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Identity representation and participation: a Genoese periphery district experience

Franca Balletti, Silvia Soppa

The Saint Eusebio district case gives rise to highlight some features both theoretical and practical about the approach described in this section, comparing the choice of method and experienced usual procedure; to stretch an abstract of the planning's features given to the work:

- following targets of effectiveness in researches about the territorial knowledge, in the highlighting of targets and in the research of actions strategies for the local area. The local scale becomes the layer on which appropriate shapes of knowledge can be built, on which new interpretations of territorial asset can be produced. It becomes a go-between to answer in reality to the general information on territorial policy.
- opting for a shared approach, seen as added value compared to other possible guidance, even with awareness of the ambiguity of this option: approval's building necessarily goes through the recognition of shared choices compared to expectations and needs of inhabitants, as well as territorial policy planned and not by the simple legitimization of choices taken in institutional sitting a priori.
- researching a 'good practice' of communication/interaction among different subjects, that could be effective in the local context of study and according to the assumed conceptual basis. The 'Identity Maps' have been considered as a tool able of making different parts of territory (material, social, economic) interact for building original shapes of "collective and connecting intelligence (Paba 2003), in

order to start initiative and project's action for the district. All the experience in Saint Eusebio is characterized by having the inhabitants as active and protagonist subjects, who have given real inputs to their expectation. The University involvement through a degree thesis, introduces the acquisition of some techniques of "wide communication", finalized to make easier enlarge the number of players. Appealing to "Identity Maps" allowed to consider some contents and important aspect to plan shared projects for this territorial field and the aims of building the Map can be summarized in having at our disposal a tool that:

- allowed to produce a "thick description" of territory, of its propensity, attitudes and transformations, in order to anchor the ordinary knowledge of the local communities to their historical-cultural asset (Magnaghi 2005);
- could build up a simple, but introductory for the action, and easy understandable reading method, overcoming the meaning of representation map according to an exclusive technical purpose;
- held a role of knowledge spread, aware of its own territory, effective for the project, understood as a collective learning project able to develop meaningful outputs (Weich 1995);
- activated emulation processes, including wider part of the territory and more difficult to urge to build a shared process - this point explains the will of giving the map a 'winning' shape using its further digital processing ;
- drew an ancient, current and future 'vision' of the territory able to have a confrontation in an active and constructive way with the territorial policy and the foreseen direction of development. Inside this view the local reference constitutes the not to be

ignored frame through which the role of social interaction with territorial and urban matter and policy can be checked. The originality of the experience can be also identified in having spurred on suggestions of environmental requalification, that have been formulated and ripened according to those needs inhabitants had expressed for improving their 'life environment', needs that have shown themselves particularly careful in giving quality to public everyday spaces.