

Report on the "The Possible City Seminar" research path

**implemented by the University of Turin,
Department of Culture, Politics and Society**



Where the initiative begins: the idea of the University for the "The Possible City" Seminar.

The research path (organized by the University as a seminar) aimed at analyzing, discussing and constructing the "The Possible City" project. The project, created by the Municipality of Turin and supported by the Ministry of the Interior, set the strategic goal of contributing to the overcoming of the Roma camps and its concrete objectives included the consensual and negotiated dismantling of the spontaneous settlements of Lungo Stura Lazio and the start of a process of inclusion of Roma families.

The project The Possible City was realized in Turin from 2013 to 2015 and involved a total of 633 people from Lungo Stura Lazio, who have self-built 173 shacks on about 320 present at the beginning of the activity. The key formula was: resources in exchange for responsibility, through the Formula of the Emerging Pact for over 180 families.

The work table was formed months after the conclusion of the project, which took place at the end of 2015, and is a place for reflection on policies towards Roma camps and, in general, towards urban marginality: the aim was "to reopen the case of the Possible City", that is to read critically the story and make it somehow memory. At the base of the work there was the concern that the emergency in large part was the result of a long carelessness, or intentional ignorance, of the growing critical situation and that the official end of the emergency could result in a return, once again neglected, to the situation of departure.

Who has been involved: public body, third sector

The "Possibile City" seminar was promoted by the Department of Culture, Politics and Society of the University of Turin (<http://www.dcps.unito.it/do/home.pl>) and was coordinated by Professor Marco Buttino . The Animation Valdocco Cooperative, the Diocese of Turin with the Migrants Pastoral Office, the Municipality of Turin with the Foreigners and Nomads Office, the Italian Red Cross and several university professors and researchers, authors of publications and researches on the inclusion pathways took part for people in conditions of marginality and exclusion.

The Prefecture of Turin or other institutional representatives of the police were not involved.

The Possible City: a research object to analyze the problem of marginal living

"We believe that it is necessary to avoid that marginality and destitution are considered as sudden events and therefore emergencies to be resolved in a short time. It's about taking stock of emergencies policies, remembering them and learning from experiences. "

This is the link established by Prof. Buttino who connects the seminar to the more general research project called "Cittadinanze" (<https://www.cittadinanze.eu/chi-siamo/>) which "aims to create a bridge between University and citizenship through research paths, public meetings on "fragile rights" in the city, citizenship practice laboratories and territorial investigation groups ". Specifically, the focus of the Seminar is to detect the possibility of giving citizenship to marginal ways of inhabiting the city and today excluded.

The working method: towards what?

The method provided for approx. 10 seminar meetings in almost two years of work, characterized by thematic insights and evaluative comparisons on the topics.

Among the topics that emerged and dealt with:

1) the clarity of the objectives was crucial for the various actors involved in such a complex project: were the objectives clear? And to what extent have they been achieved?

The very limited timing and the large numbers have made prevailing the demands of order and safety with respect to the complex construction of "emergency pacts" and the search for solutions that are actually stable alternatives to the field.

2) how did the negotiation with the interested parties take place? was the central aspect of the project, was it really possible to do it?

The real negotiation has been difficult for various reasons: still the "emergency" time, the reduced availability of various and customizable solutions (have they fully exploited the existing possibilities? With longer times it would have been possible to build alternatives to the most solid and stable?) has created strong information asymmetries, that is, inequality

of information between who was offering and who was the recipient of the intervention: the former did not clearly explain the existing possibilities; the latter, or families, tended not to explain their strategies.

3) The Project has been closed prematurely.

In mid-December 2015 everything stopped. Emerging processes, starting work, obtaining a home imply an accompanied path that does not stop at a given moment, otherwise we lose what has been hardly obtained. This is the difference between managing an "emergency" and implementing effective social policies. Is it not possible to move on to the latter overcoming extraordinaryness?

4) The relationship between work and home.

The first job placement (job exchange) is not the same as obtaining the job, but it is an important and necessary step; obtaining a house implies the ability, even if not immediate and total, to pay the costs. In short times and, above all, given the difficulties for the job, we ended up overturning the relationship, several Roma families, obtained housing, they found themselves in great difficulty to pay the costs and then they lost their home without being able to return at their shacks in the camp.

5) the finding and also the construction of low-cost housing.

Difficulties of a legal, administrative and political nature have prevented the promotion of low-cost housing solutions within the Possible City Project. This remains an important issue: is it possible to build / use new solutions with criteria that respond to the needs of users coming from Roma camps? Is it reasonable to do it?

6) It is necessary to think about the experiences of other countries and other regions.

Practical results:

- A focus on the "Cittadinanze" convention (11/17),
- The presentation of the "Vie d'uscita" by Chiara Manzoni (12/3/2018),
- A meeting between the City of Torino and the Possible City Group of Citizenships / UNIVERSITY of Torino (7/3/2018).

Research and analysis work can not be an end in itself, it lives to connect to the world of politics and practices: the traditional tools of public meetings, publications, research returns are effective for influencing decision makers and improving quality decisions?

Hypotheses of ways to increase the impact of research and analysis:

A possible network between the Universities of the main Italian cities affected by these conditions (eg Turin, Milan, Rome, Naples) to have data and processes available from different contexts and therefore be able to produce and disseminate comparative analyzes and of over-local impact.

Establish co-planning arrangements with local decision-makers to ensure that the analyzes and evaluations of research groups are binding in the processes through which policies and solutions are created.