

Reading the city through the lens of urban standards.

The case of Ponticelli, East Naples.

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Abstract: In occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Decree 1444/68, an intense debate has refocused the attention to the original tension of the Law towards the right of the city. By the application of the Decree it has been possible to reconstruct a new geography of Italy, variegated and diversified. In this scenario, the south of Italy is conspicuous by its lack of equipment, that can't permit an evaluation of the social impact because it's an interrupted process. The purpose of the present study is to observe and analyse how the spatial welfare system of southern Italy has been built, examining the study case Ponticelli, in the eastern periphery of Naples. Through the outline of two stories, it will investigate the construction of the public city in the degraded areas, among tensions and social inequalities. The first one is an institutional tale, which looks at the process of application of the decree; the second one is an informal tale, which reads the practices and the processes of use and appropriation of these lands. Thus, the current paper aims to rethink about the validity of the normative tool in an urban and social condition characterised by continuous and uncertain evolution. Additionally, the research attempts to find alternative and spontaneous forms, bordering illegal practices that can be found in urban areas, in absence of public intervention, such as subsidiary processes of guarantee of the right to the city.

Keywords: urban planning standards, urban practices, land reserves

Foreword. What do we talk about when we talk about urban planning standards?

The urban planning standards are a normative device introduced in 1968 at national level through the Decree (DI) 1444/68. It was intended to ensure, through reference to a quantitative value (18 sqm/inhabitant), the creation of a specific category of public spaces and thus curb urban speculation occurred after the Second World War, improving the quality of individual and collective life. The collective equipment defined as urban standards – schools, parks and open spaces, collective services and car parks – therefore represent the formalization of a right to the city. They have been realized



mainly in growing areas, to equip the public city and to compensate for the lack of collective equipment within the already urbanized areas. They have therefore helped to build the periphery of the public city according to the modern urban model.

The instrument of urban planning standards, understood by local governments as a mere numerical quantity to be respected in the sizing of the zoning plan, is now ineffective in responding to the social and urban condition in deep global change, in continuous and uncertain evolution, according to needs and desiderata that characterize contemporary lifestyles in a very different way from those defined 50 years ago. Today, the theme of urban planning standards raises several questions concerning, on the one hand, the disjointed heritage of equipment, its management and reuse; and, on the other hand, the failure to implement that "collective infrastructure" as a guarantee of high levels of livability (Gabellini, 2001; Munarin and Tosi, 2011).

Historical Background. Fifty years of urban planning standards

"The patient research for the physical and concrete dimensions of individual and collective welfare started before the Welfare State" (Secchi, 2005) is still nowadays a crucial point of the urban discipline. The phenomenon of equipment of the city, as a heritage of '900, remains one of the main features of the contemporary European city (Munarin and Tosi, 2011).

In occasion of the 50th anniversary of the DI 1444/68, in the last year a debate has been animated in ministerial and academic domains, which refocused the attention to the horizons in the sense of the decree – the only national policy on the 'public city' about citizen rights recognised by the Constitution¹ – in the original tension towards the right to the city. Among the different initiatives, the academic group "Laboratorio Standard"² led a research which has: crossed the cultural and of interdisciplinary context roots of the Decree; it has also built reports on the role of the normative device in the equipment of different Italian cities and territories by means of the production of "standard spaces" as deposits of grounds as well as of collective and public artefacts (Renzoni, 2018); finally, the research group has developed possible experimental hypotheses towards a rethinking of the normative tool, that is able to adapt to the transformations and challenges presented by contemporary society³. National and local seminars⁴, meetings with representatives of the academic world and of the local and regional administrations have been the occasion to create an atlas of cases and questions, problems and innovative devices. Urban performance and quality, legislative reduction, and limits of the parametric value – unable to meet the increasingly complex needs and desires – are the concepts where the focus of the discussion on urban planning standards has been put today and in

¹ From an intervention of Carlo Alberto Barbieri at the 15th edition of INU (Istituto Nazionale Urbanistica) Urbanpromo "Progetti per il Paese" at the plenary "*Standard urbanistici e servizi ecosistemici. Il ruolo del verde per la riurbanizzazione della città contemporanea*", Triennale di Milano, November, 20th 2018

² The research group "Laboratorio Standard", patronised by SIU (Società Italiana Urbanisti), is a spontaneous group of different universities composed by: Cristina Renzoni, Paola Savoldi (DASU, PoliMi); Maria Chiara Tosi, Stefano Munarin, Alessia Franzese (dCP, Iuav); Giovanni Caudo, Mauro Baioni, Nicola Vazzoler (Darc, Roma Tre); Sara Basso, Elena Marchigiani (Dia, Università di Trieste).

