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## The small historic centres: a resource for urban structures

*Manuela Ricci*

Italian towns of fewer than 10,000 inhabitants number 6,989 (86,2% of the entire amount). With a population of 18,631,613 they represent 32.7% of the total; almost all of these centres have significant historical heritage. The centres with fewer than 15,000 inhabitants are as many as 91.83% of all Italian municipalities and have a corresponding land area of approximately 79.4%. These municipalities contain 42.2% of the population. In Italy, between 2001 and 2009, the population grew, on average, by 5.3%. In this context, the historic centres with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants grew by 4.6%, at different rates among northern (7.51%), central (4.44%) and southern (-1.8%) regions.

The data show the increasing of population in small towns and the decreasing, on average, of the phenomenon of abandonment. This means that the forms of expansion of new constructions, and thus the consumption of soil, could be reduced by redeveloping the historic centres. They could become a real resource to be exploited by the policies of territorial transformation of the country.

The main issue is that of taking into account, in designing the processes of development, the needs of the towns and specific territories where these centres are located.

This is the theme addressed in this section of the magazine, which reflects the path of research and experimentation that is being pursued by the Master Act, Valorizzazione e gestione dei centri storici minori. AmbienteCulturaTerritorio, azioni integrate (Use and management of minor historic centres. AmbienteCulturaTerritorio, integrated actions) and the Centro di ricerca Focus (Formazione, cultura, storia) de La Sapienza, Università di Roma (Focus research center (Education, culture, history) of La Sapienza university, Rome).

In the light of this issue, the following aspects are illustrated:

- the law on historic centres of the Umbria region, which promotes the Quadro strategico di valorizzazione (Strategic framework for improvement) to regenerate the historic centres examples of redevelopment of city centres where public spaces play a significant role;
- examples of small historic centres, which, because of low housing prices, have become home mainly for immigrants, in Italy;
- cases of multiethnic cohabitation, in Transylvania.

## Strategy and incentives for enhancing the historic centres of Umbria

*Roberta Lazzarotti*

The Region of Umbria has recently enacted legislation (Act No. 12 of 10 July 2008, Standards for historical centres) that is in many ways innovative and surprising. From its first draft, the law has aroused great interest, as well as inevitable controversy over the great sensitivity of the issues addressed. First and foremost: the introduction of incentive schemes to encourage restoration work on historic heritage. The law has been subject to investigation and trial application by the Masters act (enhancement and management of minor historic centres, AmbienteCulturaTerritorio (integrated activity) in Orvieto, which was organized by the Focus research centre, Sapienza university of Rome with the support of the foundation for Centro studi città di Orvieto.

The trials carried out were consequently employed for an elaboration of the Linee guida per la definizione del Quadro strategico di valorizzazione (Qsv) (Guidelines for the definition of the strategic framework of enhancement) that is mandatory by law for municipalities having more than 10 thousand inhabitants, and for historic centres with an area of more than 14 hectares.

The law begins with some rather significant statements of principle, which inextricably and clearly bind the concept of the enhancement of the historic centres with that of local development. As a foundation of what is expressed, the need to pursue objectives such as: the creation of environmental, social and economic conditions for the reintegration or continued presence of resident families, for economic operators and tourism development and maintenance, the establishment and enhancement of the activities of craftspeople, tourist accommodations, commercial offices, social, recreational, cultural and artistic services for individuals.

The major innovations of the approach proposed in the measure concern three aspects:

- the affirmation of the importance of acting intersectorally, with the provision of measures to support businesses and services located in the historic centres;
- the need for developing a preliminary strategic objective, based on a participatory process involving an active community and local economic operators;
- the development of a public-private mechanism of exchange based on the conversion of intervention costs incurred for the renewal of historic area in building premiums to be achieved outside the historic and agricultural areas, within a limit of one third of the expected remaining expansion plan. Interventions are carried out within the so-called Ambiti di rivitalizzazione prioritaria (Arp) (Areas of revitalization priority), delimited by the municipal authorities on the basis of the compliance with the deterioration and abandonment criteria specifically provided in the legislation.

The interest of experts, professionals and associations

is focused strongly on this last point, to avoid indiscriminate use of the premiums, especially in an area as rich and fragile as Umbria.

It is legal to include in Arp places and public buildings, whose privately funded redevelopment can produce premiums. This option can be exploited usefully to address infrastructural lack related to the theme of accessibility and mobility in the city centres.

