

Experience and impact of Learning Cities. From reporting to transformative capacity: criteria, evidence, comparability

Esperienza e impatto delle Learning Cities. Dalla rendicontazione alla capacità trasformativa: criteri, evidenze, comparabilità

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1. Introduction

The concept of the Learning City has evolved from a metaphor of “mobilisation” into an international policy infrastructure capable of steering urban strategies towards lifelong learning as a lever for inclusion, cultural prosperity, economic development, and sustainability (Unesco-UIL, 2013; Unesco-UIL, 2015; Osborne, Kearns, & Yang, 2013). The growth of the Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) makes this now global phenomenon visible: Unesco (2025) announced the accession of 72 new cities and the expansion of the network to 425 cities across 91 countries, encompassing almost 500 million citizens potentially engaged in lifelong learning policies and opportunities. On International Education Day 2026, Unesco highlighted how Learning Cities are translating the principle of learning for all into concrete reality.

Interpreting this expansion offers an opportunity to consider new dimensions that suggest equally new meanings for the development of Learning Cities (LCs). Certain conceptual keywords are no longer confined to lifelong learning and its municipal governance: if the Capability Approach is adopted as an interpretive framework, for instance, LCs can be understood as places guided by the normative criterion of freedom and human well-being. Similarly, research on educational and training ecosystems, as well as on social innovation, shows how LCs and Learning Regions (LRs) may represent forms of co-construction of new meanings – educational and training-related across an active life course now extending well beyond retirement age – and the co-production of civic and proximity-based economies. Making these linkages explicit constitutes a promising direction for further research.

2. LCs, LR, SDGs and Cultural Heritage: from “mapping” to assessing public value

Unesco-UIL (2017) explicitly proposes aligning LCs/LRs with the SDGs, highlighting recurring trajectories in their potential for skills development across key transitions (inclusive learning cities; green and healthy learning cities; learning cities for decent work and entrepreneurship).

More recent literature suggests that a significant share of learning cities and learning regions develops transformative capacity through activating cultural heritage as a learning infrastructure and as a lever of territorial innovation oriented towards the production of public value: the (creative) regeneration of places, memories, and knowledge (historical,

industrial, gastronomic) tends to generate hybrid configurations in which local economic development, social cohesion, and active citizenship mutually reinforce one another, often through collaborative arenas (festivals, civic networks, community labs) and multi-actor partnerships integrating universities, local authorities, and civil society (Longworth, 2006; Valdés-Cotera et al., 2015; Theodora, 2020). Within this perspective, regeneration and place-making dispositifs that are “culture-led” and “community-driven” are interpreted as socio-educational architectures capable of generating economic, social, and cultural benefits, including through circular approaches, with growing recourse to multi-criteria and participatory evaluation methodologies to guide adaptive reuse decisions (Della Spina, 2019; Gravagnuolo et al., 2024; Girard, 2020). The regeneration of industrial heritage also indicates impacts on social and territorial innovation, employment, and socio-cultural vitality, albeit with strong contextual variability (Scaffidi, 2024).

The interdependence among cultural, urban, and territorial policies is made particularly visible in the experiences of cities in the Unesco Creative Cities Network, where culture and local identity are mobilised as assets for sustainable innovation – generative rather than extractive – yet with recurrent challenges in terms of inclusion and policy continuity (Forleo & Benedetto, 2020; Unesco, 2024; Pagkratis & Dobson, 2024).

At the level of assessment, valorising this interdependence may rely on three “pillars”:

- specific frameworks for learning cities/regions promoted by the Unesco Institute for Lifelong Learning and the R3L+ approach, in order to make visible the surplus value generated by local learning networks (Preisinger-Kleine, 2013; Lido et al., 2020);
- repertoires of indicators developed within the smart/knowledge cities debate, organised into recurring domains (economy, people, governance, environment, mobility, quality of life, data) and tools such as composite indices and dashboards (Sharifi, 2020);
- multidimensional territorial-reading models which, even without consistently adopting the “learning city” label, offer transferable metrics for describing how a territory learns and transforms.

