

# SCIENZA & POLITICA

per una storia delle dottrine



## Plan-based Thought. From the New Civilisation to the Global System of Power

Il pensiero di piano.  
Dalla nuova civiltà al sistema globale di potere

*Roberta Ferrari*

roberta.ferrari6@unibo.it

University of Bologna

### A B S T R A C T

Historically the plan has been about much more than economic planning. By plan-based thought I mean a concept of social governance that requires a multiple but structured articulation of social, economic, administrative and political forces and institutions and aims at shaping new forms of integration and social control using a specific scientific discourse. The following essays provide an analysis of global planning starting from different historical and geographical situations and different disciplinary perspectives. The broad picture that emerges shows points of continuity and discontinuity between different contexts and theories but also reveals a common theme: the conflictual relationship between economics and politics which not only reflects the hierarchies between state and society but also shows the dialectic between different forms and conceptions of power and their social reproduction. Plan-based thought does not only concern temporary institutional transformations, but reacts and is connected to the management of social conflicts over time.

KEYWORDS: Planning; USSR; US; Le Corbusier; Neoliberalism.

\*\*\*\*\*

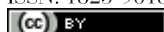
Storicamente il piano è stato molto di più della pianificazione economica. Per pensiero di piano intendo un concetto di governance sociale che richiede un'articolazione multipla ma strutturata delle forze e delle istituzioni sociali, economiche, amministrative e politiche e mira a plasmare nuove forme di integrazione e di controllo sociale utilizzando un discorso scientifico specifico. I seguenti saggi forniscono un'analisi della pianificazione globale a partire da diverse situazioni storiche e geografiche e da diverse prospettive disciplinari. Il quadro generale che emerge mostra punti di continuità e discontinuità tra contesti e teorie diverse, ma rivela anche un tema comune: il rapporto conflittuale tra economia e politica che non solo riflette le gerarchie tra Stato e società, ma mostra anche la dialettica tra le diverse forme e concezioni del potere e la loro riproduzione sociale. Il pensiero di piano non riguarda solo le temporanee trasformazioni istituzionali, ma reagisce ed è connesso alla gestione dei conflitti sociali nel corso del tempo.

PAROLE CHIAVE: Piano; URSS; US; Le Corbusier; Neoliberalismo.

SCIENZA & POLITICA, vol. XXXII, no. 62, 2019, pp. 5-15

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1825-9618/11207>

ISSN: 1825-9618



This monographic issue of *Scienza & Politica* dedicated to the plan is the result of an International seminar held on December 6, 2019 at the Arts Department of the University of Bologna in the context of Projects of National Interest (PRIN) on “Personalization, institutionalization and de-institutionalization: the new power dynamics in post-democratic societies”. The aim of the seminar was to discuss the plan as a global historical and political concept. Its origins, which can be traced back to the eighteenth century<sup>1</sup>, correspond to the discovery of the systematic character of the world. The 1937 volume, *Planned Society: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow* – a collection of essays by thirty-five economists, sociologists and statesmen, is a historical record of the importance of a global plan-based thought during the 20th century. The symposium was divided into four sections: economic control in primitive, ancient, and medieval societies; economic control and nationalism; control and planning in particular areas of economic activity; the control and planning of all economic activity. It begins with an essay by Margaret Mead on social control in primitive societies that shows how the topic of planning was on the agenda everywhere in the world and was conceived of as an ancient anthropological truth: the need for planning was reconstructed as a natural instinct that had always existed and was proper to human beings in society all over the world. The aim of the book was firstly to affirm that planning could not be understood solely from the side of economics, because its true target was the «harmonious organization of all social forces under the rule of intelligence»<sup>2</sup>. It is evident throughout the book that the aim was to radically redefine the social philosophy underlying economy.

The question of planning involves much more than perfecting the scheme by which production, distribution, and consumption can ultimately balance; *it involves profound issues of social philosophy – of a way of social life with consequences for education, politics, and all major social institutions*. In short, the acceptance or rejection of a planned society involves *a theory and practice affecting not, as the New Dealers think, a patch here or a patch there, but society as a whole. This must be borne in mind particularly with reference to programs of planning under capitalism*<sup>3</sup>.

