The 1968 effects and civic responsibility in architecture and urban planning in the USA and Italy: Challenging ‘nuova dimensione’ and ‘urban renewal’

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ABSTRACT
The article scrutinizes the impact of the 1968 student protests on architectural education and epistemology within the Italian and American context, the advocacy planning movement and the relationship of architecture and urban planning with the socio-political climate around 1968. It aims to demonstrate how the concepts of urban renewal and ‘nuova dimensione’ were progressively abandoned in the USA and Italy respectively. It presents how the critique of these concepts was related to the conviction that they were incompatible with socially effective architecture and urban design approaches. The article sheds light on the complexity of the reorientations that took place in both contexts, taking into consideration the impact of student protests, and the 1968 Civil Rights Action the architects and urban planners’s task on the curricula of schools of architecture. It also investigates certain counter-events and counter-publications in the USA and Italy, shedding light on how they reinvented the relationship between architecture and democracy. It reveals the tensions between enhancing equality in planning process and local bureaucracy in the case of advocacy planning strategies.

Introduction
Within the context of the contemporary interest in new urban design methods that aim to reinvent the relationship between urban design and democracy, the long history of participation can offer us clues on how civic engagement and social responsibility can be critically conceived. The contemporary interest in methods of ‘advocacy planning’, ‘collaboration’, ‘participatory design’, ‘co-production’, ‘commoning’ and ‘negotiated planning’ should be interpreted in relation to the long history of participation concerning how urban design can forge a critical relationship with civic engagement and social responsibility. Instead of repeating the concepts, roles and tools that were tested some decades ago, contemporary urban designers should engage more intensively with the historical examples and use them as...
a base for new critical approaches. Most importantly, historical experiments like The Architects’ Resistance (TAR), the National Organization of Minority Architecture Students (NOMAS), the Black Workshop, the City Planning Forum, and Associazione Studenti e Architetti (ASEA), which are examined in this article, remind us that the issue of participation in not only a question of urban design practice, but also – and maybe most urgently – requires experiments and changes in the pedagogy of architecture and urban design.

Enlightening ‘for realizing the implication of the implementation of participation-oriented strategies is [the distinction...] between the ‘collaborative approaches’ and the concepts of ‘co-production’ and ‘negotiated planning’ (Charitonidou, 2021a). As Vanessa Watson has highlighted, ‘co-production, along with collaborative and communicative planning positions, assume a context of democracy, where ‘active citizens’ are able and prepared to engage collectively and individually (with each other and with the state) to improve their material and political conditions’ (Watson, 2014, 70). Relating the concept of ‘negotiated planning’ to the growing interest in the commoning practices goes hand in hand with taking into consideration the actual ‘actors and power dynamics, involved,’ and the ‘virtuous cycle’ of planning, infrastructure, and land.’ (Watson, 2014, 77) Another notion that has a dominant place in the contemporary debates regarding participation-oriented strategies is that of urban commons. David Harvey’s remark that resources are socially defined in the sense that they are always related to technology, economy, and culture is useful for comprehending the commons beyond their reduction to natural resources, and for understanding ‘urban commons’ as a network of technological, economic, and cultural parameters (Charitonidou, 2021a; Harvey, 2011). A tension that is useful for better grasping the notion of commons is that between understanding commons as community and understanding commons as public space. Understanding commons as community implies that community is conceived as a homogeneous group of people, whereas comprehending commons as public space is based on the intention to take into consideration the relation between heterogeneous communities.

As far as participatory design is concerned, the Nuovo Villaggio Matteotti constitutes a case that reveals the myths of participatory design approaches and their endeavour to replace the representation of designers by a representation of users. A remark of Giancarlo De Carlo that is of great significance for the comprehension of his participatory design approach is his claim that ‘[p]articipation implies the presence of the users during the whole course of the operation’ (Charitonidou, 2021b, 1002; Zucchi, 1992). The importance of this observation lies in the fact that it renders explicit that a transformation of how the architect conceives the users implies a reorganisation of the design process and a re-articulation of all the phases of the procedure. The point of departure of De Carlo’s participatory design approach was the rejection of the linear design process of modernism, which, according to him, was based on the following three distinct phases: the definition of the problem, the elaboration of the solution, and the evaluation of the results. The tension between control and freedom was of the utmost importance for the participatory design approaches that were at the centre of the epistemological debates during the sixties. According to De Carlo, the shift from modernist architecture to an architecture of participation implied a reorientation of architecture’s scope and a shift from an organisation based on the aforementioned three distinct phases towards a non-hierarchical model of architectural design processes during which the user is welcome to participate in every phase. De Carlo, in his book entitled La piramide rovesciata, analysed the impact of the 1968 students’ protests on architecture (De Carlo, 1968). In the recently re-
The impact of the Urban Renewal Program on the urban fabric

The term ‘urban renewal’ refers to a federal government program that was initiated in 1954 with the purpose to replace blighted urban areas with new urban projects. As Fern M. Colborn remarks, in *The Neighbourhood and Urban Renewal*, an important turning point regarding the emergence of the urban renewal politics in the United States of America during the post-war years is the Housing Act of 1949, which was supported not only by professional urban planners, but also by city officials, and business leaders among others. According to Colborn, the 1949 Renewal Program defined urban renewal as ‘the diversified efforts by localities, with the assistance of the Federal Government, for the elimination and prevention of slums and blight, whether residential or non-residential, and the removal of the factors that create slums and blighting conditions’ (Colborn, 1963, 7). This program contributed to the formation of a certain kind of ethics regarding city rebuilding. Before the revisions of the program in 1954, the term that was officially used was ‘urban redevelopment’ instead of ‘urban renewal’. H. Briavel Holcomb and Robert A. Beauregard, in *Revitalising Cities*, argue that after the 1954 revisions of the program, urban renewal became more attractive to private investors (Holcomb & Beauregard, 1981).

A recent exhibition entitled “Fringe Cities: Legacies of Renewal in the Small American City”, which was curated by MASS Design Group and held between 2 October 2019 and 18 January 2020 at the Center for Architecture in New York, aimed to show the damages that the Urban Renewal Program provoked. In order to grasp the impact of urban renewal on the urban fabric in the USA, we should think of its immense scale and of its nature as act of federal funding to cities aiming to cover the cost of acquiring areas of cities perceived to be ‘slums’ (Figure 1 and Figure 2). Between 1945 and 1965, within the framework of the Urban Renewal Program, federal funds were used in order to construct hundreds of thousands of public housing units in many American cities. The two cities that used most of the federal funds for this purpose are New York City and Chicago. By 1960, New York City was the city that received the highest percentage of federal money for urban renewal. This money was used in order to replace ‘slums’ with modern public housing. Holcomb and Beauregard shed light on the reasons for which the Urban Renewal Program was largely criticized (Holcomb & Beauregard, 1981) a Economist Martin Anderson, in *The Federal Bulldozer: A Critical Analysis of Urban Renewal, 1949–1962*, also analysed the reasons behind the large criticisms of the Urban Renewal Program (Anderson, 1964). A reason that explains the disapprovals of this program is the fact that it provoked the replacement of low-rent dwelling units with high-rent ones.

