Urbanism and Heritage: working within the private residential stock in contemporary Italy

Owning a house – whether it be an apartment in a “modern” urban condo, or a family-house in the città diffusa – has been a key element in the construction of Italy’s post-war middle-class. Today, in the light of demographic transition, environmental developments, labour market and real estate issues, the immense housing heritage owned by Italian families is undergoing a radical redefinition in meaning, use and value. This impacts the role of architecture and urban planning. The new scenario no longer implies demand for additional spaces, but rather for the reorganization of an abundant and onerous built heritage.

In this perspective, the seminar elucidates – first – questions about the possible evolution in the relationship between population, territory and built stock in Italy, with particular reference to changes in social stratification. This will provide a framework for defining possible policy and design strategies aimed at the transformative management of the existing residential assets. Strategies on which, I believe, we will have to work with increasing intensity in the coming years.

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