"The City Is the Best Teacher": A Review of the Educating City in Europe and China

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Abstract The Athenians thought that a city, understood as a community made up of people with different needs and potential, had the primary task of educating its citizens, in order to favour their harmonious integration in the polis and their active participation in the polis' life. From this cultural perspective, admirably synthesized by Plutarch through the expression "the city is the best teacher," we can trace the roots of the current concept of the educating city. This article aims to explore the various dimensions of the educating city concept, by demonstrating, how only cities that are able to activate different educational processes (formal and informal) can be authentic vehicles of social integration. In this direction, the city, on the one hand, can realize every person's potential, abilities, and rights to the lifelong education; on the other hand, the city can promote the community identity itself, as well as the self-construction of the sense of community. This, also through innovative conceptual proposals for overcoming the relational and aesthetic poverty of the metropolis form of the contemporary city, fosters the perception of the city as a highly complex living organism.

Keywords educating city; lifelong education; extra-scholastic spaces; social integration; metropolis form

1. Literature review: educating city and lifelong education

The idea of an educating city has a long history dating back to ancient Greece. According to Plato, the education of citizens aimed at involving the individual in the life and growth of the city/polis, while the city itself helped to educate its citizens and develop their potential. That idea, along with the project of the educating city, is also presented elsewhere and thereafter varying, of course, in different contexts and historical periods.

However, the concept of the educating city, which was followed by and adhered to the current learning city (Longworth, 2006), was developed in a framework of lifelong education (Piazza, 2013), and the latter clearly emerged during the 1960s, within the debate regarding adult education.

After World War II, a hope flourished to eliminate illiteracy and all difficulties that limited human and democratic development. Likewise, the need arose to set adult education within a wider context than that of merely fighting illiteracy, even though that need was considered as a crucial goal. An initial response to the issue was made by UNESCO at the Second World Conference on Adult Education, held in Montreal in 1960. At the conference, it finally became clear that adult education was a vital and integral part of every national system of education, following education for children and young persons. Therefore, the educational process was for the first time conceived as a continuous, and lifelong process. The ensuing proposal attempted to overcome uniquely school-oriented educational approaches, with the aim of meeting the needs of a constantly changing society (Mencarelli, 1964; UNESCO, 1960).

On the one hand, adult education represented a space where the concept of lifelong education was acknowledged and from which it spread. On the other hand, three years after the publication of the manifesto of lifelong education (Lengrand, 1965), the latter separated itself from the issue of adult education, even within the context of UNESCO, during the General Conference in 1968 (UNESCO, 1968). Lifelong education has ever since been considered as a whole set of educational processes, which also includes initial children's education and adult education, and involves the individual's whole existence and entire personality dimensions (Lorenzetto, 1976).

The history of lifelong education continued with its consecration in the report by UNESCO titled *Learning to Be* (1972). It highlighted the educational ability of a society, conceived as an educating community, seeking to face the current challenges of the times and those in the future concerning the universal right to learn and to educate oneself during one's lifetime. The original French version of the report included a direct reference to the expression "cité educative" (educating city). This document validates the opening observation in this paper: in order to stress the need for school to be supported by the city in its educational role, the report quotes Plutarch, "the city is the best teacher" and, above all, "the city educated the citizens. The Athenians were educated by its culture, by paideia" (p. 62).

Moreover, along with the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) report titled *Recurrent Education* (1973), the relationship between education and the city took on a pivotal

role in the development strategies of the city itself and that stimulated the specific promotion of educating cities. By doing so, emphasis was placed on the concept of total education, typical of lifelong education, and on giving priority to different levels of educational integration. That was the starting point of the first international congress on educating cities held in Barcelona in 1990 (nowadays the International Association of Educating Cities includes 502 cities worldwide).

