

SHARED METHODS FOR THE VALORISATION OF THE INLAND TERRITORY. THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN SAMO AND THE ABANDONED VILLAGE OF PRECACORE

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ABSTRACT

The inland territories, often apparently marginal with respect to the directions of economic growth of the extended territory (Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria), are actually endowed with fundamental factors of development: natural and cultural resources, agri-food resources, artisan skills. Thus, they contribute to the strengthening and construction of the image and form of the extended territory, enhancing the aspects consolidated over time. Acting on such potential levers, it intends to carry out initiatives aimed at keeping alive the existing natural and cultural heritage of the territory and strengthening local communities, respecting the balances consolidated by centuries of traditions, finalizing interventions to new forms of inhabit sustainable and ecological territory.

The paper focuses a triggered process that concerns the recovery of land use starting from two contexts of excellence: the ancient village of Precacore and the La Verde river. These places become spaces of shared planning for the activation of forms of local sustainable and innovative development. The planned activities and the actors involved activate a system of rules in which the criteria of public utility, economic performance, social value, environmental sustainability are the basis of effective planning solutions of the territory, through proposals whose identity and cultural character re-establish the idea of the future of local communities.

Besides the consolidation of the participation system, the objective is the development of projects concerning the sustainable development of the territory, aimed at promoting forms of participatory experimentation, but able to generate values, starting from the local point of view in order to answer to issues ecological, social and economic. The process constitutes a system in continuous growth towards the identity values of the territory. At the moment, Re_think

Precacore. Ideas for the future of the ancient village. Projects and processes to innovate and enhance and the River Contract as a territory project for the La Verde Valley are the ongoing experiences develop by the LaStre Laboratory of the PAU Department, which is working on these accompanying processes for the shared enhancement of the internal territory. The activity was started with a Agreement between the Municipality of Samo and the LaStre laboratory, for the definition of the operating models and innovative management practices of territorial governance, in collaboration with the Aspromonte National Park Authority.

KEYWORDS: Shared Method, Heritage, River Contract, Local Communities

THE POTENTIAL LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT OF INLAND TERRITORIES

The Italian inland areas are characterized by the presence of a highly valuable territorial capital: a natural heritage with animal, plant and landscape biodiversity; an important historical, architectural and cultural heritage, but also intangible assets such as cultures, traditions and languages that are fundamental elements of identity for the settled communities and are, by their very nature, history and structures that produce social cohesion and a sense of community.

The strategies for promoting local development at national and international level, have focused attention, through reflections and practices, on the need to identify innovative forms and procedures capable of promoting local development through the centrality of the quality of life which, through the programming and planning of interventions that fit into a territorial dimension, highlight the specificities (cultural and natural heritage) of each marginal area.

The development of these territories through the valorisation of territorial capital is perfectly in line with the objectives of the European Strategy 2030 for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Indeed, in the approval of the National Strategy for inland areas (SNAI) within the framework of the Union's cohesion policies, the enhancement of the cultural and natural heritage aimed at territorial improvement is indicated among the main levers to reverse the trend depopulation and contribute to local development. Furthermore, investing in inland areas, not only economically, allows the territory to remain healthy.

In this sense, the proposals of the research group of LaStre of the PAU Department of the Mediterranean University that is working in a territorial context concerning the south-eastern area of the Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, within which the protected territory of the Aspromonte National Park is entirely included.

The objective of the experimentation is to develop innovative processes aimed at promoting an integrated development that also aims to counter the depopulation and weakness of the economic system of inland areas, through policies (participated) of soil protection, urban security, promotion traditional agricultural and craft activities, as well as the creation of quality tourist activities.

THE ASPROMONTE NATIONAL PARK IN THE METROPOLITAN CITY OF REGGIO CALABRIA

The Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria is characterized by a territorial system with different areas and contexts for morphological configurations, settlement characteristics and levels of economic development. Its territory coincides with that of the former province, while relations and vocations can be identified in several territorial systems rich in peculiarities and diversified identities.

The PNA is one of the five homogeneous territorial zones of the metropolitan city (the others are the plain of Gioia Tauro, the Strait, the Locride and the Grecanica area). This choice represents one of the most innovative aspects of the Statute that recognizes the Park Area as a Metropolitan garden, identifying a different and innovative relationship between the “city” and its metropolitan territory, which wants to place itself on a par with other territorial contexts to activate forms of development and enhancement consistent with the peculiarities of the places.

