



Martin Baumeister, Bruno Bonomo,  
Dieter Schott (eds.)

# CITIES CONTESTED

*Urban Politics, Heritage, and Social Movements  
in Italy and West Germany in the 1970s*

**campus**





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# Introduction:

## Contested Cities in an Era of Crisis

*Martin Baumeister, Bruno Bonomo, Dieter Schott*

### »Save Our Cities Now!« The Perception of Urban Crisis in the Early 1970s

In May 1971, the *Deutscher Städtetag*, the Association of German Cities, held its convention in Munich. Hans-Jochen Vogel, president of the Association, mayor of the Bavarian capital and a prominent Social Democratic politician, gave the keynote lecture under the title of the convention's programmatic motto: »Save our cities now!« In his speech, Vogel drew a pitch-black picture of the situation of West German cities which, according to his diagnosis, were threatened by a deep crisis after the enormous effort and impressive successes of 25 years of postwar reconstruction.<sup>1</sup> He saw obvious parallels to the United States, quoting President Nixon who had recently declared that one would need another American revolution in order to save the country's cities from the brink of a precipice. Munich's mayor listed a whole series of symptoms characterizing the difficult situation of the growing cities and urban agglomerations: among others, the decay of older residential areas and historic city centers, urban sprawl and the mushrooming of new faceless districts, traffic congestion and heavy pollution, an increasingly insufficient infrastructure in education and the public health system, growing social inequality and disintegration. Vogel diagnosed a deep urban crisis of epochal dimensions, which, for its part, was a manifestation of profound transformations in all spheres of life. He declared that the future of the cities would be decided not in the sphere of urbanism and by urban experts, but in politics. For Vogel, a pragmatic reformer and certainly not a radical intellectual, the roots of the problems were to be found in the development of capitalism, es-

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<sup>1</sup> Hans-Jochen Vogel, »Rettet unsere Städte jetzt!«, in *Rettet unsere Städte jetzt! Vorträge, Aussprachen und Ergebnisse der 16. Hauptversammlung des Deutschen Städtetages vom 25. bis 27. Mai 1971 in München* (Cologne: W. Kohlhammer, 1971), 55–84.

pecially in exploding real estate prices and the disparity between strong private financial power and weak municipal finances.

Vogel's statement as well as the *Städtetag* meeting had a considerable media impact at its time. The influential magazine *Der Spiegel* made it its cover story, transforming the *Städtetag*'s strong appeal into the rather pessimistic question: »Can we still save the cities?«<sup>2</sup> The weekly *Die Zeit* asked: »Are our cities dying?«<sup>3</sup>, echoing Jane Jacobs' famous critique of modernist urban planning and urban renewal in the United States of the fifties.<sup>4</sup> For West German experts and politicians the apparently catastrophic situation of the great cities in the United States, plagued by social disintegration, racial conflicts and the impact of mass traffic and anonymous mass consumerism as evoked in the proliferating American debate about the »urban crisis«<sup>5</sup>, served as a warning of a future threatening their own cities. The West German debate of May 1971—properly speaking the culmination of a longer process of critical evaluation by German intellectuals<sup>6</sup>—expressed a growing sense of unease about recent urban development and modern urban life. Summed up in the rather vague term of »urban crisis«, this sense of unease gained ground in manifold political and academic discourses of the postwar era, especially during the sixties and seventies.

»Urban crisis« referred to a variety of problems in rather different contexts. In the United States, it was marked by general societal struggles often perceived in categories of race and class, while in Western Europe it was influenced, apart from wider political and social contexts, by normative

2 »Sind die Städte noch zu retten?«, *Der Spiegel*, 24, June 7, 1971, particularly the article »Länge mal Breite mal Geld«, 54–72. All translations in this text from German and Italian are the authors'.

3 Sepp Binder, »Sterben unsere Städte? Wachsende Probleme, wachsende Schuldenberge—die Stadtväter rufen um Hilfe«, *Die Zeit*, May 21, 1971.

4 Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).

5 Prominent North American contributions to the discourse of »urban crisis« are, among others: Victor Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities: the Urban Crisis: Diagnosis and Cure* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1964) and Edward C. Banfield, *The Unheavenly City: the Nature and Future of Our Urban Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1970). On the origins, evolution and different uses of this notion: Timothy Weaver, »Urban Crisis: The Genealogy of a Concept«, *Urban Studies*, republished online March 31, 2016, DOI:10.1177/0042098016640487.

6 See especially Wolf Jobst Siedler, Elisabeth Niggemeyer and Gina Angreß, *Die gemordete Stadt. Abgesang auf Putte und Straße, Platz und Baum* (Berlin: Herbig, 1964) and Alexander Mitscherlich, *Die Unwirtlichkeit unserer Städte. Anstiftung zum Unfrieden* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2008 [1965]).

concepts and ideas of distinctive European traditions of city and urbanity.<sup>7</sup> Marxist scholars used the term in order to denounce the strains and social costs of capitalist development which were becoming particularly evident in the urban centers of the Western hemisphere. For Henri Lefebvre, »la crise urbaine« was the »most central« of a whole series of crises affecting French society in the sixties, reflecting the country's deep transformation.<sup>8</sup> Debates on the »urban crisis«—which intensified during the sixties—were closely interrelated on both sides of the Atlantic as well as in different political and ideological camps from the left to the right.<sup>9</sup> Focusing on urban problems, on a deeper level they referred to general trends and developments concerning all areas of life, as Vogel claimed in his Munich speech in 1971.<sup>10</sup> And all of them expressed an urgent desire to remedy a supposedly menacing, dangerous situation affecting the cities and their respective societies by political means. These could consist either of pragmatic, piecemeal reform, repair measures as spelled out by Vogel or—as the vociferous Left of the seventies hoped—of a fundamental societal change, a revolution which was to take cities as its point of departure.

