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Cities entered a transformative logic since the nineteen-eighties. The main reason for this transformation was the industrial crisis that took place between the late seventies and early eighties. The current economic crisis is also altering the context of cities dramatically and will provoke a great impact on their future.

INTRODUCTION

> Cities are going through a profound metamorphosis, a transformation of their productive systems, crystallised in physical and symbolic space. In the logic of competitiveness and economic growth, understood as a synonym of social progress, this metamorphosis is often led by the implementation of urban strategic plans. Here strategic plans are understood as defined by Borja and Castells (1998) as *'a city project that unifies diagnoses, specifies public and private actions and establishes a coherent framework mobilising the cooperation of urban social actors.'*

STRATEGIC URBAN PLANNING, INTEGRATED URBAN PLANNING AND URBAN REGENERATION

> Strategic urban planning processes are motivated by the search for an improvement in the level of public-private cooperation, the wish to coordinate activity, the wish to launch revitalisation processes and even to follow others. They are unifying diagnoses, specifies public and private actions and establish a coherent mobilisation framework for the cooperation of urban social actors. A participative process is a priority when defining contents, as this process will be the basis for the viability of the objectives and actions proposed. As stated by Borja and Castells (1998) the result of the strategic plan should not necessarily be the creation of regulations or a government programme, but rather a policy contract between public institutions and civil society. For this reason, the process following the approval of the plan and the monitoring and implementation of measures

or actions ensuing the plan are just as important or even more so than the process of elaboration and consensual approval of strategic urban planning (Borja & Castells, 1998).

The integrated urban planning approach takes a slightly different stance. Some of the concepts on which it is based are mentioned below:

- it addresses a combination of social, economic, planning, construction and management issues,
- it unifies diagnoses, specifies public and private actions and establishes a coherent mobilisation framework for the cooperation of urban social actors,
- it is based on public-private cooperation,
- it demands a participative process.

The result of the process is a policy contract between public institutions and civil society.

Both, integration and strategic processes, are fundamental in urban planning when working with the city as whole, physically, economically and socially.

Over the last decade or so there has been a shift in urban policy. The keyword has become regeneration. Urban regeneration is a complex combination of social, economic, planning, construction and management activities. These elements of urban regeneration are brought together to improve social sustainability and economic stability, together with the infrastructure of a specific area. Regeneration areas frequently encompass long-standing communities from lower income groups. Experiences of successful regeneration demonstrate that urban regeneration is most effective when it is delivered in partnership with those groups and organisations best placed to influence the success of urban regeneration projects.

NEIGHBOURHOOD'S POLICIES IN WESTERN EUROPE

Under pressure from unplanned metropolitan growth and various economic crises, a number of negative factors have been developed in urban areas, such as incompatible land uses, traffic

congestion, air pollution, etc. The damaging influence of these factors caused various forms and degrees of decline, especially in historic centres. In the more depressed areas, the loss of the wealthier population and businesses, combined with uncertainty with regard to the future of these areas, resulted in environmental neglect and physical decay. In turn, this has contributed to further economic decline and social degradation in a vicious circle. Such acute congestion problems, environmental-architectural degradation and the need for accessibility of such cultural, commercial and business centres have made active policies necessary.

- > Equally, over the last decades there has been a fairly constant sense of disquiet about the way in which many local neighbourhoods have not been the proper focus of policy and have suffered economically, socially and environmentally. Problems around city neighbourhoods were exacerbated by the movement of people, retail and work to the suburbs. It created urban sprawl and effectively robbed many city neighbourhoods of much of their amenities, social mix and political influence. It also helped to break down local networks and friendships – and contributed to continuing social polarisation.
- > Many practices have been carried out in Europe to address these issues during the last decades and different forms of integrative city development can be founded throughout Europe since the early 1980s. Some of these examples enable us to understand how the main concepts and practices of strategic and integrated urban planning and development have evolved. The planning principles underlying these new approaches are described below for selected countries and at European level.

**QUARTIERSMANAGEMENT
 (NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT, GERMANY)**

- > A federal/state programme '*Districts with Special Development Needs – the Socially Integrative City*' addresses areas where multiple urban development

issues overlap, and where numerous problems are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. The objective of the Socially Integrative City programme is to foster and promote future-oriented urban development. In order for the targeted districts to develop, the specific issues of social, economic, ecological, and urban development facing them are taken into account together, and local people and institutions are brought into the planning process.

**CONTRATS DE VILLE
 (PLANNING CONTRACTS, FRANCE)**

The '*Politique de la Ville*' is an inter-departmental policy in which many ministries are involved in the financing of this cross-border policy. The five principles of '*Politique de la Ville*' (Urban Policy) are:

- area-based priorities (concentrating efforts on particular neighbourhoods),
- drawing up concrete projects,
- specific areas and projects have to be closely linked,
- transversal and partnership approach,
- contractualisation (the contract is a formal way to structure a partnership and allow a clear definition of the management system for the regeneration policy).

Over time, and following a more global strategy the '*Politique de la Ville*' has shifted from a targeted, area based programme to a more global and integrated strategy with the ambition to manage a sustainable development process.

