

INNER AREAS IN ITALY

A TESTBED FOR ANALYSING, MANAGING
AND DESIGNING MARGINAL TERRITORIES



EDITED BY
ITALIAN NATIONAL NETWORK OF YOUNG RESEARCHERS
FOR INNER AREAS COMMITTEE

BABEL
URBANIZATION

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ACRONYMS

ADSL	Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line
CLLD	Community-Led Local Development
CNAPPC	Italian National Council of Architects, Landscape Designers, Planners and Architectural Curators
CREA	Council for Agricultural Research and Analysis of Agricultural Economics
DEF	Economic and Financial Planning Document
EU	European Union
GAL	Local Action Group
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
INEA	National Institute of Agricultural Economics
ISMEA	Institute of Services for the Agricultural Food Market
ISPRA	The Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research
ISTAT	Central Statistics Institute
MaaS	Mobility as a service
MEA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MIBACT	Ministry of Cultural Heritages, Activities and Tourism (current MIC Ministry of Culture)
MIT	Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport (current Ministry of Sustainable Infrastructures and Mobility)
NUUV	Evaluation and Verification Unit of Public Investments
NADEF	Update note of DEF (Economic and Financial Planning Document)
OCSE/OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.
PNRR	National Recovery and Resilience Plan
PO FESR	Operational Programme of the European Regional Development Fund
PSR	Rural Development Programme
SAU	Utilised Agricultural Area
SIC	Site of community importance
SNAI	Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas
SPA	Special Protection Areas
TPL	Local Public Transport
UNCEM	Unione Nazionale Comuni Comunità Enti Montani - National Union of Municipalities
UVAL	Communities and Mountain Authorities
ZPS	Public Investment Assessment Unit

The genesis of the volume: passion and curiosity

Italian National Network of Young Researchers
for Inner Areas committee

This volume is a contribution to the Italian and international debate on marginality, territorial imbalances and public policies that support “inner”, “peripheral”, “declining” and “fragile” territories. This subject has been widely discussed, especially in the field of economic and urban studies, both in the past and in recent times. Therefore, this text has not been written with the presumption of being innovative, nor to deepen an unexplored theme. Instead, it is generated by the need to rework and disseminate the results of this lively debate.

This volume was born in September 2019, when a group of PhD students and post-doctoral fellows of the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of the Politecnico di Milano, imagined for the first time a network that would connect young Italian researchers around the theme of inner areas. The reason why this idea was born may be easily explained.

THE CONTEXT OF THE VOLUME: THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR INNER AREAS

In recent years, territorial marginality and policies in support of disadvantaged areas have, once again, been strongly debated in Italy, especially thanks to the launch of an important public policy: The National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI). This Strategy was launched in 2014, in the framework of the programming period of European Territorial Cohesion Policies 2014-2020, and it was developed by the Public Investment Assessment Unit (UVAL), within the Department for Development and Economic Cohesion. In line with the European objectives for territorial cohesion, the SNAI was developed with the aim of ensuring a minimum level of aggregate opportunities to allow every citizen, regardless of where he or she lives, to enjoy all the best opportunities to live his or her life (Carrosio, Faccini, 2018, p.76).

The first key action of the SNAI was the development of a map that defines and identifies the territories of the policy’s application. Hence, there was the national classification of inner areas, which is based on the criterion of distance from the main services’ provision centres. All Italian municipalities have been divided into two main categories, depending on the presence or not of specific services. As written in the “Methodological Note”, prepared by the Department for Economic Development and Cohesion (DPS, 2013: 1), the identification of inner areas starts from a polycentric reading of national territory. As matter of fact, Italy is characterised by a network of municipalities or aggregations of municipalities (services provision centres), around which are localised areas characterised by different levels of spatial peripherality. With this in mind, the strategy first identifies the so-called ‘poles’, i.e., the municipalities with those services considered essential for citizens: a hospital with top-level first aid, higher education schools and a silver train station¹. Secondly, all municipalities not equipped with such essential services and localised at a driving distance of more than 20 minutes from the pole have been classified as “inner areas”. The inner areas, in turn, have been divided into “intermediate” (distance from the pole between 20 and 40 minutes), “peripheral” (distance from the pole between 40 and 75 minutes) and “ultra-peripheral” (distance greater than 75 minutes), depending on the distance from the poles. Fig.1 shows the map that emerges from the SNAI classification.

Once the classification had been elaborated, the work of the SNAI continued with the selection of some areas among those classified as “inner areas”, for testing the design and implementation of the Strategy. The main actions proposed by SNAI have a twofold objective. On the one hand, the measures are aimed at improving essential services, the deficiency of which characterises the inner areas. On the other hand, local development projects may build a framework for the enhancement of the often unexpressed territorial capital. The selection of the so-called SNAI “Project Areas”

1. Silver is one of four levels of station facilities, often without control, equipped only classification introduced by RFI. In Italy there with urban/sub-urban/metropolitan services are 594 silver stations, these are medium/small (Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, 2014).

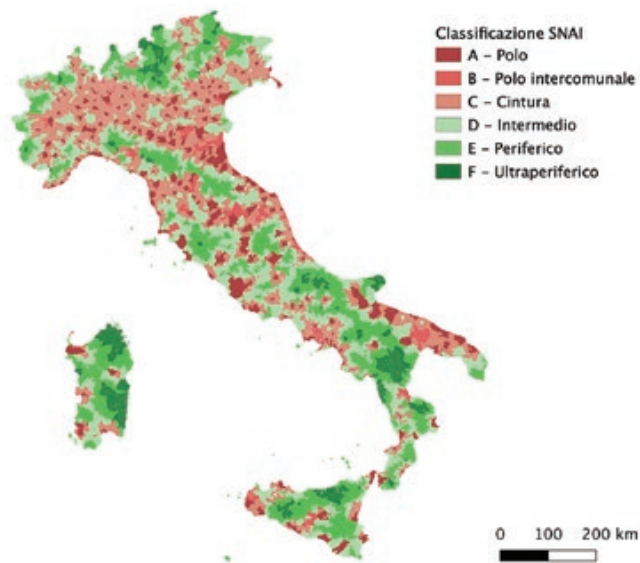


Fig. 1. Classification of the Italian Territory according to the National Strategy of Inner Areas (our elaboration on SNAI data)



Fig. 2. The 72 experimental areas of SNAI (source: Inner Areas Technical Committee, 2019. www.agenziacoesione.gov.it)

took place in several stages. At the beginning, 22 “Pilot Areas” or “Prototype Areas” (one for each of the 20 regions) and 2 “Experimental Areas” (the area called “Valle del Simeto”, in Sicily, and the area of the “Valchiavenna”, in Lombardy) were identified. Subsequently, this selection was extended to further “Project Areas” up to the 72 that today constitute the SNAI experimental areas that benefit from European cohesion funds and national funds dedicated to inner areas. Fig.2 maps the 72 project areas.

THE CONTEXT OF THE VOLUME: THE YOUNG RESEARCHERS NATIONAL NETWORK FOR INNER AREAS

From this brief introduction of SNAI, we can see the importance of this policy and the absolute interest it has aroused in the Italian and international cultural debate.

As young researchers, we had been working on the subject when we started thinking about the possibility of creating a network. Many of us had begun our research path precisely because of the curiosity to investigate the world of inner areas and territorial fragilities that in recent years have become central themes of the Italian academic debate. This intense debate, intercepted in many conferences, seminars and department talks, has raised an almost spontaneous question: how to track and frame this great cultural and intellectual effort that, voluntarily or not, the SNAI had helped to reactivate in Italian research? From this question, the action started! In November 2019, we launched a “*call for research*”, widely distributed to all Italian universities and research institutes, to gather researchers who were working on the theme of inner areas.

The first goal of the call for research was to map the outbreaks of research on the subject, coming from different disciplinary fields: we wanted to enrich the usual network of connections and contacts that each researcher manages to establish in their own academic field. Inner areas, as well as territorial marginality, are issues that need different perspectives and knowledge. We needed to meet researchers to talk, to discuss and to broaden our research ideas. Starting from a wide dissemination to all disciplinary fields, the call has collected contributions from economists, urban planners, historians, architects, jurists, sociologists, designers and geographers (Fig. 3), coming from all Italian regions and from more than 50 universities (Fig. 4).

The second goal was to define the target researchers. The call for research and the Network that derived from it was addressed to “young researchers”, that is, young people not because of their age, but because of the experience in the field of research. The call was open to doctoral students or post-doctoral fellows who discussed their thesis within 5 years. This precise choice was made to consider the workshop, the event that put together the Network participants for the first time, as a place of horizontal dialogue and open meeting, where even researchers with less experience could actively participate in the discussion. But not only that. We were, at the same time, excited to discuss a very important subject that had already been debated in the past and is still discussed nowadays. At the same time, we were afraid that, as

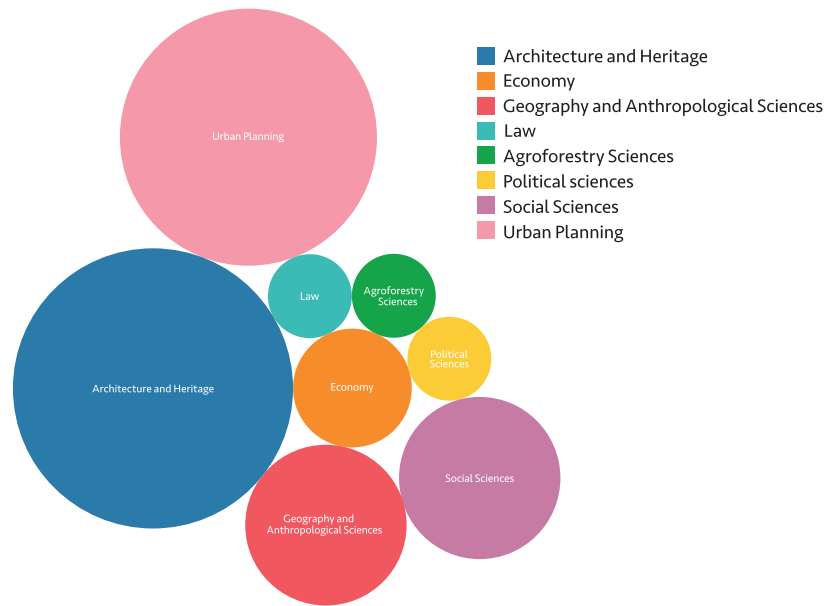


Fig. 3. The multidisciplinary of inner areas: the disciplinary areas of origin of researchers



Fig. 4. Map of the provenance of the researchers who responded to the call

young researchers, we lacked the authority that came from experience. However, we were curious to find out if our immature gazes, but virgin and fully passionate for the path still to be travelled, could offer an innovative perspective on this subject. What would have emerged from the meeting and dialogue between many young researchers from all over Italy and with different cultural and academic backgrounds?

Based on these premises, questions and objectives, the Young Researchers National Network for Inner Areas has come to life, a free group, which has met virtually for the first time through a Facebook group. This group was a useful tool to anticipate the real meeting scheduled for April 2020 in the classrooms of the Politecnico di Milano. The health emergency that has turned our lives upside down in the last year has also disrupted the Network's programmes, but the workshop took place anyway. We met remotely between June and July 2020 through virtual meetings. The idea of the workshop endured. The conference that we had planned as the first meeting of the Network was an opportunity for comparison and discovery, a symposium during which we came to know each other's response to a shared question originated from the SNAI and the theme of territorial fragility. We gathered around remote roundtables, each animated by about 15 researchers, with different backgrounds and experiences. In these roundtables, it was possible to reflect on inner areas, in relation to some fundamental themes and on the basis of our personal research experience. The topics we have identified are: public policies (Italian/ international) for disadvantaged areas and administrative fragmentation; rural system and local production; social innovation; tourism; services to the citizen (mobility-health-education-social welfare); depopulation and abandonment; land control and hydrogeological risk; economic development, entrepreneurship and industry strategies; architectural heritage and cultural heritage; natural heritage and environmental resources.

The book was born from this experience, from the different roundtables and from the maturation of the results of the debate. We are the authors, the founders and organisers of the network: Stefano D'Armento, Catherine Dezio, Agim Kërçuku, Rossella Moscarelli, Gloria Pessina, Benedetta Silva, Bruna Vendemmia - together with Giusy Pappalardo and Daniela Luisi, who helped us in managing the discussions during the workshop. Additionally, all the participants in the event helped to enrich the content, both through the workshop intervention and with texts, images and references, which we inserted in the different essays of this volume, in the form of "box". Regardless of the responsibility of each author, who reinterpreted with their own eyes the debate that took place during the workshop, this volume is, in all its aspects, a product of the Network. This is why the volume is an original contribution to the national and international debate on inner areas and policies in support of fragile areas. Original for its genesis and structure, but also for the heterodox and critical vision with which it discusses the theme of inner areas. The critical approach is one of the results of the work that the Network has put in place. Young researchers

read the research questions without compromise, because of their very nature, and even deal with them with irreverence. This irreverence may also be read between the lines of the essays that are collected in this volume. Undoubtedly, this is not to deny how good, helpful and interesting research works have been already done, and are currently in progress about inner areas and territorial fragility. The relevance of recent policies and actions is already largely discussed in the academic and institutional contexts and we as “young researchers” have the task of desecrating (allow us) this theme.

In this perspective, we deliver this vision, sometimes critical but constructive, to the academic debate. To the Italian, who knows the inner areas, their beauty and complexity in depth, and to the international, who experienced and studies many examples of territorial marginality and development policies. We also deliver it to those who are outside the academy, who inhabit and govern the inner areas. We believe that the research must come out of academy and intercept and influence the processes of action on the territory. Finally, we deliver it to all the participants of the Network. Thanks to them our project came to life and it was possible to write this volume.

Starting from the first results that are collected and presented here, we want to look to the future of the Network with new impetus, and above all to the future of inner areas from which our research journey began. Because it is from the most fragile areas, and with the youngest, that we believe the Country must start again.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE VOLUME

The workshop organisation, made not by disciplines or geographical areas but thematic subjects, and the centrality of the reflection about inner areas, are the spine around which the different chapters are built. The volume consists of 9 chapters and is divided into three parts. In the first part we discuss the dynamics and constitutive processes of inner areas: demographic dynamics of total or partial depopulation that in some cases lead to a complete retreat of the anthropic presence (Chapter 1); the presence of services that meet the essential needs of the inhabitants of inner areas, the tools for mapping them and the conditions and capacities needed for their design and management (Chapter 2); the administrative processes that guide the construction of public actions at the local level and the integration of the strategy with development policies at national level (Chapter 3). The second part of the volume focuses on the resources of inner areas. Chapter 4 defines inner areas as reservoirs of environmental resources and questions possible cognitive approaches, tools, practices and policies capable of addressing landscape issues as a transition opportunity from mining-based growth models to new alliances between humanity and the environment, to reduce the incidence of environmental risk. In this sense, the inner areas represent an important laboratory for knowledge experimentation, able to overcome disciplinary boundaries and to include technical knowledge and skills of

the inhabitants and institutional learning, sometimes with a conflictual dimension (Chapter 5). But inner areas are also rural systems with the intrinsic potentialities of becoming an active resource and territorial capital composed of the many dimensions of the territorial system: the cultural, natural, human and economic one (Chapter 6). In the same way, the architectural material heritage widespread in inner areas, but considered in a tangent and purely instrumental way by the SNAI (Chapter 7), constitutes an important resource. Finally, the third part of the volume discusses possible intervention strategies for the regeneration of inner areas. Chapter 8 questions how to plan a tourism strategy which could be a vector of development for the peripheral territories (Chapter 8). Chapter 9 presents a reflection on recent, local development practices, based on the exploitation of territorial resources and capacities, opening up to new perspectives (Chapter 9).

Beyond these specific themes, there are also intersecting issues that emerge at different points in the volume, which are addressed from time to time with different approaches and perspectives depending on the different contributions and disciplinary inputs: the tools needed to read the context; the ability to collect, catalogue and share data; the acquisition of local capacities, services and resource management; the need to provide a non-antithetical reading of inner areas; the proliferation of policies at different scales and based on different themes of intervention, which often cross over these territories without producing actual and real repercussions; the concept of territorial capital that manifests itself in its different dimensions as tangible cultural, cognitive heritage; last but not least, the question of the classification of inner areas and the possibility to develop an endogenous self-determination of geographical boundaries as an asset for local development not decided by an external entity.

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- You can follow the evolution of the debate and involve new participants through the Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/495175868040540>
- Working diaries of the ten tables of the National Young Researchers Workshop for Indoor Areas <https://www.eccellenza.dastu.polimi.it/blog/>



Inner areas for Italy

Gabriele Pasqui

What are “inner areas”? This is by no means an obvious question, because it brings into play an interpretation of inner areas in the context of a more comprehensive reading of the territorial dynamics of the country. Whilst it is indeed worth noting that “inner areas” is in part a name that alludes to a strategy and policies - starting with the interesting experience of the SNAI, as discussed in the following pages of this book - it would be a mistake to dismiss the polysemic nature of the concept of inner areas by reducing it to a mere statistical delimitation. Indeed, the expression “inner areas” refers not only to those areas defined by a certain distance (from major urban areas, from globalised flows, from the more dynamic demographic processes, from the all-pervading connectivity that we are now used to and that now seems ‘natural’ to us as a result) - and which therefore represent the ‘other’ in comparison with the geographies of the dominant development model - but also to a certain “intimacy”, an “internality” of these places, landscapes and heritages which suggests a different time and space, different ways of living.

The marginality and neglect of these inner areas are the result of a temporally stratified process in which long-term and very long-term dynamics (spanning the course of the entire 20th century, and perhaps even earlier) intertwine and overlap with more recent phenomena, connected to the acceleration of depopulation and the impoverishment of local economies as connected to the more general processes of reorganisation and restructuring of the local forms of production methods of territorial capitalism from post-WWII onwards.

This outlook, which places the fate of the inner areas into the broader context of the transformations that the demographic, socio-economic and environmental aspects of the Italian territories are undergoing, seems all the more opportune as the prospects of inner areas - both in Italy and beyond - crucially hinge upon the ability to offer a new perspective for territorial policies as a whole.

I believe that this working assumption is shared by the Italian National Network of Young Researchers for Inner Areas committee which edited this publication and which, for over a year, has been fuelling a very interesting discussion on the analytical and planning dimensions linked to the topic of inner areas, as a privileged place for interpreting the territorial divides and the fragile conditions of Italy as a whole.

From this perspective, the work done by the Network helps to feed into and enrich the work done as part of the Department of Excellence’s “Territorial Fragilities” Project at the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of the Politecnico di Milano, and it is for this reason that we have decided to support this publication and, more generally, the activity of the Network.

Moreover, I feel that this look at the issue of inner areas in the more general framework of identifying strategies for Italy as a whole is consistent with some recent publications, which take the policies applied to marginal areas as essential pieces of the puzzle for a different vision of the Italian model for development. I would like to mention two of these publications here, specifically two collective volumes: *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste* [Reinhabiting Italy. Inner areas between abandonment and recovery] (edited by Antonio De Rossi, Donzelli, 2018) and *Ricomporre i divari. Politiche e progetti territoriali contro le disuguaglianze e per la transizione ecologica* [Healing divisions. Territorial policies and projects against inequalities and for an ecological transition] (edited by Alessandro Coppola, Matteo Del Fabbro, Arturo Lanzani, Gloria Pessina, Federico Zanfi, il Mulino, 2021).

The work contained in the subsequent pages of this volume - in each of the three sections dedicated respectively to describing and classifying marginal areas, managing the resources that characterise these areas, and the tools and strategies used for these interventions - frames inner areas as places of both marginality and possibility, following a line of thinking that brings together inner areas, middle Italy and metropolitan environments.

What the Network of Young Researchers is banking on is that the perspective from which we look at Italy will allow us to imagine, and even invent, new economies, new social relations, perhaps even new institutions, modelling them on these “marginalised areas”,

in the face of the breakdown of the mechanism that entrusted the “centres” (starting with the major urban areas and their dense regions) with a leading role so as to guide the entire system.

This point of view also implies acknowledging the state of deep crisis that is affecting some (but not all!) of these inner areas, as well as the need to consolidate a new idea of citizenship for the places in which a scarcity of services and limited accessibility pose huge problems that require a radical reinvention of the local development model.

Looking at inner areas with particular attention to their natural, environmental, historical and architectural heritage, their social capital, their services, and the dynamics of their local economies - starting with the tourism sector - allows us to recognise the diversity of these areas, yet without disregarding the social and spatial inequalities and injustices that afflict them. As such, it is a matter of taking on what Carlo Donolo would have defined as the “variety” of the Italian territory, which is both tangible and intangible and which concerns its people, populations, histories, places and landscapes.

The perspective offered in this book recognises and places value on this variety, with its various essays and interesting asides taking a position that is capable of identifying the many Italies, working from the top down and the bottom up, but also from near and far. From the top down, by mapping out new geographies and putting together comprehensive images that reject stereotypical representations. From the bottom up, by mobilising local societies, actors, settled and moving populations within this map. From afar, by means of structural interpretation tools which connect the recognition of these new geographies to the processes of globalisation and the mechanisms for reorganising our systems of capitalism within the country. From near, by meticulously observing the localised relationships between social and spatial practices, between economic processes and the transformations of places, between the crisis of public services and their universalistic principle and the insufficient maintenance of the extraordinary heritage of material welfare.

The inner areas - the Italy of empty spaces, depopulation and abandonment, but more generally, the marginalised areas - never exist in a vacuum. They overlap and rub shoulders with the Italy that is full, populated, cared for. On this, I feel that the approach of the National Network of Young Researchers for Inner Areas does not indulge in any sort of localism or assumptions of the self-sufficiency of these areas. In order for the marginalised Italy to become a resource for the country, it is paramount, absolutely crucial, for it not to be thought of in terms of its isolation, its otherness. A project for Italy is necessarily a project centred on relationships. Between inner areas and medium-sized cities, between metropolitan peripheries and urban regions in decline, between coasts and valleys, between global flows and local relationships.

There is no way of reversing ideas, views and policies on inner areas that involves ignoring the processes taking places in urban environments and, specifically, in metropolitan areas. Indeed, it is precisely in order to gain a better and more extensive understanding of the interdependencies and vicious or virtuous circles that link together the major urban

areas, the ‘in-between’ Italy of its medium-sized cities and urban sprawl, the inner and marginal areas, we must first come to see how this ‘empty’ Italy can represent a resource for the ‘full’ Italy, and vice versa.

What this means in this context is avoiding the charming - yet deeply unfounded - images of a post-pandemic prospect of abandoning the cities for the villages, though I feel that it is equally necessary to work on the assumption that perhaps not all of Italy’s marginal areas can be reinhabited, though some of them must be capable of providing ecosystem services that will prove essential in this situation of climate change. That a reinvention of sustainable models for tourism depends on the ability to produce new economies - and not simply niche ones - in vast swathes of inland Italy, in a relationship that must be reinvented with an overhauled idea of coastal tourism. That the management of migratory phenomena should be perceived as an essential testing ground for new projects to care for, maintain and rehabilitate the areas and landscapes of marginal Italy.

In other words, a project for the inner areas becomes a project for the country if it gives up on any idea of self-sufficiency and instead envisages alliances not only with the few strong areas, but also with those “centres” suffering an identity crisis whose definitive disconnection, but also progressive marginalisation, would only exacerbate the country’s structural problems in the European and international context.

There is one more of the many elements examined in this volume that I should like to highlight. The analysis and proposals contained herein and directed at the inner areas lie at the exact intersection of two demands which I believe should be taken together as the cornerstones for a new policy for Italy’s territories: an environmental demand and a demand for socio-spatial justice.

In this light, a collection of projects for the marginalised sections of Italy can only represent a single piece in a broader overarching strategy for the environmentally-sustainable conversion of the economy. It is important not to lose sight of the fact - as articulately explained in the second section of this book - that the inner areas bear the weight of a decisive proportion of the environmental balance of this country. Reconstructing a geography of fragile areas involves placing a crucial focus on analysing the effects of climate change, of the imbalances resulting from the prevalence of a model for development with no regard for the future, of the fragility of our soil, our air, our rivers and coastlines, highlighting the potentially decisive role of “marginal” areas in reinventing a development model that is considerate of climate change and ecologically sustainable.

However, this attention to the environmental dimension of the transition must also be politicised by assuming the central role of the issue of justice and combating the growing inequalities between areas and populations.

For all these reasons, I consider the volume *Inner Areas in Italy. A testbed for interpreting and designing marginal territories* to represent a significant contribution as source material for both scientific research and civil debate, with a view to developing a policy for inner areas as an essential part of a new model of territorial development for our country.

PART I

Describing and Classifying Marginal Territories

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1

Depopulation and abandonment. A thematic map of shrinking territories

Agim Kërçuku

Shrinking can be a generic and ambiguous notion. In this essay, shrinking is considered as a possible condition of the fragility of territory and concerns not only the socio-demographic decline but is also related to the retreat of anthropogenic presence, the degradation of the social fixed capital and the abandonment of the building and infrastructural heritage. While not at the centre of the great seasons of urban and territorial studies of the last century, shrinking literature is vast and continuously accumulating. The extensive review of positions allows us to recognise, with different intensities and conceptualisations, six relevant series of studies that have had a significant relationship with the phenomenon of shrinking: the epochal rural exodus of mountain and agricultural areas; the crisis of the city; the season of productive decentralisation and divestment; the emergence of the different forms of widespread urbanisation; the most episodic forms of catastrophes; political and social changes and related migrations. Finally, the study of literature allows us to reflect on the perception of shrinking in public and disciplinary debate. There is a unitary and covering inclination that returns, on the one hand, a mournful and alarmist attitude towards the phenomenon of shrinking, and, on the other hand, delivers consolidated images linked only to depopulation and the abandonment of inland areas.

A WEAKENED AND CONTESTED LANGUAGE

The territory and the city are also a metaphor for society, writes the sociologist Arnaldo Bagnasco (2016). Urban planners, architects and sociologists can talk about it among themselves and together with other scholars only if they can find a wavelength that allows it. Words and images are the essential elements on which this wavelength is based. Therefore, it is now necessary to rediscover a focus on the relationship between words and their meanings and identify an appropriate language to understand urban phenomena (Bianchetti, 2018).

However, the most widespread attitudes on the definitions and meanings of words in disciplines, not only architectural and urban planning, are generally understood and deformed within two misleading tendencies: the strongly reductive attitude of its meaning and the continuous tendency of contention between different disciplines.

The first concerns an attitude that has been firmly built in the last forty years; it was in the 80s that the language in architecture and urban planning started to fragment and crack (Bianchetti 2011, Bianchetti et al. 2015). The links between words, objects, spaces and processes were broken, definitively marking the end of the twentieth century (Bianchetti 2011). Multiple ruptures have corroded and weakened the meaning of words, making them sometimes vague and other times even empty. Not even the words and definitions considered foundational for a very long time are now capable of describing the contemporary territory's transformations. (Guess 2014, AaVv 2005, Secchi 2013, Olmo 2018). The articles and essays are accompanied by words with a constant uncertainty of meanings, thus plunging the language into a dust.

At the same time, we find similar difficulties in those cases where there is a process of claiming the use of words by different disciplines and fields. This second attitude, which we could define as linguistic segregation, shows itself very clearly in cases where there is a continuous dispute over the authorship of the words, which inexorably alienates the possibility of agreement (Zucconi, 1989). This is a behaviour that frequently leads some disciplines to entrench themselves in a sort of ivory tower. The isolation definitively marks the separation between reality and research.

Against this twofold movement's background of weakening and contention, how is the relationship between the words 'territorial fragility' and 'shrinking' measured?

TERRITORIAL FRAGILITY AND SHRINKING

In the Treccani vocabulary, *shrinking* (contrazione) is defined as: s. f. [lat. *contractio* -onis, der. of *contrahĕre* «to contract»]. 1. The contracting, being contracted, concerning a body or matter that has the right to shrink, to shrink. [...] 3. fig. Reduction, decrease, decrease: c. *sales, consumption; a considerable c is expected. the volume of business.* [...].

However, the definition of the word *shrinking* depends on the problem that arises. What does *shrinking* mean within the articulated and plural processes of the fragility of the relationship between space and society? What does the phenomenon of *shrinking* express for a territory? What elements are constitutive of this

condition of fragility? Is it possible to distinguish different phenomena of *shrinking*? If so, what could those fixed or variable elements be that allow us to recognise different situations?

Generally, when we talk about a territory's *shrinking*, the phenomenon of population reduction is associated with it, which is the loss of the demographic capital in a given space. However, the relationship between *territorial fragility* and *shrinking* is endowed with a vast interpretative capacity that allows us to open different paths. Paths that touch the various forms of capital (of a territory): *economic, material, symbolic, spatial* (Bourdieu 1968; see chapter Catherine Dezio in this volume), to which the social and demographic one must be added. Within this writing, the word *shrinking* could be explained precisely through the intersection and overlapping of these paths: the *shrinking* of the territories' capitals. The word *shrinking* is considered as a possible condition of the fragility of territory. It does not concern only those territories in which we witness the dynamics of *shrinking* of the populations present, the activities carried out and the flows that pass through them. It also concerns those territories with an increasing lack of care and maintenance and abandonment processes of significant public and private built heritage segments. A heritage that may appear to be in excess is also due to past dynamics of overproduction, or less and less habitable, due to its urban-building connotations and the contexts in which it is inserted. Territorial fragility becomes evident in those territories where we witness the erosion of coexistence forms, and the cracking of spatial support inherited from the twentieth century and those territories with exposure to environmental, social, economic, political and institutional issues.

Italy has not known radical phenomena of *shrinking* due to dramatic crises of the Fordist industrial realities (as they have emerged in some contexts in North America), nor has it known strong political upheavals (as in the case of Eastern European countries), but rather it has experienced phenomena of progressive and consolidated *shrinking*, which we can consider to be of very long duration. A *consolidated shrinking* that has mainly characterised those territories defined inland areas and often coincides with villages and highlands, places marked by building abandonment and population decline. However, this is a known dynamic, widely studied and affected by numerous national policies, of which the SNAI is only the latest in a long series.

The first hypothesis that moves this work is that the so-called internal areas are utterly consolidated shrinking areas. The geography of the shrinking also touches on something else. The emerging geographies of the shrinking in Italy question the consolidated images, which tend to trace depopulation and abandonment of the territory only to inland areas (Kërçuku et al., 2020). The geography of the shrinking with different intensities also concerns the portions of the territory at the centre in the recent process of twentieth-century urbanisation, the metropolitan cities and *Italia di mezzo* (In-between Italy), that part of the Italian territory that cannot be ascribed either to metropolitan or internal areas (Kërçuku et al., 2020).

Against the background of this declination of *shrinking*, how has the disciplinary literature on the subject measured itself? The following paragraphs will return the reconnaissance work on the disciplinary literature. The following were examined: volumes, international journals and research conducted in major universities and research centres on demographic shrinking issues.

BOX 1.1

The pattern of shrinking and regional policies. Network resources for the territories and landscapes of the Parma Apennines

Barbara Caselli
Università di Parma

The process of depopulation in the most marginal areas seems rather irreversible, yet the presence of social capital is fundamental for countering abandonment and the degradation of land and landscape.

The research activity carried out defined a methodology to map the spatial distribution of shrinking areas in Italy, with the support of GIS technology. This highlighted strong territorial inequalities, even in regions considered homogeneous from a geographical-administrative and socio-economic point of view. In addition, the comparative analysis on socio-economic and land cover dynamics in various case studies confirmed that plans and policies have not always been able to provide efficient territorial management.

In the eastern Parma Apennines, territorial disparities are quite evident in the lower and upper valley: one is a well-known growing centre dedicated to agri-food production subject to the degradation of "traditional

landscapes", the other is subject to a continuous shrinkage of "social landscapes", despite the proximity to a pilot area included in the Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas.

In this framework, the potential role of landscape as a strategic element for triggering territorial revitalisation and synergies among regions with different degrees of marginality is investigated. The research intends to consider the potential relevance of landscape policies alongside local development policies, also collaborating in various experiences able to strengthen a constructive dialogue with local communities, such as the course 'Materia Paesaggio 2019', organised by the Emilia-Romagna Region in collaboration with the University of Parma, the network 'UNIAPPENNINO' and the 'landscape and inner areas' working group of the Regional Observatory for the Quality of the Landscape.

BOX 1.2

Emigration from the Madonie area: a statistical analysis

Giuseppe Dino, Mariele Macaluso
independent researchers

Internal migration has a great impact on shaping the demographic dynamics and shows geographical transversal traits. A survey carried out in 2018 focuses on the phenomenon of depopulation from the Madonie area in Sicily, which is covered by the SNAI (National Strategy for Internal Areas), going beyond the traditional view on emigration from the South to the most economically developed areas. According to ISTAT census data, the number of citizens residing in all Madonie municipalities decreased by 10% between 2008 and 2018, with the population set to decline further in the next 10 years. This survey revealed that 60.9% of respondents are willing to move back to their hometown under the same working or study conditions, while 39.1% do not intend to move back to their hometown. The lack of job opportunities, therefore, would not be the main cause of population decline, but rather a consequence of a more complex territorial framework, where an appropriate living

environment would influence motivations against or toward relocation.

The statistical analysis also suggests that trust in the political system is particularly low. These young individuals are less likely to have confidence in political institutions and leaders, with negative implications for their collective capacity. Local and regional institutions are perceived to be disengaged in facing the current urgent needs and challenges faced by the socio-economic context of these areas.

In conclusion, the results show a lack of circular mobility, which could be a potential tool to foster development by reducing the negative effects of brain drain and encouraging brain circulation.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the already-existing territorial imbalances across regions, thus further marginalising the smallest areas. On the other hand, the post-pandemic could offer a unique opportunity to tackle the impact on inequality dynamics towards a more inclusive society.

A LONG STUDY SEASON

The list of books, articles, conference panels and exhibitions on demographic shrinkage is growing inexorably. If we try to list the titles of several books published on the issue, temporarily suspending the inclusion of articles in magazines, exhibitions and conferences, here are some titles: *Lo spopolamento montano in Italia: indagine geografico-economico-agraria* by the Comitato per la geografia del Consiglio Nazionale

delle Ricerche e dell'Istituto Nazionale di Economia Agraria, *Urban Decline and the Future of American Cities* of Bradbury, Downs and Small, *Urban Europe: A study of growth and decline* by Van der Berg, Drewett and Klaasen, *L'Italia emergente. Indagine geo-demografica sullo sviluppo periferico* of Cencini, Demattei and Menegatti, *Liguria: un declino "a valenze multiple"* of Caselli within the *Storia dell'Unità d'Italia, Shrinking cities*, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2 by Philipp Osvalt, *Design after decline: how America rebuilds shrinking cities* by Ryan Brent, *Apocalypse Town. Cronaca della fine della civiltà urbana* by Alessandro Coppola, *Shrinking cities: international prospective and policy implication* by Pellagst, Weichmann and Martinez-Fernandez, *Implosions / Explosions. Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanizations*, edited by Neil Brenner, *Città tra sviluppo e declino. Un'agenda urbana per l'Italia* by Antonio Calafati, *Città territorio urbanistica tra crisi e contrazione* by Arturo Lanzani, *La España Vacía* by Sergio del Molino, *Quel che resta. L'Italia dei paesi tra abbandoni e ritorni* by Vito Teti, *Shrinking Cities and First Suburbs* by Anirban Adhya, *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste a cura* by Antonio De Rossi, *Città in contrazione. Modelli interpretativi per ambiti urbani di piccole e medie dimensioni in Italia dal 1990 al 2016* by Casello, Ventura and Zazzi. If, on the one hand, the quantity is striking, it is, on the other hand, necessary to pay attention to the publication dates; in fact, the books listed are respectively from 1932, 1982, 1982, 1986, 1994, 2006, 2012, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2017, 2018 and 2019. The list could go on but what is important to underline is that although studies and research on the phenomenon of demographic shrinking have greatly multiplied, especially in the last twenty years, the question of demographic shrinking is not new, let alone so recent.

The multiplication of reflections on these issues in the last 30 years will be dealt with later. In that case, it is interesting to understand how the theme of demographic shrinking has entered urban and territorial studies. Except in some specific disciplinary fields, the issue of depopulation has never had great scientific success. The anxieties and worries have always turned to the population's constant growth, and the problem has never been permanently covered. However, it can be noted that in Italy, the relationship between *shrinking* and *territory* can be identified with different intensities and conceptualisations in at least six relevant study seasons from the early twentieth century to today.

The six seasons of studies dealt with in the following paragraphs are mainly overlapping and owed to the specific conditions in which the relationship between territory and demographic trends is restored in Italy and industrialised countries. They are a synthetic picture and allow us to understand fully how the relationship between shrinking and territory has changed over the years.

