The slow line as an opportunity to regenerate heritage in the fragile areas: the case of VENTO project.

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Abstract: The topic dealt with is the tangible and intangible widespread heritage located in the fragile areas of the northern Italy, crossed by the river Po. Here the idea of the line is defined through its thickness, that is the heritage that we want to discover and evaluate, and for which the line represents an opportunity to become a hinge, an anchor and a flywheel, in order to regenerate fragile territories. To undertake this investigation, we will use the VENTO cycle route as case study for applying this analytical approach. VENTO is a territorial project, designed by Politecnico di Milano and part of a network of paths on a national scale decided by the Italian Ministry, that uses a cycle route along the river Po as an opportunity to regenerate fragile areas from Venice to Turin. In this research VENTO proposes itself as an experimental laboratory which provides the possibility of reversing the work perspective on territory. This research, by identifying, mapping and trying to evaluate the heritage along VENTO, will investigate ontologically the relationship between fragility and heritage and how it can change according to this new perspective of the line.

Keywords: slow infrastructure; heritage; evaluation

Introduction. Which fragility, which heritage.

More than 60% of the Italian territory is occupied by small municipalities (53% of all Italian municipalities), where reside about a quarter of the Italian population (SNAI, 2013). These territories, which occupy most of the Italian territory, have been called *"inner areas"*, defined as *"areas significantly distant from the centers offering essential services (education, mobility and health care), but rich of important environmental and cultural resources and highly diversified by nature"* (SNAI , 2013). The scarce offer of essential services, accessibility and work places characterizes the inner areas and it is the effect of a series of dynamics that emerged at different times and intertwined in various ways.
These dynamics were mainly due to historical phenomena and to some more recent ones. On one hand, the rural exodus from the mountain to the plain; on the other, in the lowland territories, the reduction of work places for the increasingly industrialized agriculture, which it does not offset by growth in industrial and tertiary employment. Then, more recent phenomena due to the crisis of some

industrial-type local economies and strong contractions of employment in large industrial activities caused by the process of automation, not compensated by the growth of employment in the commercial and tertiary sectors (Lanzani, Curci, 2018). The effects of all these phenomena are depopulation, emigration, social and productive rarefaction, the abandonment of the land. Already in 1961, the Italian agrarian economist Emilio Sereni had understood the extent of this transformation by speaking of *"a prelude to the disintegration of the agricultural landscape"*. That gives us the idea that it is not only a physical phenomenon, but also a moral fact and a cultural result, of a descending story of places, people, memories. Antonella Tarpino describes these areas as *"spaesati"*, that we could translate as *"lost"* and *"non-town"* at the same time, that means that they have lost the essence of a town (2012).

It is a continuous abandonment, a silent and latent phenomenon, which has led to the constant aging of towns and villages, to devastating effects on the hydrogeological system but also to the risk of loss of local identities.

In this heritage at risk, we can be able to find one of the cornerstones of the territorial rebirth of a vast part of our country. The word *"abandonment"*, in fact, from the French *"abbandonner"*, has among its meanings that of *"making available to, referring to someone"* (Tarpino, 2016). Abandonment is not a final state, it often carries with it a symbolic and metaphorical significance of *re-birth, of return, of a second beginning*. The heritage of these places is intended as a broad concept, which includes material and immaterial elements, traces and signs that testify the relationships that the community has established over time with a territory (Zerbi, 2007) and that must be read and interpreted.

The tangible heritage is represented by: (i) immovable property, that is buildings, an underused or abandoned social fixed capital, often widespread in the territory in potentially strategic points (since they are unexplored); (ii) movable property, that means objects of domestic, religious or festive occasions. These are not disused or underutilized elements, but a complex of elements in relation to each other, affected by a phase of stalemate or crisis and no longer maintained today.