To sum up, lifelong education, on which the considerations on the educating city are placed, stands for total education, because it does not separate childhood, adolescence, and adult pedagogy, nor formal and informal levels of education. It is complete, because it refers to the homogeneity of the individual, of one's existence and of educational processes. Its main focus is people and their unlimited expressive and communicative possibilities. Lifelong education places its hopes in human growth inside a community characterized by active participation and active citizenship, and by the pursuit of a common good, as well as in the ethical and critic-creative forces that belong to human beings. Furthermore, it requires social, political, and institutional commitment to meeting everyone's right to education at all times and in any place. Ultimately, lifelong education is a leading, normative, and regulating idea useful to set up an educating society, which can limit the effects of many narrow approaches and reductive anthropological perspectives, in favour of that truly human development (Cropley, 1979; Dozza and Ulivieri, 2016; Lengrand, 1970; Schwartz et al., 2009; Suchodolski, 1992).

From this perspective, starting from the original idea of the educating city and up to attention presently devoted to it, there have been no changes in the need to consider the city as a place capable of promoting the lifelong education of its citizens and of benefiting from the spread of learning availability. The principle on which this necessity is grounded and which supports such need, is that people who have educational needs and potential should be able to be satisfied in the place where they live, thanks to the educating commitment of the community and its contribution to the creation and realization of educational processes.

Thus, the educating city is an anthropological place opposed to a no-place (Augé, 1992). It is a home, neither anonymous nor featuring the ethnology of loneliness. It embraces its citizens both to meet their need for complete fulfillment and to achieve their own enrichment through unfailing educational care. In this regard, by looking beyond the merely economic functionalist outcomes, while focusing on the educational purposes of a new morality and of learning humanism (Osborne, Kearns, and Yang, 2013) – as the Beijing declaration invokes (UNESCO, 2013) – it may be easier to realize the positive consequences of an educating city in terms of intellectual and cultural growth, active citizenship, improved social cohesion and reaction to global changes, and an increase in personal and community well-being (Longworth and Osborne, 2010).[①]

However, those consequences may occur if the concept of the educating city is accomplished not by reducing the role of school education (Mottana and Campagnoli, 2016), but rather by implementing educational integration proposals like the ones mentioned above. When most attention and efforts were devoted to the issue, relevant departments might publish several works that led to the recognition of primary goals: ① the creation of an integrated educational system, in which school would be supported by the city, the latter being conceived as a "large educational classroom and an educational laboratory" (Frabboni, 1991: 35); ② the collaboration between urbanism, architecture, and pedagogy (Gennari, 1989), so that both schools and the city could be turned into spaces in tune with the educational needs of people of all ages, starting from the youngest.

Therefore, an educating city is not only a city capable of harmonizing different educational and training operators, of involving the whole community in the learning and educational process of its inhabitants in a lifelong approach, and of affecting such process by expanding and consolidating its cultural opportunities as well as its means of communication, education, and learning. Indeed, the educating city is also a city that thinks over its urban areas and their design in pedagogical terms, ensuring the availability of its physical space, hosting indoor and outdoor educational events which enable the city itself to be rediscovered, and understood anew from an educational perspective.

2. Innovative school: an important element of educating city

One of the privileged contexts, which should apply the "philosophy" of educating city, is the school. In the past, schools, which were built to deal with mass education, were characterized by static and teacher-centred classrooms designed to maintain discipline and to suit a learning model that involved the teacher transmitting knowledge. The basic structure of such schools included classrooms with the teacher's desk on a dais and pupils' desks arranged in parallel rows and large connecting corridors (Meda, 2016). Spaces conceived in this way, however, do little to provide effective answers to the challenges posed by today's knowledge society.

Firstly, today's schools must cater for a range of teaching and learning methods (e.g., plenary, individual, group, with or without technology, inside and outside the classroom) based on active student involvement and on interaction with the local community. Secondly, schools are being called upon to broaden their educational offerings, which can no longer be limited to a lesson timetable, but must include extra-curricular activities that cover the whole day and meet the varied needs of both pupils and the local community. Another major issue is that schools are now competing with other educational institutions, sometimes implicitly, at others less so. This scenario means that school spaces need to be redesigned to become flexible and adaptable environments that can support the extension of educational services and opening times and accommodate a growing number of users (i.e., the school population and citizenship) (Gennari, 1997).