This volume shows that planning is something more than a new economic theory or a discourse on the role of the state and political government. And above all demonstrates that plan-based thought was not only a soviet problem, and neither can it be reduced to New Deal, harshly criticized by supporters of planning in the US. On the contrary, American and European economists and sociologists understood the plan as an overall rethinking of capitalism, from a

<sup>1</sup> É.B. CONDILLAC, *Traité des systèmes* (1798), Paris, Fayard, 1991.

<sup>2</sup> F. MACKENZIE, *Introduction*, in F. MACKENZIE (ed), *Planned Society: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow: A Symposium by Thirty-Five Economists, Sociologists, and Statesmen*, New York, Prentice-Hall, 1937, pp. xi-xxiii; S. HOOK, *The Philosophical Implications of Economic Planning*, in *ivi*, pp. 663-677, p. 666.

<sup>3</sup> *Ivi*, p. 664. My italics.



social, ethical, technical and political point of view. To these thinkers, plan-based thought was even more urgent under the capitalist system.

Our seminar focused however on the political advent of the plan, i.e. that historical moment in which it became a social theory of power and administration. From the 1920s onwards, plan-based thought took on an institutional dimension and was used to face the social and economic crisis that all over the world imposed a radical reconsideration of liberalism and threw modernity into a deeper and wider crisis<sup>4</sup>. The idea behind our seminar stemmed from my research on the plan over some years, analysing the forms and discourses of what I call a *plan-based thought* that crossed the Atlantic and which we find in different forms in the United States and Europe as well as in the USSR between the 1920s and the 1930s. The aim was not merely archaeological, but to identify in the global history of plan-based thought the genealogy of a new form of social governance whose fundamental scope was the administration of economics. The 19th century had prepared the basis for a deep reappraisal of the relationship between state, economy and society through the invention of what would later become the welfare state. Plan-based thought developed in this framework but with its main issue being not the function of the state, but the wider control and prediction of volatility and instability. Plan-based thought aims at solving the problem of evolution, that spontaneous order that left human progress in a passive state and many subjects in the waiting room of history. The ability to produce a social prognosis for the future in order to govern and shape society, exerting power over the transformations of the present, expressed faith in the endless malleability of history, i.e. in a *new technology of time* created by the machine. It is this aspect of plan-based thought, the connection between power, technology and time, which still persists within the framework of the neoliberal global economy. Recently, historical research has returned to planning<sup>5</sup>, showing that it is not simply evidence of an economic-political epoch that is now irretrievably confined to the past, but a process of social engineering and a mechanism of governance of global reality that also operates in new ways within neoliberal politics: logistics, algorithms and the platform economy, logistically planned supply chains, global corporations and big data are increasingly analysed from the point of view of the idea of planning. The novelty also

<sup>4</sup> M. CIOLI – P. SCHIERA – M. RICCIARDI (eds), *Traces of Modernism*, Frankfurt/New York, Campus, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> D. VAN LAAK, *Zukunft Konkret. Historical Remarks on the Actions of Practical Planners*, in M. BERNHARDT – B. SCHELLER – S. BRAKENSIEK (H.g.), *Enabling and Preventing: On Dealing with Contingency*, Frankfurt/New York, Campus, 2016, pp. 191-208; D. VAN LAAK, *Planning. History and Present of Anticipating the Future*, «History and Society», 34/2008, pp. 305-326; Q. SLOBODIAN, *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard UP, 2018.

lies in the claim that new technologies can finally solve past debates on localized knowledge access, economic calculations and prices systems<sup>6</sup>. The state did not disappear as a planning actor, but the planners have changed, and the relation between planning, global market power, technology and sovereignty was radically modified, with important political consequences and transformations.

In 1891 Friedrich Engels wrote to Karl Kautsky that «if we then move from public limited companies to trusts, which dominate and monopolize entire branches of industry, not only is there no more private production, but we can no longer even speak of the absence of a plan (*Planlosigkeit*)»<sup>7</sup>. More than a century later, contemporary China has opened a debate on a new form of planning focused on what we could define as «a big data-based state platform economy»<sup>8</sup>.