The total cost of the intervention is then converted into areas of building construction premiums through the regional parameters of the cost of public housing construction according to the following format:

Premium quantity (sqm) =  
 50% total cost of interventions in Zone A+  
 20% total cost of interventions in any area perimeter (€/sqm)  
 80% cost per sqm of regional cost for public housing construction (€/sqm)

The Master act experiments were undertaken maintaining the financial aspects under constant review throughout the process of project preparation; it was immediately clear that the probable margins of profitability for the private sector were decidedly modest.

A scenario of applications of the law could present many difficulties in attracting medium-sized operators, excluding those historic centres in which housing values are already high. However, the incentive seems feasible overall for the smaller properties that, with the possibility of at least partially covering the costs of redevelopment, could overcome any obstacles to the intervention. The impact alone of the mechanisms introduced by the law would therefore not be sufficient to contribute substantially to the initiation of the process of enhancement that the law intends. Therefore, there is the absolute necessity to establish a consistent framework in which activities can find the synergy and tools for programming, planning, intervention and financial support available, and therefore the key role that Qsv could play.

It is important that the Qsv be used for strategic deliberation and participation in the future of community life and work in the historic areas. The issue of premiums should be addressed for the following reasons:

- the priority revitalization areas are identified in relation to their strategic position and function within a development of the historical territory;
- areas of localization arising from construction premiums are defined on the basis of an assessment of environmental and territorial factors to be conducted necessarily on a large scale, at least municipal. The Qsv must therefore be a tool for comprehensive planning.

Another merit of the Qsv that the region recognizes is as an instrument of 'presentation' of the territory, including all the functions of promotion and marketing planning.

It also requires the Qsv to take on the connotation of an instrument of participation: as such it must be created with the help of citizens, associations of traders and

the bearers of collective interests. The definition of the Qsv represents only the first step in beginning a process of planning developmental strategies for operators and extended communities, which along with the promoters (local administrations, but also any private partners) outlines their future, consistent with the framework defined by all the local and regional programmes.

## The public spaces in the regeneration of historic centres: a multiplicity of profiles

Andrea Iacomoni

Public spaces have almost become a 'conventional element' to represent the urban identity. If not redeveloped with the due respect to history and to the needs of settled communities they could denaturalize their layout, in the case of historic centre or, on the contrary, they could fail to build one.

Nowadays urban plans and programs are more and more concerned with the quality of interfacing spaces seen as places where most of the times the bargaining between public and private takes place and the social praxes hinge after a few years in which they experience a new interest in sites' quality, whether historic or peripheral.

In particular within historic centres, the redevelopment of central areas doesn't merely gather an historic, artistic and cultural interest but it also gains a socioeconomic relevance into a revivification of roles, functions and interfaces as 'vertebral apparatus' of the urban space.

In such a context, there are many redevelopment projects and accomplishments on consolidated urban spaces to trigger actual economic, residential, leisure time and tourism revitalization activities.

### *The multiplicity of profiles in redevelopment paths*

Since the end of the Twentieth century, many Italian cities have invested in the recovery of squares, parks and historic roads. At the moment the reconversion of public spaces is the path followed by many administrations and it's often inside the framework of organic transformation strategies located into urban and strategic plans. The plan of Modena, for example, defines the central areas which are intended to participate to the redevelopment of public space, taking the via Emilia as qualified connection between the different parts of the city. Whereas in the plan of San Benedetto del Tronto we find an attempt to systematize the open space of the historic centre.

For what concerns the renewal of public spaces, a lot of methods have been tried but surely some addresses are a priority. One method consists in using the urban plan as general tool to program the interventions which must be supplemented with other means in order to design and manage those interventions: architecture contests; the arrangement of permanent laboratories and observatories for the recovery of historic centres; the organization of workshops to widen the involvement of citizens and professionals.

In such regard the experiences made in two small centres of Tuscany as Capolona and Monte San Savino are emblematic.

In Capolona, during a workshop in 2007, three urban environments were taken into consideration to redact research oriented plans for a better urban quality as testing field for participatory processes. In 2008 the municipality

of Monte San Savino organized a seminar on planning in order to design strategies to recover buildings and spaces of the historic centre.

Both experiences, at a methodological level, can represent an important step towards a definition of urban planning choices to be discussed and checked through their potential effects and thus capable of embodying morphological contents with a structural reach.

Such a 'design' oriented strategy, alternatively to the normative plans of the 'categories of intervention' for historic centres, is a good operational methodology implemented by a few municipalities such as the enhancement process on the historic centre of Faenza where we can already spot a design oriented to the redevelopment of public spaces too.

The planning experience implemented by the Regione Toscana with the act number 205 of March 17th 2008 is much more advanced. The Integrated planning for sustainable urban development (Piuss) becomes a new urban tool to regenerate specific urban environments through the designing of a set of coordinated interventions.

