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The INA Casa Watershed: Adalberto Libera and the Modelisation of the Collective

Davide Pisu 

University of Cagliari

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the impact of INA-Casa—the dominant Italian reconstruction plan that operated between 1949 and 1963—on Italian and international architectural debate. It focuses on the role of the so-called *manualetti*, a series of booklets that guided the designers of the INA-Casa programme. Published by the INA-Casa architecture office in 1949 and 1950 under the supervision of the rationalist architect Adalberto Libera, the booklets openly criticised rationalism and the international style in favour of a re-evaluation of vernacular and historical architectural characteristics. The article proposes a new reading of the second booklet, devoted to urban planning, analysing its structure and questioning its agency for the projects developed under the plan. It argues that its use of texts and images corresponds to the dichotomy between *rules* and *models*, as explored by Françoise Choay. The article delves into the notion of the *model* as the “imaginative tool” that makes urban planning possible, identifying the *manualetti* as *normative models*. It proposes that the influence of Libera’s models on Italian architecture has been overlooked and must be framed afresh within the broader historical debate on Italian “neorealism,” which, a few years later, would result in the “watershed” represented by early Italian postmodernism.

KEYWORDS

Normative models; Italian architecture; normativity

Introduction

This article aims to contribute to the discussion on the architectural model as a tool for change and its twofold agency for architectural design and debate. First, one can consider the model as a *descriptive* or *epistemic* device that describes a possible spatial arrangement or idea. In this sense, every design can be a model. Second, the agency of the model derives from its active nature in shaping the future. In this sense, the model is a *prescriptive* or *ruling* device that sets the terms in which the built environment must be conceived, thought of and modified to adapt to humans’ needs and desires. Models can be physical, scaled copies of an artefact, used to forecast actions or explain the desired state of facts, such as scale models of Nuragic complexes¹ or Brunelleschi’s dome for Santa Maria del Fiore. They can be buildings that later serve as a source of inspiration for other designs, such as the Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia in

Palestrina, inspiring Bramante's Belvedere in Vatican, or sets of rules, such as the Seagram Building served for New York's 1961 planning law.² Models can also consist of bidimensional representations of a spatial artefact—namely, drawings of buildings or parts thereof or urban layouts and fragments. This article addresses the latter case.

It describes some of the modalities by which architectural models unfold their prescriptive or descriptive agency by drawing upon the second *manuale* of the INA-Casa Plan. This booklet, the second in a series of four, was compiled in 1950s Italy under the supervision of the Italian rationalist architect Adalberto Libera, who at the time oversaw the *Ufficio Architettura* of the INA-Casa Plan. The INA-Casa Plan was the most ambitious reconstruction programme of post-war Italy. Established by the labour minister Amintore Fanfani as a means to create jobs for low skilled workers at the aftermath of World War Two, the plan ran from 1949 to 1963, leading to the development of about 20,000 new social housing complexes, 350,000 houses and 760,000 rooms, which together had a huge impact on Italian cities and landscape. For the programme, Libera's models acted as protagonists, not only driving the outputs of the plan throughout the Italian peninsula but also orienting the debate and the sensitivity of a whole generation of architects. They put into architectural form the ideological premises of the plan and advised participants to adhere to certain design requirements. This influence prompted the setting out of a precocious criticism of modernism by means of a dispersed and weak—yet pervasive—awareness of the Italian vernacular building tradition in the national architectural debate.

The importance of this research lies in the fact that models are usually overlooked in the policymaking process. Despite their effectiveness in orienting the efforts of a distributed and collective range of designers, engineers and builders, the role of the *manualetti* as regulatory instruments, with their rich figurative apparatuses, was neglected and forgotten. In fact, the third and fourth manuals, published in 1956, after the resignation of Libera, are almost entirely textual, largely abandoning the use of pictures.³ Nonetheless their normative approach has the potential to tackle normative *aporias* generated by indexes and quantities. Curiously, “urban standards” originated, for the Italian context, precisely in the turning point of those historical events.⁴ This paper, therefore, aims to bring to the forefront the implementation mechanisms of the manuals' recommendations, suggesting a renewed importance of models as regulative instruments as opposed to written norms, usually conceived as stern, synthetic and technical tools, external to the design process.⁵ Though subject to many studies, their normative agency has been questioned in depth only in the work of Patrizia Gabellini, who describes them as a “normative strategy.”⁶ Among other scholars who have focused on the manuals, Sergio Poretti addresses them as “quasi-norms,” and Bruno Reichlin mistakenly speaks of the “[b]ureaucratic [...] part of the ‘Fanfani Law’ addressing the Plan.”⁷

More recent research by David Escudero (earlier in this volume of *ATR*) analyses the manuals, arguing they were “permeated by the neorealist environment” and describing the mutual influences between them and the Italian architectural debate around the neorealist poetics.⁸ Escudero's work sheds new light on the paramount influence of the manuals on the crystallisation of a neorealist aesthetic, describing the INA-Casa experience as a “convergence” between architecture, cinema and literature.⁹

Interestingly, Escudero's work recognises the narrative strength of the manuals, arguing that their quality is comparable to that of a "manifesto" as they demonstrate the strong engagement of their author in the architectural debate, even with a declared normative purpose.¹⁰ Nonetheless, Escudero's analysis does not engage with the prescriptive implications of this process.

INA-Casa

Implementing the INA-Casa Plan was neither straightforward nor rapid. The leading role went to the Italian national insurance institute (Istituto Nazionale delle Assicurazioni, INA), a monopolistic life insurance operator founded in 1912 and from which the plan takes its name. In the delicate moment of the establishment of republican rule, the INA's role resulted above all in consensus building around the social-democratic ideas that would characterise subsequent decades.

The first elections of the newly constituted Italian Republic saw the victory of the popular Christian Democracy (*Democrazia Cristiana*, DC) party, with 48% of the vote, and the defeat of the Popular Democratic Front (*Fronte Democratico Popolare*), a left-wing alliance between the communist and socialist parties, led by Palmiro Togliatti and Pietro Nenni, respectively. A month later, in May 1948, the first democratically elected government was installed, after twenty years of fascism, with Alcide de Gasperi as prime minister. The role of minister of labour and social security was taken by Amintore Fanfani, a professor of economic history at the Catholic University of Milan and an advocate of fascist corporativism. After the war, at the end of which he found shelter in Switzerland, his proximity to the Milanese Catholic circle led Fanfani to become a prominent figure of the DC. The party played a dominant role in Italian politics for approximately fifty years, until the political scandals of the early 1990s condemned it to a sudden, nearly total disbandment.

The complex institutional layout of the INA-Casa Plan, derived from the consideration of many sensitivities and interests, emerged from different hypotheses developed by radically different personalities. Paolo Nicoloso describes the convoluted path that led to the plan's establishment.¹¹ The major actors involved would operate according to an initial scheme that envisaged an implementation committee (*comitato di attuazione*) to oversee the drafting of the building programme proper. INA would manage the fundraising and finances. The construction phase was variously overseen by the Istituto Nazionale per le Case degli Impiegati Statali (Institute for the Housing of State Employees, INCIS), the Istituto Autonomo Case Popolari (Institute for Social Housing, IACP), and the newly constituted *Gestione INA-Casa* (INA-Casa Management), an ad hoc management authority.¹² Authority over the management of the plan was ambiguously split between two stakeholders. On one side was the implementation committee, chaired by Filiberto Guala, an engineer with strong connections to Catholic circles, who reported to the ministry of labour and Fanfani. On the other was the *Gestione INA-Casa*, controlled by the president of the INA, Annetto Puggioni, one of the plan's authors. The plan was destined to last for two seven-year periods, a total of 14 years, until 1963.

The corporativist spirit at the basis of the plan, eloquently called *Piano per l'incremento dell'occupazione operaia, case per lavoratori*, or Plan for Increasing Workforce, Housing for Employees consigned the country to an artisanal, low-productivity mode of construction that hindered the surge of a modern building industry in Italy.¹³ Borrowing from Keynesianism the idea that state intervention in the economy was necessary and desirable, the plan sought to maintain social and economic order—comprising small, artisanal enterprises—by reinforcing the existing economic tissue rather than “disrupting” and renovating it by favouring alternative models for the building industry. Rather than addressing the problem of quality in the Italian built environment and urban development, the plan sought to respond to the political necessity to increase employment levels among labourers.¹⁴

The translation of the political spirit of the plan into architectural principles, given the need for a new aesthetic for the post-fascist era, was not an easy task. The technological approach was necessarily based on the traditional mode of building, with its extensive use of semi-finished products easily manageable on the part of one or two workmen, thus excluding large operations of prefabrication to maximise the workforce needed.¹⁵ The architectural language, the code of expression and the urban model were destined to follow, perhaps rhetorically, the same principles.

