

Inclusive/Exclusive Cities

*Original*

Inclusive/Exclusive Cities / Marina, Ognen; Armando, Alessandro. - STAMPA. - (2016), pp. 8-11.

*Availability:*

This version is available at: 11583/2667266 since: 2017-03-23T13:43:44Z

*Publisher:*

City of Skopje

*Published*

DOI:

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**SINERGI Project**

**Social Integration through Urban Growth Strategies**

The SINERGI Project (Social Integration through Urban Growth Strategies) is a network of twinned cities that provides exchange of knowledge, experience and good practices of partner cities, Universities, civic organizations and social groups enabling better social integration through joint development of urban growth strategies. The project has enriched the sense of identity and mutual understanding between European citizens by bringing upfront problems and issues of urban life that are shared among them but also by sharing common values, history and culture in an open dialog.

The network provided a platform for creative and open debate between local authorities, academics, experts, civil activists and citizens from local communities about the problem of social integration in ever-growing cities. The SINERGI Book Two – “Inclusive/Exclusive Cities” provides the insight and exploration of the knowledge, practices, research and experience in facing the challenges of the contemporary cities. The purpose of this book is to provide a wide frame for the democratic tools that will enable citizens to exercise their right to the city, to provoke decision makers to create innovative policies and, through critical understanding of the relationships between the inclusive/exclusive city and the citizens, to create a better future for our cities.



**INCLUSIVE / EXCLUSIVE CITIES**

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Ognen Marina  
Alessandro Armando  
(Eds.)





## **SINERGI Project**

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The network organized two seminars and two workshops as a platform for creative and open debate between local authorities, academics, experts, civil activists and citizens from local communities about the problem of social integration in ever-growing cities. The SINERGI Project Book One, "The Projects for an Inclusive City" and Book Two, "Inclusive/Exclusive Cities" are the result of the work and research within the SINERGI project. The purpose of the books is to provoke decision-makers and citizens to challenge their perception of the city and, through critical understanding of mutual cooperation and shared values, to create a sustainable and lasting network of cities and active citizens.



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**LISBOA**  
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# **Inclusive Exclusive Cities**

Edited by  
Ognjen Marina  
Alessandro Armando

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## **Acknowledgments**

## **Credits**





Ognen Marina  
Alessandro Armando

# **Inclusive/Exclusive Cities**

Cities are complex systems of elaborated spatial and social relations. The challenges of the contemporary urban transformation have surpassed its economic aspect and emerge as a social, environmental, spatial and identity crisis sometimes having devastating effect on the social fabric of local communities and cities. The pressure of the financial crisis and outdated concepts and strategies of urban growth have caused the policies and politics of the urban growth and cities management to become exclusively matter of city administration, decision-makers and politicians. The questions of democracy and broader social inclusion in the scope of urban growth is mainly discussed and raised in the domain of the urban activism, within the academic debate or in marginalized and excluded groups of civic society. However, it reveals not only different ideas and tools how to provide the urban growth but also the tremendous difference in vision of the future of cities and urban imaginaries.

This condition has a direct implications on the process of cities development but also of governance and confinements of democratic potentialities in designing urban space that are only released with the broader inclusivity. Consequently, the emerging resistance to imposed spatial order made apparent the role of social and spatial inclusion in democratization processes and social relations in a society framed by its differences. Completely opposite to inclusive, transparent, participative planning for diversity, the process of creation of exclusive projects and spaces in cities encourages divisive tendencies and damages future prospects for open, connected and socially sustainable cities and societies. In spite of everything, these trends across the world provoked reawakening of public sphere and demonstrated that urban space is central to democratization processes. We can recognize strongest reactions in emerging every-day spatial practices with increased movement across newly marked social and cultural barriers and switching the border zone into contact zone. In this dazzling blend of financial crisis, challenged concepts of urbanity, dysfunctional policies and citizenship in crisis we can go through the social and economic contradictions and failures of the cities by innovating the urban policies and practices, aiming to enable a more inclusive, effective and socially responsible approach.

