

2024

Research  
Report



# Inhabiting San Siro

A co-research on the housing conditions and management networks of public housing

C U R A l a b  
Collective Urban Research & Action



# Inhabiting San Siro

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A co-research on the housing conditions and management networks  
of public housing

2024 | *Research  
Report*

## A research promoted by:

CURA Lab - Collaborative Urban Research&Action  
Department of Architecture and Urban Studies - Politecnico di Milano  
Mapping San Siro

## In collaboration with:

OFF CAMPUS - Polisocial  
Tenants' Union Sicet Milano  
MaudLab - Mapping and Urban Data Lab, DaStu - Politecnico di Milano

## Networked with:

Università Milano Bicocca - Dept. of Human Sciences for Education „Riccardo Massa“  
Associazione Alfabeti Onlus  
Associazione Scomodo  
CISL FNP Milano Metropoli  
Legal Clinic - Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi  
Cooperativa Equa  
C.S.I. Centro Sportivo Italiano  
Fondazione Soleterre



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## Introduction

The research group Mapping San Siro, which has been active for years in the public housing district of San Siro, has always been concerned about the right to housing and access to fair and decent living conditions.

For some time now, we have been carrying out projects aimed at investigating, narrating, and restoring living conditions in the neighbourhood, considering the constant changes affecting this area of the city, also linked more recently to the Covid-19 pandemic and international migration flows. Aware of the existence of a very varied and articulated panorama of housing conditions in the neighbourhood, we feel the need to continue working on this theme, representing its different characteristics and resources.

The issue of the right to housing, and in particular that of the right to public housing, today takes on urgent and priority characteristics, in the face of the major urban transformations affecting the city of Milan and the related processes of ‘expulsion’ - exacerbated in recent times by rising prices and the post-Covid economic crisis - of ever wider population groups from the central areas of the city to the suburbs.

The neighbourhood of San Siro, forming a quadrangle of building blocks, hosts one of the highest concentrations of public housing in the city, with a housing stock of about 6,000 dwellings.

The neighbourhood still represents a valuable resource for safeguarding the right to housing for the most fragile segments of the population.

However, the preservation and valorisation of this heritage seems to be continuously undermined by several factors that, in recent years, have caused a slow but continuous erosion of the public housing stock. The continuous processes of alienation, poor management, lack of adequate maintenance and a general slowness in the procedures for assigning public housing are just some of the factors fuelling what we could call the ‘housing question’ in the San Siro ‘ERP’ district (‘Edilizia Residenziale Pubblica’ – public housing).

The aim of the research is therefore to bring out and represent the multiplicity of aspects concerning the ‘housing issue’ within the public housing quadrangle, recounting the different points of view, the critical issues but also the countless resources that this district has built and consolidated over time.

In fact, San Siro today has a very high concentration of active and diversified local actors - associations, foundations, cooperatives, and informal groups - who work daily to improve the living conditions of its inhabitants.

In order to be able to give voice to the different instances and testimonies of those who, living and working in the neighbourhood, bring with them a profound wealth of experiential knowledge about this area, the research adopts a shared and open approach. Promoted in collaboration with the tenants’ union “Sicet Milano”, the survey makes use

of the collaboration and active participation of the network of local realities (institutions, local actors, inhabitants) that in different capacities and in different ways live and act in the neighbourhood.

Thus an attempt was made to construct an up-to-date image of the housing conditions in San Siro; to explore the practices, dynamics and different forms of living in the neighbourhood; to investigate the different forms of management of the public housing stock and, finally, to address the growing need for housing within the district, in the light of the great transformations of the west of Milan and the city of Milan in general.

The investigation was developed from several questions, which can be summarised in three broad research issues:

1. What is the value and role of public housing stock for everyday living?
2. What does it mean to live in San Siro today?
3. What perspectives for co-research on public housing issues?

To answer these questions, the research work, and thus this report which brings together its contents, has been organised in five parts, each focusing on one aspect of co-research.

A first part of the report focuses on collecting and updating data on the composition of the population within the quadrangle, alienation processes, forms of management and valorisation of real estate assets by public institutions.

This part of the work, which presents an up-to-date “atlas” of certain data considered relevant and forms an apparatus of mapping and other graphic elaborations, attempts to show, on the one hand, the changes that the neighbourhood has undergone over time in social, economic and administrative terms and, on the other, to reconstruct an overall picture of the interventions, policies and projects that have focused on the quadrangle in recent years.

A second part of the research attempts to bring to light “other ways” of inhabiting the neighbourhood beyond public management, through an analysis of the forms of social management and informal housing networks that criss-cross the neighbourhood, often in ways that are invisible and difficult to trace. The attempt is to narrate and give voice to the multiplicity and variety of forms of management and care of the public heritage, not only by the private social sector, but also by communities and individual inhabitants. Through the additional tool of the questionnaire, to which the third part of the report is dedicated, an attempt was made to systematically collect some qualitative data, often invisible, related to the different ways of inhabiting the neighbourhood, the relationships between inhabitants and the informal practices of care and sharing.

The questionnaire, intended as - at the same time - a participatory project built together with the network of local actors and a shared instrument of ethnographic investigation on housing conditions, is divided into three parts: a first part attempts to reconstruct the different profiles of the population living in the ERP neighbourhood, a second part

investigates the practices and perceptions of the inhabitants with respect to the common condominium spaces, and finally a third part focuses on the domestic dimension, investigating the conditions and equipment of the housing and the daily habits of the neighbourhood's inhabitants.

Finally, a fourth part of the report attempts to bring together the information from the previous parts by proposing a critical reading that identifies four “families” of housing situations within the quadrangle, representative of similar and in some ways comparable conditions. This reading is an attempt to frame some situations that are particularly critical and “in need of a project”, and others that instead constitute “good practices” in the neighbourhood and could represent the starting point for imagining a project in the neighbourhood.

Finally, in the fifth part of the report there is a collection of opinions and observations by professionals and researchers: through these open and transversal revisions, some critical readings on the present and future of public housing in the San Siro district and more generally in the city of Milan are proposed.

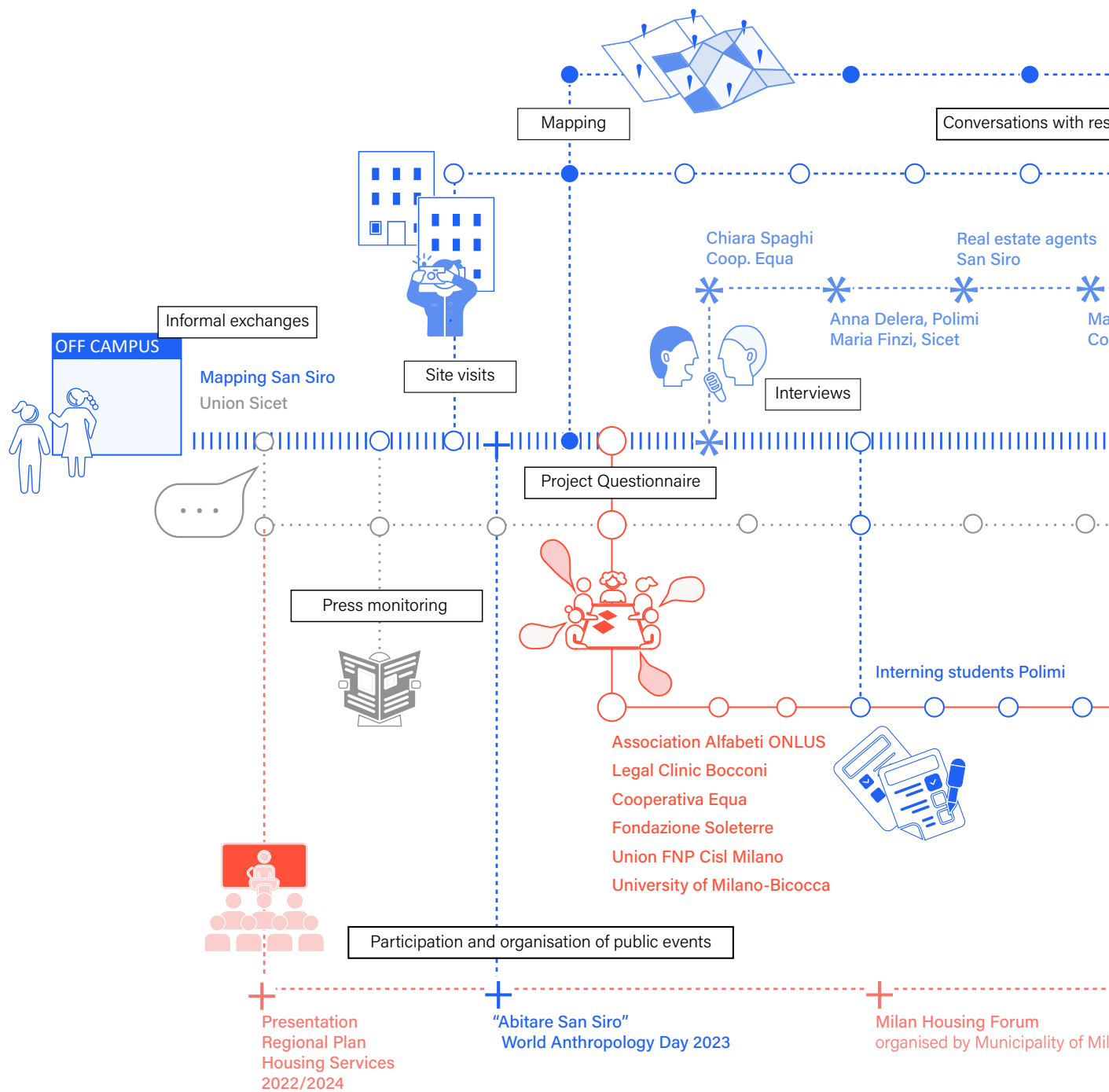
## Research operations and methodological challenges

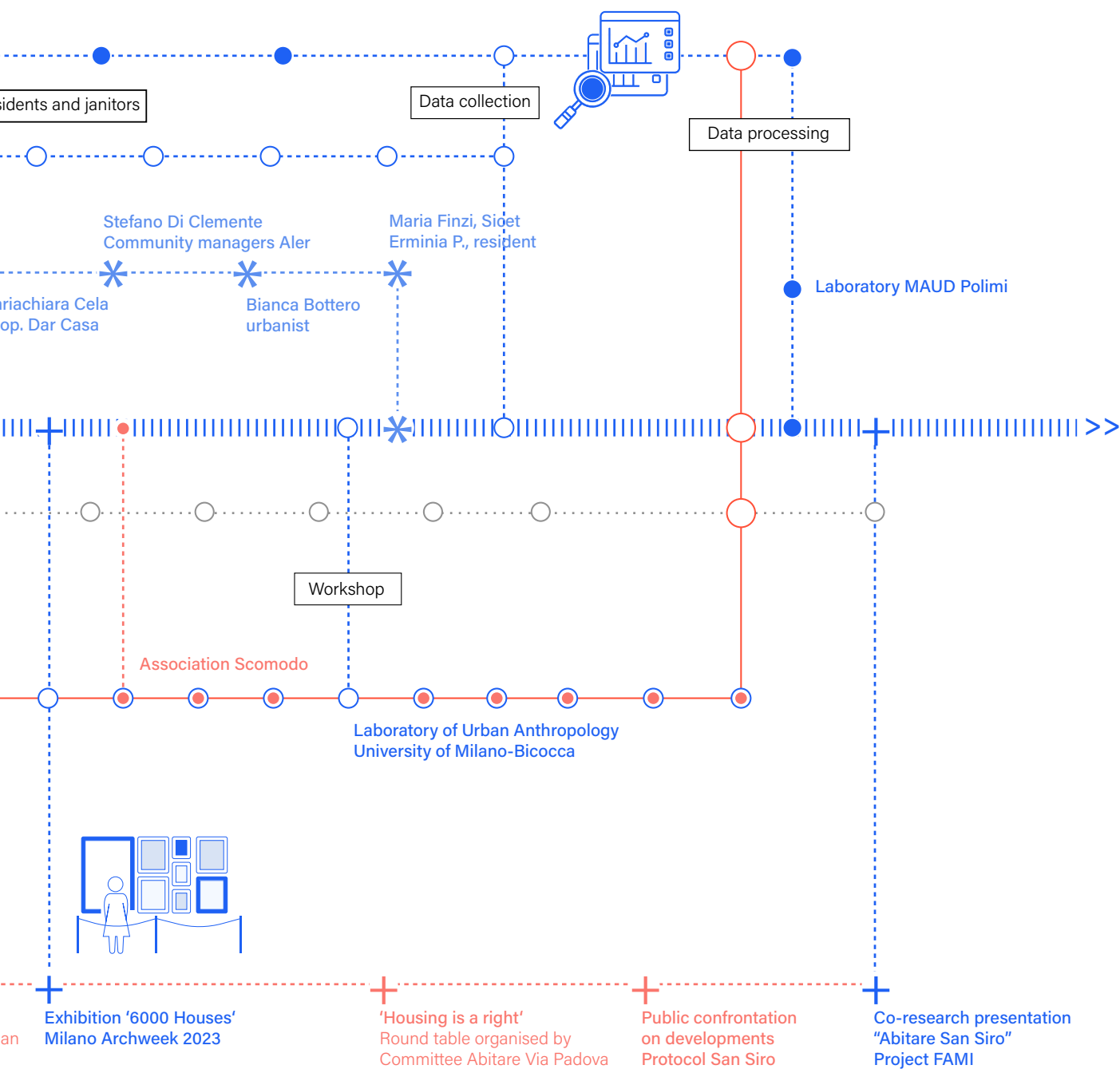
The co-research was developed from the knowledge of the area produced over years of activity and stable presence in the San Siro district, in a network with a number of individuals who have long collaborated in the research group's activities and with whom a solid relationship of trust and exchange has now been established.

In line with a situated and participative approach to research, attentive to valorising different forms of knowledge (local, communal, technical) and data representation, the investigation was carried out according to a non-linear, open and simultaneously active path on several fronts, making use of different research tools, such as multiple visits to each houses, interpretative mapping of the quadrangle, informal exchanges with inhabitants and janitors, structured interviews with operators and experts, monitoring of press reviews, analysis of regulations and other public acts, and the distribution of a neighbourhood questionnaire together with the network of local stakeholders.

The use of different survey tools, in addition to enhancing the contents of the research and enriching it with new nuances and perspectives, guarantees a certain variety of 'reading levels' of reality, and thus meets the need to frame the issue as comprehensively as possible, in the face of a general difficulty in obtaining public data on the state of the heritage, the processes underway, and the future direction of this portion of the city. Alongside the opacity of the available data, which is often out of date, partial or aggregated in different forms - and therefore difficult to compare - and sometimes even incoherent, there is also the poor 'traceability' of many phenomena that cross the quadrangle, linked to the condition of 'invisibility' of certain profiles and the many informal housing practices. These profiles and practices represent a stable and growing reality in the neighbourhood, inevitably linked to various phenomena including, undoubtedly, the general impoverishment of an important part of the population and the increase in the 'need for housing' at affordable prices in the city of Milan. The multiplicity of instruments adopted therefore aims to grasp and represent, albeit in a partial form, this heterogeneity of ongoing dynamics and ways of living in the neighbourhood.

## Research Journey





## List of research operations

### *Inspections*

Period 12.2022 - 05.2023 | 14 days of inspections in the different buildings of the neighbourhood until the completion of all 57 buildings

### *Interviews*

01.02.2023 | Chiara Spaghi, Cooperativa Equa housing project coordinator  
07.02.2023 | Anna Delera, architect and professor at Polytechnic University of Milan DASTU, and Maria Finzi, Sicut Syndicate  
08.02.2023 | Maria Chiara Cela, Cooperative Dar Casa  
05.04.2023 | Stefano di Clemente, Aler manager, together with community managers of UOG2 Fosco Bugoni, Jacopo Carbonieri, Rosa Di Lecce, Sara Mantovani, Dina Mohamed, Clara Orsenigo  
19.04.2023 | Bianca Bottero: urban planner, activist and resident of the San Siro district  
10.01.2024 | Liliana Padovani, urban planner

### *Statistical data collection*

Period 09.2022 - 12.2023 | Collaboration with Maud Laboratory - Mapping Urban Data Lab of Polytechnic University of Milan DASTU

### *Data collection and public documents*

Period 12.2022 - 10.2023 | Collaboration with Tenants' Union Sicut Milan

### *Informal site visits*

Period 02.2023 - 03.2023 | Real estate agencies in the San Siro area  
Period 12.2022 - 05.2023 | Aler and private janitors of all buildings of the neighbourhood  
Period 12.2022 - 06.2023 | Inhabitants of the district  
Period 12.2022 - 06.2023 | Workers and volunteers of third sector organisations active in the neighbourhood

### *Neighbourhood questionnaire*

Period 02.2023 - 06.2023 | Distribution of 380 questionnaires at partners' premises  
Period 06.2023 - 07.2023 | Selection of 360 valid questionnaires for processing and digitisation of data



Period 08.2023 - 10.2023 | Data processing

### *Meetings with co-research partners*

- 11.01.2023 | Co-design meeting of the neighbourhood questionnaire
- 19.10.2023 | Co-research outcomes feedback meeting and collection of comments and supplementary opinions

### *Organisation of events*

- 17.02.2023 | 'Inhabiting San Siro. A walk to get to know one of the public neighbourhoods bigger than Milan' as part of World Anthropology Day 2023, in cooperation with Sicet
- 06.05.2023 | Workshop day with students from the postgraduate course in Urban Anthropology at Bicocca University, organised together with Alice Ranzini (Polimi) and promoted with the collaboration of Paolo Grassi (Unibicocca)
- 10.06.2023 | Opening of the exhibition '6000 houses. A century of public housing in San Siro' as part of the Milan Archweek 2023 - 'Living in San Siro. Architectures between history and memory' promoted by the DASTU Departments and DABC of the Polytechnic University of Milan
- 10.10.2023 | Presentation of co-research results within the FAMI Project "Reinventing citizenship. Pathways for capacitating social networks and groups in the San Siro district", promoted by the Prefecture of Milan

### *Participation in events*

- 14.12.2022 | Attendance at "Presentation of the Regional Housing Services Plan 2022/2024", organised by Aler and Regione Lombardia at the former Municipal Market in Piazza Selinunte
- 21.22.03.2023 | Participation in "Forum dell'Abitare Milano" - Forum on Housing in Milan organised by the City Council at B.A.S.E. Milan
- 01/02.06.2023 | Participation in 'Abitare è un diritto' - 'Living is a right', round table organised by Committee Living in Via Padova
- 06.07.2023 | Attendance at Public discussion on the progress of the Arrangement Protocol for the regeneration of the San Siro Quarter in Milan, organised by the Municipality of Milan, Aler and the Lombardy Region

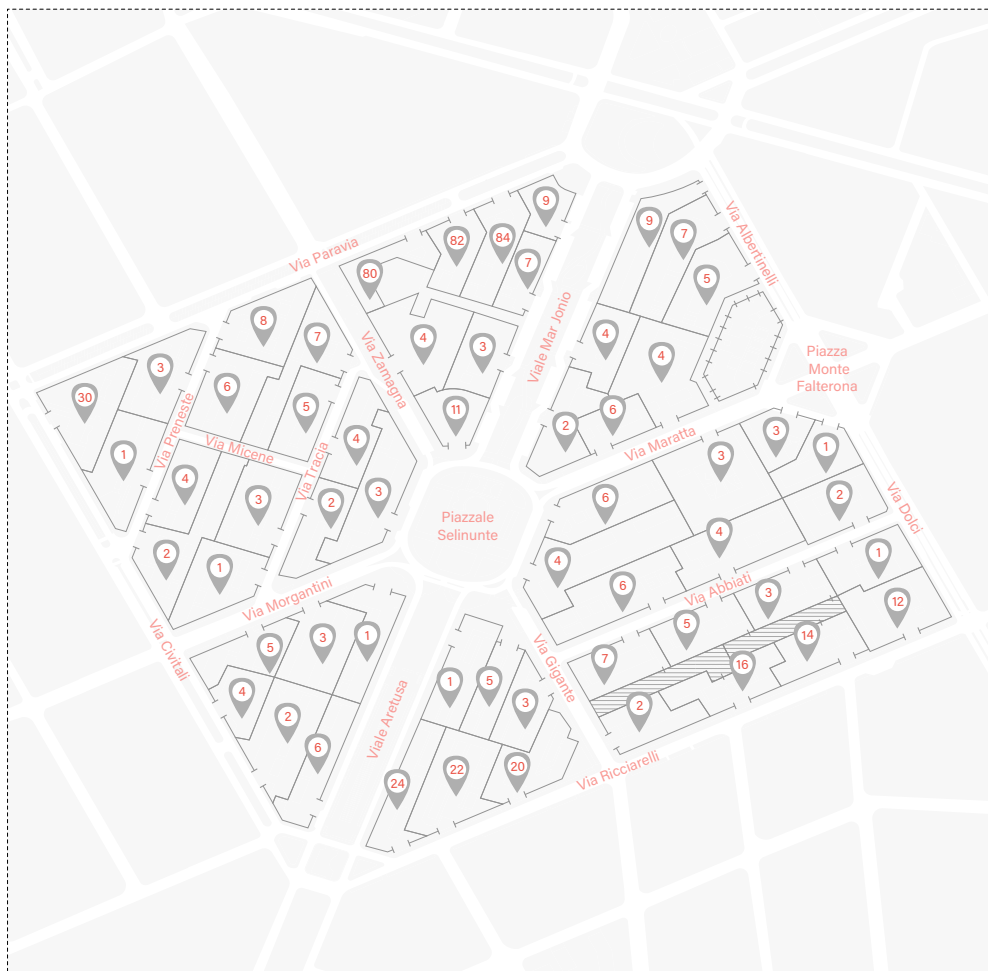
## Orienting in the neighbourhood: basic maps

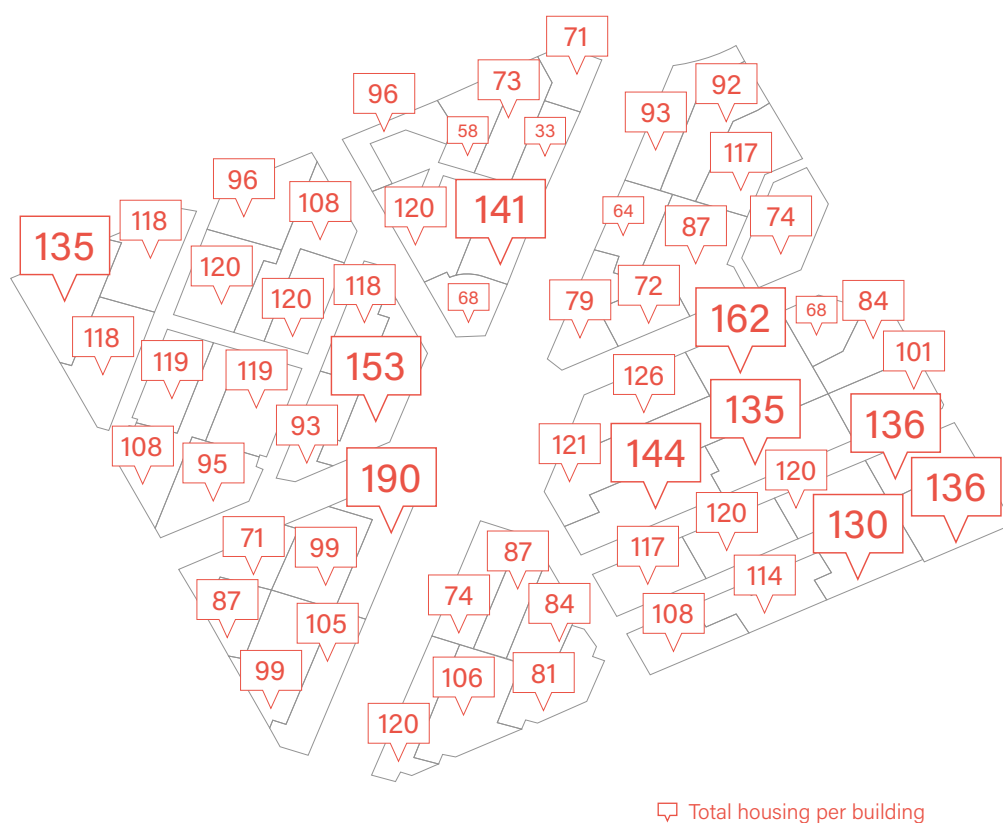
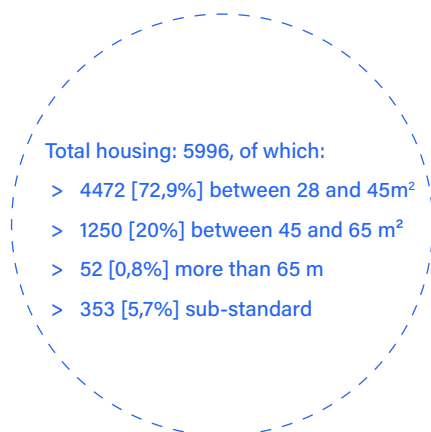
### Condominial property

- Condominium plots
- ⌞ Condominium entrances
- + Private entrances
- ≡ Shared courtyards

### Address

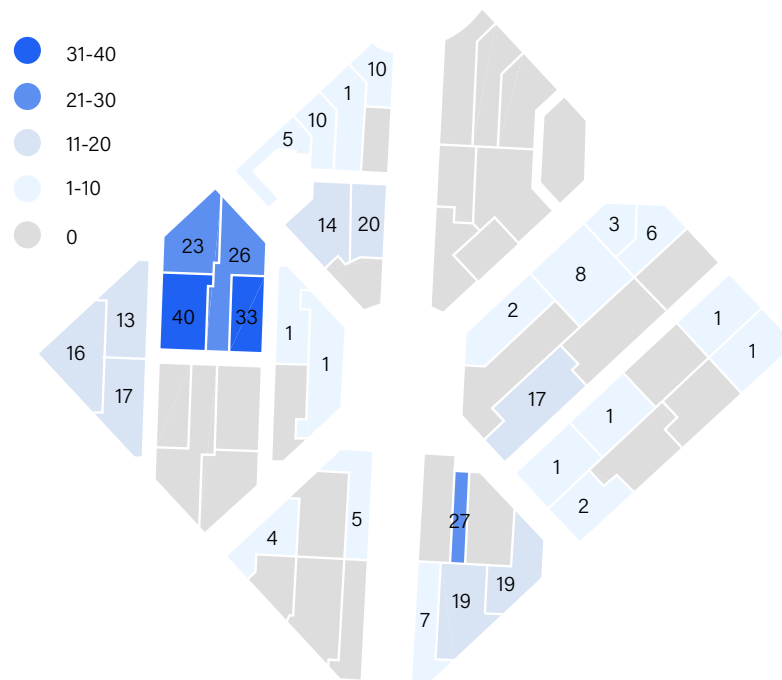
- 📍 House numbers



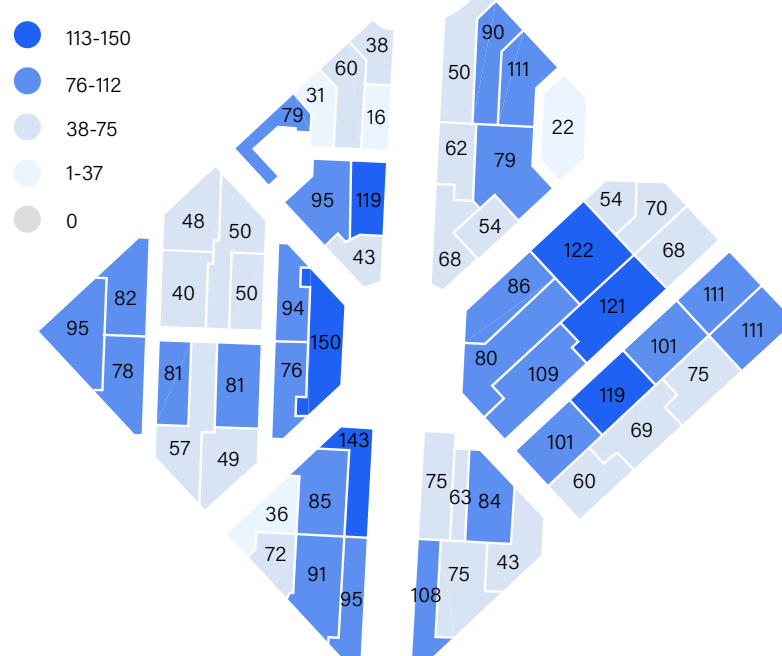


Sources: Report "Mapping San Siro Data. Letture quantitative del quartiere Erp San Siro a Milano" by Mapping San Siro, 2014. Own elaboration.

### Below-standard housing

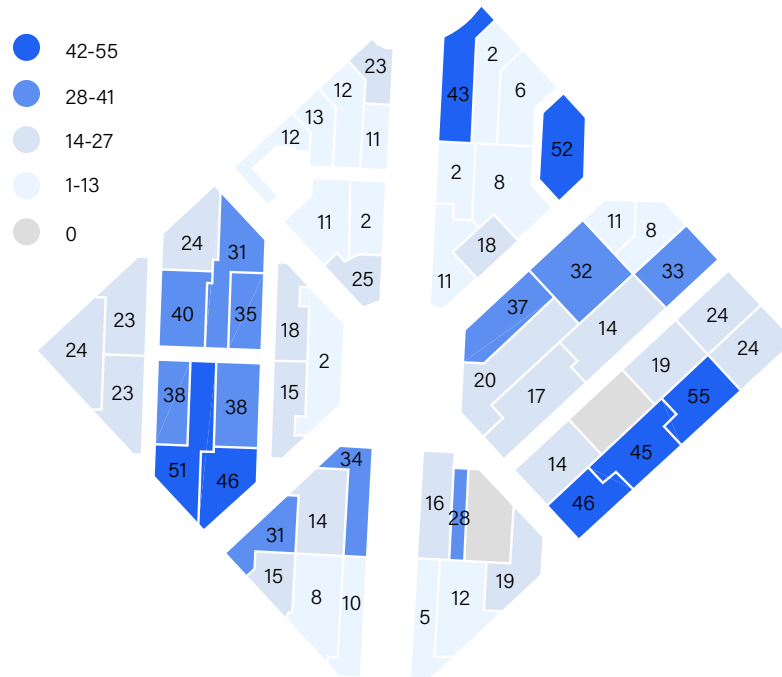


### Housing between 28 and 45 square metres

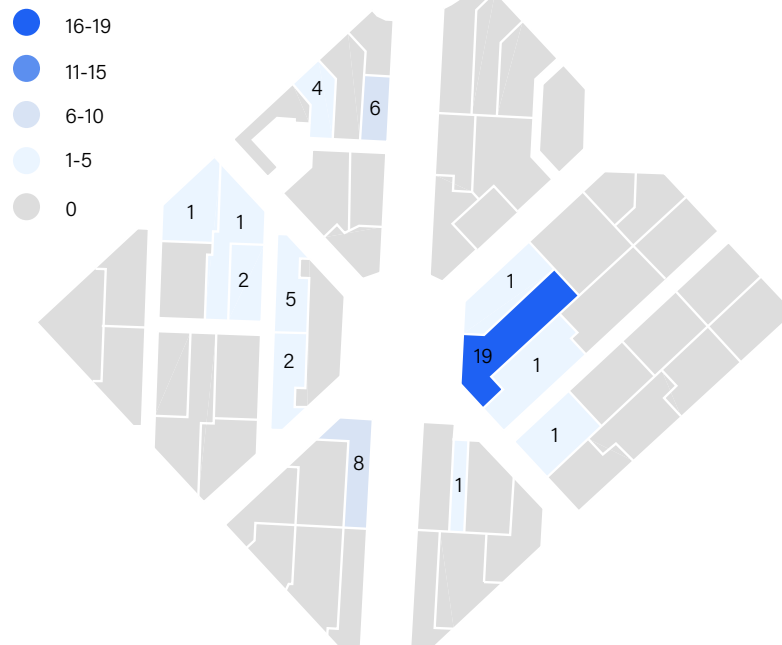


Sources: Report "Mapping San Siro Data. Letture quantitative del quartiere Erp San Siro a Milano" by Mapping San Siro, 2014. Own elaboration.

Housing between 45 and 65 square metres



Housing of 65 sqm or more



Sources: Report "Mapping San Siro Data. Letture quantitative del quartiere Erp San Siro a Milano" by Mapping San Siro, 2014. Own elaboration.

# Part 1

A diverse neighbourhood

## 1.1 How has the population changed?

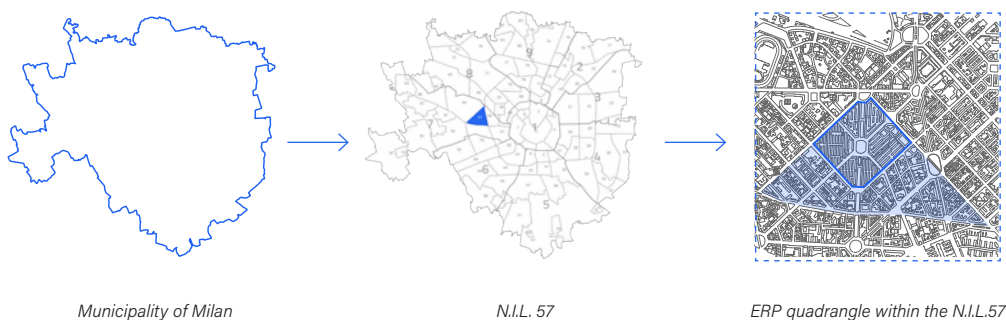
San Siro has historically represented one of the main destinations of the great internal migrations, from southern Italy and the Veneto region, which from after World War II until the 1960s involved thousands of families and workers. The district has therefore been characterised since its birth as a landing place, over the years invested by various migratory processes, not only from the national territory, but also international.

Today, there are inhabitants with more than 80 nationalities in the neighbourhood; a great diversity, constantly changing, due to the great mobility within the district and the migratory processes that go through it. The neighbourhood is marked by change, diversity and multiculturalism.

Moreover, the San Siro district is now the ‘youngest’ neighbourhood in the city of Milan, with an increasing presence of minors, young adults with foreign citizenships and families. The elderly population, which has been declining for years, is increasingly small and at the same time fragile: there are many cases in the neighbourhood of elderly people who are not autonomous, often alone and without adequate assistance. Another interesting aspect concerns the composition of households, which in the neighbourhood are often very numerous compared to the Milanese average. These data tell of a neighbourhood in constant change and in stark contrast with the rest of the city of Milan, which instead presents a scenario of an increased presence of single-family households (+40% in the last ten years), a constant increase in the elderly population, and a very reduced growth in the young population.

The data analysed to reconstruct the structure of the resident population, processed thanks to the support of the Maud - Mapping Urban Data Lab of the Politecnico di Milano - DASTU, come from both national (<https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/285267>) and municipal sources (<https://sisi.comune.milano.it/>, portal ‘SISI-Sistema Statistico Integrato’). In particular, ISTAT data updated to 2021 distributed by Census Sections were used for the general analysis of population composition.

For the analysis of data on the distribution by citizenship, gender, and age group in the district, data provided by the Civic Services Directorate of the Municipality of Milan, organised by individual house number.

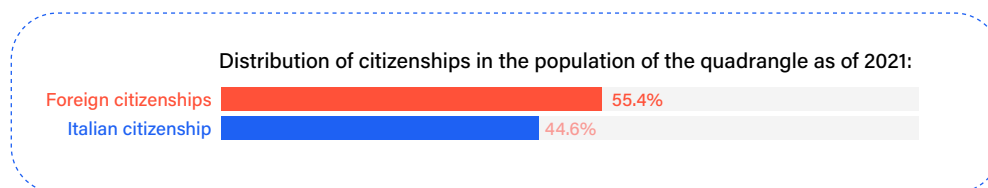


### 1.1.1 Trends over the last ten years

	2011	2021			Percentage variations	
	San Siro	San Siro	NIL 57	Milano	San Siro	Milano
Total population	9.484	10.524	30.163	1.319.767	+ 11%	+ 6%
Foreign nationalities	3.816 [40.2%]	5.835 [55.4%]	[32.8%]	[19.2%]	+ 53%	+ 43.8%
Population ≥ 75	1.160 [12.2%]	886 [8.4%]	[12.2%]	[13.1%]	- 24%	+ 9%
Population 0-19	1.836 [19.4%]	2.671 [25.4%]	[18.9%]	[16.82%]	+ 45%	+ 8%
Single-Households	3.065 [58.1%]	3.266 [59.8%]	[57.7%]	[54.0%]	+ 7%	+ 40%
Households ≥ 5	240 [4.5%]	463 [8.5%]	[4.4%]	[2.9%]	+ 93%	+ 16%
Employment rate (15-64)	3551 [59.6%]	3900 [58%]	[67.8%]	[70.1%]	+ 10%	+ 11%
Female employment rate (15-64)	1597 [54.1%]	1393 [46.5%]	[61.1%]	[64.9%]	- 13%	+ 9%

Sources: ISTAT - Population census data 2011 and 2021 [data by census sections]. Own elaboration.

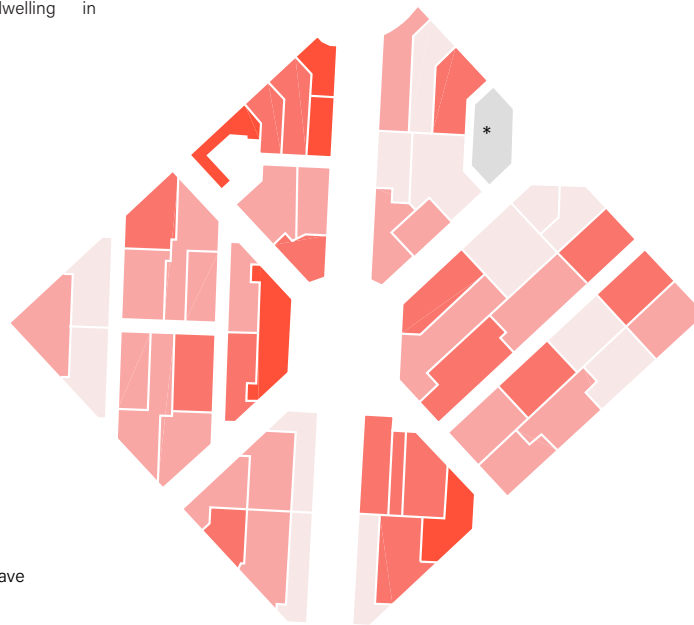
From the graph above, it is possible to see how, in the decade between 2011 and 2021, the composition of the population in the quadrangle has undergone significant changes: it has generally increased (+11%); the presence of people with foreign citizenships has increased substantially (+53%); and the population has become younger on average, with a decrease in people over 75 (-24%, in contrast to a Milanese average that is growing), and an increase in young people in the 0-19 bracket (+45%). Another very substantial increase concerns households of 5 people or more (+93%).



Sources: ISTAT - Population Census data 2021 [data by census sections]. Own elaboration.



Average density per dwelling in each house in the quadrangle:



\*The houses in Via C. Allori have been excluded from the representation, as they are different housing types (single-family houses) from those in the rest of the quadrangle.

Sources: Data from the Register of the Municipality of Milan 2023. Own processing.

In the map above, it is possible to read the population distribution in the district by mapping the average population density per dwelling in each house. This figure was calculated by relating the number of inhabitants found to reside in each house number to the total number of flats in each house.

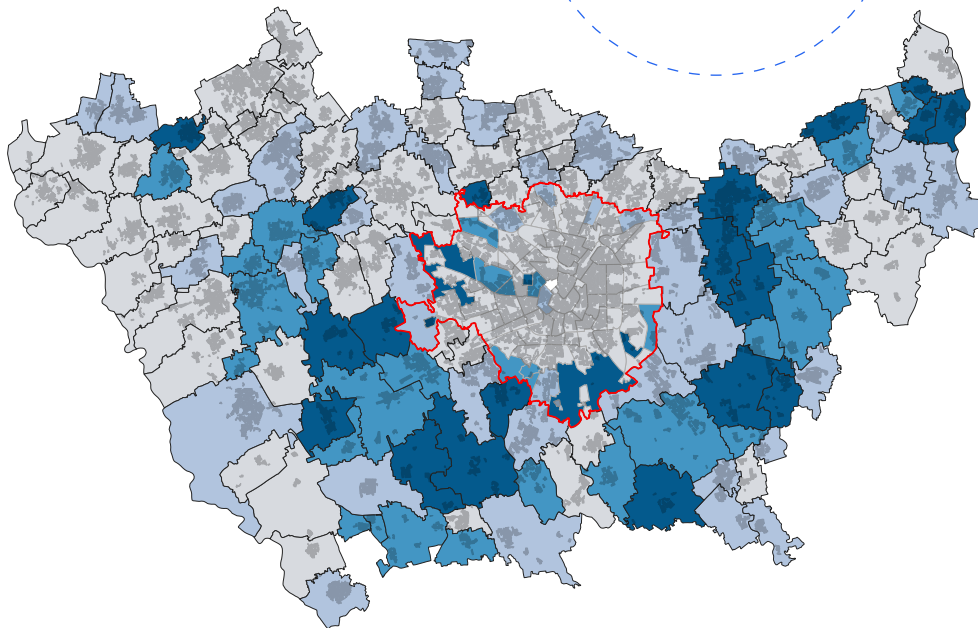
In this regard, it is important to point out two aspects: the calculation of the number of inhabitants per house number includes all residents registered at the Municipal Registry Office, but does not take into account all residents without title or who are in informal long-term accommodation situations. In addition, there is a considerable number of empty dwellings in each house. The precise figure on the number of empty dwellings per house, however, is not provided publicly. In conclusion, the densities shown in the map produced are inevitably distorted and much lower than the actual housing densities in the quadrangle.

## 1.1.2 An increasingly younger population

Population distribution of the 0-18 age group  
in the Metropolitan City of Milan:

- < 17%%
- 17%-18%
- 18%-19%
- > 19%
- Comune di Milano

Population percentages  
in the 0-18 bracket:  
> Milan 16%  
> Metropolitan City 16.7%  
> Lombardy 16.8%

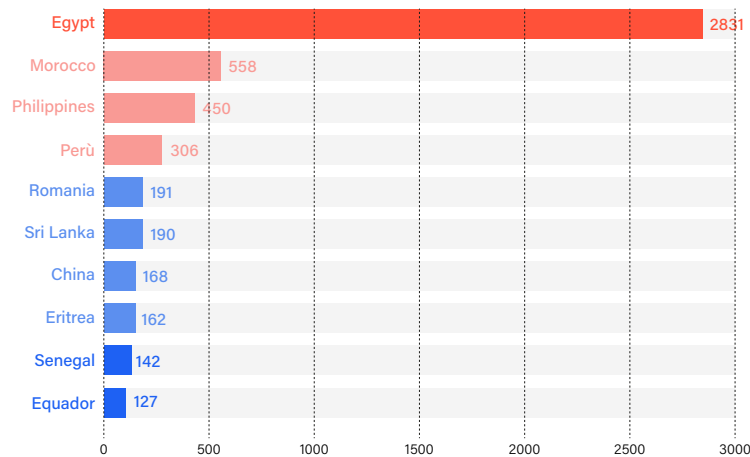


Sources: ISTAT 2023 for data on municipalities outside the Municipality of Milan, Anagrafe del Comune di Milano 2023 for data on the Municipality of Milan [breakdown by district].

The young population in the district represents more than 25% of the total population. This figure, read in relation to the data for the Municipality of Milan (16.7%) and the metropolitan city (16.8%), tells of how the quadrangle today represents one of the ‘youngest’ areas in the city. The map above represents the spatial distribution of the youth population in the Milanese territory and in the neighbouring municipalities: as can be seen, the San Siro area is an exception within the municipal territory, with a percentage of the population in the 0-18 bracket that is much higher than the Milanese average and, on the other hand, in line with the distribution of the youth population in the neighbouring municipalities.

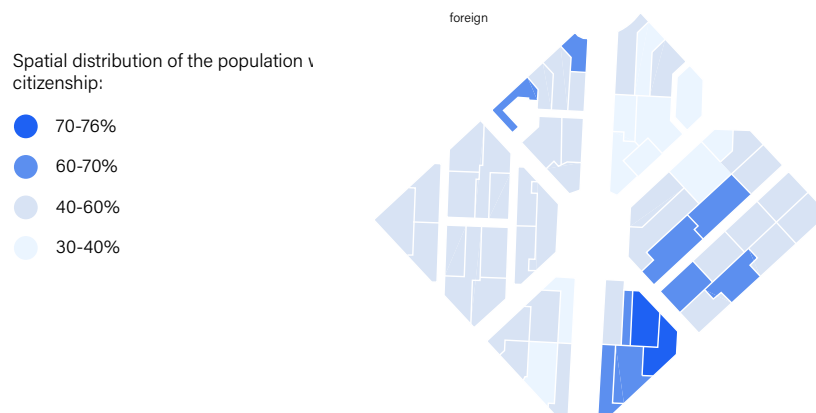
### 1.1.3 An increasingly plural neighbourhood

Top ten foreign nationalities in the quadrangle:



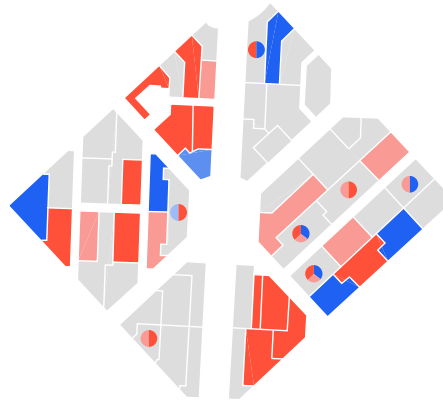
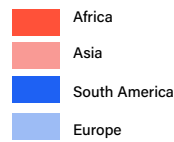
Sources: Data from the Register of the Municipality of Milan 2023. Own elaboration.

