Special Issue Combining Safety and Equity in the Post-Covid City: New Trends between Local Policies and Bottom-Up Practices

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Madalena Corte-Real

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Summary

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What is a city? This is the question

Fabio Corbisiero

What Makes a City a City?

What a city is? This is the question I usually pose to my students at the beginning of my "Urban Sociology" course every year. First and foremost, the city is a space of contested change. Moreover, the very definition of the city as an empirical object is inherently controversial (Lefebvre, 1973), and only through a plurality of perspectives within a transdisciplinary framework can one attempt to approach a pure analysis of the concept of the city. It is not by chance that urban studies, beyond specific disciplinary lenses, have traditionally evoked urban transformation through the paradigm of complexity.

Although protean and iridescent cities attract scholars, they require dialogue between disciplines that, particularly in certain periods, have tended to remain distant from, or even antagonistic to, each other, such as history and geography, sociology and urban planning, geology and engineering, architecture and geometry. In urban spaces, the continuous and reciprocal relationships between space and time emerge in paradigmatic ways. The contemporary city has been said to reveal the forms of socio-spatial reorganisation characteristic of globalisation, including spatio-temporal compression (Harvey, 1989) and the associated political meanings and effects (Jessop, 2006). These phenomena can only be understood by sharing approaches and tools from diverse disciplinary traditions.

Many scholars have focused their attention on cities with the intention of enriching urban studies. This has enabled the construction of new conceptual tools, innovative maps, and original cognitive cartographies, capable of restoring to the urban subject a heightened awareness of its position within the global network of relations, and of the inherently "political" nature of this position. Interdisciplinary urban analyses seem to construct a framework of maps and representations that attempt to address crises of meaning, investigating the "black holes" produced in the social fabric of metropolises. The goal is to guide policies aimed at reducing imbalances, unsustainable polarisation, and injustices, while proposing alternative spatial and institutional configurations (Jameson, 1989; Bauman, 1999). Urban life can only take place beyond structurally determined geographical boundaries; in sociological terms, the city transcends its physical limits and becomes a state of mind.

This process, in which one's personal biography intertwines with the development of the city, inevitably reflects the historical, social, political, and economic characteristics of the city's evolution. The emergence of the urban is, in part, attributable to the obvious complexity of the object of study and, on the other hand, to the particular disciplinary paths that it would be naive to confine solely to academic affiliations and institutional positions.

Changes in cities are constant and rapid. Cities can no longer be read simply as "growth machines" (Logan & Molotch, 1987), but rather as ecosystems that influence social formations. As you will read in this monographic issue of "Out of Place", there are several causes of urban change: mobility, migration processes, inequalities in time and space, social marginality, and urban tourism-one of the proxy indicators of critical transformations that are universally affecting cities.

There have been several dramatic events that have impacted cities globally, particularly those in industrial democracies: from the terrorist attacks on New York City in 2001 to the COVID-19 pandemic. Urban contexts have been targeted by social change and have thus further contributed to questioning the organisation of phenomena associated with urban life.

Tourism, which is theoretically a phenomenon of subjective leisure and collective well-being, is, on the contrary, another clear example of how the city can become a space of social tension. If urban tourism offers entertainment, imaginative authenticity, and pleasure to city visitors, it also serves as an intervention in the everyday life of the city, with the local population simulta-

neously becoming both a part of the tourist product and its antagonist. This is exemplified by the antagonistic "overtourism" movements that, as of 2015, find their stronghold in the network SET (Southern Europe facing Turistification), which has long fought for the right to the city in the Lefebvrian sense.

The focus on tourism and its anti-urban corollaries is merely a lens through which to analyse the numerous critical issues plaguing contemporary urban life: the increasing precariousness of the right to housing, caused largely by the mass acquisition of real estate by investment and property funds for conversion into tourist accommodation; the rise in property prices; and the transformation of housing units into short-term tourist rentals. These phenomena lead to real urban massification, running counter to the principle of the right to the city for all. These tensions foster competition for the preservation of urban segments where permanent residents are often the losers, struggling to access basic activities and services such as mobility, infrastructure, healthcare, and leisure.

In this urban form, where tourism also functions as a driver of development, tourist consumption rarely compensates for the non-consumption of residents. This dynamic creates a dual form of otherness, wherein visitors encounter the otherness of the places they visit, while locals coexist with an industry that primarily serves the needs of outsiders.

As tourists traverse the globe, experiencing sometimes subtle differences between places, the city continually re-codes its spaces (Hollinshead & Suleman, 2018), spectacularising them (Judd, 1999) and reducing their otherness through the commodification of everyday life. The abrupt halt to tourism during the pandemic provided an opportunity for critical reflection on the liberal economic development model that we have now "normalised" through a neo-capitalist lens, or "mortified" from a social research perspective.

The challenge is not to stop change, but to manage it. One tool available is research, which, like this monographic issue, offers itself as a resource for the most virtuous governance of urban transformation.

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Gabriele Manella, Madalena Corte-Real

Combining Safety and Equity in the post-Covid City: New Trends between Local Policies and Bottom-Up Practices. An Introduction

All the data and the debate clearly show that we are living in an "urban time". That is true not only as the majority of the world population lives in the urban areas (UnHabitat, 2022) but also for the prominent impact of city in social, cultural, economic, political and environmental terms. Changes in the city are constant and fast. If we focus on them within the frame of neoliberal urbanism, the transition to fordism to post-fordism (Savage & Ward, 1993) and the one from managerialism to entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989) are two clear examples. Cities can more and more be seen as "growth machines" (Molotch & Logan, 1987), with an increasing orientation to attract investments as well as the "creative class" that make them profitable (Florida, 2003). The "tourism turn" that is occurring in many urban areas is one of the clearest indicators of this trend (Ashwort, 2012). On the other side, inequality and social exclusion seem to intensify with dramatic impacts on the urban realm (Short, 2018; Hagen & Elliott, 2021).

In terms of local management, however, we are also seeing an important increase of urban governance practices, with the rise of urban bottom-up social movements, both local and connected to broader ones (Blanco & Leon 2017). Several forms of civic engagement seem to be addressed to foster the right to the city in its multiple forms: affordable housing, against touristification, sustainability, public spaces, migrants and refugees, etc.

More recently, the Covid-19 pandemic affected in particular urban settings (Martinez & Short, 2021), and it has furtherly contributed to questioning the way in which urban government and planning are organized. This debate is still very vibrant, with some authors who point out that Covid-19 "just" accelerates trends that were already working in the city, and other ones who stress that the change is not so dramatic as it seemed to be until a couple of years ago. Again, tourism is clearly an example: the loss of arrival and overnights in 2020-2021 has been recovered in 2023 and almost all the problems connected to this sector are persisting.

All these elements suggested us to propose this monographic issue. The concrete opportunity, however, was given by the IV Midterm Conference of the European Sociological Association Research Network 37 - Urban Sociology, entitled *Seeing Like a City/Seeing the City Through* that took place at the Georg Simmel Center for Metropolitan Research of the Humboldt University Berlin from the 5th to the 7th of October 2022.

Nine presentations have been selected by the RN37 Board and proposed for a peer-review process. Some of them explicitly consider the Covid-19 pandemics, but other ones have been considered as well because they focus on some topics that are definitely part of urban debate today, both inside and outside of Europe. One of the contributions, moreover, is also focused on some extra-European cases, and the interview has been done, with an urban scholar who lives and works in the United States.

In *Local Authorities and Civic Actions Disentangled: Legibility and Scene Styles*, Sebastiano Citroni focuses on the collaboration between local authorities and bottom-up civic practices in the implementation of urban government. Given the growing involvement of civil society actors, the author gives a more nuanced understanding of these urban dynamics through the Civic Action approach. An ethnographic study in the Via Padova area of Milan aims to understand the reciprocal influence through a focus on the informal dimension of daily interactions and practices. This study highlights that charity funding causes new scenes in the daily life of the association that were absent before, and the requirements from the relation with local authorities favour certain styles of interaction to the detriment of others. In other words, the importance of "scene styles" in structuring civic actions emerges.

In *Endless displacement. Migration governance, containment strategies and segregation in Athens and Turin,* Erasmo Sossich combines the attention to migrants and refugees to the one about new patterns of residential segregation in Europe. Containment, dispersal, and concentration strategies contribute to the new geographies of mobility and immobility and to the reconfiguration of many urban spaces. Two case studies are considered: the "soft" eviction of Ex-Moi, a squat in the periphery of Turin and the "hard" eviction of Eleonas, a refugee camp in Athens. Through a participant observation, interviews, a document analysis and a research-action, the author suggests that Italian "widespread reception" and the ongoing process of "campization" in Greece might support diverging segregation patterns and settlement trajectories of migrants.
The side effects of tourism in some urban destinations, namely in the inner cities, is another prominent topic in the public agenda as well as in the academic debate. In *Unmasking the effects of Airbnb in Barcelona*, Sofia Galeas Ortiz, Oscar Mascarilla Miró and Montse Crespi Vallbona consider the local effects of touristification and the related interests involved in the Spanish city. Using secondary data from official sources and InsideAirbnb, along with interviews, the authors look at the impact of the increasing number of homestays in the historic and touristified centre of Barcelona (Ciutat Vella). The effects on local residents and immigration density are considered as well as the reaction produced in terms of local protests and political reactions. At the same time, the maintenance of heritage and community spirit is considered a critical variable for all the actors engaged in the process. The research points out the urgent need of public policies to balance the needs of tourists and residents, proposing measures such as stricter regulation of homestays, restrictions on the acquisition of properties by non-residents and investments in public transport and social housing.
Regarding access to public services, Francesco Calicchia considers the case study of Rione Sanità, a working-class neighbourhood in Naples marked by an increasing social and cultural diversity, namely gentrification and touristification processes. In *Social Capital and Health: New Frontiers and Old Problems in a Working-Class Neighbourhood in Naples. Testing a Reconsideration of Territorial Healthcare*, the authors considers a bottom-up development project connected to the local hospital and the ways through which this effort compensate and helps the lack of intervention from the local government. Based mainly on a participant observation and interviews, the impact of restructuring territorial healthcare is considered, addressing the relation between social capital and health regarding the local community struggle to defend the San Gennaro hospital. A community of care that involves all the private and public local stakeholders is proposed, in order to improve the impact of decisions made and develop a comprehensive care plan.
In the article *Safety, mobility and sociality in urban spaces during the health emergency in Italy*, Daniele Pulino, Sara Spanu and Antonietta Mazzette work with questionnaires and structured interviews to consider the shifts in perceptions of safety, trust, social relations, and the use of urban spaces in the most severe Covid-19 time (2020 and 2021). Their study, however, also raises concerns about the effective transformation of social policies and behaviours towards a more sustainable city. The pandemic has revealed the fragility of the urban development model, emphasizing the need to rethink the organization and distribution of financial and human resources in cities.
Following a look at the impact of the pandemic in terms of reality, perception and hopes, Ariela Mortara and Rosantonietta Scramaglia focus on the case of Milan and the search for a new economic and social normality in the context of urban rebirth. The authors highlight the resilience and adaptability of this city's residents and local actors during and after the pandemic that severely affected this territory, with attention to the gradual normalization of daily routines with the resurgence of cultural activities and a reassessment of the inherent adaptability of the urban environment. 100 semi-structured interviews with managers, owners and operators report a generally optimistic outlook despite the pandemic challenges faced and point out the importance of digitalization, community collaboration, and the need for structural, administrative reforms to effectively implement recovery and resilience plans addressing the significance of

urban regeneration, sustainable practices, and the potential for Milan to become a "15-minute city".
Also, regarding urban planning, current approaches are often not conducive to the full development of childhood. During the Covid-19 pandemic in Italy, a country with highly imposed restrictions, children were also particularly affected by lockdown measures. In this sense, Elena Pagliarino and Maria Letizia Montalbano use a multiple case study approach to explore the importance of urban spaces for their development, addressing their rights to independent mobility, to play, to have a contact with nature, to be educated in a safe and healthy environment, and to participate in decision-making. In other words, advocating a child-friendly approach is a fundamental step to have safer, healthier and more inclusive cities for everyone. Their study also highlights the need for collaboration among local government, schools, local community and children in order to make these experiences more systematic.
In the article *From the "reception trap" to the "denied reception". The tightening of migration policies and the centrality of informal settlements between segregation and resistance*, Omid Firouzi Tabar considers the case of a refugee settlement in Padua through the frame of the European policies over the past twenty years, where the management of borders and the governance migrant flows has been mostly influenced by security logic in which Covid-19 restrictions have been a further "excuse" for "de-humanitarianization" approach. In an ethnographic study with a direct engagement in various protests and mobilizations, the authors points out that, despite the presence of structural elements of suffering, discrimination and oppression, we are in an always open field marked by conflicts, negotiations, alliances and resistance where subjects are often not passive victims.
Raul Marino, Elkin Vargas, Maud Nys and Alejandra Riveros focus on *Public spaces transformations in Latin America during Covid-19: Community resilience and Tactical Urbanism in Bogota, Quito and Mexico City*. They start from the assumption that city-making in most Latin American cities has been a mixed process between formal and informal growth, and the communities that self-built their houses and neighborhoods have a social construction of their habitat. As a consequence, tactical actions and their execution are intimately related to the construction of collective identities in social movements. Through an online survey and a comparative analysis of Tactical Urbanism projects in these cities, the author observed the monitoring, functionality, feasibility, follow-up, and sense of belonging for caring and maintenance. The changes to access to streets, parks and other urban public spaces are stressed, as well as the resurgence of these spaces through participation, tactical urbanism, and citizen activism.
This publication also presents reviews of three recent books. The first, by João Pedro Silva Nunes, is about *The Routledge Handbook of Comparative Global Urban Studies* (2024), edited by Patrick Le Galès and Jennifer Robinson, offering an overview of key ideas and practices in the field, enhancing current debates with contributions from over 50 international scholars and practitioners. The book addresses the increasing interconnectedness of cities and urban areas as a consequence of globalization. The evolution of knowledge-building in urban studies is stressed as well, with attention to new comparative research strategies.
The second book, *Millenials Generation Z and the Future of the Tourism*, reviewed by Francesca Romana Ammaturo and edited by Fabio Corbisiero, Salvatore Monaco and Elisabetta Ruspini, considers the lifestyles, expectations and plans of these generations and they way in which they are redefining tourism. If the so-called tourism industry is supposed to enjoy future growth, the peculiar needs of these two generations are critical. The volume seeks to answer the following questions: What contribution can the new generations make to the future of tourism? How are technological advancements and social networks shaping future travel trends? Can a generational perspective be useful to help the tourism industry recover from the Covid-19 crisis?
The third book, *Migranti: la sfida dell'integrazione digitale. Innovazione e co-creation nel progetto H2020 MICADO*, reviewed by Emanuele Stochino, considers the outputs of the Horizon 2020 project MICADO (Migrant Interrogation Cockpits and Dashboard) that has been implemented in

four pilot cities: Antwerp, Hamburg, Madrid, and Bologna. The project's aim is the development and implementation of an app to simplify the interaction among migrants, public administration and the third sector; in other words, make the access to services easier. MICADO has been presented to end users which is equipped with a multilingual interface with an automatic translator to facilitate the search for information about public administration and social services rules and benefits. Despite some critical aspects (a very high turnover of managers on the project, users' difficulties due to limited knowledge of the language, an EU lack of political will to enact laws on the regulation of migrant status), the project has given ample proof that it is possible to use ITC tools to help, at least, some migrants.

This issue ends with an interview with Ray Hutchison, Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. Several aspects of urban sociology and the impacts of Covid-19 on cities are considered, bringing about the fact that anticipated changes often do not materialize, drawing a parallel with the post-9/11. In this sense, for example, opportunities for rural areas remain to be seen in terms of significance and lasting trends. Vulnerabilities and increased inequalities in urban areas are highlighted, and the exacerbation of political polarization, especially in the US, is a critical factor in understanding the lack of consensus on the impacts of this crisis. The interviewer also explores the persistent relevance of the conceptual tools of the Chicago School and New Urban Sociology for interpreting recent urban changes.

In summary, this special issue aims to provide an overview of contemporary urban dynamics, highlighting challenges and opportunities to promote more inclusive and equitable cities through local policies and participatory practices. All the items contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of urban issues, stressing the importance of rethinking urban development in light of the lessons learned from the pandemic and the needs of diverse groups to promote fairer and more resilient cities.

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Letizia Montalbano, Elena Pagliarino[1]

Examining Regeneration Experiences of Urban Outdoor Spaces Through the Lens of Children's Rights[2]

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic seriously impacted the wellbeing of children and young people all around the world. In Italy, they were among the most affected by the State restrictions to prevent the diffusion of the virus (Tonucci, 2020). As UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) reports (Mascheroni *et al.*, 2021), in Italy children's home confinement and school closure were the longest among European countries. Niri (2020) points out that despite the fact that one of the fundamental principles of the Convention on children's rights is that of their best interest «in every problematic situation, the best interest of the child/adolescent must take priority» (Art. 3 of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child), during the lockdown no need of children and adolescents was deemed compelling enough to warrant specific exceptions in government prescriptions aimed at limiting the spread of the pandemic. Their necessity to access outdoor spaces for fresh air was acknowledged only after the needs of dogs and runners were addressed (*ibidem*). The closure of playgrounds was one of the first prevention measures implemented in Italy during the pandemic (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 - A girl looks at the close playground during the pandemic (Source: Pagliarino).

Schools were closed immediately afterwards. Walks by the sea, in the woods and city parks were prohibited. The pandemic highlighted soon the disparities in access to nature for urban children since only those from higher socioeconomic status families had access to private green spaces

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and vacation homes in natural areas (Rios *et al.*, 2021). For the other children, even the access to the condominium courtyards was precluded.
According to various authors (Ammaniti, 2020; Bianchi, 2020; Niri, 2020), this disregard for children reflects a long-standing situation that the pandemic has only exacerbated. Based on UNICEF's comparative report on child wellbeing in rich countries (2020), Italy records the worst results. As regards the school system, in the Seventies, Italy was a model at European level (Bianchi, 2020), in particular for the inclusion of children with disabilities (Laws n. 118/1971, n. 370/1976 and n. 517/1977) and the school full-time (Law n. 820/1971) which is not a simple enlargement of the school time but an opportunity to experiment with a holistic education. However, as early as the Eighties, a trend of decline and disinvestment emerged and persists today (*ibidem*). According to the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) (2023), Italy holds the lowest position among OECD countries in terms of indicators reflecting the quality of its educational system.
This situation reflects the marginality of childhood in the political agenda – what Tonucci (1996) calls the «invisibility of children» – which clashes with the stereotype of a country where families are large and children are pampered or even spoilt. Instead, the typical Italian family is becoming smaller – Italy is among the Countries with the lowest fertility rate – and more isolated. The solitude of Italian children is aggravated by «the loss of public realm» that is the disappearance of traditional bonds which linked the family nucleus with the extended family and the residential community due to the construction of anonymous neighbourhoods of housing complexes, usually unconnected to the historic urban fabric, and poorly provided of outdoor spaces for socializing and children's play (Lorenzo, 1992, p. 6). Childhood is placed at the centre of society only seemingly (Bakan, 2012). What strategies can be deployed to counter the social irrelevance of girls and boys, highlighted and exacerbated by the pandemic? This article intends to contribute in answering this question with a reflection on the role of cities' outdoor spaces to the complete fulfilment of post-pandemic childhood.

1. Theoretical framework

This work focuses on urban spaces that facilitate children's rights by fostering their physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development, as well as their active participation in social life and their capacity to contribute to the transformation of urban environments (Giusti, 1998). Thus it builds on and complements the existing literature on urban sociology, environmental education, and the new sociology of childhood, especially that which has developed reflection on the social construction of childhood in dialogue with the sociology of law and in relation to the international Convention on the Rights of the Child (see for example, Belotti & Ruggiero, 2008; Baraldi & Iervese, 2014). In the following paragraphs, this literature is explained by dividing it according to the children's rights to which it refers. However, children's rights are connected to each other, i.e., the right to autonomous mobility contributes to the right to play, education and sociality among peers, while the right to a healthy environment or that to be listened should be transversely guaranteed in every space dedicated to play, education, mobility, self-expression, and socialisation.
The final right under scrutiny in this literature review, namely the right of children to participate, holds particular significance in the new paradigm of childhood sociology. Since its affirmation around the end of the Seventies, the new sociology of childhood (James *et al.*, 1998; Belloni, 2006; Corsaro, 2015), has had a predominant interest in the daily lives of children in all their spheres of life, recognizing children's ability to be active subjects gifted of agency. The concept of agency is further explored through children's active engagement in shaping their immediate territorial surroundings, as they partake in decision-making, planning, and action within the urban fabric,

contributing to their lived experiences within the city (Forni, 2002; Pinzello & Quartarone, 2005; Paba & Pecoriello, 2006).

1.1 The Right to Independent Mobility

The autonomous mobility together with free play on the street are considered fundamental in children's construction of social, cultural, and civic identity (Ward, 1978; Paba & Perrone, 2004) and in their transition to adulthood (Matthews, 2003). According to Karsten (2005), the freedom of children to move around their neighbourhood or city without adult supervision has dramatically declined in recent decades in Western countries, due to urban planning choices that have favoured car circulation. The spaces precluded to cars have been reduced, public spaces have been transformed in car parks, the movement of pedestrians and cyclists has become more dangerous (Jacobs, 1961; Ward, 1978) for the increase of accidents and air pollution (Lorenzo, 1992, p. 15). The reduction in children's autonomous mobility is also due to social factors such as the weakening of community ties, the educational choices of parents who do not always favour the proximity between school and home and the social pressure for the increasingly omnipresent adults' control on children even during their free time (O'Brien, 2003; Karsten, 2005). «We are no longer used to seeing boys and girls traveling public spaces; for a long time they have been confined to special places, under guard, under surveillance» (Mottana & Campagnoli, 2017, p. 10). Nevertheless, children need a city that they can experience as a large playground (Bozzo, 1998) because the right to safety travel, unaccompanied by adults, is instrumental to the full affirmation of their rights to play, go to school, or meet peers.

1.2 The Right to Play

Article 31 of the Convention on the rights of the child has long been considered «the forgotten article» because there is still some resistance in recognizing play as an essential right (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013). Teachers and parents attribute to play a meaning strongly influenced by adults who direct authorize, limit, and sometimes grant it only in exchange for adequate behaviour. It happens, therefore, that overly agitated classes are threatened by their teacher with "skipping the break" or "spending the break sitting at the desk". In many parts of the world, the tolerance towards the natural behaviours of children and adolescents in common spaces is decreasing, because they are perceived as a source of disturbance, disorder, and danger (*ibidem*). This led to the increasing appearance of bans on some types of games or to the complete prohibition of children's play in common, public and private spaces (i.e., condominium courtyards and gardens).

Play and recreation are essential for children's health and wellbeing. They promote the development of creativity, imagination, self-confidence, autonomy, as well as physical, social, cognitive, emotional, and social abilities, contributing to all aspects of the learning process (*ibidem*). Gray (2011) notes that free play with peers has declined sharply in Western countries and that such decline is associated with the rise of psychopathology in children and adolescents.

The neighbourhoods close to the places where children live and go to school are important settings for play, but there has been a progressive transition from outdoor play spread across every space of the city, such as streets, squares, sidewalks, and courtyards, to play concentrated in dedicated areas or contained in private spaces where children mostly play alone, with a negative impact on their cognitive, emotional, and social development and on their wellbeing, due to the decrease in outdoor physical exercise (O'Brien, 2003; Karsten, 2005). The choice to relegate children's play to dedicated spaces progressively causes a form of childhood segregation (Jacobs, 1961; Ward, 1978; Ariès, 1993; Tonucci, 1996). These "spaces for them" are frequently gated and fenced-in, not always close to children's residences, thus requiring accompaniment for access,

and sometimes inadequately equipped to foster imaginative, active, social, and risk-testing play (Brown *et al*., 2019).
Several authors highlight the multiple benefits of playing outdoor and warn about the increasing disconnection between children and nature (Sobel, 1996; Moore, 1997; Gill, 2014). Playgrounds serve as environments that promote children's development particularly in the absence of natural settings such as meadows, woods, and streams (Apel & Pach, 1997). But excessive control over children and overprotectiveness have shaped the development of playgrounds (Malone, 2007). Therefore, prioritizing accident prevention results in increasingly protected and pre-determined play experiences, ultimately limiting the opportunities for children to express their creativity during play.

1.3 The Right to Education in a Safe Environment

This study examines the right to education within the context of the city's responsibility to ensure its complete realization, focusing specifically on the right within a conducive and healthy environment that supports learning in all its dimensions. Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the Reggio Emilia Children Approach to education, conceptualized the physical environment as the "third teacher", emphasizing its role in the learning process. Also Maria Montessori theorized the pedagogical value of a "prepared classroom environment" as a significant agent of learning. However, the right to a physical environment suitable for meaningful learning was severely compromised during the pandemic. Education was first shifted online and then regulated by distancing measures, diminishing its physical and social dimensions. At the same time, the pandemic highlighted the necessity of integrating contact with nature into education, reigniting interest in outdoor education and revitalizing a longstanding concern of environmental education –the centrality of experiences in nature – which is increasingly relevant and urgent as the children's disconnection from nature grows (Sobel, 1996). There has been a renewed interest in the external spaces of schools, such as school gardens and courtyards, as well as all urban spaces useful for a meaningful learning. Place-based approaches to education suggest to connect schools with their communities and surroundings to create an educational community throughout the city where both the physical place – the built and natural environmental space – and the social, political, and economic assets are the core values of the learning experience (Freire, 2000). Sobel (1996) stresses the importance of children and youth-driven processes in place-based education. Hart's model of children's participation (1979) passes through a school able to connect students with the larger community, but public school systems in most nations remain completely isolated from their surrounding communities and environments. The teacher and environmental educator Franco Lorenzoni (2020) suggests to build generative links with local administrations, health authorities, and associations, starting with opening the schools all day, to host multiple formal and non-formal education activities, giving space to collaboration, dialogue, and participation. «The city is itself an environmental education, and can be used to provide one, whether we think of learning through the city, learning about the city, learning how to use, manage or change the city» (Ward, 1978, p. 152). The *City as Classroom* is the message that Marshall McLuhan *et al*. (1984) conveyed to teachers, inviting them to utilize the city as a tool to encourage children to observe, feel, and perceive their own urban environment. This involves adopting unconventional educational paths, thereby stimulating their awareness of being social actors gifted of transformative power over the world around them.

1.4 The Right to Participate in Decision-Making

Among the pioneers in examining the city through the lens of children in urban planning, design, and management were Jane Jacobs (1961) and Kevin Lynch (1977) during the post-war decades. In the Seventies, Colin Ward furthered this exploration with her famous book *The Child*

in the City (1978), introducing an innovative, anti-authoritarian model to interpret the relation between children and urban public spaces within the realm of social sciences. More recently, an emerging global child-friendly cities movement shifted the focus onto their needs, experiences, and views. In 1996, UNICEF launched the Child Friendly Cities Initiative (childfriendlycities.org), which promotes the realization of children's rights at the local level by supporting a network that includes municipal governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, media and children themselves. The international initiative Urban95, supported by the Bervard van Leer Foundation, reimagines cities from 95 centimetres, the average height of a three years old child (Vincelot, 2019). Viewing the urban environment from a "frog's perspective", where adults must crouch down, bending their legs to reach children's eye level, reveals a significant shift in the functionality and accessibility of cities, thus underscoring the vast gap between urban design and the actual needs of children (Forni, 2002). Child in the City (childinthecity.org) is another indipendent foundation aimed to strenghten the position of children in cities, promote and protect their rights. Cities Alive (ARUP, 2017) proposes a "children's infrastructure" that is both a physical and social network that allows children to experience the city. Similarly, several environment education experts (for example Sobel, 1996) stress the concept of the network, borrowing it from ecology and proposing a widespread system of spaces and interventions connecting the "neighbourhood nature" with the one outside the city.

In 1991, in the Italian city of Fano, Francesco Tonucci founded "The city of children" project with a specific political objective: empowering children to play a leading role in the urban governance. Since then, numerous cities have joined the project, forming an international network that supports municipalities in implementing the participation of girls and boys in the governance of the city, the transformation of public spaces to facilitate children's free play and autonomous mobility, particularly on the home-school journey, as well as the participatory planning involving boys and girls (Belingardi *et al.*, 2018).

While this movement's values were and are beyond reproach, it has had very little influence on the structure of cities (ARUP, 2017). According to Brown *et al.* (2019), a right-based approach to urban policy means respecting the right of children to participate in the process of decision-making, through engaging with children, listening to them and involving them in co-design activities and co-creation of public spaces. However, there are very few experiences developed in a way that allows such voices to be heard and respected (Bishop & Corkery, 2017; Brown *et al.*, 2019). There are plenty of resources available, but it is still necessary to undergo a cultural shift, valuing children's and young people's knowledge and ideas.

Recognizing children as agency actors is the central node of the entire sociology of childhood. The authors cited within the realms of urban sociology and environmental education literature also share the vision that acknowledges children's ability to be active social actors within their cities. The concept of agency is also taken up by the participatory approach in urban planning (Ciaffi & Mela, 2006) aimed at the active involvement of participants living in a given territorial context. In this sense, the active engagement of children is pivotal, as their perspective is inherently connected to their immediate surroundings. It embodies a tangible, deconstructive, and spontaneous ecological gaze. Importantly, their perspective is less influenced by adult-centric biases, interests, and expectations. Furthermore, it is marked by imagination, openness to experimentation, innovation, and a forward-looking orientation (Forni, 2002; Pinzello & Quartarone, 2005; Berritto, 2022).

2. Methodology and analytical approach

The article reflects on public spaces such as playgrounds, city gardens, and parks, school gardens, and courtyards, as well as other open-air spaces like streets, squares, arcades, and sidewalks. Additionally, it considers private spaces such as condominium courtyards and gardens. The reflec-

tion is conducted by examining some well-established experiences and other innovative ones that occurred during the pandemic in several European cities. These initiatives are characterized by addressing children's rights to education, play, security, association, self-expression, and being heard through the use of outdoor urban spaces. Children's rights-based approaches have had little strategic influence on the built form of cities to date (Bishop & Corkery, 2017). «While progress has been made in the last 30 years, rights-based approaches to urban policy are not yet widespread, but their adoption would be transformative» (Brown *et al*., 2019, p. 2). The paper focuses on the narrative of such initiatives, through a multiple case study approach, categorizing them according to the right to which they correspond, following the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter referred to as CRC or the Convention). CRC is an international treaty that aims to protect the rights of children worldwide. It was signed in 1989 and adopted on 1990, and 196 countries have ratified it so far (Italy did it through the Law N. 176 of 1991), making it the most widely ratified human rights treaty. The Convention includes a wide range of rights relevant to city life including: the right to education (articles 28 and 29), the right to play (article 31), the right to express their views and have them taken seriously (articles 12 and 13), the right to a safe and healthy environment (article 24), the right to freedom of association, i.e., children meeting others and joining groups (article 15).
Applying the lens of children's rights highlights not only the pressing issues exacerbated by the pandemic but also how they were intertwined with pre-existing conditions of inadequacy or delays in creating the necessary environment for the fulfilment of rights. The selection of experiences was driven by the imperative to document a phenomenon – the urban initiatives in response to the pandemic – at its onset. The aim was to encompass a diverse range of cases (metropolises, medium and small cities, towns) and addressing different needs. This inclusive approach sought to provide an overview of what was happening, spanning across Italian regions (North, Center, and South) and Europe. The rights-based perspective enables us to comprehend both the state of emergency resulting from the health crisis that denied those rights and the responses implemented to guarantee children's rights. This unprecedented urgency, arising from the nature of the pandemic, prompted the selection of cases observable from within (Turin, Bologna and Berlin are the cities where the authors live and work) as well as others developed during the pandemic. These cases brought attention to well-established experiences, born in response to previous crises, highlighting the notion that every crisis carries opportunities for change (Morin, 2020). The experiences were selected from those collected by institutional organizations, networks, associations, movements, cultural events, and academic conferences attended online or in person (i.e., UNICEF, comune.info, rivistaeco.it, labsus.org, childfriendlycities.org, childinthecity.org, lacittadeibambini.org, biennalespaziopubblico.it, lungi.it).

3. Results

In the early stages of the pandemic in Italy, playgrounds were the first urban spaces to close, followed immediately by schools, without providing any alternatives. Distance learning would only commence in the following school year, six months after the onset of the pandemic. Walks by the sea, in the woods, or in city parks were prohibited. Home confinement was particularly challenging for children, especially those without access to private outdoor spaces, as even entry to the common areas of condominiums was restricted. With the end of the lockdown and the resumption of many activities, preventive measures for children have been eased. However, they have still been significantly hindered in meeting their basic needs for play and socialization.

3.1 Outdoor Schooling

The pandemic, marked by home confinement, school closures, and remote learning, has intensified the separation between children and nature, highlighting the adverse effects of the absence of nature on children's wellbeing (Rios *et al.*, 2021). Discussions were held regarding the reinforcement of outdoor education or utilizing non-school buildings in the city to mitigate the risks of contagion associated with indoor and crowded environments. Expanding and multiplying learning spaces became imperative in the aftermath of the pandemic, prompting a thorough reassessment of open-air environments. Tables and benches emerged like mushrooms in many city parks to address the demand for outdoor study spaces, yet outdoor education holds a profound pedagogical significance that extend far beyond the quest for less crowded and healthier environments (Zavalloni, 2009). The concept of outdoor education was not new in Italy, which has a historical background of open-air schools. Established for the first time at the end of the First World War to aid in the physical recovery of delicate children, they emphasized the importance of outdoor life, sunlight, and contact with nature. These schools were founded on hygienic-sanitary motivations as well as innovative pedagogical ideas. Maria Montessori and Giuseppina Pizzigoni were among the pioneering pedagogists to emphasize the formative role of educational activities grounded in contact with nature. *Casa del sole* in Milan, for example, was built according to the educational principles, which were among the most advanced in Europe, inspired by the Waldorf schools or *La Rinnovata* by Giuseppina Pizzigoni. Today, the pedagogy of open-air school places centrality on the relations between children and nature, conceptualizing nature not merely as wild and distant, but as the encompassing environment – both natural and built – that surrounds us. Outdoor education emphasizes the connection between schools and their surrounding communities end environments, with the aim of building «a learning community in a learning city» (Hart, 1979; Freire, 2000; Farné *et al.* 2018). In Italy, there are various expressions of outdoor pedagogy, such as outdoor schools (scuoleallaperto.com), schools in the woods, etc. The pandemic could have been an opportunity for a large-scale outdoor education experiment, but it was stifled. New outdoor school initiatives were limited, and even field trips and school excursions were prohibited until April 1, 2022, more than a year after the onset of the pandemic. However, there was some activity in the external areas of school buildings, albeit not for educational purposes. In fact, school courtyards and gardens are the most immediate and accessible spaces for implementing outdoor education, yet they are still undervalued. They are designated for recreation, providing the time for children's socialization and free play during the school day. Various initiatives are underway to make these spaces accessible beyond school hours, not only for students but for all citizens. This recognition transforms schoolyards and gardens into public urban spaces dispersed throughout the city, proximate to homes, facilitating the expansion of public space. The city of Turin was a pioneer in this field with the *Cortili aperti* (Open schoolyards) project. In Turin, there are over two hundred school playgrounds. In almost all cases, these spaces are monofunctional, serving limited-time children's recreation and having minimal connection with the social and urban context in which they are located. Through collaborative efforts between various divisions and services of the Municipality, schools, and by entrusting the custody and care of the spaces during non-school hours to local associations, nine school courtyards have been opened. The regeneration planning was conducted in collaboration with children and young people, facilitated by the efforts of the Sustainable City Laboratory of Turin Institution for Responsible Education. The children's creativity was tested with the constraints of regulatory aspects, space characteristics, and available resources. This led to practical technical solutions encompassing building interventions, furnishings, green areas, as well as innovative solutions for play and socialization. This initiative was made possible through a broader vision of urban recreational spaces: the open school courtyards project is linked to the strategic plan of urban play areas. Within the Municipality of Turin's experience, three noteworthy aspects are evident: i) co-planning with children, ii) inter-sectoral consultation involving different public institutions, and iii) integration of the action within the city policy.

The city of Collegno, in the metropolitan area of Turin, went a step further. Amidst the pandemic, when schools were closed and strictly regulated, parents of two peripheral institutes, the Calvino primary school and the Rodari nursery school, facilitated the opening beyond regular hours. Through collaborative agreements with the schools and the municipality, these spaces were utilized for homework, workshops proposed by parents, other citizens, or associations. Additionally, they were utilized for organizing community' meetings where the school played a central role in local empowerment and solidarity.

The pandemic made it evident the strategic role of active collaboration between administration and parents' associations, such as the case of Manin Di Donato in Rome, where parents have held the keys to the school for almost twenty years, managing spaces during non-school hours, weekends, and summers when the school is closed. It was precisely this participatory model that ensured the social stability of both the school and the local community. This model assisted families with their primary needs and empowered to find creative solutions to address children's loneliness, creating spaces for socialization and meetings even beyond school premises. Skills and relationships developed over this twenty-year experience proved crucial in navigating the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Social distancing necessitated new ways of playing during school breaks to prevent physical contact. At the Fortuzzi school in Bologna, Gianluca Gabrielli and his students rediscovered or invented games that could be played "at a half-distance" (Lauria, 2020). Games were conceived to overcome the constraints imposed by the pandemic, and often those very limitations became opportunities for play. For instance, «Nina at a certain point faced the problem that we no longer recognized each other due to the masks, but we could turn it into a game of guessing which expression was under the mask, because we can express feelings even just with our eyes, but you have to practice…» (*ibidem*).

According to Claudio Tosi, craftsman and educator of the Italian Federation of CEMEA (*Centri per l'Esercitazione ai Metodi dell'Educazione Attiva*, Centres for the exercise of active education methods), the pandemic, with its distance learning, eliminated the third dimension by reducing the educational experience to an image on the screen. Hence, it is crucial to restore the three-dimensionality of the gaming experience: «we need games at full volume» (*ibidem*). In 2019, the first *boîte à jouer* (box to play) of the Jouer pour Vivre association was installed in a Parisian school. It is a container, ranging in size from a trunk or suitcase to that of a shipping container, filled with various objects and recovered materials (pipes, fabrics, boxes, cardboard, tires, etc.), provided to children during breaks to foster creativity and collaborative play in schoolyards. This embodies Bruno Munari's concept of de-structuring forms to unleash infinite playful and creative possibilities. It also resonates with Maria Montessori's insight that learning takes place through the child's experience, with adults having the sole responsibility of preparing the environment and allowing the experience to unfold. After the pandemic, the *boîte à jouer* gained popularity due to its ability to enhance children's skills that are essential for promoting resilience, such as imagination, experimentation, autonomy, and cooperation.

In some cases, the initiatives were initiated by local associations to counter the unequal effect of the pandemic. In the historic centre of Genoa, around Via del Campo and Via Prè streets, an area full of fragility and social diversity, where families live in small, often dilapidated houses and lack internet connectivity, two initiatives were born during the Covid-19 lockdown: *Hub di quartiere* (Neighborhood hub) and *Liberi tutti insieme* (Free all together), promoted by a group of local associations to address the educational needs of children and young people on the margins of the educational system. *Hub di quartiere* is a local collection and delivery point for educational tools, encompassing not only tablets and PCs but also open and collaborative web resources. These resources enable educators, volunteers, and students to interact both in person and remotely. *Liberi tutti insieme* seeks donors to provide financial support to the hub. The aim of these initiatives was to maintain an educational relation with disadvantaged children and young people, fostering their digital and human connection, and creating awareness and solidarity

within the local community. In another city centre suburb, the Quartieri Spagnoli of Naples, the *Lib(e)ri per crescere* (Free/Books to grow up) project by the cooperatives La Locomotiva and Progetto Uomo, with the support of the Municipality of Naples, established a space to promote reading among children and teenagers, especially through shared reading between parents and children. During the lockdown, the project coordinators recognized the need to adapt it, and the activities continued remotely by sharing a story each day on their Facebook page, telling stories over the phone, following the example of Gianni Rodari, or simply engaging in conversations and providing companionship over the phone. Once the confinement ended, the *Biblio Ape* (Ape van library) was activated: a van filled with books that travels around the city and creates reading points.

3.2 Expanding Children's Play Opportunities

The need to create additional playgrounds close to home, utilizing even the interstitial and the residual spaces - such as those between houses - became evident during the pandemic. In Amsterdam, following the Second World War, Aldo Van Eyck observed children engaging in free play in abandoned and empty spaces. Based on this observation, he designed hundreds of playgrounds, filling the physical and social gap left by the war and establishing a widespread network of playable spaces throughout the city.
In Italy, the *Giardino del Guasto* (Guasto's garden) is an historic garden designed with similar principles. It emerged on the ruins of the Palazzo Bentivoglio in the heart of the historic centre of Bologna. Designed in the Seventies by architect Gennaro Filippini on behalf of the Municipality, it was later abandoned, but rescued from decay at the end of the Nineties by the homonymous association. It is an elevated garden with large concrete structures, including snakes and dinosaurs, covering the previous ruins and following the natural land contours. It draws inspiration from William Robinson's natural gardens, Maria Montessori's educational principles, and observation of children's free play on the ruins and their responses to the renovation work. Due to its layout, the garden naturally encourages distancing without separation (Montalbano, 2022). Through a planned access schedule at different times and specific events dedicated to children, parents, and educators, the garden became a space for children's free play during the pandemic (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 - Free play at the Il Giardino del Guasto, Bologna (Source: Montalbano).

Today, the notion of «in-between realm» of Van Eyck is gaining prominence in the experiences of various European cities. The revitalization of residual and abandoned spaces, through a creative process that breathes new life into them, has been explored by projects such as *Esto no és un solar* (This is not a building site) in Zaragoza. Here, neglected land in the city centre was transformed into public spaces for children. The initial and crucial step involved the removal of barriers like rubble, debris, and rubbish that rendered the land inaccessible. Subsequently, the revitalization process employed simple and recurring materials, colours, and construction details to impart distinctive characteristics to these spaces, making them easily recognizable and embraced by the citizens. Ghent in Belgium aspires to be the most child-friendly city in Flanders and is actively establishing play areas, even within urban micro-spaces (those residual areas often lacking a specific function). The Play Everywhere concept, pioneered by KABOOM! (kaboom.org/play-everywhere), engages communities, including children, to envision spaces in their neighbourhoods that could be transformed into «playspaces». These could include unconventional spots like a laundromat, grocery store, sidewalk, or bus stop. These experiences serve as powerful examples, illustrating that even small and modest interventions can yield significant impacts.

The significance of play environments designed to educate children about risk became especially apparent during the pandemic, when children were predominantly viewed as passive recipients of preventive measures. Danish architect Carl Theodor Sørensen pioneered some of the earliest adventurous playgrounds, known as *skrammellegepladser* or junk playgrounds. This innovation stemmed from his observation during the Second World War that children were playing everywhere except on conventional playgrounds. Children were provided the materials and tools to essentially build their own playground out of bricks, wood, and other waste materials. The concept was picked up on by British landscape architect Lady Marjory Allen who created over thirty-five adventure playgrounds in the Sixties and Seventies lead by the motto «better a broken bone than a broken spirit». In Berlin, *Abenteurespielplätze* (adventure playgrounds) stand out as compelling examples due to their capacity to promote free play and imagination, encourage movement (particularly beneficial for combating rising rates of childhood overweight), and introduce an element of controlled risk. Playgrounds that promote risk provide a controlled environment where children can engage in exploratory and challenging play. Participating in risky play is instrumental in fostering resilience, developing coping skills, and nurturing autonomy in children. Moreover, it plays a pivotal role in enhancing body and spatial awareness as kids actively experiment with the potentialities and constraints of both their bodies and the surrounding environment. Engaging in controlled risk-taking on playgrounds teaches children how to confront and overcome fear, uncertainty, and the disappointment that may accompany failure. These acquired skills are essential not only for managing health risks but also for instilling a sense of responsibility in children. This approach emphasizes active engagement and learning, steering children away from being passive recipients of preventive procedures and empowering them to navigate the world with a heightened sense of awareness and responsibility.

The prohibition on playing in common spaces within residential complexes during lockdowns led to the emergence of various initiatives and experiences in different cities. In Bologna, the project *Vietato vietare di giocare* (Forbidden to prohibit play), undertaken by Cinnica network and *Libera Università del Gioco*, initially engaged various experts addressing the issue of private communal spaces restricted for children's play. Subsequently, it led to significant change mirroring developments already achieved in Rimini, Ravenna and Milan. This change involved overcoming the prohibition through the approval of an amendment to the building regulations, asserting the right of children to play in accordance with the Convention on children's rights, specifically in the courtyards, gardens, and outdoor areas of private residential buildings.

Moreover, additional initiatives have emerged with the aim of establishing areas dedicated to play, unrestricted movement, and socialization by temporarily closing off sections of the city to vehicular traffic, particularly in zones frequented by children, such as those adjacent to schools

and playgrounds. Certain municipal administrations opted to restrict traffic solely during specific times of the day, such as school entry and exit hours, creating temporary school zones. For instance, to alleviate congestion in playgrounds during the lockdown, the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg neighborhood in Berlin introduced nineteen *Temporäre Spielstraßen* (streets closed to traffic during designated hours and/or days to facilitate children's play). These spaces, often managed by the community, proved to be spaces venues for social interaction, resilience, and community bonding for both children and adults (Dickmans, 2020). Several local administrations, such as the Municipality of Milan, opted for enduring structural interventions that deeply transform the urban landscape, pioneering the concept of permanent school zones. In alignment with Law n. 120/2020, which introduced amendments to the regulations outlined in the Highway Code, these zones are designated areas near schools where enhanced protection for pedestrians and the environment is assured. The newly designated pedestrian spaces are equipped with natural elements like trees, shrubs, and flower beds, along with amenities promoting play and socialization such as ping-pong tables, picnic spots, benches, and bike racks. Furthermore, these areas are seamlessly connected to the broader city through newly constructed cycle paths. Milan, in this way, is creating novel public spaces, particularly geared towards children, where social distancing and road safety are prioritized, allowing for safe and enjoyable communal experiences. Through the initiative *La città va a scuola* (The city goes to school), implemented across five cities in the metropolitan area of Turin, school squares – acting as urban transitional space connecting schools and city – were collaboratively designed. This process involved cooperation between schools, public administrations, and local associations. The aim was to establish partnerships and legitimize the use of space in areas that are frequently neglected and prone to conflicts among diverse social groups.

In 2022, the count of school streets across Europe reached an estimated 1,250, with notable performance in London, Barcelona, and Paris (Clean Cities, 2023). The origin of the first-ever school street can be traced back to Italy, specifically in Bolzano in 1989. It took nearly three decades for the concept to gain momentum elsewhere, with schemes emerging initially in Parma and then in Milan. A significant turning point occurred with the *Streets for Kids* events from November 2021, catalyzing transformative shifts. Recently, the mayors of Rome and Milan have unveiled plans for 110 new school streets and 87 *Piazze Aperte per ogni Scuola* (Open squares for each school) indicating a growing commitment to these innovative urban interventions (*ibidem*).

Recognizing that merely closing specific city areas to car traffic may not suffice to ensure the safety of children's play and movement, the city of Bologna initiated a project aimed at restricting car speed to 30 km/h throughout the historic centre (bolognacitta30.it). This measure not only enhances the safety but also contributes to a quieter and less polluted urban environment. Additionally, to further promote the safety of children and their families, Bologna introduced the *Negozi amici* (Friendly Shops) project. This network encompasses over 100 shops that provide assistance to children and families, offering amenities such as access to water, restroom facilities, shelter from the rain, phone charging, waiting spaces, help in case of danger, and support for breastfeeding (comune.bologna.it/eventi/rete-negozi-amici).

The exceptional nature of the pandemic facilitated the discovery of swift and effective solutions. School squares and streets – whether temporary or structural – and novel approaches like tactical urbanism, open streets, slow streets, and play streets experienced a significant boost during the pandemic. What sets them apart is not only their pandemic-driven acceleration but also their appeal as simple, cost-effective interventions. Moreover, these modest transformations signify more than just physical changes: they mark a cultural and political shift (Jacobs, 1961). Through these adaptations, the city transforms into a space that not only facilitates the lives of its younger residents, offering protection and opportunities for autonomy and responsibility, but also rekindles a sense of community that has dwindled over the years. The act of welcoming, even through neighbourhood shops, extends beyond a simple gesture of consideration towards children and parents during a particularly sensitive period. It embodies a political and cultural

choice that renders public space more child-friendly (*ibidem*). Jane Jacobs eloquently captured this idea when she wrote: «I am convinced that urban science and urban architecture must become, in the real life of existing cities, the science and art of catalysing and nurturing this dense fabric of active relationships» (*ibidem*, pp. 12-13). The Italian *Biennale dello Spazio Pubblico* (Biennial of Public Space), bringing together urbanists and architects, dedicated its 2021 edition, titled *Children and Public Space*, to a contemplation of the future of cities with a heightened focus on children's needs. As part of this effort, they launched an awareness-raising initiative titled *A un metro di distanza* (One meter away) (Andreoni & Rota, 2021).

3.3 Participating in the City

As expressed by Niri (2020, p. 28-29), «during the lockdown, markers were not considered an essential good. Children were also denied the right to express themselves, representing the world and what was happening. The last markers were used up to draw rainbows with the words "everything will be fine", a typical example of how adults are able of putting into children's mouths and hands what they would like to hear». To advocate for the recognition of children and their needs, the Libera Università del Gioco association in Ravenna launched the *Liberare tracce d'infanzia* (Freeing traces of childhood) initiative, inviting families to use coloured chalk and draw on the streets around their homes, leaving behind traces of children's presence. The initiative served to alleviate children's sense of loneliness and to remind adults that children are not disappeared and want their voice to be heard. With a similar intention in Bologna, during the Easter holidays of 2021, which were spent in home confinement, a black rabbit crafted from recycled wool from an old sweater mysteriously emerged from the closed gate of the *Giardino del Guasto*. Additional two hundred identical bunnies were distributed to the children in the neighbourhood by the art director of the association that oversees the garden and works in the local nursery school. She assumed the role of *Citofonella*, the intercom fairy, ringing doorbells to reassure and entertain children.

The neglect and invisibility of Italian children during the pandemic has been criticized by several authors (Ammaniti, 2020; Bianchi, 2020; Niri, 2020; Tonucci, 2020). Immediately after the lockdown, Lorenzoni (2020, n.p.) proposed: «To counteract this lack of attention, we require a symbol, perhaps a dream, a modest one at the outset, envisioning dedicating Sundays of Phase 2 [the phase of the pandemic marked by the reopening of many socio-economic activities], to unrestricted movement of children. Adults would have the freedom to move as long as accompanied by children [...] Though it may appear as a bizarre, futile, and superficial idea in the face of an uncertain future and pressing contemporary challenges, it is precisely in such challenging conditions that we must nurture our imagination and propagate ideas capable of shaping a more just and constructive future. The prospect of beholding a city devoid of cars presents an invaluable opportunity. It has the potential to ignite our imagination. In the world's oldest country, the reopening of cities with a focus on children could serve as a positive indicator of a change of direction». However, to find experiences sensitive to understand children's perspectives and engaging them in the process of changing cities, we need to look back before the pandemic.

In Pievebovigliana, situated in the province of Macerata on the slopes of the Sibillini Mountains, a small village profoundly affected by the 2016 earthquake, a participatory design and self-construction initiative unfolded for the external space of the temporary prefabricated school. The project SCIAME *Spazio Costruito Insieme Aperto a Molteplici Esperienze* (Space Built Together Open to Multiple Experiences) involved children aged 3 to 14 over the course of an entire school year (2017/18). Various stakeholders, such as the cultural association Les Friches, La città bambina of Florence, and the Reggio Children Foundation, collaborated to decode children's desires and needs. Families and municipal technicians played active roles in all project steps, emphasizing the belief that the school is an integral part of the community, territory, and a collective

educational endeavour. Participatory planning and self-construction were considered essential elements in the process of reclaiming public spaces after experiencing trauma.

