

‘After Gomorrah’: Building a Mindful view of the Peripheral with the Northern Outskirts of Naples as an Example

‘Dopo Gomorra’: costruire uno sguardo consapevole ‘sul periferico’ con l’esempio di Napoli nord

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Abstract

With the proliferation of studies on and local programmes of urban regeneration on the one hand and the stereotypes and stigmatisation of peripheries on the other hand, a more comprehensive understanding of urban peripheries is needed today, when urbanisation is proceeding at a dizzying pace. Focusing on the northern peripheries of Naples, this article discusses the ways in which we can renew our understanding of urban peripheries by posing two views of ‘the peripheral’: a view from the city, which entails a valorisation of the knowledge, know-how and issues related to what is commonly known as urban regeneration, and a view from the periphery, where suburban ways of living raise emerging complexities and peripheral conditions that push towards a reconceptualisation of urban peripheral neighbourhoods. The peripheral area of Scampia was adopted as a research ground for reflecting on this reconceptualisation. In this respect, the northern urban peripheries of Naples were adopted as a case in reflecting on what lies at the urban-sub-urban intersection, and the conceptual observation was extended from the famed Scampia to the urban outskirts, which are currently undergoing uneven social fragilisation as they have been left behind in the regeneration processes of places such as Scampia.

La proliferazione di studi e programmi di rigenerazione urbana su scala locale, ma anche gli stereotipi e le stigmatizzazioni che caratterizzano le periferie, inducono verso il bisogno di definire una comprensione analitica più profonda di cosa oggi è rappresentato con il termine “periferia urbana”, in un’epoca in cui il processo di urbanizzazione procede incessante. Con un approfondimento sulle periferie di Napoli nord, l’articolo discute le modalità con cui è possibile ridefinire l’oggetto “periferia urbana” attraverso una duplice osservazione: uno sguardo “dalla città”, che prende in considerazione la valorizzazione della conoscenza, delle competenze e delle questioni chiave radicate nel tema che è comunemente noto come rigenerazione urbana, ed uno sguardo “dalla periferia”, dove le modalità di vita tipicamente sub-urbane sollevano complessità e condizioni periferiche emergenti che spingono verso una ri-concettualizzazione del quartiere urbano periferico. L’area periferica di Scampia viene adottata come campo di ricerca da cui far partire alcune riflessioni per questo esercizio di ri-concettualizzazione. In tal senso, l’articolo utilizza l’esempio delle periferie a nord di Napoli per una riflessione all’intersezione tra l’urbano e il suburbano, estendendo l’osservazione dalla ben nota Scampia al suo intorno, coinvolto in disordinati processi di fragilità sociali, in quanto lasciati indietro dai processi di rigenerazione che interessano luoghi come Scampia.

Keywords

Urban periphery, Suburbs, Urban Regeneration, Metropolitan Areas, Naples

Periferie urbane, suburbia, rigenerazione urbana, aree metropolitane, Napoli

An iconic demolition

On July 1, 2020, the demolition of the *Vela Verde* ('Green Vela') in Scampia on the periphery of Naples was completed. The *Vele di Scampia* ('Sails of Scampia') was a housing project built in 1962–1975 (under the 1962 National Law on Public Housing) at the northern periphery of Naples. The block of buildings got its name from the buildings' triangular shape reminiscent of a sail (*vela*), and the project was a quintessential example of rationalist architecture, typical of many European high-rise urban peripheries. The project originally consisted of seven buildings, which were supposed to provide a dwelling to approximately 40,000–70,000 households (Ghirardo 2013). Three of these buildings, however, have been demolished over the years, and as mentioned earlier, the smaller *Vela Verde* was also recently demolished. Today, the three remaining buildings mirror the degradation, decline and impoverishment that occurred in numerous urban peripheries across Europe until the end of the 20th century. In particular, the *Vele di Scampia* has turned into an iconic representation of an urban periphery ravaged by the Camorra (a criminal organisation based in Naples; see Behan 2002), as recounted in 'After Gomorrah', the famed TV series based on Roberto Saviano's novel inspired by true events. Over the past three decades, stigmatisations and stereotypes of Scampia and Naples as being under the control of the Camorra have weighed on such areas. *Le Vele* has also been said to be one of the largest sociological, urban planning and architectonic mistakes of the post-earthquake reconstruction of Naples (Catalano et al. 2004).¹ However, the most recent demolition was part of a wider process of urban revitalisation and was welcomed by many grassroots local communities as the watershed towards a new beginning, which could benefit from the intervention of the municipal administration thanks to the project 'Re-Start Scampia'.² Nonetheless, the history of Scampia and the Neapolitan peripheries is too complex to completely trace in a single paper as it involves the presence of the Camorra and the collective efforts of

