



Belgeo

Revue belge de géographie

4 | 2022

Supporting sustainability : perspectives on the economic and social rebirth of rural spaces

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Soutenir la “durabilité” des zones internes (rurales) de la Basilicate : outils et stratégies locales pour le lancement de processus de développement local à Lagonegrese-Pollino

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Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/belgeo/57141>

DOI: 10.4000/belgeo.57141

ISSN: 2294-9135

Publisher:

National Committee of Geography of Belgium, Société Royale Belge de Géographie

Electronic reference

Luisa Spagnoli, “Supporting the “sustainability” of inland (rural) areas in Basilicata. Tools and place-based strategies for implementing local development processes in the Lagonegrese-Pollino subregion”, *Belgeo* [Online], 4 | 2022, Online since 28 December 2022, connection on 30 December 2022. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/belgeo/57141> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/belgeo.57141>

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Introduction. Basilicata, an ‘inland’ region

- 1 Most of the territory of Basilicata (67.7%), which includes 98 rural municipalities (of which 57 are mountainous), and most of the population (56.9%) belong to the “D Area”, as classified in the Rural Development Program¹. The agricultural system of this area is still strongly characterized by excessive fragmentation of the production structure, especially in the internal hill and mountain areas. These are known for suffering from significant marginalization processes due to various factors that lead to a general cooling of local socio-economic activities. It represents a risk factor for preserving the environmental and landscape balance. In addition, the economic instability resulting from the restrictions due to the COVID-19 emergency has hurt mainly the agricultural enterprises that are diversifying their activities, offering services and trying to meet the tourism demand (with non-hotel accommodation and catering) associated particularly with non-traditional forms of tourism².

- 2 Of the 131 municipalities in Basilicata, 126 are classified by the National Strategy for Inner Areas (Italian SNAI)³ as “inland areas” and 110 as “peripheral and outermost areas”, for a total of 431,512 inhabitants in inland areas compared to a total resident population of 578,036 (Rapporto di Istruttoria per la Selezione delle Aree Interne, 2014).
- 3 Basilicata is thus one of the European contexts with lagging economic and social development and modest territorial competitiveness due to a complex of factors related to instability and low diversification of productive sectors, low demand for domestic consumption, low living standards, low youth employment rates, aging and population decline, low accessibility to services, and modest investment in research and development (SISPRINT, 2019).
- 4 The presence of micro and small municipalities is widespread and concentrated mainly in the mountainous and inland areas of the region, where 6.7% of the regional population lives in municipalities with less than 1,630 inhabitants, compared to a national average of 4.8%. This aspect is the most apparent reason for difficulty “in ensuring accessibility and timely provision of key network services in a homogeneous manner, which harms the quality of life” (*Ibid.*). Undoubtedly, the smaller municipalities are at the center of the region’s demographic shrinkage: between 2011 and 2018, they lost 9.4% of their population, compared to a 4.6% decline for small municipalities throughout Italy. The aging index in the Basilicata small towns is 32% higher than the Italian average⁴ (*Ibid.*). This situation is inevitably reflected at the economic level in specific productive sectors: the number of companies in small or tiny municipalities has decreased by 6.4% between 2012 and 2018, accelerating a productive polarization in the larger municipalities of the region, where a greater concentration of industrial areas can be detected. It contrasts with the situation in the small municipalities, where the more traditional sectors related to trade, crafts and agriculture predominate.
- 5 The situation described above is observed and analyzed through the lens of the Lagonegrese-Pollino subregion, in the province of Potenza. This area, located in the southwestern part of Basilicata, presents some characteristics (to which we have already referred) that can also be found in the mountainous and hilly areas, as well as in the inland rural areas of the Peninsula: depopulation, aging population, lack of essential services and infrastructures, accessibility problems and the cooling of the socio-economic system activities. All these factors have contributed to the decline in land use, the deterioration of the historical, cultural and environmental heritage and, above all, the abandonment of agricultural land and rural heritage. However, there are some innovative elements of spatial planning supported by institutional actors (who intervene with specific public policies) and non-institutional actors (such as Pro Loco and the Local Action Groups) to initiate a process of local development (tourism). This includes the restoration and conversion of the former Lagonegro Spezzano-Albanese railway into a greenway, which is the result of a program agreement between Basilicata and the municipalities concerned (Lagonegro, Lauria, Nemoli, Rivello, Castelluccio Inferiore, Castelluccio Superiore, Rotonda and Viggianello), the Italian Public Property Agency and Ferrovie Appulo Lucane s.r.l. The latter is a venture born on the initiative of the institutions yet transformed into a territorial project through action research promoted by the Institute of History of Mediterranean Europe (Isem) of the National Research Council (Cnr) (coordinated by the author of this essay), whose main intention was to accompany local communities on a path of knowledge and growth. In other

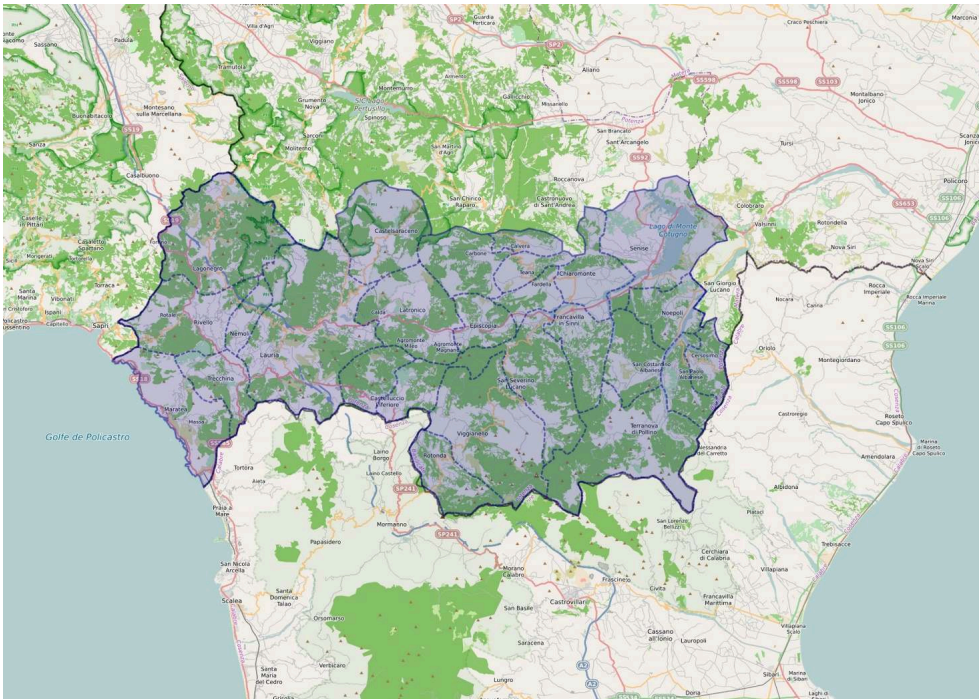
words, to “guide” new and more adult generations in dialogue and mutual interaction to discover their territory and understand how great the affection and devotion to it is.

