

**Self-organized practices for complex urban transformation.
The case of Bagnoli in Naples, Italy**
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Abstract

L'attuale clima di instabilità politica ed economica rallenta e complessifica le trasformazioni urbane e la loro gestione politica. Al contempo però, l'"austerità urbanistica" spinge le città a sperimentare alternative inedite di policy-making, che a loro volta possono prevedere l'inclusione di attori nuovi nel policy network rilevante. L'articolo esplora i possibili risvolti di pluralizzazione e democratizzazione della gestione del cambiamento urbano analizzando le diverse configurazioni di attori coinvolti nella trasformazione dell'ex zona industriale di Bagnoli, a Napoli tra il 2002 e il 2016. Nel 2015 il governo nazionale ha avocato le competenze di pianificazione e di esecuzione del progetto per Bagnoli. In risposta a tale intervento, diversi movimenti sociali hanno intensificato le loro iniziative per contrastare le modalità e il progetto proposto dal governo nazionale, ritenuti rispettivamente non democratico e "neoliberale". La compatibilità delle rispettive posizioni e alcune considerazioni pragmatiche, hanno portato ad una peculiare costellazione che ha visto importanti rappresentanti dell'esecutivo cittadino allinearsi con le posizioni dei movimenti sociali e contro il governo nazionale. Tale configurazione, si ritiene, ha reso possibile l'ingresso di attori normalmente esclusi dal circuito di policy-making e costituisce pertanto un'innovazione del paradigma di pianificazione urbana.

The current political instability and economic uncertainty slow down and complicate urban transformations and their correspondent decisional processes. At the same time, however, "austerity urbanism" pushes cities to explore alternative policy-making approaches that might include new actors in the policy network. We investigate this democratic potentiality by analyzing different configurations of actors (2002-2016) that have been participating in the over two decades-long, and still incomplete, transformation of a former industrial area in Bagnoli, in western Naples (Italy). In 2015, the central Government took over the city's planning competences over the area. In response, several social movements have intensified their action against what they regard as an unchecked, "neo-liberal" transformation of the area. The compatibility of the respective views, as well as pragmatic considerations, led to an alignment between movements and the city and to their joint opposition to the Government. This configuration, we argue, makes room for usually excluded actors and is thus an innovative way of urban policy making.

Parole Chiave: Rigenerazione urbana, Governance, Movimenti sociali

Keywords: Urban regeneration, Governance, Social movements

1. Introduction

The nexus between the crisis and urban austerity is usually

understood as a process whereby a diminishing spending autonomy leads to the shrinking of political space and to the deterioration of urban livelihoods. Not only is the scope of urban politics reduced and predominantly absorbed by the management of the crisis, but the few strategies of urban development that remain available are usually managed in a technocratic fashion and removed from democratic scrutiny. Importantly, austerity does not impact all social groups equally. Often carried out under the banner of “fiscal consolidation”, austerity measures typically translate into the de-funding and slashing of welfare programs, public services, and public employment. As the primary beneficiaries of public expenditures, poorer citizens are targeted disproportionately (Hastings, Bailey, Bramley, & Gannon, 2017; Peck, 2012).

Certainly, therefore, urban austerity is a selective reduction of citizens’ ability to decide how the city should be shaped. But it is not only that. Austerity policies rarely go uncontested. Such contestation are potentially innovative (Davies & Blanco, 2017; Fuller & West, 2016; Hilbrandt & Richter, 2015; Hou & Knierbein, 2017; Mayer, 2013; Tonkiss, 2013). The present crisis has prompted cities where the perceived failure of traditional, technocratic ways of governing urban space to give room and legitimize new political configurations and experimentations: Lisbon was Europe’s first major city to have a full-fledged participative budgeting (Allegretti & Antunes, 2014). Paris’ current Mayor, Anne Hidalgo, pledged to allocate about 5% of the city budget (over 400m€) through participative budgeting by 2020, in what is so far Europe’s largest participative budgeting project in absolute terms. Experts warn that social issues such as affordable housing or urban poverty are not tackled by the projects proposed by Participative Budgeting, which focuses instead on minor, quality-of-life interventions such as the repair of flowerbeds or street pavements (Madénian, Scully, 2018). Variation and difference across countries are substantial. For example, the majority of cities practicing participative budgeting in Germany (74 out of 96, considering only those with population larger than 40 thousand) discuss the *entire* city budget. In the context of financial austerity, however, the reduced democratic potential afforded to such initiatives is defined by some as “capitulation of local policymaking” (Amrhein, 2012). Local elections in 2015 in Spain saw the rise of Mayors who expressed

precisely the resentment against austerity politics that have been implemented by traditional parties. In Madrid and Barcelona, anti-establishment Mayor experimented with new ways of absorbing political inputs from the citizenry with online referenda and by a continued proximity with activist groups. In Italy, Bologna and Naples introduced city-level regulation for citizens to operate and manage public property as “commons” in 2014 and 2012, respectively. In this sense, the contestation against austerity seems to have taken off the ground of grassroots and landed into town halls.