¹ In 1980, the *Irpinia* earthquake widely damaged parts of the historical centre of Naples. As a consequence, a massive construction of residential buildings in the peripheries (including Scampia) took place.

² The urban regeneration project 'Re-Start Scampia': <https://www.coesionenapoli.it/patto-per-napoli/progetti/restart-scampia/>; <https://www.comune.napoli.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/36161>

diverse public institutions to address a chronic vulnerability, two issues that strongly characterise the area.

In this paper, the recent demolition of the uncomfortably famed *Vela* serves as a springboard for discussing the contemporary urban peripheries, particularly how we see these at present, when there is increasingly complex planetary urbanisation (Brenner 2014), even in the global suburbs (Keil 2017a). Across Europe, peripheral neighbourhoods like Scampia have been (and still are) places of marginalisation, poverty, inequality and segregation (Wacquant 1993; Hohenberg and Lees 1995; Musterd 2005; Mingione 2008). In the 2000s, a new trend of post-Fordist local regeneration was triggered, even encouraged by the European Union. Today, *urban regeneration* is a keyword that describes, inter alia, the proliferation of grassroots activities and inter-institutional area-based projects in many European peripheries. Massive post-suburbanisation processes involving a non-centric population, spatial expansion and economic growth (Ekers et al. 2012; Hamel and Keil 2015) suggest, however, that the global urban peripheries are changing. In this view, suburbs are considered pivotal places providing information about the contemporary urban regions and peripheries (Hanlon and Vicino 2018; De Vidovich 2019) and pushing for further observations of peripheral neighbourhoods 'from the urban outside in' (Keil 2017a). Thus, Naples is a meaningful observatory as it has experienced and is still experiencing manifold urban transformations, although simultaneously facing many forms of social exclusion (Amaturo 2004; Morlicchio and Morniroli 2013; Morlicchio and Pratschke 2004) especially among the urban peripheries, such as Scampia.

On the basis of *Vela Verde's* demolition, this paper attempts to outline a perspective capable of integrating multifaceted features, from how people connotate and talk about peripheries (Harris and Vorms 2017) to the increasing attention given to urban regeneration over the past two decades. Through an observation moving from Scampia to the outside, the paper seeks to answer the following research questions: How do we conceptualise urban peripheries at the current time of massive suburbanisation (see Güney et al. 2019)? How can we adequately frame and observe urban peripheries at the current time of vibrant regeneration within cities, and conversely, of the emerging peripheral conditions at the edges of cities?

To answer the aforementioned research questions, the paper provides a commentary based on the existing literature about the target area, and benefits from some reflections from qualitative fieldworks conducted within the period from December 2018 to May 2019. Thus, the paper should not be seen as the outcome of a qualitative case study or as a research paper as it is not grounded on a specific method but relies on a combination of literature review and some research reflections. The paper seeks to build a coherent and conceptually robust theoretical commentary on the topic 'the peripheral', which has gained peculiar relevance over the past three decades.

