

ARCHITECTURE. HISTORY AND PROJECT

MUR DM 118 - City Green Archipelago

Funded By	MINISTERO DELL'UNIVERSITA' E DELLA RICERCA [P.iva/CF:97429780584] DAD - Progetti
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Context of the research activity	<p>The research investigates urban parks' role for city inhabitants in the post-pandemic era. The idea is that the desire for nature, which emerged vigorously during the pandemic lockdown, can help overcome the central-periphery tension by bringing back the debate on the project for the renewal and systematization of the voids present in the cities, which, this time, are conceived like the connectors that innervate and actualize it.</p> <p>Progetto finanziato nell'ambito del PNRR - DM 118/2023 - CUP E14D23001510001</p>
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	<p>City Green Archipelago is the title of the master plan designed for the city of Berlin during the Sommer Akademie in 1977 by O.M. Ungers and R. Koolhaas. The idea of a city made up of a series of urban islands separated from each other but interconnected by a fluid system of parks and green areas was not implemented by the city, which preferred to follow the more profitable logic of income. Today thinking back to the master plan imagined for Berlin, we can easily imagine that if the city had become a set of "urban islands" surrounded by parks and natural environments, its inhabitants would have better tolerated the forced confinement produced by the pandemic that has exhausted the inhabitants of the densest urban centers.</p> <p>Currently, Europe is immersed in a severe environmental and economic crisis. Using the title of a 2017 song by Pink Floyd leader Roger Waters, Maurizio Carta (2022) poses the question, "Is This the Life We Really Want?". Ideology aside, the pandemic does not reclaim the post-Covid city but accelerates the challenge to rapidly implement many of the actions that the best urban thinking, research, and most innovative practices have long signaled for more creative, resilient, intelligent, and just cities, cities capable of guaranteeing the new "right to the city", which is also a right to the planet (Carta, 2022, p. 44).</p> <p>The city is man's greatest invention (Glaser, 2013). Above all, it is not just a space phenomenon. In the city, the interweaving between territorial capitalism and network capitalism, ecological transition and digital transformation, cultural heritage and innovation, training, and participation, and research and development (Carta, 2022) is welded. But what should the city we would like to live in be like?</p> <p>In recent years, inequalities between cities, regions, and territories, which had</p>
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Objectives

already emerged following the severe crisis of the 1970s, have grown and become radicalized in Italy and worldwide. This increase in spatial gaps, changing the very prospects for life and the future of social classes and groups, has been accompanied by a shift of power and resources from the public to the private sector, from the most disadvantaged to the wealthiest, from the state to the market (Sini, Pasqui, 2020). We need new policies for the city capable of acting simultaneously on the environment, work, health, education, and housing (Sciascia, 2020).

Against the "blah blah blah" of politics, unable to seize the moment we are going through as an opportunity for active renewal, it is necessary to identify vigorous actions capable of countering the climate and environmental crisis. We should re-read the lessons that come to us from the past. We should dive back into the visions and utopias that had already sensed that the sustainability of our very existence depends on our planet.

The rethinking of the development model generating a new future cannot fail to correspond to a revolution in urban policy, a rethinking of its settlement paradigms, and a renewal of its design protocols (Gill et al., 2020). It is necessary to start again from the public interest by interrupting the idea that urban resources are a «bouquet to be offered as a dowry to the financial markets, real estate developers, investment funds» (Carta, 2022, p. 37) which, for the most part, they reiterate the rhetoric of development linked to growth rather than real factors of innovation in cities.

What is being postulated is that the city's project can start afresh by redesigning its voids, assumed as the connective tissue that provides for the connection and support of the relationship between what is a city and what is not. Overcoming the antinomies built-unbuilt, center-periphery, etc., that characterize many of the studies on the city, the idea is that the desire for nature, which emerged during the pandemic, could be the key through which the concepts of city and non-city can be reset to reprogram themselves through the idea of differentiated density. Rethinking the system of urban parks within the settlements can represent an opportunity to renew the projects concerning what until now has been conceived as the product of an antinomy (Dal Pozzolo, 2001; Czerniak, Hargreaves, 2007). It is not a question of bringing the city into the countryside or the country back into the city. Instead, it is about reprogramming our way of seeing and designing unbuilt spaces.

Public parks are today the infrastructures where people's "desire for nature" can be expressed. A renewed interpretation of the urbanized territory can be best described, conceived as a whole as a space with different settlement densities. Designed to be broken within the denser urban agglomerations, the idea is that equipped urban parks can now expand to extend beyond their perimeter and build new urban sequences together.

Specifically, the research seeks to:

1. Design innovative approaches to city reconfiguration and urban regeneration processes centered around renovating and enhancing urban voids as crucial elements for urban ecological regeneration.
2. Investigate the transition from traditional urban development models to new urban imaginaries that prioritize sustainability, resilience, and the preservation of natural ecosystems.
3. Examine the role of green infrastructures in urban transformations that impact people's quality of life.

The research focuses on the city of Turin, but it extends the investigative agenda to other international case studies.

Selected readings

M. Carta, Homo Urbanus. Città e comunità in evoluzione, Donzelli Editore,

Roma 2022.

J. Teller, Urban density and Covid-19: towards an adaptive approach, in «Buildings and Cities», 2(1), 2021, pp. 150–165.

R. Horton, Covid-19. La catastrofe, Il Pensiero Scientifico, Roma, 2020.

K. Gill et al., Corona, the Compact City and Crises, in «Journal of Landscape Architecture», 2020, n. 15, pp. 4-5.

G. Sciascia, Fabbricare fiducia ai tempi del Covid-19 e oltre, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2020.

C. Sini, G. Pasqui, Perché gli alberi non rispondono. Lo spazio urbano e i destini dell'abitare, Jaca Book, Milano 2020.

J. Xie et al., Urban parks as green buffers during the Covid-19 pandemic, in «Sustainability», n. 12, 2020, 6751.

U. Eco (a cura di), L'Ottocento. Storia della civiltà europea. Arti visive, EncicloMedia Publishers, 2014.

E. L. Glaser, Il trionfo della città, Bompiani, Milano 2013.

Julia Czerniak, George Hargreaves, Large Parks, Princeton Architectural Press, Princeton 2007.

L. Dal Pozzolo, Fuori città, senza campagna. Paesaggio e progetto nella città diffusa, Franco Angeli, Milano 2001.

O. M. Ungers, R. Koolhaas, et al., Le città nella città. Proposte della Sommer Akademie per Berlino / Cities within the city. Proposals by the Sommer Akademie for Berlin, in "Lotus International", n. 19, 1978, pp.82-97.

Skills and competencies for the development of the activity

1. Relevant Master's degree or equivalent research experience in architecture, landscape studies, or related fields.
2. Genuine interest in green and blue infrastructure and its relationship with urban morphology.
3. Research experience and familiarity with qualitative/quantitative methods.
4. Strong analytical and critical thinking skills.
5. Excellent communication and writing skills in English.
6. Ability to collaborate across disciplines.
7. Self-motivated, independent, and effective management.