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AGENCY STUDY: THE ANALYSIS OF AN OPPORTUNIST BUT EFFECTIVE INSTITUTION

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Foreword

The case study of the Italian team has concerned the Programme Missions for Development (Missioni di Sviluppo - MdSs), that is a programme promoted by the Law 44[1] Committee (today I*g* Imprenditorialità giovanile Spa), and co-financed by European Union in order to spread the enterprise culture and favour the rise of enterprises created by young people in the South of Italy. In particular, we have analysed the Mission for Development settled in Campania (Naples).

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[1]The Law 44 Committee, founded as direct emanation of the State in 1986, in 1994 changes in Ig and becomes a limited company (completely controlled by the Treasury Department).

Besides gathering documentary materials, the study is based on a field research. Particularly, we have interviewed the promoters of intervention (a manager of I*g*) and all the agents of the Agency. Moreover, the survey has been expanded also to a specific project carried out by the Mission for Development, that is a project of vocational guidance, addressed to young people with low qualification. This part of the work is based on one interview to a boy who attended the training course, and on participant observation in some phases of the project.

Finally, we have organised a focus group with the staff of the Mission focused on a general evaluation about their experience. As we will say, Missions for Development is a three-years project started in 1993, repeated in 1996 and just ended (12 January 1999).

The report is in four parts: the first part is an outline both of the context where the idea to promote the programme and the project philosophy matured (section 1) and of the main steps of the Missions' development (section 2). The second part deals particularly with the Agency studied in depth, that is the Mission for Development in Campania which has its head office in Naples. Differently from the first part, based on the analysis of the written materials, this section is based on the presentation/interpretation the professionals done of the Agency (section 3). In the third part, the latent functions of the Agency are revealed (section 4), getting from the adduction method - clues, hypotheses, confirmation - (section 5). Moreover, in the light of the new interpretation of the Missions running, it is analysed also the project of vocational guidance mentioned before (section 6). Finally, the fourth part is a general valuation of the Agency, with a special reference to its transferability/reproducibility (section 7).

1. The genesis and the inspirers of Missions for Development (MdS)

The MdSs were born in 1994 as agencies for promoting the local development. We can't fully understand their genesis without referring to an important law for the development of Southern areas, the Law 44 of 1986, not only for MdSs result from it, but also - and mostly - because both the law and the Missions have been 'created' by the same inspirer, Carlo Borgomeo. Borgomeo is Neapolitan by birth, a catholic militant and a trade-unionist. He had been facing for a long time very problematic social realities and has experienced, at the same time, the failure of politics in starting a real process of renewal in the South of Italy. Later, he became a researcher in a prestigious national centre for social research (Censis) and, since

he was a Southern man and an expert in labour issues, in 1986 he was called as a consultant by the Minister for the extraordinary intervention in the South of Italy (Salverino De Vito). The Law 44 for youth entrepreneurship resulted from this meeting; actually, this Law has represented a *turning point* in the economic policy for the Southern areas of Italy.

Indeed, it isn't a traditional measure of the labour policies, but it originates in Italy a new current for intervention, that is the *enterprise creation*. Differently from what happened in the other European countries, it was immediately experienced on a large scale involving all the Southern regions of Italy[2]. The mechanism of the Law is very simple. Young people presents an enterprise idea, developed in an enterprise project. A technical committee (Comitato Legge 44 - Law 44 Committee) values the enterprise idea; in case it should be suitable, they support it with financial and effective incentives (that is enterprise training, tutoring by another enterprise leader in the same sector, etc).

Even though the intervention today seems to get into line with the current philosophy, it has represented, when firstly adopted, an extremely innovative measure, both in its inspiring principles and in its instruments. The Law 44 in fact is the first concrete representation of the concept of exploiting the personal resources: by financing subjects on the basis of their ideative capabilities and not their property security, the Law shows to be a forerunner, a true pioneer of *self-empowerment* philosophy. Moreover, since the Law subordinates the financing to the presence of definite requirements and conditions (drawing up an enterprise plan, a proper company framework etc), it stops the so-called 'rain' financing, considered the prop of welfare policies up to then.

In 1992, six years after being operative, a first analysis of the Law pointed out one of its limits. The opportunities provided by it were taken by subjects living in the Southern regions relatively more developed (for example Abruzzo) while, paradoxically, just the most deprived ones showed the lowest rates of application to the Law. The reason for this failure was identified in the structure of legislative intervention, which had been conceived from the top and was centralised, and so too distant from local realities. In other words, only the least peripheral areas, those already involved in a system of relations and information, were able to

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[2]The success of intervention is testified by the fact that starting from 1995 (Law 95) it has been extended to a large part of national territory (5.231 Commons on a total of 8.100).

'dialogue' with the centre. So, this intervention risked to become a reproducer of marginalisation.