As director of the *Gestione INA-Casa*, Puggioni appointed Arnaldo Foschini, a professor and president of the Faculty of Architecture of Rome University. His designation was sternly criticised on account of both his alleged lack of experience in construction and his proximity to the fascist regime.¹⁶ To partially compensate, Foschini tapped one of his most brilliant former students to supervise the *Ufficio Architettura* of the plan: the former *enfant terrible* of Italian rationalism, Adalberto Libera. His role, as director of the office, was to address the architectural language of INA-Casa. He had to emphasise the necessity of turning the page of history with a renewed architectural expression and to bend this expression to the political agenda and sensitivity of the DC and Fanfani, as the plan's main political advocate.

Libera was one of the most promising architects of his time.¹⁷ Before the war, his work reflected the Italian aspiration for uncompromising modernism, to the point of characterising with his oeuvre—alongside other notable architects of his generation, like Giuseppe Terragni, Mario Ridolfi, Luigi Figini and Gino Pollini—the very idea that rationalism would become an inherent part of Italy's “collective imagery.”¹⁸ After the “[h]eroic season of the *ventennio*,” Libera found himself isolated in a “hostile world.”¹⁹ His works were irremediably underestimated and accused of “mannerism” by critics like Manfredo Tafuri, who considered them “untimely, on the brink between an aloof refinement and the ‘overly simple’.”²⁰ Libera's approach to architecture drastically changed during the war, when he directed his attention to housing policy and the relationship between architecture and society and worked on issues of prefabrication with Giò Ponti.²¹ It is thus possible to speak of two distinct “Liberas”: pre- and post-war.²² He nonetheless maintained a number of lines of research across these two “phases,” characterised by a rational commitment to control and proportion.²³

As the director of INA-Casa's *Ufficio Architettura*, Libera curated and published two manuals addressed to the architects willing to participate in the plan. The first was published in 1949 and focused on problems of domestic spaces and layout, illustrating

a series of abaci of design hypotheses for the INA-Casa houses. The second, published in 1950, was developed with the express intention to address issues of urban design, delving into problems of architectural language, settlement patterns and urban landscaping. In these pamphlets, Libera illustrated the formal and ideological premises of the plan, making open references to pre-modern architecture as a source of inspiration for the new housing projects.²⁴

The Second *Manualetto* of INA-Casa

Of the two manuals published by the INA-Casa architecture office during Libera's term, the second is particularly interesting for its strong rejection of rationalist principles, made clear both in words and drawings.²⁵ The manual is conceived in three parts: the first is a short preamble; the second is an extensive description and depiction of a series of principles around which the new settlements should be conceived and designed; and the third, a series of projects designed by the office.

The preamble of the *manualetto* claims that the “mission to pursue [is] to give a *just* direction to the development of urban complexes”—namely, to avoid any form of “over-crowding [...] in high-density settlements [...] which has proved harmful.” This emphasis on low density building is justified by the physical, moral and psychic health of the inhabitants. The preamble baldly states that the consequences of “over-crowding” are a “lack of healthy conditions, a surge in infectious diseases, increased morbidity and mortality, especially among children, high rates of pugnaciousness” and even a “high number of illegitimate births.”²⁶

In closing the preamble, two principles are recommended to circumvent such problems: to avoid high density in the new settlements; and to create “articulated, varied, wavy” compositions to obtain “cosy and relaxing” spaces, with diverse *veduta* on to “nice vegetation.” In this recommendation, it is easy to recognise the influence of “Scandinavian neo-empiricism” on the Italian architectural debate.²⁷ Each building should have its own physiognomy, and each inhabitant should find, “without difficulty,” their own house, in which they can feel their “personality *reflected*.”²⁸ Far from the “bureaucratic” language of which Reichlin accuses them,²⁹ the manuals offer a straightforward ideological declaration rejecting high-density and mass-produced architecture and celebrating the superior quality of pre-modern urban elevations over modernist aesthetics (fig. 1).

The second part of the manual is composed of 21 brief numbered statements of general considerations in determining a building site. The vague nature of these statements does not facilitate understanding of the spirit of the INA-Casa plan, nor do they mention any rigid formal concept. Instead, they introduce a series of possibilities that gradually transmit an idea of urban settlement that is varied in shape—with open references to the image of the medieval city—and immersed in nature. The images are interpretable only by those with a technical background, and the statements' lack of clarity results in the figurative apparatus alone constituting a code for the architects involved. The first recommendation can be considered paradigmatic of this approach.

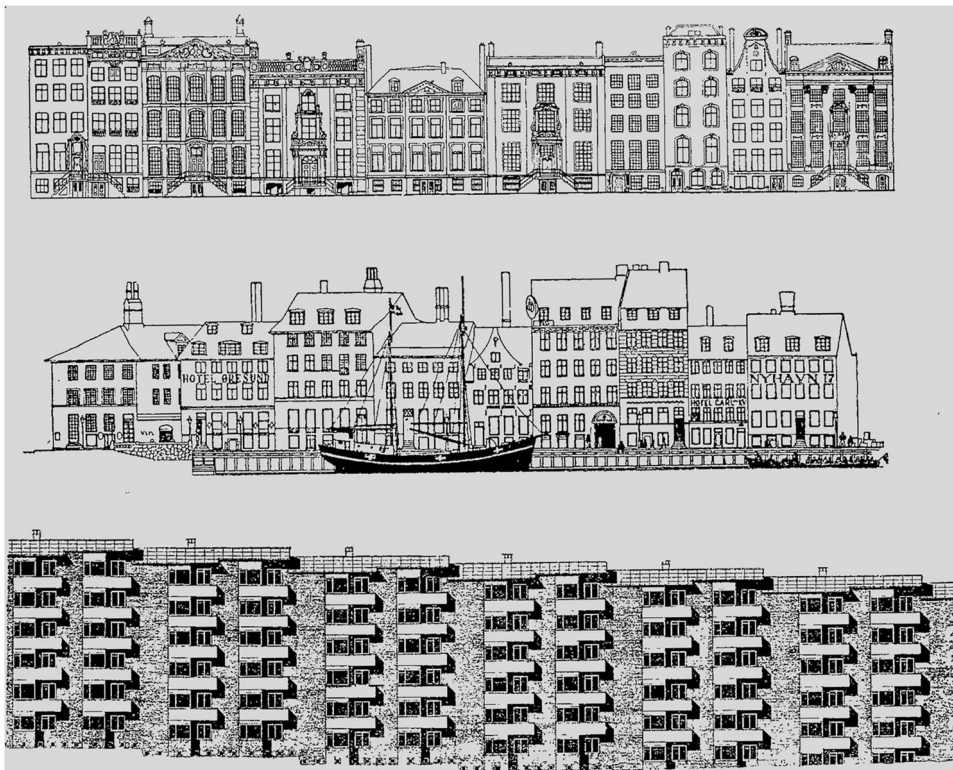


Figure 1. While the first two elevations—Amsterdam and Copenhagen—are described as “happily varied,” the third is regarded as “monotonous and almost obsessive.” from p. 12 of *Piano incremento occupazione operaia, case per lavoratori. Suggerimenti, Esempi e Norme per la progettazione Urbanistica. Progetti Tipo* (1950).

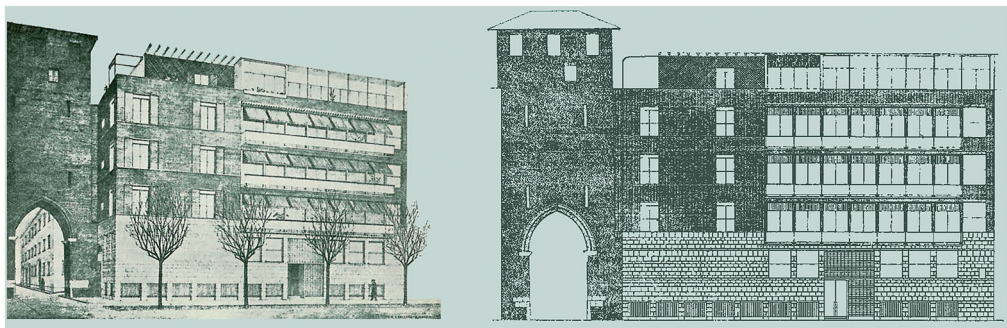


Figure 2. Giuseppe Vaccaro, *Casa in Piazza Malpighi*, Bologna, from pp. 10–11 of *Piano incremento occupazione operaia, case per lavoratori* (1950).