Intangible aspects represent a living heritage closely connected to the material one: the techniques and capacities that have enabled landscapes to be created, buildings and furnishings to be built and local products to be developed; dialects, music and oral literature that are derived from unwritten traditions, proof of the relationship between community and territory; types of organization of social life, such as festivals (Zerbi, 2007).

Then there are two categories of heritage that represent the perfect intersection between material and immaterial aspects. The first one is the agrarian traditional landscape (Barbera, Biasi, Marino, 2014), that is the product of natural and anthropic aspects and whose maintenance over time, as well as safety in hydrogeological terms, depends strictly on the continuity of traditional agriculture.

The second one is the heritage of food, that means products that are the result of an adaptation to the local conditions of climate and territory and to the cultural traditions of breeding, of working processes and of traditional kitchen. When an elderly person dies alone in one of these small villages, a story endes and with it they disapear a house, an era, a family, sometimes a surname.

Today we are all too focused on the transformation of the urban system, which is a laboratory of work and hospitality but also of inequality and marginalization, and we forget to look at what happens outside. The anthropology of abandonment, made up of empty spaces, abandoned or lost heritage, can be an opportunity to focus on the destiny of these villages and on the need for a new non-ideological planning, capable of rethinking opportunities for a new and sustainable regeneration of places and people (Teti, 2017).

1. Widespread heritage as a watermark of a territory. Intrinsic fragility and problems of protection.

"The concept of a historic monument embraces not only the single architectural work but also the urban or rural setting in which is found the evidence of a particular civilization, a significant development or a historic event. This applies not only to great works of art but also to more modest works of the past which have acquired cultural significance with the passing of time." (art 1, INTERNATIONAL CHARTER FOR THE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF MONUMENTS AND SITES, "THE VENICE CHARTER, IInd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, Venice, 1964).

Although many years after its adoption, the Venice Charter still shows a certain relevance, particularly in the definition of *"monument"*: it was a pioneer in transferring interest and attention from the object of *"historical and artistic value"* to the cultural heritage.

Buildings, landscapes, tools of everyday life, testimonies of the civilization that produced them for strictly utilitarian purposes: all these elements constitute the dense network of signs that make unique a territory. These elements despite of being fragile because no longer central to the life of a community and subject to degradation because abandoned, they can become the pulsating and lively center of the regeneration of a place, if adequately protected and re-identified.

Firstly, it is necessary to understand how the protection can be an action that acts as a driving force of a sustainable development for an heritage that is no longer 'exceptional' and single, but customary and widespread.

The instrument of the constraint *ex lege* for the protection becomes difficult to apply and manage when dealing with such large numbers.

Even if it were possible for a state to protect this heritage with national legislative instruments, the effectiveness of the policy should be always verified.

So what could be the strategies to put in place for the protection of widespread heritage?

Firstly, a depth knowledge without filters linked to the value judgment - historical, architectural, monumental, artistic, whatever it may be. A first important, but perhaps not yet sufficient action, partially done by many territorial bodies in recent decadesm, is the census of widespread heritage, to do without preconceived criteria.

An effective protection should pass through the awareness of the local communities of the unrepeatability, of the identity meaning and of the role that this heritage plays for their economy and their territory.

Respect for the heredity of the past, which translates into care for the same, should enter in the ethical dimension of community, to be able to translate into an effective, widespread and capillary new form of protection.

Already forty years ago the Amsterdam Declaration, promulgated by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 1975, underlined the role that community had to assume in handing down its architectural heritage to the future. This role closely intertwined with the concept of Integrated Conservation: *"Integrated conservation involves the responsibility of local authorities and calls for citizens' participation"* (Amsterdam Charter, point 2).

In order to survive, cultural heritage needs to be recognized and loved: *"only if it is appreciated by the public and by the younger generation. Educational programs for all ages should, therefore, give increased attention to this subject"* (Amsterdam Charter, point i). Therefore, public awareness should

be among the priority objectives for those involved in cultural heritage, through specific educational programs.

