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Ecological networks in the urban planning. Strategies and action plans in the case studies research of Montreal, Milan and Rome

Valeria Erba, Mina Di Marino

The ecological network concept has been included in the urban and regional planning already. The three cases of the Metropolitan Region of Montreal and the Provinces of Milan and Rome want to evaluate the ecological network concept. The goal is verifying the ecological preservation actions. Developers, citizens and local governments can understand the ecological network concept, which represents the hazards and environmental potentials; instead the regional and planning systems in the cases study research are different. The infrastructure system could damage the ecological corridors; it could reduce the ecological ways, in thereby compromising the environment, its functional ecosystems and the landscape. The people are more involved when they can understand and they can appreciate the integration between ecological and social factors. The contents and the objective of the landscape ecology are absorbed from the regional and provincial strategies and have product action strategies and action plans. In the Province of Milan the ecological network use many symbols, more related to the territorial features than the others two Provinces. Apart from that we need more analytic studies that consider the integration between ecological and urban factors, the knowledge of detailed and evaluated potentialities and criticalities of the territory. Even if the ecological network is defined on contour lines, landed estates and topological features, the regulation gets together plans to implement an ecological network project, at the local scale especially. The planners have to absorb the recommendations and instructions from the Regional ecological network. The project of the motorway Pedemontana that crosses five provinces from Varese to Bergamo at the north of Milan has an economic and environmental impact.

The infrastructure reduces the environmental impacts and the ecosystem fragmentations thanks to the environmental compensation (local environmental projects) that produce the ecosystem services too. The city of Rome develops an integrated approach to preserve and to protect the environment in the urban area: the urban adjustments, urban compensations, conventions and expropriations could manage the ecological network in the city of Rome. The case of Montreal pursues an integrated strategy between urban projects and nature conservation and goes over isolated ecological practices. The ecoterritories are not conservation parks, they are large identified territories and there are core zones surrounded by buffer zones and corridors that link together the cores zones. They aimed at the urban sustainable project (e.g. land exchanges, acquisition) with a clear civil involvement (ecological gifts, voluntary pre-

servation, confidence to the financial bakers) and integration between financial programs (protected area development, measure to support the agriculture, training programs).

The comparison between the Metropolitan Region of Montreal and the two Provinces of Milan and Rome
In the 1999 the Province of Milan adopted the ecological network map in the territorial provincial Plan. The Plan put forward innovative contents and new implementation strategies (potential scenarios and ecosystem services). Direct and indirect actions point out the provincial strategies and the objectives of the future implementation of the ecological network. The local project that contributes to the implementation is based on the cooperation of many involved actors.

The Province of Rome traduces the criteria in the specific context with territorial and geographical features and with ecological and environmental values. The City of Rome identifies the ecological network map in the urban plan and regulation earlier than the Province of Rome and the Region of Lazio. Instead the Region Lazio has a monitoring system of protected areas. Recently the ecological provincial and urban networks have paid attention to the relations between the environmental development and the social and cultural uses.

The City of Montreal proposes an ecological management of the natural resources focused to preserve the urban biodiversity.

The Metropolitan Region of Montreal has taken Montreal City as one's model for the other municipalities and is aware of the opportunities related to many local projects of ecological network: environmental corridors and greenways could contribute to define an ecological network and green system at the large scale. The ecological networks could be a sustainable and social paradigm both for the programs and for implementation. The three implementation ways are:
– the concept plan and action plan of Montreal City;
– the green corridors of the north of the Province of Milan;
– urban sustainable projects related to the ecological network in the City of Rome.

The ecoterritory of Île-Bizard and the concerned has three objective:
– scheduling of the functions that respect the citizen requests;
– showing the objectives related to the nature protection of those specific milieux;
– proposing the ecoterritory as public heritage.

In the Province of Quebec the law of the natural heritage conservation defines the humanized landscape "an area that is formed to protect the biodiversity of a habited, terrestrial and aquatic territory, where the landscape and the natural components have been shaped in the years from the human activities, in harmony with the nature and they show intrinsic recognized qualities" (V category. World conservation of nature).

The plan concept of Île-Bizard identifies three poles:
– nature parc which is delimited from the urban development;
– the agricultural pole;
– the pole of riverside areas.
The buffer zones guarantee the ecological preservation of ecosystems. The ecological corridors facilitate the accessibility and the tourist and agricultural management.