The great historical and artistic virtues of Italian towns and cities constitute the premises that must be taken into account in the design of new neighbourhoods, in view of a cautious adaptation of new buildings to the particularities of the environment, for which it is necessary to understand and sense the concern to avoid creating discontinuities and contrasts too vast and violent.³⁰

To illustrate this statement, a rendering, plan and elevation of Giuseppe Vaccaro's unbuilt *casa in piazza Malpighi* (fig. 2) in Bologna is shown. The house is located near the *torresotto* of *Porta Nuova*, a medieval construction that formed part of the city's defensive system. The building openly adheres to modernist geometric principles. It clearly links to the Italian rationalist experience, with its regular façade *parti* and the evident and consistent use of structural and technological solutions proper to modernism. However, it is impossible not to detect an intentional and subversive adherence to a pre-modern conception of architecture. The subdivision into three horizontal elements corresponds to the Albertian tripartition, with the use of a denser and *rustico* stone podium that becomes gradually lighter in the upper floors. The use of bricks furthermore establishes a material continuity with the city's building tradition. The transition from narrower to wider openings as the tower grows ever distant suggests a gradual shift from the heavy, massive history of Italian architecture as represented in the tower to a liberated and lighter rationalist architecture, while remaining respectful to the past. It is a continuity embodied in place of a rupture or crisis. The *manualetto* observes:

The formal adherence of the new building to the environment is here obtained by repeating, in the part that joins the antique medieval gate, two of its principal characters: the prevalence of walls over windows, and the red brick texture. Even the asymmetry of the building and the elements of the attic and roof tend to confer a character similar to that of the buildings of the square and district.³¹

This caption, describing Vaccaro's house, explains the relevance of the project with respect to the general recommendations. Somehow, the regular, rationalist *parti* on the right half of the building is not even mentioned, despite its clear visibility to any architect to whom the manual is addressed. The choice from the first pages already indicates a direction to those designers approaching the plan via the *manualetti*. Italy's diverse, stratified landscape and the Italian social scenario require that architects do not discard history. Somehow, without even questioning the ideological premises of modernism, they must delve into history, diversity and spontaneity to find a new paradigm. Participating in the plan, and in this historical turning point, required a new poetical sensitivity for a compromise between modernity and tradition.

In the manual, the problem of urban design and composition is addressed within this same ideological framework, offering up numerous pleas for variability, unexpectedness, and an intimate relationship with nature: "10. The building elements should be set out in order to arrange intimate architectural scenarios and to create pleasing perspective views, composing them with greenery and the lines of the landscape."³² And later: "14. The return to the use of colour, typical of Italian tradition, is always recommended, but particularly in the buildings that will arise outside of the urban settlements."³³

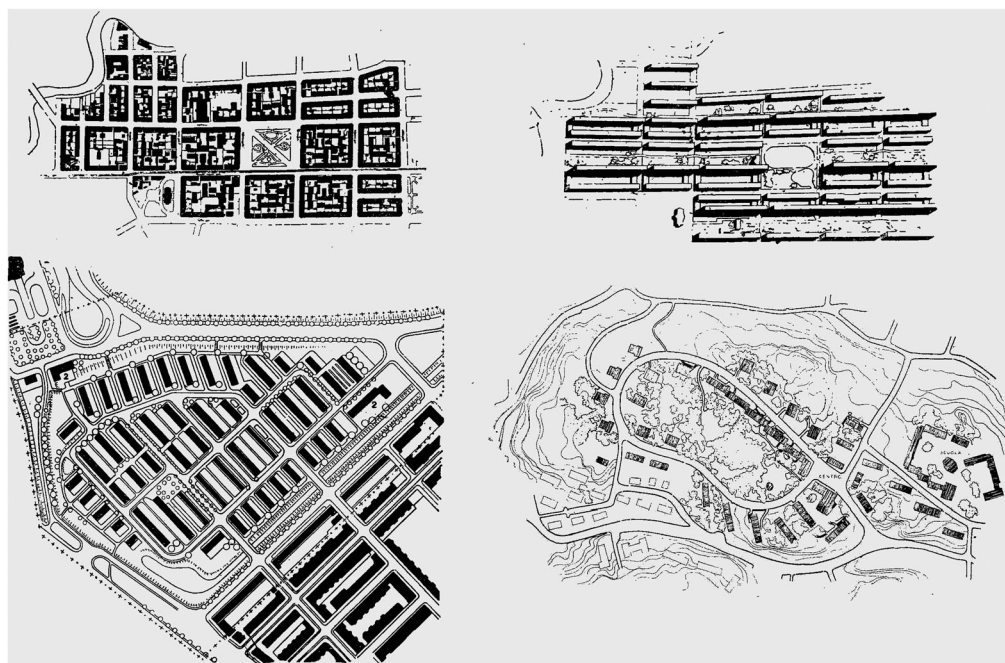


Figure 3. From bottom left, clockwise: the first three are described as negative examples, while the fourth is praised for its “nice local sights along the ring road.” From pp. 16–18 of *Piano incremento occupazione operaia* (1950).

This fragment suggests, especially through its illustrations, what should and should not be included in the layout of the new districts. There is a rejection of parallel successions of identical rows, and closed courtyards with narrow streets, in favour of open, varied compositions.³⁴ Spaces are determined by the juxtaposition of different blocks and are studied one to the next both for their functionality (intended as adherence to type) and expression in an urban setting. While posing as a rejection of “rational layouts,” this fragment promotes a new approach to urban landscaping. Although the genealogy of the formal attitude of the INA-Casa programme is often traced back to Scandinavian neo-empiricism, it nonetheless deals with problems specific to Italian cities, especially regarding historical architecture and landscaping, which, as an effect of this political attention, shift to the centre of an “implicit” debate to which Italian architects are invited to contribute with their designs (fig. 3).

The last part of the manual, then, is dedicated to a series of projects developed by the INA-Casa architecture office under Libera’s supervision. Once again, as with the second part, the drawings are central in understanding both the communicative aims of the manual and the spirit underlying the entire INA-Casa operation. Conversely, the textual apparatus tends to draw the attention of the reader to specific parts of the images, along the lines of the ideological framework within which the plan operates.

When it is necessary to separate children by gender, the living room offers sufficient space for two beds. It is evident that such an accommodation is not ideal, but it is, in

any case, a solution to which many families in need would aspire, given that they now reside in far worse conditions.³⁵

It is clear from this and similar statements that the “horizon of action” of the plan is strictly bound, both operatively and ideologically, to Italy’s “material reality.”³⁶ The same notion of the “standard” is challenged in the name of the actual conditions of the populations to which the housing is directed: social ties, economic tissue and cultural identity are all elements for which the urban scenario is a stage.

These were the ideas that came into my mind this evening, Good Friday, in a stroll through the Quartiere Tiburtino, which I had not seen in years. There were the workmen heading back with the newspaper in hand, the women making the last bits of shopping for the next day in the stores still lit up and in the dark alleys the candles of the stations of the *via crucis* were burning, arranged here and there along the whole district with the sheets, tablecloths and carpets of the wealthier worshippers and from one to the next, behind the cross and the priest, a herd of young ladies with torches, while unconcerned, alongside, the older boys were playing football or cleaning their bikes. There was life, in any case, in the district. For good or bad as it might be, it was living, at best, and the experience, therefore, seemed valid to me, notwithstanding the concerns and the disavowals, and the hatred, possibly, each of us has nurtured for it.³⁷

As Quaroni describes in his brilliant fiction, INA-Casa was intended as a conservative strategy for the context and way of life of Italian *towns*, more than it was for the neighbourhoods and peripheries of the cities.