In Italy, symptoms of the »urban crisis« such as congestion, poor housing conditions, lack of municipal finances, inadequacy of services and increasing social tensions appeared »ever more widespread and acute« over the seventies.<sup>11</sup> At the beginning of the decade, Rome, the capital, was seen as a sym-

7 See e.g. Edgar Salin, »Urbanität«, in *Erneuerung unserer Städte. Vorträge, Aussprechen und Ergebnisse der 11. Hauptversammlung des Deutschen Städtetages, Augsburg, 1.—3. Juni 1960* (Cologne: W. Kohlhammer, 1960), 9–34.

8 Thierry Paquot, »Que savons-nous de la ville et de l'urbain?«, in Marcel Roncayolo et al., *De la ville et du citoyen* (Marseille: Éd. Parenthèses, 2003), 15–33, here 29. See Henri Lefebvre, *Le droit à la ville* (Paris: Anthropos, 1968); Manuel Castells, *La question urbaine* (Paris: Maspéro, 1972); *Id.*, *Ciudad, democracia y socialismo* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1977).

9 See e.g. the reception of Jane Jacobs's *Death and Life of Great American Cities* which influenced, among many others, Alexander Mitscherlich's pamphlet—see Marianne Rodenstein, »Die Unwirtlichkeit unserer Städte: Kontext, Thesen und Konsequenzen«, in Mitscherlich, *Unwirtlichkeit*, 171–199, here 175. In the UK, the »Community Development Project« of the Labour government in 1968 and the »Inner Area Studies« (1972) of the conservative Heath government were important policy documents highlighting the perception of an »urban crisis«, strongly influenced by US-American notions.

10 Vogel, »Rettet unsere Städte jetzt!«, 61.

11 Franco Ferraresi and Antonio Tosi, »Crisi della città e politica urbana«, in *La crisi italiana*, vol. 2, *Sistema politico e istituzioni*, edited by Luigi Graziano and Sidney Tarrow (Turin: Einaudi, 1979), 559–605, here 559.

bol of the degradation and unlivability of the big cities.<sup>12</sup> In September 1970, on the occasion of the celebrations for the centenary of the Porta Pia breach, the Christian Democratic mayor Clelio Darida had to admit that »one hundred years after its reunion with Italy« Rome had »grown on itself in a disorderly and hurried manner«. It had not managed to develop »a valid relationship between history, tradition, culture and the needs and expectations of a modern metropolis at the center of an advanced country«: it was, in sum, »a city where problems (some problems in particular) have reached the level of explosion«.<sup>13</sup> Rome's situation, however, was far from unique. Even Milan—the city that more than any other embodied the myth of urban modernity in the years of the economic miracle—in the changed context of the seventies, did not escape the critical, almost apocalyptic, representations of the metropolis in crisis, choked by congestion, decay and lack of green spaces.<sup>14</sup> While planners, sociologists and political analysts discussed the origins of the »urban crisis« and its relationships to systems of governance and urban policies<sup>15</sup>, Italo Calvino masterfully expressed the theme in literary terms. In one of his most renowned books, originally published in 1972, the great writer drafted a series of archetypal imaginary cities out of an evaluation of the contemporary urban world as passionate as it was critical:

What is the city today, for us? I believe that I have written something like a last love poem addressed to the city, at a time when it is increasingly difficult to live there. It looks, indeed, as if we are approaching a period of crisis in urban life; and *Invisible Cities* is like a dream born out of the heart of the unlivable cities we know.<sup>16</sup>

12 Francesco Bartolini, *Roma. Dall'unità a oggi* (Rome: Carocci, 2008), 99–100.

13 »20 settembre 1870: la capitale è Roma. Discorso celebrativo del centenario di Roma capitale pronunciato nell'Aula di Giulio Cesare dal sindaco Clelio Darida durante la solenne seduta del Consiglio comunale«, *Capitolium*, Sept. 1970, 3–12, here 11. The Porta Pia breach (20 September 1870) marked the capture of Rome by the Italian troops, which paved the way for the proclamation of the »eternal city« as the Italian capital in 1871.

14 See Francesco Bartolini, *Rivali d'Italia. Roma e Milano dal Settecento a oggi* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 2006), 269–270.

15 Ferraresi and Tosi, »Crisi della città e politica urbana«; Paolo Ceccarelli (ed.), *La crisi del governo urbano. Istituzioni, strutture economiche e processi politici nelle città del capitalismo maturo* (Venice: Marsilio, 1978).

16 Italo Calvino, »Italo Calvino on Invisible Cities«, *Columbia: A Magazine of Poetry & Prose*, 8 (1983), 37–42, here 40. See also Id., *Le città invisibili* (Turin: Einaudi, 1972); the first English translation is *Invisible Cities* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974).

## The 1970s as a Period of Structural Rupture

In the debates about »urban crisis« cities were often considered exemplary sites, as mirrors and hotspots of deep general transformations of Western societies, then still more felt or anticipated than fully grasped. The deep sense of crisis as perceived by contemporaries fits well with the way the seventies are addressed in current academic debates. Many historians hold that the seventies mark the opening of a profound longer-term crisis-ridden »structural rupture«, though views and opinions about the scope and character of this break differ. While Niall Ferguson considers the seventies »more as the seedbed of future crises than as the crisis conjuncture itself« when »the shock of the global had only just begun«, Charles Maier maintains that the »West« did experience a decade of crisis, comparable to the earlier period of twentieth-century economic hammering in the 1930s and to the geopolitical meltdown that preceded World War I: »The turmoil of the 1970s provoked a fundamental rethinking of the economic and political axioms that had been taken for granted since the Second World War. It closed the ›post-war‹ era and its policy premises.« Unlike the two earlier turbulent eras, 1905–1914 and 1929–1939, the shake-up of the seventies did not lead to a major world conflict.<sup>17</sup> For Hartmut Kaelble the seventies are »one of the pivotal decades of the twentieth century«, a »soft turning point« for all of Europe, a »silent revolution«, instead of an upheaval dominated by spectacular political events«, characterized by a paradoxical dialectical relationship of disillusionment and promise.<sup>18</sup> For some historians the seventies are characterized as a decade of transition particularly by important transformations in the realm of mentalities and behavior as manifest, among others, in changes of sex, gender and family relations.<sup>19</sup> In general, however, more emphasis is laid on the comprehensive character of the »structural rupture« which permeates society, economy and culture and affects Western as well as Eastern Europe,

