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Welfare innovations
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URBAN POLICY INNOVATIONS IN LOCAL WELFARE IN MILAN, ITALY

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INTRODUCTION

1.1. Debates on social policies in Italy: setting the frame

The way in which debates about welfare develop at the local level in Italy is conditioned in our view on one hand by the type of debate that develops at the other institutional levels (national, regional, provincial), and on the other hand by the configuration of the relations among those different levels. Before analysing debates on welfare issues at the local level in Milan, we will therefore briefly set the frame for this analysis.

At the national level, the debates are shaped by the main features of the Italian welfare system that, as it is known, are the typical characters of the Southern European model. The bulk of social protection revolves around the core sectors of old-age pensions (besides health and education) that are monetary-based schemes born to cover a social risk that was typical of the industrial Fordist economy. The emergence of new social risks linked to the shift to post-industrial societies, that was a delayed and slower process here than in Nordic and Continental countries (Bonoli 2007), coincided with a major change in the Italian political system. For decades a number of parties formed - around the large Christian Democrats party - unstable governments that lasted short or very short periods, without anyhow giving rise to any real turnover, since the largest Communist Party in Europe was steadily at the opposition. The latter steadily supported the enlargement and consolidation of the social protection, but social expenditure was a way for all parties to achieve social consensus and obtain or maintain votes. Especially in the Seventies, this was at the basis of the out-of-control increase in public expenditure and public debt, that still conditions the room for manoeuvre of Italian Governments nowadays (Ferrera *et al* 2012). With the fall of the iron curtain at the end of the Eighties and the burst of a capillary network of corruption scandals at the beginning of the Nineties, a switch was observed from this situation of impossible alternation to a political system that aimed at becoming based on two political poles, aggregating the different parties. As in other countries, the Italian parties progressively turned from ideological parties, addressing specific social groups, to catchall parties, seeking votes across all social groups.

The Bismarckian feature of the Italian welfare system has contributed to focus the debates on the retrenchment/defence/recasting of monetary measures protecting against “old” social risks: several subsequent reforms of old-age pension schemes have polarized the social actors, although different governments, both political and technical, either supported by centre-right or by centre-left parties, or even by large coalitions, have passed restrictive pension reforms from the mid-Nineties until 2011. These reforms were however more aiming to reducing public expenditure, than to reorienting it towards other social risks or groups of population. On family issues, divisions formerly juxtaposing left wing vs. right-wing parties were replicated inside the re-aggregated political poles (also due to the presence of politicians defining themselves as ‘Catholic’ in most parties). This has played a role in the fact that the debate focused almost exclusively on ethically sensitive issues (such as the regulation of assisted reproduction technologies, or of biological will), often treated on an ideological basis, rather than on welfare reforms (Saraceno 2003).

At the same time, since the constitutional reform of 2001, that regionalized all competences about social policies (except for contributory monetary schemes, such as old-age pensions, unemployment benefits, family benefits), the room of manoeuvre on welfare reforms at the national level has been made much more complex, since in order to define

or redefine social rights, as well as to earmark funds, agreements must be reached between the State and all the 19 Italian Regions and 2 Autonomous Provinces.

The debate on policies against new social risks (e.g. care policies, activation policies) is also limited by the fact that the bearers of new social risks tend to vote less, to have less voice, and to be less represented in democratic and decision-making arenas (Bonoli 2008).

The relevance of debates at the regional level has increased since the cited constitutional reform of 2001 that regionalized most responsibilities about social policies. At this level, the core of debates on social policies is concentrated on the health sector that, having been regionalized ever since the early Nineties, and involving huge resources that make up most of the regional budgets, has constituted the main field for institutional building of Italian Regions in the last two decades, and especially since the introduction of direct elections of regional governors in 1999 (Pavolini 2008). In particular, debates have developed about the diverse ways in which different regions have organized their health system, and the regulation of relations between public and private actors. Lombardy is the frontrunner of a quasi-market regulation, later reproduced also in other policy fields.

Since the management of public housing is also regionalized, some debates can be detected, especially about the existence of opportunistic behaviours of recipients, the poor quality of dwellings and the decay of neighbourhoods with high concentration of public residential buildings (see below § 4).

Provinces have limited powers as to social policies, except in the field of employment policies, since they manage the Public Employment Services (*Centri per l'Impiego*, see §4). The main public debate at this level regards the legitimacy of the existence of this institutional level, that was supposed to be suppressed once the Regions would come into function (what happened in 1970), and are nowadays blamed to be useless bodies, with little competencies, but contributing to the high costs of politics. Some attempts for their suppression have been started, all of them encountering severe institutional resistances. Supporters of the maintenance of this institutional level claim that they represent a crucial link between regions and municipalities, and a preside on the territory. At the moment we write this report it is not clear whether provinces are going to be suppressed and when.

Debates on local (municipal) social policies are rather limited, generally speaking. Despite competencies in some fields, such as early childcare and social assistance are largely devolved to cities, the scarce centrality of these policy fields in the Italian welfare system, the frail (for childcare services) or non-existent (for minimum income benefit) national frame, and the insufficiency or residual amount of resources devoted, contribute to limit the scope of possible reforms or innovations, and thus also debates are generally limited to issues related to the access to, quality of or management of facilities, like for instance waiting lists for day-care centres or conflicts between the city council and the private bodies managing outsourced facilities (see § 2). Compared to public debates that have developed around other areas of local regulation, like for instance the introduction in 2012 of a congestion charge in the city centre, issues of local social policies appear as rather neglected, both in representative and decision-making arenas, and in the local press.