The Indire-Labsus observatory on community educational pacts examines examples of shared governance in education, where collaborative agreements aim to foster an inclusive school as a collective asset, encompassing both tangible and intangible benefits. According to their research (Labsus, 2022), it became evident that the actors engaged in school care actions or the utilization of school spaces, particularly external ones, are predominantly associations, followed by teachers and school managers, with parents being the least involved. While children are actively engaged in the activities of these pacts, they are seldom direct interlocutors. Only a few municipalities, such as Collegno in the province of Turin, formally extend collaboration to include them. In most cases, experiences are limited to gathering children's ideas and suggestions for regenerating public spaces. For example, the *Giardino dei Desideri* (Garden of desires) pact on the outskirts of Milan involved the community in the regeneration and maintenance of a public garden. Additionally, projects focused of urban micro-regeneration with natural and cultivated plants, particularly in peripheral and more degraded neighbourhoods, such as *A Piccoli Patti* (In Small Pacts) in Milan and *PROGIREG* in Turin, have also engaged community participation.

Table 1 - Highlighted aspects of the analyzed cities' outdoor practices and experiences

EXPERIENCE	TYPOLOGY	ACTIONS	BENEFITS	TEMPORAL DIMENSION	POSITIVE IMPACT OF & OPPORTUNITIES FROM THE PANDEMIC
Casa del sole (Milan), *Rinnovata Pizzigoni* (Milan), *Scuole all'aperto* network	Open-air-schools and outdoor education	Education in a healthy environment, emphasis on the relation with nature in the learning experience	Education and health	Historical experiences Pre-pandemic	Raising awareness about the importance of contact with nature, expanding and multiplying outdoor learning spaces, large-scale experimentation of outdoor education
Cortili aperti (Turin), Calvino and Rodari schools (Collegno), Manin Di Donato school (Rome)	Open schools, school's courtyards, and gardens	Spaces open beyond school time and for other social groups besides students, emphasis on participation and bottom-up processes	Play, education, community engagement, and solidarity	Pre-pandemic During pandemic	Skills and relationships developed before the pandemic allow to continue during the pandemic
Fortuzzi school (Bologna), *Boîte à jouer* (Paris)	New ways of playing in school's spaces	Play spaces and tools to develop children's skills such as imagination, creativity, autonomy, and cooperation	Play, socialization	During pandemic	New ways to play respecting social distance and fostering resilience
Hub di quartiere and *Liberi tutti insieme* (Genoa), *Lib(e)ri per crescere* and *Biblio Ape* (Naples)	Common educational spaces outside the school	Spaces and tools for education outside the school through community engagement, emphasis on educational poverty and inclusion	Education, community engagement, and solidarity	During pandemic	New ways to continue pre-pandemic initiatives
Aldo Van Eyck's playgrounds (Amsterdam), *Giardino del Guasto* (Bologna), *Esto no és un solar* (Zaragoza), micro play spaces (Ghent), KABOOM! Play Everywhere	Free play spaces	Unconventional play spaces, utilizing even micro space in the city and reclaiming abandoned spaces	Play, socialization	Historical experiences Pre-pandemic During pandemic	Multiplying outdoor play spaces respecting social distance

Carl Theodor Sørensen's *skrammellegepladser* (Copenhagen), Marjory Allen's junk playgrounds (London), *Abenteurespelplätze* (Berlin)	Adventure playgrounds	Play spaces and tools to develop children's risk-taking	Play, socialization	Historical experiences	Raising awareness about the importance of risk-taking in building resilient children
Vietato vietare di giocare (Bologna)	Play in common private spaces	Ensuring the right to play in private common spaces	Play, socialization	Post-pandemic	Raising awareness about the paramount importance of children's play
School streets (Bolzano and Rome), permanent school zones and school squares (*La città va a scuola*, Turin, *Piazze aperte per ogni scuola*, Milan), *Temporäre Spielstraßen* (Berlin), *Negozi amici* and *Bologna Città 30* (Bologna)	City safety	Reduced speed limits for cars and spaces temporarily or permanently closed to car traffic for children's play or to ensure safe access to school, emphasis on the use of public space	Safe movement, play, and socialization	Post-pandemic	Multiplying and accelerating initiatives
Liberare tracce d'infanzia and *Giardino del Guasto* (Bologna), *A un metro di distanza*	Listening to children and children's expression	Initiatives to make children's voices heard	Rights to expression and to be heard	During pandemic	Raising awareness about the children' rights to expression and to be heard
SCIAME (Pievebovigliana), *Giardino dei desideri* and *A piccoli patti* (Milan), PROGIREG (Turin)	Community educational pacts involving children	Involvement of children in giving ideas, designing, and implementing interventions, emphasis on co-planning with children	Education, participation, and citizenship	Pre-pandemic	

To emphasize the essential aspects of all these practices, a table (Table 1) has been compiled to synthesize the typology, actions, and benefits. The table also incorporates the temporal dimension to separate and highlight the positive responses from institutions or society during and after the pandemic, contrasting them with those developed before the pandemic, included historical ones. Notably, we omitted an attribute for the scale of initiatives, given that these are primarily local endeavours originating in one or more cities, yet possessing the potential for nationwide replication. Finally, we added an attribute to synthesize the impact of pandemic on these practices, as well as the opportunities that have arisen as a result of the pandemic.
The beneficial impact of well-established positive practices on institutional or societal responses during and after the pandemic mainly occurred through the following primary processes:

- raising awareness about their significance and value, including their enabling conditions like skills and social relationships, that prioritize the best interests of children;
- enhancing existing good practices, such as utilizing outdoor spaces for play and education;
- accelerating their implementation, particularly when they were still *in nuce*, achieved through simplification of bureaucratic procedures or grassroots pressure from citizens and associations, as well as participatory planning and management;
- enriching them by diversifying practices while adhering to the constraints imposed by the pandemic.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

There are more people living in cities and more children growing up in cities than ever before. However, children are often overlooked in urban planning (Bishop & Corkery, 2017). The pandemic underscored the extent to which the needs and desires of children have been neglected, emphasizing the significant connection between their health, development, and overall wellbeing and the outdoor spaces within the city. Despite the tragic nature of the pandemic, it has also presented opportunities for reflection and action regarding the potential for urban regeneration with focus on respecting and promoting the fundamental rights of children. In this article, these possibilities are explored by examining historical cases conducted before the pandemic, as well as others implemented during the pandemic emergency. These cases focus on the concept of outdoor education, schools that are open to the community and their surroundings, and the educational potential inherent in public spaces, primarily playgrounds. These experiential typologies come together in the concept of the learning city: a city that reimagines its structure and functions within an educational continuum, widespread, suitable, and adaptable to the various places within the city. It actively seeks and discovers opportunities for expression in interstitial and residual spaces, in border spaces (such as those between school and city, like school zones), in the continuity between public and private spaces, and, most importantly, in the dialogue among the individuals inhabiting these spaces, beginning with children and young people themselves. The significant challenge for future coexistence in cities involves experimenting with a citizenship model that accommodates diverse needs and desires. In today's urban landscape, people and ideas converge in increasingly confined and populated spaces, hosting a myriad of lifestyles that often coexist in conflicting ways. In this context, children should transcend their homes and classrooms, emerging as actors who envision, construct, and transform their environment. They should be active citizens, not merely users of the places they inhabit and traverse (Ward, 1978). Numerous studies have presented empirical evidence supporting children's agency in urban life, acknowledging their capacity to be active social actors within their cities.

Achieving this objective, despite the current scarcity of participatory initiatives, requires adopting a child-sensitive framework, crouching down to the "frog's perspective" (Forni, 2002). This approach enables us to understand the profound transformation in the functionality and accessibility of cities and highlights the gap between urban structures and the needs of children. Seeing cities through children's eyes – that means both focusing on children's development and involving children in urban planning (ARUP, 2017; Bishop & Corkery, 2017; Vincelot, 2019) – will deliver long-term benefits, affecting current and future generations (Brown *et al.*, 2019). A child-friendly approach will contribute to build safe, healthy, and socially inclusive cities for everyone. To accomplish this, it is essential to integrate policy and action, overcoming the fragmentation of initiatives that often target specific sub-populations or address several various urban issues within the same population (*ibidem*). In our study, we came across numerous global and local initiatives, a positive indicator of widespread awareness and action. However, we observed a significant heterogeneity in the methods and intensity of applying similar initiatives. There is also a presence of positive initiatives that, despite their pioneering nature, remain limited to a localized dimension, lacking systematic implementation throughout the national territory. The analytical lens of children's rights allows us to evaluate experiences and identify rights that are still inadequately guaranteed. Moreover, it enables an examination of the connections between different rights, fostering a reflection that aims towards an integration between initiatives. Reimagining neighbourhoods, green spaces, and schools in a holistic manner – encompassing security, educational, and ecological objectives – becomes more than just enhancing the quality of individual parts of the city.

The experiences described in this article highlight a series of possible paths right now:

- The possibility of creating synergies between policies and actions. For instance, pandemic-related distancing measures and the revision of the Highway Code have seemingly converged

to a synergistic approach through the implementation of structural or temporary interventions in proximity to schools. The alignment of spatial planning with sustainable mobility, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, facilitates the establishment of an extensive network connecting various city locations to create widespread movement and play spaces for children.

- The prospect of fostering collaborations among local stakeholders. The seamless integration of school spaces planning with immediately adjacent external areas, representing the intersection between school and city, necessitates a cohesive and harmonious coordination of initiatives and actions. Moreover, endeavours undertaken informally, as seen in the cases of Naples and Genoa, or through formal arrangements like the Collaboration Pacts for an inclusive and participatory school, have unequivocally proven to be instrumental in serving as a lifeline for local social relations among children and families.
- The achievement of the goal of interconnecting public and private spaces, such as enabling children to play in condominium common areas, was made possible through the collaboration of different skills and interests. Municipal technicians, condominium administrators, parents, and associations worked collectively towards the realization of an "open plan" (Doglio, 2021).
- Moving beyond the monofunctionality and sectoralisation in the urban public space, as exemplified by the availability of school spaces beyond regular school hours and days.
- The involvement of children and young people in the planning of spaces is a notable aspect, yet it is sparsely evident. As Roberts (2000, p. 238) argued «it's clear that listening to children, hearing children, and acting on what children say are three very different activities, although they are frequently elided as if they were not».

However, it is evident from the reported experiences that several rights remain inadequately assured. The rights to autonomous mobility and unrestrained, adventurous play are stifled by the prevailing design of cities and playgrounds. The pandemic has underscored the deficiency of nature in children's lives, revealing their innate need to be outdoors, connected with nature, to fulfil fundamental requirements for light, air, and movement. Furthermore, the pandemic emphasized their right to enjoy the myriad developmental benefits that nature offers, as exemplified by the renewed interest in outdoor education. Play, recreational and educational opportunities in nature should be amplified within the city in order to establish a comprehensive network of green spaces and «neighborhood nature» (Sobel, 2022) as an ecological network. This approach enables children to engage in independent and safe play and movement throughout urban spaces. As our cities expand and densify, there is a concurrent disappearance of empty and residual spaces, and the outskirts with their natural surroundings are gradually receding. Unplanned playgrounds are becoming increasingly scarce and distant. Furthermore, the rising volume of car traffic and the proliferation of parking have rendered residential streets less secure, transforming them to mere transition areas. Finally, there is a notable scarcity of initiatives involving children in the design of public spaces, despite the Convention affirming their right to participate in decisions impacting their lives. The empowering experience of contributing to the design of local environments is crucial, recognizing children as political actors with a legitimate voice on nature and contemporary environmental issues.

Regarding the rights considered in this work, they all need to be guaranteed for future similar pandemic scenarios, whether it is during a lockdown period or transition period, because they are fundamental rights inherently linked together and essential for the full development of the child. This objective can be pursued through some fundamental attitudes. The first is the awareness of the paramount interest of children in every future similar crisis, as stated in Article 3 of the Convention. This attitude requires a more conscious and attentive consideration of children's needs, which would benefit from listening to and taking into account children's perspectives. Therefore, the second important attitude is the inclusive approach of multiple voices, including those of children, in processes and practices concerning children's rights protection. Another

important attitude is a holistic, integrated, transdisciplinary, and intersectoral approach in the conception, design, and implementation of experiences, as seen, for example, in the shared resolution of conflicts between different interests in the use of common condominium spaces in the city of Bologna (*Vietato vietare di giocare*).

The pandemic has underscored the weakness in the link between theory and practice, as well as between research and interventions. Corbisiero & Berritto (2021) and Berritto & Gargiulo (2022) have highlighted the gap between public policies and scientific research in the implementation of post-pandemic social interventions for children. It is evident that examining practices that engaged in safeguarding children's rights during the pandemic proves beneficial. In this study, our objective was to recognize and analyse them during a historically sensitive period for children's rights. However, acknowledging the characteristics and social value of these experiences is not sufficient. What is still lacking is to integrate them into a broader systemic vision. The experiences examined in this article represent a valuable asset to identify potential lines of public intervention and future policies in response to the unmet needs of childhood. Public outdoor spaces in cities can serve as a lever for policymaking to imagine, build, and implement urban regeneration policies that address the needs of post-pandemic childhood. These experiences, however, are highly contextual and widely varied in their expressions. Similarly, the heterogeneous and diversified set of practices, combined with the hyper-local nature of some, remains a critical challenge for the consolidation of new policy approaches. To move beyond the episodic and experimental nature characterizing these experiences and to appreciate what has been experimented at the local level, a reflection on the dialogue between practices and policies at different levels of governance seems necessary. The goal is to explore, describe, and analyse the factors that can enable or limit their birth, development, and consolidation. Therefore, a future research objective could be to study the relations between practices and public policies and how public administrations can equip themselves to support their emergence, development, and sustainability over time. This involves transitioning from a purely institutional responsibility in designing and implementing public policies to one shared with the communities that have developed the experiences. One can envision a new policy model that starts from localities and engages with various forms of active and civic participation, including children's involvement.

5. Limitations of Research

Children's rights are universal and children's wellbeing is a matter of global concern. However, the guarantee and respect for these rights vary across different parts of the world. This research focuses on the urban context and presents experiences from Italian and European cities. Hence, these reflections can only be regarded as applicable to Western and urbanized contexts. Another limitation that deserves attention, perhaps for a future research proposal, is the varied spectrum of needs among different age groups of children, as well as between girls and boys, and among children with varying abilities. The inclusion of children with disabilities in outdoor urban spaces has not been addressed here, underscoring the need for a dedicated analysis in future research. The choice of the experiences recounted was subjective and driven by the urgency to witness what was happening during the pandemic. Therefore, one of the main limitations of the study is that it does not offer an exhaustive and systematic review of the initiatives.

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Francesco Calicchia[1]

Social Capital and Health: New Frontiers and Old Problems in a Working-Class Neighbourhood in Naples. Testing a Reconsideration of Territorial Healthcare[2]

Introduction

The following paper is part of a wider research effort aimed at investigating the development process of the hospital facility "San Gennaro dei Poveri" in Rione Sanità, Naples, and understanding how the restructuring operation that incorporated it impacted the citizens of the neighbourhood, and their ensuing reaction to it. This analysis must take into account the complex dynamic that exists on a macro, national and supranational level, where the decisions often take place, and on the micro, neighbourhood level, where said decisions unfold. In this arena, where various political levels clash, oftentimes in a direct opposition among each other, civil society also joins the fray. Even the analysis of the political and social action of these constantly evolving realities must always consider the ever-changing relationship between the local dimension and its efforts to reinforce its influence and lobbying power, joining forces, finding supporters and building stronger platforms with other neighbourhoods, on a regional or even national scale.

Herein, though, the focus shall be on some peculiar features that have emerged during the fieldwork, strictly related to the social capital of the neighbourhood. The analysis' goal is therefore to present the social context of the study, the Rione Sanità in Naples, investigating the social capital structures therein, and setting up a reflection on whether they could be implemented in conjunction with the territorial health restructuring Plan issued by the Ministerial Decree 77/2022, which involves the San Gennaro Hospital, envisioning a possible community of care that could involve each and every one of the actors that play a role in it.

This work will begin with a brief history of the case study, the San Gennaro Hospital, so that the context can be presented as clearly as possible. Afterwards, there will be an analysis on the present-day sociological context, through the sociological literature on the concept of social capital, with a comparative focus between the Rione Sanità and the Villa Victoria neighbourhood in Boston, studied by Mario Luis Small, clarifying how the similarities and differences between the two neighbourhoods should help to better frame the case study and provide useful tools for recognizing the sociological categories employed in the analysis itself.

The paper will proceed with a critical analysis of Ministerial Decree 77/2022, through the sociological categories that have been employed in other works on local healthcare and health.

Lastly, after an exposition of the methodology used in the field work, the final section will analyse the results, with a reasoning about the limits, the potential and possible future research possibilities that could stem from this work.

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1. Historical Background

The San Gennaro Hospital is a healthcare facility in the core of Rione Sanità, right below the Capodimonte hill (see fig. 1).

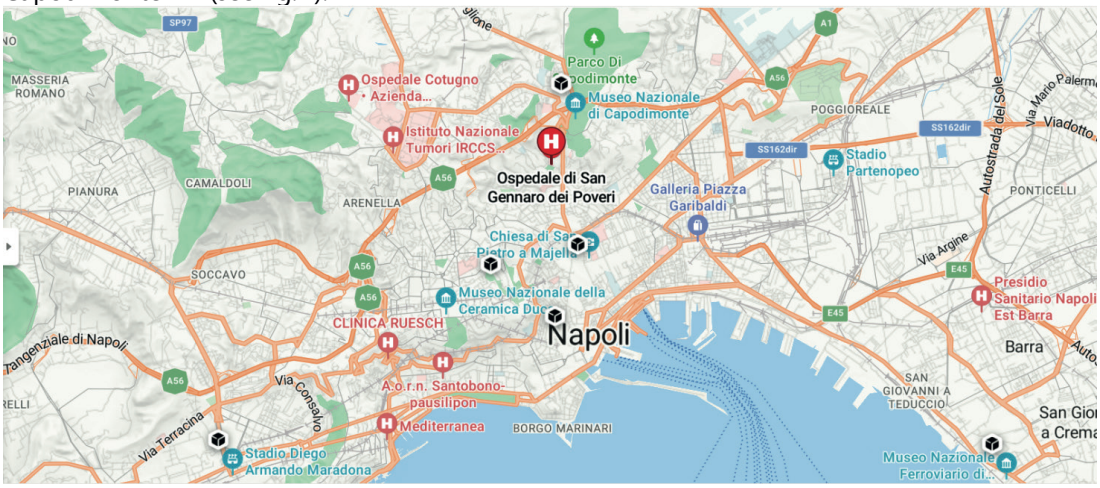

Figure 1: Ospedale San Gennaro dei Poveri. Source: reprocessing from Bing Maps.

The Real Ospizio di San Gennaro, commonly referred to as "San Gennaro de' Poveri", was born in 1667 following the will of Pietro Antonio Raymondo de Cardona, who was Viceroy at the time. During those times, the charitable aids of Naples were prevalently handled by private institutions (trusts, monastic orders, etc.). Therefore, the Ospizio San Gennaro was supposed to be the first attempt to secularize and put under the monarchic domain the management of poverty[3]. This policy, far from having charitable intents, was rather answering to the need that the temporal power had to control and repress the poorest elements of the population. A city the size of Naples had always had severe issues related to immigration and vagrancy, which often led to riots and uprisings. The goal was to provide room and board to the needy, with the added benefit, for the Crown, to keep under close surveillance urban marginality within a defined perimeter. Quoting Clemente (2013), the project won't come to fruition, due to the huge management costs of the structure and the conflicts with local noblemen.

The structure is then repurposed into a city Hospital, representing one of the numerous Historic Hospitals of the Centre of Napoli (Diana et al., 2020). The San Gennaro Hospital turned into a key element for the neighbourhood, not only for urban healthcare for the city centre, but also for human and economic interchange. As stated by one of the activists during an informal conversation, the Hospital represented, for the neighbourhood, "the presence of the State", the first and foremost state facility for the health of the territory and those who inhabit it.

Said role grinds to a halt at the beginning of the New Millenium, when the structure is severely downsized and progressively reconverted into an outpatient clinic.

The research stems from the looming threat of closure of the Hospital perpetrated by the Region, which inspired the creation of the "Committee in defence of the San Gennaro Hospital" – a testament of the important social capital possessed by the territory, thanks to which the neighbourhood was able to fight back and even affect the politics – and from the willingness to understand how this resource could prove to be a key asset for the new territorial restructuring plan for healthcare following the emission of the Ministerial Decree n. 77 of 23rd of May 2022.

Said work is the first result of the fieldwork that took place during last year in the San Gennaro Committee, following their activities both inside and outside the Hospital. This includes the role of active observer even in the meetings of the Committee in defence of the Park in front of the

3 A second, far more ambitious attempt (around 10,000 beds versus the 800 of Ospizio San Gennaro) was the Real Albergo dei Poveri, dated 1749 (Clemente, 2013, op. cit.).

Hospital. A public fenced park is situated in front of the hospital, which reopened some years ago thanks to the citizens' efforts. However, due to a land subsidence, it was closed off a few weeks prior to the beginning of the pandemic, and has been closed off ever since. The fieldwork revealed that a group of citizens was pressuring the administration to make the park (the only public green area of the lower part of the neighbourhood) accessible again; the padlock that was sealing the Park's gates was broken and those same citizens began to take care of the area. Weeds were cleared out, trees were pruned, hazardous places were rendered safe again, and the access was provided daily thanks to the efforts of some citizens who, every day, opened and closed to Park to its visitors. Meanwhile, another committee was formed, which pressured the Municipality so that the space could be opened to the public yet again. Some of the residents involved in this operation are part of the Committee in defence of the Hospital, while other members of the Committee for the reopening of the Park are more or less actively involved in the protest for the Ospedale. In addition, many of the meetings concerning the Park were held inside the Hospital, in the Committee office, especially during the cold weather.
The Committee for the Park, then, does not only involve simple citizens, but also several activists coming from associations or movements of the neighbourhood. As in the Committee for the Hospital, the Committee for the Park also has a quite diversified social composition: young and elderly people, Italian residents and new immigrant ones, activists and common citizens, entrepreneurs, students, public employees, professors, unemployed and workers. For this reason, the fieldwork conducted within the Hospital is inextricably intertwined with the neighbourhood itself. The Committee for the Park and the Committee for the Hospital are examples of how deep the neighbourhood relationships run. Being an active observer in the San Gennaro Committee in Defence of the Hospital means having to interact with an intricate, multi-layered network of relations, which is not related to activism or politics separately: it involves both of them simultaneously. Another layer is added with the inclusion of the network of relations among neighbours, friends or relatives, which involves activists or common supporters. In the following sections of this paper we will delve deeper into the matter, because clarifying this specific aspect of the neighbourhood is particularly useful for the aims of this research. Moreover, even on a conceptual level, the research is contaminated by it, since health is a broad concept that also includes the right to green and accessible areas, as it is often highlighted by the two committees to justify their connection.

2. Social Territorial Capital

As a territory, the Rione Sanità possesses a social capital that allowed it to face several issues, which, among other things, favoured the creation of the San Gennaro Committee, thus preventing the closure of the San Gennaro Hospital.
To truly comprehend the perspective that inspired the research, we should insist again on one of its basic elements, the social capital concept. The three scholars that are traditionally quoted when approaching the topic of social capital are Pierre Bourdieu (2018), James Coleman and Robert Putnam. While, according to Bourdieu, the social capital is the sum of the resources available to the individual or the social group, meaning relationship networks, knowledge and financial availability, which allow the individual to succeed in its society though power relations, Coleman (1988) focuses on the power that the social capital possesses in influencing individual success through the interaction with the other. The distinguishing feature of Coleman is the application of the concept of rational choice, which is more related to financial sciences, since it is the method used by the individual to traverse society in order to achieve their goals. Naturally, said choices cannot escape the conditions imposed by the limits and the inner characteristics of the social context in which one operates. Putnam (2000), lastly, utilizes the social capital to explain the cohesion of a community and the quality of the civil networks it can take advantage of.

The definition of social capital by Putnam has gained a lot of traction in the last years, especially outside of academia. Later on, we shall analyse the critical aspects that have questioned this approach. Ultimately, this paper opted for the definition by Minelli (2007, p. 9), since it distils the concept efficiently: the social capital «consists of the resources coming from civic participation, relationships based on trust and reciprocity norms that characterize social networks».
The definition of territorial social capital by Alessandra Landi (2021, p. 152) is particularly apt to the aims of this paper, stating that «we can say that collective efficiency[4], organisational resources of a community and collective civic engagement help shaping a territorial social capital that is differently distributed among the neighbourhoods, and which is influenced by the density of organisations and community and neighbourhood associations, as well as individual social networks and traditional affiliations to civic groups».
Landi is suggesting that displaying social capital in a spatial key can turn it into a set of territorial resources ready to be valorised (simultaneously exposed to the opposite risk, of course). This dynamic reading of social capital, in other words, helps us to analyse the neighbourhood following a process of ever-constant, ever-evolving change, with a three-dimensional, ecological approach that can properly render a complexity which would otherwise risk being hidden. This exercise is necessary, as Landi argues, so that social capital doesn't appear as it was declining, since it is conventionally measured through national criteria such as voter participation or attendance to national-level protests. When adopting a different set of lenses, instead, more focused on local matters and other participation forms, reality can show a different shape, far from a socially lethargic one. In this sense, the qualitative research on micro contexts and the study of different forms of aggregation and protest, such as informal reunions of groups of citizens, mutual aid activities, public events not formally related to protests, and commitment to issues with a heavy impact on the territory, such as public healthcare, can offer a different perspective about these territories, unveiling different ways to show participation and aggregation.
Despite what has been said so far, a further distinction should be made, since the indeterminateness of the definition has often created some confusion in the meanings attached to the concept of social capital. For example, it is often discussed whether it is an individual or collective asset (Carlson, Chamberlain, 2003). Another risk one could easily run into when analysing the concept of social capital, both in its individual or collective conception, is to consider it as a manifestation of an individual or territory's incapability of improving their conditions. In doing so, the responsibility of the socio-economic conditions of social groups is attributed to the individuals or the community, losing sight of the structural causes that strongly affect the life trajectories of people and the conditions of neighbourhoods or whole cities. In fact, as previously mentioned, Putnam (2000, op. cit.), whose work on social capital is considered today as the main reference point for this line of academia, is criticized for excluding in his analysis some conditions, such as inequalities due to class, race and gender which could severely impact people lives (Navarro, 2020), and which end up being ignored due to the alleged power social capital has in improving the life of social groups, which is often used indiscriminately and without consideration of social and economic contexts. About the specific relationship between social capital and health, Muntaner et al. (2020) explained how considering and studying the informal relations among family, neighbours and friends is surely important, but equally important is to consider the connections that influence which individuals and which groups have access to public healthcare resources, meaning connections with institutions and broader social networks. To further clarify how social capital cannot be considered as the only determining factor in shaping one territory's fate, we refer to how Petrillo (2018) uses the distinction by Wacquant (2008) on external, top-down violence on the neighbourhood and internal violence, focusing on the former. External violence can take up many forms, and could be essentially connected to the presence/absence of the State. Its presence can be felt through the use of force exerted by law enforcement, a material violence

4 For an in-depth analysis on the concept of collective efficiency, Sampson, 2009.

which often follows different directories in specific neighbourhoods, which face daily and overwhelming oppression, or in determined political choices, which concentrate public residential buildings in already degraded areas. There is also a kind of top-down violence which is manifested through the absence of the State, occurring whenever suburban districts are abandoned, educational services are cut down, local hospitals are closed (the very same kind of violence that was employed in Rione Sanità, so this is what we are referring to when we talk about the choice of closing down the hospital, even if it will not be explicitly quoted), welfare aimed at most deprived classes is cut down, and so forth.
Even the stigmatization process can be classified as external violence, whenever it creates an irremovable label on one's body, which modifies one's self-perception outside of the neighbourhood, in the job market or when buying a house, also turning into severe defamation forms.

3. Villa Victoria and Rione Sanità: Similiarities and Differences

For a better understanding of the relation between social capital and suburban neighbourhoods, it could prove useful to have a short comparison between the Villa Victoria neighbourhood of Boston, narrated and analysed by Luis Small (2004), and Rione Sanità. The two realities, in fact, present some undeniable similarities. What should prove more useful to the goals of this work are the differences between these two experiences, since what has been pervading this research is the need to understand the quality and the shapes that social capital can assume in the various contexts it is present in.
Villa Victoria is a suburban neighbourhood in Boston whose inhabitants are almost entirely composed by South Americans migrated in the United States, mainly from Puerto Rico. During the past years, it has been interested by a bottom-top urban regeneration and redevelopment process, and currently (meaning at the moment of Small analysis) is going through a crisis, because apparently the new generations weren't able to fully honour the legacy of the changing process that improved the neighbourhood conditions.
Rione Sanità, as Villa Victoria did, went through positive stages and stages with increasing unease, criminal activity and neglect. Nowadays the neighbourhood is living a renaissance moment, as already stated, thanks to an urban regeneration process which has drawn investment, tourists and new residents.
Small, in his analysis on social capital, claims that said resource might very well be a strong asset in helping a neighbourhood to break out of isolation, exclusion and even stigmatization processes. This element, obviously, has to be properly framed, since its success could be made or unmade due to the participation of several aspects: in Villa Victoria, as Small wrote, the combination between a decent amount of public services and a social capital ripe with more or less thick social relations guaranteed, especially for the older generation, the possibility of not having to go out of the neighbourhood that often and/or developing contacts with the middle class residing outside of the neighbourhood. This peculiar aspect can also be found in Rione Sanità; in fact, the quality of the social capital gives the residents the possibility of taking advantage of relationship networks which answer to many needs, creating a concrete mutual aid structure that can provide a service where the public sector is instead absent. Actually, as already stated multiple times throughout this work, despite the scarcity of public services, a closed down emergency department, a severely crippled hospital, no banking branches, no accessible park areas and so forth, the mutual aid strategies mentioned above and the relatively central position of Rione Sanità granted its residents the possibility of not straying far from it, nor looking for relationships with people from outside.
In light of the fieldwork conducted insofar, it should also be noted that although the neighbourhood is experiencing this phenomenon of insularity, it is still able to build networks and to rally

up relational capital when needed. This is especially true for the activism forms present within the neighbourhood. This dynamic can be attributed to several synchronous factors.
In the first place, while in Villa Victoria language has been a formidable obstacle for many residents, due to the social composition consisting mostly of South American immigrants, Rione Sanità, naturally, didn't have a similar problem. Secondly, even though Rione Sanità is a suburban neighbourhood with several forms of vulnerability, poverty, school dropout etc, it also has a diversified social composition, as proven by the San Gennaro Committee itself. In fact, the Committee counts among its members people who are unemployed, uneducated, marginalized, but also nurses, doctors, university researchers and retirees. On a macro level, this feature pertains to the whole neighbourhood, allowing a connection to higher social classes which is instead absent in the case of the Villa Victoria residents, as Small describes. Such heterogeneity can be found also in daily life, in gathering places and in activism, allowing it to build networks outside of the neighbourhood and to engage with every possible scenario, ranging from a simple café to the halls of government, if the situation demands it.
This feature, which can be considered one of the resources of territorial social capital, is exemplary in the San Gennaro Hospital's case, and maybe the hospital itself has been a catalyst for it in the past, contributing to its strength. In an informal conversation with Luca, he said: «The Hospital opened up the ghetto». The Rione Sanità, due to its geographical location, which encloses it within its own boundaries, has always been considered as a sheltered neighbourhood, almost protected from the outside world. The San Gennaro Hospital represented not only the presence of the State within the neighbourhood, but also an entry gate for uninterrupted human exchanges. The accounts that emerged during the fieldwork have effectively framed the San Gennaro as something more than a healthcare facility. It was the fulcrum of a lot of economies that gravitated around it: the cafeteria service, the laundry service, the cafeteria inside the hospital, the stalls outside of it. It was a local statal healthcare facility where doctors were on a first-name basis with the patients, who they would meet while buying groceries, and they would ask for a quick medical opinion during the process. An exchange of goods and people that allowed for a constant renewal of connections within the neighbourhood.
When looking at the first results of the fieldwork, one should come to the conclusion that, compared to Villa Victoria, Rione Sanità, also due to the (not always positive) deep modifications that have been affecting it, possesses a wide array of resources that made up the territorial social capital which allows the neighbourhood to create networks that go beyond its own boundaries, so that protests can be structured on a meso-level platform. In this sense, a particularly pertinent example is the constitution of the Public Consultation in defence of community health, a city organ acknowledged by the Municipality, with members from the civic society of every urban territory, of which the San Gennaro Committee is one of the founders. In the following pages, we shall point out how this asset could be valorised by public power when building a shared vision of healthcare.

4. Ministerial Decree 77/2022: Restructuring Local Healthcare

In order to justify the following analysis, it should be best to first explain the contents of the Ministerial Decree 77/2022, whose goal is to restructure territorial healthcare. San Gennaro Hospital, in Naples, is one of the structures present in the city primed for a strategical role, since it is supposed to accommodate both the Casa di Comunità (Community House) and Ospedale di Comunità (Community Hospital) at the same time.
The Ministerial Decree 77/2022 (Vicarelli, 2022) aims at renovating the hospital structure of our NHS, following a request[5] that has been present for several years, which brought changes on a regional scale, such as the creation of Case della salute (Health Houses), which have been pres-

5 The push came not only from civic society, as mentioned before – with the intervention, among others, of Giulio Maccaro, founder of Medicina Democratica – but also from sociological literature, which shall be presented herein.

ent for some time already in Tuscany, Emilia Romagna and Veneto. COVID-19 revealed some important weaknesses in our healthcare system and its structure, which nowadays is still based on large hospital centres and, most of all, large polyclinics[6]. The pandemic period highlighted the inadequacy of an organisation that leaves territories undefended, depriving citizens of local facilities that could provide a targeted, quick and tailored assistance according to the context and the patients; not just in terms of medical intervention, but also in terms of listening to the patient, communication and health promotion (Lenzi, 2021). The organisation is also being affected by the gradual cutting to public spending on healthcare, following a trend that started during the nineties with the dismantling of the public welfare system, and which has been steadily defunded ever since the 2008-2011 crisis (Gimbe, 2019; Neri, 2026)[7]. The combination between the historic hospital-centric vocation of our NHS and the spending-review which cut down the territorial healthcare facilities has created frail areas, incapable of reacting to crises such as the pandemic one.
The new Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza (Recovery and Resilience National Plan) was planned by keeping the shortcomings the pandemic revealed in mind, and by considering the demographic changes that are affecting our society, with an important intervention aimed at restructuring territorial healthcare and investing in the redevelopment of physical structures and updating most of the infrastructure. Measure 6 of the Plan identifies the following critical points in need of intervention (PNRR, 2021, pp. 225-226):

1. massive territorial discrepancies in service delivery, especially in terms of prevention and territorial assistance;
2. an inadequate integration among hospital services, territorial services and social services;
3. high waiting times for the delivery of some services;
4. a low degree of skill in achieving synergies for defining response strategies for environmental, climate and health hazards.

After highlighting the critical points, the Plan is scheduled to proceed following two major trajectories: 1. Local networks, structures and telemedicine for territorial healthcare; 2. Innovation, research and digitalization of the national healthcare.
The Plan is seemingly focusing, for the first line of intervention, on local healthcare, by reinforcing the territorial intermediate hospital facilities and by reorganizing the system as a whole around a spread-out, osmotic vision based on the territory. The fulcrum of the intervention is the creation of two new healthcare facilities, the Community House and the Community Hospital, and the enhancement of home healthcare.
Specifically, Community Hospitals and Community Houses are territorial socio-health facilities aimed at offering a continuous, easy-to-access socio-health assistance. Quoting Mission 6:«The Community House shall be a physical structure with a multi-disciplinary team of primary care doctors, freely chosen paediatricians, specialist doctors, community nurses, other health professionals, also including social workers» (PNRR, 2021, p. 228); as for Community Hospitals: «A healthcare facility of the territorial network with a short-term hospitalization system aimed at patients in need of health interventions with a medium/low clinic impact and short-term stays. Said structure, with an average capacity of 20 beds (up to a maximum of 40 beds) and with a management mostly handled by nurses, contributes to a better appropriateness of care, causing a reduction in improper accesses to healthcare services, such as the ones related to the emergency department» (PNRR, 2021, p.229).
The other major goal pursued by this intervention approach is the enhancement of home health-

6 The Ministerial Decree 70/2015 marks a turning point toward the closure of small local facilities in favour of large polyclinics.

7 The report by Fondazione Gimbe explains how, despite the funding share had increased from 2010 to 2019 in absolute terms, accounting for inflation makes it so that the share couldn't even keep the purchasing power unchanged.

care, so, conceiving one's home as the starting point for treatment, with an integrated plan for territorial healthcare which begins with people's homes and involves every possible level, until it reaches the hospital. The underlying concept of the document is made clear: answering to the ever-growing population aging of the Country and the unavoidable increase of chronic diseases, bridging the territorial gap between the North and the South, and the gender and generational gap. Despite the limitations and the critical points emerging from the Decree, the text seems receptive to the several issues revealed by social research during the last years. Two of the theories that have been the most discussed in the scientific discourse (Antonovsky, 1996, Singer, 2009, Singer et al. 2017) are specifically going to be analysed here. Both models, in fact, the Syndemic Theory by Singer and the Salutogenic Model by Antonovsky, despite their differences (which shall not be investigated), push for a clinical practice that takes into account the social determinants when approaching territorial healthcare. Ideally, this passage tries to explain why this paper links the restructuring of the territorial healthcare system to the urban neighbourhood examined, the Rione Sanità in Naples. It is evident that nowadays, in order to properly set up an efficient healthcare system, the social, economic, cultural and political conditions cannot be ignored. These two aspects are examined together in order to provide a complete picture, quoting Ingrosso's proposal (2023) which considers territories in holistic terms as care communities, which shall be developed in the following paragraph.

5. Methodology

As previously mentioned, this paper is the first partial result of a research that has been progressing since September 2022. This work is still being carried out through active observation within the Committee in defence of San Gennaro Hospital and, as said, by an inextricable participation to a wide array of events occurring in the neighbourhood, as well as activism networks that unfold on a macro and meso level also outside of the Rione, sometimes even outside of Naples. There is a specific clarification to be made about the fieldwork conducted inside the neighbourhood, related to the researcher's position. The research on Rione Sanità and the following interest started with two University exams, and was followed by a Master's degree thesis, which, through ethnographic interviews, was about cultural endeavours in Rione Sanità, and the beginning of the gentrification and turistification processes that were unfolding at that time. At a later time, although a couple of years before the beginning of the doctorate, the Rione Sanità became the residential neighbourhood of the author. Therefore, this research is contextually inserted in a framework where the researcher had already been present in for some years, not just as a resident, but also as an activist. This aspect has been initially positive, since it guaranteed an advanced level of previous knowledge; and, while it allowed for an easy and immediate access to the field, it also created some issues, which have surfaced after some time, during the research itself. In fact, it can sometimes be difficult to distinguish between the research field and one's own living environment. Moreover, when being a resident of the neighbourhood can sometimes take precedence over being a researcher, keeping the roles separated can prove difficult. More often than not, I was perceived more as a member of the Committee rather than a researcher, both within the Committee and outside of it. This, obviously, had a twofold impact on the research: internally, it was harder not to take a stand and asking to not be involved in decisions that might influence the actions of other members; externally, it often implied being considered as a member of the Committee, with what that entails: conflicts, political differences, personal stances. This implies having to overcome distrust and more in order to proceed with the research. To put it shortly, these factors created an environment where it was necessary to keep the balance between the inescapable perception coming from being a resident, which leads to being more involved, and keeping one's role as a researcher (Davis, 1973).

In addition to active observation, other survey tools have been implemented. In the first place, the study of materials coming from secondary sources: Ministerial Decree 77/2022 (which shall be analysed later on), Board rulings, Corporate acts of ASL Napoli 1, but also press releases, fliers and videos coming from the civil society.
Lastly, semi-structured interviews have been carried out, to key players, activists, residents, politicians; so far, 18 interviews have been conducted. This paper is going to utilise the ones to Mauro, president of the San Gennaro Committee; Luca, the youngest member of the Committee; Fabio Greco, president of the Third Municipality[8]; and Paolo Fierro, national vice-secretary of Medicina Democratica, an association composed by doctors, healthcare workers and researchers, whose founder, Giulio Maccacaro, was one of the first theorists of the healthcare approach that inspired the idea of Health House. More than once, there have been attempts at getting in touch with the executives of ASL Napoli 1 and the Region, through formal and informal ways, but, at the time this paper is being written, no feedback has been received yet. This aspect shall also be analysed further on.

6. Rione Sanità, San Gennaro Hospital and the Committee: a Care Community Concept

Rione Sanità is a neighbourhood administratively pertinent to the Third Municipality. Looking at ISTAT data[9], it is immediately apparent how deeply affected it is by some issues: it ranks among the first areas of Naples in unemployment, school dropout, social distress, foreign population. Despite its proximity to the city centre, it is more classifiable as a suburban area, not only because of its severe social issues, but also due to the absence of services: obsolete schools, urban hygiene issues, no green areas, lack of banking services and, case in point, no adequate healthcare facilities.
Actually, the whole city of Naples suffers from a lacking healthcare structure. Throughout the years, most of the small city hospitals have closed down, due to several restructuring plans. The situation is even more critical as far Emergency Departments[10] are concerned, with the only Emergency Department currently active in the city centre being the Pellegrini Hospital. All the others are gathered in the hospital neighbourhood, with Cardarelli as the main reference point; or the Ospedale del Mare in Ponticelli. A severely inadequate infrastructure for a city the size of Naples. As for Rione Sanità, the neighbourhood, during the last part of the 20th century, went through a rather dark period, plagued with neglect, social exclusion and marginalization.
The economic boom, and the fortunate political-economic conjuncture of that timeframe, favoured the recovery of a thriving leather manufacturing industry and the opening of some factories, which improved the economic outlook of the area. The situation changed dramatically during the Nineties: the factories began shutting down, often resorting to delocalization. Mario Valentino, among them, shut down its production department. Said company played a major role in the neighbourhood, since the local manufacturing texture was composed by leather

8 The City of Naples is divided into Municipalities, administrative divisions of the city. Each Municipality has its own Board and its own Municipal Council. While the Municipality President represents an important spokesperson, matters related to public healthcare and its organization pertain to the region. As such, the micro dimension of the Municipality works more as an intermediator actor between the territory and the Region, rather than as an actor with enough weight to influence decisions taken elsewhere.

9 https://www.comune.napoli.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/34362. Last available data dates back to the ISTAT 2011 census.

10 Loria, Fierro, Referto Epidemiologico Popolare, 2019. With the Covid-19 pandemic, so after the publication of this Report, the Emergency Rooms of the Loreto Mare Hospital and San Giovanni Bosco were also closed. After being repurposed into Covid Centers, they have not been reopened yet. In the case of San Giovanni Bosco, whose reopening was originally planned by the Region, the problem is the lack of doctors. The tenders published by the Region for the Emergency Room of the Hospital have received no bids, https://napoli.repubblica.it/cronaca/2022/05/11/news/napoli_il_paradosso_del_san_giovanni_bosco_pronto_soccorso_nuovo_ma_deserto-349010022/.

workers whose jobs depended almost entirely upon its commissions. Poverty and unease kept increasing, the neighbourhood plunged into chaos. The Camorra became stronger, the "stese"[11] phenomenon started. In the same years, territorial services are reduced, schools are depowered, and as the New Millennium rolls in it's the turn of healthcare facilities. The Rione Sanità, along with Quartieri Spagnoli, during those years benefitted from the European Plan URBAN, aimed at suburban areas (Laino, 1999), which will requalify some urban furniture elements in the market square, also setting in motion immaterial interventions for youth employment. The neighbourhood, as the New Millennium unfolds, also thanks to the activity of some personalities, went through a regeneration stage: tourist sites were born, the Cimitero delle Fontalle was reopened – an important worship place turned touristic attraction (Monaco & Calicchia, 2019) - new cultural projects and social promotion activities were created. The Rione drew interest, tourists and even new residents (Corbisiero, 2021). Its urban regeneration process is a model that sparks discussion even outside the city borders, sometimes even outside national borders. Funding, from UNESCO and other bodies, entered the picture, supporting requalification interventions. Meanwhile, the neighbourhood was living a paradoxical situation: while the bottom-up regeneration process drew in investment, tourists and new residents, triggering a gentrification process, services aimed at residents were still severely lacking. So, even if the territory was proving to be responsive and operating toward a real improvement of its lifestyle conditions, the same cannot be said about state power, which, apart from some cases (for example, the municipality, which was following closely the territorial situation and was receiving input from it constantly), wasn't capable of properly supporting this progression.
The looming threat of shutting down the Hospital is an example of how this happened in reality. The closure of the Emergency department of San Gennaro was announced in 2011. Activists, residents and territorial associations[12] decided to act. The San Gennaro Committee in defence of the Hospital[13] was born. In 2016, as Luca retells, the conflict deflagrated. The Region made its move for the definitive closure of the hospital facility by taking away the machinery.

> «Suddenly, it happened: daily meetings and a daily garrison, outside of the hospital. A gazebo outside of the hospital, with the Insurgencia (one of the collectives participating) guys taking turns, and also people from the rione, guarding the hospital, to halt the total, definitive dismissing, because the aim was the complete shutting down of the hospital» (Luca, 04/05/2023)

The shutdown project was part of a wider regional project for restructuring territorial healthcare:

> «during that same period I began working with a friend, an university colleague, we were building a political collective which was actually going to be working on the hottest issues the city had, like the health system, health… national healthcare, it was the most urgent issue because it wasn't only about San Gennaro, there were five city hospitals, including Ascalesi, and we were involved also with the Ascalesi (another hospital in the Centre, situated near the Forcella neighbourhood)». (Luca, 04/05/2023)

The struggle heated up, and the garrison outside of the San Gennaro was starting to become more structured, attaining a physical space where the protest could continue on. Mauro, President of the Committee:

> «We saw this place, one morning Antonio said: 'hey, why don't we open it?', we set up a meeting, meanwhile we were meeting in the evenings, the tent was working, the debate was lively […] Antonio took his

11 "Stesa" is a term of the local vernacular which the national media also picked up, and that nowadays is commonly used. This expression means an ambush of camorra forces in the streets of the neighbourhood, whose victim is often the member of a rival clan. It has happened more than once that the victims of a "stesa" ended up being common citizens hit by mistake.

12 https://napoli.repubblica.it/cronaca/2011/11/10/news/chiude_il_pronto_soccorso_rivolta_all_ospedale_san_gennaro-24788279/.

13 https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064346996227.

chance, he said 'come on, come on Mario, let's do it'. We were 5-6-7, we forced our way into the door a couple of times and it opened. After a while the forces of the city joined in, you know, the CARC, Insurgencia, OPG, the social centres were the strongest before, they were there, they had an even stronger voice. To put it briefly, we began doing this internal activity». (Mauro, 28/05/2023).

The first years of activity of the Committee have been particularly intense. The shutdown of the Hospital made the waves in the city, especially in the neighbourhood; the methodical dismantling of territorial healthcare perpetrated by the Region created a united front from the citizens opposing this action. The Municipality also added its support, led by the De Magistris administration, along with the Third Municipality, which was also led by a member from the same list as the Mayor, Ivo Poggiani.
Luca remembers those first years:

«at the beginning things were extremely hot, Francè, really… because we were under attack by the enemy, see? The enemy was attacking you, because it was closing down your hospitals, the attack was materially visible. And clearly, when it is materially visible, when they take away the machinery, the department is suddenly closed down, the mobilisation, the response is inevitably greater. I mean, at the beginning we could organize manifestations in the Rione, or roadblocks in Museo. They were real roadblocks, with 100-150 people, 200 people from the Rione, not militants, people from the Rione». (Luca, 04/05/2023)

He utilizes military jargon: the Region, the State, are the enemy, those who take the decisions from their high seats, without caring about the context, an ineffable act that calls for the external violence mentioned before, to which the neighbourhood answers by fighting back[14].
The mobilisation and the constant presence of the Committee led to the opening of a small First Aid space, and the shutdown project of the Hospital is halted. The Hospital was joining a new restructuring Plan for territorial Healthcare, whose goal was to turn it into a Community Hospital. While the protest, throughout the years, stopped the Hospital from shutting down, the pandemic and the ensuing emerging weaknesses of territorial assistance of healthcare facilities solicited the Administration and the Campania Region, in line with the national trend, to restructure the system[15]. In line with the Ministerial Decree 77/2022, and taking advantage of the PNRR funds, the structures bound to turn into community hospitals were selected, and San Gennaro was among them[16].
The ways with which the protest unfolded must necessarily change, as Luca also noticed:

«you can't count on that level of mobilisation now, on that heat supporting you in your most intense actions, where even the response of the enemy cannot destroy you (…) these factors have kind of changed how we fight today. It changed because the San Gennaro has been repurposed, now it truly is an outpatient clinic. There's not much else to do, except fighting to have more active clinics, and improve their performance. Unless you wanted the complete reopening of the hospital, in which case you need to involve other powers of the city and move outside the hospital borders. That's where the fighting is happening now, I believe, the battlefield is not just the San Gennaro anymore, and the fighting and tension level can be turned up on those topics, it can be turned up on the Emergency Department, which is not present in the San Gennaro anymore; it can be turned up, possibly, on the waiting lists, it can be turned up on themes that people are literally experiencing on their skin today. And this requires you to step out of the San Gennaro and setting up deals with other forces (…) you need to find new formulas. Today, with a roadblock set up like this… nobody would show up». (Luca, 04/05/2023)

14 The term is not chosen loosely, but it aims to refer to the warlike aspect of the protest, emerging from the words quoted here.

15 Not without oppositions and slowdowns. Actually, it was President De Luca himself who refused to vote for the Decree during the State-Region Conference, due to a controversy with the Ministry of Health about the allocation of healthcare personnel (Vicarelli, 2022, op. cit.).

16 For an in-depth analysis on the territorial restructuring Plan of the Campania Region, see the Deliberazione n. 682 of 13/12/2022.