³ National SIU seminar "*Cinquant'anni di standard urbanistici (1968-2018). Bilanci, questioni aperte e ipotesi nella direzione di una riforma possibile*", December, 12th-13th 2018, University Iuav of Venezia

⁴ For further information please visit: www.standardurbanistici.wordpress.com

the past decades⁵. The design of new maps as possible, some of them concern the change of the demand – variable, fragmented, dynamic – other maps deal with the dynamics of reuse/conservation/management of the supply (Gabellini, 2018) – inappropriate, obsolete, no longer just public but often of negotiating nature. Following the urban federalism, Regions from 1970s have taken different orientations, shaping a new Italian geography, which is variegated and diversified in terms of number of facilities, application of the procedure, used tools, urban forms created, practices of use, processes of regeneration of the inherited legacy from the application of the normative tool, innovations ‘within and beyond the logic of the standards’⁶. Consequently, a disarticulated national image has emerged following three patterns: first, the overproduction of “standard spaces”, that faces the problem of reconfiguration of the urban material inherited; second, the pattern crushed by the ‘pressure of the parameter’, unable to respect a too severe numerical value in the planning process; third, the pattern of under-equipment and informal city.

According to the logic of overcoming the urban planning standards, the “*progetto di suolo*” has been defined by Bernardo Secchi: “a large part of the *progetto di suolo* concern the standard areas, that is the areas meant to provide the city with collective equipment, that now are not linked tiles among each other [...]. However, the *progetto di suolo* does not reduce the public spaces to mere standardised quantities. Urban design and administrative planning practice, during the past decades, have shown how the principles and the objectives that rule the formulation of the law might be, in fact, betrayed” (StudioBresciaPrg, 1998). *Progetto di suolo* described by Secchi goes beyond the reductionist notion of to which urban planning standard has been attributed in urban planning practice, which is a non-secondary cause of semantic poverty of the contemporary city (Secchi, 2006). This latter, in turn, has generated fragmentation and lack of sense of urban parts space. Within the *progetto di suolo*, there is in between spaces, which cannot be eliminated or reduced to technical spaces (Secchi, 1986a); it shows attention to the dimension of everyday life, to the articulation of the space in sequences of recognisable, comfortable, and safe places. This kind of project does not only deal with quantities but with the quality of things, that is detail quality. “Recovering the spirit of the Decree, the *progetto di suolo* considers urban planning standards as materials which more most properly public and collective part of the city can be built” (StudioBresciaPrg, 1998). *Progetto di suolo* represents the ‘urban excipient’ (Munarin, 2010), in which it synthesizes collective infrastructure. “This is certainly the opportunity to deal with it: i.e. when the pressure for the construction of huge quantities of dwellings, in addition to the existing ones becomes weaker, while the pressure for the ‘modification’ of the existing is still strong” (Secchi, 1986a).

In this paradigm shift, where the city does not expand but rewrites itself, the city can be conceived as a recyclable resource. The topic of the transformation of parts of the city that have concluded a cycle of life, that are not going to work as in the past and are not going to host the same populations, leads to consider the recycle of the city as a fundamental strategy that crosses scales and themes of the contemporary urban question (Viganò, 2011). If on one hand the ‘cycle of modern’ can be considered

⁵ For additional details, please read: Collection “*Welfare urbano e standard urbanistici*”, (Roma: Officina); Contardi L., edited by, 1999, “Trent’anni dopo... Tornare a ragionare sugli standard urbanistici”, in *Urbanistica Dossier*, n.21; Falco L., 1987, *I nuovi standard urbanistici*, (Roma: Edizioni delle Autonomie); Falco L., 1977, *Gli standard urbanistici*, (Roma: Edizioni delle Autonomie).

⁶ Expression often used to classify the innovative aspects in the normative tool, in Caceres E., Chicco P., Corrado F. Falco L., Madrigal M., 2003, *Servizi pubblici e città. Gli standard urbanistici nelle legislazioni regionali e nella pianificazione locale*, (Roma: Officina).

as concluded, on the other, the entity of the legacy inherited from it, the legacy of urban planning standards, represents a central and crucial point.