Ecological network development and implementations
In the case of Metropolitan Regional of Montreal the ecological network planning isn't a systemic vision: the local design could develop a regional design. In the case of Province of Milan, the implementation at the local scale means recognition, financial finding, participating management to implement plans and designs. In the case of Province of Rome the ecological network should relate to the local ecological networks, where often their elements are components of the provincial ecological network. The scientific research reminds us that the programs and plan could prevent the consequences of ecological insularities, if the urban-rural development, the infrastructural, the settlement and environmental development are compatible with the same phenomena (e.g. ecological fragmentation).
The ecosystem map by Bernardino Romano, based on integration between urban and ecological factors, has the objective to minimize the impact of the urban development in the existing ecosystem matrix. It means to know the functional disorders of new settlement to the ecological networks, when the surfaces and the isolation degree are reduced from the urban development.
New ecosystem scenarios based on polyvalent ecosystem services (the benefits humankind derives from the workings of the natural world. These include most obviously the supply of food, fuels and materials, but also such hidden benefits as the formation of soils and the control and purification of water) help the sustainable development. The ecological network of the Province of Milan has also the function to develop ecosystem services. Further the scientific research reminds us to consider the secondary ecological areas that could become priority areas in a new sustainable development. The ecological value of the area depend both on dimensions of the protected areas and on the existing species, but the ecological value could go beyond the protection boundaries. In the Metropolitan Region of Montreal some protected areas are not juridical entities but they are based on conservation and preservation programs, agreements between municipalities, owners, associations in order to develop the ecoterritories for common benefits. The instrument to develop the ecological network could be the urban adjustments (transfer of edificatory rights, e.g.: municipalities of Province of Milan and Rome), the ecological gifts (Metropolitan Region of Montreal), standards of urban quality and the ecological and environmental quality (provinces of Emilia-Romagna Region), the environmental and ecological compensations (e.g. Province

of Milan). The new criteria of implementation concerns to preserve the ecological equilibrium with the landscape and the environment, it means planning the development compatible with the ecological and landscape values and components. Actually the concept of ecological network has been enriched; in fact the polyvalent ecological network is taking off. The integration between the ecological and environmental functions with the social and cultural functions is giving more meaning and acceptation to the ecological network. The territorial design must be shared through the planning and the civil involvement that could guarantee the sustainable use of environmental resources. The design must be modified, detailed through the involved actors and the neighbour municipalities that take part in the ecological plan.

Cohousing Vs gated communities?
A taxonomical analysis of cohousing

Francesco Chiodelli

The cohousing develops as from the seventies in the northern European countries, subsequently spreading firstly in the United States and later in southern Europe. In spite of the ten-year course, the cohousing is a quantitative very limited phenomenon. All the same, for example in Italy, it is surrounded by an increasing public interest: this paper sketches out an analysis work of the situation useful to highlight not only the positive elements, but also those of criticity.

Definition and features
The peculiarities that are defined typical of the phenomenon are usually four (McCamant, Durrett 1994):
– spatial features: the planning follows a set of customary rules that try to support the maximum of the social integration however keeping a determined degree of privacy and individual independence (Williams 2005). The different cohousing experiences are in this way established by small dimension interventions (included from 15 to 40 houses), usually of urban or periurban location; private houses are normally of 5-15% reduced dimensions as regards the average, with the prevailing intention of favouring a greater use of common areas;
– trial features: insistence on shared planning, or rather on the participation (different for degrees and forms according to the situations) of the future residents in the devising and defining process of the physical and organizational structure of the community;
– Managerial features (and legal-owners): the management of the different life aspects in the community occurs through meeting processes that require the participation on equal terms of all the residents statutorily gathered in an association. All this occurs independently of any different legal-owners forms the cohousing can assume, that can be a freehold or an undivided property, or made up of mixed forms that integrate both private property of the lodgings and collective ownership of common areas;
– functional features: copresence of both residential functions and collective services, the latter are almost exclusively addressed to the members of the community and, generally, directly managed by the same people.

A taxonomical analysis of cohousing
After giving, in the first part of the text, a descriptive picture of the phenomenon, in the second part the paper tries to find out the cohousing's peculiarities beginning from the specificity of its constitutive features.
The matter is not irrelevant: the (supposed) specificity of cohousing, in fact, and a positive judgment about the same, are at the base of a series of public encouraging politics to carry out these settlements.
In this part of the paper subject that, in my opinion, the cohousing is only one of the possible developments

of the 'contractual communities', or rather "organizing forms with a territorial base of private nature – able both to control and autonomously to provide itself with infrastructures and services" (Brunetta, Moroni 2008), such as, for example, the gated communities, sharing with the latter a great part of the complexities already highlighted by the literature dealing with this phenomenon. For doing this I'll formulate and use the following taxonomical classification:
Family: settling areas with a residential character;
Genus: contractual communities (features: members selection, communitarian multifunctionality, constitutive rules of private nature);
Species: residential associations (features: collective possession of both sites and equipment for a shared use, participation to the decisions concerning both the management of these areas and the community organization).
Variety: [X] Cohousing (features: informal selection, environmentalist-communitarian ideological characterization, self-management of services, shared planning, pro community design); [Y] Gated communities (features: formal selection, ideological characterization based on personal security, accesses control).

