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Cum-cives, ie citizens of the polis, and urban policy

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Cum-cives, i.e. citizens of the polis, and urban policy

Key words: Urban policy, Fair and Equitable Wellbeing, Human Ecology

Following the phenomenological philosophy, the paper carries out quantitative and qualitative analysis of some concrete cases, differentiated by size and location. E.g. in Rome while there are 50,000 people (of a total population of 2,880,000 inhabitants approx) with housing needs, 110,000 housing units are empty. It is clear that there is a disequilibrium either social than physical. But there is also a qualitative study, using tools such as e.g. the Fair and Equitable Wellbeing and (BES) proposed by ISTA – CNEL alongside those suggested by the Charter of Quality by AUDIs (Association of Urban Disused Areas) since 2007. These two instruments put emphasis on the need to confront the issues addressed in a multidisciplinary way, so with a multicriteria, “integrated”, approach. In a broader perspective that goes back to “human ecology” (Appold, Kasarda, 1991; Pope Francesco, 2015). School of thought that has the two Calabrian philosophers, i.e. Bernardino Telesio with the “Philosophy of Nature” and his disciple Tommaso Campanella, the author of “The City of the Sun”, contemporary of Thomas More and his “Utopia”, as fathers in the modern age, and then the various thinkers of Anglo-Saxon origin, H.D. Thoreau, W. Whitman, then I.L. McHarg, P. Soleri etc. as latest references. References that are the basis of the goals of the EU strategies. These are declared and evident, as example, in “Smart City” (2007) where it is said that the goal is to build local Communities, inclusive and sustainable, either materially and socially. An important element of the study is the time, because the land use decisions have consequences often do not revealed immediately. This means test the effects in the short, medium, and long period.

The paper, having highlighted the gaps and inconsistencies of the actual philosophy of action, essentially based on the market, thanks to the mention of “best practices” proposes a different path. Highlighting the benefits and conditions necessary to ensure that the policy, and therefore the planning of territories and cities, goes back to being effective and therefore useful: that is to be the art of managing the polis for its citizens, its cum-cives.

1 Needs and citizens

The issues of happiness and well-being of the citizens are central in the work of urban planners and land planners. The Athens’ Charta drawn up in the 30s of '900 was created with these objectives. In the biggest towns the most of population lives in the peripheral areas (fig.1).



Fig.1 - Fight for the house, 1974, San Basilio, Rome North East (@D'amico)

In Italy the law approved in 1962, n.167 for the economic and social housing, has led to the drafting of plans for new housing developments on the outskirts of Rome and other Italian cities like Naples, Milan etc. But it took almost ten year for having a substantial implementation of it. In Rome after the first PEEP (1964) there was a second plan (1987). In 1984, about 800,000 people were living in illegal situations, 1/3 of the residents. The matter was so serious that to try to solve the housing question in 1985 the Government proglumated the first Amnesty about building activity (Concono edilizio)¹ (<http://www.urbanistica.comune.roma.it/pdz.html>). In 2001 the population of Rome was of 2,546,804 (ISTAT) inhabitants, of which 946,195 were in areas of abusive origin, ie 41% as Cellamare notes in 2013 (Fig.2).

