

**Social Maps of Civil Society
Subjects with Bridging
Social Capital Purposes as
an Organizing Tool for a
Governance of Sustainable
Urban Diversity**

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Social Maps of Civil Society Subjects with Bridging Social Capital Purposes as an Organizing Tool for a Governance of Sustainable Urban Diversity

Summary

The paper proposes an organizing tool useful to governance wanting to promote a sustainable diversity in cities. After having briefly introduced the specific adopted meaning of sustainable urban diversity through what has been called the beyond tolerance's social model, the proposed tool is described in terms of an urban diversity's social map and its main features are outlined on the basis of theory and with some examples. Firstly, the proposed tool represents a processing instrument based on a regulated and active partnership of peculiar types of civil society's subjects, the civic groups with bridging social capital purposes. At the end, advantages and disadvantages of the proposed tool are discussed referring to main sociological debates on governance policies and urban diversity.

Keywords: Sustainable Urban Diversity, Social Maps, Bridging Social Capital, Civic Groups, Governance.

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Social maps of civil society subjects with bridging social capital purposes as an organizing tool for a governance of sustainable urban diversity.

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1. Introduction

Just walking through whatever neighbourhood of an European contemporary western city, a person gets immediately the clear impression that in a relatively short time major changes have taken place in local communities. Whatever may be the causes, these changes in any case seem to have induced an increase in the level of urban diversity.

Indeed, taking as exemple just the ethnic dimension – probably one of the most impressive dimension of urban contemporary diversity - statistical data seem to confirm the afore-cited walker's impressions. Some data referring to Milan metropolitan area are useful to outline the ethnic aspect of the contemporary urban scenario:

- At the end of 2006, 400.000 foreign citizens lived in Milan's province and half of them were women.
- In Milan, non Italian residents represent 13% of the total population (170.619 on 1.302.753), but amongst young people the amount goes up to 20% and even more in some specific area of the city (stranger resident minors are 34.575 on 150.931).
- In Italian school, on the average, there are 5, 6 stranger alumni every 100, but in Milan they represent about 14, 2% of the total presence (Favaro 2007).

Besides, talkinkg about immigrant dimension of contemporary diversity at least two other aspects have to be mentioned. Firstly, the care of children and, overall, of elderly people is, since already a long time, an exclusive task of stranger women who come from faraway, that in this way have definetely entered the familiar spaces and languages of many households.

Secondly, more and more households assume an interethnic character, thanks to mixed unions, the consequently presence of children sons of two cultures and international adoptions. In Milan metropolitan area one wedding out of five is between Italians and foreigners but, obviously, loving relations who don't know borders are much more¹.

Nonetheless, broadening our perspective from recent immigration phenomenon to a wider meaning of diversity, we must admit that diversity doesn't really represent a very new urban topic.

¹ For a qualitative picture on the meaning and difficulties of these kind of relationships, see Artoni 2005.

Indeed, the relevance of urban diversity could be traced back even to the origin of western culture: “The city is in his very nature plural [...] Not just the city is composed by a plurality of persons, but also by different type of people because a city can't be just the product of similar being [...] Babylon and every other big city has the outline of a people, not of an urban aggregate” (Aristotle, *Politica*, II, 2, 1261 e III, 3, 1276 in Aristotele 2002).

Going to more recent times, urban sociology from its begging has claimed – in different ways - that one of the major characteristics of urban context in comparison to the rural one is the superior level of socio-cultural ethorogeneity (Weber 1961, Simmel 1995, Wirht 1938, Hannerz 2006, Petrillo 2001).

Probably, the very novelty of nowadays is that urban diversity has become a widespread issue, conditioning many social languages and discourse models (Gee 1999): it's not anymore just a social science topic as it was since not long time ago. Today, the everyday experience of diversity involve the city's public and private spaces, relationships, personal choices, habits and way of communicating. Nowadays, differences don't concern only work times and productive spaces but stay in homes, in the shared everyday experience, in common roles of who is parent, husband or wife, postman, consumer, patient, citizen and so on and so forth (Colombo 2002; Colombo e Semi 2007).

On the other hand, contemporary diffusion of discourses on diversity involves also the spread of specific and local uses of the term, which normally may not have so many things in common with each other, because every use of the term “diversity” tends to be very specific, having a very contextual meaning embedded in specific local practises (Gee 1999). This fact may lead to a concrete risk: the widespread use of the term “diversity” tend to assume a character of self-evidence whose origins and nature are apparently unnecessary to question (Colombo 2002).

Nevertheless, regarding this essay it is necessary to question, clarify and define the term “diversity”, in particular considering its use in the expression of “sustainable diversity”. Therefore, the first part of this paper will focus on the clarification of the adopted meaning of sustainable diversity. The rest of the essay introduces a specific type of social map of urban diversity, thought as an organizing tool for a good governance for sustainable diversity, as this has precedently been defined.