Taxa and both genus and species characteristics
Selectivity (taxon: genus). One of the peculiarities of the different contractual communities is the possibility to select not only the access both to the area and to the services of communitarian character (as well as the behaviours there must be kept), but also the same residents, by virtue of the spatial and organizing form's private nature (Le Goix 2002).
A differentiation element between X and Y is related to the formalization level of this selection: in the X instance it is ex ante opened, to choose the community future members ('elective neighbourhood') and it is based on informal mechanisms; in Y case instead it is based on a collection of formal, impersonal and mainly indirect rules (principally the income).
Communitarian Multifunctionality (taxon: genus). Characteristic feature of all the contractual communities is a certain degree of copresence, both of residential functions and community services, whose utilization is intended for the members of the settlement. Also in this case neither quality nor quantity of services are an element of a clear differentiation between X and Y.
Constitutional and operative rules of private law (taxon: genus) with both a communitarian devising and management (taxon: species). Typical of all the contractual communities is still their organizing form: these settlements, in fact, are ruled not only by the common norms of public law relating to the particular territory portion where they are used, but also by a rules system of private law, introduced by the members of the community to guarantee its specificity and its functioning. A differentiation between cohousing and gated communities exists only in the organizing degree and in the formalization of

this kind of structure: very low for X, and mainly based on customary and informal norms, while it is often very high and finely detailed for Y in the official documents of the association.

The variety taxon: the value element. A characteristic that does not directly belong to all the residential associations, but that is typical of both X and Y, is an explicit ex ante value component as the beginning of the community formation. So, it is only the value type expressed, but not the value-ideological characterization itself, to be a differentiation element between X and Y.

Challenges, potentialities, risks
If we read the cohousing within a taxonomical background it loses a large part of its supposed peculiarity, and reveals of sharing with the gated communities lots of the criticities fully highlighted by the literature dealing with the contractual communities.

For example, one of the problematical features that must be taken into account when we talk about the cohousing (as for any other type of contractual community) is the social (but also spatial) segmentation that these settling forms can favour. In fact it is difficult to explain how much in the cohousing the emphasized reconstruction of a kind of community and of a collective responsibility is just a progressive reaction to the increasing social atomization, and how much, instead, it is (or can easily become) a neocommunitarian reply that just deepens the fragmentation of the urbanized panorama. What is clear is that there is not such a profound difference between gated communities and cohousing as to justify, in relation to the government territory range, a difference in the public treatment.

Gender auditing in spatial planning: the case of Rome's provincial plan

Silvia Macchi, Angela D'Orazio

The work presents the results of a pilot study of gender auditing in spatial planning conducted in frame of the gender budgeting of the Province of Rome (Ccidd 2009). The proposed methodology builds on the Amartya Sen's capability approach to 'human development' (Sen 1985, 1987), adding to it the contribution of feminist economics (Picchio 1992, 2003), particularly in what concerns the role of unpaid caring work for the very existence of market activities.

According to the informal Network of experts on gender budgeting at the European council, a gender budget 'entails a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality' (European Parliament, 2003, p. 3).

In Italy, a national directive officially introduces gender budgeting in 2007 (Mripa, Mdpo 2007), but a series of experiments have been carried out from the early 2000s at local level (Macchi, Catemario 2008) where Gender-Capp developed its methodology from the capabilities approach (Addabbo et al. 2008).

Sen's theory is based on two concepts: capability and functioning. 'A functioning is an achievement, whereas a capability is the ability to achieve. Functionings are, in a sense, more directly related to living conditions, since they are different aspects of living conditions. Capabilities, in contrast, are notions of freedom, in the positive sense: what real opportunities you have regarding the life you may lead'. (Sen 1987, p. 36)

A person's capability set depends on the means offered by the context where she lives that include goods and services (or 'resources' to some) and a series of factors that determine to what extent that person can access those goods and services. Sen (1985) recognizes three categories of conversion factors: those linked to a person's individual characteristics (e.g. metabolism, physical condition, sex, reading skills, intelligence), those linked to the social group a person belongs to (e.g. public policies, social norms, discriminating practises, gender roles, societal hierarchies, power relations) and those linked to the characteristics of the environment where a person lives (e.g. climate, geographical location). It follows that different people convert goods and services into well-being at different rates; that is, they do not all enjoy the same freedom to choose the kind of life that they value.

Communing with Sen's ethical commitments, the aim of public policy is to widen people's opportunities to be and do what they value to be and do. The focus shifts from effective functioning to the conditions of its achievement, i.e. the capabilities as the outcome of resource conversion processes.

The purpose of the pilot study reported here was to develop a methodology for gender auditing specific to spatial planning and based on this theoretical approach.

A territorial plan such as the Rome's Ptpg is first and foremost a policy coordination instrument that deals with processes of spatial differentiation. The question was: what spatial differences the Ptpg focuses on and what would be if the capabilities approach is incorporated, that is, if we conceive the territory as a meta-conversion factor of goods and facilities into well-being?

