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The role of networks for the development of rural tourism and the valorization of origin products[1]

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Abstract
In rural areas, development is reoriented to enhance local resources-physical and sociocultural-with the aim of retaining the benefits in the area as much as possible. Development objectives are defined on the basis of the needs, capacities, and perspectives of local agents, while the participation of the population is a fundamental principle and strategy for action. The plurality and heterogeneity of agents and interests is therefore a defining characteristic of the territorial quality strategy, whose development and implementation usually involve the contribution of diverse economic figures. In this essay, we identify and discuss the plurality of key functions that networks can play in endogenous rural development processes. The rural area and its endogenous development processes, evidenced by the two cases analyzed - of agritourism and valorization of products of origin - can be interpreted respectively as a network of networks, more or less formalized, resulting from their interactions. In particular, we identify the function of building connections between capitals to create meanings, that is, symbolic capital, characterized by the development of economic / organizational functions, the creation and sharing of internal patterns and management of territorial commons; we add to this a metafunction, an effective governance of the relationship between agents.
Keywords: Territorial development. Sustainability. Endogenous. Productive processes. Value creation.

[1] This article is the English translation of the following article:: Belletti G., Marescotti A. (2020), Il ruolo delle reti per lo sviluppo del turismo rurale e la valorizzazione dei prodotti di origine, in: Meloni B., Pulina P (a cura di), Turismo sostenibile e sistemi rurali locali. Multifunzionalità, reti d'impresa e percorsi, Rosenberg e Sellier, Torino. Thanks to the publisher Rosenberg and Sellier for their kind permission.
Translated from Portuguese by Roberta Rigon.

O papel das redes para o desenvolvimento do turismo rural e da valorização dos produtos de origem

Resumo
Nas zonas rurais, o desenvolvimento é reorientado de forma a valorizar os recursos locais - físicos e socioculturais - com o objetivo de reter os benefícios na área o máximo possível. Os objetivos de desenvolvimento são definidos com base nas necessidades, capacidades e perspectivas dos agentes locais, enquanto a participação da população é um princípio fundamental e uma estratégia de ação. A pluralidade e heterogeneidade de agentes e interesses é, portanto, característica marcante da estratégia de qualidade territorial, cujo desenvolvimento e implementação costuma envolver a contribuição de diversas figuras econômicas. Neste ensaio, identificamos e discutimos a pluralidade de funções-chave que as redes podem desempenhar nos processos de desenvolvimento rural endógeno. A zona rural e seus processos de desenvolvimento endógeno, evidenciados pelos dois casos analisados - do agriturismo e da valorização dos produtos de origem - podem ser interpretados respectivamente como uma rede de redes, mais ou menos formalizada, resultantes de suas interações. Em particular, identificamos a função de construir conexões entre capitais para criar significados, ou seja, capital simbólico, caracterizado pelo desenvolvimento de funções econômicas / organizativas, pela criação e compartilhamento de padrões internos e gestão de bens comuns territoriais; soma-se a isso uma metafunção, uma governance eficaz da relação entre os agentes.
Palavras-chave: Desenvolvimento territorial. Sustentabilidade. Endógeno. Processos produtivos. Criação de valor.

El papel de las redes para el desarrollo del turismo rural y la valorización de los productos de origen

Resumen
En las zonas rurales, el desarrollo se reorienta para potenciar los recursos locales -físicos y socioculturales- con el objetivo de retener los beneficios en la zona en la medida de lo posible. Los objetivos de desarrollo se definen a partir de las necesidades, capacidades y perspectivas de los agentes locales, mientras que la participación de la población es un principio y una estrategia de actuación fundamentales. La pluralidad y heterogeneidad de agentes e intereses es, por tanto, un rasgo llamativo de la estrategia de calidad territorial, en cuyo desarrollo y aplicación suelen intervenir diversas figuras económicas. En este ensayo, identificamos y discutimos la pluralidad de funciones clave que las redes pueden desempeñar en los procesos de desarrollo rural endógeno. El espacio rural y sus procesos de desarrollo endógeno, evidenciados por los dos casos analizados -del agroturismo y de la valorización de los productos de origen- pueden interpretarse respectivamente como una red de redes, más o menos formalizadas, resultantes de sus interacciones. En particular, identificamos la función de construir conexiones entre capitales para crear significados, es decir, el capital simbólico, caracterizado por el desarrollo de funciones económicas/organizativas, la creación y puesta en común de patrones internos y la gestión de bienes comunes territoriales; a esto se añade una metafunción, una gobernanza efectiva de la relación entre agentes.
Palabras clave: Desarrollo territorial. Sostenibilidad. Endógena. Procesos productivos. Creación de valor.