In particular, in *the next paragraph* it will be briefly presented a theoretical general framework which asserts that a sustainable idea of diversity is the one that assure general sociological conditions allowing the possibility of concrete contact, communication and mutual understanding amongst different cultural groups or subjects that compese diversity of contemporary cities. This sort of idea will be defined as the “beyond tolerance” meaning on sustainable diversity

because put itself explicitly in opposition with the widespread idea of tolerance. Governances arenas which adopt this definition of sustainable diversity don't generally foster diversity in the city, but have the task of assuring the conditions for a respectful but not superficial contact amongst different entities that compose diversity.

The *third paragraph* deal with civil society subjects already working for promoting a sustainable idea of urban diversity, as it has been precedently defined.

In *paragraph four* these subjects will be defined as civil society groups with *bridging social capital purposes*, referring explicitly to Paul Lichterman's theory and research (Lichterman 1995, 1996, 2005, 2006).

Paragraph five presents a general model of diversity social map thought as an organizing tool for policy-makers wanting to collaborate with civil society subjects with bridging social capital purposes to implement the afore-defined idea of sustainable urban diversity. In this paragraph references will be made to some examples of already existing cases of social maps of diversity that represent the main empirical inspirations for the general model of social map proposed in this essay.

2. A sustainable diversity definition: the "beyond tolerance" meaning.

In western societies, at least from the eighties, the feature of diversity has assumed a particular relevance: "Diversity do not stand just for simply stratification, social polarization or uneven distribution of power amongst a cultural homogenous group [...] but it has to be intended as referring to immeasurable cultural references, as a fight for the very meaning of the action, and not only for the distribution of resources. A greater social attention towards diversity means privileging discontinuity, paradoxes, boundaries, sites of meetings and contestation, spaces where reference of values are different and not easily comparable" (Colombo 2001, p.211; my translation).

From a sociological perspective, the diversity issue directly enable the rise of a fundamental question about how it is possible today to stay together with a minimum degree of social cohesion and at the same time, with respect for the specificity of every one. Thus, the *diversity* topic re-proposes for many sociological scholars the classical questions about models and possibilities of social orders, cohesion, solidarity and power distribution. The fundamental question thus is: how is it possible of being together amongst diversity?

There are different answers to this question and, to briefly summarize the sociological debate, these answers can be grouped in a shematic way in two opposite positions:

- the first one describes a society oriented toward fragmentation and conflict, in which emphasis on specificities and differences impedes every form of solidarity and civic

engagement. General urban context described by these scholars is characterised by social fragmentation, often meant as a break of the pre-existing socio-economic order, typical of the so-called phase of “societal modernity” (Giaccardi, Magatti 2003): “Fragmentation is a way of speaking about the break of a specific equilibrium, the rupture of a way –amongst others – of composing the pluralism typical of the city.” (Pattaroni 2007 p.16; my translation);

- the second one describes an ever changing society in which old forms of dominance are finally challenged by a widespread criticism. Positive valorisation of differences indeed leaves more and more room for dissent voices to be heard in the public arena and this may lead to a redefinition of power relationships (Colombo 2002 p.8) .

Leaving apart in this essay the scarcity of reflection upon the theoretical status of diversity’s concept (Colombo 2006), there are a number of scholars who try to answers to the above-cited fundamental question - *how is it possible to stay together amongst diversity?* - in ways which cannot be easily categorized once for all in the above dualistic scheme. These answers could be collocated in a quite homogenous group, representing in this essay the adopted idea of sustainable diversity, even if these scholars never – explicitly or implicitly- talk about their concept of diversity in terms of sustainability².

This group of theories does not even represent a real scientific tradition: it could be more properly considered as a collection of reflections on diversity who share the fact of stating that in order to deal with contemporary urban diversity, it’s necessary to go *beyond* the old idea of mutual tolerance: moreover, the very idea of tolerance is harmful in dealing with diversity for a general social model.

This “school of thought” – that by now we will call the *beyond tolerance* thought – does not just limit itself to strongly criticize the idea of tolerance but also provides a proactive argument on the sustainable diversity topic. According to this argument, the material presence of discussion’s arenas, dialogue’s spaces that can give the concrete opportunity to local communities to open itself to the exchange in respect of every individual identity represent the necessary, but not sufficient, sociological condition for the recognition of the other and to accede to the complexity of the contemporary social urban experience (Sennett 1990).

² Probably economists or urban planners would disagree with the exposed idea of sustainable urban diversity. In absence of a real sociological debate on sustainable urban diversity, I’ve chosen what may appear, from most point of view, a peculiar analytical perspective.

Indeed, what really matters in dealing with urban diversity is an effective recognition: every missing or partial recognition that give back a negative or sidetracked image, undermine personal and social capacity, the very possibility of a self-directed action (Taylor 1992).

The definition of sustainable diversity adopted in this essay is based on the “beyond tolerance” idea of multiculturalism, widening from the ethnic or cultural dimension of diversity, to every other possible dimension of contemporary diversity.

The “beyond tolerance ” thought comprehend reflections of some eminent contemporary social scholars, amongst which Alain Touraine and Ulrich Beck. According to Touraine a sustainable answer to the diversity topic is a fundamental issue of contemporary societies because the creation of a more egalitarian future depends on this answer (Touraine 1997, 1998).

