

The New Master Plan of Rome: A Plan Without Strategy¹

In chapter 2 of this essay we made a little critical excursus of the Roman urban planning, intended not as an evolution of the urban form of the city in its history, nor as a story of the interventions that in its history have been operated for one reason or the other to increase or to re-manage its functionality, but rather as conscious planning of the city. Let us formulate a very short résumé of this excursus.

1. Summary of the Past Master Plans

We have spoken, in effect, only of the master plans of the city²; the first of them (1870) – deserving this name and but not too much – was formulated immediately after the assumption of Rome as the capital to the Kingdom of Italy in 1870. Together with the master plans of 1883 and 1908, they composed what we have called the “Umbertine” town planning. Next followed the “Fascist” town planning that found its main expression in the plan of 1932.

From the second world war to today, the periodization that I would suggest, is divided into clear periods: the period that we have called of the “modern” town planning, which flows in the master plan of 1965 and in the successive period which we have called “populist” and “ephemeral”, because it is hard to identify a particular strategy if not just an absence of strategy; by the way, arrogantly supported for one reason or another by all the political and cultural phases that have occurred after the adoption of the master plan of 1962.

Basically, the whole of this essay (in particular chapter 4, 5, and 6), which focuses on the necessity of a new particular strategy for Rome, is the result of a constant criticism developed in the course of the last phase, that called “populist” and “ephemeral” (therefore from 1962 until today); a criticism against the urban

¹ This paper reproduce the Chapter 7 of the Author's forthcoming book: *Rome: A new Planning Strategy*, published by Routledge, London, 2005. In this version, the bibliographic references concern all the book.

² Master plans that are a product of the urban planning since the urban planning was born, i.e. in the second half of the nineteenth century in other European countries, in the USA, and in other countries strictly related to the European culture, even if formed on other continents. For the difference between the two concepts of the “urban planning” – in many aspects both legitimate – see what has been developed in my book *Introduction to the Urban Planning* (not yet available in English).

management of the city, in spite of the fact that this management has been labelled with a vast gamut of political colors (from the extreme right to the extreme left). Since 1965 until today the government of Latium and of Rome have been the most various:

- From 1965 to 1975 a Christian-democrat and socialist coalition government succeeded in a climate blocked by the cold war, and attempted to make operational the plan of 1962. In this period it was not possible to control the particular speculative operations of a class of estate owners, nor the popular abusiveness (*abusivismo*), produced because of the scarce capacity of the implementation of the plan for popular low-income housing in order to satisfy the growth of demand itself.
- From 1975 to 1985 for the first time in the city a Left wing government won, with communist mayors that limited themselves to manage the bane of the previous period, trying to get consensus everywhere at a cheap cost with ephemeral initiatives and reclamation of the illegal agglomerations developed in a wild way in the urban peripheries.³
- From 1985 to 1993 a Christian-democrat and socialist coalition went back again to the government of the city and profited of the previously poor management, to open the door again to private speculation for any possible ambit of activity, moving in more and more extended ways in the corruption and concussion in the urban planning sector.
- And finally, from 1993 until today (2002) - in parallel with the clearing of the communists after the soviet regime fell, and the beginning in Italy of a bipolar political regime, and based on an electoral system, a government, called a majority system, which had its first experiences in the local administrations (as we will see in the next section) - a centre left coalition went back to the government of the city. This government also demonstrated, although there were great expectations, especially in the opinion of the technicians, a remarkable incapacity to find the new way of the strategic planning.

Well, all these successive and opposed governments had something in common: the setting aside of any serious engagement of urban planning, through a “day-by-day” management, dismantling any comprehensive and quantified vision of the city growth. In sum, the full adoption (not only drawn or suffered from the facts, but even conscious and “theorized”) of a planning “incrementalist” method, which in this specific case has been translated in an almost permanent, reiterated, deliberation of “variants” to the 1965 master plan.

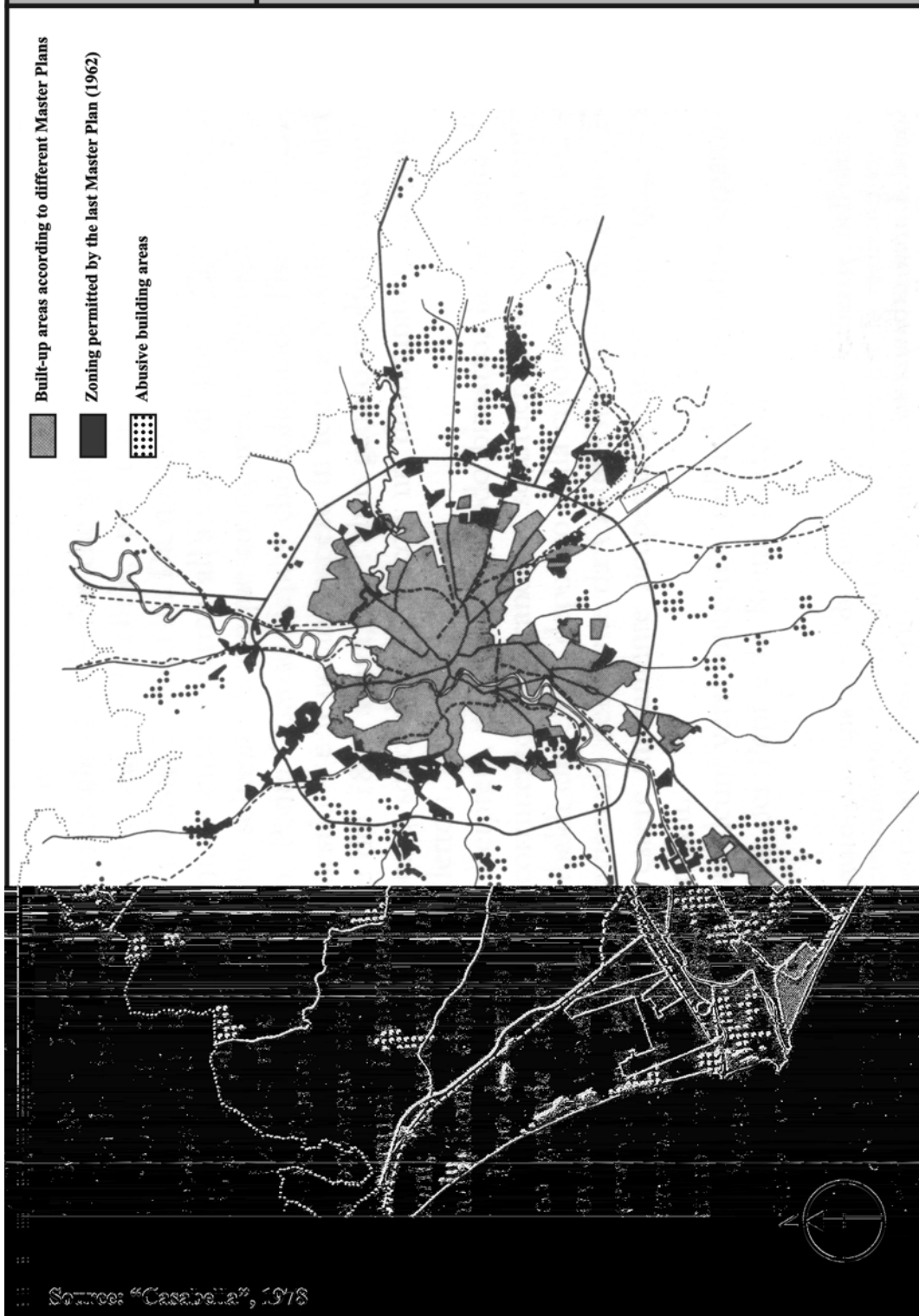
These variants, in fact, have never been presented as the ordered result of schedules in the implementation of the plan and of its strategies, and as a consequential adjustment of the operational guidelines, always monitored and controlled in their comprehensive consistency.

These variants, on the contrary, have assumed the nature of interventions intended to legitimize some land uses in themselves incompatible with the 1965

³ About this period a good deal of criticism is contained in the edited book by P. Della Seta (1986) with interesting essays by Della Seta himself (1986) and by V. De Lucia (1986).

Figure VII.1

Rome: abusive building areas



master plan, and to give to them legality, political-juridical, without re-discussing their technical consistency.

This way of proceeding in the disorder and in the un-meaningfulness has been facilitated by two main factors: 1) the bad methodological and technical quality of the old plan itself, which it should be suitable to manage with rationality criteria; 2) the overwhelming political concern that has impeded a more rapid pace in the production of an effective dialogue with all the stakeholders of the planning itself.

Concerning the quality of the old plan of 1965, they have been discussed in the previous chapters and it would be possible to summarize them in the following three points:

- a) It was founded on a theoretically correct strategy: the search for an alternative centrality to the historical centre later becoming the “Eastern Business and Administrative System (SDO)”, but chronologically aged. Its principal author, Luigi Piccinato, had conceived the “equipped axis” at time (1930s) in which such a strategy and the choice of a location of it, could still have had a great meaning and a useful application for the further growth of the city. But, 30 years later, in the 1960s, the city growth sprawl of the settlements with a population almost doubled in that period, made the location choice of the equipped axis very near the historical centre (also, in the meantime, extended) in a way totally counterproductive to the strategy for which it was conceived. The last 30, which included the effect of the second world war, should have suggested a totally new choice, to which, matured by Piccinato himself in the 1930s: a courageous shift of the SDO, and the simultaneous adoption of some other alternative systems, conforming to the demographic and territorial growth of the city. The decision makers found themselves with the task of managing the plan with indications that had become out of date.
- b) That plan was lacking, moreover, with a total absence of evaluations concerning the “land use/traffic generation” relations. This shortcoming made that plan absolutely fragile and made uncertain any applicative determination.
- c) Finally, it was absent – as always in that plan - any evaluation of the operation and implementation cost of the plan, with respect to the available or, by the way, mobilizable resources. From the shortcoming of any economic evaluation it has derived the impossibility to give to the plans any operability in time; and the possibility to select in respect to the alternative physical-territorial projects, those that “optimize” the relation “objectives/means”, which is the condition of feasibility of the plans.

2.The Most Recent Debate on the New Master Plan

As I have said in the prefaces, this essay on a new urban planning strategy for Rome was originally developed in 1985, and has been subsequently updated (only with few retouches) by the occasion of further editions. The revisions have never been very radical because in Roman urban management, from 1985 to the end of the century, nothing of relevance occurred.

Rome’s urban management has always developed with vain and rhetorical declarations of the need for “change” - declarations of “change” that almost

everybody has taken part in: a) the politicians whenever soliciting votes, or new administrations when elaborating upon new programs; b) technician/urban planners always ready to claim with proclaim and movements of opinion their professional role; c) the operators (overall the building operators), of course in the name of citizen's general interest, and in the name of assuring a high and steady level of employment in the sectors of their workers and capitals.

But, what has always resulted from all of these declarations? Nothing. At best, some "variants" of the old master plan of 1962 have been sanctioned, urged on by the need to absorb most of the events of the city, all regularly marked by the disrespect of the Master Plan and by the so-called "abusiveness" (*abusivismo*), that is, by initiatives (of which, some even public) developed outside, and often against, the prescriptions of the master plan, and therefore without the obligatory formal permits of the plan management authority.

In 1985 this planning *laxity* had been further facilitated by the stoppage and inversion of the demographic growth of the city (in its administrative boundaries); this effect diminished the urgency to set-up a control of urban housing development.

In chapter 2 I have already illustrated how this laxity has been accompanied (and in my opinion also favored) by an extended debate⁴ in which everything has been said - in addition to the contrary of everything. Such debate can be encompassed and classified along four main orientations:

1. The master plans are dead and must not be resuscitated; we need to substitute them with flexible urban policies, in which the urban planner intervenes with counsels case-by-case, assuming tasks limited and specific (for instance the design of quarters, squares, urban decoration, project standards, "great works", etc.). Some people consider giving to this orientation the name - totally abusive, as I will say below - of strategic planning.
2. The master plans are still the valid unique tools for land and urban management. In particular, the Roman master plan of 1962 is retaining its validity, and we need, finally, to implement its "equipped axis", modified as the Eastern Administrative System (SDO). If they are not implemented, it is not the fault of those that produced them, rather it is the fault of those who - in order to free their hands from uncomfortable rules, or to favor operator interest, or for simple neglect and/or incapacity - have not applied and managed them as they should. It would be sufficient to insert into the leadership of the city, a class (or party) of political leaders engaged in the enforcement of the respective plans, and to fighting speculation, for things to become better.
3. The master plans are indispensable for guarantying a "structural" vision of the city, but must be managed in a flexible way, prepared for modification in their normative prescription in order to meet new requirements, or the wishes of the operators with whom it is opportune to cooperate, or the needs of social

⁴ Within this debate I select only a few participants: Clementi and Perego (1983), Merloni (1984), Clementi, Ed. (1985), Vittorini (1984,1986), Marcelloni and Vittorini et al. (1986), Talia (1986), Della Seta, Ed. (1986), Samperi (1986, 1996), Pazienti (1987), Cubani (1990), Della Seta and Salzano (1993), Tocci (1993), Balducci (1995), Campos Venuti (1996).

groups with particular characteristics. It belongs to the master plan to build the “structural” side of the planning, and it belongs to the policies and urban projects to provide to the strategic needs that are changing.

4. The master plans are valid in general, but the Roman master plan of 1962 (actually still in force) has been overcome with respect to its direction of spatial growth and it has become necessary to elaborate a new plan with a very new and different direction of spatial growth that will recover and absorb the abusive growth that afflicted the old plan.

The above technical-political debate has been accentuated, since the end of the 1970s, as far as the Left administrations influenced by the communist party began to be installed (not only in Rome, but also in many other important Italian cities, especially in central Italy), and it was unlikely to invoke a simple change of political leadership (as in orientation number two). The debate in these cases has been transferred within the same Left side, and has been developed in a transversal way through the other political sides.

But such debate has been so vibrant that I believe it has helped paralyze the firm attitudes of the last Roman administrations. Otherwise, it could be difficult to explain the ambiguities with which, even with the electoral victory of the Left in 1993, the new administration has delayed entering resolutely into a new master plan (in reality, only taken on since 1999; see section 5, chapter 2).

Those ambiguities and those uncertainties of orientation have continued to pervade even the new Master Plan.

