational spheres, transformations impact the deeper structure of ways of enacting governance, changing the mainstream culture of governance itself (Servillo and Van den Broeck 2012).

Most empirical studies demonstrate actually that the successful development of innovative practices can rarely be classified as either bottom-up or top-down, but rather as both shaping and shaped by new, dynamic forms of cooperation across scales (Moulaert and MacCallum 2019). This evidence led SI scholars to the generation of the idea of bottom-linked governance, that is «new forms of cooperation across territorial scales in which policy (broadly defined) and practice are not dictated from any one level of governance but transformed and institutionalized by, and in the terms of, the cooperation itself» (Moulaert and MacCallum 2019, 91). The concept of bottom-linked governance allows to account the complexity of the society, that the bottom-up governance instead could not address because of its politically ineffective features, such as the stronger belief that there is no need for a state or the unreflective conviction that the political system and state apparatus should uncritically adopt or integrate the bottom-up decision-making mechanisms of the people. Bottom-linked governance, on the opposite, admits that the governance of innovative initiatives needs to be developed interactively among SI actors, their scalarly dynamic networks and state institutions. The resulting interaction «is not that of an easy-going sweet romance, but a trajectory of co-

construction and confrontation moments in which protest and conflict, as well as analysis, co-learning and negotiation, all have a role, as does the re-institutionalization of relationships between state and civil society» (Moulaert and MacCallum 2019, 127-128). Bottom-linked governance arrangements should thus consist of socio-political innovation and collective empowerment, achieved by fighting for rights and building polity and counter-hegemonic alternatives.

The operation to re-read the four concepts of my framework through the lens of Social Innovation allows to analyse them with the same mindset and the same terminology. Moreover, the SI perspective shows how social cohesion as a *problématique* can be tackled by a complex and plural set of dimensions, comprising innovative arrangements of governance, practices of commoning, forms of citizens empowerment, and negotiation of shared values and cultures (fig. 2.1).

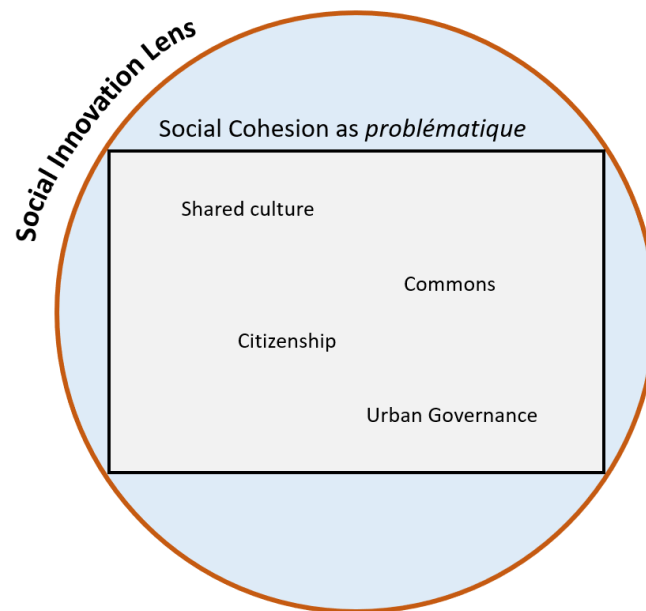


Fig. 2.1 – The four mobilized concepts under the lens of Social Innovation perspective.

Source: personal elaboration.

2.2. From SI to the strategic-relational approach: actors, institutions, and structures

The shift from SI as a product to SI as a process gives prominence to social relations which have a potential transformative power. At the same time, though, these relations are embedded in a contextual set of practices, norms, and constraints. This means that social innovative practices depend, on the one hand, on the role of contingency and the casual and micro-agency effects carried out by different actors and, on the other hand, on

place-specific socio-economic structures and institutions (Moulaert *et al.* 2010). Thus, when analysing the process and the impact of an innovative solution, the SI perspective focuses both on individual or collective agencies and on the structures in which actors are embedded, taking into consideration also the institutions and the discourses (i.e. the interactions among agency, institutions, and structures) (Moulaert *et al.* 2016). This method allows overcoming the limitations of conventional approaches that focus exclusively on structure or agency.

SI defines the agency of individual actors as human behaviour, that makes a significant difference in the natural and/or social worlds, either by direct action or through the mediation of tools, dispositives or institutions, steering or interfering with the development processes (Moulaert *et al.* 2016). Structures comprise those moments of natural and/or social realities that, in the short- to medium-run and in a definite spatial context, cannot be changed by a given individual or collective agency; structures can both constrain and enable actions. An institution is a «socialized structure, that is, a relatively enduring ensemble of structural constraints and opportunities; [it] comprises a more or less coherent, interconnected set of routines, organizational practices, conventions, rules, sanctioning mechanisms, and practices that govern more or less specific domains of action» (ibid., 169). Institutions mediate the interactions between structures and agency, by selectively shaping actors' opportunities and constraints for individual or collective action in space and time. This process implies then interactions between actors and institutions: the result is an institutional field, meant as both actants and their practices, and of institutions, expressed and examined in terms of each other: institutions in terms of action and action in terms of institutions (Van den Broeck 2011).

By enriching Jessop's strategic-relational approach (2001), Van den Broeck develops the strategic-relational institutionalist approach (Van den Broeck 2011; Servillo and Van den Broeck 2012; Van den Broeck *et al.* 2013), applied in the field of urban planning to investigate the social construction and the transformations of planning systems. According to this approach, on the one hand, actors reproduce or reorganize institutions reflexively¹⁵ and to different extents, taking into account structural constraints and windows of opportunity; on the other hand, institutions privilege some actors' strategies and tactics recursively¹⁶, by responding to actors' behaviour in a more or less consistent

¹⁵ Reflexive consists in taking account of itself, taking account of the effect of its personality and its behaviour.

¹⁶ Recursive means to involve doing or saying the same thing several times in order to produce a particular result or effect; recursion is the process a procedure goes through when one of the steps of the procedure involves invoking the procedure itself.

way. The whole interaction between actors and institutions can be referred to as a reflexive-recursive dialectic, based on reciprocal influences: actors develop structurally oriented strategic calculations towards institutions; institutions impose structurally inscribed strategic selectivities towards actors (Servillo and Van den Broeck 2012) (fig. 2.2). This dialectic includes (re)producing, maintaining or transforming both actants, relevant social groups and their strategic behaviour, and institutional frames and their strategic selectivities. Within this perspective, «continuity and discontinuity, institutional stability and institutional transformation interact. Rather than following a linear pattern, these processes exhibit routes of bifurcations, power struggles, missed opportunities, dead ends, choices with no return, and so on, path-dependent on previous institutionalization processes» (Van den Broeck *et al.* 2013).

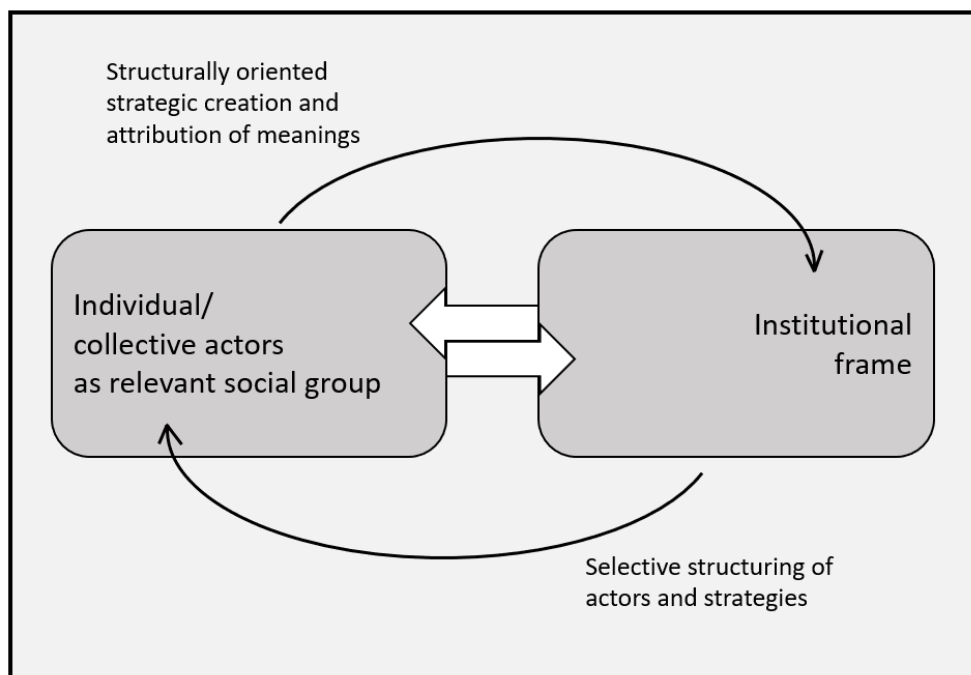


Fig. 2.2 - The reflexive-recursive dialectic of individual or collective actors and institutions.

Source: Servillo and Van den Broeck 2012, 47.

Sociologically, this process has been explained by Barbera's theory of social mechanisms: actors can be influenced by endogenous conditions within the group or community they are part of and, at the same time, by exogenous conditions typical of broader social networks. As influenced by endogenous conditions, individual choices can originate from the interaction with other persons belonging to the close social group or by a social effect in which the actor adopts certain beliefs or certain preferences according to the group's aggregate behaviour. The exogenous conditions underline how the

individuals' behaviour is the result of negotiation, bargaining, and strategy between all actors. The interdependency of actors takes three configurations: a) strategic interdependency: when the actor has to consider other actors' behaviour, consequently to his choice; b) processual interdependency: when the temporal sequence of actions and events influences individuals' choices; c) relational interdependency: when the resulting macro-phenomenon is influenced by all actors' relationships, as well as by their spatial collocation (Barbera 2004).

2.3. The reflexive-recursive dialectics applied to social cohesion

Having applied the lens of SI to social cohesion to overcome its limits and to commons, citizenship, and governance to set them under the same perspective, I now mobilise the strategic-relational institutionalist approach to read the relationship between social cohesion and governance of public space.

2.3.1. The rival explanation

The literature analysed in the first chapter – closer to rationalist approaches than to SI perspective – often talks about the construction of “good governance” to pursue social cohesion in cities. The latter is approached as an important goal to be achieved through changes in governance, only meant as the capacity of traditional government to open up participation for new actors. As such, the relation between social cohesion and urban governance is predominantly conceptualized through a top-down perspective. Within this perspective, one main strategy proposed by urban policies to achieve more cohesive cities entails fostering practices of commons and citizens' participation. Participation¹⁷ is often depicted as a tool for governments to expand political arenas.

Commons accordingly is treated as a policy tool to promote a sense of community among citizens. This approach spreads the idea that giving citizens the opportunity to take care of their own city helps them to improve their individual and social capabilities and build social cooperation, reciprocity, and solidarity. The collaboration for the care and management of common resources is seen as a generator of personal connections, socialization practices, place attachment and eventually civic engagement for the

¹⁷ I do not go through the literature on participation, but it would be possible to open many research streams about the concept of participation: among others, the role and function of participation, who participates, the mode of participation, the extent of authority, and the impact of participation (Arnstein 1969 – and all the subsequent debates; Moro 2002; Fung 2006; Cucca and Kazepov 2016).

collectivity (Linn 1999; Dekker and Van Kempen 2009; Iaione 2015b; 2016; Foster and Iaione 2016; Veen *et al.* 2016). Therefore, one of the main arguments addresses how local or national governments can manage urban commons, changing old policies and implementing new ones in order to favour the participation of citizens in their governance (Foster 2013; Cumbers 2015; 2015; 2016; Foster and Iaione 2016). Consequently, analyses about the influence of urban governance on the extent of social cohesion, through the activation of citizens' participation and commons projects, look mainly at institutional conditions that need to be (re)produced or controlled: e.g. what role the local government needs to take on; what legal frame is necessary; what responsibilities can be transferred from the administrative institutions to citizens. However, this perspective omits all aspects related to communities, needs and interests, excluded populations and governance arrangements within other organizational spheres.

2.3.2 The alternative perspective

The rationalist perspective gives a poor understanding of the interactions between social cohesion and governance of public space. The strategic-relational institutionalist approach permits to escape this trap, by shifting from a top-down normative approach to an analytical overall perspective that includes the complexity of the society. Indeed, the relationship between social cohesion among actors and the governance of public spaces is part of wider dialectic dynamics, which on various scales concern also the negotiation of a shared culture, the development of commoning practices, the production of citizenship and the broader governance arrangements. Therefore, the strategic-relational institutionalist approach expands the investigation of the mutual interaction between social cohesion and urban governance by triggering new questions: how the dialectic between social cohesion and urban governance develops, how practices of commoning and citizenship intervene within this dialectic, why citizens reclaim the custodianship of public spaces and why they reinvent spaces, why they feel the need to gather in public spaces, but also how the governance of public spaces is organized, how the local governments involve citizens in the governance of public spaces.

Within my framework, all dimensions included by the SI perspective in the concept of social cohesion – shared culture, commons, citizenship, and urban governance (fig. 2.1) – are part of dynamics that evolve and result from a dialectical interaction between actors and institutions. The negotiated culture among the members of a community is the product of the interaction of institutional values and norms to which most of individuals

are socialized on the one hand and more or less alternative behaviours or actions that may reproduce the same culture or may bring in changes on the other. These behavioural changes can be accepted and afterwards institutionalized, modifying the shared culture of that particular group; or they can be dismissed, not producing any long-term change (fig. 2.3a). The same mechanisms take place in practices of commons, by which actors and existing institutions determine the institutional way of managing common resources (fig. 2.3b). The frame of citizenship results, on the one hand, from individual and collective ways to activate rights and duties of citizenship and, on the other hand, from the institutional status of citizenship valid in that specific time and socio-political context (fig. 2.3c). Eventually, urban governance is the output of a reflexive-recursive dialectic between the decisions of actors and the selectivities of existing institutional arrangements of governance. In each sphere, the product of these dialectics consists either of the reproduction of the initial institutional frame or in its transformation (fig. 2.3d).

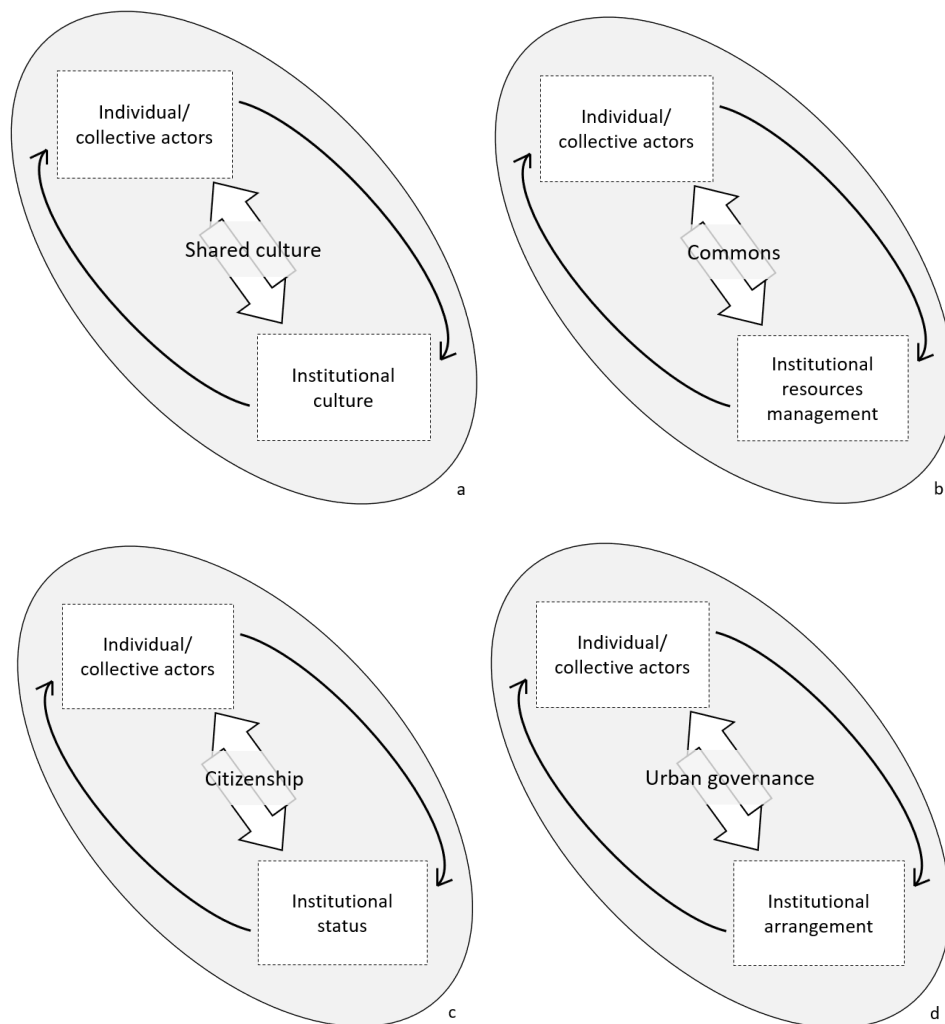


Fig. 2.3 – The reflexive-recursive dialectic applied to the concepts of shared culture, commons, citizenship, and urban governance.

Source: personal elaboration.

Figure 2.3 shows the application of the strategic-relational institutionalist approach to each dimension of social cohesion. Seen by this perspective, thus, social cohesion includes diversity, expressed by the different ways that people find to negotiate common cultures and norms, to decide and implement practices of commoning, to shape dynamically citizenship, and to construct arrangements of governance. Social cohesion includes also all these dynamics and negotiations, dialectically interacting.

I proceed by shifting from a one-concept-scale to an application of the model to the overall framework. Given a precise moment in time and a precise spatial context, shared culture and urban governance are shaped and negotiated by interactions between agents and institutional frames. Yet, the individual or collective behaviours of actors and the strategies of institutions concerning the urban governance influence directly those related to the shared culture; in the same way, actants' and institutions' selectivities in the frame of the shared culture, impact those in the frame of the urban governance. In this way, a reflexive-recursive dialectic arises between the shared culture and urban governance.

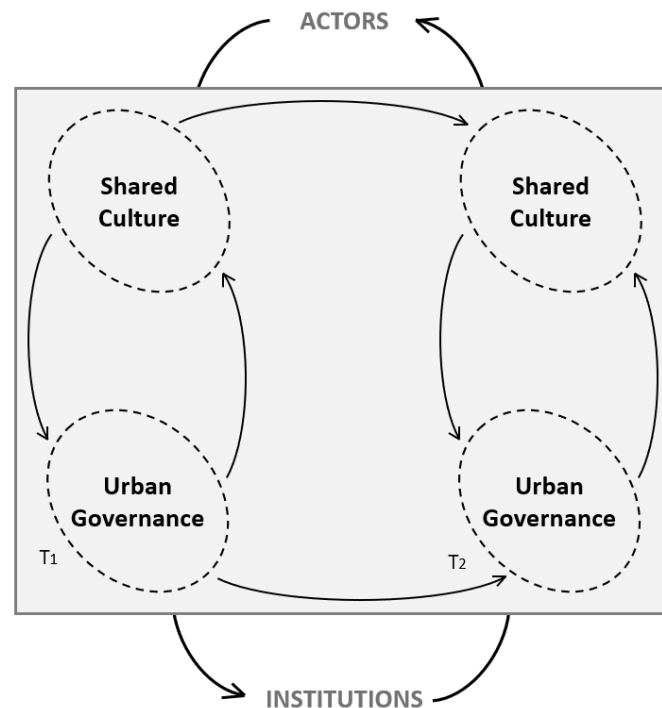


Fig. 2.4 – The reflexive-recursive dialectic applied to the interrelation between shared culture and urban governance.

Source: personal elaboration.

Opposite to some of the literature presented, I state that the variation in the level of sociability, belonging and attachment of actors – the shared culture – may affect the

arrangements of urban governance, by influencing the engagement of individuals and groups and activating them to exit the private sphere and enter the public one. Clearly, the reflexive-recursive dialectics active at time 1 affect the dialectics that develop at time 2: the shared culture dialectic influences in fact both the urban governance dialectic in the present time and reflexively the same shared culture dialectic in the future. The same happens for the urban governance dialectic (fig. 2.4).

Since my study concerns the governance of urban common spaces, I deepen now the dialectic between shared culture and urban governance, by focusing on the concrete practices and processes through which actors and institutions shaping the urban governance affect those shaping the shared culture and vice-versa. In the literature that I critically discussed, commons and forms of active citizenship are considered tools for urban policies in order to foster social cohesion. However, this is not enough to give a profound and realistic image of society. Indeed, commoning processes and the activation of different forms of citizenship locally may also impact policies, regulation, and management of urban spaces, by reproducing or transforming the current governance arrangement.

From a SI perspective, commoning is a reaction by citizens to address needs for themselves that are no longer or not yet covered by the government and/or the market. Additionally, I state that practices of sociability among neighbours and sense of belonging to the community may increase their attachment to the place, by gathering and organizing activities in shared public spaces – that is producing a negotiated shared culture. These public spaces are likely to be part of the neighbourhood because of the broad accessibility by all people living and experiencing that specific neighbourhood. The sense of attachment to the local territory influences citizens' attention and motivation in taking care of it, noticing criticalities and discussing them. Sharing problems, suggestions and ideas may encourage collaboration among citizens to manage the neighbourhood and its spaces as commons (dialectic between shared culture and commons, fig. 2.5). The recognition of the existence of common resources and common needs may establish a community of commoners, who are collectively engaged in sharing values, norms, and cultures. This process does not only solidify the specific practices as part of the civic repertoire of these citizens, but it also interplays forcefully with knowledge, trust, and value fostering civic identities and critically conscious communities (dialectic between commons and citizenship, fig. 2.5).

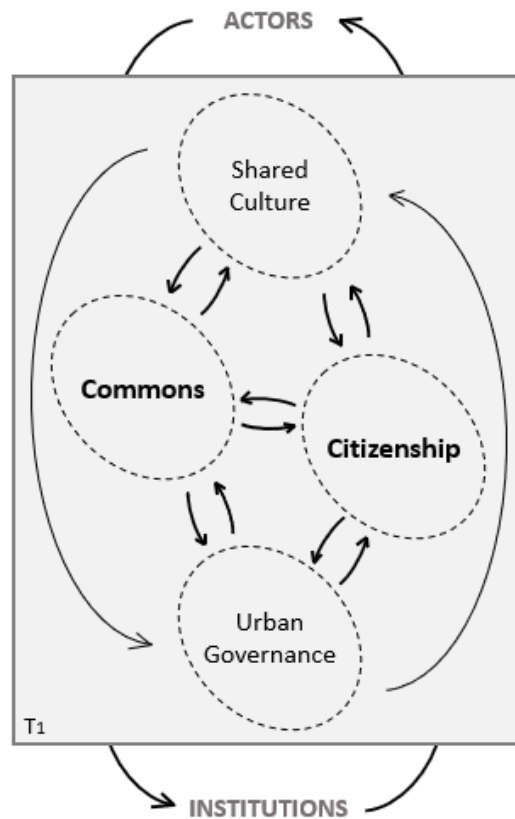


Fig. 2.5 – The reflexive-recursive dialectic between shared culture and urban governance enriched by the intervening variables of commons and citizenship.

Source: personal elaboration.

Empowered communities may enter the public arena, being capable of negotiating rights and responsibilities part of their status of citizens and giving shape to a specific form of citizenship. All these processes, from the shared culture to the form of citizenship, going through commoning, have the potential to tackle new and diverse arrangements of governance (dialectic between commons/citizenship and urban governance, fig. 2.5). However, the burst of affective engagement and motivated participation in itself is not sufficient to empower citizens, because participation is valuable only to the extent that it results in a real and effective redistribution of power.

Under this point of view, commoning practices emerging from collective needs and motivations may become a tool to boost citizens' participation in the public arena and to bring governance of urban space into question. The bond between commons and citizenship is tight but complex: commons can potentially achieve transformations in urban governance only when commoning practices transform individuals in empowered and conscious citizens, capable to enter the public arena, to tackle the mainstream procedures and to participate in designing and implementing new procedures. Commons

can be managed and reproduced successfully only by a cohesive community, composed by engaged and empowered individuals. Therefore, commons represent a threshold between the social-private life of individuals and the political-public life of citizens, where citizenship is negotiated and shaped. Figure 2.5 summarizes these interactions.

As well as in the case of shared culture and urban governance, the reflexivity and recursivity of commoning practices and citizenship impact on the reflexive-recursive dialectics among all processes, intervening eventually within the dialectic between urban governance and shared culture. In this framework, commons and citizenship intervene, being not only the processes that stimulate changes in urban governance and shared culture but also the product of the dialectic between governance and culture: indeed, reciprocal influences between the latter re-organize the way in which citizenship is shaped and commons are governed. The entire dialectic reproduces itself time and again, always remaining context-specific (fig. 2.6).

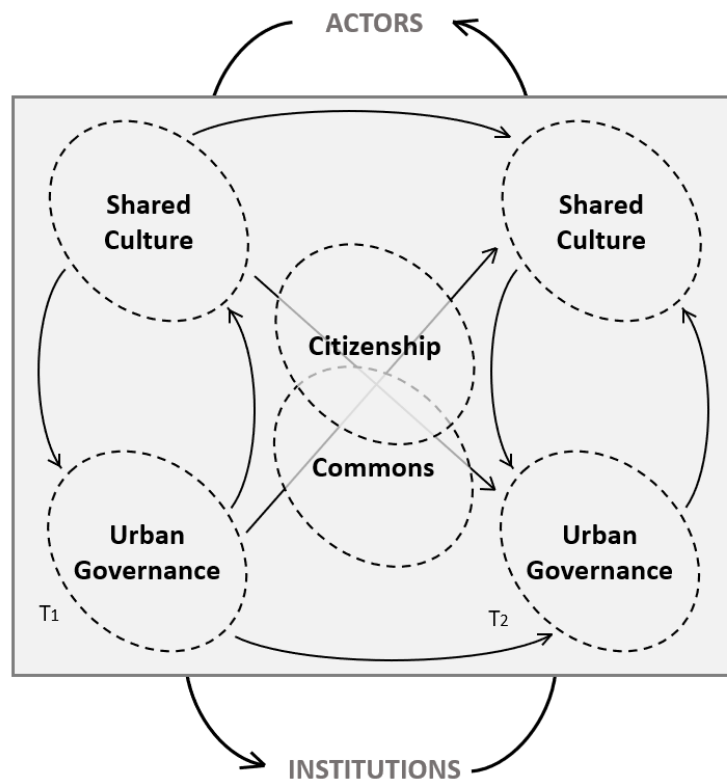


Fig. 2.6 – The overall reflexive-recursive dialectic among the four mobilized concepts: shared culture, commons, citizenship, and urban governance.

Source: personal elaboration.

All the dynamics considered, both within and among each dimensions of social cohesion, imply that social cohesion and governance of public spaces emerge when

citizens find ways to cope with difference, when they are allowed to negotiate contingent ways of citizenship and to common their spaces in non-exclusive ways, and when they participate in decision-making for the governance of all these processes.

2.4. Conclusions

After identifying the limits of social cohesion focussed on shared culture, and mobilising the concepts of commons, citizenship, and governance to fill the missing dimensions within social cohesion, in this chapter I turn to Social Innovation to conceptualize the different meanings of social cohesion and to organize the mobilized concepts under the same perspective. Among all the existing definitions and theories of social innovation, this work is framed within the one that draws attention both to solutions to specific needs and to socio-political processes that influence, and are influenced by, these same solutions, with a particular concern for social inclusion and social justice. SI interprets social cohesion as a *problématique*, which implies also conflict and exclusion, together with forms of governance to organize them. Thus, social cohesion is a plural, scale-sensitive and multidimensional issue that can only be addressed collectively, that is by a democratic negotiation of interests and values. The analysis of social cohesion requires considering a wide spectrum of processes and outcomes, modes of human behaviour, arrangements of governance, causalities, historical factors, and geographical patterns, that all together have produced cohesion, but also fragmentation and exclusion.

Applying the SI perspective to the other concepts, commons may clearly be an alternative means to satisfy communities' needs, concerning issues such as the participation in the governance of urban spaces or in the provision of the local welfare system, or the broadening of social networks against loneliness. Citizenship is both an output and an input for innovation and social transformations: it is the output when innovative practices produce effective access to services and enacted spaces; it is the input because radical innovations, to be such, need a real citizens' involvement in decision-making processes. This involvement can lead to the negotiation of rights and duties, causing the production of new forms of citizenship. The final shape of citizenship and the leading process towards it are therefore multiple, time- and place-dependent, and assuming diverse contextually-based configurations. Eventually, the relationship between SI and governance is twofold: the latter is both a framework and a field for SI. On the one hand, the development of socially innovative practices influences governance through the

creation of new mechanisms, new collective actors and new solutions; on the other hand, governance structures and dynamics have an influence on the capacity of different actors to develop socially innovative practices. Moreover, social innovations are not dictated from any level of governance, whereas they require bottom-linked arrangements of governance, which implies that the governance of innovative initiatives needs to be developed interactively among SI actors, their scalarly dynamic networks and state institutions.

The operation to read the four concepts of my framework through the lens of Social Innovation allows to analyse them with the same mindset and the same terminology. Then, highlighting the dependence of socially innovative practices both on the agency of different actors and on place-specific socio-economic structures and institutions is necessary to do the step further towards the mobilization of the strategic-relational institutionalist approach. The latter, indeed, is adopted to read the complexity of the interactions between social cohesion and the governance of public spaces, which has been given a poor understanding by the literature analysed. Within rationalist approaches and neoliberal urban policies, social cohesion is the goal to be achieved through changes in governance, only meant as the capacity of traditional government to open up participation for new actors. One main strategy proposed by urban policies to achieve more cohesive cities entails fostering practices of commons and citizens' participation, which are thus depicted as policies tool to promote a sense of community among citizens. Therefore, one of the main arguments addresses how local or national governments can manage urban commons, changing old policies and implementing new ones in order to favour the participation of citizens in their governance. Analyses about the influence of urban governance on the extent of social cohesion, through the activation of citizens' participation and commons projects, look mainly at institutional conditions that need to be (re)produced or controlled.

On the contrary, the strategic-relational institutionalist approach expands the investigation by looking at the mutual interactions between social cohesion and urban governance, but also by taking into consideration the negotiation of shared cultures, the development of commoning practices, the production of citizenship and the broader governance arrangements. Therefore, I apply the reflexive-recursive both at a one-concept-scale (shared culture, commons, citizenship, governance) and at the overall framework. The resulting dialectic between social cohesion among actors and the

governance of public space is characterized by multiple interrelations and reciprocal influences among diverse organizational social, civic, and political spheres.

In the next chapter, I present the methodology used to analyse the case studies. Afterwards, I apply the analytical framework to the analysis of three Italian Social Streets, which may be an example of innovative social practices promoting inclusion of citizens into spheres of society and, contemporarily, giving a “voice” to groups that are traditionally excluded by the governance of urban places.

Chapter 3.

The fieldwork: Social Streets, research methods and pilot cases

«...Please look closely at real cities. While you are looking you might as well also listen, linger and think about what you see»

Jane Jacobs

I observed, asked and listened. I also participated, collected and mapped. In front of me, the urban space, both private and public. Few times I had access to private houses and intimate conversations. More often I lived the public space as – recalling Gehl and Svarre's words (2013) – everything that can be considered part of the built environment: streets, alleys, buildings, squares, sidewalks, bicycle paths, benches, etc. I experienced the public life in its broadest sense, as everything that takes place amid public space, between buildings, on balconies, seated, standing, walking, biking and so on.

This chapter traces the research methodology elaborated to answer the initial questions. After a brief explanation of the reason why I adopt the case study methodology, I present the phenomenon object of the study, depicting its evolution and the previous analysis carried out about it. Subsequently, I justify the presence of three case studies introducing each of them. Section 3.4. displays the methods I used to address my research question and to collect the data: firstly, I operationalise the theoretical concepts of my framework; then I describe the specific function of each method within the current research. Section 3.5. presents the pilot cases and the indications I obtained from their study. Eventually, I conclude with some personal considerations about my role as researcher.

3.1. Why a case study?

The previous chapter enunciates the set of theoretical propositions I want to mobilise to answer the research question on the mutual interactions of social cohesion and citizens' access to and governance of public space. The main proposition is that social cohesion and urban governance are embedded in complex dialectical interactions between actors, shared culture, commoning practices, the production of citizenship and urban governance. The necessity thus to study a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and the explanatory nature of my question led me to choose the case study strategy. A case

study is an empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control. It is useful especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The case study method allows also to deal with a full variety of evidence. Another reason why I adopt the case study method is that this research does not aim to generalize results to universe and to enumerate frequencies, but to point out what conditions are favourable to generate bottom-linked governance. Therefore, developing a case study that follows the already set theoretical propositions permits firstly to guide data collection and analysis, secondly to generalize the results to those propositions and to expand theories (Yin 2003). Moreover, once favourable and disadvantageous conditions are singled out, it is possible to consider whether they are applicable to other contexts, contributing to improve, in this specific case, urban arrangements and solutions, both at an administrative level and at an individual and community one.

3.2. Social Street as case study

An Italian recent phenomenon caught my attention when its initial purely social practices began to cross the subtle border between private and public life. Its fast development and spread were initially impacting, in some cases, the urban texture and in a second moment the relationships between citizens and public administration. The phenomenon concerns a new form of neighbourhood communities that takes up the name of Social Street. The first group was born in Bologna in September 2013, thanks to the individual initiative of a father: after moving with his family from Tuscany to Bologna, the man was looking for some playmates for his son. Walking along his residential street, he often heard children voices, but he never had the chance to meet some of their families around. Thus, he created a Facebook closed group named “Residents of Fondazza Street, Bologna¹⁸”. He then advertised the group hanging some flyers on the walls along the street. After a couple of weeks, the neighbours who signed up for the group were already ninety-three. They “broke the ice” exchanging some virtual chats to understand who lived at which door and, after few messages, they organized a face-to-face-meeting, which became the first of a long series. A thousand of members celebrated the first birthday of the Social Street in September 2014.

¹⁸ The original name in Italian: Residenti in Via Fondazza, Bologna.

The founder's choice to use the social network Facebook as a virtual tool to trigger *real* gatherings contributed to the diffusion of the "experiment". Facebook posts and twitters, web blogs, radios, televisions, newspapers and journals – not only in Italy – spread the news of the Social Street in Bologna, acclaiming it as a good practice able to re-bond people in an individualized era. Today the Social Streets are 408 in Italy and 10 abroad, among which 6 in Europe. The Italian groups are active more in the North and gradually are less present in the Centre and South of the country. Milan and Bologna are the cities with the highest number of Social Streets: 77 and 57 respectively. They are now assembled in the Italian website – www.socialstreet.it – that reports the existing Social Streets, the links to their Facebook groups and their initial goal, principle and values. «The goal of the Social Street is to socialise with neighbours [...] There must not be profit purposes but just social ones. Social Street does not support any political, religious or ideological vision; it brings together people with the only criterion of proximity among residents in the urban area¹⁹». Every group is indeed organized around a specific urban area (street, square, park, part of neighbourhood), factor that contributes to construct a shared identity among members. Sociality, gratuitousness and inclusion are Social Streets' three main values. The sociality is the most important goal to be achieved by the groups. All the initiatives have the single purpose to stimulate citizens in socialising and participating in common projects. Gratuitousness and gifts imply gratitude and allow to activate virtuous circles of reciprocity and trust, generating bonding value²⁰. Lastly, the access to Social Street is formally open to everyone for total participation, regardless any ethnical, political or religious differences. Although the first Social Street initiators do not want to set strict rules and membership criteria, the website presents clearly the guidelines to be successful in the creation of a Social Street. Besides the already mentioned values of sociality, gratuitousness and inclusion, the Social Street must not achieve personal requests and needs but only collective ones. Moreover, groups cannot benefit from any type of external funding, basing all their activities on gratuitousness or members' individual contributions. However, among all groups there is a wide diversity on geographical position, collocation within cities, structural and economic features of the urban area, birth year, type of activities, internal organization and relational network

¹⁹ The quotation and the data are reported by the Italian official Social Street website: www.socialstreet.it; visited on January 24th, 2019.

²⁰ About gift and social bonds see: Godbout, J.T. and Caill , A.C. 1998. *The World of the Gift*, Canada: McGillQueen University's Press; Prandini, R. 1998. *Le radici fiduciarie del legame sociale*, Milano: Franco Angeli; Mauss, M. 1990. *The Gift. The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*, New York, London: Routledge.

established with other socio-political subjects of the territory, such as the local administrative institutions and civil society actors. Regardless of general guidelines, indeed, every group develops individually on its members' interests and needs.

During the last five years, the Social Streets received attention by some scholars from different fields and with different purposes. Some first exploratory studies aim at deepening the knowledge of the phenomenon, with a specific focus on Milan and Bologna (Stanica 2014; Pasqualini and Introini 2015; Pasqualini 2016). In these cases, object of research is the groups' demographic composition, or the functions and values that Social Streets represent for members. Secondly, the role of Facebook and the hybrid nature of Social Street communities, on the edge between virtual and real life, are investigated as a new type of citizens' engagement and sense of community (Augè and Pasqualini 2016; Cabitza *et al.* 2016; Mosconi *et al.* 2017). Under the same perspective, other scholars consider the Social Streets as the answer to public space crisis. These groups represent a strategy of re-embedding social and economic practices and regenerating urban and social texture (Nuvolati 2014; Gamberoni 2015; Pais 2015). Eventually, together with some colleagues, I already reflected on Social Streets as forms of Social Innovation, able to activate civic engagement in response to collective needs (Ganugi and Maggio 2018; Macchioni *et al.* 2017).

Certainly, Social Streets are acknowledged as a new urban actor pursuing the aim to improve social and daily life. However, there is an evident lack of understanding about the phenomenon, due to the generalized perspective kept so far. The diversity among all groups does not permit to talk indistinctly about Social Streets as if it has a unique form. First of all, it would be necessary to wonder whether these groups are really inclusive and apolitical. Further, are all Social Streets active and real good practices, or do they have perverse effects in some cases? Moreover, only Social Streets in Milan and Bologna have been studied, whereas it may be useful to examine their development in smaller cities or peri-urban territories. Last but not least, although Social Streets are new actors, their relationships and links with already existing urban actors has been completely ignored. Consequently, also the impact of Social Streets' creation and interrelation with territorial subjects has not been examined. The aim of this research is hence looking at the Social Streets within their social and political contexts. Social Streets, civil society actors, citizens and public administration are indeed embedded in the same urban territory: isolating and analysing one of these subjects as a lonely cloud floating around does not

allow to consider all the conditions – constraints and impulses – that affect its individual agency.

3.3. Why multiple case studies?

The choice to have multiple case studies comes from the awareness that all Social Streets are completely different from each other and that they don't have a single way to gather, organize activities, manage common resources and face the urban public administration. From March to July 2016, I contacted 32 Social Streets, located along the Italian territory and abroad (in Europe: Poland, Netherlands, UK, Norway and Germany; New Zealand and USA). The main difficulty has been caused by Facebook privacy policies which block messages by “unfriend” people hiding them from the main list of personal chats. This required me to ask the Social Streets' administrators for friendship and for admission in Social Streets' Facebook groups, so that my messages could have more chances to be read. I interviewed 18 Social Streets, visited 9 of them and participated in activities of 4 other groups. The Social Street administrator – more than one in some case – is always the founder of the group or, otherwise, one of the most active members. Aims of these preliminary and broad interviews were to deepen my insight about: the bond between administrator and urban territory; why the group was founded; the structural features of the Social Street urban area; the Social Street history and main activities; the role of Facebook and the transition from *virtuality* to reality; the relationship of the Social Street with civil society and public administration.

Keeping in mind that the aim of the research is investigating the potential interactions of social cohesion and urban governance – that is the impact that neighbourhood groups may have on policies of urban governance, and vice versa, the main criterion I used to choose my case studies is the Social Street's rooting within the urban socio-political network.

- i. The group *Residents in Street Twenty September*, in Verona (Veneto Region), seemed to be the less rooted. Its members were refusing any formal collaboration with the administrative side of the city, preferring to maintain the Social Street's activities on an informal and autonomous level.
- ii. The group *Residents in Street Pitteri and surroundings*, in Ferrara (Emilia-Romagna Region) represented another position, since its members signed an

official regulation for the governance of public green area, but they did not further strengthen the relationship with other urban social and political actors.

- iii. The group *Residents in Street Saint Pio X and surroundings*, in Trento (Trentino Alto Adige/Südtirol Region), was the most politically rooted Social Street in all of Italy, for having applied to public announcements of the City and carried out projects in collaboration with third sector's organizations and cooperatives, also receiving public budget.

This three Social Streets are in the North-East side of Italy (fig. 3.1), in three different regions and cities. Ferrara, Verona and Trento are small to medium sized cities, counting respectively 132.009, 257.353 and 118.229 inhabitants. The three Social Streets are born 2 kms away from the city centre, in a middle position between the centre and the first periphery. The group in Ferrara was born in November 2013²¹, the one in Verona in March 2014 and the one in Trento in October 2014, so at the time of my first contact they were all at least two years old (tab. 3.1). When I contacted their administrators, the Social Streets were facing different challenges and difficulties, but they were in any case three of the most active in the whole country.



Fig. 3.1 – The Italian cities where the three Social Streets are located.

Source: Google maps.

²¹ This Social Street is the second group created in Italy after the first one in Bologna.

Social Street	City	Region	Birthday	Members, first contact	Members, today
Residents in Street Pitteri and around	Ferrara	Emilia-Romagna	Nov. 2013	347	535
Residents in Street Twenty September	Verona	Veneto	March 2014	132	440
Residents in Street Saint Pio X	Trento	Trentino Alto Adige	Oct. 2014	486	591

Tab. 3.1 – Basic characteristics of the three Social Street chosen as case studies.

Source: Facebook groups of the three Social Streets.

3.4. Operationalization and research methods

In this section I describe the methodology developed, based on theoretical propositions that are used to collect and interpret data. Each theoretical concept is operationalized and matched to appropriate methods of research.

3.4.1. Empirical categories

The complexity of social cohesion reflects on the empirical use of the concept. Its operationalization comprises both macro and micro dimensions and develops multi-dimensional measures of the concept, based on economic, political and socio-cultural spheres. The most used method in the literature that I analysed in chapter 1 is the survey, organized in multiple choice or Likert-type scale or agreement/disagreement rating (for a review of the main dimensions of social cohesion see: Jenson 2010). From my first contact with the Social Streets, many administrators seemed reluctant to participate in the research, because in the last two years they have been contacted by many researchers without then receiving any feedbacks. The researchers are mainly bachelor or master students and Social Streets are fed up with answering quick and short surveys built only to gather some sterile and superficial data.

For this reason, I chose not to use any quantitative methods in order not to overload members with other crosses and scales. However, still maintaining the focus on sociability, sense of belonging, place attachment and civic engagement, that help in the understanding of social cohesion at the neighbourhood scale, I turn to qualitative and visual methods: interviews, focus groups, photographs and maps. The dimensions of social cohesion may, indeed, be expressed discursively in interview settings, but they can also be observed through interpretation of social practices (Blokland 2017). In table 3.2,

I summarise the empirical categories used to operationalize social cohesion at the neighbourhood scale and to apply it within the Social Streets context.

Studies and researches about commons adopt a qualitative methodology, often focusing on case studies. Besides interviews and observation, also maps and photographs are sometimes used. In order to operationalize commons in Social Street cases, I apply the definition according to which commons are made of three aspects: the resource, the commoners' community and the institutions of commoning. Table 3.3 specifies the empirical categories I develop to operationalize the process of commoning in social streets.

<u>Theoretical concepts</u>	<u>Empirical categories</u>
Social cohesion: (sociability; sense of belonging; place attachment; civic engagement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reason to create/participate in the Social Street - Geographical borders of Social Street - Composition of members (who participates, who does not participate); relationships among members - Characteristics of the territorial context (neighbourhood, buildings and public space typology) - Use of the urban area by Social Street's members (attendance/use of space) - Virtual participation (uses and functions of Facebook groups: posts, comments, likes – by whom and what for)

Tab. 3.2 – Operationalization of social cohesion.

<u>Theoretical concepts</u>	<u>Empirical categories</u>
Commons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Characteristic of the resource - Characteristic of the commoners' community (who is in, who is out) - Organization of commoning practices (internal governance: roles, tasks, decision-making) - How and where decisions are taken internally about resources and projects (informal meetings, organized meetings for the purpose, within family, among friends) - Engagement of residents in the custodianship of public spaces - Practical organization for the installation and/or maintenance of common resources (tasks division, preservation of free riding, solution to vandalism) - Involvement of external actors (City and civil society actors) for the custodianship of commons

Tab. 3.3 – Operationalization of commons.

Concerning the last two concepts, citizenship and governance, the focus of this research is limited to the management of urban space, which means investigating the civic dimension of citizenship and the potential modifications of policies regulating the use, property and care of public territory (tab. 3.4). As well as social cohesion, citizenship can be measured through quantitative indicators of social and political participation, but for the same reason explained above, I chose not to use surveys or numerical scales, but rather integrated interviews and focus group with concept mapping.

<u>Theoretical concepts</u>	<u>Empirical categories</u>
Citizenship Urban governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationships among different Social Streets - External governance: relationships between Social Street, local institutions and civil society actors (commons organizations, informal groups, formal partnerships) - Perception of these relationships by different urban actors - Negotiations of rights, responsibilities and powers between citizens and institutions (what institutions, what citizens, content of the exchange) - Participation in meeting with local institutions (who participates, how and when) - Inclusion of citizens in decision-making processes; participatory projects; co-production of policies and regulations - What and how decisions are taken in these meetings; what decisions are then really implemented and how the implementation is organized, who takes part in it - Regulation in use for the management of urban public spaces (what actors are involved, tasks division, negotiations and conflicts among them) - Type of agreement between the Social Street and the City (type, content, how it was established, who asked for it, who is involved) - Real contacts between residents and representatives of the City - Influence of the Social Street in empowering residents to become political actors - Citizens' perception to have a role in affecting the liveability of the neighbourhood and the relative decision-making

Tab. 3.4 – Operationalization of citizenship and urban governance.

3.4.2. *Methods*

This section focuses on the use of qualitative methodologies in the current study, describing the criticalities and strengths experienced on the field. All the methods I used merge with each other: photo voice with netnography, photo elicitation with focus groups, mapping with focus groups and interviews. They are complementary and they would result in different data if used separately. Moreover, the possibility to shift from online

interaction to offline interactions with my object of study gave me the possibility to combine methods more creatively.

3.4.2.1. Netnography

From the moment I asked the Social Streets to have access to their closed groups on Facebook, my observation of their social practices began, even if on a virtual basis. Since these neighbourhood groups were born on a social network and they initially developed on a virtual notice board – then shifting to real interactions on the urban street – members' social practices occur both in the virtual domain and in the real one. This match requires a double perspective: online and offline. Now, in fact, many social activities cut across both digital and real worlds, making it impossible to divide completely face-to-face interactions from the virtual ones (Garcia *et al.* 2009; Kozinets *et al.* 2014). The study of the Social Streets' urban life alone would be insufficient to get the whole meaning of participating in these groups.

Internet Studies (Boccia Artieri 2015; Kozinets 2015; Vittadini 2015) developed during the 1990s. From that moment, their attention shifted from the optimistic celebration of digital technologies' transformative potentialities to the necessity of mapping users, practices and cultures of virtual networks. Despite belonging to the field of consumer and marketing research, I use the term Netnography, because it is the most suitable to underline the origin of this research methodology into traditional ethnography but having its own specificities (for more details and guidelines about netnography, see Kozinets *et al.* 2014 and Kozinets 2015).

My netnographic field site has been Facebook and specifically the closed group of the Social Streets. Observing the virtual interaction of the members it is necessary to investigate the functions of the Facebook groups and the possible discrepancies and/or commonalities between offline and online interaction. It helps, moreover, to detect the type of relationships developed among members during the evolution of the Social Streets. The netnography gave me access to archival (or observational) data and elicited data. Archival data comprise anything the researcher can gather from the web that is not a product of his or her involvement to prompt the creation of data. Elicited data, instead, refer to content that is co-created by the researcher and members of the social media community through processes of social interaction (Kozinets *et al.* 2014).

Since one of the main challenges of netnography is the vast amount of data until the risk of data overload, once I entered the Social Streets' groups, I faced the necessity to

select some periods of observation. My interest was depicting a portrait of the community identity and culture. So, thanks to the observation of the Facebook groups of the 32 contacted Social Street and after having participated in activities in my selected case studies, I identified significant moments of their evolution from their birth to the period of my stay (e.g. the first month after the creation of the group, the first summer, the first Christmas, the second birthday, etc.). Subsequently, I looked for these exact periods on the Facebook pages of the groups in order to observe what kind of posts and messages had been exchanged. I classified all posts and detailed by whom they had been published – administrator, member, representative of public administration, civil society actors – and by how many people they had been liked and commented. The posts' typology is listed as:

- Fun meetings (“aperitivi”, dinners, celebrations, etc.)
- Activities to do together (sport, cinema, hobbies, courses, etc.)
- Activities/events shared on the Social Street page and organized by other urban actors (private gym, cooperative, school, etc.)
- Activities/projects organized by the Social Street (Christmas Tree, street cleaning, urban gardening, etc.)
- Request/offer of help, objects, services
- Information exchange about the neighbourhood
- Sharing of journal/newspapers/blog articles
- Commercial activities
- Critical issues in the neighbourhood (petty crime, traffic jam, littering)
- Welcoming new members
- Neighbourhood or group pictures
- Greetings and regards.

In order to record these online data without violating members' privacy, I never captured screenshots of the Facebook pages: I only counted the type of posts and I copied-pasted the content of posts and comments if relevant.

Co-created data by myself and the Social Street members took different shapes: my posts on the Facebook groups to organize meetings or focus groups, and to invite members to participate in the photo voice activity²²; pictures showing me together with members during scenes of offline activities; my name tagged by the Social Streets'

²² See section 3.4.2.3 about visual sociology.

members who wanted to involve me in some conversations or to joke with me. Furthermore, when I chose my case studies, I asked the administrators to let me have access to their private chats, that are Facebook or Messenger chats used by the Social Streets administrators and most active members to communicate among a limited and well-known group of members. Trento's Social Street accepted gladly, whereas Ferrara's and Verona's group preferred not to include me in these conversations. The administrators of the Social Street in Ferrara were afraid of an excessive influence of my presence among them and that some members participating in this chat might not appreciate my intrusion. However, they created a new collective group specifically to involve me and during my stay there, they used this latter chat as well to discuss about the latest happenings. The members of Verona's Social Street, instead, do not have a Messenger collective chat, but they use a Whatsapp group for more personal or practical messages. They did not take into consideration to add me in this group and, respecting their reservations, I never pushed for it.

3.4.2.2. Participant observation

Concerning the observation of the Social Streets' offline practices, I carried out the traditional participant observation as it permits to observe the human action, not only to listen to stories of that action (Cardano 2011). This method requires the researcher participation in the social life of those people whom he/she is observing. The goal is analysing the reciprocal social interaction within individuals' original and natural context. I chose to reveal my identity to all members of the Social Streets. My role has been active, even if at different grades: from having casual social interactions with various members of the Social Streets to undertaking specific functional activities during the Social Streets' events and activities (bringing food, helping with storage and cleaning, or organizing a meeting on my own). My access to the field was always mediated by the Social Streets' administrators whom I completely left free to decide in what way and circumstances they wanted to introduce me to the rest of the group. In the case of Ferrara's and Verona's Social Streets, the group of most active members always preferred to manage my meetings and interactions with the others, both on Facebook and both "on the street". In the case of Trento's Social Street, on the contrary, the administrator let me talk and write to the group freely. I spent one month in each of the three Social Streets during the spring of 2018: in April with the Social Street Residents in Pitteri Street in Ferrara; in May with the Social Street Residents in Twenty September Street in Verona; in June with the Social

Street Residents in San Pio X Street in Trento. The choice to complete the fieldwork in this period is not casual: indeed, Social Streets' activities and gatherings are more easily organized during the good seasons in Italy, when the outdoor social life blossoms together with flowers. Besides the months passed living the Social Streets life, however, my observations began when I entered the Social Streets' closed Facebook groups and started virtual participation. Moreover, I visited them for first interviews with the groups' administrators and I kept doing it for some of their important events. In total, then, I observed these three Social Streets and the steps they took, for two years, from the Spring of 2016 to the Spring of 2018.

During my stay in each city, my observation regarded also the Social Streets' urban areas. Gehl and Svarre (2013) write that public space continues to have democratic, cultural and symbolic significance, playing a vital role as a meeting place for people. In order to observe the urban territory and its influence on the Social Streets, I got inspiration by Gehl's urban life studies. He suggests approaching urban space answering few questions:

- a. How many? E.g. how many people are moving (pedestrian flow) and how many are staying in one place (stationary activity)?
- b. Who? E.g. people gender or age.
- c. Where? E.g. where are people and activities gathered or dispersed to a greater or lesser degree? On the city level this can mean registering or localizing numerous functions, activities, direction of pedestrian flow and preferred places where to stay. This question can relate to where people situate themselves relative to other people, buildings and city spaces.
- d. What? E.g. types of activities in an area, such as staying, commercial or physical activities (Gehl and Svarre 2013).

Eventually I did not follow systematically this technique, but Gehl's questions guided me in observing the territorial context of the Social Streets. For instance, I used the method of counting in the area of Ferrara's Social Street, but I realized that detailed numbers about pedestrians, bicycles and cars, or about age and gender of people crossing that neighbourhood, were not adding relevant data that could answer my questions. Therefore, in Verona and Trento I stopped doing it, observing though more carefully what type of persons attended the areas, what attitude they had and what paths they took.

3.4.2.3. Visual sociology

Visual methods in sociology are used to explore the social world, through photo and video cameras. Two main approaches are photo voice and photo elicitation (Harper 2002; Knoblauch *et al.* 2008; Molloy 2007; Hughes 2012; Slutskaya *et al.* 2012; Holm 2014). Photo voice is a research method in which researchers give the camera to those being studied. Research participants are asked to take pictures or make movies about a certain topic. The material is subsequently analysed by researchers or participants, or both. Photo elicitation techniques involve using photographs or films as part of the interview, asking participants to comment and discuss the meaning of the visual supports. In this case the images can be taken specially by the researcher with the idea of using them to elicit information, they can belong to the subject, for example family photographs or movies, or they can be gathered from other sources.

Using photo voice and photo elicitation, I proposed the use of photographs to Social Streets' members. Firstly, I invited them to take pictures or to bring me old pictures, answering the following questions:

- a. What is the first place that pops up in your mind when we mention the Social Street?
- b. What is the first situation that pops up in your mind when we mention the Social Street?

Secondarily, I used the collected pictures as stimuli during the focus groups with Social Streets' members. The pictures always show the street where Social Streeters are used to gather or scenes of events and activities that they preferably remember. Therefore, it has been possible to use those images to elicit the discussion about criticalities and opportunities of the urban area and to call to mind the history of the group: how they first met, what they are used to organize and in what way, why they participate in the Social Street activities.

3.4.2.4. Focus group, interviews and backtalks

I realized then focus groups and interviews. Focus groups were meant to investigate the group dynamics among the Social Streets' members. I divided in six areas:

- i. Personal data, such as age, gender, nationality, educational level, job and family composition;
- ii. The urban area and the history of the Social Street;
- iii. The relationship among members and their use of the neighbourhood;

- iv. The group organization for the care and management of commons;
- v. Perception of citizenship;
- vi. Perception of urban governance.

The main difficulty in organizing the focus groups was to engage the Social Streets' members in participating: only the most active members, who were already engaged with the group activities, demonstrated to be collaborative. In Trento no focus group could be organized due to the moment of inactivity that the Social Street is going through.

Since the aim of the research is also investigating the relationship between the Social Street and other urban actors, interviews needed instead to investigate the role and the perspective of civil society and local public administration. I interviewed different subjects:

- Civil society actors that operate in the same Social Streets' neighbourhoods;
- Civil society actors that collaborate (or collaborated) with the Social Streets;
- Civil servants or politicians who collaborate or get in touch with the Social Streets;
- Civil servants or politicians who work in sectors concerning urban space management, commons, neighbourhood community and participation.

The interviews contained different thematic areas, in order to discuss the role and the activities of every actor, past/present/future collaborations and partnerships, commons, citizenship and urban governance.

All focus groups and interviews have been recorded and performed in private spaces most of the times. When this was not possible, I wrote down notes during the interview or immediately after. I sometimes benefited from informal conversations or situations occurred by chance to collect information, stories or simply thoughts. In all the three case studies, I often had the chance to share my impressions and understandings with the Social Streets' administrators – the so-called backtalks – who explained, confirmed or clarified to me specific situations or peculiar members' behaviours. A certain amount of informal conversations happened also with residents of the Social Streets' neighbourhoods, who however are not enrolled in the groups. Due to the difficulty to find and contact them, I proceeded with a capillary distribution of postcards within the post boxes. The message contained a brief presentation of me and my research, the request to participate in the research through an interview, the Universities logos and my contacts. I received really few replies – from 2 to 5 out of 200/300 postcards, by email or mobile phone – in each Social Streets. I seized the opportunity anyway to ask those people their bond with the

neighbourhood, the area strengths and weaknesses, their knowledge of the Social Street practices and their attendance and use of public and green surrounding spaces.

