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Plans, housing question and modernization of the country

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Jordi Bellmut, Maria Goula

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Problems, policies, and research

Atlases of the landscape in Europe

Atlases and landscapes

Methodological proposals for the management and promotion of Piedmont landscapes

Social perception of the landscape and the Atlases

The Atlas as a metaphor for the history of territory and landscape

The European context

Experiences on the landscape catalogues for Catalonia

Tuscany landscapes Atlas and spatial planning

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Mariarosa Albano, Clea Martone, Michele Russo,

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Projects and implementation

The Ptcp of Naples: the land and its fertile resources

Presentation

Dilemmas and obstacles in the management of objectives

A heritage to defend and exploit

The Ptcp of Naples: from the plan of 2003 to the new proposal of 2008

The landscape in the plan

Naples Ptcp directions

Settlements system

The assessment of territorial contexts and the landscape analysis

Agricultural landscapes in the Naples province: a heritage to be protected

A soil science to urban landscape planning: the case study of Naples and its surroundings

Cultural heritage, landscape and metropolitan system: is planning possible?

Sustainable mobility for Naples' metropolitan area

Statistical analysis in support of territorial planning

Gis for spatial co-ordination planning

Knowledge and action in the 'structural' interpretation and representation of territory

edited by Paolo Pileri

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Kjell Nilsson, Thomas Sick Nielsen, Stephan Pauleit

Paolo Pileri, Marta Maggi

Profiles and practices

Consuming land, consuming the future

Four countries, six experiences, for a single issue: limiting urbanisation

Towards sustainable land use in Germany: reviewing the German experience

with antisprawl policies and tools

Urban containment strategies in the Netherlands

From an economical use of land to land use management strategies, tasks and

challenges in Switzerland

Land use and consumption in England: how is land use controlled and monitored?

How has land use changed?

Assessment of sustainable land use in Germany: the project Fin.30

Integrated European research on sustainable urban development and periurban

land use relationships

Interpretational figures and methods for knowledge and evaluation of land consumption:

the transition matrix

Rosario Pavia

Methods and tools

Zoning, zooning

Michele Talia

Reform of territorial governance and the new urban order

Clovis Ultramari

By the way, what urbanism really is?

Dilemmas and obstacles in the management of objectives

Francesco Domenico Moccia

The diversity of provincial plans is due to the diversity of provinces. One such difference is at the metropolitan level, which yields a set of problems peculiar to urban planning. These problems are grafted onto an economic and functional reality of which we have descriptions from several perspectives and which remain topical, but defy territorial innovation. Regardless of what it may be called, the metropolitan question in the literature shows a continuity of scientific development rotating around the stability of a concept, although it is expressed in several nuances. And when, in the European context, the metropolitan issue becomes the subject of centrally based assessments to establish relations and regional balances, it inevitably ends up being the subject of national policies for those governments which are shrewder at perpetuating their role as leader among the other EU members.

The identifications of objectives of a territorial plan should take into account various factors including social needs, demand for spaces for different activities, and quantity and quality of future development. This is influenced by the system of values, politics and ecological awareness. Such objectives should also be substantiated by investigations and projections so that accurate diagnoses of problems which the plan will tackle are made and appropriate solutions are determined. This whole procedure is clearly both onerous and time-consuming when applied to every detail of the plan, albeit recognised as a

technically correct method of working. For reasons of simplification, the objectives are not applied equally across all regions.

Formulating objectives in a strategic approach is subject to two further conditions which have to be taken into account. The first contextualizes them into realistic options both in terms of real resources which can be mobilized and opportunities expected from the wider system of relationships within which the province of Naples is positioned. The second relates to the capacity and ability of players actually or presumably involved in the collective action of change. These conditions affect the whole physical nature of the project: it has to be carefully designed so that construction may take place in an area whose adversities cannot be underestimated.

These conditions may also be faced in terms of possible development, too easily translated into slogans, which are communicated effectively as well as being misleading. Naples, a Mediterranean platform, needs a logistical project which reflects its key role along north-south and east-west European corridors. At the same time it must be properly positioned in relation to the ports of the northern Tyrrhenian and Adriatic, and with the hub of the Po valley which has the same system of inter-relationships. In current conditions, the territorial plan performs a pure regulatory function and runs the risk of purely regulating and appraising the municipal plan. Indeed, the territorial plan has already been marginalized by the major policies of regional investment, planned through the Regional territorial plan (Ptr) and Strategic regional plan (Psr). The Ptcp complies with these plans but cannot make any addition or specification, at least with

respect to the active land use policies.

The challenge is here to strike the right balance between legislation and regulations, exploring the possibility of legislation which steers possible actions, until certain thresholds are reached. This leads us to reflect on the whole role of coordination and for the purposes of the plan. One could start by discussing the intent of the legislator regarding the absence of social and political union in a community to which the public decision is addressed, and the use of a variety of subjects who converge in an institution which is plural in itself.

We are dealing with a rigid evaluation of the scientific knowledge concerning the metropolitan context, which is embedded in the law itself, although ineffective in practice. The end result is the drawing up of projects which are similar in scale and interest, even if they seem to have to be shared with the municipal community. There can be no other premise for a consistent implementation of polycentrism, even if this is the expression of initiatives from below. There must be added the policy of decentralization of rare functions, the containment of tertiary development of consolidated centres, central investments concentrated in public works and public-private projects and the development of a new and old centrality.

Searching in planner's subconscious, we find aspirations, which have the role of guidance in the variety of the topics which we have so far treated, corresponding to the most radical and overall assessment of the situation and to the challenge which it poses for the tasks in hand. Although the literature is increasingly devoted to deal to methods, techniques and process, showing ever

more respect for independent decisions making by social and political actors, the inevitable substantive argument sooner or later ends up being the subject of public debate, perhaps never in the explicit manner of a codified idea of town and territory, of principles and formers.

But when positions are compared also on marginal and specific aspects, on sectoral solutions and techniques, a reference is felt to a concept often unexpressed in order not to compromise a dialogue between parties intent on coming closer to shared projects albeit starting from distant positions.

But the prejudice power of the guideline had to be verified or detached from the starting positions, boosted to become point of convergence. This is a ground that seemed to be feasible on the basis of ecological context from which to begin in order to imagine a new metropolis. In this approach sustainability is exceeded. We have already lamented the ineffectiveness of the evaluation which does not intervene during the planning process in order to select choices and guide objectives, but simply has mitigatory and compensatory measures. It is a question of freeing the environment out from sectoral policy and devising a broad package of environmental measures and moving the concept that the various requirements should lie within the unitary framework of the 'ecological city'. When such a model has been set up, the comparison with the existing city will seem inevitable because in this comparison it will have a role of pushing for change and generating projects.