Research Article

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The Renovation of Italian Railway Stations: From the Journey to the Consumption of the Journey

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Abstract

The article analyses the transformations that have affected Italian railway stations in recent decades. The first part deals with the history of the railway station and is devoted to understanding its functions as well as its social and symbolic meanings. The construction of railways had a significant impact on the urban form: it created new centralities and fractures and conditioned the development of the city. The railway station represented a novelty from an architectural point of view, being a space in which architectural and engineering knowledge merged. Because of their importance and monumentality, railway stations have been likened to cathedrals of modernity and movement and have been among the most important public spaces in the twentieth century. The second part of the article focuses on railway station renovation projects, in particular the «Grandi Stazioni» project, viewing it in the broader context of the profound changes in urban policies, which are increasingly oriented towards enhancing competitiveness and attractiveness. The renovation of stations has been aimed at revitalising rail mobility to address the mounting crisis in both the freight and passenger sectors, due to competition from road transport first and air transport later. The loss of centrality of rail transport had also affected railway station spaces, multiplying material and social voids as well as forms of decay. The renovation of railway stations has taken the form of a privatisation and commodification of spaces and an increase in surveillance and control. The transformations of railway stations can thus be read an example of contraction/domestication of public space.

Keywords: *railway stations, redevelopment, public space, commodification, surveillance*

1. Introduction

1.1 The advent of the railways and station architecture: a periodization

Before analysing the redevelopment and renovation processes that have affected stations in recent decades, it is a good idea to briefly retrace the most significant stages in the history of station space to grasp the functions and meanings, including symbolic ones, that it has taken on over time. First, it should be remembered that the advent of the railways in Europe, which took place in the first half of the nineteenth century, brought about a revolution in the transport of goods and passengers by

bringing together, connecting and integrating distant territories as well as creating an unprecedented space-time contraction (Wolmar, 2011; Stover, 1961; MacKenzie, Jeffrey, 1986).

At the same time, the construction of railways has been one of the main factors in the transformation of urban spaces in Europe (Robbins, 1962). In his famous work on the railway journey, Schivelbusch (1979) fully grasps the complexity and ambiguity of the relationship that has developed between the bundles of tracks and the city since the very beginning. First of all, he emphasises that the station did not start out as a space in the city: the different functions connected to railway transport (maintenance of trains, storage of goods, construction of premises to accommodate travellers) required very large spaces, which is why stations were often located outside the traditional city walls.

This means that for a long-time station remained a sort of alien appendage of the city (Schivelbusch, 1979, p. 161). In the course of time, however, the imposing space reserved for the bundle of tracks created fractures and barriers that were able to influence the development of many urban areas. This aspect can be best clarified by referring to an important classification of railways, namely the distinction between *terminal stations* and *through stations*. *Terminal stations* were built in major European cities in the years when railways were starting to spread, i.e., as early as the 1840s, and served as termini of several railway networks. They were conceived as new city gates for inbound travellers and goods. This type of station was in the vicinity of urban areas, allowing the railway to get as close as possible to the city and thus not creating any fracture lines. Terminal stations are present not only in large cities, but also in medium-sized ones, and wherever there are functional requirements such as in seaports, or in cities that have played a key role such as Florence, for example.

Through stations, also called passing stations, are quite common in smaller towns. They are less complex than terminal stations, since trains are just passing, and this facilitates manoeuvring on both sides of the line. Broadly speaking, the location of this type of station is outside the established urban fabric, although the rapid development that characterised the industrial phase of urban history quickly cancelled out this distance (Conticelli, 2012, pp. 24-26). Taking this important distinction into account, it is then possible to outline a few phases in the history of the relationship between cities and railway stations.

An initial phase is known as that of *polarisation*. The railway station becomes a catalyst, as it is now necessary to create connections between the railway node and pre-existing parts of the city (through the construction of a new traffic network consisting of straight, circular or bypass roads). At the same time, the presence of the station acts as an expansion factor of the urban fabric towards the station itself. This initial phase is followed by a further one in which the track bundle creates a profound fracture that hinders the harmonious development of the city.