17 Niall Ferguson, »Introduction: Crisis, What Crisis? The 1970s and the Shock of the Global«, and Charles S. Maier, »Malaise«. The Crisis of Capitalism in the 1970s«, in *The Shock of the Global. The 1970s in Perspective*, edited by Niall Ferguson et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 1–21, 25–48, here 20, 21, 27, 26.

18 Hartmut Kaelble, »The 1970s: What Turning Point?«, *Journal of Modern European History*, 9: 1 (2011), 18–20, here 18 f.

19 Philippe Chassaigne, »Why the 1970s Really Matter«, *Journal of Modern European History*, 9: 1 (2011), 21–23, here 22; Göran Therborn, »The Tide and Turn of the Marxian Dialectic of European Capitalism«, *Ibid.*, 9–12, here 10.

capitalist as well as socialist societies.<sup>20</sup> According to this interpretation, the decade of the seventies marked the definitive end of the postwar boom, of an era that has been labeled as »les Trentes Glorieuses« or, in the words of Eric J. Hobsbawm, »the Golden Age« following the dark »Age of Catastrophe«.<sup>21</sup> The postwar reconstruction had definitively come to an end, the decades of growth and continuously rising prosperity were closed and the Keynesian consensus dominating the economic policies of Western European countries was quickly eroding.

With good reason, it has been argued recently that the historiographical debates on the seventies, dominated by British, French and German scholars, are for the most part anchored in specific national contexts and shaped by contemporary perceptions, political factors and historiographical traditions.<sup>22</sup> A possible solution to this situation could be to promote a transnational dialogue. This volume brings central aspects of the debate about the peculiar character of the decade up for discussion in relation to the urban sphere of Italy and Western Germany as an arena of conflict and contestation. It developed out of a conference held in May 2015 at the German Historical Institute in Rome, aiming to bring German and Italian scholars together in order to compare and contrast, how the »urban crisis« became manifest in cities and was faced by them in Italy and Western Germany during the seventies. Thus it aims to integrate urban history into general history. At best, cities hitherto do play a marginal role in general history or do not feature at all although the twentieth century in Europe has been characterized as an urban century and urban historians stress the role of cities as mirror and laboratory of general historical processes and transformations.<sup>23</sup>

20 Anselm Doering-Manteuffel and Lutz Raphael, *Nach dem Boom. Perspektiven auf die Zeitgeschichte seit 1970* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008); Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, »Nach dem Boom. Brüche und Kontinuitäten der Industriemoderne seit 1970«, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 55:4 (2007), 559–581; Konrad H. Jarausch, »Verkannter Strukturwandel. Die siebziger Jahre als Vorgeschichte der Probleme der Gegenwart«, in *Das Ende der Zuversicht. Die siebziger Jahre als Geschichte*, edited by Konrad H. Jarausch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 9–26.

21 Jean J. H. Fourastié, *Les Trente Glorieuses ou la révolution invisible de 1946 à 1975* (Paris: Fayard, 1979); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century 1914–1991* (London: Michael Joseph, 1994).

22 Sonja Levsen, »Einführung: Die 1970er Jahre in Westeuropa—*un dialogue manqué*«, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 42:2 (2016), 213–242.

23 The 20th century in Europe as an »urban century«: Leif Jerram, *Streetlife. The Untold History of Europe's Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). For Italy, see Francesco Barbagallo, *L'Italia repubblicana. Dallo sviluppo alle riforme mancate*

This is remarkable and even surprising given the fact that both the Italian and West German societies had become thoroughly urbanized societies by the late sixties. Furthermore, the scholarly discovery of the »modern city«, of industrialization and urbanization as a relevant historical subject was actually—and not by chance—taking place exactly when the debate about an »urban crisis« was at its pivot, around 1970.<sup>24</sup> Last but not least, urban his-

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(1945–2008) (Rome: Carocci, 2009); Guido Crainz, *Il paese mancato. Dal miracolo economico agli anni Ottanta* (Rome: Donzelli, 2003); Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics, 1943–1988* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990); *L'Italia repubblicana nella crisi degli anni settanta*, 4 voll. (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2003); Silvio Lanaro, *Storia dell'Italia repubblicana. L'economia, la politica, la cultura, la società dal dopoguerra agli anni '90* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1992); Aurelio Lepre, *Storia della prima Repubblica. L'Italia dal 1943 al 2003* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2004 [1993]). For West Germany, see, among others, Andreas Rödter, *Die Geschichte der Bundesrepublik 1969–1990* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2004); Edgar Wolfrum, *Die glückliche Demokratie: Geschichte der Bundesrepublik von ihren Anfängen bis in die Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2006); Eckart Conze, *Die Suche nach Sicherheit: eine Geschichte der Bundesrepublik von 1949 bis in die Gegenwart* (Munich: Siedler, 2009). See also urban historians' claims for the relevance of cities in the general history of postwar Europe: Sergio Pace, »Through the Looking-Glass. Research on the Italian City in Historical Perspective«, in *Italian Cityscapes. Culture and Urban Change in Contemporary Italy*, edited by Robert Lumley and John Foot (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004), 15–28; Simon Gunn, »European Urbanities since 1945: A Commentary«, *Contemporary European History*, 24:4 (2015), 617–622. For an interpretation of West German history as urban history, see Dieter Schott, »Die Geschichte der Bundesrepublik als Stadtgeschichte erzählen«, in *Mehr als eine Erzählung. Zeitgeschichtliche Perspektiven auf die Bundesrepublik*, edited by Frank Bajohr et al. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2016), 159–174.