The most recent Convention of Faro, introducing the concept of *"common heritage"*, focuses the attention on the relationship between Cultural Heritage and Community, recognizing the latter an active and participatory role since its definition: *"cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It encompasses aspects of the environment resulting from interaction between people and places through time"* (art. 2a).

In international documents, local communities have assumed an ever greater role in the preservation of material and immaterial heritage. The promotion and dissemination of a care culture in the local communities plays a fundamental role in ensuring the survival of this widespread and fragile heritage.

The 'education' of community to see its heritage and to recognize it as a scarce and therefore exhaustible resource, could be the most effective measure to guarantee its survival. The only prohibition imposed by the *"constraint"* is almost never sufficient. However, it is necessary to find the correct ways to transmit this message. Conferences, lectures or courses, although important to train and update those who already have professional skills in the sector, they are not able to reach the common population.

Working together with local communities with practical examples and starting to share a different awareness of cultural heritage with the new generations, both could prove to be effective strategies.

2. Which tailored suit for heritage in the inner areas?

The territories defined as *"slow"*, not because of an index of delay but as a distinctive development factor, are characterized by a logic that is not economist and that cannot be measured with traditional growth indicators. The same character of the territory represents a determining factor of development. The different local development models have common characteristics, such as: specialization in a production chain or technology; strong synergies and internal interactions; a marked sense of belonging by local community.

The territory, however, cannot be expressed only in terms of infrastructures or as a static reality, but it is a place where the geographical and physical elements are linked to other elements.

Thanks to the initiative of the Minister of Territorial Cohesion Fabrizio Barca, the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI, in italian) is launched in 2013, coordinated by the Agency for Territorial Cohesion, and it attempts to regenerate these places. The main objective of SNAI is the reversal of the demographic trend of these territories and it is pursued through two classes of actions: (i) the first focuses on adjusting the offer of essential services, so that means the pre-conditions for the territorial development; (ii) the second aims to implement interventions in favor of local development, focused to generate labor demand through the re-use and enhancement of territorial capital. Precisely in this last class of actions there are tools that solicit the valorisation of resources through a quality regenerative tourism. In the coming years, luxury will be made up of rare goods, such as time, tranquility, silence, security, conviviality and a healthy environment. All these elements are definition of quality. *"Quality can be seen hellenistically as an attribution of meaning: when an object or a service is of quality, they acquire a particular thickness in our eyes, an aura that makes them unsustainable and precious, regardless of the intrinsic value of materials"* (Nocifora, de Salvo, Calzati, 2011). Therefore, the philosophy of the slowness, which uses time not for sentimental or

ideological reasons but as a lens to know and deepen the sense of places and to build a relationship between hosts and guests, is the suitable suit for these territories.

Therefore, in order to give a rebirth to these territories, it is needed a true innovative capacity that: makes the identity stories recognizable; assigns a new use to the heritage; generates jobs and new economies. All this is a project: an innovative project of continuous and daily education to care and protection and of a sustainable, responsible, ethically oriented tourism, able to reactivate broken narratives. To follow this direction, it is evident the need for a preliminary re-education work to recognize the specificity and the patrimonial value, in the perspective of instructing research of history, roots, identity and civic sense.

Montanari declares that heritage can no longer be something *to be visited*, but rather it is something that *contains us* (Montanari, 2014). It is necessary to consider a reversal of perspective. The reversal of gazes and actions should be able to transform: the art from an object to pay to everyday life fact and the citizens from customers into visitors. It is this type of concept that can grow users who choose sustainable tourism on a cultural and environmental level and who associate tourism with an active education, rather than passive luxury (Montanari, 2014). Starting from this clarification, talking about a project in this context means speaking of a *"pedagogical project"*. It means a continuous and daily education, inside and outside school, and a sensitive and attentive eye to the recognition of what has value, that can lead to protect and care in the most emotional sense. In its most ancient form, the word *"care"* comes from the Latin *"coera"* and was used in a context of love and friendship.

