Innovation in territorial planning and programming: governance models for inter-municipal network systems

1. Innovation in territorial policies

In relation to the new European and national policies on recovery and resilience and to the appropriate territorial projections of the axes of intervention, the essay questions the relationships between the heritage of local resources and multilevel sectoral policies up to the regional scale, to arrive at the definition of guidelines on the governance of development processes aimed at the ecological transition of networked systems of municipalities. A new model for the management of growth processes supported by the extraordinary financing provided by the EU is hypothesized, compatible with the forms of re-signification and regeneration of existing resources, and capable of overcoming the rigid discipline of territorial transformations that often inhibit spontaneous or induced innovative practices from public financial contributions. Territorial projections of national and EU policies capable of supporting and implementing forms of management of the existing territorial heritage, not only through economic incentives but the involvement of human capital. The local social structure plays a central role in these new phase of policies, the culture of the territory which is the basis of sustainable development processes must be implemented. Regenerative processes will first question an existing abandoned or underused heritage, therefore they require specific tools and devices to define and evaluate the unexpressed capital together with the new isolated phenomena of re-signification. It is a question of thinking about new ways of participating in local intervention programs, with the experimentation of more advanced decision-making and implementation models that do not only concern the sharing of some intervention actions. The regional economic planning of the 2014-2020 cycle that has just ended is also necessarily part of this reflection, which in Italy has been implemented through territorial planning processes aimed at building scenarios for the rebirth of the territories, in particular for the Inner Areas. In fact, in the operative devices of programming, the participatory approach to transformations, to the definition of scenarios that tend to support and not limit the various initiatives coming from below, is clearer. The area of regional planning is in fact by definition aimed at accompanying and encouraging emerging development, strengthening cooperation between the public and private sectors. The experience on the Internal Areas has highlighted the importance of concertation in the relaunch choices for the networks of municipalities, set up to design scenarios of opportunity, a strategic vision made up of interventions that gives a voice to the different local actors, not just institutional ones.

The place of dialogue between subjects responsible for the protection and development of specific territorial resources and socio-economic operators is the territorial project, considered first of all as a tool for understanding the complexity of the wide area system, and secondly as a space for ideas and congruent initiatives, and therefore an instrument for the governance of transformations. The modalities of interaction and consensus formation between the main actors, institutions or individuals, who participate in the decisions are difficult, given the different administrative levels to be coordinated and the territorial scales. Therefore, the governance of the territory should be based on: 1) cooperative relations between public and private, 2) integrate and replace traditional administrative procedures with negotiation and clearing interactions; 3) solicit private resources and skills and direct their evolution towards purposes of collective interest. Multilevel associations need to be created with permanent mediation tables that share and support a territorial strategy that requires ratification but also revisions and additions underway. By increasing the discussion on the issues of resilience and ecological transition between the forms and the different governing bodies of territorial transformations, the obstacles to structural projects would be reduced, thus guaranteeing effective settlement processes, economic and environmental enhancement. In this process of reactivating contextual knowledge - it concerns the territorial resources available from the urban dimension to the open space - it is also necessary to verify the role and effectiveness of participatory tools (social planning tools) initially aimed at self-improvement, knowledge potential and subsequently self-representation. Innovation in planning can encourage creativity to emerge by activating or at least not hindering "individual experimentation", supporting an innovative effort through which to negotiate consensus on ways of living together. Self-regulation and re-distribution processes resulting from the production and dissemination of knowledge and information (Healy, 2004). Planning cannot be understood as a linear process that leads to a definitive point, but the latter corresponds to the achievement of a shared vision (Sennet, 2006), however not lasting.

Participatory arenas in governance processes should be seen as one of the many urban democratic and public spaces where people meet and feel connected to each other. The "learning laboratories" are configured as real virtual spaces in which participants are involved in an experience of continuous growth of knowledge and simulation of the actions that follow one
another. Collaborative processes and technologies should be seen as moments in which consolidated ways of conceiving knowledge are questioned, moments of knowledge generation and mutual learning. Knowledge as an unstable but transformative resource; it is a changeable entity in continuous adaptation as a consequence of the dynamics of the activated relational context.