As already mentioned, especially in the case of through stations, the large space occupied by railway tracks and by all the annexes that are necessary for transport creates a dividing line between the areas opposite the station and those at the rear. The area facing the station is the new gateway to the city, and thanks to the creation of roads and the monumentality that characterises the construction of spaces for travellers, it becomes a central place in the new city. On the other hand, the districts located beyond the tracks will often be characterised by low-quality buildings and lack of services; they will develop in a haphazard manner, without elements of centrality, and will eventually become the new suburbs (Conticelli, 2012, pp. 27-28). In addition to the urban planning aspects related to the construction of railways and their impact on the development of cities, it is interesting to recall that railway stations represented a novelty from an architectural point of view.

The station space is indeed enormously complex: if we consider the area of the platforms where passengers congregate and the canopies above them, it is a functional steel and glass hall with a typically industrial character. At the same time, it is a stone-built structure in the part beyond the railway tracks; in other words, a railway station is *half-palace* and *half-factory*, the place where you can admire the power of industrial production but also the pomp and monumentality of the architecture typical of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century cities (Schivelbusch, 1979, p. 163).

The architectural historian Carroll Meeks (1956) proposed a five-stage periodization in the history of railway station architecture. In the first phase, which characterised the years between 1830 and 1845, simple buildings were erected, especially in England and the United States. These were small constructions that paved the way for the exploration of a new, complicated theme, since – as has already been stressed – the station is a space that combines engineering and architectural knowledge. The second phase began in the 1850s and corresponded to a standardisation of the problem that led to adopting high quality, typified and repeatable solutions. The third phase ran from 1860 to 1890 and was a period when increasingly refined structures were built that combined architectural composition with engineering prowess. The fourth phase from 1890 to 1915 is defined as *megalomaniac* and was characterised by exaggerated gigantism and accentuated architectural monumentality. The final phase (1915-1956) corresponds to a historical moment marked by impending competition from new means of transport, primarily the automobile, which created new demands for the integration of different mobility systems. From an architectural point of view, the language adopted in this phase was that of modern architecture (Meeks, 1956).

As has already been mentioned, these early constructions were modest, but from the outset the station became a theme explored by important architects and engineers. Along with other urban facilities such as department stores, universal expositions, and theatres, the station is a space that will connote nineteenth-century urban experience by embodying the idea of modernity, progress, and movement (Zucconi, 2011; Sica, 1977).

In the mid-nineteenth century standardization phase, the paradigmatic example in Europe is the Gare de l'Est in Paris, which went into operation in 1849. The façade is built according to a hierarchical, tripartite, and symmetrical principle, with a main body and two side wings. This façade model was used in both terminal and through stations. It is found in Italy in the first station built in Milan in 1864, at Venezia Santa Lucia, Torino Porta Nuova and Genova Piazza Principe. Another feature of the Gare de l'Est model is the visibility of the metal vaults covering the railway tracks in the façade elevation through a large glass window. This solution was also used in Paris in the nearby Gare du Nord, in other European cities and at the Torino Porta Nuova railway station. In this period, the external building was often dominated by a clock tower, with the clock as a fundamental element for the station and the modern times it heralded (Ventura, 2004, pp. 27, 36).

The turn of the twentieth century saw the expansion and renovation of facilities: station buildings were designed to be grandiose and monumental, with many references to ancient architecture, especially in the entrance gallery, which became ever larger. An Italian example of this type of architecture is the new central station in Milan, inaugurated in 1931 (Ventura, 2004, p. 36).

The language of modern architecture, in which functionality and rationalisation of space replace the monumentality of previous constructions, characterises the projects launched in the 1930s. Important railway stations were built in Italy in that period. Angiolo Mazzoni, who in 1922 was appointed inspector of the Ferrovie dello Stato Works Division, is one of the leading figures in the design of modern stations. Under his direction, several railway stations were built: Brenner (completed between 1935 and 1936), Bolzano (1927-30), Littoria (now Latina, 1930-32), Siena (circa 1931-36), Reggio Emilia (1933-35), Trento (1934-36), Montecatini (1933-37), Messina (1936-39) and Reggio Calabria (circa 1936-40) (Cozzi *et al.*, 2003).