Caring arises when the existence of someone or something begins to have importance, then it begins the attention, the concern, the sense of responsibility. Therefore taking care of these places and their heritage, firstly it means (re)knowing them with a moral and practical look at the same time. It means dedicating actions and projects to a sustainable, responsible and educational tourism. A tourism that is a reciprocal positive exchange between residents and visitors, aimed mainly at: identifying and bringing back those individual diffused heritage to the depth of their history; having the ability to relocate them within a narrative that knows how to produce attractiveness; develop the ability to attract tourists aware of the dimension they are discovering; proposing the slowness of knowledge and respect; enhance the specificities, rhythms, flavors, emotions, stories and roots of the place; produce work and provide supplementary incomes to consolidate the presence of community, slowing down the exodus from their homelands (Nocifera, de Salvo, Calzati, 2011). That's can be a tourism that is an economic activity but it is above all a *"multidimensional cultural practice"* (Nocifera, de Salvo, Calzati, 2011): a balanced relationship of interchange between residents and tourists.

3. The regenerative power of the slow line.

Slow tourism has been experiencing particular success in recent years. More and more people are approaching slowness as a form of possible and positive mobility. More and more people are those who wish to practice a form of holiday using slowness, in the various known ways: on foot, by bike, on horseback or mule, in kayaks, with small boats or with a combination of these ones. Often using the railway network where slow mobility infrastructures are not.

If initially, a decade ago, these were isolated initiatives or limited to a few hundred cases or to certain geographical areas (such as the case of the Camino de Santiago in Spain or the Danube cycle route in Austria), today slowness has gone on to occupy a more important place in tourism. Relevant for numbers, but above all for high social positive effects, for low environmental impacts and for the

ability to activate or reactivate local and widespread economies, especially where none of them existed before or where they were very weak.

This is one of the questions we are most interested in keeping in mind. The lines on which the different forms of slow tourism can exist, can become real and effective backbones for the territory. Unfortunately, the excessive specialization of these tourist lines has segregated them in areas far from the design interest of those working on urban studies or landscape planning, of those who design public policies. Cycling is usually seen as a way to move and nothing more. Its design, at most, concerned urban design and in any case at a very small intervention scales. Going on foot too, except for those close to pilgrimages. Moving on horseback goes beyond the design imagination. All these mobility forms, alternative to cars, have been the subject of frivolous discussions, but it has never been thought that they could be the common floor for the triggering of a new territorial vision, a different model of sustainable development, a strategy to regenerate the fragile territories.

Urban and territorial planning know little about the possible role played by these slow tourism models. And little did they inquire. Therefore, slow tourism has never found its own space in the discipline. Just today, with great difficulty, is it making itself known and accredited.

From the comparative studies made in other European countries, in the case of cycling tourism, the regenerative potential has demonstrated, especially towards the weakest areas, those farthest from the metropolis and from the traditional economies. Germany boasts 45,000 km of tourist cycle paths built in just over 30 years and today has over 175 million vacation days spent cycling every year; 2.2 occupied in cycling tourism per 1000 inhabitants. In Italy we are far from these numbers: the employed are only 0.22 per 1000 inhabitants, despite the fact that the natural and artistic heritage is decidedly greater. What is lacking is the culture for these tourisms and the infrastructures that make them possible. Let's focus on the latter.

These are linear infrastructures. Long distance cycling in the case of cycling. Paths in the case of walking trails. And so on for other specific cases. In all cases, these have the forms of lines. Thin and light lines, without motorized traffic, safe for all types of travelers (starting with the less experienced), well signposted, connected with the rail and road interchange nodes.

Those lines are often ancient ones, such as the case of mountain paths or religious paths. Lines that are more recent are the cycle paths. In both cases, these real infrastructures however show very interesting characteristics for the territories they pass through. First, compared to traffic roads, high-speed railways and highways, they interact with the places they pass as they are permeable at all points and not only at junctions, tollgates and stations.