3.4.2.5. Mapping

Mapping and map-making as strategy to question the relationship between humans and their environment have always been used by many research fields, among which geography and sociology. Behavioural and human geography approach the environment from the basis of phenomenology and existentialism paying attention to the subjective experience of place and stressing the active role of human and social relations in the environmental experience. Within these streams, maps, and especially mental maps, communicate spatial information, function as mnemonic devices, structure and store knowledge, and serve as imaginary worlds, eventually providing subjective experiences of place and time. Cultural geography highlights the meaning of culture as a spatially pluralistic and dynamic process that is an important part of social signifying systems. Here landscape becomes a channel for studying cultural and social phenomena and processes (Soiini 2001). From another perspective, research maps have been accompanying sociological studies from their beginnings to the present. This kind of studies begins with Durkheim's suicide study, goes through the Chicago School of Sociology and contemporary uses GIS systems to help re-imagine and re-shape cities and towns around the world and create many concepts of the city, such as CityLab and Smart-City. Whereas the School of Chicago mainly used maps as geographical portrayal of facts to represent social phenomena and to relate them to spatial and geographical features within an ecological perspective, after WWII the mapping method has been commonly used not only to illustrate but also to analyse phenomena, locating problems, verifying hypothesis and discovering hidden facts and relationships (Czekaj 2017). Moreover, this method began to include the production of maps to represent places' subjective perceptions, uses and practices (for an example see Ostanel 2012).

Coping with the refusal to use quantitative surveys to analyse social cohesion, I turned to maps to address – together with focus groups, netnography and participant observation – the concept. Inspired by previous studies with maps, but not finding any suitable one for my case studies, I prepared geographical maps of the urban areas which the Social Streets refer to and I proposed to focus groups' participant to work on them. I asked all participants to draw on the map the neighbourhood borders according to their perception and, secondarily, to add another line for the Social Street borders.

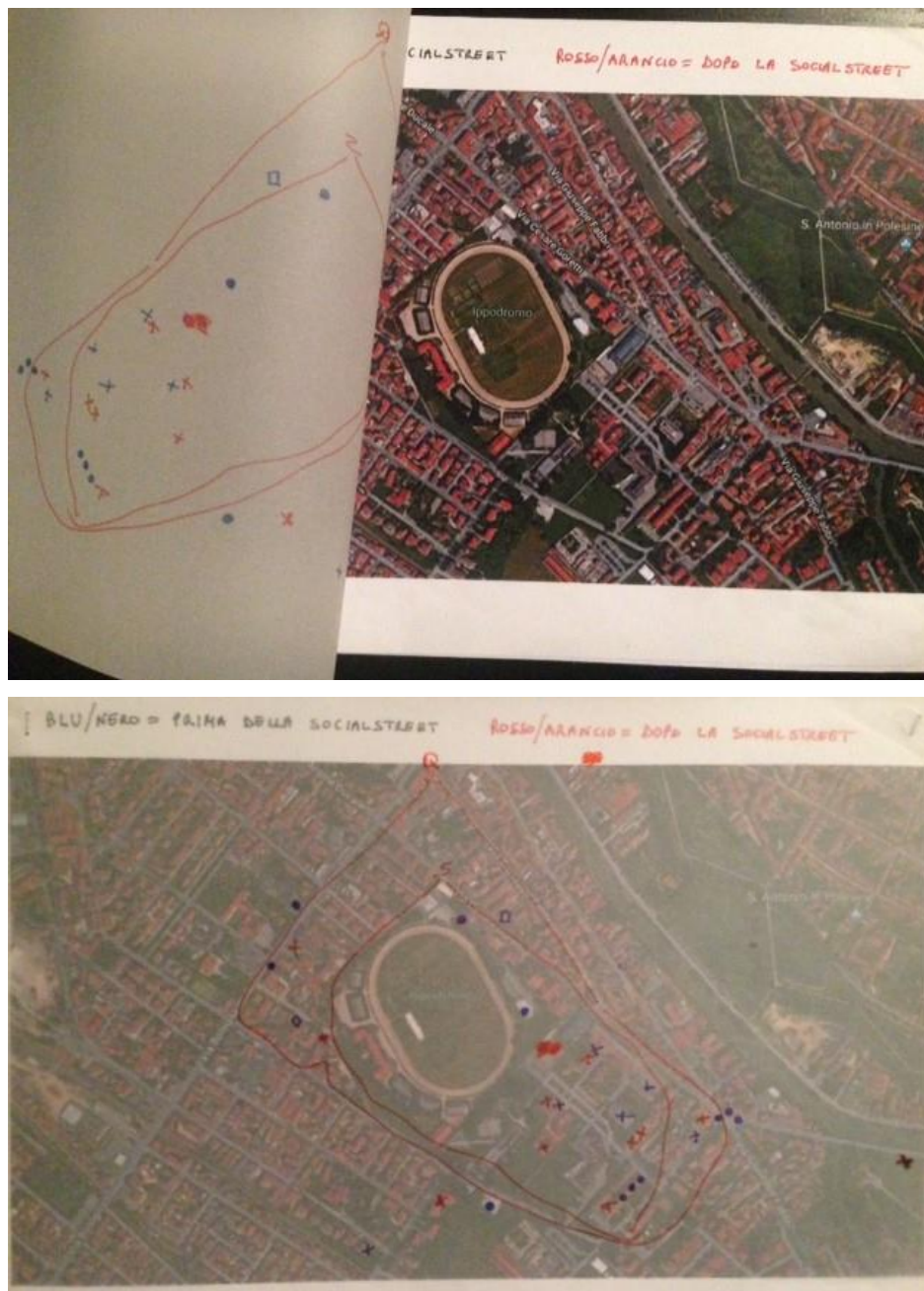


Fig. 3.2, 3.3 – Examples of the mapping activities, done by the Social Streeters during the focus groups.

Afterwards, I guided them through pointing on the map:

- The people (Social Streets members or not) who are part of their closed network, the ones whom they turn to ask for support and help or to spend time together (outside or at home);
- The commercial activities (shops, cafes, restaurants, supermarkets, gyms etc.) which they use in the neighbourhood;
- The cultural and social activities (cooperatives, voluntary organizations, theatres, scout, parish, etc.) to which they attend in the neighbourhood.

I also recommended using two colours (red and blue) to differentiate the points referred to relationships, commercial activities and cultural activities that they have/attended before participating in the Social Street and the points referred to the same aspects but after enrolling in the Social Street (fig. 3.2, 3.3). The whole activity has been integrated with explanations of the choices made in drawing and pointing and with spontaneous comments given by participants. This method worked as stimulus to facilitate the discussion about uses of the neighbourhood and practices within it. Further, it highlights many dimensions that contribute to give a deep understanding of Social Street members' sense of belonging and place attachment. It helps, eventually, to examine the Social Street both as territorial area and neighbours' community. Nevertheless, two limits need to be considered: the subjectivation of terms, which implies a different understanding of the words I used such as "closed social networks"; the difficulty to investigate a temporal dimension referred completely to the past (before the involvement in the Social Street) but merged blurry with the present time (after attending the group).

Besides studying social cohesion, I introduced the use of maps to investigate the dimensions of citizenship and urban governance. Concept mapping needs to represent humans' knowledge structures and mental models visually. It is assumed that the cognitive structure of the map consists of interconnected sets of elements representing the implicit views of one's own interests, concerns and tasks (Soiini 2001). In these models, texts, sentences and descriptions are taken as depictions of an externally given world, or as realisations of underlying cognitive description of the world. Having experimented the difficulty to discuss about intangible concepts within the pilot case studies²³, during the focus groups with the Social Streets' members and the interviews with civil society and public administration, I invited participants to represent the relationships between actors involved in the management of urban spaces according to their perception (fig. 3.4, 3.5). The resulting maps displayed nodes as actors/concepts and links as relationships between the actors/concepts. The links are one-way, two-way or non-directional. As in the case of mapping relationships and use of the neighbourhood, this activity has been accompanied by discussions and explanations. In few occasions, since some of the interviewees were totally embarrassed or feeling unable to represent their thoughts about the topic, I did not force them to draw but I solicited a discursive answer.

²³ See section 3.5.4. about the pilot report.

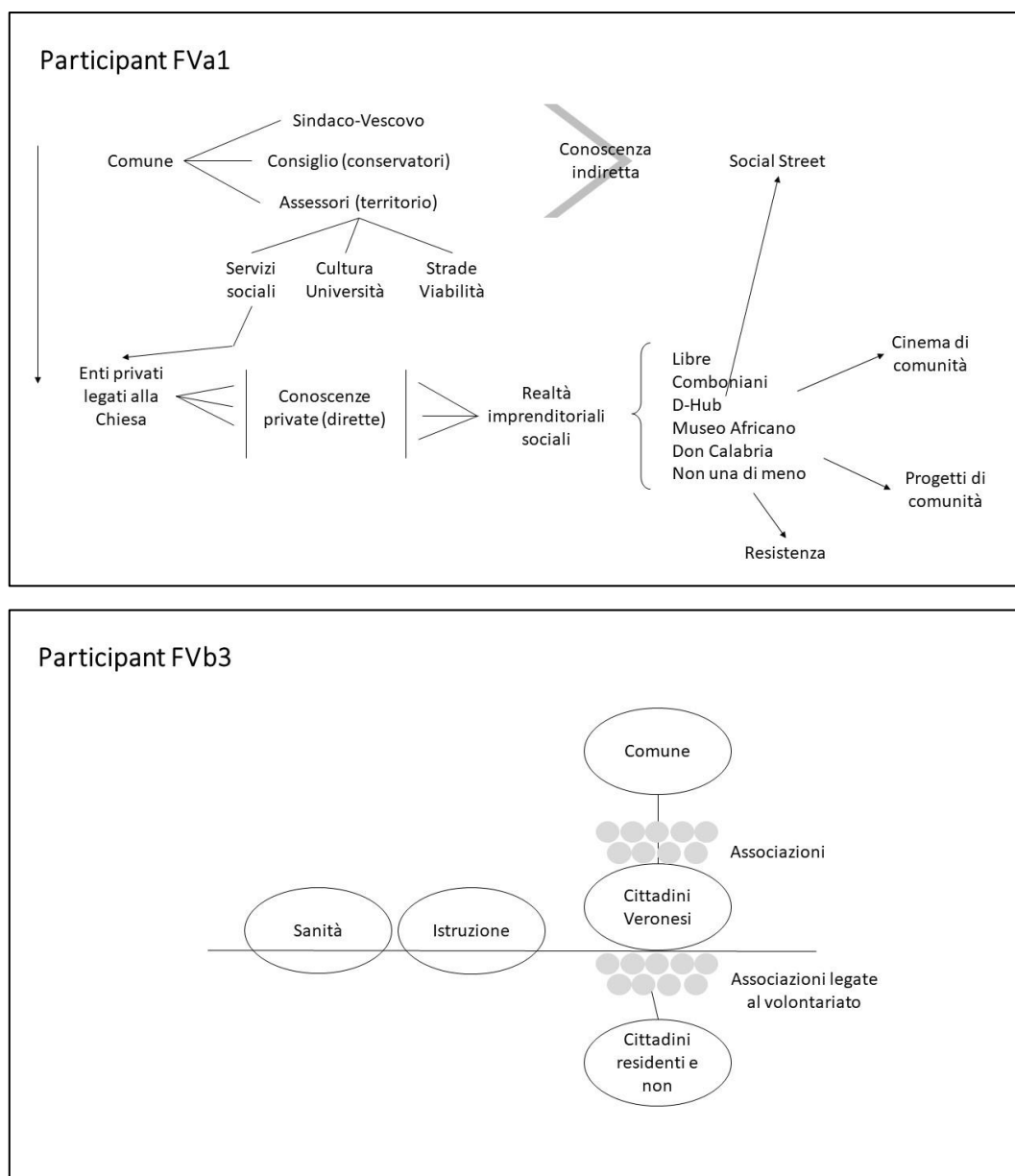


Fig. 3.4, 3.5 – Examples of the mapping activities to represent the citizenship perceptions of the Social Streeters participating in the focus groups.

<u>Theoretical concepts</u>	Social cohesion	Commons	Citizenship, urban governance
<u>Methods</u>	Netnography Participant observation Photo voice and elicitation Focus group Mapping	Netnography Participant observation Photo voice and elicitation Focus group Interview	Netnography Participant observation Focus group Interview Concept mapping

Tab. 3.5 – Methods addressing each theoretical concept such as framed in the whole reasoning, in order to answer the research question.

	Net-nography	Participant observation		Focus group	Interviews		Informal talks
		Territory	Group		Civil Society	Local government	
Ferrara Social Street	●	● - Neighb. structure - Counting	● Urban center's participatory project	1 Members 10 participants	4	3	5 Members 4 Not members
Verona Social Street	●	● - Neighb. structure	● - Dinners - Activities (cinema, market) - Civil society's meetings - Backtalk with the group admin.	3 Members 8/4/5 participants 1 New member 5 participants	8	5	2 Civil Society 3 Members 2 Not Members
Trento Social Street	●	● - Neighb. structure	● - Backtalk with the group admin.	●	5	5	5 Members 5 Not Members

Fig 3.6. – Methodological techniques used in each case study. The figure gives some details about a) the type of observation; b) what kind of activities I participate in; c) the number of accomplished focus groups, interviews and informal talks and the actors I involved in.

3.5. Innovative streets in Belgium as pilot cases²⁴

Two Belgian projects, named Living Street and Future Street²⁵ – respectively in Ghent and Antwerp – served as pilot cases in order to finalize the preparation of the data collection phase. Living Street and Future Street share the initial need: making the city ecologically more liveable, with greener streets, free from the traffic and enriched by places for socialization practices. This purpose differs lightly from the triggering motivation of Social Streets. The Italian neighbourhood groups were opened with the first goal of sociability. Nevertheless, besides the names (Living/Future/Social Street), all implying a different perception and experience of urban context, the care towards the urban territory is similar across the three different projects. Secondly, the possibility for citizens to tackle and impact public regulations, while acting on the residence area, is strictly pertinent to the research question and the principal aim of this study.

After a preliminary collection of secondary material about the projects, I proceeded to contact the people directly involved. The interviews have been recorded and transcribed in May/June 2017, followed by updates from the two NGOs committed in the projects in

²⁴ The subsections 3.5.1, 3.5.2. and 3.5.3. are also included in a publication: Ganugi G. 2018. The Role of Commoning and Mutually Shaped Citizenship in Developing Bottom-Linked Governance. The Projects Living Street and Future Street in Belgium. In *Sociologia e Politiche Sociali*, 21(2), pp. 51-70.

²⁵ The original names in Dutch are Leefstraat and Toekomststraat.

February 2018. For Living Street in Ghent, I interviewed: the NGO's founder, two citizens engaged in the initial project-design phases, two residents who experimented the project in their own streets, a civil servant from the Department of Mobility, working previously for the NGO, and the head officer of the department of Meeting and Engaging²⁶ – for a total of 7 interviews. For Future Street in Antwerp I interviewed: the NGO's founder, three residents and the responsible of the office of Green Areas, Environment, Communication, Urban District Consultation and Development Cooperation²⁷ – for a total of 5 interviews. The overall number of interviews collected is not high, however it provided sufficient data to narrate the development of the projects and their impact on the community and the local administration.

3.5.1. Living Street, Ghent

In 2010 the City of Ghent, together with other four cities – Aberdeen, Rotterdam, Montreuil, Ludwigsburg – engages in the European project Music (Mitigation in Urban Areas: Solutions for Innovative Cities), aimed at catalysing and mainstreaming carbon and energy reduction in urban policies, activities and built environment, while also representing an opportunity for decisive local actions. To implement the project, the City gathers around twenty people of Ghent society, who are involved or interested in topics such as pollution, sustainability, urban liveability, in different ways and with different roles, inviting them to participate, share and compare their expertise. After the first meeting, the civil servants in charge of conducting the brainstorming within the group realize that the topics mentioned above were not cause of concerns, while mobility and the way through which urban streets get used by inhabitants are fundamental in the conception of a liveable city. Addressing these topics, indeed, the group finds the inspiration to think about different possibilities to approach urban space, reducing parking lots and car access to streets, implementing socialization spaces and outdoor activities.

Therefore, new ideas and proposals are presented at the final event of Music, with the hope to see them realized, but the reaction of the City and its representatives is cold and doubtful for a lack of resources and for the proximity to municipal elections. This obstacle triggers the group of frontrunners to set up the organization Lab Van Troje, in order to try out one of their proposals using their own resources and their own energies. The aim is offering solutions to speed up the transformation of Ghent into a liveable and climatically

²⁶ The translation refers to the original name of the office in Dutch: Ontmoeten en Verbinden.

²⁷ The translation refers to the original name of the office in Dutch: Groendomein, Leefmilieu, Communicatie, Stedelijk Wijkoverleg en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking.

neutral city, connecting citizens, entrepreneurship, public services and third sector. The first edition of Living Street takes place in 2013, thanks to small amounts of money personally provided by participants and/or offered by private companies and thanks to the help of many civil servants; the second edition is funded by a Belgian national project and by a European award; the following editions, until 2016, are funded instead by the City, for a total of 50 successful experiments of Living Street. One of its fundamental aspects is the voluntary engagement of citizens: the project indeed is never proposed/imposed; on the contrary, it is only requested by people who are really interested in a different approach towards the urban space. The latter, after attending a first informative meeting organized by Lab Van Troje, are asked to ring the bell of all their neighbours collecting dreams and fears related to the street. On the basis of these perceptions a plan is projected and then proposed again to every resident. If everyone agrees then it is possible to organize the activities to create the Living Street. If not, the designing phase is extended, until all together they find a solution. If this does not happen, Living Street is not realized. Concretely, Living Street is translated into: closing the street to the traffic – partially or totally – during 2/3 summer months; removing parking lots; equipping the street with green carpets and wooden structure functioning as benches, tables, flower pots and work desks. The main organized activities are community meals, team or table games, car/grocery/medicine sharing. At the end of the summer period, the residents have the task to bring the street back to its original status, since the aim of the project is not causing definite transformations but showing the possibility to live otherwise. Nevertheless, what cannot be turned back are the relations established by neighbours who did not know each other before, and the mutual-help practices.

The activity duration of Lab Van Troje is settled for five years until 2017, as the mission of its founders was not economically benefiting from the project or leading it forever, but mainly spreading the approach of Living Street into the current system of residential street design. In the summer of 2017, thus, the NGO transmits its know-how to the City of Ghent. The office Meeting and Engaging is appointed to continue building on the experiment, by opening up to different environments and situations: for instance, high-tension neighbourhoods, agriculture areas, buildings of flats, the construction of new areas within the city or the renovation of old ones. According to the latest updates, the City hires one of the NGO's volunteers to continue working on the Living Street 2.0 version. The current stage intends to aggregate the – positive and negative – evaluations of all the citizens who experimented the project in the past years, in order to draw general

guidelines that might lead the ones willing to explore an alternative way to live the city and to pursue collaboration with the Municipality.

3.5.2. Future Street, Antwerp

Future Street is born by the initiative of the NGO Antwerpen Aan't woord in Antwerp. The organization is composed by a network of experts in participation: citizens, individual or associated, third sector stakeholders, administrative staff, politicians, educational institutions. Their motto is “making the city together” and their network is the instrument to achieve it. Once the NGO coordinator discovers the project Living Street in Ghent, he conceives a similar experiment to give citizens the possibility to transform their streets in a more liveable public space. Thus, the NGO applies to the Participatory Budget, implemented by the City Department of Green Areas, Environment, Communication, Urban District Consultation and Development Cooperation. Every year 10% of the Department's budget is dedicated to projects that are proposed and selected by the population and developed along the next year.

Future Street is proposed and selected in 2015 to be developed in 2016 in three streets, helped by the NGO to implement the experiment. These streets are identified by the NGO itself, thanks to previous personal contacts or because their residents were already active for other participatory initiatives in the neighbourhood. Therefore, the residents of these streets are guided in individualizing needs and desires of their urban life. Despite the process of information and involvement of all residents of the areas does not seem to be capillary, only in one case some disagreement about outdoor activities arises. Activities normally are constituted in community meals, sports and games, cinema, quiz, camping, karaoke, common waste collection, urban gardens, and socialization practices among neighbours such as excursions, bicycle trips and concerts in the surrounding. The streets are closed, totally or partially, for two weeks up to six: in two cases constantly, whereas in the third only on evenings and during weekends. Once the project is completed, the streets are reopened, but small changes are made, for instance through planters and cultivated green spaces, public boards and common waste collection. However, the experiment affects more the sense of belonging to the local community, the relationships among neighbours, the social control and the collaboration within the street or between the group of neighbours and other stakeholders active in the neighbourhood, like a language school for adolescent refugees or an elderly home.

The three streets involved in the project state to have learnt a lot and to be willing to replicate the experience, maybe with some modification, during the summer of 2017. Nevertheless, the Participatory Budget funds supports the winning projects only for one year and beside its institutional framework it seems much more complicated to see the same possibilities recognized. Therefore, the administration is proceeding with the annual implementation of new projects approved and chosen by the citizenship: among those, another initiative proposed by the same NGO seems an interesting follow-up of Future Street, though more focused on the realization of urban gardens and this time in ten streets of the city.

3.5.3. Findings

The analysis of Living Street and Future Street addresses citizens' practices of commoning, their modality of activation and the processes of governance that, on the one hand, drive the projects and, on the other, are objects of the innovation carried by the projects themselves. Despite acknowledging the relevance of every city's contextual history and development, I choose consciously to leave out many factors that might rather influence the projects' evolution: for instance, geographical, demographic and social-political-cultural information about Ghent and Antwerp; characteristics of participation in Ghent and Antwerp; or information about the position of the streets within the broader city or their physical and demographic composition.

3.5.3.1. Commons

Living Street and Future Street concern the production and care of various commons: streets and sidewalks, the wooden structures built by the residents and converted in spaces for socialization, games, meals and, eventually, all the practical objects such as crockery and cutlery. In order to define the community and the practices of commoning organized around these resources, two levels of analysis are necessary: (i) the collaboration among diverse urban actors – citizens, NGO, private companies, civil servants; (ii) the interaction among neighbours and users of the streets.

- Living Street: (i) the lack of funds by the City of Ghent for the first two years induces the residents to activate their personal relationships and their capacity of fundraising, in order to sensitize private companies to support the project economically. Moreover, they have the chance to get in contact with many civil servants who collaborate voluntarily with the NGO, learning in this way how to

- face different problems and to find solutions together with the city administration.
- (ii) The NGO requires participants to inform, listen and include in the design every resident, ending the process with a joint result able to satisfy everyone's needs.
 - Future Street: (i) the overall fund by the Participatory Budget of the City and the strong mediation acted by the NGO between citizens and administrative offices hinder participants in becoming autonomous for the resolution of practical issues.
 - (ii) The involvement of every resident is not evenly distributed in the streets, causing in one case some disagreement between participants and the owner of a commercial activity; however, a slight adjustment of the activities organized by the former solves the argument.

The two projects are characterized by an informal organization of tasks, regarding both the realization of structure and their maintenance. They also share the complications due to the difficulty to spread the commons culture, according to which the resource belongs to the whole community who takes care of it collaboratively. On the contrary, there is a lack of participation in the factual realization of the projects and, consequently, the perception that the resources would belong personally to few residents prevails in the ones who do not participate constantly and actively: «People feel themselves as visitors, they think that we did our back gardens. They couldn't understand that it's for everyone, also if it's in front of my door»; «It's difficult to convince other people that this is a public space and that everyone is allowed to use it. People think that when you do something, the space becomes private» (residents, Ghent – Antwerp). Another communal aspect between Living and Future Street is the creation of new relationships thanks to the practices of commoning: participants, indeed, involve neighbours, individual or organized – schools, elderly home, bars – in the activities, establishing important bonds of mutual-help that last over the end of the projects.

3.5.3.2. Citizenship

Before mentioning the topic of citizenship, it is right to underline the preponderance, in both projects, of Belgian citizens. Foreigners participate in some of the activities, without actively collaborating in their organization. Regarding Living Street, thinking back at its development is useful: a group of twenty citizens voluntarily plans and designs some initial proposal to produce a change in the city; despite the lack of support by the City, the group sets up an organization to self-manage the project; even the residents who want to experiment Living Street apply voluntarily, subsequently collaborating with each

other to implement it. All this underlines the citizens' spontaneous activation: feeling the necessity to improve their own city, they do not wait to receive a service passively or even only complain, but rather do something to contribute concretely. The distance kept in the beginning from the City conduces as well a stronger contribution from private market actors in offering to citizens the opportunity to manage public resources – another important aspect in the perspective of mutually shaped citizenship. The success of the project and the demonstration of interest by the City then cultivate the citizens' awareness of their responsibilities towards the city. This awareness is also confirmed because of the recognition of their competences and role by the local institutions, deciding to involve them in writing the guidelines for the Living Street 2.0 version. Therefore, there is a double new perception: the City starts to listen to citizens more carefully – «every time they renew a street, if that street is residential, they before try to understand what people would like» (resident, Ghent); and citizens are more aware of their expertise and, consequently, of their power on the City – «it will be important that next year, the government hears the citizens who already did the project, because actually they are the ones who know more now, not the city» (resident, Ghent).

Completely different is the process that leads to the realization of Future Street: the project is written and presented to the City by the NGO; once it got the public fund, the experiment is proposed to people already active in participatory projects within the belonging neighbourhood; the practical issues are almost entirely solved thanks to the mediation between the NGO and the institutions. Although the residents have to self-organise to realize the activities, for all the rest of the process there is not an individual decisive and spontaneous activation. Furthermore, the previously active citizens are those who mobilize more: the project does not trigger a major awareness in a major number of residents.

3.5.3.3. Bottom-linked governance

The two different paths impact differently the governance model for the use and management of urban spaces. Living Street involves diverse stakeholders belonging to many scales: the European Union, the City of Ghent, an NGO, citizens and private companies. Along its evolution, the generative action triggering changes runs from hands to hands. From the EU to experts of sustainability, through the application of the City to the European project: «we were open as city of Ghent, we were saying: we have a big opportunity because we want to become climate neutral, we want to do a lot of things;

but we are also very honest, we don't know how to do it» (civil servant, Ghent). From citizens to a new NGO, funded for a precise aim: «we were complaining against the city. We were acting very typically. Then I said: wait a minute, we are also stuck to our role in this moment. If we want to change things, we have to show to others that we believe in what we projected and that we can do it in a different way» (frontrunner, Ghent). From the NGO to the City again: «we went to the City and said: we stopped. It was strange, because they were in the flow of things we were doing. We wanted to help the city of Ghent to learn everything we did and to translate it in hard decisions» (funder of Lab Van Troje, Ghent). At this moment the NGO is ended and replaced by the City, which hires one former volunteer to guarantee a management continuation of the project and keeps the dialogue open with the population: «If we want to create a policy, we have to create a framework. Framework is a broad regulation, not one hundred of strict rules. Some main principles will be set but keeping them broad. More like a handbook, as co-creative as possible [...] Then you stop to be a project or a way to meet people, but this becomes a way to give the city back to people» (Meeting and Connecting Service, Ghent). The creation of a new set of guidelines to help in designing and managing the Living Street 2.0 version indicates the institutionalization of a bottom-up initiative, through the modification of administrative regulations and the involvement of actors who were previously out of the decision-making arena. At the structural level of the city, changes occur slower, but according to Lab van Troje and to Living Street residents something is already evolving towards a new attitude and planning modality: «Now the planning of streets is completely in the philosophy of living street, without parking lots. And this was our goal» (funder of Lab van Troje, Ghent); «there is something we realized, it's not shown in our street, but we did something. It is shown in the streets that are built now. The road map is the proof they are willing to change something» (resident, Ghent).

Future Street, instead, is proposed by an NGO, realized by few citizens and totally supported by the Department of Green Areas, Environment, Communication, Urban District Consultation and Development Cooperation that provides the Participatory Budget and supervises the coordination among all different Departments of the City for the realization of citizens' projects. Although «the system of permission didn't change after Toekomststraat [Future Street]», the collaboration between institutions and citizens still works out well: «actually, it was easier than how X thought. If you ask and if you work together with the administration, it can be easy» (Department of Green Areas, Antwerp). Taking another project as example, the representative of the Department

admits that preparing the field for institutional transformation and then carrying it out is difficult: «It was complicated, it took me three years to create the first possibility, then we did [the project through] the participatory budget. We needed a lot of permissions, so we made the coordination of all the permission [...]. Fire department, public transport, etc. had to agree and it has been quite difficult. No one wanted to do the job. There was none who had that in his job description, so first we had to create that job description and then we could do it» (Department of Green Areas, Antwerp). In the case of Future Street hence the economic and bureaucratic incentives obtained within the institutional frame of the Budget remains as temporarily as the project.

3.5.3.4. At the mirror

Observing the evolution of Living Street and Future Street, many conditions seem to influence the different results in Ghent and Antwerp (Tab. 1). The year of birth determines how much time actors have to experiment, test and eventually modify the process and its singular phases: whereas the first experiments of Living Street takes place in 2013, Future Street edition runs only in 2016. Another important difference is the source of funds. In the beginning Living Street is realized thanks to private amounts of money, since the City refuses to support the project. Future Street instead is totally and forthwith funded by the Participatory Budget of the City of Antwerp. Regarding commons-related aspects, the experiences share the type of resources managed as commons, the difficulties in spreading the commons culture to all residents and users of the streets and the creation of new social relationships. On the contrary, they differ in the way various urban actors and neighbours interact. In Ghent the lack of public funding pushes the citizens to look for private market companies' support and contemporarily the voluntary collaboration of many civil servants gives them the opportunity to face practical issues and to find solutions in agreement with the city administration. During the phase of design and planning of each Living Street, every resident contributes with her needs and ideas. In Antwerp citizens manage to collaborate with stakeholders of the Third Sector, such as a language school and an elderly home. In one case difficulties in involving all users of the street arise, causing some disagreement, then solved by little changes in the realized activities.

Living Street is characterized by a strong and voluntary activation of individuals, who plan and design the initial proposals at the first stage, set up a new organization, apply to the project and outline the experiment in their own street. This spontaneous engagement and the success of the initiative produce awareness of citizens' capacity and role, both in

participants and in administrative figures. Overall, many stakeholders contribute in the process, starting from the European Union to the City, then to the NGO Lab Van Troje and the citizens and eventually to the City again in collaboration with citizens. When the NGO closes, the transition to the City is carried with continuity towards the NGO's activity and with respect towards the role of citizens: indeed, they are actively involved in formulating new regulations for the second version of the project – Living Street 2.0 – that the City is interested in implementing in other streets and diverse areas of Ghent. On the other hand, Future Street is implemented by an NGO, which, after the approval of the project for the Participatory Budget, proposes its realization to residents already active in other participatory projects. Moreover, the strong mediation acted by the NGO between the City of Antwerp and the participants did not allow a decisive and spontaneous activation of citizens. In Antwerp, the stakeholders involved are the NGO, the citizens of three streets of the city and the Municipality. Furthermore, the economic incentives and bureaucratic permissions are temporally and last only for the duration of the project. In fact, Future Street is meant to finish the same year of implementation due to the public fund organization. The following year, a similar initiative is financed, again proposed by the same NGO, but focused more on urban gardens.

To sum up, the final relevant difference is the institutionalization of a bottom-up initiative through the transition to the City in running the project and the production of new policy regulation, in one case, and the temporary character of the experiment, in the other case (tab. 3.6).

	Living Street	Future Street
Birth year	First edition: 2013 (process started in 2010)	Single edition: 2016 (process started in 2015)
Funds	- 2013: participants or private market companies - 2014: Belgian national project and European award - From 2015 on: City of Ghent	Participatory Budget by the City of Antwerp
Common resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Streets and sidewalks - Wooden structures (tables, benches, etc.) and objects (crockery and cutlery, balls, etc.) - Activities (games, meals, trips) 	
Practices of commoning Among urban actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact with private market companies for an economical support - Collaboration with many civil servants to face practical problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration with actors of the Third Sector (language school and elderly home) - Strong mediation between citizens and administration by the NGO
Among neighbours and streets' users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Every resident involved in the project design - Difficulties in spreading the commons culture - Creation of social and mutual-help relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficulties in involving some resident: disagreement, then solved

Citizens participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Citizens plan and design voluntarily the initial proposal - Self-management of the project by setting up an NGO - Spontaneous activation and voluntary application by residents - Contribution by private companies - Citizens' awareness of their responsibilities towards the city - Recognition of citizens' role by the City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The NGO writes and presents the project to the City - The NGO proposes it to citizens already active in other participatory projects - Strong mediation of the NGO and lack of individual, decisive and spontaneous activation - The most engaged citizens are those already active in previous projects
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involved stakeholders: EU, City of Ghent, NGO, citizens and private companies - Steps: EU – City – citizens – NGO and citizens – City and citizens - Transition from the NGO to the City to run the project (NGO's volunteer is hired) - The City and citizens write together a new regulation - Light evidences of change in institutional planning attitude (parking lots, road map) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involved stakeholders: NGO, City of Antwerp, citizens - Economic incentives and bureaucratic permissions last for project's duration
Follow up	Living Street 2.0	Similar project funded by the Participatory Budget

Tab. 3.6 – Conditions taken in account to answer the research question.

For the implementation of Living Street, I consider fundamental the following strengths: a) the lack of public funds in the beginning; b) the voluntary engagement in the project; c) the recognition of citizens' role by the City; d) the end of the NGO and the transition to the City. Alternatively, I believe that Future Street faces some weaknesses: a) the short duration of the project; b) the full funding by the City; c) the preeminent role of the NGO, that presents and proposes the project to already active citizens; d) the withdrawal of all the permissions recognized to citizens during the project, but not available anymore the following year.

The next interesting and useful step of analysis would be verifying the progress of Living Street 2.0 to test the effective modalities of citizenship involvement and engagement and the realization of the new experiments foreseen for the summer 2018. It would be important as well to understand whether Future Street produces some indirect changes within the institutional structure and whether some projects financed by the Participatory Budget in Antwerp manage to affect the practices of urban government or, once they end, they only leave the stage to the next projects.

3.5.4. Lessons from the pilot cases

During the study of the two pilot cases I decided not to consider factors that might influence the projects' evolution and the transformation of urban governance: for instance, geographical, demographic and social-political-cultural information about Ghent and Antwerp; citizens' participation in Ghent and Antwerp; the position of the streets within the broader city or their physical and demographic composition. Even if not necessary to test the interview tracks, all these aspects are very significant for two main reasons: (1) the needs and interests pursued by these projects relate directly to the type of population participating; (2) the public administration propensity to accept and include citizens and bottom-up initiatives pertains to the political tradition of the City, or to the risk appetite of politicians. For example, in one experiment of Future Street in Antwerp, the case of a commercial street where the ground floor is totally dedicated to shops and market activities, the closure of the street in order to let neighbours socialize and spend weekend time outdoor might not be of any interest to shops' owners and may even be totally counterproductive. A neighbourhood inhabited only by university students, living in the city for few months of the year and maybe only on working days, might not be characterized by a strong place attachment and civic engagement (or at least a different one). A traditional top-down regime of government, that never tried to decentralize some public functions to NGOs or citizens, is not likely to boost new types of collaborations and partnerships. Therefore, spatial, social and political conditions of the city where the case studies develop, need to be addressed. This also implies looking at the street's structural composition, population composition, functions of the neighbourhood, traditional role of civil society and traditional political regimes.

Another aspect I omitted from the pilot cases is the dimension of social cohesion, because Living Street and Future Street do not directly stand on the need to increase socialization and lower individualization. However, during the interviews with both Ghent and Antwerp citizens, increased sense of belonging towards the community has been repeatedly named as one of the most important factors of the commoning process. This supports my decision to include social cohesion within the overall theoretical framework. Moreover, Flemish citizens' reflections about the difficulty to spread the commons culture and to engage all neighbours to collaborate in the neighbourhood care and activities made me think about who remains excluded from this kind of initiatives. Reasons may be different: people are not interested, people feel cut out from majority of the group, people feel to be useless for the group. I decided hence to involve people in

the research who are not members of the Social Streets but who live in the same urban area of interest, in order to investigate why they do not participate.

Carrying out the study of pilot cases, I also realized that I did not elaborate enough on the concept and perception of citizenship. Since it is a truly abstract concept and talking about it may not be intuitive for everyone, I took into consideration the idea of using concept maps.

Thanks to Living Street and Future Street, two other aspects were underlined as strongly relevant: the internal governance of neighbourhood groups, or in other words commoning institutions; and the intermediary role of the NGOs in mediating between citizens and representatives of the City. On these premises, I developed more questions for interviews or focus groups and higher personal attention during participant observation about the organization of Social Streets' members and about the diverse roles played by them within the mechanism of the group and the relationships with other urban actors.

3.6. I'm Giulia and I'm researching the Social Streets

The title above is the usual expression I used to introduce myself to the Social Streets' members. Those who knew me already used a similar sentence introducing me: she is Giulia, the one whom I mentioned to you, researching the Social Streets. I was Giulia, the researcher. This phrase implies the main difficulty I faced carrying on the fieldwork. Indeed, besides being there to research, I felt also a real member of the Social Streets, especially in Ferrara and Verona, where I experienced the interactions on the Facebook group and "on the street" as a resident of the area²⁸. I am also simply Giulia with my character, my fears, my limits and my qualities. It turned out impossible for me to discern myself completely from the researcher. While observing, participating and interviewing, I always tried to maintain a cognitive distance from my objects of study. However, I also experienced those situations as an individual, interacting with others, exchanging opinions, thoughts and believes.

Consequently, my presence produced a perturbation amid the members, both in the virtual dimension and in the real one. Even if the Social Streets' members completely seemed at ease and the stories about the previous meetings matched with the ones that I

²⁸ In Trento the interactions have been limited to the ones with the Social Streets' administrators, few other members, the civil society and the local government actors due to the low level of activation of the group.

was participating in, it is likely that they might have modified their behaviour to comply with the standard considered appropriate for that context.

My character had an impact also on the decisions I took to develop the research. A good example is the choice to stop counting people's features and attitudes because they were not adding anything relevant to my data; the strategy used to find people who live in the neighbourhood but do not participate in the Social Street; or the preference not to force focus groups' and interviews' participants to draw a concept map if they did not want to. All this relies on my belief in what is ethical to do in order to achieve the maximum result for the research, and in what is the limit point until which invading people's privacy and comfort zone is correct. Probably someone else would have taken other decisions, such as stopping people along the street to ask whether they were Social Street members or pushing all participants to draw a concept map.

As Desmond (2016) writes in the closure of his book, everything – your race, your gender, where and how you grew up, your character and your temperament – may influence on whom you meet, what is told and showed to you and how you interpret what you see. My identity opened some doors and closed others. Eventually, we can only do our best, pay attention to how our identity affects our work without ever losing sight of the most important issues.

Chapter 4.

The Social Street Residents in San Pio X Street and surroundings, in Trento

The Social Street Residents in San Pio X Street and surroundings (*Residenti in Via San Pio X e dintorni*) was born in Trento (Box 1) between September and October 2014. San Pio X street is in the Trento-south area, located part in San Giuseppe and part in San Pio X district. Both districts belong to the area called San Giuseppe-Santa Chiara. The Social Street area is delimited by a well-defined boundary: north by Vittorio Veneto Street, south by Alcide De Gasperi Street, west by the railway and east by the river Fersina.



Fig. 4.1 – The distance of San Pio X Street from the city centre.

Source: Google maps.

Box 4.1 – The Region Trentino Alto Adige and the City of Trento

Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol is an autonomous region in Northern Italy. Since the 1970s, most legislative and administrative powers have been transferred to the two self-governing provinces that make up the region: the Province of Trento, commonly known as Trentino, and the Province of Bolzano, commonly known as South Tyrol.

Regarding health and social policies of the welfare system, Bertin and Carradore's (2016) classification of local welfare models assigns Trentino Alto Adige/Südtirol to the cluster "generalised social system

mixed with a corporative system”. The main characteristic of this cluster is the strong presence of many public and corporate actors, supported by an integrated and cohesive civil society. Südtirol, together with Aosta Valley, presents the highest values for the number of cooperatives divided by the total resident population – among other variables. Although social risks are relatively low, services are widespread and municipal social expenditure per capita is high, these two regions present poor levels of innovation (Bertin and Carradore 2016).

Trentino is divided into 177 municipalities (*comuni*), whose capital is the city of Trento. Trento counts 118.229 inhabitants (Demographic statistics ISTAT, 2018, demo.istat.it). The municipal population is not concentrated only in the city, but also in numerous scattered suburbs. The vastness of the municipal area, therefore, gives rise to a population density that is not characteristic of compact cities with a high concentration of population. The city is almost completely surrounded by mountains and crossed by the Adige, the main river, and Fersina, another important torrent. 51% of its territory is covered by woods, 20% by agricultural areas and 8% by residential areas.

Trento has a good industrial production; the richest and the most profitable economic sector is commerce. Cultural and hiking tourism are also very important. More than half of the workers in the city of Trento is an employee of the public sector. Before 1994, it was governed by the Christian Democracy party. Afterwards, it has always been governed by centre-left coalitions.

Box 4.2 – Reading suggestions

The chapter follows the birth and development of the Social Street of *San Pio X Street*. The division into time intervals, from the date of its creation until today, is based on salient events and periods for the group itself.

Table 1 lists all subjects belonging to the case study in Trento, who have taken part in the research. In order to guarantee the anonymity of the interviewees, I changed the names using fancy names. In the same way, the references to the Trentino reality and to the organizations to which the subjects belong have been neutralized as much as possible, so as not to make it possible to identify the participants in the research. For this reason, next to the mentioned name, I report only the sector to which the person belongs, specifying the third sector body or the public administration office only if relevant to the research itself, and in any case if it does not damage the privacy of the interviewee or of persons nominated by the interviewee. For greater fluidity in reading, I translated the excerpts of the interviews into English, storing the original Italian transcriptions of the interviews/focus groups in my archive. With regard to the third sector cooperatives or associations I have chosen to use only one identification letter (e.g. cooperative F).

The analysis is interspersed with synoptic boxes, useful to deepen the geographical and demographic context of the area in which the SSt is located, the political and administrative situation of the city of Trento, the specific methodology applied to this case study.

Furthermore, pictures 2, 4, 5, 7, and 9 aim to represent this story, using the theoretical concepts mobilized and showing the interactions between the shared culture of citizens, the practices of commoning and citizenship and the governance of public spaces.

4.1. The little book house

The spark that initiates the SSt experience is a conference organized by the association Bottom Up in June 2014, where the experience of the Italian Social Street is discussed in relation to the principle of subsidiarity. One of the conference guests is Professor Gregorio Arena, president of LABSUS – Laboratory for Subsidiarity (*Laboratorio per la Sussidiarietà*) - who presents to the City of Trento the Regulation on Collaboration between Citizens and the City for the Care and Regeneration of Urban Commons (*Regolamento sulla collaborazione tra cittadini ed amministrazione per la cura e la rigenerazione dei beni comuni urbani*)²⁹. At the conference, Eugenio, a native of Basilicata, who moved to Trento for studies ten years before and who has been living in San Pio X Street for three years, is positively impressed by the initiative of Social Street. Thus, together with three friends, he decides to create a Social Street in their area of residence, precisely San Pio X. The friends themselves (<35 years old) moved to Trento for family or study reasons from other parts of Italy. Precisely because they come from other contexts, the four founders of the SSt feel the need to enliven the neighbourhood more, activating a sense of solidarity and reciprocity with other residents and thinking they can create something virtuous for the collectivity.

«I believe very much in the power of space, even in the reinterpretation of space, as a link, which however must be reconstructed. So being in the area and doing activities, somehow, remains in your head...I don't know. And even space then changes and it is the thing that drives me to participate in these things, in the cleaning up and then in this event that will take place» (Valentina, RMt).

«What I hope for this project is to create an active reality and a more lively neighbourhood!» (Terenzio, RMt, from a post on the Facebook group of 31/10/2014 in which Terenzio himself proposes a round of presentations).

«The idea of the social street came to me when I realized that there is never a place or a good time to train mind and body – a corner of peace where to devote to sports and hobbies – then I remembered that warehouse in the basement that would seem perfect: a cleaning up and some tools...arranging it together could be cheap and then available to everyone» (Eugenio, RMt, from a post on the Facebook group of 31/10/2014 in which Terenzio proposes a round of presentations).

²⁹ The regulation is a legal instrument that encourages the inclusion of citizens in urban governance officially presented in Bologna in February 2014. The Regulation can be downloaded for free at <http://www.labsus.org/scarica-regolamento/>. On 24/04/2019, the Italian municipalities that have approved or are about to approve the regulation are 189, according to the LABSUS website: <https://www.labsus.org/i-regolamenti-per-lamministrazione-condivisa-dei-beni-comuni/>.



Fig. 4.2 – San Pio X Street and the arches of the local railway.

Source: Facebook group Residents in San Pio X Street and surroundings – Trento.

The four friends create the closed Facebook group “Residents in San Pio X Street and surroundings” (*Residenti in Via San Pio X e dintorni*) on 13 October 2014. They design a leaflet and distribute it in the neighbourhood. They begin to animate the Facebook group. Ten days after the group’s creation, there are fifty members. On 24 October 2014, the first group of members meet and after a few days, Walter publishes a summary post on the topics that emerged during the conversation:

- Proposal to organize a neighbourhood time bank, i.e. an informal exchange of goods and services, aiming at the creation of a network for the inter-generational exchange of skills;
- Organization of socio-cultural events, such as dinners, excursions, games or tournaments, film debates, flea markets, laboratories, etc.;
- Proposals on how to involve people of different ages who for various reasons do not have access to Facebook;
- The owner of a shop in San Pio X, former president of a neighbourhood association, proposes to contact associations and institutions in the area and to request spaces that could be used and/or regenerated;
- Going on with the itinerant aperitifs in different bars in the area.

Walter finally hopes that everyone feels free to take part in proposing ideas, projects, suggestions and offering their willingness to organize activities according to their own interests and skills, without any kind of fear, shame or prejudice. Information and events from the neighbourhood or city begin to appear on the group; articles are also shared, for example, on the social value of acting collectively, on the right of citizens to change and reinvent the city according to their needs, on the management of commons in collaboration with the administration, on the redevelopment of the suburbs. Residents of the area (box 3), but also those who frequent it for work or pleasure, begin to join the group:

«Then Eugenio told me about it and well...he introduced me to the others of the group and for me that was cool. Well...I am both a sociable and a social person, so I liked the idea. Actually, I like the idea of getting to know people from the neighbourhood, to create your little world in it, where you live. In Trento it's difficult. I have been living in my apartment for three years, right behind here, and I am in contact with the upstairs and downstairs residents maybe only since last year» (Marisa, RMt).

Box 4.3 – The population of San Pio X

From the second post-war period, the district of San Pio X has been the scene of profound urban transformations (box 5), which have obviously also influenced the socio-demographic traits of the population. Born as an expansion of the city towards the south and characterized as a district of social housing and large factories, the area has attracted workforce and young families. These remained to live there and led the neighbourhood to have a high concentration of elderly population in the 1990s. The examination of the natural and social changes of the last 10 years shows a total negative balance, caused by the socio-cultural phenomenon of the reduction in the average number of children per woman and by the population ageing, traceable throughout the Municipality of Trento (Vlach 2011).

Due to the presence of low-cost housing and to the job offer, the district has always had a strong migratory attraction. First came Trentino people from the neighbouring valleys, later a southern population and subsequently extra-EU immigrants. Most of these come from northern Africa – Morocco and Algeria – but also from Albania and Romania. In fact, the presence of a mosque in a side street of San Pio X Street until 2012, has favoured the arrival of numerous African Muslim families; at the same time, the population ageing has acted as a catalyst for the arrival of numerous carers, especially from Eastern Europe (Mosconi 2015).

Furthermore, until the 2000s, many homeowners moved from the San Pio X district to other areas of the city, having sold or rented their apartments. This has subsequently allowed a population change, favouring the arrival of university students from other cities into the neighbourhood. Here students have the opportunity to find cheap accommodations at the right distance from the city centre although there are no gathering places. Their presence makes the population of this neighbourhood even less “sedentary” since they stay here only for two or three years.

«And well since I had just moved to San Pio X then I took the opportunity to understand what [the social street] is and how it can work. [...] I didn't know anyone and therefore it was an experience of the neighbourhood that I say cool that there is also this thing here» (Camilla, RMt/TSt).

«This thing intrigued me because I said I have lived here for about thirty years but actually I have never attended this area regularly, either because of friendships or for various reasons. In any case, I didn't really know it, so I said let's take advantage, let's try to see how it is. This is how the idea was born» (Agata, RMt).

Both for those who have been living in the neighbourhood for a short time and for those who have always lived there without attending its places, the reasons for approaching the group's activities are the lack of social relations and of the neighbourhood knowledge. A sense of belonging to the community and a place attachment are therefore missing. In fact, those residents of the neighbourhood, not registered with the SSt, do not feel this lack. The latter is above all mothers of families native of Trento or who arrived in the city already before their children's birth. I also interviewed a person of nearly thirty, born and grown up in Trento, who moved to Bolzano to study at university and then returned.

«I didn't know it but probably not being off-site, you know, I never even had the need to subscribe to such a thing and in any case I did the university somewhere else and here I kept my group of friends, but regarding university having done it in Bolzano, there I met students in Bolzano and not here» (Giuseppina, RNMt).

«I know that Social Street exists because I think that my daughter's school has done something with them, but that's all I know. [...] no I saw that they painted the underpass, the mural, uhm...those things...then how to say, I work...but not because...but it didn't interest me. Maybe if I go to see...no Mauro, who is not Social Street, asked me to participate – as I do not know what – in the District Council, but no...look, because I already volunteer in an association» (Maria, RNMt).

All of them tell me that they already have their friendships in the neighbourhood and that they are already engaged in other associations or in voluntary activities, thus not having the time or interest to enter the SSt.

From the beginning of November for the next two months, the SSt is animated by a series of personal initiatives and pressing events³⁰. The second meeting is organized, from which other initiatives emerge: mapping the group members in order to understand where

³⁰ It was, in fact, complicated to reconstruct the course of events in chronological order, because many actions were reactions to others, or many happened simultaneously. My attempt to bring back in time scale what happened sometimes flattens it, excessively simplifying the reticular dynamics that started in that precise moment and context.

they live or work precisely in the area; giving a brief questionnaire to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood so as to learn about their needs, interests, availability and to have a database on which being able to talk over and develop initiatives; organizing an event to raise awareness of the SSt in the neighbourhood, even among those people who do not use Facebook; contacting the District (Box 4), the parish and other actors in the neighbourhood so as to consider possible future collaborations and the possibility of using spaces belonging to these subjects where people can meet.

Box 4.4 – The districts (*circoscrizioni di decentramento comunale*) in Trento

In Italian law, the District is a body for participation, consultation and management of basic services, as well as for the practice of delegated functions, established by the municipality with jurisdiction over a part of its territory comprising one or more contiguous neighbourhoods. The limit, set by law, for the establishment of the districts, is 250.000 inhabitants. However, the Trentino Alto Adige Region, having a special statute, set its own rules and decided to keep the districts subdivision in the cities of Trento and Bolzano. The municipality of Trento is divided into twelve districts, led by the president in office for five years and by internal working commissions. The commissions can make proposals to the municipal council or be consulted in an advisory capacity, but they have no decision-making power. The districts can intervene directly only in the cultural sphere: the Commission of Culture, in fact, has a budget of 30.000 euros a year to be used for activities on the territory, which can be used for the organization of events/activities or to support the activities of associations operating in the area (Mosconi 2015). The district in which San Pio X is located is number 11, called San Giuseppe-Santa Chiara, with an area of 307,41 ha and 17.429 inhabitants (data consulted on 15/04//2019, <http://bit.ly/2Ujfl9x>).

The first two meetings of the SSt and above all the issues elaborated by the group underline the will to open up to the neighbourhood, getting in touch with other active realities in the area, to use the urban public spaces making them their own and to manage the spaces themselves and the activities of the group so that they can be functional to the well-being of the community. The neighbourhood (Box 5) is a quiet area. Only a few episodes of petty crime are reported to me, concerning especially green areas of the neighbouring parks. However, the area is described very positively, because it is close to the centre and also to the hospital, with little traffic and noise; full of supermarkets, grocery stores, clothing stores, stationeries, newsagents, hairdressers, pharmacy and several bars. There are also schools and the parish. All underline the strong presence of foreign residents in the neighbourhood, but they also emphasize their good integration with the local population. A reason of relative discomfort seems to be, especially for young people under the age of 30, the lack of places for recreation and socialization in the evening hours. Young people, in fact, prefer to shift to the centre, where the

entertainment offer is higher. All my interlocutors, both residents and members of the Third Sector or Public Administration, highlight the lack of interaction in the neighbourhood between the elderly generation of long-term residents and university students, often not-local, who move elsewhere after a few years. The lack of places for socialization and the generation gap consequently make the diffusion of a strong and shared sense of belonging to the neighbourhood harder. This phase of the SSt path is therefore characterized by a search for strategies to reinforce the attachment to the place and to the local population. This drives the first members to look for interests and ways to build shared values. The participation in common life, the effort to find and to found similar norms and values within the group and the willingness to work together with others to improve the neighbourhood are widespread indicators of civic engagement.

Box 4.5 – The urban development of San Pio X

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the territory of San Pio X was mostly exploited for crops, with a low density of inhabited buildings. After World War II the agricultural land turned into a residential neighbourhood, through massive interventions of social housing, the disappearance of open and green spaces and the location of some factories (Mosconi 2015). The industrialization of the area and the presence of several public houses with affordable housing have created the spark for further residential development. This development was initially translated into an architecture characterized by one/two-family houses and buildings up to a maximum of three floors, still visible above all in the area north of Matteotti Street, in the San Giuseppe neighbourhood. Later on, great buildings of public housing (even of 6-7 floors) were built, which mostly characterize the San Pio X district, from Matteotti Street towards the south (Research diary, June 2018).

In 1989 the municipal administration approved yet another social housing project, which would have created 130 new apartments, occupying, however, one of the last remaining green areas in the neighbourhood, of 12.000 square meters and site of the former Duca d'Aosta barracks. The building project was strongly opposed by the population of the neighbourhood that, after many years, managed to raise awareness of the local government and stop the project in May 2004. The residents carried out the proposal for the construction of an underground car park that would also redevelop the green area above. Exactly this area is now one of the two parks in the neighbourhood, redeveloped in recent years. The park is equipped with benches, some placed in pairs with a table in the middle, a playground for children with rocker-swings, slides, climbing wall and swings, a beach volleyball court, a ping pong table, just planted young trees and a painted mural complete the picture (Research diary, June 2018). The park is frequented in the afternoon mostly by parents with school-age children (6-11 years) and teenagers (12-17 years). The other park in the neighbourhood is called Maso Ginocchio and is located at the intersection of Monte Baldo Street and Giusti Street. During the morning, it acts as a passage for pedestrians and bicycles or for people with dog; There are also people alone or in pairs, who sit on benches, just to rest or socialize. In the afternoon, especially at school closing time, the park is populated

by children with parents and/or grandparents who take advantage of the installed games and of a skating ring (Research diary, June 2018).

San Pio X Street is a two-way street, while all the crossing roads are one-way. On both street sides, there are pavements and flower beds with hedges and trees. On the right side, proceeding from south to north, there is also a bicycle lane. The lane is part of a project started in 2012 on the proposal of the San Giuseppe-Santa Chiara district that integrates the neighbourhood into a network of connections between the city parks. The project of the cycle path was made possible by the assignment by the Italian Railway Network to the municipal administration of the areas underlying the arches of the Valsugana railway (local railway line in Trentino). As the arches exactly cut San Pio X Street, their degradation affected the quality of life of the whole neighbourhood. Thanks to this cycle mobility project, the Municipality of Trento has finally been able to redevelop the area (Mosconi 2015).

On November 4, 2014, Maria Rosa, president of an association based in the neighbourhood, shares an article on bookcrossing as a neighbourhood practice, asking if anyone wants to help her realizing this dream. The logic of bookcrossing consists in the freedom of each person to take a book from the small library and to deposit, at the same time or later, another book that will then enter the circuit of exchanged books. Many are interested and willing to participate, so a heated discussion develops in the comments under the post. Someone suggests using old recycled furniture. Valentina creates an event on Facebook so that those interested can discuss it there. Six people take an active part in the discussion by publishing and commenting on the contents, while another seventeen display without taking part in it. A week later, the initial structure for the book house has already been created. On November 16, 2014, Valentina and Eugenio invite at lunch anyone³¹ willing to contribute and complete the book house or to collaborate in the drafting of the flyer and the information leaflet:

«Yes, but there was a very cool lunch, 30 people were here where I was doing the poster to put up, here they thought about the contents of the poster. Down there others were decorating and making the little house, here someone thought about the contents to be transmitted in a document, there I did the graphic of the poster» (Valentina, RMt, while pointing the places of the house where these things were going on).

«Everyone gave his contribution according to what he wanted to do. Because if you try to do something coordinated, where everyone does everything, you can't do it. It is also wrong because if it has to start from the bottom and you want to make everyone do everything, you need coordination and you need someone above you» (Eugenio, RMt).

