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Original
Urban strategies for the future development of Turin and Skopje: economic crisis and effectiveness of urban design / Marina, O., Armando, A., Velevski, S.. - STAMPA. - THE EUROPE OF TOMORROW: CREATIVE, DIGITAL, INTEGRATED:(2014), pp. 217-235. (The Europe of Tomorrow: Creative, Digital, Integrated Skopje 15 Maggio 2014).

Availability:
This version is available at: 11583/2553141 since: 2016-03-01T10:22:32Z

Publisher:
University American College

Published
DOI:

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(Article begins on next page)

28 November 2026



University American College Skopje

FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG

9th Annual International Conference on European Integration

THE EUROPE OF TOMORROW: CREATIVE, DIGITAL, INTEGRATED

Skopje, 2014

9th Annual International Conference on European Integration

THE EUROPE OF TOMORROW:
CREATIVE, DIGITAL, INTEGRATED

University American College Skopje
Treta makedonska brigada 60, 1000 Skopje, Macedonia
www.uacs.edu.mk/conference

For the publisher. Prof. Dr. Marjan Bojadziev, Rector

Partner institution:
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, office Macedonia, www.fes.org.mk
Stine Klapper, Resident representative of FES Macedonia

Ninth annual international academic conference on European integration
THE EUROPE OF TOMORROW: CREATIVE, DIGITAL, INTEGRATED
Skopje, Thursday 15 May 2014

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Design & Layout:
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Cover page design:
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Print: AKS Management Skopje

THE EUROPE OF TOMORROW:
CREATIVE, DIGITAL, INTEGRATED

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Skopje, 2014

Urban Strategies for the Future Development of Turin and Skopje: The Economic Crisis and the Effectiveness of Urban Design

Ognen Marina, Alessandro Armando, Slobodan Velevski

Abstract

This chapter focuses on issues of the effectiveness of urban plans in the context of contemporary European cities, by mainly considering the subject of the physical transformation of public space connected with building development. The comparison between Turin and Skopje aims to highlight the possible role of urban design tools and planning (especially diachronic visioning), in the future of the sustainable growth of urban European systems. In order for strategies for envisioning the urban plans that are required, to become effective, strong support from political power and economic feasibility is essential. How can we consider the production of plans when this support is lacking? The crisis of the building sector throughout Europe in recent years has underlined some weaknesses of this approach to plans which had been a good instrument from the perspective of economic and physical growth. This paper assumes that the urban plan will continue to be a fundamental instrument for managing the future transformations of our cities, if we are capable of rethinking it as a device for reassembling and including many other implications, beyond those which are usually considered in drawing up the material shape of things to come. The paper will finally attempt to describe some strategies for rethinking the urban plan envisioning from a methodological point of view.

Keywords: urban plan, urban visioning, implementation, decision-making, sustainability.

Introduction

The urban habitat has become the main place where the majority of people live, and by 2020 80% of the European population will be living in cities, while 69% of the population of Italy is already living in an urban environment and more than 59% of Macedonian citizens are living in urban areas (The World Bank, 2013). We can imagine that in the coming years development and transformation strategies will radically change, from a political point of view. Likewise, urban design skills and devices will have to guide and interpret these sorts of changes. What will be the role and usefulness of designing the future shape (on every scale) of the city in a European context, where in few years we will have more population and less economic resources to invest in the transformation of their public spaces and infrastructures? How do urban planning tools interact with the political level and decision-making processes if the power of governing them seems to be scattered among different individuals and bodies, who usually follow conflicting and independent purposes?

The challenges of contemporary urban transformation have surpassed its economic aspect and emerge as a social, environmental and spatial crisis with a tremendous effect on the social fabric of local communities. While global trends show a profound growth of the urban environment through the transformation of cities, the involvement of citizens in the process of imagining and building our cities remains seriously undermined. The real challenge of the urban future of our cities is how people can live together and better in rapidly changing cities? We know little about how people in complex urban settings embrace patterns of transformation and social cohesion and why they might lean towards conflict. This condition necessitates the creation of innovative partnerships between policy makers, researchers and citizens to meet tomorrow's challenges including sustainability, improved equity and a better quality of life in a more inclusive society. This chapter will move from a theoretical perspective which considers the urban plan as a complex set of practices and devices which have to be put into a hierarchy of values and priorities rather than leading to the rationality of transformation through a prescriptive design (Armando, Durbiano, 2009; De Rossi, Durbiano, 2007). The interpretation of the present crisis of the building sector as a primary vector for economic development in Italy and in Turin comes from the analysis of the socio-political context by the political scientist Silvano Belligni (2008) and from surveys conducted by the geographer Giuseppe De Matteis (2011). About the