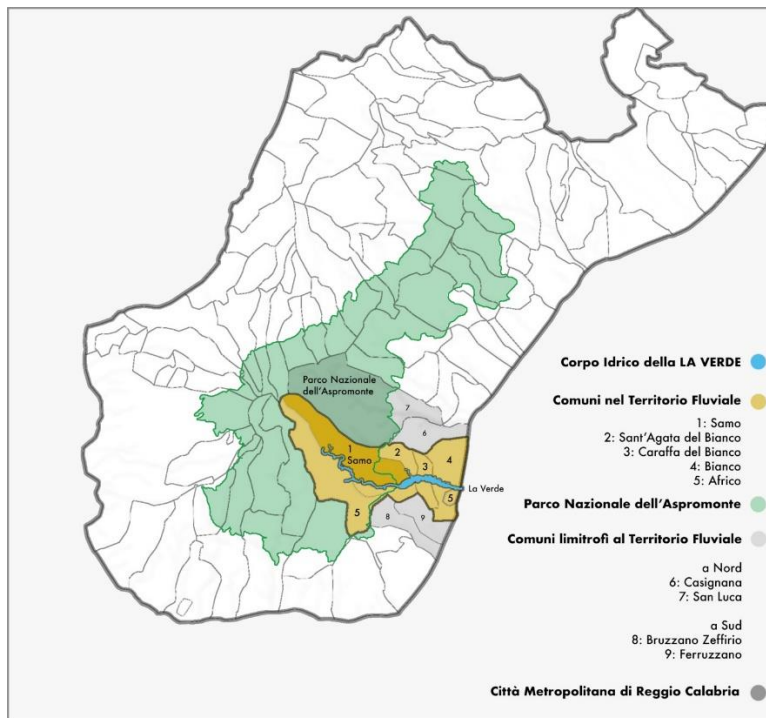


Figure 1: The La Verde valley in the Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria

The presence of a protected area, the Aspromonte National Park, a mountain park of over 65,000 hectares, included entirely in the metropolitan perimeter, represents a unique example at European level. It is an area that is characterized by the exceptional naturalistic, landscape and cultural heritage and by a rural and mountain settlement system in which the tendency to interpret a residential character, even widespread, linked to the use of tourism with cultural purposes and is increasingly consolidated. landscape, historical and archaeological, enogastronomic and naturalistic. In the centers inside the park is expressed a culture of places characterized by a rural world that is joined in a thousand different narratives and looks at a common and at the same time peculiar project.

The territory of the Aspromonte National Park is a sort of programming, rich in history and culture that gives rise to a strong uniqueness in the settled communities. Its central position in the “vast” context of the metropolitan territory, which includes 37 municipalities, one third of those that make up the entire area, represents a strong point in the metropolitan process of the city of Reggio Calabria. Furthermore, the multiplicity and variety of the many local contexts give rise to as many settlement systems, the smaller, often fragile centers of the metropolitan context. They produce a geography, a different vision, for which it is necessary to find forms of aggregation and specific spaces of intervention in the process of establishing the Metropolitan City, above all in the light of the homogeneity that provides the territory of the Park. The geography, therefore, reveals a territory that has experienced several more or less positive events, from depopulation phenomena, to the demographic and economic crisis and not least the phenomena of physical degradation of the territory, all accompanied or in any case consequent to a general depletion of the territory itself.



Figure 2: Samo, Precacore and and La Verde river

The territory of the La Verde river valley (the territorial context of the paper) is located almost entirely in the area of the Aspromonte Park (Fig. 1), on the eastern side of the Aspromonte massif and winds, at the mouth of the Ionian coast of Reggio, between the inhabited centers of Africo Nuovo and Bianco; it also includes other centers that gravitate in the hilly area of the valley: Ferruzzano, Samo-Precacore, Sant'Agata del Bianco and Caraffa del Bianco. This context has all the characteristics (socio-economic, territorial and morphological) already described, which characterize the territory of the park. Moreover, the low level of structures and services, a marked youth unemployment with consequent social poverty, a high index of population aging, generate an increase in social and spatial segregation which makes the territory more easily permeable by depopulation phenomena. This also involves a deterioration of the settlement heritage and of the infrastructural endowment with consequent contraction of the road infrastructures, in addition to the loss of an effective defense of the territory.