Those who conceived the Law, and chiefly Borgomeo, evidenced a great self-reflective capacity and put forward a series of connected initiatives[3] to spread information in the so-called 'weak areas' in order to defuse this vicious circle. One of these, the Missions for Development, came from the fruitful collaboration between Carlo Borgomeo and Aldo Bonomi. Bonomi, a consultant for Cnel (Centro Nazionale Economia e Lavoro - National Centre for Economics and Labour) and a Northern man with a past of militancy in a party of extra-parliamentary Left, has always been in the field of social research and he has founded a research institute, A.A.STER (Associazione Agenti di Sviluppo del Territorio - Association of Agents for Local Development). It has been this institute to carry out with the Law 44 Committee the MdSs programme.

Differently from Borgomeo, Bonomi is a true social scientist. In his analysis on post-industrial society, he describes the end of Fordism as the shift from a *vertical* society, based on the dichotomy equality/inequality (*up/down*) to a *horizontal* society where the discriminating factor is now the inclusion/exclusion (*in/out*) from multiplicity which characterises the global society: knowledge, skills, mobility, languages (Bonomi 1996). Moreover, the global society, far from being considered as the result of a deterministic process (the process of universalisation), is seen as resulting from the dialectics between local and global (Bonomi calls it *glocal society*).

With a surprising parallelism with the biographical approach, even in this approach the risk of exclusion is considered as result of a dialectic relation: the inclusion/exclusion for a local reality, as for individual, will depend on its/his ability to identify and value the resources it/he owns and to start adaptive strategies.

On the operative level, for Bonomi and his team, this line of analysis translates into a strategy of research-action oriented to *'give voice and visibility to invisible subjects who live on the fringe of horizontal society'*. The strategy considers as main scenery the local area.

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[3]The program involved six-seven kind of initiatives: from sensitising interventions into schools to arrange informative materials on innovative medium (video-cassette etc), to install computer totems in the most important public places.

Therefore, the programme MdSs results from the interface between the philosophy of *self-empowerment* by Carlo Borgomeo and the theory of *glocal* society by Aldo Bonomi.

2. The Evolution of the Missions for Development (MdSs)

As already said in the foreword, the programme MdSs has been put into effect twice: in the three-years-period 1994-1996 using FERS funds and in the period 1996-1998 using FSE funds by European Union. Between the first and the second edition there have been substantial changes in its prospects; it's worth dwelling upon them.

The first edition of the programme, as already said, aimed to face the misfunctioning of Law 44, especially its less application just in the most disadvantaged areas. The thesis is that those areas suffer an information deficit which, compromising the possibility to take advantage of opportunities offered by the law, prevents the entrepreneurial potential of young people from emerging. A crucial argument in the philosophy of intervention in this first stage, considers the enterprise as the main, if not the only one, driver for development. Consequently, the receivers of Mission activities are young people and the aim is that to grasp and support their conceiving and planning ability, directing it toward the enterprise creation.

Following this approach, they have chosen three regions to put into practise the intervention (Calabria, Sicily and Sardinia), where they found the lowest rates of application to the law. Inside them, they have selected nine territorial microsystems, defined on the basis of territorial identity criteria, rather than statistical and geographic homogeneity criteria. In other words, as we read in the MdS project, the territorial microsystem is defined by *the whole of economic, cultural, environmental, institutional, political factors which interact with (and receive strengthening by) a certain consolidated territorial identity; so it gives rise to interaction systems between local social actors and external organisations*. In each microsystem a Mission is opened and it is settled in a structure already existing (often the Municipalities or trade or voluntary associations).

The methodology of action adopted in each Mission is articulated in three phases:

- The research-action, which is substantiated in *'a phase of communication, where the local societies receive information about the aims of the project, and a phase of recording local information about young people, the potentialities of the area and the receptiveness of the local actors to cooperate, in order to sensitise the local society and mostly young people'*;

- The animation, which consists in *'spreading information with the aim to reach effectively the receivers of intervention, and to discover the enterprise potentialities which could be activated and developed through interventions related to training and enterprise creation'*;

- The enterprise creation, which represents *'the phase where both the development hypotheses and the enterprise ideas identified in the previous two phases, are put into practise. In this phase the most practicable ideas are selected and a support to plan is offered them (tutorship to turn the idea into a project)'*.

In short, it is clear that the key words in the first phase of the programme Missions for Development are the <u>subject</u> (who actually represents the focus of intervention) and the <u>enterprise</u> (considered as the driver for development).

The second edition of the programme shows a clean sheer. The key words for the intervention become the <u>territory</u> (which actually is now the direct receiver of Missions) and the <u>local development</u> (which isn't anymore directly identified with the enterprise creation). The presentation of the second edition of the programme shows clearly the change of its strategic purposes. The main object becomes the promotion of interventions for local development. Such object, which considers the territory as its central dimension, has two specific aims:

- *'to value and increase the local patrimony of relational goods, meant as ability in sharing, arranging and planning local initiatives'*;

- *'to stimulate the link between short networks, characterising the local systems, and long networks characterising the competitiveness in the markets'*.

In other words, the work of the Missions becomes essentially an activity of *networking*.