- <sup>24</sup> In the UK the emergence of a »modern urban history« started in the late sixties with H. J. Dyos in Leicester who developed urban history within a framework of economic and social history, see Roey Sweet, »Urban History«, in: *Making History*, [http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/urban\\_history.html](http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/urban_history.html) (last accessed 30/09/2016). See also H. J. Dyos (ed.), *The Study of Urban History* (London: Arnold, 1968). In Germany urban history appeared on the scholarly scene of the German Historians Convention in 1970 with a first session on the modern city; in the same year the journal *Informationen zur modernen Stadtgeschichte* was founded; see Dieter Schott, »Stadt in der Geschichtswissenschaft«, in *Stadt. Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch*, edited by Harald Mieg and Christoph Heyl (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2013), 120–147; Jürgen Reulecke, »Bundesrepublik Deutschland«, in *Moderne Stadtgeschichtsforschung in Europa, USA und Japan. Ein Handbuch*, edited by Christian Engeli and Horst Matzerath (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1989), 21–36; for an insider's and actor's perspective: Wolfgang Hofmann, »Es begann mit Stein«, in *Bürgerschaftliche Repräsentanz und kommunale Daseinsvorsorge*, edited by Wolfgang Hofmann (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2012), 363–410. In Italy it was the mid-seventies that saw major steps forward in the study of modern cities, including the launch of the multidisciplinary journal *Storia urbana* (1977) and the publication of the collective book: Alberto Caracciolo (ed.), *Dalla città preindus-*

torians so far have not considered the seventies as an era of transformation and change in and of itself. Friedrich Lenger in his comprehensive history of European metropolises since 1850 mentions the seventies as a structural caesura but without discussing its particular impact and meaning from the perspective of urban history.<sup>25</sup> Simon Gunn, however, argues that in the decades after 1970 the ideas about »modernity« as a paradigm dominant among urban experts and politicians between the thirties and the seventies »came under selective attack from preservationists, activists and others. [...] One might therefore think of European cities in the 1970s and 1980s as laboratories for new kinds of social and political experimentation, of technocratic intervention, communitarianism and neo-liberalism, developed outside the precepts of the modern.«<sup>26</sup>

## »Parallel Histories«? The Comparison between Italy and West Germany

This volume tackles some of these questions considering Western Europe in a bi-national perspective, discussing changing ideas on urbanism, urban space, urban politics and society in the seventies. The comparison between Italy and Germany in contemporary history has a long tradition and has produced a considerable amount of research with a clear focus on topics like »belated« nation building, the history of fascism and national socialism or cultures of memory and politics of history in the postwar era. The »master narrative« in this kind of comparison tends to be »parallel history« between the two countries.<sup>27</sup> The seventies, however, up to now have not attracted

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*triale alla città del capitalismo* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1975), regarded as »a milestone in urban history«. Salvatore Adorno, »La città degli storici: un percorso«, in »Le città italiane nell'Ottocento«, edited by Salvatore Adorno and Filippo De Pieri, *Contemporanea*, 2 (2007), 291–296, here 292. Leonardo Benevolo's masterpiece *Storia della città* was also first published in 1975 (Rome and Bari: Laterza); Benevolo himself was involved in the urbanistic debates of the seventies—see the contribution by Jost Ulshöfer in this volume.

25 Friedrich Lenger, *Metropolen der Moderne. Eine europäische Stadtgeschichte seit 1850* (Munich: Beck, 2013), 478.

26 Gunn, »European Urbanities«, 622.

27 Just to give a few recent examples: Maurizio Bach and Stefan Breuer, *Faschismus als Bewegung und Regime. Italien und Deutschland im Vergleich* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für



much attention and urban history and cities are completely missing.<sup>28</sup> If we look at the dominant themes of the national historiographies of Italy and Germany on the seventies, we can also observe a structural asymmetry. For Italy, these are social movements, political violence and the »historical compromise« between Christian Democrats and Communists and its failure; for West Germany, the crisis and eventual failure of the Social Democratic attempt to reform society and the change to a more pragmatic style of government, focused on economic efficiency and performance are dominant themes as well as the still important East-West relations.<sup>29</sup>

From the point of view of urban history, it seems obvious that the model of »parallel history« does not work very well. Although Italy and West Germany were both highly urbanized countries in the period under scrutiny here, some important differences regarding patterns and chronology of urbanization can be highlighted.<sup>30</sup> The Federal Republic, as part of the Central and Western European region that had experienced massive urbanization linked to industrialization from the mid-nineteenth and well into the mid-twentieth century, saw this long phase of sustained expansion (interrupted by the two World Wars) coming slowly to a halt as early as the sixties when demographic stagnation or even decline started to become visible in

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Sozialwissenschaften, 2010); Christoph Cornelißen, Lutz Klinkhammer and Wolfgang Schwentker, eds., *Erinnerungskulturen. Deutschland, Italien und Japan seit 1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer 2003); Hans Woller, »Italien und Deutschland nach 1945. Vom schwierigen Geschäft des Vergleichs«, in *Parallele Geschichte? Italien und Deutschland 1945–2000*, edited by Gian Enrico Rusconi and Hans Woller (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2006), 27–33.