To support this approach, there are the recent regional legislative measures on land use containment, to progressively reduce those parts of land that are not yet urbanised, in coherence with the European objective of no-land take by 2050. In this scenario, the guarantee of spatial quality in designing public space is considered as one of the main objectives of the legislative measures⁷. Nonetheless, for the interrupted, incomplete parts of the cities, where the cycle of equipment – an expression of the modern paradigm – has not come to an end and in which it is no longer possible to recover the gap between time, space and policies, which are the possible future cycles of life?

A Different-speed Italy

In its partiality, the “trip to Italy” described above shows a national geography “divided by the Apennine Mountains”, where “the great territorial room of the country”⁸ – the Padanian megalopolis – is characterised by comparable cycles of equipment of the modern public city, policies and reconfigurations.

The South of Italy is conspicuous by absence, lack of allocations, unfinished works, abandoned areas, (as a result of the reiteration of the bond of expropriation which was not been followed by an effective realization), unauthorised building phenomena (which make it the Decree impossible to apply). The political-urbanistic events which affected the Southern territories, the peculiar conditions of presence/absence of collective equipment only allow partial comparisons with other Italian cases.

Therefore, if on one hand the ‘standard spaces’ realised in the south raise shared questions, linked to the obsolescence of heritage, to the managing and designing of new cycles of life in terms of performance, according to the variation of the demand (as in the current national debate), on the other, the condition of absence – or suboption – of equipment does not allow to consider the evaluation of impacts and conflicts as a constant method of work and innovation (Gabellini, 2018), for a rewriting of these urban materials within regeneration processes, which cannot properly contribute to the debate on the revision of the legislative instrument, according to the parameters assumed on general scale.

Within the Black Box⁹: Ponticelli extra-ordinary city

Also in Naples, the decree on urban planning standards has contributed to shape the peripheries, fostering the process of urban polarisation, social and spatial inequalities in access to services and

⁷ In reference to the normative text of Veneto Regional Law L.R. 14/2017 “*Disposizioni per il contenimento del consumo di suolo*”, the first one region introducing the European indications in legislative normative in Italy.

⁸ See Clementi A., Dematteis G., Palermo P.C., 1996, *Le forme del territorio italiano*, (Bari: Laterza).

⁹ The title is referred to the intervention by Laura Lieto and Enrico Formato “Out of the black box. Per una critica degli standard tra eterogeneità e differenza. Il caso dei beni liberati a Napoli” during the SIU seminar “*Standard a misura. Regole, attori, esperienze*”, University Roma Tre, February, 16th 2018

facilities that should have improved the quality of individual and collective life. The inadequacy in the public managing together with the complexity of the city itself – here and elsewhere – have turned an inclusive and improving tool into a discriminatory and marginalising element.

The intervention on the existing identifies the city as a matter of facts conceived by another; the starting point is therefore “the logical understanding established by someone else” (Boesch M., 2018) to outline future paths of the possible: i.e. reading the signs of the territory in terms of palimpsest (Corboz, 1983) of formal and informal practices, regulatory and spontaneous, natural and anthropic.

In order to observe from the inside a phenomenon of equipment of a southern reality and investigate the possible causes for which analogous normative processes have led to different outcomes (Secchi, 1986a), the study case of the neighbourhood of Ponticelli, in the eastern area of Naples, has been selected. Ponticelli as "standard-city", built according to specific relations (i.e. buildings height/street width) and quantities (i.e. squared meters/inhabitants) which represent the heritage of the modern principles. Ponticelli as a residential city, with a population of 50.000 inhabitants. Ponticelli as a palimpsest and mixture of urban history – ancient farmhouse district, agricultural areas, public city. Ponticelli as a land of heterotopia, urban space organised as a campus, which conceives the ground as mere support of elements, with specific functions and specific temporalities (Secchi 2006; Foucault 1984), a peculiar land between dissolution of the industrial city and harbour activities of the productive city.

Through the delineation of two stories the research aims to retrace the construction of the public city in an area rhetorically known as “urban hell” (Camerlingo, 1986; De Lucia, 2018), an area of degradation, tensions, social inequalities: a formal story on one hand, that looks at the institutional process of application of the Decree, on quantity and consistency of inherited spaces; an informal story, that reads the practices and processes of use and appropriation, on the other.