possibilities of proposing new urban design and planning tools, the theoretical framework will make reference to studies on urban controversies (Yaneva, 2012) within the broader context of the Actor Network Theory with particular reference to research by Media-Lab at the Ecole de Science-Politiques in Paris (Latour et al., 2012).

Based on the aforementioned research this chapter intends to explore some methodological possibilities which would enable the urban plan and imaginative visionary practices to be articulated in a wider range of tools, starting from the reconsideration of the potential of design production.

The text opens with a comparison of the relationships between the urban economy and physical transformation processes in the cities of Turin and Skopje, emphasizing the strict boundary which connects the two dimensions; then, the comparison embraces the forms of urban policies and the structural articulation of urban governance. The frame of governmental structure opens, in the third part, with the limits of the present use of urban plans in those governmental and economic contexts. Finally, this chapter suggests some strategies for a different approach to provide further urban design and planning tools and practices.

Turin and Skopje: Two Cities, Two Realities

The cities of Turin and Skopje are used as case studies because they both have developed plans and visions about the transformation of a portion of urban land, which has become available from an infrastructural axis and its surroundings (in Turin, the Spina Centrale Project, and in Skopje the Southern Boulevard). Even if in different contexts both on an economic and a political level, the two cities have used the chance offered by a large transformational process as an attempt to re-launch the governance of the urban system.

The comparison therefore arises from a similarity of the challenges to the process of transformation, approaching urban change from the point of the development of infrastructure while changing the nature of the city. This analysis stems out of the assumptions that the two cities are confronting new administrative and transformative challenges in different urban contexts.

The City of Turin has a €1,3 billion annual budget. This means that every year the city has to find incomes from taxes and profits on its own at 90% (in 2012 the State provided €107 million on a total of €1.3 billion). We have to consider that the incomes from city taxation on construction activities are between 5 and 15%, but they reach 25-30% considering fines and

integration fees. In this situation the city has to encourage new and decreasing investments in the building sectors, according to the market rather than to an autonomous vision for long-term development.

Turin had been experiencing a true renaissance over the last 15 years. Not only because of the winter Olympic events in 2006, but also because of a long term strategy of governance, which was deeply intertwined with an agreement between the political and economic élites (Belligni, 2008) of the local system. In his essay Belligni draws attention to the implicit strategy of this phase of development, as an "anomic modernization", on one side the city which improved its manufacturing system, arising from its urban structure and its international appeal and competitiveness. On the other side, Turin privileged economic and material growth rather than the improvement of social and environmental quality, the distribution rather than re-distribution of opportunities and resources, the élites' governance rather than the citizens' participation. This re-launch of the urban system was strongly based on a territorial strategy, which started with the Piano Regolatore by Vittorio Gregotti and continued through the two Strategic Plans of 2000 and 2006, up to the works for the Olympic Games and the completion of the first underground metropolitan line.

In this phase the city grew up and, in general, it managed to exploit private building development to fund the implementation of public spaces and services and to recover the historical centre. This mechanism allowed the city government to exploit urban design instruments as an effective device for negotiating and forecasting the possibilities of future developments. There was, or there was supposed to be, a reliable correspondence between the drawing of the transformations, the amount of building areas, and the size of the opportunities in renovating the city. This seemed to be the only way to predict a better future for the urban system, and the only way to get money to improve the urban quality of physical space – that is the architectural quality of the city.

The growth of the Real Estate bubble between 1998 and 2006, and its consequent burst between 2006 and 2010 in all the "developed" countries around the world has its specific features in the Italian cities. During the 2000s the houses in the big Italian urban areas had a yearly 9% increase of value (more than gold, which had an 8% yield per annum). At the same time, the construction cost was about €1000 to €1.200 per m^2, on a €4,000 to €6.000 per m^2 average selling price. The result was the production, in ten years, of 30% of the whole residential stock of the Country (De Matteis, 2012).