The French sociologist tries to answer the fundamental question about how *Can We Live Together*³ analysing attentively the failure of the communitarism and of the cultural tolerance social models as organizing principle for local societies dealing with contemporary diversity. Touraine asserts also the need to rethink two major ways of conceiving the encounter with the other: the “encounter between cultures” (Levi-Strauss 1996) and the “kinship amongst different cultural experiences” (Habermas 1984).

On the proposing side of the coin, Touraine claims for the need to create in local societies urban and social conditions allowing to concretely encounter diversity, and which permit intercultural communication⁴, understood as a respectful but not superficial contact with *the other* (Touraine 1998 p.188).

The other major benchmark of the “beyond tolerance thought” is Ulrich Beck, and in particular Beck’s theory of the “cosmopolitan perspective” (Beck 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007). This perspective is the complement of what Beck defines as “banal cosmopolitanism”, a cosmopolitanism suffered in the contingencies of everyday life. On the opposite side of the “banal cosmopolitanism”, Beck proposes his conception of active cosmopolitan tolerance, which “is neither defensive nor passive, but active and proactive: it means to open oneself to the world of the other, to perceive the differences as enriching, to consider and treat the other as equal” (Beck 2007 p.4; my translation).

This idea of cosmopolitanism is one of the two pillars sustaining the “Beyond tolerance” thought, the other being what Beck (2007) define as *internal globalisation*: “Individuals, groups, communities, political organizations, cultures want to restate their diverseness and their uniqueness, that they have all the rights to preserve. But to do so, we need to transform in reality the metaphor;

³ This phrase is part of the title of the famous Touraine’s book ” Can We Live Together?: Equality and Difference” (in the Italian edition on which my work is based “Touraine A., 1998, *Libertà, Uguaglianza, Diversità. Si può vivere insieme?*, Il Saggiatore, Milano.

⁴ In this paper intercultural will be considered a synonymous of diversity, taking the word culture in his broader sense.

bridges must be build where now there are walls. And, above all, these bridges must grow not just in the heads of people but in local societies, in the internal globalization” (Beck 2007 p.8).

The “beyond tolerance” thought is in this essay considered the most adequate idea of sustainable diversity because on the one hand it clearly indicates the intercultural tolerance as the element which render an urban social model with an high degree of diversity not durable and hence not sustainable and, on the other hand, it also states which are general sociological conditions necessary to appreciate diversity.

To sum up, the adopted definition of sustainable diversity is formed by two elements:

- the reject of a superficial idea of the *encounter with the other* - exemplified by the idea of intercultural tolerance (Touraine 1998), and by practises of banal cosmoplitism (Beck 2007);
- the proposition of concrete arena, sites, and occasions in urban areas and local societies that represent the necessary - but not sufficient - condition for the “beyond the tolerance” encounter with the other.

3. Where to start for governance wanting to implement sustainable diversity in cities?

Once clarified the specific concept of sustainable diversity adopted in this essay, it should be understandable that the task for a governance who adopts this specific definition is therefore not to generally foster diversity in city but to assure conditions for a respectful - but not superficial - communication amongst different entities that compose urban diversity.

Put it in other words, we’re now turning directly to the main issue of the essay, trying to answer the following question: how can a governance enforce the afore-cited conception of sustainable urban diversity? Which tools are more suitable for helping a governance in this purpose?⁵

Firstly, it is important to keep in mind that there are different ways to address such a thorny issue. My way of addressing the topic comes from considerations upon observations and field-notes I’ve been taking for my PhD dissertation on “stable generative groups with cultural purposes” in Milan metropolitan area⁶.

⁵ Indeed, wanting to implement a sustainable diversity in city may seem such an ambitious objective for a governance as to make the reader think that it is beyond an urban governance possibilities and powers; but we do not agree with this position and we do think that a governance - not just “can” but - has the duty to engage in such challenging purposes in his action.

⁶ For more information on my PhD research activity visit <http://www.sociologiadip.unimib.it/dipartimento/ricerca/scheda.php?idUser=172> contact me at s.citroni@campus.unimib.it

During my field research activity⁷ I've been spending a six months period of daily ethnographic observation in two different cases of local mobilizations, I've interviewed civil society actors, and I've been personally engaged in some associations and urban coalitions in Milan metropolitan area. During the first period of my field-research study, I got in contact with many civil society groups to choose the most suitable case-study to be ethnographically observed, and in doing this activity I noticed there were many institutionalized urban groups ordinarily working to enact a sustainable idea of urban diversity that corresponded to the afore-cited idea of "beyond tolerance" thought, and I've been astonished by the high number of such kind of urban groups.

Afterward, as I started the daily ethnographic observation of the selected case-studies I've been immediately impressed by their extreme expertise and knowledge⁸ of the characteristics, difficulties, internal articulations, thorny aspects and strengths of the specific sector in which they operated. Hence, my personal research experience showed me how deep is the knowledge and the competencies that many civil society subjects have on urban diversity in most of his different dimensions: ethnicity, gender, age, physic and mental disability, but also socio-economic inequalities and cultural differences impeding social relations.