Historically the plan has been about much more than economic planning. By plan-based thought I mean a concept of social governance that requires a multiple but structured articulation of social, economic, administrative and political forces and institutions and aims at shaping new forms of integration and social control using a specific scientific discourse. Organization and administration<sup>9</sup> are the main concepts of plan-based thought. Administrative rationality wasn't limited to the state but was also a conception of society and its progress: the idea was that society, time and subjects could be administrated, i.e. shaped towards future needs. Plan-based thought therefore aspired to create a social technology able to mould social relationships and to impose particular anthropological paradigms. The new Soviet man, the American social manager, and the corporate man in fascisms are all expressions of a political anthropology of the plan, representing that ideal society which plan-based thought was pursuing. Soviets, business corporations and social finance, corporatism and nationalism, were all models of planned society that aspired to produce new individuals<sup>10</sup>. Planning therefore was not so much a matter of fixing targets and parameters but of creating new forms of social living, managing contingencies and governing time in order to forecast and produce actively

<sup>6</sup> F.A. HAYEK (ed), *Collectivist Economic Planning*, London, Routledge, 1935; L. VON MISES, *Die Gemeinwirtschaft: Untersuchungen über den Sozialismus*, Jena, Fischer, 1922. Cf. K. POLANYI, *Economy and Society. Selected Writings*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> V.I. LENIN, *State and Revolution*, «Lenin Internet Archive», <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/staterev/>, accessed on 25 June 2020.

<sup>8</sup> G. GRAPPI, *L'ordine logistico come problema politico, tra esperienze storiche di cibernetica per il socialismo e la piattaforma come piano*, in R. BARITONO – M. RICCIARDI (eds), *Strategie dell'ordine: categorie, fratture, soggetti*, «Quaderni di Scienza & Politica», 8/2020, pp. 331-356.

<sup>9</sup> P. SCHIERA, *Amministrazione e costituzione. Verso la nascita della scienza politica*, «Il Pensiero Politico», XV/1982, pp. 74-91. P. SCHIERA, *L'amministrazione pubblica in Europa tra costituzionalismo e solidarietà*, «Scienza & Politica», 38/2008, pp. 5-13.

<sup>10</sup> É. MICHAUD, *The Many Lives of the New Man, 1914-1945*, in M. CIOLI – P. SCHIERA – M. RICCIARDI (eds), *Traces of Modernism*, pp. 89 -106. R. FERRARI, *Beatrice Potter e il capitalismo senza civiltà*, Rome, Viella, 2017.



projected futures. Arts, politics and social science were all part of this reinvention. The plan was the main form of what Marshall Berman defined as modernism: the attempt «to make oneself at home in the maelstrom of modernity»<sup>11</sup>. Even if politics today no longer plans on a long-term basis and has lost the utopian dimension it had during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the problem of governing and planning time as the “concrete” space of human action persists and makes technical progress the measure of societal time and therefore of the possibilities of action actually practicable, manifesting the ability to confiscate the future, i.e. to show its almost destined necessity and the practical absence of alternatives.

If social evolution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century could be considered to be the last philosophy of history, plan-based thought represented that scientific and ideological pattern that during the 20<sup>th</sup> century answered the need for order by shifting the focus from history to civilisation and replacing the conception of spontaneous order with the idea of «social technology». The concept of a new civilization, used by Beatrice and Sidney Webb to define the USSR but also to point out the necessary innovation of liberal democracy<sup>12</sup>, introduced a conception of the human being not only as an individual capable of individual actions, but above all as «a subject capable of undertaking, learning and carrying out collectively coordinated actions». Plan-based thought could therefore be understood not only as the compromise necessary for the Soviet project of creating a socialist society, but also for the institutionalization of a “technocratic bargain” between political and social actors and those social sciences that aimed at rethinking capitalism.

Plan-based thought developed in three crucial historical moments: the First World War; the October Revolution; and the Great Depression<sup>13</sup>. While the first marks the beginning of globalization and the crisis of liberal democracy, the second represents the first open challenge to this democratic model and to the political centrality of Europe and the third directly claims for a global reappraisal of the laissez-faire economy and moves towards a new conception of the role of the state and of the relation between politics and economics. These

<sup>11</sup> M. BERMAN, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air. The Experience of Modernity*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1982, p. 345. M. RICCIARDI, *The Discipline of Freedom. High Modernism and the Crisis of Liberalism*, in M. CIOLI – P. SCHIERA – M. RICCIARDI (eds), *Traces of Modernism*, pp. 107-128.

<sup>12</sup> R. FERRARI, *Charade of Democracy. From the Crisis of Individual to a Modernist Civilization*, in M. CIOLI – P. SCHIERA – M. RICCIARDI (eds), *Traces of Modernism*, pp. 65-88.