In summary, when cultural heritage is treated as a driver of civic learning and territorial innovation, the learning city tends to be configured as a laboratory of public value; the evaluative challenge becomes integrating inter-urban comparability with sensitivity to territorial specificities, avoiding the risk that the generative effects of heritage – belonging, capacity to act, quality of the public sphere – remain invisible within output-only indicators. Furthermore, the use of the SDGs should not be reduced to mere “quantitative” labelling (“this activity contributes to SDG X”); rather, the SDGs can become criteria of substantive engagement: what actually changes in terms of equity, decent work, sustainability, and well-being – and in which groups, neighbourhoods, and networks?

The culture of lifelong learning proposed by Unesco-UIL (2020) reinforces this interpretation, as it emphasises lifelong learning as a systemic response to global challenges and as a principle generating cross-cutting policies.

The expansion outlined above, however, may still leave unresolved the question: “How do we genuinely evaluate the experience and impact of Learning Cities beyond reporting activities?” International Education Day (Unesco, 2026) reiterated this point: the network may constitute a space for global exchange, access to expert guidance, recognition (including through the Unesco Learning City Award), and the diffusion of city strategies

to make learning accessible to all. Yet it remains anchored to an interpretation focused on measuring “learning”.

Accordingly, advancing the meaning, significance, and role of LCs and LR in generating urban vitality, territorial development, and opportunities for human flourishing requires moving from an “inventory of provision” to assessing transformative capacity. This may require:

- a rigorous distinction between experience and impact;
- an explicit theory of change;
- mixed and comparable evaluative designs that are sensitive to context (institutional, cultural, political, territorial);
- an analytical use of an ecosystem lens that magnifies generative and plural connections.

The logic underlying an assessment of transformative capacity entails a shift from reporting to a theory of change. In the framework under consideration, the focus falls on verifying outcomes and transformations – namely changes in actual opportunities of access, in the distribution of capabilities, in social cohesion, and in the sustainability of collective choices (Unesco-UIL, 2015; Unesco-UIL, 2017). Within the context of current global challenges (climate crisis, technological and demographic transformations, growing inequalities), a paradigm shift is likely, one capable of capturing the value of a culture of lifelong learning understood as a social and political principle rather than merely as educational provision (Unesco-UIL, 2020), while affording greater consideration to perspectives of civic agency (Biesta, 2013) and combined contexts for capability development (Nussbaum, 2011). Carlsen, at the first International Conference on Learning Cities (Unesco, 2013), articulated the vision of promoting lifelong learning for all as “a vector of equality and social justice, social cohesion, and sustainable prosperity” (Carlsen, 2013, p. 5). This formulation – grounded in the Conference’s Executive Summary and adopted by over 550 delegates from 102 countries – continues to inspire an understanding of LCs not merely as providers of educational services, but as active infrastructures for redistribution and social justice.

3. A growing “territorial” perspective: local government, communities, and political discontinuities.

Longworth (1998; 2006) located learning cities/regions/communities within a perspective that interprets local government as a crucial actor in mobilising intersectoral resources for lifelong learning; at the same time, the vulnerability of processes to political cycles and institutional discontinuities is acknowledged (Longworth, 2006). Reading LCs and LR as a historical (non-linear) process is further developed by Longworth and Osborne (2010), who interpret territorial evolution in “ages” and transitions, offering a sensitivity useful for longitudinal evaluation: not only “what it produces today”, but what remains and how it becomes institutionalised over time. This perspective integrates the idea of territorial capital (TC), which in commonly used meanings is defined as the set of resources on which a community can rely (OECD, 2001; Dematteis & Governa, 2005; Camagni, 2009; Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016), namely the range of material and immaterial resources a territory can potentially access.

In more strictly economic approaches – where development objectives are reduced to mere economic growth – TC is usually identified through a predefined set of components valid

for all territories: subordinated to universal objectives of economic growth, TC is constituted only by components that can increase or perpetuate it. It is therefore conceived as the set of constraints and growth opportunities attributed to a territory. In a perspective of generative interdependencies, by contrast, TC must be decomposed and recomposed according to history, culture, and local expectations. Consequently, all material and immaterial elements are considered that take on a complex of specific qualities because they are place-bound, sedimented over the long term, and difficult to find elsewhere (Belliggiano et al., 2018), acquiring specific meaning and value depending on how they are locally interpreted (De Rubertis et al., 2019a; De Rubertis, Mastromarco & Labianca, 2019b). TC is thus interpreted as a set of resources identified and organised by the community according to its own development objectives. The ability to recognise and realise an innovative idea – and therefore the possibility that cultural and social innovation can take place – depends on the qualities of TC itself; the realisation and scope of social innovation depend on the territorial capital that the community is able to recognise and mobilise (Labianca et al., 2020). This aspect outlines the evolution of LCs and LR as discussed by Longworth: local leadership should not be presumed, but transformed into a hypothesis to be evaluated (capacity for coordination, capacity to learn from evidence, continuity beyond the electoral cycle, sedimented actions and activities) (Figure 1).