This first characteristic makes walking paths and cycle paths dialoguing lines with the territories, meter by meter. On the contrary, with highways, the territory is used by points and gates. Thus the small and medium-sized localities remain excluded from any possibility of being known and visited. In the experience of the high-speed travelers, the internal areas disappear. There, tourism gets thinner until it disappears completely. Yet those areas, those small towns, those villages do not lack beauty, historical heritages, good traditions, history and stories to be told.

On the contrary, slowness can be a strategic opportunity for inner areas as it becomes a sort of lens with which the person passing can stop appreciating details that speed erases. The infrastructures that allow the slowness can therefore be a great resource for the internal areas if well designed and equipped to allow those forms of slow tourism such as trekking or cycling.

Slow lines can become a new paradigm for territorial design. This, however, implies the effort to see a walking path and a cycle path not only as a mobility infrastructure, but as real backbones that give new meanings to the territories.

All this also requires a change of scale. When we talk about slow tourism on foot or by bicycle, we are talking about lines of hundreds and hundreds of kilometers. Continuous, comfortable for pavements, safe and therefore usable by all (for age and ability), equipped with signs and not shared with motorized traffic, as foreseen for example in the definition of Greenway, even if here the technical ambition is to have durable and more comfortable paths, able to hundreds of thousands people. If we want a generative tourism in terms of jobs and economy, we have to imagine something able to involve a lot of people, not just a few or a specialized category of people.

Besides the change of scale, the long and slow lines need a strong coordination on the territory. Tourism does not tolerate discontinuities, management changes and administrative fragmentation. When you walk or ride, the landscape is the interlocutor we are dealing with. A landscape where administrative boundaries are not necessary to the travelers, even less where they impose changes in the rules of use that tire the traveler. Those who travel slowly design a new geography whose backbone is the following trace itself. To guarantee this, the various stakeholders must learn to agree themselves, to work together, to cooperate, to choose design details that respect a single code. They must stop promoting each one himself, but they have to learn to promote each other and the entire territory dominated by the line. This need a project. The idea of the line thus becomes a new program for governing the territory and an opportunity for a cultural change.

The vision by lines implies a real cultural work to do together with the citizens and institutions. Cycles and walking paths cannot be born either by chance or following the tourist business, because this would contradict the spirit of continuity and cooperation of which the slow lines live.

This detail obliges us to review our way of designing and planning: no longer for points, no longer solving only the single issue in a precise place, but always looking a wider territory, a sort of ecosystem where everything is linked to everything, and by everything depends.

4. How to support territorial regeneration processes: multidisciplinary tools and methods.

The opportunities for strengthen territorial development by enhancing cultural heritage are not always consensual. Conflicts between the instance of environmental resources, landscape and cultural goods preservation, social, as well as economic regeneration, often arise (Oppio et al., 2015).

The complexity given by the instance of achieving multiple and diverse objectives suggests to frame a Multicriteria-Spatial Decision Support System (MC-SDSS) able to combine the potential of GIS – collecting, elaborating and representing spatial data by maps – with those of Multicriteria Decision Aiding techniques (MCDA) – able to support decision-making processes through the elicitation of both qualitative and quantitative objectives and to evaluate potential impacts of the options under analysis (Malczewski, 1999).