- 6 The Isem-Cnr research program, favoring a methodological approach based on the integration of desk analysis and field survey, provided an overall picture of the area under study to identify its critical issues and potential. The quantitative survey carried out considering information from the primary databases (Istat, Chamber of Commerce, APT of Basilicata⁵) was used for territorial analysis to assess the impact of the demographic environment on the socio-cultural and economic system of the study area. This was flanked by empirical research mainly on the ground, consulting local and regional development programs and, above all, listening to the main actors in the territory to identify the value that the municipalities attach to the railroad and the attention paid by the institutions to the territory and its heritage.
- 7 Based on these assumptions, therefore, this paper will examine some bottom-up initiatives, not least of which is the project to promote the Lagonegro-Spezzano Albanese railway, to show how fundamental such bottom-up actions are, as well as the coordination/integration between institutions and citizenship in activating territorial renewal processes, explicitly aimed to enhance the resources and vocations of the territory. The main objective is thus to verify how the reuse and transformation of the former railroad line into a new greenway can trigger new synergies and a new territorial dynamic, especially in a peripheral⁶ area like Lagonegrese-Pollino.

The Lagonegrese-Pollino area: demographic, economic and tourism aspects

- 8 The Lagonegrese-Pollino territory covers an area of about 1,585 square kilometers and is located in the southwestern part of Basilicata. This subregion is partially situated in two protected areas: the Val d’Agri Lagonegrese National Park and the Pollino National Park.

Figure 1. The Lagonegrese Pollino and the eight municipalities concerned by the railroad.



Source: author's elaboration based on Openstreetmap

- 9 The demographic situation is not without problems, indicating negative historical trends and characterizing the overall picture. There are solid internal imbalances between the different sub-areas in terms of the territorial dispersion of the population, the degree of aging and the rates of out-migration and depopulation of the municipalities.
- 10 In fact, the population density tends to decrease in almost all the municipalities and the gap between young and old is widening.

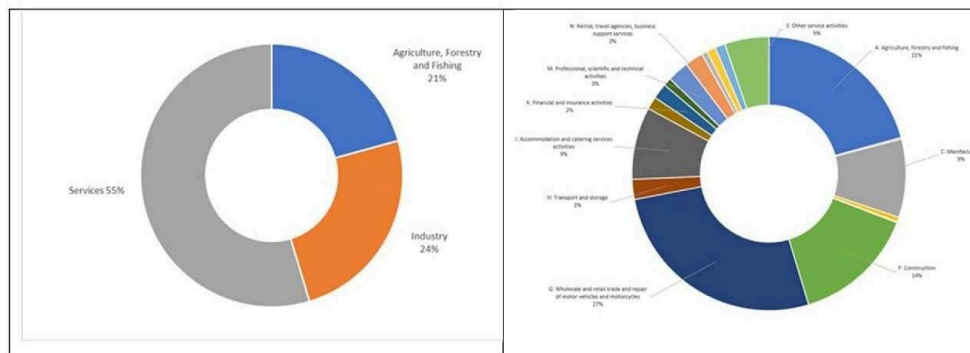
Table 1. Change in the resident population, 2011-2021 (Potenza district and the Lagonegrese-Pollino area).

Time	Change in Resident Population - January 1st						
	2011-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2011-2021
Region							
Potenza (district)	-7,081	-2,463	-2,488	-3,451	-4,051	-5,911	-25,445
Calvera	-38	-7	-4	-9	-8	-3	-69
Carbone	-70	-14	-16	-21	-20	-14	-155
Castelluccio Inferiore	-45	-44	-27	-46	-32	-30	-224
Castelluccio Superiore	-44	-7	-21	-26	-22	-1	-121
Castelsaraceno	-95	-22	-13	-41	-35	-31	-237
Castronuovo di Sant'Andrea	-73	-21	-25	-18	-32	-26	-195
Cersosimo	-65	-16	-19	-12	-18	-17	-147
Chiaromonte	8	-48	23	-40	-27	-92	-176
Episcopia	-36	-27	-18	-14	-46	-50	-191
Fardella	11	17	-14	-41	-17	-22	-66
Franavilla in Sinni	-32	-49	-25	-29	-30	-130	-295
Lagonegro	-242	-113	-72	-95	-54	43	-533
Latronico	-190	-75	-56	-92	-55	-107	-575
Lauria	-416	-114	-118	-141	-183	-124	-1,096
Maratea	-64	-9	-38	-27	-69	-106	-313
Nemoli	-20	-17	-15	-16	-29	-13	-110
Noepoli	-93	-12	-23	-31	-26	-16	-201
Rivello	-79	-17	-23	-37	-25	-71	-252
Rotonda	-44	-5	-39	-24	-12	-113	-237
San Costantino Albanese	-53	-37	-5	-20	-17	-22	-154
San Paolo Albanese	-12	-13	-17	-17	-18	-3	-80
San Severino Lucano	-112	-33	-14	-1	-33	-55	-248
Senise	-85	-62	-39	-96	-47	-142	-471
Teana	-28	-20	-10	-18	-7	-11	-94
Terranova di Pollino	-128	-40	-27	-10	-16	-38	-259
Trecchina	-29	-7	-23	-60	-29	-15	-163
Viggiannello	-106	-12	-63	-34	-67	-52	-334
Tot Lagonegrese-Pollino	-2,180	-824	-741	-1,016	-974	-1,261	-6,996
Tot Lagonegrese-Pollino %	-3.08	-1.20	-1.09	-1.51	-1.47	-1.94	-9.87

Source: author's elaboration based on Istat data (<http://dati.istat.it/>)

- 11 The aging index of the province of Potenza shows a value of 159.89 for 2011 and 213.61 for 2021, which in AREA 3 (the Lagonegrese-Pollino area) is 198.50 and 273.69, respectively.
- 12 The economic structure of the area under examination is characterized by a strong internal imbalance and some elements of structural vulnerability, which represent a real obstacle to the overall growth of the territory and the triggering of significant upturns. The local productive system comprises 5,272 active companies operating in broad areas of commerce, tertiary sector and agriculture (Basilicata Chamber of Commerce, 2020).

