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The port-city interface as a filtering line
Matteo di Venosa

The relationship between city and port in Italy still appears to be marked by strong conflicts: between institutional figures, decision-making bodies and space and land use. Often such conflicts emerge in the area which defines itself as a border line and intermediary between the urban network and port activities.
This border between city and port is defined as 'the interstitial periphery'' or 'the abandoned threshold', highlighting the marginal conditions and the nature of the frontiers between the different systems and spatial organisations.
In Italy, within the main harbour cities, it is difficult to find an abandoned space, which is available to be functionally and spatially converted in an 'organic' way. The connotation of this complex spatial context isn't so much a composition of heterogeneous and fragmentary objects, but rather the concentration of different channels and mobility networks, reflected in the multifaceted activities found in the area.
The area linking city to port could be interpreted as a potent, but imperfect 'connective space', within which the actual flow of traffic which serves the port and city moves at deferent speeds, and with strongly differentiated needs. This flow of traffic also serves the virtual commercial trade network and financial transactions, which, in turn, enhances the harbour centre and its broader interrelationships.
All in all, the conflict between city and port is largely unavoidable. Knowledge of this fact may help guide a more innovative path which experiments with the integration of various flows of traffic in an attempt to repair the port system with that of the city. From this perspective, the area between port and city could become a place of dialogue and cooperation, a type of new urban frontier and a filtering line for mediation. A filtering line is an unstable frontier. It is one which is continuously evolving and must accept imposed changes on/from both port and city, without modifying its internal organisation and functionality. The urban plans for waterfront re-development for the Marina di Carrara, Napoli and Pescara, are, in fact, experimenting with the effectiveness of this type of project.