1.2. Milan, a brief overview

Milan is the capital city of the Lombardy Region. The economic and financial capital city of Italy, it is a rich and economically dynamic context (see Costa and Sabatinelli 2012a). One of the vertexes of the former industrial triangle with Gène and Turin in the Fordist era, it was one of the main destinations of internal migration from Southern Regions during the 1950s-1970s period. Employment demand was very ample, and employment represented a key-element for the social inclusion of migrants, to acquire social citizenship and pursue social mobility. Also thanks to the wide possibilities of social inclusion through

employment, Milan has a long-lasting reputation of social solidarity. A deep-rooted legacy, stemming from a medieval religious reference defines the ‘Milanese citizenship’ as a status that anybody coming to the city could obtain by contributing to its welfare through work. Since the end of the 1970s, female employment and activity rates have increased more than the national average, also thanks to the concentration of service-based activities in the area. The local economy has shifted to tertiary and advanced tertiary, while industrial activities have been more and more expelled out of the city. Milan is a big university site, with 159.000 students in 7 universities, and an increasing level of internationalization.

From the political point of view, after World War II a rather long experience of centre-left local governments characterized the city up to the Seventies and Eighties. At the beginning of the Nineties the city was deeply shocked by the wide, national corruption scandals known as *Tangentopoli* (‘Bribes City’). The image the city used to have as ‘moral’ capital city of the country, also as opposed to the opacity of Rome as the place of national institutional and political powers, was also shaken as a consequence. After the political collapse of the early Nineties, and the introduction in 1993 of direct elections of Mayors¹, twenty years of centre-right local governments followed, first with a Northern League majority (1993-1997), then for 14 years with Mayors from the Berlusconi’s party. Such coalitions have boosted the use of some NPM instruments, especially the contracting-out or privatization of provision of public and welfare services. This fit coherently with the frame that was being developed in the same years by the Lombardy Region, characterized by the same continuity of centre-right wing coalitions (more specifically of Catholic inspiration; Gori 2008) emphasizing the set up of quasi-markets, the freedom of choice of users, and the use of cash for care tools such as vouchers. Relevant in this period was also the local political emphasis on security issues, that coupled with a stress on the contrast to migration flows, a tightening of the rights of migrants without permit to stay to access to services, either regulated at the local level (childcare services, school canteens, etc.) or national/regional programs (health care).

In the Spring 2011 a major change in the local administration took place. First, a candidate from a small leftist party (SEL, Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà), Giuliano Pisapia, who proposed a participated definition of the political program and who carried out a campaign widely supported by grassroots movements, won the primary elections of the centre-left coalition against the official candidate of the main centre-left party (PD, Partito Democratico). As a candidate Mayor, supported by a coalition of 8 centre-left political parties and civic lists, he later won the municipal elections against the outgoing centre-right Mayor, Letizia Moratti (PDL, Popolo della Libertà) in the second ballot (55.11% vs. 44.89%). Participation then became one of the keywords of the new municipal administration. In this view, municipal forums have been organized to launch or re-launch the public debate within the public administration and beyond, with the aim to include the whole citizenship, especially about social policies. First of all, two editions of the municipal ‘Forum of Social Policies’ have already taken place, in preparation of the local three-year social plan (Piano di Zona, foreseen by the national law 328/00, titled by the present administration *Plan of the welfare development of the city of Milan 2012-2014*”: Welfare Development Plan of the city of Milan 2012-2014). Two editions of a participated path linked to the “Milan Children” project on childcare and family policies (see § 3) have also taken place, and recently a first edition of the Forum of Youth Policies (named ‘MI Generation Camp’). The common feature is the participative method, with the declared aim to widely include organized groups and individual citizens. In some cases these paths have explicitly included steps localized in the different territorial areas of the municipalities. All this has represented a major difference with the approach of the previous administration, predominantly made up of hierarchical relations, applying top-down decisions, and transmitting information

¹ For Municipalities with more than 15,000 inhabitants, based on a two-ballot system.

about deliberated changes with little space for discussion and very limited occasions for feedback and voice from the peripheral levels, be they the service-level workers, the beneficiaries/users/citizens, or the neighbourhood-level representative bodies.

2. MILAN, THE RECESSION AND THE ANTI-CRISIS PROGRAMMES

The action of the new municipal administration has been limited, ever since the installation, by severe budget concerns due the concurrence of several reasons: the crisis and the increase of social demands; austerity measures and related cuts to transfers from the national level to local bodies; consequences of hazardous financial investments of the previous administration.

The financial and economic crisis that first burst in 2008 and is still on going in Italy hit rather sharply the city, due to the high concentration of firms in the urban and sub-urban area. An increase in unemployment, in the use of short-time work schemes, in the use of atypical collaboration-based and temporary-based contracts instead of permanent contracts is observed (Costa and Sabatinelli, 2012a).

The crisis is hitting sharply also because growth rates were already low before the recession began, and development policies have been for a long period rather scant, both at the national and at the local level. Some expectations in terms of economic and labour market development have recently been placed in the upcoming 'International EXPO 2015' event, the only economic development project of some relevance in the last years. As typical of contemporary urban large-scale investments, the EXPO project is also object of social and political opposition, especially from grassroots movements. The successful application was an achievement of the previous Mayor Moratti, supported by all institutional levels (Province, Region and national government). Nevertheless, the initial steps of implementation were delayed, also due to disagreements in the definition of the projects, the selection of the involved areas of the city, the type of public-private relations in their purchase and management, and their future use; and conflicts among institutional levels about the distribution of competences. Infrastructural works were also jeopardized by the scarcity of resources due to the current austerity plans (also in relation to the constraints of the European and national stability pacts).

In terms of welfare responses to the economic crisis, the previous municipal administration had initiated an Anti-crisis Fund; access criteria were defined in such a restrictive way, though, that no application was accepted in the first year. Since 2013 the new administration has changed access criteria: differently from the previous bid, in which couples were admitted only if married, this time applications were welcome from *de facto* couples as well, including homosexual households too. This choice has been quite controversial (see below § 2).

In face of the insufficiency of public resources to face the increase of economic needs, non-public actors have been creating solidarity funds and distributing forms of support, monetary and in-kind, to individuals and families hit by the recession. These funds are managed rather independently from the municipal administration, such as the of The Catholic Archbishop and *curia* created a solidarity fund that they manage independently, and that pays benefits also to individuals and families signalled by municipal social services that intercept them but cannot support them because they are not eligible for municipal income support, severely limited by budgetary constraints.

