

Tourism and Abandoned Inland Areas Development Demand: A Critical Appraisal

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Abstract. Rural areas are those territories characterized by the depopulation phenomena in favor of central urban areas, constituting a generalized social cost linked to the abandonment of traditional land uses, hydrogeological risks, degradation and disappearance of traditions. The paper analyses relevant policies issues considering tourism as the main development perspective of such territories. According to a strategic view of the territory, local development projects focus on exploiting the potential of local production, creating daily actions, attracting tourists, promoting sustainable mobility, renewable energy and sustainable interventions, effective ecosystem management consequently reduction of social costs.

Keywords: Sustainable development · Inland areas · Tourism

1 Introduction

Rural inland areas are those territories significantly distant from urban centers and lacking of essential services (i.e. education, health and mobility) [1, 2] due to evolution processes of human settlement [3]. Rural areas are characterized by the depopulation phenomena in favor of central urban areas, constituting a generalized social cost linked to the abandonment of traditional land uses, hydrogeological risks, degradation and disappearance of traditions. The second post-war period, was characterized by the exodus from the countryside, causing a drop-in demand for public services, in the employment rate, and a reduction in the occupation of the territory. Consequences are that internal areas are not adequately exploited, there is insufficient maintenance and social problems are related to the lack of basic services [4, 5]. Through a polycentric interpretation of the territory [6–8], it is possible to explore the structure of the Italian country. A first infrastructure distinguishable, consists of a network of cities that extends over the whole territory constituting the center of essential services for the population. If we exclude the areas in close contact with the central urban center, the remaining part of the national territory is classified according to different degrees of peripherality. All areas that are more than 40 min away from the primary center are considered peripheral [9]. The peripheral areas have not been adopted the same public policies as the primary centers during the past. This is one of the criteria used to classify an aspect of rural in-land areas [10].

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The research aims to analyze the results of the national guideline for the repopulation of places through: Sect. 1 - the definition of a national statistical-demographic framework in order to verify the feasibility of the proposal in relation to future scenarios; Sect. 2 - the cross-reading of the interventions carried out to verify the compliance of the objectives; Sect. 3 – The case study of Coletta di Castelbianco; Sect. 4 - Conclusion and discussion.

2 Depopulation and Italian Trends

Internal depopulation is an alarming phenomenon that has taken a back seat during the 1980s due to international migration and attention to the problems of the city, but still today it is important to talk about this. According to ISTAT data, in the year 2018 inter-municipal residence transfers are estimated at 1 million and 359 thousand. In the South of Italy, the balances are everywhere negative and the loss net population of the area is 65 thousand individuals. Only 5% of the Italian territory hosts 33% of people. In contrast, municipalities with low urbanization cover more than 70% of the country but host less than 25% of people. In total there are 6,943 municipalities in the national territory below 10,000 inhabitants in 2001. Depopulation includes complex socio-economic dynamics. The reasons for the move are studies opportunities and work; family reasons for inter-provincial ones; natural hazards.

The economic situation of Italy in the current period does not give any prospect of imminent growth as shows the trend of economic growth rates, considering the public debt and demographic data.

According to estimates and ISTAT data, Italian GDP is estimated to reach +0.1% at the end of 2019, placing last on the European scene if we consider that Ireland is at + 5.6%. Investments make up about 18% of GDP.

At the beginning of 2019, according to ISTAT data, it is estimated that the population more than 90 thousand out of 60 million residents (−1.5 per thousand), therefore an increase in the percentage of elderly population.

This implies a reduced capacity of the municipalities to invest large sums in ambitious requalification projects. However, a margin of growth is not excluded through lucid strategies and intervention policies.

Through a careful analysis of the places it is possible to recognize potentialities capable of stimulating the demand of investors and stakeholders and start a process of requalification with good prospects of economic recovery in the medium-long term. A particular case may be the redevelopment of places that are in a position considered strategic, but this is not guarantee an economically prosperous solution.

Other areas, even if they have interesting artifacts or potential environments, do not meet the minimum conditions for an intervention in economic terms.

An example is the ancient villages, especially in the south of the country, there are no convincing economic prospects based on the action of private operators.

Given the scarcity of investments and available resources, huge infrastructure works to improve the accessibility of inland areas are not taken into consideration because they represent a very risky investment with low return rate. Activating or triggering economic development processes based on local economies could prove effective in the short term,

but does not ensure long-term effectiveness given the general frame of socio-economic trends.

Therefore, tourism as a driving force for triggering processes appears to be an attractive alternative with reduced short-term return of economic costs and an activity that has always yielded in our country rich in variety and beauty recognized all over the world [11–14].

