

Social Housing in Italy: Cultural Continuity, Social Change and Future Scenarios

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to make a reconnaissance of the main aspects and developments of Social Housing system in Italy, within its hereditary transitions, as in its current trends, in order to identify actors, processes and interventions where it is nevertheless possible an anthropological, cultural and social legitimacy of the term centrality of the person. This concept is proposed through a multidimensional modelling of Social Housing.

This work has also the objective of constructing future scenarios on the Social Housing system by using experts viewpoints and apply them as a planning tool and in strategic management. *Structural analysis* allows the construction of a simplified image of the system and, in particular, permits the identification of the variables that are essential to the system's evolution.

Once defined some future scenarios, the public actor can act in various ways, in order to achieve the desirable scenario or to avoid the most problematic one.

In this framework, it becomes essential to support public actors in making strategic choices and, therefore, we propose a Decision Support System (DSS) for Social Housing. Given that taking decisions for such a complex system involves the evaluation of several alternatives, using diverse criteria, in the construction of the DSS a useful tool is that of the multicriteria analysis, which helps to rationalize the choice between several alternative and takes into account the preferences of different actors involved in the decision-making process.

Finally, since the problem of Social Housing is closely connected to the territory, the use of a Geographic Information System (GIS) allows to manage the data from a spatial viewpoint. Moreover, once built the *geographic database* it opens the opportunity to create a particular type of DSS, that considers as a key element the space, namely a Spatial Decision Support System (SDSS).

Keywords: Continuity, change, Multidimensional Model, Spatial Decision Support Systems, Structural Analysis, MICMAC, Multicriteria Analysis, GIS.

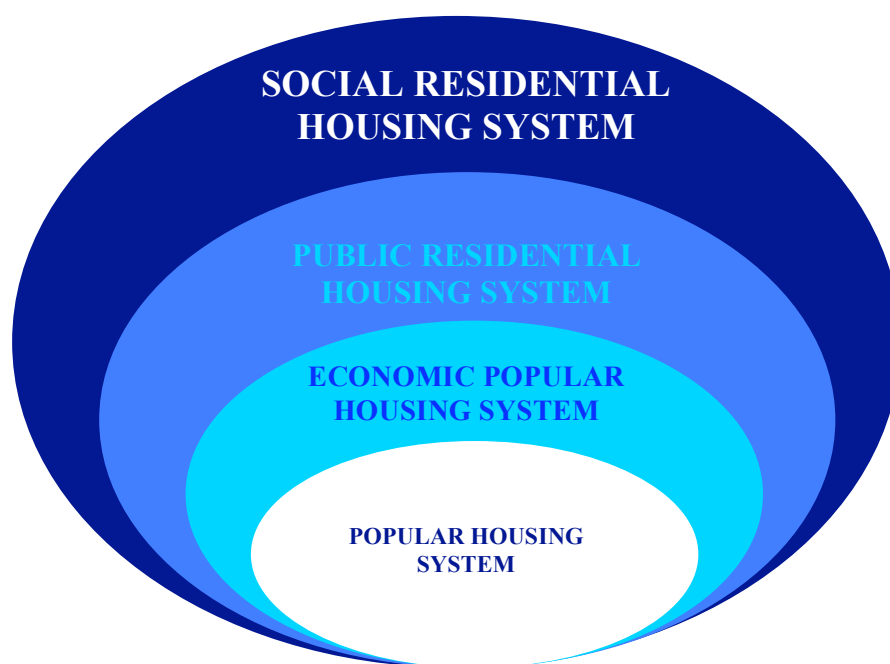
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1. Social Housing in Italy. Cultural inheritance and institutional change