After a perusal of the Plans submitted by the 20 municipalities, it becomes evident how half of those have identified the redevelopment of historic centre, and of their public spaces, as the core element for urban regeneration. In this respect the emblematic cases are: Cascina, Carrara and Massa, Prato with their plans on the redevelopment of degraded areas of historic centres and neighboring sections obtained through interventions on historic buildings and public spaces.

In other cases the plan is a chance to redevelop public spaces that lead up to a network of services in the historic centre. In particular this is the strategy of the Plan of Arezzo that activates a process of transformation accomplishing some works involving the public space of historic centre.

The Piuss of Lucca tries to resolve the issues related to that part of the historic centre where there was the former Tobacco factory area as core element to start achieving new public places. In Pisa as well the future development is focused on the enhancement of the spaces of the historic centre foreseeing an improvement in environmental quality and a redevelopment of buildings and public spaces.

Whereas Pistoia outlines the retail recovery of some small public buildings connected through the redevelopment of roads and squares.

These examples denote the importance given to public space for the revitalization of historic centres; mostly these places are still destined to public life and they often designate the role of that specific space.

In particular, the Piuss display themselves as an innovative planning example where the relationship between public and private is based on a qualitative transformation of the territory. Their goal is to structure a 'public space system' through an organic design of interventions capable of triggering and-or strengthening the so-

cioeconomic development through a high enhancement of urban and environmental quality using a dynamic and flexible medium.

They don't just pay attention to the centre but to a wider territory rendering explicit the idea that many aspects cooperate to the enhancement of the 'systems' from the single monument to the small group of buildings, from the landscape to the public space intended for reception and services.

An interesting aspect that could be detected in some of the mentioned projects is the fact that they ideally convey outside the inner richness of the historic centre, recovering it and giving new suitable functions for a modern city to the generating matrices of shape, history, memory and culture, reinterpreting those matrices in the new and reversing in a certain way the terms of redevelopment.

## Historic towns and earthquakes: emergency and prevention

*Pietro Antonio Valentino*

Earthquakes cannot be considered unique emergency events in a country with the geological characteristics of Italy. Disasters of this nature occur, in fact, with an impressive continuity. In the short span of forty years, many Italian regions have been affected by earthquakes, causing thousands of victims (4,694 from 1968 to present-day) and the destruction of substantial parts of the artistic heritage, small historic centres (the city of stone) and social capital (the city of men).

The choice of the method to employ to rebuild the community and restore properties takes into account a combined set of variables (economical, historical, architectural, urban, cultural or anthropological), but the primary models of intervention put into practise are basically twofold:

- the new towns model that alters both the buildings and the spatial locations of the centres destroyed;
- the anastylosis model that, in its purest form, follows two basic principles: 'where it was' and 'as it was'.

The concrete methods of intervention are a mixture of the two models.

In general, the first model is expressed when decision makers attach more importance to economic aspects (costs and recovery time) than to identity and historic values of the areas; the second is when, on the contrary, greater importance is paid to the historic-artistic, cultural and identity significance of the places.

In Italy, both models have been attempted with varied degrees of success. The new towns model is perhaps the oldest. The reconstruction of the val di Noto after the earthquake of 1693 was carried out according to this criteria, following a plan in which architecture was considered the highest expression of the 'new', whereas the urban program preserved and passed on the social and economic fabric of the area prior to the catastrophe. The result was remarkable and was recognized worldwide: val di Noto was included in the List of world heritage sites by Unesco because of the quality and characteristics of its reconstruction.

Subsequent applications of this same model have not been as successful. After the earthquake of Maiella in 1933, the Fascism decided 'from the top' to show off its efficiency by establishing where and how to rebuild the destroyed communities. The effects were positive in terms of time (in less than two years many communities were rebuilt), but were negative in social and identity terms, in many cases resulting in ghost towns.

And it is the logic of efficiency that is also determining the choices of the Berlusconi government in the reconstruction of Aquila after the earthquake of 2009: deciding 'from the top' where and how to rebuild.

Based on the experience gained, it can be said that the choice slants to one or the other model (new town or

anastylosis) depending on the influence of the various stakeholders that make up the local communities in the decision making. With the increase in the overall influence of local authorities, the value of the identity of the destroyed areas is also increased, and therefore the anastylosis model is more likely to be chosen.

In Italy, this model, identified by the slogan 'dov'era, com'era' ('where it was, as it was'), has been applied, almost totally in Friuli and Umbria. In both cases the success of this reconstruction strategy depended on the great importance given to local governments. Compared to the new towns model, unit costs were, on average, higher and the work went on relatively longer (around 15 years for the reconstruction of Friuli and Umbria). However, the history and identity of places was preserved, and a valuable cultural assets was conserved and restored (including the historic centres).