The Formal Story: blending place, plans, and policies

In the attempt of reconstructing a timeline, the process of equipping the city, that has crossed the plans, has been observed through the lens of urban planning standards, starting from the date of emanation of the DI.

The story begins in 1969 when an initial survey by a Ministerial commission, led by Minister Occhiuzzi, declares as illegal or abusive the near totality of buildings realized in Naples from the end of Second World War (De Lucia and Jannello, 1976), including public city settlements. This image shows the seriousness of the situation of emergency of “environment destruction and of the terrible conditions of life characterising a large part of the population. Where the near totality of buildings is illegal it is not conceivable demolishing the whole city”. Naples as an extra-ordinary city.

The story of Ponticelli area is the story of an ancient farmhouse and of an agricultural centuriation plan¹⁰ (Pagano, 2001) transformed in a huge public city equipped with a delay compared with the Italian season of "great generation" (Secchi, 2005). A story that is made during the '80s, which sinks its roots in the first interventions Ina-casa¹¹ of the after War and crosses the plans followed through the time by means of rewritings of the Peep plan 167¹² from 1964 on. The first variant to the Peep plan, designed by architect Franz Di Salvo, is absorbed by the new zoning plan in the 1972. The settlement matrix was exasperatedly linked to the car, the lands were separated by the motorway road network through public equipment. "The periphery continued to be conceived as totally available as if they were working in the desert, ignoring pre-existing settlements, but creating a new urban image, technologically updated on the large-scale values" (Dal Piaz, 1986).

The zoning plan of 1972¹³ started a systematic transformation of the city in the tertiary sector, articulated in a series of headquarter centres, where Ponticelli was clearly privileged for number and consistence of the aforementioned centres and for the connections at the superior level. It considers the eastern side as a periphery supposed to host infrastructures, equipment, and services necessary to the whole city, without any particular care for the inhabitants who were already living there. "The new Ponticelli was proposed as a fragment of a 'different city', nestled in an urban city of bulky and unsuitable infrastructure installation". Peep settlements are organised as a marginal neighborhood, largely provided with public areas and public use areas but with no integration at all with the previous ones" (Dal Piaz 1986; Vittorini, 1986). In 1976 the "Piano Quadro dell Attrezzature" (Framework Plan of social Equipment) was drawn up as a tool to properly adapt the existing zoning plan to the regulation on the urban planning standards. It was never approved but it will contribute to the formation of the group "ragazzi del piano" (Corona, 2007), i.e. the young urban planners directed by Vezio De Lucia, that will develop, on the political wave of major Bassolino, a new idea of city with environmental matrix. This experience has been mentioned because it represented a formative moment of detailed knowledge of the Neapolitan reality, in particular, of discovery of its peripheries, leading to the drafting of the "Piano delle Periferie" in 1980. That is, a plan for the recovery of the historical centres of the ancient farmhouses, annexed to Great Naples by the end of the 1920s¹⁴, as "a construction of *the city within the city*, as a plan meant to create a continuous rethinking of the main hypotheses along which we moved in the 1960s with the construction of the public city" (Secchi, 1986a). The earthquake of November 23rd, 1980 represents a turning point for Naples as it changes times and perspectives of urban development of Ponticelli.

The earthquake has played the role of accelerator of all the processes of centre-periphery social redistribution already occurring (Benevolo, 1982; De Lucia, 1989). But above all the authority, the normative instruments, the extraordinary fundings of Special Law 219/81¹⁵ for reconstruction allowed

¹⁰ The Sebeto river valley, swampy in previous times, was characterised by a centuriation structure of the territory with the rotation of "quinari" along the slopes of the Vesuvius as a testimony of the ancient process of agricultural appropriation of the volcano slopes and that marks, at the same time, a full appropriation of it (Pagano, 2001)

¹¹ Public social housing program.

¹² Public social housing program by the Law 167/62.

¹³ Last plan approved by the Ministry on March 31st. The day after urban planning domain is transferred to the regions.

¹⁴ "Since then, those lands started the downhill to the hell, progressively abandoned to degradation, without any service of public spaces"(De Lucia, 2018).