The Model Cities Program, which was initiated in 1966, aimed at the provision of housing through physical rebuilding and paid greater attention to social renewal. This program was conceived by Lyndon Johnson’s administration and was a product of the Demonstration Cities Act of 1966. It was authorized on 3 November 1966 by the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966, and ended in 1974. The Model Cities Program could be interpreted as a response to several concerns in the mid-1960s. As Christopher Walker and Patrick Boxall have remarked, this program ‘did not achieve much in the way of
comprehensive neighborhood renewal’ (Walker & Boxall, 1996, 20–21). Walker and Boxall also note that ‘funding for Model Cities was sufficient to establish an elaborate network of governmental agencies but failed to deliver much in the way of housing, social services, or business development’ (Walker & Boxall, 1996, 20–21).

Despite the fact that the urban renewal discourse was still dominant in the United States, a group of students from the Department of City Planning of Yale University’s School of Art and Architecture reacted against the extensive redevelopment of New Haven in the 1950s and 1960s, marshalling a critique of their university’s role in this top-down reconstruction. The reaction of this group of students could be interpreted as

![Figure 1](image-url)

**Figure 1.** Cover of Mel Scott for the San Francisco City Planning Commission (1947). *New City: San Francisco Redeveloped.* City Planning Commission.
a rejection of the dominance of the notion of urban renewal, which had a central place within the north-American context of the mid- and late-1960s. To better grasp the impact of the student protests on the reorientations in architectural education in the United States during the late 1960s and especially in 1968, one should take into account the six weeks student protests at Columbia University and the intention to respond to the fulfilment of needs related to the welfare of the society as a whole, on the one hand, and the responsibility to provide equal housing opportunities and equal access to public amenities regardless of race, religion, or national origin, on the other. Paul Davidoff paid

![Figure 2. The red portions the areas of Poughkeepsie, New York, targeted for urban renewal from a 1970s report. Courtesy: Center for Architecture; U.S. Geological Survey, Department of the Interior/USGS, 1969.](image-url)
special attention to the concern of advocacy planning about establishing ‘the bases for a society affording equal opportunity to all citizens’ (Davidoff, 1965, 331). Thomas L. Blair, who seems to have been more skeptical regarding the ability of advocacy planning to really enhance equality expressed his doubts regarding the capacity of ‘advocacy planning really [to establish] […] a participatory democracy’, argued that, in certain cases, it had been ‘a pretext for public manipulation’ (Blair, 1973, 143).

In 1968, within a context in which the concern about urban conditions was dominant, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown started teaching at Yale School of Art and Architecture. During the same period, in Italy, a network of significant events including the fight between the police and the students outside at Valle Giulia in Rome to the students’ occupation of the 15th Triennale di Milano in 1968, and the counter-event ‘Utopia e/o Rivoluzione’ at the Politecnico di Torino in 1969 triggered the rejection of the concept of ‘nuova dimensione’ in favor of the rediscovery of reality’s immediacy, the ‘locus’ and the civic dimension of the architects’ role (Colomina, Buckley & Grau, 2010, 114).

**Advocacy planning movement and the socio-political climate of civil rights around 1968**

During the late 1960s, pressures to reshape the methods of urban planning in a way that would take distance from urban renewal models pushed local chapters of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) to establish the so-called Community Design Centers (CDCs), which, in many cases, collaborated with universities, and aimed to support low-income groups. To better grasp the relationship between the reinvention of urban planning strategies and the student protests around 1968 in New York City, we should take into consideration the emergence of Advocacy planning movement and, more particularly, the founding of the Architects’ Renewal Committee in New York’s Harlem neighborhood (ARCH), which was the first organization solely devoted to advocacy planning in the United States. (Klemek, 2011, 191) ARCH was founded in 1964 and was one of the first CDCs. It emerged within the context of the civil rights movement in the United States of America and intended to provide technical and design advice to communities that could otherwise not afford it (Figure 3 and Figure 4). Paul Davidoff, in his article entitled ‘Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning’ published in 1965, notes that ‘[p]lanners should be able to engage in the political process as advocates of the interests both of government and of such other groups, organizations, or individuals who are concerned with proposing policies for the future development of the community’ (Davidoff, 1965, 332).

As Daniel Matlin remarks, in his article entitled ‘A New Reality of Harlem: Imagining the African American Urban Future during the 1960s’, ‘[a]cting as advocates for the protestors, the Architects’ Renewal Committee in Harlem (ARCH), which had formed in 1964, charged the state with imposing the office building on the local community, in much-needed space on Harlem’s key thoroughfare, without consultation and to the neglect of Harlem’s pressing needs for affordable housing, cultural facilities, and a high school’ (Matlin, 2018, 992). The Advocacy planning movement rejected the methods of urban renewal that had contributed significantly to the transformation of the urban fabric of New York City and other American cities such as Chicago during the years that preceded
1968. The objectives and vision of Advocacy planning movement should be understood in relation to the socio-political climate of civil rights around 1968. Among the architects that were involved in Advocacy planning movement in New York City were Elliott Willensky, R. Richard Hatch, Robert Stern, and Jim Frei. According to Matlin, during the period that followed the 1964 Civil Rights Act, an ensemble of intellectuals, artists, and professional urban planners aimed to respond to the question of how the civil rights transformations during the 1960s influenced famous black neighborhoods such as Harlem (Matlin, 2018).

**The social concerns of the early years of the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies**

The so-called ‘Street Academies’, which were organized by the New York Urban League, intended to educate high school dropouts, helping them to get to a college or university. After the success of the ‘Street Academies’ (Figure 5), the New York Urban League established a prep school in Harlem named Harlem Prep. In 1968, the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies (IAUS) proposed a pilot study of Harlem to the New York Urban League. At the time, the Trustees of the IAUS were Arthur Drexler, who was Director of the Department of Architecture and Design of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) since 1956, Peter D. Eisenman, who was the Director of the IAUS, Burnham Kelly, who was then the Dean of the College of Architecture, Art and Planning of Cornell University, John Estenza, who was then the Director of the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, and Gibson Danes, who was the Dean of Visual Arts at the State University of New York. In the proposal of this pilot program, black America was equated with urban America. More specifically, this document concluded with the following phrase: ‘But if “black” and “white” are truly symbiotic, then modern technology could be as much a symbol of black America and the modern city as it is of white America’.

