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An Italian Urban "Fashion"

The Urban 1 Programme as a Catalyst for Institutional Planning Shift

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Abstract

Since the 1990s Italy has been going through changes and experiments concerning modes and tools of urban government. New methods, based on public-private partnership, on a consensual basis, were progressively adopted, overcoming the traditional authoritative mechanisms and role of public actors. The contribution of Community policies such as initiatives on urban areas, has been crucial in creating new tools, influencing the existing ones and activating new approaches to planning.

This paper builds some theoretical considerations on the contributions the implementation of European Programmes has given to the changes in the conception of urban interventions and the debated shift in urban policies from "government" to "governance".

The aim is to build a critical analysis about how the Urban 1 initiative acted as a "catalyst" for the evolution of urban practices, accelerating the innovation of the planning cultures and practices.
The article examines three cities where an Urban 1 Programme has been developed: Genoa, Naples and Palermo. The cases have been selected in order to present the variety of interpretations of EU initiatives across Italy, fostering a critical discussion on EU programmes and their relationships with local planning policies.

1. Introduction

Italy has faced momentous changes. The transformation from a predominantly agricultural economy to one based on industrial and services sectors only occurred in the 1970s after the post-war reconstruction period (Scattoni & Falco, 2011). In the 1980s and 1990s the de-industrialization processes started, shifting to a post-fordist, post-modern model (Bagnasco, 1990) with the development of «hyper-territories, meta-expressions, and increasingly complex functionalities of urban life, work, consumption, and mobility» (Seixas & Albet, 2010, 772).
In such turbulent contexts, Italy experienced two decades of experiments in legislation and operations (Palermo, 2006; Governa & Saccomani, 2004; Tira & Zanon, 2011), shifting the mainstream institutional planning paradigms from government to governance (Seixas & Albet, 2010). New methods, based on public-private partnership, on a consensual basis, were progressively adopted, overcoming the traditional authoritative mechanisms. Various legislative provisions have introduced new instruments for territorial and urban planning (Governa & Saccomani, 2004) such as the family of Integrated Programmes and tools focusing on economic-productive aspects. Moreover, while strong pressures existed for the reform of national and regional planning legislation, several mechanisms have been experimented «with contracts among different institutional tiers or between public and private actors, with grants, special purpose vehicles, marketable building rights or potentials, mixed agencies» (Ponzini, 2011).
The role of European Comunity policies in the innovation of territorial and

urban government tools in Italy has been crucial. The Community Initiatives, such as the Urban Pilot Project 1 and 2, and the Urban Programmes, were designed by the European Union as opportunities for innovation in urban policies in the local perspective to enhance the effectiveness of public action (Padovani, 2002a). As a result, the Europeanization of urban intervention cultures, together with the innovation and integration of policies concerning social and economic issues and an invitation to overcome the traditional focus on building and planning modelling has made new inputs to the debate. The Community Initiatives contributed to the definition of new modes and tools for urban interventions, according to Rivolin and Faludi (2005, 207):

> *thanks to a sort of contamination by Community policies (through participation in Integrated Mediterranean Programmes, Territorial Employment Pacts, Urban Pilot Projects, Leader and Urban Community Initiatives), a dozen or so new tools for "negotiated programming" and "complex programmes" for urban regeneration have been created, within the short period of time of only a few years giving rise to a plethora of local territorial actions.*

In recent years, Community policies have been the objects of several studies, revealing a wider debate on the development of national policies for the city and the territory, including different institutional levels of government and governance (Balducci, 2000; Rivolin & Faludi, 2005; Rivolin 2000; Governa, 2010; Governa & Salone, 2005). The literature has deeply analysed Urban 1, above all, due to the innovative concept of inter-institutional, inter-sectoral, multi-actor, and participative action and to its wide use throughout the peninsula.

The Urban 1 Initiative concluded in 1999, involved 118 European cities, 16 in Italy. The objective was to push European cities to implement innovative and participative programmes in order to be able to intervene in effective terms in situations of serious environmental and social urban decay (Padovani, 2002b). The Urban Initiative aimed at acting as a driver for local development «through exemplary projects aimed at sustainable improvement of living conditions of urban residents, particularly in the poorest and socially