The discussion begins with the changes that occurred in the urban neighbourhood of Scampia and proceeds to the ill-explored issues in the neighbouring northern suburbs. In particular, by adopting the northern peripheries of Naples as an example, the paper expresses that a mindful and comprehensive understanding of the contemporary 'peripheral' entails two views: a view from the city, which sees urban peripheries and the relevant regeneration as a 'very urban' issue that seems limited to the municipal boundaries, and a view from the periphery, which embraces the 'suburban complexities' lying behind the contemporary socio-spatial peripheralisation occurring at the urban edges. The tension between these two views shows that 'the peripheral' has to be seen from a wider perspective to resolve the long-standing debate on urban regeneration involving places such as Scampia, and also that there is a need to reflect on 'suburbanisms', suburban ways of living (Keil 2017a, 2017b), as central themes in the redefinition of peripheral conditions, which drive the attention from the peripheral urban neighbourhoods to the suburbs and urban outskirts. In this framework, the neighbourhood of Scampia exemplifies both the geographical and analytical centrality of an urban periphery as it constantly produces narrations and discourses that legitimise such centrality and that also call for a further understanding of such. Simultaneously, the paper contributes to the scholarship on Italian post-suburban studies (De Vidovich 2020) by succinctly drawing from a literature review on the topic. As mentioned earlier, this article should not be seen as a qualitative case study as it merely integrates different forms of knowledge about the investigated area to advance a theoretical and conceptual reflection about the periphery and also to posit further research questions on such research topic. From this perspective, the paper serves as a commentary on the periphery, and aims at being a useful theoretical tool for further empirical investigation rather than at being a research article per se. Therefore, the Neapolitan context serves as a meaningful example to steer novel perspectives on the peripheral.

To achieve the aforementioned theoretical goal, the paper is organised as follows. Firstly, it briefly describes the urban region of Naples to provide a reasonable understanding of the whole area and the northern edges. Secondly, making Scampia take centre stage, the paper proposes the aforementioned two conceptual views on 'the peripheral': a view from the city, referring to the vibrant regeneration occurring within the urban core, and a view from the periphery, developed through an observation of the settlements beyond Naples, which uncover emerging vulnerabilities and 'peripherality'. Thirdly, the paper concludes with a final outline towards a redrawing of peripheries, by discussing the 'substantial' use of the concept in the studies on the contemporary urban regions. The two theoretical views' proposal and the concluding remarks involve some of the outcomes of qualitative research, although no specific mention of these is made in the paper. Considering the paper's aim, a discussion combining perti-

ment literature on the theme and the researcher's knowledge of the area is preferable. In this respect, the paper aims at nurturing the debate on urban peripheries in general terms. Naples is focused on to set the stage for such.

Locating the northern periphery of Naples

On the basis of the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) concept of 'functional urban area', the urban region of Naples can be considered a polycentric system (Calafati and Mazzoni 2017) inhabited by 3.4 million people.³ From the political and administrative viewpoint, the functional urban area accounts for 116 municipalities (see also Calafati 2016) composed of the urban core and several 'suburban constellations' (Keil 2013), resulting in a wider area compared to the institutional 'Metropolitan City of Naples' (which includes 92 municipalities), as also confirmed by many investigations (Calafati and Mazzoni 2017). Although this categorisation helps identify the boundaries of the 'city de facto' (Calafati and Veneri 2013), it does not shed light on the socio-spatial features of an area affected by a very low per capita GDP and a high unemployment rate (Calafati 2016).

The phase of industrialisation that has characterised Naples and its neighbouring area since the early 1900s is associated with a relentless urbanisation process (Rea 2002; Parisi 2017). Naples indeed experienced significant urban expansion particularly led by the decentralisation of industrial plants and the relevant modernisation of road infrastructures.

