Knowledge as a Prodromal Action for Urban Regeneration and Sustainable Development: The Case Study of Municipality of Fondi

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Abstract. Retracing the process of forming the Knowledge Framework (KF) of the Italian Municipality of Fondi, this research aims to describe the methodology used to cope with the necessity to recount all those disturbances that, in dynamic modern times, animate spaces and relationships, giving the territory multiple identities, interdependent and with uncertain edges. Combined with analyses of structures that are by nature more defined, the text deals with comparisons with other planning processes in force in Italy, reinterpreting some parts of them and transposing them to the study area, through the filter provided by the analysis tools of Regional Design. This reading aims to stimulate new reflections and ideas, not only within the governing bodies, but also to the community, providing a framework capable of innovating the KF by recognizing it, not only as an analytical process, but also as a fundamental urban planning tool.

Keywords: Municipally Planning · Knowledge Framework · Regional Design

1 Introduction

1.1 Knowledge Framework as an Urbanistic Tool

The Knowledge Framework (KF) is the integrated system of information and data necessary to understand the intrinsec issues of land-use and urban planning tools. It constitutes the amount of information necessary for an organic and comprehensive representation together with an evaluation of the state of the territory and its evolutionary processes, as well as the indispensable reference for the definition of the objectives and contents of the plan for sustainability assessment.

The importance of the knowledge dimension in planning was reinforced in the early 20th century by the Modern Movement, marking the establishment of deterministic and reductionist functionalism. During the 4th CIAM in 1933, under the leadership of Cornelius van Eesteren, the principles of 'The Functional City' were defined [1, 2]. During this fundamental event for the subsequent scientific approach to the plan, the

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complex analytical work and early design findings of van Eesteren's plan for the city of Amsterdam was examined and discussed along with other examples [3]. Such a work is now identified as one of the most significant examples, particularly for the methodology adopted in the construction of the KF.

In the Italian context, Giovanni Astengo [4] represents an important figure related to the role of knowledge apparatus in the urban planning process. He emphasized the importance of recognizing a scientific role to urban planning throughout his career. The Plan, in its interpretation, is understood as a tool for knowing, designing and transforming a complex reality. Therefore, the articulation of the process that is produced is fundamental produces and must initially go through a phase of quantitative analytical reading, followed by as clear an understanding of reality as possible, and then define the objectives within which the choice is oriented (example: Assisi Plan) [5].

This brief historical excursus highlights how during the twentieth century, knowledge data represent an essential material in the study of urban phenomena-both as components or aspects taken individually and in their reciprocal interrelationships-because they are capable of directing the many political, legislative, administrative and technical actions that continually modify the reality of a territory [6].

1.2 Knowledge Framework of Fondi's Territory

In this perspective, the collaboration between the Municipality of Fondi and the Department of Architecture of the University of Florence, formalized in June 2022, for the drafting of the KF of the municipal territory has begun. The research agreement, which was created with the intention of analyzing and experimenting with a new approach to the territorial study, is proposed as the first step for the presentation of the general variant that will affect the General Regulatory Plan (PRG) of the municipality, in force since 1973.

The balance to be found between these two purposes is assured by the decision to lay on a renew language, freed from the deterministic language of the last century's urbanism. Therefore**,** laying the foundation for the insights that will determine future land governance and that which sees the KF as the moment in which the territory is discovered, manifesting its subjects, scenarios and processes, is ensured by the decision to rely on a renewed language, which, although it follows the normative demands on planning documents, breaks free from the deterministic language of last century's urbanism [7] and which contributed to the critical issues described above. Therefore, the KF appears as the organic set of knowledge referring to the territory and landscape, on which to base future plan forecasts and assessments [8, 9].

Analyzing the blurred edges that, however, are based on clear boundaries [10]: the certainty of an artifact's location is matched by the uncertainty of its use, amalgamating these two levels of analysis with themes such as vocation and potential.