³¹ With number restrictions due to the capacity of the house.

The initial idea of bookcrossing activates a commoning process, characterized by collective actions and social processes that contribute to creating the commons itself. In this case, the commons is certainly the house for books, but not only. In fact, Valentina's enthusiasm in describing that lunch is due, in reality, to the added value that the house of books assumes, that is the value inherent in the pleasure of being with someone who shares the same place of residence to create and manage a resource from which everyone can benefit. The commons, in this case, is formed by both the resource and the production process of the resource itself. The moment lived by the SSt in this phase recalls exactly the words of Stravrides, when he describes the idea of expanding commoning: «an expanding community of commoner need not be envisaged as a well-organized machine that can integrate new parts into its always-improving functioning; rather it can be understood as an artifice of collective bricolage which people always mend, and even enjoy in doing so, and which is being shaped and used according to their needs and dreams» (Stavrides 2016, 158).

During the same period, as Maria Rosa did before, other workers of third sector bodies or representatives of the public administration who gravitate to the San Pio X district join the SSt group. Both Camilla and Gemma, for example, already nominated as members of the group, belong, respectively, to a cooperative and a school in the San Pio X area. Terenzio collaborates with an association based in the neighbourhood and Eugenio works for a social cooperative as educator in primary and secondary schools: these subjects of the Third Sector, therefore, get to know the SSt and, indirectly thanks to the presence of the singular members, approach the group. The chairwoman of a San Giuseppe-Santa Chiara district commission proposes the SSt members to publish their own article on the district magazine, explaining the identity and goals of the Social Street even to those who do not use Facebook. This proposal follows the “real” meeting of the previous day between Valentina, Antonio and the district president. The latter is enthusiastic about the birth of the group and willing to find concrete and achievable answers to the residents' interests. An alderman of the municipal council – at the time alderman of the Roads and Parks, Gardens and Heritage Service – residing in San Pio X notices the bookcrossing initiative on the Facebook group and personally contacts the SSt through a private message, to communicate his willingness in supporting them, having understood their social and collective purposes. This contact proves to be fundamental in the installation of the bookcrossing point and in the activation of citizenship practices that the public administration and the citizens mutually shape. In this way, an informal network of

acquaintances is created, some online and others offline, which connects different actors of the urban reality, starting from residents up to aldermen of the Municipality, passing through the district – the administrative level closest to the citizen – and the Third Sector actors.

In one of the discussions that took place about the bookshelf, a member of the SSt mentions the municipal regulation “Adopt a flowerbed” (*Adotta un'aiuola*). This regulation was born in 1998 when the Municipality of Trento was already engaged in involving citizens in the management of commons. In that year, the Parks and Gardens Technical Office, belonging to the Environment Department, promoted Adopt a flowerbed with the aim of involving citizens in the care of a small public green area. Interested citizens could indicate a suitable spot for the creation of a flower-bed which over time they would take care of. The realization of the flowerbed was completely at the expense of the Municipality while the citizen's task was limited to the subsequent maintenance. Unfortunately, on that occasion, only two flowerbeds were realized, which were abandoned after some time (Mosconi 2015). Given the almost zero response to this regulation, the Municipality suspended the initiative until 2014³², when it activated a second version.

This time there are eight sign-ups and at the end of 2014/beginning of 2015, they are waiting to be formalized through the issue of a standardized collaborative procedure that brings the citizen closer to the management of public affairs (Mosconi 2015). When Valentina and Antonio meet the president of the district, among other topics they also discuss the possibility of referring to this regulation to install their book house. As a matter of fact, as above mentioned, it was the alderman registered with the Facebook group who provides the Social Streeters with the right contact to complete the work: the manager of the Parks and Gardens Technical Office. Once the book house is finished, the technical manager goes to verify its stability and security, deciding to provide it with an adequate base and roof at the expense of the Municipality. To make it possible to use the same regulation as for Adopt a flowerbed, the SSt members and the technical manager decide on the placement of the book house close to a flowerbed on San Pio X Street. The book house is installed on February 4, 2015, exactly three months after the launch of the idea. The Technical Office takes care of the installation and also supplies plastic gloves for the removal of litter, cigarette butts and anything else from the surrounding area. The

³² In 2010, the Parks and Gardens Technical Office passed to the Roads and Parks Department and the change renewed the desire to involve citizens in the management of urban green spaces.

Social Streeters attach a poster to the doors of the house with an explanation of the agreement made with the Municipality and an invitation to all citizens to take care of the surrounding area; at its foot, they add a map of the neighbourhood. The house name is PIOvonoLibri, chosen with a survey on the Facebook wall to recall the name of the street and the neighbourhood³³.



Fig. 4.3 – Street cleaning at the ViviAmoSanPiox event, 02-03/04/2016. The book house is also visible, placed between a bench and a fountain, and next to a flowerbed along the road. I personally took part to this event and that was an opportunity to get acquainted with some of the most active group members, to start making contacts with Third Sector actors and to observe the neighbourhood and its dynamics.

Source: Facebook group Residents in San Pio X Street and surroundings, Trento – Social Street.

The installation of the house represents the concrete expression of the activism that exploded starting from the initiative of some residents and users of the area, who with an awareness of their role as citizens have responsibly committed to proposing an idea, realizing it and making it available to the city. Furthermore, their engagement is recognized by the local government, which is committed to adapting an existing administrative tool to meet their needs. In the following months, the book house meets a great success: many books come and go; mostly the elderly in the neighbourhood make use of it; Gemma takes one of her school classes to visit it, explaining to the children how it works and the reasons for the installation. Residents who engaged in the construction of the house propose to the online group a neighbourhood cleaning³⁴ in order to raise

³³ PIOvono Libri means literally “it rains books”, but the Italian verb itself comprises the street name Pio.

³⁴ The law of the Autonomous Province of Trento (chap. IV, art. 16, paragraph 2) establishes that the walking surface of sidewalks, entrances, passages and subways of respective pertinence is the responsibility

public awareness on the issue of land cleaning and to encourage participation in the shared maintenance of the flowerbed. Despite this, the practice of caring for the book house does not spread among the inhabitants of the area. Some do not even understand the function of gloves: Mosconi (2015) reports her conversation with two resident women, who think that the gloves are useful to open the doors of the house without splintering the skin or to touch books with greater hygiene.

During the interview with Valentina and Eugenio, while we talk about the post-installation, they themselves reflect on the process that led to the birth of the little house:

«Because we went off like a bomb, that is we started on: ok let's do the little house, let's build it. We weren't asking ourselves: where do we put it? How do we organize ourselves? Let's do it first: I take the piece of furniture, carpenters, cut it. Here we did it, at home. Let's have dinner, let's see how to beautify it, how to make it» (Eugenio, RMt).

During the commoning process, which culminated in the lunch with thirty people at Eugenio's place, the Social Streeters did not give any consideration about how to manage the process itself and how to organize the care and the management of the book house once installed. The community itself that gave birth to the little house has very loose and blurred borders. No rules have been established for its use and its reproduction as a commons; and not even sanctions for those who do not use it properly, damaging the community. In the following years, the informality and randomness of the commoning process causes episodes of over-exploitation and vandalism of the PIOvonoLibri house (see p. 139-140).

While the little house is being built and then installed, in December 2014 another path within the SSt starts: the participation as a group of citizens in a call for ideas launched by a social cooperative based in the neighbourhood and active throughout the city of Trento. The S. cooperative, on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary, wants to renew its mission and its activities, finding out other possible channels of trade and collaborations on the territory. The SSt presents the re-Discover Community project (*ri-Scoprire Comunità*), which simply consists in spreading the Social Street model and process, or experimenting with new ways of sharing goods, services and skills by networking the benefits and profits of this exchange. After the presentation of the ideas, the cooperative has the intention of following the proponents in a training and incubation course from January to April 2015, during which expert consultants work alongside them in modifying and developing the initial draft in a real project. In June 2015, four of the

of the owners or conductors of the buildings. In practice for several reasons this rule is neither respected nor enforced, causing neglect of public spaces (Mosconi 2015).

initial ideas win the competition, earning a cash budget for the project and a temporary work contract for the person who would carry out the project. Participation in this call for ideas and the training course organized by the cooperative introduce the SSt in new dynamics and trigger a new phase of its journey.

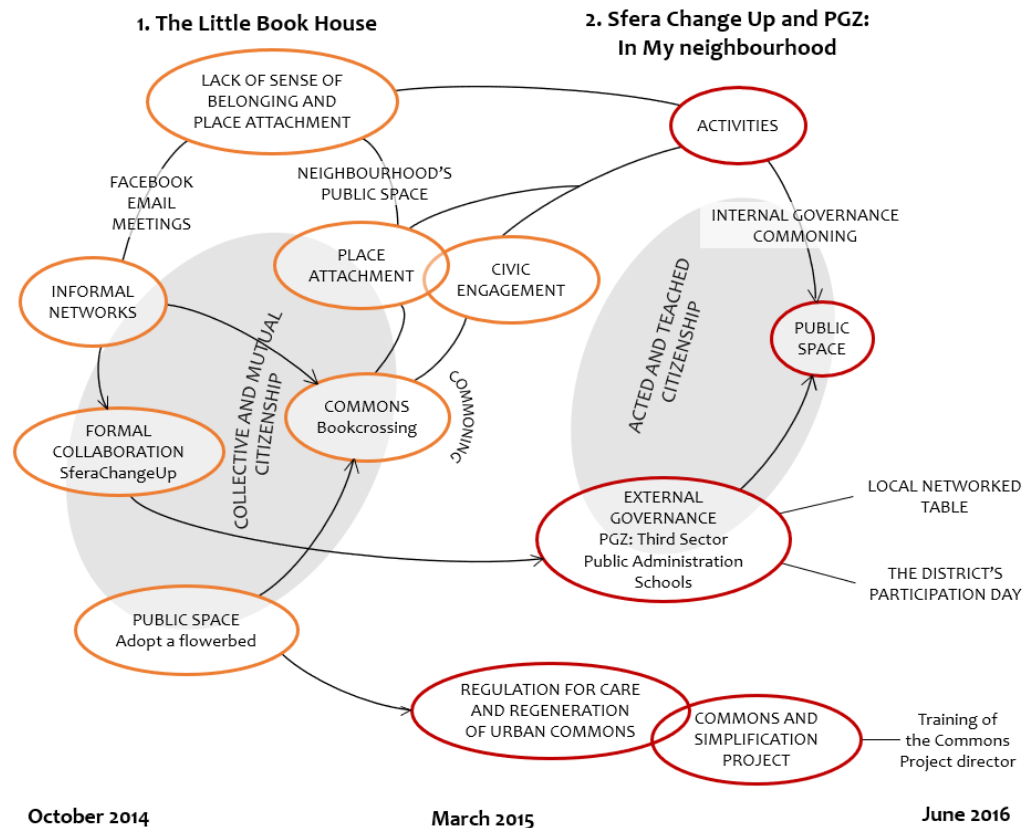


Fig. 4.4 – Representation of Step 1 and Step 2 of the SSt development.

Source: personal elaboration.

4.2. SferaChangeUp and PGZ “In My Neighbourhood: Participatory Regeneration”

The choice to participate in the call for ideas – named SferaChangeUp – gives rise to discussions within the restricted group of administrators. Valentina and Eugenio report to me the two points of view when I interview them in April 2016. According to Valentina the decision to participate in this path was not shared with the rest of the group; on the contrary, it was Eugenio’s personal initiative that, even if taken in the general interest, risks responding to profit-oriented values of the cooperative instead of aiming to socialization and community wellness:

«Along the process, other cooperatives have cooperated and we have entered into relations in a completely different way and truly from inside because they believe in the values of

the thing [...] it is beautiful, in my opinion...these logics, because Camilla [of the cooperative F] lives here, she invited us to the conference, she activated a project where we acted as a communication channel, but she mostly activated it, she is the very active one when we make activities, she tries to involve people in her neighbourhood, in her block of flats. The same thing happens with the cooperative R: they took over the Spice Garden through Adopt a flowerbed, just the way we installed the book house. [...] So this logic here of the cooperative S, I actually never saw it favourably, just because regarding the process, if we talk about the process, where is the relationship? [...] you probably do it because you have a personal interest as a cooperative and not so much because you believe in it and in its value» (Valentina, RMt).

Eugenio for his part sees in the collaboration with the cooperative S the possibility of creating a network in the territory that any neighbourhood resident benefits from. Furthermore, establishing a more consolidated relationship with a cooperative allows the SSt, which is an informal group of citizens without legal form, to be more recognized by institutional actors and, in case, to be able to receive money and use it for their own activities without spending the group members' personal resources.

«The cooperative offered a prize on the project and then offered a work grant [...] that work grant was not taken by anybody from social street and became a budget, which was not even cashed by social street, but was stopped by S also for invoices [...] In this case S acted as figurehead, if you want, it lent its legal form. [...] I have always conceived it as a channel, as an object that must be exploited, not as a subject of which you are part or you aren't and there is a hierarchy then to take decisions. It is an opportunity in my opinion that must be networked, available to the people who also live or pass through the neighbourhood » (Eugenio, RMt).

The presence of money increases the conflict within the group: part of it, in fact, is convinced that advantages can be obtained, in terms of social and community wealth, even without the use of a budget, simply starting from relationships based on gift and reciprocity. The future perspective behind Eugenio's initiative consists, instead, in the activation of a fund of money that, once created, will be available to the neighbourhood:

«The idea is to create a board, not just of citizens, but also of organizations, because I believe in the strength of the network, so the cooperatives S, F and R, the association G, the District, the interested people...the Social Services Centre...in various ways are interested in the territory and can also have the skills to carry out certain projects. The need is expressed by the community, the network gives the possibility to respond to it, the economic resources are available, there is no more need of someone who asks you, makes

you, brings you...that is, at that point the need really comes from the bottom, finding how to do it and the resource to do it» (Eugenio, RMt).

Therefore, two different ideas grow for the governance of commons and of the community: a more informal one, based on sociability, on the strength of relationships between people and on the deep connection between individuals and the territory; another more structured, based on a networked organization among various urban actors, who manage money and articulated projects.

The idea of community budget is one of the topics discussed during a couple of meetings open to citizenship, organized by the SSt at the headquarters of an association in the neighbourhood. During these meetings, the neighbourhood community discusses which identity the Social Street of San Pio X must have and which path it should follow. A total of 15 people participates, some still unknown to the “active group”. Eventually, a document summarizes the outcome of the meetings: the objective of the group is to create a Social Street structure as a tool that makes the participation of the single person superfluous and in the future will serve anyone eager to be involved. In addition to these two meetings, from March 2015 until the end of the year, the SSt participates first in a conference organized by the cooperative F and dedicated to projects that build communities starting from the bottom up, from relationships and trust and, later, to a short course on participation promoted by the volunteer service centre (*Centro Servizi Volontariato*). It also organizes a Social Happy Hour and collaborates with the communication committee of the District for the success of the Veneto Street Festival³⁵. It shares and publicizes, through both the Facebook group and word of mouth, the redevelopment project of a green area along the Fersina stream by the cooperative R, that has taken care of it thanks to a pact signed with the municipal administration.

As for the care of the group’s common resources and the commoning process, the activities are always organized by a small group of inhabitants of the neighbourhood. Looking at the SSt Facebook group, it is clear that the administrators’ attempts to involve other members in events organization and in participation processes find no or very few answers. Most of the posts, concerning community activities, are in fact published and commented on by the most active members. Other posts published on the group by members, mainly concern the sharing of activities organized by other subjects in the city and the exchange of objects or information on the neighbourhood. The Facebook group

³⁵ Neighbourhood festival organized every year by the District of San Giuseppe-Santa Chiara in collaboration with urban stakeholders and inhabitants.

itself suffers from misuses by some members. One woman, in particular, uses it to criticize the development of the neighbourhood and offend some sections of the population, while on the contrary she never takes part in meetings and never proposes a valid and positive solution to the problems she finds in the area. In turn, Valentina, Eugenio, Marisa, Walter and other active members oppose these interventions, inviting her to come out and collaborate with them, without result. The books house and the near flowerbed are still managed by the small group that had been involved in the construction and installation, as they cannot count on the help of other inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

In June 2015, at the end of the SferaChangeUp training course, the SSt project ranks second in the competition, winning the budget offered by the cooperative S. The SSt aims to get even more in touch with the territorial actors of the neighbourhood, to activate relations among citizens, in particular between the younger and the historical generations resident in the San Pio X district, and to raise awareness of active citizenship and civic initiatives among young people and families. From this planning phase and through the support that the SSt receives from the cooperative S, another project is born: the participation in the Zone Youth Plan (PGZ), with the project “In my Neighbourhood: participated re-qualifications” (*Nel mio quartiere: ri-generazioni partecipate*). The Zone Youth Plans, as defined by the Provincial Law 5/2007 of the Autonomous Province of Trento, are privileged opportunities aiming at the design of territorial youth policies through discussion tables. Young people and local actors – public administration, third sector bodies, companies – co-design actions, proposed by the young people themselves, which intend to train citizens and to develop skills throughout experiences³⁶. The planning preceding the presentation of the plan develops between October and November 2015, the project is submitted in February 2016 and a month later the funding is confirmed. According to the initial program, the organization of the activities must take place between March and April 2016 and the project has to be realized between April and July 2016. The general objective of the SSt project is to promote knowledge and enhancement of local identity and territory; to be obtained by:

1. Knowing the history, the socio-demographic and structural characteristics and the evolution over time of the context in which the participants live and/or relate and take part in the neighbourhood life.

³⁶ <http://bit.ly/2ZvCOhg>.

2. Raising awareness on the issue of re-use/redevelopment of commons in order to develop learning, participation and sense of belonging of the participants in their own territory.
3. Acquiring competences of active citizenship, in order to develop a sense of social responsibility among children and young people, and of responsibility towards their own area of belonging, learning good citizenship practices.
4. Developing knowledge on the uses and habits that characterized the neighbourhood in the past through inter-generational exchange, through the participation of some elderly people from the neighbourhood itself.
5. Forming a social network by reinforcing existing synergies and creating new ways in order to give citizens more opportunities to take over and manage the commons.

These goals translate into multiple activities, including educational paths in the local primary and secondary schools; training sessions open to citizens on the themes of creating community; moments of inter-generational exchange between students and the elderly, involved by the cooperative F; practical care of the territory, such as street cleaning and the installation of plants in the flower beds under the arches of San Pio X Street; filming all stages of the process into a document to be presented at the final moment; self-financing lottery; artistic contest for the regeneration of a public wall of the neighbourhood, through a participatory vote³⁷ of the mural to be carried out in collaboration with a collective of artists.

Thanks to the collaboration, now formalized, between the SSt and the cooperative S, and to all other relationships established by the SSt in the district, in this period a network table is being formed at regular intervals. Many actors from the neighbourhood participate in the table: the SSt, cooperatives, associations, the District, the Social Service Centre, the parish. The purpose of the meetings is to share and collectively develop the projects of individual subjects and of collaborative paths such as the PGZ, concerning activities for and about the neighbourhood. For the realization of the PGZ, the SSt directly involves the schools of the comprehensive Institute Trento 3, a collective of artists, the cooperative S, the cooperative F and, not least, the Municipality of Trento, which finances the project and follows the group in the planning phase. From 16 to 19 June 2016 the mural is created

³⁷ 700 people take part in the vote, contacted in different ways: the children involved in the project for didactical paths and, consequently, parents and teachers; the elderly of the neighbourhood through the cooperative X; the Facebook group members of the SSt; other residents through word of mouth and leaflets in the neighbourhood.

(fig. 4.5); on the last day, in collaboration with the District, the project is presented to the citizens with moments of conviviality and socialization.



Fig. 4.5 – Final result of the redevelopment process of a public wall in the neighbourhood: the mural painted by the group of artists, after the collection of ideas among school children, the elderly participating in the project and the population of the neighbourhood and after the participated vote of the preliminary sketch to be realized.

Source: Facebook Group Residents in San Pio X Street and surroundings, Trento – Social Street.

In this phase, the SSt gradually emerges as an urban actor, recognizable and recognized by the other socio-political actors of the District, and not only. As a subject bound from its birth to the place of origin in the neighbourhood, it takes its responsibilities towards the *civis*, developing the initial civic engagement in a commitment that extends to the rest of the local population: the objective of the SSt is, in fact, to have an impact on the territory of the neighbourhood, making its inhabitants and visitors aware of the care of common resources and of the idea of active citizenship. The administrators and the most active members of the SSt, together with the other actors who get in touch with their activities (cooperatives X, Y, Z, some neighbourhood associations, the District) consider the public spaces of the neighbourhood – the streets, the sidewalks and bike lanes, the parks, the parking areas, the benches, the arches and the underlying flowerbeds, the walls – as commons. The co-design for the PGZ, the network tables, the informal collaborations of those who took part in the organization of educational paths or in the painting of the mural, the formal collaborations between the SSt and the cooperative S and those between the SSt and the Municipality of Trento reflect extended and networked governance and

commoning practices, which have characterized the managing of the neighbourhood commons.

Parallel to the SSt course, the city government of Trento, both at the district level and at the municipal level, is trying to make changes in some aspects of the governance of urban public spaces. In May 2016, the Participation, Commons and Information Commission for the San Giuseppe-Santa Chiara District organizes a participation day:

«At a local level, where you get in touch with the citizens, the first thing you have to do is listening to them. Just consider my experience: I've encountered situations in which, in a structured way, you can develop participatory processes. And if it's done properly, they result usable and work, becoming credible also for the administration. So this event was designed with the purpose of asking citizens...we had the external support of competent people...however, a series of priorities came out on what to do. I don't say all of them, but most of these are in the pipeline» (Mauro, PAt).

The final report³⁸ of the day summarizes the Commission's intent: to get out of institutions by bringing them into the community, sharing the choices of the territory government with the citizens, absolute protagonists of a municipality, so that the community becomes an enrichment and an integration to the work of the District Council. Mauro (Pat), one of the main organizers of the day, tells me about the participation of more or less forty people, residents or visitors for work or other interests of the District from the SSt Valentina and Camilla take place to the event. There was no topic defined in advance but the participants were given the opportunity to discuss and confront each other to bring out the needs of the neighbourhood, dividing then the emerged issues into thematic tables. The identified needs and the consequently proposed solutions mainly concern the urban planning and social sphere. The first contains all the most practical problems related to mobility in the neighbourhood; the second one includes instances of lack of socialization and liveliness in the neighbourhood, especially for the elderly population. The final document of the participation day reports the forwarded proposals, without summarizing decisions taken at the end of the day or without telling what interventions have been developed. Mauro tells me about a municipal-owned auditorium, whose inadequacy had been emphasized during the Participatory Day, with some ideas on how to improve it. Due to the priorities of the municipal council, this work had not yet begun, but in summer 2018, it is included in the scheduled agenda of public works. In the following years the Participatory Day was no longer organized:

³⁸ The report can be downloaded from the site: <http://bit.ly/2Dy6pwO>.

«[...] for two reasons. One, because...let's say...that served as a knowledge base. Two because in any case, we have organized other more local initiatives always on the territory. That one served us as a work base, that was the idea. Probably halfway we could...we could have done another, but...let's say that the motivations were sinking and the *effort* was growing» (Mauro, PAt).

Speaking with residents of San Pio X, both members of the SSSt and non-members, I learnt that the District is known and used mainly for moments of conviviality (parties, small concerts) or for educational/informational meetings on various topics (a resident lady participated in meetings aimed at teenagers' parents). In addition to the extraordinary Participatory day, every year the District coordinates meetings open to citizens for the organization of the neighbourhood party in Veneto Street:

«I went a couple of times for the party organization, the Participatory party that we have done in the park. It was beautiful as an idea, as an initiative because it gave the idea of this horizontal participation» (Agata, RMt).

Regarding the Municipality, in March 2015, the city council approves the Regulation on Collaboration between Citizens and the City for the Care and Regeneration of Urban Commons (*Regolamento sulla collaborazione tra cittadini ed amministrazione per la cura e la rigenerazione dei beni comuni urbani*).

«This thing was influenced by some good practices that the citizens had had, in particular in the Argentario district – of which you may have heard – they dedicated a day to small maintenance interventions in the district. This thing had then been picked up a little by...some districts had started to move on this theme. So with the vote, then the acceptance of the regulation has become structural because when there is a regulation, the administration identifies some goals and somehow the matter begins» (Elena, PAt).

The 2015-2020³⁹ program guidelines document states that the administration's intention is «to reaffirm a public administration policy inspired by a concrete idea of democracy, participation and inclusion in decisions, dialogue with citizens, consciousness of responsibility and reciprocity, quality of services as a factor of competitiveness, participation, subsidiarity and simplification» (p. 30). The City also undertakes to:

- Facilitate citizens' participation in civic life and in the management of commons;
- Experiment the assignment of some "sensitive" and risky places to associations or groups of citizens, also studying forms of incentive;

³⁹ The 2015-2020 program guidelines can be consulted on the site: www.comune.trento.it/Comune/Documenti/Programmazione-ebilanci/Programmazione/Linee-programmatiche-di-mandato.

- Enhance the role of the Districts, which are the Municipal Administration's terminals closest to the territory:

«The Districts are part of this process, they can also be proponents if they are able to carry out this activity, in any case, they are involved in the co-planning phase, in some cases, they are considered involved. In any case, they are asked to evaluate opportunities on their territory, so they can also participate by saying, the proposal is fine for us, so go ahead, or you need to make some assessments, or in short...some actively participate in the co-design. Since our Districts are so many, each one may even have different sensitivities with respect to this issue» (Adriana, PAt);

- Establish permanent places of confrontation with citizens, with young people, with groups, associations, committees, to share choices and actions aimed at regaining places felt to be distant and perhaps unsafe;
- Strengthen the removal service of writings, graffiti and illegal billboards, both on public and private properties, raising awareness, empowering and involving citizens on issues of decorum and safety as commons.

In order to achieve these objectives, in June 2015, the Municipality of Trento establishes the Commons and Simplification Project. The office becomes operational in October and incorporates the previous Public Relations Office. Between May and June 2016, the Project manager participates in the first edition of the Italian School for Commons (SIBEC), promoted by the Laboratory for Subsidiarity (LABSUS), European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprise (EURICSE) and University of the Studies of Trento. The course aims to train local government civil servants so that they obtain the necessary tools to interact positively with active citizens, promoting the shared care of tangible and intangible commons in the area.

«Do you know what the added value is? I understood it later, I didn't understand it right away. That is...you have two subjects: the citizen alone, in association, in groups, however outside the administration. Now if you want to set up a pact of this kind you need a dialogue where you understand each other and you agree with each other in some way. So the administration throws down some nice bounds that has raised over the years to defend itself because we live in a world where if the administration makes even a slight mistake there is the open appeal, alas, on any little thing [...] On the other hand there are citizens who think that it is enough to say one thing and this can be done, it also becomes culturally interesting for them to find out how many and which snares the administration has [...] and to discover that these have been put there not to hurt but to protect citizens. So I see this as a great value because at the end of the pact, if we manage to put it up, I have the administration that has understood that the citizens are not all the same outside, there are also those who

are willing to roll up their sleeves and do, and it is also right to let them do it, they will not do as well as you, but it is a way to make them responsible. On the other hand, I also have citizens who are beginning to understand that people don't say no for the sake of saying no, but because there is a procedure» (Elena, Pat).

Furthermore, to make the regulation even more concrete, the Municipality has defined four collaboration initiatives, which simplify the participation of citizens in the areas of intervention deemed more frequent: a) Adopt a flowerbed (*Adotta un'aiuola*), for occasional or continuous care of small green spaces⁴⁰; b) I also take care of my neighbourhood (*Al mio quartiere ci penso anch'io*), for the continuous cleaning of public spaces and places in the city (roads, sidewalks, parking lots, free spaces), or for occasional activities in your neighbourhood (spring cleaning); c) I also take care of my school (*Alla mia scuola ci penso anch'io*), to stimulate teachers, students and parents to think of school as a commons and therefore as a gym where they can learn the principles of care, maintenance and responsible management of collectively usable spaces; d) Urban revamping (*Ritocchi urbani*), for the cleaning of writings, stickers and graffiti from the street furniture (street lamps, benches, fences, public walls).

The division into minor regulations is possible thanks to the collaboration, not always easy and without frictions, between the various offices at the head of individual services: in order, the Road and Park Management Service (Parks and Gardens Office), the Environment Service, the buildings Management Service and the Commons and Simplification Project.

«There are also some sectors a little more...people with some more difficulties, but it is clearly a new way, it adds up to a whole series of existing needs. Then maybe it happens often in a context, at times when we are maybe even a little busy with everyday life and therefore we really need a...also a particular motivation, well...but basically, we see that it is also a question of sensitivity, a long but not immediate process. We try to do as much as possible, to solve the coordination and organization aspects, but some things are responsibility of the proper offices, and therefore we try to make up for even personal relationships of involvement and motivation» (Adriana, PAt).

⁴⁰ This instrument incorporates the regulation Adopt a flowerbed already activated in 1998 (see p. 10).

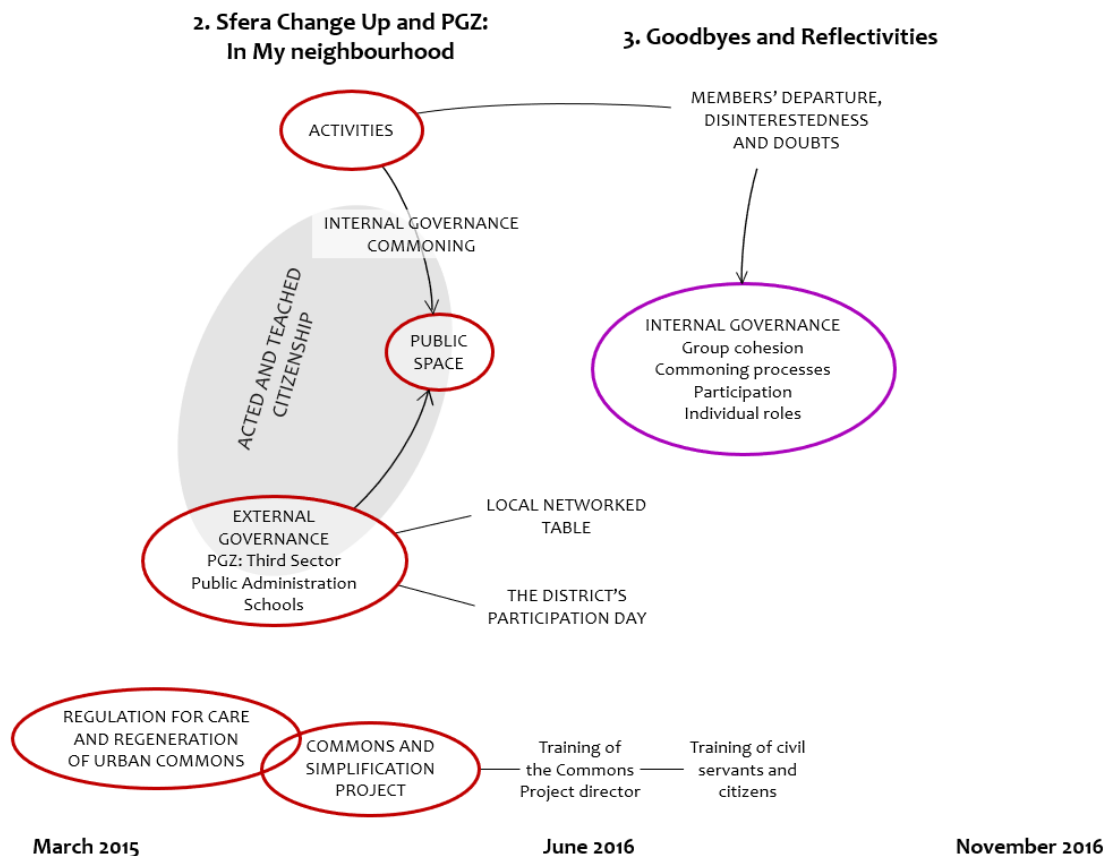


Fig. 4.6 – Representation of Step 2 and Step 3 of the SSSt development.

Source: personal elaboration.

4.3. Goodbyes and reflectivity

The end of the project In My Neighbourhood: participated re-qualifications (*Nel mio quartiere: rigenerazioni partecipate*) puts an end to the second phase of the SSSt. The civic engagement and consequently the practices of commoning and citizenship activated so far by the group members come to a stop. Two of the group founders move away from Trento for business reasons, greeting the SSSt and taking stock of what this experience has meant for them:

«Dear friends, those of you who got to know me personally know that – after four intense years – I am moving to Germany. I recently started a doctorate at the University of Siegen. In fact, I write these few lines to greet all the members of this fantastic group, the ones I know, the ones I don't know, the new ones and the "old ones". Social Street has been to me a wonderful adventure, a project, a lifestyle, "love and hate" – participation is never easy stuff – energy, creativity, passion, dedication. I will miss Trento, San Pio X, the meetings, the aperitives, the many chats, the dreams...the two years spent with this group

will forever occupy a special place in my memory» (Valentina, RMt; from the Facebook group Residents in San Pio X and surroundings).

«Goodbye, everybody! A special thanks to anyone who made yesterday's party possible [*referred to the final event of the PGZ*], the PGZ and the Social Street San Pio X. With the conclusion of the project "In My Neighbourhood: participated re-qualifications" my experience in this social street also ends. Basically, also because my stay in Trento is coming to an end and I don't know where the road will take me, but probably far from here. I also think that this Social Street now needs new faces and ideas. In these two very interesting years I saw the group grow among many ups and downs [...]» (Terenzio, RMt; from the Facebook group Residents in San Pio X and surroundings).

Even the energy of those who remain weakens and the spare time of the most active members is reduced for work or personal reasons: Marisa graduated in the spring 2016 and begins searching for a job, while carrying out an apprenticeship in the meantime; Camilla has a son; Eugenio withdraws a bit, perhaps due to fatigue after having given so much to the SSt. Many reflections have been made on this period lived by the SSt. Many members have questioned themselves or collectively about the group's development methods, its processes and dynamics and the network created around it. They tell me about their reflections two years later, surely with a consciousness and an overall view that at the time were not so strong. For the reconstruction of this period, I mostly used, in addition to the interviews, the private chat of the SSt administrators' group, in which I was welcomed in January 2017 and whose chronology I could trace back to June 13th 2016. My presence in the chat was evident to all the members, but silent, since after having thanked and greeted them, I had the role of observer, without ever intervening in the conversation.

In the words of the interviewed members of the SSt, I noticed disappointment about the difficulty of involving the resident population of the neighbourhood:

«I was expecting this in part, but what disappoints you, later on, is the fact that the initial group was that one, besides that there wasn't much participation. I expected more agreement. When we launched, instead there wasn't so much » (Agata, RMt).

The reasons are various. Certainly, in part, the quality of life in Trentino is relevant, which – in some cases, more, in others less – is of a high kind. Another reason is the personality of its inhabitants, who maybe don't have particular needs and are accustomed to having them satisfied by all the services, so they are self-sufficient and closed in their own relational circles.

«I must say that Trento is perhaps a bit like that. A bit of a mountain town, a city that was far worse before university. So I don't think it's just a matter of San Pio X neighbourhood,

I think it's a fairly generalized thing by now. But you know, wellness doesn't make you look for something else» (Gemma, RMt/TSt).

Secondly, the presence of a small group of already established administrators may discourage others from taking the initiative and carrying out activities of their own interest. Over time, some proposals have arrived, but if the administrators do not engage to support the proponent in the organization and in the success of the activity, then even the latter does not keep staying active:

«But I notice: either we move ourselves or...but in my opinion we actually have a bit of an influence on the ideas of others, because if we say “yes I come and we do it”, then the thing moves, if we don't the person finds it difficult to look for the group of people. But then again, we are already a group. In reality [...] it is not so possible to open up in this sense, in my opinion, it is something we need to think about a little» (Valentina, RMt).

Furthermore, the young age of the most active members is likely to have discouraged adult or elderly residents from taking part in organizing activities or proposing their own. The difference between generations, in fact, does not only concern the lifestyle, but also the ways in which people act their citizenship and bring personal resources into the field: the SSt administrators had difficulty in spreading a style of action based on the network and on horizontality, because many older members saw them as the driving force of the group – the leaders – and expected more directives in their behaviour.

«Also, because among the...let's say...middle-aged people, they are convinced that when you hold meetings, you propose something and you decide whether to do or not to do something. Now...until you change this kind of mentality, it's really difficult, because if there's that kind of setting, then it's difficult to change it, so maybe sometimes you propose something, some other times you let them talk, maybe...if you propose, then, of course, the ideas come out. But if you...that is, once a meeting was held, I was not there, however, according to Terenzio, he arrived there with no proposal and there were all ladies of the area, a little older, and they were stunned because he had nothing to discuss» (Marisa, RMt).

From the words of the Third Sector actors, instead, it emerged that the informality of the SSt, if on the one hand is an added value, on the other can create disorganization, slowness and ambiguity in making decisions and communicating them outside, especially to the other subjects with whom they have collaborated:

«I personally find a difficulty, now that I am the one to interface with the guys of the Social Street, and that's the one you were talking about. The fact of not having a hierarchy, a directive, or in any case there are no fixed assembly moments where you discuss, you arrive at a synthesis then you continue, but it is all very informal, dependent on the individual

initiative, this is difficult when you need to organize a fairly big event like the one at the end of June» (Maddalena, TSt).

«Since [*Eugenio*] was vague and never specified important things, such as hours, money, etc. I said: “we can do a contest, but is it interesting?”, and he: “don’t worry, you’ll have fun”. And this led me to not really understand who he was, what he was doing. Then, at the first meetings to which he invited me, I thought, “we are in a very bad situation”: they can’t talk to each other, one says something, the other says another, they don’t understand each other, it’s hard for us and them to understand each other. Because if there isn’t a reference person who is really a person...I don’t know. It was really jeopardizing...which scared me to death [*speaking of the informality of the group*]. Because we are too, but as we discuss and talk for hours and hours and it is not a neighbourhood thing, it is smaller, it is simpler that we meet more often. We are friends, every evening we meet at home talking about such things...with a whole neighbourhood it’s a good thing if you meet once a month [...] this thing has had big consequences, very much, we were all crazy, because we didn’t understand, and first you say something then you say something else, you do not explain things to us» (Luciana, TSt).

I find that the aspect of close personal and friendly relationships after the creation of the SSt must not be overlooked. While the project collaborations have mushroomed, it seems instead that friendships have not developed even among the most active members.

«In the beginning, a winning thing, in my opinion, was the fact that we [*Valentina and Eugenio*] were together [*as a couple*], and anyway we are friends even now, with Marisa too. The fact that you already know each other and everything, that was a bit of a winning card in doing things, in carrying them out. One thing I realized, I tell you personally, is that I’m not friends with many people in the Social Street, except for him [*Eugenio*] and Marisa» (Valentina, RMt).

An episode that struck me particularly happens between September and October 2016. In the administrators’ chat, answering the proposal of a member to meet for an aperitif, two other members say they are willing to meet if the reason is organizing some aspect of the next party on Veneto Street, but if the reason is only to chat informally, they prefer to postpone having not much free time.

At the end of the great projects, therefore, together with the departure of those who worked harder to create a sense of community and belonging to the place, precisely because of their previous “extraneousness” to the context, the group’s glue also failed. Since the birth of the SSt, that pure pleasure of meeting and sharing daily practices has not developed, and consequently could not keep the group active. No sociability was created among the members, which would allow them to remain engaged in the activities

of the SSt. This factor, together with the lack of needs shared by the population of the neighbourhood, has prevented the formation of a cohesive community, which, first of all, is committed on the basis of shared values and, then, take action for the care and reproduction of common resources. To confirm this, even on the SSt Facebook page, in this period, the sharing of activities and events promoted by other subjects and developed independently by the SSt begin to increase; posts about meetings, projects, events organized by the SSt members decrease considerably.

Moreover, after having gone through a period of intense weaving, the links between the SSt and the socio-political actors in the area seem to remain suspended in a sort of limbo, at the end of the projects already completed and waiting to be developed further. In fact, although the development of municipal regulations and that of the SSt have intertwined several times so far, in this phase they run on two parallel lines. In both cases, however, the work of reflection on their internal governance processes is important. Continuing the updating of the regulations for the care and management of public spaces, between September and December 2016, the Municipality of Trento organizes training courses on commons and on related Regulations, open both to citizens and municipal employees. Twenty-five civil servants and fifty-three citizens participate (Bonapace 2016). In December 2016 the city takes stock of the situation: ten pacts of collaboration between the civil society (citizens and/or Third Sector) and the public administration have been signed. As for the SSt, instead, starting from a reflection of Eugenio in the administrators' chat, a discussion develops, sometimes quite animated, among those who have been the most active members so far. In this way they find themselves confronting on topics such as the group's and the individuals' identity, the role of each of them and the personal or collective interests that have been pursued, the dynamics of commoning and the relationships with other territorial entities⁴¹.

«It is now clear that the administration group has broken up. The Facebook group, on the other hand, is active and thanks to Serena also the incoming filter [*for new members*]. The registrations are constant and there are also interesting proposals, but self-government has not become a practice and decision-making processes have become even more centralized. Many people asked me the question: But then the social street no longer exists? And I tried to answer: No but with many difficulties» (Eugenio, RMt).

Along with this message, Eugenio also communicates that he has accepted to take part in two initiatives, without first consulting the group because they are interesting for him

⁴¹ To best describe the reflexivity acted by the SSt members, I use in this situation many excerpts from their speeches in the administrators chat, highlighting in their words the significant passages.

personally. One is a project for the youth of the district developed by the San Giuseppe-Santa Chiara-Ravina-Romagnano Social Service Centre⁴² and the other is a proposal for collaboration with the Municipality by a neighbourhood association for the management of a public spot for poems. Finally, he asks the opinion of the “colleagues”, admitting that he is no longer sure of acting correctly, despite always taking decisions in good faith and for the interest of the group.

«What I believe happened from SferaChangeUp (especially from April 2015) onwards, was a thickening of **offline relationships, actions and initiatives** mainly with institutional actors **“on behalf of the social street” but with very low involvement and updating of the online page** [...], everyone and nobody is to blame. As a result, those who have been present, those who have assumed direct responsibility for the projects and have made progress in taking forward initiatives and results now find themselves alone, with a lot of **fruitful collaborations that are only in the hands of those who have made them and who remained in Trento on behalf of the social street which, however, we no longer know what it is.** [...] I’m happy that Eugenio is carrying out many activities, but I’m sorry that there isn’t even a trace of this on the Facebook page. The history of the book house was exemplary because it was born from an online proposal, voted by some members, at each step it followed an online update of the actions, and many contributions, suggestions or other things came precisely from those who were never present at the real meetings but were active on Facebook [...] Through updates you should get the **legitimacy** of carrying on things “on behalf of social street” otherwise at that point you are exploiting the social street (for a good purpose ok!! but anyway exploiting it), the method and the approach are important in my opinion if we want to **build community**, especially with hybrid communities (online/offline) [...] I would have sincerely avoided the high level of planning undertaken from SferaChangeUp onwards. I would have preferred the social street to be maintained and concerted in small actions for the benefit of everyday life and direct social relations without getting involved in projects, that only those people with a high dose of 1. Time, and/or 2. Experience, and/or 3. Motivation would have been able to follow directly» (Valentina, RMt).

Four other members of the chat agree with Valentina, underlining how it would have been better to invest in smaller events but that encouraged socialization and fought isolation. According to them, following projects like the PGZ is a huge effort, the merit of which

⁴² Within Trento municipal organization, the Social Service Centre coordinates and directs the activity of the territorial social services, with the following functions in the social sphere: provision of social services at territorial level; information, orientation and promotion; analysis of the needs of the territory; activation of territorial networks and collaboration between services and communities; planning of interventions in the territory (<http://www.comune.trento.it/content/view/full/54777>).

goes to those who managed the SSt in the last period. However, when the availability of citizens fades, there must not be a commitment of one person on behalf of the whole group, rather a renunciation of those projects and a “limitation” in organizing moments of socialization. What is most disputed is the identification of Social Street in the person of Eugenio and the priority that, through the undertaken design actions, was given to the product, to the visible result on the territory in a short term. On the contrary, the process, the involvement and the real participation of citizens should have taken on greater importance so that the transformations concerned the place, as the interconnection between the territory and its community.

«I have always preferred to say things in a face-to-face dimension and so I have little shared my actions/reports on FB [...] The sharing of what could be done concentrated in my hands because I exposed myself directly by putting face and identity card when it was necessary and therefore **identification** by people was increasingly univocal [...] **I feel this burden on me that I didn't want and that maybe I didn't even have the right and legitimacy to have** [...] I add and finish by saying that there would have been **no mural, no collaboration with schools and no PGZ without the call for ideas and the cooperative S, that “lent” the legal form**, which is anyway no-profit, to do what we did together [...] I believe that it is not easy to value the results and the social repercussions and perhaps for some things it is still early to put a point» (Eugenio, RMt).

«Regarding SferaChangeUp and the mural, I feel saying, **what result has really been brought? The important results, in my opinion, lie in the processes, in the participated and transparent ones, that consider the community as a centre of all, a community that must choose itself what to want and where to be/to go** [...] It's me who created the Gmail account “residentisanpiox” as a channel for the inclusion of those, who are no Facebook users. This e-mail account has now become a means of enhancing institutional relationships, of making information flow, that should circulate in the group» (Valentina, RMt).

«I also believe that the Social Street has got **a hybrid, ambiguous and unclear form, acting as an organization with supporting representatives and a limited information-participation**, going on in the meantime spreading the idea of an informal platform, approachable by everybody and aiming to equal bottom-up participation. [...] I appreciate that many projects would have not been produced if Eugenio and others didn't behave this way. But is it actually this the point, going on and on developing projects? **Or is the real purpose encouraging a feeling of community, perhaps slowly through participation? I have seen a policy of “doing all and now”, it doesn't matter how**, just let's do it and then we'll see for sure positive effects for everybody, because otherwise nothing begins, everything stops, in a word a very pragmatic politics [...] because it's all too easy bragging

on all fronts about the Social Street, riding a wave of novelty and passing outside the idea of an innovative social participation model, when in fact it was not or at least it was not always» (Walter, RMt).

The debate is interrupted by a practical question concerning the proposal of the poems spot, mentioned by Eugenio while introducing his reflection. The group must take a decision, so Eugenio ends the exchange of opinions by confirming that he wants to step back: that does not mean, as he says, to go off at all, because he is anyway resident in the neighbourhood and bound inseparably to the group. Once again, he leaves the group members a question: what can be done now according to you?

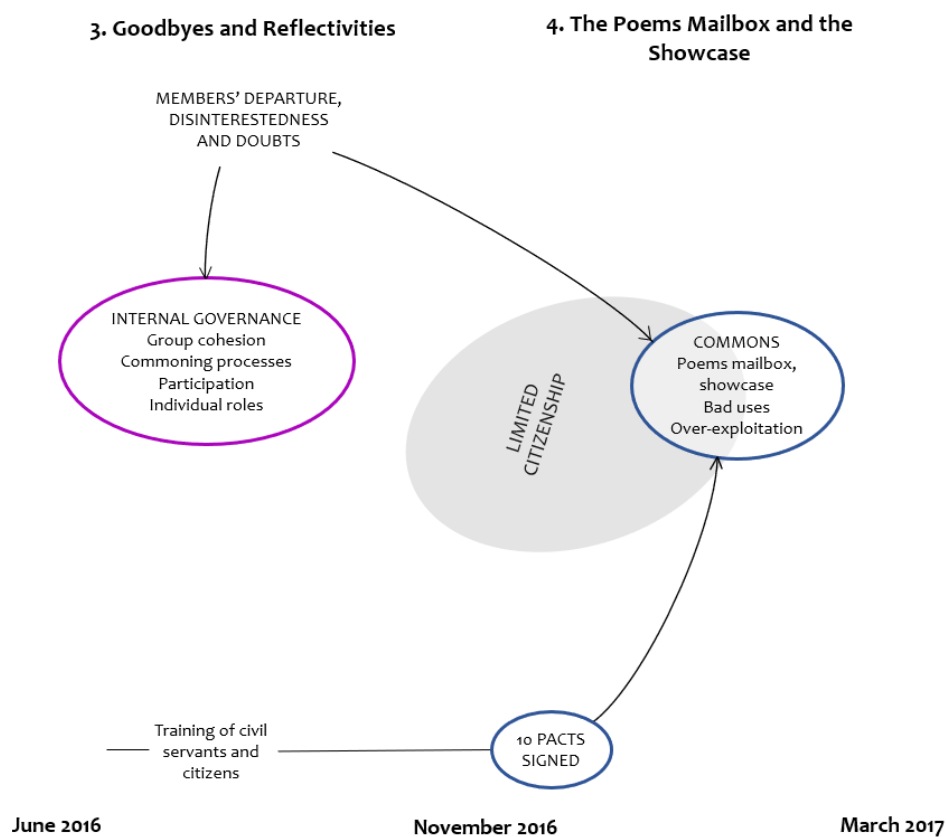


Fig. 4.7 – Representation of Step 3 and Step 4 of the SSt development.

Source: personal elaboration

4.4. The poems mailbox and the showcase

The proposal to install a public poetry mailbox on a street in the neighbourhood comes out of the member of the association G, the same one who had also proposed the bookcrossing. After concluding a project aimed at the integration through bilingual poems, the idea is to create a container available to everyone in which to exchange,

instead of books, poems. At the beginning this lady asks around if any of the shop-keepers is interested in placing it in his own shop, then, talking about it with Eugenio, the idea grows: Eugenio proposes to install, close to the poems mailbox, a board that simulates the virtual one of the Facebook group Residents in San Pio X and surroundings, but in an offline dimension, so as to try to involve also those not surfing the Internet. This kind of solution had already been suggested a few months earlier, during a project of the cooperative F with the elderly residents of the neighbourhood. The overall proposal is shared on the SSt Facebook group on 3 December, 2016, with a request of availability, as citizens and residents of the neighbourhood, to sign a pact with the City to support the association G. Camilla is the only one to answer, coming forward as citizen, intending on the other side to contact the colleagues concerning the availability of cooperative F. Since the participation of the group members is nearly equal to nothing, Camilla writes about it also in the administrators' chat, emphasizing that in a few days they should go to the City Council and sign the pact with the Public Administration. This is the moment when the discussion between the administrators, described in the previous paragraph, is interrupted. To Eugenio's answer:

«Considering the latest developments, I don't feel like signing by myself on behalf of SSt»
(Eugenio, RMt),

the reactions of the other administrators have unleashed again: they do not share Eugenio's choice of undertaking to sign the pact with the City on behalf of the SSt, without asking first if there still is a group ready to share the responsibility and, in the end, stepping backwards. At this point, Gemma accepts to take part in it and hopes to see others following her example. Since I base my reconstruction of these facts only on the administrators' chat, I do not know whether the involved people also chat privately at that moment: from the chat, I deduce that Eugenio, seeing Camilla's and Gemma's participation, also agrees to be involved.

After performing the inspections of the Streets and Parks Service and of the San Giuseppe-Santa Chiara District and agreeing upon the fundamental points of the collaboration, the agreement is signed and shared on the Facebook group in mid-January 2017. The parties that sign the cooperation agreement are the association G, Camilla, Gemma and Eugenio representing the SSt, and Trento Municipality. The pact includes both the principle of subsidiarity as per Article 118, paragraph 4 of the Italian Constitution and the Regulation on Collaboration between Citizens and the City for the Care and Regeneration of Urban Commons, approved by the city of Trento in March 2015. The fundamental values of the agreement are mutual trust between the parties, responsibility

and sustainability for the pursuit of the general interest. The main objectives are the involvement of the resources and the actors of the neighbourhood, the encouragement of cohesion and social relations between different generations and cultures, the exchange of experiences and information between citizens, education in the care of commons and the facilitation of long-term shared planning. The association and the citizens commit themselves to:

- Provide the mailbox for the poetry point and the showcase, also managing them;
- See the information to be included on the showcase, guaranteeing the participation and freedom of expression of those expressing interest in sharing the initiative;
- Supervise the correct use and maintenance of the structures;
- Care for the maintenance of the nearby flower bed;
- Report to the Office of Parks and Gardens or to the local Police the presence of hazardous (syringes, batteries) or suspicious wastes (non-compliant bags);
- Report anomalies and damage to municipal representatives.

The Municipality of Trento undertakes to:

- Make the flowerbed available, identified as the site of the installation;
- Install the manufactured articles;
- Promote adequate information to citizens on the activity carried out by the association G and the SSt;
- Identify forms of public recognition of the commitment and activity carried out by the association G and the SSt.

The agreement has a two years duration unless the conditions for which it was signed vanish; it can also be renewed and in this case, it will have to be reformulated based on any new needs, observations and objectives that might emerge⁴³.

On 24 February 2017, the poems mailbox and the bulletin board are installed and inaugurated. A couple of days before, Eugenio had shared the news on the SSt Facebook group, without however noting any kind of interest from the over 500 members, apart from a few likes. Eugenio, the alderman for Participation, Innovation, Training and European projects, and Gemma, with one of her students' class, attend the inauguration (fig. 4.8). The inauguration is taken, in fact, as an opportunity to awaken children to the care of commons and to the function of the new installations. The Municipality provides four keys of the notice board: the signatories decide to hand them over to the District

⁴³ Having carried out the observation period and the interviews before the expiry date of the agreement (spring-summer 2018), I do not know exactly if it was renewed at its expiry (January 2019).

president, to the association G, to the teacher Gemma and to Camilla for the cooperative F, as each of them can use and manage the notice board by bringing contributions from the multiplicity of collective subjects to which they belong.



Fig. 4.8 – Inauguration of the showcase and poetry mailbox (grey mailbox beneath the board).

Source: Facebook group Residents in San Pio X and surroundings – Trento, Social Street.

Precisely regarding the governance of commons, another discussion takes place immediately after the installation of the notice board and the poetry mailbox. The trigger of the debate is twofold: the misuse of the poetry mailbox and the over-exploitation of the bookcrossing. In the first case, an anonymous very polemical note is found in the mailbox by which hypothetical readers are urged to put on gloves and clean the flower beds, invaded by animal excrements, syringes and used condoms. Eugenio shares the note on the SSt Facebook group, addressing the writer of the note himself: he attaches the link of the Municipality of Trento useful to organize street cleaning, in which all of them will gladly take part. In the case of over-exploitation of the bookcrossing, instead, in March 2017 the whole group tries to tackle the problem that occurred months before and is now repeated. In fact, someone appropriates all the books that are regularly brought by the inhabitants to the little book house in San Pio X Street, leaving the container completely empty. Probably the books are put on sale at flea markets. From Germany, Valentina proposes a possible solution in the administrators' chat and on the Facebook group: padlocking the books house and giving the key to some reliable residents in the neighbourhood; each of them could, later, give a copy of the key to neighbours or

acquaintances, equally trustworthy, who live in the neighbourhood and want to participate in the book exchange. For the first time, after the events of spring 2016, the Facebook group develops a conversation of 30 comments. Replies divide into two streams of thought: some of them claim that using keys and padlocking the house is a step back from what was meant to be a commons, returning to a privatized asset and discouraging collective care; who, instead, is in favour of the keys emphasizes the need of rules and sanctions on the one hand, and a community that enforces the rules and applies sanctions, on the other, so that commons are not ruined and remain such. The comments on the group tend to adopt two different solutions: leaving the house open, hanging a “nice” and artistic note that invites not to steal books and exhorts anyone who leaves a book to write the name “Residents in San Pio X Street and surroundings” on a few of its pages. However, both on the Facebook group and in the administrators’ chat, the topic is simply set aside without making a final and shared decision. During my observation period, the books house is actually still freely accessible, but there are few books inside and the interviewed members and residents confirm that it is now little used.

In the debate arisen through the management of bookcrossing, I find references to two other problems relating to common resources. While the members are eventually considering how to pay the copies of the keys to padlock the house, Eugenio informs that the SSSt budget is now zero. The intent to create a community fund for the neighbourhood, on which the decision to collaborate with the cooperative S was based, therefore seems abandoned. In fact, after the conclusion of the PGZ, the relationship itself with the cooperative S does not develop further. The other problem concerns the disappearance of the flowers planted in the flowerbeds under the railway arches in San Pio X, during the event *Viviamo San Pio* in April 2016. The plants have really been uprooted and taken away. I discuss this episode with some SSSt members, who tell me their hypothesis. Many children had participated in the event so that someone had the idea of marking each plant with a sign with the name of the child who had planted it. During the first weeks shortly after the event families took turns watering the flowers and taking care of them. Over time, however, attention to the flower beds has dropped so much that the plants were suffering. Then, it could be plausible that families have taken the plant marked by the name of their child to take it home and take better care of it. Like the flowers of the flower beds, the culture of the commons, that the most active members of the SSSt have so strongly committed themselves to share and transmit, does not take root in the territory of San Pio X District.