Here, then, that the processes open up towards new geographies that intercept new issues: environmental, cultural-identity, strategic-infrastructural, which focus on the redevelopment of the territory and of the infrastructural network, on the reorganization of services and public space, on the need for physical accessibility, and not, of places and things, of reconnecting the different urban parts and the territory through the recognition and the project of the eco-social networks of the territory.

SENSIBLE ALLIANCES FOR NEW FORMS OF LIVING

In these territories and in the entire Region, difficulties are encountered in promoting a participatory process of sustainable development through operational and shared solutions aimed at integrating different actions promoted by different subjects. In recent years, regional policy has attempted to support territorial governance that is capable of constructing a negotiated strategic planning for urban and environmental regeneration and socio-economic regeneration of the territories, promoting place-based approaches that focus on rediscovery and the enhancement of the Internal Areas. Therefore, the time seems to be ripe to promote processes already successfully tested in some European urban and territorial contexts, where good practices of urban and socio-economic regeneration have succeeded in triggering new forms of participation, integration and entrepreneurial initiatives, even in areas particularly sensitive and problematic.

These problems are very current and felt in this area, which must be addressed with the participation of all the stakeholders and with the adoption of the most appropriate tools. It is necessary to seek management models that foster cooperation, exchange of experiences and experimentation with new initiatives aimed at encouraging the integration of the diversity present in the territory. It is therefore necessary to promote actions that increase the sense of belonging, and therefore of responsibility, of the inhabitants towards the places they live in, so that in living everyday life, the community builds its own active social role. These actions must be such as to affect the quality of life and aim to better manage the time, space and quality of public places. Forming / building a culture for and of the territory, relating the civic sense of the inhabitants and their perception of urban quality, also means exercising planning practices capable of raising the quality of life, social cohesion and the pleasantness and safety of places.

The experiments of the LaStre laboratory on the territory in question, the territorial context of the valley of the La Verde river, included in the broader technical-scientific collaboration path between the Municipal Administration of Samo (one of the municipalities of the valley) and the PAU Department, in implementation of the Program Agreement between the Aspromonte National Park Authority and the Municipality, have materialized some territorial revitalization activities aimed at the knowledge for the promotion of places, but also the production / elaboration of project visions for the future of the territory, through workshops and conferences / meetings, which have had as their object the vast territory, with the aim of creating affection and a sense of belonging to places that have become marginal.

In particular, the prospects for experimentation find space in the significant opportunities to support and support the activities of "thinking about the city and the territories" to revive areas denied to the sense of citizenship, to which university knowledge is called to participate with positive contributions impact on the educational and training sphere of the thought of students, doctoral students and technicians.

The proposed approach aims to focus on how the search for a new urban, landscape and territorial quality presupposes the re-signification of places, with the aim of identifying a virtuous synergy between economic, environmental, social and cultural resources present, with which to create a development model that can generate urban sustainability, community culture, social cohesion.

Last year the results of the design workshop were presented, drawn up by five groups of over thirty professionals, students, doctoral

students and graduates. One of the five themes, “O_S(i)amo, a participatory local development model”, concerned the opportunities contracted by the river as a territorial project. The paths and outcomes have shown how this type of activity is also an interesting way of bringing the communities settled into the problems of the territory and helping them to achieve forms of awareness and participation in the choices to be made for the government itself. A decisive role must be given to local cultural cooperatives that create the correct link between the increase in strategic planning capacity and the ability to promote identities and own resources, in order to feed the partnership strength in the implementation of interventions.

This path also includes direct collaboration in drafting the project proposal presented last July on the Strategic Project Call for the Enhancement of the Villages of Calabria and the Enhancement of the Tourist and Cultural Offer, relating to the Unitary Regional Planning 2014-2020. The LaStre has joined the UTC of the municipality of Samo developing the proposal Ideas of the future for Samos and for the ancient village of Precacore (Fig. 2), in the awareness that these small towns/villages must be understood as places of design innovation, which on the one hand they know how to guide forms of safeguarding historical identity and individual specificities, and on the other hand they emphasize new ways of involvement, activating processes capable of preserving small communities and projecting them into the future.

The foreseen interventions are linked to a need to adapt to these new needs and therefore in this specific case, to a change in the concept of efficiency strictly linked to the notion of use, function and quality of space and places. The project consists of three macro /thematic actions. The first and third propose interventions mainly of a physical and structural nature relating to the theme of “accessibility” of places and the desire to activate forms of widespread receptivity through various initiatives. The second Innovative actions and promotion of potential. O_ S(i)amoLAB is the part of the project that represents the innovative and experimental element of integration between the first two.