On the other side, the distance and the lack of direct knowledge by the governors of these sectors is still wide. From my point of view and according to people who daily work in Milan context, for instance in cultural associations, deprived neighbourhoods or immigrant organizations, the effort to make the encounter with the other something of an ordinary and enriching experience is realised - not thanks to but- despite public govern actions and their consequences⁹. According to the same points of view, this is due to the lack of direct or indirect knowledge suffered by people in charge of public govern of crucial social sector where urban diversity lays today¹⁰.

Considerations developed from field resarch have been then integrated with major findings from the ongoing debate on urban governance: sociological and political science literature on the one hand confirm the engagement of civil society subjects is a crucial aspect for an effective governance (March e Olsen 1995, Polizzi 2008), and on the other states that "ill-conceived forms of participation may lead to the reproduction or even deepening of the dividing lines between the integrated social groups and those excluded (i.e. Parekh 2000). A precondition for challenging social exclusion processes through the involvement of civil society in urban policy making is the

⁷ Not yet concluded at the moment I'm writing this paper.

⁸ In most of the cases it was an implicit knowledge that easily became explicit knowledge in the several cases of civil society actors with an high capacity of social and self reflexivity.

⁹ Many empirical evidences supporting this type of statements could be cited from the two case-studies associations I've been studying.

¹⁰ Thus, determining alos a big risk of waste of precious public resources.

understanding of the pre-existing dynamics of urban fragmentation” (Gerometta, Haubermann, Longo 2005 p.16).

Thus, I started to wander about a way not just for civil society subjects to be included in urban diversity governance but also allowing the knowledge of third sector workers to be shared and used by politicians and all other people who are effectively in charge of the govern of urban diversity. Indeed, from our point of view the sharing of knowledge between third sector subjects and governors would be an easy and profitable occasion for an increase in urban govern knowledge of the actual urban situation in which they are demanded to operate.

Besides, the opportunity would be also for civil society actors: not just because of the possible benefits deriving from a better-knowing governance but also because third sectors groups very often would need more information about which other subjects are currently working - or have recently worked in the past - on similar issues in the same part of the city. Moreover, third sector can pressure public administrations to pay attention to their issues and, in the meantime, get to know needs of citizens and their area of intervention (Fazzi e Scaglia 1999).

To sum up, both governance and third sector actors would benefit from closer reciprocal knowledge exchange. Before illustrating the tool proposed to foster this reciprocal exchange, it is necessary to pay a closer attention to civil society subjects, trying to outline who exactly they are. As we will see, this closer attention is a necessary step to understand properly the tool proposed later on.

4. How to define civil society subjects dealing with urban diversity according to the “beyond tolerance” thought?

This section is dedicated to clarify who exactly are nonprofits actors we are talking about in this paper¹¹. These subjects will be defined in terms of civil society subjects with *bridging social capital purposes*. Let’s now see what exactly this mean.

Civic society groups should represent the materialisation of what Touraine define as “open community working for intercultural dialogue” (Touraine 1998 p. 69), clues of dynamics of social re-composition not coherent with the tendency toward the increasing fragmentation of local society, consequence of the break of the social modernity order (Giaccardi, Magatti 2003).

Talking about third or non profit sector, a fundamental international bibliographic reference is the famous Johns Hopkins University’ study (Salamon e Anheier 1994), who introduced an

¹¹ This may seem an inopportune digression but it is maybe the case to underline the fact that these groups are considered the starting point for understanding the proposition I’m going to make later about a tool for a governance of sustainable urban diversity in cities.

internationally unifying standard definition of third sector subjects¹². Another major international reference is represented by the International Classification of Non-profit Organizations (ICNPO), recommended in the UN *Handbook on Non-Profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts*. ICNPO system groups organizations into 12 major activity groups: Culture and recreation, Education and research, Health, Social services, Environment, Development and housing, Law, advocacy and policymakers, Philanthropic intermediaries and voluntarism promotion, International, Religion, Business and professional associations, unions and “Not elsewhere classified”. These 12 major activity groups are further divided into 24 subgroups¹³.

Turning to the academic literature, the civil society frame definition I would adopt - from the many at disposal - is the following: “the public or potentially public settings in which unforced participants engage in ongoing, voluntary association, outside of the immediate demands of family, work, or government “ (Eliasoph Lichtherman 2003, p. 782).

Wanting to develop in more depth the academic notion of civil society subjects, nowadays the general academic situation on civil society’s specific theoretical perspective is much more complex than it was ever before: different research tradition have developed as the non profit sector increased his relevance in most part of the western world, different definitions following different point of view are at disposal and the very opportunity of a unifying general definition of third sector is today questioned (Moulaert, Alieni 2005). Besides, in recent years research on social capital (Putnam 1997, 2004) have often directly or indirectly analysed also non profit and voluntary activities (i.e. Caltabiano 2002), thus adding new and often innovative material in the already vast literature on these topics¹⁴.