Anti-crisis measures are also carried out by the recently instituted *Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano* (Milan Welfare Foundation), a public-private body created by the Milanese

three main Trade Unions and the Milan Municipality, with other members such as the Province of Milan and the Chamber of Commerce. The Foundation was created expressly to manage together funds stemming from an initial capital of the Trade Unions. The first and main measure in place is a micro-credit programme, an instrument both of support to individual small firms and of social inclusion of beneficiaries (see Costa and Sabatinelli 2013). A second program has been initiated to anticipate payments to unemployed people who are eligible for short-time work schemes, whose procedure takes a few months before the payments effectively arrive. All measures are though in such a way that beneficiaries will pay the paid sums back, so that the initial capital will remain at disposal of the Foundation to support more people.

From the point of view of the distribution of competences and of the inter-institutional relations, it should be noted that the Municipality holds responsibilities for social assistance, but not for labour policies and employment services. Since the half of the Eighties the Municipality of Milan has developed specialized employment services for socially disadvantaged youth and for people with mental disease. Over the Nineties this service was gradually extended to all types of beneficiaries of social services, and finally to the whole citizenship. In the meanwhile, competences for public employment services (PES) have been devolved to provinces in the Nineties. In 2003 the Province of Milan has reorganized PES on a territorial basis, grouping employment, training and orientation services in seven *Special Territorial Agencies for Training, Employment and Orientation* (AFOL) in seven areas of the province, making official agreements with municipalities. The previous municipal administration of Milan always refused to join any agreement with the province, with the result that the PES are entirely managed by the province on the Milan area, with a loss of potential coordination and synergy. The coalition that won the last elections advocated in its electoral program the end of municipal autarchy and, among other things, the entry of the Municipality in AFOL Milan with a 50% share. At the moment being, this has not happened yet; it should be said, though, that the government of the province has also changed in the meanwhile (from a centre-left to a centre-right majority), and it is not clear-cut what the future of these Special Agencies is going to be. However, the present municipal government coalition assumes the importance of the Municipality as a unified coordinator to face the current employment emergency, despite the little competencies that the local level holds in this policy field both in terms of regulation and of intervention.

All in all, between evolving social conditions and rising needs and sharp constraints, between small innovations and overall stasis, Milan appears in search of a way out, not only from the crisis and recession, but also from political and institutional inertia, and for a (new) place in the changing world (Bonomi 2008; Lodigiani 2010).

3. FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

3.1. Local welfare for whom: the family, families, citizens?

On the backdrop of the symbolic issues debates have focused on in Italy in the last decades (instead of actual policy reforms, see § 1), the understanding of what family is, and the definition of the target of social policies have held a relevant place, both at the national and at the local level.

Roughly, it could be said that centre-right wing parties advocate that families are the beneficiaries of policies, understand “family” as the one based on marriage, and have contrasted any project of reform to regulate *de facto* couples, and even more so gay marriages. In reality, opponents of such reforms have also been present in centre-left

pole, and supporters of them were also found in the centre-right pole; as a result reforms have been steadily stuck. After the failure of national law projects to regulate *de facto* couples, a few Italian Municipalities have autonomously introduced their municipal registers for common-law marriages. The former municipal administration right-wing municipal board had steadily refused to introduce such register. The candidate Mayor Pisapia promised in the electoral campaign, and introduced in September 2012, a Municipal register for the parity of rights and duties for all forms of emotional bonds, even outside marriage, that want to be recognized by the city council (in terms of housing, assistance, school, culture and sports), also to contrast all forms of discrimination (particularly those related to sexual orientations²). According to the Mayor it was a “reduction in the rights’ spread”, referring to the spread between national debts that has become central in public debates. According to Arcigay (association of gay persons) it was “an important sign”. According to the opposition, in the words of the former vice-mayor, it was a “laicist carnival propaganda that has no practical effect and will be a new source of expenditure for public accounts”.

The first practical effects have in reality already been observed. As mentioned above (§1), the anti-crisis fund has been opened up by the current administration also to non-married couples recorded in the municipal register, disregarding their sexual orientation (also the requirement of having been resident in the city for 5 years has been removed). This has raised local controversies, and especially the declared opposition of *Avvenire*, the newspaper of the Italian Catholic Bishops’ conference, that defined the initiative an “ideological slide”. Right-wing representatives, including the former city councillor for social policies, have also sharply criticized this decision, taking the chance to underline their affinity with the position of Catholic press; as a matter of fact, in occasion of the last local elections, the local catholic church organizations had marked quite a distance from the centre-right candidature.

3.2. The city and its children

Milan has a historical good tradition of childcare provision (in Italian terms), with a deep-rooted patrimony of municipal kindergartens (for children 3 to 6), a core of municipal day-care centres (for children under 3 years of age), and an early commitment for integrative services (socialization services for those children under 3 who do not attend day-care centres), with *Tempi Famiglia* (“Time for Families”) available in different neighbourhoods. During the last centre-right wing oriented municipal administrations, childcare policies and services have been characterized by a libertarian approach, with an emphasis on the role of private providers and of market solutions, as well as on the role of employers in providing reconciliation tools for their employees. An effort was deployed to reduce the waiting lists for municipal services. This was pursued through:

- “Purchase” by the Municipality of “places” in privately owned and managed day-care services and micro-crèches;
- Outsourcing of publicly owned services;
- Introduction of small family-based services (*Indi famiglia* or child-minder);

Not only most of the new public places come from privately managed, and often also privately owned services, but the Municipality organized an office for private providers within the Municipal Childcare Services Sector (*Ufficio Privati*), in order to foster and support private entrepreneurship in this field of policy, providing informative “kits” about normative requirements and financing opportunities, and contributing with *ad hoc* funds to

² On the anti-discrimination themes, a delegate of the Mayor to Equal Opportunities was also designated.

the opening of new private services, also paid to big financial companies that, in the words of their representatives, would have opened their company crèche with or without that public monetary support.