3. The New Master Plan

The new Master Plan approved by the City Council⁵ is the result of very vast and complex work.⁶ It has finally been carried out after 40 years since the 1962

⁵ Approved by the Rome City Council on the 20th of October 2000. The plan has been the outcome of a huge quantity of persons under the political responsibility of the assessor for “land use policies”, Domenico Cecchini (incidentally, a professional urban planner), organized in a new office for the master plan (directed by Maurizio Marcelloni. From July 1998, the starting date of the plan, a large team of experts has worked (183 units) with the commitment to a municipal consulting company (STA). The work has been developed over 30 months. 70 percent of the above said staff is composed of architects, but “the team has registered the presence of engineers, geologists, historians, archaeologists, IT experts, and graphic and communication experts”. It is symptomatic, it seems to me, the absence among the 183 staff members of even a single economist, or a single sociologist, or a single political scientist; this says more about the nature of the plan than many other discourses. All of the plan documents are available on the Internet at <http://www.comune.roma.it/dipterritorio/npr/prg>. For this and other information about the organization of the plan see C. Patini (2001).

⁶ The new Master Plan is composed of a Report [Comune di Roma, 2000a] (of 98 pages), an extended text, very interesting, of “Technical Norms” [Comune di Roma, 2000b] (of 154 pages), and of a large quantity of exhibits (maps, schema, etc., of 250 units) classified in groups named: 1. “Prescriptives”; 2. “Managing”; 3. “Descriptives”; 4. Indicatives”; and, 5. “For the Plan Communication”. The original maps in the scale 1:500, 1:10,000, 1:20,000, and 1:25,000, are, with few exceptions, in an A0 format; those in the scale 1:50,000 and 1:80,000 are in double A0 format; but the original format has been conserved only in the maps included in the “Guidelines” which are in an A 3 format. The plan has been largely diffused in a new issue of *Urbanistica*

plan, which from the formal point of view, was still in force in spite of its practical “inexistence”⁷ (of which we have traced the reasons and effects in the previous chapters). It represents, in the opinion and in the intention of its authors, an important renewal in its approach, methods, and results.⁸ We will see, even if briefly, the limited meaning of this opinion.

By the way, as I have already mentioned (see the preface to the English edition), I will limit myself to examining the conformity or non-conformity of the new plan to the strategic lines for the development of Rome that are the subject of this essay (incidentally, formulated in a much earlier epoch than the new plan), and to the concept and planning methodology to which those lines have been inspired.

(N.116, Jan-Jun 2001), the journal of the INU (National Institute of Town Planning), through articles and notices written for each sector of the plan by those that have guided those sectors. Attached to the N.116 of *Urbanistica* there is also provided a digital version (.pdf format CD with Adobe Acrobat).

⁷ In such way the old plan was defined in 1985 by Domenico Cecchini, who will be responsible in the future of the territorial policies of the city government which has prepared the new Master Plan (Cecchini, 1985).

⁸ A quick word must be said about the introduction of IT into the new plan, which represents a problem by itself (and even not so meaningful), but which constitutes, however, a very important instrument for the utilization and methodology of *integrated* planning. It is certain that the new plan is scared of the introduction of information technology, even if IT has been introduced here a little later with respect to what has occurred in the official urban planning in other advanced countries. But these information techniques have not even been used fully. At the opinion of the authors themselves, this IT – briefly, the adoption of CAD technologies from the data collecting by heterogeneous sources and of GIS technology for the collection of geo-referenced data – has not even been fully used, in order to avoid losing much material that had been collected in paper form from the Office of Plan in the previous years and with respect to the starting of works for the new plan. One of the professionals charged to illustrate the technical aspect of the work declared: “it has not been possible to follow the way of the complete information technology in the plan already elaborated under the paper form in its final version, nor the construction of a plan directly in an IT environment expressly dedicated to it” (Patini, *cit.* 2001, p.192).

Even if justified by the circumstances (which however has a name: the backwardness in Italy of the technical culture applied to the urban planning, backwardness that has its true origin in the university rooms where the urban planners are formed), this “hybridism” is such that it will very much impede the management of the plan in a procedural and current way, as by the way, it is the aim, obsessively repeated in all the presentation of the plan. In fact, an indispensable condition of effectiveness of the procedural method is given by the chance to monitor in real time the evolution of phenomena (and of the data connected to them or which express them); and this last chance is supplied by a complete IT introduction of all instruments (mapping and numeric) that concern it.

For not to say of the case when the plan would be presented in its new form, needed to allow the traditional urban plan to make a leap of quality: that of a plan constructed, both in the descriptive part and in the prescriptive one, through the organic *integration* of the physical and territorial targets with the socio-economic ones (population, economic flows, traffic flows, gravitational area, etc.). The complete IT introduction, even if not sufficient, in such a case would have been indispensable.

The absence of an *integrated* approach, has without doubt mitigated the negative effect of the incomplete IT introduction; moreover, the condition has been created for a much more difficult application, given the limitedness of the integrated approach. Below I will explain how an integrated approach could be applied - which would be a true novelty – demanded, and made possible for the new plan through our present state of information technology.

4. A New “Type” of Plan?

The Report of the new Master Plan dwells, in the first place, on describing which “type” of plan the authors have intended to produce. Therefore, it dwells on methodological questions that deserve some comments.

Most of the arguments developed concern a supposed distinction between the “strategic plan” and “urban plan”.⁹ According to the plan authors:

In the majority of European countries...the crisis of the larger cities and the need to convert related economic bases has put on the table that philosophy of competitiveness between cities aimed toward the conquest of hegemonic spaces and roles in the new urban hierarchy on the European and worldwide scale. And in order to sustain and build this competitiveness, the task of urban planning has been substituted, and sometimes accompanied, with the principles of “urban policies” supported by the process that people tend to define as “strategic planning”. The strategic plan of a city assumes a business programming model; it fixes a limited number of objectives considered as strategic, and realistic, because they are shared by the productive and social forces of the city, and thus administratively, financially, and technically feasible. In sum, it is a complex set of very objective-oriented urban policies (not urban planning policies), whose implementation is committed to the control of mixed bodies (city council/operators) delegated to introduce all those necessary elements of adjustments, using “the margins of flexibility of decision making”, typical of business management. The strategic plan is not a urban plan: it is a plan for an economic strategy of the city within which the urban planning conditions of the city (infrastructures like airports, stations, transport connections, land supply, great projects, and so on) play a very important role....Almost everywhere strategic plans and urban policies have allowed the achievement of the objective, but at the same time have diffusedly introduced processes of economic, social, and urban dualism, which have - indirectly but clearly - re-proposed the request for framework and instruments for general reference (ibidem page five).

This concept of strategic planning seems to me a little reductive and misleading. Nonetheless, it does not correspond to the vision of those who first introduced the (incidentally, pleonastic¹⁰) concept of strategic planning simply as an instrument to give order and facilitate effectiveness (first of all logical and

⁹ The Report, page four and following.

¹⁰ In fact, as the “strategic” attribute of the plan means, according to rule of semantics, an *objective based* plan, it seems to me that such an attribute is inherent to any possible notion of a plan (so that it deserves to be called a plan), because I cannot imagine that a plan could exist without objectives. However, it is also true that, in reality, as far as the plan documents are not the product of a high level of competence, so far people forget “to make explicit” the objectives which are often given as implicit. This is a cause of great confusion and contradiction, even in consideration of the fact that the explicitness of objectives makes easier and more fluent even an analysis of the consistency between them (analysis which is another indispensable requisite of a plan, while urban plans are usually deficient of such requisites). Thus, we are induced to say: welcome to the pleonastic, and to the superfluous expression of the strategic plan, if this helps us to produce more rational and consistent (and therefore feasible) plans!

“systemic” effectiveness) and therefore concreteness and feasibility, to plans themselves.¹¹

Strategic planning had developed in the urban management field long before some scholars, more recently, posed the problem of the “competitiveness” between great world cities.¹² On the other hand, even these last interpretations are debatable enough. The “competitiveness” that the Report makes reference to is not that between the world’s “great cities” in order to gain a dominant place, but that which any true city (or urban system) should research in order to achieve those thresholds of “urban effect” that attract and keep citizens, and helps retain those that could be attracted by other cities of other systems that have already achieved them. It is a matter of a “strategic competitiveness” – a matter of simply retaining the role of a great city.

5. “Urban Plan” and “Strategic Plan”: A False Dichotomy

The Report of the new Master Plan of Rome, in its double-mistake of operating with a clear distinction between the “urban plan” and “strategic plan”, and at the same time clearly stating that the strategic plan has great merits in and of itself (and has to accompany, in due time, the urban one, but not substitute it),

¹¹ I refer myself for instance to the ancient formulators of the systemic planning and of the operational research related to them. I acknowledge that in Italy, unfortunately, due to a scarce familiarity with the scientific literature on planning (just an example, the mere ignorance of the work carried out by some international journals like *Socio-Economic Planning Sciences* (Pergamon) or *Environment and Planning* (Pion), since the 1960s), a very confused (and by itself misleading) kind of implementation of strategic planning has taken place. In the field of urban planning, strategic planning has been used rather in a logic aimed essentially to demolishing the old prescriptive planning (the “blueprint planning”) instead of enriching it with new unitary methods of socio-economic and land use planning integration; and instead to go toward stimulating more enlarged applications. The case of the new Master Plan of Rome is a good testimony for this misuse : in order to avoid the strategic plan in its reductive interpretation current in Italy, it has been preferred to go back practically to the old concept of the urban plan, renouncing in such a way to that “integrated approach” which would assure its renewal (for further clarification on the concept of integrated and strategic planning see some of my older works: Archibugi (1970, 1975, 1976, 1978, 1979, 1981).

¹² The authors who are the most notorious forerunners for a strategic approach toward planning on the local government level, that is, on the city level, are the British colleagues of the IOR, (J.M. Friend, et al., 1969, 1974, 1984), who were not at all interested in urban “competitiveness”, but in choice and decision problems in complex environments, where multiple institutions, public and private, are operating, in a regime of uncertainty; choice and decision problems that must be carried on into a common framework of evaluation and of resources to be employed, for the achievement of common objectives, potentially conflicting. What does all this have to do with a “business approach”? There is, if you want, only the research for not demolishing them and not rendering them too flexible (as inevitably they have been, are, and will be) in order to meet changing and conflicting needs of “variation” in their implementation. There is the requirement to make the plans, from their conception, consistent: a) with available resources; b) with the choices of other institutions which, with their own decisions, interfere and could make them inoperational; c) and with the preference of users and operators. And all this, without waiting for the plan implementation to discover inconsistencies, and that they are not taking account of a series of variables, of other social and economic objectives, that can make the plans inconsistent and infeasible. In sum, to be brief, it is a question of doing only more intelligent and technically better-qualified plans.

does not produce anything other than negative effects on both supposed “types” of plans. Negative effects that are in my view the following:

- The consolidation of the usual or traditional (especially in Italy) paradigm of the urban plan (“blueprint type”) without endowing it with “operational rationality” (intended as consciousness and assessment of the compatibilities and constraints);
- The renouncement of the application of a systemic and strategic logic to the physical plans, and relegates it only to the “economic plans” (admitted but not conceded that even the last plan is not deficient of the same operational rationality as the physical one);
- The accustomization of professionals to consolidate the idea of two different types of approach to planning, the economic and the urban, and consequently emphasizes differences, while on the contrary it is imperative to integrate more and more both approaches, not only in the sense that each of them include the other, but also in the sense that both compose a unique methodological matrix of the plan;
- The disaccustomization of people to the idea that the differences are not in the approaches, but only in the methods and in the quantity of the variables which are introduced as input in the planning process; a process which in itself must tend always, *ex ante*, toward optimality, that is, to aim toward the maximum of *objectives* (whatever they are, physical or economic) given the available *means* (whatever they are: physical or economic, human or natural resources), even if in reality it always occurs that the process is “sub-optimal”, because it will *not* be able to catch – *pro tempore* – *all* the variables in the game, either on the side of the objectives, or on the side of the means: but this is part of the game.
- The production of a useless and false “conflict” between urban planning aspects and socio-economic aspects, while on the contrary, people can produce synergies and convergences, which, by means of artificial dualism, are systematically neglected if not ignored.

It is clear that a plan (urban, or economic, or social, or whatever) can never always be “integrated” 100 percent (even the concept of integration tends in its contents to vary in time and in its environmental conditions). But there are other “dimensions” and interdependencies where the imperfections of the plans can be, or will be, inevitable to justify; these dimensions are: 1) that temporal short, medium, long period; 2) that hierarchical-territorial dimension, which is very present in the case of local community plans¹³ (but today, in the climate of

¹³ Rightly, the Report of the new Master Plan of Rome put in evidence how detrimental the absence of an “institutional framework of urban law” at the national scale (in practice here it is made reference only to a procedural-juridical framework and to this is called erroneously and imprecisely “urban planning reform”) has been in the elaboration of the Roman plan (as any other urban community however important). And even how much more detrimental the absence of a reference framework of physical and economical substantial choices also at the national scale (in the field of the demographic forecasting and of the indicative distribution of the investments especially if public) could be for a local plan. All this could allow the attainment of a minor uncertainty but a major clarity in the (territorial and economic) integrated development hypotheses

international cooperation and globalization, there are also the cases of the national dimension and other levels).

In the light of these considerations, many other statements in the Report to the new master plan require reconsideration: 1) “that the new plan does not wish to be a strategic plan, but presupposes and stimulates the need of a strategic plan”; 2) that “it is on the contrary a structural type of plan”, that is, “it determines the great invariance’s of the city’s organization on which to hook the diffused policies of re-qualification of the urban fabric for which it has dictated rules and procedures...”; etc., and lastly, the most generic statement, banal, yet equivocal (used indeed as a slogan), 3) that it is a “plan which has built by doing” (it has repetitively used the English expression “planning by doing”, an evident paraphrase of the better known, significant and ancient slogan of the “sociology of the knowledge” and of the “philosophy of pragmatism”, the “knowing by doing”).¹⁴

“Planning by doing” is a slogan that states everything and nothing at the same time. Because, planning is already doing, and no more than doing. But, if it is identified only in the “doing”, it eliminates the specific sense of the planning, which pretends – it seems to me – to mean, properly, do not wish only *to do* something, but wish *to do it through a plan* (“doing by planning”). Therefore, what sense does the expression make?