In particular, MC-SDSSs transform and integrate geographic data (map criteria) and stakeholders' preferences and uncertainties (value judgments) in order to obtain information for decision-making and an overall assessment of the decision alternatives (Ferretti, Pomarico, 2012). The ability of this integrated approach to both generate alternatives during the strategic planning phase and to compare them during the evaluation phase makes this tool suitable to deal with complex and ill-structured territorial problems (Dell'Ovo et al., 2018). Differently from monetary techniques, such as Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) and Stated Preference (SP) techniques, whose aim is to find the most efficient solution with respect to the maximization of social welfare, MCDA provide decision makers with a comprehensive analytical framework to explore decision problems, by supporting the elicitation of different views on alternative courses of action. According to the comparison carried out by

Saarikoski et al. (2016), the main differences between MCDA and monetary techniques lay in these aspects: i) aggregated versus not aggregated options; ii) universal versus context specific values; iii) unitary versus conditional conclusions; iv) distributional issue and income asymmetries; v) individual versus social rationality; vi) interests versus ethical judgements; vii) representativeness; viii) biases.

Given the aim of supporting inner areas regeneration by cultural heritage along slow mobility routes, MCDA seems to perform better than CBA and SP techniques, especially in the distributional issues, being the stakeholders' preferences an integral part of the evaluation process, and in the inclusion of multiple dimensions of the problem, that can be accounted by monetary units, proxy measures and special scales, tailored to the decision context.

The advantage of MC-SDSSs is the use of GIS for mapping spatial criteria, sub-criteria and indicators and aggregating the results in order to show both the potentials and the critical aspects of the territorial context under investigation.

It is important to underline how the strength of suitability maps is given by the possibility to read the total result and the partial ones, according to the structure of the decision problem. By providing different layers of spatial knowledge, it is possible to point out where are weaknesses and to define tailored strategies to solve them.

5. Towards an Atlas of regeneration: the VENTO project for the implementation of a Heritage Recovery Model.

The large amount of abandoned or underused heritage present in the areas subject to depopulation arises the need to reflect on the implementation of a *line tourism model*, capable of regenerating fragile territories.

With this objective, the case of VENTO is used to set the first steps of *a Heritage Recovery Model*.

VENTO, the project of a cycle route along the Po river linking VENezia to TOrino, conceived by the Politecnico di Milano, is a territory project based on the line values. VENTO experiences the paradigm for a different way of territorial design: a test for sustainable alternatives shaped for helping inner and fragile areas to have a suitable perspective.

Technically VENTO is a cycle and pedestrian route. But if it were only this, it would have failed its mission which is instead to regenerate those territories and make them visible, thanks to a slow tourism vision. Slow tourism, as it is defined here, let people discover existing heritage and stories and it make them understand that they have always been linked to each other, even if today we don't see them like this anymore. We are talking about a light line that is designed to be a narrative thread, able to sew beauty.

Obviously all this has been thought to start a slow tourism, that does not exist along the Po river today, able to: generate new jobs, slow down depopulation, create new economies with very low impact, save the beauty that still exists there.

With these and other aims, in 2010 born the VENTO project, which is now under construction after years of involvement of municipalities, regions and national governments. Today, thanks to an assiduous planning and participation work of the Politecnico di Milano, the VENTO project is in the financing and realization phase (www.progetto.vento.polimi.it), thanks to a funding program of the Italian State and in collaboration with the regions.

Along the cycle route, there are two cases of heritage recovery in favor of line tourism: Ostello dei Concari (Figure 1), in Bagnolo San Vito (Mantova) and the Locanda dei Pontieri or Ostello del Po (Figure 2), in Guastalla (Reggio Emilia). Both are recoveries of public isolated buildings that have

been restructured and have been object of a call for tender. With this virtuous example, which recovers heritage, gives it a new use, generates jobs and local economies, we aim to create a Heritage Recovery Model based on the line.

Figure 1 and Figure 2: Ostello dei Concari, MN (left) and Ostello del Po, RE (right). Two virtuous cases of recovery of public buildings in favor of tourism on the VENTO line.