Interestingly, Reichlin stresses the correspondence between the recommendations of the manuals and the Tiburtino district itself, the design of which was drafted between August 1950 and April 1952.³⁸ He wonders “if there might not have been one of the designers of the neighborhood behind the drafting of the law.”³⁹ As Nicoloso notes, Mario Ridolfi helped draft the manuals along with Giuseppe Vaccaro and Mario De Renzi.⁴⁰ At the same time, he actively contributed to the realisation of the Tiburtino. Along with the other senior Quaroni, he supervised the works for the construction of the district, coming to the younger designers’ rescue, “demolishing with the palm of his hand the poorly built walls.”⁴¹

In its final part, the manual goes on to describe possible principles for the aggregation of the basic cell, further detailing and depiction of the scenarios of the new districts and the internal arrangements of the houses—to the point of designing the plumbing of kitchens and bathrooms. However, the manual tends to define the general approach to the design rather than constrain it to a specific standard or rule (fig. 4). These points are described without binding designers to them. Instead, they serve as mere guidelines for the dispersed agency of Italian architects that can, starting from these recommendations, elaborate a response within their own designs.

Rules and Model

The second *manualletto*, although rich in deontic formulations—expressions such as *must*, *should*, *ought* and *is recommended/necessary*—lacks an inherent enforcement mechanism to compel the architects involved in the plan to adhere to its *déon* (from the Greek *δέον*, meaning “duty” or “obligation”) as a proper law would. Their

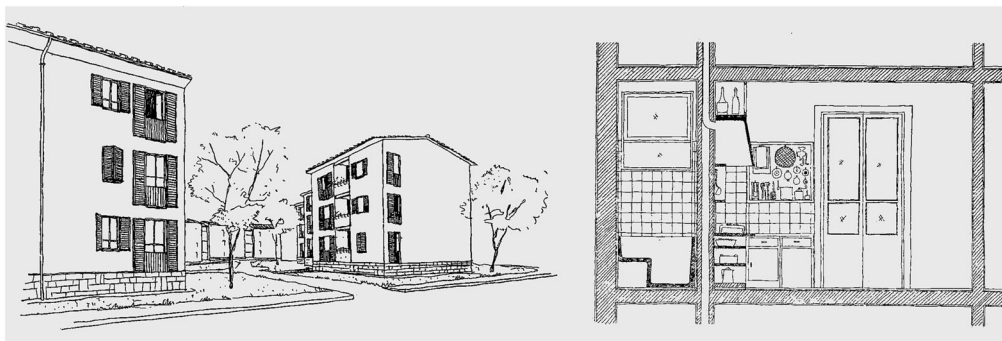


Figure 4. Urban scenario and detailed section of a kitchen and bathroom. From pp. 48–50 of *Piano incremento occupazione operaia, case per lavoratori* (1950).

normative strength, nonetheless, is unquestionable and derives from the mechanism of the competition on which the plan hinged.

The first competition, launched in October 1949 with a deadline of December 15, was destined to have great success among Italian designers. The 340 participants—203 architects and 137 engineers—were scrutinised by a commission of experts that included Giò Ponti and Giuseppe Samonà.⁴² According to Nicoloso, the first competition was deemed extremely fair and a huge success for the hopes of young Italian architects. Of the 191 selected projects, 157 were realised by architects, 113 of which were from the new generation of designers who graduated after 1941.

This first centralised competition was followed by a series of 31 competitions, both national and local, in 22 provinces. The *Gestione INA-Casa* considered this decentralisation to be unfavourable, as local administrations tended to be subject to corruption and political pressures.⁴³ Although not perfect, the instrument of the competition provided incentives to the designers involved to respect and endorse the rhetorical and moral manifesto of the manuals. It also allowed for modifications, improvements and even critiques within a low-density framework and established a dialectic between the three poles of the operation: the architecture office and the INA-Casa management structure as drafters of the manuals; the commission, with their oversight of the quality of the projects; and the designers, whose sensitivity and decentralised knowledge allowed for ample reception of the spirit of the plan (fig. 5).

The manuals apparently do not seek to impose their recommendations in a strictly regulatory fashion. While the norms stated are indeed compelling in their semantics, their pragmatics are somewhat questionable. Due to their generic and vague wording, the designers who had to respond to them were, to a certain extent, free to interpret the rules and apply them to their designs. Even supposing a rigorous interpretation of the principles stated in the manuals, the potential outputs—in terms of the design of the new districts—remain undetermined. More importantly, it is not possible to clearly separate the textual recommendations from the content of the images, which, in contrast, are extremely rich and whose interpretation is essential for the success of the normative corpus.

We thus face a paradox: a rule—or a system of rules, like the *manualetto*—without a binding force is ineffective and not a rule at all.⁴⁴ This consideration raises a question regarding the ontology of the statements and pictures contained in the *manualetto*.

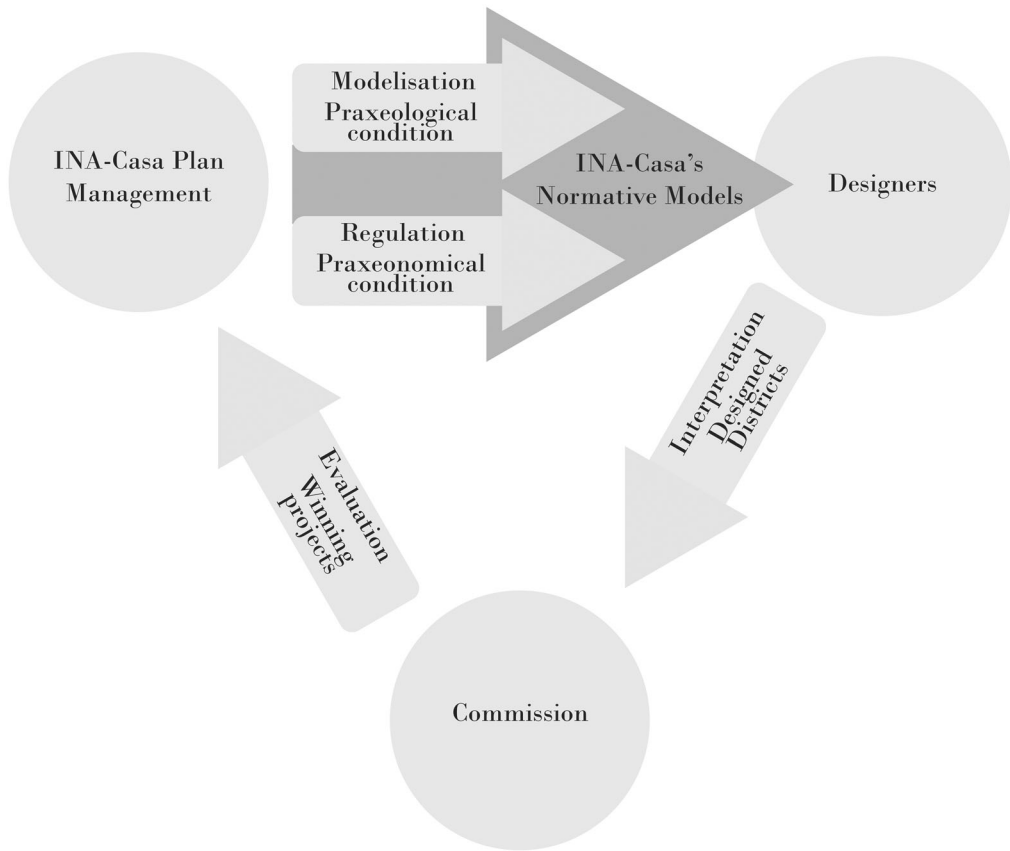


Figure 5. Scheme of the tripolar agency of the INA-Casa competitions (author).

What are the statements, drawings and images that have such a clear normative aim, if not rules? As banal as it may sound, with its form being so familiar to any practitioner—the form of the manual, from the *Neufert* to any pattern book from the fourteenth century onwards⁴⁵—the question pertains to the *nature* of the *manualeto* itself.