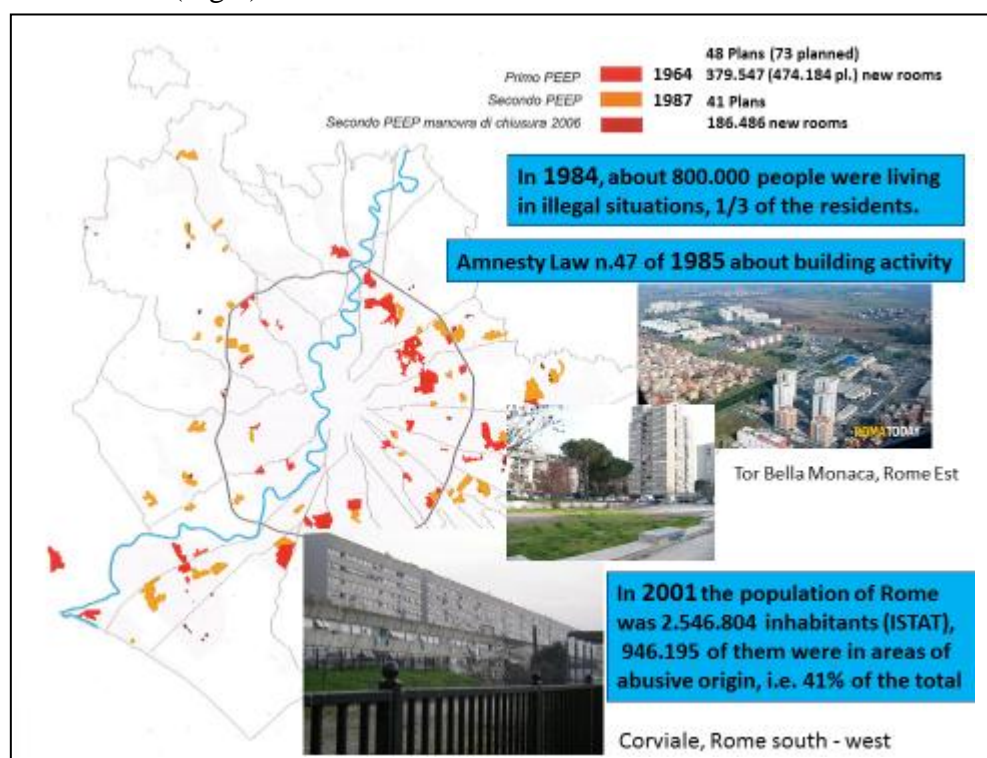


Fig.2 - Rome, Housing and transformation of areas between 1964 and 2001

Since 1973 the market has taken more and more space, because the policy has pull back itself and has left to the economy the decisive role in the planning, and therefore also in social choices. The social, spatial and environmental outcomes of those choices have been devastating. In Rome while there are 50,000 people (of a total population of 2,880,000 inhabitants approx) with housing needs, 110,000 housing unities are empty. Urban planning must serve for the citizens, i.e, the cum-cives, otherwise politics - the art of managing the polis - is useless.

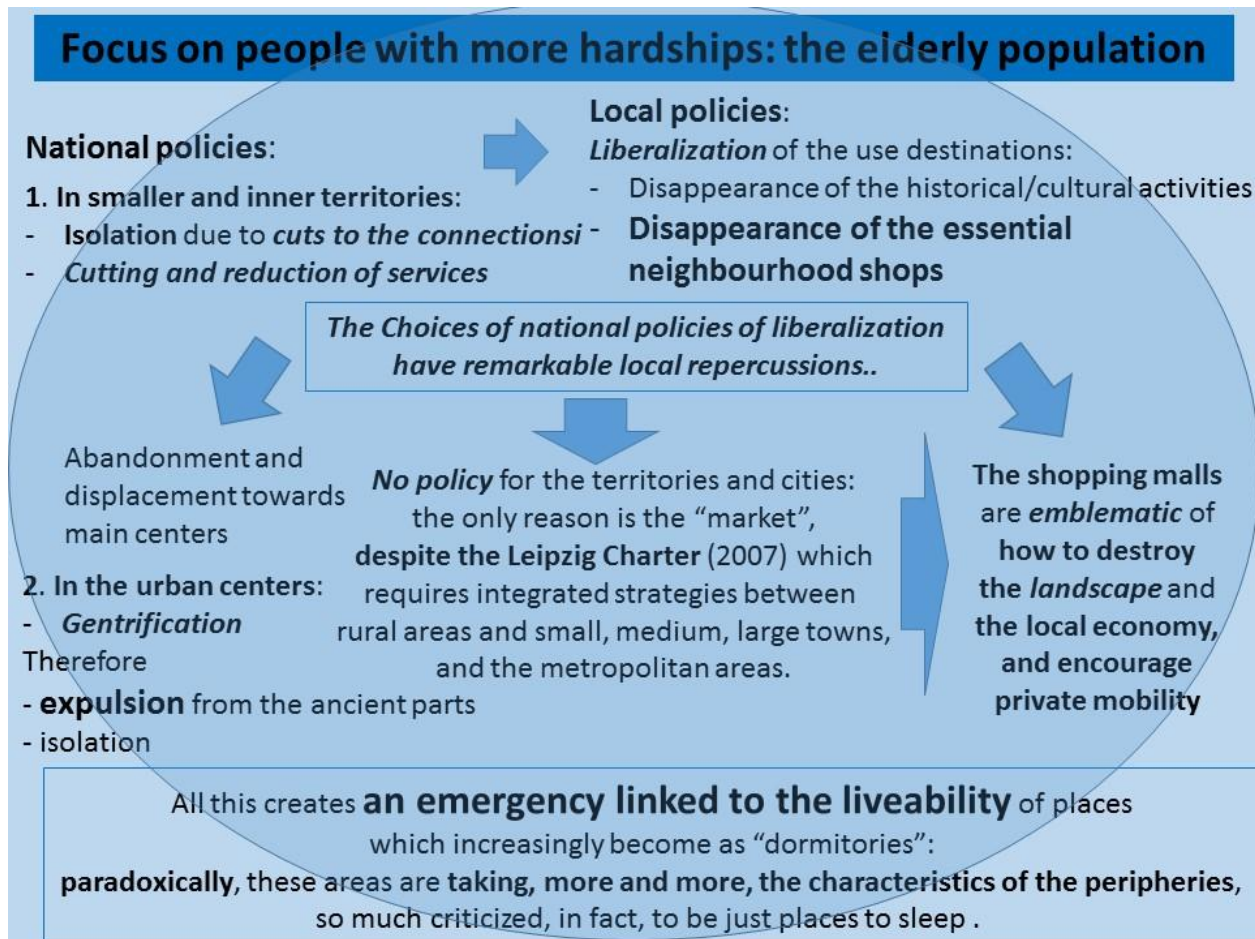
Focus on people with more hardships: the elderly population.

