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Fausto Curti Out of place. Large projects lacking context

Problems, policies, and research

edited by Carlo Gasparrini Contemporary city and urban project in Italy
Carlo Gasparrini Mysteries and professions of the urban project in Italy
Ariella Masbouni The project production process in Europe
Pier Carlo Palermo Strategic requirements of urban projects
Paolo Ceccarelli Out-of-date town planning answers
Cesare Macchi Cassia Meaning and methods in the contemporary urban project
Paolo Avarello The hard work of constructing the urban project
Federico Oliva Many projects in Milan but only a few of them are urban
Paolo Fareri Urban project lacking city: notes from the case of Milan
Carlo Alberto Barbieri General town planning scheme, strategic plan, and urban project in Turin
Patrizia Ingallina French ideas for the Turin urban project
Maurizio Marcelloni Strong government for the Roman urban project
Daniel Modigliani Local government and experimentation in the urban project in Rome

Patrizia Gabellini, Bertrando Bonfantini Roads and practices: a research on Milan

Projects and implementation

edited by Bruno Gabrielli, Roberto Bobbio Genoa, a strategic plan for effectiveness and its results
Bruno Gabrielli A strategy for being effective
Carola Gattorna The governance of a city in action
Francesco Gastaldi Genoa-Europe
Maurizio Cazzullo The urban redevelopment of the Darsena area
Simona Gabrielli A season between new architecture and recovery
Giorgio Gatti, Anna Maria Nicoletti The rehabilitation of the historic center
Edda Ricagno The routes of color
Emanuela Brignone Cattaneo The reconquest of the waterfront
Federica Alcozer The process of transformation of European city
Nicoletta Artuso Strategies for the development of the port
Franca Balletti The regeneration 'beyond the center': the complex programs
Roberto Bobbio Towards new strategies for a city in transformation

Profiles and practices

Giuseppe Campos Venuti A strategy for territorial transformations balance

Methods and tools

Peter Bosselmann Authenticity, simulation and entitlement

Josep A. Acebillo *Barcelona progrès*: a successful experiment in communicating town planning

Received books

Local government and experimentation in the urban project in Rome

Daniel Modigliani

In March 2003 the Municipality of Rome adopted the New Town Plan. Its adoption formalised an important result of experience in Rome matured through recent decades of town planning management in which the problem of finding new ways to maximise the private contribution to public works as well as works of public interest. The lack of public resources, impoverished but at the time growing, can only be solved by agreements between public and private at local government level. This practice requires public as much as private entrepreneurial abilities for long-term visionary projects using agreements made with the world of finance, but also great flexibility, and it is this which has been formalised in Rome both in the procedures of the integrated programs and in those of the urban project. This attempt is not only theory, but also based on solid long-term experimentation. It all began in the early 1990s, forced by the need to intervene in the abused suburbs with their lack of resources, and lack of the old town planning instruments. So with the encouragement of a small financial package provided by the Ministry of Public Works, the programs of urban renewal and regeneration were activated. Along with these the URBAN community programmes also began, and then the PRUSST and neighbourhood contracts were launched. Announcements were published in Rome to attract private enterprises to the proposed transformations, but always within strict public control. All this took place in difficult but fertile times in which the new Plan

was being planned. A completely new experience saw local government, entrepreneurs, local representatives, and representatives from central government working together, individually and in association. Work involving all of Rome's external suburbs and which became a type of long-term training course. It has produced a great many financial resources and produced many programs which have above all restored trust in the ability to plan and project manage in the city with effects which will endure for at least another ten years. The urban project's procedure, used every time an area in the city is transformed, is a product of this experience and has been regulated by being made a specific norm in the form of art. 16 in the NTA (Legal Technical Rules that regulate land use). The aim is to guarantee that intervention is not only sustainable, but also improves conditions in the context, that economic and technical feasibility are assured from the start, that the process is planned throughout its duration, and that from the start there is continuous and interactive consultation with the local community affected by the intervention.