First level or meta level:	
• Recognition	• Participatory evaluation
Second level:	
Appreciation/Attractiveness of the territory	• Quality of living and trajectories preferred or expected by the local community
Third level	
<i>Generative component: human flourishing</i>	• Quality of widespread knowledge and skills • Ability to produce and apply (knowledge and skills) • Ability to improve human capital (education/training)
<i>Generative component: social capital</i>	• Propensity to collaborate (in the public sphere: inter-municipal collaborations; in the private sphere: business networks) • Propensity to comply with “contracts” rules
<i>Sedimented component</i>	• Productive system • Protection of local/territorial values and skills • Local and non-local connections (connection infrastructures, digital and physical accessibility)

Figure 1. Levels of definition of territorial capital (Labianca et al., 2020).

4. LC as relational and generative ecosystems: urban flourishing as interdependence and feedback loops

The perspective of LCs as educational, training, and transformative ecosystems draws on ecosystem theory in biology, initially used to define a unified framework within which to study plant and animal communities, their interactions with inorganic nature, and their interrelations with human communities (Tansley, 1935), and subsequently understood as a community of organisms and their physical environment interacting as an ecological unit

(Lincoln et al., 1982). A first map of the ecosystem, as represented by ecologists, includes interactions, interrelations, interacting communities, interconnections, organisation, exchanges, and energy. In this direction, Banerjee and Petersen's (2023) scoping review highlights that the field is fragmented and that integrated frameworks are needed to describe learning within and across cities, with attention to multi-level processes and city-to-city networks in which a collective and ecosystemic intelligence co-evolves. Drawing on Bateson (1972), the reference to the ecosystem becomes an explicit articulation of a system pertaining to learning – and which is itself learning: following Maturana and Varela (1980), through the principle of “structural coupling” (encompassing the organism of the individual human being, human society, and the ecosystem) and the need for “awareness” of outcomes as a form appropriate to the learning task. This image holds that thought is centred on patterns and relationships, which are the essence of the living world. LCs as learning ecosystems are not synonymous with “networks” but with mechanisms – knowledge circulation, co-design, evidence-informed decisions – and feedback processes (how evidence modifies choices and resources) oriented towards the flourishing of both people and contexts.

A learning and training ecosystem is therefore a complex and dynamic environment enabling individuals and communities to interact and collaborate to promote generative human, social, cultural, and economic development through:

- interconnected relationships: relational networks among various actors, including students, teachers, families, entrepreneurs, educational institutions, and local and global communities;
- diversity and dynamism: dynamic networks in continuous evolution, designed to be flexible and adaptable to changing educational needs and socio-economic contexts;
- integrated learning: learning not confined to classrooms, but extended and hybrid, distributed across different experiences and places;
- co-creation and participation: all participants involved in the design and organisation of training that safeguards the interests of all ecosystem members;
- support for personal and collective growth: designed to support both personal and collective growth, promoting transversal skills and encouraging a sense of collective responsibility and common well-being;
- innovative technologies and tools: digital platforms and open systems helping connect different learning opportunities and support progress and transitions effectively and in distributed ways;
- distributed governance: distributed governance among various actors decentralises responsibilities, enables greater participation and inclusivity, and allows multiple voices to steer and develop the ecosystem.

In this direction, Valdés-Cotera et al. (2015) present comparable cases (12 cities in different contexts) that orient practices, policies, and “lessons learned” towards making lifelong learning a concrete ecosystemic endeavour, with attention to governance, partnerships, and local strategies. From an evaluative perspective, these findings can support three analytical directions:

- moving from describing best practices to reconstructing recurring patterns (conditions, constraints, enabling processes);

- developing indicators and tools for experience/impact based on “situated” evidence, avoiding excessive abstraction;
- developing indicators of “connectivity” among ecosystem elements.

