Rethinking the neighborhood: security and social inclusion in an urban space. A case study in San Lorenzo, Rome.

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This paper aims to discuss if, and how, the pandemic reality could be an opportunity to rethink social function of space, in order to manage, or even prevent the risk, the insecurity and the criminality. During the past year, typical metropolis' characteristics (Borja, Castells; Giddens; Sassen) have become a critical issue in the light of the virus expansion and the effects have been suffered, in particular, by those districts usually distinguished for nightlife. Our point of view is the neighborhood of San Lorenzo, in Rome, a place of multiple identities, that that has been object of an uncontrolled studentification process. The pandemic has determined a drastic change. This analysis is focused in particular over the area of via dei Lucani, protagonist of one of the most relevant housing projects ever realized in San Lorenzo. At the same time, it represents an issue about urban security, since 2018 – when have taken place there a tragic episode ended with a girl's death. This fact put this area at the center of conflicts that have seen opposed the instances of the left parties and movement, historically embedded in the area, and a request of security policies made by the right and extreme right parties. So, this space has become an important case study to analyze the way actors imagine different possibilities of alternative spatial and social constructions (Wright; Harvey; Santos). Is the pandemic situation the opportunity to combine such different instances?

In this paper the qualitative methods have been integrated with the visual approach: in particular, the video-photographic exploration covered places of public and social living in the neighborhood and was accompanied by qualitative video-interviews with privileged witnesses. By participating in regular observations, the authors have gained an insightful view of the local communities and the authorities' response regarding ongoing restrictions and opportunities.

Keywords: urban security, risk governance, spatial construction, pandemic reality, real utopias.