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Towards the Enabling City: Intermediate Places between Practices and Planning for Social Innovation in Bologna

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Abstract

The research investigates the interaction between social innovation practices and urban planning, assuming as a case study and field of application the city of Bologna, observed from the point of view of the production of urban policies and with respect to the places where it is practiced.

Social innovation are localised actions tackling current urban complexities with micro-scale practices of service and urban production, by which new urban actors find answers to social needs, which are less afforded by the market and the public sectors. Planning and social innovation practices are two dimensions working in the city in different but complementary ways, subject to a **mismatch**. Through the lenses of **interaction**, the research explores the **context of Bologna**, a paradigmatic study and application field, a laboratory of innovative policies where a tradition of collective civic initiatives intertwines with a more responsible institutional planning framework. After drawing from area-based policies of Berlin and Barcelona, the thesis reads the role of specific **intermediate places**, mediators in bridging the level of institutions and the practices. Through an inventory and a cross-cutting taxonomy of intermediate places, the research draws the knowledge to inform a new urban model for the city of Bologna, aimed at overtake the mismatches by enabling the practices to act, allowing urban planning to frame them in a cross-fertilisation dimension. The proposed **urban diagrammatic model**, foresees intermediate places as local socio-urban observatories for research and development, interacting with both institutions and communities. The goal is to critically explore the limits and widen the meaning of the capacity of action of social innovation practices engaging in mutual-learning with the city. The model suggests a new possibility for reflection on urban planning as a more flexible approach, which translates the numerous experiences of the city into alternatives and multiple visions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

"Certainty increase [...] simply because they can make more mistakes than others. Every mistake is in turn archived, saved, recorded, and made easily readable again, whatever the specific field or topic may be [...] When you sum up a series of mistakes, you are stronger that anyone who has been allowed fewer mistakes than you"

Latour B., *Give Me a Laboratory and I Will Raise the World*, 1983

The age of complexity and of cities' innovation

In the age of urbanisation, global issues with local consequences, we are living within rapid changes, growing evidences of fragility and decreasing trust in institutions. Cities are growingly complex (Sassen 1994; Urry 2003; Healey 1997, 2007; Amin and Thrift 2002, 2017), subject to multiple forces and trends and the result of the action of a plurality of ever-changing spatial, social, environmental, digital elements. They are subject to well-known global phenomena, such as urban saturation, ageing, climate change and political turmoil, against which fixed recipe – whose solutions are not reproducible – and the traditional skills of urban planning, often do not apply. At the same time, cities remain the ideal driving forces of the national economic systems, as their main development arenas, both in economic and social inclusion terms. Cities in fact, are the arenas where production and services are no longer only linked to private companies, but they add new value to urban space (Gabellini 2018). Cities are growingly presenting such a level of integration between socio-technical systems, infrastructures, local movements, human and non-human agents (Amin and Thrift 2017) that they are looked as a paradigm to investigate the society as a whole, reversing the perspective. After a long-lasting crisis that saw cities gradually reducing the public provision of services and of inclusive processes, they are growingly unable to answer to urgent question raised as a consequence of such global phenomena.

In this scenario, we are witnessing the emergence of non-governmental actors (BEPA 2010) – from local communities, collective enterprises, private groups – organised to provide those services that are not offered anymore by the public nor by the market, bringing in private resources for common-interest purposes. This phenomenon is commonly defined **social innovation** (Gerometta et al. 2005; MacCallum et al. 2009; Howaldt et al. 2014; Moulaert et al. 2017) a dynamic indicating local initiatives performed for common-interest purposes, often producing changes in the city systems. Social innovation offers integrated services mostly at the scale of the neighbourhood, as a social recognisable unit. Language courses for foreigners, purchasing groups, micro inclusive economy experiments, proximity services for elderly, low priced neighbourhoods' events, urban orchards, health promotion and inclusive education, are only some of the multiplicity of experiences performed by social innovation practice, operating in the urban space. This multiplicity of practices produces what is generally expected as side effects or by-products of the institutional actions of the plan (Donolo 1997; Crosta 1998), answering both to societal needs and often creating structural transformation in urban and social terms, while producing new forms of collaborations. In some cases, they are being able to achieve the power of a public policy (Fareri and Giraudi 2009). Therefore, they impact on social, urban and organisational domains. The growing expansion in numbers and in interests of social innovation practices, is leading them to reconcile local economic development with the needs of the population (Matteaccioli 2008) in terms of working and living conditions, addressing also the economic domain. These initiatives are more and more present in cities, no longer extemporaneous and not anymore contingent, but they are becoming a tendency that eventually leads to constitute a critical mass and a systemic requirement. From this emerges the need to know and investigate them, to understand their potential in the current complexity of cities and crisis of the public actor.

In the increasingly complex context, cities are hotspots of knowledge, cultural, economic energies, hence are called to be "engines" (Dvir 2003) of urban development. Nevertheless, in order to face and overcome social emerging challenges, they need to transform their development system, by **providing space for the emergence** of new

solutions, supplying alternative financial tools and economies, granting enabling distributive context and systems to be able to offer a significative catalogue of solutions to complexity. The main problem for these solutions concerns overcoming their configuration as a sum of temporary individualities (Sennett 2008) to be seized instead of a hierarchy of opportunities to transform mainstream processes in a flexible and reflective way. This seems to require innovation at urban scale, with the **planner's lenses** as useful categories to read the process that led to the rise of and to organise the partnership with social innovation initiative.

Social innovation is a concept with **fuzzy boundaries**, indicating a "combination of bottom-linked actions, by which people find answers to social needs" (Moulaert et al. 2013) that are not afforded by the market and not anymore by the state, "experimentation and production of the new, emerging as challenges to institutional legitimacy" (Hillier 2013). In cities, social innovation appears as an ecosystem of practices of civic origin, exploring and experimenting "new ideas and solutions to meet social needs and at the same time create new relationships of collaboration" (Murray et al. 2010). Such practices are increasingly diverse - in themes, scale, organisation - forms of local experiences that "produce a discontinuity" (Manzini 2018) in the urban and service system emerging when economic and social themes progressively approach each other, creating a phenomenon that has its materialisation in the urban space. Social innovation practices are increasingly able to move smoothly in urban spaces, reconfiguring small-scale urban models of the city (Hill 2014) in a way that seems to be more effective in meeting global challenges – also thanks to their short term and small-scale action – than urban planning is currently able to do. Social innovations can take many shapes, according to the larger socio-political system in which they are embedded (Brandsen et al. 2016): they take the shape of new service provisions and urban interventions in networks (e.g. new forms of cooperation, from urban gardening to support to public health, to new forms of teaching and learning); they refer to large projects or to clusters of small projects, to innovations in urban services both in the governance and their distribution; they address policies usually excluded from the general planning system (Evers and Ewert 2015), concerning environment, culture, but they also provide fresh visions and inputs to standard planning segments. As a consequence, they are challenging and replacing the traditional ways through which discussion on urban services, spaces and processes is usually addressed in planning. Their action is currently transforming the public role and challenging institution in re-thinking its organisation in more adaptable forms. But is social innovation enough to produce urban transformations? This question seems useful to reflect upon, in light of the contemporary global challenges, which requires for cities to step-up and tackle complex issues in a more operative manner.

The urgency to act locally in order to find context-based solutions for global urban challenges, is expressed by UN Agenda 2030 and its 17 SDGs, by the UN Urban Agenda of the UN conference Habitat III (Quito 2016) and eventually by the principles enunciated in the Pact of Amsterdam (2016) and developed in the EU Urban Agenda. This sequence of decisions by UN and international bodies underlines their convergence on city as main stages where to fight issues that concern the "very survival of the planet" (UN 2016). The framework provided by European and global agendas seems to encourage cities on the one hand to engage and partner-up with local emerging energies, and on the other to enable their growth and diffusion with the provision of a diffuse and multi-level governance (Kazepov 2010) infrastructure.

In this global urban policy framework, social innovation has grown as an umbrella concept containing everything that is emerging as an extra-planning activity in the city, filling the void left over either by the state or the market (Moulaert et al. 2013). This tendency, together with a mostly positive description of the outcomes of social innovation, have left space for misinterpretations or to the misuse of the concept to justify or hide agendas. Therefore, it seems useful to bring out the urgency to define a shared understanding of social innovation, to facilitate its positioning in the framework of urban planning, with all the multiple interpretation, constraints and ambiguities. This might help to address the ways in which **urban planning can learn** from these innovations and **selectively enable** their dynamics and tools to be aggregated into a planning system that opens up collaborations in order to handle complex issues.

Research objectives

Literature on social innovation in its urban dimension, produced a vast repertoire of definitions by drawing from the practical nature of the phenomenon, and shows that the topic has always been analysed from the institutional point of view or from the local community promoting it. Therefore, what appears is a research gap in addressing the level in-between the actions of the multitude of practices and the institutional planning framework among which they act. The interaction dimension between the two levels in fact, is still overlooked. In the literature about social innovation in fact, great attention has been paid in the products of its action and the possibility to up-scale such production into a larger scheme of norms. What appear still missing is an analysis on the conditions thanks to which the phenomena emerged, where it persisted and how it was able to produce interesting solutions for some urban context. The challenge, is in the same inner nature of social innovation, which is dynamic and difficult to grasp and coordinate in a structured framework. The concept is hence interpreted as a research and development methodology, following the model inspired by the philosopher Gilles Deleuze, applied to urban planning. The Deleuzian interpretation of social innovation constitutes not only a theoretical but also planning-oriented framework. It links social innovations to dynamics of change, of becoming, constant creation and transformation (inherent principles of experimentation) (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) through 'windows of opportunity' (Hillier 2013), such as the contextual conditions in terms of background (Chap. 3), policy framework (Chap.4) and place dimension (Chap. 5).

Social innovation processes in cities are complementary to institutional planning processes. Thanks to their inner abilities linked to their path-dependency (Drewe et al. 2008; MacCallum et al. 2009; Moulaert and Vicari Haddock 2009), they could be capable to **expand the capacity of cities to answer to challenges and solicitations**, and eventually question the traditional urban planning approaches. Their value, impact, transformation capacity, is still to be recognised, evaluated and organised to avoid its collision and fading in the face of urban/normative/bureaucratic limitations. Starting from this hypothesis, the research aims to look into the **interaction** between practices and planning, to deepen the linking mechanisms between the two levels, who are the protagonist and the structures in support. The final aim is to enable the transition from social innovation to institutional innovation.

The initiatives described as social innovations occur as "anomalies" (Crosta 1998) that are not foreseen by institutional planning, but bring out qualitative outcomes able to produce urban and social added value. These endogenous energies, acting sometimes spontaneously in the city, appear to be chances that traditional planning practices should not only recognise, but integrate, address and organise, re-formulating strategic protocols and action models, interacting with them. **Integration does not intend the prevailing of one category over another, but the mutual learning among them**. The point of view of interaction, seems to offer a promising strategy for the spatialisation of social innovations, the recognition of their limits, mechanisms, evolutions and transformative power for the city in its material and organisational aspects.

The research process necessarily considers the main feature of social innovation initiatives, such as the path-dependency–as the close correlation with the context in which they emerge–as these processes are embedded in a specific territory and arise from contingent solicitations. For these reasons, the city of Bologna is chosen both as privileged observation case and a testing ground. The practical nature of social innovation in fact, requires to anchor the production of the knowledge starting from empirical research. The context from which to observe and read the phenomenon is key for its understanding and a fertile testing ground for its verification. The city of **Bologna** always worked to fill the gap between the level of institutions and the one of local practices, providing urban policy action frames, with different degree of success and achievements. Following the traces of a strong tradition, the city is currently providing a fertile ground for the flourishing of urban social innovation initiatives, some of which have been formalized over time while others have remained outside the institutional schemes. The enabling context of Bologna has meant that, more than just being alternative suppliers of public services, social innovation initiatives have become "agents" in the care and regeneration of public spaces and large quantities of urban assets. The constellation of initiatives in the city, shows a different degree of interest and commitment to urban space. For some it represent a stage to perform their actions (e.g. street art, urban dance, temporary installations, cultural events), others are aimed at taking care of it (e.g. collective repainting of walls after a graffiti intervention, care of pocket gardens or of street furniture), others aim at regenerating it through the provision of new services (e.g. solidarity purchase of food, language courses, proximity service provision) and others intervene in order to adapt renew its spatial elements (e.g. re-use of empty buildings, transformation of a square or unsafe public road). The city of Bologna has been offering through time a responsible public guidance (Palermo and Ponzini 2014) that was able to outline virtuous conceptions of urban development and social cohesion.

Through the tracing of social innovation in Bologna, the research intends to verify the value of the practices for the city, in terms of attractiveness, cohesion of its inhabitants, international competitiveness, quality of life. A necessary premise entails the risks for such practices, if used to legitimise re-arrangements of urban uses and to privatise public portions of the city (Savini et al. 2015), to produce new fragmentations and selective boundaries.

Urban practices labelled as social innovation are becoming more and more widespread–partly as a result of the impetus provided by European policies–nevertheless they are still part of **a fragile theory**, with empirical basis (Palermo and Ponzini 2014) and a multiplicity of possible interpretations. For this reason, the research is primarily oriented to achieve a theoretical systematisation of this subject, considering its invariant elements, such as its link to the specific nature of each individual context and action. Social innovation in its "urban" declination is

confronted with an open disciplinary field, such as urban planning. The research interrogates on the possibility to put this approach into practice **by turning the episodic logic** of these interventions to **interact** with the **stable and strategic** characteristics of urban planning.

As stated by Ezio Manzini, interaction (positive or conflicting) between systems and actors is what produces innovation processes more likely to answer to pressing social needs (Mulgan et al. 2007; Grimm at al. 2013). Observing the experiences of social innovation, it is clear that interaction is impossible to directly design and plan. Nevertheless, what is possible, is to **create the conditions to enable** it, through infrastructures that triggers its successful emergence and positive urban value creation (Manzini 2015). The enabling conditions can be pursued through two dimensions:

- the **policy dimension**, aiming at answering to **how** social innovation emerged, by analysing the contextual support system and coherent network of regulations and norms that activate dialogue and foster (or failed to) the interaction between planning and practices and the multitude of subjects in cities;

- the **place dimension**: answering to **where** does social innovation happens, defining infrastructures and facilitating contexts for interactions to happen between the urban actors, within which they mutually learn to enrich without eliminate their different points of view based on a common intention.

The two dimensions can create fruitful and virtuous exchange which allows to explore the relationship between practice and planning processes through urban nodes that act as **intermediaries**, to anchor strategic and abstract principles and values to more operative contingent processes, that should be organised, planned (Hillier 2013), tested and verified. Besides verifying the possible value of the interaction of the practices with the urban planning system, the research provides the space to **widen the meaning of social innovation**, by critically explore the limits and the possibilities of the present capacity of action of the practices in transforming mainstream urban processes while engaging in a fruitful cross-fertilisation.

Drawing from these premises, the research sets four objectives:

- define a theory for the **transformative potential of social innovation practices** in urban contexts. A first phase of literature review is useful for the development of preliminary hypothesis and to define the field of investigation; this is followed by personal observation and involvement in practices, semi-structured interviews (with practitioners and civil servants), review of European projects outputs. The goal is to widen the vision of social innovation moving from micro, local and episodic actions towards multiple perspectives, systemic, organised alternatives changes and alteration of the institutional processes of urban development;

- analysis of the **interaction between social innovation practices and urban planning**, defining the policy background from two model cities, Berlin and Barcelona, analysing their approaches in policies oriented towards the organisation of social innovation in a larger vision, led and coordinated by specific urban intermediaries. The policy analysis aims to highlights the methodological insights, threats, externalities and constraints with a specific critical focus on the area-based approach, highlighting the reasons for its obsolescence. The analysis will be compared to the Urban Innovation Plan in Bologna in

the attempt to define a general framework of actions. The cases underline the cruciality of key actors and places as strategic units of spatial and institutional proximity with different outcomes and rate of success;

- establish the **place where planning, practices and actors come into synergy**. This objective is addressed through the exploration of the role of the specific innovation places in Bologna (Urban Living Labs, Community HUBs, Policy Labs, Innovation Hubs). The goal is to investigate how specific intermediate places are performing in fostering micro innovation, and their capacity to become nexus for innovation in urban policies, planning tools and the territory. Expressing a very concrete picture of their approaches, tools and partnership produced, contributes to ground social innovation in an urban dimension, using the categories of planning setups and arrangements. The goal is to understand what could be learned from intermediate places, which approaches they deploy, the impacts achieved, the rules implemented, the services distributed, the modes of governance to inform planning;

- consolidate a **diagrammatic model** which aims to develop an alternative approach for the city of Bologna that addresses the interplay between different activating places in larger urban flows. Intermediate places categories are traced in the present configuration of the city, highlighting their role as spaces of influence, processes, network and governance factors for a new urban model. The model is descriptive and prescriptive of strategies and orientations for planning. Unravelling the dynamic of the mutual fruitful interactions between social innovations and urban planning, the impacts, the risks and the possible planning directions, will also lead to frame a larger territorial view, revealing potentials in and beyond the metropolitan city, enlarging the view from the city to the region.

Research questions

The growth of the multitude of practices intervening in the co-production of the city, seems to suggest the need to go beyond the observation and recognition of their potential, towards building a new, integrated paradigm of urban transformation. The thesis starts from the recognition both of the possibilities and of the limits of the current action of social innovation practices (due to urban and normative constraints) and planning (due to lack of resources, skills and grasp on local issues). The fertile link between small interventions and long-term vision is a long-standing theme of the urban planning and design discipline. A crucial point, however, is that to conceive projects inspired by purely local interests and objectives, risks side-effects as privatisation and further competition. The coherence of such interventions with a large-scale vision and macro strategic objectives is decisive. Such a vision must confront a complex regulatory and institutional framework and be shared and legitimised by firstly the urban context and secondly the influential networks of large-scale dynamic relationships. Social innovation dynamics are constantly changing and in perpetual becoming (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Hillier 2005) while urban planning necessarily needs to stabilise them into some framework and spatial boundary.

The research question (Figure 1) addresses how to move towards an **open and interconnected urban model** that overtake the tensions and addresses the mismatches by **enabling social innovation to act, allowing urban planning to frame it** and deal with it in a cross-fertilisation dimension. The aim is therefore to identify an original urban model, flexible and open enough to allow the creation of an interconnected systems of social dynamics, to

translate the experiences growing in the city, into alternatives, possible multiple visions, not to predict or anticipate, but to be aware of the possibility to achieve effective transformation.
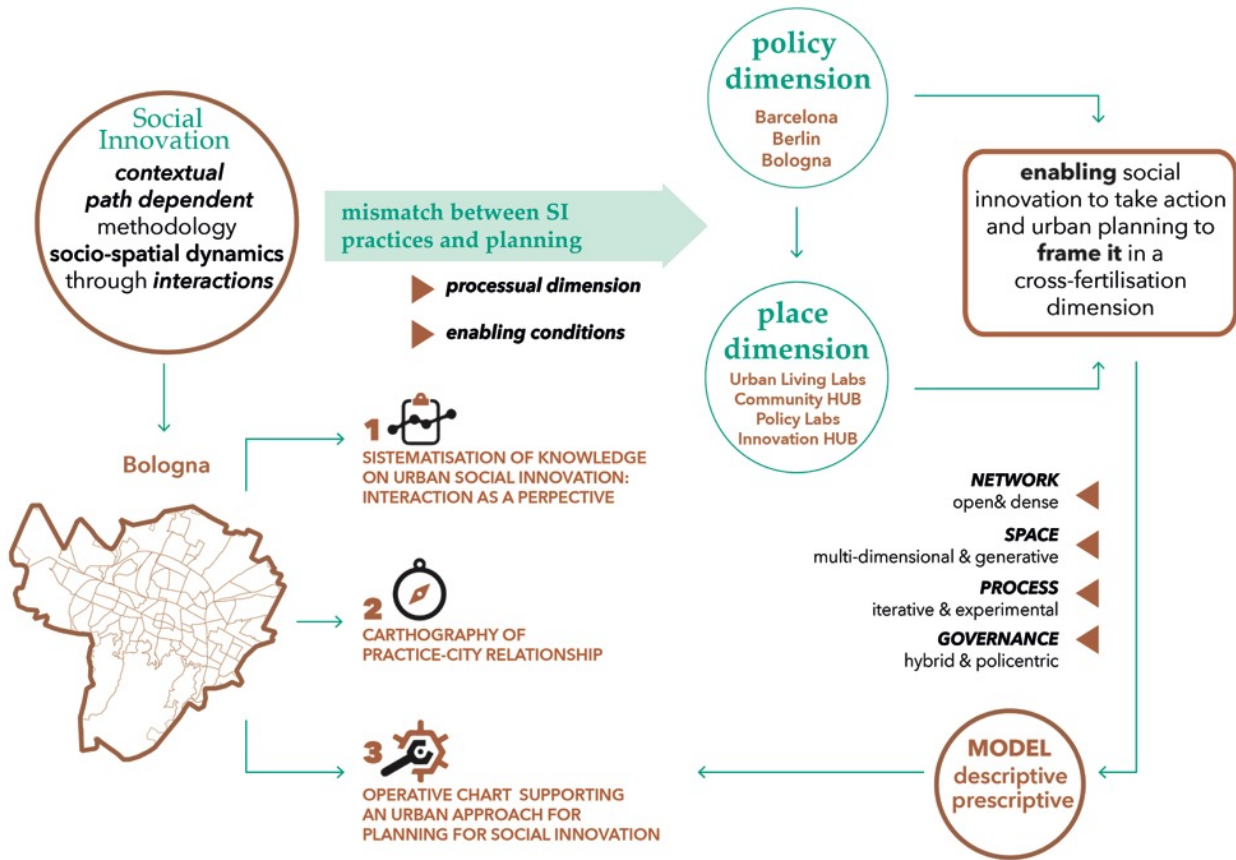
Figure 1 - research framework. Source: the author.

Addressing the relevance of social innovation for urban context, does not mean interpreting the concept as a solution for every urban challenge and issue. Social innovation appears as a necessary but not sufficient approach, an evocatory, alluding concept, useful to produce informed urban transformations, effectively disseminated services and widespread urban value. It necessitates both enabling and constraining conditions, which can create new identities generated through alliances and organisation of heterogeneous elements (Ballantyne 2007). The observation of several European cases (read through the results of European Projects KATARSIS (FP6), SIMPACT (FP7), TRANSIT, SIC, WILCO, CAPPSI), shows that social innovation initiatives tend to fail if not engaged in a clear policy strategy. This is due to economical reason, but has also to do with the contingent character of the initiatives and their dynamics. It seems more and more clear that social innovation contributes to more effectively impact short-term on the context they act within, but it tends to have short life or even fuel private interests (Ostanel 2017) and competition between the promoting actors, if not framed in a comprehensive technical and political agenda. When engaged with institution though, it is necessary to highlight the risk occurring when it is interpreted as a signal for a mere reduction of the public intervention. Additionally, with the stabilisation of the social dynamics (Savini 2017), institutional intervention risks to bundle or promote some experience over others, involving only actors with a high cognitive and economic power at the expense of parts of the population that are difficult to represent. This risk to reduce the critical autonomy of communities, increasing the gap between the

social base and institutional planning. This contrast risks to create further fragmentation and even more production of exclusive spaces, while enabling social innovation should not decrease the role of the public actor, or selectively constraint the innovation dynamics.

With these elements in mind, the field of investigation is narrowed to identify in the processual/methodological dimension of social innovation, to be addressed through two dimensions of investigation.

Policy dimension

In order to achieve the objective of creation and distribution of urban value emerging from the interaction between practices and planning, understanding how cities provide a policy framework is key. A stated by the Eu commission in 2017 "[…] *socially innovative actions, successfully initiated and carried out by individuals and communities, failed to sustain themselves in the absence of clear strategic policy or political backing by local authorities*".

As a premise, the research underlines the risk that social innovation initiatives run in the long-term if not engaged in fruitful interaction and exchanges with local context or institutional actor, which can transform the practices in a mere sum of individual interests. On the other hand, the interaction with policies and institutions has to be efficient enough to define a common ground of action and a virtuous circle (Manzini 2015), in order to not just being used but to enter in a mutually-shared network with planning. Social innovations appear to be verified when capable to be scaled up and deep (Riddel and Moore 2015) in order to not just impact larger numbers, but transcending particular episodes to be recognised as changes in society, policy and institutions, with avalanche effect producing systemic impact. In order to enable this interaction, it seems necessary to envision a support system in a coherent network of visions and flexible norms. The research question interrogates on the possible mechanisms to intertwine social innovation practices and urban planning. Considering planning and its tools as the place of **synthesis and debate of urban policies**, – especially in Italy, where the municipal urban plan is the only document that speaks of the city, its vision for the future and that has been consistently produced –in order to explore this dynamic, some research question guided the investigation:

- **how social innovation came to be?**
- **how social innovation contribute to mutual learning with institutions?**
- **what are the lessons to be learned when looking at their interaction?**
- **what impact does policy tradition have on emerging social innovations and future structuring on planning setups?**
- **what are the enabling factors for social innovation to deep and up-scale?**

Some cities have already undertaken steps to change the tools that govern the relationships with the local social innovation experiences. Therefore, the policy analysis aims at deepening the emerging differences, variables and trajectories in structuring and applying original policies in the attempt to give a perimeter of action to social innovation.

Berlin is explored through the twenty years-long policy of *Quartiersmanagement* - Berlin Neighbourhood Managements, the applied cohesion policy 'Socially Integrative City' which established local development agencies as on-site offices hosting Neighbourhood Councils involved with the Neighbourhood Management of social innovation projects. **Barcelona** is investigated in its recently-implemented *Pla de Barris*, which aim is to reduce inequalities between the neighbourhoods by implementing local infrastructure aimed at ease the access for citizens

to income, services, urban quality and welfare. To achieve these objectives, both cities acts in those neighbourhoods where there is a greater concentration of social vulnerability and aim to generate transversal interventions that include the participation and involvement of residents, municipal agents and services. The focus of both policies is to develop a new local strategy starting from local assets (both social and spatial), existing or created ad-hoc, private, public, hybrid, located in pilot districts. Their role is to act as intermediaries in the public sphere, gathering, encouraging and implementing experimentation to produce a new set of urban solutions to a series of challenges. The emerging elements from the two analysis are critically examined and compared with **Bologna**'s recent attempt to frame in a discursive orientation the manifestation of social innovation, through the Urban Innovation Plan. The Urban Innovation Plan is the place where planning tools, available resources and ongoing projects, bottom-up initiatives and civic collaboration activities are told and linked.

Place dimension

In the complexity of cities, meant as multiple aggregation (Amin and Thrift 2005, 2017) of variable elements, a key for the reading can be found in the specific places enabling relationships between these elements. These contexts are referred to as **intermediate places**, situated areas located in-between the dimension of institutionally-led urban planning and local-led social innovation practices. They go beyond the distinction between micro or macro levels, but look in the dimension between the two, where interaction generates relationships, blending creativity and technical skills, encouraging collaboration in stable exchange with institutions. Intermediate places are Deleuzian 'opportunity windows' that allow social innovation to emerge, providing local and micro activities the space to upscale and deep-scale. They are emerging due to the transformation of social relations and the emergence of new local economies, focused on dynamics of sharing, disintermediation and sustainability. They are moving alongside or even replace those that until now have been the traditional places of participation and social aggregation in the urban space. Their novelty stands in the new paths that determine their birth, in the new mechanisms of aggregation, and in the new forms of governance that they assume. The interaction of actors, actions and practices in a complex system, is the key for these places to contribute to develop into local 'urban innovation engines' (Dvir 2003). Questions related to the place dimension are:

- **where social innovation happens?**
- **how specific places can play a role in spanning between levels?**
- **what are the lessons that can be learned by planning and practices?**
- **what can be transferred from one domain to another?**
- **how the performance of intermediate places can trigger institutional change?**

Moving towards a spatial dimension of the analysis, Urban Living Labs (De Bonis et al. 2014; Franz 2014; Concilio and Molinari 2014), Community HUBs (Calvaresi and Pederiva 2016; Pratt et al. 2016), Policy Labs (Manzini and Staszowski 2013, Puttick 2014), Innovation Hubs, are proving to be successful models of intermediate places. Their spatial contiguity, the recovery of direct exchanges between different actors, allow them to be interactive playgrounds in which the practices can be managed together with visions and strategies with an evolutionary long-term perspective. They use innovative management models and involve the implementation of projects and processes, deeply rooted in the territory; while they are not alternative forms to planning, they are active and

operational forms on the margins of it. These places are models of collaboration in intermediate scale, obtaining the advantage of observing from a privileged position (LeStrat 2018) the micro social innovations and being able to transfer and translate their impacts to the macro level and vice versa.

The questions generate a two dimensions' reflection with the common goal to define an urban model able to spatialise social innovation as part of urban planning framework. The output of the research aims to define a descriptive and prescriptive model to support urban planning and design with social innovation. The diagrammatic **model** aims to develop an alternative scenario for the city of Bologna, by putting into value social innovations to expand the operative capacity of planning and overcoming the fragmentations of the practices; at the same time, it aims to deviate from the risks and ambiguities of the integration of social innovation in planning setups, while addresses the bundling between different activating places in larger urban flows.

Research outline

The research starts from the observation of the phenomena of social innovation practices emerging in cities, their acknowledgement as key drivers to learn from how to recognise and deal with local challenges, in a more operative and needs-grounded manner. The research process aims to organise a specific knowledge on social innovation in urban planning setups, by incremental steps in a non-linear and not-closed loop. As Groat and Wang wrote (2013), research is not a linear process therefore the inquiry aims to define the observed phenomena by categorising it, framing new ways of organization and mobilization, looking at discourses and practices that shape it in today's post-crisis era. As a discourse on social innovation gained momentum in recent years among different actors and within governing circles, there has been a considerable amount of debate whether it is able to provide alternative solutions for current social, political, or economic inequalities and injustices. Focusing on the European context, the research also aims to go beyond current 'fragile' understandings of social innovation, by engaging with questions about its possible theorization going beyond the current citizens and community engagement narrations, by providing a framework for planning within social innovation.

The research is structured in four parts, corresponding to the inductive research parts further divided into five phases, as shown in Figure 2. The first part resembles the **OBSERVATION** part, drawing the knowledge framework, the scope of the inquiry with the goals clearly stated, the methodology and the rationale. The present chapter of **INTRODUCTION** presents the research questions, the inquiry context, the preliminary hypothesis and the methodology used to address the questions. The first research phase is the **RECOGNITION,** which stems from the premise that inductive research implies a lack of a codified theory, opening up the necessity to frame the inquiry concept in a wide and more empirical reference background. The field of social innovation is multi-disciplinary and wide, therefore is filtered through its manifestation in the city, generating spatial transformations and service provision. Furthermore, social innovation is interpreted as a research and development methodology, highlighting more precisely its dynamics and processes of becoming, rather than its results and meanings. In order to frame the dynamic of a practical and abstract concept, the context of Bologna act as an observation point to build up the knowledge that emerge in the **TRACING** phase. Tracing, for Deleuze and

Guattari means understanding path-dependencies in terms of transformations as evolution or breaks, and how systems respond to them. A reconstruction of the background context of policies, experiences, setbacks, developments and inertias in Bologna, constitutes the starting point from which to begin the definition of the hypothesis and eventually its consolidation. The first part concludes with the identification of the current challenges for the main case of analysis and application, which is the city of Bologna.

The second part describes the **PATTERN DETECTION** by deepening the city policies that recently contributed to create a system of norms, tools, devices at institutional level to enable and structure social innovation in the city. This aims at realising a policy review of two European cities that have, in different ways, attempted to build a regulatory and action framework around social innovation in their territories. This phase aims at **UNDERSTANDING** different models of area-based policies in Barcelona and Berlin whose opportunities and threads act as transfer lines for the Bologna case. The policy analysis addresses the re-definition of institutional relationships and approaches towards social innovation, exploring drawbacks, shortcomings and highlighting positive and negative externalities, directions and impacts. The case studies are chosen for their common features in their recognition of endogenous local forces as resources to partner-up with, through the implementation of an institutional process of managing and co-designing social innovation, in which urban intermediaries have a central role. Each city implemented area-based approaches starting from their neighbourhoods as productive units from where to read, trigger, implement and organise social innovation in urban settings. From the policy analysis, analogies and contrasts are highlighted and compared with the on-going policy which is being built in Bologna with the Urban Innovation Plan.
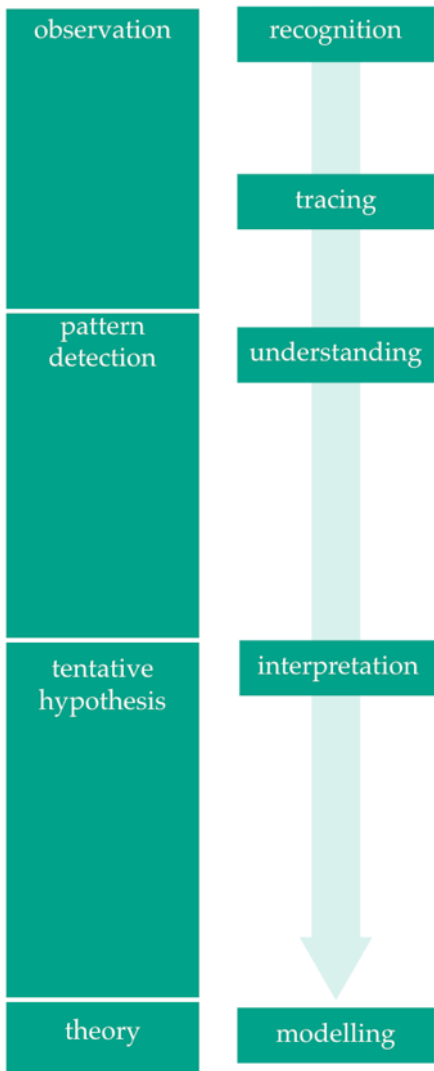
Figure 2 - inductive method
compared to research phases

In the third part the **TENTATIVE HYPOTHESIS** stems from the assumption of a pivoting role of urban intermediaries performing in intermediate places as spanner of social innovation. Drawing from this premise, the research tackles the **INTERPETATION** phase, reading interaction for social innovation starting from the point of view of intermediate places, as boundary-spanners arenas (i.e. geographically or institutionally bounded spaces), enablers and triggers of more effective innovation practices, transforming, translating and transmitting knowledge between institutional planning and social innovation practices. The analysis of the multitude of intermediate places takes place through key readings and a taxonomical framing into specific categories, such as Urban Living Labs, Community HUBs, Policy Labs, Innovation Hubs. The categories are analysed through some literature references, some examples of European networks, national and international cases and its spatialisation in the context of Bologna. These different passages produced an original taxonomy of the intermediate places that is proposed as an instrument of observation and interpretation of social innovation in its urban dimension. The cross-cutting taxonomy highlights the requirements to start from in the definition of the urban model.

The last part of the research, in charge of the definition of the **THEORY**, aims at consolidate the previously defined patterns of knowledge through the systematisation of the knowledge emerged. The **MODELLING** phase aims at depict the diagrammatic model from the interpretation of social innovation as an agent of urban transformation, activated and triggered by specific intermediate places that enable 'windows of opportunity' for it to materialise and stabilise in across-fertilisation dimension. The urban model aims at overtaking the contrapositions between urban levels and actors. It is descriptive, prescriptive, and eventually is adapted while up-scaled to the metropolitan city and at regional level. From this point of view, it can be argued that the recent changes in approach proposed through urban laws and calls for proposals that explicitly refer to the new dimension of "urban regeneration" could constitute a field of experimentation of this model of approach, and therefore be a fertile ground for testing the results of this research in the future.

Methodology

The research uses an **inductive methodology** (from the particular representative case to the general lessons), highlighting qualitative elements of an observed phenomenon, in order to build a preliminary hypothesis to be verified and organised as theory. It adopts an inductive approach to the understanding of social innovation practices without focusing solely on the effects and solutions produced, but concentrating on the process of

becoming and on the space of interaction with institutions, which can become element of cross-cutting contamination. In the vast knowledge production on social innovation, the focus has mostly been on the definition of the phenomena rather than in how it came to be (Hillier 2013). It is therefore necessary a greater effort to acquire knowledge on how the design tools, the actors, the tactics producing innovative and "anomalous" practices (Crosta 1983), can be engaged in a relationship of mutual exchange with stable planning frameworks, and what is the rationale and the vector of such relationships.

The complex and practical nature of the phenomenon on the one hand and the cognitive fragmentation on the concept on the other, are some of the factors that encourage reading the issue according to different disciplines, leading to personal interpretations and use of vague and abstract terminology. A transversal activity of the research aims at create a small glossary of terminologies used in the text, necessary to clarify the relations and hierarchy of the terms used throughout the dissertation and the researcher position.

The research differentiates between the **macro level** of **policy and planning** fields, the **micro level** of **practices** and related **projects** and the **meso level** of urban intermediaries and **intermediate** places. The following definition are used throughout the text:

- **practice (of social innovation)** is a general summary of projects that have shared characteristics (Howaldt et al. 2014) (e.g. public spaces' care, civic innovation, transport/product/services-sharing). Practices are transversal to various societal topics, (gender relations, formal and informal education, management, governance, established habits and cultural customs) (Howaldt et al. 2018);

- **project/initiative (of social innovation)** is a single and concrete implementation of a solution to respond to social demands, societal challenges or systemic change (e.g. neighbourhood animation, collective urban orchard, re-use of a public underused space, urban art, social streets, micro-entrepreneurship, proximity services);

- **urban policy** is the set of public decisions, and the corresponding system of actions, to solve a collective issue (Dente 2011), implemented by local governments which contribute to define the spatial and social organization of urban space; they develop and legitimise territorial transformations (Mazza 2005); they can be divided in **policies for the city**: competitive, aimed at strengthening the international role of the city by pursuing economic growth; and **policies for the citizens**, solidarity dimension, involving the condition of those who inhabit the city (Sebastiani 2007);

- **urban services** are the system of actions and interaction that have value for a person or a group of people, that answers to a specific need related to a specific urban context. Public services are provided by public administrations for its citizens and the temporary population to ensure a dense level of channels, contact points and relationships;

- **urban planning** is the set of provisions aimed at a rational development of the territory through the organization of the three fundamental systems that comprise it: infrastructure, environment and settlements; it is a technical knowledge which contributes to shape and support the decisions of urban policies (Mazza 2005); indicates a multiplicity of visions of the city (Amin and Thrift 2002, 2017); it is the action of setting-out a world that has yet to be actualised, formed from potentials to become something (Deleuze and Guattari

1987); it researches coherence in the actions to implement, in order to accomplish pre-determined goals, to harmonise the personal and the collective needs (Aavv. 2003);

- **spatial proximity** is meant as the spatial concentration and closeness as elements that enable links and stimulates collaboration networks thanks to daily contact and exchange. Institutional proximity is intended as a collective model of governance that fosters exchanges among a mutual shared system of values and norms;

- **agency** is the temporally constructed engagement of actors of different contexts, in interactive response to the issues posed by changing mainstream situations (Emirbayer and Mische 1998);

- **collaboration** is an interaction among two or more urban actors that foresees an exchange in which the participants benefit from the encounter (Sennett 2018) and the result of it is added public value;

- **local community** indicates the coexistence of a group of individuals, with like-minded interests and behaviors in a communal space (Palermo and Ponzini 2014), who interact non-just in a defined geographical area but mutually recognize as an identifiable group of people which share competences born from common interests, resources, projects;

- **neighbourhood** is the portion of the city where complex dynamics of several distinct elements of the socio-spatial system manifest. Neighbourhood differs from 'community' for the spatial aspect of its definition (Durose 2009). Neighbourhood is the geographical unit from which to better detect, analyse and test form of governance through networks, the improvement of proximity services to tackle social exclusion and eventually to recognise and organise social innovation;

- **territory** is defined as the "localised interconnected spatial forms" of the relations between contextual actors and material and immaterial resources (Howaldt et al. 2018); historical product of the processes of long-lasting co-evolution between human settlement and environment, nature and culture, and therefore, as a result of the transformation of the environment by stratified cycles of civilization;

- **intermediate place** is the area, district, building, social and material unit, where the interaction between social innovation practices, the urban context and urban planning normative framework, takes place;

- **pace** is a portion of territory, ideally or materially circumscribed, it indicates the context in which the social relationships and the space are constituted, where interactions linked to social and economic processes are carried out;

- **context** is the space and the social set-up which constitute the background in relation to which action becomes possible and takes on meaning;

- **social innovation ecosystem** is the "enabling environment that needs to be put in place for social innovations to achieve systemic change" (Social Innovation Ecosystem, Building Change Trust). It encompasses various forms of participation, organization, financing which combines public and private, multi-dimensional governance, especially when institutionalized;

- **institutions** are the normed activities, ritualized and accepted as the most appropriate in a given field, which encourage or sanction certain behaviours. For example: universities and public administrations;

- **empowerment** is a process that aims at "bringing people who are outside the decision-making process into it" (Rowlands 1995) by organising themselves. It is about individuals being able to develop a 'critical

consciousness', understanding of their circumstances and the social environment and act to maximise the opportunities available to them in the accessibility to: public life, resources, processes, opportunities;

- **governance** represents "a change in the nature or meaning of government" (Rhodes 1996). Local governance requires to "both deliver policy and build networks and relationships within the local community" (*ibid.*), by generating change in the engagement and networking of diverse actors previously not connected which develop into engaged communities involved into processes, organisations, politics;

- **local** is a specific site in a specific time, whose knowledge is identified as a "non-verbal knowledge that evolves from meeting to interacting with someone (or someplace) over time" (Yanow 2004; Durose 2009). The local knowledge is both contextual and contingent and reflects expert understanding from lived experience.

a) *Researcher position*

The research assumes that emerging local practices of service co-production and spatial transformation, defined as social innovations, represent key elements to read and with whom to partner-up to address the current change of urban systems and for this reason should be spanned and organised in new flexible models intercepting urban planning strategies. This is a research precondition that aims to address the under-researched problematic relationship between excessively practice-based social innovation research and the little attention to what is beyond the context: the link between the practices and the policy context, the processes of both institutionalization on the one side and the risk of cooptation on the other, the problem of normative bias and fragility in its generalization, the understanding of their limitations in autonomy, in the possibility to up and deep-scale, in their tendency to tackle circumscribed interest, and their limited impact. Bearing in mind that not everything that happens in local practices is always positive (see Research questions paragraph), it seems necessary to pay attention and distinguish between a spontaneity aimed at self-affirmation (Gabellini 2018), and pro-active practices that act through evidences in space and towards which it seems reasonable to assume a mutual learning perspective. The research embraces the Deleuzian-inspired vision, stating that social innovation should not just be used, standardized or crystallised in institutional paths (Moulaert et al. 2013), because this can generate further barriers in the access to services and in some cases the further fragmentation of spaces. At the same time, to transfer to social innovations the responsibility of being the solutions to urban challenges, risks to justify the reduction of the role of the public institution in favour of private initiative with effects on the fair redistribution of the urban value, on the further fragmentation, of the chaotic and not hierarchical variety of different actions (Palermo and Ponzini 2014) leading possibly to the creation of unnecessary competition and to unforeseeable side-effects.

As a first assumption, the text highlights the existence of two opposite orientations in social innovation research: one oriented towards the results and outputs of the practice; the other one attentive to the context (institutional, normative, organisational) in which the subjects act. The thesis starts from this second approach, moving the **focus towards the interaction** (Crosta 1990), proposing to look at the in-between level, exploring the spatial expression of social innovation to become resources for planning. Planning is here suggested as an intellectual endeavour and capable to remain attentive to the unforeseen (Deleuze 1994) by renouncing to pre-determination of the outcomes, taking a step towards the construction of a shared system where social innovation are collective resources to

mutually learn from. The research identifies in constant creation, transformation and dynamism triggered by interactions (positive and conflictual), the ways in which social innovations transforming urban space and service provision, can expand (but not substitute) the capacity of urban policies and planning to innovate in order to be best equipped to answer to challenges and solicitations at various urban scales. These interactions need to be analysed and systematised to highlight their common features, positive externalities and added value to transfer to urban planning setups.

In this sense, the research hypothesis is that fruitful nodes of interaction to be investigated lie in the meso level between planning and practices, and, in order to give morphological substance to the vision of social innovation and to embed it into planning schemes, the text introduces "**intermediate places**", structured 'windows of opportunity', where urban actors engage within the urban space. The approach linked to places, makes it possible to highlight the points of convergence between planning and practices from a spatial perspective, i.e. from the point of view of the object of urban planning, the places, which holds together the social and material dimensions of the city. With respect to interaction, therefore, **places matter** where they materialize, acquire substance and meaning in a specific context. Places bring entail emotional component elated to self-identification that contribute to the emergence of behaviours based on collaboration and learning that become determinants with respect to social innovations.

The intermediate places aggregate an intentional community, which identifies itself in them because of the sense of belonging to the context and because it uses the same modes of dialogue and self-representation, as well as the same system of shared values specific to the place itself. The use of the place dimension refers to the spatialisation of the *civitas*, which today is increasingly determined by the contextual, specific and niche conditions within which the life of individuals is organized (Donzelot 2009). The place then becomes the means to affirm the existence and creation of shared values, overcoming the conflict not by negotiation, but by mutually learning alternative ways of value production and development.

Intermediate places are hence understood as open arenas, where to build enabling alliances (Cognetti 2018) both for institution and social actors. It refers to places that allow interaction between individuals who are not static in their interests, actions, goals or relationships. They are in fact capable of evolving within the institutional framework, constantly learning and transforming each other. Following this rationale, the main working hypothesis of the research tend to overcome the tendency to involve only actors with a high cognitive and economic power at the expense of the parts of the population that are difficult to represent, increasing the gap between the social base and institutional planning and reducing the critical autonomy of communities. On the other hand, it seems of fundamental to unpack the role of institutions in understanding, supporting and enabling social innovation in public discourses. Finally, the variability of the contextual conditions for social innovation to emerge is taken as a precondition both for the elaboration of the step of analysis and for the definition of the main assumptions of the research. The **enabling conditions** for social innovation to act, allowing urban planning to frame it and deal with it in a cross-fertilisation dimension, is empirically explored by considering the above-mentioned variables and positions.

b) *Methodological position*

The complexity of the issue implies that a single valid methodology cannot be used to deal with a dynamic concept. The **qualitative research** will therefore be the approach used to produce a complete and detailed description of the topic, anchored and verified on the specific context of the city of Bologna. The research approach follows the **inductive method** that, starting from the observation of the phenomenon of social innovation practices in the co-production of services, products, projects, identifies the lenses of the intermediate level as devices from which to identify a series of verifiable requirements through observation, analysis, testing, revision and verification, to formulate a tentative hypothesis as a conceptual definition of a theory (descriptive and prescriptive urban model). The ambition is to develop a generative research that, learning from practice, would produce usable knowledge to build useful alternative visions for urban planning and design.

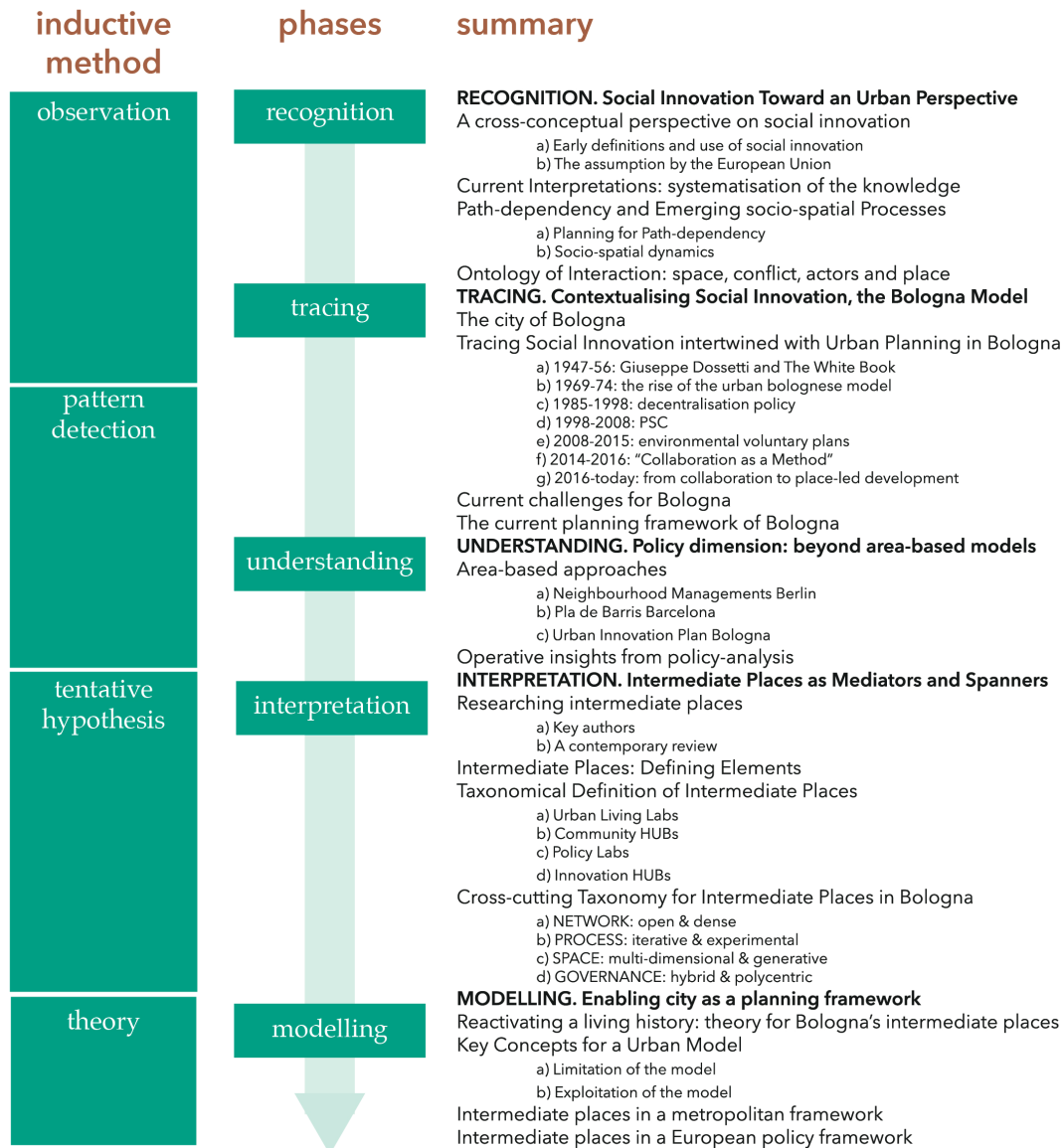| inductive method	phases	summary

observation	recognition	**RECOGNITION. Social Innovation Toward an Urban Perspective**
		A cross-conceptual perspective on social innovation
		    a) Early definitions and use of social innovation
		    b) The assumption by the European Union
		Current Interpretations: systematisation of the knowledge
		Path-dependency and Emerging socio-spatial Processes
		    a) Planning for Path-dependency
		    b) Socio-spatial dynamics
		Ontology of Interaction: space, conflict, actors and place

	tracing	**TRACING. Contextualising Social Innovation, the Bologna Model**
		The city of Bologna
		Tracing Social Innovation intertwined with Urban Planning in Bologna
		    a) 1947-56: Giuseppe Dossetti and The White Book
		    b) 1969-74: the rise of the urban bolognese model
		    c) 1985-1998: decentralisation policy
		    d) 1998-2008: PSC
		    e) 2008-2015: environmental voluntary plans
		    f) 2014-2016: "Collaboration as a Method"
		    g) 2016-today: from collaboration to place-led development

pattern detection		Current challenges for Bologna The current planning framework of Bologna

	understanding	**UNDERSTANDING. Policy dimension: beyond area-based models**
		Area-based approaches
		    a) Neighbourhood Managements Berlin
		    b) Pla de Barris Barcelona
		    c) Urban Innovation Plan Bologna
		Operative insights from policy-analysis

tentative hypothesis	interpretation	**INTERPRETATION. Intermediate Places as Mediators and Spanners**
		Researching intermediate places
		    a) Key authors
		    b) A contemporary review
		Intermediate Places: Defining Elements
		Taxonomical Definition of Intermediate Places
		    a) Urban Living Labs
		    b) Community HUBs
		    c) Policy Labs
		    d) Innovation HUBs
		Cross-cutting Taxonomy for Intermediate Places in Bologna
		    a) NETWORK: open & dense
		    b) PROCESS: iterative & experimental
		    c) SPACE: multi-dimensional & generative
		    d) GOVERNANCE: hybrid & polycentric

theory	modelling	**MODELLING. Enabling city as a planning framework**
		Reactivating a living history: theory for Bologna's intermediate places
		Key Concepts for a Urban Model
		    a) Limitation of the model
		    b) Exploitation of the model
		Intermediate places in a metropolitan framework
		Intermediate places in a European policy framework

Figure 3 - research methodology and research index correspondence. Source: the author
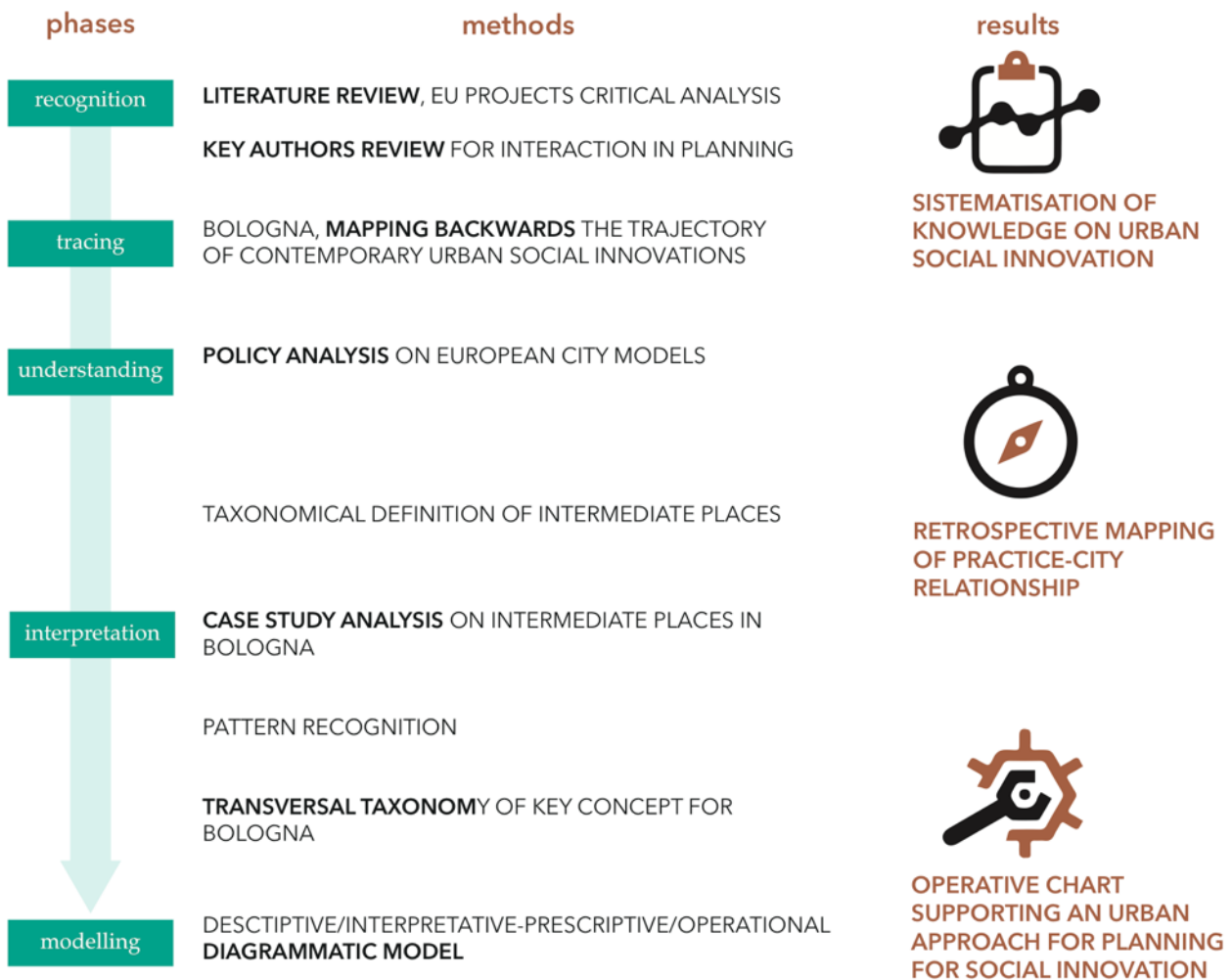
Figure 4 - research methodology with main results. Source: the author

This complexity requires mixed-approach methodologies. Inductive research aims at detecting the recurring pattern from observation and the development of explanations – theories – for those patterns through series of tentative hypotheses (Bernard 2011). Inductive research foresees the researcher to use observations from within to build a theory or to picture the studied phenomenon (Lodico et al. 2010). As showed in Figure 3, the stages of inductive research match with a sub-classification of phases, which correspond to both research steps and chapters of the thesis. Furthermore, Figure 4 shows how each phase is related to a foreseen output, while the expected results (intermediate and final) are predicted to be achieved after the accomplishment of a group of phases.

The research foresees the production of three results, based on the different investigation phases:

- a **systematization of knowledge on social innovation as a contextual methodology in urban setups**, useful to fill the lack of an organised vision and literature on the topic of social innovation beyond the analysis of its singular impacts but in an interlinked vision of the process of interaction which led to the present configuration and seems to anticipate future arrangements;

- a **map of practice-city relationship from an urban planning and design perspective**, which includes mapping the ecosystem of intermediate places, using the city of Bologna as an observation point, to apply the preliminary knowledge defined and extract further insights from the practices;

-   the formulation of an **integrated and autonomous model/protocol as a new operative chart supporting a flexible approach guiding urban planning and design for social innovation**. The model is descriptive and prescriptive, consolidated following the observations of the requirements emerged in the context of Bologna.

In inductive methodology, the **observation stage** requires understanding what is the object of the inquiry and the question to be answered in order to draw out a theory. During this stage, the **recognition phase** has been deployed using desk research, semi-structured interviews, personal observations, critical review of European projects' output. This phase, allowed to produce a preliminary result, which is the systematisation of the knowledge on urban social innovation a topic that lacks of a scientific and organised knowledge framework, due to its practical and 'fragile' nature.

In order to avoid the production of a mere collection of fragmented cases around Europe, is necessary to apply a first filter to the area of inquiry. Therefore, the context of Bologna has been chosen as a privileged observation point for the **tracing phase**. Tracing aimed at framing the background conditions in order to clearly highlight, in a critical way, how specific extra-planning dynamics seemed to find a fertile ground in the context of Bologna, how they came to be, if they were planned and their unforeseen outcomes. Bologna is chosen as a privileged observation point for its strong specificity and character of laboratory for innovative policies and civic oriented initiatives. Following Deleuzian theories, tracing social innovation in Bologna means mapping layers, **superimposing the contemporary situation with the process that enabled it through time**. This phase aimed at mapping path dependencies of social innovation, in terms of evolutions or breaks, and how the city responded to them. The tracing methodology, allows having a clear image of the evolution of social innovation intertwining with planning in the city, although with a degree of uncertainty and subjectivity. Data have been retrieved in reports, planning tools and from semi-structured interviews with civil servants and policy-makers in the city.

The **stage of pattern detection** contains the **phase of understanding**. The understanding phase is developed using the methodology of the policy analysis. Two European cities, which implemented social innovation-oriented urban policies, are analysed with the goal to detect methodological insights and drawback to be taken into consideration for the on-going strategy in Bologna. The chosen policies are *Quartiersmanagement* in Berlin, *Pla de Barri* in Barcelona to be compared with Urban Innovation Plan in Bologna. The cities have different dimension and worldwide relevance than the prevalent case of investigation. The first one is representative of an outdated methodology based on a strong public action that generated ambiguous outcomes. The second one is a recent attempt to recall this attitude by fixing its by-product (e.g. gentrification effects) and updating it to the contemporary challenges. What they share with Bologna though, is the implementation process over the years of city policies, that attempt to promote proximity as a development methodology. The neighbourhood is chosen as a reference area because of its spatial concentration, where social relations, governance dynamics and causes of decline are more easily identifiable (MacCallum et al. 2009). The common features of the case studies are:

-   the centrality of 'places';
-   the development of social innovation for the mutual benefit of the whole planning system;
-   proximity as a methodology and a catalyst to show alternative solutions.

The policy analysis is enriched with the point of view of urban intermediaries that work in *Quartiersmanagement Teams* in Berlin and in *Grupo Impulsor* in Barcelona. Looking at these cases allows highlighting different analogies, pitfalls and crucial questions to be addressed and to orient with diverse visions the Bologna's Urban Innovation Plan, an attempt to define a framework of regulated actions in the city. Berlin case is chosen because of the ability to pursues a partnership-based approach involving residents, welfare facilities, the local economy, housing associations, public administration and other stakeholders in combination with voluntary involvement but it also hidden the thread to create private neighbourhoods, inaccessible to everyone in the city. The area-based policy is analysed to point out the risks hidden in these strategies, especially the possibility to create further barriers or speculative effect when the collective motivation of the intervention loses strength and private profit takes over. The Barcelona approach with *Pla de Barris* is interesting for the ability to merge the neighbourhood scale with the metropolitan one, addressing issues that transcend the municipal borders. The main focus of the urban agenda of the administration is to outreach and disseminate the value produced by the neighbourhood social practices (Ostanel 2017), while engaging in process of co-production. The **understanding** phase foresees a wide *exposé* of the policies analysed according to a two-level matrix (Figure 5).

strategies contents

description
- Path-dependency
- Stage of development
- Main key principles/Main challenges addressed
- Methods of developed/phases
- Implementing body
- Implementation mechanisms (selection, engagement, monitoring, evaluation)
- Scale (area/districts/neighbourhood)
- Financial aspects

relation with SI: interaction (contrast and interrelation)

analysis
- Effects (spatial, organisational, institutional, tackle the challenge)
- Secondary effects
- Metropolitan dimension
- Role of spaces
- Main points to transfer (positive/negative)

Figure 5 - policy analysis matrix. Source: the author

The first level of analysis is the descriptive level, where the institutional strategies are explained, the main key principles listed and the financial mechanisms unravelled. The second part of the matrix entails an analytical dimension, where to critically investigate the effects, spill overs and main externalities of the policies.

The policy analysis highlights the role of intermediaries for each city as practice-planning bridges and it stresses in particular the potential role of places in performing this action. The **tentative hypothesis** foresees intermediate places to be able to become useful contexts to span the boundaries between practices and policies in an integrated strategy in the city, overcoming the borders towards a metropolitan dimension. Intermediate places are the object of inquiry of the **interpretation** phase, which frames the interactive playground of places as leverages for the macro level and activators for the micro one. A **taxonomy** of the intermediate places in the main case of investigation, the city of Bologna, is produced in order to define some categories to give a thematic order to places that show common features in their strategic vision and everyday operative skills. The methodology used for the case study analysis entails a mixed use of approaches: participant observation, field notes, in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, desk-analysis, social-media monitoring. The objects of investigation have been selected according to some recurring variables in terms of organisation, method, impacts, functions, infrastructure, selecting among those experiences that are already making the difference in the context of social innovation in Bologna. This comprehensive investigation of cases aimed at narrowing the selection of case studied to a number of experiences that are paradigmatic in the city context. Among the case studies described, a specific part concerns

the activities of the European project ROCK. The interesting aspect of the integration between the ROCK project and the research, concerns the experimentation and validation of intermediate places (such as Urban Living Labs) that have the ambition to lead to the prefiguration and anticipate shared models of local development. The connection with the ROCK project, inserts the research in a European context and allows the experimentation and the verification on the field of a new vision intercepting projects and practices, as a result of a set of initiatives and interventions on the territory. This phase allowed the knowledge (of the city and the citizens) to become design action in the moment of its sharing with the researcher community or the public.

The analysis highlighted five dimensions to be used to identify the intermediate character of places: organisation, method, function, infrastructure, impact. Eventually, four typologies of places are defined:

- public-promoted and managed: Urban Living Labs and Policy Labs;
- private-business promoted and managed: Community HUBs and Innovation HUBs.

All the initiatives mapped in Bologna have been then grouped under each typology. This highlighted the fragmented mosaic of experiences in Bologna, enhancing the hypothesis of the necessity of a new model supporting planning and action in the urban realm with flexible diagrammatic form. Furthermore, the case study analysis of intermediate places in Bologna, produced a cross-cutting taxonomy of key concepts for Bologna concerning network, space, process and governance. It derived from both the analysis and main readings.

To consolidate the assumption, the interpretation phase, entails the organisation of the main lesson learned from the case study analysis in Bologna, in form of key transversal concepts **descriptive** of the **interpretative learning**, starting from: the network, the space, the process, the governance. These keys are eventually organised and coupled with the **operational learning prescriptions** emerged from the analysis, defining four elements upon which to base the definition of the new urban planning model.

The **modelling** phase had the aim to build a **theory** defining a pilot operative chart, supporting a flexible approach, guiding urban planning for social innovation. The model mixes the descriptive and prescriptive assumptions and introduces a scheme for the evaluating part; it incorporates the insights from the policy analysis and the verified hypothesis of the case study analysis in Bologna. The pilot model has the ambition to extend its application from the urban to the metropolitan dimension.

2. RECOGNITION. Social innovation towards an urban perspective

"…in an open city, whatever virtues of efficiency, safety, or sociability people achieve, they achieve by virtue of their own agency […]
human beings create, through mutual exchange, the systems of value by which they live, and the more they exchange with one another, the more
individuated they become"

Sennett R. *"The Open City"*, In the post-urban world, (2017)

In his description of Open City, Richard Sennett underlines two main concepts which are being discussed by the many disciplines which are currently taking care of the city:

- agency, meant as increased capacity and access to resources and possibility to address needs (MacCallum et al. 2009) and its collective exercise in the policy-making process;
- exchange, hence localised interaction which produces widespread value for the city.

These concepts can be retrieved in the extensive literature on **social innovation** as a transformative factor for urban policies and planning. Social innovation has for decades been considered "imperative" (Nyseth and Hamdouch 2019), labeling approach that challenged institutional mainstream, portrayed by a portion of organized society that activates and intervene to fill the gap, left by the public or the market (SIMPACT 2016), in the distribution of services and/or in the care of public spaces. It is an umbrella, evocative concept, alluding rather than explaining and, although it struggles to be defined, it is socially and conceptually mobilizing. Social innovation goals are aimed at increasing the quality of life in urban settlements, resulting in improving the well-being and empowerment of a community, and they refer mostly to social and civic interests. However, the extent of the initiatives and the replication effect they provoke, is currently opening up original opportunities for urban attractiveness and therefore city development.

The necessity for a definition, emerges from the density of the initiatives, structures, newly born institutions, which are reaching such a volume and an impact, to lead to urge the production of new meanings and paradigms. The buzzword social innovation in fact, answers to the necessity to invent a new socio-spatial vocabulary, to unlock insights and considerations describing the new approaches aimed at improving the quality of urban life, in response to the context of the socio-political and economic crisis that we have witnessed all around the globe since 2008 (Moulaert et al. 2014). European agendas and international agencies (OECD 2011; EC 2010; 2017) are long since establishing the need for cities to interact with social innovation and to define approaches that can hold together the dimensions of innovation, its tools, timing and constant change, with an institutional structure able to guide them. The recent New Urban Agenda (Habitat III) and the European Urban Agenda (2016) confirm that cities are expected to experiment new original urban solutions, fostering collective agency and exchange by promoting place and people-based approaches.

In this landscape, what is still evident is the mismatch between the intrinsic episodic actions of the practices of social innovation and their short-term, immediate and constantly evolving results, and the long-term, regulated strategic vision of urban planning, which is inherently inclined to locate such actions in some spatially bounded framework. Several studies have largely focused on the value of practices, on the effectiveness of episodic action from the bottom-up, as uncoded "everyday policy" (Manzini 2015). Nonetheless, some lines of research delve into social innovation from the perspective of the institution, which integrate in its toolboxes, methodologies deriving from social innovation, through the predisposition of institutional paths. This vision recalls the work of Patsy Healey (2007) who analyzed evolutionary paths of the institutionalization of practices aimed to change the institutional form. Healey argues that 'vision' and foresight capacity, typical of planning, helps the complex process of socio-spatial change that starts from the recognition of episodes of innovation that become institutionalized practice, giving them stability. In this interpretation, practices that have the possibility of migrating to different

environments can change the governance of cities. Nevertheless, reading the phenomena through these one-sided positions might produce some risks and misinterpretations: on the one hand, delegating to social innovation the responsibility to take on social and economic development might lead progressively to the retraction of the public role, opening the field to possible fragmentation and the creation of 'privatisms' (Ostanel 2017). On the other, the interference of institutions on social innovation, risks to reduce the innovative charge, normalize and de-power more radical ideas, by de-contextualizing and removing them from the emerging context. In this background, it seems necessary to overcome the tensions and dilemma (Savini et al. 2015) of the two levels going beyond the analysis social innovation, by separating institution and communities. Therefore, it seems crucial to consider both the perspective of building 'capable' urban communities and raise awareness towards local governments, both key elements to sustain more effective social innovation (Ostanel and Attili, 2018;) to interact with planning. This leaves in the interaction space between the two dimensions of community and institutions, a wide field of research.

A cross-conceptual perspective on social innovation

The research is positioned in the vast field of social innovation in urban studies, meant as spatial and social arrangement emerging in the cities, and how urban policies have been answering to it. It stems from the observation and recognition of a growing phenomenon of emerging practices in cities, bringing up original ideas to address local collective needs, filling the void left by the state or the market. They provide services, products, processes, networks, more likely to be successful and fulfil the contingent and endogenous needs.

Social innovation as an investigation concept is not new: people have always been looking for new solutions to pressing needs (Balducci and Calvaresi 2004; Donolo 2003), especially in a moment of retraction of the public or in an extension of a crisis period. As highlighted by Palermo and Ponzini (2014) this concept and question is "fundamental for policy-makers, urban scholars, practitioners, and, especially, citizens". The dimension and density of the phenomena in fact, is emerging widely, influencing research, politics (Cognetti 2018) and striking as a global phenomenon. The concept has several definitions, varying from disciplines and points of view, highlighting the complexity to draw the limits of it in a theoretical way, because of its characteristics which emerge in the practice (Mulgan and Murray, 2010). It is usually used as a positive buzzword (Evers et al. 2014; Palermo and Ponzini 2014) where the term 'social' can be interpreted in several manners: ideas emerging from social-embedded issues, the production of collaborations during and after the process, the protagonism of local actors during the process, the societal-oriented output. The contemporary debate - academic and non-academic - tends to present it as a radically new concept, born spontaneously as alternative practices of citizens, communities and intelligent institutions to the dominant economic and cultural system. Moreover, some of the most relevant definitions of social innovation present it as something good in itself and its positivity must only be acknowledged. The tone of these definitions and interpretations though, risks to make social innovation appear as an ideology, a proxy concept for almost every alternative action in the city.

Because of this abstract nature -despite its concreteness – social innovation has become commonly used by policy-makers, because of its evocative and sometimes contradictory boundaries, as an umbrella concept containing everything that emerges in the city as extra-planning. Despite the need for clarification, when interlinked to urban environment, it shows a particular efficiency in relation to complexity of cities, especially in a moment of public

retraction. Local experiments are interpreted as tension and contrasts, leaning towards the detachment and creation of discontinuities (Manzini 2018) from the institutional main stream of urban development, provoking challenges (Hillier 2013) to institutional path, raising dilemmas (Savini et al. 2015) which needs to be recognised but mostly organised.

Critics to the extensive use of social innovation highlight its possible hidden meaning, uncovering potential hidden agendas of policy-makers, sometimes difficult to detect under the positive rhetoric of the concept. Among the risks and ambiguities for social innovation is the representation as acceptable form of decrease public action, the creation of useless 'privatisms' and competition, the interpretation towards technological inputs, the novelty understood as a detachment from tradition and from the contingent identity and the possible building territorial fragmentation and new boundaries. The fuzziness and indistinctness of social innovation, highlights even more the necessity to make sense and give a meaning to the concept stressing its trajectory as priority issue in policy-making. Learning from specificities (Palermo and Ponzini 2014), understanding its role in research and as a transformative factor for urban policies and planning, requires to analyse its historical roots and to critically reconstruct the growth and consolidation of its success. When reflecting on possible new approaches and methods for the integration of social innovation discourse in urban planning, overcoming the prevalence of one category over another, lessons from the past can help unravel the elements and how to use them in order to narrow the research field towards a planning vision.

a) Early definitions and use of social innovation

Social innovation was first used in the early 18th century. The meaning varied from "societal revolution" and "social change", to new social practice (Godin, 2012) in antithesis with the main course of civic behaviour. Its blurred borders were already apparent, especially because of the overlap between sociology and institutional studies. Several types of social changes appeared during the 20th century, the reflection on their meaning took a more structured path of semantic research. When the concept of social economy emerges in fact, social innovation acquired an institutional and more scientifically-based meaning (Moulaert et al. 2017).

In the early 20th century, the rise of the interpretation of innovation as technological and economically-driven, caused a loss of interest in the potential for social externalities of innovation. Nevertheless, the ambiguous and discussed effects of technological aspects (de Oliveira 2016) provoked reflections on the long-term impact on cities and communities (Moulaert et al. 2013) reviving the discussion on the role of social innovation especially in urban and economic development, as an answer to the excessive attention on technological-driven development (BEPA, 2010; Caulier-Grice et al. 2013; Gerometta et al. 2005). With the rise of the social movements of the 1970s, the concept acquired a more solid meaning as a collective action promoted from the bottom-up as open challenge (Hillier 2005) to the institutional mainstream. The political aspect of its interpretation, diverges from the structural and bureaucratic institutional path, reading social innovation as partly unable to compete with the wider system on political terms, but capable to challenge it and slowly provoke changes within it. Later on, many scholars started introducing in the debate the necessity to address the relationships between social needs in cities, their resolution and the role of the institution. In this framework, the 1982's book of Chambon et al. analysed the collective action, as the means through which social innovation tackled urgent social needs. The authors argued that, in this vision,

the public could represent at the same time an obstacle, a "platform for interaction or play a regulatory role" (Chambon et al. 1982). The political role of social innovation and the necessity to give a perimeter to the practices seems to emerge in the declaration of institutions as pivot for possible long-term positive effects on urban environment. The authors stated that the conditions for social innovation to raise and grow were linked to knowledge and civic empowerment, regardless the type of community arrangements or the spatial scale. This interpretation highlights the mobilizing power of social innovation (Moulaert et al. 2013) in conflictual position to economic and technologic ones. The ambiguities arise when the authors analyse the economic aspects. In fact, they state that in order to survive and upscale, social innovations have to rely on the public's financial support, which causes a dependency relationship. They argue that a public policy can be innovative if it appropriates and is able to integrate in its mechanisms a local social innovation (Chambon et al. 1982). In this interpretation the barrier for the innovator and practitioner to upscale and influence the policy maker equals the risk from the state, of merely appropriating the practice without engaging in a mutual exchange relationship.

For the first time towards the end of the 80s (Zapf, 1989) the term was used to identify place-led innovations, as multi-level actions, separated from market or technology-driven ones. Zapf referred to Schumpeter's development theories, understanding social innovation as newly designed institutions, regulations, and networks, involving several actors (state, economy and civil society) implemented as additional resources to improve the functioning and the quality of local life with new services, products and processes (Bassi et al. 2016). Eventually, the challenge became to achieve recognition of the legitimacy for a project or a transformative practice (Drewe et al. 2008), by mediating between the innovator and the institution in an interactive playground, based on shared interests and mutual compromises.

b) The assumption by the European Union

In the early 2000s social innovation became a mainstream concept, thanks to the policy of the European Union that put forward the concept in its framework, by defining the priority actions both for social cohesion and economic growth The attention towards the concept reached its peak, when President Obama established The White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation in 2009 (Brown 2016, Brandsen et al. 2016, EC 2017).

During this decade, projects and studies carried out throughout the early 2000s funded under several Framework Programmes, focused mainly on the potentialities of the outputs of social innovation in urban renewal and development. The output of these projects though, where only marginally taken under consideration in the following policy guidelines, despite their input in community engagement approaches and social economy research. The European Commission's actions on social innovation originate from the Innovation Union initiative (2010), one of the 7 flagship initiatives of the "Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" aimed, among other goals, at maximizing social and territorial cohesion. An important document that reflects on the use and the application of the concept of social innovation is the one produced by BEPA for EC's Innovation Union Programme (BEPA 2010). The document defines social innovation as ideas "that are social both as to their ends and their means and [...] that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations,

thereby benefiting society and boosting its capacity to act"[1]. In synthesis, forms of innovation that are social both as to their end and to their means and processes.

The European union led a protagonist role in the description and framing of social innovation, by promoting the concept with a series of policy instruments stating the necessity to foster and boost it among different countries. Among the tools implemented, structural investment, research and innovation funding, provided a great amount of research material and critical interpretation for further development. In these varied application and implementation of the concept through the common feature is the interpretation as market and economic-driven, often hiding the reduction of public funding and spending (Murray et al., 2010). On the other hand, what emerges from the results of European funded projects is the high contingency and path-dependency with the social-economical and historical context on which social innovation appears.