2. Resilience through territorial planning

In Italy, the government of the territory is divided between public vision, in planning at the regional and provincial scale, where the competent authorities are the authors of the planning and control of the quality of physical resources; on the other hand, the one that moves programming with the territorial planning project, which is more sensitive to the dynamics of economic operators. In both cases, the consultation and consensus formation experiences perform a specific function first in the phase of knowledge of the heritage and then in the definition of growth scenarios. The issues of the current political debate and recent government decisions focus on complex interventions for the regeneration of internal areas and the sustainable development of complex areas such as metropolitan areas. In these cases, the use of territorial projects capable of condensing a multiplicity of subjects and interests is declared.

The strategic role of the territory and the city is at the basis of this new development philosophy. Intervening on the improvement of the context conditions in which citizens live and businesses are born and operate rather than activating subsidies and incentives for families and businesses, means acting on the culture of the organization of space, on its functioning mechanisms and on its attractiveness. Of new businesses and other development factors. An instrument capable of representing these purposes were the Integrated Projects (DCS 2000-2006), conceived as a territorial projection of the development actions identified through the programming procedures. The difficult construction procedures together with weak ideas-strengths have produced a set of specific interventions, lacking a more comprehensive vision of urban and territorial transformation. They proved unable to take hold of the mechanisms that produce territoriality, to jointly mobilize both the network of local actors and external resources. The decentralization of responsibilities to local institutions in an initial phase of European programming, bringing the State only to guarantee compliance with Community rules, has led to weak results. Certainly a clear departure from the centralist policies pursued after the war with extraordinary instruments such as the Cassa del Mezzogiorno. However, these had allowed important results of infrastructure and structural improvement of the territory with relevant public works, but without considering the local capacity for defining development, they substantially did not enhance human capital. The latest 2014-2020 programming focused attention on development programs, on the production capacities of companies and on the context infrastructures, leaving out the most substantial part of the local economy associated with urban revenues. Perhaps the gap in development affecting the South lies precisely in the gap between the sectors affected by public spending from the structural funds and the unclear importance of urban and territorial transformation processes. Local systems have continued to reproduce parasitic rent without activating virtuous relationships with other transformations introduced from the outside, in particular for the purpose of consolidating production systems and enhancing topical patrimonial resources.

The operational programs and complex intervention programs, albeit with different forms and techniques, express a common basic objective: to produce concrete and relatively fast effects on the processes of territorial transformation. The executive capacity and the facilitation of the implementation of interventions are the essential aspects for the new recovery and resilience policies, but it is necessary to update and verify the range of themes and objectives, to re-establish a hierarchy between structural frameworks and action programs. Too rigid public will and forecasts can be a limit to the formation of good territorial projects, they can prevent the exploitation of opportunities coming from below and from the most creative part of the institutional operators themselves. It is necessary to build the dimension, the space in which the choices will be applied, recognizing the prevailing existing actors but also stimulating incipient interests. Relevant subjects are not necessarily endogenous, but all those who fall into multilevel governance and those who, when appropriately incentivized, can actively integrate into the implementation process. However, the planning activity must intercept and recognize the stratification of actions already present, for different actors and purposes and on scales that are not always clearly classifiable. There is no need for a new tool, but it is necessary to contaminate the existing ones with the new approach to the territory, with new themes, this does not only mean management of resources but systematization of the present potential through the involvement of the community in redevelopment actions. Conceptualization. Furthermore, the strategic condition of the process, typical of programming, is the necessary condition for the territorial project to infuse the desired effects.
3. Visionary and operational