There are national policies that cause in smaller and inner territories isolation due to cuts to the connections, accompanied by cutting and reduction of services (hospitals, schools, courts, police barracks...). All this generates significant reasons for the abandonment and the shift in the main centres at the local level, often with the participation of the laws issued by the regions, the liberalization of the use destinations is one of the main causes of the disappearance of the historical/cultural activities and of the essential neighbourhood shops. The malls are emblematic of

¹ This law, n.47/85, born to solve the basic need of inhabiting, with Berlusconi as head of Government, was followed by other amnesties very similar for having political consensus.

how to destroy the landscape, the local economy, encourage private mobility, going against sustainable mobility ².

All this causes gentrification. That is, the expulsion from the ancient parts, insulation. The combination of those things creates an emergency linked to the liveability of places that increasingly become as “dormitories”: paradoxically, these areas are taking, more and more, the characteristics of the peripheries, so much criticized, in fact, to be just places to sleep (Scheme 1).



Scheme 1 - National and local policies and their impact on the liveability

Obviously the cuts of state transfers to the municipalities and the associated enormous increase in “territorial” tax policies are national but have local impact. Because the Local Authorities to make money has been given a very powerful lever: “sell” the soil and/or transform the existing constructed areas. In the Integrated Programs (PRINT) of the City of Rome theoretically 2/3 of the increase in urban income should go to the community. But, apart from the effectivity of this expected recessed, this does not guarantee the utility - that is, the (social) effectiveness (social) - of the transformation.

Overall, national policies of liberalization have remarkable local repercussions. With the “contracted town planning” of the ‘90 the market takes more and more space: it seems that the urban policy disappeared. Despite the Leipzig Charter (2007) which requires integrated strategies between rural areas and small, medium, large towns, and the metropolitan areas.

Lack of urban policies means the absence of a coordinated and synergistic system between all areas/activities that make up a city, health, education, transport, house, green, social, infrastructure,

² Note that in the USA by time is already existing an association for the recovery of the many abandoned shopping centres.

etc.: they are replaced by punctual and / or exceptional interventions. In this picture, the elderly have not a policy dedicated to them (Fig.3), unless of the activities included in the Social Master Plan (Piano Regolatore Sociale) of the 1999 (Aragona, 2003a) that however have a “defensive” character that is of “remedy” and not structural.



Fig.3 Old women in Torre Cajetani, a small village close to Fiuggi, in the south of Lazio Region, Italy (@Ludovici, 2016))

It was the year 2011, written by the Bolshevik *Corriere della Sera*: (It is a newspaper of the middle class' thought) *“Rome, capital of the empty houses: 245,000 dwellings not used. 2011 Report by Legambiente, also another negative record, that of evictions carried out: 8,729 in 1 year”*. Emblematic that, taking note of the urgency of the issue, UrbanPromo dedicates to Social Housing two days, 6 - 7 October 2016 in Turin, Polo '900, <http://urbanpromo.it/2016/>. But philosophy does not seem to be different from the established since the early 90's.

A signal of social problems, a “proxy” to measure the level is given by the local elections of Turin. In this city of tradition of “left” - with an efficient Mayor Piero Fassino, a well-restored old town, cultural activities that have replaced the car industry, home of the Olympic Winter Games in 2008 - in the ballot for the first citizen the candidate of the Movement 5 Stars has prevailed by recovering 7 points on the former mayor. This outcome mainly is due to the vote of the suburbs which, before “red” strongholds, have been the major places of request for change and attention to the needs of the large part of the population. Event that should give pause to anyone involved in planning and urban planning: the Plenary Session “Cities in change. Good practices and experiences in progress”, at the XIX Conference of the Italian Society of Urban Planners, the good Carlo Alberto Barbieri explained “The case Torino” with the many transformations occurred and in place, highlighting the various strengths. But a few days after the ballot showed that those changes had not been “effective”, i.e. their social utility was not present or was insufficient. In this regard it should be noted that many facilities of the 2006 Wintern Olympic Games are unused, useless, and unusable, as Imarisio on the *Corriere della Sera* wrote already in 2014. All that must remind to planners and to local officials that “efficiency” must be at the service of the “effectiveness”, the ultimate goal of urban policies.