The present debate focuses mainly on the reconstruction models: for or against that of the new towns.

The risk of earthquakes, and the management of its consequences, however, raises other important unresolved issues. Among these, one concerns the short term (how to govern interventions irrespective of the reconstructive model adopted) and another the medium-long term (how to implement prevention policies, defining at the same time the rules for intervention in case an event does occur).

Managing the intervention is the immediate, real issue because in many situations, even if the rule 'where it was, as it was' was implemented, the greatest damage was not caused by the earthquake, but by interventions carried out after it.

Aside from scams, because of the effects of unsuitable interventions, the historic and artistic patrimony is often heavily manipulated, costs of operations for reconstruction soar and all of the potential preventive work carried out must be carefully checked. It is also the lack of the necessary knowledge and professionalism that makes it more difficult to apply the anastylosis model.

Prevention policies should be implemented, in the areas at risk, to preserve the artistic patrimony and identity of the historic towns. These policies, in reference to a time horizon of 10-15 years and for homogeneous areas (for risk or for prevailing building types), should define:

- the priority objectives intended to be pursued;
- tools with which to engage local communities in defining the policies and their implementation;
- the coefficient of risk for the different areas and types of risk on the basis of targeted diagnostic tests;
- the most appropriate operational techniques, taking into account the historical and artistic constraints, to safeguard the principal building types;
- the necessary professional training and processes to be implemented;
- costs of interventions and the possible forms of financing;
- incentives (fiscal or construction) to support the participation of private capital for the implementation of inter-

ventions;

- the process of implementation and the managerial or technical coordination structure;

- channels for the dissemination of information.

The definition and implementation of a prevention strategy is no different or separate from that of the response to an emergency. Indeed, even today, in the areas of intervention this response should be developed and tested.

Specifically, these areas could be created in laboratories, real and virtual, where different skills may 'work' together to test innovative technical intervention, to activate the vocational training courses, to collect, process and disseminate all relevant information for today and for tomorrow.

These workshops would be centres where the theory is applied in order to learn from the experience and to recreate the necessary knowledge for regenerating interventions.

The building yards would provide objects to be analyzed and manipulated in order to restart a process of acquiring the vanished or vanishing knowledge, as well as a place where, in an integrated manner, different disciplines can be compared to create repeatable preventive procedures.

Paradoxically, these workshops might also represent one of the tools with which to restore the economic life of the affected historic centres.

From an economic standpoint, the immediate activation of long-term policies could require additional resources but, over time, lead to a reduction in human and economic costs.

On average, in Italy around 4 billion euros are spent annually to tackle the damage caused by earthquakes to the built heritage. Once implemented, the prevention policies, with the same annual expenditure, could, for instance, treat every year about 9.7 million square meters, and, in just over three years, to make all vulnerable public schools safe and secure.

Moreover, if this capital was used to enable also private investment, the impact of disaster prevention could be doubled if not tripled.

## Immigrants in small historic centres: critical issues and resources

*Manuela Ricci*

In Italy, small historic centres are subjected to significant transformation processes related to their location (mountains, hills, plains) and the state of the settlement (urban sprawl, proximity to medium or large cities, position within metropolitan areas or isolated areas, etc.). Two opposing extremes of these transformations can be identified:

- the ‘philological’ recovery, which restores the town to its ‘original’ aspect, also in the presence of depopulation and abandonment of assets, that is characterized by holiday houses, which are inhabited only on weekends or during holidays time, often by residents from nearby cities (as is the case, for example, of many of the small villages of Umbria and Tuscany);
- the abandonment of the historic centre: degradation takes place due to the lack of interest among owners and government in investing in their restoration. This results in a serious decay of the physical structures, precluding the habitability or, alternatively, providing housing only for the poorest citizens, mainly immigrants.

Within these two categories there is a wide number of different cases.

Currently, there are many small historic towns inhabited by immigrants. Upon these historic centres converge:

- the interests of the low-income population lacking housing support by the government and seeking a solution;
- the interests of the building owners who, rather than investing in their assets, consider renting more profitable, as they are not obliged to engage in rehabilitation transactions that have an uncertain market outcome.

However, it should be kept in mind that in some towns, some of the historic buildings, owned or purchased ad hoc by the government, have been destined, after adequate restoration, for public housing.

### Cases

One particularly significant case is that of the historic centres of Castelli romani, near Rome.