The need to place greater focus on the layout of learning spaces and furniture has a long history and has fuelled the educational experiences and thinking of prominent theorists, such as Maria Montessori, Célestin Freinet, and John Dewey who believed, each with his/her own approach, that the school environment was a decisive factor in a student's education. Both Montessori and Freinet stressed that architects and educational theorists needed to work together to create school spaces and furniture that supported new pedagogical approaches. This was a very modern idea and anticipated "educational architecture," which "centres upon the person and his/her originality, uniqueness, and relationality, factors that link the two disciplines" (Marcarini, 2014: 165).

In recent years, school spaces have been the subject of international research, which has produced some interesting results. For example, greater focus has been placed on the correlation between school spaces and learning outcomes, with several studies, such as Clever Classrooms at the University of Salford (Manchester, UK), showing that pupil performance improves considerably when classrooms are beautiful, colourful, and welcoming (Barrette et al., 2015). Numerous international projects, including ones run by the OECD (2013) and the European Schoolnet (Future Classroom Lab), have helped change the traditional concept of schools and classrooms by highlighting the need to design new learning environments where teachers not only impart knowledge, but pupils develop skills with educational methods which benefit increasingly from technology and continuous interaction with the outside world.

A number of governments – in Portugal (Parque Escolar), England (Building Schools for the Future) and Victoria State, Australia (Building the Education Revolution) (OECD, 2012) – have tried to adapt to this new concept of school spaces by implementing national plans for school buildings. Generally, governments have proposed non-prescriptive guidelines which have introduced the idea that, regardless of the results of each case, schools are spaces to be "experienced in all effects and purposes" and they therefore need to be designed in accordance with "the latest parameters of eco-sustainability, energy-saving, ventilation, acoustics, lighting, and use of colour" (Borri, 2016: 121).

In terms of achievements, two main approaches have been established. One is the "top-down approach," which is prevalent in English-speaking countries and involves a team of experts applying predefined templates and standardized schemes. The other is the "bottom-up approach," which envisages planning by students, teachers, and architects, with the occasional involvement of educational theorists and experts. This approach is adopted principally in northern Europe.

Further afield, community schools and community centres in the United States are particularly interesting as they are examples of close interaction between schools, communities, and the local area, with schools hosting activities and services for students and citizens. In Europe, this idea of a school open to the local area is at its most complete in the civic centre, which is inspired by the philosophy behind smart cities and is an eco-sustainable urban domain designed to offer citizens efficient and quality services, where schools act as catalysts and generators of knowledge. In China, the concept of lifelong education and learning cities are not only popular in the academic research but also become an action of national and local governments. The open university is one of the actions performed in many cities, to maximize the diverse functions of schools (Tao, 2018).

Trends in international research and planning in the field of school buildings are demonstrating how schools of the future should be built not only on the contribution of technicians, but on continuous dialogue between a range of professionals. This combination is needed to intercept the multiple needs of school users and today's society, both of which call for dynamic and multifunctional schools designed to be experienced as spaces for study, free-time, dialogue, and inclusion, even after the pupils have gone home. "Inclusive schools," however, do not only mean to think about "pupils with special needs," but all members of the school ecosystem and beyond to the extent that schools embrace the entire local community (Tosi, 2016). Only in this direction can schools become active spaces of a

city projected to be really educating.

3. Maker space: a new space improving the innovative learning environment in the educating city

Nowadays, the boundaries between the formal and informal education is not that clear. Schools, museums, and maker spaces are all important and innovative learning environments for the educating city.

With the development of digital technologies, maker spaces became a very popular informal education space in the world. A maker space presents readily available materials that can act as a provocation for inquiry, as well as modern technology and items to invent with. Maker spaces are also referred to as hackerspaces or hacklabs, which are community-operated work places for people with common interests in computers, machining, technology, science, digital art or electronic art to do a project together (Niaros, 2017). The fundamental characters of maker spaces include: sharing, solidarity, and cooperation; distrust of authority, that is opposing the traditional and industrial top-down style of organization; freedom, in the sense of autonomy as well as of free access and circulation of information; and embracing the concept of learning by doing and peer-to-peer learning processes as opposed to formal modes of learning (Kostakis et al., 2015).