This has in effect contributed to enlarge public supply *latu sensu*, and to reduce unsatisfied demand (Cerea 2013). A number of controversies arose especially around the regulation of relations between the Municipality and the providers managing the outsourced services; the accreditation system, the selection criteria, and the compression of service costs recognized to the private providers, especially when these provoked turn-over in the providers managing municipal services. Dissatisfaction was therefore periodically expressed by the staff, directly affected both by these lowest bid modalities, that favoured the use of atypical job contracts and a general worsening of their working conditions, and by the turn-over of providers themselves, that further jeopardized their work continuity. Complaints cyclically came also from parents of attending children, worried about the quality of provision and the turn-over of staff in services in which the attachment to reference adults is fundamental. It should be said that the use of atypical contracts has in parallel increased also in municipal services.

The sector pre-education sector, as the whole municipal structure and organization chart has been reorganized a number of times, both vertically (bureaucracy hierarchy) and horizontally (relations between the central administration and the services in the different city areas), always rather imposed in a top-down way, with little internal debate. Thus, consolidation of ways of working and continuity of internal relations were somehow hindered.

The new centre-left administration has firstly showed a concern about the fact that the city is losing young families because of the high cost of living and unfriendly environment. On the one side there is an awareness of the challenge represented by the “new demography” of the city, by the deep changes observed in the population of Milan (for instance, 52,7% of households are made up of singles in 2011), and therefore that the understanding of what Milanese families are needs to be reset. On the other side there is the will to change living conditions for families with children in the city.

First of all a zero-cost but highly symbolic action was undertaken: a modification of the regulation of municipal police was released to allow children to play in the courtyards of residential buildings, what had been forbidden for many years. A similar approach characterizes the program “Happy poppy” to create a number of points in the city where mothers can breastfeed their babies.

More specifically about childcare services, the new municipal administration acknowledges the impossibility - due to budget constraints - to increase the directly managed public provision. It reaffirms, nevertheless, the role of the public services as core of the whole system of provision, and as benchmark for quality level for non-public provision. The role of the municipality as coordinating and regulating body for the whole system is moreover clearly advocated. The City Council shall hold orientation, coordination and accompaniment for services contracted-out through equal agreements, granting the same conditions of publicly managed services both to families and educators, and carrying out periodic quality controls, not only narrowed to structural requirements. According to interviewed private providers, controls have in fact begun to include a more encompassing set of items, including the pedagogic approach and the tools to implement it.

Besides, even though the insufficiency of available resources is acknowledged as a limit difficult to overcome, actions have been undertaken in order to:

- a) Use all available resources, mobilizing even limited funds, residual of bigger financial plans of the past years (such as the financing linked to law 285/97, see Costa, Sabatinelli 2011), in order to finance even small projects that have anyway an immediate and visible impact in the city. This is the case for instance of the recovery of school-gardens, a participatory project carried out together with school teachers, parents and - most of all - children, with the aim to open up those gardens to all neighbourhood children in non-school hours (Costa and Sabatinelli 2013a).
- b) Negotiate with the national government in order to unblock resources that are available in the municipal budget, but that cannot be spent because of the stability pact. This was done by the first city councillor responsible for ECEC services of the present administration (and vice Mayor, who later left the board for other political commitments) in order to be able to hire on a permanent basis a number of educators of municipal childcare services who had been working with precarious contracts for many years.

Despite acknowledging that the ECEC sector had been internally reorganized too often in the last years, and always through top-down initiatives, A deep reorganization of the ECEC sector was advocated, and has been implemented, since too few coordinators were managing too many schools, with almost exclusively bureaucratic tasks rather than pedagogic coordination, and with little representation of parents in the school boards of the territorial poles that manage more than 15 schools each. The program also called for granting more decision-making power to parents' representatives, and more possibility of relation with the municipal administration.

Ever since the electoral program, a typical social investment approach (Morel *et al* 2011) has been adopted by the current administration concerning this field of policy. The expenditure for education is understood as an investment for the present and future wellbeing of the city and of the citizenship, and not as a simple cost. A participatory programme has been launched shortly after the new municipal board came in charge to promote cultural debate and confrontation with all services' workers, educators, families and experts, as well as with all the citizens on the themes related to the Child Education Services of the Milan Municipality. The programme has been initially named after the deadline of the first year of participated planning, *Maggio 2012* ("May 2012"), and then the year after the new edition was labelled "May 13", and so on (Costa and Sabatinelli 2013a). The participatory path was organized through a calendar of thematic meetings that brought the discussion to the peripheral levels, meaning both the single services and schools, and the different neighbourhoods. Steps and procedures were foreseen to allow feedbacks to move from these levels to the central administration. A genuine need of coordinators, teachers, educators, parents and citizens to have a voice emerged, that had been repressed for many years by the overwhelming use of top-down decision-making modes. At the moment being it is, however, not clear what the final out-comes of this participatory path are going to be.

The new municipal board advocates a more inclusive, open and plural city. In this policy field in particular, the promotion of an "inter-cultural" school, open to the world, represented a clear break with the approach of the former municipal administration, that tried to restrict access to services for migrants with an irregular position as to their permit to stay, including the access to ECEC services for their children, and tended to stigmatize the "high" shares of children with a migrant background in school classes (see also the WP4 report on Brescia, Costa and Sabatinelli 2013c).

4. ACTORS, DISCOURSES, VALUES AROUND HOUSING WELFARE POLICIES, SOCIAL HOUSING AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN MILAN

In this paragraph we illustrate the general references and values that emerged in the Milan in the last ten years towards welfare housing policies, social housing and affordable housing in Milan as well as the main stakeholders and coalitions (and the expressed conflicts) in these policy fields. To do it we have to some extent to describe these policies. We could not rely on political parties documents for analysing the local welfare political milieu so our analysis is based mostly on interviews and on the newspaper articles review. We interviewed many different actors. We also analysed the main articles published on *Il Corriere della Sera*, in the national and in the local session, from 2002 to 2011. Our main research questions were: “is housing a problem today in Milan? For which kind of actors have the problems of affordable housing been resolved? Focusing on which social groups?