The first, identified as early as the 1930s in public inquiries by the National Institute of Agricultural Economics and by the National Committee for Geography of the CNR on *Spopolamento montano in Italia*, reports episodes of progressive lightening of some mountain areas hit by phenomena of "epochal" rural exodus (Lanzani and Curci: 2018). In this case, the theme of demographic shrinking is accompanied by the dualism of city

- countryside and condemns the latter to a profound marginalisation and depopulation (AA. VV., 1932). The study season focuses solely on observing the highlands of the Alps and the Apennines. It represents the first piece of the complex schedule of studies and research on population shrinking. Carlo Levi's 1945 book *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* may also belong to this first season of studies. Initially imagined by the author himself as a historical-political essay, as a social study, which later became a classic of Italian literature, it testifies to life in the territories of Lucania in fascist Italy as a confinement from 1935 to 1936. A life marked by profound misery, distance and depopulation, especially of its male inhabitants, who emigrated to North America (Levi: 1945).

Towards the end of the *glorious thirties* there is the first slowdown in urban growth and expansion, and a new season of shrinking appears. Unlike the first season, it is built around the expression *crisis of the city* (Brenner: 2014), and is generated by the high unemployment, precariousness and degradation of large urban agglomerations, as in the case of Turin. It is the worst social crisis in the city that causes a progressive displacement of the population towards other urban forms.

Subsequently, it will be the theme of divestment, with the crisis of large companies' productive organisation and the decentralisation of production (Secchi and Garofoli, 1977), that marks a new season of studies relating to the theme of demographic shrinking. In many parts of the territories of industrialised countries, the change in economies, from Fordist production systems to post-Fordist economies, has generated a growing under-use and abandonment of parts of territories and many urban centres that were once profoundly industrialised (Soja, 2000; cf. Daniela Luisi in this volume).

The economic, social and spatial disintegration of the Fordist model, on the one hand, opens the way to the long season of studies on dismission, and, on the other hand, turns the lens on new forms of more widespread urbanisation of the territory, a destination of escape from the city (Indovina et al., 1990), which feeds the progressive thinning of the population in the territories.

Nevertheless, some territories can be marked by more episodic phenomena of abandonment. These are phenomena caused by sudden changes in environmental conditions or by the advent of cataclysms and catastrophes, which force the inhabitants to abandon, rebuild and replace entire cities. The literature on disasters and natural disasters is abundant. However, there is a strand of this literature that has marginally dealt with the issue of depopulation and abandonment after catastrophic events (Navarra, 2018).

However, it is not only the economic and spatial transformations that generate *shrinking* phenomena; in the 90s, a new season of studies was related to depopulation. These studies focus on territorial contexts in which we are witnessing strong migration and population decline following political transformations. This is a phenomenon that is not present in Italy and has repercussions on the Italian territory, especially since Italy becomes the destination of some of the populations from Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

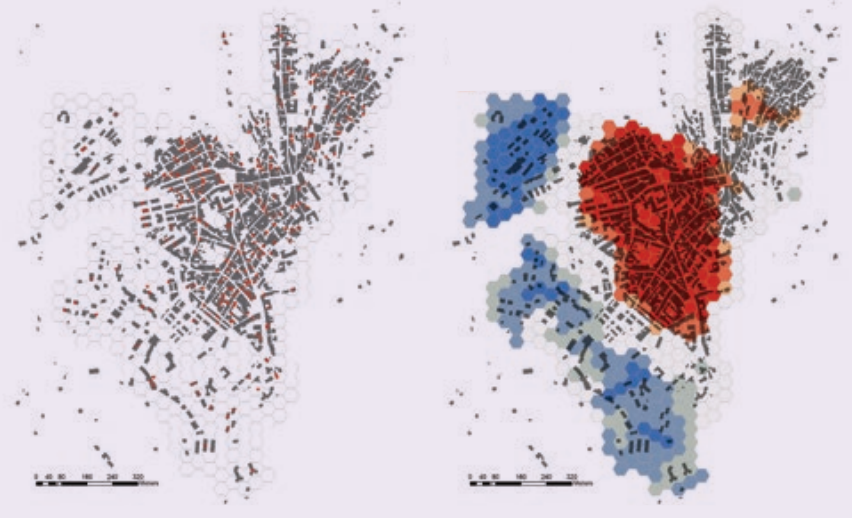
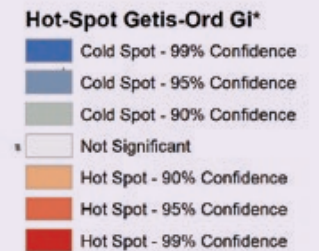
This is a comprehensive and plural picture, consisting of overlaps and coexistences, which shows a different spatialisation of *shrinking*, both in the forms of settlement and in their location in Italy and abroad. The shrinking affects urban centres, entire metropolitan regions, intermediate territories and internal areas in

BOX 1.3

The dying Italian cities: spatial analyzes of empty housing to guide place-based policies

Carmelo Ignaccolo
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Lack of granular data often hampers targeted interventions in shrinking cities. However, geocoded solid-waste tax records could offer some insights into how vacant dwellings are spatially distributed. These maps show the location of empty dwellings in Aidone (Enna) and illustrate how spatial statistics can help us measure housing vacancy's clustering effects.



BOX 1.4

Attraction, depopulation, and value streams. An exploration of the connection between metropolitan attraction, depopulation of inner areas and dynamics of value extraction through housing and urban land rent

Marco Peverini

Politecnico di Milano

The demographic dynamics in Italy are characterised by two different trends; on the one hand, the depopulation of small towns located in the inland areas of the country and, on the other hand, the attraction exerted by some economically more prosperous urban centres leads the younger and more dynamic parts of the population from the peripheral areas – the inner areas and the *Italia di mezzo* (“Middle Italy”) – to attractive metropolitan agglomerations (e.g. Milan-Bologna).

These phenomena are certainly not new, having taken place throughout the XX century in the form of work migration to major industrial centres. Families and individuals fled from the marginality of their condition towards the hopes offered by large cities through work, partly facilitated by policies such as public housing, which allowed them to settle and sometimes allocate resources to the contexts of origin through forms of “remittances”.

My hypothesis is that with the erosion of incomes and the trends of the housing market in the most dynamic cities - characterised by apparent affordability problems - migration to major centres takes place at the expense of the inner areas of origin in various respects. Firstly, as a loss of population and “human capital”. Secondly, in the form of public expenditure, to support the public investment that is concentrated in these cities. But also, perhaps, through negative economic flows from families of origin to bear the high costs of housing, to the benefit of real estate speculation. The thesis is explored theoretically, starting from the data available in the literature, and then analysed in depth through data, questionnaires, interviews and “housing pathways” of young people who migrated to Milan.

different ways. The shrinking has different temporalities; sometimes it is expressed over a long period, other times we can find it in isolated episodes and other times in cyclical sequences.

THE LAST 20 YEARS

Suppose we broaden our gaze to the international horizon. In that case, it is possible to recognise a certain similarity in the span of the six seasons, also for other developed countries of the globe. We are witnessing, as happens in Italy, a different spatialisation of the phenomenon: from the decline and emptying of the Flint factory and Detroit following the territorial reorganisation of automobile production; the abandonment of the activities and rural areas of Scotland and Ireland; the loss of populations in some marginal areas of France and Spain due to peripheral phenomena; to the ageing and lightening of the Japanese territories; up to the institutional and city crisis of the socialist bloc of Eastern Europe.

While observing a long history in the various seasons of study, from the survey of the literature on the subject, it is possible to underline that only in the last thirty years has the phenomenon of demographic shrinking become one of the rising urban themes studies. In fact, in line with the positions of some scholars (Bernt, 2016), it can be said that it is in the last thirty years that the issue has exploded, definitively and powerfully sanctioning the entry of the issues of demographic decline into national urban agendas (Calafati, 2015). As reported in the previous paragraphs, the multiplication of books, to which we must add the exhibitions (*Shrinking cities* of the Pratt Manhattan Gallery / Van Alen Institute in 2006, *Shrinking cities* within the 10th Venice Biennale of 2006), the monographic issues in journals (*International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 2012, *Built Environment*, 2012) the panels dedicated to international conferences (AESOP 2019, SIU 2019, INU 2019, SIU 2020-2021) and articles and essays testify to a vast production, which continues incessantly to accumulate and rearrange its contours and contents.

SHRINKING AS A GENERIC TERM

The term *shrinking* can be considered recent; in fact, it is only in the last twenty years that the term is commonly used in urban studies. Until the 1990s, words such as *decline*, *decay*, *abandonment* and *crisis* were used to describe shrinking phenomena. As seen above, although strongly present in many seasons of studies, the phenomenon of shrinking had not managed to emerge as an independent line of studies. The growing recognition of shrinking studies can be associated with the “*Stadtumbau Ost*” German policies. The German policy programme was oriented towards those in East German cities that were hit by significant population losses after reunification. German planners choose to conceptualise the phenomenon through the use of the word *shrinking*, as this word had a neutral meaning, contrary to the negative perceptions that the words used up to that moment had. (Bernt, 2014). Since then, *shrinking* has become a general term and attempts have also been made to reconstruct definitions and conceptualisations of the phenomenon. (Oswalt and Rieniets 2006), (Schilling and Logan 2008), (Hollander and Nemeth, 2011), (Martinez-Fernandez et al. 2012: 214), (Audirac et al. 2012: 226), (Haase et al. 2013) (Pallagst et al. 2013: 3), (Lanzani and Cruci, 2017: 80).

However, in addition to the demographic framework's transformations, the phenomenon of *shrinking* in the disciplinary literature also refers to the economic, social, political and spatial transformations. The modification of economies from industrial to service economies, the change in urban forms and the change in the social bond forms show a different spatialisation of the phenomenon. It can be observed how the literature attributes a character with a wholly consolidated and known

BOX 1.5

Anthropology, poetics and rhetoric of depopulation. Case study: Visual ethnography in the internal areas of Basilicata

Marina Berardi

Università degli Studi della Basilicata

The two images represent the same place, St. Innocenzo Street in Grassano in the province of Matera, seen from two different perspectives and different historical moments.

The use of images allows us to historically stratify the gaze. It becomes an elicitation tool to capture and highlight the sense of places, the ecology of space and culture.



Marina Berardi, Grassano, 2019.



Annabella Rossi, Grassano, 1959, ICPI, AFM Fondo Annabell Rossi, inv.726353

shrinking in the territories of the villages and other lands (the so-called *inland areas*) and underlines the emergence of contemporary and little-known geography that also affects others. The emerging geographies of the *shrinking* in Italy with different intensities also concern the portions of the territory at the centre of the twentieth-century urbanisation process, such as more fragile interstices and metropolitan fringes, medium-sized cities with different levels of functional centrality, peri-urban contexts and the urban continuum- rural plains and hills, i.e., a substantial part of what we call *Italia di mezzo* (In-between Italy) (Kercuku et al., 2020) and metropol-

BOX 1.6

Living in depopulation, living in a dynamic. Practices, processes and trajectories of an "intermediate" municipality

Valeria Volpe

Università IUAV di Venezia

In some cases abrupt, in others progressive, depopulation is a complex dynamic that nowadays involves extremely different territories and communities. It can be considered both consequence and cause of important transformations in the way of life. The aim of the thesis is to overcome the idea that depopulation and full abandonment overlap by considering depopulation as a process, as a form of transition. Who lives this process today? Is it possible to identify forms of adaptation and resistances capable of dealing with abandonment and simplification of the human environment? What are the effects of the actions proposed on a local and national scale? The contest we're focusing on is in Southern Italy "inner areas" through a closer qualitative observation of the municipality

of Biccari, in the Foggia district, part of the "Monti Dauni" area. Far from the image of a ghost town, the village is an interesting case of living in an in-between condition, both geographically and demographically. This case gives us the chance to observe, on the one hand, a community living and dealing with contraction at a different intensity, and, on the other, the engagement of the local municipality, trying to define a new project for the village. The observation of a small local context, together with the analysis of national debate, allows us to understand how local contexts react to the sense of urgency caused by the population decrease and to a growing attention of the scientific community and the media towards inner areas and countryside.

itan cities. The phenomenon of *shrinking* in these territories remains little explored, especially in its post-crisis 2008 articulation. These are parts of Italy where we are witnessing current dynamics that are in the process of consolidation or emerging dynamics of *shrinking* of which we can only grasp at the clues and traces of the not fully evident signals that could problematically characterise a part of Italy in the coming years (Kercuku et al., 2020).

ALARMISM AND GOOD LIVING

What emerges from this extensive review of disciplinary positions and definitions is a recognisable attitude. The disciplinary searches return an idea of the *territory in shrinking* characterised by a precise and restrictive label. In fact, in our daily practices, in the rhetoric of public discourse and also in the disciplinary debate, the word *shrinking* is charged with a unique and stigmatised meaning, very close to the obsessive and restless idea of alarm, increasing a widespread cultural pessimism. The *shrinking territory* is seen as a hollow gum (Esposito, 2018) in which everything is gradually eroded. The void, the remains of the *shrinking*, is frightening, and alarmism excludes any thought or gesture that overflows its meaning. The same convergence for a mournful and alarmist attitude can also be found in the literature's identification of the causes and effects that affect a *shrinking territory*: it is a combination of economic, demographic, political and spatial transformations.

The shrinking theme has a solid social and scientific value; it affects economics, urban planning and politics and is highly topical since, according to the latest estimates for the coming years, it is a phenomenon that will not diminish. Therefore, one of the issues to be addressed will be to understand how we can escape alarmism and consider *shrinking* as a natural phenomenon in developed countries. What does the word *shrinking* mean without envelope itself in the lexicon of decay, uncertainty, mourning and loss?

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The role of public services in the inner areas: from a problematic question to the definition of opportunities

Bruna Vendemmia

The availability of public services is at the basis of the definition of inner areas in Italy. Inner areas in Italy are defined by SNAI as those territories located at more than 20 minutes' driving distance from essential public services: education, health and mobility. This chapter deals with public services through different perspectives: from one angle, it looks at them as an element of defining

marginal areas and discusses the tools needed to investigate what are essential needs and basic services; from the other angle, it explores both the different systems of governance needed to plan public services in the inner areas and the conditions and the instruments useful for designing services which may respond properly to citizenship needs in these specific contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Inner areas have traditionally been identified with border and mountainous areas and more in general as being geographically far from urban centres (Bock, 2016). Nevertheless, geographical location and distance are only two of the conditions that may help to describe the complex process of territorial marginalisation. Recent studies suggest an interpretation of marginality as a lack of socioeconomic and political connection (Leimgruber, 2004; Pelc, 2006; Bock, 2016), overpassing a geographical model that considers the contraposition of centre and peripheries (Cullen e Pretes, 2000; Gatzweiler e Baumüller, 2014; Vendemmia, Pucci, Beria, 2021) and giving value to the multidimensional and processual component (Máliková, et al. 2016, p. 94).

As it has been already said in the introduction of this book, the Italian classification elaborated by the SNAI is based on the possibility given to each citizen to access some rights on an equal basis: mobility, health and instruction identified with three main public services: train stations, secondary schools and hospitals with E.R. Investigating the subject of public services is then fundamental to understand: the processes that make those areas marginal, the different conditions that may initiate a process of fragilisation and, finally, the useful instruments to elaborate place-sensitive strategies for their requalification. Two main questions will be analysed throughout this chapter:

1) First of all, their definition is based on the levels of peripherality that the different territories have with reference to some services. Nevertheless, this definition has some problems: even though equally marginal from the main service provision centres, inner areas have very different socio-economic characteristics. This condition shows the necessity of a classification method which highlights similarities and differences (Majoral, Andreoli, Delgado Cravidéio, 1998). It therefore seems important to understand what the essential public services are, the ones needed to exercise basic rights in these territories, for which group of population and what are the most suitable methods to identify and analyse them. A final question concerns the identification of a unique temporal accessibility threshold, without considering physical and morphological characteristics of the territory, the type of services, their quality, the users concerned and the possible ways to calculate it.

2) Next, the need to develop new tools of governance will be discussed, particularly with reference to low density territories and based on a precise and deep knowledge of their main characteristics, in order to enhance their potentialities. Indeed, it has been highlighted that in Italy in recent years, the shortage of public services and welfare is one of the principal reasons for internal migration (Colucci, 2018: 329) and is among the main causes of depopulation of certain areas of the country in favour of others which are better equipped (see chapter 1, Kercuku, in this book). Some authors have highlighted a positive

correlation among demographic loss, a high percentage of elderly, low income and a reduction of both public and private services (Franklin, 2019). To know and to analyse inner and marginal areas in their most representative characteristics is essential to elaborate specific solutions to reverse demographic trends in these territories. As a matter of fact, not only the availability of public services prevents depopulation and socioeconomic marginality, but as shown in many works throughout this chapter, the design of services, the way to supply them and the involvement of citizens in the different levels of design and management may contribute to the enhancement of local know-how and to an increase in local development in inner areas.

IDENTIFY BASIC NEEDS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF INNER AREAS: TYPOLOGY, QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES

As highlighted in the introduction of this chapter, inner areas have been defined in Italy based on an accessibility indicator to some citizen rights established by the Italian Constitution: the right to instruction (art. 34); health (art. 32) and mobility (art. 16). According to SNAI, those rights are guaranteed when citizens are able to access some services quickly.

Without questioning the importance of education, health and mobility rights, the indicator selected to define inner areas has some problems¹. If the main goal of the strategy is to guarantee the access to essential services on a national scale, the principles according to which those services are considered essential have not been clarified. Many scholars affirm that the definition of foundational services is still a challenge for academic research (Pereira, Schwanen e Banister, 2016), or that it is not possible to define a univocal and comprehensive list of essential needs (Nussbaum, 2011). In 2018, the Foundational Economy Collective tried to define goods and services necessary for everyday life whose limited access prevents living and limits its possibilities (Foundational Economy Collective, 2018). Foundational economy may be further discriminated in a) the material foundational economy, which consists of “pipes and cables, networks and branches which continuously connect household to daily essentials – like water, electricity, retail, banking and food – where interruption of supply results in immediate crisis” (ibid.: 20), but also car sales, which in rural low-density areas are still the only opportunity for movement.² b) The providential foundational economy which includes public-sector

1 For more details about the methodology to define inner areas please refer to: DPS - Dipartimento per lo Sviluppo e la Coesione Economica. Le aree interne: di quale territori parliamo? Explanatory methodological note for the definition of inner areas. Available at: https://www.agenziacoesione.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Nota_metodologica_Aree_interne-2-1.pdf, last access 25/05/2021.

2 In this regard, inner areas in Italy have been defined according to driving distance to essential services, for example.

welfare activity providing universal services, such as health, instruction, public order and public administration. Finally, there is also c) the overlooked economy (ibid.: 41), which includes goods and services culturally defined as essential. This is a category that evolves according to sociocultural parameters, as also affirmed by Amartya Sen, according to whom, the definition of foundational needs follows cultural peculiarity from society to society (Sen, 2005).

If the SNAI puts attention governmental processes on marginal and disadvantaged areas, identifying their marginality with the lack of essential services and proposing a structural approach, it is nevertheless clear that the three services identified as essential to guarantee citizenship rights are not sufficient to offer an appropriate representation of the different characteristics of marginal territories on a national scale, neither can they help to spot the main problems. For this reason, several research studies explore possible methods able to define marginal and disadvantaged areas more precisely and to propose suitable solutions, in some cases testing analytical methods based on clustering algorithms to identify the main problems (box 2.1), and in others considering socioeconomic characteristics (Vendemmia, Pucci, Beria, 2021), or even including hydrogeological fragility (Marucci, Fiorini, Di Dato, Zullo, 2020) and environmental questions (see Chapter 5 Pessina, in this book; Zolin, Ferretti, Grandi, 2020) as criterion of selection. The shortage of updated and detailed data may be listed among the main limits of these experiences. For example, in Italy, the national database furnishes trustworthy data which are comparable at municipality level for all the country, although they are available every 10 years. If the launch of a permanent census in 2018 allows us to benefit from recent data updated on a yearly basis³, it must be underlined that those are anyhow statistical data based on administrative borders that are often, in low density areas, not able to describe real practices of use of the territory. Nowadays, it is still complex to use digital data that may impact both the way we read urban phenomena, giving access to more fine grain information, and how we make decisions for cities, although still with very important limits (Rabaria, Storpera, 2015; Concilio, Pucci, 2021). They are very costly and subject to privacy, and legal aspects concerning their use and dissemination are still evolving (Falcone, 2016). It is often difficult to check the reliability of the data and, finally, it may be improper to use the information that has been collected for other purposes (Milne, Watling, 2019).

Other approaches suggest paying attention to local and less institutional behaviours (Sen, 2010; Martens, 2007), allowing the inhabitants themselves to identify their basic needs and temporal threshold through a method that involves listening to local communities. The most useful tools in these cases are: focus group, round tables, interviews and participatory surveys, which help to recognise “cognitive chains” (Golino, Marchetti, 2017), defined as paths that connect local

3 Permanent census is based on the combination of administrative data combined with sample surveys.

A multi-domain clustering approach to define inner areas: an application to an Italian province

Valentino Moretto*

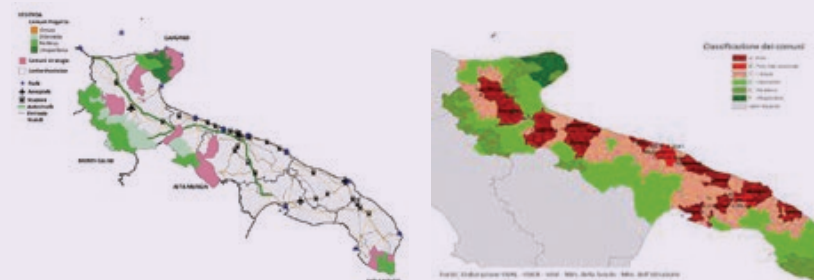
Università del Salento

Recent policy indications encourage the rethinking of criteria for the definition of inner areas, and recent studies highlight the opportunity to adopt a multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach in the parameterisation of inner areas. In this perspective, after a review of the main methodologies adopted for the definition of the inner areas, our work presents a new territorial planning model based on clustering algorithms (K-means ++, AriSel, Skater) applied to a knowledge base of multi-domain indicators organised into seven categories. The results achieved demonstrate how it is possible to obtain multiple mappings of inner areas according to the goals of the analysis in the strategic view to identify and comprehend common elements, good practices and policies to share and implement. The proposed approach allows the methodological limits of the current “top-down” (classification of inner areas imposed by the central government) and “bottom-up” methods (illusion that the places have the economic and cognitive resources required to realise effective mapping strategies for territorial development) to be overcome. The research provides a contribution on the exploration of new qualitative and quantitative approaches that can be used to process data sources already available at the municipal level for defining the inner areas, with the final aim to optimise resources and develop strategies for the socio-economic development of territories.

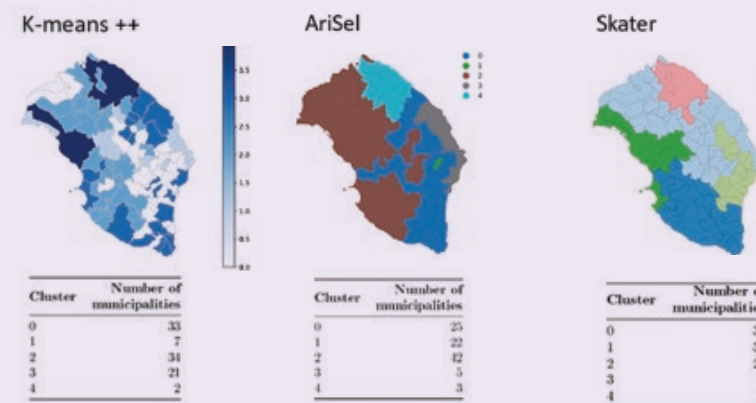
*this research has been developed by the author together with Elia G., Ghiani G., Marra P.

developments to services design, starting from local know-how (Lucatelli, 2016: 8). An example of this approach is the “Jane’s Walk” 2019 -2020 that took place in L’Aquila⁴ in 2019, through a participatory questionnaire for the social redefinition of the idea of public space (box 2.2). Clearly, this approach also has some limits, such as the selection of the sample for the questionnaire and the participant focus group, which may impact the representativeness of the essential needs, even over-representing some groups of populations.

4 Although L’Aquila is not officially an Inner Areas we included the project as it puts attention on self-evaluation of marginality and on the relevance of public spaces as essential service to enhance the quality of life.



In the framework of SNAI, the Apulia region identifies 4 Inner Areas: Monti Duani, South Salento, Gargano and Murgia.



1. Implementation of the K-means ++ algorithm without geographical contiguity. The different cluster includes municipalities which are not part of the current SNAI classification.
2. Image 2 - Implementation of the AriSel algorithm with geographical contiguity. The algorithm minimises the intraregional-heterogeneity building cluster, very different from the actual SNAI classification.
3. Implementation of the skater algorithm with geographical contiguity. Also, in this case the resulting clusters are very different from the actual SNAI classification.

The complexity of inner areas asks for both analytical and empirical tools, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods with an interscalar approach that compares a bird’s-eye view with in-depth investigation, “adding a more complex understanding of a particular community that is being

Self-evaluation of public spaces. Between distancing and proximity

Quirino Crosta*

Università degli studi dell'Aquila

Starting from the in-between dimension categories of the Arendt (1964) and the social construction of space (Jacobs, 1961), on the defining basis of the new dimensions of contemporary public space and the new public city, this work has the objective of arriving at the formulation of a good practice, useful to integrate the plan formation path. This passage takes place not only through the project action but also through the elaboration of a technical process that involves the social and cultural dimension of places. The current international scientific debate on the political value of public space and the new rights of citizenship provides the elements, so far missing or elusive, necessary for the preparation of a political thought prior to the plan action and to the design and management of public spaces. In particular, reference will be made to the paradigm of spring democracy (Cavarero, 2019) and to the concept of the alliance of bodies (Butler, 2017), with the aim of integrating the meaning of public space to be able to integrate that of urban planning standards accordingly. The empirical basis on which these reflections were nourished is a case study related to the



L'Aquila experience of "Jane's Walk" in the 2019-2020 editions: with the administration of a questionnaire for the self-evaluation of public space, it was intended to stimulate debate within a social group of citizens. The dialogical action that has developed during the walks has led to a progressive awareness of the sense of value of space (urban and social). The set of these paths, theoretical and empirical, provides new levels of meaning for the definition of democratic experimentalism.

- Arendt H (1964) Vita activa. La condizione umana, Milano, Bompiani.
- Butler J (2017) L'alleanza dei corpi, Nottetempo, Milano
- Cavarero A (2019) Democrazia sorgiva, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano
- Jacobs J (1961) Vita e morte delle grandi città. Saggio sulle metropoli americane, Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi, Milano

*this work has been developed by the author together with Rita Salvatore.

studied" (Gaber, Gaber, 1997: 100) and consequently allowing the identification of specific needs for local inhabitants and essential services, failing which socio-economic conditions of marginality emerge.

Furthermore, in the evaluation of essential services, their quality also has to be considered. For example, as highlighted before for the activities included in the foundational material economy, mobility is made of a complex system that includes the different mobility of people, objects, images and information (Urry, 2000: 1), and at the same time needs the implementation of physical, imaginative, virtual and communicative mobility (Urry, 2007: 47). The definition of inner areas instead considers mobility only as the physical mobility of people and measures the capacity to have access to the right to mobility only as the driving distances from a train station, although this indicator may describe only the distance in time (an isochrone) from a transport hub, not considering at all the different conditions and the quality of the displacement. Indicators such as the performance of the station and the services available in the station are not considered, neither are the different possibilities to reach the hub through local public transport, making it accessible also to population groups that have no access to or are not able to drive a car. In this regard, several research works in the UK have established a relation among the availability of LPT (Local Public Transport), services accessibility, poverty and inequalities, affirming that low level of accessibility may foreclose access to essential services and social life (Lucas, 2012; Ohnmacht et al., 2009; Lucas et al., 2016). In inner areas, the configuration

of territory such as mountainous areas and those generally located in low density areas, needs particular attention for the design of local connection, which may also require the implementation of different forms of mobility, such as virtual and communication, to increase their impact on local community. Nevertheless, comparing the map of the number of families connected with ADSL in Italy (fig. 2.1) with the map of Italian inner areas shows these are among the less connected territories in the country.

The quality of services also significantly impacts the accessibility to educational services, considering that the size and the type of the school, the dimension of the classes and the expertise of the teachers are among the most important factors of choice for the educational paths of young scholars (Pleic, Jakovcic, 2017). Suggesting the availability of schools without considering their quality cannot be a good indicator for socioeconomic development at a local scale. Also, in this case the territorial characteristics of inner areas are a problematic aspect, as a low density of inhabitants means small schools and mixed classes, which in inner areas is 4%, while the national average is 1.2% (Lo Presti, Luisi, Napoli, 2018: 420).

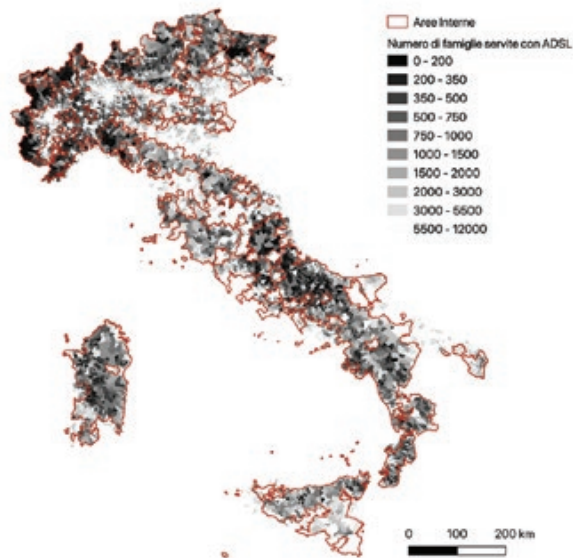


Fig. 2.1- Number of family connected to ADSL in Italy.
Author elaboration, data source: AGCom 2018

DESIGNING PUBLIC SERVICES IN THE INNER AREAS

The design of public services in inner areas calls for particular attention towards the specific needs of local population, also considering the quality and capacity of the services to respond to specific needs. Therefore, a reflection on the capacity to design and plan public services as well as on the governance tools at different scales is also needed. First of all, services in inner areas need to be designed and planned according to the specific territorial characteristics and to the needs of their inhabitants, highlighting the social role and the capacity of public services to build knowledge at local scale. The necessity to link the design of public services to local needs and to the know-how of the local population is supported by recent studies on the design of services in low density contexts (Flipò, 2020), which have demonstrated that national policies enhance their effects if they respond to a strong local intention, while having less effect when imposed by top-down interventions.

Transforming problems into opportunities

With reference to this process, educational services represent a particularly relevant example. They are normally planned based on the density of school population, which means that in the inner areas, the small number of students causes the closing of the less frequented schools for reasons of economical sustainability but at the same time increasing the distance between schools and students and reducing accessibility to educational services. The lack of schools, the low level of accessibility due to physical distance or lack of public transport and lastly, the poor quality of the service are all causes of low social and economic development at local scale (Mattioli, Vendemmia, forthcoming) and may lead in some cases to residential migration toward territories with a higher level of services, starting a loop where the lack of services is cause and consequence of depopulation.

Although these same characteristics may become the base of an alternative educational system, as demonstrated by the *Movimento delle Piccole Scuole*⁵, that promotes the transformation of small schools in low density contexts into places for promoting education and culture and contrasting depopulation, emphasising the role of the school as a community of memory (box 2.3) and enforcing, also thanks to the small number of students, the quality of learning. This also happens using mixed classes as an educational resource (Navarra, 2019), and the implementation of technological solutions to create connections with geographically distant realities in order to enhance social inclusion.

Building new alliances for the management of inner areas

Furthermore, it is also clear that there is a need for multi-actors, interscalar and intersectorial governance of public services that may lead to overpassing a

5 <https://piccolescuole.indire.it/>

BOX 2.3

The fatigue of inhabiting a territory. Views from the bottom and from a bird's-eye perspective

Valentina Rossella Zucca

Università IUAV di Venezia

Inner areas can be seen as a context for looking at the transition of the social role of services through the lens of the pedagogical potential of their space. This can start with schools, which are particularly significant from the urban-architectural point of view,

both in terms of diffusion and the typological characterisation of their buildings, their open spaces and their relationships with the context. They can be an opportunity to improve the quality of urbanity extended to nearby areas and a social centre for the entire community



Bird's-eye view and site visit of Liceo Scientifico "Giordano Bruno" in Muravera

pure associationism among municipalities based on geographical proximity (see chapter 3 Moscarelli, in this book) in favour of a solution that looks at common problems and common resources. This need is particularly visible, for example, in the design of mobility systems which involves the requalification of abandoned train lines (box 2.4). As a matter of fact, those projects are promoted, in many cases, by local associations, which look at these infrastructures as fixed social and economic capital, a local element of identity along which new territorial balances are built, often without an official recognition by national policies and local administrations. An example is the project for the Ciclovía Appenninica Alte Marche which connects 9 municipalities of the inner area "Appennino Basso Pesarese Anconetano", with the purpose of ameliorating accessibility both for residents and cycling tourists, also improving the connection with local public transport and involving a transcalar approach (Box 2.5). Another example is the greenway that connects the municipalities of San Vito and Castel di Sangro in Abruzzo passing through the inner area of *Basso Sangro-Trigno* (Ravagnan, D'Uva, Amato, Bevilacqua, 2020) along a disused railway line.

A last reflection is needed on the capacity to use new technologies to personalise and make public services in inner areas more accessible. If, on the one hand, inner areas are poorly connected, on the other hand, the development of ICT allows an important improvement in the accessibility to public services.

An example is the development of tele-medicine or the diffusion of community nurses, which have been tested in the inner areas of the Apennine in Emilia Romagna region, or the development of the "*Farmacie di comunità*" (community pharmacies) project in the mountain union *Spettabile Reggenza dei Sette Comuni* in Veneto, which proposes the use of pharmacies as a structure for health services more than just commercial shops thanks to their capillary distribution. Based on these experiences, the proposal elaborated by the University of Palermo for the municipalities of the Madonie (box 2.6) takes advantage of the ICT to develop small mobile health structures to furnish health assistance also in those places where territorial morphology and the distance from the main centres do not allow sufficient accessibility to health services.

All those experiments contribute to the shift from a people-to-service approach to a services-to-people one to ameliorate local accessibility levels. A services-to-people approach has already been spotted in several practices reported by some residents of the inner areas, referring, for example, to the existence of private mobile supermarkets that deliver foods in small villages without local shops.⁷ Platforms such as the rural MaaS (Pucci, Colleoni, Daconto, Vendemmia, 2021) may add value to these practices creating a system of planned

6 More details about the project are available at: DGR nr. 49 del 19 gennaio 2018, allegato A.

7 Interviews were carried out by the authors during a site visit in September 2020 to the inner areas in the Apennine in the province of Piacenza.

Resilience Paths. The reuse and recovery of disused railways for the regeneration of fragile territories. Experiences in Italy and Spain

Chiara Amato

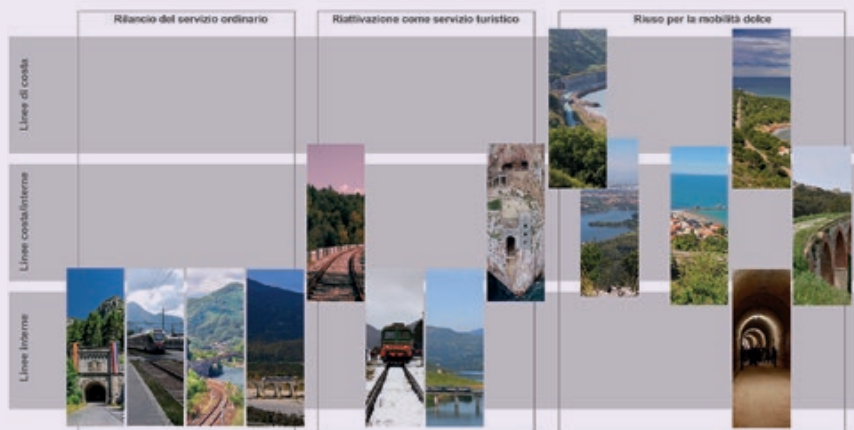
Sapienza Università di Roma

Starting from the awareness of the growing phenomena of polarisation and abandonment of the territorial peripheries of the phenomena taking place in the Italian internal areas and España Vacía in Spain, the research takes place based on the need to face up to the issue of minor railway lines which are nowadays underused or disused, which are spread over these contexts and which were once their backbone.

The research provides a first phase of contextualisation of the phenomena and a second phase of in-depth analysis of operational case studies. It intends to identify new

methodological and operational references through the definition of guidelines for the relaunch of secondary railway networks, in line with recent European and national policies of regeneration, to guide the processes of relaunching and reusing this increasingly fragmented and abandoned heritage.