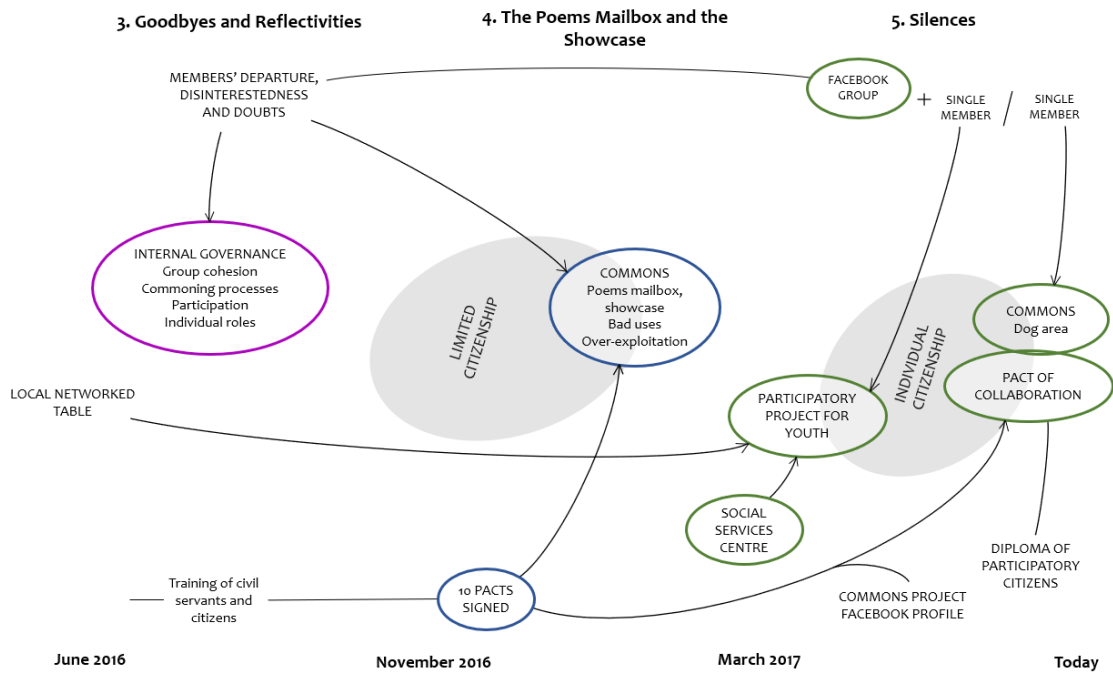


Fig. 4.9 – Representation of Steps 3, 4 and 5 of the SSSt development.

Source: personal elaboration.

4.5. Silences

The inactivity of the group in the offline dimension is also reflected in the virtual one. On the SSSt Facebook group, there are no more activity proposals to be carried out together or simply meeting proposals to share a meal or a drink together. The number of events and activities organized by other parties instead increases, using the SSSt page as a communication channel. The only news related to paths developed within the district of San Giuseppe-Santa Chiara, addressed to certain sections of its population, is the project Wow: In my Neighbourhood (*Wow: Nel mio quartiere*) organized by the Social Service Centre, and the initiative of a resident lady for the care and management of a neighbourhood dog area. However, neither of these two activities arouses particular interest among the members of the SSSt.

In short, Wow: In my Neighbourhood is a project organized by the territorial Social Service Centre, in collaboration with other Third Sector actors, and aimed at young people between 13 and 18 years. The goal of the Social Service Centre is to promote a unified photograph of the needs and resources of the young who live in the neighbourhoods of San Giuseppe and San Pio X, to know and create connections between the subjects who

work with and for the young people in the area, co-design actions, events and/or other initiatives:

«The target was young people so we started because it was a very large territory where there are different associations or cooperatives, that are active in favour of young people but there is no kind of...there was no kind of collaboration between them, so many very fragmented initiatives» (Rita, Pat).

The first phase of the project, dedicated to listening to young people and involving them to map the areas of the neighbourhood, regards 50 children and develops between May and July 2017. The educators get first in touch with boys and girls directly in the territory, in the parks and in the areas that they often go to; then they contact more structured realities, like the scouts or the parish. Young people can express feelings, criticisms, opinions and ideas on how to improve the neighbourhood and how to strengthen their sense of belonging to it. Some of their proposals are to organize musical parties or an open-air cinema, set up breakdancing/freestyle lessons and contests, organize sports tournaments, create an indoor meeting place, equip the Duca d'Aosta park with trees. Between September and October 2017, educators and young people prepare a report document for the listening action, presenting it in the district and at the network table⁴⁴. In April 2018, the youngsters are contacted to decide how to implement the final proposal: seven of them participate in the drafting phase of the project aiming to the installation of a structure for sporting activities in the Duca d'Aosta park. When I interview Rita, the proposal has just been presented again in the district and is waiting for a definitive answer, which now seems to be positive. According to Rita, the most important outcome is that the teenagers have made a long-term commitment, which consists not only in the care of the requested structure but also in educating other park-users about its use:

«They [*the teenagers*] have given long-term goals and so they will participate in two projects of the Municipality of Trento: one is "Sport in the green", therefore that of keeping, of enhancing the city parks in the summer [...] so from next year, they will be present in the Duca d'Aosta park, and they will identify and say...they will form, I don't know they will give advice on the use of the structure to other kids. So there is also a bit of responsibility, that is: I don't want...on the structure, I don't ask you for a big commitment, but I ask you: I'll be there too, I'll activate» (Rita, Pat).

Probably using the official email residentisanpiox, the Social Service Centre also contacts the SSSt in order to collaborate for the success of the project. Eugenio agrees to participate

⁴⁴ The same network table that had been organized on the occasion of the path taken by Social Street for the Zone Young Plan.

and tries to involve the other members, sharing the news concerning the project also on the Facebook group and asking the residents for opinions. However, he never stimulates any reaction, apart from some likes to the photos of the performed activities.

A similar result is achieved by the initiative of a lady resident in the neighbourhood, who in April 2017 activates to create a collaboration with the Municipality for the requalification and subsequent management of a now degraded and unused dog area. Rosita uses the Facebook group a lot to share the developments of her work and project, also seeking willingness from other members to help her and collaborate. Nevertheless, almost every time she shares updates or the proposal to meet and work together to put the area in order, she invites interested people to contact her by phone, without then updating the conversation on the group about what was decided or the date on which meeting. In addition to Eugenio, who with great availability tries to support Rosita, another member manages to get in touch with her, in representation of the Residence F, a provincial reception facility for immigrants run by a Trento cooperative. The Municipality of Trento evaluates Rosita's proposal and finally approves it in September 2017. Between September and October, the Residence guests, Rosita and Eugenio work together on the dog area, cleaning it up, sowing grass, fixing the fence, and so on. Attempts to involve the rest of the SSt continue, but their posts always receive little attention: someone compliments them on the initiative, but no one is available to collaborate. On 17 October 2017, Rosita, representing the SSt, and the Municipality of Trento sign a collaboration agreement for the Dog House with one-year validity. Unlike the agreement concerning the poetry mailbox and the bulletin board, this time the signed agreement is not shared on the Facebook group⁴⁵. From the outset, the maintenance of the area is difficult, as Rosita repeatedly complains on the SSt Facebook group about not having help to continue taking care of it.

The Municipality of Trento, meanwhile, has undertaken to further develop communication channels with citizens for efficacious and effective collaboration, as required by the approved Regulation. The Commons and Simplification Project, in fact, interacts and communicates also on Facebook through a profile managed by the Project Director. In order to recognize the work and responsibilities that all citizens of Trento are assuming, the Municipality also organizes the public delivery of the Diploma of Participatory Citizen. In order to recognize the work and responsibilities that all citizens

⁴⁵ On the Trento Municipality web-site I only found Rosita's proposal for collaboration and a copy of the agreement drawn up but unsigned.

of Trento are assuming, the Municipality also organizes the public ceremony to award the Participatory Citizen Diploma. The event takes place at the end of November 2017: Rosita also communicates this on the SSt Facebook group, but since I could not meet Rosita or talk to Eugenio about this process, I have no material about it. From a conversation with Gemma, I learned that Eugenio did not show up to collect his Diploma.



Fig. 4.10 – The banner that the Municipality of Trento has donated for the Dog House.

Source: Facebook Group Residents in San Pio X and surroundings – Trento, Social Street.

As far as the Dog House is concerned, the Municipality also donated to the SSt a banner to be hung in the fenced area: the logo and the motto of the Commons and Simplification Project reminds the citizens that “together is better” (fig. 4.10). Under the Facebook post in which Eugenio shares this news, the alderman for Participation, Innovation, Training and European Projects praises and thanks Eugenio:

«Your testimony regarding “taking care” of everyone’s things is a wonderful testimony»
(Elena, Pat).

Taking up the discussions within the SSt group of administrators, this comment, together with the representation of Rosita or Eugenio for Social Street, clashes with the process that led to the formalization of the collaboration for the management of the Dog House. In fact, the initiative was undertaken by a single citizen, then supported by a member of the SSt and by a Third Sector body. Decisions have always been taken among these few actors and only partially shared with the group, without finding the appropriate channels and methods to broaden the involvement and participation of the neighbourhood

residents. Thus, the process of commoning was not at all collective or shared in an enlarged modality of governance that involves the SSt members.

The path that led to the opening of the Dog House renders explicit a way of acting one's own citizenship different from the one that characterized the process of the book house: it is an individual citizenship, of a few individuals, who relate to the institutional part of the city because they are moved by a personal and not a collective instance. As a result, if the SSt group was recognized in the most active members two years ago, it is now mainly recognized in the figure of Eugenio. Aware of the role he has taken, he himself confesses to me that he is tired and no longer has the energy to carry out the initial idea of the SSt by himself:

«Everyone does a little like that, they all say “talk to Eugenio”. They launch ideas, but then they want someone to accomplish them» (Eugenio, RMt).

The network table itself, that includes all the actors – institutional and non-institutional – active on the district territory, is not concrete enough, according to Eugenio. They keep meeting once a month, sharing ideas and initiatives, but without co-designing and co-creating anything. Eugenio no longer finds reasons to go there, so he gives up, telling the other subjects to contact him if they decide to do something. On the Facebook group, there is no longer anyone who identifies himself with the SSt: whoever publishes an activity or proposes an event uses the formula “perhaps to you of the SSt could be of interest”, although he himself is part of the group and therefore is part of the SSt. Therefore, they did not develop a “we” that contains all the members of the ST. Furthermore, the Facebook page that at the beginning of the SSt story acted as mediation between the virtual and the real dimension is now no longer perceived as a useful tool for creating relationships, shared culture and a sense of belonging to the same community:

«Perhaps the Social Street page is not so perceived as a place, as a potential place for interaction» (Camilla, RMt/TSt).

4.6. Overview

From the moment of its creation, in October 2014, until today, the Residents group in San Pio X Street and its surroundings – Social Street Trento goes through many phases, which involve differently both the socio-political actors of the city and the territory of the Social Street neighbourhood.

The initial lack of sense of belonging to the local community and to the place directs four residents to give life to the group. Through the technological tools of Facebook and

email and through face-to-face meetings, the group actively engages to modify a public space in the neighbourhood, generating commoning processes about the commons of bookcrossing which involve the group members, the public administration and Third Sector bodies. Using as an instrument the regulation Adopt a flowerbed, the citizens and the technical offices of the Municipality act on a collective and mutually shaped citizenship, in which the rights and responsibilities of everyone on the management of a given space and commons are reciprocally negotiated. The SSt, on the initiative of a few, also participates in a competition for ideas launched by a Third Sector cooperative. In this phase, a network governance is developed, articulated by informal relationships and formal collaborations (Step 1).

This very same system of governance evolves into a structured project with which the SSt, in collaboration with the neighbourhood schools, a collective of artists and other Third Sector entities, participates and wins a public ban for the City of Trento. The Zone Youth Plan is implemented by the members of the SSt with a series of activities, especially for children and elderly people in the neighbourhood, and at the same time for the entire resident population. In this way, they not only act their citizenship, but they also implement actions to sensitize other citizens to their role, in the interest of each individual and the urban community as a whole. The collective decision-making processes activated in this phase produce a new transformation of the public territory and favour the institutionalization of a local network table, in which numerous actors active in the district collaborate. The latter, which has always been close to the citizen, organizes a Participatory Day, listening to the residents and collecting proposals to direct and advise the next activities and municipal expenses. At the same time, the Municipality of Trento is approving the Regulation for the care and regeneration of urban commons. The activation of the Commons and Simplification Project and the organization of a training course aimed at both civil servants and citizens show up among the actions undertaken by the public administration to implement the Regulation and encourage the participation of citizens in the governance of the city (Step 2).

The conclusion of this period of strong planning confuses the SSt, which from now on loses its group identity to be recognized instead in a few single figures. Leaving the previously woven relationships temporarily suspended, the most active members face a long and profound discussion on the cohesion of the group, on the processes of commoning carried out and on practices of citizenship activation and participation. The attempt to make a decision about the future of the group and its management remains

precisely such because it does not turn into shared and concrete actions (Step 3). Despite this, the name Social Street is still used to carry out some local projects. The installations of the poetry mailbox and the showcase as a copy of the virtual board are an example of collective citizenship, but triggered by the choice of an individual and limited to the activation of a few individuals. Three citizens, representing the whole SSt, a neighbourhood association and the Municipality of Trento sign a two-year collaboration pact for the care of these structures and the surrounding public space. The light beam thrown on the common resources of the neighbourhood lights up another discussion within the group about the management and reproduction of commons, which are undergoing misuse and over-exploitation (Step 4).

In the last period, the processes of commoning and governance at the local level remain more active at an institutional level. The San Giuseppe-Santa Chiara-Ravina-Romagnano Social Service Centre, together with some network table actors, develops a participatory project aimed at the neighbourhood's adolescents. A SSt member actively cooperates, trying, without success, to involve other members of the group. At the same time, another member, in her own personal interest, draws up and signs a collaboration pact with the Municipality of Trento for the care and regeneration of the dog area of San Pio X District. Therefore, referring to the SSt members, the citizenship that is activated in this phase is of an individual kind, acted and received by the individuals on the basis of individual needs/interests (Step 5).

Today the Social Street of Residents of San Pio X Street lives a period of inactivity in the real dimension, while on a virtual level it acts as a channel for communication and sharing of information and projects related to the district and the city of Trento. The group was born out of the need for its members to feel part of a community and belonging to the place. In the beginning, members share values and responsibilities, activating collective citizenship for the care and reproduction of common resources. Over time, the group has disintegrated, bringing civic engagement back to an individual dimension and leaving the governance of public affairs to institutional actors, always active on the territory. The development of the SSt and the transformation of policies on public spaces evolve in parallel, meeting when single – or few – citizens activate their role by collaborating with the public administration, through the citizenship instrument of the Regulation for the care and regeneration of urban commons.

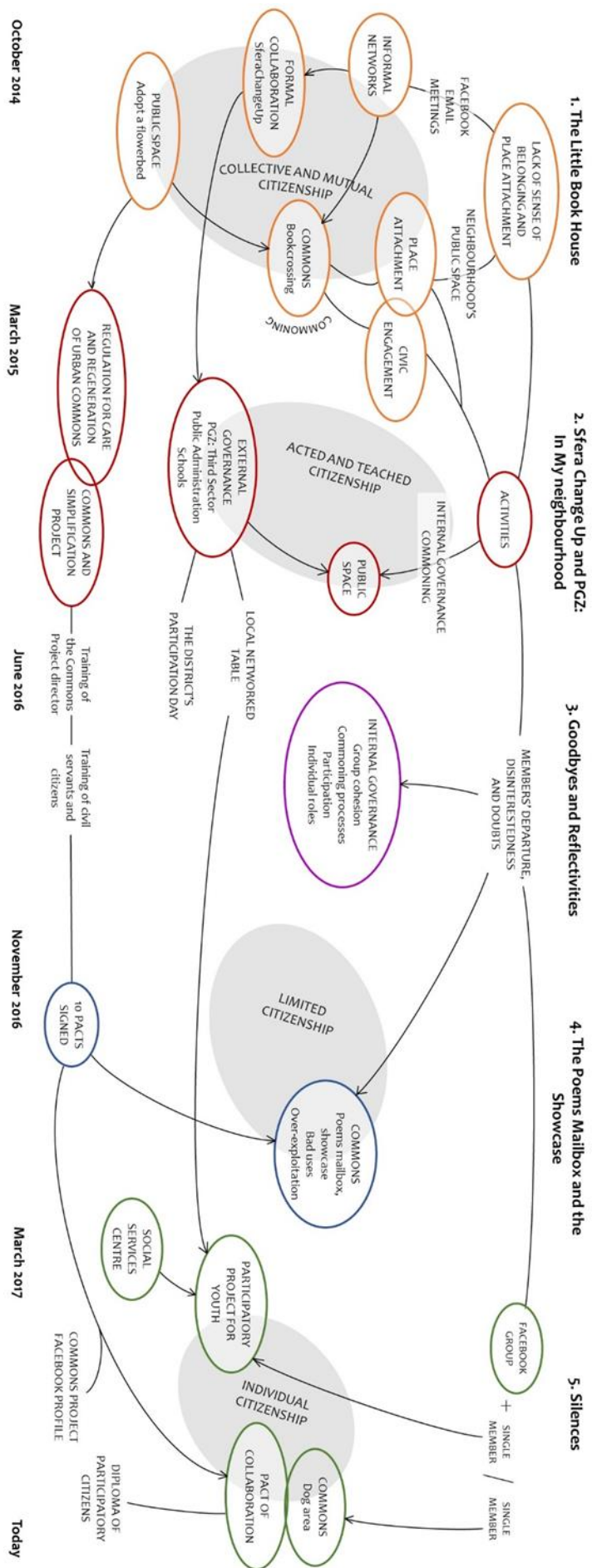


Fig. 4.11 – Representation of the SSI development, from the group's creation in October 2014 to the period of observation in June 2018.
Source: personal elaboration.

4.7. Methodological appendix

Table 1 lists all the subjects of the Trento case study who took part in the research. I also list the sector to which the respondent belongs, the instrument through which he was contacted, the research technique with which he was involved, on what date and in which place. Due to the few socialization activities organized by the SSt group in the neighbourhood, it was not possible to organize any focus groups with its members, despite repeated requests posted on the Facebook page or formulated verbally to the members that I met. The available members were then interviewed – mainly people who have been very active in the first period: two of the founders, two other young people (25-35 years) and two women also belonging to the Third Sector. A key actor for the research, especially with regard to the last SSt period of life, at first answered the request for a meeting, but he was no longer available at the time of scheduling it, not even responding to the various reminders. Table 2 shows the messages posted on the Facebook group page and the obtained answers. Finally, table 3 shows the moments of participant observation. Three Third Sector organizations were also not available for the interview: one of these did not respond to two consecutive emails, one replied that it had no staff with sufficient time and one offered to send me the contact of a person who could answer, but later did not react to the reminder. In addition to the stories of the members and of those who came into contact with the group, the SSt development was reconstructed also through the analysis of the Facebook group, of the private chat between the administrators (chronology available from 06/13/2016), of web pages of the Municipality of Trento and of the District of San Giuseppe and Santa Chiara. Two master's degree theses were useful, written by key actors who, on the one hand, experienced the SSt developments (Mosconi 2015) and, on the other, the changes within the public administration as regards the governance of urban commons (Bonapace 2016). Mosconi's thesis has also yielded much of the information regarding the neighbourhood of San Pio X.

Participant	Sector*	Contacted by	Technique	Date	Location
Eugenio	RM	Facebook	Interview Informal conver.	02/04/16 17/05/18 08/06/18	Private house
Valentina	RMt	Facebook	Interview Informal conver.	02/04/16 02/04/16	Private house Pub
Marisa	RMt	Facebook	Informal conver.	02/04/16	Pub

Fabrizio	RMt	Facebook	Informal conver.	05/06/18	Cafè
Agata	RMt	Facebook	Interview	12/06/18	Pub
Walter	RMt	/	/	/	/
Terenzio	RMt	/	/	/	/
Rosita	RMt	Facebook	/	/	/
Camilla	RMt / TSt	Facebook	Interview Interview	12/06/18 13/09/18	Pub / Office
Gemma	RMt / TSt	Facebook	Interview	13/06/18	Cafè
Maddalena	TSt	Email	Interview	02/05/16**	Office
Ezio	TSt	Email	Interview	13/06/18	Office
Luciana	TSt	Email	Interview	14/06/18	Private house
Monica	TSt	Email	Interview	12/09/18	Office
Armando	TSt	Email	/	/	/
Eugenia	RNMt	District newspaper	Interview	13/09/18	Cafè
Luisella	RNMt	District newspaper	Interview	13/06/18	Private house
Maria	RNMt	District newspaper	Interview	13/09/18	Private house
Giuseppina	RNMt	Mailbox note	Interview	05/06/18	Cafè
Lia	RNMt	Mailbox note	Interview	13/06/18	Cafè
Elena	PA _t	Email	Interview	12/06/18	Office
Adriana	PA _t	Email	Interview	13/06/18	Office
Rita	PA _t	Email	Interview	12/06/18	Office
Mauro	PA _t / RMt	Mailbox note	Interview	14/06/18	Cafè
Remigio	PA _t / RNMt	District newspaper	Interview	12/09/18	Public park

Tab. 4.1 –Individual or collective actors, taking part in the research. For each of them I indicate the sector to which they belong, the way in which I contacted them, the research technique I used, the date and place of the interview or meeting.

Source: personal elaboration.

* The sectors to which the research participants belong are coded as follows: RMt: residents in the neighbourhood, members of the Social Street; RNMt: residents in the neighbourhood, non-members of the Social Street; TSt: Third Sector Bodies, active on the neighbourhood territory and come in touch, directly or indirectly, with the Social Street; PA_t: representatives and civil servants of public administration, directly or indirectly involved in the activities of the Social Street. The letter *t* marks the city of Trento. The abbreviation for the Residents in San Pio X and surroundings, Social Street of Trento, is SS_t.

** On 12/06/2018 a second interview was requested during the survey period (June 2018 or September 2018): Maddalena replies that she is part of the cooperative only as a volunteer and asks if she can address me to one of her colleagues. I agree, but she no longer responds. I do not solicit, as I had managed to reconstruct the development of Social Street and for lack of time.

Post	Date	Like	Comment	By whom	Note
Presentation of the research(er)	14/05/18	8	1	Rosita	She is glad to know about the research but suggests me to talk with Eugenio and not with her.
Meeting proposal	26/05/18	5	37	Camilla Agata Gemma Rosita Eugenio	Available; Available; Available; Not available: sent pm, no success; Available but then he chooses not to come.
Proposal for photographic activity	04/06/18	2	/		No picture received.

Tab. 4.2 – My messages posted on the SSt Facebook group.

Source: personal elaboration.

Period	Events/activities
2-3 April 2016	ViviamoSanPiox: flower beds, street cleaning
1-3, 8-20 June 2018*	Interviews, neighbourhood observation, informal meetings and discussion with Eugenio
10-15 September 2018	Interviews

Tab. 4.3 – Participant observation of the SSt life, activities, territorial and social context.

Source: personal elaboration.

* Since the summer months were approaching, when most Italians leave their city for the holidays, it was better to postpone interviews to September, that could not be held in June. Moreover, the period spent in Trento is shorter than the periods spent in Verona and Ferrara due to personal health reasons.

Chapter 5.

The Social Street Residents in Pitteri Street and surroundings, in Ferrara

The Social Street Residents in Pitteri Street and surroundings (*Residenti in Via Pitteri e dintorni*) was born in Ferrara (Box 1) in November 2013. Pitteri street is in the Ferrara-south area, located in Bologna neighbourhood. The area of Pitteri Street is limited by the Fersina river and by the hippodrome. The road is closed at one of its edges.



Fig. 5.1 – The distance of Pitteri Street from the city centre.

Source: Google maps.

Box 5.1 – The Region Emilia-Romagna and the City of Ferrara

Emilia Romagna is an administrative region of Northeast Italy comprising the historical regions of Emilia and Romagna. Its capital is Bologna. The name Emilia Romagna is a legacy of Ancient Rome. *Emilia* derives from the *via Aemilia*, the Roman road connecting Piacenza to Rimini. *Romagna* derives from *Romània*, the name of the Eastern Roman Empire applied to Ravenna by the Lombards when the western Empire had ceased to exist and Ravenna was an outpost of the east.

Regarding health and social policies of the welfare system, Bertin and Carradore's (2016) classification of local welfare models assigns Emilia Romagna to the cluster "generalised and generous system". The main characteristic of this cluster is the widespread presence of innovative and local social services,

which means a high level of integrated social care services for older adults and a considerable percentage of children admitted to public and private crèches. The main actors are both public and private, but there are also signs of social cooperation. Compared to the other regions of this cluster – Friuli Venezia Giulia, Tuscany, Veneto, and Lombardy – the Emilia Romagna region accounts a stronger role of the Third Sector, despite a less cohesive society.

The region of Emilia-Romagna consists of nine provinces, of which Ferrara is the only one not positioned along Emilia Street. The province of Ferrara is divided into 23 municipalities (*comuni*), whose capital is the city of Ferrara. Ferrara counts 132.278 inhabitants (Demographic statistics ISTAT, 2018, demo.istat.it). The town has broad streets and numerous palaces dating from the Renaissance when it hosted the court of the House of Este. For its beauty and cultural importance, it has been designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. The territory of the municipality, entirely part of the Padan plain, is overwhelmingly flat, situated on average just 9 metres above sea level. The proximity to the largest Italian river has been a constant concern in the history of Ferrara, that has been affected by recurrent, disastrous floods.

The city of Ferrara is historically red, governed by left-wing coalitions since the creation of the Italian Republic in 1945. The left government has had its first loss this year, in June 2019, when it has been overcome by the right-wing Lega party.

Box 5.2 – Reading suggestions

The chapter follows the birth and development of the Social Street of Pitteri Street. The division into time intervals, from the date of its creation until today, is based on salient events and periods for the group itself.

Table 1 lists all subjects belonging to the case study in Ferrara, who have taken part in the research. In order to guarantee the anonymity of the interviewees, I changed the names using fancy names; in the same way, the references to Ferrara's reality and to the organizations to which the subjects belong have been neutralized as much as possible, so as not to make it possible to identify the participants in the research. For this reason, next to the mentioned name I report only the sector to which the person belongs, specifying the third sector body or the public administration office only if relevant to the research itself, and in any case if it does not damage the privacy of the interviewee or of whom is nominated by the interviewee. For greater fluidity in reading, I translated the excerpts of the interviews into English, reporting the original version in Italian in the final appendix N. With regard to the third sector cooperatives or associations I have chosen to use only one identification letter (e.g. cooperative F).

The analysis is interspersed with synoptic boxes, useful to deepen the geographical and demographic context of the area in which the SSf is located, the political and administrative situation of the city of Ferrara, the specific methodology applied to this case study.

Furthermore, pictures x, x, x and x aim to represent this story, using the theoretical concepts mobilized and showing the mutual influences between the shared culture of citizens, the practices of commoning and citizenship and the governance of public spaces.

5.1. Meetings, activities, and enthusiasm

The Social Street in Pitteri Street (SSf) is the second in the world in chronological order, born right after the first experience in Fondazza street in Bologna. The Ferrara group, in fact, was directly inspired by the Bolognese neighbours, then personalizing the activities according to their needs. In November 2013, Carolina, a long-time resident in Pitteri Street, decides to leave a message in the letterboxes of her neighbours. Her goal is to reduce anonymousness and to give rise to confidence among the neighbours so that everyone can recognize themselves as a community. Carolina hopes for once to make it possible to create a group “for” something and not “against” something, in order to know in the neighbourhood who can make you a puncture, take your dog for a walk, water your plants when you are not at home, give you the recipe of the apple pie, help you repair your bike. Carolina says she perceives more fear and distrust among the people. So, in her message, she invites her neighbours to sign in the closed Facebook group Resident of Pitteri Street and surroundings (*Residenti in Via Pitteri e dintorni*).

In December 2013, the group counts 52 members and, in the meanwhile, Carolina has already organized two meetings in the “real” dimension, on the 23rd and on the 30th of November, to which about 15 people take part. The inhabitants of the area who sign up are all enthusiastic about the initiative because they heard about the Social Street in Bologna and fully share the need to socialize more with the neighbours, not having a strong social network in the area. During my stay in Ferrara, in fact, many confess to me that the average local citizen is very closed, not very sociable and very suspicious. Simone immediately enrolls in the group SSf and admits that he would have started the group himself if Carolina hadn’t. Piero, the oldest of the group (72 years), had already begun collecting all possible information about the Bolognese Social Street and immediately joins the group with joy. Giuliana, instead, has some initial doubts, because she is not interested in becoming acquainted with new people, it seems useless to her. Nevertheless, as she already knows Carolina, even if superficially, Giuliana is involved by the latter, who convinces her to create a Facebook profile and sign up for the Social Street. The members don’t come exclusively from Pitteri Street or from the streets nearby, but also from the large artery of Bologna road and beyond:

«It was never a matter of proximity-remoteness, the idea was important. If someone was ready to move for 10 Km, that is the idea, to socialize» (Oscar, RMf).

Over time, the SSf has remained linked to Pitteri Street, because the principal nucleus of its members lives there. The neighbourhood residents who decide not to sign up for the

group, even knowing of its existence, are not interested in meeting new people, because they already have a wide network of friendships. Despite their lack of interest, they appreciate the initiative and recognize its social importance, apart from one of them, who considers the conversations on the SSf Facebook group superficial.

During the first life month of the SSf, Carolina posts and shares articles about the Social Street of Fondazza street in Bologna, in order to spread its values. The main theme of these articles is the alternative economy of mutual aid. All new members are welcomed and many introduce themselves to the group. Carolina also posts many photos of the street and of the area.



Fig. 5.2 – Type of private houses in Pitteri Street. The neighbourhood is rich in green areas.

Source: Facebook group Residents in Pitteri Street and surroundings – Ferrara.

In the first meetings, between end of November and early December, the participants submit many proposals to be implemented together: cooking classes typical of different Italian areas, in turn at some residents' house; a crochet course; an evening with table games; an evening playing cards or bingo; a video game tournament for children; a cultural event about life and works of the singer Fabrizio de Andrè; an English course held by neighbours who know the language quite well; trips on foot or by bike; watching a movie at a neighbour's house. These are just some examples. While the weekly meetings keep taking place, one idea of Carolina, who is definitely leading the group in its first steps, materializes quickly: the creation and installation of a small free library.

«The bookcrossing idea perfectly represents the concept of sharing in a public space, a place in the neighbourhood accessible to all» (Giuliana, RMf).

On the Facebook group, the post receives only a few comments, some of which emphasize the possibility that books can be stolen. As some comments are no longer visible, it was not possible to completely reconstruct the conversation. Beside this, the internal group of the most active members, made of about 10-12 people, communicates through a private Facebook chat. At first, in fact, they discuss among themselves the proposals or the events concerning the SSf, sharing them later on the Facebook group. The purpose of this communication model is to confront the development of the SSf, the decisions and the possible obstacles unanimously. The SSf members, however, prefer not to let me join their private chat, because they fear that my presence can affect the spontaneity and the freedom of their conversations⁴⁶. As a result, I cannot have a complete picture of the internal governance process that leads members to make certain decisions or organize themselves in a specific way.

A SSf member is acquainted with an officer of the commercial police and offers to ask him for advice on how to proceed with the installation of the bookcrossing library. At the same time, some members get the material and build the library container. From some photos posted on Facebook it can be seen, that Carolina also takes care of this, together with another person of the group. After the police officer's advice, the members turn to the Municipality and are addressed to the Municipal Office which deals with public green areas:

«To install the library, we asked “what do we have to do?” And there they went into crisis...then at the end, they gave us authorization through the green office, to which we had also written» (Simone, RMf).

The bureaucratic process to obtain the permission is long, because the office for green areas is facing a new situation, for which there weren't existing regulations. The most problematic node is the division of responsibility between Municipality and citizens in case of damage to the physical resource and/or to the people who deal with it. The only regulation aimed at administering the adoption of green areas by citizens dates back to 2010 and it had been one of the first to be implemented nationally. Nevertheless, it contains some important limits: the green areas can only be adopted by citizens formally associated, the responsibility is undertaken by the institution, which those citizens are part

⁴⁶ The SSf members let me however join a second chat, specially created to be used during the period when I was their guest. Obviously, the only conversations started in this chat regarded participatory activities that I proposed and organized.

of, and the adoption does not provide for any link between citizens and the territory they take care of:

«That regulation didn't provide for the relation between the people adopting the area and the neighbourhood, that is I mean [...] at the time, the choice of the area happened...I don't say randomly but you opened the map of Ferrara and chose it, so maybe in a neighbourhood people arrived, that were resident somewhere else, and in a certain sense they took away a portion of the green, making their own vegetal garden even fencing it. There have also been several cases of conflict» (Beatrice, PAF).

Thus, the green office agrees with the citizens of Pitteri Street to draw up an agreement outside the existing regulation, that enables them to use public space safely and in the general interest of the community residing in the neighbourhood.

Permission obtained and the library registered in the international circuit of the Little Free Library, the library is inaugurated on the 15th of March 2014, through a public ceremony with the participation of the Mayor and of his spokeswoman. The latter is particularly connected to the Bologna neighbourhood because she grew up in Pitteri Street and, even if she has moved to another town area, she continues to go there and visit her parents, keeping also in touch with other residents of the area.

«That moment has been a recognition of work, an artifact that could serve the neighbourhood. On that day the Mayor said: "you have done a beautiful thing; I give you two benches". Thus, that area was empty, it was just weed. Then, we have slowly enriched it. Now, with the two benches, it has become the place for the summer *Filò*⁴⁷» (Giuliana, RMf).

The library is placed at the closed end of Pitteri Street, where, after the parking lot, there is a small green area, next to the hippodrome wall. This request is followed by a petition promoted by Giuliana and Oscar and signed by other neighbours, demanding for two more street lamps to be set in Roveroni park because it lacks lighting, and for the arrangement of the area in the children's playground (Box 3). This time, however, the manager of the facilities mobility and traffic service answers negatively, because the Municipality has not enough resources to dig the road and place electricity cables for the two street lamps. As for the arrangement of the area around the children's playground, it has already been ordered and will be done as soon as possible. These two episodes mark from the beginning the strong feeling of place attachment of the SSf to the local territory:

⁴⁷ *Filò* is a concentration of people who, in the past, gathered to embroider, to spin the wool, to work with crochet, chatting in the meantime about the village, their families, the public events etc.

attachment, that materializes in the activation of collective practices, aimed to improve the use, the access and the liveability of public space in favour of the resident population.

Box 5.3 – The Bologna neighbourhood and Pitteri Street

The Bologna neighbourhood and most of all the area around Pitteri Street is strongly residential, dotted with small single houses and building of medium size not higher than five floors. Entering Pitteri Street I notice the order and symmetry of the building disposition. They are also very similar. According to some residents, this aspect is exaggerated and makes the neighbourhood neat, but aseptic and anonymous (<http://www.listonemag.it/2013/12/02/ferrara-social-street-il-caso-di-via-pitteri/>). The urbanization is recent: Oscar and Palmina tell me that many houses were built at the end of the 90ies. When Palmina (21) went to school, there were still meadows where hares ran, and when she went out into the school garden for the break and her mum was on her home balcony, they waved their hands from the opposite ends of the field (Informal conversation, April 2018).

The zone has anyway still many green areas so that some residents call it a green lung, perfect for walks in the open air and to regenerate from city traffic. The presence of the hippodrome certainly contributes, used by runners and walkers or simply by people passing by to cross the area (Research diary, April 2018). Every green space has some benches, which makes a rest very pleasant. One of these areas is the Roveroni Park, situated in the homonymous street, one of the crosses of Pitteri Street. The park is mostly frequented in the afternoon, after the school closing time, by children between 5 and 11, together with their parents or grandparents. On one side there is a children's playground (slides and swings), while the rest of the ground is used by older kids (12-14) playing football (Research diary, April 2018).

The neighbourhood is located about 2 Kms from the city centre and can be reached on foot or by bike or with local public transport. Despite this, it is also close to the highway entrance and to the main exits from the city. Inside it is equipped with all necessities: you can find services (kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, public swimming pool, home for the elderly, the scout group, the bowling club, the Church and the parish recreational club, dentists', doctors', veterinarians' consulting rooms, building surveyors' offices) and shops (newsagent, greengrocer, hardware store, laundry, bar, tobacconist, hairdresser, delicatessen, ice cream parlour, etc.). Reported by residents, they only miss a small supermarket.

The population is mainly of Italian origin and composed mostly of family units. The few foreigners living here – coming from Africa and from the East – are well integrated with the rest of the population (Focus group and informal conversations, April 2018).

Despite the presence of the Carabinieri's headquarter in Pitteri Street, petty crime events occasionally occur, such as damages to cars or car windows or thefts in garages. In the last two/three years another problem arose regarding the bins' use for the waste separation: the Municipality has, in fact, introduced an electronic card system, headed to each family, creating some inconvenience at the time of transition from the previous system and sometimes causing waste bags to be abandoned on the street (Research diary, April 2018).

Yet, no stiff rules for the governance and the care of commons are defined. Among the group members, or better said among the few more active members, who dealt with the creation and production of commons, informal and silent commoning practices are established: when the library, the benches and the green require some cleaning or renovation, the first one, who realizes it, warns the others and they decide together how to manage it. Concerning the library, in order to prevent theft and subsequent sale of books, Carolina suggests the Facebook members to mark the back of the books as a property of the Free Little Library of Pitteri Street.

Spring 2014 of the SSf experiences the entry of two local farmers, landowners in the Ferrara surroundings. From that moment on, until now, the Social Street welcomes several passing small traders, who come and sell their products in the neighbourhood. This activity, though, isn't consolidated into solidarity purchasing groups, by choice of Carolina, Simone and the veteran members of the group, because in any case they prefer not to let money circulate inside the SSf. Therefore, the governance of these practices remains on an informal level. One of the two farmers grows strawberries and collects e-mail orders from the residents of Pitteri Street, while the other, who cultivates fruits and vegetables in general, let a lady member of the group help him collecting the orders a few days before the delivery. Both farmers collect money once in place.

With the coming of Summer, instead, the SSf establishes another lasting tradition: the street dinners. During 2014 two of them are organized, both patrocinated by the Municipality. Each participant is invited to bring something to eat and to share, some chairs and, when possible, a table. Both the first and the second dinner are a great success, gathering at least thirty people, as Simone tells me. Moreover, during Summer, the members who regularly keep meeting, draw up another list of proposals to be realized with the neighbours in the coming Autumn. Remarkable is the commitment activated to organize the Halloween party at the end of October. Some members, in fact, start very early collecting sweets, finding the costumes and preparing a witches' house in the green area at the end of the street. Later on, another activity becomes usual for the SSf, that is the neighbourhood cleaning. Carolina and Giuliana launch the idea in September 2014, taking the cue from a Social Street in Mantova (Emilia-Romagna Region). Underneath the post on the Facebook group a discussion begins, whether it is citizens' responsibility to take the place of the city public employees, who should do the work. According to some, this is not correct, also considering that citizens pay tax to obtain this kind of

services. On the contrary, those in favour of the initiative, positively evaluate the benefit that the community would receive from it:

«Before the slowness of the public administration, there are a lot of citizens who, all over Italy, have decided to “do” something for themselves and for the rest of the community, taking care of flower beds, servicing green areas, cleaning parks, creating vegetable and public gardens, that also give the starting point to do something else, to weave relationships and to make community. Personally, I am fond of living in a beautiful and tidy zone, I clean it with pleasure (with others!) and if the Municipality or Hera⁴⁸ indirectly gain from it, well, this is not a problem. I also gain, because so I live in a better place» (Carolina, RMf).

Despite the participants to the cleaning are considerably less than at the street dinner, the neighbourhood cleaning is organized. Residents scatter through the streets with bags and pincers and collect garbage thrown on the ground, differentiating them. Through this initiative, the SSf members practice their citizenship, that is their belonging to the city, in an active way.

By the end of the year 2014, the green area at the extremity of Pitteri Street is equipped with – beside the first library and the two benches – a box for suggestions and criticisms for the SSf, and a porthole, taken from an old washing machine and turned into a notice board for the residents who, not using internet, have no access to the virtual Facebook wall. In April 2015, eventually, a second library is added – dedicated to books for children and teenagers. After the effort made by the members to obtain the first Municipality permission, all following installations require a much smoother process.

In fact, due to the collaboration by drawing up the specific permission for the green area in Pitteri Street, the SSf has come in touch with a public actor, recently active in the city: the Urban Center (Box 4). Entered upon office in 2010, the Urban Center has immediately started to work to participative paths together with the Ferrara population. From 2010 until 2012, the subjects are various and regard the renewable energies, the redevelopment of three city areas (the hospital, the industrial and the railway area), and the relationship public administration-citizens after the abrogation of the districts in municipalities below 250.000 inhabitants⁴⁹.

⁴⁸ Hera is an Italian company that delivers energy services (gas, electricity), water services (aqueduct, sewerage and purification) and environmental services (waste collection and disposal).

⁴⁹ It is possible to find references to these projects in the achieve of the City of Ferrara: <http://www.comune.fe.it/5392/archivio-2011-2012>.

Box 5.4 – The Urban Center

The Urban Centers pursue the critical involvement of civic communities in urban and territorial transformation policies, through experimentation of participatory and deliberative democracy forms. At first, only thought as centralized places for institutional information, overtime they are becoming spaces of confrontation among administrators, economic operators, organized social groups, committees, and individual citizens.

Nowadays, the term Urban Center indicates several kinds of structures, even very far from each other. The first UCs were born in the United States in the 60ies, twenty years later they arrive in Europe and, from the second half of the 90ies, propagate in Italy. We count Urban Centers in some of the biggest American cities (New York, San Francisco, Chicago) and European capitals (Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Amsterdam, London, Barcelona). In Italy, the greater ones are in Turin, Milan, and Bologna.

It is possible to find an important correlation between the nature of the Urban Center and the legal system of reference: in the continental European countries with administrative act regulation – civil law (which derives directly from Roman law and the Napoleonic Code), the promoter subject of an Urban Center is generally a local government institution; on the contrary, in common law countries with legal regulation of British origin, the Urban Centers are managed by other actors, such as for example university institutions, non-profit associations, business groups, etc. (<http://www.urban-center.org/en/>)

The Ferrara Urban Center was born in 2010 as a Municipality public service aimed to support local initiatives of civic participation for the improvement of communities and places, starting from lifestyles, behaviours, and micro-actions. It consists of an operative office inside the Administration and an informal citizens' network. The key objective of the Ferrara Urban Center is to create the conditions, so that the local decisional processes, particularly the urban and territorial policies, are actually more open towards the civic communities living in Ferrara. In this sense, it is engaged to work as an incubator of projects, a space for dialogue and mutual help, a workshop for learning from peers (<http://www.urbancenterferrara.it/cose/>).

Working, though, without a public budget, the Urban Center needs to look for other funding sources. At the same time, in 2011 a new political council takes office in Ferrara, and Margherita is assigned with the Department for urban planning construction, urban redevelopment, participation, and UNESCO. The interviewees, who still work with her, describe me Margherita like an “anomalous/uncommon” politician because she always persists to be very close to the citizens in a horizontal dimension of proximity, without ever assuming a strong institutional attitude. Moreover, during 2012, Caterina and Beatrice – respectively architect and communication expert – meet running a working internship for the Municipality of Ferrara⁵⁰. Therefore, looking for a budget to sustain the Urban Center activities, the two civil servants address the mayor's spokeswoman,

⁵⁰ For privacy reasons, I omit a part of the situations and events that led the two interviewees to take certain decisions, which then lead to participate in the call of the regional law 3/2010.

obtaining the authorization to participate in the call issued by the regional law N. 3 of 9 February 2010: Rules for the definition, reorganization, and promotion of consultation and participation procedures in the development of regional and local policies (*Norme per la definizione, riordino e promozione delle procedure di consultazione e partecipazione alla elaborazione delle politiche regionali e locali*, Box 5).

«That law has started an annual call to finance participatory paths. According to the rules of that call, to ensure that the participatory action is effective, not only in words, the fallout must be the modification of municipal regulation. The regulation is the interface with the citizens: modifying it means that you really take something into account. So, we participated in the call from the very beginning, we won it from the very beginning, we actually won it every year [...] and then we learnt through it how to be effective» (Margherita, PAF).

In this way from 2012 until 2018, every year the Urban Center obtains the regional fund to start participatory paths with the citizens of Ferrara, processes that end with the modification of a regulation or of a policy, modifying therefore the impact of these instruments on the internal governance of the urban government machine, on the relation between the latter and the citizens, and on the citizens' involvement in the urban governance.

Box 5.5 – The Regional Law 3/2010 and the funded participatory projects of the Urban Center

Regional Law N. 3 approved on the 9th of February 2010, is based on the following principle: «The representative democracy is a foundational ideal of the modern States and is recognized as an essential condition to affirm the participation right of the citizens by the European Union Treaty, by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, by the Italian Constitution and by the Regional statute. The development of the participatory democracy is consistent with the foundational ideals of the Republic, it promotes a larger and real inclusion of citizens and of their organisations in the decision-making processes within the competence of elective institutions, it strengthens democracy» (p. 1). The Law lists all objectives to be achieved, including increasing the quality of democracy in the public regional and local administrations; fostering greater social cohesion; bringing out the abilities widespread in the society; activating the constitutional principle of subsidiarity (art. 118 Italian Constitution); renewing the culture, the modalities and the perceiving ability of the public institutions in the relationship with the citizens; assuring the plurality and quality of the participative models. Then follow details on the values of participation and indications on admission methods and criteria.

Over the years the RL 3/2010 has gone through an evaluation and monitoring process, consisting of meetings on the territory, focus groups, hearings and discussions with other Italian regions. On the basis of this process, the regional legislative Assembly approved a new law about the participation, issued on the 22nd of October 2018 (RL. N. 15/2018). The new law aims to foster citizens' participation in the

development of public policies and to strengthen an active sense of citizenship. (<https://partecipazione.regione.emilia-romagna.it/la-legge-e-il-bando/legge-regionale-partecipazione>).

Projects activated by the Urban Center:

- December 2012 – June 2013: Participated workshops to the prevention of seismic damages (<http://www.urbancenterferrara.it/battiamo-il-sisma/>);
- December 2013 – June 2014: Let's reconstruct the kite, security as commons (<http://www.urbancenterferrara.it/ricostruiamo-laquilone-2/>);
- December 2014 – June 2015: Ferrara Mia (1), together for the care of the city (<http://www.urbancenterferrara.it/ferrara-mia/>);
- December 2015 – July 2016: Ferrara Mia (2), uncommon peoples and places (<http://www.urbancenterferrara.it/ferrara-mia-persone-e-luoghi-non-comuni/>);
- December 2016 – end of the political Council (May 2019): Workshop of knowledge, permanent city laboratory for the strengthening of groups of citizens (<http://www.urbancenterferrara.it/officina-dei-saperi/>).

The SSf and the Urban Center come into contact during the execution of the project Ferrara Mia 1, between the end of 2014 and 2015. Caterina has explained to me the procedure they applied for involving the population in the theme of commons and for finding groups of citizens already engaged upon this issue:

«Working to this project, we began to think about the concept of commons, given that throughout Italy issues of commons were spreading. What does commons mean? We started expressing the following assumption: it was the community, the collectivity, that identified commons, at the moment in which they were developing collective civic initiatives. So, the question was: who is it that in Ferrara, in his free time, for passion or personal interest, develops initiatives, that aim in some way to improving places and communities?» (Caterina, PAF).

Beatrice and her, then, on behalf of the Urban Center, begin to concretely look for and to contact groups who are engaged in doing this:

«To achieve it, we thought we should start from some concrete experiences, and with a view to the development over time, also evaluating our real possibilities, we said, let's concentrate on that part of territory that somehow we can reach, so we are likely talking about the historical centre and the residential area right close to the city walls. Now, with what criteria are we going to identify those groups, that will be... let's say... an initial reference sample, some sort of forerunners, however pioneer on this thing here? At first, we took care of contacting services connected with the Municipality, as for examples the Ancescao centres, that are services for the social promotion, or the Contrade, which are somehow linked to another very strong territorial organisation. Practically at the beginning, we filled a shortlist of strategic subjects, which somehow had to be protagonists of these

reasonings. Actually, a little later, when we started meeting them, we realized that it didn't work, because we were at a too institutional level, too hierarchic, no... there was something wrong. We needed real experiences.

Therefore, still moving on from the same question, we asked ourselves, what groups, already connected to the Administration, could answer the question. The Office for the public green areas had already been contacted by people, who wanted...ehm...to put their hands to some little parks near home, or to plant trees or other things...so we began knowing these people. Then, as I said, a little casually, this group has taken form and had a clear strategy: asking others to do word of mouth, to indicate us or bring us other groups into these reasonings» (Caterina, PAF).

The SSf is one of those groups that had already contacted the Office for parks and gardens. Moreover, both Caterina and Beatrice, being themselves resident in Ferrara, had already heard of it through local newspapers or on Facebook. So, the Urban Center gets in touch with the Pitteri Street residents and involves them in meetings for information, dialogue, and participation on the topic of commons in Ferrara.

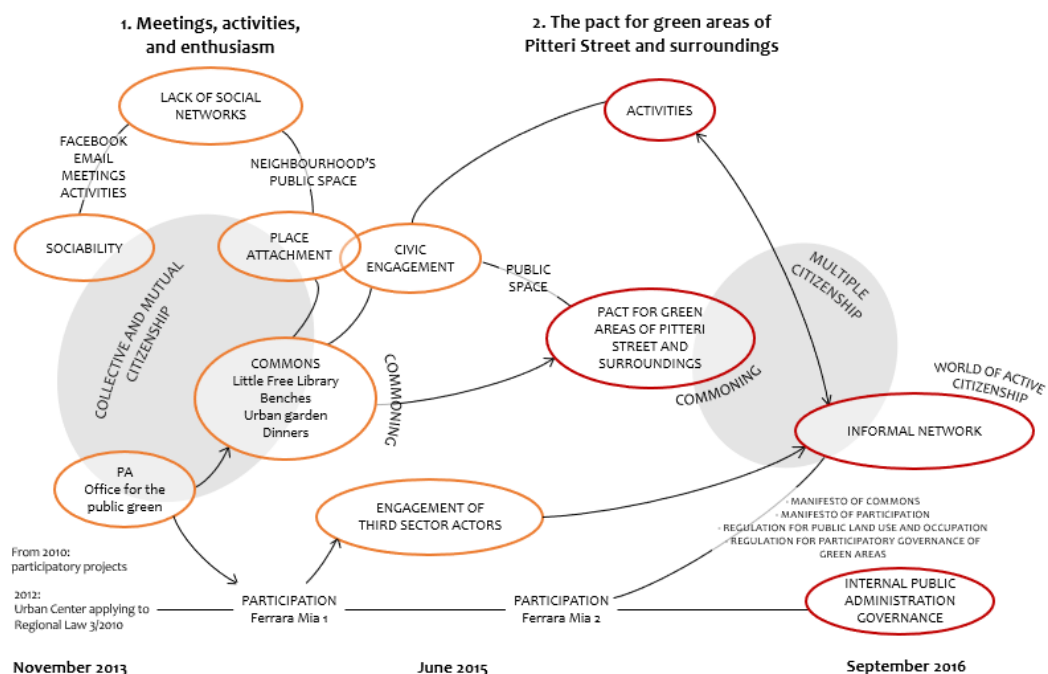


Fig. 5.3 – Representation of Step 1 and Step 2 of the SSf development.

Source: personal elaboration.

The SSf takes part, represented by a few members, who are also some of the more active in the neighbourhood: Piero, Giuliana, Oscar, Simone, and Manuela. On the website of the Urban Center, (www.urbancenterferrara.it/comunita/le_pratiche/via-pitteri-social-street/) the SSf is described as an informal group of citizens, resident in a street outside

the Ferrara walls, who freely meet and gather to organize dinners, activities and convivial events, a model of “conscious citizenship”, an attempt to regain a dimension, that the frenetic pace of life and the intrusiveness of the virtual have more and more put apart. Eventually, the Urban Center recognises the SSf as a community of commoners who take care and manage commons such as civic sense, socialization and neighbourhood relations, a model of solidarity economy, and urban art. As shown from the words of the Urban Center’s civil servants, within the context of this project, the commons are identified in the commoning practices that are activated and reproduced by citizens’ communities. The same communities meant as social practices become commons.

5.2. The pact for green areas of Pitteri Street and surroundings

The strong sense of belonging to the territory, that characterizes the SSf birth and first activities, remains accentuated even later. In July 2015, after the death of Carlo Lambertini⁵¹, poet, writer, and sculptor of Ferrara, resident in Bologna neighbourhood, the group members, represented by Piero and Martina, ask the Municipality for the possibility of naming after him a cycle lane connected to Pitteri Street. In fact, Carlo knew many members of the group and had attended some meetings, including the inauguration of the bookcrossing library, also dedicating a poem to the SSf.

Apart from this, many activities are organized by the members, always based on the value of sociability and of the care of the territory. Between July 2015 and August 2016 they follow one another: the Halloween party for the second consecutive year; a trip to the Ikea shop by the women of the group; the installation of a small urban herbs garden near the benches and the libraries; the organizations of the now regular neighbourhood cleaning; some meetings to observe stars and planets organized by a resident astronomer; the already tested street dinner, to which two professional street artists are invited. Ferrara, in fact, is famous for welcoming every year the most ancient festival of street music in Europe: the Ferrara Buskers Festival. It is organized since 1988, between the end of August and early September. During Summer 2016, Simone gets in touch with the Festival promoters and expresses the idea of inviting two buskers in Pitteri Street, on occasion of the SSf dinner. They agree to send the musicians on that single day on which – according to the Festival regulation – the buskers cannot play in the city centre. About

⁵¹ In this case, I left the original name and surname, given the public fame of the character and the effort of the group members to keep him alive in everyone's memory.

100 neighbourhood inhabitants participate in the dinner, the SSf offers dinner to the buskers and the latter play all night also involving the present children.

In the meanwhile, besides the socialization activities in the area, the relation between the SSf and the Urban Center also keeps going on:

«In the second phase of Ferrara Mia we really involved them [*the member of the SSf*], because however, both in terms of activities and spirit, they were on the same wavelength as we were, as a group of citizens supporting our project. I remember that we met and after the meeting, they had really...they proposed themselves as signatories of the formal agreement to the second phase of Ferrara Mia» (Beatrice, PAF).

The second participatory project called Ferrara Mia lasts from December 2015 to July 2016 and leads to several changes inside the administrative machine, some tangible and verifiable in the public regulations, some less visible because they regard governance modalities inside the offices. The changes made in the regulations or the introduced news concern of:

- Variation of the **Regulation for public land use and occupation** (*Regolamento di occupazione del suolo pubblico*), with modification of Article 9/bis Occupations without concession. The new article legitimates the use of small furnishings (table and chairs) in public spaces for spontaneous initiatives of a convivial kind, such as non-profit lunches or neighbourhood dinners that do not include the sale of food and do not use electric systems that are not up to standard. Moreover, this article allows private subjects to occupy the public soil for little works of maintenance of green areas and not, of urban equipment and of urban commons, made in agreement with the Municipality proper/competent office/service (March 2016).
- The adoption of the **Italian Manifesto of Participation** (*Carta italiana della partecipazione*), fostered by several subjects including INU The Committee for Governance and Citizens Rights (*Commissione Governance e diritti dei cittadini*), AIP2 Italia-Italian Association for the Public Participation (*Associazione italiana per la partecipazione pubblica*), IAF Italia-International Association of Facilitators. The principles of the Participation Manifesto are cooperation, trust, information, inclusion, effectiveness, constructive interaction, equity, harmony or reconciliation, transparency and evaluation (May 2016).
- The adoption of the **Manifesto of Commons** (*Carta dei beni comuni*), which aims to identify the fundamental principles and collective actions through which the shared care and governance of commons are exercised. It was conceived and

worked out by citizens and technicians of the public administration, led by the Urban Center. The guidelines written in it will later serve for the drawing up of the Regulation for participation in governance and care of commons (*Regolamento per la partecipazione nel governo e nella cura dei beni comuni*) (June 2016).

- The modifications to the **Regulation for participatory governance of green public areas** (*Regolamento per la gestione partecipata delle aree verdi pubbliche*), made to renew the regulation dated 2010, against which even the SSf had already clashed a few months before, asking for permission to install the library in the green area of Pitteri Street. The changes made right now allow the request for adoption of the soil also by single persons, not formally associated; the assumption by the Municipality of full responsibility for the risk of accidents while carrying out activities on that soil – unless the individual formally signs the choice to take responsibility at his own expense; verification that in the adopted area citizens also carry out social community practices and not privatistic ones, as it was the case before.

The SSf members, having previously submitted the request either to install urban furnishings or to organize the street dinner, were actively involved in the design of the modifications and in the drafting of the new regulations, taking part collectively, together with other actors of the civil society, to the decision-making process for the use of public soil.

The alderman for urban planning, buildings, urban regeneration, participation, and UNESCO points out to me that this engagement in the modification of the regulations has an impact on two different levels. The first is the involvement of citizens, whom the Municipality, through participatory processes, directly interfaces with. At first, the individuals address to the Urban Center for single requests, with functional purposes, such as adjusting a hole or adding a streetlamp, without fully understanding the intent of participation and collaboration by the new office. Besides, some groups are initially a little wary about the attempts of involvement by the Urban Center, because of previous negative experiences with the administrative offices. However, the informality and the proximity with which the Urban Center's civil servants set themselves, together with word of mouth among informal groups and the participation of well-known and trusted people, make these groups open up to dialogue. At the end of 2016, there are eighty communities of practice in contact with the Urban Center, including sixteen engaged in

continuous way and protagonists of joined meetings aimed both to consolidate the network among citizens and to change the regulations.