I understand that what people wish to say is: that we propose, ourselves, to elaborate a plan during the ongoing urban management, without stopping it. Or, more acutely, that we would elaborate the plan through steadily remaking the same, perhaps an application of the best known slogan “trial and error”.

It seems to me even in this case that it is a matter of applying one of the *elementary principles of strategic planning*, conceived obviously as a “process”, and therefore it is a matter of expressing it even as a “cycle”. In effect, in almost all the schemes used (by a huge quantity of authors) to illustrate strategic planning cycles – as the last phase of the cycle – plan monitoring or plan control is indicated. This phase, which concludes the cycle, is also that which precedes the phase with which the cycle iterates itself, that is, the reformulation and updating of the objectives, the phase from which proceed all the other classical phases of the cycle: 1) the objective analysis and the planning structuring; 2) the identification of the resources and means employable and available; 3) the methods of performance measuring and of result evaluation; 4) the

that a local plan must operate. For this absence certainly we can not reproach the local administrator and the authors of the new plan. But, when people have a full systemic methodological cautiousness of the hierarchical-territorial interactions it would be possible, better, should be possible, to make explicit also the hypothesis – at the superior territorial scale (in Italy: Province, Regione, national government) – on which the elaborators should base, even by only one side, the estimation and evaluation at the local urban scale. The explicitness of such kind (which pertains, in this case, to the elaborators of the local plan) not only makes every further quantitative specification of the plan contents more clear and correct and critically gives a size to all the quantitative analyses of the plan; but facilitates – through the conflict – the dialogue and the negotiation with the superior plan authorities. And if made on large scale it could be stimulated from these authorities, a way out from their fugitive state with respect to an appropriate planning of the territory or of the community concerned. In this, strategic planning can help exactly. Only an urban planning, tangentially “egocentric” is sterile and destined to small things.

¹⁴ See Marcelloni (2001).

implementation procedures and the individual projects, including their financing and the “program budgeting”; 5) and lastly the already recalled monitoring and control of the planning results and the plan readjustment.

Therefore what is “planning by doing” if logically and systematically analyzed, if not the application of the notion of cycles to the planning process?¹⁵

Certainly, it is not the case here to deepen the methods of strategic planning.¹⁵ Here I wish only to recall, in commenting on the dissertation included in the opening of the Report to the new Master Plan of Rome, that the indicated process of strategic planning is inherent to every kind of plan. It is not a “type of plan”. It adapts itself to whichever content the plan deals: “urban” plan or other.

Making safe the semantic arguments developed in footnote nine, we can state that strategic planning is a planning *tout court*, and that every substantive planning has its moment of *revision and result control*, and its moment of “recycling”. To use the language preferred by the reporters of the new Master Plan of Rome, the “planning by doing” (not differently by its opposite, the “doing by planning”) is a *moment* of the planning process. Therefore, both are essential moments of the same process. To choose as an approach one moment or the other, and worse, the one *against* the other, means to amputate the planning and make it null.

In reality, it depends on the moment that prevails if we must, dialectically, emphasize the necessity of the *other* moment. In a prevailing situation of “absence” of the plan (of absence of the “doing by planning”) it seems to me essential to emphasize the need of this “doing by planning”. But, in the face of the obstinate stubbornness in making “blueprint plans” and ignoring the need to adopt a process (that we call “strategic”) in order “to close” and give sense to the plan’s operationality, maybe it would make sense also to emphasize the other moment, that of the process (or of the “planning by doing”). This is what has happened often by means of an incorrect concept of planning on one side,¹⁶ but also by means of an incorrect concept of strategic planning, advocated by the uninformed or mislead supporters, which have reduced it to an expression of mere ongoing economic management without programmed objectives and without plans.

Therefore, it is needed overall to keep clear in the mind the meaning of the dialectical relationship “plan/process”, and to eschew the risk of supporting one against the other absolutely:¹⁷ this is what planning theory should never forget,

¹⁵ See on the subject my *Introduction to Strategic Planning in the Public Domain* (Archibugi 2001) [it must still be published in an English edition] where a vast report is made on the related literature.

¹⁶ An incorrect concept which is not only manifest in the urban planning by means of the “blueprint culture” (typical of the architects which have conceived urban planning as “design of the city construction”), but even in other substantive fields of planning, that of economics, where the final socio-economic scenarios have been formulated without consideration of the strategic relationship objectives/means. And the same things have occurred in other fields: health, education, transport, environment, and so on, within which it would be similarly possible (but erroneously) to develop the reasoning that it is a matter of a “structural” plan waiting for its operational and procedural integration.

¹⁷ It is as if the urban planners are divided into two parties: the party of those that state that the chicken came first (the party of the “planning by doing”) and the party of those that say that it was the egg that came first (the party of the “doing by planning”).

while on the contrary, it does forget often, sterilizing the operational capacity of planning itself.

From these observations we can draw the conclusion that even the plan, which is characterized as an *urban* master plan, should adopt the strategic planning cycle; and that it should make explicit its objectives since its first phase (as *contents* of the urban land layout).

At the same time, we can also draw the conclusion that the urban master plan should include in all its processes (that is in every one of its phases) the consideration of “*economic*” *variables*. These variables are, in the first place, the *available means* and the *material resources* (spaces, lands, accessibility, etc.) and later, the *users’ needs*, the *operators’ operational capacity*, until the “*financial*” *resources*: lacking the considerations of these variables, every physical “structure” of land use remains a mere *constraint*. Do we want to limit again the urban master plan? Do we want it to be a plan of land use constraints alone?

By now, we should have understood that only with constraints, without supplying solutions to the new Master Plan for the needs evaluated and computed, the urban master plan, as any other plan, is destined to remain a dead document (like the Report to the new Master Plan of Rome, we must acknowledge, agree, and state almost in every page).

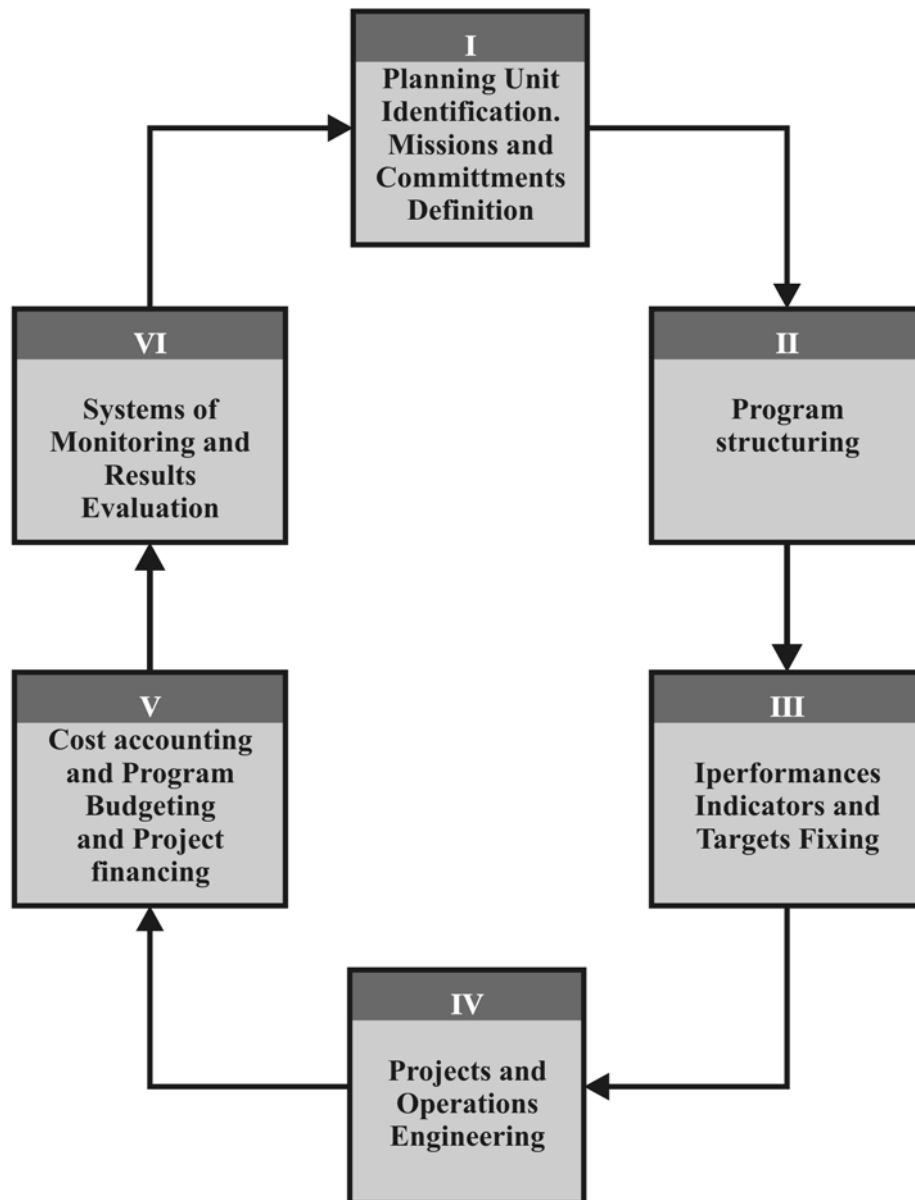
6. About the Absence of (Systematically Related) Explicit Objectives

Well, unfortunately this has been the consequence of a confused methodology in the new Master Plan of Rome: that there is a total absence of *substantive objectives* of the plan itself (even on the general level). In fact, these objectives are needed to construct a “program structure” tree, i.e., to set enchainned correlations objectives/means that characterize the first phase of the strategic planning cycle. In vain, along pages and pages in the Report of the plan, we can search for a concise and explicit list of fixed objectives (not so generic and superfluous to obtain consensus).

At a certain point in the Report (section 4, of the first Part), it lists the five “options” of the new plan:

Figure VII.2

Process cycle for strategic planning



Source: F. Archibugi, *Introduction to strategic planning in the public domain* (2001)

- i. The metropolitan dimension”
- ii. “The principle of sustainability”
- iii. “The system of mobility”
- iv. “The primacy of the disadvantaged city”
- v. “A qualitative transformation: the role of history”

Not in these titles (as people can immediately perceive), nor in the following illustration of these “options”¹⁸ (as I will say later), is configured a clear determination of one or more objectives to derive consequent programs and actions.

i. The metropolitan option

In the case of the “option” concerning the *metropolitan dimension*, it is clear that the intention of the plan is to take an account of the functional relationship and interdependence between the municipality of Rome and the rest of the territory beyond the administrative boundary of the municipality of Rome. But, it would be absurd if this could not happen given the evidence of the existent gravitation, and, therefore, of the natural implication of this gravitation on any kind of choice made by the plan. But to which kind of gravitation is the plan referring? What are the boundaries assumed by the plan, for the support of its calculations, and of its choices? On this point, the plan remains silent.

The Report says that “the choice of the new centralities is made with the maximum attention to the extant realities in the neighboring municipalities, going until true co-planning forms, identifying together localizations and functions...”; and that “the objective is that of a correspondence between administrative levels and planning levels”.

This objective could constitute the base for an adequate *strategic objective* that could sound like this: *to construct an adequate “urban system” which corresponds to an appropriate planning unit, and to correspond it with an appropriate administrative entity.*

But, what are the programs and actions that the plan indicates as instruments to achieve such objectives? What means are available for this achievement? What are the ways (indicators) in order to measure the implemented steps toward such objectives?

We are aware, in Italy, about the difficulty to obtain a feasible institutional cooperation between entities and agencies co-interested with that “correspondence” between existing administrative jurisdictions (neighboring Regione, Province, Commune) and appropriated planning units (or urban basins).¹⁹ Nevertheless, what are the actions proposed by the plan aimed to achieve

¹⁸ I do not wish to be pedantic, but personally I would always prefer to use the word “option” when some explicit and clear “alternatives” are present.

¹⁹ On the concept of *planning units* on one side and of *urban basins* on the other there is vast literature. Since I have occupied myself for a long time on this subject, I would suggest directly some of my works (Archibugi 1997) where, incidentally, there can be found ample references to the literature.

this correspondence? What actions are meant to drive positive bargaining and agreement between these agencies?

Strategic planning notoriously constitutes a way to bypass the jurisdictional system, existent or designed in order to bring the bargaining, the collaboration, and the so-called co-planning (as you want), on the issues and contents: objectives, instruments, measures, and results.²⁰ What does the plan propose needs to be done, taken into account the inexistence of reference framework both institutional, or of socio-economic and spatial contents at a scale superior to that of the plan itself?

The virtual definition of a superior scale, and the virtual predisposition both of objectives connected at that scale, or of actions equally conceived at that scale, constitutes – in absence of adequate institutional forms (at that scale) – a possible factor of stimulation and inducement to the discussion, the debate, and negotiation. Therefore, at the same time with the “provocation” through the plan contents, it should be suitable to promote as far as possible the dialogue, the discussion, and the negotiation. Why, in the new Master Plan, is there not mentioned the initiative to take in this direction, rather than to report about what has been done (that is not what truly concerns a plan)?

ii. The option of the sustainability

For what concerns the illustration of the option called the “*principle of sustainability*”, there is a vague reference to a possible *objective*, which could be formulated as follows: to *increase the (public and private) green coefficient, on the total urban superficies*.

Perhaps, some other objectives could be configurable in association with this objective (among them the objective aimed at increasing the public fruition of the “green program”) which it should be opportune to make explicit and to pose under a programmatic analysis.

The green in Rome has been the object for many years of numerous and recurrent studies and analyses. Always they have recurred partial plans, related to the extant resources, facilitated by the fact that in Rome (for the reasons indicated in chapter 3) the green has been always abundant, and its protection, indeed, has not created extreme difficulties. The new Master Plan has found a rich background of studies and knowledge, and it has been able to recompose them, with intelligence, in a unitary framework.²¹

²⁰ I would recommend to people interested in knowing how to make different agencies and local institutions merge in order to implement a desired co-planning, and to achieve “correspondence” between the administrative level and planning level, the books of the forerunners in Great Britain exactly of the “strategic planning”, Friend and others (1969, 1974, 1984). From these books we can easily draw the obvious consideration (and I wish to say this to the Italian supporters of the strategic planning in the urban field) that without defining also an appropriated planning level, it is difficult to apply the desired correspondence, and therefore, even the “strategic plans” at given administrative levels lose any sense.

