Diversity is a concept that cuts across a very large number of disciplines and fieldworks, ranging from natural sciences and ethology to ecology, genetics, social studies, philosophy and urban planning: more in general disciplines that deal with the connections between space and society. More and more frequently in the landscape of postmodern literature, the word ‘diversity’ joins or replaces the dialectic between identity and difference, surpassing even the concept of otherness. In turn, it occupies the third space in-between two concepts, to overcome the oppositional logic (related to the couple) of identity/difference. In the past two decades ‘diversity’ has become an important theoretical construct and operational ‘object’ used by urban designers, planners, sociologists, social justice and equity advocates. Moreover it has served as a normative goal in city planning and a powerful theoretical factor in planning policy. Taking the above into account, the reasoning extends over four steps as follows: (1) analysing key literature on socio-spatial diversity; (2) theoretical focusing on ‘urban diversity’; (3) critiques on theories and practices inspired by the concept of ‘diversity’ that might lead to a different understanding of diversity as an urban feature; (4) exploring the potential of the concept in analysis of urbanisation processes, socio-spatial transformations and urban policy.

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