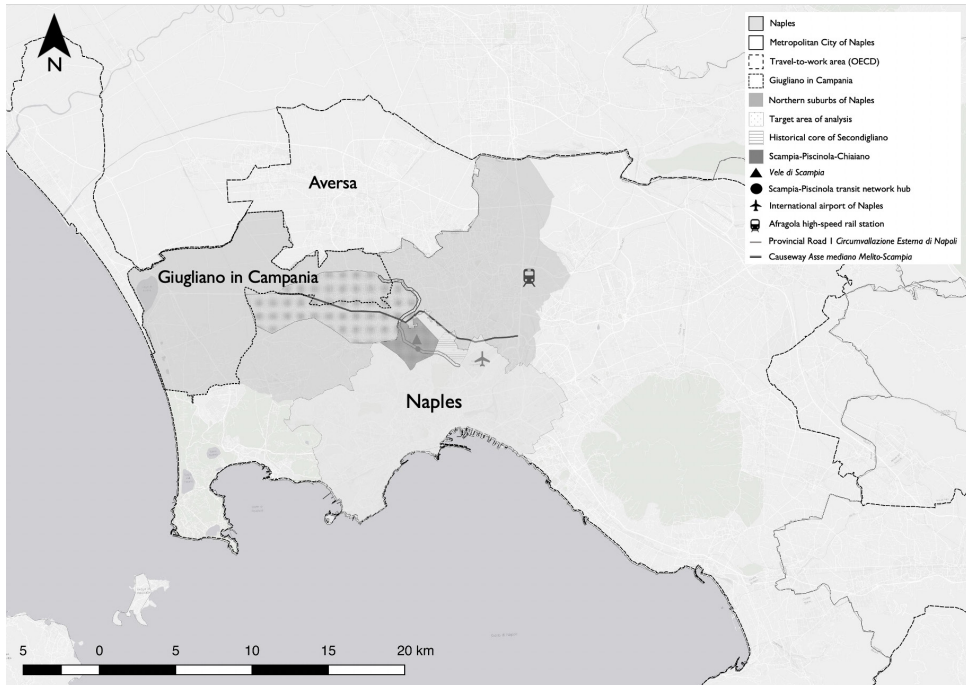
On the research groundwork, Naples has recently been described as an 'urban kaleidoscope' (Laino 2017b), to be observed from an emancipatory standpoint influenced by three typical dynamics (Laino 2016, 2017b): territorial and socioeconomic disordered 's-regulation' (see Donolo 2001), fragmented differentiation between settlements and collective-resilience-raised coping with the long-standing socioeconomic imbalance. The concept of 's-regulation' refers to the distortion typical of a complex rule system affected by the presence of organised crime, and it is crucial to acknowledge the importance of combining unlawful and informal powers in the territorial (especially residential) transformation of the area (De Leo 2018).

The urban region of Naples is also defined as a 'metropolitan ecosystem' (Di Gennaro 2014) that emerged from a rural-urban interplay, where the hinterlands had been increasingly urbanised (see Brenner 2016). It is safe to say that Naples expanded through extended urbanisation (Monte-Mor 2014) where land was available to build on as Vesuvius to the east/southeast and the 'bradyseismic' area of the Phlagraean Fields to

³ Eurostat data (2020): https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=urb_lpop1&andlang=en

the west impede a massive sprawl of the city, although urbanisation also moved across all Neapolitan hinterlands in unauthorised ways. The northern edges of Naples, however, are anything but desolate lands. The historical settlements can be traced back to the nucleus of Secondigliano from the 1950s, surrounded by agricultural lands. Neighbourhoods such as Scampia, Piscinola, Chiaiano and Don Guanella were built after the 1980s earthquake, by densifying an area shaped by small nuclei until the second postwar period, from which the Camorra began to build its empire. Today, Secondigliano

Figure 1- Conceptual map of the northern peripheries of Naples



Source: author elaboration.

and its neighbouring districts are identified as the northern peripheries of the city and also among the poorest neighbourhoods (Morlicchio and Pratschke 2004).

However, as urbanisation proceeded, the towns bordering these neighbourhoods equally saw massive urbanisation. Urban expansion involved a constellation of suburbs from the northern infrastructural axis beyond the international airport, such as the towns of Afragola (home of the recently built high-speed rail station designed by Zaha Hadid), Caivano and Casoria to the northwestern settlements of an area locally known as Comprensorio Giuglianese. This area largely falls under the municipality of