From the perspective of education, a maker space can be viewed as a place of science education, which shares similar functions and characteristics of science education in school, but in a more interactive way. A maker space is full of exploration, collaboration, and innovation, and all the participators can get science education by a new pattern of learning by doing. There are many successful and well-operated maker spaces in the world, like at the Minerva University in the US, Group T at the University of Leuven in Belgium, and even some high schools established their own maker spaces and enrolled makers from everywhere (Koo and Wang, 2015). The participator in the maker spaces can be much more diversified as it is open to people of any age, background, location, etc. In this perspective, maker spaces represent a perfect example of the way that a community can follow to become an educating city.

As China enters a "new normal" phase of slower growth, the Chinese government put forward the mass entrepreneurship and innovation as a new growth strategy in 2015. As a consequence, many cities took maker spaces as a key STI (scientific and technological innovation) platform and integrated it into city planning. Maker spaces in China are more like a combination of the traditional maker space and the incubator. Most of the maker space projects are aimed at entrepreneurship in China (Li and Chen, 2017), but the educational function of maker spaces should not be ignored. The Ministry of Education claimed clearly to support the exploration of new educational models such as maker spaces (Ministry of Education, 2015).

Many schools in China have tried to establish maker spaces in schools as part of their formal science education. Wenzhou, located in the southeast of Zhejiang Province in China, is a pioneer city for school maker spaces. In 2016, Wenzhou launched the "Five Ones" Project of Maker Education, in order to achieve full coverage of school maker spaces by 2020. To be specific, the "Five Ones" project refers to every primary and secondary school in Wenzhou to build a maker space, employ a professional teacher, start a maker course, organize a maker activity, and complete a maker work every year. By the end of 2016, Wenzhou was home to 61 maker space basement and 202 maker spaces. More than 300 schools have set up maker education courses. More than 50 sets of teaching materials have been compiled by teachers themselves, and schools have provided training classes to a large number of professional maker teachers. Now the vision of bridging the gap between a science theory and practice has penetrated from the maker space to the whole school science education procedures in Wenzhou. This "educational strategy" shows the positive effects of a "contamination" between enterprises and schools. We can describe this "phenomenon" as one of the consequences of a city, which inspires the philosophy of an educating city.

As we can see that China is on the way towards the educating city with the help of maker spaces. There are well-organized maker spaces in schools, and popular maker spaces in communities, and also newly emerging rural maker spaces in order to make a good connection between rural and urban areas. All these efforts are converging to a big push of the popularity of science education and to make the city a great place for people. In this way, the maker spaces in China is a kind of community platform which serves as not only a place for people with common interests to do a practical entrepreneurial project, but also a place for science communication and technology extension. According to the newest data from the Torch High Technology Industry Development Center, China has 5,737 maker spaces, which help more than 4 million technological start-ups by providing services, such as management training, investment opportunity, and innovative space. The key character of maker spaces in China is a service platform of innovation and entrepreneurship, but it contains a lot of training processes and informal science

education characters like delivering basic scientific and technological knowledge to the public. For example, almost every maker space has set up training centers and established strong connection with experts in different scientific areas who can give useful and timely instruction to the makers. And also, some of the maker spaces began to collaborate with schools and colleges to make training sessions of innovation, science popularity, and entrepreneurship. For instance, Z-Innoway, located in Zhongguancun core area of Haidian District in Beijing, is the first cluster of maker spaces in China. As a global entrepreneurship and innovation resource center, Z-Innoway established a worldwide professional tutor team to supply all kinds of service to people who want to engage in entrepreneurship or get technical training. Besides, some of the maker spaces in Z-Innoway took entrepreneurial education as an important orientation. For example, the Dark Horse, the largest incubation and acceleration service platform in China, helps lots of enterprises, entrepreneurial teams, university students, and entrepreneurs from communities to get a full chain of entrepreneurial education and consultation.