In this twofold analytical front, the present research proposes its own innovative role, that is, guaranteeing to the future planning phase of the general variant, in addition to a rich and homogeneous database, also the identification of a network of guidelines and nodes to be systematized and enhanced within a vision that accomunizes all levels of the territory [11–13]. This tool also aims to act as a link between administrations and the population, proposing itself as an opportunity to get to know the Municipality of Fondi

and to promote it, so as to give future policies of renovatio urbis the best degree of sense and coherence [14].

2 Background and References

2.1 Plans and Laws

This research takes place into the procedural mechanism of the formation of a planning instrument and, as such, according to Italian regulations, it responds to the directives of the regional urban planning law in force, which in Lazio is Law 38 of 1999, "Norms on the government of the territory" [15]; on the basis of this norm, it was therefore possible to know the elaborates of which the KF, by law, must be composed.

Willing to provide a critical analysis to the territory through specific cartographies, but also thanks to a process of research and restitution as organized and communicative as possible, the normative and methodological references have also been grasped in the rest of the national panorama, where the different regional norms condition the structures. In this context, made up of a multifaceted and varied regulatory patchwork, Emilia-Romagna's Piani Urbani Comunali (PUC) and Tuscany's Piani Strutturali (PS) [16, 17], the instruments corresponding to Lazio's PRGs, with their proposals and methodologies helped define the direction to be given to the research. From the Emilian Plans, the division into Systems that these tools propose was extrapolated and reinterpreted, considered as a key piece for the communicative effectiveness of the study, but also, and above all, for the clear framing of the territory's emergencies. Tuscany's Structural Plans are connoted for their adherence to the concept of a Territorial Statute, born out of the need to re-address the growing need to manage and transform the territory by virtue of the principles of sustainable development. It is an instrument that gathers within it the entire territorial heritage, proposed as a constituent common good of the regional collective identity by which is meant the set of long-lasting structures produced by the coevolution between the natural environment and human settlements, whose value for present and future generations is recognized.

The aforementioned tools have been interpreted and appropriately transposed on the regulatory and territorial reality of this area of Latium, which, however, needs to be studied according to a specific urban and territorial context and the logics implied by it.

2.2 Regional Design Approach

In order to succeed in understanding and hinging together the different shapes that make up the territory, the principles of study and representation proposed by Regional Design (RD) has been proved fundamental. This discipline, born as a reaction to the now manifest inability of large-scale Plans to respond to the new and increasingly pressing needs of the population and of the different territorial areas, bases its processes on the awareness that the administrative limits (within which, as a rule, the Plans, of classical setting, impose and define their directives) poorly dialogue with all those flows that animate the territory within them (transportation systems, water, energy, commerce, information infrastructure, but also local identities, associations, traditions) [18].

To witness the complexity of a place becoming a feature slot, the RD relies on a new mode of representation with abstract features, now more than ever in line with that dissolution of roles and forms, increasingly evident, in our cities and countryside. The functional dissolution and hybridization, the extinction of the form follows function paradigm, and the disjunction of the relationship between the two terms have helped generate new research on space [19]. It is based on a dynamic mode of depiction, capable of capturing future developments through a visioning process [20, 21], enlivened by debates with stakeholders [22, 23] about shared territory [24] and suggestions, thus finding a strong link with the activity of planning, seen as a tool for persuasive storytelling [25, 26]. Thus, the concepts of percolation, density and porosity take over, moving out of the principles of hierarchy, seen before as the only possible form of organization, and into a field of horizontal and diffuse relationships, stimulating different ideas of modernity. The descriptive form chosen to narrate the territory, therefore, adapts to the transformations taking place on the territory, which, insofar as they are undefinable and purely concrete, find correspondence in the tool of concept and diagram [27].

An excellent example of the application of these principles can be found in Florence's 2017 Metropolitan Strategic Plan (MSP) [28], which puts the bases of the future ambitions of the Tuscan Metropolitan City on a much more qualitative than quantitative reading. Within this plan, the different parts of the territory no longer come to be unpacked on the basis of political boundaries but through rhythms [29], figures with uncertain boundaries and changing meanings, with the specific purpose of not dogmatically fixing the (unattainable) intrinsic characteristics of the areas but, exclusively, of interpreting their trends and transformations.