To address this question, firstly the content of the Ptpg has been reviewed particularly in what concerns the variables selected for outlining the planning scenarios (Province of Rome, 2007a). Secondly, a model of interpreting the territory consistent with the capability approach has been developed.

The guiding assumption was that t the omission of unpaid work and its related gender distribution hinders to see the effective division of productive and reproductive roles between the state, the market and the household (Picchio 1992). As a result, the impact that a biased attribution of reproductive activities towards the family has on the impairment of women capabilities, compromising their freedom and well-being, remains concealed.

Looking at the Ptgp through 'our' territorial interpretation model has allowed us to select those planning categories of 'practical' or 'strategic' (Moser 1993, Kabeer 1999) interest to the women of the Province of Rome. These categories define the priorities of our work in auditing the Ptpg from a gender perspective, helping us to identify and measure the implications of the Plan's choices for the well-being of men and women.

The categories in question gravitate around one of the main ideas of the Ptpg, i.e. to reconfigure people's living space through an alternative distribution of productive activities, public facilities and transport infrastructure. These three are therefore the variables we focused on for drawing a map of spatial constraints that limit women's capabilities in the province of Rome. The map constitutes a baseline for monitoring the Ptpg's gender impact, providing a tool for the gender accountability of the Province's planning policy.

The Ptpg proposal is based on the 2005-15 projections of the current trends in three main variables: population, economic activity and real estate market. Both the Gdp and the population are expected maintaining the same positive growth as in the early 2000s. Furthermore, the Plan interprets the current demographic movement from Rome to other provincial areas as a positive factor of territorial re-balancing. On these premises, the Plan commits to assist the ongoing processes with a series of actions aimed at guiding the process of relocation of people and functions to be more compatible with the natural and historical environment.

The Ptpg ambition of 'managing spontaneous processes in order to attenuate the unwanted byproducts of growth' (Province of Rome, 2007b, p. 36) is in itself a realistic one, since it considers the very limited powers of the Province to influence the policies of the Capital. Nevertheless, if it is agreed that the ethical commitment of the Plan is the people's well-being, the costs related to this choice, either public or private, both for men and women, must be evaluated.

We tried to identify those elements relevant to an assessment of such costs through the analysis of some of the Ptpg's core choices. Specifically, we focused on three of the Plan's fundaments: the spatial unit utilized for the analysis of the main scenarios' variables (population, economic activity and real estate market); the relation between economic activity and population, with particular attention to social reproduction's issues; the relation between real estate market and housing needs.

The analysis of the Plan's documents lead us to the conclusion that an effort should be made to develop tools for engendering the spatial planning making. One of the instruments we proposed is a map of the spatial characteristics that affects the capability set of people with caring responsibilities. A very simplified view of both the everyday life of these persons, and the variables impacting on their effective achievements, is assumed. The experiment simply wants to prove that it is possible, even with the small data available and some basic analysis, to guide the territorial planning towards choices that are aware of gender differences and explicitly aimed at people's well-being.

To conclude, the suggestion is made that spatial planning should abandon two main prejudices: first, to indentify 'people with caring responsibilities' with women; second, to consider the caring burden as only concerning the state and the household, completely excluding any 'obligation' of the market.

Incorporating the identification of woman with carer in the political discourse means to 'naturalize' a cultural system that relegates women to reproductive roles and men to productive ones, denying for both of them multidimensional life projects. Moreover it relegates the issue of care to the confines of family and living space. Unfortunately, the consequences of these misconceptions of social reproduction have already compromised the innovative power of some proposals put forward by women's movements.

As for the second point, public policies are still ignoring the complex relations that link productive to reproductive work, resulting in relieving the market from its 'obligation' to contribute with reproduction.

The recent financial meltdown offers an opportunity for change. As for spatial planning, the raising question is: may urban development help in containing the effects of the current financial crisis and its inevitable spill over to local finances? (Hall 2009).

The Rome's Ptpg contemplates new residential areas, firms relocation and railways' improvement. All these require public investment that in the middle term will result in more fiscal revenues, while in the short term will increase the demand of workers and improve the settlement's quality. The public interest on these investments

goes together with that of landlords, as it is confirmed by recent land banking initiatives in the outskirts of Rome. If this is true, there is no financial reason to postpone once again the public commitment to provide decent conditions of life to people. The province needs only to fulfill its statutory responsibilities by guiding and coordinating the local councils in mediating between the market and the interest of its citizen.

New labyrinths

Rosario Pavia

Before being a construction, the labyrinth was probably an open space where, through the movement of the dance, the dancers instinctively appropriated the sense of life. Homer, in his description of the shield of Achilles, speaks of Dedalus as the creator of a place for dances. The thread of Ariadne was nothing other than a cord that enabled the dancers to move in harmony, led by a guide (the geranulkos 'he who pulls along the cranes'), following a spiral pattern, winding forward constantly then, at a very definite point and moment, changing direction to return.

