

Large Housing Estates in Italy

Policies and practices

ISBN: 90-6266-235-8

Printed in the Netherlands by A-D Druk bv, Zeist

Edition: 2005

Graphic Design: GeoMedia, Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University

Lay-out and DTP: david koot tekst & dtp

All publications in this series are published on the RESTATE-website

<http://www.restate.geog.uu.nl> and are available on paper at:

Urban and Regional research centre Utrecht

P.O. Box 80.115

3508 TC Utrecht

the Netherlands

telephone +31 30 253 1399

fax +31 30 253 2037

e-mail r.vankempen@geo.uu.nl

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Large Housing Estates in Italy

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RESTATE report 3d I

Francesca Zajczyk

Silvia Mugnano

Barbara Borlini

Francesco Memo

Petra Mezzetti

RESTATE

Restructuring Large-scale Housing Estates in European Cities: Good Practices
and New Visions for Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Cities

Utrecht 2005

Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University

RESTATE

RESTATE is the acronym for the international research project Restructuring Large-scale Housing Estates in European Cities: Good Practices and New Visions for Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Cities.

The project is funded under Key Action 4: 'City of Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage' in the 'Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development' programme within the Fifth Framework Programme of the European Union (contract no. EVK4-CT-2002-00085).

Coordination: Ronald van Kempen
Urban and Regional research centre Utrecht
Faculty of Geosciences
Utrecht University

Participants:

the Netherlands: Karien Dekker (Utrecht University)
Ellen van Beckhoven (Utrecht University)
Wanda Verwey (Utrecht University)
Sako Musterd (University of Amsterdam)
Wim Ostendorf (University of Amsterdam)
Manuel Aalbers (University of Amsterdam)

France: Nicole Commerçon (UMR 5600-CNRS, Institute of Human Sciences)
Franck Chignier-Riboulon (UMR 5600-CNRS, Institute of Human Sciences and Blaise Pascal University)
Marcus Zepf (UMR 5600-CNRS, Institute of Human Sciences)
Fatiha Belmessous (UMR 5600-CNRS, Institute of Human Sciences)
Marcele Trigueiro (UMR 5600-CNRS, Institute of Human Sciences)
Christine Chemin (UMR 5600-CNRS, Institute of Human Sciences)

Germany: Thomas Knorr-Siedow (Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning)
Christiane Droste (Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning)

Hungary: Iván Tosics (Metropolitan Research Institute)
Éva Geróházi (Metropolitan Research Institute)
Hanna Szemző (Metropolitan Research Institute)

Italy: Francesca Zajczyk (University of Milan-Bicocca)
Silvia Mugnano (University of Milan-Bicocca)
Pietro Palvarini (University of Milan-Bicocca)

Poland: Grzegorz Węclawowicz (Polish Academy of Sciences)
Stanisław Kozłowski (Polish Academy of Sciences)
Anna Guszczka (Polish Academy of Sciences)
Agnieszka Bielewska (Polish Academy of Sciences)
Adam Bierzyński (Polish Academy of Sciences)

Slovenia: Barbara Černič Mali (Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia)
Richard Sendi (Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia)
Nina Goršič (Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia)
Ružica Boškić (Institute of Social Sciences)
Maša Filipović (Institute of Social Sciences)

Spain: Montserrat Pareja Eastaway (University of Barcelona)
Teresa Tapada Berteli (Autonomous University of Barcelona)
Brechtje van Boxmeer (University of Barcelona)
Lidia Garcia Ferrando (University of Barcelona)

Sweden: Roger Andersson (Uppsala University)
Irene Molina (Uppsala University)
Emma Holmqvist (Uppsala University)
Eva Öresjö (Blekinge Institute of Technology)
Christina Siwertsson (Blekinge Institute of Technology)
Lars Pettersson (Jönköping International Business School)

United Kingdom: Alan Murie (University of Birmingham)
Stephen Hall (University of Birmingham)
Rob Rowlands (University of Birmingham)
Siân Sankey (University of Birmingham)

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The RESTATE project - Restructuring Large-scale Housing Estates in European Cities: Good Practices and New Visions for Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Cities - is divided into several research phases.

Earlier reports of the RESTATE project paid attention to structural and other factors that explained the differences between the successes and failures of large post-war estates in Europe, and the types and combinations of problems identified in large housing estates in the different countries and cities and the associated factors.

This paper reflects the second major research phase, drawn upon the second and third questions of the RESTATE project:

- What is the philosophy behind the different existing policies with regard to large-scale housing estates in different European cities? What are the main aims? What are the main activities included in such policies and what is the balance between these activities?
- How are these policies organised? Who participates in the policies and who has decided about this participation? Can the policies be seen as a top-down or as a bottom-up process? What are the advantages and the disadvantages of these approaches? Have the policies, the way that they are organised and the way that residents and others perceive them, changed over the time period that they have been in place?

In Italy we have focused on three post-war housing estates in Milan: Comasina, Sant’Ambrogio and San Siro.¹

The methodology used in this research phase draws on the analysis of published and unpublished policy papers, reports and memoranda. We have also interviewed a number of stakeholders in the neighbourhoods, both at the municipal level and from the regional government. We have interviewed a total of approx. 42 people, from key actors in the policy process to project managers of non-profit organisations, from trade unions to pressure groups and academics involved in the policy process and local actions. Moreover, we have discussed preliminary results with a group of local representatives. Finally, virtual meetings (discussions through internet) have been held with a group of international urban representatives of the countries involved in the RESTATE project.

The report will be structured as follows. Chapter 2 gives a general overview of the most relevant policies. Despite the specific interest of this project on neighbourhood regeneration, for

1 For further information see Mezzetti et al., 2003.

the Italian case it is necessary to start the analysis from a multi-level perspective, looking also at national, regional and municipal policy transformations and innovations in recent years, in order to frame the micro-level situation.

Chapters 3-8 focus on different aspects of policies and practices in the three estates and neighbourhoods. In the description of the situation, attention is paid to the main aims of the policies - where they exist -, the main activities, the way policies and actions are organised and furthermore, which are the main actors who participate. Due to the recent implementation of most of the policies, very often difficulties might arise in drawing advantages and disadvantages of policies and actions. Chapter 9 will draw some conclusions based on the policy analysis and will attempt to answer the two main research questions.

1.1 Milan estates: Sant'Ambrogio I-II, San Siro and Comasina

The city of Milan is the second largest city in Italy with a population of 1,304,942 inhabitants. It is spread out over more than 18,176 hectares. It is the capital of the province (the entire province population amounts to 3.7 million inhabitants) and of the region of Lombardia (9 million inhabitants).

The estates selected as case studies in the research project are: Sant'Ambrogio, San Siro and Comasina. The choice of the three estates was made based on the research criteria: the dates of construction and the number of units. Milan does not have very large housing estates, which is an important feature of the city. The selection among the estates was made also in order to find estates located in three different geographical areas of the city (north, west and south), as well as estates with different trajectories: problematic and positive.

The *Sant'Ambrogio I-II estate* is located in the southern part of the city of Milan, which traditionally has been the less industrially developed, and in general developed later compared to the rest of the city. The Sant'Ambrogio estate consists of two adjacent estates, as one continuum. The architect Arrigo Arrighetti, in charge of the project, imagined the area in an innovative way. He did not wish to realise just a social residential housing district, a 'satellite' neighbourhood, but a 'self-sufficient' settlement, where all the main services such as primary and nursery schools, the church, shops, the library, green areas - meant for playing but also for social cohesion - were close to the houses. The estates were entirely closed for traffic; cars could not enter, but had to be left in the outskirts of the neighbourhood. Part I of the estate was finalised in 1965, part II in 1971-1972. Before 1964 this entire area had a few private houses and sporadic old agricultural farms with some historic value. The surrounding area is quite desolated; there are no shops or shelters. Within the estates shops are few and not very popular, although in each estate there is a pharmacy, a bar, a little supermarket, and a very well-functioning public library. In contrast to the desolation, the San Paolo Hospital, one of the scientific university poles representing an element of attraction of this district, is located here, together with the private university IULM.

The *San Siro neighbourhood* comprises three estates: San Siro, Harrar Dessiè and Quarto Cagnino. The entire San Siro area is particularly interesting because it presents contrasts between richer and more popular areas, with areas of segregation in a very limited territorial context. Furthermore, the area hosts several attraction points (the San Siro Stadium, the San Carlo Hospital - one of the major hospitals in the city - and the main exhibition fair - '*Fiera Campionaria*'), large residential areas and social housing estates. The oldest part of the San Siro

district, the San Siro estate, was built during the thirties, in the shape of a rhombus.² This area being quite central in the city became within the years a 'periphery': a dangerous, insecure and spatially isolated area. A more recent urban settlement is the block of flats that is known as the INA-Casa neighbourhood, the Harrar Dessiè estate. The third area is the Quarto Cagnino estate. Quarto Cagnino was originally a small historic centre, a tiny village in the outskirts of the city, where in the 1980s high buildings were constructed, as if a 'space shuttle suddenly landed in this area'. Today it presents both visible differences in the extension of the open and empty spaces, the abandoned green areas without specific integration with the surroundings, and a difference in the housing structure composed by anonymous, larger and higher buildings. The San Siro estate has a 'closed-neighbourhood' structure, isolated from the rest of the area, while the rest was designed to exploit sunlight for heating purposes. This estate was not built close to any industrial areas, or as a 'dormitory'; it became a periphery over the years, even though the entire area is central and residential. In Harrar Dessiè the urban plan was developed by the architects Figini, Pollini and Giò Ponti, and built between 1951 and 1955, as an example of 'rationalism': geometrical housing stocks and common parts, with all the main services (schools, library, health services, etc.) nearby the living areas. The entire complex comprises nine linear buildings with five to six floors that the architects working on these projects defined as 'horizontal skyscrapers', and that were inserted in a garden area with a school and a kindergarten. The Quarto Cagnino estate instead was built between 1967-1973 through the Gescal Trust Funds (*Gestione Case Lavoratori*): a saving system imposed by several governments to employees. This estate, especially if compared to San Siro, has a high percentage of homeowners.

The Comasina estate is located in the northeastern part of the city where traditionally there was also the highest concentration of industries. Comasina borders north of the municipality of Milan. The northern part of the Comasina estate overlooks Novate, the next municipality. In the southern part of Comasina there is one of the biggest ex-asylums of the city (Paolo Pini Hospital) which has been for a long time a place of exclusion and segregation and since the process of de-institutionalisation it became one of the most interesting points of socialisation in town. On the eastern part, Comasina confines with Affori. One hundred years ago, the entire area was mainly dominated by the Affori municipality (including also Bruzzano and Dergano), which was a rural settlement populated by only 4,000 inhabitants. At that time, the physical feature of the area was mainly characterised by a villa owned by one of the most aristocratic Milanese families (*Villa Litta*) and by a settlement of peasant houses. In 1953 the IACP started to plan the Comasina estate, a 'self-sufficient' neighbourhood constituted of 84 buildings and nearly 11,000 rooms. Comasina was the first self-sufficient district in the Italian urban planning history and it was indeed one step ahead in the history of building and town planning for the zoning of facilities and the accurate study of the routes. The project however lacks homogeneity in the architectural fragmentation of the different buildings; this is most probably due to the intervention of several famous architects that took part in the project. Besides Camillo Rossetti - who drew the final plan on the basis of a town-plan by Diottavelli - Bottoni, Lingeri, Cerrutti, Reggio, Putelli and many others worked on the project.

2 The dates of construction are not in line with the criteria of the RESTATE project, this is the reason why the research does not concentrate only on this estate, but adding two, more recent ones, will look at the contrast between these three different areas.

2 The relevant policies: a general overview

2.1 Changes at the national level

2.1.1 The welfare mixes

In Italy, as well as in Europe, the debate on the crisis of the traditional welfare state system has focused on: (1) how to finance social security; (2) the transformation of the role that state, market and non-profit actors have in delivering the services. There is a general agreement that cooperation strategies - instead of competition - between private and public sectors are necessary as the role of the private sector is becoming more important, and for some politicians, synonymous of high quality standards and efficiency. Privatisation is still increasing and, in some areas of interventions, there is an increasing number of voluntary and solidarity organisations. The terms 'third sector'³ and 'non-profit organisations' have not only become part of common language for politicians and civic society; they also became fundamental in the redefinition of the welfare system. The competences of the non-profit sector are progressively growing following a subsiding process of the public sector towards the non-profit one. One of the elements that make the Italian case quite peculiar, however, is the recognition that this sector has been combined with a slow and progressive process of secularisation. Italy has experienced a major social and cultural transformation, which has included the increasing dominance of non-religious forces in political battles over social issues (for example, the referendum on abortion and divorce in the late 1970s). It is generally recognised by Italian scholars (Borzaga, 1988; Ascoli and Pasquinelli, 1993; Pasquinelli, 1993; Ranci, 1994; Barbetta and Ranci, 1996) that future trends will see this sector growing. This assumption is justified by two main factors: one, the increasing size of the voluntary sector which has been growing since the 1970s (Rossi, 1996; Boccacin, 1993) and two, the more recent attitude of the state to promote a *contracting-out* system with regard to the delivery of policies. In terms of people employed in the non-profit sector,⁴ for example, in Italy only 1.8 per cent of the labour force is employed in NPOs.

3 The third sector includes a large area of relationships, groups and activities which go from the family to the church, from self-help groups to cooperatives. The term non-profit is very much used and sometimes abused. According to Salomon and Anheier (1994) the non-profit sector is composed by formalised organisations which do not aim to profit from its work. This definition includes the voluntary sector but excludes informal organisations.

4 Italy is in bottom-place in terms of people employed in the non-profit sector: only 1.8 per cent of the labour force, compared to the U.S. (6.8 per cent), France (4.2 per cent), the United Kingdom (4 per cent), Germany (3.7 per cent) and Japan (2.5 per cent).

However, the Italian figures only reflect the paid workforce and exclude volunteers who are a major force in NPOs (Barbetta and Ranci, 1996).

As Ranci (1994) argues, contrary to most of the European countries in which the recent developments of the non-profit sector have been mainly caused by ideological and financial imperatives in relation to the welfare state, in the Italian context the development of the voluntary sector has been partially influenced by the role of the catholic church in the establishment of the state and its political patronage on policy-making. Furthermore, it is important to underline that the Italian welfare state - family welfare (Ferrera, 1997) - has always been characterised by a strong role of the family. The family is seen as a social actor able to directly support its members and to substitute the state.

In particular, social assistance intervention has been developed as subsided to the family and community organisations. As a result, Italian social assistance has been traditionally poorly financed and it is very fragmented. The private and public social assistance programmes can be activated only in case the family and social networks are absent or very weak (Mingione, 1999). It is not a coincidence that given this peculiar pattern, the Italian NPOs operate within a rather limited range of activities, covering social assistance, education, professional organisation, trade unions, health and culture. The areas appear to have become even narrower when we consider the distribution of those activities. Apart from education and research, which cover 28.5 per cent of the total of the non-profit sector, the remaining 47.5 per cent is directed to services geared to individuals (33.4 per cent social assistance and 14.1 per cent hospitals). Moreover, the difference between the areas is even starker. Ranci (1996) has emphasised differences in the development of the relationship between the state and NPOs (Table 2.1) and, in the words of the author, there are two factors that may vary:

- the degree of public responsibility in supplying public services;
- the dependency of the state upon the private and non-profit suppliers.

The combination of these two factors can produce four different models in which the state and the non-profit sector are related to each other to implement public policies.

This indicates that Italy is following a more general trend that is spreading across most European countries, which can be characterised by a mixed-welfare system in which the non-profit sector and the state play a complementary role in public policy. However, it is also interesting to argue that even though there has been a recognition of the role of the non-profit sector, the relationship between public and non-profit sector is modelled on a contracting-out system while the planning competence is still in the hands of the public actor. This strong involvement of the non-profit sector in public policies might lead to confusion in defining how the policies are built and how the decision-making process is put in place.

This last aspect can become a real criticism to the Italian case, because the role of the state is not clear. In other words, there is not a comprehensible analysis by the state of '*what is good to directly manage and what is better to subcontract, or what has not to be managed at all and should be left to the market*' (Ciocia, 1998, p. 93). There is not even a clear idea on who should be the actors in the process of redefinition of the welfare mix. The privatisation of the services and interventions process and the collaboration with the non-profit sector became an unclear, uncoordinated and casual answer to the crisis of the welfare system. The result, until now, has been an increasing fragmentation of policies and institutions.

Table 2.1 – Models of public policies towards the non-profit sector

Dependency of the state on private and non-profit suppliers	Degree of public responsibility	
	Universalistic	Partial
Strong	Collaborative model (Health) The NPOs have a necessary role within the whole supply system. The NPOs are generously financed as a consequence of the state's responsibility for guaranteeing universal cover.	Dual model (<i>a canne parallele</i>) (Social Services) The limited engagement of the state and the high presence of non-profit suppliers develop a system in which both of them are engaged in the financing and supply of the service.
Weak	Model with a public dominance (Education) A strong engagement of the state to develop a unified and homogenous system.	Model with a private dominance (Environment) Where there is limited public responsibility and more possibilities for non-profit organisations to influence the decision-making process.

Source: Barbetta, 1996

2.1.2 From Centralism to Federalism: shift of competences from state to regions

The analysis of the welfare state reform should necessarily include another important shift at the national level: that is the passage of competence from the state to the regions (Cazzola, 1998). This recent institutional (and administrative) reform has indeed had, and increasingly will have, a direct impact on the different strata of the implementation processes concerning policies and it will play an important role in the governance issue. The constitutional reform that has been approved on March 2001 mainly devolves the decision-making powers and decisions over the financial budget from the state to the regions. Although the complexity of the constitutional transformation is enormous, and despite the fact that this reform still concerns the juridical debate, some theoretical speculation can be made.

Three problematic aspects can be identified. First of all, the federalism debate has been limited to the political sphere, while the civic society seems not to be ready for this important change. Second, the transformation of the constitutional structure has not been followed by a transformation of the tax system from the state to the region. Last, but not least, there is a contradictory situation in regard to what the Vth title of the constitution claims in the shift of administrative competences and functions from the state to the regions and from the regions to the local authorities. It should also be mentioned that some competences have passed to regions even before the Vth title of the constitution - during the left-wing coalition government in 1997 and 2000.⁵ Specifically, the Bassanini Law was dealing with the competences on 'services for individuals and community', while the regions have full powers on 'social aspects'. Among the positive and innovative aspects of the revision of the Vth title of the constitution, it is important to underline that for the first time in Italy 'urban governance' is defined by law, especially because urban settlement was regulated according to a law that was passed in 1942. In practice,

⁵ For further information see *Testo Unico*, no. 445 D.P.R. 28 December, 2000 which abrogates and substitutes Law no. 59 of 15 March, 1997 (called *Bassanini 1*) and Law no. 127 in 1997 (called *Bassanini 2*).

however, urban governance is not yet a reality. In 1990, Law 142 - Restructuring the Local Authorities - underlines the necessity to promote a large scale and holistic planning. However, this suggestion has never been taken under consideration, and in Italy problems are solved with 'special' laws and sectorial interventions (transport, environment, etc.). Even the urban renewal programme has followed the same pattern. The projects in general have not a multi-dimensional approach that could include the quality of life, environment, the quality of public space and social cohesion. In this problematic scenario, perhaps it is too early to evaluate the impact of this constitutional reform on social and housing policies due to the fact that the modifications of the regional policies on these matters have not yet reached the implementation stage. However, as we shall argue further on in the paper, some implications are already visible: at least in theory, it is the case of the new 'Regional Programme for Residential Public Housing' (PRERP) (see Section 3.1.3). In fact, we can argue that even the idea itself of drafting a new 'Regional Programme for Public Housing' represents a manifestation of this process.

What however can be already argued around this aspect is the fact that policy processes are increasingly becoming multi-level in the sense that more institutions are playing a role, whereas traditionally, Italian housing policies have been marked by two main public housing programmes: Piano INA-Casa promoted by the Christian Democratic Minister Fanfani 1949-1963, and the Gescal Trust Funds (Gestione Case Lavoratori), between 1967-1973.⁶

2.2 The situation at the local level: the no-policy no-strategy frame

First of all, Milan does not have a political strategy that could build the future scenario of the city. Milan is one of the few big European cities that have not yet produced a strategic plan. Several European cities (such as Barcelona) as well as large Italian cities (Turin, Rome) and medium-size Italian cities (Pesaro, Florence, Trento, La Spezia)⁷ do have strategic plans to build scenarios of the future of the city.