The population with foreign citizenship is, based on data from the 2021 census sections, 55.4% of the total population of the district (a very important presence, even if referred to the Milanese average, which in the same year was 20.1%) More recent data, provided by the Municipal Registry Office and updated to 2023, slightly reduce the percentage to 51.2%. Among inhabitants with foreign citizenship there is a wide variety of origins, with some countries being particularly numerous. If we look at the graph of the top ten nationalities, the Arabic-speaking component (especially from Egypt and Morocco) accounts for about half of the inhabitants with foreign nationality in the district. The other most numerous origins are the Philippines, Peru, Romania and Sri Lanka. This composition at least partly mirrors that of the city, apart from the Moroccan and Chinese nationalities (not particularly present in the neighbourhood, but third in the city). The map below shows the spatial distribution, by percentage bands, of the population with foreign citizenship.



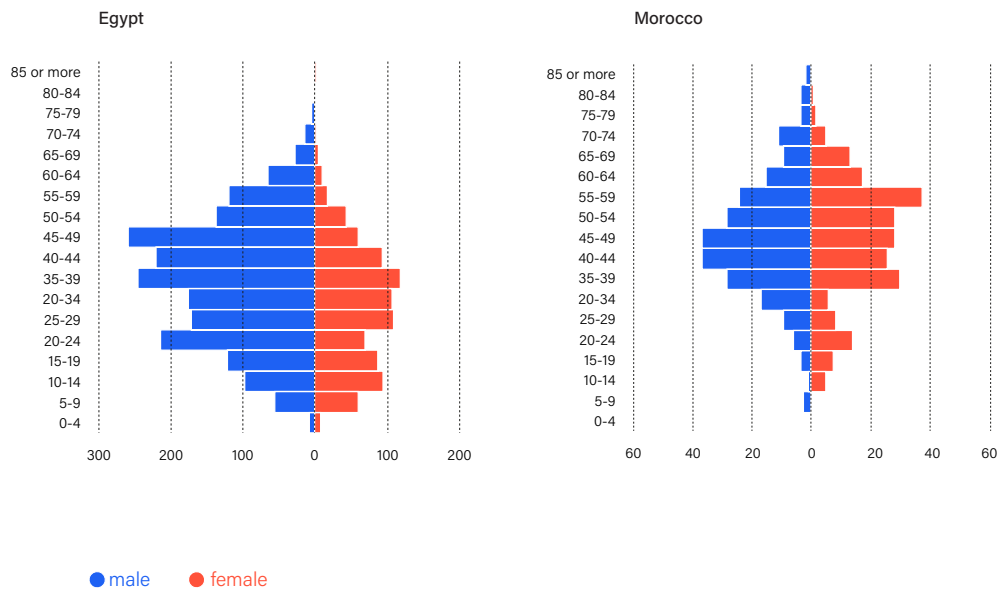
Source: Data from the Register of the Municipality of Milan 2023. Own elaboration.

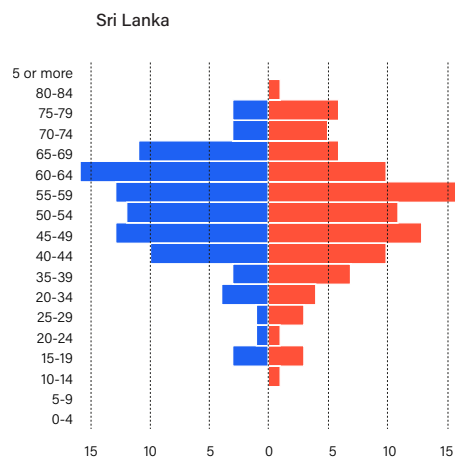
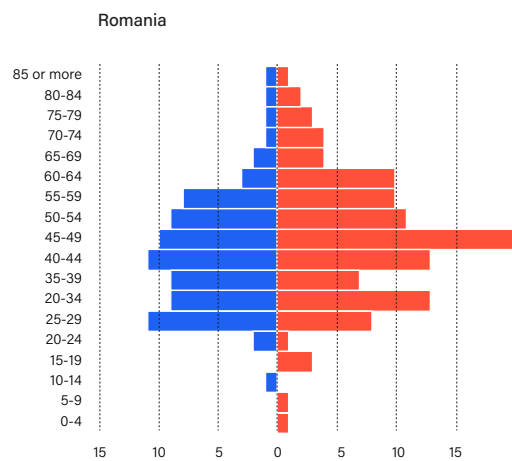
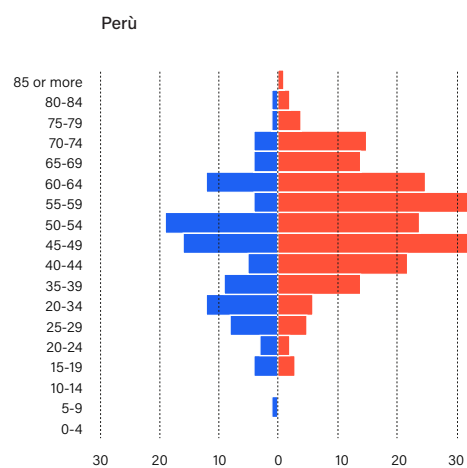
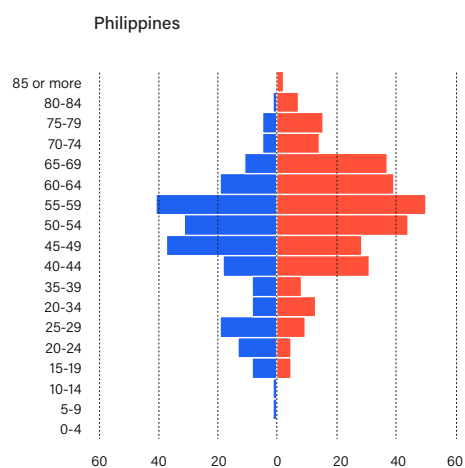
Spatial concentrations of the main foreign nationalities present:



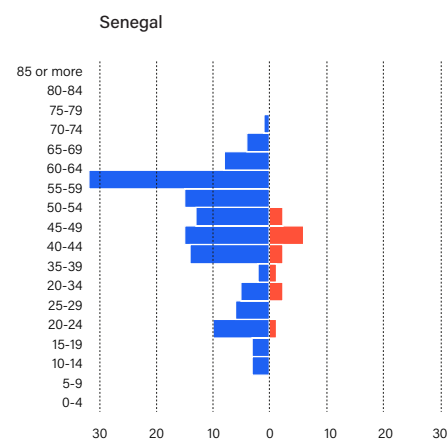
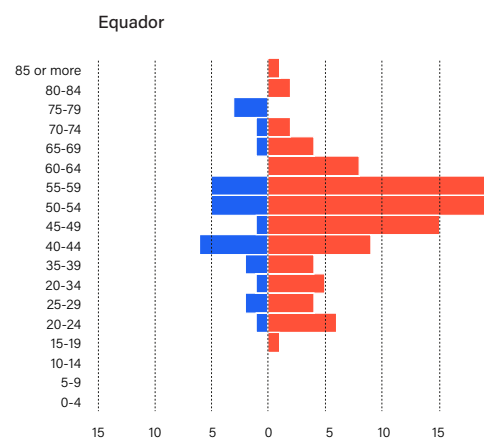
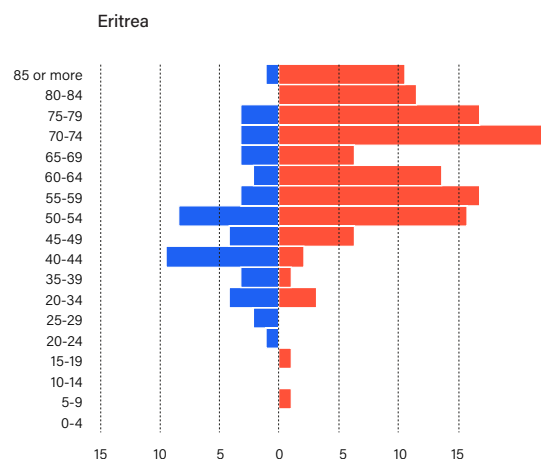
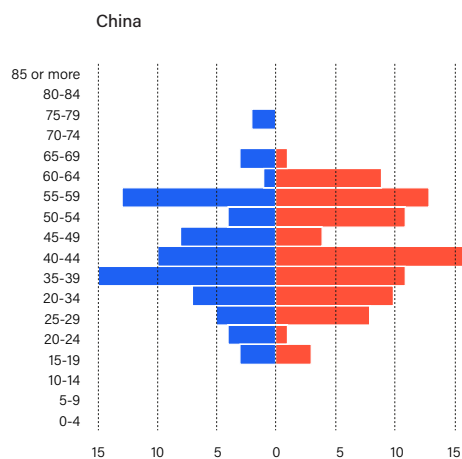
Sources: Data from the Register of the Municipality of Milan 2023. Own elaboration.

The top map shows the spatial concentrations of the main foreign nationalities present in the district. In the graphs below and on the following pages, instead, the distribution by age group and gender of the top ten foreign citizenships present has been analysed. Alongside more homogeneous distributions, some specific dynamics emerge, concerning in particular the Egyptian population, with a strong presence of young and very young inhabitants, the Eritrean population, predominantly female and elderly, the population of Ecuador, also predominantly female, and finally the Senegalese population, almost entirely male.





● male ● female



● male ● female

Sources: Data from the Register of the Municipality of Milan 2023. Own elaboration.

## 1.2 How has the public housing stock changed?

The San Siro quadrangle is still today the largest public housing complex in Milan, with a public housing supply of more than 6,000 dwellings until the end of the last century. A neighbourhood born as an outpost of urban growth and a massive response to the demand for housing. Over the years, the district has undergone major transformations, due to a general change in public housing management policies, the promotion of new urban development programmes and increased international migration flows.

In general, the theme of the ‘periphery’ has been less and less considered in the public policy agenda over the years, despite the major changes from the point of view of urban development: this has triggered complex processes of marginalisation of the Milanese periphery, especially in areas such as the San Siro quadrangle, on which different degrees of complexity are already ‘stratified’.

Today, the district appears as a multi-problematic inner suburb, characterised by dynamics of marginality, exclusion, and degradation.

A slow but progressive change, to be defined as decline in some respects, linked to a lack of an integrated regeneration plan and adequate programmes for building recovery, an insufficiency of available economic resources for organic and widespread redevelopment, and an absence of important services to support the fragile resident populations.

An important heritage of houses that would represent a value for plans and programmes and a material basis for welfare and accompanying policies. A heritage that, even over the last ten years, has been subjected to pressures related to spin-offs, sales, poor maintenance, and thus in various ways removed from the public allocation procedure.

Compared to the Aler user registry data of 2013 (made available thanks to an agreement stipulated between Aler and Polytechnic University of Milan in 2013, which allowed for the sharing of the database on the state of the estate and Aler users as of 2013), the data on the estate reveal in fact a significant and further reduction in public housing, a considerable increase in empty dwellings and above all in squatted dwellings.

Dynamics affecting the state of the estate as a whole, are linked to slow but progressive “erosions” of different kinds: for example, within the quadrangle almost all apartment blocks have shares of sold housing, which are present in varying concentrations and to varying degrees.

### 1.2.1 A snapshot of heritage today

In the graph on the opposite page, you can see an overall picture of the housing stock within the district. The total of 5996 dwellings is heterogeneously composed, with 1416 privatised dwellings, 295 managed outside Erp and 4285 managed under ERP.

Of these, 3991 dwellings are managed under S.A.P., while the remaining 292 are dedicated to S.A.T. (22 dwellings) or development plans (272 dwellings).

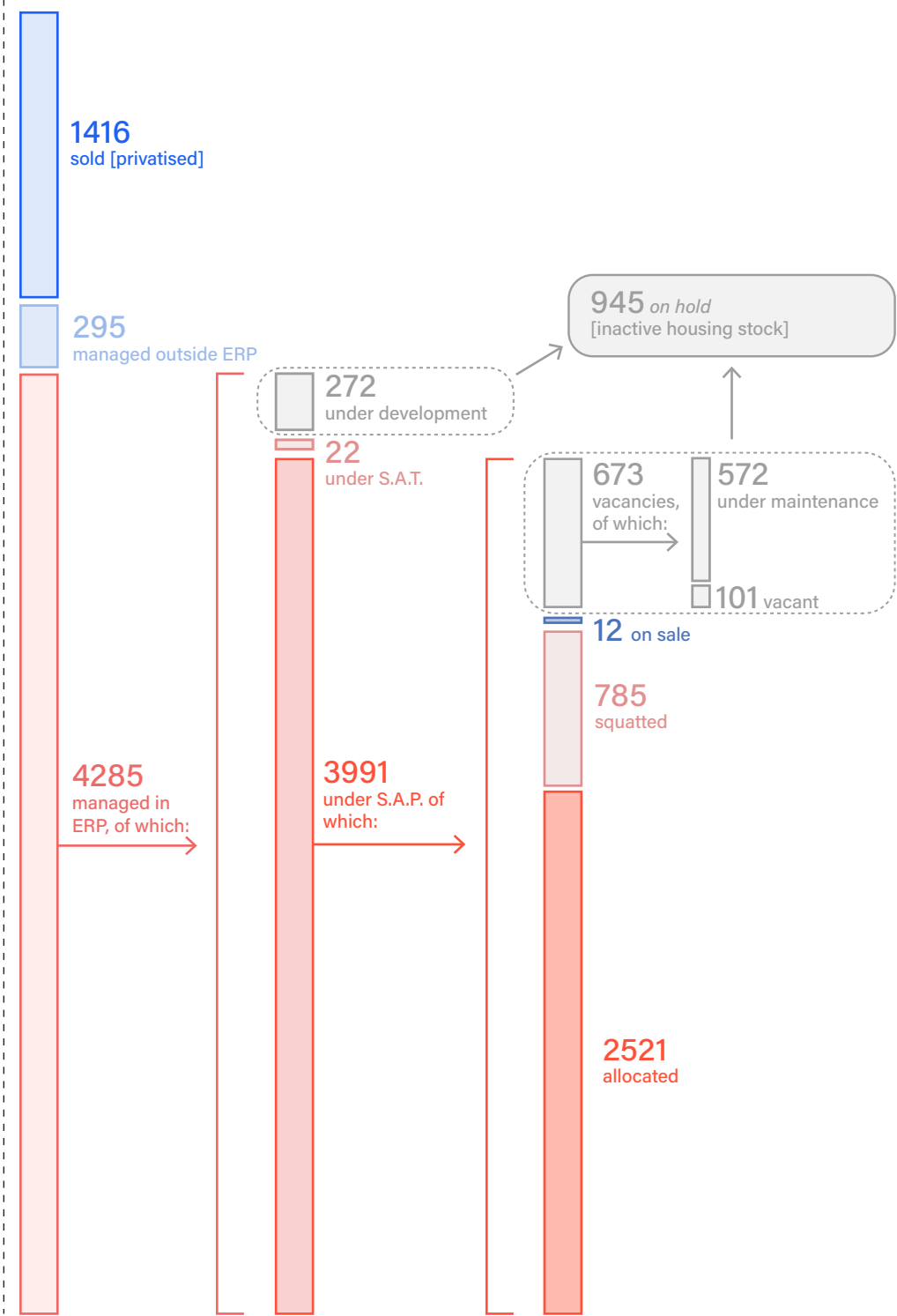
Of the 3991 dwellings dedicated to S.A.P., just over half (2521) are actually allocated. The remaining part is squatted (785), under maintenance (572), vacant (101), and for sale (12).

The most recent update of data (in partial form) provided by Aler during the public meeting on 06/07/23 “On the implementation of the protocol for the regeneration of the San Siro district”: 5987 total dwellings in the district; 1435 privatised dwellings; 694 squatted dwellings; 521 dwellings vacant due to lack of maintenance; 577 dwellings upgraded and assigned in the last five years.

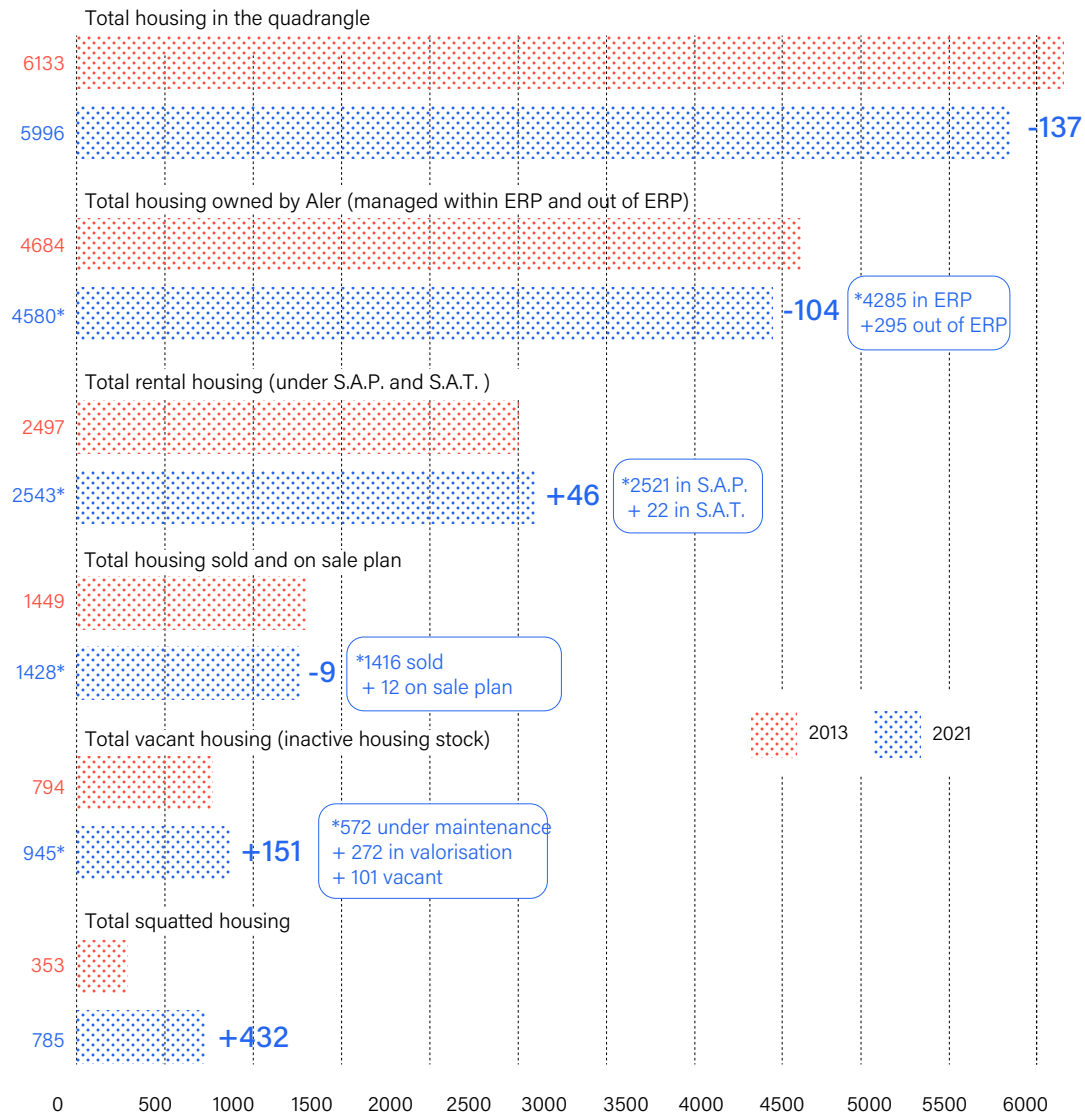
*Sources: Municipal Council Resolution no. 1003 of 06/08/2021 "Approvazione delle linee d'indirizzo per la sottoscrizione del Protocollo d'Intesa per la rigenerazione del quartiere San Siro tra Prefettura di Milano, Regione Lombardia, Comune di Milano e Azienda Lombarda per l'Edilizia Residenziale Milano". Own elaboration.*



5996 total housing in the quadrangle, of which:



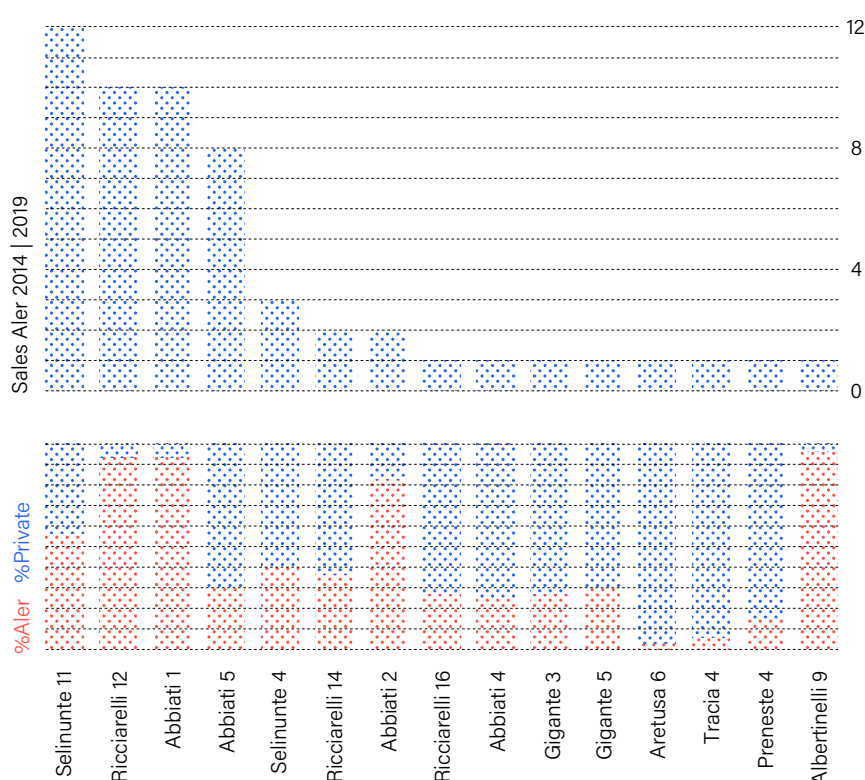
## 1.2.2 Aler disposals in the last decade



Sources: Inspections, interviews with inhabitants and caretakers of civic buildings within the quadrangle (period: December 2022 - March 2023). Comparison of collected data with: Report "Mapping San Siro Data. Letture quantitative del quartiere Erp San Siro a Milano" a cura di Mapping San Siro, 2014. Municipal Council Resolution no. 1003 of 06/08/2021 "Approvazione delle linee d'indirizzo per la sottoscrizione del Protocollo d'Intesa per la rigenerazione del quartiere San Siro tra Prefettura di Milano, Regione Lombardia, Comune di Milano e Azienda Lombarda per l'Edilizia Residenziale Milano". Own elaboration.

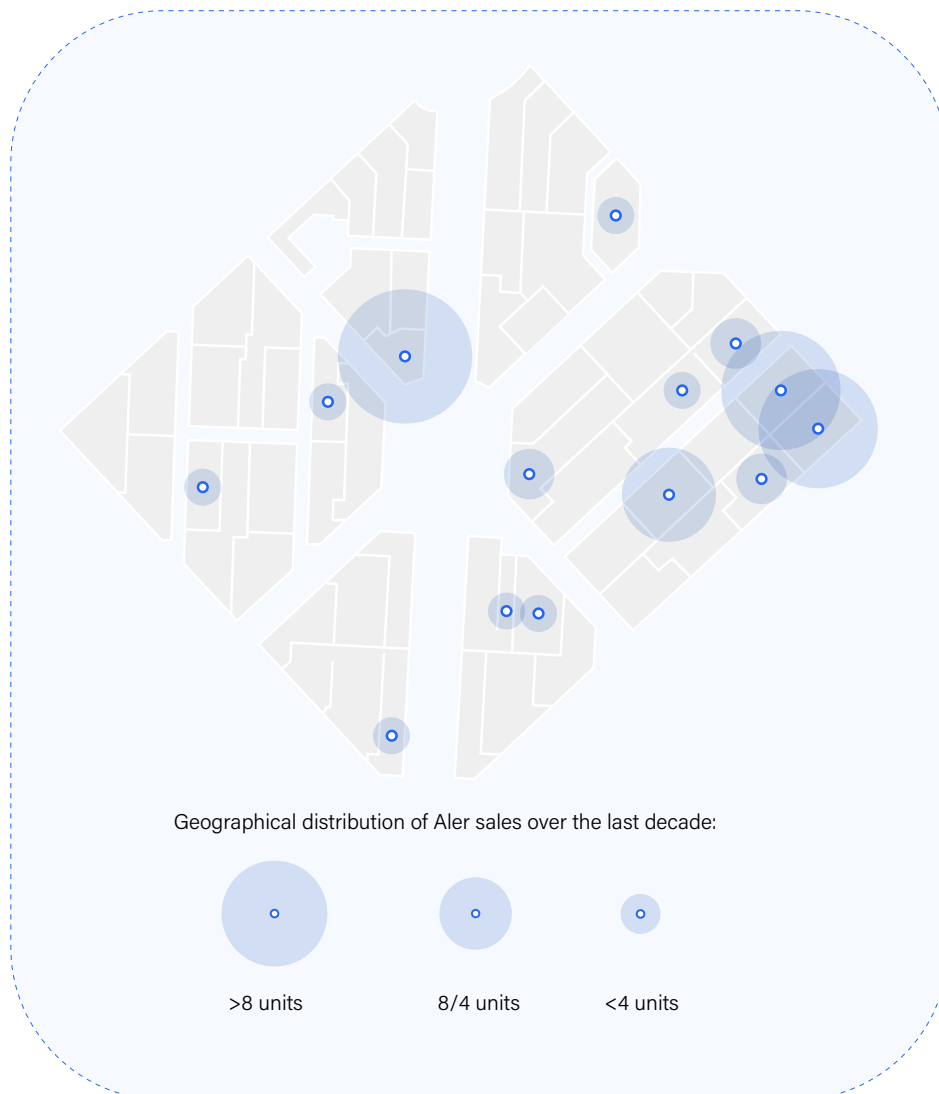
A comparison of the data for 2013 and 2021 (graph above) shows an overall reduction in Aler-owned dwellings (-104), a slight increase in rented dwellings in ERP and non-

ERP (+46), a substantial increase in dwellings on hold - i.e. vacant, under maintenance or development - (+151), and a very substantial increase in squatted dwellings (+432). Some data are inconsistent, probably due to different counting methods in the sources consulted. In particular, the total number of dwellings in the quadrangle, apart from specific management methods and their status, is 137 units lower in 2021 than in 2013 (in Aler's latest public presentation of 06/07/23 the number is still 9 units lower - see page 25). The number of housing units in the sales plan is also inconsistent.



Sources: Inspections, interviews with inhabitants and caretakers of civic buildings within the quadrangle (period: December 2022 - March 2023). Comparison of collected data with: Report "Mapping San Siro Data. Letture quantitative del quartiere Erp San Siro a Milano" a cura di Mapping San Siro, 2014. Municipal Council Resolution no. 1003 of 06/08/2021 "Approvazione delle linee d'indirizzo per la sottoscrizione del Protocollo d'Intesa per la rigenerazione del quartiere San Siro tra Prefettura di Milano, Regione Lombardia, Comune di Milano e Azienda Lombarda per l'Edilizia Residenziale Milano". Own elaboration.

The sales plans promoted by Aler in the last decade took place in the periods 2014-2019 and 2020-2023, respectively. It is interesting to note that most of the alienations took place in buildings that were already largely privatised before the last sales plans (graph above).



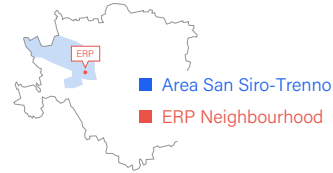
Sources: Inspections, interviews with inhabitants and caretakers of civic buildings within the quadrangle (period: December 2022 - March 2023). Comparison of collected data with: Report "Mapping San Siro Data. Letture quantitative del quartiere Erp San Siro a Milano" a cura di Mapping San Siro, 2014. Municipal Council Resolution no. 1003 of 06/08/2021 "Approvazione delle linee d'indirizzo per la sottoscrizione del Protocollo d'Intesa per la rigenerazione del quartiere San Siro tra Prefettura di Milano, Regione Lombardia, Comune di Milano e Azienda Lombarda per l'Edilizia Residenziale Milano." Own elaboration.

The coincidence of the higher number of sales in already largely privatised blocks of flats is evident from a comparison with the graph above, which shows the geographical distribution of Aler sales over the last decade, and the elaboration on the opposite page, in which the percentages of private and public property to date are shown for each block of flats. It is particularly noticeable that the south-eastern sector of the quadrangle is the one with the highest percentage of private housing. This sector is the one in which most of Aler's sales have taken place over the last ten years.

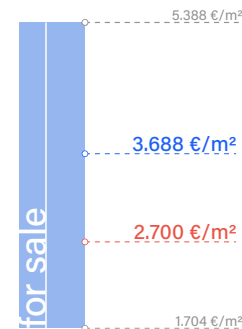


### 1.2.3 The real estate market and urban transformations in the San Siro area

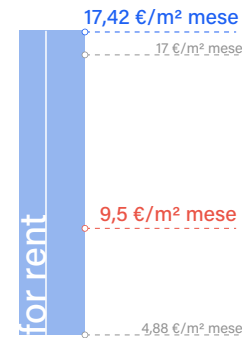
Average trend in rental and purchase prices in the area in question, period 2015 - 2023.



Average sales price [€/m<sup>2</sup>]



Average rental price [€/m<sup>2</sup>]



Source: [www.immobiliare.it](http://www.immobiliare.it). Data updated to April 2023. Own elaboration.

The slow but steady process of alienation and privatisation of the neighbourhood, which has been eroded in its public component, is overlaid by the dynamics related to private property, both within the quadrangle and in the urban sector (graphs above). The western quadrant of Milan, around the quadrangle, is now characterised by the presence of numerous transformations that will have a significant impact on the entire area. The interventions - many of them in progress - present various uses: in the vicinity of the Meazza stadium, some projects concern sports areas or leisure facilities, as in the case of the new Lido di Milano or the Terme de Montel. Alongside these, a significant proportion of residential projects, varying in size and time horizon, clearly emerges. A recurring element is the type of housing model that these projects propose, in continuity with the almost completed City Life district: apart from the occasional hint of residences for rent

at subsidised rates - as in the case of part of the project for the Piano Attuativo Trotto - the transformations envisage housing with luxury finishes, large terraces, private green spaces and exclusive condominium services. All these projects constitute an element of attention for the San Siro district, which is inevitably subjected to the pressures exerted by these dynamics of the real estate market. Below is an overview of the most recent projects realised; on the following page, the most important projects (realised, in progress and planned) are located on a map of the neighbouring districts that impact the San Siro area, followed by factsheets of ongoing and planned projects.

## CityLife project realised



**Timeframe:** 2009 - 2023

**Actors involved:** Consorzio CityLife (ownership).

**Intended use:** residential, tertiary, commercial, sports and leisure, green areas.

**Subject of the funding:** In the area of the former Milan trade fair, the new CityLife district has been built, with residential buildings, a shopping centre, three office towers and green areas.

*Source: Municipality of Milan. Image source: Holzner.Bertagnolli Engineering*



## Hotel NH Collection project realised

**Timeframe:** 2021 - 2022

**Subjects involved:** NH (ownership),  
Quattroassociati (manager).

**Designated use:** hospitality

**Subject of funding:** Near the Portello Exhibition Centre, the former Church of Christ the King was integrated into the construction of a new hotel as part of the NH Collection chain.

*Image source: Urbanfile. Image source: Niiprogetti.it*



## Metro line 5 project realised

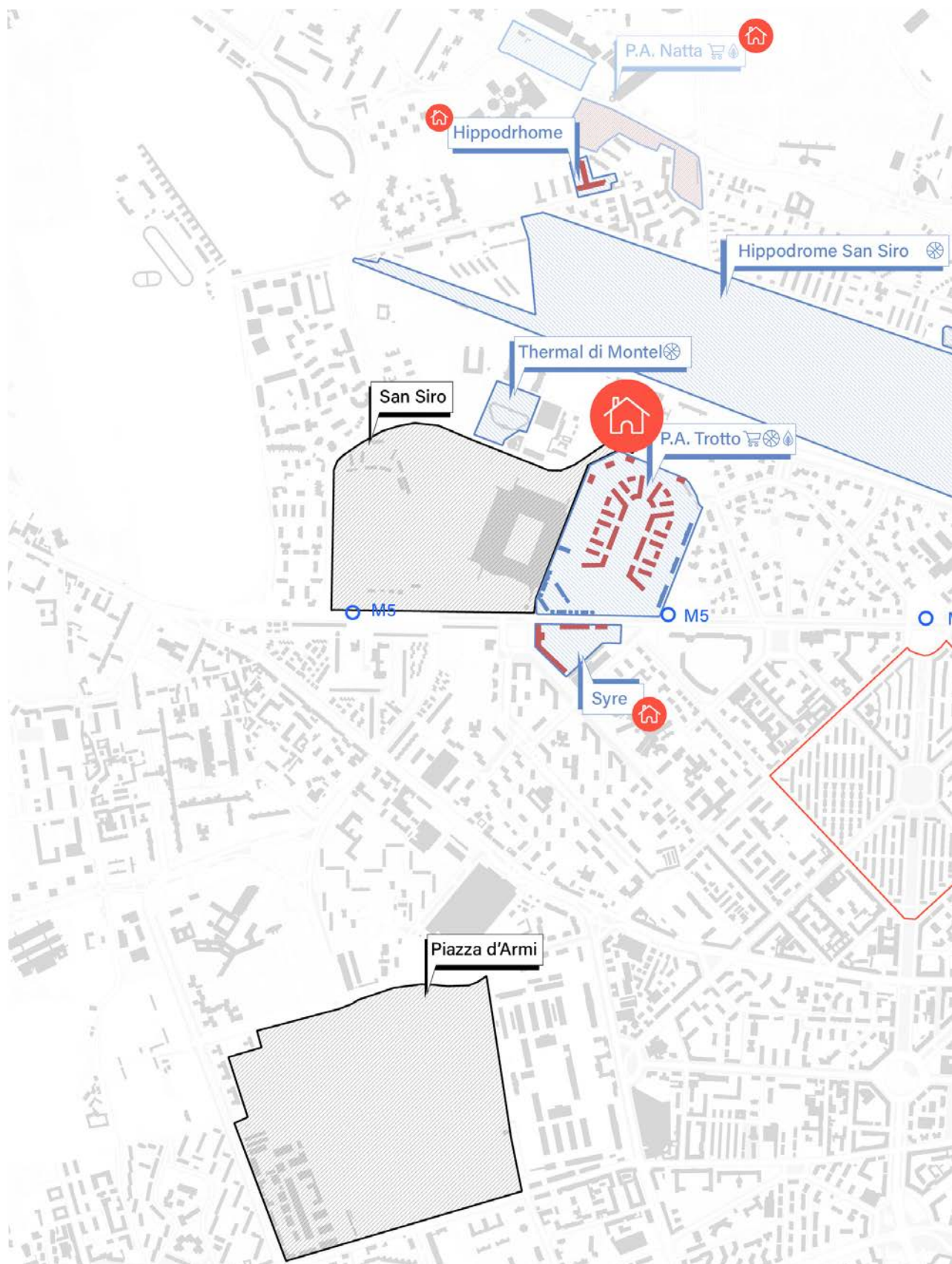
**Timeframe:** In the pipeline

**Intended use:** mobility

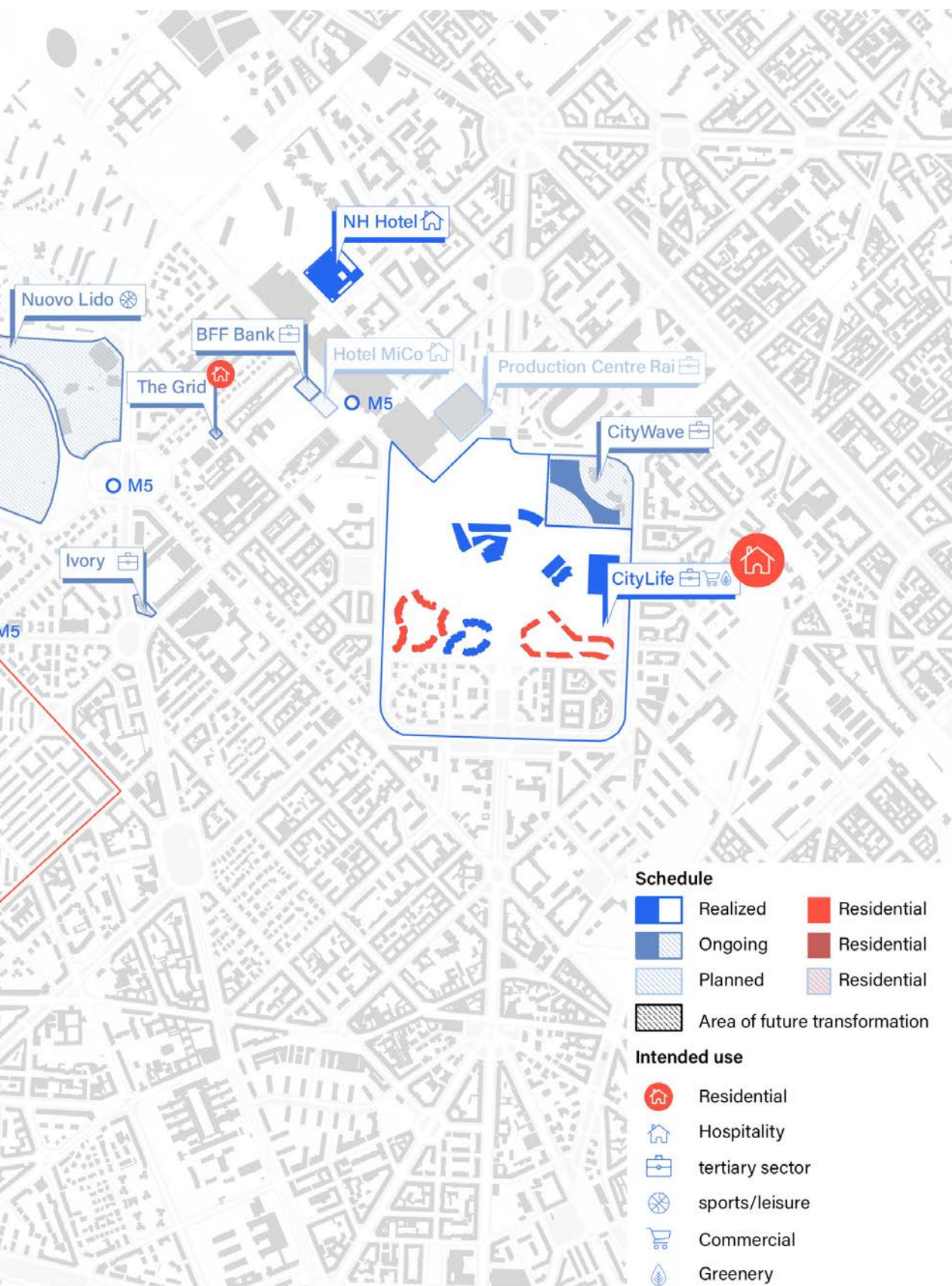
**Subject of funding:** Metro Line 5 was completed in 2015 as a light rail line and runs in the northern part of the city, from Bignami and San Siro Stadio.

*Source: Municipality of Milan.*









## Trotting Implementation Plan ongoing project



**Allocated funds:** 450.000.000€

**Timeframe:** 2024 - 2027

**Actors involved:** Hines (ownership),  
Kohn Pedersen Fox (architecture)

**Intended use:** residential, commercial, sports, green areas.

**Subject of the financing:** In the area used as the Hippodrome until 2012, adjacent to the current Meazza Stadium, work is underway for the urban regeneration project promoted by Hines. On an area of approximately 130,000 square metres, the project envisages the construction of residential buildings, with some affordable housing solutions, commercial services, sports facilities, neighbourhood services and green areas. *Source: Municipality of Milan, Urbanfile. Image source: City of Milan*



## Syre ongoing project



**Timeframe:** 2023 - 2025

**Actors involved:** Hines (ownership),  
Studio Marco Piva (architecture).

**Intended use:** residential

**Subject of the funding:** In the block adjacent to Piazza Axum, where some stables once stood and were demolished in 2020, a residential complex is planned, with a building along Via Rospigliosi, a tower of about 22 storeys and a third development not yet presented.

*Source: Urbanfile. Image source: Municipality of Milan*



## The Grid ongoing project



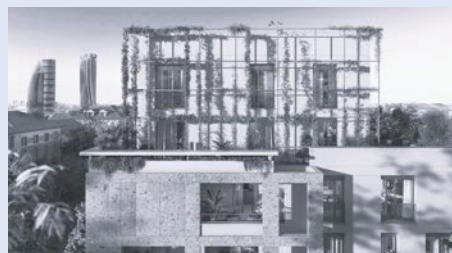
**Timeframe:** 2023 - 2025

**Actors involved:** Re.Mi (ownership)

**Intended use:** residential

**Subject of funding:** In a block of flats near piazzale Lotto, the demolition of a building belonging to a nunnery has made way for a new residential development: the project includes a residential building with high environmental performance and 'deluxe' flats with large terraces.

*Image source: The Grid Milan, Urbanfile. Image source: Urbanfile*



## Hippodrhome ongoing project



**Allocated Funds:** 25.000.000€

**Timeframe:** 2021 - 2024

**Subjects involved:** Gruppo Carlo Maresca (ownership), Beretta Associati, Protointegra (architecture).

**Intended use:** residential

**Subject of the financing:** North of the racecourse "Ippodromo del Galoppo", in the Lampugnano district, work is underway on a residential complex with a 22-storey tower and characterised by high energy standards, luxury finishes and innovative services.

*Source: Idealista, Urbanfile. Image source: hippodrhome.com*



## Montel Spa ongoing project

**Allocated funds:** 1.200.000€

**Timeframe:** 2022 - 2024

**Actors involved:** Municipality of Milan (ownership), Marzorati Architettura, J+S Spa (architecture).

**Intended use:** leisure (spa)

**Subject of funding:** Winner project of the Reinventing Cities competition, envisages the construction of a new spa facility in the former de Montel stables, integrated into the project.

*Image source: Urbanfile. Image source: Corriere Milano*



## City Wave ongoing project

**Allocated funds:** 100.000.000€

**Timeframe:** 2021 - 2025

**Actors involved:** Generali (ownership), B.I.G. (architecture).

**Intended use:** tertiary

**Subject of funding:** Completion of the City Life district with a fourth building for tertiary use: designed by studio B.I.G., the complex consists of two buildings connected by a wave structure which, covered with photovoltaic panels, defines a covered public space.

*Source: Urbanfile, Artribune. Image source: ElleDecor*





## Ippodromo del Galoppo

### ongoing project

**Timeframe:** 2022 - 2024

**Actors involved:** Snaitech (ownership)

**Intended use:** sports

**Subject of the financing:** Snaitech, owner of the Ippodromo del Galoppo, has initiated extensive maintenance work on the facility with the aim of equipping it with new services and infrastructure, on a par with other modern facilities, making it usable throughout the year and not just seasonally, and welcoming more spectators for horse racing events and concerts.

*Source: Il Sole24ore, Urbanfile. Image source: Urbanfile*



## New Lido di Milano

### ongoing project

**Allocated funds:** 25.000.000€

**Timeframe:** 2023 - 2025

**Actors involved:** Municipality of Milan (ownership),

Ingesport Health (architecture)

**Intended use:** sports

**Subject of the financing:** Major maintenance work is being carried out on the Lido in Milan, in Piazzale Lotto, by the company Ingesport Health and SPA consluting S.A., which will take over its management for 42 years. The project also includes the construction of a new swimming pool and sports centre, as well as the renovation of existing facilities.

*Image source: Milanotoday. Image source: La Repubblica Milan*



## Ivory

### progetto in corso

**Timeframe:** 2022 - 2024

**Actors involved:** Coima (ownership),

Piuarch (architecture).

**Intended use:** tertiary

**Subject of the financing:** At Piazza Zavattari 12, a building previously owned by Ubi Banca and then sold to Coima is to be redeveloped. The latter has started work on a new office building, taking some aspects of the previous one to create a structure with large balconies and terraces and high levels of energy efficiency.