1 The evolution of agriculture and the rural world

The development of economic and social systems leads to the diversification of productive systems, in which polymorphism provokes a growing demand for

instruments to guide effective *governance*[2]. Rural areas also experienced a profound transformation, which led them to different configurations in terms of dominant characteristics, dependence or autonomy or even delay or development (Basile and Cecchi, 2001). This transformation was conditioned by the new functions attributed by society to rural areas, which are increasingly less associated with residual and marginal areas linked to simple food production, but increasingly seen as areas of productive and residential settlements, also linked to environmental protection and the preservation of local identities.

The agricultural sector had to face a major transformation process which, on the one hand, has led to a sharp contraction in the number of agricultural enterprises present in the territory and, on the other hand, to a change in the size of the activities, as well as the nature and organization of the productive processes through a continuous elimination of phases of the "traditional" productive process as well as the acquisition of new phases and functions in a process of "fragmentation" and "recomposition" of activities and a consequent rearrangement of business-to-business and business-to-society relations at both local and global level.

The concept of multifunctionality expresses the diversification of the social functions that the agricultural sector performs today (Velasquez, 2001): maintain the vitality and a certain level of socioeconomic development of rural areas (especially marginalised and disadvantaged ones); ensure food safety for the population; offer a variety of services as well as food production; preserve the physical environment (hydrogeological protection of the territory, landscape, biodiversity, etc.) and reproduce the anthropic environment (local cultures and traditions, gastronomy, etc.) (Belletti et al., 2002).

The dynamics of agricultural and rural development are therefore based on a wide range of economic activities, linked only in part to traditional activities of cultivation and creation. These activities can create interesting occupational opportunities to those categories considered the most "weak", of young people and women, who in this perspective can find better opportunities for career improvement compared to traditional development. The result is a reassessment of the autonomous capacities of the agricultural sector and the rural environment to trigger virtuous processes of economic and social growth and development, as well as a multiplication of entrepreneurial opportunities.

Thus, although at different levels and rhythms between business typologies and territorial areas, there has been a change in the connection modalities of agricultural enterprises, either with other operators contributing at various levels to the creation of agri-industrial end-market products (input supplier, processing of agricultural products, marketing and distribution, services, public operator), or in relation to the relational modalities of the agricultural enterprise at the territorial level, due to the alteration of the economic and institutional structures of the rural areas.

This stage also marks the transition from a predominantly "exogenous" agricultural and rural development model, dictated and directed by "external" forces

[2] Territorial governance, concept widely used by the author. By definition, an organization system/ method used for administration and monitoring purposes, which involves several types of relationships between the subjects/agents/companies/institutions involved

framed in purely sectorial and *top-down*[3] schemes, to a model of the "endogenous" type, which requires solicitation of local material, non-material and human resources through a strategy marked by sustainability (Brunori, 1994 and 2003).

The consequences are many. In rural areas, development is reoriented in order to value local resources - physical and socio-cultural - with the aim of retaining the benefits within the area as much as possible. Development objectives are defined based on the needs, capacities and perspectives of local actors, while population participation is a fundamental principle and an action strategy.

In the relationship between the rural environment and the external scenario, on the other hand, adherence to the endogenous model implies new forms of functional governance to consolidate a new protagonism of the actors at local level, as well as a decentralization of interventions, which philosophy ranges from an individual and sectorial logic to a territorial logic. The decentralization of interventions implies that the territorial partnership (which includes public agents, companies and their associations, expressive organizations of citizenship and defenders of diverse interests, etc.) take direct responsibility for planning and implementing development initiatives. It is important, in this scenario, to achieve greater interaction and cohesion between social groups and categories at the local level as well as to establish external strategic alliances.