Giugliano in Campania, an 'edge city' (Garreau 1991) with 123,839 inhabitants, whose historical nucleus is about 7 kilometres northwest of Scampia. The large majority of the northern edges of Naples are affected by deficit development and by the dirty business of illegal waste management run by the Camorra (Mastellone et al. 2009; D'Amato et al. 2015). Nonetheless, this illicit waste management situation coexists with many innovative productive networks and micro-businesses belonging to the industrial tradition of the agro-food and textile sectors (Calafati 2017; Laino 2017a). In this landscape of intense productivity, the population of numerous towns began to increase during the 'great transformation' (Di Gennaro 2014) that occurred from the 1960s to the 2010s. At that time, land exploitation highly altered the area: the fertile lands left increasing room for diverse residential forms, from self-led typologies to public housing estates and large condominiums (known as *parchi urbani*). This pattern enabled the peripheral urban in-between (Sieverts 2003, 2011) to be located at the northern outskirts of Naples. The in-betweenness corresponded to a conurbation that engulfed historical settlements such as Secondigliano and the high-rise districts of Scampia and Piscinola in a context crossed by numerous infrastructural networks (especially for mobility) and different residential typologies. The whole area, including these peripheral neighbourhoods and the neighbouring towns, is shown by the conceptual map in Fig. 1, which serves as a working tool to better understand the areas among different layers, boundaries and spatial features. Figure 1 indicates the northern edge towns (simply labelled 'northern suburbs of Naples'), two typologies of administrative boundaries (i.e. the perimeter of the OECD functional urban area and the boundaries of the Metropolitan City of Naples) and particularly the analysis area, on which the reflections for this paper were focused. This area corresponds to a group of towns between the city centre of Giugliano in Campania and the neighbourhood of Scampia (Melito di Napoli, Mugnano di Napoli, Villaricca, Calvizzano, Qualiano, Marano di Napoli). The conceptual map in Fig. 1 also enables the introduction of the further analytical steps. Firstly, the city is focused on to acknowledge the planning and governmental efforts made to regenerate several neighbourhoods of Naples, including Scampia. Secondly, the observation shifts to what is located outside the city, to discuss the relevance of the suburbanisms in studying the peripheral.

A view from the city: Naples and the urban regeneration

In the Mediterranean context, Naples is playing a leading role in the development of urban community-building practices (Laino 2018). Many contemporary urban transformations took place over the past three decades for the purpose of tackling social

exclusion (Vicari 2001; Dines 2002). These involved touristification (Cerreta et al. 2020; D'Antonio 2016), urban renewal of the historical city centre, post-industrial regenerations (Cento Bull 2005) and university-led innovation (Addie et al. 2018; De Falco 2019). In the city centre, a cultural melting pot is nurtured by the presence of many non-profit associations, philanthropic bank foundations and grassroots initiatives (Caponio 2010). Since the 1970s, for instance, the historically deprived central neighbourhood *Quartieri Spagnoli* has been the site of best practices in tackling poverty, school dropout and social exclusion (Stanco et al., 1994; Laino 2001), and in the 1990s, it also benefited from the European programme URBAN for the regeneration of public spaces (Nanetti 2001; De Vidovich 2017). Against this backdrop, Naples can be seen as a territory of 'emancipatory practices' that largely affected the configuration of bottom-up frameworks for facing the urban inequalities and deprivation in southern Italy (Laino 2010) as unlike the northern Italian regions, it has the peculiar problems of the South of Italy: unemployment, imbalance and underdevelopment (Nitti 1903; Donolo 2015). Scampia and the northern urban neighbourhoods of Naples are not immune to the proliferation of projects in the still-ongoing phase of urban revitalisation, as shown by the establishment of a nursing faculty in a recently built structure next to *Le Vele*, within the framework of 'Re-Start Scampia'. Furthermore, the presence of a composite social fabric organised in formal or less formal groups to improve the living conditions in the neighbourhood was already identified in the early 2000s (Berruti and Lepore 2008). However, the socioeconomic deprivations and the heavy presence of the Camorra make it difficult to implement any regeneration programme in Scampia. Alongside the joint efforts by manifold institutions (from the police to the judicial authority, from the local to the sublocal administrations, from civic anti-mafia committees and associations to the universities), diverse typically urban interventions (from street arts to new affordable housing) have steadily transformed Scampia. Today, these collective endeavours seem to have been strengthened by the programme 'Re-Start Scampia', which is eligible for a total funding of 56.9 million of Euros⁴ from three sources: the National Programme for the Urban Regeneration and Security of Peripheries,⁵ the national operational programme Metropolitan Cities 2014–2020 (*Pon Metro 2014-2020*)⁶ and the Development Pact for Naples (*Patto per lo Sviluppo della città di Napoli*) by the national Territorial Cohesion Agency (*Agenzia per la Coesione*