«Creating a network of Municipality's friends is not an objective of the Municipality, but as soon as a City with its offices become the catalyst of a series of experiences, it should, even in the most discreet and intelligent way possible, encourage the exchange of information and of relation of these different experiences. It [*the Municipality*] becomes a sort of collector in some way, fostering a transversal relationship» (Caterina, PAF).

The functioning of the internal bureaucratic organisation is the second sphere on which the participatory processes impact:

«This way of working enables to modify the municipal machine, that is divided into vertical water-light compartments, isn't it? It allows modifying the municipal machine regarding the citizens' needs. I mean, the objective for the Municipality, on a proposal, not only a request but just a citizen's proposal, is to be able to give him an answer. To do that, you must be absolutely transversal. Acting within the machine is the value of these paths. Making a series of things smooth. The effects are the regulations, the value is that the people, the managers, the officials, who worked at these mixed tables, learn a different way of relating with the citizen» (Margherita, PAF).

The civil servants of the Urban Center immediately realize, in fact, that in Ferrara there are at least three more different offices in charge of listening to the citizens, of orienteering their needs and of intervening for citizens' support: the Center Idea (*Centro Idea*) works on the education to Ambiental sustainability; the Center for social and cultural mediation; the Center for family. So, they start looking for a shared working modality, involving also these offices in all participative projects.

«There is a need for an office or an office network, that develops a system of citizens' hearing, co-planning, accompanying, different from the usual municipal office, but precisely in a logic of proximity» (Caterina, PAF);

«Coordination that allows you to speak a single language with the citizens and to be aware that there are others, that you are not unique and that you are not the only one with whom that citizen talk. Even this is part of the machine modification, in order to be more effective, more efficient» (Margherita, PAF).

During 2016, following the changes made to the municipal regulations, six different groups of citizens sign as many cooperation agreements with the City of Ferrara. These also include the Pact for green areas of Pitteri Street and surroundings (*Patto per le aree verdi di Via Pitteri e dintorni*). The reflection process and of internal governance of the SSf, that has brought its members to sign the Pact, is born from two triggers: on the one hand, the activation of social streeters in participating in the activities of the Urban Center

and in making an explicit request to the Municipality to modify and use public land, even though there were no precedents; on the other hand, the initiative of a neighbour, resident in front of the Roveroni Park and already active on a voluntary basis together with a group of parents and children, to cure the sowing and growth of the park grass. Furthermore, in the last years, the group of the park frequent visitors feels the need for a fountain of drinking water and for a fence, that protects and divides the green area from the street and from the parking lot. This resident, through personal acquaintances, gets to know that the SSf is already acknowledged by the Municipality as a civil actor and that it could be a facilitator channel to obtain what his children and other guys need for better use of the park.

«I think that the idea, if I remember correctly, was suggested to me by a green operator to whom I had turned to understand what the channels were for being able to open a dialogue with the municipality on the requests for improvement on our neighbourhood park. He who was in the sector, working for municipal contracts told me that in this phase of ours...in that period, I'm talking of four/five years ago, Social Streets were coming forward and in particular ours already had this fortune to be recognized. And at that point, I put things together by doing two plus two. Since I know Simone, I said, now I try to talk to Simone» (Riccardo, RMf).

«He himself called us as Social Street asking if we could help him because in parallel he had started this group of children and dads, he did not attend the Social Street...he asked if through us we could establish a contact with the municipality to help him legitimize this work here » (Simone, RMf).

«He said “if I am alone, I count for little, but instead I have your support”, so we supported him as group Social Street» (Oscar, RMf).

Through contact with the SSf, Riccardo succeeds in bringing his requests forward and in discussing them with the alderman for the public works and mobility. After an e-mail exchange and a couple of meetings, the request for improvements of the Roveroni park is included in a program of arranging the green areas, that was just being run. According to the civil servants of the Urban Center, this has been possible also thanks to the effort made by them simplifying the communications among the different municipal offices:

«*[The alderman to the public works]* has tried to finance or in any case to allocate resources for interventions in areas where he already knew, or it was known, that there was a real interest by the community. So not at random, but punctual interventions where there are already active communities. For us too this is a great success because never before had the councillor for public works contacted us to understand if it made sense to perhaps invest in

one area rather than another or even asking us about the expectations or requests of the inhabitants » (Beatrice, PAF).

So, in May 2016, Riccardo and some members of the SSf proceed to sign the cooperation agreement with the City of Ferrara. The agreement has an annual duration and is based on the principles of subsidiarity, mutual trust, responsibility, a full and timely circularity of information. The aims that the agreement wants to achieve are:

- Installation of a fountain of drinking water in the Roveroni Park;
- Installation of a protective fence to make safer playing in the Roveroni Park;
- Maintenance of the swing in the Roveroni Park;
- Shared planning of new possible interventions for the care and ordinary maintenance of the Roveroni Park and of the small green area at the end of Pitteri Street;
- Promotion of the re-appropriation of commons starting from the recognition of spontaneous practices of care for communities and places.

Essentially, to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood the pact is nothing more than a legitimization of what they were already doing, that is taking care of the green areas and of the public facilities; co-operating with the Municipality for their maintenance. Moreover, they engage themselves in involving the other inhabitants of the neighbourhood in the re-appropriation of the shared places and in sharing events and ideas with other communities of practices spread over the city. The Municipality commits itself to installing the facilities as agreed and to putting at disposal the tools needed for their maintenance; to listening to the SSf and supporting it in the development of activities and of new possible projects, respecting the autonomy and the self-organisation of the citizens; and to activating any possible co-operation necessary for the performance of the activities, also involving other sectors and services inside the municipal administration.

The signing of the pact has been the subject of discussion among the members of the SSf and of confrontation with the founders of the first Italian Social Street in Bologna. The latter, in fact, from the beginning of the experience, underlines the importance of keeping the neighbourhood group free from any municipal dynamics, to avoid the risk of being manipulated or exploited by the public sector. After various reflections, given the difference in the geographical, political and social context, the SSf decides to sign it, considering it advantageous for the well-being of its community and not finding in the Municipality a negative attitude:

«At the end, I have just seen advantages for us, concretely. In the current state of affairs, I didn't have the feeling that it [*the Municipality*] worked for its own benefit. Then it is clear that they got something out of it, but there was not explicit request as compensation of the fact of the park» (Simone, RMf).

According to the pact, the signatories of the SSf start – or better keep – taking care of the green areas: Riccardo and the children who use to play in the park can now take advantage of the fountain both for drinking and for watering the grass. Despite the legitimization obtained through the municipal pact and the signs hanging on the fence explaining the idea and value of the collaboration to the other residents (beside the notice posted on the Facebook group by the SSf), hardly any other neighbours take part in the commoning practices for the park management and maintenance. Many residents of the neighbourhood also take it for granted that these actions are at expenses of the municipal public service, not knowing instead that their neighbours have undertaken the responsibility to do them.

In addition, some residents of the surrounding apartment buildings obstruct the children's game by posting notice boards to restrict freedom of movement in public spaces. The worst event that Riccardo tells me he lived is when an inhabitant calls the police to report the fact that Riccardo was using public water from the fountain to wet his garden. Actually, Riccardo has connected a sprinkler to the fountain to wet the park's grass. At a time when Riccardo is not there, the police arrive at the park and seize the sprinkler: Riccardo spends the entire day in the police station explaining his version. He tells me how the police officers, only when he speaks about the SSf, the Urban Center and the collaboration pact, begin softening and contextualizing the situation, giving him back the sprinkler and letting him go without problems. Once more, the mediation developed by the SSf, even if indirectly, legitimate an individual initiative, that otherwise would not be recognized as civic and aiming at the collective interest.

Other acts of vandalism, caused intentionally or by negligence, towards commons continue to be verified in the area at the end of Pitteri Street: books continue to be taken from the two libraries and never return, probably sold in leaf markets; the urban vegetable garden is used by some passing people, like all other green areas, as a toilet for their pet dogs; a little tree planted by the SSf is willingly damaged several times. As a matter of fact, even the meetings and social events organized by the most active members of SSf do not see much participation, so much that they begin to reflect on the decisions they have made, and on the behaviours they have held so far, by putting themselves into discussion. Their fear is that they have been, in these years, “exclusive” and have shut

themselves preventing the entrance of other members. Nevertheless, they say again and again how many and how different attempts they have made, trying to involve the greatest number of citizens possible, and they consider that the unsuccess of those attempts is due to the very little interest in socializing in adulthood by the Ferrara inhabitants (Research diary, May 2016).

Despite the negative aspects, these SSf members perceive that the presence of the group and the activities carried out on the territory have brought benefit to many people, even to those who do not actively participate in the SSf:

«The group of parents usually going to the park has obtained the maintenance because there was the social street, the Municipality has agreed to do the works because there was the social street. To the people, who frequented the social street a little or who did not at all, this has been important. They used to say: “I wouldn’t have told that...” » (Simone, RMf).

«Yes, and also the fact that we meet just for a chat and there are only 10-15 of us, but yet people who did not know each other before, and being conscious of the fact that in the neighbourhood there is a someone, that if you like, you go out and have a talk, this is great. If you don’t like it, you don’t go out, but at least you know you can» (Giuliana, RMf).

Furthermore, the work done by the SSf is recognized and appreciated by other informal groups and communities of practice of the city, especially by those who base their activities on collective meetings in public spaces, like the residents of Pitteri Street and surroundings. Mario, of the community K, explains it to me: thanks to the SSf experience on the occasion of the first street dinner, for which long bureaucratic procedures had been necessary, later simplified by the changes of the Regulation for occupation of public space, now the Municipality cannot require any particular fulfilments from the citizens, who want to gather on the public land occupying it temporarily:

«They cannot even ask for it, because I think that those of Pitteri Street had some problems, because they had organized a dinner that went on parking slots for a little » (Mario, TSf)

What concerns the knowledge between informal groups, and the network that the Urban Center is trying to create, despite the medium dimension of Ferrara, many communities of practices did not know each other. Each group, in fact, concerns a specific area of the city, often of very small dimension – neighbourhoods or more limited clusters of streets. Moreover, every community activates practices of commoning and citizenships, different from one another, on the basis of the needs that the citizens perceive in that precise area: carelessness of houses and roads and subsequent decay of the social and cultural wealth of the area, solitude and anonymity, drug dealing, abandonment of public green areas and consequent misuse, urbanization and overbuilding.

«We have become aware of a world of active citizenship that we did not know it existed. And not last year, but the year before, there had been an exchange: we went there, they came here» (Giuliana, RMf).

Therefore, despite the different needs and solutions leading to the elaboration of different models of active citizenship, as multiple citizenship, made up of many identities acted in different ways, the groups of citizens know each other, exchange experiences and share a part of the process of decision-making related to their urban territory:

«We participated reciprocally in the various initiatives, that is, in the sense that when they had initiatives, we went, and so did they. Then we tried because everybody had different problems in the zone, but, in the end, we managed in joining different problems through different approaches. Even as a cue, because one says “we have done that thing”, and so you ask yourself: is it perhaps possible also in our neighbourhood?» (Antonio, TSf).

«I must say that with the people of Pitteri Street there is also a friendship. Therefore, they come to our dinner, and from time to time we go there to take part in their initiatives when they call the band to play music [*buskers*]. The Far Filò evenings, and then they make it possible to observe the stars. Indeed, since I wrote books in my life, I went to present my book one evening at Far Filò, I read some passages, it was a very quiet thing. The same thing happens with other neighbours of ours, who are those of the group Cq, of the group Ff. They also organized something, and we always went there» (Mario, TSf).

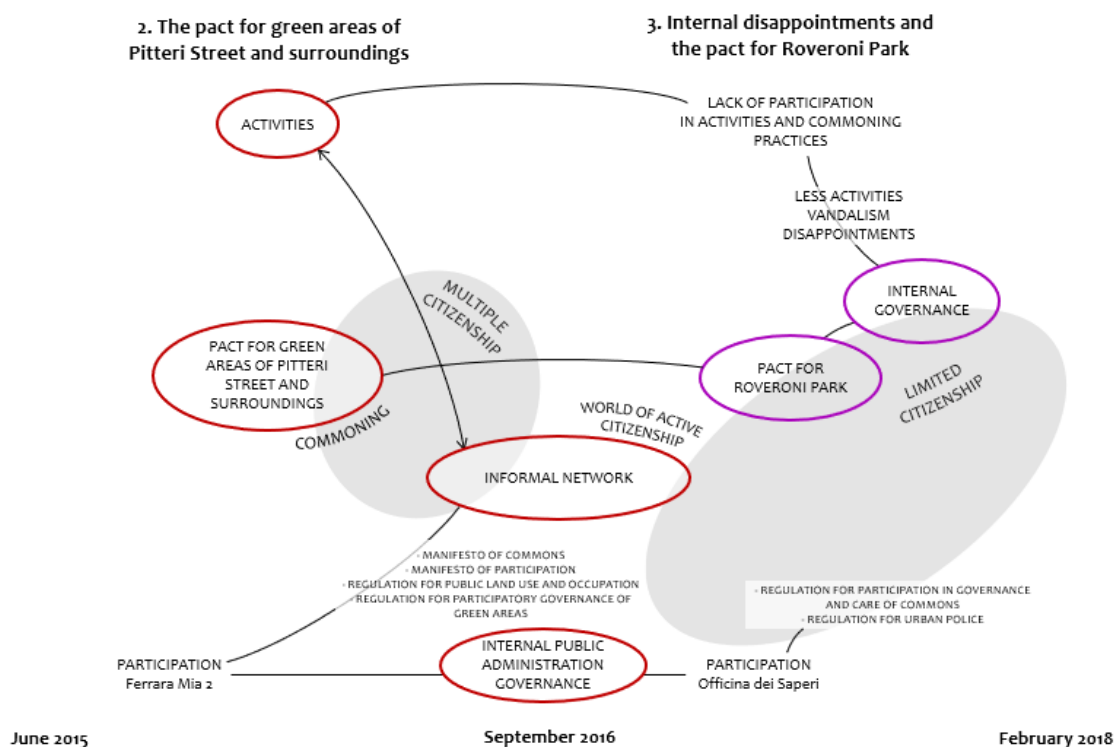


Fig. 5.4 – Representation of Step 2 and Step 3 of the SSf development.

Source: personal elaboration.

5.3. Internal disappointments and the Pact for Roveroni Park

The conclusion of the participatory project Ferrara Mia in 2016 finds continuity in the project Knowledge Workshop [*Officina dei Saperi*], as well realized by the Urban Center thanks to the funds of the regional law 3/2010. This phase begins in September/October 2016 with the purpose of realizing an urban permanent workshop for the strengthening of local citizens' group, who develop micro initiatives to the improvement of places and communities. Aim of the Urban Center is to consolidate the work done so far, both with the citizens, fostering the creation of a transversal network for the free exchange of ideas, relations and mutual help, and with the public administrative colleagues, supporting the conditions for new ways of relating with citizens through municipal workers able to work in a logic of proximity, listening and co-planning. In April 2017, the sixteen communities who regularly worked with the Urban Center – including the SSf – sign an agreement based on the idea that participating in public decisions means first of all participating concretely in the social, economic and therefore political life of the city.

For its part, the public administration of the city of Ferrara is facing some reflections concerning precisely the relationship with the population. The traditional bodies, such as the districts and the party headquarters, which used to act as a filter between citizens and civil servants, no longer exist. In parallel, the development of the technologies has reduced the communicative gap between the two entities, providing the citizens with much more tools, including WhatsApp and Facebook, not only the petition, in order to advance requests and proposals:

«The synthesis is likely to be more tiring than a decade ago, but you have a situation of filtering, of traditional filters that either fail or their weakening actually creates an even more direct relationship with the administrator. It is certainly positive in many respects, it also gives you a chance to grasp in a fuller or unfiltered way, therefore not already interpreted from a point of view of an intermediate requirement, what may be the need. And it probably puts you, as a result, directly in the condition of explaining the reasons of your choices, what your objectives as an administrator are, what your limits and what your difficulties» (Enrico, PAF).

Talking about difficulties, both the alderman and the civil servants of the Urban Center admit that the public administration is going through a hard period, in which it has to face either the economic crisis and the crisis of a system, now old and not able to renew itself:

«This crisis of the local body, on the one hand, is the matter of resources, and on the other regards the technicians, I mean there is a veto on hiring since a long time, the employees' average age is very high, no new workers and no new professionals arrive. We two are the youngest employees...» (Caterina, PAf);

«The problem of a municipal machine, like ours, which is big in the sense that we are over a thousand employees and therefore a thousand people, with a consolidated record of personal experience, so this also certainly affects, in the sense that in any context a person who has always been used to doing things in a certain way you can train him, he can be willing to get involved, he can also have all the desire of this world to interpret his role in a different form, but surely that element is there, in a rigid context like that of the municipal machine. Rigid for what concerns the entry paths but also the exit and the internal ones» (Enrico, PAf).

In this context, the Urban Center really wants to recover the participatory dimension and, consequently, the legitimacy that should be typical of a Municipality towards its citizens. Hopefully, the citizens recognize the effort made by the Municipality for including them in the governance of the *res publica*:

«At a time like this, I hope that the citizens of Ferrara will be able to realize the efforts that have been made to make it more accessible, to make it easier, to facilitate this relationship [...] Having such a direct relationship is ideal to us, because we can immediately verify. And then you build things...I mean, if the Municipality works for the citizens, you build together with them the things that are needed, which is perfect. Because however much you can think of it, here at the offices you will never come to think of the thing that [*the citizens*] are asking. So, they [*the citizens*] are giving a lot » (Margherita, PAf).

So, beside these internal reasonings, the modifications of the Regulations according to the regional law keep going on. During the project Knowledge Workshop (*Officina dei Saperi*), in March 2017, the Urban Center, with the co-operation of the communities of practice, draws up the Regulation for participation in governance and care of commons (*Regolamento per la partecipazione nel governo e nella cura dei beni comuni*). The Regulation is based on the Manifesto of commons of the previous year and it identifies three areas of action: the promotion of a regular listening activity on the territories, analysis and reconnaissance by the offices of the public administration; the identification and modification of the regulations and of the administrative instruments to favour the civic initiatives promoted by individual citizens or by groups; the sharing of knowledges and the free exchange of ideas and relations through a public system of information and communication. In the following month – April 2017 – the Urban Center succeeds in getting the Regulation for urban police (*Regolamento per la polizia urbana*) approved.

This Regulation contains article 40 about street entertainment, simplifying the soil occupation by street artists for their shows.

In continuity with the work done in 2016, 2017 witnesses the signing of another 7 collaborative pacts between the Municipality of Ferrara and its citizens. Among these, there is the extension of the annual pact of the SSf. The “Roveroni Park Pact”, signed on the 10th of October 2017, marks the continuation of the collaboration and the sharing of responsibility in the management of the green areas of Pitteri Street and surroundings. Compared to the first agreement, this is characterized by a precise negotiation of actions and responsibilities both of the reference community and of the Municipality, shaping a real form of citizenship fit for SSf. Nevertheless, it’s a form of citizenship that does not apply to the whole group, but only to those few active members, engaged in common care of the neighbourhood’s resources. In fact, when on the one hand the collaboration between these members and the Municipality continue, on the other hand also the little participation to the SSf activities persists, together with the demoralisation of the members, that fail in involving their neighbours.

From October 2016 onwards, beside the celebration for the approval of the bicycle lane named after the friend Carlo Lambertini, the activities organized and promoted by the SSf decrease. The historical group of promoters can no longer organize the traditional Halloween and Epiphany Parties, due to family commitments and lack of time. The other members, even if they took part in those parties in the previous years, do not take the initiative to replace the neighbours in the organization. The care of the libraries, of the urban vegetable garden and the neighbourhood cleaning are carried out as before by the twelve members who have collaborated from the beginning. Even the problem of the books picked up and never given back to the library is still current, without the SSf can find a solution to it. Giuliana fears that part of the responsibility for the lack of participation is due to them, that in socializing and building strong bonds, without realizing it, have made decisions on their own, involving the rest of the group belatedly or not sufficiently. In this regard, one of the last attempts at involvement is implemented in December 2016. In winter, the founding core of the SSf moves the summer evening meetings from the benches of the public green area to the private houses of some of them, in rotation. Aware of the fact that going into unfamiliar houses may discourage the participation of the less assiduous, they organize a dinner in a pizzeria, hoping that a neutral place can call more people. This does not happen and in the pizzeria, they are only the same few ones.

Spent all summer 2017 without changes in participation level, during the autumn-winter 2017, two other factors contribute to increasing the disappointment of the most active members. The first concerns the neighbourhood cleaning, the second regards the commercial activities, that go on being developed thanks to the use of the SSf Facebook group. Shortly after the ordinary street cleaning organized by the group, in September a member, virtually active on the Facebook group, but not so present at the “real” activities, publishes a post in which he complains about the misuse of the bins for the separate waste collection in Pitteri Street: the post shows a picture of some bags, abandoned outside the bins and containing mixed waste. A virtual discussion of 53 comments follows, many of which criticize the incivility of people. Obviously, the SSf members, regularly engaged in cleaning the area, also as administrators of the Facebook group, intervene trying to mediate, inviting those who consider Pitteri Street a dirty street to take part in the cleaning. At this point, even the citizens’ street cleaning initiative is criticized, partly because it is carried out without first verifying the willingness of others to participate, partly because it is carried out without the necessary security measures. These members think, in fact, that other resolving measures of the problem must be adopted and, moreover, that it is not up to the citizens to find them:

«I think that cleaning is incorrect in this case. There is a problem, and someone must solve it. It’s not the citizens, who must patch it up. Here cameras and fines would be necessary» (RMf, from a post on the Facebook group of 15/09/17);

«I agree, it’s ok giving one’s own availability, but it’s not the citizens alone who can do the cleaning» (Gabiella, RMf, from a post on the Facebook group of 15/09/17).

The administrators’ group, then, supports their position regarding the choice of the dates in which to carry out the cleaning, noting that communication has always been given well in advance and that the initiative has always been carried out during the weekend, presumably more free from weekly commitments. Moreover, they underline the value and the motivation on which their actions are based:

«Everyone who participated has done so with the desire to be together and combine business with pleasure, taking a good initiative to make our neighbourhood more beautiful. This is, in fact, the SSf philosophy. And no one can deny, that many activities are made really to gather people and make them feel the common sense of belonging to the Social Street’s community. All the rest are just sterile polemics» (Francesca, RMf, from a post on the Facebook group of 15/09/17).

Following this comment, the discussion is interrupted, as far as I can see on the Facebook group.

The second issue concerns the purchasing activities. Since the first spring of the group in 2014, some of the SSf members, have established a relationship with two farmers of the Ferrara countryside, in order to purchase fruit and vegetables. Over the years, Pitteri Street has also welcomed producers of loose soaps, cheeses, bread and biscuits, preserves and jams. For many of them, it was an occasional relationship, lasted a short time, while one of the first two farmers is still supplying the neighbourhood's inhabitants, together with another producer who joined him subsequently. Two of the members in particular take care of the product orders and help the producers at the time of sale. The buyers, resident in the neighbourhood but non only – since the news spread through word of mouth of informal networks – appreciate this food for the best quality and the lowest price. The producers, for their part, appreciate the direct exchange with consumers:

«Do you know what's nice? The fact that I know who I do it for, who eats it. That salad that I planted this morning, I know it will be eaten tomorrow by Tom, Dick, and Harry. It's direct. It's not like going to the market» (Christian, LPf).

When Martina had taken contact with the local producers and had included them in the group, the other members and administrators of the SSf agreed, hoping that these activities would bring participation in the meetings, in cleaning and in other “social” activities. That was not the case, because instead some of the members, who actively participated in these initiatives, have begun to use the “supermarket” (as Simone called it during one of our conversations) of Pitteri Street and have stopped participating. What irritates the “social” part is that the SSf members are losing the initial spirit of Social Street, just using it as a platform to manage trading activity. I report an abstract of the long post published by Simone on the Facebook wall, on the 30th of January 2018, with the purpose of triggering an internal reflection on the identity and on the goals of the SSf:

«The guidelines are summarized as follows: Sociality, Gratuitousness, and Inclusion are the essential principles for all Social Streets. This is and should be the engine of ALL what happens in this group and most of all what happens in the real life of the Social Street (from virtual to real is the slogan of Social Streets).

In the last years, much of that spirit has been lost and the life itself of this group has radically changed. The suggested “social” activities have had less and less participants: to the neighbourhood's cleaning nobody takes part (but this group has often hosted posts that stigmatize, for example, small signs of deterioration in the area!), the last edition of the Pitterian Buskers has seen the participation of very few Pitterian residents but many “outsiders”. The last street dinners/picnics have taken place among a few close friends. Halloween party has not been done for two years. This year we haven't had the Pitterian

Befana. Nothing irreparable, but it has struck us a bit that no one noticed anything since they were two initiatives that the neighbourhood's children seemed to like.

On the contrary, a “commercial” dimension has become increasingly popular, which is not very consistent with the guidelines of Social Street, but which has a certain popularity. Now, apart from the guidelines, this could be something good if it was the opportunity to enhance the “social” component of this experience. But this is not the case lately. Let's say that it's time to weigh the pros and cons and to understand if and how to go ahead because Social Street can NOT become just a buying group! ».

In the virtual dimension, this post raises very few reactions, three of which are by other administrators of the SSf. Among the other three responses, one is relevant, because it points out the position of members, who take part in the purchasing activities, and that is also reported to me by other members on the occasion of interviews: according to them, even if the commercial exchanges do not directly aim to make people know each other, they indirectly support practices of socialization. Some of them, in fact, got to know the SSf thanks to the widespread word of mouth about the possibility of buying local products and, after meeting the group, they have started to participate in some activity or to meet some other consumer, even if the neighbourhood relationships born from these activities are actually limited.

«We have felt some dislike, that is through claims such as “eh but there is not only this”, “eh but the Social Street is not only this, actually the Social Street is not a sale”. In my opinion, instead, all this is also part of Social Street. They think it was not the right way to get to know each other. In fact, I absolutely disagree because I met her [Martina], and since then we are friends (Gabriella, RMf).

The only possible solution for both parties is to divide the group and let all the people interested in the purchasing activities migrate to another Facebook page, leaving the original group of the SSf. Alternatively, members engaged in “social” activities have the awareness of simply having to accept that the SSf container is also used for commercial activities while continuing to make their own proposals and organize their activities. Nevertheless, in this phase, face-to-face dialogue between the two parties is missing, where to confront each other on the group management and to take decisions on the future of the SSf.

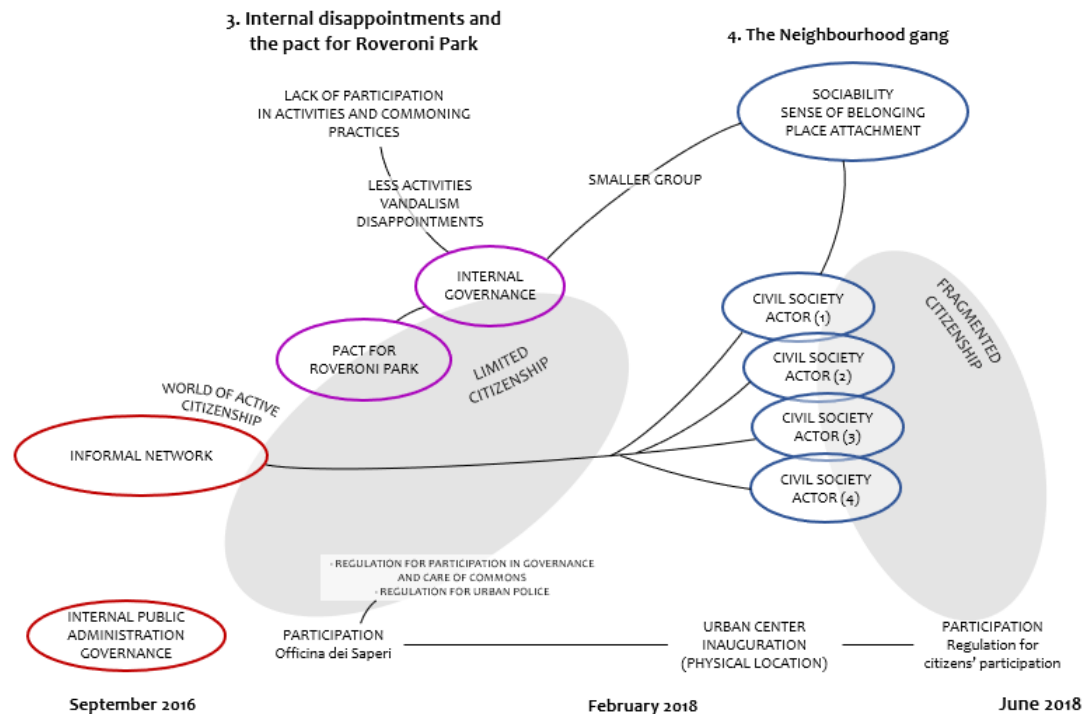


Fig. 5.5 – Representation of Step 3 and Step 4 of the SSf development.

Source: personal elaboration.

5.4. The neighbourhood gang

The confrontation between the two internal identities of the SSf does not develop even in the following months. The most active members, who name themselves “social”, begin instead to accept, that a great lot of their neighbours are not interested in enlarging their own social networks, but they use the Facebook group for the trading of local products. At the same time, the organizers of the purchasing activities do not propose the separation from the SSf, therefore, the two subgroups continue to coexist, at least virtually, without collaborating or actually relating in reality. What frightens the founding core of the SSf is the closure in themselves, that they are experiencing in the little world of their neighbourhood. One day, during my stay in Ferrara, Piero expresses to me his disappointment for a fact occurred to him some days before at the Roveroni Park: despite the park frequent goers know him very well, and at the moment they were there, Piero feels a total lack of confidence towards him and is very struck.

«We are going towards an age in which everybody is more and more closed in himself, in the family, and is not open to socialization» (Piero, RMf).

«We are on social [networks], but we are not on the street. We have tried because the street here was a small community to us» (Giuliana, RMf).

A small community is precisely the most evident result of the SSf path: the twelve most active members, from the beginning till the last period of observation, June 2018, establish a strong sense of belonging to the local group of neighbours.



Fig. 5.6 – Palmina’s mapping exercise.

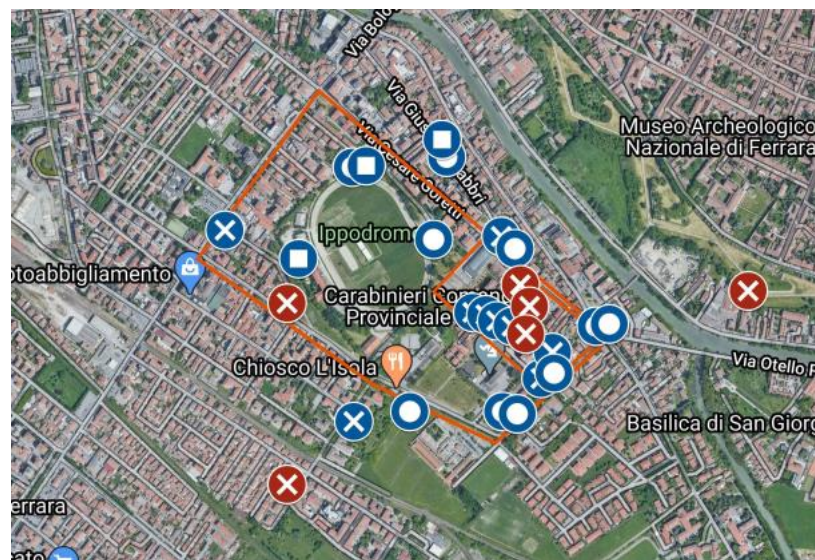


Fig. 5.7 – Simone’s mapping exercise. Palmina and Simone live in the area since more than 15 years. Obviously, they already had relationships with neighbours in the area (blue crosses), but the Social Street allows them to bond with new people (red crosses). The use and the attendance of the neighbourhood – operationalized by the attendance of commercial activities (circles) and cultural activities (squares) – have not changed after the birth of the Social Street, because of their already deep knowledge of the area.

Source: Fieldwork.

Among them, ten take part to the focus group and I have the opportunity to deepen these aspects with them. Seven of them have been living in the neighbourhood for at least 15 years and, even if they well know the commercial and cultural activities of the area, the Social Street has permitted them to increase their acquaintances by at least twice (fig. 5.6, fig. 5.7). Two of them have moved to a near neighbourhood in 2017, but continue to come and meet the residents of Pitteri Street and surroundings:

«We keep coming here, because even though we no longer live here, it was a beautiful way of getting to know our neighbours, since it is now almost impossible to know who lives near you, at least in these areas [...] we love knowing people and staying together, we met lovely people. That is why we hope to continue having a relationship. Also because, as Giuliana said before, even though we don't see each other for a while, when we meet again we feel the same enthusiasm of the first times» (Giuseppe, RMf).

Three members, on the contrary, moved to Pitteri Street in the last three years and the Social Street has allowed them to come into confidence with the neighbourhood, connecting them with local people and introducing them to the services available in the area (fig. 5.8, fig. 5.9).

In essence, the Social Street has allowed this group of individuals and families (it's mainly parents who participate) to socialize on the initial basis of only one thing in common: the place of residence.

«It was useful to us to create a larger group of friends» (Giuliana, RMf);

«We created a gang, like when we were little! » (Simone, RMf);

«Yes, a middle-aged gang» (Giuliana, RMf).

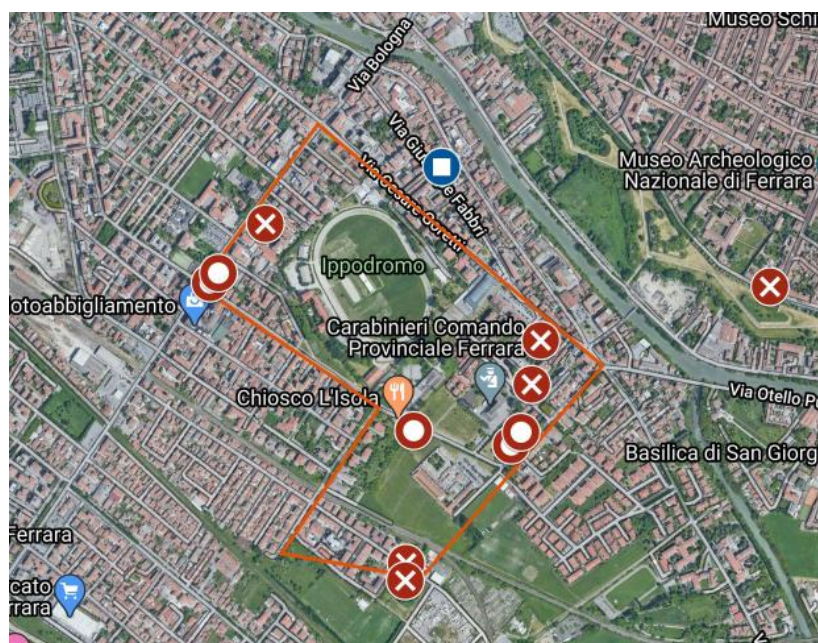


Fig. 5.8 – Silvano's mapping exercise.



Fig. 5.8 – Laura’s mapping exercise. Silvano and Laura moved to Pitteri Street less than three years ago and the Social Street helps them both in attending the local services and activities (commercial – circles – and cultural – squares – activities), and in meeting local people (red crosses), whom otherwise they would not meet.

Source: Fieldwork.

Precisely for the fact of having a common bond to the territory and living their activities and initiatives in Pitteri Street, in the Roveroni park and in the surrounding streets, they also develop a stronger place attachment and, consequently, a civic engagement towards the public spaces. The governance of green areas and of street furniture, in fact, continues thanks to the SSf in collaboration with the Municipality, under the administrative hat of the still active collaboration agreement. The practices of commoning remain informal and limited to the small group of ten to twelve members:

«The first of us who passes by and notices something to be repaired or fixed: “guys, we should mow the grass, put in order the plants, settle the little library”. We ring us up, choose a day and do it» (Oscar, RMf).

In the neighbourhood there are other groups, that use the public spaces and take care of them. One of these, for example, is the group of pet dog owners, which includes Noemi:

«The company of the dogs, that I desperately try to involve [*in the SSf*], but I cannot understand why...it’s a very close-knit group, and together we take care of the space in front of the school. We have mowed the grass, collected it, but I never manage in making them integrate into our group» (Noemi, RMf).

The same applies to the group S or to the association C: the SSf tries several times to open a dialogue with their representatives, looking for common interests upon which to organize initiatives collaboratively, so that the participation increases in every context and the socialization becomes easier and easier. Nevertheless, there was never a positive answer from these groups.

In any case, the instrument of the collaboration agreement keeps the relationship with the Urban Center active. The SSf members, but also other communities of the civil society who participated in the municipal projects, have always perceived a deep and propositional hearing by the two civil servants. Still, the SSf directly contacts them in case of problems that fall within the framework of the collaboration agreement with the certainty that they will be solved. For their part, the residents of Pitteri Street and surroundings, following their civic engagement, feel they are collaborating to improve the quality of life of the neighbourhood for their fellow citizens:

«We are giving something to ourselves, we are leaving a city, or rather a small piece of the city more in order, even if it's all a little symbolic, because we do not actually clean the neighbourhood, we do not actually grow herbs, but we feel we are leaving our children something that makes them say "how beautiful that neighbourhood"» (Giuliana, RMf).

This perception also accompanies greater awareness of their role of citizens as an active part in urban governance. Activism that, on the one hand, takes shape in claiming the right to use, personalize and totally live the urban territory and, on the other hand, in becoming a stimulus for the public administration, providing real perspectives and constructive criticisms, aimed at improving the city and not finalized to an empty individual complaint.

«One may say: "as a citizen I pay taxes, therefore I expect the Municipality to give me services", or: "as a citizen I pay taxes and, since I pay taxes, this portion of road also belongs to me, therefore I have the right to put hands to it and to renew something". These are two opinions. Actually, in the beginning, I agreed more with the first point of view, but today, after the experience of the Social Street, I agree more with the second one. So, since I pay taxes, when I want to organize a street dinner, I must be able to do it» (Simone, RMf).
«I think that we as citizens must be the goad, the critical part, also in the positive and constructive sense. To be an active citizen means this...I felt that frustration like when one says "nothing works", but then he doesn't do anything either » (Diletta, TSf).

What concerns the work of the Urban Center, all the communities of practice that I met, visited and listened to, even if grateful of the hearing and satisfied with the method applied by the Municipality, they underline that the developed experiment is still

undersized. The obtained results concern, in fact, a small portion of the population and a restricted city surface. Among the citizens collaborating with the Urban Center, there is also a widespread fear that all the work done so far may come to an abrupt halt when the political mandate of the current municipal council expires in spring 2019. In general, forecasts on the city's political future, historically red but close to a probable change, are very negative. Meanwhile, on the administrative side, the alderman for urban planning, urban regeneration and participation, and the civil servants responsible for the Urban Center see their efforts recognized in two ways. First of all, at the beginning of 2018, the city council allocates 20,000 euros to the Urban Center, to implement and spread its work to neighbourhoods and sections of the population not yet involved. The budget must be spent in the current year and in the following year. Secondly, in March 2018, the Municipality inaugurates and assigns to the Urban Center the premises of the former fruit and vegetable market, subjected to a long period of restoration. From this moment on, the Urban Center, that has been so far represented by Caterina, Beatrice, Margherita and all those citizens who collaborated in it, acquires a physical space, potentially usable by the population in a collective way. Despite the concept of proximity to the territory remains central, the alderman for urban planning, urban regeneration and participation hopes for this space to become the citizen's space, where to get information, to co-plan and to identify together the needs and the desires, in order to draw and improve the neighbourhoods together. According to the alderman, the Urban Center must become the place where the future of the city will be built. (Research diary, inauguration of Urban Center, 24/03/18).

In addition, the participatory project Knowledge Workshop (*Officina dei Saperi*) continues. After redefining the possibilities of free and convivial use of the open public space, and of collective management of public green areas, the Urban Center starts a process of reviewing the institutions of participation, or how to make citizen participation in urban governance more concrete and effective. The project proposal sees the updating and monitoring of more traditional tools such as requests, petitions, and deliberative proposals, and the introduction of new methods of listening and discussions. The changes in the participation regulation aim at not hindering the micro-actions of citizens, but favouring them, and empowering citizens to interact with the decisions of the local administration.

«The regulation is an instrument for the citizens, or better, what it's written in it serve the citizens» (Caterina, PAF).

The changes to the regulation are preceded, as in previous years, by participatory laboratories open to all citizens. In this case, there are two evening appointments in April 2018, on two weekdays at 5 p.m. The first meeting is purely informative, with the purpose to explain in details the possibilities that the regulation revision can produce. About thirty people participate. The second meeting, on the other hand, is operational and structured for operational tables: each table is made up of citizens, city technicians, and at least one participation expert, who together discuss and evaluate the change' proposals to the participation regulation. The participation decreases a little and there are only 25 persons. Piero is the only representative for the SSf at both meetings.

Among the subjects emerging from this process, the civil servants of the Urban Center mainly concentrate on two aspects. The first one already rose from the previous participatory processes, and is the necessity to create a transversal network between offices inside the public administration:

«What we have realized, also in the light of, the meeting of yesterday evening [participated laboratory on 12/04/18], is that actually, we as Urban Center and probably also other municipal offices that work on networks of communities [*Center for families, Social Mediation Center, Sustainability Education Center IDEA*], absolutely need to support the green office. If we do not do so the theme of creation or in any case of neighbourhood relations linked to these initiatives is not dealt with, that is, these offices work more with social networks, which must support these technical offices, because otherwise, in our opinion, we lose also the sense of these things, which is not the great environmental value it has, but also the pretext of giving birth to social and cohesion projects » (Caterina, PAF).

The other fundamental issue to be solved by the Urban Center is the participatory budget given by the City of Ferrara. The assignation modalities of this sum still have to be decided. How can they include informal groups? How can they include citizens who do not need money? How can they co-plan with citizens? These are the three questions that Caterina and Beatrice are facing in order to find solutions for the inclusion and the engagement of the greatest part of groups possible, that they are cooperating with. Many communities of practice, in fact, are not formally or legally associated. Moreover, not all citizens have the need to activate interventions that imply economic spending; on the contrary, some groups, like the SSf, prefer not to have to manage money and base their practices on gratuitousness and gift. Lastly, the Urban Center wants to devise a co-design process that can impact the actual needs of citizens, also evaluating technical and administrative aspects that are outside the choices of citizens.

Easily understood, the groups of citizens, already joined to the Urban Center, welcome the news of the available budget, even having no idea, how it will be spent by the public office. The delegates of the group Z, Diletta and Elda, who always attend the meetings organized by the Urban Center, and who represent one of the most active communities of the last years in the informal network of all the Ferrara communities of practice, participate with strong interest also in the laboratory about the regulation of citizens participation, sharing their point of view:

«The negative aspect is that *[the budget]* always falls from above, the positive aspect is *[that it's possible to work upon]* the neighbourhood's team, to enlarge the participation in a transversal way. We don't have to invent new places to get participation, we just have to go to the already existing ones, where people already gather and spend time together, in a more and more transversal modality» (Diletta, TSf).

While the group Z was keeping constant its participation in the initiatives of the Urban Center, many other groups have reduced their engagement, principally for lack of time or because they don't perceive the direct impact of the above activities on their needs. In this phase, also the bonds between the various actors of the Ferrara civil society weaken so that they reduce the mutual participation to the organized events. Each one of them, however, continue to interface with the Urban Center or with the other municipal offices, trying to respond to their own needs: therefore, several forms of fragmented citizenship are active, based on different needs and bearers of different negotiating arrangements between rights and responsibilities. The fact itself that the same group does not maintain over time a constant level of activism produces a fragmented form of its own citizenship.

5.5. Overview

From the moment of its creation, in November 2013, until July 2018, the Residents group in Pitteri Street and surroundings – Ferrara goes through many phases. However, what remains stable is the strong sense of belonging and place attachment among the small group of active members.

The initial lack of social relations in the area and the strong anonymity of the neighbourhood leads one resident to give life to the group. She is immediately supported by other inhabitants, who also appreciate the previous experience of Social Street in Bologna. Through the technological tools of Facebook and email, on the virtual level, and through face-to-face meetings and a lot of activities organized in the area of Pitteri Street, the group actively engages to modify the public space, generating commoning processes

around the Little Free Library and the green areas, which involve the group members and the public administration. This process is allowed after the re-negotiation of rights and responsibilities between the City and the citizens. The old regulation for the adoption of green areas is exceptionally modified in an agreement between the SSf and the Office for the Public Green, activating a form of collective and mutually shaped citizenship. The civic engagement acted by the SSf opens up the dialogue with the Urban Center of Ferrara. The latter participates in the Regional Law 3/2010 to innovate the urban governance and in particular the processes of citizens' participation in the administrative decision-making. So, it looks for formal and informal actors with whom collaborating about the issue of urban commons (Step 1).

The commitment of the SSf towards the civic sense, the socialization and the care of the local territory as a commoning practice brings the group closer to the values of the Urban Center, which thus also involves it in the second phase of the project Ferrara Mia, aimed at the review of existing regulations for the governance of public space. The changes and innovations concern four regulations: the Regulation for public land use and occupation; the Italian Manifesto of Participation; the Manifesto of Commons; the Regulation for participatory governance of green public areas. Following these modifications, the Urban Center subscribes 6 pacts with groups of citizens. Among these, there is also the Pact for green areas of Pitteri Street and surroundings required and signed by the SSf to legitimize the care and management activities, of the Roveroni Park and other public areas, that are already performing as residents. Actually, the initial request comes from a single resident, frequent visitor of the park who, knowing the SSf members, asks them for support to obtain recognition and to be listened to more easily by the Municipality. The SSf acts, therefore, as a mediator, being already recognized by the public administration as an active urban subject. The changes to the regulations and the drafting of the collaboration agreements affect both the relationship between the City and its citizens, and the internal governance of the Municipality: the Urban Center, in fact, tries to activate a transverse and reticular work between the administrative offices, so to simplify the co-planning and to favour a univocal communication with the citizens. Relations between civil society groups are also influenced: though the communities of practice are active on their micro-territory, starting from different needs and finding various solutions, during the development of these projects, the citizen groups get to know each other, sharing initiatives and discovering a world of active citizenship. The city is studded with multiple methods of citizenship (Step 2).

The path Ferrara Mia leads to another participatory project, *Officina dei Saperi*, aimed at strengthening what has been done so far, both towards the network of citizens and the network of offices inside the public administration. In conclusion of this further process, another two regulations are changed through the co-operation of the Urban Center with the citizens: The Regulation for participation in governance and care of commons and the Regulation for urban police. Other 8 agreements are subscribed, including the extension of the first SSf's pact. The pact content does not change, because it is always aimed at the care and management of the green areas of Pitteri Street; the negotiation of actions and responsibilities supported by the reference community and by the Municipality is, however, more precise. Nevertheless, the citizenship activated in this phase is restricted to the few members who are engaged in the practices of commoning from the beginning. The participation in the activities and events organized by the SSf, in fact, is shrinking. Furthermore, the urban furniture of the green area in Pitteri Street continues to suffer acts of vandalism and misuse. This produces a fatigue overload for the usual organizers, who reduce the number of activities, but also some disagreements among themselves and other members of the group. The reasons for disagreement are, in one case, the arising of complaints regarding the management of the public space, without a real participation in looking for solutions, and, in another case, the use of the SSf Facebook group to organize purchasing activities, which go far off the fundamental values of socialization, typical of Social Streets. (Step 3).

Later on, also stating the difficulty in involving other groups of citizens present in the same district, the SSf begins to accept reduced participation and to appreciate at least the growth of a small group of friends. Among them, the sense of belonging to their small community and, consequently, to the territory remains very strong. As a result, the practices of commoning for the management of the green areas and of the urban furnishings are maintained on an informal level and are restrained to few members, yet legitimized by the administrative hat of the collaboration agreement. The work of the Urban Center goes on with the activation of a further reviewing process of a municipal regulation: the regulation of citizen participation. The actors of the civil society, who have been collaborating for years with the two civil servants and the alderman for city-planning, city-regeneration, and participation, share two different feelings. On the one hand, they have been actively listened to and, on the other hand, they feel the urge to continue a path, that has followed so far innovative working modalities but, like an experiment, is limited to a small territory portion and to population's elite. According to

the communities of practice, in the course of this process, citizens must play the role of the critical spur for the public administration, offering new prospects for the improvement of the city. Nevertheless, some groups of citizens, who constantly collaborated with the Urban Center in the previous phases, reduce now their engagement. The network between the groups is also weaker at this stage. The various models of citizenship turn out, therefore, to be fragmented, based on diverse needs and bearers of different set-ups of negotiation between rights and responsibilities (Step 4).

After my departure, the Social Street Residents in Pitteri Street and surroundings continues to organize the traditional activities such as the care of urban furnishings, the neighbourhood cleaning, the Far Filò evenings and the astronomy meetings. From the Facebook posts of the group, new names come out, but the participation is still scanty. The few members, always remained active, continue to participate in the events organized by the other communities of practice known through the Urban Center. As for the Urban Center, the reviewing work on the regulation of participation is completed, leading to the implementation, on the 4th of April 2019, of the new Regulation of forms of popular participation in the local administration. In 2018, 4 agreements have been subscribed and in 2019, up to now, 5 ones. As feared by the groups of citizens I met, in May 2019, the city administration went to the right-wing party, triggering doubts about the fate of the Urban Center, whose activities had been activated, promoted and supported by a left-wing council.

I will now move on to the last case study Residents in Via Venti Settembre in Verona which, unlike the other two, was born and raised in a political climate typical of right-wing.

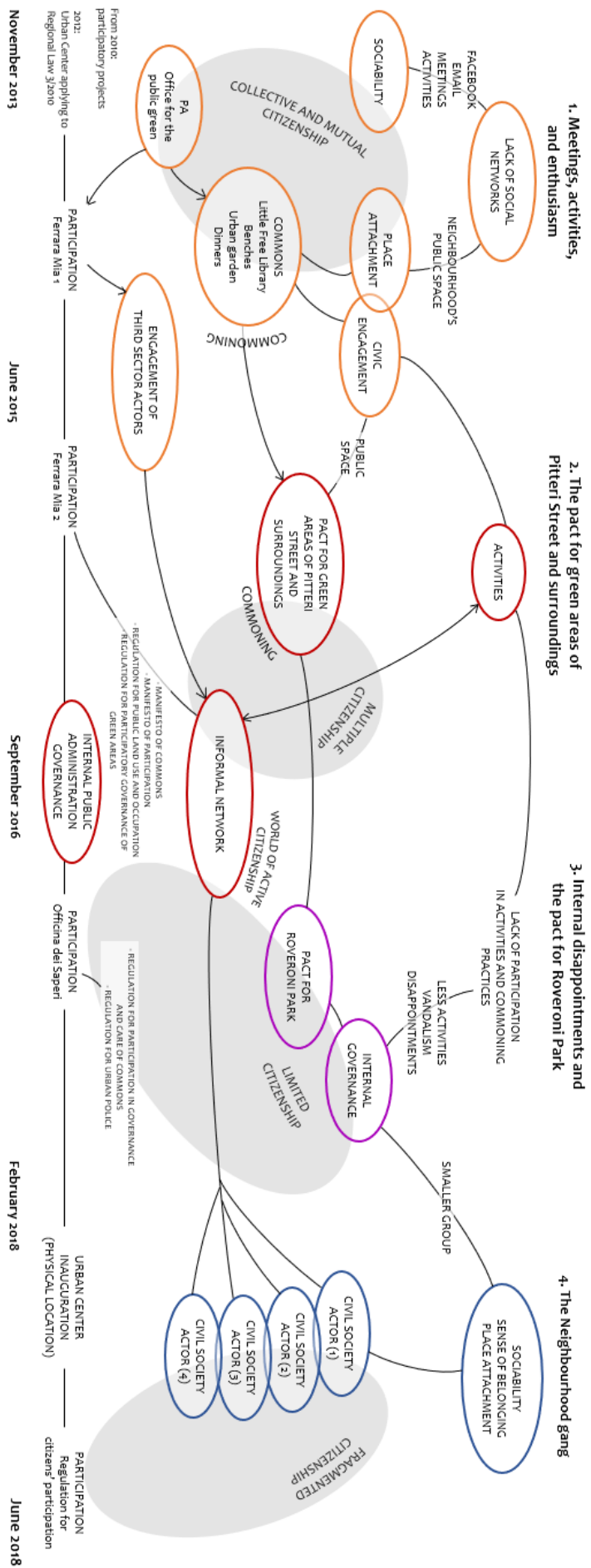


Fig. 5.10 – Representation of the SSF development, from the group's creation in November 2013 to the period of observation in June 2018.
Source: personal elaboration.

5.6. Methodological appendix

Table 1 lists all the subjects of the case study in Ferrara who took part in the research. The sector to which the interviewee belongs is also indicated, the instrument through which he was contacted, the research technique with which he was involved, on what date and in which place. Table 2 gives a deepening about the participants in the focus group: most of them have lived in the neighbourhood for twenty years; one of them lived in it for fifteen years and only three of them have arrived less than three years ago. The medium age is 48 years old and, generally, they are parents of teenagers. The only single person is the 72-year-old man. Table 3 contains the messages posted on the Facebook group wall and the answers obtained, while Table 4 lists the moments of participant observation. During my stay in the Bologna district, with the help of some members, I tried to organize an afternoon meeting with the SSF, but the bad weather forced us to postpone the appointment. In the following days, the daily commitments and the patronal feast did not allow us to find the right day to fix the meeting again. The founding nucleus of the SSf welcomed me with an evening at a pizzeria, just like they often do. The only focus group I managed to organize was with these members. With all the others I did semi-structured interviews and informal conversations. I subjected the actors of the public administration and the civil society to semi-structured interviews: all the actors contacted gave their availability except for an informal group of citizens who did not reply to my contact emails. In the municipal libraries of the City of Ferrara, I did not find specific material on the Bologna district and its population, so the reconstruction of its territorial and social development was not so exhaustive, as it was in the case of Trento.

Participant	Sector*	Contacted by	Technique	Date	Location
Alida	RMf	Other members	Interview	22/10/16	Private house
Piero	RMf	Other members	Focus group	04/05/16	Private house
			Informal conver.	14/04/18	Neighb. public spaces
Giuliana	RMf	Facebook	Focus group	04/05/16	Private house
			Informal conver.	14/04/18	Neighb. public spaces
Oscar	RMf	Other members	Focus group	14/04/18	Private house
			Informal conver.		Neighb. public spaces
Palmina	RMf	Other members	Focus group	14/04/18	Private house
			Informal conver.		Neighb. public spaces
Simone	RMf	Other members	Focus group	04/05/16	Private house
			Informal conver.	14/04/18	Neighb. public spaces

Manuela	RMf	Other members	Focus group Informal conver.	04/05/16 14/04/18	Private house Neighb. public spaces
Laura	RMf	Other members	Focus group Informal conver.	14/04/18	Private house Neighb. public spaces
Silvano	RMf	Other members	Focus group Informal conver.	14/04/18	Private house Neighb. public spaces
Noemi	RMf	Other members	Focus group	14/04/18	Private house
Giuseppe	RMf	Other members	Focus group	14/04/18	Private house
Raffaele	RMf	Other members	Focus group	14/04/18	Private house
Riccardo	RMf	Telephone	Informal conver.	28/04/18	Telephone
Francesca	RMf	Facebook	Informal conver.	09/04/18	Public park
Costanza	RMf	Other members	Informal conver.	24/04/18	Cafè
Gabriella	RMf	Facebook	Interview	17/04/18	Cafè
Martina	RMf	Facebook	Interview	17/04/18	Cafè
Christian	RMf/LPf	Other members	Interview	17/04/18	Cafè
Rebecca	LPf	Facebook	Informal conver.	12/04/18	Shop
Antonio	TSf	Email	Interview	09/04/18	Cafè
Diletta	TSf	Email	Interview	23/04/18	Private house
Elda	TSf	Email	Interview	23/04/18	Private house
Mario	TSf	Email	Interview	17/04/18	Office
Stefano	TSf	Email	Interview	09/04/18	Office
Enrico	PAf	Email	Interview	03/05/18	Office
Margherita	PAf	Email	Interview	19/04/18	Urban Centre
Caterina	PAf	Email	Interview Informal conver.	20/04/18	Urban Centre
Beatrice	PAf	Email	Interview Informal conver.	20/04/18	Urban Centre
Angela	RNMf	Facebook	Informal conver.	19/04/18	Public park
Matteo	RNMf	Mailbox note	Informal conver.	19/04/18 30/04/18	Telephone Email
Filomena	RNMf	Mailbox note	Informal conver.	19/04/18	Email

Tab. 5.1 – Individual and collective actors taking part in the research. For each of them, I indicate the sector to which they belong, the way in which I contacted them, the research technique I used, the date and place of the interview or meeting.

Source: personal elaboration.

