

Spreading EU Innovation into Mainstream Urban Regeneration Policy: a Neighbourhood Initiative in Southern Italy

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New instruments for tackling urban problems available since the early 1990s in the Italian Mezzogiorno (1)

Area-based, integrated and bottom-up regeneration initiatives targeting deprived neighbourhoods funded by EU structural funds (UPP, Urban...)

Implementation influenced by the **physical approach** to the problems of deprived urban areas developed within the Italian land use planning 'tradition'

Hybridation processes within implementation between the EU policy frames, problem construction, concepts and the ones previously developed at the local level

New instruments for tackling urban problems available since the early 1990s in the Italian Mezzogiorno (2)

Area-based, integrated and bottom-up urban regeneration initiatives promoted by the national government, funded by housing policy. Pilot projects targeting neighbourhoods including social housing to be rehabilitated or built: Urban Rehabilitation Programme (Programmi di recupero urbano), Neighbourhoods Pacts (Contratti di quartiere)...

In most cases integration limited to actions concerning housing and urban infrastructure, due to the single source of funding, and the need of extra-funding for social and economic actions

Some innovative aspects: i.e. involvement of local people in the setting-up of the programme (for the first time as an explicit requirement in national programmes)

The research questions

Shift from a top-down and sector approach mainly based on physical interventions towards bottom-up and integrated initiatives based on the involvement of public, private and voluntary sectors

What kind of changes within local level practice beyond the 'formal' changes in policy instruments?

New modes of intervention or just new 'labels' for old practice?

New development paths or just different modes of being dependent on the 'top' (EU and national government)?

The case-study: mainstreaming the 'new' approach in the Apulia region

Area-based initiatives within 2000-2006 EU structural funds policy, perceived as **successful** for some aspects, but experience limited to a few actors

National area-based initiatives within national programmes, very slowly implemented and often perceived as **failures**

Mainstreaming 'lessons' learned within these experiences as a fertile ground to explore whether (and how) the new instruments opened urban policy arenas to the 'new' approach

Mainstreaming the 'new' approach in the Apulia region (1)

Within the mainstream of Structural Funds (2000-2006 Operational Programme)

Specific **Cities Priority** measure with some quite general indications for integrated urban regeneration programmes targeting the Region five main deprived neighbourhoods (URBAN approach)

- The innovative character of URBAN lost
- Difficulties in maintaining what was learnt in the passage from a 'special' programme to mainstream

The innovative programmes did not open urban policy arenas to the 'new' area-based, integrated and bottom-up approach

Mainstreaming the 'new' approach (2)

Within housing policy

Election in 2005 of a new left regional government, willing to break with the past left government policy approach

An academic expert in the field of urban policy appointed as councillor

Housing problems central in the political programme

An **area-based, integrated and bottom-up** regeneration programme, set up by the regional government, funded by housing policy and launched in June 2006: the PIRP (Programma Integrato di Riqualficazione delle Periferie – **Peripheral Neighbourhood Regeneration Integrated Programme**)

Social housing peripheral neighbourhoods: in the middle of nowhere



'Abandoned' deprived neighbourhoods



Rundown environment in deprived neighbourhoods



The design of the PIRP call for proposal at the regional level

Design of the programme based on the attempt to avoid simplification and misuse of the innovative aspects of the programme experienced within previous policy processes concerning both national and EU programmes by:

Definition of **evaluation criteria** assigning **precise points** for each aspects of the programme, stressing on those supposed to be innovative (i.e distinguishing points for information given to inhabitants and points for inhabitants involvement in the programmes setting up)

Organisation of **workshops** aiming at diffusing concepts such as 'integration' and 'inhabitants involvement', supporting municipalities in the setting up of programme documents and establishment of an **on-line forum**

The design of the call for proposal at the regional level

Failure of the attempt to integrate different regional funds, mainly due to the lack of experience in joint action between different regional sectors

Intrinsic limit to the possibility to integrate social, economic and environmental actions to actions concerning housing and urban infrastructure)

The design of the programme documents at the local level

Many young people with **specialised skills** involved in the programme documents design at the local level in order to answer to the call for proposal requirements

Many different modes of involving inhabitants experienced

Full **awareness** of the **new concepts** underpinned by the programme among technicians and politicians

The Pirp first outcomes

Big success of the initiative in terms of regional-local relationships: **127 programmes** presented by 122 out of the **258 municipalities** of the Apulia region

Very slow procedures of the programmes evaluation

Some open issues

The main change observed concerns policy instruments, but

Can innovative neighbourhood initiatives, when not strictly linked to social policy, be effective as housing policy ?

Can innovative neighbourhood initiatives, even if mainstreamed, be effective when an urban policy does not exist at both national and local levels?

The sustainability of the changes is linked to changes in administrative and governance structures, but

How can changes in organisation and governance structures have the same pace then changes in policy instruments?