These towns have become one of the favourite destinations for roman families who are not able to afford escalating rents of the capital. The phenomenon of the abandonment of city centres began in the late nineteen-eighties. Households having a decent level of income preferred to move to new housing outside the city centre, above all to ensure more comfort, better accommodations and better accessibility (traffic and parking). Consequently, rental prices in the city centre dropped sharply, favouring renting to immigrants. The attraction of this area of the province of Rome is also tied to the presence of networks of solidarity, public transport and employment opportunities.

Generally, the native population lives in the ‘best’ areas where the offices of the municipality, the municipal libra-

ry and study centres often are located. The presence of government offices is crucial because it represents a key garrison for the resident population, making the area even more attractive to people residing outside of the centres.

In this articulation of utilization, it must be considered that some of the towns that have been entirely abandoned by private owners have begun to deteriorate severely due to the lack of even minimal and ordinary maintenance, (small collapsing cornices, etc.) Often, private owners expecting an increase in property values in order to sell or recover expenses rely on the activity of the public administrations to enhance their worth.

Public administrations are trying to combine restoration policies with social policies aimed at helping immigrants: services, facilities for access to housing, education, training programs, and work opportunities. Generally, however, these are never sufficient to create harmonious living conditions: often the local population does not accept the alien cultures, and on the part of the immigrants, there is lack of what is called ‘respect for the rules’. In this intermingled situation, conflicts rise, attempts at integration and trade subsist in a cornucopia of relationships that can create significant intercultural gaps.

In addition to rendering liveable some parts of the historic centres, and thereby avoiding their abandonment, immigrants represent additional elements of vitality for the territory:

- they support the labour supply demanded by agricultural firms (particularly, fruit and vegetables, wine and flowers), local construction companies (this is generally true in Lazio) and manufacturing firms (characteristic of areas in the central and northern regions of Italy);
- they permit the elderly to continue living in ‘their’ centres, by providing them with a multitude of caregivers;
- they provide for the continuing upkeep of a certain proportion of the native population, offering services to small businesses whose management has long since been abandoned by locals.
- they reinstate, alongside the elderly, some of the ancient professions in which young people are no longer interested.

It should be noted that the situation of social and economic subordination in which these ethnicities find themselves is slowly changing, even in small historic centres: some immigrants, favoured by the low prices, have been able to buy their homes, that are often severely deteriorated.

While in recent years home buying by immigrants has experienced a continuous increase, in 2009 there was a negative trend (a decrease of 24.3% compared to 2008). If on one hand, the purchase of housing by immigrants is a positive factor for their stabilization, on the other, it is creating major problems in respect to the maintenance of the assets. In fact, often work is carried out without any respect for historical values and public areas have been tampered with.

*Services for reviving and 'preserving' historic centres*

Municipalities undergoing depopulation are experimenting with various methods for preventing the abandonment of their historic centres. One of the 'tasks' that some of the small historic centres have adopted is that of receiving refugees. The town of Riace, which since 2001 is part of the Programma nazionale Asilo (national asylum program), and the territories of Locride (Calabria) can boast an interesting experiment on the issue: that of accepting immigrants and refugees and establishing a model.

In light of these positive results, the region of Calabria has promulgated Legislation n.18/09, Accoglienza dei richiedenti asilo, dei rifugiati e sviluppo sociale, economico e culturale delle comunità locali (reception of seekers of asylum, refugees and social, economic and cultural development of the local community). A tri-annual regional plan is to be implemented to support actions in favour of communities affected by a decrease in population that wish to upgrade and restore related socioeconomic and cultural areas linked to the reception of asylum seekers, refugees, as well as subsidiary protection and humanitarian aid groups.

The community of Montazzoli is also on the road to being repopulated. This tiny ancient town in Abruzzo has just over 1,000 inhabitants. The town's middle school is likely to disappear if there are not enough pupils in the next school year for the first class. The city council has issued a call Pro prima media (pro first middle school) regarding a rent-free provision for 3 years, beginning with the school year of 2010-11, and a total municipal housing tax exemption for all those non-resident households who enroll their children in the first grade of the Montazzoli middle school (from the school year of 2010-11). Those who may participate in the decree are all non-resident households holding Italian citizenship or come from an Eu country, as well as foreigners who hold a residence card or have legal residential permits.

**Transylvania: a land in search of actors**

*Anna Laura Palazzo*

In the post-communist era, much of the Rumania's countryside has come under new threat from agricultural collapse, abandonment of towns and villages and a lack of awareness towards the rural landscape. That is the case of Transylvania, where a mass emigration has occurred since the Second War's end provoking degradation and abandonment of historical villages and countries throughout. The 'Saxon' villages farmer's houses and barns built around fortified churches, so called from the main provenance of former settlers since the XII century (Germany, Belgium, Netherlands), are now seriously damaged or even in ruins.