In the same period Skopje was a city in transition affected by the transformation of society, a transition towards a market-oriented economy, and radical changes in urban plans and a fragmented urban structure. The complex process of transition has been profoundly influenced by the transformation of the existing social and economic structures and the establishment of new ones. The long-lasting process of transformation in the country was marked by a slow pace in the development of infrastructure, a rapid urbanization of residential areas and the densification of the city center. It is notable that at the same time the city went through a process of radical de-industrialization, mainly due to reasons that were completely different to the process of de-industrialization in Turin during the same period.

The City of Skopje has a total yearly budget of €86 million. The incomes from city taxation on construction activities are between 5 and 15%, but they reach 20% when one takes into consideration taxes and other fees (City of Skopje, 2014). Both the central government and the city encourage construction activities in the city but the budget income is mainly based on the sale of state owned construction land and property taxes. The process of transformation has been marked with further changes of the structure of the city due to the heavy de-industrialization and the decline in services since the beginning of the 1990s, whereby the outskirts of the city as in most of post-socialist cities have remained under-urbanized with a high level of unemployment throughout the urban areas (Tsenkova, 2006). Nevertheless, the process of transformation of the city in the post-socialist period and especially in the period of the last decade of the 20th century has been marked with speculation in construction land and activities on a small scale involving land and flat owners to becoming partners in a small entrepreneurial activities transforming the face of the residential areas by changing building by building, block by block. At the turn of the century the process of urban transformation had shifted towards the commercial center of the city followed by the interest of foreign and domestic investors in the purchase of state owned construction land with the purpose of constructing new and large trade centers. The characteristic of this process differs from the previous period by the fact that larger parts of the city have become the subject of urban change promoting the typological and functional transformation and privatization of the urban parts at the same time.

While the development of new large industrial compounds in the urban area in the past has served as a tremendous attraction to a new labor force, the contemporary process of de-industrialization has caused a large

decrease in the number of employees in industry while remaining and dwelling in the city besides the change in the status of their employment. This development prompted the expansion of vast urban areas that are covered with industrial infrastructure but remain beyond the process of urbanization and urban transformations. This condition of *terrain vague* in the city has created huge voids in the urban structure while the urban population either remained the same or has even experienced some growth. This caused an increase in pressure on the residential areas and especially the densification of the center of the city while stretching the limits and sub-urbanization of the city (Tosic, 2004). It has also determined the de-urbanization of areas as a consequence of a change in land ownership in all parts of the city and has created a specific density gradient of the post-socialist cities with "peaks" and "troughs" distributed in relation to their proximity to the city center or the suburbs (Bertaud, 2004).

Nevertheless, it is evident that the role of urban governance has been affected by deep differences in the two cities. In Turin the city transformation has represented the embodiment of the political legitimacy of two mayors for fifteen years and to a large extent it can still be considered as a strength of the local context. In Skopje, by contrast, the opportunities to exploit the building development were merely oriented to economic profits, according to fragmented occasions and without embodying the identity of a political subject. In place of any strategies of governmental representation through the urban vision of a new structure of the city, politicians have been pursuing the materialization of national identity through punctual monuments. It is a matter of fact that the overlapping of the national and local dimension on Skopje as a capital city has encouraged this attitude: but the control of the implementation of building through detailed plans by the local municipalities could explain more concretely this fragmentation of the urban policies, as well as the lack of a political representation of their systemic relevance to the city.

Urban Policies and Plans: A Comparative Description between Turin and Skopje

In Turin the Piano Regolatore Generale (General Urban Plan, 1995) has started a wide process of the redefinition of planning instruments and the organization of public procedures for transforming the city. The huge transformation of the central railway axis (Spina Centrale) has deeply modified the anatomy of the whole city and produced new procedural rules and planning

tools. The limited availability of public land forced the city government to use the former Masterplan (which had been conceived as a coherent and prescriptive drawing) of the concrete opportunities of negotiations, with many variations, but also with a good deal of effectiveness in the complex. The strong alliance among the different levels of power and a widespread consensus over many years enabled the city to take a lead in negotiations and to represent itself through the mission of reshaping the urban form. This first success of the urban policies through a leading vision started to decline since 2007-2008.