Of the many buildings completed in this period, the most important one in terms of quality and complexity of the construction is certainly the new Santa Maria Novella station in Florence, designed by the so-called Gruppo Toscano led by architect Giovanni Michelucci. The innovativeness of the project lies in the choice to create a horizontal, linear building which is set up against the richness of the materials used in the interiors, decorated with traditional Tuscan marble and wooden furnishings, as well as important paintings that embellished the bar and restaurant areas (Bandini, 1987).

This phase was followed by a stalemate, as the rail transport crisis would deepen in the years to come. The design of new stations and work on existing ones will only resume in the late 1990s.

2. Methodology

The article presents the results of qualitative research carried out in the historic Italian stations and the new stations of Afragola and Reggio Emilia. We have applied mixed methods, including archival and ethnographic fieldwork and visual analysis. In addition, we analysed official documentation, such as technical and design reports concerning the Grandi Stazioni project, and the various legislative interventions made by the municipal administrations regarding the stations and the spaces in front of them.

3. A New Idea for the City and the Stations

It is since the closing decades of the twentieth century and especially in the early years of the new millennium that Italian stations have undergone major transformations. Many modernisation and redevelopment projects have affected these important urban facilities. The aim was to revive rail mobility, which was facing a mounting crisis in both the freight and passenger sectors due to competition from road transport first and air transport later. At the same time, the loss of centrality of rail transport had more generally affected station spaces where material and social voids as well as forms of decay had multiplied.

However, the plans for the revitalisation of the railway system and station spaces must be read while considering the broader context, i.e., the profound changes that affected cities and urban policies in the same years. As is well known, in the 1980s the public debate in the urban sphere, in Europe as well as in the United States, was dominated by the idea of revitalising cities through regeneration/renovation policies, at a historical moment when the economic restructuring that followed the crisis of the Fordist system was changing the face of cities, with the subsequent loss of centrality of urban space due to the delocalisation of production (Hall, 2002; Hoskins, Tallon, 2004; Harvey, 1989a).

To ward off decline, several urban institutions therefore invested in regeneration/redevelopment projects of entire city districts. The advent of globalisation has then placed city revitalisation strategies in a framework in which they are even more articulated: competitiveness and attractiveness have become watchwords for all urban agendas (Hambleton, Gross, 2007), since globalisation has assigned a leading role in the global economy to cities capable of attracting flows of capital, goods, information, and people (Friedmann 1986; Marcuse, van Kempen, 2000).

Essentially, urban policies in recent decades have increasingly focused on the construction of an attractive and innovative urban image. As pointed out by David Harvey, all this was possible thanks to two spatial devices: the creation of functional spaces for the entertainment and consumption industry and the construction of quality residential areas (Harvey, 1989). The target to which these proposals are addressed is represented by the elites of the emerging global class, by tourists, by city users, and by all those social groups that *can afford to consume the city*, given that consumption is becoming an integral part of the rhythms and times of the urban experience as pointed out by Sharon Zukin (1995) in her now classic work *The culture of cities*.

As a result, a number of urban renovation and redevelopment interventions have taken the form of processes of privatisation of public spaces and commodification. Finally, it must be emphasised that such processes have been favoured by the increasingly marked trend towards the creation of public-private partnerships for urban-scale works.

This is because in the late 1980s increasingly decentralised forms of governance began to take hold, along with a loss of public supremacy in the design of the city. The enlargement of the sphere of government decision-making to actors other than the state (governance) encouraged the entry of private actors who began to participate in the formulation of city development policies (Harvey, 1989b; Brenner, 2004). Private actors also provided funding, at a time in urban history when public expenditure was shrinking, which diminished the possibilities for the state to manage such projects alone.