The History of Social Housing in Europe has an ancient tradition of well over a century, interpreted as a story of addition and change, in the sense that the experiences and practices first socio-political and political-economic implemented at both national both at the local level were significant levers for development (Levy-Vroelant, C. and F. Reinprect Wasseberg, 2008). For Italy, the historical consequence of a later development industry in the early twentieth century has involved not only in economic terms, a development differentiated and progressive system of social housing, which has been gradually implemented first through the political establishment and regulation of social housing, following construction business people, then public housing construction, and finally social housing. Specifically the Italian situation, this progression is called a of cultural continuity in the exploitation and promotion of housing policies, while evident in the evolution in the plural and integrated response to needs, criteria and values that inextricably linked issues of person, all the rights, welfare, as in the tradition of Italian social policies (*infra*, Pasotti)



Venditti, 2008

In particular, the realization of the first steel chemical and mechanical implants, and the enlargement of the single market, with significant increases in production and consumption of goods, have involved the concentration of factories, especially in the industrial triangle Milan, Turin, Genoa, while in the South there was already a famous “southern question”. At the social level, the laborers were working in tight and unhealthy environments and living in neighborhoods built in the vicinity factories, in homes and standardized approvals, known as “tenements” with courtyards and sanitation in the municipality. Other social classes lived instead in different parts of the various city which, although not devoid of the phenomena of urban and social exclusion (in line with the rest of major European cities), however, were increasingly modernizing. The twentieth century was intense from the political point of view and meaningful for the economic and social occurred. In this framework, as mentioned above and shown in the picture, then starting at the beginning of 1900, took place a copious political activity and legislation that initially has framed housing (Law 254/1903 Luzzatti) popular and economical (Royal Decree of 28/04/1938 - No. 1165), subsequently established the system of public housing (Read 865-71 and 457-78) with a major role played by public authorities for then structure the system of social housing

(Interministerial Decree 22 April 2008) (Venditti, 2008).

In this work, the analysis focuses in particular on the system of public housing (ERP) system and social housing (ERS), as in the periodization of history and in cultural value, are the closest and most easily recognizable levels of the system of the “very social housing” type in Europe. The introduction of the ERP system is by passing the notions of “social housing” and “popular economic building” In detail, the ERP is divided into several types:

« - Subsidized housing, carried out directly by the state, regions or other government agencies (IACP and Municipalities) with full public funding. It has as objective the provision of housing at a content rent;

- Housing built by private facilitated with the assistance of public funding (loans rate least facilitated, indexed);

- Subsidized housing, which originates from a system of rules, based primarily on the right of surface, and produced directly by individuals who bear also the economic financial burden. It is achieved through agreement between the person normally beneficiary and extent of the local community with territorial concession to private areas at a low cost » (Venditti, 2008).

ERP managing bodies have been known for a long time as Popular House Autonomous Institute IACP, having legal authority to the public. The housing finance system was supported considered to be levied by the workers directly managed by Home Management for Workers (GESCAL).

In 1998, this method was no more funded and the State disposes direct interest to the sector and hence the housing policy interventions are made by the Regions (d. lgs. 112/1998, art. 60). At the beginning of the 2000s, after the reform of Title V of the Constitution, the legislative powers between the State and the Regions are redefined and the issues of ERP are stratified on three levels of management. The State is responsible for setting the level of performance through determining the housing minimum for lower income persons and the establishment of principles aimed to ensuring uniformity in the criteria for the allocation of housing on the national territory. The State shall also, in the acquisition, collection, processing and evaluation of data on housing provided through the Center on Housing Policy. Falls under the concurrent jurisdiction planning of settlements of ERP, as falling within the government of territory. The Regions are responsible for setting objectives and planning, as well as the sustainability of the financing shares. In particular, they have the right to redefine the levels of income for access and maintenance of the ERP, the definition of royalties, the identification of new mechanisms for housing financing, identifying ways and objectives in order to activate the social fund (Guerrieri, Villani, 2006). The skills allocated to local governments regarding the «identification, as well as programming regional types of intervention to meet the recognized needs, the identification of private operators responsible for execution of operations located in the territory, granting of the operators responsible for the implementation of interventions in their territory, the management and implementation of interventions» (Guerrieri, Villani, 2006).