Through an integrated approach (functional and socio-economic, morphological and landscape, ecological), the guidelines will identify the conditions (territorial, social, economic) for the relaunch of the railway service or the reuse of the infrastructural

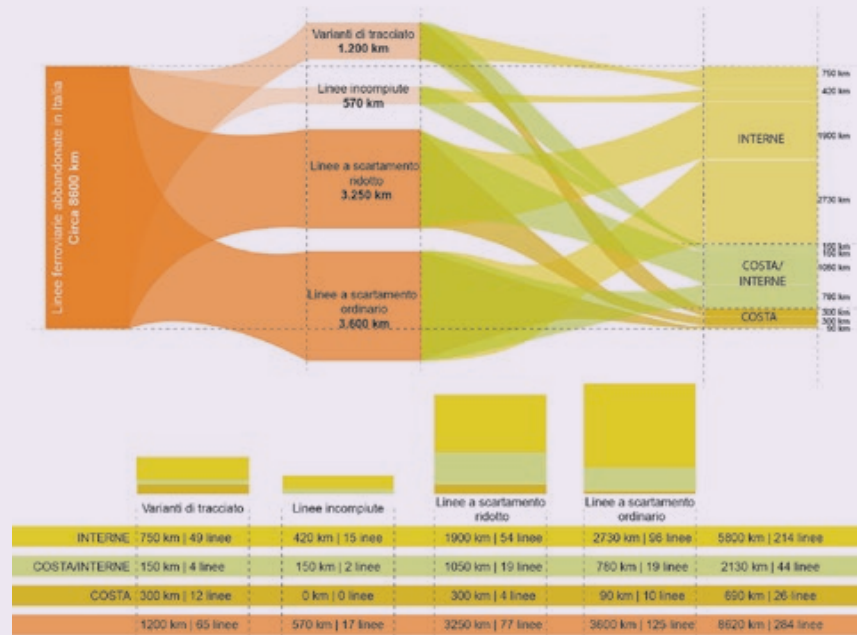


Classification of the study experiences



heritage as an opportunity for a socio-economic revitalisation of fragile territories, from waste landscapes to structuring axes of territorial rebalancing, for a morphological re-signification and reconfiguration, for a networking of resources and specificities, for a transformation into integrated networks that bring new forms of sustainable mobility and new ecologically-oriented collective values.

Inner areas and disused railways



Classification of disused railways

delivery services coordinated with other experiences already tested, such as domiciliary services like “*maggiordomo rurale*” (the rural butler) which is already active in the Oltrepò Pavese, or responsive transport systems and social cabs. In these cases, it is also useful to consider that the projects that have higher chances of success are the ones rooted in local initiatives and some limits may be highlighted. Besides the already mentioned lack of internet connection, the inability of the user to use those services and platforms because of their age, because they lack

BOX 2.5

DESIGNING RESILIENCE. Trans-scalar architecture for resilient habitats

Maria Giada Di Baldassarre
Università Politecnica delle Marche

Relying on the concept of sustainable development presented in the 2030 Agenda and European Union policies for territorial cohesion, the research focused on inner peripheral territories. These are unique types of rural peripheries that share the fact that their development potential, access to services of general interest and population’s quality of life have been affected by a lack of connectivity of some kind.

The present research intends a resilient habitat as an open and living space that responds creatively to economic, social and environmental changes in order to increase its long-term sustainability, and proposes inner peripheral areas as test fields where design dynamics can experiment with innovative ways of development - thanks to the valuable reserves of resilience available - and new lifestyles in terms of physical, mental and emotional well-being, also in relation to the current perspective of Covid-19 pandemic.

The territory of investigation, applying the ‘research through design’ methodology, is the Appennino Basso Pesarese-Anconetano, the Marche region’s pilot inner area within the National Strategy for Inner Areas (2014). Resilience is proposed as something to be achieved through transcalar architecture. In this vision, transcalarity aims to define, analyse and design strategies from the large scale to the small scale, integrating different disciplines, overcoming hierarchical visions and helping with decision-making by connecting top-down policies and bottom-up practices. The elaboration of development scenarios, as shared visions with the local communities and based on the territorial values and traditions, will also produce new forms of knowledge, to approach these types of problems in similar contexts.

Analisi delle infrastrutture



Analisi dell’offerta formativa

> Massimo grado di istruzione offerto



Analisi dell’Assistenza Sanitaria

> Distanza dei Comuni dai centri DEA (Dipartimento d’Emergenza e Accettazione)



the individual resources or even because of the elevated costs of the services must be considered. In the case of the rural butler for example, the Cariplo foundation played an important role in economical support, financing up to 59% of the project⁸ and enabling a significant reduction of start-up costs. Nevertheless, the increase of the costs in the following phases of the project had a negative impact on the diffusion of the service.

BOX 2.6

Assistive domotic to revitalise small urban centers*

Elvira Nicolini

University of Palermo

The research focuses on human wellbeing in reference to health protection for the residents of marginal areas.

Small centres have been considered as a new smart dimension, also as an answer to social distancing due to the current pandemic. Small towns are characterised by the resilience of the landscape, a place where there is an element of slow life and OKm resource consumption. At the same time, those places suffer because of a condition of marginality due to their localisation in the inland, the morphological character, the low quality of infrastructures and definitely the complexity of connections. Those conditions may interfere with the quality of services, even essential ones, such as health services that may be located many kilometres away.

The project proposes a smart health service which may adapt to the users and the context, following an interscalar approach to the context of the resident's life with territorial scale. Thanks to the new technologies, it is possible to face the condition of marginality, particularly considering the design of the health service as a network among neighbouring municipalities. As matter of fact, a domotic system integrated to ICT may guarantee a service equivalent to one of the places which is closer to the hospital with a remote connection. Thanks to the use of mobile health vans with diagnostic instruments that may reach the patient at their own home, it is possible to guarantee a first-aid service.

*this work has been developed by the author together with Rita Salvatore.

8 Oltrepò Biodiverso (2017) Studio di Fattibilità progetto Attivaree

TOWARD A RESEARCH AGENDA ON PUBLIC SERVICES IN INNER AREAS.

In this chapter, different problems connected to the implementation of public services in inner areas have been analysed. If the lack of public services is a condition of marginality, it has been highlighted that to analyse this subject, both quantitative and qualitative analyses are needed. The definition of essential services, the lack of which makes life impossible and limits the access to several opportunities may lead, in some cases, to a reinterpretation of inner and marginal areas. The quality of services and their accessibility is also relevant.

Nevertheless, it has been highlighted that in territories with peculiar characteristics such as the inner areas, the same problems linked to public services may represent a chance to develop opportunities.

Reflecting on the design of public services opens new questions. It seems particularly interesting to investigate who are the actors involved in the design and the definition of essential services for inner areas, as well as who is responsible for these services in the different administrative phases and at different levels of government. For example, who decides to close a school or a train line? And what are the tools that make it possible for the inhabitants of these areas to be involved in defining their basic needs?

How can the requests of low-density territories be more represented in the different phases and levels of governance?

And finally, regarding the distribution of resources for the development of public services, is it possible to overcome an approach based on population density while preferring attitudes that enhance the potentialities of each territory?

In this regard, Massimo Castelli, Mayor of Cerignale, a small village on the Apennine in the province of Piacenza that counts 122 inhabitants and 1 million trees, evokes the density of the rural heritage (see chapter 6, Dezio, in this book) in response to the low density of population and affirms: "The Apennine is a resource (...) we are the money box of the future."⁹

9 https://www.corriere.it/buone-notizie/20_ottobre_05/massimo-castelli-sono-sindaco-un-milione-alberi-d90c2c8a-06f2-11eb-a92a-d6e5260ddeb.html. Last access 17/02/2021

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A policy for the inner areas or the inner areas in each policy? Reflections and research for a critical review of the National Strategy for Inner Areas

Rossella Moscarelli

This essay intends to discuss the National Strategy for Internal Areas (SNAI) critically, considering some key aspects of this public policy. We propose a synthetic review of the concept of “internal area” and of Italian public policies that in the past have dealt with the issue of territorial marginality. Following this introduction, three issues of the Strategy are discussed on which interesting lines of research are being developed regarding (1) the approach with which internal areas are looked at and classi-

fied (2) the application of policy at the local scale and (3) the integration of the Strategy with other policies that propose development actions in the same territories. These ideas allow us to develop a critical reading of the Strategy that leads to a further research question: a policy for internal areas or internal areas in each policy? With this question, we intend to undermine the absolute need for public policies in support of marginal areas and to propose a critical review of the issue to the Italian and international debate.

“INNER AREA”: A NEW DEFINITION?

The term “inner area” refers only to the Italian context and did not originate with the National Strategy for Internal Areas (SNAI, using the Italian acronym) definition of 2014. Indeed, the concept of inner area first arises in the Italian debate during the late 1950s about the condition of the Mezzogiorno. In that period, the agrarian economist Manlio Rossi Doria (1958) coins the term inner area to identify the rural territories with a low productivity due to the lack of an efficient irrigation system. Inner areas were areas regarded as the “bones” of the territory, in contrast with the “pulp”. The bone-pulp dichotomy proposes a definition of marginality that arises from what is not considered marginal. In the first definition of inner areas, the marginal nature of these territories is found in the unbalance between population and resources. With regard to this, Rossi Doria writes: “Over the decades [...] in the southern mountains, a poor society of peers, mainly small landowners, has become established, the precarious equilibrium of which held for fifty years starting from 1880 thanks to emigration, which not only made it possible to maintain to some degree the relationship between population and resources but also allowed extremely modest incomes from farming to be supplemented and increase – albeit by little – the standard of living. The true drama of these zones came about when, after 1921, emigration ceased and the growing population was forced to live more densely than the local resources alone” (Rossi Doria, 1982/2003: 74-75, own translation).

Based on these reflections, Rossi Doria elaborated a first classification, considering the relation between population and resources, and divided the rural territories of the South into six different categories. The result was that the bones were formed approximately by 88% of the entire territories and the pulp was the rest, just 12%.

Even if this first classification was related to the condition of the South, it has to be remembered that the marginalisation process of the so-called inner areas has also affected the mountains and hilly areas of the Alps in the North and of the Apennines in the Centre (Rossi Doria, 1982). Over the years, the idea of inner areas proposed by Rossi Doria was taken up and reworked several times, also in planning that was key to develop targeted intervention strategies and policies, taking into consideration both the South (Ricerche e studi Formez, 1981), and the North (Bronzini, Jacobelli, 1983; Rolli, 1984; Palumbo, et al., 1989; Becchi Collidà et al., 1989). In truth, in each of these strategies and documents, it is not possible to trace a constant or a clear evolution with which we approached the term “inner area” and its definition. Maybe because, like the regional marginality itself, the “inner area” concept is constantly evolving (Mantino, 2015).

The point here is that it is not the SNAI that inaugurates the debate on Italian inner areas. And, in the same way, the SNAI is not the first to attempt to develop public policies in support of inner areas and, more generally, of those territories considered as fragile. In the Italian context, these special policies “in support of” were born in the 1950s and continued, mainly as a result of two phenomena emerging precisely in

those years: the increasing disparity between the North and the South of the country (Felici, 2007; Galisi, 2014) and the depopulation of the mountains (Revelli, 1977). It is no coincidence that Italian policies in support of areas considered marginal or disadvantaged historically refer to two main chapters: development policies for the South and those for mountain areas (Mantino, 2013; Borghi, 2017; Silva, 2020). Each of the policies developed over the years to support those areas considered to be in greater difficulty, the South and the mountain areas, have developed individual geographies. Such geography, on the one hand, outlines the territories to which “special” funds are to be allocated, and, on the other hand, the places that, in a more or less explicit way, are considered fragile and marginal.

The SNAI is integrated in this cultural and political heritage, in part by retracing some elements already present in strategies and classifications of the past and, in part, by innovating the practices and the approach with which to address the issue of territorial marginality¹.

What we intend to show in this essay is not the description of the SNAI policy, which is already briefly described in the introduction of this volume. Rather, a critical reading of three of its main points is proposed: the identification of inner areas, the implementation of the Strategy at a local level and the integration with other development and territorial policies. The reading of these aspects is carried out through the presentation of research studies which, starting from the SNAI, have elaborated or are developing a critical reflection. It is therefore not an essay that aims to be exhaustive in the analysis of the SNAI as a public policy, but rather a text that wants to show and discuss how much some studies and research are developing as a continuation of or as an alternative to SNAI processes. The essay therefore represents an invitation to enter a world in full ferment, that of research on territorial marginality, inner areas and public policies in support of these territories.

A CRITICAL READING OF THE POLICY: THE CLASSIFICATION OF INNER AREAS

The SNAI redesigns its own geography of Italian inner areas. The first fundamental action of the Strategy was, in fact, the elaboration of a national scale map with which to define and identify the territories of application of the policy. This map (see Introduction) shows that over 60% of Italy has been classified as inner area (Uval, 2014). With respect to this first nodal point of the SNAI, it is possible to identify two main reflections on which to propose a critical reading of the policy.

The first concerns the methodology and validity of the classification proposed by the Strategy. According to such a classification, there were first identified all the so-called “poles”, i.e. the municipalities provided with those services considered essential for citizens: a hospital, middle and higher education schools and a railway

1. We need to remember that the SNAI is related not only to the Italian national context, but also to the European one, having been born in the wake of the European Territorial Cohesion Policies for the period 2014-2020.

station (cf. Chap. 2 Vendemmia, in this book). Secondly, all non-poles municipalities and at a distance greater than 20 minutes from the pole, are included in the classification of “inner areas”. Thus, the criterion chosen to define the status of peripherality is a spatial and geographical distance. It is not evaluated in any way by the a-spatial distance, also defined as “relational” (Torre, Rallet, 2005), which appears instead in the European classification of marginal areas, the so-called “inner peripheries” (De Toni, Carrosio, 2018; Espon, 2017; Copus et al. 2017) (see Chapter 2 Vendemmia, in this book).

BOX 3.1

Inner areas: marginality, land abandonment and environmental risk. Methodological approach for evaluating territorial fragility

Chiara Di Dato

Università degli Studi dell'Aquila

The Italian government approved the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI) in 2012. The beneficiaries are a group of less-favoured areas that also have a key role in the Regional Policies 2014-2020. One further fund addressed to less-favoured areas is the Law n.158/2017. In particular, it addresses small municipalities with up to 5,000 inhabitants. The objects are structural growth and economic and social development of these territories.

Indeed, these territories show problematic socio-economic conditions, which can be linked to different grades of recurrent disadvantaged factors. Although there are funds for them, the complete map of each municipality condition compared to the disease factors is still missing. The study of disease factors can show different levels of marginality for all the municipalities analysed.

The methodology proposed is composed of a set of indicators related to various diseases of the territory (i.e. disadvantaged economy, depopulation and issues connected to hydrogeological instability). The methodology consists in classifying the level of overall disease. The aim of the research is to elaborate and to map territorial diseases starting from the criteria of diseases in the Law n.158/2017. Then, areas that are more critical will appear, along with potential territorial clusters. A further aim is to highlight that potential convergence of funds on areas with higher values of disease would necessitate the requirement to provide more support. Therefore, it would entail promoting higher levels of development for these areas.

The classification proposed by the SNAI, questioned for the chosen indicator, has triggered research and studies that propose alternatives and revisions of the mapping of Italian marginal areas (Marucci et al., 2020) (Box 3.1).

The second reflection in reference to the classification of inner areas proposed by the SNAI concerns the perspective, underlying the Strategy, with which to look at territorial marginality. At various times where the Strategy has been explained, it has been reiterated that “inner area” is not necessarily synonymous with “fragile area”. On the one hand, the SNAI just identifies the degree of peripherality, a characteristic that refers exclusively to the services considered. The identification between the inner area and the marginal or fragile area is not entirely correct. On the other hand, however, the classification itself proposes a Manichean matrix with which we look at the territory by dividing it into two clear categories: on the one hand, there are the municipalities that *have* services and *are* centres, on the other hand, there are the municipalities that *do not have* and *are not*. In other words, “that geography effectively draws an Italy in Italy, identified for what it does not have and for what it is not. The inner area has no services, so it is not a centre” (Pileri, Moscarelli, 2017, own translation).

In this sense, it is possible to trace a certain flaw in the structure/design (?) of the SNAI classification, which repeats what other development policies were already doing: inner areas are “special” territories, which in the eternal confrontation with successful urban models cannot keep up and, for this reason, require care and special treatment. If it is true that a map is never a neutral representation of reality (Farinelli, 2016), it must be taken into account that the image that the SNAI map returns of inner areas is that of places that *do not have* and *are not*, in constant comparison to another territory that *has* and *is*. In this regard, it is interesting to reflect on the starting point from which this classification is born, which in some way gives an image of the Italian marginal territories. In fact, it is not the inner areas that decide to define themselves as such, but, on the contrary, the definition, as well as the policy, originates from the counterpart of the inner areas, or rather from the centres. Referring to the so-called “middle mountains”, that is to say those border territories between the plain and the mountain proper, Mauro Varotto writes: “Drawing a border always means defining the limits of validity of a vision of the world, which obviously has its origin away from that border; therefore every border speaks of itself, but above all speaks of the centre that has defined it, which in this case takes us out of the mountains, into the territory that has sanctioned political marginality” (Varotto, 2020: 21, own translation).

The process described by Varotto is also found in the definition of the boundaries of the inner areas, established by subjects external to those who have sanctioned their marginality. This directionality, from the centres to the inner areas, can become critical since it re-presents the patterns of other epochal phenomena of redefinition of territorial hierarchies in which a certain subordinate dynamic between territories seems to emerge (Olori, 2017). In this directionality, which is first of all cultural, it

is however possible to acknowledge the SNAI with the merit of having destabilised the local context, proposing the vision of external subjects: in this direction there is the possibility of unhinging certain blocked contexts, especially since those in those areas who are carrying out innovative experiences, as in the case of the “new mountaineers” e.g. (Corrado et al., 2014), are often urban as a culture and as an imaginary. Even Manlio Rossi Doria, in reference to what he considered inner areas, wrote how important it was, to imagine a different future, the gaze and action of subjects outside those territories. Rossi Doria writes as follows: “The social forces, the labour forces remaining in those areas [the inner areas, Ed.] today are not capable of promoting such a process of renewal. Similarly, local bodies, such as the municipalities and mountain communities themselves, impoverished in their structures and even in the most elementary administrative functions, are not capable either. Like it or not, this is the reality. The strength of the renewal capable of promoting the development and reform of local bodies must therefore be sought elsewhere” (Rossi Doria, 1982/2003: 125, own translation).

The need for this exogenous thrust, which at best combines and contaminates the endogenous one (Sartori, Sforzi, 2019), can reinvigorate territorial contexts which, as we will see in the next point, struggle to find energy and design skills.

A CRITICAL READING OF THE POLICY: FROM THE NATIONAL PROPOSAL TO THE LOCAL APPLICATION

The classification of inner areas, with its potential and its limits, is a necessary step in order to identify the areas to which funds should be allocated to finance local development projects. The SNAI must therefore be seen in a twofold perspective: on the one hand, as a national policy, with its architecture and place-based approach; on the other hand, as a local policy implemented in 72 project areas scattered throughout Italy (see Fig.2 in the introduction to this volume). A rich and important reflection was born by the observation and analysis of what has happened and is happening in the different local contexts of implementation of the SNAI (Leonetti, 2020; Impei, 2020; Storti 2016a). From such studies, many critical aspects are emerging. Some of them characterise the marginal contexts for which the SNAI itself is directed (Lucatelli, Monaco, 2018). The first of these is the difficulty for municipalities and local actors to become the real promoters of the strategy in their territories. Many of them passively experience local development processes due to the lack of a knowledge base of the opportunities and resources of the places in which they live (Box 3.2).

Another difficulty encountered concerns the inability of local subjects to unite, or at least cooperate, with each other and become a critical mass for a more decisive dialogue between them and with the supra-local actors. This difficulty also manifests itself in the contexts of the project areas, although these have also been selected on the basis of their capacity for cooperation and shared planning. Indeed, the association between the municipalities, repeatedly indicated as a strength and innovation

BOX 3.2

Co-creation of visual narratives for inner areas' development

Marco Leonetti

Sapienza Università di Roma

If you want to build a ship, don't gather men just to collect wood and distribute tasks, but teach them longing for the wide, endless sea.

A. de Saint-Exupéry

To mark the deepest distance between the SNAI's theoretical design and the experience of the "Monti Reatini" area is the weakness of the participatory path of strategic co-planning. Facing political-administrative difficulties, the local community seems to express distrust in the face of hypothesis of change, highlighting the pervasiveness of the (self) representations of marginality and defeat. The challenge here is all about the ability to stimulate thoughts and plans toward the future, to bring out new awareness, beyond the technical-administrative discourse, so often unable to accommodate weak or dissonant voices. In this context, it appeared

useful to explore the potential of videography as a means of looking at the souls of places. In the "Monti Reatini", videography will be the way to make visible again all those innovative experiences not intercepted by institutional scouting activities. Looking at visual narratives as communicative and relational devices, it will be possible to verify their ability to create a space for a new consciousness of place germination. Collecting territorial biographies and asking crucial questions - Who are we? Who would we like to be? - different points of view can be gathered, fostering a stronger interaction. By socialising the video product, it will be possible to verify whether compelling stories have really been co-created. In this way, participatory videography will be able to act as an empowerment tool, useful for supporting and encouraging the SNAI institutional action.

point of the SNAI (Lucatelli, Storti, 2019; Barca, 2015; Barca et al., 2018), has represented the essential condition for which it was possible be part of SNAI projects: only municipalities gathered in project areas, or that propose an idea of local development and implementation of services in associated form, could be financed. Despite this, in the implementation of projects it is quite common that municipalities have obtained SNAI funding to invest in actions closely linked to their local territory, rather than in large-scale project actions. In fact, the municipalities are not always able to define a territorial level planning, misunderstanding the SNAI funding as funds with which to carry out ordinary works that, due to lack of resources, they have not been able to realise previously (Lucatelli, Monaco, 2018).

It is true, however, that not all project areas have shown this inability to become an active and promotional part of the local development process encouraged by the SNAI. This is the case, for example, for the area of the Simeto Valley in Sicily. Here, the local actors, composed of the mayors of ten municipalities, the University of Catania and civil society, were able to propose their strategy to the Inner Areas Technical Committee² (Saija, Pappalardo, 2021; Saija, 2016). One of the most interesting, and atypical, aspects of the case of the Simeto Valley concerns the fact that it was the territory that asked to be included in the Strategy as a prototype area. This implies that the territory had already organised itself into a system, a group, a border in which it recognised itself, that is the municipalities of the Simeto Valley.

A CRITICAL READING OF THE POLICY: INTEGRATION WITH OTHER POLICIES

A third aspect of reflection that the SNAI suggests to us is the relationship that this policy has with many policies and actions that insist on the same territories. This relationship occurs on both the local and national scale.

Starting from the local scale, we remember that the SNAI, like all policies, defines boundaries, by defining the areas of application of its strategy and its funding (Gaeta, 2011; Pasqui, 2005). In the case of the SNAI, we find two different borders: those identified by the national mapping of the Italian inner areas and those of each of the 72 project areas. Defining the boundaries of the project areas is an essential operation, from which several municipalities recognise themselves as belonging to a single area. The process of belonging to a border (Impei, 2017) is not carried out automatically with the sole adherence to the SNAI project area. As we have already seen, in fact, municipalities can be part of a project area in order to obtain funding and not necessarily follow a maturation process with which they come to feel part of a single territory and therefore of a single strategy of development (as happened in the case of the Simeto Valley).

Moreover, the boundaries defined by the SNAI on a local scale overlap with numerous other boundaries, which, both in the past and still today, define territorial actions, relationships and projects. This is the case of GAL, former mountain communities, unions of municipalities, etc. In this way, boundaries have been drawn that have created aggregates, systems and a sort of "we" to which the municipalities belong. This overlap between places, borders and policies has become an interesting research opportunity that questions the actual ability of these systems to reflect the territorial reality and its social dynamics (Box 3.3).

2. The *governance* of the Strategy is defined by CIPE Resolution no. 9 (2015) and subsequent amendments. It has established the "Inner Areas Technical Committee", coordinated by the Department for Cohesion Policies of the

Presidency of the Council of Ministers, with responsibility for the selection processes of the areas and the development of development strategies local with the territory.

Moving to the national scale, it is necessary to remember that the SNAI intertwines numerous issues that are part of the agenda of territorial public policies: that of mountain areas, rural areas (see Chapter 6 Dezio, in this book), small municipalities, seismic areas (see Chapter 5 Pessina, in this volume), etc. Each issue corresponds to a specific public policy, to a funding, to a development approach and to a horizontal and vertical relationship between public and private entities and subjects. This is the origin of and inspiration for a line of research that questions the relationship of the SNAI with the different policies that will affect the same territories: for example, those of reconstruction and extraordinary interventions in seismic areas (Breglia 2020; Abbamonte, 2020), those of support to small municipalities (Marucci et al. 2020; Romano, Fiorini, 2018), those of territorial reorganisation through the union and

BOX 3.3

The administrative fragmentation in inner areas. The case of the Inner Area “Lazio 3 Simbruini Terre d’Aniene”

Francesca Impei

Sapienza Università di Roma

According to the National Strategy for “Inner Areas” (SNAI), municipalities constitute the basic unit of the political decision-making process and can offer – as an aggregation of contiguous municipalities – the institutional space to provide services and implement development projects.

In many contexts, however, the geography of local political action often draws boundaries and apparent territorial systems, devoid of the sort of “regionalism” (Gambi, 1977) necessary to stimulate active territoriality (Governà, 2005), and hence forms of shared planning. This is the case with the “Inner Area” Lazio 3 Simbruini Terre d’Aniene, a mostly mountainous territory along the high and

middle course of the Aniene river, between the Metropolitan City of Rome Capital and the province of Frosinone, on the border with Abruzzo. This area constitutes an “emblematic example of relational abandonment of the territory” (Banini, Impei, 2019), due to the absence of participatory processes, the resistance to supra-municipal initiatives and the planning inertia detected here.

Comparative analysis of administrative boundaries in this area – regarding management of services, local planning and spontaneous local aggregations – will verify the existence of a shared territorial identity, enabling the development of strategies for the “Inner area” as a whole.

merger of municipalities (Dalla Torre, Cestari, 2018) and those of rural development (De Toni et al., 2020; Storti, 2016b).

Delving into these research areas is not easy and the results that emerge cannot be considered exhaustive and complete since the in-depth questions in some specific contexts cannot often be extended to the entire national context. However, it should be emphasised that the integration of policies is a key point that can risk putting in crisis areas that are already fragile in themselves, with a poor ability to become critical mass, to propose their own visions and development models.

A POLICY FOR THE INNER AREAS OR THE INNER AREAS IN EACH POLICY

Our critical reading could continue by considering every aspect of a broad and complex strategy such as the SNAI. We intend to conclude by proposing a radical critique, which may perhaps represent a necessary crisis for those who study these issues, but also for those who define policies and actions for these places.

At this point, it is worth asking what constitutes inner areas and if they really have such different characteristics compared to the rest of the country. We choose to consider only two simple parameters that can help us imagine what constitutes these territories: the orography and the demographic dimension. Starting with the former, the data shows that, out of the total of Italian inner areas, 57% of the municipalities are “totally mountainous”. The remainder is divided into “partially mountainous” (9%) and “non- mountainous” (34%) municipalities³. This data is not surprising: it is not new that mountain areas are part of disadvantaged areas for which *ad hoc* policies are imagined, which has emerged in past policies and in other European contexts (Nordregio, 2004). Furthermore, looking at the latter characteristic, the inner areas are mostly composed of very small municipalities (with populations of less than 2,000 inhabitants) and small (with populations between 2,000 and 5,000), respectively for 59% and 25%.

Both of these data, the orography of the territory and the demographic dimension of the municipalities, do not represent neutral features that are functional simply to describe a place. They can, instead, be interpreted as indicators of fragility, or rather, of areas that need attention and care because they are complex territories such as the mountain ones and those with a low population density, which can often mean the risk of depopulation, low presence of essential services and insufficient territorial management (Casa, Pileri, 2017).

The data just presented lacks a fundamental reference parameter, which is the comparison with national data. What are the Italian municipalities like, at least as

3. Data elaborated on the basis of the SNAI (which refers to Law 991/1952 with which the classification (Uval, 2014), updated with Italian municipalities are divided into “totally mountainous”, “partially mountainous” and the Istat classification data of the Italian “non-mountainous”). municipalities based on their altitude class

regards the two characteristics with which we have described the condition of the inner areas? Let us start from the orography of the territory (Istat, 2019a): the Italian municipalities are made up of 42% of “totally mountainous” municipalities, 32% of “partially mountainous” municipalities and, finally, only 27% of “non- mountainous” municipalities. Now, we shall look at the data concerning the demographic dimension (Istat, 2019b). 69% of Italian municipalities are composed of municipalities with less than 5,000 inhabitants, with the very small and small municipalities representing 43% and 26% of the total respectively. The municipalities of medium and medium-large size (population between 5,000 and 10,000 inhabitants and between 10,000 and 50,000) make up 15% and 14%. Finally, there are the large municipalities (population over 50,000 inhabitants) which account for the remaining 2%.

These simple data, which could be expanded by choosing other more specific indicators, seem to suggest that the characteristics and difficulties of inner areas are not only found in some isolated areas, but are rather the very core of the country. This idea can also be understood by looking at the distribution of inland areas in the different Regions. Indeed, there are some Regions in which almost all the municipalities are classified as inner areas. About 80% of the municipalities of Sardinia, Molise and Calabria are classified as inner areas. Basilicata is the most emblematic case, and is almost entirely made up of them (96%).

The preponderant presence of inner areas, mountains or small municipalities indicates the need for these places to not be treated as special cases to which funds and special interventions can be dedicated, but rather as key elements of the Italian territory to be taken into account in all national policies. Hence the question about the need for a policy for inner areas or to include inner areas in any policy.

If, on the one hand, the SNAI, as well as other policies aimed at specific territories such as mountains, rural areas or small municipalities, seem necessary because they are tailor-made for the places, on the other hand, we must not risk that *only* these policies speak *to* and *of* these places. Seen from another point of view, it is necessary to ask whether the policies not explicitly addressed to a place, and which therefore claim to be destined for any type of territory, have not actually been developed with a specific area in mind (for example metropolitan contexts). Fabrizio Barca, who has promoted the SNAI, when discussing the main differences between place-based and place-neutral policies, states:

“National policy measures are almost always taken with specific places in mind. An example is the set of policy measures that the recent World Bank Report on “Reshaping Economic Geography” defines as “spatially blind”; the institutional measures such as “regulations affecting the land, labour and international trade and social services as education, health and water and sanitation”. Even ignoring the strong, context-dependent effects of rules on labour and international trade, all the other institutions defined as “blind” not only have effects which are strongly dependent on places, but their design is always strongly tailored to places” (Barca, 2009: 19).

In essence, what Fabrizio Barca argues is that there are no policies that do not have places in mind when they are elaborated and defined. Even in the case of national policies that affect the entire country, it is not possible to think that these are suitable for the whole territory, from the cities of the plains to the very small towns of the Apennines. What we intend to highlight is therefore the need to remind ourselves of all the territories, not just the “strongest” ones, when the main national public policies are outlined. This is an even more urgent need if we keep in mind the conformation of a country like Italy, made up mostly of inner areas, small municipalities and mountains⁴.

Despite the profound criticism that arises from this reflection, we need to remember that the development of specific policies for marginal areas helps to make the issue known and to insert it in the public debate, as well as in the cultural and academic one. In fact, one of the merits⁵ that must undoubtedly be acknowledged to the SNAI is that, following the launch of the Strategy, a considerable ferment and debate has resurfaced around the theme of inner areas. The inner areas, which collect within them the issues of the mountains, small municipalities, unattended natural resources, hydrogeological risk and depopulation, have found their recognition in the SNAI classification. The different aspects of the Strategy, from the principles that support the policy to its classification and experimentation, have been widely presented and discussed both by those who internally promoted, developed and worked on the Strategy (Lucatelli, Storti, 2019; Barca, Carrosio, Lucatelli 2018; Lucatelli, 2016; Lucatelli, Monaco, 2018; Monaco, 2016) and by those who have observed more or less from the outside its work and its effects (Mantino, De Fano, 2015; Meloni, 2015; Marchetti et al., 2017; Meini, 2018). There has been much discussion of the SNAI and inner areas in specific sections of conferences, in departments that have decided to focus their research on marginal areas and in widely distributed books that present the question of small mountain and rural municipalities to the general public (De Rossi, 2018; Cersosimo, Donzelli, 2020; Arminio, 2013).

This merit is quite relevant if we consider the importance of feeding and, above all, renewing the narration of the inner areas (Vito Teti, 2018). We conclude this reflection on the SNAI on the narrative of marginality and of inner areas in particular. As we have seen, the narrative of marginality does not originate from inner areas, but rather is elaborated in the centres. This suggests that in the story of “marginality”, there is

4. Another manner to reading and understanding the question (“a policy for inner areas or inner areas in every policy?”) concerns the possibility of including this and other similar policies, born in support of disadvantaged areas, to the within a structural and ordinary framework, overcoming the idea of “extraordinary” policies for “extraordinary” territories.

5. It is not the aim of this essay to evaluate the impacts of the SNAI on the territory (as the Strategy is still being implemented). The one that is cited is therefore not the only merit of the Strategy and does not exclude the presence of others which are not mentioned here.

always also “centrality”: there is no margin without a centre. One question, therefore, remains open more than ever and leads us to question how it is impossible to untie the centres from the inner areas, the centrality from the marginality (Domansky, Lung 2009). Why then should we imagine policies only for marginal areas without intervening in the relationship they have with the centres or, rather, on the effects that the centres cause on marginal areas?

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PART II

The Management of Resources

4

Natural heritage and environmental resources in inner and marginal areas: restarting from the care of landscapes towards new alliances | Giusy Pappalardo

5

Fragility, environmental risks and territorial safeguard. Transdisciplinary perspectives from inner areas | Gloria Pessina

6

Regenerating rural systems of inner areas starting from territorial capital: reflections on a possible utopia
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7

Architectural heritage in the National Strategy for Inner Areas: an opportunity often missed | Benedetta Silva

Natural heritage and environmental resources in inner and marginal areas: restarting from the care of landscapes towards new alliances

Giusy Pappalardo

Inner and marginal areas are made of a tight relationship between natural and social ecosystems. In history, anthropic activities (e.g.: fishing, agriculture, grazing, logging, etc.) have been based on a certain balance in the use of resources such as groundwater, rivers, soil, forests, etc., in some cases managed as *commons*, that have also contributed to the shaping of cultures, economies and political systems. Today, the health of socio-ecosystems in these contexts may vary between heterogeneous conditions. On one side, portions of inner areas are protected through conservation measures that may or may not be effective. In contrast, other parts of the territory are abandoned or infested areas that suffer several socio-pathologies, such as contamination of soil, water, etc. In between, there are a variety of variations and possibilities characteri-

zing the current manifestations of the human-nature relation.

Based on some reflections elaborated through several years of empirical research in inner and marginalised areas in Italy, this chapter explores the epistemologies, methods, practices and policies aimed at fostering an integrated approach based on the care of landscapes. A map of research studies is proposed for exploring the opportunities of a deep socio-ecological transition: from models made of extractive economies to new alliances between humans and the environment. Thus, this chapter also aims to point out some examples of territorial governance structures that can enable renewed relations of landscapes' care within socio-ecosystems in inner and marginal areas, in the pursuit of access to resources for all and of a collective well-being horizon.

INTRODUCTION

Inner and marginal areas benefit from an abundance of natural resources, thanks to their rich geomorphological configuration made of mountains, hills, river courses, valleys, floodplains and so on. Despite their richness, they are currently undergoing a significant demographic contraction (see Ch. 1 Kërçuku in this volume) due to a variety of reasons. Difficult access to basic services (see Ch. 2 Vendemmia in this volume) is just one of the factors: depopulation is mostly due to the crisis of agricultural, silvo-pastoral and artisanal productions (see Ch. 6 Dezio in this volume), as well as the thinning of exchange flows with cities, upon which the small and middle-sized economies of those areas were reliant. As a matter of fact, these activities had historically generated socio-economic opportunities and specific features for inner landscapes, which are now emptying out and transforming according to multiple dynamics (Lanzani, Curci 2018). The abandonment of several anthropic activities is hence producing changes, reducing these areas to wastelands, i.e.: spaces where the *unwanted* of the city (e.g.: micro-dumpsites, polluting plants, etc.) fills the voids generated from the abandonment. The natural heritage of inner and marginal areas thus undergoes transformations related to a lack of care, as well as to the dominant models of extractive economies (Moore, 2016) emerging in contemporary societies influenced by the global forces of finance and neoliberalism.

Such depletion of ecosystems mirrors an alteration in the relationships between humans and the environment. This has led us to consider inner areas as territories that are unable to offer good living conditions. However, in the last few decades, reversed dynamic emerged (Carrosio, 2019); numerous experiences witness a rediscovery of the inner territories as an alternative to some of the contradictions of the chaotic and hectic urban life. In Italy – thanks to the stimulus given by public policies for territorial cohesion such as the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI) – these territories gained a relevant role in the debate, not only within urban and regional studies, but also in the wide public domain. Not surprisingly, during the current pandemic conjuncture, they have been considered key places for a post-pandemic restart inspired by the principles of a territorial re-equilibrium (Nigrelli 2020).