In order to understand the potential for joint effort for construction of better cities this book aims to develop a platform of knowledge and promote an informative debate about concepts, approaches and tools that are coherent with the complex nature of the cities and societies, but comprehensible and simple enough to be useful for institutions and citizens that are affected by the processes that are shaping cities. The questions that could be addressed and topics are: 1. Where and how could we identify and analyse the issues of social inclusion/exclusion in a transformation troubled cities and what can we learn from good and bad practices of social inclusion and/or exclusion? 2. Is there a new complexity of the relationship between cities and society, uncertainties, and questions to be addressed? What are the new approaches, tools and practices that will enhance democratization of urban development through better inclusiveness? 3. To what extent could urban disciplines be engaged with urban progress in terms of theory,

practice and education in an era with new social networks, new political policies, new digital tools and new forms of art and culture? 4. How cities can encourage urban inclusion at a time of intense social and cultural transformations, especially through design and urban planning? Moreover, to what extent are urban plans able to facilitate communication between citizens and institutions, society and the form of the cities?

The contributions to this volume show different perspectives and positions about inclusiveness, both in spatial urban practices and in the strategies of city governance. Thus, the answers to the previous questions cannot be reduced to a coherent set of statements. Nevertheless, some addresses seems to emerge from the debate.

Regarding the first and primary question – the issue of inclusion/exclusion– the main contradiction is to conceal the “right to the city” and the inclusiveness of the process with the effectiveness of the plan (Cabral). On the one hand the inclusive strategies lead in many cases to read the city as a fragmented entity and promote local development actions (as in the case of the “mosaic structure” in Bakalcev et al., whether the “micro-urbanism in Velevska et al.). On the other hand, the need to propose collective frames for urban space development and for unifying consensus should ask for a more institutional and general *top-down* discipline, which cannot avoid various forms of exclusion (Frassoldati). This kind of contradiction could reflect somehow different approaches, according to what François Lyotard called the two opposite models of society as a “functional whole” or “divided in two” (*The Postmodern Condition*, 1979). In the first approach, the balance within the urban system should start from the bottom, at the local level: since the equilibrium is possible, its composition will be incremental – but then it will unlikely extend to the entire system, being the effects stuck at a very small scale. Instead, the second approach considers conflict as an inevitable factor, thus it admits that the institutional conditions can limit conflicts, also through top-down interventions and accepting some forms of exclusion (from benefits, from decision-making involvement, etc.).

The second question is about the “new complexity” of the European (and world) cities: the structural conditions of urban systems (real estate market, connectivity, economic balance, political orders...) continue to change rapidly in the last years. This complexity can whether reflect dramatically into a parallel transformation of physical space (as evidently in Skopje as in Guangzhou) or it can be almost indifferent to the material urban development, which falls into a sleepy decline (such as in Turin, Zagreb and partly in Lisbon). The processes of exchange affecting the urban collective life – both the symbolic exchanges and the technical, economic, bureaucratic ones – acquired new topologies, becoming more dynamic and dislocated. The scholars are trying to describe and map this phenomenon: the new urban complexity produces innovation and opportunities for democratic development, but it also generates unpredicted forms of opacity. The real estate market gains power in combining information at the global level, while the planning instruments and the urban policies are stuck into a local perspective, being subjected to unrestrained conditions. The institutional

plans regulating land use, density, infrastructures into long-term actions and public contracts still reflect a set of urban paradigms, which are going to disappear rapidly. In the meanwhile, the cities continue to transform even without the help of public plans. In this divergence between the institutional capacity of regulation and the autonomous raising of unexpected forces, the innovation in planning instruments is urgent. Some experiences of local negotiation (as in Lisbon) or some proposals for re-thinking the planning process as a “rhizomatic nesting” or as a predictive and diverting tree have been presented and discussed during the SINERGI project, finding here some punctual proposal (Mantziaras, Frassoldati, Pensa et al.).

The third question is an interdisciplinary topic. Urban studies and technical knowledge about architecture, infrastructure, planning have never in many decades been so openly challenged as much as today. The social dimension of reality, mainly in its aspect of a global network, shows more and more its power on the material space of cities: the “total mobilization” (as the philosopher Maurizio Ferraris recently called it) affects habits, collective values, fluxes, borders, capital assets and geopolitical orders. The scale of the city becomes the sphere where new intersections among disciplines are experimented and where the challenges of humanities, engineering, economics are tackled and natural sciences can build new forms of alliance – as Panos Mantziaras recalls in his article, quoting Bernardo Secchi. Academics, professionals, public administrators have to renegotiate the limits of their competences: designers with planners, urban sociologists with economists, management engineers with political scientists, etc. The disciplines traditionally in charge of the technical aspects of urban transformation should rewrite their skills and move them into the socio-political dimension of the process, and vice versa. The disciplines focused on the development of the XXI century city can turn into a network of *sociotechnical* sciences.