*Source: Urbanfile. Image source: The Plan*



## BFF Bank

### ongoing project

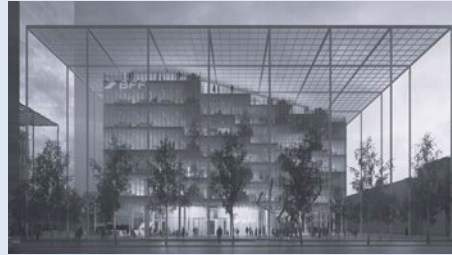
**Timeframe:** 2023 - 2024

**Actors involved:** BFF Bank (ownership),  
Open Building Research (architecture).

**Intended use:** tertiary

**Subject of the financing:** After purchasing the area owned by Fondazione Fiera Milano, BFF Bank started work on the construction of the bank's new headquarters opposite the pavilions in Viale Scarampo and towards which a large public square opens up. The building will also house an area for contemporary art.

*Image source: Urbanfile. Image source: Urbanfile*



## Natta Action Plan (North and South)

### planned project



**Timeframe:** In the pipeline

**Actors involved:** Municipality of Milan (ownership),  
Ediltrenno (manager).

**Intended use:** residential, tertiary, green areas

**Subject of the financing:** The implementation plan for the area near Lampugnano is divided into two areas: in the area to the south a new residential building complex is planned, to the north the project revolves around a public pedestrian axis, along which an office building, a green area and a commercial area are grafted. *Source: Municipality of Milan. Image source: agep.it*



## Hotel MiCo

### planned project

**Timeframe:** under contract works

**Actors involved:** Fondazione Fiera Milano  
(ownership), Studio Amdl Circle (architecture).

**Intended use:** hospitality

**Subject of funding:** Also in the area of the Milan Trade Fair, a new hotel is to be built to serve the Mi-Co Congress Centre at Portello. The new hotel, with more than 170 rooms on 21 floors, was designed by Michele de Lucchi (Studio Amdl Circle) and its construction is now going out to tender with the aim of inaugurating it with the Milan-Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics.

*Source: Urbanfile.*



### Rai Production Centre / planned project

**Timeframe:** under definition

**Actors involved:** Fondazione Fiera Milano (ownership), Rai (manager).

**Intended use:** tertiary

**Subject of the financing:** With the conclusion of an agreement between Fondazione Fiera Milano and Rai, it is planned that the latter will move and centralise its headquarters in a pavilion in the Portello complex.

*Source: Il Sole24ore, Urbanfile*

### GFU San Siro / area for future transformation

**Subject of the financing:** The area of the current Meazza stadium is one of the seven Great Urban Functions identified by Milan's P.G.T. and its future development is at the centre of much controversy. In 2022, the project promoted by the two football teams Inter and Milan to demolish the Meazza and build a new state-of-the-art sports facility was presented to the city in a public debate. Faced with the many criticisms that emerged during the debate, the Municipality of Milan, the owner of the area, placed new conditions on the proponents, who then turned separately to other areas of the city to build their stadiums. Faced with this new eventuality, at the beginning of 2024, a renovation project of the current Meazza signed by the Arco Associati studio was presented by the city administration, a last attempt to keep the teams at San Siro. Although the outcome of this transformation is still uncertain, the impact that projects of this kind can have on the neighbourhood and, in particular, on the ERP quadrangle, is a relevant aspect to take into account.

*Source: Municipality of Milan. Image sources: Milanotoday.it, Urbanfile.it*

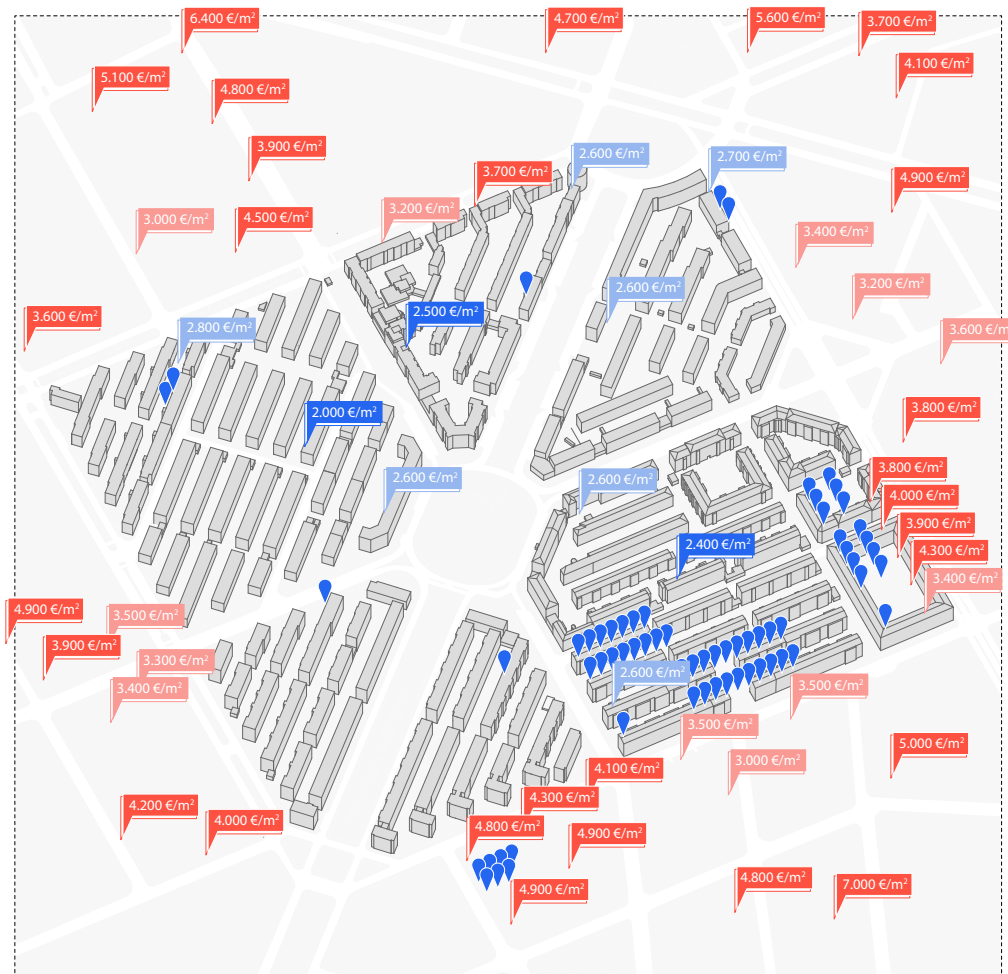
### Piazza d'Armi / area for future transformation

**Subject of the financing:** Identified as a Large Urban Function in the PGT of Milan, it now includes a large green area, some old military warehouses and military barracks. New real estate development and the creation of an urban park are planned for the area. Although there is still no definite plan, the development hypotheses put forward have been strongly opposed by local associations and realities, especially with respect to the issue of the protection of green areas and ecosystem services that exist today.

*Source: Municipality of Milan*

The mapped and filed projects tell of how the neighbourhood is changing rapidly. These transformations have a major impact on the growing real estate pressures in the quadrangle. As can be seen in the map on the opposite page, just beyond the streets that perimeter the ERP district, there are now some of the highest real estate values in Milan, and about double those within the quadrangle. Within this neighbourhood there are several properties for sale by tenants who are already owners. One figure is of particular interest, relating to sales through judicial auctions: this appears to be the prevalent mode of sale within the district (about 85% of the housing on the market within the quadrangle is for sale through judicial auctions). This was confirmed in interviews conducted with several estate agents in the San Siro area (some excerpts, in anonymous form, can be

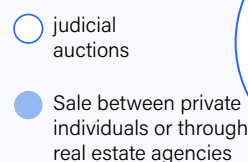
read on the following pages). From the interviews it emerged that most of the profiles of the owners whose housing is now being sold by judicial auction have a migration background and have owned the property for about twenty years. These poor and at-risk owners have been faced with mortgages that are not commensurate with their family circumstances, particularly in recent years and after the Covid-19 pandemic.



Private accommodation for sale in t  
Market prices in €/m2



Heritage for sale  
in the ERP quadrangle:



85.5 %

14.5 %

Source: [www.immobiliare.it](http://www.immobiliare.it). Data updated to April 2023.  
Own elaboration.

*Q. Who is buying property today in San Siro?*

A1: In the public housing district those who mainly buy are who we call Mr. Mohamed in the jargon, they are people who do not need to take out a mortgage, who buy - mainly in cash - two-room apartments of 120,000 euro to renovate.

A2: Foreigners, interethnic families, but also students, people who come from other regions and who perhaps don't have a sufficient budget to be able to buy in more expensive areas because, as you know, prices in Milan have skyrocketed, and so people must make do with buying in the working-class neighbourhood. A short time ago, two guys came, two students, who wanted to see a flat on Via Abbiati, then they also made a proposal to buy. As for foreigners, most of them are families, looking for small and medium-sized flats. They are almost all flats in need of renovation and refurbishment, and this affects the selling price, which is lower in the quadrangle than outside.

A3: That market there is very disturbed by the situation there, to use strong words by the 'rabble of people there' Do you know that they squat the houses? There is a kind of mafia running the system. Quite a degraded situation. Selling there is very difficult. In the last two, three years the situation has deteriorated a lot, only in the first few numbers on Via Abbiati and Ricciarelli you still manage to sell something. Years ago, before the financial crisis that was felt here between 2009 and 2010, many foreigners bought, then afterwards, most of them stopped paying their mortgages and the banks took the flats. Just outside, on this side, the market is different, although prices have shot up and it is very hard. Then there is the Lotto area, which has an even higher value, completely different from here. It's like there are three zones, very different and close to each other..

*Q. And who sells instead?*

A1: Many Italians are frightened by the situation and the presence of so many non-EU citizens. Most Italians are trying to leave. They are mainly elderly, they would like to live in quieter areas. Just outside the quadrangle, for example in the Piazzale Brescia area, there is no defined target of buyers and sellers, but it often happens that young couples want to buy, perhaps with a small child or with the prospect of expanding the family. In any case, buying is difficult, at the moment we have 4000 residential requests in the area and availability of about 40 flats: there is a very high demand from all over Italy.

A2: Many foreigners, and Italians from the south. Via Abbiati is now very revalued, especially on the outside. Inside, the situation is very different and less desirable, both in terms of the condition of the flats and the type of people who ask for them.



A3: Until the crisis of 2008, that is, before the crisis of 2008, many foreigners with a regular job were also buying, but today this is no longer happening. It has been lost because the banks no longer give such a high revenue (110, 120% before: practically with the mortgage you bought back the house, the furniture and the expenses) this thing is no longer happening now. And then the prices are high, you can't afford it, foreigners but also Italians, we're talking about the working class, people with a regular employment contract can no longer buy. Young people, couples, students are now buying, but in more liveable areas. In Via Novara, Quinto Romano, people buy at more affordable prices with a higher quality of life: they used to be dormitory neighbourhoods, now they are real, well-connected neighbourhoods.

*Q: Do you have, or have you had flats for sale in the quadrangle? What condition are they in?*

A1: The flats we had within the district are in very different conditions, in Via Abbiati 1 and 2 the flats tend to be already renovated, the further inland you go the more the buildings are in a critical condition, I don't want to say that we saw real 'slums', but that's the truth.

A3: Yes, last year we had a flat for sale on Via Ricciarelli, but on the opposite side from the popular one: they sold some old people, who had gone to live outside Milan, and a young guy, in his thirties, originally from Campania, who has been working here for years, and decided to settle down (obviously with the help of his parents), bought it. The issue is not that there are many foreigners: there are foreigners and foreigners, and there are Italians and Italians. There are foreigners who have businesses, who work, absolutely, and hard too, nothing to say, and they are also pissed off at those others who make the disasters. At night everything happens in Piazzale Selinunte, and they run the houses: that's the problem.

## 1.3 Condominium mapping

The maps on the following pages collect some data on the state of the public housing stock in the neighbourhood: the maps are the result of multiple inspections, carried out, civic by civic, and interviews with caretakers and neighbourhood residents. The information has been organised into thematic mappings, in which data on the characteristics of concierge services (next page), the quality and equipment of the condominium spaces (page 46), the state of maintenance of the buildings (page 47) and finally the management and administration methods (page 48) are given.

The overall picture of these mappings reveals an uneven and highly fragmented situation within the neighbourhood, in which situations of severe degradation coexist with attempts at care and ‘good neighbourliness’.

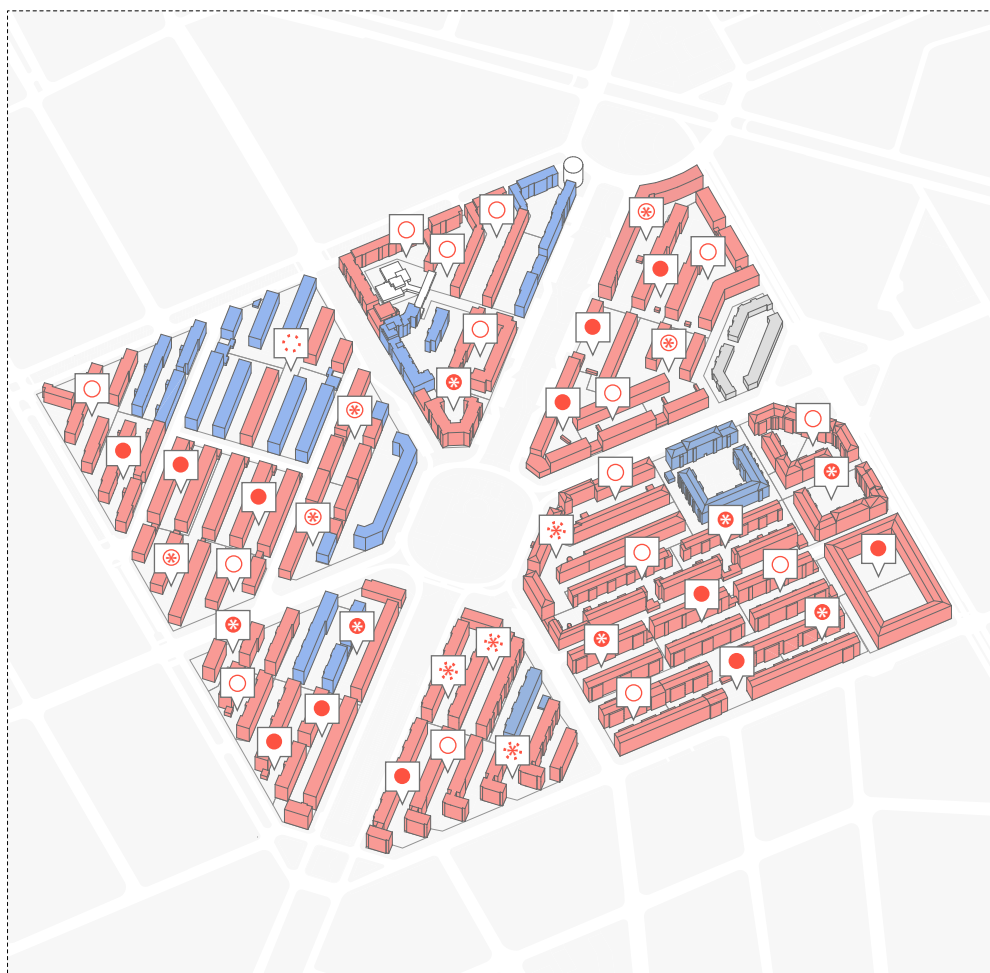
### 1.3.1 Concierge services

#### Operating status

- Active
- Absent
- Not foreseen (private homes)

#### Caretaker profile

- Resident caretaker with Italian citizenship
- ✱ Resident caretaker with foreign citizenship
- Italian caretaker from morning to afternoon
- ⊗ Foreign caretaker from morning to afternoon
- ⋯ Italian caretaker morning
- ✱ Foreign caretaker morning



Source: Inspections and intelocations with building caretakers, December 2022 - March 2023

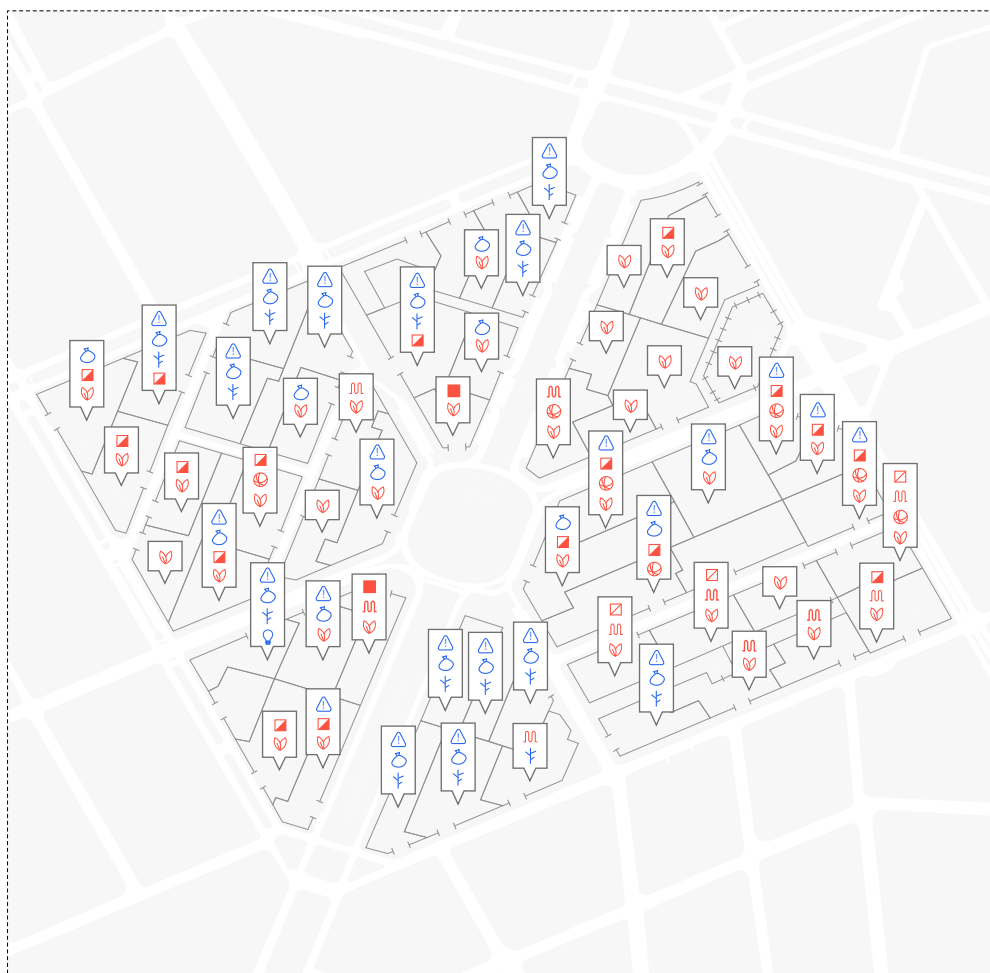
### 1.3.2 Equipment and quality of condominium spaces

#### Equipment

- Elevators in all staircases
- ▣ Elevators in some staircases
- ▣ Anticipated elevators
- ∞ Bike racks

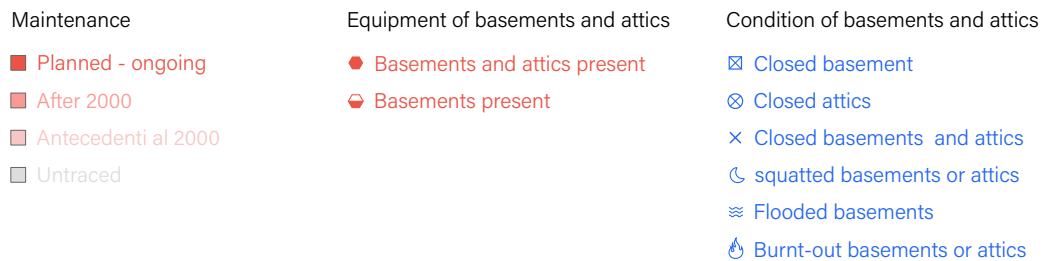
#### Quality of spaces

- ♥ Care of greenery and common areas
- ⊕ Spaces for play/gathering
- ✂ Degraded green and common spaces
- ⊖ Waste abandonment
- ⚠ Perceived insecurity
- 💡 Lack of lighting



Source: Inspections and interlocutions with building caretakers, December 2022 - March 2023.

### 1.3.3 State of Maintenance of the Buildings



Source: Inspections and interlocutions with building caretakers, December 2022 - March 2023.

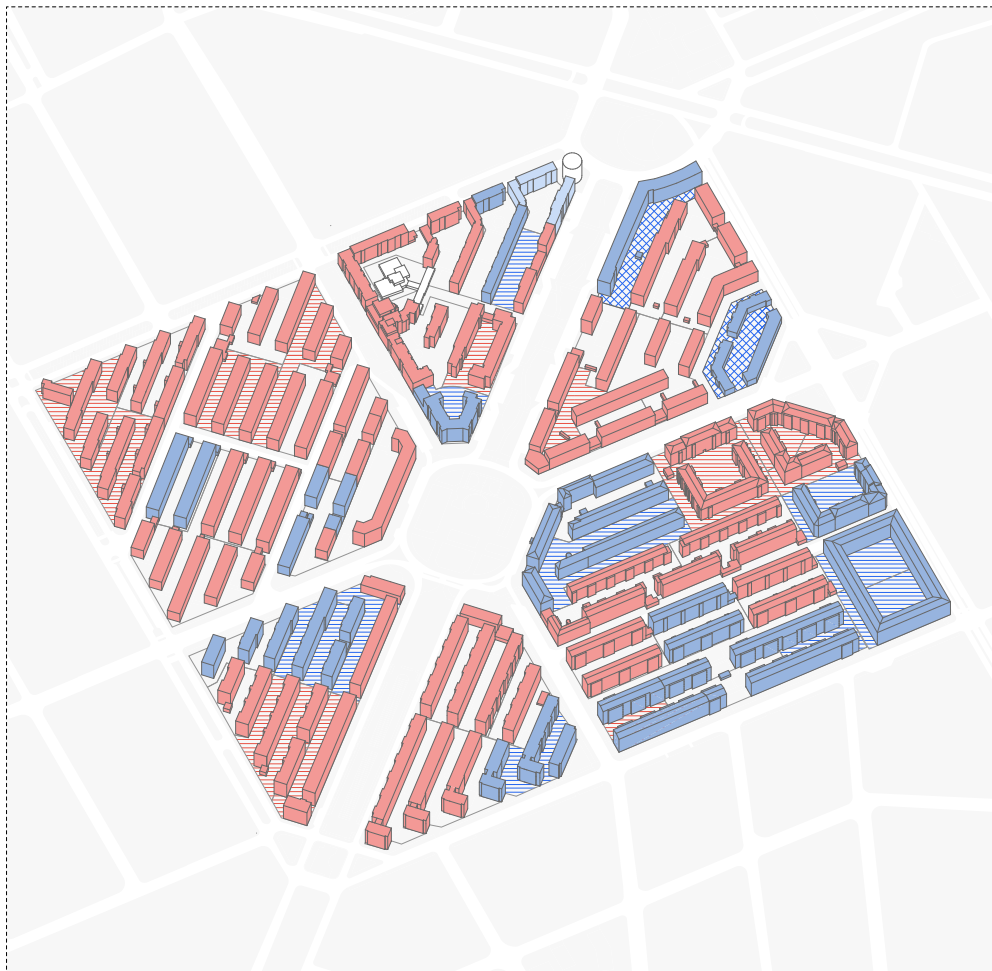
### 1.3.4 Administration and Management

#### Administration

- Aler
- Predicted privatisation
- Private

#### Property ownership

- >70% Aler
- >40% private
- 100% private



Source: Inspections and interlocutions with building caretakers, December 2022 - March 2023.

## 1.4 public planning:

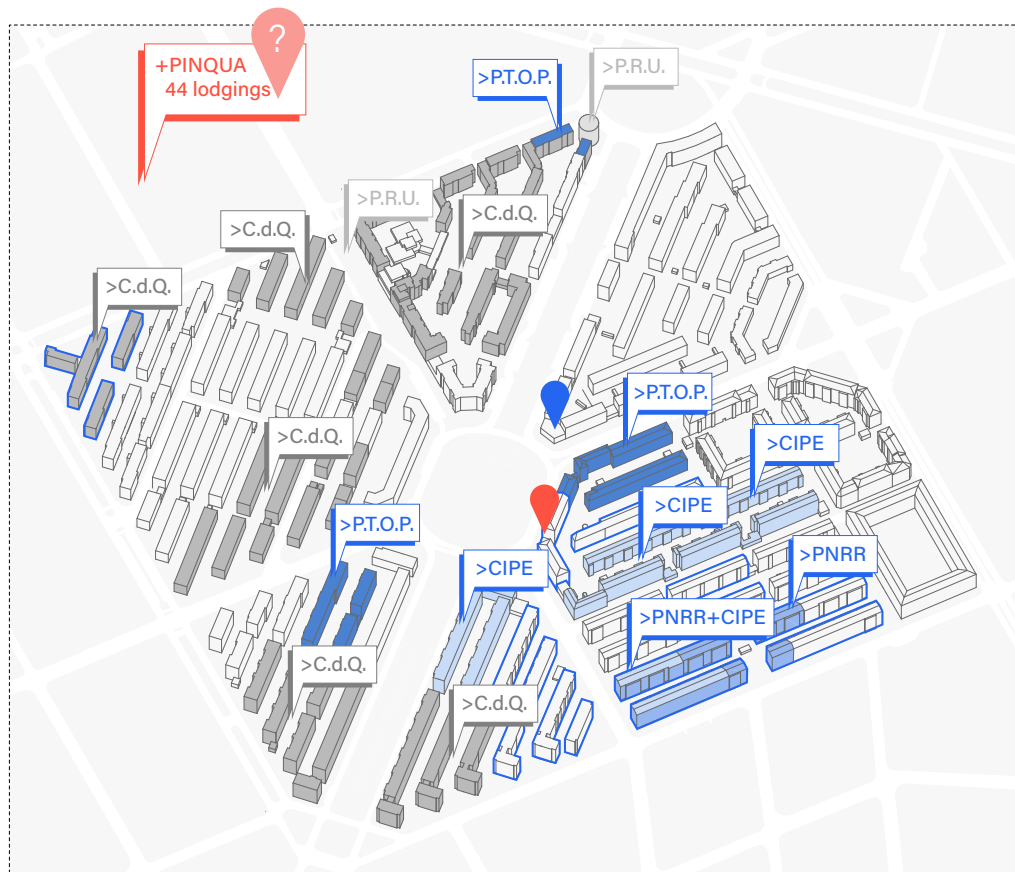
### Where do we stand?

Over the last few years, many plans, programmes and projects have been promoted with the aim of redeveloping portions of the ERP quadrangle, improving the housing conditions of the resident population and rethinking some of the neighbourhood's public spaces. In this section of the research work, an attempt has been made to reconstruct an overall picture of the various projects that have followed one another over time, taking as a starting point the first two major redevelopment programmes in the neighbourhood, respectively the Urban Renewal Programme and the Neighbourhood Contract 2, from the early 2000s.


The attempt to build a complete picture of the projects of the last twenty years responds to the need to understand, with an overall view, where and how the various funds that the neighbourhood has received over time have been invested. In general, a notable fragmentation of interventions emerges, which, apart from the Neighbourhood Contract, have so far been concentrated only in certain areas of the neighbourhood, mainly in the south-east quadrant (leaving some highly degraded sectors, such as the south-west quadrant and the blocks facing the north side of Via Paravia, without interventions). In the following pages it is possible to consult, in this order: a mapping of the interventions in the different areas of the neighbourhood, a timeline representing the programmes, plans and projects that have been concluded, are in progress, or are being implemented. At the end of the chapter a number of fact sheets are dedicated to each of the projects promoted over time in the ERP neighbourhood, with an indication of the reference regulatory framework, the funds allocated, the expected and actual implementation times, and at last a brief description of the interventions promoted and implemented. These representations show the framework of public investments and lines of action on housing over the last twenty years in the neighbourhood, also in the light of the recent funding allocated to the San Siro neighbourhood with the National Recovery and Resilience Plan - PNRR and the related Innovative Programme for Housing Quality - PINQuA.

What appears is a considerable fragmentation of interventions that, except for the C.d.Q., have so far been concentrated only in certain areas of the district, mainly in the south-east quadrant. Moreover, many of the interventions promoted and financed through the recent CIPE, PINQuA and PNRR programmes are still at an early stage even though the deadline for the completion of works is set for 2026.

### 1.4.1 Comparing Plans, Projects and Programmes



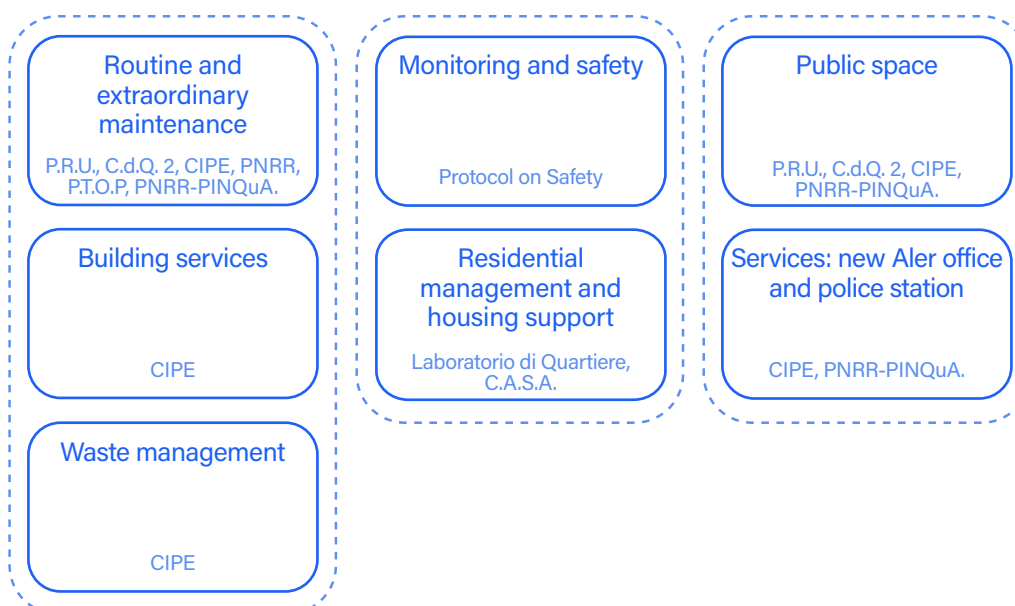
Map of projects

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Urban Renewal Programme                 |  Aler property valorisation plan              |
|  Neighbourhood Contract 2                |  PNRR - PINQuA / Move in San Siro             |
|  CIPE Programme                          |  Neighbourhood Workshop + Social Care Service |
|  PNRR / Safe Green and Social Programme  |  Progetto C.A.S.A. + Community managers       |
|  P.T.O.P. / Three-Year Public Works Plan |  |



Public funds allocated  
for the San Siro quadrangle  
in the last 6 years  
**40.1 million €**

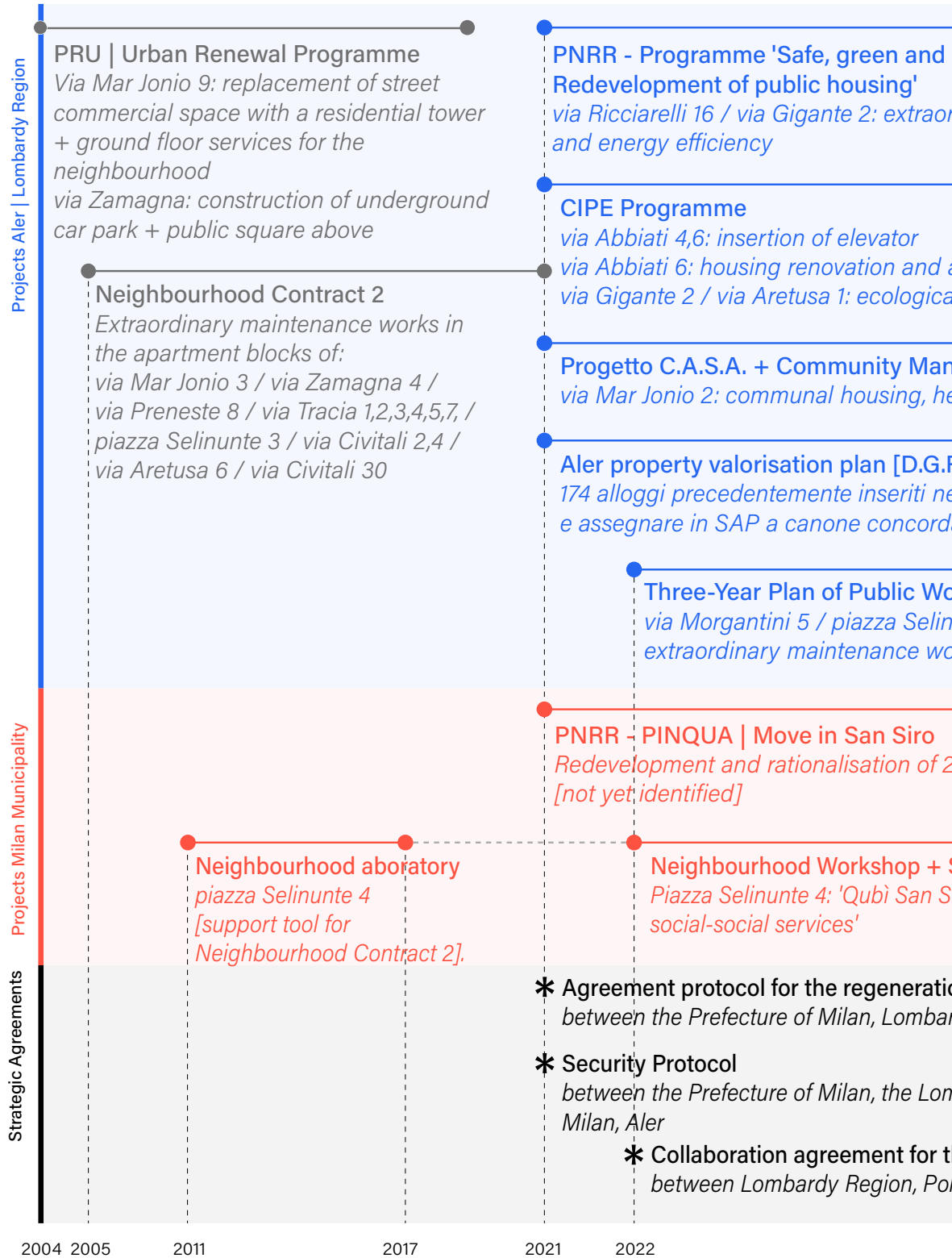
#### Areas of intervention

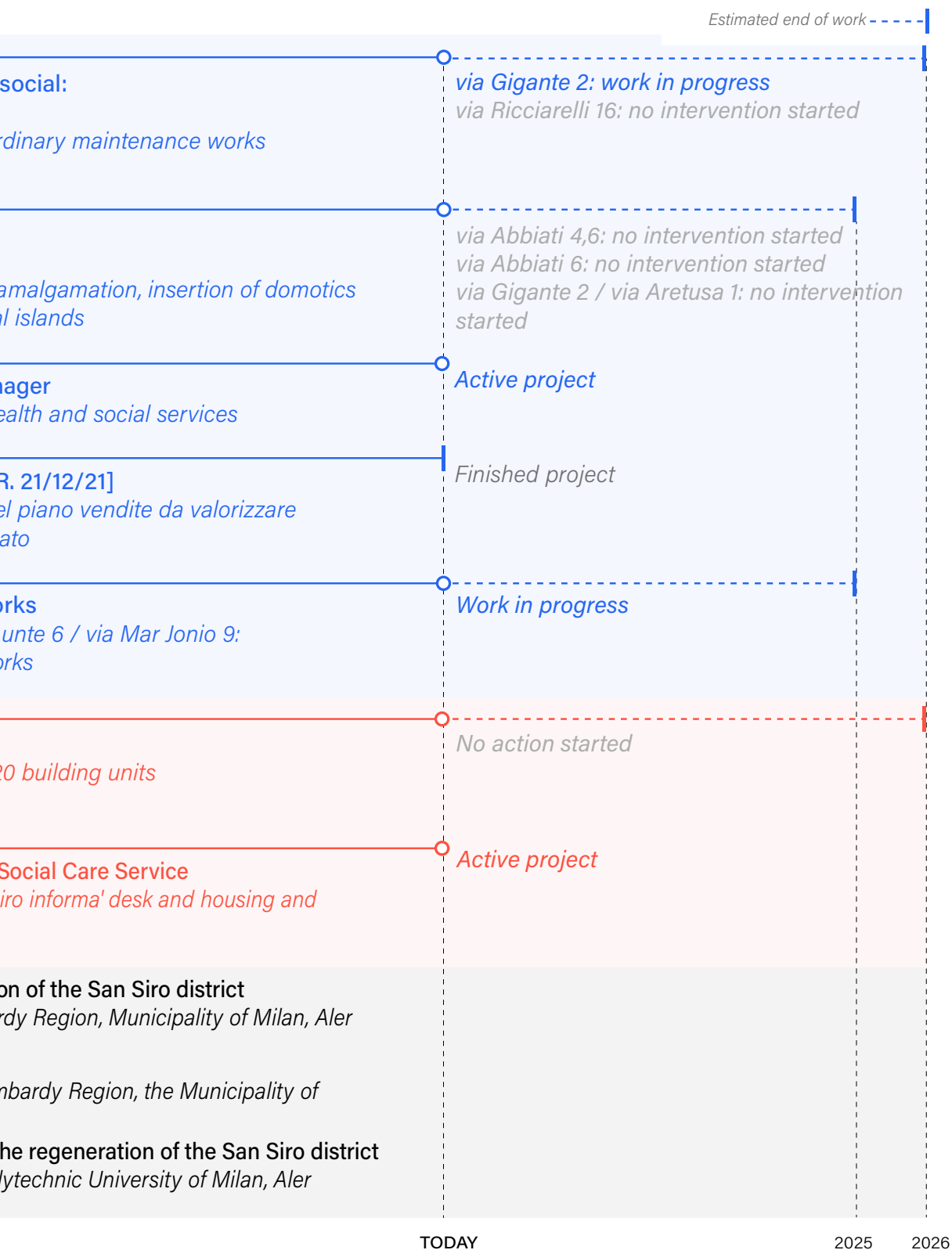


*For sources, see the detail sheets of the individual projects on the following pages.*

The map on the opposite page shows the geographical distribution of interventions in the different areas of the district. On the next page a timeline has been drawn up representing programmes, plans and projects that have been concluded, are in progress, or are being activated. This is followed by several fact sheets dedicated to each of the projects promoted over time in the ERP district, with an indication of the reference regulatory framework, the funds allocated, the planned and actual implementation times and finally a brief description of the interventions promoted and implemented.

## Timeline of the interventions





## P.R.U. / Programme of Urban Renewal

**Funds allocated** 46 billion lire

**planned Timeframe** 1998 - 2001

**effective** 2000 - 2004 c.ca

**Actors involved**

Aler, Lombardy Region,  
Municipality of Milan



**Subject of funding**

Demolition of the commercial space and construction of a residential tower with ground floor for services in Via Mar Jonio 9. Construction of an underground car park and a public square above it in Via Zamagna, corner with Via Paravia..

*Source: D.G.R. 6/96, L. 5 agosto 1978 n. 97, P.R.U. Programmatic Lines (4917/1998).*

## Neighbourhood Contract 2

**Allocated funds** 45 mln €

**Planned timeframe** 2005 - 2012

**effective** 2010 - 2021

**Actors involved**

Aler, Lombardy Region, Municipality of Milan,  
Polytechnic University of Milan



**Subject of funding**

Renovation of buildings Via Mar Jonio 3, Via Zamagna 4, Via Preneste 8, Via Tracia 1,2,3,4,5,7, Via Civitali 2,4, Via Aretusa 6. In Via Civitali 30 the initial demolition and reconstruction project is converted into extraordinary maintenance. Redevelopment and arrangement of public space in Piazza Selinunte and Via Mar Jonio.

*Source: Cella M. (ed.), Un contratto per la città. I Contratti di Quartiere II a Milano, EdicomEdizioni.*

## Programme CIPE

**Allocated funds** 8.6 mln €

**Planned timeframe** 2023 - 2025

**effective** [no action started]

**Actors involved**

Aler, Lombardy Region,  
Municipality of Milan

**Subject of funding**

- a. Via Abbiati 4,6: extraordinary maintenance of courtyards, installation of lifts [4.3 mln €].
- b. Via Abbiati 6: recovery building staircase G [1.4 mln €].
- c. Via Zamagna 6: recovery Ex Omni building (new headquarters Police Station) [2.6 mln €].
- d. Arethusa Street 1, Gigante Street 2: insertion ecological islands [300000 €].

*Source: CIPE Resolution No. 127/2017.*



## PNRR / Programme Safe Social Green

**Allocated funds** 7.5 mln €

**Planned timeframe** 2023 - 2026

**effective** [Work in progress]

**Actors involved**

Aler, Lombardy Region

**Subject of funding**

Routine maintenance and energy efficiency of the buildings at Via Ricciarelli 16 and Via Gigante 2.

*Source: DGR no. 37 of 06 October 2021*



## Three-Year Plan of Public Works

**Allocated funds** 12 mln €

**Planned timeframe** 2023 - 2025

**effective intervention** started in Via Morgantini 5

**Actors involved**

Aler, Lombardy Region

**Subject of funding**

Building rehabilitation and securing of buildings in Via Morgantini 5, Piazza Selinunte 6, Via Mar Jonio 9.

*Source: Regional Council Resolution*

*11/7020 - Sitting of 26.09.2022.*



## Enhancement Plan of Aler properties

**Funds allocated** /

**Timeframe** 2018 - 2022

**Tot. calls** 2

**Actors involved**

Aler, Lombardy Region

**Subject of funding**

Recovery of 174 appartements previously included in sales plans. The mechanism envisages a tender notice for the allocation of individual dwellings, with the tenants undertaking to carry out the necessary renovation work and the subsequent deduction of the related costs from the rent.



*Source: CIPE Resolution No. 127/2017, Regional Council Resolution No. 11 / 5760 Session of 21/12/2021.*

## **PNRR / PINQuA Innovative Programme for Quality of Living**

**Allocated funds** 15 mln €

**Planned timeframe** 2022 - 2026

**effective** [no action started]

**Actors involved**

Aler, Lombardy Region,

Municipality of Milan, Metropolitane

Milanesi, A.M.A.T.



**Subject of funding**

- a. Renovation of 20 dwellings (to which another 24 were added) within the ERP district
- b. Redevelopment of public spaces in the neighbourhood

*Source: Municipal Council Resolution No. 284 of 10/03/2023*



## Neighbourhood Workshop + Social Custody

### Actors involved

Municipality of Milan

**Project start** from 2021

### Subject of funding

Activation of an information and orientation point for services and resources in the area; activation of a support service for persons and families in fragile conditions..



## Project C.A.S.A. + Community managers

### Actors involved

Aler, Region of Lombardy

**Beginning of the Project**

### Subject of funding

Activation of a space offering health services and communal socio-health services; inclusion of the figure of the community manager in the area, for the support and accompaniment of integrative housing services.





#### 1.4.2 A successful experiment within the San Siro neighbourhood contract

The Ministerial Decree of 27 December 2001, published in G.U. no. 162 of 12/7/2002, defined the resources and characteristics of the programme called 'Neighbourhood Contracts 2'. This decree allocated substantial funding to the Regions, with the primary objective of intervening on the building, urban and social degradation of public housing districts, through the participation of the inhabitants, union organisations and associations present in the area in defining the programme's objectives and drawing up the final projects. The Region of Lombardy authorised 23 programmes for a total amount of 305 million euro (Ministerial Decree no. 394 of 28 October 2004).

In the Municipality of Milan, out of sixteen areas at risk initially identified, five Neighbourhood Contracts have been authorised: Mazzini, San Siro, Calvairate/Molise, Gratosoglio, Ponte Lambro, for total funding of 220 million euro. In the specific context of the San Siro district, the Neighbourhood Contract envisaged work on 14 house numbers for a total of 1,542 dwellings (of which 180 are now privately owned, having first been sold in the 1980s). The contract also provided for: the redevelopment of several services in the neighbourhood; the renovation of the heating plant and heating network; the revision of the road system; and the reorganisation of the urban public space in the streets adjacent to Piazza Selinunte and in the square itself.

The experience and contribution of several professors from the Polytechnic University of Milan and the Siset union to the redevelopment of the district were collected in an interview with Anna Delera and Maria Finzi, respectively professor of architecture at the Polytechnic University of Milan and Siset worker and trade unionist. Thanks to their stories, it was possible to reconstruct the events of a complex and articulated process that, despite the difficulties and constant delays, still remains the most important and effective project in the San Siro ERP district.

They relate to the project for the building complex in Via Civitali 30, which is one of the 14 buildings covered by the Neighbourhood Contract. A complete demolition and reconstruction was initially planned for this complex, with a loss of the total number of dwellings and an overall decrease in public housing units. Thanks to the will and perseverance of some active neighbourhood actors, including Anna Delera and Maria Finzi, the project was modified over time and the demolition of the building was replaced with extraordinary maintenance. The interview, in the following pages, attempts to reconstruct the events, the difficulties faced and the outcomes of this long and interesting neighbourhood project.