These cases force us to rethink the nexus between the economic crisis, austerity, neoliberalism, and other “global” forces and local phenomena concerning urban politics and policies. While the dense web of economic relations across countries and cities facilitates the spread of economic policies and ideologies, cities are not only on the receiving end of that nexus. As we have seen, cities often resist and react to such pressures.

Therefore, we conceptualize the crisis as double-edged entity: partly a questioning and abandonment of accepted practices, partly the occasion for innovation in terms of social and political dimension. We define “innovation” as requiring two elements: the inclusion of new actors in the decision process, and new procedures for place-based co-decision making (Figure 1).

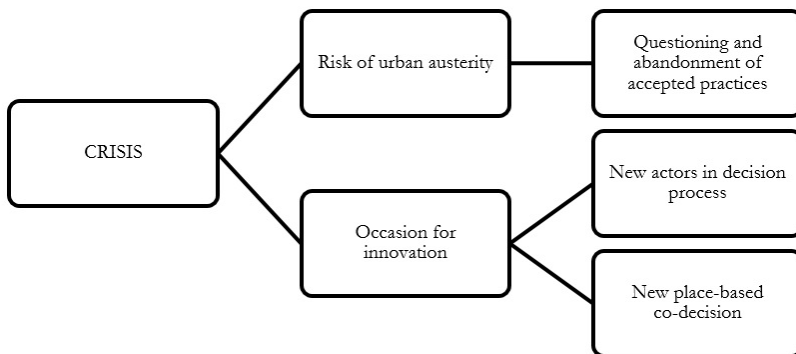


Fig. 1 – The double chance of the crisis (Source: authors, 2017)

This paper analyzes the unfolding of different policy-making approaches within the crisis by looking primarily at the network of

actors involved in the decision and by comparing the composition of that network before and after the onslaught of the crisis.

This research investigates how, and to which extent, the crisis prompts innovative ways of deciding about urban space. How do citizens respond to the crisis, and how is their ability to change the city articulated in a context of crisis? Does an increase in civic engagement translate into higher or lower degrees of social conflict?

Broadly speaking, the crisis generated issues that are shared by different geopolitical contexts such as decreasing of incomes and employment, restriction of bank credit to families and enterprises, slump in market and houses prices with the progressive worsening of families and enterprises expectations affecting consumption and investments. In this uncertain scenario, each country reacts according to its own economic, political, social and cultural characteristics. For this reason, we resorted to a qualitative place-based methodology, derived from Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) in order to contribute to theory through data collected from empirical analysis of local context.

The analysis of the selected case of Bagnoli (Naples, Italy) is a longitudinal study that seems particularly useful to elaborate on whether the increased mobilization and visibility of social movements and civil society is a type of fruitful innovation that emerge from the crisis. It is based on previous work focused on the emancipatory models of participation in planning (Ragozino & Varriale, 2018). The recent mobilization in and about Bagnoli is part of a city-wide framework in which relevant experiences of social movements and civic initiatives are establishing innovative ways of taking part in political debates and decision-making processes (Dines, 2000; Gargiulo & Cirulli, 2016; Vittoria & Napolitano, 2017). The article is structured as follows. First, we present the methodology used to track and analyze the evolution of the networks of actors who impacted – or sought to impact – upon the transformation plans. Secondly, we present the area of Bagnoli and summarize the latest phases of its post-industrial transformation (1990's-2016) through the Stakeholder Analysis. In the third part of the article, we present the findings of the Stakeholder Analysis, and offer our interpretation on. In the conclusions, we reflect on whether the changes in Stakeholder Analysis may help us imagine new ways of manage urban transformation in a time of economic

and political crisis.

2. Methodology

Due to the locally embedded responses of policy makers, local communities and organizations, as well as privates, we set the research questions with a grounded-based approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), which «discovers theory from data systematically obtained from social research» (Glaser & Strauss, 2009: 1). One of the requirements for a solid research in this approach is the possibility to access the empirical field directly, in order to analyze the ways how «truth is enacted» (Addelson, 2009).