Even Mauro, the President, realizes that: «the development of the Committee is tricky, because we could also become part of the institutions, the protests are there, but I always say: before the fight seized the moment, the fight was about the shutdown. Now we need to evolve». (Mauro, 28/05/2023).
Evidently, the initial conditions that spurred the protest were now absent. The Committee, though, was able to recognize the change and seemed to adapt to it. When the goals change, the ways to achieve them also change. There's more: as Small claimed (2004, op. cit.) a strong social capital within a neighbourhood is not a guarantee that it would create dialogue bridges with other neighbourhoods, nor that those who inhabit it are looking for external contacts. As Small recounts, there are too many variables that could influence an external opening or its opposite reaction. Actually, the presence within a territory of a functional service infrastructure could even favour a decrease in the external mobility of the neighbourhood. This could be applied, in some aspects, also for the Rione Sanità, for example in how leisure is structured or in expanding one's friends and relatives networks; activism, though, doesn't seem to be affected by it, which, according to the words quoted before, seems to know clearly how important it is to network outside of the Rione's borders:

> «joining different realities through the fighting. I think it could be a strategy, I see it as a strategy to band together a little, and then to protest on a more general level against the Region. Otherwise, Francè, if we are still here asking for the opening of the clinic we miss the point. This is something we do because we are from Sanità, because we are the San Gennaro, whatever, but we are not doing anything more than what we could do. And what we could be for others, because, actually, we are a model also for others». (Luca, 04/05/2023)

This bottom-up capacity of organization and communication, though, clashes with the state's incapability of intercepting and gathering these issues. This happened not only between public administration and citizens/territory, but also among the different levels of public administration. In fact, when asked about what information the Region provided on how the Community Hospital project for San Gennaro is supposed to unfold, the President of the Third Municipality answered: «No, we read it and studied it according to the protocols, which are… let's say, public» (Fabio, 10/06/2023).
The fieldwork revealed another evidence, with the Region and the ASL never formally having an official discussion with the territory. Up until that moment, in fact, the members of the Committee managed to gather information through informal connections with the ASL or regional managers. Suddenly, finding information became harder. In the weeks that followed this paper, specifically on 19th of January 2024, the regional councilwoman Maria Muscarà, during a Question Time at the Region, called out the Heritage Councillor Antonio Marchiello, asking him updates on the San Gennaro. She specifically asked: when are the works on the Hospital and Community House supposed to end, and if it was possible to appoint a liaison who could keep the territory and the other stakeholders (the unions, for example) updated on the developments occurring within the structure. The councillor answered to the first question by saying that the works will be completed in July (to everyone's surprise, since up until that point there wasn't even a starting date for them). As for the second question, no answer was provided, confirming the regional approach of closure to dialogue.
Meanwhile, in the following days the offices of the San Gennaro Committee received an eviction order, as the rooms had to be renovated. The news reached the Committee President through secondary channels. Despite the fact that the Committee had been a recognized association for quite some time, communication happened informally through third parties. As of today, no one in the Hospital knows if the Committee will receive new offices.
Actually, one could say that these very shortcomings, which have always been present, are the fuel that gives energy to the protest platform, and they could have even been what has made

the territorial social capital so strong, since when the public service is absent the only possibility comes from resilience and mutual aid strategies.
In fact, during the years, the role of the Committee developed by taking up new forms, that go beyond the usual protest:

> «now, you should know that in here we have sheltered homeless people, listening centre, workshops, meetings, even prevention meetings. We did so many things (…) since this is also an info point, a meeting point, the STP ambulatory, reception, the medical part in the upper part, but here we also do daily reception, Agit is supposed to come now, the mediator. We could say that the fight is beginning. A smart thing we are starting to do… the institutional part, we're trying to set up meetings». (Mauro, 28/05/2023)

This has been confirmed also by the fieldwork. The Committee, in an informal way, carries out information and sensibilization activities in and out of the hospital. In the stalls outside of the hospital it often happened that people received assistance, people who asked for help on various issues related to public healthcare. The Committee headquarters, today, is the reception point for the ENI-STP clinic for migrants, proving once again how it is possible to offer formal and institutional services within an officially non-recognized occupational framework. Another example: the same activists who led the Committee in defence of the Hospital, along with some residents, have also created the Committee in defence of the San Gennaro Park, by talking with other territorial realities and involving other residents in the protest for the reopening of the green area, which is still closed as of today.
The Committee, though, also fulfils another important role for the territory, as well as for public administration: the controller role, and, due to the lack of communication within the ranks of public administration, it often is the Committee itself that mediates among ASL, Region and Municipality. In fact, the President of the Municipality stated:

> «The San Gennaro, according to what the ASL programme is saying, should become a Community House, and a lot of money has been allocated. The works, of course, start and end at intervals, stuff like that. There never was a clear state of the art about what is going to happen in that hospital. The fact of the matter is that, thanks to them (the Committee) we are vigilant, we are present, meaning that we are able to know, to understand every structural movement happening in that hospital». (Fabio, 10/06/2023)

The Ministerial Decree 77/2022 explicitly outlines an integration between social and healthcare work within community facilities. Specifically, there is an attitude towards dialogue and openness with the local Third Sector realities, such as APS and Non-Profit Organisations, so that they can be an active part of the design and planning of policies for healthcare promotion, but also for supporting the patients during the illness stages. Indeed, their involvement is an added value, since they can be the bearer of a territory's needs and act as an echo chamber for its issues. Ingrosso (2023, op. cit. p. 35), though, gives the following warning:

> «In a socially and culturally fragmented scenario there are some shared transversal attractors that can unite local textures around symbolically defined interests: health – considered as the capability of taking care of the most relevant personal and collective needs (like during the pandemic) and also as safety and environmental liveability – can be one of the most relevant aggregators, a symbolic medium, on which the networks and the local areas can be mended and regenerated. This is why the Community House should become one of the symbolic-aggregative epicentres of an area or neighbourhood-sized community. This focused regeneration of community networks should move through three main guidelines: the institutional and participative one, the cultural and creative one, and the solidarity and trust-based one. In other words, obtaining the commitment of the representative institutions is important, along with civic participation, developing of an activity of symbolic and artistic aggregating elaboration, ending up with a structural involvement of the organized solidarity of the third sector.

> The latter can allocate its resources in local projects, in community building and engagement, and on ethical investment in the area, increasing the social and community trust rate; it could also take part in the governance and co-planning of the CdC. The Decree, currently, is too generic on how this dialogue is supposed to take place»

The first motion, then, is to regain the centrality of local healthcare facilities, not just as physical infrastructures, but also on a conceptual level. Health must be considered as a common good, with a One Health[17]view: involving in the analysis of individual and collective health the contextual social determinants and considering health not as the absence of illness, but as a psycho-physical and social state of well-being (Ottawa Charter, 1986), where a big part is played also by environmental factors, such as the air quality, life and work environments, mental health, etc. Furthermore, reconnecting to Ingrosso's definition, a «health community» is not made by simply promoting health activities, but rather by having a constant, horizontal and efficient dialogue between the territory and the socio-healthcare facilities of the territory. The risk is turning the Community Houses and Community Hospitals into mere alternative names for outpatient clinics, where the citizen is a user/consumer, but where decisions are firmly in the hands of powers external to the territories (which, as we saw, are often considered hostile toward the territory itself), in a vertical hierarchical structure.
Said shift in approaching health by the National Health Service is also carried forward confidently by society players. Paolo Fierro of Medicina Democratica (which, as mentioned above, have been pushing for a long time for an approach toward territorial healthcare that includes spaces such as Community Houses), claims:

> «Health House should be the core of this new kind of territorial organisation. Health House, with active participation from committees, family associations, of the ill, etcetera etcetera, but also from intellectuals, researchers, etc. What the task should be… yes, I want to outline the ideal thing… that the demands and the needs of the population are acquired with this participation form and the suggestions by this territorial entity, so that the healthcare facility can outline a project (…) a project which then has to set as its goal the reduction of the avoidable mortality in that territory, the reduction of the causes that provoke a specific type of, let's say, unexpected deaths and so forth, prevention, healthcare education, etcetera etcetera (…). And this idea means that the population is closely cooperating with healthcare workers, primary care physicians in the first place, but also laboratory technicians, nurses, neighbourhood nurses, social workers and so forth». (Paolo, 16/12/2023)

The territorial social capital created by the San Gennaro events should be reinvested and revalued by the NHS. In fact, while the Ministerial Decree 77 is considering a participative form to the governance of the so-called community facilities, where local stakeholders are present from the planning stage of the actions to be implemented, in reality there is only a generic reminder to this participative form. Considering that, so far, the Region and the ASL management have ignored every possibility of talking with the territories, it is only logical to foresee that the recommendations of the Decree will remain unimplemented. Yet, as we have seen, the social capital carried out by activism in neighbourhoods like the Rione Sanità could become an asset, since throughout the years it acted as an echo chamber for the territory, not just by considering its needs, but also for communication with the citizens about possible healthcare promotion activities, and even as communicative mediums for the different ranks of public administration.
The way with which the health system is envisioned has to change, taking precedence even over its processes. As mentioned already, the new Ministerial Decree proposes a change in the care approach and the communication mode with the territory, but this can be implemented efficiently only by considering the whole territory as a care community. This can be achieved only by involving every local stakeholder in an integrated development plan. In this sense, what has been said so far helps to outline which territorial assets can be involved. The Rione Sanità, then, could

17 https://www.iss.it/one-health.

become a reproducible model. The social capital present in the neighbourhood is a system that was able to answer to the inadequacies of the public one, implementing resistance strategies, of mutual aid, but also political claims, when it was necessary to do so. Said asset, then, is already acting as a care community, parallel to the State, sometimes even substituting[1] or going against it. In its attempt to support the Ministerial Decree 77 along its restructuring development, public administration (meaning, specifically, the ASL, the Municipality, and the Region; each according to its jurisdiction levels) could gather together these local forces mentioned insofar and implement them in an institutional course, so that they can identify the needs, explicit or not, of the population to provide actually efficient services; and to give value to what is already present in terms of social capital. It should be said, lastly, that the network of players of the Third Sector or private citizens with good organisational skills already present in the territory could benefit from being part of an institutional course, where they could count on the aid of professionals and the coordination with public services, which often are already counting on the support of the social capital assets, but without a well-defined plan, nor a common vision. Naturally, in this possible care community, the added value offered by the Ministerial Decree 77/2022 is not just the formal acknowledgement of the care community itself, but also the intent expressed in the Decree to involve the final users, whether they be ill or healthy, not only as users of the services, but finally as players with their own agency, manifesting needs and opinions.

Conclusions

As a conclusion of this paper, it should prove useful to recap what has been said insofar and draw some considerations, starting with the main objective this work had. As such, presenting the complex framework, which has issues to address and assets to valorise, is instrumental toward explaining to the reader how the new restructuring territorial healthcare plan (which, to tell the truth, is already tackling this factor in its goals) promoted by Ministerial Decree 77/2022 could benefit from involving the territorial players.

The creation of the social capital of Rione Sanità could be traced back to a series of concurring factors intertwined with each other: the narrow alleyways and the small spaces of many residences, especially of the so-called 'bassi[2]', have allowed the contamination between public and private, fostering more or less deep relationships among residents – the alleyways of Naples, specifically the ones of Rione Sanità, can be fully considered as the «contact spaces» Agier (2016, pp.85-89) speaks about, narrow streets traditionally present in the South of the World, but also in other parts of the Globe, whose forced promiscuity between public space and domestic areas, and the narrowness itself, favour and/or strengthen thick relationships – the strong presence of the Third Sector, especially of Catholic origin, and a history of worker's struggle events. Additionally, there is also the severe scarcity of public services, such as socio-healthcare facilities, public green areas, etc., to which the territory could answer, thanks to the assets it possesses mentioned before, with mutual-aid strategies and, when necessary, by protesting. This scarcity, in turn, contributes to nourish the social capital present and is also nourished by it, in a process of mutual interaction.

While it surely cannot be claimed that the social capital of Rione Sanità could be considered as a miraculous cure-all, it's undeniable that said asset could be promoted by the State on every level and, as specifically pointed out by this paper, by the NHS, to increase the efficiency and the efficacy of public action on the territory. This is because social realities, such as the San Gennaro

1 Due to not being relevant for this paper, many networks haven't been mentioned, such as the Rete Educativa (Educational Network) which involves schools and other educational centres; parishes, cooperatives, associations supporting families and kids, etc., which all participate in creating an informal care community.

2 Traditional Napolitan residences on the ground floor of buildings, directly on the street. They are usually very small and unhealthy spaces, destined to the lower classes of the population.

Committee, can carry the requests of the territory, acting as a medium for sensibilisation activities, health promotion, catalysing energies for other territory-related social matters, and also acting as controllers for the public activities of the State.
What has been presented so far opens possible and potentially original elements of consideration on themes related to the territory itself. Indeed, it represents an exceedingly complex social context, where several topics unfold and intertwine, in a constant dialogue among each other and which should deserve further attention. Topics such as the ongoing gentrification process, which presents itself as an issue for the working class and the immigrants residing in the neighbourhood, but also the presence of a popular culture, championed by those who were born in the neighbourhood, with events, cults and rituals of a more or less religious nature, more or less accepted by the Church; but also music, street-art, and theatre, which unavoidably have to interact with the forms and the cultural codices of the new residents. It can also be a contribution to a broader theory on social capital related to an urban periphery. As Small (2004, op. cit.) had already pointed out, it's wrong to consider peripheries as places without resources, thick social relationships and cultural vivacity. The Rione Sanità, in this sense, is a kaleidoscope of different motions coming from below and choices sent from above which clash in the local arena, often cutting across the borders of the Rione and reaching other urban contexts. In essence, the reality is complex, far from the bidimensional accounts often reported by journalistic investigations. The ethnographic survey and the qualitative analysis can assist, in this case, in untying the knots and the opaqueness of a complex reality, highlighting what causes the weaknesses, the factors that spark the protests, the assets the territory utilizes according to the moment, by also providing a tool to improve the efficiency of interventions of local stakeholders and public administration alike. It would certainly prove useful, for the possible development of this analysis, to have updated quantitative data on the socio-economic status of the neighbourhood, keeping in mind that the ones provided by the official channels are already quite a few years old. So, the qualitative method employed here should be integrated with quantitative techniques, in order for said data to be built autonomously.
This research has surely suffered from objective constraints, unconnected to the researcher's will, mostly related to being unable to obtain the point of view of the public administration. The analysis of the official documentation produced by Region and ASL can surely provide an idea on the political and administrative public choices; but it would also have been useful to know about the considerations, the willingness and the actions of the single individuals composing the administrative apparatus who, often, as the active observation work highlighted, can influence some communicative and organisational choices rather than others. Additionally, it should be surely mentioned how the researcher's role caused some difficulties, as already mentioned in the methodology paragraph; while it didn't hinder the research so far, it still needs to be recorded, so that anything that this paper has said can be read by taking into account this non-secondary aspect.
Lastly, the hope is that this work could represent a starting point for the decision makers, which could rethink the healthcare safeguard and local healthcare, by considering the contextual features, weaknesses and strengths, and taking advantage of the endogenous resources to improve the impact of the choices taken, in order to develop a care community that can engage with every social player, both public and private, not just for the promotion and assistance but also for the medium-long term planning, where one's health is conceived as a complex and all-encompassing state to respect in any scenario, where sickness is an integral part, not an exception to answer to only in the moment in which it manifests itself (Antonovsky, 1996, op. cit.).

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Safety, Mobility and Sociality in Urban Spaces during the Health Emergency in Italy[2]

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic led to an unprecedented situation regarding the policies adopted to combat the spread. According to the WHO (2023), Italy was among the first Western countries to record cases of contagion and among the first to suffer the most significant morbidity from the Sars Cov2 virus. For this reason, it is an interesting case for the radical measures which were adopted to contain the pandemic.

Before going into the research method and results, it is important to reflect on some of the changes which took place due to Covid-19. On the one hand, the pandemic seems to have challenged the urban models that have prevailed in recent years, including not only structural aspects (types of private dwellings and public spaces, distribution of services to citizens and viability), but also ways of working, of being together and everything that induces the mobility of people and goods.

An unprecedented global urbanisation process characterised the first two decades of the twenty-first century. One need only think of the shapeless territorial expansions that have sprung up in just a few decades in Africa, Asia and the Americas, based on extreme forms of labour and environmental resources exploitation that have produced irreconcilable (at present) contradictions and severe social, redistributive and environmental inequalities; contradictions that, at least in terms of extension and populations involved, are not even comparable with the forms of exploitation of the working class (well described by Friedrich Engels) of the first European and North American industrial cities.

This concept is related to the inhuman living, working, and housing conditions of all those people crowded around these agglomerations. It must be said, however, that the progressive growth in the consumption of natural resources has gone hand in hand with an improvement in the average standard of living of the populations involved, albeit with numerous imbalances and factors of extra- and intra-urban duality (Borja & Castells, 2002), starting with the advanced-development countries that constituted a model of economic development that could be replicated everywhere, and then extending to the rapidly developing countries. This has helped to trigger a spiral process: new social needs have expanded and individual demands for goods have been renewed, accelerating the process of land and natural resources consumption.

Despite the profound structural changes of these decades, some features stand in continuity with the urbanisation processes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, albeit presenting themselves today in a paroxysmal manner. The characteristics of this process are essentially based on three elements: mobility (of people, goods and capital); the concentration of the population in delimited, albeit increasingly extended, spaces, and consequently, the concentration of the universe of goods and services; and lastly the exploitation of natural resources, despite the cultural and social awareness of their finiteness. These characteristics have determined a high cost in terms of social and environmental sustainability that technological refinement has not only failed to mitigate but also, on the contrary, has accelerated the processes of consumption, producing adverse effects and dimensions that cannot be confined to where they are generated - Edward Lorenz's much-quoted 'butterfly effect' - nor can they be circumscribed in time.

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All this was well known before the health emergency caused by the spread of the Sars-CoV-2 virus. However, this pandemic has made immediately visible the numerous perverse (and intentional) effects of the capitalist development model that has prevailed (Florida *et al*., 2023), undermining at least the first two characteristics that made possible and accelerated the global processes of urbanisation. At the same time, with regard to the third characteristic, there continues to be, so to speak, much 'distraction' about political and governmental choices, the effects of which go beyond the choices made to manage the pandemic that has led to reflection on the political category of "state of exception" (Agamben, 2021).

First of all, it has put mobility at risk since the Coronavirus 'travels' with human beings. The containment of the risks of contagion thus required a limitation of movement, particularly when a large part of the population was not yet vaccinated, with consequences which have been promptly debated (Cresswell, 2021; Daconto *et al*., 2020; de Haas *et al*., 2020; Freudendal-Pedersen & Kesselring, 2020).

It is enough to think of the deep crisis for airlines, resulting in a further increase in unemployment in this sector. One may also consider the collapse of tourism in 2020, whose 'destiny', as it is well known, is closely linked to the ability of people to move quickly within their own country and from one point to the other on the planet (Gössling *et al*., 2021; Corbisiero, 2020; Koh, 2020).

Secondly, the concentration of a N number of people at the same time-space, in collective, public and private spaces, is one of the main causes of the transmission of the virus (Ilardi *et al*., 2021). This means that urban density, especially in public places, has become a source of risk. This evidence questions one of the historically given pillars of the city and, more generally, of urban settlements since it is equivalent to the fact that many co-existing social interactions have been and might be a possible source of danger. However, this type of interaction is constitutive of the creation of spaces for collective use, which for Urban Sociology are spaces that fulfil a primary function in social action, since they are the containers within which ideas, cultures, practices and diversity are born and nurtured (Pratt, 2020). In short, that «mosaic of social worlds in which the transition from one world to the other is sudden» and which only the city can produce, seems to have entered into a crisis today (Wirth, 1938, also 1971, p. 417).

The condition of hypersensitivity to risk and insecurity must be elements that already defined societies of the so-called "second modernity" (Beck, 1986), where fears of epidemics are connected with the emergence of new threats caused by the modernisation process itself and the weakening of social protection systems (Giddens, 1990; Castel, 2004). On the one hand, this condition of insecurity is closely connected with the insecurity described by Bauman (1997), or like an overlapping of its threefold dimension (security, certainty, and safety). On the other hand, it is closely related to the widespread erosion of trust in institutions (Rosanvallon, 2012). Moreover, it is historically present in those countries such as Italy, where there has been a weak institutional legitimacy (Donolo, 2013) and where they suddenly found themselves having to govern an emergency widespread throughout the country. From this perspective, it is interesting to point out that during a pandemic, it is possible to identify the evolution of individuals' attitudes of anxiety along with the progression of the spread of the virus. For example, observing the case of the A/H1N1 pandemic, a 'cycle of fear' has been identified (Surrenti, 2011), divided into three phases: the prodrome, the acute phase and the trend towards normalisation. The prodromes are linked to the outbreak of the pandemic and the dissemination of the first information on the contagion, information which is also contradictory in terms of the interaction between mass media, with messages ranging from recommendations of institutions to reassurances from economic actors. On the other hand, the acute phase corresponds to the peak period of the pandemic, during which fear is the emotion that conditions social action. In addition to morbidity, this phase is marked also by an increase of contradictory messages from the press and of specialist knowledge. Moreover, it is also during this phase that, because of the danger under control, institutions adopt mechanisms to regulate public behaviour. Finally, the phase of the normalisation trend corresponds to the attenuation of the spread of the pandemic and the

relative reduction of fear. This refers to a different perception of risk and the idea that the real danger has been amplified by the media or by other institutional actors, at different levels of government. Although this analysis is related to risk communication, this division substantially resembles what happened with Covid-19, but with a crucial difference, which is the fact that throughout the health emergency we detected a circular pattern with a transition from normalisation to a new acute phase.

From March to May 2020, the Italian government decided for a nationwide lockdown that forced most of the population to stay cooped up at home. Since the very beginning of the first lockdown period, our aim was to investigate how the health emergency, the containment measures and the physical distancing were having an impact on the sense of security and trust, social relations and individual behavior, as well as the very use of public and private urban spaces. The purpose of this contribution is thus to offer an overview of the impact of the pandemic on Italian territories and cities, by presenting some results of a study conducted in 2020, and to discuss on the challenges that Italian cities would face in the immediate future considering the Covid-19 pandemic experience.

The study will be presented as follows: Section 2 describes the research methodology; Section 3 presents the most relevant findings; Section 4 discusses the results; Section 5 outlines the conclusions.

1. A Sociological Survey on Citizens' Perceptions of the Health Emergency

In times of total physical segregation, locked inside our homes due to the health emergency, we asked ourselves about the changes produced by the new situation. We asked ourselves: How does it feel to experience such an exceptional situation? How much has the perspective from which the world is observed changed? How are social relations perceived, both the closer and the more distant ones? But also, how much do people miss the casual and spontaneous relationships in meeting places and the choice to be together, namely all those relationships that are denied today? And again, how has the sense of security and trust towards oneself and others, one's affections (parental and friendship) and institutions changed?

The survey was launched after the Italian government's decision to implement the national lockdown (March 8, 2020) and ended in November 2020. It was developed in three phases corresponding to three different surveys designed to delve into the various themes from both a quantitative and a qualitative point of view.

In the first phase, an online questionnaire was administered (from the March 25 to April 5, 2020, when the majority of the Italian population was forced to stay at home due to the aforementioned lockdown) and it was designed to investigate, on the one hand, the new everyday life in relation to forced cohabitation in domestic spaces and the modes of interaction in open spaces and, on the other hand, the degree of social security and institutional trust. Two thousand four hundred fifty-five people submitted replies.

In the second phase (from the May 25 to June 8, 2020), an array of open-ended questions on 'cities and sociability' were submitted, to which those who had been willing to be contacted in the first phase responded: approximately 150 people. In this phase, information was collected on the behaviour adopted in using urban spaces (both open and closed, public and private ones) after the peak of the emergency and when a "return to normality" seemed to have begun.

In the third phase (between the end of October and the beginning of November 2020), further questions on the governance of the health emergency were posed to the same interlocutors as in the second phase but mainly addressed to researchers and experts, in order to collect evaluations on the effectiveness of the policies adopted and the necessary changes that emerged during the pandemic[3] (Mazzette *et al.*, 2021; Mazzette, 2022).

3 Respondents' opinion about vaccination was not investigated as COVID-19 vaccine was not yet available when the survey was launched, and data collected.

The research steps were developed over a period of time, making the use of web surveys unavoidable due to the acute limitations to the co-presence activities in force. This made the choice of a snowball type of sampling unavoidable, whereby the results that emerged have no claim to representativeness and can only be attributed to the universe of people who participated in the survey. The use of the autofill web survey involves some risks linked to possible difficulties in the interpretation of the questions or the instructions for filling them in, which may affect the reliability of the response. In this respect, specific attention was paid to the wording of the questions and the lexical choices to minimise ambiguities and misunderstandings. Finally, a self-administered web survey does not allow the control of the response process, the degree of attention in filling in the questionnaire, etc. In this regard, if, on the one hand, we relied on the sense of responsibility of those who participated in the survey both in terms of the truthfulness of the answers and of non-repeated compilations, on the other hand, we proceeded ex-post to the removal of records (157) with missing values concerning gender, age and place of residence. Finally, a final limitation to be pointed out is related to the highly blurred boundary between the observer and the one observed in this specific situation, given that in our dual capacity of being both citizens and researchers, we experienced the exact condition of forced closure as the respondents. This exposed us to several risks, one of which was that of "losing sight" of our being impartial with respect to value judgements, as Max Weber suggested back in 1917. It should be remembered, however, that for all objects of social knowledge, a constant exercise and tension between *Wertfreiheit* and reference to values is necessary. This entails the fundamental processes of distancing and approaching the object studied, not least in order to make knowledge a helpful tool for critiquing social reality (Gallino, 2002, pp. 73-90).

The quantitative survey results are based on 2298 questionnaires, collected through Google Forms, 64% of which were completed by females. Overall, the respondents are in the 41-55 age group with high educational qualifications (university degree and post-graduate). From a territorial point of view, we observe a distribution of respondents residing mainly in Sardinia (72%). The remainder part is located in the country's North-West, Centre, South and North-East regions. In the light of the imbalances predicted by self-selected sampling, the cases were analysed using weights by sex, age group, and municipality of residence as of January 1, 2020. Data collected in the quantitative survey will be presented in Section 3.1 and 3.3.

The qualitative survey was developed as follows:

1. A first wave of structured interviews was carried out through open-ended questions addressed to a small group of the sample who had given their permission to be re-contacted for the subsequent stages of the research. More specifically, 125 interviews, administered from the 25th of May to the 8th of June 2020, explored the plan of institutional responses, the changes in daily habits and transformations that have affected the city. Specifically, the sub-sample is relatively homogeneous in terms of gender composition but unbalanced towards the older age groups and it appears to have a high cultural capital. Nearly a third of responses (27%) come from university professors and researchers and 25% from teachers. The share of public administration employees, officials and clerks also was significant (18%). Furthermore, this sub-sample lived predominantly in urban areas (85%) at the time of data collection.
2. A second wave of structured interviews was administered in October 2020, with the flare-up of the pandemic, and they consisted of two open-ended questions concerning public policy interventions, with a sub-sample consisting mainly of university lecturers. We collected 35 interviews. In both waves, after labelling relevant words and sentences with codes, data were conceptualized and interesting relationships between social experiences and urban spaces emerged, as it will be presented in Section 3.2.

2. Survey Results

2.1 The Gaze Beyond the Window

If we think back to the moment when the most restrictive restrictions were introduced in Italy to combat the circulation of Sars-Cov2 (Table 1), it is as if someone had suddenly turned off the spotlights in offices, gyms, kindergartens, university classrooms, museums and libraries and decreed the end of the show. Borrowing the metaphor of Erving Goffman (1974), the curtain had come down on those stages on which we were used to stage our social life daily, playing the various roles according to the situation in which we found ourselves involved. Everything is confined within domestic walls, in those spaces of daily life that we were used to consider almost exclusively as backstage, the dimension of our private life, the same walls that very abruptly became the stage of a new reality instead. A reality that continued to be made of our daily relationships related to work and study and that, took place within a very unusual framework, in a totally different setting, which required an effort to redefine those «organisational principles that govern events» and orient us with respect to our involvement in them (Goffman, 1974, p. 10).

Table 1 - Covid-19 Confinement Measures in Italy (Chronological order)

March 4, 2020	Schools closing
March 8, 2020	Localized lockdown (Lombardy and 14 other Italian provinces)
March 9, 2020	Nationwide lockdown
March 20, 2020	Ban on park use
March 22, 2020	Ban on intra-municipal travels
April 1, 2020	Extension of restrictions
April 10, 2020	Reopening of retailers (i.e. bookshops)
May 4, 2020	End of nationwide lockdown

The survey results showed that the most detrimental effects of physical segregation occurred mainly in demographically small and medium-sized contexts. In municipalities with up to 10,000 inhabitants, the most critical positions emerged during the national lockdown, for example, regarding the quality of forced cohabitation, with a worsening that was felt on average by about half of the respondents (47.9%), whereas respondents living in large cities expressed a less critical position (18.9%). As regards this specific interpretation, what is striking is not only the sharpness of the critical judgments expressed by those who were spending the quarantine in small municipalities (less than 5,000 inhabitants), but also the detachment observed with respect to more extensive territories, in which more stable scenarios prevailed and in which changes in relations with cohabiting relatives tended to be evaluated more positively than negatively. On the whole, this type of discomfort came mainly from young students who, due to the pandemic and the closure of schools and universities, had to radically reorganise their time and learning spaces under not always ideal conditions in terms of software and hardware infrastructures that could enable them to regularly attend e-learning activities. In this regard, it should be borne in mind that in small and very small municipalities (up to 2,000 inhabitants) almost 40% of households did not have a computer during the most acute phase of the pandemic (Istat, 2020).
Not only was domestic isolation experienced with difficulty within the family, but spending almost all the time at home does not seem to have represented a particularly favourable opportunity for strengthening ties of proximity. This condition is shared by the majority of respondents living both in small/medium contexts and in large cities. As a matter of fact, if more than a half of those interviewed (58%) declare that, before the health emergency, they did not use to have any relations with their neighbours, during the lockdown, relations on average appear to have neither improved nor worsened. However, there are also significant differences in this regard, both

positive and negative, and in relation to the age of the respondents. In territorial contexts where ties pre-existed, the weeks of domestic confinement led less than elsewhere to consolidating those relationships. In small communities, everyday life during the lockdown immediately appeared to be more isolated than elsewhere and less inclined to reciprocal relationships within proximity networks.
This happened despite the often-problematic conditions referable to these settlement contexts in terms of dependence on the more prominent centres for supplying and accessibility to various services. In other words, a picture immediately emerges that is relatively distant from a predominantly journalistic narrative which, precisely during the period in which this survey was conducted, nurtured the strengthening (if not the discovery) of neighbourly relations as a necessity for coping with domestic segregation: one thinks of the frequent *flashmobs* which, in the very early stages of the quarantine, aimed to build or consolidate neighbourly sociability.

2.2 Urban Places and Urban Reorganization "After" the Pandemic

During the national lockdown most of the population was convinced that this was a momentary phase and that, once it had passed, 'normality' would return, which meant pre-Covid social habits and activities. Both institutional communication and more generally the mass media played a central role: the sentence «tutto andrà bene» (everything will be fine) became the most repeated 'mantra' written on the walls and windows of our cities, at least in the first few weeks of the health emergency.
With regard to our research, if the first (quantitative) phase of the survey is associated precisely with this 'mantra', since it was launched after the first few weeks of the national lockdown when we were still unaware of how long the confinement at home would last, the second (qualitative) phase of the research was initiated just after few weeks since the end of lockdown restrictions. From this point of view, it is interesting to observe the elements that emerged from the interviewees' reflections regarding the relationship between social experiences and urban spaces, with particular reference to mobility and sociality in coexistence.
In relation to mobility, five lines of behaviour emerged: 1) a first line consisting of a concrete fear of coming into contact with other people, and this led to highly cautious behaviours, continuing to stay at home or limiting movements and physical contact as much as possible, even after the end of the lockdown. This conduct has certainly been the most widespread and has united many of our interlocutors, regardless of differences in gender, age, place of residence and occupation; 2) a second behavioural line, on the other hand, was characterized by the fact that the pandemic had imprinted profound changes on daily habits and individual urban rhythms, especially on routes and means of travel; 3) a third behavioural line tended towards a return to normality, namely the recovery of pre-Covid social life; 4) a fourth line did not record important changes between the before and after, especially among people accustomed, even before the health emergency, to having only a few social contacts outside the family network; 5) a fifth line of behaviour united those who had the opportunity to discover new interests or recover old ones that they had forgotten during the health emergency. It is worth emphasizing that this ability to 'reinvent' has emerged to be, above all, a feminine quality:

> «In Phase 1 [during lockdown period in Italy, from March 9 to May 4, 2020] I gave up the daily walk, going to the newsstand, cinema, yoga lessons, meeting friends and family members at home or outside, at the bar. I wasn't able to visit the exhibition on Maria Lai at the Ulassai Art Station, nor the exhibition on Raffaello at the Scuderie del Quirinale. I couldn't fly to see my son and grandson. But I took care of my garden, I practiced yoga at home. While reading I went through many places and retraced in my memory the many places of my life. In Phase 2 [when the lockdown ended] I started going to the newsstand again, to the bookshop, and I restarted my daily walk. In a few days I will begin a "Voyage en Sardaigne" in villages that I don't know yet» (retired woman).

These are trends which, on the one hand, contemplated sociality, albeit conditioned by the strict observance of the rules and, on the other hand, contained a reduction, if not a cancellation, of a large part of social relationality.
In relation to sociability and the attendance of urban spaces, both open and closed, both public and private ones, the fear of contagion guided the opinions of the interviewees and this is in a highly diversified way. Alongside those who did not intend to give up any places frequented before the pandemic, there were, in fact, those who preferred open places because they were afraid to go to closed ones while awaiting the evolution of the pandemic. The interviews, in particular, showed that some places were perceived as essential after the lockdown and others were not. By observing the places of culture, the analysis shows that conference rooms, bookshops and museums are the places that the interviewees would not have wanted to give up. At the same time, they were willing to avoid attending universities, libraries, concert halls and fairs.
Regarding indispensable places of consumption, the interviewees indicated pubs, restaurants, bars and supermarkets. At the same time, it is interesting to note that most interviewees included shopping centres among the non-essential places, but neighbourhood shops were mainly indicated as essential places. This result can be attributed to the fact that the local shop appeared safer because it was easily accessible on foot.
Finally, concrete proposals for urban reorganization have emerged, such as the strengthening of public transport; the change of times and spaces of the city to guarantee everyone full access to services in safety; the reduction of gatherings and, therefore, of the occasions that generally lead to gatherings; the increased use of digital technologies and remote working. However, these problems have a structural nature that the pandemic has made even more visible. For example, the issue of urban and extra-urban public transport (Brenna, 2021) is perceived as central by all the interviewees because it involves practically every type of population. How to solve long-term problems such as public transport in a short time period? The indications of our interlocutors were numerous, including higher frequencies of public transport, the flexibility of timetables, according to the needs of the different populations, and the increase of dial-a-bus services.

2.3 Insecurity and Trust

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to an unprecedented condition of insecurity, which quantitative research explored in its various dimensions, considering the evolution of institutional trust in the new condition of risk experienced in the period of maximum diffusion of the pandemic. In particular, three elements for reflection emerged from the results.
Firstly, during the "national lockdown", there was a low level of concern regarding the occurrence of crimes. This concern represents one of the founding elements of the contemporary sense of insecurity. Answering the question (multiple choice): «What crimes are you afraid of suffering these days?», just under 40% of the sample said they were afraid of crimes, with greater emphasis in large urban centres and metropolitan areas.
Similarly, the general concern about crimes, explored through a Likert scale, appeared to be contained, except for the fear that episodes of youth violence could occur, which aroused intense alarm in 34% of the respondents.
Secondly, the research has highlighted the emergence of a widespread awareness regarding the collective and social dimensions of insecurity also explored trough a Likert scale. From this point of view, the economic (57%) and political (44%) consequences of the health emergency caused strong concerns, while the levels of concern regarding the possibility of losing one's job (13%) or one's health (11%) were limited. It should also be emphasized that, on a territorial level, the concern for the collective dimension of insecurity appeared to be growing with the size of urban centres.

Thirdly, the responses showed an increase in trust in the work of institutions, especially the National Health Service (NHS) (53%), the Third Sector and the Government. Similarly, the police forces (38.8%) and civil protection (37.6%) benefited from a more significant increase in confidence. This growth can be traced back to the positive assessment of the role played by these institutions in the first weeks of the lockdown. In particular, the widespread appreciation of the work of the health system should be underlined, which has been under particular pressure since the beginning of the emergency, also as a consequence of the weakening to which it has been subjected over the last few decades and which Covid-19 seems to have suddenly unveiled, even if the problems of underfunding still appear to be open (Neri, 2023). Taken together, these results lead us to carefully consider the emergence of an awareness of the problems of insecurity on a social and collective level and the growth of trust in the institutions directly involved in the fight against the pandemic. Indeed, the decrease in the number of crimes due also to the strict application of the 'confinement' measures could have contributed to shifting attention to the socio-economic problems that these measures could have caused in the immediate future.
Nonetheless, between the end of March and the beginning of April 2020, a priority need for solidarity emerged, understood as an awareness of the weight of social ties and reciprocal relationships of interdependence. This need also emerges by observing institutional trust, as the levels of trust recorded in the acute phase can be read as a result of the diffusion of a sense of recognition of collective belonging, which has been more present in urban realities. However, as the investigation has let us foresee, this recognition was configured as provisional, closely linked to the acute phase and its spatial-temporal condition (Lewin, 1942) due to the exogenous shock caused by Covid-19 (Roccato, 2021).

3. Discussion

Our analysis of the impact of Covid-19 in Italy highlights some effects of insecurity and social relations during the national lockdown and problems related to the use of urban spaces in the first year of the pandemic. The results suggest that the pandemic has highlighted a demand for social and collective security, the fragility of the urban development model and the need to reorganize the city, first of all by providing every part of it with essential services for everyday life: schematically represented by the "15-minutes city". In terms of precariousness, the survey made it possible to highlight a prevailing concern for the economic and political consequences of the emergency. On the other hand, fears about the phenomena on which public debate has focused in the last twenty years, such as immigration and crime, seem to be disappearing. Indeed, during the first quarter of 2020, there was a decrease in the number of crimes which may well be related to confinement measures. This could have led to awareness of the lower concrete risk of being the victim of a crime during the peak of the health emergency and confinement measures. However, there was an early recognition of the economic and social risks of the health emergency, due to the emergence of a priority need for solidarity, understood as an awareness of the weight of social ties and mutual interdependence relationships. As regards the fragility of the urban development model, the results underline a need to reduce the concentration of people which questions the very reasons (and urban economies) which generally involve the so-called gatherings, for example those deriving from the well-known dynamics of entertainment and consumption described in the late Nineties by John Hannigan. The need to avoid opportunities for virus transmission has undermined most of the attractive policies adopted in recent decades by many cities, not just in Italy. In short, it has questioned all those processes which, from the Nineties onwards, have transformed cities from containers of events to event cities themselves (Sgroi, 1998), whose success is directly linked to the dual ability to create opportunities for meeting and to increase flows of people and goods to be consumed, both in a material and cultural sense.

Furthermore, the results reveal an essential awareness that the pandemic must be considered an opportunity to rethink mobility, making it sustainable from an environmental and social point of view. This means overcoming the functional division of the city into specialized and separate spaces and thus reducing the elements that induce mobility, especially the one linked to daily life.

Conclusions

This contribution has illustrated the results of a sociological investigation carried out in Italy aimed to investigate how the health emergency, the containment measures and the physical distancing were having an impact on the sense of security and trust, social relations and individual behaviour, as well as the very use of public and private urban spaces. The study was launched during the peak of the health emergency and confinement measures and was concluded at the end of 2020, thus highlighting a series of problematic changes as the pandemic situation evolved related to trust and a sense of security, social interactions, and the use of physical spaces of the city.

On the one hand the results of the research made it possible to get a snapshot of a significant event from various points of view, such as the need to rapidly reorganize everyday life in the face of profound limitations and new rules, that led to a redefinition of sociality and reorienting perception on urban places due to the fear of contagion. Despite a widespread awareness regarding social insecurity, a low level of concern about crime emerged as well as a positive assessment of the role played by public institutions. On the other hand, results suggest a necessary reflection on the macro and micro physical and social contexts, within which the different everyday lives had to be redefined. In this regard, the study shows that not only demographically small and medium-sized contexts most suffered the effects of physical segregation, but that also young people were experiencing the major discomfort since the early stages of pandemic. Faced with the need to impose pervasive limitations on populations intended to contain the spread of the virus as well as the time needed for a gradual "return to normality", it came to light the inadequacy of cities in facing a health emergency and the inability to readapt to new crisis scenarios. In this sense the study revealed the need expressed by respondents to rethink cities' functioning, beginning with mobility.

More generally, the contemporary city's very nature has been undermined by the health emergency, especially regarding some characteristics that have distinguished it in the last two decades. First of all, commercial transactions and transnational financial flows between cities have disappeared since each one of them seems to have been "locked up" to defend itself from the virus; secondly, in the case of Italy, all those economic processes that are less and less anchored to the territory have made the cities – actually the country as a whole – even more vulnerable. Just think of the fact that during the first phase of the epidemic, a large part of the Italian population could not have access to some safety devices, such as masks and sanitisers, because, in the previous decades, the delocalisation of production had led Italy (nearly all of Europe in fact) to depend entirely on the industrial production of other countries, primarily China; consequently, the transition from an economy based on a material kind of production (which includes the "city of producers" in the Weber's sense) to an economy of knowledge (the creative city), has had positive effects, but also many negative results. Despite the considerable effort made in initiatives for the regeneration of degraded neighbourhoods and districts as a consequence of deindustrialisation, that has attracted a mix of activities, enterprises (technological start-ups, professional studios, such as architects, artists, designers), new trendy places and consumption, financial flows, leisure and entertainment support services, visitors, tourists and consumers, the pandemic has highlighted how all of this has never really become an engine of urban development in Italy. A clear sign of this was the fact that in Italy, all social, educational and work

experiences that fall within the cultural sectors – from schools of all levels (including university) to museums and temporary exhibitions, from theatres to auditoriums, from experiments in the food sector to those of fashion and, more generally, of artisan "know-how", and so on – were the first to be closed, at first due to the national lockdown, and subsequently in order to limit the contagion in the autumn and winter months and among those who have had to deal with limitations for the longest time.

In subsequent studies, we argued that time would have told whether all the social needs expressed during the peak of the pandemic would have been translated into social policies and behaviours oriented towards a more sustainable urban model. At present, observing how quickly Italian society has forgotten the difficulties experienced in the last four years, we are sceptical in believing that society and the economy are learning from the health emergency to correct sustainable social behaviours and organizational models. Consider how the idea of the "15-minutes city" was recurrent in the public debate during the peak of the pandemic and turned out to be more of a slogan than as a real attempt to structurally redefine cities' organization and distribution of financial and human resources. For example, the traumatic process of emptying urban areas dense with tourists and consumers appears to have been archived and, in the current state of things, there are no significant changes and/or turnaround in the agendas of local administrations. The void in these areas has again transformed into a pattern of the same flows of people and goods in the aftermath of the so-called post-pandemic phase, without critical second thoughts on the need to bring back stable inhabitants even in central areas with solid tourist vocation, in addition to the temporary inhabitants.

Ultimately, it is as if politics, the economy and society have rewound the tape bringing the urban world back to how it was in the pre-pandemic phase. Just think of the major Italian cities (Rome, Milan, Venice, Florence and Naples) which saw an abrupt transition from over-tourism to under-tourism in the acute phase of the health emergency, sweeping away the overall economic system on which they rested, and then readjust it in 2022 towards renewed forms of over-tourism (Mazzette *et al.*, 2022). In recent years, the studies from various disciplinary perspectives have investigated the social effects of restrictions and physical distancing in cities, in formulating proposals, guidelines and indications also coming from empirical investigations such as the one presented in this contribution, and they converge in outlining a critical profile related to the organization of urban spaces and activities (Nigrelli, 2021, Artelaris *et al.,* 2022, Hama Rada *et al*., 2022, Bertuglia & Vaio 2023, Shatkin *et al.*, 2023).

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Sebastiano Citroni[1]

Local Authorities and Civic Actions Disentangled: Legibility and Scene Styles[2]

Introduction

A recurring trend has become evident in a variety of urban contexts: the growing involvement of civil society actors – by definition external to institutional politics (Jessop, 2020) – in local governance practices. This is not particularly new, and is covered by many research strands: for example, urban studies on shifting city-state relations, analysis of public action in large metropolises (Les Gales & Vitale, 2015), and research into the hybridisation processes of third-sector groups and the rise of public-civic partnerships (Horvat, 2019). In spite of their differences, these phenomena – and the associated studies – all agree on the growing relevance in urban contexts of government through civil society (Citroni & Coppola, 2021), that is urban governance practices that involve "bottom-linked" initiatives (Eizaguirre *et al.,* 2012) interacting with supra-local institutions (Oosterlyink & Sarius, 2022).

"Neoliberal civil society" (Jessen, 2021) is a too broad frame to make sense of these recent phenomena, as they vary widely in different local contexts. They include, for example, the conflictual ways that counterculture has become involved in local urban government in Geneva (Pattaroni, 2020); the formalised agreements through which third-sector organisations provide public services in the local welfare, as in Milan (Pacchi, 2020); and Berlin's recent public-civic partnerships (Horvat, 2019) supporting regeneration processes with social inclusivity aims. These urban governance practices have little in common apart from the controversy they court, as they are both the object of fierce criticism – the "Trojan horse of global capitalism" (Savioli, 2019) – and the source of new hope that a more just city can be achieved through urban social innovation (Oosterlynck & Sarius, 2022). Indeed, these emerging practices are producing a variety of outcomes, that have been the object of growing debates about which conditions ensure the most inclusive results (Jakob, 2012).

This paper aims to focus on the collaboration between local authorities and bottom-up civic actions in the implementation of urban government, concentrating on what is currently going on in specific urban domains and how such phenomena are addressed in the urban studies literature. Indeed, in a variety of urban research strands, a general contradiction has become clear that – more subtly – also characterises many studies of third-sector organisations providing welfare services. This contradiction concerns the fact that, on the one hand, such studies underline the increasing interdependence between state and civil society actors in a variety of domains and processes but, on the other hand, the relation between these actors and their reciprocal influence is analysed as if they were separated entities, through causal models that assume their strict autonomy from one another. Only in recent specific studies that aim to overcome the all-encompassing term of neoliberalism has there been an effort to address the relations between civil society actors and the state in a more nuanced and precise way, such as with the study of the reshaping of the welfare diamond prompted by social innovation and social investment initiatives (Jessen, 2021).

It is worth underling the social relevance of the limit this paper aims to address: indeed, postulating a clear-cut separation between the state and civil society is not only inaccurate to describe one of the most significant recent governance trends (particular evident in urban contexts), but it means also de facto reproducing a neo-liberal ideology that rhetorically is sustained by the belief and value of such separation. It is hardly by chance that Gramsci clearly warned that «the distinction between the state and civil society is purely methodical and not absolute» (Gramsci,

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1997, p. 201). Therefore, assuming an absolute separation between state and civil society is not a neutral operation, as it consolidates and legitimises the neoliberal governmentality project, to the extent that it becomes hegemonic (Foucault, 2015).
This poses a challenge for the researcher interested in disentangling the civic actions' contribution to current urban governance. On the one hand, the situation described above encourages us to avoid reifying the separation between state and civil society so as not to become accidental accomplices in reproducing the neoliberal orientation in urban government practices. On the other hand, the dramatic nature of the problems and forms of inequality that are concentrated in urban areas (and often too hastily traced back to the neoliberal model of urban governance) makes questioning and disentangling the reciprocal influences between the state and civil society a pressing matter.
In summary, this paper addresses the dilemma of how to analyse the relations between two entities (state and civil society) whose separation is neither absolute nor clear-cut. I will do so by focusing on the everyday practices of civil society actors using the "Civic Action" approach (Lichterman & Eliasoph, 2014). This shift in viewpoint requires adequate introduction, as its focus on everyday practices may at first seem like a micro-sociological approach that does not allow any kind of generalisation. On the contrary, while adopting the totalisation strategies typical of ethnographic approaches (Baszanger & Dodier, 2006), the focus on tiny practices within the Civic Action approach is required to analyse broad processes and address general questions such as the double one adopted in this paper: how specific forms of government through civil society may alter the latter's daily actions, and how the everyday practices of civil society affect the contextual conditions imposed by public policies.

1. From Civil Society to Civic Actions

Before proceeding any further, it is essential to define the two parties in the relationship this paper intends to analyse, namely local authorities and civil society. The former includes not only public authorities, but also other regulatory institutions, including private foundations, which play a significant role in local welfare systems[3]. Civil society is a much fuzzier term, and includes a variety of actors and initiatives with different legal and organisational forms, repertoires of action and domains of intervention (Citroni & Coppola, 2021). Classic examples of civil society actors include environmental or human rights organisations; lobby groups and advocacy coalitions of various kinds oriented towards the adoption of specific policies; third-sector social or cultural organisations; and social cooperatives that offer work to disadvantaged people. In terms of definitions, these bodies share the fact that they cannot be ascribed in legal terms, and above all in terms of their logic of action, to either purely the public and bureaucratic sphere or the market. It is no coincidence that one of the main components of civil society is known as the "third sector", where the word "third" underlines its otherness with respect to the other spheres: bureaucracy and the market.
However, when one goes beyond the formal definitions and investigates the processes and their informal dimension, the framework sketched above becomes much more complex, to the point of making the aforementioned "thirdness" controversial. Looking at civil society's actions, it is not uncommon to see it collaborating closely with public and local authorities, which involves following bureaucratic standards and procedures or resorting to actions aimed at efficiency and the pursuit of profit.
Since the terms "civil society" and "third sector" allude to an ideal-typical extraneousness to public bodies and urban government that is only rarely achieved, the author prefers the more pragmatic category of "Civic Action" (Lichterman & Eliasoph, 2014; Lichterman, 2021), relating to

3 Polizzi, E. (2017). *Quale nuovo radicamento per il Terzo settore italiano?*. This paper was presented at the X annual conference of Espanet Italia, it has not been published and has been shared with me by the author.

any form of bottom-up collective efforts to address social problems, regardless of the legal form adopted, the field of intervention and the relationships activated with the public in carrying it forward.
This definition includes the same phenomena to which the expression civil society refers, but moves the adopted point of view from organisations, groups and actors to actions, practices and processes. With respect to more established categories, such as non-profit organisations, the adopted approach follow the actions and pays attention to the type of relations practised, leaving the task of characterising what kind of collective action it is to empirical investigation.
The relationship between local authorities and civic actions has been the subject of countless studies attributable to various lines of analysis and research, which would be impossible to summarise here. Looking exclusively at more recent contributions, studies on social innovation (Nicholls *et. al.,* 2015*)* have brought to public attention the relevance of the relationship between civic action and urban government, particularly in the areas of combating poverty and promoting diversity (Oosterlynck *et al*., 2017; Vicari & Moulaert, 2009). Even more recently, research on public-civic partnerships (Horvat, 2019) has explored the potential for new emerging urban governance practices to address the issues of growing inequality and social exclusion more effectively than traditional policies (Oosterlynck *et al.,* 2019).
These studies – as well as older works dealing more generally with civic actions and their relationships with local authorities – display three recurring flaws that this analysis seeks to overcome and that here can only be mentioned briefly. Firstly, most studies have focused on how local authorities affect civic actions, with no attention to the latter's possible retroactions or general influence. Secondly, as already stated in the previous section, local authorities and civil society organisations in these studies are taken to be two strictly separate entities, instead of seeing their separation as purely "methodical", not absolute (Gramsci, 1997). This is a central feature for critical scholars of civil society and the state (Jessop, 2020), but it generally leaves no space for any empirical exploration (Les Gales & Vitale 2015). And finally, this study aims to avoid the general overlooking of everyday civic practices as supposedly irrelevant aspects, when these details are actually capable of revealing broad patterns (Tsing, 2015; Lichterman, 2021).
While these are recurring problems in the empirical studies conducted into the relationship between civic actions and local authorities; they are not universal. On the contrary, especially outside welfare studies, there are some examples that clearly go in a different direction and avoid reproducing the limitations mentioned above: for example, civil society's everyday practices, their informal dimension and their relationship with public bodies are central to the analysis of social movements conducted by Melucci (1996) and Berezin's (2002) investigation of cultural production.

2. Scene Styles

These and other studies are able to overcome the three limitations highlighted above because they share a general characteristic that recurs in even the most disparate fields in which the relationship between civic actions and public administrations is investigated. In short, these studies pay attention not only to *what* the civic actions concern – the themes and domains to which they refer – but also to *how* the civic actions are structured and carried out (Citroni & Lichterman, 2017). In other words, rather than focusing exclusively on which non-profit organisations do or do not do (e.g. services or advocacy), the studies that inspire this paper's analysis of the relationship between local authorities and civic actions focus on *how* the latter are structured both on a formal level (organisational structures and legal forms) and on an informal level, which includes their everyday practices (Citroni, 2015).
Ever since Hegel's classic reflections on civil society (Jessen, 2021), the state's actions towards it have always been expressed in terms of how it is structured and acts, given that the authorities

define the organisational and legal forms – and even earlier the criteria of legibility (Scott, 1998) – to which the civic action must conform in order to be legitimate (Jessen, 2021). This subtle yet important influence shapes what civil society can do even more than what it actually does (Citroni, 2020). Furthermore, paying attention to civic action's structure (and not only to what it does) allows us to draw on a growing stream of studies that look at civic practices in the context of other topics, with meso-analysis clarifying the relationships between the micro level of the actions studied and the macro level of their contextual factors (Fine, 2021; Citroni, 2022).

This study's focus on civic actions benefits from a cultural analysis of everyday practices capable of disentangling this elusive dimension. Indeed, this paper does not focus on the official or organisational aspects of civil society (its legal form or organisational structure), but rather on the minute and informal dimension of civic action: the daily practices through which it develops. This dimension is investigated by observing it through the variable of "scene styles" (Lichterman & Eliasoph, 2014), a category developed within the field of pragmatic cultural sociology that refers to the recurring patterns of interaction (Eliasoph & Lichterman, 2003) and group formation practiced by those involved in civic action in relation to the observed settings. The basic assumption underpinning this variable is that individuals do not invent the way they relate each time from scratch, but instead draw from a common repertoire of shared codes, just as our language is based on a common stock of largely taken-for-granted knowledge.