It's worth to underline that young people assume a completely different role in the overall re-planning of Missions' programme. Indeed, they are no longer considered

as hidden resources to 'intercept', as potential entrepreneurs to reveal, but rather as one of the objects of intervention, as one of the receivers of a complex activity which promotes the culture of self-employment. This is no more identified exclusively with the enterprise creation but tends to involve a wider purpose. As written in the illustrative document of the programme, Missions are addressed to:

• *'the promotion of behaviours based on the valuation of individual and environmental potentialities, which favour the abandon of consolidates mentalities and experiences aiming at privileging the adoption of individual strategies oriented to look for a stable job'*;

• *'the creation of new attitudes alternative to the culture of assistance and so alternative to those which consider the State as a dispenser of provisions and as a provider of risk protection'*.

Although the MdS' operative tools are the same (research-action, animation, guidance and planning support), we are in presence of a substantial revision both of the concept of development itself and of the way to start it. If in the first phase they started from a very reductive idea of development, where the enterprise assumes nearly a demiurgic value (with an economic and deterministic view, they actually considered the enterprise able to generate development by itself), in the second phase the centrality of social dimension is recognised (the enterprise is seen as a result of development and not as its mover).

With a pun, we could say that the *mission* of the Mission for Development becomes *'the social and cultural creation of infrastructures in the territory. It finds its resources in the cultures and relations among the subjects on the territory, before than in young people, potential users of the Law 44; in particular, it finds them in those intermediate subjects (first of all Majors, but also trade unions, trade associations, local entrepreneurs, priests, voluntary associations) which through their daily actions create poles of relations and aggregations'* (in such way MdS carries on a role of 'catalyst').

Therefore, so much the receivers as the Mission's product are changed. The receivers of intervention aren't directly young people, but intermediate subjects that is local actors, majors, trade association representatives, trade unions and entrepreneurial associations. In other words, young people cease to represent the object of Mission's activity and become the potential beneficiary of its activity of *networking* (for example, of agreements, activated by the Mission, between the

school world and the local entrepreneurs). The product of the Mission isn't directly the enterprise creation, but the creation of relational goods, which become the crucial resource for activating initiatives for local development.

Another consequence of such revision is the change of localisation criteria of the Missions. Actually the second edition implies a radical re-planning of geography of intervention which is expanded to all Southern regions. Secondly, the intervention loses its 'horizontal' nature (they have opened the same typology of Mission in each micro-system chosen) in order to become 'hierarchical' (according to the peculiarities of the area an information point is opened or a Mission is established) and 'centralised', both at local level (in all regions exists a main Mission which co-ordinates the others) and at over-regional level (the head office of Ig[4] in Rome controls and co-ordinates all the regional Missions).

The inspirers of MdS, Carlo Borgomeo and Aldo Bonomi, refer to two reasons to explain the changes occurred. First, *'the need to answer an increased demand for counselling coming from local Authorities'*, which results from the direct popular investiture (from 1993 the reform of the electoral mechanism provides for the direct election of majors; since it involves a higher responsibility of majors themselves towards the electorate, a higher demand for concreteness in offering precise answers to the needs of local society has been generated). Secondly, *'the need to support the local administrations in the complex management of the instruments of concerted planning (territorial pacts, local agreements, programme agreements etc)'* recently introduced.

The analysis of the main steps of the Missions for Development shows they have been able to exercise a good self-reflexive capacity and to put into effect adaptive strategies with respect to the changes into the context, both socio-economic and political-institutional ones. Even though the Missions for Development have been conceived by structures which are direct emanations of the State, they seem to be less prone to the self-reference and permeated by a *modus operandi* typical of the private or social-private organisations.

Evidence of such a philosophy is that today, about expiring the second three-years-period of the programme, they don't think to repeat it again: in two regions

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[4]In the second edition of MdSs, the subject who carries out the intervention is directly I*g* and not A.ASTER which takes on now the role of strategic consultant of the program.

(Campania and Puglia) the Missions have been already closed, in the other three (Sicily, Sardinia and Calabria) they will close in few months.

3. The Mission for Development in Campania

The in depth study carried out, concerns the Mission for Development in Campania. The survey took place from May 1998 to January 1999. It's based on a series of in depth interviews and meetings with the staff and the clients. In particular, we have first met the regional coordinator of the project and then all the professionals, and each of them has reported about the activities. Later, we have done five in depth interviews, four to members of the staff (the coordinator, a senior and two juniors) and one to a manager of I*g*, responsible for the programme Missions for Development.

Moreover, as we have already said in the foreword, subject of the study has been also a training course carried out by the Mission, addressed to young people with low qualification. We have carried out this part of the study by taking part in the first meeting of the course and doing two interviews, one to a young receiving the intervention, the other to the regional coordinator.

Finally, we have organised a focus group with the six junior professionals. The meeting has taken place at the end of January 1999, that is near the Mission shut-down, and this has allowed us to focus the discussion on a general reflection about the whole experience.

The Mission for Development in Campania was born in 1997, starting the second phase of the programme[5]. For this reason, its territorial location is of hierarchical and centralised type (ref. section 2): indeed, there's a regional office with coordinating functions (in Naples), three information points depending on it (in the Neapolitan hinterland) and two decentralised offices (in Avellino and Salerno). The staff of the Mission for Development in Campania has nine professionals: the regional coordinator, two seniors and six juniors.

