

Co-design your Neighbourhood

A participatory Process for multicultural Regeneration

aste & nodi

May 2019

The history of Porta Capuana. Embracing Change – Remaining true to Itself

It is said that at the end of the struggle for the inheritance to the throne that followed the death of Joan II in 1435, Naples was so struck that it seemed unrecognizable. It was as compensation for the Neapolitan people that Alfonso of Aragon decided to devote all his efforts to embellish and enrich the city. In this spirit renovation works began, which in 1483 led to a drastic change in the appearance of the city, giving the district of Porta Capuana the structure that still remains today. The enlargement of the perimeter of the walls and the displacement of the gate from the side of the castle to the side of the complex of Santa Caterina in Formiello considerably reduced the relevance of Castel Capuano, which, already no longer a royal residence, also lost the role of fortification. After the annexation of the Kingdom of Naples to the crown of Spain, this structure lost in importance so much so that in 1503 it was transformed into a Palace of Justice. This change was to have a long-lasting impact since this new function would characterize the area until the beginning of the twenty-first century. However, the Court of the Vicariate, hosted until 2007 in Castel Capuano, was not the only activity dedicated to the administration of justice. Just outside the walls, passing Porta Capuana, is located the Complex of St. Francis, a former convent, seat of the Court, and Magistrates' Court which has been in disuse since 2006. A little further north, at the intersection of Via Foria, Via Rosaroll and Via Cirillo, there is the seat of the Justice of the Peace, which is housed in part of the complex of S. Giovanni a Carbonara.

The public use of these structures has not only characterized the historical buildings that house them, but most of the public establishments in the district, which have founded their economic stability precisely on the bustle of people attracted by these activities. For this reason, the disempowerment of the Court and Magistrates' Court, started in 2000 and completed in 2007, resulted in a deep crisis for commercial activities that led to the closure of many of them. The emptying of the commercial premises and many apartments in the buildings of Porta Capuana caused, as can easily be assumed, a lowering of the real estate values due to the surplus of supply in the face of a demand that had run out and that would soon undergo major transformations.

This trend has upset the neighbourhood and it has been accompanied by other processes of transformation that have affected adjacent areas of the city but which showed even more significant outcomes on the area of Porta Capuana. The most obvious of these was the renovation of the nearby Piazza Garibaldi, which began in 2003 with the adoption of the project that led to the restyling of the railway station in Naples. This brought to the construction of a shopping mall and the renovation of the square, whose completion is scheduled for July 2019. The realisation of this project coincides with the birth of high-speed train connections between the main Italian cities, which began with the Freccia Rossa train in 2008 and has given new life to Italian railway stations. This new course for the railway stations not only increases the number of passengers but transforms their own role within the city. Many of the usual activities that are located near the railway stations are considered inadequate to compete with other transport systems for the category of customers to which the high-speed service is addressed. Behind the restyling operation, therefore, lies the idea of removing urban functions that are not appropriate to the reception of high-paying travellers, businessmen and tourists. In this case, the first people affected by this transformation were men and women from Eastern Europe who used to meet every Thursday afternoon in the square of

Naples' train station (Piazza Garibaldi) to exchange information, share products as well as the hope of building a new community far from home. Immediately afterwards it was the turn of the "informal taxis" of African young men, mainly Nigerians, who brought fellow country people and other foreigners in the most remote areas of the province for a small fee. Finally, it was the turn of the historic Duchesca market, which was removed from the adjacent alleys of Piazza Mancini and was affected by a long period of temporary stalls and evictions.

Another urban policy that has had an impact on the life of the neighbourhood was the implementation in 2011 of the new plan for city mobility promoted by the Mayor De Magistris. This provided for the closure to vehicular traffic of two roads connecting the upper and lower part of the city center: Via Duomo and Via Pessina-Piazza Dante. The same plan provided for the closure to traffic of the entire network of streets in the old town centre from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. If on the one hand this policy had the merit of freeing the old town from the traffic of cars, it did not have a great impact on the overall circulation of cars in the city. This had as a result above all the shift of traffic to Via Carbonara/Via Cirillo and Via Rosarol, the two main streets of the district of Porta Capuana, which increased the traffic in the area and engendered much debate. This was because the closure of traffic in the old town was propagandized mainly as an action of valorisation of the patrimony of the areas that were forbidden to the traffic. This message, in turn, aroused the opposite sentiment in the areas excluded from this action. In other words, not only did traffic increase, but it was also clear that for the public decision-maker the area of Porta Capuana was excluded, at least for the moment, from the operation of tourist enhancement.

