



## Urbanistica n. 126

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Received books

**Urban project lacking city:  
notes from the case of  
Milan***Paolo Fareri*

The recent transformation of Milan has been marked by an urban project which is not easy to evaluate. It is not only because the internal success of results produced by very recent operations is being analysed, but also above all because how they relate to the city.

Through recent decades in Milan what politically speaking has been called urban project is simply the setting of a style of government within urban transformations. Their main aspects are now described. Without any selfirony, the new settlement of Bicocca has seen the birth of the 'Bicocca Village'. One arrives in the neighbourhood of Arcimboldi as if using a 'teletransporter' from a 1970s science fiction tv series, as positioned in Piazza della Scala. In publicity Santa Giulia is depicted as an ideal city, but around it lie the permanent traffic jams of Ponte Lambro, Rogoredo, and the eastern ring road. The Garibaldi-Repubblica project is an attempt to construct a City for the city's fashion industry, as if in the city almost three hundred salons had not already concentrated together recently and quickly. In contrast, the great PRU (Urban redevelopment project) project has substituted several historical factories with districts whose identities' main element is marked by the logo of a supermarket chain. The city is developing through 'ready made' projects composed of a fake, false, or sham sense of city.

A project attitude is simultaneously derived from rigid delimitation of a territorial field and affirmation of strategic

needs. Once this has been achieved, project limits are re-read from the point of view of a political analyst. One limit is the territorial reference field. Analyses of the processes clearly show how consideration of relationships within the nearest or closest context is relevant to the building a consensus in or around the transformation project. In addition, not only efficiency but also effectiveness is strictly correlated with ability to consider different territorial fields simultaneously. It seems that what is required is a project form composed of needs seen from a plurality of perspectives, which should only be those of the very same actors involved. Therefore, the project is not so much the expert's domain but a process of social interaction, the domain of communal work between the planner and process experts. The second limitation is the persistence in planning of projects that tend to use rigid transformation hypotheses, which therefore preconfigure the final state. On the other hand, process analyses constructing project images can be used as an effective instrument not so much to mediate between interests but to construct new positions in order to trigger learning processes. Consequently, what seems to be required is a project form whose process is strategic, which knows how to put forward visions of the future while being open to change.