4.1. Summarizing Milan’s affordable housing scenario

Before going through the analysis of actors, values and discourses to what concerns welfare housing issues it is worthy to recall some aspects of the Milanese context:

1. Milan is the third most expensive city in Italy following Rome and Venice (Mugnano and Palvarini 2011). In this last decade the lack of affordable housing in Milan came to the fore. Housing as a welfare good/service issues regain some visibility after 20 years of its absence in the public sphere, especially after 2008 but also before it because of the huge prices increase in the private market. As pointed out by our reports both at a National and at the city level, shortage of public housing solutions together with the scarcity of new funds to develop it as well as the rising market price of dwellings and the scarcity of renting available ones, created a new strata of population that express housing needs, those who are not poor enough to enter in the “social” public housing market and not wealthy enough to enter in the private market. Along with this emerging demanders of affordable housing there are other groups who could not find decent and accessible housing in the city, deprived families that apply to get into the public housing stock as will be clarified further on.
2. Since the beginning of the Millennium, the Milan housing market has experienced an increase in building activities due to the reconversion of many areas to a residential scope after a large and rapid process of deindustrialization in the city. Almost 80 urban transformation projects with a residential content have been approved, many of them via new urban instruments such as the “Integrated Intervention Plans”(in Italian the acronym is PII) which increased the high profile housing stock (in terms of prices, quality and size) (Cognetti 2011; Mugnano and Palvarini 2011) but did not provide a significant number of social housing units (Cognetti 2011).
3. Milan, even though owning the larger public social housing stock in Italy, is in a situation of very strong shortage if confronted with demand numbers. The public housing stock, the “public city”, counts for around 75,000 dwellings, part of them owned by ALER (47,000) and part by the Municipality (28,000). From 2000 to 2007 each year, around 1100 units of public social housing were available but 800 of them are assigned to “urgent situations” (evicted families or very deprived ones) and only 300 are assigned through the ordinary procedures (Rabaiotti 2007). From 2007 to 2009 approximately 4,000 per year new requests for an ERP-house have

been presented. The waiting list contains around 18-20,000 families (see WP3). The public housing stock is quite old and many apartments are not used and inhabited because they lack minimum standards (for example measure at least 28 sqm) to be assigned and many are occupied illegally (around 2000 in the ALER stock). Moreover, estimates say that around 60% of renters in the public stock have arrears in payments, which shows how this bulk of public resources constitutes an opportunity for residents but also a problem for its management. In July 2013 newspapers published some data about the budget deficit of ALER that sums up to 80.5 million of Euro with an annual receipt of 106 million Euros. It is in any case important to remind that In Milan the legal provision for public housing sale has been a good opportunity for tenants to buy the dwellings they were living in. Dwellings have been sold by ALER at low prices to finance the renewal of the public stock and its improvement but it according to many observers, the past and on-going dismissal of ALER stock is used to do ordinary maintenance of dwellings and not to make investments.

4. Milan is a highly densely built city and land costs are very high. The lack of land and land prices turn whatever new construction very expensive and prevent the development of affordable housing to rent or to buy without conspicuous public supports, be they in terms of land use for free or for very low rates and for long times, be they subsidies, grants, contributions or tax levy. For example, the traditional suppliers of affordable housing for rent in the city, the so called “*cooperative edificatrici a proprietà indivisa*”, building cooperatives that build to rent but not to sell maintaining a collective property, have big problems to continue their mission, that is, to produce affordable housing for their members. These cooperatives (some of them have more than 100-120 years) own nowadays 8.000 dwellings in Milan (Quinzii and Terna 2012) and very few of them could consolidate and develop their stock in the last decade, Many of them diversify their activities, building dwellings in “*edilizia convenzionata*” to sell, changing their original mission.
5. Recent estimates state that in Milan there are around 80.000 private empty dwellings (Torri 2012). Homeowners tend to be quite “defensive” in their renting behaviours because there are not enough legal protection in case of problems with renters as well as incentives to let or disincentives for quiescent housing assets (something changed with the new wealth tax on housing assets). It is important to consider that the city in any case, have a tenure profile with relatively more renters than others.

To summarize, as well as other Italian cities, it can be stated that the housing stock is huge in Milan and the shortage refers only to affordable dwellings, to buy and to rent.

4.2. Policies in the decade

Here we will shortly describe the main events that characterized the production or the availability of affordable dwellings in the last decade even if “access to housing” was not a main focus in local policy. From 2001 onwards the Municipality of Milan has been engaged in the development of some public housing initiatives and in supporting new actors and instruments to foster social housing.

Contrary to what happens in other countries, till the beginning of the decade “social housing” was implicitly intended as the “public” component of this policy field. In many cities characterized by high housing or re-housing needs, many private housing initiatives have been developed to cope with (or to try to cope with) the scarcity of dwellings

devoted to low and middle-low incomes, normally through the constitution of social cooperatives and associations that promote self-building activities, buy and restructure private buildings for rent or sell at lower prices, get concessions from public agencies to remould and manage entire buildings with the same aim. Following local experiences, law 244/2007 defined a new typology of dwellings defined "residence of general interest destined to location", non luxurious real estate localized in Municipalities with "high tension housing needs" and bound by contract to at least 25 years renting destination. The law introduces an important principle: dwellings destined to long term renting, even if private, represent an economic service of general interest. They can be privileged by tax exemptions, and by planning and economic support by public actors (ANCI 2010).

One year after, The *Ministero degli interni* with the decree 22 April 2008, defined social dwelling (*alloggio sociale*) as "a unity for residential use in permanent location aimed to reduce housing problems for individuals and disadvantaged families, who are not able to access to renting housing solutions in free market conditions". The definition of "Social housing" in the decree is quite general and can be actuated through: the imposition of a minimum number of dwellings rented at a "fair rent" for builders that use lands prior devoted to "standard services"; the free assignment of Municipal land imposing the construction of dwellings only devoted to rent at fair values (in any case lower that the private market ones) plus municipal urban taxes exemptions and last but not least, the involvement of private actors that privilege ethic investment aims and accept lower returns but being sure that the Municipality will pay in case of tenants arrears and that they will be supported in matching demand an offer (Baldini 2010, Plebani and Merotta 2011, Giaimo 2011).