Despite the recent attention to inner and marginal areas, the decay of the natural heritage characterising them remains an open question. As Poli (2015) points out, the issue is the recognition of the 'territorial heritage as a conscious and shared social revelation of the complex (ecologic, cultural, symbolic, economic) potential insisting on a territory and originating a social process' (p. 138). As such, the environmental issues become social issues.

This chapter hence investigates the possibilities and opportunities to re-establish fruitful relationships between human activities and natural resources in inner and marginal areas, starting from the assumption that there is a strict nexus between natural and anthropic dimensions: a *nature-culture continuum* as identified by Latour (2000).

Recalling Latour's words (2014), 'it is just as impossible to decide on which side you are as when you follow the path of a *Möbius strip* with your finger. Which means that,

on Earth at least, the old distinction (well, not so old in the end) between “natural” and “social” factors has become moot’ (Latour, 2014, p. 59).

The *Möbius strip*’s metaphor is aimed at explaining the *inter-actions* between the ‘associations of humans and non-humans’ (Latour, 2000), opening up some questions related to the way knowledge is produced and transformations are decided, as well as inviting a reflection on how the democratic question is intertwined with epistemological and methodological aspects concerning socio-ecological issues.

In the light of these premises, this chapter explores possible ways to generate change through practices, policies and governance structures aimed at consolidating new alliances between humans and nature¹. These alliances can take place in inner areas at first, as strategic territories where the *nature-culture continuum* is more predominant compared with metropolitan contexts.

After a brief summary concerned with the way the SNAI strategy is dealing with these topics, a paragraph is dedicated to the geography of the research conducted by young scholars, aimed at identifying the redefinition of the *nature-culture continuum* in inner and marginal landscapes.

THE TOPIC OF NATURAL HERITAGE IN THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR INNER AREAS

Even though the SNAI strategy has mainly attempted to focus on the re-organisation and strengthening of essential services in inner areas (education, health, mobility), it has also been an opportunity to generate a wider system of knowledge based on the peculiar features of the involved territories. Given that these areas differ from metropolitan contexts due to the strong mixture between ecosystems and social dynamics, the topic of natural heritage and environmental resources spontaneously emerges from the co-designing processes on site. For example, this has been the case of “The Milk Mountain: Healthy lifestyles and Dynamic Communities in the Emilia Apennine” Strategy, or of the “Casentino and Valtiberina: Apennine in Tuscany, Mountains of Spirit”, or of the strategy for the Dauni Mountains entitled “From the land to the person: innovation and associations, new nourishment for the territory”. In these strategies, as well as in several others, the mixture between anthropic activities, natural heritage and environmental resources is clear.

However, from a funding standpoint, there is a lack in the way the National Strategy has been set up: the SNAI resources (based on the Italian Stability Law) are aimed to be spent on just three key thematic areas (education, health, mobility). These thematic areas could have intersected the environmental issues but were required to comply with specific expected results and indicators, thus posing some limits to a kind of planning which would on the contrary need to be integrated. Some Italian regions have been benefiting from a margin given by a conspicuous endowment of territorialised resources from EU OP ERDF and CLLD funds. Still, some problems emerged as a consequence of the rigidity of

1. With this expression, we make direct reference to the seminal work by Prigogine and Stengers (1979).

the expected results and of the pre-defined indicators, far from the creativity expressed by the communities during the co-design processes. The previous programming choices operated by the Regional governments did not always match with the needs that emerged in the scouting phase promoted by the SNAI itself.

As a consequence, regional fragmentation did not give enough room and economic resources for interventions aimed at giving value and promoting the care of the natural heritage as a key for the regeneration of the inner areas, even though at best they express that *nature-culture* mixture distinguishing them from the urban agglomerations. In certain cases, some consolidated institutional and organisational tools such as the Mountain Communities (Law 267/2000, art. 20) or some experimentations such as the River Contracts (Scaduto, 2016) or the Ecomuseums (de Varine, 2005) allowed the integration of the SNAI strategy action with other projects already in place in those territories regardless of the SNAI itself. Despite the cages in which several projects were bridled, the liveliness of the inner and marginal areas is starting to draft several possible paths which are opening windows of opportunity for the next EU programming period.

After a short recall of landscape as a concept able to give a specific interpretational framework for the symbiotic *nature-culture* relationship, the next paragraph presents some elements for drafting new possible working directions.

STARTING AGAIN FROM LANDSCAPES TO GIVE A NEW CENTRALITY TO THE MARGINS: A GEOGRAPHY OF THE RESEARCH BY YOUNG SCHOLARS

A variegated disciplinary debate in the field of urban and regional studies (Magnaghi, 2000; Pizzolo, Micarelli, 2003; Gambino, 2003; among others) tends to confirm the idea of an approach to territorial and landscape protection and care based on a reinterpretation and reconfiguration of the constantly evolving system of relationships between natural and anthropic elements. Starting from the premise that a sharp and dichotomous separation among natural and anthropic components is an artificial construct, this approach hooks to the definitions of *cultural landscape* introduced by UNESCO in 1992 and, even more precisely, by the European Landscape Convention in 2000. Twenty years after the Convention was issued, its effects are being echoed in a variety of contexts and researches.

Starting from a recent research work conducted on an inner area of the Marche region, Giacomelli (box 4.1) shows the importance of re-founding the local development planning through a reinterpretation of the nature-culture symbiosis. Similarly, Pavesi (box 4.2) is proposing to reconsider the basin planning in inner areas through the implementation of agroforestry practices able to generate *sponge landscapes*. This approach, tested by the author in the Lombardy region, consists of realising a variety of project interventions able to increase climate change resilience, as well as to foster biodiversity, ensure the health of the ecosystems and improve the shape, functionality and accessibility of the places, in an integrated way.

However, as Pavesi himself shows, with the absence of adequate forms of *governance* of vast territories, such as river basins, the physical intervention risks failing, due to the

Landscapes as social-ecological systems: understanding urban-inner areas relationships through the lens of ecosystem services

Matteo Giacomelli

Università di Camerino

Landscapes result from a continuous human-nature interaction, whose elements are interconnected to the point that they should be conceived as a single socio-ecological system. Recent changes in global socio-economic structures threaten the stability of regional systems, with the risk of affecting communities in inland areas and compromising their environmental and social assets. In spatial planning, policymakers face the challenge of reconciling competing sectoral interests to ensure the multifunctionality of landscapes and thus their sustainability. To overcome this gap, the ecosystem-services framework provides an opportunity to integrate multiple aspects of human-nature interaction into a

single framework and to detect mechanisms for co-production of services. Through the definition of the ecosystem services characterising the case-study of the Southern Marche region, the survey of stakeholders involved in their co-production and the spatial analysis of the demand-supply pattern, the research takes into account the complexity of socio-ecological systems, indicating the causal relationships between drivers of change, impacts and the response of these systems. The results aim to support regional governance in building strategies that improve the resilience of socio-ecological systems in inland areas.

lack of organisational forms able 'to overcome the asymmetry in the upstream-downstream scheme, in order to balance interests located in different municipalities'. A coordinated and effective implementation, as well as a long-term management through specific public policies, necessarily needs an adequate organisational structure to systematise the actions of a variety of institutional and non-institutional actors, as in the case of the River Contracts.

The problem of the effectiveness of the environmental protection restrictions – and of the necessity to imagine new management forms for large and complex territories – is still an open issue, both in inner areas and elsewhere. While investigating wetlands and water-related productive systems in the Po River Delta, Tornieri (box 4.3) deals with the issue of connected and sometimes contradictory interests that may emerge in a natural park. Parentini and Massaro (box 4.4) add further reflections about territorial actors in

SPONGE LAND(SCAPE). Which opportunities for inner areas?

Filippo Carlo Pavesi

Università degli Studi di Brescia

Landscape design, which can also be implemented through the adoption of particular agroforestry practices, can be an opportunity for inland areas. Rural areas can be planned and designed as a SPONGE LAND (SCAPE) that can contribute to the mitigation of hydraulic risk, improving, at the same time, both the resilience level of anthropised areas and the living conditions of the ecosystems. Natural Water Retention Measures (NWRM) are Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) considered as ideal measures for the SPONGE LAND (SCAPE) design. NWRM can retain, infiltrate or release water with a controlled flow rate and, at the same time, they can provide other

ecosystem services (increase biodiversity, improve aesthetic conditions, offer recreational opportunities, improve water quality, recharge of groundwater, etc.). Spatial and landscape planning can provide, at basin level, adequate compensation schemes to connect providers (in inland areas, upstream) and beneficiaries (in more developed municipalities, downstream) of the flood-storage service and other connected ecosystem services. A governance model at basin level can be an effective cooperation tool to overcome the asymmetry in the upstream-downstream scheme, in order to balance interests located in different municipalities.

the context of the inner areas and parks of the Basilicata region. Through their research, they show the necessity of an approach based on active protection that enables the regeneration of the landscape through the valorisation of the *collective capacities*. Through this expression, they recall the debate opened by the seminal work of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum (1993), which represents one of the pillars of the SNAI strategy itself.

The importance of giving value to collective capacities is also at the core of the research work conducted by Coraglia (box 4.5) in the Piedmont region on the importance of the production of cultural value in relation to natural contexts. Through a reinvention and a new use of raw materials and manufacturing techniques of the past in a contemporary way, the cultural value of the tradition-innovation nexus can also generate socio-economic value. This is a key issue for the depopulating inner areas: a conscious use of the natural heritage – considered as a producer of new value chains that are respectful of ecosystems – can represent an occupational opportunity and a chance of emancipation for the younger generations.

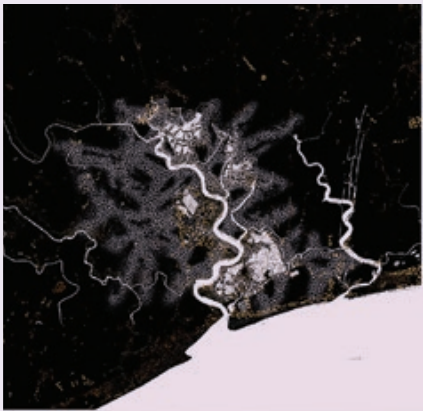
Nature. Brand or infrastructure?

Stefano Tornieri

Università IUAV di Venezia

In the Anthropocene era, with the evident effects of climate change, we are involved in a gradual reconsideration of the value of nature intended as a multiple spatial reality: metaphorical and real, of ecological and social relationships, experience of interaction, well-being, creativity, production of value and aesthetic beauty. However, the process of re-evaluating nature, which includes the understanding of existing ecosystems and their inclusion in territorial policies, still appears limited. A new project idea is needed, which considers nature not as something to be preserved but as a pervasive infrastructural element, able to drive the development of the territories. A design method that starts with

new mappings, created by crossing datasets from various sources (gis, nasa, pat, etc) that highlight the natural component understood as an integral environmental medium. New design approaches able to be both a powerful communicative tool in the construction of today's "territorial brands" and a morphological / infrastructural factor for the future of the territories. Projects that apply the principles of landscape ecology and are expected to feed an imaginary of innovative nature, which informs professionals and actors involved in the transformation of the territory as well as decision-making processes in the management of natural areas.



A possible future for the Caorle lagoon where nature builds a new infrastructure on a territorial scale capable of becoming a driving force for the development of the territory itself.

Genzano Città-Convivio strategy. Notes for ongoing Third Mission, research and teaching

Silvia Parentini, Saverio Massaro

Università degli Studi della Basilicata

Genzano di Lucania is the only ultra-peripheral municipality of the inner area Alto Bradano; besides having the typical structural problems of internal (inner) areas of the country, it is characterised by multiple actions of territorial revitalisation through regional networks such as the Union of Municipalities "Alto Bradano" (from 2011). According to "Strategia d'Area Alto Bradano" (2014-2020), based on innovation and research, since February 2020, the framework agreement between the Municipality and the University of Basilicata has been activated, focusing on the Genzano Città-Convivio strategy (coordination: Prof. Chiara Rizzi), which is developed through three programmatic trajectories: community, sharing and knowledge. It is an enabling device that provides technical and scientific support to territorial analysis activities; it develops scenarios and triggers urban regeneration processes through on-site actions, in order to

counteract the phenomenon of depopulation and strengthen community cohesion.

As part of the Third Mission, the following activities were carried out:

- the teaching of Design Studio 5 (Unibas), whose results were presented to the Genzanese community through a public debate in the square
- the PhD research by Silvia Parentini (PhD "Cities and Landscapes") which investigates the role of resilient communities for the active protection of the landscape and the enhancement of the inner areas of Basilicata.
- the redevelopment and reactivation project of Palazzo Fiore (proposal submitted to "Borghi and Historic Centers" tender - Mibact, 2020) a historic public property, located in the semi-abandoned historic centre of Genzano, to be transformed into a cultural and energy hub.

Moreover, this issue is paralleled with the topic of collective resources' management, the *usi civici* or *commons* (Ostrom, 1990) including underground water, forests and grazing land which are crucial for inner areas. This is the core of the research work conducted by Ottaviano (box 4.6) on collective forms of management and property of territorial resources in the National Park of Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga. Investigating the topic of the management of collective resources does not mean restricting one's reflection just on their materiality. On the contrary, as Ottaviano himself explains, it is necessary to take into account 'their ecological-political declination as tools for reconstructing the balance

Design for material cultures and future scenarios. Local heritage revaluation and future materials to develop alternative perspectives

Valentina Coraglia

Politecnico di Torino

Design workshops on-site, immersive experiences, participatory projects and interactive practices. How can those methods, very often used to activate creative practices, also be useful, when the design discipline is dealing with local realities, typical materials and ancient tools aimed at transferring intangible knowledges in extinction? The question is investigated in a research project entitled "Design for material cultures and future scenarios. Local heritage revaluation and future materials to develop alternative perspectives", currently ongoing in the PhD programme in Production, Design and Management at *Politecnico di Torino*, in collaboration with *MATto*, the material library of the Architecture and Design Department. The study is investigating and questioning the methods most used in order to enhance and pass down tangible and intangible heritage through design. In particular, we are focusing on projects that act directly on-site and have a deep connection with the local territory. The analysis allowed us to find out the weaknesses and strengths of the approaches, such as, for example, the small possibility to foresee outcomes or the difficulty to obtain replicable results. On the contrary, projects in the field are particularly successful in involving many actors and different fields working together and immerse everyone in constantly different realities.

After the scouting of many case studies, the research is now looking at developing an own method aimed at rediscovering and enhancing tangible and intangible material cultures. In order to fulfil our intentions, we started to select and map our first focus area in Italy: The *Piedmont* region. Currently, we are establishing the criteria for the selection of *Piedmontese* local heritages for which there are more opportunities of interventions.

in labour-nature-value relations', i.e.: the organisational forms allowing a non-extractive and regenerating management and use. On a similar line, Rosa² analyses the *comunaglie* management in the Liguria region from a historical and juridical perspective, highlighting both criticalities (dispersion, conflicts around utilisations, etc.) and opportunities (cooperation, agreements, etc.). The issue of governance is also crucial for Caverni, Pepe *et al.*³ who have dealt with the importance of forests in the Italian national context. Despite forests covering 34.6% of the national area (out of which, 73% is located in the inner

Re-territorialising approaches and tools to overcome the conservation/development dichotomy for protected areas

Giovanni Ottaviano

Università del Molise

The research addresses the persistent dichotomy between conservation and development in protected areas, in order to identify planning approaches and tools capable of overcoming the problems that result from the dichotomy itself. Starting from the results of previous research on the planning process of the Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park, the critical issues that come from the fragility of the places and the administrative singularity of the protected areas have been included in a broader discussion about the interpretation of man/environment relationships and the role of the territory in socio-economic development processes. The case study, through the use of analogically significant models, was used as a cardinal point of a reinterpretation of the role of protected areas in territorial balances.

The research highlighted the potential effectiveness, as territorial heritage production, of an actualisation of the forms of collective management and ownership of environmental resources, as well as their ecological-political declination as tools for reconstructing the balance in labour-nature-value relations. The latter, in fact, follow incrementally diverging paths, making a progressive mutual alienation between the three components; also, the main tools for enhancing natural resources tend to reiterate the subordination of nature to economic-financial models. The "retro-innovation" of collective uses, on the other hand, can significantly contribute to the rediscovery of the value of collective management for the purpose of an enhancing and enhanced protection of the environmental and landscape heritage of protected areas.

areas) the relevance of forests is often forgotten in Italy. Caverni, Pepe *et al.* explore the topic of the groups of owners in forest consortia and assert the key role of the

2. Cfr. Rosa D. (2020), "Il governo delle comunaglie. Fonti, gestione, conflitti e tutela dei beni ad uso collettivo nella Liguria d'età moderna", *Rete Nazionale AI. Workshop di Giovani Ricercatori*, Politecnico di Milano, online, 15 luglio 2020

3. See Caverni L. Pepe A. et al. (2020), "Il patrimonio Forestale nelle Strategie di Sviluppo delle Aree interne: il ruolo dei consorzi forestali", *Rete Nazionale AI. Workshop di Giovani Ricercatori*, Politecnico di Milano, online, 15 July 2020

Slow-living habitats. Strategies for the reconnection of inhabited territories in the Marche Region

Caterina Rigo

Università Politecnica delle Marche

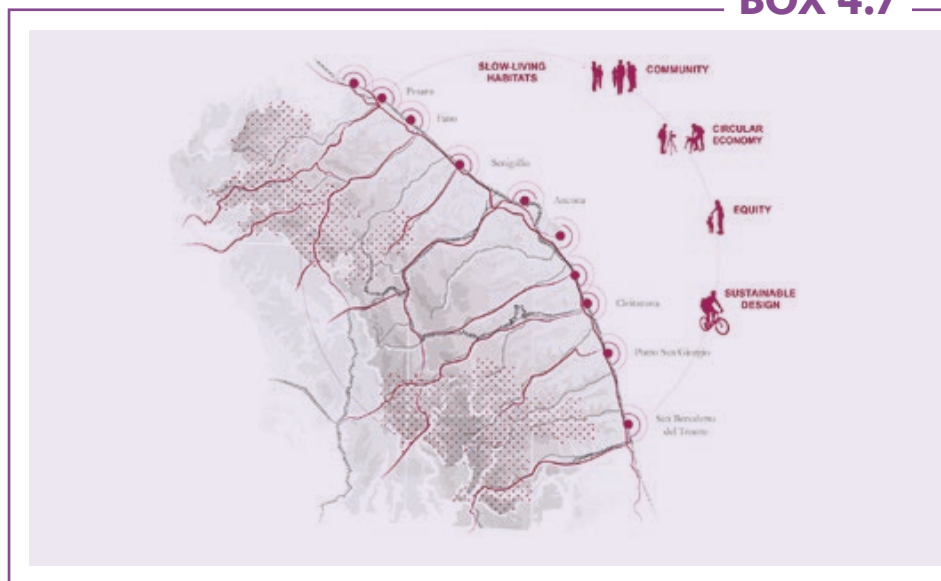
The research presents the first results of a doctoral thesis in architectural and urban design, connected to the national research programme Branding for Resilience, which studies inner areas and small villages as potential accelerators of resilience in four Italian regions. In an integrated design approach, the research investigates some 'slow' contexts in the Marche Region, a territory characterised by a comb-shaped morphological structure that defines the settlement development along the river valleys, with infrastructures linking the mountain, hill and coastal belts. Low density, rural patterns, multiple productive activities and a variety of settlement typologies characterise these hybrid and complex territories.

The research methodology includes an integrated approach between different disciplines and scales, focused on the transformation of space as a key element

of future development paths. The idea is to combine the state-of-the-art and the scientific dissemination, with good practices in study and qualitative analysis, in-the-field research and interaction with local stakeholders. A general attention to the cultural transformations and current policies provides the basis for the prefiguration of new projects to orient the effort towards operative actions. Communication is central to the construction of imaginaries and visions that are the basis on which to structure new strategies for the case studies. Design occasions—as public spaces to be regenerated, reconnection of cultural itineraries, infrastructures to be implemented, voids to be rethought, abandoned areas to be regenerated—become a pretext to widen the view from the single lot or the single town, looking at strategies of territorial reconnection.

Mountain Communities as subjects that are able to manage a vast heritage consistently, often dispersed due to the fragmentation and the lack of coordination among different territorial actors. Once again, territorial governance is the key for the reproduction of natural heritage in inner areas.

All these different expressions of the *nature-culture* symbiosis pose some epistemological questions, i.e.: they invite a reflection on the knowledge tools, which are also transformational tools in the territorial planning and design domain. What can be the form of the explorative scenarios aimed at investigating the complexity of the relational systems emerging in landscapes? This research question ignites Rigo's



(box 4.7) reflections. While considering the 'scalped' landscapes of the Marche Region, she underlines the importance of creating transversal investigations, able to integrate different disciplines and scales. From her work we can infer the necessity of a multi-level, polycentric, polyphonic, trans-disciplinary and relational reading of the landscape dynamics.

So far, most of the emerged aspects revolve around the issue of the enhancement of protected areas or, in general, of the abundant environmental resources of the inner areas. However, we know that inner areas can also be wastelands or territories of contamination, as discussed by Vacirca (box 4.8), who defines them as areas in which different socio-pathologies take place. This is the case of the *post-Xylella* crisis in Salento, one of the emblems of the failure of the dynamics of the Anthropocene, or Capitalocene, as Moore (2016) defines it. Such failure is pushing us to find new relational forms able to generate alternative bonds to the prevailing productive and reproductive models (Haraway, 2016). On a similar line, we can also think about the landscapes of exploitation, as rivers transformed into 'territorial machines', as shown by Longhin (2020) in her research about the Piave river basin. Exploitation is also evident in the territories of deindustrialisation and in former mining territories, still characterised by open wounds, as in the areas studied by Simoni (box 4.9).

The different topics that have emerged from a variety of research experience in inner and marginal areas rich in natural resources suggest some reflections about: a) possible policies for local development attentive to the different dimensions of the nature-cul-

Futurability in the post-Xylella Emergency in Salento. Socio-environmental and botanical conflicts, agri-food districts and commons beyond monoculture

Chiara Vacirca

Università del Salento

The crisis consists in the fact that the old dies and the new cannot be born: an interregnum in which the most varied morbid phenomena occur. In Salento, the post-Xylella crisis embodies the words of Gramsci: in the territorialised impotence generated by the epidemic and in a rural context characterised by depopulation, marginality and abandonment, there are concrete risks of exploitation, new extractive and monoculture policies. But the phenomenon, as socio-pathology (Colella, 2020), can also generate critical consciousness, platform for change and new interest in soil ecology. The PhD research, initiated in 2019, aims at mapping the attempts to stay in the trouble (Haraway, 2016) experienced in the infected area. The primary objectives are therefore the study of the forms of perception and representation of the crisis and the future by social actors, as well as the development of

practical-operational actions in collaboration with local organisations in probing viable alternatives in the processes of territorialisation and management of common goods.

The current research made it possible to frame Salento as a socio-environmental (De Marchi, 2004) and botanical (Sheikh, Gray, 2018) conflict. The former deepens the territorial dimension, understood as the relationship consolidated over time between social groups, environment and landscape. On the other hand, the botanical conflict allows a more-than-human world in the space of social action (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017), problematising the boundary between the sphere of human agency and the agency of plants, microbial and bacterial actors, with a more-than-human sociological approach (Pyyhtinen, 2016).

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ture relationship; b) the organisation, management and governance of resources and processes; c) possible cognitive/interpretive (and transformative) tools to be tested in inner and marginal areas.

CONCLUSIONS

Even though the mapping of young Italian scholars' research on inner and marginal areas is still incomplete and could be further expanded, we can conclude that the presented works converge in considering the natural heritage as one of the elements of a more intricate and complex relational system which takes place in the territory and in the landscape (Magnaghi, 2000; Pizziolo and Micarelli, 2003; Gambino, 2003; Poli, 2015 and others).

A new alliance (Prigogine and Stengers 1979; Haraway, 2016) is thus necessary in order to overcome the problems generated by the dominant extractive models (Moore, 2015). Such an alliance should rise from the assumption that the continuity between nature and culture (Latour 2000; 2014) should inform both the cognitive frameworks and the transformative approaches that could be implemented for an authentic ecological transition beyond mere slogans. Therefore, it is crucial to restart from inner and marginal areas characterised by the *nature-culture continuum*, in order to overcome the ongoing dynamics of shrinkage (Lanzani and Curci, 2018) and to consider them as experimental areas (Carrosio, 2019) for territorial rebalancing (Nigrelli, 2020) and new opportunities in the post-pandemic phase. In order to achieve these goals, it is important to reflect both on the ways in which research is conducted, trying to "stay with the troubles" (Haraway, 2016) as much as possible, and on the ways in which public policies and experimental governance models (e.g.: place-based territorial pacts, see: de Varine, 2014; Scaduto, 2016) can be informed by practices (Crosta, 2010).

Finally, it is time to evaluate the results of the first SNAI strategy season, which is about to close the co-design phase and is now going through its implementation phase. It is recommended that the relationship between basic rights, natural heritage and environmental resources is made more explicit in the future and translated in real measures

BOX 4.9

Images from the mining sites of Montevercchio Levante. Guspini, Medio Campidano

Davide Simoni

Università IUAV di Venezia

The mining industry has redesigned the orography of some territories where it has deposited a series of mining waste on the soil that interact with the hydrographic network. This new deposited layer, in addition to an environmental emergency, constitutes an important design opportunity to imagine a transition of these territories.



and funds for the implementation of the lively projects emerging from the local contexts. For the new phase, it will be interesting to integrate the topic of capacitation (Nussbaum and Sen, 1993) of basic rights and of the access to services with the wide issue of *just sustainabilities* (Agyeman *et al.*, 2016). In the inner areas, the intersection between social and environmental justice (Schlosberg, 2009) could open interesting opportunities and give new centrality to the margins.

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Fragility, environmental risks and territorial safeguard. Transdisciplinary perspectives from inner areas

Gloria Pessina

This chapter deals with the topic of Inner areas through the lens of territorial fragilities and environmental risks in the context of the current climate crisis. After a brief introduction on the way in which environmental risks are tackled by Italian public policies, the chapter focuses on the SNAI strategy and on other recent policies for Inner areas. It then investigates the attention given to these issues by scientific research in the fields of public policies analysis, political ecology, environmental sociology, urban and territorial studies. While observing

interesting crossovers among different disciplinary fields, the chapter delves into some transdisciplinary research on a selection of Inner and marginal areas, often conducted by young scholars, in collaboration with local inhabitants, activists and/or institutions active at different territorial levels. The chapter is concluded by a reflection on the future of the SNAI and of the research on environmental risks in Inner areas, in the context of the *Next Generation EU* vast funding programme.

INTRODUCTION

“We should take care of the territory where the rain falls and not get angry with the rain”. With these words Paolo Pileri, Italian engineer for the defense of soil and professor of territorial planning, commented on one of numerous episodes in which hydrogeological instability again acquired fame in the Italian media, i.e. a cloudburst which hit the city of Crotone. The news stayed under the spotlight just for few hours, before being blocked out by the latest updates on the Covid-19 pandemic (Pileri, 2020). Even though the violent meteorological event did not result in casualties, it caused considerable damages. Both the local population and those who have been studying these phenomena for long were not surprised: “when the *bombs* [i.e. cloudbursts] fall and find a fragile, abused and poorly attended territory, the damage they create is ten times bigger” (*ibidem*).

In the last twenty years, the issue of environmental and climate risks has gained increasing prominence in the public debate, as a consequence of numerous “natural” disasters hitting the Italian territory with increasing intensity. Among the most relevant events, we can mention three destructive earthquakes (L’Aquila 2009; Emilia Romagna 2012; Central Italy 2016-2017), several floods (Genoa 2010-2014; Massa Carrara 2012; Sardinia 2013; Marche 2014; Northern Milan 2014; Calabria Ionica 2015; Livorno 2017; Dolomiti Bellunesi 2018; Liguria and Piedmont 2019; Venice 2019), landslides (Montaguto 2006-2011; Val Fiscalina 2007; Messina and its province 2009; Cancia 2009; Trentino and Dolomiti Bellunesi 2018; Piedmont and Liguria 2020), at least one case of windstorm with violent rains (Trentino and Dolomiti Bellunesi 2018) and an increasing number of summer fires, in particular in Southern Italy (Sicily, Campania, Calabria). For many years, experts and environmentalists have called for the replacement of expressions such as “bad weather” or “exceptional climatic phenomena” with a real acknowledgement of the environmental footprint of human activities on climate change and of the relationship between climate change and these climatic phenomena (ISPRA, 2020; Legambiente, 2019; Mengarelli, 2020).

Although this consciousness is still not fully widespread in Italy, the urgency of the environmental issue and the relationship between pollution, climate change, “natural” disasters and risks for local communities have been recognised in numerous international contexts. Therefore, several important international treaties were signed in the last years, such as the Kyoto Protocol (2005) and the Paris Agreement (2015). Several directives on energy, climate, air and water were also compiled at EU level.

The EU directives adopted by the Italian government¹ have led to important experimentations². However, these did not always result in radical reforms in the terri-

1. For example, the Water Framework Directive (2000), the Covenant of Mayors for climate and energy (2008), the EU Adaptation strategy (2013), the EU Green Deal (2019).

2. For example, the experience of numerous River Contracts since the early 2000s, the National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation (2015), the National Integrated Plan for Energy and Climate (2020).

torial planning domain and in the environmental/climate risk prevention strategies (Coppola, Lanzani, Zanfi, 2021). On the contrary, the priority has often been given to restoration actions and to economic compensations. Despite their importance, these actions did not help to “broaden the understanding of the problem – and subsequently the planning of the interventions – at the natural scale of the phenomena causing the disaster” (Becciu, Lanzani, Zanfi 2021, p.85).

The approach to risks in Italy was not substantially modified after the creation of specially appointed techno-operational structures (*ibidem*), such as the Department Casa Italia (2017) for securing the private residential stock and the public buildings in some seismic areas, or the Struttura di Missione Italia Sicura (2014-2018) for the coordination of the actions related to hydraulic and hydrogeological risks on a national scale. As shown by the increasing responsibilities of the Civil Protection, Italy still seems to be characterised by an emergency approach to risks (Balducci et al., 2021). However, we can identify some innovations in the most recent policies to tackle environmental risks in the metropolitan and Inner areas, which will be at the core of the next section of this chapter. The third section deals with the topic of transdisciplinarity and of the necessary forms of knowledge to tackle extreme climate events, risks and structural fragilities in an effective way. In the fourth section, we will focus on some Inner areas where interesting research experimentations and interventions are taking place in the framework of the existing policies to tackle environmental risks. Eventually, the chapter presents some preliminary conclusions and drafts some possible future paths for research and action.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS IN THE INNER AREAS: THEIR TREATMENT BY THE SNAI AND OTHER RECENT PUBLIC POLICIES

The topic of environmental and climate risks characterising the Italian territory has been taking centre stage in the wider debate on policies aimed at tackling territorial fragilities (Pessina, 2019), traditionally focused³ on the reduction of the economic divide among regions (Bagnasco, 1977; Felice, 2016; Ferrari Bravo, Serafini, 2007 [1972]; Casavola, 2015; Cerea, Pacchi, Ranci, 2019; De Vivo, 2009; Trigilia, 2012). Starting from the 1990s, the policies against fragility have considered the material, environmental and social dimensions of a variety of “problematic” territories, in some cases included in economically competitive regions (Governa, 2008; Osti, 2006; Pasqui, 2008; Dente, 2014; Palermo, 2009; Trigilia, 2005). This marks the start of a season of new local integrated policies co-financed by European funds and aimed at contrasting multiple fragilities (Dente, 2014). In the second decade of the new millennium, these policies against territorial and environmental fragilities have

3. Beyond the best-known economic development policies, it is worth mentioning a set of actions and policies for mountain territories introduced in Italy since the 1930s (Piccioni 2002). These policies have inspired several strategies for mountain, marginal and Inner areas, including SNAI (Dente 2020; Mantino, De Fano 2015).

focused mostly on Inner and metropolitan areas of the country. A third type of territory, recently re-named by some scholars as “Middle Italy” (Lanzani et al., 2020), seems to be still in search of specific policies.

The issue of the environmental risks and fragilities of the urban areas was the object of important national policies sustained by European structural and investment funds for the 2014-2020 programming period, centred on urban peripheries characterised by the need for social inclusion, physical and energy regeneration and improvement of the environmental quality of public spaces⁴. In the Inner areas, on the other hand, the fight against environmental risks represented part of the objectives of the SNAI (2014-2020), both indirectly, as a desirable outcome of contrasting depopulation, and more directly, through actions for the enhancement of the natural heritage. In particular, the intermediate objectives of the SNAI include “the reduction of the social costs of de-anthropisation”, i.e. “hydro-geological instability, degradation of historical and architectural capital (and human landscapes), destruction of nature” (SNAI, 2013). In other words, the SNAI underlines the existing relationship between the possible increase of hydro-geological instability phenomena and the lack of adequate protection of the territory due to the abandonment of the Inner areas. Increasing environmental risks would hence be a consequence of the lack of transport connections, basic services and job opportunities causing the depopulation of Inner areas.

Although the analysis of land-use criticalities (hydro-geological/seismic/landslides’ risks) was relevant for the definition and selection of the Inner areas to be included in the SNAI 2014-2020, the contrast to risks and the attention to natural heritage could and perhaps should have been more central in the implementation phase of the strategy on the selected pilot areas (see Ch. 4 – Pappalardo, in this volume). Other recent policies and economic planning documents at the national level have been addressing the issue of the vital importance of natural resources in the Inner areas and of the environmental risks affecting them, proposing some integrations to the SNAI (NUVV, 2020). The “Piano Sud 2030”, presented in February 2020 by the Italian Minister for the South and for Territorial Cohesion, devotes considerable attention to Inner areas, putting them in relation with the sustainable development goals of the UN 2030 Agenda and with the European Green Deal. In particular, the “Piano Sud 2030” aims to tackle hydrogeological instability through some priority actions: 1) the enhancement of agricultural activity through the creation of public and consortium reservoirs located in hilly and Inner areas; 2) the sustainable management of forests, which represent over 35% of the national territory (mostly located in Inner areas) and contribute decisively to combating soil erosion (Minister for the South, 2020). Simi-

4. These policies include the National Operational Programme on Metropolitan Cities, financed through EU funds 2014-2020 (FESR, FSE) and by a national co-funding, and the “Bando Periferie”, financed by the Stability Law 2016, the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finances’ fund for investment and infrastructural development and by EU funds 2014-2020.

larly, the Economic and Financial Document (DEF) and the subsequent Update Note (NADEF), respectively approved by the Italian Cabinet in July and October 2020, reaffirm the need to enhance agricultural activities and sustainable forest management, particularly in Inner areas (MEF, 2020a; MEF, 2020b).

At the time of writing of this chapter (February 2021), the Italian government is still drafting the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), i.e. the investment plan it should submit to the European Commission to access the funding provided by the *Next generation EU* in response to the Covid-19 crisis. In January 2021, the Italian Cabinet approved the first draft of the NRRP, which was then sent to Parliament for further evaluations. In the meantime, some associations and representatives of the civil society have formulated some proposals and critiques to the draft NRRP, in particular on the way in which environmental and climate issues are treated. The main critique regards the lack of an adequate quota of the available funds to tackle these issues, considering that the majority of the allocated funds (3.4 out of 3.6 billion euros) will merely substitute already planned actions, instead of adding to them (Forum Disuguaglianze Diversità 2021, p.12). Regarding the planned intervention for seismic areas, Forum Disuguaglianze Diversità is suggesting a reform of the legislation on post-earthquake reconstruction in line with the most recent proposals formulated in the academic domain (Balducci et al., 2021). As the civil society members put it, “it is unacceptable that for every single earthquake, we start all over again with the definition of people’s rights, methods and objectives of the reconstruction, using the funds in an inadequate way, while the country has clear rules and efficient structures to manage emergencies [...]. Given the dispersion of competences and previous experiences, the seismic territories can neither prepare for the risks nor limit their impact” (Forum Disuguaglianze Diversità 2021, 26).

RESEARCH ON POLICIES AND ACTIONS TO TACKLE ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS IN ITALY: TOWARDS A NEW DIALOGUE AMONG DISCIPLINES

The analysis of environmental policies in Italy has been the object of specific studies in the years following the establishment of the Italian Ministry of the Environment in 1986 (Bobbio, 1994; Ceri, 1987; Cesaretti, 1995; Dente, 1992; Dente, Ranci, 1992; Dente, Fareri, Ligteringen, 1998; Frey, 1993; Lewanski, 1986, 1990, 1992, 1996, 1997; Lewanski, Liberatore, 2002; Pacchi, 1999). These research studies highlighted some central elements in the definition of environmental policies in Italy, often formulated in response to “catastrophes” through the creation of dedicated bodies. These specially created structures were usually intended as temporary, but in most cases were consolidated into permanent bodies.