The dancing rite expresses the circularity of life and of death. Only later, in Crete, the place of dance was to become the constructed labyrinth, only later was the winding movement to be transformed into the tangle of confusing intersecting corridors.

The thread of Ariadne is a metaphor which reflects traversal of the labyrinth-like metropolis following an itinerary that is legible both spatially and as a narration. The threads of Ariadne, as paths which link places and complex nodes, restore our sense of orientation and an understanding of urban structures.

Bigger and smaller networks, pedestrian paths, sequences of public spaces, but also tracks and integrated infrastructural nodes, in continuity with the city and the territory. This working hypothesis should be developed in investigating strategies for intervention, but now, analyzing the origin of the labyrinth as a dancing traversal, we discover a new approach for understanding and charting the contemporary city.

Is it possible to recover an aesthetic dimension in passage through the city, one enabling us to participate more in our surroundings, to be more aware of our body and our senses, more willing to expose ourselves to contact with others? Is it possible to break the inertia and solitude, the opacity and passive alienation of our urban condition? How can we give movement through the city the lightness and profundity of dance? The dance through the labyrinth was nothing other than one of the many ritual forms of the Dionysian processions. Ariadne is inside this rite, the dances in the space of her labyrinth are dedicated to Dionysius. Through dance and music, the participants enter into an integral relation with the surrounding space, they are reconciled with the forces of nature, they get its deep meaning instinctively.

Something of the dancing labyrinth has survived, however; we can glimpse its traces in peasant feasts, in carnival processions, in the wandering of the flâneurs of modernity and the nomadic ways of the situationist avant-garde, in the ephemeral rites of the 'white night' celebrations.

The dancing labyrinth is an absolute and timeless metaphor. Transferred to the contemporary city, its myth

signifies not only our reorientation, giving meaning to the traversal, but also showing ourselves to others in a different and continuous public space, one able to engage us and free our imagination, our creativity. To move through it dancing is an appeal for freedom, for safety, for individuality and participation; it is a appeal for understanding. In reality, the urban spectacle is no longer a cognitive learning experience, it is no longer a Dionysian emotion nor even an Apollonian dream, today it is only evasion, shock, alienation. In reality, dancing traversal of a city is an aesthetic and learning experience that does not exist. The contemporary city negates it. Its labyrinthine form is the result of physical obstacles, of barriers, of exclusions. The space of the metropolis is born of the violence of social contradictions, of urban conflicts and oppression, of irreconcilable differences. Its tangle seems to lead to death. The labyrinth is not synonymous with death, it is rather an aspiration to life, reproducing the infinite circularity of a path which always brings us back from the abyss to the beginning. Will it be possible to dance once again in the labyrinth of the city? There are no definite strategies, only questions. Only the beginning of a hope that does not want to give up the plan as a utopia, as the search for a way out.

The labyrinth of Egypt visited by Herodotus in ancient Shedit, whose ruins can be seen now north of Medinet-El-Faiyum, appeared to the writer of The History "superior to all descriptions ... in it there are twelve covered courtyards, with doors facing one another; six toward the north, six toward the south; and the courtyards are contiguous, and a single wall encloses them from the outside. There are two orders of rooms, one order underground, one above: they number 3000, 1500 per order. We ourselves saw the upper rooms, passing from one to another … but concerning the subterranean ones we only have hearsay information: because the Egyptians who supervise those did not want us to see them, saying that there are the tombs of the kings".

A geometrical labyrinth that was symmetrical but endlessly immense and repetitive; it was precisely this redundancy and spatial amplification that induced wonder and stupefaction. Underneath lay a secret labyrinth, most likely identical in form and structure to the one above. The labyrinth of Egypt was the result of two strata, but while the first was accessible and practicable, albeit with difficulty, the second was visible only to the priests keeping watch on the tombs of the kings. In the Greek labyrinth, the dance stopped at the brink of the abyss of the underworld; only heroes and divinities could venture beyond into the dark subterranean maze. Dionysius was also known as Chthonos, the subterranean one, the god who traveled between above and below.

A relation between the surface and the underground characterized architecture for a long time, not only in the great funeral constructions of antiquity, but also, beginning with St. Peter's, in Christian churches, in the important renaissance palaces like the ducal complex of Urbino, as well as in the construction of fortification walls, like those of Perugia arranged by the younger Sangallo, who then in Orvieto dug the well of St. Patrick, which is nothing other than a tower turned upside down. The subterranean is present in the engravings of ancient monuments and in the dark spaces of the prisons of Piranesi, and it is part of the great utopian constructions of enlightenment architects like Boullée. It emerges powerfully in the modern city, whose reorganization began underground with the introduction of sewer systems and the tunnels of the early subway systems. The dark belly of the subterranean city entered rapidly into the collective and literary imagination, becoming the negative other side of the urban surface in many 19th and 20th century novels.