*Q: Where did your participation in the Neighbourhood Contract 2 originate? How did you become involved in the contract? Your participation was not envisaged at the beginning, is that correct?*

A.: Everything, even the Civitali 30 experience, stems from another project. That of Via Maratta 3 and Piazza Monte Falterona 1 and 3. Ermanno Ronda and I, then secretary of SICET, in 2002 - before the neighbourhood contract - had tried with the Region of Lombardy to make an experience of participatory planning. They were the first approaches to the subject. There was barely any talk of it in Italy, and the CdQs we had opened on the introduction of this new design methodology. Through Ermanno's contacts with the Region of Lombardy, we had proposed to do an experiment in the neighbourhood of 'something' that would try to put this new method of intervention into practice with the participation of the inhabitants, even though we did not yet know what it would be. At a certain point in the Region we found a young official in the housing sector, architect Francesco Bargiggia, who took us seriously and found the buildings in the San Siro district, Via Maratta 3 and Piazza Monte Falterona 1-3, in which Aler had already invested heavily in extraordinary maintenance (the roofs and façades had been redone, and some lifts had been added), which could become the places where this experiment could be applied to those parts of the building where no work had yet been done: the courtyards. The maintenance work on the buildings had, however, taken a very long time, as is often the case, and the building site had lasted for years: contractors had gone bankrupt; various subcontracts had left the building site on hold for months and years. The overall financing also included the redevelopment of the courtyards of the civic buildings, but these have not yet been realised or even designed. Arch. Bargiggia then proposed that we work on these courtyards, which for years had been used as construction site areas and then left in a pitiful condition - abandoned concrete mixers, rubble, iron, building site material - and which the Region did not want to entrust to the various companies that had been subcontracted. This complex terrain of obvious disaster and conflict between the inhabitants, deprived for years of the possibility of using collective spaces, and the institution, could have become an interesting field of experimentation for implementing a participatory planning intervention. This was when the Region was preparing to participate in the second call for neighbourhood contracts, the first had been in 1997 but Milan had not received any funding,. So there was this issue of participatory planning that we did not yet know how to manage and which way to go, and for the Region, the experiment on the courtyards of San Siro could become a measure to understand how to then organise ourselves. So in 2002 we started this activity in the form of Workshop ABITA at the Polytechnic University of Milan, in

collaboration with Sicet and commissioned by the Region of Lombardy.

*Q: Sicet was already based in Piazza Monte Falterona 3, so it was already present in the area?*

A.: Yes, Sicet was already based there. Maria, however, was not yet working for Sicet, she was outside of all that: she came in after this operation. In Via Maratta 3, we were assigned a small room in the entrance hall and there we set up the Participatory Design Laboratory in which we undertook, in the following months, various activities with the inhabitants to redevelop the communal spaces. The courtyards that are now there in those three houses are the fruit of this experience. At the end of the work, we packaged the data and materials collected, recounted the experience, and delivered the project that emerged from the design experience with the inhabitants to Aler and the Region. During the activity there were two moments of confrontation with the inhabitants of the courtyards concerned, and correction of the project ideas that emerged from the findings of the various meetings and the activities promoted during our stay in the Laboratory. Once the work and the preliminary project had been delivered, however, the execution of the project, the request for authorisations and the work direction were assigned to an external designer. Only after a very long time did the work begin, but not in its entirety. The new rubbish dump we had planned for Piazza Monte Falterona 3 had not yet been authorised and the residual funding from the previous building redevelopment contract had been exhausted. In the following years, Ermanno and I continued to bring the work to completion, and at that point Maria, an old acquaintance with whom I had worked at university and who had been involved in community participation with Officina Ecologica, joined in. She had experienced participatory urban planning in the early 1990s, so there was some interest in these issues on her part. At the beginning of 2005, after various insistences by Ermanno and myself, work had finally resumed in the three courtyards and I needed someone to help with the management. The overall work in the courtyards was completed in April 2007 - a biblical time. At the same time, the Neighbourhood Contracts 2 started.

M.: This premise serves to tell how we were already partly involved in a process in progress within the neighbourhood and how we already had a presence, if not daily, then biweekly within the neighbourhood. This was, to all intents and purposes, a job following an assignment, but in order to put this work in place and for the history of that participation work, there was a continuous relationship and rapport with SICET, through Ermanno and Tina - the person in charge of the San Siro neighbourhood, with Don Roberto Villa of the Maria Vergine Addolorata Parish, and together with other realities such as the Micene Social Centre, Alfabeti and the CPS, with whom we set up the San Siro Working Group to deal with the Neighbourhood Contract 2 - San Siro and to create an interlocutor to create participation at the level of associations and inhabitants, and with whom we held meetings in the parish, in Via Micene, at SICET and in Via Maratta in our workshop. We were still not talking about Via Civitali 30, but soon afterwards we

were.

A.: When the Neighbourhood Contract was presented, it envisaged the demolition of Via Civitali 30: this was the stone of scandal that started it all. In itself, the demolition of this house number, which from a formal point of view was going to conclude that part of the district's quadrangle and which had also been designed by relevant authors, was a blasphemy from the point of view of architecture and the provision of ERP housing. With the demolition, 136 ERP dwellings were to be eliminated, while with the reconstruction, 40 ERP and 60 private dwellings were to be built in two small buildings that had absolutely nothing to do with the neighbourhood and would have disrupted the design of the neighbourhood itself. One of the justifications given to justify the 60 new private dwellings was that, in order to implement some of the interventions of the neighbourhood contract, Aler had the problem of the dwellings already sold to the inhabitants, to whom it wanted to be able to propose - but it was a bit of a pretext - a transfer to new dwellings at a more advantageous exchange rate, since these owners, scattered all over the neighbourhood, risked being major obstacles to the implementation of the work: They would have to share in the cost of the redevelopment and there was the possibility that they would get in the way, as in some cases they even did.

*Q: So the idea of the project was to move the owners of housing scattered around the neighbourhood by merging them into one building?*

A.: This was one of the justifications with which they had justified the construction of the 60 private dwellings, all of which were planned to be in one of the two buildings.

*Q: It seems strange that owners, i.e. people who have already bought a property, precisely identified, then decide to move to another one.*

A.: In fact, precisely because of this, it was necessary to create advantageous conditions for owners: anyone who bought a flat in a run-down area or building in the neighbourhood was offered a flat of the same size in a newly built building, economically at zero exchange. It could have been a profitable exchange and would probably have eliminated the problem of fragmented sales that had been made over time! It had been realised how the coexistence of owners and assignees within the same building created a lot of problems whenever renovation costs were to be incurred. This was a motivation that was not explicitly stated, but stated between the lines. An explicit motivation, on the other hand, was related to the question of the shape of the neighbourhood and its desire to open up towards the city, with a direct route and crossing towards the old farmhouse 'Cascina Case Nuove', so as to have greater integration of the neighbourhood with the outside world. The idea was to open up Via Micene, which would somehow become an axis of the neighbourhood, by opening up the ground floor of the front of the building in line with Via Preneste. The trigger, therefore, for blocking the realisation of that project was, on the one hand, the union's stance on the loss of 96 public housing units and, on

the other, the loss of the neighbourhood's original identity in its architectural appearance. The decay of those buildings, however, was not such as to justify their demolition. On the contrary! In the neighbourhood there were, and are, parts that are certainly much more degraded.

*Q.: Indeed, one wonders, why precisely via Civitali 30 was chosen for demolition? Perhaps because of the strategic location on the edge of the district and thus the possibility of opening up towards the city?*

A.: Perhaps. This fact of opening up towards the old farmhouse and towards Via Novara could in some way have favoured this decision. We have to consider that the PRU had already been made, which, on the other hand, from Piazza Segesta had already demolished and built the building nicknamed 'kebab', which had, in some way, initiated the idea of transforming that square: the entrance to the neighbourhood from that side was beginning to look different. Thinking about it now, the intervention at this point could probably represent, in an overall idea, another point of access to the neighbourhood with respect to the city from the west side, even if in fact that area of the city was not, at the time, so relevant (today, with the H.S. neighbourhood in Via Cenni and the activities promoted in the 'Cascina Torrette' and the 'Cascina Case Nuove', even that part of the city is beginning to find new vitality).

M.: A key aspect, from a social point of view, was that 136 families lived in these 136 dwellings, a good number of them elderly and CPS patients. There were socially fragile families who would be put in serious difficulty by this intervention. There were about fifty homes to be recovered in the neighbourhood by Aler and then others in other neighbourhoods that could be offered to the inhabitants of Via Civitali 30, but this would have uprooted people who had instead developed living habits and social relations there over the years.

A.: Another reason we emphasised for opposing the project was that the demolition of this tip would unnecessarily complicate the problem of accessibility, which the CdQ was supposed to solve, and which in this specific case was easily solved by inserting a lift in the central 'T' junction of the main building.

*Q.: Was the group you set up self-organised? Was it not responding to a specific request from the Neighbourhood Contract to establish a participatory process or other forms of involvement of the inhabitants?*

M.: We were a self-organised group, but composed of elements rooted in the neighbourhood, and therefore stakeholders whom it was impossible for Aler and the municipality not to recognise. There had in fact been a protocol of understanding, and some actions had been carried out: following these, the project was changed and the committee we had set up for Via Civitali 30 was recognised. However, the Turin company Metodi had been appointed to manage the participation in the process within the

Neighbourhood Contract, and this had put us in difficulty. During the implementation phases they were entitled to do what we were recognised for. Basically, there was a situation of overlapping competences. Metodi was the official organisation that established the Neighbourhood Workshop within which the institutionally managed meetings were to take place. We became one of the elements invited by them at the tables, but with an overlap of roles as well as competences. Metodi settled in what is now Alfabeti's headquarters in Via Abbiati 4: at that time, Alfabeti was based in the cellars of Via Maratta 3 where health risking problems were the order of the day! From then on, there were several moments of role misunderstandings.

A: I also have a dim memory of a meeting between myself and Ermanno with Massimo Bricoccoli (now Director of the DASTU Department of the Milan Polytechnic), then a very young researcher at the Polytechnic University of Milan, to discuss the question we were raising about the demolition of Via Civitali 30. The participation of this young researcher is important because the University, understood as an institution, was involved in the whole history of the Contratti di Quartiere (Neighbourhood Contracts) as it was commissioned by the Region of Lombardy and Aler. M. Bricoccoli took part in this meeting as an institution and Maria and I, as well as the Working Group, also as the Abita Workshop and therefore, again, as the University. So there was an overlap of roles: the Workshop Abita had the official assignment from the Region on Via Maratta 3 and Falterona 1 and 3, while there was no assignment as participation in the San Siro Working Group.

*Q. Regarding the demolition of Via Civitali 30, what were the main critical issues that were raised as reasons, apart from the problem of accessibility, to support the demolition of the building?*

M.: First and foremost, the need for maintenance work. But that of Civitali 30 was not a more dramatic condition than many others in the neighbourhood, on the contrary, it was perhaps one of the least compromised. In fact, I think that, probably, if we had not been there, the work would also have been done, but we blocked it with a certain simplicity because it was all really absurd and blown up in an exaggerated way: there were no real, solid reasons for it.

A.: We were able to obtain extraordinary maintenance for the T, but not for the two buildings behind it, because the Neighbourhood Contract also provided for more important building renovation work that, however, posed a more sensitive problem of mobility, which is what we did most of the work on. The first projects that were presented to us even envisaged joining the two buildings together in reverse, creating an intermediate body. The Region and Aler had not renounced a somewhat heavier redevelopment because the principles of the Neighbourhood Contract provided for the involvement of a private entity that would intervene within the public neighbourhood with the aim of bringing about a partial change of users. For the Contract relating to San Siro, Civitali 30 represented the focal point for achieving this objective. If it had not

been realised with private financing (obviously carrying different kinds of interests within the neighbourhood), the whole mechanism of building the Neighbourhood Contract would have vanished. But we opposed this hypothesis as well! While for the 'T' the extraordinary maintenance with the insertion of the lift took place in a very short time, the building renovation, in deferred, for the two buildings behind the 'T' saw its realisation in biblical times. I say 'in deferred' in the sense that the initial idea was to identify all the conditions of discomfort and housing emergency in the de facto state, in order to obtain provisional maintenance for the most serious situations, in the T and in the small buildings (which we had surveyed and reported and which an Aler technician had also viewed with us). After that, we had the objective of postponing the two stages of building renovation in such a way that, before starting work in stairwells C and D, work in E and F would be completed, in order to be able to move the inhabitants from one staircase to the other: we had imagined a real plan of gradual mobility of the inhabitants, so as not to leave anyone on the street or moved to another neighbourhood or to other parts of the same neighbourhood. This method was also applied within the T under extraordinary maintenance. Families could also ask to be relocated in the neighbourhood or even in other neighbourhoods, but we tried as much as possible, especially for those who requested it, to preserve the same social fabric within the apartment block. This work was also done with a little funding that came from the Local Security Plan and the Courtyards Project.

M.: We had a hard time, but in the end we managed to get the list and the maintenance condition of the empty flats, i.e. those that could be used for displacement. By renovating T, in fact, we thought that the empty dwellings could become possibilities for moving some of the inhabitants from the other buildings within the block, so that we could start to put our hands on the buildings behind. There was a lot of empty housing in T that allowed this first transfer, so we made an agreement with Aler that they would renovate all the empty housing in T and keep it empty in order to allow internal mobility. We had collected the data of the inhabitants staircase by staircase, accommodation by accommodation: the number of elderly people, the number of children, the number of family members and the type of users, their relationship with the neighbourhood and their requests, everything was noted down and taken into account in the mobility plan. We gathered this information simply by going around the block. There were times when we went as a group, first to the courtyard with the porter - an extremely helpful person who had given us a lot of the initial information - and then house by house. The task was precisely in this sense: when the Courtyards Project arrived, through Alphabets, I was partly paid for this work [from the statement: 96 paid hours, 30 volunteer hours].

*Q.: What was your experience of the process with the inhabitants? What kind of involvement did you perceive? What difficulties - if any - did you encounter?*

A.: The memory I have is basically positive. Very positive, because we started from a success and when you start from a success, normally, participation works. The success

was the averted demolition, the modification of the project that was discussed from time to time in the neighbourhood, in assemblies where the designers were also involved.

M.: At the beginning there was a great momentum, given by the common feeling of people who felt the power to change things. After that, however, there was a more difficult phase: we had asked for and obtained the extraordinary maintenance work on time in relation to the emergency conditions at an early stage, but Aler, which had made promises to us, had still not achieved anything. This led to a certain amount of disappointment, which was further exacerbated by the timeframe that was getting longer and longer.

*Q.: How long was this process and then the implementation of the interventions?*

M.: There were phases when I was no longer even at Sicet in San Siro: the last building was finished two or three years ago, no more. At a certain point we gave up and handed over all this work on mobility: by then the problem of demolition had been averted, the 'T' had been quickly fixed. After a series of discussions with the planner, we handed over the work, continuing to follow it at the Sicet level and thus continuing to follow the tenants in mobility. We have reached a conclusion on many issues, however, in the intervening years, we have somewhat lost sight of the succession of events relating to the implementation of the project. One thing I will never forget are the elderly people, some of whom have died in the meantime, who were very uneasy about the prospect of mobility: this touched my conscience. We did everything we could to ensure that they were protected, but still, some did not make it to this moment of mobility, eventually even choosing suicide. This, and one episode in particular, disturbed me: I realized that no matter how much effort we can put into it, intervening so heavily and with these expectations of mobility, while still guaranteeing people the right to return to their homes, is a very difficult condition to deal with, especially with Aler's biblical timescale, which promises return after two years, which then becomes 15. So basically, it was a very positive experience, but it also raised several questions in my mind.

A.: I didn't know about this specific situation, but I remember walking past here four or five years ago and still seeing the scaffolding on these buildings and saying to myself 'it's not possible': the times have really been taken to extremes and they're not even justified, you can't understand why. Many people, who were able to make a move, moved and were happy, their move was successful, and they found themselves in better yards. Of others, perhaps those who stayed in the extraordinary maintenance part and therefore experienced all the work in the two buildings opposite, however, I would like to hear the testimony and hear how they have lived through all these years

*Q.: What were the demands, instances and needs that you had collected? What is your main memory of the situation of the tenants and the housing conditions they were in?*

M: On the residents' side, the conditions reported were conditions of infiltrations, leaks,



and things of that nature. With respect to housing situations, the main issues were - as they are today - overcrowding, below-standard housing, the high presence of elderly people

*Q.: Were the below-standard dwellings then merged to recover habitable housing?*

A.: In the "T" building, no, no work was done at all between the dwellings, and everything remained as it was: the lift was put in, and maintenance work was done on the stairs, facades, and roofs. Regarding the two buildings at the back, I honestly did not compare the projects carried out with those established, but here they probably also reduced the number of dwellings a bit, for "regulatory compliance needs", i.e. mainly for sub-threshold lodgings that could no longer be allocated.

*Q.: What kind of resonance has this process had at an institutional level? This is the project that stands out compared to the others in the Neighbourhood Contract: do you think it has had any impact at institutional level, or compared to the other interventions in the neighbourhood?*

A.: No. Because in my opinion we always (we too, not just the institutions!) move in sealed compartments, so since we were working here, the focus was only on solving that specific problem. Actually, what you are saying is very true: why not make it a model and have a focus, also from the point of view of product quality, compared to other interventions? When I walk around and see those little domes that the Neighbourhood Contract has put up to protect the entrances to so many buildings here in the area, when I see those horrible lifts put up outside, I ask myself 'but where were we?' In Via Civitali 30 the mobilisation was born from the trigger of the demolition, then we studied all the steps of the project and intervened, even managing to maintain a somewhat overall focus, but in the meantime, we lost sight of the other smaller interventions of the Neighbourhood Contract, which in the long run produced questionable solutions and an overall poor-quality result.

M.: This is also because, all this work was carried out in an extremely protracted timeframe, when by then this presidium and the attention had waned a bit and we had surrendered to the fact that the Neighbourhood Laboratory had gradually reduced our role: over time, we were no longer summoned to meetings, we were perceived almost only as a disturbing element.

A.: Among other things, I remember that the Neighbourhood Workshop eventually became an instrument that organised small parties and initiatives to keep the mood up, and although we tried to make them understand that instead of doing these things, it would be necessary to inform people about what was going to happen within the civic area, to check the implementation of the planned works and their quality, they did nothing more than this: that was their level of information. This theme of participatory planning, on which we should reflect a lot - I am very critical after the experiences we

have had - is a theme that in the end always runs the risk of leading you to parties and mass distraction elements with respect to what is the real reason on which and for which we are working. And then, let's face it, the Neighbourhood Contract in San Siro has produced physical and visual abominations: I'm not talking about all the social problems that it will certainly have caused - I can't see those, I didn't follow them step by step and so I can't know them - but when I turn around and see the domes, the lifts, the pathways, I see some really ugly things that make me think of how much public money has been spent badly and with which, instead, much could have been done.

M.: There was a proposal, also addressed to Aler, to open up courtyards and create transversal paths, but they have always been blind and deaf on the issue. In the Giambellino district, however, I recently had the opportunity to walk through four open courtyards, in which there are gates interrupted by openings that create a nice continuity. Of course, they have not completely torn down the fences, but a permeability has been created that works. So I think it could have been done here too.

A.: In Via Maratta and Via Falterona, even years later, it seems to me that the result of those courtyards, from the point of view of design, has held up as quality. After that, the people are there. But the quality of the project makes sense, remains, and leaves quality: Via Maratta is a project finished in 2007, so 15 years have all of them. Basically, these are efforts that make sense: there is no omnipotence, but we are dealing with such bodies that the processes are long, difficult, and badly managed. And then I repeat: project quality is something that the more time passes, the more I am convinced it is important. I didn't think 30 years ago that I would ever have such a determined view on project quality, but today I am more and more convinced of it. The things that we have defined within PINQuA are words, but from those words you then must arrive at a result that is qualitatively interesting - and by 'interesting' I mean as far as intervening in the choice of materials. With Maria, for Via Maratta, we also did a lot of work on the tree essences. This means making an investment that does not just mean making an economic investment. Moreover, having a daily relationship with the people who live there means bringing out all the problems and looking for solutions as the design proceeds, starting with a comparison and listening work. We can give the municipality a general design with all the good intentions, but from that design and that scheme, moving on to the implementation phase, and thus truly giving quality to the project, is difficult as well as fundamental - and it is only the quality of the project that then gives you back satisfaction over time, and probably also gives it back to the inhabitants. It is nice that today you walk around the neighbourhood and go to Via Civitali 30 and recognise a corner of quality in the neighbourhood, then go to Via Maratta and do the same: this is important, it means that there the seed that was sown is a seed that has borne fruit.

# Part 2

Other ways of inhabiting San Siro

## 2.1 The 'other' networks of living

Part of the public housing stock in the quadrangle (295 units) was hived off and entrusted to management outside Aler. These managing bodies, which are part of the large and varied set of third sector subjects, are mainly associations, cooperatives and foundations that develop projects to support housing in the San Siro district and other fragile areas of the city of Milan. To date, the subjects with the greatest presence in the neighbourhood are the DarCasa Cooperative, the Equa Cooperative, the Association Comunità Nuova and Caritas Ambrosiana.

Alongside the projects promoted by the third sector, an informal network of housing services has developed over time in the neighbourhood, which is rather difficult to intercept due to the opacity, fragmentation and difficult recognisability of the activities present.

Through a series of interviews with some of the inhabitants and caretakers of all the blocks of flats in the ERP quadrangle, it was possible to identify at least two informal dynamics that are widely and systematically present throughout the neighbourhood. One concerns the squatting system, which is managed by real intermediaries, responsible for identifying empty dwellings, managing access to the dwelling, and sometimes connecting the flat to the condominium electricity supply. The second dynamic concerns the subletting of individual beds, within Aler rented flats or, in some cases, private accommodation. It is estimated that in these lodgings, often the size of a two-room or small three-room apartment, between 10 and 20 people are housed for periods of time varying from a few weeks to several months. These are often migrants who have just arrived in Italy or Milan, in search of employment and without the means to find an alternative housing solution.

Another mode of informal support for living is the various forms of solidarity between inhabitants, who in many cases identify themselves within their communities, similar in culture, religion, or country of origin.

Within these communities, true mutual aid networks have been woven over time, through which relatives, friends or acquaintances are welcomed and hosted in the homes for extended periods of time, on a voluntary and solidarity basis.

### Experimentations of the social private sector

295 external managements of the property spun off from ERP. Third sector organisations present today in San Siro: Cooperative DarCasa, Cooperative Equa, Association Comunità Nuova, Caritas Ambrosiana

### Social management

### Informal housing management

#### The squatting system

Historical, stable, 'consolidated' squatting, or linked to organised crime networks

#### Dormitory houses [and alternative sleeping spaces]

Subletting of single beds in two-room or small three-room flats, accommodating 10 to 20 people, often migrants who have just arrived in Italy or Milan

### Mutual aid and solidarity networks

#### Long-term hospitality

Forms of solidarity between residents who identify within their communities, similar in culture, religion, or country of origin

#### Extended families and cohabitations

Hosting relatives, friends or acquaintances for extended periods of time, on a voluntary and solidarity basis

### 2.1.1. Experimentations of the social private sector

Following the interviews conducted with Maria Chiara Cela, an operator of the Dar Casa Cooperative, and Chiara Spaghi, coordinator of the housing project of the Equa Cooperative, several common themes emerged for reflection on the difficulties and challenges that projects of this type must face on a daily basis and in the long term in a multi-problematic context such as that of San Siro. The main issues, which emerged in both interviews, primarily concern four areas: that of the profiles of the housing recipients, that of the reception and services offered, that of integration with the neighbourhood, and finally the area of collaboration and coordination with other managing bodies.

As regards the profiles of the project recipients, it emerges that they only in some cases present particularly serious situations of economic and social fragility, while in most cases those who apply through the cooperatives present the same characteristics as the applicants in the Aler ranking list.

This situation testifies to the very strong housing need of certain segments of the population, who therefore try to act on several channels to somehow obtain housing at an affordable rent. The most common applicant profiles, in the case of Dar Casa, are single-parent households, small families and singles.

About the issue of accommodation and services offered, the interviews reveal that the accommodation given out is often too small to cope with demand, and access to accommodation is sometimes difficult even for operators, due to issues related to the perception of insecurity in the neighbourhood and in some buildings particularly. Finally, a case of squatting has long prevented the allocation of housing to the cooperative's applicant members. The issue of the integration of project recipients within the neighbourhood is a further common theme: the people included in these projects present, in almost all cases, situations of economic and social fragility such that living in the neighbourhood is often a further element of stress. The operators interviewed noted a general lack of a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood. However, some rootedness factors may be linked to the ability of the operators to intercept and address needs, through the network of services in the area; or to the presence of previous ties within the neighbourhood (this occurs especially within the Arab community).

Finally, as far as collaboration and coordination between the different managing bodies (i.e. between the Co-operatives and Aler) is concerned, a poor collaboration emerges on the part of Aler both with respect to the management of condominium maintenance and cleaning problems, and with respect to the inclusion of recipients in the ranking list. This fuels a general inability of the recipients of the projects to leave the welfare system, due to their inability to pay market-price rent.

*Q.: How did the project come about and why is it connected to the San Siro district?*

M.C.: When the cooperative was born in the 1990s, the idea that had come to the founders was to open negotiations with the municipality and Aler to have flats that the cooperative could renovate and then assign to its members. I think the choice fell on these sub-threshold flats or those that had already been hived off by Aler for other reasons - but in most cases they are sub-threshold flats, which in a few cases we have merged to make larger flats - precisely because the municipality and Aler could not assign them, so they ended up empty and unused. Instead, we, having no constraints with respect to the regional regulations for assignment, could restructure them and assign them to our members, always following a reasonable proportion with respect to the number of members. In fact, studio apartments are assigned to 1 or 2 people maximum, after which clearly the households can also change over time, so there are situations with larger households, now also in studio apartments. We have 60 flats in Quarto Oggiaro, a few flats in Corvetto and Molise, and these 39 flats here in San Siro. So in reality I don't think there was a real choice for a location, but the cooperative has taken scattered flats, i.e. those that the managers and landlords made available for this project, which was initially conceived as such.

*Q.: How many accommodations do you have and where are they located within the quadrangle? What types of housing are there in your project?*

M.C.: There are 39 flats that we manage, and they are mainly in Via Tracia, Via Ricciarelli and then there are some scattered in Via Paravia (1 flat), in Viale Aretusa (maybe 1 flat). Yes, the others are a bit scattered in Via Ricciarelli 20, 22, 24, and in Via Tracia, but they are not grouped together, they are distributed in different house numbers. We also have a flat at No. 12 in Via Ricciarelli. In general, the buildings in which we have flats are partly in apartment blocks, partly in entirely public buildings. Our accommodations are mostly below-standard, small studios. Especially in Via Ricciarelli and Aretusa, they are all like that. In Via Ricciarelli there will be about 15. They are flats separated from the public housing stock because they are sub-threshold and therefore cannot be allocated through the ranking list and the call for applications.

*Q.: Who are the target groups of your project?*

M.C.: They are the members of the cooperative, i.e. the people on the reservation list. Who actually formally should have certain requirements, which are however very broad, especially from the point of view of income: we borrow the requirements of subsidised housing, so the total gross income of the household cannot be no higher than EUR 46,000 per year. And then the member, i.e. the family, does not have to own suitable housing; but in reality, of course our members tend to have much lower incomes. The cooperative was therefore created with the idea of finding an answer and contributing to the housing problem of foreign workers in Milan who had a job but struggled to find housing, either for reasons of economic sustainability or precisely because of mistrust and discrimination. So our social base is mainly composed of people of foreign origin - some of whom have since become Italian - and of different nationalities.

Of course, there are also Italians who can register - everyone can register regardless of nationality, but they must meet these requirements. The rent is similar to the moderate rent. By now we are between €55-60/m<sup>2</sup> per year, but consider that since some flats are very small, particularly studio flats, we get around €210, including expenses. The utilities are separate, because then everyone activates their own utilities, as in a normal rental contract (although we have the assignment for use because we are a cooperative and they are members, so it's not a rental, formally, but an assignment in usufruct for an indefinite period). This means that as long as we have the accommodation, the person can stay in it, if they pay and if they respect the rules in the contract - as, for example, if they do not sublet. Another thing is that there is no VAT at 10 percent as in leases, but VAT at 4 percent because the users are precisely cooperative members.

*Q.: Have you carried out any maintenance or renovation work to be able to allocate housing to your members?*

M.C.: Yes, we redid the bathrooms, the electrical system, in some cases even the fixtures. These works are paid for by us, but we, for example in the last housing, I think we did not pay the rent for eight years, paying the expenses to Aler instead, of course, and with that rent discount we covered the works.

*Q.: Did you also merge some flats?*

M.C.: Not in this last round, but in previous rounds it has happened that we have merged flats. But in my opinion not in San Siro. We have some slightly larger flats - we have two-room apartments and even a four-room apartment in Via Paravia, which by the way was given to us as a change of accommodation from a flat in Corvetto that was no longer habitable. The four-room apartment is certainly the result of an amalgamation, which we did not do, however,



because they had already given it to us like that. The two-room flats, the ones I have in mind - but I think they are all like that - were already born as two-room flats, so I don't know why they were separated from the ERP. Maybe they were already social projects before and were put back on the market. The two-room flats belong to the first round; in this 2010 round they were all one-room flats and have remained so. Surely there is a cost issue, the amalgamation costs money, so we probably also considered that it was not possible to do it with the 8-year rent discount. .

*Q.: Compared to the demand you have from your members - or those who want to become your members - is the presence of so many studios an advantage or a disadvantage?*

M.C.: It depends, in the sense that it is a bit of a two-way movement. We, when people come to sign up on the list, we tell them what our offer is, especially to people who are looking for a three-room or four-room apartment (we only have two four-room apartments in our entire offer). Maybe the person signs up anyway because they only have to pay €25.82 and can stay on the list forever, but they have less incentive. There is also another issue to keep in mind: people are on the list for a very long time, so maybe they have registered as singles, but in the meantime, they have started a family, or maybe they enter as singles and after two months the family arrives, even if they are in the studio apartment. Because in any case they have no other possibilities, or they have few: some have a little more, others a little less, but it also happens that four or five people stay in the studio apartments. Members can then join our exchange list, but having that accommodation package there, the offer almost never changes.

*Q.: Regarding the management of the San Siro housing, what - if any - critical issues do you encounter in the maintenance of the buildings and in the management of your members' coexistence with the other inhabitants of the neighbourhood?*

M.C.: Regarding maintenance, the big issue is that we can only do so much - for example on all common services. We are tenants like everyone else, so if someone complains about the cleaning service rather than about the stairs not having electricity and things like that, we report it to the building manager or Aler, like everyone else. On these things we cannot intervene directly, except by reporting.

Let's say that the biggest problems we have had have been in housing: for example, we have had infiltrations that may have come from other flats. The problem is the response time to the report we make to Aler, or even the possibility of intercepting the tenant's flat from where the infiltration may be coming from - because he may be squatting, so there are a few difficulties. In the flats in Via Ricciarelli 22 and 24 it has become very complicated lately. Management has become very complicated.

*Q.: How do your partners react and how do they handle this situation?*

M.C.: We had had some questions about Via Ricciarelli. They started telling us that we could no longer use the cellars, that they had gone into the cellars. Then at a certain point the cellars were closed, so even members could no longer use that service. But we can't do anything about that stuff there, Aler has decided to close the cellars because there's a problem, I guess security, and they're closing ours too. And then there are many people who have asked to change accommodation because of neighbourly relations because, as we know, there are many squatted flats and there is more of an impossibility to relate to neighbours, because of the squatting of common spaces and public spaces. We are really talking about physical occupation, in the sense that activities are carried out in many of the common spaces. This is what has been reported to us, but the problem is that even in these cases we can only make reports to Aler. .

*Q.: Don't you have faster communication channels with Aler, also for the fact that you are providing an important social service in the neighbourhood?*

M.C.: I don't know, maybe we intervene earlier on some things than the tenants. I don't know about that, but on these more collective problems we are like everyone else. Sometimes we manage to solve some problems, without asking Aler. We have done this in the past, for example there was a neighbourhood cohabitation problem, and we went to the neighbour to seek dialogue and explain our tenant's point of view, pointing out that he was a member of the cooperative. But now it seems to me that the issue is very different, also in terms of numbers. So it is more difficult.

*Q.: Do you also offer a service of accompaniment and orientation to services in the neighbourhood?*

M.C.: We do this on request. If, starting from problems related to housing or pressures that may relate to housing, we become aware of other problems or other situations of fragility that may not be directly related to housing, but which the member nevertheless tells us about, we offer guidance to the services or to the realities of the territory.

*Q.: What kind of requests or needs do you encounter most frequently?*

M.C.: Let's say that in San Siro it is a bit complicated. It is easier for us to do this where we have a concentration of flats that we manage as a whole, and therefore where our territorial presence is a little different - for example, on the QuBì network at San Siro we are not inside, and we have practically never used it. I have to say that one of the reasons is also that in San Siro we practically have no minors. On the other hand, we are actively inside the QuBì

Barona network, and the Quarto Oggiaro network, because there we have projects in which we do the overall management (i.e. also the property management of the services and social management thanks to our more visible presence there). In San Siro this does not happen because we are scattered, so it is a bit difficult. But for example, the other day a lady came in and told us about her rent issue. She told us that she had to redo her bathroom, so she had a problem paying the January rent now, and that she would pay it to us in February. From there she started to tell us things about some problems she has with her son, and so I'm going to meet this lady again and try to see if I can actually include her in neighbourhood networks..

*Q.: What are the most common profiles of the recipients of your project at San Siro?*

M.C.: Now it changed a bit, we might have some minors. We might have a family in Morgantini, but he came in alone: he was in a one-room flat in Via Ricciarelli, then his family rejoined, and we were able to move them to a two-room flat in Morgantini. Most, however, are single men, who probably share the flat with others. We register a person and then tell him to tell us if there is someone else inside. Also, if it's a studio apartment, we say 'yes that's fine, but you can't put too many beds in it. If you want to share the rent with someone else that's fine because it helps you, but it can't be more than one.' We try to mediate. Now we have an eviction, maybe in Via Thrace, because this man was discovered by Aler with beds in it, and inside they said they were paying this man, our partner. And so we had to do the release procedure. In any case, beyond the specific cases, on situations of incorrect use of the accommodation we try to bring the situation back to an acceptable, if not optimal, condition by talking and mediating with the partner, whose needs we also recognise.

*Q.: You said that there is not a very fast turnover in your flats, is this one of the reasons why the waiting lists remain static for so long?*

M.C.: Either people go into social housing (in most cases), or we evict them because they don't pay, or someone finds other solutions. Maybe someone even buys - particularly in the past someone has bought, although less so in San Siro. But usually, the step is to register with our cooperative, get on the list and wait. Then maybe in the meantime someone also applies to Aler, but it's not automatic, there are people who have been there for millennia - since they were assigned in the 1990s. What we propose, however, is a stable housing solution. For example, a single woman, who works and has a steady job and pays €200 for a one-room apartment, may well apply to Aler, but what chance does she have of getting back in? What's more, they might then move her to the other side of town to pay maybe €150 in rent instead of €200. But moving house means redecorating, changing area, changing life, for some people. And so maybe the lady decides to stay there. For families, on the other hand, it is different.

*Q.: What connection is there - if any - between your members who live here and the neighbourhood?*

M.C.: When members ask for a change of accommodation there are some who tell us they no longer want to stay here, but in reality it is not so much that they no longer want to stay in San Siro. For example, people who live in Via Ricciarelli may ask to change their accommodation, but it is not that they necessarily want to go to another area, they simply no longer want to stay there, in Via Ricciarelli. So, San Siro itself is fine. To a lady, for example, the other day I proposed a flat in Affori and she said 'but isn't there something in the city?' What she meant was that she would have liked to stay in San Siro, but not in Via Ricciarelli. But the choice of area, as well as the size of the flat, becomes even more important when you are faced with a change of accommodation. Because in any case these users already have a home, and their expectations are a little different than if they were entering a home for the first time. Then also many others may already have a house, but they may have it on the private market, so for them the advantage of having a house at a much lower cost is greater than the locational advantage. On the contrary, if they are requesting a change when they tell us this, they often explain that their children have joined them, that their children perhaps already attend school in San Siro, and that they would therefore like to move to a two-room apartment because they do not have enough space but still remain in the same neighbourhood.

*Q.: Do you have any form of surveillance and monitoring in the neighbourhood?*

M.C.: Let's say it's a garrison that is born more out of necessity. Our figure who most often goes into homes is the technical contact person who, if there is a need, goes out on call. And so the contact person goes to the house, for example, for a shutter that's broken, maybe sees things and reports them and, if there's something strange, then it's shared in the cooperative with the other people who work and some members. But it's not that we do any real checks. Not having a space is difficult. We had tried in 2010, when we took these last 15 flats from Aler. We had done a micro-project to build a neighbourhood network of members, and we organised meetings at Alfabeti with our members, but it was very difficult because partly they didn't all recognise themselves as members of the cooperative, partly because they were really very scattered, and partly because they were people who had lived here for a very long time, and so they were inhabitants of the neighbourhood, or they were lonely people who only lived in the neighbourhood to come and sleep - in the sense that they went out, worked, came back and slept. So, even when we tried to understand how they lived in the neighbourhood, what came out a bit was this: the neighbourhood for them was more of a place to sleep.

*Q.: With respect to your knowledge of the neighbourhood and of your partners living here, how do you find their living experience in San Siro overall?*

M.C.: I don't know exactly how it is now, certainly there are a lot of single people - not only men - who tend to be of working age, so it is possible that they lead a very lonely life. But I don't exclude that maybe in the meantime they have built up a network of relationships in the neighbourhood, maybe when they are not at work they have relatives, friends with whom they experience public spaces. When we did that analysis, however, this was not happening. But we are also talking about 13 years ago, maybe things have changed in the meantime. The neighbourhood has also changed a lot in terms of population, so maybe the social networks have also changed. I don't know if they have networks of relationships that depend on the fact that they are here or on the fact that they have people they know who live here - family members, rather than countrymen. Potentially it could also be difficult to establish relationships in this neighbourhood, but as soon as there is already a group here, maybe they start to recognise and get to know each other.

*Q.: Overall, how would you rate the management of your project in relations with Aler and other institutions?*

M.C.: We, for example, have never yet had relations with Aler's community managers, so I don't know if on issues of cohabitation these figures could be of any help, but Aler did not have these figures before and I don't even know if this is their mandate. For example, when we were trying to mediate with respect to the issues of neighbourly relations they had a bit of a problem here, which was us with our tenant and the other tenant who was not represented by someone from Aler trying to have this meeting. The issue of maintenance and services is certainly difficult, in the sense that we cannot intervene in any way. In San Siro, it has often happened to us that we have had infiltrations from common parts or neighbouring flats, which we have then managed to resolve in some way; it's simply a long time, you have to solicit countless times. Also because then the members contact you, and tell you that they don't pay the rent, they don't go to Aler to report. I think the members have understood very well that objectively at a certain point we can no longer intervene and that the most we can do, when they don't feel comfortable in the flats we've assigned them, is to suggest that they put themselves on the list for the change. Via Ricciarelli 22-24 are just abandoned, even the caretaker is in trouble: what can she do if there is not at least an intent behind it, a will to improve things and someone working on it? This has been the case for a while, but in recent years the situation has deteriorated without any measures being put in place.

1 February 2023  
Interview with Chiara Spaghi,  
coordinator of the housing project of the Equa Cooperative

*Q.: How many accommodations do you manage to support your project? Where are they located and what are the types of accommodation you manage?*

C.S.: The Equa cooperative (formerly Tutti Insieme) has a strong history in reception. We have accommodation for parents-children in semi-autonomy: this is temporary reception on the dispatch of the social service or other bodies. In this case we are talking about accommodation spread throughout the territory, where the social service provides for the placement of a parent with the children. Depending on the size of the accommodation, one adult and one or two minors are housed. In the San Siro quadrangle we have four lodgings. They are one in Via Abbiati, one in Viale Mar Jonio, one in Via Albertinelli and one in Via Aretusa, which is squatted. They are all two-room apartments, where we accommodate two or three people depending on the size.

*Q.: How did you manage or are you managing the squatting of the accommodation in Via Aretusa 1?*

C.S.: We contacted Aler, but they told us that since the accommodation is rented to the cooperative, if they squat it, 'you have to take care of vacating it, you can't leave it like that.' We have tried everything to get Aler to help us with the eviction but there is no way. So we have to take on the burden and honour of evicting the dwellers (filing a complaint, activating a lawyer and judicial officer), it's still a very long process. Inside there are people with minors, often they are people with expired residence permits or without documents, so even giving references to the social service is very complex. The accommodation has been squatted since 2019. I've been working in the cooperative since 2008, over time I've seen the degradation that cyclically occurs in the various houses. We have other accommodation in another part of the city and the situation is exactly the same: the moment they remove the caretaker the situation collapses.

*Q.: Who are the target groups of your project?*

C.S.: People arriving on dispatch from the social service (Milan and hinterland) or other sending bodies (SAI, LGNET2). They are people in a situation of fragility. To date, most of them are foreigners. We are not the first reception centre, precisely because being spread throughout the territory we do not have the possibility of placing them in a protected context or in any case of guaranteeing a constant educational presence during the day.

Host families have no expenses, the fees are paid by the sending institution, they have an educational support of about 12 hours per week.

The request for placement starts from the service, then an assessment is made and if it is positive, the group is included in the project. For the parent and the child, based on what is requested by the service and the needs observed, the educational project is created for the individual members of the nucleus. The conclusion of the project, which should last a maximum of two years, takes place with a transfer to RST (temporary social housing) or even better, if the nucleus has the characteristics, a direct transfer to Aler accommodation.

*Q.: How does the management and maintenance of the dwellings work?*

C.S.: There is a part of ordinary maintenance which is the cooperative's responsibility, and a part of maintenance (e.g. radiators, infiltrations, maintenance) which is Aler's responsibility. When it's up to Aler, waiting times get longer.

We don't have a preferential line with Aler, now with the two managers, the two community managers, we have a direct channel because we send the e-mail directly to them (at least on the flats in Via Voltri: the manager there is very active and at least I can get answers from Aler). But there was a long period when everything fell into oblivion, you would make a report and they wouldn't respond. Now at least I see that the two poles of competence are also responding, they are taking action. There are situations that are objectively complex, in which even simple routine maintenance is difficult. In some houses, most of the appartements are squatted: there are those who occupy and take care of the housing and those who occupy and disintegrate it. Most of the houses are in this second condition, even the stairwell is dirty, there is rubbish piling up, it accumulates, and it is difficult to make Aler come into contact with this reality.

The accommodation next to ours they keep squatting, when they vacate they leave everything inside, and it's a constant discussion with Aler. We give accommodation that should be in a certain way, guarantee a decent situation: we clean up and do disinfection before each new entry. In the Aler buildings there is a constant problem with cockroach infestations, Aler does its planned disinfestations, which are perhaps not enough for very run-down blocks like Via Voltri 4 or Via Arethusa<sup>1</sup>.

The answers they sometimes give when you contact them are unbelievable: 'it's not true that there are rats in the cellars', 'it's not true that there are cockroaches', 'it's the tenants who invent these things to avoid squatting.'

*Q.: Is it possible for the recipients of your project, at the end of two years, to apply for and obtain ERP housing?*

C.S.: The lady who is now in Via Abbiati has been holding the keys to Via Gigante since yesterday. Yes sometimes she does, let's say that the people in charge of checking the documentation are cleaning up every detail. We have brought the same documents four

times. The last time we went, the child (the daughter of the lady who wanted to apply for ERP housing) had just done her identity card. They stopped us and said: 'But excuse me, this identity card of the child was made after the application for accommodation', so we had to make a declaration that the child had made this identity card for the first time. If a user goes alone to make the application, how can he manage to solve the problems? Moreover, these procedures extend the time. After two years our project ends, and we cannot keep people in an educational project when they are actually autonomous and just waiting for a home.

*Q.: In the event that the recipients of your project want to remain in the neighbourhood at the end of the project, is it possible to prioritise this need in the application to Aler, in order to give continuity to the housing process?*

C.S.: No, Aler does not consider this kind of request. Years ago, Aler accepted the reports of the social service, which could give indications, such as: 'this is a fragile nucleus, if you give him accommodation in the drug-dealing area, we will lose everything', or 'the lady is very well rooted in the San Siro area, she lives there, she works there, in short, everything in the area..' now nothing.

Often, at the end of the course, these people are placed in other projects. They are always single-parent households with minor children, they are people who cannot work all day to bring home a salary that would allow them to live in private rented accommodation. We have also tried with Milano Abitare, but the demand for rent is often a third of the salary, often our tenants are women who work part time. So we get nowhere. With the agreed rent the minimum for a two-room apartment is 500 euro. Our tenants are almost all cleaners, they can't do it in facilities that ask for night shifts, holidays, where the salary increases a bit, so 'it's like chasing your own tail'. Maybe they are also people who come from their country with degrees that are not recognised here, so they must start from scratch because they have no qualifications, not even the third grade. So, our members either get Aler or MM housing, or we try to place them in other projects. Moreover, transitional housing services do not always take them, because the members do not have sufficient income and so there is no possibility that they can then go on their own. So the municipality spends three times as much money keeping them in the housing projects. When the projects are finished, there is simply a lack of affordable housing solutions.