degraded areas» (CEC 1994).
Whereas the physical outcomes of this experience have been analysed (Palermo et al., 2002; Campagna & Ricci, 2000), studies have approached Urban 1 experiences as a chance to activate a learning process concerning the use of cross-sectoral urban policies (Padovani, 2002a), and the promotion of effective participative processes, all aimed at the social and economic cohesion of target areas (Tosi, 2001). Accordingly, the Urban initiative has improved a set of capabilities in co-operation and in dealing with integrated urban problems (Padovani, 2002a, 2002b). Furthermore, the adoption of suggestions from the EU city governance approach and the introduction of a series of Integrated Programmes have had direct consequences on the Italian planning culture, inaugurating a "planning by project" (Fontana, 2002) fashion which had to deal with the crisis of planning models.
What seems to be missing is a debate on the contribution of Urban 1 in the discussion on the contemporary shift in the Italian institutional planning. To discuss this, the article will analyse the initiative in three Italian cities, Genoa, Naples and Palermo, following three specific perspectives.
The first is related to the role of the nation states in relation with European Union institutions and the consequent new models for public action. The first generation of European Community initiatives – such as the Urban Programme have partly contributed to the evolution of the Italian planning systems with the introduction of new concepts and practices to deal with urban issues pressing to enforce administrative decentralization, strengthen local responsibilities and to develop integrated urban policies (Saccomani & Governa, 2004; Stanghellini, 2001; Tosi, 2001; Governa, 2010). Clementi (2002, 26), stated that it is necessary «to manage by agreements rather than with decrees and measures for self-reliance. We would expect that after this very intense period of experimentation, the local development plan would never be the same [translated by the authors]».
The second is to critically discuss how the European aspiration to build a socially shared interaction, closely related to the concept of "consensus building", were differently activated. Laino (1999, 75) observed that the 16 different interpretations of Urban 1 were examples of «a series of decision-making means partially following the *government* approach combined with others in accordance with urban *governance* conceptualization [translated by

the authors]». Taking into account the significance of the term governance in relation to the particular phase of citizens' involvement in the decision-making processes, he outlines the use of methodologies of participation of inhabitants, the great potential for innovation, and the clear limits to the Italian practice of urban regeneration.

The last point of interest is how such urban regeneration policies with social objectives, together with the expansion of strategic means of planning, select areas and/or issues of intervention and how the trends to timely intervention may foster some tendencies to the exclusion of some areas or issues from the planning field.

To sum up, the concern of this paper is to make some theoretical reflections on the modifications of planning practice in Italy, through the lenses of the institutional planning shift that restructured the planning discipline in Europe in the last decades. The role of the Urban programme as a "catalyst" of changes in planning cultures will be debated. In chemistry, a catalyst is a «substance that increases the rate of a chemical reaction without itself undergoing any permanent chemical change[1]»: the same programme has been implemented in several different contexts, and we will debate how it contributed to the accelerating of the processes of shifting of institutional planning. The theoretical debate on this shift will be outlined in section 2. Section 3 will summarise the evolution of the Italian planning system in order to give the context for the empirical analysis (Section 4) which will show how the implementation of the Urban 1 programme in Italy is worth studying in order to provide some theoretical considerations (Section 5) in respect to the general frame aforementioned.

2. The contemporary institutional planning shift and the EU initiatives

The last three decades of the last century have been described as the epoch of the post-modern shift, the transition between a fordist and a post-fordist economy being entrenched with great social and cultural consequences and

1 As defined by the Concise Oxford English Dictionary, edited by the Oxford University Press and available on *www.wordreference.com*

gigantic spatial transformations within the urban field (Fillion, 1996). The growing specialization of urban spaces, the fragmentation of the urban structure, and the emergence of new and typical urban forms allow the 1970s to be considered as the beginning of a period of general transformation of urban forms, not yet concluded (Martinotti, 1993).

Such phenomena have been faced by the public sector with growing difficulties due to the fiscal stress connected with de-industrialization processes. Neo-liberal trends and the crisis of planning models made factors like the decline of nation states, the fragmentation of the decision-making processes, and the prevalence of the multinational private sector crucial to an exploration of contemporary policies (Shaktin, 2002).

Three general aspects of the contemporary shift in planning can be reviewed in order to formulate the questions to be debated within the paper.

1. It is necessary to look at the redefinition of the role of the nation states which do not simply passively undergo the aforementioned processes «but engage in them as actors in their own right» (Governa, 2010, 664). Decentralization processes have reshaped the relationships between national and local levels, defining new models for public action and a number of new policies were developed, shifting the mainstream institutional planning paradigms from government to governance (Seixas & Albet, 2010). It has been noted that making an absolute distinction between such two models is an unattainable task, and referring rather to a «*continuum* of intersecting aspects and features» (Governa, 2010, 679) seems to be a more appropriate approach. Indeed, within such processes, the role of strategic means of planning is crucial. Within the EU, a further level is in play: a re-scaling of territorial governance (Brenner, 1999) related to the bilateral relationships between nation states and EU institutions. The shift to governance and the innovation of local policies are commonly considered as main tools for achieving the objectives of competitiveness and cohesion which frame the community agenda on urban development (Territorial Agenda, 2007; ESPON, 2010; Governa, 2010). From this view-point, the first generation of Urban programmes can be analysed as a test-bed for the desired renovation of local policies in southern European cities.

Within such a context, some reflections on the EU's Territorial Agenda have stressed on the fact that a shift towards a so-called “evidence-based”

justification of policies has brought a relative neglect of the dimension of political and social agency in spatial development processes (Gualini, 2008). Might we extend such reflections by suggesting that the shift from governmental to governance practices refers to a shift from a political to an operational attitude? In other words, may the shift towards project-based planning and the (relative) neglect of normative planning practices reduce the opportunities for political debate and foster some tendencies to focus only on economic development policies?