⁴ Financing of the regeneration programme 'Re-Start Scampia': <https://www.comune.napoli.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/36161>

⁵ *Programma straordinario per la riqualificazione urbana e la sicurezza delle periferie*: http://www.governo.it/sites/new.governo.it/files/Bando_periferie_urbane.pdf

⁶ 'Pon Metro 2014-2020' in Scampia: <https://www.comune.napoli.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/36961>

Territoriale). The demolition of the *Vela Verde* has been a milestone of this programme, and two more demolitions are planned and foreseen. A single building should be preserved, though, and converted into public housing (which is the primal use of the project), as a situation of housing informality had characterised *Le Vele* for decades.

On the basis of the foregoing, a view from the city entails a tangible interaction with urban regeneration as the main theme characterising the local interventions in the peripheries, even in places that have been stereotyped and stigmatised as being under the control of criminal organisations, which are coincidental with the poorest urban areas throughout Europe. In this view, urban peripheries are to be seen as places of 'possibility' (Società Studi Centro Storico 1986), from where local experiments steering empowerment and addressing social exclusion, poverty and inequalities can be executed.

A view from the periphery: disclosing suburbanisms

While in this paper the view from the city is largely based on a brief review of the literature about the contemporary transformation that Naples has experienced since the 1990s, the view 'from the periphery' or of the peripheral neighbourhood of Scampia is grounded on some reflections raised during the fieldwork activities, and was strengthened by some literature on the suburban realm. The paper engages with some recent investigations of Italian suburbanisms, intended as drivers of the (post)suburban contemporary transformations occurring in metropolitan peripheries and related to welfare provision, access to basic services such as water and a lack of metropolitan agenda that can include diverse suburbs from a socioeconomic and sociodemographic standpoint (De Vidovich 2020, 2021b) suburbs and urban fringes are pivotal places for understanding contemporary urban transformations because the majority of the world's urban population live in suburbs. Suburbanization (i.e. the process of combining the non-centric population, economic growth, and spatial expansion. The notion of *suburbanisms* was first adopted to describe the transformations of the 1950s American suburbs as an ecological phenomenon accompanied by social-psychological attributes implying a distinction based on 'neighbouring' (Fava 1956). Today, *suburbanism* is a quintessential notion for addressing and describing the multidimensional ways of living taking place in suburbs worldwide (Keil 2013, 2017a, 2017b; Walks 2013). As introduced with reference to Italy, recent case studies from Milan and Rome disclosed a sort of 'secondary role' played by suburbs in the metropolitan agendas (De Vidovich 2021b; De Vidovich and Bovo 2021) suburbs and urban fringes are pivotal places for understanding contemporary urban transformations because the majority of the world's urban population live in suburbs. Suburbanization (i.e. the process of combining the non-centric population, economic growth, and spatial expansion. As one of the largest

urban areas, Naples could also contribute to these findings by uncovering novel understandings of periphery as a concept.

As mentioned earlier, the outskirts of the urban region of Naples have turned into a polycentric system of cities under constant expansion, where the fragmented infrastructural development and land properties have weakened the ecologic and territorial systems. Although the concept of *suburb* hardly explains the hinterlands of major Italian cities (Indovina et al. 2009; Lanzani 2003, 2012), these areas represent places of 'suburban outcasts' as they play a 'secondary role' in the trend of contemporary urban transformation of cities even though they are carrying out a tangible function in the productivity of the whole urban region, largely thanks to the agro-food sector, but also by being interstitial places among the transit networks and connectivities for the whole area. Giugliano in Campania and its neighbouring municipalities (including Aversa to the north, in the province of Caserta) saw massive suburban expansion from the 1980s to the 2010s, during the second phase of the 'great transformation' of the Neapolitan metropolitan ecosystem (Di Gennaro 2014). However, Comprensorio Giuglianese began to be commonly considered a dormitory of Naples. As aforementioned, the area is also known for severe problems in waste management (with large-scale illicit garbage burials or with dump pyres; hence the label *Terra dei Fuochi* [Land of Fires]). As argued by Laino (2017b), when the serious pollution of the air, water and soil of the towns in the western provinces of Naples and Caserta came to the attention of the media, a disinformation campaign was launched by casting a negative light on the products of these towns (e.g. buffalo mozzarella). Such an issue and its echo on the media is an example of the manifold emerging inequalities clearly distinguishing the 'inner peripheries' of Scampia-Secondigliano from the 'outer peripheries', where the suburbanisms are affected by overlapping deficits. In short, automobile dependence, poor quality of public spaces, lack of public funding for social services provision (to address the diffused poverty) and youth unemployment⁷ are the main features shaping the suburbanisms in Comprensorio Giuglianese, with the harmful effects of waste management in the background. On the basis of this differentiation, one will wonder what the real existing peripheral condition of Scampia in the northern outskirts of Naples is. Figure 2 discloses the central position in the transit network system as Scampia is the terminus of two subway lines and is crossed by the causeway *Asse Mediano Melito-Scampia* connecting the international airport to the western suburban peripheries and the *Circumvallazione Esterna di Napoli* built on a road from World War II. Beyond rhetoric, Scampia may be seen as a hub in the suburban connectivity of

