

16 CITIES COMPARED

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URBAN and complex programmes

There is no doubt that the URBAN programme for Italy has caused our country's cities to "grow": ideas, projects, innovation, organisation of offices, bids and tenders, partnership, and implementation management are all fields in which the different administrations, in various, original ways, have produced results and vied with each other.

It is however certain that also the complex programmes promoted in the last few years in Italy by the Ministry of Public Works have moved in the same direction, acting within the same *mix* of elements.

Both typologies have served as a nucleus around which more or less large pearls, of greater or lesser luminosity, have developed; both typologies have provided the local administrations with a fertile *humus* in which to develop political programmes and election campaigns; both, again, have urged the administrations, often for the first time, to take up urban marketing formulae and to enter the market on their own account as bodies capable of transforming urban degradation into a "value", restoring liveability, safety and image to parts of cities.

But is there a difference?

Many claim, quite rightly, that when URBAN first started it already included within itself the germ of physical and social integration: but the same could be said about the District Contracts, and the same occurred for certain urban rehabilitation and urban renewal programmes. But while in the first case that type of integration was a must dictated by the necessity to respect the different mix of measures, acting in an *ex ante* sense, in the second case integration came about in carrying out the programmes and pursuing "free" mixes, ones not obliged to take paths already mapped out.

Again reasoning about "obligation" and "choices", we can address the subject of office organisation, where in the case of URBAN the interaction of the various council offices and departments was made necessary precisely because of its original formulation and where for the complex programmes, instead, it has been a choice of the administrations aimed at strengthening the projects and involving more efficiently and effectively, the various actors of the local communities.

The number of cities that have started complex programmes is far larger than the URBAN cities. URBAN has, however, brought about a greater interaction among the cities not just at national level, precisely due to the organisational structure of the Italy Programme, but also at international level.

The administrations of higher level than those of the municipalities (regions and provinces) have been involved in a different manner: URBAN has basically travelled on municipal rails, whereas the complex programmes have witnessed a more substantial involvement of the regions and provinces (these last especially in the PRUSST).

The URBAN sub-programmes

Each sub-programme presents original aspects linked to various factors.

Quite apart from the organisational and managerial factors (cf. DICOTER interviews), particular interest attaches to three subjects which the administrations have tackled and given their own, original answers: integration, the activating of the services, and activities aimed at promoting the sustainability of the urban environment.

Regarding the first subject it should be pointed out that, by and large, to produce “integration” the cities have promoted measures in which the connection between the rehabilitation (or less frequently construction *ex novo*) of buildings and the activation of the services is extremely clear: the physical measure is never an end in itself but always correlated with the supply of a service which, normally, starts functioning in temporary premises and is then transferred to the upgraded buildings. An emblematic case is that of Cosenza, where the completely degraded historic centre is now once more an attraction, with its services.

This general principle has many corollaries. The integration that is promoted between activation of services and their management by individuals and/or associative formations that have been formed for the purpose within the URBAN programme, as for example in the Catanzaro sub-programme, is particularly significant.

Another corollary of the main concept of integration is the one found in numerous programmes, between urban furniture measures (upgrading of roads and city squares), on the one hand, and the incentives offered to craftsmen and traders (and the private resources invested by the latter) whose upgrading projects often foresee, jointly with company consolidation and/or development, also the rearrangement and upgrading of the head office.

On the other hand the possibility of generating induced effects is based precisely on integration. For example, in the Palermo sub-programme, roads and city squares are earmarked to constitute circuits in upgraded areas in order to be imitated by the owners of the buildings looking onto them and to attract investments and locations of new social and economic actors. These are factors which, in being producers of social diversification, create a useful and diversified modality of urban renewal.

As far as sustainability is concerned, the measures range from ones that impinge directly on environmental modifications (such as the rehabilitation of unauthorised tip areas, the restoration of geomorphological damage caused by mining activities, the renaturalising of areas) to ones that transfer polluting activities (delocation of polluting activities, in some cases with subsequent reclamation); from measures aimed at indirectly affecting the environment through control of the system of mobility - from the standpoint both of the typology and the technology of the ways presently used and to be substituted (e.g. with ecological minibuses or “hybrid” buses) and of rationalising flows (e.g. by installing an integrated telematic system for the management of urban mobility) - to decidedly innovative experimental measures such as that of the anechoic chamber in Genoa (a unit for testing electromagnetic radiations emitted by electronic apparatuses).

The third point relating to the activating of services is important in particular for the thorough analysis made of local needs targeted on “designing” the service which has led above all to

setting up “centres” of a varied nature, intended - quite apart from URBAN - to walk on their own legs: such centres range from diversified forms of reception (residential centres and day centres for the poor and needy, reception centres) to centres intended for social aggregation; centres producing services of a typically social nature (technical district services, social-educational services for juveniles; anti-violence services for women; a multiethnic service); centres concerned with production and employment (information and advice on work, training and enterprise ; job centres; front offices for small and medium size enterprises; structures for the valorisation of typical products) and, lastly, centres that offer the possibility to carry on leisure activities (“music house”, “ludoteca”, a space for playing and for formative games activity).