*Q.: With respect to your knowledge of the recipients of your project, how do you find their living experience in San Siro overall?*

C.S.: Those who come to the San Siro area and are not of Arab origin do not initially want to be there. The square is very run-down, at first glance they don't like it as an area. Those who are near Via Albertinelli or in Via Mar Jonio find it a bit better. In Via Arethusa, even when we had the last tenant accepted, they all struggled (tenants and youth workers) to live in the context of civic 1. The youth workers, like the tenants, are almost all women,



and in the evenings they were afraid to move around inside the area, after a certain hour the various trades begin. When our members have children, they are afraid they will take bad turns. They tend to tell you that no, they don't want to be in San Siro, then maybe they start living it, they realise it's not so bad, it's a suburb like any other, there are a few opportunities: very active in the area are the associations and social cooperatives. What we try to do when they come into our projects is to make them aware of the different reference points where they can be supported: homework space, work orientation, Italian courses. One reference in recent years has been the QuBì project. You definitely see the change in them when they begin to understand that they are not alone. A reference point for the area with regard to applications for council housing is Sictet in Piazza Monte Falterona.

*Q: How do you organise your family support activities and the orientation and accompaniment service in the neighbourhood?*

C.S.: It always depends on what kind of nucleus arrives, on the needs it brings and, how should I say, on how it can experience the context of the neighbourhood. Because sometimes we get mothers who come from a different area of Milan, and in agreement with the service, they keep the schools in the area they come from and their job more far away from home. In these cases there is little we can do, what we can do is offer the listening counters, the job search (if by chance they don't have one at the time), the fresh food packet. For some people, the neighbourhood is a dormitory.

A lot depends on the social services and how important they think it is that the nucleus remains rooted in the neighbourhood they come from. It also depends a lot on the people we take in: some are more willing to experiment and thus begin to experience the neighbourhood, others are not. It also depends a bit on the needs they bring. We never promote all services across the board because they are not used anyway, but we suggest what we think are useful, interesting actions. Maybe you accompany the member to the counter for the fresh food packet and find the colleague who proposes another activity, so one thing causes the other. It also depends a lot on the children we have. The younger they are, the easier it is then to root the mothers in the neighbourhood.

*Q.: In your experience, does the presence of people of foreign origin in your projects result in a stronger bond with the neighbourhood, which we know has a very high percentage of foreigners?*

C.S.: No, often between the different ethnic groups there is a lot of mistrust. Arabs don't look favourably on South Americans, South Americans don't look favourably on Arabs. Between people of the same ethnicity it depends on where they come from. At the start there is already a certain resistance, "I'm not going to that neighbourhood there that's all foreigners." Then they are always very, very lonely, shy, fragile, marginalised people. If they had a greater support network, maybe they wouldn't go to the social service for help.

*Q.: What are the activities included in your educational project?*

C.S.: We do all-round educational support for the parent and the child. So, parenting support, educational support, mother's support in finding work, training, money management. There is also work on the relationship, to establish trust and be able to collaborate. And then on the child, depending on the age, we understand how to set up the work. We do a little piece of the road together, we accompany them during a part of their life. It is an accompaniment in daily life. When you enter the project you are a person who should have a certain autonomy. Then this is not always the case, because when they arrive simply because of housing difficulties and lack of accommodation, there are usually other problems underneath: difficulty integrating into the new context, cultural poverty.

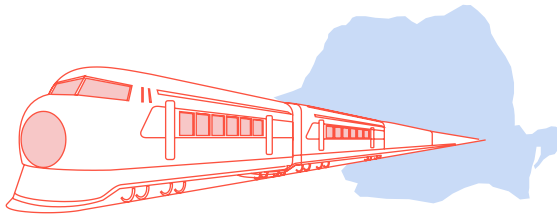
*Q.: Have you ever experienced difficulties in carrying out your activities because of the housing context?*

C.S.: In general, no. In the last few years, even before they squatted the accommodation Via Arethusa, it was the most complex situation. We had the flat at the end of the courtyard, when you arrived at the end, invariably the building was without lights because they kept breaking them, the door was broken. Luckily nothing ever happened. Good or bad, the educators are accepted, 'I know it's you, so I'll let you through' But for a woman it's always a tiring situation, because there's always all this 'unspoken' that scares you. The other accommodations I must say are all in much quieter apartment blocks. Because Via Albertinelli is nice, Via Mar Jonio too, and Via Abbiati too.

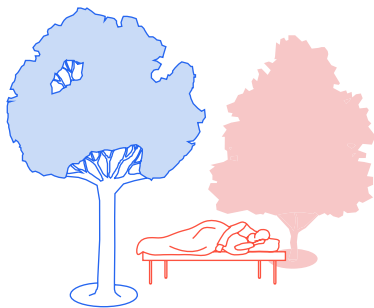


## 2.1.2 Informal housing management

### 40 SQM: One house, four life stories from a narration by E. and M., March 2022



*In 1999, M. and E., together with their daughters, moved from a village in Romania in the direction of Milan, driven by the need for better job opportunities and by the economic crisis affecting Romania in those years. Arriving in Milan, without references and without knowing the language, they start sleeping in different places within the city. For almost two years, they live in a semi-stable form between the covered public space of the Palazzo della Regione and the subway of the Central Station.*



*Intercepted by a voluntary association, they are taken into a temporary shelter.*

*They stay there for several months, but the conditions at the centre are very difficult, especially for E. and the girls. In fact, from morning at 7 a.m. to evening at 7 p.m., the guests must compulsorily leave the facility. During this time, M. finds various jobs, often as a parking attendant or carpenter.*

*He moves around the city depending on the jobs he can find, by word of mouth with a few acquaintances. During the periods when he is not working on the construction site, he works as a valet along the large tree-lined parterre of Viale Papiniano.*

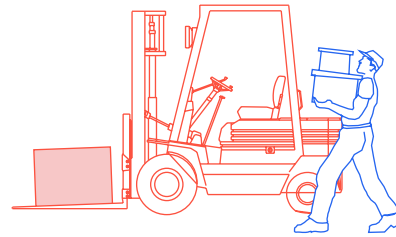
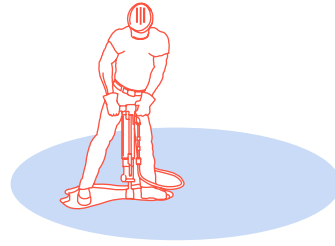


*The family's economic precariousness does not allow them to find stable accommodation. For this reason, after years of living in shelters and on the streets, the family receives word of mouth about a few vacant flats in the Lorenteggio district, and decides to try to squat*

one of them.

Meanwhile, E. discovers that she is ill. Access to treatment and care is complex, due to financial difficulties and a general lack of knowledge of available resources and support networks. Also because of this, M. is forced to work very heavy shifts, often at night and up to fourteen hours.

To an already complex family situation is added a constant sense of distrust towards institutions and people from outside the family, due to the prejudice often suffered by people of Romanian origin.

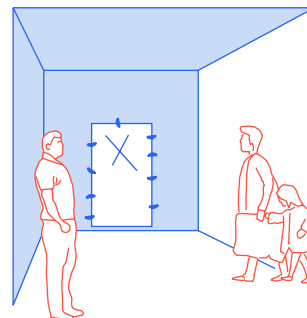


Thanks to an intermediary, they enter an uninhabited flat and start a stable life for almost three years, managing to save some money. In 2019, due to an eviction in the apartment building, they are forced to leave and start life on the street again.



After several months on the street, again thanks to an intermediary known by word of mouth, the family moved into a flat in the ERP district of San Siro. Relationships with the neighbourhood are quite good, but E. and M. seldom frequent environments other than their place of study and work. The pace of life is tight, to be able to support the daughters'

studies and care for M.'s mother, who is in Romania and seriously ill. The family's life is divided between the retirement home where E. works in the afternoons as a cleaner, the Barona neighbourhood, where M. works as a night courier, and the Vittorio Veneto high school, which their daughters attend with excellent results. Domestic life takes place in a two-room apartment of about 50 square metres, where the rooms of the house are used alternately throughout the day.











*'This is our joker room.*

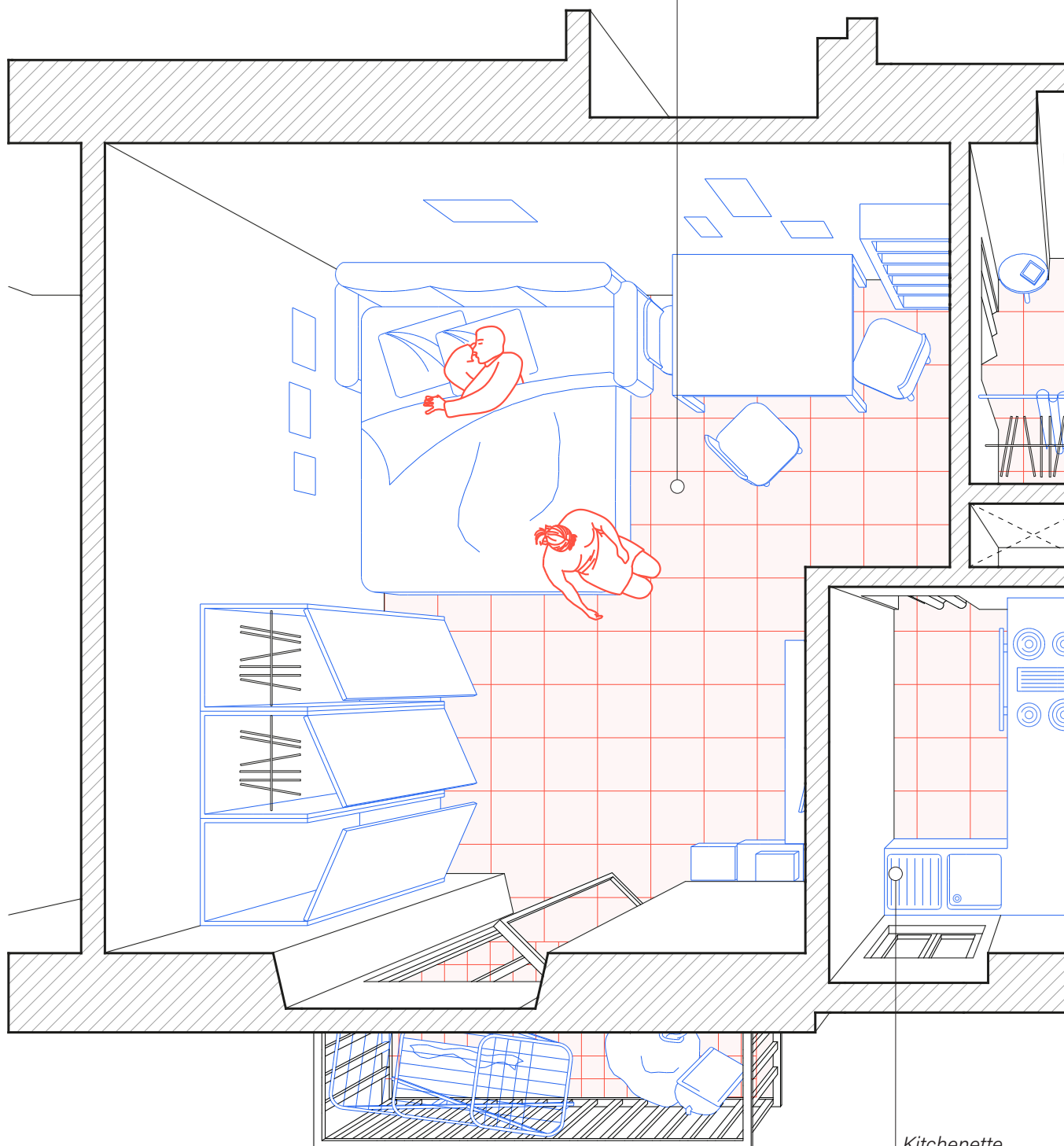
*Here we all stay together, the girls do their homework, we watch TV. At night we open the bed and so it becomes our bedroom.'*

Living room

TV room

Bedroom

Conversation space

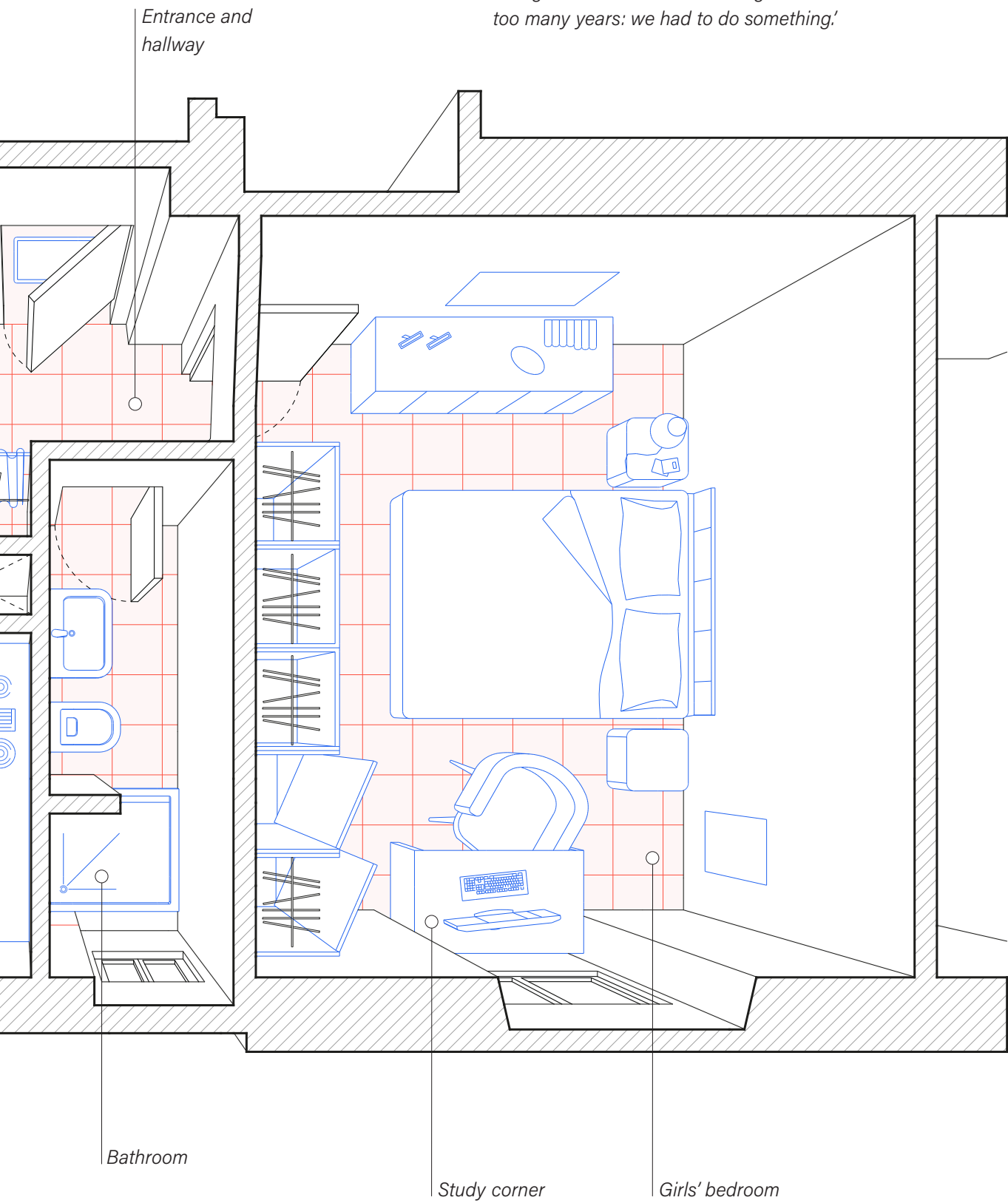


Kitchenette

*'The balcony is a storage room, but also a laundry room,  
and also the only space to get some air and sun'*



*'Moving in was not easy. We were scared, with two little girls, but we had been living on the street for too many years: we had to do something.'*



### 2.1.3 Mutual aid and solidarity networks

#### Living and working in San Siro: the story of a family and a community From a narration by M., Aler caretaker, April 2022

*M. is from Sri Lanka, but has lived here for many years. He comes from a very small village, his father did not work, he did not help in the house and his mother was always very tired, she worked too hard to support everyone. M., then, after studying until he was sixteen, decided to become a bricklayer. The pay, however, was too low to support the family. "I felt dead," he confided. He knew that he would have to work until he was eighty because there is no pension in Sri Lanka. Many of his friends from the village decided to leave, those who could study went to Australia, Canada or England. But M. could not leave to study, so he decided to pay an agent to travel to Italy.*

*He arrived in Italy after a long and difficult journey by boat. After staying in Sicily and Calabria for a while, M. moves to Naples to an acquaintance who lives in the Rione Sanità. Through this acquaintance he starts working in a public garden, assisting a gentleman who brings a horse into the garden every day to entertain the children who pass by. After a few months he finds work in a house as a handyman. His cousin, also in Naples, meanwhile taught him the trade: washing, cooking, keeping the house tidy 'like the Italians do'. For a while he stayed in Naples with this rich family, but then he heard that there were more job opportunities in Milan, so he decided to move there. In Milan, he starts working in a factory and begins to live in a community of other Sinhalese in the San Donato district. Again thanks to a friend, he learns that the Aler is looking for a caretaker for an apartment building in San Siro. Without a second thought, M. applied for the job and, after a few weeks, was hired. After some time, he is joined by his wife A. and later by his sister and then her cousin. M. and A. have two children. All six live in M.'s house, a small three-room apartment on the ground floor of 50 square metres that Aler assigned to M. when he was hired as caretaker.*

*Having one's home near one's work entails, according to M., only one inconvenience, namely that one never really stops working. There is always someone who needs his help: the old lady who needs to have her shopping carried, someone who complains about noise, children playing football in the yard. M. knows many people from the block of flats and the neighbourhood. In general, he gets on well with everyone. Only sometimes there are problems.*

*He knows many Sri Lankans in the neighbourhood: there is a small community of Sinhalese living in San Siro, near Via Paravia. To meet up, very often on Saturdays or Sundays they gather in their homes and eat together, but above all they drink whiskey, which can never be missing in a Sinhalese home. Whiskey drinking is a custom imported*

*by the British during colonialism, but today it is a real tradition, a weekend ritual.*

*In his spare time, M. takes his bike and goes for long rides, alone or with his eldest son, and often rides to the cricket ground in Via Novara, where the entire Sinhalese community in Milan gathers to play. Cricket, like whiskey, was also brought by the British, but is now part of the Sri Lankan identity.*

*Every summer, M. and his friends take care of mowing the lawn and preparing the field for tournaments, which are organised on social media or by word of mouth.*

*The entire Sinhalese community of Milan participates in the tournaments, and some even come from other cities, such as Parma and Bologna. Indians also participate, united by their great passion for the sport.*

*A. does not speak much Italian and is always busy with the youngest child, who was recently diagnosed with autism. The older one has recently had learning problems. She can't even go to Italian school because of the small child, which keeps her busy all the time. She has been in Italy for eight years, on Saturdays and Sundays she goes out with her family and goes to church at Piazzale Brescia, or to the park, to the shops with the children, so she is not always at home. She prefers not to walk in the neighbourhood, especially since last year when someone robbed the house: since then, she has been very afraid and does not feel safe.*

*M.'s sister, on the other hand, currently looks after an elderly lady in the block of flats. During the week she sleeps with the lady, and at the weekend she returns home with the family, sleeping in the only other bedroom (which is also used as a storage room) besides the one in which M., A. and the children sleep. Together, the ladies often go to the nearest supermarket in Via Ricciarelli, where they only find Italian vegetables and greens which they cook in the Sinhalese way with a lot of imagination. Some of the vegetables they cook, such as Gotukola, come directly from the small garden that A. is growing in the communal courtyard.*

*A.'s cousin is a guest of the family when he is not away on business, or when he is looking for a new job. He sleeps on the sofa in the living room, which also serves as M.'s dining room, playroom and office during the day.*

*According to M., the neighbourhood has changed a lot over the years: before, there were many Italians and they used the courtyard with the chairs to sit and hang out together in the evenings. Today this no longer happens, because people stay in the houses for a short time, there is always a bustle of people, and you never know exactly who lives in the block of flats. Only children use the courtyard amidst the complaints of the inhabitants. The stairs are a particularly dangerous place, because he has discovered that people use these spaces to take drugs. Every time M. reports things that are wrong to Aler, but so far nothing has changed. "A few months ago," he says, "they entered my house through the bathroom*

*windows, at night, trying to steal. They beat him up and then ran away. M. is convinced that it is someone who lives in the neighbourhood, because he has seen these people from afar several times. Since this incident, both he and A. are very afraid to go out at night.*

*Sometimes M. frequents a bar run by Chinese people, in Via Carlo Dolci, because there are always plenty of free chairs and because it is quite close to home. Another option is to go to Via Paravia, to the benches there, although then you can't go home late, when it's dark, because the streets on the way back are unsafe and without references. At the latest at nine o'clock you have to be home. The problem, according to M., is that if someone robs you in that part of the neighbourhood, there are too many dark corners, too many narrow streets and too many courtyards in which to hide, and no one to ask for help.*

*With his family, M. often goes to Piazzale Brescia, because there is a nice garden there and they have also recently installed ping pong tables. Piazza Selinunte, on the other hand, is not as quiet a place as it was a few years ago. Piazzale Brescia, on the other hand, is a different story. On Sundays, M., A. and the children go to church across the street, and then, once they've left, they go for pastries in a very good bar near the San Luca hospital. This is a place where M. goes when he wants 'a certain treatment,' because in that café he is treated well, and everything is very clean and elegant.*

*Sometimes at the weekend they go to Primark, in Rozzano, or to Arese, in the big shopping centre, if they can get a ride from a friend who has a car.*

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# Part 3

The neighbourhood questionnaire

### 3.1 The questionnaire experience: research tool and network project

A further survey and interaction tool developed with this research is the “neighbourhood questionnaire”. We attribute to the questionnaire a project and network value: coordinated by the research team, it was developed together with several local actors who are very active in the neighbourhood (identified on the basis of relationships of collaboration and mutual trust built over time). The questionnaire concerns housing conditions, quality of life and neighbourhood and community relations to be submitted to the inhabitants of the quadrangle.

The idea of creating a questionnaire arose from the need to try to collect, in quantitative form, some information on living in San Siro, of which those who work and live in the neighbourhood have direct experience (thanks to their constant presence in the neighbourhood, the observation of spaces and informal conversations with residents and third sector operators), but which often escape a more comprehensive and systematic representation. Thus, starting from certain assumptions and acquired knowledge, a questionnaire was collectively drafted and then administered with the aim of bringing out these ‘latent’ data on housing conditions in the neighbourhood, of which those who know the area are aware, but which are invisible within the more easily accessible statistical and quantitative representations.

The questionnaire experience employs an entire section within this report, as it is a project that required the participation and active commitment of various local actors such as, in addition to Mapping San Siro and the Sicet trade union - coordinators of the project - the Associazione Alfabeti ONLUS, the Bocconi Legal Clinic, the Cooperativa Equa, the Soleterre Foundation, the CISL FNP Milano Metropoli trade union, the Bicocca University, the C.S.I Centro Sportivo Italiano and the Scomodo collective. It is also a project carried out from the initial stages of the research, through some preliminary meetings, and then developed over a period of six months, at the end of which more than 360 questionnaires were collected through dedicated interviews with each of the participants.

By its very nature, the questionnaire is a multiple tool: the active involvement of local actors and part of the resident community made this survey instrument also a small network project, as well as a tool for collecting data on housing. In addition, the distribution methods, the continuous confrontation with operators on the difficulties and progress of the project, and with the residents on the housing and living conditions within the neighbourhood, have made the questionnaire an interesting tool for relations and ethnographic investigation.





## Qualche domanda su di te

1. Attualmente abiti nel quartiere di San Siro?

☐ SI ☐ NO

Indicare il proprio indirizzo: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Da quanto abiti nel quartiere?

- ☐ QUALCHE MESE  
☐ 1-2 ANNI  
☐ 3-5 ANNI  
☐ 5-10 ANNI  
☐ PIU' DI 10 ANNI

3. Qual è la tua cittadinanza? \_\_\_\_\_

In quale Paese sei nato/a? \_\_\_\_\_

Se hai dei figli, in quale paese sono nati? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Quanti anni hai? \_\_\_\_\_

Indicare le età delle persone che vivono con te: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Quante persone abitano nella tua casa?

Indicare un numero: \_\_\_\_\_

Quante, delle persone che abitano con te, fanno parte del tuo nucleo familiare? Indicare un numero: \_\_\_\_\_

Se ci sono persone con invalidità, indicane il numero: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Nella casa in cui abiti, quante persone lavorano? Indicare un numero: \_\_\_\_\_

Qual è la tua principale fonte di guadagno e quella di chi abita con te? *(Puoi scegliere più di una risposta)*

- ☐ CONTRATTO A TEMPO INDETERMINATO  
☐ CONTRATTO A TEMPO DETERMINATO  
☐ ALTRA FORMA DI CONTRATTO  
☐ LAVORO AUTONOMO  
☐ LAVORO INFORMALE  
☐ PENSIONE  
☐ REDDITO DI CITTADINANZA  
☐ NESSUNA *(casalingo/a, studente, in cerca di occupazione)*

7. Tu o altre persone che abitano con te, avete qualcuno tra questi mezzi di trasporto? *(Puoi scegliere più di una risposta)*

- ☐ AUTOMOBILE  
☐ BICICLETTA  
☐ MOTORINO  
☐ MONOPATTINO  
☐ ALTRO



## Sul tuo condominio

8. A che piano abiti?

Indicare un numero: \_\_\_\_\_

Nella tua scala è presente l'ascensore?

☐ SI ☐ NO

9. Nel tuo condominio è presente l'ascensore?

☐ SI ☐ NO

Se nel tuo condominio è presente l'ascensore, te la sua presenza è:

- ☐ FONDAMENTALE  
☐ IMPORTANTE MA NON ESSENZIALE  
☐ INDIFFERENTE

10. Tu, o altre persone che abitano con te, avete un cortile del condominio?

☐ SI ☐ NO

Perchè? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Quali, tra questi, sono i problemi del tuo condominio? Usa una scala da 1 a 3 *(problema molto presente)*

- |   |   |   |                            |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | PULIZIA / GESTIONE         |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | MANUTENZIONE               |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | PROBLEMI DI ACQUA          |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | PERCEZIONE DI INQUINAMENTO |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | PRESENZA DI MAFIA          |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | SPACCIO NEGLI EDIFICI      |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | PERSONE NELLE SCALE        |

12. Quanto paghi di spese condominiali?

- ☐ 30-50 EURO  
☐ 50-100 EURO  
☐ 100-200 EURO  
☐ PIU' DI 200 EURO

13. Secondo te nel tuo condominio c'è:

- ☐ MOLTO BENE  
☐ BENE  
☐ DISCRETAMENTE  
☐ NON BENE  
☐ MOLTO MALE

Perchè? \_\_\_\_\_





## Sulla tua casa

14. Qual è la tua situazione abitativa?

- ☐ LOCAZIONE ALER
- ☐ LOCAZIONE PRIVATA
- ☐ PROPRIETA'
- ☐ OCCUPAZIONE

Indicare la fascia ISEE: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Quante stanze ha la tua casa, oltre all'angolo cucina e al bagno? Indicare un numero: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Quali di queste dotazioni ci sono nella tua casa?

- ☐ LAVATRICE
- ☐ COMPUTER
- ☐ INTERNET
- ☐ FORNO

17. Nell'ultimo anno ci sono stati problemi di manutenzione nella tua casa?

- ☐ SÌ
- ☐ NO

Se sì, quali sono stati i problemi?

- ☐ INFILTRAZIONI D'ACQUA
- ☐ PROBLEMI DI RISCALDAMENTO
- ☐ DISTACCAMENTO INTONACO
- ☐ ALTRO (Specificare: \_\_\_\_\_)

18. Nella tua casa inviti volentieri altre persone?

- ☐ SÌ
- ☐ SOLO FAMILIARI E AMICI STRETTI
- ☐ NO

Se sì, in quali occasioni? \_\_\_\_\_

Se no, perchè? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Nella tua casa c'è uno spazio tranquillo per stare da soli? (per rilassarsi, studiare, pregare, ecc..)

- ☐ SÌ
- ☐ NO

20. Nella tua casa ospiti persone per prolungati periodi di tempo?

- ☐ SÌ
- ☐ NO

21. Hai relazioni positive con i tuoi vicini di casa?

- ☐ SÌ
- ☐ NO
- ☐ NON HO ALCUNA RELAZIONE

Perchè? \_\_\_\_\_



## Quelques questions à propos de vous

- Habitez-vous actuellement dans le quartier de San Siro?  
☐ OUI ☐ NON  
 Indiquer votre adresse: \_\_\_\_\_
- Depuis combien de temps habitez-vous dans le quartier?  
☐ QUELQUE MOIS  
☐ 1-2 ANS  
☐ 3-5 ANS  
☐ 5-10 ANS  
☐ PLUS DE 10 ANS
- Quelle est ton citoyenneté? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dans quel Pays êtes-vous né(e)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Si tu as des enfants, dans quel pays sont-ils nés? \_\_\_\_\_
- Quel âge avez-vous? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Indiquer l'âge des personnes qui habitent avec vous: \_\_\_\_\_
- Combien de personnes vivent dans votre maison?  
 Indiquer un numéro: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Combien de personnes vivant avec vous font partie de votre famille?  
 Indiquer un numéro: \_\_\_\_\_  
 S'il y a des personnes avec des handicaps, indiquer le numéro: \_\_\_\_
- Combien de personnes travaillent dans votre maison?  
 Indiquer le numéro: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Quelle est votre principale source de revenus et celle des personnes qui vivent avec vous? (Vous pouvez choisir plusieurs des réponses)  
☐ CONTRAT À DURÉE INDÉTERMINÉE  
☐ CONTRAT À DURÉE DÉTERMINÉE  
☐ AUTRE FORME DE CONTRAT  
☐ TRAVAIL AUTONOME  
☐ TRAVAIL INFORMEL  
☐ RETRAIT  
☐ REVENU DE BASE  
☐ AUCUN (homme/femme à la maison, étudiant, en recherche d'emploi)
- Est-ce que vous, ou d'autres personnes vivant avec vous avez l'un de ces moyens de transport ? (Vous pouvez choisir plusieurs des réponses)  
☐ VOITURE  
☐ VÉLO  
☐ CYCLOMOTEUR  
☐ TROTINETTE  
☐ AUTRE



## Sur votre immeuble

- À quel étage habitez-vous ?  
 Indiquer un numéro: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Y a-t-il un élévateur dans votre immeuble?  
☐ OUI ☐ NON
- Y a-t-il un concierge dans votre immeuble?  
☐ OUI ☐ NON  
 Si il'y a un concierge, pensez-vous que sa présence soit:  
☐ ESSENTIELLE  
☐ IMPORTANTE MAIS PAS ESSENTIELLE  
☐ INDIFFÉRENTE
- Est-ce que vous, ou d'autres personnes vivant avec vous, fréquentez la cour de l'immeuble?  
☐ OUI ☐ NON  
 Pourquoi? \_\_\_\_\_
- Lesquels de ces problèmes sont les plus courants dans votre immeuble? Utilisez une échelle de 1 (petit problème) à 3 (problème très présent)  

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	MAUVAIS NETTOYAGE/ GESTION INADÉQUATE DES DÉCHETS
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	ENTRETIEN INSUFFISANT
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	PROBLÈMES D'ACCESSIBILITÉ
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	PERCEPTION D'INSÉCURITÉ
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	PRÉSENCE DE BEAUCOUP DE LOGEMENTS VIDES
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	TRAFFIC DE STUPÉFIANTS DANS LES ESPACES COMMUNS
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	PERSONNES DANS LES CAVES/ GRENIERS
- Combien payez-vous en frais de copropriété par mois ?  
☐ 30-50 EUROS  
☐ 50-100 EUROS  
☐ 100-200 EUROS  
☐ PLUS DE 200 EUROS
- Selon vous, dans votre immeuble, vous vivez:  
☐ TRÈS BIEN  
☐ BIEN  
☐ DISCRÈTEMENT  
☐ PAS BIEN  
☐ TRÈS MAUVAIS  
 Pourquoi? \_\_\_\_\_



## Sur votre maison

- Quelle est votre situation de logement?  
☐ LOCATION ALER  
☐ LOCATION PRIVÉE  
☐ PROPRIÉTÉ  
☐ OCCUPATION  
 Indiquer votre tranche ISEE: \_\_\_\_\_
- Combien des pièces compte votre maison, à part la kitchenette et la salle de bain ? Indiquer un numéro: \_\_\_\_\_
- Lesquelles de ces commodités y-a-t-il dans votre habitation?  
☐ LAVE-LIGNE  
☐ ORDINATEUR  
☐ INTERNET  
☐ FOUR
- Au cours de l'année dernière, y a-t-il eu des problèmes d'entretien dans votre logement ?  
☐ OUI ☐ NON  
 Si oui, quels étaient les problèmes ??  
☐ INFILTRATIONS D'EAU  
☐ PROBLÈMES DE CHAUFFAGE  
☐ DÉTACHMENT DU PLÂTRE  
☐ AUTRE (Spécifier: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Invites-tu volontiers d'autres personnes dans votre maison?  
☐ OUI  
☐ SEULEMENT LA FAMILLE ET LES AMIS PROCHES  
☐ NON  
 Si oui, dans quelles occasions? \_\_\_\_\_
- Si non, pourquoi? \_\_\_\_\_
- Y a-t-il un espace tranquille pour être seul dans votre maison? (pour se détendre, étudier, prier, etc.)  
☐ OUI ☐ NON
- Accueillez-vous des personnes chez vous pendant de longues périodes ?  
☐ OUI ☐ NON
- Avez-vous des bonnes relations avec les personnes qui habitent dans ton immeuble?  
☐ OUI  
☐ NON  
☐ J'AI PAS DES RELATIONS  
 Pourquoi? \_\_\_\_\_

## بعض الأسئلة

- هل تسكن في  
اكتب عنوانك
- منذ متى تسكن  
□ عدة أشهر  
□ سنة 1 - سنة 5  
□ 5-3 سنوات  
□ 10-5 سنوات  
□ أكثر من 10
- ما هي جنس  
اين ولدت؟

- انترنت  
□ فرن
- هل كانت هناك مشاكل في الصيانة في منزلك، العام الماضي?  
□ نعم □ لا  
إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، فما هي المشاكل?  
□ تسرب المياه  
□ مشاكل التدخين  
□ فصل الجبس  
□ مشاكل أخرى  
(حدد): \_\_\_\_\_
- هل تحب دعوة أشخاص آخرين إلى بيتك?  
□ نعم  
□ العائلة والأصدقاء المقربين فقط  
□ لا  
إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، في أي مناسبات? \_\_\_\_\_  
إذا كانت الإجابة لا ، فلماذا?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- هل يوجد مكان هادئ في منزلك لتكون بمفردك?  
(لاسترخاء، الدراسة، الصلاة، إلخ...) □ نعم □ لا
- هل تستضيف أشخاصًا في منزلك، لفترات طويلة من الزمن?  
□ نعم □ لا
- هل لديك علاقات إيجابية مع جيرانك?  
□ نعم  
□ لا  
□ ليس لدي علاقات  
لماذا? \_\_\_\_\_

- العمارة □ نعم □ لا  
لماذا?  
11. أي من هذه المشاكل الأكثر انتشارًا في عمارتك؟ استخدم الدرجات من 1 (ليست مشكلة) إلى 3 (مشكلة منتشرة للغاية):  

□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	التنظيف / إدارة النفايات غير كافية
□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	صيانة غير كافية
□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	صعوبة لدخول البناية
□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	شعور عدم الأمان
□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	تواجد الكثير من الإقامات الفارغة
□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	تجارة المخدرات في الأماكن المشتركة
□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	أشخاص في المخزن / العلية (Cantina/Soffitta)
- كم تدفع في مصاريف العمارة شهريًا ؟  
☐ 30-50 يورو  
☐ 50-100 يورو  
☐ 100-200 يورو  
☐ أكثر من 200 يورو
- في رأيك المعيشة في عمارتك:  
☐ جيدة جدًا  
☐ جيدة  
☐ لا بأس بها  
☐ ليست جيدة  
☐ سيئة جدًا

- إذا لديك أطفال، في أي بلد ولدوا?  
4. كم عمرك?  
اكتب أعمار الأشخاص الذين يسكنون معك?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- كم عدد الأشخاص الذين يسكنون معك?  
اكتب رقمًا  
\_\_\_\_\_
- كم عدد الأشخاص الذين يسكنون معك، هم جزء من عائلتك؟ اكتب رقمًا  
\_\_\_\_\_
- إذا كان هناك أشخاص ذوي إعاقة، فافكر عددهم: \_\_\_\_\_
- كم عدد الأشخاص الذين يعملون؟ اكتب رقمًا  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ما هو مصدر دخلك الرئيسي، و من يعيش معك؟  
يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة واحدة:  
☐ عقد دائم  
☐ عقد محدد المدة  
☐ عقد من نوع آخر  
☐ عمل حر  
☐ عمل غير رسمي  
☐ تقاعد/ معاش  
☐ دخل المواطنة  
☐ لا يوجد (رية بيت - طالب/ة - باحث عن عمل)  
☐ أنت أو الأشخاص الذين يسكنون معك، تملكون أي من وسائل النقل هذه?  
☐ سيارة  
☐ دراجة  
☐ دراجة نارية (moto)  
☐ سكوتر (monopattino)  
☐ آخر



### Algunas preguntas sobre

1. Actualmente vives en el barrio de San Siro?

☐ SI ☐ NO

Indicar tu dirección: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Desde hace cuánto vives en el barrio?

☐ ALGUNOS MESES

☐ 1-2 AÑOS

☐ 3-5 AÑOS

☐ 5-10 AÑOS

☐ MÁS DE 10 AÑOS

3. Cuál es tu ciudadanía? \_\_\_\_\_

En qué País naciste? \_\_\_\_\_

Si tienes hijos, en qué país nacieron? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Cuántos años tienes? \_\_\_\_\_

Indicar las edades de las personas que viven contigo: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Cuántas personas viven en tu casa?

Indicar un número: \_\_\_\_\_

Cuántas de las personas que viven contigo, hacen parte de tu núcleo familiar? Indicar un número: \_\_\_\_\_

Si hay personas con discapacidades, indicar el número: \_\_\_\_\_

6. En la casa donde vives, cuántas personas trabajan? Indicar un número: \_\_\_\_\_

Cuál es tu principal fuente de ingresos y la de las personas que viven contigo? (Puedes escoger más de una respuesta)

- ☐ CONTRATO A TIEMPO INDETERMINADO
- ☐ CONTRATO A TIEMPO DETERMINADO
- ☐ OTRA FORMA DE CONTRATO
- ☐ TRABAJO AUTÓNOMO
- ☐ TRABAJO INFORMAL
- ☐ PENSIÓN
- ☐ SUBSIDIO DEL GOBIERNO (REDDITO DI CITTADINANZA)
- ☐ NINGUNA (amo/a de casa, estudiante, en búsqueda de ocupación)

7. Tú o las personas que viven contigo, tienen alguno de estos medios de transporte? (Puedes escoger más de una respuesta)

- ☐ AUTOMÓVIL
- ☐ BICICLETA
- ☐ MOTOCICLETA
- ☐ MONOPATÍN
- ☐ OTRO

## Questionnaire Habitar San Siro

\* Una investigación colaborativa sobre las condiciones de vivienda en el barrio ERP\* de San Siro

\*Barrio de vivienda pública

¿Hay ascensor? \_\_\_\_\_

☐ SI ☐ NO

9. En tu condominio hay un portero?

☐ SI ☐ NO

Si en tu condominio hay portero, para tí su presencia es:

- ☐ FUNDAMENTAL
- ☐ IMPORTANTE PERO NO FUNDAMENTAL
- ☐ INDIFERENTE

10. Tú, o las otras personas que viven contigo, frecuentan el patio común del condominio?

☐ SI ☐ NO

Porqué? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Entre estos, cuáles son los problemas más presentes en tu condominio? Usa una escala de 1 (problema poco presente) a 3 (problema muy presente)

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | LIMPIEZA / GESTIÓN DE RESIDUOS INADECUADA |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | MANTENIMIENTO INADECUADO                  |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | PROBLEMAS DE ACCESIBILIDAD                |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | PERCEPCIÓN DE INSEGURIDAD                 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | PRESENCIA DE MUCHOS ALOJAMIENTOS VACÍOS   |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | VENTA DE DROGAS EN LOS ESPACIOS COMUNES   |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | PERSONAS EN LOS SÓTANOS / ÁTICOS          |

12. Cuánto pagas de cuotas de condominio al mes?

- ☐ 30-50 EUROS
- ☐ 50-100 EUROS
- ☐ 100-200 EUROS
- ☐ MÁS DE 200 EUROS

13. Para tí, en tu condominio se vive:

- ☐ MUY BIEN
- ☐ BIEN
- ☐ REGULAR
- ☐ MAL

## Questionnaire Vivre à San Siro

\* Une recherche collaborative sur les conditions de logement dans le quartier ERP de San Siro

14. Cuál es tu situación de vivienda?

- ☐ ALQUILER CON ALER
- ☐ ALQUILER CON UN PRIVADO
- ☐ PROPIETARIO
- ☐ OCCUPACIÓN

Indicar el rango de ISEE: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Cuántas habitaciones tiene tu casa, además del espacio de la cocina y el baño? Indicar un número: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Cuáles de estas dotaciones hay en tu casa?

- ☐ LAVADORA
- ☐ COMPUTADOR
- ☐ INTERNET
- ☐ HORNO

17. En el último año, han habido problemas de mantenimiento en tu casa?

☐ SI ☐ NO

De ser así, cuáles han sido los problemas?

- ☐ FILTRACIONES DE AGUA
- ☐ PROBLEMAS CON LA CALEFACCIÓN
- ☐ DETERIORO DE LAS PAREDES
- ☐ OTRO (Especificar: \_\_\_\_\_)

18. Te sientes cómodo invitando a otras personas a tu casa?

- ☐ SI
- ☐ SOLO FAMILIARES Y AMIGOS CERCANOS
- ☐ NO

En caso de SI, en qué ocasiones? \_\_\_\_\_

En caso de NO, porqué? \_\_\_\_\_

19. En tu casa hay un espacio tranquilo para estar solo? (para relajarse, estudiar, rezar, etc.)

☐ SI ☐ NO

20. En tu casa recibes huéspedes por un periodo de tiempo?

\* Le questionnaire c'est anonyme!  
La compilation prendra environ  
8 minutes.

Les données recueillies seront utilisées exclusivement à des fins de recherche, sous forme anonyme et agrégée, en conformité avec le Code de protection des données personnelles (D.Lgs. 196/2003), mise à jour par décret législatif (D.Lgs. 101/2018) en adaptant la réglementation italienne au règlement européen sur la protection du privacy (Reg. UE n. 679/2016, GDPR) et ses mises à jour ultérieures.

\* الاستبيان مجهول!  
سيستطاع اكتماله حوالي 8 دقائق.

سيتم استخدام البيانات التي تم جمعها حصرياً لـ:  
أغراض البحث المجهولة والمجموعة وفقاً لقانون الحماية من  
البيانات الشخصية (المرسوم التشريعي 196/2003)، محدث  
بـ:  
المرسوم التشريعي (المرسوم التشريعي 101/2018)  
لتكليف التشريع الإيطالي مع اللوائح الأوروبية بشأن الخصوصية  
(لائحة الاتحاد الأوروبي رقم 679/2016، اللائحة العامة  
لحماية البيانات) والتحديثات اللاحقة.

### 3.1.1 An progressive project tested through practice

The ‘Abitare San Siro’ questionnaire can be defined as a progressive project, insofar as, from the earliest stages of conception and then distribution, it was intended as a tool for collective discussion and reflection, both on content and on the organisation and roles of the various actors.

An initial meeting, involving all the project participants, was an opportunity to discuss an first version of the questionnaire, drawn up by the research coordinators. The comparison with the local realities revealed the need to translate the questionnaire into several languages, due to the difficulty of many inhabitants in understanding Italian, and to reformulate some questions in a less direct form, due to the strong distrust that often characterises the more fragile profiles living in the neighbourhood. Finally, a further integration proposed during the discussion concerned the degree of involvement in the project on the part of the questionnaire’s recipients: in order to increase awareness of the research’s objectives and contents, it was proposed that a special information section be prepared, using simple and informative language. Suggestions for changes were then collected and reformulated to produce a product shared by all participants.

