

Research on/for/with a local community: ethos, approaches and methods

Different research approaches in planning and urban studies imply researchers' direct interaction with one specific local community facing one or more issues of relevance. Apparently similar interactive activities – such as participant observation, ethnography, interviews, surveys of socio-spatial interactions, workshops, etc. – could be based on very different ethos depending on the epistemological and methodological approach that is used to frame the research itself. This workshop is composed by a mix of practical and seminar activities aimed at supporting participants in the understanding and development of methodological approaches and strategies of interaction consistent with epistemological paradigm of choice. Thus, activities are organized in two modules:

Module I – From case study to action-research (Perrone, Rossi, Saija)

Focuses on differences and similarities between two approaches of research with one specific community that are often confused with each other, namely case-study research and action-research, providing hints on how to constructively approach them within the frame of short-term research endeavors like a PhD thesis or a post-doc research contract.

Module II – From consultancy to action-research (De Leo, Saija)

Focuses on how to creatively approach 'applied research', that is usually expected from research contracts paid by externally funded projects or clients (consultancies), so that the process of knowledge production can generate important learning and transformative outcomes for both the researchers and the engaged community (action-research).