



Urbanistica n. 126

January-April 2005

Distribution by www.planum.net

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Strong government for the Roman urban project*Maurizio Marcelloni*

Although we may know exactly what an urban project is, if we no longer remember what it is when writing it into a regulation, or rather, if we do not manage to control it, the regulation will neither meet the needs of both the jurist-regulator and the administrator-controller, nor satisfy the flexibility required by the town planner-project manager. In reality this method confronts the attempt to undertake a complex of urban phenomena with, as far as can be seen, the culture of the urban government which has always refused to acquire this complex: both in terms of development and in terms of practical regulation. Confronted with this complexity, both the planner and the administrator must modify their own approach and must change the way they design the project. Firstly, the urban project poses a question of 'project/planning culture'. Almost always the will to define everything *a priori* derives from the evaluation's objectivity which the public administration must guarantee by eliminating all forms of discretion in the decision-maker. In fact, the traditional idea of defining a plan/project on the basis of given rules and parameters and presenting it for approval no longer holds good. The real problem posed by the urban project is that of the methods with which the various subjects participate and work together in its definition: in its content, time schedule, feasibility, and usefulness. The most fascinating challenge posed by the urban project lies specifically in its demand for integration: between planner and decision taker, between these and the local demand, between the definition of the

contents and the various disciplines involved, between marketing and project phrases, between definition of the management models and actuating development phases, between planning and management of time, between control instruments and guarantees of quality in the space produced, between control of the initial form and quality of successive projects. All this cannot be but the fruit of attentive negotiation between operators and administrators. Rome's experience throughout these years confirms that there are certainly difficult problems associated with making progress along these lines. There are a great many urban projects activated and to be activated. The reality of this definition is composed of very different operations: from the urban project in the Ostiense-Marconi area involving the transformation of an entire area of the city through a multiplicity of precise and infrastructural interventions, to the urban transformation projects possessing a new centrality composed of complex large-scale interventions on 'empty' urban spaces of relevant sizes with the aim of constructing poles of attraction for substantially residential urban settings. The state of the art shows that a wide range of trends apply and there still seems to be a strong risk of remaining in an environment of purely real estate and property construction operations. The operators seem to wish to negotiate seriously, but only if pressed by a politically unified administration, conscious of its powers, of which it perhaps does not have many but which are certainly sufficient to obtain useful quality prioritised shared projects for the city.