To sum up, many definitions of civil society subjects refering to different cultural and academic debates are nowadays at disposal: nonetheless some are too generic or abstract, some other are too strict and specific so that in any case no one seems to me to fit adequately social groups I’ve met during my field research period.

Civil society subjects I’m talking about are nonprofit organizations, cultural associations, informal groups, urban coalitions, music bands or other kind of artistic groups, local mobilizations, and other type of stable social groups that actively work to enact the sustainable idea of urban diversity above described as the “beyond tolerance” thought.

If from an academic point of view these subjects seemed to me too heterogenous and hard to fit in one of the academic definitions already available, they all have, to my eyes, something in

¹² For more information see directly Salomon e Anheier (1994, 1997).

¹³ *Satellite Account of Nonprofit Institutions and Volunteering*, 1997 to 2001. (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/13-015-XIE/13-015-XIE2005000.htm>)

¹⁴ The definition of non profit subjects proposed in this essay may seem to be in this line of thought (Putnam thinking) and research but it is important to me to underline that this is not the case.

common; they all are civil society subjects who work, on an everyday basis, in direct contact with local residents to enhance their social capacity¹⁵ and to enact institutionalized relations (Lichterman 2006) amongst diversity, even if diversity has for everyone of these subjects a different meaning, such as ethnic diversity, age diversity, gender diversity, socio-economic inequalities, ways of life, new urban poverties or disabled persons, for example. As I was yet unsatisfied with my work, I continued searching for scientific theories and categorizations that could help me understand these urban social groups, according to the adopted idea of sustainable diversity.

The work by Paul Lichterman (1995, 1996, 2005, 2006) proved very inspiring in this sense. Drawing on his theoretical and empirical work (particularly Lichterman 2005, 2006) I thought I had finally found the suitable conceptualisation and I started thinking these groups as *civil society subjects with bridging social capital purposes*; put it in other words: groups who define their objectives in terms of establishing some kind of bridges among different social groups and of overcoming unwanted forms of urban fragmentation and social isolation, often with an accent on the development of stable social relations among heterogeneous parts¹⁶.

The above definition of civil society subjects with bridging social capital purposes¹⁷ has to be seen with explicit reference to Lichterman's own research on religious-based voluntary associations (Lichterman 2005). In this work, the author tries to develop a cultural explanation of the reasons why certain groups succeed in their activity of bridging social capital and why, on the contrary, some others do not. What is most interesting, for the purpose of this paper, is the way in which Lichterman revisits the social capital concept by referring to the work of Tocqueville (1982), Addams (2004) and Dewey (1927).

Lichterman's investigation on classical social thinkers is in this sense a precious resource for my reasoning because it indicates a relevant theoretical dimension which is crucial for the definition of third sector groups who aim at fostering urban sustainable diversity. Indeed, among the several stable social groups who ordinarily deal with some of the dimensions of urban diversity, *non profit groups with bridging social capital purposes* are organizations that work with the explicit purpose

¹⁵ By social capacity we mean "people ability to work together organizing public relationships rather than ceding those relationships entirely to market exchange or administrative fiat of the state" (Lichterman 2006 p.535).

¹⁶ Actually this is a partial re-elaboration of Lichterman's work. To deepen similarities and differences between Lichterman's thought and the use I made of it see the research project of my PhD dissertation at disposal at <http://www.sociologiadip.unimib.it/dipartimento/ricerca/scheda.php?idUser=172>

¹⁷ Talking about bridging social capital it is maybe the case to underline from the beginning that we're not speaking in Putnam terms. Indeed, Lichterman (1995, 1996, 2005, 2006) put his works on social capital in direct contrast to the works of Robert Putnam (1997, 2004). Misunderstandings are likely to occur because inside Putnam's school of thought there is a line of research on *bridging social capital groups*, but these are social groups composed by people considered to be heterogeneous according to some pre-defined criterion (Coffé, Geys 2007).

of establishing intercultural - in the broadest sense of the term - stable contacts, both at the level of individuals or groups¹⁸.

For some empirical examples that may help the reader to outline what exactly we are talking about, let's consider the two case-study organizations I've been ethnographically observing:

- "*Esterni*": a cultural association who mobilize resources and organize cultural initiatives (e.i. artistic festivals, parties, theme meetings, cultural events) to change urban conventional meanings, challenging precedent interpretations and showing that other uses of the city are possible. In particular "Esterni" very often use marginalized area of the city to organize public events in which, with the support of inclusive cultural-artistic practises, *Esterni* try to foster collective use of public spaces and interpersonal contact amongst diversity.
- "*Progetto Cantiere Cuccagna*": consist in the RISTRUTTURAZIONE of an old historical building in Milan to create a relations system among cultural associations active in the urban area where the building is situated. The purposes of "Progetto Cantiere Cuccagna" are to create occasions for free cultural participation of citizens, concrete opportunities of sociability allowing the development of significant relationships among different cultures or generations and to foster the social and cultural integration amongst diversity with the support of inclusive projects.

5. An organizing tool: mapping urban diversities through civil society subjects with bridging social capital purposes.

In this paragraph I will present the organizing tool proposed for supporting a governance of sustainable diversity in the city. Then I will discuss its main advantages and limits.