In the Milan case, in June 2000 the local government has started to re-think the city as a whole with the programmatic document *Ricostruire la grande Milano*⁸ (2000). According to the document, Milan has the aim to enlarge its urbanity by focusing on the renewal of abandoned industrial areas such as Bicocca, Bovisa, etc. These areas shall become the city's new centrality (Milan as a multi-centre city) characterised by a process of decentralisation of functions and services. According to this scenario, the city centre has to become a hosting and entertaining place (pedestrian area such as Garibaldi) as well as a residential area. The green areas have to be all connected to form a green corridor across the city. The document ends stressing the intention to follow up this work with a strategic master plan. Apart from the document's contents, its importance is related to the fact that it has been discussed and produced by the council without planning a sharing strategy with other actors who exist and work in the urban context. The same

6 INA-Casa and GESCAL are forced saving systems imposed by several government to employees.

7 Further information on city strategic plans can be found on the cities' websites: Barcelona (www.bcn2000.es), Turin (www.torino-internazionale.org), Florence (www.comune.firenze.it/progrettafirenze), Trento (www.comune.tn.it/progetti/ps/ps_index.htm).

8 For all information above see: Assessorato sviluppo del Territorio, 2000.

top-down model has been followed for all specific projects that are planned or under realisation⁹ (see Chapters 3 and 8). Even though this official document was not thought to be a strategic plan, the total absence of the civic society in its drafting is an important aspect to be taken into consideration to understand how the policy-making process is built in Milan.

A few other aspects are important to understand politics in Milan's recent history.

During the 1980s Milan was for the rest of Italy - but more important for its citizens - perceived as the most progressive, industrialised, innovative and exciting Italian city. However, soon after, this 'perfect' image was spoilt by the discovery that the economic, political and financial worlds were operating thanks to a generalised and sprawling corrupted system. Milan turned into the symbol of the city of bribes (*Tangentopoli*). The involvement of local politicians in the corrupted system caused - and this was probably not the only cause - a rapid and drastic detachment of the citizenry from traditional politics and also from traditional parties. From a political orientation point of view, in Milan, the 1990s can be seen as the period of the emerging *Lega Nord* - the party which is celebrating a strong antagonism towards a bureaucratic and public state system considered inefficient and unproductive¹⁰ - and *Forza Italia* - the party which has introduced the idea of state-business company, and the importance of the free market.¹¹

The crisis of the political system and of the parties has produced some transformation from the participation point of view: (1) at the beginning, there has been a crisis of the forms of organised and structured participations also at the local level; (2) from the second half of the 1990s, there has been an increase of bottom-up forms of participation, mainly around transversal issues (environment, social and civic issues) and at a micro-local level. As Graziano (2003) underlines, in the last decade, despite the decrease of citizens' participation through formal and traditional institutions at the local level, the activism (see for example the creation of an umbrella organisation promoting a referendum for no-pollution in Milan) and the formation of neighbourhood committees (*Comitati di quartiere*) has been particularly cantered on public space claims (see Chapter 8). It is also important to underline that the increasing engagement of local organisations can be related also to the transformation of the administrative local structures occurred between 1990 and 1999.

2.2.1 The administrative decentralisation

In 1976 the institutionalisation of neighbourhood councils served to change the nature of decision-making at the city level and had an impact on the quality and methods of delivering social services to neighbourhood residents. Law 278 transformed neighbourhood councils into an articulation of the Italian state. The neighbourhood councils became in fact a national issue as a result of the emergence of two aspects of the Italian political outlook. The first one was the notion of urban rights that was interpreted as the fight to access to public services such as education, health, housing and transportation. The second aspect was the desire for an increased citizens' control on services and a great desire to participate in decision-making.

9 For example, Bicocca area - one of the largest de-industrialised areas in Milan and where the university is now located - was partially built by the time in which the documents were produced.

10 In 1989, at the EU elections Lega Nord gains 3.4 per cent, in 1993 its candidate for mayor of Milan wins with 57.1 per cent.

11 We must remember that Forza Italia holds Milan's city council since 1996 and the regional council since 1995.

In the early 1960s, some MPs of the PCI (former Italian Communist Party) experimented forms of urban decentralisation reforms, anticipating demands that would emerge a decade later. As a result, during the late 1970s, the city of Milan was divided into 20 neighbourhood councils. Each neighbourhood council would administer between 60,000 and 80,000 inhabitants. Local inhabitants through a proportional electoral system would elect the neighbourhood council. The existence of a direct ‘relationship’ between the neighbourhood council and the local residents was able to bring on the agenda of these governments issues strictly related to the local context. These forms of direct democracy were also a typical expression of those years, during which citizens were showing a strong sense of participation in the political, social and civil lives of their neighbourhood.

In recent years, two normative milestones, Law 142 in 1990 and Law 265 in 1999, established new transformations of the administrative structure. With particular reference to the Milanese situation, the 20 neighbourhood councils were aggregated into nine districts, administering around 130,000 inhabitants.¹² As we can see in Figure 2.1, each current zone includes at least two or three former zones. As we will see in Chapters 6 and 7 this new division has a direct impact on the distribution of social and community services in the city.

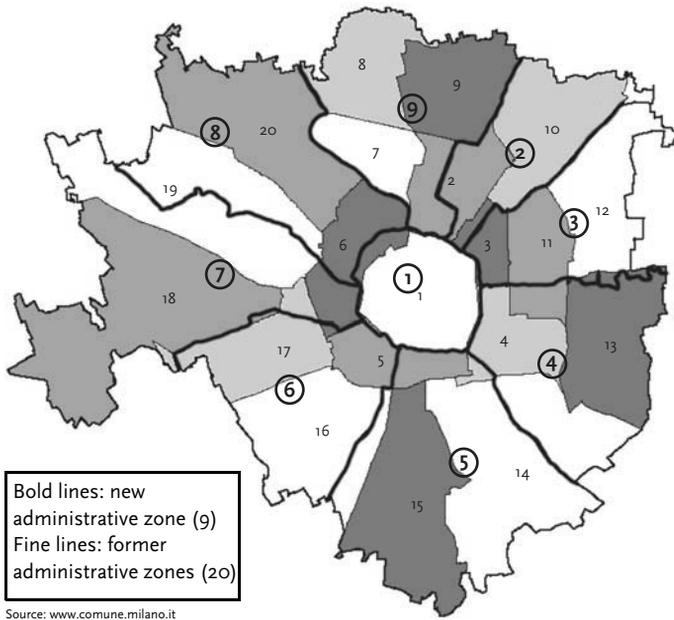


Figure 2.1 – Decentralisation areas in Milan before and after 1999

Furthermore, since the changes occurred in 1993 (Law 277) when the electoral system was changed (from a proportional to a mixed majority one), the president of the neighbourhood’s district is directly elected. Despite all these reforms, the general trend in the last 25 years

¹² It is worthwhile noting that today the population of Milan is less compared to 25 years ago.

regarding the neighbourhood councils is a progressive loss of their role and decision-making capacities. Two major causes are at the origin of this regressive tendency. On the one hand, participation in decision-making processes has fallen. On the other hand, the legitimacy of the institutional political figures has also entered into crisis. Furthermore, the new political coalition does not seem intent on changing this trend. However, as we shall see in the following paragraphs, new forms of participation in the decision-making processes are experimented. These do not occur in the institutional fora and are characterised by being focused on specific and very practical issues that tend to be less strictly 'political'. Interrelated to this local dimension, in the very recent years Italy is experiencing also a decentralisation process of the competences from the national to the regional levels that directly influences the decision of the local governments, as we shall see in the following chapter.

2.2.2 The case of urban policies and housing

At the planning level, Milan has started to promote integrated renewal programmes. It is important to underline that the local history of the renewal programmes seem to be marked by two periods. The first period which goes through all the 1990s, is characterised by the fact that the local authority institution did not invest in the full exploitation of EU funds for renewal programmes (Neighbourhood Contract I and Urban I). Despite the experience of Rome's local authority, which has formed a specific city council department to prepare, organise and coordinate local actors to draft projects for EU application, Milan has completely failed in this task. The absence of central coordination and direction of the council has made it impossible for any presented projects to be financed. This first period of integrated project has been instead mainly characterised by the implementation of national integrated projects (PRU, PRUST, PRUI) and other forms of partnership (private-public) such as project financing. In other words, the renewal process of several areas of Milan has been promoted and fostered throughout national re-qualification measurements (i.e. the PRU). In 2003, 17 PRU projects have been started or are in the process of being put in action. As it will be seen later San Siro has benefited by PRU.

The second period that has just started has seen a strong intervention of the regional level¹³ in collaboration with the council to facilitate and promote coordination between private, public and non-profit sector to benefit from the EU programme. In this second phase, the region of Lombardia has decided to activate financial and human resources to promote the renewal programmes. An interesting case is for example the second call for the Neighbourhood Contract II. One of the most evident signals of the attention to the programme is given by the budget made available (EUR 112,375,000) by the region of Lombardia to co-fund the projects. Apart from this aspect, the region has also promoted before the Neighbourhood Contract II deadline a detailed information campaign for all municipalities to propose projects.

13 This period overlaps with the publication of the regional programme on Residential Public Housing (PERP) which will be described more in the following chapter (see Section 3.1.3).

Table 2.2 – Regional renewal programme

Project/programme	Description	Aims	Area of intervention	Law
PRU (Urban renewal programme)	A coordinate set of activities (maintenance, re-qualification and new building) that are financed by public or private contribution.	Re-qualification of areas to improve the life standard of the neighbourhoods.	The programme is designed and promoted by the <i>Ministry of Lavori Pubblici</i> ; it is a task of the municipality to identify areas or whole neighbourhoods.	Art. 11/1993 Law 493/93
CONTRATTI DI QUARTIERE (Neighbourhood contracts)	A programme that through the citizen's participation promotes: housing and urban intervention, actions to promote social development, actions to combat unemployment.	Combine the re-qualification with the participation.	The programme is designed and promoted by the <i>Ministry of Lavori Pubblici</i> .	1998 Art. 4/2002 (<i>Contratti di quartiere II</i>)
PRUSST (Urban renewal programme and sustainable development)	Represent a new phase of the territorial re-qualification. These new programmes have the aim to network and co-ordinate the already existing projects.	The creation of interventions able to promote sustainable economic, social environmental development. The creation of integrated systems to promote the re-qualification of deprived areas.	The programme is designed and promoted by the <i>Ministry of Lavori Pubblici</i> ; it is a task of the municipality to identify areas or whole neighbourhoods.	1998
URBAN (Urban renewal programme)				1994 European commission communication no. 94/7180/02

Source: own research, 2004

In Milan two typologies of interventions can be traced for neighbourhoods that are involved in the renewal process:

- neighbourhoods where the renewal process is the consequence of function transformations of the area. In specific, a passage from an industrialised to a residential or services area (i.e. Bicocca, Bovisa and Vittoria);
- neighbourhoods in decline where the renewal is a strategy to combat poverty and social exclusion (i.e. Ponte Lambro, San Siro, Lorenteggio etc);
- peripheral neighbourhoods which are not considered particularly in crisis, but which do suffer a diffuse sense of social exclusion and isolation (ex. Comansina Sant'Ambrogio I–II). For

these neighbourhoods the strategy is to activate new focal points of socialisation (Barrios near Sant'Ambrogio I-II and former Paolo Pini near Comasina).¹⁴

What characterised the first typology of intervention is a low involvement of the inhabitants in the transformation. This trend gets to the extreme point in which the project is named after the famous architect who was involved in the planning. In the case of Bicocca, for example, the project is now known in Milan as '*Gregotti's Bicocca*' after the name of the architect. Together with the '*Gregotti's Bicocca*', there is '*Renzo Piano's Ponte Lambro*'. This trend reflects Milan's general renewal approach, where the great and massive interventions are in the hands of new or old elites and the process of citizens' involvement are left to micro-projects such as The Abita Laboratory in San Siro which will be described later in Chapter 3.

For the second type of neighbourhoods, which are traditionally known as 'historical neighbourhoods of the city' (*quartieri storici*), policies and interventions are supported by integrated policies. These neighbourhoods are increasingly becoming target areas for future renewal programmes.

The third type is mainly marked by interventions that are strongly supported by non-profit sectors under the direction of the council or region (see later Barrios' project and ex-Paolo Pini project).

Concluding, the idea of collaborative planning is consequently quite weak. Indeed, in a local context, where the general strategy applied is to 'refer' to an architect or a private investor (e.g. Pirelli Real Estate). In the future of the second biggest city in Italy there are not many opportunities for 'other voices' to be heard.

14 Both experiences are described in Chapter 8.

3

Housing and the built environment (urban restructuring)

Until a few years ago, from an urban reconstructing point of view, Milan could be portrayed as a vibrant city. The city can be compared to Turin which, during the industrialisation period, together with Milan, had a leading role in national economy, and, in the last 20 years, experienced a process of deindustrialisation. But while the Turin local government considered the EU initiatives (Urban I and II, Neighbourhood Contract I, etc.) an opportunity to re-launch the city as an Italian example of the deindustrialisation process, to some extent, Milan lost its first chance. In the last period, Milan is hastily trying to fall into line with the rest of Italian cities, but the task is difficult and sometimes not even properly planned. Some general remarks should be made on the main aims of Milan's urban restructuring and specifically to housing policies.

In Milan, the housing issue is very much a problem of affordability. During the housing expansion period (1945-1960) Milan's general policies, as well as all over the country, was to invest in the private housing sector leaving to social housing a very limited amount of investments due to two national programmes: PIANO INA-CASA (1949-1963) and later GESCAL Funds (1963-1998). Regarding the social housing sector, even though Milan is the second city in Italy after Naples for low cost social housing, this is in fact now inadequate, both because of the total lack of an investment strategy in this area and also because the housing stock is being sold off or falling into disrepair. In Milan, the Regional Agency of Residential Social Housing - ALER - owns only 45,000 dwellings and, in the last ten years has annually sold 800 units. The final result is that the social housing stock which is available is not even able to respond to the pressing requests of low-income evicted households.

One of the most evident results is that in Milan the issue of affordability is a combination of high house prices, especially in the central neighbourhoods, and the fact that in the rental sector social housing is now limited while the private rental sector is very highly priced (and also limited). In the private rental sector new regulations have pushed up the number of evictions. Indeed, according to one of the most prestigious estate agents in Italy, the Gabetti Agency, in the central area of the city, the price of the flats has risen with 15 per cent between 1998-1999 and more than 12 per cent in 2000. The high demand of rented dwellings (40 per cent of demand against the national mean of 30 per cent) meets a supply that has been low for a long time (Tosi, 1994).

The region of Lombardia is arduously trying to gain back Milan's leading role in the national scenario by framing urban renewal and housing issues. In 2000, the region of Lombardia has launched a new social housing programme that is aiming to move away from the 'traditional'

approach of simply maintaining the social housing stock. Indeed, the regional programme is promoting:

- strategies of social mix by renting available dwellings in social housing estates to specific social groups (students, policemen and temporary workers such as nurses and builders);
- strategies of public space reclaim;
- strategies to combat social and physical isolation for elderly tenants.

3.1 Main aims of urban restructuring

3.1.1 Main activities

As has been mentioned above (Section 2.2.2), integrated programmes are marked by two main periods. In the first period national integrated programmes have become one of the most common renewal programmes in Milan, specifically in one of our case studies: San Siro. In the second phase the region became the main actor in coordinating renewal programmes within the regional juridical frame of the Residential Public Housing Programme (PRERP). The following two sections will deal with these renewal programmes and with the institutions promoting this new form of urban government and governance.

3.1.2 Urban renewal programmes: the PRU in San Siro

The PRU is one of the integrated programmes for urban regeneration that used to be proposed and implemented first by the administration of the CER (the housing committee) and then by the *Direzione Generale del Coordinamento Territoriale* (Territorial Coordination Department) of the Ministry of Public Works.¹⁵

As Padovani (2000) underlines, the PRU as well as the PII (integrated programmes) are conceived as new tools available to municipal administrations to renovate segments of the city marked by problems of urban decay and social distress. Furthermore the author highlights three main innovative elements that can be identified in these programmes: (a) the promotion of new forms of partnerships in the design and implementation of the project; (b) the integration between interventions on buildings and interventions on infrastructures, services, and open spaces; (c) timing of the project to be shared and subscribed by all the actors involved.

The programme must concern several urban functions, from housing to manufacturing or service activities; provide for several forms of building intervention, including works of urbanisation, of urban rehabilitation and building, if necessary, new constructions; open the project to bids from several public and private entities and several public and private financial

15 Since 1992, five successive schemes have been implemented: *Programmi integrati* (Integrated Programmes);

Programmi di recupero urbano (Urban Renewal Programmes) addressing the problems of distressed public housing estates, December 1994; *Programmi di riqualificazione urbana* (Urban Regeneration Programmes), December 1994, addressing urban areas with problems of industrial abandonment and urban decay; *Contratti di quartiere* (Neighbourhood Contracts) introduced in 1997 to cope with public housing estates with serious problems in terms of urban quality and social exclusion; *Programmi di recupero urbano e di sviluppo sostenibile* (Urban Regeneration and Sustainable Development Programmes), 1998.

resources. As an important condition the programmes should insist on the coexistence of a mix of actors and public and private resources (Mingione, 2001).

The San Siro area has an urban renewal programme (Law 493/93, article 11). However, the evolution of the programme has not been linear. Although the theoretical policy planning seems straightforward, the San Siro case presents negative aspects and delays due to the complex political and social environment in which it is operating.

The PRU of the San Siro district is specifically for a part of San Siro estate - the area defined by via Zamagna-via Paravia and via Mar Jonio. This is the oldest part of the neighbourhood with 6,092 dwellings in the social housing sector. The PRU foresees an investment of EUR 11,383,000. These sums are funded partially by the ALER and the region and partially by private investors. As already mentioned above, several critical aspects can be underlined. First of all, as it can be deduced by the description of the interventions reported above, the San Siro PRU mainly focuses on the physical reconstruction or renewal of the San Siro estate. Too little attention is paid to social cohesion of the tenants and there is no mention of any initiative to combat social exclusion for elderly living in the estate - although this social group is by far the most represented. Second, the San Siro PRU is considered by some stakeholders geographically too limited. *'(...) We are approving here a sort of a second generation PRU, not a huge urban re-qualification plan which interests i.e. a former industrial area, but a tool for the renewal of a big social and residential housing area. However, since the first draft project of the San Siro PRU, the approval of today's session concerns a tiny triangle of the neighbourhood. The main issue of social disadvantage which relates to the entire area remains unsolved'* (interview Comune di Milano, 2002).

The implementation of the PRU presents side effects such as slowing down the implementation of other activities. For example, the renewal of dwellings requires forced mobility of the inhabitants and therefore the spaces allocated for these purposes cannot be used to organise other activities.¹⁶ However, from a positive view, it can be argued that the San Siro PRU has had an attractive effect on promoting other small policies and initiatives in the same area (especially micro-level policies). The underlining idea for policymakers and other actors that operate within the neighbourhood is the creation of productive synergies with other projects.

3.1.3 Regional Programme for Residential Public Housing (PRERP) 2002-2004

The new Regional Programme for Residential Public Housing (PRERP) has been approved with resolution no. 605, on the 8th of October 2002 (*Delibera del Consiglio Regionale*). The new programme covers the period 2002-2004 with a financial budget of EUR 950 million. The programme has not yet been entirely implemented. In summary the regional action plan will focus on:

- direct and public interventions for the most vulnerable part of the population by supplying social housing with *'canone sociale'* (flat social rents) or promoting partnerships with the non-profit sector in order to activate social services and programmes;

¹⁶ This remark was made during an interview with Mr. Marcello Badano, director, emergency unit, ALER-Milan, January 2003.

- a supply of dwellings at ‘*canoni moderati*’ (affordable rents) that can be offered by the market or public sector. An affordable rent means rent below the market price affordable for low-medium income households;
- economic support of the rent for households with economic difficulties;
- promote integrated programmes (PII - integrated programmes, PRU - urban renewal programmes, neighbourhood contracts) because these can be considered the most successful partnership initiatives between private-public sector;
- promote new supply policies not for areas which are spatially de-localised, but where housing problems are mostly concentrated. Reducing commuting distances will positively affect the economic system and the quality of life.