The fourth and last question is about the discipline of architecture, in its most general sense: the architecture of the city in its spatial and temporal extension, from design to planning. It is the question regarding the possibility of achieving a new kind of urban projects, for both our present and future cities. A project of the city, taken as a public action of governance, can integrate many different dimensions of urban transformation: social interaction and public debate about values, symbols, etc., the technical and bureaucratic management, the economic and financial aspects of the process. The innovation of urban projects should move from the traditional tools towards a more flexible and self-generative set of instruments, preserving their value of public and institutional objects. To this extent, urban plans can promote social inclusion by broadening the implications of a process, and by developing their capacity of predicting deviations in the future. Design and urban planning can enlarge our societies, but only by integrating good promises with measurable effects. In other words, it is necessary for designers and planners to accept and consider plans and projects both as means for imagining a better future, and as instruments of power.

## Authors

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### **Minas Bakalchev**

He is an architect and professor at the University Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Faculty of Architecture, Skopje, BArch at Faculty of Architecture, Skopje, MSc at Faculty of Architecture, University in Beograd, PhD on technical science University Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. He was co-curator of Macedonian national pavilion on Venice Biennale 2006, and got mentioned for the project city of possible worlds, with Mitko Hadzi Pulja under the acronym MBMHP work together on architectural projects, workshops, exhibitions. Their work was acknowledged by many city and national awards. He believes that architecture can change the world in a way the world changes us.

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Assistant Professor at the Institute for Architectural Design at the University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" - Faculty of Architecture in Skopje where he got his Diploma, Master and PhD. He is an author of numerous architectural buildings including the "Stobi" Winery awarded Best Architectural Building in Macedonia in 2010 by the Association of Architects of Macedonia. He curated the Macedonian exhibition at the Venice Architectural Biennale in 2012 and participated as author of the exhibition in 2010 and 2014. As a part of the Metamak Architectural Collective he co-authored the exhibition "Personal Manual for Making Architecture" in New York 2011.

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Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Architecture, University "Ss. Cyril & Methodius" in Skopje. He is a JFDP alumnus and holds a PhD in Architecture and Urbanism. Main fields of his professional interest are graphic communication and computer applications in architecture. His research, numerous publications and exhibitions cover a vast number of topics related to urban transformation, accessibility, sustainable urban development, computer applications in architecture, visual communication etc. He is an active promoter of the implementation of new techniques and technologies in the design process. He participated at the Venice Architectural Biennale in 2014 as author of the Macedonian exhibition.

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He has founded in 2009, with 4 associated architects, the 2MIXarchistudio based in Turin. Now he is attending the PhD Program on "Architecture History and Project" at the Polytechnic of Turin in collaboration with the South China University of Technology and within the activities of the South China Torino Collaboration Lab. The topics he is exploring are concerning the relationship between the urban planning practices and their physical performances within the contemporary Chinese cities expansion.

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## Acknowledgments

This book was made possible with the support of EACEA within the 'Europe for Citizens Programme' 2007 – 2013 for the SINERGI Project (Social Integration through Urban Growth Strategies). The content of the book is a result of SINERGI Project International Scientific Conference that was held in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia in November, 2015. The selection of texts that were presented during the conference has been developed further for the purpose of the book "Inclusive/Exclusive Cities". The structure and the content of the book is a result of the research by respective authors put into perspective of the debate about inclusive and exclusive cities and with the objective of further development of critical and creative debate and exchange of knowledge between decision-makers, city administration, experts and citizens.

This publication reflects the views of the author only. The Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein

**With the support of 'Europe for Citizens Programme' 2007 - 2013**



## **Credits**

### **Editors**

Ognen Marina  
Alessandro Armando

### **Cover graphic**

Bisera Krckovska

### **Publisher**

City of Skopje

### **Printing**

EVROPA 92 Dooel

CIP - Каталогизација во публикација  
Национална и универзитетска библиотека "Св. Климент Охридски", Скопје

711.4:72.012(082)  
72.012:316.334.56(082)

INCLUSIVE / exclusive city / edited by Ognen Marina, Alessandro  
Armando. - Skopje : City of Skopje, 2016. - 474 стр. : илустр.

Публикацијата е во рамките на проектот: "SINERGI Project"

ISBN 978-608-4809-00-5

а) Градови - Урбан развој - Зборници б) Урбана социологија -  
Зборници  
COBISS.MK-ID 101626634

With the support of 'Europe for Citizens Programme' of the European Union



Europe  
for Citizens

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