A series of EU research projects had contributed to frame it into a tool, a methodology, particularly used at urban level as an opportunity to design collaborative city administration models. This practice allow for some cities to start reflecting on the possible elements to lead local governments to equip their planning toolboxes with some institutional flexible tools to interact with social innovation. In this context, URBAN program (COM(2002); COM(2003)308) first and URBACT (URBACT II, 2015) more recently, contributed to support cities in this transition, while at the same time mapping and benchmarking the most successful stories. URBACT is an European exchange and learning programme, that promotes sustainable urban development for European cities by sharing knowledge between peers. URBACT work stream 'Social innovation in cities' identifies cities as catalysts of social innovation, by fostering more responsible civil servants and new institutionally-led approaches to frame innovative practices, in particular related to urban micro transformation and service provision.

In the recent EU programming, social innovation is marked as the best tool available to the public administration to face the growing complexity (Allulli et al. 2016) that derive from global and increasingly multi-dimensional phenomena, such as climate change, resource scarcity and energy crises, population aging and health.

Current interpretations: systematisation of the knowledge

Although it first appeared as a concept in the late 1990s, under the impulse of a pervasive political and academic discourse, social innovation, has slowly evolved into a catchphrase, a buzzword to easy fix many different societal issues. The accepted understanding of social innovation paints a picture of success. However, it has been highly oversimplified giving the impression that the outcomes of social innovative initiatives are unchallenged and unproblematic. The concept entails mostly a positive narration of societal changes, nevertheless change of any nature entail always a loser and a winner, bringing inevitable tensions; furthermore risk, failure and negative impact, are part themselves of the innovation process and as such they need to be understood and investigated.

Research in the field of social innovation has produced multiple interpretations, due to the variety of application (urban regeneration, territorial economic development, social applications of communication and information technologies, participation processes, etc.) and of the adopted approach (economic, sociological, etc.), and ultimately because of the complexity of drawing an analytical and scientific framework of a phenomenon that has

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[1] European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation. http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081

its main expression in practice. The line of research on social innovation can be alternatively framed in: an economic approach linked to new forms of work and organization (Zandonai and Venturi, 2012; Murray et al., 2010), focussing on innovations in the public sector (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000), referring to sociological interpretative frameworks (Borghi 2018; De Leonardis, 2003) and to design tools (Deserti and Rizzo 2014; Meroni 2010), relating to governance arrangements (Gerometta et al. 2005) and referring to urban and territorial regeneration forms (Moulaert and Vicari Haddock, 2009; Evers et al., 2014). In the different disciplines, some common traits seem clear:

-   the practical and active dimension;
-   the civic protagonism and origin;
-   the collective action and the ability to face complex problems with a creative approach.

Research on social innovation is therefore based on discursive frames which are primarily defined and shaped by the practices, driving the research to follow tentative approaches generating plural interpretations to the concept. This produced an excessively case-study based social innovation research, while little attention has been posed to what is beyond the context, and how and why the practice came to be. To this multiplicity of interpretations corresponds a multitude of analytical and implementation approaches which, rather than showing conflicts or contradictions, offer multiple starting points for navigating through social innovation key ideas. The goal of this chapter is therefore to define a comprehensive framework of social innovation interpretations in relationship with urban planning, to learn and understand them as socially embedded phenomena.

The following table summarise the main positions, useful to point out for the purposes of this research. It fundamentally considers outputs or research or scholars that defined the main features and opportunities for social innovation in urban settings.

Table 1 - literature review on social innovation in urban dynamics

Author(s)	Year (s)	Definition	Concept	Book/paper
Chambon, David, Devevey	1982	practices that allows an individual - or a group - to be in charge of a social need which did not find a satisfying answer elsewhere		'Les innovations sociales'
Deleuze	1986 - 1993	social innovation takes place through windows of opportunity for social creativity which may emerge from challenges to institutional practices.	innovation often emerges from conflict; opportunity spaces at micro scales may make creative strategies possible at macro scales.	'Foucault', 'Difference and Repetition', 'Negotiation', 'Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia'

Zapf	1989	newly designed institutions, regulations, and networks, involving several actors (state, economy and civil society)	implemented to improve the functioning and the quality of social practices with new services, products and processes	'Über soziale Innovationen'
Moulaert, Vicari Haddock, MacCallum, Mehmood, Hamdouch, Nussbaumer	1999 - 2009	a combination of bottom-linked actions, by which people find answers to social needs which are not afforded by the market and not anymore by the state, while building social cohesion and communities' empowerment	innovative responses to social exclusion under the heading of Integrated Area Development (Nicholls et al. 2015). Become opportunities for urban regeneration thanks to the **(re) combination of assets already present in the area**; focusses more on new social processes and rebalancing power disparities. The **response to a need**, the creation of **social relationships** and **local empowerment** are the methods of verification in a **path-dependency** scenario	European Research projects: SINGOCOM, KATARSIS, URSPIC, DEMOLOGOS, VALICORES, SOCIAL POLIS
Gerometta, Häussermann, Longo	2005	solutions to social exclusion problems in European cities with an eventual input into the development of new social integration strategies (Young Foundation 2010)	awareness of the ambiguity of civil society's role in building governance relationships (Gerometta 2005) , under certain conditions, civil society is found to be a valuable contributor towards more cohesive cities and governance arrangements (*ibid.*)	'Social Innovation and Civil Society in Urban Governance: Strategies for an Inclusive City'
Klein, Harrisso, CRISES	2007	the interaction between collective governance, co-production of (social) services, co-construction of public policies and the	**endogenous** development perspective, **decentralization** in state structures (agencies) and creation of bodies of	'L'innovation sociale'

		plural character of the economy (Correia 2019)	cooperation and co-production, role of civil society; organizations working from specific areas	
MacCallum, Moulaert, Hillier, and Vicari Haddock		takes place when bottom-up initiatives of development meet (and merge) with institutional initiatives and when novelties in social organization that are created and are persistent over time.	what is needed for these novelties, is not just to be recognised, but organised in new urban models.	"Social Innovation and Territorial Development"
BEPA	2010	respond to social needs that can be ignored by traditional forms of the private market and not served by public services (Bonifacio 2014)	it is characterized by the search for tackling social needs through **new forms of collaboration and relationships** between different groups of individuals	'Empowering people, driving change. Social Innovation in the European Union'
Mulgan, Murray, Caulier-Grice, Young Foundation, SIX, Nesta	2010	specific ideas, actions, frames, models, systems, processes, services, rules and regulations as well as new organisational forms (Nicholls et al. 2015)	civil society becomes welfarist, providing **innovations that are social both to their ends and to their means**. **Social entrepreneurship** provide solutions to "intractable social problems" that the "classic tools of government policy on the one hand and market solutions on the other, have proved grossly inadequate" (Murray et al. 2010)	'The Open Book of Social Innovation'
OECD, Servillo, Van Den Broeck	2011 - 2012	satisfying new needs not provided by the market or creating new, more satisfactory ways of	implies a shift of process, products, organisation, enabling new relationships with both stakeholders and	Forum on Social Innovations

		giving people a place and a role in production	territories; relational approach	
Moulaert, MacCallum, Mehmood, Klein, Hamdouch, Nussbaumer , MacCallum, Van der Have, Rubalcaba, Pares	2014 - 2017	focus on the multi-level governance (Kazepov 2010) and institutional dynamics, identified frequently with an urban development approach (content, process, outcomes dimension)	arises whenever urban issues (e.g. poverty, exclusion, segregation and deprivation or opportunities for improving living conditions) cannot find satisfactory solutions in the 'institutionalized field' of public or market (content) by triggering **alternative and flexible forms of collaboration and** restructuring power relations (process) and empower disadvantaged groups (outcome)	'The International Handbook of Social Innovation: Collective Action, Social Learning and Transdisciplinary Research'
European Commission	2017	It is human-centred; focused to turn people's and institutions' potential into positive results, highlighting social innovation at the level of cities and regions as grand scale laboratories; at the core of policy making and the political agenda of Europe	socially innovative actions, successfully initiated and carried out by individuals and communities, failed to sustain themselves in the absence of clear strategic policy or political backing by local authorities	'Vision and trends of social innovation for Europe'
Manzini	2015 - 2018	local experiments that produce a discontinuity in the urban and service system, creating a phenomenon that has its materialisation in the urban space	It foresees an **interactions among existing or new resources** and social capabilities, to create original functions and meanings that breaks the routine creating "**context-dependent** radical solutions" (Manzini 2015)	'Design, when everybody designs. An introduction to Design for Social Innovation', 'Politiche del quotidiano. Progetti di vita che cambiano il mondo'

The literature review shows how social innovation has been moving from being framed as "any increase in aggregate individual utility arising from an innovation" (Ayob et al. 2016), intervening in particular in the

production of a larger and more grounded number of services, products, processes, towards a **focus on the relational dimension of collaboration** between different groups, in which planning discipline and categories can be key. This relationship emerges and is produced through uncoded transformative actions that are read here through the territorial dimension. Moving from this consideration, this research starts referring to the main approach to urban renewal and development, carried on by a series of European projects in the 2000s.

This approach aimed to use planning tools and categories, interpreting social innovation as a contingent process rooted on the historical and societal conditions in which it emerges. This interpretation of social innovation is mostly concerned with the results in terms of impacts, such as cultural, normative, regulative and societal changes that these practices are producing. The studies of Frank Moulaert on urban renewal (Moulaert et al. 2009, 2013), led to strengthen the connection among social innovation and urban planning and especially urban regeneration. In this vision oriented towards impacts and results, what seems to be missing is the analysis of the trajectory of social innovation, how it came to be (Ayob et al. 2016, Hillier 2013) and how to organise it in a cross-fertilisation dimension. Therefore, what is still overlooked is the processual dimension of social innovation and what social innovation need to act and where. The research highlights the potential and need to update, **revise and challenge existing definitions and understandings of social innovation** (i.e. Moulaert et al. framework) both in a broad sense and also in its applicability to the European context. Furthermore, what emerges is the urgency to unpack the utopian understanding of social innovation in public discourses, by understanding its real and potential role in increasing public trust instead of public disengagement.

Following the model inspired by the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, Jean Hillier (2013) gives a precise framework of this attitude, not only theoretical but also policy-oriented. Deleuze offered a common language to compare the practical experiences of social innovation and put forward alternative points of view, trying to frame some phenomena which are constructed in dynamic ways, difficult to grasp and to coordinate in a structured framework both in their concept and in their actions. According to Deleuze in fact, social innovation is meant as a **path-dependent** process happening in "**windows of opportunities** for social creativity which may emerge from challenges to institutional practices", in which local actors engage within the urban space. Deleuze refers more to **processes rather than tangible outputs** of the individual practices, whose effects seems to improve and enhance local society's capacity to deal with its challenges. It differs from other typologies of innovation for the connection to relationships and peer-interactions more than market-led transactions (Osborne e Strokosch, 2013). It is more easily connected to a specific **context** following singular dynamics, in a different way than technology: unlike a product in fact, it is an approach that make people and specific local conditions (Moulaert, MacCallum, Hillier 2013), its focus and action leverage, in a place-based attitude with a high attention to the role of local institutions. In this perspective, the opportunities born at the micro level, facilitate creative strategies and contaminations on a larger scale. In Deleuze definition what seems evident, is the significant role given to the **interaction** between individual local initiatives (social innovation practices) and the possible contamination with more responsible institutions (urban planning setups) available in building new planning framework for social innovation to take action, shifting through scales and levels (Hillier 2013). The research definition of social innovation is therefore a contextual and **path dependent** methodology both determined and producing **socio-spatial dynamics of change** through **interactions**. This definition resonates with the model inspired by the philosophy of Gilles

Deleuze who, in philosophical terms, declared the necessity to focus on the 'windows of opportunity' providing these dynamic of change to happen. This interpretation is further explored in the following paragraphs.

Path-dependency and emerging socio-spatial processes

Social innovation practices have inner abilities linked to valorisation of existing resources, contingency and path-dependency (Drewe et al. 2008; Hillier 2013). In literature, social innovation is described as capable to expand the capacity of cities to answer to challenges in a more operative manner. At the same time, planning, as the action of setting-out urban strategies to be realised, comprehends a set of methodologies able to deal with foresighting what comes into being for cities and territories. In this view, planning legacy comes into tension with dynamic contingent conditions (Mäntysalo et al. 2011, Savini et al. 2015) produced by social innovation practices. Therefore, these two dimensions of action and vision, must be considered in formulating urban development models, which not only recognise social innovation, but take it, address and organise it, re-formulating strategic protocols and action models, to foster the interaction with planning setups. Nevertheless, the blurred boundaries that distinguish the notion of social innovation when related to the city (BEPA 2010; Gerometta et al. 2005, Moulaert et al. 2013), reflect the complexity and variety of possible relationships between episodic and short-term local actions and permanent and long-term planning, visible in the experiences flourished throughout Europe. The success of social innovations can be measured by the degree of its penetration into society, impacting wider systems while posing the need of deeper reforms of such systems. If read from the point of view of urban planning, measuring its effectiveness involves the degree of interaction and inclusion of mechanisms and organizations as well as outcomes and spillovers in the categories and tools of the plan. In this sense, with the aim of enabling their success and progressive integration and interaction with the planning framework, they require specific conditions for innovations to be produced and be deep-scaled in the society, representing a transformative potential, in the immediate, and a development in the long run.

Identifying the perspective that urban (social and spatial) capital can offer as potential to put into practice in the city, it seems clear that planning can provide the interpretative key, codes and tools to shape this alliance through the provision of a spatial infrastructure for social innovation practices and facilitating occasions for interaction to transform conflict and tensions into urban value.

a) Planning for path-dependency

The research proposes a broad interpretation of the concept of social innovation linked to urban transformations and settings, useful to understand both the perimeter and the dimension of the analysis. Social innovation is recalled as a **path-dependent and context-grounded** methodology, both determined and producing socio-spatial relationship of collaboration enabled by complex interactions.

In a complex system such as the city, every phenomena is the result of the interaction between urban components. For any emergent phenomena though, there is the influence of many sediments of the past: "the set of […] preconditions that make it possible to experiment with something beyond history" (Deleuze, 1990). This influence is defined as path-dependency, identifying the relationship that occurs between social actors and the specific

institutional contexts, driven by history and social context. This is both structural and institutional determination. Path-dependency defines the structural component, by highlighting the limited set of options that are inherent to a particular urban context (e.g. community development in a capitalist environment is a different challenge than in a social-democratic state). It is also institutional stressing the impact of local institutional histories and cultures that can be empowering as well as disempowering (e.g. a long tradition of private-public cooperation in local development will provoke the rise of future institution-building and social innovation in governance relations). Path-dependency entails the urban actors' dependence on a socio-political context and their ability to act **in accordance or against** the rules of an established framework (Moulaert et al. 2013). The central idea of path-dependency linked to the institutional context is that some institutions tend to become increasingly resistant to change over time, and therefore small choices and deviations can have significant long-term impacts (Sorensen 2015). From this perspective, social innovation is not just a simple inclusion of a novelty in the institutional production of a territory, but it is potentially included in the society and in the territory itself, yet to be unveiled and provoke changes in the institutional status quo. In this sense, the temporal dimension acquires a key importance. In planning the notion of time is the variable that determines the contextual conditions (political, social and economic), the analytic tools for the analysis of continuity and change in public policy that produce the enabling elements that generate social innovation initiatives. Social innovation is therefore a reaction to an economic and social contest, a possible outcome of a process that is rooted and driven by contextual conditions.

b) Socio-spatial dynamics

As extensively described, cities are foreseen to host the fastest growing population in the future, but at the same time they are witnessing the velocity of growth of global issues (environmental, political, social, ethnical, technical) which comes with the extending and diverse population. The city can be understood as "a spatially thickened field of social practices" (Venturi and Rago 2017), the combination of urban dimension and social innovation is hence assumed in relation to the perspective of the city as a collaborative ecosystem, where urban-production processes take place through the dialogic interaction between actors at various levels. Urban environment in fact, are currently being re-interpreted as potential spaces for innovations that could evolve into alternative socio-technical regimes able to tackle global challenges in a local, operational manner (Allen 2015). In this sense, the features of social innovation, capable to attracts inputs from public and private sectors, creating new relationships triggered by shared co-designed solutions, is an approach that seems particularly suitable for generating original transformations at the urban level (Manzini 2017), supporting cities in addressing the growing specific challenges by putting into value their spatial capital. This assumption puts forward the dimension of place through which address new framework of contamination with planning and social innovation. Place in fact, entails a dimension of social, economic, political life and of people and community organizations (Venturi and Zandonai 2019) without a place, innovation cannot distribute, generate, cultivate relationships.

These assumptions can be integrated with the interpretation of the contemporary city as capable of re-activating and organising local existing resources by Moulaert and Vicari-Haddock (2009), who assume resources as spatial capital to be activated (e.g. empty spaces, urban voids, opportunity areas) by a set of knowledge accumulated over time (Camagni and Dotti 2010), triggering changes by and for the creation of social capital. Social capital is foreseen

for individuals to become agents (Sen 2007) instead of passive recipients of external interventions. The position is linked to the idea of "capacitation", a concept derived from Amartya Sen (2000), that implies the ability to contrast and reverse the conditions of deprivation in which the recipients are engaged to create agency (Donolo 2003). A methodology of action aimed at not allocating benefits to fill a gap but to invest in the capacity of the local actors (De Leonardis 1998). As active agents, local actors intervene to fill the political and institutional vacuum left by the lack of guarantee on the provision of services by administrations and institutions. Resources and forces of the private social sector, social entrepreneurship, communities of self-organized citizens, activate to optimize the use of territorial resources and ensure social improvement, to achieve solutions more likely to be satisfactory to their values and aspirations (Murray et al. 2010). These actors have been defined as "competent communities" owning cognitive and methodological bases to face and give answers to shared problems, because they are recognised as "collectively capable of analysing their situation, recognizing needs, mobilizing and using the resources necessary to satisfy them" (Caldarini 2008). The actors take different labels: social innovators, active citizens, city-makers, and are those who wish to contribute, anticipate solutions and trigger alternative institutional development, acting collectively and producing further collaborations. Some literature frames them as "communities of action" (Cristoforetti et al., 2010) defined as collective entities owning the typical characteristics of the community resulting from simultaneous local and global relationships. Others (Urbinati 1997; Palermo and Ponzini 2014) identify them as communities of interests, different from a multitude of individuals sharing values and meanings but more similar to a series of singularities owning responsibilities, autonomy and desiring to actively being engaged in society. They result in a whole that is more than the sum of its parts (Sennett 2018). This **individual autonomy** is the element that enhance the possibility of a fruitful dialogue between singular needs, to challenge the mainstream and to revendicate specific rights to intervene in improving urban conditions. The responsible individual autonomy cannot be reduced by abstract predefined schemes or general procedures, but must involve concrete and practical experience in a specific context, working to preserve and enhance the urban life to which they belong.

Communities of action and interests seems therefore in need for a place where to recognise, relate, build and establish their capability to autonomously join forces by using and transforming local values and resources. A community of action and interests is first identified with a spatial or virtual boundary, eventually evolving into a place dimension when recognized and considered as a collective sphere for the a *civitas*, or the *cité* (Sennett 2018). The place could become the measurement unit for social innovation that – from a urban planning disciplinary perspective – allows to renovate, extend the disciplinary field or even review certain cornerstones of the discipline. From their localised and spatialised dimension, communities of social innovators are referring to global phenomena and models. For this reasons it seems relevant to also point out the effectiveness of social innovation practices as significantly reducing if not extended beyond local/communitarian borders (Cristoforetti 2010) or capable of mobilizing different scales and actors. The contemporary increased mobility of knowledge and capital implies that innovation would no longer be an endogenous development process within a city but a process of integration in global networks and the result of complex social interactions on multiple spatial scales (Westlund et al. 2014). Social innovation spanning from intentional communities, is a situated phenomenon produced by several individual autonomies coming together to be responsible for a societal transformation. They are grounded to the place but they also refer to global models.

With these premises, the idea is to investigate this dimension as capable to reduce the distance and the tension between the characteristic of planning and practices by focussing on interaction as a design element.

Ontology of interaction: space, conflict, actors and places

The spaces of relationship, conflictual or consensual, have always been represented by public spaces. Public space facilitate "mutual exchanges, and therefore obligations and mutual loyalty" (Sennett 1999), materializing the space of citizenship (Amin 2002). Public space is understood as the spatialisation of the public sphere, where urban actors actively seek to "find new communities" voluntarily, overcoming the dilemma of planning (Savini et al. 2015) by "accepting their respective differences" (Sebastiani 1997). Public sphere is an intermediate dimension between public and private, which is not legally defined. It is "a space for private actors who exercise critical functions in a discursive form" (*ibid.*), the space for the encounter and social interaction, where urban policies are realized in concrete. It represents the space where citizens interface one with the other informally and by chance. Despite these readings and a long-lasting positive narratives, public space for meeting and sharing 'in common' often includes some social groups and excludes others. Amin and Thrift (2002) argue that, although it is clear that the public space itself hosts interactions and connects people, it seems to have evolved into a transition area for just occasional and casual meetings, no longer able to produce exchange, intermingling, agency.

In either position, it seems that today, contemporary public spaces are more and more reducing their role of civic and political activators, limiting to being witnesses of the public life, without actually being able to produce further hybridization and knowledge. Knowledge and learning is rather produced by plural and distributed experimentations, hybrid and informal activations, distributed in different public and private forms. They emerge from exchange between actors that often compete to reach decisions among conflictual positions (Mantysalo et al. 2011). In this interpretative key, it seems crucial to deepen the role that **conflict** (of power, levels, scale, norms) can play in interaction and how to draw potential from it by transforming it through an enabling infrastructure for practices and institutions alike. The conflict emerging through exchange and coexistence in public spaces is explained by Deleuze as the result of multiple interaction between ever-changing elements, some of which are resistant to the behaviour of others (Deleuze 1992, Hillier 2013). Watson (2018) argues that public space is never neutral because its intrinsic nature is traditionally that of an arena for free expression, including conflict and protest. In ancient cities, public spaces were key places for cultural education and popular political practice. Meeting (and confrontation) in public space gave rise to community, civic behaviour and responsibility, judgement and public participation. Today, places of civic formation and political activation are plural and distributed, hybrid and informal. Knowledge is increasingly distributed in different forms and quickly consumed. These knowledge dynamics, their evolving process and changing paths, are foreseen as impossible to crystalize in a comprehensive planning framework, because of its shifting nature, but they are possible to trace through interactions.

This is confirmed by the above-mentioned rise of new forms of communities, shaped as mix of autonomous individualities, in a lighter and more flexible way (Avermaete 2008), voluntary and intentional, pursuing personal and collective needs, which recognise themselves by choice. The consequence of the configuration of self-chosen communities – whose growth and necessities to interact and appropriate places are the objects of new urban challenges for architecture and urban planning – introduces the transition from public to collective sphere. The

collective sphere finds its spatial materialisation as the result of "a set of conditions and interactions" (Palermo and Ponzini 2010, 2014) in **places of mutual learning**, as setting of society's dynamic transformation, conflict and constant creation (Lindblom and Cohen, 1979; Lindblom, 1990). It refers to places that allow interaction between responsible and autonomous individuals that are capable of evolving within the institutional framework, constantly learning and transforming each other. The consequences of interaction can lead to various results. For Dewey (1998), individuals who share an experience and interact with each other produce forms like collages, emphasizing verbal limits and similarities, misunderstandings and common knowledge. Reciprocal relationship between individuals can be mainly guided by utilitarian principles and lead to acceptable compromise solutions through a process of negotiation; on the other hand, a dialogue between autonomous actors capable of a good public debate can lead to the possibility of a virtuous collective cooperation. These are both unrealistic and complex solutions. A third possibility involves integration of the individualities, without one part overcoming the other, in a mutual learning relationships that generate knowledge, which is produced by the experience of interaction between a group of actors and agents carrying different positions, understanding, actions and interests.

For Deleuze, interaction among systems eventually creates conflicts in which one part 'flees' the other, to creatively try something else. This is what he called "lines of flight", dynamism and creation triggered by interactions. This position resonates with prominent positions of cities as playground for contestation and conflict by Harvey (2012) – enhanced even more by the current social and economic conditions – or cities as scenarios for the attempts of the public, to organise, control and tame (Allen 2015) the effects of the global crisis and its consequent urban conflict. Open conflict is often the result of the difficulty of coexistence of the heterogeneous subjects in the space (Scandurra et al. 2009), taking place mainly in specific perimeters, "disputed areas" (Montanari and Ostanel 2015), small basins where a different articulation of public and different profiles of exclusion coexists. Conflict and contextual collective knowledge production through fine-grained interactions between actors in space, requires an in-depth study of both the actors, but also the "actants" such as the urban space, who influence levels of innovation and urban change.

Regarding the actors, this vision seems to emphasise the role of intermediate 'bodies' (Hillier and Abrahams 2013), such as traditional urban intermediaries, like trade unions, trade associations, which through time assumed the role of facilitators and mediators with institutions. This traditional actors though, used to mediate and argument resolutions with the institution, an agreement that would be advantageous for the represented citizenship, but also for the intermediary himself, part of the represented group. The intermediate body had the objective of selectively settling the conflict or using it to achieve certain objectives and rights. In the wake of the new global challenges and a changed economic scenario, classic intermediaries are becoming obsolete, thanks to the strengthening of more distributed agents and "actants", that receive and re-elaborate precise "bottom-up" inputs in a parallel proactive dialogue with the institution.

As Zandonai explains (2018), intermediation seems to move towards the "production backoffice", places of learning (Palermo and Ponzini 2014), paying greater attention to localised structures as "interfaces with reality" and arena for exchange and agency-building. These actant would be more and more similar to facilitators of conflicts, working on boundary strategies. They would be multi-local *milieu* (Bergvall-Kåreborn et al. 2009; Camagni and Maillat 2006; Matteaccioli 2008), able to capture the dynamics of innovation in a global knowledge economy,

where innovation results from complex social interactions on multiple spatial scales. The *milieu* is understood as a spatialized whole, a place in which interactions between individual agents are developed through the learning processes resulting from multilateral and multi-scale transactions among individual autonomies that generate specific innovation externalities.

What if these places can represent the spatial platforms that helps to promote the intermediation between differences, creating intercultural, dialogic and transformative areas of negotiation? A new planning model, I argue, should therefore recognise both conflicting elements as well as agency and action, and enhance their mutual relationship (Deleuze 2004a), by transforming conflicting positions into something rational and meaningful, a collective construct (Palermo and Ponzini 2014) and a learning place. From the (public) space, interaction - and the conflict it brings with it - moves to the places in the collective sphere, where agents and actants (actors and urban context elements) integrate by learning from each other. Interaction is hence identified as a guiding concept to address the analysis of the process and path of social innovation in cities.

From the sistematisation of social innovation in fact, emerges that the processual dimension of this evocative concept is often overlooked, bypassing the enabling conditions that it needs, to focus more on the impacts. The research aims to address this gap by anchoring the knowledge in a paradigmatic context. The city of Bologna is taken as a reference to reconstruct the path that led to the emergence of social innovation practices. Mapping of the context of Bologna, is an attempt to draw a visual and descriptive representation of relationships, events, political background, as well as locating encounters, spaces, conflicts, ruptures, flows and discontinuities. This 'tracing' work essentially reconstructs the contextual conditions of the city of Bologna that, through interaction, brought out the practices of social innovation as a prevalent paradigm of the political model of the city. It is also a reconstruction of the policies of proximity and distance and how power relations have been constantly reshaped between institutions, neighbours, and city users in general.

3. TRACING. Contextualising social innovation, the Bologna model

"To trace, or interpret, entails looking back, often from above, in a systematic manner. To trace is to describe and to analyse the diversity of relations, the modalities of co-ordination, the discourses, the emotions, affects and how they were mobilised to shape actants' frames, representations and behaviours".

Deleuze G. and Guattari F. *"What is Philosophy?"* (1994)

The aim of this chapter is to trace how and for what reasons (contextual, societal, political) the contemporary socio-spatial configuration of the city of Bologna came to be as in the present. Bologna is the main case study from which to read the intertwining relationship between practices of social innovation and policies that determined on the one hand, the codification of specific planning approaches, and on the other, important modifications of the socio-spatial structure of the city. Tracing for Deleuze and Guattari (1987) meant "understanding path dependencies in terms of transformations as evolution or breaks, and how systems respond to inner and to external forces", by mapping in retrospect to investigate potential trajectories for innovations. The reconstruction of the background of the evolution of the city in a systematic and critical manner, in terms of socio-spatial action reacting to socio-economic events and extra-planning practices interacting with planning, allows to understand the trajectory that led Bologna to its contemporary setting.

The city of Bologna

The city counts 390,000 inhabitants and it is located in the middle of a metropolitan area of about 1 million inhabitants. Its position, in the middle of the Po Valley, surrounded by two rivers and the southern hills, made it one of the most important crossroads of vehicular and railway mobility in Italy and Southern Europe (Gabellini, et al. 2017; Orioli 2019). The city transformed itself in a double direction: on the one hand aggregating and strengthening its relevance as an economic asset, on the other externalising its power and government structures in a polycentric way. This dualism, was even more enhanced thanks to the presence of the Roman Route Via Emilia which, together with the establishment of the oldest University in Europe in the year 1088, and the flourishing agricultural and manufacturing activity, determined the growth and development of the city over time. Bologna is chosen as a privileged observation point for its strong specificity and character of laboratory for innovative policies and paradigmatic planning initiatives. The city has always followed an evolutionary path, guided by a flexible and adaptable political component aimed at recording changes, which has produced institutional models with wide enough boundaries to proceed in an integrated way with the needs of the population. The 'Bologna Model' of the XX century was based on administrative and urbanistic pillars. The first was centred on the recognition of the city (and the region) as paradigmatic for its social capital and "civicness" (Putnam et al. 1994), the second, recognised the planning and development model of the city, putting forward the idea of power de-centralisation as a morphological model. Both the lenses from which to read the model, are based upon the main drivers of social cohesion, efficiency of services and solidity of the power structure (De Maria 2012), in a nutshell, a responsible political organism, capable of pursuing collective recognition and legitimisation.

Concerning the administrative 'Bologna model', the city of good governance, home of social democracy has always fostered the overall civic engagement, putting forward the participation of citizens in the government, as a policy tool, understood as the recognition of individual and collective needs and the ability to empower citizenship proactively involved in solving these needs (Farinelli 2014). The construction of this characteristic has been certainly encouraged by the social-democratic political class backed up by the productive forces organised in cooperatives, which was able to experiment with innovative forms of urban management: from the decentralization to the rise of the neighbourhoods, the policies promoted by the administration always contributed to enhance participation in public life by encouraging institutional proximity. This vocation is fostered by the nature of Bologna as a "cognitive city" (Farinelli 2014), home of the first university, whose role has always been of

production and circulation of specialized knowledge. This framework, has led the territory to become more characterized by the aptitude to widespread quality, rather than to single excellence (Trimarchi et al. 2012). These distributed resources seem to represent collective assets for the re-signification of urban space (Orioli 2019), which is the goal of the current Policies of Urban Collaborations promoted by the Civic Imagination Office of the Municipality, with the aim to enhance urban capital through the capacity and empowerment of citizens.

Bologna has a long history that has seen the city intertwine the care and preservation of urban capital in both its spatial and social components: its most representative architectonic element, the porticoes, is a concrete example of communing ability of private spaces to evolve into shared resources, in a perspective of enhancing the space regardless of the property. Bologna is often mentioned as "an extraordinary harbour on land" (Leandro Alberti in Piano Strategico Metropolitano 2017) and "[...] inhabited by residual citizens", evoking an image of dynamic and constant change of an urban space whose permanent and temporary inhabitants consider their own.

As shown above, the multiple dimension of the city and its capacity to transform and change its role, is hence visible in its rich planning tools, dynamic public spaces, and evolving urban actors. Bologna in fact, has always been a city rich of different humanities (Scandurra 2009), reflected in its various definitions: University City, market city, city of food and of transit. It is a city that seems to be constantly reorganised as a result of the actions carried out by those who live and pass through it, as urban agents. This tendency might be triggered also by the peculiar demographic dynamics which sees a 25% of change in the population occurring every ten years (Bovini 2017), this means that on the one hand there is a high percentage of the elderly population strongly rooted in the city and, on the other, a portion of transitory population that finds it difficult to connect itself to the city. This leads the city to have a high level of consumption of its space by both permanent and transitory inhabitants.

It is a city famous for its extensive social capital, hosting more than one thousand associations and organised groups of citizens promoting various kind of activities. In march 2019 in fact, the configuration of the thousand loose city associations was divided per topics, as follows:

Culture	Internationalisation	Health	Sport	Education	Human rights	Civil protection	Environment	Animals, nature
407	18	121	206	95	148	9	31	8

Bologna was the city were social street (Cristoforetti and Lodi 2017) were born, there are 315 start-ups, with an annual increase of +17.5% (source: Infocamere-registro imprese) and more than 26,000 cultural and creative industries. More that 1/3 of the local PIL (GDP) is produced by cooperatives.

The dynamics of the city materialises in large part thanks to the action of urban actors, whose knowledge is not specialised nor technical, nevertheless they are design agents (Leoni, 2017) able to modify the city by reacting to economic or social changes with visible spatial consequences. Students, residents, traders, itinerant inhabitants (Crosta, 2010b)[2], creative and cultural organised groups, have contributed to the creation of meanings and values for the public space that hosts its multiple uses and social interactions.

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[2] Itinerant inhabitants: those who have a home in several places and whose territory of living is made up of the places where they carry out activities, the stages and the routes that they usually do, recognizing the itinerant nature of the practices of use (Crosta, 2010)

The aptitude and ability to merge *urbs* and *civitas* (Zamagni, 2017), tradition and ability to change (Merola 2018), have granted the city to be looked after as a 'model of planning', an aptitude that the city applied to each sector of the government structure, putting always at the centre the urban context as a dense space of social practices shaping the city. This aptitude is visible in the on-going urban policies, which focuses significantly on urban regeneration (following the principles of the regional law 24/2017), interpreted and delivered in multiple dimensions and meanings (Orioli 2019). On the one hand urban regeneration in Bologna involves the spatial transformation and re-qualification of the existing city, but also as an opportunity for social innovation to emerge. From this point of view, urban regeneration via social innovation (Ostanel 2017) has found in Bologna a particularly fertile ground for the richness and liveliness of the associative and cooperative world and for the multiplicity of actions which sees as protagonist the activism of its citizens. The current policies and planning approaches implemented by the city, are part of a general planning crisis and strong geo-political changes. This scenario implies also the introduction of the Metropolitan City in 2014, within which Bologna has the role of building a new metropolitan citizenship, which starts from the already strong municipal core and aims to be expanded at metropolitan and even regional scale.

The interaction between the active role of the inhabitants of the city and planning framework, evident since the 60s in Bologna, is therefore renewed in the current policies, aimed at paving the way for the city to reclaim a new role as a model.

Tracing social innovation intertwined with urban planning in Bologna

Research and practices of social innovation are interested in networking, enhancing and being conditioned both by global and local relationships. From the former, they are influenced indirectly in the challenges to face (such as climate changes, global economic crisis), from the latter they inherit characteristics and inputs arising "from the development path of a specific place" (Hillier 2013), which establish the legacy of the present state of a place, but also possible opportunities for future evolution in continuity or arising from conflict. In order to understand the present complexity of the city of Bologna and in particular of social innovation interaction with urban planning, it is useful to explore the contextual configuration in an organised and systematic manner, tracing the path-dependency of the dynamics, the historical background, how they came to be and what visions and planning setups triggered its consolidation.

Bologna has a strong tradition of citizen participation and proactive involvement, built on over sixty years of progressive municipal urban policies (Bianchi 2018). It has been defining urban planning measures aimed at playing a 'social' role, (Bravo 2009, Farinelli 2014, Gabellini 2018, Orioli 2019) in order to merge the care for the city with the one for portion of society (Bravo 2009), intertwining constant change and innovation, *urbs* and *civitas*. This approach demonstrates a dimension of urban development that holds together the rediscovery and spatial redevelopment of places and the activation of groups, associations, people, 'agents' in the city, direct consequence of the mutual contamination between new productions and space. The social-democratic approach and the central role of the public, which has accelerated the development of the welfare system in Bologna, has always been accompanied by an increasing collaboration with the third sector (facilitated by the role played in this territory by the cooperative movements), up to assume the general awareness that no system of services or local spatial

transformation holds, if not interacting through proximity approaches fostering relationship bonds. The tradition of economic cooperation and civic activism that have characterized the city over time, linked to local resources and practices, have become synergic and anticipatory elements of urban transformation (Orioli, 2018), building the foundations for the definition of administrative acts for the sharing of responsibilities in the care and development of the city.

In most recent times, the retraction of the public actor and the growth of processes of self-organisation, are re-shaping both the mechanisms of place-making and the organisation as relational and service processes. The role of institutions is transformed into a facilitator and an enabler for local experimentation aimed at enhancing the practical dimension and immediate and visible results in social, cultural, political, environmental issues. An analysis of the trajectory of the planning and political context of the city, seems to be useful to highlight the constant presence of an attitude and a focus on collaboration in the construction of urban policies: a reading that reflects a tradition of urban planning attentive to *civitas*, not only reflected in the political affiliation of the administrative apparatus, but evident in the same constitutive logic of the city. Some moments in the recent history of the Bolognese policy and planning trajectory have seen the urban and administrative planning intertwined in a holistic view, adapted at the same time as mandatory (urban plans) and voluntary (strategic and action plans) tool. The reading can provide one starting point to understand the action and the role of the tools put in place today by the city (Figure 6) and understand how the relationship with social innovation practices came to be.
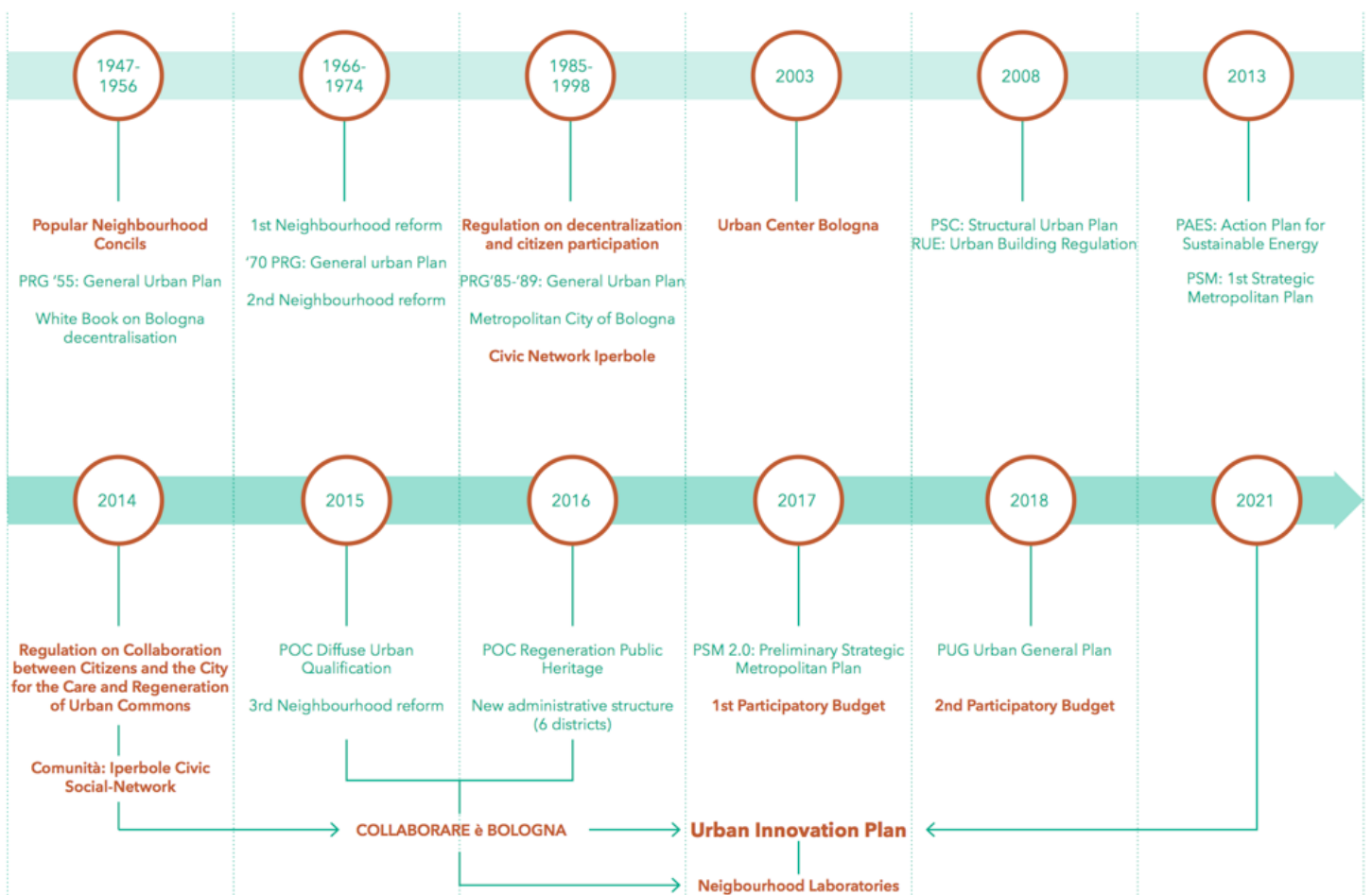

Figure 6 - Bologna: timeline of social innovation. Source: the author

a) 1947-56: Giuseppe Dossetti and The White Book

Bologna is well known for its cooperative movements and its associations, pursuing mutualism and the free collaboration of several people for the achievement of a common purpose through mutual help to ensure equal rights and duties. This tradition is part of the constitutive logic of the city which, through time, started to frame this attitude in normative and administrative arrangements, resulting in some paradigmatic moments for the urban policies of the city. One of the main innovations in this sense, was the debate on popular participation and decentralization of the municipal administration, which coincided with the birth of the **popular neighbourhood councils**, at the end of 1947. After the war, Bologna was at a turning point and the task of representing political continuity went to the mayor Giuseppe Dozza. The new political-economic concept foresaw a redistribution of income in favour of the workers, with the multiplication of public services and social investments. At the time, Giuseppe Dossetti was a politician, member of Christian democracy, who believed in the need to strengthen channels of dialogue between the municipality and citizens through the institution of "neighbourhood councils", understood as "forms of self-government of the citizens of the same neighbourhood". Behind such a proposal, there was the idea that neighbourhoods are characterized by an organic special pattern of relations rooted and grounded in the territory, a community dimension that the councils should enhance.

Following this principles, Dossetti ran for mayor of Bologna in 1956, testing in his personal political campaign, a program for the city built in a collective way and enriched with the contributions and studies of scholars of different disciplines. The results of these analysis, conversations and reflections were translated into the "White Book on Bologna" of 1956. The book contains a thorough explanation of the reasons for the promotion and reinforcement of the idea of "organic neighborhoods", as spatially dense agglomeration of communities sharing similar identities, thanks to the enhancement of the relationships created; it unravel the idea of neighborhood councils as local outpost of the public administration, until proposing to spatially de-localize some public offices inside the neighborhoods. It represented an avant-garde program of administrative **decentralization** implemented later by the communist administration in the 1960s, which paved the way to a national law on neighbourhoods. According to Ardigò (2002), who analysed the White Book in depth, the program for decentralization set three goals:

- to respond to emerging needs for social integration in the suburbs;
- to create windows and channels for popular participation, beyond the political party mechanisms, to increase the legitimacy of city government;
- to improve the efficiency of administrative action, sharing part of the responsibility to overall governance.

The proposal foresaw an "*urban and social reorganisation of the city in organic districs*" (Dossetti 1956), hosting **civic centers**, in charge of the decentralization of the services at local and city scale, but more importantly as privileged local observatories and arenas for local civic debate. The civic centers were seen as cores of the activities of the

neighborhood, meeting point of many activities of the government of the city, and showcase of the projects of the city.

Eventually, building from the assumptions of Dossetti and Ardigò in 1960 the municipality pursued policies aimed at increasing the interaction between citizens and the public sphere by approving the division of the city into 15 *quartieri* (neighborhoods). The neighborhoods contributed to amplify the image of Bologna as the main laboratory for experimentation in local urban democracy. This political enabling and fertile context, was backed up by labour unions, housing cooperatives, and citizens were engaged in collective efforts to develop the city.

This fundamental reform, allowed to pursue the intention of developing a constellation of spatial intensities rather than singular centres of power, with the aim to build "potential nodes of urban vitality"(*ibid.*). These were the most notable characteristics that put Bologna in a different position from the rest of Italy, thanks to its interpretation of the role of neighborhood, not just as mere container and executor of localized services, but also as places were decision were made, in a collective and shared manner.
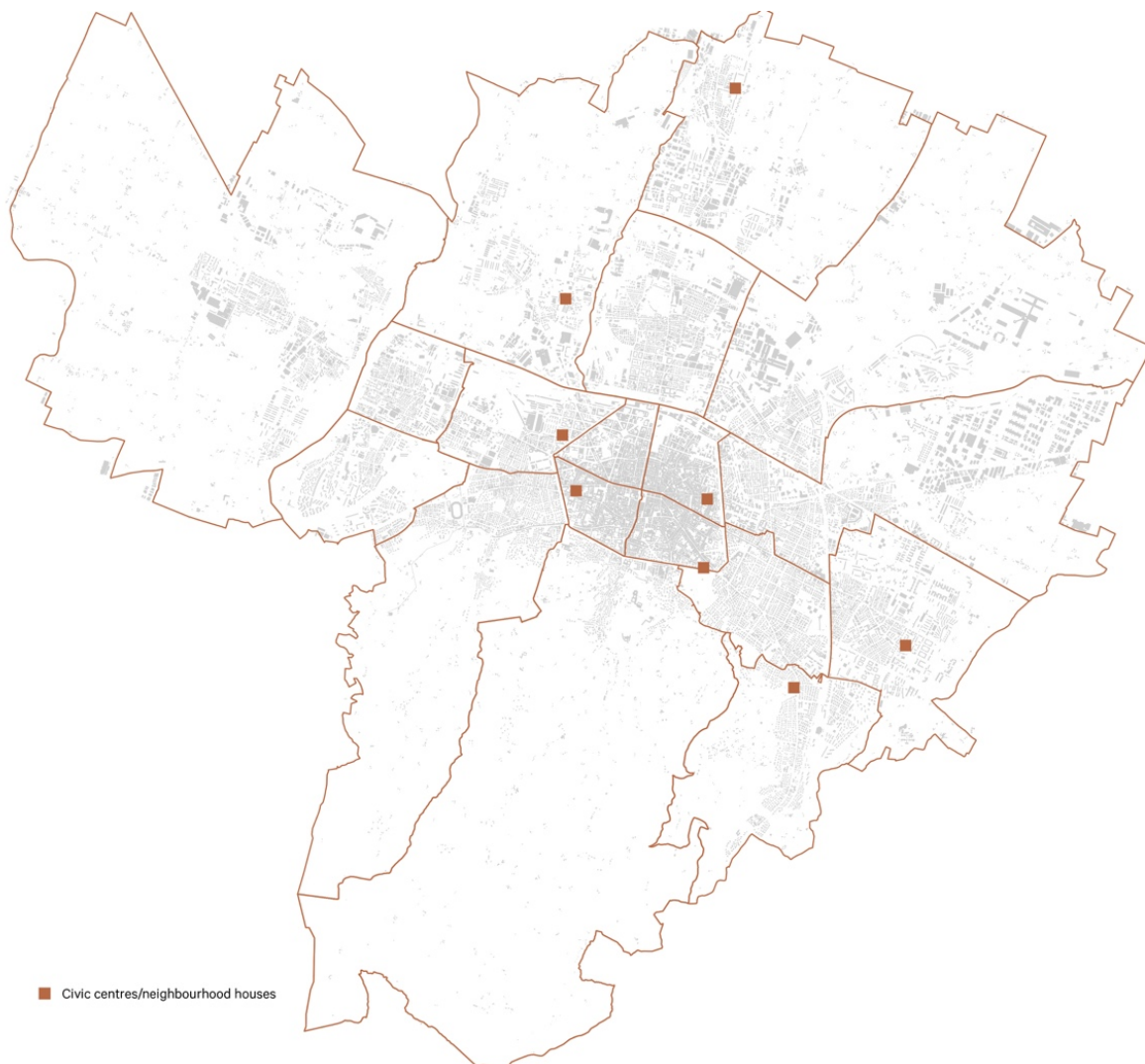

Figure 7 - Map of the first Neighbourhoods and location of the first civic centres. Source: the author.

Bologna was a pioneer in the expansion of the role of neighborhoods also thanks to the capacity to translate the management and administrative model into spatial quality. In particular, due to the generative role of civic centers,

the city developed an approach which resonates with the Lefebvrian theories on the right to the city achieve thanks to the production of the 'urban original' (Lefebvre 1976), collective space for people to both connect and be alone, confront and learn, and have freedom to inhabit the city. Planning was one of the fields in which it was possible to carry out partial experiences of decentralized municipal government. Therefore, besides the administrative vision of the decentralization, an urban scenario was prefigured, following the recognition of the growth of the population, urban transformations due to the economic wealth, and in the wake of the rise of the image of open city-region. The approval of the *Piano Intercomunale* of 1962 (Comune di Bologna 1962), was the first attempt to frame a polycentric vision of the city, with peripheral nodes of local government and civic engagement. The inter-municipal scheme, proposed the first road network (tangenziale) to reduces congestion on historical axes; it defined and marked new polarities to be strengthened, and located the new large urban facilities with a metropolitan logic. The planning scheme indicated the Airport, the Fair (1964), the new *Interporto*, the Gross Center, the Food Center, the Roveri industrial area, the Business Center, the University of Ozzano, conceived as the center of the new metropolitan settlements. This new tension towards the metropolitan area set the basis for a vision of Bologna as a polycentric city open towards ambitious innovative solutions (Tarozzi 1999), but at the same time grounded in its neighborhoods. The following years of the urban planning and policy background of Bologna, established the basis for the 'Bologna model' in urban planning to be tested and assessed.

b) 1969-74: the rise of the urban bolognese model

At the end of the 60s, the Bolognese planning model gained international fame, holding as the main success, the Plan for the Conservation and Restoration of the Historical Centre. Additionally, the overall approach though, meant to extend the vision from the city centre to the whole city, by innovating the planning of suburban neighbourhoods using the newly defined PEEP (popular economic building plan) instrument and promoting the urban mix, strengthening the role of the popular neighbourhood councils, as first manifestation of participation in Italy (Campos Venuti 2013), later implemented as a State Law.

In 1960 the deputy mayor for urban planning, Giuseppe Campos Venuti, proposed to carry on a series of studies on Bologna, concerning social housing, the historical centre features, the green areas, services and infrastructure. Starting from those years a change was visible both in the definition of new planning tools and the dimension of social issues integrated into planning. In '63 Venuti presented the PEEP which aimed to assign and develop social housing areas within services for the community and design of green areas, in the main peripheral areas of the city. The historical center became a socio-urban laboratory of elaboration, proposal and verification of policies, directions and proposals of the "reformist planning" (Campos Venuti 1991), carried out using the Plan of the historical center as the experimentation context to test and prove its effectiveness. In this case, the protection of the historical heritage represents the prerequisite for the construction of a narrative framework that declares a change in the approach of urban planning towards an integrated approach, aimed at promoting the integrity of an historic center subordinated to the presence of inhabitants of different social conditions.

Between 1969 and 1970 a Variant of the General Regulatory Plan for the Historical Centre[3] was presented, bringing out the double urgency to preserve the historical centre as an entire monument, protection of the hill, encourage the industrial development of the north-east area and the development of green areas. As narrated by P. Gabellini, the Plan for the Historical Centre is developed when in Italy, many specific thematic planning tools contributed in setting the basis for future urban transformations (Gabellini 2007). The Plan aimed at refine the former urban development plan (piano regolatore) from 1958, of which it constitutes the directly prescriptive Variant, with procedures at different speeds that contributed to plan the future of the city.

The plan was preceded by an extensive research led by Leonardo Benevolo from 1963 to 1967, with Deputy Mayor Campos Venuti, the census analysis highlighting historical, architectonical, typological values of the centre of Bologna, and at the same time analysing its social fabric (Albrecht et al. 2016, Comune di Bologna 1965), in order to understand socio-morphological constant and variables in the historical centre. The analysis was oriented towards the design, underpinning the main element that contributed to the collective definition of the identity of the centre: recurring building typologies of living and working (Bravo, 2009), porticoes, diffused district centralities, large containers as collective facilities.

The Plan marked a decisive moment in planning: for the first time the specific theme of conservation and protection of heritage became a laboratory of experimentation of urban and social policies likewise (Bravo 2008). The 1969s approval of the Plan marked the beginning of three years where a series of conservation measures intertwined with social provisions by translating to the historical centre the housing programme (PEEP historical centre) and services (*ibid.*).

The Plan can be divided into different thematic phases. The first was led by the team of Leonardo Benevolo and aimed at building a database of typologies of the historical centre. To this, followed the definition of the '*comparti*', homogeneous areas that urgently needed renovation, defined according to both social and material decay. In 1973 the application of the national law on social housing[4] (Comune di Bologna 1974) to the conservation of 4 *comparti* (San Leonardo, Solferino, San Carlo and Santa Caterina), marked a turning point in the recognition of the historic centre as an inhabited environment, preserving in an integrated way both local crafts and social capital. The process of implementation saw the involvement of the owners with '*convenzioni*', agreements with the public administration of the uses and regulating the necessity to re-locate and guarantee temporary housing or shop solutions (casa-parcheggio) to the landlords, during the construction site. The temporary buildings were located nearby, in order to guarantee the living proximity and the continuity of the economic activities.

The Plan recognized in the intersection of actions and relationships, the basis on which to build a new concept of historical city that, in a moment of crisis of the functional vision, re-emerges today as a model to look after. After 50 years from the approval of the Plan for the Historical Centre of Bologna, a reflection on the legacy of its planning approach for the protection of the historical city, is interesting to be read in respect to the contemporary challenges. The plan was able to release a double legacy: on the one hand the material legacy of the conservation of the historical city, grown to become a laboratory for urban transformations. On the other, the legacy of the

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[3] The authors of the Plan for the Historical Centre are R. Carrieri, G. Mattioli, V. Parenti and R. Scannavini, with G. Agostini, F. Bottino, L. Mari and G. Filippini. The Mayor who approved the Plan was G. Fanti (1966-1970), and the Deputy Mayor for Urban Planning, A. Sarti.
[4] Law 167/1962, which introduced the Piano per l'Edilizia Economica e Popolare (PEEP, Plan for Economic and Popular Housing).

planning approach that went beyond the tools and the procedures, but included the narration and reproduction that has accompanied the experience over time. The interpretation of material and immaterial heritage and values, the hybridisation of public and private intervention, the identification of civic representative spaces, are some of the elements that contributed through time to set the basis for the 'bologna model' with its attention to urban and civic values.

Figure 8 - Heritage conservation as a collective value: the historic centre is a common and its conservation corresponds to a new urban policy centred on the "right to the city" (source: Comune di Bologna, 1974).

The narration of the plan became central to the process. The exhibition organized by P.L. Cervellati for the *Année Européenne du Patrimoine Architectural* (1975) was an example of the attempt to bring together different audience, practices and visions. Entitled "Knowledge and Consciousness of the City", the exhibition narrated the historical center as an expression of its inhabitants, different, multiple, but integrated into the urban space. The contribution of the public description of the plan, both in its definition and following its approval, led to the construction of the narrative of the Bologna model for planning, which somehow constitutes the immaterial legacy of the city.

The Plan for the Historical Centre paved the way to a fruitful season for planning in Bologna, where the historical center became a socio-urban laboratory of elaboration, proposal and verification of policies, directions and proposals of the "reformist planning" (Campos Venuti 1991), carried out using the Plan of the historical center as the experimentation context to test and prove its effectiveness. The Bologna model aimed to merge a long-term vision with immediate actions and decisions (Aavv. 2003). The "reformist" operation of Bologna has given rise to the new areas closest to the centre instead of the extreme periphery, using popular and economic building as a determining element of urban development, thus reversing the typical model of speculative expansion of cities. Promoted by Campos-Venuti with a group of professionals, implemented a strategy that was able to avoid a single-use use of parts of the city, for example thanks to the relationship with the university spread throughout the territory. The years of implementation of the urban Bolognese model, found a slow decline during the 80s when

the population started to reduce and either move towards the countryside or de-locate towards other small centres. Those years saw on the other hand, the stabilisation of the decentralisation policies.

c) 1985-1998: decentralisation policy

The early 80s saw the momentum for the consolidation of the policies on de-centralisation. The public administration materialised the attempts to keep together the *urbs* and *civitas*, the development and maintenance of the material city with that of the civic conscience (Farinelli, 2014), with a reorganization of services, de-located as urban units in the neighbourhoods. As Farinelli states, the de-centralisation policy was "conceived as a proactive "function of democratic citizenship", […] capable of fostering the overall social emancipation of all the subjects, even those apparently excluded by the single service provision" (*ibid.*). In the words of Dente and Regonini, the decentralisation was "…an adaptive reaction to the changing relationship between the political administrative system and its citizens to maximize consensus […] the main function of the neighbourhood councils has been to increase the legitimacy of the system by smoothing the policy process" (Dente and Regonini 1980). In these interpretations, emerges the political nature of the neighbourhood as outposts of the municipality, interpreted both in the attempt of the institutions to govern proximity and therefore to widen the value produced locally also to categories normally not involved in political life; both in the role of the neighbourhoods as antennas and echoes of the central policies, direct contact points with the citizens, also representing propaganda locations to widen the political consensus. The reflection on decentralization and the birth of the neighbourhoods went in this direction, by consolidating the participation of the inhabitants in common life.

The decision-making powers attributed to the Neighbourhoods aimed at:

- local investments: direct management of financial resources for investments in the neighbourhoods;
- neighbourhood team: management of the personnel necessary for neighbourhood services and activities;
- community care: strengthening of social networks as a new approach to develop local responses;
- care of the territory: definition of maintenance priorities and investments, declined around the needs expressed by the territory, with the support of the municipal departments and sectors concerned.

The directional decentralization foresaw the decision to move the Fair District out of the city centre, allowing on the one hand to strengthen the symbolic value of the centre, while guaranteeing proximity services in the peripheries. At metropolitan level, the policy of decentralization, administrated together the action of the 15 municipalities, with Bologna as the capital, planning at the same level the territorial structure of the largest municipality and that of the small ones. This has allowed a balanced growth over the entire area in the attempt to avoid greater speculation, applying in the periphery the same policy started in the centre, offering services and a share of social housing also in small municipalities.

Focusing on Bologna, the decentralisation, together with the acquisition of areas at low costs, paved the way for the widespread diffusion of services, a policy that proved to be effective for developing a spatial and social proximity condition in the city. The widespread diffusion of services, first concentrated in a few areas of the city, together with the location of the popular and economic districts, was the hallmark of Bologna's reformist urbanism. In 1985, the new "Decentralisation and Participation Regulation" was approved, putting forward the participation

of citizens in city life through the places designated in each neighbourhood, which left in the Bolognese model both the sign of fragmentation and that of innovation (Bifulco 2015). The nine larger new neighbourhoods thus received wider powers and new delegation[5], taking the form of institutional decentralisation districts with autonomous popular legitimacy and responsible for the management of important areas, including the direct management of financial resources for investment and the management of assets for activities delegated to the neighbourhood, such as the green areas. These elements seem to have contributed in creating a distribute quality rather than a centralisation and action capacity in the Bologna area, which the city has benefited greatly, from all social layers.

On a planning level, in the same years G. Campo Venuti drafted the General Urban Plan for the city. The Plan, tried to put forward and renew its cultural tradition as territorial planning reference model, by promoting a strategy focused more on transformation rather that expansion of the city. It identified the areas of "interstitial transformation", which played a pivoting role in the construction of the planned urban structure, to create urban and architectural configurations that can be recognised as a reference urban structure. The plan provided a coordination tool (*Disegno Urbano Concertato*) resulting from the debate between the system of public decision-makers and private operators.

On an administrative level, Bologna witnessed the emergence of the necessity to connect, not only on spatial basis but in a more direct and disintermediate way. This brought to the rise of the civic network Iperbole (Internet PER BOlogna e L'Emilia romagna IPERBOLE) in 1995, the first italian civic network and the 2nd in Europe. The civic nets are promoted by the Administrations to provide a virtual environment that aims to promote and encourage communication, cooperation, exchange, provision of services between citizens and all those who make up a local community and, at the same time, open the local community to communication via network with the rest of the world. Iperbole offered to the citizens of Bologna the free activation of an e-mail address and the service of connection to the Internet.

The civic net aimed at fostering communication, cooperation, exchange, ease the provision of services and reduce the 'space' between inhabitants and the institutions. This approach was successful, with 13,000 visits per day and information from 490 associations, 113 public administrations and 39 municipalities (Biblioteche oggi, 1998), so that it moved the interactive space from the digital to the spatial dimension, providing a spatial structure, EBo (2003), later Urban Center, which role was to shorten the hiatus between institutions and citizens. The efficiency of this node of interaction was tested in the process of construction of the new planning tools, following the Regional Law 20/2000.

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[5] *Quartieri 2.0 – Progetto di riforma del decentramento, del ruolo e delle funzioni dei Quartieri*", Department of Decentralisation of the Municipality of Bologna on 25 May 2015

d) 1998-2008: PSC

Since 2000, the region Emilia Romagna has adopted a new planning law (the Regional Planning Act 20/2000) that made a clear distinction between structure and operative plans. In the early 2000s, the Municipality of Bologna renewed its urban planning tools, engaging in the definition of the PSC - Municipal Structural Plan (2007) and the RUE - Urban Building Regulations (2009), which were followed by the three thematic Municipal Operative Plans, the executive level of the new system of planning, dedicated respectively to "Diffuse Urban Qualification" (2015), "Regeneration of Public Heritage" (2016) and "Equipment and Unhealthy Industries" (2016). In the same years, the first Urban Center (first EBo – Bologna Exposition, 2003) was born and was immediately in charge of the first experimentations in neighbourhood laboratories. The 2000s were the years when urban centres were emerging as public and public-private structures operating in the field of urban policies, with the main objectives of informing and encouraging, also through innovative ways of representation, the dissemination among citizens of urban policies and the results in terms of achievements, primarily of the public administration. Urban Center was also the intermediary that put in place the consultations with the vast groups of stakeholders of the city, prior to the development of the new urban planning tools.

Figure 9 - the former Urban Center, Ebo located in Re Enzo square. Source: La Repubblica 2003

From 2004 to 2009, the administration chose to pursue an approach that would enhance and reach out synergies with local institutions, economic and social actors and citizens, to improve the contents of structural and urban planning, activating numerous initiatives both at the level of the district and the city (Ginocchini, 2009). This work was led by the newly born institution, Urban Center Bologna (UCB), at the time a permanent exhibition located in the city centre. In 2005, the making of the new PSC entered a new phase: the administration opened a public dialogue to discuss many of the regeneration projects to be included in the new plan. UCB acquired the new mission to promote, by providing adequate information and stimulating the participation of citizens, the urban, architectural, infrastructural and environmental projects of Bologna and in general any public or private initiative designed to qualify and improve the metropolitan area of the city. With its new location in the *Sala Borsa* library, it was the "first access point" (Barbi and Ginocchini 2019) to inform about the ongoing projects of the city but also a disseminated outpost to involve the inhabitants in a concrete and active dialogue in the neighbourhoods, especially through neighbourhood labs.

Figure 10 - the location of Urban Center from 2008 to 2017, in Sala Borsa library. Source: Iperbole Comune di Bologna

UCB started to work closely with the administration by acting as its interface in the neighbourhoods, this activity materialised in the "voluntary action" (Ginocchini 2008) of the neighbourhood laboratories, six experiences that aimed at building a stable dialogue in specific parts of the city, to orient the ongoing planning process. The laboratories were: Laboratorio Mercato, set in the former area of the fruit and vegetable market in Bolognina; *Laboratorio Via Larga*, *Laboratorio San Donnino Laboratorio Villa Bernaroli*: for the design of the guidelines for new parks; *Laboratorio Croce del Biacco* and *Laboratorio Bolognina Est*: a new co-designed masterplan to be implemented in the Operative Guidelines of the PSC. The neighbourhood labs have contributed to "increase the effectiveness of public action on the ground, promoting a broader governance" (Evangelisti 2009). The workshops on the places started in parallel with the thematic discussion spaces. The Forum *Bologna città che cambia* of 2005 built specialized working tables, leading on the one hand to the establishment of transversal alliances with stakeholders of the territory, and on the other to the integration in the planning tools of reflections and clarifications emerged from the discussion tables. UCB was in charge of the organisation of the discussion Forum that saw the participation of 153 associations and 260 individuals that took part in 10 meetings of thematic working groups, 6 plenary sessions and 2 walks in the neighbourhoods.

The consultations, laboratories and stable dialogue, produced a large number of contents and externalities to be considered by the future PSC. These insights though necessitated still of a general framework to be made coherent in an organised spatial and normative apparatus. Therefore, the PSC of Bologna, under the scientific advice and guide of Patrizia Gabellini of the Polytechnic of Milan, divided the city vision into one comprehensive strategies, called 'seven cities' a project-oriented approach for the following 'cities': the Railway City, the By-pass road, the Hills, the River Reno, the River Savena, the Western Via Emilia, and the Eastern Via Emilia (Gabellini 2011). Each city is an 'interpretive description' an 'operational stratagem' (*ibid.*) to aggregate, coordinate and communicate a planning strategy for Bologna. For each sub-city, the plan defined critical issues and guidelines for appropriate planning interventions, a set of urban development projects that were in standby or emerging in given places, and essential design guidelines for important place-making activities (Gabellini 2008). According to the planners "it was a short, descriptive way of expressing the joint presence of very different living conditions that involve different populations, bringing together urban forms that function in different ways, of greater or lesser complexity, introverted and extroverted, forming part of networks of varying dimensions". Each 'city' was addressed through a specific strategy aimed primarily at strengthening the relationships between inhabitants and space, selecting, organising, and evolving towards a certain degree all the fragmented ideas and suggestions, now portrayed into clear guidelines and spatial regulations (Palermo and Ponzini 2014). For each of the 'cities' an analysis of current investments and initiatives was developed, highlighting potential and critical areas and potential projects, evaluating

their feasibility or degree of completion (Ginocchini and Manaresi, 2007). The image of the cities served for the purpose to guide and define a shared understanding in order to detail and fine-tune the actions and operation in a collaborative way. The PSC adopted in 2008 (Municipality of Bologna 2009) was the first step in a process of rethinking, in form and content, of the objectives and instruments of urban development for the near future. Therefore, rather than governing the expansion of a new city, the plan focused on the observation of the existing city, its fragility and its needs. The plan "did not involve the territory in a uniform manner, but concentrated and diversified interventions" (Gabellini 2011) in specific areas where the density of different 'publics', of social practices and coexistence of urbanity put them forward as crucial experimental areas.

The Operational Plan (POC), the executive level of the new planning system, has become the first and most immediate address for intervention in the city. It has provided a list of more than two hundred interventions on the city, from the renovation of sidewalks to the restoration of public spaces. Together with the redefinition of the planning guidelines, the main body of urban planning and building regulations (RUE - *Regolamento Urbanistico Edilizio*) has also been updated. The RUE has also introduced the possibility of placing "temporary use" initiatives (Municipality of Bologna 2015) in every area of the city without being subject to other form of planning.
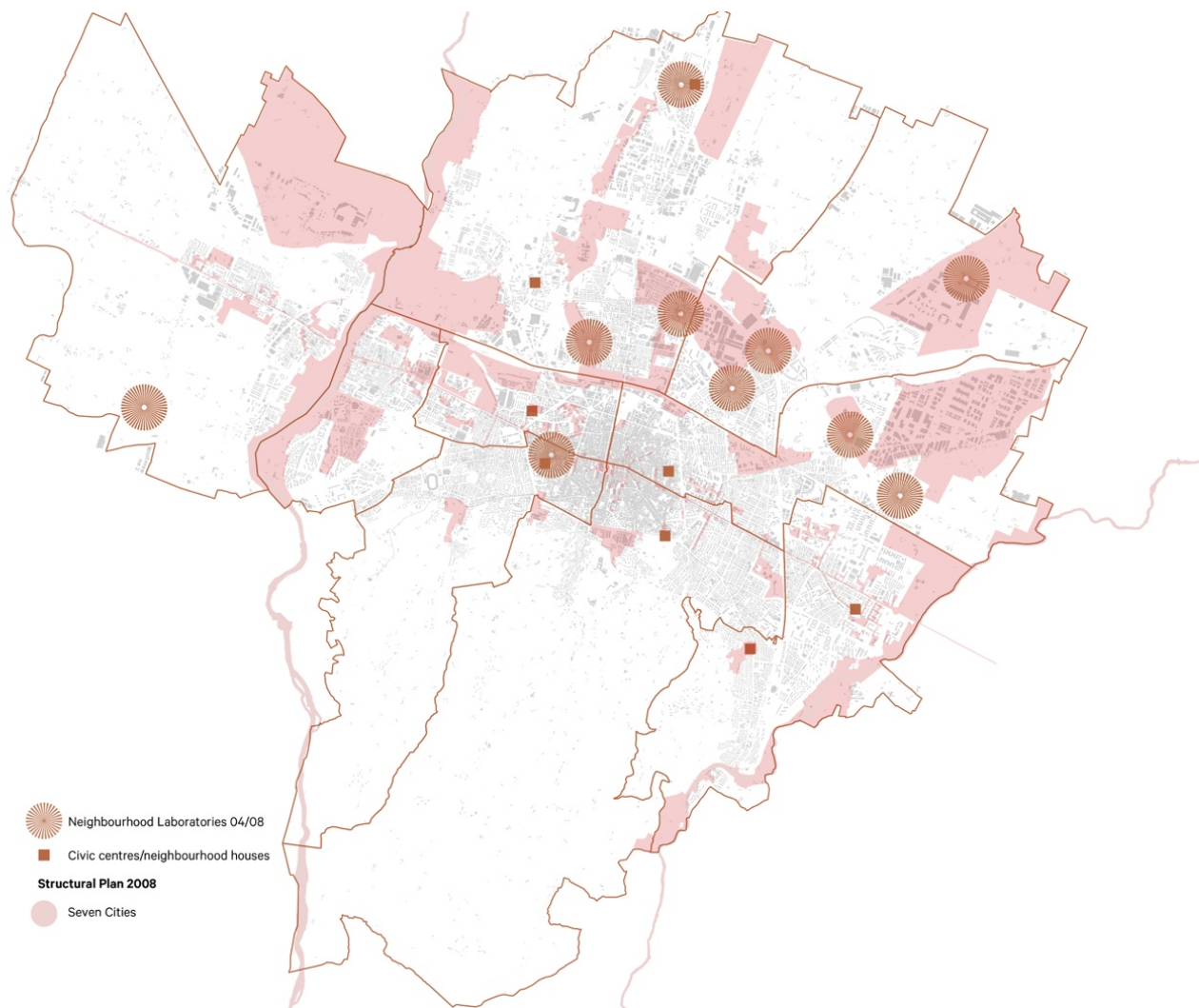

Figure 11 - map of Neighbourhood Laboratories and PSC strategies. Source: the author

What seems interesting in the definition of the Bologna planning tools, is not so much the effect produced on the city (slowed down by the subsequent years of national structural crisis and local politics), but the process that underlies its concretization. In Bologna, like in other European cities, regulations and planning tools are looking at new actors, different from the traditional ones and which are not seen as obstacles to the transformation of space, but instead as resources. Through neighbourhood workshops, the operational capacity of the social infrastructures built and reinforced in previous years is tested and put to work. Specific places therefore, are no longer just arenas of discussion and complaint, nor outposts of political propaganda, but operational places that, starting from space, build ideas and proposals to be linked to the long-term vision of the plan. It is still a process mainly driven by the institution and the political vision, which however begins to open spaces and windows of dialogue and opportunities with the growing projects underway in the city.

Nevertheless, the approach that characterized urban development in Bologna during the 2000s became less effective and sustainable in the years after the 2008 European economic crisis, due to economic uncertainties, political standstill, lack of resources and trust in politics introducing changes in priorities and aptitudes of both the inhabitants and the institutions.

e) 2008-2015: environmental voluntary plans

Since 2010, Bologna has experienced a change of approach in order to face the reduction of public resources and the temporary settle of the construction market. Therefore, urban development was oriented more towards small-scale intervention, urban regeneration and short and medium term investments allowing to fine-tune the policy framework for the post-crisis approach.

In 2006, Bologna's adherence to the Aalborg commitments for the implementation of Local Agenda 21 intersected the collaboration and engagement policies, with the framework of sustainable development in the local administrative sphere, within which different tools and actions were put in place. In 2008, Bologna joined the Covenant of Mayors, an initiative of the European Commission that calls cities to address climate change issues through the implementation of local policies on sustainable energy. Following the Covenant, the Municipality undertakes the commitment to prepare a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) for the definition of measures and policies to be developed to achieve the European sustainable objectives. It is a voluntary plan, whose assumptions are based on collaboration between actors, local stakeholders and urban planning, in synergy with future orientations and results defined by the Municipal Energy Plan. The approval of the SEAP in 2012, framed in a single instrument, a series of actions on energy efficiency and emission reduction, through interventions on different sectors, defined after a process of sharing and co-planning with local stakeholders (Fair, Bologna Airport). Collaboration in the SEAP process was achieved through a Forum, and the definition of a Memorandum of Understanding for its implementation. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Municipality and local stakeholders provides for a formal commitment and sharing of objectives for the implementation and monitoring of SEAP actions, with 2020 as a deadline.

In 2015, following the new Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, Bologna equipped with another voluntary instrument, the Local Climate Change Adaptation Plan (Fini et al. 2016). The Plan defines strategies and objectives starting from the current climate situation and prescribes the actions necessary to achieve them, distinguishing the

cases in which the responsibility for the implementation of the actions is shared between local stakeholders and the Municipality. The Adaptation Plan has dialogued with urban planning, leading to the progressive adaptation of existing planning tools, in which it transfers some environmental measures and makes them applicable. The plan aims to keep together in a single framework information on environmental data, increasing awareness and change towards responsible behaviour, support the implementation of actions, communication and exchange of knowledge generated. The collaborative logic extends to the interaction not only between private and public actors, but between the planning tools, integrating the endowment of mandatory and voluntary plans in a shared logic of development of the resilient city. The methodology used in the definition of the Adaptation Plan, seems to find in the double action of involving the main stakeholders and translating the process into concrete actions that can be monitored, its elements of innovation for the definition of a new urban model in Bologna.

Voluntary tools on environmental issues have given substance to the vision of Bologna as a Resilient City, which has found strength both in the innovative tools put in place by the administration and in the set of experiments and designs that have consolidated the contents. It can be observed that social innovation is also an explicit theme in this sector plans, declined as the ability to create new structures of governance on global issues with strong local implications. Environmental Action Plans are also paradigmatic in considering the ongoing projects in the territory, as allies in the implementation of the plan actions. The city of Bologna is currently engaged in the launch of a new activity of general planning, to adapt the urban planning tools to the Regional Law 24/2017, proposing to address for the first time in an integrated planning tool, explicit measures for talking climate change and societal issues. With the formation of the General Urban Plan, the path of the environmental Action Plans and that of the urban planning is definitively merging, and this calls for a strong integration of skills, reinforcing the narrative framework of the collaborative city.

f) 2014-2016: "collaboration as a method"

Since 2014, the City of Bologna began to intercept social innovation via structured participation activities, as a stable tool to "improve the contents of city planning, both at district and city level" (Ginocchini, 2009). To respond to the lowered trust determined by the financial crisis, the city decided to focus more on seeking the active involvement of citizens by focusing on urban proximity and services, local relations, everyday use of public spaces, services and the regulation and management of urban common goods, to define and implement policies and interventions with short and medium term investments. The decrease in public resources and action, has led, like in many cities also Bologna to the creation of new processes of self-organization and active citizenship, developed in the wake of the cooperative tradition above mentioned. The production of proximity services, the care of the public space, the management of common goods, forms of local economic development based on the sharing of resources and on cooperation, started reconfiguring both the mechanism of construction of places and the organization of social relations and local services. This set the basis for a collaborative model that, as indicated in the new Urban Innovation Plan (2016), aims at create stable opportunities for active communities to interact on environmental and social issues applied to the urban context, in the logic of informing urban planning and trigger innovation oriented towards new institutional arrangements (Ostanel 2017). Collaboration is one of the variables of open government policies (De Blasio and Selva 2016) and follows three principles and directions: horizontal

multi-stakeholder procedures at community level; transversal policies at institutional levels; circular subsidiarity, with public-private-people partnerships, at the intermediate level.