A specific attribute of the category of scene styles is the way it is centred in the "interaction order" (Goffman, 2015): the basic unit to which this category refers is not individuals or organisations, but the observed "scene", that is the participants' shared definition of what is happening here and now (Goffman, 1986, p. 8-10). This type of situated centring allows us to grasp the variety of configurations and relationships with public administrations that the same organisation can assume under different circumstances (Biorcio & Vitale, 2016, p. 9). To focus on scene style allows to draw on a growing international research strand that has pinpointed the repertoire of interaction patterns shaping different collective actions in a variety of contexts, including but not limited to Italy (Bordieri, 2023; Citroni, 2022). Similar studies show how scene styles such as community of interest, militancy, or community of identity do not refer exclusively to the micro-sociological dimension but instead possess a much wider value, which manifest itself in scenes but concern a dimension broad as that of the meanings of collective actions. This is an invitation to avoid the same misunderstanding that has so often concerned the work of Goffman, from which the approach adopted here derives.

This can be done here effectively by underling how the literature on scene styles shows how this variable filters the institutional conditions and processes in which they are practiced (Lichterman, 2005): the meanings the latter assume derive from the recurring models through which they are experienced and practically interpreted (Lichterman, 2005). For example, the same change in context – such as the spread of new forms of participation – can constitute either a renewal opportunity for an organisation or a threat to its survival, and these different results derive from the scene styles practised in each case (Citroni, 2022). This filter action is anything but neutral, given that at the level of everyday practices, scene styles generate the specific meanings the general dimensions take on regarding relations with public bodies.

The filter operation conducted by scene styles corresponds to what de Certeau called the "metaphorization" by everyday customs and practices of the formal representations and codes in which they take place (de Certeau, 1990). Specifically, metaphorization coincides with a double – apparently contradictory – operation from the practices towards the contextual conditions in which they occur: at a formal level the former consolidate the latter, while at an informal level contextual and institutional conditions are always used for purposes and according to logics that inevitably differ from those for which the conditions were originally set up, bending them to the organisation's customs and daily practices.

Attention to practices, particularly understood through the category of scene styles, allows us to tackle the full complexity of the relationship between civic action and public bodies while

neither reifying their separation nor focusing exclusively on the latter's influence on the former. Through close analysis of the relationship between the two parties, this analysis will also examine how civic action filters and metaphorizes the constraints and opportunities deriving from its relations with local authorities.

3. A Lively, Still Partially Opaque, Landscape of Civic Actions

Italian third-sector organisations provide an excellent case study for investigating relations between local authorities and civil society: the type of civic action they develop is characterised – compared to other European contexts (Ranci, 2015) – by a high level of institutionalisation, which developed earlier than other countries and has profoundly affected the structuring of local welfare (Fazzi, 2013). The institutionalisation of the Italian third sector, which started more than thirty years ago with the first laws that defined legal forms of volunteering and social cooperation and regulated their relations with public institutions, is still ongoing. A reform of all legislation in this area was launched in 2016, which remains unfinished in 2023; one of its main objectives is standardising and regulating – through various shared administration processes (e.g. co-planning and co-programming) – the increasingly close collaboration between civic action and public bodies.

The institutionalisation of the third sector represents an effort to make civic actions increasingly legible and controllable by defining categories relating to legal forms, organisational structures, formal requirements (e.g. statutes) and areas of intervention that groups and organisations must comply with in order to be able to relate to public bodies. The imposition of clarity and simplification criteria on third-sector civic action comes both from the state and from the market (Scott, 1998): the recent tarnishing of the image of non-profit organisations in Italy following a series of scandals and abuses (Moro, 2014) has made transparency and social impact assessment a central requirement for all nonprofit groups. All this has made Italy a work-in-progress that is ideal for studying the relationship between civic action and local authorities, the development of which involves increasing institutionalisation, simplification and legibility by the public authorities. The most interesting aspect of the Italian case is that the process is still ongoing, with recent legal obligations relating to transparency struggling to impose themselves on a field of civic action which – often unintentionally – comprises an incoherent and open assemblage, largely opaque to its own protagonists.

In Italy, Milanese civil society has historically been characterised as the most advanced laboratory for the transformation of civic action (Tomai, 1994) and political and social change (Melucci, 1996). Civic action in Milan has repeatedly been considered a forerunner of general social and cultural trends that only subsequently reach other parts of the country (Biorcio, 2001). Many of the trends observed have a particularly controversial character: for example, the disintermediation of civic participation or the loss of relevance of the organisational dimension, the rise of the scene style "plug-in volunteering" (Eliasoph, 2012; Citroni, 2018), and the professionalisation of the third sector and its growing supporting role for the neoliberal orientation of local government (Meulabach, 2012). Regardless of the specific nature of these trends, it should be noted that the ability of Milan's civic action to anticipate them stems from certain local characteristics: its international ties (it is often considered closer to Europe than the rest of Italy) and its rich, heterogeneous civil society, with a strong capacity for innovation and collaborative attitude towards public bodies (Pacchi, 2020).

Milan offers particularly interesting local conditions for studying the relationship between local authorities and civic action, as conflicting trends concentrate there and come into contact with one another, with unpredictable outcomes. These can be summarised in terms of two opposing dynamics: on the one hand, the institutionalisation and professionalisation of the local third sector together with its recognised collaborative attitude (*Ibidem*), as well as the visibility it enjoys in

an urban context, lead to a tendency for simplification, transparency and legibility; on the other hand, there is also an opposing trend that resists this, helping to make Milanese civic action lively but also opaque, to a certain extent indeterminate and overall rather inconsistent. This second trend can essentially be attributed to three factors: 1) the historic anchoring of many participants in civic action in the traditional white (Catholic) and red (communist) political cultures, together with the fact that their age makes it difficult for them to adapt to new regulatory transparency and legibility requirements; 2) the effervescent vitality that characterises Milanese civil society as a whole, with a constant stream of new initiatives and new groups in a wide variety of fields, whose practices are informed by different scene styles, often not particularly compatible with the requirements for collaboration with local authorities; 3) the fact that the spread of a collaborative attitude implies that the minority of groups that do not embrace it tend to marginalise themselves by failing to adhere to the transparency criteria required for collaboration with the public authorities.
The research project introduced in the next section, from which the analysis in this paper is drawn, will further highlight the extent to which Milan civil society remains obscure and illegible, despite the high levels of collaboration with the public actors it comprises.

4. Methodology

The empirical material discussed on the following pages is derived from an ethnographic study conducted by the author from 2014 to 2016 in the Via Padova area of Milan (Citroni, 2022). The initial aim was to grasp the meaning of certain trends of change taking place in local third sector groups – detected in a previous study (Citroni, 2014) – and in particular to grasp the limits and opportunities that these changes implied for everyday group life. One of the changes investigated was the transformation of the relationship between civic actions and public bodies, which involved increasing "contractualisation" (Ranci, 2015) and collaboration in urban government practices (Pacchi, 2020).
An ethnographic approach was adopted to grasp the meanings of the changes investigated, involving the author's participant observation in three case studies of civic actions. The cases were chosen – after an initial qualitative mapping – as they were organisations that were going through one of the changes the study was investigating. At least eight months of participant observation was carried out for each case study, preceded each time by interviews with the main representatives of the selected cases, so that the official depiction of the changes investigated could be compared with the practices through which they were experienced on a daily basis. The researcher's access in the field differed from case to case – as specified in Citroni 2022 – but always involved conducting voluntary work and eventually sharing the results that emerged from the study.
The hypothesis this study explored concerned the possibility that, in line with previous research (Lichterman, 2005; Citroni, 2015), the dimension of the practices – and the scene styles that inform them – plays a filtering role in shaping how the transformations manifest themselves in the daily life of the studied groups. The main research results confirmed the initial hypothesis for all the transformations investigated, including the one connected to relations with local authorities. In more general terms, the research confirmed at the level of the individual case studies the aforementioned statements regarding the relevance and controversial nature of the relationship between civic actions and local authorities in Milan. On the one hand, the representations investigated with the interviews showed how public bodies' efforts to simplify and improve the legibility of local civic actions was fully accomplished, to the extent that the categories they "spontaneously and naturally" brought up to describe themselves and their work during the interviews largely corresponded to the legal requirements. On the other hand, however, the simplification and legibility efforts had failed, as the practices within the categories imposed by

the local authorities always pursued goals that were largely unrelated to the intended aims (as shown below in section 4.3). While the level of representations offered legibility and simplified largely heterogeneous phenomena into a few categories, the level of practices restored indeterminacy and opacity and re-introduced dimensions that are difficult to interpret but relevant to the purposes of the research conducted.
That said, the study did not reveal total indeterminacy and opacity: instead it showed the extent to which the practices uncovered were informed by five recurring scene styles, all present in the same civic action but distributed across its different scenes following recurring patterns that were dominant in specific settings.
The study of the relationship between public bodies and civic actions, thanks to the focus on the dimension of scene styles, revealed – as will be illustrated more fully in the next section – the extent to which the distribution of scene styles in everyday group life was re-articulated by the type of relationship activated with local authorities and how much the styles detected were in turn able to re-articulate the contextual conditions in which they were practiced.
Before developing these two points more fully in the next two sections, it is worth briefly introducing some characteristics of the Villa Pallavicini association, the case study chosen to analyse the relationship between local authorities and civic actions. Firstly, it should be noted that it was a particularly complex example of everyday life in an organisation: all five scene styles mapped in the study were practiced in at least one of the observed situations. Secondly, it is worth highlighting that, during the participant observation, the association began a new relationship with a private foundation – in Milan, private foundations are the biggest provider of financial support for the local welfare system – to fund a cultural initiative consisting of a festival on the theme of multiculturalism to encourage processes of social inclusion in a multi-ethnic suburban neighbourhood (Via Padova in Milan).
For the selected case study, this relationship meant the initiative had to comply with three specific requirements: (1) the activation of the users involved, who were called to be proactive protagonists in the festival rather than mere spectators; (2) the construction and coordination of a network of local groups (charged with setting up the festival) that varied greatly in terms of their organisational forms and areas of intervention; and, finally, (3) the preparation of social impact procedures that could measure how much the festival achieved its official goals. To untangle the relationship with the local authorities, attention will be paid both to how the formal requirements informed the studied practices and to how these requirements were used at the level of everyday practices.

4.1 Seeing Like a City

The relationship Villa Pallavicini entered into with the local foundation to put on the multicultural festival impacted the civic action in ways that are not immediately evident. While on the one hand the relationship with public authorities implies a simplification and legibility that have a direct impact on the level of representations with which the civic action interprets itself and its own work, on the other hand it is harder to identify the type of action in terms of the practices, in other words the ways these representations are used in the dimension on which this contribution focuses.
Focusing on the daily life of Villa Pallavicini and its changes linked to the new relationship with the foundation, what emerges is new scenes of everyday group life that did not occur before the funding was received and that developed as a result of the commitments to coordinate the setting up of the festival. One example of this is the biweekly coordination meetings attended by the various partners, which were held at the headquarters of the Villa Pallavicini association. These events formed part of the funded project's schedule and aimed to monitor and organise a variety of activities and tasks. Their official purpose meant the "community of interest" style

prevailed in informing the exchanges between the participants, which were oriented towards tangible and well-defined tasks. As often happens, the dominant recurring pattern of interaction emerged most clearly when it was violated, such as the seemingly disproportionate reaction prompted by the transgression described in the following excerpt from the field notes:

> «Before the usual read-through of the minutes from the previous meeting, there was a short intervention by Marco, a member of the organisation in charge of managing the multicultural event: 'I should say straight away that we haven't done our homework; we've been overwhelmed by other things and this was the last thing on our mind... I'm sorry, we haven't made the occupation of public land requests to the municipality, nor have we been able to contact the server for the plant... sorry, but we didn't manage'. Reply by Carla: "Do you realise we're now in big trouble: what do we do for Saturday›s concerts?? What the hell, that's just not on! We're all overworked, I won›t tell you what happens here every day ... but you can't behave like this, a little respect is required ... I really don't know what we're doing here if this is what's going to happen» (from the fieldnotes of the author, 18 May 2016).

This reaction immediately seemed disproportionate to the researcher, not because the failings that gave rise to it were not serious, but due to the typically mild and conciliatory attitude of Carla, who reacted that way. Indeed, in another situation recorded in the researcher's field notes, the same person was faced with an equally serious failure to comply with previously agreed commitments on the part of a volunteer – once again, permits had not been requested in time for one of the festival's events to be held on the street – but the reaction was completely different. The point is that, in the "community of interest" style, failing to fulfil commitments takes on a further meaning with respect to the tangible difficulties it implies for the organisation of the festival: it is a violation of the mutual expectations that form the bonds between the participants in this specific scene style. Not taking this failure seriously would have meant practicing a different scene style from the "community of interest", in which the participants' common ground is a shared interest in the realisation of a specific initiative.

It is no coincidence that the scene in which the failure did not elicit an equally vigorous reaction was predominantly informed by another scene style, the "community of identity", in which bonds are not based on the specific commitment made towards others but are rooted in the sharing of the same sense of belonging to a common condition or identity.

Based on the ethnography conducted in the six months preceding the organisation of the festival, the "community of interest" style was only used as a group-forming method during the periodic meetings between the representatives of the coalition that won the tender to put on the festival. In the case under investigation, organising the festival modified the complex repertoire of scene styles practiced in the everyday life of the association, and shifted the balance deriving from the combination of the different approaches to group-forming practiced by volunteers and operators within the various scenes involved. Taking advantage of charity funding to organise a festival with hundreds of participants and dozens of events, in fact, highlighted some situations of group life that would otherwise be less relevant and even introduced new, previously absent scenes, including coordination meetings between the network of associations promoting the festival.

Although minor, the "community of interest" practice was a new scene style previously absent from the life of the organisation studied. In the case, however, of another scene style – "plug-in volunteering" (Eliasoph, 2012; Rapoš Božič, 2021) – organising the festival gave greater prominence to a style already present in the group, informing practices that previously implied other recurrent patterns of interactions. For example, while before the situations in which the group met were generally informed by a "community of identity" style, the group participants' involvement as volunteers at the festival ensured that, at least during meetings and other formal occasions, the "plug-in volunteering" style was also practiced. Their participation in the festival, in fact, was based on performing specific tasks, for limited and clearly defined periods of time (e.g. one hour of leafleting, one morning of stage assembly, two hours of bar service, etc.), relegating

the "community of identity" practice to informal or background moments, in which the volunteers returned to share ideas and discuss, for example, the opportunities that arose for them as a group.
In summary, the analysis of the relationship between local authorities and civic actions highlights two points. Firstly, the charity funding causes new scenes to be created in the daily life of the association which involve some styles ("community of interest") that – even if already detected in other contexts (Eliasoph & Lichterman, 2003) – were previously absent in the studied settings. Secondly, the requirements deriving from the relationships entered into with local authorities favour certain styles of interaction to the detriment of other, less suitable ones: for example, the requirement to measure social impact legitimises the practice of a style like "plug-in volunteering" (Eliasoph, 2012; Rapoš Božič, 2021), in which the involvement of the participants and the tasks they perform are predefined in advance and are therefore more easily accounted for.

4.2 Seeing the City Through

While the influence of local authorities on third-sector bodies is something recognised at a representation level (Scott 1998) but difficult to disentangle at the level of practices, the inverse case considered in this section – how third sector groups may influence the conditions set by local authorities – is difficult to ascertain and a controversial hypothesis, as well as the starting point for the analysis conducted in this case. Two preliminary clarifications are therefore needed, the first of which concerns the importance of avoiding easy determinisms in the relationship between administrations and third-sector bodies: that is, just as the institutions do not determine practices (this relationship is always mediated), one must also avoid thinking that practices in themselves can overturn the institutional conditions that constitute their main condition of possibility. Secondly, one must bear in mind that the analysis here concerns the informal level: it does not look at how practices influence the formal level of conditions, but rather the way in which they manifest themselves at a situated level, their meanings and concrete implications. More precisely, it is a matter of investigating the process of "metaphorization" (de Certeau, 1990) with which practices appropriate institutional rules and conditions, with logics and purposes that necessarily differ from those for which the rules and conditions were originally conceived. Therefore, the conditions required by the funder – in short, users' activation, network coordination and impact measurement – are consolidated by simply participating in institutional relationships that require their compliance; but equally the forms of this participation metaphorize these conditions, as exemplified below.
In particular, the study's results show how the same conditions (the three requirements mentioned above) are metaphorized in different ways through different scene styles, resulting in heterogeneous constraints or action dilemmas at a practices level. This can be demonstrated with reference to the scene styles mentioned above, starting with the "community of interest" and then moving on to "plug-in volunteering".
As already mentioned, the first of these styles was systematically practiced in coordination meetings, occasions in which a large and heterogeneous number of actors were involved by virtue of specific and well-defined operational objectives, concerning the schedule of initiatives organised in the scope of the funded festival. In this approach to group formation, the relationship between the participants was based on the common ground of specific reference to these operational objectives, to the point that all attempts to broaden or deepen it caused embarrassment and were avoided as they undermined the reciprocal expectations linking the participants to the situations in which the "community of interest" was prevalent. Indeed, the requirement for participation to receive the funding led to the activation of a heterogeneous network of subjects which, in terms of practices, translated into relationships informed by a "community of interest" style, that is interactions that were openly instrumental to pursuing concrete goals. Some of the

participants in this style showed awareness of this implication, such as this obvious example from behind the scenes at a meeting:

> «Returning home, Pietro, one of the volunteers from the association I am studying confesses to me that he "initially took this opportunity to further their political action, gain greater visibility and potentially make an impact", but he soon realised that "the partners did not share their cause" and therefore he had to keep his intentions for himself, i.e. further them anyway without raising them openly» (from the author's fieldnotes, 8 May 2014).

This excerpt clearly shows how the aforementioned institutional conditions appeared in a "community of interest" style within a specific dilemma: to put it simply, that of building a broad coalition with a narrowly defined target or a narrow coalition among a few subjects that pursue a broadly defined target. As the first type of configuration gives way to the second, the community of interest style is challenged in favour of the emergence of the "community of identity" as a recurring model of interaction.
However, the dilemma with which the aforementioned conditions manifested themselves through a "plug-in volunteering" style was completely different. In this case, these conditions translated into an alternative, which contrasted the possibility of measuring with that of encouraging the participation of subjects external to the initiative and involved in it as volunteers or beneficiaries. This kind of dilemma was evident in the meetings, particularly in the way the prevalent "plug-in volunteering" style gave way to other styles of interaction, as in the following excerpt:

> «You, Mario, will station yourself at the end of this road, since your size should help you deal with any motorists who are not exactly happy to be there...- No, wait a minute, remember last year? The biggest problems had been in the park, there had been that fight... we should make sure that does not happen again, so nobody gets hurt.
> [Mario] - True, we need to figure out how to do that together... let's think about it for a moment now» (from the author fieldnotes, 24 may 2014).

Mario's intervention exemplifies a scene-switching practice in which the "plug-in volunteering" style gives way to a different model of interaction, defined in the context of this research as "pro-active citizenship" due to its proximity to the ideal of Tocquevillian self-organisation. This type of relationship signals the activation and assumption of responsibility by subjects initially invited to take part as volunteers carrying out specific and predefined activities. Due to its emergent and situated nature, the activation practiced by citizenship is particularly difficult to measure and report; indeed it can be argued that it takes place to the extent that the initial specific involvement parameters are exceeded or go in unexpected directions.
Through the scene styles practiced, the institutional conditions deriving from the relationships entered into with local authorities take on a dilemmatic nature, in which compliance with the requirements set by one of them is to the detriment of the others. Styles metaphorize and modulate the same general conditions in different dilemmas of action: for the "community of interest", for example, the choice is widening the network of subjects involved regarding a specific objective, or restricting the network but structuring it towards a more broadly defined objective and thus approaching a "community of identity" model. For the "plug-in volunteering", meanwhile, it was observed that the possibility of measuring the impact produced negatively affected the activation of the subjects involved, whereas, on the contrary, for "pro-active citizenship", the activation of users was to the detriment of social impact measurement. In summary, while at a formal level the requirements to which the subjects studied had to adhere remained the same (indeed they were reinforced), at the informal level of everyday practices and the dilemmas faced, the institutional conditions deriving from the relationships entered into with public administrations changed.

Conclusion

Urban governance practices are evolving so rapidly that research is struggling to keep up. In addition, although more recent analysis and modelling considers the growing role of the subjects of civil society and their relationship with the authorities, it generally postulates a separation between these subjects that exists only on a formal level. Recent collaborative co-planning and co-programming initiatives – which are at advanced stages in their testing and regulation in Italian cities (Arena & Bombardelli, 2022) – imply such a close collaboration between the authorities and civil society that a study of their relationship must consider any distinction between them to be purely methodical and not absolute (Gramsci, 1997). This assumption is often found, for example, in the critical literature on government through civil society and neo-liberalism, but these hypotheses are formulated in a way that leaves very little room for empirical exploration. In order to offer this space for empirical investigation, but without making naïve assumptions about the separations, the hypothesis formulated in this essay focuses on the informal dimension of the reciprocal influences between local authorities and civic actions.

The relevance of this dimension regarding the action of the state has been noted in the literature on civil society since at least the time of Hegel's classic reflections, while for the other direction in the relationship it was De Certeau who underlined with particular clarity the power of practices to change the contextual factors in which they develop from within. This paper has shown how these types of theoretical orientations can easily be translated into research hypotheses capable of being confirmed at an empirical level. In particular, the focus on scene styles has achieved a double result in the investigation of the relationship between local authorities and civic actions: firstly, the influence of the former on the latter has been resized, placing this effect solely at the level of representations and showing how at a practices level the processes are more complex and less deterministic. In particular, we have seen how local authorities affect civic actions through the constraints placed by the former on the latter, which re-articulate the array of scenes and related styles of interaction of the fabric of daily group life, stimulating new scenes and legitimising some styles at the expense of others. However, this does not mean that the influence is irrelevant, since scene styles are not an internal variable of civic action and its organisational culture, but rather the dimension in which the general functions performed by the action take shape, and the type of task actually accomplished through one's own work (Citroni, 2022).

Secondly, a re-appropriation by civic actions of the constraints placed on them by local authorities was detected at the level of practices: the civic actions analysed (and the scene styles that inform them) "metaphorize" these constraints at an informal level in different action dilemmas.

The working hypothesis proposed to investigate the relationship between local authorities and civic action is by no means simple, as it requires a demanding exploration of the everyday informal dimension of civil society. In fact, this paper, rather than reproducing the standard view of civic action's areas of intervention, has instead focused on the ways it is structured on a daily basis, investigated here in terms of scene styles. While it is true that the literature emphasises how the collaboration between public bodies and civil society takes place in specific areas – such as fighting poverty and increasing diversity (Oosterlinck *et al.,* 2017) – it is also true that the study of reciprocal influences must also pay attention to how they act and how these are shaped by, and in turn feedback from, the institutional conditions in which they are situated. This is particularly true when the emerging forms of urban governance are made up of such dense relationships between civic actions and authorities as to make it necessary to avoid reifying their separation. This interweaving, in fact, necessitates overcoming the exclusive focus on representations, to instead investigate the effect of legibility and simplification imposed by local authorities on civil society. This effect is best examined when we not only focus on the categories through which the action represents itself but also consider the situated uses of these categories.

The current complexity of relations between civic actions and local authorities in urban contexts has been the object of a variety of both theoretical and empirical studies that have ended up

redefining civil society: no longer something completely external to public authorities and particularly their actions, but a variety of actors that through bottom-up civic action and initiatives may contribute to the urban governance in different forms (Citroni & Coppola, 2021). This paper is part of the growing interest in such forms and focused on the informal and everyday dimension of civil society (Lichterman & Eliasoph, 2014) as a privileged place for studying its relationship with public administrations in urban areas (Brandtner & Powell, 2022).

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Ariela Mortara, Rosantonietta Scramaglia[1]

Italian Cities Looking for a New Normal: Economic and Social Opportunity between Reality, Perception and Hopes. The Case of Milan[2]

Introduction

According to the scientific literature (Abusaada & Elshater, 2022), the pandemic was primarily an urban phenomenon: over 90% of confirmed COVID-19 cases were located in cities, and Wuhan, Milan, Madrid, and New York City were the first and most affected ones (UN Habitat, 2020). The pandemic's repercussions had a significant influence on both the urban structure and the consumption patterns of residents, city users, and tourists, resulting in shifts in user lifestyles and the utilization of spaces (Florida *et al.*, 2021). Indeed, 2020 revolutionized how we work, study, travel, spend leisure time, and, in general, how we live (Samuelsson *et al.*, 2020) and plan for the future, thus affecting global mental health (Alzueta *et al.,* 2021).

In various European countries, government-imposed lockdowns, implemented to protect public health and curb the spread of the pandemic, provided Western populations with an unprecedented experience, which modified precedents relationships with natural spaces (Vimal, 2022). This meant abruptly interrupting the relation with the city, in its socio-spatial entirety, and particularly relinquishing the use of public spaces. Suddenly, cities were deserted, and for the first time, the typically fast-paced, constantly bustling, and densely populated urban landscapes came to a standstill (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2020).

Conversely, the imposed lockdowns «profoundly transformed the familial spaces of home» (Rose-Redwood *et al.*, 2020, p. 99), which now acted as a multifunctional space for work, education, and leisure activities. Moreover, the lack of interaction with intermediary spaces forced everyone to adapt to this substantial reduction in spatial usage, which had implications for the well-being of both young and adult individuals (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2020; Pancani *et al.*, 2021).

Italy, with 16 million contagions and over 160,000 deaths associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection between March 2020 and April 2022, has been one of most affected European countries, especially in the initial phase of the pandemic (Zeneli & Santoro, 2023), and Milan has been one of the top 10 European metro areas with the most decelerating population growth rates (Wolff & Mykhnen, 2023). Progressively stricter restrictions initiated a cyclical phase of closures and reopening that, for the first time, highlighted the special relations of Italian people with their cities, bringing to light a need that is usually taken for granted under normal conditions (Bottini, 2022). However, since the second quarter of 2021, there has been a gradual resurgence of pre-COVID routines, although old habits have undergone some modifications. According to the Annual Report, Italy started to experience a gradual normalization of daily routines specifically during the last part of the year (Istat, 2022). This is stressed by the fact that most citizens (with percentages ranging between 57% and 85%) were dedicating the same amount of time to many activities as they did before the pandemic. The resurgence of residents' habits of frequenting public spaces led to what has been termed "the rebirth of cities". Indeed, the concept of urban rebirth after the COVID-19 pandemic encompasses the process of urban rejuvenation, revitalization, and meta-

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This paper is a joint work. However, in line with standard academic practice, we indicate that Rosantonietta Scramaglia wrote paragraphs 1 and 2, Ariela Mortara wrote paragraphs 3 and 4. The rest of the paper is a joint work. The paper presents some results of a broader research project titled "The Rebirth of Cities as an Economic and Social Opportunity Among Realities, Perceptions, and Hopes". The research project has been founded by two departments of IULM University.

morphosis that numerous cities underwent in the aftermath of the global health crisis (Buonocore *et al.*, 2021; Zgórska *et al.*, 2021; D'Onofrio & Trusiani, 2022). As the world began to recover from the pandemic, cities found themselves compelled to adjust and reimagine their identities in order to face new challenges and embrace opportunities for positive transformation. Indeed, the pandemic underscored the significance of resilient infrastructure and technology within urban landscapes (Gade & Aithal, 2021), encouraging investments in the modernization of transportation systems, healthcare facilities, and digital infrastructure.

The crisis related to the global spread of the COVID-19 virus, which initially required European states to employ emergency measures to address the first phase of the pandemic, was now calling for the adoption of structural administrative reforms that could enable the effective implementation of projects outlined in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans, financed through the European Recovery Fund (Di Lascio & Delgado, 2023).

Regarding the future role of cities, the pandemic impacted urban economic geography at intra- and interregional levels in the context of four major forces (Florida *et al*., 2021, p. 1511): the social scarring caused by the pandemic, lockdown as a forced experiment, the need to secure the urban built environment against future risks, and changes in urban form, real estate, design, and streetscapes. At the macro level, the pandemic is unlikely to significantly alter the economic geography and spatial inequality of the global urban system. At the micro level, however, it could produce several short-term and some longer-term social changes in the structure and morphology of cities, suburbs, and metropolitan regions.

Since the spring of 2021, there has been a notable increase in cultural activities, such as music festivals, theatre performances, and urban cultural events, particularly in metropolitan areas. From June 25 to 27, Milan hosted a unique rendition of Piano City. This event turned the city into a music extravaganza publicly accessible, featuring numerous free concerts scattered throughout the urban landscape. The 2021 edition was meticulously crafted with a program encompassing live performances and streaming broadcasts, enabling those unable to attend in person (due to COVID-related restrictions) to partake in the festival from a distance. For residents of Milan, this marked a pioneering offline/online event that brought the prospect of a return to normalcy (Colli, 2021).

From September 5 to 10, 2021, Milan was abuzz with the Supersalone, a globally renowned trade fair dedicated to the furniture and home decor sector, and an adaptation of the traditional Salone del Mobile. Simultaneously, the city came alive with Fuorisalone, the Design Week. Supersalone brought 262,000 visitors to the pavilions at the Rho exhibition centre and over 400,000 people participated to all the events in the city (Tgcom24, 2022). Fuorisalone extended its influence across various locations, filling the city with exhibitions, creative concepts, product innovations, and unique events in unconventional venues. Following that, it was time for Fashion Week, which occurred from September 21 to 27, albeit in a "phygital" format encompassing both in-person and online runway presentations (with 42 in-person and 23 digital shows). This revival of live fashion showcases generated immense enthusiasm, leaving a profound impact not just on those within the fashion industry but on the entire city of Milan. It instilled a sense of great optimism and signalled a true renaissance for the city.

In mid-November, Milan hosted Bookcity from November 17 to 21. This event traditionally stands as the autumn highlight in the city, celebrating books and reading.

All these events, among numerous others held in Milan, have breathed fresh life into the city's tourism and hospitality industry, which was among the most severely impacted sectors. They have also revitalized the broader economic ecosystem intertwined with it. Even Carlo Sangalli, the President of Confcommercio, acknowledged at the end of December 2021 that Milan had experienced a renaissance. This is noteworthy, considering it was one of the cities mostly affected by the pandemic in 2020 (Confcommercio, 2021).

In April 2022, Italy saw the conclusion of the COVID-19 pandemic state of emergency, leading to a gradual relaxation of significant social distancing measures. These changes included the stop

of mandatory mask usage both indoors and outdoors, as well as the discontinuation of the regional color-coded system used to assess the severity of the contagion spread. The return to unrestricted social interactions and the full resumption of mobility practices sparked a noticeable resurgence in the reclamation of public spaces. The connection with urban space takes shape and develops over time through socio-spatial practices, and the preferred location for these practices to occur is public space, such as parks, squares, and green areas, as well as the so-called "hard public spaces" like local markets and commercial areas (Bottini, 2022).

In order to understand the rebirth of cities after a pandemic event, it is crucial to highlight the inherent adaptability within the urban landscape. The city capacity to modify and transform its physical and urban components in response to external shocks is a vital consideration for urban policymaking (Lai *et al.*, 2020). This re-evaluation presents an opportunity to upgrade areas and structures that were rendered vulnerable by the pandemic, to restore interrupted socialization processes, and to encourage interactions once again among various groups of individuals, including residents, city users, and tourists – which decreased significantly across the board. Indeed, due to the pandemic, the year 2020 had ended negatively for Lombard tourism with very high losses: -66.3% in arrivals and -60.9% in overnight stays. In 2021, there was a recovery compared to the previous year, although the tourism had not yet returned to the levels of 2019: +51.7% in arrivals and +59.9% in overnight stays compared to 2020; -48.9% in arrivals and -37.3% in overnight stays compared to 2019 (Cavedo, 2022). As for Milan, tourist arrivals fell by -76% between 2019 and 2020, reaching a historic low of 1.9 million visitors in 2020; 2021 and 2022 saw a gradual recovery, with 3 million visitors in 2021 (Assolombarda, 2023) and 6.7 million in 2022 (Milano Today, 2023) aiming to bring cultural consumption and the use of key venues like museums, theatres, cinemas, and libraries back to pre-pandemic levels. In addition to this factor, it is essential to consider the inherent effect produced by the desire of the population, especially younger age groups, who have particularly felt the psychological impact of forced closures (Pancani *et al.*, 2021; Ramkissoon, 2020 Orgilés *et al.*, 2020; McKinlay *et al*., 2022), to reclaim the city. These elements empirically confirm the absolute relevance of the relationship between social and individual well-being and the ability to enjoy urban space.

While, on the one hand, the resurgence of public space attendance serves as a genuine urban driver toward renewed vitality and dynamism, on the other hand, the sudden surge of strength in those months highlights issues related to urban safety and environmental sustainability due to the increased presence of external visitors and tourists (Pasquinelli *et al*., 2021).

In the same period, people were contending with the impacts of a multitude of interconnected challenges throughout the globe. The ramifications of COVID-19, the climate change issues, the disparities in social equity, the disruptions in supply chains, the persistent high inflation rates, and the looming possibility of recession present formidable barriers to the advancement of healthy societies and the establishment of climate resilience leading to a "polycrisis" (World Economic Forum, 2023).

While cities are focal points for these challenges, they also hold the potential solutions. Despite changes in our cultural landscape that have reshaped our lifestyles and professional routines, urban centres continue to thrive. In the eve of the outbreak of the pandemic, over half of the world population (55%) lives in cities, a significant increase from the 30% in 1950. Projections indicate that by 2050, this proportion will surge to 70%, with an estimated 2.5 billion individuals moving to urban environments within the next two decades (United Nations, 2018).

Based on this scenario, the paper presents the results from the research project *Italian Cities Looking for a New Normal: Economic and Social Opportunity Between Reality, Perception and Hopes. The Case of Milan*.

The next paragraphs will discuss: 1) the post-COVID Milan; 2) research project's aim and methodology; 3) results and discussion; 4) conclusions and limitations.

1. The post-COVID Milan

Amidst the pandemic, some European cities have embraced place-making approaches arising from a renewed interest in public spaces and contemporary environmental concerns. In Milan, following the guidelines of the urban plan for sustainable mobility (PUMS), the Strade Aperte initiative started in 2020 as a responsive strategy to the pandemic. Its aim was threefold: to promote sustainable modes of transport, to adapt public space to new crisis-related needs, and to create a more inclusive urban transport network. This effort proved particularly successful in the creation of emergency bike lanes that connect the entire city (Comune di Milano, 2020).
The pandemic has highlighted that in the so-called Healthy Cities, there have been 1/3 to 1/10 fewer casualties compared to conventional cities. Therefore, the need to restructure our urban areas according to the principles of Healthy Cities, which enable a healthy life based on pedestrianization and accessibility, is now clear (Tagliaventi & Diolaiti, 2021).
In April 2020, the international network C40 Global Mayors established a COVID-19 Recovery Task Force, chaired by Mayor of Milan Giuseppe Sala, to share knowledge and experiences aimed at expediting economic recovery following the COVID-19 crisis (https://www.comune.milano.it/).
In Milan, just like in many other capitals, a range of strategies have been put in place with the goal of transforming the metropolis into a "15-minute city," particularly in the post-COVID-19 era (Whittle, 2021). This paradigm provides that citizens can reach everything they need within fifteen minutes: jobs, health facilities, schools, stores, cultural facilities, sports facilities, cafés, and restaurants. This model, proposed by Carlos Moreno (2016), gained notoriety when the mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, included a plan to implement it in her 2020 re-election campaign.
In a recent paper, Moreno *et al*. (2021) highlighted the need to rethink cities and make them safer, more resilient, more sustainable, and more inclusive in the wake of the pandemic, which has contributed to an increase in social inequalities and brought unemployment to record levels worldwide, as reflected in the UN Sustainable Development Goal 11.
Prior to Mayor Giuseppe Sala's declaration in February 2021 that Milan should emulate Moreno's model after the COVID-19 pandemic, several neighbourhoods were already moving to this direction thanks to the collaboration between residents and businesses. We use the term neighbourhood to identify a specific city district in which everyday urban life events take place (Citroni & Karrholm, 2019). According to Rossi *et al*. (2020), in Milan there are 88 neighbourhoods, also called NIL[3].
Indeed, neighbourhoods as Isola, NoLo (North of Loreto), and the more recent NaPa (Naviglio Pavese) are good examples of these networking skills. While the case of NoLo is now extensively documented (Trimarchi, 2019; Gerosa & Tartari, 2020), NaPa represents a new gastronomic neighbourhood that includes fourteen commercial activities, including restaurants, cafés, and gastronomic centres, as well as a winery and agencies involved in supplying the neighbourhood (Bruno, 2021). The success of events like the NoLo Fringe Festival, which filled all the spaces in the neighbourhood north of Loreto and expanded to all neighbourhoods in its 2022 edition, or the several themed "weeks" (Fashion, Design, Game, Digital) organized by the Municipality of Milan, which have now evolved into a catalyst for hosting events in unconventional locations, clearly underscores the conviction that economic revitalization is attainable through these endeavours.
Most of these locations can be described as hybrid spaces (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982; Oldenburg, 1989; Mortara, 2000, 2021), presenting a diverse combination of functions and activities serving public and general interests, the coexistence of nonprofit activities alongside commercially oriented ones (such as cafés, restaurants, and shops), and a wide range of legal structures for managing entities (e.g., associations, social enterprises, limited liability companies, cooperatives, etc.). All the activities described offer the opportunity to rehabilitate areas and structures

3 NIL (Nuclei di Identità Locali - Local Identity Centers) represent specific areas or places within a city or region that have a strong sense of local identity, culture, and community.

that have become unsafe due to the pandemic, to restore interrupted socialization processes and to re-establish exchanges and relations between different types of people.

2. Research's Aim and Methodology

The research project aimed to investigate the revival of Milan through the resurgence of social life in the city. We have conducted 100 face-to-face semi-structured interviews with managers, owners, and operators of as many hybrid spaces (Oldenburg, Brissett, 1982; Oldenburg, 1989; Mortara, 2000, 2021) where various types of activities take place (commercial, educational, leisure and cultural activities). Indeed, according to Tricarico and De Vidovich (2021, p. 308)

> «Small- and medium-sized commercial activities, as well as craft and manufacturing companies, represent the privileged target of an urban agenda aimed at steering proximity as the key element for an offer calibrated on a neighbourhood scale, and as vehicles of systemic innovation in sectors considered at the margins of political agendas for a considerable amount of time».

The 100 selected spaces have been identified based on those listed in the final report of the Department of Labour, Productive Activities, Trade, and Human Resources (2016-2021) under the leadership of Cristina Tajani, Councillor for Economic Development and Labor Policies for the Municipality of Milan. This range encompasses everything: from the historic shops to coworking spaces, socially impactful enterprises, cafés, and restaurants, as well as cultural spaces such as theatres and workshops (Comune di Milano, 2021).
The interviews were conducted in November 2020 and, upon securing the necessary privacy permissions, either recorded or videotaped. Subsequently, these recordings were transcribed. We conducted the analysis grouping responses into categories capable of reflecting the key themes and concepts that emerged, accompanying the analysis with exemplary verbatim quotes. Specifically, as in other research studies (Spiggle, 1994; Mayan, 2016), a content analysis was conducted in four phases (coding, categorization, comparison, and theorization), in order to classify and interpret the acquired knowledge.
The interview guide used is based on the conceptual framework of Florida *et al*. (2023). According to them, the COVID-19 pandemic is producing four main forces with the potential to lead to relatively long-lasting transformations of cities and regions as we know them. In our interview guide we have referred to these forces to address significant changes in Milan through the point of view and the activities of entrepreneurs. We have asked about "social scarring", the consequences of citizens' and users' fear instilled by the pandemic on the economic viability of their businesses. We have inquired how the "forced experiment of the lockdown" have influenced traditional ways of interaction or substituted them with the digital fruition. Thirdly, in order to understand if the informants were concerned about the "need to secure the urban built environment against this and future health and climate risks", we have investigated about the safety measures taken to protect the health of the users of the spaces, also in anticipation of future pandemic risks. Finally, we have focused on "different configurations of indoor and outdoor spaces". Starting from this conceptual framework, the interview script, having gathered details about the interviewee's role within the business and their contributions to its conception, execution, or organization, initially reconstructed the history of the establishment.
Afterward, a second set of questions delved into the business' response to the pandemic and its potential connections with the local community. These questions explored opportunities for networking with other entities, both physical and virtual, as well as the nature of relations with institutions. Additionally, there was an exploration of whether such relations had evolved, possibly due to participation in specific calls for proposals. The discussion also encompassed future projects, with a particular emphasis on sustainability considerations.

The subsequent segment of the interview pivots towards examining the context, assessing any alterations and how those transformations have unfolded. Concurrently, it delves into the nature of the customers and whether there have been shifts in how they are catered to. Interviewees have been invited to clarify if they glimpse at resurgence signs and to pinpoint areas where they envision possible social and economic revitalization, as well as any perceived threats.
In the last phase, the last two inquiries revolve around informants' perception of possible indicators of rebirth within the city of Milan.
The following paragraphs categorize the results of the interviews into thematic categories.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 The Pandemic Effect: Towards a Return to the Status Quo

As anticipated, all interviewees recognized the influence of pandemic on their businesses. This effect was particularly high for those organizations that had cultivated their identity as hybrid spaces (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982; Oldenburg, 1989; Mortara, 2000, 2021). The restrictions mandated by ministerial decrees, pertaining to operating hours and the capacity of indoor spaces, proved especially detrimental to establishments like restaurants, cafés, and even retail stores. These businesses expanded their primary operations to include event planning, such as hosting live music, exhibitions, theatrical performances, and similar activities.
Another pivotal factor in assessing the pandemic impact was the capacity to offer patrons outdoor seating. In this respect, establishments such as Cascina Cuccagna – a farmhouse with a bookshop, nursery and restaurant – and Capoverde – a flower store with an adjoining restaurant – were able to resume their catering services at an earlier date. Indeed, in line with the Ministerial Decree, the reopening of outdoor dining services exclusively for table service began on April 26, 2021, for both lunch and dinner. Consequently, these businesses had a more extended window for recovery after months of forced closure. Furthermore, if the outdoor areas are embedded in a green environment and are not located on a busy street, customers are even more inclined to visit these facilities:

> «In the evening, it's wonderful to eat here, especially outdoors. People prefer to dine here rather than amidst traffic because they get a moment to breathe» (Capoverde).

As widely acknowledged, the pandemic years have greatly accelerated global digitization (We Are Social, 2022; 2022a). Indeed, many interviewees revealed that they had adapted their operations to the new needs. They managed their social media platforms more actively to maintain connections with existing customers and engage with new ones. Moreover, they transitioned to online events as alternatives to in-person gatherings and introduced food delivery services for restaurants.
Virtually all the interviewees acknowledge the indispensable nature of technological possibilities, as they have felt the urgent need to adapt their equipment and skills to navigate an increasingly digital reality. Despite recognizing the pivotal role of digital technology in ensuring the survival of many businesses during the pandemic months, the interviews generally reveal a strong desire to move away from the online realm and revert to the pre-pandemic situation. Managers are among the first to hope that people will return to physical spaces, and they recognize a similar longing among their customers. In some instances, such as with Casa delle Donne – an association dedicated to women of all ages, sexual orientations, diverse backgrounds, and cultures, committed to combating gender-based violence, promoting talents, and valuing women's knowledge – the online dimension will complement in-person activities. Certain events and meetings will continue to be available through streaming platforms to accommodate those

who, out of concerns about the virus, remain hesitant to participate in person.
Some of the interviewees noted that their decision to opt for home delivery has opened up a parallel line of business that they do not want to do without. This approach allows them to expand their customer base and reach different age groups.

> «An opportunity opened up for all delivery-related activities. Digital skills have also expanded at a personal level for people, and many online activities have emerged and grown» (QF. Coworking with a nursery).

The imperative of maintaining social distancing among individuals has frequently resulted in a rearrangement of available spaces, often requiring a decrease in the number of patrons. A case in point is Santeria Paladini – a multifunctional space encompassing a bar/bistro, a record store and bookshop, an exhibition area hosting concerts and literary events, and a coworking space. They regarded this as a positive development, enabling them to concentrate exclusively on their loyal customer base.
From the customer's perspective, the pandemic appears to have carried out a natural selection process: often, loyal customers are among the first to return, bringing others with them. The intermittent closures and mobility restrictions have reduced occasional customers, and in the case of coworking spaces, the user profile has partially changed:

> «Those who live far away no longer use the coworking space or use it to a very limited extent (by purchasing an entry package). However, there has been an increase in companies that use the office flexibly (for example, only a few days a week) or rent it for their employees, engaged in smart working, as a meeting and networking place» (QF. Coworking with a nursery).

In addition, some interviewees state that thanks to the increased use of social media channels, the age of regular visitors has decreased, as the manager of the Candiani Denim Store – an urban micro-factory for customised jeans – says:

> «By promoting heavily on the social platform that is now more clearly used by young people, we have attracted curious students and younger customers, with an average age around 25-27 years» (Candiani Denim Store).

3.2 More Focus Towards Networking Within the Neighbourhood and Institutional Relations

The relation with the neighbourhood emerges as particularly relevant for entities with a stronger social focus, such as Cascina Biblioteca, a cooperative specialized in social inclusion, personal services, and employment placement. Their communication director states:

> «We focus on the neighbourhood, after-school activities, and summer camps. Therefore, we respond to both social and community needs. Through various grants, we are able to organize activities for schools. For example, we have recently started a project called Inclusive by Nature, which is an activity we used to do, in the past, in a less structured way. We collaborate with many educational institutions, from preschools to high schools» (Cascina Biblioteca).

The interaction with institutions tends to be more polarized, often viewed as a means to secure financial support either directly or through targeted grant applications. Notably, initiatives with a pronounced social mission are typically more proactive in seeking institutional backing. For instance, the director of Spazio Rab, a unique establishment where young individuals with intellectual disabilities are employed, elaborates:

> «We applied for a grant from Cariplo, a private foundation, to receive funds. At the municipal level, we did not receive assistance, and we also applied for various regional grants with rather limited payouts, not sufficient to cover the 70% drop in revenue in 2019» (Spazio Rab).

Purely commercial enterprises – as Spazio Nolo, a store with an eclectic calling, presenting itself to customers as a boutique-café-wine bar, promising a sensory experience encompassing food, wine, and designer objects, or Bici e Radici, a shop born from a unique concept that revolves around the world of bicycles and green culture with the precise goal of promoting sustainable practices – take a distinct stance, as they generally do not place a significant emphasis on seeking institutional assistance.

> «Regarding Spazio NoLo, truthfully, we don't pursue institutional support. We still fall into the category of self-funded entities, and our company maintains a strong financial footing. While it may seem like we have some bad luck in this regard, at the same time, we consider ourselves fortunate because we don't require such assistance» (Spazio NoLo).

> «In the past, we engaged in a variety of institutional grants and projects. However, over the recent years, the number of such initiatives has dwindled. Our interaction with institutions has consistently remained fairly neutral, lacking any particular affiliation. Consequently, we haven't had the opportunity to foster stronger ties with them» (Bici e Radici).

The manager of Capoverde, speaking about future opportunities, says:

> «I don't think there are any growth opportunities because there is no real policy to help businesses on the part of municipalities and local administration. Over the years, I have learned that everything you can achieve is because you put in your own effort. There is no help from the authorities» (Capoverde).

3.3 Future Projects and Sustainability Perceived as Challenges

Not all interviewees are able to discuss their future projects. In some cases, it seems that the primary need is to regain the time (and money) lost during the months of the pandemic, making it challenging to plan for the future. However, this is not the case for Santeria Paladini, whose director explains:

> «In 2021, we initiated training courses at Santeria, offering both in-person and remote learning options taught by professionals skilled in both modalities. Our inclination is to persist with these courses, diversifying the range of options available» (Santeria Paladini).

The manager of Farm 65, which describes itself as a culinary hub with a mission to offer memorable experiences related to cooking and the preparation or enjoyment of beverages, says:

> «We aim to expand this concept of a hub. We want to tell the story of food, cooking, and what lies behind eating in a true and sincere way, far from everything that television has created in recent years, which in our opinion has also somewhat spoiled the real world of cuisine» (Farm 65).

When it comes to planning projects, the focus is usually on people's desire to come together without the constraints imposed by the emergency situation. The intention is often expressed to resume projects that have been postponed due to the pandemic. Regarding sustainability, the primary emphasis is on reducing plastic consumption and giving priority to recycling and reusing in order to reduce waste. Sustainability is also reflected in specific choices related to organic farming and a general environmental awareness:

> «In discussions about agriculture, the primary emphasis consistently revolves around organic farming. The objective is to cultivate fields while simultaneously rejuvenating fallow lands, establishing a supply chain that, via cattle grazing, culminates in cheese production» (Cascina Biblioteca).

3.4 Opportunities and Looming Threats

The opportunities that respondents perceive are largely seen as future challenges, driven by the idea that their businesses represent a unique and valuable proposal:

> «Opportunities are numerous since our bookstore is an interstitial space. Indeed, this physical space has a one-to-one value, which will be exploited as a future opportunity» (121+ Libreria exTemporanea).

Given their awareness of the value they offer to users, many interviewees struggle to pinpoint tangible threats:

> «The threats faced are inherent to urban living in a city like Milan. From one vantage point, it's a city characterized by its fast pace, ambitious objectives, and aspirations to compete on a global scale. These threats encompass challenges commonly encountered by expanding urban centres, spanning mobility issues, the rising cost of living, including rent, sustainability concerns, and income disparities that may not align with those of residents in global cities. Nevertheless, there are also factors that work in favour of our business, such as the establishment of a new metro stop, presenting an opportunity» (Santeria Paladini)

For companies focused primarily on live events, such as Blue Note – a Jazz Club with restaurant – and Campo Teatrale – a cultural association organizing events and offering theatre courses – the biggest threat appears to be the possible tightening of restrictions to contain the pandemic. Such measures could undo progress made in efforts to restore a semblance of normalcy to this point:

> «The biggest threat is inevitably another closure. The organization behind it is not minimal. It's not just about setting up a room but planning tours, and between authorizations, contacts, and bureaucracy, it's not easy for us to stop this machine once again» (Blue Note).

> «If another lockdown was imposed, it would entail another months-long interruption in our operations. This presents both a risk and a looming threat. Our work, which cannot be substituted by online lessons or performances, becomes challenging to sustain without in-person interaction. Additionally, the evolving audience attitude toward theatre poses another significant threat. The uncertainty of knowing the show›s attendance numbers until the day before means uncertainty about the return on the investment made in its organization» (Campo Teatrale).

3.5 The Signs of Milan's Rebirth

As stated earlier, the interviews were conducted at the end of autumn 2021, a period during which Milan was revelling in the triumph of a summer season marked by the return of tourists, including international ones.
It is inevitable, therefore, that for most interviewees, in light of the revival of many events that traditionally mark the course of city life, the signs of recovery are more than evident. According to the manager of Le Biciclette, an art bar and bistro which host vernissages of emergent artists:

> «We fell, but we all got up immediately. Milan has risen and been reborn, everything is a sign of rebirth» (Le Biciclette).

As previously mentioned, the resurgence is frequently associated with the opportunity to host in-person events and the return of tourists, a sentiment underscored by the son of the owner of Osteria del Treno, not just a restaurant but a versatile place that transforms itself in base of the occasions, also serving as an events hall and wine bar:

«Yes, I've seen many tourists return that I hadn't seen before. Obviously more of them are European rather than American; Asian tourism is still missing to some extent. But American tourism is returning, and this is very important because Milan has been working a lot in recent years and is being shaped by tourism. It wasn't like this before; people used to come for business, but they didn't come to visit Milan. This seems to me a good sign of rebirth» (Osteria del Treno).

According to the Director of Communication at Pescheria Spadari – the venue belongs to the Historical Shop network of Milan, it sells seafood and offers a restaurant – and to the manager of Cascina Cuccagna, the renaissance of the city is intricately linked to the concepts of urban revitalization and sustainability, which Milan has been ardently dedicated to (Ballabio, 2022):

«Through urban development efforts, an increasing number of districts have undergone revitalization during this period. This includes the creation of bicycle lanes that promote eco-friendly mobility. Additionally, new ventures such as coworking spaces are emerging, which, in my view, are crucial for fostering community engagement and aiding the city's post-pandemic recovery» (Pescheria Spadari)

«Milan has demonstrated a keen and responsive approach to sustainability concerns, actively championing urban revitalization initiatives. The endeavours aimed at rejuvenating public spaces for the community serve as a prime illustration of this commitment» (Cascina Cuccagna).