While a descriptive statement can be valued based on truth, which denotes an adherence to reality, this cannot be done for rules. Rules are neither true nor false, but according to the Italian philosopher Norberto Bobbio, they can be valued for their *justice*, *validity* and *effectiveness*. The German philosopher Hans Kelsen, though, argues that when one aligns their behaviour with the norm what operates is not the norm itself but the representation of the norm that one creates.⁴⁶ From this perspective, *effectiveness* is not a feature of the norm but rather a behaviour *with regard to* it. While norms do not operate directly upon the INA-Casa housing designs, they produce a representation which is then implemented in the designs. The *manualeto*'s statements are not enforced by a sanction. Failing to return “to the use of the colour” does not entail any trial; the nature of the recommendations is not *normative*. Instead, these rules must be seen as *cognitive* instruments. Cognitive and normative, as the Italian philosopher of law Giampaolo M. Azzoni notes, is one of the forms of the *great division*

between *Is* and *Ought*—*Sein* and *Sollen*, *Essere* and *Dover Essere*—discussed by David Hume and others.⁴⁷

This theme, and its implications, resonates in Choay's work. According to the French urban-historian and philosopher, the foundation of architecture and urban planning as a discipline was made possible by two distinct texts.⁴⁸ Acting separately and complementarily, they established a framework by which a discipline explicitly devoted to the development of techniques and knowledge for the organisation of built space could arise and affirm its necessity and desirability in the following centuries. The first text to which she refers is the treatise by Leon Battista Alberti, *De re aedificatoria*, which relies on the enunciation of textual recommendations, making his ten books a catalogue of *rules*. The other work to which Choay refers is Thomas More's *Utopia*, published in 1516. Alberti's treatise deals extensively with practice and history of architecture; in contrast, *Utopia* does not engage solely with built space, but instead focuses on society and its institutions.

Choay affirms that the *instauration* (from the Greek *σταυρός*, meaning “foundation”) of *models* as instruments for architecture happened with *Utopia*, which signed with an “indelible mark” the urban theories that would follow in subsequent centuries. In this sense, More's *Utopia* shares two distinct features common to all works of urban planning: a critical approach to the state of facts, and the spatial modelisation of a future reality. Models, in Choay's views, constitute a radical criticism of existing society in relation to space, making possible the idea of a deep, radical and rational rearticulation of the built environment as, simultaneously, a mean and a simulacrum of a righteous society.⁴⁹ While such models as those that can be found in *Utopia* do not have an explicitly prescriptive content—it can be said they do not have a *syntactic* normativity (i.e., they are not presented in the form *should*, *ought* or *must*)—they have a *pragmatic* normativity. Their prescriptive content is praxeological, meaning that its normativity operates “under the condition” that an agent is pursuing a given aim.

When More, in Book II, describes the island, he must convince the reader that the island exists. He must create the illusion of a “visual experience” of the island.⁵⁰ When creating this illusion it is possible to separate two overlapping images: the first is the image of a place, which Choay defines as “portrait” that pertains to a specific milieu with its identity and unrepeatable traits. The second image, in contrast, shows “a definite system of cultural norms” deriving from a “human ordering act” and accounts of *Utopia*'s reproducible characters. This latter image, distinctly separated from the former throughout Raphaël's depiction in Book II, corresponds to the *model*.

The components of the *manualetto*'s normativity can thus be differentiated into two systems. The first is a syntactically normative system, containing the textual recommendations, general and abstract, without a binding force but backed by the expectations of the competition.⁵¹ The second consists of a pragmatically normative system, which has the sole purpose of creating a “visual experience” of the new districts, such that designers must introject, criticise, and use it as a condition of their own INA-Casa plans. These two systems are bound together by what Choay's describes as the *model* and which is inherent in the *manualetto*'s images and texts, namely, a series of reproducible characters, referred to a “definite system of cultural norms.” Without the model's epistemic framework—which, in contrast, does not have normative

implications—the norms would be ineffective, given the absence of the *ideological* premise of the manuals. The manuals are a unique combination of explicitly normative and epistemic functions, making them *normative models*.⁵² The INA-Casa manuals concur with the creation of a cognitive background by which the normative action of the manuals could be effective, allowing for rationalism to be “overcome,” and lay the basis for the evolution of architectural debate.

The INA-Casa manuals’ epistemic dimension corresponds to what can be perceived as a response to the need for “ethical clarification” after twenty years of fascism. In this sense, the *Ufficio Architettura* was a mere seismograph, materialising the collective need for a “new moral life” and a “new way to see and feel reality.”⁵³ This agenda, whether pursued knowingly or unknowingly, would result, throughout the two seven-year periods in which the plan was enacted, in the involvement of a whole generation of architects. Of the 17,000 architects and engineers active in this period, about a third participated in at least one project. The youngest generation of Italian architects would, in particular, be nurtured through the plan’s ideological framework. Saverio Muratori, Giuseppe Vaccaro, Ettore Sottsass and Giancarlo De Carlo, to name a few, all developed designs for INA-Casa districts.

Carlo Aymonino and Ernesto Nathan Rogers, both involved in the plan, would become protagonists in the debate on Italian postmodernism. While the former is known for his large architectural and theoretical production, centred on typology and the modern city, Rogers was the director of *Domus* (1946–47)—which was founded in 1928 by Ponti—and of *Casabella* (1953–65). Under Rogers’ guidance, *Casabella* was renamed *Casabella-continuità*, expressing the necessity of “continuity” with the past of Italy’s architectural tradition. Its clear voice in the debate is represented by the well-known quarrel between Rogers’s *Casabella-continuità* and the missives written by Reyner Banham in the pages of the *Architectural Review*. This exchange is ironically, in retrospect, a significant watershed in the history of Italian architecture. While the direction taken by this debate is not fully attributable to the agency of the *manualetti*,⁵⁴ it is evident nonetheless that the cultural upheaval that would result in the rise of the so-called neoliberty, and later in Italian postmodernism, would not have had the same vigour without the plan and its normative background. Every architect involved in the programme—approximately a third of the 17,000 architects and engineers active in Italy at the time—was led to study, develop and implement a programme of research and design hinged on low-density, spontaneous, bespoke and aleatory variations for which the reference was, overtly, vernacular and pre-modern architecture.⁵⁵

The manuals, the competitions, the development of the INA-Casa new districts and their publications in leading Italian journals led the architectural intellectual milieu to interiorise the ideological premises of the plan in the Italian agenda. After 1956, Rogers’ *Casabella-continuità* drastically changed its course. De Carlo left the magazine, and Vittorio Gregotti, who would many years later become its director, was appointed editor-in-chief, bringing a series of influential thinkers into the editing staff, such as Giulio Carlo Argan, Gae Aulenti and Quaroni. Their activity, both in terms of research and practice, became crucial in the development of a cultural grounding for Italian postmodernism, conditioning Italian architectural debate. In *Casabella-continuità* in 1957, Vittorio Gregotti introduced, in an article entitled “L’impegno della tradizione,”

the work of two young Turinese architects, Aimaro Isola and Roberto Gabetti.⁵⁶ Gregotti described their work in glowing terms, highlighting their attention to the local building tradition and their fascination with historical forms, which would later be described by Banham as “neoliberty.”⁵⁷ Two years later, from the *Architectural Review*, Reyner Banham harshly condemned *Casabella’s* editorial policy: “It is the promise of liberty, not Liberty or ‘Neoliberty,’ the promise of freedom from having to wear the discarded clothes of previous cultures, even if those previous cultures have the air of *tempi felici*.”⁵⁸ Banham’s reprimand references what he identifies as an open retreat from the “watershed” of modernism in favour of a *borghese* attitude of Milanese and Turinese architects.

What Banham called the “Italian retreat” had deeper roots. Italian architecture had to cope with the fall of fascism and seek a radically different formal dimension explicated through a collective effort that went beyond architecture to involve literature, cinema and poetry.⁵⁹ Its counterpart was the neorealist “movement” or, more simply, a “neorealist” sensitivity. Its foci were the spontaneous, the vernacular and the naive, and an inclination towards the collective, the common and the popular.⁶⁰ These foci would later be supported, in the architectural debate, by the theoretical contributions of thinkers such as Aldo Rossi, Manfredo Tafuri and Paolo Portoghesi, originating the *Tendenza* and those strains of Italian postmodernism of great influence elsewhere.