28 Exceptions to the rule are Donatella Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State. A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Christoph Cornelißen, Brunello Mantelli and Petra Terhoeven, eds., *Il decennio rosso. Contestazione sociale e conflitto politico in Germania e in Italia negli anni Sessanta e Settanta* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2012); Thomas Großbölting, Massimiliano Livi and Carlo Spagnolo, eds., *Jenseits der Moderne? Die siebziger Jahre als Gegenstand der deutschen und italienischen Geschichtswissenschaft* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2014), Italian edition: *L'avvio della società liquida: il passaggio degli anni settanta come tema per la storiografia tedesca e italiana* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2014); Petra Terhoeven, *Deutscher Herbst in Europa: Der Linksterrorismus als transnationales Phänomen* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2016).

29 See e.g. the works cited in footnote 23.

30 Peter Clark, *European Cities and Towns, 400–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 223–253; Guy Burgel, *La ville contemporaine après 1945* (Paris: Seuil, 2003), 33–85; Paul M. Hohenberg and Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe, 1000–1994* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1995), 331–378.

several large and medium-sized cities as a result of a range of factors including industrial restructuring and the incipient urban manufacturing crisis, increased private mobility, changing lifestyles and the preference for ex-urban and peri-urban locations resulting in pervasive suburbanization. By contrast, in Italy, a relative latecomer to modern urbanization, urban growth fuelled by internal migration became particularly intense in the fifties and sixties—the years of the »boom« when the transition to a fully industrialized economy was completed. Actually, urban development during the postwar period took rather different forms in the countries examined due, among other things, to the greater extent of war destruction suffered by German cities, to the unequal degree of conservation of the historic fabric in the wake of nineteenth- and twentieth-century urban renewal, to the uneven effectiveness of planning and regulation, and to the importance of informal urban expansion in the Italian context. Nonetheless, in Italy it was only in the seventies that urban growth began to run out of steam; major cities—such as Milan, Turin and Naples—started to lose population, or saw much smaller increases than before, as was the case for Rome. It was the onset of »a vast and unexpected movement of territorial deconcentration« that was caused by industrial decentralization linked to the crisis of Fordism and by the spread of infrastructures and services beyond the main urban areas and the most advanced regions. Furthermore, these processes were due to problems affecting most cities in the aftermath of the great postwar expansion: lack of affordable housing and high living costs, congestion, insufficient public services and the increasingly poor quality of the urban environment.<sup>31</sup> The outcome was a shift in growth from urban cores to surrounding metropolitan areas, the increasing urbanization of the countryside, the expansion of provincial towns and their merging with nearby centers into wider urban systems. Similar dynamics occurred in most of the industrialized Western world and were accompanied by concerned contemporary debates on »counterurbanization«.<sup>32</sup> However, while in West Germany these processes had already started in the

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31 Giuseppe Dematteis, »Le trasformazioni territoriali e ambientali«, in *Storia dell'Italia repubblicana*, vol. 2.1, *La trasformazione dell'Italia: sviluppo e squilibri. Politica, economia, società*, edited by Francesco Barbagallo et al. (Turin: Einaudi, 1995), 659–709, quote from 675.

32 Brian J.L. Berry (ed.), *Urbanization and Counter-urbanization* (Beverly Hills and London: Sage, 1976); Anthony G. Champion (ed.), *Counterurbanization: The Changing Pace and Nature of Population Deconcentration* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989).

sixties, in Italy it was rather the seventies that marked a turning point—the beginning of a longer-term change in urbanization patterns.

If one looks at the local level, differences between the two countries also seem to prevail. In a comparative analysis of processes and practices of political communication in cities in postwar Italy and West Germany, for example, it has been stressed how urban topography and space influenced and molded political debates and conflicts in rather different ways in both post-dictatorial states due to different political and social traditions as well as material conditions. In Italy, political strife and competition were brought out preferably in public space, in the form of direct confrontation in the *piazza*. In West German cities, in contrast, antagonistic political communication was deliberately kept out of the public space and was characterized much more by avoiding open conflict, while, because of the confrontation with East Germany, communists, unlike in Italy, were widely banned from local politics. When young protesters, willing to break the established codes of conduct for political communication, entered the urban arena from 1968 on, they entered two different settings and confronted two different ways of relating politics to urban space. This situation deeply influenced the appearance of social movements and the dynamics of urban struggles in the seventies.<sup>33</sup> It is particularly in the sphere of urban movements, however, where important transnational interrelations and international connections have been highlighted beyond all national peculiarities.<sup>34</sup>

Lutz Raphael, in his contribution to this volume, proposes a different way of comparing Italy to the Federal Republic of Germany, stressing commonalities and convergences rather than differences. Drawing on the thesis about the »structural rupture« since the early seventies which he developed together with Anselm Doering-Manteuffel<sup>35</sup>, he situates the urban conflicts and debates in and about Italian and German cities in a wider context of long-term social, economic and political processes, also beyond the seventies, where he sees basic parallels between West Germany and Italy. In many regards such as mass consumption, welfare spending but also social struc-

33 Claudia Christiane Gatzka, »Die Nachkriegsstadt als Ort politischer Kommunikation. Überlegungen am Beispiel Westdeutschlands und Italiens 1945–1968«, *Informationen zur modernen Stadtgeschichte*, (2016), n° 2, 91–108.

34 See Bart van der Steen, »Die internationalen Verbindungen der Hausbesetzerbewegungen in den 70er und 80er Jahren«, in *Deutsche Zeitgeschichte—transnational*, edited by Alexander Gallus, Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015), 203–220.

35 See, among others, Doering-Manteuffel and Raphael, *Nach dem Boom*.

tures, e.g. family relations, Raphael notes long-term trends towards homogenization between the two countries. Thus, by 1990—he concludes—Italy was clearly less strikingly different from Germany than in 1960. Even in fields such as the distribution of power within the political system there is a notable trend towards multilevel governance with the regionalization of the early seventies in Italy, giving access to power also for the Communist Party on the regional (and local) level. What is remarkable from an urban history perspective are, among others, the parallels in terms of economic structure of clusters of industrial enterprises of different sizes and scales organized in networks of flexible production which became dominant in southern Germany as well as in »Third Italy« and generated comparable spatial structures of »semi-urbanized spaces, mixing industrial parks, housing areas and commercial surfaces.«<sup>36</sup> Migration provides a further link between West Germany and Italy, generating comparable social structures in both societies on an urban level as well as initiating transfers of social experiences and forms of struggle.