4. Consuming the Journey: The Station from Public Space to Domesticated Space

As we have pointed out, the railway infrastructure has had a strong impact on the urban structuring of cities, and the influence of station architecture on urban form has also been very relevant. Owing to the monumentality of the edifices and the articulation of a space in which technical advances in mobility combine with innovations in architectural solutions, railway stations are like cathedrals in historic cities – the secular cathedrals of modernity. But equally significant are the social aspects of the station space. Railways came into being first and foremost to make the movement of goods more efficient; it is no coincidence that the first tracks were built in England, the cradle of the industrial revolution. In this regard, let us recall that the first line connecting two cities, inaugurated in 1834, was that from Liverpool to Manchester, two of the most important industrial cities in England (Wolmar, 2011).

Since their appearance, however, railway tracks have been enormously successful in passenger transport. And it is around the success of *travel by rail* that originated the complexity of the social and symbolic meanings that station space has encompassed over time. As recalled by the German historian, rail mobility was seen as a *technical guarantor of democracy*, harmony between nations, peace, and progress (Schivelbusch 1979, p. 73). This was because it would be able to bring people closer together spatially and socially, causing all classes of society to meet and form a kind of *living mosaic* made up of the most disparate social positions, characters, manners, and customs. But reality returned a different picture: while on the one hand travel by rail would be experienced by the different classes as *participation in an industrial process*, on the other the inequalities would be reproduced in the class division of the carriages (Schivelbusch, 1979, pp. 74-75). The epitome of social distinction was then the experience of luxury intercontinental trains, such as the journeys of the *Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits*, which offered the famous Orient Express route from Paris to Constantinople (Maggi, 2003) and the so-called Indian Mail, the exotic route from London to Bombay (Dedola, 2006).

But, in general, the whole history of rail travel can be traced through elements of social distinction and differentiation which, at certain times, ended up creating actual polarisations between the haves and the have-nots.

If we look at the history of Italian rail transport, for example, the Etr 300 train – known as the Settebello, as it consisted of seven carriages – entered service in 1952. It was a luxury train, the fastest at the time; indeed, it could travel at a maximum speed of 180 km/h and carry 160 people. Of the seven cars, four were for passengers, one for luggage and toilets, one contained the pantry and the kitchen, and one the restaurant and the bar. In addition to being the fastest train running in Italy, it was also most comfortable, with air conditioning, a music broadcasting service, heat and sound insulation (Maggi, 2003, pp. 165-166).

If that of the Settebello was an elitist experience, allowing the few to appreciate the marvels of technical progress associated with mobility, the same years are remembered as those in which trains *transported the poor* (Maggi 2003). This expression refers to the use of trains along the new emigration routes that started to replace transoceanic voyages in favour of destinations in northern Europe and the large industrial cities in the North of Italy. The decline in the number of first-class travellers, which had characterised the post-war period due to the advent of car ownership, had already led to the reduction from three to two classes on the entire European network (except for Spain and Portugal); between 1956 and 1957 couchette coaches were introduced and express trains (*direttissimi*) began to operate, connecting Italy to the European countries where emigrants mainly found work.

The symbol of this new type of line was the Italien-Holland Express, which ran from Rome via a series of branches to Brussels-Ostend, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Copenhagen, and Stockholm. New domestic routes also sprang up within Italy, connecting southern regions with Genoa, Turin, and Milan. These were the *Treno del Sole* ('Sun Train') from Palermo to Turin, the *Freccia del Sud* ('South Arrow') from Palermo to Milan, and trains from Apulia to northern cities (Maggi, 2003, pp. 167-169).

But while rail travel incorporates class differences, the station space built around the experience of travel has long been one of the most important public spaces in the city, with all the complexity and contradictions that public space is able to contain and reveal (Madanipour, 2003; Paquot 2009; Borja, Muxi, 2003). And the *living mosaic* mentioned by Schivelbusch is fully present in the station space that expresses an articulated public dimension in which different experiences such as arriving, waiting, crossing, fleeting encounters, leave-taking, and nostalgia meet or clash, and in which the rituals of interaction are multiplied (Goffman, 1988).

At the same time, the station has always been a place of daily life experience for all those who find refuge and assistance in its spaces, as is well thematised in the work by Colombo and Navarini (1999) on the anthropology of Milan's central station. We could say that the station spaces, as emblematic places of the modern metropolis, have allowed a sort of apprenticeship in urban promiscuity but also, taking up Simmel's considerations (1995), in the recognition and smoothing of differences.