From this perspective, local actors (businesses, citizens and institutions) are called upon to create strategies and new ways to improve development in order to potencialize local resources, in particular, specific local resources, that is, those less likely to be reused in standardized and homologated production processes that can hardly be transferred to other economic sectors and / or to other territories. These are not only resources susceptible to direct economic use by companies, but also those local resources of collective character, with which each company can count on in the value creation process, such as natural resources, landscape and artistic, but also regional traditions in all their diversity of expressions.

In general, it is possible to define the *strategy of territorial quality* (Ray, 1998; Pecqueur, 2001) as a process of awareness of the agents of a given territory to the fact that the "network connection" of different components and resources of that territory (typical agri-food products and traditional handicrafts, tourist and personal services, rural landscape and places of special environmental value, local culture and folklore, artistic and architectural resources, etc.) may have a multiplying effect on the value of each of the goods and services offered in the territory. From this awareness derives a process of elaboration and management of valuation actions that aim to leverage the integration between agents and potentiate the specificity of this set composed of goods and services.

The added value that can be generated in the context of the territorial quality strategy has therefore a joint character and derives from the fact that the citizen acquires each good in a context defined by the coexistence of a set of goods and services and a complex of environmental, cultural and landscape resources. The appropriation by the agents of the joint *surplus* has a collective character, because it is based on network strategies based not only on economic motivations, but also on the sharing of local values.

[3] Top-down approach

The plurality and heterogeneity of agents and interests is, therefore, a striking characteristic of the territorial quality strategy, which development and implementation usually involves the contribution of several economic actors such as agricultural enterprises, enterprises producing agricultural and non-agricultural goods of local character, hotels, public establishments, service enterprises, etc., and also associations representing local economic or cultural interests, non-local associations (of consumers, etc.), as well as, of course, public administrations that can use a set of territorial planning and financing tools to contribute to strengthening the general image of the area.

As part of the new development model, we are therefore witnessing the emergence of new forms of articulation between agricultural enterprises and society. On the one hand, these involve and modify the execution of the "traditional" productive activities and the exchange of products in the market; on the other hand, they expand the spectrum of business "productions" to include the financing of more or less innovative services.

Compared to the homologated model of agriculture (Basile and Cecchi, 2011), there is also a radical change in the operating logic of agricultural enterprises; in the face of this fact, a profound transformation is needed that can underpinif in a transition towards a new socio-technical model (Geels and Schot, 2007; Lamine et al. 2012; Belletti and Butelli, 2018). The alternative paths taken by agricultural enterprises within this model are substantially three (Van der Ploeg, 1993; Van der Ploeg, Long, Banks, 2002): 1) an increase in the level of differentiation and in the quality of the production carried out by agricultural enterprises (quality); 2) an increasing extension of agricultural activity towards new activities of production of goods and services; 3) the recovery of more direct channels of exchange with the final consumer (short supply chains). These paths do not represent alternative forms of strategic configuration of the company. On the contrary, there are countless synergies that can be achieved between the different areas. Just consider, for example, agritourism, which offers the possibility to know the products of a given farm and, more generally, the territory itself (through the Roads of Wines and Tastes[4], for example), besides activating short marketing channels. Educational activities may have similar potential, too, as well as the activation of short supply chains can be an element of business and territory promotion.

The transformation of a mono-functional farm (that is, one concentrated on the production of agricultural goods sold as undifferentiated raw material on the market) into a diversified and multifunctional farm is, therefore, a complex process that involves three complementary fronts of the company: that of the relations with the market, relative to the productive chain (deepening), that of the extension of the type of activity developed (broadening) and relations with the rural environment in which the company is located, in addition to the system of resources and agents present in the territory (regrounding).

Deepening refers to all activities related to the traditional ones, both downstream and upstream. These are production or service activities primarily aimed at replacing and modernising conventional elements, as well as the internal

[4] Strade dei vini o dei sapori, known worldwide as "Roads of Wines and Tastes", it is the name given to a group of routes around Italy which aim to promote regional areas which produce wine and specific food.

production of these elements (fertilizers, energy, rations, etc.), their productive reorganisation into integrated collective models, its innovation of the product and the care with its qualitative aspects, the transformation of the company and valorisation of the quality of the products, the establishment of more direct relations with the final consumer in the context of short supply chains.