Below there are example images of what is located in Vienna (Austria) considering the local actions for the public and accessible town. Each metro station has an elevator easily accessible (Fig.3), there are bike paths and differentiated traffic lights for pedestrians and bicycles. Distributors of public water and the telephone booths are present in the city centre and are functioning (Fig.4).



Fig.3 - Vienna, Austria, Accessibility and Public offers (@Aragona, 2016)



Fig.4 - Mobility and the diverse modalities (@Aragona, 2016)

Question: but we planners and planners for what do we serve? Urban planning, urban policy, must serve for the citizens, i.e, the cum-cives, otherwise politics - the art of managing the polis - is useless and so town planning. The political choice that has given the command at economy poses this demand. The question is not only make interventions of “repairers” but think or better re-think the overall planning strategies.

But it is possible to follow another path.

There are tools to analyze/intervene. a) Those existing from some years. I. The already quoted “Social Master Plan” (1999), linking individual needs with the territory; II. The “Master Plan of the young girls and young boys” (Piano Regolatore delle Bambine e dei Bambini) (Aragona, 2003b). Not coincidentally, there will be the “Festival for the accessible cities” in Foligno (PG, Italy), 23 - 24 September 2016. b) Other more recent such as the “Fair and Equitable Wellbeing” (Benessere Equo e Solidale, BES, 2013) or the “Charter of values” (“Carta dei valori”).

The “Fair and Equitable Wellbeing” has been created by the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) with the National Council of Economy and Labour (CNEL). It is a tool for evaluate the life quality conditions of the inhabitants. It consists in 134 diverse indicators divided in 12 different areas: Health, Education, Work and conciliation of life's time, Economic well-being, Social relations, Politics and Institutions, Safety, Subjective well-being, Landscape and Cultural heritage, Environment, Research and Innovation, Quality of services (Fig.5).