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[5]As already said, in the second edition the programme has involved two more Southern regions: Campania and Puglia. Therefore, in the second three-years-period there were 14 Missions for Development: three in Sicily, three in Sardinia, two in Puglia, three in Calabria and three in Campania.

Seniors and juniors have personal and professional features very different. The seniors and the coordinator, all of them already involved in the first edition of the programme, haven't a qualification relating to their job (two of them aren't graduated, the other one has a degree in Agriculture) but have a past of militancy and involvement into the social environment. Moreover, they weren't born in Campania but come from other Italian regions. On the contrary, all juniors are graduated (mostly in Sociology and Political Science), all working for the first time and all coming from Campania (the difference in the geographic origin isn't accidental or unimportant, as we will see).

Beyond these objective differences, there's a substantial homogeneity in the *weltanshaung* of all professionals, who seem to be passionate supporters of Mission philosophy, and all vocated to their job. A striking element in the interviews is that all interviewees assert they couldn't have done a different job but the agent for development. For example, the coordinator with an enthusiastic tone states *'yes, yes I love this job, I really love it, I believe that my job is better than the most beautiful dream I could have imagined for my future, if I could invent a job, I believe I couldn't have been able to invent it so, it's perfect for me'*, while the juniors - looking back the beginning of their experience - use sentences like these: *'When I've read the advertisement for the selection, I've thought 'but this is my portrait', 'but that's me!', 'they're looking just for me!'*. Their vocation has never got exhausted; on the contrary it stands the test of the time, if it's true that all of them continue confirming the full correspondence between their job as agent for development and their professional aspirations.

It's interesting to note that the total identification with their professional profile goes on, even in presence of an accentuated criticism towards the organisation they have worked for. Considering the last two years, the junior professionals use, as reading key, a double register, that is a clear distinction between the valuation they give of their professional experience and that of the Agency. As to the personal level, the assessment is absolutely positive: all of them assert of having acquired not only specific skills, but mostly greatest awareness and maturity. On the contrary, the evaluations on the Agency running are very negative: absence of leadership, lack of instruments, approximation, indeterminacy of purposes represent all elements which concurred in creating - according to the juniors - a climate of uncertainty and disorientation.

Paradoxically, it has been just this climate which generated a virtuous circle: the young professionals, left alone with an overburden of responsibilities, have created an extraordinary team spirit and a deep sense of belonging to the group[6] which has allowed them to face difficulties, (*the mood which characterised the starting phase was substantially of loneliness and uncertainty, you felt always alone in facing the problems, and then the uncertainty, because we suffered from the lack of organisation, I've never understood if there has been a tread of organicity or not, the uncertainty has remained and continues, but the loneliness has had an interesting evolution, I was well with my colleagues, in moments of great difficulty it was very important meeting the others, many times we found the solutions all together, then we have acquired the skills'; 'we got accustomed to this way of working because the uncertainty was shared'; 'the activity of the agent for development must be carried on in team, there can't be the single agent, there must be a team'*). The confirmation of confidence in their capacities and the strengthening of their professional identity come from the recognition of having been able to face unexpected difficulties.

Anyway, overcoming this challenge hasn't been without consequences: the strong team spirit the staff used to face the difficulties has implied the individuation of an antagonist, identified in the upper level. Indeed, during the interviews, several elements of conflict have arisen, mostly towards the coordinator who becomes a scapegoat, 'accused' to pretend brilliant results without giving adequate methodological instruments. In other words, what the young professionals contest is the weakness of his methodological instruments and his non-assuming the role of 'master'.

Actually, the responsibilities of the co-ordinator in managing the activities are very restricted, since the operative model of the Mission follows a logic wanted by the top. As we will see, in spite of the appearances, the organisation of the programme Missions for Development has a deeply top setting up. This explains also why the upper levels, and especially the coordinator, are definitely less critic as to the implementation of the programme.

However the difference of valuations between seniors and juniors never turns into a frontal dispute. The common acceptance of the inspiring principles of the

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[6]This strong feeling of belonging depends also on the fact that they attended a four months training course, living all together in a small town located in Central Italy

Missions and the shared tendency to reach ambitious results, get the conflict never to lead to paralysis, but rather to a concerted action that aims at reaching the Mission's purposes (that is to say, the conflict doesn't concern the goals but rather the means to reach them). The main 'suffering' of junior professionals is the lack of an organisation and actually - as we will see in the next steps of the analysis - it isn't a perception but a matter of fact, from their perspective.

Actually, the analysis of the running and the activities carried out by the Mission in its two years of its existence, shows a high degree of destructuring. Two elements emerge: a) a high flexibility in the task of each professional; b) a high discontinuity in the activities carried out by the Mission.