It is interesting to underline how in the new guidelines the focus is two-fold. On the one hand, there is great attention regarding rents, rent controls and rental issues versus private sectors and owners. On the other hand, the focus is on the neighbourhood community, with the promotion of integrated programmes and new bottom-up policies.

Besides this, measures of intervention exist which are already implemented by the region in terms of rental housing policies which include: temporary renting; funds for renting support; a regional observatory on housing condition; safe neighbourhood projects and mortgage for first buyers. PRERP is intended for the promotion of new intervention measures (according to Law 21/2001) such as: 20,000 rented dwellings, neighbourhood contracts II, rented dwellings for elderly people, residential housing for students and regional programmes for residential social housing (Regione Lombardia, 2002a) (Tables 3.1 and 3.2).

Table 3.1 – Regional intervention measures already implemented

Intervention measures	Description	Regional funds available (Euros)
Temporary renting	A supply of rented dwellings for those people who (students, employees/workers) need a house for a short period.	25,967,472
Funds for renting support	This measurement is funded by a National Fund, ‘ <i>Fondo nazionale per il sostegno all’accesso alle abitazioni in localizzazione</i> ’ and integrated by regional funds. This economic contribution is used to support households living in rented dwellings.	72,303,966
Regional observatory on housing conditions	The observatory aims at monitoring the quality and quantity of housing demand.	6,213,020
Safe neighbourhood project	Video surveillance in the ALER estates.	1,549,371
Mortgage for first buyers		72,303,966

Source: Regione Lombardia, 2000a

3.1.4 Social mix: a policy to combat social exclusion in the social housing estate

What is worth mentioning is the philosophy behind some of these interventions. Most of the temporary renting for students and special categories (such as nurses or policemen) has been promoted to increase the social mix of the neighbourhoods. With regards to temporary renting, the ALER registered an availability of 1,260 dwellings that will be made available for those categories. Between 1998-1999, 1,000 dwellings have been offered to policemen and their

Table 3.2 – New regional intervention measures 2002–2004

New intervention measures	Description	Regional funds available (Euros)
20,000 rented dwellings	The decree provides for the building of new dwellings with ' <i>canone concordato</i> '.	64,557,112
Neighbourhood contracts II		34,912,486
Rented dwellings for elderly people	Renewal of dwellings to be allocated to elderly people (permanent renting with ' <i>canone agevolato</i> ').	(non-available funds)
Residential housing for students		4,704,542
Regional programmes for residential social housing	General housing needs.	456,558,827

Source: Regione Lombardia, 2000a

families. Before the end of 2003, 165 dwellings will be made available to nurses. Since 2000 the ALER has also signed a convention with some of the main universities in Milan to allocate students. Until now 95 dwellings have been made available. Dwellings are often quite small (one/two-bedroom flats), and the rent is quite low (EUR 3,000 per one-bedroom flats per year, EUR 2,500 per student per two-bedroom flats). The ALER is responsible for the renewal of flats that very often are rented furnished. The renting contracts are relatively short term (duration of the university studying for the students or based on the working contracts). The social mix policies have two interesting implications. Firstly, the lack of social housing and allocation criteria have made the social housing estates available only for poor and excluded groups. The policy is attempting to combat and prevent segregation and at the same time gives the opportunity to vulnerable groups (low income) to access to affordable rents. Secondly, due to the typologies of groups involved in the programme (policemen, nurses and students), the programme could produce informal networks. It might improve the quality of life of other tenants (elderly people who might need health care) or the safety of the entire estate.

3.1.5 Reclaiming public spaces in San Siro estate: the Abita Project

In the social housing estates a common problem is the presence of abandoned public space. It is common that green areas and gardens in the courtyard of the estate become 'a dumping place for dismissed washing machines and other electrical devices'. In San Siro a participatory process to reclaim public space has been promoted. The project, which started in March 2002, involves only a very limited area of the estate: two buildings in Piazza Falterona 1/3 and one in Via Maratta 3.

This project was only able to involve 450 dwellings, where the estate has more than 6,000. The Abita Project aims at the re-qualification of a very deteriorated estate with an active participation of the inhabitants in the planning phase of the process. First, the laboratory was established, located in one of the buildings where the transformation is in act. The ALER provided the space. The laboratory aims at becoming the focal point of the project, a physical space where meetings can be held and where the public can access all information about the process. With the direct help of the inhabitants and by involving other non-profit organisations working in the area (Lega Ambiente, Sunia, District Council, Minor Associations, Voluntary Association for Non-Italian Speakers Alphabetisation), the Abita Laboratory is promoting a

planning phase which is particularly focused on the re-qualification of the courtyards of the buildings and to the renewal of the dwellings. With regard to the courtyards, the Abita Laboratory is attempting to make them more accessible and usable by the inhabitants (i.e. the initiatives 'citizens action for cleaning the playgrounds', 'drafting the rules of using common spaces', 'management of the common spaces maintenance'). The project has regarded also the renewal of dwellings, in which the ABITA Laboratory is experimenting a participatory process of restructuring the unoccupied dwellings as well as those flats that are below the minimum standards per dimension.¹⁷ An objective of this entire project is to provide the ALER with significant and documented suggestions for the implementation of the policies specifically for these buildings.¹⁸

The Abita Project is an interesting initiative of participation and partnership. Regarding building partnerships, the project has been based on a partnership agreement (*Protocollo d'intesa*) that has been signed in 2001 by the ALER (Lombardy Agency for Residential Social Housing), the region of Lombardia and the Lombardy *Feder-casa*,¹⁹ on the opportunity to promote a renewal process of a deprived area of Milan through a process of participation. By public competition the *Politecnico di Milano*, Department of B.E.S.T. (Building Environment Sciences and Technology), has been selected to coordinate the participatory renewal process.

An important element that distinguishes these projects from other initiatives in the neighbourhood and in the city is the strong involvement of the people living in the estate in the process of planning their space. Despite the fact that the beneficiaries of this project are limited, the impact of this participatory policy applied to a social housing estate can have positive consequences on the dramatic process of forced mobility that any renewal project involves. Furthermore the laboratory has been and still is an opportunity to put together organisations operating at the neighbourhood level, despite the different backgrounds and different aims.

Finally the important role played by the academics as process facilitators is an example of ways in which it is possible to bridge the gap between practitioners and academics.

3.2 Custode Sociale

To combat the process of social exclusion and to promote forms of social cohesion in the neighbourhood, which is strongly characterised by elderly tenants in social housings located in the entire district, the city council in partnership with non-profit organisations has promoted the *Custode Sociale* pilot project.

Although the *Custode Sociale* is one of the most recent projects in the San Siro area, it is very explicative in terms of possible partnerships and local resources activated. In 2000, the *Custode Sociale* (Social Porter) has been a pilot project in the San Siro area, as well as in the other three neighbourhoods in Milan: Stadera, Ponte Lambro and Gratosoglio. The experimental phase

17 The Quadrilatero estate was built before 1932 and one of the main physical features is the small dimension of apartments and their limited offer of comforts (elevator, central heating, etc.).

18 For all the information see: Regione Lombardia, Laboratorio San Siro (www.politicheperlacasa.regione.lombardia.it/ProgrammiEdiliziaSet.htm).

19 Regional Association for Social Housing Associations.

lasted for about two years (end of 2002), and because of the high success of the initiative, the city council in collaboration with the voluntary sector has extended and expanded the project (second phase). At present, the project is implemented in 16 neighbourhoods of Milan. The *Custode Sociale* is an interesting social assistance service specifically targeted for elderly people who are unable to access the social services or have very limited mobile capacities. Furthermore, the *Portierato Sociale* aims at providing and promoting a social network for those elderly people who are isolated in their neighbourhood. Indeed, the *Custode Sociale* provides basic social assistance services, as well as organised social events (Christmas parties and entertainment events) for elderly people living in the estate.

A peculiarity of this policy is the very limited territorial area of intervention. Indeed, the *Custode Sociale* does not operate in more than two or three estates. In the experimentation phase, the *Custode Sociale* was a daily service (9.30 a.m. - 6.30 p.m.) and since the second phase started a night service has been implemented.

Apart from the high success of the project, the initiative shows an interesting new partnership and collaboration between different social actors, stakeholders and policy-makers operating in this area. The project is run by voluntary organisations (in the specific case of *San Siro Fondazione Fratelli di San Francesco*, www.fratellisanfrancesco.it) financed by the city council and with the collaboration of the ALER. The problematic issue of isolation of elderly people living in social housing (managed by the ALER) is no more seen exclusively as a social services' concern, but it has activated a synergic collaboration to promote a multi-dimensional approach to combat situations of social exclusion. Looking at the principal designing phase of the policy, it is worth mentioning that in the neighbourhood selection, there has been a collaboration between the city council and the ALER that has provided information on the population living in the estates. This aspect is underlining the transformation of the role of the ALER in contributing to the process of defining the policies to be implemented. Indeed, by statute, the ALER has the task of maintaining and managing the physical structure of the social housing patrimony. Apart from providing the room for the *Custode Sociale* headquarters, in the second phase the ALER has activated another initiative: by training porters already working in the ALER estates with social services professionals to work together with the *Custode Sociale*, and developing similar skills.²⁰

3.3 Conclusions

Regarding housing and environment policies, it is possible to draw some general conclusions that stress national tendency of a shift of aims and goals in the housing policies. After a long period of housing expansions (1950-1970), housing policies have been overshadowed by other issues in the last three decades. Very recently, the pressing housing demands and the new needs responding to social transformation (high territorial mobility equals the demand of temporary renting accommodation, labour flexibility equals the affordability issues for newcomers to the housing market), have put housing issues under the spot again. Furthermore, it has become clear that to create sustainable neighbourhoods, housing interventions need to be combined with

20 Due to the different professional profiles, in this case called *Portinai sociali*.

social and economic interventions. The growing attention to integrated housing policies, however, is quite a new approach in Italy and in particular in Milan. The few cases in which integrated policies have been implemented (temporary accommodation to create social mix) are still in their experimental phase, and therefore quite difficult to evaluate.

Specifically related to the Milanese context, it is important to underline the increasing role of the region in coordinating and programming the general strategies, even though it is becoming clear that, as usual, the private contribution is still quite consistent. The ex-industrial areas are becoming the 'new frontiers' for private investors to renew neighbourhoods and make the city increasingly more unaffordable. Within this scenario of grand plans and great strategies, the inhabitants' voice is kept quiet and the citizens' involvement in urban renewal programmes and projects is still relegated to a minor role. Few are the initiatives that see participation of the citizens as a consolidated practice. Rarely these projects are promoted and financially supported by the local authority. In most of cases, they are micro-initiatives promoted at the pilot level. Among those, the experience of the ABITA Laboratory in San Siro deserves our attention (in Chapter 8 the *Villaggio alla Barona* also represents an interesting case).

It is hard to study the estates separately from the cities where they are located, especially with respect to employment and economic opportunities and policies.

An important agreement on labour took place in Milan in 2000 - the so-called 'Pact for Milan' - among all the major social forces of the city, from the administration, to trade unions (not all of them), to the private sectors' representatives. This agreement is meant to foster employment in Milan for socially disadvantaged groups (disabled people, drug addicts, young dropouts, former detainees).

This trend and the 'Pact for Milan' has been criticised for the additional quotas of flexibility on the job market it created through the introduction of temporary contracts and reduced salaries, compared to the ones established by national contracts, for some segments of the population such as immigrants, long-term unemployed and disabled people. The 'Pact for Milan' inspired the national law on labour, which is known as *legge Biagi*,²¹ and also known as the 'Pact for Italy'.

4.1 Main aims of economic and employment policies

Programmes and policies so far implemented in the city and at the national level focus on both people looking for a job and employed people who might lack the skills to obtain an enduring position on the labour market. For this reason, training and education are often closely linked to employment and labour policies.

The regional operational programme (*Programma Operativo Regionale* - POR) illustrates the interventions that the region of Lombardia expects for the years 2000-2006 in relation to employment through the use of resources of the European social fund for Objective 3. The European interventions look at the following pillars, to which the region of Lombardia explicitly refers:

- improve and foster employment and job-creation for workers;
- develop an entrepreneurial culture;
- foster the capacity of adaptation of enterprises and their workers;
- reinforce gender policies.

21 For further information see Law 30/2003 and Legislation Decree 276/2003 (known as *Law Biagi*).

In order to implement these objectives, starting from an analysis of the economic scenario and with reference to interventions implemented in the previous programming phase, the region has put emphasis on the shift from an approach based on assistance and social security cushions to an approach based on prevention and active labour policies. In order to do so, the regional programme (2000-2006) was developed around the objectives of the regional development plan (*Piano Regionale di Sviluppo*) together with the agreement for the development of the economy and labour in Lombardia (*Patto per lo sviluppo dell'economia e del lavoro in Lombardia*) with an active role of the Table of Local Authorities (*Tavolo delle Autonomie*), in order to follow the objectives and the actions as far as possible connected with the needs and the perspectives of the territories and the sectors, in which objectives and actions are put in place.

Despite the existence of regional programmes and the intention to coordinate sectoral policies, in the employment, labour and skills sector it is difficult to trace the existence of a major policy from which all interventions follow. Even in this sector coordination and governance at different levels are far from being put into place. The region seems in several sectors the most innovative and capable actor under this trend, but so far the best result is the ability to spell out the need and urgency for better coordination, collaboration and urban governance.

Therefore the activities we shall raise in the following sections neither fall all under the same 'umbrella', from the legislative framework point of view, nor under the regional programme, or any 'big policy'. The two policies we shall look at have different affiliations. Nevertheless, despite the lack of coordination, in some cases the visions and priorities contained in these policies embrace similar trends and scenarios. Some of the activities we shall highlight have been designed to target specific areas within the city. The 'territorialisation' of the policies, or 'area-based' policies, linking activities and policies to specific geographical areas, as an important and determinant factor for local development, is a new trend in this specific sector: it started in the mid-1990s and is gaining more and more momentum. Considering our interest for estates-based activities, this trend is very relevant. Another interesting trend of local policies addressing the issue of unemployment is their focus on special groups. These are the groups such as young people looking for their first job or women wishing to go back into the labour market after motherhood, and they all need special assistance.

4.2 Project on the development of small enterprises in Sant'Ambrogio-Barona, San Siro, Comasina and other peripheral areas of the city of Milan

An interesting policy to foster employment, inspired by an area-based factor, touching our three estates is the project on the development of small enterprises in some peripheral areas of the city of Milan (including San Siro, Comasina, Sant'Ambrogio-Barona).

This project is coordinated by the city council, in particular by the office for interventions to foster enterprises (*Ufficio Interventi a Favore dell'Imprenditoria*). The laws promoting these projects are Law 266/1997, art. 14; Ministerial Decree 225/1998; and finally *Delibera* of the city council 1825/2002.

4.2.1 Aims and visions

The main vision underlying this policy is derived from the idea that economic development is the main instrument that can affect, with a different trajectory, areas at risk of criminality and

unsafe suburbs. The start of this idea lies in the 1990s, when all of a sudden ‘urban problems’ became an issue. In those years youngsters full of rage appear in the suburbs of big French cities (the *casseurs*), and urban riots were common in Los Angeles. A direct link was made between economic development and security. Basically, attention to entrepreneurship starts from the concern of urban violence.

The aim of this policy is to help inhabitants of the estate who have an economic project with a logic of empowerment.

4.2.2 Activities

The project entered two phases. In the previous experimental phase that started in 1998 six neighbourhoods were selected.²² In the second phase it gave contributions with a zero banking rate to the creation of small enterprises operating in specific disadvantaged and segregated areas of the city (18 neighbourhoods). San Siro, Comasina and Sant’Ambrogio-Barona were among these. The project was promoted in 2000. The funding is established by the Ministry of Economy and subsidised each year by the National Budget.²³

The approach was modified after the first experimentation phase due to a new way of interpreting the ‘culture of entrepreneurship’. In this direction the actions of the city council have not been limited to selecting interesting projects; it further signed a partnership agreement with the House of Commerce and developed methodologies and training courses (Martinotti et al., 2000). The underlying idea is that for the sustainability of a business of any kind it is not sufficient to have financial resources, nor just good ideas are enough. You also need competences.

4.2.3 Participation, organisation and brief evaluation

It is not easy to evaluate this project, which is somewhat still in its pilot phase. In terms of numbers, the project itself selected and gave funds to 30 ‘best’ enterprises, and 24 were assisted on management issues (marketing, business plan, etc.), which is not a huge number. However this project saw 24 enterprises participating in the whole cycle of the project, creating 50 new jobs. A self-evaluation on the impact and the results of this policy shows that where the policy has been supported by an active and synergic local context, the results have been more visible. Indeed, in the case of the Calvaire-Molise neighbourhood, where the policy has been accompanied by a pilot project of an ‘enterprise incubator’ (a kind of laboratory to foster local entrepreneurship supervised by a team formed by academics and practitioners), the number of enterprises has been higher and their life more stable compared with other areas. In other neighbourhoods, results have been less positive. For example although the San Siro neighbourhood is composed by a mixture of population and the numerous social resources working in the area show the existence of a vibrant community, this innovative multi-dimensional policy does not seem to have been fully exploited. So far only five ‘new enterprises’ were created, taking advantage of the opportunities within this policy. And both in Comasina and Sant’Ambrogio only one was implemented.

22 Here the conditions to participate were even more convenient, since the fundings were considered as ‘lost funds’, which meant that the city council would give 50 per cent of the cost of the project without asking for a refund.

23 The funds have been voluminous so far: in 1999-2000, EUR 12 million; in 2001-2003, EUR 15 million.

A good result of these projects however can be seen in the joint work among different stakeholders and institutions at the local level, especially between the city council and the House of Commerce, which became the executor of the selection process within the project. The stakeholders expressed positive judgements for the project and for the joint work, both within the city council and the House of Commerce, which might therefore continue on a stable basis.

The project has been implemented in nine other Italian cities (from north to south, including Genoa, Naples, Venice, etc.). The network seems to be useful for confrontations at a technical level, which can be seen as a positive outcome.

4.3 'Pink-Counters' (*Sportelli Rosa*) in all nine districts in Milan

'Pink-Counters' (*Sportelli Rosa*) is an initiative designed by the city council of Milan, specifically by the decentralised department of the council. This initiative started in its experimental phase in December 2002 thanks to a European social funds contribution. It targets women looking for job opportunities. It has been activated in all the nine administrative districts in which the city is divided. This allows for an area-based initiative that can become well known at the local level both for women applying and for actors offering job opportunities.

4.3.1 Aims and visions

Sportelli Rosa aims at giving a concrete answer to one of the European main pillars for the use of social funds: the reinforcement of gender policies. The specific target includes: women in a difficult situation, at a special phase in their life, i.e. right after motherhood; or women after their forties when they wish to find a different job, or any job, and that are often regarded as too old for a new vocation; women without a school degree or professional qualification, or with a degree that is hardly usable on the job market; women that wish to start an autonomous initiative or become entrepreneurs.

4.3.2 Activities

Any woman can call the service and learn about their services and opening hours. There usually is an interview at the counter first in order to define the professional profile. This is often the first service presented, but commonly this is what is mainly needed and women can have their ideas clarified on what to do next, and how to approach their search for jobs with just one interview. If that is not enough, depending on each case, the service offers different alternatives:

- activities to enrich each person's experience;
- psychological consultancy on job related issues;
- discussion on employment opportunities;
- sustain entrepreneurial initiatives;
- free service is for the applicants.

The project aims at helping the demand and supply sides in the job market. It also helps to define the professional profile of the women applying for this service, which is managed with the assistance of professional women in charge of giving orientation in the job market.

In addition activities of training and internships are promoted and assistance is given through professionals to women that wish to start up an autonomous activity.

4.3.3 Organisation

The initiative was set up by the department of decentralisation of the council in collaboration with several partners: non-profit associations, the main social and productive realities operating in the city and other public actors, specifically: *Assolombarda*, the House of Commerce, its training institution *Formaper*, the Department for Labour of the Council, and the Department for Training of the Province of Milan, different associations of category such as the Artisans' Union, the Union of Commerce, etc. The project definitely saw the participation of several stakeholders from many sectors (public, private and non-profit) wishing to work together on such an initiative, demonstrating such target group's need for attention in the labour market.

4.3.4 Participation and a brief evaluation

The initiative is very young. It is difficult therefore to establish an evaluation at such an early stage. However in almost one year of existence these Pink-Counters offered assistance, addressing to different employment opportunities to more than 2,200 women.