In this way, the maker spaces in China has become a space to serve citizens, open to people of different backgrounds as well as to people of different needs. In addition, it has also become an important urban space for cities to embrace the philosophy of lifelong learning.

4. The educating city in local and global perspectives

The concept of the "educating city" can be related to that of the city as "organism" or "living system" (Magnaghi, 2010: 25). An organism is not something closed in itself. While having an "operational closure" (Varela, 1979: 58) that allows it to acquire an "identity," it is simultaneously "open" to the outside world, co-evolving with it (Bertalanffy, 1968). So – as stated in the Charter of Educating Cities (AICE, 2004) – "the educating city is a city with its own personality […]. The educating city is not self-contained; it has an active relationship with its environment, the other urban centers in the nation, and cities in other countries."

Purini (2007, 2016) declines the theme of the opening/closing of the city system, like that one of the opening/closing of the planning, which governs it. Historical cities fascinate us because – as he claims – they are governed by an "open" project that does not fully predetermine the development of the urban structure, unlike what happens in the modern city, where a "closed" project predominates, obeying efficiency, economy, and speed logics. The historical city, thus, appears to be the result of "an almost biological evolution." The continuous re-examination of the project makes it temporary, and leads to "continuous topographical and architectural adjustments," giving "life to a succession of spatial compressions and expansions." Hence "the alternation of road canals from the different sections, from the narrow ones of the alleys to the wide ones of the larger roads, and of discontinuous openings, also of non-uniform dimensions and corresponding to the squares, [which] gives the city architecture a character of organic irregularity" (Purini, 2007) and even an aesthetic value to the city that makes us feel good. "The air of the city makes us free," as a medieval German saying asserts.

The modern city is, instead, a result of a "closed" project and a result of the economic efficiency or of an emergent need: it originates from the industrial revolution, from thousands of people who abandoned the countryside, transforming cities into agglomerations. From the second half of the eighteenth century, the Cité Industrielle changed the face of European cities, nourishing considerable tension, which finds the highest expression in the romantic revolt. The organic dimension of the urban space gives way to what has been defined as the "metropolitan form" of the contemporary city (Soja, 2000; Magnaghi, 2010: 26; Perrone, 2012: XIV – XVI), where the territory is interpreted according to the economic cycle. Having become a merely spatial constraint, the place is reduced to a geometric space, ceasing to be a lived space. "The geometric space is homogeneous, uniform, neutral [...]. The geographical space is unique; it has a proper name" (Dardel, 1952/1990: 2).[2] In the metropolitan city, the inhabitants do not have a relationship of qualitative continuity with the urban and rural environment and become residents, that is to say, they are users of resources and services rather than people who take care of the place where they live by engaging in exchanges and relations. If the organization of the city ceases to be a net of relationships and becomes merely functional, there is clearly a weakening of its educational capacity. Today, "the inhabitants are dissolved and spatially fragmented in the sites of working, leisure, fruition of nature, consumption, care, reproduction, and therefore they have no more "places" to dwell in which to integrate and socialize all these functions; they have no longer a relationship of exchange and identification with their living environment (Magnaghi, 2010: 35).

By rejecting the intuitive and spontaneous conscience that man entertains with his own living environment (Muratori, 1959/1960), the place and the city are emptied of that dimension which, in an elusive way, we can define as a collective process of belonging and identification with the genius loci and the milieu of a place, representing the pre-condition for a "common feeling," capable in turn of feeding an informal educational process.

For Romano (2010) the entire history of the European cities is characterized by a dialectic between a need for efficiency that allows the city, as civitas, to represent the interests of its citizens and the city as urbs, that is, as "an expression of an aesthetic will that has to do with the symbolic sphere of citizens." This symbolic dimension forms the basis for the "recognition of the dignity of citizens" and represents "the defence of our civic belonging" insofar as "the citizens of a city constitute a collective entity [...] a real holistic subject, an organism with its own identity and will of a higher order than that one of the single individuals composing it" (Romano, 2003).