Transylvania's historical 'heart' is Siebenburgen (Septem Castra), because of seven 'cities' commercially linked to the most important trade centres of Europe. According to the surveys by local historians, the 'core area' of the Saxon villages is included in Centru macroregion, deriving from the unification of six counties (Judete), in order to fulfil (achieve) the objectives of the european enlargement.

Notably, a main cluster of traditional villages and few towns are situated in the hilly area among Sibiu, Sighisoara and Fagaras; two other knots along the eastern and northern edges of Transylvania witness for the original defensive function. Altogether, they amount to some hundred settlements, with a residual saxon population of no more than 20.000 people, and some communities of serbs, hungarian, ukranians and romanians, all set apart from active citizenship and poorly integrated. In recent years, a process of unofficial (re)use of this 'void', mostly by groups of gypsies, has taken place, producing a gradual erosion of pre-existing heritage resources.

Unlike the Rumanian government, highly concerned with roman heritage underpinning the national identity, the international community is holding a strong action towards conservation of the saxon heritage: we mention the inscription of few sites on the Unesco World Heritage List, and the rehabilitation of several fortified churches driven by the Council of Europe and the European Committee. Besides, many different trustees are involved in the reuse of traditional farmer's houses, such as the Mihai Eminescu trust, headed by prince Charles of England, the Gesellschaft fur technische zusammenarbeit, supervised by the German government, and some Hog (Heimat-Ort-Gemeinschaften).

Several non-profit german and austrian associations are involved in heritage protection, conservation, enhancement, funding and management as well. In spite of the efforts, these actions are often driven without any recognitions and systematic surveys, sometimes without any suitable monitoring of the restored stock that lies uninhabited and is going to be damaged in a short time: few years later, traces of 'scientific' rehabilitation are no



more visible. In most extreme cases, restoration works are interrupted and taken back now and then, according to financial availabilities, with notable waste of energies. In Transylvania, new challenges cast by integration processes and hence by globalization meet some major concerns. The goal for forthcoming development of the region needs to take into account at least two main conditions: first, permanent reurbanization providing employment and facilities for the new settlers, and second, a set of actions fulfilling the need for economic development with a wide conservation of natural scenery and biodiversity, that ultimately represent fundamental resources in the region.

Whenever town planning and urban design are concerned, landscape needs to be previously 'referred to': 'landscape as a project' provides guidelines for settlement patterns and shapes, dealing with 'feature' and 'size' issues at any scale: it seems an appropriate fieldwork for subsidizing 'top-down' strategies and policies providing guidelines, setting patterns and facilities related for instance to catchment and influence areas on a vast scale, with 'bottom-up' practices regarding local requirements. In conclusion, the case of the Rumanian Transylvania can be significantly used as an occasion to evaluate development strategies rooted in the common ground of nature and landscape. Further strategic actions can be then left to different disciplinary approaches, directed towards a carefully considered combination of conservation and development.

## Planning vs. mafia

*Marco Cremaschi, Marina Marino*

How do crime organizations affect planning and spatial government? Finding an answer to this question should be a priority of national policies. For now, it is at least an interesting task for scholars and researchers attempting to understand the state of southern regions in Italy.

In this context, three potential research questions already suggest themselves. First, does organized crime affect planning processes in ways that are similar or dissimilar to those followed by legal interests? Second, does a better governance contrast illegal activities more effectively? And third, do correct public policies support the development of a political concern able to foster a regime change?

The sicilian cities of Bagheria and Gela have been studied of late, and can provide an initial positive answer at least to the last two of these questions, also helping to frame the first one, which still requires a broader enquiry. Both cities point out that the interaction of crime and politics constitutes a strain on the planning process that may be generalized. They further bring forth interesting results regarding the provision of experimental public services when a national government replaces local representatives with appointed civil servants because of the acknowledged presence of illegal connections with the mafia organizations.

The dissolution of local government is the end point of a long process of deterioration. In these extreme conditions, civil servants have implemented rigorous policies, as well as a more political approach to technical planning issues. In fact, imposing legality requires strong will and resilient political strategies, in order to support a change in the administrative behavior.

Local plans and decisions have been 'deconstructed' to reveal their hidden links with the mafia's affairs. A continuous control on the activity of public employees in different offices has shown the grey areas of passive support to illegal powers. The redesigning of spatial development decisions, and of the regulatory procedures was aimed to reduce those areas.

These measures and the new governance style have heavily affected criminal business. Crime organizations are in fact interested in many different aspects of local governments. As profit oriented organizations, they invest in land development (for instance, in commercial centers); as a quasijurisdictional power, they need to control space, provide safe houses, manage a spatial logistic of goods, etc.; being involved in public procurements, they try to influence administrative regulations. In doing so, they perversely provide for some development and local welfare, and their importance grows exponentially as public provision worsens. The strength of crime is due, thus, to combined factors: benefits to a few; threats to many; and institutional decay, all at the

same time.