It is evident that the bi-national comparison results in a rather complex picture of contrasts and common traits as well as influences, interdependence and mutual relationships, depending on the perspective and the issues at stake. The history of European cities of the last decades, which in large part is yet to be written, can benefit from a comparative approach which goes beyond self-referential single case studies and reductive visions closed in the frame of national history. The comparison between Italy and Germany, which can already build on some traditions, is a valuable alternative to a narrow concept of »Western Europe« which is generally restricted to the »classical« triad of Britain, France and West Germany. Focusing on cities opens new dimensions to the debates about the »epochal character« of the seventies, while urban history can benefit from engaging in this agenda.

## Focal Points and Structure of the Volume

The present volume does not claim to give a panoramic view of Italian and West German urban history of the seventies: rather, it concentrates on some partly overlapping and closely interrelated central topics. Three focal points

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36 See Raphael's contribution in this volume.

have been chosen—urban politics, »the historic city«, and social movements. In all three fields the seventies marked a turning point, witnessed significant novelties, and/or saw ideas and programs that had been developed over the previous decades being translated into practice and given a concrete dimension.

The first section deals with »Urban Politics and Visions of the City« with a dominant focus on left-wing parties particularly for Italy. This focus is due to the fact that within the Left, in its broad understanding, a significant shift in perspective occurred around 1970 which gave the city and the urban sphere a new and much higher relevance. In classic Marxist ideology, the factory and the traditional struggle between workers and the bourgeoisie over wages and labor relations, as fought out in strikes and industrial action, had been considered the all-important site of conflict. Now the sphere of reproduction in Marxist terminology, the household and family as well as leisure gained new significance, and thus urban conflicts apart from and beyond the factory were considered to be as important as classical labor conflicts. On the other hand, within Neo-Marxism, after the failure of voluntarist hopes of an imminent revolution, personal wishes and desires acquired a new validity and—paralleling this »subjective turn«—the quality of the living environment became much more important than before. It was basically within the Left that these ideological and political reorientations took place, but the Left did in this period have a strong influence on public opinion and shaped general debates over the city and quality of life therein. Therefore it is a true and sincere reflection of contemporary problems if the papers in this volume focus apparently one-sidedly on the Left.

A second reason is that in Italy »red« administrations were voted into power during the seventies, opening new perspectives in the sphere of urban politics. After winning local elections in 1975 and 1976, the PCI had the chance to govern eight out of ten of the country's largest cities (Rome, Milan, Naples, Turin, Genoa, Venice, Bologna and Florence), several of them for the first time.<sup>37</sup> High hopes accompanied those victories in left-wing public opinion. The question how to exercise the newly won power posed itself urgently: communists and their allies developed programs and strategies aimed at tackling the manifold problems left by the extraordinary urban growth

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37 It should be remembered that in the same period, following the regional elections of June 1975, left-wing administrations came into office in key northern regions such as Lombardy, Piedmont and Liguria, which added themselves to the central regions already governed by the Left: Tuscany, Emilia Romagna, and Umbria.

of the previous decades and at using the urban arena for the general progress of society. Innovative policies were developed in some sectors: for instance, urban conservation and social housing in Bologna and cultural initiatives in Rome, as detailed in following chapters. Yet, despite some significant achievements, the overall experience of »red« administrations proved rather disappointing, since elements of continuity and co-management of power tended to prevail over expectations for renewal or radical change nurtured by supporters of the Left.

Contributions in this section deal with urban policies and the respective underlying notions of the city—they discuss changing visions of the political, social, cultural meaning of cities; efforts to use the means and instruments of architecture, urban planning and cultural politics in order to resolve deep social conflicts and inequalities as well as to foster social integration and realize an »urban utopia«; furthermore, contributions also consider the agency of neighborhoods, of local residents, and immigrants in their own dynamics and their sometimes paradoxical effects.

The second section »The Historic City between Protection and Reinvention« tackles the tensions between the deep changes that Italian and West German cities experienced in the wake of the processes of urbanization and urban renewal from the postwar period to the seventies, and the new policies of heritage protection fostered by newly emerging ideas of »old town« and »historic center«.<sup>38</sup> The focus here is on the specific value attributed to the pre-war, particularly the pre-industrial, city and on the dialectics between modernization and the conservation of urban identity.

The fifties and sixties witnessed major developments in the debate on urban heritage both on a national and an international level. Overcoming artificial distinctions between monuments and »ordinary« buildings, protection was claimed for entire portions of the city or whole towns of high historical value which heritage conservationists and planners suggested be seen and treated as complex unitary organisms. Building on this, the seventies brought a comprehensive reappraisal of the aesthetic and use values of the »old« town as a cherished and highly valued habitat, culminating in the European Architectural Heritage Year, 1975. A forerunner and vanguard in

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38 See, for an interdisciplinary survey on »urban heritage«: Heike Oevermann, Sybille Frank and Eszter Gantner (eds.), »Städtisches Erbe—Urban Heritage«, *Informationen zur modernen Stadtgeschichte* (2016), no. 1, 5–90.

this debate—indeed an international model in those years<sup>39</sup>—was Bologna. There the communist administration launched highly ambitious urban renewal schemes which were intended to preserve the old built fabric together with its traditional residents, especially low-income households, rather than proceeding via a comprehensive demolition of the old housing stock, as had been general practice within modernist-inspired redevelopment schemes in many European city centers over the previous decades.

Contributions in this section look at the emergence of new understandings of the historic city in this period and their cultural and political implications, as well as at planning debates and practices in selected cities—first and foremost Bologna—through case studies.