One of the early projects of the IAUS was a project aiming to ‘develop a new form of educational mechanism in Harlem’. This project, which took as its point of departure the success of the so-called ‘Street Academies’, tried to ‘translate community desires into programs’. In its description, there is a reference to the need for ‘community planners’ and ‘urbanologists’, who were differentiated from the ‘university-trained urban sociologist[s]’ in the sense that the former, in contrast with the latter, were capable of providing ‘living documentation of the experience of the ghetto’. This project had as its main objective to shape ‘physical and social design’ tools with the aim to provide ‘economic and political stability’.

Reading the statements of projects of the early years of the IAUS, one is confronted with consistent formulations aiming to encourage analytical rigor and detailed planning. Such a case is the following statement: ‘A research proposal to develop a rational approach to urban design through the study of the street: 1. As a model for the development of rational criteria and methods for the objective determination and evaluation of physical and social design proposals; 2. as a prototypical component of a physical environment; 3. as a case study involving and interdisciplinary team’.

In the section concerning the method that would be followed in the framework of this project one can read that the main objective of the project was to ‘discover the physical, social, and operational potential of the street as a positive organizing element in any urban context’.
In order to grasp how the early activities of the IAUS are related to the debates around urban renewal, one should bear in mind that the founding of the IAUS is associated with the Urban Design Group, a department within the New York City Planning Commission of the Mayor Lindsay’s administration. The Urban Design Group was formed by the participants of the team of the School of Architecture of Columbia University that contributed to the projects that were included in the exhibition ‘The New City: Architecture and Urban Renewal’, which was held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA) from 24 January through 13 March 1967 (Drexler, Kassler & Frigand, 1967; Frank, 2012).

A useful comment regarding the impact of the approach of the Team 10 on the curricula of the North-American Schools of Architecture during the late 1960s, is the description of Team 10’s agenda in the catalogue of the exhibition ‘The New City: Architecture and Urban Renewal’: ‘Prominent in the dialogue are members of Team X, a loose group (outgrowth of CIAM) formed in the mid-fifties to explore elusive values of human associations and aspirations that they felt were disregarded in the stratified, over-generalized solutions of modern city planning’ (Drexler, Kassler & Frigand, 1967, 12). Ada Louise Huxtable published an article entitled ‘Planning the New City: Modern Museum Exhibits Projects That Link Esthetics and Sociology’ in New York Times commenting on the aforementioned exhibition (Huxtable, 1967, 39, 45). Reading this article, one suspects that the opinion that

![Figure 3. Architects’ Renewal Committee in Harlem (1968) East Harlem Triangle Plan. Architects’ Renewal Committee in Harlem.](image-url)
urban renewal was able to bridge the gap between aesthetic and social concerns was still dominant within the American society in 1967. That same year, on the other side of the Atlantic, in Italy, *Zodiac* published articles concerning the debates around urban renewal in the North-American cities, such as Richard Hatch’s ‘Urban Renewal in Harlem’ (Hatch, 1967), Giorgio Gaetani’s ‘Notes on the Relationship between Planning and Design in America’ (Gaetani, 1967), and Vincent Scully’s ‘The Threat and the Promise of Urban Redevelopment in New Haven’ (Scully, 1967). Scully, in the aforementioned article, criticized urban renewal, expressing his skepticism regarding its effects. Three years before the publication of this issue of *Zodiac*, *Casabella Continuità*, which was directed at the time by Ernesto N. Rogers, devoted a double issue to the USA. In this issue, which was introduced with the editorial of Ernesto N. Rogers entitled ‘Discontinuità o continuità?’ (Rogers, 1964), particular emphasis was placed on the presentation and analysis of the American Urban Renewal Program.

*Figure 4. Architect J. Max Bond Jr. served as executive director of Architects’ Renewal Committee of Harlem (ARCH). In 1968, ARCH produced this community-oriented design for the 125th Street East Harlem Triangle Plan. Drawing by E. Donald Van Purnell. Courtesy of Arthur Symes.*
In 1968, at Columbia University, which is situated next to Harlem, a strike took place at the School of Architecture. A question that was addressed during this strike was the intention to transform the curriculum of the School of Architecture in a way that would permit to re-evaluate and re-invent the relationship between the education of architecture and the real profession responding to the needs of the social welfare programs of the 1960s.

The emergency of the necessity to re-establish how the curricula of the schools of architecture would respond to social concerns and civicness should be interpreted in relation to the criticisms of the Urban Renewal Program. Important for better grasping the disapproval of the Urban Renewal Program are Jane Jacobs’s *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Jacobs, 1961), and Peter Blake’s *God’s Own Junkyard* (Blake, 1964). Blake, in the latter, related post-war suburbanization to the uglification of American landscape and the decline of the sense of place.

The fact that the School of Architecture of Columbia University was located at a neuralgic point within New York City’s urban fabric should not be underestimated in the framework of this endeavour to comprehend the connections between the disapproval of the Urban Renewal Program and the emergence of Advocacy planning movement, on the one hand, and the student protests at the School of Architecture and the transformations of the pedagogy these latter triggered, on the other.
Within this context, a distinction that acquired a central role is that between the ‘institution’ and the ‘individual’, as Marta Gutman and Richard Plunz highlight in their essay entitled ‘Anatomy of Insurrection’ published in *The Making of an Architect, 1881-1981: Columbia University in the City of New York*. In this essay, Gutman and Plunz remarked that ‘[a]s a whole, very few architecture students were caught up in the emerging New Left criticism of the 1950’s culture [...] even though New York City and Columbia fostered an important part of the movement, around figures such as Herbert C. Marcuse, C. Wright Mills and Paul Goodman’ (Gutman & Plunz, 1981, 183; Charitonidou, 2018).

On 23 April 1968, a group of 300 demonstrators led by Students for a Democratic Society and the Society of Afro-American Students occupied Hamilton Hall (Figure 6 and Figure 7). These demonstrators were opposed to the Morningside General Neighborhood Renewal Plan (GNRP), which was developed by the city of New York Housing and Redevelopment Board (HRB) in 1964, as it is proven by the fact that, before occupying Hamilton Hall, they removed the construction fences around the gym site in Morningside Pak. Two days later, six buildings, including Avery Hall, which as today hosted the School of Architecture, were occupied. Four years earlier, on 5 October 1964, an article entitled ‘New Life for Declining Morningside. Changes Promised by Renewal Plan’ was published in *Columbia Daily Spectator*. One can read in the caption of the image illustrating the renewal site accompanying this article written by Michael Drosnin:

> The ninety-two blocks outlined in white will be the site of the Morningside General Neighborhood Renewal Plan, a project that promises to dramatically change the appearance of the Morningside community. One-third of the area will be razed for new housing. (Drosnin, 1964, 1)

![Figure 6. A scene from the campus-building occupation at Columbia University. Source: Columbia University Archives.](image)
The Department of City Planning at Yale School of Art and Architecture and the Advocacy planning movement

The Department of City Planning at Yale School of Art and Architecture was founded in 1960 and emerged from the city planning program at Yale School of Architecture, which was founded in 1949. During the 1960s, the students of the Department of City Planning at Yale School of Art and Architecture expressed their disapproval against the urban renewal politics characterising the top-down redevelopment in New Haven. The criticisms of the students concerning the top-down redevelopment in New Haven preceded the establishment of the Department of City Planning.