In its completed form, the questionnaire, drawn up and distributed in paper form, presents



three areas of investigation: the first concerns the profiles of the inhabitants, with questions on citizenship, age, type of work performed, and the presence of disabled people within the dwelling; the second area concerns neighbourhood spaces, with questions on the quality of courtyards, the presence of condominium problems, and neighbourhood relations; finally, the third area concerns the spaces

of the home, with questions on the type of living situation, housing amenities, quality and perceptions with respect to living spaces. The questionnaire is formulated in such a way as to include questions on the objective conditions of housing and common spaces, and more subjective questions, with respect to perceptions of the neighbourhood and neighbourhood relations. It was translated into four languages: English, French, Spanish and Arabic. It was then administered in five languages. The compilation was initially intended to be carried out independently, at the locations of the subjects involved and with the possible support of the operators, in understanding and/or explaining the objectives of the research. Already in the early stages of distribution, which started in February 2023, it became clear that autonomous

compilation presented several problems. Among the main problems encountered was the mistrust and lack of interest on the part of the inhabitants in completing the questionnaire. In fact, many inhabitants come to the counters or the offices of the associations and cooperatives involved with urgent problems and little interest in activities that are not aimed at solving their own difficulties. In addition, the operators involved showed substantial difficulty in reconciling assistance in filling out the questionnaire with other routine activities.

In this sense, the questionnaire design proved to be adaptive and progressive, with a change in distribution methods and an internal reorganisation of roles and competences. From an autonomous compilation, there was a shift towards an accompanied compilation, with the involvement of a team of six students from the Faculties of Architecture and Urban Planning at the Politecnico di Milano, who participated in the project as part of the broader curricular internship experience at the Off Campus San Siro. The students were trained to personally submit the questionnaire in the locations involved. After an initial accompaniment phase, the group was distributed to the different locations and each student personally participated in the distribution and filling out of the questionnaire, personally submitting the questions to the inhabitants involved and thus collecting, in addition to the data explicitly requested in the questions, a large amount of life stories and personal tales from all over the San Siro district. During the distribution phase, which lasted five months (from February to June 2023), several meetings were held for collective discussion and reflection with the students and some young people from the Scomodo collective, who voluntarily took part in the project and contributed, on various days, to the distribution of the questionnaires in the neighbourhood. Several days of “itinerant distribution” were also organised, in the public spaces of the neighbourhood, in order to intercept a segment of the population that often does not access, for different reasons, the services offered by the third sector actors in the neighbourhood. Overall, it can be said that the ‘neighbourhood questionnaire’ had the character of an progressive and adaptive project, which tried to constantly collect and confront the learnings from the field experiment.

### 3.1.2 The questionnaire as an ethnographic survey instrument

The “accompanied” distribution of the neighbourhood questionnaire allowed for a considerable amount of interaction between researchers, students, operators, and inhabitants. Altogether, around 380 questionnaires were completed (of which 360 were then selected for completeness in data processing). Each of these documents brings with it a personal comparison and interaction that can hardly be summarised within a “closed” instrument such as the questionnaire.

These interactions between researchers and inhabitants can also be considered extremely valuable in understanding aspects that escape the precision and punctuality of pre-determined questions. To be able to collect and process this great wealth of knowledge acquired during the months of distribution, the students involved kept a diary, in which personal reflections, life stories, photographs and other useful elements were jotted down to recount the knowledge learned from the people interviewed. The diary was also a tool for critical self-reflection and the sharing of personal challenges and issues, with respect to the research project and visions, present and future, of the neighbourhood and the city.

This relational dimension and informal exchange were also deepened and elaborated through the organisation of a workshop day dedicated to the students of the Postgraduate Course in Urban Anthropology at Bicocca University, promoted with the collaboration of Paolo Grassi, an anthropologist and researcher at Bicocca University (who has been a member of the Mapping San Siro research group for many years). During this day, the fifteen students (with different academic backgrounds but united by a strong preparation in the disciplines of anthropology and social sciences) were presented with the first results of the research and were asked to participate in the distribution of the questionnaire in the public spaces of the neighbourhood. A total of 33 questionnaires were collected and, at the end of the distribution workshop activity, a collective discussion was organised to try to reconstruct, from an ethnographic perspective, the various considerations on the use of the questionnaire tool, its strengths and weaknesses, the difficulties encountered and the relational experience







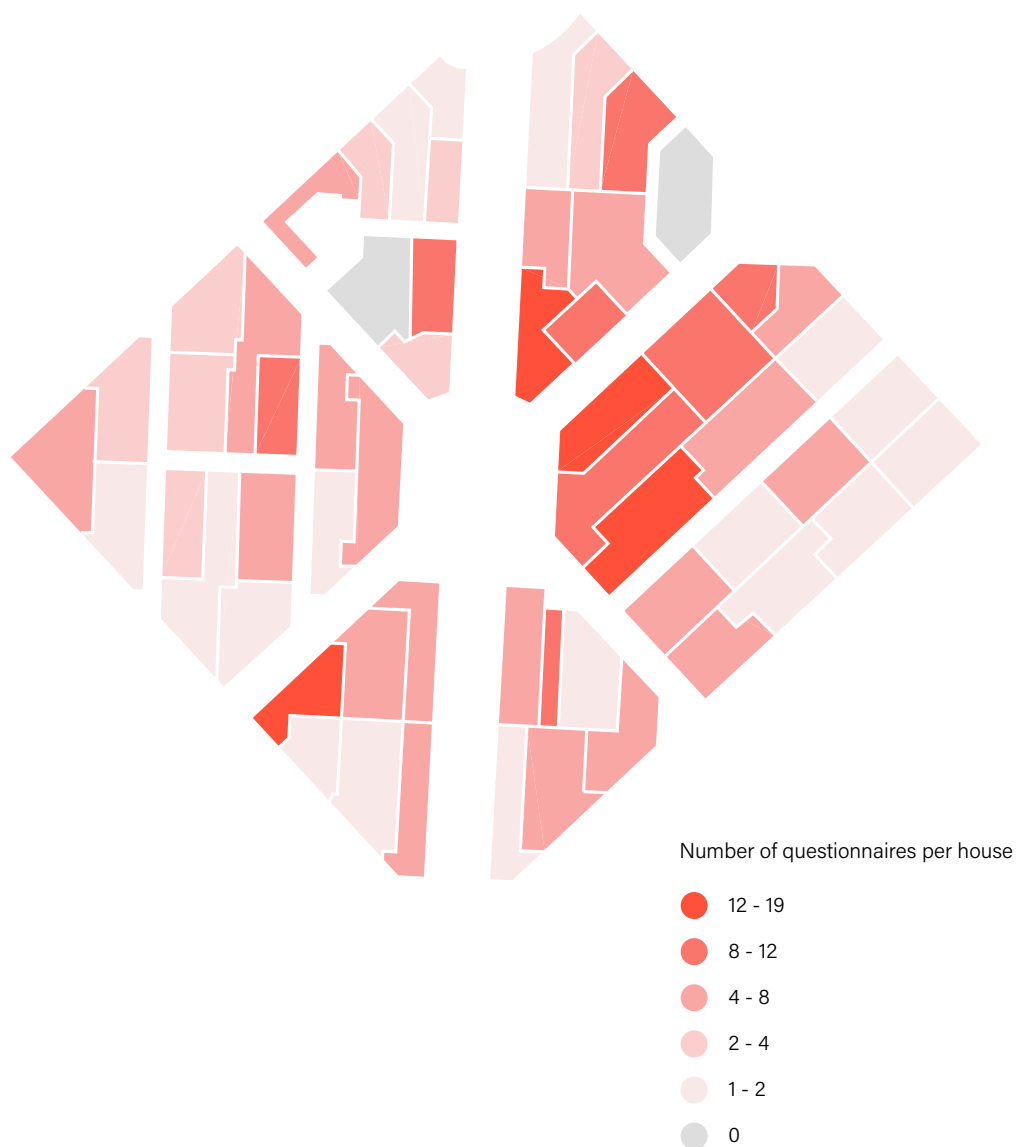
with the neighbourhood's inhabitants.

The activity was organised through a reading based on four macro-themes: profiles of the inhabitants and areas of fragility, housing situations, relations, and perceptions with respect to the neighbourhood and community relations. The hints and observations that emerged from the collective comparison steer

the reflection on the use of the questionnaire tool in two directions. A first order of considerations concerns the noted need to precede the filling in of the questionnaire with a friendly and colloquial interaction, as well as complete information on the aims and purposes of the research. These considerations reveal the theme of the resident population's mistrust and lack of confidence in institutions and subjects perceived as strangers. In particular, the questions on work and on the characteristics of one's personal and family condition are those that aroused particular unease in the respondents. In this regard, the questionnaire was sometimes interpreted as a 'fourth subject' of the conversation, capable of mediating, as a physical object of reference, the difficulties of communication and sometimes of translation. A second order of observations concerns the ability of questionnaire takers to 'translate' broad answers, which often broaden the scope of the conversation and range over different issues, into precise and timely answers. In this sense, the observations reveal an inevitable "interpretative gap" operated by the researcher who fills in the questionnaire, with respect to the contents of the answers received. In this regard, an interesting reflection concerns the legitimacy of making these interpretations, which are as inevitable as they are potentially misleading. On the other hand, about the substantive questions on the data that emerged from the compilation, on the whole the experience of distribution in public spaces proved to be more effective than that at the premises of those involved in intercepting certain profiles that rarely, for different reasons, access the service system. In particular, it was possible to intercept some people belonging to the Roma community, some people who live in cellars and attics, some young people who sublet beds in dormitory houses, and finally some people who own housing in the neighbourhood, who spend little time in the quadrangle and rarely need the services offered by the third sector.

## 3.2 A comparison of the collected data

Of the 380 questionnaires collected, 360 were taken into account for processing. In the map you can see the number of questionnaires collected for each house in the quadrangle. Six percent of the 360 questionnaires selected do not have a location, but even this percentage was considered for data processing.

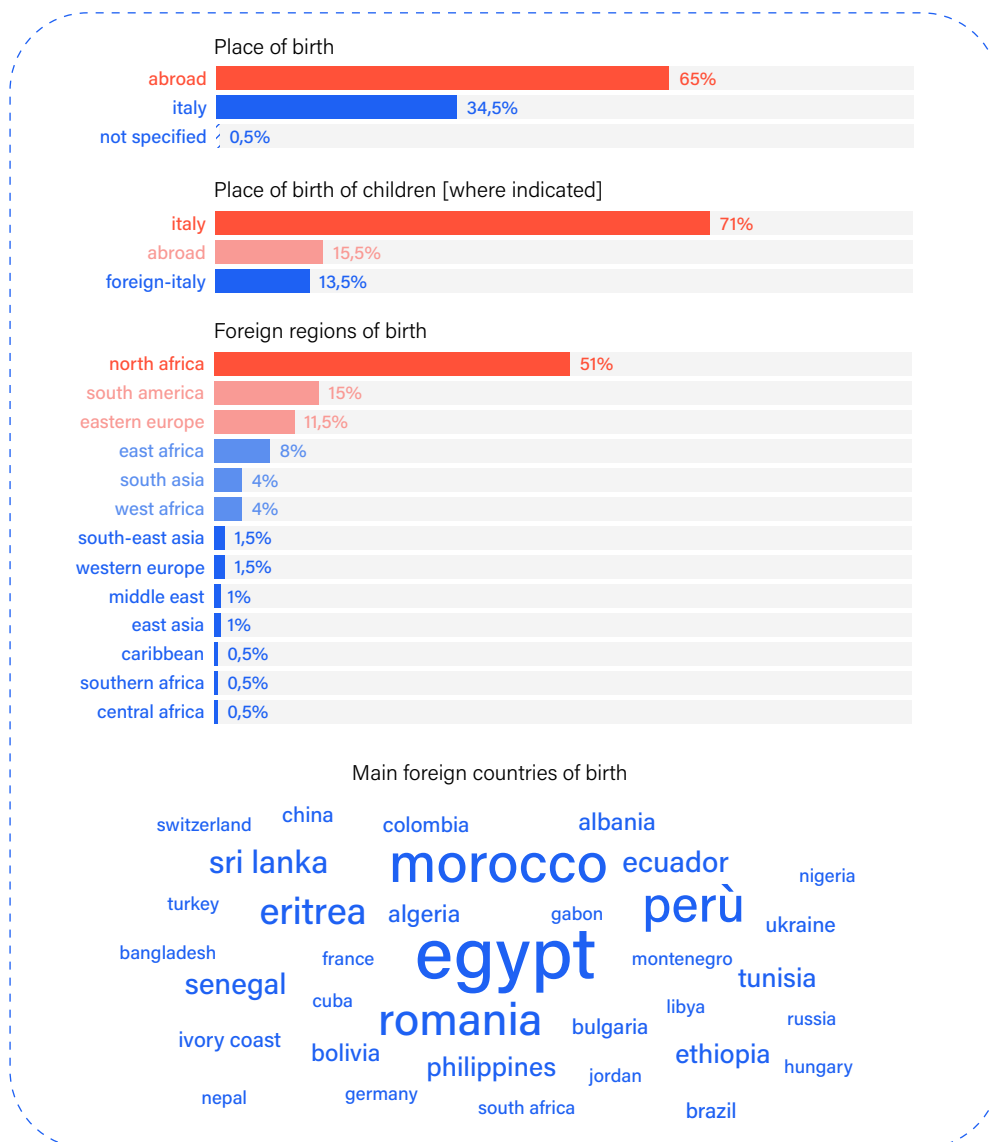




### 3.2.1. Typical inhabitants: the most common profiles

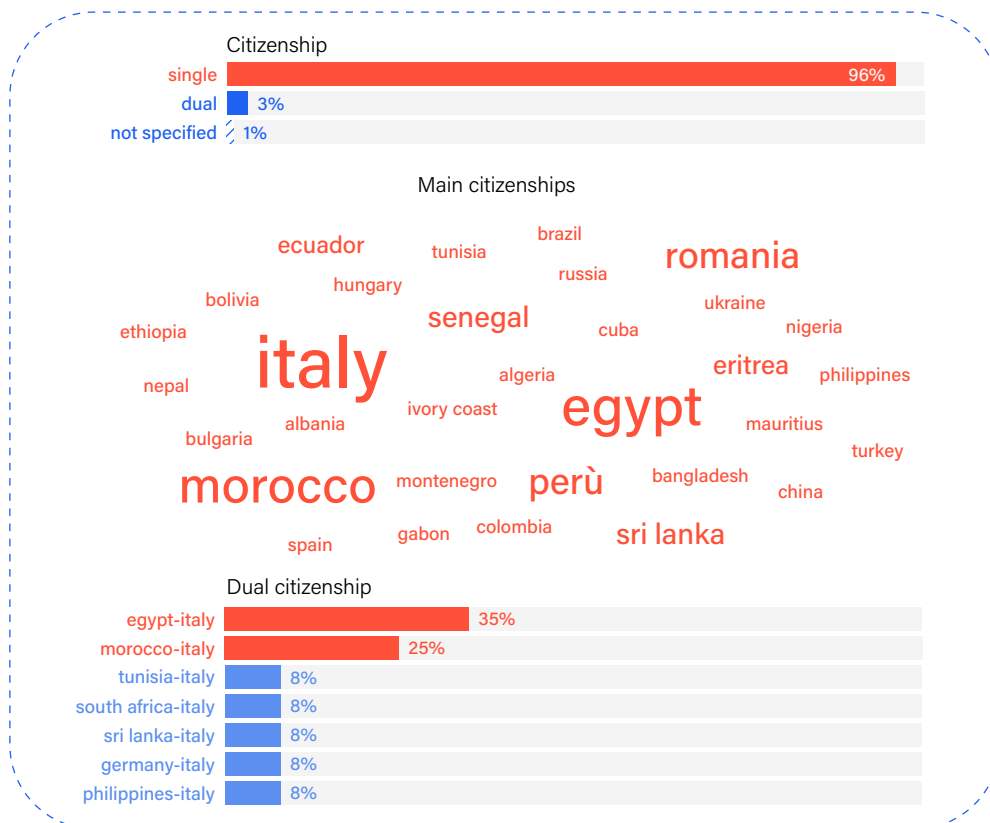
#### Origins

Based on the answers given in the questionnaire, 65% of the inhabitants were born in a country other than Italy. However, where the presence of children was indicated, in 71% of cases these were born in Italy. The data therefore suggest an important presence of profiles with a migratory background and at the same time of second-generation young people. The main regions of origin of the population with a migratory background are: North Africa (51%), South America (15%), Eastern Europe (11.5%). The main countries of origin are Egypt, Morocco, Peru, Romania, Sri Lanka, Eritrea, Ecuador, and Senegal.



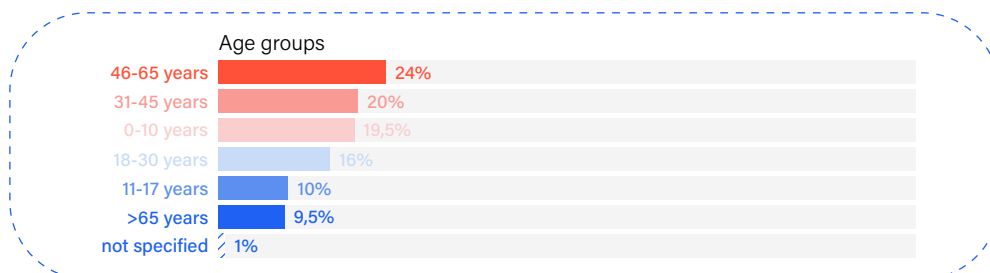
### Citizenship

The main nationalities surveyed are Italian, Egyptian, Moroccan and Peruvian. The questionnaire also reveals a small presence of dual nationalities (3%). In more than half of these cases, the dual nationalities were Italian-Egyptian (35%) or Italian-Moroccan (25%).



### Age groups

Overall, the population is very young: the data shows that 30% of the inhabitants are between 0 and 18 years old. 16% of the inhabitants are between 18 and 30 years old and 20% between 31 and 45. 24% are between 46 and 65 years old and, finally, only 9.5% are over 65.

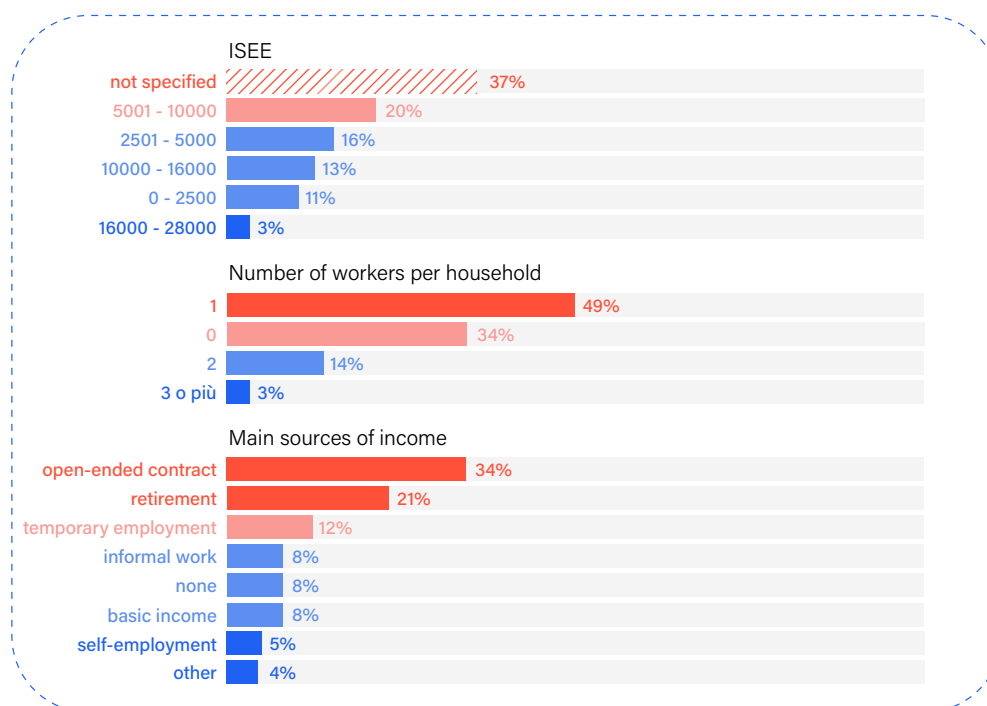


### Economic Situations

In most of the 360 questionnaires analysed, the question on ISEE bands remained unanswered (37%). This is probably due to the perception of one's ISEE band as a private and sensitive data, and thus to the respondents' unwillingness to answer the question. 27% declare an ISEE bracket between 0 and 5000 euro and 20% between 5001 and 10000 euro. Only 13% declare an ISEE between 10000 and 16000 and 3% above 16000. Overall, therefore, about half of the respondents (47%) declare an ISEE equal to or lower than € 10000.

This data can usefully be read in relation to Aler monthly fees, which range from about €60 (protection bracket) to about €400 (lapse bracket). From the latest data published by Aler in its 2024 Forecast Budget, it appears that in the Milan area almost 50% of Aler users are in the protection bracket, and only 7.7% in the forfeiture bracket. These data provide a rough measure for understanding the economic fragility of the population assigned public housing. The data are also corroborated by what emerges from the questionnaire on the number of workers per housing unit within the quadrangle: in almost half of the cases (49%) it turns out to be one, in 34% of the cases it turns out to be zero.

Finally, the main sources of income indicated in the questionnaire are open-ended contract (34%), welfare and social security system (citizenship income and pension, 29%), other forms of income (informal work, self-employment, other, 17%), fixed-term contract (12%) and, finally, no source of income at all in 8% of cases.

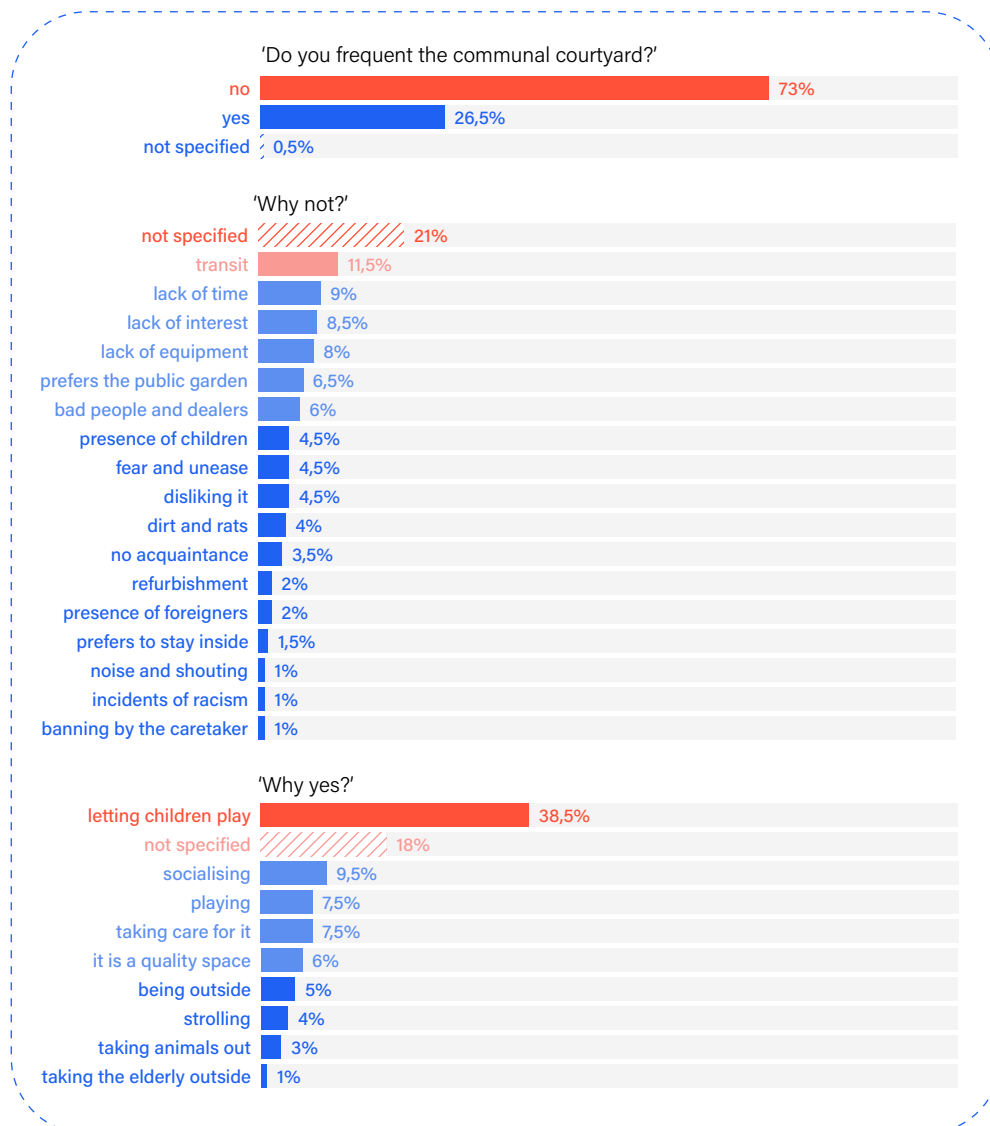


### 3.2.2 Neighbourhood and community relations: an ambivalent relationship

#### *Use of courtyards*

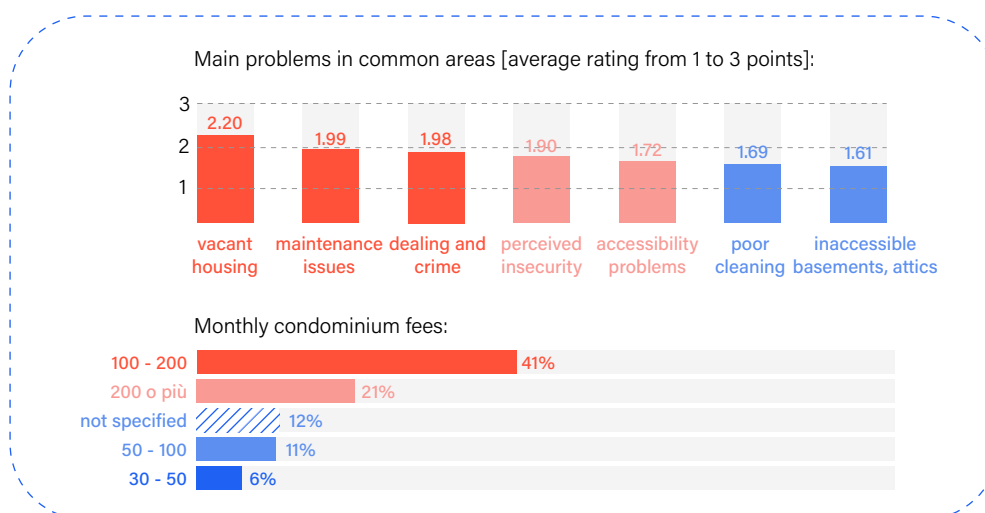
To the question “Do you, or other people living with you, frequent the courtyard of your apartment building?” most respondents (73%) answered “no”. Among the reasons given, the most frequent were lack of time or interest, lack of facilities in the courtyard and the presence of other, higher quality green spaces nearby. In some cases, the perception of insecurity, noise, discomfort, and dirtiness is reported.

Respondents who state that they frequent the communal courtyard (26.5%) indicate as their main motivation the possibility to play or let their children play (46%). In other cases, the courtyard is used for socialising (9.5%), taking care of its spaces and greenery (7.5%), and staying in a quality space (6%).



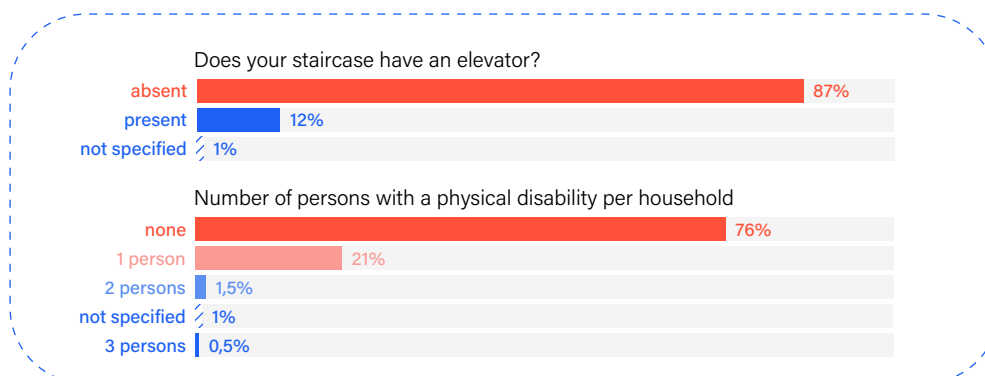
### Common spaces

After compiling a list of seven of the main problems commonly reported by the residents of the neighbourhood, the respondents were asked to rate the severity of each problem within their own building by giving a score from 1 to 3. The average ratings are shown in the elaboration below. As can be seen from the graph, the presence of many empty dwellings is indicated as the main problem (linked to a greater feeling of abandonment and greater degradation of common spaces), followed by maintenance problems, the presence of drug dealing and other illegal activities in common spaces, the perception of insecurity, accessibility problems, poor cleanliness and, finally, the inaccessibility of cellars and attics. It seems useful to read these data by comparing them with the amount of monthly condominium expenses, which in most cases are over 100 euros, and in 21% of cases even over 200 euros.



### Accessibility

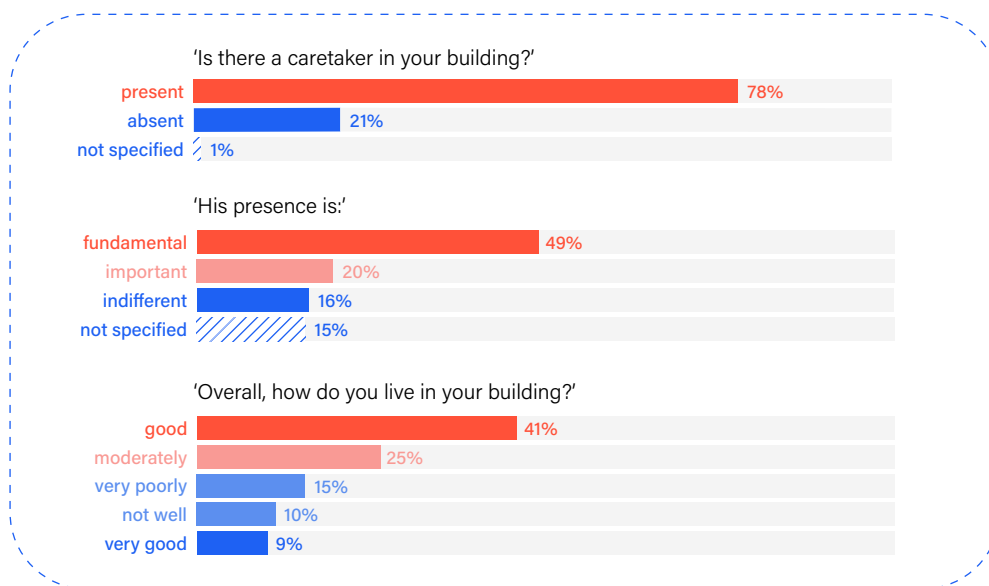
While there are very few lifts in individual stairwells (present in only 12% of cases), in 21% of cases at least one person with a physical disability is present in the household. In some cases, more than one person is also present.



### *Caretakers and quality of life*

In 78% of the cases the caretaker is present in the building. In these cases, his presence is considered fundamental “only” in 49% of the cases, in 20% of the cases his presence is indicated as important but not fundamental. Finally, in 16% of cases his presence is indifferent.

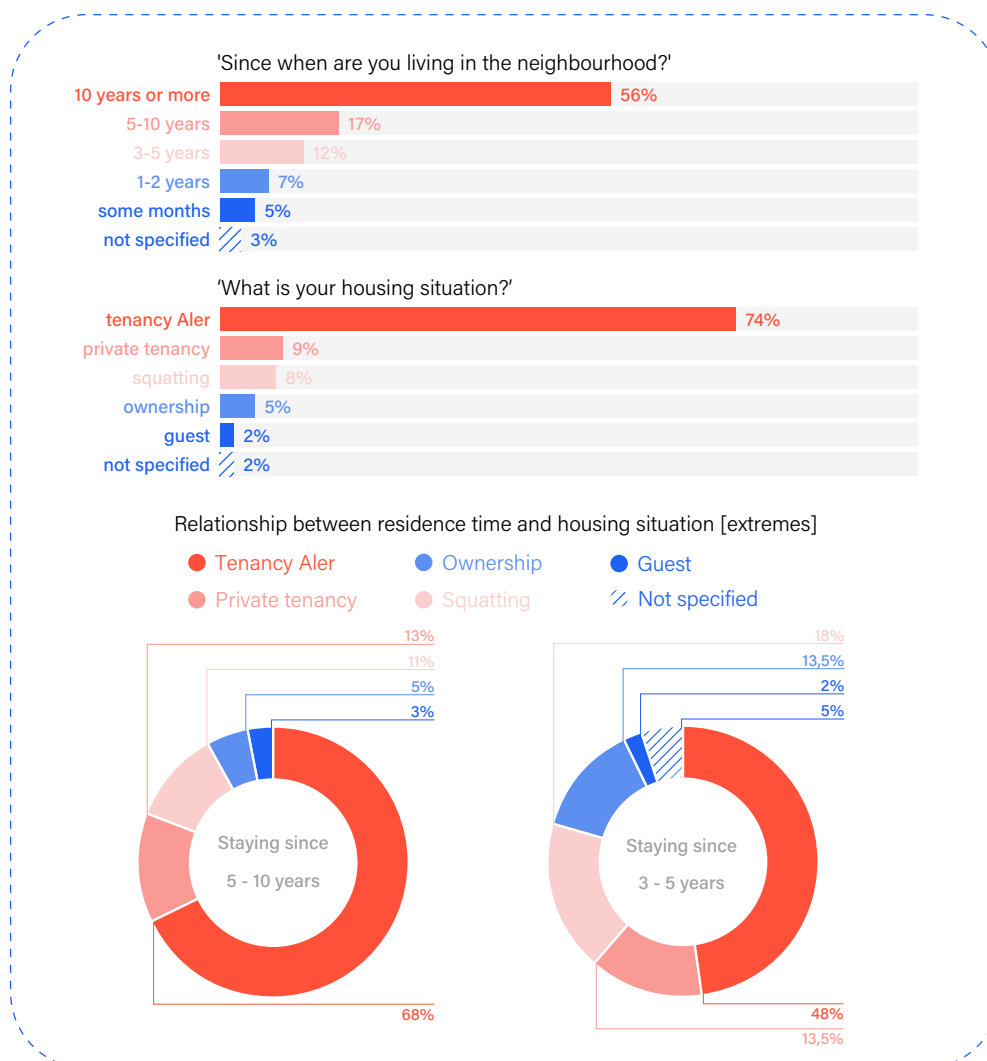
Overall, in the face of the varying degrees of problems that emerged from the questionnaire about the quality, equipment and use of condominium spaces, 50% of the respondents nevertheless state that they live “well” or even “very well” within their building. Another 25% say they live ‘fairly well’ and, finally, a further 25% say they live ‘badly’ or ‘very badly’.



### 3.2.3 Domestic spaces, between loneliness and overcrowding

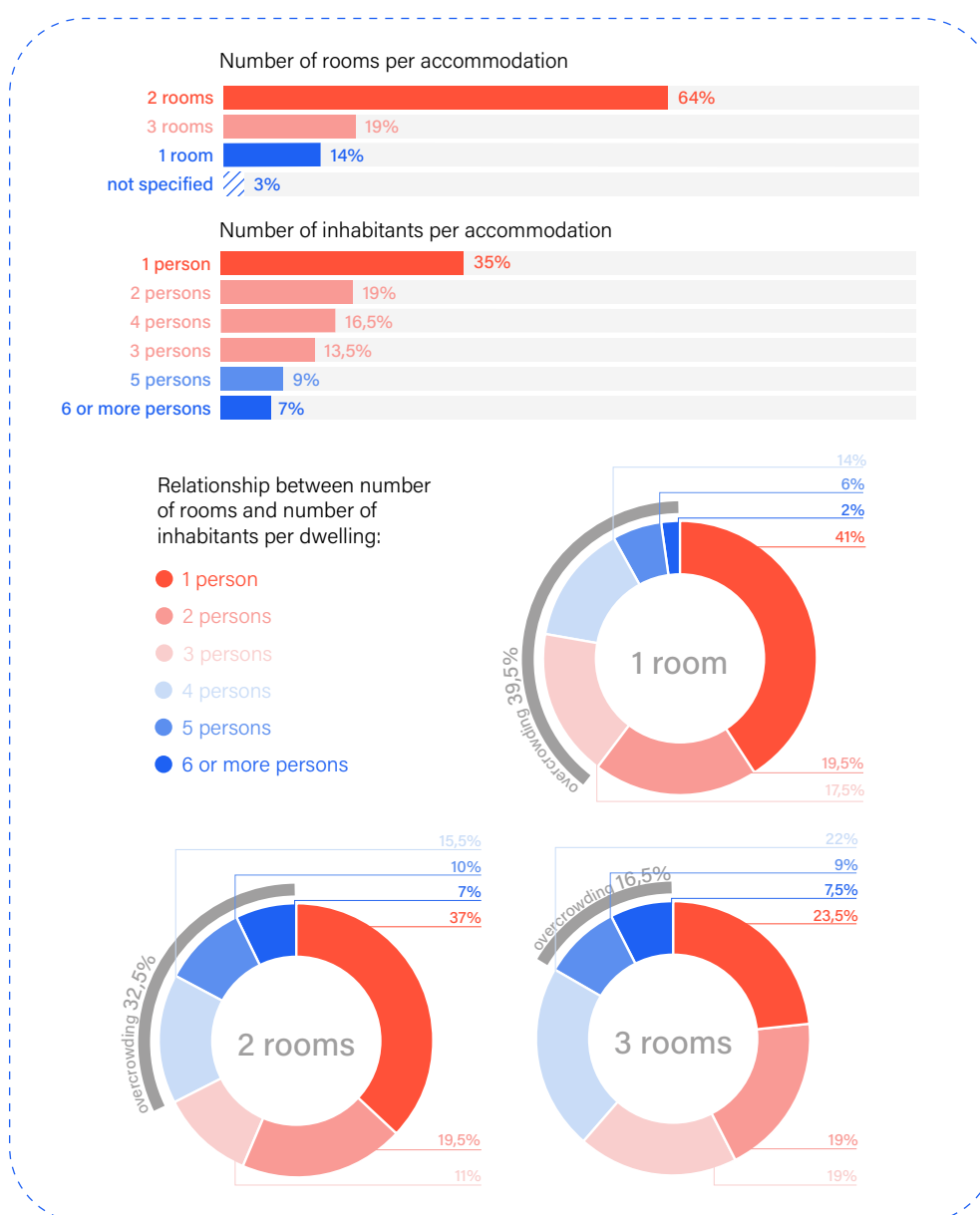
#### *Residence times and housing situations*

Processing of the data collected shows that most of the respondents have lived in the neighbourhood for 10 years or more (56%), followed by 29% who have lived in the neighbourhood for 3 to 10 years, and a small percentage who have lived there for 1 or 2 years (3%) or a few months (5%). It is of particular interest to compare the data on the length of time living in the neighbourhood with the housing situation (Aler lease, private lease, squatting, ownership, hospitality). A comparison of the data shows how, in cases of “historical” permanence in the neighbourhood, most of the housing situations are Aler leases (83.5%), although there is also a small percentage of “informal” housing situations (9%), such as cases of squatting (5.5%) and hospitality (4%). In cases where people have been living in the neighbourhood for a few months, on the other hand, the percentage of Aler tenancies decreases considerably (58%), while private tenancies (21%) and squatting (11%) increase.



### Housing size and density

In most cases (78%), the respondents' dwellings consist of two rooms (64%) or one room (14%). Only in 19% of cases the dwellings consist of three rooms. Here again, the data take on particular significance when compared with the density of households, which in 46% of cases consist of four or more people. Comparing the size of the dwellings with the number of inhabitants in them, a situation of widespread overcrowding and generally high housing density clearly emerges. In the case of one-room dwellings, the percentage of overcrowding is close to 40%, in the case of two-room dwellings over 30% and in the case of three-room dwellings over 25%.

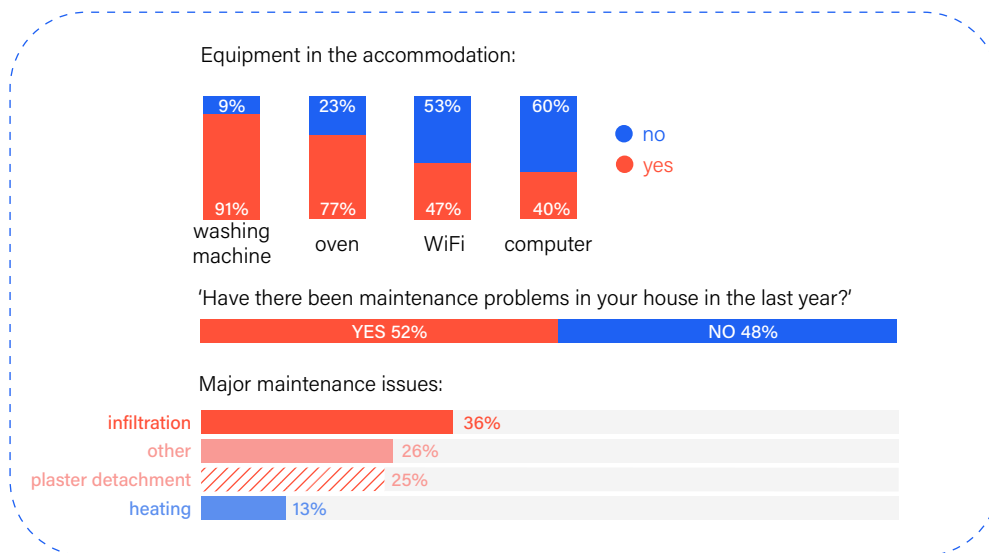




### Equipment and maintenance

The questionnaire listed some basic equipment commonly found in a home, such as a washing machine, oven, Wi-Fi and computer, and the respondents were asked to report on the presence or absence of this equipment in their home. It emerged that while the washing machine was present in most cases (91%), the oven was present in only 77% of cases, and Wi-Fi (47%) and a computer (40%) were present in less than half of the cases.

In addition, more than half of the respondents stated that they had experienced maintenance problems in their housing in the last year. The most reported problems were water infiltration (36%), plaster peeling (25%), and heating problems (13%).

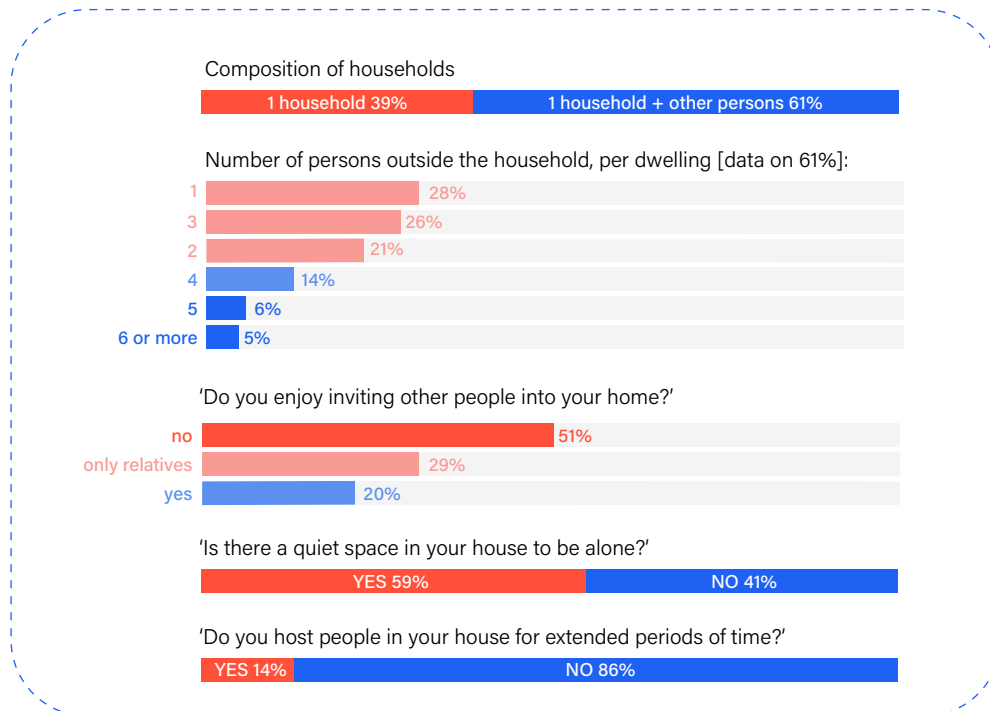


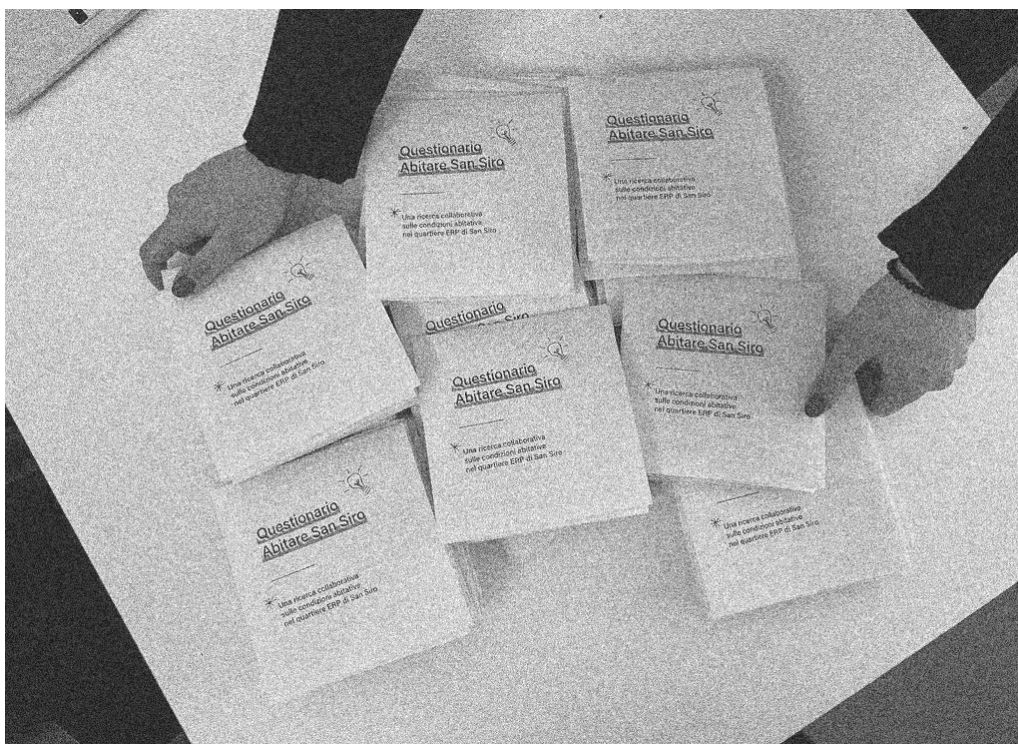
### *Households and Hospitality*

Within the questionnaire, the following question is asked: ‘How many, of the people living with you, are part of your household?’ Analysis of the data shows that there is often only one household within the same accommodation.

