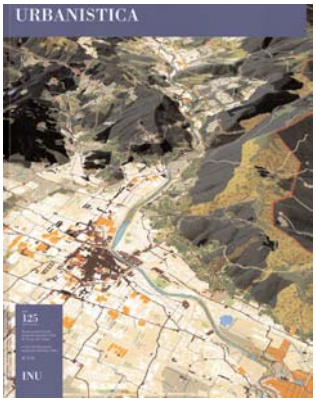


**Urbanistica n. 125**
September-December 2005

*Distribution by www.planum.net*

*Angela Barbanente* — The social function of territory and of town planning: demands, projects, and problems

**Problems, policies, and research**

*edited by Elio Trusiani* — Urban policy in Brazil: national strategies and local practices
*Elio Trusiani* — Institutional innovations and social-spatial differences
*Raquel Rolnik* — Lula's government and the Ministry of Cities
*Gislene Pereira* — The City Statute: new avenues for urban management
*Maria do Rocio Morais do Rosario* — Curitiba: the challenge of the sustainable city
*Elio Trusiani* — Three questions to Jaime Lerner
*Cristina de Araujo Lima* — The Metropolitan Region of Curitiba
*Yara Vicentini* — Brazilian cities between modernization and marginality
*José Pessôa* — Preserving historic centres in Brazil: idees and practices

**Projects and implementation**

*Alberto Magnaghi* — Exercises in statutory and participatory planning: the Prato TCP

**Profiles and practices**

*edited by Sandra Bonfiglioli* — The city of time and the culture of planning
*Marco Mareggi* — The spillovers from urban time policies
*Gisella Bassanini* — Women's views of the transformation of the city. A research workshop
*Luc Gwiazdzinski* — The city of the night
*Maurizio Vogliazzo, Decio Guardigli* — Festen. A memorandum for the workshop *Architecture of festivity*
*Marco Albini* — The places of mobility, or the design of temporality inhabited public spaces
*Alberico B. Belgiojoso* — Events, museums and paths for urban renewal
*Lorenza Perelli* — Art transforms public spaces
*Gian Carlo Calza* — Les Halles. A time architecture workshop
*Alain Guez* — Time aspects in the design of Les Halles in Paris

**Methods and tools**

*Mario Sechi* — City centres and peripheries in Pier Paolo Pasolini and Paolo Volponi

*Pierluigi Properzi* — The reformist governance of the territory. The need for a project

*Giovanni Circella, Mario Binetti, Margherita Mascia* — The Prospect Theory and the prediction of traveler behaviour

Received books

**Institutional innovations and social-spatial differences**
*Elio Trusiani*

Brazil is a country undergoing a very rapid urbanization process: suffice it to think that in 1940 it had 1,572 municipalities while in 2003 this figure had become 5,561. In the last decade alone 1,077 new administrations have been established, giving rise in this short time to an important transformation in the country's politic-administrative geography. At present 82% of the Brazilian population live in towns, although there are great inequalities and enormous social-spatial differences. The big urban agglomerations, in fact, reveal very clearly the country's disparity, concentrating extremes of poverty and wealth. Segregation, fragmentation and contrast between 'informal' and 'formal' city areas, between occupations in environmentally fragile areas and areas 'properly' urbanized and provided with adequate services, are the present situation of the main urban areas of Brazil. In spite of the intense urbanization, the increase in the number of municipalities and the decentralization of powers, urban policy in the past has not played a dominant role on the national political agenda, although the central government contributes to a considerable extent to financing housing, environmental recovery and urban transport. A reversal of trend has come about in the last few years, when the 'urban question' started occupying considerable space in the debate both in academic circles and in the bodies responsible for formulating public policies, to the point of becoming one of the major challenges for the country's development. A challenge taken up by Lula's government which, for this purpose, has established the Ministry of Cities; from São Paulo, a metropolis with more than 18 million inhabitants, to Xapuri, a forest town in the heart of the Amazon region, the government recognizes as an absolute and urgent priority the formulation of a national urban development policy that takes into account the enormous differences that exist in the country. By acting in this way the government has filled an institutional gap and is playing a fundamental role in urban policy and sectoral policies, giving a further impetus to the decentralization of functions to the municipalities, as defined in the Federal Constitution of 1988. A highly important moment for the towns was the approval in 2001 of the City Statute (Law 10,257) which establishes rules of public order and social interest, in order to regulate the use of urban property in favour of the collective good, the security and welfare of citizens and standards of environmental equilibrium. The City Statute defines the rules for national urban policy, outlined and made operative by the Municipal Master Plans, obligatory for all towns with more than 20,000 inhabitants. Precisely these two moments, i.e. the City Statute and the creation of the Ministry of Cities, are important innovations in Brazil's legislative and operative panorama and bring the urban question to the attention of national policies, recognizing it as one of the foremost ones of the new government. The contributions contained in this service propose a reading of the current phase of experimentation and transition of urban areas, compressed between institutional innovations and very great social-spatial contradictions and differences; in the first part it is precisely the contents, the objectives and the wealth of proposals that are evidenced, while in the second part a case study concerning the town of Curitiba is presented, shedding light on the virtues and defects of a town that for some forty years has been planning its growth according to the rules of ecological and urban sustainability, and whose experience has received international acclaim. Policies to integrate public transport, soil occupancy and the road traffic system are ensuring that the city's growth is controlled and monitored, making it possible for the public authorities to intervene so as to minimize the negative impacts. Safeguarding the territory, economic development and social promotion are the basic elements of the urban policies adopted in Curitiba and, at the same time, they act as the basis for tackling the challenges of sustainable development with perseverance and creativity. Some brief critical notes precisely on this experience bring the service to an end and offer ideas for fresh reflection.