Over time was also redefined the relationship between Regions and the IACP, managing bodies, with their transformation into new models of social housing, called “House Companies”.

In early 2008, these new companies are equal to 108 (Dexia Crediop Censis SPA in collaboration with Federcasa). The transformation of the IACP in House Companies resulted, in some cases, only in a different name, with the replacement of the term *institution* in *company*; in other cases, it ended in a transformation of a legal form.

In the table below are represented the names of the new House Companies (Guerrieri, Villani, 2006).

Tab. 1 – *Denomination of Companies House*

ACRONIMO	DENOMINAZIONE	REGIONE
ACER	Azienda Casa Emilia Romagna	Emilia Romagna
ALER	Azienda Lombarda per l'Edilizia Residenziale Pubblica	Lombardia
ARER	Azienda Regionale per l'Edilizia Residenziale	Valle D'Aosta
ARTE	Azienda Regionale Territoriale per l'Edilizia	Liguria
ATC	Azienda Territoriale per la Casa	Piemonte
ATER	Azienda Territoriale per l'Edilizia Residenziale	Abruzzo Basilicata Friuli Venezia-Giulia Lazio Toscana Umbria Veneto
ATERP	Azienda Territoriale per l'Edilizia Residenziale Pubblica	Calabria Campania
IPES	Istituto per l'Edilizia Sociale	Bolzano
ITEA	Istituto Tecnico per l'Edilizia Abitativa	Trento

Companies House recently constituted are essentially legal forms ranging from public economy (Liguria, Abruzzo, Emilia Romagna, etc.) a public non-economic (Campania, Puglia, etc.) and they usually provincial powers.

It should be noted however that the ERP system is characterized, even in the presence of private actors to some types, as the “made in public”, with the presence, regulation, and management principles markedly of a public nature.

The ERS system seems compatible with the system of Social Housing in its two versions “very” and “nearly” Social Housing, on the grounds that it crystallizes in the definition of “social housing” understood as « real estate units used for residential use in hiring a permanent place function of general interest in maintaining social cohesion, reduce the discomfort housing for individuals and disadvantaged families who are unable to access the rental housing in the open market. The social housing is an essential element of system of social housing made up of services aimed at residential fulfillment of basic needs.

3. Fall within the definition in paragraph 2, the housing built or recovered from operators public and private, with the use of contributions or public facilities - such as tax exemptions, allocation of land or property, guarantee funds, facilities for urban type - intended the temporary lease for at least eight years and also to the property.

4. The social housing is provided by public and private primarily through the provision of rental housing should be used where the prevalence of available resources, and support access to ownership of the house, pursuing the integration of different social groups and contributing to improving the living conditions of the recipients.

5. The social housing, as a service of general economic interest, is standard urban additional means to ensure free transfer of land or housing, and on the basis and according to the criteria required by the regional laws » (inter-ministerial Decree 22 April 2008).

Among the possible ways of interpretation of the Social Housing in Italy, it is possible to consider its more applicative form in terms quite varied, ranging from interventions to Housing support from the public, to interventions not already provided by public residential housebuilding, to a specific mode of public-private redevelopment of projects urban construction and manufacturing, to the promotion of activities designed to offer housing for specific targets, including in a extensive sense a type of system “made public”, in line with the new integrated and plural dimension where the public, without losing its identity, plays a fluidification role of decision-making between the different actors, with varying degrees of intensity in response to the needs and characteristics of the

system.