Broadening concerns production and service activities that go hand in hand with agricultural activity proper. These are intended both to meet new market needs (tourism, residential, cultural, etc.) and to provide services of collective interest (environmental, landscape, etc.). This last front includes agritourism activities, educational and social farms, wellbeing centers, landscape and environmental preservation and hydrogeological defense, etc.

Regrounding, on the other hand, involves restructuring the system of business relations with the local context: the ability to activate relationships (*networking*) in the rural environment becomes a central element for the success of the multifunctional model, and often represents an essential condition for deepening and expansion strategies. In the monofunctional business model, relationships tend to be simplified and are reduced to contact with the supplier and customer system, often detached from the territorial context. Consider as an example, the development of certain tourist-recreational activities that benefit strongly from collective strategies defined according to the territory, or the collective valorization of a typical product through the *Protected Designation of Origin*[5], or the articulation of local labour relations (part-time and pluri-activity).

In the context of the new endogenous rural development model, the traditional activities of production and exchange of products on the market by the agricultural enterprise change. In addition, the range of agricultural production is expanded to include the financing of innovative services.

2 The roles of networks in endogenous development models

The recovery of the territorial dimension of the development of rural areas is based on the recognition of endogeneity characteristics (which value the *bottom-up* approaches , focused on local resources), integration (between different activities within the same territory / company, but also between the local and global levels) and sustainability in its three forms: environmental, economic and social (Brunori, 2011). The territorial dimension requires the presence of a shared social capital. The territory is recognized as a complex element, in which new forms of connection arise between agricultural enterprises, enterprises of other sectors, organizations representing the business world - but also society in a broad way and public institutions operating in the area. At the same time, the relations between local and external agents are consolidated to such an extent that it often seems more appropriate - in situations of strong relational and communicative intensity such as those that characterize the new rurality - to speak of models of neo-endogenous (Ray, 2006).

[5] *Denominazione di origine protetta (DOP), or "Protected Designation of Origin", in free translation, it is a food stamp/mark based on geographical indications defined by the European Union to identify and protect foods that have particular quality characteristics, which essentially or exclusively depend on the territory in which they were produced.*

Thus, a vision of territorial development emerges as a long-term political project, shared by the agents of a given local context that interact with external agents and built on a set of local resources (Brunori, 2006).

Rural areas, especially the marginalized ones, are often characterized by entrepreneurial fragmentation (with a high number of small businesses) and by polycentricity (absence of a single economic "motor" in the territory). In this context, the district question, made possible by the industrial economy (Becattini, 1987) arises intensively and expresses itself not only as a peculiar form of organization of production within a territorialized sector, but also as a planning and *governance* space linked to the advancement of a local productive system or, more broadly, a rural territory. The district as a possibility of production organization - an agricultural or agrifood district - proposes, as evidenced by Iacoponi (1990 and 1995), a model of reticular interaction between a plurality of companies that share sectoral and organizational belonging and regional proximity. These networks generate resources ("economies") external to companies, but within the district, easily accessible to those who are part of this territorialized network. They are physical resources, such as infrastructures and training centers, as well as immaterial, such as access to information, knowledge, *know-how*, reputation capital. In fact, the social interaction generated thanks to physical (face-to-face) and cultural / values (belonging to the same local community), facilitates the continuous dialogue between operators, as well as the circulation of information, learning processes and the accumulation of skills, creating a climate of trust that reduces transaction costs and allows companies to specialize in specific phases of the productive process or in certain types of economic activity.