Conclusion

The INA-Casa manuals constitute an important episode for Italian architectural history, but their role as normative tools, and their broader effect on the history of architecture, has been overlooked. The plan, which during the last century suffered a fluctuating reputation,⁶¹ hinged on a series of points rooted in normative models, an effective combination of ideological considerations referring to a definite system of cultural norms and a series of depictions that materialise these norms but are subject to the interpretation of the designers. Their pragmatic normativity, backed by the mechanism of the competition, allows for a certain degree of flexibility that was vital for the success of the plan. The normative models of INA-Casa allowed for the translation of the “collective” manifestation of Italian post-war architecture throughout the Italian peninsula. As Bernardo Secchi wrote, the Fanfani plan represents the last time in which “a political project, a specific economic policy and a number of urban and architectural projects succeed [...] in being consistent and coherent in relation to one another.”⁶²

Despite the strong ideological character of the plan, which hinged on the political and formal dimensions described, the outcomes of the plan were fairly diversified and demonstrated a certain persistent nature of the rationalist’s sensitivity among Italian designers. The Tiburtino district, drafted even before the manuals were laid out, more than bears the signs of Libera’s work and represents a sort of manifesto of the new poetics to the point that Reichlin described them as exemplary for their neorealist approach to architecture. Similarly, a series of developments were designed by Libera, like the Garden City in Via Pessina in Cagliari, based on a type of three floors of isolated blocks immersed in a succession of small gardens, or the Tuscolano III in Rome,

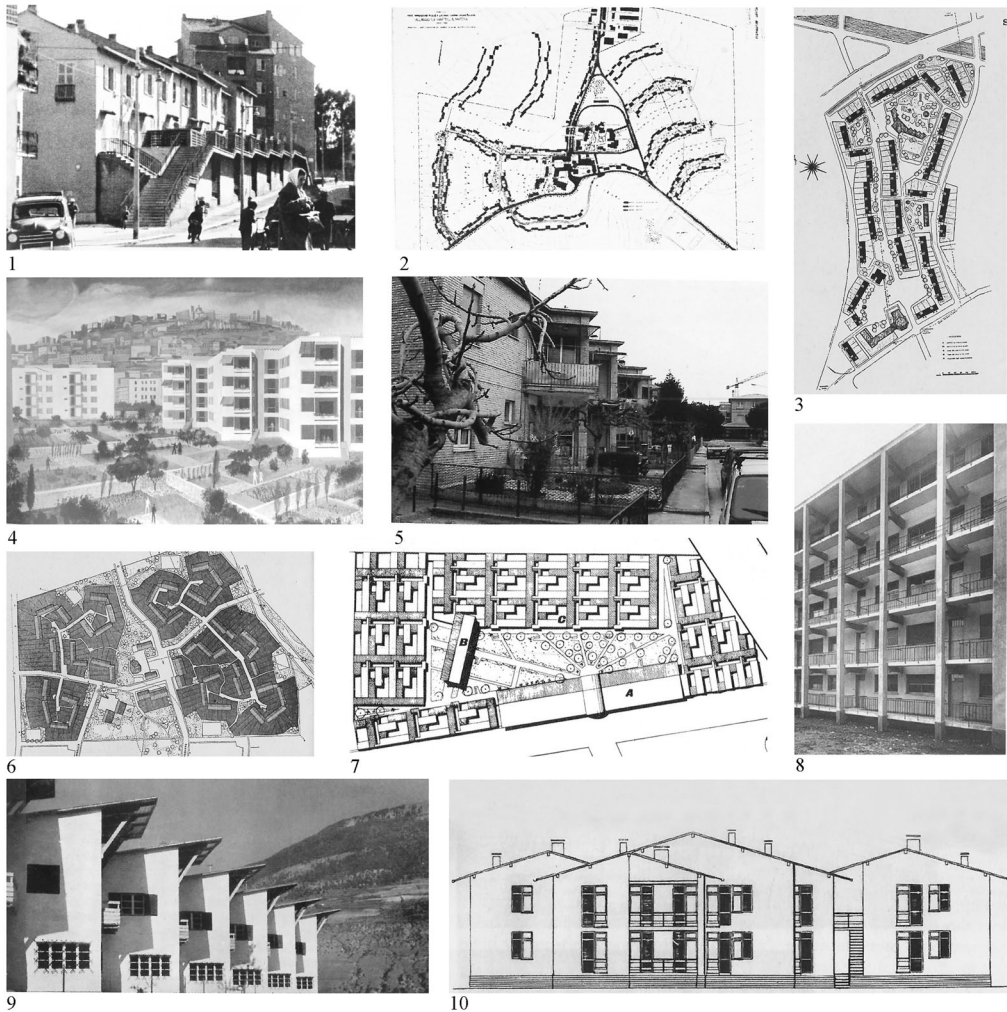


Figure 6. Examples of the INA-Casa Districts: (1) Tiburtino, Rome, row houses by Mario Ridolfi (photograph by Marco Frongia); (2) Quartiere La Martella, general plan (drawing by Edgardo Maxia); (3) San Giovanni a Teduccio district, general plan (drawing by Edgardo Maxia); (4) Libera's garden city in Cagliari, bird's eye rendering (photograph by Davide Pisu); (5) houses in Porto San Giorgio (photograph by Marco Meniconi); (6) San Basilio district (drawing by Edgardo Maxia); (7) "Horizontal Unité d'habitation" at Tuscolano III, general layout (Drawing by Edgardo Maxia); (8) houses in Sesto San Giovanni (photograph by Stefano Suriano); (9) Unità Edilizia in Passo dello Stelvio (drawing by Edgardo Maxia); (10) houses in Baveno (drawing by Edgardo Maxia).

in which he developed the "INA-Casbah," a sort of low-rise, high-density, continuous system of courtyard houses known as "the horizontal *Unité d'Habitation*."⁶³

Most of the new districts were unmistakably influenced by the recommendations of the INA-Casa manual. The La Martella district, designed by Michele Agati, Piero Maria Lugli, Quaroni and Michele Valori, is among the most studied of these.⁶⁴ The San Basilio district, by Mario Fiorentino, and the San Giovanni a Teduccio district, by Carlo Aymonino, Carlo Chiarini, Marcello Girelli, Sergio Lenci, Carlo Melograni and Franco Vandone, both constitute clear examples of the research induced by the

manuals and are exemplary, too, of the neorealist design approach.⁶⁵ Other subsequent developments were nonetheless similar in their results. The district of Porto San Giorgio, designed by Mario Paniconi and Giulio Pediconi, displays several features that are traceable to the manuals—despite being constituted by two parallel rows, its triangular loggias, the open spaces between the rows and its building technology are clearly indebted to a vernacular building tradition.⁶⁶

Similarly, the *Unità Edilizia* in Passo dello Stelvio, by Benedetto de Scarpis, highlights another peculiar aspect of INA-Casa's poetics, namely the reference to local building traditions. In this case, the intention is recognisable both in the strongly sloped roof and building details and in the layout of the living room, which reprises the *Stube* (main room) from the traditional South Tyrolean house. On the other side, the roof has a single slope, recalling Ponti's Hotel in Val Martello, the decorations are absent and the windows are extremely regular, showing the intention of the designer not to totally renounce rationalist aesthetics.⁶⁷ In other projects, conversely, rationalism emerges forcefully, as in Giancarlo De Carlo's houses in Sesto San Giovanni,⁶⁸ only to be neglected shortly thereafter. De Carlo's project for Baveno, for instance, demonstrates a rare capacity to delve into local building tradition, brings together a series of autonomous housing units and composes a plan that seems extrapolated from Libera's manuals.⁶⁹ Rationalism was certainly overcome but not forgotten. Its lesson continues to operate in the Italian architectural milieu, albeit unarticulated (fig. 6).

The INA-Casa manuals were developed long before the conceptualisations and the theoretical metabolisation that occurred from the end of the 1950s onwards and that would continue, in manifold manifestations, until the end of the 1970s. Although their agency is open to question, it is important to note that the notions on which the post-modern debate hinged were already present and operating in that plan. Its ideological premises, were, ironically, translated into architecture through the visual and textual *modelisation* of one the most prestigious protagonists of Italian rationalism: Adalberto Libera.

Notes on contributor

Davide Pisu is an architect, postdoctoral fellow and lecturer in architectural and urban composition at the University of Cagliari. He completed his PhD in March 2020 with a dissertation entitled "Norm and Form: Perverse Effect of Architectural Regulation and Normative Models." He is interested in the manifestations of the normative sphere in architecture and in the legacies of normative phenomena at the urban scale in the twentieth century.