<sup>13</sup> To give only some examples of embryonic and well-structured forms of planning that were promoted both by authoritarian regime and by liberal democratic government adhering to various facets of market economy we can refer, in that order, to the Hindenburg Plan, the National Resources Planning Board, The Nazi Four Year Plan, Beveridge Plan and the Marshall Plan.

global events had a true planning power that crossed borders and alliances and transcended ideologies.

Plan-based thought focused on society as an autonomous entity that could not just be understood, but also organized over time. The centrality of the state was not simply related to general questions around sovereignty, for the state was also a concept of the crisis that had to be reinvented and charged with providing welfare in order to respond to social struggles. Thus plan-based thought had concrete effects on material conditions and institutions. Indeed, as could be said of the United States, the constitution of the state «may be considered a plan with amendments»<sup>14</sup>. The concept of plan-based thought is meant to identify and define this connection between the transformations of the state, society and its organization: planning aimed at overcoming the boundaries of state thought, starting from the assumption that «all government is planning». It was therefore a question of radically challenging the division between economics and politics, of rethinking the position of individuals in society, the connection between science and social progress, and consequently the political meaning of freedom and equality.

The following essays provide an analysis of global plan-based thought starting from different historical and geographical situations and different disciplinary perspectives. The broad picture that emerges shows points of continuity and discontinuity between different contexts and theories but also reveals a common theme: the conflictual relationship between economics and politics which not only reflects the hierarchies between state and society but also shows the dialectic between different forms and conceptions of power and their social reproduction. Plan-based thought does not only concern temporary institutional transformations, but reacts and is connected to the management of social conflicts over time.

As it was already acknowledged decades ago<sup>15</sup>, the plan didn't start in the USSR, even if it reached a particularly high level of complexity in that context. If we analyse the European and North American contexts, it is clear that planning is not exclusively concerned with redefining economics. The idea of a social and political plan was already underway at the end of the 19th century. In the face of industrial development and social conflicts, plan-based thought expressed the urgent need for social rationalization in order to realize the betrayed promise of evolution. Social efficiency, social integration, the logic of standardization, foresight and bureaucracy are all elements of the semantics of the plan.

<sup>14</sup> F. MACKENZIE, *Introduction*, in F. MACKENZIE (ed), *Planned Society. Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, p. xii.

<sup>15</sup> F. CAFFÉ ET AL., *Crisi e piano. Le alternative degli anni Trenta*, Bari, De Donato, 1979.



As Jonathan Levy's essay shows, in the US the planning idea had already taken hold in the twenties but «peaked during World War II». By 1948, however, state planning was not an issue in the US but instead constituted the main strategy of American Cold War foreign policy, which promoted planning agencies abroad for geopolitical reasons. Post-war US economic planning was a corporate planning and reveals an underestimated continuity with the planning discourse of the 1920s. US corporate managers were the real planners of the economy and in fact wanted to prove that growth was possible without central state planning. US corporate planning was aimed at efficiency in the use of capital and creating larger corporate bureaucratic structures. Corporate planning emphasized its own social relevance against critiques of the social homogenization produced by its logic of standardization. This emphasis on social value meant American capitalists had to bargain with organized labour. Corporate planning in the US was therefore both a way to avoid state planning and to increase the power of business lobbies, while at the same time depoliticizing the reorganization of economy and society.

Neither was this trend absent during the New Deal, when the planning ideal was not a mere technical instrument of economic reorganization, but a scientific and ideological reconstruction of the community necessary for neutralising conflicts between the classes and imposing the command of a classless state. Keeping account of the relevant political difference between the first and the second New Deal, in F. D. Roosevelt's public spending the criteria that prevailed were aimed at accumulation. If we take the *Big Business, Big Labor, Big Government* formula, it is legitimate to ask to what extent the autonomy of labor and government from business expressed itself in projects that were really autonomous from the logic of the legitimisation of the existing social order. At this juncture a "transatlantic West" was born, where planning also became a war against economic and social disorder and against the workers' attack on profits<sup>16</sup>. The New Deal can also be seen as a way to integrate workers' movements and the autonomy they had won in the preceding decades within the material constitution of the state. A managerial character, warfare, conservatism and social interventionism simultaneously coexisted in this planning project<sup>17</sup> and were deeply connected to the development of a Soviet alternative.