The enhancement of the territory whose aim is tourism, concentrates activity and resources related on tourism itself. It is possible a positive variation of the residents of the area, but this does not imply a relevant endogenous development process. So, although there is economic growth, it could happen that there is a high risk that the problems associated with inadequate land use persist. An example would be the case of the 10 tourists who overwhelmed by an avalanche of mud in the Raganello gorges having one excursion were hit by an avalanche of mud due to the washing of the ground following the flood.

2.1 Strategies

The repopulation strategies adopted so far show a common line of action based on a more or less consolidated view of the internal areas. There are characteristics of the place that cannot be overlooked and are involved in the design process [15–17]. The strategies such as the selected proposal of this research start from the assumption that re-inhabiting the internal areas is the most suitable solution to overcome the problems caused by depopulation. They are distributed throughout the national territory and are concentrated on the Apennine and Alpine belt of national morphology. These areas are recognized for being difficult to access. It is the obvious and not negligible assumption of the territory.

The four projects, selected from the publication of "**Archipelago Italy, at the 2018 Architecture Biennale**" [18], are presented according to a renewed interpretation.

Archipelago Italia investigated how contemporary architecture approaches marginal areas, collecting a series of examples that stand out for their ability to dialogue with the local context and needs for the revitalization of territories.

The cases examined, in fact, were selected according to the type of key intervention to highlight the logic and processes that structure the hypothetical modus operandi. The hypothetical actors, the predominant actions that intervene in the project are extracted to be inserted in a scheme of relationships. Each case has its own structure and internal logic derived both from the potential of the territory and the built, from public or private clients, and from the analysis by the designer.

The selection criteria include: area located in the peripheral area as indicated by the Department of Development and Internal Cohesion (DPS); objective and purpose of the project for the territory and the development of the internal areas; presence of problems in the environmental and socio-demographic fields;

A further typological selection was carried out according to the projects that distinguished themselves in their field of action taking into consideration the purpose of the intervention and the subject dealt with.

Through the study and the deepening of the projects it is possible to identify four lines of action:

- intervention aimed at the enhancement of the territory with a tourist purpose;
- intervention to re-populate the abandoned places addressed towards a specific target of users;
- local interventions for urban development;
- urban and private recovery operations for a large user base;

Actions develop along a different timeline with diversified economic sources. The following selected proposal illustrate the strategy adopted for the redevelopment of the area with positive and negative implications and processes still under development.

3 The Case Study of Colletta di Castelbianco

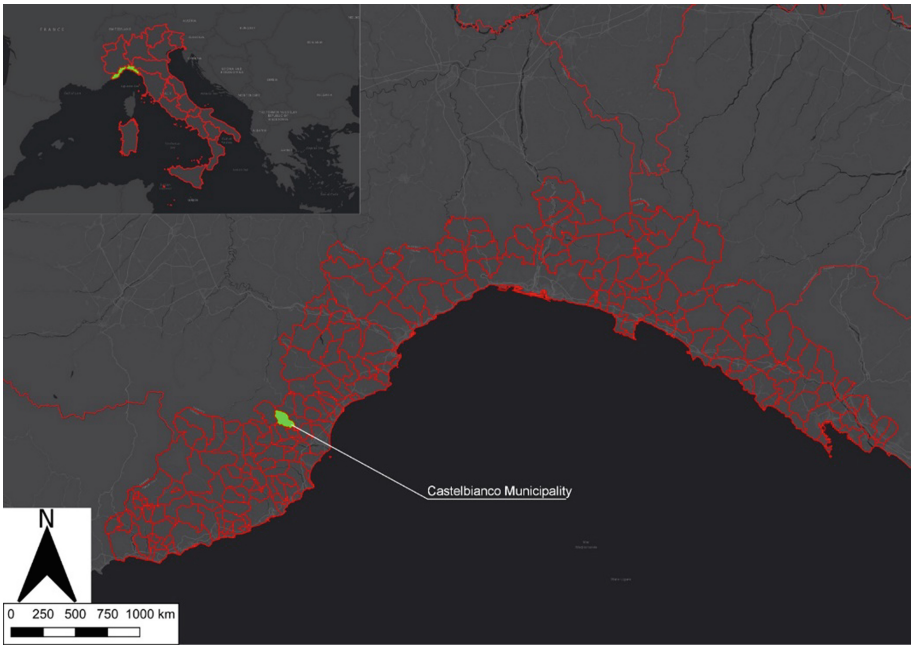

Fig. 1. Location site

The village of Colletta (see Fig. 1) was completely abandoned about two hundred years ago. During the second half of the nineties, it was the subject of intervention by the architect Giancarlo de Carlo on the initiative of a group of private investors.