2. Such a question is intertwined with the second theoretical point to be debated: the so-called institutional turn in social sciences[2], stressing the new forms of political interactions between the vertical pressures of private interests – linked with the growing role of multinational sectors – and the grass-roots democratization and decentralization pressures. In a post-modern political arena, decisions cannot be taken «in a linear fashion from intent to choice, but in a complex, socially structured interaction» (Vigar et al., 2000, 47). Thus, specific practices should be embedded in a wider context made of social relations (Healey, 1999), considering both the growing effects of large international institutions on day-to-day people's lives and the ability of people to influence them (Beauregard, 2005). Consensus building practices and the general shift from normative to strategic planning are deeply interconnected with such themes.

Within their analysis of contemporary large urban developments in Europe, Gualini & Majoor (2007) have stressed some critical aspects: a limited amount of both strategic and comprehensive planning approaches; a lack of effective implementation of “new” planning ideas. The point seems to be the institutional fragmentation wherein most of such projects are realized which makes it harder for governments and local administrations to effectively pursue their interests. These authors foresee the emergence of a “new urban policy” (*ibidem*, 198) whose main focus shifts from *welfare* policies to market-oriented approaches.

Given the shifting patterns of justification of policies, how did the implementation of the Urban 1 programmes in Italy manage the consensus-building issues? Can we recognize some tendencies towards the so-called

2 See *Planning Theory*, vol. 4, n.3, 2005.

"new urban policies"?

3. A last theme stresses the "dark-side" of the institutional planning shift. If we recognize that both contemporary societal patterns and urban forms are increasingly associated with social polarization, privatization of public space(s) and exclusion of social groups (Young, 1991; Petti, 2007; Holston, 1998) we might be interested in understanding how such processes are justified: if a democratic interaction is necessary to justify policies, the role of information is decisive for consensus building (Forester, 1989; Hillier, 2002). Thereby, a "neo-liberal governmentality" has been described, based on the building of oppositional categories such as "order/disorder", "we"/"the others" (Hutta, 2009) to justify selective and/or exclusive policies. From this viewpoint, a strategic means of planning – and the use of specific programmes as well – allows a "selective non-planning" (Yiftachel, 2009) in order to exclude from institutional attention some areas, instances, or populations.

Tosi (2001) questioned the model of an integrated approach proposed by European documents in relation to the concept of multidimensionality of measures in the social literature, stressing the relationships between the choice of areas where Urban programmes apply and the achievement of social goals. A last question emerges: can the generalised use of integrated programmes, such as the Urban one, reduce the use of normative planning tools and, thus, foster some tendencies to the exclusion of some areas or issues from the planning field?

These questions can provide some critical interpretations of the Italian shift in planning policies. Thus, instead of a review of "best practice" outcomes, this paper will compare different processes, in order to make some general conclusions on the way complex, well-funded urban programmes may, at the same time, contribute to positive innovation to planning processes or shift the decision-making focus from public to private interests.

3. The Italian planning shift

3.1 From zoning to the crisis of traditional Italian planning

The Italian planning system is grounded in an outdated law, Law 1150 approved in 1942, which defines the municipal plan (PRG, Piano Regolatore Generale) as a master plan based on land-use zoning extended to the municipal area. Its main aims were organizing the physical growth of the city and providing building regulations for land transformation. Subsequent legal amendments and supplements have further articulated the zoning and the PRG has progressively become a tool used to orient urban growth in order to perform economic and social development (Oliva et al., 2002; Mazza, 1997). This model is based on a comprehensive knowledge of reality that allows the definition of problems and the construction of alternatives to choose the planning solutions, structuring the local plan in the notion of public interest (Mazza, 1997).
Since the 1970s, major territorial expansion has stopped, social demand changed, and the notion of collective interest broken down (Saccomani, 2003) putting in crisis this sort of plan. The main criticisms of this model were brought from social, business, and environmental interests (Salzano, 1998). Three main reasons for the ineffectiveness of public actions and the inadequate technical quality of municipal plan have been recognised (Oliva et al., 2002):

- the reference to a model unable to govern the transformations taking place;
- extreme rigidity of the plan in comparison to the rapidity of urban change;
- inadequate implementation tools, essentially based on expropriation procedures and not considering public-private negotiations.

To overcome such a crisis, an incremental approach to the municipal plan was developed aiming to a design parts of the city, according to the needs and priorities of the moment. Thus, in the early 1990s, new tools for urban planning were introduced in the Italian framework to operate in a more flexible and pragmatic way on the basis of public-private agreements in

derogation of the existing PRGs (Mello, 2007; Ombuen et al., 2000). After the first implementations, these tools could only give partial answers when disconnected from a general planning strategy and vision. Thus, there was a new planning demand for a return to having a municipal plan, but radically changed in form and procedures (Salzano, 2008; Oliva et al., 2002).