While various dimensions of the environment have been studied in Italy in the last decade, also in relation to significant episodes of crisis (e.g., earthquakes, floods, increase in air pollution, failure to clean up soils and waters contaminated by industrial activities, illegal disposal of highly toxic waste, etc.), the literature on environmental policies analysis has not developed accordingly. This is not completely

surprising, as the attention to environmental issues undergoes cyclical fluctuations, as already observed by Downs (1972). However, some studies on environmental conflicts appeared in the Italian debate, mostly developed by researchers belonging to the disciplines of environmental/territorial sociology, environmental history and human geography (Armiero, De Rosa, 2017; Centemeri, 2006; De Marchi, Ungaro, Pellizzoni, 2001; De Rosa, 2018; Leonardi, 2017; Osti, Pellizzoni 2013; Pellizzoni, 2011). Part of these studies have been inspired by consolidated studies on political ecology on an international level (among others: Castree, Braun, 2001; Desfor, Keil, 2004; Harvey, 1996; Heynen, Kaika, Swyngedouw, 2006; Kaika, 2003; Latour, 1993; Peet, Robbins, Watts, 2004; Smith, 1984; Swyngedouw, 2010; Zimmer, 2015)

These studies highlight the relationships between disasters, long-term pollution phenomena, environmental justice, capitalism and climate change (Nebbia, 2020). While some scholars (Armiero, De Rosa, 2017; De Rosa, 2018; Leonardi, 2017) emphasise the need to repoliticise the environmental issue, by giving value to conflicts and to the knowledge produced by environmental movements, others question the reasons behind apparently missing conflicts through in-depth investigations of the socio-economic and political contexts of areas hit by major disasters (Centemeri, 2006). Further studies from the environmental/territorial sociology discipline investigate the role of experts in the de-politicisation (or in some rare cases: re-politicisation) of environmental conflicts (Osti, Pellizzoni, 2013; Pellizzoni, 2011). Eventually, other studies from the same disciplinary background explore the social dynamics linked to major disasters in Italian history (Mela, Mugnano, Olori, 2017).

In the last ten years, the urban studies discipline in Italy has been debating the definition of actions and strategies to contrast hydrogeological risk and adapt to climate change (Angrilli, 2013; Mahmoud, Morello, 2019; Menoni, 2017, 2018, 2019; Musco, Van Staden, 2009). However, already since the 1980s, the Italian urban and territorial studies debate has developed a line of research and planning actions on environmental issues. This scholarship has promoted a “territorialist approach” in dialogue with other disciplines, such as geography, geology, hydraulic engineering, ecology, history, demography, sociology, and anthropology (Dematteis 1985, 1995; Giusti, Magnaghi, 1994; Magnaghi, 2010). Elaborating on such studies, in more recent years, urban and territorial scholars have tackled specific environmental risks and issues, observing them through a territorialist gaze⁵.

5. These studies include research on illegal building, particularly in coastal areas (Curci, Formato, Zanfi 2017), land consumption (Pileri 2018, 2019), river basin planning (Del Fabbro, Pessina, *in press*; Pappalardo 2017), eco-system services and green infrastructures (Arcidiacono, Ronchi 2021), demographic shrinkage, abandonment and possible forms of reuse of the existing built heritage (Lanzani 2015; Lanzani, Zanfi 2017), the materiality of energy transition (Geroldi, Pessina, *in press*), agriculture and the development of bio-regions (Dezio 2020; Dezio, Longo 2020).

In the current context of climate change and increasing debate on environmental risks, a demand for new forms of knowledge is emerging. The ongoing challenges require disciplinary boundaries to be crossed, include technical expertise and direct experience from local inhabitants. Even conflicts could become an occasion for knowledge production, if institutions are ready to learn from them (Allegretti et al., 2021; Saija, 2016). Therefore, the Inner areas represent an important testbed, especially for the production of transdisciplinary knowledge on environmental risks (De Rossi, 2018; Carrosio, 2013; Cersosimo, Donzelli, 2020; NUVV, 2020).

EMERGING PLACES AND ISSUES FOR A TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH ON ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS AND INNER AREAS

After having gained momentum through the SNAI strategy for the period 2014-2020, the Italian Inner areas represented the opportunity for numerous and diversified research, actions, and reflections, also in dialogue with the SNAI. These experiences have been and are often still animated by young people (inhabitants, researchers, activists) who have decided to invest their energies in places often characterised by phenomena of ageing, depopulation and abandonment. Among the most relevant and well known, we can mention the research-action experience of the Simeto River Pact, in Sicily (Saija, Pappalardo, 2016; Pappalardo, Gravagno, 2018), which emerged in response to a specific environmental risk. Another important example is the initiative promoted by the research group “Emidio di Treviri” in the territories of the Central Apennines affected by the earthquake of 2016-2017 (Emidio di Treviri, 2018).

The Simeto River area was included among the SNAI pilot areas as a result of the initiative of a composite group of researchers, inhabitants and local activists, who have constituted a Participatory Presidium and have been promoting a variety of initiatives in the domains of participatory action research and education. Among them, it is worth mentioning the Community Planning and Ecological Design (CoPED) international summer school, organised by the University of Catania in collaboration with the University of Memphis and the University of Massachusetts (Boston). Despite the considerable differences of the context and of the composition of the promoters, the “Emidio di Treviri” research group has also been an important garrison for the Central Apennines territories affected by the 2016-2017 earthquake and by the poor management of the post-disaster interventions. The research group has been promoting a variety of initiatives, including the Massimo Dell’Orso Study Award for the creation of an interdisciplinary knowledge archive on the Apennines, which can integrate the questionable expert knowledge which intervened in the area after the earthquake. Moreover, the “Emidio di Treviri” research group identified the need to develop a critical approach to territories at risk and hit by disasters through the promotion of a priority line of research-action (*RAN Knowledge for Apennines*) in collaboration with a network of local inhabitants, activists

For a critical approach to Inner areas studies

Scuola di Fornara

“Emidio di Treviri” research group

The “Scuola di Fornara” is the first critical training experience on mountain themes and inner areas. It was born during the independent research on the post-earthquake of the central Apennines conducted by the research group “Emidio di Treviri” as a moment of self-training and collective elaboration. On the typology of the Academic Schools, since 2017 it has proposed seminar moments, workshops and laboratories from an ecological perspective about the territorial issues of the highlands. Moving from self-management, it guarantees widespread access to a particular form of knowledge involved in social transformation and welcomes young enthusiasts, academics, inhabitants, documentary filmmakers, professionals, etc. In a small village in the Monti della Laga (Gran Sasso - Laga National Park), the match between academic knowledge and applicative perspectives occurs in close contact with the

conflict processes developing in the territory. The School has a close relationship with the subjects and groups that assert themselves across the area, through public assemblies and moments of conviviality, without which the critical theoretical elaboration would not be able to take transformative potential.

The 5th edition of the School, which today assumes an autonomous form from the Emidio di Treviri research group, but continues to bring a critical view and knowledge production on the Apennines’ processes, will take place in 2021. The territories of the central Apennines affected by the earthquake, subjected to an acceleration process of slow trends already ongoing before the earthquake, thus become a privileged point of observation to investigate the dynamics of the highlands’ development and organisation.

and associations. Eventually, a self-managed popular school was created in a small hamlet hit by the earthquake in the Monti della Laga area (BOX 5.1).

Among the research promoted by young scholars on the integration of the local lay culture on earthquakes with expert knowledge, we can also mention the study promoted by Politecnico di Bari in consortium with Roma Tre university on the SNAI pilot area of Monti Dauni, in the Apulia region (Ajò, 2020). Moreover, some researchers and PhD students of the University of Camerino are investigating the relationship between ruins and contemporary design in areas affected by seismic events in Central Italy (2016-2017), underlining the role that the ruins can have in

BOX 5.2

Post-earthquake regulation and Inner areas

Silvia Montecchiari

Università di Camerino

The research aims to overcome the current regulatory model of post-earthquake reconstruction. At present, the legislative measures launched to deal with the consequences of a seismic event are built case-by-case, with a multiplication of regulatory instruments that cause uncertainties and do not appear in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction: approved by the United Nations in 2015, this regulatory framework, in binding the Italian legislator, requires the adoption of a unique regulation by 2030. The fulfilment of this international commitment would mark the turning point of an incapable legislative method of mitigating the economic and social impact of seismic events. The regulatory chaos that manages the reconstruction, leading to the delay in the recovery of the earthquake areas, is the main cause that pushes displaced citizens and economic activities to stabilise in the areas to which they are diverted in an emergency, more attractive in terms of economic and aggregate opportunities. A certain and timely reconstruction action, which can only be achieved by clear and precise rules, would limit the abandonment of the areas affected by the earthquake and reverse the depopulation of areas often already marginalised. With a view to enhancing the protection of internal territories subject to catastrophic events, the research aims to outline the guidelines of a legal framework that can deal with the consequences of disasters (damage to people, private real estate, reduction or loss of economic activities), and ensure an immediate recovery action to mitigate the damage to the socio-economic fabric of the affected communities.

the transmission of the memory of the place (Bukvic, 2020). The issue of earthquake prevention and response to seismic events is also at the core of ongoing research in the civil law domain questioning the adequacy of the current regulations in Italy, while proposing some reforms in line with the most advanced international conventions on the subject (BOX 5.2).

In addition to the territories affected by the most recent earthquakes, the Inner areas of the country have been hit by extreme climate phenomena such as the Vaia storm (2018), which has been the object of recent research on risks promoted by the Department of Territory and Agroforestry Systems of the University of Padua. Thanks to the contribution of young scholars, the department is conducting some in-depth analyses on perceptions and responses to disasters by local population and

institutions. In particular, the research focuses on the complexity of the damaged forest system and the fragmentation of disaster-related knowledge and skills (BOX 5.3). Moving from a single catastrophic event towards wider phenomena, the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of Politecnico di Milano investigates the landscape of the Alps and multiple layers of fragility due to both contraction

BOX 5.3

Mountain communities and extreme weather events: analysis of the territorial fragilities and strategies for territorial re-activation. The Italian case of the Vaia windstorm

Federica Romagnoli, Mauro Masiero, Laura Secco

Università degli Studi di Padova

In October 2018, the Vaia windstorm hit North-Eastern Italy. Vaia was an unprecedented atmospheric event and is considered the single event with the greatest impact on forest ecosystems that Italy ever recorded.

Gusts of wind with peaks of more than 200 km per hour combined with very intense rainfall distorted the landscape of the affected areas, and strongly weakened the communities it hit. Almost 500 Alpine municipalities were affected, remote and fragile areas whose conditions of marginality and vulnerability have significantly worsened.

Current damage estimates indicate 9 million cubic metres of windthrow plus damages to infrastructure and the environmental and cultural heritage of the territories.

However, this estimate lacks a detailed analysis of storm consequences at the community level. From an institutional and

governance point of view, there is not a clear understanding of the medium and long-term effects of the management strategies adopted. Similarly, there have not been investigations to examine closely attitudes, perceptions and reactions to the storm at individual and community levels.

A holistic and systematic analysis of socioeconomic aspects and interdependencies among the multiple dimensions that compose the forest system is crucial for the correct management of future extreme weather events.

This research aims to study the interactions and cause-effect linkages among environmental resources, socio-economic processes and natural phenomena. This understanding is crucial to develop effective and adaptive strategies able to improve territorial resilience, coherently meet the needs of the affected areas and valorise natural and cultural heritage.

Contemporary Alpine Landscape VS Fragilities

Silvia Restelli

Politecnico di Milano

The research deals with the territorial fragilities affecting the Alpine landscape. The Alpine landscape is understood to be a product of a stratification process of anthropic activities, developed in relation to the different economic systems that have guided and structured the territories, and natural events and phenomena produced over time. The physical transformations involving territory and landscape are also considered to be the result of changes in the relationship between Alpine context and cities in the surrounding metropolitan areas.

The landscape is investigated in its contemporary characteristics through a multi-scale approach aimed at understanding the fragility phenomena affecting it. Alpine landscape fragilities compose a complex plot caused by the alteration of local balance conditions. In the research, fragilities, interpreted as constitutive or arisen, are

identified as the results of climate and socio-economic changes (global phenomena) and phenomena of shrinking and abandonment, and increasing and overuse (local phenomena).

In this framework, the fragilities topic is thoroughly investigated by means of case studies at different scales of observation located in the central Alps, with the purpose of identifying their physical and relational geography.

Starting from the case studies and the collected planning and project practices, the research aims to closely examine the issue concerning the landscape planning and project, as a tool able to face the fragilities affecting the landscape. The research proposes a methodological approach for the landscape planning at the supra-local scale, addressing qualitative objectives to preserve, protect, regenerate and enhance the landscape and overcome its fragilities.

and overuse, in the framework of the activities of the Department of Excellence on “Territorial Fragilities” (BOX 5.4).

Another Inner and mountain area characterised by depopulation phenomena, soil erosion and increasing hydrogeological risks is represented by the Madonie, in Sicily. The Rural Development Studies Centre of the University of Calabria recently completed a research project on this area concerning different rationalities and forms of territorial knowledge expressed by policy makers, (neo-)farmers and experts. In particular, the research questioned the role that the academy can have in the process of collective construction of a cognitive heritage able to synthesise these positions and

Neo-rurality in the Mediterranean mountains. Repeasantisation processes in Sicily and Andalusia

Carlotta Ebbreo

Università della Calabria

The research studies the phenomenon according to which neo-rural subjects (<40 years, not coming from rural families) move to Mediterranean mountain territories and begin to practise a lifestyle related to “peasant agriculture” (Van Der Ploeg, 2013). The analysis of these practices as “agroecological” (Vara, Gallar, 2014) focuses on the forms of access to resources, organisational and production practices and the socio-economic relationships between the subjects and the territory in which they settle. The empirical study is based on eleven case studies analysed through participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The research looks at these practices through the repeasantisation hypothesis (Van der Ploeg, 2008; 2013). Furthermore, it is argued that using the agroecology approach (Altieri, Rosset, 2018) in reading the repeasantisation processes

(both in terms of production models and forms of cooperation and resource governance) can help to observe the different “forms of rurality” (Halfacree, 2008; Clocke, 2006) that neo-rural subjects produce in the territory. Eventually, it emerges that the process of repeasantisation helps to describe the processes of neo-rural agricultural settlement and can help respond to the environmental, ecological, demographic and socio-economic criticalities experienced by many of the Mediterranean mountain territories. Furthermore, the different forms of governance and access to local resources, as well as agricultural, land and social policies, influence the actions and perception of these subjects in relation to the implementation of peasant practices, the care of natural common goods and the perception of themselves as members of a territorial community.

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The Belice dams. Water and organic planning

Giovanni Asmundo

Università IUAV di Venezia

The research deals with the case of the Jato and Belice Valley dams in Sicily, in the democratic urban planning promoted by Danilo Dolci and his Centre for Studies and Initiatives for Full Employment in the 1960s. It is an extraordinary virtuous case in which such infrastructures were strongly desired in a bottom-up process whereby they were an instrument for the transformation project of an arid and backward internal territory. In the late 1950s, Dolci developed with the farmers a sociological-urbanistic method of investigation called “popular self-analysis”: the shared metaphor of the “dream of the washbowl” was born as a large-scale basin to collect water, irrigate and transform the territory. From this concept emerged the

idea of designing the dam on the Jato River, which became the symbol of a democratic development plan and the objective of a community self-structuring process. In the 1960s, at the turn of the Belice earthquake, the bottom-up project expanded to the adjacent valleys. Again, the dams became the strategic target for obtaining democratic water and the metaphor for an organic reconstruction in the post-seismic situation, opposite to the top-down urban planning. Thus, dams became objective tools, capable of representing the symbol of “the essential lever for structural change”. Once built, the Belice dams concretise and testify the transformation of the territory and guarantee the experience of the possibility of change for future generations.

provide useful elements for public policies against territorial fragility (BOX 5.5). Another part of Sicily, the Belice Valley, is the object of research promoted in the framework of the PhD in Architecture, City, Design (Hydro-logic design curriculum) of the IUAV University. The research is investigating the process of popular self-analysis and organic planning for the creation of infrastructures to fight drought in the Belice valley started in the mid-1950s thanks to the work of the Italian sociologist Danilo Dolci and partly interrupted by the 1968 earthquake (BOX 5.6).

The emerging geography of research and actions taking place in fragile Inner areas goes beyond the briefly mentioned experiences recalled in this section, including many other areas in which a fruitful and sometimes conflictual encounter is taking place between local populations, scholars, institutions and policies. Such encounter can strengthen both the knowledge on environmental risks and the effective safeguard of the territory.

CONCLUSIONS

A first partial mapping of the most recent research and interventions in Inner areas hit by disasters or characterised by instability phenomena shows a great liveliness of topics, actors and resources at play to imagine new forms of territorial safeguard, as well as to develop new forms of transdisciplinary knowledge to tackle multiple environmental risks. This liveliness is also fuelled by the initiatives of young researchers showing that these issues are central for Inner areas (and beyond) and, therefore, must be adequately dealt with by policies and planning tools. Environmental and climate risks cannot be addressed with occasional interventions in response to emergencies, nor with actions of “ecological modernisation”. On the contrary, they require a profound rethinking of territorial policies (Coppola, Lanzani, Zanfi, 2021) and development models currently contributing to worsen the ongoing climate crisis (Pileri, 2019). Having reached the end of the first programming season, the SNAI strategy has ample room for improvement, which could be achieved through the definition of specific objectives related to the environmental and climate risks (NUVV, 2020). In the context of the current climate crisis and in the framework of the allocation of very consistent resources by the Next Generation EU programme for the post-pandemic recovery, it is urgent to pay overall attention to the entire Italian territory and to the causes of environmental fragility. In addition to an adequate orientation of financial resources and to the preparation of effective policy tools and actions, a season of knowledge experimentation and innovation is now open, aimed at overcoming disciplinary boundaries and learning from action, thus becoming “usable” (Pasqui, 2021; Saija, 2016).

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Regenerating rural systems of inner areas starting from territorial capital: reflections on a possible utopia

Catherine Dezio

The composite dimension that distinguishes rural systems and the intrinsic potential to become an active regenerative resource for fragile territories is well represented by the concept of “rural heritage as territorial capital” (Dezio, 2020a). Starting from this reconceptualisation, how can rural systems contribute to the rebirth of inner areas? To answer this question, the coevolutionary relationships (Norgaard, 1984a; Norgaard 1984b) of the many dimensions of rural

territorial capital will be explored, with a view to closing the gap between sectors, scales and levels of government. The aim of the chapter is to feed the discussion on rural issues in inner areas, already introduced within the National Strategy for Inner Areas (2013), in order to stimulate an open, accessible and transversal debate, alternating analytical reflections on current transformations with possible antifragile utopias.

1. In the following contribution we refer to rural areas following the OECD criteria (2009), based on population density. However, although it is not the main subject of this contribution, it is raised that the OECD criteria obviously cannot be considered exhaustive. Despite the

efforts made in recent years, a sufficiently adequate definition of rural municipalities has not yet been reached. The notion of rural municipalities still remains undefined, says Blanc (1997), due to the existence of a plurality of factors that combine to qualify a rural space (Storti, 2000).

RURAL SYSTEMS AND INNER AREAS: FRAGILITIES AND POTENTIALS

Over the last century, the changes that Italian rural systems have undergone are considerable and have led to important consequences for entire territories and communities (Bevilacqua, 1989; Lanzani, 2003; Agnoletti, 2010; Lanzani, et al 2015; Colloca, 2018; ISPRA, 2018a). On the one hand, a model has spread in which productivity is no longer the only objective to be pursued, but coexists with other purposes such as environmental protection and food quality, thanks especially to the CAP reforms since 1992 (Henke, 2002; European Commission, 2012; Frascarelli, 2017). On the other hand, agricultural activity continues to produce devastating and irreversible transformations on agri-environmental systems. Some of these are: intensification and monospecificity (Valorosi, 2002), the presence of pesticides in water (ISPRA, 2018b), loss of biodiversity (WWF, 2020), reduction of cultivated area (Pagnotta et al, 2014), the destruction of original historical traces (ISMEA, 2018), as well as the abandonment of agriculture and related assets (Benayas JMR et al. 2007; Lasanta et al., 2017; De Rubertis, 2019). The latter, in particular, introduces the following paper, which intends to propose some reflections on the regenerative potential of rural systems in depopulated areas.

The abandonment of rural territories is a historically rooted phenomenon, which we can now define as systemic, as it has affected a large part of southern Europe for many decades and with slow continuity (Lasanta et al, 2017; ESPON, 2018; Del Planta, Detti, 2019; De Rubertis, 2019). In 1961, the agricultural economist Emilio Sereni spoke of a “prelude to the agricultural landscape’s disintegration” (Sereni, 1961). This observation referred to the idea that the abandonment of these geographies was a physical phenomenon with profound structural consequences (Gentileschi, 1991), but also a moral and cultural fact, the result of a descending history of places, people and memories (Teti, 2017). That’s why we talk about rural abandonment, and not agricultural, because of all the rural settlements and their tangible and intangible heritage that are involved (Barberis, 1966; Vecchio, 1989; Macchi Janica, 2016).

The data on a national scale tell us how the phenomenon is still dramatically current. For decades, the Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) has undergone a progressive contraction (by 2.3% from 2000 to 2010; 6th Italian general census of agriculture, ISTAT 2010) and is accompanied by a significant reduction in small farms (in particular, farms with less than 1ha decreased by 50.6%; ISTAT 2010) and by a general demographic stagnation of rural municipalities (De Rubertis, 2019). This constant depopulation tells of a rampant fragility in Italy (see chapter by Agim Kërçuku in this volume), which includes agriculture in its complexity. It not only refers to production, but also to distribution services.

2. The cited article describes the depopulation phenomenon referring to rural municipalities and for the Degurba classification of Eurostat (residual compared to urban poles and clusters) both in the OECD definition (population density below 150 inhabitants for sq km),

Every year, but even more now in the time of a pandemic, depopulated rural municipalities are at risk of losing the minimum supply services for people who decide to stay there. The confirmation of the alarming situation comes from research conducted by Confesercenti (2019). In the last 9 years, the phenomenon has involved 35,000 neighborhood shops and in 2019 alone, 5,000 retail shops have closed, with a closing rate of 14 per day. With obvious cultural and geographical differences, the phenomenon approaches American food deserts, literally defined as “areas where people have limited access to a variety of healthy and convenient foods” (Dutko, Ver Ploeg, Farrigan, 2012). The neighborhood shops are places of sociality and safety principals. If the shops close, degradation increases and quality of life decreases. These are essential services that are becoming scarce together with depopulation and economic crisis. Recalling that 60% of the Italian territory is occupied by inner areas, defined as “areas significantly distant from the centres offering essential services but rich in important environmental and cultural resources” (SNAI, 2013), we could also include food supply (which is underestimated by the SNAI) in the term “services”, in addition to schools and health care (see chapter by Bruna Vendemmia in this volume).

Having said this, it has been found that there is a considerable overlap between the municipalities of inner areas and those defined as rural by both the OECD and Degurba (De Rubertis, 2019). For this reason, but not the only one, talking about rural systems and inner areas in Italy will often mean facing two sides of the same coin, with their weaknesses but also with their opportunities.

In inner areas, agricultural, pastoral and forestry sectors may have the potential to assume a regenerative role. They can be economic driving forces, especially thanks to their intrinsic multifunctional capacity, and they can contribute to environmental protection. The management of agricultural land can play an important role in areas characterised by high levels of landslide risk and hydrogeological instability (see chapter by Gloria Pessina in this volume). Furthermore, the supervision of pastoralism in mountain areas contributes to the vitality of these areas, to the maintenance of biodiversity and to the contrast of soil degradation (Lucatelli, Storti, 2019).

To achieve all that, and much more, it is essential to work on the continuity of good agricultural activity to allow the permanence of populations and a generational change useful for maintaining life and presence in these territories. We need the good agriculture of good traditional practices, which in these contexts is fragile and requires support actions. The composite dimension of rural systems has in itself the potential to become the humus underlying regenerative local development paths, aimed at reversing the demographic trend that characterises inner areas.

Given the ecological and cultural importance of the territories surrounding many rural municipalities as providers of ecosystem services (Forman, 2019; Saragosa, 2019), talking about the regeneration of these territories becomes an opportunity to investigate, and, if possible, deconstruct, the relationships that exist between strong territories and weak territories and how these narratives are able to influence

both problems and solutions. In this sense, it can be said that there is a basic error: Italy should not be told as the dichotomy between metropolis and rural villages. Rather, rethinking our country with a global approach, which looks at a single plural made up of cities, villages and landscapes (Pileri, Moscarelli, 2018), means adopting a point of view capable of including complexity made by networks of relationships and interactions, rather than administrative borders (Bock, 2020).

Unfortunately, this was not the narrative conducted by the latest policy of regeneration of inner areas (see chapter by Rossella Moscarelli in this volume), the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI, 2013), which still foresees the city-countryside dualism as development-backwardness, with a strong focus on administrative boundaries. Having said that, however, there are many positive aspects of the SNAI. We know that the SNAI, launched in 2013 on the initiative of the Minister for Territorial Cohesion, Fabrizio Barca, and, coordinated by the Agency for Territorial Cohesion, aims to regenerate the territories of inner areas through not only the adaptation of the services on offer, but also the enhancement of local resources. The merit of the described approach, known precisely as resource-based development or as “development oriented to the place”, hoped for virtuous development paths starting from the enhancement of territorial capital (understood as a set of specific local conditions that cannot be replicated; Fratesi, Perucca, 2014).

Guided by this purpose of the SNAI and with the support of CREA and of the National Rural Network, the Inner Areas Technical Committee played a guiding role in identifying this resource capital and in the design of public intervention in the selected areas for the strategy, while clashing with the rigidities in the implementation methods of the RDPs, with the limited resources available to the regions and with the limited administrative capacity of local authorities (Lucatelli, Storti, 2019). The solutions adopted differ according to the contexts, but very often they are based on synergies between different tools and result from the meeting with the LAGs present. These solutions have led to the awareness that improving the design of interventions is only possible thanks to a great deal of ethical re-foundation for individual institutions, and then thanks to a new predisposition to cohesion and cooperation between different levels of governments and territorial actors.

From its inception to today, the SNAI should have produced similar effects. Actually, some inner areas have managed to do better than others, not only perhaps due to the lack of continuity in the national direction, but also due to how regions and municipalities have been able to catch (or not catch) the strategy challenges. This is why the regeneration of inner areas cannot only be occupational but also social and narrative. This means that small municipalities should first be able to make a systemic idea of territory their own, in which the development of a single municipality is only achievable with the cooperation of many. This, too, is part of the resource-based method, which leads to a reinterpretation of inner areas as experimental laboratories, for all dimensions of rural territorial capital.

REGENERATIVE APPROACHES STARTING FROM THE MANY DIMENSIONS OF RURAL TERRITORIAL CAPITAL

Some recent research studies have reconceptualised the multidimensionality of rural systems as “country capital” (Garrod et al., 2006). This implies the redefinition of the many rural resources, both tangible and intangible, as a single capital to be known and protected, but also on which to draw and invest, with responsibility and awareness.

The core of this approach is based on the concept that long-term human well-being depends on the correct short-term use of resources, whether natural or cultural (Garrod et al., 2006). The UK countryside agency defines rural capital as “the fabric of the countryside, its villages and small towns” (Countryside Agency, 2003). Although this definition may seem simplistic, it actually succeeds in suggesting the richness of the countryside fabric: the environment and landscape and its ecological and production cycles; settlements and artifacts; traditions and culture; small and medium-sized local economies (Garrod et al., 2004; Garrod et al., 2006).

This multidimensionality necessarily implies a co-evolutionary reading, or a point of view in which the environment is seen as a dynamic product of the continuous interaction between the anthropic and natural systems (Norgaard, 1984a; Norgaard, 1984b). This point of view is consistent with the resource-based approach proposed by the SNAI, inserting good intentions to a holistic and systemic interpretation of the endogenous resources.

A resource-based approach as the foundation of a territorial regeneration project, in the context of rural systems, is not a historical novelty. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Kropotkin, major exponent of the environmental anarchist movement, wrote the book “Fields, factories and workshops” (Kropotkin, 1899). In his book he addresses the agricultural problems linked to policies that led to land abandonment. To combat abandonment, Kropotkin argues that it is necessary to reconsider the land as a common heritage, to place agriculture at the centre of productive activities, developing cultures starting from local traditions (Kropotkin, 1899; Scudo, 2011).

It is from here that we want to start again, in order to be able to redefine the many dimensions of rural resource, both tangible and intangible. And this, in line with an approach that knows how to deal with the different components (environmental and anthropogenic, tangible and intangible) and the interactions between them, in the spatial and temporal transcalarity that distinguishes it (Magnaghi, 2014). We are talking about a historical approach, perhaps only apparently consolidated, which, starting from Gambi (1961), was in turn influenced by the historian Cattaneo, passing through Serpieri (1946), Sereni (1961), Rossi Doria (1965) and Bevilacqua (1989). This approach has the potential to guide strategies and plans that have as their objective a regeneration capable of bringing together tangible and intangible and socio-cultural and environmental aspects in the same interpretative framework.

This clarification is necessary to define the approach to reading the rural territorial capital that will follow in the next paragraphs. The study, approached for different dimensions, apparently sectoralising, is actually capable of attacking the complexity of agriculture while respecting its individual specificities. Remembering that the distinction between culture and nature, in the context of agriculture and food, is more fictitious than ever (Montanari, 2004), it may be useful to read this dimensional analysis trying to understand how nature can become a cultural model for conscious communities.

The Cultural Capital of the Rural System

Starting from the rural cultural capital of inner areas, we should obviously talk about heritage (see chapter by Benedetta Silva in this volume). The cultural places recognised as such on a national scale (museums, archaeological sites, palaces, ecclesiastical assets ...) when surveyed in 2011 by ISTAT, total 4,588; of these, 1,803 fall into inner areas. If we talk about rural heritage specifically, we are dealing with a very broad and little recognised concept that includes all tangible and intangible elements capable of bearing witness to the relationships that a community has established with a rural territory (Zerbi, 2007). The tangible elements are divided into real estate, or buildings for agricultural use or related to crafts or industry, and movable property, or objects for domestic, religious or festive occasions (Zerbi, 2007). The intangible elements represent a heritage of techniques and skills, dialects, music and oral literature, forms of organisation of social life and specific forms of social order (Convention for the protection of the intangible cultural heritage, 2003). There are also two categories of goods that represent the intersection between tangible and intangible heritage: food heritage, as result of an adaptation to the local territorial conditions, climate, cultural traditions, farming and work processes (Porciani, 2018; Montanari, 2010) and traditional agricultural landscapes (Barbera et al., 2014), the product of natural and anthropic elements and whose maintenance over time (and the safety of the territory in hydrogeological terms) depends on the continuity and cultivation methods of local communities.

Consistent with this last category, it is interesting to mention the research by Francesca Vigotti (2020; Box 6.1), which intersects the tool of the National Register of Historic Rural Landscapes with the National Strategy of Inner Areas. In particular, for each of the 123 sites reported in the National Catalogue of Historic Rural Landscapes, a matrix of criteria is structured that can be crucial for the conservation and sustainable development of the rural heritage of territories. This research is an example that the construction of databases or catalogues is only a starting point for activating a common ground on which to place a conscious and collective protection.

The survival of memory that the rural cultural capital of inner areas possesses can only be guaranteed by a different narrative for individuals, community and local administrations beyond the media banalities of typical products, festivals and folk-

Rural landscape systems in the inner areas: fragilities and potentialities of a multifaceted heritage

Francesca Vigotti

Politecnico di Milano

The research investigates rural heritage systems in the so-called Italian *Inner Areas*, on a national level.

Rural heritage systems in the Inner areas might represent a potential territorial safeguarding and a trigger to foster regeneration strategies of areas affected by the dynamics of abandonment. Yet, these systems are conditioned by various vulnerability factors, such as ageing of residents, erosion of cultivated land and related practices, together with the risk of loss of tangible and intangible heritage.

As a first step, the research analysed the indicators and information related to the National Strategy for the Inner Areas (SNAI) and the ones as presented in the context of the investigations that have led to the creation of the National Catalogue and the National Register of Historical Rural Landscapes. Thus, this preliminary study has resulted in the identification of which rural heritage systems

are set in the *Aree Progetto* as defined by the SNAI. Completing the introductory research, selected strategies have been reviewed by identifying specific actions dedicated to the safeguarding and management of rural systems, widespread built heritage and traditional practices and knowledge.

The result of such analysis is a composed base of knowledge for the research applied to selected case studies to be integrated with research in the field. As a final step, practices and tools of research-in-action that might complement the data retrieved from indicators have been identified (e.g. community mapping, interviews) to foster the knowledge, monitoring and conservation of rural heritage systems in the inner areas.

lore. We need to work together for the tangible and intangible heritage, recognised and unrecognised, inside and outside museums, universities, libraries and archives to reconstruct a powerful and antifragile narrative. It must be a narrative capable of showing that the knowledge that we believed to be dead is alive and is capable of including the individual, uniting the community, generating sensitive economies and is capable of reconstructing a past history whilst knowing how to contain the future one (Dezio, 2020a).

Preserving the rural landscape heritage starting from agrobiodiversity and local knowledge. Experiences and suggestions from Latin America for the implementation of the GIAHS approach

Andrea L'Erario

Politecnico di Milano and FAO-GIAHS Secretariat

Since 2002, the FAO-GIAHS programme (Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems) promoted an approach for the dynamic conservation of traditional agricultural systems of global importance, based on bottom-up projects in which local populations are both actors and recipients of the actions undertaken.

In many countries in economic transition, the GIAHS approach constitutes the starting point for national policies for the recognition of the importance of historical agricultural systems. These policies are aimed both at implementing actions for their active protection and at increasing the awareness on the importance of their conservation, as well as active protection from the perspective of the UN-SDGs.

The inner areas of many of these countries, as in Latin America, are today affected by phenomena of abandonment, breakdown of traditional agricultural systems, loss of landscape heritage, agrobiodiversity and traditional knowledge. Despite this, in some Latin American countries, the increase in sensitivity (also political) on the importance of the active protection of traditional

agricultural systems is evident. This sensitivity, also related to the need to ensure the food sovereignty of the populations, mainly comes from the recognition of the Latin American GIAHS.

From this premise, the research investigates these policies which, starting from the theme of food sovereignty, have an impact on the active protection of traditional agricultural systems also as historical-cultural heritage, through the dynamic conservation of agrobiodiversity and traditional knowledge related to the daily management of the landscape. The research also aims to identify experiences that can suggest ideas for policies or projects to be launched in Italy, even in the context of the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI). In the reactivation of traditional agricultural systems, the SNAI illustrates a fundamental aspect to reverse phenomena of abandonment of internal areas and revitalise rural landscapes.

BOX 6.2



Agricultural terraces (*Sistema de andeneria*) in Socoroma, Region of Arica y Parinacota, Chile. The enormous Latin American historical agricultural heritage represents a living heritage, still cared for by local populations with traditional methods. However, at the same time, the fragile character of this heritage is evident due to the progressive abandonment of these places, especially by young people. The abandonment has consequences in the breaking down of the ancient links with the past and, therefore, the oral transmission systems of knowledge for the daily care of the landscape (source: Wikidata, Creative Commons-CC BY-SA 4.0)

A bottom-up narrative constructed and shared with local communities, true holders of the intangible heritage linked to traditional agricultural landscapes, is the subject of research by Andrea L'Erario (Box 6.2). Andrea, working on an international case, identifies experiences useful for feeding the policies for the Italian Inner Areas.

The Human Capital of the Rural System

A narrative, like the one described above, stands as an intense and long-lasting work on the human capital of inner areas, a concept considered by many to be one of the central elements in the development of rural areas (INEA, 2013). From the early 1900s to today, there have been different definitions of human capital (Hanifan, 1916; Jacobs, 1961; Bourdieu, 1980; Coleman, 1990). Pierre Bourdieu was perhaps the first who, integrating tangible and intangible aspects, defined it in its entirety as an individual component (skills and competences, Burt, 1998), and a social component (interaction and relationships, Bourdieu, 1980). Therefore, when we talk about social innovation, we will refer to a process of change based on actions that are aimed at both individual and social capital: education, training, improvement of working conditions, sharing economy and much more.

It is clear that cities represent the great places of social innovation par excellence. However, inner areas and their rural systems also have the potential to be laboratories for social innovation. These are mostly territorial development paths connected to community processes that try to fight some typical criticalities of these places, such as economic inequalities or exclusion from basic services. The social innovation paths that include the rural systems of inner areas are activated, in particular, on aspects such as: green communities, the phenomenon of new farmers, food planning, social agriculture, support for short supply chains and local productions and much more.

Amina Bianca Cervellera's research (Box 6.3) focuses precisely on the relationship between typical productions and processes of social self-identification, and how it can become an instrument for regeneration.

Rural areas are normally considered areas where change is more difficult, but it is a partial truth. It is possible that forms of social innovation can take place on the fringes, but not marginally, flanked and supported by dedicated policies (Barbera, Parisi, 2019).

