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The reform we want

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Problems, policies, and research

City-ports. Plans and projects
 Guidelines for port planning regulations
 The maritime transport situation
 Urban planning for waterfront redevelopment
 The port-city interface as filtering line
 The port as a park
 Maritime traffic in the Mediterranean and Mediterranean issues
 Port planning in the minor ports of Emilia-Romagna region
 Emilia-Romagna ports
 Tourist ports and urban development

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Projects and implementation

Verona sud. The "Cardo massimo"
 To imagine south Verona
 South Verona and the 'style of the city'
 The interpretation of a context for the construction of an urban plan
 The street as a settlement rule. The project as a new identity image
 The outline director for mobility and for public transport
 The matrix of the landscape: the 'Cardo massimo', the sequence of the open spaces
 The environmental strategic assessment
 Land uses asset: a description along the axis
 The guide criteria for the street plan and the seven drafts of the Cardo
 Project deepening: two 'threshold' spaces along the 'Cardo massimo'
 The normative structure
 The perequative model
 The quantities for the Variante

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Antonio Malaguzzi, Andrea Bondonio
Andrea Bondonio
Stefano Mancuso, Alberto Giuntoli
Benta Wiley

Reggio Emilia: project, perequation and implementation
 An international design competition for a Masterplan by private developers
 Urban plan for parco Ottavi: from the competition to the definitive plan
 Parco Ottavi: the design of the green areas
 Communicating parco Ottavi

edited by Franca Balletti
Kim Leslie
Franca Balletti, Silvia Soppa
Marialessandra Signorastrì

Profiles and practices

Tools for shared representation of sites. From "Parish maps" to "identity maps"
 The project Parish Maps in West Sussex
 Identity representation and participation: a Genoese periphery district experience
 Children and identity representation: two maps for Savona town

Sofia Morgado

Lisbon: five metropolitan states from unoccupied space

Adele Semeraro, Simona Rappuoli

Methods and tools

The management of the changes in the agrarian landscape, challenges and innovations of Siena Ptc

Silvia Viviani
Mariella Zoppi
Romano Viviani
Massimo Morisi
Leonardo Rignanese

Towards the territory orientation plan of the Tuscany Region
 Town planning and upland areas
 Good town planning: a question of culture
 Effectiveness as a quality in public planning
 Interview with Riccardo Conti

Tools for shared representation of sites. From "Parish maps" to "identity maps"
Franca Balletti

The paper deals with which knowledge of the territory and sites is useful for processes of urban policy that are considered as central for the inhabitants' role, their expectancies, knowhow and memories; which knowledge is important to consider for the same project as a 'future's tale', but also to place it in the focus of rules that tend towards rebuilding or reinforce 'feeling community' (Appadurai 1990). Which knowledge of the territory and sites is useful for processes of urban policy that are considered as central for the inhabitants' role, their expectancies, knowhow and memories? Which knowledge is important to consider for the same project as a 'future's tale', but also to place it in the focus of rules that tend towards rebuilding or reinforce 'feeling community' (Appadurai 1990)? Different approaches point out how the question of territorial representation is raised by regulations and essentially must be studied as a problem of the interaction with the inhabitants; where the target is the building of a 'shared knowledge' that is able to make the expert's knowledge, expertises and common knowledge all interact in a virtuous way. One of the less explored aspects in the 'representation' of sites is the one that refers to the inhabitants' perception of resources, values and local critical aspects. This aspect revalues "the power of perceptible knowledge compared to the supremacy acquired by conceptual knowledge restoring to favour symbolic, provocative, imaginary, expressive languages"

(Decandia 2005). This knowledge is about building performance documents in which a creative and poetical aspect can be recognized as an opportunity to think about the space with new schemes, according to different 'concepts and space temporal connections' (Cosgrove, de Lima Martins, in Picone 2003). According to Guttenberg, even the poetical procedure of territorial subject is at stake, the one that probably "takes effect on others [...] changing their knowledge's space".

Representation experiences of 'perceptible knowledge'

Some theories have suggested to place side by side representations of technical knowledge and perceptible, emotional affective analysis of urban environment, but to make the choices to transform the territory, they have had little importance and not even the relationships and interconnections among different ways of representation have been analyzed. Even if innovative both in content and representation techniques, interpret perceptions, feelings and expectation of inhabitants, the final reading is often synthesized by 'experts'. The lack of 'other maps' directly built by inhabitants is clear. A first attempt of classifying, absolutely not exhaustive, refers to some threads: a) representation that derives from psychological-environmental and psychological-geographical research; target is to clarify the methods used by people process spatial information. In this field 'maps of knowledge' and 'perceptible maps' are produced. The first ones are individual mental images of space that are beyond the physical information about a place, but apart from intrinsic qualities and vertical dimension of the territory,

they are useful especially for orientating. Perception maps are an attempt of finding rules to direct town's physical configuration quality through survey of the feelings of those who use the territory (Lynch 1960). Other representation, such as the 'atmosphere maps' proposed in the field of the psychological-geographical research, points out the effects of the geographical environment on emotions and on people's behaviour (Debord 1981). Representation, as 'social interaction space', directly built by the inhabitants using a different level of importance than the technical knowledge. A first group of experiences, that appears more useful within processes of territorial politics on a large scale, suppose a huge utilization of informatics tools. In some cases, e.g. the 'kinaesthetic maps', the 'community mapping' and the 'long-lasting cartography', it's about 'open maps', interactive, reviewed and implemented using the Internet environment; in other cases such as the 'green maps' (Modern world design, New York), informatics is used to collect information and to draw an icon map of territory. A second group of experimentation, more interesting for a local approach to territorial management's problems, is to make a provision for the creation of maps through a deep interaction with local inhabitants and the processes in order to reinforce the communities' culture, power and capability to directly take part in the project's plans and decisions. Besides 'Gullivers' maps' (see E. Trevisiol, *infra*), the most stimulating experience is offered by 'community maps' that, even if built according to context and specific purpose, derive from the English 'parish maps' (Common ground,

west Sussex County, see K. Leslie's article, *infra*). Their peculiarity is that they are elaborated by the residents 'with their own capabilities and knowledge' and "are focused on identities and on local differences, on features that bring make a place different from any other". In Italy an analogous project has been developed by EcoMuseums (see card, *infra*), by building 'identity maps', suggested by university researches that found agreement at local and institutional levels. In particular this agreement was found within the processes of shared town planning and cooperation with teaching methodology of primary and secondary schools (see F. Balletti, S. Soppa, M. Signorastri, *infra*). Regarding Parish maps and EcoMuseums' community maps the representative dimension of the territorial identity prevails as 'state of the art' in a particular historical period in order to 'restrict' what can't be missed. The identity maps are mainly thought and built as support for the direct democratic processes, assuming the role of governance tools. Identity cartography, beside identity physical factor, inserts 'identity spatial factor': location names, traditions, rules and material culture, local knowledge and legends. Maps built by inhabitants, as far as those that want to have a dialogue with inhabitants, are visually far from those related to technical knowledge. They rediscover graphical techniques bound to ancient methods of cartographic drawing, full iconic shapes that can be easily read and ethical and pictorial interpretation, but they can also use hypertexts and digital cartography. The identity maps give a look toward the future. If, as Farinelli wrote, "each map is a project about the world and the project of each map is about transforming the

face of the Earth according to its own image", the identity map wants to get a main role disclosing a future vision that doesn't tear to shreds the plot of meanings and relationships that keep the evidence of the transforming process of the life's places.

The map's legitimacy is provided by the process quality and by the approval, contrary to what happens, of the images produced by the planning for which the 'objectivity of technique' is needed (Schon 1983).