Assuming the ecosystem perspective, LCs-LRs can therefore be described as open systems promoting lifelong learning, social inclusion, and sustainable development through multi-actor partnerships (public institutions, universities, businesses, civil society) (Longworth, 2006; Bellandi, Donati, & Cataneo, 2021; Ofei-Manu et al., 2018; Füg & Ibert, 2020; Piazza, 2024). The Unesco approach emphasises indicators such as civic participation, learning culture, and collaborative networks (Longworth, 1998; Ofei-Manu et al., 2018). German regional policies show how social innovation is integrated into learning regions through experimental practices and emerging professional communities (Füg & Ibert, 2020).

5. “New learning sites” and public pedagogy in urban space

The growth of the GNLC and its emphasis on local government should not obscure the fact that urban learning includes non-institutional and sometimes conflictual dimensions. Popović et al. (2020) show that, in contexts of friction with institutional policies, new learning sites emerge in public space (civic practices, protests, critical participation) that can be interpreted as public pedagogy and contextual forms of urban civic education. This perspective concerns not only access to educational services, but access to citizenship spaces, voice, recognition, and agency. In evaluative terms, this implies including tools capable of observing:

- perceptions of access and recognition;
- the quality of public spaces as learning environments;
- practices of participation and deliberation (including informal ones) that produce civic learning.

The demand for comparability grows with the expansion of the global network of LCs. Unesco frameworks (Unesco-UIL, 2013; Unesco-UIL, 2015) provide a basis for process and system indicators (Xu, 2024; Sharifi, 2020; Patrão, Moura, & Almeida, 2020). In effect, one outcome of a public pedagogy perspective in urban space is social and cultural innovation interpreted as a response to contemporary urban challenges enacted through collaborative practices involving active citizens and partnerships across different sectors (Domanski, Howaldt, & Kaletka, 2020; Terstriep, Rehfeld, & Kleverbeck, 2020; Bellandi et al., 2021; Galego et al., 2021; Sandlin, O’Malley, & Burdick, 2011; Webb et al., 2020). Social innovation ecosystems require flexible governance integrating public, private, and civic actors in co-productive processes oriented towards public value (Terstriep et al., 2020; Bellandi et al., 2021).

Considering the Capability Approach perspective, public pedagogy in space also redefines human development by centring on people’s substantive freedoms (capabilities), overcoming purely economic or resource-based visions (Fukuda-Parr & Cid-Martinez, 2019; Robeyns, 2005; Clark, 2013; Nussbaum, 2011; Deneulin & Shahani, 2009). In urban co-design, participatory feedback evaluation gains value in providing data on policy impacts on citizens’ real well-being, spatial justice, and equity in access to opportunities (Janssen, 2024; Janssen et al., 2023; Janssen et al., 2021; Wolfram, Borgström, & Farrelly,

2019). Nussbaum proposes a list of fundamental capabilities that can serve as a reference for inclusive policies (Nussbaum, 2011; Spatscheck, 2012).

The tool of Spatial Contracts (Schafran, Noah Smith, & Hall, 2020) can be considered a model for negotiated agreements – both formal and informal – capable of regulating the collective common good and governing trust systems within a given territory, in the urban domain as well as in LCs: negotiated collaboration agreements assume a strategic as well as organisational and value-related function for contexts of citizenship and agency. The fact that Spatial Contracts focus on trust systems – which always have some material component – and are essentially linked to human action towards contexts and territories defined by the presence of tangible and intangible heritage, renders visible choices aimed at unlocking hidden opportunities. Being territorial, they are rooted in the social realities of their specific system, in their geography and history, and in the physical and symbolic environment they inhabit, encompassing the meanings and values of the trust systems that are intended – through place contracts – to be realised or reproduced.

A public pedagogy in space that activates negotiated trust networks through Spatial Contracts brings together interdisciplinary co-creation projects and actions oriented towards the common good, the generativity of cultural heritage, and full human development. In this direction, some recent studies propose integrated models in which learning cities/regions become enabling platforms for expanding individual and collective capabilities through collaborative governance and innovative ecosystems (Janssen, 2024; Janssen et al., 2023; Janssen et al., 2021). However, the literature still reports limited empirical systematisation of this evaluative perspective. The intersection of learning cities/regions, the Capability Approach, and innovative ecosystems represents a promising but still underexplored frontier of contemporary urban research. The convergence between learning cities/regions and innovative ecosystems offers a framework for addressing contemporary urban challenges in participatory ways oriented towards human development (Robeyns, 2005; Longworth, 2006; Bellandi et al., 2021). The Capability Approach proves effective in providing normative criteria for assessing the social impacts of urban policies beyond mere material outputs (Fukuda-Parr & Cid-Martinez, 2019; Clark, 2013). Nonetheless, significant limitations persist: many applications remain theoretical or fragmented; few empirical studies effectively measure capability expansion in urban contexts; and multi-actor governance presents persistent difficulties linked to structural inequalities and lack of coordination (Janssen et al., 2023; Terstriep et al., 2020; Howells, 2021). The Unesco-UIL webinar for International Education Day 2026 highlighted that the GNLC is not only a membership structure, but an infrastructure recognising plurality among cities – through exchange of ideas, expert guidance, and international recognition – that becomes an ecosystemic opportunity grounded in education and training for subjective and collective agency.