A mode of research is thus proposed that, with a holistic approach [30], allows as much study material as possible, in the certainty that every factor or action that influences a small part of the territory, as it unfolds and repeats itself over time, also influences all other factors and actions.

3 Research Methods

As introduced before, the research followed the RD approach, which gives the design the dual role of descriptor of the present and prefigurator of possible futures. This dual role is particularly relevant from a scientific/operational point of view in the construction of a KF, capable in fact of overcoming the analytical question, normally understood as the only component of this document, by providing for an interpretative and synthetic restitution that aims to shape the various parts of the territory, analyzing them in their singularities and in their mutual inseparability. Through this kind of reading, the different scales and components on which a territory is structured are interconnected by multiple levels of analysis and suggestions, but nevertheless brought back to a system of their own, thus ensuring effective communicability of the results of the study.

Starting from the documents required by Departmental Circular No. 11302 of 09/25/2000, the regulatory reference of the Lazio Region regarding the new implementation of PRG and listing the minimum contents of the new KF, the research reorganized the required information into five systems: Environmental System; Settlement System; Socio-economic System; System of Vigorous Planning; Landscape System.

Finally, each system is summarized in a concluding paper that is entrusted with the task of gathering the outcomes of the previous analysis on the territory, in order to grasp its main peculiarities.

The structuring of the KF in the five systems, the list of documents falling under each system and the summary papers constitute the operational framework described in detail in the following.

4 Results

4.1 The Contents of the Knowledge Framework

The construction of the KF, as anticipated, followed the need to meet the requirements of Departmental Circular No. 11302 of 09/25/2000. In the case of KF construction, it was possible to learn the need for the composition of a report and the following graphic drawings:

- Territorial Framework;
- Main geomorphological features of the territory;
- Areas under hydrogeological instability;
- Areas under hydrogeological constraint;
- Framework of the PRG forecasts on the graphic elaborations of the Territorial Landscape Plan (PTPR);
- Framing of PRG forecasts with superordinate planning instruments;
- Aerophotogrammetry;
- Land cover;
- Areas and properties of state property;
- Areas of special naturalistic importance;
- Relationship between land, infrastructure network and the settlement structure;
- Agropedological map;
- Identification of homogeneous territorial zones “A” and “B”;
- Equipment;
- Elements that appear likely to be safeguarded;
- Identification of squatter cores;
- Planimetry of the municipal territory showing the existing state of affairs;
- Road network and other communication and relationship systems;
- Focus on built-up areas.

4.2 Data Sources

To enrich the already vast database provided by the municipality, it was useful to consult the info-geographical portal of the Lazio Region (geoportale.regione.lazio.it), from which decisive information was drawn for the systemic organization of territorial planning [31], particularly in the definition of the regulatory context and the environmental and landscape contexts, combined also with the study of the provincial plans of Latina and sector studies.

Among the materials collected from these sources, the Regional Territorial Landscape Plan (PTPR), approved in 2021, most determined the direction and reliability of

the research. This document gathers a wide range of information useful for the understanding, first, and management, later, of the regional territory, reporting in a single and homogeneous language the protections and ambitions of the whole of Lazio.

To complete the framework of data collection, the research relied on an extensive bibliographic apparatus, consisting of texts by different authors and with different purposes. This sampling of publications, in which one finds ancient essays [32], historical [33, 34] and thematic insights [35–37], collections of postcards [38] and hiking guides [39, 40], ensured, during the phase of defining the overall ambitions of the study, an even greater understanding of the identities that intertwine and amalgamate in this place (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Potential and criticality map. Produced in the research area as a study analysis

4.3 Five Systems

The first observation made in response to the list of required elaborates concerns the strong homologation of different themes, which are found to be described sometimes broad and generic and at other times very specific containers, resulting in elaborates that have little dialogue with each other and, above all, of complicated interpretation by non-technical readers.