Although enthusiasm and optimism seem to prevail, some interviews reveal more cautious positions, as expressed by the CEO of Santeria Paladini and a member of the board of Casa delle Donne:

«I don't know, I hope. For now, real signs of rebirth are still very timid. This is also due to the high costs of the city and labour, and all that they cause (e.g., undeclared work)» (Santeria Paladini).

«Let's say that in these months (September/October/November) of 2021, the city of Milan is slowly returning to full swing in its activities... You can't call it a rebirth but more precisely a slow resumption of rhythms and processes that existed before the health emergency» (Casa delle Donne).

Despite the pandemic, from the privileged perspective of those managing a project like 121+ Libreria exTemporana, the city of Milan has shown particular signs of resilience:

«In Milan, it seems that nothing has happened. Even comparing it with other cities and having visited other cities, including Buenos Aires and Barcelona, where you can perceive a change after the pandemic, Milan seems not to have been touched at all. I think that Milan has an adaptability characteristic that it has exploited during this period» (121+ Libreria exTemporanea).

However, it is not necessarily a sign of inertia, as the administrative manager of the bookstore points out:

«No, I haven't perceived any signs of rebirth, and I haven't noticed any kind of innovation. I think Milan has continued in the same direction as before COVID» (121+ Libreria exTemporanea).

On the contrary, although a minority view, the president of the social cooperative that includes Capoverde expresses a clearly different perspective. Despite the revival of activities and clear signs of a return to socialization, he does not see an improvement in economic and working conditions:

«No signs of rebirth, after two years like this, being the president of the social cooperative that manages the restaurant, I have seen people's desire to be together, to go out, to be outdoors, to socialize. But from a work perspective, in my opinion, we haven't learned anything from what happened to us as a community. In my opinion, everything has become much more difficult. If you ask me for an evaluation

from a work perspective, everything is much more difficult because everything has become too hectic, traffic has tripled, people are not in a good state of mind, so everything has become too difficult» (Capoverde).

4. Conclusions and Limitations

The interviewees well represent the diverse landscape of activities in Milan: shops, social cooperatives, hybrid places, coworking spaces. They are all privileged points of observation for what has happened at the micro level, in the neighbourhoods where they are located, but also at the macro level, in relation to the institutions.

Despite the international uncertainty and the alarming news about the consumption habits of Italians, who are willing to travel less (23%), reduce spending on clothing (16%) and on restaurants and entertainment (12%) in the face of the loss of purchasing power due to inflation (WineNews, 2022), and although COVID-19 has affected Milan and the north more than other parts of Italy, our results show that most Milanese entrepreneurs are still confident about the future.

Overall, the interviews offer a generally optimistic picture and view of the situation, although the pandemic period has seriously challenged many institutions, which, despite fruitful summer months, still complain that they are far from pre-pandemic levels and want to return to a state of normality. Even in the face of a number of perceived threats, primarily related to the possibility of new restrictions and perhaps another lockdown, many respondents also recognize the opportunities that the past difficult months have presented, primarily the push towards higher digitization, but also the opportunity to network with other organizations and serve as a hub for the neighbourhood.

As widely acknowledged, the pandemic years have greatly accelerated global digitization. By January 2022, 4.95 billion people, equivalent to 62.5% of the world population, had gained access to Internet, and the number of social media users had surged to 4.62 billion, accounting for 58.4% of the global population. This represented an impressive growth of over 10% if compared to 2021 (We Are Social, 2022). Turning our focus to Italy, approximately 51 million of people (on 59 million residents) were Internet users, reflecting a 1.7% increase from the previous year, with 43 million actively participating in social networks, a 5.4% rise from 2020 (We Are Social, 2022a).

Furthermore, our results highlight the expectations expressed by entrepreneurs about the public policies for recovery, as stressed by other studies too (Rachmawati et al., 2023), which recommend strengthening public space planning and use of public services to meet the needs of various activities.

The general positive attitude is confirmed also by the data from the annual ranking conducted by Sole 24 Ore (2021) on quality of life, Milan rose from the tenth position to the second among the Italian cities, mainly thanks to the indicators of Wealth and Consumption and Business and Employment, with an improvement also in the sectors related to Culture and Leisure.

Activities and projects that have emerged from our research project suggest that they are a starting point rather than a goal: despite the complex pandemic situation, at the time of the interviews, our informants perceive Milan as a place where evolutions and revolutions are happening. It's a city ready to put forward ideas, energy, and enthusiasm even during a critical moment. The resilience that the Milanese have shown during the long months of lockdown is reflected in their ability to rely on their skills and use resources wisely, as well as in the hope for a "new future" that was still in its infancy at the end of 2021 but is now materialising. Indeed, what emerges from the interviews is confirmed by the aforementioned activities organized at the neighbourhood level by local associations and residents, as well as at the city level promoted by the municipality.

Regarding the limitations of this study, the first concern is related to the qualitative methodology, which does not allow for any generalization to the territory of Milan. Additionally, the research was conducted in the last months of 2021, a period which seemed to offer some stability

after the summer months, only to be undone by the spike in infections around Christmas and then by events related to the war in Ukraine.

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Omid Firouzi Tabar[1]

From the "Reception Trap" to "Denied Reception". The Tightening of Migration Policies and the Centrality of Informal Settlements Between Segregation and Resistance[2]

Introduction

As in many other European countries, in Italy since the late Nineties we have been witnessing the gradual strengthening of "zero tolerance" policies (Wacquant, 2000) through a continuous production of administrative measures, a constant involvement of police and media and a-transversal protagonism of political forces.

Over the past twenty years, the issue of security has been one of the most frequent in Italy's public and media space, and has had the ability to affect much of the welfare urban policies, especially in areas particularly marked by social exclusion and marginality. At the same time, it has been an overall paradigm of social control with which social movements, especially the anti-racist ones, have had to contend. Security policies cannot be confined to specific areas of social control such as criminal law, but they represent a sort of paradigm within the framework of contemporary capitalism, both in its liberal (humanitarian) and populist (repressive) formulations. In most cases migrants are at the centre of these strategies, exposed to often violent practices of control, but they are also actors of radical resistance processes.

Symbolically insofar as they are stigmatized as "others" who threaten the security of cities in order to crystallize around this fear social anger and the socio-economic concerns of the of the middle and working classes increasingly impoverished in the new neo-liberal frame. They are the recipients of racializing processes and specific forms of territorial collocation and urban segregation (Davis, 1998; Harvey, 2018; Petrillo, 2018), functional to manage and contain the social surplus produced by the welfare state crisis within the progressive transition from the social state to the penal state (Wacquant, 2006; Simon, 2009) and to activate new and more flexible forms of differential inclusion within the new regimes of labour exploitation (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Cutitta, 2016).

In recent years we have witnessed an evolution of such stigmatizing narratives, and different forms of construction of "otherness" have followed one another and intertwined. From the moment the discourse on migration started to focus on the asylum seeker, the so-called "tautology of fear" (Dal Lago, 1999), which had at its centre the criminalisation of the irregular migrant, has overlapped with "tautology of suspicion" where the migrant must strive to represent the "perfect victims" and must come to terms, in the pandemic context, of being vehicles for the spread of the virus. From "dangerous" to "victim" to "infector". To use an effective expression by Niels Christie (1986), the representations of the "suitable enemy", the "suitable victim" and now the "suitable infector" combine with each other, contributing to define an otherness always destined to occupy a position of inferiority (Fabini & Firouzi, 2022).

This contribution is set within the framework of recent sociological and anthropological studies that have identified a restrictive trend in the functioning of borders in Italy and Europe and a hardening of migration governance. We will try to see how a certain configuration of the battleground animated by governance techniques and resistance behaviour can give us, within the urban context, indications of the novelties of the phase we are experiencing. In particular, we will focus on informal settlements, which in our view become a kind of laboratory where we can interpret the trends underway, in this case that of a security orientation of migration policies.

A relative confirmation of this trend has arrived from the results of the last part of an ethno-

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graphic study in Padua, a city in Northern Italy "famous" for having hosted between 2015 and 2018 some of the largest reception camps in the country.
After a first part where we will present some theoretical and empirical contributions in migration studies, but also in consideration of new strands of urban studies that are productively debating with them, we will define the methodology of empirical study and show the most relevant elements that emerged. Finally, we will make some conclusions, proposing some points for reflection and possible future studies with respect to the balance of the relations between care and control, and between humanitarian devices and securitization solutions.

1. Less Humanitarian Care, More Control, and the Politics of Expendability

In Italy, especially since the so-called refugee crisis started in early 2015[3]. those stigmatization processes that we could call *production of functional otherness*, have had as a constant reference control and disciplining devices oriented to the figure of the "good refugee" (Vacchiano, 2011). The forms of segregation and marginalization in the reception of asylum seekers (Manocchi, 2014; Pinelli; 2017; Firouzi, 2019) seem precisely geared toward constructing this ideal type of "suitable enemy" (Christie, 1986).
This "good refugee" lives and moves on the outskirts of cities, does not protest, does not claim rights and welfare, is grateful for the gift of welcome, accepts non-guaranteed jobs without raising his or her voice, is not unionized, conforms to the rules like a child in boarding school. This is a figure whose social construction is opposed to the "false refugee", a label that the dominant public discourse has applied to all asylum seekers who have made their presence visible in the territories, individually or collectively claiming their independence and rights.
Until the Pandemic, the governance of the right to ask for international protection and the organization of asylum seekers' reception was hinged on the paternalistic and infantilizing social construction of the "perfect victim" to be protected, as distinct, especially in the public narrative, from the "false refugee" and the "economic migrant" figures to be criminalized and rejected. In Italy, the consolidated securitization rhetoric (and norms) crystallized around the figure of the "clandestine" migrant (Dal Lago, 1999; Caputo, 2007; Sbraccia, 2020; Quassoli, 2020) are flanked, in correspondence with the spread of forms of "humanitarian confinement" in the context of the organization of the reception system (Campesi, 2015), by narratives and stereotypes that shape a subject who is highly exposed to victimization and vulnerability (Pasian & Toffanin, 2018; Marchetti & Palumbo, 2021) and thereby rendered docile, disciplined, depoliticized (Manocchi, 2014). Stereotypes and labels applied to migrants – represented sometimes as dangerous, other times as victims, other as spreader, as in the case of the Pandemic – do not replace each other but tend to intertwine and often coexist, with more or less force in the public space depending on the historical phase (Fabini & Firouzi Tabar, 2022).
Looking more generally at the framework of European policies over the past twenty years the governance of borders and migrant mobility has been influenced by securitization logics (Huysmans, 2000; Van Munster, 2009; Neal, 2009; Vaughan-Williams, 2011). At the same time, that approach, particularly towards refugees and asylum seekers, tends to intertwine with a humanitarian one, where practices of compassionate care and control coexist, alternate, and sometimes overlap (Fassin, 2012; Agier, 2005; Cutitta, 2018).
I think it is important to highlight that we interpret the prevalence and radicalization of some orientations within a gradual proliferation of «ambivalent and hybrid security-humanitarian regimes» (Hess & Kasparek, 2017, p. 63).

3 Two statistics can give us a good idea of the changes taking place at that historical stage. The number of people landed on Italian shores increased from 42,925 in 2013 to 170,100 in 2014 and the number of asylum seeker collocated in the reception centers arise from 66.066 in 2014 to 174.734 in 2016 (Ministry of Internal Affair).

The (i)mmobilisation strategies of migrants and some radical stigmatization and institutional abandonment of migrant subjectivity have led to the assumption of a "securitization" of migration governance (Fabini & Firouzi Tabar, 2023) in Italy and the Mediterranean region, achieved through the "excuse" of Covid-19 (Stierl & Dadusc, 2021), and a "de-humanitarianization" of the securitization rationale behind bordering and migration control (Heller, Pezzani & Stierl, 2023). Adding to these arguments is the idea that the main point is not a retreat of the "humanitarian reason", but a consideration of how it has been inflected through hygienic-sanitary logics and combined with deterrence measures aimed at preventively disrupting migrants' access to rights, asylum, and European territory (Tazzioli & Stierl, 2021). A tendency that seems to consider at sea and in the territories, the "necropolitical sacrificability" of migrants (Fabini & Firouzi Tabar, 2023) and the constant threat of being subjected to irregularity and repatriation as well as to socio-spatial segregation and institutional abandonment as functional devices for the organization of increasingly racialized and violent forms of subaltern inclusion (Ambrosini, Lodigiani & Zanfrini, 1995).

Recent political trends in Italy, especially the latest reform of migration legislation (Law 50/2023, conversion law of the so-called Cutro Decree), suggest, as we will see, that the trend towards securitization, made evident during the pandemic phase, is still ongoing. The overall message seems very clear: migration, even with respect to asylum seekers and refugees, is a matter of national security, less and less related to the humanitarian spheres.

Among the multiple signals in this direction, three political and normative solutions seem particularly significant, all contained in Law 50/2023, which has changed Italian policies on border control and the management of the reception of asylum seekers.

First, the government criminalizes NGOs engaged in Search and Rescue (SAR) operations in the Mediterranean Sea, turning a humanitarian dimension into a national security one. The most serious decisions in this regard have been to sharply increase the penalties for smugglers, to reinforce agreements with Libya to block the departures and to implement the (illegal) rejections in the Mediterranean Sea, to prohibit NGOs from carrying out more than one rescue in the same mission, and to designate very distant locations as ports of disembarking to making rescue activities economically unsustainable.

Secondly, resources for the reception of asylum seekers like legal and psychological support and Italian language courses have been cut, severely downsizing the sphere of rights and completely eliminating any institutional objective of social inclusion and accelerating the exit processes.

This law strikes the right to reception through two other provisions: it definitively states that asylum seekers can only be placed in emergency facilities, and new temporary camps are established where adults and minors can be confined together and where only food, shelter and language mediation are provided.

Finally, the most recently debated measure: the decision to build new administrative detention centres in every Italian region and the decision to hold people who have arrived from safe countries in detention spaces while waiting for the conclusion of the process of their asylum application.

It is important to emphasize another element which concerns a recent practice of several Italian prefectures, and which has produced considerable exclusion and social marginalization towards asylum seekers: the tendency not to place young "newcomers" in reception facilities even though they have clearly expressed a desire to seek political asylum, and to give them appointments to formalize their application months later, a period in which they swell the population of the homeless, subject to complete institutional abandonment.

The urban repercussions of this orientation suggest a nationwide generalization of those conditions of radical rejection, socio-spatial marginalization and hostility that characterize the so-called "cities of exclusion" (Marchetti, 2019), where the dynamics of abandonment of a part of the asylum seekers risk excluding them even from those basic forms of parallel welfare thanks to which they were guaranteed a dignified survival (Semprebon, 2021).

The recent legislation and the repressive governmental practices in many territories suggest that

the processes of forced or voluntary exit from reception, already existing for many years due to an increasing porosity of its symbolic and material walls (Firouzi Tabar, 2020), is undergoing an acceleration. This has resulted in an increasing presence of the homeless asylum seeker within the informal settlements that arise within cities. During some meetings and interviews, some of the workers of the Municipality of Padua repeatedly reported that for the first time in their experience they were seeing many homeless asylum seekers (waiting for a long time to be placed in reception facilities) turn to the support desk to get a meal, to take a shower, and often to ask for a place to sleep. The presence of this figure in urban space was also verified through periods of participant observation in the surroundings of a new informal settlement, Salvemini Square, located near the train station, and then emerged from the increasing number of appeals made by a group of lawyers who were collaborating with the "Open Gates" legal support desk, which we will return to later.

These individuals experience diffuse exposure to social neglect, repressive actions by law enforcement, and intimidation marked by coercive dynamics connected with the very important concept of "deportability" (De Genova, 2002).

What is striking is that the migrants living in these campsites, are portrayed as responsible for a problem of law and order, as producers of degradation that threatens the city. This applies to those who voluntarily choose to leave reception facilities, but also to those who have had a positive or negative response to their asylum application and who, in the absence of inclusive policies following the reception period, find themselves forcibly living on the streets. The inhabitants of these informal settlements are abandoned, excluded from any inclusion strategy and represented as deviants responsible for a security problem, treated as criminals (Mantovan, 2018), in some cases as ungrateful subjects who dared to refuse the gift of reception.

However, we do not intend to communicate a passive image of the subjectivities we are talking about.

In accordance with some theoretical orientations that have recently come to prominence in migration studies we look at the scenario determined by security policies as an open field, as a battleground (Ambrosini, 2021) marked by constant conflicts and frictions between the devices of control and the emancipatory thrusts of thes people (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Hess Kasparek, 2017; De Genova, Garelli & Tazzioli, 2018; Papadopoulus, 2022). While we are aware of the violence that this securitization frame of migration governance produces, we think it is important to focus on less popular areas of our cities where it is possible to observe the manifestation of migrants' counter-conducts and resistances against exclusion and marginalization. These homeless asylum seekers often use the city by creating and inhabiting specific interstitial spaces (Fontanari & Ambrosini, 2018) to gather resources for their continued journey, in some cases thanks to the interactions with the scarce low-threshold services that are available, in others, through connections with the local social networks, especially with the antiracist groups and associations (Pasian, Storato & Toffanin, 2020; Sanò & Della Puppa, 2021). These settlements evolving beyond the formal reception system can be seen as an arena, characterized by conflicts, social tensions and negotiations.

In particular some specific areas such as that around the railway station, can become battlegrounds marked by changing power relations «for the physical and symbolic production, occupation and appropriation of (public) space» (Cancellieri & Ostanel, 2015, p.10). This "spatial agency" that Cancellieri and Ostanel refer to leads back to the struggle for public space and can be a condition and a prelude to further forms of socio-political urban protagonism.

In Italy, through heterogeneous behaviours and individual and collective practices asylum seekers, both people in transit and people desiring to stay, often engage in informal and occasionally illegal ways of occupying metropolitan, urban, and rural spaces (Stopani & Pampuro, 2018; Peano, 2021), becoming active participants in subjective processes of conflict and negotiation, both in the more welcoming "sanctuary city" (Ambrosini, 2021) and in the inhospitable frame of the "cities of exclusion" (Marchetti, 2019).

As said before, we do not want to underestimate the forms of further suffering and violence that constitute the social effects of repressive and security policies and of an increasingly widespread tendency towards institutional abandonment and sacrifice of thousands of men and women who have passed from the social trap represented by reception to seeing it in many cases completely denied. At the same time, however, we believe it is important to have a gaze capable of catching the various acts of "making spaces" (Colucci & Gallo, 2016) by migrants outside the reception system and their ability to express autonomy and innovation, particularly evident through the study of informal settlements (Belloni, Fravega & Giudici, 2020; Benedict 2020), to try to trace and bring to the surface those forms of agency from marginal positions (Ghorashi, De Boer & Ten Holder, 2018) and those counter-hegemonic expressions within the spaces of urban segregation (Dempsey, 2021). These resistances and counter-conducts signal an active presence of migrants and their unwillingness to be passive actors in the governance of the urban space (Hall, 2015; Darling, 2017; Kreichauf & Mayer, 2021).
The informal settlement that I have had the opportunity to know in Padua show the coexistence and sometimes the intertwining of forms of oppression produced by institutional choices and the production of spaces of resistance within highly conflicting urban contexts.

2. Methodology

This article contains some empirical contributions that emerged during an ethnographic study in which extensive periods of direct observation were accompanied by active engagement in various protests and mobilizations, where asylum seekers advocated for their rights within reception facilities and dignified forms of local inclusion. Specifically, in 2022 there were many occasions for meeting with a large group of asylum seekers excluded from the institutional reception system in and around an informal settlement in Padova near the railway station.
We can divide the empirical work into three parts although the interactions with some migrants was long-lasting and went through all of them.
In the initial two parts, we focused on the organization of reception facilities and the conditions in terms of human rights and freedom, followed by an exploration of the social ramifications brought about by the pandemic on asylum seekers.
In the last part, finished at the end of 2023, our collocation and interactions in the research field were guaranteed both by the relationships established during the preceding stages and by the fact that the informal settlement in question emerged in the same square where I am engaged as an activist within a social and cultural space called Stria, specifically within the legal support desk for asylum seekers organized by the Open Gates association.
The presence of a legal support desk a few meters away from the central area of the informal encampment made it possible to look from inside to get to know the perceptions and point of view of the inhabitants of that place, but also to activate a self-reflective process with respect to the ambivalences of solidarity-based anti-racist practices (Firouzi Tabar, 2021).

3. Results: Contested Spaces in the City

We are in Padua, in the railway station area. Towards the end of 2018, Law 132 on security and immigration was approved by the Italian parliament, and it is no coincidence that the two concepts overlap within the legislative measure. Among the various issues, such as some attempts to hinder the NGOs active in the Mediterranean, emerges one of the most relevant cuts in investments for the reception of asylum seekers that led to a deterioration of the conditions of migrants in the facilities. Between 2018 and 2019 the total investment of the Italian state for the

various forms of reception decreased by about 150 million (Data: Ministry of Economy) euros. More in detail we see that the public funds disbursed *per die* for each asylum seeker within the emergency facilities falls from 35 euros to 25 euros (Data: Ministry of Interior), forcing especially the small organizations to make substantial cuts for social inclusion services.
Among the many choices to restrict the requirements for access to reception and accelerate expulsions from it, we find the elimination of one of the most widespread forms of regularization: the "humanitarian protection". That "permit to stay" was introduced by Law 286/1998. In the absence of conditions for having international protection, it tends to care people who suffered particular physical and psychological harm in trying to reach Italy, and those who built a consistent path of social inclusion in Italy while waiting for their asylum application to be examined.
The meaning is to institutionally abandon and make irregular and deportable thousands of individuals who previously, albeit precariously, found some socio-economic protection in the framework of the right to asylum and institutional reception. It is no coincidence that during the first months of 2019, the first small encampments sprang up, first in Piazza Salvemini and later, following a police eviction, in Piazza Gasparotto.
We are in a logistically and architecturally strategic area.

Image 1. The gathering of young migrants in the square.
(Source: original from the Author)

Image 2. The square after the police station opening.
(Source: original from the Author)

The square is visually sheltered, little known, and is only a few meters from the station, public showers and popular kitchens where free meals are daily distributed. At the same time, it is close to the city centre. In 2021, immediately following the end of restrictions due to the pandemic crisis which pushed everybody to abandon the square, the area began to be populated again (Image 1). The settlement, especially in terms of the number of people using it as a night shelter, reaches its maximum size and crowding during the spring and summer of 2022, precisely at the stage when, together with other activists and fellow researchers, we decide to inaugurate the Stria cultural space and the legal support desk within it.[4]

The relationships previously built with some of the settlement's inhabitants and my role as activist and coordinator of the asylum seeker help desk within the square ensured a daily, trusting interaction with the migrants in the area through interviews, informal conversations, and consultations at the legal support desk.

The composition of those who passed through or inhabited the settlement during those months is heterogeneous. Asylum seekers who left the reception facilities due to a revocation of the measures, the end of their asylum application or by voluntary choice, irregular migrants looking for inconspicuous places of shelter, regular migrants without a job and without sufficient income to have a home, but also migrants with a regular job unable to find accommodation due to racism in the rental housing market. the square also played a functional role for certain young newcomers who, especially since the Cutro Decree, have found it very difficult to find a place in the institutional reception network. Thanks to the legal support desk, but also to the constant presence of various solidarity associations and the availability of a group of lawyers, they were able to receive information and assistance that would otherwise be difficult to obtain. Additionally, the square provided a place for them to spend a few nights while awaiting improved accommodation. For many months, the square's arcade had turned into a dormitory. The contiguity with the legal support desk made it possible, on the one hand, to monitor at almost all hours of the day and evening the situation and to intervene in emergency situations by providing water and blankets, or by reporting to social and health services the most serious critical situations.

The biographical stories collected during individual conversations, but also in collective moments of confrontation, reveal first and foremost the consequences of an institutional governance entirely based on emergency logics, a fact that forcibly collocates many migrants in an extreme spatial, social and temporal precariousness, often rendering them incapable of constructing medium-term projects, too busy in a daily struggle for survival. During December 2022, a new phenomenon, at least in intensity and spread, gave us concrete evidence of the conditions of these "suspended lives" particularly referring to migrants who had recently arrived in Italy. Our association was contacted at the same time by a group of Pakistani migrants who had been frequenting and sometimes sleeping in the square for a few weeks and by some social workers who worked at the public showers, a key point of reference for vulnerable individuals seeking support. It was reported to us that many migrants who had arrived in Padua, despite having expressed a desire to seek asylum, were not seeing their right to be placed in reception facilities respected and thus find themselves in the particular (forced) condition of homeless asylum seekers (image 3). Going to the public showers to ask the municipality for temporary accommodation in the framework of the so-called "winter emergency", the workers could not accept their request since the Prefecture was the only institution that could take care of them.

These are people trapped in a kind of socio-legal limbo. On the one hand they were unresponsive with respect to the institution that officially deals with asylum seekers, the Prefecture, and on the other hand they were rejected and literally left on the street by the municipality social services. In that period I was able to meet and get to know many young people in this condition and I could see the signs of a deep discomfort and disorientation due to this institutional

4 The opening of the Stria space is favoured by the long work of actors as the cultural circle Nadir, the Co-working C0+ and the Gasparotto association. An important collaboration plan was created with them in order to address the problems and contradictions of the area and imagine together innovative forms of urban regeneration.

abandonment of very young people (in several cases we are talking about under 20 migrants). For these people, who seem to confirm a trend toward "securitization" that sees increasingly "less care" and "more control", there is no public investment for socio-economic protection. This condition drives them to find refuge and seek resources in the informal dynamics of urban space and in some cases in reference to anti-racist realities in the territory.

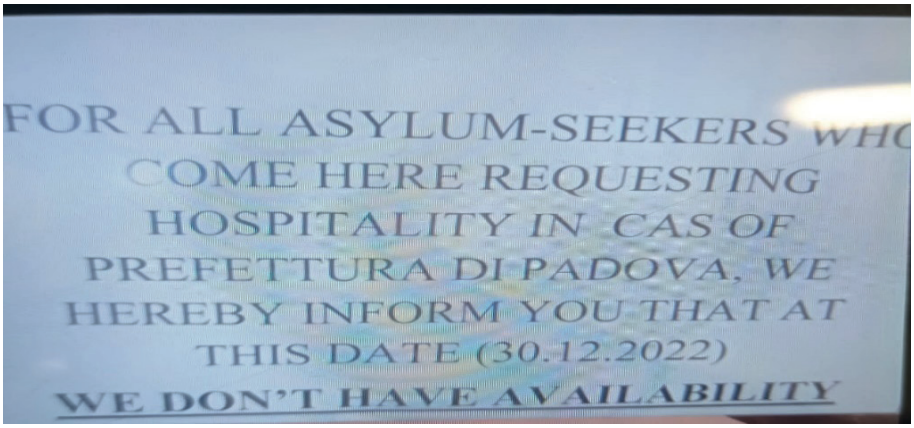

Image 3. This poster was hung in front of the police headquarters and the prefecture of Padua (Source: original from the Author)

While representing in many cases a minimum basis for the protection of primary rights such as the right to housing the organization of reception itself is steeped in critical issues and problematic contradictions. Indeed, the choices and life stories observed and shared during that period brought to light and confirmed the idea of the social trap represented by the institutional reception system. In this regard it seems emblematic that within the encampment I found people who I met for the first time in the protest marches seven years before against the rights violation within some reception camps, people who today show all the rage and frustration toward an oppressive and discriminatory migration management system.

Among the people met within the informal settlement, there are many cases of former asylum seekers whose reception itinerary did not favour an emancipatory process, trapped in a precarious and frustrating vicious circle. Among them, the case of Hakim, a young Ivorian guy, seems to be very emblematic. Hakim does not sleep in the square, he finds better solutions from friends, he arrived in Padova during 2011 at the time of the so-called North Africa plan so he has a good network in the city. Until 2013 he benefits from humanitarian permits, but in 2013 the plan ends and he finds himself excluded from reception and thus homeless. With dozens of other people, he occupies a building, Casa Don Gallo, where he remains for two years while he waits for a response to his application for international protection. From 2015 to 2019 he is placed in the institutional reception circuit, where for a short period he also experiences the difficult living conditions in the first reception camp in Bagnoli, in the Province of Padua. It is there that we met for the first time, during the summer of 2017. In 2019, his application for asylum is rejected, and he is expelled from the reception facility despite a "reiterated application" for international protection. Then, his residence permit is no longer renewed and he starts to live irregularly. Hakim, and many others like him, more than ten years after his arrival sees his path to inclusion, which began with hopes and ambitions, retreating instead of evolving. As emerges from a long interview done before he left to reach France, he suffers on his skin the violent effects of Italian migration policies and finds in the informal dynamics and networks of the territory the last resources to try to change course in his life:

> «Do you remember when we used to do the manifestation together to get the Bagnoli refugee camp closed down? That was many years ago. We thought we were doing the right thing, even when we

occupied Don Gallo with comrades from the Union. But it didn›t help. In the end then they move you around, move you around and tell you to wait. At first it is okay, everything is okay because you think you wait and then you get the document. Do you see me? It›s been ten years and I don't even have it. I don't even think about it anymore. I met some guys here near the station who also come to the square sometimes, they are organizing to go to France, I'm thinking to go with them»

Hakim's story not only signals to us the violence that characterizes migration control and, in response to it, the importance of studying what happens in urban contexts. It reminds us, once again, that around the concept of agency of migrant subjectivity the imperative to avoid any form of "romanticization". The relations built over the years, the informal dynamics from which to recover socio-economic resources and the solidarity of anti-racist associations, combined with the main point that is the obstinacy and stubbornness of the subjects themselves, keep alive the hope for emancipation and growth. At the same time, social exclusion from the institutional point of view and the extreme precariousness of the legal condition makes the situation radically problematic, and this is increasingly true for the very young newcomers.

Moreover, Hakim's biographical profile warns against the risk of creating rigid and ideological categories insufficient to read the complexity of the phenomena observed. While it is true that this life trajectory, and other elements gathered from the field of research, reinforce the idea of a general tendency to restrict or nullify the rights and dignity of migrant people, this tendency must be read by considering very carefully many contingencies as well as many subjective and local structural variables. The suggestion that comes to us is to focus on the "battleground" along the multiples of mobility that people trace trying to escape the reins and traps of migration control policies. Going back to Piazza Gasparotto it should be noted that at certain stages, the socio-sanitary conditions within the settlement were highly critical, accompanied by issues related to drug use and frequent episodes of conflict, in some case violent, among its inhabitants. Nevertheless, the concealed and sheltered location of the settlement, along with its strategic positioning and the presence of social support networks and easily accessible low threshold services, facilitated in some cases a more dynamic and independent utilization of the opportunities offered by the urban environment. the settlement and the relational dynamics it produced among the inhabitants, but also with external actors as anti-racist groups, have represented for some migrants an opportunity of relational visibility as well as the possibility to accumulate social capital both to connect more to the city's opportunities and to accumulate resources with a view to continuing their migration trajectory.

There are many cases of migrants, often known in the evening hours because during the day most of the settlement's population moved to other parts of the city, who spent only two or three weeks there before attempting to reach France or Germany. In this case, the relational network of the settlement was pragmatically useful not only to rest and regain strength for the new journey, but also to gather information and logistical indications on the safest way to reach and cross the border. Even in the weeks during which the area is overcrowded and conditions of greater social decay and episodes of conflict between the inhabitants intensify, the police forces do not seem to want to act through the classic repressive and security instruments. What prevailed was an informal dynamic of tolerance and a constant negotiation plan, oriented not to exasperate the conflict and not to impose the instruments of the penal and repressive approach, where in many cases there was a strategic and "logistical" disapplication of the law (Fabini, 2023). The words of a Nigerian guy who was irregular after the denial of his asylum claim and who was living in the informal settlement in the square in those days, words collected after closing time of the Open Gates desk where he was collaborating as a mediator, seem very meaningful:

«The police? I used to try to avoid them. but now I'm tired, I've been in Italy for five years, I also spent almost two years in the Cona camp in Venice, together with 1,000 other people. After five years I'm here without papers, without a home and without a job. I'm tired of running away too. and then they know that around here there are many of us without (papers) they know us, what should they do? arrest us all?»

Throughout this phase, municipal authorities exhibited a mix of responses, oscillating between the provision of essential services, such as night shelters for migrants, including those without documents, the willingness to mobilize the local social services and the anti/marginalization "street units" to try to approach the situation with the tools of mediation and care.
In spite of this, situations of abandonment, strong social exclusion and critical situations from the point of view of primary rights persisted and were in part counteracted by the presence of Stria, of Nadir, another cultural space active from years in the square, and the network of solidarity associations. In addition to specific interventions such as legal support, the main contribution of the self-organized realities was to "make visible" on a daily basis the most urgent critical issues and push institutions to intervene, albeit often belatedly.
Between spring and winter 2022, the informal settlement and its surrounding area emerged as an experimental laboratory of encounters and relations involving a portion of the migrants in the camp. This experimental space brought together various professionals such as lawyers, mediators, and researchers, as well as anti-racist solidarity groups and the municipal administration. It is important to highlight that, especially thanks to the migrants' ability to utilize that portion of the city and their skill in building and leveraging unexpected relationships within it, the prevailing theme during this period was the structural causes behind the formation of the camp. Simultaneously, the issue of social marginalization and institutional neglect often took centre stage in the city's public discourse.
This was partly due to the efforts of solidarity groups very active in the area. In this context, there was a growing recognition of the need to address these phenomena with social tools of care and inclusion, in open opposition to the securitization model.
However, this element alone would not have been sufficient without the existence of an institutional willingness that we can consider rare in the Italian political landscape, which is broadly oriented towards representing social marginality as a matter of security and public order. As already mentioned, the Municipality of Padova, particularly the head of social services, decided to directly invest resources, despite attacks from right-wing parties. These resources were used to strengthen "street units" in the area to daily support the homeless population, and to create a new street unit focused on people with drug addiction. They also committed to supporting existing associations and, at the proposal of organizations such as Open Gates, to establish institutional tables where different actors (including the Police Headquarters and the Prefettura) meet to envision a structural social intervention in the area and to plan a social requalification of the same using mediation and social inclusion tools. This particular activism of associations and the administration's willingness unexpectedly found an echo in the local press. One of the local newspapers, *Il Mattino di Padova*, on October 22, 2022, headlined in this way an article about the situation in Piazza Gasparotto: «Migrants expelled from reception centres are the "drifters" who fill the squares of Padua». This article, and others of the same tenor, overturn the assumptions of the securitization paradigm by attributing the tensions and conflicts present in the area not to the dangerousness of the subjects, but to the structural limitations and criticalities of migration governance. From the individual responsibility to the institutional one.
However, this experimentation, and the virtuous storytelling that accompanied it, was short-lived.
The first signs of a shift towards a more traditional security-focused approach appeared on the morning of September 26. Without prior notice, law enforcement officers entered the square and cleared the makeshift beds where dozens of people were sleeping, discarding all their belongings, including their clothes. Around the same time, a media campaign began with remarkable consistency, focusing on the perceived danger posed by the people frequenting the square and questioning the effectiveness of a social and community-based approach.
In a short span of time, the long inclusive process constructed in that area was severely weakened, overshadowed by the intrusion of stigmatizing narratives and the practices of criminalization activated by the police.

In January 2023, an event occurred that marked the definitive return to a security-focused approach: the establishment of a police station in the square (Image 3). This led to the subsequent dismantling of the informal settlement, the "desertification" of the area, and the relocation of a large portion of migrants to another sheltered location in the vicinity, Piazza Salvemini. Ironically, it was the same place where they had moved years earlier after a police eviction.
Identifying a specific reason to explain this shift is not easy. It can be hypothesized that, beyond the classic justifications underlying the securitization rationale, there was a strong reluctance from local institutions to continue investing in a social experiment creating a reproducible precedent and, above all, an attraction point, as "inclusive city" for migrants residing in more hostile territories. On the other hand, we can explain this change by considering the city hall's goal of responding, with immediate and visible solutions, to the debate activated in the city following the intervention of some local newspapers that had used headlines like these to portray the situation: «A Tent city in Piazza Gasparotto in Padova: Is the kingdom of pushers and drug users», «Decay in a short walk from the station. The residents: Sex in the square in change of drugs». We can see once again a centre-left local government imitating the right-wing approaches and feeding populist practices and rhetoric, thus confirming the transversality of the securitization trend in local government (Tondelli, 2009).
Certainly, for some migrants – such as many recent asylum seekers excluded from institutional reception and an increasing number of asylum seekers expelled from reception centres following the approval of the Cutro Decree – this abrupt shift toward a security-oriented approach will have significant social consequences, pushing them towards extreme social marginalization.

4. Final Remarks

The case of the informal settlement in Padua shows us two elements that we consider useful for a more general discussion on the phenomenon of migratory movements and its governance within territories, reinforcing the idea of a progressive "securitization" of "othering" and "bordering" policies in the urban context.
First of all, the process that characterized that part of Padua's urban space, at least until the security turn, showed how, despite the presence of structural elements of suffering, discrimination and oppression, we are in the presence of an always open field marked by conflicts, negotiations, alliances and resistance where subjects are often not passive victims.
Secondly, we see how this battleground is increasingly developing in the shady areas and sheltered places of urban space. The occupation of these spaces by migrants, specifically by an increasing number of "homeless asylum seekers", occurs for several reasons and through many different forms. It may be the search for shelter to spend the night, or it may be a strategic device to seek new forms of active inclusion in the territory, or even a temporary logistical support to continue the migratory trajectory.
It is true that after the end of the informal settlement experience in Piazza Gasparotto, many migrants have found other solutions and appropriate contexts to cope with the distress caused by the processes of racialization and institutional socio-economical abandonment we have recently witnessed in Italy. However, it is equally true that the "expendability" in act thanks to the hegemony of the securitization model places them at very dangerous levels of denial of basic rights, leading to daily suffering and violence.
Certainly, this conflictual and emancipatory use of the city and the occupation and production and reproduction of new spaces and relations in some of its areas, as the Padua case shows us, must severely reckon with the tendency to restrict the requirements for the right to asylum, to severely weaken the organisation of reception and to impose securitization approaches in the management of new migrations.

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Unmasking the Effects of Airbnb in Barcelona[2]

Introduction

According to UN-Habitat, by 2035, most of the world's population will live in metropolitan areas. This will further intensify the need for affordable housing. A home is not only a basic right but also a key factor for social cohesion, as it generates a sense of belonging and fosters cultural recognition (Hernández *et al*., 2007; Lebrusán Murillo, 2019). Spain has recently experienced growth in numbers of both landlords and tenants (Future Policy Lab, 2023), which suggests polarisation in the real estate system, in which the proportion of people who are not owners of their homes is increasing along with the proportion of people who own more than one property and are making a profit by renting them. Hence, the right to housing is also being affected by the right to private property. In consequence, the right to live in decent housing is in conflict with the ability of private owners to sell or rent their homes for profit, and tourism is a relevant factor in this. The city of Barcelona is no exception to these patterns. The purpose of this article is to look at buildings that are used for both residential and tourism purposes, in order to observe the extent to which they turn ordinary everyday places into a kind of theme park.

Therefore, the main purpose of this research is to explore the coexisting interests in the historic and touristified centre of Barcelona, where the aim should be to preserve the sense of belonging and attachment to the place among local and immigrants, and even among tourists. This entails analysis of the effects of the increasing number of homestays[3] (or tourist housing) in this area of Barcelona (i.e. Ciutat Vella), including its gentrification processes, immigration density, protests by social movements, political reactions, and maintenance of heritage and community spirit.

After reviewing the scientific literature on housing problems and touristification, we describe the major expansion in the advertising on the Airbnb website of homestays in Barcelona. We then consider the community spirit and very essence of the neighbourhood that residents yearn for and which tourists actively seek in order to feel immersed in the local culture and daily life.

Methodologically, the secondary data was gathered from the Government of Catalonia and Barcelona City Council, and also from the InsideAirbnb website. The Datasets Catalogue, in CSV and SHP formats, Open Data BCN, (Barcelona City Council's open data service) was processed and filtered using GIS programs, in this case Arcgis (Esri). The primary data was collected from 15 in-depth interviews with local residents, leaders of social movements, real estate agents and political representatives. Fitting both sets of interests is the challenge faced by mature and sustainable destinations and, therefore, by tourism policy in smart destinations. Will this be the case with Barcelona?

1. State of the art

It has been suggested that an effective measure to reduce the effects of the crisis of accessible, affordable housing and concentration of rented properties as opposed to home ownership could be the regulation of rental fees (Lebrusán, 2019). The recent popularity in Europe of such policy has its supporters and detractors in academia. Many have associated it with fewer and poorer quality houses being available for rent (Sims, 2007), because in a market economy, regulated

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3 We use the term homestay to refer to a tourist housing, because the origin of this accommodation is residential.

prices do not always have positive effects. However, other studies have shown that controlled rent can prevent certain types of population from being forced out of their neighbourhoods (Diamond et al., 2019) without causing a collapse in the supply of rented properties (Jofre-Monseny, 2023).

In Spain, the measures approved in the recent State Act on the Right to Housing (BOE, Boletín Oficial del Estado, May 2023) establish a legal framework for any Autonomous Communities that wish to implement temporary rent control by declaring "stressed areas". This law "freezes" the price of homes that have been rented in the last five years and subjects rental fees to a reference index in the case of dwellings belonging to major property owners that were not being rented before. However, as seasonal contracts (for less than 11 months) are exempt from control, there is a loophole that owners can exploit in order to circumvent the regulation of rent. Regarding fiscal matters, tax discounts for tenants and a higher tax on the rent of second or unoccupied homes have been proposed. Councils have also established a surcharge on property tax for unoccupied homes and second homes, which together with the increase in public housing stock would make more homes available for rent. Normalisation of public intermediation on rented properties has also been proposed, which would raise people's trust in landlords and make tenants feel more secure, as well as new mechanisms to balance the changing needs of households with the existing housing stock.

In recent decades, public policies have favoured the right to speculate with housing over the right to live in it, the so-called commodification and consequently financialisation of housing (as mortgaged home ownership drove financial markets). Both processes encouraged home ownership, disinvestment in public and subsidised housing, as well as an increase in speculation. This is where tourism also came onto the scene, whereupon the use of new technologies to advertise homestays on peer-to-peer accommodation platforms led to a sharp increase in tourist short-term rentals (Cócola-Gant, 2018). This touristification process, a phenomenon dubbed "airbnbification" by Richards (2016), stems from the revaluation of property and the rise in purchase and/or rental prices, and can lead to residents being forced out of their neighbourhoods, which become invaded by tourists.

Consequently, the prevailing perception in Spain is that the increasing demand for rented housing has outstripped the growth in supply. Combined with the residual role of council housing, this has led to a persistent lack of affordable residences being available for rent, especially in urban areas. Approximately 76% of rent-paying low-income households spend 40% or more of their disposable income on their homes (Future Policy Lab, 2023). And in 2020, according to the same report by the Future Policy Lab (2023), home ownership rates fell in all age groups, but especially among younger households. Only 27% of under 28 people own their main home, and the home ownership rate among over 48 people is just 75%.

This crisis of accessible, affordable housing is especially striking in Spain, but the same thing is happening elsewhere in Europe. According to the Housing Anywhere International Rent Index report (2023), published by Europe's largest home rental market, in 2022 the EU member states witnessed an average year-on-year increase of 14.3% in rent. This crisis has raised concerns about the notion of housing precariousness, which Clair *et al.* (2019) define as the state of uncertainty that increases the real or perceived probability of someone suffering an adverse event, caused (at least partly) by their relation with the provider of their home, or its physical qualities, affordability, security, or lack of access to essential services. All this is aggravated due to the population being increasingly concentrated in urban areas, where the demand for housing is often higher than the supply. There are various reasons for this concentration, including employment (skilled immigrants, digital nomads, expatriates), education (academic tourism) and both private and corporate tourism.

Regarding the changes caused by tourism, local governments originally strove to create tourist resources and infrastructures (Hall, 2009; Colomb, 2012), but later started implementing measures to limit the growth of tourism and to prevent residential neighbourhoods from being transformed into tourist areas. For example, Barcelona approved the Special Urban Plan for

Tourist Accommodation (PEUAT) in 2021[4], which establishes areas where the supply of tourist accommodation can increase (i.e. the least congested ones), areas where it should stay the same and areas where it needs to be reduced. This plan responded to the need to make the city's tourist accommodation compatible with a sustainable urban model. However, limiting licences for tourist apartments and the closure of illegal accommodation has not detracted from the residents' real concern: the increase in the price of housing, both for purchase and for rent (López-Gay, 2018). By a process of *silent expulsion* (López-Villanueva and Crespi-Vallbona, 2023), the touristic interest and general demand (skilled immigrants, digital nomads, expatriates, academic travellers) in certain areas of the city has raised the housing price, thus displacing the people who cannot afford to stay. Hence, housing policies should focus on expanding social housing, with the clear objective of spatially distributing it to encourage mixed neighbourhoods and discourage segregation, ghettoisation and gentrification.

Both tourists and residents want neighbourhoods to maintain their everyday mood. They are places to which the community becomes attached, where their lives are played out and a source of well-being (Barañano-Cid, 2021; López-Villanueva & Crespi-Vallbona, 2023). Sense of place, by definition, is the emotional relations between people and their environment, and indicates how meaningful it is for a person or community and how it contributes to their sense of well-being (DeMiglio & Williams, 2008). These spaces and buildings (whether or not they are considered heritage) and their associated customs are parts of the local identity (Crespi-Vallbona & Richards, 2007) and modern-day tourists tend to actively seek these everyday experiences, and look to immerse themselves in the local community (Füller & Michel, 2014; Gravari-Basbas & Delaplace, 2015). What has been dubbed "off-the-beaten-track" (Maitland & Newman, 2008) or "new urban" (Füller & Michel, 2014) tourism has been fostered by Airbnb (Freytag & Bauder, 2018; Ioannides *et al*., 2018), which offers the chance to feel closer to the local population's day-to-day life and more immersed in the neighbourhood (Maitland & Newman, 2008). As Stors (2020) points out, the pairing of new urban tourists with home-sharing trends are current drivers of urban transformation, place-making and image construction from the bottom.

However, this is not without controversy. Airbnb was originally conceived as a means to provide ordinary people with new ways to make money by renting rooms in their homes, which also promoted a more inclusive tourism (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018). Kadi, Plank and Seidl (2019) studied the impact of Airbnb in Vienna, finding that it is less concentrated in the centre and is more spread throughout the city. Hence, this platform (and others, such as Homeaway, 9Flats and Housetrip) might be viewed to be promoting inclusive and socially sustainable tourism. Unfortunately, the reality is that mass, invasive and unwanted tourism (Pimentel de Oliveira, 2020) has, from the first decade of the twenty-first century, given rise to a multitude of movements that criticise the negative effects on cities. The essence of so-called *tourismophobia* (Huete & Mantecón, 2018; Mansilla, 2018; Milano *et al*., 2018) is the claim that it has driven up the cost of both owning and renting homes, and has caused changes to residential dynamics, the commercial fabric, neighbourhood relations (Gil & Sequera 2018; Crespi-Vallbona & Mascarilla-Miró, 2018) and the use of public space (Luque *et al*., 2019; López-Villanueva & Crespi-Vallbona, 2021). Protest movements have also decried how little say the general public has in what is happening (Schneiberg & Lounsbury, 2008) and are arguing that they too have a right to the city (Crespi-Vallbona & López-Villanueva, 2023). The most intense tourism activities still tend to be concentrated in central neighbourhoods, with profound effects on local housing market, the cost of rent and residential displacement (Cócola-Gant, 2016; Gutiérrez *et al*., 2017).

Tourist policy tends to declare certain destinations to be of special interest. But the challenge is to strike the right balance between the interests of residents and tourists. Governance models need to plan new areas for both sets of people (Ioannides & Petridou, 2016). Innovative solutions are required to maintain the character, authenticity and community spirit of neighbourhoods

4 The PEUAT, the first of which was approved in 2017 and the second in 2022, guarantees the rights of residents and regulates tourist accommodation through zoning. This includes Zone 1, the declining zone (in Ciutat Vella, part of the Eixample, Poblenou, Vila Olímpica, Poble Sec, Hostafrancs and Sant Antoni) in which new accommodation facilities cannot be opened and no new licenses for tourist apartments can be issued.

in the form of regulations in response to the complex dichotomy of tourism development and real inclusiveness, offsetting the negative effects of the home sharing and ensuring that the benefits are rightfully distributed among the whole resident community (Morales-Pérez *et al*., 2020; Crespi-Vallbona & Domínguez-Pérez, 2021). This is especially important given that many cities lack efficient urban policy instruments to tackle the spatial displacement and gentrification processes caused by the rapid expansion of informal tourist accommodation due to online platforms such as Airbnb (e.g. Gutiérrez *et al*., 2017; Lee, 2016; Schäfer & Braun, 2016).

2. Barcelona: the case of Ciutat Vella

This article uses a descriptive but critical approach to the main purpose of considering Airbnb apartments in the historic and touristified centre of Barcelona, and how they might have contributed to the lack of residential housing and excess of tourist accommodation. It also proposes ways to preserve not just the local and immigrant population's sense of belonging and attachment to the place, but also the one of tourists themselves. It focuses on the central and highly touristic district of Ciutat Vella (Map 1), exploring aspects as gentrification, immigration density, social movements, political reactions, heritage and community spirit.
Barcelona is a Mediterranean city that is compacted into a relatively small geographic area. It has 10 districts and 73 neighbourhoods. The oldest and most central one is called Ciutat Vella (Old City) and is made up of four neighbourhoods: Raval, Barri Gòtic (Gothic Quarter), La Barceloneta, and Sant Pere, Santa Caterina i La Ribera. El Raval grew around the medieval walls, although there were probably previous settlements in that area. The Gothic Quarter is the oldest part of the city, largely corresponding with the ancient Roman settlement of Barcino. La Barceloneta was almost uninhabited until the mid-eighteenth century, when fishermen began to settle along the seafront. Sant Pere, Santa Caterina i La Ribera was the city's financial hub between the thirteenth and the fifteenth century. Rich merchants built grand palaces as the ones that still stand in Carrer Montcada.

Map 1. Ciutat Vella and its 4 neighbourhoods: El Raval, Barri Gòtic, La Barcelona, and Sant Pere, Santa Caterina i La Ribera

Source: Barcelona City Council

In terms of methodology, the results are based on qualitative and quantitative data by: a) 15 semi-structured interviews with residents, leaders of social movements, real estate agents which manage the housings listed on Airbnb platform, and political representatives involved in the transformation of these areas; b) observation by visiting the neighbourhoods; c) secondary data obtained from official records of registered tourist accommodation and number of international visitors (*Turisme de Barcelona* reports, which is the local destination management of Barcelona City Council), the InsideAirBnb website (which gives updated information of listed apartments in the Airbnb platform), Incasol (which provides data about the development of land for economic activities, for residential use and the promotion of protected housing of *Generalitat de Catalunya*, the Government of Catalonia), reports about the concerns of Barcelona residents (*Percepció del Turisme a Barcelona*, Barometer Reports) and the Municipal Register of Inhabitants (Statistics of Barcelona City Council). The open data available from these institutions in CSV and SHP formats (specifically the share of holiday rentals with respect to residential rentals) is processed and analysed using geographical information systems, in particular ArcGIS (which is maintained by Esri). Furthermore, data from Idealista (Real Estate Agency that provides housing rental and purchase prices in Barcelona) were analysed.

The heat maps is useful to show relative densities of point entities or numerical values depending on the zoom level and the extent of the map. For our study, there are identified the locations of the tourist units by means of a shape file layer in the ArcGis software, and the District delimitation (in this case the limits of the city of Barcelona, with the tool called Kernel Density); then, this graphical representation allows to visualize the concentration of points in space. Furthermore, to obtain the Table 4, a debugging of the original base of the AirBnb platform is performed, using the two aforementioned layers (the first, the delimitation of neighbourhoods and districts in Barcelona in polygons, and the second is the layer of the tourist locations in points). Once the locations of the Airbnb points are distributed in the polygons of each neighbourhood, a summary table is made to show that Raval, Barri Gótic, Barceloneta and Sant Pere contain the most Airbnb housing.