The third section »Contested Spaces and Social Movements« reconsiders the social movements of the seventies as particular urban phenomena. In both countries under scrutiny in this volume, the seventies stand out as a period of intense political activism developing in the wake of 1968 and at the same time reflecting the changing context of the twilight of the »Golden Age«. Italy, in particular—where the student revolt had been followed by the workers' »hot autumn« of 1969—experienced a longer and deeper cycle of social mobilization than any other European country over the whole decade.<sup>40</sup> A peak in this cycle was reached in 1977 with the explosion of youth protest known as *Movimento del '77*, which merged militancy and creativity, violence and irony in a unique blend that represented an international peculiarity and—as will be seen in the following chapters—attracted considerable attention from abroad.<sup>41</sup>

With the already mentioned re-discovery of the city as a strategic arena for conflicts about social reproduction, struggles about the use of urban spaces and resources acquired a new dominance. In numerous cities and neighborhoods across Italy and West Germany, activists, radical groups and voluntary associations sought alliances with local residents to oppose rede-

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39 See Max Jäggi, Roger Müller and Sil Schmid, *Red Bologna*, with an introduction by Donald Sassoon and photographs by Otmar Schmid, featuring an interview with Mayor Renato Zangheri (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1977); original edition: *Das rote Bologna. Kommunisten demokratisieren eine Stadt im kapitalistischen Westen* (Zurich: Verlagsgenossenschaft, 1976).

40 Robert Lumley, *States of Emergency: Cultures of Revolt in Italy from 1968 to 1978* (London and New York: Verso, 1990); Giovanni De Luna, *Le ragioni di un decennio, 1969–1979. Militanza, violenza, sconfitta, memoria* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2009).

41 Luca Falciola, *Il movimento del 1977 in Italia* (Rome: Carocci, 2015); *Mondo contemporaneo*, 1 (2014), special issue on the *Movimento del '77*.

velopment schemes and preserve traditional settlements, to fight for the right to housing, to defend living standards through self-reduction of utility rates, to have access to improved infrastructure and public services, and so on. These struggles saw new actors taking the stage, the diffusion of innovative practices and the re-emergence of revolutionary horizons, bringing about a wider reconfiguration of the political scene. A lasting legacy of the seventies in Germany, and to a considerable degree also in Italy, has been the formation of an »alternative milieu«, particularly in those large cities where fierce urban conflicts did take place and activists from new left groups succeeded in embedding themselves in the urban environment. The city has been both the site and the object of contention in this formation of an alternative milieu which contributed to changing the political culture for the following period in a decisive way.<sup>42</sup> Contributions in this section analyze some of the most significant social movements and conflicts of the seventies in their urban dimension through an array of approaches, ranging from the focus on local initiatives to the study of transnational transfers and recontextualization.

In the following, we briefly summarize the contributions to each section before moving on to some concluding remarks.

## Urban Politics and Visions of the City

The perception of the strategic role of cities for and within political programs changed significantly in the seventies, particularly in Italy. Francesco Bartolini traces how the Italian Communist Party (PCI) developed a new discourse on the city under the combined influences of Neo-Marxism and contemporary urban struggles. Cities became regarded as key sites of conflict as much as the factory, with the backdrop of the strategic realignment towards a broad alliance between working and middle classes, which the PCI pursued in the form of the »historic compromise«. Initially, Bologna played a major role in this reorientation, but it lost much of its shine when the PCI took over municipal leadership in several of the largest Italian cities and their different problem scenarios came to the fore. The initiatives of the PCI-led

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<sup>42</sup> See particularly Sven Reichardt and Detlef Siegfried, eds., *Das Alternative Milieu. Anti-bürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa, 1968–1983* (Hamburg: Wallstein, 2010).



administrations in these cities met only with partial success, and in reaction to the deepening economic crisis of the late seventies and the failure of the »historic compromise«, eventually the PCI had to readjust its view of the urban question.

In this context, Rome evolved into a crucial testing ground for the Communist Party. The *Estate Romana*, an innovative cultural festival launched in the summer of 1977, became one of the flagship projects of the Italian capital's »red administration«. Film screenings and other cultural events staged in the archaeological settings of the »Eternal City« served, for one, to try to overcome the antagonistic atmosphere of the »Years of Lead« and, on the other hand, to create a new kind of urban mass culture. Roberto Colozza shows that this initiative was a major influence in changing cultural policies in Italian cities and beyond, ushering a new emphasis on mass cultural events staged in evocative urban contexts. For the PCI this cultural policy—massively criticized by exponents of traditional culture as »ephemeral«—implied a significant opening towards the elements of a less authoritarian, more libertarian youth culture and paved the way for the advent of a new generation of leaders more in tune with youth movements and democratic principles.

What turned into another symbol of the urban policies of the Left in Rome was Corviale, an imposing social housing complex located in the western outskirts of the city. Vittorio Vidotto considers issues of architecture, built space and social life in his account of the planning process as well as the appropriation by inhabitants of this nearly one-kilometer-long building. He highlights the utopian aims of the involved architects, supported by the commissioning agency IACP, to create a new urbanity conceived as a radical alternative to the ubiquitous suburban sprawl of postwar Rome. Huge problems arose after residents started to move in due to an unfortunate coincidence of missing services, the inability of the IACP to manage the complex in an efficient way and a lack of political will to terminate the self-help activities of illegal occupants, which led to the »Gordian knot« which Corviale still presents itself as today. Nevertheless, a new identity has developed and most residents would oppose the slogan »Demolish Corviale« used by the political Right to denounce the alleged failure of the Left.