Eugene Henard was the first to theorize about the need for an artificial urban ground under which the complex technological networks of the city could be reorganized. With Perret and Le Corbusier, the artificial ground became a recurrent theme of the modern-functionalist project and was reflected, almost at the end of a cycle of research efforts, in the proposals of Edouard Utudjian for L'urbanisme souterrain. The city as a futurist building site, the city which Antonio Sant'Elia sinks deep underground, comes back on the scene in the provocative 1960s work of architects like Paul Rudolph, Archigram and Hans Hollein, who organized the new city's megastructures as though they were aircraft carriers sunk and buried in the landscape. Of the great urban utopias of that period, Mesa City and Arcopoly of Paolo Soleri are those that most tried to integrate the surface ambient with the spaces created below by giant organic structures which plunge their roots deep underground. The utopias of the 1960s and 1970s were the last vital attempts of modernist planning to find a new design for the city and the territory in infrastructure networks. Infrastructure's etymological root itself shows the subterranean vocation such a reorganization implies.

But that reorganization did not take place, and in those same years a deep split began to divide architecture and city planning, the city and its infrastructure, and the fragile relation between ground and underground was progressively weakened further. The city's surface became an inextricable labyrinth, while at the same time the underground too turned into an endless but disconnected morass, a dark labyrinth of tunnels and pipes and nodes and networks.

These networks are disconnected on the surface and even more so below. The underground infrastructure continuously increases in its density, in its entanglement, and also in its autonomy. The separation between aboveground and underground sharpens and consolidates. While in the first modern period there was a visible and planned relation between the built settlement on the surface and the underground (consider how the sewer system's placement affected the first urban plans), in the contemporary city the weave of the surface city appears completely independent of subterranean networks. In some big cities like London, Paris, New York, the tun-

nel systems for trains and subways still maintain a link between above and below, but elsewhere that relation has been completely dissolved. Under the streets there is a maze of electrical conduits, gas and water pipes, telephone and communication cables, and sewers, piled up without any order.

In the underground, hollow spaces, built stratifications, archeological remains, tunnels, necropolises, and channeled or piped watercourses constitute a hodgepodge that only with difficulty can be charted or represented. Below the surface, there are systems of gas and oil pipelines, underpasses and railway tunnels, hydroelectric channels and buried cables haphazardly traversing the territory. Whole regions are disseminated with mines and oil wells, with garbage dumps and underground natural gas storage depots.

This maze of subterranean networks is in conflict with the delicate underground balance, with the fertility of the soil, with the fragile aquifers, with the mineral deposits. Underground is a labyrinth, like above. The contemporary world is made up of superimposed labyrinths without any visible link. Not two geometrical and symmetrical realities as in the Egyptian labyrinth, but two infinite and non-communicating labyrinths.

Perhaps it is precisely from this division that it is necessary to begin. On this unresolved knot depends our environmental equilibrium, our survival, our way of perceiving the world and orienting ourselves in space.

To traverse the labyrinth signifies this as well: to try to reestablish a link with the earth, with the thickness of its crust, with above and below, identifying new forms of integration and correspondence. How can this relationship be made visible in the processes of urban transformation? How can a greater environmental equilibrium between the two parts be promoted? What threads of Ariadne will make it possible to reconnect the two labyrinths?

New paths of research and intervention are opening up for planning and design.

Housing plan and historical centres: regional declinations of the State-Regions Agreement

Roberta Lazzarotti

The signature, on March 31st 2009, of the State-Regions Agreement on the so-called "Housing Plan" produced a state of expectation for the Regional implementation laws.

Now thaths most Regions have taken legislative action, it is possible to strike a first balance. Regional laws are a variegated whole, and they shows two surprising outcomes:

– many Rregions have set their law within a larger policy territory management, in order to either 'dam' or exalt (according to different ideological and political positions) the potentials of the policy proposed by the Government;

– in general, the local enactment of the measures was not successful as expected. In one case, that can be explained by the fact that by limiting the applicability of the remunerating mechanism, Regional bills have reduced their appeal on local operators. It is more difficult to understand the weak response in those cases in which a Regional compliance to the Agreement was more convinced and unconditional.

The Agreement aims to encourage initiatives for the boosting of the economy, to answer housing needs of the families and to take incisive measures for the procedural simplification in building activities.

Regional laws declared similar goals from their beginning, too. Recurrent items, include firstly the goals of the 'boosting of the economy/support to building industry' and the 'architectural and residential quality improvement'. The need for housing, that should justify the name of 'Housing Plan' –. would show at the bottom.

