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**Demolishing to build. From city of quantity to city of quality**

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My thesis analyzes the emerging opinions in the recent urban-planning debate which acknowledge demolition as a solution for territorial quality loss (loss of safety, efficiency and liveableness) and promote the opportunity and feasibility of “building scrapping” strategies.

Since the second world war, property speculation and illegality have done severe damage to the Italian territory in terms of over-urbanization, degradation of the environment, realization of large slums and residential areas with no about aseismic, energy and hydrogeological regulations. Moreover, the increasing sprawl, permanent tolerance towards building illegality (thanks to several remission laws), a general tendency to negotiation, have made things worse. The situation in Italy is serious because of its geomorphological characteristics: a high concentration of potential dangerous phenomena for the inhabitants, as well as a systematic energy dependence from foreign countries and the responsibility for a great environmental variety, a landscape and a cultural heritage among the best on planet Earth.

In order to sort out such problems, many academies and leaders of Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica are carrying out an extraordinary project about building renewal and delocalization, known as “Riabilitazione Urbana” (Urban requalification). This strategy, which should correct some of the most important urban mistakes of the past, make the national territory safer and restore an acceptable level of liveableness, may represent a relevant breaking point in Italian engineering, still dominated by a long – standing approach based on unrestricted preservation.

From a larger perspective, demolition might be even more than an exceptional and transitory measure to re-establish acceptable conditions of liveableness: it might fill urbanism with new contents and establish new models of planning based on transformation and contraction. Such innovation would mark the passage towards an opposite planning model, aimed at expanding the natural environment and at containing urban areas, also focusing its efforts on a critical reassessment of urban shape and on its rebuilding, according to environmental principles.

This concept is supported by the opinions of town planners such as Loris Rossi, Terranova, Nigrelli, Criconia, who claim the diffuse idea that a solution to the fundamental issues of global warming, biodiversity loss, increasing demand for a better quality of life, must be pursued in urban planning too.

Certainly, legal, economic, practical, environmental and even psychological obstacles make the way difficult: for example, the permanent lack of a national law formalizing “perequazione urbanistica”, the efforts to find financial resources; also practical difficulties about allocating inhabitants, using planning instruments and promoting an effective environmental improvement, are among the main challenges.

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Despite all concrete difficulties, which might be solved thanks to pilot-experiences and suitable instruments, a deep cultural change in considering territory is needed: from a physic substrate submitted by business and transformable only through short-term economic interests, to a limited natural resource, not easy to reproduce, requiring maintenance, respect and far- seeing policies.

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