Following the tradition of cooperation and subsidiarity proper of the city institutional arrangements and regulations, Bologna adopted a strategy that led to the approval of the Regulation for the Regeneration and Care of the Urban Commons. The Regulation (Ostanel 2017; Foster and Iaione 2016, Bianchi 2018) is the tool adopted by the municipality to provide a framework for the different occasions when the municipality and citizens ally to share the responsibility to care for and regenerate the city. It is a measure that legitimises dialogue and exchange relations between the public and citizens. The regulation provides for the application of the principle of subsidiarity in line with the art.118 of the Constitution, to support and enhance the independent initiative of citizens, individuals or associates. It is the framework for the management of all collaborative projects, in which the citizen, both as an individual and through the intermediate bodies, has the opportunity to cooperate with institutions defining and managing interventions to tackle their nearby social context. The operational tool it provides is the "pact of collaboration", through which are defined the object of the intervention, the modalities and the forms of support that authorizes citizens to deal first-hand with specific aspects of care of parts of the city, establishing mutual rights and duties. Each proposal can be managed by going beyond the traditional bureaucratic approach, through an agreement between public administration and citizens for the care of the following goods:

- material (e.g. streets, squares, arcades, flowerbeds, parks and green areas, school areas, buildings...);
- immaterial (e.g. inclusion and social cohesion, education, training, culture, awareness raising civic, environmental sustainability, reuse and sharing...);
- digital (e.g. sites, applications, social, literacy, computer science...).

The "pacts" do not discipline nor govern maintenance but regard more the care and the partial assumption of responsibility, which leads to the creation of trust. A new vision of classic participation is therefore experimented, based on co-production as the voluntary involvement of citizens in public service production and delivery (Osborne et al. 2016) changing the institutional structures and administrative arrangements of the municipality. More than 500 "pacts" has been signed in the city, dealing with a large frame of topics, from education, to environment, to maintenance of green spaces and orchards. The "Commons" regulation was successful especially thanks to the occasion it created for energies to be liberated from schemes, frameworks and bureaucratic boundaries, while at the same time being aggregated to it.

The approval of the Regulation set a milestone for the city, as it established a good practice that, unlike other 'models' put in place in Bologna over the years, has been able to be adapted and replicated by other Italian cities[6]. Also in the academic field, the Regulation has reached such a level of study and dissemination[7] as to bring Bologna back to the forefront as a model of administrative management. Nevertheless, after five years of implementation some insights and criticalities can be highlighted, based on the published support material of the "pacts", reports[8] and interviews with some of the promoters of the Regulation. It emerges the necessity of such a disintermediation

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[6] More than 170 municipalities signed the Regulation in Italy (Giglioni 2017)

[7] On Google Scholar, the publication citing "The Regulation for Urban Commons Bologna", are 19.500, only in Italy. Source: Google Scholar.

[8] Pais, I., de Nictolis, E. and Bolis, M., Evaluation of the Pacts of Collaboration Approved through the Regulation for Collaboration between Citizens and the Administration for the Care and Regeneration of the Urban Commons. Empirical Evidences from the Case of Bologna (September 1, 2017). Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3137002or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3137002

tool, to regulate unusual arrangements between public administration and the active private (association, third sectors, social enterprises), but what is highlighted, is that most of the pacts are signed by private citizens and are "mono-stakeholders" (Pais et al. 2017). This aspect responds to the principle of the Regulation, to regulate subsidiarity, but conflicts with the hypothesis of extending it and creating stable collaborations between stakeholders, which ensure growth and upscale of individual proposals. Furthermore, what emerge is a rich framework of initiatives, which nevertheless are largely based on existing and ongoing actions, which have thus been stabilized and recognized by the "pact", but do not extend the range of initiatives and do not create networks or new alliances to strengthen projects or propose new ideas. This figure seems to indicate a lack of attitude from the participants to put together their project efforts in a synergistic proposal. In any case, it remains evident that the mere existence of the Regulation is not enough an incentive to strengthen alliances, create interest in a transversal and multi-sectoral way and thus create collaboration. Moreover, with respect to social innovation, the evidence of the stipulated agreements does not contribute to the creation of agency, especially because it mostly contributes to strengthening existing experiences that already act on the territory. Finally, from the observation and reading of the types of proposals, there is an absolute majority of micro-actions proposed for the care of public spaces, which require fewer actors involved and less complex partnerships. The Regulation for the Urban Commons and the pacts of collaboration are therefore mostly dealing with everyday care of the city, short-term, linear interventions, which does not necessarily entails a large partnership to materialize. In this sense, the role of the Neighbourhood seems to be one to not only guide and provide a normative framework for the pacts, but to engage in the process of design and of awareness-raising prior to the sign of the "pacts".
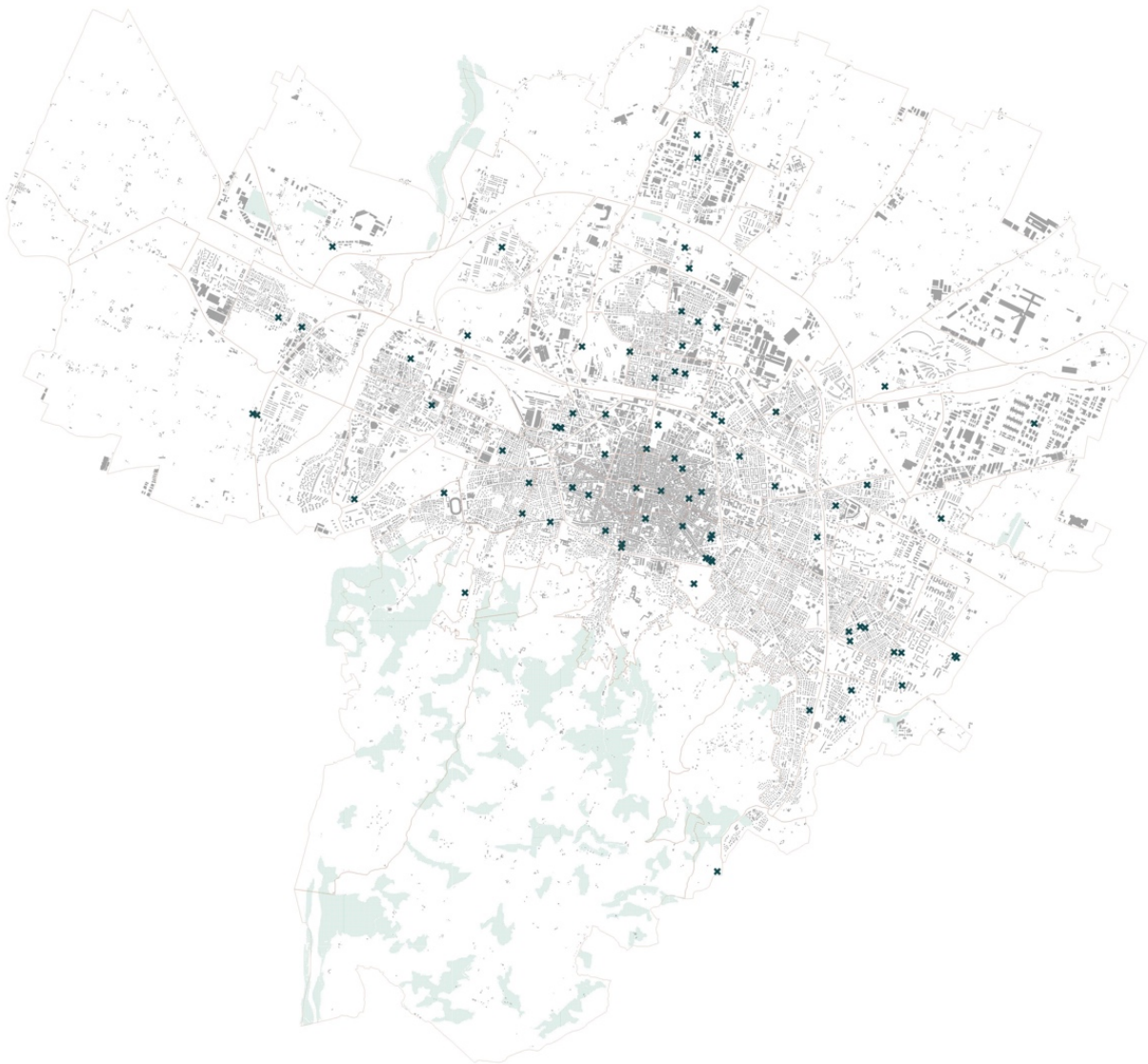
Figure 12 - distribution of collaboration pacts in the year 2018. Source: the author

This consideration was partially addressed in 2015, when the reform of the Neighbourhoods was approved. In addition to having a territorial impact, the reform has paved the way for a new role for the Neighbourhoods, whose new mission is the care of the community and the territory. In this context, the Neighbourhoods become guarantors of participation and the promoters of active citizenship and shared administration. A role that they must play with a proactive attitude, releasing some power to support the leadership of citizens with skills and solutions but also guiding the processes and monitoring the results. In this regard, with the reform, some articles of the Municipal Statute dedicated to civic collaboration and Participatory Budgeting have been adapted. Based on the new system of decentralization of the administration, the municipal policy "Collaborare è Bologna" translates from 2015 into the first concrete actions of collaboration. The policy provided a structured process where local communities interacted in specific locations in the six neighbourhoods, in order to try out the new tool provided by the Regulation for Collaboration. The main aim, was for the municipality to define a framework (of norms and tools) to be able to govern the production of public value in social innovation practices.

This narration has further being reinforced by some aggregating tools, such as the social network "Comunità", the first civic social network ever tested, where citizens are encouraged to share, discuss and produce new collaborations, and where all collaborative projects are mapped and made available. Additionally, the tender "IncrediBOL!" promotes entrepreneurial projects in the cultural sector and creative professions, giving finalcial aids to a large number of cultural and creative projects in the city.

The effectiveness of the strategic choices of this vision passes through forms of democratic co-management (Allegretti and Herzberg 2004) of public resources, including the Participatory Budget (PB). PB in Bologna has been experimented since 2017. It entails the direct management of a portion of the municipal budget by the citizens, to finance a series of projects organized in different neighborhoods, previously defined through a path of co-planning on a territorial scale. The process foresees the direct selection of the co-designed proposals through an online voting, from which priority projects are elected to be realised in the following year. In 2017, the amount of one million euros of the municipal budget, has been set aside for 2018 and 2019 to be allocated to the Participatory Budget, while for 2020 the figure has been doubled. The process, saw more than 1,800 citizens participating in the co-planning events in both editions and respectively 14,584 and 16,348 people voting on-line for the realisation of the projects at neighbourhood level.

g) 2016-today: from collaboration to place-led development

In the first years of experimentation, the collaborative policies have led to the consolidation and up-scaling of episodic initiatives evolved towards a relevant degree of economic sustainability, which allow them to consolidate and plan their long-term action. Social innovation in Bologna then has grown to overcome the mere subsidiarity logic: local engagement, entrepreneurial skills and the use of local knowledge, are new values that are being created thanks to the opportunity for different stakeholders to interact in specific places. This strategy aims at reinforcing the proximity and proposing the diffuse quality of the city as an internationally competitive value. The current policies of the city are gaining international success and are largely studied because of their ability to stress the topic of collaboration among planners, professionals, cognitive institutions, practitioners, city users.

Different initiatives in urban policies and planning in the last years (2016-2019) are directed towards reconfiguring this tradition. The Urban Innovation Plan is the last device that Bologna has voluntarily adopted, a discursive framework that encourages co-design processes aimed at connecting the vision and proposals of the public administration with the potential arising from the commitment of citizens. The Plan is conceived as a set of tangible and intangible actions, with a first deadline in 2021, having as a main goal the widespread diffusion of opportunities, instruments, resources, spaces and competences towards the protection of urban commons. It started in 2017 to foster social innovation with dedicated facilities, through the Neighborhood Laboratories, collaboration centers and spaces for relations and interaction between urban intermediaries, institutions and groups of citizens that intend to activate and manage stable collaborative processes useful for mapping, listening, consulting, co-designing, reporting and measuring what is happening in the neighborhoods of Bologna.

Starting from Neighbourhood Labs in the city's quarter, new contract models for Commoning are aimed to support citizens' engagement and sharing initiatives, participatory budgets, and a diligent use of digital and analogic communication and interaction between citizens and city government.

The process of the '*Laboratori di Quartiere*' enhances innovation at institutional level promoting specific nodes of interaction, new forms of urban co-production, engagement and stable cooperation between social innovation practices. The Laboratories are growing to become flexible outpost for the public institution in specific neighborhoods, building stable local processes to enable innovation and mutual learning. This strategy, promoted by the municipality, can be put side by side with the activities promoted by specific places in Bologna, innovation spanners and useful bridges for social innovation in urban policies and planning.

Bologna is creating and enhancing a backbone structure in the urban fabric, where new 'hotspots' spur social innovation as a main externality within the regeneration strategies of the cities. From an individualistic conception (creative genius), the city is moving towards the vision of collective and widespread innovation in which the presence of real relational and co-innovating intermediate places becomes crucial in pursuing authentic quality ecosystems within the whole urban and metropolitan context. The attention to the city transformation's routines built with a participatory approach though, presents both risks and opportunities.

On the one hand, one risk is generated by the conflict of the practices with the constraints of the urban scale and a large framework of norms, sometimes inaccessible or unreadable by local processes (Leoni 2017). Furthermore, the sphere of their autonomy (Palermo and Ponzini 2014), the possibility to out and deep-scale (Moore and Riddel 2015) is often reduced, relegating their influence in circumscribed interest (Brenner and Theodore 2002) and limited impact, while the key issues are determined by decisions made on the highest government levels or by external forces (Swyngedouw et al., 2002). A further risk is that the rhetoric of social innovation becomes a pretense (Palermo and Ponzini 2010) for avoiding difficulties and simplifying solutions, hence social innovations could be understood as acceptable forms of retraction of the governments in public service delivery (Manzini 2017) instead of supplementary resources, rising controversies in the relationship with traditional economy sectors. The public actor could therefore represent at the same time an obstacle, the mediator or the interaction platform driver in the innovation framework. In Bologna's case the pro-active strategy is played with different potentialities. The city is addressing these questions with a strong focus on the role of places as interaction nodes that can make the difference in terms of rapidity, skill and opportunity development for micro practices, in both short and long distances networks, using contiguity mechanisms fostered by institutional devices.

As many scholars argued (Crosta 1990, Habraken 2000), urban user-oriented transformations are considered effective when generated as positive externalities of interaction between subjects. If intermediate places can be deemed as valuable sources of interaction, the open issue is to pave the way towards a more structured role of these places in bridging innovation from social practices to institutional policies. In the hiatus between State and citizenship these experiences are to be seen as means to shorten the distance: they act as autonomous regenerative systems capable of creating new civic values. The effectiveness of these nodes at urban and territorial scale is related to an institutional innovation (Garud et. al. 2007) vision that fosters the production of open knowledge and provides valid exchange frameworks between different value systems. Within the different roles assumed by the public governments, universities, enterprises, non-profit organizations and other stakeholders, the emerging paradigm seems to be the hybridisation of models and the flexible geometry governance of initiatives with changing roles for actors, called to be alternatively turbines, drivers, referees or simple players on the urban stage.

Current challenges for Bologna

As seen in the previous paragraphs, the long-term political framework in Bologna expresses a strong tradition of engaging with societal action through mostly citizen participation, which was built on more than sixty years of pioneering administrations (Ostanel 2017; Bianchi 2018) and decentralized administrative system. Recently, the approval of the Urban Innovation Plan, with horizon 2021, has defined a political enabling context that performs collaboration aimed at enabling specific places, considered potential capital to be released and distributed, in order to create opportunities for communities to interact and provide new services. The double focus on interaction and on specific urban nodes currently developed by the city, fits in the framework defined in the previous chapter, of the reduction of the gap between social innovation practices and planning through the enhancement of the value produced by intermediate places of interaction. In order to understand how the context of Bologna can be read to validate this hypothesis in policy and spatial terms, it is necessary to conclude the reconstruction of the background of planning and social innovation, by highlighting the current photography of the city, its issues and challenges.

In order to build a picture of the contemporary challenges of the city, which can find in the encounter between social innovation and planning a first resolution, some demographic data of the city have been analyzed in the first place. The study by Gianluigi Bovini (2017) from the Programming, Control and Statistics Area of the Municipality of Bologna on the fragility of the city, "Outskirts of Bologna: vulnerability and opportunities. A proposal for measurement for Italian cities" allows to read the current dynamics of transformation, at various levels, and to locate, understand and explain them in the light of the demographic composition of the city.
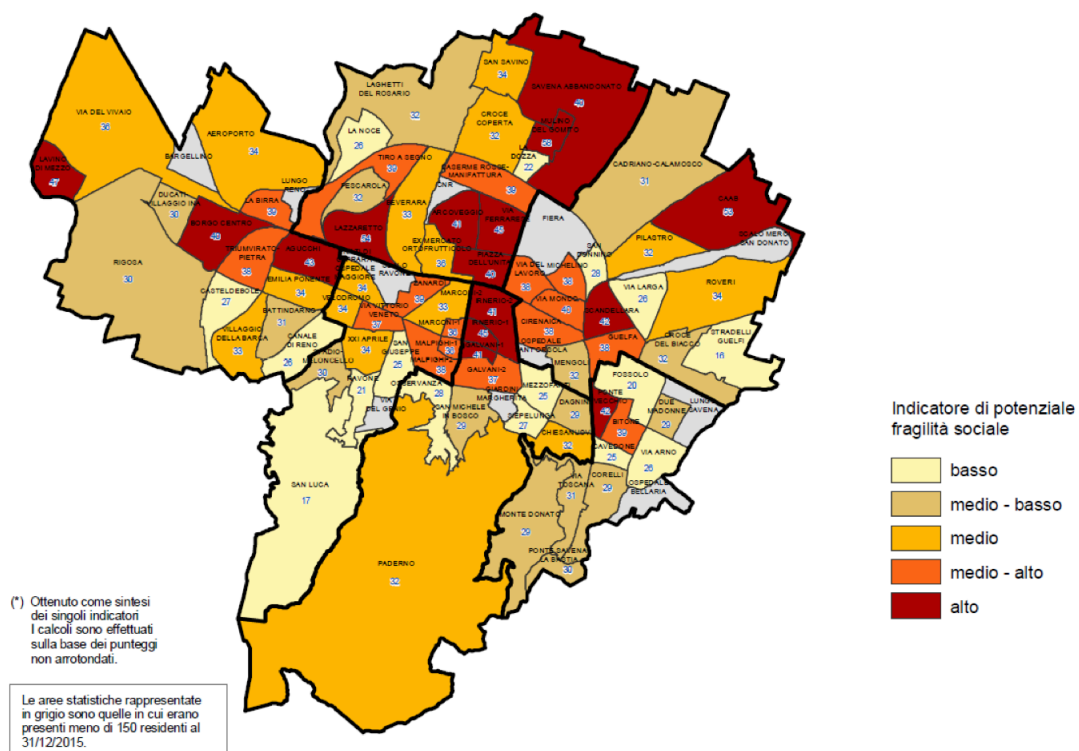

Figure 13 - map of potential social fragility. Indicator defined using the following variables: % of empty housing; % single-family nucleus; % graduated; % foreign population (between 0 and 19 years old); balance with communitarian and extra-communitarian population; natural balance population between 20 and 64 years old; old population (>65) living alone. Source: Area Programmazione, Controlli e Statistica Municipality of Bologna.
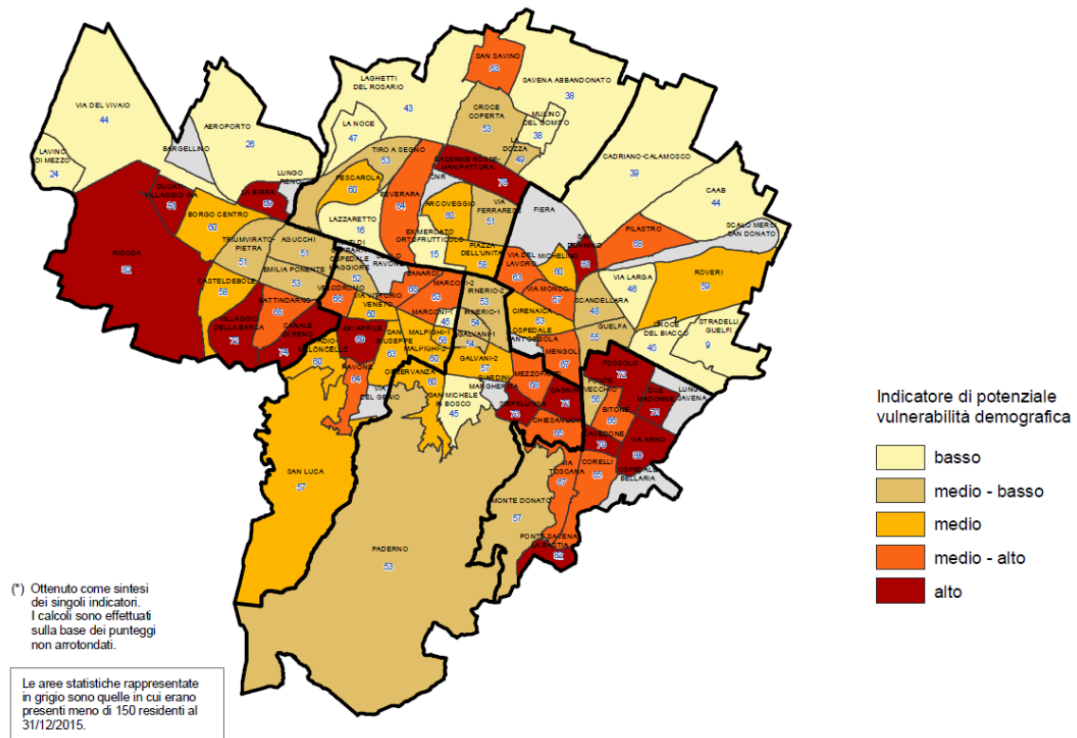
Figure 14 - map of potential demographic fragility. Indicator defined using the following variables: % in the resident population; average annual natural balance; % resident population aged 80 and over. Source: Area Programmazione, Controlli e Statistica Municipality of Bologna.
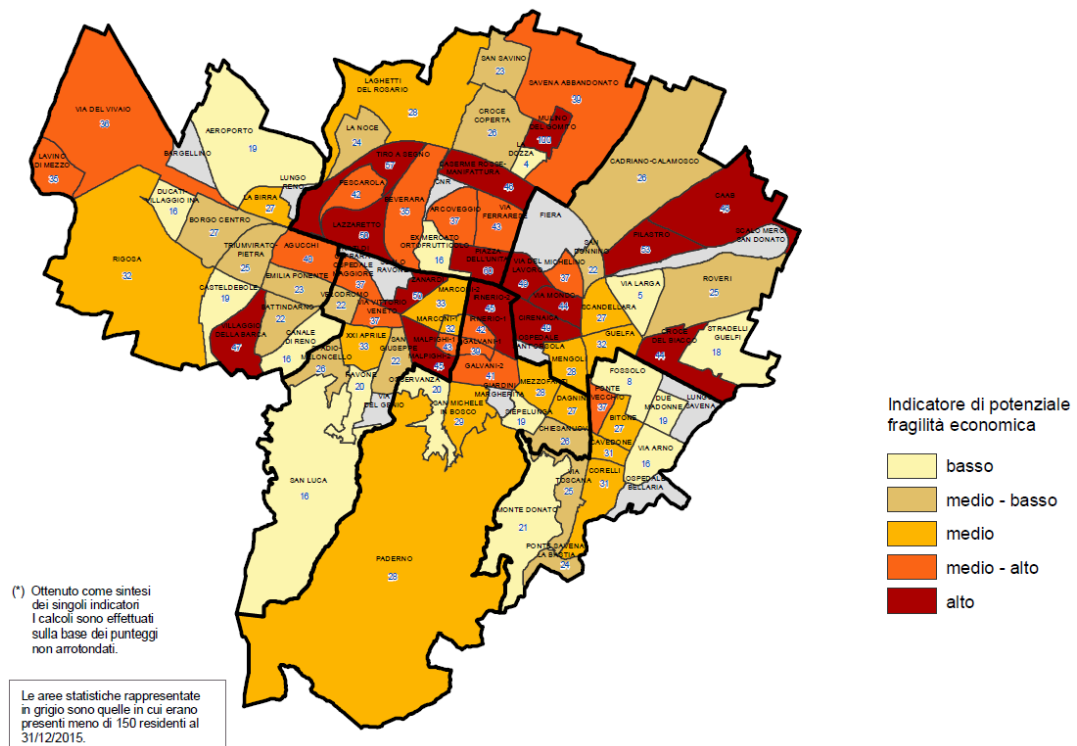

Figure 15 - map of potential economic fragility. Indicator defined using the following variables: % of rented occupied dwellings; % of taxpayers with an income of less than €11,746; % of households with an average income per capita equivalent of less than €12,338. Source: Area Programmazione, Controlli e Statistica Municipality of Bologna.

After years distinguished by a falling birth rate, aging population and a drop in the number of inhabitants, and despite the recent crisis, Bologna is currently witnessing a growth in its population and economy, increased in recent years by the emergence of the tourist phenomenon. The rapid change in the 'publics' of the city had profound impacts on its social and economic fabric: the additional segment of the tourism, connected to the development of the airport and the high-speed rail network, has on the one hand contributed in mitigating the effects of the 2008 crisis (Orioli 2019), on the other, has added a 'public' to the city users. The current socio-economic, and therefore urban, configuration of the city of Bologna has been strongly determined by the years of structural crisis and by the years immediately following the crisis. The economic stabilisation contributed to accelerate the recovery and the possibilities for the city to focus on the one hand on inclusion policies, on the other in the competitiveness at European and global level, in a multi-dimensional way.

Observing the maps of fragility, it is possible to define a partial picture of the contemporary societal framework of the inhabitants of the city. The natural balance is in line with national data and is strongly negative and destined to diminish. Residents in the city though (more than a third of the residents of the metropolitan city) have increased both in the short (+0.44%) and medium term (+4%) and are mostly women (53%). In this context, the data of the migratory presence, in constant growth, confirms the attractiveness and accessibility of Bologna especially for people coming from southern Italy and from European and non-European countries (almost 60,000 foreigners in the city). The incidence of foreigners in Bologna (15.4%) is higher than the average of the metropolitan city, as is the migration rate, equal to 8.4%. According to some scenarios the resident population will increase further (400,000 units in 2030) and with it the over-80s will increase, which could reach almost 41,000 by the beginning of 2030. The indicator of demographic fragility has higher values in the Borgo Panigale, Savena, San Donato-San Vitale districts and in some areas of the Navile, due to the higher presence of foreign population, old residents and single family nucleus. Despite the increase of the employment rate (71.7%, first in the ranking of large cities) with an unemployment of 5.2% and youth unemployment of 13.3%, Bologna is nevertheless witnessing an increase in the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, which, according to Eurostat indicators, represents 16% of the population. To these data is added the modification of family structures, the first form of support to social issues and the first support network. Families are increasingly changing towards an average of one-two components (single-person households is 51.6% of the total number of families residing in the city), in a framework that sees the needs of families increasingly shifted towards the care and assistance of children, adolescents, elderly people, what emerges is the absence of a support network, in a role that was traditionally played within the family. It therefore seems urgent to find different solutions to meet these basic needs and to ensure a renewed capacity for social cohesion. The response to this need should be able to be systemized with the intrinsic and documented capacity for reaction and innovation of the city to address some major challenges of the near future.

The data present also a radical reduction in public resources to deal with the crisis. In the administrative mandate 2011-2016, this decline was estimated at about 200 million euros (1/3 of the available resources). Despite the sharp decrease in resources, the local government has tried to keep together the reasons for social cohesion and economic development in a difficult financial and regulatory context. The data presented by the map on demographic, social and economic fragility show that social fragility is widespread in the city, not only concentrated in the geographical peripheries but to a certain extent is evident also in the historical centre. The historical centre in fact, shows a

migratory turnover of 15 thousand new residents each year, of which 9 thousand are Italians; 20% change in the population between 2012 and 2016 on an average in Bologna of 14.1%, the share of the elderly alone (about 33.8% on an average in Bologna of 30.4%), unoccupied housing (24.8% on a total average in Bologna of 11.6%) to show the spread, even in central areas, of social fragility (which is around 41.2%, identified as medium-high).

The data exposed, allows to frame the contemporaneity of Bologna: it appear to emerge a pattern showing a complex mix of small-scale simultaneities, a series of situations, formal and informal transformations, innovative episodes, which are counterbalanced and justified by large-scale socio-economic phenomena, the growth of immigrant population (15,4%), the growing touristification (3 mln/year), and emerging segregation. In the encounter of the two dimension lies different and conflicting temporalities and spatialities of urban interplay that can be seen to co-exist and collide. The simultaneous growth of residents and drop of natural balance shows, in line with other European cities, the stabilisation of migration as the contemporary form of city-making. At the same time, data show the ageing of the residents and the reduction of a support network, whether of family of friends. This framework seems to forecast a future living environment where individuality risk to tend towards isolation and the need to interact and exchange in the space is crucial.

In this sense, conviviality, sharing and producing value together (Sennett 2012) is an interesting output that would most likely emerges from actions of "social inclusion and cultural recognition". This is foreseen to materialises through the shared experience of action (working, living, participating, creating together), rather than through casual encounters in the public space. In this case, the shared experience would be mediate through voluntary and pro-active interaction in specific places, oriented not only towards socialisation but mostly towards the production of some sort of value from the collaboration. It seems important to promote diversity, rather than seeking unity or refining the boundaries of a single individualistic action. If innovation lies in interaction with people (and therefore it transforms into social innovation) then stimulating diversity and alternative to the mainstream, could increase the potential to create the discontinuous change needed to integrate urban planning and social innovation. The thesis' hypothesis is that this value should be recognised as key to tackle the future challenges and be aggregated in urban policies, therefore conviviality, encounter through interaction seems to need a new model to be encouraged.

The current planning framework of Bologna

The planning model of the Emilian post-war tradition and the positive specificity of the city of Bologna, paradigmatic in building moments of participatory government, is abandoned in the light of the inadequacy to interpret a systemic crisis of a regional order on the one hand, and the inevitable urban constraints of initiatives born in the local context, on the other. A review of the current planning/policy tools of Bologna, is helpful in framing the institutional context of action of the current dynamics of social innovation.

Civic Policies

Tools

- Regulation on Collaboration between Citizens and the City for the Care and Regeneration of Urban Commons
- Participatory Budget

Engagement processes

- Neighbourhood laboratories
- Thematic laboratories (air, spaces, PUMS, Under etc.)

URBAN INNOVATION PLAN

2017   2021

Bologna Urban Agenda

Urban and Territorial planning tools

Urban Regeneration

- **PSC, RUE**: Structural Plan and Urban Building Regulation
- **POC**: regeneration of public assets, widespread urban qualification, unhealthy equipment and industries
- **PUA**: Urban Action Plan
- **Metropolitan Agreements**: regeneration projects (Fair, Hospital, University, Railway station, F.I.C.O, Airport)

Climate Adaptation Mobility

- **PAES**: Action Plan for Sustainable Energy (voluntary)
- **BLUE AP**: Adaptation Plan to Climate Change (voluntary)
- **Metropolitan PUMS**: Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan
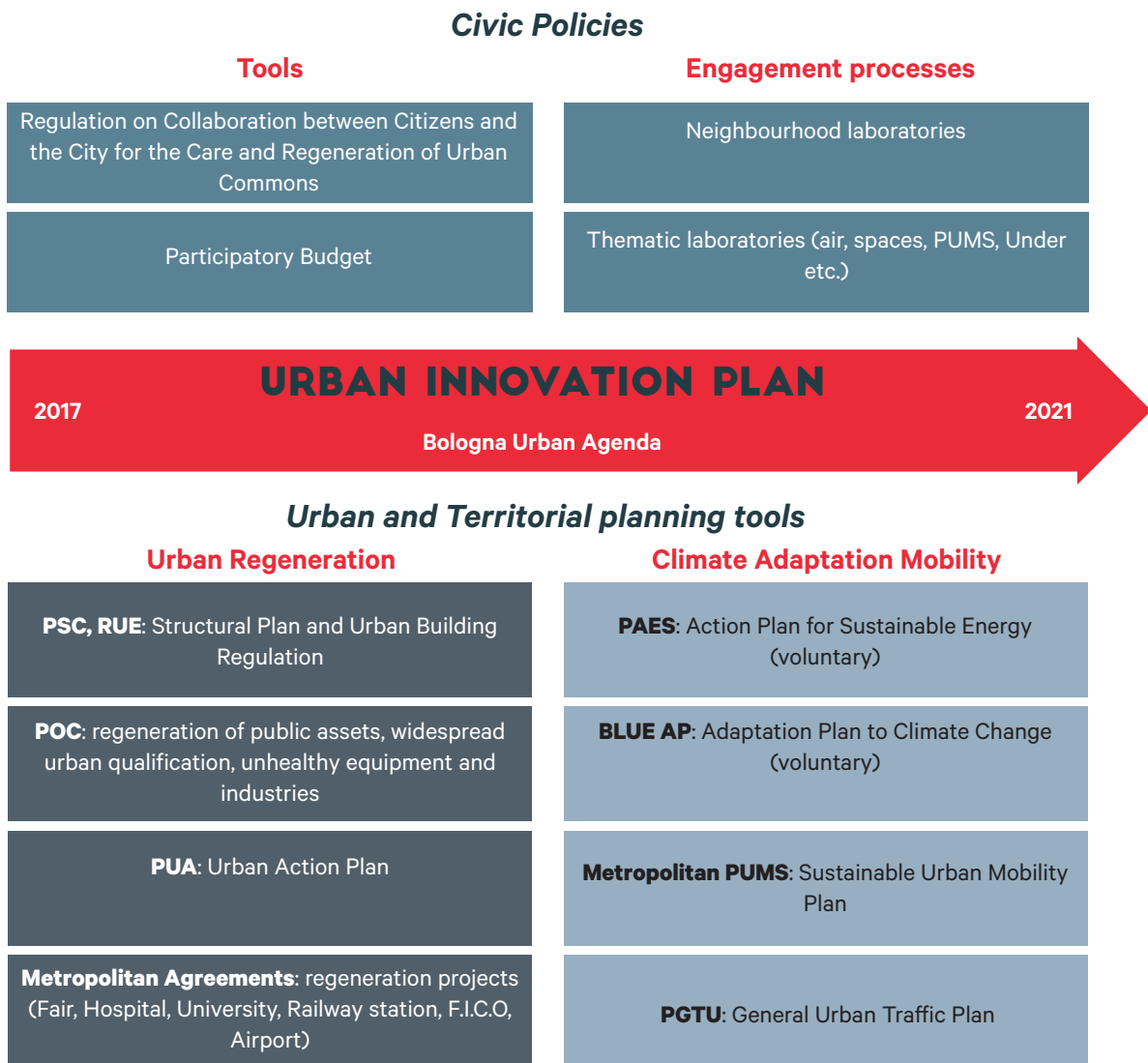- **PGTU**: General Urban Traffic Plan

Figure 16 - planning framework of Bologna. Source: the author.

The current planning framework of Bologna, presented in Figure 16, shows how mandatory planning tools (and specific urban regeneration masterplans), are part of a **non-hierarchical framework**, where social innovation enabling policies intertwine with environmental ones, with a transversal link given by the discursive backbone of the Urban Innovation Plan. In this framework, the Urban Innovation Plan is represented as a urban agenda that holds together the different planning, financial, governance tools, without having a real prescriptive power, rather a guidance and orientation one.

In its nature of crossroad-city that attracts, and polycentric city that distributes value, Bologna extends its influence far beyond the municipal territory and shows a potential functional urban region that transcends the urban scale. The introduction of the metropolitan city in 2014 has broadened the strategic vision scale in planning, but this has not yet been followed by an operative planning at metropolitan level, nor with an hypothesis of upscaling the urban approach to the metropolitan scale. Bologna seems to be the only metropolitan area with a real fabric of municipal associations on the surroundings of the city centre, constantly balanced between decentralization and centralization, which would greatly facilitate a government based on concentric agreements in a multi-scalar logic, which is the one successfully adopted in many European metropolitan contexts (e.g. Barcelona and Berlin). It is in this dimension that the Urban Innovation Plan, with its project-based aggregative structure, seems to play a role of directing and ordering fragmented experiences, which need to be systematized. The Urban Innovation Plan includes projects on the physical city and projects that affect the social fabric. it is therefore the place where the actions foreseen by the planning tools, available resources and ongoing projects, bottom-up initiatives and civic collaboration activities are narrated and linked.

In order to move towards the definition of an hypothesis for the encounter of social innovation and planning in the context of Bologna, some preliminary pattern – emergent from tracing in retrospect to investigate potential trajectories for innovations – are highlighted.

The first consideration entails the relationship between social innovation and the political, planning, economic, social context of its emergence. The tradition established in 60 years has allowed Bologna to **prepare the ground** for the issues posed by social innovation. Some **institutional remaining**, "leftovers" from previous administrations (such as decentralization policies, establishment of neighbourhoods, welfare policies) are still able to support social innovation in a stable way, without a specific political support or reference agenda, while new measures have been included to respond more urgently to contemporary issues of scale and more local impact (common goods regulation, neighbourhood laboratories). Nevertheless, the **positive narration and stable praxis** of the city government, risk yielding on the one hand to the logic of *laissez faire*, crossing the boundary of recognition and empowerment of practices, to the point of **delegating responsibilities** proper of the public actor to the private one. Moreover, in terms of narration and discourse, rediscovering 60 years old concepts, risks to run the risk of emptying them of their meaning or using them to cover some secondary agendas. On the other hand, in Bologna the **institution directly promotes and supervises** the processes of interaction with social innovation practices, building through the same public officials, **relationships of trust** that lead to exchange and mutual learning. The current approach, I argue, has been reinforced thanks to the political continuity of the public administration, with the mayor Merola in charge since 2012 and previously Deputy Mayor for Urban Planning. The political but also technical continuity has allowed a coordinated forecasting of mandatory and voluntary tools, carried out with similar approaches, i.e. the construction of stakeholder networks, the recognition of urban practices to be valorized and aggregated to the planning, the experimentation and prototyping of new solutions thanks to the creation of hybrid partnerships. Political and technical continuity and consolidated tradition are crucial factors for the creation of an enabling environment for the interaction of social innovation and planning, nevertheless from the analysis carried out, in recent years the consolidation of the individual initiatives appears to

reward more and more the **same actors or organized groups**. As visible in the map (Figure 17) of the intertwined action of planning and social innovation today, the current policies appears to provide a semantic frameworks supporting those initiatives that already have the means and skills to carry out projects, without triggering further innovation or expanding the pool of participants. This might tend to produces fragmentation and privatization (Ostanel 2017), transforming social innovation initiatives into "elitist spaces" and to the **commodification of space and citizen action**, where the **access is "controlled"** (Cognetti 2018) and the results do not produce extended value for the city. Therefore, co-production should be designed and organized, avoiding the tendency to narrow the process involving people already active in community towards eventually being able to support both formal and informal institutional change (Moulaert 2003, Garud et. al. 2007) and distribute its publicness and public value.

Figure 17 - Bologna contemporary enabling context for social innovation. Source: the author

On a spatial dimension, crucial "spaces of opportunity" where the challenges of the city seems to materialize, assess and orient, are the Neighborhood Labs, as experienced and lived spaces, valuable hubs to initiate and foster development in the urban districts; the Labs can represent convincing models of urban co-design intercepting active citizens and eventually aimed at fostering new expertise in urban design. These units could enhance the exploration of **concepts and models of co-production in specific contexts**, strengthening interactions between different publics and experts in setting up urban projects and looking at contextualization and replication in the upscaling of singular innovative projects (Brandsen et al. 2016). In the new regional horizon of the metropolitan

city, neighborhood might be "access points" (Ginocchini and Barbi 2019) and productive units of new forms of economic production, from where to strengthen the metropolitan cooperation, rediscovering the territorial spread values and the link among them. This logic the metropolitan vision, I argue, allow to move social innovation from clustering in autonomous individualities, into commoning, However, as seen for other European cases, the city should avoid the risk of commodification, emerged in certain area-based approaches, managed and controlled in business-like fashion, which produced a privatization of the urban space.

As shown by the multitude of tools and policies, Bologna have started to implement informal confrontation and collaboration moments that go further the typical forms of citizens' consultation, towards more active engagement forms such as public-private partnership, co-management of common goods (e.g. Regulation for collaboration of urban commons and Participatory Budget in Bologna), and thematic urban/neighbourhood laboratories (Neighbourhood Laboratories) in settings that could be considered intermediaries among institutions and local actors. This policy is analysed in comparison with two European metropolis, Berlin and Barcelona that, in different times and with different resources, have been experimented a planning approach oriented towards a more efficient institutional commitment and more responsible social innovation, by reinforcing the intermediate dimension among the two levels.

4. UNDERSTANDING. Policy dimension: beyond area-based models

"Developing policy agendas […] serve to build up social, intellectual and political capital which becomes a new institutional resource. […] takes place through dialogue, and its qualities and outcomes are the result of the interaction between who gets involved and in what arenas, the communicative routine and styles which build up and the existing social relational worlds which co-exist in a place".

Healy P., *"Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies"*, (1997)

The growth of social innovation initiatives in European cities led to wonder how to combine them to consolidated planning schemes, granting to be complementary and generate both collective value for the local community and knowledge for the institutions. This foresees urban processes that need to be guided by a strategic general vision, while being connected to the operative multitude of "anomalous" processes (Crosta 1983) and "cracks" (Amin and Thrift 2005) of social innovation. This assumption has been confirmed by the European Commission that in 2017 argued that socially innovative actions, even if successfully launched, have not been able to maintain themselves and to continue to be effective in the absence of a clear strategic policy of support from local authorities (EC 2017). From a policy point of view, some European cities are recognizing the value of social innovation practices, considered not only subsidiary to public action, but possible samples and experimental tactics from which to reconstruct an alternative vision for future planning, starting from the neighbourhood scale.

These cities have long been mobilising to support social innovation initiatives emerging from more or less organised urban actors. This attitude has gained strength as a result of the structural crisis, which has reduced to zero structural urban investments linked to the material city, causing increasing gaps between demographically, geographically and economically fragile areas and those with a greater concentration of resources. Therefore, the distance between institutions and citizens has been reinforcing. In times of crisis, in fact, the institutions struggle to have resources and ability to recognize the changes in the population (increasingly older, fragile and polarized) and consequently to respond in terms of services to emerging needs, and on the other hand the population faces the challenges that arise in an increasingly radical way and without confidence in the public actor.

Over time, a number of experiences attempted to reduce the gap between the two levels, like the URBAN projects (I and II) and the more recent URBACT networks, focused more on the management of urban areas through the insertion of institutional situated presence in fragile neighbourhoods, which became venues for experimentation of area-based strategies. However, the season of projects of this type seems to have left no solid knowledge in the field, as demonstrated by the continuous interest in processes that arise from the places and actors of the territory, which respond to shortcomings on the part of the public and the market.

In this paragraph the research analyses two European experiences. Both cases supports the hypothesis that a new policy approach should be based on the neighbourhood dimension, as specific pole of interaction enhancing exchange, agency and conviviality, which have in the neighbourhood its operative dimension. The first one belongs to the category of area-based approach that has been insisting on Berlin neighbourhoods for twenty years, but has led to critical results. The second is a recent political initiative that attempts to respond to the criticalities of the first by narrowing the scale and addressing more contextual challenges in a multi-scale manner and with a horizontal governance, but with a strong public component as regards urban welfare.

Against this background, it seems crucial to critically explore what are the policy framework that are working towards a fruitful direction, what are the achieved results, barriers, constraints and opportunities to be reflected upon for a new urban model for the city of Bologna.

Area-based approaches

The attempt to include practices – that are located at the borders of planning – in a development normative path, has led to a worldwide diffusion of local approaches to urban transformation. A variety of terms have been

formulated[9] to define urban development models emerging from these premises. The definition of these approaches have been elaborated as output of European projects, as externality of academic researches and results of collaboration among university and public administrations. A shared definition of these approaches is **area-based planning**, an integrated, comprehensive (Parés et al. 2011) strategy that is led by the municipality, as main director and manager of a range of transversal interventions implemented at the scale of the neighbourhoods. It identifies an assets-based approach which recognises the resources, expertise, skills, capacities within communities rather than focusing on problems or deficiencies. Since the 1990s area-based initiatives, were a dominant form of political intervention in many cities (Andersson and Musterd, 2005). This attitude focused on experiences involving strategic area transformation and neighborhood regeneration, with an institutional stewardship and control, and local attempts of engagement. The theoretical approach aimed at increase the environmental and social value of the neighbourhood that were supposed to be self-managed and self-promoted by local communities. It aimed at produce benefits from improving the quality of the space, attachment to the place and social cohesion, which nevertheless are difficult to quantify. On the other hand, it appeared risky, uncertain and able to give limited results with respect to the main objectives of urban change.

The area-based approach entails the public body designing an intervention, composing a varied menu of actions (on houses, infrastructures, open spaces, services) and accompanying its implementation through the creation of a structure located in the neighbourhood. The actions were often oriented towards the recovery of acceptable living conditions in areas in decay, and the increase of opportunities for fragile areas and aimed at strengthening relationships among various urban actors (multi-level, multi-sector, multi-scale), who acknowledge their mutual interdependence (Blanco and Gomà 2006). Area-based policies consider neighbourhoods as the primary units for planning interventions, and social innovation as a necessary methodology that local communities have at their disposal to create new solutions to unmet social-spatial needs, in a State and market withdrawal situation. Neighbourhoods in fact, are useful unit where to read social fragilities, inequalities, local issues deriving from global phenomena, while at the same time they are able to diagnose, produce and assess alternative solutions to urban challenges. The approach recognizes the neighbourhood scale a dimension where it is possible to appreciate and guide local innovation-driven development within the framework of the global mission (such as SDGs), that become explicit at the local scale.

Area-based approaches required thorough critical preliminary analysis to define the target areas and to determine the inspiring and guiding principles to eventually produce outcomes and orientations towards future planning practices.

Despite the attempts of technicians and professionals to fully intertwine with local contextual practices, the legacy of these projects are often critical. The most common critical positions entail the scale of these interventions (too large) the openness of the process (too exclusive) and the impact of the projects (unresponsive to demands, producing gentrification) (Palermo and Ponzini 2014, Savini et al., 2015; Calvaresi 2019). These approaches

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[9] Self-made urbanism, do-it-yourself urbanism, tactical urbanism, city-making approaches, are just few of the ever-growing definition of local-led private actions carried out in specific parts of cities, in forms of animation, proximity services, care of micro portion of public space.

produced different threads. The main inspiration principles foresaw a strong attention to self-organisation and pro-active inclusion of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, engaged with the entrepreneurial idea to increase the relevance of the neighbourhood by working on the inhabitants capabilities. This approach led to the rise of the rhetoric of the creative class (Landry 2000; Florida 2003), which produced, in many cases, phenomena of displacements and substitution of residents. The main issue though, was their inflexibility to "adapt to the ever-changing context of new socio-economic circumstances" (Savini et al., 2015, p. 2) producing rather fixed boundaries and limitation in access to collective life.

In recent times, area-based planning is reconfiguring towards strengthening social cohesion for an inclusive growth, rather than focussing on the entrepreneurial development per se, counting more and more on the transformative power (Moulaert et al. 2016) of social innovation. The growth of social innovation practices is challenging the cities in taking direct responsibility and in making explicit the premises and consequences of area-based processes, not only to re-organise neighbourhoods but to make them productive units on a multi-layered and trans-scalar strategy for the whole city and even at metropolitan level. As a consequence, area-based policies have been enriched with specific attitudes such as experimentation and co-production, and transformed with the aim to open up alternatives for planning setups.

Experimentation (Hillier, 2007), co-production (Voorberg, Bekkers, and Tummers, 2013) and social innovation are trying to answer to the necessity to innovate and open up urban planning and design processes. In several cases urban experiments are looked closely for their potentialities in informing planning (Evans et al. 2016) and in stimulating alternative solutions to the mainstream. The inclusion of experiments and co-production in the praxis of urban planning, foresees the creation of a flexible form of governance, which aims at implement and monitor specific tested interventions in a legal and institutional framework. With this approach, the need for policy-makers is to provide an infrastructure for different kind of experimentations and co-production to interact at urban and regional scale. With these premises, area-based approaches are read in their ability to implement experimentation and co-production in the primary observation units of the neighbourhoods. This point is fundamental to understand what the effectively operable 'space' of urbanism in the contemporary era is, and the role of planners.

This chapter draws a framework of comparison of different cities that implemented **area-based policies** to sustain forms of **social innovation in a structured policy framework**. The chosen cities relate to different ranks, but are similar in the centrality of neighbourhoods as strategic units to connect the different levels of planning. Here social innovation assumes concrete organisational forms that differ from the local planning mainstream, yet they are interrelated with it.

The cities are portrayed through the description of their current specific policy, their promoting actors, resources, schemes and results. The externalities of these approaches are different, according to the scale of the cities and of the policy implemented, the market typologies, the collaborative tradition and the role of the public and private players. **Berlin** represents a useful long-term area-based approach reference (20 years) on which to read the evolution of a city and its multiple and hyper-diverse neighbourhoods (Ostanel, 2016). **Barcelona** is considered as an outsider for its strong attention to the metropolitan dimension of its policy, to be taken under consideration.

A final remark is done by portraying possible converging points and contrasts with the current discursive policy in **Bologna**.

The methodology of research for the policy analysis, entailed in-depth interviews with the main actors and civil servants, as well as analysis of reports and documents in the three cities, with the aim of collecting a detailed description of the policies. The research questions that this chapter aims to answer concern the process of emergence of social innovation, how it came to be and the impacts of policy tradition on contemporary dynamics and future planning setups, the lessons to be learned when looking at the interaction between planning and social innovation, the enabling factors for social innovation to up-scale and how it contribute to mutual learning with institutions, provoking change of governance, functioning of service provision and of planning practice. The analysis was structure in two part, descriptive and analytical (Figure 18) to gather two category of information:
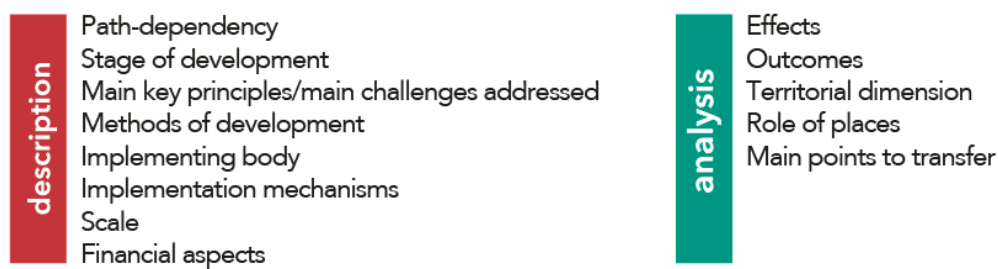
Figure 18 - the dimension of the investigation for policy analysis. Source: the author.

The **descriptive part** focuses in the identification of the area-based contents leading to the policy:

- **path dependency**: to determine what legacy the political, social, economic, planning tradition have on contemporary design of urban policies;
- **stage of development**: to provide a timeline of the phases of implementation;
- **main key principles/challenge addressed**: to define both the challenges that triggered the definition of the policy and the principles to address them;
- **implementing body**: describes the governance setup;
- **implementation mechanisms**: defines in depth the modalities for the implementation of the policies, through which tools and foreseeing which phases;
- **methods of development**: concern the description of the methodology for the application of such main principles;
- **scale**: to specify both the urban scale to which the policies are targeted and the scale of the impact;
- **financial aspects**: identification of sources of financing of the whole policy and the specific mechanisms of implementation.

The **analytical part** focuses in the detection of the relation of the policy with social innovation (both contrast or interrelation), by exploring:

- **effects**: explains the detectable externalities of the policy, highlighting also the expected results in terms of spatial, organisational, institutional changes and the ability to innovate institutional arrangements;

- **outcomes**: evidences the outcomes of the policies, related to spill overs emerged as a follow up or during the implementation of the policies;
- **territorial dimension**: to understand if the policies had urban boundaries or were extended towards a metropolitan or even regional dimension;
- **role of places**: investigates the potentialities arising from the three cases of specific nodes of interaction as triggers and catalysers of the processes foreseen by the policies;
- **main points to transfer**: identifies what can be valid key point from which to start defining a new urban model for planning.

a) Neighbourhood Managements Berlin

The city of Berlin has since years activated a policy that provides for the management and organization of social innovation practices as primary actions to answer to issues emerging in social housing neighbourhoods. The *Soziale Stadt Koernerkiez*, Socially Integrative City is the framework program among which the city implemented the *Quartierzmanagement*, Neighbourhood Management (NM), where specific places were established to manage the investments and implementation of actions in determined areas, acting as bridges between institutions, local stakeholders and individual or groups. The goal was to build a schedule of specific activities to be realised in the areas, ranging from the animation of the district, to the definition and care of community spaces, up to the creation of start-ups with social goals and urban-scale projects.

Belin legacy

In the panorama of European cities, Berlin has always been studied for its paradigmatic urban morphology, as archipelago city, City within the City[10] its radical transformations, its deep historical urban traces and vivacious social dynamics. The late 1960s' Berlin, with its pronounced and different identities, was the perfect setting for the development of Unger (and later Koolhas) theories, useful for understanding the current policies. Unger's City within the City was based on some key assumptions: a) "the impulse of design" comes from the environment as it exists and accepts the existing conditions. The process is a continuous "knitting and assembly experiment"; b) accidents are part of the process - the first level is the planned intention or "framework", while the secondary level is "accidental, spontaneous and, if necessary, temporary"; c) there is a "plurality of solutions" - many interpretations are needed for the same solution; d) architecture is not only as an object but also as an influential "urban element"; e) adaptability as one of the "basic conditions of design" – "transformation from an authoritarian act into an act of participation" (Ungers 1977). Ungers stated that the individualisation of the city allowed for citizens to identify themselves in specific places, which incarnate collective necessities. Within this work is possible to read the identification of places as "formally defined to attract and enable collective domains" (Schrijver, 2006). Ungers theories in Berlin, offer some reflection starting from the potentiality of small-scale intervention to create collective spaces and produce a union of fragments in a coherent planning setup. Even though missing a reflection on co-production, it was a first attempt to spatialise necessities for collective interaction aimed at solving urban issues, necessarily accommodated in-between the public and the private.

The evolution path of these policies, transformed the city into one of the most attractive places where youngsters, families, creatives class who wanted to spend some time in. It has always been characterized by a multitude of actors and cultures that coexisted and stimulated each other leading to left their mark on the urban landscape. The city has focused on area-based development policies through its urban history. As a border city in the middle of Europe, where distinct political systems and ideologies cohabited (Brandsen et al. 2016), it provided in the 60s and 70s several programmes to support the fast-changing neighbourhoods, undergoing high levels of migrations from

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[10] O.M. Ungers. *Die Stadt in der Stadt: Berlin das grüne Stadtarchipel* (Cologne, 1977). Publication completed in collaboration with R. Koolhaas, P. Riemann, H. Kollhoff, A. Ovaska.

the middle east and other parts of Germany. The German Federal Government had a prominent role in the resource allocation, almost everything was subsidized by it, i.e. the *Gastarbeiter* and the *Familienzusammenführung* provided assistance for migrants families and low income people for housing in the city.

As a consequence, this dualism of a 'poor but sexy city' (Frey 2003), attractive to creative "change agents" (Ewert 2016) and unconventional lifestyles, produced a disconnection between social and economic policies, with effects on the urban environment. It is the city in fact, together with Amsterdam, where urban decision-makers increasingly adopted entrepreneurship support as a central means to foster economic renewal in deprived areas (Trettin at al. 2011). It grew into a "unique assemblage of different institutionalized countercultures, such as old style welfarism or the new predominance of economism, market orientation and managerialism" (Evers and Ewert 2013), these diverse orientations intertwined constantly, with the most visible effects on the different neighborhoods. Therefore, Berlin implemented very different ways of giving social innovations a space in the architecture of urban policies and forms of governance. The city has been showing a urban mix of directions and discourses. As argued by Ewert though (Ewert 2016), relying on social innovation practices, may not be sufficient anymore to sustain the urban development of a city showing the emergence of pressing social challenges, especially since the sphere of their autonomy (Palermo and Ponzini 2014), is often reduced, relegating their influence in circumscribed interest (Brenner and Theodore 2002) and limited impact.

Socially Integrative City

An example of an innovative setting where new practices are framed, is the **Socially Integrative City** (SIC) created in Berlin State in 1999, by the Senate. The original aim of the program was to start a development process in those districts considered depressed and undergoing different challenges and lack of services, in particular housing districts. SIC derives directly from the approach to "cautious urban renewal" (Foerster 2014), an urban approach developed by the IBA in 1982, which became a guide for urban revitalization in Berlin up to the 2000s. IBA-Altbau foresaw 12 principles for socially-compatible development of the city, building guidelines inspired by the resistance of many citizens against the destructive refurbishment of the 1970s in the city. These years saw the raise of Berlin's creative economy, which has its roots in the 70s new social movements promoting new forms of micro-support systems in opposition to the criticized forms of state-based solidarity (Evers et al. 2013). The principles foresaw the transversal goal to involve citizens in an integrated development, in order to create more livable urban districts producing alternative, normative models of urban regeneration.

SIC further deepened the principles of IBA, with a top-down approach within the framework of the program "Areas with Special Development Needs - The Socially Integrative City" initiated by the national government and the governments of the federal states of Germany. Its main goal was to answer to the housing problems and displacement issues, in **areas with special development needs**, operating with an integrated operational approach, a mix of method and topics transversally addressing housing, economic, social issues in alliance with the network of urban actors active at neighborhood level. The program has been implemented all over Germany and funded by the Federal Republic of Germany and the Federal States; its attempt is to answer to growing local challenges by relying on three key points:

- **pooling resources**: bringing together the expertise, staff and financial potential of all sectors and levels;
- **partnerships**: active integration and networking of local residents, local economic and social operators;

- **empowerment**: information, training and motivation as a stimulus for self-determined public action.

In Berlin, the program includes funding from the EU Union, from the Funds for Regional Development. In 2004 it was legally recognized by the Federal Law, stating that Germany aims to develop neighbourhoods following this specific policy, by law. SIC foresaw **Neighbourhood Managements** as distinctive **para-institutional structures** created in each selected neighbourhood that manages five types of Neighbourhood Funds, each covering a different type of project to be selected with the direct involvement of the inhabitants.

Context. In 1999, Berlin Senate introduced the Neighbourhood Management programme for 15 neighbourhoods with specific urban fragilities. The evaluation of the progress of the programme, soon showed that the areas had stabilized and improved so convincingly that in 2001 the Senate decided to extend the programme to more neighbourhood, until reaching the current number of 34.
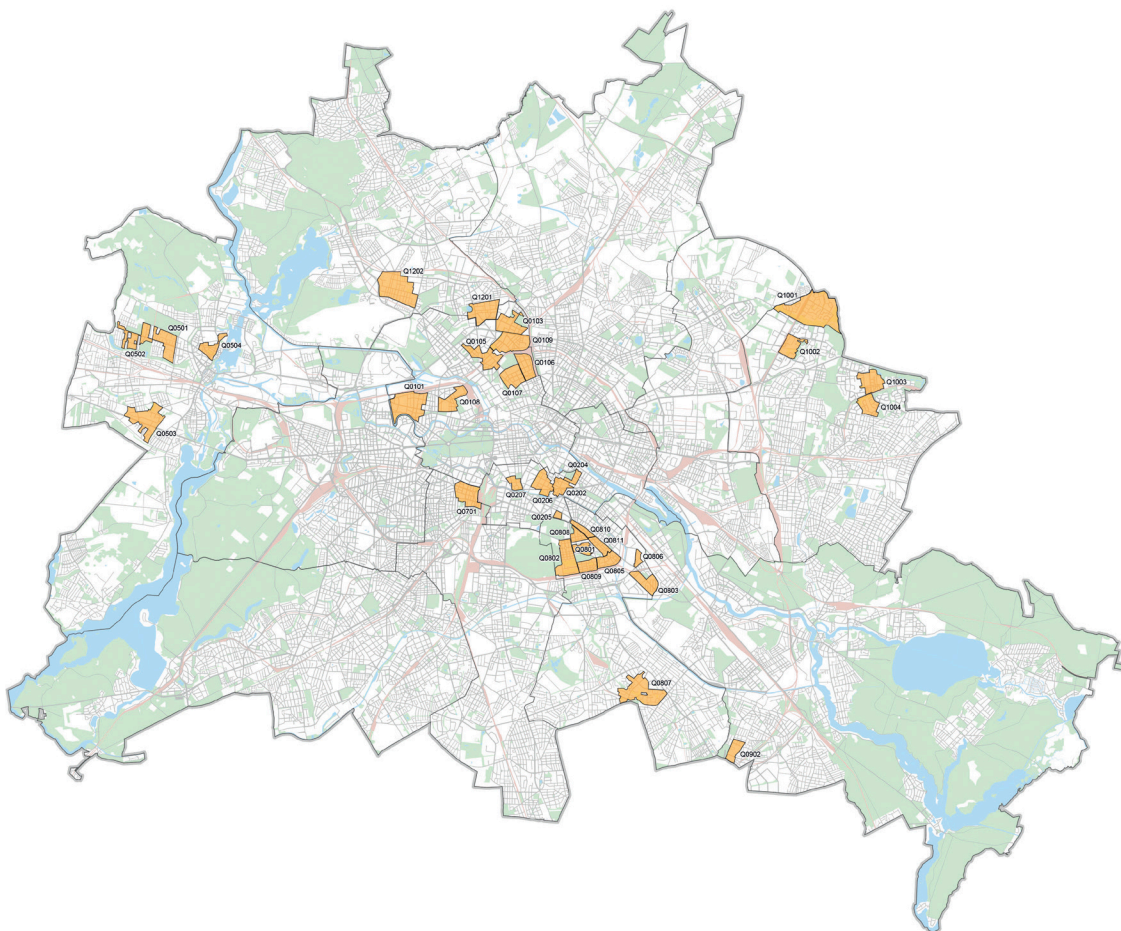

Figure 19 - Identification of target areas for Quartiersmanagements. Source: Social Integrative City

The policy identifies "Kiez"[11] as **areas with special development needs** (Figure 19), presenting the following spatial characteristics:

- inner-city traditional boroughs (in both the former western and the former eastern part of the city);

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[11] A "Kiez" is a smaller district within a city. It is defined by the residents themselves and as such does not necessarily coincide with administrative borders. Nevertheless, it is often used as a synonym for neighbourhood.

- large public housing estates in the former western part of the city;
- large complex housing estates in the former eastern part of the city;

and showing recurrent dynamics and criticalities to tackle:

- deficits in urban development, infrastructure, primary and secondary services;
- lack of ecologic services;
- economic stagnation;
- unbalanced life quality;
- high rate of unemployment and social welfare bonds;
- large percentage of non-speaking german;
- spread health conditions;
- increasing conflicts and delinquency in public spaces.

Since 2005, Kiez have been divided according to four categories of intervention: "large-scale intervention", "medium intervention", "prevention" and "continuity". The areas that fell into these categories have been analyzed according to different criteria: level of social pressure, level of intensity of the intervention and level of human and financial resources invested. The areas are also characterized by a high fluctuation of residents, many of which heavily dependent on subsidy income and/or have a migration background.

In each area, SIC foresees the set-up of a Neighbourhood Management, an on-site office acting as a local development agency, taking care of the coordination, activation, initiation and monitoring of several typologies of projects. Neighbourhood Managers act on behalf of the Department of Urban Development of the Senate of Berlin in consultation with the district authority.

Goals. The logic behind the programs is to promote neighbourhoods through **temporary projects** that are designed to meet the local demands of innovation to tackle pressing everyday issues. NM sets its own agenda in each neighbourhood differently, with the consequence of decentralising decision-making, by delegating part of the responsibility for small-scale projects to residents. The approach followed by the NM is to support a cluster of microprojects (Colini and Tripodi 2012) whose positive side effects emerge only if considered as an open and dense network, intertwining into the neighbourhood, to trigger a change in the perception of the areas, by offering grounded and contextually rooted services.

The main goals of the NMs are:

- upgrading and stabilization of 'areas with special development needs';
- prevention of social exclusion, involving inhabitants in decision-making processes;
- rrioritisation, selection and implementation of locally-based temporary social innovative actions;
- Reduce displacement by increasing chances in employment, education, integrations.

The basic features are:

- definition of integrated and strategic action plans (*Entwicklungskonzept integrated in action and strategic plan for the neighbourhood),* the main guideline for the allocation of different funding in specific projects. Yearly

report produced by the NM Team together with Neighbourhood Council, the Administration of the Neighbourhood and the Senate of Berlin;

- creation of Neighbourhood Management teams as local start-ups and interaction places;
- networking among stakeholders and pooling of local resources within areas with special development needs;
- empowering communities by engaging them through Neighbourhood Councils;
- management of different types of Funds to develop several projects (from temporary to permanent).

Implementation.

The program started in 1999 with four NMs until reaching 15 areas in 2001 mainly located in the Western part of the city and 34 areas in 2011, where about 415,000 inhabitants lived on approximately 2,200 ha. NMs are run by external but not independent contractors, commissioned to manage funding, resources and organize the development of the neighbourhoods. The first phase of the policy implementation (1999-2005) saw the NM Team as unique actor to handle the organization of the areas.

Following an incremental logic, from 2000-2002 a side pilot project "One Million for the Kiez" (500.000€) led by the Senate of Berlin, aimed at establishing the success of small-scale self-management with a citizens' jury selected the 15 target neighbourhoods, in charge of the assessment and selection of projects to be developed. The pilot was successful, therefore in 2005 the SIC program was extended to 16 more NMs, with an additional informal institution born from the evolution of the juries, called **Neighbourhood Councils**. In 2009 five more areas were marked as Kiez, reaching the current number of 34 NMs in Berlin. During the years, only 4 areas have been 'stabilised' from the NMs, i.e. they reached such level of self-organisation, which allowed them to be 'released' by the program and be managed in complete autonomy by the neighbourhood councils or by the companies born within the area, in an horizontal way.

The implementation of the programme follows a series of steps. Starting from the main goals defined by the Senate, the Neighborhood Management Team selects, together with the Councils, the main projects to be financed with a system of Neighbourhood Funds – NF. Neighbourhood Funds work within the boundaries of the Kiez, except when the issue to be tackled concerns a wider area or several institutions (e.g. reducing drug abuse by not just delocalizing it into another area). In the case of Berlin NF are divided into 4 categories with different scopes and budgets:

Actionsfonds (max 1.500 €) Community-building projects and residents' activation. Temporary projects;

Projeksfonds (min 5.000 €) Actions and transformation of the urban space tailored on local needs;

Netzwerkfonds (min 50.000 €) Sustainable development or infrastructure building within the Neighborhood Management area. Structural measures to be transferred to district-scale;

Baufonds (min 50.000€) Sustainable development of buildings or infrastructure building within the Neighborhood Management area.

This approach forges a mechanism that allows a cascade of many micro-projects tapping into the social texture of the neighbourhood. The main idea is to cluster and network many different projects, to change the perception of the social life in the neighbourhoods, mostly by offering basic cultural and education through outreach.

Each Neighborhood Managements set its own agenda in each neighbourhood differently, by defining criteria to reward and realise initiatives, projects and proposals coming from local innovators, through a call for application. The call for applications is addressed not only to residents, but also to schools, kindergartens and local initiatives, in order to integrate them as hotspots for local development through the Neighbourhood Fund. The selected projects do not intervene on the basic structures and conditions, such as unemployment, social frictions in public places or resources in the education system, they rather offer alternatives to the top-down approach of service delivery, public space management, education activities, often disconnected from the local challenges.

The process reached the goal of **bringing together the activities of the different players** in the neighbourhood, to try out **new forms of collaboration**, and to make better use of **existing resources**. The neighbourhood managers provide a **platform for networking and interaction**, enabling groups and actors to debate and identify local needs, values and responses. The Neighborhood Management needs to be a well-known meeting point in the district, to support residents with everyday challenges through easy-to-access-services (e.g. after-school homework supervision, consultancy for various social and bureaucratic problems) and to build up networks among local stakeholders to develop the project proposals. Every two years the Neighbourhood Team writes a *Handlungskonzept*, an assessment report that states the steps of the development for the district.

Governance.

Each Kiez is provided with the enabling infrastructure of the Neighborhood Managements (Figure 20), an on-site office whose team is strongly interlaced with the administrative bodies of the neighbourhoods. Each **Neighbourhood Management Team** is contracted by the Senate of Berlin and it includes professionals in architecture, urban planners, sociologists, economists, among which one person necessarily with migration background. The Team is completed with some volunteers in charge of overseeing the areas by walking around, listening to issues and try to involve those who normally are excluded by participatory processes.

The residents of the neighbourhood participate in decision-making processes through two special models: the Neighborhood Councils and the Actionfunds Juries. The first is a committee of 15 people living in the areas and 10 stakeholders from the whole district, elected every two years by the Neighbourhood, who get involved to take part in the decision-making process, and maintain continuous dialogue with the Neighborhood Management Team and the governmental administration. Residents from 16 years old can be part of the councils, which requires to have conversation skills, no language barriers and be able to communicate and evaluate an idea. Those are some of the reasons for the appearance of exclusion phenomena towards a portion of the population living in the areas, minorities which do not have the tools to participate or perceive the bureaucratic requirements of the programme as a barrier. Therefore the further engagement of communities, the enlargement of the public and the extension of the value produced by the program is often in charge of the same projects proposed by the citizens.
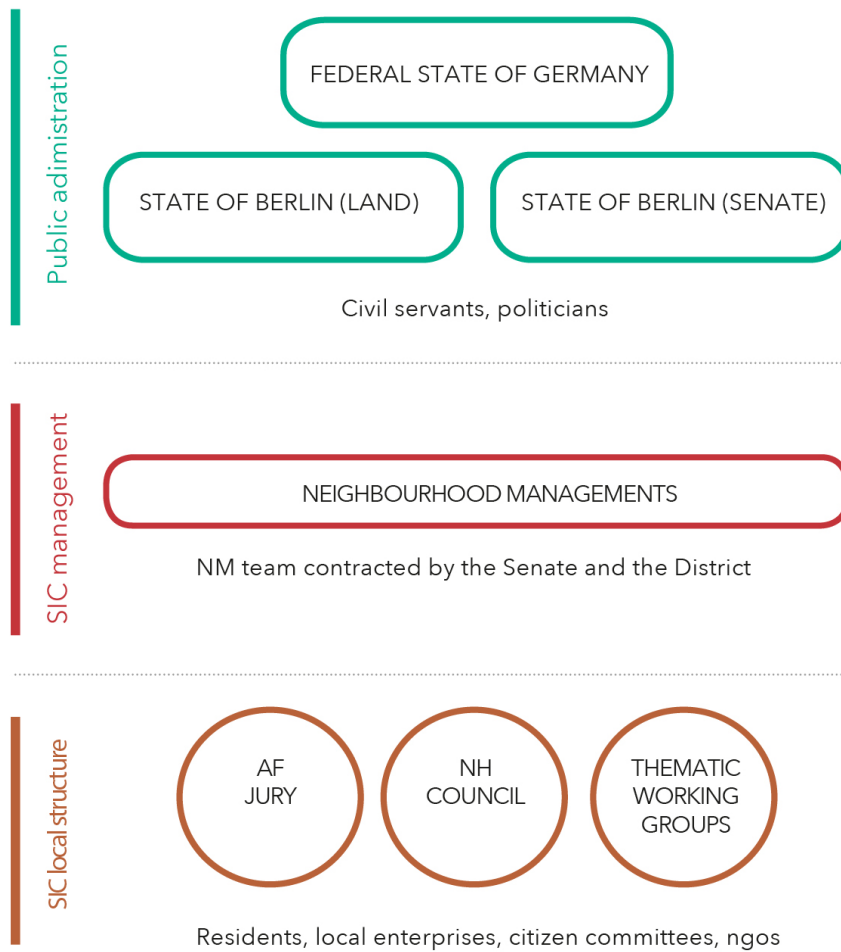
Figure 20 - governance of Neighborhood Management and roles. Source: the author.

The Action Fund Jury is composed by neighbourhood residents and experts, responsible for temporary project selection and evaluation, to be implemented at small-scale level and financed with the Actionfund (up to 1.500€/project), financing an average of 15/20 projects per year for a total of 150.000 €. Members of the Neighbourhood Team explains that the fund is quite restricted, therefore the general rule is to finance the largest number of projects with around 5/600 € per project. In addition inhabitants are involved in **Thematic working groups** meeting on a regular basis to discuss on education, health, traffic and public spaces. The governance structure of Neighborhood Managements is completed with the **Steering Group at District level**, led by the Department of Urban Development. It meets every three months with representatives of the Senate, the different Neighborhood Managements of each neighbourhood and thematic department of the State. Furthermore a **Steering Group at local level** meets on monthly basis, with representative of local stakeholders, the Senate, Neighborhood Managements and elected representatives from the Neighbourhood Council. This configuration allows for different level to interact and share feedbacks, useful to revise and re-arrange some formulas or measures.

The following table summarises the main descriptive and analytic elements.

BERLIN Socially Integrative City (SIC) program Neighbourhood Management *(Quartiersmanagement)* - NM	
Path-dependency	End 60s: City within City (Ungers); 1982 IBA "cautious urban renewal". The neighbourhood management model has become internationally known as one of the most successful strategies for integrated, participative urban regeneration of deprived urban areas. The programme SIC drew on the first URBAN Community Initiative. In particular the Berlin case is interesting because the community-led approach is emerging from a context where the wide State intervention, together with the affordable prices of the city, provided a fruitful context for social innovation practices. The approach has become mainstream policy in local urban development. *Socialraumorienterung*[12] (social-spatial orientation) in fact, sees the NH as an infrastructure where to test integrated approaches taking into consideration the social space. Public participation of inhabitants takes place from the design to practice through community-led asset management.
Stage of development	In implementation since 1999, revision in 2005
Main key principles	Neighborhood Management is a interaction platform aimed at upgrading and stabilising 'areas with special development needs', preventing a downward spiral of social exclusion by inviting the neighbours to participate in the prioritization, development and implementation of locally-based actions fostering the improvement of their living conditions. It promotes temporary and permanent projects designed to bring together the activities of the different players in the neighbourhood to make better use of existing urban and social capital. In Berlin it covers 34 neighbourhoods with a total of 390.000 inhabitants and an area of 25 skm. The main challenges addressed are: - upgrading e stabilisation of "special development areas" - preventing downwarding spiral - enhancing local economy and labour-market policy - widening chances in employment, education, integration - reach neighbours which are not easy to engage The main principles addressed are: - forging new forms of collaboration, proximity, networking - integration of social and financial resources - encouraging interdisciplinary dialogue and multilevel action - care and creation of public spaces
Implementing body	Federal government – Senate Department of Urban Development and Housing, Neighbourhood Management Team (small private companies, start-ups, professionals)
Implementation mechanisms	Identification of problem areas (Kietz) by the Senate, categorisation of areas (4 categories: large-scale, medium scale, prevention, continuity). Each are is provided

[12] In the German tradition of social work, the idea of social spaces (Sozialräume) is a significant conceptual reference since the early 1990s. This approach follows the concept to discover, analyse and shape social spaces in order to create conditions that enable processes of community development for modernisation of public welfare institutions.

with a Neighborhood Management in charge of the allocation of resources for project development: it collects the issues and the proposal and mediates with the City for assistance. Neighborhood Management works together with the different district department, concerning schools, youth, public spaces, integration issues, security. Neighborhood Management team is in charge of both outsourcing for ideas in the neighbourhood by engaging the inhabitants, of the selection of the ideas to be financed and of the management of their implementation.

The actions are usually oriented towards:
- trigger local economy and employment
- provide space for civic involvement
- improve access to public services
- take care of the quality of urban environment

In addition to these criteria, the cross-cutting topics of sustainability, equal opportunities and integration need to be part of the projects

Methods of developed	**Participation.** Citizens participate in decision-making processes through the Neighbourhood Councils (NCs) and Actionfunds juries. The NCs is a committee consisting of people living/working in the respective Kiez, who are involved by the team in the development of their neighbourhood. 51% of the Neighbourhood Councils are inhabitants involved in projects, appointed by elections and by random sample; 49% are representatives of educational institutions, religious groups, police, local commerce and building companies. The ActionFund Jury is composed of neighbourhood residents ('local experts'), and is responsible for temporary project selection at small-scale level. Different engagement tools are used according to the population and the project: outreach, personal commitment of individuals and teams, word of mouth, meetings, district festivals and artistic/community-based initiatives, area and building surveys, online information and public relationships.

Areas selection criteria. The process support the most disadvantaged districts. Berlin is divided into 434 'life-worth oriented areas' where the best area has number 1 and the worst has number 434. The areas are chosen according to different criteria: level of social pressure, level of intensity of the intervention and level of human and financial resources invested, high fluctuation of residents, many of which heavily dependent on subsidy income and/or with a migration background.