In order to identify an effective case to study, we used the following criteria:

- 1) Presence of unresolved issues (related to planning, housing, dismantled areas, unemployment);
- 2) Possibility to observe different constellation of actors over a long period of time;
- 3) Presence of conflicts between political, economic, and social actors;
- 4) Presence of non-institutional actors (activists and other civil society actors).

The lengthy and still unaccomplished transformation of an industrial area in western Naples (Bagnoli) fits these criteria. The case of Bagnoli allows us to observe a fairly stable scenario (in terms of physical transformation) before and after the onslaught of the crisis. Although the closing of the plants and the pending transformation process suggest that Bagnoli is a territory in crisis, the structural problems caused by the economic and real estate crisis of 2008 and 2011 affected the area by changing its assets as discussed in the following paragraphs.

Besides and beyond the goals articulated in the several planning tools that have been dedicated to the area, it has been possible to observe how the roles and the interaction patterns between actors have changed.

In order to understand whether and if the structural issues of the crisis have affected and stimulated new forms of innovation, this analysis focuses on the role of actors involved in the transformation process and their behaviors. A Stakeholder Analysis was carried out to characterize the roles taken up by a selection of actors and their mutual relationships in 2016 and 2014 – when a combination

of economic and political factors led to the seismic changes in the governance for the transformation of Bagnoli. This method was used in an attempt to achieve an advanced knowledge of actors, of their intentions, personal interests and their interactions (Varvasovszky & Brugha, 2000). It helps to understand the degree of influence that urban actors have in the political and decisional process as well as in the regeneration process of places.

Actors included in the analysis are those involved in the process at different level from local (City Council of Naples, local associations, self-organized social movements, and privates) to the national level (central Government represented by the national agency Invitalia, the Government-appointed commissioner and the control room). They have a direct engagement in the regeneration issues and have directly affected decisional process and public opinion.

Starting from key actors, the set has been enlarged through a “snowball technique” (Farquharson, 2015) by asking interviewees about other stakeholders with considerable influence in the regeneration and/or in the decisional process. The empirical research process is iterative in order to monitor the fluid changes that occur simultaneously in the network of actors and of the political and economic context.

This analysis covers the time span between 2002 and 2016, which has been divided in two phases. Each is characterized by different implementing bodies, Bagnoli Futura and Invitalia, respectively (Table 1).

Time phase	Phase A (2002-2014)	Phase B (2014-2016)
Implementing body	Bagnoli Futura <i>Urban Transformation Company</i>	Invitalia <i>National Agency</i>

Table 1 – Time phases (Source: authors, 2017)

For each phase, three elements were considered: planning tools, actually implemented physical changes, and the relevant urban actors.

The stakeholder analysis took place in the following steps:

- 1) Identifying different components of the policy issue in the two time phases;
- 2) Identifying and approaching actors involved (iterative analysis);

- 3) Elaboration of collected data and building of actor maps;
- 4) Discussion.

2.1. Data Collection

The phase of data collection lasted from October 2013 through May 2016, the purpose being that of continuing to monitor the situation for a longer period of time. At present, researchers are collecting updated information to develop the next phase regarding the period 2016–2018. The collected data is composed of primary and secondary resources. The former includes face to face semi-structured interviews put to representatives of different groups of actors. Almost two authors as interviewers facilitate the meeting particularly if there is more than one respondent (Varvasovszky & Brugha, 2000). Before starting, an agreement around issues of confidentiality and way in which obtained information will be transformed into data and be used has been submitted and the possibility to record the meeting has been negotiated. All interviewed actors were firstly contacted via email through the institutional account of the National Research Council of Italy – Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development (CNR IRISS). They were briefly informed of the nature of the research and asked to be interviewed as observer, rather than actors. The latter regards published documents, planning tools, projects for the area, public tenders, judiciary ordinances and internal regulations of organizations. With regard to unofficial documents, face to face interviews provide a good opportunity to gain internal documents. Collected primary and secondary resources have been enriched by active observation through several site visits in different days of the week and different times of the day; participation to several institutional events, meetings and events organized by local activists, photographic survey, field notes, and collection of electoral materials.