If we consider the largest urban transformations planned by the city of Turin and its neighbours in the last 5 years – especially in the north-eastern sector of the metropolitan area – we notice a prediction of a virtual increase in the 48,000 inhabitants. Among these, 17.500 inhabitants have to be referred to the Turin's "Variante 200", which includes 1,35 million m^2 of territory and plans about 900.000 m^2 of gross floor area. Today the possibility of financing new services and infrastructures – as the second metropolitan line – has to be referred to the incomes from the sale of public land to real estate companies. Unfortunately, something in recent times has been going wrong and the correspondence between opportunities of transformation, the amount of land and their values are going to become more and more changeable. The real estate market and the building sector in Italy faced a heavy slowdown over the last few years. In 2012 the trades lost about 18-20% of their business, and the market fell by 3-5% in value. In general, the construction industry is facing the deepest crisis of the last 60 years. Between 2006 and 2012 the industry lost the 24.4% of its market as a whole, and 44% if we consider only the new construction. At the same time, the industry of sustainable energy plants and building energy renewal has overtaken the whole construction sector (Bellicini, 2013).

Moreover, urban territory has been largely taken up by developments and Turin has been one of the most "consuming" cities of the past, alongside Naples and Milan, and today it counts for 60.3% of consumed land (Paludi, 2012). Recent policies on the mitigation and compensation of soil sealing and consumption, both at a local and on the European scale, suggest new strategies for the economic and social feasibility and sustainability for a different growth of EU urban systems. With the changes in the political and social system of the 1990s, followed by the transfer and re-examination of property regulated by the principles of commercialization and privatization, the urban and social landscape of Skopje has become even more conflictual. This condition, oddly enough, will lead once again to the "re-invention" of a yet another urban image and the

unprecedented consumption of residential and public space (Marina, 2013). The process of transformation although at a high intensity did not provide for any profound strategic transformation of the city, but experienced the lack of overall vision with regard to the city or any serious impact of the urban change on the overall economy of the city. The reasons for this lie beyond the common economic agents of the construction industry and are embedded instead in the system of urban planning as a major tool for planning and managing urban development.

The local Municipalities in Macedonia are responsible for making Detailed Urban Plans (DUP) for the built environment following the guidelines of the General Urban Plan (GUP) developed by the City of Skopje as a distinctive local government entity, while the overall control of planning procedures is still controlled by central government. In this way, two issues in the relationship between the municipalities and the city of Skopje have to be acknowledged as having had a direct influence on land management which has placed a large burden on the possibility of producing any viable overall urban strategy for development.

First, the land owned by the Republic of Macedonia is still governed by the central government and not the local authorities (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, 2011). This situation turns 'property islands' into municipal territory and as such does not allow for direct contracting between the municipality and private investors, and therefore bridges this cooperation towards the central government which on the other hand is detached from the local urban planning strategy of the municipality. In reality any possible implementation of the model of private-public partnership is brought to a halt.

Second, concerning the governing logic of free market economies and especially in the case of Skopje, it could be recognized that the main stakeholders when it comes to the use of potential resources for producing capital are the governing sector and its institutions and the initiatives that come from private investors. This logic of governing the urban economy and spatiality depends completely on a top down implementation of any strategy that has little space for other actors, such as the participation of citizens and their influence on decision making for the cities through models that include various groups of third parties.

In a situation like this there is strong separation between private and public participation on two levels. First one occurs in the process of making the general planning in which state institutions, including the City of Skopje, exclude private initiatives and their interest by not involving their consultancy. Likewise,

any planning could not anticipate precisely the needs of private capital and the use of any possible potential this sector offers in the form of investment. Basically one of the two main stakeholders is excluded at the very beginning of the process of creating a spatial strategy for development.

A Comparison between the Two Cities over the Current and Potential Use of Planning Tools

In this section we offer a comparative analysis between two different cities in which we have analyzed the suitability of the urban plan as a tool for initiating, managing and evaluating the urban transformation of cities. The comparison is between the urban transformation of Turin, Italy and the urban transformation of Skopje, Macedonia (Marina, Armando, 2013).