Therefore, the required elaborates were collected into four thematic groups, which take the role of the backbone of the Fondi KF, proposing themselves as the Systems [41] of the Fondi territory. Thus, the 19 papers are redistributed in such a way to facilitate their consultation, both during the process of composition and approval of the general variant to the PRG and in other fora.

Once the Systems were composed, they were evaluated on the basis of the level of depth guaranteed by the 19 elaborates and, consequently, aspects worthy of further study and research were identified; the need thus arises to add further analyses that can thus ensure a more authentic and ramified restitution of the current state of the Municipality of Fondi.

The papers, from the initial 19, increase up to 41, which create a new additional System, that of Landscape. The framework of the KF is thus being defined into a recognizable graphic design has been attributed, capable of better guiding and orienting both the technician and the casual reader.

The work is completed by the KF Report, which is also structured according to the outline and graphic palettes proposed by the five Systems, of which it serves as a summation.

Each of the five is defined by an almost consequential order of content (from national to local, from the vast area to the single point) or by a sectorial order (natural-anthropic, places-activities) so as to help, those who will interface with the study, in the search for the single topic, without, however, ever losing sight of the complexity in which that one fits in and with which it relates (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Faceplates used for the works belonging to the five Systems

At the end of each System, which are proposed as coherent binders of data in each case objective and deducible, a further elaboration is included, defined as the System Synthesis [42], and of which it is proposed to tell, in an outline design, its peculiarities and trends.

4.4 Synthesis of the Systems

In order to bring together and organize the results of the analysis of each System, as anticipated, each of them concludes with a synthetic elaboration that has been given the task of capturing the emergencies and anomalies that have emerged.

Each summary paper presents its own language and goes beyond the analytical value in order to highlight the subtext behind each information layer, identifying therein a crucial value for the future design phases of the General Variant to the PRG.

Environment Structures of Territory
The map, at the conclusion of the Environmental System, aims to define the load-bearing characteristics of the municipal territory, that is, those that are to be accumulated [43] and highlighted over the course of the previous analyses belonging to the system. Through the delimitation of these compartments and networks, future operations on the territory can be conducted with the critical awareness that realities insist on the municipality that can only escape the rigid administrative perimeter and that, therefore, will necessarily have to be studied in dialogue with other neighboring municipal realities, thus also providing the basis for the stipulation of future pacts, collective and concerted, of management and transformation, such as River Contracts [44] and forms of associationism [45].

Settlement Centralities
This paper aims to close the Settlement System through an identification of the different identities present in the area. Fondi, as can be deduced from the Historicization of building sites, is a municipality that has historically seen its population, and consequently its built-up area, traceable exclusively around its main town. With the completion of the reclamation works on the Plain then, which took place in the years immediately following World War II, the municipality was provided with new and extensive land to devote to agriculture. It is thus that, in the midst of these large crops, new nuclei began to spring up and expand, which today define small agglomerations and hamlets, with their own and perceived identity and substantial autonomy, but all bearing the vice of unplanned and previously studied building, and witness the unbalanced distribution of services and sub-services, the ineffective connections offered by the road network and the very numerous scattered houses.

The elaborate Settlement Centralities, using a unique language and scale appropriate to each case, brings out, through excerpts from previous cartographies and interpretive readings, those identities that are latent today, giving the settlements a renewed recognizability and value [46]. The ultimate intention is to make people reflect on the many micro-identities formed spontaneously, through unconventional fabrics and building, by employing a conceptual shift [47] that pushes to reevaluate and integrate them into the overall identity of the municipality (Fig. 3).