The extension of the district concept to the "rural" is particularly significant. The rural district goes beyond the specific supply chains and covers the territory as a whole, in its various dimensions. From the conceptual point of view (Pacciani, 2003; Belletti and Marescotti, 2007), the transition from agricultural and agroindustrial district to rural district is full of implications. We must consider a series of economic activities present in the territory being diversified, but highly integrated and interdependent, and identify the foundation of competitiveness in its complementarities - according to a logic of purpose economies. The territory should be conceived in its entirety, as a provider for the performance of economic activities and as a support for an articulated and complex set of social and environmental functions, with the participation not only of companies, but also of citizens and social forces. The rural district has a particular expertise, which does not reside in a specific good produced in it (such as the wine in Chianti), but in the ability to offer an integrated set of goods and services that carry within themselves the characterization of a given territory. The logic is that of the "basket of goods and services" (Pecqueur, 2001). It is precisely the relational character of the products offered that is decisive: the value of a good depends on the "quality" of all other goods in the basket and the "quality" of the territory itself, therefore, a set of territorial resources that have a collective origin and represent common goods to be maintained and reproduced collectively (just think of a landscape linked to traditional agricultural provisions, cultural traditions and the reputation of the territory incorporated in the name of the territory itself).

In this context, it is evident that endogenous development models need a dense network of connections between the elements of the system that make up the territory, both of agents and resources. These networks can play a number of key functions within endogenous rural development processes; among them, we can identify five in particular:

1. Establishing connections between capitals to create meanings
2. Economic/ organizational functions
3. Creating and sharing internal standards
4. Management of territorial commons
5. Seeking and effective governance.

The first function is to establish connections between the different rural capitals present in the territory (environmental, economic, human, cultural, social, institutional) (Berti, 2009) to create relevant meaning to both internal and external agents. As highlighted by Belletti and Berti (2011) from the concept of *Countryside Capital* introduced by Garrod, Wornell and Youell (2006), the resources present in rural areas, both material and intangible, if properly mobilized, determine a competitive advantage for those who live and work in that territory. These local resources, mostly fragmented, can be transformed into a "territorial rural capital" (Dematteis e Governa, 2006) defined as the localized set of common goods which produce collective advantages that are not divisible and are not privately appropriated. This "territorial rural capital" present three characteristics, which are: immobility, as they are permanently incorporated in certain locations; specificity, because they are difficult to find elsewhere with the same qualities; and heritage, since they accumulate and settle in the medium-long term and therefore, cannot be produced in a short time. The network between agents allows mobilizing these capitals, creating connections between them and reaching a synthesis that is manifested in symbolic capital (Brunori, 2006), which represents, precisely, the set of symbols produced by local society, which should be understood as representations of different capitals, whether in terms of internal conceptualization or in terms of external perception (Belletti and Berti, 2011).

A second category includes the economic/organizational functions of networks, by which the systematization of a set of agents and resources can allow the search for network economies (linked to the sharing of patterns, see the next point), scale and range. An effective example is the economies of scale in conducting collective marketing campaigns, aimed at promoting the territory: the unit cost of service production which is the cost of "contact" with the potential customer, decreases as the volume of investment made increases, thanks to the pooling of resources from different areas.

The third category consists of the creation and sharing of internal standards, or standards shared among the agents of the territory. The relevance of these standards is twofold. On the one hand, the presence of a shared standard is a stimulus for the agents included in the system to seek to increase the quality of their goods, services and to ensure the overall coherence of supply from that specific territory. In this way, it is more likely and less expensive to coordinate the agents of the system and consequently activate collective action.

The fourth category concerns the management of territorial *commons*. Many of the territorial resources used, both material (e.g., water, infrastructure) and

intangible (e.g., the landscape and even the reputation attached to the name of the territory) represent the essence of a common good and are therefore, subject to over-exploitation and unregulated exploitation phenomena, which may compromise their sustainability and functionality over time. Appropriate forms of networks between agents can prevent or at least reduce these phenomena. A fair distribution of the resources and benefits of rural development processes among the actors of the system is one of the most expected results of this type of management.

Finally, the fifth function of the network in endogenous rural development processes is to seek a territorial governance capable of activating and managing the movement of alignment of rural agents around a shared vision of objectives and the development model (Iacoponi, 1995), and also a governance capable of responding and meeting the requirements of public policy management, especially on the part of the European Union. This is clearly a cross-cutting set of functions and, to some extent, preliminary to the four previous categories. It is worth highlighting the importance of governance models that aim at forms of public-private interaction and collaboration, that are capable of establishing local control over development processes, in addition to maintaining the benefits in the territory and ensuring their sustainability over time, with the aim of stimulating continuous innovation and ensuring that the subject (company, institution or citizen) feels part of a relationship-driven system.

