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## Town planning equalization

*Giuseppe Campos Venuti*

Basically town planning equalization is the obvious choice. In fact we had already invented it in 1961, with the standard regulations of the Master plan of the Bologna Inter-municipal Plan, which states (in Art. 27) "50% of the areas of the various expansion districts ... must be assigned to areas of public use for roads, car parks, public and social amenities, green areas, subsidized building, etc.". These regulations were first rejected and then readopted, after which the 'Sullo Reform' began to be applied in Emilia Romagna, and was eventually applied voluntarily by the municipalities; regarding both public and private expansion, it offered more interesting prospects and was at the moment preferred.

Recourse to diffuse expropriation, in the minority of municipalities using it, guaranteed effective implementation of the public city, but only while the prices of urban areas remained at reasonable levels. But prices rose in the '80s, and this brought the forgotten town planning equalization back into the limelight and in the 1994 Master plan of Reggio Emilia its widespread use was proposed; in the 1999 Master plan it guaranteed the free acquisition through equalization of the public city foreseen by the plan. I prefer to call the operation 'equalizing compensation'. Compensation, because I consider the free transfer of the whole quota of the public city relating to every measure a compensation due to the community, which in exchange attributes private building rights to land ownership. And equalizing because the free granting of areas, and compensation in building

rights, must be guaranteed with equal criteria for all the areas belonging to the same town planning-legal categories.

In the case of the new Psc of Reggio the minimum quota of free transfer for building areas for housing and tertiary purposes may not be less than 50% of the total area (in the 1999 Master plan it was not less than 40%), and it increases to 80%, where the new building value to be offset is lower.

The best known of the recent innovations applicable more widely to the reformist regional laws, is that relating to 'social housing', considered equivalent to the standards in the 1968 decree. An innovation that will allow an extraordinary change for low-cost and public housing, and perhaps a new national policy.

In the new 'social housing', by zeroing the cost of the site, the final cost will be reduced roughly by one-third, for buildings financed by the community.

The application of town planning equalization, used more and more often, is casting light also on a basic problem: that of substituting for the tax on the first house a tax on urban land rent, that is on building areas.

Town planning equalization has thus opened a new problem in public-private relations, the regulation of which is the keystone of town planning today.