²¹ In spite of this I cannot hide that I prefer my proposals, more rigorously related to the strategy for the new centres, contained in my study (see Figure V.3) then that forecast by the new plan (see Figure VII.3) .

However, the green strategic program of the new Master Plan would be better if more connected with a *system of objectives*, and the *means of intervention*. And this is so even if you consider that it would probably constitute, among the different fields, a more feasible and satisfactory plan, if evaluated ex post, both because of the aforementioned abundance of resources and the abundance of already available studies.

iii. The option of the mobility

Concerning the *mobility system* option, even this should have been oriented toward a better definition of the objectives to achieve. It should have also appeared in a form more strictly consistent with the *central* objective that pervades the whole plan, and that, has, in fact, pervaded the entire planning history of Rome²² (but that is strangely absent as the primary and priority objective in the Report of the new Master Plan): briefly the typically planning objective concerning a *new centre/peripheries relationship* and a *new layout of the centralities*, from uniqueness to plurality.

This objective, indeed, meanders and pervades with its presence the entire Report of the new Master Plan (and its annexes)²³. But, what I would like to point out is that *it has not been made explicit*. Moreover, I could have the propensity to attribute this to the fact that the issue of plural centrality has not been made correctly explicit. Therefore, even the possible mobility objective has not been managed in a way consistent with the other plan's determinations. Moreover, it has been practically annulled.

The shortcoming of *clear and explicit objectives* in the system of centrality and in a related system of mobility, and the shortcoming of an organized interdependence between both systems, has resulted in a sort of marmalade of interventions that – in spite of clear and sincere good intentions, and of innovations on behalf of the authors - will not give better, more effective results than those of the late decades examined in the previous chapters.²⁴

iv. The option of the primacy of the disadvantaged city

Concerning the option called the *primacy of the disadvantaged city*, the Report illustrates, through many arguments (perhaps too many), several objectives that could have been made more explicit and could have been better compared. For

²² This has become, as we have seen, a dominant motive of all of the past master plans - and especially the master plan of 1962. And it has also been the central theme of this book itself.

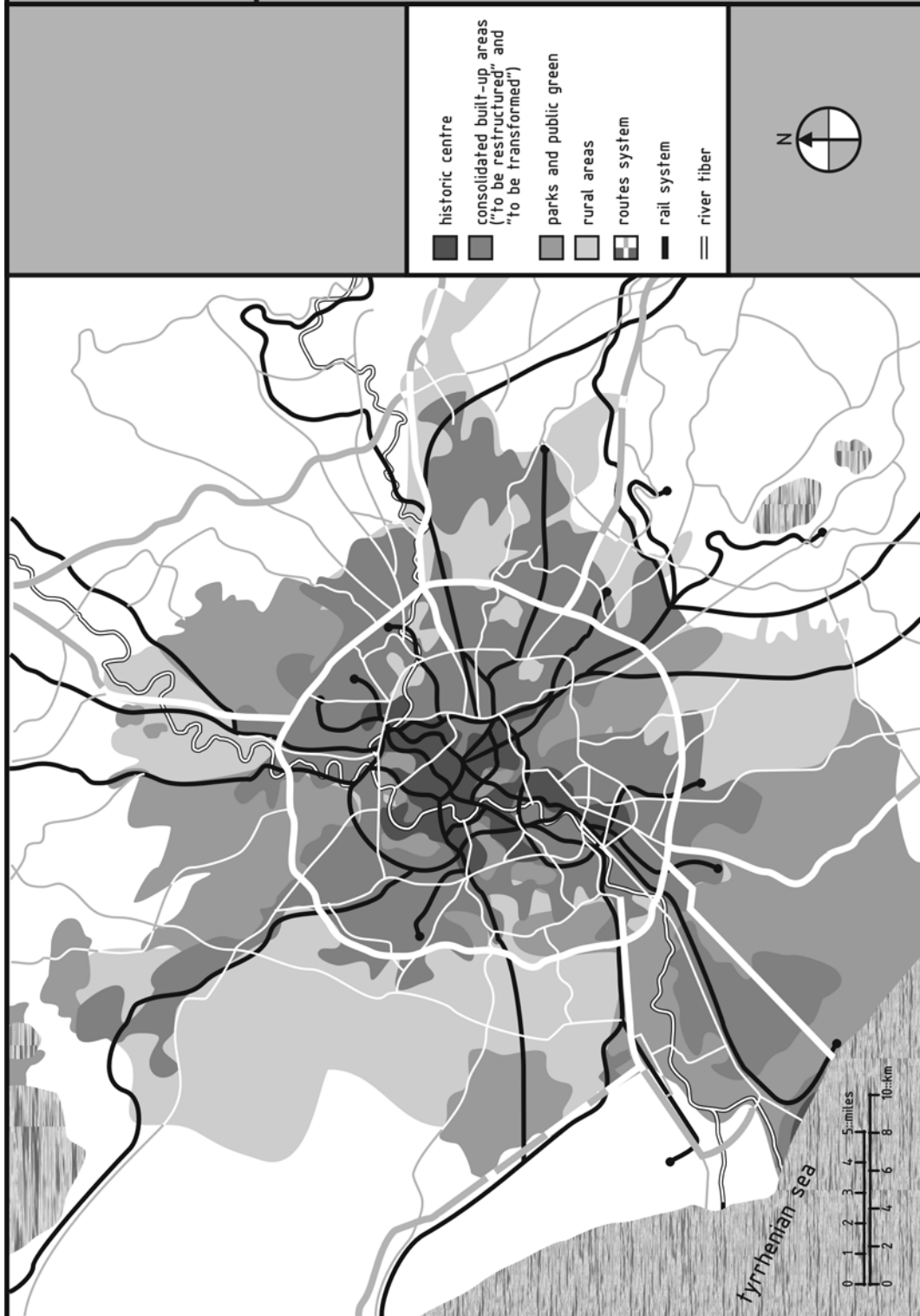
²³ See for instance Campos Venuti (2001b).

²⁴ Here on the system of the mobility we have limited ourselves to mark only the absence of explicit objectives.

Figure VII.3

Rome: The new Master Plan of 2000

Map 01:
General view



example: “reorganization of the peripheral fabric”; or “transformation of the peripheral fabric in the city”, and so on. But, the logical consequentiality between objectives and interventions is absent, while it should be the factor that puts the plan in order and allows the plan to be both operational and controllable. Even in this case, it is the absence of a precise definition of the *objectives* that preclude an ordered articulation of the relationship between the *objective* and the *actions*, and the *programs* aimed to achieve it. By examining the program of the new plan concerning the new centralities (section 3, chapter 7) we will see the consequent negative effect.

v. The option of the “qualitative transformation” and of the “task of the history”

Finally, the plan lists the option of “*qualitative transformation*” and the role of *history* (incidentally, slightly “botched” even conceptually): it concerns substantially the motivations of the interventions forecast for the “historical centre” (more or less extended to the conventional boundaries taken into consideration by previous definitions). Well, even it – in the illustration developed in the Report – does not supply a unique and ordered definition of the objectives from which to deduce an adequate “program structure”.

7. Policies, Objectives, Instruments: Some Confusion

Arguments and motivations of the indicated policies are all interesting, opportune, acceptable. But, here I do not wish to discuss such arguments and motivations. Here, the way in which these emergent policies are discovered and identified is in discussion.

Even in this matter, the new Master Plan (and its Report) does not orderly express the consequentiality between objectives and policies, between policies and programs, between programs and interventions or actions. And the ultimate result is the absence of a “*program structure*” that allows clearness and orderliness in a series of interventions that could be easily used to evaluate the consistency, effectiveness, and results.

In sum, the illustration of the “options” can not be a surrogate for a clear, concise and explicit list of the *general objectives* of the plan, conceived and articulated in such a way as to be useful to both the political and technical process of the plan itself.

The political process is that which must realize the convergence in the plans, the consensus of the political decision makers interested in the plan itself and that have title to adopt it, and sanction it as an engaging document for the whole represented community. But it must realize the convergence even of all people called to give consensus in some way to the plan, through a bargaining process that is an integral part of the political process.

Table VII.1**Example of a list of possible objectives
for a master plan of Rome**

1. To distribute urban services in the most effective way to serve population with the minimum cost of access.
2. To create alternative centralities to the historic centre capable of alleviating the load.
3. To destine mainly the traditional historic centre to functions that increase its value, simultaneously protecting the cultural historical heritage and the related tourist demand.
4. To decentralize modern business and administrative, and commercial and recreational activities as far as possible in new centres (alternative to the historical centre) designed consistently and feasibly with the sustainability of the territorial development.
5. To establish the most balanced relation between settlements and the traffic generated from them, in a way that minimizes journeys and optimizes the traffic load on the network.
6. To achieve optimal levels between users and quantity of services available (town planning standards).
7. To maximize the value of the artistic, cultural, environmental heritage of the city.
8. To vitalize and qualify the new peripheries of the city.

The technical process is that which assures or guarantees the operational effectiveness of the plans, i.e., the translation of the general objectives into the concrete actions aimed to achieve them.

A plan is not, in fact, a literary discourse; it is not like a newspaper article written by a sensible observer of things that are working or not working; nor is it a political discourse, made by the politicians to capture consensus about the options to be taken.

The plan is a instrument to put into practice those options, and to transform them into implementation programs, and transform these programs into single initiatives, projects, interventions, and measures, that are unable to be implemented in the programs. In the plan nothing must be left by understatement, for granted, for implicit. All must be motivated, aimed, “targeted”.

Therefore the objectives and the options must be formulated to lead to a successive articulation by programs, and these programs to lead to a successive articulation by actions [in what is an (almost endless) “*enchained succession objective/instrument*” (the instruments for superior objectives become the objectives for an inferior instrument)].

The *program evaluation* becomes thus (in the plan formulation, i.e., *ex ante*), if an *instrument* taken into consideration and suggested by the plan (projects, interventions, dispositions, actions, initiatives, and so on) is appropriately “generated” and deduced from the formulated *objective*. In the plan implementation (i.e. *in itinere* or *ex post*) the program evaluation becomes the way to assess if that instrument put in operation is well conceived in its functionality, that is, if it is working, or has worked in the expected way, and if it gives or is giving the expected result in comparison with the objective.

Now, in any part of the Report to the new plan we get a clear manifestation of this *succession objective/instrument*, which is, on the contrary, an essential requisite if a plan wishes to be called a plan. All this is valid for any “type” of plan, independently from its content; and this is due to a simple, logical reason - that a plan of choices and decisions must be able to orderly express *why* they are taken; and, in order to do this, they have to go back again to their objectives. In **Table VII.1** I wanted to list, as a mere example, a series of possible “objectives” for the new Master Plan of Rome, objectives formulated in a appropriate way to give a beginning to the “program structuring”; which is notoriously the *first step* of the strategic planning process.

The other well known steps of the process are:

- The identification of the “performance indicators”, or “achievement measures”, and other ways through which to monitor plans.
- The “engineering” of a program structure, i.e. the identification of the modalities and the programs of actions needed to obtain the achievement of the objectives, and successively the specific actions or projects to put in place these modalities and programs, and so on.

- The project financing or the financing of the engineering, and the identification of how each operation gets the funds and the resources to face its costs.²⁵
- The operations control and monitoring, with the aim to warn where and when the process is blocked; and the aim to adjust (and through which modalities) the onward march of the plan. From this step springs a fixed schedule of revisions, reiterating the process from the beginning.

The first step of the program structuring is that in which it is permanently restructured on the basis of the indications coming from the engineering phase. However, from the beginning, the program structuring needs to be articulated in a sequence from top to bottom in which the possible actions programs for any objective are indicated, and the possible instruments of intervention, or measure, or action are indicated for every program.

It is this type of planning process that deserves to be called strategic planning.

Now, let us leave aside the discussion of the plan's "type" (even if this has occupied the illustration of the authors of the new Master Plan). And let us move on to examine many substantial choices related to the territorial layout of the new Master Plan. And let us move on to examine the different options in the light of the analysis developed in the previous chapters.

8. The New "Centralities": A Misleading Application

Even the new plan undoubtedly faced the crucial problem of Rome: the need – as said previously – for the creation of one or more alternative centralities to the so-called historical centre of Rome. We know that this problem is the hinge around which rotates all Roman urban planning strategies of the past.

On this point the Report to the plan,²⁶ at least on this subject, has presented a "system of the centralities". However, my opinion is that the way in which this system has been conceived completely sterilizes the prevailing meaning of it in the urban planning literature; and it misleads the capacity to represent a true strategic alternative for the future growth of Rome.

Let us give a direct glance to how the "new centralities" of the plan are argued (see **Figures VII.1** and **VII.2**). The first figure illustrates the dislocation of three types of centralities called: 1) "metropolitan"; 2) "urban"; 3) "local". Just the first two types of centralities are already 18; with the addition of the third type they make up no less than 50.

²⁵ To get an idea about how reductive the vision of a economic constraints and the conception and vision of the new Master Plan can be, see the article in the journal *Urbanistica* (N.116, 2001), by "Ecosfera", which illustrates "the economic evaluation of the Plan". Ecosfera is the consulting company that has been committed to perform the economic analyses of the Plan.

²⁶ And in the writing of some urban planners that proclaimed themselves as authors of the methods and contents of the new plan like F. Oliva (2001), Anna Maria Leone (2001), Stefano Garano (2001a), all published in a unique issue of *Urbanistica* dedicated to the illustration of the new master plan of Rome.

Figure VII.4

Rome: The new Master Plan of 2000

Map 02: The "new centralities"



The second figures include also some centralities that are (or should be) located in the territory neighboring the municipality of Rome, that of municipalities belonging to the Province of Rome.²⁷ In practice, such a territory conventionally marks the gravitational border of a “metropolitan area” or “metropolitan system”. These centralities that correspond to the 20 larger municipalities of the Province (from 15,000 to 50,000 each) are called “external”.

In spite of using the same word, “centrality”, the new plan is based on a concept of centrality that has nothing to do with what has been developed in urban planning literature,²⁸ in order to discover some planning strategic guidelines aimed to modify or eliminate the inconveniences of spontaneous growth (based on agglomeration laws), producing a damaging lack-of-balance to the effectiveness and quality of urban life (like pollution, congestion, degradation, etc., that all must be attributed to the overloading of the urban function in limited available space).