In the last twenty years, sociologists and political scientists have been trying to investigate how civil society can participate in the policy making process (Fung Wrigth 2003; Polizzi 2008). This issue has been addressed mainly through normative approaches and prescriptive models of participatory policy making (Bohman 1996, Fishkin 1999, Elster 1998), while empirical analyses of existing participatory policies adopted by public administrations are still rare¹⁹.

Indeed, there already exists interesting experiences of civil society subjects who participate in urban policy making process. As far as Italy is concerned, the most institutionalized case is that of 'Zone plans', which were introduced eight years ago: by the year 2000, the Italian welfare system had been completely reformed, with the introduction of national law nr. 328. One of the main goals of the reform was to promote civil society's participation in local policymaking processes, by giving civil society organizations the opportunity to actively collaborate in the context of local

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¹⁹ With some relevante exception, as for example Polizzi (2008) on Zone Plans and participation in Milan discripts.

social planning (Polizzi 2008).

The academic literature underlines that one of the major difficulties preventing a productive collaboration between local policymakers and the third sector relates to the reciprocal lack of information: in most cases, they have no common working experiences, and there are also cases in which they have no idea of who the other actors are and what their activities focus on (Moulaert, Nussbaumer 2003; Polizzi 2008).

My field research has fully confirmed this lack of information, but it has also highlighted some interesting experiencing of how some public actors have tried to overcome this limit, in the attempt to allow for policymakers to effectively involve civil society actors in the governance of urban diversity²⁰.

The means proposed is an organizing tool – not a general model of good governance – explicitly inspired by the direct observation of such good practises and by considerations I made upon advantages deriving from the adaptation of such practises for a governance of sustainable diversity. Therefore, the tool represent a generalization drawing on common characteristics of the observed good public practises, which are going to be mentioned later in the paper.

What was most interesting for my research was to find out that the main aim of these practices was that of systematizing third sector's fragmentated knowledge, by means of some kind of institutional and organizational tool, which - in all observed cases - took the form of a social map.

Althought every social maps observed have a different form, they all seem to be a product of public governors growing aware of the opportunity offered by the direct knowledge possessed by civil society subjects. What was also evident is that governors are willing to make the best possible use of civil society knowledge in their policy-making activity.

Hence, the organizing tool used for a governance of sustainable diversity are *social maps of civil society subjects with bridging social capital purposes*. In particular, I propose various maps available for urban governance: there is one for every aspect in which diversity can articulate²¹ and relative not to the whole city, but different maps referiing to the urban areas in whiche a city is articulated²².

As far as the subject of these maps are concerned, they include all civic groups with

²⁰ It is important to underline that the experiences to whom I'm talking about have been thought not as tools for governances, as in the cases of the Zone Plans. Nonetheless these experience may represent, according to the thesis of this article, tools for governance of sustainable diversity.

²¹ The decision about which are the principal aspects of urban diversity in a specific context represent a controversial question to be solved with the possible support of some experts.

²² In this essay we will talk generally about *the social map*, without specifying which peculiar aspect of urban diversity this map is going to cover, because the general model of the tool here proposed is adaptable to most dimensions in which nowadays diversity articulate itself.

bridging social capital purposes: their objectives, their operational mode to achieve them, their personal way of defining their purposes of bridging social capital, what the relationship with others organizations of the same kind and the main difficulties experienced in their activity.

The most interesting examples of social maps I came across during my field work are represented by three particular public projects by Milan provincial authority to map three specific dimensions of urban contemporary diversity:

- *Integrando*: a map who tries to identify all immigrant communities, intercultural and integration public services and cultural associations of the provincial area. This map is constantly updated and is accessible on a dedicated website²³.
- *Metrocult*: a map, a collection of free publications²⁴ and a calendar of regular meetings to foster practices of interaction and the sharing of knowledge among all social groups who somehow deal with urban cultural diversity in their ordinary activity.
- *Talenti extravaganti*: a map of immigrants artists in Milan metropolitan area, grouped in main artistic sectors. This map aims at exploring ongoing cultural transformations from the peculiar perspective of immigrants' artistic expressions.

The main characteristic of social maps is their accessibility, that is to say the fact that the information they contain are available for everyone who is interested, including public governors, social workers and citizens in general. This also allows for scientific reliability, as they provide with publically checkable data, that anyone can control in order to guarantee the relevant information are correct.

Besides, the fact of involving subjects with bridging social capital purposes can be considered as a good pre-condition for the success of these maps, in terms of number of civil society groups collaborating: these subjects are more likely than anyone else to participating in drawing a map that will surely offer them an increased visibility. Indeed, different experiments with maps had been carried out in the past, but one of the major problems they had relates to the limited stimulus they provide for the involvement of the groups they are aimed at.