In 1954, Christopher Tunnard established City Planning at Yale, a collection of essays focusing on urban planning issues (Richards, 2017). In 1966, Tunnard was appointed Chair of the Department of City Planning at Yale School of Art and Architecture. After his appointment, the Department of City Planning took distance from urban renewal politics and started supporting advocacy planning movement, favoring the collaboration with communities and rejecting top-down methods. The phase of the Department of City Planning that started with the appointment of Tunnard was related to the intensification of the critique against the involvement of Yale University in urban renewal projects in New Haven. These projects were based on the close collaboration between Yale University and the City of New Haven, which was largely criticized by Tunnard. During this

Figure 7. Document including the demands of the protesters. Source: Columbia University Archives.
same period, the famous advocacy planner C. Richard Hatch was teaching a course entitled ‘Planners and Clients’ at the Department of City Planning at Yale University (Hatch, 1967, 1968).

In the 1950s, before Tunnard’s appointment, Yale University acted as a principal partner and consultant in the city’s urban renewal efforts (Goldstein, 2011; 2017; Goldstein & Cohen, 2017). During this period, Arthur Row was the Chairman at the Department of City Planning at Yale University, a top-down approach concerning urban planning was dominant. As it becomes evident reading the article entitled ‘The Physical Development Plan’ Arthur Row co-authored in 1960 with James H. J. Tate (Row & Tate 1960, 179), he supported top-down strategies in urban planning. This is also apparent in his activities as responsible for Philadelphia’s Physical Development Plan, which was completed in 1960.

During the 1968–1969 academic year, in reaction to the top-down strategies in urban planning, a group of students founded a new governance committee named City Planning Forum. This committee was supported by Tunnard and consisted of all full-time faculty members and students. In dialogue with the civil rights movement, it had as its main purpose to bring greater diversity to the department. The City Planning Forum collaborated with the Black Workshop, which was an activist group formed by ten African American design students in late 1968. Its main aim was to enhance interdisciplinary discourse and was an important component of the quotidian life at the Yale School of Art and Architecture (Dozier, 1971). In the beginning, the Black Workshop was named Black Environmental Studies Team (BEST). It was founded in 1968 by ten students from architecture, urban planning and environmental design, who submitted a proposal for a new course study that would fight against the racial barrier between academy and inner city. The Black Workshop aimed to link the ‘urban crisis’ to the ‘black experience’, and collaborated closely with the architects Don Stull, Max Bond, and Art Symes. During its first year, Richard Dozier was its director. The students that participated to the Black Workshop selected and hired their instructors themselves and set their own educational agendas (Wilkins, 2016, 125).

The Chair of the City Planning Forum was Professor Henry Wexler, who, in spring 1968, issued an official recognition of both the City Planning Forum and Black Workshop. The activities of the City Planning Forum and the Black Workshop played a significant role in the endeavour to challenge the top-down strategies related to urban renewal and contributed to the promotion of advocacy planning strategies. On 12 May 1969, Kingman Brewster Jr., President of Yale University since 1964, met with activist students at the School of Art and Architecture (Figure 8). Some days later, on 27 May 1969, he announced the dissolution of the Department of City Planning, which remains closed until today, and invited Tunnard to leave his position.

In 1968, Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour taught a studio at Yale School of Art and Architecture titled ‘Learning from Las Vegas, or Form Analysis as Design Research’. (Stadler & Stierli, 2015) The fact that the second part of the title of this studio was replaced by the students with ‘The Great Proletarian Cultural Locomotive’ could be interpreted as an expression of the students’s concern about the political aspects of architecture and urban planning.
An important instance concerning the generalized critique against urban renewal strategies during the 1960s, and, especially, during the period that followed the 1968 student protests, is the opposition of a group of architecture students from Yale University, Columbia University, the University of Pennsylvania, MIT, and Harvard University at the New England regional conference of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) on 8 November 1968. Some months earlier, in June 1968, civil rights leader Whitney M. Young Jr., executive director of the National Urban League, had delivered a keynote address at the AIA National Convention in Portland, Oregon.

Figure 8. Yale President Kingman Brewster (center) meeting with activist students at the School of Art and Architecture on 12 May 1969. Students adapted the familiar closed fist motif for their own radical campaigns, portraying it holding a paintbrush and a T-square. Source: Yale Daily News, 16 May 1969. Photograph by Steven Koch.
The emergence of counter-groups of students in the North-American universities as an expression of civiness in architecture

The Architects’ Resistance (TAR) was formed in 1968 by architecture students from Columbia University, MIT, and Yale University. TAR described itself as ‘a communications network, a research group, and an action group . . . concerned about the social responsibility of architects and the framework within which architecture is practiced’.6 (Figure 9) TAR’s engagement with contemporary architecture provided the basis for a radical critique of professional culture and the role of the architect within society. TAR published position papers such as ‘Architecture and Racism’ (Figure 10), ‘Architects and the Nuclear Arms Race’, and ‘Architecture: Whom Does It Serve?’, and organized counter-conferences. TAR declared in one of its position papers: ‘Architecture is not an end in itself but part of an economic, political and social process. The Architects Resistance hopes to bring social and moral conscience to the practice of architecture’. (TAR, 1969; Charitonidou, 2019)

TAR’s ‘alternative meeting’ entitled ‘Design for Nuclear Protection’ held in March 1969 was conceived as a counter-event to an AIA-OCD workshop held in Boston, and had an important impact on academia (Monteyne, 2011). Symptomatic of its popularity is the fact that, it attracted 150 attendants, while the official venue only convoked 12 people (Monteyne, 2011, 225). Another organization that played a major role for the struggle over civil rights for African Americans in the United States was the National Organization of Minority Architecture Students (NOMAS) founded by the African-American architects Wendell Campbell, Nelson Harris, William Brown, Robert

Figure 9. The 1969 ‘Architecture and Racism’ protest organised by TAR in New York City. Photograph by Julie K. Stone.
Wilson, Robert Nash, Leroy Campbell, John S. Chase, Harold Williams, Kenneth Groggs, Jeh Johnson, D. Dodd, and E.H. McDowell in Detroit, Michigan, in 1971 during the AIA National Convention. The main purpose of this organisation was to defend the rights of minority design professionals and fight for policies that condoned discrimination.