* The sectors to which the research participants belong are coded as follows: RMf: residents in the neighbourhood, members of the Social Street; RNMf: residents in the neighbourhood, non-members of the Social Street; LPf: Local Producer of the city or the countryside surrounding Ferrara; TSf: Third Sector Bodies, active on the neighbourhood territory and come in touch, directly or indirectly, with the Social Street; PAf: representatives and civil servants of public administration, directly or indirectly involved in

the activities of the Social Street. The letter *f* marks the city of Ferrara. The abbreviation for the group Residents in Pitteri Street and surroundings, Ferrara is SSf.

Participant	M/F	Age	Nationality	Education grade	Job	City of birth	Living in SSf area	People /housing nucleus
Giuliana	F	54	Italian	High school	Employee	Ferrara	From 1994	3
Noemi	F	52	Italian	High school	Housewife	Ferrara	Until 2017	4
Giuseppe	M	53	Italian	High school	Agent	Ferrara	Until 2017	4
Simone	M	44	Italian	PhD	Professor	Ferrara	From 2003	4
Piero	M	72	Italian	Junior high school	Retired	Bologna	From 1998	1
Laura	F	52	Italian	High school	Nurse	Ferrara	From 2015	4
Silvano	M	55	Italian	High school	Employee	Ferrara	From 2015	4
Raffaele	M	24	Italian	High school	Employee	Taranto	From 2017	3
Palmina	F	21	Italian	High school	Student	Ferrara	From 1996	3
Oscar	M	56	Italian	High school	Technician	Ferrara	From 1994	3

Tab. 5.2 – Members of the SSf participating in the focus group. For each of them, I indicate personal data (gender, age, nationality, educational grade, job) and place-related data (the city of birth, when they move to Pitteri Street or when they move out, how many people they live with).

Source: personal elaboration.

Post	Date	Like	Comment	By whom	Note
Presentation of the research(er)	09/03/18	11	3	Giuliana, Simone, Laura	Welcoming me
Proposal for photographic activity	27/03/18	6	36	SSf active members + 1 un-known	Collected 12 pictures + 1 member who brings me the printed version
Meeting proposal	03/04/18	/	1	Stefania	She cannot be present

Organization of focus groups	11/04/18	1	6		5 members answer to the selection of possible days
Greetings and thanking	30/04/18	17	12	SSf members Elda, TSf	They all thank me, wish me good luck and hope to meet me again soon

Tab. 5.3 – My messages posted on the SSf Facebook group.

Source: personal elaboration.

Period	Activities
4 May 2016	Interview to four administrators of the SSf Guided tour of the neighbourhood
22 October 2016	Inauguration of the bicycle lane in memory of Carlo Lambertini, writer and sculptor of Ferrara
9 September 2017	Street cleaning and aperitif
24 March 2018	Inauguration of the Urban Centre Dinner with the SSf members
5-15/17-25 April 2018 3-4 May 2018	- Interviews: TSf, PAF, LPf, RMf - Focus group: RMf - Informal conversations: RMf, RNMf - Neighbourhood observation - Urban Participatory Laboratories at the Urban Centre

Tab. 5.4 – Participant observation of the SSf life, activities, territorial and social context.

Source: personal elaboration.

Chapter 6.

The Social Street Residents in Twenty September Street, in Verona

The Social Street Residents in Twenty September Street (*Residenti in Via Venti Settembre*) was born in Verona (Box 1) in March 2014. Twenty September Street is on the East side of the city centre, located in Veronetta neighbourhood; it is limited by the Adige river on one edge and by the Bishop Gate (*Porta Vescovo*), that belongs to the ancient wall of the city, on the opposite edge.



Fig. 6.1 – The distance of Twenty September Street from the city centre.

Source: Google maps.

Box 6.1 – The Region Veneto and the City of Verona

Veneto is an administrative region of Northeast Italy. Its population is about five million, ranking fifth in Italy. The region's capital is Venice. Veneto was part of the Roman Empire until the 5th century AD. Later, it was part of the Republic of Venice until 1797.

Regarding health and social policies of the welfare system, Bertin and Carradore's (2016) classification of local welfare models assigns Veneto to the cluster "generalised and generous system". The main characteristic of this cluster is the widespread presence of innovative and local social services, which means a high level of integrated social care services for older adults and a considerable percentage of children admitted to public and private crèches. The main actors are both public and private, but there are also signs of social cooperation.

Veneto is divided into the Metropolitan City of Venice and six provinces. The province of Verona is divided into 98 municipalities, whose capital is the city of Verona. After the municipality of Venice, Verona is the largest city of Veneto in terms of inhabitants (262.403) and it is also the third-largest city in northeast Italy. Characterized by the features of the Padan plain, Verona is built on the Adige river. It is one of the main tourist destinations in northern Italy, because of its artistic heritage and several annual fairs, shows, and operas, such as the lyrical season in the Arena, the ancient amphitheater built by the Romans. Because of its urban structure and architecture, indeed, Verona is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

After the second world war, Verona has had only one local government led by the socialist party, belonging to the left-wing. From 1951 to 1994, the Christian Democracy guided the city, while from 1994 to 2019 the city has been governed by right-wing coalitions, apart from a five-year interval (2002-2007) of a centrist party.

Box 6.2. Reading suggestions

The chapter follows the birth and development of the Social Street of Twenty September Street. The division into time intervals, from the date of its creation until today, is based on salient events and periods for the group itself.

Table 1 lists all subjects belonging to the case study in Verona, who have taken part in the research. In order to guarantee the anonymity of the interviewees, I changed the names using fancy names; in the same way, the references to Verona's reality and to the organizations to which the subjects belong have been neutralized as much as possible, so as not to make it possible to identify the participants in the research. For this reason, next to the mentioned name I report only the sector to which the person belongs, specifying the third sector body or the public administration office only if relevant to the research itself, and in any case if it does not damage the privacy of the interviewee or of whom is nominated by the interviewee. For greater fluidity in reading, I translated the excerpts of the interviews into English, reporting the original version in Italian in the final appendix N. With regard to the third sector cooperatives or associations I have chosen to use only one or two identification letters (e.g. De, Db, Va, Mg, etc.).

The analysis is interspersed with synoptic boxes, useful to deepen the geographical and demographic context of the area in which the SSv is located, the political and administrative situation of the city of Verona, the specific methodology applied to this case study.

Furthermore, pictures 2, 3, 4 and 7 aim to represent this story, using the theoretical concepts mobilized and showing the mutual influences between the shared culture of citizens, the practices of commoning and citizenship and the governance of public spaces.

6.1. The first and silent beginning

The Social Street of Twenty September Street was born on the 28th of March 2014, upon the initiative of a resident in that street, who, being inspired by the first Social Street in Fondazza Street in Bologna and longing for greater socialization with his neighbours,

opens a Facebook group. The group's description says: The goal of the Social Street is to socialize with the neighbours of your own street of residence in order to establish a bond, share necessities, exchange professionalism, knowledge, carry out collective projects of common interest and draw therefore all the benefits deriving from greater social interaction. This first phase turns into an attempt, that finds it difficult to take off. Between the end of March and April, moved by a strong personal motivation, the founder hands out leaflets to the commercial activities of the street and of those in the surrounding area. After, he begins publishing on the Facebook group photos of the neighbourhood's glimpses and sharing articles about the Social Street experiences in other cities. In the meanwhile, the first members register themselves and he welcomes everybody. In April the SSv is included in the list of the Italian Social Streets (www.socialstreet.it). There are the prerequisites for going from the virtual to the real, so at the beginning of May, the founder proposes to meet. Six members meet on the 11th of May 2014 for a brunch in one of the street's bar.



Fig. 6.2 – A spot in Twenty September Street.

Source: Facebook group Residents in Twenty September Street – Verona.

This first meeting is not followed by others, but the Facebook group remains very active, initially allowing the members to know each other. Unfortunately, after a few months, the SSv's founder itself leaves the neighbourhood, also abandoning the group management. However, beside the simple inhabitants of the area, also some residents of the neighbourhood – or just workers in it – register in the group, while they are already

involved in other associations or organizations of the civil society, engaged to the physical and social requalification of the district, to cultural proposals' offers and to the integration of diversities. Among these, in August 2014, Carlo introduces himself through a post on the group, telling about his being a member of the association De, which is concerned, together with other two associations, with the cultural activities carried on at Nani Garden (Box 3). The care of the Garden has been entrusted to them by the District 1⁵² of the Municipality of Verona, which includes the historical center and the neighbourhoods Veronetta, San Zeno and Cittadella. The comments following the post help Carlo to better explain their objectives and their activities:

«On Thursday, the 11th of September, we'll begin a series of meetings at Nani. We are forming a little Urban Center on the basis of previous experiences. It is called SUV (Veronetta Urban Development) and it is open to everybody. We will also talk about streets and probably the first to be taken into consideration will be Twenty September Street. There will never be a real program to be followed literally, but some guidelines on which to develop a common subject. The objective is the awareness of citizens, the knowledge of the common heritage, the search for the historical roots that generated it, the analysis of the social and economic dynamics. To get where? We hope to come up with solutions to share with our public administrators, trying to create a crumb of participatory democracy in this small and sometimes dull city of stone» (Carlo, TSv, from a post on the Facebook group, 26/08/2014).

The activities of this small group of associations, in fact, surely present a civic engagement towards the neighbourhood and in general the city, that brings associations' members to activate as citizens for the improvement of collective life. Nevertheless, as far as I can see from the Facebook group⁵³, the association De and the SSv do not manage in interacting and co-operating further.

Box 6.3. The Veronetta neighbourhood and Twenty September Street

The Veronetta neighbourhood is part of District 1, which also includes the historical center and the two neighbourhoods next to it, San Zeno and Cittadella. The neighbourhood is bordered to the west by the Adige river; to the south by the buildings of the University of Verona, by the monumental cemetery and by the railway; to the east by Porta Vescovo (Bishop Gate) and by the now imaginary line of the old city walls; to the north the district extends to the bend of the river, bordered by Ippolito Nievo Street and San Felice Street, and still includes the Ponte Pietra and Castel San Pietro, sites of strong tourist attraction.

⁵² About the definition and functions of the district, see Box 4 Chapter 4.

⁵³ This period has only been reconstructed thanks to the posts on the Facebook group Residents in Twenty September Street - Verona and by a few comments from the members who have registered since the beginning and who are still part of it.

The abstract boundaries of the SSv include – for most of the members participating in the research – the streets parallel to Twenty September Street, to the north and south, all the traverse alleys connecting these main roads, the university, and San Francesco Street. Veronetta is a historical neighbourhood, strewn with ancient alleys, churches, and monuments; there is also an ancient Roman theatre and the Austrian fort, known as Castel San Pietro. At the same time, it is the first housing unit of the city; the inhabitants live in one floor-houses and houses of few floors (three, on average). The main street is Twenty September Street, with the function of connecting the centre to the most external areas in the east of the city. Also, most of the commercial activities are concentrated on its both sides, making the street the very beating heart of Veronetta (informal conversations, May 2018). The Atlas research (see sections 6.2 and 6.3) found, among other aspects analyzed, the use of the ground floors of the neighbourhood, identifying the functions of each room. These are mainly bars, restaurants, shops of traders and artisans, and finally associations (De Biase 2017). Besides the shops, Veronetta hosts two historic markets, with a periodicity of three times a week in Isolo Square and twice a week in Santa Toscana Square. The headquarters of the Zanotto university pole makes the district particularly frequented and inhabited by young students, also marking its evening and nightlife based on the university parties usually held on Wednesday evening. During weekends, however, most students leave the city to return to their homes of origin. Another distinctive features of the neighbourhood are old military buildings and abandoned barracks. Strong is also the Catholic culture that impregnates these roads, due to the presence of Catholic missions, which host missionaries returning from international missions. Instead, there are no free green areas, which serve as meeting places, for play and leisure, while one can find private or public gardens, open only in certain time slots.

Veronetta has always been both a destination and a passage of migratory flows, from many parts of the world. Nowadays, in addition to Italians, Venetians and others, the most common ethnic groups in the neighbourhood are Africans, Sinhalese, Indians, Sri Lankans, Filipinos, Indians; women from Eastern Europe are also present. Due to these flows, but also to those of university students and missionaries, Veronetta is characterized as a neighbourhood with strong demographic change and low permanence. These factors, together with a predominantly right-wing political culture based on nationalism, have led, in the city mentality, to a ghettoization of the neighbourhood, labelled the “Bronx” of Verona. According to the perception of Verona inhabitants, Veronetta is insecure and not suitable for the life of families or single women. In reality, all the residents I have met, have the opposite perception and love the intercultural richness of the neighbourhood, appreciating its vitality and human dimension compared to the rest of the city:

«Those who live in Verona but not in the neighbourhood advised us against it. They said to me: you are crazy! I always say that it is the sea of Verona, it is the international district. The historic centre is in the hands of tourists...the beautiful thing coming out from the centre in the evening when I go there on foot, after crossing the bridge, it seems to me to enter a real city and leave a fake city. There is a real change of atmosphere. Pubs and bars are frequented by the Veroneses. And then it is the only international district, as it could be in Paris and London. My barber is Sri Lankan, he has now become an international star» (Marcello, RMv);

«I describe it as a young and stimulating neighbourhood, certainly alive. The neighbourhood Borgo Trento is very sad. Borgo Trento is recent, it is from the 50s, there is nothing. Here everything has

to be unveiled. I loved getting in touch with cultures. Srilanka, there is the Lebanese... this is the positive side» (Gabriele, RMv);

«It is a human neighbourhood. It has its own vitality, its identity, with many facets and many diverse realities» (Fabio, RMv).

The inhabitants of Veronetta, on the contrary, point out problems of different nature: traffic, especially buses for public transport, which travel in both directions at a very high frequency, causing noise and environmental pollution and posing a danger for bicycles and pedestrians; danger that is accentuated by the absence of cycle lanes and the presence of narrow sidewalks, shabby and disconnected from each other; moreover, the parking lots are insufficient, even for residents who, despite the possession of priority permits, do not find places. The second problem, highlighted by all, vehemently, is the multiplication of B&B and Airbnb accommodations. Regarding only the platform Airbnb the total number of structures is 200, with the availability of beds of around 800. Mainly addressed to tourists, the offer is also interesting for students away from home searching for more permanent accommodation, for travelling workers, for exhibitions' visitors, for opera's fans, for soldiers on leave, for university researchers. The stay is extremely short, around 1, 2 or 3 nights (Laboratoire Architecture Anthropologie 2017). Finally, a cause of annoyance to the inhabitants is dirt and inadequate management of the waste system. However, this problem seems widespread throughout the city and not only in Veronetta (informal conversations, May 2018).

«The problems of Veronetta, actually, are not the ones linked to the immigration, rather the dirt, the care of the territory (dog poos), beside the fact that many people complain about the conditions in which the city is left on Wednesday and Thursday, after the university evenings» (Giorgia, RMv);

« I believe that all the stories about danger are all gossip manipulated for the purpose of devaluing the neighbourhood and selling it at a low price. And of this, we already see the result [*referring to the B&B structures present in the neighbourhood*]» (Cristina, RMv).

In the last five years, Veronetta has also been the subject of debates between the public administration, civil society organisations and the residents themselves, regarding the request of the City of Verona to the national budget for the project of urban regeneration and periphery security of metropolitan cities and chief towns (see section 6.3). In this case, the budget is wanted to be used for the requalification of Palace Bocca Trezza, dating back to the 16th century, previous seat of a school of arts but left go to rack and ruin for decades. The debate regards first of all the classification of Veronetta as periphery, despite its central location and its important history. I quote a comment written by a member of the SSv group because it is very relevant to the issue:

«Veronetta is part of the Centre, lies between the city walls, is experiencing incredible growth and it is not a periphery. But it is a mental periphery and many people still consider it this way. I believe that mental peripheries make a periphery...this is the point. As resident in Twenty September Street I also think that the stretch before and behind Bocca Trezza is in a deteriorated condition, due to the choice to not increase the value of commons (the palace, the barracks...) and a desert extending for meters, that makes it an unusual street, being considered part of the Centre up to the palace, and periphery after it... Veronetta, then, lacks meeting places: a real park, youth centres, meeting places» (Serena, RMv/TSv, from a post on the Facebook group, 16/10/16).

Because of its peculiar characteristics and its differences with the rest of the city, Veronetta has always been a magnet and a privileged area of observation by researchers and writers. Below are some of the publications reported to me by SSv members:

- Chelidonio G. and Menichelli B. Eds. 2006. Veronetta: una rete di risorse culturali per oltre 3000 anni. CD, ARCI/Verona-Comune di Verona/Assessorato al Decentramento.
- De Biase A. and Zanini P. Eds. 2018. Atlas#1 Verona: Esplorazioni temporali di un quartiere (Explorations temporelles d'un quartier). LaaRecherches.
- De Biase A. and Zanini P. Eds. 2018. Atlas#2 Verona: La dimensione urbana delle fortificazioni (La dimension urbaine des fortifications). LaaRecherches.
- Di Nicola P. Eds. 2018. Veronetta, quartiere latino. Una ricerca tra Università e città a Verona. FrancoAngeli: Milano.
- Sorina M. 2018. Storie dal pianeta Veronetta. Tra le righe libri, Brossura.

In this period, also Serena tries to enliven the communication on the Facebook group and to bring on the net realities already existing on the territory. Sometime before, Serena founds the Db association in the Veronetta district, as an experience of political volunteering, to respond to the job training/job research needs of women, who live or have experienced a situation of disadvantage. Precisely for this reason, she gets to know and collaborates with the municipal service House of Ramia (*Casa di Ramia*), an intercultural centre for women. On the Facebook group of the SSv, Serena shares activities and events organized by Db and adds the virtual profile of House of Ramia to the group, trying to trigger virtual dynamics. Even this attempt, however, does not arouse the participation and involvement of residents in social and cultural activities.

After the departure of the founder, who stops publishing or sharing updates, from January till November 2015, the group falls into almost total silence.

At the same time, the Municipality of Verona proceeds to a revision of the regulations regarding commons and democratic participation and to the creation of a network of civil organizations. On March 31st 2015, in fact, the municipal council approves the guidelines for the participatory definition of a regulation for subsidiarity. At the base of the document approval, article 3 of the municipal Statute of the City of Verona is recalled, which inspires its action to the principle of subsidiarity, both in the relationship with other public bodies and towards the private subjects of the civil society. This resolution commits the administration to start a participatory process, accompanied by concrete experimentations and aiming, by the end of 2015, at the approval of a Regulation for subsidiarity. Secondly, during the summer, the Department of Social Services, Family and Equal Opportunities

organizes a path named Together for a Community generating Welfare⁵⁴. This participatory process gathers the Verona organizations engaged in the social sphere, in order to know, value and strengthen the taking of responsibility by the social system, also through the launch of new experiments, through collaborations created in view of specific objectives and regarding specific issues. The process goes on until May 2016.

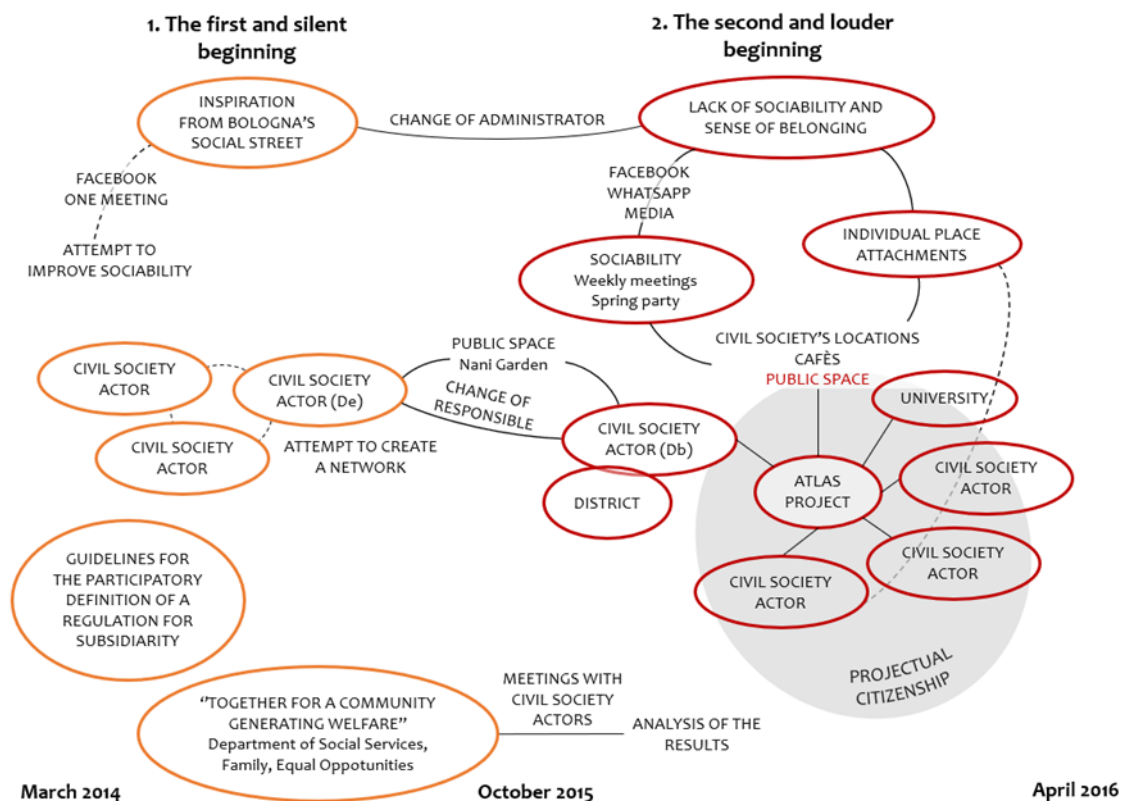


Fig. 6.3 – Representation of Step 1 and Step 2 of the SSv development.

Source: personal elaboration.

6.2. The second and louder beginning

The next phase of the participatory path Together for a Community generating Welfare consists of three thematic meetings, on November 16th, 23rd, and 30th, 2015, aimed at listening to and bringing in confrontation the civil society organizations of the city. The three topics dealt with concern spheres of the Social Services Area: Old and new poverty and fragility; The Community and the needs of care and growth; Subsidiarity: answers of institutions, of network and of neighbourhood. After the meetings, from December 2015 till March 2016, some operators of the municipal Social Services have re-read the

⁵⁴ https://www.comune.verona.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=47972&tt=verona_agid.

documentation produced in the November days, in order to identify some transversal themes that emerged and their priorities. The results are then presented at the meeting open to all social organizations on the 6th of April 2016. The transversal issues pointed out are: Live the territory; Employment, inclusion, opportunities; Communicate “the social” in Verona. None of the SSv members or of other groups or associations active on Veronetta territory talks to me about this project. The only person who refers to it speaking about participatory paths is Ilaria, member of the municipal council. She considers the attempts at active listening and commitment of citizens by the local administration to be insufficient.

While the City carries on this path, the history of the SSv proceeds, with an important turning point. Serena, who joined the Facebook group in August 2015 and is one of the most active members, so far on a virtual level, decides to try to relaunch the SSv despite the period of silence gone from January to November 2015. Thus, in November 2015, she proposes herself as the new administrator, taking on the management of the Facebook group.

«In any kind of crisis there may be, there is always something that can save you, that is relationships. So, this is why I searched for the social street. With extreme recklessness, this is also the reason why I applied to become an administrator when I saw that there was none» (Serena, RMv/TSv).

Serena arrives in Verona three years before from another Veneto city, for study reasons, and then she decides to establish precisely in Veronetta, because in love with the interculturality and vitality of the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, in three years she fails in building significative relationships with any other inhabitant of the neighbourhood and she does not find in Veronetta any place equal to the bell tower of the ancient villages: a place for meeting and socializing.

Serena starts again sharing news about the neighbourhood and events related to it on the Facebook group; she asks the actual members to add other residents; she signs up in the Social Street of Fondazza Street in Bologna, in order to understand the using modalities of the social networks and the intervention modalities by the administrators. Meanwhile, a local newspaper publishes an article on SSv and this acts as a sounding board for the second start of the group. Serena, moreover, is active in the neighbourhood through the association Db, so, thanks to the acquaintances made by collaborating with other civil actors on the territory and thanks to the virtual participation in the SSv, in a couple of weeks she already gets to know a little group of members. Two are the main strong motivations on which their participation desire is based: on the one hand, the will

to demonstrate that Veronetta is not only the unliveable and insecure neighbourhood perceived from the outside, but that inside it there are so many factors of wealth and capital for the whole city; on the other hand, the lack of relations with other residents of the area, caused by the strong mobility of the local population.

«A synergy has been created between some residents of Veronetta, between 4, 5, 6 people, sharing the desire that the social street is a means to bring out the beauty of this street, because this street is cross and delight to the Verona people, because the multi-culture is considered at the same time to be beautiful but the foreigners to be bad and ugly» (Serena, RMv/TSv);

«It was born precisely from this widespread feeling of those who chose to live in Veronetta: it's beautiful as a neighbourhood, I just don't know my neighbours because there is such a mobility» (Giacomo, TSv/RMv).

While this first group of residents begins organizing a meeting to which they invite all the SSv members, new people continue to register. The existence of the group spreads thanks to word of mouth among acquaintances, to the article on the local newspaper and to articles about the Social Street experiences in Bologna and all over Italy. Even the attention of the residents themselves towards their own territory makes them get in touch and become closer to the SSv because they are looking for a group of citizens with their own civic interests for the common well-being.

At this point, then, the SSv puts together people alone or with a poor social territorial network, but with a deep sense of place attachment (fig. 6.4):

«Veronetta is the intercultural neighbourhood of Verona. In the past it was also characterized by tragic situations, there were crazy sublets, abusiveness, building speculation, especially migrants. Then this situation was regularized, now the beautiful part of the intercultural remains and those who come to live here come for this reason too, believing it. I used to live here as a student and when I bought a house, I bought it here» (Serena, RMv/TSv);

«I like it. I feel all right. There are plenty of services, university, study room, bars, feasts, opportunities of relating to people. And then the cultural diversity of others does not scare me, it stirs me up. I consider it a plus, as something more» (Federico, RMv);

«To me, it is the Verona neighbourhood that I prefer, the most lively of all. In other neighbourhoods there is nobody around after 7 p.m. The university also helps a lot. I know that people speak ill of it, but I have been living here for long time » (Piera, RMv);

«It is a neighbourhood with the dimension of a small village. Here you really feel the sense of belonging. I feel like I belong to something, I have never had so many acquaintances in

a neighbourhood as I have here. As I lived in Valverde, before, I said I was from Verona.

Now, since I live here, I realized I use to say: I am from Veronetta» (Maura, RMv).

Besides, what they have in common is a sense of belonging to a neighbourhood community and a meeting place, where to establish and develop sociability practices.

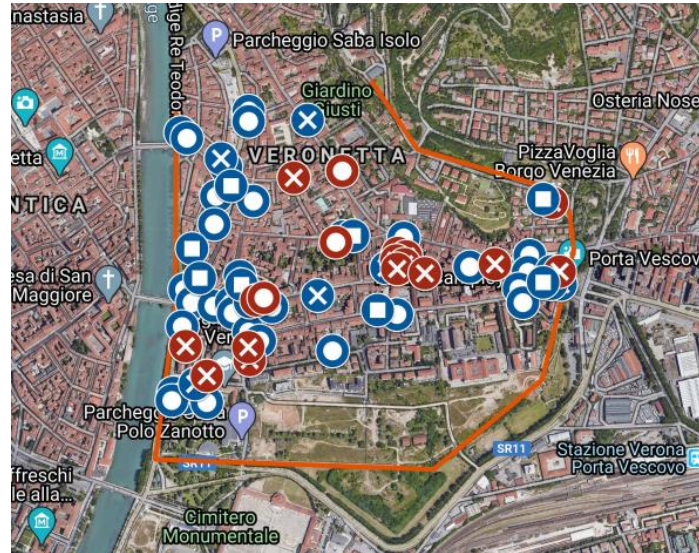


Fig. 6.4 – Emma’s mapping exercise. Even if the use and attendance of the neighbourhood – operationalized through the attendance to commercial (blue circles) and cultural activities (blue squares) are already high before the birth of the Social Street, the relationships with other people living in the neighbourhood are limited (blue crosses). The Social Street gives Emma the possibility to bond with new people (red crosses).
Source: Fieldwork.

The first two official meetings of the SSv, eventually activated, are held in January 2016. From this moment on, the group keeps at least one weekly appointment, in the first time slot of the evenings on weekdays. Having no SSv headquarter, the participants meet in cafès and restaurants of the area, choosing those involved in developing an ethic, sustainable and social activity towards the territory and the local population.

«There are bars who help the neighbourhood. The Bar Buongiorno has opened in the place previously occupied by drugs pushing, keeping itself aloof from this activity. In this way, the people suspected of drug pushing gave up to do it there. What we have promised ourselves as citizens is to have ethical behaviour, to take care to meet where people are and share what we do or need support » (Serena, RMv/TSv).

Some meetings also take place in the associations’ headquarters of the neighbourhood, according to the locations’ availability. The possibility of meeting in public spaces, however, is missing in Veronetta, especially in winter when the cold weather does not allow staying in the open air. The only place of Twenty September Street that could host

the SSv is the Nani Garden that, being as before administrated by District 1, has however changed its management compared to 2015. In fact, in January 2016 the association Db takes over the association De. In this way, Serena – new administrator of the SSv and founder of Db – finds herself from now on to manage two roles that remain deeply intertwined in her identity as a promoter of social inclusion and common goods.

«After a reflection with the outgoing (and really amazing) boys of De, we decided to apply for the management of the former Nani Gardens. We did it because we believe it is a common good that must be enjoyed together. We would like other associations of Veronetta (and not) and even ordinary citizens to think of it as we do and to make proposals to present in District 1, for this year » (Serena, RMv/TSv, from a post on the Facebook group, 28/12/15).

After the first months of management of the Nani Gardens, Serena asks District 1 for permission of using the rooms in the small building inside the Gardens for the SSv meetings. However, the request is rejected by the administration, being this kind of meetings considered unsuitable for the use of the room. Serena informs the group and promises to better understand how to use that place and how to make requests. The relationship with the District develops in this period not without obstacles. Even though Db manages the Garden and is in direct contact with the representatives of the District, is not easily able to mediate also for the SSv. The District seems, in fact, not to fully understand the values of the group, considering its informal and self-managed governance a factor not to be shown up in the projects promoted by Serena for the use of the Nani Gardens. Moreover, having always worked with structured methods and certain bureaucratic procedures, the District is sceptical and critical about new practices that require a minimum change in attitude and mentality.

In the meantime, the group continues with regular meetings. Even though some of them exchange the phone numbers and communicate through WhatsApp, Facebook remains the main tool for all communications, because it is considered the most inclusive way of communication, with fewer barriers to entry. One of the first proposals carried out by the members is to create a little vegetable garden inside the Nani Garden. Moreover, the group would like to animate the neighbourhood and the public space of the garden even more. Therefore, in March 2016, the SSv starts the organization of the Spring Party. The meetings of the month are almost all dedicated to the tasks distribution for the party (flyer creation, coordination with other local associations, project writing to be presented in the district). After obtaining permission to open the Garden to the public, the SSv fixes the date of the party for Sunday, on April 3rd, 2016. The party passes between the

installation of four terrariums for aromatic plants, the management of a stall of books to be exchanged and read together, board and card games, snacks, and small talk. Participation is high, even if the estimate of the number of people present is difficult, given the freedom of access to the Garden and the informality of relations and exchanges. The Spring Party is the first occasion in which the management of money occurs. The expenses for its organization are borne by a few members, who compare the amount spent at the end of the party, but nevertheless, do not expect to recover the money. They agree that the small amount collected that day as a free offer can become the common SSv fund for future needs. In addition, Serena proposes to try to look for refunds through the Db association.

The Spring Party, based on practices of sociability and collaboration, with the simple purpose of spending time together and sharing places with neighbours in an informal and free climate, distinctly mark the characteristics that the SSv wants to assume and maintain over time. Some members, including Serena and Patrizio, a few months earlier – precisely, in January, when the members had begun to meet again after the change of the group administrator – were worried that, instead, these values were lost. The effect of this concern is the proposal to participate in a research project for the study of the Veronetta neighbourhood with the aim of contributing to its redevelopment. In fact, Giorgia – a teacher at a primary school in Veronetta and living in the neighbourhood for twenty-three years – takes part in the first SSv meeting confident of finding fertile ground for the development of the project:

«I have been at the first meeting, there were about ten people. I already had this idea to see if we could put together a research work, to see if we could even break stereotypes in this neighbourhood. And the Social Street seemed like an ideal place to share this project»
(Giorgia, RMv).

Giorgia is already in contact with the Laboratory of Urban Anthropology and with a group of architecture researchers from Paris, who years before had followed the redevelopment of the Lazzaretto neighbourhood in Verona, and is trying to form a network of actors from Veronetta to include it in the project to be submitted to a call promoted by the Cariverona foundation. The SSv responds positively to the idea of becoming a network partner as an informal group of citizens. Together with the group, another eighteen active subjects in the neighbourhood participate (associations, a university college, an educational comprehensive institute, a library, a solidarity purchasing group). They look then for a network characterized by the engagement in planning this idea. As in the case of individual citizens who sign up to the SSv for the strong place attachment they feel

towards Veronetta, so the actors who decide to participate in the project do so for their own individual civic engagement and sense of citizenship. In this way, they become united by citizenship acted collectively, but limited to this specific project, which moreover does not see the participation of the public administrative actor, but only of civil society organizations and of the Veronese and Parisian universities.

Even if they agree with this participation, Serena and Patrizio wish to remind the group that the main goal of SSv is the sharing between neighbours and not structured planning:

«To me too, the priority is to get to know each other and share common reflections, with advice, ideas, and requests. Fondazza Street has started off building relationships in a neighbourhood because the social street is not an association or a committee, but it has the purpose of favouring a 360 degrees participation to whom lives in an area, through spontaneous and flexible organisation. I would, therefore, give priority to the desire of seeing and confronting each other as “curious” citizens rather than to the more demanding projects involving political associations or institutions » (Patrizio, RMv).

Once the planning and writing phase is closed – the project Atlas#Veronetta is presented to the Foundation on March 3rd, 2016 – the SSv members are relieved being able to take care of the Spring Party and enjoy weekly meetings in front of good food and a glass of wine. After the Spring Party, in April 2016, the usual meetings continue alternating with occasional activities, including a Bread Baking Day and a Stitching and Button-Sewing Day.

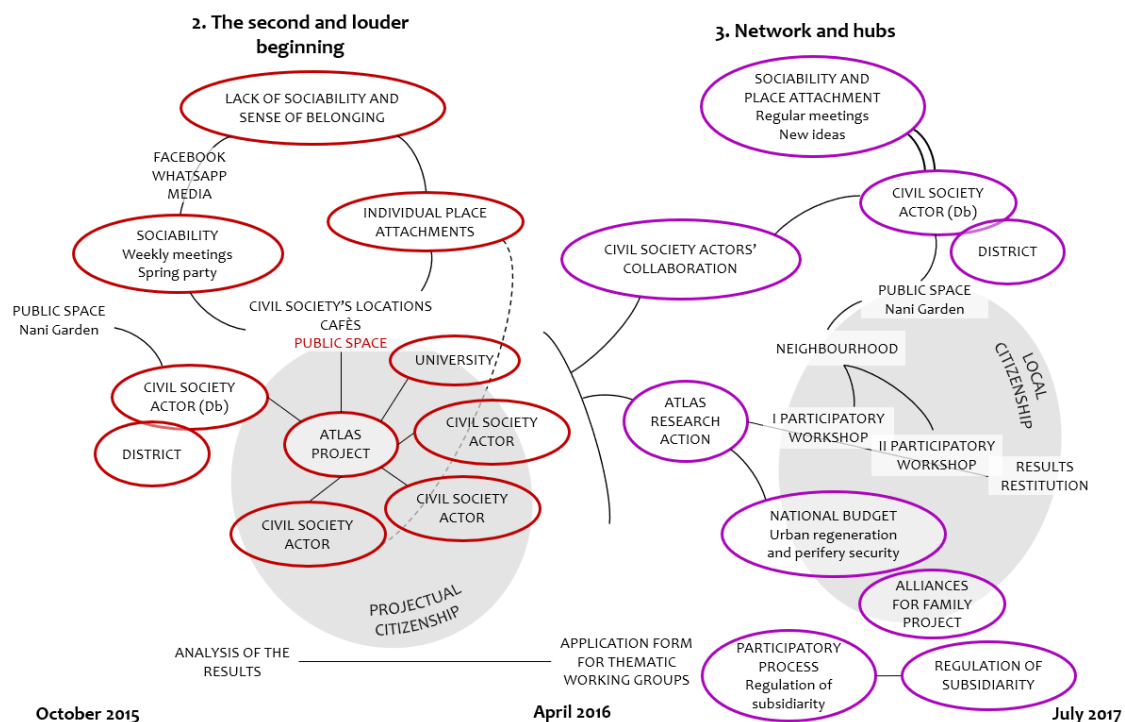


Fig. 6.5 – Representation of Step 2 and Step 3 of the SSv development.

Source: personal elaboration.

6.3. Networks and hubs

During the following year, from May 2016 till the next Summer (June/July 2017), the SSV continues its activities of socialization and sharing, based on informal moments. In addition to the weekly social dinner, the members gather on birthdays or feasts, purposely inventing some in the “dead periods”: the party in Twenty September Street in September is an example (fig. 6.5, fig. 6.6).



Fig. 6.6 – Patrizia’s mapping exercise.

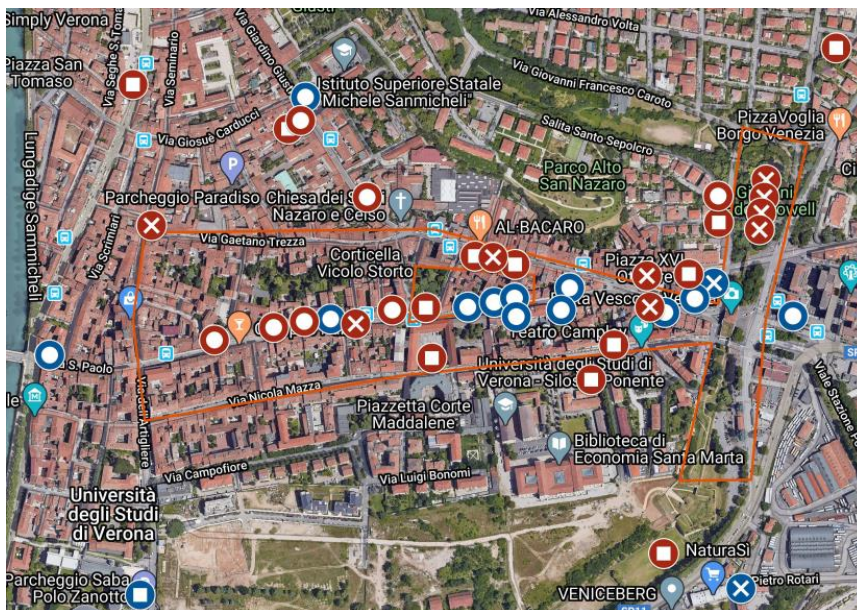


Fig. 6.7 – Filippo’s mapping exercise. Both Patrizia and Filippo had the chance to meet new neighbours, to use more commercial activities and to attend more cultural activities in the neighbourhood, after the birth of the Social Street.

Source: Fieldwork.

The Spring Party 2016 is repeated in 2017 but under the form of a special day dedicated to the yeasts culture. Besides, in this period, the relationships born in the first months of real activity of the SSv (January-April 2016) and the collaborations between the Association Db and other actors of the neighbourhood strengthen and develop further.

The opening of the university to the neighbourhood, already highlighted by the participation in Atlas project, is also expressed in episodic activities: in May 2016, a group of students organizes a pic-nic at the Nani Garden, in order to get to know the experience of the SSv and of other realities of the area; further, in December 2016, Serena and other members take part to the University conference entitled “The rights of the net” on behalf of the SSv, together with the founder of the Social Street of Fondazza Street in Bologna. These exchanges between the SSV and the University also arise thanks to the presence in the SSV group of two university professors.

Serena also continues feeding her professional– Association Db – and personal – SSV – interest in enhancing common spaces, animating the neighbourhood and including anyone who shares the same values of belonging and sharing. From this point of view, she continues to revitalize the Nani Garden with events and activities. The Atelier Nani project is born, which includes all the activities that revolve around the garden, but in particular, one day each month (usually the third Sunday of the month) dedicated to exhibitions, markets, and brunches, and two workshops a month (the Saturday afternoon) for children and families. Moreover, from mid-2016 onwards, the Nani Garden is frequented and used by the Association De, former administrator of the Garden and users of Bocca Trezza Palace; by the project of vegetarian gastronomy Te; by the SSv; by the Association Lf, permanent collaborator of Db to many projects; by the Lebanese restaurant Tabulè; by the committee Bt, born to make the Palace valuable; by a group of photo amateurs; by a group of social operators, citizens men and women who reflect on the theme of rights, through laboratories of active citizenship; by Mg, that makes valuable the social economy and the neighbourhood’s networks.

As regards, specifically, the relationship with the SSv, Serena proposes to the other members to collaborate more closely: both by making an official request to the district for the use of the indoor halls inside the Nani Garden during the social dinners, and by using a stall of the SSv during the Atelier Nani, explaining to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood what the group is doing. Every time Serena publishes a post, in the text she refers to all the ideas that are brought to her by the other members, tagging each of

them, so that the whole group can coordinate and try to realize these ideas. She, therefore, carries out a demanding job of mediation and coordination, trying to empower the other members to take the initiative to satisfy their own needs/desires, even if she holds the reins of the whole group and its development.

In relation to this, Serena proposes several times during this period to form sub-groups within the SSv, based on the topic or activity of interest. In fact, there is a part of residents in the group that has registered and follows the discussions on the Facebook page, in the hope that the SSv is the opportunity and the right tool to act on the neighbourhood and improve it, requalifying it both structurally and socially. Marcello and Gabriele are two of them. During a focus group, they tell me about not taking part very often to the socialization and informal sharing meetings with other members, on the contrary, they have always participated to civic actions for the good of the local territory. Both, over the years, have also made requests directly to the public administration, reporting neglect and the need for intervention where they found them. However, they have never received replies, also signalling their initiatives on the Facebook group of the SSv. Between September and October 2016, Marcello attracts the attention of the whole group on the issue of Italian funds for the redevelopment of the suburbs. In fact, also the local newspapers publish updating on the matter: after the municipal administration has sent the project, in June 2016, the Italian government has decided to allocate funds for the redevelopment of Veronetta. There are three lots with the related redevelopment plans and they concern the Bocca Trezza Palace, the former Santa Marta barracks and the former Passalacqua barracks, all abandoned buildings that contribute to the degradation of the neighborhood⁵⁵. The project for the re-generation of Bocca Trezza, situated in the Nani Garden, crosses the SSv on two occasions. The first occurs during the summer of 2016, when the Association Db – in the person of Serena – is contacted by Veronica, responsible of the Adult and Elderly Office of the Social Services area of the Municipality of Verona, with the request to write a project for the intended use of the interior of the building. Veronica admits that the deadlines for the project submission are too close to allow the organization of a participatory process open to all citizens:

«In this context, the processing times of the social part of the project and also of the architectural part were very fast and did not allow the possibility of making a participatory process. And therefore, to involve a whole series of subjects present in the neighbourhood partly known by us and partly not. Of course, we have heard the social workers and those

⁵⁵ For further information, some articles from the local press dated September and October 2016: <http://bit.ly/2Z8Pxc7>; <http://bit.ly/2KCIIOU>; <http://bit.ly/2KOUzkV>.

who work in the neighbourhood operationally on the social, educational, small social entrepreneurship, in short, those who work in that area» (Veronica, PAv).

On her part, Serena tries to involve the SSv, without however finding sufficient responses so to be able to give a shared and collective answer to the administration:

«I have always tried to interpret this request with a view to the common good, so to identify and respond to the hypothetical needs of the neighbourhood. I have also tried to consult the Social Street, but the time was not ripe. I have tried to describe the protagonist behaviour of some associations showing how it's the young people who take care of the neighbourhood, and how they are not spritz-young people [*young people who only think about enjoying themselves*]» (Serena, RMv/TSv).

Through this, Serena wants to emphasize the civic commitment that many residents of the area have developed, founding associations and interest groups aimed at improving the lives of all, and that for this very reason, it would be necessary to include them in the decision-making process and also reserve part of the building's spaces for this type of activity.

The second occasion in which the SSv is contacted in this context is the moment in which the municipal office convenes the Atlas#Veronetta project partners to discuss together the future destination of the interior spaces of the building. The representatives of the research team, after confronting with the associations involved in the project, meet the Municipality in November 2016. However, they decide to refrain from giving any usage suggestion, because it could be premature and binding. Instead, they only emphasize the importance of a study that establishes the ideal destination in relation to the needs of the neighbourhood and city. After the meeting, this news is communicated to all Atlas partners, including the SSv. Some of its members, like Massimo, do not agree with this choice and claim having lost an opportunity to get their voices as citizens heard by the Municipality. Eventually, after the various consultations carried out, the completed project foresees that the Bocca Trezza Palace, once restored, will host the offices of District 1, a conference room, the digital material of the municipal library archive, some services of the Municipality of Verona that need a new location and, finally, some new services, such as an Area for separated parents, a space for families with children aged 0-12 or a multipurpose room to be used by citizens for parties and various meetings⁵⁶.

The confrontation between the public administration and the Atlas partners takes place because the Atlas project, in July 2016, wins the call of the Cariverona foundation and is

⁵⁶ Currently, the national funds that had already been allocated for the redevelopment of the suburbs have been blocked, due to the change of government in March 2018.

officially activated. In order to learn more about the reality being studied, in September 2016, researchers from the University of Paris ask all the subjects of the network to give a description of their own group and their activity. On this occasion, the SSv underlines its identity as an informal group of citizens, whose main objective is to meet each other. The few members, who collaborate in the drafting of the document, underline the collaboration with, but at the same time independence from, other associations and from the municipal administration:

«The trend is ensuring that the links with the administrations and associations remain of an unstructured kind, and do not involve actual belonging, but simple exchange» (Social Street Questionnaire for Atlas; Collected material).

After the introduction of the network subjects to the Atlas researchers, the research takes place in the Veronetta area in two periods: a week in February 2017 and a week in June 2017. On both occasions, the Association Db places the small house of the Nani Garden at the team's disposal, so to let them take advantage of a workroom. The research is collaborative and requires citizens to collaborate with researchers to collect data and to formulate some of the central hypotheses. The first workshop is dedicated to the temporal reading of the neighbourhood, which is observed from the point of view of the rhythms of life of those who populate it (foreigners, locals, students). This view allows identifying the problems connected to the sharing of spaces and, also, the possible and alternative uses of the places. The second workshop focuses on the daily experience of the neighbourhood, wishing to observe the paths that its inhabitants regularly take: the researchers ask those who have spare time to act as their guides and to accompany them to visit the "daily" places of the neighbourhood. During my stay in Veronetta, nobody tells me about his own participation in the workshops, apart from Serena, who provides me with all the materials produced at the end of the research. The information I collected come from the published academic material and from the SSv's posts on the Facebook group. The project ends on 11 June 2017, when Atlas researchers present the main results of the research, exposing them to the Nani Garden in a concise exhibition entitled "A temporal experience of a neighbourhood"⁵⁷. On the possible impacts that the research had on the neighbourhood and on its redevelopment, I did not find any feedback and, also in this case, none of the members seems to remember the Atlas#Veronetta project as having an impact on the local reality.

⁵⁷ The references of the academic publications written following the project can be found in the bibliography: De Biase 2017; Laboratoire Architecture Anthropologie 2017).

Meanwhile, Serena has officially asked the District for the possibility of using the Nani Garden for the evening and weekly meetings of the SSv. In March 2017 the official confirmation arrives and from now on the Nani Garden – with its green space outside and its rooms inside – becomes headquarter of the SSv. Many members confide to me that the turning point of the group has been precisely the possibility to meet outside of commercial premises, such as restaurants or cafés, in which they were obliged to spend money. Moreover, almost all identify the SSv with the Nani Garden and the moments lived with the neighbours inside it. Therefore, considering the multiple uses of the garden by many actors of the neighbourhood, this place becomes more and more the hub, which individuals, groups and networks, different from each other, refer to, united by sharing the same space and the ability to collaborate for its use:

«I would like it became the neighbourhood Garden, a common space in which to live, to exchange ideas, cues, to stay together and to perceive even more our staying close to each other» (Serena, RMv/TSv, from a post on the Facebook group, 14/11/16).

In this phase, citizenship develops acted by many actors at local level: citizenship as right of using the neighbourhood and its spaces, and citizenship as the right of participating in the social and cultural life of the community. The SSv and all other actors of the neighbourhood's civil society activate their civic right to contribute to the common welfare, taking at the same time the responsibility to create social and physical spaces – therefore places – where to increase and spread the participation of all in this welfare. Up to the events of the Bocca Trezza redevelopment project, however, an open and constant dialogue between the local administration and the citizens does not develop, that aim at the shared governance of public places. The interactions between the two urban actors are occasional and not structured in real participation of the citizens in the decision-making process. They are mostly moments of listening by the administration.

Leaving the boundaries of the Veronetta neighbourhood, however, an attempt to increase citizen involvement is triggered at the general level of the City regarding the development of the Regulation for Subsidiarity. Even about this process, none of the SSv members speaks to me, except for Giacomo and Greta who were able to follow its development for work reasons. Thus, I reconstructed the process that led to the drafting of the Regulation solely on the basis of their comments, the interview with the General Affairs Office of the Municipality and the information gathered from the website of the Municipality of Verona⁵⁸. The participatory path, entitled “Verona for the subsidiarity”,

⁵⁸ https://www.comune.verona.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=52312.

begins in summer 2016, with a first collecting phase of needs and ideas by the citizens. The adopted tools are two on-line questionnaires, spread through the official web platform of the Municipality of Verona. Aim of the first questionnaire, published between August 11th and 31st, 2016, is to introduce the concept of subsidiarity and to understand the meaning and the function that citizens give to it.

«The concept of subsidiarity lives and exists in praxis. Very often, a citizen who takes care of the green area, I say to you just a little thing, does not realize that he is acting in subsidiarity. Therefore, we have also taken into account experiences of citizens, who were asking for a formalization of what they were already doing, because it is obvious that an institutional role behind you gives you guarantee and feedback on your capacities and on your commitment towards real commons, that belong to the community» (Irene, PAV).

The second questionnaire was released between October 3rd and November 4th, 2016, with the aim of examining which public functions are considered priorities, focusing also on the forms of support that the Municipality of Verona should make available to those who intend to sign a subsidiarity pact. Both questionnaires reserve a final part for the collection of desired examples of subsidiarity projects. The General Affairs Office collects about 100 possible projects that citizens, in associated or in single form, would like to carry out. Following the collection of replies received, in October 2016, a first draft of the Regulation for Subsidiarity is returned through the same web portal, open to citizenship observations. On the basis of the comments received, the competent office continues to draft the final version of the Regulation, which is first publicly introduced in February 2017 and then officially approved by the Municipal Council on March 2nd, 2017. During the first five months from its activation, only one subsidiarity pact is signed. According to Greta, the attempt to activate new models of collaboration is not taking place from the point of view of subsidiarity, but in an attempt by the administration to decrease public spending. Greta also claims that this first agreement has been signed during the election campaign to give visibility to some politicians (Research diary, May 2018).

Finally, although it takes place in a modality of service planning that does not involve citizens' participation in the decision-making process, however, SSv indirectly influences another path guided by the public administration of Verona. The participatory process "Together for a Community generating Welfare"⁵⁹ ends up, in June 2017, with the collection of registrations from civil society organizations interested in participating in

⁵⁹ In April 2016, the three transversal themes have been presented (Living the territory; Employment, inclusion, opportunities; Communicating the social in Verona) on which civil society organizations have expressed the desire to continue working (see section 6.2).

one or more of the job prospects that emerged from the path, developing innovative solutions in a participatory way. Unfortunately, I have no other material or information regarding the conclusion of this project: I do not know which subjects have registered, what the registration involved and whether from this path have actually been created operating networks. In December 2016, following the meetings that had taken place between the organizations and the municipal administration, however, the Office for Culture of Differences Equal Opportunities of the Social Services department activates the project Alliances for Family⁶⁰. In fact, the Municipality of Verona presented a nomination for the regional project a few months earlier, being selected together with other Veneto Municipalities. The objective of this regional initiative is to create territorial networks made up of social, economic and cultural forces that, in agreement with the institutions, promote in the local communities, policy initiatives that are attentive to the needs of families. Specifically, the project drawn up by the Equal Opportunities office in Verona and published as a call for the selection of partners in the territory as social actors (associations, cooperatives, etc.) identifies four objectives, dedicated above all to the aspect of conciliation family-work. The last objective, however, takes shape in experimenting local proximity projects, time-saving services and conciliation actions for young people. Within this last step, the project reads:

«Experimentation and/or support, in at least two neighbourhoods, of solidarity networks like the start-up of social streets, the restoration of good neighbourly relations, the activation of good practices of reciprocity between neighbours, such as the promotion of new models of family support; [...]» (Project Alliance for the family in Verona, Office for Culture of Differences Equal Opportunities).

The office managers, in fact, have heard about the Social Street experience during the meetings of Together for a Community generating Welfare, deciding therefore to include the idea in the project. Their intent is to encourage the birth of new groups or support the growth of existing ones, possibly recognizing the work already done in the area.

«We deal with equal opportunities and conciliation, so this has to do with it and above all, it was a way to bring citizens closer but also to work on active citizenship, on feasible, concrete collaborative relationships...then we need to understand concretely if it is possible to put them into practice, inside of...let me say it because now I'm old...inside an administration that I don't know how much awareness it has of what we are doing at a territorial level» (Nicoletta, PAv).

⁶⁰ https://www.comune.verona.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=58524&tt=verona_agid;
<http://www.regione.veneto.it/web/sociale/alleanze-territoriali>.

The negativity on Nicoletta's face is due, as she tells me, to a longstanding disinterest on the part of political figures in relation to family policies, in front of the effort of technical-administrative figures to emphasize the importance of satisfying the needs of any kind trying to get to know the area.

In any case, Serena tells me about this project during a phone call in 2017 and she explains to me that she does not agree with the idea of the public administration of stimulating the birth of groups like the Social Streets: these are practices which she believes must not be led in any way but have to be left totally free of being born and growing in the informality and self-management of citizens. Serena participates however in the project as Association Db, together with Association Lf. In essence, the Alliance project formalises and supports, even economically, practices and activities that the two associations have already activated over time. The project lasts from December 2016 until March 2018, when the regional funding ends.

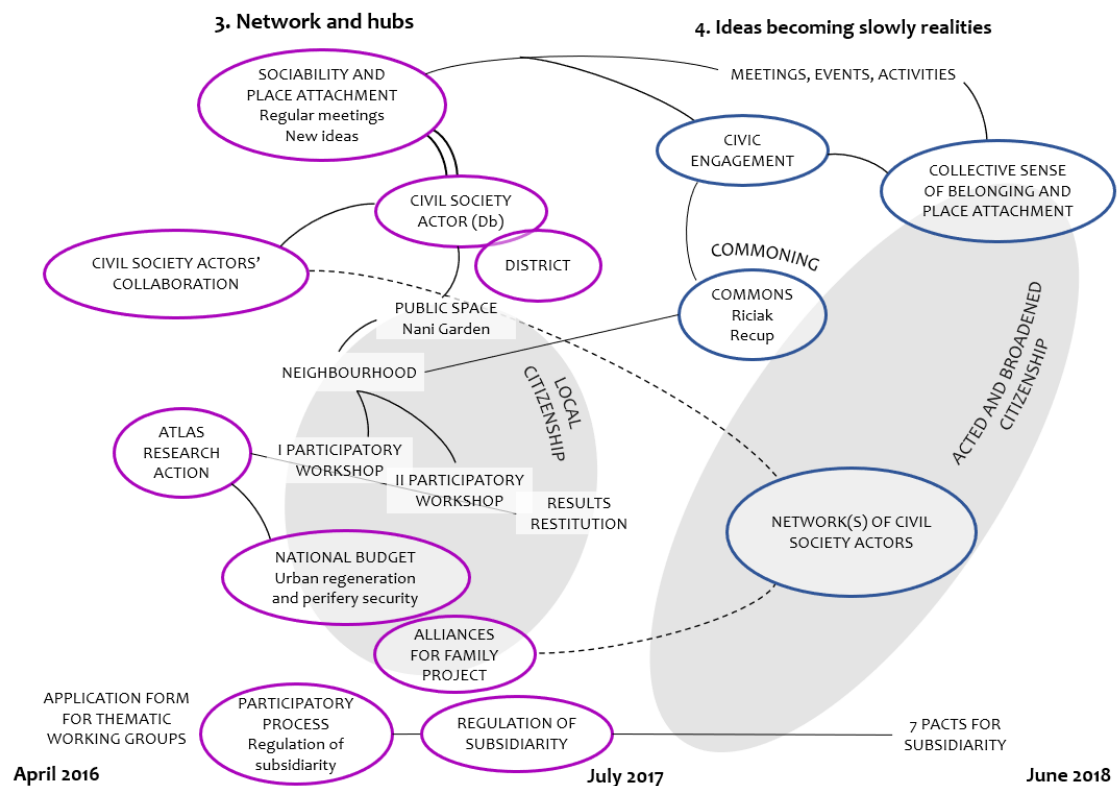


Fig. 6.8 – Representation of Step 3 and Step 4 of the SSv development.