As for the network, we refer more to the general functions that it can develop, and not so much to the concrete individual forms that the network can take. In this second perspective, different tools become possible, ranging from informal networks to codified forms such as associations or the most recent network contracts (Italian Law 33 / 2009) [6] , which can follow specific models made possible by sector-specific norms, such as those of the Wine Route, districts or biodistricts.

In the next two paragraphs, the role of the networks in rural development processes will be briefly discussed with a view to rural tourism and the valorization of origin products.

3 Networks in rural tourism

In recent years, rural tourism has become a tool of great interest to address the socioeconomic problems of the rural and agricultural sectors (Guarino and Doneddu, 2011). It is especially since the Second World War that tourism is perceived as an important resource for many European rural areas, particularly those that have been left on the margins of the process of agricultural modernisation and industrial development. Rural communities perceive tourism development as an opportunity to diversify the rural economy and revitalize territories that were no longer competitive in the face of global market dynamics and the evolution of agricultural policies. The activity is also promising for agriculture, since rural tourism offers the opportunity to diversify activities in a multifunctional perspective (Belletti, 2010).

The diversity of rural tourism has been progressively accentuated, with the transition from the pioneering phase to the current phase of fast growth. The

[6] Legislative decree 33/2009, 11 of april 2009: Urgent measures to support industrial sectors in crisis, as well as provisions on milk production and debt repayment in the dairy sector"

relationship between rurality and tourism is very complex and articulated, due to the multiple links that exist between the different components of rurality and the tourist phenomenon; the latter goes from a pioneering factor to one of the engines of the local economy, or at least one of the poles of territorial development strategies.

The process of value creation through rural tourism is based on the combination - operated by an agent or, more often, by a plurality of agents - of a set of resources, some generic and others specific to the local rural heritage. This process takes place through the exercise of activities aimed at the production and marketing of one or more tourist and recreational services. The rurality resources that can be potentially incorporated belong to the different types of territorial capitals mentioned above (environmental, cultural, social, economic and human), with symbolic capital representing a fundamental element, both to ensure the consistency of the offer around a common perception of the territory, as well as for the communication with the market. However, the real role played by rural resources varies according to the situation. Some rural resources are used directly in the production process (rural properties used for accommodation, natural areas used to offer tours and excursions, etc.), while others represent attributes that contextualize the tourist product (for example, the quality of the landscape, the reputation of the typical products of the region) and which can be decisive in the consumer's decision (Belletti, 2010).

A relevant aspect is the collective and not private character of some of the rural resources used in the process of creating tourist value. That is, they are resources produced and maintained with the contribution of numerous agents, often through lasting processes. In many cases, the contribution of farmers is decisive, due to the fact that agricultural enterprises manage most of the soil in rural areas. Many rural resources have the nature of a public good, that is, they can be used freely by a plurality of agents that organize these resources in a production process that has tourism as an end. In this scenario, the value generated by tourism does not always reward those who in fact contribute to the maintenance of rural capital, thus harming the multiplication of these capitals and consequently the very support of the tourist development process. An emblematic case is that of public goods generated by agricultural activity, such as cultural landscapes, the conservation of agricultural biodiversity and local material culture, which are often valued on a tourist basis without agricultural enterprises participating in the distribution of benefits.

As long as the rural territory has its own economic and social vitality, agriculture and the other protagonists who use the soil and contribute to the rural cultural structure will spontaneously produce and regenerate rural capitals as a by-product of their main activity, the production of goods. At the time when this no longer occurs, or when technical and economic developments make available new production methods (for example, super-intensive farming models), which negatively impact the capitals linked to the development of tourism, the problem of how to guarantee and guide the reproduction of rural capital arises. The risk of erosion of rural capital intensifies when the tourism development process is led by subjects outside the rural context of the region, especially when it comes to large groups that buy whole rural villages to transform them in some kind of holiday village. Even without such extreme situations - which are in fact frequent in rural areas of major attraction and tourist development, as in Tuscany - the tourist initiative

is often triggered by non-agricultural or local elements, which may make it difficult to strike a balance between production and the use of rural territorial capital.