The emergence of process-oriented urban planning strategies in Italy as an epistemological shift

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Italy entered the so-called ‘miracolo economico’. According to Giorgio Piccinato, Italy was dominated until the mid-1960s by the so-called ‘blue print planning’ (Piccinato, 2010). However, during the 1960s and 1970s, town-planning strategies were transformed significantly. These mutations aimed to respond to the dynamic transformation of the Italian society. Representative of this reorientations in town planning strategies is the emergence of a process-oriented new school under the label ‘plan-process’ (‘piano processo’). Note-worthy is the fact that this new school was focused on economic programming, placing more emphasis on parameters such as density, building ratios and percentages of development than on conventional urban planning methods. In parallel, the emergence of this new tendency was related to the intensification of the interest in methods of quantitative analysis concerning the social and spatial aspects of urban planning. A protagonist role within this context of development of new town planning approaches had Italian urban planner, architect and educator Giovanni Astengo, who taught in Venice at the time (Astengo, 1951).
According Piccinato, ‘[a]s the popularity of social democracy declined in Europe, the United States became the obligatory point of reference for new town planners’ (Piccinato, 2010, 248). Piccinato related this shift to the replacement of ‘a historically moralist attitude’ towards urban planning with a stance that was conceived as that of a ‘perfectly neutral scientist’ (Piccinato, 2010, 249).

The publication of the Piano Regolatore Generale di Roma (PRG) in 1962 and the role of the Comitato di Elaborazione Tecnica (CET), which was active since 1954, should be understood as expressions of this epistemological shift in urban planning strategies in Italy during the late 1950s and early 1960s. The PRG of 1962 was openly opposed to the 1931 Fascist plan and was preceded by intense debates concerning the establishment of new urban development strategies that exploded during the 1950s. Important for the controversies around the new master plan of Rome was the founding, in 1960, of ‘Codice dell’Urbanistica’, which was a program that the Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica (INU) launched in order to respond to the need of new urban planning strategies. This program aimed to establish new relationships between urban planning methods and economic growth on a national level. The Roman group Architetti e Urbanisti Associati (AUA), which was a design and research collective formed by Lucio Barbera, Giorgio Bertolini, Sergio Bracco, Alessandro Calzabini, Massimo La Perna, Claudio Maroni, Gianfranco Moneta, Maurizio Moretti, Vieri Quilici, Bernardo Rossi Doria, Stefano Ray, Lidia Soprani, Manfredo Tafuri and Massimo Teodori, strongly disagreed with the INU and its members rejected the incorporation of private sponsors and contractors in the management of urban plans. AUA participated in many national competitions during the 1960s such as that for the new Centro Direzionale in Turin in 1962.

The AUA was interested in contributing to the transformation of the institutional status of urban planning through their involvement in the debates developed in the framework not only of the university but of the Istituto nazionale di urbanistica (INU), Italia nostra and the competitions for Regularory Plans (Piani Regolatori) and Directional Centers (Centri Direzionali) as well. The AUA participated in many competitions. As Andrew Leach remarks in his PhD dissertation entitled Choosing History: A Study of Manfredo Tafuri’s Theorisation of Architectural History and Architectural History Research, ‘[a]fter the 1962 publication of the Piano Regolatore Generale di Roma (PRG), the AUA perceived the necessity for political party affiliation’ (Leach, 2006, 21). Tafuri noted regarding this issue:

As the Comitato dei tecnici socialisti, we had conducted an autonomous struggle against the botched results of the regulatory plan, in parallel to the campaign of the AUA. When the first centro-sinistra government revealed itself to be a failure, I had a crisis and didn’t feel that I could go on. I remained in the Partito socialista, but I couldn’t support their position with respect to the regulatory plan for Rome. (Tafuri, 2000, 25-26, 29; 1963, 45)

**The Associazione Studenti e Architetti and the transformation of the institutional status of urban planning**

Manfredo Tafuri took part in the debates on the regulatory plans (piani regolatori). In the early 1960s, before concentrating his work on historical research, Tafuri was a member of the Associazione Studenti e Architetti (ASEA), which was a student group at the Faculty of
Architecture of Sapienza University. As we can understand reading the founding manifesto of the ASEA, published in 1959 and signed by a number of students including Tafuri, the main intention of this group was to ‘reconnect, in historical terms, to the moral, social and cultural premises that inform the Modern Movement’. In order to grasp the impact that this group had on the reorientation of the pedagogical strategies at the Faculty of Architecture of Sapienza University, we should bear in mind that Dean Saul Greco had authorized the teaching of a ‘parallel course’ in urban planning by the ASEA. During the period that the ASEA was active, many student protests had taken place at the Faculty of Architecture of Sapienza University. The first occupation at the Faculty of Architecture of Sapienza University in which Tafuri was involved took place in 1958. Tafuri also participated in a “60-day occupation of the Faculty of Architecture in 1963 that resulted in Zevi, Quaroni and Luigi Piccinato being called to Rome as new professors” (Leach, 2002). Five years later, on 1 March 1968, a battle between the students and the police around the Faculty of Architecture of Sapienza University in Valle Giulia in Rome took place.

The situation in different cities of Italy was similar. For instance, the students’ occupation of the 15th Triennale di Milano in 1968, and the non-institutionalized event ‘Utopia e/o Rivoluzione’ at the Politecnico di Torino in 1969 were also related to the rejection of the concept of ‘nuova dimensione’. The intention to rediscover reality’s immediacy, the ‘locus’ and the civic dimension of the architects’ role were at the centre of the debates and should be interpreted in conjunction with the vision for a non-capitalist logic of education. Tafuri, between 1964 and 1965, while working as teaching assistant of Ludovico Quaroni at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Rome ‘La Sapienza’, taught a course entitled ‘La storia dell’architettura moderna alla luce dei problemi attuali’.