In 61% of cases, in addition to a family unit, other persons are present in the accommodation, in varying numbers: in 28% of cases 1, in 21% of cases 2, even in 51% of cases 3 or more persons. It is likely that this 51% includes situations of roommates living together, rather than families practising forms of hospitality.

In any case, these data contrast with the answers given to the questions “do you invite people into your home for extended periods of time?” (only 14% gave an affirmative answer) and “do you willingly invite other people into your home?” (only 20% answered “yes”). This suggests a certain opacity, and perhaps also a high dynamism, of the composition of households and living situations.





# Part 4

Reconstructing a fragmented  
geography

## 4.1 Types of housing situations

In the period from December 2022 to March 2023, multiple surveys and interviews were carried out within the different neighbourhoods. However, the knowledge acquired and elaborated in this report is also the result of a constant and continuous presence in the neighbourhood and at the Off Campus space of the Politecnico di Milano, by the researchers and all those who took part in the research.

From the many inspections carried out over the four months, from the interviews with caretakers, from the conversations - more or less informal - with the inhabitants, and finally from the resulting graphical elaborations proposed in the maps, a very fragmented picture of the housing conditions in the neighbourhood emerges. However, it is possible to recognise certain features that are common to some housing situations, which in some cases are particularly critical and in need of targeted interventions, and which in other cases are already in good condition, both in terms of the state of the buildings and in terms of maintenance, care, and good co-existence between apartment blocks.

Trying to gather housing situations with common characteristics into groups, four 'families' of situations were identified, in an attempt to represent four 'identikits' of apartment blocks on which to imagine possible interventions, depending on the characteristics and degree of problematic living conditions. The main criteria for recognising the types were both physical (the presence of empty dwellings and squatting, the overall state of maintenance of the building) and social, management and community-related (the characteristics of the concierge service, the inhabitants' perceptions of safety and cohabitation issues, the care and accessibility of common areas).



#### 4.1.1 Multi-problem enclaves

The first type includes the ‘multi-problem enclaves’ characterised by a strong presence of squatting, a high percentage of empty dwellings (with consequent hygienic and sanitary problems due to the state of abandonment and neglect), a general degradation of the structures, the perception of danger by the inhabitants and those living nearby, the total lack of care and cleanliness of the condominium spaces, and the abandonment of waste and bulky objects in the courtyards, cellars and other common spaces. In some of these buildings there is no concierge service, in others it is present only in the mornings: the interviews revealed the many difficulties that caretakers face on a daily basis in managing situations of particular degradation and social fragility, in which many of the inhabitants of these apartment blocks live.



21 February 2023

Extracts from a conversation with a caretaker

'People used to sleep in the attic, so now I have the doors paved and leave only one open, for technical inspections. Instead, here on the ground floor there are three flats that are paved: in one of them there lives an old man who is now in hospital, they broke into his house and stole a television as old as the cuckoo's nest and an even older kitchen, so we decided to pelt it. When he comes back we will reopen it for him. It's, let's say, a temporary security measure (so to speak, because if they want to get in, they break the plates and get in anyway).

A few years ago [the Aler operators, ed.] came to make assessments, but in the last twenty years they have never made any serious intervention. We should start with the roof and then work our way down. It's not enough to come here with a brush. The cellars are unusable because they often flood. At a certain time, as soon as it gets dark, you're afraid.'

21 February 2023

Extracts from a conversation with a resident

'Here we are full of non-EU citizens and gypsies. I am the owner and I have to suffer. I had to wear a grill. You can't say anything they spit in your face and tell you are racist. I'm alone, my husband died three years ago because he had a fight with a gypsy here and he had a heart attack. That's how I lost my husband.

The gypsies come here at night, they dump, they have their cellars here. I'm tired, the heating costs double, why do I have to pay for the heating for all these squatters? I've gone from 78 to 155, I'm paying for another flat, I bought 23 years ago. For me they can have all the markets they want, but even when you're not there they sit there and play for money, what do you think?

If you have the chance, write what I am telling you, because we do not know where to turn. Aler assists those who have Aler housing, and there is a deficit of 100 and more thousand euro with Aler. We no longer know which saint to turn to. I worked for 40 years at a police station, when I go there they tell me their hands are tied. I know the laws, I don't come from a factory, I didn't have a gun but I swore loyalty to the State. And when I go, the manager sends the control, but they can't be here all the time. Three days ago, they stabbed each other. They hide drugs here.

I see in Via Abbiati, in Via Tracia they're clearing out, here nothing. If you want, I'll show you my door, as soon as I bought it, they stabbed it all off. I'm alone, I stay all night with the TV on in the living room, and at every slightest noise...'



#### 4.1.2 Situations in the balance between abandonment and attempts at cure

A second type encompasses situations ‘in the balance’ between abandonment and attempts at care, with characteristics of building decay, the widespread presence of housing voids, a feeling of insecurity and sometimes of danger in the evening hours on the part of the inhabitants. However, these situations are overall better than the former, thanks to the presence of concierge services and the work of some inhabitants, who cyclically undertake initiatives to take care of common spaces (small informal vegetable gardens, furnishing elements such as flower boxes and planting in the condominium flowerbeds). Moreover, although there is a high percentage of squatting in these buildings, these are considered - by the residents interviewed - to be ‘peaceful’ and long-standing: they are often family units or elderly people. In some cases, these same people undertake actions of care and maintenance of the common areas, fostering a climate of good coexistence within the condominium. The conditions of cellars, attics, and rubbish rooms, often in a very poor state of maintenance and hygiene, remain critical.



17 January 2023

Extracts from a conversation with a caretaker

'This apartment block is one of the quietest, few children, most are Italians born here, the squatters, mostly foreigners, are about ten, and they are quiet. The empty flats are growing because the elderly are dying, currently there are about ten. Some were already paved over, especially the ground floors. There are ninety-nine flats in total, about ten of which are historical owners. Recently there was an auction sale'

7 March 2023

Extracts from a conversation with a resident

'I am very careful to be indifferent. Nearly every day the police are here because there is an out-of-the ordinary trade. Look at this courtyard, there's a dead rat there, can you see it? The rats go up to the upper floors. For women then, there's a curfew at 9pm.'

14 March 2023

Extracts from a conversation with a caretaker

'Before, people were sleeping in the basement, prostituting themselves, dealing drugs. During the day you couldn't see them, at night they were fighting over drugs. And what do you want to sleep? Then I in the corner over there, where that window is, I have the bedroom, so the noise was all out here. It started from one o'clock until five in the morning. You call the police, and they come with sirens - because then I was exaggerating...I was scared, so I was saying 'come! They're killing each other!' You could hear bottles crashing right under my window. Even if I didn't intervene my heart would go up into my throat because I still got scared. Who is used to such things? I would call the police and they would come with a siren. They hear the siren and what do they do? They run away. In the end I started to feel unwell, I had this feeling on me, this sickness, an upset stomach, dark circles under my eyes. We collected signatures and all the e-mails I was sending to Aler and went to the police station. I said 'either you intervene, or I'll put in a can of petrol. I'm going to jail, I don't give a damn. I can't go on like this.' I was really upset, I was crying night and day. Then they intervened, sent them away. Me, not even as a gift, I want a house here, in this area. If I leave, I want a house far from Milan. And above all from San Siro. It's unliveable. And it's pretty quiet here. My luck is that I'm on the edge, because then the public houses end, and the private ones begin. Going inland, towards Piazza Selinunte, I'd rather be dead or run away. The good thing is that in four years I will retire. And what will I do, squat? Because I can't afford a €700 a month room, with a pension that will be about €700 for 27 years of contributions. I can't afford it. Before the regional elections the councillor said 'Don't worry, we care,' but now he hasn't even been elected. Goodbye and thank you.'

#### 4.1.3 Islands of good coexistence

A third type encompasses the ‘islands’ of good coexistence: these are some particularly well-maintained apartment buildings, which for different reasons are managed and maintained in good order, both by caretakers and inhabitants. These housing situations share the common characteristics of having a concierge service in the mornings and afternoons, often with caretakers who know most of the inhabitants well and who live or have lived in the building in which they work. In many of these cases, caretakers and tenants undertake daily actions to care for the common spaces. It was also reported by some inhabitants that there are informal networks of mutual help in these apartment blocks, indicating a good climate of coexistence and solidarity. Even in the case of squatting, these do not create any particular inconvenience for the regular tenants, as they are consolidated and long-term squatting.





11 January 2023  
Extracts from a conversation with a caretaker

'I am taking steps to make information leaflets to be put up in the yard and stairwells, to do the recycling properly. The situation has become calmer in the last 5 or 6 months, since the tenants have become more respectful and less impetuous: I have changed my attitude with the tenants, I have been more determined, no longer willing to let them walk all over me. And actually, now there is more respect from their side, they have stopped spiteful and annoying and rude behaviour. I still work hard to make everything work as well as possible.'

8 March 2023  
Extracts from a conversation with a caretaker

'It is important to know how to approach tenants, especially foreign ones: it takes seriousness and a little confidence, but also knowing how to impose rules with kindness because this changes everything, especially in human relations. The most problematic tenants are the Italian ones, who are disinterested and disrespectful and rude, especially towards me and foreigners. I started to do small jobs, such as repainting the stairs and hanging pictures, then later the tenants started to do it too.'

They have tried several times to enter the empty flats, but in this block of flats it is difficult because it is a very familiar environment with good neighbourly relations, and I am present day and night.

There were some problems with recycling, mainly due to disinterested Italian tenants, foreigners had difficulties with the language but now they have understood how to do it and do it well.'

#### 4.1.4 Parts of the neighbourhood breaking away from the quadrangle

Finally, the last type is made up of the portions of the neighbourhood that are now detached from the quadrangle. This set differs strongly from all the others. They are almost entirely privatised apartment blocks, located, for the most part, along the eastern and south-eastern edge of the neighbourhood (the one that relates most directly to the city centre). Informal conversations with the inhabitants and interviews with the caretakers reveal a certain willingness to ‘distance themselves’ from the rest of the working-class neighbourhood, even though there is an interesting mix of historical and new tenants. Many of the people who live in these apartment blocks avoid entering the quadrangle, and often it is not necessary for them to do so, as they have all the primary services within walking distance and outside the ERP perimeter. The buildings are well-maintained and well-maintained, the concierge service is active all day long, with often resident caretakers.



14 December 2022

Extracts from a conversation with a caretaker

'The building is almost entirely privately owned: out of 134 flats, only nine are Aler-owned - five of which are inhabited, four are under seizure for legal reasons. There are no squatters, they know that the private owners are driving them out, it's only Aler that turns a blind eye. I don't understand it, it will never end like this. Before there were many squatters, gypsies, foreigners in general living there. Now instead the apartment block is very quiet, there are no more episodes of violence. In the past there was a drug dealing problem in the block of flats (it was the tenants themselves who were dealing), and it was solved with the intervention of the police.

Recently there was an isolated incident of a stabbing, in a tenant with drug addiction problems. But that was an exception. In general, the neighbourhood is safe, at least this side where we are. Thieves have never broken in... it's not like the thief is robbing the thief's house.'

25 January 2023

Extracts from a conversation with a caretaker

'The area is being redeveloped a lot, we are five minutes away from Citylife, and the prices in recent years have risen a lot, think that here they rent a 38 square metre for 1,150 euro a month. An executive of a very famous company lives there.

It is all good working people, half Italians, and half foreigners, mostly Egyptians and Filipinos. There are many owners, many professionals, architects, professors. It's nice and very quiet.'

## 4.2 Overall vision: a programme map to restore value to public housing

### > Inspiring good practices

To be carefully preserved and replicated in the district

- > **Reduced presence of empty dwellings:** an inhabited building in all its parts promotes a feeling of general safety and the maintenance of adequate sanitary conditions, as well as the daily care of domestic and neighbourhood spaces.
- > **Presence of a long-term caretaker,** often resident in the building: the caretaker assumes an important role as a reference point for the inhabitants and as an active guardian. Knowing personally the individual housing situations and the specific conditions of fragility, he is a fundamental intermediary figure between the inhabitants and the managing body.
- > **Good state of maintenance and good accessibility of the building:** the manager carries out on time ordinary and extraordinary maintenance work, care of the green areas, the removal of architectural barriers and the restoration of the lighting and security system of the entrances.
- > **Good neighbourly relations:** positive relations between the building's inhabitants are fostered by collective actions for the care of common areas, undertaken on the initiative of caretakers and inhabitants. Shared use of common courtyards, guaranteed by the joint presence of caretakers and Aler community managers, mitigates conflicts and encourages sociability.

### > Sectors with which to foster exchange opportunities

Possible interventions

- > **Improving the management of transitional spaces between public and private buildings,** encouraging shared care, fostering greater communication on possible uses and organising opportunities for dialogue between the inhabitants of the different buildings to mitigate possible conflicts.







### > Situations to be assisted with punctual actions

#### Possible interventions

- > **Unlocking dormant housing potential:** prioritise the allocation of empty housing by jointly rehabilitating disused flats within the same building and speeding up the allocation process. The PINQuA programme could be applied here by redeveloping the 44 dwellings in the programme within the same or two adjacent buildings. This punctual action would increase the positive impact of the project not only at the household scale, but also at the condominium and block scale.
- > **Increasing concierge services** by increasing concierge opening times and promoting contractual continuity of caretakers within the same building.
- > **Supporting forms of organisation among residents**, through synergies between the activities of caretakers and the initiatives of Aler's community managers.
- > **To increase security in the evening hours** by improving the lighting system in common areas and the control of main and secondary entrances.

### > Areas of experimentation to be favoured

#### Possible interventions

- > **Set up a table of competences for the management of situations of particular fragility:** enhance the competence of local actors and institutions present in the neighbourhood, with a joint programme for the identification, support and accompaniment of situations of employment and of particular economic, psychological and social fragility. Of three institutions such as Aler, the Municipality of Milan and the Police, among those to be involved, bearers of local instances, certainly include: Sicet, Bocconi Legal Clinic, Community Managers of Aler
- > **To set up a team of experts in the field of architecture**, for the redevelopment and enhancement of the building stock, for the renovation of sub-standard housing and for the design of quality common areas within the buildings.
- > **Increasing and enhancing concierge services**, increasing concierge opening hours, promoting contractual continuity of caretakers within the same building and improving communication between the managing body, community managers and caretakers for better management of common areas, greenery and waste.



# Part 5

Insights for a reflection  
on public housing

## 5.1 In dialogue with the local network

In the final phase of the co-research process, following the collection and processing of the data set out in the previous chapters, a meeting was organised with the network of subjects who actively collaborated in the research, to return the results and activate a dialogue and collective reflection on the issues addressed. Several issues commonly perceived as relevant and urgent emerged from the discussion (collected during the meeting in a panel, as shown in the photo on the following page).

A first consideration concerns the architectural and social value of the public quadrangle: the heritage building still represents a good example of architectural design that today also assumes the value of historical heritage. This consideration brings with it a reflection on the opportunity to rethink the management of the heritage in a more homogeneous way and more oriented to a protection and enhancement of the historical value of this large public project.

A second consideration, defined as the ‘assault on the diligence’, concerns the constant - albeit slow - erosion and fragmentation of the quadrangle’s housing stock, which is matched by a worrying opacity and sometimes incoherence of the available public data: this situation makes it difficult to reconstruct the processes underway and fuels collective awareness of a disinvestment, in economic and political terms, by the institutions in public housing.

Related to this is another point that emerged during the meeting: the invisibility of data on the management and status of the San Siro’s heritage. The difficulty in finding up-to-date and consistent data is also evident from the way in which the elaborations of this research were constructed: it was often necessary to compare several sources, to compare official data with an on-the-spot verification, to collect testimonies, interviews, and other ‘voices’ of the neighbourhood that often allow the changing and articulated reality of living in the quadrangle to emerge more fully than public data.

Another reflection concerns the ‘inertia’ of the housing stock: a constant change in the population (think of the increase in large families, a growing non-self-sufficient elderly population, widespread situations of social and sometimes psychic fragility) is not matched by a change in the size and articulation of housing solutions, most of which are now no longer suitable to accommodate the neighbourhood’s population.

A further consideration then concerns certain terminological aspects: it emerged how even the research, in recounting the multiplicity of ways of living and the profiles of the inhabitants, may or may not contribute to fuelling stigmatisation and stereotypes about the neighbourhood over the years already widely disseminated by the media and public opinion. One wonders, specifically, to what extent certain terms such as “foreigner” or “foreign population” are in fact adequate to describe certain portions of the population who have been living in the neighbourhood for years, and even more so portions of the

very young and second-generation population, who were often born and raised in Italy. Again, it emerged that certain terms, such as 'illegal occupation', do not fully convey the complexity of living in the neighbourhood and at the same time fuel easy political exploitation.

In view of these considerations, it was therefore preferred to use, in the text of this report, phrases such as 'population with foreign citizenship' to indicate all profiles of inhabitants with citizenship other than Italian citizenship, and it was decided to describe the complexity of different cases of squatting as: consolidated squatting, long-term squatting, administrative occupations and unregistered occupations.

Lastly, a final consideration concerns future prospects for the neighbourhood: a reflection on the contents of the 'overview map', in which families of common housing situations have been identified, has revealed the opportunity to reflect in depth on the characteristics that define the 'islands of good coexistence', that constitute to all intents and purposes good practices within the neighbourhood, in which various elements converge to make them such. These situations could usefully provide examples from which to restart to rethink a project and to instruct public policies on housing in the San Siro district and in the city of Milan in general.



## 5.2 An interview with Bianca Bottero: urban planner, inhabitant, activist

Bianca Bottero was a lecturer in environmental design at the second Faculty of Architecture of the Polytechnic University of Milan. She has carried out teaching and research activities in the field of urban design and social housing. She is a historical resident of the San Siro district, where she has been involved as a volunteer and activist for years.

In dialogue with Maria Elena Ponno

*Q.: How do you think the neighbourhood has changed in the last 20 years?*

B.B.: I must say that I have only really frequented the neighbourhood in the last 10 years, because before that I had the un-ecological habit of arriving at the red metro station in Piazzale Lotto, and then going to the Polytechnic University where I taught, always driving along Via Paravia, which is one of the boundary roads of the quadrangle on the western side. I live at the end of the street, in a building of a certain architectural merit, and I saw the neighbourhood as a little closed, a little inaccessible, but I appreciated its being such a correctly and modernly designed working-class neighbourhood; I did not perceive, within the apparent order, the rigid authoritarianism of its spaces as it has revealed itself to me since I walk around it on the inside and see its neglect and dirtiness. It must be said that in the 1930s and 1940s when it was built, this was a fairly 'tame' neighbourhood, made for workers, who had a similarly constricting regime in the factory, but which created a solidarity that was also reflected in the life of the courtyards. Then, from the 1950s, there was the massive and somewhat undisciplined immigration from the south, laboriously assimilated. Finally, in the last few decades, a young non-EU population arrived, full of children, economically weak, pruning a 'different' culture: far from that of the former inhabitants, now elderly and a little bewildered, whose children had gone elsewhere to neighbouring towns where houses were better and rents more affordable. Over the years, this situation has worsened due to mistaken institutional policies (weak and handicapped persons were brought in, a capillary sales process of housing was triggered, building maintenance was seriously neglected). Nor did a major intervention in the 1990s help, born out of a Neighbourhood Contract, which rehabilitated, somewhat in its own way and only in the western part of the neighbourhood, which had remained in the eastern part completely run-down.

Since 2010, I have therefore frequented the neighbourhood because I used to teach Italian to non-EU women in a former shop rented by Aler to the Associazione Alfabeti in Via Abbiati, one of the most 'perverse' streets in the neighbourhood, where - old inhabitants have told me - the most violent games, brawls and clashes between boys took place. A long street flanked by now dilapidated houses that enclose huge courtyards and perpetually display on the pavement, often cluttered with cars, bags of

rubbish, pieces of furniture piled up and dirt of all kinds.

The women who attended our Women's School, mostly Egyptian and Moroccan, arrived veiled from various parts of the neighbourhood, almost always with one or two small children juggling a pushing buggy on uneven pavements. As I watched them arrive and leave, usually alone, I often reflected on the size and shape of the streets, which seemed to make any relationship, any desire to be social, impossible.

Together with the Mapping group of the Polytechnic University, which also had a very small office in Via Abbiati, we thought a lot about this, and insisted on the need to create paths and spaces of sociality, strong points in the neighbourhood that would regenerate it. Sometimes, we thought, little is enough. And something has been tried. But in this neighbourhood, little is not enough. (Even Moreno, a volunteer of the Alphabets association, has illusions that doing street art would change the quality of the neighbourhood, tourists would come). But more is needed! In the neighbourhood there are some well-designed dwellings, for example the rationalist ones of Albini and Camus' group, although for economic reasons the original projects have been modified and densified, losing their original quality. Then there are interventions, such as the courtyards on Via Maratta designed by Broglio, the small semi-detached houses on Piazza Falterona, or the recently renovated blocks of flats on Via Mar Jonio, which are extremely dignified, with non-trivial technology and design, even if they would need to be renovated on the installations and the size of the dwellings. In the eastern part of the district, on the other hand, the buildings are extremely poor and lacking in quality, and are now extremely run-down.

But what is missing above all is a reinterpretation of the entire district according to a different understanding of the still extremely rigid and repressive relationship between the private space of the dwellings, the semi-public space of the courtyards and the public space of the streets.

In my opinion, your research should lead to a strong and courageous proposal in this regard.

*Q.: With respect to your experience in Alphabets, what reflections do you have on the relationship of women with the neighbourhood and the city?*

B.B.: I arrived when the school had just started and had profound experiences. My pupils, mostly Arabs, were genuine in their beliefs and culture, but also very affectionate; they were my friends. Most of them hardly knew the city, very few had taken the metro, none had taken the train. Only a few, who perhaps had relatives in other parts of Milan, moved around a bit more. They were always in the neighbourhood, but even so they only travelled certain routes that they felt were safe: they told me that they went to the market, to the supermarket, to take the children to and from school, and then came home and stayed there. Not even in the courtyards did they go down.

When talking about housing typologies some things are taken for granted, like thinking



that the courtyard is a friendly meeting place. It is not so obvious, there are so many elements at play, especially in these socially complex situations, in these rigid spaces. I saw this when we, as the Polytechnic University, carried out a 'participatory design' action in the two courtyards in Via Maratta between 2002 and 2007. It was very interesting, but even here, there were palpable tensions: there were those who parked an annoying little motorbike, there were noisy children, there was even a dubious person spying on the unattended lodgings, to call some compatriots to squat them, paying of course. I read a beautiful book 'Tutte Donne' (All Women), which collected many interviews with women from the neighbourhood. They were generally elderly, who had arrived when the neighbourhood was built from various small towns in Lombardy or Veneto or Emilia to follow their man, a worker in the factories in the area. They were poor or very poor, they were without any reference, even political, they could not even be defined as proletarian. Then, having arrived here, they began to develop a collaborative mindset, some joined the Communist Party and distributed the [journal] "Unità" in the courts, others helped hide the partisans: they acquired a role, a social dignity. Today it is accepted that these people do not have this dignity, it is accepted as inescapable. If I look at the people who are now here playing [at the table outside Off Campus] I also understand why there is social conflict. Some communities, like the Roma community, can be very problematic. So, if there is no will to address this problem too, nothing will change. I don't have the formula, but it seems to me that there is no stance on this, no programme on the part of the municipality and the region. Everything is devolved to volunteers, but volunteers alone cannot really change things. They say money is lacking but then comes the "Fuori Salone" and the money shows up. I have become very critical of Milan.

*Q.: Speaking of which, what do you think about the housing issue in Milan today?*

B.B.: All I could do is to repeat everything the newspapers (at least some of them) say every day. There is no plan, and there is no will to make a plan. Milan is going ahead by selling a large part of its public assets to private individuals, even to foreign investors. In the San Siro area, the use of the hippodrome has been changed from a sports area to a building area, and a new private residential settlement will be created here. Within a stone's throw our derelict working-class neighbourhood. It is said that a lot of money will come in this way and that something will then 'trickle down' and arrive also here. When I was in the university, there was a lot of focus on American planning, which seemed to us to be a necessary guide to various urban design choices so that they would be congruent with a certain idea of the city, whatever it was. One did not want to distinguish social design from spatial design. I was also very fond of an English urban planner, Bill Hillier, who had studied the social logic of space with which urban nuclei were formed in the past: there was always a continuity of paths and viewpoints, so that from one door you could see your neighbour's, and this favoured a sort of social



control of proximity; however, what he called 'the integrating axes' were always present, and he even mathematically assessed their capacity for integration. These kinds of considerations have been completely lost in the planning of current city developments. Milan in the 1960s had founded the INU (National Institute of Urban Planning), which is now silent on even the most important issues such as the Meazza stadium.

*Q.: I remember a slogan by Stefano Boeri about "returning to the villages" in the face of the downside of life in the big cities.*

B.B.: Boeri overlooks the fact that the city could also be designed respecting and enhancing proximity. There have been projects in this sense in Milan too. For example, engineer Corda's 'zone 30' project, which delimited certain areas by channelling traffic around them, thus favouring pedestrian mobility inside, so that children could go to school alone... But this project seems to have been abandoned. As Leopardi said, the 'close-knit society' is important: the fact of greeting the baker or the shopkeeper, of having even a minimal but daily relationship with a known context is the basis of social cohesion. I myself, for years, lived in a rather 'slabby' way in my neighbourhood, often moving around by car and frequenting it little. Now I live it differently, and I realise how much it helps me. So I think it is unfair to talk, even in a somewhat romanticised way, about the villages as an alternative to the city.

Certainly, however, it would be useful to look more carefully at some places close to Milan, which are also part of the metropolitan area. They are 'villages' full of history, but neglected and impoverished, left in the shadow of the big city. There is a very good book, 'Febbre' [Fever] by Jonathan Bazzi, which talks about life in Rozzano and describes this situation well.

*Q.: What do you think of the recent 'Forum Abitare' - [Forum on Housing] - promoted by the Milan City Council?*

B.B.: As far as I could see, it seemed like a lot of smoke and mirrors. To deal with an issue like this, of housing, of the quality of living, there must be people who take responsibility for a position, who make proposals. Instead, as far as I was concerned, it seemed like a missed opportunity. A lot of people were given space, everyone spoke for a few minutes saying a few things, even interesting things, then there was no debate. It was a façade operation, but serious reflection is not possible unless we agree that an effective project is expensive, and also requires a 'renunciation' of the lifestyle we are accustomed to in favour of more ecological choices in a broader sense. Now projects are only driven by the quest for financial gain, which becomes the only measure of their success. In the meantime, the city has lost a lot from the point of view of social balance, and it does not seem that its current priority is to look at ethics; on the contrary, the Milan model is increasingly that of a rich city, the richest in Italy.

## 5.3 In dialogue with Liliana Padovani

Liliana Padovani has taught urban and territorial policies at the IUAV University of Venice and territorial engineering at the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Trento. An expert in housing policies, local development, and urban regeneration programmes, she collaborated in the creation of the Mapping San Siro group and has carried out research and project work in the neighbourhood.

In dialogue with Francesca Cognetti

*Q.: A first question I would like to reflect on is the value of public housing. Many times, in recent years we have talked about Milan: how do you think it is transforming itself and how, within this transformation, does public housing still have a value in your opinion and what sense can it make?*

L.P.: Milan is changing in a worrying way because it is becoming a city that is strongly oriented towards certain interlocutors and is radically, violently, and rapidly changing the image that had emerged in recent years: that of an attractive and welcoming city. A lot is being built, shifting the offer towards the upper classes, and ignoring the fact that the city has historically been, and in theory should be, made up of inhabitants of different profiles. It is a city that is being transformed under the pressure of external forces, insensitive to the specificities and range of potential of the local context, and in fact outside the local control to which the consequences of the current situation seem to have gotten somewhat out of hand. The Milanese universities themselves, which were an important component of the city's growth project and had been well placed in national and international rankings for quality and attractiveness, are now in difficulty because the cost of the city and housing has become so high that students who are not resident in Milan no longer come. There is no longer room for certain presences, which after all make up the city's wealth: housing, first and foremost.

*Q.: In your experience, how much is this situation in line with a European trend?*

L.P.: It is undoubtedly a worldwide trend, but I wonder whether a European city like Milan should follow the models of these big new cities that are emerging around the world. It is, after all, a question of democracy: a city that is composite, that accepts within it a multiplicity of profiles and activities, and that for these reasons has played an important role as a melting pot and incubator of potential, is different from the city that is made up of prestigious buildings and functions and those who are able and interested in paying for them.

*Q.: In this sense, is public housing a 'bulwark' of this idea of the city?*

L.P.: First of all, it is necessary to rethink the very concept of 'public' and 'public housing.' That said, in the current context of growing inequalities, in which large real estate operations are managed by operators who have specific interests and tend to be self-referential, it would

seem to me important to open a debate and think about whether, why and how, it might be useful for cities to be able to build an alternative “public” offer of housing and spaces to be offered at affordable costs to more user profiles, even to those who are not in the upper income or profit bracket. And this applies to dwellings, but also to ground-floor spaces, shops or activities that provide a connection between private and public space. An offer that, to be incisive, should have a greater consistency than the current public housing stock and be better articulated with respect to the needs of potential recipients. An offer that, with rules different from those of the market, can respond both to primary needs such as the right to housing, and to the particular needs of cities. It would also seem important to me to think about how the public heritage - not only residential - that exists today, and is sold (often sold off) to the private sector, could instead serve as a strategic resource for this purpose. Regarding the need to rethink the concept of public housing, I am referring to its organisational and management structure, to the system of objectives identified, and to the profile of the recipients: as it has been up to now, it has not worked very well, so much so that several interesting proposals for change are underway, but they are fragmentary, local and still experimental. We should better understand this situation and the operational indications that can be drawn from it, and see how it is possible to maintain a heritage that defends the concept of public property in the sense of a common good aimed both at guaranteeing fundamental rights and at responding to specific, sometimes temporary, needs of the city (residences of public service employees, students, etc.) Needs that are ignored, if not expelled, by market mechanisms. In this perspective, an important role as stakeholder to build this strategic vision of the city should be played by mayors individually and within their associations.

*Q.: Doesn't the vision of a neighbourhood like San Siro, where there are multiple tenant profiles, also risk being a threat to the neighbourhood itself, in terms of erosion of public assets?*

L.P.: A type of heritage such as that of San Siro cannot be destined only for the poorer segments of the population, there needs to be a mix of profiles. This, however, only makes sense in a hypothesis of reinforcing this offer: that is, measures must be taken in parallel both to improve the building quality and management methods of the existing public housing stock, and to increase the size of this stock - which in Italy is at its lowest level compared to other European countries. If the need to ensure an adequate supply of housing outside the logic of the market and managed within a welfare concept is not perceived, then the idea that there is a variety of profiles in a social housing district can become a threat to the public heritage. Growing inequalities are leading all over the world to a crisis of democracy, which can also be observed from the housing issue, which inevitably concerns justice and recognition of rights. In this regard, it seems strange to me that in a city like Milan, which has had centre-left juntas since 2012, this issue has not emerged as a priority on the public debate agenda.

*Q.: Do you remember times when housing was an important issue for the centre-left?*

L.P.: There have been times when more attention has been paid to the sizing of expansion

areas to be allocated to social housing, but the dominant objective has been to expand access to home ownership rather than to increase the supply of affordable rental housing. Public housing has always been understood as a refuge for certain categories of people, without an awareness of the different degrees of need and fragility. Moreover, in the past, the housing market in Milan was very different and even in the private rental sector there was a greater stratification of prices.

*Q.: With respect to this situation, in which a centre-left city seems to represent some profiles a lot and not at all others, the issue of foreigners also emerges, which is not on the city's agenda even though 20 per cent of people have foreign citizenship. In this sense, the San Siro district offers a vision of the future with respect to this issue.*

L.P.: As paradoxical as it is that this issue is not discussed, I believe that the political agenda does not address it because it is a sensitive issue that also affects voting patterns. However, the issue is there, it is evident and recently brought to public attention also by the world of production and services: we should take a risk and somehow try to open a dialogue. I was very struck by an interview with Lagioia, who to the question "how come there is no protest here?" replied that, basically, we have lost the propensity to take risks for the sake of a goal. I think this is true, there is a tendency not to expose oneself on issues that might challenge acquired advantages. It seems to me, however, that alongside the denunciation and documentation of a serious problem such as the citizenship rights of a foreign population that nevertheless lives and works formally or informally in some parts of the city - as the case of San Siro demonstrates - we should at least reactivate that capacity for risk that serves to open a dialogue and forms of mobilisation from a perspective of change. It is an idea that is unfortunately struggling to materialise.

*Q.: How do you see Verga and Roj's project? Does it seem feasible to you?*

L.P.: In my opinion, it is a suggestive project that will be resubmitted. The first version seemed dangerous to me, not only because it uncritically erases a piece of the public city's history, but also because it has aspects that may appeal to the neighbourhood's residents, many of whom are unaware of the project's long-term impacts. For example, the promise of new, equipped, and functional housing may appeal: the problem, however, is that not all current residents will have access to this new housing, further exacerbating situations of severe housing deprivation. This type of policy managed by private investors has given very little back to the public, without anyone ever measuring the outcomes of these processes. In this regard, I also wonder whether it is right for the city to continue to have new high-rise buildings that develop vertically and thus replace a model of living that is still functioning today. The skyscraper reduces social life and all those intermediate spaces that represent a mediation and a form of education for the transition between private life and the rest of the world.

*Q.: But why is this idea of a city being discarded so quickly?*

L.P.: Because these new projects are economically more interesting. Moreover, these are not projects of people who live in and know the city, they are projects that come from outside, with outside investment. In this sense, Roj and Verga's project (second version) is a bit more mediated, the reference model is more that of a good public social housing estate of the 1960s and 1970s. In any case, this obsession with continuing to build and cement in an urban area that is already heavily built up and has serious environmental problems seems really strange to me, beyond all logic.

*Q.: I think that neither you nor I have ever had a conservative vision of the neighbourhood; perhaps we need to reinterpret a conservative dimension but one that looks more towards the future.*

L.P.: Yes, in the end, conservation is not necessarily linked to the past. Conservation is the preservation of a piece of history, of a city and a way of life. I am convinced that it is much nicer to live with houses that are not tall and with spaces on the ground that are better known, more manageable and not too closed. It also seems to me that indeed the ecological, health and environmental sustainability aspects need to be evaluated more carefully.

*Q.: Given your experience with San Siro, what potential do you see there?*

L.P.: I believe that indeed that space is potentially positive. Now it has a lot of negative connotations in terms of relations, management, the quality of the concierge services, and also with respect to the narrative that is often built around these spaces. But it seems to me that the neighbourhood, with greenery in the courtyards and the houses not too high, is a beautiful space, a beautiful piece of the city. Certainly, some houses are in a very advanced state of decay and should be renovated. I have grown fond of those spaces, I cannot help but see them in a perspective of recovery and maintenance of an urban form and neighbourhood that encourages social relations and proximity. Some elements, such as the entrances to the house, are particularly squalid. A gatehouse should be a welcome, a beautiful archway, in a poor neighbourhood as well as in a rich one. So, an intervention in that sense, for example, would definitely have to be done. In any case, I see the potential of many spaces in the neighbourhood, which have also allowed some people of Italian or foreign nationality to live together well over time.

*Q.: What kind of city did you see, from the point of view of networking and local projects, in the context of San Siro?*

L.P.: I have seen a lot of commitment and many initiatives. What seems to me to have been lacking is a vision: after all, they are all initiatives that, beyond the excellent service they offer, fail to produce change. In this I also see a danger, because all these bottom-up initiatives - which in Italy today are a really important part of welfare - are perhaps also

harmful because they actually dampen the conflict and allow the public body to disinvest. We, at the beginning, hoped that these initiatives would be drivers of public action, but this did not happen. The absence of an overall vision meant that these efforts were somewhat reductive. The next step, namely becoming interlocutors not of individual issues but in a broader sense, failed. A network was established - a very positive aspect necessary to claim needs, access funding and coordinate better - but not a vision. At this juncture, the interlocution with the public body, which is the first to lack a vision, seems serious to me.

*Q.: The last question is on this subject : why is there still no project on San Siro?*

L.P.: Are there any in the other neighbourhoods? I don't understand what people think about this city. The suburbs of Milan have had a huge boost recently, apart from the public neighbourhoods. It is not true that the municipality has done nothing - perhaps not enough - but in terms of connections and creating points of attraction, there has been a lot of work in the suburbs. The suburbs as a category have improved, there are many new neighbourhoods, but the housing conditions for those without high incomes have not improved.

*Q.: Perhaps in the suburbs in which these public neighbourhoods are embedded, there does not seem to be a vision of how to intervene. These interventions on the suburbs seem almost designed to create new centres.*

L.P.: The idea, it seems to me, is to extend the attractive and dynamic Milan to its suburbs, which are being redeveloped and revalorised by improving connections and introducing quality services. Those who cannot cope with the new costs of living in these areas have to move outside, to the other suburbs that are not yet well connected, with a process of expulsion. A vision on the future of public neighbourhoods is absent because an understanding of living in a complex city is missing. What is an inclusive city made of? Among the most important issues is the reduction of inequalities. As far as housing is concerned, imagining a new type of housing welfare, in which the state invests without simply delegating to the private sector. Then, the environmental issue, to be placed as a perceived and shared dimension at several levels. Moreover, I believe that the richness of a city also lies in its ability to tell its past. Paris has always struck me because old models of life can be found within it; Milan also had this characteristic to some extent. These suburbs are a piece of history; maybe it is worth observing and understanding them before tearing them down.

## 5.4 Organising unions in San Siro: prospects and development of a new union action in the working-class suburbs

Sicet (Tenants' Union Home and Land) is the tenants' union adhering to Cisl (Italian confederation of workers' unions) active in Milan since 1974 for the defence and affirmation of the right to housing and living. Giacomo Manfredi is a Sicet Milano worker for the San Siro, Baggio, Gallarate and Rhodense areas. He holds a degree in Historical Sciences from the State University of Milan and a Master's Degree in Intercultural Training Skills from the Catholic University of Milan. He reported on the San Siro district by participating in the Espanet Italia National Conferences in 2021 and 2022.

Living in San Siro has its nuances, criticalities and hopes.

Many stories we encounter during our union activities in the neighbourhood have one thing in common: the protagonists live in poverty despite having a job.

Between work and non-work, a grey and sometimes invisible area emerges that risks becoming a trap from which it is difficult to break free: poor work.

In many cases there is a direct relationship between the conditions determined by poor work and housing conditions. For many of the households encountered during the research through the questionnaire, it can be seen that half of the respondents have an ISEE (Equivalent Economic Situation Indicator) of less than 10,000 euro and half of the households interviewed are composed of only one worker.

The sources of income are also indicative with 29% having income from welfare and social security and 17% from informal employment.

During the months of research, the Sicet headquarters in Piazza Monte Falterona 3 was one of the places where the questionnaires were collected, thanks to the presence of students from the three-year degree course in Urban Planning: City, Environment and Landscape.

Having opened the union headquarters to these activities allowed us to get to know the families living in the neighbourhood not only for their housing needs, but the narrative that emerged during the collection of the questionnaires, which in fact turned into a dialogue of mutual acquaintance, made it possible to become aware of the working and therefore economic condition of the families, giving a context to the reason for certain life choices.

Also emerging are the stories of those families who have recently arrived in the neighbourhood as new assignees of social housing, after perhaps having suffered the drama of eviction, losing their jobs, having lived for months or years in overcrowded rooms with minor children who despite everything have always attended school, in a condition of extreme precariousness with parents burdened with precarious and intermittent jobs.

When housing conditions are insecure, people's life choices also suffer direct consequences: people accept to continue holding on to jobs that they would rather leave because they are poorly



paid or borderline exploitative; they look for second or third jobs, they give up the union struggle for a fair and decent wage for fear of losing their jobs because they are precarious and lack protection.

The home can therefore determine the 'material basis of oppression', domination and inequality. The home is by nature the access to the city, it creates connections between those who inhabit it, the territory and the institutions, it is an instrument of democracy, since those who live in the home in security and freedom are highly more anchored in the democratic life of the place they inhabit, they are participants in what happens and if they are 'free' in their own home they can be advocates of the democratic progress of their community, because they are freed from the domination of the owner or the legislator who 'commands' and 'decides' their living.

A possible prospect is the strengthening of negotiations in the 'existential peripheries'.

Union action in urban peripheries can set the goal of building protection and claim actions for access to the city and the right to live, it can enable people to re-appropriate space and time according to their needs and requirements. The city - in this perspective - becomes 'a work, as an end, as a place of free enjoyment, as a field of use value' (Lefebvre) in which the inhabitants are able to engage in a project of emancipation and liberation from precariousness and poverty. Awareness, and refusal, to be excluded from the urban and thus social life of the country is necessary.

The quadrangle, as the research shows, has a housing stock that, with its 4285 dwellings intended for ERP, can be a necessary pillar to cope with the great demand for housing in the city.

Massive intervention is needed to recover the 685 empty dwellings (572 under maintenance and 101 vacant).

The funding in progress in the neighbourhood of no less than EUR 40 million (pages 49 to 58 of the report) can act as a driving force for a broader intervention to reclaim vacancy by enabling the neighbourhood to provide housing for families under eviction or already evicted in Milan and crowding the public housing lists.

Another critical element in the neighbourhood is the presence of squatted houses, 785.

Those who live in this condition not only often have the same maintenance problems in their housing, and often find themselves in precarious social and economic situations, or even in a condition of illegality due to situations of housing need, with the problem of finding themselves in a condition of non-residence or fictitious residence as it is not possible for them to have residence in the accommodation in which they live.

In such a complex situation, however, thanks to the regulatory interventions of recent years, it is possible to find solutions to get families in an obvious state of difficulty and with an established state of need out of this spiral of social precariousness and illegality.

For them, it is possible to apply Article 23, paragraph 13 of Law 16/2016, which allows the verification of the state of need of the squatting households in order to build projects to get out of housing illegality using the tools that the regional legislation provides for, i.e. the activation of the Transitional Housing Services (SAT) which, with the amendments of Regional Law no. 8 of 25 May 2021, and subsequent amendments, provide for the use of these instruments for households that do not meet the requirements for access to the Public Housing Services (SAP) but can apply for SAT housing because they meet the economic requirements for access to the SAP and their neighbourhood of residence is within a redevelopment and safety programme. This was the case

for Via Bolla, it is the case for San Siro where the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 26 October 2021 by the Prefecture, the Lombardy Region, Aler Milano and the Municipality of Milan, Aler identifies precisely in the SAT (Articles 3, 4 and 5 of the Protocol) the instrument of exit from squatting for families in need.

On Via Bolla, this kind of pragmatic and common-sense approach, identified by the Lombardy Region, Aler Milano and the Municipality of Milan, in agreement with the Prefecture, has meant that the regulatory instruments have been used to find housing solutions for those families, not all of them it must be said, who were in an obvious state of need, identifying, among the vacant Aler Milano ERP and the houses owned by the Municipality and managed by MM Casa, the housing units for their relocation.

This process, which is long and not always clear and in any case complex in its procedures, we can consider it a first step towards freeing families in need of a housing solution with inclusive and social pathways.