Against the background of the altered framework of urban policies, let us now analyse the socio-spatial changes triggered by the renovation of Italian stations. In Italy, as well as in the European context, refurbishment projects to restore old station buildings have been aimed primarily at making them attractive poles for new urban functions, given the progressive loss of centrality of rail transport. A successful example and a textbook case of this type of operation in Europe was the redevelopment of London's Charing Cross station in which the historic building dating back to the second half of the nineteenth century was incorporated into a new volume to be used for offices and commercial activities. At the same time, in an increasingly articulated transport system, stations have been renovated but also designed as intermodal hubs (Conticelli, 2012, p. 33).

In Italy, the loss of competitiveness in the railway sector mainly affected freight transport. Indeed, by the immediate post-war period, the special conditions granted to lorries and the expansion of the road network had already drastically reduced the movement of goods by rail. During the economic boom years, only 24% of goods travelled by rail. This percentage fell to 16.7% in 1970 and 10.5% in 1980 (Maggi, 2003, p. 173).

The main gains in railway history had always been brought by freight transport, and the shrinkage of this sector led to a series of year results with low earnings first and losses later. From the mid-1960s, competition from road transport also affected the passenger sector: the railway's share of the passenger transport market was 16.7% in 1965, 11.3 % in 1970 and then plummeted to 9.31% in 1980 (Maggi, 2003, p. 174).

To overcome this crisis, a complex process of revitalisation of the sector began in the 1990s with the high-speed rail travel project. France was the first nation in Europe to focus on the construction of high-speed railway lines, inaugurating the section from Paris to Lyon in 1981, following the pioneering adventure of Japan, which had launched its first high-speed line in 1960 (Perren, 1998). Compared to the experience of other nations, Italy developed a mixed high-speed system in which both pre-existing lines and dedicated tracks were used. And it is thanks to the high-speed system that new stations such as Reggio-Emilia and Afragola were built.

In Reggio-Emilia, in a location outside the city centre, a secondary station was built for a stop (Mediopadana) of the Milan-Bologna high-speed line. The construction of the structure that accommodates travellers was entrusted to the famous Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava. The objectives of the project are described as follows:

> *«The strategic location gives the station considerable relevance, emphasising its role as a defining landmark of the city ('gateway station') and its fundamental importance within the regional, national, and international mobility system. [...] The idea proposed in the first feasibility study (the 'sail' idea) has been readapted and reworked (the 'wave' idea) to better distinguish itself from bridges, while retaining architectural harmony and coherence of language within the entire project. The proposed 'wave' idea gives the station its own identity and uniqueness, as an autonomous architectural element, and, through the shapes of the structure, it has the advantage of transmitting a sensation of movement to travellers passing on the adjacent railway and motorway» (Municipality of Reggio Emilia).*

Owing to its suburban location with respect to the city of Reggio, this new railway junction is like the early stations, which, as mentioned above, were placed outside the city centre and therefore substantially out of it. The Reggio design aims to make the station a new central point within the vast Parma-Reggio-Modena area and, for this reason, it has been conceived with enormous spaces that are prepared to host many different commercial, but also cultural and recreational activities, in line with the idea of the new urban function that stations are supposed to carry out. The results in terms of polarisation are still to come and, also, given the monumentality of the structure, the station appears as a valuable container that still fails to connect with the context in which it is set. For the new Afragola high-speed station, built on the Rome-Naples high-speed line, similar considerations can be made. In this case too, the location is outside the historic centre of Afragola, and the project also includes the construction of a commercial gallery and exhibition spaces. The station designed by archistar Zaha Hadid was inaugurated in 2017, after a series of stoppages in the works, which had started in 2003.

From an architectural point of view, the project does render the idea of movement, thanks also to the construction of an enormous 5000-sq.m. window that covers the main gallery. As in the case of Reggio, however, here too the building seems extraneous to the context and conveys a sense of suspension with respect to the full achievement of the project's objectives.

