



Urbanistica n. 134
September-December 2007

Distribution by www.planum.net

Paolo Avarello Planning the risk

Problems, policies, and research

edited by Irene Cremonini, Adriana Galderisi
Adriana Galderisi, Scira Menoni
Scira Menoni
Catia Amadori, Irene Cremonini, Lucilla Sansavini
Carlo Lazzari, Sandra Vecchiotti
Massimo Olivieri
Anna Arvanitaki
Andrea Ceudech

Seismic risk and urban planning process: towards the integration
Risk, prevention and urban planning
Vulnerability analysis in the historic centre of Salò
The test on a town of average size: Forlì
The experimentation in the historical centres of San Piero and Santa Sofia
Urban vulnerability studies in Montone (Perugia)
The historic centre of Nafplion: urban vulnerability assessment
Systemic vulnerability and seismic risk in the historical town of Naples

Projects and implementation

edited by Mirella Fiore, Marichela Sepe
Francesco Domenico Moccia
Amilcare Troiano
Carlo Gasparrini
Carlo Gasparrini
Marichela Sepe

Francesco Russo

Manlio Ingrosso
Mirella Fiore, Cinzia Panneri, Antonino Pardo, Paolo Sacco

Clementina Chieffo
Ettore Cinque, Andrea Mazzella
Davide Geneletti, Alberto Pistocchi, Stefano Bagli
Mirella Fiore

Roberto Gambino
Antonio Di Gennaro, Gaetano Di Pasquale, Leonardo Filesi
Antonino Pardo, Paolo Sacco
Cinzia Panneri

Vesuvius: risk or development? Safeguard and integration of the resources
A propulsive profile for the prevention and mitigation of natural risk
The strategies of planning of the National Park of the Vesuvius
Living with a volcano: the real risk lies in not having planning perspective
Representing Vesuvian territory
Decongestion and revitalisation: the OSP as opportunity for sustainable development
Procedure for the approval of the operative strategic plan (OSP) for the vesuvian area
The OSP juridical requirements
Awards to urbanism and prospective interventions. The two operative sides of the plan
Local development support policies
The OSP economic and financial approach
The OSP strategic environmental assessment
The plan of the Park of Vesuvius. The confrontation with a mutable and varied territory
A national park in a metropolitan context
On the analysis of environmental resources
Role and contents of the strategic projects
Landscape unit and structural systems. The regulative components of the plan

Profiles and practices

Giovanni Allegretti, Daniela Anceschi
Giovanni Allegretti, Francesca Rispoli

Giovanni Caudo
Giovanni Caudo

Simonetta Armondi, Paola Briata

The Structural plan for Dicomano 'bridging'
Towards the participatory construction of a Regional law on participation

Paper houses: the new housing question
Houses at affordable prices: the evolution of social housing in Britain

Evaluating territorial development projects, a modest unorthodox proposal

Methods and tools

Graziella Tonon

Luca Fondacci

Umberto Janin Rivolin

What's up-to-date in Cesare Chiodi's theories on city planning and what's not?

The territorial responsibilities of Italian multiservice public utilities

North-Western Platform: 'Sit-Ins' as tool for territorial governance

Evaluating territorial development projects, a modest unorthodox proposal

Simonetta Armondi,
Paola Briata

The article aims to offer a contribution to the debate on territorial development projects evaluation, on the background of the opening European community support framework for 2007-13.

Starting from the outcomes and the 'mixture' of different exploration activities, essays and reflections are heterodox proposals, carried out from not orthodox evaluation practitioners. The essay gives priority to a planning perspective. Starting from some research practices reflections a 'protocol' for territorial development projects evaluation is introduced. The protocol could be considered both a tool for the evaluation team as well as an instrument for the integrated projects partnerships in order to carry on a self-evaluation activity. The self-evaluation should allow all the actors involved in a local partnership to reflect on the process potentialities and weaknesses, and on the possible solutions of the emergent problems. The evaluation protocol, therefore, could be used as tool to learn from the experience through a collective process involving all the partners. Based on some specific outcomes of integrated development projects, a selective approach is proposed, to focus on process aspects usually not considered by established evaluation: the governance networks densification; the integration between actors, actions, policies and resources; the issues of learning and capacity building in the public actions practices.

The essay offers a frame of

evaluation literature concentrating on the dominant interpretation of an evaluation process, then it proposes the path of the design of the evaluation protocol based on three qualitative variables: governance, integration and capacity building. Finally, some lessons from the experiences and some opportunities offered from an interactive approach are suggested.

Development projects evaluation: limits and perspectives

It is commonly acknowledged that the introduction of evaluation into many countries in southern Europe, including Italy, occurred as a result of the requirements of European structural funds regulations. The EU Structural funds approach to evaluation has clearly stated aims and responsibilities to assess every stage of the programming cycle. Programs (in Italy, Regional operating programs) are usually implemented through projects (in Italy, PIT in Ob. 1 areas, integrated projects in Ob. 2 areas), but the EU has not clearly stated how to evaluate projects as the main guides (Means, Tavistock Institute, The Guide) assume that the same methods can be used to evaluate socioeconomic programs as well as projects. Despite this, experiences have clearly shown that programs evaluation tend to be mainly focused on accountability, resulting in bureaucratic and focused on efficacy and effectiveness. On the contrary, a project evaluation should be focused on capacity building, innovative practices and learning: its objectives should be to improve the capacity of the actors involved in the project to program, manage and monitor their activities. For this reason in the last years the EU, as well as Italian

institutions, have begun to understand that a specific form of evaluation for projects is needed.