Table 4.1 shows the use of the service between June and September for the different district areas. The result between the different areas is quite uneven, nevertheless - if we think that it is a totally new service - it has reached a significant number of participants.

*Table 4.1 – Number of women that used the Sportelli Rosa between June 2003 and September 2003**

	District									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Age										
18-30	5	8	3	4	5	6	2	9	4	46
30-40	7	21	3	2	19	10	1	21	10	94
40-70	7	28	3	11	18	19	7	24	15	132
Nationality										
Italians	15	35	5	10	28	28	7	41	23	192
Foreigners	4	22	4	7	14	7	3	13	6	80
Education										
Elementary	0	5	2	0	1	4	3	4	2	21
Junior-high school	4	28	0	7	17	14	5	23	11	109
Vocational school	6	6	1	4	5	3	0	7	4	36
High school	8	13	6	6	13	10	1	12	7	76
Bachelor	1	5	0	0	6	4	0	9	5	30
Regional courses	1	5	8	1	3	3	1	5	5	32
Total	58	176	35	52	129	108	30	168	92	848

Source: www.sportelliroso.com

* District 6 is where Sant'Ambrogio is located, San Siro lies in district 7 and Comasina in district 9.

The initiative started as an experiment, as we have mentioned above, with funds coming from the European Social Fund (EUR 400,000). Starting from now, thanks to the success of the initiative, the city council will devolve EUR 200,000 per year of its budget to this project, and these Pink-Counters have been set up as a permanent service of the neighbourhood council.

This will stand for the continuation of the project, and for a better diffusion on a longer-term basis of this service to all those in need. A successful factor of this programme is that most of the professionals working in these services are women helping women. It is not clear how purposely this has been designed, but in any case the presence of professional women helping other women is a way to promote gender solidarity and it also stands as an implicit element of empowerment for the women coming to the service as applicants and users.

4.4 Conclusions

In this chapter the employment issue has been discussed on a national and local level, due to the fact that employment local policies are very much limited to few experiences and most of the decisions regarding strategies to combat unemployment are taken at a higher territorial level. However, among the few activities to fight unemployment in deprived areas, it seems that the general tendency is to target special groups such as women or youngsters.

The safety debate can be generally based firstly on the dichotomy ‘objective and subjective safety’, secondly, on the data on ‘reality’ and the ‘perception’ of risk and insecurity. Local policy perfectly reflects this contradictory dichotomy. In the last five to ten years, data produced by the *Prefettura di Milan* shows a rapid decrease of crime and violence on people. But at the same time, it seems that the perception of risk is increasing. Local authorities therefore invest on new policies to combat criminality.

At the same time, safety policies seem to have changed their aims and philosophies by shifting from a city-based to a neighbourhood-based approach. This shift has overlapped with the main transformations undertaken to reorganise the police’s structure and to qualify their presence in the territory (Bricocoli and Cottino, 2003). Indeed, since the beginning of the 1990s, in Italy the municipal police has been transformed into local police, which has implied not only a changing in the name, but also a shift of competences and ways of combating crime to the local level by targeting problematic neighbourhoods.

The process of territorialisation of safety policies is very well underlined in the ‘*Ricostruire la grande città*’, where the process of identification of the problematic areas - *aree problema* - is described in details. The mapping on the unsafe areas (presence of criminality, prostitution, drug-dealing etc.) in the city has been provided by a close collaboration of the eight key-informants operating in the city on the safety issue (*Questura, Carabinieri, Guardia di Finanza, Direzione investigativa antimafia, procura della Repubblica, Pretura Circondariale, Tribunale dei Minori, Polizia circondariale*).

Some important commonalities on safety policy can be traced. First of all, as Bricocoli and Cottino underline (2003), local government promotes policies based on the idea of coordinating actions, promoting multi-actor processes and disassembled rooted practice. Second, the policies being before implemented across all cities, are piloted in one of the problematic areas.

5.1 Safe neighbourhood programme

The use of video-surveillance to combat criminality is generally speaking one of the most applied interventions. Following the Regional Law 8 of 21/02/2000, (*Interventi regionali per la sicurezza nei Comuni*), the region of Lombardia promoted a regional decree (7/6638 on 29.10.2001) a competition, funding EUR 1,549,371 to municipalities that would realise projects of video surveillance in social housing neighbourhoods. These projects have been implemented by the

city council, together with the ALER and the police forces, including those at the local level. For the year 2003 and the following three years of implementation of the project, the region of Lombardia expects from the local administrations detailed evaluation reports on the results obtained. The installation phase will be concluded in November 2003.

The main stakeholders involved in this project in San Siro are:

- the local administrations;
- the region of Lombardia (in the preliminary phase);
- the city council and specifically the 'safety' sector;
- the municipal police;
- the ALER (which so far in San Siro gave the availability of a space, *Mar Ionio 4*, to be used as a station in the neighbourhood to install the video monitors).

The project was drafted on evidence-based research in the preliminary phase of the project. The Prefecture of Milan²⁴ in fact, shared with the region of Lombardia information over the crimes, such as robberies, bag snatching, drug dealing and sexual violence in order to choose the neighbourhoods for the pilot phase. The neighbourhoods were chosen also for the presence of so-called situations at 'risk', which are measured by the presence of: (a) irregular immigrants; (b) gypsy camps and (c) drug dealing areas and prostitution. Given the emergency over the safety of some neighbourhoods, documented through some of the crime indicators mentioned above, a list of the priority areas was drafted. In the municipality of Milan three neighbourhoods were chosen for a pilot experimentation period: '*Fulvio Testi*', '*Stadera*' and '*San Siro*'.

The project of the city council foresees the implementation of 45 'DOME' video cameras in these three neighbourhoods, to be installed in strategic positions, linked directly with the central police precinct, and using optical transmission networks. In the neighbourhoods there will also be 46 stations with a button with which anyone can directly call the operative central police precinct, protected 24 hours that will automatically activate the closest video camera that has a record of the images. The region of Lombardia will contribute with more than EUR 2 million (precisely EUR 2,086,589,88) to the project, the contribution by the ALER is for Milan around EUR 1,000,100.

The expected results from two of the main stakeholders in the project, the municipality and the region, as they officially declare, are to '*capture a perception of safety from the citizens living in the neighbourhood*' (Region of Lombardia, 2000b).

This perception in their view will be achieved through the '*reinforcement of the activity of control in terms of quality and efficiency in repressing crimes*' (Region of Lombardia, 2000b).

The criticism of the project is of different nature. This kind of project seems to attract a lot of media attention. San Siro has been portrayed as a neighbourhood where a lot of abusive and illegal occupation of dwellings located in social housing estates occurred. This has been justified because some dwellings seem to be abandoned. In fact, in most circumstances and in articles that appeared in the local press, the dwellings belonged to the elderly that were either away for long periods or had gone into the hospital. However, illegal immigrants have been occupying apartments and in fact the number of abusive occupations in this area is numerically the highest in the city: 393 in San Siro (ALER, 2002).

24 The prefecture is an institution that represents the state at a local level.

5.2 The creation of a local garrison in deprived areas

The creation of a local garrison in deprived areas is one of the few programmes described in this report that does not have a direct application and implementation in any estate case study. The programme started at the beginning of the 1990s. Only one implementation was undertaken in a Milanese urban context: the Stadera neighbourhood. The reason why this programme should be included in the report is related to the complexity both of the process and the programme, the multi-actor dimension and its bottom-up praxis. The project has been promoted by the local police – the Department of Territorial Issues - and was aimed at establishing a better relationship between the neighbourhood and the police and of becoming a territorial reference point for the residents. The mission of the programme was quite open: ‘the garrison needs to be a presence in the neighbourhood’. This unclear mission gave to the operative unit a sense of freedom and the need to activate practices of auditing and opening towards the neighbourhood. In other words, instead of transferring a model of intervention from one urban context to another, it was indirectly asked to the operating unit to model, adapt and transform their competence for that certain social context. The operative unit that was asked to work on this mission was a mixture of competences and capabilities. On the 8th of February 1994, four policemen and social workers (involved in a stage programme for the IACP) formed this territorial task force. In its best time, the garrison was a multi-task office attempting either to solve situations of abusiveness, or combat forms of micro-criminalities and attempt to recreate a sense of community and neighbouring for elderly people. The Stadera garrison still remains the only case with respect to this typology of intervention, with its limits and positive aspects often due to the personal initiatives of its promoters.

One of the most innovative aspects of this pilot project to fight criminality is the multi-actor character implemented. The close collaboration between social workers and local policemen stresses the importance that safety and micro-criminality can not only be fought with repressive and controlled strategies but also need new approaches that focus on the social dimension of the risk.

5.3 Community policemen

Although, the previous experience has not been reproduced in any other neighbourhood, another programme is partially related to it. In 1996 the safety and local police department have launched a new programme: Community Policemen. Although a clear difference can be found between the two programmes, traces of continuity exist. As for the difference, while the first focuses on physical presence, Community Policemen focuses on the presence of a local force - one or two policemen. On the contrary, an aspect of continuity is the attempt to mix together the idea of control as safety with the social dimension of building a sense of neighbouring.

The rapidity of diffusion that characterised this programme is very interesting. The programme was activated in 30 areas of Milan (Comasina, San Siro were among the first ones) and rapidly passed to 60 areas and have now reached 150 areas of the cities. The innovative aspect of the programme is that one or two policemen are held responsible for a delimited area of the city. In other words, they become a reference point for the residents of the area regarding

enquires and problems which can occur and at the same time they are a contact point for the local police regarding that certain area.

According to Bricocoli and Cottino (2003), the Community Policemen underline an approach by which:

- the organisation of the services is based on the territorial dimension: the neighbourhood or the estate;
- a proximity strategy, a direct relationship between a policeman and a resident;
- it promotes an approach by the policeman who becomes alert to understand certain problems that can occur in that specific area.

5.4 Conclusions

Although the safety policies are increasingly becoming neighbourhood-based, this shift does not imply any participatory strategy of the inhabitants. Safety is still a top-down policy, which is centrally decided and locally implemented. The multi-actor dimension is very often promoted by excluding who really benefits from the policies. In other words, regarding the safety policy, multi-actor means building collaboration and cooperation between the different authoritative forces operating in the city. The safety problem especially in the deprived areas is frequently related to micro-criminality, which is often the result of the phenomenon of school dropouts, the process of social exclusion and economic deprivation. In this perspective, the use of video-surveillance can be considered more as a controlling strategy rather than as an effective policy to combat crime. Actually, the use of video-surveillance might even have a negative effect on citizens' involvement in reclaiming the public spaces of the neighbourhood.

6 Education and skills

In Italy the central government is in charge of the main competences in the education domain (elementary, middle and high schools) and the regional authority of professional education. 'Additional competences' (for example refectory service, school text supplies, special canteen fares for low income families, summer holiday camps) and infancy services (children from 0 to 3 years) are mainly entrusted to the municipal authorities. Universities are instead autonomous boards.

This chapter will focus on some main areas of intervention:

- infancy care: enterprise nursery, estate nursery and *Tempo per le Famiglie* (Section 6.1);
- intervention in favour of admitting foreign pupils in the compulsory school (elementary and secondary school) (Section 6.2);
- adult education: municipal centres for permanent education (Section 6.3).

Concerning area 1, this answers a precise repartition of competences, according to which the municipality supplies infancy services. As to area 2 it is worth noting: a) the special relevance of the migratory phenomenon for the city of Milan; b) the activities of the Regional Education Bureau *Ufficio Scolastico* (which is the local board representing the Ministry of Public Education) in the field of foreign pupil's admittance. Concerning area 3, the municipality of Milan has a long tradition in the education domain, which offered a wide supply of courses for permanent education.

6.1 Infancy care

In this section our focus will be on services for children from 0 to 3 years of age, giving special attention to those neighbourhoods involved in the RESTATE research. The actions presented in this paragraph are (1) daily nursery, and more in detail enterprise and estate nurseries; (2) *Tempo per le Famiglie*.

All these services have a special status between the education domain and the family support: more so than a right to education granted to the child, they are considered a support given to the parents. Special care is nevertheless reserved for the educational project and from an organisational point of view the educational board of the municipality supplies these services.

6.1.1 Daily nurseries

Daily nurseries were introduced through a national law in 1971 in the framework of the political mobilisation wave of those years²⁵ and in reply to the needs that arose with the increase of woman working and the baby boom. The municipalities of the north and centre of Italy were the first to reply positively to those claims, while in the south this kind of service is still limited.

The municipality of Milan - which was already managing these services autonomously - promoted the progressive diffusion of daily nurseries in the different neighbourhoods of the city. Nevertheless and despite the fall in the birth rate, the supply has never met the demand. At present the municipality provides 110 public daily nurseries, for a total of 5,926 available places, facing 8,833 applications (data 2001/2002). In this context, the access is regulated by priority criteria, aiming at supporting low-income families and the so-called 'social cases' (problematic families or families in hardship conditions).

In the RESTATE areas the situation is as follows: 15 daily nurseries, 22 kindergartens in zone 6 (Sant'Ambrogio/Barona/Lorenteggio); 17 daily nurseries and 22 kindergartens in zone 7 (San Siro/Baggio); 20 nurseries and 19 kindergartens in zone 9 (Comasina/Affori/Niguarda).

In recent years the problems connected with daily nurseries have been a centre of debate for three reasons: (1) problems and labour disputes between the municipality and educators; (2) mobilisation of 'spontaneous' committees of parents; (3) new policies in support of the private initiative in the sector. Since it goes beyond the purposes of our research, we will not go through point (1). Concerning point (2), it is worth mentioning the experience of the so-called *Comitato Chiedoasilo*, which witnesses the popularity of the service among citizens (see also Chapter 8). We will now move on to point (3).

In recent years the local administration has more and more included the private sector in the management of education services. Since the late 1990s, due to the high demand of nurseries (the increase of woman working) the local authority has paid great attention to this field of education. The lack of financial resources, however, has forced the administration to get the private sector involved in its 'new project for daily nurseries'. Quoting the city councillor of education: *'We rely a lot on the private sector to satisfy the waiting list. Local administrations have limited budgets. It would be therefore impossible for our poor resources to build enough public nurseries to meet the demand. Therefore, we invite the private sector and enterprises to open nurseries, reserving places for the community'* (La Repubblica newspaper, 16 October, 2003).

Two main policies are being tested:

- enterprise nursery schools;
- the estates nurseries. In general, this area of intervention can be related to the so-called 'philosophy of proximity', that means to create services particularly close to the citizens, according to physical distance and different needs. At the same time, the experience of enterprise nurseries agrees with the idea of promoting a social role for firms.

25 The 1970s opened an innovative era and new claims for services came out (special emphasis on claims for open and participatory services). The origin is to be found in the Collective Movements Mobilisation started at the end of the 1960s (movement of students, workers; women and feminist movement, health care). In parallel with this bottom-up pressure, it was reported as the progressive implementation of the administrative decentralisation, included in the Italian Constitution but not yet applied at that time (Tognetti Bordogna, 2000).

1) *Enterprise nurseries*

As the heading indicates, a firm opens them in order to meet the needs of its employees. In the last years this practice has been spread, even if mostly within big firms (CartaSi, Vodafone, etc.), as a way to improve their image as well, or within institutes characterised by onerous work schedules (hospitals have started very early to open nurseries, in private forms and beyond the public intervention). At present the University of Milan-Bicocca, under the coordination of the Faculty of Educational Science, is also working to open such a service.

Since 2003, these actions can obtain regional (Resolution of the Regional Council VII/12454, 21.3.2003) and national grants (Financial Act 2003), by drawing up of a contract between the municipality and the firm. The agreement offers advantages for both sides: the municipality covers part of the expenses to build the nursery, while the firm reserves a quota of places (generally 15 per cent) for the children of non-employees. The firm manages to save resources in the start-up phase and the municipality is able to satisfy a portion, even if small, of applications. At this point the local authority has just to integrate the fee for 'external' children according to the family income (the parameters applied are those in force in public structures). The management and the definition of the educational project are generally delegated to third parties (services associations such as Happy Child and Baby World, cooperatives, etc.) working as franchising groups.

Among the positive aspects of this solution, one can report:

- the great flexibility of these structures (working hours for example) compared to public ones;
- a high level of harmonisation between the nursery organisation and the employees' (and firm's) needs;
- the availability of the service even for middle-income families (and considering the shortage of places in public nurseries and the high costs of private ones; otherwise they would be excluded from the service);
- the possibility to reduce the public waiting list thanks to reserved places for 'external kids';
- the integration (even if partial) of these structures in the public system allows a greater control of educational and management standards;
- the integration between the firm and the territory.

There are some critical aspects as well. Primarily, the less stability of the service in the long run, depending on the presence of the service in the territory exclusively on the firm and on the employees' needs is one aspect. Secondly, the impact of a stronger social homogeneity on the educational project is another aspect.

2) *Estate nurseries*

These nurseries are opened and managed by cooperatives, associations or private individuals, authorised and financially supported by the municipality. This kind of experience, coming from the north of Europe, was first introduced in Italy in the region of Trentino-Alto Adige (with the *Tagesmutter*) and later have spread mostly in the small municipalities of the north (and in the hinterland of Milan as well) and the centre of Italy. The core philosophy is the recognition and the promotion of the families' self-organisational skills, aiming at improving the social cohesion and social networks in the territory. Since this year, the funds in Milan are granted through public competition. Applications were 45 and just 29 were accepted (16 opened by private individuals and the rest by associations, cooperatives, etc.) according to two criteria:

(1) the manager must have an appropriate professional qualification; (2) the premises must be declared fit for habitation.

In the three areas considered by RESTATE there are two qualified estate nurseries (managed by private individuals) in zone 6 (Barona/Lorenteggio/Sant’Ambrogio); 3 (2 by private individuals, 1 by a non-profit association) in zone 7 (Baggio/San Siro) and 1 (association) in zone 9 (Comasina/Affori/Niguarda).

The municipality allocates EUR 250 per month (which is about half of the expenses per child in public nurseries). From an organisational point of view, each estate nursery can admit from three to a maximum of seven children, between 0 and 3 years of age.

Critical states are reported in the way the local authority is managing the entire project. The administration is blamed for an insufficient control on the educational project, on management aspects and on the professional qualification required for educators. The words of the city councillor for education, Bruno Simini, and the manager of the Infancy Services Board of the municipality, Egidio Spelta, are particularly meaningful in this respect. Mr. Simini declared: *‘The main control is through public competition, which let us value the operators and select in most cases qualified people. Concerning managing aspects, we let the families make direct contact with the educator and define different educational routes according to the needs’*. Quoting Mr. Spelta: *‘We can talk about a sort of a private firm managed by parents who engage an educator. Therefore they decide everything in autonomy, while we just examine the educational project’* (Il Manifesto newspaper, 4 September, 2003).

The effectiveness of the project is questionable since it could easily turn into a sort of babysitting. In this sense, it is worth noting there is no form of integration between these nurseries and the public system. Moreover the administration guarantees just 30 hours of an on-the-job training at the opening of the structure.

The feasibility of this policy at the level of big cities is questioned. Until now, in fact, tests have been done in Italy just in small municipalities where a good level of control in the territory is guaranteed and where it is easier to support the families’ self-organisational capacities. In big cities, because of the lower level of administrative controls, the risks of such experiences are more evident, both in terms of children’s physical and psychological safety.

6.1.2 Tempo per le famiglie (mother-child play groups)

Tempo per le famiglie is another well-established tradition in accordance to the philosophy of proximity. In Milan the first experience goes back to 1984, financed by the Dutch Foundation Van Leer (involved in family and infancy aid projects). After four years of experimentation, in 1989 other eleven *Tempi per le famiglie* became operative, and they are now a part of the Education Services Board of the municipality of Milan.

It is an alternative, but not substitutive service to the nursery and it is addressed to those families who personally take care of their child during the first three years of their child’s life. Designed for both mother *and* child, *Tempo per le Famiglie*, is an opportunity for the mother to network with other mothers in the neighbourhood. In the play sessions with their children, the mothers have the opportunity to confront each other with their personal experiences. The annual fee for keeping the service operative for potential users is very low.

