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Scampia, a controversial reality. A socio-historical analysis and perspective of urban regeneration

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“We are an extraordinary and beautiful Country, but very frail at the same time. The cities and landscapes are frail, especially the suburb where no one has spent time and money to do maintenance. But it is the suburbs the city of future, where the human energy has focused and that we leave to our children...”

Renzo Piano

This sentence of the famous architect reflects what we have tried to analyze in this thesis: we chose one of the most problematic suburbs of the southern Italy, Scampia, trying to analyze the troubles and potentials, in order to propose a possible solution of urban regeneration taking in account both troubles and potential, and the participation of the people who lives there.



This investigation begins with the historical-political path that concerned the city of Naples and its hinterland, from the birth of the so-called "Casali" until the arrival to the law 167/62 which led to the construction of Scampia district, with many other Italian suburbs, which over time have shown the same problems, due to inadequate architectural design and a very low social mix.

Then we passed to inspect not only the buildings called "Vele", which are, for better or for worse, the symbol of the district, but especially the population, characterized by many young people and large families, but especially by high percentage of subjects with a very low level of education, and unemployed. This is particularly alarming because of the strong presence of camorrist associations, which attract people in their clan, taking advantage from the lack of jobs and ignorance. Another important factor is the disaffection of people with the area where they live, mainly due to too fast settlement of the district, that did not create a real social mix, because of the urgent need of housing after the earthquake of 1980.



The danger map of Scampia (DUN research, 2001)

But the social reality of the territory, despite the problems, has changed since Roberto Saviano has described it in "Gomorra", thanks especially to the associations, who have been working in this area for years, using buildings confiscated from the camorra ((R)esistenza anticamorra), trying to create traditions that can bind citizens to the place where they live, such as Carnival (Gridas), helping the Roman population who live in the camps (Chi rom ... e chi no), experimenting new teaching and social methods (Centro Territoriale Mammuth), and not forgetting the work of

religious organizations that have stolen young people from the camorra (Opera Don Guanella, Centro Hurtado).



The sun, the caterpillar and children. SCAMPIA (NA) 1997

These analysis led us to a proposal for urban regeneration, realized through the SWOT analysis. Actually there is a redevelopment plan approved in 1994, but that is still a valuable tool, never accomplished, so that several sites are still far behind with works. The SWOT analysis have been drawn up taking into account the above analysis and the strengths and weaknesses identified by the inspections in the neighborhood, but also through the interviews we conducted both with the representatives of the associations, both with technicians and teachers involved in the preparation of the redevelopment plan; these were divided into three themes that we consider fundamental: Infrastructure and construction; environment and territory; society and employment.

We are firmly convinced that the district can reborn, if the necessary tools to create jobs, give support to the population and direct a social and cultural growth, will be adopted.

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