Turin: from the Diachronic Approach of Strategic Plans to the Static Vision of Urban Plans

The "strategic" aspect of planning is always about time, and the setting of priorities or sequences of actions. In a broader sense, there are two kinds of Italian planning instruments which refer directly to strategy: the Territorial Plans of Coordination (PTC) and the "third generation" Strategic Plans (PS). In Italy the PTCs were started in the early 1990s, when their management shifted from the Central State to the Regions and then to the Provinces. The PTCs dealt mainly with infrastructural and mobility projects, by establishing the priorities of implementing road and railway networks. The "third generation" Strategic Plans were started in the late 1990s – with Turin and Rome being the, first in 1998 – with the purpose of involving private and public actors in an area to establish common objectives, priorities and actions for long term local development, focusing on both spatial and socio-economic aspects of the local system. In these plans the temporal dimension is fundamental, and the plan is a project of sequences. Attention to the diachronic dimension has been largely successful, especially for the Strategic Plans of Turin (2000 and 2006). There has been a precise intention and try to design not only the city through the implementation of the projects of the General Plan, but also its wider territory, by focusing on the multi-scale form of the whole metropolitan area. However, this coherence between the form of territory and the city doesn't reflect on considerations about time, between the strategic-territorial scale and the urban-planning actions. If the strategic plans established sequences of actions and not only

objectives, the urban plans and projects were produced as static images of future land setting.

So, if we shift from the strategic to the morphological dimension of planning, the diachronic approach doesn't seem to have any specific role anymore. The city visions which were made of Turin in the last 30 years usually showed a flat scene; rom the 1980s proposals for a new General Plan to Gregotti's Masterplan in 1995 (Figure 1), up to the "Corso Marche" Plan in 2009 and the ongoing proposals for the northern areas of the "Variante 200" (Figure. 2), the Visions built up a final state, which should lead all efforts to implement themselves and to reconcile the contradictions in an instant when everything will be accomplished. And this is not a matter of the naivety of the policy makers or of the designers, but rather a specific strategy that, in some circumstances could work. At present this structure of the representation of the urban project has many negative effects and it reduces the effectiveness of the overall design itself:

- The urban transformations manage to be transmitted, visualized and published only by spatial fragments, where the market proposes specific developments. The developers usually come before the decision makers.
- The architectural design projects are rarely made and approved in distinct phases, and only the economic evaluators are allowed to split the implementation process in feasibility sequences that are purely economic.
- On the other hand the architectural urban design could picture morphological sequences, where the working steps are drawn as verified and measured states. To lead the urban transformations through sequences would allow:
- Aspects to be drawn up in many dimensions, in which every phase would be indicated. This would mean: more transparency in decisions about what will be accomplished and in which order, more technical proofs about the effects of transformations, and more reliability about the procedures with a consequent increase of confidence among investors.
- To coordinate every phase with different scales of powers, rules and decisions, so that the following could be included: deadlines for public funds, mobility networks, coherence or conflicts with the larger scale plans, and the shifting of the restrictions and duties from one phase to the other.

Skopje: Political and Technical Separation as a Cause of Urban Fragmentation

The new urban project that has been developed by Urban Center Metropolitano along the axis of the Southern Boulevard in Skopje is composed of building scenarios of the transformation of territory by designing its physical form. The new hybrid figure of the plan draws its legitimacy from the process of shaping potential conflicts and defining the horizons of change at the same time (Figure. 3). The urban plan should have become the tool of mediation while shaping the form of negotiation between different stakeholders involved in the process of urban change. The aim is to describe how the urban development of a large scale portion of the city can be managed by designing the urban structure; starting from the assessment of available land, and a survey of private and public ownership, up to the drawing of the urban morphology and the forecasting of the capital investments involved (Fig. 4). The goal of this research is not only to clarify the potential for the rationalization of the strategic development of the city by using an Urban plan, but also to suggest that the vision carried out of the Southern Boulevard can be a device for articulating urban identities, and coordinating the variety of fragments along the axis of the new Boulevard, according to an overall vision capable of including the differences between local identities.

The main problem that arises from the idea of the Urban plan as a tool for the urban transformation of Skopje is that it considers the main infrastructural corridors (traffic for instance) for which the exclusivity of decision-making is possessed by the city of Skopje administration and not by local government. The collision for making a workable strategy comes in the contact zone between the named arteries and the urban structure. At the same time the Detailed urban plans (DUPs) made by the local Municipalities don’t have the right to take into consideration the territory of the infrastructure corridors, although in many cases these corridors divide the land which belongs to the same municipality. On the level of spatial use, land management, viable urban strategy and economic resources it means the disintegration, fragmentation and division of municipal territory into disconnected land archipelagos. This planning approach creates the detachment of strategy from detailed planning (municipality) and does not take into consideration the local land strategy. The infrastructural corridors are extra-territorial for the municipality itself which reflects the same situation in

the very use of land and has a direct influence on the spatial practices on the level of the everyday utilization of urban territory.