2. A multidimensional model of Social Housing

In the moment when the media attention and legislative focus back to the problem - increasingly emerging in Italy, but never dealt with a decision - of the house as a right to satisfy support and protection of persons, in different conditions and ranges of age, of income and of needs, it seems appropriate to advance the guiding theme of residential and social housing through a necessary althous partial terminological refundation, also performed in order to avoid misunderstandings or failures made possible by erroneous conceptual translations, incorrect language or a forced semantical adaptation. This applies even in the face of wide diversity of models, applications and practice on social housing expertise at European level, a sign of cultural and political plurivocity in which, in different domains of the protection of social rights, public policy-makers undertook to respond (Scanlon and Whitehead eds., 2007-2008). This formula is resulting in cultural, political and economic development processes of the protection of social rights for the inclusion and integration as well as, in the widest point of European regulatory view, of respect of needs, civic and social interest. Indeed, from a purely formal perspective, we will find the definition “social””, with the obvious preferential orientation of the target recipients - made up of players in terms of social exclusion and therefore, to housing hardship (Venditti, 2008) the reference to the matrix of the general interest to whom these measures seek to respond immediately by raising a theme – that of the structural link between human rights, and individual welfare – which develops as a focus value of this work. Meanwhile, we can identify the epistemological correlations of social housing:

- 1) comparticipation to the liveability of the place and its civil representation (district, block etc.) in order to reduce the discomfort of housing;
- 2) Socializing sharing of the costs of social housing socializing especially in its relational meanings (Donati, 1991) with increasing the productive relations between householders to optimize the potential of copying with emerging situations of daily life;
- 3) integrated construction of a “residential identity” able to promote social inclusion at a group level. «The territorial anxiety is the prefiguration of the loss of membership of a place to a human group, and viceversa. This affiliation, namely the indigenosity, is the subject of a operation of “cleaning” not unlike that which took place at the expense of street life at the turn the industrial revolution. The result in both cases is the move to a regime of territorial indifference, alienation between the people and their territory. [...] The city, the country, the territory become indifferent to the average citizen, who hasn't the power to get his hands on the city and changing the face of the environment in which He live. He is allowed to use, to do inside the own niche. But his living is not business of creating places. He is only a user » (La Cecla, 2005).

Based on the above, seems to assume consistency, for integrated development and not reductionist system of government decisions and policies on social construction residential and social housing as an expression of protection of rights of the person, a *relational* and *communicative* approach between institutions and civil society, in the meaning of concepts that are fundamental to the sociological analysis such as participation and social capital.

«The relational approach is based on a substantial revision of the relationship between the administration that supports and governs the urban and the local company that “suffers” interventions of qualification. This review introduces more interactivity, which is expected to substantial through a dual effort between the civil society approach on the one hand and the public administration at the other hand. The transition from urban aimed as direct public Administration to urban aimed at negotiating a transition is based on a communicative hub. The ability to communicate becomes, in the government-civil society relation, a dual directionality» (Bazzini, Puttilli, 2008).

Reported so far from what seems to be unequivocally a topic whose importance increases in its

dynamic connection with further requests and reasons for the social dimension of living. It refers to the *enforceability of rights*, both personally and in civil, constitutionally enshrined in a number of European political traditions. Terms such as *protection, support, distress*, etc. identify properly the fundamental condition, anthropological before than social, of life. Every person, regardless of the status, role, income or job, contains in itself, but is in itself, the fundamental condition of need: the constitutive lack that forces and at the same time allows shared socialization, educational interaction, intersubjective communication, developing the critical expression's potential of vision of the world that makes everyone not only an individual but, in fact, the *person*, subject of protection and law.

As with welfare (especially that developed in operational ideals of the Italian tradition), elements that appear correlative articulate the policies of social protection and services to people (the “trifocality”: individuals, groups/communities, institutions), in the same way it's possible to identify, within the theoretical context of social housing, a valorial and functional triplicity identified in the *centrality of the person*, the *rights* and *welfare*. This reflection is made relevant by the finding that, in spite of current unilateral trends of policy and the market, which are becoming increasingly liberalized and in some way dissolving the fundamental relationship of trust between the need for social protection by the State and expectations of meeting the needs of different social strata of the population, also legacy of an influential *civic tradition* in the economy, history and culture of Italy (Zamagni, 2004), the person must again be the focus of anthropology, identity, society, in a word *relational*, able to reconnect in the proper sense of the foundations of economic and political agency all the questions relating to the issue of human rights, the legitimacy of their empirical applicability and environmental sustainability in terms of policies, operations, production of goods and services.