Source: personal elaboration.

6.4. Ideas becoming slowly realities

Within the project Alliance, the Association Db, in collaboration with the Association Lf, organizes in Veronetta cultural and musical events, afternoon laboratories, neighbourhood practices and exchanges, facilitation of bureaucratic processes for families and enhancement of the Nani Garden as a neighbourhood place. The cultural and musical events take place in September 2017, during three evenings on weekdays, on the same days as the social dinner of the SSv. The purpose is to create a familiar atmosphere, that welcomes the neighbours in the park and makes them feel fine thanks to a shared meal. The invited bands play Latin and African music. The afternoon laboratories are organized, instead, on Thursdays and are dedicated to the children and their families. As evidence of how the Association Db and the SSv are now strongly linked to each other, these laboratories are managed by an employee of the Association, together with a Moroccan volunteer mother who was introduced to the SSv group by a neighbour during one of the evening dinners. Another way in which Db commits itself, in January 2018, to utilize the Nani Garden is to move into its space the delivery of fruits and vegetables by the solidarity purchasing group of Veronetta. The collecting day of the mentioned products coincides with the dinner of the SSv: this allows some members of the gas group to stay for the SSv meetings, and to some SSv members to get to know the gas group and their products' quality. Finally, an example of facilitating bureaucratic practices for families is Serena's effort to organize a Filipino wedding. Given the cultural diversity, it is necessary to request special permits and documents of the civil act. In addition, Serena, through mediation with the district, manages to make the wedding be celebrated at Nani Garden, always with a view to making it the neighbourhood space:

«I was able to mediate processes that otherwise I would not have mediated, because the municipality would not have been mature to talk about these things. Indeed, the municipality is very refractory to these practices » (Serena, RMv/TSv).

On the contrary, the dialogue with the Office Culture of Differences Equal Opportunities, which supports the Alliance project, and with the Adult and Elderly Office, with which the Association Db is in contact for the suburban redevelopment project, is easier, although not without misunderstandings, due – according to Serena – to the political culture prevalently widespread in the administration and the population:

«They are smart and I like them because you can also talk about things that are a little different from usual, but on commons they are not very receptive. Not only because of them but precisely because in this city, if you talk about commons, you are labelled a communist,

whereas instead, the commons should go beyond a politicized view of things» (Serena, RMv/TSv).

The Alliance project ends in March 2018. Despite the conclusion of the regional funding, the Associations Db and Lf ask the Equal Opportunities office for permission in order to continue with some of the laboratories and, above all, to find alternative and sustainable solutions to support the community of the neighbourhood. Over time and in the succession of the organized events, the relationship between the Association Db, the SSV and the district 1 also improves. Personal relationships based on the direct relation between representatives of the different realities help to build mutual acceptance of own attitudes, duties, and interests. In December 2017, for example, Serena on behalf of Db and Ettore, district councilor, organize an afternoon of Wishes exchange, close to the Christmas period, for the associations and the citizens' groups of Veronetta. The initiative is also presented at a municipality press conference on December 13th, 2017.

Remaining on the subject of collaborations, during my stay in the neighbourhood and through the contacts received from the SSV, I have the possibility to know in part also the relationships and the dynamics between other actors of civil society active in the local territory. According to my interviewees, both in the Third Sector and in the Public Administration, Verona is very rich in voluntary associations. In particular, in recent years many new ones have emerged that deal with the enhancement of the territory and local heritage. Even the existing ones begin to be sensitive to the theme of urban decor and of regeneration of abandoned or degraded places. Limited to the Veronetta district, I too notice a lively cultural and social ferment, and at least within the boundaries of the neighbourhood, this ferment seems to be shared and synergistic between the existing realities.

«Compared to what the neighbourhood is like, I see it and I live it in an increasingly active way, in the sense that over the years realities have emerged also connected to each other, in the sense that we sometimes talk to each other even as neighbours of association or reality...even the University of Verona is much more integrated within this neighbourhood and therefore is much more perceived, in my opinion, than once when it followed a certain straight path, interacting neither with business premises like local pubs and things like that, nor even with associations» (Valeria, TSv);

«It happens that when we know each other on the net, someone makes a service available, a good, something. And in a moment, it becomes a relationship, because then, in the end, those who do this kind of thing are more or less a consolidated group» (Carlo, TSv).

In particular, I consider two recent networking experiences noteworthy. One is called Box336 and is a group of diverse associations – currently, there are thirteen – born in 2016, following the devastating earthquakes of Central Italy (Amatrice, Norcia, Visso). This association was born from the previous experience of collecting comfort products activated on the occasion of another earthquake, in Emilia-Romagna in 2012. This initiative highlighted the strong participation and intense involvement of many Verona realities in helping the affected territories. Thus, in the wake of this success, when Amatrice is destroyed by the first earthquake, the members of the various associations, who remained in contact after 2012, informally and automatically start exchanging emails and messages wondering how to help. Instead of gathering comfort items, this time the idea arises of contributing through a cultural intervention, which can act on the social tissue also damaged by the catastrophe. After a series of self-managed and informal meetings, the Verona cultural associations decide to organize themselves into two parallel actions: a public event of theatre and music performances in a city square, open to citizens, with the aim of raising funds; a public tender announced by the order of architects for the design of a container to be built in a town of Central Italy for one of the local associations, with the aim of activating the participation of the populations affected by the earthquake⁶¹. The event in Piazza San Zeno, in September 2017, makes possible a collection of around 30,000 euros. The public tender receives 23 projects, which selected by a competent jury, allow to find the most innovative and sustainable solution for the construction of the box. Meanwhile, Box336 also announces a tender between the cultural associations of Central Italy, asking them for a useful project for this box. Based on the needs and wishes indicated, and also on the basis of the technical-administrative possibilities, Box336 chooses an association, among the eleven that have shown interest. In May 2018, Box336, in collaboration with the winning association, is working on the creation of the container on-site, which will then be filled with objects and/or activities useful to the cultural and social life of the local community.

«We were there, we found contacts on the spot that helped us out. We have carried out targeted campaigns in the area through newspapers, Facebook and we have collected eleven applications by associations. We made a selection: obviously, all this is also linked to the permissions of the associations to install a box; not all of these associations had permits. We went to visit the three selected associations in March [2018] the last time. One of them has won, so also the goal of creating a cultural bridge between us and them is still there

⁶¹ The set of associations that unite for the common purpose is called Box336, where box is the container to be designed and 336 represents the time (3:36 am) at which the first earthquake occurred.

because we are always in touch. At this moment we are in the phase of project realization and we will go to install it directly to their place » (Tommaso, TSv).

Box336 is also organizing another fundraising event, scheduled for September 2018, in order to update the citizens who funded the initiative the year before. If the money collected on the whole allows it, the goal is to build three boxes and allocate them to more associations in Central Italy or always to the same, perhaps with different functions of the container.

In May 2018 a further attempt starts aimed at building a network among civil organizations in Verona. I am invited by Carlo of the Association De to the meeting organized by Salmon Magazine for May 16th. Salmon is a magazine that is already involved in spreading the social and cultural activities of Verona and the province. His proposal is to act as a collector for the many existing realities in the area, creating an informal network of peers. The goal is to talk about each other's work, connecting people and situation: in a word, "contaminating each other"⁶². Secondly, the creation of this network can be useful to deal cohesively with the difficulties – bureaucratic, administrative, legal – that each association finds in carrying out its activities. There are about 50 people at the meeting, representing as many groups of citizens. Although many are in favour of belonging to a network, there are also many doubts whether this network is able to be formed and survive the intrinsic differences between the various organizations:

«How many times have we tried to put ourselves together? I have a feeling that they are attempts that are made and then fade away. I personally believe in the net, but at a certain point, it will be necessary to see if all the differences that characterize us are in some way united by a common thread that holds them together even if different...because one who has a museum is not like me that I make an African music and dance festival...it's obvious» (Alice, RMv/TSv);

«If the objective was different, if it was to fight a struggle...if there was an external goal to each of us and much bigger than us that unites us itself. Instead, it is still an initiative that to some would bring advantages and to others less, things begin in my opinion to become a little bit more difficult to manage» (Tommaso, TSv).

In any case, the meeting ends with the exchange of reflections on the possible utility of the network and with the promise of thinking about it, meeting again to talk about it and decide how and if to continue.

⁶² http://www.salmonmagazine.com/rete_salmon/.

After attending this meeting, the same day I go to the Nani Garden to have dinner with the SSV members. The group continues its work of socialization among neighbours, keeping up the tradition of the weekly dinner even during the summer of 2017 and organizing new moments of sharing: celebrating birthdays, decorating the Christmas tree in the inner room of the Garden, arranging a picnic for the Easter Monday and May 1st, gym sessions on Saturday afternoons and walks along the river on Sundays. In November 2017, one of the most active members from the beginning tries to revive the practice of a circular economy to reconcile lifetimes, avoiding having to buy expensive services and organize his own time in a solitary and frantic way. So he asks other members of the Facebook group which activities they would like to do all together or what kindness they would be willing to exchange with their neighbours. The post is followed by some comments regarding cooking, knitting together and the exchange of home maintenance works, but the members do not decide to organize any of these practices in a structured way.



Fig. 6.9 – One of the many social dinners of the SSV at the Nani garden.

Source: Facebook group Residents in Twenty September Street – Verona.

The governance for the exchange of solutions to individual necessities and the organization of collective activities always remains informal and self-managed from time to time based on needs. The division of tasks between single members is also not

structured in a defined way but depends on the presence of members in individual initiatives and their personal abilities. The only regular and stable aspect is the coordination of Serena, which never fails to remember the group's appointments, to organize online activities with the other Veronetta actors and to try to include as many people as possible. As well as the Nani Garden has become a hub – a junction and a reference point – for the residents of the neighbourhood and not only, so much Serena is a hub as a reference person from whom many networks branch out, that she increasingly tries to relate to each other through new textures. All the members of the SSv that participate “really”, and not only virtually in the group, recognize her great charisma and her deep intelligence, together with a good dose of joviality. They also admit that without her and without her dual role (SSv and Db), probably many possibilities would not have materialized for the SSv. I deeply talk about it with Serena herself, in whom I find marked reflexivity on her role, on that of Nani Garden, of Db and on the identity of the SSv.

«I always put myself under discussion because the Social Street is not mine, as well as Db is not mine, it is everyone's good » (Serena, RMv/TSv).

When other members call her or introduce her as “the administrator/organizer”, Serena is annoyed and exasperatedly answers that the organization is the group (Research Diary, May 2018). Despite this, she realizes that she was the only one who wanted to take the reins of the group in 2015; along with the fact that if she had not established relations with the public administration – even if this officially happened as Association Db – the history of SSv would have been different. Serena benefits from this ability to cover different roles and to find a meeting point with various actors, sometimes opposed, of the Verona reality, and does not let herself be influenced by the social labels that others attribute to her:

«Now and in the last six years, since 2012, I am this way: I conquer spaces little by little, sometimes doing things before they say it's possible and then saying that it is possible; they say I am a politician and I have this dual role: the communists tell me I am too Catholic and the Catholics tell me I am too communist. I ultimately consider neither group. But here...although they think we have divergent ideas, however people propose to me to do things, even the administration. And in the end, they do it, because who gives a damn what identities they sew on me, but I do the things» (Serena, RMv/TSv).

Thinking back to the years spent with the SSv and to the people who approached and then moved away from the group, yet accepting it, Serena regrets if someone has gone because of her presence:

«I believe that if some processes move, it is because I am there: this is sometimes so favorable to the development of the Social Street, but sometimes if I am unpleasant, you would not dream of coming close at all. Then, beyond sympathy or antipathy, I wonder how much a strong charisma exerts an influence on these processes. We'll know in years and years. It is that I am sorry to lose people who go away, because maybe if I was not so cumbersome, they would be there» (Serena, RMv/TSv).

Another aspect of her role as an administrator that she does not like to play is to moderate the discussions that arise on the Facebook group. To do this, Serena chooses, sometimes, to remove what has been published, even if this action is preceded by many questions about her own authority and how much she is allowed to do this. In the end, when necessary, it does so to protect the core value of the Social Street experience:

«This afternoon, as a moderator, I removed the post about a demonstration and some days ago a presentation of parties, claims and more. Even aware that it was a non-party event, the choice was to limit aspects that in any case belong to politics, although many women and men here are active in politics first (some even in effective politic) and we believe in dialogue and confrontation, which – together with the relationship, solidarity, mutual help, and culture – characterize us as a group [...] Moderation choices are not choices that deny identities and are extremely soft and are based, in addition to the non-economic promotion, on the site and the indications of the format, which I report to you: “Inclusion: important is the choice to focus on everything that unites people (excluding what it divides), to be proactive even in front of the harshest criticisms, not to accept being against without being constructive, to exclude languages unacceptable by all the members of the group”» (Serena, from a post on the Facebook group, 20/02/2018).

In addition to posts regarding demonstrations or party positions, Serena chooses to cancel, or at least limit, the interventions of members who continually and only advertise economic or personal activities, which have no impact on the community and the local territory.

In November 2017, I read on the Facebook group about the last attempt by Serena to form thematic subgroups, one of which in particular on the co-construction of the neighborhood. She tries to include those members who would like the SSv more committed to these aspects. Formally a work table never starts, however it is precisely in this period that after so many talk and shared dreams during the social dinners, the ideas of some residents begin to materialize. Already in July 2017, two or three members are working to find an abandoned building in the Veronetta area to be used as co-housing. After a few months, they are negotiating for the building of the former Bell Foundry, right in Twenty September Street. They tell me about this project when I arrive in May 2018

and are a little demoralized by the difficulty of getting the permits to proceed: the bureaucracy seems even more irresolvable when it comes to abandoned buildings, maybe decadent and unsafe.

In the meanwhile, in October 2017, during a social dinner, someone reminds other members of the presence of cinemas in the neighbourhood. The elder SSv members and those, among the young, who have access to photos of the past years⁶³, begin to dig out information about it in the historical memory of the neighbourhood. In fact, nowadays, the neighbourhood has no longer a cinema and, thus, fantasizing about the enrichment of the social and cultural life that such a service would bring to Veronetta, the SSv starts planning the reopening of the old cinema Ciak. The building in which the old cinema stands is from 1972; accessed from the Embassy Gallery, which connects Twenty September Street and Cantarane Street. The cinema, still privately owned by a Veronese family, has now been closed for ten years. The idea that, slowly, dinner after dinner, takes shape thanks to the civic imagination of the members of the SSv is to reopen the cinema – with the new name Ri-Ciak - as a community cinema. The aim is, therefore, to transform the cinema into a place of aggregation, sociability, leisure, and cultural offer: in addition to film projections, the SSv would also like to organize spaces for a bar and for laboratories available to other realities in the neighbourhood. Between the end of April and the beginning of May 2018, the SSv begins to dedicate the second part of the social dinners to organizational meetings for the reopening of the cinema. Many are the questions to be discussed: the formation of a group of advisers, that is, the restricted group of members designated to make the main decisions; the formation of operational subgroups (promotion and communication; public relations; event organization; restructuring; administration; cultural strategy) and the selection of a contact person for each group; the agreement with the cinema owner; logo creation; fundraising.

At the end of the second meeting, on May 2nd, 2018, some of the advisors discuss the need to separate the convivial moments of the SSv (dinner, informal meetings) from the organizational moments of the group Cinema, in order to increase the concentration on operational needs. Furthermore, they underline the importance of keeping the Ri-Ciak project group well defined. The reasons are multiple: protecting oneself from the excessive growth of the group and, therefore, from having to work with unknown people; protect the project from possible “theft” of ideas; avoid that some participants appear only

⁶³ A photograph posted on the Facebook group dates back to the 1940s and portrays the sign of a cinema Ariston.

at a few meetings, without effective engagement. For this reason, the advisors decide not to include in the mailing list anyone who presents himself every now and then to the meetings, but only those who are included in the group because they are trusted and known and actively engaged in the project.

Marta is mainly involved in contacting the owner, as for work reasons and long presence in the neighbourhood she has many contacts. The owner is a Veronese businessman who, after a letter from the SSv – also preceded by informal verbal contacts – delegates one of his collaborators to manage the relationship and the agreement with the group. The SSv proposal is to sign a 15-year bailment. Thus, citizens could make a long-term investment, and not only the owner of the cinema but also the community could benefit from it in these first 15 years.

Another key topic discussed at the meetings is participation in the regional tender POR-FESR 2014-2020 as a funding opportunity. The Regional Operational Program (*Programma Operativo Regionale-POR*) is the tool through which the Veneto Region promotes a plan of social and economic growth in the sectors of industrial development, of digital agenda, environment, and innovation. The funds (in total around 600 million euros) come from the European Union, the Italian State and, in part, from the Region itself. The European Fund for Regional Development (*Fondo Europeo di Sviluppo Regionale-FESR*) is one of the European structural funds with the objective of financing development projects within the European Union. The Ri-Ciak cinema project is sent to the Region by May 18th, 2018. In the meantime, pending the outcome of the call for tenders, SSv discusses the possibility of activating public crowdfunding for the collection of other funds in the form of social shareholdings: the final idea is to request a 55 euro share to anyone who wants to participate and support the project.

During the months of May and June 2018, the subgroups organize their work, producing some proofs of the logo, making the first inspections in the closed cinema with the collaboration of the engineer chosen by the owner, and organizing the first events of promotion of the project to raise awareness among the citizens.

At the same time, in March 2018, Giacomo, together with five friends, starts an initiative that he had been brooding for some time: to retrieve the food that is thrown away because unsold, even though it is still edible. The Recup project is born, inspired by the Recup Social Promotion Association of Milan. The purpose is to combat food waste in the local markets of the city, while at the same time avoiding that people in need of fresh food are reduced to looking for it in the rubbish bins. The first attempt is carried

out at the Bentegodi Stadium Market on March 31st, 2018: Giacomo and his friends go to the stadium, located in another neighbourhood than Veronetta, nearly at the closing time of the market (13:00); they buy three or four espresso coffees at the bar and take them to sellers of fresh fruit and vegetables. While offering them coffee, they explain the idea of the initiative. Three market vendors agree and enthusiastically welcome the project, declaring themselves ready to supply them with food. Once the boxes of fruit and vegetables are collected, the volunteers gather them near a bench. Afterwards they draw the attention of people who were seen rummaging through the garbage and offer them food for free. Given his membership in the SSv, Giacomo does not hesitate to use the Facebook group to divulge what he is doing, so on Saturdays, some members of the SSv join to help. On April 17th, 2018, Patrizia and Luce try to activate the same initiative at the market in the Borgo Venezia neighbourhood. In fact, the topics dealt with by Recup arise interest in some of the younger members of the SSv.

«In the Social Street interest groups have formed: those who make the social dinner, those who jog together, the cinema project... what happened there is that within the Social (Street) we have recognized ourselves as similar people, who had similar interests, starting from not being subjected to the territory, but actively experiencing it, to make and change the social context. Many volunteers come from the Social Street and some of Recup have come to the Social (Street) [...] let's say that Recup has activated the young part of the Social Street in some way» (interview with Giacomo and a volunteer, published in a local newspaper in January 2019⁶⁴).

However, the number of SSv members and citizens in general gathering around the Recup project is not enough to allow volunteers to run the activity on two markets, so they choose to concentrate on the Stadium market. Within two months, the initiative becomes regular and Recup volunteers begin to be expected every Saturday from both fruit and vegetable vendors and those who receive food. Giacomo creates a whatsapp group for the management and coordination of the activity. Moreover, they decide all together to organize brunches on some Sundays of early summer at the Nani Garden, taking advantage of the help of the Association Db to request permission of using the Garden outside regular hours. So after retrieving fruit and vegetables on Saturdays at lunchtime, the volunteers spend Saturday afternoons cooking and preparing desserts, then gathering on Sunday mornings in the garden, offering dishes to citizens in exchange for free offers.

⁶⁴ <https://ilnazionale.net/storie/recup-combattere-lo-spreco-alimentare-e-lesclusione-sociale-attraverso-il-fare/?fbclid=IwAR2HVTEci8-6yWTssPoFJZtUrim8qZuOi6P8M9HRTQCTZZRINzg-5H8jFb0&cn-reloaded=1>.

The brunches become thus an opportunity for promoting the Recup activity and for fundraising to cover the costs sustained by the volunteers (coffee, balance, gloves, etc.).



Fig. 6.10 – The group of Recup volunteers, after the collection of fruits and vegetables, and ready for the redistribution.

Source: Facebook Page RecupVerona – <https://www.facebook.com/recupverona/>.

All the actions taken by the members of the SSV in this period are evidently dictated, first of all, by an intense place attachment, already present in each of them, towards both the Veronetta neighbourhood and the urban territory in general. Secondly, participation in the SSV gives them a sense of belonging to a community of neighbours: not just neighbours, but close to each other thanks to social and cultural values. Finally, this sharing triggers in each of them the civic engagement necessary to operate actions aimed at collective well-being. Thus, the cinema Ri-Ciak and Recup become real commons of the SSV, or better, of small groups born in the SSV. Around the two projects, two distinct communities of commoners are defined, which provide control over access and inclusion of new members. Furthermore, both groups organize themselves through different commoning practices, establishing moments of encounter, division of roles and rules that all participants must respect.

Through the common resources and the commoning practices for their management, the SSV – which includes the various interest groups - advances its citizenship rights for

the recovery of abandoned places, for the redevelopment of the local territory and for the inclusion of otherwise excluded social groups. Furthermore, it is a citizenship that is not limited to issues related to the neighbourhood, but that expands beyond its borders, to reach other areas of the city. This type of citizenship, however, takes shape only thanks to the active contribution of the members of the SSv, or more generally of the civil society organizations engaged in the territory, which find space for their action among the intricacies of the existing bureaucracy. The role played in these processes by the municipal administration is limited to the granting of permits for their development and economic support, in the form of public tenders. The only administrative change, started in any case within the municipal machine, was in March 2017, with the approval of the Regulation for subsidiarity. After a year and two months, in May 2018, the collaboration agreements signed between the City and the citizens are seven.

The perception of the SSv members participating in the focus groups is that there is a total detachment between the public administration, on the one hand, and the citizens, single or associated in groups, on the other. The governance of public services and spaces is seen as centralized in the hands of political decision-makers and organized hierarchically, where the Municipality delegates the management of the city to cooperatives and subsidiaries:

«At the top, there is the institutional part, very conservative, at the bottom instead there are the citizens, with their social movements and social entrepreneurial realities that make “resistance”, carry on the concept of community, are more innovative» (Filippo, RMv);

«There is a hierarchical, patronage or conflict relationship between decision-makers and others. The concept of “participatory governance” of commons in Verona has not yet arrived» (Raffaella, RMv).

According to some, the different spheres of the population – Veronesi, residents in Verona but not originally from Verona, off-campus students, foreigners – receive different rights and opportunities. Even the administrative actors, the districts, that in theory should be closer to the citizens, are perceived as distant or non-existent (fig. 6.11, fig. 6.12.). The district meetings are open to citizenship, but the inhabitants of Veronetta participate very seldom, due to the distrust of local politicians. This mistrust is increased by the lack of answers that citizens denounce following their specific requests to the administration.

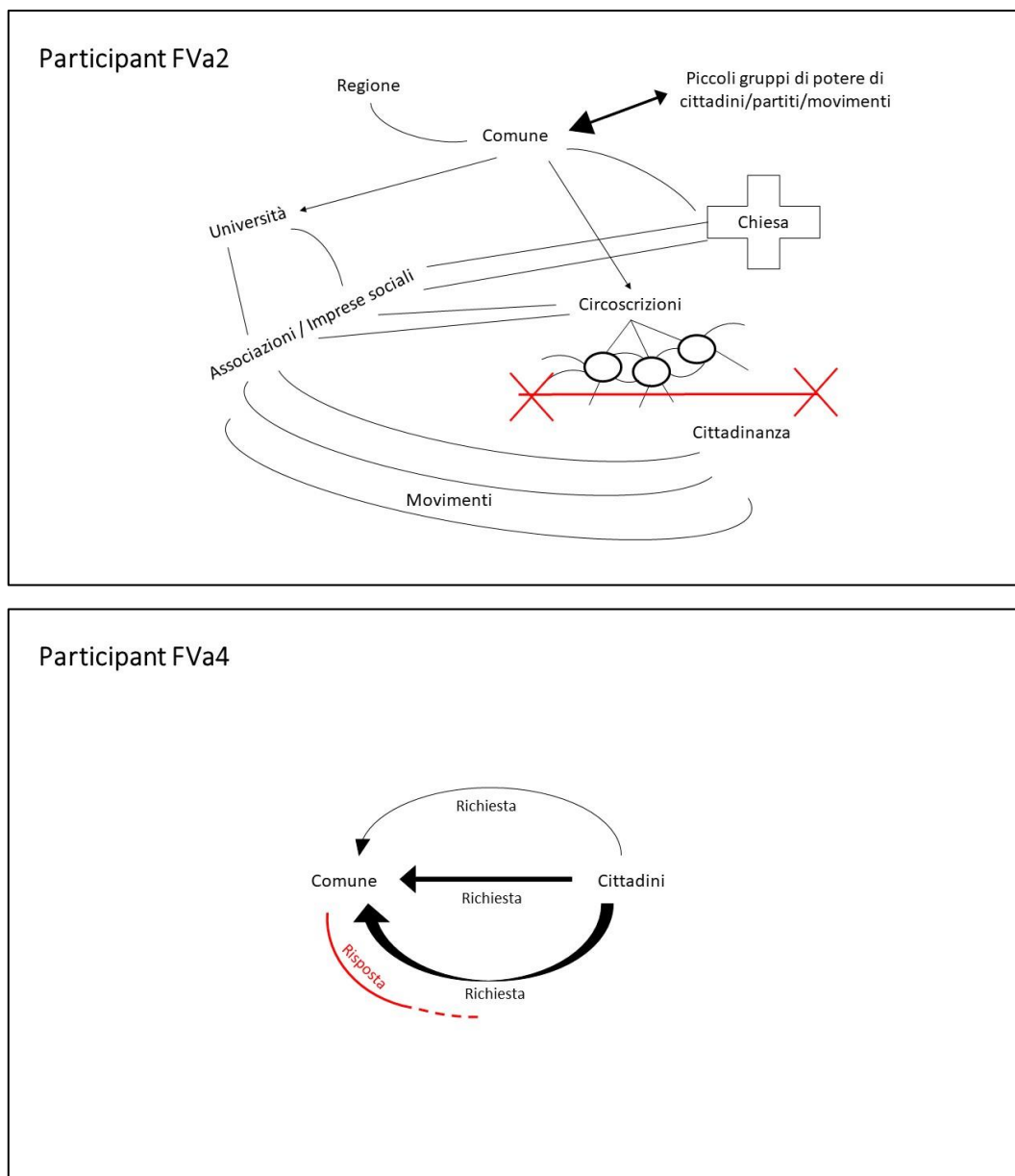


Fig. 6.11, Fig. 6.12 – Maps of two SSV participants' citizenship perception, representing the detachment between the citizens and the local government. In the first map, even the districts (*circoscrizioni*), are represented as distant from citizens (*cittadinanza*). From this picture, the dialogue between citizens and public actors seem possible only through the intermediation of voluntary association or social entrepreneurship (*associazioni/imprese sociali*). The second map shows how the requests forwarded by citizens to the local government (*Comune*) do not receive proper nor complete answers (*risposta* – red, incomplete arrows).

Source: Fieldwork.

This is another reason why the interest in improving one's own territory and the quality of collective life result in the actions of the SSV, in a group united by the sense of belonging and by the attachment to the place and the community. When I leave the SSV, at the end of May 2018, I have the feeling of getting out of a whirlwind of activities,

interests, values, charismatic people and ideas, which swallowed me up a month earlier. But what has been fundamental for the development of the SSv and that still keeps it alive, is the socialization created between its members: the sharing, the exchange and the informality that all the members describe to me as the pure pleasure of being together:

«Having the Social Street has been useful because in three years I hadn't known anyone. And I reinforced bonds that I didn't think. Then you discover many things that could be interesting junctions: a person who comes from your own city of origin and then you go together by a single car. Then one tells me: we do crochet working and I know of another who does it and I say yes let's do it together. You create a network (Serena, RMv/TSv);

«There is the fact that knowing people within the Social Street we trust more, that perhaps exchanging things and favors with totally unknown people, on the contrary, there would have been more mistrust» (Raffaella, RMv);

«In the end, it is really like being at home» (Patrizia, RMv).

6.5. Overview

From the moment of its creation, in March 2014, until June 2018, the Residents group in Twenty September Street – Verona goes through many phases, constantly characterized by an intense place attachment of citizens and civil society organizations towards the urban territory, together with a detachment between the latter and the public administration.

The first attempt of a Veronetta's resident to create a Social Street in Twenty September Street takes the move from the first experience of Social Street in Bologna. However, the first meeting between the first members of the group is not enough to trigger sociability and sharing practices. Despite the efforts of some members, the collaboration between civil society actors already active in the neighbourhood is not reinforced. On the administrative front, the municipal council approves the Guidelines for the participatory definition of regulation for subsidiarity and, at the same time, the Department of Social Services, Family and Equal Opportunities organizes a participatory path addressed to Verona organizations in order to enhance and strengthen the taking of responsibility on the part of the social system, also through the start of new experiments and collaborations (Step 1).

After the first administrator of the SSv has left, the group tries to start again thanks to the initiative of another resident and a small group of members. Although they are all very close to the neighbourhood, due to its particular social and cultural characteristics,

they suffer the lack of sociability, social relations and sense of belonging to the local community. After the first again organized meetings, the SSv group consolidates and establishes the tradition, never abandoned, of meeting once a week. The location of the meetings changes from time to time, due to the lack of a public place of socialization in the neighbourhood. However, an important link between the SSv and the Nani Garden is already growing, thanks to the dual role of the new administrator, founder of the Association Db, that manages the garden. Precisely for the management of the garden, shared with the District, some misunderstanding is created between the association and the administration, because of the scant knowledge of mutual procedures. The convivial moments of the SSv, including the Spring Party, serve the members to keep firm and transparent the values of sharing and informality that the group prefers. In fact, these values risk being hindered by the participation of the SSv as a partner of a territorial network in the Atlas#Veronetta research project. The project aims at an analysis of the spaces of the area for a subsequent and possible redevelopment of the neighbourhood. Activating actions on the territory and the participation of the residents, the project also triggers civic citizenship practices, even if limited to it (Step 2).

The Atlas research continues, therefore, on the Veronetta neighbourhood together with its inhabitants and the civil society organizations already present in the territory. Some of the latter reinforce their collaboration with the Association Db, making the Nani Garden a hub in the neighbourhood. Even the SSV tightens stronger bonds with the other actors in the neighbourhood, participating in Atlas research, collaborating with the university, and taking advantage of the Nani Garden, thanks to the agreement between the district and the Association Db. In all these dynamics, citizenship acted by multiple actors at the local level is developed: citizenship as the right to use the neighbourhood and its spaces and citizenship as a right to participate in the social and cultural life of the community. Thanks to the channel of the Atlas research, SSv also comes into contact with the public administration, when the City of Verona receives national funding for urban regeneration and the security of the suburbs and takes care of the project for the destination of use of abandoned spaces in the Bocca Trezza Palace. However, the limited time available to the office in charge of the project does not allow a real participatory process and a listening to all citizens. An attempt at greater citizens' involvement is triggered by the development of the Regulation for Subsidiarity. The participatory process leads to the spread of two questionnaires and then a draft of the regulation, which precede the official writing and the final approval of the document. In the meantime, the Office Culture of Differences

Equal Opportunities in the Social Services department activates the project Alliances for Family, in order to create territorial networks to promote policies that are attentive to the needs of families (Step 3).

The SSv is involved in the Alliance project following the participation of the Association Db: at Nani Garden, more and more the Place of the neighbourhood, are organized cultural and musical events, afternoon workshops, practices and neighbourhood exchanges and facilitation of bureaucratic processes for families. Over time and after the organized events, the relationship between the Association Db and District 1 also improves, thanks to the mutual knowledge and personal relationships that have been established. Being the district of Veronetta, and the city of Verona in general, rich in social and cultural associations, many collaborations and network dynamics develop also among these actors. Two different but interesting examples are the cases of Box33 and the proposal made by SalmonMagazine. At the same time, the practice of socialization continues regularly within the SSv, and new ideas and initiatives are developed among its members. In particular, two projects are taking shape: the reopening of a neighbourhood cinema (Ri-Ciak) and the recovery of unsold but still edible food (Recup). Around these two common goods projects, well-defined communities of commoners and commoning practices are developed. Together with the place attachment typical of the residents of the Veronetta neighbourhood and the renewed sense of belonging to a local community, the SSv members thus activate civic engagement actions that give shape to an acted and broad-based citizenship. The commitment of citizens and civil society organizations is not, however, equalled by that of the public administration, which collaborates in these practices only by granting the necessary permits for their realization. Even the subsidiarity pacts have not yet spread widely among the population of Verona (Step 4).

Today, actually, the pacts signed between the administration and the citizens have reached the number of 22: these also include the collaboration between the Association Db and the City for the management of the Nani Garden. The pact essentially formalizes all the activities and initiatives that the association already organized, better recognizing the role of citizens in the management of the Garden. After my departure, the SSv members have also continued the Ri-Ciak and Recup projects. As for the cinema, the group joined in a social enterprise, continuing the activity of promoting the initiative. In November 2018, the Region has included the project in the list of those to be funded by allocating the first sum of money, which the group will receive only if it is able to raise a

second sum through crowdfunding. For this reason, beside continuing the collection of support quotas, ViveVisioni is also participating in further public and private tenders for raising funds. As for Recup, after contacting the Recup association in Milan, the group has however chosen not to formally join, remaining an informal group of citizens. As such, however, it has participated in the project The City is All Mine (*Tutta mia la città*) together with the Association Db and other Veronetta associations, pursuing the macro theme of urban regeneration. Finally, apart from these projects, the SSv still keeps its weekly meetings and convivial moments, animating the neighbourhood with parties, dinners and games.

In the next chapter, I compare the three case studies, analyzed so far individually, and then use the emerging considerations to answer the research questions formulated at the beginning of this analysis.

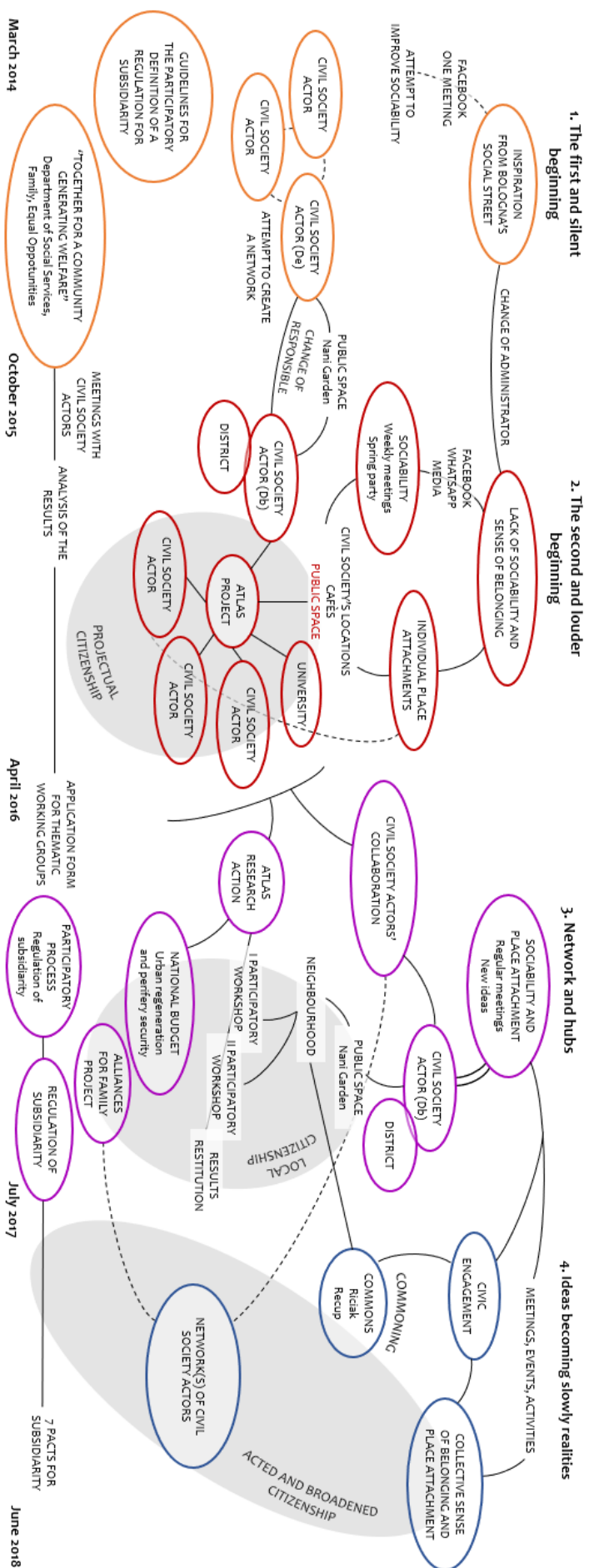


Fig. 6.13 – Representation of the SSV development, from the group's creation in March 2014 to the period of observation in June 2018.
Source: personal elaboration.

6.6. Methodological appendix

Table 1 lists all the subjects of the Verona case study who took part in the research. I also list the sector to which the respondent belongs, the instrument through which he was contacted, the research technique with which he was involved, on what date and in which place. Table 2, 3, 4 and 5 give a deepening about the participants in the focus groups. The medium age is 46 years old. About 68% of them has a high educational level (degree, postgraduate or PhD). About 72% of them live alone or with another person: indeed, most participants in the Social Street are couples without children or young people sharing the house with flatmates. Without taking into consideration four participants, who work or meet friends in the neighbourhood, most of them have moved to Veronetta less than eight years ago. Table 6 shows the messages posted on the Facebook group page and the obtained answers, whereas table 7 lists the moments of participant observation.

Given the lively activity of the group and the number of initiatives organized, I could literally take part in the life of the SSv, both by participating in events and meetings, but also by experiencing belonging to the community of the neighbourhood in everyday life. In fact, it has frequently occurred to me to come across members of the SSv by walking along Twenty September Street or doing shopping in the area; I established a good relationship of dialogue and exchange with some members so that I could join them during informal evenings in pubs or restaurants in the area. Furthermore, being a guest at Serena's house and having she been absent from Verona, I made myself available to help her manage the keys to the gate of the Nani Garden so that I also had the chance to experiment the demanding “work in-network” behind the management of a shared space. I subjected the actors of the public administration and the civil society to semi-structured interviews: all the contacted actors gave their availability.

Participant	Sector*	Contacted by	Technique	Date	Location
Filippo	RMv	F-t-F meeting	Focus group Informal conver.	17/05/18	Nani Garden
Aurora	RMv	F-t-F meeting	Focus group Informal conver.	17/05/18	Nani Garden
Patrizia	RMv	F-t-F meeting	Focus group Informal conver.	17/05/18	Nani Garden
Emma	RMv	F-t-F meeting	Focus group Informal conver.	17/05/18	Nani Garden
Flavia	RMv	F-t-F meeting	Focus group	17/05/18	Nani Garden

			Informal conver.		
Aldina	RMv	Facebook	Focus group	17/05/18	Nani Garden
Luce	RMv	F-t-F meeting	Focus group Informal conver.	17/05/18	Nani Garden
Raffaella	RMv	Facebook	Focus group	17/05/18	Nani Garden
Silvia	RMv	Other members	Focus group Informal conver.	19/05/18	Nani Garden
Giorgio	RMv	Facebook	Focus group Informal conver.	19/05/18	Nani Garden
Fulvia	RMv	Other members	Focus group	19/05/18	Nani Garden
Federico	RMv	F-t-F meeting	Focus group Informal conver.	19/05/18	Nani Garden
Piera	RMv	Facebook	Focus group Informal conver.	19/05/18	Nani Garden
Catia	RMv	Facebook	Focus group	26/05/18	Nani Garden
Giorgia	RMv	Facebook	Focus group	26/05/18	Nani Garden
Cristina	RMv	Facebook	Focus group	26/05/18	Nani Garden
Vincenzo	RMv	Facebook	Focus group Informal conver.	26/05/18	Nani Garden
Marcello	RMv	Facebook	Focus group	28/05/18	Nani Garden
Gabriele	RMv	Facebook	Focus group	28/05/18	Nani Garden
Giovanni	RMv	Facebook	Focus group	28/05/18	Nani Garden
Sofia	RMv	Facebook	Focus group Informal conver.	28/05/18	Nani Garden
Maura	RMv	F-t-F meeting	Focus group Informal conver.	28/05/18	Nani Garden
Aldo	RMv	F-t-F meeting	Informal conver.	09/05/18	Nani Garden
Greta	RMv	F-t-F meeting	Informal conver.	28/05/18	Cafè
Patrizio	RMv	F-t-F meeting	Informal conver.	03/04/16 01/05/18	Nani Garden
Serena	RMv / TSv	Facebook	Interview Informal conver.	17/03/16 30/04/18	Private house
Alice	RMv / TSv	F-t-F meeting	Interview Informal conver.	17/05/18	Private house
Giacomo	RMv / TSv	Facebook	Interview Informal conver.	10/05/18	Cafè
Marta	RMv / TSv	F-t-F meeting	Interview Informal conver.	11/05/18	Office
Anna	RMv /TSv	F-t-F meeting	Interview Informal conver.	11/05/18	Office

Vittoria	TSv	Email	Interview	11/05/18	Office
Valeria	TSv	Email	Interview	11/05/18	Office
Vito	TSv	Facebook	Interview	20/05/18	Public park
Luca	TSv	Facebook	Interview	19/05/18	Cafè
Carolina	TSv	Phone number	Interview	28/05/18	Nani Garden
Lorenzo	TSv	Email	Interview	24/05/18	Office
Gianmarco	TSv	Email	Interview	24/05/18	Office
Tommaso	TSv	Facebook	Interview	21/05/18	Cafè
Luisa	TSv	Phone number	Interview	10/05/18	Office
Carlo	TSv	Email	Interview	16/05/18	Office
Nicoletta	PAv	Email	Interview	02/05/18	Office
Veronica	PAv	Email	Interview	24/05/18	Office
Ilaria	PAv	Email	Interview	18/05/18	Cantine
Ettore	PAv	Email	Interview	17/05/18	Office
Irene	PAv	Email	Interview	29/05/18	Office
Bartolomeo	RNMv	Mailbox note	Informal conver.	31/05/18	Telephone
Nicolò	RNMv	Mailbox note	Informal conver.	04/06/18	Telephone

Tab. 6.1 – Individual and collective actors, taking part in the research. For each of them, I indicate the sector to which they belong, the way in which I contacted them, the research technique I used, the date and place of the interview or meeting.

Source: personal elaboration.

* The sectors to which the research participants belong are coded as follows: RMv: residents in the neighbourhood, members of the Social Street; RNMv: residents in the neighbourhood, non-members of the Social Street; TSv: Third Sector Bodies, active on the neighbourhood territory and come in touch, directly or indirectly, with the Social Street; PAv: representatives and civil servants of public administration, directly or indirectly involved in the activities of the Social Street. The letter *v* marks the city of Verona. The abbreviation for the group Residents in Twenty September Street and surroundings, Verona is SSv.

Participant	M/F	Age	National.	Education	Job	City of birth	Living in SSv area	People /housing nucleus
Filippo	M	36	Italian	Postgraduate	Social worker	Venice	From 2016	2
Aurora	F	35	Italian	Degree	Nursery school teacher	Rovigo	From 2016	2
Patrizia	F	55	Italian	High School	Nanny	Verona	From 1992	3

Emma	F	38	Italian	High School	Un-employee	Verona	From 2014	1
Flavia	F	52	Italian	High School	Un-employee	S.Paolo Brasile	From 2010	1
Aldina	F	54	Italian	Degree	High school teacher	Verona	From 1992	2
Luce	F	28	Spanish	Professional training	Social health workers	Madrid	From 2018	2
Raffaella	F	60	Italian	Degree	Doctor, bookseller	Verona	From 1976	4

Tab. 6.2 – Members of the SSv participating in the focus group on May 17th, 2018. For each of them, I indicate personal data (gender, age, nationality, educational grade, job) and place-related data (the city of birth, when they move to Twenty September Street or when they move out, how many people they live with).

Source: personal elaboration.

Participant	M/F	Age	Nationality	Education grade	Job	City of birth	Living in SSf area	People /housing nucleus
Silvia	F	23	Italian	Degree	Secretary	Verona	Friends	3
Giorgio	M	33	Italian	Degree	Self-employee	Torino	From 2018	1
Fulvia	F	28	Italian	Degree	Un-employee	Verona	Friends	2
Federico	M	33	Italian	Postgraduate	High school professor	Varese	From 2016	2
Piera	F	68	Italian	High School	Retired	Verona	From 1992	1

Tab. 6.3 – Members of the SSv participating in the focus group on May 19th, 2018. For each of them, I indicate personal data (gender, age, nationality, educational grade, job) and place-related data (the city of birth, when they move to Twenty September Street or when they move out, how many people they live with).

Source: personal elaboration.

Participant	M/F	Age	Nationality	Education grade	Job	City of birth	Living in SSf area	People /housing nucleus
Catia	F	65	Italian	High school	Retired	Vicenza	1980	1

Giorgia	F	63	Italian	Degree	Teacher	Treviso	1995	4
Cristina	F	44	Ukrainian	PhD	Tourist guide	Kharkiv	2008	2
Vincenzo	M	49	Italian	High school	Educator	Verona	Job	2

Tab. 6.4 – Members of the SSv participating in the focus group on May 26th, 2018. For each of them, I indicate personal data (gender, age, nationality, educational grade, job) and place-related data (the city of birth, when they move to Twenty September Street or when they move out, how many people they live with).

Source: personal elaboration.

Participant	M/F	Age	Nationality	Education grade	Job	City of birth	Living in SSf area	People /housing nucleus
Marcello	M	54	Italian	Degree	Legal office manager	Vicenza	2004	1
Gabriele	M	53	Italian	Degree	Self-employee	Trento	2003	3
Giovanni	M	50	Italian	Degree	Teacher	Verona	Job	3
Sofia	F	30	Italian	Degree	Musician	Bari	2015	2
Maura	F	68	Italian	Degree	Retired	Brindisi	2012	1

Tab. 6.5 – Members of the SSv participating in the focus group on May 28th, 2018. For each of them, I indicate personal data (gender, age, nationality, educational grade, job) and place-related data (the city of birth, when they move to Twenty September Street or when they move out, how many people they live with).

Source: personal elaboration.

Post	Date	Like	Comment	By whom	Note
Request of books and material about the neighb.	06/09/17	8	12	Members	Four books suggested
Presentation of the research(er)	09/04/18	7	5	1 member	Inviting me to the celebration of her birthday
Proposal for photographic activity	30/04/18	3	6	Members	2 pictures posted
Organization of focus groups	04/05/18 09/05/18 17/05/18 24/05/18	6 25 3 2	22 1 35 5	Members	Great participation in setting the appointments and asking me more information

Greetings and thanking	04/06/18	19	6	Members + 1 TSv actor	Wishing me good luck and hoping to meet me again soon
------------------------	----------	----	---	-----------------------	---

Tab. 6.6 – My messages posted on the Facebook group of SSv.

Source: personal elaboration.

Period	Activities
3 April 2016	Spring party at the Nani garden
3 December 2016	Participation in the seminar “The Rights in the Web” at the University of Verona as audience
30 April – 2 May 9-12/14-30 May 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews: TSv, PAfv, RMv - Focus groups: RMv - Informal conversations: RMv, RNMv - Neighbourhood observation - Participant observation at SSv activities (Wednesdays’ dinner; Recup; TSv meetings; Ri-Ciak meetings)

Tab. 6.7 – Participant observation of SSv life, activities, territorial and social context.

Source: personal elaboration.

Chapter 7. Analyzing the dialectics of social cohesion and governance for public space

Today numerous issues are challenging urban public spaces. Many phenomena have become increasingly problematic, complex and interrelated in many cities due to the speed and the extent of their evolution. Western European countries are facing problems with respect to a decreasing quality of life of local communities in urban neighbourhoods. Within this context, this research focuses mainly on two criticalities: the weakness of social ties among individuals and the deficient (governance of) common places. The city indeed represents the place where the traditional ties of the community seem to have been replaced by anonymity, individualism, and indifference. The reasons are many and different, including the strong urbanization, the increased mobility and the development of information and communication technology. Greater fluidity and virtuality are eroding bonds of spatial proximity and shared identities (Forrest and Kearns 2001; Castells 1997; 2008). Together with the reduction of sociability (Simmel 1969), also public spaces decrease in quantity and lose their socialization function. This crisis, characterizing urban spaces and services of common interest, is determined, firstly, by the deficit and decline of public and collective spaces and, secondly, by the lower interest and attention of citizens towards the urban public spaces (Iaione 2015b; Becattini 2015). The latter is perceived as nobody's or local authority's places, rather than everybody's places or common spaces.

Lately, however, we are witnessing the rise of forms of participation and social actions, aimed at re-embedding the territory, looking for support within communities and reclaiming control over decisions about how the city develops and grows. Various micro-spatial urban practices reshape urban spaces, exploring alternative solutions to collective needs and injecting the places with new functions and meanings. All these contemporary movements struggle for recognition and empowerment, thereby challenging the established distribution of power and the existing governance structures. While reshaping urban space and tackling governance relations of power and responsibility, these practices also influence and are influenced by the social cohesion of neighbourhoods and cities at large. Within this framework, therefore, I aim to understand the interaction between social cohesion and citizens' access to and governance of public spaces. This overall concern generates additional secondary questions. Does social cohesion contribute to improved care for public spaces? Do the empowerment of communities or the alternative use of

urban spaces increase social cohesion? Does better governance of public spaces create social cohesion? Do public regulations and policies for the governance of public spaces foster or hinder citizens' participation in urban decision-making? Does the involvement of citizens in urban governance for public spaces increase social cohesion? Answering these questions, the project aims to contribute to the current model of democracy, by re-signifying individuals' social lives with collective political meanings, showing a way to empower citizens and presenting pathways to alternative solutions for shared governance of public spaces.

7.1. Resuming the analytical framework

To start, I reviewed the literature concerning social cohesion, focusing mainly on sociology, political science, and urban studies. The dominant perspective of social cohesion is merely social, focussing on shared culture and without addressing the underlying socio-political dynamics. It mainly refers to harmony and shared values, and neglects how difference is overcome and conflicts or decision-making are organized and subsequently governed. The negotiation of rights and duties belonging to citizens is not mentioned. The empowerment of excluded and detached communities is not considered. The modalities through which citizens get attached to a place or to the community are not elaborated. The production, reproduction, and governance of the social cohesion itself are equally missing. Thus, in order to proceed beyond the a-political conception of social cohesion, I bring in three new dimensions: a) collective care, b) politics and c) governance. The dimension of collective *care* allows adding commons and commoning institutions to the analysis, highlighting the link between feelings of attachment/belonging, which characterizes social cohesion, and the engagement of communities in practices of stewardship and custodianship. The *political dimension* is necessary to enrich the literature on social cohesion, adding the reflection about inclusion and exclusion, about negotiation of rights and responsibilities among different urban actors. This dimension implies taking into account counter-hegemonic social-political practices, stepping out from only consensus-oriented mechanisms. Eventually, the dimension of *governance* permits looking at and analyzing the organization of social relations, commoning practices, and citizenship formation, as well as conflicts and exclusion.

Acknowledging the gaps identified in the literature and the concepts mobilized to fill them, the research aims to construct a framework that conceptualizes social cohesion in a broader way, by setting under the same lens all its dimensions and addressing the production, reproduction, and governance of social cohesion itself. The theory of Social Innovation (Moulaert *et al.* 2013) plays the role of the perspective through which the whole framework is shaped. According to this SI approach, innovations are both the product as solutions to specific needs and the socio-political processes that influence, and are influenced by, these same solutions, with a particular concern for social inclusion and social justice. SI occurs when collective action achieves three main forms of change, alone or in combination: a) the satisfaction of human needs – material and immaterial – that are not considered, either because not yet or no longer perceived as important by the market or the state; b) the empowerment of marginalised social groups, through the enhancement of socio-political capabilities and through the (re)creation of identity, thereby increasing their visibility, recognition, access or voice rights; c) changes in social, power and governance relations, that enable the above satisfaction and increase the level of participation of deprived groups in society (Moulaert and MacCallum 2019).

SI theory denounces the neoliberal perspective of social cohesion simply seen as an emphasis on belonging, inclusion, participation, recognition, legitimacy, absence of conflict and social control. This trend misses the point that social conflicts and divisions are not necessarily destructive of social order. It neglects that forms of conflict constitute key elements of the process that brings people together in relationships. Thus, conflict and exclusion, together with forms of governance to organize them, need to be included in the conceptualization of social cohesion. Therefore, SI interprets social cohesion as a *problématique*, namely a plural, scale-sensitive and multidimensional issue that can only be addressed collectively, that is by a democratic negotiation of interests and values. Understanding social cohesion as a *problématique* permits to combine both social and political dynamics focusing on the governance of e.g. decision-making processes, conflicts, inequalities, and power negotiations, to consider the place and time specificity of the context and to blend the views of the multiple urban actors.

Proceeding by applying the SI perspective to the other mobilized concepts, commons may clearly be an alternative means to satisfy communities' needs, concerning issues such as the participation in the governance of urban spaces or in the provision of the local welfare system, or the broadening of social networks against loneliness. Citizenship is both an output and an input for innovation and social transformations: it is the output

when innovative practices produce effective access to services and enacted spaces; it is the input because radical innovations, to be such, need a real citizens' involvement in decision-making processes. This involvement can lead to the negotiation of rights and duties, causing the production of new forms of citizenship. The final shape of citizenship and the leading process towards it are therefore multiple, time- and place-dependent, and assuming diverse contextually-based configurations. Eventually, the relationship between SI and governance is twofold: the latter is both a framework and a field for SI. On the one hand, the development of socially innovative practices influences governance through the creation of new mechanisms, new collective actors and new solutions; on the other hand, governance structures and dynamics have an influence on the capacity of different actors to develop socially innovative practices. Moreover, social innovations are not dictated from any level of governance, whereas they require bottom-linked arrangements of governance, which implies that the governance of innovative initiatives needs to be developed interactively among SI actors, their scalarly dynamic networks and state institutions.

The operation to read the four concepts of my framework through the lens of Social Innovation allows analysing them with the same mindset and the same terminology. Furthermore, using the lens of SI gives relevance, on the one hand, to the role of contingency and the casual and micro-agency effects carried out by different actors and, on the other hand, to place-specific socio-economic structures and institutions. In fact, the impact of innovative solutions depends both on individual or collective agencies and on the structures in which actors are embedded, taking into consideration also the institutions and the discourses (i.e. the interactions among agency, institutions, and structures) (Moulaert *et al.* 2016). Institutions, indeed, mediate the interactions between structures and agency, by selectively shaping actors' opportunities and constraints for individual or collective action in space and time. The interactions between actors and institutions result in an institutional field, meant as both actants and their practices, and of institutions, expressed and examined in terms of each other: institutions in terms of action and action in terms of institutions (Jessop 2001).

The strategic-relational institutionalist approach (Van den Broeck 2011) explains the interactions between actors and institutions as reflexive-recursive dialectics. Actors reproduce or reorganize institutions reflexively and to different extents, taking into account structural constraints and windows of opportunity, while institutions privilege some actors' strategies and tactics recursively, by responding to actors' behaviour in a

more or less consistent way. This process results in reciprocal influences, where actors develop structurally oriented strategic calculations towards institutions; institutions impose structurally inscribed strategic selectivities towards actors (Jessop 2001; Van den Broeck 2011; Servillo and Van den Broeck 2012). Applying the strategic-relational institutionalist approach to my framework implies two operations: a) addressing the negotiation and the interactions between actors and institutions, that eventually shape shared cultures and norms among citizens, practices of commoning, forms of citizenship and arrangements of governance; b) discussing the mutual influences between social cohesion and governance of public space in the present moment but also the impact that these same influences have on the reproduction and organization of social cohesion and governance of public space in the future.

The analytical framework, now completed, contributes to understand the deep complexity behind the research question and to overcome the inadequacy of neoliberal perspectives in addressing the relationships between social cohesion and governance of public space. The literature analysed, indeed, often talks about the construction of “good governance” to pursue social cohesion in cities. The latter is approached as an important goal to be achieved through changes in governance, only meant as the capacity of traditional government to open up participation for new actors. As such, the relation between social cohesion and urban governance is predominantly conceptualized through a top-down perspective: to achieve more cohesive cities, urban policies need to foster practices of commons and citizens’ participation. Within this perspective, participation is depicted as a tool for governments to expand political arenas and commons as a tool to promote a sense of community among citizens. Therefore, one of the main arguments of neoliberal studies and policies addresses how local or national governments can manage urban commons, changing old policies and implementing new ones in order to favour the participation of citizens in their governance. However, this perspective omits all aspects related to communities, needs and interests, excluded populations and governance arrangements within other organizational spheres.