Maps may take various forms, more or less complex. In a sociological perspective, one may think about maps built with social sciences' methodologies: for instance, social network theory can help analyse the relationships among different civil society groups and how they change over time; ethnographic techniques can help produce thick descriptions (Geertz 1979) about each organization practices in relation to urban diversity, or can contribute to exploring the reasons why similar non

²³ <http://www.provincia.milano.it/cultura/progetti/integrando/cd-online/htm/index.htm>

²⁴ Publications who took the form of “instant books”,

profit organizations are not successful in their activity²⁵..

Whatever the form of social *maps*, they are based on web architecture, which, despite all recent widespread rhetoric on the web, has specific advantages when used as an organizational tool for a governance of sustainable diversity. So, let's turn to illustrate these advantages in the next paragraph.

6. Advantages and challenges of urban diversity social maps as organizing tool for a governance of sustainable “beyond tolerance” diversity.

In order to make up for the afore-cited lack of information between policymakers and civil society, different strategies can be put forward. The map proposed in this paper is an organizing tool with various advantages at this respect.

First of all, it is a *light tool*, because it is not excessively costly to set it up and manage, neither for civil society subjects nor for public administrations. Research on this topic (Gerometta, Haubermann, Longo 2005; Polizzi 2008) shows that participation in governance arenas is a time and money consuming activity for civil society actors, especially for small and voluntary organizations. For this reason civil society subjects may leave such governance arenas. This consideration recalls a well known syndrome of deliberative processes (Bobbio 2005, Bohman 1996): participation, at the very beginning, is strong and motivated but then, during the implementation stage, it becomes irrelevant; thus, the universalism of participatory arenas may be seriously compromised (Polizzi 2008).

The real challenge consists in gathering all different subjects of a designated urban area and to offer them the opportunity to give their own contribution for the setting up of governance arenas, while preventing the most powerful and structured subjects from domination.

On the other hand, Polizzi's main research conclusions (Polizzi 2008) clearly show how the solution to this possible risk cannot be a more intrusive action by public governance in setting up and organizing these participatory arenas: “as a result of the institutionalization of participatory arenas, participation becomes more complex: the skills necessary to take part in these arenas become more complex and both bureaucracy and work load are likely increase. As a consequence, the participation of small and weakly organized actors, becomes more difficult, while administrations win a more prominent and hegemonic role in the third sector” (Polizzi 2008 p.16).

The fact that this social map is a *light* organizing tool could guarantee the opportunity for all

²⁵ Explicitly following in this case Paul Lichterman (2005) example.

and every participant to take part in the drawing up and the updating of the map, while at the same time preventing most powerful groups to take advantages of others²⁶.

About the publicity character I have introduced above, there are at least two aspects that need to be further developed.

Firstly, according to Le Galés and Lascoumes (2004, 2007) policy and governance instruments are not considered only as tools for reaching a policy goals, but they can also generate a specific kind of relationship between citizens and political authorities. In the case of the social map of civil society subjects with bridging social capital purposes, political authorities could become a possible channel for citizens to get to know urban diversity in its different facets, through civil society's actors, when regularly mapped out.

Secondly, concerning civil society participation in urban governance, the legitimacy of representativeness becomes a crucial matter (Polizzi 2008, Vitale 2007): for a governance who want to map all civil society actors with bridging social capital purposes new models of third sector's legitimate representativeness could be encouraged. Indeed, sociological studies on models of representativeness (Cotta 1976, Pitkin 1967, Pellizzoni 2005) show that representativeness is not given but, instead, it depends on whom we give the legitimacy to represent other actors. Therefore, we may have reasons to think that civil society representative structure can become more effective once the intention is clearly declared of including all civic subjects with bridging social capital purposes in an open organizing tool dealing with a specific diversity aspect in a certain urban area.

Sociological research findings confirm that the participatory process is more effective when it uses regulated tools (Cotta 1976, Pitkin 1967, Pellizzoni 2005, Polizzi 2008). In this sense, other possible advantages may derive from the possibility of establishing strict rules for civil society subjects to enter into the process of drawing social maps. Researches on governance arenas (Bifulco Vitale 2006, Trigilia 2005) highlight how these arenas, in most cases, lack regulatory models that, for example, could constrain all participants to draw on real and widespread needs.

The proposed organizing tool offers the possibility of implementing a strong regulatory model which operates directly through an access criteria that collects all civil society subjects willing to participate in a specific governance arena.

Lastly, the most important advantage of the proposed tool relates to the *coordination* among civil society organizations, and this is an aspect often considered to be crucial for the effective engagement of civil society actors in governance arenas: "it is essential to find out how all different [civil society n.a.c] subjects can effectively take part in the planning arenas without losing some

²⁶ In particular relative to the Italian context, some specific research have underlined (Trigilia 1995; Censis 1991) that civil society subjects who most frequently succeeded in taking an effective part in governance arenas are the most politicized one (Giorgi, Tosi 2006).

contributions because of a fragmentary organization. To be effective, this involvement requires the gathering of all contributions in terms of knowledge, skills and creativity. Without any kind of coordination, it is very difficult for civil society organizations to successfully take part in local policy making, namely for small association, cooperatives, foundations and all the small subjects belonging to the third sector. This means that there is a need for tools that can make such a participation more accessible, for example through the use of organizing mechanisms that can support communication, planning and the development of the skills needed for a political dialogue with public administrations. If these conditions are not granted, participation can become ineffective. Furthermore, unsatisfied actors tend to exit from the participatory arenas” (Polizzi 2008).