In this way, the part of VENTO relative to the municipalities of the Province of Alessandria has become a test to take a first possible step towards this model for cultural regeneration and the initial approach of an Atlas that has heritage as its center. The territory under consideration, mainly agricultural (the most widespread crops are rice fields, poplar groves and arable land), includes 16 small municipalities in the Province of Alessandria (14 have less than 2000 inhabitants) in the depopulation phase (12 out of 16 registered a negative rate of change population, data source: ISTAT 2001-2013). In this context of fragility, consistent with the picture described about the Inner Areas, the Po river flows in a natural area covered by the Park of the Po Vercellese Alessandrino. The Atlas is an opportunity to carry out a census inside the area of the Park, focusing in particular on that type of buildings suitable to play a role in the line tourism, from the point of view of location and volumes. Therefore, we talk about the traditional building typology of the agricultural landscape of the plain, the Cascina (farmhouse of the north of Italy), which represents the largest widespread heritage, unrecognized, underused or abandoned. Through surveys and subsequent checks on the land registry, 24 buildings were found that reflect the requirements (Figure 3); six of these are public, the rest is privately owned.
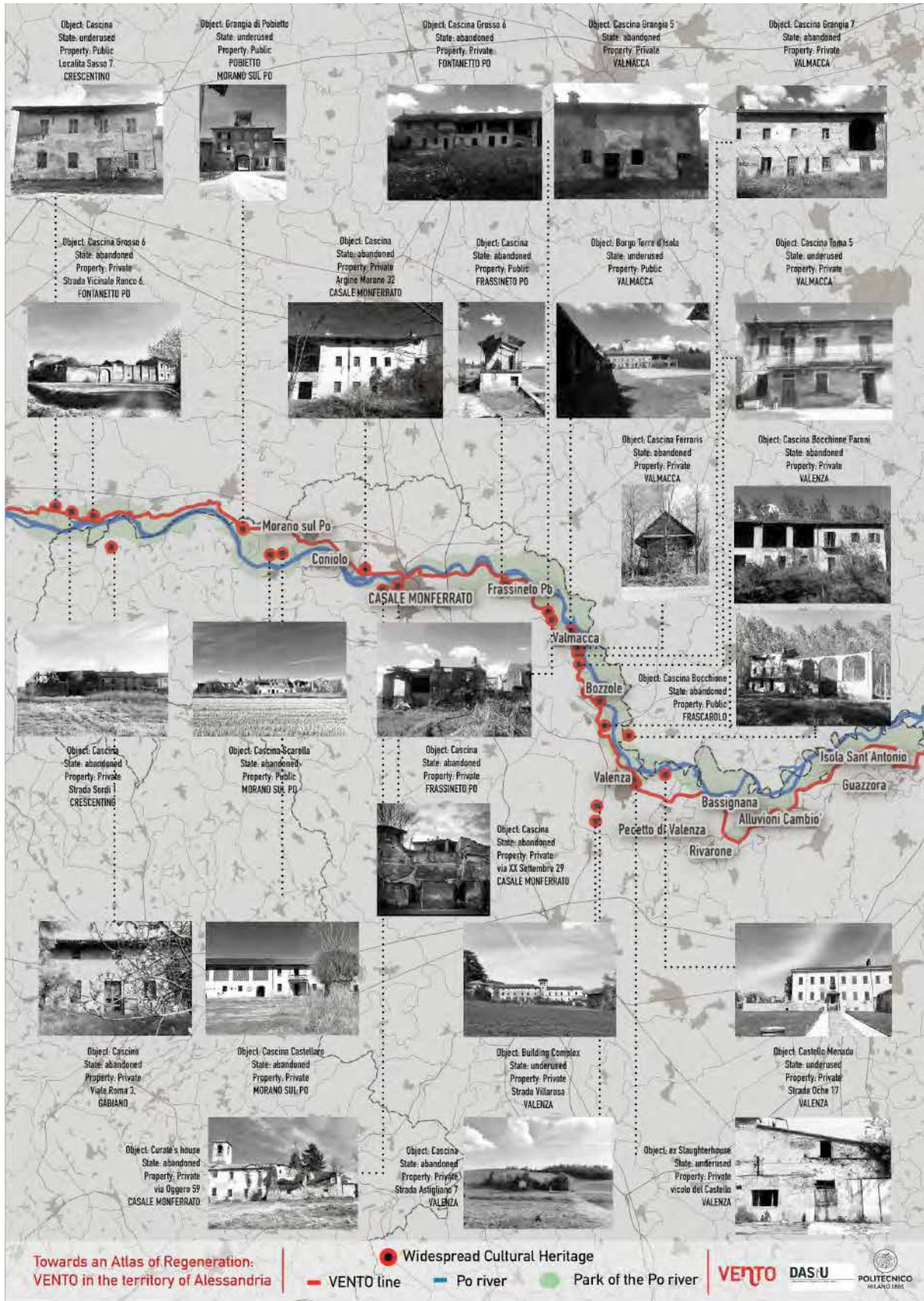
Figure 3: Towards an Atlas of Regeneration. Widespread Abandoned Heritage along the VENTO line in the territory of Alessandria (Figure elaborated by the authors).

