

A misunderstanding, which could be full of consequences, exists today in the public debates on “territorial projects”.

By this I mean the confusion between the drawn project, as an architectural project can be when it is brought to be carried out as it has been designed, and the territorial project as an ongoing process, in which the path which is followed to achieve the goal is in fact much more important than the goal itself.

For example, if the images produced in the “Portrait urbain de la Suisse” (Herzog, de Meuron, Schmid, 2007) had the merit to answer a fashionable question, namely “what about the national territory?”, they would completely miss their target if their goal was meant to propose a possible future of Switzerland.

This type of drawing is the negation of the territorial project and can on the contrary produce simplistic stereotypes that may reveal themselves rather devastating for the territory.

A territorial project, on the other hand, is the result of an agreement and the responsibility of a great number of actors concerned and implied in the decision-making process, others that the architects, engineers and town planners; the choices bear upon space incidences, across several scales and in many diverse fields.

The territorial project proposes a coherent possible future, validated by political actors, and supported by the population.

It has nothing to do with a rough caricatural image, but consists in a whole process where the strongest stakes reside in things which are not seen.

Thus it is rather uninteresting to see spaces partitioned in “zones” called “calm” or any other name for that matter.

More than in the layout of its limits, it is in its bonds that the future of a territory is revealed, and in flows which exist between places, people, objects, and in the relations between all the actors.

All actors, rather more so than the so-called experts, are the true makers of the territory.

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