In line with the solutions suggested by the multidimensional sociology of Geoffrey C. Alexander, in which the scientific legitimacy is assumed by the centrality of epistemological matter on the nature of social action (Alexander, 1982), here is the original vision of a “scrolling space” of social housing, as seen through the conceptual and epistemological dynamics expressed in this work, without interruption, represented by the *centrality of the person*, capable of combining and recognize one another, liquifying dynamically, the two main dimensions of trifocality described above: the *rights*' dimension, symbolic, abstract, formal, normative, and that of *welfare*, applicative, decision-making, executive, relational. In that sense, we can observe the elements of greatest *interest* – particularly in literal and original meaning of “what is between me and you” note: interest – of the epistemological conceptualization of this proposal, with no overlap and slide interruption of any kind, while avoiding those cesures, ambiguities and paradoxes in which the same welfare, in a multiple and complex world, seems now to have stumbled repeatedly, taking risk to exchange risk of the *container*, i.e. the procedures, practices, methods, goals, for the *content*, i.e. people, their values, their cultures, their rights. The following chart shows a schematization of the multidimensional model of social housing:

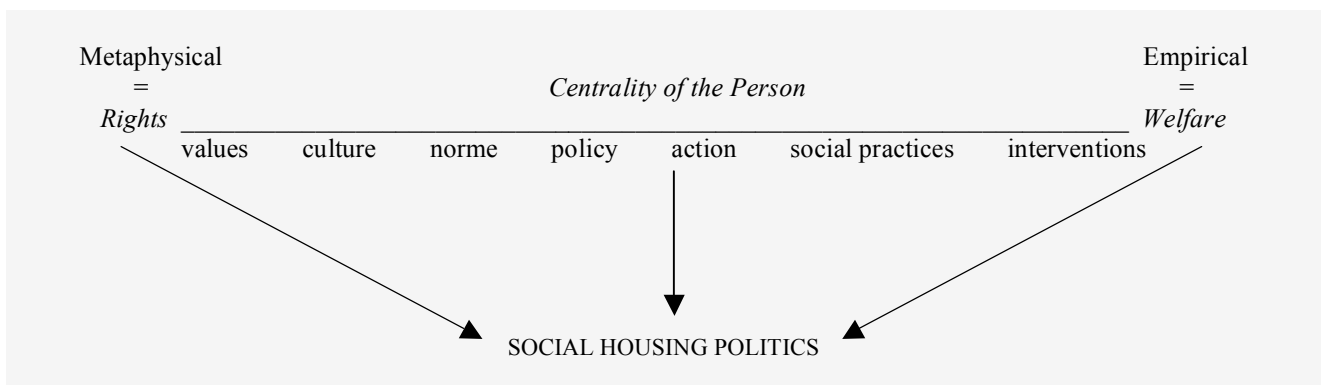


Fig. 1 – Multidimensional modelization of social housing

3. *The method of scenarios*

The objective of this section is to make a description of a Spatial Decision Support System to support the relevant decision problems involved in the Social Housing management. The advantages of a Decision Support System derived mainly from the possibility to use data for decision support and, in particular, for considering the opinions of people involved in the decision process.

We think that the use of quantitative data (*hard data*) together with the opinion of experts (*soft data* or *subjective data*) is the best way to take into account all the most significant aspects of the problem. On the other hand, using such a System in a Spatial environment give to decision-makers the advantage of looking at data directly on maps. In general SDSS are based on various type of data and indicators, but the union of soft and hard data in a GIS environment is a whole new challenge. Statistical modelling, Multi Criteria Decision Making techniques and GIS logic allow to create a model that becomes the basis for the SDSS.

Entering in more detail, about the subjective approach we propose the method of scenarios, as proposed by Godet (2001), and in particular we follow the purpose of creating a *Participated Planning Scenario*.

