

Another brick in the wall

The project of self-construction as way of immigrants integration: the role of nonprofit organizations

A case study in the municipality of Ravenna - Italy
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Objective

Starting from the mid '80 Italy became a “receiving country” after more than a century of being a “giving country” of migration fluxes. Several researches show that the main problems for the immigrants in Italy is at the first place “to find a house” and at the second position “to find a job”. Having a decent house seem to be one of the main conditions to facilitate the *integration process* of immigrants in western societies. The European countries are becoming more and more multi-ethnic societies, the question arising in the policy-making process is how to help the building of *inclusive communities* (at the local level) in order to increase the *social cohesion* of the society (at national level)?

The aim of the paper is to present a case-study of a new housing-policy run by a municipality in a North-East region of Italy with the involvement of a wide array of nonprofit organizations (Ngo, Social Cooperative, Ethic Bank) towards Italian and immigrant families. The project is based on the technique of “self-construction” which imply the participation of the users in the building of their houses trough the direct work in the week-end and holidays under the supervision of experts of nonprofit organizations.

Methodology

The case study is based on qualitative methods, such as: a) analysis of documentation; b) analysis of mass media (television and news papers); interviews with key figures of the project (heads of local public administration offices and managers of NPOs).

Results

The main result of the study is to demonstrate the SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities threats) of the project, to enlighten the organizational *networks* underlined and to illustrate the key elements of its success, so that it can be replicated in other local communities in western democracies (welfare policy).

The network context through which the project has been implemented can be described as a “ + 0 sum game”, meaning that all the actors involved (Local Municipality, NGO at national level,

Social Cooperative at local level, Ethic Bank, users/beneficiaries) gain something and no one actor seem to lose anything.

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