Monitoring. A report is produced by the Neighbourhood Management Team every two years. At city level, monitoring is performed by the Senate of Berlin that monitors the achievements of the Neighborhood Management at neighbourhood level through ongoing cooperation with the Neighborhood Management, and through the annual activity report. City of Berlin uses a geographical reference system on living environment areas that enables the continuous monitoring of critical areas with a geographic reference, using social status and social dynamics indicators. This system supports the identification of areas to be 'stabilised'.

Inner Monitoring. According to the entity of the investment a Neighbourhood Council (25 people) evaluate each project. The Local Steering Group meet once a month to monitor the activities.

External Monitoring. A District Steering Group meets once every three months to check the progresses of the programme. Interim evaluations every two years are conducted via on-line consultations, case studies analysis. A recent consultation process is promoted by the Senate to have feedback on the past 20 years of the programme and suggestion for follow-ups. |

	Evaluation. The whole SIC programme is evaluated nationally through external studies and reports. The Neighborhood Management team provides an annual report of the activities implemented to the Senate of Berlin for evaluation.
Scale	Neighbourhood/District
Financial aspects	Jointly supported by the EU, the Federal Government and the state of Berlin. The Socially Integrative City programme for Berlin invests c. €22 M per year. The total fund for each neighbour is an average of 100.000 € each year. The program foresees 5 Neighbourhood Funds: - NF1(<1.000€) are projects that aim to improve volunteer engagement and the networking of inhabitants. (e.g a German/Turkish theatre play, an international circus festival for young people, a festival of a local association working with arts & crafts, language projects for school children). - NF2 (between 1.000€ and 10.000€) projects aimed at sustainable measures that must comply with the objectives of the yearly redacted action plan (e.g. careers advice and job training, computer classes for parents, media workshop, drumming, City walks in the Kiez, language and reading weeks). - NF3 (> 10.000€) supports the implementation of long-term projects concerning socio-cultural activities and infrastructure development (e.g. economic and trade advice, temporary use of empty shops, holiday activities for children during holidays such as rapping, collage and gym, neighbourhood newspaper and website). - NF4 (> 10.000€) focusing on construction or refurbishment of building and public spaces (e.g. refurbishment of old premises for collective activities such as the neighbourhood centre and the improvement of public space like public squares and gardens for children) - NF5 is dedicated to support model projects with a cross-sectoral approach that can be put forward as case studies and can touch issues affecting many parts of Berlin therefore being geographically transversal.
Role of places	Neighborhood Managements are located in specific places, impersonating the role of local development agencies; the direct connection with the everyday life is a strength for the work of the Neighborhood Management Team.
Effects	- self-management and citizens engagement - collaborations for public purposes - recognition and exploration of local resources and potential - cooptation of citizens' initiative - policing the poor - interdisciplinary dialogue and activity - multitude of projects on different topics - improvement of proximity services - low threshold to access - bureaucracy barrier - network with city hubs and cultural institutions - projects carefully observed and evaluated
Outcomes	- institution's perception and institutional learning - gentrification processes - overburden the local actors - added public value over the years - stop of the downward spiral by reversing the stigma - social focus but reduced action on welfare

- private-led neighbourhood development
- exclusion of minorities
- strengthening network

Main findings

Following the in-depth interviews and analysis, what emerges is a complex framework, where local positive externalities are counterbalanced by the risks of undermining the actions due to the lack of support of the activities carried out and the absence of a long-term strategic vision.

SIC contributed greatly to reinforce the **self-management of the neighbourhoods**, by engaging the inhabitants to take action through interdisciplinary dialogue, pooling the resources, and strengthening the existing networks. The involvement of neighbours (with NC and Actionfunds) in the decision-making and evaluation of future planning decisions, provoked short and long terms effects. At first it allowed for local projects to be examined more closely in terms of effectiveness, significance and use of resources than in normal application procedures. This provided space for experimentation of new solutions, unconventional projects - which could not normally receive support - to obtain funding. Nevertheless, the interaction with citizens seemed to be often limited to reach out and collecting existing practices, missing a **process of entrepreneurial support** of the idea, with the construction of a solid base for a long-lasting and wider impact. This was intentional because of the temporary nature of each project, more related to test new forms of collaborations among actors rather than providing long-term solutions. This attitude though, has been also read as a cooptation and commodification of citizens' initiatives or a technical and polite way of "policing the poors" (Eick 2003). In the long run, this possibilities can lead to the overburden of the inhabitants with responsibilities and duties, which are not usually entitled to social innovation initiatives. This might turn these process-centric decision-making arenas into too **hyper-regulatory rather than emancipatory**. Furthermore, it could provoke the opposite effect of refusing and distrusting the institution, moving the initiatives in the dimension of illegality and provoking further privatisation of collective resources.

The **relationship with institutions** changed in many ways after the programme. The main outcome highlighted are different according to the point of view. The Neighborhood Managements lacked the presence of a link with central institutions, reduced to monthly appointments, without a real stable collaboration on the ground. The understanding of the **complex bureaucratic system,** difficult to be accessed by the beneficiaries, emerged clearly as a barrier, even though the information provided by Neighborhood Managements are aimed to lower the threshold for the access to a wider target. The evolution of the programme throughout the years in fact, lost the "trial and error" learning aptitude of the first years for a more complex structure. The role of Neighborhood Managements hence evolved into one of **translator**, reducing the time to be dedicated to deal with everyday support activities aimed at involve and reach out new parts of the inhabitants. What emerges, however, is a framework in which the institutions are sporadically present and **delegate to the intermediaries** the burden and responsibility of dealing both in terms of operations and of the control of its implementation. Neighborhood Managements therefore find themselves having to deal with issues **without having the means or being entitled** to act, further limiting their effectiveness.

The local communities highlight the recognition of the opening of a privileged **communication channel** with the different departments of the District. Following this point, the perception of the Neighborhood Management Office as an outpost of the municipality depends on the neighbourhoods where the policy is applied. In the central areas (e.g. Neighborhood Management Flughafenstraße), where many social innovation initiatives are already in place, there is a conflict among the individual projects to emerge and thrive, therefore Neighborhood Managements are seen as **means to shorten the distance** towards institutions for the realization of their initiatives. On the other hand in the outskirts (e.g. Kosmosviertel) Neighborhood Management are seen more as **opportunities' providers** from which to extract knowledge and possibilities to kickstart new actions. In one case, Neighborhood Managements are instrumental only for the faster realization of consolidated local actions, on the other are privileged resources of both knowledge and opportunities for local changes.

Moving to the point of view of institutions, the valuable externalities of Neighborhood Management in terms of ability to provoke positive dynamics and collaborations for public purposes, together with the changed socio-economic conditions, led institutions to a gradual shift in their policy-making processes. In particular, at district level institutions are recognizing the need to work more area-based and they are defining a support scheme for all the districts in a larger scale. The German word for it is Sozialraumorienterung social-spatial orientation (Handbuch zur Sozialraumorientierung Grundlage der integrierten Stadt(teil)entwicklung Berlin, 2009): it sees the NH as an infrastructure where to test integrated approaches taking into consideration the social space. This is a casa were an area-based policy provoked **institutional learning** that led to the rise of the *Socialraumorienterung* social-spatial policy.

Despite an initial criticism as a 'soft' intervention, Neighborhood Management appears to detach from the previous quantitative initiatives (e.g. more social housing) concentrating more on qualitative challenges, representing a paradigmatic example in urban development policies (OECD 2003). The capacity to strengthen collaborations by enhancing local assets and social resources, appears often emptied by the scarce possibilities to intervene on structural issues, concerning welfare, social cohesion, health, therefore livability. Neighborhood Managements cannot intervene directly but they can communicate the detected urgencies to the department in charge. The reduced action power on structural problems was among the main reasons for the generation of phenomena of displacement: despite grasping the real issues of the neighbourhoods in fact, Neighborhood Managements had **limited impact on the welfare systems** and therefore they had no power in the containment of processes of gentrification.

As argued by Ewert (Ewert 2016), Neighborhood Management, if deployed as an assemblage of micro social innovation projects, self-concluded and time-limited entrepreneurial activities, might **not be sufficient** to sustain the urban development of a city showing the emergence of pressing social challenges, which cannot be tackled only by an allocation of resources.

Neighborhood Managements as interface structures for social innovation hold great potential for the development of a new planning approach that expands the operativity of planning and provide a vision to social innovation. Nevertheless, their action is limited to management of funds for small-scale, time-limited activities, making them too little to intervene in structural issues affecting the neighborhoods and guarantee the re-distribution of value

towards excluded categories, avoiding the escalation of negative processes. On the other hand Neighborhood Managements, being led mostly by private contractors run the risk to transform the Kiez, into private field of experimentation of their social enterprises, causing further fragmentation and exclusion phenomena. Both these points entails a more stable role of the institutions promoting the policy, currently mere observer of the processes without a real pro-active commitment.

b) Pla de Barris Barcelona

Barcelona is one of the main examples of engaged cities in Europe. The city has always combined approaches to the spatial transformations of the city with **social-democratic policies** that combined social well-being and local culture (Degen and Garcia 2012). Barcelona owns a civic heritage of 40 public libraries, 50 civic centres, 32 Neighborhood Houses, 17 popular universities, 10 party houses (URBACT 2017), a 20% of these other civic cultural structures, excluding libraries, are owned and managed by citizens, social movements or associations. The unique style of governance, based on strong support for citizens' initiatives (González and Healey, 2005) and the changing influence of private sector in policy choices has long been recognized as the generator of the city's innovative mix of cultural activities and urban regeneration through social innovation. Nevertheless, it is also a city of contrasts and conflicts that shows a varied fragility and forms of exclusion in its different districts and especially in the central areas. Despite this, Barcelona provides since decades a fertile environment for social innovation to act and the most different players to interact in the urban environment, in a compact, cohesive public-led environment, that has been a European reference for years.

Barcelona legacy

The city has a long tradition of self-management carried out by the working class (dating back to the 19th century) and of neighborhood battles dating back to the 60s and 70s of the 20th century, which, as a result of growing migration, asked the city of Barcelona for certain housing services. In 1979, the newly elected Socialist Municipal Council rebuilt the city by drawing on strong civic ideals (González 2011) and, in a conscious political move, involved neighborhood associations in the design of its urban policy. The city saw a long period of important planning interventions also embedded as models for other cities (Monclùs, 2003, Degen and Garcia, 2012, Montaner et al., 2014). Gradually, the Barcelona model has also led to the democratization of urban space, strengthened by the opening of neighborhoods to the rest of the city through public festivals and cultural events, demonstrating a new identity based on "municipal citizenship" (McNeill 2003). The approach has seen the incorporation of the leaders of the most active neighborhood associations into the city's governing coalitions, an anticipation of what is also happening nowadays. In 1979, a period of great urban transformation began in Barcelona, which gave rise to what will be known internationally as the "Barcelona Model". The term refers to the set of urban policies, urban planning and management strategies that guided the renewal of the city from the mid-seventies onwards. Despite what the name, rather than a model, it was a dynamic process in which both public policies and the actors involved and their mutual relations were repeatedly modified and adapted to the emergence

of new circumstances and needs (Casellas 2012). Political decentralization from 1985 onwards contributed to the spread of administrative power in the various districts. In addition, Mayor Maragall's policies in the 1990s helped to materialize discourses on social cohesion at the urban level, through policies against social fragmentation and segregation (Garcia 2008). A dimension of 'Barcelona of the neighborhoods' was emerging with citizens engaging with districts with specific identities.

Nevertheless, with the city's stability as a particular model of governance being further internationalized, the democratic participation of citizens in the process of building the city was declining. The "Barcelona model", clearly visible in the urban changes as a result of the 1992 Olympic Games, was successful also due to the involvement of civil society, although it has begun through time to show signs of exhaustion and even of backing down. The increase of social inequalities has been leading to deeper urban segregation, both in central parts and in portion of the metropolitan region (Blackeley 2005; Degen and Garcia 2012). Barcelona's urban regeneration model has been under increasing pressure, which has increased the tensions between the objectives of global competitiveness and the attempts to ensure social justice and participatory governance. Like in other European cities, the structural crisis coincided with and was reinforced by the crisis of trust in public institutions and their representatives, from which self-empowerment and management awareness emerged, the best known example of which, is the 15M movement. The movement's starting point was the request to participate in the management and governance of public life, given the loss of confidence in existing institutions. As a result, there was a growing demand from society, associations, organizations, the third sector, for the management of space with public objectives.

Social innovation in Barcelona is nowadays encouraged by the administrative form of the country, the decentralised structure that appoints the autonomous communities to deliver and guarantee urban services (Montagut 2016) and by the specific city government, as it emerges clearly in the new municipalism phenomena (Balbo 2018). In the last years the political turmoils and the strong presence of some political leaders, led to a new response from the city, to the private mobilization for public purposes. Since the 2016 the city is experiencing a new wave of a rising phenomenon defined "new municipalism" or "municipalism of the common good" (Blanco and Gomà 2006), where the former urban activists are staring to reclaim political power by entering the institutions. Neo-municipalism, in fact, is envisaged as a new form of city government based on a greater impact of social issues in urban policies in contrast to the neoliberal policies of austerity. In this context, the urban agenda is defining platforms of interaction between practices of social innovation and regulatory policies. The "local" becomes a fundamental element in the articulation between the territorial government and the major global issues, as demonstrated by the creation of the "Network of Refuge Cities", an initiative launched by the Mayor of Barcelona at the end of August 2015 to accommodate migrants in opposition to the policies of closing the borders implemented by national governments and the European Union (Garcia, 2015).

Before the rise of the new administration, some attempt to frame the multitude of episodic practices, where undertaken. The management and orientation towards collaboration in Barcelona, has taken off strongly thanks to the political impulse of local institutions, especially in the last period through a series of initiatives and tools, helped to reduce the gap between institutions and innovation practices.

A remarkable experience was the implementation of the **Pla Buits** *(Pla de Buits Urbans amb Implicació Territorial i Social)*, a set of actions aimed to grant temporary use of empty spaces to public entities or non-profit associations to propose and develop uses and temporary activities (of one year extendible up to three years) to enhance social dynamism, conviviality and coexistence in the neighborhood. It temporary transferred to legally constituted and non-profit entities, spaces in which no transformation was foreseen in the short term. The objective was to extend participation to interested urban actors in the definition of future uses of publicly owned spaces. The spaces to be assigned, were defined by the municipality through the town planning department. A public competition defined which temporary project entailing activities that have public interest or social utility, would be the beneficiary of the space. The evaluation committee used a series of evaluation criteria (self-sufficiency, environmental sustainability, social impact or performance, creativity, innovation, formal quality). Legally, the process is structured as a transfer of temporary use, free of charge. *Pla Buits* had some positive impacts in the regularisation of some illegal practices, but on the other hand lacked the strength to define a shared integrated methodology beyond co-existence but stressing the co-production of urban transformative value. The attempt was perceived more as a 'domestication of the urban space' (Alabao and Martínez 2015), a temporary suppression of conflict and the redirection of the active citizenship towards solving what is contemplated as a "temporary problem of public management". The program seems to have lost an opportunity to build a strong path for a mutual collaboration among institutions and local communities, by granting support without foreseeing a long-term coherent plan.

Gestiò civica is another instrument that has been part of the city's regulatory framework since 1998. Civic management spaces have always been encouraged by the city of Barcelona, to date there are 35 non-profit civic management service structures. They are public spaces previously managed by the municipality, then by private companies, while more recently by civic initiatives (private owned with public purposes). The management requirements are the same as for the *Pla Buits*, with the addition that the contractors are linked to the territory, and the agreement is signed through a collaboration pact.

Another step in the research of a coherent framework for social innovation in Barcelona, was the research project **Barris i Crisis**. Its aims were to diagnose the effects and social consequences of the 2008 crisis and also the answers that were given by the neighborhoods in terms of private initiatives with public purposes. The research shed light on the territorial effects of the crisis from the point of view of the civic self-organisation as answer to the state retraction. The research team used several tools, among which the most relevant was cartography (Figure 21): the map of social innovation practices in Catalunya; the map of social segregation (using as variables the percentage of resident foreign population over total population and percentage of unemployed population, and average cadaster value and cost of the dwelling). The overlapping of these maps has allowed to define some preliminary territorial correlations between SI practices and urban segregation, highlighting that the great majority of practices (87%) were established in areas of non-segregation. The study concluded that social innovation tends to concentrate in areas hosting the most resources (networks, financial, relationship) for collective action, therefore the **commitment to social innovation** as a strategy to satisfy collective needs, should be **accompanied by community strengthening policies** in those urban areas where such resources are scarce. As a final remark, the research stated the importance of strengthening the connections among levels of intervention, in order to produce

urban transformation, proximity services, products, more likely to be absorbed and to produce value for the context within they are generated.
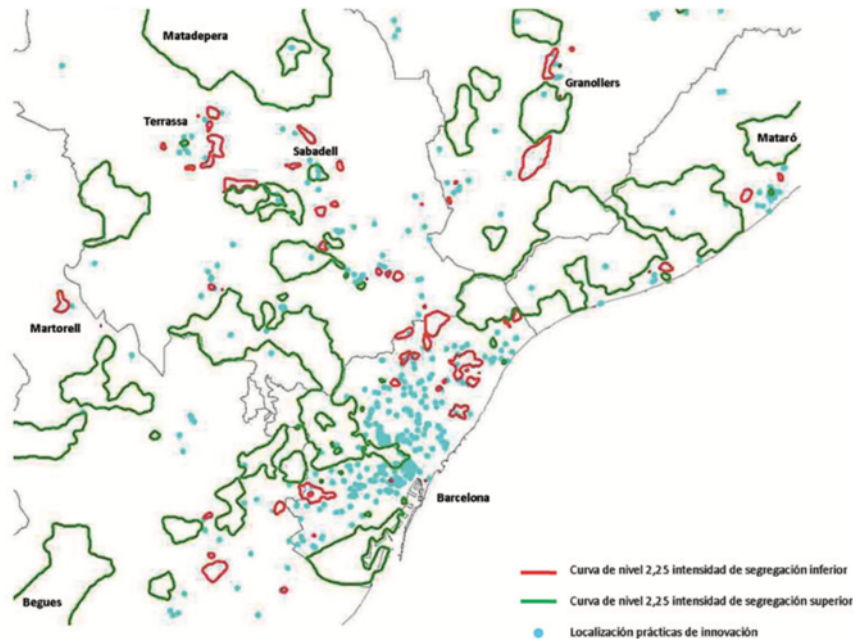

Figure 21 - Barris i Crisis (2015) localisation of social innovation and urban segregation areas. Source: Barris i Crisis

Pla de Barris

In 2016 the first steps of the new Administration led by mayor Ada Colau, were to define a new framework to recognize the on-going plans, devices, activities carried out within the city. The large experience of the Barris i Crisis and Pla Buits, pictured a situation of high social segregation among neighborhoods, warning against the risk of **transferring to social innovation the entire responsibility of guaranteeing social cohesion** in the city and, especially, in the most vulnerable urban areas (Blanco et al. 2016). They also pointed out the clear redistributive problem at the metropolitan scale that requires to go beyond strictly local policies, urging multi-scale and transversal integrated interventions.

This led to the definition of the knowledge framework of the **Pla de Barris** (2016), an initiative promoted by the municipality of Barcelona and managed by *Foment de la Ciutat*, a public enterprise. The Plan has its main objective in reducing social segregation and fighting its externalities, through the articulation and distribution of social innovation activities. It considers 16 districts of Barcelona, mostly in the area of the river Besòs and part of the historical city centre. It operates in four major areas: education, social rights, economic activity and urban ecology. The Plan has been applied since 2016, developed together with an **advisory council**, with the task of guiding, monitoring and evaluating the development of the Plan.

The main focus of the urban agenda of the Colau administration is to outreach and disseminate the value produced by the neighborhood social practices (Ostanel 2017), engaging in a process of co-production. Pla de Barris provides social innovations with tools to guarantee its continuity of action: it strengthens the practices by providing the conditions to act and produce effective externalities. It does that by managing the urban transformations and avoiding dangerous side effects (e.g. create further segregation or boundaries, provoke gentrification effects). The

Plan aims to induce a process of "co-production of public policies", with an incremental approach, which sets the main goals, without defining strategies, norms and actuation, a priori.

Context.

The asymmetric development of the different neighborhoods in Barcelona has determined the growth of inequalities and a double velocity in the city evolution. Pla de Barris starts from these premises to identify specific areas where inequalities are more pronounced and unable to be tackled with traditional planning tools, because of their constant dynamism, the need for rapid responses and complexity of topics to address.. In the application of the Plan, the neighborhood and the urban scale are selected, following the knowledge base emerging from the Social Innovation map of the city. Pla de Barris develops and applies 10 plans on 16 neighborhoods (Figure 22) located along three axis: Besòs, Muntanya and Litoral. It involves 12,6 % of the total population of the city, with 202.498 inhabitants.

The areas are selected according to some parameters: average level of salaries in the neighborhood; socio-economic, education and health indicators; presence of categories with special needs (disabled, elderly, etc.); urban deficits (lack of primary services and standards); degree of conservation of social housing; existence of on-going welfare-related actions. Each area represent an experimental site from which to experiment integrated reversing strategies that merge the individual innovation projects and the general visions of the plan. The encounter of the scale of the neighborhood and the territorial dimension of the axis, represents the additional strength for local social innovations to affect and be integrated in larger portions of the city. They act as two complementary lines of action that are mutually enriched: beside acting on different scales, the time horizons are different (four years for the neighborhoods, and medium to long term for the axes) and both the foreseen actions are different.

Figure 22 – target areas. Source: Pla de Barris

Goals.

The principles of Pla de Barris are as follows:

- transversality of thematics (to reduce the sectorial fragmentation of the municipality);
- inter/intra-institutions cooperation;
- empowerment of neighbourhoods through institutional proximity;
- revolving the perspective: working for projects aggregations, governing the effects of the actions;
- capitalization of the experience of the urban transformation processes already carried out in Barcelona and Catalonia;
- evaluation and accountability of results

Pla de Barris aims to reach four main objectives:

- Recover and boost the economic activity in the neighborhoods, especially through planning of community occupation, the promotion of the social economy and cooperative, the reactivation and the impulse of the small commerce, as well as the consolidation and the reinforcement of the local industrial activity;
- Facing urban challenges, low quality of housing and lack of equipment that can affect more intensely some neighborhoods, as well as promoting accessibility and centrality;

- Establishment actions of care and improvement of the living conditions of the population residing in these neighborhoods, with special attention to those who need it most (elderly people, young unemployed, immigrant population);
- Empower neighbors to organize and establish objectives and actions to improve collective life in the neighborhood, promoting social innovation practices to tackle global missions in local context.

Transversal principles are always necessary to be considered through the implementation of the actions at local level: gender perspective, public health, equity, energy and sustainability transition. At the same time more specific topics are addressed in a more pervasive manner, including:

- granting equal opportunities for people with low incomes;
- enhancement of small/medium economic activity, with particular emphasis on social economy, proximity trade, recovery of local industrial capacity and the improvement of employability;
- fill the gap in urban lacks in public space or equipment;
- retrieve the quality and health of the housing stock;
- increase educational opportunities;
- prevent spatial downwarding spiral;
- attention to groups with special needs.

All the measures seems to set the basis for an urban scheme of planning, which is retrieving its preventive and care action, rather that the regulating ones. The main expected outcome of the Plan is to convert "traditionally forgotten territories" into "new poles of attraction", socio-technical aggregations, which stands-out in the urban context, in particular thanks to their innovative models of co-production of policies in the territories, the aggregation of the constellation of initiatives, the organisation of management activities and the deployment of transformative actions.

Implementation.

The Plan is structured and it develops according to five axis: a) quality of living, b) plural economy, c) people, d) good government and e) the engagement with the cities with social justice. Each axis is divided in different area of action for the municipality (living, tourism, job, etc.). In parallel, ten district plans are developed with a territorial horizon.

The participation in the process, both in the actuation and in the definition of the goals, happens through the platform '*decidim.barcelona*' and through meetings and local-based workshops. *Decidim*, from the Catalan for "let's decide", is a digital infrastructure for participatory democracy, built entirely and collaboratively as free software. *Decidim* hosts collaborative processes for strategic planning, participatory budgeting, collaborative regulatory design. On *Decidim* processes and dialogs, debates, and assemblies are openly held and recorded.

Local-based workshop are deployed in the following phases:

- the **phase of the contribution to the plan** (one month and a half). It collects proposals according to the different axis of the plan. Furthermore, it proposes to enrich the existing projects and proposals and re-assemble local resources and assets into new shapes and original formats;

- the **phase of the answers** foresees the assessment and validation of the emerged proposals by the different sectors of the municipality taking into account the multiple competences emerged during the process, to be integrated into the Plan of Municipal Actuation;
- in the **phase of the results**, the new version of the Plan is presented, which incorporates the overall constellation of projects and local proposals. The *Equipo de Gobierno* is then in charge of transferring the plan to be discussed and approved.

Different policies and cross-sectoral competences, are developed and unraveled together, in a cohesive integrated strategy, aimed at focusing on local issues (displacement, social fragility, environmental risks) to face in a coordinated approach joining forces with local resources. As a backbone strategy, neighbourhood co-production, led by the public enterprise *Foment de Ciutat*, aims at re-design forms of artisanship, oriented towards the collective definition and common execution of solutions to previously detected needs. The empowerment of the citizens is fostered thanks to strategies targeted to ease the access for a large part of the population, who does not have the means to engage in city-making processes, governed by the institutions, but managed by the local intermediaries.

Each area is expected to develop its Plan, arising from the organization of a series of co-designed initiatives that entails:

- the **"engine projects"** that, due to their size and transversality, are capable of crossing and making the most of the areas of intervention of the Plan: social rights, education, economic activity and urban ecology. They are thematic projects that articulate all the proposals and actions surrounding a neighborhood;
- the **"proposals"** are the tools used to achieve the objectives. The proposals of the Barris Plans are foreseen to be used within the local existent community in the coming years. They carry out more than one action on the territory;
- the proposals contemplate **"actions"** that constitute the roadmap to follow in each Plan. The deployment of actions is a living process, so that they can be redefined over time. The involvement of the neighbors, as well as the associations or the agents and services of the territory, is essential for the success of the program and has to respond to a new relational logic that includes **co-production**.

Although each Pla de Barris has defined lines of action based on the diagnosis of each neighborhood with its neighbors, there are a number of shortcomings that are common to all territories. This has led to the fact that some projects have been jointly scaled and distributed in different neighborhoods or that some projects have been replicated and adapted to each territory, relying more on a global model and governance. Many of these transversal projects have been **motivated by the same areas**, which have seen the opportunity to implement innovative projects in territories of great social complexity, this way incorporating a proximity factor to the Neighborhood Plan. It should be noted that the vast majority of these projects have been deployed for the first time thanks to the awareness provided by the Plan (e.g. Program for the rehabilitation of vulnerable farms, New professional profiles in schools, New leadership in the neighborhoods). The transversal projects have eventually become structural projects beyond the Plan, therefore it is necessary to assess their continuity. That is the reason for many of these projects to incorporate an impact assessment program that allow to draw conclusions with a view to assessing its continuity in the future.

Governance.

The management of the process of implementation of the plan, together with the coordination of the activities, is in charge of an urban intermediary, **Foment de la Ciutat** (FDC), while each neighborhood plan is coordinated by a leader of a technical table. Foment de la Ciutat represents the link between the different sectors of the municipality and from the institutional level towards the local projects and eventually the one supervising the spatial implementation of the plan. The governance of the plan can be divided in three parts: political, technical and district. For the political part, parallel to the coordination of this process by Foment de la Ciutat, one **Advisory Board** has been created by experts in the various disciplines for urban transformation, as a support for the activities. The technical part is led by a **Piloting Committee**, with the presence of all the municipal areas involved and the driving forces in each neighborhood formed by technicians and neighborhood, who have become the epicenter of the decisions and the co-production of the projects. The technical work develops through sectorial thematic and technical tables for each district. Finally, at district level, the **Grup Impulsor** is the intermediate level that engaged directly with social innovation practices, raising awareness towards the technical and political bodies and enabling the singular initiatives. The project leaders of the Plans are professionals involved specifically in each of the plans to promote the intermunicipal coordination, management of actions and permanent dialogue with the social fabric of the neighborhood. The people in charge of the project have favored the transversal and integrated dimension of all the programmes promoted within the framework of the Plan, as well as ensuring intense and coordinated work with the district and the technicians in the area.

The involvement of the neighborhood through the *Grup Impulsor*, aims at cover the following aspects:

- adoption of a shared diagnosis of the issues;
- widest possible consensus regarding the priorities and actions to develop;
- debate and agreement on the allocation of resources;
- agreement on the management instruments to be used, which should include as much as possible the network of entities and neighborhood organizations.

The year 2016 has been devoted to design the methodology, the system of governance of the Plan, and specific plans for the sixteen districts of Barcelona selected. In the same year, the four instruments that guaranteed the governance of the Plan (Figure 23) and its methodological particularity were implemented: a) the commission of the municipal company Foment de Ciutat as the driving force and coordinator of the Plan with the recruitment of nine project managers, b) an advisory council made up of experts in the different disciplines for the urban transformation, c) a piloting committee with the presence of all the municipal areas involved, and d) the driving groups (*Grup Impulsor*) in each neighborhood formed by technicians and neighbors, who have become the epicenter of the decision-making and the co-production of the local actions. The implementation and monitoring of the ten neighborhood plans is planned between 2017 and 2020.
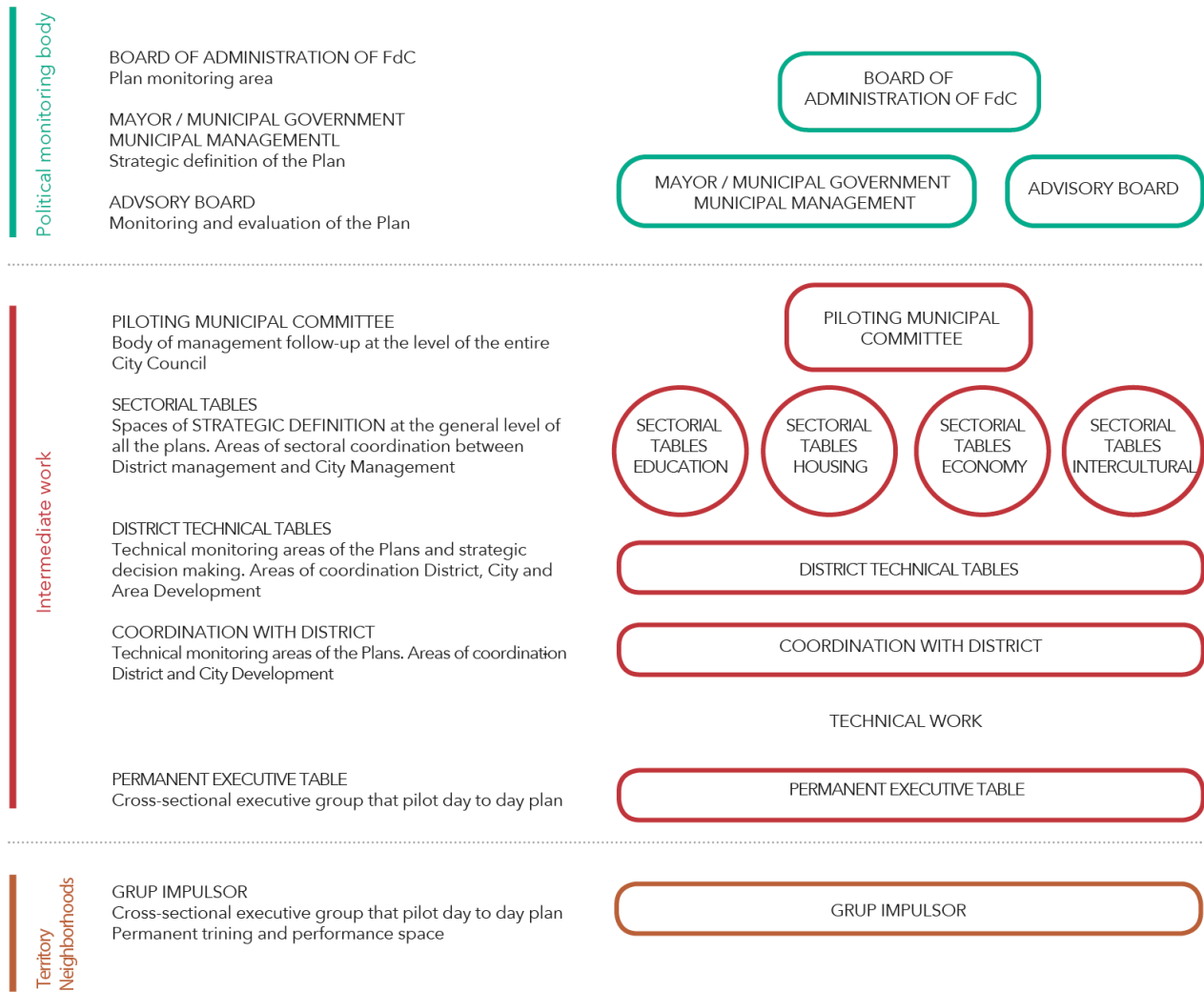
Figure 23 - governance of the Pla de Barris. Source: the author

The following table summarizes the main descriptive and analytic elements of Pla de Barris

BARCELONA Pla de Barris (Neighbourhood Plan)	
Path-dependency	Tradition of urban renewal policies (30s) PlanMacià. Mayor Maragall (70-80s) hygenism. Austerity policies stopped this cycle: 15M movement paved the way for new municipalism. Consolidated tradition (60-70) of civic fights and conflicts. In 2011 Plaza de Catalunya in Barcelona became the stage for the protest, turning into an urban commons as people assembled there to express their political views and make demands on their rights to the city. The collective symbolic capital that Barcelona accumulated depends on values of authenticity, uniqueness and particular qualities that cannot be replicated. This raises the question of local empowerment, including popular and opposition movements.
Stage of development	2016/2018 - In implementation

Main key principles	Aims to induce a process of "co-production of public policies". The objectives of the Plan are: to reduce inequalities, boost economic activity in the neighborhoods, improve the quality of housing and access to equipment and empower the neighbors to organize and answer to the increasing social segregation in the metropolitan region; implement a strategy based on: equity, right to the city, democracy and citizen action. Link between urban transformation and social intervention, inserts everyday life practices in a long-term perspective.
Implementing body	Municipal level: Mayor of Barcelona as main promoter. The neighborhood is the main protagonist, both in the conception and definition of the actions and in its deployment, management and evaluation.
Method of development	**Participatory approach**. The plan defines its objectives but the decision regarding the actions to be undertaken, their follow-up and their implementation are a joint task of the City Council and the citizens in each of the neighborhoods integrated in the program, through intermediaries

Selection criteria. As a result of the characteristics of the city and the distribution of income in the neighborhoods, it combines two different territorial scales: the urban neighborhood and the urban axis. It involves 16 areas in the metropolitan city.

Criteria for selection:

- average income level of the neighborhood with respect to the whole city;
- socio-economic, educational and socio-health indicators of social struggle;
- presence of groups in need of special attention;
- presence of urban development deficits;
- state of the housing stock;
- existence of proposals and innovation demands;
- presence of local intermediaries (associations and committees).

Tools. Engine projects crossing territories and topics, articulate and articulate all the proposals and actions. The proposals are the tools used to achieve the objectives, carrying out more than one action on the territory. The actions that constitute the roadmap to follow in each Plan. The deployment of actions is a living process, so that they can be redefined over time.

The Plan follows 4 phases:

1. Study of the status quo in the neighborhood. Qualitative and quantitative analysis. The latter is carried out with various meetings with technicians from the district of the different districts of the City Council and interviews with the associations and stakeholders of the district. The result of this phase is a **diagnosis** of the situation.

2. Concrete proposals. Once the analysis has been carried out, some initial proposals are defined and materialised in participatory actions (a workshop open to the public, an collective joint action). The result of this phase is a first **draft plan**.

3: closing the document and presentation. The district and the municipality conclude the document with a budget allocation for the different proposals with actions. This document is what is then presented to the citizens.

4: Implementation and monitoring of the Plan.

Training. The Advisory Council has also contributed to the promotion of the Training Program aimed at both City Council and City Development technicians. Moreover, two training cycles have been programmed, one directed

to the project leaders of the Plan and one to the neighborhood technicians of the different districts.

Monitoring. The proposals of the plan are debated and publicly evaluated through the digital platform and during on-site workshops, so that they can be capitalized and extended to other neighborhoods in the city, the metropolitan area and the whole Region.

Evaluation. The plan foresees the establishment of an advisory council, composed by citizens and professionals in the field of urban planning, social services, urban economics, and citizen associations. They are in charge of the co-evaluation to create knowledge by learning from experience.

Scale	Neighborhood approach on a **Metropolitan scale**
Financial aspects	€150 M. Special fund in the budget of the City Council, linked to the Mayor's Office, for intervention in the neighborhoods with the most urgent needs
Role of places	Thematic working groups in the neighborhoods' civic councils; creation of training and collective learning places for both the City Council staff and all the actors linked to the different actions in progress. These training and debate spaces have 3 main purposes: - share information and analysis derived from the program's performance as a whole. - provide training on specific aspects necessary for the proper development of the program. - promote the exchange of experiences and the identification of good practices with the participation of all the actors.
Effects	- slow reduction in data on inequalities in some neighbourhoods - transversal projects have become structural projects - incorporation of new collective actions developed by neighbours: Marina + 36 actions; Raval +34 actions; Sant Genís dels Agudells i la Teixonera + 21 actions; Zona Nord +22 actions; Les Roquetes + 4 actions; Trinitat Nova +18 actions; Trinitat Vella +34 actions; El Bon Pastor +40 actions; La Verneda +21 actions; El Besos +35 actions - simultaneous territorial and place-sensitive (Rodríguez-Pose 2018) policy - platform of interaction and evaluation between practices of social innovation and regulatory policies - practices are institutionally guided towards conversion into an added economic and productive space (whose value is marketed and distributed)
Outcomes	- rise of new associations to represent citizens' interests - political empowerment, agency of citizens - outreach and disseminate the local value produced in a territorial scale - neo-municipalism can give rise to extreme populisms - transversal projects motivated by the same areas (place-sensitive), thanks to the awareness raised by the Plan - involvement of metropolitan municipalities in the decision-making - leave out collective rights while enhancing personal contribution

Main findings

Some insight clearly emerged from the preliminary reports of the Pla de Barris and through interviews with scholars and practitioners, in charge of its implementation. It is still very early to evaluate the real impact of the Plan and its ability to reduce territorial segregation. However, it is worth highlighting that inequality data in the city has begun a very slight improvement (Informe Annual Pla de Barris Barcelona 2018). Barcelona shows how a policy approach can create synergy between professional practices, heterogeneous forms of social reclamation and institutions, breaking the public/private economic dichotomy in favor of a third element, the **common good**. The area-based policy is succeeding in achieving a balance between an horizontal coordination among social innovation practices, and **multi-level institutional governance** (Kazepov 2010). This balance has been possible thanks to the institutional commitment, with a clear political backing but also the involvement of the individual civil servants. Through the Training Program in fact, the recurrent theme of the poor predisposition of the administrative staff to take action, the lack of skills for the recognition of local needs, the scarcity of cognitive resources to deal with them, is addressed. The dynamic dimension of the training programme (the session took place each time in a different area of the Plan) has made it possible to build proximity relationships directly in the places, generating localized knowledge and exchanges with the context.

Each Plan presents different stages of implementation, effects but also pitfalls and shortcomings. One noticeable spillover of the Pla de Barris is the shared special attention to neighborhoods as basins and inexhaustible repositories of resources to be valued, of experimentations to be monitored and of relationships to be exploited. Many of the engine projects in fact, have been motivated and triggered by the same contextual factors targeted to be enhanced. The neighborhood dimension therefore, allowed for the identification and isolation of significative **challenges to become opportunities** to implement innovative projects in territories of great social complexity.

In geographical terms, the Barcelona approach is interesting for the ability to merge the neighborhood scale with the metropolitan one, addressing issues that transcend the municipal borders. The Plan does not just focus on social innovation areas of opportunities, but it attempts to **narrow the gap** between middle class districts (hit by the crisis but still able to act to improve their condition), segregated neighborhoods and institutions. In doing so, it recognizes the value of smaller municipalities located on the edges of the metropolis, hotspots of innovation, of natural resources, or industrial production. The approach is a first attempt to consider the real city, rather than the administrative one, using as a spread network, the experiences of social innovation and the neighborhoods as nodes where territorial values are collected, created and distributed. The nodes and antennas of the strategy are the neighborhoods, while the existing initiatives, associations, act as collectors and triggers of new knowledge, urban values and shared services. The role of the Grup Impulsor is key to achieve these goals, thanks to the **proximity work** but also to retrieve the **trust in institutional settings**, an issue where typically populism risk to find fertile ground to grow.

It represents a trial and error strategy (Donolo 2003) of policies and development, implementation and assessment, at the service of the municipality. To a large extent the Plan has forced the City Council to work in a different way. If the administrative areas normally set objectives and strategies to be subsequently implemented in the territory, the Pla de Barris has **turned this dynamic**: the objectives and the design of projects grow from the territory, and

the administrative departments are those responsible for implementing them. This is a qualitative evidence of the capacity of the Plan to reinforce not only what is public, but what could be collective, or common.

Nevertheless, the risk of reinforcing those practices that already emerge and are already well established in the territory where there is more capacity to act and to perform in common, is still present. The areas of intervention of the Plan – more fragile and with a weaker collective sphere - are still showing less capacity to activate, to tackle social difficulties and fragilities. This might be due to the early years of implementation of the plan, but shed the light on a key point that concerns the impossibility to address certain local issues in the absence of the public actor and without a previous program linked to structural measures (welfare, job opportunities, health, education). The action of the Municipality of Barcelona has strong political connotations: it affirms a new municipalism, a new form of democratic governance of cities and a new way of doing politics. Therefore the Administration intends both to support local practices in which groups of citizens associate and cooperate to achieve common interests in order to respond to collective problems, but also to intervene in tackling more structural issues such as inequalities in access to social, cultural and economic resources of the city. This **dualism** is facilitated by the multi-level governance of the Plan: the four bodies (Piloting Committee, Technical Tables, Executive Tables, Advisory Council) that, through the daily activities and proximity measures of the Grup Impulsor, implement and monitor the actions materialized from the Plan process.

Thanks to the fertile ground provided by the Pla de Barris, the new city government has also committed itself to promoting the Civic Heritage Programme for the use and management of city's heritage as a common good. The idea is to support and consolidate processes of community action, and has based this action on an open, inclusive vision of the city, in which the intersection of the public and forms of civic activism is a standard procedure. It is based on the idea that the municipal heritage can become common through new ways of interaction and shared management. The regulations were co-designed with the community spaces of the city.

The strategic objectives of the Programme are:

- to recognise, enhance and promote the urban common goods of the city of Barcelona;
- to recognise practices that are already in place and that are not embedded in a framework to ensure their continuity;
- to promote or consolidate projects for the self-management of urban common goods on the basis of principles of autonomy and to propose public policies that deal with the social needs of organizations;
- to generate prototype management of community services in which to experiment with the civic co-management;
- to design and implement a form of "common ownership".

As pointed out by Degen and Garcia (2012), Barcelona's model of collaboration between citizens and institutions was for years strongly based upon a unique governance style and its ability to merge competitivity of the city at international level and social cohesion at local level. The new articulations between state, market and civil society though, has generated new forms of governance for democratic legitimacy (Swyngedouw 2005) and forms of new municipalism. The Barcelona approach seems to reinforce participation in the sense of co-production of public

policies, because it starts from the idea that civic responsibility also lies in the collaboration in the diagnosis of problems. This attitude reinforce the idea of citizens as partners in the city-making and therefore as necessary assets to be empowered for a collective purpose. In Barcelona, the Municipality has always been the key player and a guide in the management of the process of urban change, although it has certainly adopted and encouraged a more entrepreneurial approach. Barcelona's unique governance styles have allowed a constant renegotiation of how the public and private sectors combine with civil society to ensure economic redistribution and social cohesion.

c) Urban Innovation Plan Bologna

Within this policy analysis, Bologna presents a different scale and rank than the previous cases. Nevertheless, its attitude for traditional approaches of social democracy applied to the city's transformation and the recent area-based approach deployed, makes it comparable to the other metropolis. The inspirational model of laboratory-city (e.g the paradigmatic planning approach for the city historical centre starting from 1969), has been reinforced in recent years, thanks to a series of urban policies developing principles and orientations that renovated the city role as a model in intertwining *urbs* and *civitas*, as shown in chapter 3. Despite the necessary changes in the structure of the city, determined also by the different emerging publics, Bologna has not changed its logic and, consequently, its constitutive identity. The Collaborative City model described since 2014, aims to frame this vision. The neighbourhood re-organisation of 2015 (Comune di Bologna 2015) with the reduction from 9 to 6, was the occasion to re-think the roles of the neighbourhood in administrative and management terms. The re-organisation foresaw for the Neighbourhoods Councils to strengthen the collaboration with residents by becoming main players in the care of the territory, with the establishment of new offices as territorial nodes where to concretely experiment with circular subsidiarity. The Neighbourhoods are therefore given the task of becoming the "antenna" (*Verso il Piano di Innovazione Urbana*, 2018) of the local upcoming needs and to promote networking, understood as the interplay of people and associations in the area, using formal and informal devices to activate synergies. The reform pro-actively involved civil servants, in guaranteeing the engagement of local actors in collaborative management and also design of strategies to take care of common goods. Among the elements of interest, the horizontal subsidiarity principle was fostered thanks to a mix of implemented devices, with the ultimate goal of fostering active citizenship:

- the "Regulation for the collaboration between citizens and the public administration on the care and regeneration of urban commons" approved in May 2014, a tool that implements the principle of subsidiarity, foreseen by the art.118 of the Italian Constitution, allowing engaged citizens to declare interest in the care and management of urban commons;
- the social network "Comunità", the first civic social network ever tested;
- the tender "IncrediBOL!" that promotes entrepreneurial projects in the cultural sector and creative professions.

The "Commons" regulation in particular, was successful thanks to the occasion it created for social innovation energies to move more freely among schemes, frameworks and bureaucratic boundaries. Collaborative policies in Bologna have led to the up-scaling of micro social innovation initiatives evolved towards a relevant degree of economic sustainability, consolidated and planned for long-term action. As a consequence, social innovation has grown to overcome the mere subsidiarity logic: local engagement, entrepreneurial skills, and the use of local knowledge, are new values that are being created also thanks to the opportunity for different stakeholders to interact in specific places. This strategy aims at reinforcing the proximity between institutions and neighbours, while proposing the diffuse quality of the city as an international competitive value. The process *Collaborare è Bologna* (2015) was meant to test the tool of the 'pact' emerging from the Common regulation, in a first structured process, engaging local resources to map, detect, identify and develop the potentialities of each neighbourhood, while at

the same time define the degree of urgency of intervention on the regeneration of specific buildings or the revitalization of public spaces.

Bologna is addressing urban development issues with a strong focus on the role of places as interaction nodes in which the relations performed within them create value (Venturi and Zandonai 2019). The dimension of place, in the case of Bologna, is able to govern its inner system of relations, transforming it into assets that feeds economic development and social cohesion. Places can make a difference in terms of rapidity, skill and opportunity development for micro practices, in both short and long distances networks, using contiguity mechanisms fostered by a stable institutional presence on the territory.

These premises are developed in the 2016's **Urban Innovation Plan**, the discursive strategy oriented towards the 2021 that holds together the main projects intertwining urban planning and social innovation in Bologna linking them to funding resources and to local potentialities, through collaborative methodologies based on spaces and places, open data and new technologies. It is not an urban planning tool or any other kind of plan provided for by current legislation, but rather a way of describing the actions deriving from urban planning forecasts and environmental plans, and made possible thanks to funding obtained from the public administration, such as the Pon Metro, the *Bando Periferie* and the Pact for Bologna, but also the activities that are the result of citizens' requests and initiatives, such as the participatory budget projects, launched since 2017. The Plan is meant to describe and unify in a document, both the choices and visions of the Public Administration and the local extra-planning initiatives, merging them with the potential and networks that arise from the direct commitment of citizens and communities, in the various and free forms in which they express themselves.

The Plan is an open document produced each year. The first report - *Verso il Piano di Innovazione Urbana. Un piano dedicato ai quartieri della città, agli spazi per la comunità e le relazioni tra le persone (2017)* – is a vision useful to arrange more clearly the Bologna Urban Agenda. The Plan expresses a well-defined position of the public administration towards social innovation, by identifying "a strong public commitment to ensure as many people as possible to have a distributed and accessible supply of services, tools, skills, information and space". It aggregates projects emerging from European funding (ROCK project; UIA – Urban Innovative Actions), the projects to be carried out in the capital and metropolitan area of Bologna as part of the National Operational Programme (PON) Metropolitan City 2014-2020. The second report - *La prossimità dei laboratori di quartiere. Verso il Piano di Innovazione Urbana (2018)* goes from the phase of recognition and organization of resources in the field, to the multifaceted story of the implementation of the actions and projects recognized by the plan. In particular, it describes from within the implementation of the policies outlined in the Plan.

Some points of the Plan are more interesting for the purposes of the research: first, public heritage is considered as an asset for community development; secondly, the administration integrates different sources of funding into a single vision on urban development; finally, the Plan identifies new centralities in the neighbourhoods dedicated to the interaction and the construction of relations. The Plan structures a total investment of 77.270.000 € covered by various European, regional and public funds.

What seems interesting is that the integrated framework of the projects and financial resources answers to a shared strategy of regeneration of areas, spaces, existing buildings, potential capital to be released as opportunity for the

communities to interact and become responsible not only for the co-design of urban transformations but also for its governance and care.

The Plan introduced different local interaction initiatives, namely Neighbourhood Labs (NL), Participatory Budget and Thematics Labs (LabAria, LabSpazi). The process of the Neighbourhood Labs is the connecting element where interaction is the tool used with the aim to create proximity spaces as concrete and stable collaboration processes in each neighbourhood promoting specific nodes of interaction, new forms of urban co-production, engagement and stable cooperation between local players. This strategy, fostered by the municipality, is contributing to define a coherent territorial framework for social innovation in the city, identifying specific places as innovation spanners and useful bridges towards urban policies and planning.

Context

Urban Innovation Plan is an area-based policy, as described for Berlin and Barcelona. The significant difference concerns the process of selection of the areas on which to intervene and where to propose the implementation of the neighbourhood laboratories. Unlike other cities, Bologna did not only analysed ex ante the data on territorial inequality and fragility to identify the implementation areas. Instead, the **existing resources** were the assets to be worked on, highlighted during the participatory paths carried out over the years. For the establishment of the areas where to intervene with the Neighbourhood Labs, the selection started from the priorities that emerged during the "Collaborare è Bologna" process, based on the presence of on-going activities of social innovation (e.g. existing groups and associations working to take care of some public spaces, informal orchards, self-organised community centres) and socio-demographic criticalities. "Collaborare è Bologna" foresaw 6 city meeting from October to December 2015 that have allowed the results of recent Bologna's policies, to be presented in the six new neighbourhoods and where the tool of the collaboration pact was tested, and extensive feedbacks were given by the participants (residents of any age, economic operators, civil servants, representatives of professional categories). The participants were first given a map of each neighbourhood of Bologna, asking them to identify, according to their knowledge, what were the potentialities and already set processes in the areas, on which they considered useful for resources to be invested. From the meetings emerged a scattered picture of initiatives, mapped on a cartographic base, highlighting the distributed potentialities of each neighbourhood and the amount of energies already in place. Between January and February 2016 a process of evaluation of the proposals by all the structures of the administration took place, which allowed to identify possible synergies between the proposals, funding opportunities and relevant issues both in specific neighbourhoods and distributed throughout the city. The final phase of reporting foresaw another six meetings in the neighbourhoods, during which the priorities for intervention were illustrated. Following this path, the prerequisite and the priority assets on which to intervene with future planning visions, were identified. In some cases, they were areas in a state of degradation (geographical, social, environmental) or undergoing fast processes of decay, in others, contexts with strong transformative potential, in which social energies and economic resources have already been invested. The projects identified eventually formed the basis for the elaboration of the proposals to be candidate to the European funds of the 2014-2020 programme (both structural and regional funds). In terms of geographical distribution, the target areas where located mainly in social housing districts (e.g. Pilastro in San Donato, Portazza in Savena, Pescarola in

Navile), in what might be considered social peripheries in the historical centre (e.g. University area), in peri-urban/rural areas (e.g. Caab) and in hotspots for social aggregation. The areas identified, have become eventually the reference for the following phase of the Neighborhood Labs within Urban innovation Plan. As shown in Figure 24 and Figure 25, specific data from the statistic department of the municipality of Bologna, highlights the higher presence of social inequalities and fragilities in the city, showing higher emergency not only in peripheral areas but in a distributed pattern across the urban parts of the city. When overlapping the most affected areas by social, demographic and economic fragilities, with the target areas of 2017 and 2018 phases of UIP, they partially corresponds, but half of the sensitive areas are still left out.

The context of the Urban Innovation Plan is hence including for a half the most fragile areas of the city and for the other half it considers the areas where the presence of higher social and urban capital, constant work and long lasting tradition of collaboration, provides a large sampler of projects and social innovation initiatives.

Maps of demographic, social, economic fragility
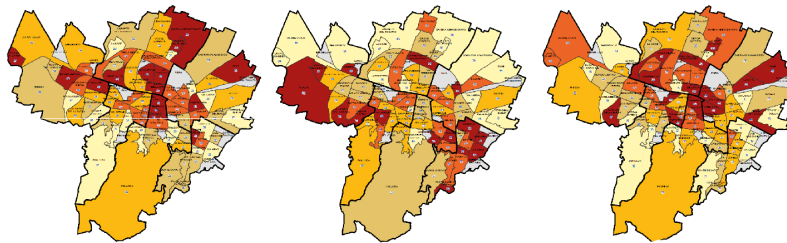
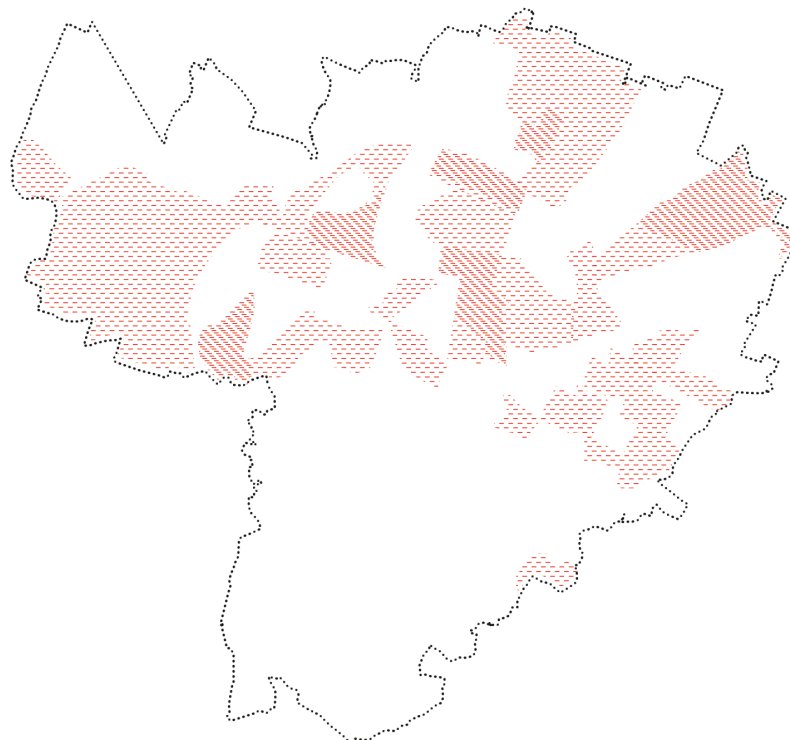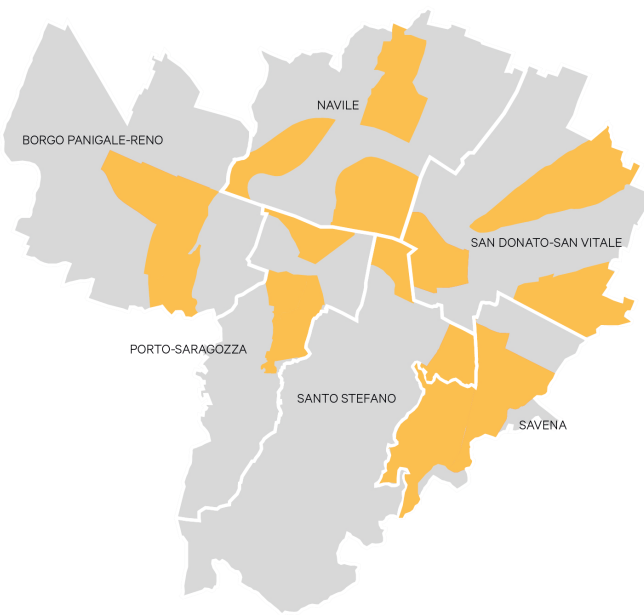Overlap layers of mayor fragility (demographic, social, economic)

Figure 24 - map of social, demographic, economic fragility with highlighted the most affected areas. Source: elaboration of the author on "Fragility maps" by area Programmazione, Controlli e Statistica - Comune di Bologna

Taget areas for the Urban Innovation Plan (2017/18)   Overlap layers of mayor fragility with target areas UIP
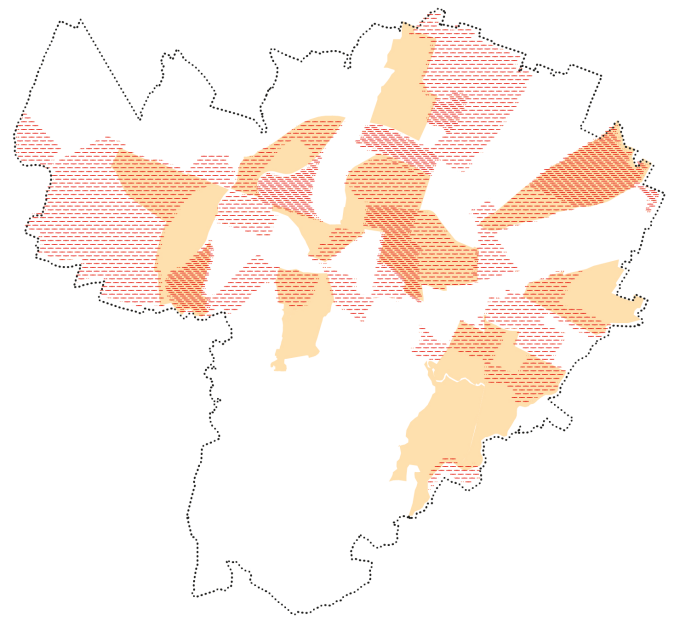

Figure 25 - comparison between the most affected areas with the target areas of the UIP. Source: elaboration of the author on the map of the Neighbourhood Laboratories by Foundation for Urban Innovation and "fragility maps" by area Programmazione, Controlli e Statistica - Comune di Bologna

Goals

The objectives of the UIP are multiple and changeable. The plan aims to relate the choices and projects of the administration with the potential and networks that arise from the direct commitment of local communities, expressed in different forms. It brings together programs and proposals with 2021 horizon, in order to report, circulate ideas, create awareness, connect efforts and stimulate collaboration for the future development of the city. From an administrative and political point of view, the objective is to guarantee to the largest possible number of people a distributed and accessible supply of services, tools, skills, information and spaces, to collaborate with the actions already in place in the city. UIP aims to develop and disseminate greater social skills, starting from the potential given by the places of the city.

From the urban point of view, the goal is to generate centralities in the new 6 districts of Bologna, which are not only administrative, but real drivers of initiatives, arenas of exchange and observers of hyper-local dynamics. With regard to governance, the plan intends to forge alliances with the various actors who oversee the territory with their own initiatives, for whom the objective is legitimacy and sustainability, including economic one. Finally, from an economic point of view, UIP intends to strengthen assets and initiatives that can drive a recovery and regeneration of fragile areas, but at the same time have a pivotal role for a distribution of value to other parts of the city, in a seamless process. Collaboration therefore becomes a competitive factor at international level. Through the Neighborhood Labs, the specific goals of the Plan entail the definition of the hybrid and mixed uses of each selected building or area in each Neighborhood and the organization of the projects to be candidate to the participatory budget, by selecting the topics to be addressed with urgency (e.g education, digital gap, social cohesion).

Urban Innovation Plan foresees to answer to these goals by creating the conditions for seamless localized participation processes to support social innovations through stable processes which connects inner resources to opportunities in each neighborhood. This role is expressed by the Neighborhood Laboratories.

Implementation

The process of the Neighbourhood Laboratories act on these objectives by promoting specific nodes of interaction, hosting new forms of urban co-production, engagement and stable cooperation between social innovation practices and between practices and local institutions. They are the operative, proximity device with which the city equipped itself for both the activities of observation, collection, creation and monitoring, in an iterative way. NLs can be described as enabling infrastructures and local hubs of collaboration, acting as intermediary institution between actors and local institutions and between actors themselves (Aggers and Jensen 2015; Nyseth and Hamdouch. 2019), oriented to the co-design of policy actions and urban solutions. They are "opportunity spaces" (Hillier 2013) of interaction between city staff and organised and non-organised groups of citizens, with the aim to activate and manage stable collaborative processes in the target areas. Their aim is to develop a virtuous synergy between the public and the private actors, as they are called to play a reference role for citizens and trigger innovation towards institutions, through several phases:

- the first step on the implementation of the Labs, concerns the selection of the areas where to set them up, as explained above, carried out by Municipality's sectors and Neighbourhoods' officials, who are also in charge of the definition of the large thematic framework of topics to tackle;
- the following phase aims at building the knowledge of the neighbourhood, its emerging issues, urgent problems, main resources and opportunities to address with local stakeholders in charge of the definition of the capital to activate in the neighbourhood. It involves the most relevant territorial actors, as indicated by the neighbourhoods' officials but it aims to enlarge the involvement to those categories that usually do not participate (sucha as neet[13] and immigrants), through general assemblies;
- the co-design phase foresees the deployment of a series of engagement tools (meetings, design workshops, digital collaboration platform, questionnaires, walks and bike visits) bearing in mind the proximity mission, which aim to engage the widest audience. This is the phase where the proposals for action are collected, fine-tuned, shared, assessed and communicated;
- each neighbourhood's design proposals, follows a validation phase with technical personnel from the municipality, in order to assess their feasibility and get the right support in financial, bureaucratic, technical terms. In order to engage people to participate in the activities, Neighbourhood Lab Teams participate in public events, like cultural meetings, neighbourhood parties, concerts, in order to enter in contact with a wide range of people, who are normally hard to reach.

After the first year of experimentation, the results are 11 building defined as priorities to be regenerated with European funds and private investments, and a large catalogue of project proposal for public spaces, to be candidate to the participatory budget. The regenerated hubs aims at becoming interaction nodes for new forms of

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[13] Neet: young people neither in employment nor in education or training.

urban co-production and to set stable collaborations between local resources and practices of territorial transformation. They aim to transform the role of neighbourhoods into new cultural and productive arenas for youth, culture, sport, social activities and community development.

The noticeable side effect, is that specific places are becoming a sort of outposts for public institution, assigning a new role to neighbourhoods to build stable local processes to enable innovation and mutual learning. What is still to be understood is their collective power for the whole city, their character and impulses, their differences in relation to the different districts and the connection possibilities, and finally the network they could span in the metropolitan city.

Governance

The UIP is commissioned by the Municipality of Bologna, produced by the governance unit (Figure 26) of the Office for Civic Imagination - which the city council kicked off at the end of 2016 - and managed by the Foundation for Urban Innovation, for the specific part of the Neighbourhood Labs, with an incremental process to be replicated each year. The governance of the plan is necessarily hybrid, precisely because it encloses a series of wide-ranging projects in a single discursive framework. The common denominator of the projects is the characteristic of interaction between public, private and civic actors, with in some cases the incursion of cognitive actors (universities or research centres). The element that connects the various projects is the processes of the NL, which have their own complex and multi-level management. Each NL is equipped with a Neighbourhood Team, a multidisciplinary group in charge of leading and enabling the development of the activities of co-design, aimed at better manage the complexity and at interfacing between the multiple levels of institutional and not-institutional actors involved. The Neighbourhood Labs become operative units for the integrated projects and plans, coordinated by the Neighbourhood director and the Neighbourhood Lab team. Because of the variety of topics addressed, the Labs includes and involves the whole sectors (Ostanel 2017) of the public administration. The municipality guarantees the conditions for Neighbourhood Labs to act as intermediaries, thanks to the implementation of new creative technical-economic tools and parallel stakeholder involvement actions.
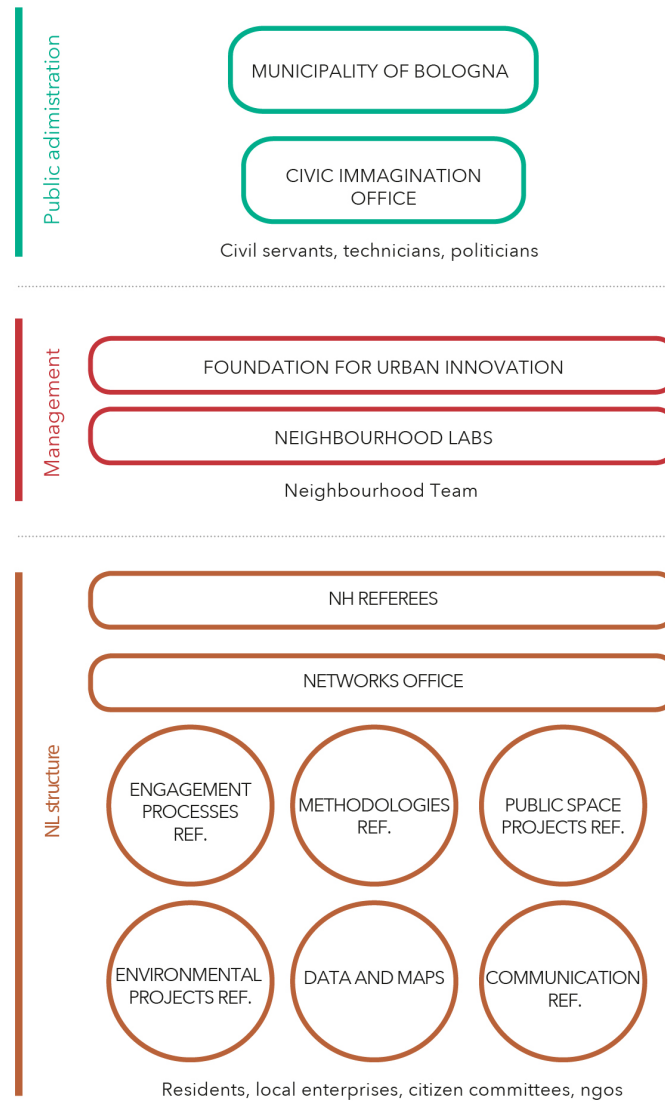
Figure 26 - governance of the Urban Innovation Plan. Source: the author.

The following table summarized the main findings of the descriptive and analytic investigation of the policy.

BOLOGNA Urban Innovation Plan (UIP) and Neighbourhood Labs within the Collaborative City	
Path-dependency	Tradition of social democracy and efficient welfare system; neighbourhood reform and de-centralisation of services: Laboratory-city.
	Regulations to support local social innovation, added subsidiarity principle in the Statutes of Municipality: Regulation on Urban Commons; NH management reform; continuity in local government; long term policy process on neighbourhoods; tradition of community-based activism, collaboration driven by co-design mechanism at city level, NH based participation
Stage of development	Since 2017 (until 2021). In implementation
Main key principles	Urban Innovation Plan establishes a general discursive framework to coordinate different projects and actions in different areas, previously selected. It organises several ongoing projects of the city and their urban opportunities, resources spaces and competences, with different tools and financial devices. It foresees the development of area-base processes through Neighbourhood Labs, in charge of

the co-definition of projects to be realized to tackle urban inequalities at district scale by defining a framework of projects which address several issues in specific target areas. It establishes concrete collaboration in each neighbourhood and creates specific proximity spaces.

The main principles of UIP are:
- Social inclusion, rights and opportunities
- Environmental sustainability
- International attractiveness and proximity economy
- Digital space and community technologies

Implementing body	Municipality of Bologna – Office for Civic Imagination – Foundation for Urban Innovation (former Urban Center)
Methods of development	**Engagement.** Neighbourhood Labs entails the recruitment of participants such as multi-level stakeholders, members of associations, intermediate bodies, young people, migrants and inhabitants of the neighbourhood, recruited during public events, on-line campaign and outreached locally. **Intermediate level.** The Labs are managed and implemented by the Foundation for Urban Innovation, as intermediary in the facilitation of the processes. The central government lets go partially some power to the Labs while guaranteeing the smooth realisation of the process. **Monitoring and feedback.** Stable presence of civil servant to monitor the process; Ces.co.com. (Centro Studi Avanzati su Consumi e Comunicazione Dipartimento di Sociologia e Diritto dell'Economia University of Bologna) produces annual reports assessing the outcomes of the laboratories and follows the process as it develops, re-arranging the methodology step-by-step. Each project comprehended in UIP follows its specific implementation phases. For the establishment of the Neighbourhood Labs the selection started from the priorities that emerged during the "Collaborare è Bologna" path, based on the presence of on-going actions and socio-demographic criticalities. It defines target areas, where specific data from the statistic department of the municipality of Bologna, highlighted the higher presence of social inequalities and fragilities. What links the projects is the transversal on-going path of Neighbourhood Labs, cyclical, stable, recursive process that is renewed year by year. It follows 5 steps: **- Communication and information**: the district is involved in defining the base requirements from which to start the design proposal, prior to inform on the existing actions from previous processes; Integrate different sectors, scales and policy areas. Choice of areas involved and identification of resources (collaborations, funding, facilitators, ...); **- Involvement of actors**: Intermediate bodies, inhabitants, young people and migrants **- Priority selection and validation**: definition of the area Agenda: scenario, projects, proposed actions; Vocation definition for proximity places (financed by PON Metro). Identification of priority projects on public spaces to be submitted to the Participatory Budget.
Scale	Neighbourhood/District
Financial aspects	The aim is to integrate different financial forces under a shared vision for urban development. The Plan frame a total investment of 77.270.000 € including several funds. - PON Metro 2014-2020: 41,2180 m €

	- Urban Innovative Actions (Villa Salus project): 6,35 m € - Horizon 2020 (ROCK): 2 m € - National Plan for suburbs requalification: 18 m € - Laboratorio Urbano Aperto: 3 m € - City Plan: 10,25 m € In the 1st year of implementation, the Neighbourhood Labs defined priorities to apply to the Participatory Budget (1.000.000 € both for 2017 and for 2018 editions)
Role of places	The Neighbourhood Labs are developing transformations for new hubs as cultural centers, new spaces of urban co-production, related to youth, culture, sport, social activities and community development: 11 areas of intervention among the 6 neighbourhoods of Bologna were selected to be financed and developed. These renovated places constitute specific hotspots for social innovation, because of their significative role in terms of uses (they are hybrid in functions and in their management), spanning networks (they are part of a system of spaces in the city which have the same boundary-spanning role between citizens and institutions) and European link (they are regenerated thanks to EU fund, therefore they are included in EU networks) among the neighbourhood.
Effects	- Co-design of guidelines for the development of actions of education, social inclusion, digitalisation - involvement of multi-actors (economic operators, third sector, intermediate bodies, associations, committees, cooperatives, civil servants, policy-makers, residents (both elderly and millennials), representatives of foreign inhabitants - Project proposal for 11 buildings - 6 projects for new squares, gardens and public spaces voted for Participatory Budget - 12 priorities for the future of Bologna's Districts to be used by the administration as guidelines for future policies: 1) Inclusion of young people, training and education, 2) Development of employment and business, 3) Digital, new knowledge and skills, 4) Memory, sense of belonging and participatory storytelling, 5) Inter-generational exchange, 6) Animation and social aggregation, 7) Right to space, beauty and play, 8) Slow mobility, security and accessibility, 9) Collaborative and open spaces, 10) Multiculturalism, 11) Support to parenthood, 12) Support for marginalities
Outcomes	- definition of a different governance and planning model - possibility to experiment new forms of participation - activation of mutual learning environments, as research and development arenas for public development - triggering social innovation at micro level - reinforcement of territorial networks - NL outposts of PA, hidden political agendas

Main findings

After the first years of experimentation of the Urban Innovation Plan, it seems important to highlight the role of Neighborhood Labs as intermediaries in the policy implementation process, as fundamental elements to guarantee the following main purposes:

- fostering the involvement of multi-actors, both multi-level (different institutional profiles and government levels) and multi-discipline (different competences represented by the actors involved); outreaching less involved categories;
- triggering social innovation at micro level: fostering experimentation and implementation of collaborative practices promoted by citizens, communities and businesses;
- leveraging social innovation at macro level: challenging standard procedures by proposing flexible tools and devices for area-based governance. The Foundation for Urban Innovation appears to be an institutional innovator (Ostanel 2017) within the Administration system;
- up-scaling and promoting the methodology at regional, national and international level and researching for best practices to be replicated in the specific context;
- mapping and gathering data and information: to monitor and evaluate the processes; to narrate and represent the dynamics of change; to inform planning; to open up new opportunities for practices;
- granting the possibility to try the goals and re-formulate the actions foreseen to reach them through a recursive and iterative process.

What is experienced in these **in-between places** is to accommodate different informal territorial projects born from singular micro forces, creating opportunities for exchange and interaction, reinforcing every existing project and allowing the emergence of processes that emerge from interactions of the individual groups. With Neighborhood Labs Bologna is creating a backbone structure in the urban fabric, where new social innovation hotspots act as bridges from local initiatives and institutional level, and where proximity is the inspiration principle. The Neighbourhood Labs, I argue, are considered flexible outpost for the public institution in specific neighbourhoods, engines and productive units for new forms of economic productions and building stable local processes to enable innovation and mutual learning. This institutional strategy can be put side by side with the activities promoted by specific places in Bologna, innovation spanners and useful bridges for social innovation in urban policies and planning. In these places, the actions linked to local resources and practices hence become anticipatory elements of urban transformations (Orioli 2018).

The dimension of place, in the case of Bologna, is such to the extent that it is able to govern its own system of relations, transforming it into assets that feed economic development and social cohesion. Places can make a difference in terms of rapidity, skill and opportunity development for micro practices, in both short and long distances networks, using contiguity mechanisms fostered by a stable institutional presence on the territory. Nevertheless, in order to be able to embody this role, they need to be recognized in their intermediate dimension, and given a support framework to allow them a long-term programming, including monitoring and evaluating phases. The policies of Bologna shows that urban intermediaries of institutional or informal kind, are gaining more and more centrality as contact points between government and citizenship, as resources and externalities to be taken into consideration both by innovation practitioners and institutional policy-makers.

Nevertheless in this case, the durability of the policy process is put under tension. In Bologna the 'season of policies' that puts forward the alliance between social innovation practices and the local government is strongly politically driven. The collaborative policies are heavily intertwined with the current Public Administration and its political vision, leaving space for the possibility, in case of a change of political orientation, for the dismissal of the

overall apparatus of norms, initiatives and supporting infrastructures. This attitude could have a negative impact on the sustainability of the policy process, but could also have repercussions on the sustainability of micro-scale practices, which by their nature are contingent and strongly linked to the context, including socio-political ones. In this sense, it seems even more necessary to establish and consolidate the role of places as interface located at an intermediate level. In addition to acting as a bridge between action levels (from macro to micro) as explained in the next chapter, these are interesting places for collaborative production, containing projects and services and, ultimately, producing skills.

Operative insights from policy-analysis

This chapter aims at understanding the lessons that could be learned when looking at the interaction between planning and social innovation from a policy point of view; it aimed at unravelling how social innovation came to be and the impacts of policy tradition on contemporary dynamics and future planning setups, the lessons to be learned when looking at the interaction between planning and social innovation, the enabling factors for social innovation to up-scale and how it contribute to mutual learning with institutions.

From the comparison of the on-going policies of the cities of Berlin (SIC - Neighbourhood Managements), Barcelona (Pla de Barris) and Bologna (Urban innovation Plan – Neighbourhood Labs) some operative insights can be summarised.

The analysis is divided into two parts, the first descriptive part highlights the similarities between the three cases: the institutional policies are guided by an area or neighbourhood dimension as a unit of intervention and also as a pool of resources to be enhanced; they are based on the recognition of target areas (most in need of intervention) through a system of indicators and provide for a management model based on a multi-level governance. In the three cases the policy approach shows in the intermediate level the key role for the effectiveness of the implementation of the target-oriented actions in the territory. In Berlin, the Neighbourhood Managements provides a real form of local management, in the form of an area-based development agency, focusing on **co-managing**; in Barcelona a complex governance apparatus holds together a series of actors and roles positioned at the meso level between the promoting institutions and practices: the roles vary according to the skills deployed, from the technical, management and thematic ones, to the more relational ones of the Grup Impulsor, constituting a governance apparatus that focuses on **co-learning** as a method of development; in Bologna the approach sees the Neighborhood Labs as intermediaries between the municipality and the local communities, pursuing a **co-design** logic.