Lombardy Region anticipated the National Law trough own legislation (Regional law 12/2005) defining what can be considered as social housing and in 2006 decided to finance projects that could increase the existing stock funding 80% of the cost of dwellings to be rent in the "social regime" and 60% of those in the "moderate" regime. Milan Municipality individuated 46 areas to develop social housing and public housing in 2005 and could use this opportunity window.

It is also worthy to explain that a lot of attention has been given to the licensing of the new PGT, *Piano di Governo del Territorio*, the urban planning tool that regulates the construction of the city, the destination of land and urban transformations. This plan have been approved at the end of 2012 but has undergone a very long procedure of consultation that occupied part of the prior legislation and part of the nowadays one which are politically opposed. This plan regards also the development of affordable housing in the city. According to it, urban transformation with more than 10.000 sqm will have to develop a proportion of social housing dwellings to rent as well as a proportion of dwellings to sell at relatively affordable prices. Many observers state that the Municipality wants to regulate via urban planning policies that need specific investments and tools to be effective. The issues that regard the PGT has been presented and debated almost every day in the media between 2009 and 2012.

Public housing projects

Milan Municipality, ALER Milano and Lombardy Region launched different projects regarding the "public city" in these last years:

- Urban renewal of public neighbourhoods within different programmes: *contratto di quartiere* I and II, PRU and Urban.
- In the decade 8 buildings devoted to ERP (*edilizia residenziale pubblica*) have been constructed in Municipal areas (see what stated before). The Municipality launched 2 international architecture competitions called *Abitare Milano I* (2003) and *Abitare*

a Milano II (2005) developing high quality projects for public housing, using mainly municipal funds (131 million Euros, 22 by the Regional government and 109 by the Municipality). In each project there is a mix of contracts: “social regime” (*canone sociale*) for very low income households, “moderate contracts” for households with modest incomes and *canone convenzionato*. These projects produced 1034 new dwellings, half of them for “social regime” tenants but some of them did not start yet.

- Intervention in the existing stock: recuperation of some sub standard dwellings, demolition and reconstruction parts of buildings. Part of this stock is devoted to “emergency housing needs”.

Social housing projects

Among the areas individuated for public and social housing projects, 11 have been devoted to develop social housing in a public-private partnership regime through public calls called *bando 8 aree* and *Bando finanza etica*. This choice is related to the fact that the Municipality didn’t have enough resources to develop new projects and that the regional funding could support only specific projects which contained public dwellings, that is dwellings devoted to rent for those who are eligible for public housing. The Municipality granted the surface property to private operators for 90 years for free for the part in which they produce dwellings for rent and at a low price for the part in which they build apartments to sell mostly with a rent-to-buy formula . Many private actors responded to the first call, building enterprises but also cooperatives as well as, for the second call, *Fondazione Housing Sociale*. FHS has been founded in 2004 by the *Fondazione Cariplo*, the largest “Foundation with a bank origin” in Italy (see wp5 Milan).

These two calls have been at the centre of the public debate as well as the emergence and importance of this new private actor, *Fondazione Housing Sociale*, which for many reasons is considered as the more innovative actor in producing social housing in Italy. As explained in wp5 Milan, FHS launched the first ethical fund for social housing in the country, that open the way to other funds and to the national system of ethical funds.

Even if it is quite early to properly evaluate to what extent private actors can really contribute in the production of affordable housing some problems emerge. Private actors and their logics can hardly coexist with public rules for example in the assignment of dwellings. Private actors have to build and manage new social housing settlements and are interested in developing “good social mixes” which are not always compatible with the need of including those who are in public waiting lists. Furthermore, according to our interviewers, “social housing” is nowadays a fancy word but quite economically unsustainable for private operators without a huge public support. Most social housing projects contain a consistent proportion of rent-to-buy apartments in order to turn the whole operation feasible.

Temporary housing needs

Local housing policies have been developed in these last years to deal with temporary housing needs by students, public workers and other mobile populations. According to many researches Milan need to produce affordable housing to be attractive in a highly competitive and mobile labour market (Censis-Cgil-Sunia 2007, Torri 2012, Costa 2012). This acknowledgment gave birth to some specific investments by the Municipality and co-opted public and private actors. As known Milan is a huge university centre with around 160.000 students and 6 Universities. More than 50% of them need accommodation in the city and face a very speculative market. For this reason, the Municipality of Milan has

invested in the last years, along with other actors, in this specific housing segment building or renewing buildings devoted to student residences and developing an agency called *AgenziaUni*. This agency is an experimental project enacted by Milan Municipality in collaboration with the Milanese Universities and the association *MeglioMilan* and the support of the national association of Municipalities (*Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani*, ANCI), the Department for young People Affairs (*Dipartimento per la Gioventù della Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri*) and *Fondazione Cariplo*. The aims of the agency are to match demand and offer of flats for students (also aggregating students to share a dwelling) and to monitor prices and quality standards in this market. According to official data, around 8.000 beds have been produced in Milan with public support to cope with students housing needs. Some residential solutions called “foyer” are also being developed for few beds. These foyers are devoted to young students and workers aged 18-30 to find accommodation and a communitarian way of living in the city.

4.3. Actors and coalitions

We could identify different positions at the city level, different coalition of actors which express three main ways of representing housing problems nowadays:

- A coalition of actors that state that policies and resources (private and public ones) have to be concentrated on the most vulnerable population as those who stand in waiting list for public housing for many years even if eligible to access it, those who are in need of public housing allowances to stand in the private market, those who have been evicted as well as homeless people and other very deprived groups (mainly the Roma population).
- Those who state that “the heart of the housing problem” is to produce and give access to families and individuals in the “grey area” because they are not eligible to demand public support nor capable to stand in the private market (to buy or to rent).
- Those who think that the priority in housing policies has to be given to investment in the existing public stock, owned by ALER and by the Municipality, in many cases in very poor physical conditions and pervaded by illegal practices.

A good occasion to compose a panorama of the city level actors and their values were a conference held by the new Municipal left- winged government in November 2011. Different actors have been invited to present themselves , their activities, priorities and ways of intending possible collaborations with the local government.