New Inhabitants: small and large Settlements that transform the District

The combination of the lowering of the real estate value recorded following the relocation of the Court, the restyling of Piazza Garibaldi and the closure to traffic of the old town has generated the conditions for which new urban populations have chosen Porta Capuana as a possible place to settle down. In particular, the spaces left empty were immediately filled (i) with food stores of people from Eastern Europe who are frequent visitors to the area even though they do not have a real settlement core in the neighbourhood. Rather, their presence is due to two important activities they carry out for the life of the community. One is the arrival of vans from their home countries that bring food, books and typical objects through weekly trips to Piazza San Francesco every Thursday. The other is the celebration of mass with the Greek-Catholic Orthodox Byzantine rite in the Ukrainian language held at the Church of Santa Maria della Pace (in Via dei Tribunali) on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. (ii) Another population of foreign origin that has settled in the neighbourhood in recent years is the Chinese one. After the neighbourhood of Gianturco, Porta Capuana was chosen as a second center to carry out commercial activities in an organized manner. While in Gianturco, a suburban district and former industrial zone of the city, the availability of real estate is linked to former industrial sheds where the wholesale of goods takes place, the retail sale is carried out in the district of Porta Capuana, the historic center located at a few steps from the station. The first to reach Porta Capuana, however, were the Nigerians (iii), who settled in the streets that connect Via Rosarol with Via Carbonara. Arrived in the 90s near Piazza Garibaldi, they are the oldest community of migrants and have therefore developed an intermediation capacity with newcomers. The most important role they play in the neighbourhood is that of taxi drivers. In particular, they accompany other foreigners arrived at the station in the various settlements of the province, carrying out an activity which is very useful for those who have recently arrived in the city and are unfamiliar with the territory. However, not all the activities they carry out in the neighbourhood have this social relevance. In the same streets it is indeed quite frequent to come across the so-called "bassi" (ground floor apartments typical of the city) that house real brothels where Nigerian women (or African more generally) prostitute themselves with a system of control and protection

that covers large areas of the neighbourhood. However, people of foreign origin are not the only new inhabitants of the neighbourhood: affordable rents and proximity to the station and to the city center have also encouraged the establishment of artistic and cultural activities. The history of cultural agencies began in 2005, when a group of photographers (M. Spada, E. Mancuso, M. Berruti, R. Scibetta and G. Ceraudo) decided to create the La.Na (Neapolitan Laboratory) in the former Bourbon Wool Mill, which had previously been the convent of Santa Caterina in Formiello. This experience, even though of short duration, had the merit to make known this fascinating historical complex and to attract the attention of cultural associations and artists. The first association to settle in this complex was the Carlo Rendano Association, which founded the Lanificio 25 in a small secondary courtyard, which soon became a city landmark for indie and electronic music. Lanificio 25 also acted as an agent for transformation, advising other culture agencies to take up spaces inside the former wool mill and promote the knowledge of the district in its historical and monumental features. The first association to follow in the footsteps of the CRA was Intolab, a cultural organization that manages a co-working in the same complex. But the real change is represented by the arrival of Made in Cloister, an association which for its size, role and ambitions represents the turning point in the process of regeneration of the district. Made in Cloister is a foundation set up through the recovery of the small cloister of the Church of Santa Caterina in Formiello and the creation of an exhibition space and for events, of a restaurant, a bar and a bookshop. In addition to the re-use of the building, there is another very important role that the foundation has assumed in recent years: it has been leading a number of changes in function of the monumental complex. This was possible thanks to its "gravitational force" which made other subjects that gravitate in the same field revolve around its activities linking in this way their fate to that of the foundation. But in addition to this indirect role, the foundation has acted as a real Urban Transformation Company, signing agreements with rental or purchase options with private owners and identifying investors and activities compatible with their idea of transformation. The most important of these in terms of size and function is the Social Coop. Dedalus, which has been involved for years in projects for the integration of first and second generation immigrants and which, thanks to the collaboration with Made in Cloister, has created the Officine Gomitoli workshop on the first floor of the Chiostro Piccolo. This has meanwhile become a place of work for over 60 operators that carries out integration projects on the territory as well as hosting events and themed presentations. The Zapoi Association, made up of young architects and designers, participated in the construction of Officine Gomitoli's furnishings and it still carries out its own workshop/carpentry inside the Great Cloister of the Wool Mill. After efforts were made to reconvert the entire complex, new companies have settled in the Lanificio over the last two years. Among these are the Dino Morra Arte Contemporanea gallery, a 3D design and printing studio, the house-studio of the American artist Jimmie Durham (Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement in Venice, 2019) and the Brazilian artist Maria Thereza Alves, who manage a residence where artists from all over the world are invited to think and create works for the area.