On the one hand, rural areas have the ability to generate profoundly innovative solutions, thanks to the presence of a plurality of actors capable of promoting ideas and practices; on the other hand, is the poor attitude of the governance system to take innovation as the basis for its own behaviour (Di Iacovo, 2011). The risk of this mismatch is being able to generate solutions which do not take root or spread. Governance in rural areas needs to foster a closer link between innovation carriers and institutional subjects, through the organisation of facilitation tools capable of assuming the change's subject as an organised opportunity and priority (even the most devastating one, such as the earthquake, explained in detail in the research of Marco Francucci, 2020, but also in that of Karina Zabrodina, 2020).

In this sense, the research by Davide Bazzana and Silvia Baralla (Box 6.4) describes a virtuous attempt to implement an integrated development model for Inner Areas, starting with new skills development and knowledge sharing. The goal is to put the inhabitants and their knowledge back to the centre.

Creating value through food. The social construction of future in the territory of the Four Provinces

Amina Bianca Cervellera

Università degli Studi Milano-Bicocca

My ethnographic research concerns the territory of the Four Provinces (a set of valleys of the Ligurian Apennine between the provinces of Pavia, Alessandria, Genova and Piacenza).

Despite the administrative fragmentation, the Four Provinces show several common features connected with forms of peasant mountain economy and due to the fact that these valleys represented for centuries an important crossing point for the convoys transporting goods between Genova and Pianura Padana.

After the Second World War, this area (like many other territories along the Apennines) underwent a process of depopulation and economic decline. The aim of my research is

to explore the typical agri-food products as a possible flywheel for the empowerment of this territory and as a vehicle of new forms of social self-identification.

Food, as a catalyst for multiple practices and meanings in different social and environmental contexts, is a lens through which light can be shed on processes of economic and symbolic value-creation. To analyse how projects aimed at the empowerment of the agri-food supply chains elaborated by policy makers and experts intersect with endogenous dynamics of change involving farms and cooperatives located in the territory becomes crucial in order to understand the developmental trajectories that are currently taking shape around this area.

In the rural territories of inner areas, it is possible to identify the “levers to which a proactive and intentional action can be successfully applied, aimed at enhancing underutilised resources or those left on the sidelines by development processes” (Borghi, 2017). By the latter, we mean “human resources, of fixed social capital and also of natural capital” (Borghi, 2017), which should be made operational and enhanced.

The Natural Capital of the Rural System

In the context of the vast natural capital that the inner areas can own (see chapter by Giusy Pappalardo in this volume), while referring to the studies on the term by Daly and Costanza (Costanza and Daly, 1992; Costanza, 2020), we recall one

Ricegrowing for the implementation of sustainable development and the empowerment in inner areas

Davide Bazzana, Silvia Baralla***

**Università degli Studi di Brescia and Fondazione Enrico Mattei*

***Consiglio per la ricerca in agricoltura e l'analisi dell'economia agraria*

The RISE project, developed at the Summer School for Sustainable Development (Siena, 2019), aims to relaunch and promote two areas with a rice-growing vocation in the Vercelli and Oristano districts, both characterised by similar productive features, potentials and marginality conditions which are typical of the inner areas, such as a lack of services, youth emigration and social fragmentation.

The aim of the project is to relaunch the inner areas through a sustainable and integrated development capable of enhancing the territory thanks to a multidimensional approach to sustainability by creating new skills, increasing national/international attractiveness and improving quality of life and the employment rate. Particular attention is devoted to the agri-food and tourism sectors, which are among the most privileged in sustaining the role

of local stakeholders guaranteeing new development opportunities.

Acting locally is necessary to strengthen the socio-economic and cultural structure and to make resident communities aware of the potentiality of their territory with the common aim of redeveloping and promoting touristic and cultural resources, through a transition towards sustainable rice growing, which is both a typical agri-food product and potential driver for public and private investments. Supporting virtuous actions for the sustainable management of rice growing by sharing experiences and good practices that can enhance the natural heritage of the area and promote eco-tourism is essential to create the sharing of knowledge necessary to start a virtuous process of transition, placing the inhabitants at the centre, thus avoiding the gentrification of the rural system.

of the most recent definitions (Natural Capital Committee, 2017), which includes “natural assets in their role of providing natural resource inputs and environmental services for economic production”. With reference to the inner areas, if we consider all the municipalities classified as inner by the SNAI, they contain more than 70% of the forest area and more than 77% of the area protected by parks, SPAs and SICs of the total area protected at national level (Carrosio, 2021). Furthermore,

an important point is that 2/3 of the value of ecosystem services at national level is produced in inner areas, against a local demand of only 1/5 of the total (Saragosa, 2019). This evaluation represents a fundamental point because ecosystem services are produced but still not paid. A national government that has a clear understanding of the problem of inner areas should work to start addressing the issue of paying for these services, territorially equalising those who produce these services and those who use them (Saragosa, 2019).

Looking into the specifics of the natural capital of rural systems, we could also say that it is divided into tangible and intangible, where by tangible we mean the agro-ecosystems as a whole and by intangible the services and benefits generated by them (MEA, 2005; Costanza et al, 2017). Certainly, the most important services provided by agriculture are the supply of food, fuel and fibre, that is, the supply services. But there are also support services, the most important of these being the maintenance of soil fertility, which is essential for sustaining agricultural productivity. There is also the provision of habitats for biodiversity, nutrient cycling and pollination, which allow ecosystems to continue providing services such as food supply, food regulation and water purification (Swinton et al., 2007). The regulation services are among the most varied. Agrarian landscapes have the ability to regulate population dynamics of pollinators, pests, pathogens and wildlife, as well as soil conservation (especially erosion regulation and protection from instability), quality and water supply, climate regulation and carbon sequestration. The additional services provided by agricultural landscapes, therefore, include cultural benefits (recreational and aesthetic), for which the evaluation is still complex today (Swinton et al., 2007).

There is no doubt that agriculture still manages most of the environmental resources and is in a central position in the relationship between man and resources, representing one of the main tools for transforming and organising the natural landscape and for constituting the first food producer. Furthermore, from ISPRA studies, it emerges that 21% of the Italian UAA (2010) has characteristics of high naturalistic value in terms of genetic biodiversity, diversity of species and landscape image. An example of how the high naturalistic value can meet agricultural production is the research by Luca Giupponi et al. (2020; Box 6.5). It has set itself the goal of taking a census of the traditional local herbaceous cultivars³ of Lombardy (to date 1,615), characterising them from an agronomic and nutritional point of view and enhancing them so that unique and quality agri-food chains are triggered. The work of Giupponi et al. becomes exemplary, not only for the characterisation and enhancement of endangered species, but above all with a view to promoting the sustainable development of mountain areas and their small and medium-sized farms through environmental protection.

3. "Traditional local herbaceous cultivars" means a local variety of a crop that reproduces by seed or by vegetative propagation with a variable population, however easily identifiable and which usually has a local name.

Study and enhancement of landraces of Italian mountains: the experience of UNIMONT

Luca Giupponi, Valeria Leoni, Davide Pedrali, Alessia Rodari, Anna Giorgi*

**Università degli Studi di Milano*

The University Centre of Excellence "UNIMONT" (<https://www.unimontagna.it/en/>) is an innovative training and research centre of the University of Milan, specialising in the study and analysis of issues regarding mountain areas. UNIMONT, thanks to the specific skills dealing with mountain topics, intends to promote the conservation and sustainable development of mountain areas by preserving the socio-cultural and biological diversity, the production of peculiar and high-quality local products and the preservation of landscapes' quality for a sustainable tourism. Landraces are an agri-food and historical-cultural heritage, but they are undergoing losses worldwide; Italy is taking action to counteract this problem. In this sense, an important action was to investigate the state of the Italian landraces preserved on farms - in situ by merging and analysing the data contained in the main databases on Italian agrobiodiversity. The total number of herbaceous landraces found was 1,615 wherein Poaceae, Fabaceae and Solanaceae together comprise 70% of total herbaceous landraces. In particular, three cultivars were nutritionally, genomically and agronomically characterised by the UNIMONT research team: "Nero Spinoso" maize (landrace from Camonica Valley), Copafam beans (typical legume of the Alps) and "Grano Siberiano Valtellinese" buckwheat (very ancient variety). Finally, UNIMONT provides a quality analysis service for saffron, a suitable crop for marginal and mountain Italian areas.

The Economic Capital of the Rural System

It is not possible to talk about natural capital within rural systems without also addressing the economic dimension. The research by Marco Marino and Jacopo Galli (2020) is just one of the possible demonstrations of this. It hypothesises scenarios of drastic transformation based on climate change in the productive landscape of the Po Delta.

But let's proceed in order. For David Ricardo, historical classical economist, economic capital is one of the three factors of production, together with land and labour (1817). In the case of rural areas, reference is made to agricultural produc-

tion, which can be defined as the activity through which some goods (production factors that Serpieri identifies as “work performance, tools and raw or auxiliary materials”) are transformed into new goods (products). Land is the physical basis of production, to which is added the capital of investments. Work is the third factor of production, which differs from the others in socio-psychological constraints and in the historical dimension.

Today, farming is changing towards new forms of business, through the development of activities that add value to products (ISMEA, 2016): this means talking about the agricultural multifunctionality of farming (OECD, 2001). The multifunctional practices activated by farms can be divided into three categories (Henke, Salvioni, 2010): (i) *deepening*, in which there are practices of in-depth analysis and enhancement of production (short chain and direct sales); (ii) *broadening*, which provides the opportunity to combine traditional activities with other functions performed by agricultural enterprise, such as rural tourism (see chapter by Stefano D’Armento in this volume), landscape management and biodiversity conservation; (iii) *regrounding*, on the other hand, involves the reallocation of production factors outside the farm.

In this panorama of different activities, it is worthwhile to deepen one of them: the short supply chain. The short chain is defined as “a production chain characterised by a limited and circumscribed number of production steps, which can lead to direct contact between producer and consumer” (ISMEA, 2016).

To understand the economic impacts and repercussions of some types of agri-food supply chains and the relationship with the territories of inner areas, Chiara Spadaro and Luca Martinelli (2020) undertook a comparative study of three different practices: the Forno Brisa between Loreto Aprutino (PE), Nocchiano (PE) and Bologna, where flours, grown in the Pescara hills, are transformed into the Emilian capital; the Tularù di Ponzano farm in Cittaducale (RI), where nine companies, a fresh pasta laboratory and a bakery share the production regulations; the Valmarecchia Bionatura cooperative, based in Pennabilli (RN), which markets flours of a mill under the “Terre Biologiche Valmarecchia” brand, controlling the entire supply chain. Beyond the specific results, what emerges from their survey is the strong urgency to imagine inner areas no longer as appendages in a subordinate relationship with the cities, but as systems capable of conducting a development path only with a one-to-one relationship of interdependence (Bock, 2020). This need arises from the local communities themselves interviewed, who underline the need to dispel the recurring myths of these territories, romantic or decadent visions of little use to a concrete medium- or long-term design approach.

THE POSSIBLE UTOPIA

In this illustrative roundup of resources and strategies, distinguished by territorial capital’s dimensions, we can clearly see the ability of agriculture to become a multifaceted platform, on which multiple systems and as many intentions can be inserted.

A resource-based project of rural systems of inner areas, traditional and innovative at the same time, can be regenerative if it takes into account the great multidimensional potential of their capital: it can be a keeper, improve and protect the quality of places, build social networks between producers and citizens and much more (Dezio, 2020a).

This is done by applying a systemic perspective that re-centres agriculture and its capital, with: more and more European agricultural policies that know how to decline locally on typicality and criticality; win-win formulas for the producer’s income, for healthy food for the citizen, for an authentic landscape beauty for tourists, for leisure places for the inhabitants, for ecosystem services for the community; policies for the reuse of buildings, soil protection, landscape protection, local markets and proximity economies, in a perspective that can be traced back to a bioregionalist vision (Berg, 1978; Iacononi, 2001; Magnaghi and Fanfani, 2010; Magnaghi, 2019; Poli, 2019; Dezio, Longo, 2020; Dezio, 2020b). It is a return to an awareness of the place value, or rather of “place consciousness” (Magnaghi, 2010), which can lead to protection and care.

“Back to the land” arises as a necessary reconstruction of the material bases and social relations, in order to renew the co-evolutionary relations between human settlement and environment (Norgaard, 1984a).

Andrea Ambroso (Box 6.6) takes up the concept of “back to the land” by re-proposing it as a phenomenon capable of expressing the profound change of territoriality, an essential transformation of the co-evolutionary relationships between individual and environment. In this sense, he investigates the phenomena of rurbanisation, and with them also: the new modes of production and distribution, the increase of an alternative economy, the forms of settlement that this demographic return has taken over the centuries and which strategies to adopt so that this neo-rurality can generate virtuous territorial transformations.

“Back to the land” is an increasingly transversal need to address the growing agricultural problems. It does not pretend to go back in time or to clear the history of mechanisation or genetic engineering, which has radically changed what was once the traditional agriculture, but it requires effort for a new challenge. Young minds and innovative thoughts are required for ancient crafts. The intertwining of new technologies with traditional knowledge can change the connotations of agriculture, which can remain real while feeding on utopian provocations (Dezio, 2020a).

All this leads us to reflect on the forms of local governance, understood as a system of actors, tools and processes. First of all, it reflects on the role of the farmer, who is always a producer but, compared to the past, today can generate change by proposing themselves as a “builder of common goods useful for the whole commu-

BOX 6.6

Neoruralism - New territorialising of agricultural systems

Andrea Ambroso

Università IUAV di Venezia

The phenomenon of neo-ruralism can be considered as one of the most important cultural trends of our time. This attitude comes from the current crisis of the concept of 'Western city': a crisis which impacts both environment and society.

The phenomenon manifests itself as a new awareness of the concept of 'work', a new identity of the 'land', the valorisation of the short supply chain and of organic products.

The aforementioned processes convey a deep change in the concept of territoriality, together with an essential transformation of the relationship between man and environment.

The RDP (Rural Development Programmes) are critical as the engine of transformation of the rural areas, impacting the development of the new farmers' youth policies, and the modernisation of the farming productive system to improve performance and environmental sustainability.

The new production models aim to innovate the rural landscape as a system that is always changing and never stable, able to supply diverse food products, to adapt itself to reversible programming, frail, seasonal and sustainable. Within this context, the concepts of archaism and superfluosity, the stigmas usually associated with rurality, become meaningless.

Archaic and modern blend together so that the agricultural enterprise no longer represents the arena of chemical-industrial technologies. On the contrary, it becomes a new model of production, management and online sales.

The new agricultural enterprise doesn't grow anymore in terms of size (rural space), but in terms of technological development, constant improvement of the operations, financial and environmental impact.

Therefore, for a resource-based regeneration that invests in the rural capital of inner areas, a public intentionality that invests in the human and relational dimension becomes indispensable, also with a view to enhancing economic capital: strengthening networks; research activity; education projects; training for local knowledge; exchange of common experiences. At the base of such a project there is a conception of territory that is a common good, a heritage of natural and cultural resources, individual and collective at the same time, and where agriculture is capable of evoking past values and soliciting future innovative abilities. From here, it is necessary to start again: from the here and now of all those involved at the local level in agriculture (Poli, 2013), and from a possible utopia that leads to real actions oriented towards the real problems.

city" (Poli, 2013). On the other hand, planners are asked to urge change, identifying flexible, inclusive, integrated objectives, policies and tools. Local institutions are asked to encourage change, with co-planning and cooperation actions. Finally, citizens are asked to spread the change in everyday life, also remembering that "eating is an agricultural act" (Berry, 2015). Therefore, we too, with our choices, affect agriculture every day.

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Architectural heritage in the National Strategy for Inner Areas: an opportunity often missed

Benedetta Silva

The architectural heritage of the inner areas and the possibility of a return to living permanently in these areas have returned to the centre of the national debate due to the health emergency and the obvious limits of living in large urban agglomerations: in marginal contexts, the existing buildings are largely underused or unused. In the first implementation of the National Strategy for Inner Areas (2014/2020), the theme of the conservation of the widespread architectural heritage was only tangential to the objectives of this important policy. The contribution intends to draw attention to some issues on which the protection of the

buildings and the interventions on this heritage depend: the housing function of the settlements, the socio-economic reactivation of the territories, the role of administrations and associations and possible financing channels.

The issues mentioned here allow the elaboration of reflections and observations for a new research perspective, which brings back the project for the built heritage as a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary theme, able to mediate between the requests of protecting the architectural heritage and those of adapting to contemporary living standards.

POST PANDEMIC AND RETURN TO THE SETTLEMENTS OF THE INNER AREAS

The health emergency has turned the spotlight on inner areas and on the possible return to living permanently in small towns which have been abandoned. The first phase of the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the limits and criticalities of contemporary living in large urban agglomerations and metropolitan contexts. The areas with the highest residential concentration have proven to be more fragile and exposed to infections, while the inhabited areas of inner areas have been identified as a possible answer to the problems brought to attention by the pandemic, due to their reduced population density and to phenomena of demographic decline. With the end of the first domestic confinement, an initial proposal was put forward for a rethinking of the ways of living in urbanised spaces, through a contemporary project to re-inhabit those large portions of the national territory forgotten after World War II (see Luisi, in this volume; Boeri, 2020; Fioretti, 2020a; Fioretti, 2020b; Galgani, 2020; Giovara, 2020; Molinari, 2020; Nadotti, 2020; Varlese, 2020).

In the debate among associations active in the territories and scholars who deal with inner areas (for example see: Boeri, Piacentini, 2020; Oteri, Scamardi, 2020; Crisan, Fiorani, Kealy et al, 2015; Devoti, Naretto, Volpiano, 2015), it has been underlined that the discussion on the return to the villages, which cyclically returns to be central to the political debate, cannot remain only “paternalistic rhetoric”: from many sides it has been denounced as the inner areas, the settlements and more generally the architectural heritage cannot be addressed only as a possible response to emergencies that arise. To give some examples of the proposals for the “return to the small towns”, in the last decade the inner areas have been identified as the possible solution to the strong over tourism of the most important Italian tourist destinations (Rome, Florence, Naples, Venice), with the promotion of the smaller municipalities, as evidenced by the relevant initiatives activated by Mibact. With the coordination of the General Directorate for Tourism, 2016 was dedicated to the “Cammini d’Italia” (Paths of Italy), 2017 was proclaimed “Anno dei borghi italiani” (Year of Italian villages), 2018 represented the “Year of Italian food”, while 2019 promoted “Slow tourism”. In the same years, on the basis of some virtuous Calabrian examples such as Riace, Badolato, Caulonia and Stignano, it was hypothesised that the 1,359 Italian localities identified as without inhabitants at the last census (Istat, 2011) could be repopulated (as a response to significant migration processes, which were investing our country) by migrants hosted in reception centres scattered throughout the national territory¹. During the current health emergency, the political debate has found in the inner areas a possible solution to the urban problems that emerged with the pandemic: the villages and the unused built heritage have been imagined as a landing place for those who could flee from densely populated areas and large urban agglomerations.

1. DASTU department (Politecnico of Milan) *storici solidali. Il recupero del patrimonio* financed the project FARB E/MIGRATE: centri culturale per un'accoglienza sostenibile in 2016.

The data presented in the collaboration agreement signed in July 2020 between CNAPPC and Uncem show that in the 5,552 “small municipalities” of Italy, for every two occupied houses there is an empty one. This is a numerically extended heritage: the hypothesis signed to intervene even on only 15% of the available houses could bring 300,000 new inhabitants, two billion euros to the construction industry and tens of thousands of new employees (CNAPPC, Uncem, 2020).

Questioning a possible return to villages and unused built heritage makes it necessary to reflect on contemporary living standards, moving away from what has been done in the past: re-inhabiting inner areas cannot mean a new urban dispersion, with phenomena of building speculation and destruction of entire landscapes, as has happened in many rural and mountain areas since the Second World War and especially between the 70s and 80s of the last century (Lanzani, Curci, 2018; Legambiente, 2009; Cipra, 2008).

The projects for the existing buildings, the conservation and protection of the architectural heritage represent articulated and complex themes, which must necessarily be measured with important conditioning factors, such as natural and environmental risks (earthquake, hydrogeological instability and floods, see Pessina in this volume) and anthropic ones (linked above all to abandonment). It is necessary to recognise and assume the complexity of the problem (Musso, 2015), accepting its challenges and perspectives for our contemporaneity. Historical settlements, as a matter of fact, cannot be simplified as a set of architectures, but must be recognised as an interdependent system in which architecture, urban structure, territory and landscape, environment and socio-economic and cultural system are interfaced. In this unified vision, the conservation of the existing buildings should be taken as a guideline for the definition of intervention priorities, mitigating risks, rebalancing uses and governing the transformation of this heritage.

REFLECTIONS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE AS ONE OF THE GOALS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR INNER AREAS

As mentioned in the introduction, the existing buildings of the inner areas are largely underutilised. The theme of the conservation of the architectural heritage appears to be tangential to the objectives set by the SNAI.

Without describing the actions promoted in the seventy-two project areas, the contribution intends to collect some issues that should be mandatory when wondering about the possibility of permanently re-inhabiting these territories: the themes of conservation and use of historic buildings intersect, in fact, socio-economic, administrative, financial and cultural reasons on which the interventions themselves depend.

The centrality of the housing function in marginal contexts

In almost all cases, the Area strategies approved so far show how the intervention in inner areas has resulted in conservation and protection actions for individual cultural buildings or listed buildings (Agenzia per la Coesione Territoriale, 2020). The architectural heritage of the inner areas cannot be recognised only in “monumental” episodes and the intervention in marginal contexts cannot be resolved only in these types of valorisation and protection actions: the national territory, in fact, is studded with villages and small towns, whose urban heritage represents an inestimable richness and an example of the sedimentation of history, material culture, construction techniques and materials. The National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI) has the aim of countering demographic decline in the medium term and supporting sustainable territorial competitiveness (Muval, 2014), creating new income opportunities and ensuring accessibility to citizenship services (see Vendemmia in this volume). This policy has rarely been able to activate resettlement initiatives with accompanying actions for those wishing to return to live in these areas and the protection of widespread built heritage wasn't encouraged. Starting from 2017, but more and more frequently after the experience of the health emergency, the initiatives to intercept the interest in returning (understood as new housing and support for economic activities), have been promoted by individual local authorities with the allocation of non-repayable economic contributions for the reuse of existing buildings, concessions and incentives for taxes and services. The Municipality of Montesegele (PV), for example, has promoted the so-called “Patto di residenza” (Residence Agreement) for the three-year period 2017-2019: a tender to attract new residents (five couples under 40) and new entrepreneurial activities (Municipality of Montesegele, 2017). In the Piedmont Alpine context, on the other hand, some Municipalities have granted incentives to those who transfer their residence (Municipality of Salmour, 2018) or have promoted activities to encourage resettlement, as in the case of the Municipality of Traversella (Di Maria, 2020). The Municipality of Pomaretto has developed the project “Vieni a vivere a Pomaretto e... ti accoglieremo” with the collaboration of the association “Sviluppo Pomaretto”; the aim is meeting supply and demand of housing (Municipality of Pomaretto, 2020).

On the Apennines, the case of Santo Stefano di Sessanio (AQ) is emblematic: after the experience of a private initiative of the widespread hotel, in 2020 the administration proposed facilitations for those who moved their residence to the ancient village (Municipality of Santo Stefano di Sessanio, 2020). The Emilia-Romagna Region, however, has allocated 10 million euros via the “Progetto Montagna” (Mountain Project) to encourage the repopulation and revitalisation of mountain areas through the purchase of first houses without land consumption or the reuse of the existing built heritage (Emilia-Romagna Region, 2020).

In light of the recent debate on a possible move from metropolitan to marginal areas, it appears necessary to recognise how the housing function must return to

being central for the protection and safeguarding of settlements in inner areas, subject to depopulation, socio-economic contraction and settlement discomfort. Often, the common thought associates the villages of the marginal areas with the image of totally abandoned settlements whose architectural heritage is in a state of ruin: the inner areas, however, are also stories of “resistance” (Vito Teti, 2017) and of communities who choose to stay and invest in these territories. In fact, the residents represent the very soul of the settlements, whatever the size of the contexts being studied. In the past, top-down projects have often recovered the building stock, but the spaces have remained abandoned with a waste of energy and economic resources. Questioning whether there are possibilities to re-inhabit the built heritage necessarily starts with a reflection of the dynamics in progress. The presence of inhabitants, even if in small numbers, or of people interested in returning to these settlements, who imagine a future in these places as permanent citizens, represents the link with the territory that must be safeguarded and encouraged through activities to support the permanence. In the absence of inhabitants, however, it is necessary to understand the reasons for settlement that have disappeared, because they have been lost and there is no longer anyone interested in living in these historic centres. In these cases, the disciplinary field of restoration could accompany the process of ruderization of these places with safety measures: these centres, still subject to sporadic visits, still represent focal elements of the landscape that cannot be left to total environmental action. At the same time, it is essential to think about whether the current dynamics are altering the settlement structure and whether the abandonments of the settlements are total or partial. The experiences of the Lucanian inner areas show the possibility of networking fragile realities, subject to total abandonment also caused by problems of a hydrogeological nature and slow landslides, allowing the conservation of the state of the places thanks to new uses of these areas (Box 7.1). In the Matera area, it was possible to implement virtuous projects for the conservation of the architectural heritage, both in contexts without inhabitants and in the presence of small communities. Craco (MT) is a village totally abandoned after the landslide of 1963: today it lives again thanks to the cinematographic vocation that guarantees its preventive maintenance and the study of the state of conservation of the construction techniques (Calitro, Catella, Colonna et al, 2011; Cadilhac, Cantella, 2020). In Grottole, however, there is still a small community of inhabitants: the Airbnb platform and the social enterprise “Wonder Grottole” have created “Italian Sabbatical”: a three-month temporary residence project. With five places available, 280,000 applications came from all over the world (Italian Sabbatical, 2019).

The Sicilian case differs from the trends of the rest of the peninsula: the urban conformation of most of Italy is made up of small villages, while Sicily has larger towns, even in areas classified as inner areas. The contributions of Chiara Circo (Box 7.2) and Deborah Sanzaro (Box 7.3) with the study of the abandoned centres of Petralia Soprana (PA), Motta Camastra (ME), Leonforte (EN) show how the debate on Sicilian

Stories of abandonment and rebirth of the inner areas of Basilicata: the case study of the medieval village of Craco (MT)

Maria Antonietta Catella
Polytechnic University of Bari

Condemned to a sort of complete abandonment since 1963, the medieval village of Craco (MT) is an emblem of “minor Italy” affected by “settlement problems”. Confronting an entire city in a state of ruin with the relative condition of fragility and precariousness determined by the slow landslide movements still in progress involves having to accept the loss of the characters that give it its identity, that of a spent city, and welcome the new cinematographic vocation, the art of “ghost town” able to attract an increasing number of visitors. The conservation of the ruins and of the now consolidated “image of the city” can be pursued through maintenance works, evaluated on the basis of archived knowledge of the state of conservation of this example of vernacular architecture. The results are currently partially illustrated in a permanent exhibition set up at the Emotional Museum of Craco, former San Pietro monastery.

Other settlements affected by the same landslides and depopulation

phenomena, such as Civita di Bagnoregio (VT) and the Farm Cultural Park of Favara (AG), have shown this resilient nature aimed at enhancement, as well as some smaller Lucanian centres currently representing real and virtuous examples. Think, for example, of the eighteenth-century village of Campomaggiore (PZ), the “City of Utopia”, which in recent years has been revived thanks to the establishment of an Archaeological Garden Park, or the Wonder Grottole project, aimed at creating a “social enterprise” with the ultimate goal of the recovery of the concept of village in the province of Matera.

These are examples that demonstrate how the conservation of medieval places can be pursued through the use of tourism which, if able to network with fragile settlements, can guarantee the enhancement of the internal Lucanian areas.

inner areas strongly intersects the themes of the protection of historic centres. The polarisation towards the coastal areas has led to territorial imbalances and the crisis of the “average city”, with partial abandonment in the urban centres of the inland.

Preservation and safety of small historical centres. Research towards the formulation of a code of practice for the restoration project of buildings in aggregate

Chiara Circo

University of Catania

The work is part of the research project titled “*Open Technologies for local development. Democratic practices for enhancing and preserving cultural heritage*”, activated at DICAR (UniCT) with “PON R&I 2014-2020” funds.

The research investigates the possibility of developing a “code of practice” for the restoration of buildings in aggregate in the small historic centres. The codes of practice – drawn up by the research group coordinated by Antonino Giuffrè from the end of the 1980s – constitute a cultural guideline for the consolidation project of masonry buildings, offering sets of advice (not prescriptions) that derive from the knowledge of the specific features of the historical fabric under examination. This line of research has inspired other codes aimed instead at the restoration of the façades – an aspect also addressed by further operative tools such as plans of colour.

The research intends to test on some small centres of the Sicilian inland – Petralia Soprana (PA), Motta Camastra (Me), Leonforte (EN) – a methodology already adopted to study other historical contexts – Faenza (RA) e Comuni della Romagna Faentina, Fossa (AQ) – which

is inspired by the codes of practice approach, but which has the merit of investigating every aspect of conservation in an overall, and not sectorial, manner. The idea is still to avoid standardising restoration, which - especially in these sites - has a major impact on the fragile balance of the urban fabric and its relationship with the surrounding environment.

The work includes – for each centre – the collection of the background documentation and the following on-site survey to identify the architectural-constructive features and recurrent problems of the masonry fabric. A sample block is then identified to carry out an in-depth study of the issues identified, in order to assess the criteria for intervention, but also the critical matters that may emerge for the implementation of a comprehensive project.

The preservation of abandoned historic centres. Tools, methods and good practices for the built heritage in inner areas

Deborah Sanzaro

University of Catania

The recently raised warning regarding the condition of historic centres is linked with the issue of inner areas. In fact, it has been highlighted how historical sites and settlements often suffer more from urban and territorial marginalisation processes.

In Sicily, once ‘land of towns’, depopulation affects not only small municipalities but also medium-sized ones, with consequences on the heritage built in disadvantaged areas. Urban centralisation and polarisation towards few sea-bordering sites have generated heavy imbalances over time. Yet, if the definitive abandonment of entire settlements remains episodic, the partial abandonment is more frequent.

In a multidisciplinary framework of answers, the current research investigates the role of the discipline of conservation in relation to the need to understand the peculiarities of

these processes and to regulate the changes made. With a focus on Sicily, the study aims to measure the effects of depopulation dynamics on the historical built environment by crossing two approaches at different scales: a large-scale quantitative analysis aimed at identifying risky situations; a qualitative analysis aimed at studying cases and concrete experiences. In detail, the aim is to examine both levels of transformation and ongoing deterioration and the strategies implemented to counter the abandonment phenomena. Facing an examination of practices with a particular reference to the Sicilian context, the study aims to interpret and evaluate criteria and approaches in the choices made in order to highlight the criticalities linked to visions and orientations hardly compatible with the needs of preservation.

The areas identified as “historic centres” have been totally abandoned, while in urban expansions a certain reactivity of the community remains (Vitale, Sanzaro, Circo, 2020; Sanzaro, Vitale, 2020): the cohesion of degraded areas (even with phenomena of total ruderisation of parts of the city) and still inhabited areas makes it inevitable to question the risks to safety, the problems of urban imbalance and the alteration of the sense of belonging to places, also evaluating the reasons that led to the alterations of the housing functions.

Rehabilitating the architectures of the inner areas: some ideas for the reactivation of the economic and productive system

Within the complex interactions that exist in the construction of conservation and protection projects of historic settlements, the resettlement of the population also requires reflection on the entire economic and production system (Box 7.4). Effective repopulation seems possible only with the creation of new job opportunities and with the construction of new capacities (Camarda, 2020; Camarda, 2019). Today, it seems foolish to think that marginal areas can only be inhabited by smart workers, because inner areas need to return to being places of meaning to be cared for and maintained: even Giuseppe Provenzano, when he was Minister for the South and Territorial Cohesion, highlighted how it is necessary to renew the economies of inner areas, valuing local economic, artisanal and productive activities².

In the last twenty years, the reuse of the historical settlements of the inner areas has too often been conceived as a mono-functionalisation. The touristic was used as a new function (see D'Armento, in this volume), promoted both by public proposals (as in the case of Mibact), and from private initiatives such as, for example, in the case of the Sextantio widespread hotel project in Santo Stefano di Sessanio, L'Aquila (Box 7.5), both of which are mentioned in the introduction of this contribution. In the case of the widespread hotel in the province of L'Aquila, the effects of the 2009 earthquake made the accommodation facility open seasonally due to the reduction of customers (Signori, 2017). The results of the interruption of international tourist flows following the Covid – 19 global pandemic, with a 68.6% reduction in foreign visitors (Istat, 2020), have clearly shown how the choice of an economic intervention solely for tourism promotion has proved ineffective, if not caused bankruptcy. In the debate on the new possibilities for the villages of inner areas, it appears necessary to overcome the vision of repopulating the marginal contexts only for tourism, cultural and welfare purposes. The economic system should be globally rethought, with a multifunctional proposal that leads to the so-called “multiple regeneration”. In the presence of several economic activities, when one enters a crisis, the other activities can compensate for the missing earnings and lack of attractiveness.

By reducing the analysis to the system of the inhabited centre only, it is often difficult to identify a possible future for the architectural heritage of these territories because there are no activities and functions that can become a driving force for development: expanding the area of investigation and examining the complex structure, with a large-scale approach that also examines the territory outside the villages, it is possible to rethink the production system as a whole (see Dezio, in this volume), creating new job opportunities and services. Examples of research expe-

2. Minister Giuseppe Provenzano took part in the debate *Riabitare i piccoli centri. Una strategia per la dispersione post pandemica*, coordinated by Stefano Boeri and Paolo Piacentini, broadcast online directly via Facebook (www.facebook.com/stefano-boeri/videos/3074987569235401/), last access 21/2/2021.

The recovery of heritage as a component of the regeneration process of inner territories

Cosimo Camarda

University of Palermo

To contribute to the theme of the regeneration and enhancement of minor historical towns, it is necessary to imagine solutions able to eliminate or at least limit the critical issues (declining population, abandonment, physical and social decay, disused heritage, etc.), through studies and investigations to compose a cognitive framework of analysed territorial contexts and of virtuous experiences, proposing actions aimed at the recovery of heritage as a component of the regeneration process of “marginal territories”.

Research in progress has developed a mapping of forty good practices, opportunities to recover the architectural heritage, and not only acting as design devices through actions with the following aims:

- tourist, real estate and hospitality purposes;
- productive and/or commercial;
- artistic, cultural and educational;
- social and cooperative.

Heritage, in its territorial, social, economic and cultural components, represents an essential value for the territory to be considered as a resource and, in this regard, it is necessary “to build” resilient communities, as imagined by Maurizio Carta (2019), acting in a flexible manner to adapt to new housing models capable of renewing the relationship between humans and nature and reactivating processes of rebirth of minor historical towns.

The research looks at the Nebrodi area as a territory of interest, one of the “rough” areas of Sicily in which there is a system of small hilly and mountainous towns, recognising in this one of the main territorial areas affected by contraction and marginalisation processes.

In light of the considerations made, it is necessary to take actions aimed at enhancing the heritage that can produce a new wealth of housing, economy and society for marginalised territories.

riences that investigate the themes of the protection of historical buildings with a territorial vision are offered by some Sicilian studies. The fascist agrarian reform for the reclamation of the uncultivated and unhealthy areas of the Sicilian inland led to the foundation of numerous villages, destined to become service centres for the future fractionation of the surrounding uncultivated areas. These settlements have

Strategies for the valorisation of small historical towns in inner areas: methodological proposals

Emanuela D'Andria

University of Salerno

The research investigates the valorisation of small towns with the aim of setting up a multi-criteria tool in order to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions carried out in a small municipality. Organised according to the AHP hierarchical structure, the developed tool is based on the criteria: social, economic, environmental and historical-architectural, which have been divided into sub-criteria. To this end, the main 'invariants' of the typical small town were identified and subsequently translated into 16 sub-criteria to which weights were assigned. This phase involved the use of questionnaires administered to different professionals with the goal of drawing up pairwise comparison matrices that provided the required weights. However, each sub-criterion needs to be quantified through indicators. Therefore, 15 studies were collated from the literature for a total of 470 indices. From these, those most relevant to the defined sub-criteria were selected, resulting in four distinct datasets for each criterion. The model thus prepared has been applied to two case studies: the Albergo Diffuso Sextantio and the Borgo del Benessere of Riccia. In the implementation phase, after assigning scores to the indicators, it was possible to compare the weighted scores, obtained from the multiplication between weights and scores, with the 'ideal' weighted scores. This operation has made it possible to understand, in relation to a percentage threshold, which sub-criteria represent a weakness in the implemented strategies. This means that the tool is able to detect the fragilities of the realised interventions in order to propose guidelines for targeted improvements and to support the decision-maker (local governments, technicians) in the correct analysis of the actions to be undertaken.

been progressively abandoned due to the lack of residential services and infrastructures for productivity (dams and aqueducts above all) and today the built heritage is in a state of ruin. Asking about the possibility of re-inhabiting these places makes it necessary to reconnect the system of the built heritage and rethink the interac-

tion with the surrounding economic system in an organic and territorial vision and enhancement of local agricultural productions (Box 7.6). The study of the fortified structures of the provinces of Enna, Caltanissetta and Catania intends to propose the construction of a network of cultural infrastructures. Recognising the difficulty of using a single building, this project intends to identify a territorial cultural system, through the development of a database. The systematisation of the information collected on the structures included in the circuit and the resulting interactive map represent a double operational tool for the architectural heritage surveyed: on the one hand, it is useful for the planning of conservation and protection interventions, on the other hand, it can represent a possible trigger for the socio-economic development of the areas involved (Box 7.7).