The role of the **urban intermediaries**, positioned at a meso level (Figure 27), between the strategic macro level and the micro level of the practices, emerges as a common character of the three cases. They act at the neighbourhood level in different times, ways and with different outcomes according to the cases.

Figure 27 - summary of the Policy Analysis. Source: the author

Urban intermediaries, emerge as guides in the area-based processes of regeneration that intercept social innovation, as arenas of interaction between the level of practices and of institutions. Although intervening at different scales and with different starting points, the three cities share this common ground that provide different peculiarities according to the specificities of the cities' political goals, territory, target areas and actors involved. In Berlin, urban intermediaries are outposts of urban policies, not only for their link from practices to more engaged institutional processes, but also for the connection between actors, resources, working both ways, towards institutions and towards local communities, in a managerial logic. Their role is to mediate the tendency to involve in social innovation processes, only actors with a high cognitive and economic power at the expense of the democratic representation of parts of the population that are difficult to represent, increasing the gap between the social base and institutional planning. Barcelona's intermediaries are rather consolidated civic infrastructures, reinforced and legitimised by the public strategy and supported in particular concerning welfare measures. Here the public keeps the responsibility of coordinating and operating in the most urgent sectors and domains, while supporting (also financially) the autonomy of existing local prexides in the neighbourhoods. The logic is of a mutual learning, where intermediaries share their consolidated experiences of street-level work, while institutions provide additional space for a policy framing of the local actions. Bologna is rather a collection of the two approaches, with a widespread consolidated network of centers, that is retrieving the legacy of the civic centers. The difference of the contemporary configuration of the Neighbourhood Labs, is their productive activity (of products, policies, processes). Here, to "design together" (Sennett 2012) is what makes the difference in their catalysers role for innovation in the different areas.

In the case of both Berlin and Bologna, intermediaries are located as singular units at the centre of the processes of social transformation, while Barcelona pursued a more distributed logic, where several existing outposts are taking over as "antennas" for the implementation of the measures of the Plan. Neighbourhood Managements (Berlin) and Neighbourhood Laboratories (Bologna) become real institutional architectures on a neighbourhood scale. The first, operate by meeting the experiences of social innovation and giving the opportunity to act to those who do not have the means or the tools to participate, by direct financing projects. The latter are constituted as social infrastructures, starting exactly from such experiences which are not only activated and managed, but co-designed. While Berlin and Bologna offer specific 'windows of opportunity' for the interaction between practices and policies, Barcelona **consolidates** with a standard framework **what has already been happening** in the city for some time: a widespread scenario in which specific places allow institutions to approach the territory both to manage and to co-produce solutions on a local scale. Barcelona's effort is to avoid the transformation of these moments of encounter into co-optation of citizenship, commodification of collaboration and to prevent processes of gentrification, generated by the lack of public control of the results of private, profit-oriented projects. In this interpretation the presence of institution is even more relevant, to assess and support the processes, enabling and strengthening their outcomes, in particular the access to specific tools and the confrontation between the individual initiatives. In Berlin on the other hand, the institution is the director and orchestrator of both the strategy and the financing choices. Nevertheless, the policy entails the direct delegation of implementation and verification to an external contractor, which in some cases produced escalating effects towards privatisations of public and collective assets and initiatives.

The second part of the analysis highlights three lessons that can be learned by analysing the policy context. As shown by the Figure 28, these intermediaries are inserted in an enabling policy context that locates them at the meso level between planning (macro level) and practices (micro level). They act as bridges between the strategic and the operative playground, via three interactions:

- **Grafting** from meso to macro;
- **Legitimising** from meso to micro;
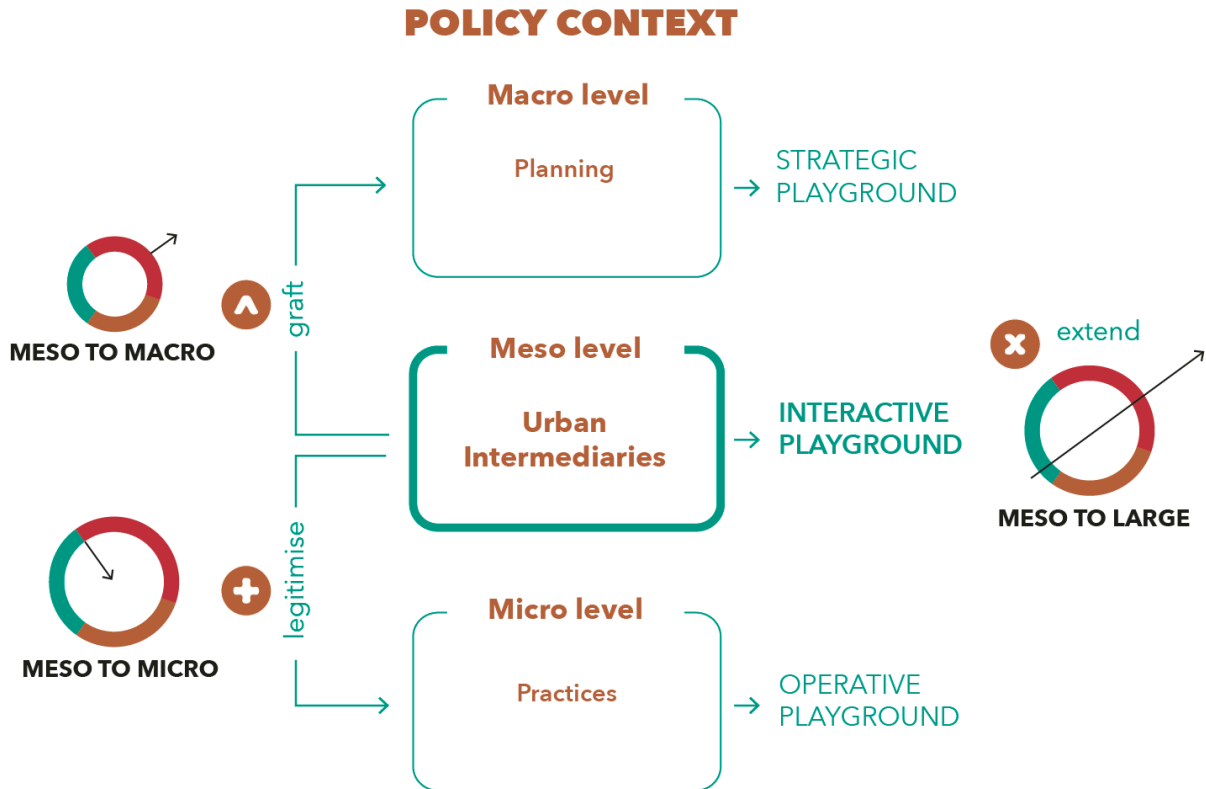- **Extending** from meso to large.

Figure 28 - lesson learned from policy analysis

Grafting: from meso to macro

Grafting entails the ability of the interaction to transform the existing into something new, a contamination between practices and planning, facilitated by policies.

Urban intermediaries interact, trade, with the level of planning by **grafting** ideas, needs, organizational structures, the operational action of practices, in the strategic schemes of planning. They are not performing an action of mere integration of the results of innovation practices that would risk reducing their radical and innovative potential in the first place. They recognize the valuable elements in the micro level and know how to graft them with the tools and schemes of the plan, in order to produce alternative institutional arrangements, renew existing tools and approaches towards the management, planning and development of the city. In the analysed cases, this action is materialised as **institutional learning** produced as a spill over of the processes: public actors are **correcting their institutional devices** according to a trial and error strategy implemented by area-based processes:

- Berlin is pursuing goals of grafting between institutional and practices levels, in a form strongly imposed by the state institution, who however disappears at the time of the implementation of policies and in the operational actions carried out by the Neighbourhood Managements. This attitude, is risking to delegate not only the responsibility of the management but also the control of the outcomes to the NM team. Furthermore, it requires an external and formal evaluation, which risks to lack the ability to record the

qualitative changes produced by social dynamics. The case of Berlin has produced a managerial management of certain areas, which in some cases has not solved the initial challenges and has also privatised the areas, also generating phenomena of replacement of inhabitants and expulsion;

- in Barcelona, the process of governance takes shape thanks to the strong political drive that has found in neo-municipalism a response in terms of political power. The social-political context of the three cities, has been the key condition for social innovation to emerge and in some cases, to stabilise its transformative potential. In the case of Barcelona is even more clear that the political scenario (15M movement) had a pivot role in the sensitisation towards a supportive role of the government towards social innovation, producing a planning scheme that reads the city through the lenses and the categories of social innovation. In this sense, social innovation contributed to influence the institutional planning by providing different interpretations for the urban analysis, searching and addressing those needs that are still underrepresented or ignored. Furthermore, the interaction with the practices allowed to deal – from an experiential knowledge point of view – with the processes that politics cannot direct. As a consequence, the attitude to enable social actors to intervene in the transformation of the city is already a praxis. The Pla de Barris offers a grafting action by providing social innovation practices, emerging also from the evolution of social activism actions, with the tools and competencies to take action, by empowering them through training and inserting their solutions directly inside the planning tools. Differently from the case of Berlin, the preliminary empowering action allows to graft into planning not only the "expert" practices, but enlarge the field to a seamless flux of ideas from unusual actors and with unexpected outcomes;

- in Bologna, the institution directly promotes and supervises the processes and the intermediate level, going towards the neighbourhood through the same civil servants, building relationships of trust that lead to mutual exchange and learning. The urban intermediaries in fact, are direct emanations of the institution, evidencing its involvement as both **pragmatic and experimental**, as well as of validation and supervision of the micro actions. On micro level, the contextual organisations and communities, create groups of knowledge creation on how to govern local issues in an integrated logic, making the most of the results of social innovation initiatives. Urban intermediaries act on these premises by matching these two levels facilitating the mutual learning and the creation of new solutions for the areas. The size of the city, the social fabric, and the urban tradition probably contribute to allow for greater control on the one hand and experimentation on the other. Bologna, therefore, implements structures capable of enhancing both pragmatism (Venturi and Zandonai 2019), understood as a widespread capacity for evaluation and learning, and experimentalism, i.e. the orientation to seek new and changing solutions.

Legitimation: from meso to micro

Legitimation is intended as the procedure to empower and strengthen the practices, a policy framework that allows to support and give tools to practices to stabilize even in the long term.

Another action carried out at the intermediate level is the **legitimisation** of social innovation practices, thus the recognition of the value of local initiatives, providing the conditions to be able to increase, consolidate and extend on a large scale or to be shaped as good practices. In the three case studies, even though the governance space is

identified and marked by public institutions, it **leaves enough opportunities for communities and individuals to emerge** and "influence governance practices" (Taylor 2007). The openness and fuzzy borders of the concept of social innovation allows for practices – and for scholars who study them – to be self-referential and self-legitimate. On the other hand, when recognition comes from the institution, is less connected with identity but more on pragmatism.

- in Barcelona, the governance created has mainly functions of representation and coordination of the existing setups. As seen for the former Barcelona model (Degen and Garcia 2012) of managing the city, it risks failure when it imposes a hegemonic model of consensus that **undermines creative social strategies and political dissent** risking to commodify the social space, but on the other hand to leave to social innovation the responsibility for social cohesion risks to produce further tensions or even exclusion. Nevertheless, the legitimation of the practices of social innovation is granted in Barcelona thanks to the action of the technical tables and the guidance of Foment de la Ciutat a direct emanation of the municipality. The presence of a public company that takes charge of informing, building paths of learning and acceleration of ideas already existing on the territory, through social infrastructure (schools, neighborhoods, libraries) is already active. The synergy with *Grup Impulsor* granted the management of the local resources and values, to strengthens the practices by providing the conditions to be supported and implement their ideas. The approach aims at avoiding dangerous side effects (e.g. create further segregation or boundaries, provoke gentrification effects). The Plan aims to induce a process of "co-production of public policies", with an incremental approach, which sets the main goals, without defining a priori strategies, norms and actuation;

- in Berlin, The NM Team implements a managerial approach towards the neighbourhood, by rewarding with financing those initiatives that are more ready than others to be realised, often going beyond the actual content. This mechanism though, risk to result more hyper-regulatory rather than emancipatory, but also tends to enable the strongest actors to the detriment of those who do not have the tools to answer to the bureaucratic requirements of the Funds or the ability to explain their needs and ideas for linguistic or cultural difficulties. In order to avoid these risks, the Team provide also a support system to those categories;

- in the case of Bologna, urban intermediaries in the meso level, act in a laboratory logic to legitimate social innovations and to enable their emergence. The attitude derives from its collaborative tradition and current policy framework, to support, exchange and learn from the practices and at the same time increase their ability to intervene in the urban transformation. The neighbourhood laboratories are hence arenas of experimentation where social innovation practices are given the right toolbox to be supported and to answer not only to contingent needs but to be framed in a planning strategic framework. The risk of this laboratory logic is the emergence of a technical divide that could prevent people who normally do not engage, to being further excluded. Furthermore Bologna can count on a stable basis of active citizenship also due to its collaborative tradition, but mainly thanks to the cognitive density of the city. This is not yet true if the perimeter of analysis extends to the metropolitan city, where the legacy of the good administration is present but its potentialities for innovation are not yet exploited.

Extension: from meso to large

Extension means the dissemination, exploitation and production of complementary actions, aimed at amplify the value generated by the interaction by reproducing it on the territory and beyond the municipal borders.

The experiences of Berlin and Barcelona, are building the foundations (Berlin) and the first bases (Barcelona) for the sharing of local values in a broader perspective, using institutional arrangements inspired by the governance of commons (Benkler 2017).

- in both cases of Berlin and Barcelona, it can be detected the emergence of new planning arrangements, approaches and normative apparatuses, arising directly from the premises and deployment of the policies. Barcelona, with the City Heritage Programme for the Use and Management of the Community, contributed to set the basis of the consideration that 'the public' must become 'the municipality' by promoting new forms of interaction between the municipal public institution and citizens' community initiatives, based on the recognition of the right to community management and community use by the citizen. The programme consolidates an institutional and regulatory framework that allows and encourages community management projects. A framework that also recognises the self-employment nature of these projects, protects their value and allows their full development;

- Berlin expresses a learning process by **codifying a planning approach**, that recognizes the unit of the neighbourhood as repository for local and contextual action of socio-urban development. "Social space orientation" is therefore used as a description of an attitude that pursues the goal of achieving synergy effects in favour of social urban development, in particular an increase in equal opportunities, through intensive interdisciplinary cooperation involving local interest groups and local actors. It takes into account both the fact that society is becoming increasingly differentiated and that structures that promote cohesion, are therefore needed. Neighbourhoods are foreseen to become a common, interdisciplinary "planning and design space";

- the case of Bologna is revealing of an attempt to shape–even through its narrative–a model for collaboration as a method of city transformation. From an individualistic conception, the city seems to be moving towards the vision of connected and widespread innovation in which the presence of real relational and co-innovating intermediaries becomes crucial in pursuing authentic quality within the whole urban and metropolitan context.

The contemporary focus of attention of urban policies has progressively shifted from material redevelopment, through major unitary interventions on target districts (area-based approach), to the support of third sector/association/intermediaries entities in the design of activities. The reduction of the area-based projects phase seems to derive from multiple reasons, among which the recognition that the approach that supported it is made out-dated by the growing protagonism of the associative realities, the growth of the competences of the third sector, the intervention and the skills of the local actors, which are also partly the legacy of previous cycles of public policies. The case of Berlin is peculiar in showing that a managerial and private-oriented culture, might result insufficient if enacted in substitution of an urban and architectural vision.

This paragraph analysed a case linked to the first approach and one more connected to the second. The case of Bologna instead, seems to give space for action to self-organized communities, providing enabling tools for action. Here the difference lies in the stewardship of the process, which is not in the hands of an external contractor, but is performed by a public authority as a guarantor of consistency and continuity. However, this might generate threads of competition among individuals and risky side-effects in terms of urban-technical legitimacy of actions. In this regard, the research proposes a third way, with a role of policy coordination in places and districts, by the places of experimentation and innovation themselves, which become urban intermediaries. These intermediaries demand to be recognised and located at the centre of new intervention programmes. This approach requests the actors of social innovation to reinterpret their relationship with the context, in a design perspective (Appadurai 2006), impacting in the urban space. With this premises, the place is the space where conflicts and diversity produce social, economic and technological relations, in which the co-presence of actors, intentionality, problems, resources, opportunities generates the field for possible projects. The expected impacts are on the service supply system, with higher qualification; on the networks of actors of urban policies; on the regeneration policy agenda, promoting innovation, both on the product side (new services, old services provided in new ways) and on the process side.

It seems that urban policies needs to move towards a **logic of co-production with social innovation practices**, giving up power while governing processes, negotiating goals and reducing bureaucratic procedures to define an approach oriented to the valorisation and networking of experiences and their outcomes. Social innovation practices seek their field of operation in the space between commodification and forms of social protection. This calls for a profound change in the relationship between social action and public policies, the latter being challenged to give space, recognize value and provide support to initiatives that spring from the places themselves. In order to reach this synergy, I suggest that a crucial role can be played by **urban intermediaries**, localised in specific places that are relational arenas of exchange and urban agency triggers. The hypothesis to be verified therefore sees in **intermediate places** between the macro (region-metropolitan city-municipality) and micro dimension (committees, social innovators, social entrepreneurs, organised society), as the device to overcome the mismatches and grant social innovation to take action but to be framed by urban planning.

5. INTERPRETATION. Intermediate places as mediators and spanners

"[…] they occupied an 'intermediate' position, one step removed from final responsibility in decision making […] Participating in social networks from an intermediate position required not only considerable communicative skills but also a 'tactical' sensibility"

Latour B., "*Reassembling the Social*", (2005)

The policy analysis of the previous chapter, highlights the role of urban intermediaries as enablers of extra-planning transformative actions, triggers of new processes able to graft innovation from meso to macro level, to legitimise the practices from meso to micro level and extend the values producedfrom meso to large. After reading the interaction between social innovation practices and institutional planning, with the lenses of policies and administrative processes, the analysis addresses the issue from the **dimension of place**, a pragmatic point of departure for the interpretation of the vast field of social innovation. The chapter explores the ability of places to generate value through a localised interaction between space, relationships and endogenous and exogenous resources. Within a plurality of experiences of social innovation and policies on social innovation, the dimension of place becomes fundamental as the main object of planning able to distribute, generate, cultivate relationships. The place is a geo-localised indicator of generativity (Venturi and Zandonai 2019) that transforms spaces through sensemaking processes. The passage from spaces to places generates a surplus, a fundamental value for the market, the community and policies. Places are spaces in which the relationships that are created within them generate value, which is not only local (Latour 2005) but whose value is up-scaled. Spaces are measurable, while places, through their dimension of meaning, memory and affection, are inhabited and generative.

For many years the debate on urban planning has focused on analysing the different ways of interacting in cities, overcoming spatial and social barriers. The whole line of research on the smart city, on the shrinking city, has been concentrated on trying to overcome the idea of places as generators of aggregation, while in recent years the importance of places as goods of social and economic exchange has been rediscovered (Calvaresi and Pederiva 2016; Montanari and Mizzau 2016; Nicolas-Le Strat 2016; Ostanel 2017; Venturi and Zandonai 2019), thanks to the evolution of the traditional infrastructures where these exchanges occurred. As described by Nicolas-Le Strat (2018), the place is shaped as experiments and interactions develop, so it arises from habits and voluntary practices. The performativity and generativity of places for communities to connect and establish bonds, is what differentiate from neutral public space. The production happening in specific places, the strong project-relatedness, creation, transformation and dynamism, moves them in-between traditional working spaces and traditional community/aggregation spaces. These places are **boundary-spanners** (Steadman 1992; Williams 2002; Acuto et al. 2018) able to transform, translate and transmit knowledge by trigger dynamism and creation, enabling both contributory and conflictual interactions. Creation, transformation and dynamism triggered by interactions (positive and/or conflictual), seems to be the way in which social innovations transforming urban space and service provision, can expand the capacity of urban planning to respond to challenges and solicitations at various urban scales. In this sense, intermediate places are moving alongside or even replace the traditional places of participation in the urban space recalling the classic Urban Centers. Following this traditional scheme, they are assuming a variety of new forms in contemporary cities, by answering to the current evolution of the ways of living, working, meeting and enjoying services, and by providing multifunctional contexts that connect, support and contaminate previously separated elements. Their novelty is substantiated in the new paths that determine their birth, in the new mechanisms of aggregation that are emerging, and in the new forms of governance that they reveal.
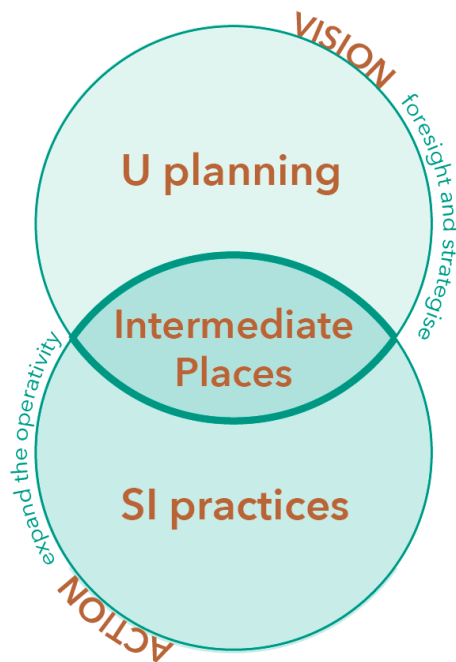
Researching intermediate places

According to Deleuze, social innovation is a path-dependent process happening through 'windows of opportunity', in which local actors engage and interact by organising in communities of practice, representing the first step for creating a co-production service ecosystems. On the basis of singular experiences of social innovation, despite their positive and successful narrative, it is not possible for planners to evaluate and make essential choices for its inclusion in important urban transformations. Therefore, the research introduces the approach of interaction as a mutual learning methodology to provide space for divergent positions, different cultures, multiple actors, to be intentionally part of a context and a collective experience where to mutually learn from through interaction. These interactions need to be organised, both managed and designed, to foster positive and negative externalities and strengthen their added value to transfer to urban planning setups. In this sense, the previously analysed policies, focus on the role of interaction and mediation defined in places that are her called **intermediate**.

The word "intermediary" or "intermediation" (Crosta 1998), recalls the established tradition of intermediate bodies, social formations that represent and self-represent themselves in particular sectors or places of civil society (e.g. consumer association, committee for the fight for the home, non-profit bodies of the voluntary sector and the Third Sector, trade union). Their aim is to develop the capacities and capabilities of individuals, families and communities to participate more fully in society and economic growth. As Venturi and Zandonai (2014) point out, the current international, economic and political framework that Europe is going through, seems to require a new role for these entities, to overcome the old methods of negotiation, to bring a new centrality to space nodes, as "interfaces with reality" also with regard to the materialisation of urban policies and the localization of global challenges. The reduction of power of the intermediate social bodies has left a void in society, caused by the loss of confidence towards the public actor or the market, influencing all levels. Given the absence of social intermediation today, new types of social infrastructures are reinforcing the status quo represented by schools, libraries, social housing, providing space for new communities to emerge, filling the holes that have been created, by responding to new emerging needs of people. These **new social infrastructures** aims at regenerate XX century models of service delivery, care of the community and of the city. Intermediate places can embody this generative role, but they can also move towards new forms of production and developing new innovative and investment-friendly proposals for change, **merging competition and cohesion**. In the era of disintermediation, re-intermediate could generate new values that are still to be explored.

Places are put forward here as intermediaries between practices of social innovation and planning, identifying with the term both their role as **mediators** (Latour 2005) and **spanners** (Williams 2002, Acuto et al. 2018) between levels. According to Latour, the action of mediation of a spatial object aims at "transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry" (Latour 2005), challenging us to follow and interpret, rather than confine and pre-determine outputs. This assumption fits well, I argue, with the role of intermediate places and to the outcomes they produce. The action they perform is oriented towards the detection first and the translation in an unexpected outcome after, of the multitude of micro experiences of social innovation, in a constant dialogue with planning frameworks. They seem to be able to "make a difference" (Durose et al 2016) in the neighbourhood they are settled, by "facing in multiple directions" and "negotiating between different

rationales and commitments" (Newman 2013). In intermediate places, interaction is observed as a planning device and a regulating principle.

The attention to intermediate places aims at going beyond the tendency to keep institution and communities separate in social innovation research. This attitude has overlooked the role of both local communities and institutions in processes of social innovation (Cassiers and Kesteloot 2012). The intermediate character of the places is crucial in considering that both more empowered local communities and more responsive local governments (Garcia 2006; Ostanel and Attili 2019; Moulaert et al. 2009) are key elements to sustain more effective social innovation. The interpretation through the lenses of intermediate places, is an opportunity for questioning **where** social innovation is enabled, how specific places can play a significant role in spanning multiple sectors and actions, what are the lessons that can be learned, how the performance of 'intermediate places' can foster formal and/or informal institutional changes (Gonzalez and Healey 2005; Donolo 1997; Moualert 2003; Garud et. al. 2007). Intermediate places are considered part of the meso level between planning and practices, they represent the interactive playground in-between systems, a **spatial representation of the collective sphere** (Avermaete 2008).

They are hybrids in functions, promoted by a mix of actors and manage a plurality of ingredients in the city. They have an active role in becoming nexus for economical, institutional and social innovation in urban ecosystems. The hypothesis is that, through intermediate places the action of social innovation practices inform and expand the operativity of urban planning towards co-produced services and processes more likely to meet the socioeconomic, cultural and environmental needs; at the same time they the vision capacity of planning bring social innovation into a foreseen and strategic framework.

Nevertheless, intermediate places do not have specific labels suggesting their use, because of the impossibility to define them with a unique function. Each has its own specific name that does not indicate the content (Encore Heureux et al. 2018), e.g. living lab, city lab, innovation center, third place, social innovation hub. For this reason, they cannot be defined nor bordered with a singular meaning, they rather be drawn up as an **inventory of variables and invariants**. Intermediate places hence **deserve a theory**, a systemic logic, to emerge from the simple catalogue of good practices. To illustrate the main ideas on these places, a literature review of the main scholars, research tracks, position papers and exhibitions is drawn.

a) Key authors

In order to observe the potential of the relationship between social innovation and urban planning, the lenses of **interaction in intermediate places** seems to provide the useful key to answer to the research question. The

attention to the intermediate level aims to overtake the tensions and mismatches occurring when institutional level and community level are analyzed separately, overlooking both levels (Cassiers, Kesteloot, 2012).

Interaction is not meant only as an exchange located somewhere and at some point, but it is **constitutive of all the human and contextual elements** that take part in it or are engaged in it, and **that undergo a change**. It also concerns the relationships and qualities that characterized them through time, in this sense, the interactions are "local". The place is an intermediary element in the execution of human activities, and likewise it is the channel through which they move and the vehicle with which they proceed.

At the beginning of this investigation process, it became clear that in order to fully understand the meaning of social innovation aimed at collective action and co-production of public policies among the vast planning discipline, the field of investigation had to be narrowed down using some interpretations provided by literature in urban studies and urban sociology. In order to provide a definition for intermediate places four authors are taken as reference to build a framework of meaning of intermediate places through the interpretation of concepts that, I argue, contribute to specify the role of these places, as mediators and boundary-spanners between planning and practices.

The framework builds on the reflections of Deleuze, who defines the concept of "micropolitics" (1987) as changes that occur through friction and conflict in unexpected places, a vision that stands with Balducci's interpretation of Galison's (1999) "trading zones". Furthermore, Amin (2002) identifies "microspaces" of daily sharing, places in-between public and private that allow to negotiate the differences. Finally, Sennett (2017) focuses on liminal spaces of exchange and agency, those spaces at the limit of control (Schroeder, 2018), negotiation arenas where urban actors actively seek to "find new communities" based on "accepting their differences" and where urban planning can support experimentation in new forms. These visions are explored in the next paragraph in order to draft a theoretical framework for interaction between social innovation practices and planning.

Deleuze, micropolitics

Gilles Deleuze is already mentioned in the previous chapters drawing from his interpretation of interaction among levels and what is the lesson to be learned from it. What Deleuze called **"micropolitics"** are results provided by small groups of urban actors through experimentation, with qualitative rather than quantitative outcomes. Micropolitics use experimentation to creatively producing new solutions as a combination of elements bringing inner capacity intertwined with time and path-dependency, integrating and expanding the institutional ability to respond to challenges and solicitations. By looking at the micropolitics and at the space where endogenous forces interact in a 'local-revolutionary' manner (Patton 2000), Deleuze does not exclude the relationship with a broader system of norms, declaring that "molecular escapes and movements would be nothing if they did not return to the molar organisations to reshuffle their segments" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). This approach does not aim to exclude institutional planning but transforming it into a 'fabric of immanent relations' (ibid.), which are foreseen to take place in specific environments defined 'opportunity spaces'. Opportunity spaces are multiple in their hierarchy, open and able to take on a thousand (Deleuze and Guattari 1980) shapes, subject to constant movement and change, therefore immanent and in constant 'becoming' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). They answer to a logic of 'becoming' which, in the words

of J. Hillier (2005) moves the perspective from an "ontology of being which privileges end-states and outcomes, [towards] an ontology of becoming which emphasizes movement, process and emergence". In the deleuzian perspective though, change and modification does not entail necessarily something disruptive and a break towards the past, but something that considers also "traces" of traditional background and contextual features. It is this aspect that connects social innovation – its path-dependency and context-bounds – to deleuzian theories.

For Deleuze, interaction produces **micropolitics of everyday life**, qualitative outcomes emerging from experimentation with a combination of ingredients, to be re-organised in a long-term perspective. These micro-interaction cannot sustain the system by themselves though, they need a "molar" organization to refer to, to be able to keep "becoming" and therefor produce change and innovating. Additionally, innovation should also incorporate the "traces" from the past to be able to emerge in "opportunity spaces", enabling infrastructures for innovation. Moving on an urban level, this understanding highlights clearly the need to rely on the constant modification provided by social actions, to produce innovation that is useful for the city but that is also in some way guided by it, as anticipation of urban and social change. This guidance is not easy to envision or even to define, but what seems a useful starting point is to start from reconstructing the past "traces" that triggered and led to the current situation. Finally, Deleuze leaves some potential suggestion on the role of planning as an aptitude able to read from the potentialities of conflict and friction producing creative transformation. This calls for a more critical reflection on the role of conflict and friction as potential trigger of innovation.

Galison, trading zones

Interaction often produces **conflictual** relationships: a critique to the mainstream and the institutional way of programming and planning, a protest "by doing" (Nicolas-Le Strat 2018), turning conflict into action. As Sophie Watson highlights (Watson 2018) a better understanding of conflict and collaboration as mutually reinforcing elements is necessary, understanding conflict (e.g. about power imbalances) as a necessary aspect for the construction of the legacy of social innovation experiences.

The multiplicity and conflictual objectives of urban actors, their belonging to different cultures, the pressure of the crisis, has produced processes of interaction in urban space, which can be well described with the concept of Trading Zone (Balducci et al. 2013) introduced by Peter Galison (1997). Galison's theory on trading zones (Galison 1999), as "local infrastructures of sharing concepts and tools that facilitate exchange between antagonist systems and users" (Mäntysalo et al., 2011), adapts to the topic, in the definition of the characteristics of environments of mutual exchange between practices and policies. The interaction in the trading zones takes place between a group of actors with different disciplinary backgrounds, methodologies and objectives that start a dialogue starting from simple elements (thin descriptions) that allow to exchange information in a specific local context, facilitating mutual understanding, the construction of partial agreements and the generation of innovations (Galison, 1999; 2010). The spaces in use in the city increasingly appear hybrid contexts in which collective action and cooperation between different actors takes place, even with different systems of values, interests and meaning. Spaces that one wants to take care

of, in which one can imagine and design solutions aimed at improving the quality of urban life. In these 'zones' we are witnessing the emergence of important innovative energies in which ideas emerge not from external forces, but develop as part of a creative inherent experimentation in the territories, an immanent process where the place itself offer opportunities for a wide array of publics to engage. In this sense, the place is capable of triggering new long-term dynamics and transformations. Galison intends places as laboratories where different positions interact to equip themselves with shared concepts and tools to produce value in different forms (e.g. new shared processes, ideas, languages, products, services). The place is the common resource of different 'publics' and can be considered an "objective basis for the construction of the trading zone" (Balducci et al. 2013). With this understanding, intermediate places could be examples of Galison's trading zones (Galison 1999) spanning the dialogue between different cultures (Balducci et al. 2013), vectors between diverse knowledge domains and urban systems. Intermediate places take into account the conflict that may arise from proximity, using its externalities (positive or negative) as ingredients to move beyond antagonism providing alternative perspective from the encounter of two opposite visions. They generate changes **without extinguishing the conflict** but **opening to alternatives** to be mutually observed and evaluated. The place becomes challenging, provoking interaction, being activated and activating social practices (Avermaete et al. 2008). In such situated contexts, the ability to integrate practical, local and case-specific issues is what is recognized as relevant knowledge and value to be put in place as a common resource. As highlighted by De Bonis et al. (2014) the theory of Trading Zones can be referred to spaces of intermediation, contexts in which collective action and cooperation between different actors is possible because it happens within specific places.

Galison's theory of Trading Zones, recalled by Balducci et al. applied to strategic planning, puts the emphasis on the methodologies and different possible positions in interaction. This generates arenas and platforms for negotiation between agonistic (Mouffe 2000) positions that – through situated dialogue – produces shared, common resources and eventually creative transformation, i.e. innovation. In this vision emerges an hypothesis that can directly influence the technical culture of urban planning, called upon to rethink its place in the contemporary dynamics of social innovation and complex change. The role of the planner seem to be more and more similar to that of facilitator of trading zones, who work on border strategies, as boundary-spanner (Steadman 1992; Williams 2002; Acuto et al., 2018), coordinating multiple actors, transforming, translating and transmitting contingent knowledge.

Amin, micro-spaces

Ash Amin's interpretation of conflict becoming urban value through interaction, emerges from the definition of **perimeters of shared spaces**, reference nodes where to read and understand how hyper-diversities can be negotiated by "simultaneous use and intermingling of diverse groups" (Amin and Thrift, 2002). In their seminal work "Cities, reimagining the urban" (2002), Amin and Thrift define cities as a "constellation of distributed know-hows and reflexivity within communities of practices operating at different scales". This know-how and reflexivity is developed through encounter and exchange, and the consequences of it, either positive or negative. The consequences of interaction are defined here as

"necessary contingencies", taking place in specific places, rather than from occasional encounters in public spaces. Furthermore, as "contingencies", places of interaction are not fixed in space and time, but variable and dynamic. For Amin, to understand this dynamics and grasp its potentialities two features are crucial: the in-between and the **micro-spaces**. The first, is the level where planners are foreseen to be working in order to "spark engagement as a means of building critical ability, voice and argument", enhancing the communities' capability to develop the "right to research" (Appadurai 2013), to transform the knowledge into an "informational basis" (Borghi 2017) of policies and of public choice, and to act upon it. For the consolidation of the ability to raise awareness and to mobilise of intermediaries, what is also key for Amin is the **scale** of the place where interaction is staged. Current urban dynamics have forced the raise of collective provision and co-production of collective space and infrastructures, collective "micro-spaces". The author claims that "micro-spaces" are more likely to encourage the conviviality and acceptance of differences and create new forms of urban productions. The dimension is crucial both for the possibility of interacting and for the chance to observe in detail what is produced by it and to provide an interpretation through a planning model. "Light-touch interventions aimed at creating a common urban culture", he argue, "might make a significant difference" (Amin 2004). The space thus become an open platform to support the production of new value created by new relations, generating an "heterotopic sense of place" (Amin 2004) in-between the plurality of global cultures and the geographic proximate. These hybrid places, resonate with the identified intermediate places, and can represent useful points of connection between governance mechanisms and "contingencies" as innovation episodes, with the ambition to become drivers of social and spatial innovation. What is still open in how to give an order to these heterogeneous agglomeration of micro-spaces, aggregating actors and resources in all combination.

Sennett, liminal spaces

Following this direction, Richard Sennett expresses what he believes are the keys to "create the systems of value by which [people] live" (2017): **agency**, meant as increased capacity and access to resources and possibility to address needs (MacCallum et al. 2009) and its collective exercise in the policy-making process; and **exchange**, hence localised interaction that produces widespread value for the city. Sennett remarks that 'agency' in a city is a blending of spatial creation and social behaviour, that should not be left to happen informally or randomly but must be accompanied through design, and in particular urban design of **liminal spaces**. With this term he means places of transition, situated between two dissimilar spaces, are able to change according to its users, time and perspective and combine often ambiguous topics. They are incoherent spaces, and mark an open way of life by bringing together heterogeneous parts of the city and diverse groups of people – of race, class, economic or social backgrounds. Liminal indicates the experience of a transition, even if there is no obvious barrier between the two states (Sennett 2018). The liminal passage creates a sort of transit consciousness. They are spaces where contradictions and conflicts come together and coexist. Furthermore, Sennett puts forward the idea that liminal spaces are constituent part of the design of an Open City, which its characterised by: ambiguous edges, contriving incomplete forms in architecture and planning for unresolved narratives. The first refers to borders instead of boundaries. Borders are open

to interaction, different groups and function like membranes, allowing an constant exchange. After the sociologist Steven Gould, borders are the places where variation most likely would occur. The incomplete form allows more flexible operations and tries to think of evolving structures that are able to change according to their use. Planning for unresolved narratives, refers to the patterns of usage that function as dialogical sequences, not as a linear narrative, which means there is a never-ending process of various actions happening at the same time and creating connections to each other. The Open city is a system "in which an extensive network of components without centralised control and simple operational rules give rise to complex collective behaviour, sophisticated information processing and adaptation through learning or evolution" (Sennett 2018). These are some of the features which, retrieving Sennett's work, could contribute to improve planning to "liberate alternatives" (Sennett 2017) enhancing agency through stable exchange, in specific liminal places, through design.

Talking about interaction, these four authors bring out crucial concepts to start from, in order to put some order in the constellation of fragmented socio-spatial relations between actors, happening in specific nodes on interaction in cities. Micro-politics of everyday life (Deleuze 1994) is what might be generated in micro-spaces (Amin and Thrift 2005) though interaction that may also be conflictual (Balducci et al. 2013). Sennett's work, similarly to Amin's, focuses more on the spatial dimension of interaction, not only on the scale and the network (Amin 2002) but also on the design configurations. Similarly, to what Latour writes in "Reassembling the Social" (2005) spaces are "mediators" of the relationship with both human and non-human objects. Becoming, constant creation and transformation (inherent principles of experimentation) are the basis of Deleuze's theory for innovation as the production of 'new' forms of transversal interactions. This resonates also with Galison's trading zone, dynamic nodes of dialogue between often opposite systems, moving the perspective of analysis not in the actors (institutional or extra-institutional) and their position but in the interaction itself (Crosta 1990) As Latour pointed out, "an actor on stage is never alone in acting" (Latour 2005), highlighting the need to shift the focus from the individual intermediary to the set of individuals and the relationships that exist between them and the surrounding context. Moreover, Crosta contributes to this, proposing the need to centre instead on interaction (Crosta 1990) by "asking oneself what outcomes can be related to the interaction".

The dissertation attempts to define interaction as the main 'edge' (Sennett 2017), interface for the access in public life: where the intermingling between supply (institutions) and demand (practices) in put under tension and takes place according to mechanisms of mutual recognition and sharing. The encounter however, can **modify the participating subjects**, from the usual activation of consolidated paths to the ability to remodel new urban solutions in a creative way. In the latter case, the subjects can be considered as agents (Crosta 1990) working together with the contextual "actants" (Westlund et al. 2014). Against this background, I propose to look at places as resources for agency-creation through exchange, with the place as fundamental components in determining the offer, to be used in the interaction between actors, making the dialogue itself possible.

b) A contemporary review

The recent cultural debate about the city, has shown a special consideration towards specific places where co-production for social innovation is an everyday practice, paving the way for a possible new urban local model of development. The multi-dimension of these places opens up infinite possibilities to describe them, to catalogue their features and promote them as valuable nodes for the future development of cities. National and international networks, exhibitions, independent researchers, think-tanks, European projects, are contributing to draw useful reflections from the practice, in the attempt to grasp their dynamics to frame them into some coherent discourse. As a result, a rich and ever-changing production of publications, handbooks, guidelines, has recently been produced from different more or less academic sources, which constitutes interesting starting points for the recognition of a phenomenon that is based on empirical results.

A first contribution is promoted by two cultural institutions based in Italy but with a highly international profile: La Triennale di Milano and the Venice Biennale. Starting from 2003, with the exhibition *Quotidiano Sostenibile - scenari di vita urbana* curated by Ezio Manzini and François Jégou, the *Triennale di Milano* began a reflection on the forms of collaborations located in specific places in Milan, called "embryonic signals of present" (Manzini and Jégou 2003). The exhibition shed light on empowered places "endowed with a technical system that 'augments' its properties, extending the possibilities of a place rather than of an individual" (*ibid.*) and it defines a panorama of proposals and scenarios on future everyday life in a sustainable metropolis, emerging from these place units. The exhibition introduced the concept of "multi-service centers" as "enabling platform that operates in the everyday sphere, offering solutions, opening opportunities, and facilitating co-operation between those in the production and consumption system" (*ibid.*). The authors were interested in supporting these production and consumption processes, upscaling their impacts by strengthening their specific ability to be able to connect with local networks of resources. The exhibition was the first seed of a reflection on the role of hybrid spaces, which links to two new exhibitions at Triennale: *Segnali di futuro[14]* by Stefano Pereglio in 2014 and *New Urban Body* by the Social Housing Foundation, in 2017/18. *Segnali di futuro* was the preliminary result of a research work that has investigated the places of innovation that emerged in the city of Milan, resulting in a debate and an exhibition at the Triennale on the 40 realities of Milan that presented characteristics of intermediate places producing social innovation. The success of the initiative led subsequently to the enlargement of the research, first in the metropolitan city of Milan and later throughout Italy. The places were categorised with the keywords: live, know, make, exchange, move, that summarised the role of the places in changing in the production of public services, in the forms of work, in the ways of living, in the creation of social cohesion, in daily strategies of individual and collective well-being, in cultural practices and mobility. From this knowledge base on the Italian territory, it was finally possible to build conceptual links and connections with European places. The outcome was exposed in the 2017 *New Urban Body. Esperienze di generazione urbana*[15] exhibition. Starting from the Triennale of Milan and subsequently in Italian cities, the exhibition brought reflections on these sensitive and vital nodes within the city body, in their role of engines for processes of urban generation and for the construction of the social fabric. The exhibition presented how specific hybrid spaces

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[14] Further information about the exhibition at http://segnalidifuturo.com

[15] Further information about the exhibition at http://www.newurbanbody.it

answers to new contemporary necessities, challenges, issues, proposing a new and different way to organise time and space, while welcoming and stimulating new ideas and initiatives, in an open context for sharing ideas and gathering communities to build collective processes for the city. The exhibition claimed that "space is an important infrastructure to respond to socio-urban new needs, because it represents the place of the social network and as such should be designed". The collection of case studies analyses the main characteristics of hybrid places in Italy and Europe according to their accessibility, sustainability, collective design abilities.
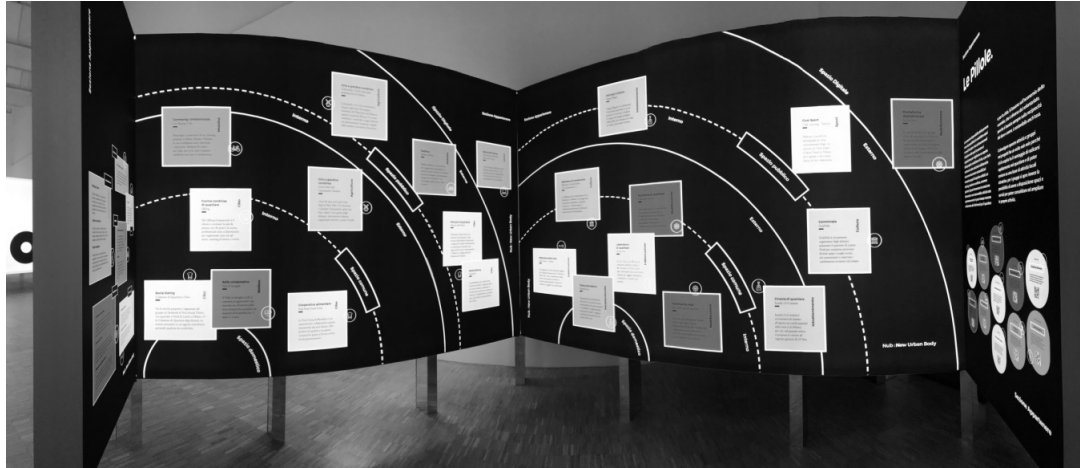

Figure 29 - New Urban Body. Triennale di Milano. Picture by the author.

Another exhibition has been key in adding meanings and reflection to the topic: the French Pavillion of the 16th Venice Biennale. The Pavillion exposed the "Infinite Places" in France, a narration of ten cases of places that "manage to welcome the unexpected, to offer free spaces, to integrate un-programmed uses and allow for popular appropriation thanks to collective energy and common desires" (Encore Heureaux 2018). The focus was the process of recovery of the existing places and the multiplicity of actors participating in the identification, implementation and re-vitalisation of the spaces. The 'infinite places' presented in the pavilion already exist in space (they occupy abandoned factories and warehouses, abandoned offices, urban voids without function) and time (they have a history of functions and populations). They are unfinished, in progress, continuously in movement and reinvented in incremental construction processes. Therefore 'infinite places' can be defined as intermediate places for their permanent movement beyond the local, while pursuing proximity, possessing transcendence through the long network of relationships and hybridisation of ideas they create.

Figure 30 - Infinite Places. French pavilion of the 16th Biennale di Venezia. Picture by Biennale di Venezia

The curators of the Pavilion managed to stand out among the usual representation of space in the framework of the Biennale topic "freespace". According to Farrell and Mcnamara, the curators of the 16th Biennale, "freespace" is "the space for opportunity, a democratic space, un-programmed and free for uses not yet conceived. In this context "freespace" in meant as in-finite, endless, open-ended space that is incoherent and bring together heterogeneous parts of the city and diverse groups of people, different race, class, economic backgrounds, ethnicities, where contradictions come together and coexist.

An additional point of view is provided by the results of the EU project EUCANET[16] - European City Agencies Network that dealt with the new role of urban agencies, in relation to city practices, local and national policies and European agendas. The project was an opportunity to reflect on how the traditional Urban Centres are being transformed into laboratories, factories and places that are increasingly producing ideas, services and products. This transition has taken place for different reasons and under different pressures: compared to the new urban needs arising in different cities, thanks to political stimuli, following re-configurations of the governance of the urban centers themselves. The need that urban agencies find is therefore of no longer being able to merely act as a showcase for the projects and policies of the cities, but to necessarily act as attractors of skills and energy of the city, and as interlocutors and carriers of privileged instances, with regard to local and European institutions. The European project has enabled a number of urban agencies to form a network based on the recognition of common aims, objectives and actions aimed at acting as a bridge between institutions and practices of social innovation. In this case, unlike the previous one, the key is mainly institutional, due to the prevalence of urban agencies within the public administration.

In all the cases, common points emerge mainly in the methodologies used in the involvement of contextual practices of social innovation, in the spatial dimension of the outputs (re-appropriation of unused buildings for the former, definition of multiple spaces of interaction for the latter) and in the strong hybrid component of uses and governance. A semantic and taxonomic effort would allow to clarify roles, open up possibilities for national and international networks aggregating this places, and act with long-term programmable objectives, also in terms of economic sustainability. The identification of the characteristics of the different urban agencies, infinite places, everyday embrionic signals of future and hybrid bodies, would open up the possibility for the creation of stable networks of exchange between the specificities of the places, the contexts, the resources employed. These places are currently unorganized singular points that nevertheless constitute the backbone of the future city, made up of specific actions recognized, circulated and triggered. They can represents a reserve of innovation, but only if systematized and recognized in a general strategic scheme more closely linked to planning.

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[16] EUCANET (2017-2019) is co-funded by the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union. It involves five partners from four countries: Urban Center Metropolitano Torino and Urban Center Bologna from Italy, City of Marseille from France, city of Skopje from Macedonia and Cluj Metropolitan Area Intercommunity Development Association from Romania

Intermediate places: defining elements

Starting from the premises recognised above, there is no standard intermediate place, but different way for them to foster interactions. In fact, interaction can happen between two urban actors promoting a project for the city (e.g. in a co-working space or a fab lab), between business actors and public administration for the production of new economies, between different institutions (e.g. cognitive and political) or between citizens and public administration. The differentiation of intermediate places is such not only in the sense of a multiplication and a diversification of the places, but also in the sense of a continuous variability of the interacting subjects and objects. Inspired by classical models like urban centers, civic centres, neighbourhood houses, one of their features is to develop, try out and test urban solutions, producing changes in different urban domains by bridging design-led approaches and social innovation, to inform policies. Drawing from Ash Amin (2009), intermediate places can be spaces within which different resources circulate, hosting activities that are not part of an overall plan, inputs that change constantly the character of the space, actors that continuously negotiate their position and role, conventions and rules. Their challenge is locally-anchored while at the same time open to trans-national and global models and inputs. Innovation in fact, is no longer an endogenous development process within a territory or a city but it is a process of integration and participation in global networks. Therefore they are intermediate for their permanent movement between the local and the global. What seems interesting is to study the interaction of "bodies, in close physical proximity, regulated by the rhythms of invention, order and control generated by multiplicity" (ibid.). Therefore, the attempt of the research is to identify shared social responses, collective result in different types of interaction in intermediate places and what is the process that lead to that. According to Dvir, in order to be a "driver of urban innovation", a place must include in a complex system people, relationships, processes, tools and technological and spatial infrastructure (Dvir 2003). These elements will be categorised, analysed and described as defined elements of intermediate places. The analysis is based on a multi-methodology of investigation: a literature review on spaces of innovation, living labs, city agencies particularly referred to urban planning; in depth interviews with key stakeholders (employee of intermediate places, promoters of community and innovation hubs); interviews with institutions have been conducted. Policy documents, regulations, urban planning documents, as well as the material produced by social innovators themselves have been analysed to investigate the relation between the level of the practices and of the local government in social innovation, by building hypotheses, interviews, observations intermediate results. Drawing from this analysis, some common criteria have been identified to recognize the intermediary character of the places, useful to select the cases to be analysed. The criteria have eventually been diversified into variables and constants.

Table 1 - Criteria for the identification of the intermediate character of places

Criteria	Defining elements	Variables				Constants
Organisation	**multi-level governance**	BUSINESS	PUBLIC	CITIZENS	ACADEMIA	
Method	**co-production**					**context-led** knowledge-sharing, iteration
Infrastructure	**multi-scale spatial interfaces**	CENTRE/BUILDING	DISTRICT	PLATFORM/NETWORK		
Function	**boundary-spanning**					**multiple uses** entrepreneurial, social, welfare
Impact	**pluralisation of publicness**	POLICIES/PROCESSES	BUSINESS/TECH	SERVICES/PRODUCTS		
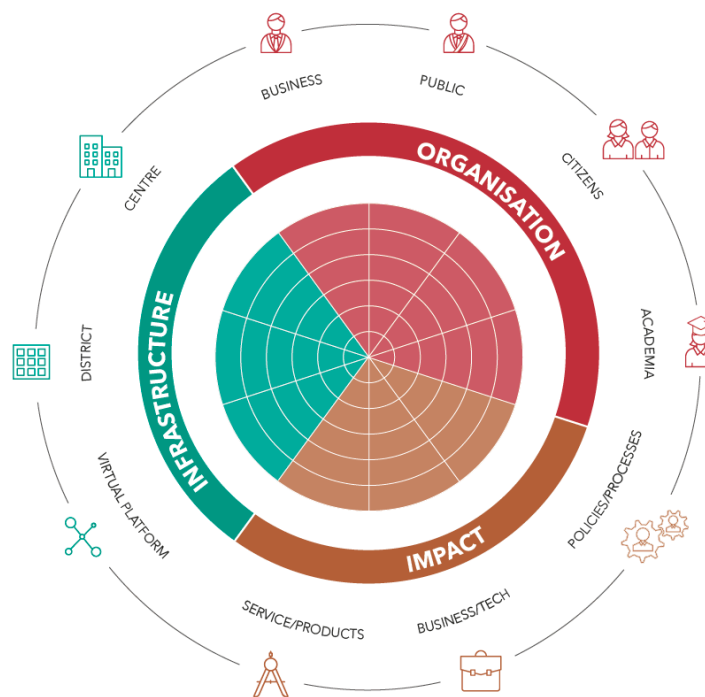
Figure 31 - Variables patterns in intermediate places. Source: the author

Table 1 shows that intermediate places are proving to be successful models because of different element. According to the bibliographic analysis and the criteria identified, a first variable for intermediate places is their **organization** in multi-level and circular governance (Kazepov 2010), which involves complex, adaptable and flexible forms of management led by urban intermediaries. These intermediaries provide an indirect action on forces and trends already active in a context (social innovation practices) to promote their evolution towards the vision foreseen by an influential actor (public or private, individual or collective) who seeks to anticipate future development in a manner consistent with the points of view and interests at stake, leading to the desired collective result. The governance relationships established in these places are mainly based on circular collaborations and hybrid configurations, triggered by aims of common interest: the variables in this case concerns the different configuration and "weight" of each actor in the governance setting, such as business, public, citizens and academic actors.

Regarding their **impacts**, intermediate places are foreseen to produce a pluralisation of publicness (Donolo 1997), meant as distributed situated action for collective purposes resulting in: policies and processes, services and products, new business and technologies. Faced with an urban society based on the recognition of differences, considering the "territory in use" implies taking into account a plurality of uses and practices, which, consequently, build different territories (Crosta, 2010b) and reformulate a definition of public in the plural sense.

The **infrastructure** where they operate is a spatial interface in contiguity with internal contextual resources and referring to external models. This interface can assume the shape of a singular building or centre, a district or even a platform or a network. Their spatial features are multi-scale and show an adaptable form like buffer areas, immersive contexts.

Some elements appears to be constant in intermediate places: to summarise the **functions** of intermediate places the research in fact, uses the concept of boundary-spanning. They transform, translate and transmit know-how, resources, actors, actions on both sides of the boundary.

Among the multiplicity of functions, the feature that distinguish intermediate places from traditional "third places" (Oldengurg 1989) is their collective production. Intermediate places operate using co-production as fundamental **method**. This approach focuses on the process of producing together in order to generate original solutions to urban issues. Co-production is performed through experimentation, where intermediate places provide space for testing, exploration, learning of alternatives for the development of urban solutions. In order to produce collective value, they equip with a rich toolbox to support an informal research activity. Intermediate places in fact, generate a large body of knowledge as main spill-over. This attitude defines places that synthesize, merge and elaborate resources emerging from social innovation practices into knowledge and possible elements of synergy with institutional planning.

Organisation

Intermediate places are contexts where the collective management is facilitated by **multi-level governance networks** (Kazepov 2010). These are places that go beyond traditional dichotomies of bottom-up and top-down, engaging in more flexible and adaptable (even more complex) form of management of their everyday activities. In fact, they show original forms of management, borrowed from entrepreneurial models and applied to urban contexts. The network of actors involved entails different level (public institutions, third sector organisation, local committee, etc.) multi-scale subjects (ranging from area/neighbourhood scale, to national and European relevance) relating to plural areas of expertise (urban planning, service provision, environmental programming), with different agendas and institutional logics. The uses, outputs, targets, shareholders, financial and government management are all subject to continuous mutation, for economic sustainability reasons (diversify is necessary for the continuity of intermediate places) and to maintain their openness to internal and external inputs. Therefore, this permanent dynamic of transformation of uses and re-consideration of activities requires a high dose of inner trust and of external stable support. Differently from standard service places, intermediate places are often promoted or managed by a multitude of actors which are here defined **urban intermediaries**: associations, foundations, social enterprises, NGOs, not for profit enterprises. Understanding the ability to enable innovative practices by urban actors, implies their study as collectives of individuals (Crosta 1990; Latour 2005) who together (Sennett 2012)

contribute to a certain innovation and as distributed capacity or localised and embedded agency (Garud et al. 2007). These collective actors are characterized by a tendency to link and connect in particular with those they share common goals and interests with (Venturi and Zandonai 2019), producing public value. Their multi-level governance share a portion of responsibility in the development of the city with public administrations, especially on the matters of civic engagement, proximity-services provision, community organisation, city promotion. In terms of governance though, the question of the degree of openness of the decision-making processes, of its territorial distribution, the governance relationships, the institutionalization of practices and the techniques to be adopted, remain open.

Impact

The generation of public value is considered the main outcome produced by intermediate places, innovating both public administrations and private forces. With their private action oriented towards collective value production, they intervene in the **pluralisation of publicness**, confirming what Donolo (1997) claims as the increasing multiplication of situations - interactions - from which one can expect a possible "production of the public", with a trial and error strategy of policies production. During the concretization of this ambitious objective, they produce several spill overs, in cognitive, social, welfare, organisation, urban terms: they open mutual learning spaces, they build and strengthen networks, and generate new individual and collective urban actors and protagonists (Cognetti 2018). The impact that intermediate places make in the process of publicness production, has to do with several aspects. The first is building **relationships**. Intermediate places, in fact, act as "trading zones" (Galison 1999; Balducci et al. 2013) between different contexts, building bridges and shortening the distance between different entities (municipalities, local, national and transnational institutions, associations, groups of citizens, individuals). By building links and connecting elements, they bring together different vertical levels and intersectoral skills of people who do not usually interact, crossing the boundaries of industries, professions and cultures. Intermediate places mobilise a significant dose of tacit knowledge to create small but lasting changes in the ordinary structures of delivery and organisation of services and of production, developing new procedures and tools, which require deep and continuous learning and sharing.

Another aspect, is that this circular engagement allows intermediate places to produce **capabilities**. Following the description of Appadurai, intermediate places can produce "research capabilities" (Appadurai 2006) in their users and managers, who aim to build form of common identification of contingent problems to be addressed and possible treatment. In other words, with respect to social impacts, intermediate places seems to form the political capacity (Cognetti 2018) of users, through the construction of capabilities. On the other hand, reading their impact towards institutions and the administrative apparatus, intermediate places seem to improve the capacity of choice of decisions and therefore providing institutional change (Donolo 1997). With institutional change is meant the impact on power relations in planning processes (Moulaert 2003) provoking change of governance, in functioning of service provision and of planning practice, and change in the practices and performances of local democracy. As intermediaries, in fact, these places are aware of both the critical points, but above all of the potential characteristics of a the territory. This awareness is the leverage that intermediate places should perform towards institutional planning mechanisms.

This last characteristic is also key for the production of **new knowledge**. Among the impacts of intermediate places, in fact, I underline how the outcome of the meeting between groups of various levels and social positions, which recognise each other, can - often - produce new orientations towards joint ownership of common and shared solutions. Intermediate places are those places that act as facilitators in "managing constructively the differences" (Sørensen and Torfing 2013) of the engaged actors. In conclusion, in addition to redefining the routines of daily social practices, they give new meaning to institutional routines.

Method

Retrieving the quote by Sennett, "the more they [human beings] exchange with one another, the more individuated they become" is key for the reading of the method that intermediate places share, which refers to co-production. It is meant as an ensemble performance (Howaldt et al 2014) that sees the involvement of both users and public sector's professionals in the design, development, delivery and assessment of solutions (Brandsen et al. 2018; Nabatchi et al. 2017; Osborne and Strokosch 2013), supporting the generation of public value. **Co-production** refers to the availability of urban actors and multiple levels of expertise, to deploy their resources and share them in a design process, not to exploit in financial terms the results but to create distribute publicness out of them. Co-production in the city, requires alliances and partnerships to be forged between the local authority and the many expressions of civil society, to design a new path of development (Venturi and Rago 2017) deviating from standard production of services, policies, processes for the city. Producing together (Sennett 2012) prevents the identical reproduction of relationships with acquired and inherited identities (Nicolas-Le Strat 2017), especially because it transforms the way in which each of the practices connects with the others, binds to its environment and, ultimately, loose its ties and preconceptions. The objective of co-production is primarily to seek out and find the problems that design will have to respond to, using a multi-channel approach to collaborative production (Brandsen et al 2018), focusing both in the output but more importantly in the process, which generates externalities. Collaboration in production in fact, involves a sharing of resources that generates new products and services but also **spill overs** such as new skills, construction of social networks and additional value of use (Benkler 2006) or microeconomies. The need to recognise these values, to understand, organise and assess them is crucial. Collaboration in production also implies the need, on the one hand, for management, raising the question of who controls the processes and, on the other hand, for organisational models that guarantee transparency and allow new productions to be clear, open and distributed, i.e. to move from punctual to systemic. Moreover, co-production guarantees an ongoing assessment process, through feedback loops between the actors involved in the process. This allows new ideas to be better supported at the time of implementation in the territory.

Nevertheless, co-production and responsibilisation, can be used to justify the demand for citizens and organised groups to do more with less. In this sense, delegating a typical role of institutions, to social innovation practitioners. What still needs to be addressed are the means through which co-production works: strategies of **experimentation**, **iteration** to expose new possibilities. In this scenario social innovation can help exploring transformation opportunities of the urban context by testing the potential of the combination of resources, problems and opportunities in small scale urban experiments, looking for new development models.

Infrastructure

The recalled focus on intermediaries producing embedded and localised agency (Garud et al. 2007), is useful to understand the distributive infrastructural context of social innovative actions and the importance of places to trigger them. The success of social innovation activities in fact, often emerge thanks to their relationship with the different organisations of the territory with whom they are in spatial contiguity. The recovery of direct relationships between different actors, the sharing of values and visions (Venturi and Zandonai 2019), allows intermediate places to act as **spatial** neutral (Puttick 2014) **interfaces**. In intermediate places, the space itself is conceived as enabler of innovation that, starting from the gathering of the endogenous urban and social capital (Camagni and Dotti 2010), connects internal (contextual) to external resources, operating on both local and global levels. In order to organise and produce pragmatic outcome, the space still needs its capital to be organised, starting from the dimension of space and its scale. The latter, is a fraction of the urban, identifying intermediate places in a building, a group of buildings, a district, a neighbourhood a portion of the city, which nevertheless impact at the scale of the city (De Bonis et al. 2014). As well as the scale, the location varies considerably: they are urban, peripheral, located in the historical centre or in fringes at the edge of the city (Besson 2018). They can be recognised in former industrial buildings, offices, former shops, in University campuses, in institutional areas or in mobile and temporary spaces.

Intermediate places are identified by a space that is considered at the fringe of institutional levels but also a buffer, immersive, adaptive context, defined by Sennett as liminal (2017), a zone of transition between uses, properties, scales. Intermediate places are those context that provide a space that manage to "adapt to the unexpected, offer free zones, integrate unscheduled uses, allow citizen appropriation, focus on collective energy, implement desires" (Encore Hereaux 2018). It can be understood as an emanation of the concept of "third place" (Oldenburg 1989), between private and public place, home and work, an informal meeting context that creates opportunities. The concept has evolved towards embracing collaborative production sites, subsequently including the social, cultural and public service sectors, producing living spaces adaptive to stakeholders and users' needs to co-produce services and products with collective value.

Function

This ability to cross-fertilisation and trans-scalarity of intermediate places, can summarised by the concept of **'boundary spanning'** (Steadman 1992; Williams 2002). The concept defines an entity that understands "both sides of the boundary, enabling them to search out relevant information on one side and disseminate it on the other" (Tushman and Scanlan 1981), practicing change by transforming, translating and transmitting knowledge, and by combining resources and relationships. Boundary-spanners can create connection between separated systems, which could lead to integration of diverse elements, going beyond the prevalence of one category over another, but enhancing the mutual interaction between them. When it comes to cities, boundary-spanning capacity works to recognize existing resources at the micro level (such as social innovation practices), map the context and actors, to organize the interaction between the elements (resources, actors, in the specific context) with the aim of connecting internal networks to external actors (Acuto et al. 2018) and to build lasting links for the shared development of the city. Boundary work creates meaningful interactions, merging different domains, plural scales, old and new institutions, mutually adapting themselves into a new logic. Boundary-spanners act as competences

collectors, keeping also the transfer and dissemination aspects. The non-standardised nature of intermediate places and their hybrid status (Encore Heureaux 2018) in fact, requires a strong capacity to disseminate its outputs and outcomes. A distributed narration is crucial for the legitimization of the results of these places. It is not only a question of communicating expected outcomes, or of narrating good practices, it is also a matter of capturing and expressing the mutual learning that takes place through unexpected or unforeseeable methods, thus enhancing the spillover effects that characterize socio-technical infrastructures.

In their boundary-spanning role, intermediate places host a multiplicity of functions with a large array of **vocations**. They range from a mere social function, to cultural and welfare containers, to entrepreneurial facilities, places where people "meet, interact, experiment, ideate and prototype new solutions" (Bason 2010). More often, they merge the different functions into a unique umbrella, providing a perimeter to different uses with different degrees of sustainability, which integrate and synergistically coexist to grant long-term persistence of places. Intermediate places are characterized by mixed ownership and management, by the attractiveness of local resources, involved in decision-making and management processes for the resolution of local problems, which ultimately produce collective value in the form of products, services, systems and processes. During the process they put into work a strong ability to understand, explain, discuss and question. In support of these skills, they equip themselves with a rich toolbox that they use to respond to challenges: design tools, competence enhancement devices, horizon scanning, forecasting scenarios, strategic planning and analysis of emerging signals, mixed together to achieve the expected goals. These devices help to support real **field-research activities**, conducted in original and unexpected ways. This is uncodified research, because it does not belong to cognitive institutions (academia) or to established and recognized centers. Building on Appadurai's reasoning, on the right to do research, the intermediate places lead their communities to "make disciplined inquiries into those things they need to know, but do not know yet" (Appadurai 2006), critically questioning the problems and potential observed locally, building a body of independent knowledge. This knowledge appears to be expressed through various media: social experimentation, cultural activities, political initiatives, collaborative productions. However, this body of knowledge suffers from the lack of institutional codification. The research produced by intermediate places is less permanent (Nicolas-Le Strat 2018), more liquid and does not respond to bureaucratic logic, disciplines and formalisms. In this it remains free, mobile and open, available to anyone interested in intercepting it and making use of it.

Taxonomical definition of intermediate places

Among this scattered but rich framework, this research wants to open up a systematic and grounded discussion about the evolution and typologies of what are being identified as intermediate place that take a variety of new shapes in contemporary cities. The semantic effort of definition is linked to the understanding of their mutual characteristics, elements transferable to a broader framework of governance of the city, the possibilities of exchange, activation of new forms of knowledge, skills and interests related to specific contexts. In order to verify the hypothesis of a role for intermediate places between urban planning and social innovation, a first necessary step is to create an inventory of what fit under the definition of intermediate place, consolidate it in a specific urban context and finally build a cross-cutting taxonomy from which to draw the knowledge to envision a new urban model.

Starting from the recognition of their diversity without assuming a single trajectory or a unified understanding, the research aims at making intermediate places understandable and comparable for future analysis. A first codification of the defining elements of the places is developed, aiming at identifying four categories (see Table 2): Urban Living Labs (e.g. Open Urban Labs, University Spin-offs, Think-Thanks); Innovation Hubs (e.g. FabLabs, Accelerators, Incubators, Hackerspaces), Community HUBs (e.g. Neighbourhood Centres, social centres), Policy Labs (e.g. City Agencies, Urban Centres, Local Development Agencies). The Innovation and Community HUBS are specialized in the creation of shared and collaborative work and socialisation spaces. Then, Urban Living Labs try to stimulate innovation through collective intelligence, experimentation and prototyping. Policy labs pursue clear social objectives on issues such as citizen participation and public urban policies.

The following table summarises the main features of the four intermediate places identified by the research.

Table 2 - inventory of intermediate places: Urban Living Lab, Policy Lab, Community Hub, Innovation Hub.
Source: the author

Urban Living Labs	
Description	open innovation platforms for co-production of experimentation for services, products, social infrastructures development
Organisation	public (enabler) + business (utilizer), knowledge institutions (provider), citizenship (user)
Method	experimentation, co-production, knowledge-sharing, iteration
Infrastructure	centre, district, virtual platform, network
Function	entrepreneurial, social
Impact	social innovation, shared learning, new services, new products, new businesses, new technologies
Policy Labs	
Description	public interaction arena to co-design collective solutions to common problems and satisfy shared needs, interests and expectations
Organisation	public (enabler): municipality/government institution; + university; citizenship (user); 3rd sector
Method	user-centred design, co-production, evaluation of policies
Infrastructure	office, centre, virtual platform
Function	social
Impact	social innovation, citizen engagement processes, new policies
Community HUBs	

Description	service structures that host public welfare services, together with activities with a high social impact
Organisation	social private + public (enabler), business (utilizer/supporter), citizenship (user), 3rd sector
Method	co-production, sector-specific activities
Infrastructure	office, centre
Function	social, entrepreneurial, cultural, welfare
Impact	social innovation, citizen empowerment, citizen engagement
Innovation HUBs	
Description	laboratories where it is possible not only to experiment but also to produce new products, services and organisation models
Organisation	Private + private, business (enabler), business (utilizer), citizenship (user)
Method	co-production, multi-sector activities, knowledge-sharing, prototyping, marketing
Infrastructure	office, centre
Function	entrepreneurial, business
Impact	social innovation, shared learning, new services, new products, new businesses, new technologies

The table summarizes in four types, the multitude of emerging intermediate places, according to organization, impact, method, infrastructure and function. In this classification, social innovation appears to be the shared goal and inspiration for all, while co-production is the approach and the regulatory line, and multi-scale space is the field for exchange and contamination, managed by an heterogeneous governance. Differences emerge in the promoting actors, Urban Living Labs and Policy Labs are deeply embedded into and promoted by the local government, the others rely mostly on private support. Their outputs are often different, more products/service-oriented for Innovation Hubs and Living Labs, while Community Hubs and Policy Labs aims at obtaining new policies and processes. Nevertheless, they all act with the city and its users as both target and producers, even though they develop a range of different forms: from spatially bounded places for innovation labs and community hubs, to purpose-built distributed initiatives for collaboration for Urban Living Labs and Policy Hubs.

Due to their complexity and variety of application context, a case study analysis in the city of Bologna, seems to be the most appropriate method to provide an empirical reading of the different typologies of intermediate place. The units of analysis are the many intermediate places identified in Bologna, narrowed into the four models of Urban Living Lab, Policy Lab, Innovation Hubs and Community HUBs. For each typologies a selection of the most significant and relevant cases is presented, but a categorization effort has been produced on the wider

panorama of intermediate places in the city. Data have been retrieved from articles, from the repository of the Urban Innovation Plan and the process "Collaborare è Bologna" (2015), the Open Data of Bologna, The analysis has been performed through field notes from participant observation (in the case of the personal participation to ROCK project) and semi-structured interview with social innovators, personal observations. The dimension of analysis used to compare intermediate places, derive from the criteria analyzed in Table 1: organization, method, infrastructure, function, impact. The aim is to find common traits, comparable outcomes, qualitative evidences, cross-cutting spill-overs, but also differences, difficulties, and limitations.
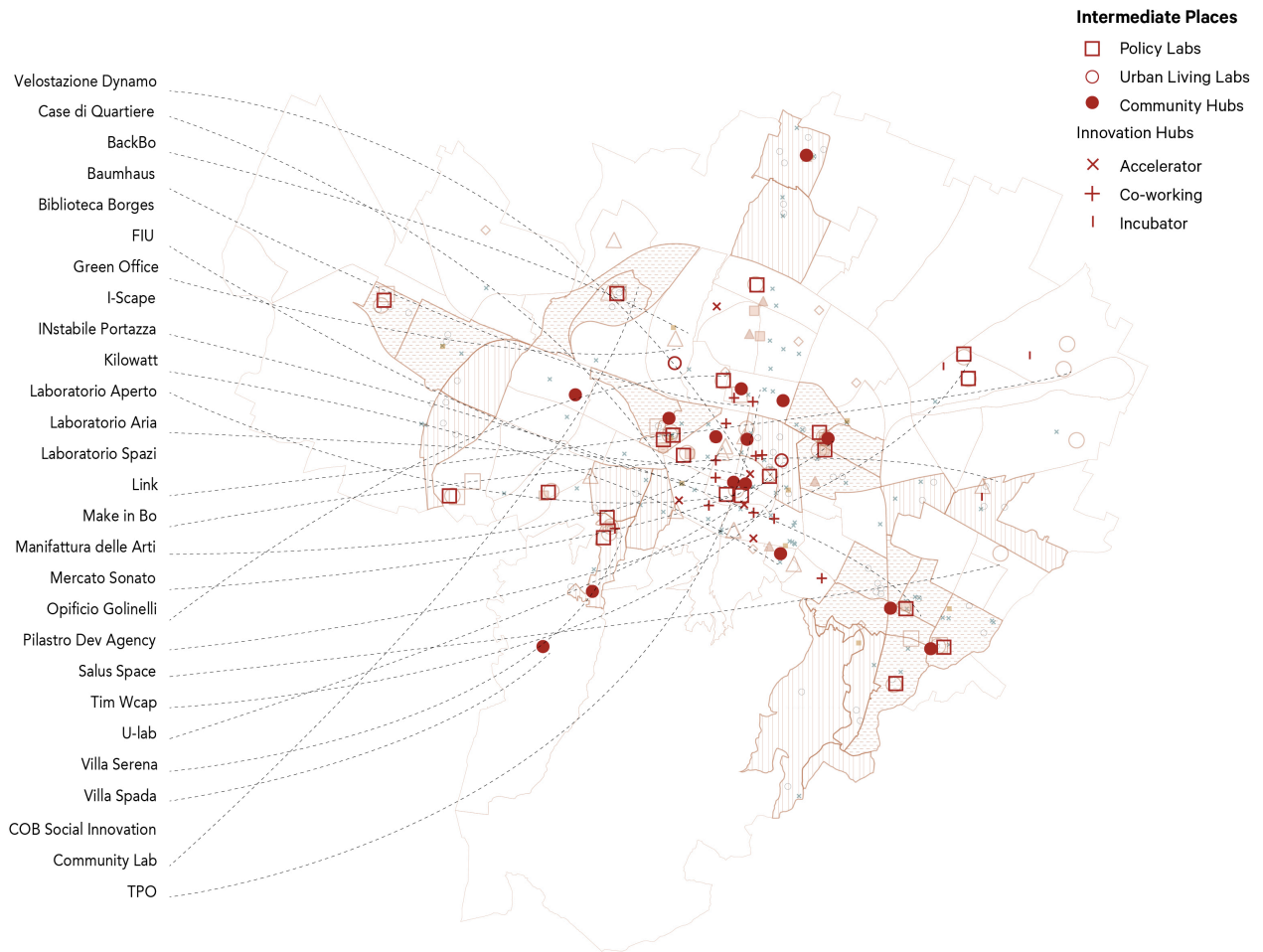

Figure 32 - intermediate places in Bologna. Source: the author
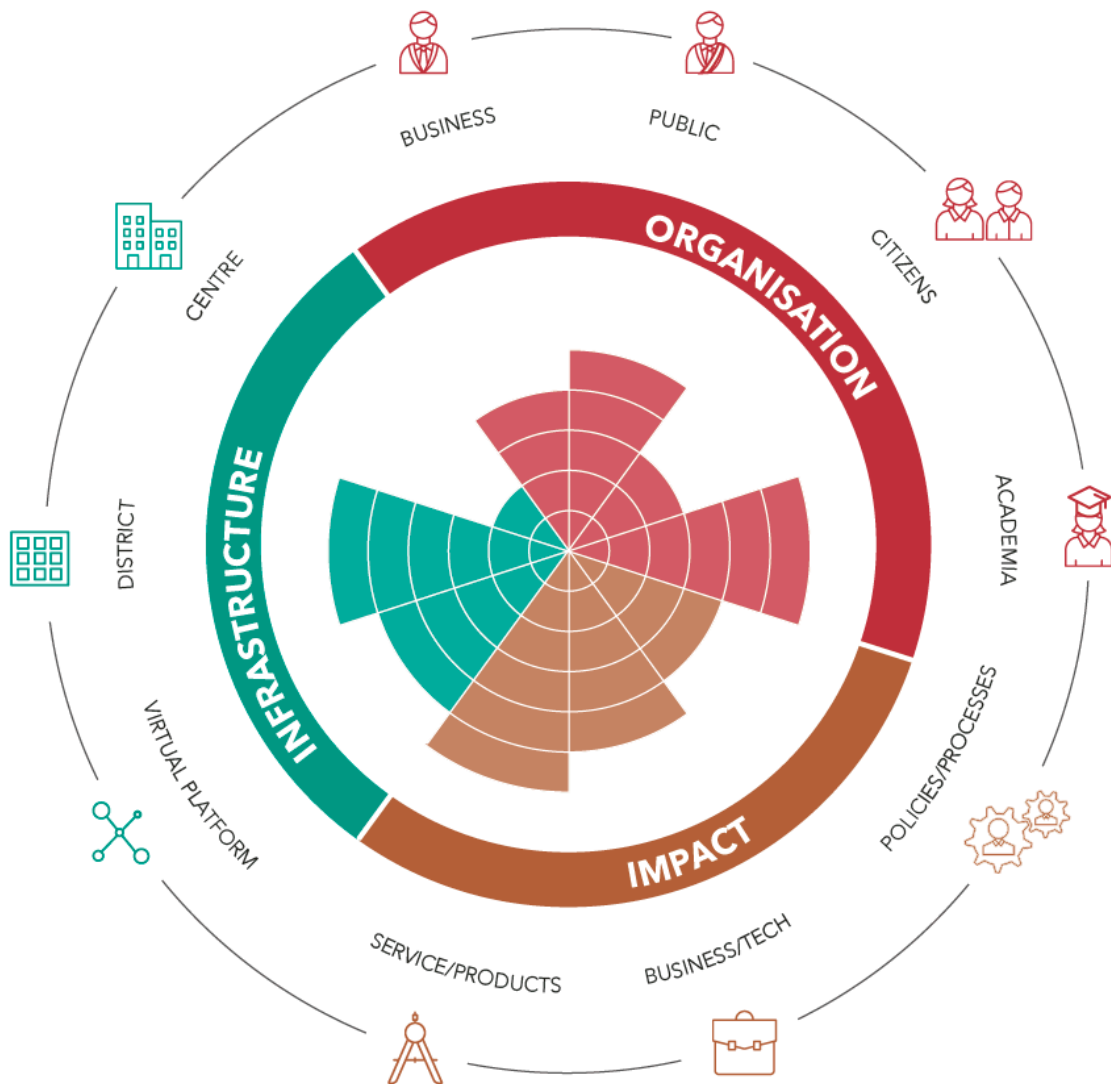
a) Urban Living Labs

Figure 33 - Urban Living Lab variables. Source: the author

Living Labs are user-centered, open innovation[17] contexts operating on the territory (city, metropolitan city, region) integrating processes of applied-research and experimentation with the end user at the center. Living lab aim is to pursue public-private-people partnerships in the process of co-production of goods and services (ENoLL 2010). According to Leminen "Living labs are physical regions or virtual realities, or interaction spaces, in which stakeholders from public-private-people partnerships of companies, public agencies, universities, users, and other stakeholders, are all collaborating for creation, prototyping, validating, and testing of new technologies, services, products and systems in real-life contexts" (Leminen 2013). Living Lab is an applied-research approach that "takes research and development out of a laboratory and into the real world" (ENoLL 2015), crowdsourcing innovative

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[17] Open innovation refers to a business approach defined by H. Chesbrough defining a free flow of information, exchanges of ideas enhanced by the possibility to connect and share more and more easily. It is now been applied to public or hybrid organisations taking up managerial research and development approaches to innovate public policies and processes.

ideas from outside the organisations' boundaries, using the knowledge of the external "crowd". The concept was codified in the 2000s as a research approach in business, then taken up by the European Union in 2006, in the attempt to trigger a competitive development strategy for cities, which required the multidisciplinary involvement of different actors to design, test and develop goods, products and services. The logic of Living Labs foresees to develop innovations that are tested in a short time and in real contexts, in order to incorporate user feedback, demonstrate the validity of the product/service, thereby reducing the inherent risk and reach a wider distribution. Since 2006, with the Helsinki Manifesto[18] that sees the birth of the European Network of Living Labs (EnoLL), the methodology has been applied in universities, rural communities, and, more recently, as a tool for local and regional urban policies. EnoLL labelled more than 440 Living Labs and currently counts 150 active members (EnoLL 2017), involved in various domains and topics. Therefore, after being adopted by the European Union, the methodology has recently evolved up to a third generation (Leminen and Westerlund 2017) defined Urban Living Labs (ULL). The Living Lab model has extended its field of application from areas of experimentation of new technologies and services, to the co-production spaces, policies and urban processes based on local needs (Franz et al. 2015). This shift allowed to incorporate in the experimentations all the variables related with complexity: societal, political, environmental questions are some of the new domains where ULL can intervene with experimentation in cities. ULL is oriented towards the transformation of the Lab's context into a platform of collaborative innovation to "create, prototype, validate and test" (*ibid.*) directly in the urban context, with multiple stakeholders interacting with both researchers and business partners. From a first phase strongly linked to the observation of the users and the use of technologies and data, the transfer of the approach to the city, applies a laboratory logic to real contexts, with experimentation of prototypes of services and products, ultimately fine-tuned to be implemented in the city and its planning setups. ULL model aims to offer an open, explorative (*ibid.*) and collaborative context that enlarge towards citizens and local players together with universities, the possibility to be agents in the processes of transformation of the city. It enables and accompany the exchange and co-production of shared urban values.

