

DEPRIVED NEIGHBOURHOODS IN NEO-LIBERAL TIMES.

The role of public funding in
education

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“actually existing neo-liberalism”

- ▣ «**actually existing neo-liberalism**» Brenner & Theodore (2002) different from pure neo-liberal ideology
- ▣ Peck and Tickell (2002) **2 models**:
 - «**roll-back**» or «*laissez-faire*» («let-do») associated to Margareth Thatcher’s and Ronald Reagan’s policies in the context of the 80s (market logics and **reduction of the State** to a minimum to face the economic recession)
 - «**roll-out**» or «*aides-faire*» («help-do») associated to the New Labour’s centre-left government in the UK (a more **active role of the State** in facilitating the accumulation of capital)

variegated neo-liberalism

- ▣ Brenner and Theodore (2002): «recognising the extraordinary **variations** that arises as neoliberal reform initiatives are imposed within contextually specific institutional landscapes»
- ▣ «**path-dependent character** of neo-liberal reform projects» (Brenner and Theodore, 2002) : the different ways in which «established institutional arrangements significantly constrain the scope and the trajectory of reform»

but.....

the neo-liberal recipe

a general well-established **neo-liberal planning recipe** exists :

- ▣ «finding a **derelict industrial or port area** (in the latter case, delocalising port activities in a deepwater zone);
- ▣ adding a lot of **public/private partnership**,
- ▣ a pinch of trendy “**creative class**” according to Landry’s (2000) and Florida’s (2003) theories,
- ▣ a quantity of **entertainment and leisure**,
- ▣ a spoonful of **(luxury) housing, offices, malls and public spaces**,
- ▣ a handful of **tourism**.
- ▣ Seasoning with **IT facilities**;
- ▣ then mixing with an **international Olympic or cultural event** and with a slowly and carefully cooked **strategic planning tool**.
- ▣ Finally flavouring with a **tasty slogan** – such as “young city” or similar – and with an “**inclusive**” and “**shared**” **participatory process**».

disciplinary power of best practices

- ▣ neo-liberal planning recipe as «**knowledge apparatus**» (Sum, 2009),
- ▣ competitiveness as a «**hegemonic “knowledge brand”**» (*ibid.*), «persuasive, widely accepted and powerful **simplifications of the world**» (McCann, 2004),
- ▣ the so-called “**best practices**”: spreading neo-liberal discourses and approaches and forming a sort of **disciplinary power** over different countries and rooted planning traditions,
- ▣ used by various actors to support arguments and to **express the need for certain projects** (see: Peck, 2010),
- ▣ projects refer to a specific (and often imagined) «**urban neoliberal subjectivity**» (Beaten, 2011) mirroring particular ideas about work, free time, and (above all) **pattern of consumption** (see: Atkinson, 2003b; Zukin, 1995; 1998).

a technology of representation

- ▣ **public open spaces** (on which urban regeneration schemes are particularly focused): promoting an idea of “**quality**” that mirrors a specific, «**selective and systematically discriminating**» **aesthetic model** (MacLeod, 2002) , which, in turn, both emerges from and promotes **specific social groups**, i.e.: young single or childless urban professionals with high income, and high social, educational and cultural capital.
- ▣ «**technology of representation**» incorporated within a «**technology of renewal**»: detailed design guidelines as «**guidelines for a favoured kind of urban citizenry**, figuratively embracing them in a landscape informed by a **bohemian aesthetic** while other residents are rhetorically and materially recast as **outsiders**» (in: Hoskins & Tallon, 2004)
- ▣ use «**interdictory architecture** of the new built environment» (MacLeod, 2002) implying **expectations of specific behaviours**, often supported by **surveillance systems** .

spatial exclusion

- ▣ cities at the heart of processes of **exclusion/inclusion**, as the transformations linked to the process of both economic restructuring and globalisation have led to a **polarisation of the labour market**: high-skilled and low-skilled labour
- ▣ changes affect the social and spatial structures of cities: **spatial polarisation** as an additional outcome: space as a crucial dimension in the structuring process of exclusion.
- ▣ especially in the case of **run-down inner city areas** or **peripheral public housing estates**
- ▣ emphasis on social issues shifted **from notions of social class to notions of place**
- ▣ both mainstream literature and political discourse in many European countries focus on the dimension of the **neighbourhood** (especially if dangerous, deprived and involved in a **downward spiral** that contributes to the further concentration of low-income households)

neighbourhood effect?

- ▣ interpretative categories generally used for explaining the «neighbourhood effect»: “**downward spiral**”, stigmatisation, “post-code discrimination”, predominance of **negative role-models**, spreading of anti-social behaviours, concentration of disadvantaged low-income inhabitants, and the escape of householders as a result
- ▣ introducing a “**de-concentrative**” **social mix** as a solution
- ▣ Lindsey (2007): exclusion is «manifested both physically (within the actual space of the city) as well as discursively (within the space the city occupies in the imaginary)» - exclusion is not only spatial, but it also is an **exclusion from city's narratives**
- ▣ dialectical relationships between the (essential) economic motives and the (not irrelevant) **ideological connotations** of neo-liberal globalised and market-led urban renewal initiatives.

a “pseudo-concept” is roving Europe!