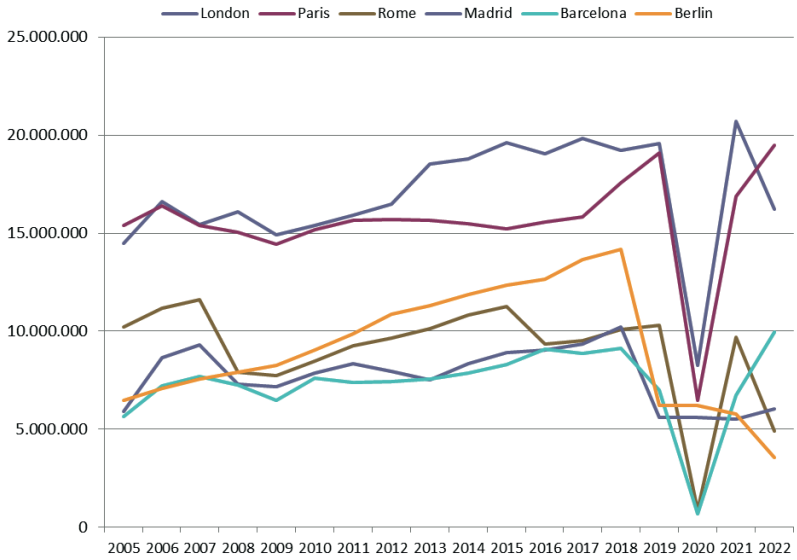
The study was carried out between October 2022 and September 2023. Qualitative methods are also useful to understand how the residents of a tourist destination feel, to understand their social context, and to interpret their opinions (Denzin & Licoln, 1994, 2003; Jennings, 2010). Participants to the interviews were selected through quota and snowball sampling. Quota is a non-probability technique to collect data from population subgroups (Coleman & Multon, 2019), in this case from the presidents of the contacted social movements: *Xarxa Veïnal Ciutat Vella* (Neighborhood Network Ciutat Vella), *l'Òstia*, *Barceloneta diu Prou* (Barceloneta says Enough) and the real state agencies. Snowball sampling enabled the researcher to access informants using contacts provided by other informants (Noy, 2008). These recommendations were obtained from FAVB *Federació d'Associacions de Veïns i Veïnes de Barcelona* (Barcelona Federation of Neighbours Associations).

Thematic analysis was used to identify, analyse and report the most relevant aspects of research questions, which inquired about the participants' opinions of tourism in Barcelona, specifically in their neighbourhoods, its impact and the effect on their lives. In the discussion section, we interpret these opinions on the expansion of tourism and the related changes.

3. Results and discussion

Barcelona was chosen as a single case study because it has experienced rapid growth in tourism, especially in the last twenty years. It has become a major tourism hub and attracts even more visitors than the state capital, Madrid (Figure 1). The numbers show the rise not only of leisure travellers but also of corporate tourism. Indeed, since 2018, Barcelona has been consolidated as the fourth destination in the world for business meetings and events (ICCA, International Congress and Convention Association, 2023).

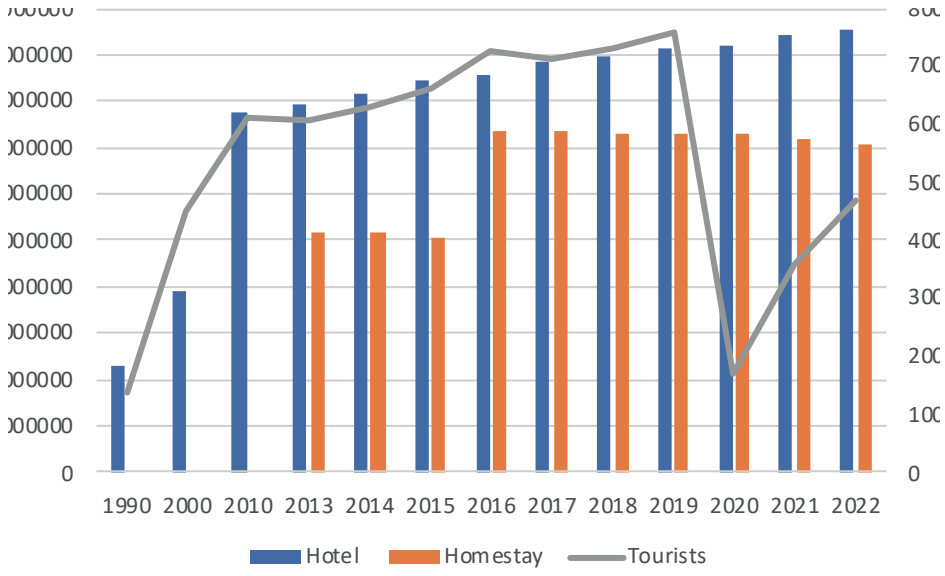
Figure 1. Most visited cities in Europe. International Tourism (2005-2022)



Source: Own elaboration from Tourism Statistic Reports (Turisme de Barcelona)

This gradual increase in tourism flows has been accompanied by an increase in regulated accommodation, the traditional hotel industry, as well as the emergence of homestay apartments. In Barcelona, the system of VUT licences (*vivienda de uso turístico*, "homes used for tourism"), or HUT as they are known in Catalan, was introduced in 2012[1] in response to the rise of mass tourism, the aim being to regulate the use of homes for other than residential. Figure 2 reports the evolution of tourism in the city and the increase in associated accommodation.

Figure 2. Evolution of tourism, hotel accommodation and homestays in Barcelona (1990-2022)

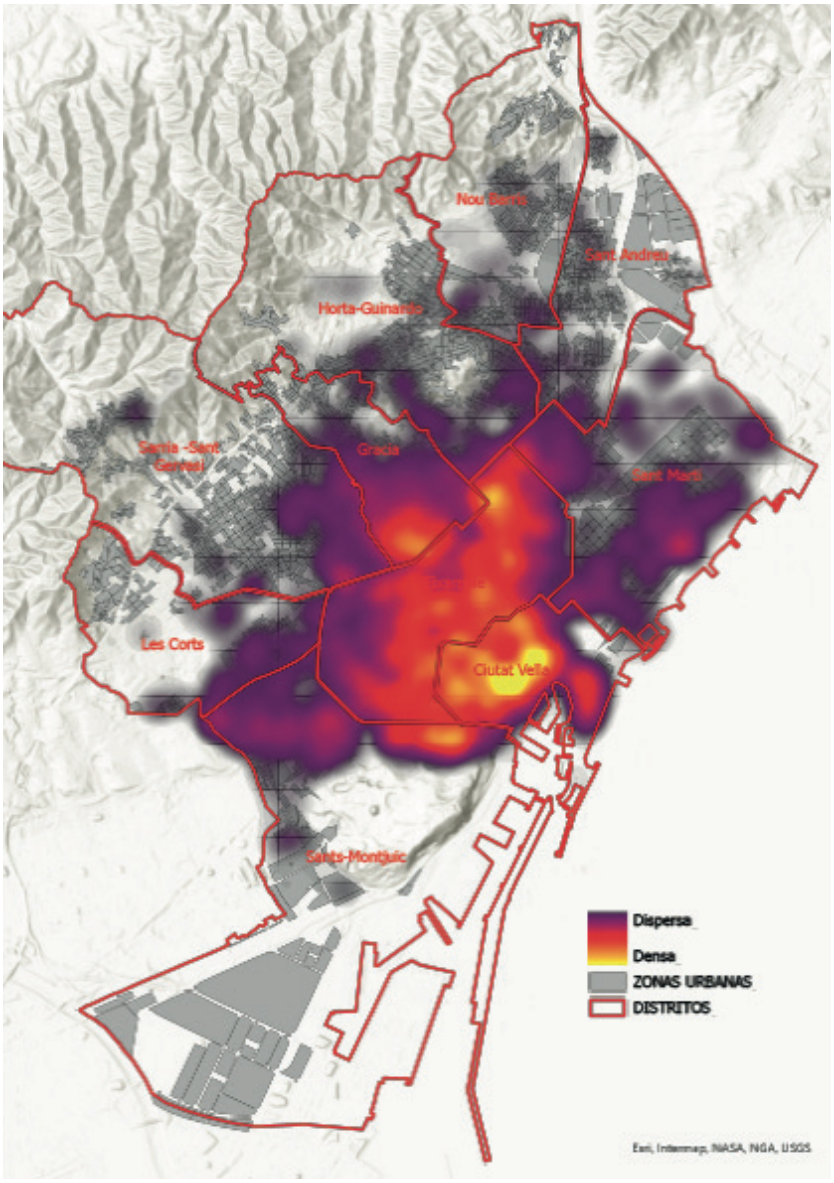


Source: Authors' elaboration from Tourism Statistic Reports (Turisme de Barcelona)

1 Decree of Generalitat de Catalunya 159/2012, November 20, on tourist accommodation and dwellings for tourist use.

Licenced guesthouses tend to attract customers by advertising on dedicated websites. However, they operate alongside non-licenced homestays, with Airbnb having been present in Barcelona since 2008, as well as homes that rent out individual rooms, for which no special licence is required. This has led to a huge number of houses "disappearing" from the residential market and being used by tourists instead, as shown in Map 2. In the city centre, Ciutat Vella is the most exposed district to this concentration of tourist accommodation to the detriment of residential properties. According to the *Memòria de Sostenibilitat Turística* (Tourism Sustainability Report, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2016), more than 70% of the hotel supply and seven out of ten of the most visited sights in Barcelona were concentrated in Ciutat Vella. This is a recurrent phenomenon in many popular tourist cities due to the concentration of the main amenities and tourist attractions in such areas.

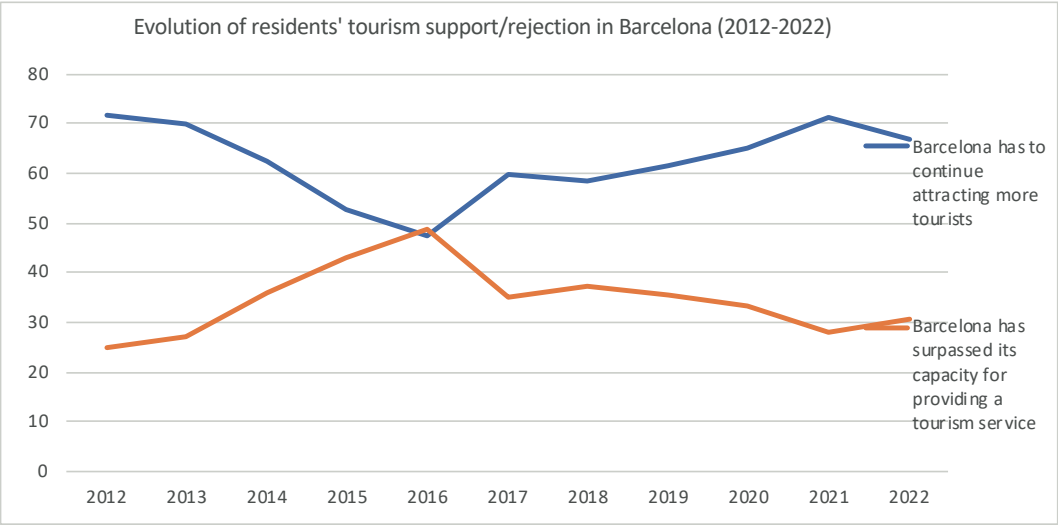
Map 2. Heat map of tourist flats listed on the Airbnb platform (2022)



Source: Authors' elaboration based on data from Inside Airbnb.

This expansion of tourist dwellings coexists with the modern-day tourists' desire to become immersed in the local culture and daily life, and the residents' demands for their right to remain in the neighbourhood, for its community spirit to be retained, and for greater participation in the fair distribution of the positive financial effects of tourism. As shown in Figure 3, the local population is considerably concerned about the effects of mass tourism on the city. In the Ciutat Vella and Eixample districts, pressure and overcrowding are much higher than in the rest of Barcelona, and carrying capacity has been exceeded (Sharpley, 2021).

Figure 3. Evolution of residents' support for/rejection of tourism in Barcelona (2012-2022)



Source: Authors' elaboration from *Percepció del turisme a Barcelona* (Barometer reports), Barcelona City Council

However, since this opposition to tourism peaked in 2016, numbers have begun to drop, with the people of Barcelona becoming more concerned about the lack of residential housing (Table 1), which forces residents out of their neighbourhoods as they cannot afford to pay "tourist-oriented" prices (Millar, 2017; Campbell, 2017; Ortega, 2019; Crespi-Vallbona & Domínguez Pérez, 2021).

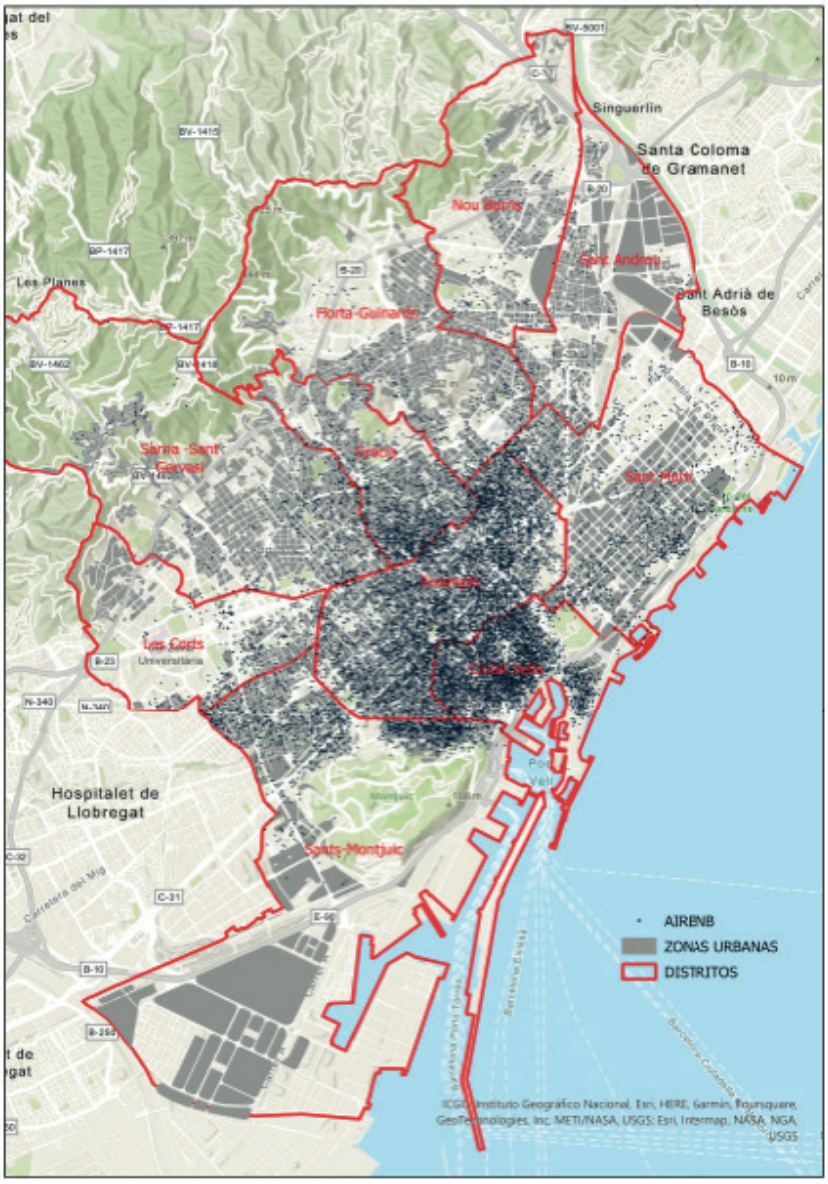
Table 1. Concerns (%) among the population of Barcelona (2013-2022)

Concern	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*	*2018*	*2019*	*2020*	*2021*	*2022*
Access to housing	0.3	0.5	1	3.4	4.8	12.1	6.5	7.4	5.6	7.6
Tourism	0.5	4.5	3.8	11	7.1	5.2	3.6	1.9	3	2.9

Source: Authors' elaboration from *Percepció del turisme a Barcelona* (Barometer reports), Barcelona City Council

Hence, the challenge faced by mature destinations and tourism policy lies in accommodating the interests of all sides. Barcelona's appeal resides in its historical and cultural centre, but there is major overspill into its other neighbourhoods too (Crespi-Vallbona & Galeas, 2023). Airbnb is one of the most popular holiday rental platforms and the one that most reflects this remarkable growth (Map 3). For this reason, this research is especially interested in exploring Airbnb listed properties in the touristified centre of Barcelona in order to point out the real state of housing for tourists and residents.

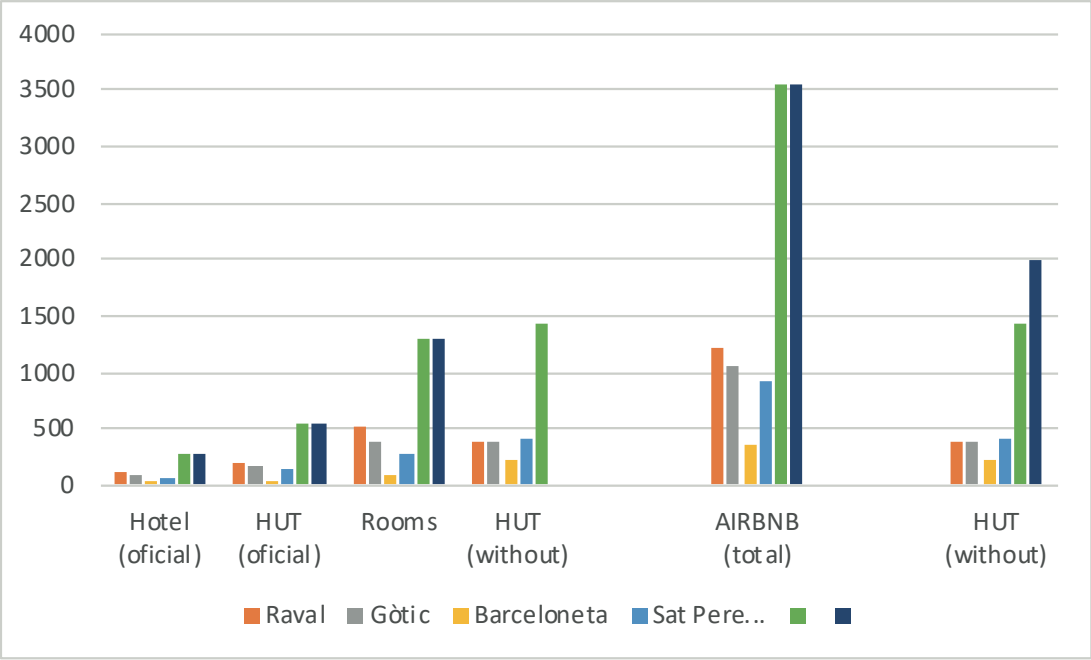
Map 3. Homestays listed on the Airbnb platform concentrated in Ciutat Vella, 2022.



Source: Authors' elaboration based on data from Inside Airbnb.

The results show that there is a considerable irregularity among homestays. Despite the introduction of the PEUAT system, control of licences is neither strict nor sufficient. If we analyse the total number of apartments listed on Airbnb in Ciutat Vella as of December 2022 (3,552), we observe that only 15.7% are licenced for tourism activity. Likewise, of the total listings, 7.7% are ads for hotel rooms (which have a hotel licence but advertise on the platform to boost their market share). The rest (76.6%) are apartments that are also advertised on the platform, but do not have a licence (40.3%) or are exempt as they are rented rooms in residential houses (36.2%). These non-licenced rental units include six boats, three in Barceloneta and three in the Gothic Quarter. Figure 4 illustrates this data for Ciutat Vella, broken down by neighbourhoods.

Figure 4. Homestays listed on the Airbnb platform concentrated in Ciutat Vella, 2022.



Source: Own elaboration based on data from Inside Airbnb.

We can see that the neighbourhood with the most illegal non-licenced accommodation is Sant Pere, Santa Caterina i La Ribera. The neighbourhood with the most rooms for rent is El Raval, which is also the one with the largest number of legalised housing available for rental by tourists. Counting all the establishments that are advertised on Airbnb, the following is observed (Table 2). A priori, the Airbnb platform should only include ads for tourist housing, but as we can see, there are also other types of accommodation such as hotels, youth hostels, student residences, guesthouses and tourist apartments. Specifically, in the Barri Gòtic and the Raval, only 62% and 70% respectively of the ads on Airbnb are tourist housing. The rest are other conventional accommodation. In La Barceloneta, 90% are homestays, and in Sant Pere, Santa Caterina i La Ribera 85%.

Table 2. Number of Barcelona establishments listed in Airbnb, 2022

Neighbourhood	*Hotels*	*Youth Hostels*	*Student residences*	*Guest houses*	*Apartments*	*Homestays (with or without licence)*	*Total*
El Raval	50	2	4	32	1	211	300
Barri Gòtic	62	4	1	47	1	192	307
La Barceloneta	4	2	1	-	-	63	70
Sant Pere, Santa Caterina i La Ribera	22	1	2	10	-	203	237

Source: Authors' elaboration based on data from Inside Airbnb.

Considering the number of places available for accommodation that are advertised on Airbnb, the following is observed (Table 3): in El Raval the 11,59% of beds belong to homestays, the 10,9% in the Barri Gòtic, the 6% in La Barceloneta and the 9% in Sant Pere Santa Caterina i La

Ribera. Consequently, the majority of beds in these neighborhoods do not come from tourist housing but from conventional lodging (hotels, youth hostels, student residences, guesthouses and tourist apartments).

Table 3. Number of places available in Barcelona listed in Airbnb, 2022

Neighborhood	*Hotels*	*Youth hostels*	*Student residences*	*Guest houses*	*Apartments*	*Homestays (with or without licence)*	*Total*
El Raval	7,470	277	581	1,204	170	1,273	10,975
Barri Gòtic	7,131	485	19	1,303	69	1,102	10,109
La Barceloneta	2,503	275	182	-	-	190	3,150
Sant Pere, Santa Caterina i La Ribera	2,511	132	107	203	-	710	3,663

Source: Authors' elaboration based on data from Inside Airbnb.

On the other side, most of the entire homes that are advertised for rent have room for four people. However, in Barceloneta, where there is an abundance of tiny apartments of about 33 sqms, known as *quarts de casa*, most homestays only have room for two people.
There is also very clear polarisation of ownership of homestays. From the data it can be deduced that 32% of both national and international advertisers are renting more than ten homes, even in different neighbourhoods. It can also be gleaned that these are mostly managed through a real estate agency, which also creates work for other companies, such as the cleaning ones.
The concentration of registrations for Airbnb is better observed if we calculate the density, based on urban land area, that is, discounting green areas, roads, industries and any non-residential uses (tourism density: registrations / urban area). This calculation gives a clearer idea of the neighbourhood where tourist accommodation has had the highest impact on local residents. Table 4 shows, once again, that Sant Pere, Santa Caterina i la Ribera is the neighbourhood with the highest density of registrations in the urban area.

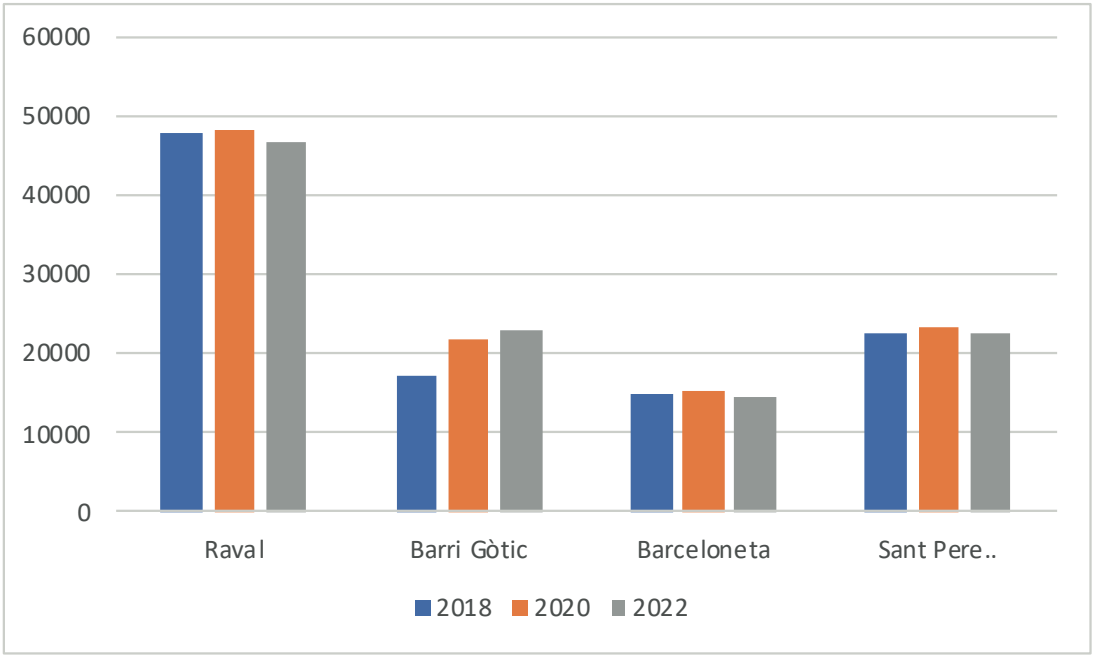
Table 4. Tourism density, 2022

Neighbourhood	*Airbnb registrations*	*N. blocks*	*Urban area (ha)*	*Density (registrations/ area)*	*Registrations per block*
el Raval	1,216	136	52.01	23.38	9
el Barri Gòtic	1,047	116	36.17	28.95	9
la Barceloneta	356	118	27.51	12.94	3
Sant Pere, Santa Caterina i la Ribera	933	143	31.65	29.48	7
total	3,552	513	147.34		
Average				24.11	7

Source: Authors' elaboration based on data from Inside Airbnb and Open Data Ajuntament de Barcelona

Meanwhile, it has been observed that the population of Barcelona has fluctuated in recent years, although it remains fairly stable at 1,639,981 (2022). Ciutat Vella is home to 6.49% of the total population, mainly in El Raval (Figure 5). As we can see, however, all these neighbourhoods have been losing population with the exception of the Gothic Quarter.

Figure 5. Trend of population in Barcelona (2018-2022)



Source: Authors' elaboration based on data from *Població i Demografia* (Population and Demographics, Barcelona City Council)

This same neighbourhood, El Raval, traditionally tends to have the most foreign residents, although it was overtaken in 2022 by the Gothic Quarter (Table 5). El Raval's immigrant community includes a prominent presence of Pakistanis and Moroccans.

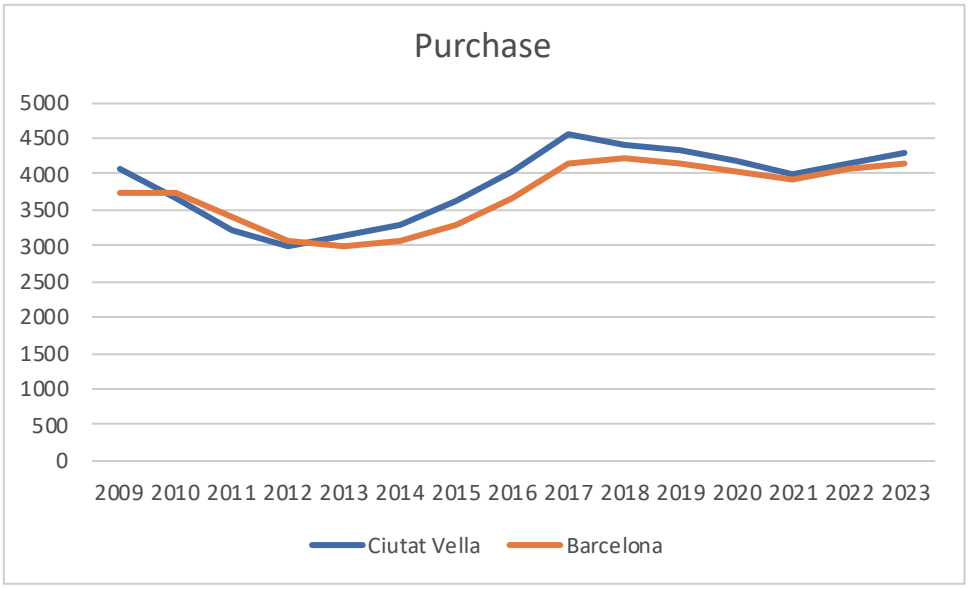
Table 5. Evolution of the nationality of the population of the neighbourhoods of Ciutat Vella, 2018-2022)

Year	2022			2020			2018		
Neighborhood	*Spanish %*	*Foreign %*	*Total (N)*	*Spanish %*	*Foreign %*	*Total (N)*	*Spanish %*	*Foreign %*	*Total (N)*
Raval	48.1	51.9	46,520	47.0	53.0	48,263	49.9	51.1	47,605
Barri Gòric	36.2	63.8	22,748	38.1	61.9	21,715	49.9	51.1	17,035
Barceloneta	59.1	40.9	14,342	59.5	40.5	15,112	64.0	36.0	14,893
Sant Pere, Santa Caterina i la Ribera	53.8	46.2	22,418	53.4	46.6	23,241	57.5	42.5	22,605

Source: Authors' elaboration on data from *Població i Demografia* (Population and Demographics, Barcelona City Council)

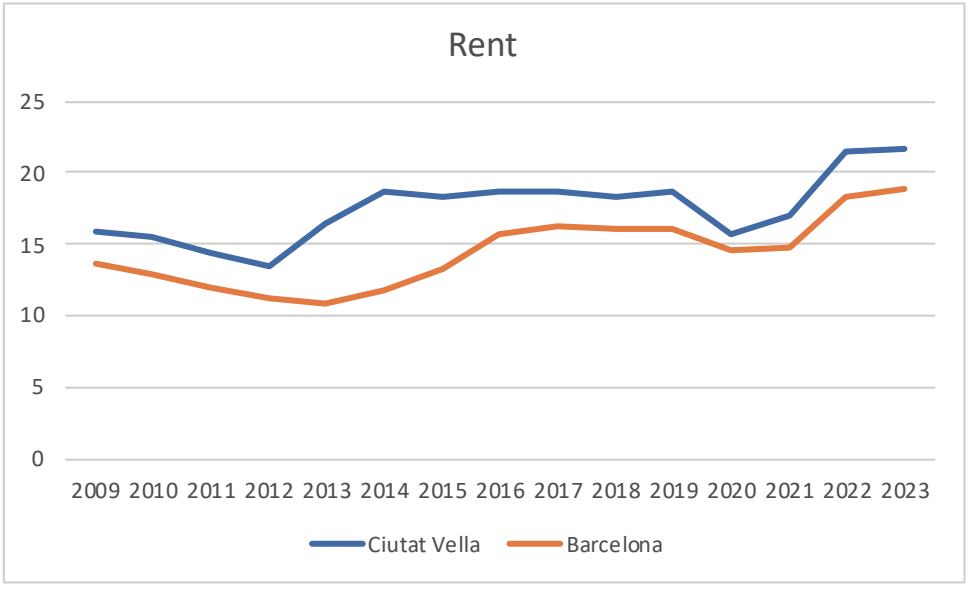
As for the evolution of the cost of home rental and buying in Ciutat Vella with respect to the city as a whole, prices are constantly higher in this district, whether properties are bought or rented, as shown in Figures 6a and 6b.

Figure 6a. Price trends for purchasing a house €/sqms in Ciutat Vella and Barcelona (2009-2023)



Source: Own elaboration on data from *Evolución del precio de la vivienda en venta en Barcelona* (Evolution of the price of housing for sale in Barcelona, Idealista)

Figure 6b. Price trends of renting a house €/sqms in Ciutat Vella and Barcelona (2009-2023)



Source: Own elaboration on data from E*volución del precio de la vivienda en alquiler en Barcelona* (Evolution of housing rental prices in Barcelona, Idealista)

The interviewees' comments help to understand the reasons why residents are abandoning these neighbourhoods, especially La Raval and Barceloneta. It is partly due to the characteristics of the dwellings, the lack of public spaces and commercial changes. The buildings in which these houses are located are mainly more than eighty years old, and they do not have lifts (to get

up a minimum of four floors). Older people struggle to climb so many stairs, especially when they have heavy shopping bags to carry, so they either choose to spend their lives shut indoors and hardly ever leave the house, or otherwise move out of what are usually rented homes. The same situation has been found by other studies of other neighbourhoods of Barcelona, which have less tourism but where the apartment blocks have similar characteristics (López-Villanueva & Crespi-Vallbona, 2023). Meanwhile, young couples starting a new life and planning to have children tend not to choose these neighbourhoods either, due to the lack of private parking on the property itself and the structure of the houses (usually narrow, with little ventilation or natural daylight). This is especially the case in Barceloneta, where 80% of the houses are *quarts de casa* of between just 26 and 35 sqms. They are also put off by the lack of green, public spaces in which to socialise with other people. Couples who prefer to live in the centre tend to be those who do not intend to start a family and who prioritise cultural life and leisure facilities over spacious housing. Long-term foreign students who come to the city to further their education (masters and postgraduates) also tend to opt for these apartments. As the real estate agencies themselves tell us, they basically offer such clients these options because they are the best possible tenants. They are young and fit (they do not mind if there is no lift), enjoy living in the cultural and leisure centre of the city, have no need for private transport and generally are not interested in staying for any more than eleven months. Hence, many rooms are rented to this kind of person.

Additionally, the touristification of these neighbourhoods, and in some cases the concentration of immigrant population, has led to many changes in terms of trade. Very few traditional local businesses have survived (Lapeira Portús, 2023). Residents complain about the disappearance of butchers' shops selling pork, grocery stores, and the pastry shops where they would go on Sundays to buy the typical cake to take to family gatherings. Although some of these stores have closed due to the lack of generational replacement, the disappearance of local drugstores, haberdasheries and other local businesses has certainly had an impact on everyday life, with these spaces being converted into bars and restaurants (many of them managed by the Chinese population) or 24/7 grocery stores (mainly run by Pakistanis).

Conclusions

Cities are attracting more and more people, companies and investments, bringing together a temporary and permanent population that includes holiday, business and academic tourists, expatriate workers and digital nomads, lifelong residents, young people from elsewhere in the region and immigrants seeking new learning and professional opportunities in urban centres. Cities can be killed by their own success, and major challenges can arise regarding coexistence and access to housing. This is also very much the case in Barcelona.

The results of this this show the variables and actions that should be considered in future public policies and strategies in Barcelona in order to mitigate the negative effects of tourism and strike the right balance between the needs of visitors and residents alike.

Tourism undoubtedly means neighbourhood changes, and especially those in historic centres, which are particularly coveted by visitors, who often pay little heed to cultural aspects and are merely interested in experiencing the traditional atmosphere of these and similar neighbourhoods and make few other demands.

Undoubtedly, residents are the ones who most perceive the structural changes. They yearn to go back to their traditional daily lives. Hence, sustainable, responsible management is the key. This involves analysing the data (as this study has done), and being transparent when reporting political action. The results show that there is major irregularity in the homestay market, and the insufficient efforts by PEUAT to control it by issuing licences need to be applied more strictly. Many unlicensed homes are still being advertised on Airbnb, as well as regulated accommodation in hotels, among others. This gives the impression that there are more homestays than there really are. They are actually widely concentrated among a small number of owners of ten or more properties.

Different measures could be proposed to mediate this tension over housing. Like in other countries (such as Canada, the Netherlands and New Zealand), it might be interesting to prevent non-residents from buying property, thus limiting foreign real estate speculation, as well as investment funds. This promotes glocal business and it should be accompanied by the non-provision of gold or residence visas for foreigners to invest. The difficulty lies in the need for consensus between different administrative departments in terms of their functionality and regions of influence.

Homestays could be taxed more, which would encourage owners to rent their properties for residential use. Also, the law protects tenants more than owners and this discourages from renting homes for residential use. So, legal support could be given to long-term landlords when their tenants do not pay the rent, so they can quickly recover their homes or receive governmental aid.

The local population is also calling for older buildings to be rehabilitated and adapted to modern needs. They avoid living in these neighbourhoods due to the lack of elevators, ventilation, natural light and parking for private vehicles. They are also put off by the lack of decent public spaces for socialising and of pavements to walk on.

Revaluations of these buildings and public spaces would cause housing prices to rise once again, the cost of which may well be assumed by temporary rentals such as academic tourism. Therefore, tax incentives to rent properties for residential use will be decisive. In whatever case, the restoration of the historical and tourist centres will lead to local differentiation, with history and heritage playing an essential role.

There is also a need to protect the traditional and local trade sector. Social and financial life in these neighbourhoods has much to do with the shopkeepers who raise the shutters of their stores every morning to meet the community's needs. Without their presence and spirit, the sense of attachment to the neighbourhood disappears. Likewise, there is a strong insistence among the local population on the need to preserve and rehabilitate the buildings that have a prominent historical value for local cultural identity.

In short, cities are changing and so are their uses. People's needs and habits are also being transformed. The regeneration and rebranding of these neighbourhoods (Anholth, 2010) imply an identity-building process based on adaptation to the new era and on appreciation of the collective identities of these spaces, to create an image that identifies individuals (both residents and tourists) with the place, thereby generating a comparative and competitive advantage (Camprubí, 2009; de San Eugenio Vela, 2013). Thus, the image and reputation projected by these neighbourhoods both to the internal and external public should capture not only residents and companies, but also talent, corporate investment, infrastructure and tourists (Fernández-Calvià, 2011). For this reason, it is extremely important to recover heritage, traditional commerce and shared space. Such a branding strategy should showcase the pride of place, sense of belonging and quality of life that the residents feel. If not, places become degraded and stigmatised.

Brave measures are needed to generate virtuous circles and depart from demagogy. Meanwhile, policies on the use of housing will always be ineffective in saturated cities like Barcelona where land is in such short supply. The best housing policy in cases like these is to invest in a fast, efficient suburban train network, as this will make it easier for people to live on the city outskirts, where they would have a much wider range of affordable residential options. This entails the need to redefine the concept of the city beyond the merely administrative one. Functional cities to which people can commute in less than one hour should be the key strategic goal.

Another option would be to decongest the city so that residents have no need to travel to the city centre for administrative or work reasons, which could be replaced with online transactions and remote working. Furthermore, the transformation of people's habits and needs also entails the mixing of land use, whereby new residential areas could include spaces and homes designed for remote working or for co-living, which would generate homogeneity between residential uses and commercial and administrative ones.

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Erasmo Sossich[1]

Endless Displacement. Migration Governance, Containment Strategies and Segregation in Athens and Turin[2]

Introduction

The paper considers the spatial productivity of migration governance at urban scale, suggesting the appearance of new patterns of residential segregation. New governmental tools of containment, dispersal and concentration are combining and creating new geographies of mobility and immobility (Tazzioli & Garelli, 2018), and reshaping the spaces of the "urban diaspora" (Arbaci, 2018). "Displaceability" redefines the urban condition of the postcolonial citizens (Yiftachel, 2018), and new forms of accumulation through displacement arise. Assuming the theoretical lenses of "border abolitionism" (Tazzioli & De Genova, 2023) and adapting the "analytics of dispersal" (Tazzioli, 2020), we investigate how the transformation of the migration regime and bordering practices after the so-called "migration crisis" of 2015 influenced the previous pattern of displacement and residential segregation, leading to the creation of what has been called a "confinement continuum" (Tazzioli & De Genova, 2023).

I claim that this process, marked in particular by the gradual closure of the legal channels of access to the territory and by the affirmation of asylum as the only possible legitimising principle for a person's presence on the territory, has profoundly altered the trajectories and processes of integration (De Genova, 2002; Cabot, 2014; Sorgoni, 2022), leading to the emergence of complex apparatuses and policies dedicated to the governance of migrations (Tazzioli, 2017; Rozaku, 2019), meaning the complete reinvention of bordering practices, reception systems and urban agendas. To better unpack "the urban character of asylum" and the city as a "site of bordering" (Darlin, 2016), the article moves on to the cases of Turin and Athens.

After adopting a neoliberal agenda in order to overcome the previous development paradigm and embarking on a profound urban renovation, culminating in the event of the Olympics, both Athens and Turin have intensely suffered the effects of the 2007-2008 financial crisis, witnessing intense conflicts, often concentrated in neighbourhoods interested by regeneration policies and international immigration. Despite those similarities Athens, as a harbour and capital, and Turin, as a post-industrial continental city, show very different patterns of immigrants housing segregation and socio-tenurial differentiation. Therefore, I think that a comparison might allow us to identify possible variances and invariances (Cardano, 2020), following a multiscalar, contextual and divergence comparative perspective.

I suggest that the Italian "widespread reception" and the ongoing process of "campization" in Greece (Kourachanis, 2018; Kreichauf, 2018) might support diverging segregation patterns. Mixing dispersal and concentration in different containment strategies appear to be sustaining already existing patterns – namely the tendency to peripheralization – in the Italian case, while in Athens we see a combination of a radicalised pattern of "vertical segregation" (Maloutas, 1993) with an unheard level of residential segregation. Both cases highlight how the spatial productivity of containment strategies must be integrated in a contextual analysis, taking in consideration its combination with already pre-existing urban phenomena, such as abandonment, gentrification or marginalisation (Maloutas & Fujita, 2012).

The second part of the article is dedicated to the eviction of Turin's Ex-Moi housing squat and of the Eleonas refugee camp in Athens, and explores how global displacement links to urban displacement (Roast *et al.,* 2022) and "domicide" (Nowicki, 2014). The article goes on accounting for the claims and the resistances put into action by their residents, as cities shall be considered

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as stages of both policing and politicisation of forced migration (Darling, 2016). Furthermore, the article explores how different approaches and technologies of eviction, namely "hard" and "soft" evictions, might shape different displacement trajectories, which, in turn, support the emergence of new geographies of residential segregation, but also abandonment and gentrification (Marcuse, 1985). As new dispersal strategies are implemented, once more we witness the spatial productivity of migration governance at work (Tazzioli, 2020), as in both the cases of the Ex-Moi and Eleonas, migrants appear to have been instrumentalized for justifying new processes of "regeneration, legitimised insofar as they enable the "return of part of the city to "citizens".

1. Methodology

The research adopts a multiscale and comparative methodology (Caglar & Glick Schiller, 2018), and is based on two research fields. In both cases qualitative methods have been employed, such as ethnography and interviews, document analysis, participant observation, research-action and *conricerca* (Collettivo RicercAzione, 2013; Armano, 2020). In the case of Turin, the research mostly took place between 2017 and 2019, when I was active in the housing rights movement and lived in the housing squat Spazio Popolare Neruda. There I met many inhabitants of the Ex-Moi squat, and took part in many activities hosted in its buildings.
In the case of Athens, the research took place between October 2021 and October 2022, when I lived there and visited many refugee camps in the Attica region and other critical locations as Lesvos island. During this period access to the camps grew more and more complicated, to the point where it would have been legally impossible to enter without specific authorizations. Since, at least nominally, the only way was to volunteer with NGOs, I chose to exploit other opportunities to visit the camps at every chance, such as the lack of controls during the residents' many protests and mobilizations or, more often, the disinterest of both camp authorities and the private security guards in charge of surveillance. The last months, between June and November, were strongly influenced by my role in supporting the mobilisation against the displacement of Eleonas Refugee Camp residents to other mainland camps, until its closure in the autumn of 2022.[3]
This access to the field influenced my entire study. Contesting the notion of "dirty anthropology" (Jauregui, 2013), I have chosen to cross a field of research shaped by structural violence, positioning myself on the side of those I understood to be the active subjects of resistance against violence, racist and neo-colonial practices. Instead, I claim that, in certain circumstances «a clear distinction [...] between perpetrators and victims of violence» (Jauregui, 2013, p. 144) is possible. In doing so I have followed a scholarly tradition shared both by those who refer to critical anthropology and critical urban studies (Armano, 2020). Furthermore, through the struggle I was able to develop partially distinct relations from the reifying logic of research and humanitarian ones, often experienced in all its contradictions by the many researchers who gain access to the field by dint of displaying the pass and sleeveless jacket of an NGO, or through restricted authorizations (Rozaku, 2019). I therefore played the role of a "solidarian", interested not so much in the practices of residents but in the study, and sabotage, of migration governance.

2. Italy and Greece Segregation Patterns: Common Background and New Trajectories

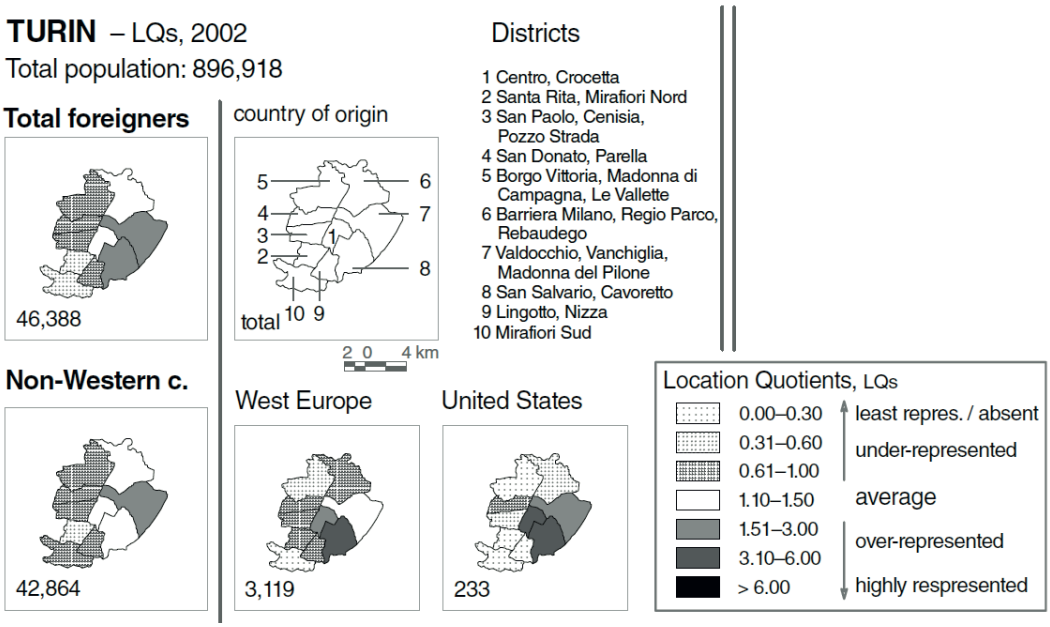
Immigration in Southern Europe started becoming relevant in the Seventies, established in the Nineties, during the so-called "migratory turnaround" (King *et al.,* 1997), and reached its

3 Unfortunately, this approach led to my arrest on the morning of August 19, 2022, while I was filming an attack of the Greek police against a group of Eleonas camp residents during a sit-in.

peak in the first decade of the new century, when arrivals began to outnumber those in traditional settlement regions. Nonetheless, Southern European cities have rarely seen highly segregated areas, while the distribution of their population appear heterogeneous, with a tendency to concentration in peripheral and suburban areas in continental cities, and central areas in port cities centres (Arbaci, 2018).

According to Arbaci, segregation is a process to which various factors contribute, in particular the "State-Market-Family" nexus. This determines the type of relations among four factors: welfare regime, housing system, urban planning, and land system. In particular, Greece and Italy have a residual housing welfare and a housing system dominated by home-ownership combined with low residential mobility. However, they have important differences in planning policies, with a wide heterogeneity of experiences in the Italian case (Barbagli & Pisati, 2012), and a centralist, though not coherent, intervention in the Greek one (Alexandri, 2018). The residual nature of social housing and a housing system dominated by ownership and weak residential mobility, not very sensitive to fluctuations in real estate value, allow us to understand why the population of Italian and Greek origin has only rarely moved *en masse* from devalued neighbourhoods, thus leaving little space for the concentration of the immigrant population. In fact, we must keep in mind that the segregation of the lower classes is largely owed to the movements and segregation, albeit voluntary, of the upper and middle classes (Semi, 2015). Consequently, even in Turin (Figure 1), where 15% of the residents[4] are estimated to be of foreign origin (Comune di Torino, 2021). This rate did not exceed 35% even in the areas of greatest concentration (Comune di Torino, 2011).

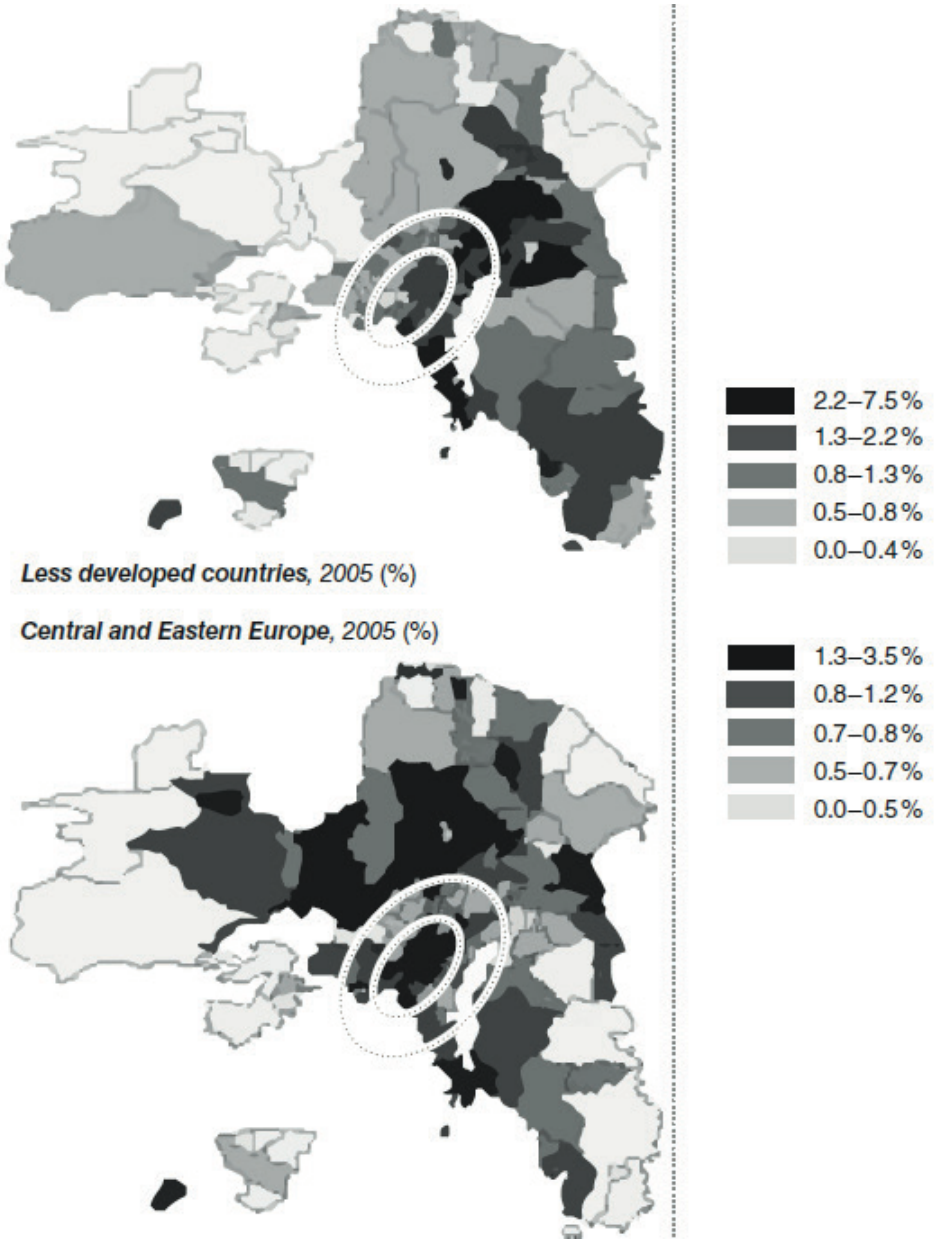
Figure 1. Turin: segregation patterns.



Source: Arbaci, 2019, p. 165

4 It is worth saying that numbers do not account either for the many inhabitants who are not able to be registered as residents, nor for the undocumented immigrants.

Figure 2. Athens: segregation patterns



Source: Arbaci, 2019, p. 218

A different situation is depicted in the literature dedicated to Athens (Figure 2), where residential segregation overlaps with "vertical segregation" in dense multi-storey buildings, the famous *polykatoikia*, long rows of which make up the vast majority of the city (Maloutas, 1993). Challenging the mainstream theoretical approach, strongly influenced by the North American academic tradition following which segregation is substantially synonymous with concentration, Arbaci (2019) describes the ongoing process of dispersal and desegregation with the metaphor of the "urban diaspora". Through the quantitative analysis of eight southern European cities, amongst which Athens and Turin, Arbaci shows how a reduction of the Location Quotients (LQs)

and of the Index of Segregation (IS)[5] can be associated with increasing forms of housing deprivation. In both cases, the presence of highly "classically" segregated areas seems limited, but the immigrant population appears to live in marked socio-economic marginality, marked by other dimensions of segregation (Massey & Denton, 1988), such as micro-segregation (like "interstices", namely small areas with over-representation of different foreign population, or "vertical segregation"), marginalisation (meaning discrimination in the access to the housing market and socio-tenurial segregation) and peripheralization (Bergamaschi *et al.,* 2021).