If LCs can be infrastructures of sustainable human development, evaluation should integrate two quality criteria:

- transformative effectiveness: the capacity to modify opportunities and practices over time (capabilities, networks, institutions, spaces);
- transformative justice: equitable distribution of benefits, reduction of inequalities of access and conversion, and democratic quality of processes.

Within this perspective, the fundamental issue is not only “what works” in LCs, but “for whom it works, under what conditions, and with what conception of public value”.

6. Challenges for Learning Cities as highlighted in the Contributions published in this Issue

The contributions gathered in this issue paint a rich and polyphonic picture of the central question posed by the call for papers: what directions should guide the evaluation of the experience and impact of Learning Cities, what tools may be employed, and how these can be rendered coherent within frameworks that are credible, inclusive, and generative.

This journal issue opens with the invited contribution by Ellerani, presenting a hypothesis for redefining the LC construct, reinterpreted as an agentive educational ecosystem (with a list of combined capabilities) – one that achieves a dynamic balance among actors and in which the quality of its connections converts resources into combined capabilities, generates transformative collective agency, and produces public value and common good over time. Opening up reflection on the connections that sustain the LC as an ecosystem makes it possible to bring together implementation and democracy within education and citizenship.

We introduce the presentation of the review with Federighi, Carlsen, Di Grazia and Valdés Coterá's contribution from the first evaluation report on governance in learning cities in Italy. The research work becomes illustrative of a new perspective towards LCs. The hypothesis for the evolution of the LC framework should not measure “how much culture exists in the city”, but rather the quality of processes and their social impact. For example, evaluation areas could be defined that give meaning to integrated governance (a formalised cross-sectoral steering committee), data management (the presence of a learning monitoring system based on Open Data and impact indicators), training of a LC manager and inclusion (minimum proximity indicators for services), and private sector engagement (active training agreements with local businesses and workplace learning).

The contributions collected in the theoretical-methodological section reveal, with considerable force, a productive tension between two distinct orientations. On one side, several studies employ mixed empirical designs – quasi-experimental, convergent, and comparative – to measure the concrete effects of learning within LCs on employability, self-efficacy, civic engagement, and professional adaptability. Di Palma demonstrates how participation in integrated urban learning experiences – internships, service learning, project work, and local workshops – enables students to attain higher levels of professional adaptability, provided such experiences are accompanied by guided reflection tools capable of transforming experiential engagement into meaningful learning. Gravino, Saraiello, and Tafuri develop these insights in close continuity, showing that the impact of LCs on perceived employability depends neither on the quantity of opportunities available nor on the frequency of participation, but rather on the inclusive quality of the learning experience: it is through processes of recognition, social network formation, and self-efficacy reinforcement that learning within LCs becomes subjectively relevant. Scala, Tafuri, and Liguori complete this thematic picture by demonstrating that participatory interventions grounded in practical workshops, collaborative brainstorming, and storytelling significantly increase both civic engagement and self-efficacy, and that students involved in such activities experience learning as more relational and transformative, with a heightened awareness of their own role within the community. Palmiero, Tafuri, and Romano extend this perspective to the broader plane of evaluation, showing that engaging university students as citizen-learners in participatory co-evaluation activities yields significant effects in terms of civic awareness and perception of urban inclusivity: participatory evaluation thus emerges, in its own right, as a fully-fledged educational device. The Brescianini and Luppi hypothesis presents a convergence around key processes

between Learning Cities and Educational Communities: it shows an interesting coherence perspective with “evidence-based connections” to evaluate multi-actor and territorial processes.