- ▣ assumption that more balanced communities can be achieved by encouraging the **social mix** through the **differentiation of housing tenures**
- ▣ well-designed open public spaces for imagined citizens (consumers) to be attracted in regenerated neighbourhood as the **obvious corollary** of the basic assumption
- ▣ J. Donzelot (2006) reveals the **ambiguities** in using the concept of “*mixité social*” as a key-tool to achieve social cohesion in French urban policies over the past twenty years – 2 type of policies:
 - ▣ imposing **minimum quotas of social housing** to local authorities
 - ▣ encouraging “**middle class residents**” back into deprived neighbourhoods (mostly post-war housing estates) through **selective demolition** and housing differentiation measures.

rhetoric and hidden reasons

- ▣ the ultimate goal is to increase the variety of housing typologies in order to **encourage home ownership**, rather than assuming as primary objective the mix of population groups with different incomes
- ▣ enticing **middle-class residents** into deprived neighbourhoods, rather than deprived households into richer areas
- ▣ understanding both **rhetoric and hidden reasons** staying behind public discourses on social mix, which seem to be mainly led by the need of attracting middle classes residents and private investments in the (no longer public) restructuring of the existing public city

the case of Berlin

- ▣ Berlin (which used to be a tenant city): shift towards **ownership** of housing policies, subsidisation of condo conversion expanded, funding for social housing **drastically curtailed**, and rent control has been reduced
- ▣ each year 30,000 housing units are “freed” from being reserved for low-income groups, and the public housing associations are being sold
- ▣ the goals of social programs for “problematic neighbourhoods” – such as “Social Stadt” – are not desegregation or redistribution (since such goals are **no longer seen as feasible**), but rather an **attempt to mitigate the worst effects of the restructuring**

Blair's ambiguous "mixed communities"

- ❑ concept of social mix **exclusively applied in social housing estates** – differences with the Home Ownership and Opportunities for People Everywhere VI or Moving to Opportunity USA programmes: vouchers to rent private dwelling in richer neighbourhoods are given to low-income households
- ❑ social mix as **a (prodigious!) tool** for delivering both income and social mix as well as social interaction, broader social cohesion, "sustainable communities", cultural and ethnic diversity (**surprisingly, happiness, richness and eternal youth are not mentioned!**).
- ❑ in the reality: needs in **stopping the "escaping" of the middle-class** towards the suburbs (the process of sub-urbanization started in the '80s) and to **enhance the (global) competitiveness** of the city in the new knowledge economy.
- ❑ assumption that the return of the middle classes to the inner city could be the key-way of reducing concentrated poverty and its long-term effects: basic ambiguities and contradictions clearly showing the **rhetoric nature of Blair's social mix**
- ❑ what is to be "mixed" remains highly unclear in key policy documents : **uses and functions («mixed development») or social issues («mixed communities»)???**

no evidence

- according to many scholars: **little or no evidence** neither of the increasing of social interactions between social housing rental residents and the owners of newly built housing units, nor of the leading to better life chances and opportunities
- «tenures are spatially separated as a result of the **land assembly methods**»
- **loss** of social housing and public assets
- transformation of **local services and retail** for the benefit of higher income groups.
- mixed-tenure strategies as a form of **gentrification**
- tenure mix tends to produce «**utopian and dystopian spaces**», «physically proximate but institutionally estranged», daily **micro-conflicts** over the use of green or social spaces, risk of segregation «with “haves” occupying their trendy new apartments and the “have nots” living not far away in substandard housing»

the “dark side”

- ▣ rhetoric connected to the idea of a «**civilized middle class**» and paternalistic assumption of a (supposed) “civilizing” influence of tenure mix, based on the idea that contacts and interactions with “**role model**” from a different socio-economic background could “motivate” the deprived groups or individuals, even though there is «**no specific evidence of role-model effects or increased social capital**»
- ▣ increasing in the UK of **negative perceptions of Muslim residents**, due to the bombing of 11th September 2001 in the US and 7th July in London as well as the riots in Northern English cities in 2001: **re-emerging of assimilationists discourses** within which residential segregation of ethnic groups was seen as undesirable

what other spaces??

- ▣ mixed uses as a sort of «**professional orthodoxy**»
- ▣ approach that tends to **treat the symptoms** of urban deprivation and inequality
- ▣ causes rooted **outside** the borders of the neighbourhood.
- ▣ social worlds, places of consumption or education of children from low and middle/high-income families **remain highly separated**
- ▣ even though tenure mix may imply a (relative) physical proximity between social groups having different incomes, it does not automatically mean **a real mix in public spaces, schools, public services and shops**
- ▣ **what other spaces** focusing on to construct a shared concept of contemporary urbanity?
- ▣ Amin (2002) suggests the **spaces of daily negotiation of differences**, such as workplaces or schools

focusing on schools

- ▣ as regards **schools**, even in the less criticised cases of UK neighbourhood regeneration, new middle class residents tend to perform **exit strategies** by sending their children to private schools or to public schools outside the (clearly still stigmatised) neighbourhood, so that the degree of class or ethnic segregation in schools within the regenerated areas remains higher with respect to that of the surrounding neighbourhoods
- ▣ schools and **the access to welfare services** (such as education, training and employment opportunities): a more crucial factor for the construction of “sustainable communities”, even for avoiding the «potentially detrimental gentrifying effects» that only mixed-tenure regeneration processes «may inflict on the communities they intend to help» (Lees, 2008).
- ▣ ○

education as citizenships

- ▣ a too easily forgotten book – “*Verde per la città*” (“Green for the city”) by Vittoria Calzolari and Mario Ghio on educational provisions (in terms of school buildings and related green and sport areas as well as of educational systems)
- ▣ this is a book that clearly talks about what we today use to call “**urbanity**”, since it stresses **the role of public schools** (to be connected to both playing fields and public libraries) within urban neighbourhoods, by addressing their design in terms of both spaces to be devoted to young citizens and inter-relationships between these spaces and the neighbourhood as a whole.
- ▣ during the tumultuous rent-guided growth of the city of Rome in the 60s, highlighting the **existence of children** and the need to consider public spaces, structures and contexts within young people operated meant **linking together the issues of education and citizenship**

**THANK YOU VERY
MUCH!**