Urban Living Labs can be defined through some key features determining their specificity:

- **description**. ULL are processes, platforms, initiatives mainly oriented towards a stable transformation of portion of the city, through co-production with end-users in a real-life context. In the extensive analysis on the repository on ENoLL, the label of Urban Living Lab has been applied extensively to several initiatives, user-centered approaches, in some cases with ambiguities. Some of these are strongly technology oriented, while others are more oriented towards local solutions for social urgencies and collective empowerment of citizens. Both typologies aims at ultimately producing changes in standardised planning procedures by implementing the open innovation principles. The goal of the ULL process is to answer to users' existing or new needs by developing innovative and immediate solutions in form of processes, ideas, services, goods and products, to be implemented, fine-tuned, assessed, replicated and eventually transferred as models. The domain upon which they work are related to global challenges

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[18] In November 2006, the "Helsinki Manifesto" was promoted, in response to the need for an efficient European model of open innovation, with the ultimate aim of increasing the EU's competitiveness on innovation in close connection with communities. The Manifesto foresaw the official birth of the European Network of Living Labs.

(climate change, sustainable growth, social cohesion, financial crisis) whose effects are often locally anchored;

- **organisation.** ULL are explicitly promoted by the public together with knowledge institutions, therefore they involve the local administration not just in product or service improvement, but also in planning processes (Scholl and Kemp 2016). They highlight the importance of the public-private-people partnership (Bergvall-Kåreborn et al. 2009; 2015) in the process of producing concrete transformation on the city (spatial and service-related), proposing the model of the "quadruple" helix, where business, universities, public bodies, are intertwined with civil society. The governance of the Urban Living Lab could entail companies, smes, ngos, at the same level as universities, municipalities and representatives of the civil society (associations, committee, cooperatives, individuals), with their different interests and motivations (Franz et al. 2015). For this reason, each actor engage with ULL non simultaneously, but their contribution during the process is nevertheless oriented to reach the final output, with shared aims and goals. In this scheme, the public actor is responsible for the transparency of the processes and the inclusion of all the possible beneficiaries of the city. The role of the universities and research centres (Figure 33), is what distinguish Urban Living Lab approach to the other intermediate places, positioning it more towards a research and investigative orientation, applied to the city as object of study. The distinctive element is also the role of the end user as a protagonist in the application of research in real-life scenarios. The user becomes researcher but the body of knowledge created is eventually shared for the purpose of the Urban Living Lab (e.g. U-lab in Bologna provided a large know-how on the topic of accessibility, to be applied to bring solutions to widen the accessibility of the University Area);

- **infrastructure**. The space of experimentation of the methodology often coincides with the Urban Living Lab itself and the value produced can have both immaterial and tangible characters. In other words, Urban Living Lab is both an innovative approach and a collaborative space (Leminen et al. 2015), an innovation milieu built on everyday practice and research (Bergvall-Kåreborn et al. 2009), a real-life environment (ENoLL 2017) applying co-production paths for the development of new services, products and social infrastructures. ULL can become research arenas where different energies of the territory converge, aggregating consolidated skills and synthesizing local knowledge, to encourage new policies and activate alternative forms of planning, organization and administration, producing widespread value in the city. Urban Living Labs are both understood as places of aggregation and nodes of interaction of practices and planning. The digital infrastructure (Figure 33) is essential part of the ULL, both as a platform to exchange and connect and as a device to monitor and assess the activities in real-time. The scale of ULL is variable as well as their distribution. In some case they are bundled in specific buildings as coordination centres of the research activities (Laboratorio Urbano Aperto); they are located in parts of the city and their activities deploy in a distributed manner, in public and private spaces (U-lab); they might be part of a research centre, a University or a campus as bridge-structures to connect with real context (Green Office, iSCAPE).

- **method.** ULL are usually time-limited situated experimentations, where a series of iterative processes is performed to answer to a specific goal and achieve several outputs. The approach is based on systematic and iterative actions of co-production, experimentation and evaluation, facilitating the activation of new

relationships and synergies in a mutual exchange of learning and values between the four main actors involved: users (citizens), private companies or business, public administration, knowledge institutions. As already mentioned, the actors are not simultaneously involved, but they enter the process in different phases. The term Lab summarizes the research-oriented approach built with the purpose to experiment, observe, evaluate and re-design solutions for everyday urban life. As developed by the Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions (Ams 2017) the foreseen phases of a ULL entails eight steps:

- o initiation, problem definition and identification of resources needed to tackle it;
- o plan development, a shared vision that embeds all the point of view, goals and ambitions to adapt to the various capacities and resources available;
- o co-production, details on the project defined in a collective manner, identifying barriers to overcome, constraints to be tackled and regulation to comply with; co-production foresees working sessions with a mix of urban actors where all contribute to the development of the project; draft ideas to accept uncertainties in normative and regulatory frameworks;
- o implementation, the application of the solution into practice, in the real-life context to test its efficiency;
- o evaluation, assessment phase of the degree of achievement of the goals, with feedback loops, iterated during the co-production process, involving a plurality of urban actors;
- o refinement, finetune and improve the solution;
- o dissemination, picks up a lesson to be repeated in other contexts, learning from the whole process and from the evaluation;
- o replication, apply the process to a different context, scale, background to take advantage of the knowledge produced;

- **function.** Born as research centres, ULL considers the city or the neighbourhood it works within, as a dynamic experimental area. The ingredients of such experiment are local resources (economic, social, cultural) and external enablers (technological, administrative, financial). ULL span between the two dimensions, with a coordinated system of actions to transform the city into an "open-air" laboratory of "boundary innovation" where companies, associations, formal and informal groups, test their local solutions to global challenges, and acquire a benchmark of value and quality of their project, ready to be aggregated to local and territorial planning. The entrepreneurial attitude is then merged with a social mission. In this perspective, the value of innovation testing concern both private interests (business is a large part of the organisation), but is always aimed at predicting, assessing (thanks to the presence of the universities) and addressing collective impacts (public administration and citizens as guarantors);

- **impact.** ULLs produce outputs in various domains. They improve and create new urban services, increasing the quality and access to existing ones, often in line with sharing economy principles, and develop alternative solutions for emerging societal needs. They strengthen synergies with local communities, with residents with whom they see their activities in constant feedback loops. They also provide modification of institutional paths, recognising the emergence of new institutional arrangements

(Moulaert and Vicari Haddock, 2009) that traditional public actors should look after, moving towards a logic of co-production also in policy-making and city government. The Urban Living Lab intercept innovation as an opportunity to answer to social challenges, presenting the possibility of negotiating objectives, strategies and policies. Its value lies also in the replication and transferability potential: the ULL strategy leads to the consolidation of routines that, when replicated in other areas of the cities or up-scaled in larger territories, are proved to be successful in the short-term transformation, but more specifically as observatories for innovation practices, providing a large amount of data to monitor social processes and answer rapidly to them. The transferability potential of Urban Living Labs lies also in the extent of their network. Thanks to ENoLL in fact, the results, constraints, potentialities and insights of the worldwide experimentations are shared and discussed (ENoLL organises annual gatherings during the OpenLivingLab days), in order to provide value both for the research community and for the municipalities interested in applying the methodology.

In Bologna, the city-University partnership for the experimentation of real-life urban transformations, have provided space for the emergence of several Urban Living Labs concerning a variety of sectors and topics. In order to empirically analyze the dimension of ULL, three case studies are explored in Bologna: U-lab, the Urban Living Lab of ROCK project in the U-area; Green Office, from ROCK project, related to sustainability for the UNIBO campus; iSCAPE Living Lab Bologna, unravelling the topic of air quality though citizen science.

U-lab is the Urban Living Lab implemented in the University Area of Bologna to transform it into an open-air laboratory for interaction of practices aimed at producing an original scenario of development for the area. The University Area (Zona-U) of Bologna has been considered as a **situated diffuse laboratory**, where the elements are the cultural and creative practices, combined together to produce an original scenario of cultural development of the area. U-lab acts in a laboratory logic, managing different ingredients and intercepting multiple resources, building networks and defining collaborations, broad partnerships, co-planning methods to achieve a series of main objectives:

• define a set of shared priorities for the area, opening opportunities for meeting and exchange and helping to strengthen the agency of actors who enjoy, live, work in the area;

• build an ecosystem of stakeholders with whom to collectively promote a series of activities for the territory. All actions are therefore aimed at facilitating development and consolidating relationships at various levels; provide different development scenarios on which to direct the planning tools and propose alternatives to the mainstream;

• experiment with unconventional uses of public spaces.

In order to reach these goals, citizens and institutions, established and new actors contribute in a horizontal way to the collective co-production of urban experiments, to enhance tangible and

intangible cultural heritage. The partnership proposed by U-lab is composed by University of Bologna (knowledge partner), Municipality of Bologna (Public Administration), Foundation for Urban Innovation (implementing partner) and local intermediary, ecosystem of local stakeholders (associations, committees, cooperatives, enterprises, local cultural institutions). U-lab's attempt is to broaden the typical governance structures of the Living Lab (Bergvall-Kåreborn et al. 2009; Franz 2015) by including the local community and actors not only in the activities but also in the definition of the action plan of the district. The challenge is to involve the categories that normally are not engaged, like the students population and the cultural and creative industries, with the aim of ensuring the accessibility of cultural heritage (formal and informal) to those who gravitate around the area. U-lab is the "vehicle" provided by the ROCK project and its partners to build knowledge from the experimentation area, to co-design priorities and requirements for its development and to plan detailed activities to be aggregated into the city schemes. It is framed as a transversal activity to the project, linking the localized experimentations in different spaces, public, private and collective, held together by the "platform" dimension. The distribution of the actions in the area is meant to respond to the twofold objective of highlighting the presence of a widespread and underused building stock and to ensure a dynamic of ideas along the area.

The activities of U-lab were carried out in two stages during 2018 and 2019. The first moment is defined as "listening and co-design" and has put in place a series of exploratory activities aimed at building knowledge and priorities for action on the area; the second moment has concerned the "experimentation and prototyping" of the proposals that emerged from the co-design.

The first phase (Figure 34) began with the involvement of local actors (institutional and non-institutional) in the definition of possible experimentations to carry out for the animation of the district. The experimentation phase (Figure 35) has seen the materialization of the defined actions through co-design and deployment by the same previously involved actors who became agents of the investigation first and eventually the transformation of the portion of the city.

Figure 34 - ROCK U-lab activities of listening and co-designing. Photo Margherita Caprilli

The first phase included seven thematic meetings to select the three main axis for the regeneration of the Zona-U: sustainability, accessibility and collaboration for new cultural productions. During the meetings - which were attended by delegations of local citizen's associations, cultural producers, civil servants from local administration offices, representatives of social enterprises as well as from inhabitants of the area - a preliminary definition of these three concepts was presented and discussed. This allowed to get a context-led idea of what sustainability, accessibility and collaboration really meant for the inhabitants and for the subjects operating in the university district. For instance, the issue of sustainability was perceived more in terms of the need of a collaborative effort for the care of public spaces, rather than reducing the carbon footprint and waste reduction in the area. Similarly, accessibility, rather than a technical matter for the reduction of spatial barriers, was understood as the need for the removal of all the spatial, economic and social barriers for the access to culture. In an analogous way, improving collaboration for the production of culture was perceived as the need to broaden the accessibility to underused spaces to allow the participation of a larger part of the population in the cultural city life organisation of events and cultural activities.

Figure 35 - participatory mapping activity in the framework of U-lab. Photo: Margherita Caprilli

The outcome of the first phase was the development of a list of requirements for the three management scenarios, which has been taken as a blueprint for the monitoring and evaluation of the actions performed in the rea. At the end of the first part of U-lab's activities, the participants reflected on the activities carried out, evaluating their experience on the basis of the impacts produced, the feedback received and the difficulties encountered. The constant monitoring phase is a significant part of the process of mutual learning between institutional and non-institutional practices, which leads to the production of evidence of research and useful to the narrative of project activities.

The outcomes of the first phase of U-Lab were taken as an input for a two-fold strategy. Firstly, a public call for project was launched to finance a series of activities that would have put in practice the approach and the guidelines elaborated during the meetings. Among the forty-seven proposals

received, sixteen projects were financed. Projects included theatre laboratories, events, public discussions, presentations and collaborative mapping activities, which constituted not only applications of the guidelines developed in the first phase, but also their verification, as well as new occasions to gather on-site data. From the knowledge base produced in the thematic meetings and during the activities on the university area, the topic of accessibility emerged as the most urgent. In March 2019, a new co-design path saw the interaction of some actors previously engaged in the provision of cultural activities for the area, joining forces to design a service related to accessibility. The service took the form of a multi-device mapping of the Zona U oriented towards different targets with disabilities or not.

The U-lab experimentation was successful in terms of **allowing alternative** types of interventions in historical contexts beyond usual reactivation strategy based on cultural or recreational events. Also, unprecedent and innovative themes were introduced in the public debate. In particular, an original point of view on accessibility, based on the engagement of cultural institutions, businesses and individuals, more likely to produce a shift in the traditional ways in which issues of accessibility are usually tackled, paving the way for possible direction for institutional urban regeneration projects. However, the engagement device of ULL proved to be insufficient to meet the active participation of who normally do not participate, especially students. In this sense, new forms of engagement should be thought beyond the living lab model, which was able to mobilise only those individuals and stakeholders already engaged in on-going formal or informal civic processes. The main idea is to move beyond the traditional role of the **university researcher as a city council's consultant** towards a mutual reinforcing role as partners.

Green Office (GO). Green Office Bologna is an Urban Living Lab created as externality of the ROCK project. GO is an idea born in the Netherlands, which brings together young people (students, researchers) with sustainability entrepreneurial ideas, services, products, through initiatives run by students who, with the support of administrators and university professors, put into practice projects with social and environmental impact. GO goes beyond just associationism or volunteering, working as in an NGO: with a budget, its own statute and a group of managers, composed by students and researchers. In Bologna, the Green Office concept has been concretized within the Living Lab of sustainability "Terracini in Transizione", a transversal and interdisciplinary team of professors, researchers and technicians of the Department of Engineering of UNIBO, putting forward the "transition thinking" approach for the facilitation of adaptation and mitigation processes, which has initiated a series of engagement processes with students and interventions to make people aware of their responsibilities on sustainability.

GO Bologna aims at tackling the existent low level of collaboration between staff and students, to the detriment of sustainability plans and programmes, with little practical implementation and no real impact. It also addresses the lack of financial, human or time resources for the student initiatives that

struggle to take off or be put into practice. To fill this gap, the main actors of the Green Office are the students who, through research, studies, periods of internships, actions in the field, can really affect the territorial reality of Bologna, through supported incubation and dissemination of good practices. Co-created and co-managed sustainability actions aims at moving sustainability actions not only within academic environment but in exchange with the territory. The Green Office is designed to allow its development even after the end of the ROCK project, becoming a real hub of sustainability or the University. Moreover, the Green Office "Bologna" model will be the pilot model for the Green Offices that will be developed in other Italian cities and in other cities in Southern Europe.

Among the multi-campus structure of UNIBO, with offices located between the city of Bologna, Cesena, Forlì, Ravenna and Rimini, the Green Office can be considered a centre of interconnection between universities and university departments, citizens and institutions. A central Green Office, located in the ROCK area (Via Zamboni) was created and then the Green Office spread in various locations. The experimental activities of "transition experiments" have contributed to the drafting of the current UNIBO Sustainability Plan. ULL is therefore a valid **support for the experimentation of new models** of sustainability, from micro experiments in a controlled environment, up to the transfer in other contexts such as industrial or territorial governance to facilitate the change towards a sustainable society. The initiatives adopted, involving students, technical-administrative staff and teachers, were not limited to acting only at the level of the individual system, but expanded, triggering participatory processes that contaminate and allow a spread of the model of resilient city bringing positive externalities also to the local community.

iSCAPE. iSCAPE Living Lab is the ULL set in the framework of the european project iSCAPE, which works on integrated strategies for air pollution control in European cities. The iSCAPE project aims to reduce urban air pollution and negative impacts through iSCAPE Living Labs by assessing the effectiveness of a range of passive control systems (green infrastructure, low boundary walls, photocatalytic coatings, urban design) and promote behavioral changes to reduce urban air pollution and address the negative impacts of climate change.

iScape ULL provide Smart Citizens sensor kits for everyone to measure local air pollution. The Living Lab in Bologna aims to raise public awareness on air quality and the impact of passive control systems by reducing air pollution. In particular, it deals with understanding how human behavior interacts with pollution; how pollutants are measured through low-cost sensors; it shows the importance of passive measures to reduce pollution. The results of experimentations are opening up new scenarios for mobility, policies and infrastructure management. Evidence-based data on the impact of green infrastructure and trees in particular are collected in a real urban environment, engaging economic operators, researchers, public administrators and citizens. The main actors involved in the local pilot projects are the University of Bologna (Department of Physics, Department of Industrial

Engineering, Department of Civil, Chemical, Environmental and Materials Engineering), the Regional Agency for Prevention, Environment and Energy of Emilia-Romagna (ARPAE), the Municipality, the Bologna Foundation for Urban Innovation and the Green Office. The iScape Living Labs are also hosted by a virtual platform enabling conversations around air pollution in Europe. It gather the results of the tests from the European iScape Living Labs and present opportunities for collaboration and concrete solutions that can be applied to improve the air quality of cities.

iSCAPE is an Urban Living Lab that employs the principles of Citizen Science which, according to the EU "are citizens 'doing science', for example, through crowdsourcing. Or it can mean greater understanding of science by the public made possible through greater access to information about the research process such as the ability to use open research data or download open access journal articles". Citizen science, defined as the "non-professional involvement of volunteers in the scientific process, whether in the data collection phase or in other phases of the research" and participation are today necessary conditions for EU research funding in all scientific domains, as well as cornerstones for responsible research and innovation. iSCAPE ULL seems to put into practice the concept of citizen science, to **bridge the existing gap between the theoretical dimension of learning and real life challenges**, facilitating urban education and research, while operatively providing solutions for the city. Nevertheless, it can risk to fail in its pedagogical and sensitisation action (third mission), if the tools, the language and the transmission of knowledge remains in a high specialist level.

Lesson learned

With ULL, the Living Lab format has shown a more general role of guiding local planning processes concerning specific topics, as a facilitator and partner. The strength of the approach is to favour the productive interactions between different subjects, coordinating them locally in a transversal way, integrating levels of multi-scale and multi-actor intervention, for a limited amount of time. In this sense, the case studies in Bologna show some variables and dominant characteristics from which the research draws the following lessons organised into requirements:

1. **Increasing public Research & Development**
2. **Consolidating iteration of the approach**
3. **Enlarging the engagement of a wider audience**
4. **Clarifying actors' roles and responsibilities**
5. **Stressing the potential for replication**

Increasing public Research & Development

The cases highlight the role of **research as a trigger and driver** of the activities of ULL. In U-lab, the researcher has a protagonist role both in the definition of research questions, methodologies, as well as the intervention

strategies, in a continuous feedback loop. This way, the researcher becomes an active agent in urban transformation, while **city administration becomes an investigative process**, and not a mere application of political decisions. This interplay of roles between researchers and users is also visible in Bologna iSCAPE Living Lab. What emerge from the description of the Lab is the **enabling role of technology for research purposes**, which is not overlapping as a superimposed layer on the city and on citizen's activities, but is supporting people to work to extract the knowledge needed to tackle a problem. Furthermore, the knowledge produced by ULL is often made available as open resources, a common and shared externalities for all to be used. This step in the process need special care, especially when the business component of the partnership is predominant. What appears urgent is the capacity of the whole model to direct the use of the knowledge produced towards the generation of new inputs for another process or data and open knowledge for collective use.

Consolidating iteration of the approach

A specific research question is often the origin of an Urban Living Lab activity which, as shown for Bologna, is linked to European projects and therefore subject to limitations in the topic, in the participants and in the accessibility to the activities. Because of this, ULL are managed by project teams and some contextual factors such as space, time, actors to involve, are previously selected. The issue of time is crucial, when imagining Urban Living Labs as vectors for social innovation to upscale and intersect institutional frameworks, without one category to prevail on the other. Collaboration and co-production in ULL **require long-term commitment**, as well several challenges to be tested on. The strong interdependence of existing Urban Living Lab in Bologna with EU project, risks to prevent their **legitimation, sedimentation and stabilisation** in an institutional path and in an everyday programming for the city. The time-limitedness is the main constraint of the described ULL: U-lab and iSCAPE are direct emanations of European projects, despite the premises that indicate the hypothesis of continuing and maintaining the activities, the ULL often run out of action with the end of the project. A different case is Green Office, born by the will of the engineering department as "Terracini in Transizione", used the framework of the ROCK project to transform the pilot into a practice and distribute the benefits produced in other parts of the city. The context of the European project has therefore served to expand the existing network, bringing new partners, new issues to be addressed and real contexts on which to experiment, but the iteration of the approach is fundamental in order to stabilise positive externalities in the city, to build fruitful collaboration and long-term transformation scenarios.

Enlarging the engagement

The **benefits for the actors** involved in ULL are different: in the case of the City, the coordination and commitment from the beginning of the process, provide ULL with a valuable source of knowledge and a platform for research and development of urban strategic investments (e.g. on air quality for iSCAPE, on accessibility for U-lab); the same can be said for business partners, who have privileged access to data and information in real time, to which they can respond with products, services, goods to be put on the market, more responsive to the needs of users (e.g. in U-lab the business partners were cultural and creative industries that were able to provide fine-tuned activities and productions for their audience; in Green Office the producers of green technologies for green roofs, softwares for heath measurement etc. were able to access to seamless data from the experimentations in the

campus, furthermore the Green Office provided assistance to business partners to realise greener events in the city); for academia, access to data and the possibility of experimenting in real conditions is the greatest benefit emerging from the ULL (for the three Labs, a real context of experimentation granted larger possibilities to gather real data and provide consistency to the research questions); finally, the citizens-prosumers, have the advantage of being able to enter from the beginning in the decision-making processes and add know-how to have at their disposal urban products and services, better equipped for the real collective needs, which citizens represent. The ULL in fact, increases the accessibility to urban services and enables the users by offering abilities, competencies to act in an autonomous way especially in the care of the urban goods.

In this scheme, an imbalance of benefits is evident, in which the citizen is still poorly represented, especially within ULL that deal with issues that are difficult to understand or in which the citizen can only intervene marginally. This leads to results that often intervene on issues that afflict middle social strata that are able to express needs and make requests on personal issues. There is still a tension between users as mere "beta testers" of innovations or users as full contributors, with a real autonomy of competences and ability to act on the evolution of experiments. The cases demonstrate the necessity of the mediation mechanism to connect generally excluded groups of actors, enhancing collective actions, with greater capacity for contamination across the entire city.

The described ULL address uncertainty, involving different urban actors with overlapping and conflicting powers in a process of reflection and mutual learning oriented to the common resolution of urban challenges. In the logic of opening up planning by enabling intermediate places to intertwine with social innovation, the experiments of U-lab have effectively **attracted actors who were not previously considered** or involved in the formal planning process (Mäntysalo et al. 2011) (e.g. deaf, blind community), but failed in enlarging the participation of students population. U-lab shows evidences in the benefits of direct engagement with the city (the co-production of new services, the creation of a large unexpected alliances born inside the Lab, the alternative approach to the regeneration of a problematic area through culture) and highlights the positive value of brokering between the city and urban actors (activation of new collaboration pacts, renewed attention of the city towards unusual topics such as social, urban, economic accessibility to cultural heritage).

Clarifying actors' roles and responsibilities

In the social innovation domain, ULL are able to give a territorial perspective, by creating new connections and bonds for the already existing practices. ULL process and widespread network enable local vocations and put them in circle with external resources, in a circular subsidiary perspective. In this mechanism, the role of the **institutions is key**, in their ability to look at social innovation practices from the outside, recognise their value, trigger some leverages and eventually re-define themselves from the inside, getting involved in a mutual learning perspective. Institutional role is helpful also to clarify the premises of the ULL experimentations: the risk is to produce ambiguities by understanding the participants as mere "objects to be investigated" and not really part of the processes with related benefits. The case of U-lab is symbolic in representing a top-down process, where the administration has guided by solving critical issues and bringing attention to the issues of interest. In this sense, the personal involvement of civil servants in the activities, has allowed a greater transparency of the process and therefore a mutual trust, which has led to co-produce initiatives (summer events planning in the university area) real services (accessibility service) integrated by the administration in its programming. In the long run, the risk of

this operation though, is to generate a reduction of responsibilities of the public in the matter of public services production, especially in some strategic sectors. ULL process requires specific expertise and skills from research and academia, which should be able not to detach from the societal requirements, but at the same time to provide the necessary knowledge in management, mediation and facilitation of co-production activities. What appears urgent is the need for developing new competencies for professionals and public servants, necessary to overcome the idea that social innovative actions themselves are sufficient to create value and to contribute to urban innovation. In parallel, ULL show the need of large investments in terms of organisation, coordination, management, tools. This is a case in which the municipality involved should **release power while governing and sustaining the process**, discussing development goals while withdrawing old procedures to innovate its inner organisation.

Stressing the potential for replication

ULL has proven successful in the implementation of **small-scale and short-term solution**, with a limited thematic focus. In this context, it can effectively set in motion certain circular processes in terms of research, action, and allow several institutions and actors to join forces and to act in common. The attempt of extending this model to other contexts, as well as to a larger scale, is however still to be verified. Following this, the risk is for some public administration to hide under the experimentation "narration", reading failures attempts as discouraging moments, continuing iterating small experimentations without transferring and replicating the value and therefore without producing any substantial change in the urban system.
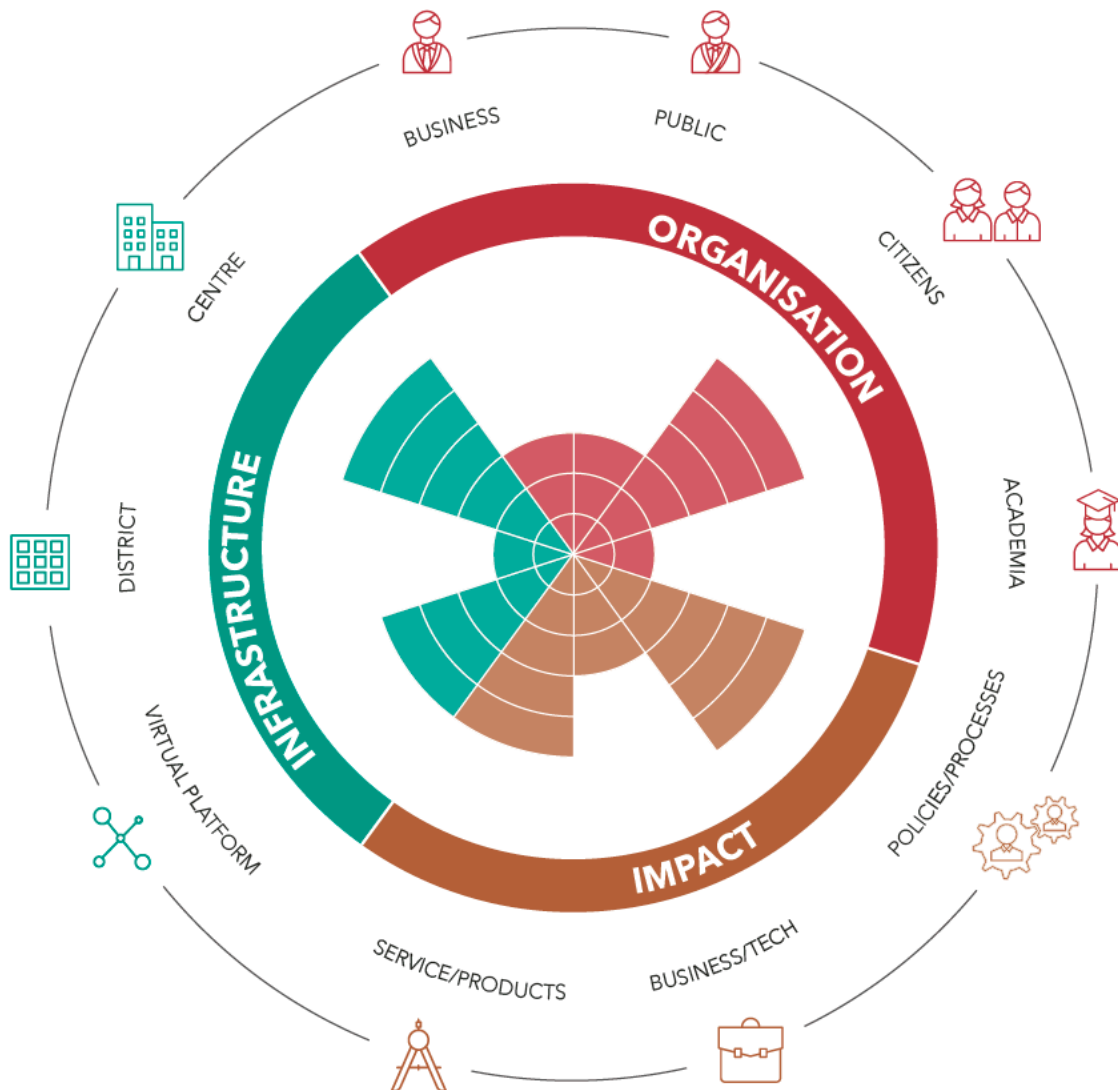
b) Community HUBs

Figure 36 - Community HUB variables. Source: the author.

Community HUB is a recent denomination (Calvaresi 2018) of a growing phenomenon referring to initiatives emerging from the regeneration of public or private spaces and infrastructures for collective use. Inspired by the principles of openness and inclusion, it entails intermediate places, which stems from processes of re-appropriation, re-cycle (Gabellini 2018), re-novation of meaning (Venturi and Zandonai 2019) of specific places led by local community of actors, grew to a certain degree up to influencing the local urban policy agenda (Groth and Corijn 2005). Community HUBs foresees new ways to close the gap between citizens and urban services, in the absence of the public actor or the market and to govern mutualism and subsidiarity. They usually entail the renovation of different and peculiar spaces left out of "time and place" (*ibid.*) such as unused cultural or industrial heritage, empty gardens, brownfield, abandoned centres, becoming unexpectedly fertile ground for community-led regeneration. They emerge from the aggregation of social innovation practices evolved toward reaching a stable maturity and providing changes in the collective management of resources, in the provision of urban services and

in the definition of new ways of working. The origin of the definition resonates with the idea of HUB, which recalls infrastructural elements that, re-converted into new forms of collective use, retrieve the ability to aggregate, connect, provide access and mobilise multiple resources.

Behind the rise of Community HUBs (Avanzi et al. 2016), stands the increased possibilities of engagement and interaction with urban life, which allow a variety of subjects to be part of the creation of the city; the request for unusual and affordable contexts for urban groups excluded by the traditional job market, to establish their business ideas; the necessity to reverse the abandonment trend of private or public assets; the political decision to encourage collaboration with social entrepreneurs, cooperatives, associations and committee in the management of assets.

In Community HUBs, new ways of living the city are envisaged, as an alternative or even in antagonism to the institutional strategy "that overturns the manipulation of power relations" in a given space (De Certeau 1980), impacting on power relations in planning processes (Moulaert 2003) provoking change in the mainstream structures. The large growth of experience shows a new emerging knowledge community (Curti 2018) on topics such as urban transformation, social inclusion and entrepreneurship. A Community HUB can resonate with the former social centers, district social clubs, grounded and classic forms of social aggregation, from which they differ in the type of promoting actors and in the vocation towards not only social aggregation but also new forms of collective service production. The community that they create, is voluntary, independent from social-demographic connotations and operating on needs that are independent from political agendas or design briefs, but emerge from social urgencies (e.g care of migrant kids, language schools), organizational (management of common working and living spaces) economical (access to resources for entrepreneurial activities). Their value stands in the generative capacity of valorizing local assets (geographic, urban, material and immaterial heritage, know-how) creating original partnerships and proposing alternative hybrid production models. Community HUBs can be identified following these variables:

- **description**. Community HUBs are meant are intermediate places born from private initiative, sometimes under illegal premises (squatting, occupations), evolved towards the shared identification as local outpost of proximity services, provided by the community itself. The definition comprehend all the singular regenerated 'objects' of a city which are variable in the space organization, hybrid in use, flexible in governance, make use of different tools and are the outcome of complex regeneration of assets. Furthermore they are in a critical relationship with existing models (Nicolas-Le Strat 2018) of service provision, but at the same time they strengthen and develop new practices which are beneficial for large portion of the city and for the same traditional models;

- **organisation**. The governance structure of Community HUBs (Figure 36) reflects the flexibility of the space they are located in and the variety of uses they propose. They are often promoted by citizens, groups of innovators, associations, cooperatives, social enterprises, hence private actors engaging in a collaboration approach towards the creation of a new intentional community. Their governance structure is based on a flexible partnership between private/social private and public, with a shared responsibility in planning and comanaging the resources. The form can be defined as community enterprise, leading a multiple system where the public administration is involved only a support partner. Community HUBs merge together different skills such as community organising, managing, leadership skills, in order to

ensure the collaboration among the promoting actors, while strengthening the external networks with public and private stakeholders with different interests, needs and positions;

- **infrastructure.** They emerge in former abandoned or decay spaces where new ways of living, building, sharing, participating can be more easily tested out, making sure that the polymorphous space attracts and triggers social, organizational and policy change. A central element in a Community HUBs is space: an aggregating, identifiable perimeter, more often coinciding with a building or a centre (Figure 36) that allows to 'make' and to participate, with legacies brought back to light and updated according to contemporary needs. Space is the main resource and often the asset from which the community is recognised and shaped around. Therefore it has a material meaning but is also instrumental to generate further value (in social, environmental terms) through the activities it hosts and contribute to inspire. The space is transformed in temporary, transitory, tactical manners (Bishop and Williams, 2012; Oswalt et al., 2013, Gabellini 2018);

- **method.** Community HUBs use incremental and adaptive processes, meeting the top-down institution and mediating the unpredictability of the bottom-up. This twofold orientation requires a stable organisation and constant renovation of the commitment in the construction of a community that, even if already existing, must be aggregated and cultivated starting from simple needs (i.e. sharing of working space, the construction of a local networks such as purchasing groups, support group for proximity services, social streets) that must be explicit, recognized and shared. In a Community HUB solutions must be then changed and adapted over time according to contingent needs. Designing and effectively carrying out constantly shifting projects and initiatives, implies a work of proximity, which is not limited to territorial animation, but requires an activity carried out side by side with the groups and individuals willing to mobilize and be engaged;

- **function.** The standpoint of community HUBs is community service. The place and its network can provide a means for alternative approaches to service delivery underpinned by the principles of community involvement and partnership (Locality 2016), allowing everyone to give time to teach, make, create. They use co-production as an empowerment tool, to open up new channels of collaboration with the administration, based on a principle of horizontal subsidiarity aimed at the realization of the general interest. Community HUB aggregates the informal service networks that are generated locally, map them and creates opportunities for cross-sector and multi-level interactions. Nevertheless, these structures not only provide territorial welfare services, but promote collaborative economy networks and eventually enable micro-entrepreneurship. They are places that make (local) interaction their main goal adapting their uses according to the needs or the opportunities for new business or new social challenges, aggregating the vast field of activity and experience that engages a multitude of citizens, individually or in an associated form. Their flexibility of uses allows the possibility to maintain the core business of their activities as community-oriented and promoted by social enterprises, third sector or voluntary work. Nevertheless the reversible and ever-changing uses permit to save some portions of the space for different forms of business, granting the self-sustainability of the activities proposed;

- **impact**. When read with the lenses of social innovation in urban planning, the main outcomes of Community HUBs are related to the creation of collective institutions capable of anticipating dynamics, transformations and phenomena at district scale. Their proximity position allow them to detect and support local needs, acting as outpost for several categories of citizens. In this they are realistic (Besson 2018), concrete places, taking into account all the variables, conflicts, dynamics of the district where they emerge, "trading" (Balducci et al. 2013) and mediating to reach new shared paths. The engagement process they perform is one emerging from informality and spontaneously aggregation people, attracted toward Community HUBs by its easiness of access, the open environment and horizontal management structure. A large presence of Community HUBs in European cities is being recognized by local public administration as well as international networks. Relating to the former, the interventions born on the initiative of citizens or associations that are transformed into Community HUBs, seems to push the public administration to adapt to the new uses its plan or program of intervention for the areas concerned or for the contingent situation. For the latter, the growth of the phenomena pushes to interrogate on the possibility that a change of paradigm in the development of cities is happening, urging recognition both from the research point of view and from the administrative one.

Bologna hosts a constellation of these places, ranging from the most historical and consolidated, such as the district civic centers (Salomoni 1983), to more recent and innovative forms of community places. The first, emerged after the de-centralization policies of the city in the 70s, in the attempt to build a convivial framework to encourage a plurality of residents to participate in public life in order to avoid marginalization and foster local engagement. On the other hand, thanks to several financing tools (e.g. '*IncrediBOL!*, '*Municipality of Bologna and Culturability*', '*Unipolis*') and network opportunities, contemporary community HUBS have been able to grow from micro-scale to become true social and economic intermediaries.

INstabile Portazza. The concept of civic centres has been taken as an inspiration by INstabile Portazza, a national case study involving a large community of 200 residents, who have met thanks to the local Social Street and has autonomously activated itself and 30 organisations in the co-design of the new use of an abandoned civic centre in the district of Savena. The building was built in 1962 in the complex of the district Ina Casa: Villaggio Portazza. It was proposed as a Civic Center: the intention was to integrate the beneficiaries of the housing through a process of socialization, sharing and participation that would come to life in the spaces of the center. The village was located in a completely decentralized position with respect to the urban center, as it was in the logic of settlement of the neighborhoods Ina Casa. Today, however, the village has been completely absorbed by the urban fabric, the Civic Center has therefore gained the opportunity to offer itself as a service to the entire district Savena. The space acquires a precise role, both for its location (in a central position with respect to a historical district of social housing), for the process of re-configuration (involvement of the inhabitants in the redesign of spaces, according to new needs), and for the meaning (it is the

former civic center of the neighborhood). In this case, the community has drawn inspiration from the place to propose new uses and future development hypotheses for the neighbourhood.

The architecture of the former Civic Center fully reflects the designers' intention to create a space to bring people together, a flexible and adaptable space in which the sense of community and community is cultivated and strengthened. INstabile is located on a 700 square meters space that provides the presence of: cafeteria, coworking, kindergarten, auditorium, exhibition space, space for indoor sports.

INstabile Portazza was declared a 'community creative hub', which uses space as a frame in which to trigger the production of collective values with the residents first and the Bologna's inhabitants after. The HUB community answers to the necessity to define an accessible, inclusive and dynamic space. The ambition is to create a "suburban local development agency" that collaborates with the public administration and the territory, focusing on three main topics: culture, community welfare and work. The HUB has become a source of exchange and share of welfare services, whose process is based on an incremental self-recovery, involving residents and project partners, implementing new activities in a step-by-step process. This allowed the project and management model to change and be seamlessly re-defined and the place to become a living and evolving structure. The decision-making process is what distinguishes INstabile from other similar national experiences. The **management is horizontal and the leadership shift** over time. Decisions concerning activities to be performed, are taken during monthly assemblies. All decisions are taken by the participants in the assemblies, trying - as far as possible - to find an agreement between those present. If the agreement is not reachable, the decision is put to a vote and approved with the favorable vote of 75% of those present, and the minutes of the meeting is made available online.

Figure 37 - INstabile Portazza summer event 2018. Photo by the author

The transformation of the building, supported by PON Metro funds and Culturability awards, has taken place through a deliberately slow **process of self-recovery**, involving residents and project promoters. The project has been eventually supported by sponsors, funding from participation in tenders, crowfunding, which help to give continuity to the transformation. At the same time, the first activities have begun to take place in the recovered building, which have contributed to the evolution and redefinition of the project and management model in progress.

Kilowatt. Among the first to be called Community HUB, the case of Kilowatt, hosted by the Greenhouses of Giardini Margherita in Bologna, is an example of collective construction of urban identity, based on shared values and public interest objectives. The name derives from the initial desire to upgrade an abandoned plant of Energy distribution, but also referring to the idea of spreading new creative energy in the city. Born in 2012 as an association, evolved in 2014 as a cooperative including 7 associates, in 2015 it transformed into an Srl (100% owned by the cooperative). Kilowatt defines itself as an environmental, social and cultural value-ideas accelerator, with a hybrid governance (Avanzi 2016) that allows it to distribute the produced value, with communities and institutions, keeping the balance between economic sustainability and public services offer. It aggregates a network of companies, professionals, startuppers, cultural operators and associations, with the intention of innovating the way to understand work and services, promoting collaboration and sharing of tools and skills for a professional and living growth. In 2015, the 'Kilowatt' cooperative, transformed the abandoned space of the greenhouses of the Margherita Gardens into a place of cultural contamination between experts, citizens, business, non-profit stakeholders and the Public Administration. Kilowatt was given the opportunity to rent the buildings free of charge through the Incredibol! tender (2013) and it transformed the abandoned buildings into a coworking space and a center for advice, training and education. Since then it has grown into a community centre for creative professionals and entrepreneurs. The idea of Kilowatt is to answer to the evolution of job market and to the retraction of public welfare, offering a place where working spaces, urban local services and events, merge with collaboration and neighbourhood animation processes. The promoting group aimed overturning the narrative of civic spaces as antagonist and promoting only counter-culture, starting from the theme of job creation and its emerging needs. In this intermediate place, several actors (professionals, business and associations) work together with the local community with the ambition to build a "local proximity context", where services emerges from local needs answered with local assets and resources. The greenhouses also host a community garden used as an orchard but also as an experimental area (e.g. for the project "*semino*" to grow typical vegetables of the foreign communities living in Italy) a *bistrot*, an events space, a space for workshops (hosting 300 workshops in 2016), a Solidarity Purchasing Group. Kilowatt hosts a variety of educational programmes (47 laboratories for children in 2016), camps and community festivals and is a free incubator for startups. It also provides a coworking space for 30 people (in 2016) and

offers childcare for the self-employed (9 children). Kilowatt's services also include a programme that provides support to immigrants in Italy, which has generated new small businesses. Kilowatt is now a center of innovation and creativity, a resource for startups and entrepreneurs, and an inspiration for the community. The generated salaries for the year 2016 reached the amount of 350.000 € for 35 workers in 2016 and 45 in 2017. The governance structure is composed by a Kilowatt Cooperative, which controls Kw srl, dedicated to restoration and selling, for the 100%. This way, the money produced by the srl enter directly into the cooperative to finance those activities subject to "market failure", such as free socio-cultural initiatives, the garden and the educational activities.

Since 2015 Kilowatt has been carrying out and publishing on its channels its own **impact assessment**, useful for consolidating the approach and for attracting constant feedback. The assessment portrays a qualitative/quantitative analysis based on interviews and observations of the yearly activities, the perception of the participants, the recognitions received both in terms of awards and of publications. In the 2018's impact assessment has shown a steady increase both in the number of users and in the incomes (+42% for the cooperative) which coincides with an increase of days dedicated to research and development. This data highlights the evolution of Kilowatt from an aggregator of competences and proximity service distributor, into a real relational hub and incubator of new forms of working and living models, a landmark in the panorama of Community HUBs. The activities of Kilowatt, besides providing for the self-sustainability of the place in which they operate, are able to connect communities and create unexpected possibilities with respect to the network already present in the city. The set of skills that Kilowatt brings together allows both projective ability towards the future, but also exploration of alternatives in the present (Kilowatt impact assessment 2018). It is not only a place of aggregation, but also capable of redistributing what is generated, which is not concentrated but used to "incubate" new communities. On many occasions in fact, Kilowatt has allied with other Bologna's community HUBs (e.g. Dynamo) to build partnerships, to contribute to the mutual growth of places, to reflect on the organization of empirical actions and to reinforce national and international networks. The community incubation function was carried out also thanks to a series of free meetings aimed at "bringing out the submerged energy of the city" (Avanzi 2016), which led to legitimizing and recognizing Kilowatt, not only among local institutions, but also to local and national ecosystem of social innovation. The systemization and the construction of long networks is one of the characteristics that can contribute to the success of the initiatives of this intermediate place.

Figure 38 - Kilowatt in the Greenhouses of the Margherita Gardens. Photo by Lorenzo Burlando

The experience can be seen as an enabler of social innovation with local community as a client, with the advantage to rely on a wider range of distributed resources among human and professional qualities of the community. On governance aspects, Kilowatt is an example of renewal of the relationship between urban and territorial actors: public, private, third sector and local community. These actors come into play at different times and with individual interests that they put into play to **achieve a common interest (publicness)**. It is a hybrid governance in order to be able to **socialise the value** created with the community and the institutions, **remaining in a market regime**, economically sustainable, without depending on the public body. Nevertheless, the added value of the operation derives from a 15 years contract with the local authorities (owners of the area) that enabled Kilowatt to promote long-term strategies and programming, allowing to externalise the value, while keeping the balance in economic sustainability.

Mercato Sonato. It is a unique project, which transformed in 2015 the underused local market of the San Donato district, into the headquarter of the '*Senzaspine*' youth orchestra: 200 under 35 musicians with the idea of re-using an unusual place to bring a normally 'elitist' discipline (classical music) closer to the public. It is the first public space in Italy entirely self-managed by a young orchestra. The space were they are set is municipal property and in 2015 it was assigned to the *Senzaspine* Association, after winning the Incredibol! 2014 competition, reinforce by the 2015 Culturability award of the Unipolis Foundation. The *Senzaspine* Orchestra was born as a response to the needs of young musicians from academies and conservatories, graduates, specialists, who had no opportunity to play in an orchestra, due to lack of youth orchestras and investments in culture. It also answers to the need to create a bridge between study and work opportunities related to music. In June 2013, director and president Tommaso Ussardi, supported by the vice-president and director

Matteo Parmeggiani created *Senzaspine* in the form of **a platform**, a school in which to train young musicians who want to work in orchestra.

The Mercato Sonato is hence a project of urban requalification and regeneration, which aims to revive, through culture, art and especially music, a place on the edge of the city that has become deserted over the years. It hosts events, concerts, workshops and courses also for children. Thus, began a complex project of urban and cultural regeneration, unique in its kind on a national level. After the first triggering phase, the Sonato Market became Circolo Arci. The governing body of the association is composed of some members of the orchestra and young professionals who joined the project because of its potential, including Duse Theatre, Photo Notes, Ministry of Heritage and Culture, All for Music, *Argenteria Corradini*.

Figure 39 - Mercato Sonato. Photo: Zero Bologna

The project resulted in giving a **new urban centrality to creative expressions and experimentations**, starting from the transformation of a space of everyday life and production, into a place of restless and seamless creation. The quality and value of the initiative have been further reaffirmed, after the first financial kickstart, by an important ministerial contribution (Single Fund for Entertainment) that marked the success of the initiative. In two years the *Orchestra Senzaspine* has recorded numerous sold outs at the Teatro Duse in Bologna and at the Teatro Auditorium Manzoni in Bologna, along with great successes throughout the region and beyond. Furthermore, it collaborated with traditional social and knowledge infrastructures of the city (schools, libraries, civic centres) by distributing the knowledge acquired in cultural and artistic terms, but also in managerial ones, exchanging knowhow in the realisation of an ambitious community process. Nevertheless, Mercato Sonato remains still isolated from the specialist cultural circuits, struggling to provide its productions to exit the local target and therefore urging a larger connection to urban and even international networks.

Baumhaus. The baumhaus 25/2 space is located in the Park of *Dopolavoro Ferroviario* of Bologna, behind the railway station. It is a cultural hub that gathers the projects of the Baumhaus network and hosts musical and artistic events, workshops and training activities. The baumhaus network (since 2012 APS On the Move, then MAP) is composed of BAUM, Festival of open culture, La Clique! cultural education project and BH Studio, a shared recording studio based in Bolognina neighborhood. The idea of the promoters is to consolidate a network made up of different realities: MAP as the editors of the magazine "Bolognina Basement", "Baum", a festival circuit and "On the Move", a hip hop crew. Baumhaus project wants on the one hand to increase the cultural activities and the protagonism of young adolescents and on the other work on the training of the association's members and cultural operators with courses on strategic marketing and management control and at the same time consolidate all the part of artistic and musical production of the network, with the organization of festivals, events and reviews. The Baumhaus space is the result of a long process of co-planning conducted together with Snark association that involved more than 200 people among which youngsters, educators of the District, the Municipality and local citizenship. The initiative began in 2009 (within the Bologna and Province Migration Coordination) with the Street Basket tournament "*Schiaccia il Razzismo*" to sensitize on the theme of second generations and citizenship and continued, from 2010 to 2014, with the hip hop laboratory On the Move - aimed at an audience of migrant and native adolescents - within the XM24 Social Center. From 2012 to 2016 it managed the "Corte 3" community space in Bolognina, in agreement with the Navile District, where it organised cultural events and training activities. In 2013 it launched the cultural webzine Bolognina Basement. Through La Clique! project, baumhaus has implemented 20 laboratories, in a network with schools and educational services. Some of the paths currently implemented include: radio editing on the theme of cultural innovation, street art, screen printing, urban photojournalism, graphic journalism, site specific art, hacking, screen printing, comics, videomaking, event organization, scientific dissemination applied to urban arts. The education approach intertwines practices and approaches: fashion, community organizing, astrophysics and gender education. Baumhaus tends to contaminate technical and professional training with elements linked to urban cultures as a practice of self-determination. The goal is to offer **cultural and non-formal education** projects to young people at risk of school dropout.

The name "baumhaus" derives from the house (haus) on the tree (baum), and recalls an imaginary and a desire: a privileged point of view from which to observe the world, and take action to change it. It is a liminal space, suitable for the meeting between the artistic and youth realities that populate the first periphery of Bologna. The ambition is for it to become a place of experimentation and sharing of ideas, in which art is a vehicle for inclusion and participation. The internationalization of their cultural production makes it possible to consolidate at European level an already functioning and economically sustainable distribution model for audio, video and editorial works licensed in

creative commons, encouraging the spread of an open culture even among the youngest and connecting the local dimension with the European one.

This Community HUB is testing a **consultancy model** based on the intersection of cultural practices and education, based on open source principles and alternative cultural productions, to bring a contemporary approach to informal and non-formal education, particularly in complex contexts.

Figure 40 - baumhaus in Bolognina. Photo Baumhaus

It leverages culture to imagine and build work and training paths that start from the needs of the new generations and open **spaces of autonomy in the periphery** of the city, while creating job opportunities. The impact concern also the urban space: baumhaus works to regenerate the Park of *Dopolavoro Ferroviario*, opening it as a hybrid space of education and culture. The sustainability model though, is still mainly based on public and private financing. To get out of this logic, baumhaus tries to experiment with innovative models of economic sustainability based on the equal exchange of skills and opportunities: professionals in the creative sector can access multipurpose workspaces by providing their experience in workshops and training courses aimed at young people in the area.

Dynamo Velostation. It is former car garage in which a series of cultural associations joined forces to create a service hub for sustainable mobility, interpreting specific demands while producing new job opportunities and disseminating the culture of sustainability. Dynamo was proposed by the Association "*Salvaiclisti Bologna*" and funded after winning the Incredibol! 2012 competition. It materialised in 2014 to answer to the call for actions to raise awareness on the safety of cyclists and with the aim of promoting interventions to fight the vulnerability of road users, the association has evolved over time to deal with issues related to awareness of climate change and the adoption of environmentally friendly behaviour. Eventually they wanted to add to the campaigning activity also a

custody activity near the railway station to provide a safe place to park bikes, as well as a Community Hub to promote sustainable urban mobility. Dynamo therefore been located in the basement of the monumental entrance to the *Parco della Montagnola*, specifically below the *Pincio* staircase, made available by the Municipality of Bologna. The large rooms under the staircase had been used for several purposes, including the protection of the citizens of Bologna from bombs during the Second World War and, more recently, housed a parking lot.

Figure 41 - Dynamo Velostation. Photo by the author

The Dynamo project was conceived as both the "home of all urban cyclists", and a place of aggregation, urban services and sociality. It is a space born from the idea of a city at a human scale, where new mobility and culture coexist, with maximum accessibility and intersecting synergies. It is not only urban service HUB, but also a point of sustainable tourism reception and it also offer a varied and free cultural palimpsest.

Today Dynamo functions as a self-sufficient cooperative, with 12 members and several employees. Among other things, it serves as a hub for a vegetable cooperative and a courier service, an event space, and houses an outpost of LEILA, a library of objects. Its collaboration span from partnerships with sustainability festivals, to entertainment clubs, to collaborations with the University of Bologna.

It also has an on-site bar and offers bicycle rental and repair, making it financially sustainable. The data confirm the use of the place with 50,000 bike parked during 2018, 100.000 users passing through its entertainment spaces. In 2018, the place generated an income of the value of 350,000 euros (source: Incredibol!), various sensitisation campaigns, and it provided the city with distributed services for sustainable mobility, in partnership with local operators and public events. Besides regenerating a space, Dynamo is offering a tangible model for the aggregation of cultural offer, creation of new jobs, provision of services and generation of value for the city. The model has been taken as inspiration for several operations in Italy, where the established long networks had the advantage to strengthen the value of the experience and highlighting it as a service platform, essential for the city itself.

METBO. MET, acronym for Meticceria Extrartistica Trasversale is a space born from an initiative of Cantieri Meticci, in the heart of the historical Navile district. It is a non-profit cultural organisation based on collaboration between Italians, asylum seekers and refugees. The main objectives of *Cantieri Meticci* are social, artistic and political actions: granting access to culture for thousands of people from all backgrounds; a widespread care of cultural and civil life in overcrowded peripheral areas; a permanent source of narratives between migrants and Italians; a system to connect the periphery and major cultural institutions of the city center; the mixing of different people and artistic languages as an innovative method to make theater and culture at a high level. *Cantieri Meticci* aims to bring together people around artistic activities, to facilitate the process of integration. Since October 2015, *Cantieri Meticci* has carried out 8 theatre workshops in 3 different districts of Bologna, involving about 240 participants. The composition of the groups has united not only different countries, but also different ages, genres, language skills and cultural backgrounds, to create the most favorable conditions for a fruitful exchange between participants. The location of each workshop was chosen both for its proximity to a reception center for refugees and asylum seekers and for its symbolic value in terms of cultural and social life (libraries, community and cultural centers, multicultural center of the city). The aim of METBO is to build a space of opportunities and interaction for new practices of encounter between citizens, migrants and art. The name evokes a space in which the processes generated, lead to the mixing of people, aiming at quality creation, mixing knowledge and sectors. It hosts theatre shows, music, exhibitions, artistic residencies, video installations, ateliers, mix languages exhibitions. *Cantieri Meticci* understands culture as a glue to **connect heterogeneous audiences**: citizens and refugees, intellectuals and craftsmen, international artists and young people from the suburbs. MET defines itself as a "membrane space" designed to let the outside, the city, penetrate into artistic processes. MET was created thanks to the contribution of the Unipolis Foundation's Culturability call and important partners such as *Coop Alleanza* 3.0, Arci and the Robert Bosch Foundation, and the support of the Municipality of Bologna and the Navile District. The place is located in the former *Coop Allenza* building, owned by the Municipality of Bologna, transformed to

turn the area into a new pole of cultural and social attraction. The place host local association services, such as the headquarters of *Legambiente*, a non-profit organization, a cooking school. It houses a theater, a rehearsal room and various ateliers (video mapping, comics, storytelling, language theater, stop motion, tailoring and carpentry). Among the uses is a "Collageria", where children and adults cooperate with artists from all over the world to create large collective collages to be exhibited in the city. A "PoPolifonico" archive made of technologically modified files of stories deposited by citizens and from which the company draws inspiration for the dramaturgies of its shows. The "teAtrio", the entrance used for public performances. Finally, a "RiStoryArte", a hybrid environment that, thanks to large tables that are also interactive screens, stages events that combine catering, storytelling and video art. The setting up of the MET space follows the perspective of recycling and reuse, reflecting the hybridization that it attempts to achieve with the activities it puts in place.

Many other places in Bologna fit under the description of Community HUB, promoting cultural, artistic, recreational, craft, training, care and minor maintenance of the green. They evolved over the year building on the legacy of the civic centres of the 60ies, opening up to the needs of young people, becoming a reference point for generations.

Lesson learned

The Community HUBs described are generative places, which are able to increase and distribute benefits and values to the society, through the regeneration of the available resources. Nevertheless, they seem to still rely on the short-term logic of public financing, a competitive approach that might prevent their commoning and further production of value for the city. Thanks to the case studies analysed, the research draws the following requirements:

1. **Shifting towards a living, bonding context**
2. **Pluralising the publics**
3. **Fine-tuning the relational dimension**
4. **Facilitating a platform for evolving, hybrid uses**
5. **Encouraging institutional involvement**
6. **Ensuring longer-term sustainability**

Shifting towards a living, bonding context

As seen in the case studies, Bologna's Community HUBs are spaces made to house mainly activities of co-design and co-production of services. They are new type of urban centralities at neighbourhood scale, unique but also scalable, different from traditional service retailers and providers, in between community centres and service factories. The cases analysed are developing different forms of **co-production of proximity services**, generating micro pattern of sociality, starting from the local *milieu* (Camagni and Dotti 2010), to connect initially separated resources towards social inclusion. In the social innovation domain, they are able to give a territorial perspective to social issues, by creating new connections and bonds: Kilowatt focusing on contemporary job's necessities,

INstabile with a focus on the relationship between people-local community; Dynamo, by enabling local vocations in a sustainability perspective; baumhaus and MET highlighting the potentialities of the encounter between emerging cultures, art and the traditional social fabric of the city.

Their **space** reflects this attitude through **a living, changing, adaptable frame**, which configures according to the necessities. In the case of INstabile, the incremental configuration of the space becomes the precondition for the collective identification of **shared rules of engagement and management**: the space is transformed in a self-produced incremental way and, similarly, the curatorship of the events to finance the spatial transformation is incremental and circular. Decisions and leadership are circular, to guarantee on the one hand the responsibility of all participants and the horizontality of the processes. Kilowatt uses the same "bossless" dynamic both for the program of regeneration of the spaces of the greenhouses of the Gardens, and for the management of the schedule of activities promoted. The cross-fertilisation that results from this organisation, gives the creative and innovative stimulus to both the vision and the management tool.

Pluralising the publics

The ability to engage and be open to the most diverse target is what stands out in the panorama of intermediate places in Bologna. The 'hub' role, **intercepting and distributing** seamless flows, is directed to both engage and empower a wide variety of competences and know-hows. In the cases analysed what seems essential is to avoid the 'sterilization' of the publics: a single target represents a limitation for the success, the contamination and the reproduction of innovative urban productions. They claim that "places made for a single community can no longer exist and above all be lived" (Caliri and Tranquillo 2016). The language, narrative and access keys of these places are directed towards a larger audience that includes categories usually not considered by institutional paths. In the case of MET, the pretext of the theatrical and artistic performance, built within a context that is in turn self-organized, has allowed the successful production of new collaborations between migrants and local actors. As seen in all cases, the impact of social innovation on the urban context is much more decisive and effective, if included in a **distributed mobilisation process** useful to trigger a multiplication of energies, moving from clustering – aggregation of initiatives – to commoning – proactive interaction of similar initiatives oriented towards the upscale of their produced values. Community HUBs play this role, acting as a privileged point from which to focus on local socio-economic dynamics (Caliri and Tranquillo 2016), multiplying and diversifying the opportunities for users to exchange and enhance their capacity to research (Appadurai 2013).

Fine-tuning the relational dimension

As intermediate places, Community HUBs need first of all to be recognized as such, claiming their role as urban ecotones (Avanzi 2016), "membranes" and platform between domains. For these reasons, the space is technologically infrastructured to allow **connectivity, flowing in and out of data** and knowledge created and to transfer into a digital environment all the activities performed in the space. The digital dimension in Community HUBs is key both to strengthen the international network with similar places, and to reinforce their primary role as a relational platform. These places in fact, are created thanks to innate relational skills that provide the conditions for new exchange platform to be imagined and created. The local and trans-local relational platform they create is not one to provide exchanges of opinions or mere meeting space for strangers, it is a real generative platform that,

through the interaction of different people, interests, resources, concepts, it relates subjects and contents that traditionally do not dialogue, thus becoming also the means of social cohesion performed through co-production. It act as a **relational development agency** able to cross-scales, boundaries and conceptual limitations.

Facilitating a platform for evolving, hybrid uses

Community HUBs can refer to **various resources of everyday life** (mobility, education, food, health, work) that systematise with issues of large interest and scale (sustainability, integration, social cohesion, resilience) providing space for commoning not only around one resource but generating a systemic flow of resources. Hence, the use in Community HUBs is impossible to be defined because it is shifting over time, it moves into different thematic and spatial directions ant it explores various configurations for the production of different categories of goods, which cannot be predicted in advance and have inevitable positive external effects on other users. As seen for the Dynamo case, even if the focus falls under one thematic umbrella (sustainable mobility), the HUB is subject to such contamination and promiscuity that it renews and innovates constantly the way in which activities are managed, hosted and performed in the space.

Encourage institutional involvement

Community HUBs experiences differ from other intermediate places, mainly in the governance and the promoting actors. In the cases analysed groups of professionals, associations, social workers, partnered up with local institutions to pursue their objectives, whose externalities where shared by the institutions. The management of Community HUBs, if handled only from the bottom-up, risks to exclude some specific actors in the long run, triggering elitism and generating cultural barrier for the access to the process. It must be avoided the risk that these places are experienced as exclusives, instead of capable of extending their effects to the whole community. Therefore, one aspect to be highlighted is the central representative **role of the institutions**, that in some cases (Kilowatt more than others) were able to recognise their value and get involved in a mutual learning perspective. Inside the intermediate places the institution is forced to change (Ostanel 2017) and to recognise the value of the urban actors as agents, being able to review its mechanisms through multi-level exchange. The public actor is also responsible for the transparency of the processes and the inclusion of all the possible beneficiaries of the city.

Ensure longer-term sustainability

Community HUBs are often born from individual or small groups' skills and ambitions, matured and refined thanks to the experience of the people who created it. In order to consolidate this experience in a **lasting and sustainable form**, it seems necessary to transform informal practice with precise tools and skills. These places are often strongly reliant on short-term public funding that prevents high-value activities from being planned. They are places where there is no administrative toolbox and where the programming follows the logic of the tender. It seems therefore necessary to put in place administrative tools that give shape, boundary, perimeter to forms of appropriation that meet the existing needs and to generate processes with a "mixed supply chain" (Calvaresi and Pederiva 2016). The idea is not to standardize the models, but to **secure them**, to deal with their **legacy** with respect to the objectives achieved and visible in the territory in which they operate. Community HUBs put themselves in a position of accountability to give answers (by equipping themselves) to what the local community asks for. They therefore produce public value as well as public goods and therefore deserve a role in the debate

and in the public resources allocated. In this sense an accountability measure is necessary: as seen for Kilowatt with the impact assessment and, to a certain extent, in INstabile, the stable assessment and reorientation of goals and mission, is what moves the Community HUBs towards their responsibilisation and eventually their legitimisation. The produced side effects can be verifiable on various axes: well-being and quality of life, personal satisfaction, investment of economic resources for local development, creation of businesses for social purposes, employment through new jobs, creation of new micro economies, production of transversal knowledge and skills.
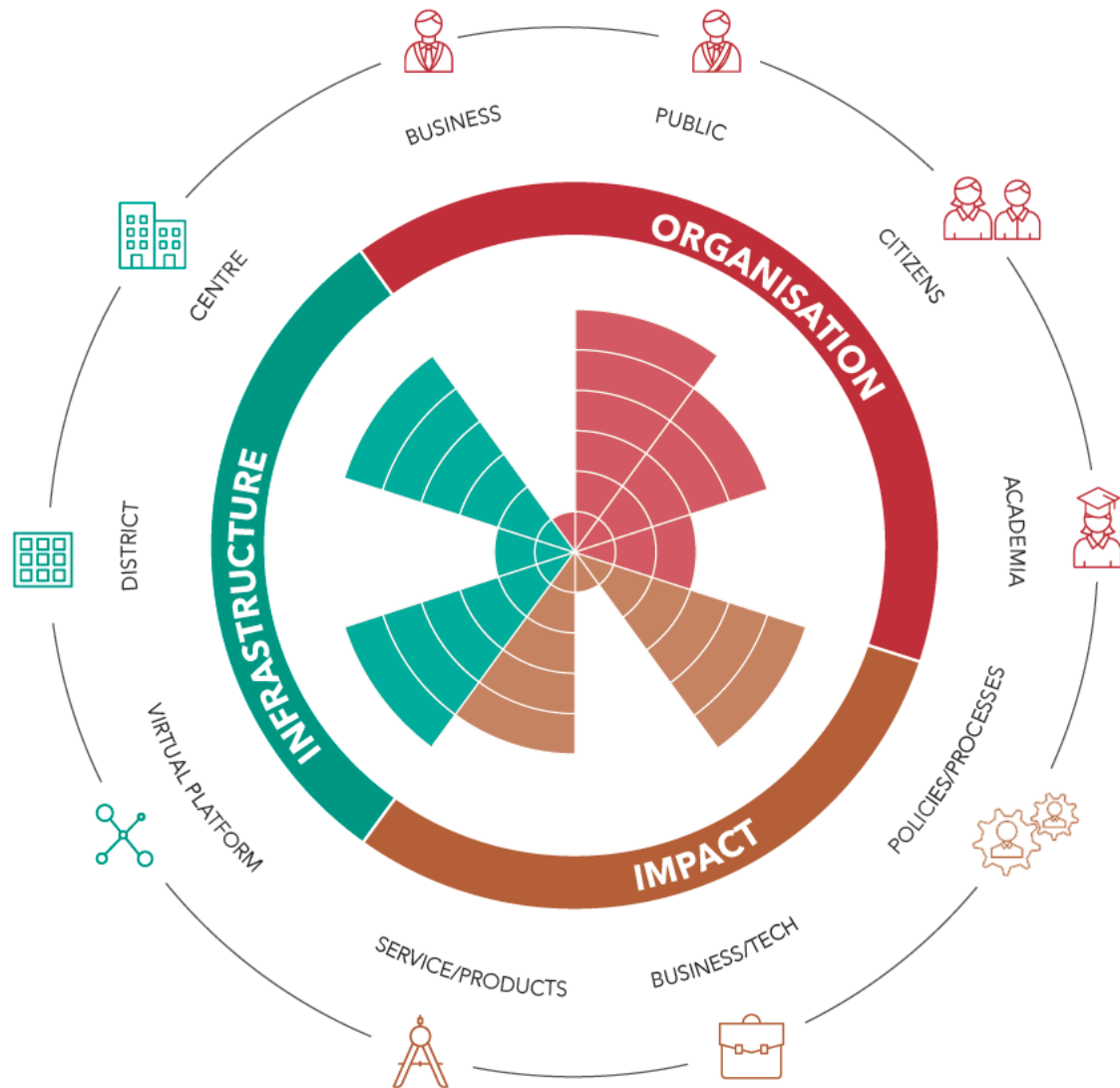
c) Policy Labs

Figure 42 - Policy Labs variables. Source: the author.

With the consolidation of the necessity for stratified citizenship to be involved in public decision-making processes (EC 2010; 2017; OECD 2011) and the growing changes occurring in cities, the old models of 'participation' are starting to shift in logic, scale of intervention, target and begin to define original and renewed "arenas of deliberation" (Falanga and Nunes 2019) here defined Policy Labs. The idea of conceiving places where to share, interact and address the issues and challenges of the urban community is not new: in the ancient Greece, the Agora (open place of assembly) was the first manifestation of the necessity of citizens to be closer to the power and embodied single spatial structures as representative items for a wider entity. In this interpretation, Urban Centers have long since proved to be successful inspiration models, especially because of their spatial contiguity: the recovery of direct relationships between different actors allowed them to act as playgrounds in which multiple practices, stakeholders and policy-makers could interact in a long-term vision with the perspective of a structural change.

With the term Policy Lab, the research comprehends those places born as Urban Centers (Monardo 2009), City Labs, City Agencies, evolved from a role of "megaphones" and "antennas", showcase of the cities' projects, towards "arenas" and "factories" policy-making processes. With "megaphone" is meant the main role of narration of what happens in the city, while "antennas" aims at collecting, processing and disseminating useful information, data, knowledge of the city. The role of "arena" is what some Policy Labs are experimenting, retrieving the ancient role of public spaces, as political aggregating infrastructures, aimed at publicly dispute collective interest topics transversally affecting the city. With "factories" the Labs are adding the production feature to their main description, moving towards a role of incubation of ideas, new civic services and solutions for urban challenges. The need for Policy Labs is to go beyond to merely act as a showcase for the projects and policies of cities, but to necessarily play a dual role: on the one hand as attractors of skills and energy of the city, on the other as counterpart and carriers of privileged instances, towards local and European institutions.

- **description**. Policy Labs are intermediate places where the main mission is to co-design urban policies, their communication to citizenship and their manifestation in the urban space. As highlighted by Ginocchini and Barbi, Policy Labs' role is twofold: on the one hand they are local "access points" (Ginocchini and Barbi 2019) addressing a plurality of spatial issues and enhancing the fruition of urban services, on the other they look after global models to tackle contemporary challenges like climate change impacts, overexploitation of resources, energy lacks, migration flows, crossing wide range of sector, from economy to the environment management. This demonstrate again the overlapping of concrete and local effects and challenges, which arise from highly global phenomena and from general principles (Topi and Lucchini 2019) of European policies framework. Policy Lab provides a shortcut between government and citizenship, to shorten the distance between the two domains;

- **organisation**. Policy Lab is intended as a municipal initiative with a hybrid organizational form, working to bridge the gap between institutional level and society. It differ from the Urban Living Lab, for the prevailing role of the Public Administration as initiator or main part of it (Figure 42). Among the described intermediate places, Policy Lab is clearly oriented and marked by political power (Taylor 2007). The role of professionals and facilitators working in Policy Labs is of boundary-spanners (Williams 2002) with respect to the city administration, while actively being involved in the local ecosystem of stakeholders. They are invested with the role of moderators between institutional levels, competences, societal sectors, to eventually guarantee equal access to policy-making and maximise benefit for the policy agendas (Manzini 2012);

- **infrastructure**. With the multitude of possible actors, inputs and visions in the Policy Lab, the space as such gains a key role. Spaces are meant as access points for interaction, dialogue and experimentation are the basis for the construction of a stable process of experimentation on urban policies which is led by the municipality, integrated by local stakeholders and implemented by local players. Space can be a collaborative context, but also a conflictual one, where power imbalances, multiple political positions, different levels of representation (Cognetti 2018) are performed. Policy Labs are setting the basis for the redefinition of the everyday habitats and places of citizenship, based more on experiences, performances and co-design, rather than just discussion or communication;

- **method**. Policy Lab has the aim to look at the whole context of Community Hubs, Living Labs, Innovation HUBs, with a planning perspective. At the same time, their proximity with the public actor means that the Labs must play the role of guarantor and facilitate the ability to reach and involve in the co-design laboratories of policy, population groups that normally do not participate. The activities performed have the ability to critically engage citizens (Monardo 2007) in the policy-making, by opening up the process and providing the key for the reading and the access of bureaucratic, normative, political languages. The political configuration and management, provide space for conflict to arise. Policy Labs in fact, are the most 'exposed' intermediate places to tension and pressure from the side of the users (citizens, organisations, business and cognitive actors) and the side of the manager (public administration). These "trading zones" are often able to mediate and translate conflict into original processes for the production of urban policies and strategic political orientation for the administration of the cities;

- **function**. The main function of the Policy Labs is the networking of the social capital of cities, through the use of actions aimed at mutual exchange, pooling the narratives of informed actors and the provision of facilities for meeting and dialogue with the institution. The function is that of a director, virtuous coordinator of the dialectic between stakeholders, through a work of facilitation, research and organization of multiple inputs and initiatives that come from the legacy of local contexts. Policy Lab aims to: provide new policy solutions through practical projects and empirical evidence; develop the skills and knowledge of the political profession and, more generally, of the public service; inspire new thoughts through experimentation;

- **impact**. Policy Lab produce innovation in planning processes, its goal is not product or service improvement, but the research for new ways to ease the transition from the complexity of city planning tools and regulations towards more adaptable and forward-thinking form of production of urban policies. Social innovation in Policy Labs is an externality rather than a precondition, it is the result of an institutional setting to provide space for a more democratic decision-making context. The extent of the action of Policy Labs is the municipal perimeter, but their influence could span towards the European level.

