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## AlmaTourism

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**Gaddoni S. (Eds), *Spazi pubblici e parchi urbani nella città contemporanea – Public spaces and urban parks in the contemporary city*, Patron, Bologna, 2010**

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The book is the product of a PRIN National research project on the issue of public spaces, whose Bologna local Unit was co-ordinated by Silvia Gaddoni.

The architectural, economical and social changes occurred in the urban environment offer to scholars of different disciplines (geography, sociology, architecture, landscaper planning) the occasion for rethink the urban space. The globalization, the technological revolution and the wider diffusion of innovations, together with the introduction of different lifestyles and new social practices have imposed relevant changes to the urban structure. These changes have now to be re-thought and re-interpreted, not only by the researchers, but also and mostly by the citizens and by each individual who have to establish a new relation with it, finding new meanings to give it.

The book opens up with Silvia Gaddoni's introduction, that suggests a reflection on the new ways for thinking about a city after all the changes that it has faced. Four thematic sessions follow, with papers presented both in Italian and English.

The first session, "Public space: space of the polis", propose a historical-geographical analysis of the public spaces in their evolution. In particular, Giancarlo Benevolo follows the changes that the public spaces have faced in the Italian urban environment from the Middle Age, to the Renaissance;

Laura Federzoni focuses on the evolving role of some urban elements such as the walls, the squares, the churches, through an analysis of the cartographic production from the Middle Age to the XIX century, while Davide Papotti's paper is an interesting analysis of how the contemporary urban literatures promote the image of the public space as the co-existing place of a material realisation and an immaterial "epiphany" opening in front of modern *flâneurs*.

The second session, "Public space: an inclusive or exclusive setting?" investigates the inclusive or exclusive dimension of the public space through three case studies, Stockholm, the United States and England. The first case, presented by Elisabeth Lilja analyses the theoretical models that relate the social life with the public space, highlighting the paradox existing between the meaning that the planners attribute to the public spaces and the experience of the inhabitants. Elisa Ravazzoli's paper focuses on the changes occurred in the public spaces in the United States, as a consequence of a privatization process that has lead

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to the creation of hybrid public spaces such as the *Privately owned public spaces* or the *Gated Communities*, jointly managed by the citizens. Finally, Elena Gentilini, offers the example of how urban re-qualification in England is often directed by a process of social inclusion aiming at sharing the responsibilities for the management of the public spaces, through the creation of partnerships between citizens and urban social actors.

The third session “Public space as a planned space”, is opened by a second paper by Elisa Ravazzoli, dealing with the multiple cities co-existing inside Stockholm due to the different planning processes it has faced and that the author has studied using innovative instruments such as the sociotope map or the soundscape map. The second paper, written by Per Berg analyses the project aimed at creating a sustainable Stockholm, where the public spaces will play a relevant role in identifying the city’s *genius loci*. Franca Miani’s paper starts from the idea that not only squares and streets can be recognised as public spaces nowadays but also shopping centres and other non-places can, and she suggests case studies from the United States, China and the United Arab Emirates. Finally, Valentina Albanese suggests the case of the reconstruction of Valencia’s urban space, realised for the America’s Cup, as an example of high quality urban reconstruction policy.

The last session, “Public spaces as urban parks and green areas”, opens up with a paper on Stockholm, where Ulla Berglund compares the green and the stone town planning evolution. Filippo Pistocchi’s paper discusses then, from a seriously theoretical and legislative point of view, the European policies stimulating the urban competitiveness in matters of sustainability and cohesion, analysing in particular the case of the public gardens in the town of Cesena. Finally, Michael P. Conzen reflects on the role of the Chicago *Millennium Park* as a “*World-class urban park*”, investigating in particular if it is able of fulfilling both the goals of urban aggregation and urban tourists’ attractions and recreation.

The book is concluded by a short essay by Franco Farinelli, who rethinks the perspectives for the public space, particularly in the light of the chances offered by the Internet to create and utilize it, in connection with the issues of power management.