The San Siro quadrangle can become a laboratory of good practices and the relaunch of public housing for the city of Milan, and on this the research identifies the critical issues on which to intervene in the neighbourhood, but it can also become a necessary union laboratory where the right to housing and the right to work can be combined, and thanks to the results of this research we have a clear picture of the social state of the neighbourhood and its inhabitants.

A careful reading would make it possible to build actions to protect the families in the neighbourhood that can go beyond their single housing need - something that as Sicut we do on a daily basis, representing more than 900 families in the San Siro quadrangle - by placing them in a community context, giving the union in general, as an intermediate body, the task of acting in a coordinated action to protect workers as such, not only in the workplace, but where they live. In fact, it is increasingly difficult to intercept workers in the workplace, as this is often precarious, unprotected, and lonely.

Meet and get to know these workers, starting from an individual need and projecting it into a collective need.

The social and working condition of those who live in this neighbourhood, the working poor, the lonely elderly, the strong presence of minors and therefore also the role of working women, and foreign communities can be the basis for the creation of a large social network in the periphery of San Siro, given also the important presence of associations that work daily to improve the lives of the inhabitants and the implementation of social protection union actions, building participation and representation in the working-class outskirts.

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## 5.5 Living in San Siro. Some observations from the Off Campus legal clinic

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### 1. Bocconi University's legal clinic in San Siro

Starting in 2019, Bocconi University has launched the legal clinics project to offer a support and guidance service on matters of a legal nature to those who request it at the legal desks located in various locations in the city of Milan<sup>1</sup>, including the San Siro/Selinunte district. This is a curricular activity - coordinated and initiated by Professor Melissa Miedico<sup>2</sup> - envisaged in the Law degree course that involves teachers, students and lawyers and aims to promote the recognition of rights in fragile contexts<sup>3</sup>.

The peculiarity that characterises the San Siro legal clinic is its location. In fact, it is located within the 'Off Campus' space, managed by the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of the Polytechnic University of Milan, in the heart of the San Siro/Selinunte district. Here, people in need of legal support can enter freely, during the counter's opening hours, without the need to make an appointment (every Thursday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., excluding public holidays and from the end of July to September)<sup>4</sup>.

Direct access to the legal desk in Via Gigante makes it possible to define the San Siro clinic as a true street law activity, capable of reaching a large number of people, who spontaneously turn to the service and who, in a fragile and multiproblematic territorial context, build a relationship of trust with the operators, unmediated by the formality that sometimes characterises public services and sometimes hinders access<sup>5</sup>.

This is reflected in the data collected throughout the entire course of the activity: from 2019 to 2023<sup>6</sup>, there were 862 registered accesses to the legal clinic (mainly households) and each person or household approached the service on average twice (one third of the total number of people approached the counter more than once). The numbers increased significantly over the years, from 38 accesses in December-November 2019 (with an average of 1.4 accesses per individual), to 49 in the year 2020<sup>7</sup>, with a significant increase in the following years: 212 accesses in 2021 (average of 1.8 accesses per individual), 221 in 2022 (average accesses per individual: 2) and finally 342 accesses in 2023 (average accesses per individual: 2).

The number of people who come to the clinic reflects the demographic composition of the neighbourhood: the elderly (often alone), people with psychiatric problems, even serious ones, the unemployed and families at risk of poverty, numerous people of foreign origin (in the neighbourhood they represent 50% of the inhabitants, with as many as 85 nationalities represented)<sup>8</sup>. There is a clear prevalence (51%) of requests for support from people from Arabic-speaking countries (Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Afghanistan, Syria), while much fewer, though increasing over the years, are those from Central and South American countries (Peru, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Cuba, Guatemala, 15%), Western

Asia (Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, 10%), Western Europe (Italy, France, Germany, Spain, 9%), Central and South Africa (Congo, Eritrea, Nigeria, Senegal, Mauritius, 7%), Balkan countries and Ukraine (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine, 5%) and finally the Philippines and China (2%)<sup>9</sup>.

As for the legal issues tackled during the past four years of activity, the very characteristic of direct, unmediated access to the counter - figuratively and physically, given the characteristics of the place where it is held - has always made it possible to deal with very heterogeneous issues: from support for regularising one's presence in the territory or for housing-related issues to help in dealing with bureaucratic or administrative acts instrumental to accessing rights (health, school, work, etc.). These issues are intrinsically linked to the exercise of rights because they imply interaction with institutions and public bodies, which often find an obstacle in the lack of knowledge of the Italian language and lack of a basic orientation to rights.

More precisely, we divided the issues submitted to the desk into ten macro-categories: right to housing (i.e. search for housing, access to ERP housing units, support in managing relations with Aler), right to health (such as the choice of paediatrician or the issuance of a health care card for an irregular minor, often made problematic by the absence of a valid residence permit), right to work (CV writing and job search), language (enrolment in Italian schools for foreigners), right to education (school enrolment, even late, change of school or management of relations with teachers), immigration law (i.e. assistance for the issue of various types of residence permits, applications for international protection, renewal of residence permits, regularisation 2020, ...), referral to social services for situations of vulnerability (requesting support from the Qubi project and being taken in charge by other organisations that have activated projects in the neighbourhood), family law (separations, divorces, problems related to minors) and rights in general (including, in particular, support for victims of crime) and other generic requests (administration/bureaucracy ('Spid' - Public Digital Identity System- request, IT support, request for renewal of identity documents, request for certificates).

The most frequently addressed cases concerned immigration law (19.9%), right to education (16.9%), general issues (16.10%) and right to housing (15.71%); followed by labour law (8.14%), right to health (6.78%), various rights (7.66%) and request for contact with social services (3.49%), family law issues (3.10%) and requests for support in learning Italian (1.9%). Of all of them, we will focus here on the right to housing, without claiming to provide a complete picture of the housing situation in the neighbourhood, but trying to provide the picture (partial and by no means representative) that the direct and privileged gaze that a street law clinic offers us in order to try to draw some, albeit partial, observations on the matter: it is, after all, an interesting observatory because of the opportunity it offers to get to know real cases and people who easily escape statistics and research; for the most part, as we shall have the opportunity to illustrate, the people who turn to the counter live in conditions of extreme vulnerability, they are often invisible subjects, who precisely because of their multiple frailties try not to be identified and observed.

## 2. The right to live in the perspective of the legal clinic

The public housing stock in the San Siro/Selinunte district is severely degraded, with substantial shares of vacant dwellings, often squatted by individuals and households in extremely precarious economic and social conditions, as the research illustrated in this volume shows.

It is a context that shows great complexity, precisely because of the heterogeneity of the situations that make it up. This is why a survey such as the one carried out by the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of the Polytechnic University of Milan is extremely useful to identify the reasons for such complexity and to update knowledge about the neighbourhood. It is for this reason that Bocconi University's legal clinic has gladly decided to collaborate in the collection of data, asking those who contacted the legal desk to participate, if interested and willing, by submitting themselves to the questionnaire prepared by the Polytechnic University. In fact, we believe that, in such a context, the panorama outlined by the requests of those who come to the legal clinic in Via Gigante are relevant, as they concern the majority of people living in the neighbourhood.

With reference to these aspects, the fact that the clinic is open to all those who decide to apply to the service, whether they are legally resident or not, is certainly highly relevant.

The purpose of the legal clinic, in fact, is not so much to bring situations of irregularity to light, nor to report them to the owner of the property - be it a private individual or the public housing authority - nor do the clinic's operators have any power to ascertain irregularity.

The picture that emerges from the legal clinic's observatory is one of great fragility, affecting the housing experience of both squatters and regular residents.

For this reason, it is therefore perhaps useful to outline here, at least briefly, an overview of the experience gained over the years in the various forms of the right to housing in the neighbourhood, starting with an illustration of the types of requests collected over time, and ending with an examination of some specific and emblematic cases.

### 2.1 The numbers of regular housing

As mentioned above, the types of requests made to the legal desk show the presence of both regular and irregular inhabitants.

From 2019 to date, in fact, with reference to the topic of housing, requests for help have been collected mainly concerning problems of a different nature: the management of housing (therefore, made by regular people, both in ERP and private housing), the request for support in filling out the ERP notice (also only possible for those who have not been declared squatters in the previous five years), the search for housing (mostly coming from squatters), the regularisation of squatters in public housing and the request for mediation aimed at reaching an agreement for the payment of unpaid rent. In addition, there are issues related to the payment of bills, requests for financial contributions for the payment of rent.

Of the many issues submitted to the legal desk, the majority have to do with house maintenance (mainly plumbing and heating) and neighbourly relations, as well as the service of a notice to vacate or a complaint for the offence of encroachment on land or buildings under Article 633 of

the Criminal Code<sup>10</sup>.

At first glance, therefore, it is fair to say that housing problems affect both holders of a regular lease and those who squat the accommodation.

This finding is also confirmed when looking at the case history in more detail.

Most of the questions, 29% of the total, concern requests for support in participating in calls for tenders for the assignment of public housing, not only in filling out the application, but also for requests for updates on the status of the procedure. With reference to this area, in fact, there are strong difficulties in accessing the applications: although the public body provides individuals at its offices with the necessary IT tools to access the platform (i.e. a PC workstation at the offices), often the effectiveness of this support tool is not sufficient to overcome the difficulties in understanding the modalities of participation in the call for applications and the filling in of the application. First and foremost, the selection of properties, as in the last published calls for tenders it was required that participants select a number of flats, based on the declared characteristics (including the address, the floor of the flat, the presence or absence of a lift), a process that is often difficult without the support of a live operator.

Equally frequent is the request for help with household management (19 % of the total), i.e. issues concerning dwelling maintenance. Often, inhabitants of public housing properties turn to the counter asking to contact the managing body to request intervention for plumbing or heating problems or even bad neighbourly relations. In this sense, too, that requested of the legal clinic is an intermediation activity with the authority, given the difficulty of reaching it directly. It is not rare, in fact, that the wait for maintenance or repair work lasts for months, creating great discomfort and frustration. In this sense, as will be said, the fruitful collaboration with the Community Managers of Aler Milano, mediation figures, very close to the territory and the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, as well as being competent in all practices, was essential.

Holders of a regular tenancy contract then make numerous requests for mediation to solve problems of regularity of payments and access to the procedure for blameless payment arrears<sup>11</sup> (13%) or requesting contributions for the payment of rent (2%), especially following the Covid-19 pandemic.

A large proportion of clinic users also share the need to find housing (17%)<sup>12</sup>. As the Polytechnic research shows, the neighbourhood is home to very large families living in small, overcrowded houses, renting a bed in houses inhabited by a large number of strangers: a situation that is clearly intolerable, especially for families with minors.

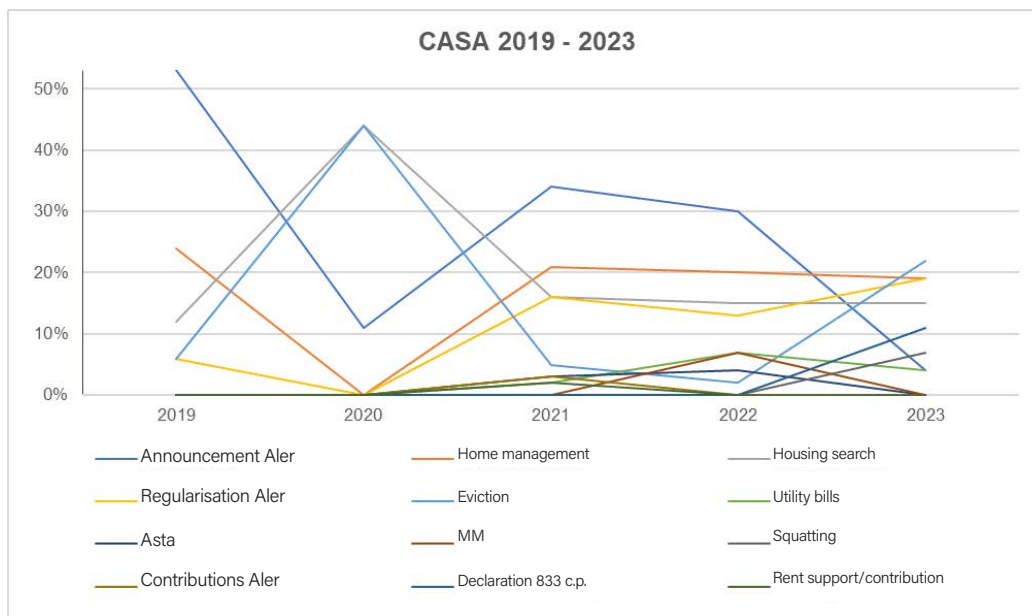
However, the search often has negative outcomes. Frequently, even those who might be able to afford a monthly mortgage payment come up against black rent offers from landlords or against prejudices, especially if they are foreign nationals<sup>13</sup>, make access to the regular housing market even more difficult.

Similarly, applications concerning problems with regularity in payments and access to the procedure for blameless payment arrears, stable in 2019 and 2021, increased in 2022-2023. On the other hand, regarding the search for housing, after an increase in 2020, there have been constant numbers since 2021 (lower than in 2020). Likewise, requests relating to housing problems remain constant. There have also always been relatively low demands for rent subsidies and payment of bills. The latter activity is likely to be handled more independently by tenants.

As of 2019, the number of requests for support in filling out the application for access to ERP



tenders or for updates on the status of the ERP procedure has been steadily increasing. Finally, it should be noted that the indicators are different for the year 2020. This change is evidently linked to the adoption of lockdown measures following the covid-19 pandemic. It is, however, worth noting a radical decrease in requests for support related to the ERP call, regularity of payments and access to the procedure of blameless payment arrears and housing management; and a specular increase in requests related to evictions and housing search.



## 2.2. The numbers of irregular housing

Although the survey did not cover persons squatting in public housing, for the sake of completeness, it should be noted that a significant number of accesses of persons in this condition were registered at the legal clinic.

For these people, emerging from irregularity by seeking a regular rental contract not only suffers from the difficulties already described with reference to regular housing, but also from the impossibility of accessing ERP calls for applications since those who have been previously declared illegal in the previous five years cannot apply for public housing.

However, the scarcity of effective solutions to improve the difficult living conditions of people turning to the legal clinic seems to persist over time, as confirmed by the data collected. Since 2019, there has been a steady increase in requests for support for eviction incidents or complaints for the crime of invasion of buildings or land under Article 633 of the Criminal Code.

There are also frequent cases of people living in a condition that can be defined as ‘double irregularity’, due to the lack of a residence permit and regular accommodation<sup>14</sup>. The double irregularity leads to a stalemate that is difficult to overcome for the emersion of persons in this circumstance.

In fact, on the one hand, the purchase of a flat or the signing of a lease or even participation in

calls for tenders for the assignment of ERP housing are conditional on the regularity of residence in the territory, and on the other hand, the issuance of a residence permit in turn presupposes a regular residence<sup>15</sup>.

The lack of a regular housing title, added to the lack of a residence permit, constitutes an element of strong vulnerability, which determines the almost total invisibility of the person (sometimes even desired in order not to run the risk of expulsion or criminal prosecution); this condition of extreme vulnerability affects not only the individual person who is the victim, but also the serenity of the entire family, very often composed of minors.

There is no doubt, however, that in addition to the situations that frequently present themselves at our desk and that involve families and minors, there are other situations in the neighbourhood: squatting by groups of single adults who thus obtain a cheap bed, and other forms of squatting that do not present themselves at our desk and which we are therefore unable to identify and which are very difficult to investigate from our specific point of view.

After all, our research specifically targets the people who contact the counter and makes no claim to provide a statistically relevant or complete picture of living in San Siro.

## **2.2 The people**

As mentioned, while this contribution does not have the ambition of reporting an exhaustive survey on the housing condition in the neighbourhood, it does record significant stories. These are not only numbers, but also significant personal stories describing living conditions and people's perception of the state of their existence.

Therefore, we need to look at some emblematic cases to describe how the numbers are reflected in the daily lives of those who approach the legal desk. In fact, it is very relevant to note how each of the problems illustrated so far by numbers actually constitute people's everyday problems.

We will focus in particular on some cases concerning extraordinary maintenance works of ERP tenants, the search for housing by regular residents in private dwellings not suited to the living needs of the person or household, and finally 'supervening' irregularities of ERP tenants.

### **2.2.1. Mr D. and Mrs F.:**

#### **The maintenance and management of public housing flats**

The first two cases concern tenants of Aler Milan ERP housing, both over 65 years old, and describe in detail the typical needs of people living alone in this kind of flats.

The first case involves a person, Mr D., a retired 71-year-old Italian. Before his retirement, Mr D. worked at various jobs, including some in the construction industry. Currently, his gross annual income is 4,088 euro and he is a recipient of social allowance.

He has lived in the neighbourhood for more than 20 years and has good relations with neighbours and other inhabitants.

Since the start date in November 2019, the gentleman went to the legal clinic on many occasions, not only to ask for support in his application for exemption from paying the Tari for income reasons, but also and above all for issues related to his lease of an Aler public housing flat.

In particular, his difficulties relate to the payment of rent, as well as problems with humidity and plumbing leaks in the flat.

The meagreness of his income in recent years meant that Mr. D. was unable to pay his rent and

thus owed Aler. To be able to pay off the latter, the legal clinic supported Mr. D. in mediation with the institution. In this sense, the collaboration with Aler Milan's Community Managers was fundamental, who, called upon by the clinic's operators, directly contacted Mr. D. and took charge of the case.

Similarly, Mr. D. asked the legal department for help in contacting Aler technicians to repair a plumbing leak from the flat next to his, which over the years had generated a quantity of mould that made the environment unhealthy and therefore living in the flat intolerable.

Precarious economic conditions and the need for an interlocution with Aler are the reasons that also prompted Mrs. F. to go to the legal counter in Via Gigante.

Mrs. F., seventy-one years old of Moroccan origin, has lived in Italy since 1985 and has held a lease with Aler Milano since 1991. Retired since March 2021, F. has an income of about 700 per month.

She repeatedly asks us for help because she complains about the need to reduce her rent, given the change in her income from when she worked to the end of 2022, when she retired.

Moreover, the lady - who is not at all familiar with bureaucracy - is not able to independently fill in the tool needed to respond to this rent adjustment requirement, namely the annual Aler questionnaire (for which she went to the counter).

Her case, as well as that of Mr. D., testifies to the enormous economic fragility that afflicts single people over 65 and the consequent high risk of not being able to fulfil their contractual obligations. In the neighbourhood, there is a part of the population of ERP tenants at high risk of irregularity, who need constant support and interlocution with the company that owns the rented property, capable of adjusting and considering the changing economic conditions of the inhabitants.

#### **2.2.2. F. and S.: the search for a suitable home**

A different aspect of the fragile housing conditions of those who live in San Siro and who have approached the legal clinic over the years concerns people or households residing in places that are totally inadequate for their living needs.

Emblematic in this respect are the cases of Mrs F.S. and Mrs S. and her daughter.

F.S. is a forty-five-year-old woman, an Italian citizen of Moroccan origin, unemployed and - until early 2023 - a recipient of citizenship income. For a few years now, she has been living alone in a private flat where she rents a bed - off the books - in a room she shares with other people, strangers.

This situation, at first glance, might seem sufficient to guarantee a certain stability of life. However, it is precisely the dialogue and the encounter with the lady that show how the absence of a living space of one's own in which to be autonomous, as well as the close and forced cohabitation with unknown people is a source of great suffering.

She constantly turns to all services in the area to find an alternative housing solution, but her income does not allow her to aspire to anything more than what she has. She tried in vain to participate in the ERP call, but was not successful, and she does not meet the requirements to access other solutions, such as Transitional Housing Services (SAT).

Mrs. S.'s situation is partly similar to that of F.S.: she too has been renting for years a bed in a flat shared with people with whom she has no relationship of affection or friendship.

The fundamental difference between the two women is that Mrs. F.S., since 2020, has a newborn daughter and it is precisely because of the presence in the household of a child of that age that such a living condition reveals all its intolerability. In fact, the needs of a newly formed single-parent family would impose spaces and a living context that cannot be reconciled with having only one bed at one's disposal and with the presence in a flat - moreover of very small dimensions - of unknown persons.

Therefore, also for Ms. S. a change of home would have been necessary, but this is rendered impossible by financial incapacity. The only feasible solution would be to rent at a regulated or at least reduced price, such as that applied to public housing. Although S. had also applied several times to participate in ERP programmes, she could not be allocated a flat due to her position in the ranking list.

### **2.2.3 Mr L.: the 'persistent' irregularity in public housing and the consequences of the irregular presence on Italian territory**

Lastly, Mr L.'s personal history testifies to the close link between the regularity of the foreign national's presence on Italian territory and the regularity of his living conditions in public housing. The two situations are connected to the extent that changes in one directly affect the other.

Mr. L. is a 67-year-old Egyptian citizen, in Italy since the 1980s. Here, he worked for thirty years in construction until, in 2015, he was struck down by a heart condition that forced him into a wheelchair for a few years. Due to his worsening health condition, L. has lost his job since 2015. This occurred precisely at the same time as the expiry of his residence permit for work reasons, which L. could not renew.

Shortly before his residence permit expired, however, L. had been allocated Aler housing, where he still lives.

However, the subsequent irregularity of his presence in the territory (due to the non-renewal of his residence permit) meant that his living conditions also became, de facto, irregular.

But that was not all: since he could not work, Mr L.'s financial conditions soon became such that he was unable to pay the rent and, therefore, accrued a large debt to Aler. Further worsening his debt position was the failure to fill in the user registry, which allows the company to be notified of the ISEE certificate of income, based on which the amount of rent is calculated annually.

The ISEE certificate is in fact issued only to Italian citizens or persons legally resident in the territory. Since Mr L. did not hold a regular residence permit, the rent could not be adjusted to his actual income and therefore, not only did the monthly amount always settle at the maximum, but also his debt - resulting from non-payment of the rent - was calculated over the years on the basis of the maximum amount charged.

The passage of time and the persistence of the debt led to the opening of eviction proceedings against Mr L. in 2019, which became enforceable in 2023.

Mr. L. turned to the legal clinic - which was already supporting him for the regularisation procedures of his stay in the territory - to be helped in the request for the activation of the procedure of blameless payment arrears.

This required the cooperation of the tenants' union SICET and the Aler Community Managers, who are still supporting L. in the necessary paperwork for the recognition of blameless payment

arrears and the consequent debt reduction.

The case illustrates the state of general precariousness in which a person can live who, despite having a legitimate right to reside in a building, finds himself without a residence permit for reasons beyond his control and how the lack of a residence permit has an immediate impact on his housing situation.

In cases such as these, it is not only the meagreness of the income - as described for Mr. D. and Ms. F. - which determines the risk of the loss of the regular right to reside in public housing, but also the change in the status of the foreign national. The latter in turn depends on a law of immigration, which in recent years has been affected by numerous reforms, reducing progressively the types of residence permits and the cases legitimising their issuance.

### 3. Conclusion

The analysis of the data and cases illustrated so far allows us to make some, at least partial, considerations regarding the state of the 'right to housing' in the San Siro district.

As mentioned above, the group of neighbourhood residents who turn to the legal clinic in Via Gigante is characterised by a strong social and economic fragility and reports heterogeneous problems, which are not limited to the issue of housing. The latter, however, contributes significantly to determining the quality of people's living conditions.

In particular, it emerges how, especially those living in public housing, suffer from the absence of direct contact with the managing body and that it is often precisely the lack of an interlocutor that leads to the exacerbation of problems that in themselves would have little impact on the quality of life.

These are, in fact, often issues related to the maintenance of the state of the flats (e.g. plumbing problems), which if solved immediately would not erupt into situations that are difficult to sustain, as in fact happens. One thinks, for example, of the frequent problems of unsanitary rooms due to mould or malfunctioning heating systems.

Similarly, being able to have direct contact would make it easier to take part in the procedures for the census of ERP tenants or to participate in calls for applications for public housing.

From this perspective, it would also be necessary to rethink the way services are used, so that they are better adapted to the characteristics of the population: elderly people with little familiarity with technology, foreigners with limited knowledge of the Italian language, just to give a few examples. These would not be excessively costly measures, but they would have a significant impact on the quality of life of people and the entire neighbourhood. Indeed, one cannot underestimate the positive impact that proper maintenance of facilities contributes to the well-being of an entire population.

The introduction - by Aler Milano - of the figure of Community manager seems to move in this direction. Contact with the territory and collaboration with existing realities and services in the neighbourhood can in fact help reduce the distance between the tenant and the managing body. In this sense, the opening of the "C.A.S.A. per i Servizi Abitativi" centre by Aler Milano is particularly positive, as it allows direct contact with the territory and the neighbourhood,

which facilitates the support of tenants who need frequent contact with the managing body. Also - but not only - in collaboration with the clinic, the Community Managers were able to provide fruitful help to those who had accrued a debt in the payment of rents and for cases of 'supervening' irregularity. Support in applying for access to the 'supervening arrears' procedure and the definition of a debt repayment plan is essential not only for the individual tenant, but also for the credit interest of the institution itself.

A further finding to emerge from the legal clinic's housing case history is the difficulty in finding housing, which affects many of the residents of the neighbourhood who also have regular housing. From the experience of legal counters over the years, it is clear how widespread the problem of finding adequate housing is for people or households with low income.

However, it is very common for families with more than one child living in overcrowded situations or renting a bed in a house shared with strangers, despite having ISEE indicators close to the minimum, to participate in ERP calls with a negative outcome. The strong mismatch between supply and demand in the housing market has major consequences on the lives of the neighbourhood's inhabitants. Inadequate housing conditions do not allow for the full and effective development of the individual, especially in the case of large families (the many living in the neighbourhood) and minors. There is no doubt that precarious housing cannot be reconciled with the need for stability typical of school-age children, with all that this implies for their education and their future.

Expanding the supply of affordable housing would reverse this phenomenon, which seems to have increased over the years.

Thus, a heterogeneous picture of difficulties emerges, which changes according to the personal circumstances of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

The elderly - who often live alone - suffer from a strong isolation and find it hard to cope with everyday problems. They frequently complain about poor building maintenance - plumbing and heating problems - which significantly affects their well-being and in relation to which they express a feeling of helplessness.

Discomfort then emerges from the account of neighbourhood relations. The multiculturalism that characterises the population of the buildings often generates conflicts between people belonging to different ethnic groups: the coexistence of different cultures, ages and ways of life often generates conflicts that are difficult to resolve, contributing to widespread malaise.

For the many large families living in the area, the overcrowded condition caused by the small size of the flats is also a source of great discomfort. As mentioned, this affects the serenity of family relationships and the development of children, and in most cases, it is difficult to find more suitable housing solutions, even elsewhere in the city.

However, the presence of virtuous resources in the neighbourhood should also be noted.

This refers to the caretakers of public housing properties, fundamental guardians, to whom residents often report the difficulties of their neighbours; to the elderly who support families in managing daily life and small needs; to the human relationships that are created between neighbours and who are also supportive for abused women.

The logistical conformation of buildings in the neighbourhood also proves to be crucial for the serenity of daily life: courtyards, at least during daylight hours, are a place for children to socialise, only to turn out to be a less safe place in the evening and night hours, during which

parents report concerns about illicit use of common spaces.

Ultimately, the neighbourhood, even in form of the home, can prove to be a place where strong bonds are created and a sense of connectedness develops, which is crucial for people from distant countries.

This is the element that should be emphasised the most so that the specificity of the neighbourhood becomes a source of wellbeing for its inhabitants.



## Notes and Bibliographical References

<sup>1</sup> There are five legal clinics at Bocconi University, in addition to the one held in the San Siro district: the 'Rights in Prison' clinics (one at Bollate prison in collaboration with the University of Milan - Bicocca and the other at San Vittore prison, in an internal space, organised by the Polytechnic University) the "UASI" clinic (which offers legal assistance to Ukrainian citizens, launched following the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022), the "Startup and Innovation" clinic (which provides free legal support to start-ups participating in Bocconi 4 Innovation programmes) and the "Tradelab: Global trade and investment rules" clinic (held in English), which - in collaboration with the Tradelab NGO and a network of institutions and partners (based in Geneva) - brings together students, professors, professionals and experts in international arbitration to provide legal support to states, NGOs, international organisations and small and medium-sized enterprises on international investment and trade law issues.

<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor of Criminal Law in the Law Degree Course, Bocconi University of Milan. In addition to Melissa Miedico and Maria Dellagiacoma, the following collaborate in the activity: Lucia Ventura, contract researcher within the FAMI project (Project 3867) and Ludovica Oliva, PNRR - Musa research collaborator at Bocconi University.

<sup>3</sup> The student activity lasts from one year to six months and involves the awarding of 6 credits to the student. Legal clinics allow students, from the fourth year of the law degree course onwards, to train by dealing with real cases, always supported by lecturers and professionals.

<sup>4</sup> As clarified by P. BRAMBILLA- M. CARRER- A. MAESTRONI (eds.), *Accesso alla giustizia, solidarietà e sussidiarietà nelle cliniche legali - Accesso alla giustizia, solidarietà e sussidiarietà nelle cliniche legali – Cliniche legali*, vol. I-II, Giappichelli, Torino, 2018: the legal clinic activity has several important objectives. A first objective has to do with the training of students: in fact, it allows them to acquire new knowledge in an engaging way, thanks to the learning by doing method, which starts from a real case to be dealt with and - sometimes - when the clinic envisages the carrying out of real clinics, with a direct interview with the person who is asking for support and who is, often, in conditions of extreme vulnerability (prisoners, immigrants, minors, women, etc.). The clinics thus also make it possible to broaden students' competences, through the acquisition of skills that are very useful on a professional level. Thanks to these activities, the clinics also make it possible to educate and raise the awareness of the students involved in social responsibility, in line with the University's Third Mission, promoting the recognition of rights in contexts of fragility.

<sup>5</sup> C. BARTOLI, *Prospective and Proposals: How Legal Clinics Can Contribute to a Europe of Rights and how the Union's Institutions can Help this Good Practice*, in *Diritto & Questioni Pubbliche*, 2016; C. BLENGINO, *Lo sguardo della clinica legale sulla vulnerabilità: tracce per una riflessione a partire dall'esperienza con vittime di tratta*, in *Etica e Politica*, XXI, 2019; P. BRAMBILLA- M. CARRER- A. MAESTRONI (ed.), *Accesso alla giustizia, solidarietà e sussidiarietà nelle cliniche legali - Cliniche legali*, vol. II, Giappichelli, Turin, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> The legal clinic activity in Via Gigante started in November 2019. The data collected refer to the period from November 2019 to December 2023. It must be considered that during the period of the Covid emergency (February 2020 - February 2021), access to the counter was suspended and there was predominantly remote information dissemination through formal and informal

channels.

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that in 2020 the clinic's activities were interrupted several times due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

<sup>8</sup> Data available at <https://www.mappingsansiro.polimi.it/>

<sup>9</sup> Over the years, the percentages have remained more or less stable. In 2019: Arabic-speaking countries 70%, Western Europe 11% Central and South America 11%, Western Asia 8%. In 2020: Arabic-speaking countries 49%, Central and South America 22%, Western Europe 10%, Central and South Africa 8%, Western Asia 6%, Balkan countries and Ukraine 4%. In 2021: Arab-speaking countries 43%, Central and South America 17%, Central and South Africa 11%, Western Asia 10%, Western Europe 10%, Balkan countries and Ukraine 6%, China and the Philippines 4%. In 2022: Arab-speaking countries 58%, Western Asia 10%, Western Europe 10%, Central and South America 7% Central and South Africa 6% Balkan countries and Ukraine 5% China and the Philippines 2%.

Finally, in 2023: Arab-speaking countries 51%, Central and South America 19%, Western Asia 10%, Western Europe 7%, Balkan countries and Ukraine 6%, Central and South Africa 5%, China and the Philippines 2%.

<sup>10</sup> This is the procedure that concerns those who squat a property, who are charged with the offence of squatting of land or buildings under Article 633 of the Criminal Code, according to which 'anyone who arbitrarily invades other people's land or buildings, public or private, in order to occupy them or otherwise gain profit from them, is punished, on complaint by the offended person, with imprisonment from one to three years and a fine ranging from EUR 103 to EUR 1,032. Imprisonment for a term of two to four years and a fine ranging from euro 206 to euro 2,064 shall be imposed and prosecution shall be ex officio if the offence is committed by more than five persons or if the offence is committed by an obviously armed person. If the offence is committed by two or more persons, the penalty for the promoters or organisers shall be increased'.

<sup>11</sup> If they reside in public housing.

<sup>12</sup> The search for housing also takes place through participation in auctions, which is why 3% of those seeking assistance with housing go to the legal desk.

<sup>13</sup> It is not uncommon for people to be refused tenancy because they are foreigners.

<sup>14</sup> Article 5 of Decree-Law No. 47 of 28 March 2014, converted with amendments into Law No. 80 of 23 May 2014, combating the squatting of real estate, provides that 'Any person who unauthorisedly occupies a property without a title may not apply for residence or connection to public services in relation to that property, and deeds issued in violation of this prohibition shall be null and void for all legal purposes'.

<sup>15</sup> Possession of a regular residence permit is a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for concluding a lease (and/or purchase) of a property. The lack of such a document therefore prevents one from having a regular accommodation. On the other hand, even the recognition of a residency permit presumes the regularity of the accommodation (given the need to present a certificate of housing suitability and/or a declaration of hospitality). Moreover, only regularity of employment allows one to establish one's registry office residence in the dwelling in which one lives, an indispensable requisite for access to numerous services; first and foremost, the taking in charge of social services. In a context of total invisibility such as the one described, which also involves minors, the intervention of the social services is often essential for the proper development of minors.

## 5.6 Public housing and commoning processes:

### A co-research on management practices and living in public housing in Milan

Francesca Cognetti, Maria Elena Ponno

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#### 1. The motives and tools of a co-research on public housing

The San Siro quadrangle is the largest public housing district in Milan, and therefore represents a privileged field of observation for understanding the condition of public housing in the city (Cognetti, Padovani 2018). Today, the district is affected by complex transformation processes that have invested it at different scales over the last twenty years: within it through different and fragmented interventions of divestment and valorisation of the housing stock; in its immediate surroundings by being located in the urban quadrant of San Siro stadium, very dynamic from the point of view of investments and development plans aimed at the redevelopment of numerous disused areas of public and private property; in the city of Milan characterised by increasing limitations of a heritage of affordable housing combined with global dynamics that place it at the centre of flows of people of different origins.

All these changes raise multiple questions about the future of this important public sector and the conditions through which it can renew its traditional role as a neighbourhood that has historically welcomed the city's poor inhabitants and families. A future linked to a major new housing issue, of which the neighbourhood represents a piece, a paradigmatic area, a window for observation and listening. The need to develop co-research on public housing stems from these questions and from the difficulty - commonly felt by the Mapping San Siro research group, as well as by the tenants' protection unions - of accessing information and data on the state of the housing stock, housing conditions, management dynamics and policy frameworks, and of systematically comparing different local carriers of knowledge on the issue. This condition of opacity, combined with a fragmentation of the networks and consequently of the knowledge developed at the local level, even though the launch in the past years of important co-research pathways has demonstrated the important wealth of implicit knowledge that many actors carry (Maranghi, 2023), has given rise to a shared pathway of knowledge reconstruction. We believe that this path, which is now coming to an end, should be interpreted on two levels: in its 'material' outcomes, as an opportunity to produce and make public new frameworks for reading and interpreting phenomena, which we hope will have a generative outcome with respect to actions and possible policy directions on public housing; and in its 'process' outcomes relating to the emergence and valorisation of a wealth of knowledge that is configured as a commoning process, as we will have the opportunity to point out in the final part of this essay.

At the basis of the research path are therefore: emergent processes of excavation and valorisation of local, informal and contingent knowledge also of more marginal subjects; collaborative processes that actively involved various subjects (institutions, third sector operators, other universities, local associations, inhabitants) in some specific areas of work; interdisciplinary processes, which put various competences (urban planning, architecture, anthropology, demography, pedagogy, law) to work.

Collaborative research was made possible thanks to longer-term pathways, which in fact constituted a fundamental basis of trust and relationship, both between those involved and with the individual inhabitants. The continuous presence of a dedicated research person and the Off Campus space as a device for investigation were other central aspects, which tested the role of 'expert knowledge' and the university.

This transversal and collective dimension is reflected as much in the methodological approach, developed through an incremental and adaptive path, as in the survey instruments, which are rather heterogeneous and also - to a certain extent - designed to be 'resilient' with respect to external influences and events. In addition to interviews, visits to each house in the popular district, the processing of demographic data, and interpretative mapping (on the condition of the heritage, renovation projects, and management methods), weekly testimonies and life stories were collected from different profiles of inhabitants, thanks to their stable presence within the Off Campus space and the possibility of observing from the inside and having informal relationships with people and subjects. A further survey instrument was the 'neighbourhood questionnaire', a survey that allowed us to collect data anonymously and extensively.

## **2. Plurality, porosity, informality**

The reconstruction of the housing situation in the neighbourhood has led us to recognise how an apparent 'homogeneity' of the public housing stock (in terms of urban form and ownership) corresponds instead to a plurality: the composition of the ERP stock is heterogeneous from many points of view, including the management, maintenance and care of the buildings, the provision of rehabilitation programmes or, conversely, the presence of situations of severe architectural and urban decay. Heterogeneity that even emerges within the same building: in most cases, there is a co-presence of publicly managed housing, detached from the ERP stock and entrusted to third sector subjects, privatised, squatted, for sale, empty.

This plurality is also reflected in the social composition of the neighbourhood, in which old and new owners, historic tenants, new assignees, informal inhabitants and temporary residents coexist. Profiles that trace many different ways of living both in terms of housing and in relation to courtyards and neighbourhood spaces: a challenge of living together in daily life, which is often experienced as 'a trench', but which in some cases produces, even unexpectedly, good neighbourhood islands. These situations of coexistence have a great impact on community relations, and are further stimulated by the diversity in the origin of the inhabitants. To some extent, this multiplicity also tells us of a welcoming and porous neighbourhood, which distinguishes it from other, much more homogeneous, and inaccessible parts of the city, bringing out a new profile of the ERP San Siro district, historically characterised by a uniform population. There are a variety of management and mutual aid practices related to housing, formal and informal,

authorised and unauthorised; a patchwork of situations that in fact produces the possibility of living and finding affordable housing, albeit often in temporary and precarious conditions. A rare condition for Milan.

The presence, within the ERP stock, of dwellings in uninhabitable conditions and the lack of public funds for their redevelopment, has led to the temporary removal from the stock of a substantial number of dwellings and the entrusting to several cooperatives, which have over time renovated the flats and reassigned them to their members, offering housing services in addition to the public ones. In addition, it has fuelled dynamics of squatting of housing, and the spread of other informal housing networks, which are difficult to trace, but which act as compensation for the shortage and scarcity of public allocations.

There are many trajectories of informal living, often linked to situations of great precariousness and hardship: from situations linked to criminal management by real 'intermediaries', responsible for identifying empty dwellings, managing access to the dwelling and sometimes connecting the flat to the condominium's electricity supply, to the phenomenon of subletting individual beds, in publicly allocated dwellings or, in some cases, in private dwellings. Networks of housing support are also found on the basis of solidarity networks, among inhabitants who identify themselves within communities they belong to, similar in terms of political culture, religion, or country of origin. Within these communities, true mutual aid networks have been woven, through which relatives, friends or acquaintances are welcomed and hosted in homes for extended periods of time, on a voluntary and solidarity basis. In a context such as this, characterised by a general feeling of institutional abandonment (Grassi, 2018), we detect the emergence of an 'other' system of values and practices of management and regulation, considered by the resident population as legitimate - though not legal - for preserving and protecting their daily living (Maranghi, 2022). These practices allow *de facto* access - albeit under conditions of opacity and precariousness - to a primary good such as housing. While on the one hand they open up the possibility of a stabilisation of individuals and families, on the other they risk constituting a strong limitation in terms of the stabilisation of life paths and the persistence of 'precarious belonging' (Gargiulo, 2019). Think, for example, of the issue of residence, which in Italy is the material and legal basis for access to a series of other fundamental rights (such as health, education and citizenship). An invisible population, which in the neighbourhood has a substantial weight, also in quantitative terms. A porous neighbourhood means potentially crossable, appropriable, modifiable, and therefore more capable of interacting with the mutability and variety of contemporary housing situations. This character seems to be more an unexpected outcome of a plurality of initiatives, actions and practices than the result of a strategic design (which does not emerge from the reconstruction of the framework of public interventions, developed with the research). No less, the public management of the heritage often turns out to be a brake on its valorisation: a static nature marked by slow and often hiccup-like processes - with a very long time horizon on the allocation, maintenance and redevelopment of disused housing - on which the managing body itself has recognised the margins for renewal (for example through the introduction of figures such as community managers).

### 3. Public housing and commoning processes

This composite and articulated reading of the living conditions in San Siro brought out a point of view from within, trying to ‘decentralise urban theories’ from new interpretations, not necessarily constructed from the centre ‘towards the periphery’. “Thinking from peripheries” (Forte, 2022) allows us to propose concepts and values by inhabiting the contradictions of the margin (Pozzi, Rimoldi 2017): the San Siro neighbourhood is thus configured as a place capable of offering “a radical perspective from which to look, to create, to imagine alternatives” (Hooks, 1998).

Ultimately, we believe that it is necessary to reflect on how this complex public urban artefact, plural, porous and accessible in its formal and informal components, represents an insurgent and strongly action-oriented model of inhabiting the city. On closer inspection, the term ‘public’ itself, with reference to this housing stock, is in some ways problematic: faced with such complexity, definitions based exclusively on the property’s ownership status or access criteria risk being reductive (Padovani, 2022). In this regard, some orientations seem interesting, which propose a concept of the public good as a common good (Donzelot, Epstein, 2006; Bianchetti, 2016), as a product of forms of learning, mutual trust, care and empowerment of public assets and its ways of use (Arena, 2020). This is a broad and complex issue, which opens a reflection on the opportunity to make the value of this housing offer shared, soliciting ‘respect’ and ‘care’ from both inhabitants, managers and public institutions on the basis of a shared sense of public housing as a common value (Boni, Padovani, 2022).

To conclude, from the perspective of the common value of these public goods, let us try to reread the forms of inhabiting and doing research as practices of commoning. The public heritage, in its heterogeneity and fragmentation, is ‘de facto’ managed by those who inhabit it in the most disparate forms, even beyond the formal and legal aspects: these processes of re-appropriation, care and production of spaces, as well as the spaces themselves produced by collective action, can be read as practices of ‘space commoning’ (Stravrides, 2016), which to all intents and purposes reshape and infuse ‘new lifeblood’ into an important portion of the public city. It is a panorama of actions that are also configured as political claims, expressed in a more or less conscious form: in this sense, the everyday practices of appropriation and care can be read as mechanisms of contestation and reconfiguration of the concept of belonging to the city, to be read as forms of ‘insurgent citizenship’ (De Carli, Frediani 2016).

Furthermore, recognising the enormous potential of disused public heritage, these practices become a rich repertoire of potentials related to the possibility of satisfying many housing needs (Steven 2022), and as ‘concrete’ demonstrations of possible solutions for re-housing and re-appropriation of the city (Cognetti, Cellamare 2017).

Finally, from a methodological point of view, the co-research path developed, as well as all the operations put in place during the months of work, have been generated and nurtured by a relational process of mutual knowledge and exchange, built over the years between the ‘university’ actor and a highly articulated network of other individuals and subjects. These processes of horizontal and responsible knowledge construction can be read as commoning practices, insofar as they determine both the shared production and the ‘emergence’ of latent forms of knowledge. The process of commoning thus has several valences: it is embedded in relational practices patiently developed with many subjects in the neighbourhood; it is a process of political recognition of



urgent collective issues with respect to which knowledge becomes a critical tool; finally, it is a process of common emergence of a 'latent potential' in terms of skills, knowledge, and possible actions on living.

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**'Living San Siro.**

**A co-research on housing conditions and ERP management networks.'**

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The issue of the right to housing, and in particular that of the right to public housing, takes on an urgent priority today, in the face of the major urban transformations affecting the city of Milan and the related processes of 'expulsion' - exacerbated in recent times by rising prices and the post-Covid economic crisis - of ever larger segments of the population. The San Siro neighbourhood hosts one of the highest concentrations of public housing in the city, with a housing stock of about 6,000 dwellings. The district still represents a valuable resource for safeguarding the right to housing for the most fragile segments of the population. However, the preservation and valorisation of this heritage seem to be recursively undermined by several factors that, in recent years, have caused slow and continuous processes of erosion and poor valorisation of the public housing stock. The aim of the research is therefore to bring out and represent the multiplicity of aspects concerning the 'housing issue' within the public housing district, reporting the different points of view, the critical issues but also the countless resources that this neighbourhood has built and consolidated over time. The co-research path, developed from the knowledge of the area produced over years of activity and stable presence in the San Siro district, was developed in a network with a number of subjects who have long collaborated in the research group's activities and with whom a solid relationship of trust and exchange has now been established. In line with a situated and participatory approach to research, attentive to making the most of different forms of knowledge and data representation, the investigation was carried out according to an open and adaptive path, making use of different research tools, such as on-site visits, interpretive mapping, exchanges with residents and the various voices present in the neighbourhood.



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