The approach

The two new populations that have settled in the neighbourhood have a similar behaviour to that of pioneer plants in an ecological system. These are plant species that settle first on newly formed land, such as landslides, lava flows or land where the vegetation has been destroyed by fire. These plants are generally very resistant and have the merit not only of repopulating the soil but of modifying it, making it suitable for other more demanding species that will settle later. Each pioneer species represents therefore the prelude to the arrival of individuals of new species that will vary depending on what transformation have taken place. The role of these populations is therefore important not only for the impact produced by the behaviour of their own individuals but also for the transformations they anticipate, partly by preparing a suitable environment to accommodate other populations. In the case of Porta Capuana, it is quite clear

that the arrival of economic actors linked to the world of art and culture of medium-high value, such as the Made in Cloister Foundation and the Madre Museum, has brought with it a number of collateral activities such as artists' studios, small galleries, co-working and so on. But this was not the only change induced since even the long-standing activities adapted to their presence. The cafés in the area started to install outdoor areas to accommodate visitors to the museums and galleries for a happy hour or a coffee after their visit. At the same time pizzerias and restaurants began to display menus in English and walking in the area it is now possible to notice luggage storage facilities here and there. The organization of new services, made possible only through the acquisition of new skills not initially available, inevitably generates a slight but constant increase in the costs that retailers pass on to their customers. Taking up the metaphor proposed, the land that this population is preparing lends itself to accommodate people with a greater propensity for cultural consumption and with a higher spending capacity than historical residents.

This trend is counterbalanced by the arrival of foreign populations that have settled in the area. As often happens, the establishment of new communities generates the opening of many grocery stores, businesses and craft shops often submerged or informal, displaying products coming from the home countries of foreign communities. In turn, the possibility of finding these products that are otherwise difficult to find attracts other people of foreign origin not resident in the area, increasing the perception of the incidence of this phenomenon. As a consequence, public policies tend to be oriented towards a greater consideration of the migration phenomenon in this area of the city. In a few hundred metres are concentrated a number of reception centres such as Sprar centres, CAS, reception houses, public showers, dormitories and canteens run by Caritas and other charitable organisations. All these structures produce a density of services that in turn generates a flow of frequenters. But while most of the foreigners who have settled there have a job, often on their own, and are therefore favoured in the integration process, the users of the services and in particular of the basic services (dormitory, canteen, showers...) represent a critical issue with a view to integration. It often happens, for example, that patrons of a lunch table, having no other place to go, wait in the neighbourhood for the evening meal to be provided. This way of using the area leads them to consider and perceive the public space as "private", regardless of the presence of other users. This behaviour, generated by a flawed welfare system that rarely succeeds in making recipients independent, generates many reasons for conflict with historical residents. Another easily foreseeable consequence of this phenomenon is a depreciation of real estate values, perhaps especially on the ground floor. The feeling of degradation, which as such is configured as an irrational feeling and therefore non-negotiable, generates distrust and little propensity to social upliftment. The homeless who sleep in the hallway of a building next to a cafeteria or a group of people that sit on a bench in front of a pizzeria drinking wine from the carton, act as a deterrent for individuals to invest in improving their own business. The prevalence of this population therefore seems to bring with it a progressive worsening of the livability of the neighbourhood which is caused by insecurity and degradation. This, if taken to extremes, may drive away those historical residents who feel a greater need for social upliftment and livability. In both cases, the prevalence of pioneer species creates a disadvantage for the historical inhabitants. In the event that cultural actors prevailed, property prices could rise to the point of becoming unaffordable for old residents or become a source of income that may prompt them to leave the neighbourhood. On the other hand, if migrant communities prevailed, the neighbourhood could run the risk of becoming a real ghetto where different problems intersect generating a complex urban situation, which would become the cause of the progressive displacement of the historical inhabitants. But how is it possible to protect this category of inhabitants without putting into practice extreme and liberticidal security policies against migrants or folkloric and illiberal policies against cultural operators?