Until May 2016, the authors interviewed 19 actors, among the following categories: local politicians, entrepreneurs, professionals, activists, researchers, and former factory workers. Some actors have been interviewed multiple times during the entire fieldwork to monitor such reactions and new trends. All materials have been archived according to the subject on paper and in digital form. By elaborating collected information, researchers identified and selected actors who

have a direct engagement in the regeneration issues and have directly affected decisional process and public opinion, then they built a matrix monitoring involvement, influence/power, position and impact of issue on each actor (Varvasovszky & Brugha, 2000) (Figure 2). The selected actors are: *City Council of Naples*, *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.* (the society which led the dismantlement of the industrial area and its transformation process from 2002 to 2014), *Invitalia* (a joint-stock company of the Ministry of Economy), *Government-appointed commissioner* and Control Room (a tool created by the Government through the *Sblocca Italia* Decree), *Bagnoli Assembly*, *Iskra Collective*, *Bancarotta Collective* (self-organized social movements), *Science Centre and Arenile Resort* (private bodies).

This data, together with urban planning details, are the starting point to draw the two actor maps referred to 2014 and 2016 based on the degree to which they were able to influence the regeneration of the area, and their position vis-à-vis the relevant regeneration plan.

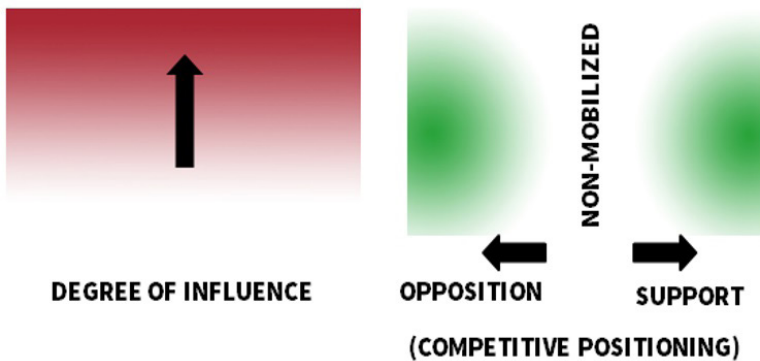


Fig. 2 – Map format and variables (Source: Ragozino, 2016)

The actors are located in the graph according to an estimation of their influence on the transformation, and on how they relate to the transformation plan (oppose, neutral, favor). Incidentally, the plans implemented by *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.* (2005) and by *Invitalia* (2016) differ in content, but are substantially similar for

the modality of implementation. Opposition and support should thus be understood not only as directed towards the content of the plan, but also towards the way it is to be implemented. These maps, shown in the following paragraphs, will be compared to each other in order to develop some reflections with regard to research questions.

3. Planning and politics in contemporary Bagnoli

The former industrial area of Bagnoli has been subject of an intense scientific and political debate since many years mainly for its evolution as an industrial district located in a place of the city of Naples of valued natural environment – the *Campi Flegrei* volcanic area (Andriello, 2003; Andriello, Belli, & Lepore, 1991; Di Dato, 2016; Lepore, 2017). In ancient times, the area was used for thermal baths and agriculture while it was a beach resort in early eighteenth century. With the application of the plan for the industrialization of the city, in the first part of twentieth century, it became place for heavy industry of the Italian Government. During the '60s, the industry had its highest numbers of employees (8800). In the '80s foreign demand for Italian steel decreased. The factory was shut down in 1992, leaving behind a huge polluted area on the sea and over 2100 unemployed workers (Figure 3).

The former industrial area of Bagnoli makes up 15% of the homonymous district, which hosts 24.000 inhabitants. It is the place where a series of legal obligations converge, which makes Bagnoli a difficult area to plan (and to study) (Figure 4).



Fig. 3 – Current view of former industrial area of Bagnoli (Source: Ragozino, 2016)



Fig. 4 – Regulation layers (Source: Ragozino, elaboration from Google map image, 2016)

The transformation of the former industrial area in Bagnoli started with its closing in 1992 and, as of spring 2016, is still ongoing. During the '90s, the transformation was managed with a traditional, top-down approach, with limited and largely ceremonial attempts to listen to the local population. This phase was also characterized by a certain degree of cooperation between municipal, regional, and national Government levels. Since the mid-2000, however, the transformation has come to an impasse. Evident discrepancies between local, regional, and national levels of Government emerged in that period, and last until today. In 2015, the national Government averted the city's planning competences and appointed a commissioner. For its national economic significance, the national Government included the transformation of Bagnoli in a set of high-priority interventions benefiting from Government funding. The importance of Bagnoli for the city administration, and in the city's political debate, is equally hard to overstate. Making matters even more complex, the city administration has joined several urban social movements in different battles and demonstrations against the Government's takeover of the transformation plan – as presented in the following paragraphs.