Third sector housing organizations position themselves in the two first groups. *Caritas Ambrosiana* stick to the first coalition claiming for basic housing needs of very deprived populations as Roma and other groups. Private actors as *Fondazione Housing Sociale* (see WP5 Milan) and building cooperatives in the second group, underlining the importance of producing affordable housing for low-middle income households. The two main syndicates of tenants are divided: SICET is more oriented to solve urgent cases, SUNIA is more available to work on promoting middle class access to housing. Public actors (the Municipality and ALER) were pretty much oriented to the third way of representing problems and solutions. Official representatives claimed for a valorisation of the public stock, both working on the infrastructural elements and in the social ones. They declared that the city “must be pride of its housing stock”, “turn public neighbourhoods a nice place to live in”, “with the help of residents and their associations”. They also declared that they will promote legality in a soft way, intending not to oblige people with arrears or people that illegally occupied public dwellings to live they homes but going through a

negotiation process. They acknowledge in some way that illegality has been the only solution to cope with housing needs in the past because of the bad management of the all sectors and the lack of investments. A proposal have been put on the table, to create a public housing agency to match needs and housing offers as well as create the conditions for a more effective governance of the existing resources for housing.

The Municipality claimed that the need of private investment in this sector is crucial because public funds are and will be very scarce but willing to maintain, or better, to regain, regulatory competences and power of the whole housing market. The new left-winged administration adopted the slogan of “the city as a common good” as a strategic and cultural guiding line for its action which implies for urban and housing policies to abandon the idea that “markets can spontaneously solve the many problems of the city rehabilitating the idea that the public actor has the responsibility of correcting the distortive markets mechanisms, promoting the general interest of the community” (words of the actual *Assessore De Cesaris in Comune di Milano 2012*, summary of PGT).

For the actual administration the priority is to produce affordable dwellings through the renewal of the public stock (transforming sub standard apartments that nowadays are not used), mobilizing the huge stock of empty apartments with incentives to their owners and with the creation of an *Agenzia per la casa* to support demand-offer matching and through the enforcing of the rules established by the PGT (Piano di Governo del Territorio) imposing a quota of affordable apartments to rent in private initiatives (Torri 2012).

Two years have passed by and most of what have been declared by the public actors remains dead letter. An agreement called *Patto per la Casa* has been signed by all the relevant local housing actors which establishes that in the next years a housing agency will be putted in place, a new public neighbourhood will be built, special funds will be devoted to renew the public housing stock and that a public housing agency to manage empty dwellings will be instituted but no funds have been allocated to promote all these actions, nor at the Regional level, nor at the Municipal one. It is important to take into account that the Regional government who are in charge of housing policies have undergone elections in 2013, which caused many changes in the boards. Regional elections have been anticipated also because of the imprisonment of *Domenico Zambetti*, who hold the Housing Councillorship! Meanwhile the Milan Housing Councillor has been changed.

According to our empirical data, it can be stated that there is not room for manoeuvre for producing huge numbers of affordable dwellings because of the lack of Municipal land cash resources stemming from National, Regional and the Municipal level. “Social Housing” becomes, as happened in Brescia, a kind of passe-partout word and concept and thought as a panacea for Milan’s affordable housing problems. The actual administration is continuing some of the projects that have not been concluded in the prior administration presenting it as *riprendiamo le cose lasciate a metà*, literally, “let’s resume what has been left half done”. Two god examples: the renewing of existing dwellings and the construction of two new buildings of the project *Abitare a Milano II*.

ANNEX

I. Childhood welfare policies and issues in the newspapers³

The research on press was made on the basis of the following key words:

- ASILI NIDO (day-care centres)
- CONCILIAZIONE FAMIGLIA-LAVORO (family-work conciliation and related issues)
- BABYSITTER/TATE (babysitters and nannies)
- SERVIZI PER L'INFANZIA (services for babies and children)
- BAMBINI STRANIERI + SERVIZI PER L'INFANZIA (foreign children + services)
- MADRI SOLE (lonely mothers)

A secondary search was done with the following key words too, but it emerged relevant articles had already appeared in previous searches:

- LISTA D'ATTESA (waiting lists)
- ANTICIPO SCUOLA/ASILO (early entry in kindergartens)
- NIDI ACCREDITATI (day-care centres accredited by the municipality)
- RELAZIONE NONNI-NIPOTI (children-grandparents relationship and grandparents' help for childcare)
- ORARI ATIPICI (flexible working hours and flexible hours of services)
- CENTRI ESTIVI (summer services)

The following table summarizes the main findings of the selected articles, their titles and general contents and the actors quoted in them.

Table 1: Newspaper articles on family and childcare policies and issues in Milan 2002-2011

Themes	Main actors	Main articles titles/contents
ASILI NIDO (day care centres)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City councillor responsible for family and social related policies• City councillor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nursery services are insufficient with respect to parents' demands (2010)• (debate) New rules for access to nurseries (2012)• Access to nurseries allowed to 'non