This experience shows some positive aspects. First of all, offering common spaces, it shows special efficacy in big cities like Milan, characterised by processes of atomisation and the weakening of social relations. *Tempo per le famiglie* can be a significant way out of isolation and

an opportunity for social integration of young foreign mothers (especially women from North Africa, who come to rejoin their husband and have to face two delicate experiences - motherhood and migration). The project has developed the learning and adjusting abilities. As it was primarily addressed to mother and child, it is now accessible for other family members (such as grandparents/grandchildren; babysitters/children) and it offers a significant support to other subjects who are involved full time in infancy care.

The poor resources assigned by the local authority to this service represent the real problematic side of the experience and the cause of the limited diffusion of the services in the municipal territory. Moreover, some seats (those managed by non-profit agencies) are funded on specific projects (Law 285/98, in most cases). This means that the service will be guaranteed for limited time periods, whatever the community's reply. Quoting the person in charge of a cooperative managing *Tempo per le Famiglie* in zone 9 (Comasina/Affori/Niguarda): '*Concerning Comasina, we have started the service winning the public competition advertised by the municipality in June 2003, using residual funds allocated by Law 285/98. This act works on triennial terms: the first was 1999-2000-2001; the second was 2002-2003-2004. The deadline for all projects funded within this second term is June 2004. We opened on the 1st of September and we already know on the 30th of June this service is going to close. This is the critical point. [...] On the national level we do not know what is going to happen to Law 285 after the coming into force of the new Law 328, which now includes different national laws. No one can tell if Law 285 will be part of Law 328 or if it will keep a specific financing capacity on its own. We blame the local authority for not declaring publicly its intentions.*'

6.2 Actions in favour of foreign minors

As said in the introduction, the local authority has no competences on compulsory schools, which depends at all levels - elementary, middle and high school - on the Ministry of Public Education. An intermediate institution between the ministry and each school is the so-called *Provveditorato agli Studi* (now *Ufficio Scolastico*, Regional Education Bureau) with offices at the province and the regional level.

Several reasons have made us pay special attention to those actions in favour of foreign minors: (1) the relevance of the migratory phenomenon for the city; (2) the special sensibility of the Regional Education Bureau towards this issue since the 1990s. Compared to other Italian cities, Milan in fact has experienced quite soon (since the early 1980s) and more intensively the arrival of migratory fluxes from developing countries. Nowadays, besides new arrivals, the city faces an increasing stabilisation in the territory of old coming groups (Philippines, Egyptians, Moroccans, Chinese) through practices of families rejoining. This has led to an increasing number of minors (Table 6.1), and an increasing number of children born with at least one foreign parent (Table 6.2). All this has impacts on the school system, which is dealing with a growing number of foreign pupils (Table 6.3). In origin this phenomenon was mainly limited to kindergartens and elementary schools, while it has progressively diffused within middle and high schools.

Table 6.1 – Foreign minors residing in Milan, 1997 - 2002

Foreigners 0-17 years of age				
Year	Male	Female	Total	% minors on total foreigners
1997	n.a.	n.a.	11,334	14.2
1998	n.a.	n.a.	14,769	15.0
1999	8,818	8,000	16,818	16.0
2000	10,025	9,137	19,162	16.3
2001	11,472	10,499	21,971	16.6
2002	12,477	11,559	24,036	17.8

Source: www.comune.milano.it

Table 6.2 – Children born in Milan with at least one foreign parent, 1994 - 2000

Year	Total
1994	1,435
1995	1,562
1996	1,916
1997	1,649
1998	2,103
1999	2,403
2000	2,810

Source: www.comune.milano.it

Table 6.3 – Pupils with one or both foreign parents in elementary and secondary schools in Milan, per administrative areas, school year 2001/2002*

Administrative areas	1	2	3	4	5	6**	7**	8	9**	Total
Kindergartens										
Foreigners	389	557	508	559	378	511	532	496	479	4,409
Total	1,434	1,464	1,603	1,598	1,090	1,604	1,638	1,801	1,632	13,864
% Foreigners	27.1	38.0	31.7	35.0	34.7	31.8	32.5	27.6	29.3	31.8
Elementary schools										
Foreigners	700	971	774	715	654	678	884	851	854	7,051
Total	2,627	2,588	2,888	2,139	1,977	2,290	3,468	3,127	2,618	23,722
% Foreigners	26.6	37.5	26.8	33.4	33.1	29.6	25.6	27.2	32.6	29.7
Secondary schools										
Foreigners	377	446	413	351	278	363	474	540	477	3,719
Total	1,851	1,292	1,927	1,127	1,203	1,409	1,954	1,979	1,483	14,225
% Foreigners	20.4	34.5	21.4	31.1	23.1	25.8	24.2	27.3	32.2	26.2

Source: www.comune.milano.it

* Data include both public and private schools.

** Areas investigated by RESTATE.

Italy started quite recently to pay attention to immigration and the admittance of foreign minors in the school system.²⁶ The right of education for everybody, no matter what their citizenship, is sanctioned by art. 34 of the Italian Constitution. No specific directives were however envisaged on this matter. Since 1989 the Ministry of Public Education has defined a series of organisational and educational ministerial memoranda, aiming at promoting the admittance of foreign minors. The underlying philosophy of all these actions is intercultural pedagogy. The educational project aims at: (a) overcoming cultural ethnocentrism; (b) promoting other cultures; (c) promoting intercultural exchange. It is an innovative legislation, directly influenced by long-term immigration countries. It provides: (a) support to foreign minors for learning Italian; (b) recognition of the right and duty of education even for minors without a residence permit; (c) promotion of intercultural activities. The entire corpus of directives and ministerial acts are now part of the 1998 law on immigration (Law 40/1998) and not even the more recent act (Law 89/2002), far more restrictive, has questioned the basic principles of the former law.

Within this legislative framework, in Milan - which is one of most affected cities by the phenomenon - the so-called CREI (Centres for Intercultural Education) were set up and a new professional figure has appeared, the *facilitatore di apprendimento* (learning coach).

1) CREI (Centres for Intercultural Education)

The CREI date back to 1998 when they started an experimental project by the Regional Education Bureau (*Ufficio Scolastico*) with six offices: three in Milan (not one in RESTATE areas) and three in its province. They were usually located in schools characterised by high rates of immigrant pupils and strong activeness in this policy domain. It was however required for those centres to be a reference for all the schools of the district. The initiative was aiming at defining an intermediate subject between schools and the Regional Education Bureau (*Ufficio Regionale Scolastico*), which being closer to the problems and to the schools resources could: (a) make the circulation of information and sharing experiences easier; (b) supply advice for the admittance of foreign minors and projects working out; (c) get the community and other juridical bodies involved in intercultural school projects.

In 2001 - in a more general framework of reorganisation of the education sector - the CREI were renamed *Poli di Alfabetizzazione Italiano L2*. This has brought relevant changes in the core mission of the service: the focus of the activity is now on learning Italian as a second language. At present in the region of Lombardia there are 25 Poles; 8 are in Milan and 16 in the province. Moreover it is worth noting that on the border between zone 6 (Barona/Sant'Ambrogio) and zone 7 (Baggio/San Siro), the first Pole in Milan with his office in a high school (*Liceo Scientifico Marconi*) is now operative, proving the progressive diffusion of foreign pupils on all school levels.

2) Il *facilitatore di apprendimento* (learning coach)

During the 1990s, a new professional figure emerges in the framework of the different ministerial acts (see in particular Ministerial Memorandum 205/90 and 73/94): the so-called

26 The first law on immigration was the Law 943/1986, which was followed by the so-called *Legge Martelli* (Law 39/90). For both acts the central figure was the male worker, lone immigrant. The focus was therefore mainly on labour aspects, undermining those needs (health care, educational needs, for instance) tied to the presence of a family.

facilitatore di apprendimento. Within the intercultural approach, two of the main lines of school intervention are adopted: (1) the intercultural activities in a strict sense are addressed to both foreigners and Italians and are done in the classroom (even introducing changes to the education programme where necessary); (2) ad hoc language support actions for minors rejoining their family. All teachers must be involved in the first kinds of activities. A specifically trained teacher - the coach - is in charge of the second ones and follows a specific programme just for foreigners. The schools²⁷ obtain this additional human resource by submitting a specific project to the Regional Education Bureau (*Ufficio Regionale Scolastico*).

Towards the end of the 1990s, there was a great diffusion of these professional figures in Milan and in its hinterland. Different schools in zones involved in the RESTATE project have already experienced this kind of initiative. The underlying philosophy of this policy was to avoid emergency interventions. In this sense they started to operate even in situations with low migration pressure. Moreover, their activity was not restricted to the development of literacy skills (to communicate). They were also providing more advanced language tools (Italian for studying). It was an innovative policy, making schools one of the most *à l'avanguard* sector, able to face the needs arisen with the growth of foreign communities in the country. In this sense, it represented one of the few sectors trying to overcome pure emergency logics in the definition of policies. Even in this case, however, the recent re-organisation of this domain has brought radical transformations.

At the base of these changes is the reform of public education by the minister Moratti (Law 53/2003). The reform provides a re-organisation of school cycles, support to private schools and severe cuts in public education. On a local level this has meant a radical reduction of projects (in order to apply for a coach) approved by the Regional Education Bureau (*Ufficio Regionale Scolastico*): the result was primarily a reduction of the service, conceived just to those schools in great difficulties, then the service was definitely abolished. In order to face the increasing demands the Regional Education Bureau (*Ufficio Regionale Scolastico*) in Milan, traditionally sensitive to this issue, has disposed of the reinforcement of the Poles in 2002.

The reform has shown its negative effects and has eroded the spirit of innovation of the former policies. The strategy of emergency has therefore become the dominant philosophy. Because of the shortage of resources available, only literacy interventions are provided and only where the concentration of foreigners is particularly high. The new instructions damage especially those schools located in poor neighbourhoods. These institutes present the highest concentration of immigrants and at the same time they have very limited funds available on their own (these can be ad hoc funds decided by the Parents' Committee and therefore strictly dependent on the means of the pupils' families; it must also be mentioned that the self-governing school process started with Law 59/97).

Also worth mentioning is the classification criteria to obtain the '*Ministerial Fund 2002/2003 for schools located in areas with a high concentration of immigrants*' (Legislative Decree 270/02 and Ministerial Memorandum 106/02). The Decree provides two different financial sources: the first one is intended for schools with more than 8 per cent of nomad and foreign pupils; the

27 When we talk about schools we usually refer to comprehensive schools, which put together one or more kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools of the same area. Usually the coach was assigned for the entire institute and, even if more concentrated on the elementary level, she/he was operative even in kindergarten and middle school.

second one is reserved for specific projects, addressed to the 25 Poles. The funds are really scant (from a maximum of EUR 5,250 to a minimum of EUR 2,652, depending on the foreigners' rate) and many schools, among the granted ones, have a percentage of foreigners even four times higher (around 30 per cent) than the minimum quota defining a situation of 'intense migration process'. Here is the distribution grant situation in Milan: five in zone 1; 12 in zone 2; five in zone 3; eight in zone 4; seven in zone 5; seven in zone 6; eight in zone 7; seven in zone 8 and eleven in zone 9. More specifically, these are the areas investigated by RESTATE:

- zone 6 (Barona/Sant'Ambrogio) has obtained six grants in: one middle school (9.19 per cent percentage of foreigners) and three elementary schools (16.5 per cent), two comprehensive schools (22.82 per cent);
- zone 7 (SanSiro/Baggio) has obtained eight grants in: three secondary schools (14.32 per cent), three elementary schools (31.83 per cent), two comprehensive schools (23.98 per cent);
- zone 9 (Affori/Comasina/Niguarda) eleven grants in: one high school (16.18 per cent), two secondary schools (26.54 per cent), six comprehensive schools (32.30 per cent).

6.3 Adult education

In Milan there are two main lines of intervention for adult education. The first one is provided by the central government, through the Ministry of Public Education, and works at a local level through the so-called CTPs (*Centro Territoriale Permanente*). The CTPs started in the 1970s with courses for adults (the so-called '150 hours') aiming at obtaining the elementary or secondary school diploma. Other educational proposals have then been added for instance, Italian courses for foreigners; courses to obtain the secondary school diploma for young people at a risk of dropping out and ad hoc professional courses financed by the European Social Fund (FSE).

The second line of intervention is provided by the local administration. Milan boasts a long tradition of intervention in the education sector. Even before the national unification of Italy (1861), the local authority was already managing schools and courses for its population (for instance, evening courses for workers). This interest has continued being cultivated and has offered a wide supply of educational services.²⁸ Four inspiring principles were shaping the local authority's actions: (1) quality care of the service provided; (2) special attention for new education needs of the population; (3) easy access to the service by weak subjects; (4) strategy aiming at an homogenous diffusion of the services in the local district. As it will be shown later, from the 1990s this general approach has been questioned and a radical process of reorganisation of all educational services provided by the local authority has started.

In line with the aims of our research, we are now going to focus on the CEPs (Permanent Education Centres). The effects at neighbourhood level and their underlying philosophy have driven us to concentrate on this specific action.

28 Post-compulsory schools and courses; post-diploma courses; courses for permanent education; foreign language courses; arts and communications (music, theatre, cinema, design). More courses have recently been included: Italian for foreign immigrants, informatics, and FSE courses.

6.3.1 CEPs (Centres for Permanent Education)

At the end of the 1970s the local authority promoted the CEPs with two main aims. First of all, the CEPs represented an answer to school dropouts, supplying alternative education curricula for adult dropouts. Secondly, the CEPs organised courses for adults willing to obtain new professional competences. Moreover, they soon became a place where courses and activities were organised as leisure time and could attract 'housewives in the morning to workers late in the evening'. The widespread diffusion of educational services for adults has also meant promoting social cohesion and contrasting social exclusion. The centres focus their work mainly on professional education, different cultural activities, education for the elderly and the inclusion of people in the socio-cultural life of their community.

As said before, since the early 1990s, the CEPs - and more in general all educational actions supplied by the local administration - have started a radical transformation, which has not yet been concluded. This process has mainly brought a reduction of the supplied education services, especially at a neighbourhood level. In the school year 1991/1992, there were 88 offices, 112 courses and 30,774 users. In 1998/1999 the numbers decreased to 47 offices, 63 courses and 28,212 users. At present there are 37 operative offices; a slight reduction in the number of enrolled people corresponds with a significant reduction in the service supply. With this restrictive policy, the administration was aiming at *'redefining and updating the service supply in order to limit the local authority's intervention where no alternative initiatives were guaranteed by other subjects'*²⁹ (special reference to ministerial CTPs).

Secondary, the re-organisation of the sector was intended to increase the decision-making autonomy of services and getting the private sector involved in the management of the city educational structures. Moving from this philosophy of intervention, in the year 2000 the Civic Schools Foundation of Milan (which includes the four schools of excellence of the municipality: Music Civic School, School for Interpreters and Translators, Dramatic Arts School, Civic Cinema and Television School) became operative. Until now, however, the private sector has not taken up an active role in this field and the foundation is still dependent on the local authority.

This policy has had however a strong effect both on the CEPs educational proposals and on the accessibility of the service to weaker subjects. The decision-making autonomy of each centre on the courses supply has increased. Nevertheless, the local authority has introduced financial restrictions and more rigid budget constraints. Under these conditions the centres were actually forced to reduce the education supply and to focus on the most profit-bearing courses. Moreover, the shutdown of many neighbourhood offices and the long distances to reach the new ones have strongly influenced the accessibility to the centres and discouraged a significant part of the population (for instance elderly people).

Despite the cuts, today the CEPs are present in each of the nine zones of Milan. It is worth noting that after the 1999 fusion of the previous twenty zones in the actual nine, even if there are more centres for each zone, not all of them are properly operated or accessible at a neighbourhood level. In the actual zone 9, including the neighbourhoods of Comasina, Affori and Niguarda, for example there are three CEP offices, but all of them are so distant from Comasina that they are hardly reachable for the people of that neighbourhood. In the other two

29 Tri-annual plan of objective 1999-2001, attached to Delibera PG531.010/99.

neighbourhoods investigated by RESTATE, there are four CEP offices (one in Sant'Ambrogio and three in San Siro). The educational activities supplied differ from one centre to another: courses for young people devoid of compulsory school diploma; informatics; Italian courses for foreigners; foreign languages; arts; para-professional courses (furniture restoration, tailoring). Moreover all the CEPs of the three areas investigated are involved in social projects, aiming at contrasting processes of social alienation and social exclusion, school dropouts, teenagers' and adults' education difficulties. The actions proposed are mainly addressed to minors in school discomfort conditions, to foreign minors and adults.

6.4 Conclusions

In this chapter we have given a general view of the main national and local policies in the educational sector. In Milan, there are three principle lines of interventions: (1) first infancy services; (2) interventions addressed to foreign minors; (3) adult education.

Concerning the second line of intervention - under national competence - emphasis was laid on the effects at the local level of the re-organisation and fund restrictions (decided by the government) within the public education system. The intercultural approach taken up in the 1990s has not been questioned formally. The financial restrictions introduced have determined: (1) a reduction in the total number of actions, which are now limited to the most critical situations (schools with high concentration of foreign pupils); (2) from a qualitative point of view, a reduction of intercultural interventions in favour of 'first care actions', such as language courses for immigrants with no notion of the Italian language; (3) a disadvantage for these schools located in poor areas and therefore with limited recourses on their own; (4) more in general, the giving up of a more general and long-term policy in favour of short-term and emergency actions.

The other two lines of actions - infancy care and adult education - are dependent on the local authority. As we have shown, the municipality of Milan has a long tradition of intervention concerning education (especially adult education) and the right of education, which are now questioned. In particular it has been reported: (1) a general funds decrease in the sector; (2) the promotion of the private initiative in the management of educational services; (3) general reduction of the services supplied at neighbourhood level.

7 Health and well-being

In this chapter we shall look at policies with respect to health and well-being. We will use health only as something that can be applied to an individual. The community aspects of health are put under the heading of Community Health (see Chapter 8). We include in this chapter aspects related to specific health services (public health) and social services (social assistance), and we did not concentrate on issues related to culture and leisure services. Furthermore, it is important to underline that the national law regulates both health and social services, and the local health care policy is very limited. However, what seems to be an Italian peculiarity, especially regarding to health, is the strong importance played by the region in the health policy process. As a result, the chapter will include a multi-level dimension. By starting from the national level, the chapter will frame the health policies into the regional dimension and into the local-estate dimension.

7.1 The health policies at the national and local level

Italy confronted the health care subject for the first time with Law 833/1978. This law established the National Health Service (SSN) and put health assistance among the citizenry policies. It establishes: (1) that all citizens are entitled to be in good health and to have access to health and social services; (2) the state's central role in public health management. Other features of the law are: (3) the multi-dimensional and preventive approach to the health problem; (4) cooperation and integration among health and social-assistance services.

The subjects managing territorial health services were Local Social Health Authorities (USSL) and, at an intermediate stage, the Districts. They represented the idea of integration and cooperation between different services at an organisational and cultural level: they included the family advice bureau, the doctor's clinic and the social workers' office; they had to circulate the information and integrate interventions; moreover, to further enforce integration, programming and control powers by the local bodies were established.

It was an ambitious project that met quite a few problems in the implementation phase. Among others we recall two problems. First, the missing integration between health and assistance and secondly, budget problems. With regards to the first problem, the full implementation of Law 833 required a strong communication and integration capacity among public actors (state, regions, provinces, communes, USSLS) and different services (social and health services). This skill often happened to be absent: in fact the different subjects were self-governing; interventions overlapped in a few sectors, while other needs were left completely

uncovered (for example, immigrants or homeless people, because of the connection between residence and the right to assistance); again, distinction among areas of competence was used to offload problems and subjects from one service to another (Negri and Saraceno, 1996). As to financial matters, the SSN costs were carried by the state, which later passed to the regions a sum proportional to the number of residents. To bear the costs, in the 1980s 'tickets' (the payment of a small amount of money) have been progressively introduced for citizens to make use of health benefits or to get medicines. Such a step, though, has contributed towards making both confusion and inequality grow. Together with tickets, the 'ticket exemption' was introduced. This requested stigmatising categorisation processes and, on the other hand, it charged the city administration with the costs of the assistance to the poor and it caused, due to the scarcity of resources, rationing practices. Again, it protected only a few categories (social pension, minimal old age pensions and receivers of disability pensions), but left wide discretion margins on others.

In the 1990s, the SSN was significantly transformed with two main legislative interventions: (1) the health service reform laws (Law 421/91; Law 502/32); (2) laws that transferred competence from the state to the regions. We already described the second set of changes in Chapter 2 (Section 2.1.2).