Policy Labs in Bologna are an emanation of the traditional role of the Neighbourhoods' administrations: a local outpost of the public administration that coordinates and guides the local transformations while observing and detecting urgent issues. In the following cases what emerge is the presence of Policy Labs aimed at renewing the same role of the promoting institutions, dealing with change in public institutions by learn from best practices, from local stakeholders and urban actors and their practices, and consolidate from that learning in the attempt to develop new models for the definition of policies more likely to address real needs.

In Bologna this role is embodied by the **Foundation For Urban Innovation** (FIU), the former Urban Center, a place where multiple resources and tools (skills, data, training and spaces) facilitate exchanges between citizens, public institutions, associations and representatives of the public sphere of Bologna.

Figure 43 - The new Headquarter of the Foundation for Urban Innovation. Photo: Margherita Caprilli

It is a city agency acting as a broker between the local ecosystems of actors, the municipality and ultimately the European level. The governance of FIU is composed by the Public Administration as Office for Civic Imagination and the University of Bologna. The evolution of FIU has also involved its multidisciplinary staff, composed of project managers with different backgrounds in urbanism, architecture, economics, political science, art and communication. FIU's role is twofold: on the one hand it is an "access points" (Ginocchini and Barbi 2019) for urban challenges to be addressed and for the fruition of urban services, on the other it is a "factory" that relates on global models, localized to tackle contemporary challenges, urging citizens' agency on a wide range of sectors and especially in prototyping new products and services.

For years the former Urban Center dealt with participatory design processes, **accompanying planning activities** (e.g. the PSC in 2004) or masterplans of large urban projects (e.g the renovation of the former horticulture market). After the crisis in 2011, the era of large urban projects heavily reduced, leaving space for UC to deal with widespread policies and small-scale projects ranging from sustainable mobility, territorial promotion, and enhancement of relationships between people. In the word of who works for the Foundation, the main aim of the re-configuration of the former Urban Center was to intervene in the debate about the re-thinking of participatory policy-making, as main experienced player. The idea was to move towards the role of trigger of new territorial practices going beyond the mere dialogue by giving up some power and therefore resources to put into practice transformative actions. Eventually the necessity was to organize the knowledge capital collected through the years and return it in the form of a framework gathering together all the tools, initiatives, funding opportunities going on in the city, collected under the semantic umbrella of the "collaboration as an operative tool". The emerged framework materialized into the Urban Innovation Plan (see chap. 4) that became the focus of discussion through Neighborhood Laboratories.

Figure 44 - Neighbourhood Laboratories in 2018, led by FIU. Photo: Margherita Caprilli

The traditional interaction arena used by the Urban Center to co-design with local communities, has been hence actualized to be iterated in a seamless organized and localized collaboration process. The Neighborhood Lab involved more than 6000 people in 190 meetings. In the first edition of the Neighborhood Lab FIU experimented the new tool of the Participatory Budget. It entails the direct management of a portion of the municipal budget by the citizens, to finance a series of projects organized in different neighbourhoods, previously defined through a path of co-planning on a territorial scale. The process, saw more than 1,800 citizens participating in the co-planning events in both editions and respectively 14,584 and 16,348 people voting on-line for the realisation of the projects at neighbourhood level. The large experience of participatory design and planning gained through the years constitute the base upon which to start researching for renewed methods of engagement, collaboration, communication. In this sense, FIU is investing large efforts in the research of the more effective manners to involve the largest number of citizens and those targets who normally do not participate in its activities (e.g. students, millennials, migrants, tourists). The Policy Lab is implementing lifelong learning actions through external feedback from local communities (with online and offline questionnaires), and a rich toolbox of methods to stimulate creativity, guide discussions, moderate collaboration and develop, prototype and test solutions, such as: crowdmapping, collaborative technologies (tested for participatory budgeting), crowdsourcing, walking neighbourhood tours, targeted communication campaigns (specifically oriented towards teenagers).

Figure 45 - Neighbourhood walking tour. Photo: Margerita Caprilli

The case of FIU is paradigmatic in its ability to be a platform between public administration, university and citizens. It was able to influence the rise first, and eventually manage a planning tool (Urban Innovation Plan) which has been adopted as an approach to describe under a shared framework all the actions intertwining social innovation and the city development. However, as a direct emanation of the Public Administration, FIU still needs to **overcome bureaucratic approaches to foster a more critical, continuous and conscious interaction** within the public administration; it also needs to **raise awareness** of its platform's ability to be an **observatory of practices and a factory of innovative processes** and possibly inspire more coherent and contextual policies. The main success of FIU is the shift in the relationship between the public institution and the citizens: the local "antennas" located directly in the neighborhoods (with the local teams of the NL) represent a **concretization of the distribution of administrative power**, that is typical of Bologna's decentralization policies.

Laboratorio Aria is an experimental Policy Lab promoted by the Municipality of Bologna (environment department) together with the Foundation for Urban Innovation, aimed at involving a wide audience on the theme of air pollution in the city. The main objective of Air Lab was the construction of a collaborative research activity, for the development of a communication campaign on air quality, which would not only be institutional and that would guide the behavior of citizens not only from the regulatory point of view, but stimulating the adoption of proactive personal behaviors with respect to air quality. The process foresaw to act in such a way that the process was an integral part of the campaign. The achievement of this objective has been addressed by preparing a process of involvement that included institutional entities that have expertise on the subject of air (Arpae, Asl, metropolitan city, University) and local actors who already deal with air and sustainability, even not in a specialized manner, but that represent privileged channels to citizens. These actors did

not contribute financially to the project, but as providers of skills and resources, in particular by making themselves available in collaboration on thematic working tables developed during the project follow-up phase. In this sense, the process has become part of the communication campaign.

The activities of the Laboratory were carried out in three phases: observation, development of tools and information content and a final phase dedicated to in-depth studies. The result was the definition of shared guidelines on how to create innovative information tools and paths to improve citizens' perception of air quality.

Figure 46 - Air Laboratory. Photo: Margherita Caprilli

The activities of the policy Lab have been carried out in the form of: a) Laboratory: open to all, in which mainly intermediate and aggregative subjects participated. The objective was to build together a framework of communication and activation experiences on pollution and to build together the questionnaire. b) Online questionnaire: released online with the participation of 2000 citizens, whose objective was to collect information on behavior, existing actions and the perception of air quality by citizens. The process led to the development of a service for the dissemination, information and collection of data on the air, in the form of an App (App Aria), with the aim to inform in real-time and not technically, on the expected air quality and suggest useful behaviors to reduce the individual impact. The laboratory obtained several results that differed from the initial objective, including the activation of a monitoring group whose activities are periodically reported during the meetings. However, the most interesting element was the emergence of a series of instances to be expanded as a transversal theme of discussion in the city. The Laboratory has become a permanent arena of work and discussion conceived as a place for sharing, deepening and developing knowledge and specific policies and actions on air quality and health in Bologna. A first step towards the institutionalization of the air theme and the consolidation of its study was the birth of a protocol of understanding

between a group of bodies that provided a structured instrument of collaboration, a table of cooperation with the objective of carrying out transversal activities between bodies.

The impact of the this Policy lab on the planning activities in progress, happened thanks to the predisposition of communication channels, thanks to which the other city laboratories (NL) become 'megaphones' of the information. The hypothesis is to integrate the theme in the participatory paths in Bologna to bring up the theme of air, highlighting the results achieved. The Lab has led to the emergence of some urgent issues concerning not only air quality but the planning context in which it can be inserted and carried out with concrete actions in the city. Therefore, a series of in-depth studies on significant issues but lacking in know-how were performed on the following topics: health, sports, data (environmental monitoring data), PA projects on the theme of air quality. Interviews with experts on the topics were published on institutional channels, as video pills on social networks and technical-operational indications as reports, as well as focus groups with experts who had not participated at LabAria. The hypothesis has been to build a **stable and continuous process of exchange** between different and distributed expertise and ongoing actions, local institutions and possible connections with extra-local or European bodies.

Laboratorio Spazi is another Policy Lab of Bologna, dealing with the definition of a shared understanding and regulation for regenerated spaces in the city. The main goal is to design new policies and instruments to entrust and manage assets owned by the Municipality. Led by the Foundation for Urban Innovation in close collaboration with the Municipality of Bologna, the Laboratory has seen the participation of 51 different city "bodies" (associations, committees, movements, cooperatives, and other forms) that have proposed **procedural innovations and new administrative structures** with the aim of making the process of allocating and managing public buildings more open and responsive to the needs of local organizations. The Lab aimed at stimulating the dialogue between the urban actors to co-design policies and new forms of management of public owned spaces.

The participants shared the creation of an **urban pact for mutual recognition** "Charter of principles for the civic use of public spaces" between municipal administration and forms of bottom-up organization for the management of public property assets by private organizations. The document contains 10 fundamental principles that define the perimeter of a new policy of spaces in the city shared by all the experiences of use and management of municipal buildings. Among the points that have been defined, emerges the theme of the necessarily public nature of the projects to be carried on thanks to the regeneration actions in the public asset, to be verified at thematic and territorial level. This is followed by the value produced by the project proposals which, according to the protocol, must respond to the need to improve the quality of the contexts in which they operate. Another key point concerns the strengthening of collaboration networks, with a priority focus on the proximity dimension or with networks operating on different scales.

Figure 47 - Spaces Laboratory. Photo: Margherita Caprilli

An action program made up of 4 phases has been defined with the objective of identifying a group of experts within the Administration to coordinate the workshops and meetings – together with the Lab participants – to run an in-depth analysis of the current procedure used by the PA to entrust the public commons, to prepare a document collecting all the proposals and, finally, to submit the final report to the PA, which would analyze, verify and connect the proposals.

The Lab worked to identify new ways in the allocation procedures, defining the possibility of assigning the spaces directly, through a public call, through moments of co-design or through assemblies arranged with public notice. The proposal are then submitted to the administration, which, based on the principles listed above, can assign the space. The life of the space assigned is then continuously monitored for a possible renewal. The plurality of the city's organizations that have participated in the Laboratory and that have contributed to the drafting of the document is what stands out as spillover of the Lab.

In Bologna, this Policy Lab appears to introduce an innovation both in the administrative processes, as a possible new device to outsource know-hows on a sensitive topic, but also in the changing logic of the individual organizations. It moves from a competitive and individualistic vision between organizations (generating conflict and resistance to engage with institutions) towards commoning in a clear guiding framework with established principles for the regeneration of urban common goods. These principles are particularly interesting for their ability to collectively define what is the public value that the public regenerated spaces must produce, how it must be produced and the assessment mechanisms to provide the monitoring, both with respect to the organization's forms of activation and management, but also concerning the services produced.

Lesson learned

Bologna and the collaborative policies (with the set of tools put in place) are part of a complex system that requires the emergence of **secondary intermediate structures** necessary to collectively govern this set. From a micro point of view, citizens are asking for more and more evidence, transparency, information, spaces for openness to dialogue, from the point of view of the administrative organization, there is an urgent need for intermediaries who coordinates, updates and connects the administrative structures of the Municipality so that they work with different skills, on common issues. The experiences of the Bolognese Policy Labs start from this attempt, equipping the city to shorten the distances between the two levels, by the will of the Public Administration and therefore with a public client. The lesson learned entails the following requirements:

1. **Intensifying the multi-role of institutions**
2. **Outreaching on a multiple scale**
3. **Fostering institutional learning**
4. **Co-producing shared norms**
5. **Identifying a location as nexus of resources**
6. **Opening data**

Intensifying the multi-role of institutions

The innovation of Policy Labs answer to how to renew a rigid system providing a better way to deliver a service or for a government to pursue a strategy. Even though it applies to environmental, social, urban issues, the inherent issues are mostly political decisions. Differently from other intermediate places, the described cases are more invested in moving beyond the lab and **embed innovation into society**. The political responsibility is what drives this acceleration, also due to the dependence of Policy Labs on political decision and will. This generates problems in particular related to short-time efficiency and **time-limited** activities, because the survival of policy labs is linked to the **contingent administrative political force** and its visions and prescriptions risk to not be applied in future different political settings. The public emanation risks also to make Policy Labs dependent from political agendas and bureaucratic apparatus, it also risks to hide some problematic agendas under the rhetoric of the participation. In the case of Urban Center first and FIU after, this specific issue is underlying its activities since the beginning and it increases together with the expansion of the area of intervention of the lab. The governance follows the typical patterns of **multi-stakeholder cooperation** seen in other intermediate places. The difference is the main role of the municipality. The public actor should play in fact the multiple role of promoter and enabler, of client and customer, but also of designer.

Outreaching on a multiple scale

The issue of trust and the image as outpost of the public administration often prevent the activities to have the real transformative power that is expected, generating poor results and reinforcing the distrust mechanisms. The attempt of FIU is to increase the outreach of citizens and the participation of its employees into local events and initiatives to, on the one hand understanding the keys for the access to certain type of communities and, on the other, to approach with a less structured and technical apparatus. This approach based on **proximity and stable**

activities, grants a large mobilization (both as proactive participation and in contrast) of urban actors, resources, alternative solutions to policy issues. It can be said that Policy Labs should outreach on **multiple scales**: events of a few days, processes of several months and platforms that operate for years. A single event can trigger new relationships and insights, while a long-term platform can enable new capabilities and initiatives and ultimately a systemic transformation.

Fostering institutional learning

The Policy Labs seen in Bologna, like the other intermediate places, offers a specific space and method to organize and optimize the process of creating social innovation initiatives. The objective of the Policy Lab, however, is mainly public and aims to build alliances, acquire knowledge and know-how on topics useful for fine-tuning the current or future policies of the city. If read from a processual point of view, the path would suggest an extraction and appropriation of values and knowledge, which make up for institutional shortcomings. From the lenses of social innovation, the emphasis is on the one hand on **institutional learning**, and on the other, on the **mutual exchange** of knowledge and interaction oriented towards the common good.

Co-production of shared norms

The tendency in policy is to **normalise and regulate** social innovation processes "institutionalised as regular social practice or made routine" (Howaldt et al. 2014), in the framework of rigid evaluation protocols, including criteria and indicators. This might prevent the generation of original solutions to everyday issues, producing conflict and rigidity. As seen in the Lab Spazi though, the **co-production of a shared normative apparatus** (and a consequent evaluation criteria), seems to be changing the concept of competition between organizations. The Laboratory in fact, tries to find common ground and clear guiding principles around the regeneration of common assets. The principles developed by the Laboratory define the public value that regenerated spaces must produce both with respect to the organizational forms of activation and management, but also in the services produced. This case shows how the assessment of the activities of Policy Labs is necessary to give legitimacy to the results, collect data and be able to replicate and distribute the value produced.

Identifying a location as nexus of resources

As shown by the case studies, FIU embodies a reference point for the distributed Policy Labs in Bologna. This nexus role, has important implications for Policy Labs: thanks to the action of enabling the exchange and interaction, they move from granting the cooperation around a single resource (e.g. air quality; public assets) to enabling multiple urban resource flows (e.g. air-local stakeholders-open data; public assets-local organisations-administrative tools). Each experiment, discussion, dialogue performed drew very effectively on agents and actants that were not previously at the center of the formal planning process. This enhance further the role of intermediaries, as both multiplicators of resources and managers of the complexity originated by the generated flows.

Opening data

Advocacy is one of the most important capacities required for the Policy Labs, needed to motivate and convince of the intentions of each process, granting transparency and equality. It is also necessary in order to convey the

proper message. In this sense the collected **data on societal needs and potentiality** are shared by Public Administrations to territorial actors in order to build new forms of knowledge and data driven support and evidence-based policies for the generation of new needs-based projects.s
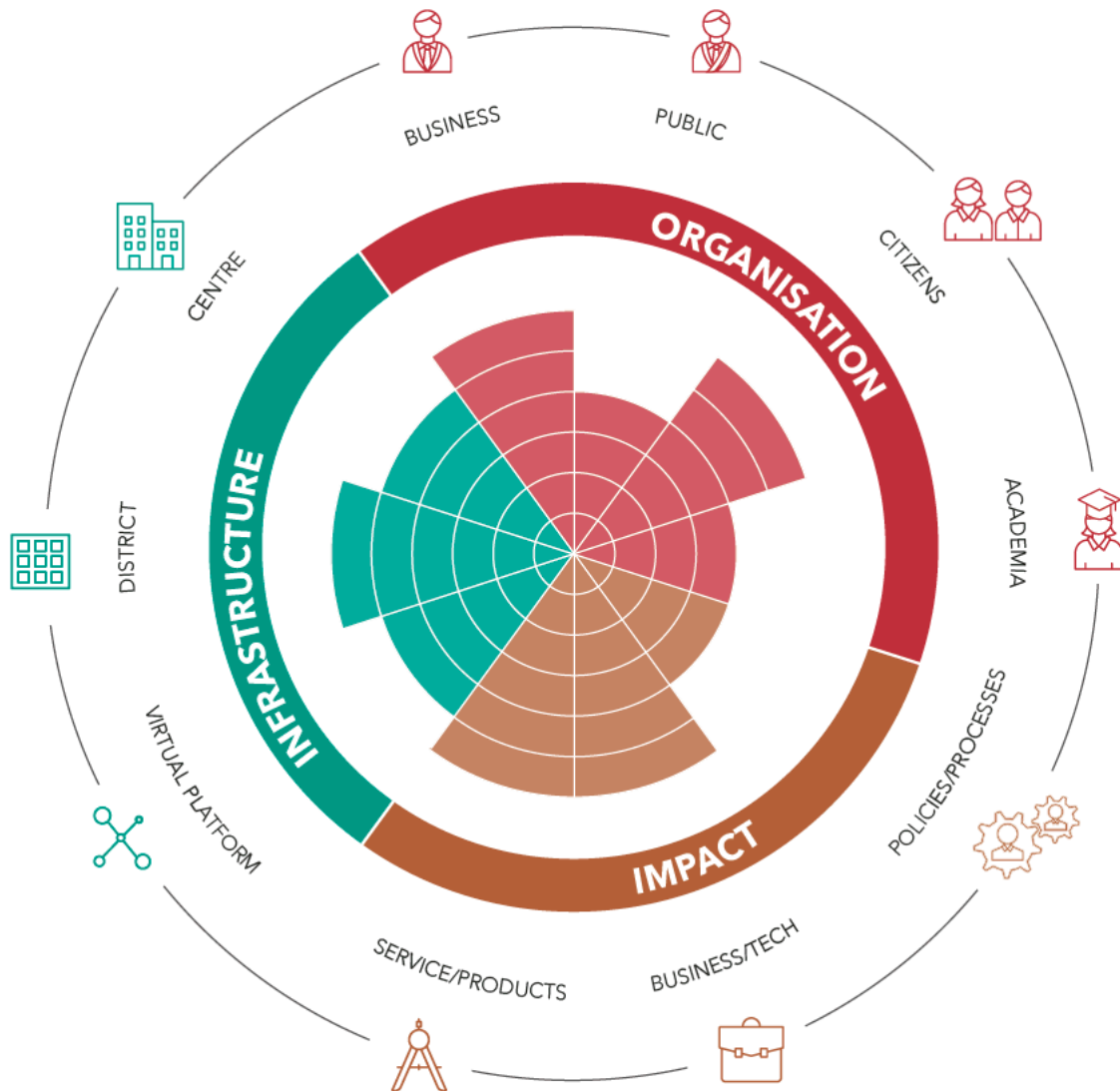
d) Innovation HUBs

Figure 48 - Innovation HUB variables. Source: the author.

With the term Innovation HUB. more than for any other intermediate place, the research represents the enabling context capable of **unlocking the potential of social innovations** and **transfer the results** to the benefit of urban systems. Innovation HUBs, compared to the other three models, pay a greater attention to the process of production of social innovation. For this reason, the business and technological component of governance is prevalent. The growing accessibility of tools for manufacturing objects together with the extensive accessibility to technologies and the evolution of web platforms - from simple interaction and dialogue to even co-design, prototyping and manufacturing - determine the visible growth of these places. The growing number of HUBs falling under this label entails fab labs, hackerspaces, co-working spaces, impact incubators, social enterprises incubators, whose social impact derives from the ability of their promoters to "act in common", commoning, regarding new entrepreneurial models (not only of social innovation in services, but in production of goods and knowledge), new cultures, new inclusiveness models. Social here, defines an interaction among individuals, based

on sharing an impersonal task. This collaboration emerges when people do something together instead of just being together (Sennett 2018). This category of intermediate place is often overlooked by local policies aimed at strengthening the relationship between social innovation and institutional planning, but what it seems interesting to analyse is the role of business actors engaged in the provision of public goods.

- - **description.** Innovation HUBs address urban challenges or social problems by unlocking the creative and innovative potential of their participants (Gabriel 2014). The objective of their promoters (private individuals, foundations, social enterprises) is to facilitate socio-technical experimentation (Manzini and Jegou 2008), to fuel social and technological innovation. They are becoming more and more widespread, where it is possible not only to experiment but also to put new products, services and organisational models into production. (Venturi & Zandonai 2019). This orientation, successfully achieved within a protected space, opens up the possibility for new business, organization, production models to emerge, affecting mainstream paradigms. In the evaluation by Social Innovation Monitor (2018), Innovation HUBs are described as support infrastructures for the creation and development of social value and entrepreneurship. The typologies analysed fit under the following categories:

  - **FabLabs** are small-scale, open, artisanal laboratories, offering tools, competence, support, in the framework of the renewed interest in "making" and a revival of the tradition of Do-It-Yourself in cities. The main idea of Fablabs is to promote collective learning, based on "doing", interconnecting technical cultures of knowledge with other forms, whether practical or expert. In a digital era, FabLabs are re-discovering craftsmanship (Sennett 2008) moving towards re-establishing materiality (Schröder 2019) and potentially effective relations between on the one hand, existing resources, consolidated local production, intrinsic values and, on the other, new resources (social, professional, cultural, etc.) which can be fed by the former. Their growth translated into a movement (maker movement) aimed at addressing new modes, processes, and cultures of manufacturing (Cities of Making 2018). According to Richard Sennett, "the craftsman" represents the potential of humans to build something based on their experiences, skills and abilities and distinguish the 'homo fabers' from 'animal laborans' (Sennett, 2015). The combination of design, craftmanship, and digital technologies observed in the maker movement is seen as inspiration for the renewal of urban disciplines that leads to discuss about the "fab city" (IAAC 2016). Fab city is a global network of cities engaged in enhancing the right of its inhabitants, users, to co-produce and experiment in the city, moving from the laboratory dimension to the city itself. The logic is similar to the Urban Living Lab, but with a stronger focus on a distributed production of goods, digitalisation and new artisanship, combining traditions and high tech innovations. In the paradigm of the Fab City everyone is encouraged to become a maker: access to open-source design software and faster prototyping technologies, making it easier to design and manufacture products, blurring the limits between producer and consumer. The participants to fab labs are members of communities of creators, who share the same values and identities in a cooperation logic. With their approach, a new form of situated knowledge of the city emerges, to

shape complex urban dynamics in a new artisanal shared logic. Commoning materialises also by adhering to the values and principles of international networks that use the same production methods;

- **social incubator** are both spatial facilities and the process of scaling-up ideas with wide social impact in both the market and the society. Their aim is to support social enterprises, provide services for the creation, growth and acceleration of enterprises. They act to increase the awareness of the territory on the role and potential of social enterprises. The main target of social incubators is social entrepreneurs, towards which they put in place activities aimed at accelerate the impact of their start-up ideas, accompany the ecosystem, set up a policy, animate the community;

- **Co-working**. Spatial structures used in a shared way by a varied set of subjects as workspaces. They present some structures to support collective work: meeting rooms, kitchen space, relaxation rooms. In some cases they provide training courses and incubation programmes. Coworkers are selected according to vertical or horizontal criteria and each contributes to the management of the space by paying a monthly fee;

- **organisation**. With regard to the ownership (Figure 48) of Innovation HUBs, some structures are part of organisation and commercial companies, some follow a model of network-social-franchise. Against this background, it seems clear that social entrepreneurial approaches are the more frequent forms of production of these places in a social innovation framework. Therefore a business approach oriented towards the production of collective social value. They lean towards the production of social change combined with the presence of economic and financial sustainability (Doherty et al. 2014) and the creation of a hybrid value, both social and economic (Emerson, 2003). Social enterprises can increase social capital, can improve the efficiency of society as a whole, to the extent in which they facilitate the coordinated action of individuals (Putnam et al. 1994) in the context, through the generation of both goods and forms of inter-institutional partnerships with local public and private actors;

- **method**. Innovation HUBs provide answers especially to problems where the responsible direct agents are difficult to identify and where cross-sector collaboration is a prerequisite for finding possible solutions, as a variety of actors have an interest in managing the problem. They are also suitable for solutions that need to be tested before they can be widely deployed in unexplored territories. The implemented method they pursue often entails an iterative process, characterized by trial and error practice, experimental approach, human-centred design, systems thinking, high levels of uncertainty and failure, and often no generation of short-term income. Lab-like approach such as continuous learning, autonomy, responsibility, flexibility, individualization and cooperation are all trajectories of work developed in innovation hubs;

- **function**. Innovation HUBs have different names and formats, with different histories, cultures, business plans and networking tools. The boundaries between these formats are not always well defined, but in the interest of research the interactive dimension between institutional schemes and programming and emerging micro-innovations informally in the city will be privileged. Their functions span from improving knowledge creation and flows, developing and improving organisational learning mechanisms, to

facilitating long-term innovation strategies, competitive intelligence and data mining strategies, and creating opportunities for future entrepreneurial activities;

- **impact**. Intermediate places work for generating solutions to societal challenges. In the case of Innovation HUBs, these solutions take more often the form of products and services (Figure 48) that are both of public use but also marketable. The added value of the productions of Innovation HUBs is their placement at the centre of a collaborative process, which guarantees a form of **affiliation to a network**, with shared values and principles whose main value proposition is to **co-produce by acting in common** and producing valuable externalities for the society. It is mainly through a series of these local hubs, but distributed globally, that these places are configuring and growing with new members, technologies and businesses. The networking emerges also by means of replication of the Hubs into similar experiences, creating a cascade effect that generates distributed spill overs . Furthermore, the spill overs generated as impacts, specifically on the participants, can be described as knowledge and skill provision and capabilities' building. Innovation HUBs in fact, are privileged observers of the contemporary dynamics, evolutions and tendencies of the market and the technological research. Managing knowledge as an asset, they enhance the capacity to identify, document, measure and assess intellectual capital. Their social purpose makes them original alternatives to hierarchical production infrastructures and their "acting in common" provides the background for labelling its productions as social innovation.

In the specific case of Bologna, the socio-economic context in which Innovation HUBs are analysed is a context with a strong, widespread and medium-sized industrial tradition, studied in many economic and sociological texts. It entails a network of small industries, often born from existing ones, which thanks to the high rate of technological innovation, flexibility due to small size and synergies with local resources, makes up for the lack of a large availability of capital. Today, bolognese companies are proposen into the international market with medium-high technological level, characterised by a culture of innovation and by the synergistic aspect of the use of local resources and the network of local collaborations. This attitude has been made possible by the presence of local institutions such as models of technical education, local banks, associations of entrepreneurs and producers, open bodies of planning and governance of the territory. Bologna's productive vocation has also been enhanced by creating some points of excellence linked to technical culture, while other places have taken their cue from the productive tradition to evolve into centres of service innovation and others into places of artisanal production facilitated by technology. In the multitude of production places in Bologna, the research highlights some examples identified as Innovation HUBs, that turned innovation into a seamless process of renovation of the value generated for society, by setting the basis for a new socio-economic approach, taking place in the city.

Opificio Golinelli. A good example of Innovation HUB can be found in Opificio Golinelli, born thanks to its homonymous Foundation, defined as the "new citadel of knowledge sharing", whose core businesses are education, training and culture. It presents a palimpsest of interactive clusters connected to specific identities and functions, in which formal and informal, spatial and virtual

exchanges, take place. The activities promoted by Golinelli are supported by principles related to learning-by-doing, research and experimentation in the laboratory, learning from experience, oriented to the development of entrepreneurship from a theoretical and practical point of view. This aptitude provides the chance for participants to be motivated to invest in innovative career paths. Opificio was the first production place, which moved from a mere subsidiary position with the public administration, to a circular dialogue to foster knowledge, education, by merging art and culture for younger generations.

Figure 49 - Opificio Golinelli. Photo: the author

The Opificio was conceived as a metaphor for the city in which all activities take the form of ideal containers, icons of representative buildings of the urban fabric, such as the Town Hall, the School and the Building Site. It is housed in a newly designed structure, inside a building with an industrial past. The space, of about 14.000 square meters, is divided into pavilions and independent structures, connected by a system of walks, gardens and squares that follow the configuration of the city's public space. The centre hosts the main training, educational and cultural activities of the Golinelli Foundation and its project areas: School of Ideas, Science in Practice, Business Garden, Science in the Square, Educating to Educate. Opificio provides spaces dedicated to children and young people, teachers and citizens, granting space where to learn by doing, conceived as a metaphor for the smart city, an accelerator with a 2065 horizon. Opificio Golinelli has been awarded the Premio Urbanistica 2015 by the scientific magazine of the Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica for the category "Quality of infrastructures and public spaces".

Two years after the birth of Opificio, the Golinelli Arts and Sciences Centre was inaugurated as an addition to the existing Centre. It was conceived to offer a synthesis between art and science and to host a multi-year programme of cultural initiatives with the aim of imagining the future and stimulating a set of educational, training and entrepreneurial actions for young people.

Almost 5 years after the inauguration of Opificio Golinelli, more than 300,000 visitors and more than 500,000 hours of training have been provided. The long-term development plan of the Golinelli Foundation, Opus 2065, designed to support the young generations in their knowledge path, provides for the implementation of the accelerator of ideas G-Factor for the formation of business culture in all sectors through the design and delivery of services aimed at creating a new entrepreneurship with a high innovative, scientific and technological content. G-Lab and G-Factor are companies, which must remain on the market as if they were profit, while remaining non-profit thanks to the reinvestment of their profits in the activities of the company itself. With this programme, the desire to integrate the places of knowledge, experimentation and production in order to face the challenges and the contemporary dynamics of the city becomes a reality.

Figure 50 - The New Center for The Arts at Opificio. Photo: G. De Vincentis

This is a particularly interesting example of intermediate place for the **mechanism of mutual learning** thanks to which the place itself has been able to modify the action of both users and promoting institutions, whose steady commitment appear to have led to the redistribution of the added value to be extended to normally uninvolved actors (young generations) and the whole territory (through the involvement of schools). The main goal of Opificio, in the word of its director, is to open up towards the regional network of innovation hubs, merging a global horizon but remaining locally grounded.

Fablab Bologna. It was born in 2013, thanks to the work of 18 citizens that created the MakeInBo association. They participated to the Incredibol! tender, which awarded them with funds for the purchase of machinery and equipment, a free lease agreement, free professional advice, and

promotion for their organization. After three years the association has been renamed FabLab Bologna, joining the global network of laboratories born from the program of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. FabLab Bologna is one of many companies that use free rental space in the previously abandoned offices of Piazza dei Colori, a public square located in a peripheral neighbourhood of Bologna, Croce del Biacco. The square provides many empty ground floors, once small shops that today have become the headquarters of associations that are revitalizing the area or innovative activities. Among these, Fablab offers a collaborative space with tools and training for those interested in design, electronics and digital production, designed to provide access to technology and encourage creativity and invention. It currently works with about 30 people and provides consulting, design development and prototyping services for 40 companies (source: Incredibol!), as well as 3D printing services, material brokerage and resale, machine rental and digital tools. About 80% of the company's turnover comes from training services for companies, professionals, institutions and secondary schools. To respond to the growing demand for young students to be involved in shared and conscious production, FabLab Bologna has developed PlayMakers, a series of creative laboratories within technical institutes. FabLab Bologna dedicates two nights a week to pro bono consultancy for residents of the Croce del Biacco district interested in approaching new type of artisanship. In the same network are also the Fablab Imola and the Fablab Valsamoggia.

Figure 51 - FabLab in Bologna. Photo: Make in Bo

The Fablab model is interesting for the production mechanism that allows the acquisition of a useful method in the co-design phase with the final beneficiaries of the project, encouraging the use of open source technologies in digital manufacturing and IOT. In particular, Fablab Bologna locates this model in the middle of a peripheral hotspot, where the local target of the activities is composed by young generations of migrants, unemployed people, neet. This gives a symbolic value to the initiative, and grants wider recognition as a good practice of regeneration of a peripheral area, an innovation in terms of both process and impact.

COB Social Innovation. Born in 2013 in Bologna, creating a first innovation space in the city, which was shared with other groups with the first idea to create a co-working space. The trigger was the idea to create a space aimed at guaranteeing a wide social impact to the produced goods, whether they were objects, processes or new organisational models. COB has then moved to Valsamoggia, a municipality located on the west part of the metropolitan city of Bologna. The name COB is born from "corn-cob", the idea to create a methodology of diffuse, cluster social innovation; it can also be associated to "collaborative bologna" or the short version of "co-business". The first headquarter was based in Via Saragozza, where a co-working space was set up, to be eventually moved to Valsamoggia, when the offices of the municipality remained empty after the fusion of the nearby municipalities in one headquarter. The municipality offered the spaces to the association in exchange of their re-activation for a public use. The COB association merged with Fablab Valsamoggia (Figure 52) to share the space, re-naming the space as OGGI – la casa dell'innovazione. After a three year investment by Philip Morris, the space was configured as the present use and with the needed supplies and furniture. This created a virtuous circle between the large company, the municipality and two social-purpose associations.

Figure 52 - FabLab Valsamoggia. Photo: the author

The fruitful collaboration with the public administration to get the space started, produced a contract of three year (to be renewed) for the use of the space. The space is variously used by many actors: the public administration often uses it for institutional meetings; informal groups to discuss and create shared activities for the territory; association and freelance share the space for working activities; the

relationship with the closest institutions (e.g. library) was a chance to generate and distribute impacts and mutually learn and provide new value for the territory.

The group of innovators work as consultant for other Innovation HUBs and the main idea is to expand and further create clusters in the territory. COB collaborates with TIM Working Capital and the start-up hosted in the space and Transition Italia. Their role as intermediaries is visible in the ability to boost and connect different competences, answering to local necessities, in particular related to lack of jobs for young people, refugees etc. to be put into synergy with the business companies and the public actors. Their mission is not to produce results but to produce impact and narrate it in a wide and clear manner.

Figure 53 - a detail of COB Valsamoggia. Photo: the author

Lesson learned

The Innovation HUBs identified in Bologna refer to a larger territorial perimeter, which transcends the border of the administrative city. This preliminary observation is key in understanding a possible future role of these places in the scheme of the interaction between planning and social innovation practices, as more oriented towards a metropolitan or even regional dimension. The following points are assumed as critical requirements to highlight:

1. **Inspiring clustering for common good**
2. **Guarantee understanding for legitimation**
3. **Densifying local-global connections**
4. **Putting forward co-learning as a way of doing**

Inspiring clustering for common good

The case of Bologna shows that the excessive repetition and distribution of Innovation HUBs throughout the city is difficult to achieve. The needed extensive investments, commitment, resources and constant care to develop such places, is among the reasons why this type of intermediate place is more distributed in a larger scale territory

rather than inside the administrative border. This evidence answers to the clustering logic, typical of USA innovation districts (e.g. Silicon Valley; Brainport Cambridge) based on a modern concept of agglomeration, that "describes the economic ecosystem in which firms, institutions, infrastructure are connected in order to create a good atmosphere for increasing competitive advantages" (Porter, 2004), where it was proven (Porter 2000) that clustering innovation centres is a successful strategy for economic growth and localized investments, rather than distribution of scattered resources. In the case of Bologna, the strategy of spurring innovation within the city should go beyond the economic level promoting 'excellence poles', by focusing on the distribution of social outcomes and side effects, creating a place from an **aggregation of spaces for local communities** to connect to employment and educational opportunities. The value produced is complementary to the traditional economic sectors (e.g. FabLab is taking advantage of the productive legacy of Bologna, to enhance the manufacture by reinventing ways to produce with new technologies as a trigger also for younger generations and an alternative for unemployed and unskilled residents) and the platform they create is strategic both for local resources, practitioners and institutions (e.g. the case of COB is key in their role of linking platform for metropolitan institutions, local peripheral entrepreneurs, large global companies, experienced professionals, residents of a small community).

Guarantee understanding for legitimation

Being hybrid in use, promoting actors, impacts and outputs, the difficulty is for Innovation HUBs (as well as for other intermediate places) of **being understandable** by many people and be **legitimised as a valuable resources** for the city, making their value tangible. The lack of standards and normative definition might often lead to the reduction of commitment of the participating innovators or the difficulty of interpretation by institutions as well as parts of the society. In this sense, the lack of legacy and of long-experienced reference models should be overtaken by the seamless **activity of self-determination and self-description** made by Innovation HUBs. Through their existing national and international networks in fact, these places are in contact with similar realities and are part of a global discussion about their successful experiences, pitfalls, barriers and organisation models. This might provide opportunities for a collective effort in defining, codifying, assessing and semantically express the meaning of their actions.

Densifying local-global connections

The global connection between experiences does not always corresponds to a strong local network. In the case of Bologna in fact, the existing contact between Innovation HUBs, is not structured with stable interaction moments and, in some cases, the competitive logic is still prevailing on the collaborative one. This might be due to the inherent mission of innovation hubs, to upscale their productions and outputs in order to provide both systemic change but also to increase the possibilities for their sustainability and growth. Remaining in the local or elitist known circles, might in fact prevent to scale-deep the value produced, losing the potentialities as a HUB.

At the same time, the network is growing in value at regional and national level (e.g MakE-R network; The Fablab in Italy; Open Maker Italy; TalentGarden; Impact HUB international network). Being part of a dense network fit in the same logic of innovation HUBs and Open Innovation principles: the adherence to specific principles, the sharing of acquired experiences and knowledge, the identification and commitment to a global movement. The networking and the global belonging of a movement and a self-codified model, prevent for Innovation Hubs the

risk to become a pawn in the big corporations (like in the case of COB with Philip Morris or in the case of Opificio with Alfasigma) that collaborate in the governance system. Therefore, a lesson emerging from the analysis is for the global platform to have corresponding reinforced local network, to engender flows and transformations of resources more likely to answer to real needs and produce the expected deep impact on the same society.

Putting forward co-learning as a way of doing

The complexity of cities is reducing the capacity of public actors to see the instances that are drawn to their attention and the market is not acting to solve them. This scenario seems to require a new set of skills to both recognize and tackle complexities, while assessing the efficiency of the results. In this sense, the **mutual learning among public institutions, high education institutes, citizens and economic operators** performed by Innovation HUBs, thanks also to the unprecedent social commitment of business partners, constitute a fruitful starting point to face the need to equip new professionals with transversal design, personal and social skills as well as specific skills on urban planning. The case of Opificio Golinelli emerges as a national excellence in this sense. It transformed education in an innovative process, producing a model to be looked at by many actors while at the same time remaining attentive to the constant changes occurring in the city, brought to its attention by the participants to the activities offered. The innovation stands in the possibility to pro-actively interact on real urban challenges and recursively share knowledge with different counterparts. The performance of innovation hubs could be also read as a sensitization action, a form of "changing by acting", showing different ways of producing, and generating added value, to be reintroduced in the society in form of skills and competences and need-related goods.

Cross-cutting taxonomy for intermediate places in Bologna

In order to overcome the tension between the constant becoming of social innovation practices and the stabilization into a planning frameworks, intermediate places between vision and action seems to be useful platforms for the tension to be unraveled. The research hypothesis, verified on Bologna's case, identifies in intermediate places possible activators of the operative playground of the practices by building capabilities and becoming leverage of the strategic playground, while raising awareness towards institutions. The cases analysed show their capacity to be agents and stages for social innovation processes, more likely to address demands-led actions in the cities. Furthermore, the cases express a multitude of different actors playing a key role as intermediaries for social innovation. This intermediate dimension though, goes beyond the actors and lies in various procedures and sides of collaborative innovation among several "actants" (Westlund et al. 2014) such as the policy context, the space, the socio-technical framework of planning, and the multiplicity of geographical scales. The analysis showed that Bologna is currently configuring as a constellation of different typologies of intermediate places, which present various contact points. Here intermediate places are both collaborating (e.g. FIU with INstabile Portazza or Dynamo, to name a few) or are not yet recognized or known in this role (e.g. iScape or Green Office, which are currently more limited to a university dimension rather than an urban one), or eventually are not able to interact with each other (e.g. Urban Living Labs with Community Hubs, or Innovation Hubs with Policy Labs, because of their different target or mission). As highlighted, the city is addressing the widespread retraction of service provision from the state and the market and facing the persistent effects of the economic crisis, relying on its tradition of collaborative city with a strong focus on the role of places as interaction nodes, using contiguity mechanisms fostered by institutional and not institutional devices.

As it is explicitly stated in many of the reports produced, the interviews, the outcomes and lessons-learned, although intermediate places in Bologna are united in their general mission of public service improvement and trigger of social innovation through co-production, they are far from homogeneous, they constitute a mosaic of different 'local particularisms' (Amin and Thrift 2002). The definition of the different categories of intermediate place is hence useful to map the places answering to specific criteria (paragraph 0 Intermediate places: defining elements), to highlight their urban value and identify the actors. The identification of the four typologies, closes the **interpretative learning phase**, providing the base upon which to develop the descriptive part of the urban model. Furthermore, the case study analysis showed some recurrent patterns, positive externalities and characteristics with a strong transformative potential towards the city. It also emphasised critical elements and rigidities to be overcomed in order for these places to embody the role of bridges among the level of the practices and the one of planning. These elements have been organised into **requirements**, which are the starting points for the construction of the **operational learning** for the prescriptive part of the model. Eventually, the requirements emerging from the analysis are grouped into **four keys** (Figure 54) that Bologna's intermediate places should comply to, in order to strengthen their role as spanners towards planning and towards practices of social innovation.

putting forward co-learning as a way of doing
fostering institutional learning
opening data
ensuring longer-term sustainability
increasing public research & development
consolidating iteration of the approach

inspiring clustering for common good
guaranteeing understanding for legitimation
densifying local-global connections
outreaching on a multiple scale
pluralising the publics
enlarging the engagement
stressing the potential for replication

PROCESS

NETWORK

keys for a urban model

INTERMEDIATE
PLACES

SPACE

GOVERNANCE

shifting towards a living, bonding context
identifying a location as nexus of resources
fine-tuning the relational dimension
facilitating a platform for evolving, hybrid uses

intensifying the multi-role of institutions
co-producing shared norms
encouraging institutional involvement
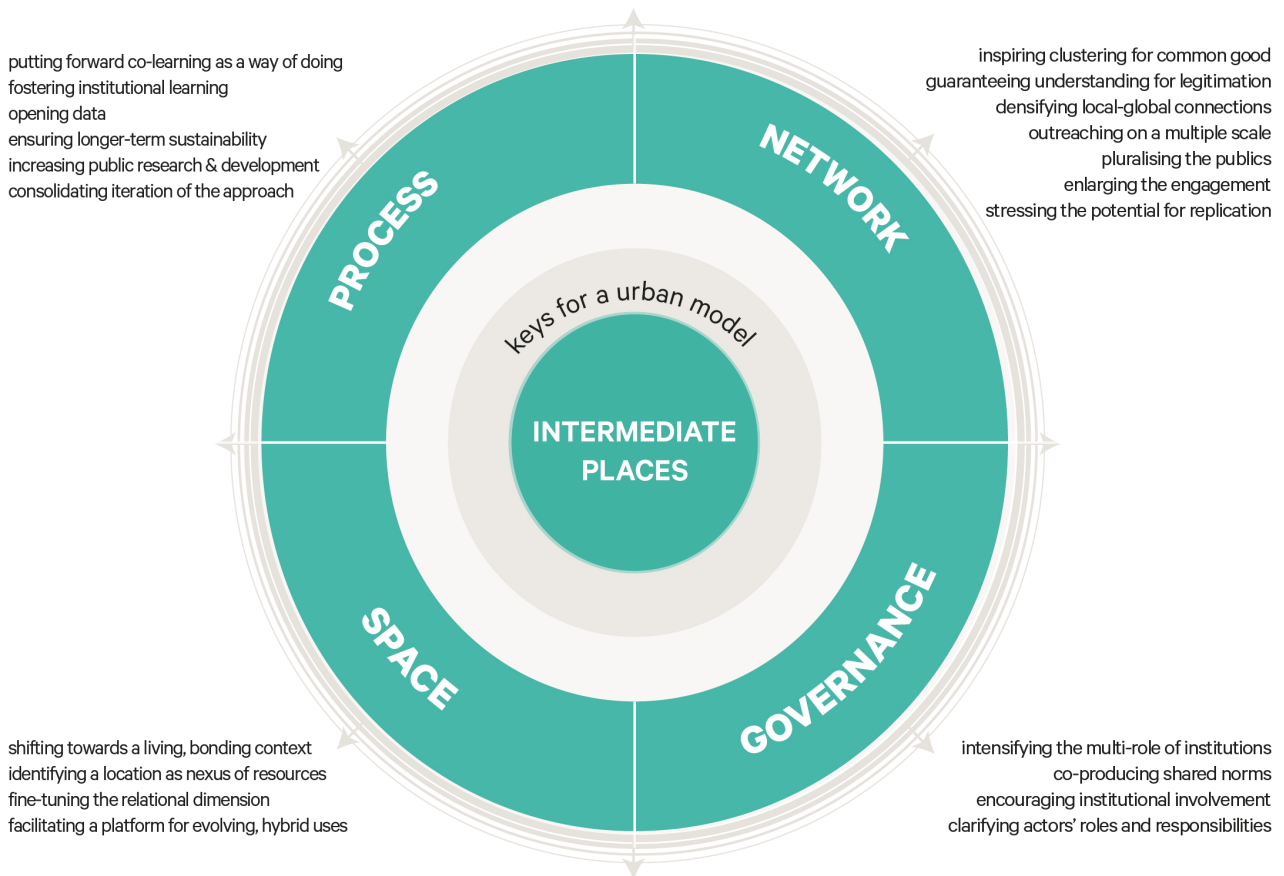clarifying actors' roles and responsibilities

Figure 54 - keys for a Bologna model contextual, path-dependent and cross-cutting. Source: the author

The keys are meant to be **contextual** (they emerge from the analysis of Bologna intermediate places, therefore they are inextricably linked with the communities and cities in which they are located, for whom they advocate in a global dimension), **path-dependent** (they draw from the policy analysis, therefore they rely on a enabling policy context as a precondition for their application) but also **cross-cutting** and open to replication (they set the basis for a general urban model, an approach to be adapted, refined and eventually replicated).

On the basis of the defining elements, of the policy analysis, and of the context of analysis and application, a **multidimensional scheme** is produced to recognise the presence of intermediate places as nodes on which to graft a new model for planning in Bologna. The scheme aims at visualize and verify how much the field of social innovation can find in this model not only an organizational form, but also a driver that accelerates and consolidates processes that have until now been located outside the planning mechanisms, and how much urban planning can engage with them in a long-term vision framework.

The emerging requirements are presented below (Figure 55). Each intermediate place is grouped into the four identified typologies, and each one is described in their characteristics, promising elements, intentional orientations and, finally, summarised into requirements. This determines the identification of an **operational learning framework**, which organises the requirements **into four keys**: network, space, governance and process, contextualised for the city of Bologna, path-dependant from the policy analysis and cross-cutting to be described as prescription for a new urban model.

These keys, cut across the emerged requirements to define a transversal taxonomy that has the aim to set the basis to orient, inform and guide planning for and within a social innovation methodology.

The methodology is described through specific characteristics that focus on the possibilities of interaction between planning and social innovation, by means of intermediate places that should meet the following keys:

- **dense and open networks;**
- **multi-dimensional and generative spaces;**
- **iterative and experimental processes;**
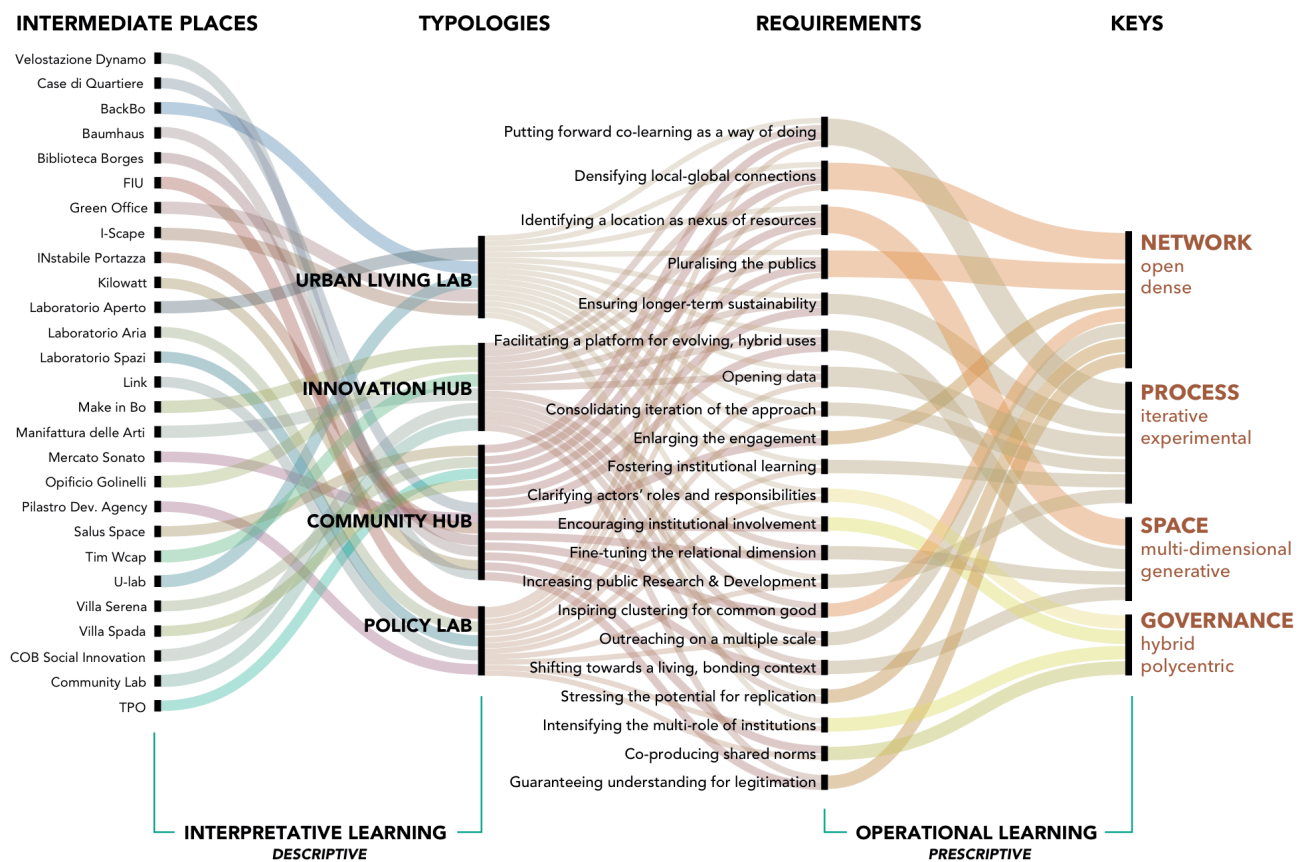- **hybrid and polycentric governance.**

Figure 55 - multidimensional scheme of intermediate places in Bologna. Source: the author

a) NETWORK: open & dense

The requirements highlighted, are grouped into contextual keys. One of them concerns the **network**. Network is meant as a multitude of links and of relations, internal to places and to the perimeter of the city as well as part of long global and virtual context. Economic-financial, technological, social, institutional and even spatial innovation is activated thanks to the creation of internal and external networks, on several scales. Networking works both horizontally and vertically, creating local-local and local-international connections that activate the circulation of knowledge and generate spill-overs. Such spill-over effects, if strengthen locally, allow a coherent level of highly specialized expertise in a variety of different geographical contexts. A significant example is the FabCity network,

which connects different innovation poles in competitive neighbourhoods, triggering the economic revitalization of previously degraded areas or enhancing abandoned areas, in a seamless exchange with a global network of cities. Against this background, intermediate places are meant as devices that **enable the dialogue** between different types of knowledge at local, city, national and global level. They operate "two movements that modernization had made contradictory: sticking to the ground on one side and becoming globalized on the other" (Latour 2018). In order to perform this action, they first need to strengthen their **internal and external networks**, by densifying the first and opening towards the second. As shown in the case studies in fact, proximity and local interactions are more likely to produce better tailored solutions to localised global phenomena (social, environmental, cultural, etc.). This tension between local and global is overcomed by means of local **densification** of the relational network and the **openness** of the borders of such network towards the global level. Intermediate places must therefore refer to specific contexts, but they should open up to broader (in scale or themes) frameworks of meanings.

The need for inspiring clustering for the common good, the enlargement and pluralisation of the publics, are among the requirements that underline the necessity to densify the internal relations of the intermediate places and those generated between them and the city, diversifying the sources of outreaching on different scales and tools. In the same way, some requirements focus on the global network to which the intermediate places belong, which in turn should be intensified both in the local and in the international connections, to respond to the need for recognition and understanding, through the affiliation to circuits that are not only limited to the local. In addition, the network between local and global should provide support to overcome the limited replication potential: the construction of dense and open networks in fact, ensures a **catalog of case histories** that, systematized, can identify the critical elements and barriers to be overcomed depending on the context of application; furthermore, it allows to find solutions locally with a vision towards global models, tailored to the specific context, but adaptable and exploitable.

Dense Network.

The **intensification** of the ecosystem of intermediaries in urban contexts is necessary to create stable bonds with the actors emerging in the panorama of city-service-making (financial subjects, consulting societies, incubators) and reinforcing those with the traditional suppliers (schools, civic centres, libraries, cultural facilities). This double logic aims on the one hand at enriching the framework of local actors and at strengthen the mutual relationships and arrangements, on the other at expanding the connections beyond borders, to orient the planning towards a metropolitan and regional vision. As stated by Palermo and Ponzini (2014) in order to enable the development of collective places of interaction, the intensity and widespreadness (Putnam 2000) of these experiences is crucial.

The cases in Bologna show the necessity to rely on interaction for the generation of value chains between places at various levels, producing bonds that are spatial as well as relational, programmatic as well as functional. By creating a concrete and driving network between the inhabitants, citizens, users, workers, who are concerned by the same local issues, the territory acquire value as a shared capital, converging its

strengths towards common objectives. This could reduce the risk of individualisms or commodification of the collective production of social innovation.

Existing networks of intermediate places need to be densified and redesigned to operate not only as a backbone structure for individual urban production units, but as **channels that multiply** the individual values of the initiatives (Venturi and Zandonai 2019) provided by subjects that do not necessarily operate within the boundaries of planning. Proximity and a dense local network can multiply the chances that a social innovation will produce positive effects in other sectors than that in which it originates, evolving in the passage from one sector to another and, therefore, perfecting itself, while generating positive spill-overs in the territory. The evolutionary paths of social innovation can also give rise to new innovations, which emerge from local contamination of know-hows and competences (e.g. the application of a technique in a field other than that in which this technique was originally born). Social relations are therefore built around services and products, conveying knowledge rooted in the territories towards the best opportunities for development, in an iterative process that can be strengthened by public action and oriented towards new forms of urban policy.

Open Network.

Social innovation practices are fluid, in constant becoming and dynamic. This is the reason for intermediate places to rely less on perimeter (spatial, thematic, functional) and boundaries (normative, regulations) and more on openness. Despite the necessity to strengthen the local networks, it seems necessary to avoid enclosing the partnership in a too narrow dimension, which risks of erasing the external causes of urban issues and of underestimate the relationships, alliances, the resources that can derive from being in a wider network of innovative experiences, of institutional and non-institutional subjects, of material and immaterial resources. This can be achieved through the implementation of **processes of open innovation** as seen in the case of Urban Living Labs, by spanning boundaries **outsourcing** for resources and knowhows, to be systematized inside their inner circuits to expand the knowledge produced. Opening the network means working to consolidate both vertical (with different level of government) and horizontal (with different level of competences) links, by increasing the connective capacity. In this case, the increase in connective capacity is measured not only in quantitative terms (e.g. number of contacts, number of partnership), but above all by looking at the capacity to diversify them and to develop biunivocal relations aimed at hybridize their management models, skills and, more generally, approaches and visions.

Trough the observation of intermediate places and their networks, planning is challenged to shift from the necessity to frame into a spatial and normative scheme, to rely more in openness and contamination. The continuous exchange between the places of the entire city of Bologna, is a starting point to look at the wider networks, as an horizon for the development of new relationships and transformations, and as an opportunity to locate the role of intermediate places in the discussion for the urban agendas of the future. Opening the network means maturing the ability to share and compare to other actors in order to facilitate the provision of services and resources in an authentic ecosystem. A proactive effort that requires, first of

all, to share strategic elements and policies, as well as identify tangible and intangible assets as common assets to be mobilized for common purposes.

b) PROCESS: iterative & experimental

The process put in place by the intermediate places should be able to **spread innovation** and not only to scale it, to distribute the effects at the scale of place or area at first and transfer the impacts to urban and metropolitan scale thanks to the network of which they are part. It is therefore a reticular, rhizomatic process (Deluze 1994) made up of incremental phases. The process should take on emerging characteristics that lie beyond individual intentions, but represents a collectivity. The effects of the process derive from the interweaving of strategic intentions, interaction and contextual factors. This attitude is more likely to produce new knowledge and the accumulation of alternatives to mainstream solutions to urban challenges, entailing also possible failures. The data and knowledge produced should be assimilated by institutions in a co-learning process guided by intermediate places. The analysis highlights the necessity for intermediate places to establish a methodology able to **ensure longer-term sustainability** and to **not dissolve the knowledge produced**. In order to play a stronger role as observer and bridges towards institutional planning in fact, what appears still missing is the accumulation capacity of both knowledge and resources, of intermediate places. In fact, most of the places analyzed do not follow a stable assessment method and are not able to record and share with others the results achieved, failures overcomed and criticalities found. This could be caused both by a lack of awareness of the ability to make a difference with respect to a change in the city's planning arrangements, or by a lack of support and skills to provide a structure not only for the performance and management of activities, but also for their longer term operativity.

Against this background, what appears to be a key to address is the **process**. The process implemented in intermediate places, is expected to include failures, changes of direction, unforeseen outcomes to develop a variety of possible solutions to the initial challenge, considering the diversity of resources, capabilities and constraints in a given context. Consequently, the process should adapt and change in response to what has been learned along the way; their mission, structure and approach should be inclined to evolve significantly and suddenly, rather than following a static model.

The main prescription to be transferred from the analysis of intermediate places towards planning concern a process that should be **iterative** and **experimental**.

Iterative process.

The cases analyzed highlight the need to support the production of intermediate places through prototyping, continuous loops of mutual assessment, redefinition of objectives in the light of the results achieved, and reiteration of activities, in order to achieve the best possible outcome. This also allows their process to adapt to changes in the situation and context and to iteratively seek the most suitable solution to the context, the available resources, the actors involved and the actual demand for innovation. The process

becomes almost an improvisation performance, a continuum in which the actors follow steps and redefine the edges of their action during the course of the work and where failure is expected and accepted (Manzini 2009). Iterative progress is made through a process of constant development of microprojects, "limited and successive steps" (Palermo and Ponzini 2010, p. 72) feedback loops (EC 2017), based on tests and errors, unexpected successes and even disadvantages. This entails for choices and therefore changes in urban settings, to be progressive and potentially reversible (*ibid.*). This attitude may involve risks of fragmentation, but can also ensure pluralistic, compatible, prudent and effective choices. The idea of an iterative approach is to proceed cyclically in a series of small steps aimed at widening and maximizing the individual actions. They need to try things out on a small scale, take risks, test and accept failure as part of progress, re-inventing their own methods and approaches as they proceed. This **circulation** is what helps moving from tacit and latent to explicit possible knowledge, and vice versa. The iteration of the processes produces the stabilization of their contingencies, a routine that allows to evaluate the results achieved and the value generated. It is an attempt to codify a discipline based mainly on practice, experimentation and therefore difficult to grasp in predetermined categories. This allows for intermediate places to self-assess, collect data and create an inventory to be made available both for internal purposes (better-tailored services, solutions) or external ones (provide insights from the ground on needs, issues but also possible alternative solutions to the mainstream), but also to enrich the outward narrative.

Iteration is also foreseen in the interaction among stakeholders. Interactions between the producer and the user in the co-production of public services and the interdependence between these two at the operational level is aimed at monitoring and negotiating the fluid changes to re-evaluate solutions within the network of actors and of the socio-urban context. The continuous inclusion of shared knowledge, evolving perspectives and interactive experiences achieved through experimentation.

Experimental process.

Experiments are projects whose goal is to learn something out of their success or failure, rather than to achieve a specific outcome (Kemp and Van den Bosch 2006). They are conceived as "speculative methods of knowing" (Hillier 2007), open to discovery, surprise (Sennett 2012) and dealing with uncertainties. Experimentation allows to adjust, think laterally, trying new possibilities and fail, in order to "expose other realities" (Nicolas-Le Strat 2018), with alternative points of view.

Intermediate places usually implement an approach that starts from micro-experiments (aimed at addressing context-dependent issues), reiterated and evaluated to be finally scaled towards macro-transformations. The experimental part entails various cycles of trial and testing of the solution to report feedbacks and hints, to produce certain or uncertain results. Experimental processes, following social innovation methodologies, produce value when they are reconnected to a wider frame, and when the solutions tested are put into synergy with others and scaled-up (into more systemic levels by trying to modify regulations, work procedures and cultures). The added value of experimentation is that the testing of new urban solutions (services, products, technologies and policies) in real conditions and in an open and visible way, can cause

radical transformations. The goal of intermediate places in fact should not just be individual product or service improvement, but ultimately innovation in planning processes and "agency" as a relational effect of the experimentation. In this sense, experimentation is performed also in the modes of engagement, which need to involve the actors of the local ecosystem (and not only) through the activation of flows from outside to inside (i.e. to attract cognitive and material resources in order to enhance the role of places, scouting and showcase for talents and ideas of the ecosystem) and from inside to outside (i.e. to transmit cognitive and social resources developed within the places).

The aim of the experimental process should therefore be one of **support and assistance of the practices** of social innovation, without losing their emancipatory value. The experiments put in place by the intermediate places must seek a necessary pluralism, even agonistic (Mouffe and Galison in Mäntysalo et al. 2011). At the same time, a process of **assessment and constant evaluation** of the activities performed is crucial. The value they produce in fact, can be complementary to the traditional economic sectors and the platform they create is strategic both for practitioners and institutions: they could represent R&D units and social cohesion tools for public sector policies. This would transform the city into a seamless dynamic aggregation of localized hotspots of policies' experimentation, a site of flows that overcomes the current scattered patchwork-configuration.

c) SPACE: multi-dimensional & generative

The lessons learned from the case studies, show that the boundary-spanner work in intermediate places, impacts and is enhanced by the **spatial** dimension. Space in fact, act both as showcase and as engine for dynamics of social innovation, a localized arena that generates/is generated by relationships, bonds, but also issues, oppositions and negotiations. In this case, the space itself becomes an intermediary: on the one hand, it retains and cultivates talents and renews social and cultural bonds (Venturi and Zandonai 2019) with the local dimension; on the other, it sets in motion initiatives that combine different dimensions and transmits and translates the value produced within it in different directions and through different means and languages, to influence multiple levels of knowledge. Space is liminal (Sennett 2017) in the sense that it should create a bridge between problem solving (institutions) and problem finding (local communities) providing spatial interfaces in which the practices can be managed together with the visions and the strategies, with a co-evolutionary long-term perspective. It should support encounters that are provisional, sudden and convivial (Amin 2002), out of the logics of programming and planning.

Space may represent a shared identity, or may draw boundaries around some cultural and temporal domains risking to become excluding (Groth and Corijn, 2005). In order to avoid this, reading from the cases in Bologna, space should not be a limited box, but an "infinite" (Encore Hereux 2018) frame hosting dynamics, heterogeneity, interconnectedness. It should be socially produced and hence socially changed, through newly crafted uses, new forms of co-production for the collective sphere. These operational requirements are in line with the reading of space as constantly becoming (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Thrift 2004) and whose structuring elements are always incomplete. The challenge of dynamic, living, incomplete form (Sennett 2017) of space, is how to make it both

simpler and more flexible in operation (*ibid.*). Through the multi-dimension of the space it seems possible to increase its potentialities as generator of relationships.

Space generative.

The space provides a frame of materiality, a membrane that give shape to functions in which everyday activities should coexist with longer-term processes and possibly intertwine their externalities. This hybridization is conceived not only as the setting of continual social transformation but also as an **architectural element of urbanity generation**, producing uncodified transformative actions. The layout of the spaces, i.e. the choice of how to organize the material and social context, influences the interactions (and the related cross-fertilization processes) between the subjects living in them: from the furniture, to the dimension and the decoration, every element in the space should relate to a logic of collaboration and dynamic learning and producing.

In this sense, the space in intermediate places should be able to multiply and connect the individual resources that are drawn to it to do something new (or to re-combine and re-new existent resources), by creating flows of urban capital to be aggregated and then circulated in the city, provoking encounters that are spontaneous and far from the logics of programming. Space hence should become a generative **epicentre of new relationships**, which in turn generate new productions in the form of policies, products and processes. This attitude is well represented by the vocabulary with which the spaces are indicated: hub, is an evocative term of an aggregating infrastructure but at the same time distributing; lab recalls the dual attitude of protection, of a "safe" work environment and at the same time open to constant contamination from the outside.

It is from the transformability of space that the conditions for the experimentation of new uses, productions and functions are built. The space acts as an operative and significant connection for the multiplicity of actors driven by different interests and expectations (Venturi and Zandonai 2019), contributes to align the models, to translate the languages and negotiate, if necessary, the rules of engagement (Aa Vv 2017), to compare between different knowledge and to facilitate the meeting between those who manage and those who populate spaces. Appropriation and identification in space are elements that make it "living" and open to multiple interpretations.

The space should be hence transformed from mere container, an "empty box", into a context: the contextual value allows the triggering of potentials, capabilities (Appadurai 2013), experiences that allow the appropriation of spaces to transform them into places. Space should turn into a support for a collective enterprise that develops through time in an incremental manner: it should support the research of possible synergies between different actors for the satisfaction of both individual and collective interest.

Space multi-dimensional.

Intermediate places engage a wide range of participants, cutting across the boundaries of industries, professions, and cultures; they bring together different vertical levels and cross-sector competences of

people that do not usually interact. For this reason the space hosting them must necessarily provide **several shapes and forms** (digital and material, platform and diffuse) and must be used and understood from **multiple perspectives** simultaneously. This purpose-built diversity and multiplicity recreates the multiple feature of cities, and is therefore helpful to fuel collective creativity and re-create an operative real-life context. Even when they seem to be clustered, a careful examination reveals that intermediate places are based on a multiplicity of "spaces": sites, institutions and links, which actually form part of the places themselves. The space should be flexible enough so as to be able to capture the sense of multidimensionality. The analysis shows that a co-produced space is capable of triggering more consistent dynamics, being a context where a multitude of uses can be performed voluntarily, and in a "safe" perimeter. Space must provide frames in which accommodate multiple entries (resources, people, knowledge) and triggers the production of collective values. A spectrum of different forms is represented in intermediate places, from spatially permanent spaces (e.g. clusters of innovation hubs, fablabs offices, coworking rooms), to purpose-built initiatives for collaboration (e.g. platform-based urban living labs, policy labs in representative spaces) diffused in space and distributed in time.

The opening and differentiation (dimensional, scale) of the space is what must most characterize the intermediate places. Following what Sennett (2017) described, the space becomes an extended, widened edge to stimulate the initiation of relations between inside and outside. Spaces must therefore become mediators (Latour 2005), as they are able to incorporate "the complicity of society and the fluidity of their needs" (*ibid., p.39*). Space blends social, technical, cognitive, political, economic, cultural dimensions, all embedded into material frames that define a perimeter, a porous border in which the interaction among the dimensions should take place.

d) GOVERNANCE: hybrid & polycentric

The multiplicity and diversity of space in the intermediate places should clearly be matched by a multi-level governance organization, with the same dynamic and changing structure. The four typologies analyzed, show typical patterns of multi-stakeholder cooperation, which produces contamination between public, private and social actors.

Along with the 'established' dimensions of innovation such as high-tech, economics and finance, the Bologna, Berlin and Barcelona case study highlights the emerging role of institutional and social innovation, which implies explicit and sophisticated models of public, private and hybrid partnership. The critical aspect of governance entails the coordination of the constellation of intermediate places, their verification, assessment and the valorization of their production. Most of the places risk in fact to only narrate the 'collaboration' but in reality to selectively decide with whom to collaborate, therefore producing exclusion and risking to create a traditional intermediate body. This might lead to produce a scattered territorial network in the city, with the risk of creating privatisms and further fragmentation. In order to reach that, the **governance relationships** are key. The interdependence and autonomy of actors, the formalization of horizontal relationships (Parés et al. 2011) through negotiations between public and private, ranges from collaboration, to flexible arrangement, to partnership, which is different than the usual logic

of service externalization (Venturi and Zandonai 2019). The relationship is in some cases founded on an institutionalized statutory framework based on circular collaboration, with the public actor willing to release some power, while at the same time governing the process, to continue producing public purpose. According to the different cases, the degree of flexibility of the governance declares more private arrangements, more public framework and mixed configurations. Each of these governance settings hides some risks or ambiguities: the private might tend to see its collective recognition and legitimacy (Falanga and Nunes 2019) reduced or even neglected, while the public one is strongly linked to political agendas and bureaucratic apparatus. A polycentric and hybrid governance seems to be the current most effective compromise, although it requires clear declaration of each parts' intents and transparent rules of engagements. In fact, direct public support for the creation of relationships between different actors is essential to facilitate the clear dynamics without eliminating innovation potential or replacing the actual vocations of the promoting actors. Therefore, the role of the public institution as guide of the processes is key, both in the construction of the process itself and in its implementation, guaranteeing a constant monitoring of the results and a continuous re-framing of actions, tools and engagement mechanisms. In the case of Bologna, the proactive involvement of the public represents a constant commitment to the redistribution of added value between actors not previously involved, aimed at expanding the network of participants in the provision of services or in the public transformation of the city. Intermediate places, in fact, risk to produce important results in terms of resources, services, inclusive products and urban transformations, which tend to remain in an area of lesser impact if not enhanced or distributed by the public actor.

Drawing from these premises, the governance of flexible and dynamic urban units, collectors of potentialities and generator of values, needs necessarily to be **hybrid** and distributed, **polycentric** but aggregative.

Hybrid governance.

The governance configuration of intermediate places, needs to overcome the idea of the public or the private or even the public-private-partnership, to put forward the aptitude of partnership with **public function and intention**, hybrid in its composition where the public/private legal framework is replaced by common interest. Sophisticated governance allows for a mixed public-private approach, including civic organisations, social entrepreneurs, NGOs, working together through structured frameworks. The analysis of intermediate places in Bologna in fact, shows that what has been called private is in fact already public, the publicness is given by the value produced and the results achieved locally in terms of spatial transformations, service provision and alternative economic opportunities created. Nevertheless, the four typologies highlighted, show different political engagement (depending on the degree of participation of public administration), therefore a collection of different governance configurations.

The operational requirements that emerge from the analysis of the case studies aim to strengthen the **mutual cross-fertilisation of the individualities** inside the governance structures, through the exchange of resources, but also by adopting mechanisms to include a greater number of participating actors. This interplay is assumed as one of the main recognized values to be intensified by also means of clarification of individual roles and capabilities of the partners. As mentioned above, the plurality of actors involved can

improve the quality of public choices because each of them can represent complementary questions and interests (Palermo and Ponzini 2010). This setting can be produced by collaboration mechanisms, fostered to generate not only processes and goods but also a common ground of shared norms, regulations, guides for the action (e.g. what happened in the Spaces Labs and INstabile Portazza) and the production of new distributed knowledge that is combined and socialised.

The governance model requires that the parties interested in collaborating assume a characteristic (or a part) of the actors with whom they collaborate. In this sense, the public actor that participates in the management structures, can assume the ability to attract a market demand or some organizational characteristics typical of the managerial world, on the other hand, the private actor can expand its vocation to invest in the social. This capacity to intermingle should be the main characteristic of intermediate places, an hybrid setup that encourages institutional change by impacting on power relations in planning processes (Moulaert 2003) provoking change in governance, in the functioning of service provision, and ultimately in the practices and performances of local democracy. From the analysis, clearly emerges the necessity for public and knowledge institutions, to provide their vision ability to accompany the processes and to be able to work with the episodic and the contingent. A new paradigm should involve a different role for both institutional actors, as the entrepreneurial subject of development, and for high-level institutions, which must be involved by using resources for transformative actions expanding the path undertaken with the third mission.

Polycentric governance.

It is an emanation of former traditional decentralisation principles. As explained by Ostrom (1990), when a common resource is closely connected (it derives and is oriented towards) to a wider framework, governance activities are organized into multiple levels without relying on any hierarchical structure (Harvey 2014). While this appears to offer a spatial metaphor, distributing and bringing government closer to communities it is primarily a policy concern. Specific places of interaction can serve the purpose of moving from a hierarchical to a heterarchical model of government (Brandsen et al. 2016), with many centres of decision producing agency, by transforming opposite and conflictual positions through dialogue and exchange.

As highlighted by the analysis of the Bologna cases, in order to avoid useless privatisms and fragmentations, it is no longer sufficient to collaborate but it is necessary to **co-produce** new rules with new actors. Polycentric governance find space for action in the constellation of intermediate places that must be coordinated and connected with each other and with the enabling policy context. A polycentric structure consists of localised institutions that are autonomous but benefit from one another's proximity, they become increasingly integrated by reinforcing their complementarity. A polycentric governance setting has the added value to create autonomous institutions, independent from political cycles, who share the political direction but goes beyond the time-limitedness of the mandate or European/regional funding. This entails for public administrations to be able to release some power and to grant autonomy in the management and in the decision-making, to intermediate places.

The polycentric whole is more than its parts. The whole attains a level of urbanisation that could never be achieved by the individual entities. This organisation provide a new form of governance that moves from a network of different actors (quadruple or quintuple helix), towards the commoning of their intentions, oriented towards the co-production of urban values. Nevertheless, in order to avoid the emergence of inequalities or re-distribution of resources, it must always include the public actor, who create favourable conditions thanks to strong and forward-looking spatial planning frameworks to improve clustering of stakeholders.

The case of Bologna resonates with the NMs in Berlin, and the Pla de Barris in BCN, showing different potentials in a broad and polycentric governance mechanism. The presence and diffusion of urban intermediaries of social innovation raise awareness on the importance of cross-fertilisation between different levels that should emerge from all stakeholders as a way of "acting in common".

This chapter aimed to provide a discursive and empirical framework as a possible answer to the gap between social innovation practices and urban planning. On the one hand there are informal, self-organized, entrepreneurial processes, on the other hand institutional urban processes in need for a review of its logics. The intermediate places constitute a new ground of redefinition between the two: a place of dialogue between knowledge, institutional learning and capacity building of new local urban actors. They refer to a specific context, but they open up to broad meaningful frameworks and global models. The categorisation of intermediate places has enriched the mapping of Bologna, showing on the territory the richness of experience, their areas of influence, the management characteristics and design elements that can be transferred and scaled in a long-term urban strategy.

In this vision, the city becomes the material support for a collective enterprise made of links and interconnections between actors and places, which develops over time. The following chapter develops how this vision can find correspondence in a descriptive and prescriptive diagrammatic scheme for the city of Bologna.

6. MODELLING. Enabling city as a planning framework

"The new urban planner is posed as the crucial intermediary, helping to mobilize the 'voices from the borderlands', arbitrating between stakeholders and ensuring that the powerful play no tricks; never losing sight of urban social justice as the binding goal"

Amin A. and Thrift N. *"Cities. Reimagining the urban",* (2002)

Reactivating a living history: theory for Bologna's intermediate places

From the analysis of the previous chapters, a diagrammatic scheme emerges, an urban model that holds together the elements of the research: social innovation practices and urban planning in a policy enabling context. It is based on the context of Bologna and verified with respect to the cases of Berlin and Barcelona and responds to the research questions by proposing intermediate places as operational units of research and socio-technical development within urban planning setups.

The research identifies in the potential role of intermediate places the answer to the mismatch between social innovation practices and urban planning setups, as means to shorten the distance between the levels. The research premises highlight the contextual character of social innovation, identified and interpreted as a path-dependent methodology and a practical concept still lacking a real theory, but built through the synergy between different approaches.

Similarly, intermediate places can be described by a series of variables and constants (Chap. 5. INTERPRETATION. Intermediate places as mediators and spanners) and their role made explicit through the aggregation of a series of concepts from different disciplines (urban planning, architecture, service design, urban economy and sociology). Following these premises, and the analysis of the Bologna cases, it seems necessary to provide intermediate places with a theory and a systemic logic, useful to frame them in their role as boundary-spanners and mediators, but which is at the same link them to the context. For these reasons, this paragraph identifies a **definition of intermediate places in Bologna**, as epicenters of an urban model of development that combines practices and planning and envisions its potential in a metropolitan, regional and global framework.