Figures 2-3. The productive sectors of ATECO, 2011-2020.



ATECO is the classification of economic activities adopted by Istat for statistical purposes. The classification currently used is ATECO 2007 with updates.

Source: author's elaboration based on data from the Basilicata Chamber of Commerce (<http://www.basilicata.camcom.it/>)

- 13 The specialization of production is related to the features of the territory and is mainly based upon “tertiary activities (i.e. business services and tourism services related to the Pollino area and the basin of Maratea)”, manufacturing and trade (GAL, “La Cittadella del Sapere”).
- 14 In the valley areas and some centers of the Pollino sub-area, the agri-food sector plays an important role. It impels agriculture and promotes preserving “local knowledge” in the characteristic productions (fruits and vegetables, medicinal plants, zootechny, bakery products, oil and truffles). Many small companies, mainly family-run businesses, operate in them.
- 15 As for the agricultural sector, the number of farms decreased by 66.6% from 2000 to 2010. A decrease greater than that at the regional level (-31.8%), and the Total Agricultural Area (TAA)⁷ decreased by -6,0%.
- 16 From the last available Agricultural Census data, the total number of farms is 4,971. The most represented farm size is the micro farm (0.01-1.99) with 19.8% in the whole province, followed by the small farm (2-4.99) with 18.6%, the macro farm (50-100 and more) with 13.6%, the medium farm (5-19.99) with 12.2%, and the medium-large farm (20-49.99) with 9.4%.

Table 2. Evolution of the agricultural sector in UAA-TAA and number of farms, 2000-2010 (Potenza district and Area 3).

Region	Agriculture					
	UAA		TAA		n. farms/TAA	
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
Potenza (district)	445.860,7	423.063,1	319.855,4	309.321,8	53.900,0	27.922,0
Calvera	976,2	474,0	664,7	334,7	234,0	112,0
Carbone	3.491,8	1.768,2	2.216,8	782,4	408,0	123,0
Castelluccio Inferiore	2.034,1	1.420,4	1.174,6	850,9	413,0	134,0
Castelluccio Superiore	1.956,1	1.090,8	973,8	355,0	461,0	35,0
Castelsaraceno	5.287,3	5.130,0	2.466,0	3.721,5	340,0	67,0
Castronuovo di Sant'Andrea	2.397,2	1.482,5	1.291,1	795,7	653,0	217,0
Cersosimo	1.646,8	1.458,0	859,4	710,1	166,0	62,0
Chiaromonte	3.950,6	3.371,4	1.991,2	1.513,9	524,0	366,0
Episcopia	1.004,9	699,6	702,4	474,6	245,0	86,0
Fardella	1.011,1	1.225,2	381,0	204,3	142,0	72,0
FrancaVilla in Sinni	3.068,6	1.681,1	1.952,4	1.278,6	795,0	266,0
Lagonegro	3.715,6	8.111,1	2.148,4	5.600,2	8,0	78,0
Latronico	5.482,7	1.801,0	2.355,9	665,1	962,0	88,0
Lauria	13.178,9	8.313,5	5.492,6	3.316,5	3.189,0	600,0
Maratea	4.028,2	4.637,7	2.914,6	3.849,7	760,0	119,0
Nemoli	1.031,6	752,1	588,2	418,0	208,0	132,0
Noepoli	2.859,0	3.913,2	1.091,2	2.055,7	182,0	162,0
Rivello	4.474,8	3.813,2	3.570,9	2.154,0	399,0	354,0
Rotonda	3.592,0	3.554,0	2.049,4	1.469,1	1.453,0	293,0
San Costantino Albanese	2.712,9	2.302,4	1.114,3	1.247,8	264,0	95,0
San Paolo Albanese	2.278,6	1.567,9	658,1	738,6	145,0	48,0
San Severino Lucano	3.239,0	2.799,8	1.394,2	1.349,3	357,0	30,0
Senise	4.122,7	7.226,0	3.367,5	3.793,3	759,0	721,0
Teana	885,8	610,6	615,7	425,6	289,0	115,0
Terranova di Pollino	7.762,4	5.298,3	5.281,2	2.256,5	320,0	71,0
Trecchina	1.151,2	3.015,7	776,3	2.431,5	548,0	215,0
Viggianello	4.730,9	9.060,9	2.012,2	7.076,4	947,0	310,0
Tot Lagonegrese-Pollino	92.071,1	86.578,5	50.104,1	49.868,8	15.171,0	4.971,0
% Area/District	20,7	20,5	15,7	16,1	28,1	17,8

Source: author's elaboration based on Istat data (<http://dati.istat.it/>)

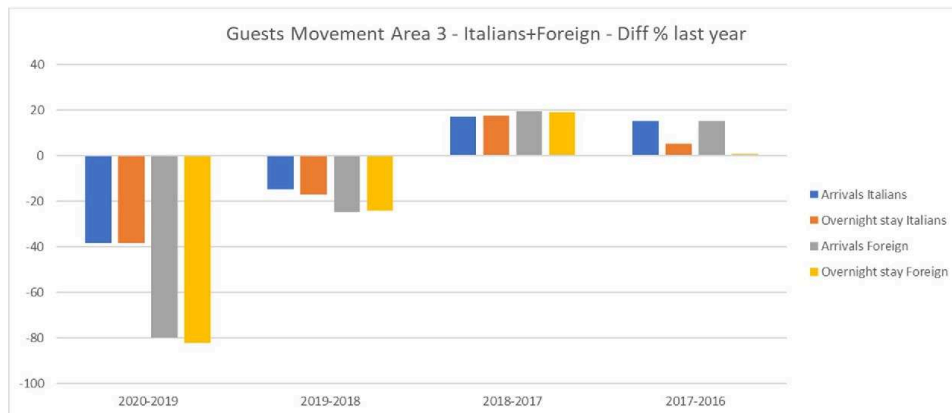
- 17 The most representative supply chains are olive growing, mainly represented in micro farms (No. 2433), arable crops in micro-small farms (No. 1700), viticulture (No. 886) and fruit growing in micro-farms (No. 431), and animal breeding, mainly in medium-large and macro farms (No. 542).
- 18 A potentially stimulating role is played by the tourism sector in the coastal area of Maratea and the municipalities of Pollino, which can rely on a series of activities aimed at creating “tourism-induced employment” (GAL, “La Cittadella del Sapere”). As a result, tourist demand has developed positively in terms of total number of visitors, increasing in recent years from 14% to 17% in terms of arrivals and from 5% to 17% in terms of visitors.
- 19 Even if Italian tourists predominate compared to the foreign ones, there is an increasing trend in both components, as shown by the statistics, which in this case confirm the general regional trend⁸.