Citizenship, as an expression of collective processes, now appears to be weakened, replaced by functional relations. The very concept of the educating city indicates the presence of this problem.

Hillman (1994) argues that the content of the unconscious is not, today, the sexuality or the arcane symbols, of which we know everything thanks to the many self-help books, but citizenship: "the polis is the unconscious […]. We have become superconscious patients and analysts, very aware and very subtle interiorized individuals, and very unconscious citizens" (p. 30).

Far from encouraging a "nostalgia" of the renaissance "compact city within the walls" (Indovina, 2009: 17 – 19), these considerations question us on which kind of form those collective processes included in the European cities' deep structure, marking its beauty, can take today. Where, by beauty, we mean the complete form of an organism, not of an organism enclosed in itself, but continually interacting with the environment, reaching successive stages of beauty, modifying itself and at the same time maintaining its own vital identity. The beauty, therefore, as the result of a successful adaptation to the environment (Dewey, 1934) and, as an indication of such a successful adaptation, has a political value (Hillman, 1996/2006).

Also as a consequence of globalization, today there is a more and more "reflexivity" of social systems, as Giddens (1990, 1991) claims. "Dis-embedding" mechanisms lead to "the 'lifting out' of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space" (1990: 21). Even our "self" is increasingly the result of such a reflexivity: our experience becomes globalized, in the sense that the trajectory of the "self" draws no more from the immediate contexts of belonging but it is reflexively built by drawing from the many points of view the globalized world, with its media, offers us. Even the city becomes reflective: it has its centre no longer in the square, historically the privileged place of democracy (Habermas, 1962/1989). The city becomes a hypertext (Bravo, 2010: 43), a metapolis (Acher, 1995), that is to say, a meta-level if compared to a multiplicity of heterogeneous and not necessarily contiguous spaces, in which each subject traces its own preferential path. The city thus lived and reorganized reflexively from everyone becomes a subjective city, which does not necessarily correspond to the "real" city. And, on the other hand, the urban planning culture of the city seems "more than ever committed to responding to a question of beauty and attractiveness [...] proposing captivating models of transformation of places and [...] powerful architectural symbols. [...] The mayors of many Italian and European cities establish a direct rapprochement with renowned architects, the so-called archistars (Lo Ricco and Miceli, 2003)" (Bravo, 2010: 46). The city also seems to offer new places – such as theme parks, edutainment places (entertainment venues related to education), entertainment shops (shopping centres also offering recreational and gaming activities) – to allow the Self to reflexively discover new dimensions. It is a question of beauty and of occasions of experience to the subject's benefit, that does not necessarily produce collective and democratic processes.

We can ask ourselves: what about the city as a collective process, as a deep urbs, as a primary source of integration of experience and therefore of democracy and education? What about the collective dynamics allowing cohesion and solidarity?

We can answer that there is no contradiction between reflexivity and cohesion, between local and global, between closing and opening. The educating city cannot do without either aspect: not without the widespread experience and of the reflexivity of today's knowledge, to be cultivated through the multiplicity of cultural and multicultural stimuli, exploiting also the participatory potentialities of new technologies, nor can it do without the cohesion and integration into processes of collective solidarity, of the community self-recognition in an "us." The educational is located at the intersection of these two moments. That's why initiatives such as cohousing are interesting. They are real social experiments because they try to make new forms of solidarity possible, overcoming, but without ignoring them, the individualism and the reflexivity characterizing our society. Since today the pole of reflexivity and individualism prevails, we assist, in a compensatory way, to a call to collective processes. The polis has become unconscious, as Hillman suggests, and we need to make it speak. The health of our psyche requires a balance between the opposites. So we are witnessing a flourishing of "bottom-up," participatory, neo-democratic processes, of "return to places" (Becattini, 2009), where the place is understood not only as a physical space, but as a centre of sharing and of primary

humanization. These processes – facilitated, in a perhaps controversial but unstoppable way, by network and information technology – re-evaluate the "local" dimension, not as opposed to the "global" one, but because a global system is necessarily a multi-agent system (Wooldridge, 2002) in which each part must have its own autonomy. So also the city must have its own autonomy, it must not be the mere reflection of global processes. "The transformation and growth of a city must be governed by a harmony between its new needs and the preservation of buildings and symbols of its past and of its existence" (AICE, 2004).③