**CONTRATTI DI QUARTIERE
 (NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTRACTS, ITALY)**

In the early 1990s the Italian state financed several programmes intended to promote integrated urban development through public-private partnerships. One of the instruments are '*Contratti di quartiere*', neighbourhood contracts for promoting housing quality, employment and social integration. These programmes provide for interventions in the fields of building and town planning; actions and measures to foster social development and

increase the employment available; an integrated approach and inter-sectoral cooperation within the public administration; involvement of the inhabitants and other organisations present in the locality. Their aim is to devise policies of local development and to encourage an active role for the members of the community and gives them the opportunity to make proposals during the various phases of planning and intervention. One component among all others assumes basic importance within this plan of action, namely the premise that these operations are based primarily on the social participation of the residents. This amounts to a sort of renaissance, concerted from below, of the most degraded districts of the city.

SINGLE REGENERATION BUDGET CHALLENGE FUND (UNITED KINGDOM)

- > The City Challenge, launched in 1991, and its successor, the Single Regeneration Budget Challenge Fund introduced in 1994, were major departures from previous, centrally defined urban policies. The Single Regeneration Budget was launched as the SRB Challenge Fund, with the first schemes going live in 1995. It was created from the merger of 20 separate programmes from 5 government departments. It had the holistic aim to improve the quality of life for those living and working in the most disadvantaged areas; and to reduce the gap between disadvantaged and other areas, and between different groups. Two key elements of the SRB are partnership and community involvement with a robust partnership of public, private, voluntary and community sectors, and with financial governance via an accountable body.

EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

- > At the European Union level, these experiences constituted the base of the Urban Pilot Projects and the URBAN Community Initiatives aimed at deprived neighbourhoods (Urban I and Urban II) during two programming periods (1994-1999 and 2000-2006).

The principles of these programmes were based on:

- **identification of a coherent geographic area**; the proposal had to demonstrate the need for economic and social regeneration or a situation of urban crisis; this was carried out by using relevant indicators, producing an in-depth survey of the existing situation, an exploration of trends, and mapping of the existing problems and opportunities,
- **definition of an urban regeneration strategy** to maximise the impact of the interventions and the visibility of the area and to emphasise the distinct role of the proposed actions,
- **creation of an organisational framework** to promote public-private partnerships and participation.

Main key features of the Urban Community Initiative were:

- an integrated approach to issues which elsewhere are often treated in isolation: reinforcing competitiveness; tackling social exclusion; and physical and environmental regeneration,
- a high profile for EU priorities, such as the integration of immigrant communities, sustainable development, equal opportunities and the information society.

Programmes are run at the local level, close to people and their problems. Local authorities are involved in the running of two thirds of the programmes. Urban areas are being enabled to help themselves.

These programmes generated close involvement of local communities, who participated in the drafting of over 80% of the programmes. The participation of the local community is a precondition of programme effectiveness, not least when it comes to tackling issues of social exclusion or the local environment.

CONCLUSIONS

- > New economic forces operating at a global scale have widened the differences in the fortunes of cities. This has increased the competition between cities to attract investment and increased the urgency of economic objectives in urban policy. States have usually responded with deregulatory strategies and the private sector has obtained a more powerful role in decision-making. Although certain goals of planning, such as the protection of the environment remain important, the emphasis among various objectives have changed. For example, economic development planning, especially in old cities that have suffered from the decline of manufacturing, has come to the fore.
- > Different forms of integrative city development have also been put in place for the benefit of the citizens and to enhance sustainable development. If strategic and integrated planning in cities is carried out as cooperative processes, and if a reasonable degree of common involvement is reached between the administration, businesses and a wide representation of social agents, integrated planning will eventually improve city management and the quality of life of citizens. The following features are contributing to this approach.
- > The logic of large urban projects gives its own entity to the city as whole. From an urban design point of view comprehensive and integrated plans break with the physical and mental barriers that have kept inner city neighbourhoods isolated. Such plans provide neighbourhoods with a 'new centrality' through infrastructure and tertiary uses.
- > 'City marketing' can have the effect of creating a collective identity for the city as a whole, while regeneration programmes can claim some success in specific areas in terms of physical renewal of public space, development of commercial properties, and provision of new and refurbished homes (although not necessarily on the scale and in the forms needed). A drawback is that, frequently, regeneration sells short the interests of those living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

At their meeting in Toledo in 2010 the Ministers of Urban Development of the European Union formalised a commitment to apply a proposal for integrated urban regeneration. **The Declaration of Toledo** sets out the European Union's political commitment to define and apply integrated urban regeneration as one of the key tools of the EU 2020 Strategy. They underlined an integrated urban policy approach as a critical factor behind short and medium-term economic competitiveness of a sustainable economy. The ministers also defined the role of cities and urban environments in reaching the goals set out in the recently approved 2020 Strategy. Therefore, integrated urban regeneration, together with the renovation of homes and buildings, will be the two main tools that the Ministers for Housing and Urban Development to build more sustainable and more integrating cities. What are they going to do with these tools? What are we going to do with them?