Table 3. The movement of Italian and foreign tourists (arrivals and overnight stays) from 2016 to 2020.

	Guests Movement AREA 3 - Tot					
	Italians		Foreign		Tot	
	Arrivals	Overnight Stay	Arrivals	Overnight Stay	Arrivals	Overnight Stay
Tot 2020	63.344	199.802	2.619	5.729	65.963	205.531
Diff % last year	-38,4	-38,4	-80,1	-82,2	-43,2	-42,3
Tot 2019	102.908	324.268	13.128	32.208	116.036	356.476
Diff % last year	-14,7	-17,1	-24,8	-24,1	-16,0	-17,7
Tot 2018	120.628	390.929	17.467	42.450	138.095	433.379
Diff % last year	17,1	17,4	19,3	19,1	17,4	17,6
Tot 2017	103.008	332.946	14.636	35.651	117.644	368.597
Diff % last year	15,1	5,4	15,3	0,6	15,1	4,9
Tot 2016	89.498	315.929	12.697	35.425	102.195	351.354

Source: author’s elaboration based on data from APT of Basilicata

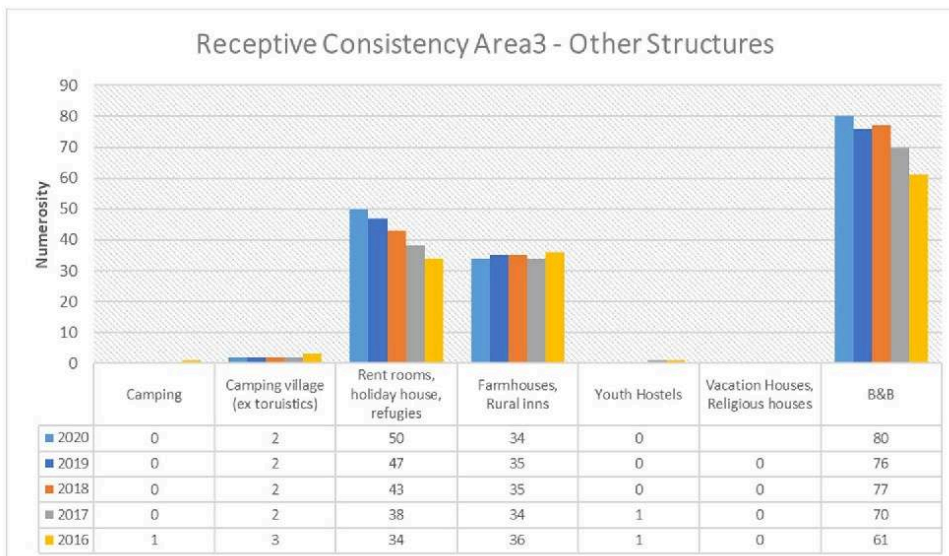
Figure 4. Bar chart of the movement of Italian and foreign tourists (arrivals and overnight stays) from 2016 to 2020.



Source: author’s elaboration based on data from APT of Basilicata

- 20 There is evidence of significant carrying capacity. While the number of hotel accommodation facilities fluctuated slightly in the period 2016-2019 (from 64 to 62), mainly in relation to non-hotel structures, there was a significant increase from 136 to 160 structures in the same period, mainly in the “Renting-holiday-houses and B&B” categories.

Figures 5-6. Carrying capacity in the Lagonegrese-Pollino region in hotels and non-hotels.



Source: author's elaboration based on data from APT of Basilicata

- 21 Nevertheless, the relationship between the coast and the hinterland is still weak. Only an innovative tourist offer that considers the highly rural areas in the hinterlands as potential reservoirs of development can stimulate a process of seasonal adjustment of flows and determine the inclusion of areas with these characteristics in the new destinations for sustainable and quality tourism.

Top down, bottom up. The definition of territorial governance

- 22 Regarding the main policies and *ad hoc* programming tools for the revitalization and enhancement of the context, especially in terms of (rural) tourism development, the

National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI) has played a significant role in this regard by selecting as a prototype the area “Mercure Alto Sinni Val Sarmiento”, which includes 10 of the 27 municipalities of the Lagonegrese-Pollino territory. The area of the Strategy⁹ aims to “promote and strengthen territorial competitiveness, starting from the specificities of the localities”. In general, the programming aims to consolidate citizens’ services and revitalize tourism and agriculture in the area. The actions on which it focuses are biodiversity (action 1), infrastructure (action 2) and (rural) tourism and local development (action 3), which will be monitored through different action lines. Biodiversity will serve as a lever for innovation in agriculture and the general production process. As for the agricultural and environmental sector, it is foreseen to focus on the typical products, with a specific “biodiversity” itinerary that crosses the whole territory, networking all the “biodiversity points” guarded by the current and future farmers, as well as including at least one “food point”¹⁰ for each of the municipalities of the area (Strategia Aree Interne – Regione Basilicata, 2018). The “biodiversity” and “food” points are in synergy with each other and tell the story of the area through the plant species and the food. Special attention will be paid to new and existing agro-food and agro-tourism supply chains to ensure investment in the production, processing and marketing phases.

- 23 This action also includes the Local Action Group “La Cittadella del Sapere”, responsible for coordination and implementation. Its objective is to select “territorial projects for the supply chain, financing individual business investments according to a well-defined and clear need. All this is important for the closure and full functioning of the territorial micro-sectors” (GAL, “La Cittadella del Sapere”). In the framework of this upgrading process, it was necessary to identify some topics within which specific priority activities of the Local Development Strategy (SLL) “Sviluppo Matrice Ambiente Rete Territorio e Turismo (S.M.A.R.T.T.)”¹¹ can be carried out. This involves the “Development and innovation of supply chains and local production systems”, the “Social inclusion of specific disadvantaged and/or marginalized groups” and “Sustainable tourism” (*ibid.*). The goal is to activate innovative collective actions as well as integration processes using local tools to find ways to strengthen the local social and productive fabric and preserve the historical and economic identity of the territory.
- 24 In this general planning framework, there are also new development opportunities for the said subregion linked to tourism, agriculture (understood as a producer of goods and services for the community) and local development, in an attempt to promote a synergistic relationship between the three elements. In particular, the recovery and conversion of the former Lagonegro-Spezzano Albanese railway. This is an instrument for revitalizing the area under investigation through high-quality forms of rural tourism with low environmental impact and high economic added value.
- 25 It should not be overlooked that programming, policies and initiatives to recover and convert disused routes into cycle paths are becoming increasingly numerous at the national and regional levels, often resulting in a fragmented and inconsistent picture in terms of the existence and actual capacity of itineraries [...] to affect the areas they cross (Mariotti, 2012, p. 91). It goes without saying, however, that this growing sensitivity to the issue of infrastructure recovery is reflected above all in the current planning for tourism and transport, which, especially since the publication of the Atlas of Paths (2015), has been moving towards the implementation of an overall strategy aimed at achieving a national network of soft mobility. Since 2015, the former