⁷ The census data (Istat 2011) on youth unemployment (ages 19–24) in Comprensorio Giuglianese went from 58% in Giugliano in Campania to 71.6% in Mugnano di Napoli.

northern Naples. A further divergence between suburbs and urban peripheral districts involves the reproduction of the encouraging practices that have occurred in Naples on the suburban scale of the northern peripheries. In this regard, the strictly urban regenerations that have reached Scampia do not cross the administrative boundaries of Naples in a tangible way. Simply put, the findings from Villaricca, a town of Comprensorio Giuglianese, reveal that these areas do not rely on the same vibrant social fabric that characterised the regeneration pathways among the urban neighbourhoods of Naples, including Scampia.

This section points out that the suburbanisms in Comprensorio Giuglianese provide novel insights into the peripheral conditions characterising the northern outskirts of Naples, and that such insights deserve further attention by both policymakers (although financial straits affect any policy implementation) and scholars.

'After Gomorrah': redrawing the northern periphery of Naples

For many years, the peripheral neighbourhood of Scampia captured people's attention both as the epicentre of organised crime and as a place of revitalisation processes epitomised by the demolition of the iconic *Vela Verde*. Further demolitions are foreseen, and one building should be preserved as a 'memory', and reconverted into a public housing. In this context, this paper highlights a twofold reflection about the complexities of observing urban peripheries at a time of post-suburbanisation and emerging suburbanisms (Keil 2017b). After locating the northern peripheries of Naples in a densified constellation of both peripheral neighbourhoods (e.g. Scampia, Secondigliano, Piscinola) and suburban settlements (identified with the towns of Comprensorio Giuglianese), the paper suggests two different points from which to view an urban periphery. A view from the periphery suggests that urban regeneration, fuelled by activism, grassroots initiatives and inter-institutional efforts, is the key theme driving both the social and spatial transformations of Scampia, after intervening in numerous areas of Naples. A view from the periphery, at the risk of being tautological, discloses the fragile conditions rising from overlapping deprivations at the urban in-between (Sieverts 2011; Young and Keil 2014), where the processes and experimentations that revitalised fragile areas in Naples are hardly reproduced, by sharply differentiating between the 'inner' and 'outer' peripheries at the northern outskirts of the Naples urban region. The two views advance a perspective on the area that could isolate the stereotypes, stigmas and deprivations that 'After Gomorrah' (the famed TV series) has made the area known for by many. The solutions for such weakness primarily fall on the shoulders of the local administrations, which navigate between economic shortages and diverse forms of poverty.