3.1. The industrial Bagnoli

The heavy industry in Bagnoli was part of Italy's earliest and most substantial attempts to address its "southern question", i.e. the persistent economic gap that separated the south from the center-north of the country. The first significant steelworks

appeared in 1904. After gaining momentum during Italy's war efforts, the industry started declining by the late '60s. Already in 1972, the city's urban plan decreed that the future of the industrial area – by then still very much alive – was to eventually host light manufacturing facilities and non-polluting industries. When the last active industry closed down in 1991, the land, the coastline, and the seabed were found to be polluted with heavy metals. The central Government created and funded an ad-hoc company, called Bagnoli S.p.A, to carry out and oversee the requalification of the area including a relevant operation of land reclamation.

The remediation process, started in 1996, proceeded slowly. A major amendment to the city plan, dealing specifically with Bagnoli, was passed in 1998. It prescribed that the former industrial area be replaced by a 120ha wide urban park. It also prescribed that, after the remediation of the soil, the area would host “integrated urban settlements”, a type of mixed-use built environment combining dwelling, economic activities, welcome centers and commercial (Figure 5).

By 2000, while the dismantling and the sale of the industrial facilities were (nearly) completed, the remediation of the land had not been started yet. Two years later, only 30% of the remediation had been completed.

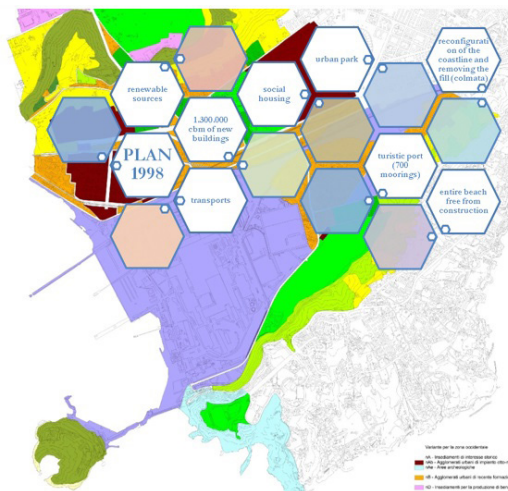


Figure 5 – Amendment to the General Plan passed in 1998 (Source: Ragozino, elaboration from City Council of Naples, 2016)

3.2. Bagnoli Futura S.p.A. (2002-2014)

In 2002, the municipality of Naples replaced Bagnoli S.p.A. (the society created in the 1996 to implement the Bagnoli Plan) with a new public utility company, called *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.* The latter was a so-called “Urban Transformation Company” (*Ita. Società di Trasformazione Urbana*), entirely financed with public funds, whose goal was to buy and remediate the former industrial area (about 340ha), to plan and carry out the detailed interventions on the territory, sell the areas destined to private actors and manage the public works.

The Executive Urban Plan, detailing the implementation of the General Plan, was passed in 2005. Its main goals were the remediation of the area, the conservation of some of the industrial buildings as industrial architecture, and the construction of some hosting facilities (conference center and a wellness center), a body of water replacing a previously planned touristic harbor, housing (both public and private), parking lots, and rail transportation (Figure 6).



Fig. 6 – Executive Urban Plan of 2005 (Source: Ragozino, elaboration from City Council of Naples, 2016)

The transformation started in 2007 with the opening of three construction sites: the Park Gate, the Sports Park, and the Turtle Point. By 2010, however, only 65% of the remediation

had been completed. The delay was due to several changes in the original remediation plan, each of which had to be analyzed and approved by the relevant authorities. Furthermore, the 2005 Executive Urban Plan modified the zoning of some areas, which then needed new methods of remediation. In the same year, the open bid for the sale of the land was deserted. According to the management of *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.*, private investors were discouraged by the mix foreseen by the plan (30% of the land for residential purposes and 70% for tertiary and commerce), which would no longer be adequate to the current situation of the market (Di Dato, 2016).

Political misalignment between the city and the regional authority led to a new deadlock. After two mandates in which the Campania regional authority was held by the center-left, the 2010 elections brought in a candidate from the center-right. Few months into his mandate, the new president cancelled more than 100 acts signed by the previous administration, on grounds that these were not economically sustainable. Several of such acts concerned Bagnoli. This blocked the flow of funds to Bagnoli Futura. At the city elections of May 2011 an independent leftist is elected as Mayor of Naples, thus interrupting a nearly 20-years-long rule by the center-left. Few months later, in 2011, the Court of Naples ordered the seizure of some areas, claiming that these had not been properly remediated. In January and February 2013, large parts of the Science Centre of Bagnoli were burned, while other parts of the area are vandalized. In April 2013, a new and larger investigation, initiated by the district attorney, leads to the seizure of the whole area. Twenty-one members of the Board of Directors of *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.* are placed under investigation for “natural disaster”. *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.* was mired in financial problems, too. One of its largest creditors, a public company called Fintecna, requests that *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.* finally pays the price it owed (59mln€) since it acquired Fintecna’s land. In December 2013, the Mayor responded by decreeing that Fintecna carry out the remediation of the area at its own cost. Unable to repay its debts to Fintecna, *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.* is declared bankrupt in May 2014.