The reflection now goes on the nature of the wide area instrument for the territorial projection of the Recovery Plan and the 2021-2027 Programming, on its purpose: it must be considered first of all as a tool for understanding territorial complexity, for deepening the conformative dynamics of non-public initiatives, and secondly as a space project and therefore for governing transformations. The inclusion of the local community in the construction of a shared image is fundamental, where common sense is implemented on the space, on the constituent elements, on the explicit and non-evident relationships internal and external to the system. The methods of interaction and formation of consensus between the main actors, institutions or individuals, who participate in the decisions are difficult, given the different administrative levels to be coordinated and the territorial scales to be coherent. An alternative to traditional forms of government appears complex, a revision would be sufficient, if nothing else, the right importance can be granted to informal (non-institutional) recycling mechanisms and the relationships between the parties that add value to the territory. From the most advanced experiences of territorial planning it is recognized the will and attempts to strengthen the capacity for strategic orientation, which aspires to the synthesis of the variety of actions and interests supported by different components of society. The strategic context is the necessary condition for the project cycle to infuse the desired effects. It is necessary to build the dimension, the space in which the choices will be applied, recognizing the prevailing actors but also stimulating incipient interests. The relevant actors are not necessarily endogenous, but all those who are part of multilevel governance and those who, if opportune incentivized, can be actively included in the implementation process. The significant actors in the construction of a context can operate on different territorial levels (municipal / local, province / supra-municipal, regional, national, supranational) this represents the vertical dimension of multilevel governance. The horizontal character of governance is that of the prevailing logic of action: institutional, based on technical knowledge, centered on economic interests (companies and their representatives), or on the representation of social interests. However, the design activity must intercept and recognize the stratification of actions that are already present, by different actors and purposes and on scales that are not always clearly classifiable. Identify the field of actions, policies, programs and projects that in various ways have already identified the development of a certain territory, trying to identify objectives, objectives, actors and relevant outcomes. Each initiative already activated can turn out to be a resource or a penalizing factor for the project as it conditions and guides the proactive action of the process on certain choices. The composition of a territorial project for resilience and ecological transition must be measured with a stratification of long-lasting practices but also with the intentions and emerging interventions. In conclusion, the construction of the context is the result of three phases: the identification of the governance networks, the recognition of actions already active or in start-up stages that influence the local model and finally the strategic reconstruction of the local model of development (coherence framework).

4. The scale of the territorial project

A project identifies a territorial area as a target area for a specific process of conversion to the principles of resilience. The geometry of the borders introduced by the new territorial policy can derive from aspects of a different nature (institutional, cognitive, historical, geography of opportunities). But there is a distance between the boundaries defined in the initial phase and those derived from a project as the definition process includes a plurality of actors who continually regenerate the spatiality of their relations between the local and supra-local dimensions. The boundaries of a development project are not certain, we can speak of margins that underlie a plurality of prevailing factors. The context of action is certainly located within administrative boundaries, but the effects and the spread of benefits and costs has a different, broader scale. The visualization of the project margins is not independent of the overlapping of the boundaries of other policies, actions and programs previously placed on the territory. It is necessary to verify the most appropriate level that encourages and then manages the processes of territorial regeneration, this means analyzing the most recent dynamics of regional territorial governance reform, identifying the specific policies, choices and approaches most appropriate to the recovery of existing. It is necessary to build the dimension, the space in which the choices will be applied, recognizing the prevailing existing actors but also stimulating incipient interests. Relevant subjects are not necessarily endogenous, but all those who fall into multilevel governance and those who, when appropriately incentivized, can actively integrate into the implementation process. However, the planning activity must intercept and recognize the stratification of actions already present, for different actors and purposes and on scales that are not always clearly classifiable. Each initiative already activated can turn out to be a resource or a penalizing factor for the project as it conditions and guides the proactive action of the process on certain choices. The composition of a project must be measured with a stratification of lasting practices but also with the intentions and emerging interventions. In conclusion, the construction of the context is the result of three phases: the identification of the governance networks, the recognition of the actions already
active or in the process of being launched that influence the local model and finally the strategic reconstruction of the local development model (framework of consistency).

It is not an abandonment to regulatory urban planning, conforming to private rights, but at the same time the innovative capacity of the individual subject, often the only vehicle of creativity, cannot be inhibited. The aim is now to regenerate the heritage, the resources belonging to the community, to a community that is rediscovered through a common project. The public interest is a priority and foundational of the new approach with respect to the management of private rights. To encourage the innovation of planning processes, the actors of urban and regional transformations must be called into question, in order to change the forms of spatial organization and the social situations themselves. The planning process of territorial recycling is essentially a continuous process of definition, exploration, representation and evolution of often partial objectives. The particular conditions that arise in the "learning laboratories" allow us to think of planning as a cyclical and evolutionary process where the representations of problems and possible solutions are continuously reformulated. They are places where a common awareness of the territory settles but they are limited to the cognitive and propositional sphere, they do not have significant feedback on the transformation. The limits are to be found in the institutional sphere that allows and legitimizes creative forms of governance but then the truly incisive transformations remain in the hands of a few actors. Faced with the need to achieve goals and find solutions to unpredictable situations, local public or private actors show surprising abilities in making use of informal response structures.