The reading that is proposed in the action-research still in progress is based on the interpretation of each population as an antidote to the prevalence of the other. The presence of spaces dedicated respectively to art and to immigrant populations does not have to be read as antithetical. It is indeed possible to find points of contact between the two categories. For example, the exhibition "Monuments" by the Chinese artist Liu Jianhua, hosted by Made in Cloister until March 2019, went in this direction. Liu Jianhua collected, through video interviews, 23 stories of 23 migrants living in the Porta Capuana district. The artist commissioned the craftsman Carlo Nappi to create a life-size paper-mache statue of each of the migrants involved. The statues were then placed on pedestals decorated with hand-made ceramics by the company Ceramica Francesco De Maio and with 2000 flowers, still made of ceramics, made by the students of the Istituto ad Indirizzo Raro della Ceramica e della Porcellana Caselli - De Sanctis.

Another example not too dissimilar from this is the course organized by FAI in collaboration with the Madre Museum. This course was addressed to citizens of foreign origin and it had the aim of training facilitators able to make the artistic heritage of the museum accessible to their communities of origin. These are just a few examples of initiatives that go in the direction proposed by the present article. Presently we are trying to make a contribution by finding common elements in similar experiments to consolidate a practice of interaction between new residents and the territory with a view to the protection of its inhabitants.

The process

Aste & Nodi began a three-step process aimed at enhancing multiculturalism and strengthening the sense of belonging of the new inhabitants to the Porta Capuana district. The purpose of the project — still ongoing — is the creation of synergies between the migrants communities that have settled in the neighbourhood in recent years, the new and old generation of local inhabitants of the neighbourhood, traders, cultural and social associations and the new activities dedicated to art and culture.

First step: an Installation called TERZO TEMPO

The starting point was the project *This must be the place* with ActionAid Italia, Federico II University and Madre Museum. First, we organized a walk lesson, through which the participants, migrants and Sociology students, got to know each other and then got in contact with different territorial realities that have been capable to modify and transform the content and spaces of specific areas in the city. Afterwards, to bring out the places to which the participants are linked, a workshop to trace biographic maps has been organized. It was necessary to prompt the participants to reflect by trying to investigate their personal stories and the places where these stories have unfolded, in order to reach a deeper level of knowledge. The aim was the production of a biographical map, a spatial representation of the set of relations that characterizes each specific existence. Lastly, a visit to the Madre Museum has been organized. There, the participants saw how art pieces can tell a story. As matter of fact, this initiative ended with the realization of *Terzo Tempo*, a collective installation at Madre Museum, where the participants had the chance to tell their own stories displaying a significant object of their everyday life. But why we called it *Terzo tempo*? *The third time* in rugby is the moment in which the opposing teams and fans gather to eat and drink together, exchanging thoughts and opinions, beyond who won and lost. The party must be organized by the home team. The third time celebrates something more important than a competitive match: mutual respect and fair play. We used this metaphor to describe a process that tried to bring together distinct social subjects, united by the need to find common solutions for coexistence.