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ORCID

Davide Pisu  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5542-1767>

Notes

1. See R. Ross Holloway, "Nuragic Tower Models and Ancestral Memory," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 46 (2001): 1–9.
2. Shortly after its completion in 1958, the Seagram Building became a symbol of a desirable New York. "In 1961, [New York's planning commission] submitted the 1916 ordinance to far-reaching revisions. The image of a sedate, freestanding tower à la the Seagram Building became accepted and legally binding maxim and ideal of the new ordinance." Liam Ross, *Grand Urban Rules* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2009), 174.
3. See Patrizia Gabellini, "I manuali: una strategia normativa," in *La Grande Ricostruzione*, 2nd ed., ed. Paola di Biagi (Rome: Donzelli, 2001), 103.
4. In the 1960s, the success of indexes and quantitative control in Italian planning policies led to the failure of their assumptions and urban planning to a mere technical act. See Maurizio Carta, *Teorie della pianificazione. Questioni, paradigmi e progetto* (Palermo: Palumbo, 2003), 137.
5. See on this point Rob Imrie and Emma Street, "Regulating Design: The Practices of Architecture, Governance and Control," *Urban Studies* 46, no. 12 (November 2009): 2507–18.
6. Gabellini, "I manuali: una strategia normativa," 99.
7. Sergio Poretti, "Dal piano al patrimonio INA Casa," in *L'architettura INA Casa 1949-1963*, ed. Rinaldo Capomolla and Rosaria Vittorini (Rome: Gangemi, 2009), 12; Bruno Reichlin, "Figures of Neorealism in Italian Architecture," *Grey Room* 5 (Autumn 2001): 78–101. Concerning the latter, aside from the fact that the manuals are far from a bureaucratic style, they do not form a part of the so-called "legge Fanfani."
8. David Escudero, "Personalising Architecture: The Contribution of Neorealism to Italian Architecture Through the INA-Casa Programme (1949–56)," *Architectural Theory Review* 24, no. 1 (2020): 86–109.
9. Escudero, "Personalising Architecture," 103.
10. Escudero, "Personalising Architecture," 100.
11. Paolo Nicoloso accounts extensively for the intricate path of the INA-Casa Plan, the numerous ideas underlying its elaboration, and the many interests conflicting and converging with alternate fortunes until the final approval in 1949. Paolo Nicoloso, "Genealogie del Piano Fanfani," in *La Grande Ricostruzione*, ed. di Biagi, 33–62.
12. The *Gestione INA-Casa* was specifically created for the management of the building programme, initiating, in some instances, conflicts with the implementation committee.

- The former remained under the supervision of Puggioni. The latter was controlled directly by the minister Fanfani. See Nicoloso, “Genealogie del Piano Fanfani,” 34.
13. “The Plan for workers’ jobs is the qualification of the plan and indicates its social aim. The building of houses is the activity that is chosen for this aim and which, at once, tackles one of the most nagging problems of post-war reconstruction.” Adalberto Libera, “La scala del quartiere residenziale,” in *Esperienze Urbanistiche in Italia* (Rome: Inu, 1952), 131. Fanfani was a fervent advocate of fascism and of corporativism. While during the war he rejected his adherence to the former, he never rejected the latter, orienting, from the end of the 1930s, his political analysis towards Catholic corporativism as a critique of fascist corporativism. See Lorenzo Ornaghi, “La concezione corporativa di Amintore Fanfani e il corporativismo dell’età fascista,” *Bollettino dell’archivio per la storia del movimento sociale cattolico in Italia* 1–2 (2011): 171–88. On the mode of construction in which the plan resulted, Sergio Poretti writes: “[A]fter a series of unsatisfactory experiments based on the adoption of heavy prefabrication systems imported from France, the attempt to launch a more global industrialisation of the building industry will remain confined to branches of academic and industrial research, and will affect only marginally either architectural experimentation or actual building developments. This latter will proceed on a dual track: on one hand, public buildings will be centred on great design interventions as urban elements, built with typically heavy prefabricated systems [...]; while at the same time, the private sector will rest on the fragmentary initiatives of small businesses, with an almost total absence of technical progress.” Sergio Poretti, “Dal piano al patrimonio INA Casa,” 16. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Italian to English are the author’s.
 14. Nicoloso, “Genealogie del Piano Fanfani,” 62.
 15. The main aim of the plan, as the name reveals—*Piano incremento della occupazione operaia, case per lavoratori*, Plan for Increasing Workforce, Housing for Employees—was to increase employment. See note 35.
 16. Nicoloso suggests that Bruno Zevi, writing anonymously in *Metron*, criticised the appointment of Foschini due his proximity to fascism: “‘Professor Arnaldo Foschini has been placed in charge of the social housing program; as far as we know, he has never built a social housing complex in his life’ [...] As if to make up for the lack of expertise on housing of which he was accused, he calls his former pupil, Adalberto Libera [...]” In Paolo Nicoloso, “Gli Architetti: il rilancio di una professione,” in *La Grande Ricostruzione*, 2nd ed., ed. Paola di Biagi (Rome: Donzelli, 2001).
 17. On Libera see Vieri Quilici, *Adalberto Libera, l’architettura come ideale* (Rome: Officina, 1981); Gabriella Belli, Vittorio Gregotti, Giovanni Marzari, Alessandra Muntoni, Giacomo Polin, Giorgio Ciucci, Vieri Quilici, Claudia Conforti, Francesco Garofalo, and Luca Veresani, eds., *Adalberto Libera: Opera Completa* (Milan: Electa, 1989); Alessandra Fassio, ed., *Adalberto Libera nel dopoguerra* (Sassari: Carlo Delfino Editore, 2004).
 18. Fassio, “Introduzione,” in *Adalberto Libera nel dopoguerra*, ed. Fassio, 21.
 19. The reference to ‘heroism’ is explicitly intended in regard to Libera’s and Moretti’s approach to experimentation, that, in Libera’s case, involved a reinterpretation of modernist typical themes with a “deeply classic view” of design. See Fassio, “Introduzione,” 21.
 20. Cited in Fassio, “Introduzione,” 21.
 21. “In March 1943, faced with the expectation of a thriving building industry in the post-war recovery, Libera writes to Ponti of the necessity of an industrialisation of the sector and a central role of the state with an “enlightened and totalitarian organisation and program.” “It is up to those of us—continues Libera—who for their personal position are close to the government (corporations, academia) to envisage a clear programme.” Nicoloso, “Genealogie del Piano Fanfani,” 53.
 22. Vieri Quilici, “Rapporto e confronto tra l’esperienza razionalista e la fase del dopoguerra: permanenze e variazioni tra primo e secondo dopoguerra,” in *Adalberto Libera nel dopoguerra*, ed. Fassio, 45.

23. Fassio, "Introduzione," 23.
24. Ideology is intended here to mean a set of ideas, necessary to the production of meanings. See Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 55. See also Manfredo Tafuri's letter in Joan Ockman, "Venice and New York," *Casabella* 619–20 (January–February 1995): 56–65.
25. The need to overcome rationalism is clear and unambiguous. See Gabellini, "I manuali: una strategia normativa," 105; and Poretti, "Dal piano al patrimonio INA Casa," 15, among others.
26. INA-Casa, *Piano incremento occupazione operaia*, vol. 2, *Suggerimenti, esempi e norme per la progettazione urbanistica: Progetti tipo* (Rome: Danesi, 1950), 7.
27. This influence is openly stated by Quaroni, who referred to the Tiburtino project as "[w]anting to give an Italian language to experiences and lessons of Swedish urbanism, we ended up making them speak even in *Romanesco*." Quaroni, "Il paese dei barocchi," 24, and later reprised and further explained by Reichlin, "Figures of Neorealism in Italian Architecture," 96. See also Escudero, "Personalising Architecture," 102–103.
28. INA-Casa, *Piano incremento occupazione operaia*, vol. 2, 8. Author's italics.
29. Reichlin, "Figures of Neorealism in Italian Architecture," 84.
30. INA-Casa, *Piano incremento occupazione operaia*, vol. 2, 9.
31. INA-Casa, *Piano incremento occupazione operaia*, vol. 2, 11. Curiously the manual states the opposite on the first principle: the medieval tower is characterised by the "prevalence of windows (vuoti) over walls (pieni)." It is evidently a typographic error, but at first glance, it generates a moment of confusion.
32. INA-Casa, *Piano incremento occupazione operaia*, vol. 2, 21.
33. INA-Casa, *Piano incremento occupazione operaia*, vol. 2, 25.
34. Curiously, Quaroni addressed the ideas underlying the diverse compositional principles of Tiburtino as hinged on an "attention towards life" vis-à-vis the renunciation of any "plastic flattery" proper to either industrialisation or the "puritan romanticism of the garden city." Quaroni, "Il paese dei barocchi," 24.
35. INA-Casa, *Piano incremento occupazione operaia*, vol. 2, 42.
36. Quaroni, "Il paese dei barocchi," 24.
37. Quaroni, "Il paese dei barocchi," 24. Partially reported and translated in Reichlin, "Figures of Neorealism in Italian Architecture," 84.
38. Carlo Aymonino, "Storia e cronaca del quartiere Tiburtino," *Casabella-continuità* 215 (May 1957), 19.
39. Reichlin, "Figures of Neorealism in Italian Architecture," 84.
40. Nicoloso, "Gli architetti," 92.
41. The younger designers were Carlo Aymonino, Carlo Chiarini, Mario Fiorentino, Federico Gorio, Maurizio Lanza, Sergio Lenci, Pier Maria Lugli, Carlo Melograni, Gian Carlo Menichetti, Giulio Rinaldi and Michele Valori. See Aymonino, "Storia e cronaca del quartiere Tiburtino," 21.
42. Nicoloso, "Gli architetti," 93.
43. Nicoloso, "Gli architetti," 96.
44. Paolo Di Lucia reports two opposite quotations on the problem of effectiveness: "Ein unwirksames Gesetz ist kein Gesetz," or "an ineffective law is not a law at all," from Novalis, and "Auch die wirkungslose Norm bleibt Norm," or "even a norm without effectiveness remains a norm," from Hans Kelsen. See Paolo Di Lucia, "Efficacia senza adempimento," *Sociologia del Diritto* 3 (2002): 73–102.
45. See Mario Carpo, "How Do You Imitate a Building That You Have Never Seen? Printed Images, Ancient Models, and Handmade Drawings in Renaissance Architectural Theory," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 64. (2001): 223–33.
46. Di Lucia, "Efficacia senza adempimento," 75.
47. See Giampaolo M. Azzoni, *Cognitivo e Normativo. Il paradosso delle regole tecniche* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1991), 11.