Only on this condition – as it possesses endogenous organizational processes that counterbalance the pressure of exogenous forces – can it be "educational." And correlatively, citizens, as they are also active parties, cannot accept to be passively governed by global processes they do not understand, because they have their autonomy and therefore their dignity. They need education. As we read in the *Charter of Educating Cities* (AICE, 2004), "persons must educate themselves for the sake of their critical adaptation to and active participation in the challenges and possibilities opening up as a result of the globalization of all economic and social processes, so that they can intervene, through their local world, in a complex international scenario, and in order to remain autonomous subjects in the face of a flood of information controlled by economic and political power centres."

5. Conclusions

How can we connect the city planning and the "philosophy" of educating city? This is the implicit question that runs through the present contribution and the main challenge for contemporary cities. We think that the answer to this question must be positive and based on a few simple points explained in the following:

① Educating cities are those contexts which allow each person to realize its potentials, capabilities, and rights to lifelong education within communities, promoting the identity of the communities (i.e., the self-construction of the sense of community) and integrating people with different backgrounds (knowledge gap, region – places, cultural differences).

② In this direction, the cities are integrated education systems, which become scenarios of multiple formal and informal educational processes (schools, museums, maker spaces, etc.), able to promote the inclusion and integration of its inhabitants and to make them active protagonists of individual and collective city life.

③ Educating cities are a "living system" (Magnaghi, 2010: 25), with their "own personality" (AICE, 2004). So they are simultaneously "closed," because they having a personality, and "open," to the outside world, co-evolving with it (Bertalanffy, 1968) and activating transformation/evolution processes towards the future.

④ So, the city planning has to be partially "open," not fully predetermining the development of the urban structure, being not a "closed" project, not a mere result of the economic efficiency or of an emergency (Purini, 2007, 2016), but a project devoted to the integration of various educational dimensions and expectations;

⑤ The cities planned on the only logic of the emergency and of the economy needs acquire a "metropolitan form" in which the place is reduced to a geometric space, that of competitive solitude (the opposite of a lived space). "The geometric space is homogeneous, uniform, neutral [...]. The geographical space is unique; it has a proper name" (Dardel, 1952/1990: 2).④

⑥ So in the city planning, we have to encourage collective process of belonging and identification with the genius loci and the milieu of a place, because this represents the pre-condition for a "common feeling," capable in turn of feeding an informal educational process (Muratori, 1959/1960).

In short, we have to balance between the closing and the opening of the city, between bottom-up processes and top-down processes, between local and global point of views, between autonomy (of the city, of the citizens) and connection with the global processes of modernization. C

(This article is the result of a shared reflection between the authors. However, we specify that: Fabrizio d'Aniello is responsible for the first part, Elisabetta Patrizi is responsible for the second part, Xu Zhuqing is responsible for the third part, and Stefano Polenta is responsible for the fourth part. All authors collaborate to write the conclusion part. In addition, we point out that the translations of quotations in the text belong to the authors.)

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Notes:

① The expression "educating city" is less and less used in mainstream language, because it is gradually replaced by that of learning city. However, there is still today the AICE (International Association of Educating Cities), born during the 1990 Barcelona congress, and it is equally true that the Beijing declaration goes in the direction of a "learning humanism," as argued by Osborne, Kearns, and Yang (2013), bringing the concept of learning city closer to the more inclusive and original concept of educating city.

② Translated from the original French edition.

③ "The concerns expressed in the *Charter of Educating Cities* were compiled

in the Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities, and developed further in the International Conference on Learning Cities in 2013. The document recognizes the relevance of cities for the equitable development of people" (Rodriguez P and Rodriguez A).

④ Translated from the original French edition.

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