Ministries of Transport and Infrastructure (MIT) and of Cultural Heritage and Tourism (MIBACT) have launched a joint project to define a system of tourist cycling paths along the lines of the Eurovelo project initiated by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) and the Italian Federation of Friends of the Bicycle (FIAB). In 2016, memoranda of understanding were signed between MIT and the eight regions involved in the project (including Basilicata). In 2017, the national cycling network was extended to ten cycling routes with a total length of 6,000 km and six additional routes of national interest were added.

- 26 As for the Strategic Tourism Development Plan (STP) (2017-2022), the aim is to provide the country with an intermodal infrastructure of greenways by upgrading historical, naturalistic, cultural and religious trails to create a true slow mobility network and “promote unique and authentic visitor experiences” (Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, 2017, p. 42). In this direction, disused railway routes, historic trails, cycle paths, cultural routes, etc., can be used to create a possible form of slow tourism and soft mobility. In line with TSP, the Extraordinary Plan for Tourism Mobility (PSMT) (2017-2022) also includes soft mobility and the tourism sector amongst its priorities. “The concept of mobility is rejected as accessibility, but above all as an experience” (Cresta, 2019, p. 94). Priority is given to territories and resources that can feed the tourism sector and promote sustainable forms of mobility. Not to mention the National Plan for Recovery and Resilience (PNRR), which, among the various policy objectives identified as the main Italian and European response to the coronavirus crisis, also addresses the issue of the green revolution and ecological transition (Mission 2), highlighting the importance of sustainable mobility and cycle paths.
- 27 In other words, the Lagonegro-Spezzano Albanese infrastructure, restored and transformed into a greenway, can become an actual element of attraction and territorial innovation, a type of alternative mobility that can support more complex renewal strategies and local development in such a context.
- 28 These are the reasons that have led to the launch of a research project¹², which is part of the project “Lucanian railway landscapes for the sustainability of the territory and local development. A “green” path along the Lagonegro-Spezzano Albanese, coordinated by the Institute of Mediterranean Europe History of Cnr and aimed at integrating and strengthening the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of the “Ministry of Ecological Transition”.
- 29 The National Strategy for Sustainable Development, approved in 2017, was created to translate and decline the strategic lines of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into the context of Italy's economic, social and environmental planning. Its purpose is to improve the socio-economic well-being of the population, ensure environmental sustainability, strengthen business competitiveness and provide more development and training opportunities, to significantly improve youth employment. In other words, it implements a comprehensive vision of the concept of sustainability, which implies an approach focused not only on the environment, but above all on cultural, social and economic issues, all of which intervene equally in the reproduction of territorial values and resources. A true “territorial dimension” of sustainability, then strongly advocated at the global level by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations and at the national level by the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, in which “the requirements of economic growth [are] combined with those of human and social development, quality

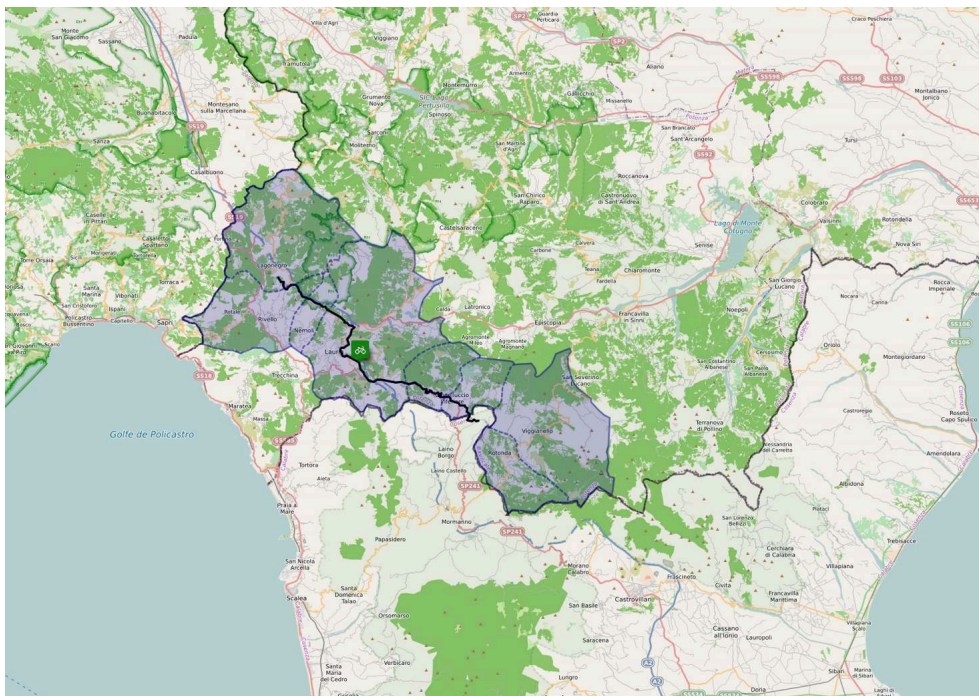
of life and protection of the planet, from the point of view of long-term well-being. The environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainable development complement and support each other in order to build a fairer, healthier and more harmonious society for all” (www.mite.gov.it).

- 30 About our research program, the objectives of the Strategy were highlighted, focusing on the environment and sustainable innovation. The specific aims of the project correspond mainly to the areas of “Planet”, “Prosperity” and “People”, as the activities carried out explored the possibility of contributing to the creation of a “co-science of place”, necessary and useful to stimulate new forms of sustainable and responsible tourism and to activate a path of self-knowledge and recognition of territorial values by local communities.

From the railway to the cycle path: the project in its outline

- 31 The research embedded in the project to transform the disused railway into a greenway – the “Ferrovia Ciclabile Lucana” – aims to promote the green path by telling the story of the railway and the places it crosses through some key themes: the historical infrastructure, the greenway and the eco-naturalistic and historical-cultural routes, the human and natural resources and the territory, with particular attention to digital and interactive systems.