¹⁵ The title VIII of the Law L.219/81 (artt. 80-85) foresees the realisation of 20.000 dwellings together with the urbanising works mainly in napolitan territory; interventions made in a unitary way and in primary and secondary urbanization services also referred to the arretrated need; detection of the areas to expropriate in exception to the existing urban planning

the shaping, in record times, to a series of ordinary interventions elaborated in previous years (Camerlingo, 1986). The Piano Straordinario di Edilizia Pubblica (Pser)¹⁶, which incorporates the indications of Chapter VIII of the Law, allowed the realisation of ordinary plans through extraordinary sources, thus implementing the Recovery Plan for Peripheries (Piano delle Periferie) and carrying on the Peep 167 Plan for Ponticelli that, until then, proceeded slowly.

For the dimensioning of the urban planning standards, it was decided to increase the values provided for in the DI in order to meet the previous need of equipment and green spaces. The Pser allowed to produce the public city, with social equipment realised at the same time as the housing (Cederna, 1987). It is a historical turning point for the equipment of the whole city of Naples: i.e. 99 schools satisfy the demand of the whole periphery, 32 sport facilities, 95 collective equipment. Especially as regards the natural open spaces, there is a considerable increase: i.e. 30 among green areas, local and urban parks with an increase of 132,7% compared with the existing endowment, raising the quantitative data from 0.11 to 2.19 sqm/inhabitants. Despite the substantial increases, the parametric data of the city scale still remains rather underestimated. Naples as a city of absence.

In Ponticelli the Pser realises 3750 accommodations (30% of the total forecasts) through 3 consortia of cooperative and state-owned companies; for the equipment, the forecast is 20 sqm/inhabitant for the recovery plan and 38 sqm/inhabitant for the new built Peep plan. It can therefore be considered as a standard city. Investigating the forms assumed by the Peep plan realised since 1981, it can be stated that it derives from a second version of the Peep plan, in 1979. This latter abandons the ambitions of the ‘great signs’ of the 1960s in favour of a clearer and more elementary settlement organisation, a grid, in response to the very trivial criteria of managerial nature among the consortia. The emphasis is maintained on the interdistrict roads with motorway features, whereas the dimensions of the macroblocks tend to encourage the realisation of out-of-scale complexes, with the structuring element of “cis”¹⁷ as a central axis of the settlement. The areas are divided into urban sub-district areas, each of which hosting a share of equipment, not equally distributed. The Pser, that will only take action on some urban sub-district areas and on the completion of others (i.e. area 11 of Ponticelli), assigns a non-secondary role to the public equipment planned. In the designing of the planvolumetric map¹⁸ some limitations can be recognized, the effect of which setting are still visible today: “the aim is recovering the importance of the delimitation of spaces with “qualifying set” constituted by buildings, borders and fences; that is to say, the recovery of the importance of the delimitation of the city” (Vittorini, 1986).

normative with a building index of 200 inhabitants/hectare; expropriation increased up to 70% compensation; the mayor is nominated as special commissioner. The realisation times are exceptional: within 15 days the areas are detected, in the next 15 they are given in concession, by means of agreements, to cooperative companies and consortia that deal with expropriation, planning and assignment of the accommodations, according to the economic criteria established by CIPE (Comitato Interministeriale di Programmazione Economica).

¹⁶ For the data reconstruction referred to the PSER (Extraordinary Plan of Housing) the following literature has been consulted: Dal Piaz A., 1982, “Il programma straordinario nel quadro delle vicende urbanistiche della città”, in *Edilizia Popolare* n. 166; Di Biagi P., 1986, edited by, “Napoli. Costruzione e ricostruzione della città”, in *Urbanistica* n. 83; Pres. Cons. Min., 1988, *Il recupero dei centri storici della periferia napoletana*, dossier INU Conference, Matera; De Lucia V. 1989, *Se questa è una città*, (Roma: Editori Riuniti); Corsi E., Franco C., 1991, edited by, *Da terremoto al futuro. La ricostruzione a Napoli. Il titolo VIII della Legge 219/81*, (Napoli: Electa); Corona G., 2007, *I ragazzi del piano*, (Roma: Donzelli).

¹⁷ Integrated centre of services.

¹⁸ The instrument to which Peep plan was subjected within the Pser, for the realisation; for Ponticelli, the group coordinator was Marcello Vittorini.

In the 1990s, in Major Bassolino's time, a process of protection of the physical integrity of the territory and of environmental quality started, according to an ecosystem vision which anticipates of some by decades the concept of no land take¹⁹, conceiving the territory as a resource (Corona, 2007). During the first '100 days' several parks and facilities are completed and opened to the public (De Lucia, 2018) to the slogan "each neighborhood of the periphery must have a park as big as the Municipal Villa in Naples".