Besides the complex relations between the city and the municipality the whole process involves a 'third party' (central government) and magnifies the nature of bureaucratic correspondence and adjustments. The problem is that central government is not strategically involved in the planning process inscribing itself as only part of the planning structure, but at the very end its role is just to approve or stop the plan. Such a situation is accompanied by a strong detachment from the planning process of the participation of citizens, especially when it comes to making strategic and final decisions defined in the planning procedure and a municipal urban strategy dependent on decisions from the centralized and therefore rigid bodies and institutions of central government (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia, 2005).

The lack of an overall strategy is mainly the product of a de-synchronization between local and central government and the interpretation and very performance of existing urban planning policies which are reflected in the decision-making process of governing plans on the level of the city as well the ones referring to the territory of the municipality, thereby failing to provide stakeholders in the city with the possibility of freely conveying their needs and initiatives.

Discussion of the New Paradigms and Strategies for Sustainable Urban Growth

What can we learn from these changes in the way the two cities are transformed and the new challenges of urban growth? Can we observe it as a change of paradigm, looking at the cities of Skopje and Turin and trying to observe the different cyclical contingencies of the two cases? How can the urban design project be effective and useful in order to govern the future of the cities, which seem to be very different from the previous 50-60 years of growth? We can summarize some notes for discussing a different approach to design in the current period of crisis.

From Micro Scale to Broader Scenarios

The situation we described above shows a situation of decline in terms of the availability of territorial capital (land, energy) and of economic investments in building development – due to the need of absorbing the Real

Estate Bubble in the next few years. Both cities will face increasing symptoms of the erosion of their low-value Real Estate capital, for many reasons. First, the low quality buildings will be replaced by new ones, already built (in 2011 the CSS commission estimated a surplus of 200,000 new houses in Italy and a sharp decrease in the prices of the dwellings in Macedonia in the last two years). Second, the ageing of the population will increase the phenomenon of low density occupation, especially in the suburbs of Turin (Mazza, Moiso, 2013) and in Skopje, where the process is similar but emerging, mainly due to the internal migration of urban dwellers toward the city center or outside the city limits.

These situations of dispersed property wealth cannot be involved either in recovering policies, nor in economic operations for gathering small capital, which is scattered amongst many different owners, within an urban scale of action. This lack of initiatives is not the fault of politicians or designers, it is more likely to be the result of the structure itself of the design production. Urban visions are rarely incremental, and they cannot take into account those processes which would need to start from a small cluster of circumstances (i.e. the availability of flats or even their portions) and then be developed on a higher scale, to a more convenient investment and to a clearer vision which would serve a public discussion.

Recomposition of Phases and Implications

The diachronic representation of a transformational process aims to compose a wider scenario, where many other collateral effects have been considered *within* the drawing, rather than those associated with external references (such as: values, procedures, contracts, and technicalities). The drawing up of a physical transformation can work as a spatial index of priorities (what comes before and after, not only in time) and as an index of the extensions (what values and quantities will be involved, not only in their spatial distribution). The strategies for reassembling can extend the possibilities of measuring the aspects of feasibility, which usually only refer to economic disciplines, or to procedures of environmental impact.

The architectural and urban reassembling might be considered as an epistemological challenge for designers, since it implies trespassing on the political field of decision making by the technical field of building production to. Furthermore, this shift would ask for a different integration of technical and political issues, from an approach where values are accomplished by fixed

visions or structural frameworks, and performances are implemented by executions and building management skills, to an approach where politics and techniques are chopped and recombined, and verified in a step-by-step circular process. This is always political and technical at the same time.