But beyond these latest achievements, the implementation of the high-speed system and, more generally, the revitalisation of the railway sector ushered a season of massive renovation and redevelopment of old stations as well as of the void spaces that had resulted from the sector's decline. To get an idea of the amount of space occupied by railway lines, and consequently of the impact in terms of the voids created by service reductions, we need only recall that official data released by Ferrovie dello Stato in 1991 mentioned 373 million square metres of space at FS's disposal (about 220 million square metres for lines in operation and 13.7 million for other uses). Of these, about half could be decommissioned or transformed under assumptions of service restructuring (Conticelli, 2012, p. 50).

We should also point out that the station renovation season also coincided with crucial changes within the Ferrovie dello Stato group. In 1998, following European transport directives, the FS group was divided into four areas: passengers, regional transport, freight and infrastructure. In 1999, the first three formed the company called Trenitalia, which is responsible for passenger mobility services and freight transport, while the infrastructure area is managed by the company Rfi (Maggi, 2003, p. 201).

Also in 1998, the company Grandi Stazioni was established and entrusted with the task of redeveloping and enhancing thirteen major historic stations in Italy. The Grandi Stazioni project specifically involved the stations of Milano Centrale, Roma Termini, Torino Porta Nuova, Napoli Centrale, Bari Centrale, Venezia Santa Lucia, Venezia Mestre, Verona Porta Nuova, Bologna Centrale, Firenze Santa Maria Novella, Genova Brignole, Genova Piazza Principe, and Palermo Centrale. In 2001, the company Centostazioni was created, which dealt with the redevelopment of 103 medium-sized stations scattered throughout the country. Finally, 2015 saw the launch of the 500- station project, which aims to work on 500 metropolitan-area stations selected among the most significant from the transport point of view, the busiest and with the highest commercial potential, in order to raise the quality standard of the services offered.

As a result of these many initiatives, several stations have deeply changed. In particular, the Grandi Stazioni project has decisively altered and in some cases distorted the aspect of old historic stations. As can be read in the company website: «With more than 700 million visitors a year, stations are becoming enterprises with a high economic potential, which are able to offer new business opportunities and quality services. With our work, we aim to give back a heritage of high architectural, cultural and social value to the public; create new poles of aggregation, socialisation and exchange; reinvent the role of the passenger by making the time they spend in stations enjoyable; satisfy needs; anticipate desires». (Trenitalia Progetto Grandi Stazioni).

The aim of the project is the economic enhancement of the station through the

commodification of its spaces, which are no longer intended only for travellers but also cater for a wider public. The Grandi Stazioni Retail group has therefore been granted exclusive exploitation rights for commercial and advertising purposes in relation to Italy's fourteen major historic stations. The mission of Grandi Stazioni Retail is «To become the ideal hub for brands, to which we offer the opportunity to experience communication and business opportunities in unique locations in terms of position and flows», and the strategy is «To place the comfort of travellers at the centre of our stations with innovative and dedicated services every day of the year. We offer those who like to move around comfortable and always interesting environments, with the possibility of discovering what the location has to offer. The quality of the experience as a whole is fundamental in the challenge of turning visitors into customers» (Grandi Stazioni Retail).

Stations were built as large urban facilities whose architecture was articulated around travel time, while redevelopment projects have been aimed at transforming travel time into consumption time by disrupting pre-existing spaces. If we look at the results of the interventions, we can see how the redevelopment of historic stations has resulted in a colonisation process by small and large commercial brands, at the expense of many spaces intended specifically for travellers, such as waiting and luggage rooms.

There are currently 800 retail units in Italy's fourteen major historic stations: 171 at Roma Termini, 133 at Milano Centrale, 98 at Napoli Centrale, 66 at Torino Porta Nuova, 49 at Firenze Santa Maria Novella, 45 at Bologna Centrale, 62 at Roma Tiburtina, 41 at Venezia Santa Lucia, 16 at Venezia Mestre, 24 at Genova Piazza Principe, 16 at Genova Brignole, 20 at Bari Centrale, 24 at Palermo Centrale, 31 at Verona Porta Nuova.