The *Planning Scenario* is made up of two elements:

- 1) the *Descriptive Scenario*, which contains all the images of the future which can be generated from the definite present, also known as the “base of the cone of plausibility”;
- 2) the *Normative Scenario*, one single image of the future planning objective and generally defined as “desired”. The normative scenario is the object of the *Strategic Planning*, that chooses and organizes the intermediate objectives that lead to the “desired” scenario.

In reality, in a Representative Democracy there exists an unstuck splitting between the “normative” and the “desired” scenario. For example, in the case of a Social Housing context, the entrepreneurs “desire” particular interventions in active policy, but these are “decided” by their representatives.

In the approach proposed by Michel Godet (1993), in order to realize a scenario it is important to follow three main phases: a) the construction of the base, that is the base of the cone of plausibility; b) the identification of the trajectories towards the future; c) construction of the exploratory scenarios.

a) In the first stage, the base of the cone of plausibility, that represents a simplified image of the present, must be settled and the objective is to define and analyze the system under study. The most important purpose is to identify central points and questions for the future and this is a central task because around these points the actors of the system under study could build their strategies. The main tool used at this stage of the process is the “Structural Analysis”.

b) The trajectories towards the future are the sequences of events or paths, in a certain number of temporal intervals. The point is to interpret the actual mechanisms regulating the evolution of the variables identified in the previous stage, taking into consideration the actors' strategy and their potential alliances and conflicts.

c) The construction of the exploratory scenarios produces a certain number of alternative images of the future, which are submitted to the judgements of experts. A scenario is made of a set of plausible hypothesis on each of the key questions defined in the previous stages.

The Structural Analysis

As seen before, the first step in the construction of the exploratory scenario regards the construction of a simplified image of the present. Using the judgments of a group of experts, the Structural Analysis is a method that allows the explanation of the system through the identification of the “key variables”, divided in internal and external variables.

Structural Analysis consists of three main steps:

1. Inventory of variables. In this stage, using expert opinions, all the variables, internal or external, that characterize the system are defined. The definition of a list of variables should be as exhaustive as possible, avoid leaving out important elements describing the system. It is also important to create a glossary, in order to avoid any wrong interpretation among the experts and so that the variables are easily understandable for people outside the group of experts.
2. Description of relationships between variables. Once defined the variables, the important task is to reconstruct and describe the web of relations between them. Using matrices the work, made by experts, consists in defining direct influences between variables taken in pairs. The MICMAC method (Godet, 1993) allows the comparison among all the variable, and in particular, is based on a square matrix where the experts declare the existence of a direct influence of each variable toward the others. In the junction between the generic row variable, let's say V_i , and the generic column variable, let's say V_j , in the cell of the matrix the experts will put 1, if the variable V_i has a direct influence on V_j , and 0 otherwise. Therefore, the MICMAC matrix is a square matrix with zeroes and ones, that allows a simplification of the problem and permits the assembling and the identification of the key variables of the system.
3. Identification of essential variables. This last stage consists in identifying essential variables of the Social Housing system's global dynamics. The variables are visualized in a perception graph, called influence-dependence plane, from which it is possible to recognize various group of variables. In particular, influent variables, depending variables and relay variables (they are at the same time very influent and very dependent), can be identified.

Consider that, besides the *direct relations* among the variables, that come out from the MICMAC matrices, it is possible also to detect the *indirect relations*. In general, in a system there are many chains of influence and feedback among the relevant variables, and in order to point out the key variables it is important to consider also the indirect relations. Starting from the original matrix, two ranking of the variables are made, one using the total by row, that represents the *influence capacity* of each variable, and one based on the total by column, that represents a measure of the *dependence* of each variable. Raising the matrix to the 2nd power (multiply the matrix by itself), we obtain a new matrix that represents the indirect relations of the 2nd order, and two new ranking (one for the influence and one for the dependence) are calculated. Raising the matrix to subsequent powers, it is possible to highlight other relations and, starting from a certain power of the original matrix, the two rankings become stable, (that is they don't change any more), and represent the final MICMAC classification.

