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Paolo Avarello

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edited by Federica Legnani and Michele Zazzi

Pedro Arrojo Agudo

Federica Legnani

José Esteban Castro

Michele Zazzi

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Anna Moretti

Paola Pucci

Marco Facchinetti

Lucina Caravaggi

Giuseppe Barbieri

Stephen Marshall

Jean Pierre Martin

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The 'complex' road planning

Giuseppe Barbieri

In recent years conservative experts have adopted a different approach to planning road systems, in particular they have taken into landscapes they are set in. Photographers, geographers, economists and sociologists as well as specialists in the field, architects, urban planners and landscape architects, have distanced themselves considerably from standard procedures in road planning. The above has occurred because of four fundamental facts:

1. The lack standard planning practices in the overall design and formation of new urban territories. There is no relationship between society and the individuals that live and use cities that have developed alongside the links in the network, above all road networks; furthermore, a road plan ignores its potential existence.

2. The necessity to perceive the road system not as a mere service but rather a 'public space'. To explore the road system to its full potential: once again it is necessary to imagine the road as a linear sequence of spatial events that can be used in a bold manner by those who transit through them and by those who dwell in them. It provides an opportunity for the hidden demand of new metropolitan rituals, that is a rapport with new centralities and the new bond with traditional services associated with the road system.

3. The diffusion of a notion whereby the road, instead of disappearing into the landscape as it currently does, provides the opportunity to 'design' contemporary landscape in conjunction with infrastructure, nature and settlements. The use of tunnels is becoming increasingly frequent.

Landscape is no longer considered as an aesthetic expression which is part of a whole but rather a force field. The vast and pulsing network system at the service of the contemporary individual is complex.

However, the settlement systems, which are serviced by networks and which have developed by the adjunct of functional constituents, do not provide a 'complex' dimension in return. Instead, new urban territories take on a wasteful uncertain shape.

4. The relationship between plan and administrative procedures that makes it impossible to 'work in terms of complex' and that governs interaction among the various parties involved, experts, partners and decision-makers.

In Italy today, regulations governing road planning is the result of an accumulation and superimposition of non-organic rules aimed at resolving various problems. It is a fragmentation that makes it difficult to accept that an infrastructure plan can be a fundamental component of complex integrated territory planning procedures. It is imperative that the various facets and issues associated with the plan do not compete with the political or technical decision-making procedures that have already taken place.

It is necessary to build a platform for interaction among the various partners involved in order to create a new type of administrative process:

- an explorative use of the project. The quality of results is directly dependent on the ability to tackle issues in the correct manner. Today we are witnessing a lack in awareness of demand as defined by various commissioning agents of infrastructure works. It is possible to experiment with new alternative 'territory infrastructures', via the

recognition of a different role attributed to architecture in the decision-making processes that govern complex territory transformation. For this to take place a topdown approach to planning must exist;

- a list of strategic actions. A city that is a part of the territory must be built with an architecture of flows and networks. Architecture that is instrumental to the construction of flows must identify procedures rather than products, that is strategy actions that can be conjugated in various ways and at various points in time, but which are capable of having an effect on the perception and development of space.

In.Fra. Settlement forms, environment and infrastructure is an example of a research project conducted by the Pescara group over two, two-year periods of the above. The project adopted two mottoes: planning space for networks and planning architecture for transversal crossings. A number of case studies were selected to experiment with given strategic and technical 'actions' that were in keeping with the above general guidelines.

The space associated with road bridges creates a given geography and topography of places that is yet to be known. Road networks intersect and meet other different networks in the space surrounding road bridges. These examples of space are different from the space which surrounds settlements, and other environments and infrastructures. Therefore, the road bridge is always a point of intersection and interaction. These spaces often come to exist as a result of change and decisions made by those who work in the sector. Therefore, it is necessary to transform these spatial 'relics' into 'resources' for the city.

The connections between port and territory is a notion related to the motorway system that runs along the coastline. It has raised the issue not only of the transport link with the sea but also the issue of a compatible and integrated insertion of an infrastructure connection between the port and land communication systems. It is necessary to identify the individuals and complex functions that operate in these connections.

The infrastructure system of the Adriatic coastal belt runs along the coastline. Consequently transversal crossings between the coast and hillside areas are neglected; an infrastructure and settlement network that moves into the hill-side areas does not exist. Road planning therefore has a dual task: to connect as well as order in and around it exchange nodes with local, disorganized and discontinuous local settlement networks.