3.2 "Complex Urban Programmes": integrated planning tools and European projects

During the 1990s, new tools were developed in order to shift the way of urban intervention from "traditional" to "integrated" (Governa & Salone, 2004): the family of "complex urban programmes" (*Programmi Complessi*), were tools focusing on economic-productive aspects, negotiated planning (*Programmazione Negoziata*), and all finalised to define a contractual model for the interaction between public and private actors.
The complex urban programmes, have been implemented in five national Programmes: Integrated Intervention Programmes (PII, *Programmi Integrati di Intervento*, 1992), Urban Rehabilitation Programmes (PRU, *Programmi di Recupero Urbano*, 1993), Urban Renewal Programmes (PRIU, *Programmi di Riqualificazione urbana*, 1994), Neighbourhood Contracts (CdQ, *Contratti di Quartiere*, 1998 and 2003), and Programmes for the Urban Renewal and Sustainable Development for Territories (PRUSST, *Programmi di Riqualificazione Urbana e Sviluppo Sostenibile del Territorio*, 1998).
In these programmes, the principle of integration – in terms of intervention-sector multi-dimensionality (functions, economy, local societies), of coordination among various institutional levels, and of cooperation between public and private actors (Davoudi, 2003) – is put forward with different approaches in an evolutionary perspective. The first direction for these urban regeneration policies – aimed to improve urban quality – including PIIs, PRUs, and PRIUs, focused mainly on physical renewal, integrating urban issues with social and economic problems. Then, PRUSSTs and neighbourhood contracts, were aimed at promoting sustainable local development in situations in which physical and functional degradation are accompanied by social problems, but at an enlarged scale, municipal at least. The second kind of intervention programmes (Law 662/1996; CIPE

resolution 21/3/1997), consists of a set of tools focused on economic-productive aspects using negotiating approaches. Territorial Pacts (*Patti Territoriali*), Area Contracts (*Contratti d'Area*) as well as Quarter (Neighbourhood) Contracts were defined as agreements for local development promoted by local entities.

Within this context, several planning policies – EU actions, complex programmes, traditional planning, and plan implementation tools – can overlap in a single geographical area, and the analysis of their relationships is a challenging task. It is important to stress the experimental character of the last two decades and the period of important institutional, economic, and social changes. Moreover, with a similar model but with different financial capacity, complex and Urban 1 programmes have simultaneously involved the same public local administrations and, sometimes, the same target areas. Following these considerations, it is undoubted that the complex urban programmes «have often been implemented in accordance with EU Urban initiative or through projects emulating its "spirit"» (Governa, 2010, 673) and the pivotal role of European Union to widely spread an innovative model of urban intervention able to "contaminate" (Rivolin & Faludi, 2005) and contribute to the evolution of the Italian way of planning, working as a catalyst.

It is evident that, not only the introduction of various legislative provisions of different tools for urban renewal but also the European Union policies have put forward the principle of integration in different forms and in different sectors contributing to an evolution of Italian practices not only through the amount of finance offered, but also by introducing an urban renewal culture unlike the traditional building and urban renewal approach (Governa & Saccomani, 2004).

Hence, Urban initiatives, and Urban 1 in particular, being the first, have played a crucial role in proposing the same new cultural issues in planning that were similarly debated in each EUCountry, introducing key innovations in terms of territorial and urban government tools (Padovani, 2002a).

3.3 Main outcomes in ordinary planning

Since the second half of the 1990s the Italian National Planning Institute (Inu) has tried to respond to the new planning situation with the proposal for

a novel national planning act with principles, guidelines, and coordination with the subsequent legislative action of the regions (Stanghellini, 1997). The extension of the municipal plan into strategic-structural and programmatic-operative regulations has been the major innovation. Such a new plan is split into three tools: Structural Plan (*Piano Strutturale Comunale*, PSC), the programmatic one; Development Plan (*Piano Operativo Comunale*, POC), the prescriptive one; Planning and Building Regulations (*Regolamento Urbanistico Edilizio*, RUE), prescriptive for the management of developed areas (Campos Venuti, 2008).

The Structural Plan is aimed at outlining the main organization lines and indicating long-term changes; the Development Plan is intended to identify actions and transformations to be carried out in the short-term (Dal Piaz & Apreda, 2010; Salzano, 2008). As a result, a proactive/strategic nature and a regulative role arise for the plan. The former, without a real prescriptive framework, create new possibilities for development. The latter ensures existing and new rights, defined through prescriptive and detailed proposals (Mazza, 1995). Particularly, the main innovative aspect of the PSC should be the non-prescriptive nature of the land-regulation, except for higher-level prescriptions and constraints (Oliva, 2009; Oliva et al., 2002), deleting land revenue provisions (Campos Venuti, 2009). Thus, from a normative point of view, the PSC should be a flexible tool for identifying strategies, objectives, constraints, and safeguards, representing more agreements by the administration than duties for the private sector (Urbani, 2000).

Within this framework, the POC defines the initiatives and the governance of main territorial development achievable in the municipal electoral mandate or five-year period on the basis of the programme of the administration (Dal Piaz 2004; Avarello & Properzi, 1997). In this sense, the POC regulates planning interventions and implementation according to criteria of priority and feasibility (Dal Piaz & Apreda, 2010) and occurs in strict relation to procedures for public-private negotiation (Oliva, 2009; Urbani, 2000). Following Tuscany, in 1995, many regions have reformed the concept and structure of the PRG, developing different variations, reflecting, more or less, the model proposed by Inu.