Interpretation of the Driving capacity x Dependency chart

In the initial MICMAC matrix, if we calculate the totals by rows, we have a sum of the ones referred to the influence capacity. This means that a variable that influences directly many other variables will have many ones and, consequently, a great sum, while if a variable influences few other variables, its row contains as many little ones, and than a little sum. As a consequence, the totals by row represents a measure of the influence capacity of each variable. On the contrary, summing by column the values of the matrix, means to measure the dependence of each variable, because it means to count the number of variables that influence the variable considered.

So, given n variables, we have n values representing the influence capacity and n values for the dependence, and interpreting the two scores as coordinates of a point in a plane, it is possible to represent all the variables in a bi-dimensional coordinate system, called exactly the "influence x dependence plane" (Fig. 1).

Calculating the mean of the influence scores and the mean of the dependence scores, we have two coordinate relative to the centre of gravity of the system. The cloud of points (variables) in this plane with respect to the various quadrants around the centre of gravity determine four categories of variables. These categories differ from one another depending on the specific role the variables they include can play in the system's dynamics (Godet, 1993; Arcade *et al.*, 1999).

Determinant or “driving” variables. These variables are, altogether, very influent and only slightly dependent. Most of the system thus depends on those variables located in the southeast frame of the perception chart. The driving variables are its most crucial elements since they can act on the system depending on how much we can control them as a key factor either of inertia or of movement. They are also considered as entry variables in the system. Among them, there are most often environment variables, which strongly condition the system, but in general cannot be controlled by it.

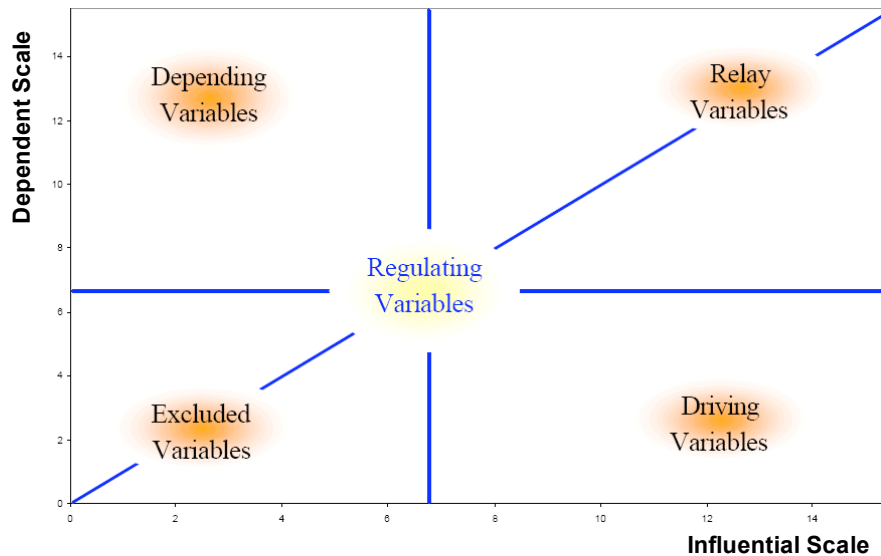


Fig. 1: *The influence x dependence plane*

Relay variables. They are at the same time very driving and very dependent. These variables, situated in the northeast frame of the chart, are by nature factors of instability since any action on them has consequences on the other variables in the event certain conditions on other driving variables are met. But these consequences can have a boomerang effect, which either amplifies or forestalls the initial impulse. It is also possible to distinguish, within this group, between:

- *the stake variables*, more precisely located around the diagonal, which will have strong possibilities to stimulate the major actors, since, given their unstable character, they are a potential breakpoint for the system;
- *the target variables*, situated over the diagonal rather than along the north south frontier, are rather more dependent than driving. Therefore, they can be considered, to a certain extent, as resulting from the system's evolution. However, a wilful action can be conducted on them so as to make them evolve in the desired way. Thus, they represent possible objectives for the system in its entirety, rather than wholly predetermined consequences (Fig. 2).