This has severely undermined the legibility, as Kevin Lynch (2006) puts it, of the station space, which is no longer a place designed around the journey but around the consumption of the journey.

Moreover, each of the large stations on which redevelopment processes have taken place has its own specific history; aggressive *commodification* tends to homogenise and flatten spaces and uses, undermining the identity of places.

Another feature of redevelopment projects was that of addressing security problems through risk prevention and reduction strategies.

As can be read in the mission statement of the Grandi Stazioni company, safety is one of the strategies used to «create a place on a human scale designed to offer services and opportunities to travellers and citizens» (Trenitalia Progetto Grandi Stazioni), and in this sense the redevelopment of stations has become a field of application of the so-called *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED).

This expression coined by American criminologist Ray Jeffery in 1971 refers to an approach according to which good environmental design is a deterrent to criminal behaviour. It involves the application of a series of measures such as appropriate lighting, the elimination of recesses and empty spaces, and the creation of well-defined pathways to ensure the visibility of spaces so as to discourage the occurrence of criminal acts (Jeffery, 1971).

In addition to design considerations, security in redevelopment projects is ensured by the implementation of passive (cameras) and active (agents and police) surveillance systems.

In 2015, control gates were introduced to access platforms, with an initial trial phase involving the stations of Milan, Rome, and Florence. The gates were part of a new package of security measures that also included increased video surveillance. This enhanced security policy applied to the station space was conceived as a strategy to counter terrorism, at a time when terrorist attacks targeting city spaces had taken place in several cities in Europe.

However, just as in many other city spaces, the issue of security in railway stations does not end with the implementation of surveillance systems or design measures to prevent crime (Paone 2008). Station security has been equated to the progressive imposition of an aesthetic of decorum (Paone 2012), which in the name of security – or perhaps we should say the *reassurance* of the traveller/consumer – has seen the multiplication of devices to keep the poorest away from stations, as they are considered a source of disturbance.

These systems take the form of both administrative instruments such as ordinances, which in many cities have affected stations and the spaces in front of them, but also – again – interventions affecting the design or modification of existing spaces.

Thus, redevelopment projects resulted in closing many waiting rooms or transforming them into exclusive halls that can be accessed only by ticket or card holders; drinking fountains disappeared, public toilets were closed, or entry is now restricted to paying users or ticket holders. The use of so-called defensive architectural elements has also spread (Flusty, 1997; Macleod, Ward, 2002), i.e., spikes and bars that do not allow people to sit, benches that are tiny or designed with armrests to prevent people from lying down. In everyday station life, many security devices are basically meant to keep beggars or unlicensed street traders away.

5. Conclusion

Redevelopment projects are progressively transforming stations into exclusive and exclusionary places. As occurs in the design and redevelopment of many other spaces in the city, the construction of environments is based on the desire for security and entertainment rather than interaction (Mitchell, 2003; Hannigan, 1998).

Sharon Zukin (1995) had already coined the expression *domestication by cappuccino* to emphasise how the logic of consumption, of which control and surveillance are a corollary, simplifies the complexity of the practices of spatial use, i.e., constructing an image of urban life that takes place in sterilised environments in which activities are selected, carefully limited, and controlled. Control mechanisms act as selective forces that produce a series of openings and closings directed at the cultural and symbolic capital of groups, eliminating conflict, which is a fundamental element in urban life and its spaces.

The subjugation of public spaces to the logic of the private commercial sector therefore erodes the concept of democratic citizenship, as the citizen, i.e., the inhabitant of the city and bearer of political demands, is replaced by the consumer (Nissen 2008, p. 1144).

The commodification of station spaces is a further step towards the commodification of everyday life, which, as Henri Lefebvre (2014; 2018) had foreseen, would be the capitalist city's way of asserting itself. Therefore, the transformations of station space that we have described so far also convey the greater importance that is now attached to the value of exchange versus the value of use in the redevelopment and design of city spaces. And, again, following the trajectories of Lefebvre's analysis, station redevelopment can be considered as a form of dispossession of *spontaneous and other practices of urban space use* and as an important litmus test of the contraction of public space that increasingly characterises urban dynamics.

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