The new local plans system largely uses the equalization strategy of property rights for its implementation, recognizing both its advantages and limitations

(Micelli, 2010; 2011). While strong pressures were aimed at the reform of national and regional planning legislations, new models have been introduced. Pro-market based devices – proposing the exchange of development rights – have been experimented and progressively adopted (Pompei, 1998; Micelli, 2002; 2004) with the objectives of achieving spatial justice and allowing administrations to effectively implement planning decisions without using financial resources (Karrer, 2004).
In such a national context – where a more advanced urban planning model is arising, bringing to more effective implementation of normative planning means – complex urban programmes and Community policies can become a way to implement the Development plan[3]. Otherwise, urban interventions from national and European initiatives may become, sometimes in derogation of the existing plan, tools which run counter to the traditional Italian planning system.

4. Case Studies

4.1 Methodology and background of the case studies

A case study methodology has been considered to closely examine the questions within the specific contexts (Yin, 1994/2003; Tellis, 1997a). The paper presents a multiple-case design due to the numerous sources of evidence through the dissemination logic of Community Initiatives (Tellis, 1997b). Three cases have been selected for the exploration of the Urban 1 Italian experience: Genoa, Naples and Palermo, in order to reflect the wide variety of interpretations of EU initiatives across Italy, highlighting strong and weak points of local authorities actions, and fostering a critical discussion on EU programmes and their relationships with the evolution and improvement of urban government. Some interviews and informal meetings with local administration's representatives[4] have been included in the case

3 The foregoing is strongly supported by Gianluigi Nigro as emerged in a long interview with him. See also Oliva et al., 2002.

4 In Genoa, Bruno Gabrielli, professor emeritus at University of Genoa and former Genoa Municipality Councillor. In Naples, Daniela Lepore, responsible for national research on the Urban programme and person close to the former manager for social policies. In Palermo, Emilio Arcuri, former Chairman of the Committee for the Historical Centre and Nadia Spallitta who lead the office for the design of the Urban 1 proposal.

study approach and are named as sources in the text. Before discussing each case, a brief summary of the background is necessary to show the great variety and interpretation of Urban 1 in Italy.

In Genoa, a port city in northern Italy, the selected areas are located in two industrialized neighbourhoods in the urban west side. The background of the sites was characterized by social conflict and lack of control by public authorities over the process of exploitation of land by private developers. These are, in fact, two of the most representative areas where the industrial production has characterised the context, both in physical and social terms.

Both in Naples and Palermo, the largest cities of southern Italy, the selected areas were within the historical centres which are characterized – like many Mediterranean cities – by a richness of cultural values and historic buildings; a complex and decayed physical structure; social deprivation; depopulation with some trends to re-population thanks to immigration and initial regeneration processes; inadequacy of public policies (Lo Piccolo, 1996).

The table below gives a general overview of the selected case studies.

Table 1: Overview selected case studies

		Genoa	*Naples*	*Palermo*
Location	Historical center		Quartieri Spagnoli and Rione Sanità	Castellammare and Tribunali districts
	Brownfield	Cornigliano and Sestri Ponente		
Tasks	Social	✓	✓	✓
	Economic	✓	✓	✓
	Environmental	✓	✓	✓
	Physical	✓	✓	✓
Funding	EU	32%	46%	47%
	Non EU	68%	54%	53%

Table 1 – Overview selected case studies
Source: official Urban website: ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/urban2/index_en.htm.

4.2 The Urban experience: measures and results

Genoa: the Urban tessera

The Urban 1 initiative in Genoa mainly involved three measures: (1)

reclamation of the environment; (2) control, monitoring and mitigation of traffic pollution; (3) economic support for new economic activities.

Distinctive aspects of the deployment of Urban 1 in the Genoese area could be attributed to the importance given to it as a fundamental *tessera* of a total redesign of the city and, above all, of its image: in fact, contemporaneously to the renewal of central parts of the old harbour, financed by other programmes and national investments (PRU, PRUSST, Structural Funds Objective 2, Columbus International Exhibition, G8 International Summit, 2004 Capital of EU Culture), and considering the typical polycentrism of the city, they chose to channel Urban 1 funding into the reuse of the western industrial outskirts. Thus, the Municipality provided to the citizens visible interventions in different quarters and neighbourhoods of the metropolitan area. According to Bruno Gabrielli – in one of the informal meetings we had around these topics – the real future challenge was in how such improvements could become permanent and durable afterwards.

The Genoese proposal was aimed at organising an innovative job centre and to improve the general conditions concerning transportation and services. Some other complementary interventions were implemented, thanks to a subsequent negotiation that permitted a re-modulation of the financed objectives. The main funded actions concerned the renewal of the ancient villas of Cornigliano – establishing new functions and a renewed connection to the city fabric – and the urban green areas of Valletta Rio San Pietro and Monte Gazzo, definitely protected from the attacks of building speculation. During the re-modulation process funds were addressed to the restoration of a daily surgery centre, justifying it by the starting-up of a new vehicular accessibility project which improved traffic conditions and made less crucial the creation of the goods-centre.