The chapter by Giovanni Cristina on Pilastro, a satellite neighborhood on the outskirts of Bologna, can be seen as a complement to both Vidotto's study on large social housing estates and Bartolini's analysis of the urban policy of the PCI. Focusing on the initiatives of a tenants' committee, Cristina shows how activists, most of them affiliated with the PCI, tried to develop

a grassroots movement to represent the essential interests of the new community. In a context of the new settlement's severe technical and planning disfunctionalities and a problematic inhabitant social structure, including many immigrant households from the *Mezzogiorno*, the committee established itself as the leading voice of the suburb, fending off attempts by far-left groups to mobilize the residents to more extreme actions. Remarkably, here PCI members and sympathizers acted on both sides of the conflict as representatives of tenants as well as members of Bologna's urban administration and housing agency. This chapter also indicates that, when seen from the outskirts, Bologna can tell quite a different story from the widely recognized »Bologna model« that is examined in the following section.

Issues of migration and a transnational perspective lie at the core of Grazia Prontera's contribution on the associational culture of Italian migrants in Munich of the early seventies, then the German city with the highest percentage of foreign immigrants. The city administration at first developed little initiative, but then established a consultative foreigners' council composed of the different migrant groups. Since the law for foreign residents interdicted the formation of political groups, Italians formed cultural associations which were de-facto political groups as well as regional associations in order to organize the social intercourse of migrants from the same regions of origin. On the whole, the associational culture of Italian migrants was more inward-oriented, trying to strengthen contact with home regions. In the seventies, however, the newly established regional administrations in Italy became active supporters of such ventures, and there were arenas, such as trade union activities and partly housing struggles, where migrant associations did interact with the German political and public sphere.

## The Historic City between Protection and Reinvention

The seventies saw a major transformation in the perception and significance of the »historic city« in both countries. Analyzing the German scene of monumental conservation, Gerhard Vinken reconstructs the trajectory of monumental conservation as an academic discipline as well as an administrative practice, going back to its first origins around 1900. Referring to social struggles linked with historic city districts of the late sixties and early seventies, Vinken shows how the original preoccupation of activists with preserv-

ing affordable living space was complemented by conservationist arguments, which led to more highly regulated legislation for dealing with historical built heritage. Experts in monumental conservation, however, continued in the mold of anti-modern thinking as it had developed in Germany in the first half of the twentieth century, insisting on the material substance and eventually even promoting the reconstruction of historic buildings no longer in existence without joining forces with urban planners.

In a complementary contribution to Vinken's, Guido Zucconi traces the ideological and political background of the »discovery« of the *centri storici* in Italy. Partly influenced by natural catastrophes which raised public awareness of the threat to the built environment and national heritage, a new and more comprehensive notion of »cultural heritage« was developed in the sixties which encompassed also artifacts of historical and not only of artistic value. Italy was clearly path-breaking with this new notion of *bene culturale* which was adopted and turned into conservation legislation quite quickly in several other European countries. The experts' discourse on »historic centers«, emerging from the Gubbio Charter of 1960, opened itself under the impact of left-wing democratization and particularly the »Bologna model« to a new policy of public intervention for historic centers which, contrary to the ideas of certain anti-modern West German conservationists, included social considerations, particularly the prevention of gentrification. Thus, by the first half of the seventies—reacting to Bologna but also to parallel initiatives in other cities—the question of *centri storici* had become an important issue of national politics.

The following two papers deal with one of the most prominent cases of the (re-)discovery and renewal of »historic centers« in Europe—the »Bologna model« of the seventies. Harald Bodenschatz writes as a distanced scholarly observer and at the same time as an eyewitness and former activist. He had been among those young city planners who saw the »Bologna model« as the progressive future of urban planning policies and emphasizes the importance of Bologna for the 1975 European Architectural Heritage Year while stressing its political and social significance: in Bologna, the preservational urban renewal of the entire historic city transcended the hitherto limited conservationist approach, which had been restricted to buildings of outstanding artistic value. Furthermore, the city was now seen as a network of public services and residential modernization was conceived in a social perspective. Despite still noticeable enthusiasm about the courageous departures undertaken in Bologna, Bodenschatz also sees the downsides, particularly the defeat in the

issue of dispossession and the abandonment of Keynesian financial policies in favor of austerity which severely curtailed the room-of-maneuver of the PCI-led Bologna administration.

While many scholars like Bodenschatz emphasize the »Bologna model« as a break in politics regarding the historic city center, Jost Ulshöfer highlights essential elements of continuity in urban planning. He traces the influences towards change from Bologna's *Piano Regolatore Generale* of 1955, the Gubbio Charter of 1960 and the subsequent reevaluation of urban heritage, and finally, as an important political factor, the strategic reorientation of the PCI towards a reformist agenda including *rimodernizzazione urbanistica*. The PCI leadership tried to transform Bologna into a communist model city by the means of planning policies, propelled by the outstanding social mobilization of 1969, in which the claim for affordable housing had a high priority and by making use of new housing legislation. This strategy, however, met with fierce resistance among the frequently lower-middle-class rank and file of the Bologna PCI itself, who massively opposed dispossessions of houses and land in the *centro storico*. Ulshöfer makes the important point that Bologna's *Piano di Edilizia Economica e Popolare* of 1973 was an attempt to deal with a long-standing contradiction in the debate over *centri storici*: how to save the stones and the men?

With her contribution, Melania Nucifora adds further insights to the relevance of the local arena for different trajectories of urban heritage protection policies by presenting two case studies from Southern Italy, a region that, until recently, has remained relatively under-researched within contemporary urban history. She sees the seventies as a turning point when the ambitious plans born out of a largely functionalist planning approach in the sixties were challenged by new environmental concerns and new sensibilities towards cultural heritage. Nucifora shows how, despite the identical legal and general planning framework, the two Sicilian cities under consideration, Catania and Syracuse, took quite different trajectories due to the role of local politicians and experts as well as such factors as the social structure of the respective PCI-membership and the significance of the local construction industry. Furthermore, for the case of Syracuse she confirms the eminent role of Bologna as a model.