The Inclusion and Openness of the Urban Project

The production of urban design separated in phases and then recomposed can help us to open up a new perspective on the managing of urban policies in a time of crisis. The framework might be summarized as follows: we have fewer resources for economic investments; we need to recycle urban structures and fabric in order to avoid land consumption; and, we don't seem to have any strong leadership available. So it seems quite realistic to imagine that future initiatives concerning our cities will be oriented to produce incremental effects, which are reliable and limited, with a reduced account for general visions to be projected towards an undefined future. The communication network systems already break onto the scene independently, so that they have to be considered by traditional forms of government and decision making. They might be used as platforms for tools, not only as compensation instruments (for top-down use) or as protests in controversies (bottom-up use), but to reform the procedures of consultation; the interaction of networks would become the main inclusive instruments, providing for limited and open scenarios, rather than for destinies and hopes to be satisfied in a more distant and unpredictable future.

Conclusions

By way of conclusion, we will try to summarize an answer to the main questions raised above. The first question is what can be the role and the usefulness of designing the future shape of the city against the background of increasing pressures and decreasing resources? Urban design tools can be more effective since they can be developed as a multi scalar description of a huge amount of information and boundaries. This possibility of widening the definition of the scenarios by design can be articulated both on the synchronic and the diachronic level. Synchronically, the plan can be used as a set of devices which demonstrate and verify within the design of physical transformation many different levels of implication (money, properties, social values, environmental impacts and others). Diachronically, the plan can put

into evidence what the chains of effects are that can be demonstrated as being feasible in a process which will last many years, verifying the real outcomes of the "promise" pictured in the final vision. The intermediate steps can become contracts and they can influence the whole process in producing priorities during the decision-making phases. The possibility of refining and enlarging the description of the future even to the smaller and weaker dynamics in the city could enable the design of the city to be used for optimizing and recycling the existing material resources of an urban system, those which usually seem to remain invisible in the process of traditional planning.

The second question is how can the urban planning tools interact with the political level and the decision-making processes in a scattered distribution of powers? The availability of a set of instruments which produce many references within both the ordinary procedures of planning and the implementation phases can measure controversies coming from a wider set of parameters, which are beyond the reduction of an econometric (and opaque) representation of interests and values. On the one hand , the increased amount of information that can be connected may help to achieve greater transparency, on the other hand it could help to rationalize some of the criteria which have been established as crucial in the decision-making process. Of course urban policies will not change according to an evolution of planning and design instruments, but it is possible that research into new strategies in the organization of data and information through design can deeply affect the processes and procedures, not only in improving their effectiveness but also in influencing the balances of powers and, eventually, in offering the possibility of new and better opportunities to a more inclusive society.

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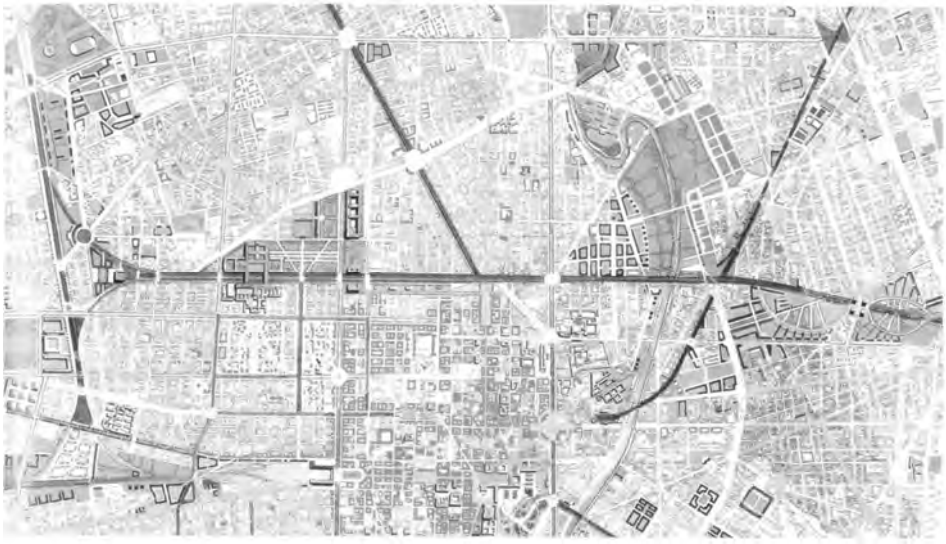


Fig. 1: Gregotti & Associati, Drawing of the Central Backbone of Turin, Masterplan for the PRGC of Turin, 1995



