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"Green Oslo" encompasses very different contributions focusing on the issue of policies affecting the city's socio-ecological system, namely the efforts to shape it as environmentally and socially sustainable as possible: emancipating it from fossil-fuel dependency, reducing greenhouse emissions and securing green public spaces through ensuring high qualities of city living are just examples of a faceted array of policies characterising the city's green urbanism.

Although the book is indeed interesting for the composition of a variety of disciplinary approaches – from urban and rural development to landscape architecture, from urban design and spatial planning to sociology and human geography until literature - it would be simplistic to look at it as a simple essay on the Norwegian capital: as the editors indicate their key to interpret it globally, the reader will find a number of parallel incentives to unfold his own Ariadne's thread through the essays.

The main hypothesis is that a city's green urbanism does not encompasses just the ecological planning of its parks and gardens or the liveabilty of the open spaces devoted to recreation: Oslo's green urbanism emerges then as the composition of many other aspects and key-concepts: biophilia, densification strategies, place-based policies...

The first part of the book focuses on what does "green" means in relation to urban life. "Biophilia" is the key-concept.

"Biophilia" is the "innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms". Such a theory (developed by E.O. Wilson in the '90s) applied to city planning has the potential to bring out qualitative but unavoidable aspects in planning for green cities: beyond the standard equipment of "green areas", other important dimensions of biophilic cities are, for example: behaviours, patterns and lifestyles of the inhabitants and concerning the contact with nature (portion of the day spent outside, urban trips made by walking, participation in local nature clubs and organizations), biophilic attitudes and knowledge (residents'

expression of care and concern towards nature, capacity to identify common species of flora and fauna), biophilic institutions and governance (priority given to nature conservation by local government and budget dedicated to biophilic programs, planning regulations concerning green rooftop requirements or bird-friendly building design, presence of aquaria or natural history museums, educational programs in schools, organizations and clubs involved in environmental education and nature conservation). Therefore green (or biophilic) cities are those which not only invest in physical "green infrastructure", but which also study and interpret the need of local population towards open-air living, direct contact with nature, environmental information and education, personal involvment in biodiversity management and in promotion of the local environment towards tourists and foreign institutions. Finally, social perception and aspirations towards the environment emerge as a dimension to be recovered into urban/environmental planning.

The second part is mainly focused on the planning discourse characterising green urbanism, discussing and putting under critical lenses ideologies which influenced planning practice throughout the history of (Oslo's) urban planning. For instance, suburbs and suburbia – always considered opposite to green urbanism for they represent the emblem of urban sprawl and soil consumption – are deconstructed as a "monolithic" reality, bringing out the the differences among types of suburbs and putting in light their different and potential contribution to greener cities.

The last part of the book focuses on "green" planning tools and strategies; here, classical urban planning topics are put in discussion and the idea of "compact city" emerges as the main theme at the centre of the debate. Densification in Oslo has been the core strategy for the Capital development until the '80s: the compact city ideal was regarded to as assolving both environmental arguments (increasing density in already built-up areas reduce the need for cars and thus the emissions of greenhouse gases) and economic interests (high densities favour high profit). Authors sustain that, despite different rationales for densification, until planning has been exclusively a public activity a sort of balance between such environmental concerns and economic interests could be granted, whereas the contemporary raising of neo-liberal planning, with most local development plans devised by private actors, puts at risk the traditional green attitude of Oslo's urban development, removing sistematically the green areas from the city's even denser centre.

Even though such reflections, hints and considerations are very interesting both when considering Oslo's specific territorial/urban context and their potential comparative value with regard to urban regions

with similar size and type, such key-concepts should rather be regarded to as “lenses” through which study, interpret and – of course – act on contemporary cities dealing with the challenge to become more “green”. Nonetheless, the definitive message of the book avoids simplistic generalization of green urbanism approaches experienced in Oslo: indeed the definition of site-specific knowledge and place-based policies is invoked as – probably – the main “green” principle in city planning and green urbanism.