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

Cities Contested

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

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About the book

Historians discuss the 1970s as an era of deep transformations and even structural rupture in Western societies. This volume, for the first time engages in this debate from the perspective of comparative urban history. By evoking an alarming »urban crisis«, contemporaries referred to general unease and upheavals which became manifest in urban society and politics as well as in struggles in and about urban space, while ideas about the »city« and concepts of urban planning were being reconsidered. The contributions to this volume comprise a general discussion about the seventies as a »structural rupture« by comparing Italy and Western Germany, and a sample of case studies of Italian and West German cities, analyzing central issues of urban politics, urban renewal and heritage, urban protest and social movements in the city.

Vita

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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.[1] 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, especially 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?«[2] The weekly *Die Zeit* asked: »Are our cities dying?«[3], echoing Jane Jacobs' famous critique of modernist urban planning and urban renewal in the United States of the fifties.[4] 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«[5], 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[6]—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 concepts and ideas of distinctive European traditions of city and urbanity.[7] 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.[8] 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.[9] 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.[10] 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.[11] At the beginning of the decade, Rome, the capital, was seen as a symbol of the degradation and unlivability of the big cities.[12] 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«.[13] 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.[14] While planners, sociologists and political analysts discussed the origins of the »urban crisis« and its relationships to systems of governance and urban policies[15], 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 archetypical 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.[16]

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 ›postwar‹ 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.[17] 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.[18] 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.[19] 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, capitalist as well as socialist societies.[20] 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«.[21] 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.[22] 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.[23] 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.[24] Last but not least, urban historians 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.[25] 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.«[26]

»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.[27] The seventies, however, up to now have not attracted much attention and urban history and cities are completely missing.[28] 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.[29]

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.[30] 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 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.[31] 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«.[32] However, while in West Germany these processes had already started in the 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.[33] It is particularly in the sphere of urban movements, however, where important transnational interrelations and international connections have been highlighted beyond all national peculiarities.[34]

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[35], 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 structures, 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.«[36] 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 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.[37] 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 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«.[38] 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 this debate—indeed an international model in those years[39]—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.[40] 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.[41]

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 redevelopment 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.[42] 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 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 preserving 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.