However, while in urban planning literature this concept of centrality (essentially systemic) has become *elementary*,²⁹ for the majority of Italian urban planners we are still at year zero of the true systemic approach.³⁰ They do not perceive – and in the new plan of Rome we have the proof of this – that to “decentralize” or to “de-polarize” into 20 or 30 centres the overload of the unique extant centre does not at all mean creating the conditions of a real decentralization, in the sense of cutting the gravitation toward the traditional centre and stopping the spontaneous and uncontrolled growth (which is the result of the central place theory). And means, on the contrary, the reinforcement of the gravitational power of the old centre, or, at best, the distribution of installations, new or old, because of the shortcoming of sufficient physical spaces which, in many places, *always belong to the same centre*.

For a real urban planning strategy that curbs the trend of a “natural” growth (as codified by the spatial economics) to exist, there must be an alternative centrality that has the capacity to supply a “critical mass” of services, strong enough to represent an attraction force, and truly competitive to the traditional centre that people wish to pull away a great deal of customers from. The problem therefore is not that of distributing “valuable and rare functions in the territory” freely and *ad libitum* without limitation; but to distribute them proportionally to a

²⁷ The Province is a political administrative institution (born as administrative, but has evolved as political, i.e. lead by elected politicians) that corresponds very roughly by territorial and demographic dimensions to the *counties* in Anglo Saxon countries, to the French *departments*, and to the German *landkreis*.

²⁸ The concept of centrality is used only in the geographical or spatial economy to describe the spatial theory of the formation of “central places”; theories that are the object of the “spatial economics” (Loesch 1940, Engl.transl. 1954, Ponsard, 1958, Isard 1956) and of the quantitative economic geography (Christaller, 1933, Berry 1961, 1964, 1970) that have since long ago melted in that caravansary that is the “regional economics”.

²⁹ Above all others, I would like to recommend the essay of Chapin and Weiss (1964) on the way to govern alternative dynamics in respect to those of the natural development. Chapin is the town planner who wrote the handbook (Chapin 1965, 1985) upon which two or three generations of American town planners have been educated. He has also been a good source of learning for myself.

³⁰ For heavens sake, I do not wish to say that this does not happen for many urban planners in other countries, especially if the practitioners are still based on the ancient blueprint urban planning.

maximum ceiling that the users critical mass is capable of absorbing (by demographic quantity, by expendable income, by economically feasible investments, and so on).

This availability is not unlimited. To follow the “blueprint urban planning”, every city could easily have four times the population that it has, and – in proportion – four times the consumption of services (and related spaces) that it can afford, and four times the investments whether in infrastructures or in productive investments than those of which the available capital (private and public) can sustain.

The duty of the urban planner, which proposes plans, is to make account; not only to be proud of his or her creative genius, as an “artist and architect of the city”, able to speak to and work on the beautiful and the ugly, leaving later to the modest economist the task of doing the “strategic plan”, and making the accounts in more-or-less short time. Indeed even their cousin, the building architect, of which they share, in the good and in the bad, the university background, if designing a “opus”, they can not neglect how much money the commitment gives to their disposal and of which type of opus is needed. These are their designing constraints. And Woe are they that are inattentive to them. The constraints are an integral part to the designing work. And, probably, they are just the constraints to unleash their creative fantasies; or, at least, their capacity to create beyond the constraints, and in full respect of them.

Not otherwise can the urban planner (or the master plan), which proposes the urban layout of a greater city, *a fortiori*, if on an entire metropolitan area level,³¹ take account of his or her own constraints, the ceiling of total users of which all centralities can afford. And all this goes without speaking about the other economic, financial and operational constraints; but, limiting ourselves to examine the pure planning strategy of the city centralities that should have the aim to upset the gravitation of the actual users (served only by traditional centre) toward other poles, of which there can not be too many, because otherwise they will never restrict the gravitation, largely superior and preferred by the users, of the traditional centre. This strategy must take into account the admissible threshold to obtain a city effect, and to aim to create alternative centralities which cannot go under those thresholds, otherwise they have an effect directly opposite to that which they intend to obtain, nominally and verbally. In other terms, it is impossible to propose successful designing solutions, of the urban planning kind, that are not compatible with the city *structure* from every viewpoint (population,

³¹ And on this point, the new Master Plan speaks clearly. However, it does not have the courage to propose itself as a metropolitan plan. Besides, in substance it manifests an excess of respect for the centrality of the other municipality of the Province, which it calls “external”, and which has not any relationship with the, although weak, effort to identify the “urban” and “metropolitan” centralities within the communal roman territory; and none of them could assume the role of an alternative centrality because of their dimensions and distances respecting the potential users. (Unless, by means of unifying – as in my proposal – their forces, their users, their availabilities, in a unique alternative centrality which could collect strategically all the municipalities of the east-south band of the Province from Tivoli to Velletri. A centrality, or autonomous urban system, that should have the function to dam the “landslide” of all the Castelli area toward Rome, with a great benefit both for the Castelli and for Rome!

real activities, natural and territorial resources, human resources, financial resources).

9. Rules and Norms, Instead of Objectives

The shortcoming of a strategic approach (of which the meaning has been misunderstood as stated in section 2, chapter 7) and the distorted vision of what an “urban plan” is, are manifest in the new Master Plan through the prevalence – in spite, even in this case, of the declared intentions – of *rules* and *norms* instead of the indication of territorial *objectives*.

In fact, at its starting point, the plan leaves itself to a kind of orgy of territorial identifications, based on what – in the traditional urban analysis of which is made ample use in the premises of the blueprint urban plans – is called “zoning”, i.e. the identification of “homogenous areas”. In the new plan, the city is, in fact, the object and theatre of vast and different “perimeter designs” (colored zoning).

First of all, in the plan, the perimeters of what is called the “component of the settlement systems” are designed, including true and proper parts of the city, named: a) the “historic city”; b) the “consolidated city”; c) the “city to be restructured”; d) the “city of transformation”; and, e) the territories (perimetrical) of the “structured project” which are, these latter, of great quantity, and all belonging to the following three categories: i) “ambits of strategic programming”; ii) “urban and metropolitan centralities”; iii) “local centralities”.

But this is not all: the zoning continues within every part (or component) of the city.

Thus, in the “historic city” several “fabrics” (ten in number) are identified, and complex and useful managing prescriptions are established for each. Moreover, always in the historic city four types of “ambits of valorization of the historic city”³² (with the related definitions) are also identified, for which again perimeters are designed and rules and norms are “prescribed”.

Thus, in the “consolidated city”, even without identifying areas, typologies of fabrics are individuated, for instance, the “fabrics of defined building typology” and those of “free building typology”, and for each of them some “casuistics” are listed with related norms and rules for all the usual dimensions of the building construction.

³² Just to understand what kind of zoning I have been referring to, I will report the definitions of these ambits provided by the new Master Plan: A) “open space of environmental value characterized by the presence of natural emergencies with strong identities, in which to operate through projects capable of integrating the unresolved margins with the fabrics of the historic city, and also of introducing new sustainable functions”; B) “fabrics, buildings, and open spaces, characterized by inconsistencies and of morphological and functional unbalance, in which to operate through projects of completion capable of reaching new conditions of morphological-environmental quality, oriented to the consolidation /re-launch of the residential use and of the functional complexity in these contexts”; C) “dismissed areas and settlements prevalently non-residential, characterized by the declination of the original use or by the loss of the consistency between the present use and the developed lines, ongoing or desired, on the local or urban scale”; D) “areas of Ostia-Lido (the beach of Rome) characterized by the need to re-qualify the sea-front with respect to the settlement rules of the historical urban structure and of the emergent architectural characters, etc.”.

Thus, in the “city to be restructured”, two typologies of fabric are identified (“prevalingly residential” and “prevaling for activities”), and in the areas of each, appropriate standards are established of a) building restructuring, b) demolition and reconstruction, and c) new construction. In these ambits some “integrated programs of intervention” are forecast by the initiative of local circumscriptions (or municipalities).

There is also other special zoning in the “city to be restructured” belonging to the building interested to some “urban recuperation programs” already set in motion by initiatives of law for special “nuclei of past abusive building” to be recuperated. And for each of these fabrics or intervention areas, the plan supplies again rules and norms.

Even in the “city of the transformation”³³ there are distinctly – in abstract in this case – different typologies of ambits: a) “ambits of coordinated transformation”; b) “ambits of ordinary transformation”; c) “ambits of defined particular planning”. And even in this case norms and rules are established that should inspire the successive designing.

An elaboration of norms and rules is also effectuated for other components of the urban system, beyond the zoning above indicated; they are individuated in these components:

- An “environmental system”, composed of: a) the national, regional, and communal protected areas, by function of the public agency which defines them as such; b) the *Ager Romanus*; c) the green and private areas that have even a historical character and a hydrographical network;
- An “infrastructure and installation system” which includes: a) services and equipped private green; b) areas and installations for the recycling of garbage and car demolition areas; c) infrastructures for the mobility; d) network for the hydraulic service, and e) network for the energy transportation and equipment of radio-television and mobile telephony.

For each of these areas or service categories, the new Master Plan establishes a series of rules and norms, and sometimes also establishes standards.

In sum, the normative system that is thus constructed, precise, minute, for each piece of the land, is not by itself wrong. Moreover, *it is the best part of the new Master Plan*. And even if we can presume that, being so detailed, it will be very difficult to carry out, and that it will be subject to a huge quantity of variances in the design phase and projecting (variances that are by the way already announced and forecast), deserves by itself – as a indicative effort – to be defended and praised, as an outcome of reflection and evaluation.

The elaboration of the technical norms for implementation of the plan are, in my opinion, *the part technically the most appreciable*. It is the product of a series of technical evaluations, which even if having come from an advanced heritage of a traditional urban planning discipline, is of quite better quality with respect of the previous plan of 1962, and it is to be presumed that it does not have anything to

³³ By “city of the transformation” the plan intends: “the part of the city of new settlement, destined to satisfy settlement needs for services and equipment at the local level, urban or metropolitan, and to constitute new opportunities for the qualification of the urban and peri-urban context.”

envy in those adopted for rules by many other master plans of Italian cities, and at the same time with respect to many other master plans in European and world cities.

The esteemed urban standards are of excellent quality³⁴; even if, indeed, they could be extended to many other aspects of the consumption, both of the space and the services, of a modern citizenship.³⁵

But that is not the point. The point is that the urban plan can not, and must not be limited to fixing a handbook – more or less compulsory, more or less indicative – of rules and norms in the implementation for the myriad cases, zones, and functions in which the urban territories are constellated. The plans do not exhaust themselves with the fixing of the game rules, for a game which is played by other subjects, or, better, by the “market”. The plan must be, itself, a *subject* of territorial transformation according to determined objectives; it is an *action program* of a political administration (which represents a community) which intends to perform, by itself first, a series of objectives; the plan is an actions program aimed to reach *something*, and for this reason it is “strategic”, i.e. aimed to achieve the objectives taking rigorous account of the means at their disposal.

This is the *optimization process* to which any plan must strive (even if it is very rare to ascertain ex post that we have ex ante really optimized). In planning it is impossible to escape from this obligation. And to do that, it is required that means are calculated at the same moment that the objectives and the targets are fixed: because, if they are abundant with respect to the objective there is waste; if they are scarce, there is fanciness. A plan without targets is not a plan.

A prudent management of the means with respect to the objectives is the contribution that the expert urban planners give to political planning. All are capable of fixing objectives without taking account of the means. This is just what is often done in political life, in order to obtain favor from the public and the electors. The urban plans that fix general objectives and later neglect the ways and the means through which those objectives can be reached, can perhaps concern the urban issues, but have nothing to do with the urban *plans*.

A plan is something that concerns the “doing”. And not the doing of the other people, but the personal doing of the planning subject. The “others” (for instance, the privates, but also even many other subjects and agents that are public, in the public pluralism which is more and more diffused) intervene in the plan as “stake holders”, and as such, they can eventually be “co-planners”. But they are co-planners because they are mobilized, stimulated, induced with appropriate measures by the principal planner, by the community who plans, in our case the city council. The plan, therefore, is not a plan if it does not also include the possibility of some *agreements* for the implementation of the programmed actions with all those that can give their contribution.

³⁴ See for instance the illustrations in the paper of Laura Ricci (2001a).

³⁵ Right now, indicators of urban welfare (of which some are transferable in urban standard) are the object of an endless literature, which would have been quite suitable for the authors of the plan to have used. However this should be the task rather of the university researcher than of the plan practitioners. Unfortunately, in the majority of cases the Italian university is not an adequate background for the urban research. It is dominated in the best of cases by the same professionals that work for the local administrations. In the worst case, it is dominated by the activists of the parties which govern the local administrations.

How is it possible to plan, and also to agree on the means and ways to plan, if not in a strict relationship with the definition objectives to be reached, and their possibility to be “indicated” and “measured”? And how is it possible if not with the priority requirement of evaluating the compatibility among those objectives and their consistency with the availability of the various resources, material and human, to achieve them?

To conceive of an “urban plan” (as any other kind of plan) as a “container-plan”, which establishes only the measure to be respected but is not concerned about *how*, *where*, and *with which means* the objectives could be achieved, does not mean to plan: it means only to establish juridical constraints that do not at all assure the implementation of the desired operations (moreover, that probably are an obstacle to them).

10. The Shortcoming of a (Structural) Reference to the Users of the Plan

The shortcoming of a structural or integrated vision of the city pervades, unfortunately, the entire new Master Plan of Rome. I would like to draw the attention of the authors of this Master Plan themselves to the fact that there is not anywhere in the plan an even minimal reference – in describing the *land* use, and the choices made about this use – to the other important referent of planning: the *users* of that land, i.e. the citizens, the people. This reference is the first important reference-parameter which serves to make a plan truly “structural”; which focuses primary factors of change in the land use, i.e. their *beneficiaries*.

These beneficiaries are, indeed, absent in the new plan both as final users of the activities, and also as persons whose needs and preferences depend on the spatial location of the activities (residential, or productive, or services).

It is not for a generic, rhetorical need that we must make reference to the user, and to the beneficiaries; rather it is because this reference-parameter is necessary to give a *technical dimension* to the choices made with aimed intentions related to the citizen.