The graph “Phase A” (Figure 7) synthesizes the relevance of the most important actors involved in this phase of the process (before the compulsory administration, with Bagnoli Futura).

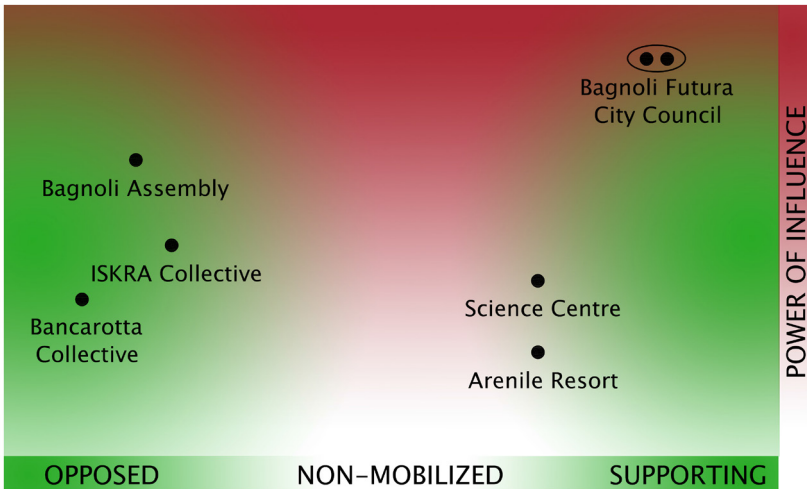


Fig. 7 - Actors map, phase A (Source: Ragozino, 2016)

On the top-right quadrant (high influence, support) we have the *City Council* and the society *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.*. The latter was publicly funded, and its board of directors was nominated by the city administration. Since its goal was to steer the transformation, and given its financial size, it is hardly surprising that it is both highly relevant to the transformation and supportive of the plan. We have placed the *Science Centre* in a more neutral portion of the graph, it is more limited in scope, in the sense that its interest in the transformation plan are mostly concentrated to its own future in it. A particularly pressing issue for the *Science Centre* is its location. Its building on the shoreline, of which the main part was burned down in early 2013, stood against the prescription of the zoning plan, but was allowed to stay until the center's investment would have been absorbed. Even so, after the arson, the director of the center declared that the Centre would be re-built "where it once stood". In the same place we have one of the largest private actors of the area, the *Arenile* beach resort. Like the *Science Centre*, the *Arenile* was granted a concession and allowed to remain on the seafront until it would amortize its investments. Similarly, its concern for the transformation of the area is limited to its own commercial activity. It has a favorable view of the tourism and market-led transformation project, but is not as supportive of the plans to create a public beach on the

shoreline.

In the lower, left-hand quadrant (low influence, opposition) are the *Laboratorio ISKRA* and the *Collettivo Bancarotta*, which are two of the most prominent groups of activists, and *Assise di Bagnoli*, a local coordination assembly for activists and interested citizens. While their opposition to the transformation process has been consistently high (the *Collettivo Bancarotta* was indeed created out of concerns for the emptying-out of the post-industrial district), their degree of influence has been for most of this phase limited. Their activities focused on awareness-raising campaigns, protests, and general denunciation of the risk of the area being “again” exploited by powerful firms. In one occasion, however, they managed to transform their grievances into policy. They collected enough signatures in favor of keeping the coastline “free” for a public beach. This call was sanctioned by deliberation issued by the *City Council* in September 2012. While an important success, this deliberation remained largely symbolic, since in order for the beach to become actually accessible, the seabed and the coastline would have to be remediated. Another factor limiting the influence of the social movements is that their primary target was the city administration, while Bagnoli is decided upon by a plurality of Government layers. The city administration, as we have seen, does not act alone for the transformation, but depends financially on higher institutional authorities (the Region of Campania and the central Government) and on private actors, is subject to investigations and seizure of land, and has other limitations of administrative nature. All these factors mitigate the force of their opposition to the transformation, when going through the city administration.