The concepts of ‘città territorio’ and ‘nuova dimensione’ as components of a new research program

The concept of ‘città territorio’ emerged during a workshop entitled ‘La città territorio’. Un esperimento didattico sul Centro direzionale di Centocelle in Roma organized by Carlo Aymonino in 1962 (Figure 12). The publication that brought together collected the outcomes of this workshop was published in 1964 in the series ‘Problemi della nuova dimensione’ (Aymonino et al., 1964). In the framework of this workshop, a panel on ‘città territorio’ was held. Vierio Samonà, Ludovico Quaroni, Carlo Aymonino, and Vieri Quilici were among the contributors to this panel. The concept of ‘città territorio’ is more Italian than that of ‘città regione’, which was significantly influenced by the American context given that Regions in Italy were officially established in 1970 despite the fact that the Regions were included in the Constitution of 1948 and the issues related to regional planning had already been dealt with in the Planning Law of 1942. The intensification of the concern about the notions of ‘città territorio’ and ‘nuova dimensione’ was related to the shift from the interest in the historical city to the concern about territory. This reorientation, which took place in the 1950s and 1960s, was expressed through the emergence of a variety of competitions for Directional Centers. Centri Direzionali as programs were perceived as mediating mechanisms between city and territory. An important instance for understanding how the suburbanization of the
post-war Italian cities was conceptualized is the meeting of the Istituto Nazionale Urbanistica of 1959, during which, a debate around the notion of ‘la nuova dimensione’ with main participants Giancarlo de Carlo and Ludovico Quaroni unfolded.

The intensification of the interest in the concept of ‘nuova dimensione’ was linked to the awareness that urban systems are at a state of permanent transition. The issue of new dimension (nuova dimensione) was also addressed at a conference entitled ‘La nuova

Figure 11. Broadsheet of the “Utopia e/o Rivoluzione” meeting in Casabella 337 (June 1969).
dimensione della città’ (‘The New Dimension of the City’), organized in January 1962 by Giancarlo de Carlo in the framework of the Istituto Lombardo per gli Studi Economici e Sociali (ILSES) in the town of Stresa on Lago Maggiore (Istituto lombardo per gli studi economici e sociali, 1962). De Carlo defined the new city as a ‘whole of dynamic relationships . . . a territorial galaxy of specialized settlements’ (Tafuri, 1986, 98). The concept of the ‘research program’ in the work of Imre Lakatos, and especially the approach he develops in his seminal book entitled The Methodology in Scientific Research Programmes (Lakatos, 1978) with an emphasis on his understanding of ‘research program’ as a basic unit of scientific progress and of science as an ongoing competition among research programs would be useful for understanding the emergence for the interest in ‘la città territorio’ and ‘la nuova dimensione’ in Italy in the early 1960s. Lakatos’s theory was adapted to architecture by Anderson, in ‘Architectural Design as a System of Research Programs’ (Anderson, 1984). Anderson’s approach in the aforementioned article was based on the ‘adoption of Lakatos’s belief that growth of knowledge does not depend on isolated theories, but on series of theories’ (Hernandez, 2018, 221). Anderson’s approach is founded on the premises that, firstly, certain architectural research programs are more ‘progressive’ or robust than others, and, secondly, ‘[c] onventions of architectural production are epistemologically compelling only insofar as they involve considerations of relevant alternatives to the beliefs they support and the worlds they construct’ (Hays, 1998, 490).

Casabella Continuità’s issue of June 1962 was devoted to New Directional Centers (Centri Direzionali) in Italy (Figure 13) and included Aldo Rossi’s article entitled ‘Nuovi problemi’ (Rossi, 1962), Carlo Aymonino’s ‘Il sistema dei centri direzionali nella capitale’ (Aymonino, 1962) and Mandredo Tafuri’s ‘Studi e ipotesi di lavoro per il sistema direzionale di Roma’ (Tafuri, 1962). Giorgio Piccinato, Vieri Quilici and Mandredo Tafuri’s article entitled ‘La città territorio: verso una nuova dimensione’ (Figure 14) was published in the issue of Casabella Continuità of December 1962 that was devoted to ‘Città e regione: problemi e documenti’. In this article that was written by the AUA, the authors claimed that ‘the term of città territorio indicates already a change of scale in the structure survey, and not just a different visual angle’ (Piccinato, Quilici & Tafuri, 1962, 16). They referred to the conference entitled ‘La nuova dimensione della città (‘The New Dimension of the City’) that Giancarlo de Carlo organized in 1962.

Tafuri, Piccinato and Quilici conceived the ‘città territorio’ as a tool and an open form aiming to grasp the mutations of urban fabric, on the one hand, and to incorporate the complexity if the new network of transportation and the expanding flows of the suburbanized city, on the other. They highlighted the ideological value of the ‘città-terriotrio’, maintaining that ‘the city, considered as the highest social and cultural concentration, empowering political and social energies, can only be considered as the best tool for those who intend to act on its structures and institutions that are concretized in it’ (Piccinato, Quilici & Tafuri, 1962, 25). Two articles that are of great importance for understanding the debates around the concepts of ‘città territorio’ and ‘nuova dimensione’ during the sixties in Italy are Tafuri’s article entitled ‘La nuova dimensione urbana e la funzione dell’utopia’ (‘The new urban dimension and the function of utopia’), published in L’architettura. Cronache e storia in 1966 (Tafuri, 1966) and ‘Il problema dei centri storici all’interno della nuova dimensione cittadina’ (‘The problem of historical centers within the new city dimension’), published two years earlier in La Città territorio. Un esperimento didattico sul Centro direzionale di Centocelle in Roma (Tafuri, 1964).
The examination of the questions addressed in the framework of seminar on ‘La città-territorio’ held at the University of Rome, in 1963, are important for understanding the efforts to invent new tools and concepts for analyzing the urban dynamic of post-war Italian cities and their expanding suburbs. The interest for the concept of ‘la città-territorio’ was closely linked to the re-organization of the Faculty of Architecture of Sapienza University.

Figure 12. C. Aymonino et al. (1964). La Città territorio. Un esperimento didattico sul Centro direzionale di Centocelle in Roma. Leonardo da Vinci editrice, Problemi della nuova dimensione series.

Figure 13. Front cover of Casabella Continuità’s issue of June 1962 that was devoted to New Directional Centers in Italy.
The Corso sperimentale di preparazione urbanistica in Arezzo

During the same period that important changes in the pedagogical curriculum and the institutional structure of the Faculty of Architecture of Sapienza University were taking place and the concerns about the notions of ‘città territorio’ and ‘nuova dimensione’ were acquiring central place in the epistemological debates in Italy, Adriano Olivetti’s “Movimento Comunità” was trying to shape new tools intending to enhance social awareness, on the one hand, and to promote the interaction between technology, sociology and political sciences, on the other (Serafini, 2015; Iglieri, 2019; Cadeddu, 2012). These new tools were based on the faith in the potential of the re-conceptualization of territory. Within this context, the Olivetti Foundation organized the Corso sperimentale di preparazione urbanistica in Arezzo in 1963. This experimental course is of pivotal importance for understanding the questions dominating the debates regarding urban dynamics. This event was among the first teaching experiences of Aldo Rossi, who at the time was working as assistant of Carlo Aymonino at the Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia (IUAV) and had joined since 1955 the editorial staff of Casabella-Continuità. Ludovico Quaroni, Giancarlo de Carlo and Manfredo Tafuri were also among the participants to the course. As Pier Vittorio Aureli mentions, ‘[t]he theme of the advanced course was the updating of the discipline in the face of the changes that had occurred within Italian cities and their surrounding territory under the pressure of the economic boom of the 1950s and early 1960s and the accompanying of the poor south to the industrialized north’ (Aureli, 2009, 59).