As concerns the first element, the flexibility, all professionals have stated that their assignment to the different activities has nearly a daily cadence (actually, they decide what to do day by day). Anyway, this organising feature doesn't bother the professionals since they generally decide by themselves how to divide the activity; moreover, they believe that the 'anti-bureaucratism' is a crucial element of creativity and productivity of their work. The co-ordinator himself affirms that the arrangement of the work must be necessarily very elastic *'since there are moments in which you have people in excess and moments of shortage'* and therefore it's fundamental the flexible use even of the professionals, who are destined each time to a specific activity also *'to collect the different professionalism existing inside the staff according to the needs, and to provide for the lacks'*. So, the consensus on flexibility is unanimous.

The critical point of the operative model, stressed only by the junior professionals-also this aspect, as we will see, isn't accidental or unimportant-is the discontinuity of activities. Actually, in the two years of running, more than once the junior professionals have been required to leave a territory and a project which they were following, and to apply to a different project in another territory. Since this *modus operandi* belongs to the nature itself of the Agency, which as mission presupposes an expiry intervention, it's necessary to wonder why the continuous *stop and go* have represented a so considerable problem, and only for the junior professionals.

In order to understand this aspect, it's necessary to consider again the kind of activity carried out by the Mission. As already said, it's essentially a work of *networking*, and its subject is the production of relational goods. The work consists in connecting the different institutional subjects under the direction of the

Mission, with the aim to start networks later able to run independently and permanently, without the Agency mediation. In brief, we can say that the typical activity has been the creation of an efficient triangulation among three different subjects on the territory: the entrepreneurship world, the educational system and the local body[7].

Clearly in this kind of job the time is crucial because the end of activities can't be predetermined, since they have to produce relations. For this reason, the fact that the programme lasts two years represents in itself an important bond. The operators have underlined that the end of an activity isn't objectively defined, since the results of their job are intangible goods, but it's necessarily the result of a valuation (have we done enough? The network activated is able to run independently?). What the operators complain about, is that, nearly in all cases, they have stopped the project prematurely (that is abandoned more than ended), without any reflection on the results obtained. In other words, according to them, the changes occurred without a logic; this leads them to conclude that the Mission has sinned of disorganisation. This has implied, in their opinion, both personal costs (very often they had to face a feeling of frustration) and 'business' costs (the results reached, they affirm, could have been better). Moreover, many of them have experienced the feeling of not being guaranteed, that is having had the commission to stir up demands on the territory, without receiving by the Agency the indispensable instruments to give answers.

Although in the junior professionals' point of view the perception of the lack of a consistent strategy is absolutely acceptable, actually it isn't true. The in depth study of the Mission, and mostly the comparison among what the juniors and the upper levels assert, has indeed showed the Mission as a deeply top structure and therefore the logic which rules it can't be understood from the lower levels.

There are at least three signs which prove this connotation from the top.

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[7]The enterprise offers tutoring and a period of training, and asks for personnel and/or activities which meet its needs; the school and/or university offer the receivers and ask for resources to carry out formative routes in line with the territory needs; the local body acts as a mediator between demand and supply by financing education grants and ideas competitions for young people. Actually, this model has been often much more articulated and complex since it has involved also the world of the voluntary service, the church, the families, the trade union and so on.

Firstly, the individuation of the areas for intervention which doesn't come from a specific analysis or criteria discussed and shared with the staff, but rather from mentors' valuation, whose reasons aren't elicited.

Secondly, the choice of the upper level professionals (coordinator and senior), who appear to have been chosen mostly as 'secret agents' since they have been already involved in the previous edition of the Missions and come from A.ASTER, the research institute founded by one of the inspirers. Then, if we consider they are the only professionals in the staff to be 'stranger' in the territory where they work (they all come from other regions) and that they are unprovided of knowledge and relations representing an essential element for the networking activity, we can assume they have been chosen to answer the logic to maintain high their level of dependence on the top (clearly the control of those who acts 'abroad' is easier).

Finally, the third element showing the top structure of management is the scant transparency of valuation criteria. Although all professionals 'feel' of having been valued, none of them has never had a feed-back on the results obtained, or at least on the actions put into effect, this denoting the scant interest in spreading information and so the intention to reserve for the top their running.

Still considering the valuation, which represents a crucial issue to understand the logic ruling the Missions, we have to add that the professionals don't confine themselves to point out a scant transparency of valuation, but they also remark the true lack of standardised procedures in the valuation mechanisms. Indeed, they underline that the six-monthly reports produced on the activities carried out, have been 'left aside'; moreover, the self-valuation, they themselves have often solicited, has taken place only occasionally and always without following any codified procedure.

Generally, the organisation of the Missions seems to be not only strongly hierarchical but also deeply charismatic, that is connected in all the aspects to its mentors' 'will' (whose words are often quoted by the interviewees as a sacred text). Actually, they are the only holders of the 'true' Missions' logic, or better to say of the true logics of the Missions.

4. Manifest and latent functions of the Missions for Development

The most surprising result of the study in depth has been discovering the great distance existing between the latent functions and the manifest functions of the Missions; anyway, the former aren't in contradiction or contrast with the latter, but even they substain them.

It isn't necessary dwelling upon the manifest functions of the Missions since they have already been showed in the description of their purposes (section 1). On the contrary, we need to dwell upon the description of the latent functions and, obviously, how we managed to discover them.