As there is no sense in making an indication of building cubage of the residential kind [physical datum] without reference to the population which will live in it [socio-economic datum]; or about cubage of the industrial or commercial kind [physical datum] without reference to the business volume which they can sustain or generate [socio-economic datum]; or square or linear metres of street superficies or railway means [physical datum] without reference to the trip/hours which they can allow and of which can be loaded [socio-economic datum]; in the same way there is not any sense in designing a plaza or square [physical datum] without reference to the estimate of how many citizens are ready to frequent them [socio-economic datum]³⁶; nor, is there any sense in designing (and with the blueprint) “centralities” without references to which functions, and for which and how many citizens/users they are designed.

³⁶ Unless we do not wish to build plazas for the pure aesthetical enjoyment of the architects, in the same way in which we reserve natural areas for the pure need to conserve fauna from extinction.

To manage the physical space without integrating it in the economic and social space is, first of all, a “technical” mistake which makes the urban planning deficient from a point of view both *systemic* and *structural*. Any other use of the word “structural”, worse if contra-posed with the word “strategic”, seems to me an urban planning silliness.

On the other hand, this is amply acknowledged, even by traditional urban planning, the planning that is prevailing at the level of quarters and zoning plans. We know very well that the normative urban planning standards – sanctioned by many master plans at smaller territorial scales – supply a hierarchy of functions and services with strict reference to the potential user’s population. The works which in Italy are called of “primary and secondary urbanization” are works on territorial hierarchical scales (day-care centres, health centres, pharmacies, and so on, as well as, sewage, streets, and so on) and are right now usual equipment even for the “blueprint planners”, which had studied them within the “housing units”.³⁷

But people have realized everywhere that the “housing units”, not by themselves,³⁸ nor added one to another in quarters, and so on endlessly, do not “make a city”, or “cityness”, and they do not produce the “urban effect”. The more harassing problem of the modern urban planning is “how to build *the city*”, and how it is possible to produce the urban effect, and not that of “how to build *within* the city”. The problem is to build the city, to guarantee the city to everybody. But this problem is no more a physical planning problem. It is a problem of an *integrated, unitary, comprehensive* – or whatever we wish to call it – *planning*, i.e. a planning which is both *physical and socio-economical*.

Well, we are very far from teaching this kind of urban planning, at least in Italy.

On the scale of a greater city or metropolis (like Rome) where the urban effect already exists and is not in question, the problem of building *the city* is posed in terms of avoiding urban degradation, derived by the overloading of functions on the spontaneous and historical centrality (without losing anything of the urban effect thus inherited). And everywhere in the greater cities the most harassing problem is of alleviating the *excess of centrality* by means of the creation of alternative centralities capable to offset the attraction of the superior urban services toward these new centralities.

This is the true, authentic, first strategic issue of the greater city, of every greater city which tends to increase its size. And on the contrary, it is not to fix the “hierarchy among centralities”, within an accurate distribution of functions smeared over the territory, aping that “central place organization” inherited a long time ago from the spatial theory and the regional sciences. To such a “natural” distribution of centralities, the reality is quite capable of taking care of itself. We do not need to disturb the urban planners and the master plans.

In sum, to disseminate the urban function in multiple centralities means going against the centrality function. Because this centrality function is that of

³⁷ Below which, according to the modern urban planning (Le Corbusier), we should not ever descend under.

³⁸ Even if these housing units are extended to the concept of a “new town”, which is not different from that of a quarter, or of great housing units; and for these reasons they failed almost everywhere.

concentrating all urban functions in the ambit of its jurisdictional territory (however making safe at the same time certain acceptable loading thresholds, and an amount of users sufficient to justify and produce the *urban effect* given exactly by that concentration). A centrality which does not supply *all urban functions*, no one excluded, is not a centrality; it usurps only the name of it. And certainly it is not competitive with respect to the centrality from which we intend to divert the load.

The new Master Plan of Rome seems to operate by detailing new urban and local centralities emerged here and there spontaneously on the base of 40 years of an “inexistent plan” (not even speaking of the external centralities based on the surviving of the little historical centres of the Province).

By doing so, the new Master Plan of Rome, usurping the concept and the name of a strategic alternative centrality, and misleading through “polycentrism” an urban form which Lynch³⁹ in his classification of the urban forms (not even for planning purposes but of simple reading purposes) would call rather “multi-nucleus areas”, designs no more, more-or-less, than what exists. Or, sometimes, it follows no more than micro-decisions of the past, whose diffused existence is born exactly from the absence of any plan and plan strategy. This behavior has come to justify the people that state that plans are useless; if they register only what exists, in other terms, if they are only the scrupulous notary of what exists.⁴⁰

On the other side, if these centralities must be reinforced in their functions - as would seem to me logical - it would implicate a vast quantity of actions and interventions in every one of them, and consequently a great dispersion of means. Leaving aside the fact that the plan it seems to me very far from an evaluation of the quantity of means and resources that must be employed for each of these actions and interventions, we can assume that this dispersion of means cannot help but be detrimental to our engagement, i.e. the creation of truly strategic alternative centralities in respect to the prior historical aim to depolarise the traditional centre.

When the plan is dispersed in thousands of brooks and hundreds of so-called centralities, we cannot be surprised if the plan objectives will never be achieved, and everything will remain as a dead words on paper, as has happened until now with the 1962 plan, by means of the pusillanimous and relinquishing management of it, and with the “inexistent plan”, as it has been rightly defined by Cecchini, before he had assumed the responsibility of the new plan. Is this not depressing to move from an inexistent old plan, after so much “sound and fury signifying nothing”, to a new plan which risks to become - for its own methodological inadequateness - equally inexistent?

³⁹ Lynch K. (1954) “The form of Cities”, in *Scientific American* 190: 55-63; and (1961) “The Pattern of the Metropolis.” In *Daedalus* (90): 79-98.

⁴⁰ For an opinion quite opposite to mine - an opinion that I would call a little ironic but deeply convinced, a “planning of nothing” - see some arguments developed, among others by Nucci (1985). Concerning this opinion, the concept of a “weak” planning (in the sense of the discourses on the “weak thinking” which developed the school of the so-called post-modernism), I appreciate the clearness, and I would say also in a certain sense the courage. On the contrary, the discourses of the authors of the Report of the new Master Plan of Rome, whose pastiche indeed reduced it to the same “planning of nothing”, are disturbing, with their verbose pretensions to go toward a plan of alternative centralities without effectiveness.

That the new plan could sustain both the actions, toward the metropolitan and the urban centralities and at the same time toward those local and external, should be demonstrated at least with accounts at hand with a serious quantification of such affordability and the feasibility of engaging such programs. But the figures are lacking.⁴¹

This is the why the centralities are not such if they do not have at least a virtual or theoretical “users area” (which I have called “catchment area”, see section 1 in chapter 5), and if it is not said how many potential citizens those centralities are referred to, and to what type of needs these citizens have.⁴² These types of accounts (which somebody calls with haughtiness “economic” but which should be the primary toolbox of critical sense and operational intelligence of the planner, and *only of the planners*⁴³) are indispensable for giving concreteness to the strategic territorial choices and guidelines.

Let me give an example of an account (very general, very approximate, and quite insufficient in the case in which we could enter seriously toward a type of accounting that I desire within the preparation of a strategic master plan).

If we should roughly divide the average Roman population, and include the populations of other municipalities that gravitate on Rome’s services (around 3,300,000 inhabitants or users) by the number of centralities indicated by the new plan (around 70), we will get an average dimension of users for each of those centralities of less than 50,000 inhabitants or users. Can we hope to assure an alternative centre with this size?

⁴¹ The figures lack except those supplied through extrapolation and predictive means (a way enemy of the programmatic approach as demonstrated a long time ago by other masters in economics as Tinbergen [1971a and b] and Frisch [1961, 1976]) and committed to excellent research institutes – as Cresme or Sta – who, in absence of clear and defined strategic and programmatic work hypotheses, could not have done anything if limited to old data and in a form, as said, predictive, creating undue assumptions and wasting their optimal research and computing potential.

The emblematic case is that of the excellent study on the dynamic of the traffic flows by the Sta, where emerged a very good capacity to quantify the present flows of mobility in Rome, *rebus sic stantibus* (from which to draw conclusions on the activities to be reorganized in order to improve the services); however, they do not say anything about what could be said if based on the question: what could be the dynamic flows of mobility *if*, at a given plan horizon (say ten years) there could be an existing territorial (hypothetical) layout (of the centralities, of the territorial densities, of the residential and the non-residential places), like *so* or like *so*? That “*so* or *so*” should not be committed to the fantasy of the same research institute – as unfortunately occurs often (deforming all the coordinated strategic processes of the planning) – but from the Office of Plan itself, where strategies are elaborated. And from this research, founded on programmatic hypotheses, and not from the conclusions of the “positive” quantitative analysis of the research institutes, the evaluation and the choices of alternative plan solutions should be developed.

⁴² Frankly, on this matter it would have been useful for the new plan to have paid more attention to what I have argued and advanced widely in chapter four and five in this book concerning Rome (and, more in general, in my other writings).

⁴³ Indeed, the prevailing economists are busy with quite different theoretical questions, far enough to give a practical hand to the “problem solving” and “to make account” with the reality of planning (they are in fact engaged to establish behavioral theories and laws, among so-called economic variables, in reality only macro-economic, which have always shown themselves unreliable and have been denied by the events and facts, and being opposite these variables to their theories the above mentioned economists cannot find other explanations and call these facts “paradox”).

These centres - states the plan - are the object of a "defined planning", in other terms, they already exist and operate in their activity; others are "to be planned", that is, they still do not play any function.⁴⁴ If the minimum users (population) threshold - as I state⁴⁵ - to obtain in a functional autonomy by any alternative centrality is about 500,000 units, these 70 centralities will not ever achieve any kind of autonomy, that is, the completeness of services which are required to constitute a true alternative to the unique centrality to the city.

They will be condemned to be centralities of series B or C, and the centrality of series A will remain only that of the traditional historic centre, contoured by all the other traditional hierarchies to which we are accustomed ("circumscriptions", municipalities, quarters, now we could call them "toponimies"). And the urban planners/geographers of the future master plans, "notaries of the existent" and "planners of nothing", will probably classify the future urban areas, by homogeneity of characters, and will call them similarly "the historic city", (extending obviously its boundaries and acknowledging the new and old patina of the new quarters), "the consolidated city", the "city to be restructured", the "city of the transformation"(every one, if you want, with the extended boundaries), and so on.

And it is not by chance that, in this triumph of various "centralities",⁴⁶ which will probably remain such only on paper, but will represent anyway and surely a costly dissipation of resources and of operational energies, people begin to talk in the new plan of some "cities" of Rome, in "plural", corresponding to the 20 administrative Circumscriptions of the city, today named "Municipalities". But *not one* of these *cities* will *ever* become a city.

On the contrary, the alternative "centralities" have the destiny to become real cities, in terms of a critical mass of users and consumers, of a mix of activities, of an economic sustainability, of an ecological sustainability, of an acceptable traffic dynamic, of an autonomous city effect or cityness.

In sum the "polycentric city" of Rome will be represented by around 70 different centralities and 20 municipalities, i.e. by a dissemination spread a marmalade of centralities that does not constitute any reasonable "polycentrism".

⁴⁴ Garano S. (2001) p.153.

⁴⁵ See the findings of a research, coordinated by myself, promoted by the European Union and concerning four European countries (France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy). See Archibugi and others (1998).

⁴⁶ This does not exclude that for any of such centralities, metropolitan, urban, local, the new master plan forecasts a "structuring project", which will elaborate its own component definitions, objectives, norms, and standards, and will have to cross and make itself compatible with all the other objectives, definitions, norms and standards fixed by the new master plan, for the components of the land use system (the cities: "historical"; "consolidated"; "to be restructured"; and "of the transformations"). And at the same time, it will have to cross and make itself compatible with the objectives, definitions, and standards fixed in other "structuring projects" relative to those that have been called "ambits of strategic planning" ("the Tiber"; "the Park of Forums and old Appia"; "the Walls"; "the Flaminio-Forums-EUR directories"; and "the Railways belt). Incidentally, the definitions of these "ambits of strategic planning" are the most interesting parts of the new Master Plan, and deserve to be considered an appropriate field of executive design. It is to be hoped that in the phase of the latter, it could be possible to give an account of the means possible and available to carry out these projects, and to evaluate seriously their costs and benefits.

11. The Absence of a Truly Integrated Land Use-Transport Approach

A true territorial strategy is absent even in the asserted “mobility system” of the new Master Plan. Incidentally, it would be difficult to fit a mobility strategy to a territorial strategy that does not even exist. Lacking the latter, the former cannot be. And both are missing because – in the systemic and strategic concept of planning – one cannot exist without the other. Both are being born from the same process.

And – to be clear – it is impossible to pass as “strategy” the eternal rehash and panegyric of the superiority of the rail infrastructures with respect to those for the car traffic, of which, even in the banana republics, they are ready to acknowledge that superiority in optimizing the mass transit in a small space, if it is the case.

Nor is it possible to pass as “strategy” – worse as an “integrated” mobility program – the creation of multi-modal connections, between cars, tramways, busses, subways, railways, etc., what forever constitutes the primer of the transportation techniques.⁴⁷

Nor, again, is it possible to pass as “strategy” the adoption – called “pragmatic” – of an already existing national railways project, of completing the lacking part⁴⁸ of the belt of railways layout which contour Rome, in order to obtain a metropolitan railway belt on the same layout.

The *true integrated* strategy would be that of calculating times, intensities, and railway and automobile traffic in function of some locations and hypothetical

⁴⁷ See Geusa (2001).

⁴⁸ It is a question of a project from forever of the national Italian railways, old by decades, with the aim of facilitating railway passengers and commodities traffic over long distances, which wished to complete the already extant railways layout: coast railway from the north (Pisa-Livorno); local railway from Viterbo and the Vatican; railway from the north (Milano, Bologna, Firenze); railways from the Adriatic sea (Aquila-Pescara), railways of the Valle del Sacco (Frosinone); railways from the south (Napoli), all confluent toward Termini, as the central station. The project – by means of a long tunnel under Monte Mario – has aimed to realize a complete railway belt in the centre of the city; a belt very useful as a metropolitan service, that constitutes remarkable inconvenience at the moment in which it serves only the national traffic, but its conversion and adaptation to the metropolitan service was already considered by everyone an opportunity not to miss. And welcome to the new plan which has profit of it.