Italy’s economic miracle ‘(miracolo economico), which lasted from 1957 to 1963, as Mary Louise Lobsinger remarks, provoked ‘[t]he re-calibration of architecture to the scale of the city and the re-dimensioning of the city, as a geographic territory’ by the
architects, who aimed to respond to ‘the dramatic transformations of Italian cities, particularly of Milan, Turin, Genoa and Rome during the late 1950s and early 1960s’ (Lobsinger, 2002, 230). The objective of the experimental course in Arezzo was to conceptualize the ‘new urban dimension’, which had provoked the emergence of many new conceptual tools and neologisms. Among these neologisms, one could mention ‘urbatecture’, which would be, in 1979, mobilized by Manfredo Tafuri ‘to describe the large infrastructural projects Italian architects produced in the early 1960s’ (Lobsinger, 2002, 225; Tafuri, 1979, 140). As it becomes apparent from how the debates evolved during the Arezzo seminar, Rossi rejected the concept of ‘la città-territorio’, which was promoted by Manfredo Tafuri, Giorgio Piccinato and Vieri Quilici – all members of the AUA, which dissolved a year later, in 1964 – in ‘La città-territorio verso una nuova dimensione’ (Piccinato, Quilici & Tafuri, 1962). Rossi’s urban theory was focused on the concept of the ‘locus’ instead of that of ‘la nuova dimensione’. In contrast with Rossi, Quaroni and De Carlo, along with Tafuri, were positive towards the notion of ‘la città-territorio’. One of the reasons for which Rossi refused to endorse the idea of ‘la città-territorio’ was his conviction that the latter disregarded the importance of the individuality of the urban artifact.

The same year that the Arezzo seminar was held, in 1963, Bruno Zevi gave a talk entitled ‘The Culture of the Cities’ at the 93rd Convention of the American Institute of Architects in Philadelphia devoted to ‘Re-designing Urban America’. In this address, Zevi commented on the ‘interaction of different architectural tendencies in [...] city-making’ and analyzed ‘the architects’ role in the process of shifting from city planning to city making and the philosophy of urban renewal’. He insisted on the necessity of ‘urban renewal’ and underlined that the mechanisms to address this renewal should be in accordance with the specificity of the context. More specifically, he claimed: ‘As for urban renewal, it is needed in Los Angeles and Detroit just as much as in Rome, and Venice, but its meaning is totally different here and there’ (Zevi, 1961, 47).

The Centre-Left national coalition was focused on economic programming and urban planning, placing more emphasis on the quantitative rather than on the qualitative characteristics of urban expansion. During the Arezzo seminar, Manfredo Tafuri, Giancarlo De Carlo and Ludovico Quaroni, in contrast with Aldo Rossi, supported the concept of ‘città territorio’. Rossi rejected the concepts of ‘city territory’ (‘città territorio’), ‘network’ and ‘open project’ because he believed that the potential of the creative forces of architectural and urban design were embedded in the form-making of architectural objects and that the above-mentioned concepts did not permit to grasp the architectural forms in their concreteness. Moreover, he maintained that the starting point should be the design of well-defined and determined architectural forms and not the abstract, quantitatively oriented procedures of urban analysis. Apart from Aldo Rossi, Claudio Greppi and Alberto Pedrolli, who were studying at the School of Architecture in Florence at the time and supported Operaism, were also opposed to the concept of ‘città territorio’, as it becomes evident in their article entitled ‘Produzione e programmazione territoriale’ (‘Production and territorial planning’), published in Quaderni rossi. In this article, Greppi and Pedrolli blamed criticised the concept of ‘città territorio’, arguing that it was an expression of a general tendency of capitalist instrumentalization of urban design. More specifically, they claimed:
the obsolete concept of the self-sufficient satellite city still reacting to a static relationship between city and countryside is replaced by the city-territory, understood as a structure that organizes the totality of the urban territory in order to make it more productive. (Greppi & Pedrolli, 1963)

**Architecture’s semi-autonomy: typological criticism and urban dynamics**

The epistemological shifts that characterized the Italian and American contexts during the 1960s concerns the efforts of architectural discipline to adapt to the transformations related to the fact that the new scale of reference became the territory instead of the city. These epistemological mutations regarding the change of the scale of reference were related to the need of re-inventing the social scope of architecture. Within this context, the role of the university and especially of the schools of architecture in society appeared as problematic and as an issue that should urgently be reinvented. Manfredo Tafuri was a figure that had a protagonist role in this effort to transform the institutional status of the schools of architecture with the objective to make the curriculum and the pedagogical vision compatible with the re-invented society. His decision to take distance from design and to dedicate himself solely to history is treated here as a key moment for understanding what was at stake in the reorientation concerning urban planning and the institutional status of the schools of architecture in Italy in the 1960s. In the beginning of his career, Tafuri was involved in several design projects such as that for the competition for the National Library in Rome after the invitation of the Italian architect and historian Leonardo Benevolo in 1959. At the time, Tafuri was still student. The project in which Tafuri participated won the first prize. As it becomes evident in his following words, Tafuri at a specific moment decided to ‘dedicate [himself] […] entirely to history’:

> One tragic night I was miserable because I had to decide between practice and history. I remember I was sweating, walking around, fell ill, had a fever. At the end, in the morning, I had decided, and that was it! I gave up all the tools of architecture and determined to dedicate myself entirely to history. What kind of history I didn’t know, but I knew at that moment that it should be history. (Tafuri, 2000, 30-31)

Pivotal for understanding the reasons for which Tafuri lost his faith in the concept of the ‘città territorio’ and the potential of design are his following words:

> Given the tasks that the constructive effort of the architect faces solely on the basis of hope stemming from his desire to design, ambiguity, to become acceptable, must translate into communicative value, into semantic structure, a figurative index closed within itself. (Tafuri, 1964)

Both Peter Eisenman and Manfredo Tafuri started their careers with the wish to address issues related to urban scale. In the beginning of their careers, both believed in the capacity of urban planning to change the social structure of society, but very soon left behind this faith in design to transform social relations. Eisenman turned himself to the so-called autonomous architecture, which was initiated with the design of his famous House series, while Tafuri decided to devote himself to history. Eisenman and Tafuri played a key role in the way the discipline of architecture evolved. The reorientation of their trajectories is symptomatic of more general epistemological mutations. In order to
interpret their reorientation, Louis Althusser’s approach could be useful, and, more specifically, the concept of ‘semi-autonomy’, introduced by the French thinker, in his seminal article ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards and Investigation)’ (Althusser, 1970, 2002), could help us better understand the aforementioned epistemological shift. Althusser’s theory could shed light on the fact that architecture is ‘semi-autonomous’ in the sense that it ‘is never fully disconnected from the heteronomous set of conditions from which it came into being’ (Avermaete, 2011, 219). Althusser argues, in ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards and Investigation)’, that architecture has its own internal logic which is full of contradictions. Althusser’s belief that ‘architectural practice develops according to different logics and rationales than social and political practices’ (Avermaete, 2011, 220) is revealing in the sense that it can help us better comprehend the reasons for which Eisenman and Tafuri rejected their faith in the potential of architecture to re-articulate social relations.