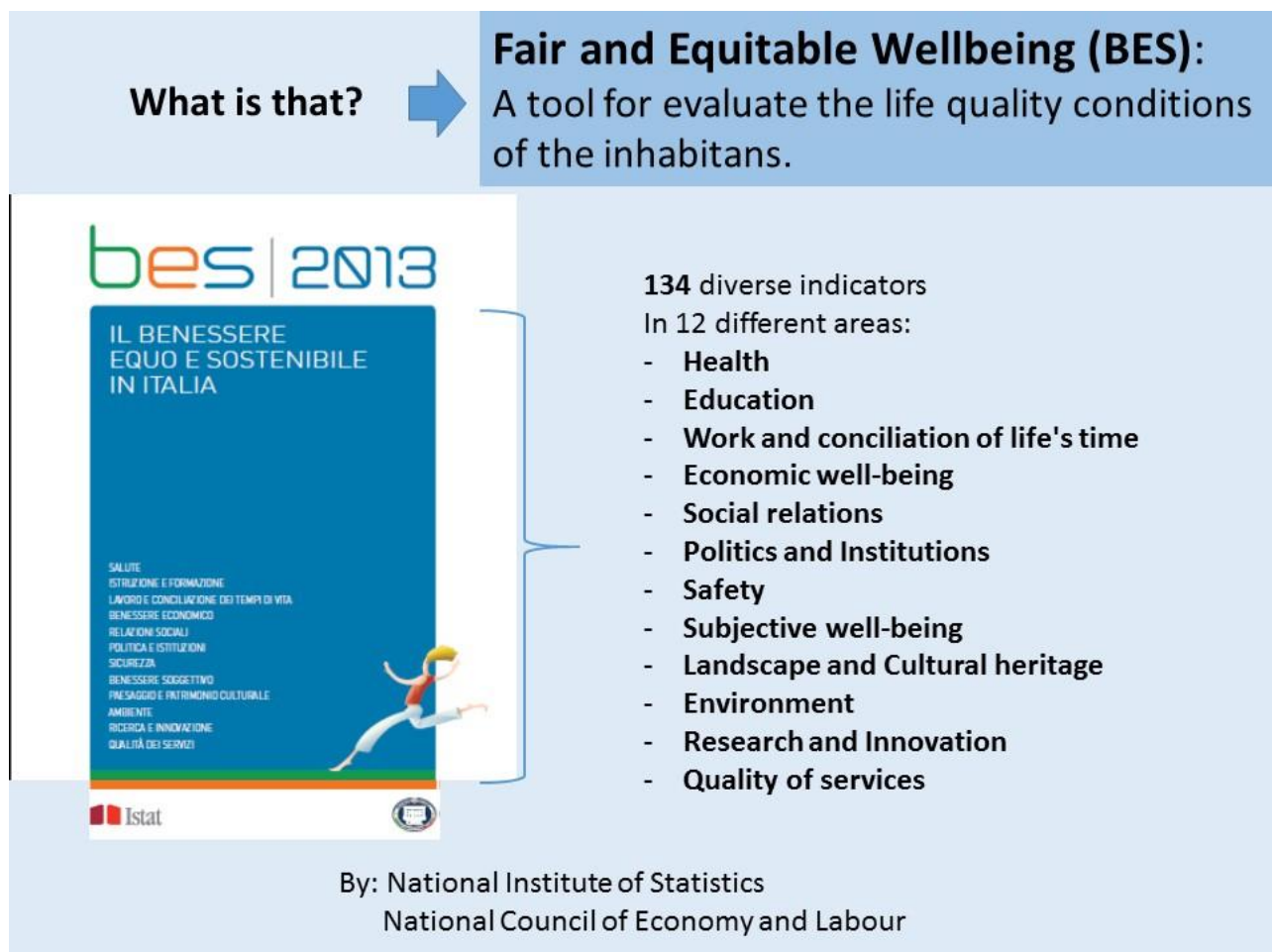


Fig. 5 -“Fair and Equitable Wellbeing” (ISTAT – CNEL, 2013)

The “Charter of Quality” is a multidimensional instrument proposed by AUDIs for the urban regeneration. The elements of the Charter are the followings: 1. urban quality: a composite concept; 2. urbanistic quality; 3. architectural quality; 4. the quality of public space; 5. social quality; 6. economic quality; 7. environmental quality; 8. the energetic quality; 9. the cultural quality; 10. landscape quality. The Actors are the public, the economic private, the collective private. The Tools consist in the public policies, the public - private partnership, the evaluation, the information, the participation. But to be frank all these elements should be present already, and however, in every plan.

Some conclusive insights: indications of policies

The territory and the town need policies and urban policies. Both must be, first of all, effective and not only efficient. This is the only way to have: I) Cum-cives, i.e. citizens, who share the same idea of the polis - origin of the Greek word “politics” - to build “civitas” shared as “cives” (citizens in Latin); II) citizens that become also “ecologicus cives”.

The big events are almost always a bargain for a few and damage with costs and disruption to the population as shown by the Winter Olympics Games in Turin before mentioned. A fact confirmed, as relevant other example, by the famous “nest” in Beijing (fig.6): magnificent but unused after the Olympic Games as shown by the Corriere della Sera in 2012, and with huge operating costs³.

The town of Faenza (RA Italy)⁴ shows that urban policies can be effective to not only efficient: a way to implement the BES and the Quality Charter. The next step is to evaluate the outcomes of examples like Faenza with a multi-criteria approach also qualitative, thus going beyond the indispensable quantitative analysis as done in the case of Ecolonia (Netherlands).

Do not forget: The purpose of Smart City is to build socially and environmentally sustainable communities. But... Peter Hall wrote in 1989 on Journal of the American Planning Association that in the USA there is no planning, but only the market, called “practice planning”. In Italy and Europe now we are following this path...



Fig.6 “The nest”, the stadium built for the Beijing Olympics Games (Sarcini, 2009)

³ Saggini (2009) in *La Gazzetta dello Sport* reports that there have been proposals to turn it into megastore because of high operating costs about nine millions of dollars each year.

⁴ Case study described in the paper “Ecological territory and ecocity as result of smart, sustainable, integrated planning policies”, Special Session S_W. Smart City as risk or chance for sustainable urban development.

A relevant note

In Italy there is the unresolved issue of considering the territory and the right to build as “a natural right” and not given by the community, i.e. the state or the municipality. The law n.10/77 which replaced the building license with the building permit were declared unconstitutional in 1980. So the private but also the public, it is much freer than other European Nations. Free to put cement on the territory: “cementification” of it (fig.7). Except that the municipality decides to undertake a battle to prevent this⁵.



Fig.7 The ruins of the Student's House below the Faculty of Architecture, beside the river (“fiumara”) (@Aragona, 2014)

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⁵ These words are present also in the paper quoted in the above note for the huge importance of the issue.

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