48. See Françoise Choay, *La regola e il modello. Sulla teorie dell'architettura e dell'urbanistica*, ed. Ernesto d'Alfonso (Rome: Officina, 1986), 22.
49. Choay, *La regola e il modello*, 21–2.
50. Choay, *La regola e il modello*, 182.
51. It could be said that these norms are normative *statements* (*enunciati*) without a normative *enunciation* (*enunciazione*). See Amedeo G. Conte, “Norma: cinque referenti,” in *Filosofie della Norma*, ed. Giuseppe Lorini and Lorenzo Passerini Glazel (Turin: Giappichelli, 2012), 57–65.
52. In other cases models have been crucial in the unfolding of the normative framework. See, for instance, the experience of Luigi Snozzi in Monte Carasso. Pierre-Alain Croset, “Tre Edifici per il Piano di Monte Carasso di Luigi Snozzi,” *Casabella* 506 (1984): 52–63. Indeed, the INA-Casa’s deliberate act of regulation by means of modelisation stands as a unique episode for its relevance and success. See also Davide Pisu and Giovanni Marco Chiri, “The Architect as a Nomothete: Luigi Snozzi at Monte Carasso,” *Journal of Architecture* 26, no. 2 (2020): 174–90.
53. Antonio Gramsci, *Letteratura e vita nazionale* (Turin: Einaudi, 1950), cited in Maristella Casciato, “L’invenzione della realtà: realismo e neorealismo nell’Italia degli anni cinquanta,” in *La Grande Ricostruzione*, ed. di Biagi, 206.
54. Banham himself uses the word “watershed” to criticise *Casabella-continuità*’s editorial policy. He saw as an “infantile regression” from modernism the praise of Roberto Gabetti and Aimaro Isola’s works, described as “neoliberty.” “Parallel with this domestic revolution there was thorough overhaul of ideas and methods in the plastic arts generally, marked by such signs as the Foundational Manifesto of Futurism, the European discovery of Frank Lloyd Wright, Adolf Loos’ *Ornament and Crime*, Hermann Muthesius’s lecture to the Werkbund Congress of 1911, the achievement of fully Cubists painting, and so forth. These mark a watershed in the development of modern architecture; there is a certain consistency about everything that has happened since, and a schism from what happened before. And Art Nouveau, *lo Stile Liberty*, happened before.” in Reyner Banham, “The Italian Retreat from Modern Architecture,” *Architectural Review* 125 (April 1959), 235. For an account of the confrontation between Banham and *Casabella-continuità*’s editorial team, see Matthew Critchley, “Continuity or Crisis? A brief history between the polemics of Aldo Rossi and Reyner Banham,” *Action and Reaction in Architecture*, eds. Tom Avermaete, Christophe Van Gerrewey, and Veronique Patteeuw, special issue, *Oase* 97 (2016): 71–80.
55. In *Controspazio* 9, nos. 4–5 (1977), there is an extensive interpretation of the quarrel on “Neoliberty,” with articles from Gabetti and Isola, Paolo Portoghesi, Gianni Accasto, Claudio D’Amato and Francesco Cellini. The articles concisely claim the importance of Neoliberty in the evolution of the global architectural debate. Claudio D’Amato, for instance, claims that “now we acquire a sense of our own continuity with the past [...]. This complex and dramatic operation [...] will find its most lucid application with Louis Kahn, for whom the will to understand history is the starting point for the general overturning of the Modern Movement.” Claudio D’Amato “La ‘ritirata’ italiana dal Movimento Moderno: memoria, storia e questioni di stile nell’esperienza del neoliberalty,” *Controspazio* 9, nos. 4–5 (Oct–Nov 1977), 51.
56. The title can be translated literally as “the commitment of tradition,” in the sense that the Italian building *tradition* implied a certain commitment, from which its value derives. Nonetheless, it can be ambiguously intended as a commitment *to* tradition, as Gabetti and Isola are presented in this article as architect-scholars, deeply entrenched in Turinese building tradition. See Vittorio Gregotti “L’impegno della Tradizione” *Casabella-continuità* 201 (May–June 1954): 63–75.
57. According to Banham, the first use of the term is attributed to Paolo Portoghesi. Banham, “The Italian Retreat from Modern Architecture,” 231–35.
58. Banham, “The Italian Retreat from Modern Architecture,” 235.

59. For a deeper analysis of the links between neorealism and the INA-Casa's experience, see Casciato, "L'invenzione della realtà," 205–21; and Escudero, "Personalising Architecture," 86–109.
60. Casciato, "L'invenzione della realtà," 218.
61. Bernardo Secchi, "I quartieri dell'Ina-Casa e la costruzione della città contemporanea," in *La Grande Ricostruzione*, ed. di Biagi, 149.
62. Secchi, "I quartieri dell'Ina-Casa e la costruzione della città contemporanea," 152.
63. Antonello Sanna "La città-giardino di via Pessina nel contesto dell'edilizia INA-Casa a Cagliari. Progetto e costruzione," in *Adalberto Libera nel dopoguerra*, ed. Fassio, 197–222; Stefania Mornati and Filippo Cerrini, "Il quartiere Tuscolano a Roma," in *L'architettura INA-Casa*, ed. Capomolla and Vittorini, 126.
64. Federico Gorio "Il Villaggio La Martella. Autocritica," *Casabella-Continuità* 200 (February–March 1954): 31–38.
65. Federico Gorio, "Il Villaggio di San Basilio," *Casabella-continuità* 212 (September–October 1956): 52–54; Giuseppe Samonà, "Architetture di Giovani," *Casabella-continuità* 205 (April–May 1955): 7–9.
66. Romualdo Montagna and Sauro Vitaletti, "Il nucleo Edilizio di Via Aspromonte a Porto San Giorgio," in *L'Architettura Ina-Casa*, ed. Capomolla and Vittorini, 152–63.
67. Giorgio Cacciaguerra and Maria Paola Gatti "L'unità edilizia di Passo dello Stelvio (1955–56)," in *L'architettura INA-Casa*, ed. Capomolla and Vittorini, 186–87.
68. Francesco Samassa, "La stagione dell'INA-Casa e il giovane Giancarlo de Carlo" in *La Grande Ricostruzione*, ed. di Biagi, 279. This project is frequently cited as a milestone in De Carlo's intellectual development. He confesses, in the pages of *Casabella-continuità*, his disappointment at the way the residents lived the building, concluding that his rational layout had excluded the thing that matters the most: being together and communicating. Giancarlo De Carlo, "Casa d'abitazione a Baveno" *Casabella-continuità* 201 (May–June 1954): 29.
69. Samassa, "La stagione dell'INA-Casa e il giovane Giancarlo de Carlo," 283–85.