The contemporary city is strongly influenced by sharing. The term is ambiguous: it alludes to a consolidation of social relationships caused by the anxiety of individualisation. It assumes different forms, usually short-lived even when repeated: associationism of different kinds, collective but not necessarily long-lasting actions, and either little or very determined communalities. These are indistinct forms, based on living “side by side, walking in step”, which Bauman described as “a desperate need for networking”; and Sennett said was “the force of wandering emotions shifting erratically from one target to another”. They are characterised by values such as ecology, frugality, reciprocity and solidarity. The key issue is understanding whether these forms are capable, as they say they are, of metaphorically rebuilding the city. In other words, can they implement a different concept of urbanity by adopting the role played in late capitalist cities by conflict, rationality, functionalism, and the market?

To tackle the problem we must first understand how they affect three different issues: the first involves changes in the values assigned to living; the second, the new logic of spatial organisation; the third, revision of the notion of public and its political consequences. Examining shared territories means reasoning out of the box about the city and looking beyond certain more or less common clichés. It also means rethinking a project, emphasising the practices adopted in places, measuring their scope, persistence and continuity.

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