Most of the researchers in this field have pinpointed the role of illegal organizations as opposed to the modernization process, while some have enquired into the mutual influence of modernization and mafia, as shown by the concept of 'institutional disorder' (Donolo 2001). The following reports try to explore spatial policies in this condition of extreme disorder, and show how they affect urban space and planning frames.

## Gela: city and politics

*Anna Paola Di Risio*

The city of Gela is regarded as the prototypical case to describe the ways in which urban development can lead to negative outcomes. In the collective imagination, it is often represented as the sum of the problems of the Italian Mezzogiorno. The commonly shared thesis that organized crime in Gela arose precisely 'because of its faulty development' is a proof of case of the paradigm of 'industrialization without development', so-called by Hytten and Marchioni in the history of Gela in the 1960s. Gela is, therefore, a privileged place of observation to investigate the link between development and criminal textures. Research literature has long explored the two phenomena and, in the following pages, the stages of this process are reconstructed. The objective is to identify how and when, in this way, the growth of the criminal clans has been enabled. Finally, some conditions are identified that have allowed the city, in recent years, to reduce the grip of crime on its institutions.

In Gela, the history of development starts at the end of the 1950s, when the national government decided to locate the industrial petrochemical plant of Eni in that city. This was a political decision dictated by the will to bring development to the underdeveloped areas of the extreme south of the country. With time and modernist optimism, the industry should have generated multiplicative effects on the territorial production apparatus and produced growth and prosperity.

In those years, the job opportunities became a great attractor and brought to Gela a sudden and uncontrolled growth. In the early 1970s the petrochemical plant, with its related activities, employed 12,000 people, and Gela numbered almost 70,000 inhabitants. The large process of migration to the towns, the total absence of adjustment and insufficient supply of social housing, led to a great proliferation of illegal activities that encompassed almost all activities throughout the city.

In the 1970s and 1980s, emergency policies were put in place, characterized by a sizable public financial investment. These top-down policies were unable to fully achieve the objectives of development, and ended by hindering the chances of achieving these same goals through local development. The effect, instead, was to generate distrust, as has also happened in the development policies of the last 15 years.

Organized crime makes its official entrance to Gela, traditionally free from the presence of mafia organizations, only at the beginning of the 1980s. There were two criminal organizations: the Stidda, of more local traditions, which was initially interested in extortion and ordinary crime, and the Mafia of Pippo Madonia, which was involved in the procurement sector.

Illegal construction does not initially appear to be directly linked to criminal interests, due instead to the

inefficiency and absence of public regulation of urbanization. However, if at the beginning the phenomenon seems far from serving abusive criminal interests its final stage reveals a direct link between the construction industry and those connected with the mafia management of the cement industry (Becucci 2004).

Summarizing, we can say that Gela is not characterized by the oppression of a deeply rooted and aggressive mafia, nor that it is a town grossly disfigured by abusiveness, but rather that the conditions of unrest were generated by a failed development opportunity ('Gela, obscene fetal development'). Its unbalanced growth, in fact, has triggered the creation of mechanisms of social unrest. This occurred not as a straight cause-effect relationship, but in a gradual regression from marginality to poverty to exclusion. It is in this citizenship crisis that the criminal phenomenon can prosper, taking advantage of the civil distrust and unrest.

Recently, Gela had returned to the headlines because it draws the attention of observers as a model of the local anti-mafia. In 2002, in fact, with the election of a mayor who openly declares war on the Mafia, appears to have stopped the drift of the city. For a first evaluation of these years of work, we need to understand what can be, in certain contexts, the effects of a political leadership that uses planning procedures in compliance with the law and helps to generate trust.

When the circuit of institutions, economy and society is viscous, curbed and discouraged, it does not provide resources for implementing direct strategies and policies. In Gela an attempt was made to reactivate the virtuous circle, with the introduction of some rules, embryonic forms of adjustments and the establishment of primary networks of trust. It is interesting to note that, after the 'serious failures of development' and the consequent negative connotations, the creation of trust cannot simply rely on new plans and programs that promise development. First of all, it is necessary to begin a process for the reconstruction of these basic principles, in order to prepare for new policies and future strategies. Politics, in this case, have proved to be quite an effective 'tool'.

## Bagheria: the challenge of the 'criminal deregulation'

*Daniela De Leo*

In 1999, the Prefect of Palermo offices decided that one of the ways to significantly change the culture of a city in which the elected officials have been removed because of 'mafia infiltration' would be to enter it into the Urban II Programme, a European programme of urban rehabilitation. So, the proposal of the Program Urban-Italia Bagheria 'Re-start from Villas' was born.