The actors involved were the Municipality – an International and European Policies Sector was created inside the Mayor's Office –, the Province, and the local transport society with the technical support of private parties. In this sense, the desired public-private partnership was not completely achieved: scholars agree on the authoritative role played by Municipality in managing the resources (Palermo & Savoldi, 2002; Fedeli & Gastaldi, 2004). At the time of approval, Genoa proposed to assign to a public-private consortium the leading role in the deployment of the project: nevertheless,

for a simplification of the steering and managerial activities, the Municipality assumed the whole function. Only two actions were delegated to other actors: the public transport manager – for the setting up of new bus-lines in the target area – and the Province – as far as environmental monitoring was concerned. For the job centre, an agreement procedure was provided in order to enable third sector private parties to collaborate in the work.

About the relationships between the reclamation programmes and (ordinary) spatial planning, some outcomes can be identified. The complexity of two regulatory plans – city and port – was balanced by a joint task-force during the drawing up of the Urban programme, but the influence of extraordinary contributions to planning issues – large-scale projects, urban marketing decisions, supra-local intents, economic pressures – made this difficult. Therefore, Urban 1 was not directly connected with the existing plan drawn up in 1990, but with the new approach to planning – a new municipal plan was drafted in 2001 – changed because of Urban 1 and other integrated programmes experiences, especially regarding the dynamic relation between plans and projects.

Naples: a story of missed opportunity

Urban 1 for Naples was guided by aims of normalization and legalization, and implemented by a small, informal team that allowed quick decision making , overcoming the uncertain bureaucratic attribution of duties, and avoiding the excesses of political negotiation and mediation. Two measures represent the main focus of the EU programme: (1) setting up of new economic activities; (2) training and local employment promotion.

When talking about Urban 1 for Naples we mostly refer to the Quartieri Spagnoli neighbourhood. In terms of social networks, the different starting points of the two target areas have had a significant impact in terms of effectiveness of the programme. The Quartieri Spagnoli already had a strong social cohesion, so it has been possible to implement the Programme more efficiently recording better results than in the Rione Sanità neighbourhood.

Some maintenance and restructuring of urban furniture, and some actions for the improvement of areas intended for cultural and recreational activities have characterized the urban renewal and regeneration. The only intervention integrated with traditional planning instruments has been the project for the

restyling and improving pedestrian accessibility of the Toledo street-Plebiscito square axis – commercial axis into the valley of Quartieri Spagnoli –, introduced at a later time in the Urban programme to ensure EU funds (Lepore, 2002c).

The main goal of the programme has been to provide economic and technical assistance in upgrading existing enterprises, encouraging entrepreneurial self-improvement and supporting the creation of consortia and co-operatives. In such a way, it has been possible to restructure two hundred existing craft manufacturers highlighting the fact that some economic activities already existed but were not legal (Lepore, 2002a, 2002b). The project also worked as a laboratory for testing innovative services aimed at improving social conditions through direct prevention and recuperation work with the young people, with specific interventions in terms of information, safety, crime prevention, and, lastly, a support to the unemployed to enter the job market (Mingione at al., 2001). From this point of view, a job centre has been established in both areas as a point of listening and guidance to search for job opportunities and carry out information and training activities. These centres are still active.

The balance of what has been carried out with Urban 1 has been quite positive in the short term, but today almost nothing is left, because the former Mayor represented the mainstay that could keep the whole system together. When he stepped down, the project disintegrated in a domino effect as we debated in an interview with Daniela Lepore.

The Urban 1 programme in Naples has been characterized by a very low integration with traditional planning instruments and it is differentiated from other Italian cases by activities which involved less “build” and more “social”: in consequence, it interacted with policies that have nothing to do with urban planning. This has been possible thanks to the delegation from the municipality to the Councillor responsible for social policies and to a great trust between the informal team, this Councillor and mayor Bassolino (Lepore, 2002a, 2002c). In this sense, the measure (2) “Training and local employment promotion” is the one that best integrated with social policies already planned by specific departments of the municipality, especially incorporating actions and social policies foreseen in the “plan for children and adolescents”. Some provision of the ordinary plan have been used to

obtain Urban funding due to the need to have in the EU programme a provision for urban renewal and regeneration aspects.
No integration of the Urban 1 with integrated programmes may be found because all of them have involved peripheral areas of the city. Nowadays, in the Quartieri Spagnoli, a pilot project is being implemented for the regeneration of the *bassi*[5] which, hiding behind the aim of continuity with Urban 1, is fostering huge gentrification processes.