As Stuart Chase asked in 1932: «why should the Russians have all the fun of remaking a world?». While Stalin's USSR claimed its political hegemony

<sup>16</sup> K.K. PATEL, *The New Deal. A Global History*, Princeton-Oxford, PUP, 2016; N. GÖTZ – K.K. PATEL, *Facing the Fascist Model: Discourse and the Construction of Labour Services in the USA and Sweden in the 1930s and 1940s*, «Journal of Contemporary History», 2006/1, pp. 57-73.

<sup>17</sup> I. KATZNELSON, *Fear Itself. The New Deal and the Origins of our Time*, New York-London, Norton, 2013.

over plan-based thinking, the United States also claimed its part in the rebuilding of the civilization that underlay the political anthropology of the plan. This remaking of the world also involved the arts and architecture, or rather these were often the starting point of a new polemic on power, organization and social life. To use the words of Lewis Mumford, «a good plan is, in essence, an attempt to put such an integration in a graphic or dramatic form. As an instrument of thought, the plan has developed mainly out of the work of the architect, the town planner, the engineer, and the geographer»<sup>18</sup>. As Anna Rosellini explains, Le Corbusier had aimed to include the viewer in the vision of the urban plan in his architecture. The artistic and political goal was to change the conventional view of reality, to create a future in which the harmony in the «civilization of the machine» would be restored. His *ville nouvelle* showed the struggle between the historic Paris and the new Paris: reinventing and reorganizing the space was also about governing time. The *ville vert* he planned for Moscow transformed the concentric system of the orthogonal grid centred on the *cardo* and *decumanus* of the *Ville Contemporaine* into a system of sectors, each of which was assigned a particular function. The elimination of the central skyscrapers and the concentric urban structure forms an «urban organism» that develops in linear sectors along the transverse axis, intersecting the central sectors, with four diagonals at both ends of the longitudinal axis, but without reaching the forms of de-urbanisation of the linear city advocated by Soviet urban planners such as Nikolaj Miljutin.

Plan-based thought in the USSR expressed the supremacy of the social connections over the individual parts and the whole. Stalin's model of centralised planning attracted global interest, since from the beginning it was configured as a process of constructing a mechanism of power and of political leadership over the economy, with its real novelty being the integral relationship between the party-plan and market-society. For the Bolsheviks, the state-building process represented a response to the «international civil war» which was redefining their era on a global scale<sup>19</sup>.

Cadioli's essay shows that the command model of the economy in the USSR, while a product of the conflictual debate between geneticists and teleologists, resulted in an attempt to create a synthesis between forecast and directive, i.e. to transform targets into a new economics that would be an alternative to the market system. The forecast had to be governed from the present, «there was little forward planning, time was barely enough to deal with immediate tasks and plans were continuously amended to make good of recurring imbalances».

<sup>18</sup> L. MUMFORD, *Forward*, in F. MACKENZIE (ed), *Planned Society. Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, p. viii.

<sup>19</sup> S. PONS, *La rivoluzione globale. Storia del comunismo internazionale, 1917-1991*, Torino, Einaudi, 2012; G. GILL, *The Origins of the Stalinist System*, Cambridge, CUP, 1990.





Whereas the geneticists lost the battle because they argued that the process of the plan had to be independent from the planners, neither did the teleologists win in their attempt at imbuing the plan with revolutionary power. Prognosis and directive were meant to presuppose each other in the drawing up of the plan, albeit both geneticists and teleologists in fact viewed them dialectically. As Stalin's Great Break increasingly took the shape of extreme voluntarism, the directive, setting what was considered politically desirable and ideologically correct, was officially proclaimed triumphant over the idea that prognosis ought to set limits for the reinvention of the future, based on the constraints of the present. While the five-year-plan took on a ritualistic function, everyday planning became the «administrative operationalisation of the Party's political goals». This however also implied in a first phase theoretical innovations that would partly confirm Preobrazhensky's main theories on the double regulator in the Soviet development system and on the coexistence of the law of value and what he defined as the law of primitive socialist accumulation.

Reading Preobrazhensky also shows that the plan was a project of society: the technology of the plan served to impose and enforce the economic relations necessary to produce «socialist rationality». The «proletarian planning principle» was an attempt to transform Soviet politics into a *new proletarian science* able to guide economic development in its transition to socialist society. The problem of power was therefore formulated in terms of the social rationalisation of economic development. The semantics of the plan in Preobrazhensky's work addressed two fundamental problems of plan-based thought: the plan as the art of government and the plan as the formulation of a new relationship between time and social foresight. The «prognosis for the future» established the plan as simultaneously a final result, a future order, and a starting point that didn't lie in the materiality of the present, but in the immaterial space of prediction that governed the present.