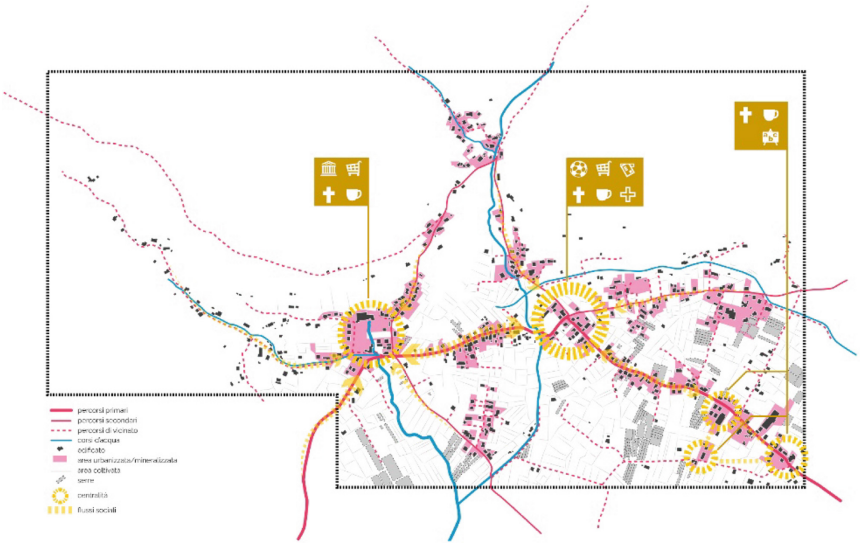

Fig. 3. Morphological-interpretative analysis, Settlement Centralities, extract

Relations Between Territory, Settlements and Infrastructures

As a synthesis of the Socio-Economic System, this map brings together the relational subplots between the spheres of inhabitants and workers, and how these are interwoven in the network proposed by the local road system and the distribution of services and work areas. What emerges is a map indicating the gaps and potentialities of specific areas, their degree of reachability and traversability, according to the concentration of areas on which different interests gravitate.

Map of Transformability

Going to close one of the most crucial systems in the facilitation of the strategic phase and transformations, this map intends to convey, more than the others, the possible directions that future spatial decision-makers can take [48].

By carefully analyzing the current Plan, with its variants realized or only planned in the last 50 years, and the standards indicated by superordinate plans, among which the PTPR stands out in importance, the map gives each area its own gradient of transformability. The reflections from which the specific gradient is generated take the forecasts of the PRG as a reference base, focusing in particular on those that have not yet been realized and that, today, must necessarily be confronted with the new indications on the use of landscapes, with the presence of new constrained areas or areas that are now built up illegally. Thanks to these parameters, it has also been possible to locate some areas that, although outside the original forecasts of the Plan, lend themselves to possible transformations, both in terms of regulatory compliance but also by virtue of a possible future process of redevelopment of the territory, through acupunctural and strategic designs [49, 50]. The map, in contrast to the areas of great transformability, also inserts the element of enduring structures [51], interpreted as those parts of the territory that over

the centuries have remained mostly unchanged determining, thanks to this, the general structure that gradually formed and transformed around them.

Mosaic of Micro-landscapes

The summary map of the Landscape System encapsulates, in an overall image, the graphic transposition of the Norms that the PTPR defines for the landscapes into which it divides the regional territory. The previous maps of this system, in fact, break down the areas analyzed on the basis of the three landscape types (natural, agrarian and settlement) and study them by comparing the prescriptions for use and transformation, which PRG establishes, with the actual land use and land cover of the municipality. Thus, a classification of areas based on their compliance with regulatory principles emerges, in which the new coloring given to the lots -from green to red- and distinctions in groups -Elements to be safeguarded, Areas to be restored, Risk elements- returns the actual adherence to the superordinate plans. The need to produce these cartographies stems precisely from the manifest difficulty in making two urban planning instruments, the PRG in force and the PTPR, born almost fifty years apart, communicate with each other, in a municipality where, moreover, the study of the territory is approached through documents that, although meticulous, are poorly communicated with each other. The PTPR itself, because of the limits imposed by the vast scale in which it necessarily sets its studies, cannot count itself the claim to have studied the individual peculiarities of each area within the municipality, which has meanwhile addressed and absorbed the natural flows that traverse and transform every landscape. Intangible flows, bundles of tensions through which the landscape, including the anthropogenic landscape, is shaped and interrelated;