With particular regards to the health service, we recall that these laws transferred to the regions most of the competence in the health field. With regards to the health system reform, instead, it introduced a few important changes: (1) it sanctioned the separation between health service and assistance; (2) it reduced city administration's competence; (3) it introduced business management in the SSN with the idea of authorities managed by health managers, governed by regions, according to market and competition between public and private principles, anyhow following budget compatibility.

These transformations - due to a change in the basic health policies philosophy - are expressed in the creation of ASL (Local Health Authority), which take the USSLS place. Such bodies deal with health care and not assistance (health authorities and non-social health authorities). Moreover, the reform has transformed the local health authorities in companies, introducing the most rigid management methods, typical of private management, in a system that remains public. The result is a body truly independent from city and regional authorities that can more easily be managed without the local authority's policy interference. Highly specialised hospitals become hospital trusts; the others go on in their activity as ASL aids, yet having economic-financial autonomy.

Within national policies the region of Lombardia started a partly autonomous reform process, having a few major aims: (1) integration of private facilities into the public health system through refunds of supplied services; (2) citizen's freedom to choose between public and private facilities; (3) competition between public and private facilities. It is a sort of 'Lombardian model' as opposed to the 'Tosco-emilian model' (Carra and Padovani, 2002) and is particularly sensitive to the national reforms' business and liberalist indications, that was taken as a model not only by other regions but also by Berlusconi's second government's health policy. The regional policy has been characterised by a few main steps:

- the regional reorganisation Law no. 31/1997, which provides for the separation between the ASL and hospital authorities' functions and annual financing resolutions, particularly that of July 1996 on the supply liberalisation;

- the 'public-private collaboration' resolution of April 1999, which provides a specific decision to privatise regional health service facilities;
- the Regional Development Programme for the VII Legislature, which provides the confirmation of the path indicated by Law 31/1997.

As for this policy's impact and consequences, an expansion of the supply can certainly be noticed, mainly due to private facilities' expansion in the territory; need only to mention the reduction of the waiting lists to get medical services. A few problems, though, have to be underlined. (1) Of all, the accreditation model for private facilities only records the situation at hand, without managing the interests involved and without guaranteeing an economical-financial consistency with the citizen's freedom to choose. (2) The competition between public and accredited private facilities is mostly fictitious: the financier (i.e. who refunds the public facility and the accredited private one) is always the SSN. It is a riskless market and, in fact, still an assisted one. (3) This implies very high risks, though, both at the system level (health care is by far the biggest item in the regional and national deficit) and for the single citizen (who pays three times for each service: (a) through a contribution to the national SSN fund; (b) through regional taxes; (c) through the payment of 'tickets'). (4) Moreover, due to the competition spur and ASLs rigid budget's constraints, a weakening of public facilities in the territory was noticed, especially for the economically less convenient services: while 'normal' citizens have a wider offer of health care services, those with 'problems' (particularly disadvantaged subjects, as psychic patients who need integrated interventions) in fact get reduced assistance.

7.2 Social assistance system

Regarding the welfare provision, traditionally this refers to the social assistance area of intervention. The Italian social assistance has been regulated for more than 100 years by the same law. Indeed, between 1890 and 2000 the Italian social services system has been regulated by the Crispi Law - prime minister at that time - that was very innovative for those years but it obviously could not reflect all the transformations that the Italian society has undertaken. In general, the welfare intervention was suffering from two main limitations:

- Policies are very often implicit in the sense that they are included into a very fragmented context of a social protection system. In other words, they do not have a multi-dimensional approach or do not promote an integrated and complex system of measures that is able to tackle the several aspects by which social exclusion is composed.
- Policies are very often indirect in the sense that these policies are not explicitly and exclusively thought for combating poverty. Better still, the beneficiaries of these policies can also be people or categories of people that not necessarily are in a state of economic need.

Only since the year 2000 some strategies have been implemented to overcome the national fragmentation of welfare provision and also to offer a national prospective on the social exclusion issue. With Law 328/2000 the Italian parliament passed an outlined law to implement an integrated system of interventions and social services (*Legge quadro per la realizzazione del sistema integrato di interventi e servizi sociali*) which stresses the importance of planning integrated and multi-dimensional interventions and resources, recognises the role of the third sector and

regulates the region and state's functions. Specifically related to the relationship state-, region- and commune, the law provides the importance of national and regional action plans, which every three years (1) have to indicate the priorities of intervention, (2) define the integrated policies regarding social environment, health education, employment, mobility and communication and (3) pass promotion, implementation and evaluation of the policies. What previously was done at the local level without an official mandate, but lay on the good will of the administrations and often became occasional, is now spelled out in a system of active protection, in order not only to assist those in difficulties, but also to eradicate the causes of disease. The main idea, or vision, or even cultural debate lying behind the socio-sanitary sector and relevant policies, is that there is a need for integration between the socio-assistance aspects and functions on the one hand and the sanitary ones on the other hand. This debate is not without tension, since there are in some cases well distinguishable functions of the actors involved, which are reproduced in the projects and programmes of intervention. A trend stressing health issues rather than assistance ones in the social services in some cases has been observed. The mentioned Law 328/2000 spells out instead the need for integrated networks of services, since these must reflect an active re-integration of all citizens in society.

7.3 Typologies of services at the local level

In the following paragraphs we shall look at specific policies of this sector concerning our estates, in order to highlight the issues just described. In particular we shall describe services for two vulnerable groups: immigrants and mentally disabled people.

7.3.1 Elderly people

The aging of the population is one of the most critical issues of current demographical and social transformations of the city of Milan. In the last 20 years (1981 to 2000) the percentage of elderly people has increased to ten points (from 21.6 per cent in 1981, to 35.9 per cent in 2000) (municipality of Milan, 2001) (Figure 7.1 shows the distribution in the territory). Moreover elderly face the highest risk of poverty in Milan (Zajczyk, 2003).

One can talk about economic vulnerability, but also about difficulties in social relations. As to the first point, most elderly receive a pension. This represents, on average, a guarantee of a decent and independent living. Nevertheless several studies (Facchini, 1997a, 1997b, 2001; Mingione and Zajczyk, 1993) have shown very old, lonely women - often with the only support of a *pensione sociale*³⁰ or a joint pension, a very modest amount of money - face the most critical situation. The reason is that, because the conditions of elderly is strongly influenced by their own working career, old women are the most affected by their marginal role in the labour market. Regarding the second point, besides economic and psychophysical difficulties, the conditions of these people have become worse by isolation and loneliness. These phenomena concern specifically those contexts, like Milan, where social change has strongly affected the micro-redistributive functions of the standard nuclear family. The weakening of informal social networks has resulted in new 'syndromes', such as 'problematic subjects', (e.g. non-sufficient

30 The so-called '*pensioni sociali*' represent the last resource for those strongly penalised in the labour market.

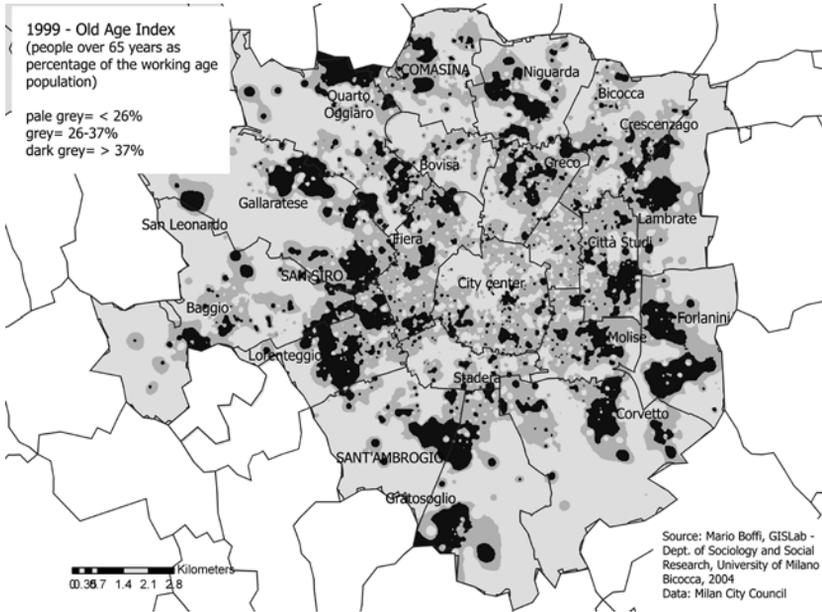


Figure 7.1 – Elderly people distribution (on active population) in Milan

elderly persons) rejected by relatives, who do not want or can not provide for them (Facchini, 2001).

In this context an efficient supply of public services - or working with the public - turns out to be fundamental, in order to prevent social alienation especially for those subjects with inadequate means and/or have a lack of family support. Public action in this field regards three main lines of interventions: (1) economic actions (income supplement subsidies; grants for health care expenses); (2) social assistance and health care services (home assistance; housing services); (3) leisure projects. Table 7.1 shows the territorial distribution of public assistance and leisure services for elderly people.

The relevance of elderly people in the three neighbourhoods is investigated by RESTATE, as has already been stressed, especially in the zone Sant’Ambrogio/Barona (Mezzetti et al., 2003). Nevertheless, the local action in this field is still insufficient. The population in Comasina feels isolated from the rest of the city. According to the people interviewed, the shortage of and the distance to basic services (such as the Local Health Care Board - ASL) and the lack of shops (trend is from retailing rooted in the territory to big distribution) have damaged the ‘homely’ atmosphere of the neighbourhood. Among other projects, it is worth mentioning that the so-called centres for elderly people was started by volunteers in many zones of the city. These centres represent the will of the inhabitants to commit themselves actively in the neighbourhood for example by organising meetings. They also promote social and cultural activities.

As an example *Centro Anziani Comasina*, which started 25 years ago, welcomes people over 55 years old. The centre is now a landmark for the people of the neighbourhood and in the last years more activities have been promoted. Besides traditional celebrations, several courses - dance, choir, theatre, soft gymnastics, English language - are now available.

Table 7.1 – Distribution of services for elderly people in the 9 administrative zones of Milan

Services typologies	Administrative zones								
	1	2	3	4	5	6*	7*	8	9*
Health services**									
Geriatric consultancy	-	-	1	1	-	3	2	n.a	1
Social assistance services***									
Housing for the handicapped	1	1	-	4	-	-	6	-	3
Housing for the elderly	-	-	7	4	2	7	13	4	3
Multi-services centers	2	2	2	6	2	4	3	4	4
Leisure services***									
Leisure centres for the elderly	1	2	2	-	1	2	3	3	6

Source: www.comune.milano.it

* Regarding RESTATE estates.

** Health care services provided by ASL.

*** Social assistance and leisure services provided by the city council.

7.3.2 Foreigners as users

Different projects of cultural mediation have started in health care structures in Milan and in other municipalities of the region.

Cultural mediation

The cultural mediator is a relatively new figure, which appeared in the 1990s in answer to the problems of a multi-cultural society. The basic idea is to introduce progressively this new professional figure in public facilities, hospitals, schools, in order to manage language and different cultural codes related problems between Italian institutions and immigrants. The mediator's tasks are: (1) preliminary-informative role on the service and its rule, making it more transparent and accessible and (2) language-communication support. This function, even if close, is not thought of as an alternative to the interpreter. The mediator is to: translate informative material and periodical news on the service in different languages; guide the newcomers to preliminary talks; mediate in critical and conflicting cases caused by linguistic and cultural misunderstandings and (3) a psycho-social and cultural role specifically addressed to other operators, providing information on the health care system of the country of origin.

In the three areas investigated by RESTATE different mediation services are provided.

1) S. Paolo and S. Carlo Borromeo Hospitals' health care centres for immigrant women

At the S. Paolo Hospital (Sant'Ambrogio/Barona) and the S. Carlo Borromeo Hospital (San Siro) a service for immigrant families has been operating for three years. The service obtains regional grants (Law 40/98) and is managed by the two medical centres and by a cooperative (*Crinali*), working on education, research and cooperation among women.

The aims of the project are: (a) making easy access for immigrant families to local infancy-care facilities; (b) helping services operators to meet the health care demand of foreign populations, overcoming language and cultural obstacles. The work of the centres is specifically based on medical, social, psychological and cultural requests of foreign women and families.

The service provides support for mothers-to-be, pregnancy termination, sterility, and gynaecological problems - and to newborn babies until one year of age. The centres are open part-time for three days a week and the operators are women with different professional qualifications. The *équipe* is formed by a gynaecologist, a paediatrician, a social assistant, a psychologist and a group of cultural mediators, coming from different countries (Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, China, Central and South America, Philippines, Albania, Romania).

The immigrant woman or families who come to the centre are welcomed by a female operator or by a female cultural mediator. The visit or medical service is immediately supplied or otherwise an appointment is made.

2) *Consultori*³¹ mediation

ASL (*Azienda Sanitaria Locale* - Local Health Care Board) services in Milan, and in particular the so-called *Consultori* (Family's Advice Bureau), have been progressively shaped also taking into account the needs of foreign communities. By this logic, in 1999, the ASL has started a project of cultural mediation according to which *Consultori* can apply for cultural mediators of different nationalities. Even in this case it has signed a convention with the *Cooperative Crinale*.

At present the cooperative works with 14 local *Consultori*. Here is the situation concerning RESTATE areas: three projects are operative in the ASL District 2 and 2 in the ASL District 5. The ASL districts do not correspond to the administrative areas of the municipality. District 2 includes, for instance, the neighbourhoods of Comasina/Affori/Niguarda (zone 9), Certosa/Quarto Oggiaro (zone 8), San Siro/Baggio (zone 7) and Sant'Ambrogio/Barona (zone 6). It must be reminded, however, after the sub-administrative areas unification, in 1999 (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1), the actual 9 zones are much larger than the former ones. This means that the distribution of the service in the territory is less effective than shown by data.

Our conclusion is that these services have a positive impact on the territory. First of all, they are able to identify otherwise unfulfilled needs. Secondly, they are thought of as integrated services, combining health care and social assistance. For instance, the cultural mediator not only works for an easy access to the services provided but she/he also informs foreigners on further local facilities; these projects represent, especially for women, an opportunity to socialise with other (foreign and Italian) women and escape isolation. Lastly, from an organisational point of view, it must be underlined that the capacities of these public structures do involve non-profit associations, even beyond a logic of service externalisation.

31 The *Consultori* were set up in 1975. They are places where women find different types of medical and para-medical professionals such as general practitioners, gynecologists, social assistants, youth assistants, family experts, etc.

7.3.3 Projects on natural social networks in Comasina

This project is intended for people with mental disabilities. This project was at first financed by the region, and seven areas in the city were interested. Today the project is financed by the city council and includes the surrounding areas of Comasina, Affori and the Bovisasca neighbourhoods.

The vision behind the project is that mental disability must be cured in a 'natural' environment, through the natural social networks, in the context where mental patients live, as in their homes. This idea is based on experience, which shows that in a natural life context it is possible to find people that voluntarily and as a natural duty help patients affected by mental diseases who are their neighbours (these people are the 'facilitators' in the project). The experience also shows how these people represent a huge and precious resource for a process on re-integration and re-socialisation of the patients. More advanced research on which these assumptions are based, show that patients are less vulnerable if their social networks are larger and that there is a strong correlation between mental disease and the intensity of social relations.

The project basically activates and exploits resources that are already available, but these are sometimes hidden. The hidden resources are neighbours that can play a two-fold role: implement a better use of the natural resources by the patient and help the situation of isolation and marginalisation of the patient. The facilitator is trained and receives a supervision and motivation from the Local Health Services for Mental Health (CPS), and is responsible for helping out the patients with daily incumbencies as well as company, and facilitates the relationship between the patient and the territorial services. Often the facilitator knows or has already encountered the patient, but with this project gains more qualification in the reference role it plays.

In order to build or retrace the natural social networks all the parties are asked to participate: the patient, the services, and the neighbours. Every three months the individual programme is discussed and re-drafted if necessary. The facilitator receives from the services a reimbursement of basic expenses, but the gain consists of the recognition of their role, and in the specific training the facilitators receive. At the basis of this project there is also the idea of contrasting the stigma that is often correlated with mental illness, as well as the associated situations of social marginalisation. The criteria of selection of the facilitators include elements such as: residing in the neighbourhood; be well inserted in the social context of the neighbourhood and have a certain and fixed salary.

The function of the mental health services apparently underlies this experimental project. What is interesting to note is that these kinds of interventions are thought also because of the inability and the lack of resources of the services to offer this type of social response for its patients, but also for a more strategic division of competences and of labour among the different possible actors involved in this operation field.

7.4 Conclusions

As we have underlined in this chapter, in the health and social assistance sectors an important transformation has occurred, regarding both the philosophy of interventions and the organisation structure. In conclusion, it can be said that the following aspects can be underlined:

- The contradiction of reform: the law regarding the health reform pushes towards the casting off of an integrated approach (division between health and social assistance services) and towards the process of the autonomy of the ASL; on the contrary the Social Assistance Reform is focused on introducing an integrated system of social intervention which involves different sectors and actors (region, province, local authority, non-profit sector);
- Regarding the estate dimension, health and social services are increasingly diminishing, also due to the fact that Milan has changed its administrative structure (passing from 20 to 9 administrative zones), and to the fact that the local authority tends to leave only one typology of service for each zone.
- From a positive side, it should be underlined that some local services have been able to benefit (despite the financial restrictions) the opportunities of the reforms (autonomy, formalisation of the third sector), by activating innovative projects and showing a good capability of understanding local needs and creating local networks of actors.

8

Social aspects and environment (community health)

In the field of social aspects and the environment major citizens' participation has been prominent in the last years, obtaining some significant results in terms of new initiatives undertaken institutionally and through interesting projects at the city level. This sector that we could also call 'community health' stands as a sector on its own, and cannot be associated to the health and well-being nor to the housing sector, because of the organisational characteristics and for the contents of the initiatives.

The first reason for this is because of a high sensitivity over the issues of pollution and recycling, and the need for green and leisure areas. Perhaps the diminished engagement over the classical themes of political activism grew around more tangible and pragmatic areas of interest. Notwithstanding, there was a growing sensitivity around Europe because of the Green movement in the 1980s and the establishment of the Green Parties throughout the continent soon after.

A second reason is that the initiatives we will introduce can be more often seen starting from the bottom (single citizens, associations etc.).

This chapter focuses on three main areas, with particular attention to the neighbourhoods studied by RESTATE research:

- the initiatives related to the environmental issue (8.1);
- the projects on culture and leisure (8.2);
- some innovative experiences focusing on community health (8.3).

8.1 Environment

8.1.1 The experience of the committees

As mentioned in the introduction (Chapter 1), politics in Milan in the 1990s has seen deep changes. Particularly, a 'new' request of micro-local representation to which a specific political subject has tried to offer answers has appeared: the neighbourhood committee. Carlo Montalbetti, president of the committee's coordination states: *'In Milan, the most active and organised committees are more or less a hundred. But there are many other inhabitants that join together to try and solve problems. Those may be very small problems but they decide to protest together. Lately the territory bond sense is growing, but also the desire to take part in something that is practical. Somehow this is similar to what in the past has happened in politics'* (La Repubblica newspaper, 29 June, 2003).

Table 8.1 – *Who protests in Milan: the event promoters*

	1991	2000	Total*
Committees	15	20	35
Groups of citizens	12	2	14
Groups of specific interest	3	1	4
Support groups	6	9	15
Immigrant groups	3	1	4
Parties	7	5	12
Institutional groups	2	0	2
Journalists			
Total	48	38	86

Source: Graziano, 2003

* Total is more than the total number of events because more subjects can take part in the same event.

Table 8.1 shows that during the 1990s there has been a progressive growth in the number of protest events in which the committees were involved, whereas the parties' presence has diminished. This happens in a context of overall reduction and atomisation of the protest events (Graziano, 2003). From Table 8.1 also emerges that, between 1991 and 2000, there is a collapse of demonstrations organised by single groups of citizens not joined in an association or committee. This is probably explained by a bigger complexity of disputes, which requests analytical capacity and interpretative efforts that only organised groups (even on a minimal basis) can perform.

Perhaps the committee's development represents one of the most important peculiarities in the Milan political scene and participation. In the mid-1990s many committees managed to develop a good synergic and network capability and to create the committees coordination.