Fig. 2. ToMake Group, Bird's Eye view of the Masterplan for the Variante 200, Torino 2014

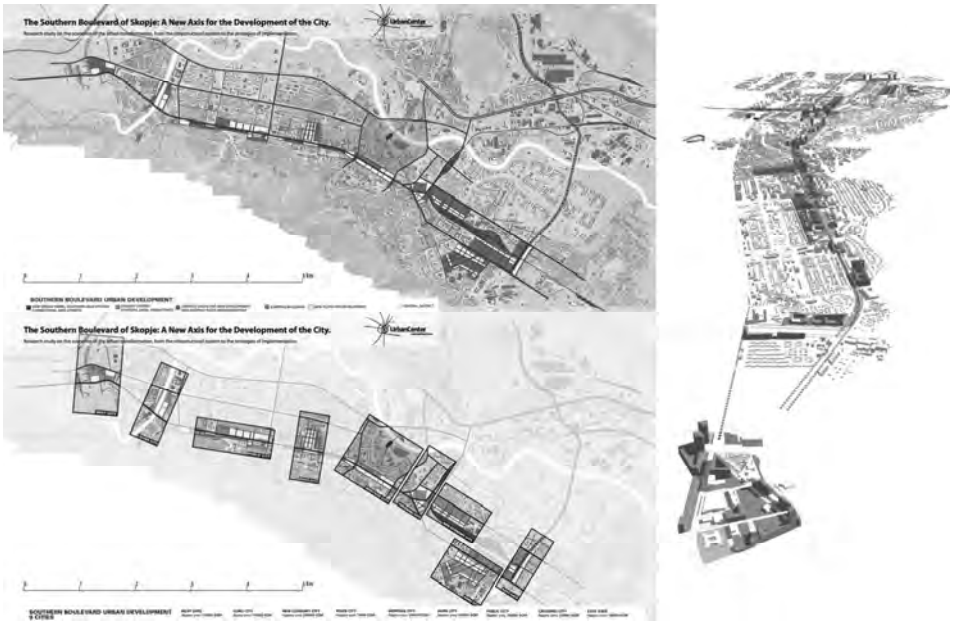


Fig. 3. The hybrid figure of the urban plan of Southern Boulevard in Skopje as a new axis of urban development

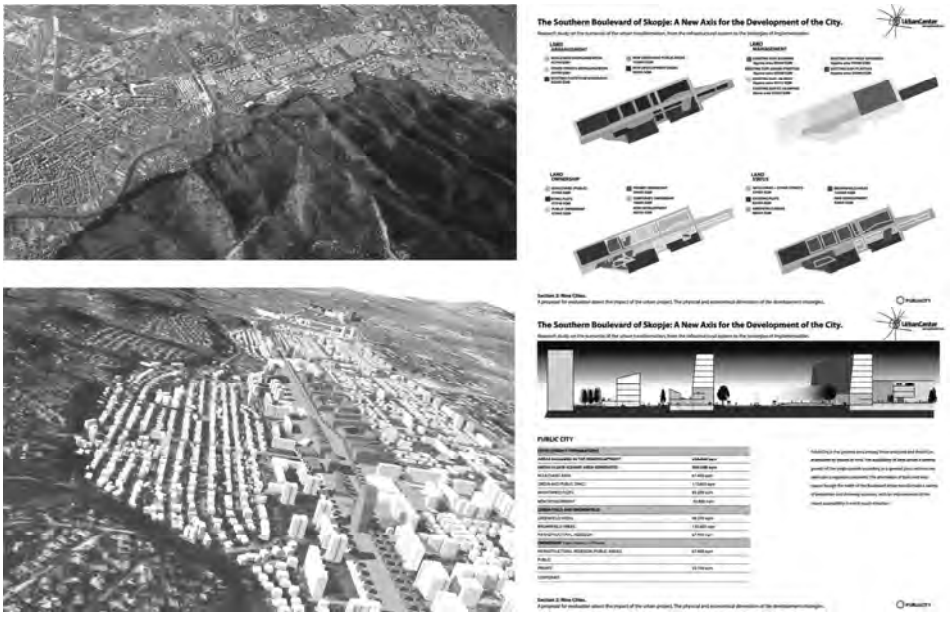


Fig. 4. The urban image and its quantification of Southern Boulevard urban development