Palermo: contradictions over contradictions

Urban 1 in Palermo has involved two historical districts on the waterfront, characterised by the contradictions typical of Southern Italy historical centres. Within these areas, huge monumental and cultural values exist, as well as most of the cultural institutions of Palermo, together with areas of extreme physical and social degradation, lacking any neighbourhood public facilities. In 1994, the districts were strongly under-populated, as a consequence of the abandonment by inhabitants, which had characterized the historical centre since 60s. The unemployment rate reached 35%.
Four measures were implemented: (1) launching new economic activities; (2) ensuring employment; (3) improvement of public social services; (4) environment and infrastructure. The municipality desired to renew the image of the historical centre and to promote the heritage as strategic means of upgrading the economy (Vinci, 2002). Measure 1 has been the most successful, and the districts are nowadays punctuated by dozens of newly established economic activities. The same cannot be said of the other measures but the new activities have had minor results on residents' employment rate while the measures (3) and (4) – funded with 80% of the budget (Padovani, 2002b) – have not been successful.
Different neighbourhoods have seen different outputs. Olivella has seen successful economic development, with the establishment of a system of hand-crafts, bars and restaurants, mainly run by residents who have empowered their sense of community (Leone, 2009). On the other hand, Vucciria, a neighbourhood hosting a famous historical market, has not received any benefit. The lack of urban centres – like the ones that were

5 Small apartments on the ground floor of the historical buildings.

decisive for Olivella's outputs – contributed to such a failure (ibidem).
It is useful to note the general lack of coordination with government's tasks: no relationships existed with 1989 Detailed Plan for the historical centre which aim was the philological regeneration of the historical space (see Lo Piccolo, 1996). Not thinking in terms of “feasibility” or “housing”, such a plan undoubtedly “saved” the historic centre from demolitions and inappropriate development but left the urban fabric at the mercy of the property sector, generating a slow but progressive gentrification. The Urban 1 programme has been developed without any relationships with the Detailed Plan and this has contributed to very scrappy results without much improvement of the urban condition. Nowadays, the 1989 plan, which has never being modified after the Urban 1, is clearly out-of-date. The embryonic re-population of the historic centre which begun in 2001 (Leone, 2009) is partially connected with Urban 1, for many private refurbishments of residential buildings have started. But the lack of any effective policy for social housing has pushed towards growing gentrification processes.
The measures involving public intervention were least effective, mostly because slowness and corruption of public bureaucracy made it difficult to manage the allocated funding. Furthermore, after the end of the programme, the new right-wing administration assigned to private activities almost all the buildings previously appointed and renovated for be social services.
Indeed, the programme has been a challenge for public offices unused to managing complex programmes. Such aspects clearly emerged during meetings with Emilio Arcuri and Nadia Spallitta. Excellent results in terms of quality of the proposals and fast execution of some measures were achieved thanks to competences acquired by the responsible staff during the implementation of Urban 1. Unfortunately, in the long term, the results vanished: the new administration has dissolved such competences, dismantling offices, mostly for political patronage reasons.
No relationships with integrated programmes may be found, for the use of such programmes arose after the end of the Urban 1 programme. PRU, PRUSST, and PII are very significant labels of the new right-wing administration, which uses them to promote private investments rather than urban regeneration. Such programmes are commonly used in breaking of normative planning instruments.

5. Discussion and concluding remarks

The great variety of methods, processes and outputs of the three cases described may be of great help in building some general theoretical considerations for a critical debate on the role of EU regeneration policies in the shifting patterns of institutional planning in Italy. The methodology we chose was a multiple-cases design, and builds on the so-called "replication logic" (Yin 1994/2003, 47). This provides a theoretical framework in two complementary ways: predicting similar results in similar contexts – a "literal replication" – or finding contrasting outputs but for predictable reasons – a "theoretical replication" (ibidem). The variety of outputs we discovered for the use of the same tool in different contexts, thus, may be rethought on the basis of the different contexts and political cultures of the three cities. In order to build some conclusions with reference to the framework outlined in Section 2, several key themes emerged: the considerations focus on the drivers and barriers identified in the relation between the local contexts, the Italian planning system and the European urban policies.

In the Genoa case, following the debate on strategic planning as a reflection of the shift from government to governance, some of the most representative interventions were not delivered by the management of transformations in the traditional "sense" of planning. They are more due to a long-term vision built up by means of non-standard planning tools, in which private interests and public priorities are matched, creating all around project aspirations and an attractiveness halo. The public sector retained the leading role but in partnership with strong pressure groups expressed by the best economic resources of the territory: marketing and R&D sectors were also closely involved in the strategy. About participation, the Urban 1 initiative collected several contributions by citizens, mostly related to the problems arising from the damaging environmental impacts of the industrial plants. In this sense, Urban 1 funding was exploited by the public sector for a typical process of consensus building: it allowed the Municipality not to concentrate all the interventions in the central area, turning the regard to a peripheral zone and, thus, preventing the risk of offering the image of a disequilibrium towards citizens from different parts of the polycentric city.

