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The plan is not enough

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Problems, policies, and research

Innovation and urban competitiveness in Ob. 2 regions of Italy

Competitiveness and urban policies

Towards a metropolitan agenda in the new programming

Urban policy: an only partial assent

Cities, districts and regional innovation systems: the intersection between innovation policies and territorial policies

The concentration of high-level jobs in the cities

Piedmont

Lazio

Tuscany

Projects and implementation

edited by Maurizio Marcelloni

Maurizio Marcelloni

Carmela Mariano

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Yannis Tsiomis

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Interview with Manuel Salgado

Federico Oliva

An urban project for the Romanina

The centrality of the periphery

The preliminary studies

The history of a competition

Description of the preliminary layout

An approach to the urban project

The competition for the Romanina master plan. The challenge of the centrality

Creating a centre in the Romanina area

Strategies, rules and decision

Profiles and practices

Francesco Rubeo

Yodan Rofè

Giovanna Fossa, Robert D. Yaro

Cristina Bianchetti

Patrizia Gabellini

Luca Gaeta

Recovering historic centres: an urban project for Beijing, Baimixiejie, the White rice road

Making liveable and sustainable major urban streets: a renaissance for multiway boulevards

A comparative study of the New York and Milan convention-trade fair centers

The crisis of the relationship between power and authority in the changing city

Ludovico Quaroni: urban planning concepts before their time

Public land as leverage for urban projects

Anna Maria Colavitti, Giancarlo Deplano

Methods and tools

Museum-city and museum of the city: reflections on an utopia

Received books

The concentration of high-level jobs in the cities

Marco Cremaschi, Anna Paola Di Risio

For urban high-level jobs we mean those positions characterised by elevated qualification, and decisional power in sectors with a high technological, research or rare services content. Such activities are prevalently located in urban ambits for obvious reasons of rarity and rank, and to a certain extent they can be considered as qualifying the very role of the city.

The indicator sums up jobs in metropolitan areas in the following sub-sectors:

- experimental R and D in the sphere of natural sciences and engineering; experimental R and D in the sphere of social sciences and humanities;
- manufacture of office machinery, processing and computer systems; aircraft and spacecraft construction; manufacture of pharmaceutical, chemical and botanical products for medicinal use; publishing, press and reproduction of recorded media; information technology and related activities;
- other professional and entrepre-neurial activities; monetary and financial brokering; cinema and video production and distribution; radio and television activities; university and education; other entertainment activities; library, archives and museum activities and other cultural activities; press agency activities.

The principal results of the analysis are the following:

- in 2001, 75% of the employees in the aforementioned sectors were located within the 72 urban LLS (Local Labour Systems), and more specifically in the principal municipalities located in the centre of the agglomerations;
- this group of functions,

which can rightfully be defined as urban, has increased by 48% compared to 1991, homogenously across geographical divisions, and with a trend close to the national average;

- in main urban areas, especially those in the North, the share of high-level functions is larger: in the local system of Milan, for instance, the it is about 30%; in the large metropolitan areas and in the North, it is higher than average;

- negative exceptions to this are Bergamo, a solidly industrial city with little propensity to research and study, and, on the other hand, Bari, where such activities are however on the increase;

- in Pisa and Trieste, cities with important universities and research centres, the share of urban high-level jobs is significantly higher than the average (25.1 and 23.9 respectively);

- different trends can instead be observed in some cases: an outstanding recovery occurred in Verona and Bre-schia, for example, due to a previous manufacturing specialisation;

- among high level urban jobs, 'technological' production generally features a drop in employees (approximately 10% less than 1991), while those linked to services and research are on the increase. This latter figure remains the most problematic, but should probably be compared to negative trends in the corresponding sectors at national level, due to a greater international competition;

- in general, the level of concentration appears lower than that of other European countries.