The proposal can be considered innovative because it realizes an endogenous type of development and integration model, through the direct and laboratorial and participatory involvement of local economic and cultural actors and actors from the academic and training world, whose creative-design skills will be set up to contribute towards actions aimed at future transformations. The project with few targeted interventions will accompany the birth and growth of a series of eco-

compatible social and economic initiatives, centered on an innovative cooperation between administrators, universities, associations, linked to the enhancement and promotion of the best expressions of the territory.

PARTICIPATED PATHS TO GENERATE VALUES

The research of the participated process involved citizens and public-technical institutions and officials operating in the fields of urban planning and civil protection at the different administrative levels, from the Circumscriptions, the Municipality, the Metropolitan City and the Calabria Region- to work to create aggregations complex engaged in functional and complementary experiences and/or support to public policies. This is a path that is still being tested towards the development of policies for the territory, which tends to collect and systematize the outcomes of the numerous experiences, both existing and “informal” (Culturability, Social innovation, Urban Innovative Action, Small Towns Act).

The activities started as a continuous process in order to build a network of local actors, united first of all by the desire to dialogue for the pursuit of common objectives, aimed at the redevelopment of the river territory, brought the Administrations involved (Municipality, Aspromonte National Park Authority, Mediterranean University), the GAL “Terre Locridee” and the other associations, in full compliance with the purposes of the River Contract instrument, to stimulate the dynamism of the local communities, through a constant territorial animation practiced at various levels by the various participating subjects, each according to their abilities and functions.

Particular forms of territorial revitalization are a privileged means to lead this territory, towards self-knowledge and the definition of local and sustainable development strategies and projects. It is a kind of path/process, the one started, which includes listening, observation of contexts, planning and realization of forums, seminars, territorial meetings, workshops, consultation tables. A technical-operational collaboration whose objective is to guide the territorial dynamics, increase the propensity to cooperation and associations, promote the culture of innovation and produce synergies between the socio-economic-cultural system and the Institutions. It was a question of triggering an action-research process, which supported the interested parties initially without a specific project, but with the aim of experimenting the transition from ideas/visions to the project and to build opportunities for active participation by definition/formation of a

cohesive community, able to circulate competences and information, in order to develop competitive forms of cooperation.

This path/process understood in this way can represent a real development opportunity for the social, economic and cultural fabric, able to implement the strategic planning processes, to start the construction of devices consistent with the needs of the territory and of the governance system. In a particularly complex territorial system for physical-geographical and socio-economic characteristics such as that of the La Verde river valley, the potential for innovation is inherent in the ability to identify and design ideas capable of enhancing the uniqueness of each portion of the territory and through the activation of territorial networks, investments, intelligence and skills, creating new and lasting job opportunities.

The planned activities and the actors involved activate a system of rules in which the criteria of public utility, economic performance, social value, environmental sustainability are the basis of effective planning solutions of the territory, through proposals whose identity and cultural character restores the idea of the future of local communities. The key elements of the project consist in identifying the potential of the River Contract instrument for the La Verde valley, a context currently lacking recent urban planning tools. A territory for which to develop a project aimed at identifying, enhancing and connecting the territorial capital of the valley and river environment through development strategies related to the agri-food sector and naturalistic and cultural tourism. This would strengthen its performance capabilities, allowing the La Verde river to become the main corridor/passageway of the Aspromonte National Park, due to its naturalistic-cultural and accommodation facilities. Among the main strengths that can characterize this design experience, the interest and involvement shown by the population on the themes of their cultural and naturalistic specificities, undoubtedly perceived as a strongly identifying element of the territory, must certainly be pointed out.

Of great impact is also the vision of the future possibility of supporting those productive processes able to favor the progressive improvement of the landscape and the employability of young employees.

Other aspects of success can certainly be found in the adoption of an articulated methodological approach and in its adaptation to the local context, as well as in the choice of a professional support for the conduct of the participatory path and in the widespread dissemination of the process within the valley territory. Moreover, one of the most

positive and important aspects can be seen in the interaction and collaboration that has been achieved, within the technical table, between the different disciplinary and operational sectors (Universities, professionals, associations), which represents an objective of the process without another virtuoso since his innovative conception, but even more in his translation into a positive and productive outcome that is not at all obvious. This last aspect represents a fundamental element to allow a good integration of the work of the technical table with that of the participatory path.

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