On the other side, a second cluster of contributions challenges the premises of quantitative evaluation by proposing alternative frameworks. Verbicaro and Oliva construct a three-dimensional matrix – encompassing accessibility, agency-capability, and policy-implementation consistency – drawing on the Capability Approach and Universal Design for Learning; its comparative application across a selected set of LCs reveals systematic asymmetries in the governance and documentation of the educational experience. Acuña Betancourt and Baraldi, writing from a feminist and epistemic justice perspective, demonstrate how a strong female agency and wide-ranging informal participation can coexist with systematic forms of epistemic invisibilisation, calling for a redistribution of epistemic power capable of transforming participation from an extractive practice into a constitutive process. Buccini, through a systematic review conducted according to the PRISMA protocol, shows how the literature is converging towards a conception of the city not as a container of educational opportunities, but as an epistemic device grounded in practices of collaboration and knowledge co-production. Németh argues that the success of LCs depends, paradoxically, less on municipal leadership than on the engagement of stakeholders in building learning communities founded on mutuality, access, and inclusion, assigning universities a strategic role in providing concrete evidence of the social and economic impacts of community learning.

Osborne, Piazza, and Azizi offer a compelling synthesis of this tension: through a critical re-reading of the historical evolution of the concept – from the economic origins associated with the OECD discourse on Learning Regions (LRs) to the current Unesco and Pascal frameworks – they show how benchmarking logics have ultimately reduced the LC to an object of accountability, losing sight of its distinctive contribution in terms of coordination and collective learning. Complementing this critical perspective, the contributions of Agagiù, De Nicola and Zuccoli, and Viana da Silva demonstrate that LCs also manifest in informal, ecological, and technological contexts where traditional evaluative criteria struggle to capture the value of the phenomena concerned: artistic and community-based practices developed in response to the Xylella crisis in Salento, the cultural heritage of Mantua and Sabbioneta as an urban learning ecosystem, and IoT and Blockchain systems as tools for environmental pedagogy and active citizenship are all examples of how the educational value generated in urban settings demands innovation in qualitative evaluative criteria – criteria that are increasingly situated and resistant to standardisation.

The contributions gathered in the experiences and reflections section reveal a significant broadening of the LC paradigm, both geographically and conceptually. Pagliai introduces the framing with a reconstruction of the concept’s development – from the Faure Report of 1972 to the Yeonsu Declaration of 2021 – tracing how the city has progressively transformed from a provider of services into a pervasive learning environment, with particular attention to the role of lifelong learning in building resilient communities. The collected experiences further document how the paradigm is finding meaningful expression in contexts of urban marginality and inner-area territories. Carlomagno, drawing on recent events in Turin, explores the fractures between marginalised communities and the formal policies of the LC, asserting that such communities must be understood as central actors rather than passive recipients of urban transformation. Audino examines Casetta Rossa in Rome’s Garbatella neighbourhood as a laboratory of participatory urban welfare,

foregrounding practices of care, attentive listening, and proximity networks as the foundations of educating communities capable of accompanying the city as a process in continuous becoming. Biagi extends the framework to the rural context of the Casentino area in Tuscany through the case of “FestaSaggia”, showing how a network of actors engaged in the shared stewardship of local heritage can constitute an authentic form of LC beyond large urban centres, rendering visible the educational value of proximity cultural practices that have traditionally been excluded from institutional recognition. Tubadji and Meredith, finally, show how a learning city can develop when educational policies balance cultural heritage and living culture.

Taken together, the contributions in this issue suggest that the evaluation of LCs can be neither reduced to a technical exercise in measurement nor abandoned in favour of purely qualitative narratives. The works collected here open towards a conception of LC evaluation that demands a plural, reflexive, and participatory approach – one capable of holding together empirical rigour and contextual sensitivity, output indicators and relational and symbolic transformations, institutional governance and the agency of the most marginalised subjects. The city that truly learns is one capable of redistributing epistemic power, rendering the categories of urban knowledge negotiable, and transforming evaluation itself into a collective act of learning and justice. It is in this fertile tension, running through all the contributions gathered here, that the evolution of the LC paradigm may be measured.

Yet it is equally clear that we stand at the threshold of a transformation that exceeds the LC as it has hitherto been understood as an act of urban governance: a new designation is needed – one capable of assuming, describing, and representing the emerging paradigm, together with the new methods and tools that its evaluation requires.

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