[illegible]

Map 03:

The green system

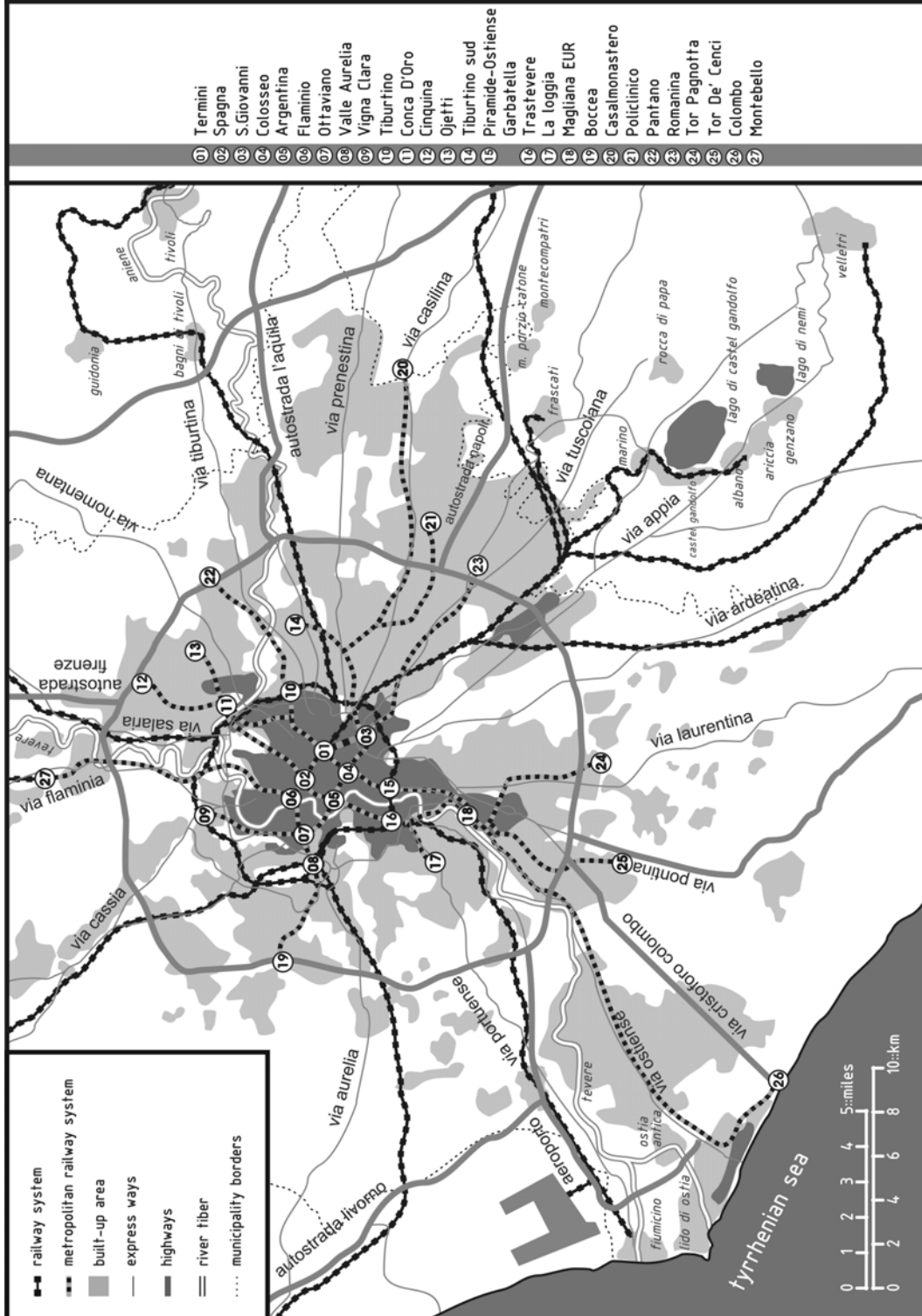


Figure VII.6

Rome: The new Master Plan of 2000

Map 04:

The mobility system



scenarios coming from the *territorial strategies*, and of giving a numeric substance to the loading which could and should derive from it.

On the contrary, showing its old imprint of the “blueprint planning” and of the normative planning, the new Master Plan leaves to another plan the strategy, say, autonomous of the organizational choices in the metropolitan mobility system. The new mobility plan is called the “Integrated Program for the Mobility” (PROIMO),⁴⁹ which is different then that of the master plan.

What do the “strategic lines” of the PROIMO, absorbed by the new Master Plan, consist of? They are, according to the Report:

In the first place, the development of an integrated mobility system - within which the different modalities of collective and individual transport are utilized, in the related field of technical, economic validity and of environmental compatibility and consistently with the urban ambit characters – in order to realize a meaningful re-equilibrium between the modalities of collective and individual transport.

The pursuit of this strategy occurs by means of the realization of a network on rail that uses different technologies (extra-urban railways, metropolitan subway, tramway lines, “innovations systems”) interconnected internally (rail-rail exchange) and with the street systems. Car transportation plays the role of adduction into the rail system and a role of services in the areas with low demand density. The street network hierarchized and rebound up, allows access to the rail system and to effectuate the trips for who the collective transport supply is less competitive [Report, p. 28].

If I have to translate this strategy in terms useful for a program structuring, I would synthesize it with the objective: “*to improve the multimedia system giving a prior function to the railway transport system*” (which is, by the way, an elementary objective pursued from always by any kind of transport planning in every part of the world). Another “strategy” argued in the Report of the new plan is that:

The quantitative and qualitative expansion of the collective transport supply should be accompanied by “limiting” interventions (limited traffic zoning-ZTL) and pay-traffic zoning for the private use, in order to guide the demand toward more convenient systems and to optimize the economic and environmental fallout of the forecast investments. [idem, 28]

Rather than “accompaniment”, the limiting or inducing policies on the public behavior, must be considered more “instruments” for the achievement of some determined objectives than an objective in itself; but from this point of view the strategic planning introduces also the evaluation of the result to be measured for that achievement; i.e. the fixing of the indicators that can show it, and which temporal targets can be established in its achievement. Nothing exists about any of this in the new plan, and nor are there any announcements about the intention

⁴⁹ This program has been carried on by the transport aldermanship on the base of previous documents as a “Transport Agenda” (1995) and of a “General Plan of Urban Traffic” (PGTU)[1998]. The PROIMO was elaborated only at the end of 1998. The Report of the new plan declares that “the strategic lines on the system of mobility find a final definition, explication, and application with the drawing up of the PROIMO” whose elaboration began only at the end of 1998.

to measure it. All is said in the assumption that from these limiting and inducing policies people should expect positive results only *indirectly*, without any quantification of its development.

Furthermore – as a third strategic objective – the intention is presented:

of the recuperation and integration in a wider and under-utilized railway network (more than 3,000 Km and 80 stations of the state national railways), which is accompanying, in a functional and integrated way, the metropolitan and tramways network. [idem, p.28]

Even in this case instruments are taken for objectives and vice versa. However, in the illustration of such intentions in the Report a weak mention (and not with very clear prose) is made to something that is close, in an approximate way, to a correct integrated transport-land use planning. This occurred when it was affirmed:

A relevant quota of the demand derives from the extant city and is not touched by the rail lines, existing and/or to be recuperated, and a quota of so-called “plan residuals” is not touched by the rail as well, i.e. the new programmed building not yet realized.....The design derives from a realistic and reciprocal “conversion”: from one side, that of the rail system toward what is built and what must be built, through an identification of the path of prolongation or of the new lines....., and from the other side, that by the settlement system toward the rail lines, by means of the concentration and the shifting of the new construction around the new stations and the valorization of the ambit of transformation located around the transport exchange nodes, with – in parallel – a consistent design of the car mobility conceived in function of an achievement of the rail lines. [idem, p.28]

In this text the “land use-transport”⁵⁰ method of evaluation is discovered, which is in the meantime recommended everywhere in the world, at least from the 1950s, as an elementary and unavoidable approach to the urban planning. But they are right! They have just discovered it for Italy: because to my knowledge (and I would be happy to be denied) there does not exist in this country even one master plan, in force and constructed in the last 50 years, which has applied to the settlements planning, the optimization of a strategy transport (for example the objective of a minimization of the total trips). And – vice versa – I do not know that there exists only one transport plan which has inserted among its optimizations, some variables dictated by the constraints of a settlement strategy, overall from the point of view of the quality of such settlements and of the access of the users to the rare and quality urban services.

Transport plans and “urban plans” have always run in parallel, with numerous contact, say, “interdisciplinary”, but neither have ever been generated, one from the other, in an intrinsic interdependency.

⁵⁰ In the urban planning literature it is customary to date this method with the publication with the book of W.R. Blunden, *The Land Use-Transport System: Analysis and Synthesis* (Oxford, 1971).

12. The Absence of an Adequate Territorial Strategy and its Effect on the Architectonic Policy and the Green Policy

It is evident, from what has been said in the previous section of this chapter, that the new Master Plan of Rome has very little to do with the “new urban planning strategy” for Rome to which this book has been dedicated. And it is also evident that it is in its approach very far from the suggested and recommended approach of the single issues dealt with in the different sections of chapter 5: “city architecture” (or “urbatecture”, as Bruno Zevi called it); “green strategy”; “programmed mobility”; “residentiality”.

And the new master plan misses what we have called the indispensable instruments of the new strategy (chapter 6).

I have said many times that my own study of Rome (this essay), represents the application to a specific case, on to an important city (which has reached the threshold of a metropolitan city with typical problems of overloading, of the decline of urban quality, and by the degradation coming from that overloading) of a general strategic approach that can be applied to almost all cities (especially if old) with a “multimillionaire” overload, and that still keeps only one centre as important.⁵¹

At the same time, it represents an approach to urban planning rather different from that of the traditional urban planning (which I have called “of the blueprint”⁵²). We can deduce that the new master plan of Rome is not in the same furrow with what I consider the needed reform of urban planning both in the sense of the “strategic approach”, and in the sense of an “integrated approach” (socio-economic-territorial).

I will conclude my critical examination of the new master plan of Rome with some short comments on the shortcoming of a strategy and of an integrated approach, as discussed in the previous chapters (4,5, and 6), this time explicating how this absence reverberates also through three other aspects: the architectural strategy, the green strategy, and the new metropolitan residentiality.

a) The architectural strategy (or “urbatecture”)

The diffusion everywhere of the centralities will bring the invasion of modern and post-modern architecture (from my point of view the same things) on areas of the city that could on the contrary conserve or preserve their historical identity,⁵³ with interventions that could beautify here and there from one point of view, but

⁵¹ This strategy in its general aspect has been dealt with more amply in other writings of mine, synthesized in the research on *Urban Ecosystems in Italy* (1999), and in my lessons on the planning theory (1995, reprinted in an edition still provisional in 2002).

⁵² Even this approach has been dealt with more amply in other writings of mine among which some more recapitulatory, like that on *The Ecological City* (1997).

⁵³ Indeed I agree with the logic, quite justified (in the plan and elsewhere), that there is the need to extend the concept of the historical centre and include in it areas more historically recent, that have until now belonged to what plan calls, for other reasons, “consolidated city”.

would also create immediately, from the other point of view, that mixture of styles and characters that cause a place to lose identity.

As I have said in chapter 5, in such way, the same effect is obtained that in the past we have had, and unfortunately will continue to have. The “great works” of architecture that invade the historical centre not only disfigure – despite their “architectural worth” – the scenic aspects of the centre that must be conserved, but also disrupt the functionality, overloading it with exactly the “new” functions that the old space is not capable to sustain without grave damage to the functionality of the city as a whole.

Truly alternative centralities could have had the role of giving – if thought of and managed with project intelligence, of the type evoked in section 4, chapter 7 – a unitary vent to the new architecture, of any tendency, creating appropriate, historically significant, and self-referencing spaces.

Moreover, the strategy of architectural diffusion and commixture, or of any strategy, accompanied by the absence of any calculation of predictable needs, and of the “economic and financial space” existent and available for the development of the new architectural interventions (which still characterize the blueprint urban planning that abuses the word “structural”), opens the door to an endless designing without economic feasibility, reproducing the same effect of the past urban planning, with generalized frustration at the architects and the operators, and also the disappointment of the population.⁵⁴

The hyper-diffusion of the centralities does not help – as at a first and uncultivated first glance it can appear – the architectural realizations, but on the contrary, strongly limits the operational capability and feasibility, in a big confusion of intentions and in a large generation of incompatibilities (which right now is evident on a first reading of the plan).⁵⁵

b) The green strategy

The new master plan, thanks also to the structural abundance of green in the city inherited by the past,⁵⁶ is rich in areas to be protected and managed in an effective way in order to keep more greenery in the city. The plan seems very well equipped from the strict point of view of the “green strategy”. However, this plan does not correspond to what I defined (section 5, chapter 5) as a “specific strategy of the urban green connected to the objective of a sustainable polycentrism”. I was

⁵⁴ I have no precise data but, by guesswork, I believe that Italy (to not speak of Rome!) is the country in which the scissor between project on the paper and effective implementation of new architectural works is the most divergent of any advanced country.

⁵⁵ I make only one example: the centrality of Pietralata, residual of the old directories of the 1962 plan, that remained on paper, a terrain of an endless designing (with the signature of the illustrated designer), will have no other effects than the compacting of an area already adjacent to the historical centre, already invaded by any kind of use; while a strategy of alternative centrality should have to be destined to the recuperation of the free and empty, or little-used, spaces, in the aim to decrease both the settlement density and the traffic generation.

⁵⁶ From the retards with which Rome has become a great city, retards that have saved it from the constructive devastations of the other European cities and from the chaotic growth of the American cities, which only at the end of the nineteenth century matured the need to guarantee green space and city beautification policies.

talking about an “equipped axis of green” that could fit the objective of creating a green “belt”, oriented not to generally surround the city, but, more precisely, to surround the oldest centre and to separate it from the new centralities, in order to create also a “safe-belt” against the compacting of the historical centre together with the “consolidated city”, and the compaction of both with the city “to be transformed” (for using the great zone definitions of the new master plan).

To do this (as indicated already in section 5, chapter 5) a severe control of the areas not yet definitely compromised, i.e. the areas yet “relatively” free of the new master plan, and a firm and rapid change of destination of those areas from the status of the equipped areas to the status of green areas was needed.