Second step: a new Inhabitants Itinerary

The second step of the process was the co-creation of an itinerary to develop the story-telling of Porta Capuana through the eyes of its inhabitants, especially of the newcomers. The itinerary was co-designed with the inhabitants, as well as Coop. Dedalus and Coop. Casba, two local NGOs supporting immigrant communities, second generation inhabitants and migrants. It involved also the local traders, restaurant and café owners, since they are considered by the inhabitants witnesses of the urban transformation of the district. The planning of the itinerary has been a participatory process in which all the activities were aimed at constructing a personal and emotional interpretation of places and spaces of the neighbourhood, becoming a peculiar reconstruction of the urban area and its people.

The first itinerary took place in December 2018 for the representatives from the URBinclusion Local Group, during the Network's Thematic Seminar on co-creation and co-responsibility held in Naples. A common feature of European cities is the solicitation for transformation due to external forces, such as large financial resources, migration flows and a tendency towards gentrification and touristification: each of these trends pushes away inhabitants and functions that are not compatible with them. The scenario is the transformation of the historical idea of the city into a large theme park with only one vocation: tourism monoculture. To combat this risk, it is necessary to balance the different functions and to keep the complexity. The URBinclusion committee selected this practice as an effective solution to be implemented and shared on the Network's platform and appreciated the focus of the case example on people's engagement.

Involving all the social groups in art production and in the co-creation of the cultural policies of their neighbourhood facilitates an equal empowerment even in the contemporary art field, usually considered as elitist. By opening up spaces, the barriers can be broken and the accessibility to cultural places and policies can be increased. In order to create a stronger connection between the contemporary art museum and the surrounding district, which is usually little frequented by the museum's operators and visitors, the co-designed itinerary will be recommended to the staff of Madre Museum and then later to the public. This represents the beginning of a dialogue based on sharing know-how between culture professionals and inhabitants. Connecting institutional "bigger" actors with local non-institutional stakeholders triggers both long-range and short-range interactions, and hinders both inefficiency and lack of connection with the territory. Preserving plurality, we foster cooperation among the social components and create synergies among the urban functions: variety and interaction ensure sustainability by enhancing the probability of finding innovative and shared solutions to complex urban difficulties and living needs.

Third step: Madre World Café

Madre Museum is the contemporary art museum of Naples, located between the area of Porta Capuana and the most touristic part of the old city center called "Centro storico". It was founded in 2005 by the Campania Regional Government, which acquired and renovated the building to a design of the Portuguese architect Álvaro Siza and the Neapolitan architect Studio DAZ¹. For the museum establishment, Campania Regional Government set up Fondazione Donnaregina, a foundation in charge of managing the museum and promoting contemporary art in Campania region².

After the above-mentioned itinerary, a workshop will be organised in order to investigate which role the museum plays in the development of the surrounding area and how it is perceived by the communities and the stakeholders of Porta Capuana district. Moreover, the workshop is aimed at questioning the position of

¹ <http://www.madrenapoli.it/en/about-us/the-museum/>

² <http://www.madrenapoli.it/en/about-us/the-foundation/>

the museum and encouraging proposals and new ideas on its governance model, as well as fostering the interaction between the museum and the territory. In fact, ever more compellingly museums are required to assume the role of auricle and people spokesperson: among the new functions of the museums there are the capability of capturing and expressing the needs of the population, as well as acting as stable and neutral headquarters for debates among the groups within civil society. With this in mind, Madre Museum can be considered a potential laboratory of the analysis and the monitoring of the social and urban transformations occurring in the area of Porta Capuana.

To understand how Madre Museum can become firmly intertwined with the reference urban fabric, it is necessary to fully examine the presence of the museum on the territory and how it is perceived both by the inhabitants and the museum operators, even with a confrontational approach. What if the museum was relocated to another area of the city? What makes the museum's presence essential in Porta Capuana district? Is Madre Museum really perceived as relevant by the inhabitants? Wouldn't they have preferred that this historical building, bought and renovated with public European funds and financed by the Campania Regional Government was used to meet a more urgent need of the population? How do the inhabitants benefit from having the contemporary art museum of the city in their district? Are there any advantages for the museum to being located in Porta Capuana and to stating that?

