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PLANNING FOR TRANSITION

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19. Acsp-Aesop Special Session: Learning from Arnstein's Ladder: from Citizen Participation to Public Engagement
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BETWEEN GROWTH AND CRISIS: THE RESPONSE OF LOCAL PLANNING TO THE ISSUE OF VACANCY

Caruso N., Delladio A., Pede E.

Politecnico di Torino - Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning (DIST) - Italy - Torino

Several long-term urban transformation projects launched in the 1990s have suffered a sharp deceleration following the economic crisis of 2007-2008. This crisis has also indirectly affected the urban planning field, almost completely outshining the decision-making power of public authorities already suffering from impacts of the neoliberal approach, cuts of financial resources and loss of powers and leadership in the urban domain. The transition in the development model triggered by austerity is also reflected in the inability to combine traditional planning tools with innovative practices carried out by groups of citizens and/or activists. In particular, forms of temporary uses and re-use have been developed in order to deal with abandoned or unfinished spaces and buildings, one of the main legacies left by the economic crisis. From the regulatory point of view, there are few cases of dialogue between reuse experiences and spatial planning or planning regulations. In this narrative, the case of the Dublin Vacant Site Register and Levy, established in 2017, gives a strong signal of public power, especially in a local context in favour of banks and private investors and little public decision-making powers. The paper presents and discusses the Dublin experience, that shows a new approach to regulate and control vacancy in a neoliberal context. This kind of tools encourage practices of temporary use in a frame of regulation, it allows to discuss the traditional planning practices and possible innovation.