Figure 7. The line of the Lagonegro-Spezzano Albanese railroad and the eight municipalities concerned by the railway



Source: author's elaboration based on Openstreetmap

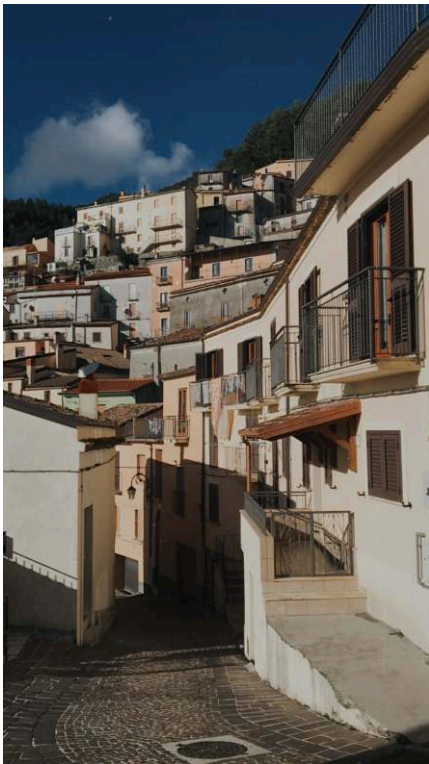
Figure 8. The railway station of Rivello.



Source: photo by Cristiana Zorzi

- 32 The joint action of the activities promoted by both projects can represent an added value in terms of preserving and enhancing the significant natural and cultural heritage and landscape of the area crossed by the former infrastructure. The idea is to reuse the route in a combination of cycling, hiking and trekking activities, but at the same time to experience the route through the reconstruction of a territorial narrative, made accessible thanks to a set of digital tools that allow for the broadest possible dissemination and use.
- 33 The objective of the initiative was to develop an integrated plan to know, valorize and communicate the rich heritage of the studied area. In this sense, an articulated network of activities is defined, aiming at the creation of a database of reference materials (indispensable for the elaboration of an interactive multimedia map for the synthetic representation of the territory, as well as thematic maps for the localization of the anthropic resources of the studied municipalities), related both to the geographical context and to the endowment of the territorial resources (cultural and landscape assets), which can be used by tourists and the local population, thus deepening the knowledge of the territory and its valuable and material aspects.

Figures 9-10. Natural and anthropogenic capital: Lake Sirino and the municipality of Castelluccio Superiore.



Source: photo by Cristiana Zorzi

- 34 Although the analysis of the territorial context was certainly one of the most remarkable objectives of the research, the reconstruction of the historical memory of the railway, the multimedia approach based on the elaboration of an interactive

cartography and 3D modeling of the infrastructural heritage, and the participative processes are also noteworthy. The involvement and exchange of tools with local actors – including Pro Loco, municipalities, the Local Action Group “La Cittadella del Sapere”, associations and the whole population – are the two chief actions of the project, as it allows to “measure” the capacity of bottom-up initiatives in activating the tourist potential of the former line and, above all, to understand the importance of the itinerary for the population.

- 35 We have built a “research and action” pathway that has brought applied geographic work to support those who want to dedicate themselves to the implementation of ‘territorial explorations’ for local and sustainable development in the role of ‘facilitator’, by promoting exchanges between institutional territorial knowledge and civic knowledge. At the same time, however, a synthesis between the two representations can be translated into a broader strategic-territorial vision. Sensitive and collaborative maps were used to support this process.
- 36 By incorporating geohistorical analysis of the territory, complemented by direct observation, workshop proposals were created for local communities. The ‘field research’ methodology, and therefore fieldwork, was considered fundamental to interacting with the territory, the population and the institutions. This allowed for the development of a territorial narrative from which the communities’ sense of belonging to the places emerged, their relationship with the territory itself and the traces left there by the railway. To achieve this goal, territorial sensitivity exercises had to be carried out first and foremost, with the ultimate goal of developing participatory cartography and community maps. These tools promote community empowerment through creativity and territorial innovation as well as support the enhancement of a certain sense of affection for the territory to represent, communicate and remember it. In addition, they are helpful to strengthen tourist practices with the aim of territorial valorization.

Figure 11. Land activities.



Source: photo by Cristiana Zorzi

Figure 12 Sensitive map (developed during a workshop with a cultural association in the area that made it possible to identify the main emotions triggered by the landscape crossed by the cycle path).



Source: Sensitive cartography workshop, Nemoli 26 November 2021 (Photo by Cristiana Zorzi)

- 37 Sensitive cartography, therefore, seemed to us to be one of the most appropriate cartographic representations for working with communities to locate resources and highlight the emotional design of the landscape. From this type of representation, intimate and shared, it was possible to deduce not only the values (cultural, historical, landscape, environmental) and possibilities of the territorial context under study, but also the critical aspects in terms of the decision-making processes that affect it. The result is precisely the maps. They have been drawn up in a participative manner with the involvement of schools, cultural associations and first citizens. For this purpose, several meetings and, as already mentioned, workshops were organized, as well as excursions in the area, “to retrace the traces of the railway with the feet and the imagination; to map the relationships of the inhabitants with the territory, its landscapes, places and environments” (Zorzi, in press, p. 204). The result of this intensive work - interviews, videos, maps, etc. - has been compiled in a geoportal (www.ferroviaciclabilelucana.it) which, although still in the definition phase, will reflect the research carried out and open future research perspectives.
- 38 In the initial phase of the work, a database was defined from which emerged the importance of the exceptional territorial heritage (in terms of anthropic and natural capital) and the potential of such a territory among those who, as M. Meini pointed out for Molise, have been “unjustly marginalized”. On the contrary, their knowledge is fundamental for realizing an integrated offer and the population’s active participation (Meini, 2018, p. 8). The structural weaknesses of the territorial context (population decline, infrastructural deficiencies, limited accessibility to basic services, etc.) should not be an obstacle when it comes to valorizing resources. In this sense, the greenway, along with other programming experiences, can be seen as a means to strengthen territorial governance and develop an economy that is “internal, and not directed by others” (Meini, 2018, p. 8).
- 39 In particular, the project experience coordinated by Isem also proved to be an attempt to mitigate the negative consequences of the so-called ‘DAD (decide, announce, defend)’ approach, implemented in our case by the region and the municipalities for the reconversion of the former railway, and to ‘repair’ the gap between decision-makers and citizens (previously excluded from decision-making processes) by promoting their dialogue and involvement, with the ultimate goal of stimulating bottom-up processes that can be integrated into the framework of multilevel governance.