3.3. Bankruptcy of Bagnoli Futura, compulsory administration, and rise of activism (2014-2016)

The relations between the Mayor of Naples and the central Government quickly deteriorated. Although they had agreed on a roadmap just in August 2014, by September of the same year the national Government passed the *Sblocca Italia* decree (133/2014) that, among other things, put the transformation plan for Bagnoli under compulsory administration: all competences for the planning, physical interventions, and supervision of the transformation are concentrated in the hands of a Government-

appointed commissioner. This made the municipality of Naples no longer relevant to the transformation. An amendment to this decree, approved in November of the same year, gave the city administration the right to have its own proposals considered. However, the Mayor declared that the city had been illegitimately stripped of its planning competences, and that this amendment did not substantially change that. He would not participate.

Isolated by the central Government and by the most powerful economic actors involved, the Mayor was, however, close to the groups of self-organizations in the area. Although both the self-organizations and the Mayor could be defined as “far left”, this ideological proximity has not always translated into cooperation. The case of the self-organizations’ battle to have a free, public beach in Bagnoli illustrates this point well: earlier on in his tenure, the movements had clashed against the Mayor, claiming he had not been supportive of their battle for guaranteeing full accessibility to the beachfront of Bagnoli. Only in a second phase did the City Council absorb the self-organizations’ input by legislating that, upon completion of the remediation, the shoreline would become a freely accessible beach.

In the same year, the municipality was asked to prepare a new amendment to update the existing planning regulation. The commissioner is nominated only in September 2015, one year after the decree was passed.

By the end of 2015, the remediation of the water and soil surfaces has not yet been completed. In the former industrial area, most of the buildings have been demolished, while surface and subsoil have been remediated by 50% only. In the southern portion of the area, which hosted the “Eternit” industry, only 30% of the remediation has been completed.

The graph (Figure 8) synthesizes the configuration of actors in the 2016, i.e. after the transformation has been put under direct supervision of the national Government. The most striking novelty is the appearance of a new, powerful entity: *Invitalia*, the national Government’s investment agency who manages almost all credit facilities of the central Government supplied to enterprises and innovative start-ups and since 2014 has the role to reclaim and re-launch industrial areas in crisis. The transfer of planning competences and thus the removal of the discussion over the transformation of Bagnoli from the (heated) city-wide debate is in line with arguments on post-crisis neoliberal policies which,

at the same time, reduce the space for political confrontation and make room for investments and land speculation. When the central Government put the transformation of Bagnoli's under its direct control, it nominated *Invitalia* as the “executive agency” for the area. Its powers exceed those of the previous, city-level agency, *Bagnoli Futura S.p.A.*: *Invitalia* can not only plan the physical transformation of the area and sell its land, but it can also build on it directly. Importantly, its statute clearly states that it is “open” to private capitals. We placed *Invitalia*, the Government-appointed commissioner and the control room in the top-right quadrant, since its power and its role of promoter of its own plans would not allow any other choice. The second evidence is the new position of the *City Council*, it has moved on the other side on top of the self-organizations evidencing the opposition to the Governmental block.

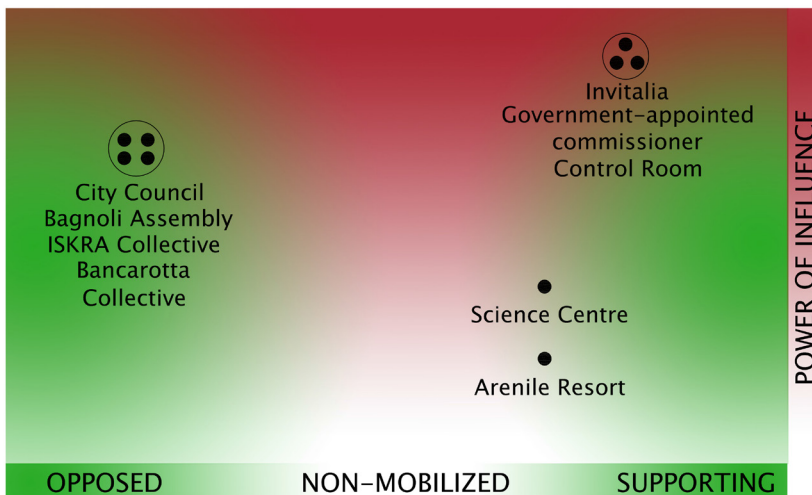


Fig. 8 – Actors map, Phase B (Source: Ragozino, 2016)

4. Output and findings

As mentioned above, the researchers compared the first and second map by composing a third graph to highlight the differences (Figure 9). These are: the rise of *Invitalia* as the main actor in the transformation, the opposition of the *City Government*, and its convergence with the local self-organizations.