In Naples, the programme was implemented by direct involvement of government. Nevertheless, we cannot speak about a pure top-down approach: the choices were the result of continuous and direct face-to-face contact with the so-called “informal team”, represented by the Quartieri Spagnoli Association, a social network already existing and strengthened in the neighbourhood. From the viewpoint of the consensus building, the “informal team” has been a mouthpiece of citizens without real participatory practices. Having knowledge of the needs of the inhabitants, it owned the freedom to decide individually with the institutions. For this reason, this approach has been termed as the “good soviet” one (Lepore, 2002a; Laino, 1999). Yet, it has represented together the strength and weakness of the programme. When the Mayor resigned from his office, in the absence of the strong leadership that had joined the network of trust relationships, the “good soviet” approach revealed itself as a problem instead than an opportunity. The biggest weakness of the programme has been that it seemed incapable of creating an effective system of governance: there has been product innovation but there has not been process innovation.

Without any doubt, the Palermo case is the one characterised by lower levels of bottom-up participation. The administration leading the city in such times has been called the one of Palermo's “spring”: for the first time after the second world war, the city was lead by uncorrupted and competent administrators and the 1990s were marked by a great social reaction against the Mafia and by some cultural and economic development. Nevertheless, the Urban programme was characterised by low levels of public interaction for the administrative and bureaucratic apparatus which were, and still are, contaminated by huge corruption and nepotism. Furthermore it is to be noted that EU controlled mostly the project phase rather than the implementation one. Such a complex context may explain the very complex outputs of the Urban 1: the need for great efforts from the responsible administrative staff and the identification of short-time consensus from the administration politicians are two sides of the same coin.

We may trace some general considerations from such a kaleidoscope of issues. A first point is the effectiveness of the Community Initiatives – such as the Urban Programme – as drivers for the construction of “European styles” of urban governance and planning, in the quest for the

competitiveness/cohesion model (see Governa, 2010). The implementation of Urban 1 programmes has been strongly dependent on local and national, political, institutional, and socio-economic conditions: in a period of turbulent changes, Italian planning has experienced both the EU policies and the evolution of domestic policies and practices.

In such a frame, the EU factor has had a strong role in accelerating the restructuring processes. Thus, the case studies support a rethinking of Urban 1 as a "catalyst" for some planning innovations, a tool replicated in the same way in many different contexts which had some role in increasing the rapidity of change in local and national planning cultures. Such a "catalysis" has been both an opportunity and a constraint: in other words, the critical analysis of the outputs produced suggests that the referred shift to "governance" – in which the European policies have had an accelerating role – reveals two faces.

Undoubtedly, Urban 1 has been a great opportunity for there-thinking of policies in order to achieve urban regeneration for problem areas: in some cases – in Genoa and partially in Palermo and Naples – results were achieved in short periods and with relatively low public funding. Some conditions seem to be crucial for their successful implementation:

- integration with general and normative planning in order to ensure long-term and general results;
- a bottom-up attitude, in order to understand the needs of the areas and where to intervene;
- an integration of public and private activities which should not mean pursuing private interests with public investments;
- integration with social cohesion policies.

Without such conditions, the following effects may be expected, as mainly the Naples and Palermo cases showed:

- only sectoral outputs are achieved, which are not effective by themselves to produce a widespread regeneration of the intervention areas;
- the spatial distribution of outputs is in a random fashion, for while some areas achieve good results, some other ones may remain unaffected or worse;

- distorted consensus building processes arise, shifting the target of the programmes to merely private interests and leading to gentrification processes.

Urban 1 programme could have been highlighted as a major opportunity to start processes of re-orientation of planning structures, experimenting with public-public and public-private partnerships, innovations and experimentations with integrated urban planning and programming, but sometimes it has had also disastrous implications. In some cases – as happened in Naples and Palermo –, Urban 1 leaded to some reinforcement of social and spatial polarization: some areas got regenerated for affluent populations – and the public funding was used to "launder" property speculations (see Yiftachel, 2009) – and others got progressively abandoned by the public sector through the lack of general planning – or through a the selective "non-planning" (ibidem).

However, there are critical aspects of new planning paradigms – like the lack of political and social agency (Gualini, 2008) and the shift towards market-oriented means of planning (Gualini & Majoor, 2007) – which have been be exacerbated by some local characteristics – such as the rhetorical and distorted use of consensus-building. Thus, a second face of the move to "governance" appears. In the general context of the "shift" towards less normative and more strategic means of planning, generously funded complex programmes – such as the Urban programme – may be for the public sector a way to reduce "government" practices, abandoning the urban field and delegating whole issues and areas to single projects and private agencies. An important issue to emerge is how effective innovations in the planning culture and some tendencies towards the "dark side" of contemporary institutional planning may have walked hand in hand under the banner of the Urban programme. Probably, one of the most critical aspects is to be identified in the rapidity of changes: it has been said that only slow and settled changes are sustainable for local contexts (Lo Piccolo 1995). Yet the role of some programmes as catalysts, together with a growing fashion to short-term intervention, is commonly disconnected from a long-term programming of changes: we highlighted how excessive rapidity in the modification of policies and practices may be accompanied by the reinforcing of the weak points of both normative and strategic means of

planning. Undoubtedly, in Italy this happened and more critical debates about such processes within the context of planning theory may be useful for a rethinking of the future generations of regeneration programmes.

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