Despite the fact that both Eisenman and Tafuri decided to dedicate their practice to questions that are not based on the conviction that through architectural and urban design one can address social issues, they kept on believing in the capacity of their work to address issues concerning the role of architecture as a node of complex institutional networks. Their ideology could be interpreted through Althusser’s claim that architecture’s critical capacity lies in the very contradiction between autonomy and heteronomy in the sense that ‘[t]he encounter between autonomous and heteronomous aspects of architecture engenders uncertainty, dissonance and contradiction – and thereby opens a field for critical reflection’ (Avermaete, 2011, 220). Tafuri’s elaboration of the concept of ‘typological criticism’ in Teoria e storia dell’architettura (Tafuri, 1968) could be interpreted as an expression of his intention to problematize the shift of the terrain within which the architects operated. In parallel, it suggested that architectural design has a critical potential that lies in the capacity of the non-abstract materialization of architectural forms to have, under certain circumstances, an impact on urban dynamics and to grasp potential urban situations.

**Towards a conclusion: The tension between enhancing equality in planning process and local bureaucracy**

The epistemological mutations in the American and Italian context that are analysed in this article should be situated within a broader context of interest in participation during the sixties and seventies. Interesting cases in this regard are International Laboratory of Architecture and Urban Design (ILAUD) in Italy (De Carlo, 1991; Borasi, 2015), the Atelier de recherche et d’action urbaines (ARAU) in Belgium (Borasi, 2015) and the Serviço Ambulatório de Apoio Local (SAAL) in Portugal (David, 1976).

Regarding the American context, ARCH, TAR, Black Workshop, City Planning Forum, and NOMAS’s aspirations to democratize urban planning should be understood within the context of the struggle over civil rights for African Americans in the United States in the 1960s. A paradox underlying their efforts is the fact that, despite their intention to broaden opportunities in participation, they were based on policies that maintained the centrality of federal aid and the prominence of professional expertise. President Johnson launched a ‘War on Poverty’ in pursuit of his ‘Great Society’. ARCH and City Planning Forum’s strategies, to a certain extent, were aligned with the ambition of President Johnson’s Great Society to renew citizens’ role. They were characterized by
a tension between the intention of advocacy planning approaches to bring equality into the planning process and the risk of being co-opted by a local bureaucracy or a more powerful interest group. Davidoff, had already, in 1965, discerned the opposition between 'bureaucratic control' and 'the demands for increased concern for the unique requirements of local, specialized interests' (Davidoff, 1965, 332). However, his intention to support both ‘the welfare of all and the welfare of minorities’ (Davidoff, 1965, 332) shows that advocacy planning was trapped between the non-flexibility of bureaucracy and the idealistic vision of equality.

Regarding the Italian context, concepts such the ‘città-terriotrio’ were the outcome of a necessity to relate urban planning to its accompanying social, cultural, and political aspects and to reveal the empowerment that this relation can promote. The rejection of the concept of the ‘nuova dimensione’ through events such as the students’ occupation of the 15th Triennale di Milano in 1968, and the ‘Utopia e/o Rivoluzione’ at the Politecnico di Torino in 1969 should be understood within the context of a more generalised epistemological shift. These reorientations should be interpreted bearing in mind that democracy is neither ‘a form of government nor a style of social life’, but ‘an act of political subjectivation that disturbs the police order by polemically calling into question the aesthetic coordinates of perception, thought, and action’ (Rancière, 1995, 1999, 87). Jacques Rancière’s understanding of democracy is useful for grasping why aesthetic and political coordinates are so closely interconnected.

ASEA’s intention to shed light on ‘the moral, social and cultural premises that inform the Modern Movement’ is not far from ARCH, TAR, Black Workshop, City Planning Forum, and NOMAS’s aspirations to democratize urban planning should be understood within the context of African Americans’ struggles for civil rights in the United States in the 1960s. The fact that several organisations and groups emerged within the contexts of prestigious universities and their aspiration to bridge the profession and the education shows that the emergence of counter-events, counter-publications and new modes of collectivities influenced significantly the institutional status of academia. It also invites us to reflect upon the necessity to reshape the urban planning models in order to respond to the call for a more democratic society. Even if certain of the struggles for civil rights of the aforementioned groups and organisations did not meet with much success, a systematic study of their modes of disseminating knowledge and of reinventing the professional and academic agendas would be revealing regarding the way activism can reinvent the relationship between architecture and democracy.

Notes

1. A proposal from the IAUS to the New York Urban League urging them to incorporate a model study of Harlem city blocks into their program. 19 September 1968. Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Gift of Eisenman Architects. AP057.S2.SS2.ARCH272386
2. Casabella Continuità, 294–295 (1964).
3. Another project proposal from the IAUS to the New York Urban League arguing for a new form of educational mechanism, based on the success of the Street Academies program, to break down racial barriers in architecture and encourage minorities to lead local planning projects. 1968. Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Gift of Eisenman Architects. AP057.S2.SS2.ARCH272388
4. Proposal for the Streets study, advocating for case studies of physical forms in the urban environment to establish design methods, vocabulary, and criteria across stakeholders in urban planning projects. Twelve-page document. 1970. Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies funds, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Gift of Eisenman Architects. AP057.S2.SS2.ARCH272391

5. 'Statement Read to the New England Area AIA Conference', Novum Organum, 1 (1968).

6. TAR, press release, ca. 1968.

7. 'Associazione studenti e architetti', L’Architettura cronache e storia, 45 (1959), 211.

8. 'Associazione studenti e architetti', L’Architettura cronache e storia, 45 (1959), 211.

9. "Feticismo dell’utopia. Dagli utopiste dell’inizio del XIX secolo, precursori della critica radicale, agli utopiste speculativi." Marcatré Rivista di Cultura Contemporanea, 50/55 numero monografico dedicato al convegno Utopia e/o rivoluzione.

10. Adriano Olivetti established the political-cultural movement “Movimento Comunità” in 1947 in Ivrea, which dissolved in 1961, after his death.

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