Currently the village, after more than 20 years, has apartments for rent for short and long periods. Given the evocative landscape and the essence of the village, the project aims to re-inhabit this village in an innovative way by integrating the new telematic systems. Allow, therefore, those who will live there to work at a distance, isolated and enjoy the nature. This category of people are called “White eagles”. The project is

addressed to a specific category of users given the identifying characteristics of the space. The project follows the logic of the "crustacean", that is, to adapt the existing structure to the new typology of spaces focusing on the connection of the different environments. [19] The architect welcomes the challenge proposed by private investors in the transformation of the village to try to repopulate it and at the same time obtain an economic return. The project explores and manipulates the possibilities offered by the existing emerging a new theory that is detached from that of the "vertebrate" that had been adopted until then during the modern period. The structure that adapts to the space and not the space that adapts to the structure, revolutionizing the concept [19].

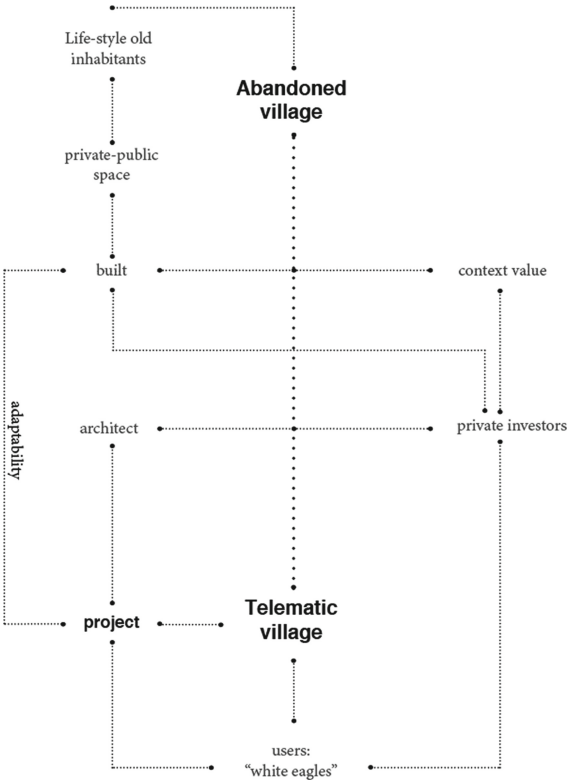

Fig. 2. Line of action

The project examined (see Fig. 2) is reported in their essential structure through the components that most influenced the design strategy and indirectly touched upon the design choices.

The guidelines for the in-land areas are based on a reading of the territory mainly for national statistical indexes and all the characters that highlight the polycentric structure comparing essential collective services for the city.

Obviously are involved the requests of the actors with the ultimate goal of repopulating these territories. The interpretation of the territory influences the design choices that

will be mainly oriented to an economic "trigger" by setting up an engine of development such as tourism or retail. Tourist could mediate the phenomenon.

Tourism is one of the appropriate solutions for in-land rural areas, but a failure to control development that focuses on the number of visitors and not on the quality of the services offered can negatively impact the environment and the landscape. Faced with the growing increase in global mass tourism, this can be a risky and credible prospect. The moment the tourism is not integrated with a system of equilibrium of the inhabitants of the place the place itself will be disposable manifesting deficiencies in the care of the territory.

The almost total absence of public investments and the scarcity of actions on the landscape constitute a further junction point.

4 Discussions and Conclusions

The strategy adopted in the first case focuses on the enhancement of the territory. Therefore, it is mainly addressed to the promotion of tourism. The second case, although the project addresses a complex issue, the re-population strategy is addressed to a particular target of users by creating a new population center. The third case analyzed is an intervention mainly carried out by the private individual who follows the requests of the client but at the same time has the strength to generate urban development. The last case deals with securing the existing building by creating a new urbanity for a specific type of user.

Although the characteristics of the landscape are mentioned and all the problems that derive from it, none focuses on the analysis and deepening of value. It is assumed that action on the territory for repopulation can mediate all the problems caused by it.

All the projects present a component aimed at increasing tourism, a source of development together with the identification of a specific user target.

That tourism is an engine for the economy is a fact, represents a resource for the country if we consider that it constitutes 6% of national GDP. But what happens if a territory is purely conceived as a tourist place? A useful index to monitor the phenomenon could be the percentage of resident population compared to the average tourist presence.

In this case, directing the offer to a specific type of tourist could mediate the phenomenon.

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According to a strategic view of the territory [15, 20–22], local development projects focus on exploiting the potential of local production, creating daily actions, attracting tourists, promoting sustainable mobility [23–26], renewable energy and sustainable interventions [27–30], effective ecosystem management [31, 32] consequently reduction of social costs (hydro-geological structure; soil maintenance; protection of biological diversity).

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