The concept of intermediate places, as understood by this research, finds fertile ground in the city of Bologna, building on its tradition of cooperation, made up of social activation and responsible and open institutions. The political continuity of the city, determined some policy outcomes to permanently remain even though they are not used anymore: the decentralization policy, the civic centers, the institution of the neighbourhoods and of the local area prexides, to name a few. These institutional remainings are **leftovers from previous administrations** and contribute in **preparing the ground for the challenges of social innovation**. In the case of Bologna, the legacy of the past is seamlessly renovated (e.g. with the old and new generation Neighbourhood Labs, the civic centres now community hubs, the urban centres now policy labs). The fertile relationship with urban planning and design tradition in the city, allows the investigation of the material dimension of an urban problem, the contextual meaning of its component and the possible side-effects of the options explored

Therefore, if read in the qualifying context of Bologna, the concept of intermediate places, is something that evokes positions more than it explains, and can open to possible new approaches for the evolution of the city, its organizational and spatial forms, calling for an extension of the model beyond the administrative perimeter. The concept of intermediate place is embedded in a historicized fabric and aims to reactivate and **renew a history**, a tradition, whose **legacy is still living**. What is configured is a field that requires a great effort to redefine mutual understanding and exchange, through initiatives that activate and build upon resources, forms of knowledge, skills and interests, referring to specific contexts, but which can open up to the construction of broader and shared meanings.

An innovative practice seems to be more effective, the more it is recognised and interact with planning schemes to grant the widest multiplication of energies and long-term sustainability. However, it should not be forgotten that interaction cannot disregard the fabric of shared norms, running the risk of individualism of the actors involved in the process. Without mutual **learning mechanisms** that can help the objectives and preferences of the actors to evolve virtuously, the quality of the interaction could decrease. Therefore, the prerequisite is to ensure that **autonomous actors** and **responsible institutions** confront each other to achieve shared meaning in relation to a variety of urban issues.

Intermediate places in Bologna, are meant to be the devices able to enact this interaction and to guarantee mutual exchange of learning: they are situated **socio-urban observatories** at the **center of contemporary urban dynamics** and spatialized **research and development units** serving both the public administration and the social innovation actors. They are located at the center of the territory because – in the complex framework that is the city – they are complex structures, able to hold together, translate, compose and recognize the different languages in an incubation and distribution logic. This attitude make them brokers of contingent opportunities, operative productive units of the contemporary city, thanks to their inner research ability to address general interest problems in practice, trying ultimately to draw some knowledge in terms of research towards both the public administration and private urban actors. Intermediate places are enabling, because they manage the transformations provided by localised social innovations, can monitor and learn from the side effects, at the same time they seamlessly review and correct the implementation of urban policies through planning decisions. Their heterogeneous distinctive aspects make them complementary as nodes of a reticular structure under institutional direction, which should not only support the public vision, but represent also a **stable critical, analytical and verification outpost** of the actions of planning on the territory. The constellation of places helps social innovation practices to perform what they already do, strengthening them by providing the conditions to act. At the same time they provide the key for the access to complex and grounded issues, to the institutions. This can be done by means of a generative and multi-dimensional space hosting iterative and experimental processes in a dense and open network and managed by a hybrid and polycentric governance.

This does not mean that every intermediate place has to follow an identical development path o role. The assumption is to provide a hierarchical organisation of intermediate places, depending on the **strategic or consolidated** role assigned to each. The research has shown that there are many possible missions and operational models for these bodies. Their approach will necessarily depend on the size, budget and capacity, the interests and priorities of those who fund it, and larger policy conditions. However, even if there is no single model or common trajectory for intermediate places to follow, it can be highlighted that in the cases analysed for Bologna, similar keys presented, influenced significantly the outcome of social innovation as an emerging effect.

At the end of the dissertation in fact, the hypothesis of social innovation as a methodology is reinforced. In the empirical analysis in fact, the positive narrative of social innovation find concrete grounds and evidences in the spatial emergences of this phenomenon. In the same way as places, path-dependencies and certain contextual elements are the conditions for a probable social innovation response. The proposal of the thesis, is to identify

social innovation as a cultural, orienting and alluding notion, a proxy concept necessary to open the discussion about cities and one that give the chance to broaden the field, but that concretise its results when looking at places. Social innovation can eventually be taught at the end as an analytical concept: starting from discerning the reasons why it happens and understanding how the action is defined by the actors

This interpretation, seems to be the way to move **from a narrative, towards a discourse** on this concept.

Key concepts for a urban model

Looking at the city as a playground of experimentations of social innovation opens the field to some alternative perspectives in urban planning. In order to move beyond the logics of social innovation as universal "good practice" (Ostanel 2017) or a proxy concept for several things, the thesis indicates the possibility of experimenting with a planning model in which the policy context should suggest a minimum of long-term invariants, and the planning tool should act through individual projects drawn up on the basis of the issues detected over time.

Public urban policies and planning tools are traditionally built on functions and not on intentions or contingencies. In order to have rules for reading intention and potential, planning could use open systems (Sennett 2017) to detect the potential dynamics of the territory, through intermediaries involved in a process of constant discovery. This operative function, I argue, should be performed relying on the distributed presence of **intermediate places**, which are hypothesized as **socio-urban observatories, analytical and verification units**, that can act as **research and development local outposts** for planning. Intermediate places can therefore intercept practice, recognize their value, legitimize them, detect how much value there is to be shared and raise awareness towards the institutions. The value produced by intermediate places is complementary to the traditional economic sectors and the platform they create can be strategic both for practitioners and institutions. Against this background, the planner must be able to respond, on the one hand, to a capacity for wide-ranging vision and forecasting and, on the other, remain attentive to the transformations and emergence of contingent requests. As far as the second aspect is concerned, the thesis proposes not so much a radical change in the role of the planner, but the capacity for mutual learning and alliance with those institution that already act on the territory as attractors of needs and translators of the same into innovative production processes.

The potential of intermediate places as enablers of social innovation, seems to represent the beginning of the solution to the current urban complexity creating a new idea of economy emerging locally from specific assets, with urban actors as civic entrepreneurs, enabled by institutional policies to enter in the service co-production, generating transformations in the urban space. The intermediate places are located at the centre of this alternative urban model. This model appears to be better achieved by suggesting an intertwined set of **place and policy driven strategies** to be orchestrated at both the local, urban, metropolitan/regional and global scale, through the right combination of embedded practices with strategic spatial tools delivered by a variety of actors.

The proposed model emerges from the two dimensions of research of the thesis:
- **policy**, which responds to the "how" practices of social innovation came to be and can contribute to mutual learning with institutions, what are the lessons to be learned when looking at their interaction,

what impact does policy tradition have on emerging social innovations and future structuring on planning setups e what are the enabling factors for social innovation to up-scale;

- **place**, that answers to "where" social innovation happen e how specific places can play a role in spanning between levels, what are the lessons that can be learned by planning and practices, what can be transferred from one domain to another and how the performance of intermediate places can trigger institutional change.
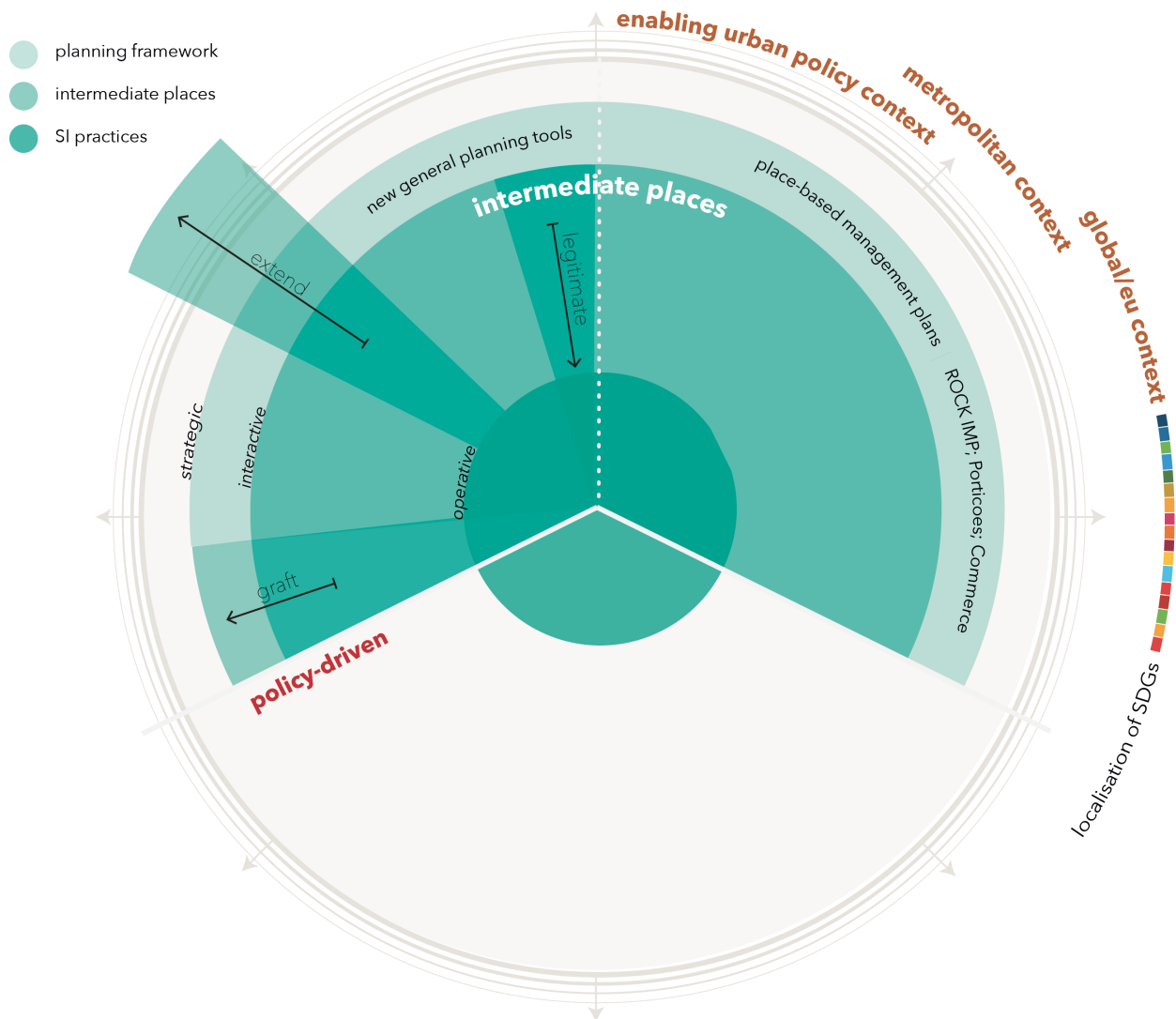

Figure 56 - **policy-driven** urban model. Source: the author.

The analysis carried out in the Chap. 4 has shown that in the case of Bologna, Berlin and Barcelona policies, the trans-sectorial and widespread societal impact and systemic transformation of social innovation, can only be achieved by means of intermediation between practices and institutional actors. Nevertheless, what emerges clearly is that area-based models – where the public body designed a masterplan, composing a varied menu of actions and accompanying its implementation through the creation of a structure located in the neighborhood (of social assistance and animation) – is no longer possible and is often insufficient.

On the other hand, a widespread cascading supports to the emergence and consolidation of ideas of social innovation from the public (or from an emanation of it) is equally excluding and may be accused of lack of

transparency and inconsistency with the planning framework. In this sense, urban intermediaries intervene to support this change, accompanying the practices along a capacity building path in the experimentation of new common goods, new business models and languages consistent with the future vision of the city. The expected impacts are on the supply system, in terms of the **qualification of services**; on the **networks of actors**, as it includes urban intermediaries as actors of urban policies; on the **regeneration policy agenda**, promoting innovation, both on the product side (new services, old services provided with new modalities) and on the process side (redefinition of the way to conceptualize and deal with urban problems). In the policy analysis though, what stands out is a possible way of exclusion, especially of the weakest actors, who do not have the means to represent themselves. The risk is to create a "selected access" (Cognetti 2018) arena in the sense that it involves only those forces (institutional, private, third sector entities and associations) that have cultural, educational, linguistic, technical tools to access the process. The political framework and involvement in the governance of the institutions is therefore key for the successful interaction between planning and practices, avoiding the risks of 'delegation' to intermediaries on issues that must necessarily be in the hands of the public actor. It is therefore necessary to put in place urban policies capable of building and empower an intermediate level made up of **instruments, actors, financial and management resources**, bridging the gap between the theoretical dimension of learning and real life challenges in three ways (Figure 56):

- from the meso (interactive) to **legitimise** the micro (operational) level of social innovation practices, their emergence, action and results; it embodies the demand-led action on intermediate places;

- from the meso by **grafting** the macro (strategic) level of urban planning, provoking new ideas, the awareness-raising of urgent and emerging needs and the institutional transformation into something new, starting from the contamination of systems that were normally separated;

- from the meso **expanding** towards the large level, of European policies and large scale territorial authorities, where the adopted model proposes new policies, new points of view on local phenomena and solutions that transversally affect a large number of cities, and may represent a pilot to be adapted and replicated.
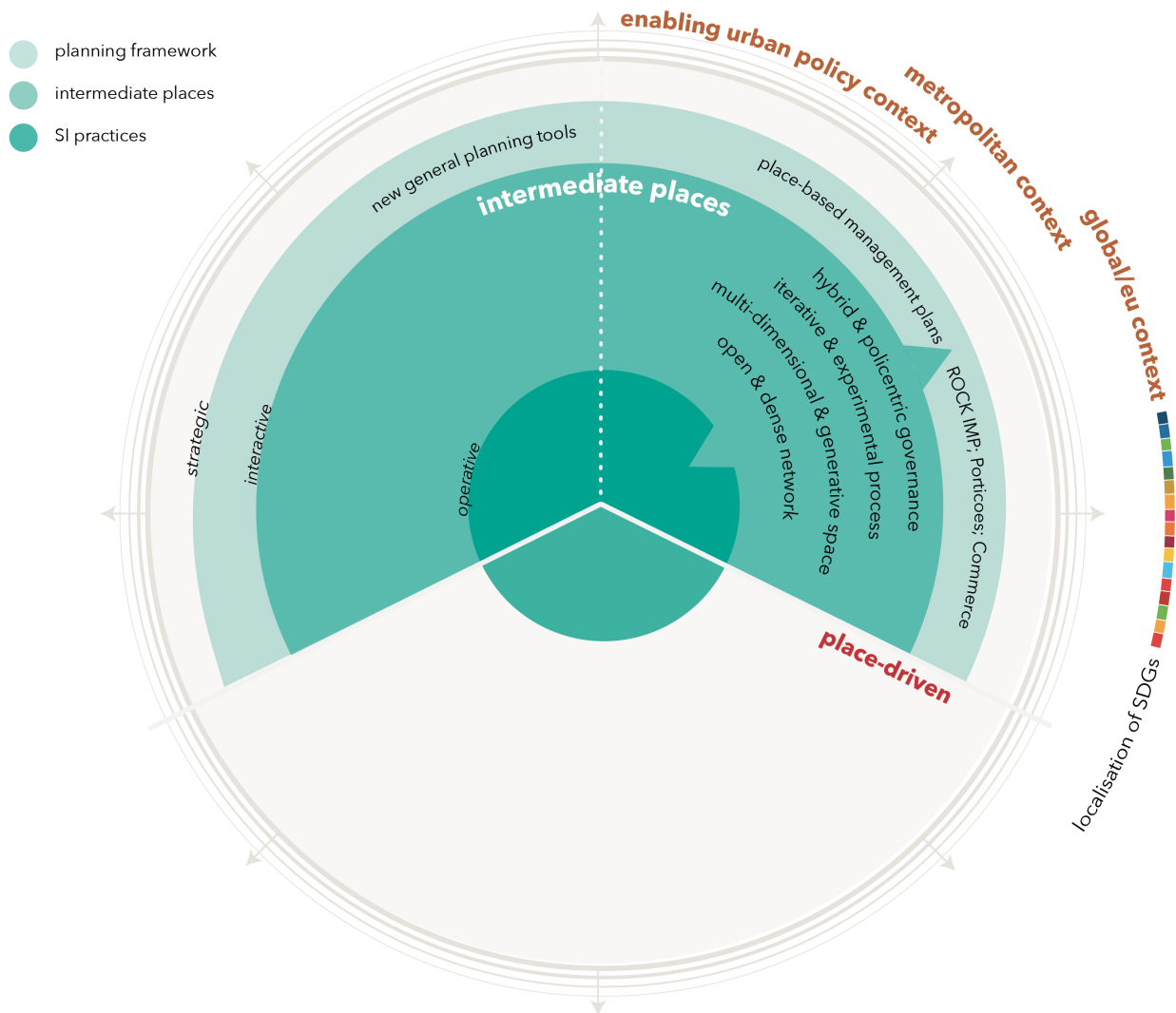
Figure 57 – **place-driven** urban model. Source: the author.

The policy analysis highlighted the intermediate dimension as an hypothesis to be explored in its capacity to link levels in the city. An addition element that stood out was the local dimension of urban intermediaries, i.e the possibility to be situated in a specific location. From this, the following chapter (Chap. 5. INTERPRETATION. Intermediate places as mediators and spanners) aimed at delving into the dimension of "place" (Figure 57). The approach linked to places, makes it possible to highlight the points of convergence between planning and practices from a spatial perspective, i.e. from the point of view of the object of urban planning, the places, which holds together the social and material dimensions of the city. The place is a **field of action**, where networks of relationships, systems of opportunities, extensive structures of actors converge. With respect to interaction, therefore, places happen as the probable effect of certain conditions, actions, conflicts. Therefore, they matter where they materialize, acquire **substance and meaning** in a specific context.

This part identified intermediate places as the connecting elements, platform, device able to interact both with practices of social innovation and urban planning tools. Intermediate places (Innovation hubs, such as accelerators, incubators; Community HUBs like spaces for civic engagement; Policy Lab like Urban Centers and City Agencies;

Urban Living Labs) allow the detection of a critical mass of processes of localized social innovation practices, thus enabling the construction of a specific role for them in the city transformation. The review of case studies in Bologna followed a double logic: on the one hand, to anchor the knowledge built on the concept of intermediate place and define its specificity according to certain variables; on the other hand, to highlight a series of requirements that the places need, to be able to effectively play the role of boundary-spanner and mediators between micro practices and macro planning, which would verify the research hypothesis. The requirements have been grouped into four thematic categories that further explain the criteria to which an intermediate place must be able to respond in order to fulfil its role, within an enabling policy framework: to form an open and dense network, to propose a multi-dimensional and generative space, and to carry out iterative and experimental processes thanks to a hybrid and polycentric governance system. These criteria can also represent the keys for understanding that emerge from the city of Bologna as elements to be transferred to current planning debate or as points to be taken into account for new planning cycles.

In this regard, Bologna is developing new planning routes, voluntary tools that accompany the more traditional trajectories followed by urban planning. Among them, the place-based management plan which is part of the aforementioned H2020 ROCK project that deals with urban regeneration of the university area and is based on shared reflections around innovative ways of using historical heritage. Another management plan is the update to the Dehors Regulation which - through the drafting of area projects shared with trader - aims to improve the use of public space in the most intensely experienced areas of the city, the historical center. Finally, the submission for WHL Unesco of Bologna's Porticoes, which expresses the desire to bring to the attention of the world a type of space that represents not only the quality of the urban structure of Bologna, but is also the place of interaction of the social life. These voluntary tools that the city is equipping with, can be recalled as managerial rather than urban design or planning tools. They can represent an opportunity for the testing of the envisioned urban model, which can rely on intermediate places to both detect, collect and investigate specific issues (e.g. commerce, heritage and protection), and provide operative tools and resources to intervene with specific measures in the city, acting within the general framework of the given "management" norms and restrictions.

Besides these voluntary planning tools, the city of Bologna is also currently engaged in the launch of a new activity of general planning, to adapt the urban planning tools to the Regional Law 24/2017, proposing to address for the first time in an integrated planning tool, issues that concern both habitability and social inclusion. The regional urban planning law identifies the "Strategy for urban and ecological environmental quality" as the as the main document of the new Municipal General Urban Plan (PUG). PUG shows mechanisms that are favoring more the private intervention in the city, to be carefully managed by the public actor, in order to avoid speculation and extraction of collective resources. In contexts in which regeneration actions arise in many cases "from the bottom-up", the Strategy recalls the need for an active and unprecedented role of the public, as facilitator and director capable of the stewardship of the multiplication and systematization of the effects of the practices that would otherwise risk remaining episodic and not bringing added value to the city. From the point of view of urban planning, the centrality of the Strategy represents a very significant change, since it definitively marks the passage from an idea of a Plan designed by the public to a conception of the Plan as a field of possibilities, which the public

can control and keep in balance precisely in relation to the degree of priority of the development options proposed by the plurality of urban actors. The new planning tool acts more and more by seeking for a mutual relationship with private interventions on the public city. This phenomenon involves a change in the conditions of transformation of cities, which will no longer be given a priori, but will arise from the public-private co-determination fixed by the public. The general plan therefore would indicates a minimum and maximum framework of transformation within which to place projects. This leads to co-decision on the process of urban transformation, hence would be more based on interaction rather than negotiation. Following this logic, it is possible to recover social and environmental issues, normally left at the margins or as a spillover of planning. This configuration seems to adapt more to the perimeter of the real complex city, made up of places of work, of life, of movements, no longer corresponding to the administrative boundary, an entire city of flows and not of fragments that develop at different speeds. With the development of the General Urban Plan, the path of private projects and initiatives (with collective interest, as in the case of social innovation practices) and that of urban planning seems to be definitively merging, and this calls for a strong integration of skills: a collaborative model that creates stable opportunities to interact on environmental, economic and social issues applied to the urban context, in the logic of informing planning and triggering innovation towards new institutional arrangements.
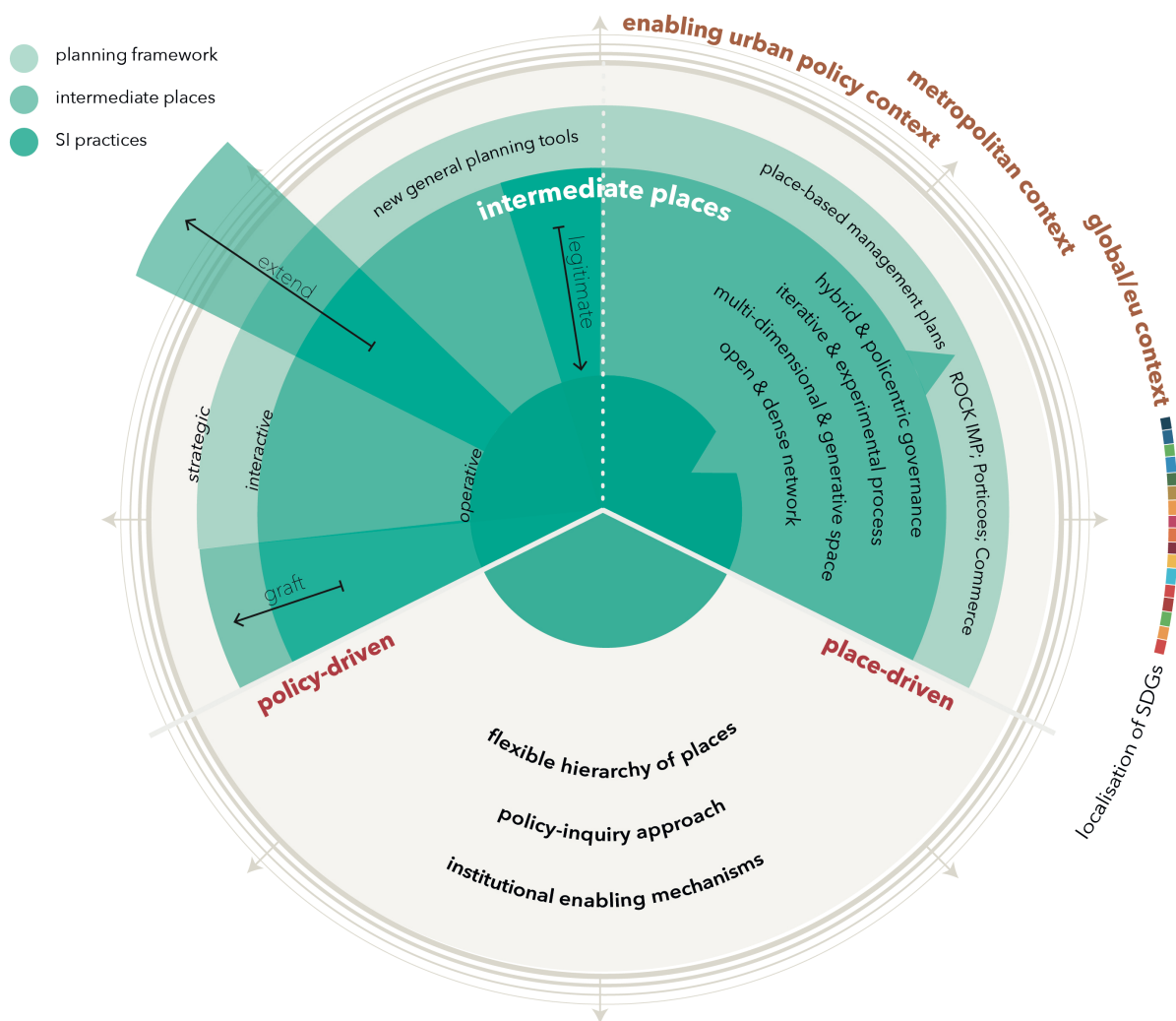

Figure 58 - urban model for intermediate places to overcome the mismatch between urban planning and social innovation practices. Source: the author.

The proposed diagrammatic model describes a methodology, a planning approach for the city of Bologna that is created to respond to the mismatch between the growing number of social innovation practices and urban planning schemes, regulations and frameworks. The research hypothesis is that this answer is to be found in the role of intermediate places, possible socio-urban observatories located at the center of social dynamics, which, responding to some requirements that aim at reinforce their role, can act as grafts with planning, create a legitimate place for contextual responses performed by local players, and extend their value to inform European policies. The model is built from the knowledge acquired from the empirical case studies of identified intermediate places in the city. This diagrammatic scheme, as emerged from the "tracing" in the city of Bologna, is facilitated by an enabling policy context, in which the conditions have been created over time to be able to face the current challenges posed by social innovation. In this policy and place-drive approach a new role is attributed to planning and planners (see Chap7: Planning directions), while some key statements are necessary to be highlighted and give substance in the model:

- a **flexible hierarchy of intermediate places** – both strategic (in charge of research and agency-building) and consolidated (for development and verification of policy decisions) are necessary. As mentioned, social innovation needs to be recognized and organized to be produced as a desired effect. A chaotic constellation of intermediate places is already intervening in the ecosystem of the city. However, their bidirectional meanings, critical discussions, and reflexive links can be investigated in a general discourse and their diverse approached valorized in a broader model. Differences in the choices, power and responsible evaluation (and consequent approach to solving) of urban problems may represent the cornerstones of a possible third paradigm for urban development, different both from a bottom-up approach and an institutional one;

- a **policy-inquiry approach**, is essential for both society and institutions to ensure a rigorous and transparent evaluation of any project emerging from their interaction, i.e. exercising a real capacity to review planning and design choices and actions. Policy meant as an inquiry process is required as a key statement to activate dialogue and transactions among many subjects involved in the urban realm. This provides to share problem-setting and strategic approach clarifying the issues at stake and the solutions through tentative projects, mirroring an inductive research methodology. This generate also the hyper-localization of collaboration policies, to avoid the risk of just 'narrating the collaboration' by bringing tangible evidences in form of service, product, urban transformations that are co-produced;

- **institutional enabling mechanisms** to draw on to implement the envisioned model that could lead to the respect for good recommendations in current practices. For examples, by ensuring previously defined incentives and benefits for solutions that are consistent with the general strategic framework (e.g. in the case of Berlin, with economic bonuses available under the accomplishment of certain contextual conditions; in the case of Barcelona with the speeding up the approvals process of a project in a way that is coherent with the general policy framework of recommendations). Therefore, the institutional framework plays an influential role in the possibilities for the effective revision of the interaction mechanisms among planning and social innovation practices.

What is still to be determined is what happens in the moment of removal (even momentary) of the institutions. Explicative in this case is the bureaucratic issues that can block or slowdown even the results of a long activity of co-design. In this case, the intermediate level by itself, is not enough in the transfer of innovations in a formal planning process. The precondition of this approach is for institutions to maintain the ability to continuously detect, refine, adapt and increase the general objectives of the plan, connected in a network and shared. On the other hand, the institutional scheme should include experimentation, feedbacks and evaluation in order to systematically work with new experiences, altered interpretations and changed circumstances (Voss et al. 2006). This will allow the deliberate use of flexible and centralised rules to support contextual experimentation and guarantee the synergic aggregation of the results of the experimentation, with the hypothesis of deep-scaling (Moore and Riddell 2015) the value created. Furthermore, interaction is assumed to become a systemic component of planning setups to enable reflexive (Palermo and Ponzini 2014; Allen 2016) concrete approaches, and not an exceptional solution to the challenges. Planning's adaptation capacity is at question, together with the flexibility to accommodate in its process results emerged from the interaction of local players, contingent solutions and more operative answers. The application of this model though, undergoes a series of constraints and barriers that is necessary to highlight.

Limitation of the model

The model, meant as the diagrammatic configuration of the interplay between practices of social innovation and urban planning is necessarily subject to limitations and to critical reflections concerning its application.

The first one concerns the **contextual dimension**. Interesting results – in terms of improvement of service quality, engagement of new urban actors and small-scale urban transformations – are evident locally. Nevertheless, the risk is their limited possibility to be reproduced and generalized, remaining exceptions linked to unlikely modifications of governance and urban planning models. As stated in the premises, the emergence of social innovation practices, their recognition and growth in numbers and quality, is directly linked to their urban context. In order to be effective on an urban scale, intermediate places must act within an institutional context that favours learning, the ability to produce open knowledge and that provides a valid framework for exchange between different value systems. A good interactions-based planning system must aim at strengthening self-identification through self-contextualization, i.e. the creation of intercommunication spaces that act as interface structures between the actors involved, within which they learn to reconcile their different points of view on the basis of the creation of a common vision. This is a not negotiable variable, one that is not possible to mechanically build, but it is subject to decades of development and evolutions, it needs years of sedimentation, consensus construction, also failures.

Building on this first point, the **political and administrative legacy (and its administrative leftovers)** is a key determinant for the success of individual initiatives of social innovation. The consolidation of this enabling circumstances, creates the material conditions in which individuals intensify and deepen the experience of collective life. As seen in the empirical analysis of the three cities, a steady political commitment from the public administration to recognize the social but also competitive value of innovation, is key.

The effectiveness of intermediate places at urban and territorial scale is related to an institutional vision that fosters the production of local open knowledge and provides large scale exchange frameworks. This approach proves to

be effective in the presence of an enabling and welcoming policy framework for experimentation on innovation, including organisational ones. This is the case for cities and metropolis, where a highest concentration of initiatives is evident and also in some cases, problematic. Cities are currently in need for these initiatives to be recognized in a larger framework of urban development and partnering-up with them. The contemporary issue though, is how to extend this produced value outside the cities, in the inner territories, in different urban enclaves (Palermo and Ponzini 2014), where there is not a careful policy framework towards communities and where polarization, populism phenomena, social degradation is actually happening. The territorial reality in which the analysed cities fit, in fact, presents growing phenomena of increasing social and political polarisation, depopulation of internal territories and the removal of disadvantaged social classes in favour of a few categories that hold most of the knowledge capital. It seems insufficient a work based on recommendations or good practices, but it is rather considered necessary that these cities, and their branched ecosystems of social innovation facilitated by intermediate places, act themselves as **nodes for interaction** (Alberti et al. 2019) and in turn generate those windows of opportunity towards lagging territories and peripheral regions. In this way the value produced by cities is distributed in terms of well-being and quality of life outside the cities themselves.

These enabling urban policy conditions are key for intermediate places to produce both positive and **feasible outcomes**. Such outcomes though, risk to be more concerned with finding pragmatic and immediate solutions to challenges, rather than provoking radical changes in socio-technical régimes (Encore Heureaux 2018). In fact, it is still difficult to quantify the impact and produced value of intermediate places in relation to their role as vector for social innovation practices and their ability to innovate urban planning, because of their current limited number and lack of recognition as producers of common value. This generates only a partial identification of their future potentialities. The attempt of the research is therefore to assess some key points for their future role. These are places that produce urban services but, in some cases, are not yet conceived as part of the public administration, despite producing collective value for the neighbourhoods and the whole city. They impact on the qualification of the supply system, on the inclusion of new actors of urban policies; on the promotion of innovation, both on the product and on the process side. For these reasons, the role of institutions, stressing the evaluative dimension, must be of guarantor of both their outcomes and the **assessment** of their results. Therefore, both society and institutions should be able to guarantee rigorous and transparent evaluation for these emerging projects by reviewing planning and design choices and actions.

In this regard, it must be highlighted the fact that the research assumptions depend more on qualitative outcomes and on observations rather than on measurable results. The model depends more on hypotheses verified on practice, rather than on appropriate data and objectivization of the observed phenomena, also due to the recent nature of the phenomena that require longer-time to detect material results. If the right set of tools is needed to process the inputs of urban experiments into plan documents and decision making, there is also a need for tools to assess the values that are produced and respected in the experiments and those that are not. In order to move from the recognition to the interaction between social innovation and planning it is necessary to assess the long-term value of these qualitative spillovers.

To achieve this objective on the ground, the intermediate places themselves can be observer and collectors of data and empirical evidences detected on the local context, focussing their efforts on different aspects of the vast

context, monitoring their success against different indicators, such as access to services, healthy life expectancy and inequalities, children's school preparation, the quality of private rented housing, participation in the labour market for some groups and the progression of work.

Exploitation of the model

This model for Bologna can ultimately represent a guide for orienting trans-scalar policies and planning schemes (metropolitan, regional, national) and for the local implementation of international goals and Agendas (Agenda 2030, Pact of Amsterdam). Intermediate places are intended as supports for a more agile European public policies, one to be closer to territories and produce more qualified urban solutions while also extending the participation of new urban actors. The aim of the diagrammatic model is to improve the connection and interaction of the intermediate places between them and with their territorial and innovation ecosystems, to equip them, to make them better understandable and more visible and eventually indicate them as local outpost for the global contemporary missions. In this sense, it seems useful to understand not only how to facilitate the creation of an urban model that acts as a framework for intermediate places, as facilitators of social innovation processes and vector of institutional innovation, but also how to pool the knowledge acquired within the city and orient towards other territorial levels. It seems very useful to think about the range of plausible and possible futures links that intermediate places might create. This can help to challenge some of the assumptions underlying current ways of thinking and doing in planning and allow for more effective choices on where to focus attention and resources in the future.

Cities that are able to build policies intertwined with social innovation, seems to be able to increase the speed of experimentation and the adoption of the outputs in the future. This different "speed" of cities and of territories, implies a cognitive divide to be filled necessarily through the systematic use of empirically acquired knowledge, by paradigmatic cities not to be assumed as role models to be replicated, but to inspire changes in future planning arrangements. Urban planning is assumed here as a precondition for institutional commitment: agendas, programs, principles in fact, avoid for the public actor to take responsibilities, while **planning is a long-term political insurance** that is necessary to pursue a strategy and an approach oriented to social innovation. The possible evolution of the urban model concerns the projection within the metropolitan and regional context and the distribution of the effects in more fragile and polarized areas, and the mutual exchange with the European and global level.

a) *Intermediate places in a metropolitan framework*

The increasing degree of urban complexity and the critical mass determined by the practices of social innovation that intervene in the co-production of urban services, suggest the adoption of approaches able to deal with new spatialities, beyond administrative borders and oriented to build a **more coherent spatial logic,** responsive to the **real and effective city** (Gabellini 2012). The effective city describes "a dynamic of processes that transcends the administrative boundaries of urban centres and indicates to municipalities of all orders the need for urban planning in line with real dimensions" Building on this premise, the Metropolitan City seems to be one administrative entity able to comprehend the effective city, to envision planning to be carried out on an inter-municipal scale, not as

mere sums of plans of adjacent municipalities, but rather as the synergic syntheses of a model to be contextualised in the dynamics of a large area.

Bologna has always expressed a polycentrism and distributed quality, rooted in regional, provincial and municipal policies, as highlighted in Chap. (3. TRACING. Contextualising social innovation, the Bologna model) of this thesis. Nevertheless, in light of the structural crisis that led to the hypothesis of the "model city's decline" (Erbani 2003), the widespread planning optimism of the Emilian tradition has been progressively decreasing. At the same time though, Bologna has been growing to be the pivotal point of the recently appointed Metropolitan City, located at the center of a metropolitan area of 55 Municipalities with 1 million inhabitants.

With the approval of L56/2014 "Disposition on metropolitan cities, provinces, unions and fusions of municipalities" the system of government of the territory has changed, with consequences on planning. The Metropolitan City has been established with the main function of a driving force for the economic development of the regional territory, putting into practice the principles of the European multilevel governance (Kazepov 2010). The establishment of Metropolitan Cities has opened up new opportunities for action, strategic and integrated visions for the territory, allowing the experimentation and realization of new service configurations at metropolitan level able to obtain higher quality services, overcoming the municipalities' resources and skills limitations. The metropolitan city of Bologna, through the Metropolitan Territorial Plan (PTM) is expected to define the programmatic and structural choices for the territorial planning functions for the entire territory and in accordance with the guidelines of the Metropolitan Strategic Plan (PSM). The plan would address the care of social and economic development as well as to the protection and environmental enhancement of the metropolitan area. The metropolitan city and the consequent planning, intend to overcome localisms in order to respond to the explosion "of environmental problems together with the deep processes of restructuring of the economy and the need to qualify its role of promotion and support of local dynamism" (Pelloni 1995). Metropolitan Bologna in fact, carries the responsibility to build a principle of metropolitan active citizenship capable of expanding the municipal one without erasing it. The metropolitan vision therefore highlights the need to widen the territorial basin with regard to environmental, economic and social issues, but at the same time to reinforce the support of local forces for urban transformation.

This is an objective that intermediate places, in their potential role as boundary-spanners, can fulfill. The metropolitan city can therefore use them as analysis and support facilities for territorial planning capable of integrating the policies of the different areas and territorialize economic planning strategies, an action that would contribute to redesign the polycentric territorial scheme and within it the role of Bologna metropolitan city. In this vision, the hypothesis carried out by the research seems to be coherently integrated, imagining the constellation of intermediate places to act as an enabling infrastructure for social innovation practices and as a vector for planning at metropolitan level. They can contribute to open the discussion about new concepts and models for the sustainable development of metropolitan territories, while expanding the metropolitan city through a new regional horizon. Within this territorial framework, the project chain put in place by the intermediate places can mobilize interests, foreshadowing and experimentation skills, in a territorial dimension.

b) Intermediate places in a European policy framework

European agendas and international agencies have long since established the need to interpret cities as places for action to be located at the center of policy discussions. Urban systems are increasingly understood as basins of formal and informal resources to be re-activated on the territory with the more ambitious objective of achieving global and missions, with actions that are born and developed from local assets. European programming (Horizon 2020; Erasmus+) is committed to define frameworks for the promotion of approaches that can hold together the dimensions of local innovation, its tools, its timing and impacts, with an institutional structure capable of driving change towards sustainable routes. The intrinsically urban dimension of the challenges has placed cities at the heart of the international policy agenda, from the signing of the Amsterdam Pact for the European Urban Agenda (2016) to the UN Habitat III Conference held in Quito in October 2016. The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the EU New Urban Agenda of Habitat III, together with the Paris Agreement outputs, emphasize the urgency to act locally in order to find context-based solutions for global urban challenges.

Within the European Union, the role of cities has long been the subject of reflection and debate which led to the development of EU and global Urban Agendas. The Agendas aims to strengthen the urban dimension in EU decision-making through a collective learning process, which should lead to the redefinition of the urban growth potential of cities, promoting a more balanced and sustainable development process, through social change and innovation.

While the Agendas are being developed as policy processes at European level, innovative local practices in cities are growing to demonstrate that the principles envisioned in the Agendas are already being tested beyond the constraints and boundaries of the Agendas themselves. As seen in the cases of Barcelona, Berlin and Bologna, the dimension of "place" plays an important role in identifying intermediaries in their role of boundary-spanners, and this is truer if the levels to be connected are local and European, or even global. The place is identified as the first access point for local community to be able to express issues and eventually promote alternative solutions to solve them, to interplay with urban planning framework. Intermediate places are located at the crossroads between government, the research community, innovative businesses and other innovation support intermediaries, and are responsible for creating or promoting links between them.

They can intercept some of the most relevant issues highlighted in the EU Urban Agenda and the Agenda 2030. The approach recalls the New Urban Agenda adopted in 2016 at the 3rd UN Habitat Conference, which recognizes as a shared vision "a vision of cities for all, referring to the equal use and enjoyment of cities and human settlements, seeking to promote inclusivity and ensure that all inhabitants, of present and future generations, without discrimination of any kind [...]" and in this area reports "the efforts of some national and local governments to enshrine this vision, referred to as "right to the city", in their legislation, political declarations and charters". Evidence of this possible attitude emerges from the collection of ongoing activities performed by intermediate places in different EU context.

As shown in a new report (EUA 2018) on the governance of large-scale innovation policies (e.g. Urban Agenda, Amsterdam Pact), as part of the EC preparation for the Horizon Europe programme, a key area for action is the capacity of the public sector to implement and localize global missions, suggesting that they should be "independent of the more bureaucratic branches of government". This hypothesis could open up new avenues for

the role of intermediaries, and in particular of intermediate places, which can respond to a wide range of urban challenges while maintaining both autonomy and exchange with public actors. Governance of global and cross-sectoral challenges is likely to require an unusual combination of organization and funding power, along with agility and a mandate for experimentation. These characteristics, I argue, can only be deployed at the urban level, through a dimension that acts as a bridge between institutions and local communities by filling the gaps at both levels and maintaining a higher degree of experimentation and autonomy. Intermediate places seem to be able to "localize the global and re-dispatching the local" (Latour 2005), this means that they are potentially in a good position to lead the implementation of the global Agendas and that they are also potentially in a good position to be involved in the development of the EU's own innovation policy. There is undoubtedly a valuable role for intermediate places, to play in coordinating and collaborating with other similar experiences at global level, to provide alternatives to large-scale societal challenges as they observe daily and understand the characteristics of potential change, build common needs to be addressed, and the ways to address them. This constellation though requires to be coordinated and guided in a clear framework provided necessarily by planning categories and tools, as designed commitment to the effective achievement of the declared goals. Planning provide a framework to the pooling activities of intermediate places towards singular initiatives, while institutions seems to contribute to add "traction" by accompany the processes.

A discussion should therefore be opened on how these bodies could feed into the evolution, development, structuring and implementation of the global and European Agendas. Bologna, which has played a leading role in the urban planning development season for 60 years, seems to have a new opportunity to be seized to contribute once again to strengthening, this time, the European and global dimension of intermediate places.

7. CONCLUSION

"It's not easy to see things in the middle, rather than looking down on them from above or up at them from below, or from left to right or right to left: try it, you'll see that everything changes"

Deleuze G. and Guattari F. "*A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*", (1987)
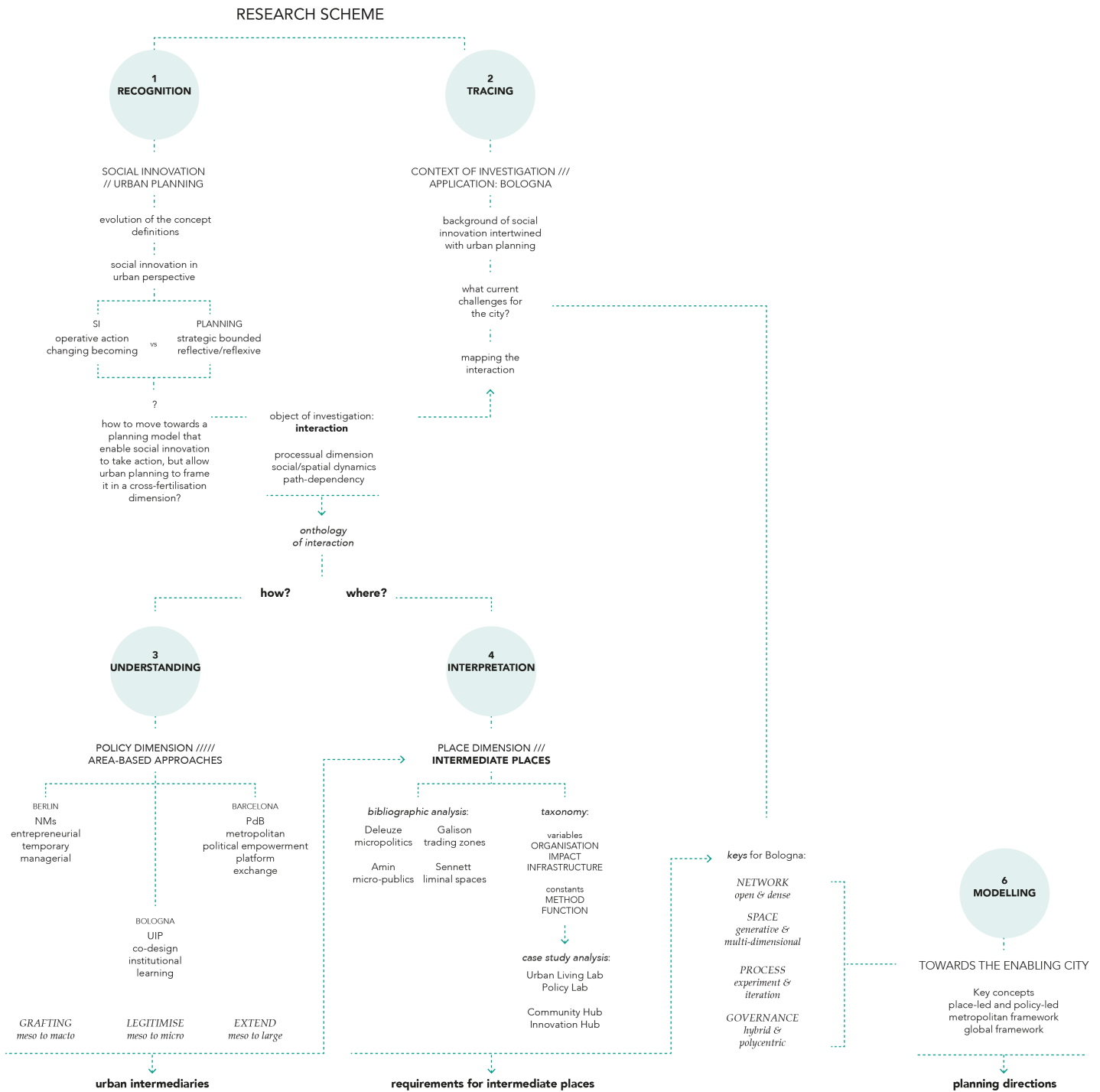
Figure 59 - research scheme. Source: the author.

Contemporary urban theories suggest that cities are complex, self-organized and non-linear systems. These aspects make their future unpredictable. This age of **urban complexity** is producing a seamless flow of new urban needs turned into demands, emerging from global phenomena with social, economic, environmental spillovers in the local context. The public actor seems lacking resources, will and skills to solve this new instance but at the same time, the market is not interested in addressing them either. In this scenario we are witnessing the growth of a multitude of dynamic answers to these urban challenges, solutions that are not predictable, nor reproduceable,

which do not answer to any recipe, and where the consolidated expertise may not apply. Throughout the years, the city has been therefore re-described, turning more and more into a patchworked collection of dynamics, with fluid practices transforming the mainstream way of delivering services, of taking care of fragile populations, or producing goods. Moreover, the way in which public or private actors operate in the city is shifting: there is a growing evidence of pieces of urban processes (of service delivery, of spatial transformation and care) falling in the hands of different actors.

This is the approach of **social innovation** practices, solutions to unmet social needs (of the local community, not everybody's), transforming social relations and at the same time empowering excluded groups. This multi-dimensionality of social innovation practices has shown since decades an abundance of tailor-made solutions, at micro scale, to urgent urban issues. In this context, social innovation practices are filling the gap left by the public actor and its planning tools and the market. These actions are causing changes in the distribution and use of services and the transformation of parts of cities, nevertheless, they operate outside or at the borders of the planning framework.

The challenge of this research has been to shorten and soften the distance between the planning dimension and that of practices, between the institutional level and those of local communities, between the strategic level and the daily operational one. The assumption is that these are two opposite dimensions working on the same field (the city) in different but complementary ways. On the one hand, practices are changing phenomena, in constant becoming (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Thrift 2004), while urban planning responds to the necessity to organize these dynamics into meaningful frameworks and spatial perimeters. Therefore, the research question wondered **how to address the mismatch by enabling social innovation to act, allowing urban planning to frame it**.

In the attempt to recompose the distance between the two levels, enabling the action of the practices and framing them in a planning framework, the initial hypothesis was that it would be necessary to investigate what happens in the **interaction** between the two. Moreover, since social innovation is a predominantly empirical phenomenon based on practice, the city of Bologna acted as a reference context both to build knowledge and to verify it.

The research then followed an inductive scheme, to whose research steps – from the observation of the phenomenon, the definition and recurring patterns, the definition of the hypothesis and finally the theory – corresponded six phases ranging from recognition to modeling. Each phase has been addressed with different research methodologies, from literature research, policy analysis, case studies, definition of taxonomies and finally the identification of a descriptive and prescriptive model related to the Bologna context. The three research results concerned a systematization of knowledge on the relationship between social innovation and the city, a mapping that represents the relationship between practices and the city and an operational scheme to support a planning approach for social innovation.

The first phase allowed to identify some reference definitions and authors who highlighted the gap still to be filled. The definitions of Manzini, Moulaert, Hillier underline the character of novelty and discontinuity with respect to the status quo, of response to unmet demands by the public and the market, the local character and the spatial impact, and the innovation that lies mainly in the experimental method that the practices adopt. Furthermore, they underline the need to organize social innovation mechanisms and to support its action with a political and policy

framework, as also emphasized by the European Commission. From this systematization, the research position, interprets **social innovation as a contextual and path-dependent methodology** according to which sediments of the path have significant consequences in the current configuration. This is both determined and it generates socio-spatial discontinuities obtained by the interaction between different actors. Furthermore, the research gap, concerns the processual dimension of social innovation practices and the enabling conditions that provoke them.

This conceptual delimitation has been investigated through two dimensions: the first is the **policy dimension**, which analyses interaction by addressing **"how"** and what is the trajectory of social innovation in the city, how institutions are informed by its by-products, and the impact of tradition and legacy of urban policies on the emergence of social innovation and its planning.

The alignment between urban planning policies/territorial planning at district level and territorial innovation initiatives, is the cornerstone of the case studies discussed. Bologna, as well as Barcelona and Berlin, have long since implemented area-based strategies, therefore, to retrieve their legacy and reactivate their living history has been key to highlight lessons to be learned, criticalities to avoid and fine-tune policy directions to be adapted. The tracing exercise for Bologna, highlighted a key element in the 'special' legacy of the city, whose institutional remaining together with a positive narration prepared the ground for the current openness of institutions towards social innovation. This sediment from the past seems to prevent from the risk of changing the configuration of the city, even in light of a political shift. The personal commitment of municipal staff is an additional element that prevents from the risk of "delegating" to social innovation the burden of taking care of usually public sectors. Nevertheless, they seem to require a stable and direct contact with those who do not commit, to avoid a speculative rewarding spiral of the "usual suspect" (Jakobsen 2013) to the detriment of who do not have the means to participate.

The case studies confirmed some preliminary ambiguities, such as the tendency for traditional area-based approaches to privatize and exclude certain categories from urban space, providing a managerial approach to the city. However, they also show how well-established balanced structures between responsible institutions and committed social innovators, might represent assets for urban development. This key role is provided by urban intermediaries, a shared feature of the three cities and a turning point for the research.

Urban intermediaries provided some lessons to be learned by analyzing the context of policies: the **grafting**, the ability of the interaction to transform the status quo into something new, a contamination between practices and planning, facilitated by policies; the **legitimization**, a policy framework that allows to support and give the tools to practices to be stabilized even in the long term; the **extension**, which aims to amplify the value generated by the interaction reproducing it on the territory and beyond the municipal boundaries.

What the three policies have in common and emerged as a key factor for their success on the territory, is the **intermediate dimension** that interacts with the micro level legitimizing and activating it, and with the macro level creating grafts and acting as a lever for new institutional arrangements. Finally, the intermediate level interacts with the extra-local level through the extension of its lessons learned in the form of models and approaches from which to learn to adapt and replicate them. The intermediate level is recognized in the dimension of place – the mail object of planning – which is described as an **intermediate place**.

The analysis of the place dimension responds to the **"where"** social innovation is localized and materialized, which spatial conditions enable it and how they act as an interface between practices and planning. The interpretative phase explores the hypothesis that the intermediate places can represent the interactive units that hold together vision and action, strategic and operational environment, planning and practices, overcoming the tensions between these dichotomies through mutual learning. This position entails for the actors of the urban processes (public administrations, high education institutions, civic society, organized society and business) to occupy the role of both the learner and the teacher in an urban process. It means for the public administration to look at social innovation practices as a resource and not as the answer and from practices to consider institutional mechanisms as validation and legitimation devices for their ideas. Mutual learning aims at "expanding the learning and discovery functions of the institutions" (Goddard et al. 2012) while enhancing community capacity to address and resolve the issues they confront.

To clarify the concept of intermediate place, some authors and experiences have been critically explored to build a knowledge framework of a very empirical concept: Deleuze and Galison identify arenas where competition and confrontation generate interaction and produce innovation, and Sennett and Amin underline the material character of places to act as bridges and vectors between the various levels. Intermediate places required to be grounded in the context of their emergence, therefore the city of Bologna was the base where they have been detected and recognized also thanks to the direct experience of observation of pilot cases under construction, due to the participant observation in the project ROCK. The great variety of these places, including their semantics, makes it necessary to organize them. A taxonomy has been produced to define four categories of places highlighting the variables and points of contact, distinguishing among Urban Living Labs, Policy Labs, Community Hubs, and Innovation Hubs. Their defining elements have been analyzed, reading their processes with the lenses of social innovation and understanding their potentialities according to the background context within which they are born. The following step in research has been to organize, both manage and design, their common features, and enhancing their externalities to transfer to urban planning setups.

Read as a constellation of urban units triggering social innovation, these hybrid places can represent a fast-growing design field and research avenue, an opportunity for urban development and regeneration and for a new role for planners. Intermediate places can become privileged socio-urban observatories, located in the middle of the processes of social transformation. The challenges they face, emerge from the local context but at the same time they are open to global models and inputs: in fact, they seem to operate "two movements that modernization had made contradictory: sticking to the ground on one side and becoming globalized on the other" (Latour 2018). Therefore, they are intermediaries also in their permanent movement between the local and the global.

The **requirements** that emerged from the analysis of the Bologna cases, have been grouped into four **key interpretations** that represent the points to be transferred in terms of mutual learning for a planning model and concern **open and dense networks, iterative and experimental processes, multi-dimensional and generative space and hybrid and polycentric governance.**

All the case studies explored are the result of a solid and forward-looking local strategy, imagined by local government and supported by reference academic and business institutions, made possible by funding from private actors with public aims, promulgated by a variety of academic actors, private and public, and complemented by civic commitment. In the case of a city like Bologna, when the territory is very active, intermediate places seem to act not only as catalyser but more as facilitator of processes. Since all these actors and initiatives should be (and in some cases are) interconnected and influence each other, it is difficult to identify a single orchestrator. Without the public leadership expressed it would be difficult to imagine an evolution of the intermediate places as well-defined bases for social innovation. Participants in the activities in fact, need careful facilitation of the process, with respect to different institutional values, cultural framework and logics, and protection from possible hidden agendas. This poses a challenging task for planners, who need to equip themselves with skills and competences concerning community organizing, entrepreneurial skills, conflict mediation, to name a few. The work of the committed public institution must respond to the needs of the public in a manner that is appropriate to the urban policy agenda and its administrative strengths. Involvement initiatives should also build greater public understanding and support for the role of intermediate places.

At the same time, new trades and hybrid skills are also learned by the members of the local community participating in the process. The changing requirement for these actors, call them to be alternatively turbines, drivers, referees or simple players on the urban stage. In an urban scenario where the public actor is too big to engage in an effective manner with episodes of social innovation and too small to address substantial issues, intermediate places represent a key interface for planners as enablers of the mutual learning between communities and institutions.

It is not so much a question of planning intermediate places, as of **innovating in the field of urban policies that can accompany the ascending dynamics that are recognized in these places**. Urban planning should be able to make room for the recognition and detecting of intermediate places, elevating them from social-urban observatories (Nicolas-Le Strat 2018) and spaces of opportunity (Deleuze 1989) to research and development units in urban planning. The presence in cities of countless initiatives that contribute to "making cities" is now acquired in practice and in part, also in theory. The work of intermediate places is changing some paradigms, but in this scheme, the role of the urban planner has not yet been definitively updated, as is demonstrated by the growth of reflections on this issue (see following paragraph).

The assumption of the thesis is that in order to enable social innovation to act, be regulated in a planning framework, and overcome the fragmentation of its impacts, a planning model should intervene in enhancing the capacity of the intermediate places between institutions and practices. The relationship between social innovation practices and urban planning should move from co-existence to mutual exchange oriented to learning. Social innovation should aim at creating lasting changes in the ordinary structures of public urban policies which could develop new planning procedures and tools. On the other hand, local urban actors should be able to pursue not only a competitive logic but also collaborative one, among themselves and with institutions, learning to define the collective interest together with other actors (Sennett 2012; Cognetti 2018). The objective is therefore to create an "enabling" context for all the actors involved.

Enabling therefore means generating an urban context that allow to plan visions of the future, giving more power to the participants, but also taking on the task of increasing opportunities and redistributing value to those who do not participate, to meet their demands, interests and expectations. This allows to avoid the creation of greater boundaries and processes of exclusion, enhancing the right to research (Appadurai 2006) and fuelling widespread critical thinking. It is an opportunity to work on inclusive processes that can improve social and institutional capacities, strengthen them, but also create new ones. The research reveals the possibilities that urban planning can have if it draws inspiration and transfers some key principles typical of intermediate places, in its schemes, norms and assumptions, grafting extraordinary projects back into ordinary activity. The attitude of urban planning should therefore be one of exploring the unforeseen, discovering the agency through exchange and co-learning dynamics of change: the **planner** role seems to be to **shape the process of this exploration.**

Planning directions

As a final remark, the research provides a reflection on possible new paths for planning, not an attempt to create a new disciplinary or professional area, but rather a remark on the identification and better-tailored integration (Palermo and Ponzini 2014) of traditional design, planning, and policy tools around the opportunities unveiled by social innovation practices. At the end of the thesis and as a starting point for a follow-up research, the intention is to provide a review on the possible directions that urban planning can take, the attitude of the planner towards social innovation practices and the hypothesis of a key role of intermediate places in this structure.

The role of planning is key in its ability to merge theory and practice and translate it into a set of tools foreseen to frame, capture and anticipate urban change over time. As described by Patrizia Gabellini (2017) though, modern urbanism and urban planning – after an experimental phase – seem to be suffering from a rigidity that has been progressively grown with its institutionalization, which prevents the discipline from aggregating emerging practices in its rigid schemes. For Gabellini, urbanism is a changing disciplinary field, and the delegitimization it suffers is probably also due to the inability to read and interpret in their own technical actions the current urban changes and to deal with the "dominance of everyday life" (*ibid.* p. 32). According to Moroni (2010, p. 142), planning "continues to be modelled on a traditional notion […] based on the belief that social systems are simple […] and controllable by way of a directional set of (mainly concrete and specific) rules". Planning hence foresees a paradox, a structural tension between organization and spontaneity (Savini et al., 2015). This is more and more true in a moment of fast changes and complexity.

The disciplinary direction of urban planning is changing in the lexicon, in the fields of action, in the instruments. New themes – or new ways of defining them semantically – call for new skills and question to equip with. A circularity and mutation of concepts emerges. As an example, the rhetoric of innovation that does not add new concepts but is rather evocative of existing ones, alluding more than explaining, a useful boost to the construction of complex reasoning, putting in order consolidated elements of the multi-disciplinary cognitive legacy. It draws from a world of reflections and practices that can constitute a significant contribution to the formation of new professionals working on the complexity of the cities. In particular, when social innovation is applied to the urban space and its transformation, it borrows the keys to interpretation and the tools of urban planning. Urbanism has

been dealing for some time with cities in which planning and extra-planning have coexisted (Pasqui 2013), have intertwined, have influenced each other, building a stratification of hierarchical relationships and power, devices for inclusion (and exclusion). In light of current complexity and dynamics of change, is urban planning therefore able to make new, directly operational, legitimate and effective contributions to urban transformation by interacting with social innovation? In order to answer to this question some disciplinary cornerstones, appears necessarily to be radically reinterpreted.

Gabellini reflects on the "mutations" taking place in the "uncertain field" (Pasqui 2013) of urban planning and on the "awareness of a new, unprecedented condition", which "calls for an adequate translation into the many areas of applied knowledge" (Gabellini 2018, p. 11). It seems that urban planning, if made up of disconnected specialisms, will be no longer possible or even useful. As an evidence, some lines of thought are moving towards the recognition of the necessity of integration among the different levels involved in planning. The tendency that literature has been highlighting for some time now is interdisciplinary contamination, a sum of partial knowledge and experimentation, that give life to a sort of comprehensive urban knowledge. Current urban planning conditions need necessarily to change even facing resistance and difficulty from the technical-scientific community of urban planners. This change can find correspondence in the pilot actions and the development of policies for cities. There, a new discipline seems to emerge, a more fragile one, and lacking theoretical bases, one that is established by the juxtaposition of many knowledges, and based on a practical field. Following this, the research has attempted to answers to questions, building a theoretical framework in a field where the theory is missing or fragmented. Social innovation is in fact a fragile and fuzzy subject that in its urban declination is faced with an open disciplinary field in which tools have a very defined and stable structure, despite being subject to a necessary mutation. The thesis refers to the approach and interpretation that Deleuze gives of social innovation, as a relational element, in constant evolution, which is part of an urban context that is transversally crossed and influenced by it. In this sense, it seems useful to deepen the urban planning approach and the planning vision that is put into play to intercept this innovation. What is considered as fruitful space for interaction (Gabellini 2018) among the two, is the contemporary conditions in which social innovation emerge: a highly fragmented, complex and reflective society, which is unprecedented and thus opens up potential and necessity to innovate the technics of urban planning and design.

The current period of radical transformation can therefore be an opportunity to deeply rethink the approach of urban planning and to problematise content and methods (Scandurra and Attili 2013). This last part of the research interrogates on what kind of urbanism do we need and which conception of the discipline can offer reasonable answers to the forthcoming urban problems.

c) *Expand the knowledge of planning*

In the wake of the current challenges, planners are contributing to reflect on the flow of complex urban events trying to re-read the current challenges by proposing a new attitude of the planner, a new posture towards the city. In Gabellini's reading, the urban planner must be able to make an **original contribution to intricate processes** that are destined to evolve over time into uncertain forms. Therefore, planning should seek for a re-composition of a series of specific urban interventions whose effectiveness should be measured both in its ability to deal

technically with situations and to develop synergistic relationships (Talia 2016) with innovations that are already working on the city.

The city seems to be in a position to adapt its functions, uses, spaces and services, without necessarily questioning the regulatory framework. It is therefore necessary to undertake a path of **amplification of knowledge**, a dilation (Bianchetti 2011), which makes use of collective intelligence (Mulgan et al. 2008) that hold data, experiences, identity knowledge, and is placed on the borderline between institutional planning and extra-institutional practice. Among those who support this approach, Dente talking about policies (Dente 2011) defines planning processes as **devices of investigation**, through which to explore the "concrete systems of action" that embody the specific forms of "production of the territory" and its transformations. A series of steps should be taken, starting from the recognition of the most equipped and competent communities and from the data available in large numbers, to learn through the action itself (Pasqui 2013), and hypothesize trajectories of common development.

The empirical analysis of chapter 5 showed how influential the experiences of intermediate places could be as local amplifier of knowledge for planning and adequate translators (Gabellini 2018) of knowledge. Their role as membranes between levels allow them to flexibly span through scales, disciplines but at the same time being locally connected.

In this framework, planning actions are conceived as the contingent result of interactions of intentional communities (Palermo and Ponzini 2010) of agents that take place under conditions of uncertainty and complexity, and that depend largely on the autonomy and evolution of each actor. Urban change processes can be explained as the progressive result of such multiple interactions between intentional autonomous actors (or agents) and contextual conditions and opportunities (actants). Gabellini calls for planners to "deal with the short term" (2018), which, however, cannot affect the profound changes that have led to urban complexity, but on the other hand the long-term action, appears unable to grasp the local demands and intercept the "common experience" (*ibid.* p. 34), mainly focused on the present. In this sense, the role of places as localised presidium, bearers of assessment criteria and coherence with a large-scale vision, can be key. A specific hierarchy of urban places of intermediation can constitute a widespread network of antennas providing a stable support to public administration for verification of the success of some practices in a specific spatial context or for the contextual evaluation of policies through reflexive mechanisms. This knowledge expansion units might give life to unforeseen development paths and research avenues.

d) *Reflexion on planning paths*

A new planning path, seems to necessarily pass through the progressive and incremental **adaptation of the skills and tools** of urban planning to contemporary challenges. The logic of adaptation coincides with the theories on complexity (Mäntysalo et al. 2011; Rauws and De Roo, 2016; Rauws 2017). Some scholars in fact, provides a vision of planning that tries to frame emerging socio-spatial practices that: are out of the linear (or incremental) logic of planning; involve more complex problems; are difficult for planners to identify (De Roo et al., 2012; Innes and Booher, 2010). This dualism foresees a tension that post-positivism line of research (Allmendinger and Haughton 2009) addressed by proposing for planning to open opportunities for social innovation practices, providing controlled and market-responsive spaces for spatial change. This approach goes towards the adaptability of planning, but it tends to control rather than organise change, or enable it. The complexity theories instead,

hypothesize a new model of adaptive planning that does not prescribe future arrangements but generates the conditions thanks to which development trajectories are developed. According to Raws et al., **adaptive planning** should set the conditions for development and at the same time integrate societal ideas. Savini et al. (2015) suggest a "policy of attendance, invitation, and mobilization of local questions, and a planning attitude highly differentiated and responsive to individual needs". The planner in this case is in charge of visioning as an explorative exercise (Pasqui 2013), of "encouraging the emergence of particular development trajectories" (Healey 2008), of valorising its paradoxical nature: "that of controlling potentially disruptive events [and] endowing virtuous social change" (Savini et al. 2015) as contextual and rooted in its own contingency, of being attentive to the "occasional" dimension, open to unexpected effects. The main goal of these approaches is for planning to create the conditions for fertile cooperation between the different institutional and social actors and for interaction networks that foster collective learning processes. This line of though follows what has been written by many authors, who agreed in provide a planning practice that is more oriented towards creating feedback cycles of learning and adaptation (Lindblom 1959, 1990), hence for innovation to emerge and be integrated into operational schemes. This vision is clearly expressed by Jean Hillier (2013), who proposes a framework in which the planner can facilitate the local agency, through the use of the typical tools of planning (scenarios, forecasts, foresighting, forecasting). The planner must be able to intercept the contingent dynamics, but at the same time insert them in a framework with a time horizon proper of planning. The idea is to base urban planning practices not only on regulatory activity, but on the capacity for action actually demonstrated in the specific context and its consequent capacitation and transformation of the spatial and social context. According to Hillier planning must face reality through the multiplicities that emerge, rather than with pre-programmed strategies. This entails for cities to equip with external forces, antennas that investigate the occurring changes, select the possible existing solutions at micro scale, connect the necessary resources and provide prototype solutions. Such solutions are always temporary, site-specific, and in continuous tension, but they are able to deal with complexity (Savini 2017). Following this, intermediate places can play the role of arenas where planning can lose its predetermination and instead open itself up to a certain degree of adaptability. If the adaptive planning position is accepted, what remain unresolved is the responsibility of defining the general enabling conditions and the consequent control over the successful adaptation of planning. It alludes therefore to the idea that planning is a process to be monitored and implemented, and perhaps what happens in intermediate places is useful for the monitoring and maintenance of plans.

Palermo and Ponzini (2014, pp. 252-53) tentative answer to this, is the possibility of a "mixed scanning", retrieving an approach drafted by Etzioni (1967), a technique that would help selectively define the appropriate solutions to specific urban issues – having great impacts and therefore require be treated in appropriately differentiated ways (Oosterlynck et al., 2013) – while keeping the public responsibility on strategic choices. For the authors, public stewardship is key for continuity, effectiveness and value distribution. This approach would allow strategic public-led choices to be also more compatible with extra-planning experiences. Richard Sennett's vision for an Open City (Sennett 2018) can be included in the debate, proposing "seeding planning" as one of his principles. This approach seeks to create "pockets of order" in the open urban system, giving a minimal specification of how forms are linked to function: this leaves room for maximum variation and innovation.

The "mixed scanning" principles and the "seeding planning" resonate with the case seen in Bologna, where a general strategy (Urban Innovation Plan, discursive framework) is in charge of drawing an essential hierarchy of issues and opportunities within a spatial context. In the case of Bologna though, the general framework should not only describe and organise the different fragmented elements and projects, but also guarantee technical coherence and integration among the elements.

In order to do this, the role of the planner is key in its ability to direct individual actions through interactions (Crosta 2003) that favour more interesting futures: in fact, relations and experimentation are the driving force behind innovation. Planning should work on the correspondence between opportunities systems, its skills, resources and the contextual conditions. It must be able to recognize relationships through the mapping of evolutionary and dynamic processes that are transformed into connections, more in terms of trajectories rather than detailed structural planning. It is not a static process but a continuous process of assembly and repositioning: a continuous negotiation between short-term actions and long-term strategies. This logic is fitting in the model proposed by the research, with widespread "seeds" that selectively "scan" resources and solutions to face peculiar challenges, while mapping, collecting, translating and acting. In a word, they are both detecting and anticipating elements, a double attitude that resonates with research and development structures.

e) A double attitude for planning

As described by A. Allen, the planning aptitude to address social innovation, appears to emerge from the encounter of two positions: the **reflective approach**, where planning practices learn from the legacy of the past, and the **reflexive approach** (Allen 2016; Palermo and Ponzini 2014), which aims to adapting emerging categories, elements, attitudes, circumstances (Mäntysalo et al. 2011) and incorporates them in its own discipline, as anticipatory elements. According to Palermo and Ponzini (2010), reflexivity can help both clarify issues at stake in urban planning and design, as well as focus on civic and social responsibilities to be accomplished. Referring to the possibility for a "mixed scanning" approach (Palermo and Ponzini 2014, pp. 252-253), would help selectively define appropriate solutions to specific urban issues while at the same time keep the responsibility for the synthesis of strategic choices in the hand the institution. This attitude seems to resonates with what Deleuze describes with respect to planning that "must remain attentive to the unforeseen knocking at the door" (Deleuze 1994), an attitude aimed more at facilitating rather than regulating, which incorporates resources, observers, on-field outposts to translate the experiences of practices up to the policies. These assumptions reflect two **simultaneous and compatible positions** for planning: one more long-term oriented, structured and hierarchically managed, entailing the stewardship of the public; the other more open to selectively change trajectory on demands/need-led basis (Albrechts and van den Broeck 2004), and open to regard some important strategic choices in more compatible terms with social innovation processes. The positions are not conflicting, but they appear to be complementary and compatible, in a mutual effort to influence each other. However, this position entails necessarily to address the issue of transparency of the choices, hence of evaluation. A monitoring system would grant the possibility to review choices, to learn from errors, to get feedbacks (as seen for the Urban Living Lab cases) and to review a priori positions. This attitude seems again to fit with a possible role for intermediate places, for their location on the ground, where this combination of urban dimension and social innovation, analysis and theory, strategy and

action, takes place. Furthermore, a reflexive approach would be synergistic with the main attitude of social innovation as path dependent and constantly updating while learning from its deployment.

f) A new role for planners

Summarizing what has been presented, the planner must hence work both analytically and diagnostically, in an adaptive and reflexive way, in an exploratory and navigational perspective, rather than imposing directions. The action of "navigating change" (Hillier 2011, 2013), the speculation about what may yet happen reveals the planner's responsibility to design "multiple ways of assembling solutions" (Hillier 2013) and actions in a constantly evolving urban system. At the same time, the planner as mediator, is called to build networks of interconnected relationships between local individuals and groups. It is a promoter of capacitation, facilitator of learning in trading zones, who work on border strategies, as boundary-spanner (Steadman 1992; Williams 2002; Acuto et al., 2018) and circulates knowledge and information, translating and transmitting policy and technical language discourses. For Palermo and Ponzini (2010), the planner is "someone who becomes part of a pluralistic process and, only through the networks of interactions […], is really able to understand the nature of the problems, the possibilities for change and the most suitable way to interpret professional responsibilities in that particular context" to "link, in a relevant and effective way, general principles, accumulated tacit knowledge and interactive experiences." (*ibid.* 2010, p.70). This position recalls what Forester (1999; 2009) describes by outlining the figure of the planner as an "important agent in social innovation processes", facilitator and/or mediator able to influence the progressive evolution of the various planning situations. The maieutic action of the planner aims at "revealing real situations and perspectives, correcting false expectations, opposing cynicism, encouraging urban investigations and expanding political responsibility, commitment and reformist action" (Palermo and Ponzini 2014). However, the planner "must be the citizen's partner, not his servant - critical of the way people live and self-critical of what he builds" (Sennett 2018 p.40). Planners are foreseen to be working in order to "spark engagement as a means of building critical ability, voice and argument" (Amin and Thrift 2002), able to "liberate alternatives" (Sennett 2017) enhancing agency through stable exchange. In today's planning we talk about negotiation, while research shows that a complementary component needs to be introduced, with interaction. Interaction should actually produce a new collective meaning that goes beyond the logic of competition and negotiation.

The construction of this idea can only arise from the confluence of two mutually nourishing processes: on the one hand the targeted and in-depth **knowledge** expansion towards urban dynamics in order to recognize not only the new problems, but also the new opportunities to which their solution may result. On the other hand, listening, sharing, involving the actors in the **collaboration**, translating their instances towards the decision-making processes for the elaboration and implementation of urban interventions.

These two approaches seem to converge in the envisioned role of intermediate places, opening also up new paths for planners. Intermediate places can be in charge of the stewardship of both knowledge and collaboration processes in specific contexts. The alternative planning experiences described in fact, show that rules, plans and vision are necessary but not sufficient in determining the quality of urban transformation (Palermo and Ponzini 2014) and urban service development. These in fact, often depend on the action implemented in a context and in the following monitoring and evaluation of the side-effects. On the other hand, to rely only on actions, dethatched from the strategic plan and vision might provoke opportunistic behaviour and is subject to risky by-products,

possible fragmentation and even aggravation of existing urban issues and fragilities. The intermediate level of specific places is a key for a new path for planning for their multiplicity of possible synergistic roles: they act as observatories, aggregating and expanding, investigating and anticipating, researching and developing, as outposts for the verification of both social innovation practices and of planning approaches. This perspective allows to comply with the requirements highlighted in chapter 5, with places as mediators and boundary spanners fulfilling the keys for planning. Intermediate places contribute in rooting both issues and explanations in contexts by merging the strategic vision within selected practices. They allow to undertake a stable process of planning review with their reflexive approach and overcome the risk to deny the concrete object of intervention of planning discipline, which are the places themselves. The planner is urged to put under observation and deepen the interweaving that is defined in places, between action and vision and to recognize and investigate the outcomes of interactions between actors, in the concrete space of public action. With this role for places, social innovation can be considered as an emerging effect with urban meanings.

As explained, social innovation is a fuzzy concept, an evocative rather than explanatory one and the research on the subject has built a series of more or less successful cases, but with great difficulty to draw a theory, especially in the urban realm. Latour (2018) suggests that when having some clues but not yet a solid interpretative hypothesis, what is recommended is to start from description of what we observe: probing, measuring, investigating. The role of the intermediate places can give substance to this investigation, to the verification and measurement of the uncertain outcomes of this new fragile emerging hybrid discipline. It seems therefore necessary for planners, to assume a position of **exploration and research**, planning as "going in search", assuming the perspective of Dewey (1998) of the investigation not as a method of knowledge, but rather as an indication of path (Pasqui 2013), a continuous localised process in which hypotheses and interpretations are tested, allowing to learn and eventually systematise the lessons learned, in the form of a plan.

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Some authors and some texts are used as a thread for the whole research, while others are chosen with the aim to deepen some specific issues. The following bibliography aims to put order and systematise the knowledge on social innovation, other than to have a specific framework of knowledge on the state of the art and the opportunity of new research tracks.

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