I identified this green belt at the level of the old fortresses which surround the city; fortresses which could constitute, in spite of their actual degradation in the present city, a reference point for a priority policy of recuperation against degradation and compaction. All this— I repeat again — in order to obtain a belt of detachment and “rest” of a thinner fabric, and therefore of more green, around the historical or consolidated centre (whichever you wish to say).

The senseless proliferation of the centralities, on the contrary, will contrast these specific green strategies. It will make these strategies lose their incidence, clearness, and priority.

In sum, here it is appropriate to say, especially on the theme of the green strategy, that they have programmed for the tree but have forgotten the forest.

And to remain on the same theme (but here it is not the case of the micro-designing), the new plan is still provided by the residuals of old urban planning philosophy for the safe-guard of certain agricultural or rural activities that have been insinuated within the boundaries of the metropolitanity. They are residuals of sentiments between the “populists” and the “chic-romantics”, typical for a Left still related to old-fashioned schemes. In the meantime, on the contrary nothing is said, it seems to me, about any serious “program of reforestation” in the urban areas that are still free; programs which, if the private interest could be involved, have a good deal of economic feasibility.

13. The Overwhelming by Micro-Design

To conclude I will try to condense the critical observations above developed on the elaboration of the new Master Plan of Rome, arguing that this elaboration has been dominated by an *excess of micro-design*, which, despite good intentions, has oriented the authors of the plan to follow the city determinations that have been too much influenced by a minute analysis of the different zones of the city itself.

Indeed the new Master Plan had under its feet a great number of different “realities” grown in the spontaneity and in the inexistence of any control policy, and moreover studied by legions of “blueprint urban planners” at the micro-territorial level and through decades of useless works of the “Office of Plan”; works made useless by the inconclusiveness of the plan and of the spontaneous strength of interest that the plan has not been capable of steering and channelling and carrying out within a precise *strategic design*.

Today, such design should have been that of the new plan (like, by the way, it is felt, acknowledged, and asserted in each page of the Plan Report). But, people found themselves facing (even prior to reaffirming a general strategy of appropriate territorial type and at this urban scale) a myriad of studies and projects developed at a micro-territorial scale, which they did not have the courage to throw into the trash; or did not have the intelligence to recuperate this myriad *not before* the general ideas⁵⁷ of the new plan where “decanted”, in the successive phases of the planning process.

The micro-territoriality and the micro-designing took the upper-hand. And they have imposed a situation in which *the scenarios projected by the plan go in an exactly contrary direction with respect to the intentions generically expressed by the plan.*

Are the centralities theorized? In fact so many are designed that it denies the theorization.

Is a more precise and strategic role of the green theorized, in the aim to make the densities more sustainable? Rather the micro-design distributes the location of the green areas in a way that the above strategic role is lost. Because these areas are not used to divide the historical centre from the new alternative centres. Indeed, from this “strategic” point of view, the fact that the new plan realizes a satisfying medium superficies of green areas for inhabitants, is not so interesting; the main interest is for which planning purpose these superficies are used (in our case, in order to separate better the historical centre from the new alternative centres).

Is a programmed mobility theorized? In fact, the new plan designs the doubling and tripling of the existent layout; meaning notoriously a servile acceptance of the existent flows. And it has begun with the complex analysis of the existent and projected flows, without testing the variability in respect to hypothetical alternative of land use, which is – as said - the most elementary contribution of the urban planning to the quantitative programming of transport (of the streets as of the rail, of the line frequencies as of their layout). On the contrary, in the new plan, transports are still conceived as a realm in itself of the “traffic engineers” – both in the consulting companies as in the municipal administrations.⁵⁸

And all this is dressed with such an endless description of the particular that one loses the whole picture.

⁵⁷ Of course strategic ideas related to the territory, and not to methodological rigmarole of the “planning by doing” type, or the “structural plan” versus “strategic plan”.

⁵⁸ It is without doubt that in the face of the “blueprint urban planners” that fill maps with “directrices”, of “use destinations”, of “centralities”, without a minimum computation of the trip flows that derive from them (i.e. in face of a urban planner which does not know their job), welcome to the traffic engineers, which at least, with their job more acquired, work on sure data, on registered flows, and propose the slimming and improvement of traffic. They work, as people say, with more limited objectives, which are translated – I acknowledge it - in sub-optimalizations. Unfortunately, among these sub-optimalizations, there is also that of transforming cities, by means of their devilries (one-ways, privileged lanes, timed traffic lights, viaducts, bypasses, freeways, etc.) into race-tracks (where, by the way, people run very slowly). But, at least they work by supplying precise data and parameters and not only wordiness.

14. General Conclusions: Everything Can Be Improved

I would not be, however, too negative about the future of the new Master Plan of Rome, nor of the future of the urban planning. It has been said⁵⁹ that the new Master Plan of Rome represents the “last paradigm” of the urban planning in Italy in the sense that this plan:

Re-elaborates two great themes of innovation in more problematic forms, like the relation between *structures* and *actions*, and the conception of the *projects in the plan*. Maybe we begin to become aware that the separation by principle between *frames* and *projects* risks becoming an excessive simplification, and that is not possible to reduce the variety of the contents of complex programs to indifferent instruments of implementation.

The new plan of Rome helps us to explore the necessary relations between *project erecting yards* and *structure frames*, and raises relevant problems concerning the boundaries and the relationships between *strategic constructions* and *urban plans*, between *economic and social issues* and *physical transformations*. In respect to these themes it still does not offer a complete model (even because the plan has grown by successive sedimentations), but gives a contribution to make the interpretation difficulties of the more orthodox positions clearer (even of the new orthodoxy which begins to emerge from different regional laws)...Perhaps, while overflowing some current limits, this experience explores, and “takes to the limit”, certain possibilities of innovation. In some ways, in my opinion, it could be configured as the “last paradigm” of a traditional reformist thinking and practice. If this attempt (expert, prudent, and sensible to establish more meaningful relationships of consistency and guides between frames and projects) is not successful, if is unable to find new equilibriums, effective and legitimate, between old and new functions (regulatory and strategic, physical and social), it will not be easy to identify further alternatives to the “Lombard pragmatism”,⁶⁰ with all the risks and opportunities that the trend implicates. [P.C. Palermo, 2001, p.210]

I repeat, I did not very well understand where P.C. Palermo wishes to go with this.

In effect, as I hope is clear from what I have said in the preceding chapters, I believe that the contrapositions between “structures” and “actions”, between “frames” and “projects”, between “strategic constructions” and “structural frames”, and therefore - as the authors of the Master Plan of Rome insist - between “types” of plans, for instance “structural” versus “strategic”, are all false contrapositions. And therefore they lead to nothing, in the thinking and in the reality.

From one side, we have the bearers of a tradition called urban planning, which prevails in Italy; of a “blueprint urban planning” kind, essentially physical,

⁵⁹ See Pier Paolo Palermo (2001) in a very complex essay of which I am not sure to have understood completely the conclusion.

⁶⁰ [not of the book author] For the English reader I am obliged to say that by “Lombard pragmatism”, I presume that the author of the paper (P.P. Palermo) intends a group of urban planners around the University of Milan (and some master plans influenced by this group), that have chosen recently to be supporters of the so-called “strategic planning”(but in a version that I think not entirely fitting with the conventional concept related to this name). [See F. Curti (1996), M.G. Bolocan, and C. Salone (1996), and M.C. Gibelli (1996)].

incapable to integrate itself with a socio-economic accounting, and, overall, with an operational programming, which is, and must be, an integral part of any type of planning. It is a wrong tradition that has its origin in the faculties of architecture and in their studies programs or curricula – in spite of some attempts, rapidly wrecked in Italy, to create transversely, i.e. integrated, the teaching of theories and practice of planning. These “old” planners can change the names of their plans to call them structural, or something else, but they amputate the most important and meaningful parts of the “structure” of which they deal and usurp their concept and name.

On the other side, we have the bearers of a “project making attitude” – always coming from a substantially physical and architectural matrix – which are, however, based on the operational “manageriality”, thinking that at a more elevated scale is not possible, or not suitable, to apply the same “manageriality” which they use to apply at the scale of a single project. But even this is a mistake, which derives from the same narrowness of vision with respect to a strategic planning that can and must be applied at all scales, even at the national and world scale (the cases of the US federal “result law”, or GPRA, for the national scale, and of the Agenda 21 for the world scale, are some first, even not perfect, attempts).⁶¹

Thus, even these conceptions of planning qualified as “strategic” are usurping the name.

Therefore, relax. “The last beach” or the last paradigm of planning is not in danger; and the day after, we are not obliged to declare “going out of business”, to surrender our arms to the “Lombard pragmatism”, to renounce to the structural planning. The Master Plan of Rome, by itself, is not representative of anything. It is an effort, full of dignity, which has tried to repair the wrong approaches – but without radical effort, even because produced, as said, by “successive sedimentation” - in front to the criticism that since 40 years at least has been made to the blueprint planning as incapable to be translated in effective implementations and operations.

I acknowledge in the new Master Plan of Rome an effort to overtake, in the right direction, the old superficiality of attributing the guilt of the urban planning inefficiency to the “capitalist system”,⁶² without perceiving and acknowledging that that urban planning, output of so much enlightened “culture”, was rather impracticable, unfeasible, technically incapable to be applied, because it lacked the “structural support” for its application: its compatibility with the necessary means and tools (first of all the qualification of the planners...).

And I acknowledge even the effort of not making the opposite mistake, even deleterious – in which urban planners, disappointed for the failed experience of the urban planning in Italy, fall into easily – of throwing in the towel (the plans and the planning) completely, giving up a political management of it, which means throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

⁶¹ This mistake, in Italy, and perhaps also outside Italy, derives from a scarce familiarity with the authors that have first theorized and practiced strategic planning.

⁶² Or even, more simply, to the estate and building speculation (big or small), and to the politicians that were pragmatismal servers of it, who had without doubt a good deal of responsibility.

The new Master Plan, full of good intentions (but also rich of declarations and self-satisfying emphasis, and of abundant extraordinary resources employed in an uncoordinated way) has searched, I repeat, to repair the approaches in front of that criticism and to face the operational needs. However, it lacks “structuring” upriver, the objectives and the measures for their paths and steps, according, by chance, exactly to the principles of strategic planning, but applied at any scale.

On the other side, coming back to the false contrapositions, even the “Lombard pragmatism”, which decorates itself with the name of strategic planning, does not represent the correct methodology of strategic planning as usually described since the time of Friend and associates and of its commentators as Faludi, and others.⁶³

The task is not simple. We have to *improve* the *quality* of our plans which “take on water” from all sides; and the premises for this exist. First of all we have to improve them where they are lacking, by a form of permanent critical discussion, inspired by a basic view of the general framework of planning in all its multilateral and prismatic vision. Therefore, I think that the first step is to improve the lack of knowledge and to build a more systematic, strategic, and integrated methodology for constructing a plan.

For instance, applied to the plan of Rome, my opinion is that it still has to fill two basic gaps:

Calculate more precisely the *centralities users*, with reference to the citizens, residents and operators; i.e. the *users* (or *catchment*) *area* (physical or by socio-economic categories) which such centralities will have to serve (see what was said already in section 6, chapter 7)

Calculate the programmatic transport demand that (on the basis of determined and explicit parameters of evaluation) is generated by some alternative scenarios of settlement formulation; in order to choose solutions that minimize the assessed cost for the users.

These in my opinion are the most important gaps, which could give a truly “strategic” content to the plan and from which it would be possible to derive many other strategic objectives well enchained with the first and more general. But many other gaps have become evident in the reading of the plan (only partly evoked in the past sections, I will not elaborate them here).

It would be suitable to reorder the whole of the prose of the new Master Plan of Rome in a “*program structure*” more intelligible and capable to help the perception and the definition of the decisional levels, the subordinations, the compatibilities.

But even from the side of the strategic plans, there is the need to improve its connection with the same upstream “reference frameworks”, even these frameworks, themselves, calculated with the same strategic evaluation procedures,

⁶³ Friend J.K. and W. N. Jessop (1969), Friend J.K., et al. (1974), Friend J.K. and Hickling A. (1997), Faludi A. (1973a and 1973b). I do not well enough know the practical applications in Italy of master plans inspired to the strategic planning; my opinions have been formed on the reading of some writings published by the journal “*Urbanistica*”. I am ready to correct my opinions in the face of more informative materials concerning Italian experiences.

and not left vague, but rather accompanied by all this information necessary so that their feasibility can be taken seriously. Feasibility, which is not only assessable at the scale of a single project, but even at the scale of more general structural plans, using the reference frameworks above described.⁶⁴

The failure and the success in the plans (as in life) are never absolute, total. Even when we feel the strong need to “turn the page”, we always do it with something achieved or gained from the past. It is a matter of choosing the ways more rapid, and to pursue with firmness, I would even say with religiousness, the clearness of ideas.

I think that what really contrasts with true progress in this field is the belief that some labels such as “structural”, “strategic”, “systemic”, “integrated” (sometime ago we have discovered the “negotiated”, “advocated”, “communicative”, “participative”, and some others) can truly characterize different thinking schools in the field of planning. I have the clear conviction that planning is always, at any time: structural, strategic, systemic, integrated, negotiated, advocated, communicative, participative, and so on, otherwise it is *not* planning, or at least it is a planning subject to serious limitations in the meaning, completeness, feasibility, and result.

If on this point we could come together, then together it would be possible to operate and improve what I have called the planning “science”, or planology, that is that to prepare planners (without further adjectives) to take account of the “polyhedrality” or “prismaticity” of making plans, and of the many aspects, even only “procedural”, of planning. In order then to be better prepared to operate in specific fields of planning (those defined “substantial”, land use, urban landscape, transport, health, environment, education, heritage valorization, and so on) in full consciousness of the systemic, strategic, structural, interconnection of their own field with all the others, no one excluded. Unfortunately, the places of knowledge and learning, the institutions of our high schools (universities and so on), are still far from having assimilated this unitary principle of plan making.

But it is our duty to never miss any occasion, not only to state it, but also to construct appropriate methods, to implement it in the practice of planning.

⁶⁴ I cannot avoid referring – for a more complete notion of what is truly the strategic planning in the public domain - to my book, many times stated here, *Introduction to the Strategic Planning in the Public Domain* (2000) at the moment, unfortunately, only in Italian.

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