The «transition» from Lenin to Stalin shows a transformation in the image of the «new man»: from the revolutionary subject to the productive worker. Here, in the spirit of building communism with Stachanov as its new ideal type, we find the political anthropology of the plan as an anthropology of productive man. For Stalin the plan had to direct the economy as an instrument of political power. Through the plan, class-party identification had to find a concrete and clear expression, to the point of strengthening and therefore overcoming the duplicity of the nature of the worker – i.e. their productive labor-force and political-managerial power. Social power or rather worker power had already won in the Soviet conception of the plan, therefore the market could be dismissed: the workers' government was the party government. The plan was meant to

solve, or at least serve to mediate, any gap between the two. If the Soviet plan was not only a political modality for organising the economy, but a specific implementation of a mechanism of power, this power was not defined once and for all by ideology but had to confront economic rationality. More precisely, the Soviet plan reproduced political power through an economic reorganization that opened up its main contradiction: the persistent domination of economics over politics. Despite all the ideological attempts to realize the opposite, this contradiction is a fundamental problem not only in Soviet planning, but also in other forms of plan-based thought. This has not been sufficiently considered until now and is crucial for reconstructing the history of plan-based thought and its current transformations. It also shows that even if it didn't begin in Russia, Soviet plan-based thought led to changes in modern political concepts that had an effect globally.

Against neoliberal individualization, which was based on the idea that the fragmentation of power led to equality of opportunity, plan-based collectivization presumed to be the social solution for the centralization and just redistribution of power, or rather for the supremacy of a collective power, whose superiority had to be ideologically reaffirmed from above.

While plan-based thought and neoliberalism seem to be diametrically opposed, they were also constrained to assimilate some elements of one another: if the former couldn't do without exceptions to the collective norm and a constant review of fixed targets, i.e. it couldn't do without differentiation and discrimination; neoliberal discourse needed a social criterion to impose its power, a hierarchical thought that would govern individuals, homogenizing the society that the neoliberal theorists were so laboriously denying.

In 1988, in his work on the economy of society, Niklas Luhmann described planning theory as being «in a desolate state»<sup>20</sup>. He argued, however, that the advent of the risk society, containing what he called its «normal catastrophes», and the neoliberal rejection of any reference to planning, did not mean that the «discussion about the plannability of society» disappeared, but instead made the need to think about its conditions of possibility even more urgent. Plan-based thought has not only become individualized, but also sectorialized, immediately posing the problem of how to systematically connect the various partial plans. It is only political planning that is considered impossible and therefore illegitimate. Today the political subsystem's structural dependence on the economy is explicit and constantly reaffirmed. We are thus in a position to overturn what we might call the paradox of the plan. While during the 20th century, plan-based thought recognized the centrality of the political system, even

<sup>20</sup> N. LUHMANN, *Die Wirtschaft der Gesellschaft* (1988), Frankfurt am Mein, Suhrkamp, 1994, p. 324. My translation.



though that centrality was constantly redefined by economic necessity, «now the refusal of political planning reveals the clash between new forms of globalized planning and the only possible sovereign planning within the national political system». Today planning can only be the highly problematic task of what Ricciardi defined as the «Global State»<sup>21</sup>.

If, as Dirk van Laak pointed out, any «planning analysis serves to clarify how we anticipate the future in the present», the connection between partial and global planning is not simply a question of boundaries and spheres of competence. For Luhmann, this possibility is denied by the same *temporal semantics* on which modern society is based, with its constant distinction between past and future. This same semantics produces the possibility of criticism which, at least in theory, is the very foundation of any plan-based thought. If plan-based thought always runs the risk of being the government of a future prognosis, the neoliberal conception of the plan results in denying any possibility of an alternative, i.e. in denying a dialogue with the future that is not predetermined by the past.

Since making a «social prognosis» was the fundamental element of plan-based thought, today the *planned government of time* takes the form of a command over the future and its possible horizons that has to be analysed and criticized in order to detect who are the new planners, what kind of power they wield and in what ways it would be possible to produce a political discourse over the future that is not caught up in established global processes of hierarchization.

<sup>21</sup> M. RICCIARDI, *Dallo Stato moderno allo Stato globale. Storia e trasformazione di un concetto*, in «Scienza & Politica», 48/2013, pp. 75-93.