Another interesting aspect is the minor relevance of the urban scale compared to the building one, that reveals the little importance attributed to the interventions at the urban and territorial level. Which makes it impossible using the incentives as a tool of urban renewal. Finally, the widespread eligibility of interventions on non residential buildings, is not very coherent in a Housing Plan.

The Agreement clearly envisaged the exclusion of historical centres from the Plan. However, the Regional transpositions enlarges this concept; in most cases by extending it to other comparable categories of goods, in other cases by including – under specific conditions – protected areas, too. The first group of laws hides a strong mistrust in the basis of the governmental initiative, and there is an effort to 'armour' the territories, often taxonomically looking for the 'beautiful' and the 'ugly', to save the first one by 'extracting' it and to sacrifice the second one on the altar of the support to the construction industry.

The four Regions that belong to the second group show a wider level of openness:

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– Bolzano, where only alpine wooded areas are not included and either A zones (historical centres) or other kinds of protected areas are not clearly excluded; it's only specified that "the particular features that originated the protection and destination must be considered";
– Sardinia, where in enlargement, demolition and reconstruction interventions the possibility of acting inside A zones is excluded, with the exception of those buildings that are less than fifty years old and are conflicting with architectural and typological contextual features;
– Lombardy, where it is possible to replace single residential buildings if incoherent with historical, architectural, landscape and environmental features of the context;
– Molise, that allows interventions on protected heritage under the condition that they are expressly approved by the authority which is responsible for the preservation.
The overview offered by the different Regional laws is not a mere opposition between cautioners and liberals, and we can not associate the first ones (as it happens very often) with the primacy of landscape preservation. After the European Landscape Convention we know, that a strongly protectionist attitude does not ensure valorisation of the territory, so we cannot consider imprudent the positions of those Regions.
Another important question, for which differences among 'protectionists' can be considered relevant, is the definition of historical centre. Only few Regions, haves limited the protection to A zones, as set in local plans; most Regions have decided to exclude from the eligibility a wide category of historical realities.
The very definition 'historical centre' proves to be too much constraining, while there is a trend towards considering of testimonial value a plurality of resources, that Regional lawmakers attempted to individuate, and that in their complex help to provide a good definition of historical landscape.
The outcomes of this effort are located at different levels in a scale of complexity in urban reading.
In some cases, the attempt consists in the exclusion of all the buildings (therefore as single goods) recognized, in different ways, of historical interest by local or Regional plans or by specific Regional catalogues. At a second level of complexity, a vision of the territory as a place of centres, major or minor, is asserted; it is therefore possible to find zones, tissues, external nuclei from historical centres, even if not clearly protected.
Last but not least question is the use of incentives as a strategy. The application of incentives of recent urbanism makes, public/private exchange visible; in these experiences the deal made clear.
The Housing Plan deliberately puts aside the possibility of an exchange, to serve the emergency aims of the law:, mainly the building industry revitalization. The real possibility of these measures to achieve territory enhancement must be evaluated, vis-à-vis what can otherwise seem to be an unjustified "gift" to private operators. Historical centres, rural territories, landscape must and can be the most important beneficiaries of the Housing

Plan, that can distribute urban weights according to more effective logics. In this sense, the relocation tool could have been used with more courage.

Gaston Bardet's Rome: the view of a French town planner in the thirthies of the 20th century

Luigi Manzione

Author still unknown in Italy, Gaston Bardet represents one of the most important theorists of French town planning in the 20th Century. As Marcel Poëte's disciple, Bardet holds a thesis on the urbanism of fascist Rome at the École des hautes études urbaines in Paris in 1932, La Rome de Mussolini, Contribution à l'étude du plan régulateur 1931, which we will examine in this paper. In the book, published in 1937, Bardet outlines the formation and the evolution of the city, with a clear interest in the urban history, developed under the influence of Poëte. However, his is an approach as an urbanist, rather then as a town historian. It would be said that the reflection of Poëte on the use of the iconographic sources for town history has a first attempt of operative translation in La Rome de Mussolini. In the line of that tradition, Bardet does not limit himself to treat the urban development under a morphological point of view, but he ventures on the ground of political and social history. The sympathy for its study's object is explicit: in fact, the myth of the 'Third Rome' does not leave him indifferent, not only for what the town planning practices are concerned, but also from the point of view of the socio-economic organization of the regime. La Rome de Mussolini has been defined as an apology of the urban policy led by the regime in Italy. The reading proposed intends to verify if it is an apology, even though a little faded, of fascist Rome or, instead, the point of view, together participant and critical, of a French town planner on the state and the perspectives of the capital of a foreign country, that he admires without any doubt. The study of the formation and evolution appears marginal when compared to the analysis of the contemporary urban and territorial planning. Bardet shows to be already able to 'take down' with ease the mechanism of the city and to read its parts and relations. His reflections are supported by the undeniable curiosity of an observer in front of a scene in effervescence. The problems of the Rome de Mussolini require solutions to be searched, according to Bardet, starting from the analysis of the existing city, making use of the data collected by demography, graphic statistics, economic projections. Bardet catches the substance and references of the main proposals for the capital: the plan of the gruppo urbanisti romani coordinated by Marcello Piacentini and the plan of the gruppo La Burbera directed by Gustavo Giovannoni. He identifies the key point in the conservation of the centre: in referring to Piacentini, Bardet outlines a notion of museum-city, 'tabernacle' of the spiritual life of the city, anticipating of half century a theme which will be at the core of the European debate. The French town planner's attention concentrates on the main operations in the capital: the trident of via del Babuino-via del Corso-via di Ripetta, the liberation of the Au-