3. The Evolution of National and European Migration Policies

While throughout the Nineties and the first decade of the following century the countries of Northern and Central Europe enforced a progressive closure of their borders, making it practically impossible to obtain visas and configuring international protection as the only channel of legal access, an "implicit migration regime" consolidated in Greece and Italy (Ambrosini, 2001), characterised by systematic entry through the use of tourist visas and the subsequent transformation of the migrant into an *overstayer* – that is, an irregular immigrant waiting for the next amnesty (Sciortino, 2006). Amnesties were the main policy for regularising flows, an unsystematic policy toward a migration dominated by informal dynamics, which however appeared to be well suited for labour and rental markets of equally widespread informality, able to quickly absorb the new arrivals. This population is distributed in houses characterised by the lowest real estate value, radicalising the geography of class segregation in line with the patterns already discussed.

During the second decade of the century, however, the two countries pursued profoundly different agendas to face the challenge presented by migratory flows, which were also qualitatively different from the previous ones. The Arab Spring of 2011 was followed by long military conflicts which forced millions of people to leave their countries in a short time.[6] Millions of "displaced people" moved to neighbouring countries, increasing the already enormous population of the Jordanian, Lebanese and Turkish refugee camps, but a part of them reached Europe (UNHCR, 2023). Between 2012 and 2013, approximately two hundred thousand people landed on the Italian coasts (OpenPolis, 2018), while in 2015 approximately 800,000 people were estimated to have reached the coasts of Greece (UNHCR, 2015). The "border spectacles" and the "bare life" of migrants paved the way for the affirmation of the humanitarian and the securitarian paradigm as the main interpretative frames for the phenomena in question, transforming the so-called refugee crisis into a European issue and the coasts of Mediterranean countries into the EU frontiers (De Genova, 2002; Van Baar, 2016). Both countries reacted with emergency measures followed by a complete overhaul of their migration policies, with the EU playing a leading role in directing and financing them. From now on migration policies will revolve around the different forms of international protection[7]: a clear separation between economic and forced migrations was affirmed (Sorgoni, 2022), and so was the imposition of humanitarian reason and its moral economy (Fassin, 2005; Beneduce, 2015); the involvement of a plurality of humanitarian and

5 Location Quotients (LQs) quantify the relative concentration of a group in urban sub-units. LQ = xi / xj, where: LQ represents the relative concentration of a social group x in an area; xi represents the percentage of the social group within the i -th area; xj is the percentage of the same group within the wider metropolitan area. LQ < 1 represents relative under-representation of the ethnic group in a zone; LQ > 1 represents relative over-representation of the ethnic group in a zone. The Index of Segregation (IS) gives a measure of the differentiation of one group in relation to the total population. The IS value ranges from 0 to 100, which respectively represent perfect distribution (social or ethnic mix) and maximum segregation of groups analysed (Brown & Chung 2006; Arbaci 2019).

6 Or leave their adopted country, as in the case of the hundreds of thousands of sub-Saharan immigrants residing in Libya until the outbreak of the conflict, when they were forced to leave the country.

7 In the Italian case the number of resident permits for asylum and asylum requests exceeded that of work permits, rising from 3.7% in 2007 to 28.2% in 2015 (Saporiti, 2017).

institutional subjects (among which the European border police, Frontex, emerges for the first time); an unprecedented reconfiguration of sovereignty both in the border areas and within the camps, true spaces of exception (Rozaku, 2019). Furthermore, new bordering practices, both on the "traditional" frontiers and through various practices of border externalisation and internalisation, shaped new channels of forced mobility in the light of the fight against "secondary movements", milestone of the EU's political agenda. As access, permanence and movement within European space become increasingly complex, new forms of containment and displacement lead to new geographies of mobility and immobility (Tazzioli & Garelli, 2018). As the EU turned to the hotspot approach and established the centrality of selecting, grouping and dividing procedures, dispersal strategies have been enacted in simultaneity with measures of spatial segregation.

However, institutional "arrival infrastructures" (Meeus el al. 2020) responsible for the "care, cure and control" (Acocella, 2022) and for the routing of migrants took on very different traits in each country. Although the creation of the hotspot system and of a few massive reception centres, the so-called CARA (*Centro di Accoglienza per Richiedenti Asilo*), demonstrates that the tendency towards the "campization of immigration", i.e. the gradual evaporation of the difference between "reception, housing and detention" (Kourachanis, 2018; Kreichauf, 2018), is not absent in the Italian case, the governments directed their efforts towards a system characterised by the so-called *accoglienza diffusa* (widespread reception).

Greek governments, on the contrary, chose to address the issue by creating, with the help of the EU, international humanitarian organisations such as the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and the IOM (International Organization for Migration), as well as countless NGOs, a large system of refugee camps, complemented by the ESTIA (Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation) program, a housing project focusing on "vulnerable" cases (Greek Council for Refugees, 2023).

In both countries, a multilevel governance was constructed. As Darling (2016) pointed out, the "re-scaling" of borders at the urban level has two dimensions: a "top-down" devolution of authority to municipal levels and a "bottom-up" assertion of authority by municipalities in the form of local ordinances on migration. In the case of Italy, governments defined the criteria for access to international protection, keeping under their direct control the system of "first reception", and delegating the organisation of "second reception" to the municipalities. However, it is through a third instrument, the so-called CAS (*Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria*, "Extraordinary Reception Centers") that most of the asylum seekers are hosted. Those, in turn, fall under the control of the prefectures, which represent the authority of the central government at the provincial level.

In the Greek case, however, international institutions and organisations, as well as the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum, took on a decisive role. Moreover, since 2015 the governance of the Balkan route, which has Greece as its starting point, has never actually stopped evolving, reflecting the rough dialectic between governments, international institutions, resident populations and people on the move. As the failure of the 2015 sovereign debt negotiations inhibited any attempt by the first Tsipras government to avoid implementing the European agenda, an "archipelago of camps" appeared along the route. On one hand, the systematic pushbacks across the Balkan borders acted as a deterrent, discouraging the less equipped categories from attempting the "game", on the other hand the Greek camp system, offering the hope of asylum, became a privileged site of containment, where tens of thousands ended up spending three, four, and often even more years, captured in the limbo of international protection procedures. To these we must add a perhaps equally large number of those who, because of their undocumented status, or in order to avoid staying in the camps, find a housing solution in the black rental market.

The 2016 EU-Turkey agreements redefined the hotspot system, introducing the "geographical restrictions" *de facto* confining the migrants on the Aegean islands, now transformed into an "enforcement archipelago" (Mountz, 2011), shaping a mechanism of "containment beyond detention" (Tazzioli, 2020) operating in conjunction with a system of transfers to Turkey (Commissione Europea, 2016). If the latter quickly failed, the "geographical restrictions" still apply – and in

2020 the Mitsotakis government announces the construction of new "reception infrastructures" on the island of Lesvos (Papatzani *et al.,* 2022). However, large protest with insurrectional features erupted in Lesvos (Fallon, 2020),[8] to which the government responded by stirring violent clashes on the land border between Turkey and Greece (Panagopoulos, 2020). Finally, in September 2020, the arson of Moria camp in Lesvos, which was known to have hosted up to 20,000 people, put an end to the attempt to exclusively confine migrants to the islands (Smith, 2020). Once more, the government changed its strategy, encouraging pushbacks in the Aegean Sea and transferring the asylum seekers from the islands to the "mainland camps". In the same period the ESTIA program came under the control of the government, which immediately acted to dismantle it and bring it to an end in the last months of 2022 (Ministry of Immigration and Asylum-European Union, 2022), when thousands of families and vulnerable subjects were faced with a "choice" between living on the street and being transferred to a camp.

3.1 Reception Policies in Turin

In Turin, too, the humanitarian emergency presented an opportunity to reorganise the reception system. The prefecture's investment went from 1 million euros in 2012 to 47 in 2016, for a total allocation of 125.43 million between 2012 and 2017. By the end of December 2017, the people hosted in the CAS, plus the regional hub managed by the Red Cross, were 4,520, distributed in 409 centres. To those, we should add approximately another 880 guests in "second reception"[9]. Thus, the State has delegated a large-scale social intervention to the prefectures and through them to the third sector, promoting a model based on hundreds of projects, favouring small-sized solutions such as apartments or small centres (OpenPolis, 2018)[10].
This model does not appear to have changed residential patterns, although it is difficult to draw a complete picture. The available data only highlights that a vast majority of refugees exiting the reception projects has difficulties in finding a new housing solution (67.4% in 2018) (SPRAR/SIPROIMI, 2018). According to the interviews, the projects included support in finding independent housing solutions, activating third sector networks to access various forms of "social housing" and supporting beneficiaries in finding private adverts, also providing a total of 1,500 euros to cover agency expenses or, alternatively, the first months' rent payments. In this way, approximately one in three beneficiaries manages to find an accommodation, often in the same peripheral areas where the "widespread reception" accommodations are located, and in particular in *Barriera di Milano*, a neighbourhood favoured by reception cooperatives as well as refugees due to the low prices, with a high percentage of foreign residents. The rest have to find a solution by relying on their social networks, local and abroad, while a minority is accommodated by the Municipality's *Emergenza Abitativa* (Emergency Housing) service or is forced to live on the streets and in dormitories.

3.2 Camps, Reception and the Urban Governance of Migration in Attica and Athens

In the case of Athens, it must be considered that it is a capital city with approximately 4 million inhabitants, out of approximately 10 million in the whole country (ELSTAT, 2022). This disproportion is reflected in the location of the "mainland camps" in the Attica region, which has hosted at least ten institutional camps, among the most overpopulated in the mainland, from 2015 to date, and by the fact that approximately 70% of the ESTIA program beneficiaries were hosted

8 These mobilizations put together seemingly irreconcilable factions, as island citizens, anarchists, no-borders activists and neo-fascist groups clashed with the police for days.

9 The SPRAR circuit, subsequently known as SIPROIMI and today SAI.

10 Very small centres are estimated to be the vast majority (295 with fewer than 10 guests, 65 with 11-20 guests). Approximately half of the migrants in the province, however, were hosted in structures with more than 20 guests. Four centres host more than 100 people, and the largest one hosts 220 migrants (Openpolis 2018).

in the city. If we then consider that the majority of the rest of the mainland camps are located near Thessaloniki and Ioannina or close to the Turkish border, we realise that we are faced with a completely opposite approach, not only in the choice to favour the camps but also in the geographical concentration of migrants (IOM, 2022).

Many of the Attica camps were opened between 2015 and 2017. These are vast spaces, set up with tents, marquees or container housing modules, but also with masonry fences, barbed wire, sometimes automated gates; always monitored by private guards "to guarantee the residents' safety", often built on lands owned by public institutions, including the army. They also lack health or educational infrastructure, and are often located tens of kilometres away from the nearest urban centres, almost completely cut off from public transport networks, and therefore from the job market. They are nominally open places but so isolated that they derive their containment and confinement function from geography (Papatzani *et al.,* 2022). To date, their management is entrusted to officials of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, but management is delegated to a vast selection of "humanitarian" organisations, in turn stratified and hierarchized between SMS (Site Management Support) and NGOs.[11]

Estimating the number of people hosted in each camp was the task of the IOM, which until March 2022 published periodic reports. That said, the numbers constantly change and it is impossible to estimate the number of unregistered people in each camp. It could be plausible to estimate that the total number of residents in the Attica camps has fluctuated between 10,000 and 20,000 people, divided into camps ranging from 200 to 3,000 inhabitants. To these we must add, until 2022, the approximately 6,500 beneficiaries of the ESTIA project, and, above all, the thousands of asylum seekers who preferred to find alternative housing solutions.

Interviews carried out with several asylum seekers provide testimony to the fact that a great percentage of people prefer finding their own housing solutions rather than being hosted in the camps. The violence, the recurrent fires, the lack of primary goods, the despair and the isolation described paint a structural condition of "planned shrinkage" (Wallace, 1990), capable of containing a part of the new arrivals, transferred from camps in the Aegean, while pushing others to the point of preferring to risk "the game" or the hardship of living in the central neighbourhoods. Here they will be able to find apartments in dilapidated but reasonably priced conditions, given the process of continued outflow from the middle classes.

The interviews also stressed the role of community networks in the search for accommodation, both in the case of so-called "hostels", i.e. entire buildings intended for short or very short-term informal rent, where migrants find hospitality for a few days or even several months, as well as within the informal rental market, dominated by the practice of subletting. These are precarious solutions, interspersed with constant house moves, always in similar living conditions and around the same areas, i.e. the neighbourhoods of Omonia, Victoria, Agios Panteleimonas and along the Acharnon street and Patission avenue. Those are the same areas where the ESTIA apartments were concentrated by virtue of the low cost of rent, i.e. the same areas that already in 2011 showed the clearest trend towards residential segregation in the entire city, with peaks above 50% (Papatzani & Knappers, 2020). In fact, these are considered the most "difficult" areas of the centre (Papatzani, 2020), that in previous years represented just a first step in the housing process of migrants, followed by movement into less segregated areas (Arbaci, 2018). On the contrary, today these processes draw a map filled with continuous movements inside the same areas. Moreover, those are not incited by an increased economic condition but by precarious housing conditions, evictions and new searches for cheaper rents. Simply put, by a continuous process of displacements.

Despite the efforts of the Municipality of Athens and its collaborators (Stratigaki, 2022), it is the police that took on the leading role in the urban governance of migrations. "Random" checks, raids and arrests, police motorcycles and armoured vehicles patrolling the squares and streets

11 Starting from 2020, only those NGOs that can afford to enter a special "register" can operate within the camps, and only under the conditions of limiting their action to what is established by the government.

are a part of everyday life of "difficult" neighbourhoods. The eviction of Eleonas is only the final part of a long operation started by the Mitsotakis government since the first months of its inauguration. A project made of evictions, transfers, deportations and changes to the reception system, each characterised by the practice of displacement employed as the urban gear of a wider mechanism. This plan aimed at diverting the route and keeping the migrants away from Athens, and was part of a broader strategy of containment, enacted by alternating forced mobility and immobility wielding displacement strategies as tools to disrupt "migrant multiplicities" (Tazzioli, 2020) and any autonomy of migrations (Mezzadra, 2011; Stopani & Pampuro, 2018).
Already in the autumn of 2019 the government proceeded to clear out the dozens of squats where tens of thousands of migrants had found shelter since 2015 (Tsavdaroglou & Lalenis, 2020). Exarchia, the international stronghold of the anarchist movement, where the police had not been able to enter since the Eighties, was from that moment on permanently garrisoned by the police. In the autumn of 2021, once the "pandemic truce" ended, the Skaramagas camp was closed. It was now time for Eleonas.

4. Endless Displacements and Urban Odysseys

The latter section of the article is based on two ethnographies and focuses on the Ex-Moi squat in Turin and Eleonas refugee camp in Athens. These two cases which can be interpret as episodes of a series of "endless displacements", chapters of real "urban odysseys", marking the biographies of "displaced people" par excellence, as asylum seekers and refugees, but also migrants and other minorities. Both cases began with a redevelopment project and ended with another one.

4.1 The origins of Ex-Moi

The four buildings of what became known as the largest housing squat in Europe (Img Press, 2020) had been built to host the 2006 Winter Olympic Games. They were part of a project whose objective was to reshape the area of former wholesale fruit and vegetable market (*Mercato Ortofrutticolo all'Ingrosso*), with the purpose of relaunching the entire Lingotto, a neighbourhood with a strong industrial vocation on the southern Turin outskirts, already subject of an important redevelopment project after the dismissal from FIAT in 1982.
The residential part of the village consisted of 39 buildings arranged in a checkerboard pattern, with 5-8 floors and a cubic shape, each coloured following a monochromatic scheme. Once the event was concluded, the buildings were used partly as social housings and partly as offices, redesigning a city projected towards a post-Fordist development model, capable of welcoming new professionals and different types of city users. However, four buildings remained vacant.
The story of the inhabitants of Moi began in 2012 (Romeo, 2017), when the government introduced the North Africa Emergency, recognizing the right to humanitarian protection to those fleeing Libya (Federici, 2012). This was an emergency measure, and refugees were often hosted in tourist infrastructures and other improvised solutions. Consequently, when the "emergency" ended abruptly in February 2013, thousands of refugees in Turin alone were suddenly deprived of housing. After just a couple of weeks, during which a nucleus of future occupants held meetings with militants connected with the Askatasuna and Gabrio autonomous social centres, the Ex-Moi was born. Soon after four buildings were squatted (Picture 1), hosting around 1,200 people for the following six years, while the Ex-Moi Refugee and Migrant Solidarity Committee became the unofficial voice of the squatters.

Picture 1. The occupied buildings of the Ex-Moi

Source: Tisa, F. (2017).

4.2 Soft eviction

In the Ex-Moi the squatters gave life to a parallel economy, structuring forms of self-organisation similar to those that characterise informal labourer settlements throughout Europe and giving rise to multiple "communing" practices (Stopani & Pampuro, 2018). For many residents, movement between the Ex-Moi and other settlements was a constant, and it was quite ordinary, following the rhythm of seasonal work, to spend the autumn in the ghettos in Calabria, the winter at the Ex-Moi and the summer in Guantanamò, in Saluzzo.[12] Others started working in the markets, selling fruit and vegetables or specialising in the collection and trade of second-hand goods, joining the hundreds of *mercatari* (market traders) who have been giving life to the informal part of the *Balon* flea market before its eviction (Magariello, 2019). Furthermore, various mobilizations were triggered, linked to the issue of the residence permit and administrative residence, which is vital both to be able to renew the permit and to access services.

After an initial eviction proposal, a long period of tolerance followed. The elections were too close and the Democratic Party mayor, Piero Fassino, who was already busy clearing out the *Platz*, one of the largest Roma camps in Europe, preferred to wait. The new 5-Star Movement mayor, Chiara Appendino, therefore initiated a negotiation with the inhabitants, engaging the prefecture, the region, the catholic church and the local *Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo*[13] in the process.

12 Saluzzo, a town at around 60 kilometres from Turin, hosted the informal settlement of Guantanamò for almost ten years. Hundreds of agricultural workers have lived among its self-built shacks, attracted by the demand which has made the Monviso district rich.

13 Compagnia di San Paolo is a banking foundation with a strong participation by the well-known bank Intesa Sanpaolo. It is one of the oldest and largest private foundations in Europe.

Despite this, the "liberation" plan for the MOI buildings was rejected by its residents. It presented itself as «A project that addresses the urgent housing and employment needs of the inhabitants of buildings in the former MOI district, to support their gradual independence and allow the buildings to be handed back for urban and social redevelopment purposes» (Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, 2021a, p. 1). This is labelled by the institutions and the media as *sgombero dolce*, a "soft eviction" similar to Platz's one between 2013 and 2015 (Cencetti *et al*., 2020)[14].
The operation will take almost two years, starting with the census of residents. In December 2017, the project manager, nicknamed *Mappatura* ("map-man") by the inhabitants, was punched by one of the inhabitants, and in the following days four of them were arrested to be held in pre-trial detention for a year (Sossich, 2023a). On August 6, 2018, the police cleared the "brown building". On March 11, 2019, it was the turn of the "blue building". Finally, on July 30, the eviction of the "orange building" and the "grey building" was carried on. It is worth saying that, according to the opinion of some educators and project managers interviewed, approximately 30% of the evicted people had arrived in the building that same night with the aim of taking part in the inclusion projects. One of the facilities where the inhabitants were transferred was the Settimo Torinese Red Cross camp.

> «The camp was divided in two, us from the Ex-Moi, about 50, and those from the Asylum, not even a dozen. We had separate spaces. In the containers we lived two per cell. There was electricity and heating and a "fan". And then there was a Red Cross hut. It was very far from the city, very far, with nothing around: railway, fields, many factories... by bicycle or bus it took us more than an hour to get to the city, only half an hour to Auchan (*a big mall located at the edge of the city*). We didn't do any activities like internships or Italian school. Nothing at all. We played football...better than staying in the room until the evening. Only those in Asylum had something to do. They studied a little. Italian school, internship... instead for those of the Moi...Sorry for them» (Interview with Idrissa, 2020)

Gradually people are placed into apartment groups managed by around thirty third-sector actors. The testimonies of "beneficiaries", operators and representatives of the institutions express irreconcilable points of view on the project. Idrissa,[15] who at the end of a year spent in the Red Cross camp was picked up by the police to be taken to the Turin CPR (*Centri di Permanenza per i Rimpatri*, the Italian detention and expulsion centres) (Sossich 2023a), has a clear-cut judgement.

> «A few days ago I passed by Corso Emilia (*Emilia Avenue*). I know many people from Moi there. We said hi, best wishes. And who knows...only they know where they sleep now. Sometimes we meet at "Oumar's house" in his tent under the *Corso Regina* (Regina Avenue) bridge. Now he is a farm labourer, they told me he went to Spain. Again, I often thought about that project... In all Italy, there has never been a mafia project like this» (Interview with Idrissa, 2020)

The partial results of the project were presented in September 2021 through a Memorandum (Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, 2021b). The document extends the duration of the "third reception" programs and presents the project as a successful model, to be adopted in other crisis contexts. In the data released, it is reported that around 800 people were included in the projects and hosted in various reception facilities, mainly CAS, and that of these, after two years, around 300 people had achieved work autonomy and around 170 housing autonomy. Finally, of around 100 people in precarious legal conditions, around a quarter were "accompanied" to regularisation (Prefettura di Torino, 2021).
According to the operators interviewed, the organisation of an "organic" intervention only started in the summer of 2020 thanks to the effort of the Municipality's *Ufficio Stranieri* (Foreigners Office), while for the first year the beneficiaries were left waiting and without any guaran-

14 Located in the far north of the Turin suburbs, the Platz for 15 years was one of the largest slums in Europe, with an estimated population of between 1800 and 2500 people. In 2013 the City of Turin launched a project called *La città possibile* "The possible city", and in 2015 the camp was razed to the ground (Cencetti *et al.,* 2020).

15 All given names are pseudonyms.

tees. Only afterwards would the remaining beneficiaries have achieved housing independence, thanks to the efforts of the teams created within the various cooperatives for this purpose, and to 1,200 euros to cover agency expenses and deposits or the first months' rent for each beneficiary. They would then find a home in the least expensive areas of the city, in particular in the Barriera di Milano district.
Finally, from July 2022, the beneficiaries moved from the MOI project to the so-called *Emergenza Abitativa* (Housing Emergency), regulated by the *Accordo Quadro* Framework Agreement), a project of four years with an investment of 12 million euros by the Municipality to face urban marginality in its various forms, including families evicted or under eviction and homeless people (Comune di Torino, 2022). During the summer of 2023, the last beneficiaries would also leave the project. The similarity between the project aimed at the evicted, not by chance named as third reception, and the second reception, highlights the condition of "permanent arrival" (Meeus *et al*., 2020) reproduced by various governmental institutions involved in the governance of migration at the urban and international level.
That said, several third sector actors and the housing movements have denounced a perverse effect of such projects, as well as the projects promoted by the second reception actors (Casalegno, 2024): hundreds of people would have been housed in the apartments of a small circle of big owners, the so-called *palazzinari* (a variant of "jerry-builders"). Among them, the best-known turned out to be the notorious Giorgio Molino, an "entrepreneur" who had specialised for decades in renting to immigrants applying disadvantageous contracts, vexatious clauses, and employing intimidating and opaque, if not directly violent, methods of eviction. Moreover, those owners have operated concentrating up to a half a dozen people as well as entire families into tiny apartments, which in turn are concentrated in entire buildings devolved for this purpose, often in terrible structural condition (Migliaccio, 2023; Tumminello, 2024). It thus seems plausible that this strategy of containment and dispersal through welfare tertiarization ended up, at least partially, by reinforcing the segmentation and stratification of Turin's housing market and the ethnic segregation of its neighbourhoods. Eventually, once more, many of them were evicted, sealing one more step in an endless circle of 'un-homing' and displacement (Elliott *et al.,* 2020).
The fate of the Ex-Moi buildings was instead sealed on July 3, 2020, when they were sold by the Municipality to the *Fondo Abitare Sostenibile Piemonte*, a fund managed by various Piedmontese banking foundations, including Compagnia di San Paolo. They were therefore destined for the construction of a complex of social residences «with over 400 beds dedicated to temporary residential accommodation at discounted rates for students, young workers, and city users» managed by Camplus, the leading Italian provider of co-living and housing for university students (Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, 2020). The student residence was inaugurated on the 10th of May 2023 (Caracciolo, 2023).

4.3 The origins of the Eleonas camp

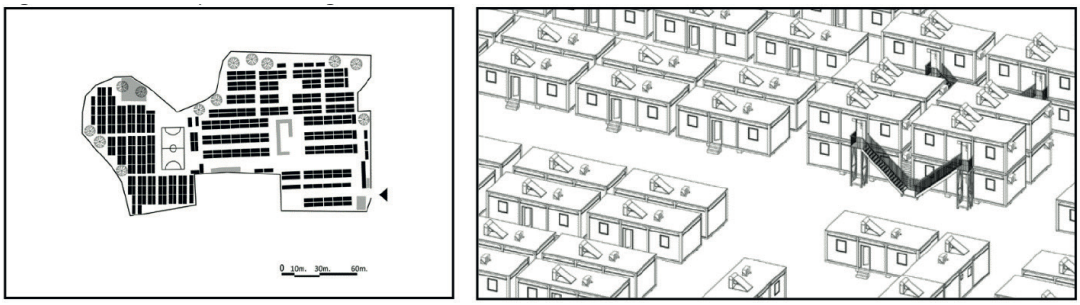
Eleonas camp was built in 2015 in the middle of "the long summer of migration" to accommodate, for a maximum span of three days, some of those thousands who were moving from the islands to continue their journey towards Europe. Only, following the change in migration policies, the structure took on a permanent character, and was expanded to include 297 housing containers (Vyzoviti & Chalvatzoglou, 2020).
Located a couple of kilometres away from the historic centre, the camp took its name from the area where it was located, and was surrounded by a continuous succession of abandoned factories, derelict buildings and urban voids, with the exception of some warehouses, transport companies' depositories and the Sunday waste-picker market, the so called "Bazaar", which I believe to be the biggest flea market in Europe, and in many ways similar to the aforementioned "Balon", in Turin (Soi Gunelas, 2021). Eleonas, literally translated as "olive grove", had long been

labelled as an "urban void", despite being not empty at all and hosting many of the logistic and industrial enterprises active in the city. It extends from the centre for entire kilometres, defined by the now buried Kifissos waterways to the west and Ylissos to the east, by the ancient but still fundamental Piraeus Avenue to the south, and finally by the ancient residential area of Colonus to the north (Panayotopoulos-Tsiros, 2020). From 1983 to 2014, four proposals had been formulated with the aim of revitalising the area: the two presidential decrees of 1991 and 1995, the "double regeneration" proposal of 2006, and the strategic plan for the region of Attica 2014.

> «In 2006, the relocation of the Panathinaikos FC football stadium from central Athens was proposed. The large amounts of space required and the need for accessibility for a stadium, combined with the relatively low land price and strategic location of Eleonas, made the area ideal to receive the new infrastructure, although the binding Presidential Decree of 1995 did not clearly allow for such development. For this project a land swap scheme was proposed in which the former stadium site would be transformed into public green space in exchange for the green space taken from Eleonas – hence the project title, Double Regeneration» (Panayotopoulos-Tsiros, 2020, p. 136)

In 2007 the Roma camp on Polykarpou Street, which had occupied this space for years, was cleared out, despite the protests of the municipal opposition led by a young councillor known as Alexis Tsipras, creating a precedent for the eviction of the refugee camp. Despite accusations of corruption (CCRE, 2009) the construction site began in 2010, only to be interrupted in 2013 due to the state council decision to stop the project and the bankruptcy of Vovos SA, a vital player in the public-private partnership behind the project. As a result, from 2014 part of the lot was occupied by the aforementioned Bazaar, seeking a new location after yet another relocation, just to face another displacement in 2016 (Soi Gunelas, 2021).
The history of the refugee camp began in 2015, when the government led by an older Tsipras decided to use half of the semi-built lot for the construction of the camp, following a well-known, albeit implicit, tradition of containment and convergence of "unwanted" populations in disadvantaged city areas (Cheshire & Zappia, 2015).

Figures 3 and 4. Map and drawing of Eleonas



Source: Vyzoviti, Chalvatzoglou & Emseeh (2020)

It was managed in concert by the Greek government, the IOM and a myriad of minor partners, both humanitarian and private, as the security. It was a camp of housing containers (Figures 3 and 4), and in 2022 it hosted (officially) 500 children, 400 women and 600 men, mainly of Congolese (39%), Afghan (30%) and Syrian origins (12%) (IOM, 2022). As it is often the case with refugee camps in Greece, Eleonas soon grew to be an example of "humanitarian urbanism" (Bram, 2016), namely a space of negotiation between the humanitarian and bureaucratic governmentality and the "silent" and "bold" strategies of "spatial encroachment" of its residents (Gillespie, 2017). Far from being a space transparent to the gaze of the authority, in the camp asylum seekers became dwellers and place-makers (Picture 2), inhabiting between corridors of

housing containers punctuated by self-built huts, cafés, minimarkets and even places of worship (Martin *et al.,* 2019), while out of the gate they could mingle in a urban environment where many others negotiated space, practices and prices on a daily basis (Soi Gunelas, 2021).

Picture 2: Eleonas Camp.

Source: Sossich (2022).

4.4 Hard eviction

In November 2020 the "double regeneration" project was brought back to life, and a new agreement was signed between the mayor of Athens, Kostas Bakoyannis, in concert with the government led by his uncle, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, and the Panathinaikos football club owned by ship-owner and media mogul Giannis Alafouzos. The camp area was intended to host part of the stadium, while the surrounding land will host other sports infrastructures, for an investment of approximately 125 million euros from the Recovery Fund, and a wide series of projects aimed at modernising the city for an investment estimated at around 500 million between public and private funds (Μίχας, 2022).

The closure of the camp was announced in November 2021, and small transfers of its population started in the spring of 2022. In the last days of June, a maxi-transfer of around 300 people was planned, thus triggering the resistance. Although life was not easy in Eleonas camp, the structure was at least located a few hundred metres from the nearest metro station, thus making it possible for its inhabitants to enjoy, at least partially, their right to the city (Darlin, 2016). At the same time, the resistance was also motivated by the fear of being brought to the mainland camps, whose condition of isolation and despair was well-known and often associated with the traumatic experience already lived in the hotspot islands' camps. Slogans such as "Eleonas is our house", and "We want to live together" were repeated so many times through the loud-speakers that eventually they were written down on the many banners hung around the gate, together with "No forced displacement of migrants for tourism and profit! Fight racism!"

Between June 22 and 30, hundreds of residents guarded the gates of the camp day and night. Despite repeated interventions by riot police all transfers were prevented.
The mobilisation was self-organised, relying on the leadership of some of the residents and on the solidarity networks that crossed the camp. It was also supported by the *Solidarity With Migrants* collective and the anti-racist organisation *Keerfa*. The former would play a fundamental role in mediatizing and supporting the struggle by maintaining a constant presence at the gates, the latter would act in the institutional arena, obtaining the support of the left opposition during a city council session and a meeting with the representatives of the Ministry of Immigration. In both cases, Pauline, a woman of Congolese origin, resident in the camp and mother of two minors, would act as spokesperson.
On July 1 a new director took office. From the first day she worked to establish a climate of terror, through a mix of "politics of exhaustion" (Welander & de Vries, 2016) and intimidation, with the precise goal of dealing with the growing autonomy displayed by the camp residents. Moreover, she was already known by many asylum seekers as the "iron fist" director of the Samos camp. A new maxi-transfer was subsequently announced for the night of August 15.
At 4 a.m. the first police contingents arrived. Soon after, the Congolese women took to the street. A couple of them smashed a bundle of pots on the ground, and those who followed up, pushing the waste bins to the middle of the street, created a barricade out of them, without ceasing the rhythmical drumming. The most recurring slogans, "Eleonas don't close", was interjected by "Tout le monde déteste la police", "Solidarité avec les immigrés", «Congo, Congo, Congo! – Afghanistan, Afghanistan, Afghanistan! – Somalia, Somalia, Somalia!". Finally, around 8 a.m. the road was cleared.
On the night of the 17th the police charged but the inhabitants rushed and resisted, and for the first time the Eleonas struggle acquired media visibility. On the morning of the 19th once again the women faced the police, holding their daughters and sons in their arms. The police charged and arrested six solidarians, including me. Once again, the mobilisation of the inhabitants would force the director and the police to take off.
A new phase then began, which was marked by a strategy of intimidation and persuasion of the residents based on their legal vulnerability. The director would summon each inhabitant individually, telling them that should they refuse to cooperate they would be thrown onto the street and that their asylum files would be blocked and removed from the system, but if they cooperate she would be able to speed up their asylum procedures. Although many doubted that either the threats or the proposals could be translated into action, "governing through uncertainty" (Kristen, 2015) is a structural trait of the political technologies employed in the governance of migration, making them neither less effective nor productive.
Morale worsened even more after Wares Ali, of Pakistani origin, died of a heart attack in the hours before yet another transfer attempt, on the night of August 30. Few were surprised when, a few days later, a fire broke out in the camp, starting from the container where the man lived.
From September on the camp was jointly supervised by the previous director and the new one. The strategy changed again: people were moved in small groups, by taxis and minibuses, on random days and hours. Thus, the unity of the inhabitants broke, putting an end to the mobilisation. One year after the first official announcement, a last forced transfer would take place on November 30, when the police finally raided the camp (Sossich, 2022b). Eleonas camp was no more. The domicide was concluded (Nowicki, 2014).
On December 12, the Ministry of Immigration and the Municipality signed the handover protocol of the area, organising a ceremony in the camp (Picture 3). Prime Minister Mitsotakis, the Minister of Immigration and the Mayor gave speeches on stage. They celebrated «the return of a part of the city back to the citizens, the launch of the 'double regeneration' project», said the mayor. The overcoming of old migration policies, said Mitsotakis.

Picture 3: Eleonas camp: Prime Minister Mitsotakis on the stage of Eleonas.

Source: Iefimerida (2022).

It is impossible to obtain official data on the fate of the residents, but their trajectories can be reconstructed on the basis of their testimonies, even if it was possible to keep contact with just a tiny fraction of them. Many boarded planes after buying false documents to arrive in France, Holland or Germany, where they started, once more, an asylum procedure. Others took the Balkan route, paying a high price for it. Some of them never reached their destination.

Many took the route and arrived in France, where they would often be hosted by their relatives for a couple of months while reapplying for asylum, just to be once more dispersed through the French reception system in a rural location, waiting for the acceptance or rejection of their application. Some managed to obtain asylum, and a regular passport. After finding the money for the ticket, they left for Germany, hoping to build a new life there. Some ended up in the Amygdaleza detention centre for illegal immigrants. Many others have sublet a home, almost always in the usual central neighbourhoods, waiting to find an opportunity to leave. Many accepted the transfer, living in the camps of Schisto, beyond the port of Piraeus, and Ritsona, over an hour's drive from Athens. Someone spent a year in Schisto, getting intoxicated to the point of becoming almost unrecognisable, until deciding it was enough. Someone accepted a dangerous job, an illegal and criminalised job, that would allow them to live in the inner city of Athens, but would eventually lead to their arrest, and a new, even more uncertain, future. Others took the reverse route. Someone lost their housing in the city just to find themselves in Ritsona camp more than a year after the eviction of Eleonas, still hoping for an opportunity to leave. Some of them are waiting for the result of their third asylum request, hoping for the opening of a humanitarian corridor, while being hosted by a charitable foundation for homeless people.

All of them embody the "spatial productivity" of the border regime much beyond the frontier, much beyond the camp, living between segregation and dispersal, forced immobility and hypermobility, drawing new geographies of segregations one displacement after the other.

Conclusions

The cases of Turin and Athens can lead to some conclusions. First of all, what emerges is that containment strategies and migration governance affect the settlement trajectories of migrants in the long term, capturing them in the cycle of immobilisation, dispersal and forced movements. In the case of Turin, these policies seem to have favoured a residential dynamic in recent years, marked by a subordinate condition in the absence of evident residential segregation, but also marked by micro-segregation, socio-tenurial differentiation and peripheralization. Very different is the case of Athens, where the policies adopted seem to have produced a stronger segregation and made any attempt at integration more complex, on the one hand promoting the departure of migrants towards other destinations, on the other trapping them in an endless cycle of displacements inside the most segregated neighbourhoods of the city. The research results therefore stress the multi-scale nature of migration governance and its spatial productivity (Lind, 2020), since the increased constraints on the mobility of the migrant population appear to be capable of producing unexpected transformations even at local scale, trapping migrants in segregated districts, initially reconfiguring Greece from a destination of settlement to a land of transit and finally reconfiguring it as a territory of containment.

It also emerges that the mobilisation of new policies of fear and xenophobic and criminalising rhetoric against the migrant population is used as an instrument for legitimising new processes of "accumulation through displacement" and gentrification (Hackworth & Smith, 2001). These measures therefore are aimed not only at attracting capital and rebranding as "global cities", but also at regaining control of what from time to time can be defined as a jungle (Ex-Moi) or an urban void (Eleonas). These narratives are proving to be the tools to carry forward that "urban neoliberalism" which, after the 2008 financial crisis, had encountered growing opposition. An opposition often triggered by the awareness that these crises were largely the result of the debts incurred precisely by these projects of urban redevelopment, as in the case of the Olympic Games infrastructures of Athens 2004 and Turin 2006.

Yet, Idrissa and Pauline's constant movements also seem to be driven by other forces. These forces are an expression of the post-colonial and racist character of displaceability, which translates into the urban realm the spatial productivity of bordering and containment practices (Tazzioli, 2020). A condition of "permanent arrival" (Meeus *el al.*, 2020) and "displaceability", described by Yiftachel (2018) as «the susceptibility of people and groups to being removed, expelled or prevented from exercising their right to the city» characterises both the story of Idrissa, who has returned to live in a squat, and that of Pauline, who lives, always temporarily, in an apartment provided by the reception system of another European country. In fact, I suggest that displacement shall be understood as the urban side of the "war on migrants"[16]. The "endless displacement" is therefore an essential component of the "confinement continuum" (Tazzioli & De Genova, 2023), identifying the endless series of forced movements alternating with just as much forced immobility.

"Deportability" (De Genova, 2002), "evictability" (van Baar, 2016) and "displaceability" therefore combine to define the condition of spatial vulnerability of the migrant subject on different scales. For people like Idrissa, who was included in a third reception project eight years after his arrival in Italy and then taken to an expulsion centre, the threat of forced displacement is constant, a silent foundation of contemporary urban citizenship (Yiftachel, 2018). The classificatory power of the *pensée d'État* (Sayad, 2002), therefore translates into a "migratory governmentality" capable of producing new subaltern subjectivities (Beneduce, 2015).

As dispersal strategies trace their genealogy back to the colonial government of "unruly" populations (Tazzioli, 2020), the condition emerging is thus characterised by a "reverse coloniality", defining a new "regime of urban identities" (Yiftachel, 2018) capable of operating in multiple

16 Through this metaphor the No Border movement denounces the violent character of EU's migration policies.

sites and scales (Lind, 2020), from the border, where one is contained or pushed back, to the renting of a house in a segmented and specialised market. A housing market with no guarantees, subject to the monopoly of specialised actors, where inhabiting means to live under the constant threat of harassment, extortion and eviction.

Finally, it is worth emphasising how the history of both the "soft eviction" of the Ex-Moi and of the "hard eviction" of the Eleonas camp find their own precedent and model in the eviction of two Roma camps, namely the Platz and the Polykarpou evictions, suggesting a genealogy of dispersal and displacement technologies yet to be reconstructed.

Only a complete and radical rethinking of both migration and housing policies could put an end to this cycle of intersecting oppressions, a rethinking that should start on the one hand with the identification of freedom of movement as a fundamental and universal right, and on the other with the de-commodification of housing. Of course, these are not issues on the government agendas. Yet, the "Fortress Europe" is no older than thirty years, and cities have never stopped transforming.

That said, the present study is limited by the absence of quantified data supporting the generalisation of the patterns described, although the difficulty of quantifying and mapping displacement processes, as well as the movements of a population deliberately excluded from the founding institutions of urban citizenship is well known (Easton *at al.,* 2019). While segregation studies could improve their insight by bearing in mind the influence of containment policies, the hypothesis of new emerging patterns of segregation could be further tested through quantitative research, while new qualitative research could shed light on the housing careers following displacements and evictions. The stories of the inhabitants of Eleonas and Ex-Moi are far from being over, as well as their urban odysseys, their search for a home across and beyond the Mediterranean, their struggle for the right to the city.

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Public Spaces Transformations in Latin America during Covid-19: Community Resilience and Tactical Urbanism in Bogota, Quito and Mexico City

Introduction: Tactical Urbanism in Latin America

The new conditions of unusual and prolonged uses of housing as a measure of protection and prevention of Covid-19, have motivated the need to explore the social and spatial dynamics that the current pandemic has generated in the world population (Gehl, 2020). Additionally, prolonged restriction of access to public space and natural areas can also generate public health problems and stress associated with a lack of physical activity, access to nature and lack of social interaction (Francis, Giles-Corti *et al.*, 2012). The impact of social distance and mobility restrictions caused by a pandemic could be seen just as one of the Anthropocene challenges to be faced (Vargas & Flores, 2022). Communities have valuable local knowledge of how they function and how to organize themselves to better withstand the restrictions such as those of the Covid-19 pandemic in their territories. Therefore, the urban collectives Urban Mapping Agency, Hablemos de Ciudad, Buro DAP and Universidad del Rosario developed an interdisciplinary project to collect the experiences and opinions of the community during the current pandemic. The project aimed to understand its impacts on habitat in the areas of housing and public space, and its transformations, especially Tactical Urbanism (TU) interventions initiated and deployed by different actors in urban spaces.

The results of the online survey taken during the longest period of lockdown due to Covid-19, from March 2021 up to December 2021 (Vargas, Marino & Cifuentes, 2020), showed that 80% of the surveyed population in the target cities of Bogota, Quito and Mexico City had some level of restriction between high and medium at the time of answering the questionnaire. In addition, almost the same percentage of people (72%) said they had been emotionally affected by the absence of social interaction in the public space. Among the most common emotional states presented by those who participated in the survey are anxiety, irritability and distress. In fact, during quarantine, the activities that people missed most in public spaces were interacting with friends or other people (36%), walking (20%) and sports (14%) ranking second and third in preference.

This paper also presents a perspective of the adaptation processes of three emblematic Latin American cities such as Bogotá, Quito and Mexico. These cities have been evaluated based on the research *Living under Quarantine conditions* (Vargas, Marino & Cifuentes, 2020), carried out between April and July 2020. This research summarized the results of emerging actions related to physical distancing and confinement restrictions, which affected the daily life of people and their relationship with the community and the use of public space. The research was of a mixed type based on documentary analysis, georeferenced analysis and online surveys (n=650), including aspects such as urban proximity, public health and vulnerability.

In Latin America, we have seen the proliferation of smaller-scale community initiatives that (sometimes) take place outside the official capacity of the city. The TU is based on such activity and has therefore become a popular movement for communities who want to change and configure their city and do so without government involvement. One of the main challenges

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is the definition of tactical or temporal urbanism. Stevens & Dovey wrote about this and interviewed practitioners involved in the design and elaboration processes of TU in Australia, who expressed that there is no single definition of this type of intervention, as their typologies, scales and methods are very different, depending on the context and the actors involved in the process (Stevens & Dovey, 2022).
TU Urbanism in Latin America has been widely implemented in urban areas, as a response to the urban problems related to lack/decay of public space, security, pedestrian safety and slow responses from the local or metropolitan governments (Ibid, 2022). The development of TU projects has been evaluated in several articles and books on these projects in Latin America (Alarcon *et al*., 2022); however, there is still more knowledge on the processes and impact of these projects on urban areas and communities. Therefore, local governments or communities engaged in TU initiatives should evaluate the results/delivery of similar strategies in different contexts, to provide a better chance of success to the urban interventions, and promote the recovery and re-appropriation of neglected or unsecured spaces in our cities.

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1 Tactics and Strategies Concept and Government Responses: Disrupting the Status Quo

The current research is inspired conceptually by multidisciplinary approaches that integrate the social dimension into the notion of place (Lefebvre, 1974). Lefebvre introduces the concept of "social space" which incorporates both physical space and the social relationships that unfold within it. He explores how space is produced in different ways, perceived, and performed in society. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre argues that space is not just a physical entity or a backdrop for human activities, but rather, a social product that is shaped by social relations, power structures, and everyday practices. Following this notion, thirty years later David Harvey remarks in *The Condition of Postmodernity* two factors in common with Lefebvre's approach, far beyond the criticism of capitalism and their Marxist perspective. The first is the Production of Space (both scholars emphasize that space is not just a physical entity but a social product that is produced, contested, and transformed through social relations and power dynamics). The second is Social Justice (they advocate for the right to the city, equity, and more inclusive and democratic urban spaces that prioritize the needs and well-being of all citizens). Therefore, they argue that space is a key site where social struggles and political conflicts play out: «The revolution of public space is not a physical one, but a revolution led by citizens, and it is expressed in the streets» (Harvey, 2012, p. 80)
Therefore, understanding how the public space evolves in rapidly growing cities such as those in Latin America is a critical part of the decision-making process regarding the public space agenda in global south cities. Also, it is important to understand that city-making in most Latin American cities has been a mixed process between formal and informal growth, and the communities that self-built their houses and neighborhoods have a social construction of their habitat (Muñera & Sanchéz, 2012), and, consequently, adapt themselves more quickly to changing urban and economic conditions. Besides, the exhibition curated by MoMA during 2014 - 2015 titled *Uneven Growth: Tactical Urbanisms for Expanding Megacities* remarks the mandatory compromise that architects should have for involving themselves both at the "top down" and "bottom up" levels of urbanism by becoming both parts of collaborative teams embedded in the early stages of policy-making at one end, and through acupunctural interventions applied to the intuitive, informal growth of cities at the other» (MoMA, 2014)
Considering the social approach to the notion of space, the concepts of tactics and strategy in the urban field defined by sociologists such as De Certeau (1990) and Bourdieu (2008) are

fundamental, especially in understanding the interactions between urban space, government and community. De Certeau defines as "strategies" the hidden media in which institutions and structures of power, or "producers", circumscribe a place as their own and generate relations that target individuals, or "consumers", who consequently enact "tactics" to destabilize or diverge from the prescribed conventions of such environments. Also, Bourdieu, in his field theory, examines how individuals construct social fields, and how they are affected by such fields. Social fields are environments in which competition between individuals and between groups takes place, such as markets, academic disciplines, and also public spaces, naming incumbent the dominant actors in the field, and insurgents the ones that try to alter the field. Insurgent urbanism therefore aims to change this paradigm in cities, and promotes bottom-up initiatives (with a wide range of typologies), as a way to claim back problematic/unused/ or contested urban spaces, and overcome the rigid/ineffective traditional top-down approach to solve public space problems in cities.

Tactical actions and their execution are intimately related to the construction of collective identities in social movements (Castells, 2006; Jacobs, 1961). The study of collective identity has helped scholars understand why people participate in collective action, but the variety of tactics that constitute those actions has not been fully explored (De Certeau, 1990). An emerging interest in culture and strategy that places social movement actors on a field of contention with opponents, allies, and spectator audiences raises questions about the tactics being used and the construction of collective identity, which is formed in interaction with others. Strategies and tactics reflect collective identities, but they also provide opportunities to assert or challenge them. Innovative methods can create tension as activists/communities work to define the most adequate scope/tool for its environments.

The tactical spectrum looking at Tactics and Tactician's stakeholders, from a sanctioned and unsanctioned perspective, shows how sometimes tactics move from unsanctioned to sanctioned as they are tested and measured for their efficiency in providing better urban spaces and creating a collaborative framework for change (see Image 1).

Image 1: Tactical spectrum of tactical urbanism (adapted from Planetizen)

As Nabeel Hamdi described in his research on participatory practices, the spirit of planners should focus on permanent innovation by production of space in a practical manner to face urgent problems consistently, whilst at the same time triggering opportunities for change to deal with their primary causes: inequity, violation of rights, risk and vulnerability (Hamdi, 2014). In this way, our research explored these innovative solutions and opportunities for change in selected cities in Latin America and collected information about participatory practices to engage communities in TU interventions.

1.2 Tactical Urbanism in Global South Cities: Cases and Examples in Latin American Cities

Citizen-led urbanism such as TU initiatives have gained momentum in Latin America, since communities reclaim public spaces as a means to promote social inclusion, and address urban challenges. In this sense, the interventions in Latin American cities have contributed to empowering social movements aligned to the right to the city. These movements, mostly grassroots, often involve residents, activists, local artists and organizations coming together to implement small-scale, temporary interventions that have a big impact on the urban environment. Here are some examples of emergent initiatives that contribute to the knowledge of the actions of tactical urbanism performed in Latin America:

- Street rebellious art in Bogotá. Bogotá has a vibrant street art scene that reflects the city's history, culture, and social movements. Street artists and activists use public spaces as platforms for political expression, social commentary, and community engagement, contributing to the visibility and vitality of urban life in the city. Moreover, street art, muralism and graffiti as branches of urban arts have become iconic interventions, easily visible, improving the built environment of stigmatized or socially depressed neighborhoods.
- Bicycle Activism in Mexico City. In the last years Mexico City has raised a series of citizen-led initiatives to promote active mobility, like cycling and urban walkability for sustainable and equitable development. These initiatives imply more social and pedagogical approaches, rather than a physical intervention. One example is the initiative *Peatonito*, which is a masked pedestrian advocate who uses humor and creativity to raise awareness about pedestrian rights and safety in the city. In the case of cycling movements, there are increasing social and even political activist groups like Bicitekas and Muévete en Bici who have organized bike rides, workshops, and advocacy campaigns to promote bike-friendly infrastructure and policies in the city.
- The Frida Project in Quito. There is a relevant project and something of an exception in the capital of Ecuador. Only 26 percent of residents use private cars as their primary mode of transport. This fact makes the Frida Project work by activating the city's streets, reimaging them as a set of collective public spaces for people, not cars. In this sense, "Frida" is designed in the rough shape of a car, but transforms parking spots into human-centered public spaces, a sort of mobile parklet. This car model at a human scale is built with recycled materials and unskilled labor. Accordingly, "Frida" radically plays a pedagogical role by teaching citizens about the concept of what a vehicle is by substituting chairs and a communal table for an isolated transport experience.
- Similar to Quito urban initiative, we can find the Park(ing) Day in São Paulo. This is an annual event where citizens, artists, and activists transform parking spaces into temporary public parks to raise awareness about the need for greening cities, especially encouraging the recovery of public spaces. São Paulo has been a hub for Park(ing) Day activities, highlighting the potential for tactical urbanism interventions and initiatives to create more livable and sustainable urban environments.
- Community Gardens in Buenos Aires. Urban agriculture projects and community gardens have flourished in Buenos Aires, with residents reclaiming vacant lots and abandoned spaces to grow food, build community, and promote environmental sustainability. These grassroots

initiatives showcase how tactical urbanism can address food insecurity and foster social cohesion. All these examples show the ways in which citizen-led urbanism and TU initiatives are reshaping some of the most important Latin American cities, promoting community empowerment, creativity, and social innovation and change. In this context, the grassroots movements contribute to a more inclusive, democratic, and sustainable urban development by engaging as active participants in the transformation of their urban environment.

2. Research Presentation

2.1 Questioning Public Space Use and Tactical Urbanism Responses in Times of Covid: Bogotá, Mexico City and Quito

During the lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic, several cities/communities decided to implement TU actions as part of a strategy to maintain physical distance as a measure to minimize its spread while mitigating the deficit of public spaces for interaction. Amid this context, determined by the impacts of the pandemic, successes and failures were evident in the implementation of these tactical actions to recover public space under proximity approaches. These situations were observed in three Latin American cities with geographical, social and political similarities. Mexico City, Bogotá, and Quito, were part of a case study framed in the research *Impacts of Covid-19 Lockdown Restrictions on Housing and Public Space Use and Adaptation: Urban Proximity, Public Health, and Vulnerability in Three Latin American Cities* (Vargas, Marino *et al.*, 2022) (see Image 2).