Depending variables, or rather, result variables. These variables, located in the northwest frame of the chart, are at the same time barely influent and very dependent. So, they are especially sensitive to the evolution of driving variables and/or relay variables. They are the “output” variables of the system.

Autonomous or excluded variables. Which are barely influent or dependent. These variables are situated in the southwest frame, and appear relatively out of line with the system since they neither halt a major evolution undergone by the system, nor really take advantage of it. A distinction must be drawn within this group between:

- *disconnected variables*, situated near the axis's origin, whose evolution therefore seems to be rather excluded from the global dynamics of the system;
- *secondary levers*, which, although quite autonomous, are more influent than dependent.

Variables concerned are located in the southeast frame, to a certain extent under the diagonal, and can be used as secondary acting variables or as application points for possible accompanying measures (Fig. 2).

Regulating Variables. One final type of variable merits being mentioned, less so for its intrinsic definition than for its original situation with regard to the other types presented above. These are the regulating variables, situated mostly in the centre of gravity of the system. They can successively act at times as secondary levers, as weak objectives, or as secondary stakes.

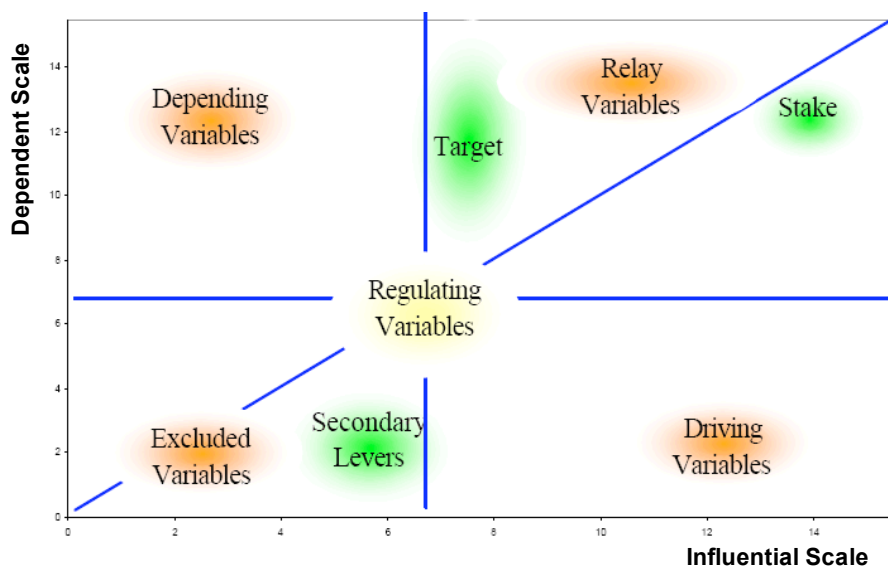


Fig. 2: *The influence x dependence plane: further details*

The results of the MICMAC

Through the technique of the GroupWare, one of the Participatory Methods (Glenn, 1999), it is possible to collect the judgments of a group of experts in the field of Social Housing. By means of a digital questionnaire, the selected experts, using their expertise, provided an inventory of the relevant variables influencing the Social Housing system, of the main actors involved and of their objectives.

It is based on the analysis of the system of social housing, identifying focal points and questions which represent the elements around which the actors could build their future strategies

Further development of the model

Starting from the base of the cone, there are different trajectories to reach the future scenarios and one possible way to looking at future scenarios is by using agent based simulation techniques. In our case the agents are the major players/actors operating within the system of social housing. In this framework, a crucial point is that of construction of econometric models representing the behaviour of those actors, and only the experts are able to define the essential elements representing each model.

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