To understand the organizational forms that allow generating dynamics of differentiation, by which certain tourist-rural configurations are traced in each rural territory, it is worth mentioning the concepts of *network* and integration. A *network* is an organizational form resulting from the connections established between a variety of heterogeneous agents in search of their own interests (Green et al., 1999). The concept of integration refers to the network connections of resources - economic, social, cultural, environmental, etc - between the different agents, as well as to the final product generated by these associations (Saxena and Ilbery, 2008). With regard to rural tourism, the networks allow agents to seek, obtain and share resources, participate in cooperative actions for mutual benefit and develop common visions, as well as disseminate ideas and mobilize resources. However, to build the product-territory, interaction between agents is not enough, but it is necessary to recognize complementarity and the need to activate integrative processes with all other agents present in the territory (Belletti and Berti, 2011).

Agritourism is an activity that, at least in some respects and if carefully regulated by regional rules, could ensure complementarity between agricultural activity and the tourist benefit - for an individual agricultural enterprise, not at the level of the rural territory. Isolated agritourism can hardly relate efficiently to the market, due to the dimensional limits imposed by regulations. It is evident that purely restrictive approaches (such as rules of control over production and land use practices) do not represent the solution to the problem, especially in marginalized areas where the abandonment process would only be accelerated - although the use of these approaches is part of a territorial strategy. The essential is, in fact, the capacity to promote local coordination mechanisms, which allow not only to include regional agents involved in tourism activity in the development of shared projects (in order to build coherence in territorial supply and ensure visibility before demand), but also to enable the subsidization of collaborative and intersectoral paths aimed at maintaining and valuing rural resources. Rural tourism is only a coordinated component within integrated rural development models specific to each territory, that has the capacity to ensure the balance between consumption and reproduction of collective rural resources through the participation of the various categories interested in strategic decisions and in receiving the benefits generated by the activity.

The thematic routes, including the Roads of Wines and Tastes (with various names in the various Italian regions), represent a specific and institutionalised network with the function of supporting the development of rural tourism, closely linked to the valuation of production. The general objective of the Wine Routes is to enhance the wine-growing areas along with their history and culture, to create a quality wine tourism, attentive to traditions and respectful of the environment and its landscape. This type of initiative testifies to the involvement of producers, processors, distributors, tour guides, tourism operators, and public bodies, in the process of valuing the products - no longer just the wine - on which the itinerary is based.

4 Networks for the valorization of origin products

The valuation of origin products - products which specific quality attributes derive from the link with certain territories - is a particularly complex activity due to some characteristics of these products, mainly regarding the collective dimension and the strong connection with the territory. These factors mean that there are many people interested in valuing the product, including the producers who operate the various stages of the production process, but also local society, institutions, consumers and their organisations. These subjects are interested not only in the business aspects of valuing the typical product, but also in the effects on the local production system and on the territory of origin of the product, on the identity of the population, local culture and known agroecosystems thanks to the product of origin.

The collective dimension of origin products can be analysed through two perspectives: that of the specific local resources, on which the peculiarity of the product of origin is based, and that of the geographical indication, that is, the name associated to the product.

Specific territorial resources, as well as the reputation associated with geographical indication, represent territorial *commons* based on a set of territorial capitals that require effective territorial *governance* in order not to compromise their value (see paragraph 2).

The particularities resulting from the link between the product and the territory of origin are in fact the result of an evolutionary process articulated between local producers and then between those producers and the local community and, over time, when the system opens to more distant markets, between the same producers with consumers and non-local citizens. The origin product is therefore the result of this interaction, and incorporates knowledge built over time and shared within a territorialized community.

The origin product represents, therefore, a resource for the local community, to the extent that aggregated dynamics and projects are created around it, both idealized by territorial agents who seek to create value around the product itself.