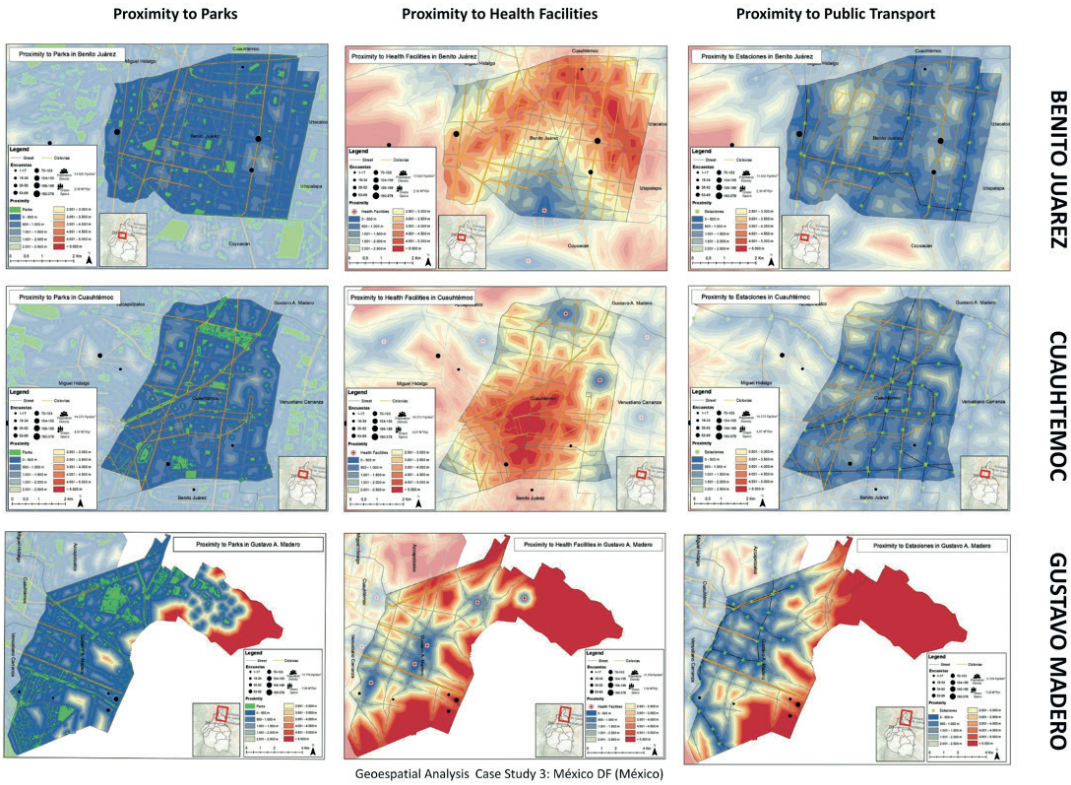

Image 2: Geospatial analysis of POI (Points of Interest) and Covid19 cases in Mexico DF (Authors)

Our mapping of the three selected cities used GIS proximity and cluster analysis to show the areas with most Covid-19 cases and their proximity to our Points of Interest; Parks, Health Facilities and Public Transport. The case study carried out in these three cities explored the range of responses that were implemented to mitigate the impacts of the low use of public space due to mobility restrictions and the need for physical distancing. Faced with this reality, and in the need to act quickly to mitigate social and environmental impacts, solutions inspired by the concepts of "urban acupuncture" and TU urbanism emerged (Lerner, 2007) as a key for the identification of "strategic" sites that result in short, medium and long-term transformations of their environments (see Image 3). This concept became the strategy to intervene with rapid actions and simultaneously highlight sectors of the city with quantitative and qualitative deficits of public space, and problems of mobility, accessibility and road safety.

Image 3: Parque Tunal II, UT and AU Bogotá, Photo credit: Raúl Marino

One of the patterns that we found as a result of the analysis carried out in the three cities, on tactical urban interventions, refers to the absence of follow-up and feedback on the results of these actions, once implemented on the urban space at a neighborhood scale. This situation has become very recurrent in this sort of strategic urban interventions characterized by very quick conceptualization and execution processes. The other pattern is closely connected with the one just described before and refers to a lack of sense of belonging about the interventions, projects, or improvements built on the public scale at the neighborhood scale. Both negatively determine the chances of success. Specifically, the pattern connected with the concept of "sense of belonging" is a key element to guarantee that any sort of tactical and "surgical" physical actions and interventions, on a certain place with functional deficits, have long-term sustainability and their results may impact positively on other future interventions through learned lessons.

In this sense, the analysis made possible to find out that the processes of planning, management and co-design solutions on deteriorated or underutilized public space do not attach importance to co-create solutions or mechanisms to encourage the engagement of local communities, direct beneficiaries, in caring and maintenance of these improvements on the urban public space. It seems that all the efforts and expectations of the TU are focused almost fully on the planning co-design and the implementation process; oppositely, there is not much effort put into the follow-up, evaluation, and feedback of the interventions on urban space, and even less if previously, during the codesign process, there was not a proper and inclusive participatory stage with a map of key stakeholders (public, private and ONGs, civil organizations) plus a diverse and wide local community representation.

Given what has been observed and said, the quickness of urban interventions on deteriorated or useless areas, strategically located, does not circumscribe "per se" a positive impact and sustainability in the long term. The success of these urban interventions, beyond the physical improvement of any place in a short time, should be determined by the increasing and

strengthening of social cohesion. Therefore, the concept of "tactical" would also imply the innovation in participatory approaches able to involve the diverse groups of people, by interest, age and expectations, normally part of any local community. An intervention with positive impacts in the long term can also be considered as tactical, and they might be clearly and effectively social, as they can bring an increasing sense of belonging as an important element of the placemaking process (Ehret & Hollet, 2016).

2.2 Tactical Urbanism Responses: Community Integration and Public Health

With the Covid-19, many of the shortcomings already existing in cities in terms of policies for the implementation of public space became evident, especially in Latin American cities, where the motor vehicle prevails over the pedestrian. Car-dependent and low-walkable cities tend to have higher rates of diseases related to inactivity such as diabetes, obesity, and heart problems, among others which coincide with the diseases linked with a higher health risk when exposed to Covid-2019, as the comorbidities associated with the pandemic (WHO, 2020). Also, our survey into public space use in Latin American cities showed that community lead initiatives to respond to the sanitary crisis were very valuable for vulnerable communities to cope (Vargas, Marino & Cifuentes, 2020).

The Park(ing) Day started in 2005 in the United States, with the collective of architects and artists Rebar Group converting a parking space in downtown San Francisco into a mini-park. Today it is an event celebrated every year worldwide in which ordinary people come together to temporarily transform a place used as a parking lot into a temporary public space for a single day. The need for quality public space has become more urgent during the last years in Latin American cities. Studies show that restricting access to public space and green areas can generate public health problems and stress associated with a lack of physical activity, a lack of enjoyment of nature, and a lack of social interaction (Braubach *et al*., 2017). Likewise, air quality is also a key factor, since during confinement improvements could be seen in reducing carbon emissions, and this could allow rethinking the ways we design cities, creating spaces designed for pedestrians, and reclaiming the streets. In this sense, TU projects are produced as a response to processes of appropriation and improvement of public space from communities, providing new amenities, services and infrastructure that together generate health and environmental benefits by promoting non-motorized means of transportation, such as biking and walking within cities, and safer streets (Stevens, Awepuga & Dovey, 2021).

It is important to highlight that our cities face different circumstances, as their population has experienced and will continue to experience a significant increase if compared to other ones in the world. The process of urban expansion in cities like Bogotá, driven by the migration of rural to urban populations, mainly as a consequence of violence in the last five decades, has increased the adverse externalities inherent to urban concentrations. In this context, some challenges transcend the mere lack of infrastructure and the absence of public spaces, such as the illegal occupation of public space, social segregation, urban violence, the inefficiency of public transportation, air pollution and the degradation of water sources.

In recent decades, TU has evolved into a means of expressing social issues in urban space, either collectively or individually, to stimulate initiatives that contribute to the improvement of living conditions in cities by creating spaces for social construction through collective agreements by strengthening the social fabric of cities in the global south where those manifestations that are part of citizen participation are evident.

The urban crisis generated by the pandemic, because of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, revealed that public spaces were insufficient in meeting the demands of a health situation of this type, resulting in a significant limitation of their effective use. This situation brought to light a lack of

understanding of the real perceptions and needs of the population, especially at a time when social distancing was essential to preserve human life. Studies have shown that restricting access to public space and green areas can generate public health problems and stress associated with a lack of physical activity, a lack of enjoyment of nature, and a lack of social interaction (Braubach *et al*., 2017). Moreover, air quality has become a key factor, not only as an indicator of public health but as an indicator of carbon emissions reduction; this could allow us to rethink the ways we design cities, creating spaces designed for pedestrians and claiming back streets.

All this added to the pre-existing problems at the level of public space in the cities mentioned above. It is relevant to highlight that highly symbolic urban interventions have also been carried out, to enrich public spaces and give them a new significance. In this sense, the concept of TU becomes much more relevant as it provides communities with tools to design their urban spaces and finally, have safe and active urban spaces, providing new amenities, services and infrastructure through temporary actions on the space. Public, fast-paced, low-cost actions, with a high impact on communities (Lobo, 2021) and that together generate health and environmental benefits by promoting non-motorized means of transportation, cycling and walking within cities (Stevens, Awepuga & Dovey, 2021). Additionally, the survey results on the use of public space in Latin American cities highlighted the significant contribution of community initiatives in response to the health crisis. These actions proved to be of great value to the most vulnerable communities, as observed in the global study about the impact of Covid-19 restrictions on housing and public space use (Vargas, Marino & Cifuentes, 2020).

3. Research Methodology

This article summarized the results and reflections of two recent research projects. The first was carried out during the lockdown caused by Covid-19 and focused on the impacts of the pandemic on the habitability of housing and urban space; and the second research was named *Recreating Cultures: Heritage, memory and place as a base to strengthen social fabric in Tunal, Bogota*. The latter was addressed to improve the social fabric and public spaces using heritage, memory and local art initiatives. Both studies intended to understand the adaptations/transformations of public spaces to the Covid-19, access to public spaces, streets, parks and other urban spaces, and the importance of tactics such as tactical urbanism to revalue public spaces in health crises.

The article was written methodologically following the same steps of the undertaken research process. It began with an extensive literature review from recent cutting-edge articles about Tactical Urbanism cases implemented along global southern cities, with special focus in Latin American cities.

Then, according to inputs, findings and data sources from the two research, there were selected three Latin American cities: Mexico City, Bogotá and Quito. These cities were the ones with the most data collected and people surveyed. Consequently, we did a comparative analysis, feasible in terms of validation and data representation. The comparison of the three case study cities was conceived under the analysis of variables as accessibility, functionality, feasibility, comfort and others in terms of sustainability, sense of belonging and follow-up to guarantee the use and caring of TU interventions, especially those that are physically implemented either to be temporal or permanent.

The comparative analysis of the three cities was supported by GIS tools, information collected by the research survey, and datasets available from the official institutions in charge of urban planning, design and management.

As part of the analysis proposed for the research, some examples of tactical urban planning interventions in Mexico City and Quito were reviewed, observing their process and results. Below are some specific examples of urban interventions carried out during the pandemic:

1. México City: The Pedestrian Zócalo Project aims to mitigate the disruptive effects caused by the pandemic. Its main focus lies in the creation of open, safe and free spaces in Mexico City. Through these initiatives, we seek to promote the reintegration of those who experienced prolonged confinement. The central premise is to selectively transform areas into pedestrian zones, evoking the image of rugs that take inspiration from the designs present in the Oaxacan huipils (see Image 5)

Image 5: Intervention of Public Space Design with Graphene Painting Mexico City-Mexico. Photograph. Gov. Ciudad de México Secretariat of Works and Services. Left Image 6: UT Zócalo Furniture. Photograph. Gov. Ciudad de México Secretariat of Works and Services.

2. Patio Cactus: The city of Ciudad Juárez, located on Mexico's northern border with the United States, quickly faced the urban, economic and social impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic after the virus arrived in Mexico. After the first confirmed local case in March 2020, measures such as lockdown, social distancing and mobility restrictions were implemented, following WHO (2020) recommendations to contain the spread of the virus. In Ciudad Juárez, a "placemaking" intervention was proposed to improve public spaces and turn them into allies for recovery after the pandemic. In the historic center of the city, an activation strategy was designed for an under-used public space. This strategy promotes the responsible use of space by delimiting areas on the floor to maintain social distancing. In addition, urban furniture suitable for the post-pandemic and elements that reflect the local sociocultural identity are incorporated. This intervention becomes a point of resilience and a gradual space for the reactivation of the city (see Image 6)

Image 6 - Left: Nueva Normalidad, right: Public space.
Photo credit: Nómada Urban Laboratory in Ciudad Juárez

3. Quito: In a pandemic, the city of Quito proposes the creation of decentralized urban workshops. *Soychimbacalle* was a cross-cutting project to recover and improve public space

by rehabilitating abandoned landscapes with safety problems. The project takes advantage of public space to generate business fairs and artistic and cultural activities. This workshop was led by Habitar Collective, a local NGO that empowers communities about the historical and cultural processes of the neighborhood, promoting the appropriation and enjoyment of public space, reactivating local commerce to repair the ravages of the pandemic, building an Agenda of Citizen Action (see Image 7).

Right Image 7: Render of La Calle Chimba. Photograph. www.quito.gob.ec.
Left Image 7: The Stairs of La Calle Chimba in Quito, Ecuador. Photograph. www.quito.gob.ec.

4. Discussion. Monitoring, Follow-Up and Sense of Belonging in Tactical Urbanism Projects: Effectiveness in Temporary or Permanent Interventions

The comparative analysis of TU projects in these cities was observed under the variables identified in terms of sustainability as monitoring, functionality, feasibility, follow-up, and sense of belonging for caring and maintenance.

In this sense, the analysis results allow us to highlight firstly the importance of monitoring TU interventions to guarantee their use, "appropriation" and maintenance by local communities and citizens. Therefore, it is important to understand the most relevant elements for monitoring these projects and their current and future perspectives. TU initiatives have been developed in favor of an inclusive use of public space, reducing spaces for vehicular traffic. In this way, it reflects the will to put people at the center of the transformations of urban spaces as we can observe in interventions returning parking spaces to public space (Parklets) and rethinking the functionality of the street (Open Street) or a single section (Pavement to squares). TU empowers pedestrians, who temporarily appropriate a space traditionally dominated by motorized transport.

TU seeks to have long-term impacts on pedestrian safety; in other words, impacts on public policies and, in general, on urban governance, the set of actors, norms and variables that influence the orientation of pedestrian safety (Lascoumes & Le Gales, 2014).

One of the crucial parts at the time to follow-up the TU interventions depends strongly on their functionality. The TU initiatives were physical, artistic, or pedagogical need to be engaged with local communities to provide them with facilities or plausible benefits. In this sense, the range of TU has been wider in terms of typologies and purposes. From the different manuals of tactical urbanism edited by Lydon & Garcia (2015) and Sansao Fortes *et al*. (2019) we can observe that the typology/scope of intervention is increasingly broad in the complex and dynamic Latin American cities. This means TU interventions have more categories, including new practices such as depavement (changing surfaces of underutilized pavement for green areas), mobile parks, parklets (see Image 8) or the intervention of road intersections and many others. The variables of the scheme that Lydon determines to establish the categories with which he organizes the cases as an example put street vendors on an equal footing with who does "bombing gardening".

Moreover, the urban intervention calls for organizations that manage parklets to gain more space for pedestrians on the streets. Seen in this way, it would seem that TU requires a wide range of categories that support the reason why the spectrum has opened up so much and, at the same time, the need for this concept to cover them all at once.

Image 8 Left: La Calle Bonita, Calle 30 Centro de Bogotá-Colombia (Photo credit: Juan Amaru Rodríguez). Right: The city of Ibarra (Photo credit: Jorge Andrade Benítez)

Other aspects to guarantee the success and sustainability of TU interventions are related to its costs/budget as well as the maintenance in the long term. Consequently, a key element to take care of the projects is the sense of belonging. The local communities, properly engaged during all the phases of the project, from planning to implementation, have the potential to be protectors or guards of all types of soft infrastructure, either permanent or temporary. The sense of belonging installed and promoted in communities has demonstrated an important aspect of tactical urban projects, by creating iconic marks on urban public spaces as neighborhood identity. However, we cannot ignore the importance of local authorities supporting the sustainability of the projects after the implementation. In this way, the research shows us, along the three cities, a lack of local government commitment in this phase of the project. That explains also the bad conditions of many TU projects. To keep the dynamic, synergy and dialogue between all the stakeholders involved in the planning and implementation of TU projects is determinant to follow-up on their results and performance.

We also observe a replicability of experiences in the world, such as parking day, one of the most shared and recognized initiatives worldwide, created in 2005 in San Francisco by the Rebar collective (2011), and implemented in 975 parks in more than 162 cities in 35 countries and 6 continents. These experiences invite us to reflect not only on the long-term effects due to the "temporary" or generally reversible and agile capability of these initiatives but also on our way of thinking about how cities are focused on improving the coexistence of the community and its participation. Several authors agreed that approaches on urban issues from a 'tactical' perspective are much more feasible than setting very long-term goals that depend, in most cases, on factors that escape the understanding of non-specialists. Lydon, in his publication *Tactical Urbanism Vol 2. Short-term Action Long-term Change* in 2011 mentions that «Many examples in this guide started as unauthorized grassroots interventions that were so successful that they soon became authorized or permanent [...] This is how short-term action creates long-term change» (Lydon, 2011, p.7).

5. Conclusions: Pushing the Tactical Urbanism Agenda

1) Local community and stakeholder engagement and commitment. During the Covid-19 pandemic we could see a re-thinking of public space, from the intervention of neglected/unused public spaces to the change or reclaim of public spaces formerly belonging to car or parking

spaces. Consequently, they were adapted to be used as community spaces, or in some cases, to extend the open-air area of cafes and restaurants, according to the regulations to reduce the number of people in enclosed spaces. These changes also strengthened the involvement of the community in the transformations of their territories. Thus, the policies followed by many cities were not based on studies or measurements of the relations between public space use, density and Covid-19 contagion. One of the main challenges is to open these processes to all the community members, not only the ones already active, reaching populations with special needs in public spaces (elderly population, children). It is quite important to re-think these processes of stakeholder engagement. In the frame of the RN37 Conference at Humboldt University in Berlin, the discussion promoted by some of the participants stressed the importance of connecting with the community in participatory processes. In this sense, the discussion session has called for looking at "resonance" (Hartmut, 2016), which means the capacity to reach the community and generate simultaneous benefits for them and the practitioners/local administration leading these public transformation processes.

On the other hand, there is a discussion that takes force in certain more critical sectors which questions the transcendence and impact of tactical urbanism interventions because they are considered to be "band-aid" solutions that do not solve the structural problems of a city in the face of the deficit of public space, security and mobility. On the contrary, it can become an attractive mechanism to generate political visibility by local administrations as evidence of participatory budgeting and community outreach.

2) Local authority's role: sponsoring all the implementation phases, engagement, and follow-up. Another important topic is the responsibility of city planning in the improvement and maintenance of public space. In most of the TU cases, the maintenance is transferred to planning/architecture studios or community groups, sometimes without a clear brief on the methodology to design these interventions. Therefore, many interventions led by the local administrations are being opened for public bidding to design. Practitioners inside the local government, most of the time, do not have experience in TU interventions, community participatory process and codesign; as a consequence, the interventions take the risk of being inappropriate toward the community due to the lack of a clear strategy to generate transformative change. Additionally, the systematization of this kind of TU exercise, could risk losing its attractive bottom-up and emergent base, and become a kind of copy-paste intervention, ignoring the contexts and community culture and values. In his text *Austerity Urbanism and Makeshift City*, Tonkiss (2013) also expressed that TU is at risk of becoming a reinforcement of the same neoliberal order it is trying to overcome.

The success of TU interventions depends on an active and diverse participatory process not only during the planning and management of the projects but also during the follow-up after implementation. TU can improve social interaction in communities where public space has problems of abandonment or insecurity, as has been demonstrated in several urban experiences in Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico. However, it is not an infallible recipe to improve the conditions of the communities where it is carried out, since several failed cases of this tactic have been seen in many cities in Colombia and Latin America. These initiatives must be carried out with a broad participatory base, so that they can have the desired effect, regardless of whether the initiatives are initiated by local governments or by communities. In most cases what exists is a mix between these two levels of action, with tactics initiated by local administrations, and adopted or replicated by communities in need of solving urgent problems in their contexts.

The cases observed in Mexico City, Bogotá and Quito made us aware of the need to encourage innovation in a participatory process, in different ways: communicatively, pedagogically and politically. The latter, for instance, can be reinforced by affirmative actions reflected by physical space through codesigned urban interventions. The lack of a proper participatory approach reduces the success and positive impact of codesign solutions focused on improving or activating deteriorated or useless urban spaces. Consequently, the follow-up, evaluation and feedback, key

factors in the effectiveness of tactical urbanism interventions, are also reduced at a minimum level, along with their lifespan.
3) Innovation, communication for mainstreaming good practices, and the need for pedagogy. The innovation in communication strategies, as well as new pedagogical approaches, promotes a wide participatory call, involvement and engagement of local communities. One of these approaches is from a technology dimension, strongly influenced by permanent disruptions. The ability expected from the people responsible for leading these processes now consists of understanding the logic and strengths of the new communication interfaces for using their potential to facilitate dialogues inside the same communities as well as with other external stakeholders, but with incidence. The use of IC Technologies, social networks, gaming and digital transmedia resources is demonstrated to be effective in attracting and spontaneously involving people of different ages, expectations and interests in the implementation of workshops, forums, and other participatory scenarios.
4) The "sense of belonging" is a tool to keep local communities engaged and committed to the caring and maintenance of TU projects. One of the questioning aspects highlighted in this comparative research, shared by the three cities, points out as a determinant of the sense of belonging about the new tactical urban interventions. This guarantees caring, maintenance, and generally the sustainability, socially, economically and environmentally, of the project or urban improvement.

The question therefore is: How can a city become more tactical? Can a city behave more tactically? Myke Lydon in his conference on TU at Los Andes University proposed a Learn-Build-Measure cycle strategy to learn by building/facilitating TU projects, and measuring their impacts on cities and communities (Lydon, 2011). We argue that integrating such innovative ideas into the sometimes very rigid and conservative urban planning approaches in Latin American cities can be challenging, but the only way to start going into this direction is to disrupt such practices and be open to new ways to perform and deliver urban transformations in our cities.

Advantages and new approaches to public space planning and design through TU for promoting healthy urban environments. The Covid-19 pandemic has accentuated the need for public spaces for safe social interaction, as lockdowns have had a great psychological impact on communities, and access to public space and safe green areas takes on renewed importance. This new focus on the diversification of public space transformations through the TU, could help us to better understand that cities are constantly changing organisms, that must have the ability to adapt to different conditions and emergencies, especially those related to public health and also to climate change.

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3T SECTION

3T SECTION

READINGS FUORI LUOGO

Francesca Romana Ammaturo reads Fabio Corbisiero, Salvarore Monaco, Elisabetta Ruspini, *The Changing Face of Tourism and Young Generations: Challenges and Opportunities*, Channel View Publications, 2022.

Thirst for adventure and new 'experiences', social and environmental awareness, as well as the opportunity to take the perfect 'instagrammable' holiday snap, all seem to be some of the current trends that characterise patterns of tourism for 'younger generations' of *Millennials* and *Gen Z*. Compared to their parents, or grandparents, Millennials and Gen Z seem to be less interested in accumulation of goods, and more inclined to accumulate, create, share 'experiences'. Combined with the emergence and rising centrality of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), such as social media, or AI, these features offer a complex picture of the changing trends in tourism across generational lines.

In their book, *Millennials, Generation Z and the Future of Tourism* (2022) Corbisiero, Monaco and Ruspini, highlight how the tourism industry, as well as scholars, should pay more attention to these 'generational' differences in the ways in which tourism is understood, experienced, and investigated. In particular, the authors emphasise the lack of attention to the generational divide in the field of tourism studies, and the potential that shifting our attention to a 'generational' analysis can bring, more specifically in relation to trendsetting or trend-forecasting when it comes to tourism. Focusing on how Millennials and Gen Z experience tourism seems to be ever so important, particularly in a world characterised by increasing threats to ecosystems by phenomena such as Global Warming, as well as in a post-Covid 19 world which has seen the shutting down of national frontiers and the drastic decline in tourist travelling. By focusing on Millennials and Gen Z, particularly in relation to their values, expectations, and patterns of consumption of touristic experiences, as well as the central role of ICTs in shaping these experiences, and providing tailored support at different levels, the authors hope to open up conversations about the changing face of the Tourist Industry at the global level.

The book is organised around three main axes of analysis. The first introduces the relationship between the concept of 'generation' and its relevance for the field of Tourism Studies. The second part addresses the importance of technology in contemporary trends of tourism, mediated by the experiences, in particular, of Millennials and Gen Z. Finally, the third part of the book, zooms in on the specific intersection between tourism, generational differences, and gender.

It would be repetitive to summarise the contents of the book itself, but it is important to note a few key points in this volume. Firstly, the analysis offered in this book seems to suggest that the authors understand tourism has having more than just recreational value, but also a social function that can vehiculate social values and principles of the people embarking on these experiences, as well as operating changes in the ways in which both the natural and build environment are experienced, particularly in times of ecological crisis at the global scale. The second aspect to note, is the importance attributed to ICTs in shaping and changing the very concept of tourism, particularly in its relational form, through the aspect of hyper-connectivity, as well as 'sharing' parts of one's own experience on social media sites, such as Instagram. Thirdly, the authors rightly identify a connection between Millennials and Gen Z's accrued social sensibility in relation to travelling and tourism (and well beyond that), with questions relating to gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. In particular, the authors argue that changing ideas about gender, gender roles and rising awareness of discrimination based on these grounds, can have an impact not just on the choice of destination, but also the expectations themselves that tourist have from their holidays or travels.

Whilst there are other aspects that the book addresses, these three key features jump to the eye of the reader, offering stimuli to reflect on the contradictions between a shrinking 'globalised'

world, and a world in which tourist travelling is still a 'privilege' afforded to the few, particularly in relation to phenomena such as 'passport privilege'; and in a context of ecological deterioration in which we should all question our travelling habits and patterns.

The book is appealing to both scholars in the field of Tourism Studies, Sociology, and Human and Social Geography, but also for students who may want to investigate young people's experiences of tourism or the rise of so-called 'social media trends', on sites such as Instagram, or TikTok.

A couple of features in the book would have probably deserved further attention. Whilst the book is rich in terms of coverage of relevant academic literature, there is less exploration of useful case studies that could have helped the reader to visualise some of these patterns in changing practices of tourist behaviour across generations. A comparison with case studies involving different generations, and potentially different chosen destinations, would have offered a more visual illustration of the challenges discussed in the book. Simultaneously, a more global outlook, would have enhanced the analytical appeal of the volume. The authors have made a true effort to be inclusive in terms of geographical spread of their analysis, but including trends in Central and Latin America, as well as Africa would have offered a truly 'global' picture of the changing trends of tourism for Millennials and Gen Z.

These suggestions do not take away from the great accomplishment by the authors who should be complimented for their rigour in providing contextualised information that truly offers a dynamic picture of how tourism may change in the future, particularly thanks to this rising and enhanced importance attributed to the preservation of ecosystems, habitats for the flora and fauna, as well as a growing awareness of colonialist, orientalist, and capitalistic forms of exploitation of touristic sites by younger generations.

This is a very innovative volume that will certainly spark future conversation about what are the boundaries of 'responsible tourism' and how shifting generational sensibilities can effect social change that is both sustainable, and long lasting.

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João Pedro Nunes *reads*
Patrick Le Galès, Jennifer Robinson, *The Routledge Handbook of Comparative Global Urban Studies*, Routledge, 2023.

Cities, urban territories, and globalization processes are more and more connected. And yet, as the urban world becomes more diverse, plural, globalised, and interdependent, knowledge-building is also changing. Within this broad *problématique* comparative research strategies challenge theorisations, empirical practices, and methodological approaches. As the editors of *The Routledge Handbook of Comparative Global Urban Studies*, Patrick Le Galés and Jennifer Robinson, claim in their introduction, not only a new urban world is on the making, but also a new methodological world is rising in global urban studies.

Le Galès and Robinson argue that scales, interdependencies, and globalisation processes hinder comparisons in the strict methodological sense. But as the global geography of research is changing, they emphasise new conditions for comparisons involving cities in all continents and contexts are developing. In a field that «was classically not very comparative» (p. 1) the editors' point is that innovative research practices, renewal of objects and approaches, controversies, and hybridisations are major contributions to the debates on which urban studies are being reinvented. One of the book's objectives is to explore an important and innovative angle: «Urban comparisons are a major domain of global urban studies», and they reflect «the current moment of innovation and experimentations in the field where a renewed comparative imagination figures strongly» (p.5).

The editors of *The Routledge Handbook of Comparative Global Urban Studies* do the job very well. The book offers the readers a wide set of contributions framed by an open and pluralist stance on current debates, presenting different research traditions, and pertaining to different geographical areas. The chapters address conceptualizations and methods, experimentations and theorisations, contexts and circulations that fully express and expand the global urban studies comparative endeavours and practices.

According to Le Galès and Robinson, comparative global urban studies have recently seen a renaissance. First, globalization is turning the world more urban and more plural. In this broad context, urban comparisons and accumulation of research results will foster theorisations. This comparative endeavour has «to be able to take into account a vast number of cases that were largely ignored» (p.5). Consequently, the book bears upon a new geography of knowledge production and it aims to show different comparative inheritances from different geographical areas, including «concepts, methods, strengths and originality of research emanating from a wide range of geographical contexts» (p. 2). Second, the book rests upon the idea that there is a rising and widening range «of experiments in terms of research questions, design and methods, objects and processes to be compared». And, as the editors cleverly put it, «comparative imagination in a world of imperfect and innovative comparisons is required» (p. 2). Hence the importance given to empirical research, data, and research methods throughout the book, particularly on Part II, dedicated to methods and research design issues.

In the Handbook's introduction, the editors acknowledge the comparative urban studies as methodologically diverse. Some of the challenges for global urban comparisons arise from practical questions of method, others result from research orientations, for instance, either more positivist or more constructivist. Overall, along the book's parts and chapters, methodological inclusiveness and diversity are sought after and achieved. Examples of different ontologies and epistemologies are present and are highlighted by the editors. They stress how the field is crossed by different disciplines – geography, sociology, political science, history, anthropology, critical literary studies, post-colonial studies, environmental studies, science and technology studies – that contribute to the broader comparative *problématique*.

Global urban comparisons bear upon the importance given to cities and metropolis in a world-

wide scale. As Le Galès and Robinson point out, if «cities belong to a world of cities» (p. 4) these same world is structured along processes and scales that are both national and transnational. Hence the importance given to actors, organizations, and institutions, but also connections and experiences, networks and relations, circulations and mobilities. In the editors' view the handbook's contributions «mark the centrality of the question of method and the vitality of a comparative imagination» (p. 5) responding then to a changing urban world. So a new set of comparisons made on a different basis due to growing interdependencies is to be made in order to sustain knowledge accumulation and fresh theorisations.

The Handbook is organised in five Parts and forty-five chapters. Part I "Inheritance: Traditions in Comparative Urban Research" excavates different research tropes, regional contexts, disciplines, and conditions and brings to the comparative practices and their foundations. Part II addresses "Methods and Research Design". These are central components of the comparative endeavour. The chapters range from the scale of neighbourhood to transnationality, comprising the role of monographs and the phenomena of comparative practices in policy making. In "Part III Contexts" the editors aim at equating the place of context in comparison by formulating a double question. On the one hand, what theoretical approaches are open to or underpin different types of comparisons and offer a sound framework for comparative analysis. On the other hand, what and how comparative practices were developed in different regional contexts. The chapter "Segregation Studies: Overriding Context through Implicit Comparison?" by Thomas Maloutas, and the chapter "Cities in their States" by Göran Therborn, epitomize the richness of comparative-based contextualities as ways to form theoretical propositions, one of the main concerns in the Handbook. In Part IV "Connections" the focus is on globalisation circuits and circulations of various kinds in a context of complex relations and connections. Finally, Part V "Experiments" presents new research taking an explicitly experimental approach, working with different theoretical perspectives and new domains of urban life to foster innovative kinds of comparison.

All in all, *The Routledge Handbook of Comparative Global Urban Studies* offers its readers with a highly valuable and wide range set of contributions that will underpin further research practice and theoretical production.

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Emanuele Stochino *reads* Maurizio Bergamaschi (ed.), *Migranti: la sfida dell'integrazione digitale. Innovazione e co-creation nel progetto H2020 MICADO*, FrancoAngeli, 2023

This book, edited by Maurizio Bergamaschi and available in open access (https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa/catalog/book/1001), is clearly a contribution on the debate on the increasing importance of technology in our society, with potentially fruitful applications to tackle inequality in information and accessibility to social services. At the same time, this book is part of the debate on migrations. All the data show that migrants are a structural part of Italian and European population, and their stronger integration in our societies is both a difficult and an urgent topic.

The Horizon 2020 project MICADO (an acronym for *Migrant Interrogation Cockpits and Dashboard*) has been implemented through four pilot cities: Antwerp, Hamburg, Madrid, and Bologna. The project's aim is the development and implementation of a ITC to simplify the interaction among migrants, public administration and the third sector; in other words, make the access to services easier. An advanced data technology has been used, and this allowed to derive meaning even from unstructured data such as comments or images on social media. MICADO has been presented to end users through an ITC application which can be used either on a personal computer or on devices such as smartphones and tablets. This is equipped with a multilingual interface with an automatic translator to facilitate the search for information about public administration and social services rules and benefits.

In the first chapter of the book, Teresa Carlone highlights co-analysis and co-planning as core elements in the early steps of the projects. This part has been connected to the importance of co-design and co-creation, a step in which ITC requires an active presence of end users (Parsons & Hick, 2008; Clifton et al., 2020). The author points out that these tools are essential to find timely responses to be fruitfully local strategies for the social inclusion of migrants and to continue over time, although updates will be necessary. The co-analysis and co-design process have been carried out through workshops and other tools through which all the actors of the process (public administration, migrants, and the third sector) can meet, speak freely, and get to know each other. The process has been highly appreciated, and many primary needs have been identified by migrants. Due to their number and the heterogeneity of local needs, however, these inputs cannot be "translated" into a universal technological solution. By "universal needs" the authors mean the ones which are present in the four cities. The "local needs" are also present in these cities but with a predominant marking for one sector. One city, for instance, might offer more information on employment and another one on housing. Owing to their limited vocabulary, moreover, migrants were assisted by cultural mediators acting as interpreters.

In the second chapter, Carolina Mudan Marelli considers the problem of how to build a Business Planet (BI) applicable to all European contexts in order to facilitate the provision of services related to migrants. A model has been used to identify and consolidate a Minimum Viable Product (MPV), i.e. a sequence of the basic functions of the universal ITC application depending on the needs that emerged in pilot cities of the project. The MPV took into consideration four specific needs expressed by migrants: healthcare, housing, work and education. In the co-design phase, the most delicate one for the success of any new technological process, it was necessary to converge the data from this step.

In the third chapter, Carla de Tona investigates what kind of co-participation is possible in implementing the ITC. The author stresses the results which usability tests have provided in the past. One of the aims of MICADO was to have an application tested and co-designed by end users with a dedicated work package. Some technical aspects of the project are reported here

too. For example, Local Piloting has been divided into four steps: Local Piloting Organization and Planning, Content Production and Integration, Usability Testing, and Public Piloting Implementation. These phases allowed to plan and implement an interactive development process of the application. The third and fourth step are at the topic of analysis in this chapter. De Tonna highlights their importance as well as the fact that pilot cases have allowed to try out new products through a small group of project users in order to understand how it may work on a larger scale. Implementing the experimental project can help predict the project's costs, its duration, its feasibility and help foresee any unexpected changes to be made. The critical issues, however, are the digital divide and the limited linguistic skills which may frustrate end users and discourage them from using the application.

In the fourth chapter, Orkide Izci considers the Plotting Implementation, i.e. the feedback which MICADO provided and the possibilities of the tool's being improved remotely by computer scientists. The four pilot cities agreed that one of the most important aspects have been the value of co-analysis and co-creation and in the early stages of the project to render the application user-friendly for migrants so that it may be used without assistance. The project has also showed that the integration of migrants has a positive outcome if it occurs in a context where individuals act in a coordinated manner by referring to widespread reference policies. The legislative vulnerability of migrants in Europe, however, lays the foundations for the difficulty of their integration process.

In the final chapter, Manuela Maggio stresses that the results of the pilot phase have produced a lot of knowledge to create a sustainable tool whose objectives can be summarized in three terms: 1) using: the use of the technological solution in daily professional practice; 2) hosting: managing, from a technical point of view, the distribution, operation and maintenance of the technology; 3) developing: identifying and developing new use cases, new functions, new features, also responding adaptively to new needs. On 2 June 2022, moreover, MICADO was presented to the European Commission and was a finalist for the Innovation in Politics Award, promoted by the Innovation in Politics Institute. As such, it will be included in the archive of good practices, hence increasing its visibility and credibility.

In conclusion, on a theoretical and experimental level, the MICADO key outputs emerged from three points of view. First, for the local public administration which had a very high turnover of managers on the project. Second, for users who, although appreciating the effort made to grant them autonomy in their search for healthcare, housing, work, and education, often encountered difficulties due to limited knowledge of the language. Third, for the European Union, with a lack of political will to enact laws on the regulation of migrant status to give certain resources and staff dedicated to them. Nonetheless, the project has given ample proof that it is possible to use ITC tools to help, at least, some migrants. Science has been able to demonstrate the benefits of MICADO, and now are requested to provide Europe with legislative stability so that the fruits of science do not remain limited to a few municipal or regional cases.

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FUORI LUOGO MEETING

Gabriele Manella, Madalena Corte-Real[1]

Old and New Problems after Covid-19: Having a Look at the US cities. A Talk with Ray Hutchison

Ray Hutchison is Professor of Sociology, faculty advisor for Urban Studies and Director of the Hmong Studies Center at the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay.
He grew up in Nashville, Tennessee and received the B.A. in Sociology from Harpur College at the State University of New York-Binghamton and the M.A. and the Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Chicago. His areas of research and teaching include urban studies, street gangs, race and ethnicity, and immigration.
He is the editor of the SAGE Encyclopedia of Urban Studies, series editor of Research in Urban Sociology (Emerald Press), and editor of a new monograph series in urban sociology for Anthem Press (UK).
Some of his most famous books are *The Ghetto: Contemporary Global Issues and Controversies* (co-edited with Bruce Haynes), *New Urban Sociology* (with Mark Gottdiener, 2nd and following editions) and *Suburbanization and Global Society* (co-edited with Mark Clapson).

QUESTION: *You paid a lot of attention on the Chicago School tools and their heritage (Chicago was part of your education as you were student there) as well as on the New Urban Sociology (you co-edited a book about). Is there any aspect/concept of these approaches that can be particularly useful to understand the post-covid city?*

ANSWER: With respect to our general discussion of Covid-19, the first thing that comes to mind is that a number of edited collections were published about what would happen to the city after 9/11. I don't know if that was specifically just in the United States or if there was also some discussion of this in Europe as well. There was a discussion that this was the end of tall buildings, that no one would even want to work in a tall building again, and that there would be no more skyscrapers built. Obviously, that's not what happened, so I was thinking in terms of how we respond to events like this. That's not really an exact parallel, but I think in some sense it informs a background here to how we think about these things and sometimes it goes to sensational ideas.
I would first want to point out that the reason for writing a good deal of these several overviews of the Chicago School was a concern that I had just simply in reading some of the published work that there were a lot of errors, and misconceptions about the Chicago School. This is certainly not something I thought of when I was in Graduate School – that I would ever end up writing about that sort of thing – but it was in large part to correct and rethink what others had already written, and published.
New Urban Sociology and you mentioned something about co-writing the book. I think it's important to note that the first edition was written solely by Mark Gottdiener. He then asked if I would work on the revision for the second edition. That came about because a year or two before that, I had asked him to write an article on Marxist urban sociology for the Research in Urban Sociology series. So that was a nice opportunity being asked to work on that revision and we did a number of them after that. I remember thinking this and saying this, that one of the things I wanted to do in the second edition was to bring the idea of social class into what Mark had written in the textbook. I don't know if that sounds strange or not, but it was just clear to me that and in part because of what he had written about Marxist urban sociology in the earlier edited work as well, that this wasn't coming into what he had called the New Urban Sociology. His emphasis was on Lefebvre and the discussion of social space. I wanted to go back to the New

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Urban Sociology of the 1960s and 1970s, kind of the European approach which took Lefebvre and the whole discussion of social class very seriously and applied it. That's not something we have ever done in urban sociology in the United States, so my idea there was to highlight in particular some things that would come to us from Marxist studies that had not been part of that. At one ASA (American Sociological Association) conference, in fact, Saskia Sassen came up to me and asked what we meant by the new urban sociology. I think that my response was something about wanting to bring Marx into urban sociology, which would make it more akin to the original new urban sociology from Europe in the 1960s and 1970s. I don't think she was very satisfied with my answer on that, and clearly it was not exactly the same as the European concept of new urban sociology. There have been several good things that she has written and Sharon Zukin as well on what happened to the new urban sociology, and I think that's important to take a look at.
In terms of the post Covid city, I think it was very obvious in the United States, and I imagine this was the case in European cities as well: Gabriele, you and I wrote the article focusing on actually nursing homes as a place of transmission for Covid-19. I think in the United States it was very clear that there were very important social class differences in who was being impacted, and I am not certain at all that a lot of this has actually gotten out into further literature.
One of the communities most affected by Covid-19 was immigrant workers, probably a lot of them undocumented workers in packing industries across the country. Those were considered essential industries and had to remain open. They provide a nice wet environment, people working very close to one another. Here in Wisconsin, a number of packing plants had multiple workers who died from Covid. Tending to have larger families and living in cramped quarters as well would mean that it would be transmitted within the family much more than the case for people in other work environments, I suppose. That hinges a little bit here on social class and migration and the use of workers and the "essential industries" as they were described.
What I really thought about with Covid-19 was colleagues of mine that I knew living in different places around the country, and in particular in New York City living in apartment buildings and not having the luxury that those of us living in smaller communities would have of having a yard around us. We are separated and isolated and all that from even the people who live right next door and so being in contact with others was much less of an issue, I think, in smaller communities. Only if you went to the store for things would that became an issue as opposed to living in apartment buildings. Thinking about my colleagues from other universities, that does not necessarily involve poor housing or even crowded housing, but still you would have to go in right through a lobby and upstairs where other people are there and that would be disconcerting. But then you get into the areas with what we might think of as tenement housing from some earlier decades, with crowded housing and households with marginal incomes. And perhaps working in the essential industries as well and coming back into an environment with lots of large family and possibilities of transmission.
So that moves us into the next question about inequalities and vulnerabilities that I think just became obvious to those of us who wanted to look at those things.

QUESTION: *Yes, exactly. You already mentioned about inequalities regarding people who are more vulnerable in professional terms and living in overcrowded housing …*

ANSWER: Yeah, I mean, so that answer does talk about some specific inequalities that are present in large cities in general, with obvious differences between neighbourhoods and the larger apartments as opposed to crowded apartments … whether that's accelerated things or had any impact on Covid.
I haven't heard any discussions about how we need to prepare for the future, despite this idea that there may be another pandemic that is brewing out there and will be hitting us in the next year or two, I would imagine the same things happening in terms of the groups of persons and areas that might be most affected.

QUESTION: *When we prepared these questions, we also had in mind the book "Bologna dopo la pandemia. Impatto territoriale e scenari futuri (edited by M. Castrignanò and T. Rimondi): it was a study on the impact of Covid-19 in that metropolitan area. The authors found a relatively good economic resilience and recovery from the pandemic crisis. Some inequalities accelerated however, and the increase of several fragility forms is probably the biggest political and social challenge now.*

ANSWER: One thing about Covid-19 – that I thought a lot about because of families and colleagues and how they responded to the events – I have thought of this in the United States in the terms of a lack of civic awareness or civic education. It's kind of like «I don't want to be vaccinated and so I'm not going to and I don't care about the rest of you».
I don't know how common that was across Europe. I know that there was opposition to required vaccinations in some countries, but here in the United States there was a tremendous political divide and I don't know how aware people in other areas of the world would be of that (with respect to Covid).
It does fit into our current polarization of Trump people and non-Trump people. If you look at some of the data on this, this sort of opposition to Covid both at the time and then even at the current time as well, that was a real marker which political party you were associated with or supported.
So, I see that as greatly increasing that divide here in the Us, the events of the pandemic. Was that the case in Europe as well?

QUESTION: *In Portugal, people were clearly in favour of vaccination. We think it was one of the most successful cases. As regards Italy, we have some anti-vaccine groups but probably not so strong and not so many as in the United States. In other words, also in Italy the clear majority of people were available to be vaccinated, possibly also because it was the first European country affected by Covid-19 and many people were very scared of what happened.*
As regard the acceleration of inequalities, we would like to mention the William Wilson's seminal work «The Truly Disadvantaged. The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy». Wilson stressed the combination of cultural and structural aspects in the concentration of urban poverty. As you know, he focused on part of the African American working-class in the inner city neighbourhoods of Chicago. Do you think that a part of migrants can be considered as the "truly disadvantaged" of our post Covid cities? Or do you think this label can be used for any other minority or for anyone else?

ANSWER: If I'm going to talk about «The Truly Disadvantaged», I'd want to take a step back, and say that we should look at the book before that, «The Declining Significance of Race» to fully understand Wilson's argument. My take away from both of these, but particularly from «The Declining Significance of Race» because it's been overlooked a lot, is the idea that our social policies have been based on racial categories, but the people who are most disadvantaged are the poor and that cuts across racial lines. The basic point he is making is that if you are African American and you are well educated and you have a good job that pays well and you can live in very good neighbourhoods, you are not part of the truly disadvantaged. If you are poor, white and struggling to get by and living in a poor neighbourhood, you are truly disadvantaged but our social policies do not connect up with, I think, the truly disadvantaged in that sense.
So who are the truly disadvantaged? I asked a question that I actually had more to think about because obviously we do have the neighbourhoods in large cities that still are points where there is the large concentration of poor African American families and as he was pointing out in the earlier work as well, that's been highlighted by or accentuated by the fact that many African American families have moved out of the central city when they can afford to and into other areas. So we do have these areas that are left behind and I would imagine we'd say mostly minority populations in those circumstances.

The other truly disadvantaged, at some level (this does really fit into urban sociology but I'm certain, it must), are our rural communities in the United States. One of the areas that I've been doing field research is in East Tennessee and we have one county there that well over half of the population is on disability and more of 2/3 of the population are below the poverty line and receiving various government benefits. That's a population that has very few opportunities. They are isolated. They are not in urban areas, but they confront many of the things we would talk about for the disadvantaged in cities or in suburbs. Because we also need to think, of course in the United States, of the change in the inner ring suburbs, as we refer to them, older industrial suburbs and those areas which have seen tremendous population loss, but also change of population and the figures, I think now, a third of the poor in the United States live in cities, a third live in suburbs, a third live in rural areas.

QUESTION: *The next question might be somehow also related with what you were saying. This issue of the attraction to leave the densified areas during the pandemic and to go to rural areas and minor cities and also this opportunity now from working from home that has been increasing also since the Covid-19 pandemic. Do you do you think that this trend might prevail and that this might be an opportunity also for rural areas and minor cities?*

ANSWER: I am wondering if this was the case in Europe as well. We read a lot about families living in cities who were buying suburban housing and moving out there or in larger cities. I think a lot of this was focused on New York City, moving to smaller towns, rural communities, if they could afford to do that to escape whatever they thought was happening there in the cities. I haven't seen anything that talks about, the degree to which that did happen, the extent of it, like numbers of persons but it does strike me as similar to Boccaccio and the plagues of the Middle Ages.

We have had a lot of discussion recently about the return to work. People working from home and how this was sort of either required or kind of standard during the pandemic and then all of these discussions that have been really big here in the States of people not wanting to go back to work and refusing to go to work under the previous conditions: "no, you have to give me benefits", "no, you have to increase my pay"… Kind of interesting to think of that as a possible effect of the pandemic.

There are often news and articles about companies trying to require their workers to come back to the office spaces. Which I think is interesting is that also goes against what we would have heard at the beginning of the pandemic (and similar to the discussion of 9/11) that people aren't going to want to be in these office spaces any longer and those traditional office spaces were all going to go away. That may well be, those spaces are being redesigned, but we'll need to wait a while to see how that all partials out, I suppose.

QUESTION: *We also have a final question about some positive effects of the pandemic. When we talked about it we had in mind the lockdown period in particular. It was not very long in Italy if compared to other countries, but we had a two months lockdown and what happened is that we had several manifestations of solidarity at the neighbourhood level. In some way the neighbourhood dimension emerged again as a solidarity strategy against the pandemic.*

ANSWER: We saw videos from Italy of people on balconies singing arias for their neighbours…

QUESTION: *Yes, that's a very clear, a very famous example of what happened, at least in the first wave of the pandemic in the spring of 2020. Do you think this impression of solidarity was very short in time in some way? Because the impression we have is that this trend is going to decrease relatively rapidly…, I don't know what you can see in the U.S. cities. So the question is a consideration of this rebirth of solidarity.*

ANSWER: That's the trend, increased solidarity because of the emergency that we all confront? Going back a bit here, work environment and these other things, I would say that something very noticeable for our university, my work environment, and I've heard similar accounts from other schools as well. A number of people really have not returned, they are still working at home as much as possible, it's noticeable. There's nobody around, the offices are vacant, people aren't coming in and visiting with others as they would have before. The buildings basically look empty, so I think that we kind of got into the habit of, we didn't need to be in that workplace to begin with. Part of this is obviously online, there is not necessarily a really good reason to have to be in the office. You can do any research you want to do with your computer at home and to whatever degree we have this... Well, we in the United States we have this big population problem sort of this big demographic change so that we have a declining younger population. The numbers of people graduating from high school has rapidly declined in recent years and is not expected to increase for a while. I guess we have pretty good data on that: students who are in junior high now, four years later will be graduating and maybe going to college and that sort of thing. Students now are very used to online instruction, and I think probably our online programs are growing more than in class teaching and that has a big effect on students, the experiences they have, a lot of them will talk about not having, a real college experience although they don't have the college experience from their background to be able to, I guess, fully digest all that. My sense of pandemic and the response is not that it increased solidarity in any measure at all. That may have been the case in some neighbourhoods in some areas in larger cities. I could see that happening if you take those examples from Italy or other European cities with particular architecture and proximity of people, that's completely different than it is in essentially any American city outside of New York City.
Again, what I get a sense of here is an increased polarization along political lines. That the pandemic became a measure of whether you are going to believe the government, if you're going to believe science, if you think it's effective at all, you know, to wear masks that became a huge issue in the Us to the degree that we had workers in stores who were trying to get customers to put on masks [and they were killed by customers upset, angry, you can't make me do that, that's the sensational example]. None of this did much to increase solidarity or making people come together in the sense of this is what we really need to do. I see that as the longer term kind of connections, implications…

QUESTION: *That sounds very interesting (and concerning). Well, thanks a lot, Ray, we have concluded our questions. We don't know if you want to add any final remarks...*

ANSWER: This is not a critique, but the way the questions progressed and the discussion progressed and that's more maybe me pulling it a certain way. I think by the end here we are not talking about what does urban sociology help us in understanding, the effects of Covid, which I think is the point for the journal, right? Are there theories, whatever, research, that would help us in answering any of these questions?
We do have literature on conflict and people coming together in times of crisis … so that may be the more important ideas that we would have in Sociology to apply to all of this.
My impression from the final question is that this may not be an example of where those ideas work out. We were all in danger. Well, many of us thought we were all in danger. A lot of other people didn't think anybody was in danger at all. We have people talking about only 0,001% of the population being affected by Covid and your chance of survival was 99% so it was all kind of a false narrative to begin with. That's not what you would expect if you were applying sociological theory and ideas of what might increase solidarity and those sorts of things.