The zoning plan approved in 2004, currently in force, provides two different production paths of standard spaces: i.e. a direct one, through public-private agreement for public use equipment, or through the transfer of areas and the realisation of equipment in the implementing planning. The plan of transformation for Ponticelli includes a series of implementing acts with the purpose of 're-founding'²⁰ the eastern city of Naples, "made of a chaotic urban mosaic but provided with conspicuous resources of available public spaces". Since the end of the 1990s, there has been a collection of scenerios, visions, calls for tenders and projects for the Ponticelli area, which today can be considered as tensions towards the future, utopias that have never been realised. Most of them are 'standard spaces'²¹. Ponticelli as an interrupted city.

At the end of the first tale, there is a reference to the guideline document for the drafting of new urban plan, published in March 2019, where the issue of the urban planning standards crosses through the visions of city proposed. Above all, the passage "from public city to city of public use, to city of common goods and civic uses" is highlighted as an evolutionary key of the definition of "urban collective infrastructure": the forms of innovation on urban planning standards aim to capitalize on the experience of bottom up experimentation, recognised and institutionalised from the local government²² as forms of the management of city as a common good.

The Informal Story: between practices and spaces

The second tale is an attempt of field exploration. By shifting the point of view from zenith to horizontal, it tries to observe the territory through the lens of collective equipment at present tense, between practices of use and conditions of degradation. Even though still in an embryonal phase of the research, it is still possible to get a first description of "Ponticelli as a city of people", still partial and introverted.

Between gigantism of settlements and the oversized roads allocation, in an excess of separation, a series of obstacles – fences more or less permeable to the eye – encloses and detects the collective equipment, often vandalised, sometimes unused, squalid, devoid of maintenance and care, without any quality and comfort. The 'standard spaces', fragmented or united in clusters, often appear inaccessible

¹⁹ In the zoning plan, approved in 2004, the C zones, expansion areas, are absent.

²⁰ See Council of Naples, Report on the variant to the general regulation plan, chap.6 (pp. 468-475), on www.comune.napoli.it/urbana

²¹ The Sebeto Park, the PalaPonticelli, the House of Music, Culture, and Events.

²² It is here referred to the following deliberations: dcc 29/15 "Adotta una strada"; dcc 7/15, dgc 893/15, dgc 446/16 for the collective managing of public and the recognition of citizen experiences of self-managing of public spaces to the advantage of local collectivity; dgc 458/17 on the temporary use of abandoned public equipment, for the purpose of valorisation of the public, unused legacy through the creation of urban civic communities.

and unaccomplished but sometimes it is just a mere perception. The gap between quantity and quality of the collective infrastructure is all there. The dimension, the scale, the distance between “parchi urbani”²³, roads, facilities and people make the urban space suspended: “not contemplated, not foreseen, removed, mankind finds itself alone at the top of the work and then disappears” (Wu Ming, 2018). An uninhabitable city. Almost a city without inhabitants. Nonetheless, people are in fact there and they manipulate and appropriate space, claiming a right to the city that has been betrayed.

The state of apparent abandonment allows spontaneous practices to colonize places: i.e. forms of informal re-appropriation, more or less virtuous, like a shred of vegetable garden land that an inhabitant has cropped in a public park, opening a gate in the fence that separates his house from the park; other times illegal, like transforming a linked bound to an urban park in toxic waste landfill. Other ones can be recognized as place-making and bottom up processes. This is the case of De Filippo Park, a 12-hectares local-scale park, apparently another fence inherited from the modern equipment. Realised at the extra-ordinary time of Pser²⁴, inaugurated and closed due to a lack of funds for the maintenance, after a period of improper use by criminal system, in 2015 it is entrusted by the municipality to the day care centre for addictions by ASL (i.e. the Italian NHS), called ‘Centro Lilliput’, for the creation of an “urban garden of health”, for curative and social reintegration purposes of drug addicted people. The management for rehabilitation purposes is associated with the re-appropriation by the local community, through the signing of an agreement between municipality and committees of free citizens for the assignation of spaces to be adopted and re-cultivated. This ‘micro-tale’²⁵ of urban planning standards tells about a process of activation, triggering and care of collective equipment, whose main value is in the recovery of the local identity and in the pedagogical function of the urban space.