The first thing to say is that in this programme, so strongly personalised and characterised in a charismatic sense, the role of the mentors has been crucial. As already said, they are the only holders of the 'true logics' of the Missions; for this reason we must start from them.

Borgomeo and Bonomi are deeply inclined to innovation into the social ambit (although from different views, since one of them comes from a catholic militancy and the other from an extreme left militancy) and they both are persuaded it's necessary to become visible subjects in order to conclude effectively their personal 'mission'. They both, even before conceiving the programme, are in a path of personal strengthening, deeply oriented to *self-empowerment.* Without giving any negative connotation to this opinion, considering the noble character of their purposes, we can assert they have 'used' the Missions in order to increase their personal power and therefore to act effectively in the social environment.

Anyway, we can't understand the latent functions of the Missions without stressing a substantial difference between the two mentors, rising, among the other things, from their different history. Borgomeo, with a past of catholic trade-unionist and a long political involvement, chooses the public administration as his specific field of action. On the contrary, Bonomi, with his past of active militancy, chooses as field for his personal achievement, the social analysis. Therefore they have a common goal, that of creating innovation, but count on different instruments: the former, privileges the institutional level and aim at identifying and realising measures which favour the local development; the latter, tends to be successful in the cultural sphere in order to have the strength for asserting the principles in which he believes: in short, he is an ideologist.

The fact they have chosen a different field to consolidate their social visibility - and so their power - not only has made them non-competitive (as we will see they

are even synergic) but explains also the true nature of the Missions, that of having been a 'social workshop' or, more precisely, a privileged observatory of the local society. Borgomeo has used it to grasp the real needs of demand in order to set up effective active policies of labour; at the same time, it has been useful to Bonomi, who has found in the research-action material for his theorisations (actually, in Italy, he's a fundamental reference point in the field of local development 'from the bottom').

For this reason, a synergy occurs between them, and we can describes it in this terms: Borgomeo needs to know the territory and the social context to produce innovative measures which, on turn, the Government approves and finances thanks to the visibility and reliability he has built around himself, also by means of the Missions. Bonomi, in order to analyse and 'animate' the social environment, needs the resources provided by Borgomeo who, by virtue of the success obtained in the political scene just thanks to the excellence of his proposals, has no difficulties in giving them (actually, the Missions for Development have had a remarkable financing).

It's worth underlying that the latent functions of the Agency - we could say, at this point, of the mentors - haven't prevented the Missions for Development to satisfy their manifest aims. If we analyse the six-monthly reports and the papers produced, it's clear that the activity of networking, of guidance to self-employment and the diffusion of enterprise creation culture, has obtained very satisfying results. We can even assert that without its role of observation point, the Missions wouldn't have been repeated - so as the other initiatives belonging to the wider initial programme haven't been repeated (see section 1). Indeed, it isn't by chance that those initiatives addressed to 'give' information have been stopped, while only the Missions, actually conceived to 'receive' information, have been kept alive, up to when they have accomplished their 'true' mission.

5. The 'true' results of the Missions for Development

The idea that the Missions for Development had a latent function prior to the manifest one, derives from recognising a marked contradiction. On one side, the existence of some huge anomalies, all tending to point out serious inefficiencies in the management and a substantial indifference for the results; on the other side,

the extraordinary commitment of all professionals, which excludes the hypothesis it were a self-referential Agency.

Getting profusely from the adduction method (clues, hypotheses, confirmation), we have verified an alternative hypothesis, that is the Agency pursued aims different from the official ones. In particular, we have tried to reinterpret the apparent bad functioning as efficient practices, wondering which purposes they could meet.

The main result of the analysis has been the 'discovery' of function of workshop/observatory. The 'explorative' aim of the Mission actually gives consistency to all the apparent anomalies recorded in its running.

As already said, they can be summarised in four points: the discontinuity in the activities carried out; the approximation in choosing the areas on intervention; the extraneity of upper levels as to the territorial context; the marked lack of valuation. Each anomaly, as we will see later, is absolutely functional to the true purposes of the Mission and of its mentors.

The discontinuity in the activities, what the junior professionals consider the premature abandon of the projects undertaken, is indeed fully consistent with the latent purposes of the Mission, that is to intercept the unexpressed needs more than offering immediate solutions. Practically, the activities are stopped when the needs have been already decoded, since the aim is to arrange institutional answers and not to give short-term answers.

The choice of the areas, at a first sight nearly approximated, actually follows a precise logic followed by Borgomeo, oriented to obtain consensus. He, in fact, identifies the areas on the basis of considerations related to political opportunities.

The choice of co-ordinators extraneous to the territory, apparently inexplicable for an Agency whose strength is the deep knowledge of the territory and of its networks, becomes consistent considering that they are persons already trained by Bonomi to act as his own 'antennae' on the territory.