Table 8.2 also shows that the protest's topic is changing: in 2000, 38 committees have as a general objective to improve liveability and protection of the city environment. Montalbetti says again: *'Not long ago it was safety that warmed up the people of Milan. Today interest and participation are focused on the neighbourhood quality of life. People are interested in town planning schemes, in interventions that are going to touch their territory. But also in apparently less important matters, such as street cleaning and carelessness towards parks'* (La Repubblica newspaper, 29 June, 2003).

Table 8.2 – *Committees' number and objectives*

	1991	2000
Environment traffic	21	38
Safety	16	2
Total	37	40

Source: Graziano, 2003

In the areas in which the estates are examined by this research the presence of committees is quite significant.

1) Focus on the Comasina district: the Gronda Nord Committee

The Gronda Nord or Intersuburban Road Issue, which was never treated in an organised way, has in the last few decades every now and then popped up with confusing and not at all reassuring aspects for the town environment, for a fair transport policy and a liveability of the neighbourhoods in the northern part of town. Since the 1980s in almost every neighbourhood touched by this plan, neighbourhood committees were established aiming to: monitor and check the administration's plans; awaken public opinion and citizenry on this issue and elaborate alternative proposals.

In 1999 the municipal administration presented the plan trying to bear out the idea of a big urban road surrounded by green. Only because of the clarifying requests of the many committees did the administration finally make clear the project's nature: an urban highway to connect Cascina Gobba and Cascina Merlata Certosa, two enlarged and renovated motorway junctions respectively north-east and north-west of Milan. Defining the street as an 'area street', the Milan city council simply used a name which did not respond to the work's true features as provided in the highway code: Gronda Nord will in fact have two roadways, four lanes (two for each way), whereas urban streets will have one roadway and two lanes (one for each way). The aim of the project is to create an alternative to the Tangenziale (which is now carrying both the in- and out-traffic across town), channelling on the intersuburban most of the traffic travelling across town though originated and addressed outside the town.

The committees underline in this plan a few critical matters. First, the intersuburban road will not be a real alternative to the Tangenziale: the 55 crossroads with traffic lights that will cross the Gronda will soon change this new road into a traffic trap. Secondly, the new highway, whose variable section in some stretches will be more than 60 metres, is going to eliminate important town parks (Affori), a relevant number of car parkings and above all it is going to separate the northern suburbs from the rest of town. Finally, public transport will be overshadowed and not be conceived as an east-west line capable of reducing the mobility request in the area.

Alternatively to the Gronda, at the end of March 2001 a proposal has been presented subscribed by more than 8,000 citizens and backed by a plan elaborated by a group of architecture students that chose this subject for their thesis discussion. At the centre of the alternative plan is the proposal of an underground-tram along Milan's north arch, protected and buried underground being incompatible with the environment and the rationalisation of the existing viability with a few new linking interventions, all outside residential areas.

The municipal administration hastily and unreasonably rejected the plan. In October 2001, though, the Lombardy TAR (Regional Administrative Court) admitted the claim presented by the centre-left wing opposition and the committees. Gronda has been recognised as a real 'urban motorway' and the tribunal forced the Milan city administration to have the environmental impact assessment made and stopped the execution works.

2) Focus on the neighbourhood Comasina part (2): the Comasina Committee

The Comasina district was built between 1954 and 1963 according to the self-sufficient neighbourhood theory, and was considered an example of excellent public building. Later the area suffered a decline process, though probably not bad enough to explain why the area was so stigmatised (Agustoni, 2003). In the last 15 years, almost 75 per cent of the lodgings have been redeemed, usually by former lodgers who became owners.

The Comasina Committee was established at the beginning of the 1990s, another case of spontaneous association of the neighbourhood residents. The main activity concerns the solutions of the litigations with the ALER, from the smallest questions (the condominium green maintenance, the rubbish, the façades) to the great public works (for example, the plumbing remaking in the area, which involves the ALER and the Milanese Electricity Company). Though most of the residents are now owners, the ALER takes part in the condominium management with a 15-20 per cent quota, therefore still being the main decision maker in the neighbourhood. Other activities concern viability and the functional organisation of the territory services.

Lately the main controversy concerns a big plan by the town administration on the Ferrovie Nord train line, now passing on the surface (with level crossings for pedestrian and car traffic), cutting out the Comasina and Affori districts from the rest of the town. The 1993 plan, welcomed by the residents, provided the roadbed's partial burial, but another, providing bridges for the cars and 6 metres deep pedestrian subways instead, has now replaced it.

As previously noticed in the Gronda Nord case, the public administration did not involve the citizens, nor did it show itself sensitive to the subsequent mobilisation organised by the coordination, composed by the Comasina Committee, the Affori Merchants' Association and the Olinda Association (see Section 8.3.1).

At present works are stopped by the TARs delay sentence, while a frontal clash is taking place between the coordination (that presents the 1993 plan again) and the mayor, who has the function of traffic extraordinary commissary and is the new plan's main supporter.

3) Focus on the neighbourhood San Siro: the Committee for the Neighbourhood Garden in Harar Dessié
The Harar estate was constructed in San Siro in the 1950s, with the idea of creating a courtyard-neighbourhood that would facilitate social interaction, with the addition, as we have seen in our previous report, of a library, a kindergarten and a primary school in the centre of the estate.

An interesting initiative of mobilisation of the inhabitants took place when the city council decided to transform a little park in this area into garages. As the president of the neighbourhood put it, this happened as a '*planning error of the city council*', since the areas were meant as green areas for the residents. This almost created a paradox, since the residents had to become the defenders of the public space, instead of their 'real owner', the city council itself.

The Committee for the Neighbourhood Garden was created with the idea of maintaining the existing area that can be thought of as the main square of the estate and the major area of social aggregation. The attempt of the committee is to return to the original idea of the estate, the idea of the courtyard-neighbourhood, with residences, commercial activities and shops and public services facing the garden.

This spontaneous committee, composed especially of young motivated parents (large numbers of mothers) would have open-air meetings in the park, finding in this way new participants for its cause and start a huge campaign, indicating that the public space was actually used by the inhabitants of the estate, for example the children that would stay there after school.

The city council did not yet express formally the erroneous intention of using the space for a different use, and the committee for the defence of the park is still active. However, the space is left for its original use, and this is only due to the good will and intentions of motivated and accountable citizens and inhabitants. Once again, even in this experience, we cannot but highlight the lack of 'strategic direction' and accountability of the formal institutions of the city.

4) Focus on the neighbourhood Barona: the Piazza Maggi-Gronda Sud Committee

One of mayor Albertini council's most important intervention in the viability field is the re-arrangement plan of Piazza Maggi, a particularly busy city junction, Milan's main entrance from the A7 motorway (Milan-Genoa) and from the southern province. Originally meant for a limited flux of vehicles (about 2,000), Piazza Maggi today during rush hour is crossed by up to 9,000 vehicles. Such observations in November 1999 started traffic councillor Goggi's initiative, aiming for a new junction construction that would reduce up to 60 per cent of transits in Piazza Maggi. The estimated works (for a total cost of EUR 18 million) are: a subway in the east-west direction along an extremely crowded road; a flyover one-way ramp along the north-south axis; a flyover one-way ramp which from the east converges in the A7 motorway junction; changing the existing ground level of Piazza Maggi; the preparation of cycle-pedestrian tracks free from vehicle traffic and the building of a new bridge over the Naviglio, to be added to the existing one.

Against this plan between December 1999 and January 2000 a Piazza Maggi-Gronda Sud Committee was constituted. Problems noted are quite similar to those already underlined for Gronda Nord: pollution, traffic at the entrances and exits; destruction of many green areas; support to private instead of public transport; lack of attention for the residents' needs; defacing of some historical areas (Navigli). From this last point of view, two matters are particularly subject of the debate: (1) the fact that the plan, that includes the extension of the underground green line towards Assago-Milan Fiori (economically very lively areas), does not include any stop at the San Paolo Hospital nor in the Sant'Ambrogio district; (2) the plan provides for the building of a bridge (more than 700 metres long, 40 metres high, 30 metres large, four roadways plus two emergency ones), which includes various works (pillars, ramps and junctions) and that will pass over the Naviglio Pavese (one of the city canals planned by Leonardo).

Besides, in the spring of 2001, almost 6,000 signatures were gathered to support a popular initiative deliberation. The fundamental points are condensed in the proposal to drain the traffic entering Milan creating a junction point in Assago extending the MM2 underground that would also reach the San Paolo Hospital. Instead of the bridge, an underground passage has been suggested to reduce the visual impact on the Naviglio. In August 2001, though, after the appeal to the TAR was rejected, the works were started, cutting down 100 trees.

8.1.2 Verde in Comune Association

Since 1993 in Milan the practice to entrust private subjects with the arrangement and care of the urban green areas became popular. This experience is different from the others exposed in this chapter because of the following aspects: (a) it was not generated by groups of citizens or civil society subjects, but by entrepreneurial groups; (b) it has changed into a real municipal policy.

The idea started in 1993 with entrepreneur Lazzaroni who constituted the *Verde in Comune Association* (AVC). The AVC (which is a commercial company) is at present in charge of 40 per cent of the assigned green areas; it also takes care of the plans for the new assignments and eventually promotes other entrepreneurs' involvement. In general terms, this policy appears to be an application of the subsidiarity philosophy promoted by local authorities (see Chapter 2). The city council underlines the saving objective: according to the parks and estates manager the saving obtained by the administration, in 2003 only, is EUR 600,000.

From an organisational point of view, two types of assignments are given, depending on the applying subject's nature: (1) sponsorships, when the area is assigned to an economical subject; (2) authorisations, when the area is entrusted to area associations or simple residents.

The assignment procedure is the same in both cases: (1) location of an area by the applying subject; (2) plan presentation to the city parks and estates sector; (3) assignment through an administrative document (only for areas bigger than 2,000 square metres are a deliberation by the city council necessary). The only cause preventing the assignation is the presence on the required area of 'yards' (parking lots, buildings, etc.). Usually they are yearly assignments. At present 50 authorisations and 100 sponsorships are active. Usually the former only wants the green caretaking. The areas are small and so are the costs. The latter concern bigger areas and are more expensive. In the districts examined by RESTATE research there are 13 sponsorship projects (five in Comasina, five in San Siro, three in Barona/Sant'Ambrogio) and 12 authorisations (four in each district). We point out particularly an intervention in Piazza Caserta (Comasina), which also included an area for lawn bowling.

The main critical matter in the project is the fact that most of the applications are concentrated in the town centre. In the sponsorships' case this is due to the more prestigious position these areas can offer, thus offering a better visibility to the sponsor. Less obvious is the authorisations' concentration, perhaps caused by the fact that central areas' residents are wealthier. Another negative aspect is that, due to the costs, most of the sponsorships and the authorisations concern simple flowerbeds, very seldom trees or bushes. Among the positive aspects, we point out how enterprises and the civil society have been made sensitive and responsible towards conservation area matters. Moreover, as far as the authorisations are concerned, these projects can aid the citizens' participation and self-activation.

8.1.3 Other interesting experiences

Other interesting phenomena, although not positioned quite in our studied areas which have taken place in Milan, are: the Critical Mass event and the Clean Air Committee Referendum Campaign (*Campagna Referendaria del Comitato Aria Pulita*).

1) Critical Mass

Since January 2002, each Thursday night at half past nine, citizens started meeting in one of the main squares of the town centre for a night bike-ride around the city.

These bike demonstrations started in San Francisco in the early nineties, when almost 1,000 bike-riders started meeting at random around once a month in the streets of the city, blocking traffic and trying to involve street passengers and car drivers to use their bikes instead of other vehicles, so as to keep the air clean and stimulate exercise. The spirit of the Critical Mass event is their unorganised and unstructured nature, allowing any new participant to take the lead and give direction to the night paths.

In Milan the phenomenon is growing (depending also on a seasonal indicator) and some nights you could see 500 bikes going around the city, from the centre to the outskirts of it, in places with little nightlife, where people would watch from the windows of their homes this bizarre event, which creates little but a distinguished noise. As in San Francisco, the event caused moments of tension between car drivers and bike-riders. In order to avoid this and to offer protection the police accompanied the Critical Mass event some nights and stayed in the back of it.

In Milan bikes have been traditionally used, but obviously less and less, as not only the traffic is an issue but also pollution has reached alarming rates (often the city council must stop all car circulation during the weekends). The issue with bikes in the city is that, for example, there are no separate bike paths, at least very few, and in general there is little education regarding the vulnerability of bike-riders, as if they created danger in traffic. Among some participants there were also environmental activists and people who work in associations on environmental issues, who have been able to communicate with the city council. They accepted last September to launch a cycling day, with different appointments around the city to demonstrate how one can use a bicycle to pick up children at school, etc. Other small initiatives are underway, for example the creation of a small enterprise for bike restorations.

2) *The Clean Air Committee Referendum Campaign*

At the beginning of the year 2000, the 'Sunday on foot' initiative, requested by the environment minister of the centre-left government, gave start to a consideration among the 'institutional' subjects (*Legambiente*, *Verdi*, *Democratici di Sinistra* party) and some local civic society members on the idea that a referendum could be promoted on the closing of the town centre to all vehicles and on the institutionalisation of Sundays without cars. After a few months of useless attempts to hold a dialogue with the centre-right wing city council, the committee members announced they would gather signatures to call a city consultative referendum.

It appears, though, a split occurred inside the committee between the 'moderates' (particularly *Democratici di Sinistra*, *Legambiente*, the ex-mayor Tognoli who setup the Anti-Traffic Committee) and the 'hard-core wing' (*Rifondazione comunista*, *Verdi*, intellectuals as Nobel prize winner Dario Fo who initiated the Clean Air Committee). In June the moderates won: an agreement was reached with mayor Albertini providing (1) the Sunday on foot institutionalisation, (2) fee-paying parking lots inside the Bastioni Circle, (3) limitations for cars in some parts of town and (4) the introduction of a number of pedestrian areas in the centre and in the outskirts. The Milan administration, though, did not hold to the agreement and 'moderates' and 'hard-core wing' again clashed on the referendum idea field.

Though the environmentalist coalition lacked homogeneity, at the beginning of November 2000 the signatures had been gathered. The fact that they were assembled so easily embarrassed the city council majority that started to fear a large positive answer in favour of the referendum. The city administration's strategy was particularly interesting. First of all, during the last months of 2000, the pedestrian areas provided for by the agreement were institutionalised (displeasing the *Polo delle Libertà* majority itself particularly sensitive to the shopkeepers' protests). Secondly, thanks to a bureaucratic quibble (a guarantor was missing from the Guarantors Committee which, according to the Milan statute, must decide on the referendum's admissibility) the board put pressure on the city council to call the referendum as late as possible, i.e. after the political elections (April, 2001) and administrative elections (June, 2001).

After the official warning from the referendum promoters to the mayor, a date for the referendum was eventually chosen: the end of June, 2001. This decision was promptly considered provocative by the referendum promoters because the date chosen was just after two very important electoral calls and right at the beginning of the summer. The referendum was therefore postponed until the autumn but the mayor confirmed the end of June as the date. The results were not favourable for the promoters: the required quorum was not reached and

therefore the vote - largely in favour of the Aria Pulita Committee's suggestions - was not valid. This meant the end of the committee that was never again active in the territory.

This experience allows two reflections. First of all, it is clear that the town administration pays little attention to either the civic society subjects' protests (citizens, committees) or to the requests made by the local political forces. Secondly it shows how difficult it is for the traditional local political forces to produce proposals and common actions that go beyond the political strategy's different visions. This second point is particularly manifest if we consider that the proposals made by 'moderates' and 'hard-core' were almost identical and that the clash inside the referendum alliance seemed totally incomprehensible to the citizens. On the other hand, as we wrote in Section 8.1.1, the success of the committees' experience is also due to these problems.

8.2 Culture and leisure

8.2.1 Centro Sociale Barrios

Centro Sociale Barrios (Social Centre Barrios) appeared in 1997 and is situated in the Barona district. The area it occupies was built by the city administration between 1990 and 1995 within a social aggregation project in many areas of town. Following the changes both at a political and local administration management level, the team working on the project was dismantled. So, when the space became ready to be occupied, there was no concrete project on how to use it. In 1997 it was assigned (for nine years, until 2006) to an association working in another part of Milan (Giambellino) on youth's problems: *Centro Sociale Barrios* was initiated.

Generally speaking, the centre was started in a situation of lack of projects by the public subjects, mainly because of the municipal politics' seesaw and uncertainty (see Chapter 2). The project's basic philosophy is to create a community development service, which is to offer not a service, but space and resources and let the territory be active. Barrios' promoters thought they would only have to gather funds and manage the space themselves, while the organisation and idealisation of the initiatives would have been left to other subjects (associations, citizens). Actually, only a short time ago this has been reached. For a long time, in the beginning, Barrios' organisers had to undertake all the activities of projecting and programming, while the territory remained passive.

At present Barrios' main activity is a brewery, around which all other initiatives rotate. They can be of two kinds: (1) activities suggested and organised by other local actors (associations, citizens); (2) activities realised by Barrios' staff. Particularly the first ones concern culture and entertainment: film clubs, concerts, musical reviews, role games reviews and cabaret. The others have a more social content: after school (especially for foreign children from both primary and secondary school); intercultural animation activities in the schools (together with some cultural mediation associations); Italian courses for adult foreigners; activities for low professional profile subjects; Barriosweb Cooperative Society which realises the economical activity of websites and computer education and vocational training for teenagers and young people.

A general evaluation of the project is quite difficult. Barrios is definitely a point of reference in the cultural and entertainment area. Besides, particularly through the more 'social' activities (point 2), it offers important resources to the neighbourhood residents. Then from this point of view it is a successful experience. If we consider the objectives it had started with (social aggregation, contamination among different social and generational groups, auto-activation)

though, some important matters emerge that deserves reflection. Those in charge of Barrios stress that: (1) centre's users have a passive participation rather than taking part in the activities; (2) the users of the different activities differ and no contamination dynamics have developed.

8.3 Some innovative experiences

8.3.1 The closure of the former Paolo Pini Mental Hospital

The issue of the closure of mental hospitals in Italy is complex and it is not in the intention of our report to describe the whole process that took in some cases more than 20 years time.³² Here we are interested in describing a particular project that grew and was experienced together with the closure of the former Paolo Pini Mental Hospital in Milan. The interesting experience we shall look at here is the creation within the spaces of the hospital of a social cooperative³³ (Olinda, www.associazioneolinda.org/assoc.html) that not only helped in the process of closure, giving support to the patients, but has also made a huge effort to re-open the huge spaces of the hospital, with its park, for the neighbourhood of Comasina and other neighbouring areas, as well as for the entire citizenry.

The first events that the Association Olinda organised, were two summer festivals during which performances, concerts, film festivals and music parties were organised, as a way to give visibility to the space and to make people understand that the hospital can be a public space to exploit. The first summer festival was in 1996 and it also allowed for the creation of networks of people and actors and institutions that were interested in the involvement required around this place. Some of the hospital patients were still living there, and it is since then that the disclosure and the re-conversion started (normally patients were sent to community houses). The idea lying behind this project was to introduce in this formal mechanism elements of flexibility and of participation needed to overcome and complete the complicated process. Instead of trying hard to identify some pro-active policies and activities, again formalised and reproduce a top-down

32 The reference law of this entire process is the so-called Law Basaglia (Law 180/78), a very progressive law that allowed for the closure of mental hospitals, and for the establishment of structures and institutions 'outside' of the hospitals in the local territories where people affected by mental disease were living. The process initiated with the law was massive, not an easy process to implement, not just from a practical point of view, but also psychologically, both for patients and the population living next to these structures. In effect, these hospitals have always been closed places stigmatised and unknown. Psychiatry however had its own ups and downs versus more integrated types of therapies, and more sanitary and pharmacological treatments. This is to say that the trends within this sector of health cannot be seen in a progressive or regressive trajectory, it is more of a mix of attitudes, scientific results, changes in mentality that make for the solutions. Some mental hospitals were closed, but the structures created to take care of the mental ill were totally insufficient, so that the whole burden fell upon the families. In some regions these processes of closure started 20 years ago, bringing amazing results of integration and de-stigmatisation of such patients. The region of Lombardia however started the closure of its mental hospitals very late.