At the end of the Urban-Italia Bagheria Program, the Municipality invested part of its remaining resources in a university-level study to reinterpret the achieved results (De Leo 2008, Cremaschi 2008).

The links between criminal powers and territories are available in many and varied forms of control exercised by the organized crime (Oc). Through the exercise of control and coercion, direct or indirect, in territories, the Oc obtain freedom to conduct their own activities. Moreover, they manage and control public procurement, political choices (through patronage and corruption) and money laundering.

The case study was an opportunity for the in-depth observation of some of the relationships between spatial planning and urban contexts controlled by a powerful criminal organization, like the sicilian mafia, in the relatively short time of the design and implementation of an urban renewal program.

Local and regional politics level intertwined in many ways. Parts of these effects have been studied so far with regard to obstacles to modernization and development of the territories in southern Italy. Others may be further investigated in the perspective of social deregulation and 'disorder' (Donolo 2001).

Obviously, deregulation is not the only reason for interest in this case. The importance lies in the effects of Oc's influence on the design and the implementation of an urban program as a whole. The main questions we ask are therefore:

- how does Oc influence the design and implementation of public policies?
- how does Oc influence affect the physical spaces and the way of life in these cities and territories?
- what kind of territorial regulation is useful in these contexts?

Achieving positive and visible outcomes from the rehabilitation program is also a means of reconstructing the bonds of trust between citizens and institutions, such 'normal' conditions having been eroded or denied during the long array of political and institutional crisis. The Program contributed to the reconciliation of public and institutional partnerships, simultaneously creating skills among the public officers and a 'sense of citizenship' in town. Thus citizens, at first reticent, have gradually accepted the challenge of change as proposed by the Programme, complying for instance to the new complex

rehabilitation rules.'

This positive shift in the citizen's attitude suggests that the regulation of procedures for the rehabilitation of buildings located inside the historic centre boundaries can also be considered.

The Urban-Italia Bagheria Program has simultaneously produced the following effects:

- to push the Municipality to take on new commitments, even ordinary ones such as building maintenance;
- to amplify the resonance of Urban's projects, further spreading the effects of regeneration;
- to renew the public image of the city of Bagheria.

Finally, it was also agreed that public funds for facade rehabilitation could be devolved only for the facades of legally constructed or condoned buildings. In addition to the request of an Antimafia certificate from all the building firms involved in the projects, the new regulations produced tangible effects such as the contextual legalization of buildings that were rehabilitated. In this case, the procedural 'bottlenecks' have been eliminated, balancing duties and exemptions to activate economic participation.

All these factors highlighted the need to:

- carefully design and monitor all stages of decision-making and implementation, not only in terms of spending effectiveness-efficiency, but also as potential deregulation forecasting-control;
- return the required responsibilities to technical and institutional components.

In the case of Bagheria, the policies challenge suggests the reconsideration of some important aspects of public policy such as:

- the role of the uncertainty of the political and institutional system being exposed by strong criminal powers;
- the influence of the fragility of social capital and the systemic weakness of the public sphere, particularly on the ways of coexistence and citizenship;
- the experience of local government and planning within the relatively short time of the Program's implementation (2002-08) and with an extraordinary availability of resources (often referred to as 'critical' in certain contexts).

#### *The sense of the Program's actions*

The actions of most interest within the Program have been:

- improving the quality of space and the enhancement of public-common goods that have fostered collective reappropriation processes;
- the simple and clear definition of new rules and procedures;
- advertising and communication of decisions and choices made by public officers as well as the visibility of those were involved in the program management;
- the involvement of the inhabitants (especially youth) in specific initiatives of entertainment in public renewed places of the city.

All of these actions have been configured as an active set of initiatives aimed at reconstructing the weak link

between citizens and political and social institutions. This, undoubtedly, makes it possible to identify a significant part of the responsibilities of the institutions most often, instrumentally, resized.

In this sense, the Program Urban Bagheria Italy has therefore offered at the same time:

- terms of resistance to control to the s-regulation due to the criminal power;
- escape routes from the most common rhetorical devices that help to obscure the issue, giving the necessary responsibility and intentionality to the technicians.

It's possible to observe, in fact, that some of these devices have been introduced thanks to the continuity and tenacity of the planner and the technical team. Determinants were certainly:

- the individual ethics of the involved actors;
- the general orientation sustained by them over time;
- their own 'idea of public'.

In an area historically controlled by criminal powers, these kind of moral ramparts are, evidently, too weak.