The marked lack of valuation, only partially justifiable with the difficulty to measure the production of relational goods with objective benchmarks, actually depends on the fact that what they value isn't the result related to the manifest function of the Mission but rather the one connected to its latent function. This

comes out very clearly in what the different hierarchical levels consider being the subject of valuation. Indeed, if the lower levels believe the product to value is the real and precise result of their activities (how many animation meetings; how many young people have been started to work etc), the mentors have as parameter the production of new legislative instruments. Not casually the manager of I*g* we have interviewed says *'resounding results of the Missions have been the Law on the honour loan and the Law which has financed the social cooperatives'*.

The interpretation developed till now is confirmed by the shut-down of the Missions, once ended the second edition of the programme, and the separation of the two mentors.

The Missions close because they have accomplished their tasks. The explorative function, addressed to give inputs to the legislative production, has actually had very remarkable results, as the law for the honour loan (a law aimed at promoting the self-employment mostly among weak and low qualified subjects) and that for the social enterprise (for the first time public financing can be allocated to create no-profit enterprises working in the third sector).

The function of *self-empowerment*, that is increasing the personal power of the mentors and use it for social aims, has produced results too. Indeed, Borgomeo has been recently called for a very prestigious appointment in a government holding (Sviluppo Italia) which will manage, in concert with the local realities, the whole intervention in the South of Italy from the financial side to the planning one. According to the manager of I*g*, Borgomeo has obtained this appointment *'thanks to the local networks which have recognised and supported him'*. Bonomi is about carrying out a huge training programme, finalised to supply all the local administration in the South with agents for development (it's the programme RAP - Rete Animatori Pubblici - Network of Public Animators). Considering that this programme has funds for 600 billion and will train 6000 young people (while the Missions were financed with 6 billion and involved 60 agents for development), his strategy appears as fully successful.

6. An emblematic example of the Missions running: the 'Project students - guidance to handicraft'

As already said in the foreword, the analysis in depth of the Agency has implied also studying one of the project carried out by the Mission for Development in Campania. It's worth speaking about it, even though briefly, because this project has revealed to be emblematic both of the Agency's philosophy and of its organising bad-functioning, and of the latent logic (the workshop function) which moves the Missions.

The project consists in a guidance course to handicraft, addressed to 15 young people aged from 15 to 18 who, once ended the compulsory school, have declared not to want continue studying (they are subjects who are repeat students and who end the compulsory school at 15, 16, 17 and not at 14).

Already in the choice of the subjects - young people with low qualification but not truancy subjects - it can be noted a first characteristic of the philosophy of the Missions that - as professionals say - are addressed to 'the second lasts, not to the last ones'. Therefore to subjects who, adequately supported, can escape the risk of exclusion, rather than to subjects already bearing the 'symptoms' of deviancy (underaged work, truancy, micro-delinquency).

This fully answers the philosophy of the Missions, which isn't oriented to 'repair' - supplying services to the person - damages already done, but rather to promote the inclusion of young people in the labour market by bringing out their personal resources. Young people, selected by the psycho-pedagogic operators of the school involved in the project, have been included in an articulated training path which alternated lessons in the classroom with direct working experiences in artisan shops.

A sign of the project innovation has been the inclusion of a psychologist, a figure who, according to the staff, turned out to be crucial to reduce the risk of becoming drops-out, actually a very high risk given the characteristics of the context. Scampia, in fact, this is the name of the area where the project has been carried out, is an extremely deprived neighbourhood in the suburbs of Naples, with a wide presence of macro-criminality. Furthermore, being an area recently built, it hasn't any identity and, mostly, is lacking of any artisan tradition. Consequently, the area is pervaded by a juvenile sub-culture that rewards the values of the personal courage and 'anti-institutionality' rather than the values of work, education and

diligence (so, proposing the artisan work to the young of this quarter has been a true challenge).

Even from the operative point of view, the project answer to the typical model of the Missions. Indeed, it comes from an effective work of *networking*, and particularly from a connection among schools, local craftsman associations and families. The last ones have been sensitised in order to push the young to follow the course, since in that context the parents are the first to undervalue the importance of school and education, and often they prefer their sons to enter immediately the informal labour market to contribute to the family income.

The same organising flexibility - typical, as we have seen, of the Missions' model - seems to be fully confirmed. The professionals have indeed alternated in running the project, according to the needs, without causing any discontinuity since the good informative circuit among them has allowed them to be interchangeable. This flexibility comes out also from the rapid change of the psychologist chosen - then revealed to be unfit for the role.

However, the project doesn't show only the positive sides of the Mission running, but also its dysfunctions. Firstly, the so-called 'logic from the top', secondly the 'discontinuity of the activities', more than once mentioned.

As to its top feature, it comes out very clearly from the 'history' of the project, born from a specific request of the President of *Ig* and not from a specific analysis of needs (Borgomeo requires the professionals of the Mission to set up a combined project for Scampia a year later having received the call from the municipality to intervene in the area). Different reasons, mostly those of political opportunity, drive the *Ig* to a drastic slimming of the programme, of which only the project of guidance to handicraft work remains, financed with a very small budget (sufficient to cover just the operating costs).