³ The press review was carried out with the collaboration of Michela Sempredon, that hereby we thank. The research included, as far as possible, the period January 1st 2002 to May 13th 2012. Research was done first of all on the local pages of the national newspaper 'Corriere della Sera'. The search focused on two fields of social services: childcare and housing. It was done by using a filter and in particular key words (in their singular or plural version, as adequate), which were selected by thinking of the main debates that have been developing over time on 'childcare' and 'housing'. An excel sheet was created to record for each key word the total number of articles found for each year. Articles were saved in folders named after the general theme ('childcare' and 'housing'), the city of reference and the 'actors' the article refers to. The selection of article has been based on: local relevance; relevance of debate (more the 3 articles on the same issue); articles that are representative of a given debate, as they report on the opinions of more actors, thus 'resuming' the debate.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> responsible for social policies City councillor of the centre-left political party PD Candidate mayors for the 2011 elections Association Chiedo Asilo Nurseries operators Parents No profit sector Centre-right political party Lega Nord Mayor (2012) Mayor (2006) Vice Mayor (2012) Private companies Researchers and academia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> married couples' (2012) (debate) Access to nurseries for the babies of undocumented migrants (2008, 2012) Loans for parents in agreement with bank/Municipality (2004) The success of 'nurseries run by companies' (2003)
CONCILIAZIONE FAMIGLIA-LAVORO (family-work reconciliation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Association Maternità/paternità Association time4kids Italian parents movement Candidate mayor Moratti and candidate mayor Pisapia No profit sector Minister of Education Gelmini Minister of Work and Social Policies Fornero (2012) Observatory on women-enterprises-Confartigianato University and academia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (debate) Increase in women who dismiss to raise their child(ren) The role of the third sector in family-work conciliation related issues
BABY SITTER/TATE (baby sitters and child minders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City councillors Parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal for an official list of babysitters/tate Proposal for tax relief for babysitters/tate 'domicile babysitter': a new services The proposal of a 'flexible nursery' Vouchers to pay babysitters
SERVIZI PER L'INFANZIA (childhood services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banks and Municipality Trade unions and Municipality Regional Authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of an official service for the recruitment of babysitters The solution of volunteering parents (who want to help/who cannot afford nurseries fees)

	and Municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (debate) Is the city adequate for children? • Financial help, through banks and the municipality, for companies that are willing to open nurseries
BAMBINI STRANIERI + SERVIZI PER STRANIERI (foreign children, services for foreigners)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Moratti and Mayor Pisapia • Centre-right political party Lega Nord 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (debate) Should nurseries be opened to the babies of undocumented migrants?
MADRI SOLE (lone mothers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single mothers • Researchers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The growth of single mothers
ANTICIPO SCUOLA INFANZIA (early entry in kindergarten)		No relevant article was found

II. Housing welfare policies and issues in the newspapers⁴

How welfare housing issues have been depicted in the Milan media in this decennium? We have looked for articles in “Corriere della Sera” containing the following keywords: squatting, social housing, social rent, housing risk, increase in cost living and housing, increase in loans, house evictions, subsidized housing, students housing, housing vulnerability, housing tension, urban regeneration. In the following table we summarize the main findings of the selected articles, their titles and general contents and the actors that have been cited in them.

Table 2: Newspapers analysis on housing welfare policies and issues in Milan 2002-2011

Key-word	Main actors	Main articles titles/contents
Squatting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riccardo De Corato, Vice Mayor • Carmela Rozza, City Councillor of the left wing political party PD (Ex President of the Comitato Coinquilini, Fellow tenants’ Committee) • Letizia Moratti, Ex mayor • Bruno Ferrante, Prefect • Flatmates Committee • Centre right political party Lega Nord 	<p>Articles mostly refer to issues connected to the general debate on ‘urban safety’ and on ‘Roma people’. The selected articles focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caritas Ambrosiana, squatting and the need for a confrontation/dialogue among parties • The ‘problem of suburbs’ • Proposal for regularisation procedures to overcome squatting • Initiatives against squatting: CCTV cameras apartment blocks guards • Chaos with the state property register • The right wing political Lega Nord and ‘street patrols’ • Roma camps • Candidate mayors for the 2011 elections and their programs • Agreements between ALER and Comitato Coinquilini (Fellow tenants’ Committee) • The racket of squatting

⁴ See note *3*.

Social housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipality • The Cardinal of Milan • Building compagnie • The President of the Provincial Authority • The City Councillor responsible for urban planning 	<p>Articles mostly refer to the PGT Piano di governo territoriale (Plan for territorial government) and the need for more social housing. The articles selected on the local debate focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The debate on the PGT and the clash between the candidate mayors for the 2011 elections • The 10 years old social housing experiment of 'La Barona' • Cascina Merlata, the expo and social housing • Agreement between the Municipality and the Cariplo Foundation for the creation of more social housing <p>The article selected on the national debate focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delay of Italy on social housing
Social rent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipality • Regional Authority • Trade unions • Flatmates Committee 	<p>Articles mostly refer to the issue of social housing in general, the difficulties for people to pay rents, due to the crisis, and the initiatives proposed by the Regional and Local Authorities accordingly. The articles selected on the local debate are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheap housing for the staff of ATM (the local public transport company) • Initiatives of financial help from the Municipality for families that cannot pay the rent due to the crisis • Support for students for the payment of their rent • Revision of rent fees by the Regional Authority in order to overcome abuse
Increase in cost living and housing, increase in loans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banks and brokers • City councillor responsible for social services • Cardinal of Milan • Caritas Ambrosiana (Third sector association) • Trade Unions • Municipality- 	<p>Articles mostly refer to the increase in housing, life and loans related costs. The articles selected on the local debate focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing cost of loans • Financial help initiatives proposed by the Municipality • Residents, especially young couples, moving out of the centre due to increasing rents • Proposal for low rents by the Municipality: elderly people hiring flats/rooms to students
Evictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipality • Flatmates Trade Union • Caritas Ambrosiana 	<p>Articles mostly refer to the number of evictions and the difficulties of residents in paying their rent. The articles selected on the local debate focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals by the Municipality to support those under threat of eviction • The proposal by Caritas Ambrosiana (Third sector association) to deal with the problem • The suggestion by the Flatmates Trade Union to use public unrented flats for evictees.
Subsidized housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flatmates Trade Union • Municipality 	<p>Articles mostly refer to the more general issue of social housing. The articles selected on the local debate focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More strict rules on 'edilizia convenzionata' • More checks on access to 'edilizia convenzionata'
Housing for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Municipality • Candidate mayors 	<p>Articles mostly refer to the shortage of students housing in Milan. The articles selected on the local</p>

university students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rectos of Milanese universities 	<p>debate focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement between universities and the Municipality on the use of 'cascine' to accommodate students • Shortage of 'residenze universitarie' • The increase of student houses as a priority for the Municipality • More checks encouraged by universities to prevent abuses on rental rates in 'residenze universitarie' • Proposal of an initiative to develop a consortium of 'residenze universitarie'.
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