The ‘presence’ of a heritage of equipment, such as the Decree spatial deposit, is also associated to the rarefaction of the unused space, of the in-between lands (Russo, 2012) waiting for the hopes-utopias-tensions to come true in the form of urban projects. They are fragments of ‘third landscape’: i.e. this “reserves of land” bring back to the generative principle of the decree, where original character had the aim of guaranteeing to the cities a reserve of unbuilt areas of public domain, regardless of the effective realisation within reasonable times and in absence of a public land policy (Falco, 1987; Chicco, 2003).

Marginal Notes on the presence/lack of equipment

On rhetorics. On one hand, there is a perception “at first glance”: a city-neighborhood-dormitory, a social hell, the mediatic reputation. On the other, “the controversy that prevails over the analysis, the passion that does not leave space for doubt, the side taking that does not allow to deepen the issues, to make comparisons, to place every idea and result into a proper perspective” (Secchi, 1986b). From another point of view, the observation from above and from a closer perspective, through the

²³ . In Naples, the term "parco urbano" is usually referred to a cluster of residential buildings, usually enclosed within fences; they might be defined as "gated communities".

²⁴ The sub-district 5, geographically barycentric in the Peep plan 167 in Ponticelli.

²⁵ The micro-tale has been reconstructed through interviews with professor Maria Federica Palestino, Diarc Unina, and with citizens that adopted areas within De Filippo park met there.

reconstruction of the normative events and the survey in the field, shows a daily reality that is made of the presence of equipment as a deposit of a physical heritage, of social networks, of forms of activism, of lands of possibility in form of waiting lands.

On urban planning standards. If the cycle of equipment according to the forms and methods provided by the Decree can be considered concluded, as it is linked to a limitless growing phase of the urban areas, the number gap, i.e. of the lacking quantities, however, cannot be recovered. If at a neighbourhood scale, the equipment has more or less satisfied the parameters established by the Decree, even though repeating the mistake of gigantism also for the equipment, the reflection needs to be brought back to the comparison between a local dimension of a presence (which is satisfied but still inadequate) and the urban and metropolitan dimension of absence (strongly underequipped), between quantity and quality, between standards and *'progetto di suolo'*. From this point of view, the case of Ponticelli can contribute to the national debate, showing comparable and common features to other Italian situations.

On urban planning. Thus, which kind of urban planning for the 'middle lands', still waiting? The storytelling of the two tales allows a definition of different images of the city: i.e. Ponticelli as an extra-ordinary city, only realised through actions and policies beyond the ordinary, but also extra-ordinary case for the phenomenon of equipment that has affected it. Ponticelli as an interrupted, incomplete, fragmented, awaiting city: a physical and political condition of inertia which generates segregation and social discomfort. Ponticelli infernal city, as an accumulation of urban wastes. Ponticelli as a present city, which reacts in a daily and spontaneous way to the condition of degradation and forgetfulness where it is relegated.

Non-conclusion

The image of an interrupted city allows to outline possible research perspectives. If the periphery can be assumed as a steady, historicised urban figure (Bianchetti, 2003; Russo, 2008), Ponticelli emerges in its hybrid position for the condition of presence/absence, unfinished, as an 'open work', where each part still has an uncertain status: if it is undiscussed which are the 'hard' parts (Secchi, 1984), the 'malleable' ones, in the inertia of the waiting, have hardened to the perception, structuring the urban landscape of this part of the city. "The quality of the space that crosses the time is not the neutrality (as defined by the modern project) but generosity, open structure, belonging to social networks" (Viganò, 2011). If "incomplete" can be considered as typical Italian style, we can assume 'freospace' as a verb or commandment that stimulates new ways of seeing the world, inventing solutions that provide for well-being and dignity of all inhabitants (Aravena, 2018): rewriting the city will mean being an open work, rather than a closed, accomplished system. The question 'time' becomes for Ponticelli a 'new urban question'. It is necessary to contrast the waiting of long term and wide-ranging planning with short timeframes and minimal interventions, contrasting to all that a greater flexibility in regulations, space and use. In a metabolic vision, assuming the postulate of Ponticelli as resource-city can allow to interpret the presence/absence of collective equipment as materials to be reinterpreted in new cycles of life. Can these materials define a new, albeit unsteady, image of the city?



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