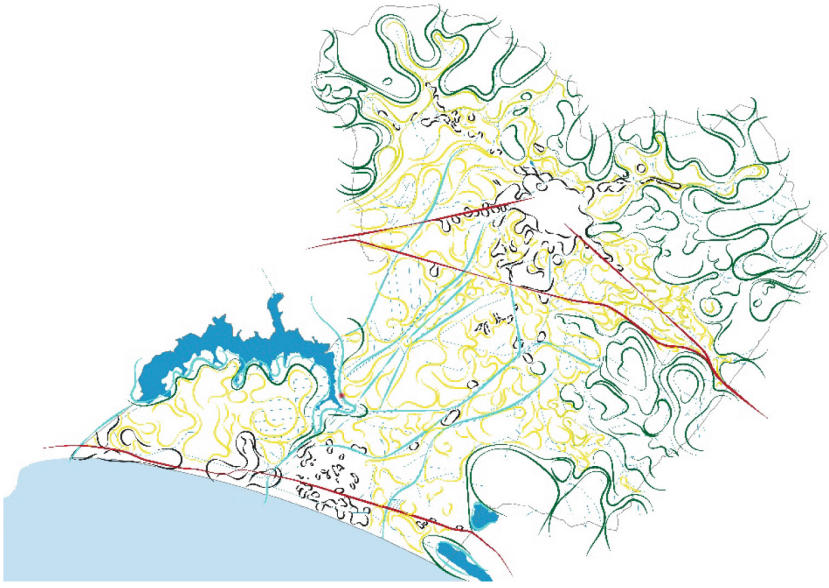

Fig. 4. Interpretation of disturbances present on the territory

though intangible, they establish margins, with which human and ecological processes relate continuously.

Given the previous considerations, the Mosaic of Micro-Landscapes intends to shape, together with the Regional Norms regarding area management, also those flows that, with uncertain margins and continuous overlaps, form the overall picture of the relationships that exist between landscapes, thus seeking to bring out and give dignity to each individual ecosystem (Fig. 4).

5 Discussion and Conclusions

The research that produced the KF of Funds, in its first graphic results, traces the complexity of the territory and the different souls intertwined in it as the keystones on which to hinge future decisions. These, in their branching and entangling, define, more than any decision dropped from above, the actions that shape spaces and activities, and this is why new territorial policies will have to take them into account and to be able to visualize them.

The visualization of the multifaceted identities of places thus becomes, through this research lens, the ultimate goal to which an instrument that undertakes to manage the life of a community, such as the PRG, will have to aim at; detaching itself, therefore, from the static forms of representation of the old instruments, it will have to try to embrace and identify that dynamism proper to each environment.

Based on the historical evolution of places and activities, but also on ambitions for the future, the analyses that the Authority will have at its disposal at the end of the research will represent an important and coherent set of vocations and insights, never fixed, but always open to new considerations and insights [52].

In this peculiarity of non-determination of the narrative, the research faces the necessary limitation of non-completeness, since, in order to effectively read the whole palimpsest of places and actors of which a territory is composed, further - and potentially infinite - analyses would have to be con-ducted. In its representing a criticality, this aspect of the research also plays, in a parallel way, a role of great potential, which, given the popularizing value of the work, can serve as a stimulus to enrichment, through new comparisons and insights.

The tool of the interview is proposed in conclusion, aware that only the interpretation of the multiple specificities that regulate the interactions between humans and the environment will be able to adapt to the infinite weave of actions and reactions that animate and structure a territory, for desirable future phases of analysis. Through social surveys that focus on the inhabitability of spaces but also give ample value to the individual perceptions of citizens [53, 54], it will in fact be possible to visualize even more of those relational substructures and thus be able to channel and exploit them, if possible, or to rest on them so as not to come into conflict; in either case, to the benefit of the overall integrity and identity of the territory.

Moreover, taking advantage of the information base provided by the research, it would also be useful to verify the reactions and insights of third parties, chosen for their extraneousness with the territory and for this reason able to read it without educations or filters given by self-interest. Along these lines, we therefore propose the activation of

laboratories and workshops, in which university students or simple enthusiasts could be involved, and during which some specific aspects would be deepened and rethought, by virtue of an already established vision.

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