7.2. The reflexive-recursive dialectics of social cohesion, shared culture, collective care, citizenship and governance in the Social Streets

To shift from the theoretical framework to its application on empirical realities, I investigate the case of Italian Social Street. The phenomenon concerns a new form of

neighbourhood communities, that was born for the first time in Bologna in 2013. From that moment on, the idea developed fast and spread all around Italy and abroad. Each Social Street is organized around a specific urban area. Sociality, gratuitousness, and inclusion are the three main values. Among all groups, there is a wide diversity of geographical position, collocation within cities, structural and economic features of the urban area, type of activities, internal organization and relational network established with other socio-political subjects of the territory, such as the local administrative institutions and civil society actors. The social streets' embeddedness within the urban social-political network, represents the criteria for the choice of three different examples of Social Streets to investigate. I apply to the analysis of the Social Streets a qualitative methodology, composed of various techniques, complementary and merged with each other. These are netnography, participant observation, visual sociology, focus groups, interviews and backtalk, and mapping. The long period of observation, that lasts in total two years and three months, allowed me to follow the development and the choices of the three Social Streets, by monitoring also the social-political local contexts. Each of the analysed case studies contributes differently to enriching the conceptual framework and to answering the research questions.

By following different paths of development, the Social Streets shed light on different components of the analytical framework, enriching eventually the understanding of the dynamics and answering the initial research questions. Singular episodes of the Social Streets' stories permit, first of all, to detect the reflexive-recursive dialectics embedded in the dimensions of social cohesion. Secondly, this operation highlights the dialectics between each dimension, eventually influencing the mutual interaction between social cohesion and governance of public space.

7.2.1 The Social Street of San Pio X Street in Trento: the perverse effect of citizenship practices on shared values and commons

The Social Street Residents in San Pio X Street and surroundings is born in Trento between September and October 2014, initially from the lack of sense of belonging to the local community and to the place as seen by four residents. They open up the group to enliven the neighbourhood, activating a sense of solidarity and reciprocity with other residents and thinking they can create something virtuous for the collectivity. This feeling is shared by those who enrol in the group. Many of them account also for a lack of places for recreation and socialization in the evening hours and for young people. They all share

the willingness to get in touch with other active realities in the area, to appropriate and use the urban public spaces, such that these can be functional to the well-being of the community.

Through the technological tools of Facebook and email and through face-to-face meetings, the SSSt actively engages to modify a public space in the neighbourhood, generating a commoning process around the bookcrossing. The group members, the public administration and Third Sector bodies, involved in the process enact a collective and mutually shaped citizenship, in which the rights and responsibilities of everyone on the management of a given space and commons are reciprocally negotiated. The construction and the installation of the bookcrossing see the higher participation in the production of a commons during the whole story of the group. However, the group does not set any rules and/or sanction to manage both the commons and the community of commoners, which, being already loose and blurred, is at risk of fading away.

Meanwhile, the SSSt, on the initiative of a few, participates in a competition for ideas launched by a Third Sector cooperative. This decision, actually, opens up a consultation and a discussion among the SSSt members about the activities and aims of the group. They foresee two different arrangements of governance: an informal one, based on sociability, the strength of relationships between people and the deep connection between individuals and the territory; and a structured one, based on a networked organization among various urban actors, who manage money and articulate projects. Eventually, the second modality takes over. This decision, together with the participation in the call for ideas, is the premise for the participation of the SSSt in the public ban “The Zone Youth Plan” of the City of Trento and, for winning the participatory project “In My Neighbourhood: participated re-qualifications”, in collaboration with the neighbourhood schools, a collective of artists and other Third Sector entities. During the project, the SSSt active members enact their citizenship, but they also implement actions to sensitize other citizens to their role, in the interest of each individual and the urban community as a whole. Furthermore, the collective decision-making processes activated in this phase among the actors participating at the Zone Youth Plan favour the institutionalization of a local network table, in which numerous actors active in the District collaborate.

After less than two years, all these collaborations are suspended and the most active members face a long and profound discussion on the values of the group, on the processes of commoning carried out and on practices of citizenship activation and participation. The positions are again two and see on the one hand the administrator of the SSSt who

developed more energetically the projects so far and on the other hand the other administrators who were keener to keep informal and sociability-based governance. What is most disputed is the priority that, through the undertaken design actions, was given to the product, to the visible result on the territory in the short term. On the contrary, the process, the involvement and the real participation of citizens should have taken on greater importance such that the transformations concerned the place, as much as the interconnection between the territory and its community.

Probably not giving enough importance to this argument and thinking to act in the interest of the group, the former administrator accepts in name of the whole SSt the proposal of a civil society actor of the neighbourhood to install a poetry mailbox and a showcase that are going to be the object of a collaborative pact for the care of commons with the local government. The other administrators would not participate in the initiative, because they also think that when the availability of citizens fades, there must not be a commitment of one person on behalf of the whole group, rather a renunciation of those projects and a “limitation” in organizing moments of socialization. Anyway, in order not to lose this opportunity to spread the culture of commons and to increase the quality of their neighbourhood, other two members of the SSt participate in the initiative. Hence, three citizens, representing the whole SSt, a neighbourhood association and the Municipality of Trento sign a two-year collaboration pact for the custodianship of the structures installed and the surrounding public space. As in the case of the bookcrossing, however, the signature of the pact and the “production” of a new commons is not preceded, nor followed, by a collective reflection and sharing of individual interests, motivations and values. Afterwards, the processes of commoning continue to be based on the individual initiative of single citizens, who carry out civic actions in name of the SSt: the dog area and the participatory project for youth are two examples. Moreover, the only still active administrator of the SSt quits the meetings of the District networked table because according to him no decisions are taken and everyone keeps organizing its own activities without a factual collaboration with the other actors.

During the entire story of the SSt, an individual attitude prevails over shared identities, values, and cultures. The reasons may be various. According to some SSt members, the typical inhabitant of Trentino Region does not perceive particular needs thanks to the widespread wellbeing services. The possibility to be economically independent and to have access to all kinds of services causes the closeness of the individual in his personal social network. Moreover, particularly in the SSt neighbourhood, the young age of the

most active members is likely to have discouraged adult or elderly residents from taking part in organizing activities, also because of the different approach to the public and civic life. These reasons are also combined with the lack of practices of sociability. The Social Street members, indeed, do not meet only because of the pleasure to spend time together and share daily practices; they always gather for another purpose, such as organizing an activity for the whole group, meeting young students to explain what the SSt is, talking about the collaboration with the City, writing a flyer. The best episode that clarifies this process happens when in the administrators' chat, answering the proposal of a member to meet for an aperitif, two other members say they are willing to meet if the reason is organizing some aspect of the next street party, but if the reason is only to chat informally, they prefer to postpone, having not much free time. Therefore, the initial commitment of the SSt founders and a few other members to experience the public space alternatively and to govern the urban resources commonly does not lead to a behavioural change of the local population. The attempt of transformation, thus, is ended, and the changes are not institutionalized nor are producing any long-term effect. The same process characterizes the relationship between the SSt and the other actors of the civil society. Although during the evolution of the participatory project there is a negotiation between the institutional culture of formally organized cooperatives and the innovative informal and horizontal culture of the Social Street, eventually the marked divergence between the groups does not produce the shared values and norms which could allow the maintenance of the collaboration.

Missing shared values within the group means that citizens do not feel any sense of belonging to that neighbourhood community. This also implies that the individual motivation towards the common interest does not have the chance to transform into collective motivation and civic engagement, which are the foundation to take action for the care and reproduction of common resources. Indeed, although the SSt members identify many "resources" (the bookcrossing, the flower beds, the poetry mailbox the dog area, etc.) as commons in the neighbourhood, there is a complete absence of the other two components used by Dellenbaugh *et al.* (2015; but also Harvey 2012 and Stavrides 2016) to define commons: the community of commoners and the commoning practices. Since the group has not formed a cohesive community based on shared values, its members also do not develop a reflection about the commons governance. They do not negotiate obligations, responsibilities, modalities of decision-making and of doing. Therefore, the actions of a few members to spread an alternative governance of urban resources does not

transform the usual private attendance, use and experience of public spaces. The bookcrossing is now little used and books have been stolen while other materials have been stored inappropriately. The poems mailbox, the showcase, and the dog area are managed by a bunch of people who suffer the other citizens' disinterest. The flowers of the areas under the railway have been uprooted and taken away, presumably by the same families who planted them to guarantee better care though in their own private garden.

7.2.2. The Social Street of Pitteri Street in Ferrara: the impact of governance transformations on practices of citizenship and commoning

The Social Street Residents in Pitteri Street and surroundings is born in Ferrara in November 2013. The founder and the first few members aim at reducing anonymousness and fostering the formation of a community, that activates “for” something and not “against” something. Through the technological tools of Facebook and through face-to-face meetings, the SSf organizes many activities. As in the case of the Social Street in Trento, the attitude of the first members in experiencing the public spaces is new compared to the institutional culture according to which life in cities is anonymous and individualised. Meeting and having dinner with neighbours in the public space breaks this idea, spreading a different way to use the neighbourhood. In the meantime, it permits neighbours to confront each other and speak about their personal interests in caring and transforming the local territory such that everyone can benefit from it. Some members of the SSf, then, start to share the same values and norms, institutionalizing this alternative culture of living the public space.

Besides, they engage in the custodianship of a green area at the edge of the street in an attempt to personalize the neighbourhood space and to feel more attached to it. By contacting the local public administration, the Social Street activates a negotiation of rights and responsibilities for the care of the urban territory. This dialogue leads to a modification of the regulation for the custodianship of urban green areas, that smoothens the following modification of the space made by the SSf. In parallel, the civil servants of the Urban Center are allowed by the governmental institutions to participate in the call of a Regional Law to activate participatory projects. The relationship with the Region Emilia-Romagna is one of the many governance challenges and processes that the public administration is facing. Another one is the management of internal working modalities. The civil servants of the Urban Center, indeed, try to activate a transverse and reticular work between the administrative offices, to simplify the co-planning and favour a univocal

communication with citizens.

Concerning the communication and collaboration with citizens, instead, the Urban Center fosters the emergence of a network between the civil society actors of the city. Contrarily to the traditional engagement modalities of the City which usually turns to institutionalized and formalized associations, the Urban Center decides to include differences, by involving informal groups of citizens who never collaborated before with the municipality due to divergent perspectives. The Urban Center, thus, opens a space of dialogue and contestation, entering itself that space and confronting institutional governance arrangements of the City with new solutions proposed by citizens. This process, made of meetings, arguments, and final solutions, allows the civil servants of the Urban Center and the civil society groups to define shared values and norms, which are the foundation, in turn, of the subsequent negotiation and shared definition of commons. According to the Urban Center and the network of communities of practice, commons are identified in the commoning practices that are activated and reproduced by citizens' communities. The same communities meant as social practices become commons themselves. In particular, the SSf is recognized by the public administration as a model of conscious citizenship, a community of commoners who take care and manage commons such as civic sense, socialization and neighbourhood relations. Such definition of commons – strongly oriented to the process of commoning – differs completely from the one emerging in the SSt – more product-oriented. In this case, there is a marked negotiation of commoning practices but the resource remains abstract and undefined.

In regards of the community of commoners, the most active members – identified as administrators – of the SSf have always been around 10 to 12. When they decide to sign the collaborative pact with the City and to commit the group towards civic actions, some other members of the group withdraw from participating actively in the SSf activities. There are, indeed, two main perceptions of citizenship and consequently of modalities to practice and shape it. The Social Streeters of Ferrara develop an internal argument about it. The SSf active members believe that the city belongs to all of them and feel then empowered in using and personalizing its spaces for the collective well-being. Other residents of the neighbourhood, instead, traditionally consider the payment of taxes as the only action that a citizen needs to do towards the city, limiting themselves to complain when necessary. The argument represents the moment in which institutionalised rights and responsibilities of citizens (taxes payment-services received) are questioned by a few individual actors, who enact a new perception of citizenship (taxes payment-

responsibility and possibility to use and modify it). For the moment, within the local context of Ferrara, this new perception is not regularized within the institutional status of citizenship, even if the modification of urban policies and regulations gives citizens the power to partially share with the public actors the care of urban commons, such as defined collectively.

7.2.3. The Social Street of Twenty September Street in Verona: the role of shared cultures and values in triggering practices of commons and citizenship

The Social Street Residents in Twenty September is born in Verona in March 2014. However, the first attempt to create the group does not trigger any practices of socialization and the SSv itself does not even contribute to reinforcing the collaboration between civil society actors already active in the neighbourhood. In the same period, on the administrative front, the municipal council approves the Guidelines for the participatory definition of the regulation for subsidiarity and, at the same time, the Department of Social Services, Family and Equal Opportunities organizes a participatory path addressed to Verona organizations in order to enhance and strengthen the taking of responsibility on the part of the social system, also through the start of new experiments and collaborations. Anyway, neither of these two projects cross the path of the SSv.

After the first administrator of the SSv has left, the group tries to start again thanks to the initiative of another resident and a small group of members. There are two main strong motivations on which their participation desire is based: on the one hand, the place attachment towards the neighbourhood and the desire to valorize it and, on the other, the lack of relations with other residents of the area, due to the strong mobility of the local population. Another factor that many of them share is the double belonging to organisations of the civil society. Indeed, besides the new administrator, who is also the founder of an association, other members work for or manage cooperatives, associations, social enterprises, etc., all active in various ways on the local territory, especially for values such as integration and social inclusion. For this reason, most of the members of the SSv already share the same culture about these topics and the same attitudes to develop civic actions. By meeting regularly and exchanging their common experiences, they also start to share a new way to live together the public space, transforming social dinners, laboratories, musical events and many others in normal and habitual practices.

During the SSv, the values of sharing and informality are always kept firm and clear, giving priority to the pleasure of spending time together, in opposition to structured and

formal projects. In fact, despite being involved in a research project and in attempts of participatory processes by the municipality of Verona, the SSv always remains independent of other urban actors, tending to develop relationships that do not involve actual belonging, but a simple exchange. A relevant episode concerns the attempt of the Office Culture of Differences Equal Opportunities in the Social Service to experiment the start-up of new Social Streets in order to support solidarity networks and to activate good practices of reciprocity between neighbours. The SSv reacts by totally disapproving the idea of the public administration stimulating the birth of groups like the Social Streets, because these are practices which must not be led in any way but have to be left totally free of being born and growing in the informality and self-management of citizens. Indeed, the commoning projects (recovery of unsold but edible food Recup and neighbourhood cinema Ri-Ciak), that start and develop in this period, are based exactly on these principles and on the culture shared by the SSv members.

Through Ri-Ciak and Recup projects and the commoning practices for their management, the SSv advances its citizenship rights for the recovery of abandoned places, for the redevelopment of the local territory and for the inclusion of otherwise excluded social groups. The role played in these processes by the municipal administration is limited to the granting of permits for their development, after receiving expressively a request from the subject organizer. The SSv members, indeed, perceive a total detachment between the public administration, on the one hand, and the citizens, single or associated in groups, on the other. The governance of public services and spaces is seen as centralized in the hands of political decision-makers and organized hierarchically, where the Municipality delegates the management of the city to cooperatives and subsidiaries. According to some, even the different spheres of the population – Veronesi, residents in Verona but not originally from Verona, off-campus students, foreigners – receive different rights and opportunities. The administrative actors, the districts, that in theory should be closer to the citizens, are also perceived as distant or non-existent. From their side, the public offices of the City organize moments of confrontation with citizens and sporadic participatory processes, but they involve only institutionalized groups, which already share the same culture, while missing to listen to counter-hegemonic groups. Therefore, there is not a proper negotiation of values and norms between the alternative culture, fostered by the Social Street and other civil society actors of the neighbourhood, and the institutionalized culture of the City.

7.3. Social Streets as Social Innovation

In chapters 4, 5 and 6 and in the previous section (7.2.), I show and describe in detail how the reflexive-recursive dialectics develop between social cohesion and urban governance and how the strategic relational institutionalist approach can be applied to read the reality. I now turn to the potential social innovation power of the Social Streets. Are the Social Streets socially innovative? Do they contribute to more cohesive cities and to arrangements of bottom-linked governance?

I recall the definition of social cohesion as *problématique* according to SI: a society is cohesive when it acknowledges the existence of different social and territorial groups present in the city, their diverse and sometimes contradictory interests; when these groups have the capacity to organise themselves and the city creates institutions in which these groups can confront with each other and decide about the city's future (Cassiers and Kesteloot 2012). Social cohesion, to be achieved, requires the problematization of diverse issues, including socio-economical, cultural, ecological, political elements and, above all, the organization of these elements. This perspective is closely interrelated with the definition of bottom-linked governance, which is a form of governance developed interactively among all actors, their scalarly dynamic networks and state institutions. This arrangement embraces forms of cooperation across territorial scales in which policy and practice are not dictated from any level of governance but transformed and institutionalized by, and in the terms of, the cooperation itself (Moulaert and MacCallum 2019). The bottom-linked approach describes the necessity not only to implement alternative bottom-up practices but also to transform institutional and mainstream frames in order to make innovations sustainable and realize a breakthrough.

Among my three case studies, none of them totally and deeply achieves an arrangement of bottom-linked governance, but they partially fulfil some of its conditions in specific moments of their stories, confirming thus the importance of the conditions depicted in the literature (Moulaert and MacCallum 2019) to achieve this type of governance arrangement. The Urban Center of Ferrara applies to Regional funds because the local resources do not include a budget for its participatory activities. In all three cities, the public administration takes inspiration by the Regulation on collaboration between citizens and the city for the care and regeneration of urban commons, firstly implemented in Bologna in 2014 and now spread on the whole Italian territory. As concerned with relying on umbrella organizations, the three Social Streets are all included

in the national website of the Social Streets, which functions as a collector of experience but also as a legitimization of that specific practice of neighbourhood community. Looking for the same legitimization, but in this case towards the local government of the city of Ferrara, also the Urban Center uses the international network of urban centers to justify its choices and activities. Involving key persons in strategic public institutions is another strategy to achieve a bottom-linked form of governance: being the Social Streets informal groups of citizens, which everyone attached to the urban area is free to join, both in Trento and Ferrara, some representatives of public institutions enrol in the groups. Their participation facilitates and supports practices of commons and active citizenship, such as asking for permission to install the book house (Trento), or obtaining the material for the street cleaning, or asking for information about the maintenance and the subsequent care of the park (Ferrara).

Concerning the role of key persons in strategic public institutions, two more elements become particularly relevant: the political orientation of the local context where the social innovations take place; the personalities of the actors involved and the role they have in the development of the socially innovative practices, but also in their professional and personal life. The political orientation may, indeed, influence the behaviours of the local politics and the public civil servants: the political culture of the City of Verona leads the public administration to work with already institutionalized actors of the civil society; the different political culture of the City of Ferrara allows, instead, the Urban Center to experiment new strategies, such as creating a transverse and reticular work among internal offices, or fostering a network among informal civil society actors. Within these processes, the individual personalities emerge. The civil servants of the Urban Center, for instance, acknowledge the difficulty to change institutional modalities of urban resources' governance, but benefitting of the political orientation and of the Regional Law as a tool, brings on their alternative proposal with determination and strength. The professional and personal role, eventually, become important to broaden the possibilities that the socially innovative projects may have, in terms of resources to use, or in terms of scaling up, scaling out and connecting with different institutional levels. The case studies offer many examples: the SSf members are told to contact the Office for Public Green by the acquaintance of one of them, who works as a police officer; the civil servants of the Urban Center get to know the Social Street for their private interest and because the spokeswoman of the Mayor used to live in Pitteri Street in her childhood; in Verona, although none of the SSv members is involved in public institutions, many of them play

their dual membership of the Social Street and of other civil society organizations, favouring network collaborations on the one hand and relationships with the District on the other hand.

Only in Ferrara informal groups of citizens, including the Social Street, previously excluded from the decision-making process, take part in policy-making for the use and care of public space. Citizens and the Urban Center also define cooperatively the object of some regulations (e.g. the concepts of commons and participation), considering the perceptions of both citizens and public administration. In Trento, the regulation is drafted and implemented exclusively by the local government, calling then the citizens to use it. Verona tries to develop a participatory process for the definition of the commons regulation, but this process evolves only online among some civil society organizations: many citizens are cut out from the process. The same happens with the call for the regeneration of peripheries, for which the officer in charge of its disposal, declares not to have enough time to listen to citizens and to include their voice in the project. The Social Streets of Trento and Verona are, then, examples of the insufficiency of innovative practices for the empowerment of communities if these same communities are hindered by participating in policy formulation and in the decision-making process. However, the Social Streets manage to collect individual instances of individual citizens and to give them a louder voice. In the case of Verona, the intermediary role of the Social Street is even not enough because the group is anyway considered too informal and unstructured. The intermediary role of another civil society organization then indeed becomes fundamental.

The Social Streets I analyse within this framework, therefore, achieve only partially the three main forms of change described by the Social Innovation theory. They satisfy immaterial needs of citizens concerning mainly the lack of sociability and sense of belonging, but also the structural and social regeneration of urban public spaces. The groups empower citizens who did not find other memberships in the neighbourhood of residence, giving them the possibility to expose their needs and interests and to be recognized as urban actors. Nevertheless, the three Social Streets analyzed do not have enough power and visibility to change profoundly and definitely governance relations and the level of cohesiveness in the cities. They manage to contribute to episodic changes of governance, but the sustainability and the breakthrough of these changes, as well as the production of structural transformations, in the cities of Ferrara, Verona, and Trento are impossible to be evaluated now and need further analysis.

7.4. Lessons for current and future research

The application of the strategic-relational institutionalist approach and the Social Innovation perspective to the relation between social cohesion and urban governance allows to unveil the reflexive and recursive dialectics that influence the development of urban institutional fields. The analysis could be continued in order to follow the further development of the Social Street phenomenon – as an example of many other urban phenomena – in the future. What emerges clearly is the inadequacy of questions such as “does an increasing level of social cohesion foster better governance of public space?” or “does better governance of public space produce more social cohesion?”. If we, as researchers and academics, and if politicians in charge of producing guidelines and policies, step into these questions, we will fall in the trap of essentialist, deterministic, instrumentalist answers. As such, neither of the two contributes to build a true understanding of reality. Society is much more complex and both social cohesion – to be analysed as a *problématique* – and governance of public space are embedded in wider dynamics between shared cultures, collective caring, citizenship and governance, gradually building (or not) social cohesion and bottom-linked governance, which the strategic-relational institutionalist approach has duly problematized.

Far from being exhaustive and comprehensive of all the factors influencing the dialectics of social cohesion and urban governance, this research does not consider social, cultural, political, geographical and demographic factors that would enrich even more the understanding of this dialectics and the understanding of the object of the study. Regarding the Social Streets, indeed, other interesting interrogatives include: what episodes of bottom-linked governance transform into structural transformations of the urban governance after two more years and after variations in the political guidance of the cities; what innovative practices of citizenship acted by the Social Streets translate into institutional rights and responsibilities for all citizens; are all Italian Social Streets triggered by collective needs, do they foster collective identities, or do groups represent individual claims for the control and privatization of public spaces, or claims for the personal safety in neighbourhoods, without supporting participatory and civic instances; what kind of urban resources do the Social Streets contribute to redistribute, if they do indeed contribute to redistributing some of them.

These are only some examples of the numerous issues that remain to investigate. Future research should include all these further variables in the framework built by this project, in order to proceed in the comprehension of the broad issues which this study triggers regarding the pressure on sociability and the lack of common places supporting public life and living together. Why do people not socialize anymore in public space? Is it a problem that spaces are privatized and citizens do not use, access, and modify them? Through the application of the strategic relational institutionalist approach, we learned to see some of the conditions that define the answers to these questions, although some could be further explored.

People not meeting in public spaces can be the expression of many dynamics: the wealth that allows people to meet at the theatre or at the restaurant, the technological innovation that creates new tools to socialize online. It can be a sign of other dynamics: the marketization of citizens' free time, the commercialisation of public space, the exploitation of workers leaving them no time to rest and talk, the decline of the welfare state pushing citizens to carry out services that were traditionally public.

These processes need to be investigated, by focusing on the mutual interactions that connect them, the practices acted by individual and collective actors in public spaces, the social cohesion and the arrangements of governance of cities, regions and states. Reconstructing the reflexive-recursive dialectics that compose social phenomena, allows to acknowledge them and thus support those socially innovative practices that have the power to improve the current model of democracy, by re-signifying individuals' social lives with collective political meanings, showing a way to empower citizens and presenting pathways to alternative solutions for shared governance of public spaces and cities.

References

- Akerstrom Andersen N. and Pors J.G. 2016. *Il welfare delle potenzialità. Il management pubblico in transizione*. (R. Prandini, Eds.) Milano: Mimesis Edizioni.
- Altman I. and Low S. 1992. *Place Attachment*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Amin A. and Thrift N. 2002. *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*. Cambridge: Polity.
- André I., Henriques E.B. and Malheiros J. 2009. Inclusive Places, Arts and Socially Creative Milieux. In D. MacCallum, F. Moulaert, and J. a.-H. Hillier, *Social Innovation and Territorial Development*, 149-166. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Arendt H. 1958. *The Human Condition*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Arnstein S.R. 1969. A Ladder of Citizen Participation. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 35(4), 216-224.
- Augè M. 2009. *Nonluoghi. Introduzione a una antropologia della surmodernità*. Milano: Elèuthera.
- Augè M. and Pasqualini C. 2016. Habiter les villes-monde (non/virtuels/nouveaux) lieux et relations sociales. *Studi di Sociologia*, 4, 303-313.
- Avelino F. and Wittmayer J. 2016. Shifting Power Relations in Sustainability Transitions: A Multi-actor Perspective. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 18(5), 628-649.
- Bacon N. 2013. *Plugging the Gap: Turning Strangers into Neighbours*. London: RSA - Action and Research Centre.
- Barbera F. 2004. *Meccanismi sociali: elementi di sociologia analitica*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Bartolini S. 2011. New Modes of European Governance: An Introduction. In A. Heritier, and M. Rhodes, *New Modes of Governance in Europe. Governing in the Shadow of Hierarchy*, p. 1-18. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Baubock R. 2003. Reinventing Urban Citizenship. *Citizenship Studies*, 7(2), 139-160.
- Baumeister R.F. and Leary M.R. 1995. The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(3), 497-529.
- Becattini G. 2015. *La coscienza dei luoghi. Il territorio come soggetto corale*. Roma: Donzelli Editore.
- BEPA. 2011. *Empowering People, Driving Change. Social Innovation in the European Union*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

- Berger-Schmitt R. 2002. Considering Social Cohesion in Quality of Life Assessments: Concepts and Measurements. *Social Indicators Research*, 58, 403-428.
- Bertin G. and Carradore M. 2016. Differentiation of welfare regimes: The case of Italy. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 25, 149-160.
- Blokland T. 2017. *Community as Urban Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Blokland T., Hentschel C., Holm A., Lebuhn H. and Margalit T. 2015. Urban Citizenship and the Right to the City: the Fragmentation of Claims. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 655-665.
- Boccia Artieri G. 2015. *Gli effetti sociali del web. Forme della comunicazione e metodologie della ricerca online*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Bollier D. 2002. The Commons as an Emerging Model for Knowledge Creation and Governance. *Collective Management of Intellectual Property: Tackling the Anti-Commons*. Bellagio, Italy: Rockefeller Foundation's conference.
- Bollier D. and Helfrich S. (Eds.) 2012. *The Wealth of the Commons: A World Beyond Market and State*. Amherst, MA: Levellers Press.
- Bonapace V. 2016. *I beni comuni urbani. Il Regolamento sull'amministrazione condivisa nel Comune di Trento*. Tesi magistrale, Università degli Studi di Trento.
- Borch C. and Kornberg M. (Eds.) 2015. *Urban Commons. Rethinking the City*. New York: Routledge.
- Brown B., Perkins D.D. and Graham B. 2003. Place Attachment in a Revitalizing Neighbourhood: Individual and Block Levels of Analysis. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 23, 259-271.
- Bulmer S.J. 1994. The Governance of the European Union: a Nee Institutional Approach. *Journal of Public Policy*, 4, 351-380.
- Cabitza F., Scramaglia R., Cornetta D. and Simone C. 2016. When the Web Supports Communities of Place: The "Social Street" case in Italy. *International Journal of Web Based Communities*, 12(3), 216-237.
- Caffentzis G. and Federici S. 2014. Commons against and beyond capitalism. *Community Development Journal*, 49, 92-105.
- Cardano M. 2011. *La ricerca qualitativa*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Cassiers T. and Kesteloot C. 2012. Socio-spatial Inequalities and Social Cohesion in European Cities. *Urban Studies*, 49(9), 1909-1924.
- Castells M. 1997. *The Power of Identity: The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture. Volume II*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

- 2008. *Mobile communication e trasformazione sociale*. Milano: Guerini e Associati.
- Chambon J.-L., David A. and M., D.J. 1982. *Les Innovations Sociales*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Coleman S.J. 1988. Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 94, 95-120.
- Costa P. 2005. *Cittadinanza*. Bari: Editori Laterza.
- Cuba L. and Hummon D.M. 1993. A Place to Call Home: Identification with Dwelling, Community and Region. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 34(1), 111-131.
- Cucca R. and Kazepov Y. 2016. *Improving Territorial Cohesion: The Role of Stakeholders in OMC and Cohesion Policy. Working Papers*. Improve. Poverty, Social Policy and Innovation.
- Cumbers A. 2015. Constructing a global commons in, against and beyond the state. *Space and Polity*, 19(1), 62-75.
- Czekaj K. 2017. Sociological Research Maps in the Process of Re-Imagining the City: Social Diagnosis and Social Planning in Municipality and Urbanity. In M. Smagacz-Poziemska, K. Frysztański and A. Bukowski (Eds.), *Re-Imagining the City: Municipality and Urbanity Today from a Sociological Perspective*, 319-336. Krakow: Jagiellonian University Press.
- Dahlgren P. 2006a. Civic Participation and Practices: Beyond “Deliberative Democracy”. In N. Carpentier, P. Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, K. Nordenstreng, M. Hartmann, P. Vihalemm, and B. Cammaerts (Eds.), *Researching Media, Democracy and Participation. The Intellectual Work of the 2006 European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School*, 23-33. Tartu, Estonia: Tartu University Press.
- 2006b. Doing Citizenship: The Cultural Origins of Civic Agency in the Public Sphere. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 9(3), 267-286.
- De Angelis M. and Stavrides S. 2010. On the Commons: A Public Interview with Massimo de Angelis and Stavros Stavrides. *An Architektur and e-flux journal*, 17, 4-7.
- De Biase A. 2017. *Strumenti e temi per pensare e progettare insieme la città*. Laa, UMR LAVUE 7218 CNRS.

- De Moor T. 2012. *What Do We Have in Common? A Comparative Framework for Old and New Literature on the Commons*. Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis.
- Dekker K. and Van Kempen R. 2009. Participation, Social Cohesion and the Challenges in the Governance Process: An Analysis of a Post-World War II Neighbourhood in the Netherlands. *European Planning Studies*, 17(1), 109-130.
- Del Sesto M. 2015. Cities, Gardening, and Urban Citizenship: Transforming Vacant Acres into Community Resources. *Cities and the Environment*, 8(2), article 3, <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cate/vol8/iss2/3>.
- Dellenbaugh M., Kip M., Bieniok M., Muller A. K. and Schwegmann M. (Eds.) 2015. *Urban Commons. Moving Beyond State and Market*. Basel, Switzerland: Birkhauser.
- Delli Carpini M.X. 2000. Gen.Com: Youth, Civic Engagement, and the New Information Environment. *Political Communication*, 17(4), 341-349.
- Desmond M. 2016. *Evicted. Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York (NY): Crown Books.
- Diedrichs U., Reiners W. and Wessels W. 2011. New Modes of Governance: Policy Developments and the Hidden Steps of EU Integration. In A. Heritier, and M. Rhodes. *New Modes of Governance in Europe. Governing in the Shadow of Hierarchy*, 19-47. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Docherty I., Goodlad R. and Paddison R. 2001. Civic Culture, Community and Citizen Participation in Contrasting Neighbourhoods. *Urban Studies*, 38(12), 2225-2250.
- Donolo C. 2012. I beni comuni presi sul serio. In G. Arena, and C. Iaione, *L'Italia dei beni comuni*. Roma: Carocci.
- Durkheim E. 1893. *The Division of Labour in Society*. W.D. Halls, Trans. New York: Free Press.
- Eizaguirre S., Pradel M., Terrones A., Martinez-Celorio X. and García M. 2012. Multilevel Governance and Social Cohesion: Bringing Back Conflict in Citizenship Practices. *Urban Studies*, 49(9), 1999-2016.
- Ertuna-Howison I. and Howison, J.D. 2012. The Transformation of Istanbul's Urban Commons. *Borderlands*, 11(2), 1-14.
- Federici M.C. and Picchio M. (Eds.) 2013. *Pensare Georg Simmel: eredità e prospettive*. Perugia: Morlacchi Editore.

- Felbinger D. and Jonuschar H. 2006. Promoting Neighbourly Interactions by the Common Use of Green Spaces. *ENHR Conference – Housing in an expanding Europe: theory, policy, participation and implementation*. Ljubljana, Slovenia: Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia.
- Forrest R. and Kearns A. 2001. Social Cohesion, Social Capital and the Neighbourhood. *Urban Studies*, 38(12), 2125-2143.
- Foster S.R. 2013. Collective Action and the Urban Commons. *Notre Dam Law Review*, 87(1), 57-133.
- Foster R.S. and Iaione C. 2016. The City as a Commons. *Yale Law & Policy Review*, 34(2), 281-349..
- Fung A. 2006. Varieties of Participation in Complex Governance. *Public Administration Review*, 66-75.
- Gamberoni E. 2015. Quando la street è social: una suggestione per la geografia sociale? *Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana*, 8(2), 306-309.
- Ganugi G. 2018. The Role of Commoning and Mutually Shaped Citizenship in Developing Bottom-Linked Governance. The Projects Living Street and Future Street in Belgium. *Sociologia e Politiche Sociali*, 21(2), 51-70.
- Ganugi G. and Maggio M. 2018. Governing Liveable Cities: a question of agency? Public Housing and Neighbourhood Communities in the City of Bologna. *Cities, Communities and Homes: Is the Urban Future Livable?*, 255-261. Derby: Amps Proceedings.
- Garcia A., Standlee A., Beckhoff J. and Cui Y. 2009. Ethnographic Approaches to the Internet and Computer-Mediated Communication. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 38(1), 52-84.
- Garcia M. 2006. Citizenship Practices and Urban Governance in European Cities. *Urban Studies*, 43(4), 745-765.
- Garcia S. 1996. Cities and Citizenship. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 20(1), 7-21.
- Gehl J. and Svarre B. 2013. *How to Study Public Life*. Washington, Covelo, London: Island Press.
- Gidwani V. and Baviskar A. 2011. Urban Commons. *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLVI(50), 42-43.

- Gil de Zùniga H., Jung N. and Valenzuela S. 2012. Social Media Use for News and Individuals' Social Capital, Civic Engagement and Political Participation. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 17, 319-336.
- Godin B. 2012. Social Innovation: Utopias of Innovation from c.1830 to the Present. *Project on the Intellectual History of Innovation*, Working Paper No. 11.
- Gonzalez S. and Healey P. 2005. A sociological institutionalist approach to the study of innovation in governance capacity. *Urban Studies*, 42(11), 2055-2069.
- Guarnizo L.E. 2012. The fluid, multi-scalar, and contradictory construction of citizenship. In M.P. Smith, and M. McQuarrie, *Remaking Urban Citizenship. Organizations, institutions and the right to the city*, 11-37. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers.
- Habermas J. 1991. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hardt M. and Negri A. 2009. *Commonwealth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Harloe M. 2001. Social Justice and the City: The New "Liberal" Formulation. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Studies*, 25(4), 889-897.
- Harper D. 2002. Talking about pictures: A case for photo elicitation. *Visual Studies*, 17(1), 13-26.
- Harvey D. 2003. The right to the city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27(4), 939-941.
- 2008. The Right to the City. *New Left Review*, 53.
- 2011. The Future or the Commons. *Radical History Review*, 109, 101-107.
- 2012. *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. London and New York: Verso.
- Haxeltine A., Avelino F., Pel B., Kemp R., Dumitru A., Longhurst N., Chilvers J., Jørgensen M.S., Wittmayer J., Seyfang G., Kunze I., Dorland J. and Strasser T. 2016. *Transformative Social Innovation Theory. TRANSIT WP3 deliverable D3.3 – A second prototype of TSI theory*. EU Project: Transformative Social Innovation Theory project.
- Hess C. 2000. Is There Anything New Under the Sun?: A Discussion and Survey of Studies on New Commons and the Internet. *Constituting the Commons*. Bloomington, Indiana: International Association for the Study of Common Property.

- 2008. Mapping the New Commons. *Governing Shared Resources: Connecting Local Experience to*. Cheltenham: University of Gloucestershire.
- Hess C. and Ostrom E. 2007. An Overview of the Knowledge Commons. In C. Hess, and E. Ostrom, *Understanding Knowledge as a Commons: From Theory to Practice*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hidalgo C.M. 2013. Operationalization of Place Attachment: A Consensus Proposal. *Estudios de Psicología*, 34(3), 251-259.
- Holm G. Photography as a Research Method. In P. Leavy (Ed.) 2014. *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 380-402. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Holston J. and Appadurai A. 1996. Cities and Citizenship. *Public Culture*, 8, 187-204.
- Hughes J. (Ed.) 2012. *Sage Visual Methods. Volume I: Principles, Issues, Debates and Controversies in Visual Research*. London: Sage.
- Huron A. 2017. Theorising the urban commons: New thought, tensions and path forward. *Urban Studies*, 1-8.
- Iaione C. 2015a. Beni comuni e innovazione sociale. *Equilibri*, 1, 59-72.
- 2015b. Governing the Urban Commons. *Italian Journal of Public Law*, 7(1), 170-221.
- 2016. The Co-City: Sharing, Collaborating, Cooperating, and Commoning in the City. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 75(2), 415-455.
- Isin E.F. and Nielsen G.M. 2008. *Act of citizenship*. London: Zed Books.
- Isin E.F. and Turner B.S. 2002. *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*. London: Sage Publications.
- Iveson K. 2013. Cities within the City: Do-It-Yourself Urbanism and the Right to the City. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37(3), 941-956.
- Jenson J. 1998. *Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Canadian Research*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc.
- 2010. *Defining and Measuring Social Cohesion*. The Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Jessop B. 2001. Institutional (re)turns and the strategic-relational approach. *Environment and Planning A*, 33, 1213-1235.
- 2002. Governance and Metagovernance: On Reflexivity, Requisite Variety, and Requisite Irony. In H. Bang (Eds.) *Governance as Social and Political Communication*, 101-116. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Jessop B., Moulaert F., Hulgard L. and Hamdouch A. 2013. Social innovation research: a new stage in innovation analysis? In F. Moulaert, D. MacCallum, M. Abid, and

- A. Hamdouch (Eds.) *The International Handbook on Social Innovation: Collective Action, Social Learning and Transdisciplinary Research*, 110-130. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publisher.
- Kazepov Y. 2010. Rescaling Social Policies towards Multilevel Governance in Europe, *Public Policy and Social Welfare* 38. Farnham (UK): Ashgate. .
- 2014. From Citizenship to Cit(y)zenship. Cities within multi-level governance arrangements in Europe, draft: <http://bit.ly/31q06q4>.
- Kearns A. and Forrest R. 2000. Social Cohesion and Multilevel Urban Governance. *Urban Studies*, 37(5-6), 995-1017.
- Kim J. and Kaplan R. 2004. Physical and Psychological Factors in Sense of Community. New Urbanist Kentlands and Nearby Orchard Village. *Environment and Behaviour*, 36(3), 313-340.
- Kip M. 2015. Moving beyond the city: Conceptualizing urban commons from a critical urban studies perspective. In M. Dellenbaugh, M. Kip, M. Bieniok, A. K. Muller, and M. Schwegmann (Eds.), *Urban Commons. Moving beyond State and Market* p. 42-59. Basel: Birkhauser Verlag GmbH.
- Klein J.-L., Camus A., Jetté C. and Champagne C. and Roy M. 2016. *La transformation sociale par l'innovation sociale*. Montreal: Presses de l'Université du Québec.
- Knoblauch H., Baer A., Laurier E., Petschke S. and Schnettler B. 2008. Visual Analysis. New Developments in the Interpretative Analysis of Video and Photography. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 9(3).
- Kooiman J. 1993. Social-political governance: Introduction. In J. Kooiman, *Modern Governance. New Government - Society Interactions*. London: Sage.
- Kozinets R.V. 2015. *Netnography*. London, Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage Publications.
- Kozinets R.V., Dolbec P.Y. and Earley A. 2014. Netnographic Analysis: Understanding Culture through Social Media Data. In U. Flick (Eds.) *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, 262-275. London: Sage.
- Laboratoire Architecture Anthropologie. 2017. *Esplorazioni temporali di un quartiere*, Report finale dei due periodi intensivi. Atlas#Veronetta-Report Finale, LAA -LAVUE 7218 CNRS.
- Lawrence T. B., Dover G. and Gallagher B. 2014. Managing Social Innovation. In M. Dodgson, D. M. Gann, and N. Phillips, *The Oxford Handbook of Innovation Management*, 316-334. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Le Galès P. 2002. Government e governance urbana nelle città Europee: argomenti per la discussione. *Foedus*, 4, 8-31.
- Lelieveldt H. 2004. Helping Citizens Help Themselves. Neighborhood Improvement Programs and the Impact of Social Networks, Trust, and Norms on Neighborhood-Oriented Forms of Participation. *Urban Affairs*, 39(5), 531-551.
- Levine P. 2001. Civic Renewal and the Commons of Cyberspace. *National Civic Review*, 90(3), 205-212.
- 2002. Can the Internet Rescue Democracy? Toward an On-line Commons. In R. Hayduk, and K. Mattson (Eds.), *Democracy's Moment: Reforming the American: Political System for the 21st Century*, 121-137. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Leyden K.M. 2003. Social Capital and the Built Environment: The Importance of Walkable Neighbourhoods. *American Journal of Public Health*, 93(9), 1546-1551.
- Lichterman P., Eliasoph N. 2014. Civic Action. *American Journal of Sociology*, 120(3), 798-863.
- Linebaugh P. 2009. *The Magna Carta Manifesto: Liberties and Commons for All*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Linn K. 1999. Reclaiming the Sacred Commons. *New Village*, 1, 42-49.
- Lofland L.H. 1998. *The Public Realm: Exploring the City's Quintessential Social Territory*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.
- MacCallum D., Moulaert F. and Hillier J. a.-H. 2009. *Social Innovation and Territorial Development*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Macchioni E., Maestri G. and Ganugi G. 2017. Innovazione sociale e sviluppo territoriale. Quando la strada si fa comunità. *Sociologia Urbana e Rurale*, 114, 130-147.
- Manganelli A., Van Den Broeck P. and Moulaert F. 2019. Socio-political dynamics of alternative food networks: a hybrid governance approach. *Territory, Politics, Governance*. doi:10.1080/21622671.2019.1581081
- Manzo L.C. and Perkins D.D. 2006. Finding Common Ground: The Importance of Place Attachment to Community Participation and Planning. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 20(4), 335-350.
- Marshall T.H. 1950. *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Martinelli F. 2017. Social services disrupted. Changing supply landscapes, impacts and policy options. In F. Martinelli, A. Anttonen, and M. Mätzke (Eds.), *Social Services Disrupted. Changes, Challenges and Policy Implications for Europe in Times of Austerity*, 391-410. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publisher.
- Maslow A.H. 1968. *Toward a Psychology of Being*. New York: Van Nostrand.
- Mayntz R. 1999. La teoria della governance: sfide e prospettive. *Rivista italiana di scienza politica*, 1, 3-21.
- McCann E.J. 2003. Space, citizenship and the right to the city: a brief overview. *GeoJournal*, 58(2-3), 77-79.
- Merrifield A. 2013. Citizens' Agora: The New Urban Question. *Radical Philosophy*, 179, 31-35.
- Miciukiewicz K., Moulaert F., Novy A., Musterd S. and Hillier J. 2012. Introduction. Problematising Urban Social Cohesion: A Transdisciplinary Endeavour. *Urban Studies*, 49(9), 1855-1872.
- Mitchell D. 2003. *The Right to the City. Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*. New York, London: The Guilford Press.
- Molloy J.K. 2007. Photovoice as a Tool for Social Justice Workers. *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, 18(2), 39-55.
- Moro G. 2002. The Citizen's Side of Governance. *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, 7, 18-30.
- 2010. L'attivismo civico e le pratiche di cittadinanza. *Convegno Sisp*. Venezia.
- Mosconi G. 2015. *Tecnologie digitali e commons urbani. Il caso studio di Social Street, Residenti in via San Pio X e dintorni*. Tesi magistrale, Università degli Studi di Trento.
- Mosconi G., Korn M., Reuter C., Tolmie P., Teli M. and Pipek V. 2017. From Facebook to the Neighbourhood: Infrastructuring of Hybrid Community Engagement. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work*, 26(4-6), 959-1003.
- Moulaert F. 2009. Social Innovation: Institutionally Embedded, Territorially (Re)Produced. In D. MacCallum, F. Moulaert, J. Hillier, and S. Vicari Haddock. (Eds.), *Social Innovation and Territorial Development*, 11-23. Farnham (UK): Ashgate.
- 2010. Social Innovation and Community Development. Concepts, Theories and Challenges. In F. Moulaert, F. Martinelli, E. Swyngedouw, and S. Gonzalez, *Can*

- Neighbourhoods Save the City? Community Development and Social Innovation*, 4-16. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Moulaert F., Jessop B. and Mehmood A. 2016. Agency, Structure, Institutions, Discourse (ASID) in Urban and Regional Development. *International Journal of Urban Science*, 20(2), 167-187.
- Moulaert F. and MacCallum D. 2019. *Advanced Introduction to Social Innovation*. Edward Edgar Publisher.
- Moulaert F., MacCallum D., Mehmood A. and Hamdouch A. 2013. *The International Handbook on Social Innovation. Collective Action, Social Learning and Transdisciplinary Research*. Cheltenham: EEP.
- Moulaert F., Martinelli F., Gonzàlez S. and Swingedouw E. 2007. Introduction: Social Innovation and Governance in European Cities. Urban Development between Path Dependency and Radical Innovation. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 14(3), 195-209.
- Moulaert F., Martinelli F., Swyngedouw E. and Gonzalez S. 2005. Towards Alternative Model(s) of Local Innovation. *Urban Studies*, 42(11), 1969-1990.
- 2010. *Can Neighbourhoods Save the City? Community Development and Social Innovation*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Moulaert F., Mehmood A., MacCallum D. and Leubolt B. 2017. *Social Innovation as a Trigger of Transformations. The Role of Research*. European Union: Luxembourg.
- Moulaert F. and Nussbaumer J. 2005. The Social Region. Beyond the territorial dynamics of the Learning Economy. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 12(1), 45-64.
- Mulgan G. 2007. *Social Innovation: what it is, why it matters and how it can be accelerated*, Working paper. Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship.
- Nicholls W. and Vermeulen F. 2012. Rights through the City: The Urban Basis of Immigrant Rights Struggles in Amsterdam and Paris. In M.P. Smith, and M. McQuarrie, *Remaking Urban Citizenship. Organizations, institutions and the right to the city*, 79-97. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers.
- Novy A., Swiatek D.C. and Moulaert F. 2012. Social Cohesion: A Conceptual and Political Elucidation. *Urban Studies*, 49(9), 1873-1889.
- Nussbaum M. 2003. *Capacità personale e democrazia sociale*. Reggio Emilia: Diabasis.
- Nuvolati G. 2002. *Popolazioni in movimento, città in trasformazione. Abitanti, city users, uomini d'affari e flaneurs*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

- 2014. Innovazione sociale, partecipazione e social street. *EyesReg, Giornale di Scienze Regionali*, 4(5), 130-134.
- Oakerson R.J. and Clifton J.D. 2015. *The Neighbourhood as Commons: Reframing the Problem of Neighbourhood Decline*. Bologna: 1st IASC Thematic Conference on the Urban Commons.
- O'Brien D.T. 2012. Managing the Urban Commons. The Relative Influence of Individual and Social Incentives on the Treatment of Public Space. *Human Nature*, 23, 467-489.
- Oosterlynck S., Kazepov Y., Novy A., Cools P., Barberis E., Wukovitsch F., Saruis T. and Leubolt B. 2013. *The butterfly and the elephant: local social innovation, the welfare state and new poverty dynamics*, ImPRovE Working Papers 13/03, Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy, University of Antwerp.
- Ostanel E. 2012. *Rapporto di ricerca. Geografie di accesso allo spazio pubblico*. Venezia: IUAV - Cattedra Unesco.
- Ostrom E. 1990. *Governing the Commons: the Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ostrom E., Burger J., Field C.B., Norgaard R.B. and Policansky D. 1999. Revisiting the Commons: Local Lessons, Global Challenges. *Science*, 284, 278-282.
- Painter J. 2005. *Urban Citizenship and Rights to the City*. Project Report. Durham: International Centre for Regional Regeneration and Development Studies.
- Pais I. and Provasi G. 2015. Sharing Economy: A Step towards the Re-Embeddedness of the Economy?, *Stato e mercato*, 105(3).
- Pasqualini C. 2016. Una nuova cultura della socialità: la sfida delle "social street". In Ambrosianeum Fondazione Culturale and R. Lodigiani (Ed.), *Milano 2016. Rapporto sulla città. Idee, cultura, immaginazione e la Città metropolitana decolla*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Pasqualini C. and Introini F. 2015. Vicini e connessi. Alla scoperta delle social street milanesi. *Gli Stati Generali*.
- Perkins D.D. and Long A.D. 2002. Neighbourhood Sense of Community and Social Capital. A Multi-Level Analysis. In A. Fisher, C. Sonn, and B. Bishop (Eds.), *Psychological Sense of Community: Research, Application, and Implications*, 291-318. New York: Plenum.
- Phills, J.A. 2008. Rediscovering Social Innovation. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 6(4), 4-43.

- Pradel M., Garcìa M. and Eizaguirre S. 2013. Theorizing multi-level governance in social innovation dynamics. In F. Moulaert, D. MacCallum, A. Mehmood, and A. Hamdouch, *The International Handbook on Social Innovation. Collective Action, Social Learning and Transdisciplinary Research*, 155-168. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publisher.
- Prandini R. 2013. La persona come medium e forma di politica sociale. Un cambiamento di paradigma per i servizi di welfare. *Sociologia e Politiche Sociali*, 16, 43-78.
- 2018. The morphogenesis of disability policies and the personalisation of social services. A case study from Italy. *Revue Internationale de Sociologie*, 28, 86-109.
- Purcell M. 2002. Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of its inhabitant. *GeoJournal*, 58(2-3), 99-108.
- Putnam R. 1993. What Makes Democracy Work? *National Civic Review*, 82(2), 101-107.
- 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Rhodes R.A. 1997. *Understanding Governance. Policy Networks, Reflexivity and Accountability*. Buckingham-Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Rosanvallon P. 2008. *Counter-Democracy. Politics in an Age of Distrust*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 2011. *Democratic Legitimacy. Impartiality, Reflexivity, Proximity*. A. Goldhammer, Trans. Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Rose N. and Osborne T. 2000. Governing cities, governing citizens. In E. Isin, *Democracy, citizenship, and the city: rights to the global city*. London: Routledge.
- Rosenau J.N. and Czempiel E.O. (Eds.) 1992. *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sabato S., Vanhercke B. and Verschraegen G. 2015. *The EU framework for social innovation – Between entrepreneurship and policy experimentation*. ImPRovE Working Papers 15/21, Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy, University of Antwerp.
- Sabel C.F. and Zeitlin J. 2008. Learning from Difference: The New Architecture of Experimentalist Governance in the EU. *European Law Journal*, 14(3), 271-327.
- Schmitter P. 2002. Participation in governance arrangements: is there any reason to expect it will achieve “sustainable and innovative policies in a multi-level context”? In J.R. Grote and B. Gbikpi (Eds.) *Participatory Governance: Political and Societal Implications*, 51–69. Opladen: Leske and Budrich

- Sennett R. 1992. *The Fall of Public Man*. New York: Norton.
- Servillo L.A. and Van Den Broeck P. 2012. The Social Construction of Planning Systems: A Strategic-Relational Institutional Approach. *Planning Practice & Research*, 27(1), 41-61.
- Siefkes C. 2009. The Commons of the Future. Building Blocks for a Commons-based Society. *The Commoner*, www.thecommoner.org.
- Simmel G. 1969. Soziologie der Geselligkeit. In *Verhandlungen des 1. Deutschen Soziologentages vom 19. Bis 22. Oktober 1910 in Frankfurt am Main* (S. 1-16). Frankfurt am Main: Sauer u. Auvermann.
- Simmel G. and Hughes. E.C. 1949. The Sociology of Sociability. *American Journal of Sociology*, 55(3), 254-261.
- Slutskaya N., Simpson A. and Hughes J. 2012. Lessons from photoelicitation: encouraging working men to speak, *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 7(1), 16-33.
- Smith M.P. and Guarnizo L.E. 2009. Global mobility, shifting borders and urban citizenship. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 100(5), 610-622.
- Smith M.P. and McQuarrie M. 2012. *Remaking Urban Citizenship. Organizations, institutions and the right to the city*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers.
- Soiini K. 2001. Exploring Human Dimensions of Multifunctional Landscapes through Mapping and Map-making. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 57, 225-239.
- Somers M.R. 2008. *Genealogies of Citizenship. Markets, Statelessness, and the Right to Have Rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stanica A.E. 2014. *Strada sociale. Il fenomeno Social Street, nascita ed evoluzione nel contesto Bolognese*. Interwideo.
- Stavrides S. 2016. *Common Space. The City as Commons*. London: Zed Books.
- Susser I. and Tonnelat S. 2013. Transformative cities. The three urban commons. *Focaal. Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology*, 66, 105-132.
- Swyngedouw E. 2005. Governance Innovation and the Citizen: The Janus Face of Governance-beyond-the-State. *Urban Studies*, 42(11), 1991-2006.
- Swyngedouw E. and Jessop B. 2006. *Regulation, reproduction, and governance: Achilles' heel of development*. Thematic synthesis paper 3, Demologos: <http://demologos.ncl.ac.uk/wp/wp2/disc.php>.
- Turnaturi G. 2011. Socialità casuali. *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*, 1, 14-36.

- Uitemark J. Rossi U. and Van Houtum H. 2005. Reinventing Multiculturalism: Urban Citizenship and the Negotiation of Ethnic Diversity in Amsterdam. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 29(3), 622-640.
- Van den Broeck P. 2011. Analysing Social Innovation through Planning Instruments. A Strategic-Relational Approach. In S. Oosterlynck, J. Van den Broeck, L. Albrechts, F. Moulaert, and A. Verhetsel (Eds.), *Strategic Spatial Projects. Catalysts for Change*, 52-78. Abingdon: Routledge.
- 2019. Mythes over participatie in wijkontwikkeling. Het Antwerpse Schipperskwartier als case. In A. Kuhk, H. Heynen, L. Huybrechts, F. Moulaert, and J. Schreurs (Eds.), *Participatiegolven. Dialogen over het recht op de ruimte in Vlaanderen en Brussel*, 71-96. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Van den Broeck P., Abdelwahab M., Miciukiewicz K. and Hillier J. 2013. On Analysing Space from a Strategic-Relational Institutional Perspective: The Cultural Park for Children in Cairo. *International Planning Studies*, 18(3-4), 321-341.
- Van Dyck B. and Van Den Broeck P. 2013. Social Innovation: a Territorial Process. In F. Moulaert, D. MacCallum, A. Mehmood, and A. Hamdouch, *The International Handbook on Social Innovation. Collective Action, Social Learning and Transdisciplinary Research*, pp. 131-141. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Van Marissing E., Bolt G. and Van Kempen R. 2006. Urban Governance and Social Cohesion: Effects of Urban Restructuring Policies in two Dutch Cities. *Cities*, 23(4), 279-290.
- Veen E.J., Bock B.B., Van den Berg W., Visser A.J. and Wiskerke J.S. 2016. Community Gardening and Social Cohesion: Different Designs, Different Motivations. *Local Environment*, 21(10), 1271-1287.
- Vitale T. 2010. Building a shared interest. Olinda, Milan: social innovation between strategy and organisational learning. In F. Moulaert, F. Martinelli, E. Swyngedouw and S. Gonzalez (Eds.), *Can Neighbourhoods Save the City? Community development and social innovation*, 81-92. London: Routledge.
- Vittadini N. 2015. Mappare o tracciare? Una questione metodologica per gli studi sulle “reti socievoli”. In G. Boccia Artieri (Ed.), *Gli effetti sociali del web. Forme della comunicazione e metodologie della ricerca online*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Vlach E. 2011. *Tra centro e periferia. Cambiare il destino di una parte urbana attraverso un processo partecipato di riqualificazione. Il caso del quartiere San Pio X a Trento*. Tesi magistrale, Università degli studi di Trento.

- Weber M. 1968. *L'etica protestante e lo spirito del capitalismo*. Firenze: Sansoni.
- Wellman B. and Hampton K. 1999. Living Networked On and Offline. *Contemporary Sociology*, 28(6), 648-654.
- Wirth L. 1938. Urbanism as a Way of Life. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 44(1), 1-24.
- Yin R.K. 2003. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London, Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage Publication