As was mentioned above, the appointment of the commissioner sidelined the *City Council* of Naples. On this point, however, it is important to make a distinction. While the Municipality of Naples has been factually sidelined, this had an almost opposite effect on the symbolic level. In other words, it has increased its appeal as one of the few who stood in opposition to the central Government, in a phase (Autumn 2015) in which the Prime Minister was far by the dominant figure in the national political landscape. This image was politically significant not only for the Neapolitan audience, but for the national one as well. Locally, perhaps the most immediate consequence of the municipality's diminished role was its increasing display of cooperation with self-organized social movements in Bagnoli. The opposition of the municipality and the social movements against the commissioner and, by proxy, against the Prime Minister, took new forms, and rose in visibility. This is perhaps best exemplified in a protest march held in April 2016, in which social movements demonstrated alongside two prominent members of the city Government against the Prime Minister, who visited Naples to illustrate the Government's transformation plan (Figure 10).

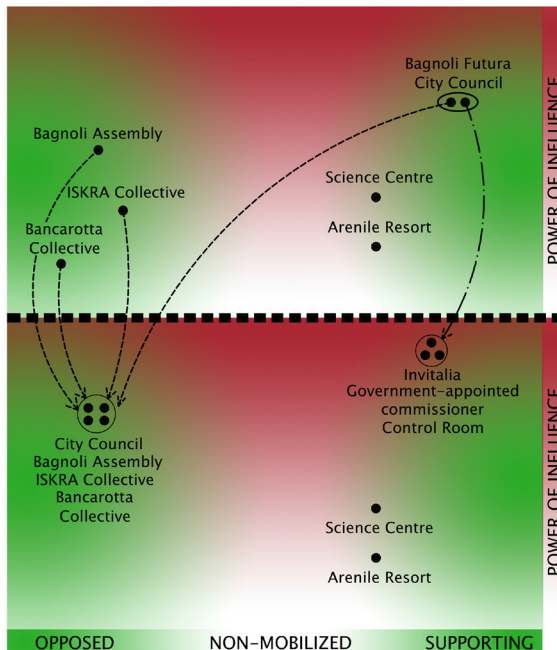


Fig. 9 – Actors network, cross-phase comparison (Source: Ragozino, 2016)



Fig. 10 – Activists in the former industrial area (Source: Bagnoli Libera, 2016)

5. Discussion

The case of Bagnoli is a complex one, and one that has economic, political, and social significance. Limiting the analysis to the question whether cities during the crisis may create with innovative, and potentially more democratic ways, of managing urban space, we offer the following considerations. Firstly, the elements of novelty and innovation are deeply contextual, and typically result in how territories react to the externalities of the crisis, most importantly the economic crisis and austerity policies imposed upon them. In Naples, as in other European cities, the wave of opposition against such phenomena is something that regards not only activism and protest movements, but also the city administration. Whereas it is too soon to say whether this development of urban politics constitutes a trend, the fact that several cities in Europe have embarked on similar ventures at least shows that it is not exceptional. Secondly, the element of innovation is clearly present, in that new actors have forcefully entered the otherwise closed circle of policy-relevant actors, albeit in a mostly oppositional manner. For the case at hand, however, there have also been instances in which some of the grievances articulated by activists (such as the creation of a public beach, and the removal of a stretch of land created during the industrial era) have been included in the final plans for the area, despite the wide autonomy of the Government commissioner. It has not been possible to conclude whether

the commissioner has absorbed these claims in an attempt to mitigate the conflict in Bagnoli, or whether such provisions would have been part of the new plan anyway. This leads to the wider question of how effective these new configurations of power are. The mismatch of scales of action (local for the activists and the city administration, and national for the commissioner) is certainly an element that speaks against this hypothesis. As was mentioned above, however, due to the extraordinary nature of the latest governance settings, it is difficult to know exactly from where the inputs of its plan derive. The third question, which we leave open, is whether these new configurations are positive, or rather detrimental, for cities in crisis. This is an intrinsically political question. On a minimum level, however, we argue that the self-organized scene in Bagnoli has at least succeeded in mobilizing citizens and in bringing several themes into the political discourse. As a consequence, it has become politically costly to decide upon them without any dialogue with the population. Regardless of the spatial outcomes, this seems to us as a positive result of the (often confrontational) interaction between the many actors involved in the city.

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