33 Social cooperatives are cooperatives which employ disadvantaged workers and have disadvantaged people who are active cooperative members (implemented in 1991). The Social Cooperatives Law (Law 381/91) appears to have clearly marked the passage from a conceptualisation of a voluntary sector which is the outcome of solidaristic, moral and altruistic values, to the idea of a non-profit sector as a key player in service delivery.

approach to decision-making, the cooperative and the association decided to serve as a collector of ideas, to have an apparent passive role, since the aim was to attract people within these spaces, and allow them to come with their ideas, and implement them.

Since 1998 the cooperative called *La Fabbrica di Olinda* has played a key role in the process of re-conversion of the former mental hospital Paolo Pini. Its objective in the field of mental health and social discomfort, is the promotion of new forms of integration through social undertakings and the chance to socialise. The enterprises created and administered by Olinda are the bar/restaurant Jodok, La Falegnameria (woodworking), Olinda Multi-media and a youth hostel.

Today the bar and the spaces of the hospital became a reference point for the people living in the neighbourhood and for people living in the rest of the city. The space of the hospital is still there to be exploited and many more ideas are under way. For example, since the youth hostel in this periphery is not working so well, the idea is now to build a three-star hotel. Milan is in need for average hotels due to its large number of exhibitions all year long, and therefore this idea is business-oriented, rather than anything else, with the great belief that the professional capacities are achieved.

8.3.2 Villaggio alla Barona

The Barona Village is an integrated complex under construction, situated in the centre of the neighbourhood Barona. It is a very organic intervention, on a space of 44 thousand square metres, between the streets Ettore Ponti and Svevo e Zumbini, that envisages the creation of a small village, with residential houses, services for kids, youngsters, disabled, etc., and a park. It is a space where the needs expressed by the local community can be met. The entire area belongs to the Cassoni Foundation and the area is considered reserved for public use, as by Law 51/1975.

The area has been hosting - for the last ten years - social activities ranging from a laboratory for mental disease, a centre hosting non-auto-sufficient elderly people, a training course for young people in difficulties and a centre where patients affected by terminal diseases could meet. During this period the area was hidden from view and the life of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood was half dismantled and behind a fence. One passing by could imagine that behind this fence was an abandoned area. Now instead restructuring and re-qualification works are undergoing and the area is becoming vital and can be well identified.

The project developed in the last decade as a sort of service-centre, promoted by non-profit organisations working in convention with the local administration. The new re-qualification project and the creation of a functional village wishes to maintain all the experiences working previously and currently in the area, adding some new ones (residential housing, commercial activities, a students house, etc.), and integrating them with residential and commercial activities functionally linked with spaces and services of public interest. The main objective is the realisation of an integrated policy, able to respect the needs expressed by the local communities (i.e. re-qualification of the urbanistic framework of the area; re-qualification of the green areas) and on the other hand capable of giving space to the needs expressed by marginalised groups, looking at the projects, the resources and capacities that the area and the territory expressed in the social sector (Rabaiotti, 2000).

Within the public park, that will represent half of the entire area (22,000 square metres), the social activities described previously shall be integrated and linked with the residential housing and commercial shops. The area did not allow for residential housing and commercial activities; 85 apartments will instead be realised. The justification for allowing change within the ties

linked to the area are that commercial activities are intended for their cultural dimension and the residences are imagined as a space to realise a social mix of tenants: tenants (young 'normal' families and couples) that are able to pay their rents and that are willing to coexist next to situations of disease; tenants that are not in the condition to pay their rents, together with tenants affected by mental disease, and tenants with terminal diseases (cancer, AIDS, etc.). The shops will include for example a library and a café at the basement of the residential area, where the two major blocks of buildings will create a nice public square. The so-called 'normal' tenants are persons that are often intent on choosing their living quarters in a pro-active way, where they can take part in the animation of the life of the Barona Village, spending their time in social activities connected with the community life.

The ambition of the project is to create a nice, pleasant and hosting centre within the neighbourhood, where situations that are normally hidden can become visible: the issues of physical and mental disability, the need for assistance for the elderly, the condition of marginalisation of some categories of the population such as people with terminal diseases, former drug addicts, etc.

The project shall: (1) keep and support the existing socio-health activities, in part by restructuring existing buildings, and in other cases demolishing the existing buildings and rebuilding new ones (3,600 square metres); (2) realise residential housing (with also commercial activities) creating linkages with the socio-health services (8,000 square metres); (3) create services linked to the religious activities, close to the existing church (4,500 square metres); (4) create public green areas, which will become the central connecting element of the different parts of the project (22,000 square metres).

The entire project will cost EUR 20 million. The funding for the project has been provided by the owner of the area, the Foundation Cassoni (EUR 15 million); and by a bank foundation, Foundation Cariplo (EUR 3 million), and also another bank, Banca Popolare di Milan (EUR 2 million).

The methodologies adopted for the realisation of the project have been very participatory: (1) meetings and exchange moments were favoured among all the actors interested in the project, so that a shared responsibility grew regarding the commitments that the project was undertaking; (2) the local population was informed on future realisations; (3) research was favoured in order to find similar national and international experiences both regarding the content and the building processes. Such initiatives are quite common in France; (4) a signature has been given of a convention between the Foundation Cassoni and the local municipal authority that fixes the terms by which the foundation declares its intention to use the space for public use.

The technical part of the project was undertaken by the association *Sviluppo e Promozione* (development and promotion) which developed the project as the framework where new initiatives could take place, valorising the existing and functioning ones together with the stakeholders already working and new ones to be included. Pressure in this direction also came from the priest serving in the active church next to the area.

The area as we have mentioned above belongs to a foundation. The area presents a bond of collective use, as it is a so-called 'white area'. Normally these areas when the ties - after a certain amount of years - decline are expropriated at a low cost by the public actor that assesses the needs of the area and implements projects of 'public interest'. Here instead we have a first example of an owner, in this case the Foundation Cassoni (which has declared non-profit aims) that was

able to remain the owner and also implement a project of public interest. This element is very important and to some extent unprecedented as well as concerning. Here not only the public actor gives to the non-profit sector the management of a service, it also gives to this new actor the right to design the entire project. This trend represents a step forward to the simple 'externalisation' of the services which is happening more and more in different sectors. The positive aspect is that in this case the actor involved cared for this area and wished to give attention to the existing experiences. The concerning aspect instead is that if the public actor gives total liberty to a private subject to undertake such project, will it be able to monitor over years that what is written under the convention shall be realised; that the money produced will be entirely re-invested for maintenance; that the selections over the tenants is done following established criteria, etc.?

On the positive side the entire project, provided that it is not a huge re-qualification programme, is one of the only projects in Milan which used a *real* 'bottom-up participatory decision-making process', involving associations as well as single inhabitants living and working in the neighbourhood.

8.4 Conclusions

As far as the environment is concerned, a certain activism is noticed by the last few city administrations, that proposed a significant number of projects (some of these are relevant in the areas observed by RESTATE) concerning the city viability system reorganisation. A number of critical points can be observed:

- The administration's lack of attention for the environmental and social impact of a number of public works. From this point of view we can recall the TAR sentences, which de facto recognise in most cases the citizens' perplexities. Again, it must be pointed out the preference given to interventions in sustain of private transport on road, rather than to implement the public transport sector.
- The lack of attention and opening towards the citizens' instances. In this situation we must point out the non-designation of the Milan Civic³⁴ Defensor, even though this figure has been provided 13 years ago by the law and has been acknowledged by the Town Statute since 1992.
- As noticed in the Clean Air Referendum Case (Section 8.1.3), the motions supported by the local political forces in opposition also find little audience with the council and the mayor. Moreover, this phenomenon can be reconnected to a more general trend³⁵ of the Italian and Lombardian local politics that tend to expand and enforce the executive power (mayor and Giunta) rather than elective councils (city council). Marilena Adamo, city councillor in Milan states: *'I believe that the reasons have to be looked for inside the idea of democracy that, in Milan as*

34 The first disposition on this matter is Law 142/90, which provided for the possibility to institute in every province or commune a local civic guarantor. His function (in Scandinavia he would be called an *ombudsman*) is to point out the administration's abuses, dysfunction, lacks and delays towards the citizenry.

35 Stressed by the local elections reforms and the laws on the shift of competences from state to regions (see Sections 2.1.2 and 2.2.1).

well as in Rome, characterises the centre-right wing institutional policy: emptying the elective assemblies of their meaning; 'owner' conception of the majority system, so that he who wins the elections owns the institutions; the aberrant spoil-system practice, which cancels any existing rule in the administrative management choice; manifest intolerance towards any form of opposition or popular participation. It was never seen before in Milan a mayor who asked the prefect the use of public force inside the council. Neither was there ever a mayor who, in front of any organised opposition manifested, even the most innocuous and apolitical committee of mothers from nursery school, cried out with sabotage and conspiracy. It is not casual that in these days even the committee coordination presented an appeal in which it requested with force the notification for the Civic Guarrantor nomination and at the same time it complained the aberration due to which the Milan citizens have to appeal too often to the tribunal or the press for the lack of answers from the commune' (www.progettocomune.it).

- The governance policies supported at municipal and regional level (see Chapter 2) turns out to concern mainly local non-profit and profit strong subjects. In this sense it must be noticed how one of the few initiatives in the environment field that found an answer from the municipal administration was that of the *Verde in Comune* Association, supported by entrepreneurial groups.
- In this situation the committees - which are active mainly on environmental themes - represent one of the most innovative and lively experiences. They show a good network and synergy capability (between them and with other local actors), a certain visibility with the media, and a certain project potentiality. Because of the impossible dialogue with the commune, the only possible strategy left is that of defence, based mainly on the appeal to the TAR. The president of one of the committees interviewed by us on this subject says: *'Our penetrative capacity is good with judicial branch (quaestorship, prefecture, TAR), poor with the elective authorities (regional, provincial and city councils)'.*

As far as the other matters treated in this chapter - which can be considered less strategic from the town's general asset point of view and which are not object of a clear planning by the administration - the bigger opening towards the non-profit associations and voluntary work must be underlined. This means, for example, a bigger willingness in assigning spaces and in delegating managing and organisational competences. Among the important elements we can underline:

- The poor network institutionalisation between public and private subjects, that puts the non-profit and voluntary work associations at the municipal's authority's agenda sudden changes of priority mercy, but also, more simply, the administration managers' and functionaries' turn over.
- The lack of resources given by the local institutions to finance such activities. For this reason, many projects must get the funds from other sources (Cariplò Foundation, in the Milan area, national laws as the already nominated law 285 and 40/1998, UE Funds) that in most cases provide for medium to short maturity funds.

9 Conclusions

An overall conclusion is that to elaborate an inclusive overview of the strategies and initiatives operating in the three estates - San Siro, Sant'Ambrogio I-II and Comasina - it is necessary to work with a multi-level perspective (state-region-council-neighbourhood-estate). The conclusion will be structured in six main points which passed from the macro to the micro level of policy analysis and from the top-down to bottom-up strategies underlining the role of the participation and citizens' involvement for regenerating large scale housing estates.

Process of decentralisation

It is necessary to underline that the process of decentralisation has to some extent penetrated down to the micro-scale. Even though the effective devolution of power is taking place from the state to the regional level (Vth title of the constitution), and it has not gone further from the municipal to the neighbourhood level, this has created a new main actor in the neighbourhood's political arena: the regional government (see for example the coordination role of the region in the urban renewal programme).

This shift of power has been a great chance for the region to re-shape the general and grand policies, and this passage has been particularly interesting for the region of Lombardia that has become a relevant case in the national scenario. The region of Lombardia is one the most active and proactive subjects of this power shifting and Milan is becoming an 'example' to follow for other local experiences (see particularly Chapter 3). Indeed, since 2000 the region of Lombardia has promoted and activated regional programmes to frame and coordinate local and micro actions that have been operating for a long time. As an example, as for housing policies, the region of Lombardia has passed the regional social housing programme that partially incorporates former experiences and partially promotes new strategies to face housing issues; this also in respect to the urban planning.

Milan and the lack of a strategic plan

However, this grand policy strategy has not yet become a praxis at the local level and Milan is still operating without a general frame. It is important to underline some great absences that make this debate difficult to be analysed. Milan, contrary to other European and Italian cities, has not yet produced a strategic urban plan in which the city council together with local stakeholders defines which are the pillars to build the future of the city on. Nevertheless, as the report underlines, a new and innovative wind is blowing over the city as for urban issues. Since the late 1990s, Milan is experiencing and promoting several activities and projects in different

areas of intervention that underline a multi-actor and multi-sector approach. However, the outcome of this approach is unfortunately only the creation of micro-projects and micro-initiatives, which are difficult to map and impossible to evaluate due to their short period of implementation.

Policies on restructuring large scale housing estates: a hidden issue

Besides the absence of a strategic plan, the specific issue of large housing estates has appeared again in the political agenda of local government under the sub-title of 'renewal of the peripheral neighbourhood'. Under this label, local authorities (especially regional ones) include both the conversion of industrialised areas into residential and commercial areas, the renewal of 'historic' (social housing estates built before 1945) and recent social housing neighbourhoods. This is the result of the fact that housing issues have mysteriously disappeared from the political agenda for almost three decades. After a great period of expansion (1945-early 1970s) of the housing stock, in the 1980s-1990s Milan has not seen any important housing interventions, except for the few interventions of maintenance financed by the ALER on its housing stock. The recent urban issues' recovery can be explained by the fact that the Milan suburbs have again become an emergency issue (aging in social housing tenants strengthens social isolation, bad maintenance of housing stock).

However, the greater attention to the issues paid at the EU level might have played an interesting role (i.e. funds for integrated URBAN programmes and neighbourhood contracts). Particularly related to the latest aspect, it might also be added that in the local context of a city, the EU philosophies are assumed in terms of 'general principles' from these programmes without a real perception of the theoretical and practical processes and effects.

Collaborative planning? Not only partnership and privatisation

Besides this already chaotic situation, it also needs to be mentioned that public administration is still operating with a very sectorial approach which does not help building and promoting a collaborative planning. Policies follow the bureaucratic structure and reflect the division of competences within the different administrative levels. Even though some activities might be very innovative, the combination of a sectorality and the absence of a reference frame might result into a fragmented pattern of interventions.

One of the main disadvantages of this situation is that it is difficult to evaluate policies and map all the projects. Opposed to this institutional fragmentation, public policies are sometimes planned and very often delivered in partnerships with the non-profit sector (particularly in the sector of health, social services such as the elderly and disabled, etc.) or, following a very recent trend, in partnership with the private (profit) sector in areas such as education (see nurseries) and housing. However, these close partnerships should not be confused with new strategies of collaborative planning, but does remain the clearest expression of shifting towards a *welfare mix*. Therefore, it can be argued that it should be distinguished between cooperation and collaboration for local policies between public and private or non-profit stakeholders and activation and involvement of inhabitants in the decision-making process.

Bottom-up strategies: the 'Rinascimento' of participation and citizens' involvement

From a participation point of view, the long tradition of citizens' involvement in the renewal process of the estate is having a second renaissance. After a first period during the 1970s in

which participation was very important and relevant and well structured on civil and political claims (gender, divorce) in the 1980s and 1990s political participation went down, as a general trend, related to trust and representation in the political system, as well as a specific trend in Milan linked to corruption scandals that were discovered starting in 1992. The participation which nowadays characterised Milan is however different from the one of the past. While during the 1970s-1980s participation was also synonymous of neighbourhood action (neighbourhood council), nowadays citizens actively participate either on large-scale issues (environments, traffic etc.) or they operate on a micro-level scale (reclamation of a green area near to their home). A contradictory tendency exists if Milan is experiencing a process of globalisation, citizens' involvement seems to be focused on 'defending public-private areas of the city' following the not-in-my-backyard-approach. Furthermore, it is only in the recent years that participation has grown and has been characterised by 'participation against', in terms of protest, demonstration, etc. (citizens realised the absence of their voice in the decision-making process), which sometimes turned into a constructive alternative to proposals offered. *Gronda Nord and Gronda Sud Committees* are the most evident cases of this transformation.

An important advantage: the exciting of vital and positive energies

However, probably the lack of planning and comprehensive approaches of the local authority leaves space for local energies and local resources to activate themselves. Led by key people which play a leadership role in the building of the projects (see former Paolo Pini) or as a spontaneous activation (see reclaim of public space in Harrar) or as a structured form of participation (see laboratory ABITA), the three estates are disseminated by several participatory micro-projects. The disadvantage is that very often the energies are wasted in understanding what is happening on a larger scale: the city. The lack of coordination, collaboration and communication (all tasks which should be promoted by the council), makes projects, programmes and initiatives casually locally based. And in most cases the locally based characteristic of the project means isolation rather than a real advantage. Furthermore, if there is not a local coordination, policies are mainly top-down and participation plays only a residual part in the construction of the policies and it is limited to certain issues (environment, traffic etc.). This produces a negative effect: the dispersion of vital and positive local energies.

Apart from single key-players, education, housing, safety, social policies are the result of an interesting outcome of the work of institutional and non-institutional bodies working at different levels - from macro to micro. Figure 9.1 is a synthetic attempt to map who is operating in the Milan context. It is worth noticing, as one of our interviewers has underlined, that foundations are recently gaining an interesting and proactive role in the local scenario. One of the problems generally occurred is related to the finance aspects of the projects and activities. The general aim in creating a foundation is to formalise the relationship between profit, non-profit and public actors to guarantee a longer continuity of the financial resources. The idea behind the foundation is based on the experiences of the banking foundation and on the social aims of the enterprises.

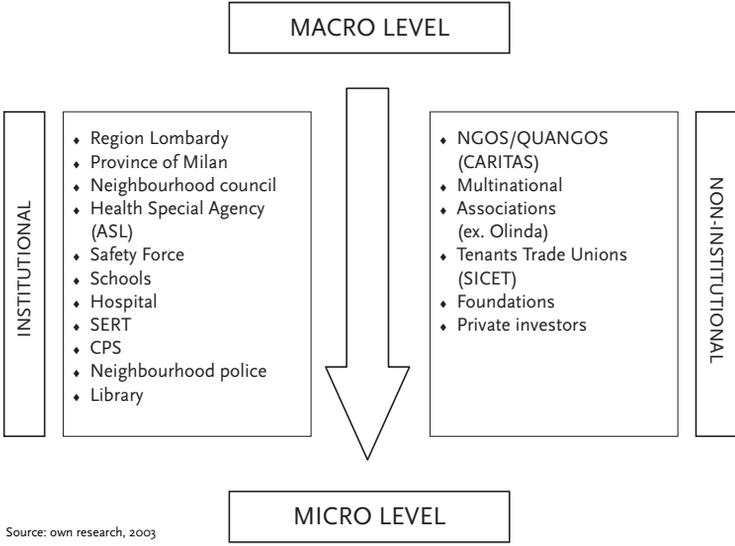


Figure 9.1 – Synthesis of actors operating in the three estates

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List of people interviewed

- Regione Lombardia, director, housing policies sector
- City council, periphery sector
- SUNIA, residents organisation, director
- SUNIA, tenants trade unions
- CGIL SPI, association for the elderly, director
- Sicut, tenants trade unions, director
- Unione Inquilini, tenants trade unions, director
- Development Agency - Milan North (ASMN), president
- Centre for European Initiative, director
- Comasina neighbourhood council, expert of the education sector, former director
- Institute for Social Research, Milan, expert on housing policies
- Barrios Centre, responsible person for different sectors, Milan
- ALER, management company, director emergency sector
- Centre *Donne in*, Milan, expert on gender issues
- Association Olinda, president
- Mental Service, area 8 and 9, director
- Office for the Mediation of Labour, responsible person
- Office for the Development of Entrepreneurialship, city council, director
- Regional office on the black labour market, responsible person
- Regional labour agency, responsible of geographic mobility programmes
- Association Grado 16, director
- Healthy Cities Programme, city council, responsible person
- Security sector, city council
- Family sector, Regione Lombardia, responsible person
- ALER, district office 3, director
- ALER, director allocation services
- neighbourhood council, Comasina, representative
- neighbourhood council, San Siro, representative
- OECD Paris on employment, national correspondent
- Community police programme, coordinator of council
- Community police programme, evaluator
- Infancy service board of municipality, manager
- Milan neighbourhood committee, president
- Harrar Park, San Siro, coordinator
- Homeless outreach services, Barona, coordinator
- Bambino Maltrattato services, Comasina, coordinator
- Homeless night shelter, Comasina, coordinator
- CGIL-SPI, zone 9
- CGIL-SPI, zone 7

- CGIL-SPI, zone 6
- AIM Association, director
- Meglio Milano, director