As concerns the discontinuity of the activities, repeatedly stressed, which for the juniors means leaving prematurely the activities running, it has been fully confirmed. During the focus-group, which took place once the project ended, all of them have asserted that the experience of Scampia has been too short, and so not sufficient to establish a stable relation between schools in the area and craftsman association (in other word, they believe unanimously that the

experience won't be repeated since the networking activity hadn't yet come to maturity).

It's worth stressing - and this confirms the existence of a latent function of the Missions - that the valuations of the juniors contrast with those made by upper levels, that is the coordinator and the manager of *Ig*, who affirm the initiative produced unexpected results. The words of the coordinator, who asserts that the project Scampia *'has been a completely successful initiative, since it has allowed us to make a test with no costs'*, fully confirm that the real function of the Missions is an 'explorative' function, visible only to the top levels.

Finally, it needs underline that, although the limits and the 'deficiencies' found in the conduct of the project, it has given unquestionably good results. Among the 15 young people selected, nearly all have ended the course, and four of them have been placed permanently as apprentices in the artisan shop where they have spent the period of training. Moreover, all the actors seem to be fully satisfied with the experience. Two craftsmen - informally contacted just to record their opinion - have showed a great interest in the project, mostly for having at their disposal a well motivated boy, a very uncommon characteristic among young people (it's a fact that the last generations are very distant from the culture of the traditional handicraft). At the same time, one of the boys receiving the course, interviewed by us, has asserted of being 'happy' to work in the shop, stressing of having learnt a lot from the experience, moreover it has represented for him an opportunity to reveal capacities he didn't believe to own *'at first it seemed difficult to me, I didn't like it, I didn't want to go, then I've learnt… they have explained me all things very well, they helped me'*. So his considerations are quite positive *'I really did nothing before, I stayed at home with the headache, now it's different, in the morning I've an aim… and my mother is happy'*.

We can then conclude - but we will go into details in the conclusions - the initiative has produced positive results for all those involved, although this wasn't its main purpose.

7. Conclusions

In the light of the results came out from the in depth study, some conclusions can be drawn, first on the degree of effectiveness and efficacy of the Missions and secondly on their reproducibility/transferability.

As concerns the first issue, we can assert that, although some inefficiencies in the organisation, the model of intervention of the Missions is a substantial example of *good practice*. Generally, the activity of the Missions seems to shape, indeed, a positive experience since the personal aims pursued by the leaders haven't taken away resources and profits from the context but, on the contrary, have produced positive falls on all the players involved.

These are evident especially among the members of the staff who, after two years, have acquired not only competencies and knowledge but also *personal skills* (the capacity of working in conditions of uncertainty, the organising flexibility, the ability to face different actors etc), which are indispensable to be in the labour market. From this side, we can assert that the Missions have acted as a training agency of post-modern *skills*, and as an incubator of a new professional profile, that of agent for development, which will have its complete recognition by means of the project RAP (see section 5).

There are extremely positive falls also for the receivers, both direct and indirect, of intervention. The first ones, those who have met the Agency as clients, have found in the professionals and in the opportunities they set up (training courses, stages in economically more developed contexts, opportunity for apprenticeship, scholarships etc) a promotion to bring themselves out and a spur to become active author of their future. The second ones, that is young people as category, have enjoyed the extraordinary opportunities offered by the legislative measures, passed thanks to the perceptions matured with the experience of the Missions. With regard to this, we have to emphasise the huge cultural value of these interventions which allow, for the first time, at least in the South of Italy, to transmit the imagine of a 'friendly' State. A State which gives credit to the personal capacities of the subject, even to that who has the motivation to act as only capital.

Also the intermediate actors, crucial partners in the networking activity, have enjoyed the useful results of the Missions' activity. The local administrators directly involved into the networks have, indeed, been able to increase their reliability and visibility among their voters; the others, that is all the majors involved in the project RAP, will have the advice of the agents for development

for two years gratis. Finally, the voluntary association, a crucial actor for the local development, which can at least have access to funds in order to set up no-profit enterprises (without the perceptions matured during the experience of MdS, such financing would have continued to be reserved only to the firms working for the market).

Therefore, we can assert that the Missions for Development have been an institution 'cynical but not sadistic'. However, the positive effects spread by the Missions result from a propitious constellation which appears to be hardly repeatable. Indeed, their success, their being an example of *good practice,* depend on a whole of factors, many of them external to the structure.

First of all, the extremely peculiar political situation, coming from the fall of the old ruling class (Missions were born immediately after Tangentopoli) and from the rising of a new class of local administrators who, differently from the previous one, has to gain on the field the approval of the electorate and are so inclined to try and opened towards innovations.

Secondly, the cultural change, deeply linked to the crisis of the old patronage system, which breaks up the image of the State as dispenser of benefits and protection from risk, so generating the tendency to act by oneself. In short, as a manager of *Ig* says *'Missions for Development intersect the change in the South and satisfy emerging needs: this is the success of the project'*.

Finally, the extraordinary charisma of the Missions' mentors; the Missions wouldn't have had the same destiny and probably wouldn't have born without it.

All that makes the experience of the Missions not only non-transferable but, probably, neither reproducible.

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