In other words, the combination of a view from the city and a view from the periphery (coincidental in this case with the peripheral conditions identified in many suburbs) moves towards a reconfiguration of the northern peripheries of Naples, which cannot be limited to the famed Scampia-Secondigliano but involves a larger area transcending administrative boundaries. In this respect, this paper stresses the widespread discrepancy between the political-administrative and functional organisations of territory that characterise major Italian cities (Calafati and Veneri 2013). This nurtured debate also shows how peripheral conditions are to be sought outside the boundaries of urban cores (Calafati 2017b). Calafati (2017b) maintains that a 'substantial' and 'non-ritualistic' use of the notion of *periphery* will lead to a focus on the 'pieces' composing the new metropolitan areas through extended residential settlements. Such an exercise engages with territories of uneven infrastructural networks embedding the conflicts between the urban cores and their 'outsides', with the aim of outlining a 'horizontal' understanding of metropolitan areas with spatial injustice and regional inequalities (Reynaud 1991; Hadjimichalis 2011; Calafati 2017b; Iammarino et al. 2019). Thus, the key message of this paper is that peripheries that are within the boundaries of the main city are objects of attention and public intervention while other territories outside such boundaries are somehow 'invisibilised'. As this statement should be further legitimated, this paper calls for further research engagements for corroborating or rebutting these emerging trends.

On the basis of this paper's limits and limited theoretical contents, we can now go back to the research questions and attempt to answer them. The questions are related to the conceptualisation of urban peripheries in the face of massive suburbanisation, especially with reference to the ways in which we can adequately frame urban peripheries given that there are tangible differences between cities and their outskirts, as exemplified by Naples. Moving from the example of the demolition of *Vela Verde*, the paper used the existing literature on the urban regeneration that had occurred within Naples on the one hand and on the post-suburban and suburban ways of living ('suburbanisms') on the other to formulate a theoretical framework where the traditional conceptualisation of urban periphery is at stake.

In the study of the social and cultural identities of urban spaces, an updated identification of 'the peripheral' at the current time of unabated suburbanisation is a necessary conceptual tool. To achieve this goal, the paper reflected on the rationale features that prioritise the regeneration of urban peripheral neighbourhoods, excluding suburban areas, which in turn epitomise the emerging conditions of peripheralities in the metropolitan context.

Using the northern Neapolitan peripheries as an example, this paper identified meaningful themes and key features that contribute to a reasonable and mindful un-

derstanding of (sub)urban peripheries, beyond stereotypes and the 'ritualistic' uses of the very concept of periphery. For this, the existing relevant literature was relied on, and the paper also benefitted from some timely findings from qualitative fieldworks, although no full reference to empirical activities is made in the paper. The paper thus describes the emerging conceptual knots around the significance and the real existing identification of peripheral conditions. Between urban regeneration projects that lack reasonable metropolitan frameworks (De Vidovich 2021a), the traditional meaning of *periphery* is at stake because it has to be identified in those places globally known as suburbs, which were originally far from being considered fragile and vulnerable but today have pockets of wealth and poverties (Hamel and Keil 2016) and many fragilities (as in the case of the northern suburbs of Naples). Novel conceptualisations of 'the peripheral' are disclosed in urban regions.

Today, *Le Vele* may be seen as a cornerstone of urban and suburban transformations not only in the urban planning field but also in cultural terms. It magnifies the legacy of rationalist architecture, which was largely inspired by Le Corbusier, and shows how the large building blocks have turned into places of concentration of poverty and vulnerability, and especially in northern Naples, of organised crime. It possesses a legacy because the present situation tells a story of urban regeneration, of massive peripheral changes, of a new awareness (both local and global) of the social ugliness brought about by the overwhelming presence of the Camorra, which has in turn been spectacularised by the famed TV series 'After Gomorrah'. For the popular culture, 'Gomorrah', which today represents an artistic product made from Roberto Saviano's pivotal novel, the subsequent movie by Matteo Garrone and finally the TV series, spread in several European and non-European countries. These three products differ from each other in terms of plot, but together, they led to a single outcome: a tangible attribution of a sort of 'centrality' to Scampia and *Le Vele*, which in turn led to a renovated understanding of what peripheries are and how such conceptualisation is changing. Beyond Scampia (i.e. beyond the municipal boundaries of Naples), there is a constellation of towns that, far from the reflectors oriented towards Scampia, are showing different forms of poverty and vulnerability. They have been left behind by the regeneration processes that initially involved the city centre, followed by the urban peripheries. Such a novel understating has been enabled by the pivotal, iconic role acquired by *Le Vele*, from where one can witness the peripheral changes in the surrounding neighbourhoods and municipalities today.

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