The next steps focus on public buildings, identifying possible future scenarios thanks to the combine use of GIS and MCDA together, which allows supporting decision-making processes. Therefore, the criteria, sub-criteria and indicators will be identified on the basis of the research objectives. By aggregating the results, maps will be obtained that will show both the potential and the critical aspects of the area surrounding each building, helping to make the best choice based on the initial objectives of the research.

The model is proposed here in its first phase of pioneering approach to heritage recovery and it represents an experimental opportunity to investigate methods and tools capable of regenerating fragile territories, reactivating local micro economies based on endogenous resources.

Conclusions: scenarios and perspectives.

Attention to the cultural heritage in the Inner Areas is growing, primarily due to the damage suffered in these areas by the most recent natural disasters. Presence of people in small municipalities is a resource to protect the territory, especially for activities to contrast hydrogeological instability and for maintenance and protection of widespread common heritage. Therefore, there is a clear correlation between the SNAI, the redevelop interventions of small villages, the contrast to the hydrogeological instability and the protection of common heritage, present here in large quantities (the places of culture surveyed in 2011 by Istat are 4,588, among them 1,803 are in inner areas). Furthermore, the SNAI indicates the tourism and the enhancement of heritage as a lever to reverse the depopulation trend in these places. The difficulties of these territories, linked to the lack of essential services, can be indirectly contained by instruments that could invert the negative indicators by creating employment opportunities and development. Therefore, small towns can become an opportunity to restart the economy, with an adequate consideration of the tourism potential and of the enhancement of heritage. Improved fruibility can act as an attractor for both inhabitants and visitors, contributing to territorial development. In the municipalities of the Inner Areas, where the degradation of spaces represents a further fragility factor, a gradual re-appropriation of places and a greater awareness of communities have a decisive impact on the actual success of policies. If were implemented policies for new governance tools and strategies for a profound educational renewal of the basic values, heritage could represent a driving force for development. That means, in some way, giving importance to the dialectical relationship between the singular, understood as individual, and the collective, on which the identity is based. Consequently, if we protect and take care of the context, or of what is collective, at the same time we take care of the individual. And that's why we take care of heritage: because heritage is of all and of each at the same time, we recognize ourselves and our identity in it; because a future without a past is an arrow without direction or orientation; because heritage is specificity, specificity is diversity, diversity is wealth; and finally, because heritage provides everyone the magnificent opportunity to *"start from the end"*, which means that describing depopulation places, apparently finished, as territories rich in potential is like declaring that the future can be changed. So it is possible to talk about a *"pedagogical project"* and in particular it is possible to do it thanks to the line: it places objects in a system, gives them added value and generates narratives by its nature of slowness. It is a project of coherence aimed at: the sensitivity of the individual in the community, the enhancement of the single object with respect to the line in which it is located, and in which the soul of places becomes the protagonist.

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