Since an informal setting stimulates cooperation and discussion among people, Aste&Nodi planned a three-session workshop using the World Café facilitation technique: during each session, starting from the opening speech of the representative of a best practise, the participants will discuss and co-design solutions or micro-practices for the proposed issue. The workshop will be held on 11th/12th June 2019 and is addressed to social and cultural operators (NGOs), educators, professors, local entrepreneurs. The subjects of discussion are

- multiculturalism and urban transformations: does the museum take a position on the policy decisions on this field?
- education and relevance to the audience: does the museum effectively involve local schools, youth and families? Is it relevant to the inhabitants?
- social innovation and networking with local enterprises: does the museum 'read' and take into consideration the features of the local production? Does it relate to the artists and the cultural or social operators of the area?

The purpose is to analyse the role of the museum in the development of the surrounding area and its commitment in empowering the local communities from the point of view of the participants. The latter are asked to give a contribution by imagining solutions to the interference occurring in the connection between Madre Museum and the territory. Because of their position, in fact, they operate everyday within the local communities: this allows them to have a more realistic point of view on the needs of the area. Informative material for the participants at the workshop is under preparation, and specifically

- a survey on the origin of the museum visitors and on their level of familiarity with Porta Capuana area: does the museum attract local people? Do visitors know other cultural sites in the district or restaurants or cafés?
- video-interviews to local stakeholders (social and cultural operators, restaurant and café owners) asking them whether and how they cooperate with the museum, what the museum could do to

increase its connection with the territory, whether they consider the museum a resource for the area and for their activity, whether they would be curious to visit the museum.

The ultimate aim is to implement, within the museum, a space for observation, dialogue and participatory governance for the social and integrated cultural innovation of the territory. Conceiving this space as a sort of threshold dimension between the museum and the urban context, unprecedented synergies among the stakeholders and the communities could be activated in Madre Museum.

But why should this concern a museum? First of all, the role of museum audiences has constantly transformed since the origin of the modern museum: from guest visitor (the collections were reserved to a selected elite), then a mass to be educated (one to many), then a consumer claiming a certain service (but still remaining a receiver of the museum message), recently the audience has become more similar to an interlocutor than a spectator. People are more aware of being the counterpart of a communication process in which they are supposed to have, and they claim, an active role.

Furthermore, Madre Museum in 2018 registered the 100'000-visitor record, that compared to 600'000 of MANN, the archaeological museum of Naples, is not an outstanding achievement, even taking into consideration the decline of Madre Museum in 2011. Although numbers are not the only indicator of the success of a cultural institution, especially as regards contemporary art museums, this data could be a clue of the museum inaccessibility, which manifests itself in people's lack of interest in the museum. According to Jasper Visser³, one of the reasons why a museum does not attract its communities – or rather non-communities – there is its irrelevance to them – as also Nina Simon points out⁴, due to the fact that the story the museum tells does not matter to people or does not concretely relate to societal developments.

A further reason lies in the barriers that the museum, both consciously both unconsciously, put for certain people to access. These barriers, according to Anna Maria Miglietta⁵, can be physical, economic, sensorial, technological, cognitive and cultural. But from museums' perspective right cultural barriers are the most difficult to be aware of: some people feel unable to understand the museum's content, or they perceive it as elitist, that is as if it was reserved to specialists or to upper class audiences. And they do not feel comfortable to even point it out. As a result, despite museums' efforts in being inclusive, they do exclude some audiences. This has something to do with inequality, referring to Amartya Sen's idea of development and positive freedom, as well as his concept of 'capabilities'. In the perspective of culture as an instrument for self-realization, having an active role in cultural experiences is a crucial right: it amounts to the ability, the recognised authority and the awareness – the capability, exactly – of establishing what is art – or culture in general – and who is it for.

Returning to Madre Museum, how does all this impact on the society and, specifically, on Porta Capuana area? Whenever the capabilities acquired by individuals are capitalized within the community, in the sense that they are distributed and become a common resource of the society, they activate a long-term process of sustainable and inclusive development, which derives from and, at the same time, enhances cooperation and synergies among local actors.

³ <https://themuseumofthefuture.com/2019/05/09/when-your-museum-isnt-attracting-people/>

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTih-l739w4>

⁵ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322308378_The_accessible_museum_barriers_actions_and_thoughts