The author thinks that the proposed map, despite the fact of being a light tool, may represent a concrete organizing support for civil society actors to communicate with each other and with public administrations. Moreover, in situations where organizational resources are limited, taking part in the drawing and updating of social maps - and related regular meetings - may improve all actors’ cooperation and mutual learning skills. At least, with the support of similar social maps, administrations and third sector actors get the opportunity of improving their mutual knowledge not exclusively at the operational level of the specific policy in which they may be involved.

7. Conclusions.

Besides all the afore-described possible advantages, it is important to underline that there are also disadvantages and risks deriving from an implementation of the proposed map as an organizing and support tool of governance arenas.

Just to cite a few: excesses in regulation may result in too strict definition of the relevant information to be included in the social map. Also, it’s important to underline the strong power of classification of the proposed organizing tool, and hence the - subtle but very concrete - cognitive implications which inevitably derive from every adopted criterion used to group civil society subjects in social maps (Douglas 1990).

Besides, the map, whatever form it might take, can suffer from limited public visibility, associated with a general excess of information: in an urban context characterised by strong fragmentation, as it is the case for Milan (Foot 2003; Magatti 2007; Offeddu e Sansa 2007; Magatti e al. 2005), the rise in visibility of civil society subjects with bridging social capital purposes can provoke an increase in the general level of urban complexity and this may determine more difficulties for the success of projects aimed at re-composing social urban diversity. This is due to

the fact that an increase in civil society subjects' visibility can in turn result in the increase of available information and hence in a higher cost for everyone interested in accessing such information.

In such a context, in order to operate effectively, subjects need to rely more and more on some sort of organizing tool, such as the one proposed here. The risk is that of further worsening the existing limits of such a tool, that is to say to give excessive power to civil society subjects in the representation of urban diversity in its different facets²⁷.

Nevertheless, the author believes there are more advantages than disadvantages, considering the likelihood of the proposed map, when adopted as organizing tool by an urban governance, to implement a sustainable urban diversity, as it is intended in the "beyond the tolerance" line of thought.

Indeed, in order for this normative idea of sustainable diversity to be concretely implemented, there is a need to create "intercultural bridges, beyond that in the head of people, also in the concrete world of everyday life" (Beck 2003 p.4) . The social map presented is a concrete step towards the creation of such bridges, and it represents the basis for the construction of new bridges, in contexts characterized by urban and social fragmentation where social groupings and subjects of civil society specific to local social milieux do not - in part or fully - relate to each other (Gerometta, Haubermann, Longo 2005).

When talking about sustainable diversity - according to the specific meaning adopted here - the biggest challenge consists in the elaboration of *processual* organizing tools capable of constantly filling the gap between the adopted normative model - the "beyond tolerance" thought in this case - and the actual reality. In this sense the biggest advantage of the proposed map is probably that of possessing dynamic mechanisms for a constant update, which is fundamental in a complex and ever changing context of urban contemporary diversity.

Besides, as it has been stated before, the value of the map for a governance of sustainable diversity is also that of being a relatively *flexible* organizing tool: laws may give civil society actors the *entitlements* to take part in the social planning process but their involvement is bound by existing organizational tools which can allow the *coordination* process necessary to give every third sector actor the *capabilities* (Sen 1993) to successfully take part in governance arenas (Polizzi 2008). Moreover, recent sociological and political literature devotes more and more attention to the *coordination* aspects of public life (Thevenot 2006, 2007) and some eminent scholars use coordination as the heuristic picklock to analytically enter both the public sphere and the private social life (Thevenot 2006). The relevance of this aspect for civil society subjects wanting to

²⁷ This is a crucial issue as it refers to criterion of representivness (Vitale 2007) of civil society subjects included in the map in relation to people this civil society subjects speak in name of.

partecipate in governance arenas is related to the fact that a good coordination may allow even the weakest third sector's actor to be recognised and to successfully take part in the governance process.

Thus, the usefulness of the map proposed is at least twofold: on the one hand, it is useful as an organizational and processual tool and it provides with a consistent basis for facilitating every coordination process between public and private subjects working in a specific aspect of diversity in a limited urban area. On the other hand, the publicity of the map facilitates the access of all citizens to urban diversity. Furthermore, it allows a first reading and understanding of the already existing intercultural bridges and boost the access these experiences of "material intercultural bridges" (Beck 2003), as the afore-cited case has shown. Touraine argues that in order to succeed in "being together" in contexts strongly characterized by urban diversity, overcoming a mere logic of tolerance and thus promoting the respect of every specific identity, some specific general conditions are required, including first and foremost an adequately accessible and articulated civil society (Touraine 1998 p.269). The organizing tool proposed may be instrumental in this regard.

However, further analysis will be needed to continue testing through empirical outcomes the effective contribution of the proposed map as organizing tool for a governance of sustainable diversity.

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