The interactive approach

A project evaluation implies a choice between different approaches and data raising techniques. The first models, based on an idea of positivist absolute rationality, considered evaluation as a comparison with the situation in a context before and after a project's implementation. This approach is not helpful to understand the real impact of a project because the relevance of an action in a specific social context, its symbolic value, its unexpected results are not considered. Moreover, positivist studies normally are not able to explain why in apparently similar contexts, similar projects can produce very different results. This is the main concern of realistic evaluation that aims to explain how the interaction between the context and the project may produce or not some results. This approach implies a very strong interaction between evaluators and policy makers: evaluation is an interactive learning process implying that the project's aims and objectives may be changed during its implementation. The interactions between the evaluator and the actors is even more important in constructivism based models, as the evaluation criteria are a product of an interactive process which aims to make a comparison with the different priorities of the actors involved. Data raising techniques could be based on quantitative, as well as qualitative, interactive (interviews, focus groups) survey methods. It is possible to mix evaluation approaches and data raising techniques, choosing on the basis of the evaluation objectives and aims. This essay makes an integrated

projects evaluation protocol proposal based on integration, capacity building and governance dimensions. The protocol has been tested through some interactive focus groups on integrated projects experiences.

Ways of looking

The evaluation design aims to: attempting to focus on three key dimensions of the integrated development projects in the literature: capacity building, integration, governance. Specifically, the objective is to recognize and activate three variables of process that have not been object of a specific attention in traditional evaluation of integrated development projects; attempting to design an evaluation protocol for development public policies, in particular for integrated development projects, by constructing of a set of qualitative indicators. It is important to specify the difference between qualitative and quantitative indicators. A qualitative indicator is a description, in the form of a concise, clear and stable statement, of an objective to achieve or an impact obtained. While a quantitative indicator represents facts and figures, it describes things using numbers, (e.g. number of beneficiaries, % who are female). The indication for a standard evaluation of the integrated territorial projects has not been inserted, in the regional programming for European structural funds, neither in the Northern nor in the southern Italy. Consequently, each regional administration has been free to predispose, or not, an evaluation system. In particular Lombardy and Piedmont, in the modernizations of the relationships of intermediate evaluation of regional programming, have introduced surveys and check lists that regard, for

example, the characteristics and the functions of the local partnerships.

An exploration in the policy evaluation literature showed that the three variables (governance, integration and capacity building) had not been object of a specific attention in the evaluation carried on territorial integrated projects. Since the exploration carried out in the theories and the practices of evaluation has not been useful to our research aims, we elaborate a review of the development literature on the three variables that concurs to shape the 'minimal shared dictionary' of the evaluation protocol. The evaluation questions that have guided the elaboration of the set of indicators in the protocol are mainly descriptive and aim to understand, observe, describe and measure the changes stimulated by the project definition and implementation (what has it happened through the implementation of the development project?). Questions try to understand and estimate the cause-effect relationships and the emerging of unexpected effects (counterfactual situation: what happened is or not imputable to the development project definition and implementation process?). For example, for the evolution of the capacity building, we propose to use three categories of reading: the dimensions connected to the organization of the development project office; the dimensions related to the integrated project management; the dimensions related to the change in the cognitive sphere and in the policy design reflection (the increasing disposition, through the integrated project, to the interpretation of the territorial context).

Learning from the experiences

What was possible to learn

from the experiences? Five focus groups, with the main promoters and actors of integrated project's partnerships, have allowed to characterize multiple lines of reflection related to the three inquired dimensions evaluation (governance, integration, capacity building). Five main lessons emerged from the focus groups. The most important are that the outcomes of the focus groups concur to express evaluations related to the integrated projects nature. In particular, integrated projects could be subdivided in projects for the local development designed to reach the preconditions for the projects of local development. In perspective, a diversification of policies and tools based on previous conditions of territories appears to be necessary for the regional policy making. Moreover, a lesson is related to the twofold interpretation of integrated development projects. An integrated development project can be seen like a process, but also like a product: a 'model' to which making reference, the tangible expression that sore actions can carry to some outcomes.

Conclusions: limits and potentialities of the approach

The proposed approach shows limits and potentialities. A first problematic aspect regards the relationship with more traditional evaluations procedures, but it's important to underline that this is a proposal not to deny, but to integrate existing approaches for a better understanding of the integrated projects specific results.

A second aspect to point out is linked to all participative strategies limits for which it is usually very difficult to involve the weakest actors, whose opinion could be crucial to

understand a process effectiveness and efficacy. Our specific research experience reveals limits as well. In particular, the focus group have to be considered only a part of an overall interactive evaluation approach that implies also single interviews, and integration with selected data, and the definition of different policies case studies to be compared. Among the potentialities is possible to mention first of all the possible connections between evaluation processes and interactive, learning activities to accompany and improve a project implementation. Moreover, the experiences have clearly shown how an interactive approach evaluation could be the base to identify the future projects strategic objectives and aims.

To conclude, the approach test has enforced the relevance of the context dimension to be evaluated. In this perspective, evaluation could be a practice of knowledge production to increase the understanding of what works and in which circumstances, and how different measures and interventions can be made more effective.