Conclusion

- 40 The National Strategy for Inner Areas, in this specific case, the Project Area “Mercurio Alto Sinni Val Sarmiento”, the Local Development Strategy with the Consortium “La Cittadella del Sapere” at its head (S.M.A.R.TT - Sviluppo Matrice Ambiente Rete Territorio e Turismo), the project for the reuse of the Lagonegro-Spezzano Albanese railway infrastructure, they all correspond to an eminently place-based approach, i.e. a dimension oriented towards places and, above all, towards communities. According to this approach, the most important thing is the possibility of learning from places, giving them a central role and making them habitable again. Community awareness and participation are essential in building a shared and inclusive decision-making process. Centrality becomes the ultimate objective of programmatic action: in this sense, it is vital to activate bottom-up planning tools, adopt a multidimensional

development vision, and implement transversal policies for the different productive sectors.

- 41 This interpretation shows how the sustainable development of places takes place through policies that aim to promote and protect local specificities and landscape diversity by integrating the endogenous resources of the territory into a system.
- 42 In other words, “the real challenge underlying this approach is to stimulate and involve most local actors – from institutions and experts to business associations, entrepreneurs, residents and users – in the decision-making process, in order to identify the needs of local communities and make institutions the leading actors in the design of a common territorial policy” (Oppido, Ragozino, Micheletti, 2017, p. 1188; Barca, 2009; Esposito De Vita *et al.*, 2016).
- 43 This approach, which underlies territorial regeneration processes, aims at local development strategies to “solve the persistent underutilization of resources and reduce social exclusion” (Oppido, Ragozino, Micheletti, 2017, p. 1188). It is clear that inland areas, which in Italy represent 60% of the national territory and are home to less than a quarter of the population, particularly benefit from such a perspective, not least because, despite their problems related to the lack of basic services, difficult accessibility, the progressive aging of the population and, more generally, phenomena of marginalization, they are characterized by a significant potential of resources (material and immaterial) and active citizenship. They represent “a resource for protecting and enhancing local identity, as they are generally characterized by a strong sense of community and rootedness in places [...]” (Oppido, Ragozino, Micheletti, 2017, p. 1189).
- 44 This is consistent with the strategies and projects addressed in the study, which aim to promote actions of territorial enhancement, starting from recognizing the significant role played by the population in enhancing and promoting the territory.
- 45 The focus of the research, even if addressed in the main lines, therefore aimed to show the importance of “place-based” local development strategies and policies, with the ultimate goal of promoting territorial regeneration projects to valorize the local resources and vocations of the context itself. But above all, how critical the network perspective is. No regeneration project can do without building fruitful collaborative relationships with public and private actors, institutions and local populations, companies and associations from the cultural, agricultural and financial sectors, so that we can contribute to activating processes for the regeneration of territories. Networking strategies can only work if political and institutional decision makers and communities are truly involved, especially in recognizing resources to understand the importance of places, their value and identity built over time. Regeneration means operating on areas by activating networked development strategies from a sustainability perspective. One cannot ignore the network, connection with the population, territory and resources (Burini, 2018). These are the reasons that led us to stimulate, from the first phases of the project, an intense networking and territorial animation aimed at building a solid network of stakeholders, a necessary condition for the research work in the field, together with schools, Pro Loco, business associations and mayors. In this way, it was possible to engage in a dialogue with the territory, identifying its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, using a “participant observation, hermeneutics and visual investigation” approach (Zorzi, in press, p. 247). From March 2021 until the end of the project, numerous meetings were

held, mainly in the field with the different categories of stakeholders and in the different communities involved in the project.

- 46 The following steps of the study will be to complete the analysis phase and the preliminary work to finalize the Isem-Cnr research project for the promotion of railway infrastructure and, in particular, to investigate if and which possibilities can promote the re-functionalization of the line converted into a greenway for and on the territory it crosses. Thus, the objective will be to study the possible environmental, social, economic and cultural impacts.

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NOTES

1. The Rural Development Program 2014-2020 classifies Basilicata as entirely rural and divides it into “Rural areas with development problems (D)”, “Intermediate rural areas (C)” and “Rural areas with specialized agriculture (B)”.
2. The goal is tourism that allows people to experience natural and cultural resources (both tangible and intangible) reasonably and coherently, prioritizing places with their particular characteristics, traditions and daily rhythms and enhancing the value of local identities. Since it is not a mass offer, this form of tourism is linked to the territory in terms of landscape, culture and anthropic capital. Moreover, in this innovative form of tourist use of the territories, the local communities also play a significant role. The tourist wants to establish more or less intense contact to create new opportunities for economic development for the territory and its inhabitants.
3. The Strategy was launched in 2014 after a special Paternity Agreement with the European Commission was approved and included in the National Reform Plan. Starting the following year, the Italian State (through the Technical Committee for Inland Areas) and the Regions worked to identify the territorial contexts for the intervention of the Strategy in the 2014-2020 economic policy, which led to the identification of numerous project areas. The aim was to involve

territorial public administrations in the search for new forms of multilevel governance, with the commitment to consider, in particular, the specificities of places (Lucatelli, Tantillo, 2018, p. 404). According to SNAI, inland areas should not be considered only as cultural assets to be preserved and valorized but rather as “a field of possible new initiatives and economic forms that, in addition to valorizing the cultural asset, require above all technical, social, administrative, managerial, and entrepreneurial innovations” (De Rossi, 2018, p. 6). Such a policy aims to recentralize the space that gives these contexts unprecedented collective and political visibility.

4. The aging index is a demographic coexistence ratio, defined as the percentage ratio of the population of old age (65 years and older) to the population of young age (under 15 years), calculated on January 1 of each year. It is one of the possible demographic indicators for measuring the degree of aging of a population: <https://noi-italia.istat.it/pagina.php?L=0&categoria=3&dove=ITALIA>

5. The APT of Basilicata is the Region’s Territorial Promotion Agency that classifies the Lagonegrese-Pollino context as Area 3.

6. By the term “peripheral area”, we refer to the definition of “inland area” as used in the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI) (see footnote 3). According to this definition, the areas are characterized by a long distance to important service centers (health, school, mobility) and by high availability of significant environmental and cultural resources: <https://politichecoesione.governo.it/it/strategie-tematiche-e-territoriali/strategie-territoriali/strategia-nazionale-aree-interne-snai/>

7. TAA is the total area of the holding. It consists of the agricultural area, the surface covered with trees, the forest, the unused agricultural area and the other area. Utilized Agricultural Area (UAA) is the total area invested in arable crops, agricultural groves, home gardens, permanent meadows and pastures, and orchards. It is the part invested in and used for actual agricultural cultivation. It does not include the area used for mushrooms in caves, cellars and special buildings.