gusteo and the reorganization of piazza Venezia. Even though he admir the urbanism of Rome, Bardet does not spare criticism to the liberation and the rarefaction of the urban tissues, in compliance with the ideas of Giovannoni on the complementarity between architecture and context, with a great interest in the current italian debate on the urban restoration and the interventions in the old centres of cities.

Even if it is an early work, La Rome de Mussolini shows as a whole a remarkable knowledge of the methods and techniques of town planning. The author does not limits himself to mentioning the most important designers and implementation. He also prefigures some original hypotheses, with reference to the idea developed for Great Paris in 1935, and even establishes a circularity in the relationship between the italian and french capitals. As Piccinato, but without mentioning the italian architect, Bardet affirms the importance of the design and the localization of the green spaces for the definition of the structure of thea city plan.

According to Bardet, to solve the problems of the 'third Rome' the 'issues of grandeur' haves priority fover the 'issues of necessity', in order for it to assume the identity of a capital, with the organization of the archaeological areas, the main connections to the region, the 'embellissements'. However, unlike the archaeologists, Bardet thinks that the archaeological arrangements become objects of aesthetization not only because of their scientific value, but also for their capacity to estabilish a connection with the urban context and, as such, they require a careful evaluation from the point of view of the town planner. Placing the archaeology of the italian capital in relation to the urban development, Bardet connects the settlement of imperial Forums area to the destiny of the city in its entirety. Therefore, the solution of the problems of symbolic representation combines with a strategic vision of the future of Rome as a metropolis. In parallel to the prefiguration of metropolis form, the reading of La Rome de Mussolini allows us to recognize the sources of a certain antiurban tendency, prone to ruralism. The 'rural and regional problems' cannot be disjoined by the expansion models, by the infrastructures and transport networks and zoning on a territorial scale. In connection to his researches on the multiplication of the high-speed suburban transports, Bardet preconizes preconizes a reorganization on the metropolis model, with a main centre surrounded by autonomous small towns from the economic and administrative point of view, with some analogy with the structure given by Piccinato to the new town of Sabaudia. Decentralization, disurbanism, ruralism, themes on which the reflection of regime theorists as well as Bardet's discourse converges, become the tools to restore an order through the 'return to the earth'. Urbanism versus ruralism: the therapy, called 'urbanisme rural', resides in the folds of this opposition, of which Bardet wishes the use not only under a totalitarian regime.

La Rome de Mussolini received several reviews on ma-

gazines and newspapers of the epoch. The book was also the object of a controversy on the state of town planning in Italy and France, in which Léandre Vaillat and Silvio Ardy took part. Despite the enthusiasm on both fronts, this polemic did not last long. That which could lead to the opposition, but also to the comparison, between two national ways to conceive urbanism and the transformations of the centres reduces himself, in the end, in a dispute of poor interest of which La Rome de Mussolini is only a pretext.

If the Bardet book does not succeed, in substance, to provoke an international debate, it anyhow reveals itself to be essential for the next reflection on parisian urbanism. In Paris, as in Rome, the growth has blurred the traditional figure with the globular contour, so that the city overflows in tentacular form in the region. The Prost Plan (1928-35) is not able to exceed the structural continuity of the undifferentiated agglomeration, defined by Bardet like a "kind of galaxy, with a court of globular mass and star nebulae, with different volumes and density". To carry out this overcoming, it is necessary to think over once more growth globally, intervening in the first banlieue ring, by a territorial readjustment policy, and aiming at the drastic reduction of the attraction exercised by the metropolis. This process appears to be possible, as Bardet had already asserted in case of Rome, only in the context of a total strategy established by a regional plan, with "a wide ring of open spaces" and, at a distance, a 'chain of taches-déversoirs-satellites'. In the end of the thirties, Bardet prefigures an original model of settlements dispersion on the territory. Already he feels the necessity of reworking a corpus for the town planning, and of rethinking his principles and techniques. Bardet will do it at the beginning of the 1940s in Problèmes d'urbanisme, his first general book on urbanism, in which he outlines an original vision of the 'urban science', based on the emergence of the social space and the centrality of a humanist point of view, of which La Rome de Mussolini may be regarded as the prologue.