The role of administrations and local authorities between planning and community involvement

The activation of participatory projects in marginal contexts brings to attention other conditioning factors in the safeguarding of historic buildings, especially in inner areas: the role of local administrations, community involvement and planning. The territories of the inner areas suffer from widespread administrative fragmentation (see Moscarelli, in the volume): the reduced political dimension and the administration's individual interests often nullify the efforts of potentially virtuous experiences, which fail to be attractive in the long term. It seems necessary to overcome the "patchy" mode of intervention, linked to the parochialism of municipalities (Zingaropoli, Martinelli, 2018), in favour of a systemic vision, with the construction of shared networks and objectives. The SNAI is already working in this direction with the promotion of partnerships and Unions of Municipalities. The strengthening of these practices, with the creation of permanent discussion tables, could represent a first level of dialogue for the coordination of the requests of neighbouring localities: "territorial archipelagos" (as proposed by Cosimo Camarca during the workshop), intended as a single system of common bonds and connections.

In recent years, joint work experiences have been activated between several administrations, including outside the SNAI. The administrations that adhere to the Union of Romagna Faentina (Faenza, Castel Bolognese, Solarolo, Brisighella, Casola Valsenio and Riolo Terme) have recognised the presence of a common architectural heritage to be preserved. After having reconstructed a shared knowledge framework of the historical building, common guidelines were drawn up for the intervention and safeguarding of this testimony. Comunità Montana Valle Sabbia (Mountain communities of Sabbia Valley) and Comunità Montana Valle Trompia (Mountain communities of Trompia Valley), both in Brescia province, were winners of the "Attiv-aree" call, promoted by the Cariplo Foundation, with the "Valli Resilienti" project: among the activities envisaged by the call, there is also the establishment of a permanent collaboration network between administrations, which continues even after the end of the financing.

Sicily city-territory. A response to the depopulation of inner areas

Valerio De Caro

Kore University of Enna

The design theme in the object tries to solve the complex question of the city-countryside relationship through an organic and territorial approach, trying to overcome the definition of internal areas proposed by the SNAI as a polycentric system of territories to be connected to essential services. Starting from a multilayered analysis, it is proposed to identify the territorial values that define the perceived aspect of the Sicilian landscape and, in particular, the identity value, identified through an anthropological, cultural and historical-literary analysis. In this case, reference is made to the signs of the sacral dimension, which characterise the landscape through the shaping of popular rituals and beliefs and to the historical-literary narration that investigates the theme of contrasting internal areas and coasts, up to the economic and productive aspects that

have a significant role in the visible appearance of the territory, trying to identify the guidelines which will orient the architectural language of the specific interventions. These are elements that represent the minimum nucleus of a plan to reuse the existing architectural heritage by converting the abandoned villages into a network of research centres for innovative agriculture, no longer services for the citizen who no longer lives in these areas, as they were conceived during the period of colonisation of the large estates, but a service for those who occupy these territories, through a pilot project that includes laboratories, experimental gardens, a territorial control centre and a meeting place for companies, in a network that interprets the internal territory as a whole and not as a whole of dispersed urban centres.

Furthermore, the Unions of Municipalities could implement a better coordination of the human resources provided to each administration through the associated management of the services, filling present cultural and planning gaps: the coordination of territorial planning activities could also have repercussions in the conservation of the architectural heritage. In contrast to what has often been done so far, programming and planning should be conceived with a medium- and long-term visions.

The research carried out on some case studies in Lombardy (Silva, Di Biase, Giambruno, 2020) show how the careless study of the architectural heritage of ancient villages and a transformative urban planning of traditional buildings has led to a total

The network of cultural infrastructures: the fortified structures. A resource for the development of internal areas

Angela Parisi

Kore University of Enna

The research work starts from the study of the territory and from the identification within the cultural landscape of the network of defensive systems in central-eastern Sicily, in particular in the provinces of Enna, Caltanissetta and Catania. The historical structures have been analysed not as a single element, but also at territorial level, investigating the existing connections between the bordering structures and the context. The next step was the cataloguing according to a template that included information on the identification of the building, construction techniques, the state of conservation and fruition. The information was processed through a database and manipulated for the introduction of data on the geo-referenced information system ArcGis Pro. From the geo-referenced map, the first operations of analysis have begun, through

the cross-referencing of data that allow the determination of the total information on the defensive systems about the state of consistency and ownership, fruition and accessibility. Through an interactive map that is consultable and constantly updated, the system that is being developed wants to synthesise the information related to the cognitive aspect, the programming and planning of restoration and maintenance interventions and, above all, the management and valorisation of the assets. The database becomes the operational tool for the second phase of the project: the creation of an exemplary network of four buildings, which through the cooperation of the territories and the participation of associations and local governments can trigger a virtuous system not only of protection, but also of economic development of the areas in which they fall.

distortion of these settlements, making the historical building often unrecognisable from what, instead, has been built recently.

In the areas of the central Apennines investigated by Francesco Chiacchera (Box 7.8), however, it is evident that many administrations often fail to grasp the development potential for these marginal areas, despite having a thorough knowledge of the territories. Several years after the earthquakes that hit L'Aquila (2009) and Central Italy (2016), some local authorities are still overwhelmed by the events and

BOX 7.8

Post-Earthquake Perspectives

Francesco Chiacchiera

Università Politecnica delle Marche

The 2016 earthquake - which involved a wide territory, not only mountainous, close to the regions of Abruzzo, Lazio, Marche and Umbria - is part of a millenary telluric history that characterises the area, periodically physically marks the territory and has repercussions on social structures, the organisation of the territory and demographic trends; just as millenary is the history of anthropic settlements in these areas, which constitute a great blender facilitator of encounters (Carlo Birrozzi). A dense network of villages constitutes one of the oldest cultural landscapes in Europe, continuously reshaped and subjected to new influences over long periods, and for these reasons presents complex and historically evolved structures (ETH Studio Basel, 2016).

The aim of the research investigation is to identify hypotheses of redevelopment, regeneration and reconstruction strategies

of the built heritage, together with ways of reactivating public spaces in order to "redefine the opportunities of territories through the tools of Architecture" (Cucinella, 2018), and intends to frame the issue of the reconstruction and reactivation of these villages according to a logic of incorporating them into a system of specialisation of actions, in a framework of a network reading of the territory, investigating the importance of the recovery of public space and the project as primary instances of a process of re-invention of "new landscapes of living" (Berizzi, Rocchelli, 2019).

The current situation of the territories in the Marche affected by the earthquake can become an impulse to activate new opportunities and uses, and to adapt spaces to the new needs of living, to introduce technological innovations and involve local communities in a more conscious way.

are unable to set up a long-term development strategy that intersects the themes of reconstruction and the reactivation of the public space, both due to a lack of tools and design aptitude.

In designing reuse strategies, administrations and professionals should involve resident or potential citizens, identifying the target community and the stakeholders who will benefit from the interventions and identifying local interests and priorities: in fact, the future of these areas cannot depend only on local authorities, but above all on collaboration with active associations and on people who intend to settle in each place. Returning to the experience of the Valli Resilienti project (Badiani, Scala, Barontini et al, 2020; Badiani, Barontini, Scala et al, 2020; Ghirardi, Badiani, 2020;

Ghirardi, Badiani, Scala et al, 2019), the disconnection between the interests of local authorities, identified in the Comunità Montana Valle Sabbia and Comunità Montana Valle Trompia, and those of the inhabitants was registered. In Valle Trompia, the project included the conservation of the historical heritage of the huts and farm-houses: here the owners of rural buildings were more interested in obtaining funding to increase production rather than investing in the conservation of the built heritage. In Valle Sabbia, on the other hand, the heritage to be conserved has been identified in the hydraulic factories: in this case, the local administrations struggled to recognise the interest in the protection of industrial archaeology, while the citizens would have invested private capital for transmission to future generations of remnants of the local productive past (Box 7.9).

What funding for intervention on the widespread heritage of inner areas?

The issue of funding represents another key point for the project of safeguarding the architectural heritage of the inner areas: the presence of funds depends on the policies and strategies that insist on the territories and on the possible extraordinary injections of resources by external public and private stakeholders (Rolli, 2015).

The administrations of small municipalities (with inhabitants of less than 5000 units) often struggle to finance interventions to safeguard the existing buildings due to lack of liquidity: the search for funding from national, EU or private foundations therefore becomes fundamental. The intervention on existing buildings and the problem of depopulation are often not central to the objectives of the calls: intercepting funds, therefore, also depends on the flexibility of the instrument and the ability of the project presented to work on the intersections of uses and functions. The Mantva Farm School is an example that has been able to work on social initiatives with direct repercussions on the existing buildings: the architectural heritage of an agricultural court in Curtatone, in the Mantua area, has been recovered through the synergy of a project which proposed educational activities for adolescents, and it has created job opportunities for young people. Another possibility to incentivise the intervention on the buildings is to use the tools of equalisation: administrations can actively involve private entities through rewarding models and incentives to make a public interest feasible, such as the protection of the historical architectural heritage. A further alternative is represented by experiences that manage to generate "bottom-up" funding (Box 7.10). Two examples of ways of self-financing communities are represented by the Mietshäuser Syndikat and the Community Land Trust (Cafora, 2020a; Cafora, 2020b). These are collective projects born from the communities themselves, which have made it possible to steal buildings from the speculative market, safeguard them and give access to residential buildings. The German experience, which began using microcredits and alternative funds, today supports itself autonomously and finances the new acquisitions (rural and urban) thanks to the "mutual aid fund" established with the payments of the tenants; the American initiative, then imported throughout

BOX 7.9

AttivAree intersectoral programme and Valli Resilienti project

Andrea Ghirardi

PhD candidate, University of Brescia

The Valli Resilienti project involves a territory of 25 municipalities in the Trompia and Sabbia valleys (Brescia Province) and it was financed by the Cariplo Foundation with the intersectoral programme AttivAree (2016-2020). The main goal is the promotion of sustainable local development, valorising environmental, economic, social and cultural resources, in order to increase attractiveness and contrast depopulation. The Cariplo Foundation has focused on intersectorality and the involvement of the third sector for the creation of lasting bonds between the parties involved. A participatory planning process was set up with comunità montane (local authorities of mountain areas), promoters of the project: they were able to define actions based on the territory's resources, strengths and weaknesses.

The University of Brescia dealt with the mapping and study and typological and

construction techniques of minor historical heritage: mountain huts and farmsteads in Trompia Valley and hydraulic mills in Sabbia Valley. This study was the basis for the creation of guidelines that allow the reuse and conservation of the heritage by means of maintenance interventions compatible with traditional techniques and materials. In both cases, it is intended to promote the dissemination of knowledge of heritage in the belief that the cultural dimension is one of the most effective means of triggering defence and recovery mechanisms for a particularly vulnerable heritage.

It remains to be verified whether the mechanisms that have been used to trigger this will also remain active in the coming years when, in the absence of further funding, they will have to be sustained only by resources within the territory.

Europe and tested also in Turin, allows the communities to access and safeguard the heritage, presiding over the territory and removing buildings from a purely tourist use.

Reflecting on the possibilities of financing obliges us to observe how there is a lack of dialogue between the policies that already insist on marginal territories. In the last decade, in fact, various references have been developing that act on the same places: the SNAI has been overlapping with Law no. 158/2017 (Measures for the support and enhancement of small municipalities, as well as provisions for the redevelopment and recovery of the historic centres of the same municipalities), of which, however, some implementing decrees are missing. The two policies do not interact with each other

and, although with different specific objectives, they aim to reverse demographic trends, favouring socio-economic development and the reuse of built heritage. This lack represents an important deficit for the policies themselves, but above all for the territories. Although the indications and identification criteria are different, the geographies of the beneficiaries often coincide: on the same areas more experiences are settlements, which fail to be effective in the territories.

In the relationship between conservation and possible development of marginal areas, you must be realistic (Oteri, 2020): the loss of architectural heritage is inevitable (Kealy, 2020), because it is impossible to safeguard all the villages of the inner areas that are now abandoned or in the process of being abandoned on the basis of the human and economic resources available. The research *BCE-RPR. Beni culturali ecclesiastici: Rischio e pianificazione di prevenzione e rigenerazione*, carried out by the Responsible Risk Resilience Centre of the Politecnico of Turin (Giulia De Lucia - Box 7.11) and by the Ufficio Nazionale per i Beni Culturali Ecclesiastici e l'Edilizia di Culto della Conferenza Episcopale Italiana (National Office for Ecclesiastical Cultural Heritage and Buildings of Worship of the Episcopal Italian Conference), explores the possibilities of preserving the enormous ecclesiastical architectural heritage of marginal areas, subject to natural or anthropic risk. With the impossible task of intervening on all the properties, the project is developing a decision-support method, with the aim of optimising the available resources and accompanying the communities and users (present or potential) of the buildings in the process of protection through participated actions.

A POSSIBLE NEW RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

The new research themes for the architectural heritage and cultural heritage should recall the key issues identified in this contribution, which trace the problems and criticalities to which the architectural heritage conservation project is confronted.

Studies and initiatives that have marginal areas as their object should be approached with a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach: the research activities, overcoming individual disciplinary interests, should be structured on the construction of knowledge networks that address the issues that the project for the historical building poses in its phases.

The methods of managing the relationship between conservation and transformation should be brought back to the centre of the academic and planning debate: the protection of the architectural heritage and the safeguarding of historic settlements depends above all on the indications and objectives of local and territorial planning. Although during the second half of the twentieth century the question of "historic centres" and the methods of intervention have been central in the academic debate for a long time (Di Biase, 2015), the results of recent research show how doubts and fears for the conservation of historical buildings were founded. The dialogue between the instances of conservation and those of transformation, with the adaptation to

Shrinking territories and shrinking of rights, access and excess of the national building stock

Silvia Cafora

PhD candidate, Polytechnic of Turin

In Italy, as well in all Europe, the financialisation of territories required by the neoliberal national policies have led the building stock to become a financial tool and, consequently, to neglect its nature as a common good.

This trend, together with others of an economic and social nature, has strongly influenced the territorial polarisation and has raised two main intertwined problems: on the one hand, the shrinking of citizens' rights, first of all the housing right in the urban vibrant centres and, on the other hand, the need to re-signify and to restore value to the abandoned building stock in the fragile and peripheral territories.

The research aims to analyse and to compare how collaborative strategies in Europe, which are working on the decommmodification of the building stock, foster and widen the right to housing and facilitate the revaluation and regeneration of the building stock in the fringes, triggering new socio-cultural approaches and innovative architectural practices.

The models analysed (such as the German Mietshäuser Syndikat, Trias and Edith Marion

Foundations, CLT) are engaged in pioneer approaches which generate economic, legal, political and social tools able to produce new property forms, democratic governances and mutual capacitation between actors of the regenerative process.

Intentional and active communities and their legal recognition by local administrations, can produce simpoietic models and new settlement possibilities for a synergic relation with urban, territorial and social ecosystems, both in fringe areas and in the urban centres.

The results of the research open up new imaginaries capable of reacting to the challenges linked to the polarisation of territories, highlighting practices and policies that local administrations are called upon to implement to counter the new structures of socio-economic and spatial inequalities. Public institutions are called upon to face the definition of a new fiscal and building policy capable of generating territorial development strategies to face the challenge of abandoned and devalued buildings in shrinking areas: re-dwell or demolish and how to do it?

comfort and living standards, can be possible only with coherent intervention and projects based on exhaustive knowledge frameworks of materials and construction techniques and of any transformations already undergone on the buildings. In this

Analysis and territorial perspectives of regeneration for the architectural and cultural heritage in marginal areas at risk

Giulia De Lucia

Research fellow, Polytechnic of Turin

Development of protection strategies for architectural heritage is increasingly taking urgency, above all in marginal areas subject to depopulation phenomena. This is not exclusively for the material conservation of architectures, but in a cultural dimension that considers heritage as an element of collective value of memory, useful for social cohesion and resilience. Architectural heritage is constantly subject to the consequences of insufficient maintenance (of both buildings and territory) and to several risks particularly concentrated in Italy (seismic, hydrogeological, etc.). A research project, conducted by Politecnico di Torino R3C Centre, aims to study methodologies for the large-scale evaluation of vulnerabilities of architectural heritage, in order to develop systemic strategies to delineate intervention priorities. The aim is to design supporting

decision methods for the optimisation of resource management and the activation of regeneration policies for heritage and territory. Research is currently focused on the ecclesiastical heritage that is capillary distributed in urban areas as much as in marginal ones. The project is conducted in collaboration with the National Office for Ecclesiastical Cultural Heritage of the Italian Bishops' Conference. The study areas, where developed methods were tested, were some territories of Piedmont, Emilia Romagna and Campania. Preliminary results of the research, by using and processing open-access data, allow a largescale frame of the more vulnerable ecclesiastical buildings subjected to both natural (earthquakes, floods, etc.) and anthropic (depopulation etc.) risks to be obtained.

sense, it is necessary to restore importance to the quality of the design, understood not as the end, but as the quality of the process that governs each phase of the intervention, from the cognitive to the realisation stage.

Within the procedures for reactivating the contexts and economies of inner areas, the development of a functional mix should also be recalled, which has often disappeared in the most recent reuse projects. This mixité should be able to identify alternatives to re-inhabit these places, reconciling the old and the new, combining the

transmission of ancient activities with agile work opportunities, as we experienced during the health emergency. These possibilities can be identified above all through participatory planning experiences that stimulate the awareness of the inhabitants and users and that allow the needs of the communities that decide to live and work in marginal places to emerge.

In reflecting on the possibility of returning to live in these contexts, it is also essential to think about the fragmentation of buildings' property as a problem that often complicates or makes it impossible to manage the intervention on existing buildings. Local administrations and associations should be called upon to develop specific tools and strategies that make it possible to operate on buildings, using the so-called "Banche della terra" (Land banks) as an example: experiences led by some regional administrations (Lombardy, Veneto, Tuscany and the autonomous province of Trento) for making available and selling uncultivated land.

Finally, it appears essential to develop a greater dialogue between the various strategies, promoting greater flexibility, expanding the outcomes and possible repercussions on the architectural heritage and more generally on these contexts, reflecting on the policies that insist on these territories and on the possibilities of intercepting funding.

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PART III

Tools and Strategies for Intervention

8

**Tourism in inner areas. Contradictions and prospects
of a privileged tool for peripheral territories' development**

| Stefano D'Armento

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**Emerging local development strategies in inner areas:
practices and possible changes** | Daniela Luisi

Tourism in inner areas. Contradictions and prospects of a privileged tool for the development of peripheral territories

Stefano D'Armento

Tourism has a leading role within the development policies of peripheral areas. Furthermore, in the collective imagination, its effective capacity to revitalise remote territories is often overestimated without considering its possible negative impacts.

This chapter deals with the role of tourism in inner areas, helping to overcome the idea of tourism as an overall solution for remote territories and

analysing it, instead, as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. In this essay, tourism is considered a contemporary way of living in a world where the roles of tourist and inhabitant of a territory are more blurred than ever before. The contribution aims to comprehend to what extent tourism can be a driver for the development of peripheral territories and with which potentials, problems and difficulties.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism had a fundamental role in colonizing and creating infrastructures in peripheral territories, far from major urban centres, due to its capacity of turning impeding factors into exploitable resources, hence changing the meaning of artefacts, settlements, and entire landscapes. The processes of tourism appropriation of formerly considered useless, dangerous, and unpleasant elements involved already in the 19th-century beach and then mountain resorts (Trillo, 2003, De Rossi, 2016) and progressively extended to other territories, along with the development of new types of tourism.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, tourism has been considered a tool to revitalise places in socioeconomic distress (Urbain, 2003). In the 1980s, it became an integral part of the European Union's cohesion policies aiming to foster development in most peripheral areas and reduce territorial unbalances (Brown e Hall, 2000, Bohlin et al., 2016, Rabbiosi, 2018).

The profound societal changes of the past few decades made tourism one of the most important and impactful industries of the contemporary age (d'Eramo, 2017). Furthermore, the same meaning of the word tourism has been called into question, since the activity of tourism progressively became a synonym of mobility, an integral part of our lives, comparable to an ordinary daily activity (Urry 1990). Consequently, along with a process of fragmentation of everyday-life times and spaces, tourists and inhabitants progressively became less defined and more mixed categories. Countless types and definitions of tourism have arisen: experiential tourism, cultural tourism, scattered hotels and the sharing economy platforms that completely transformed the market. The transition from a traditional and mass-tourism based economy to new forms of local-based tourism brought new challenges and opportunities for inner areas (Salvatore et al., 2018).

Many peripheral territories, taking advantage of the conspicuous European funds, focused their development policies on tourism. Also, within the Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI), tourism acquired a dominant role in many areas, which considered it as the only possibility to face socioeconomic issues (Lucatelli, 2016, Punziano e Urso, 2016, Andreoli e Silvestri, 2017). As a matter of fact, tourism is often regarded as a panacea, to the point that the government had to intervene to suggest a reconsideration of the role of tourism as a part of a more complex and structured strategy that should aim to improve the local population's quality of life (MIT, 2016, MiBACT, 2016).

The positive role of tourism in territorial development is widely recognised and frequently overestimated. On the contrary, the risks caused by a tourism-dependent economy, a tourism monoculture, are often ignored.

THE RISKS OF TOURISM AS AN OVERALL SOLUTION

In the press, in the public and political debate, and even in some academic fields, tourism is still frequently considered an overall solution to issues affecting remote territories. Nevertheless, in recent years, opinions and contributions documenting the negative impacts of overtourism multiplied, especially regarding the experiences of world-renowned destinations such as Venice and Barcelona (UNWTO, 2018, Petruzzi et al., 2019, Garcia-Lopez et al. 2019), places that experienced a recent tourism boost like Iceland (Sæþórsdóttir et al., 2020), and those mostly linked to the role and the effect of web-based platforms such as Airbnb (Barron 2018).

However, along with the rise of awareness of its possible negative impacts, the narration of tourism as the almost-exclusive possible driver for development in inner areas has been consolidating. Furthermore, the touristification processes become even more evident in territories already hit hard by decades of socio-economic decay and natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, which acted as accelerators of those processes (Marzo, 2020, Pasquali, 2021, Sabatini, 2020).

As a matter of fact, tourism is particularly able to fill the voids left by previous activities and ceased use of the territory and change the meaning of entire territories. Suffice to think of the countless conversions to tourist use of entire clusters of abandoned houses in historic centres, rural buildings and ancient trails and infrastructures, unused for years and reopened for the tourists' fruition. Through the tourist gaze (Urry 1990), even entire landscapes overturned their consideration from negative and tied to danger, to positive and related to well-being, as was the case for the first seaside or mountain resorts (De Rossi 2016). A valuable extreme example of how everything can potentially become an interesting object for tourism is given by the many places that fell into complete abandonment and were partially taken back by nature, which became attractive by taking advantage of the success of abandonment tourism within the macro category of dark tourism (Fabbricatti et al., 2016, East, 2017, Curti, 2019).

However, it is impossible to envision generalised reuse and recovery of everything that has been progressively decommissioned and abandoned. The excess of building stock, the legacy of past economic expansive phases and past uses of the territory also greatly impacted inner areas and it is essential to be aware that not all things can or should be recovered; there is a need for selection in order to restore and improve the beauty of places (Polci, 2015, see Silva, Chapter 7 in this volume). Indeed, in contradiction with the rhetoric according to which inner areas are synonymous with beautiful and uncontaminated places, many of them are replete with artefacts, urban fabrics or entire settlements lacking any aesthetic value, not in line with the imaginary of the attractive remote village (Pettenati, 2013, Chiodelli in Fenu, 2020, pp. 44-47).

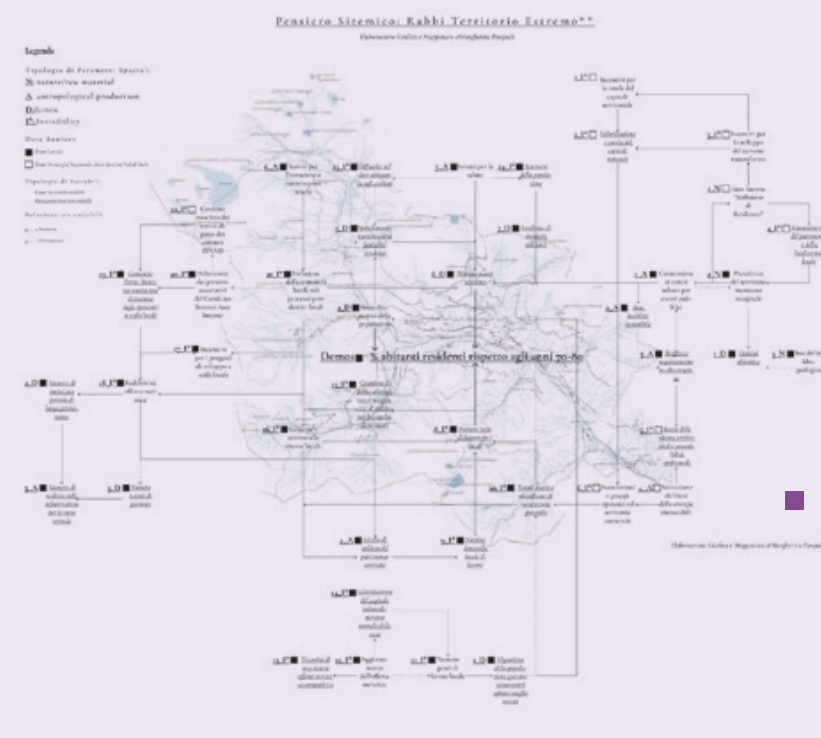
On the one hand, tourism acts as a void filler. On the other hand, tourism itself is an activity that creates new leftovers and voids, in addition to the excess of the

The water resource and thermal tourism of the inner area of the Val di Rabbi. New elements for a model of sustainable development

Margherita Pasquali

Università degli Studi di Trento

The research investigates marginal territories and productive spaces starting from the Italian context. More specifically, reference is made to the guidelines of the SNAI, which presents marginal pilot areas with objectives and needs outlined at the regional level. Starting from the Barca document, attention is paid to the active Italian research programmes, conferences such as SIU XXIII and workshops for young researchers on Aree Interne who see small villages as a resource and try to give solutions in order to reactivate these fragile territories. The key points for the



reactivation of these areas are the increase of soft and fast mobility, the prevention of the risk linked to natural disasters, the maintenance and increase of the health system and infrastructure related to education, and strategies for reviving the economic development of small villages. Territorial capital, as described in the SNAI strategy, wants to be revalued by exploiting social energy and proposing a model for some resilient tourism areas.

Furthermore, the inland areas have become the subject of discussion regarding their possible repopulation in contrast to the

continuous urban development. We want to focus on the definition of a strategy that targets the sustainable development of the individual Italian internal areas, focusing on the municipality of Val di Rabbi, which is part of the association of municipalities chosen by the SnaI Internal Areas Strategy of Val di Sole, as a pilot case. This territorial development strategy aims to respond to the need for an economic model that is not only related to “tertiary tourism, but which becomes a hybrid, and therefore civil, the economic system”. (Leonardo Becchetti, GreenWeek 2019, Trento).

building stock legacy of the past decades. Indeed, tourism is subject to cycles tied to macroeconomic cycles and societal changes like any other economic activity. Expansive phases are followed by contraction and abandonment if a tourist place cannot rejuvenate and renovate its offer (Butler, 1980, Bojanic, 2005). Examples of this is are thermal baths (Box 8.1), several decommissioned ski resorts (Apostolo et al., 2020, Clavarino, 2020) and seaside resorts, which became obsolete and no longer suited to contemporary societal requirements (Zanfi, 2008, Vespasiani, 2014).

Hence, it is still essential to refuse the rhetoric of tourism as an overall solution and instead consider its multiple negative externalities. Tourism is indeed an extractive economic activity, often based on exogenous models, which tends to create a monofunctional territory with the risk of making peripheral areas dependent on a single source of income and way of development, eventually making them more fragile.

TOURISTS AND INHABITANTS: BARELY DISTINGUISHABLE CATEGORIES

Notwithstanding the need to reconsider its role, tourism provides several positive impacts. Peripheral areas that become a tourist destination, even with low figures, experience a spark that could eventually start community revitalisation, reactivation and reappropriation -or new appropriation- of the territory. As a matter of fact, tourism acts as a certificate of existence for isolated communities not affected by significant tourism and economic flows. Thanks to tourists and their appreciation, those communities start to perceive their value and their potential, which can lead to a revitalisation that could be

Which “place awareness”? The impact of the initiative “houses for 1 euro”. The case of Sambuca di Sicilia

Fabrizio Ferreri

Independent Researcher

By analysing the initiative to sell houses in Sambuca di Sicilia for 1 euro, introduced in 2018-2019 by the local council and currently still active, the research aims to verify new potentialities for the endogenous development of the area focused around restoring and enhancing local identity assets. Convinced that the territorial concept of “place awareness”, within the discordance of its multiple and often varying and contradictory expressions, is an essential way of measuring a local community’s capacity for self-determination for the endogenous production of worth, the research tries to establish what impact the sale of houses for 1 euro has on the understanding of the territory held by the community of Sambuca in its many facets. The process of interpreting and re-codifying “place awareness” involves various figures in a community and can lead to conflicting

results: the community is not a static entity but needs to be continually modelled and nourished. It involves a complex articulation, from “micro” to “macro”. “Place awareness” naturally thrives on perceptions, sensations, ideas and attachments, but functions and manifests itself in daily life, in the various community’s routines, habits, actions and behaviour. In order to fully understand the extent of the experience of selling houses for 1 euro in Sambuca, we need to understand if, and how, the initiative in question produced effects on the perceptions, values and behaviour of the various local social-economic groups. Indeed, within the context of the re-structuring of the unique relationship that one establishes with one’s material and immaterial heritage, we can find a concrete and not short-lived result of this initiative and any other development initiative.

almost insignificant from a quantitative point of view (economic impact and demography) but fundamental from a qualitative point of view (cohesion of the community). In some places, tourism can recover a long-lost bond between people and the territory they live in or build a new one (Ferreri, 2018, Sabatini, 2020, Box 8.2), fighting that feeling of frustration and powerlessness that often pervades inner areas.

Engaging the local community in tourism strategies and projects is a fundamental way to activate processes inside the community itself that may help the tourist initiatives succeed and better allocate their benefits (Box 8.3). By doing so, the risk of potential conflicts between inhabitants and tourists, even considering the overcoming of a clear distinction between the two populations, is reduced.

As has been said, the distinction between inhabitants and tourists is no longer as strict and clear as it was in the past. Indeed, societal changes, a high mobile society and a change of habits transformed the dynamics of living, making it harder to tell who is a tourist and who is an inhabitant. As a matter of fact, the former can even spend several weeks or months in a place whose residents typically live in other places. Hence, tourism becomes a continuous flow of temporary inhabitants, and places, particularly remote places, are characterised by intermittent, seasonal and temporary living.

Around these new dynamics of living, new contemporary and future visions of tourism can be built. It is not about proposing old-style second home compounds again (Toso 2020) but rather overcoming the model of a functional division between the inhabitant as someone who has something to offer and the tourist as someone who has to use that something. Instead, the new model should be based on the community building and the sharing of the tourist initiatives, which should aim to recover and reuse and enhance the place (Box 8.4).

The new ways of living and the relationship between tourism and demographic trends have paramount importance in inner areas, where tourism is considered not just as a driver of development but as the possibility to overturn long-lasting demographic trends of depopulation (see Chapter 4, Kërçucu in this volume).

The possibilities and convenience of aiming for a generalised demographic overturn of inner areas seem mostly unrealistic. Even throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, which induced or accelerated phenomena as remote-workers or city-quitters, there are opposing opinions. On the one hand, there are those who suggest a forthcoming return to live in peripheral places; on the other hand, there are those who think that, after the pandemic, previous trends will be re-established. Trends of demographic stabilisation or even overturn can, indeed, be possible in a few selected areas. However, most of the peripheral areas will likely continue to lose a number of residents due to the general demographic trend of Italy and Western countries overall (Wiechmann, 2012, Hospers e Reverda, 2015, ESPON, 2017, ISTAT, 2018). Tourism alone is not able to reverse demographic trends. Nevertheless, it can be, as has been said, a valuable tool for the reactivation of communities, and it can help to manage abandonment and depopulation, triggering processes of enhancement and revitalisation.

Tourism and citizen engagement. The project The Other Mountain and the Dolomites of Silence

Marta Pascolini, Valentina De Marchi, Chiara Zanetti
Isoipse Association

The Other Mountain (L'altra Montagna) is a research-by-action project aimed at enhancing community engagement to identify the values to convey for the territory's tourist communication and hence to realise communication strategies and products. The project was developed between 2018 and 2020 in the municipalities of Forni di Sopra and Frisanco by the Association Isoipse on behalf of the University of Udine as part of an agreement with the UNESCO Dolomites Foundation and the Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia. The project is based on the hypothesis that tourism is a pivotal activity for the future of mountain areas, that it needs a social, environmental and economic sustainability-oriented approach, and that the engagement of the local communities is essential to develop a communication strategy capable

of talking about the mountains without stereotypes. Active community engagement can provide occasions for learning and raising awareness around the territory, the landscape and its heritage, and for reinforcing the sense of belonging and the bond with the territory. The following activities were proposed in the two municipalities: mapping tourism-oriented enterprises; identifying the territorial features considered significant by the locals; developing a tourism communication product. The project was able to raise awareness and foster the exchange of ideas and opinions about the creation of a tourist strategy within the two communities, producing a promotional video that conveys a complex and well-structured approach to the topic of mountain tourism communication.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

First of all, it is necessary to overcome the still common perception of tourism as an overall solution for peripheral areas and to face it, instead, as complex phenomenon that produces numerous advantages and disadvantages at the same time. It is then essential to analyse the relation between demography and tourism, the impacts of mobile population flows in the way territories are inhabited, and how to imagine the future of settlements facing demographic contraction and experiencing a tourism-induced intermittent living.

BOX 8.4

The central Apennines between touristisation and new forms of interest

Alberto Marzo

Sapienza Università di Roma

If we want to consider the earthquake as an accelerator of phenomena already in progress, Central Italy, today, presents itself as a case study of particular interest in order to observe the possible effects of a now consolidated narrative that sees the revival of the internal areas as indissolubly tied to their touristic reconversion. Today, it seems that there is no longer the possibility of inhabiting the Apennines, a complex and stratified system, or even considering them for any other purpose but tourism. Hence, the research aims to unravel some central issues that emerge from the observation of this territory and answer some questions: Is it possible to deconstruct this dominant narrative? What role do local communities play in these transformations, and whom are these communities composed of today? In a context in which the number of permanent residents is progressively decreasing in favour of temporary forms of living, what new modalities can make it possible to preserve these territories and to take care of them? On this point, in particular, two case studies, two self-defined temporary communities very different from each other, are questioned and intertwined: a group of inhabitants of second homes in Castelluccio di Norcia, and Corale-Preci, an artists' collective that for four years has been carrying out practices of cultural-based innovation (Sacco, 2018) and accompaniment to the community affected by the earthquake. How can the idea of tourism revival as the only form of local development coexist with those forms of imagination and constructive projection into the future (Appadurai, 2014), necessary for marginal territories to become places of experimentation of new logics and practices of living? What role can be played in this sense by old and new forms of temporary living?

Infrastructures are of paramount importance for inner areas. It is not really about big infrastructures, which are often unnecessary or even detrimental, but rather about the renovation and enhancement of the network of existing routes. In this context, so-called slow tourism, with walkways and bikeways, is a privileged tool for sustainable territorial development, involving and engaging both tourists and locals and fostering the reuse of existing building stock (Bianchi 2021, Ferreri 2021, Box 8.5, Box 8.6).

Furthermore, digital infrastructures are essential in inner areas (see Chapter 2, Vendemmia and Chapter 9, Luisi, in this volume), even more than physical ones, for drawing those intermittent populations such as remote workers or digital nomads, but also for improving the fruition of cultural heritage (Brandano e Mastrangioli, 2016, Box 8.7). If a fast and stable internet connection is a precondition sufficient to make a place more attractive among some people, territory and heritage fruition need further effort. Indeed, initiatives should not be conceived as the mere and useless digitalisation of traditional tools and instruments with a minimal to zero impact, but built and used in order to innovate and improve the fruition of cultural heritage (Casonato et al., 2020). For instance, the trace of a sender cannot just be the digitalisation of the already existing paper-made map but should also provide dynamic and interactive directions and information regarding the path and everything one can meet along the way, integrating tools as virtual and augmented reality.