8. However, the data for 2019 show a completely different situation and a significant decrease in total tourist movements: from 138 thousand arrivals in 2018 to 116 thousand in 2019, and from 433 thousand tourist presences, always in 2018, to 356 thousand in 2019; a percentage change of about -16% (arrivals) and -18% (presences). I will compare the data of Maratea (the only seaside resort of Basilicata on the Tyrrhenian Sea, belonging to the same area), the Ionian Coast and Matera for the same years. Without going into details, it is clear that Matera – the European Capital of Culture – has played a predominant role in the last studied year, even if the Ionian Coast has maintained an almost positive and increasing trend in tourist flows compared to Maratea (even in 2019). Moreover, the gap between 2019 and 2020 is widening: the situation is certainly due to the health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

9. The second pilot area is located in the south of Basilicata, within the Pollino National Park. It includes nineteen municipalities (Senise, Francavilla in Sinni, Rotonda, Viggianello, Castelluccio Inferiore, Castelluccio Superiore, San Severino Lucano, Chiaromonte, Fardella, Teana, Calvera, Carbone, Castronuovo Sant’Andrea, Terranova di Pollino, Noepoli, Cersosimo, San Costantino Albanese, San Paolo Albanese, San Giorgio Lucano). It is affected by significant depopulation, which decreased by 9.3% in 2001-2011, and considerable population aging (24.8% are 65 years and older). It is an area with small municipalities, nine of which have less than 1,000 inhabitants, and a very low population density. In this area of Basilicata, agricultural activity has declined, as is the case at the national level. Between the two censuses (2000 - 2010), the number of farms decreased by 47.5%, while the UAA decreased by 7.9%. The UAA of Mercure Alto Sinni Val Sarmiento represents 5.6% of the total regional UAA. This situation has also negatively impacted the agricultural sector’s importance index, which decreased from 2.8 to 2.4 during the decade. The same is true for the agri-food sector, which dropped from 2.1 to 1.8 (D’Oronzio, De Vivo, Ricciardi, 2018).

10. *Cibosofia* is a philosophy of life: “the humus in which to germinate and grow, which becomes the heritage of the local population and is available to those who come to the area, especially attracted by the appeal of the [Pollino] National Park” (Strategia Aree Interne - Regione Basilicata, 2018).

11. The LAG (Local Action Group) implements the LEADER initiative in the areas of Lagonegrese, Val Sarmiento, Alto Sinni, Mercure and Pollino. The LEADER action is strategically crucial for the overall economy of the “S.M.A.R.T.T” SSL and complements other programming tools implemented at the regional and EU level. The LEADER instrument is based on a bottom-up approach and puts the LAGs at the center. Their task is to elaborate and implement an innovative, multisectoral and integrated pilot strategy at the local level. In doing so, they focus on animating, preparing and disseminating the strategy and related cooperation actions in the different sub-regional areas covered by the Rural Development Program (RDP).

12. The project, which started in October 2021 and ended in June 2022, is an appropriate and concrete response to the demands of the National Strategy for Inner Areas and the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, assigning a nodal role to the territories and the evaluation of their identity features, which include the memory and the visible signs (seats, tracks, stations, tolls, bridges, etc.) of historic routes.

ABSTRACTS

According to the Regional Rural Development Program 2014-2020, most of the territory of Basilicata is classified as “Rural Areas with Development Problems (D)”. As such, it suffers from severe processes of marginalization due to depopulation, population aging and the cessation of activities related to micro companies. These phenomena weaken local socio-economic systems and constitute a risk factor for maintaining the environmental balance. In addition, the economic instability resulting from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact, especially on the agricultural enterprises that offer diversified activities and services to meet tourism demand (with non-hotel accommodation and catering services), mainly associated with non-traditional tourism. The point of view from which this situation can be observed and analyzed is the Lagonegrese-Pollino subregion. Despite numerous factors due to the obvious marginality and weakness of the territory, there are factors in this area that allow for change in terms of sustainable planning of the territory, in which not only the institutional actors but also the local population play a central role.

These are the conditions to investigate the central policies and *ad hoc* programming tools, especially regarding sustainable and quality tourism development. Starting from the National Strategy for Inner Areas to the Local Development Strategy, through the analysis of a project for the conversion and reuse of a railway infrastructure transformed into a greenway (the disused Lagonegro-Spezzano Albanese), the work aims to evaluate which instruments can activate sustainable fruition paths in the analyzed subregion and, in particular, whether participation and social activation represent an added value for the creation of territorial renewal processes.

Dans le Programme Régional de Développement Rural 2014-2020, la plus grande partie du territoire de la Basilicate est classée dans la catégorie des “zones rurales présentant des problèmes de développement (D)”. Il s’agit de zones qui souffrent de graves processus de marginalisation dus au dépeuplement, au vieillissement de la population et à la cessation des

activités liées aux micro-entreprises. Ces phénomènes contribuent à la fragilisation des systèmes socio-économiques locaux et constituent un facteur de risque pour le maintien de l'équilibre environnemental. À cela s'ajoute l'instabilité économique résultant de l'impact de la pandémie de COVID-19, qui affecte particulièrement les entreprises agricoles qui offrent des activités et des services diversifiés pour répondre à la demande touristique (avec des services d'hébergement et de restauration non hôteliers) principalement associée au tourisme non traditionnel. La zone Lagonegrese-Pollino, dans la province de Potenza, constitue le point de départ de l'observation et de l'analyse de cette situation. Malgré ces éléments qui renvoient à des situations de marginalité et de faiblesse évidentes au niveau territorial, il existe des facteurs de changement en vue d'une planification durable du territoire dans laquelle interviennent non seulement les acteurs institutionnels mais aussi la population locale.

Ces facteurs sont les conditions préalables à l'examen des principales politiques et des outils de programmation *ad hoc*, notamment du développement d'un tourisme durable et de qualité. De la Stratégie Nationale pour les Zones Intérieures à la Stratégie de Développement Local, en passant par l'analyse d'un projet concernant la conversion et la réutilisation d'une infrastructure ferroviaire déclassée transformée en voie verte (le Lagonegro-Spezzano Albanese), ce travail entend évaluer quels instruments sont en mesure d'activer des parcours de développement durable dans la sous-région analysée et, en particulier, si la participation et l'activation sociale représentent des valeur ajoutée pour la création de processus de régénération territoriale.

INDEX

Mots-clés: Basilicate, Lagonegrese-Pollino, zones rurales intérieures, stratégies de développement local et régional

Keywords: Basilicata, Lagonegrese-Pollino, inland rural areas, local and regional development strategies

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