Among the issues hindering the sustainable tourist development of inner areas are territorial administrative fragmentation and availability of data.

Administrative fragmentation (see Chapter 3, Moscarelli, in this volume) and localist attitude are issues that do not only concern tourism or inner areas but are long-lasting problems characterising Italy as a whole (Borrelli, 2009). Lack of coordination among territorial entities and tourist initiatives on a broader scale may result in competition among the different municipalities in drawing the largest number of tourists by creating new attractions or events, often similar. By doing so, few particularly interesting and successful initiatives manage to emerge, but without producing benefits for the entire territory, as could be the case through the implementation of an integrated tourism planning instead (Basile et al., 2016).

The issue of data availability is not exclusive to tourism either (see Chapter 2, Vendemmia, in this volume). Territorial research, in general, has to face the issue of unavailable or scarcely reliable data because they are outdated and they do not mirror the current situation (for instance, the use of demographic and building stock data taken from the last census of 2011). Concerning tourism data, the issue is emphasised by several factors. First of all, data are mainly collected on a regional basis, with different collection methods and aggregation units, which result in incomplete or non-comparable databases. Furthermore, data hardly account for flows such as daily trips and second home stays, which, in some territories, can consistently multiply the numbers (Doxa Mercury, 2009, Becheri e Ciccarelli, 2018). In subsequent years, the massive use of big data may make a greater quantity of more specific data available; however, at the moment, it is crucial to take into account the issue of insufficient or unreliable data regarding tourism.

Tourism is among the hardest hit sectors by the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic because of the travel bans at local and global level. The emergency situation revealed the frailty of tourism monoculture, both in the most world renown

VENTO. A territorial project from Venice to Turin along the river Po

Federica Bianchi

Politecnico di Milano

VENTO is the project of a touristic cycleway, a light thread that runs for over 700 km along the banks of the Po river, from Venice (VENEZIA) to Turin (TORINO) passing through Milan. It is a vision that goes beyond the simple infrastructural project and that wants to be a territorial project to redeem the marginal areas of our country. Many cases abroad show how these kinds of cycleways can trigger virtuous processes, generating economies and employment, strengthening socio-cultural ties and identity in the crossed territories. For this to happen, on the one hand, the project of a continuous, interconnected and safe infrastructure is necessary, and on the other hand, it requires the support of strategies and policies at a national level that facilitate its implementation. VENTO is happening now.

The technical and economic feasibility project, the first of three design phases that precede the realisation, was completed in 2019. Thanks to national, regional and municipal resources, 13 sections have been financed (255 km, over a third of the entire cycleway), which have already been partially built and will be completed in the next few years. VENTO is the result of research by the Politecnico di Milano and contributed to the establishment, in 2016, of the National Cycling Tourism System by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism. It is a first, important step towards the consolidation of practices and light infrastructure projects that can breathe life into the most disadvantaged and excluded territories from the current political agenda.

destinations and in the remote areas that heavily relied on tourism for their development. However, in the summer of 2020, travel restrictions and people's concerns about the contagion foster tourism flows in some inner areas and an active debate in the academy and in the press flourished around the ideas of a future decline of cities in favour of remote areas (Several of the most important contributions to the debate are collected in Fenu 2020).

Nonetheless, it seems extremely premature to make any conclusive argument on the effects of a pandemic which is still ongoing. This can be evidenced by all the short-term predictions made between late spring and early summer of 2020 that revealed themselves to be wrong just a few months after. Hence, far from suggesting huge changes from pre-pandemic tourism and living related

Historical walks as a strategic lever to regenerate Sicily's inner areas. The Magna Via Francigena in Sicily

Fabrizio Ferreri

Independent Researcher

As part of a new ecology of tourism, the slow tourism of historical routes currently contributes, in growing numbers, to the configuration of eco-sustainable tourism, in harmony with the surrounding area and with respect for local identities. The research aims to uncover the potential aspects of the slow tourism of historical ways from a social and economic point of view, focusing particularly on the Magna Via Francigena in Sicily, a walk from Agrigento to Palermo, touching eighteen small towns in the most inland, rural part of the island. The aim is to establish if the path analysed can trigger a regeneration process for places that are now marginalised, especially in favour of the people who permanently live in and inhabit these places. Nowadays, more than 5,000 people a year travel along the Magna Via and,

for a historically isolated community, this could be proof that it is possible to counter their marginality status. Travelling through little known and barely "inhabited" places acts as a sign of life to their communities, giving them a chance to re-assess and rebuild the current territorial hierarchies. So, the aim is to understand whether the walk can, together with and over and above any economic return, represent a crucial regeneration factor of the area's "place awareness", positioning itself as a practice and a narration of the place and of the inhabitants themselves that puts a new open, dynamic and pro-active sense of belonging and identity at the centre, to re-establish the prospects for re-launching Sicily's inner areas.

dynamics, it is possible to assume that this event simply accelerated or fostered some processes that were already in progress. The potential of some places further emerged, making them a potentially appealing location for tourists, remote workers and other categories of tourists-residents on a permanent or intermittent basis that may arise in the future.

Besides the pandemic, climate change is the biggest challenge that the tourism industry as whole and inner areas are also facing. For instance, the already occurring disappearance of snow from the lowest mountain resorts, coastal erosion,

BOX 8.7

Digitisation processes to re-activate the cultural landscape of inner areas. Open data, sustainable tourism practices and infrastructures

Marco Vedoà

Politecnico di Milano

The richness of the cultural landscape of inner areas seems to remain latent and sometimes at risk of loss. The constant decrease of social capital is causing the abandonment of the built heritage and the loss of the local knowledge that is part of the local identity (Salerno 2018; Andreoli et al. 2017; Tarpino 2016). In recent years, digitisation processes have pushed the valorisation of the heritage of the marginal area, also involving sustainable tourism practices. Still, there seems to be a lack of social innovation to support these processes. Initiatives at the national, regional and local level (i.e., cultural heritage webGIS, ecomuseums (Riva 2017) and tourism consortiums) collect and catalogue the distinctive features of the marginal areas. However, they hardly succeed in proposing an active and shared valorisation of the cultural landscape, developing a constructive connection between tourism, heritage and citizenship (Evangelista 2018; Ferrari 2018). Active valorisation

initiatives also appear fragmented and limited to their territories. The digitisation and dissemination of the heritage data seem to lack a supra-local direction or, at least, a standard data model that could facilitate the interoperability across platforms and digital services and finally promote dialogue between experiences and communities (Marchegiani et al. 2016). Open experiences for cultural heritage such as Wikipedia, Europeana, and sometimes, Open Street Map (Bonfantini 2017) could perform this task, but they are rarely involved. In this sense, the digital infrastructure should be complemented by a social and skills infrastructure that can push digitisation with sharing platforms and suggest the active valorisation of the cultural heritage in internal areas.

rising sea levels in seaside resorts, but also the change of agricultural species which change entire landscapes.

In conclusion, tourism confirms its crucial role in the development of inner areas, nowadays and in the future. It is a powerful tool from which we need to consider all the aspects and not give any salvific power, but use to support transversal and multi-sectorial policies and actions.

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Emerging local development strategies in inner areas: practices and possible changes

Daniela Luisi

Inner Areas - remote, marginal areas - are places where economic development strategies move between the appreciation of their local resources and capabilities and stocks (natural, social, cultural) to be reconsidered. Co-productions, nested markets, retro-innovations of products and processes cross with services and infra-structures (tangible and intangible), public-private partnerships, production and exchange platforms with nearby urban areas. What are the changes? Are they real and feasible? What are the institutional change/learning dynamics in the needful link among institutions, informal subjects/communities and economic development?

INTRODUCTION

Innovative projects and experiences in Inner Areas are not rare and, from North to South, are recognised as important devices for development. High-quality productive activities of goods, services and cultural welfare attract and drive individuals to launch new ones. Common ingredients among these “realities” is the relevance of territorial capital (see chapter 6, Dezio, in this book), the use of technologies (especially digital), the work theme and its declensions, innovations, local knowledge, the idea of value and changes (i.e. identify what can be improved in the production chains, how to improve local economic systems, what is changing in the local representations of production work in Inner Areas) and situated knowledge (De Rossi, Mascino, 2020; Cersosimo, Donzelli 2020; Luisi, Tantillo, 2020).

We could consider these experiences as strategic dimensions to observe, in a wide landscape made of innovations and resistances, alongside the space of public policies or look into a public policy such as the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI). It is interesting to connect different research paths which spread from those experiences inspired by the SNAI and those entrusted in the wider perimeter of local development of inner/marginal areas (Carrosio, 2019). Along this path, between theoretical perspectives and local experiences, some interesting elements of observation and analysis can be spotted in order to design local strategies: socio-economic changes, entrepreneurship and the role of institutions for Inner Areas’ development.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES

Inner Areas are usually frail because they are situated in complex environmental and hydrogeological contexts (see chapter 4 and 5, Pappalardo and Pessina, in this book). We specifically focus on socio-economic changes with regard to human and work geography (we consider inner areas and highlands as a cultural and political context) in response to climate, environmental and natural changes which amplify those same fragilities.

Contexts can be subject to disruptive changes as a consequence of environmental traumas. This is the case for “Delta del Po”, whose economy is completely dependent on draining pumps (Galli, 2020), or those areas hit by an earthquake, whose socio-economic asset has been completely overturned. In these cases, what emerges are those forms of temporariness and resistance: new practices of defence of residences become spaces and symbols of new strategies for innovative local development (Box 9.1).

“Environment shocks” can lead the way to a new local productive and work models inspired by a new “ethics of doing”, by the use of local competence, already rooted in the territory, and by new ones, installed from the outside. It is the braiding of technical/inexperienced knowledge and natural resources generating new

Portraits of a “temporary” rebirth in the emergency

Ilaria Tonti

Politecnico di Torino

Research focuses on the places that represent temporary solutions to the emergency, in which communities seek to define new forms of temporariness and resistance as alternatives to the already compromised urban legacy. In the suspended time between the earthquake and the reconstruction, the new minimum garrisons of living becomes spaces and symbols of a pursued socioeconomic rebirth, aimed at researching new reconstruction strategies and local identity and innovative development.



circular productive systems where peripheral knowledge and deep-seated practices can re-emerge (Ferrari, 2020). There are innovations that dismantle linear technological paths promoting circularity, making it the centre of new production/consumption models. Changes of knowledge and know-how define the so-called “retro-innovation” by connecting different resources. Think about local agro-energy supply chains where energy, as a component of the wood supply chain, allows the connection of wood maintenance and transfer into the production of energy.

Knowledge and capabilities act as “gluing economic agents” and “linkages” as described by Hirschman: forces generating investments and diversification of products, work and exchanging terms of goods and services (Hirschman, 1981).

The knowledge of people living in these areas plays a fundamental role in the production and re-production of know-how and practices. It is absolutely necessary to clear the air of any false impression, where Inner Areas are seen as pleasant rural places, an expression of a slow urban “countryside”, where paternalistic/promotional approaches, far from the reality of those places, take place (see chapter 7, Silva, in this book).

Knowledge control concentration can be considered as one of the primal causes of increased inequalities. Think about the grievous effects of technological transformation, the result of wrong political choices and the surrender of public/collective government of complexity (Barca, Luongo, 2020).

The digitalisation of inner and rural areas emerges as the primary challenge to generate and suggest a new tale in which they become active protagonists of digital transformation, without enduring decisions taken in urban areas (Gerli, 2020). That is the case of rural areas in the North of England, or Spain, in the Catalonia region, where “community networks” are born: broadband internet connection directly financed and managed by rural communities which decided to build up their own infrastructure. Local stakeholders’ participation has encouraged the use of new networks and digital services, reducing costs and risks, resulting in more advanced and efficient infrastructures than those realised in urban areas (Gerli, Matteucci, Whalley, 2019).

KNOWLEDGE AND PRODUCTION CHAINS ARE STRONGLY TIED TO THE PLACES OF “DOING ENTREPRENEURSHIP”

The nature of exchanges of goods, products and services is not neutral and diversification can promote emancipation processes for weak territories. What characterises abnormal exchanges in fragile areas? Three key elements can be identified: local specificity, relations and exchanged goods, peculiarity, a cognitive factor that produces recognition (Carrosio, Osti, 2018; Van der Ploeg et al., 2016). A nested market approach seems to express it clearly.

A nested market idea arises from studies on agri-food production chains; nonetheless, this is not the only fled of possible application (see chapter

6, Dezio, in this book). It concerns the enhancement processes of specific productive segments and services (from forest resource to new economic models tied to new productive landscapes) engaging hybrid actors, like the social private, and new organisational configurations, community cooperatives and social entrepreneurs that produce goods and services, including public goods, in a sustainable and permanent way (Teneggi, 2020), entailing cooperation models among owners, as consortia (Maluccio et al., 2020) or network contracts (Box 9.2).

An example of redefinition or reconsideration of a local production chain in response to an environmental crisis is the case of CASArmonica, promoted by Cooperativa Lassù and by Regola di Dosoledo (Zambelli, 2020). The aim of the project is to utilise forest wood in order to produce musical instruments. The exercise sprouts up in an area facing a number of challenges since the 2018 Vaia storm for the forest-wood production chain and its economic, social and work-related value.

Wood resources are used in a contradictory way in Italy. On the one hand, the progressive increase in national forests (tripled over the last 60 years, amounting to 39% of national territory and 73% of the areas selected by the SNAI – Romano 2020); on the other hand, a paradox: Italy is a leading country in wood transformation, nonetheless it the second largest net importer of wood products in Europe, (Marchetti et al., 2018).

The North-East area is an example: The Cadore and Comelico valleys export raw wood to Austria and buy it back semi-finished, with evident economic and environmental impacts. This is the cause of territorial choices (or non-choices), such as the absence of forest maintenance and property fragmentation (Maluccio et al., 2020). As a consequence, 41 sawmills have closed down since 2010 (Da Rin, 2020).

Stemming from the Vaia disaster and from the fragmentation of the forest-wood supply chain, a new project has emerged, with the aim to reconnect the value of the forest-wood supply chain to its use, through the experiment of operating a mobile sawmill to process the wood directly in the forest. Trees that fell after the Vaia storm will be used for musical instruments and to assemble eco-friendly buildings (a concert hall and a recording studio). The production chain will have two ends: on the one hand, the involvement of Regola di Casada, di Santo Stefano di Cadore, the forest owner (“Regola” is a centuries-old institution ruling collective properties); on the other hand, raw material and musical instrument producers. This is the important result through the involvement of different stakeholders, both institutional and non-institutional: cooperatives, associations, enterprises, but also schools inside and outside the area. “Place” and “time” have strategic value in inner areas: from housing to abandoned industrial areas (Modica, 2020), as troublesome territorial patrimony, but also

Business networks for the economic development of inner areas

Luca Di Salvatore

Università degli Studi del Molise

One of the ways indicated by the SNAI for the economic development of inner areas is that of partnership between enterprises (first of all, among those in the primary sector). The identification of innovative business models, which allow companies located in inner areas (mostly micro, small and medium-sized enterprises) to cooperate with each other through the activation of functional and structured collaborations, is considered fundamental for the safeguarding and enhancement of the agricultural and agro-industrial systems of these territories.

The business collaboration model that seems to be able to develop the “territorial capital” present in the inner areas more than any other is represented by business networks.

From the analysis of the peculiar characteristics of business networks and, in particular, of the network contract (a legal instrument introduced in 2009 which allows

aggregated companies forms of organised collaboration that continue in time to achieve a common purpose), it emerges that an entrepreneurial network can provide the right impetus to the economy of those territories, characterised by conditions of infrastructural and socio-economic disadvantage, but also endowed with resources and natural and human capital, in which depopulation and abandonment of traditional small businesses are registered.

The promotion of production chains (and the contextual “network” associations), in addition to removing forms of marginalisation of companies with respect to the market and implementing development and technologies in production, favours the return of entrepreneurs in inner areas, thus regenerating the “territorial capital” by also increasing employment opportunities.

as opportunity generator: places to be redesigned, in order to produce goods and services and create jobs (Meneghin, 2020; Rossi, Akhavan, 2020).

Any asset destined for community purposes can become a social infrastructure, not only schools or social houses (see chapter 2, Vendemmia, in this book), regenerated by social bonds. We talk about the capability of “infrastructure territorial vocations” to attract new people, also from the outside (Venturi, Zandonai, 2019).

The scopes of work are diverse: sustainable production chains and consumption models; cultural innovation and urban regeneration; near-by services and nested economies' wider sectors (tourism and agriculture); places of entrepreneurs/work; generative welfare models. We talk about social infrastructure in its use and in the regeneration of spaces, not only from a cultural standpoint, but also social sphere, healthcare, education and schooling. Trust, new representations and social relations are generated, in addition to jobs and social mobility (Box 9.3).

As underlined by Venturi, Zandonai (2019), there are three characteristics of these community assets: they should be managed by people with the same inclusive democratic principles; they should be community rooted, meant as people sharing competences around projects and resources; they should be open, test-oriented towards the development of governance models of common goods.

How to feed and support the igniting communitarian action? This can be done through a mix of public, private, non-profit and for-profit resources. This innovative policy framework already exists and is experimented locally in the urban outskirts and inner areas. Moreover, new social and economic processes of regeneration of dismissed places surface: some examples of experimentation and social innovation emerge where new enterprises, thanks to some local "change maker" (Barbera e Parisi, 2019), become established while others specialise and diversify. These are interventions based on joint processes, encompassing the required involvement and participation of local administrations, whose directing role is required to support innovative processes.

THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS FOR INNER AREAS DEVELOPMENT

Studies on community cooperatives show the importance of institutions in promoting creation and development. Specifically, support here is meant as a concrete action taken by public entities to foster community entrepreneurship, such as financial support of the organisation of public assemblies to involve communities (Sforzi, Burini, 2020).

Besides the importance of knowledge and innovation, the place-based approach pivots on the concept of power and its relations. Local ruling classes often hinder innovation processes fearing being caught off guard (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2013). When extractive elites and poor institutions coexist, a place-based approach may destabilise local conservative equilibriums (Barca, 2019).

Compared to previous development policy approaches, the approach promoted by the SNAI envisages three diverging points: 1. *entrusting mayors*; 2. endogenous determination of geographical boundaries; 3. focus on "fundamental services", which are not instrumental to an entrepreneurial strategy, but lie on the same level (Barca, Carrosio, 2020). Furthermore, in the institutional contest, what is fundamental is the so-called democratic experimentalism

Trajectories, practices and imaginaries on the move in the 'middle mountains'. An action research study through filmic geography methodology

Silvy Boccaletti

Università di Padova e Venezia Ca' Foscari

The aim of the present research is to highlight the minor, but potentially revolutionary, return trajectories to the marginal alpine, pre-alpine and Apennine areas (Corrado, Dematteis, Di Gioia, 2014). In particular, the intention of the project is to take the critical definition suggested by the geographer Varotto in 'Montagne di Mezzo' (2020) as a reference point, focusing attention on intermediate mountain landscapes, places that are now becoming starting points for new experiences of valorisation of the specificities of mountain natural and cultural heritage. On the basis of three case studies located in the Alps (Viola Castello, CN), in the Pre-Alps (Blessagno, CO) and in the Apennines (Berceto, PR), I will specifically attempt to analyse, through the filmic geography methodology (Jacobs, 2013), the geographical mobility embodied in the revitalisation processes of marginal areas, and the relative configurations it takes in terms of multi-scalar movements between peripheral and central territories, multifunctional work activities straddling tradition and innovation, and new mountain imaginaries. The decision to use non-textual language as a tool for field analysis and publication of research results is a strategic element of the project, seeking to strengthen the social impact of geographical knowledge and its presence in academic and non-academic debate.

(Sabel, 2012), that is a heated, open, informed and reasonable debate. As for the SNAI, this space for confrontation is developed by the State through new administrative methods.

What do institutions learn? What are the impacts and changes for people and territories? The pluralist evaluation, the social impact, the measurement of impacts and social investments are slowly making their way through the changes of economic development processes (Box 9.4). It is a subject concerning the institutional capacity to innovate and support local investments, generative not extractive.

When analysing territorial deviations and inequalities and the reasons for the declining performance of public intervention aimed at economic development, the quality of institutions is considered by many authors to be a fundamental factor, not only for development trajectories, but also for innovative processes, productivity and employment (Rodriguez-Pose, 2020).

In addition to the relationship between institutions and “luck” (development) of territories, the role of “informal institutions” in economic development processes is yet to be explored. As for the SNAI, the institutional presidium is necessary in order to guarantee the governance and fulfillment of co-designed actions and avoid disappointment. That is, as reported by Rodriguez-Pose (2020), institutional change mechanisms and the link between formal and informal institutions and economic development.

Rewilding Europe-Apennines: the evaluation of a sustainable local development programme

Arianna Calderamo

Sapienza Università di Roma

An evaluation of the programme of the European foundation ‘Rewilding Europe’ was conducted, a foundation that works for the return of biodiversity and wild nature. The evaluation focused on the part of the programme that is being implemented in Italy as part of the Rewilding Apennines project in the regions of Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise. The programme aims to join together on conservation actions and virtuous local sustainable development processes, by fostering the growth of a local responsible and experiential ecotourism. The project aims to reach its goals by reframing local production models, working to transform problems arising from coexistence with nature into sustainable business opportunities for local communities. The field survey first determined how much coherence exists between the theory and the practice of the programme and then analysed the implementation of the programme itself

in order to understand mechanisms and structural features that led the programme to successes and/or failures. Particular attention was placed on the programme’s unexpected surprises and side-effects, especially with regard to sustainable local development, following the Positive Thinking evaluation approach. Evaluation as a tool for improving the effectiveness of the management of the organisations, which analyses everything that is not foreseen a priori and which investigates the reference context to add information about why and how a change occurs, not just its mere occurrence. It is an evaluation with participants, in which all the staff play an active role in the evaluation process, including local stakeholders. Social inclusion represented a democratic and participatory decision tool in a pluralist perspective and not only on a methodological level.

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To lose or to win, but at which game?

Xavier Desjardins, Philippe Estèbe

To lose or to win: in every epoch, some regions seem to win while others seem to be on the losing side. In the mid-1960s, Jeffrey G. Williamson, an economist, published a paper in which he argued that in the first phase of growth, regional inequalities deepened, while regional inequalities would decrease gradually, thanks to the spread of growth and social benefits¹. Nevertheless, at the end of the Second World War, European countries implemented vigorous regional planning policies to help those who appeared to be the losers: the South and the mountains in Italy, everywhere outside Paris in France and the North of England². These regions were severely hit by agricultural change—the so-called “green revolution”—, which reduced the number of jobs, after missing the stream of post-war reindustrialisation. In Italy, it was a long story between North and South; France was more surprised because of its enduring rural roots. What could the State do then? Fund infrastructures and encourage companies, especially those nationalised, to invest in less favoured regions. Did these policies succeed? Very imperfectly, of course. However, some results were obvious. Within the framework of a Fordist division of labour, the ‘losing’ regions had something to offer: workforce, cheap land, transport and education infrastructures raised to national and international standards by national policies. Major firms were decentralising their factories; national policies merely accelerated this natural process of industry. Then, the territorial expansion of capitalist firms went worldwide. They deserted former industrial territories in Europe and America. National policies couldn’t prevent it and became noticeably inefficient. From the 1970s onwards, there appeared to be no simple solution to backwardness, for two main reasons. The first was that socio-economic fragility hit a great diversity of places: not only former rural or industrial regions, but also migrant neighbourhoods in big cities, remote outskirts, small and

1 Williamson J G (1965) Regional Inequality and the Process of National Development: A Description of the Patterns. Economic Development and Cultural Change, University of Chicago Press 13(4):1-84.

2 Hall P, Tewdr-Jones M (2010) Urban and regional planning, (5th éd.) Routledge, London.

middle-size cities. The geography of marginality had flourished. The second reason was that the national Fordist policies became inefficient: it was no longer possible to integrate all places in one pattern of growth and development. In France, placed-based policies multiplied the zoning: we now have more than 6 different programmes each targeting a type of territory such as small towns, middle-sized cities, rural industrial areas, deprived urban neighborhoods, etc. This ever-expanding geography questions not only the means and tools of policies, but also their goals. In a way, the goals of national planning policies in the 1950s and the 1960s were easy to define (or, more certainly, to reconceptualise *a posteriori*): it was about integrating all territories in one development scheme. Since this scheme was no longer efficient, what could be the new goals?

Then, national policies took a turning point in the 1980s. Since the state can no longer direct the economy, let’s put each territory on an equal footing in the globalised competition. Both Italy and France devolved more powers to local authorities to implement attractiveness policies. In order to attract people and capital, cities and territories develop their facilities, their residential attractions, their university and leisure functions, etc. The economy must develop by making the most of the territory’s resources and the skills of its inhabitants: this is the conceptual peak of local development. During the 1980s, most European states abandoned national planning schemes for local development policies: each territory was to build its own strategy, the existence of which became the main condition for benefiting from national and European subsidies. In return, local-national development strategies fuelled competition between territories. At this game, the more skilled and staffed territories were the winners. So, money and investment poured into major cities and to some rural areas that were equipped for competition.

If this new policy helped some places to build and achieve their strategy, it also helped to deepen the gap between territories. Since the 1990s, it has been observed that some regions are still lagging behind³. But from what? The interest of the critical work carried out by the young researchers whose productions are gathered here is to take a hard-hitting critical look at the various criteria for detecting these weaknesses. The policy of *inner areas* is defined according to a simple criterion: the distance to a few essential public services. But the elements of fragility of peripheral regions in Europe are not only linked to the question of the distance-time of access to some public services. In some cases, the fragility is demographic: the fall in population leads to a vicious circle, with fewer people to run facilities, the absence of which reduces their attractiveness, and therefore the number of inhabitants and jobs... Sometimes the fragility in question is that of society. Various indicators show that society’s self-confidence is eroding unevenly across the country. Protest votes are

3 Benko G, Lipietz A (1992) Les régions qui gagnent: districts et réseaux, les nouveaux paradigmes de la géographie économique, Presses universitaires de France, Paris.

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not uniformly distributed across the territory in Italy as they are throughout Europe. In short, if there is a malaise in defining the problem, it is also on the side of the solution. How can these weaknesses be resolved effectively? It is not enough to reactivate the post-war voluntarism; we must reinvent new levers of action. In the case of fragile rural areas, it is not possible to propose (effective) treatments without having carried out an absolutely complete diagnosis of the nature of the fragilities. Distance to essential public services may not always be the most relevant issue, because it depends on many factors, and mostly doesn't answer the question of the objective, although it can be useful for evaluating results. The young researchers take a bet: what if *inner areas* could be the place where new development schemes could be implemented? It is interesting that most of the papers don't focus on public services. Little by little, the chapters draw a picture of what could be a new development model. The book brings together a range of inventive solutions in the field of agrotourism, heritage enhancement, risk management and equipment management. This collection of proposals offers a form of local development "enhanced" by ecological concerns. Ecology is both an end of these policies and a means, as the invention of a new form of agriculture, renewable energies and sober management of water and soil seem to be levers of attractiveness and jobs. In effect, these places can illustrate and demonstrate the contemporary need for reconnecting socioeconomic systems with ecosystems. Researchers stress the revival of rural systems, natural heritage, architecture... This gamble does not lead to a lack of lucidity: the book denounces the lack of reflexivity of the State, which proposes this type of programme without thoroughly reviewing these a-spatial policies, particularly those relating to public services. These studies on the new levers of development for sparsely populated areas open up a reflection on the new part these areas can play in the productive system. These places lost their epochal autonomy with the destruction of ancient rural systems, based on a subtle balance between human needs, activities and natural resources. During the industrial era, most of them became so-called "mining territories", places where the extractive capitalism showed its most extreme dynamics: land, water, wood, stones and ore were provided by these territories. In short, these places played a part in the economy as long as their natural capital wasn't exhausted. Now that they have lost a major part of this capital, they seem to have no more use at all for the rest of economy, as long as it is still based on mining — extractive capitalism is now global and can obtain cheaper resources anywhere in the world. Sustainable development means, in that case, finding new ways of increasing natural resources without exhausting them. But this immediately raises another question: these territories cannot just rely on a self-centred path for development. As the post-Fordist economy goes, such self-centered strategies rely on public subsidies. That would mean maintaining these territories as natural reserves. This perspective is not acceptable, neither economically and socially, nor politically.

Therefore, ecology should not only be a springboard for endogenous development. It leads to a comprehensive rethinking and reshaping of all the connections and interdependencies between areas. Ecological issues require cities to reconnect with their rural environment for food supply, energy production or leisure areas. It is not a question of closing the parenthesis of the industrial revolution, which totally transformed the territorial metabolism by disconnecting cities from their immediate supply basin⁴: there is no sign today of massive reductions in the international circulation of goods and capital. However, this reconnection can produce new capacities for rural territories. It concerns both the layer of "material resources", but also those of "care", if we consider that rural areas are also places of leisure and residence for retirees and tourists. In return, local people expect some kind of reciprocity, in order to escape their mining functions. People no longer want to produce raw materials to be consumed by the urban economy. This perspective opens wider reflections on the economic model of ecological transition.

As we begin to understand, ecological transition is not limited to green washing, introducing new industrial processes, building electric cars and energy-efficient houses. It is about the transformation of our whole system of value. We can predict that, within a few decades, the nature of goods and services exchanged will change: not only material goods but more services, including ecosystem services. These functions can be found and protected in such places as *inner areas*. But for now, they are not part of the market. The eco-systemic and human services these areas can provide are not currently monetised. This raises a difficult question, since the most powerful support for low-density areas is provided by welfare state mechanisms, which are financed solely by the monetised economy⁵. How can the two transfer systems, monetary and non-monetary, be made to coexist between areas? Do their limits need to be redefined? We understand that the question is no longer who wins and who loses, but what is the game. It is likely that the game must change dramatically.

As always, an interest in the peripheries means questioning the norms of society.

4 Esculier F, et al. (2019) The biogeochemical imprint of human metabolism in Paris Megacity: A regionalized analysis of a water-agro-food system. *Journal of Hydrology*, 573 (1er juin) : 1028-1045.

5 Davezies L (2021) *L'Etat a toujours soutenu ses territoires*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris.

AUTHORS

Stefano D'Armento. Architect and urban planner, he studied and worked between Italy, Spain, Brazil, the United States and the Netherlands for architecture firms and real estate companies dealing with design and development. He earned a PhD in Urban Planning, Design and Policy at the Polytechnic University of Milan, with research focusing on the role and impacts of tourism in the territorial development of inner areas.

Catherine Dezio. Architect with a PhD in Environment and Landscape, since 2012 she has carried out research on territorial systems with a specific focus on agri-environmental issues, both in national and international research centres (CURSA and UNESCO), and in Italian and foreign universities (La Sapienza University of Rome, University of Molise, Politecnico di Milano and University of Vermont). Since 2015, she has been a Postdoctoral research fellow and since 2018 at the DASTU Excellence Department of the Politecnico di Milano on the subject of "Territorial fragilities" -, where she deals with slow tourism as a regeneration tool for the rural capital of the Inner Areas. She is part of the VENTO research group and she is also Adjunct Professor of Urban Design and Planning in the Faculty of Architecture (Politecnico di Milano).

Agim Kërçuku is an architect and urbanist and has a PhD in Urbanism from the Università IUAV di Venezia. Since December 2018, he has been a research fellow at the DASTU Excellence Department of the Politecnico di Milano. His research activity focuses on the dimension of fragility in the territory marked by dynamics of demographic contraction and lack of care and maintenance of social fixed capital, and on the spatial implications of the phenomenon of population ageing in coastal territories. He edited the publication of *Territory in crisis. Architecture and Urbanism Facing Changes in Europe* (Jovis, 2015, with other authors), *Tensioni Urbane, Ricerche sulla città che cambia* (LetteraVentidue, 2017, with other authors) and contributed to national and international publications.

Daniela Luisi. A social researcher and with a PhD in 'Social Systems, Organisation and Analysis of Public Policies' (Sapienza, University of Rome), she has gained various research experiences at Italian universities and in European institutional cooperation projects. Her research activity deals with participatory processes in the construction and implementation of territorial policies, methods of analysis and evaluation of public policies. Her main areas of interest are local development policies and processes, youth and educational policies. From the start-up phase, she has worked for the National Strategy for Inner Areas (Department for Cohesion Policies - Presidency of the Council of Ministers) as a planner and as a member of the technical support coordination group. She is a project partner of the Forum Disuguaglianze e Diversità and a member of the Board of Directors of the Associazione Riabitare l'Italia.

Rossella Moscarelli is an architect with a PhD in Urban Planning, Design and Policies at the Politecnico di Milano, working on research on inner Italian areas and their regeneration starting from territorial projects of slow tourist lines. She collaborates with the VENTO research group and deals with the analysis of public policies that have allowed territorial development linked to cycle or walking paths such as the Camino de Santiago in Spain. She is curator, together with Paolo Pileri, of the book *Cycling & Walking for Regional Development. How Slowness Regenerates Marginal Areas* (Springer, 2020).

Giusy Pappalardo is a researcher in Urban Planning in the Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture at the University of Catania. She is currently conducting a research project funded by the European Social Fund (PON AIM - Attraction and International Mobility) as a visiting researcher at the University of Liège, exploring various forms of insurgent museologies (ecomuseums, community museums, social museology, etc.) in relation to processes of local development. Giusy is also coordinating the ongoing ecomuseal process in the Simeto Valley in Sicily with an action-research approach. Over the years, she has conducted various action-research approaches in inland and marginal areas of Italy and in other contexts, including the US Deep South as part of a Fulbright Fellowship.

Gloria Pessina. An urban planner and with a PhD in Spatial Planning and Policy Design. At the moment, she is a postdoc researcher at DASTU, Politecnico di Milano (Dpt. Of Excellence on "Territorial Fragilities", 2018-2022). In the past, she conducted teaching and research activities on political ecology, socio-environmental inequalities and the materiality of energy transition in various academic institutions (The Institute of Development Studies, The Barlett Development Unit, CEPT University, Tulane University, UNESCO Chair in Architectural Preservation and Planning in World Heritage Cities, Politecnico di Milano - Mantua Campus). Her current research focuses on trade-offs between economic development, energy and environmental protection policies in fragile territories (case study: Sardinia, Italy). She recently edited a collective volume on territorial inequalities in Italy, *Ricomporre i divari. Politiche e progetti territoriali contro le disuguaglianze e per la transizione ecologica* (Il Mulino, 2021, with others).

Benedetta Silva. An architect and with a PhD in Conservation of Architectural Heritage at DASTU, Politecnico di Milano. Her research activity explores the themes of the conservation and safeguarding of traditional buildings. Specifically, the research work investigates the effects of the processes of abandonment and marginalisation of inner areas on the architectural heritage in a multidisciplinary way, through the study of the transformations made to traditional buildings and the analysis of the urban planning tools which govern interventions on historic settlements.

Bruna Vendemmia is an architect and urban designer with a PhD in urbanism. She is post-doctoral fellow at DASTU Department of Excellence (Politecnico di Milano). Her main research interest focuses on spatial transformations engendered by contemporary changes in mobility practices. In her research, she combined qualitative methods with interpretative mapping and spatial analysis to explore the consequences of mobile lives on the configurations of spaces and territorial relations.

INNER AREAS IN ITALY

A testbed for interpreting and designing marginal territories

Edited by

Italian National Network of Young Researchers
for Inner Areas Committee
(Catherine Dezio, Stefano D'Armento, Agim
Kërçuku, Rossella Moscarelli, Gloria Pessina,
Benedetta Silva, Bruna Vendemmia)

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The book “Inner Areas in Italy. A testbed for interpreting and designing marginal territories” is a timely contribution to the international academic and policy debate on ‘Inner Peripheries’ and on the possible measures to reduce inequalities among different regions in Europe. The National Strategies for the Inner Areas (SNAI), a groundbreaking experience of place-sensitive interventions addressing marginal areas, was promoted in Italy in the framework of the EU Cohesion Policies 2014-2020.

Inner Areas were identified by SNAI, starting from 2012, due to their remoteness, environmental and architectural fragility, relative poverty, marginality and shrinking trends. The authors of the proposed book elaborate on the outcomes of the first funding cycle of SNAI (2014-2020) and look towards the coming cycle, thanks to the contribution of more than 150 young researchers, gathered under the umbrella of the recently born National Network of Young Researchers for Inner Areas in Italy. Through the different chapters this collective text returns the richness of the multidisciplinary discussions that took place in June and July 2020 during the workshop organized by the Network of Young Researchers for Inner Areas committee and contributes to the international debate on how to analyze, manage and design marginal territories, characterized by high degrees of fragility and exposed at various risks.

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