The collective dimension of origin products has important implications with regard to the ways of economic exploitation of the reputation of the product, linked to the territorial origin. In other words, the fact that the geographical name associated with the product of origin is a local collective patrimony brings a problem related to the right of ownership over the good of "geographical indication" and the identification of limits to its use.

In valorization initiatives based on the regulation of geographical location (collective geographical landmarks, Protected designations of origin – PDO - and Protected geographical inidcations - PGI), the presence of a representative association of producers is, according to the legislation in force, obligatory. Both in the case of collective geographical frameworks and in the case of PDO / PGI, linked to EU regulation 1151/2012, in fact, the application for registration must be submitted by a producer association. In the case of PDO and PGI, the writing of product specifications (defining rules on the production process, on the quality of the final product and on the geographical area that producers must respect in order to have the right to use the name of the geographical location for the marketing of their products) is especially delicate.

Normally, reaching an agreement becomes more complex when the phases of the production chain are more numerous and when the heterogeneity of the companies located in the production area is greater - from the point of view of the refuelling areas and the quality of the raw material, the production techniques used, the commercial channels used, the economic dimensions of the activity, as well as the degree of specialization of the activities and, therefore, the importance of the product in the company's portfolio, the level of professionalism and the culture about the product itself (Belletti, Marescotti and Brazzini, 2014).

The definition of a product specification allows the development of inclusion and exclusion policies for local firms. The definition of minimum quality criteria, for example, may exclude from the use of the geographical indication some firms which, by strategic choice or technical impossibility, do not meet the requirements.

All this refers to the difficult balance between property rights (corporate reputation, corporate brand) and collective property rights (geographical indication) which conditions the very structural evolution of the local production system and the degree of cohesion between enterprises. If the product specification agreement identifies a low minimum level of quality, for example, there will be more room for individual business strategies and, consequently, greater importance will be given to the individual business image and its brands, limiting regulation to a marginal role in exchange for ensuring a minimum quality standard and thus reducing its potential catalyst for collective action.

Even after obtaining the registration, collective action is of fundamental importance for the activation and management of initiatives that value the products of origin in the market; in them are developed methods of integration and network that can be classified into two types:

- sectoral and value chain integration, that is, within the production system of the product of origin; therefore, it occurs among small and medium-sized agricultural and food enterprises, but also with commercial distribution companies, as well as those acting in the food sector and directly with final consumers;
- Intersectoral integration, that between the production system and operators of other sectors (for example, tourism) and institutional agents who work around the production process of the original article and / or are involved in promotion initiatives (the various associations and agencies, local public bodies).

In this second case, the inter-company network is important not only for the activation and management of recovery initiatives based on the use of geographical indications, but also in the context of initiatives aimed at harnessing the synergies that can be activated by other cultural capitals, such as the aforementioned Wine Routes, and more generally, the activation of thematic or integrated tourist packages and itineraries that know how to articulate the different types of resources present in the area.

Examples of creating a strong synergy between the local product and the territory are all development projects based on the valorization of local resources, in which the production and valorization of typical agri-food productions play a central role. Collective promotion initiatives are well known, usually coordinated by an institutional entity (Regions or Regional Agencies, Provinces, Mountain

Communities, consortia between local public and private entities, Local Action Groups, etc.) for the valorization of baskets of local products or, even more completely, of all the goods of the territory (Eno-gastronomic productions, handicrafts, environmental heritage, culture and local traditions). There are numerous examples of territories that promoted, through the establishment of collective frameworks, the implementation of communication initiatives, creation of thematic itineraries, high-standard quality products.

Through these forms of interaction, the integration between the product of origin and the territory is fully achieved; that is, the links between the origin product , the local community and the other resources of the territory are strengthened or become perceptible.

Other initiatives that are enhanced by territorial integration and that are becoming increasingly important in terms of valuing origin products are the routes of flavours. In this case, it is a matter of "building" in the territory a network of alliances between the various local agents, involved with the process of valorization at different levels: producers (agricultural and agrotourism enterprises, processing enterprises), the various types of "distributors" (shops, wineries, restaurants, etc.), operators linked to the tourist reception system, public managers and bodies involved in the enhancement of local resources, etc.

This set of actors that united with the aim of creating value in the territory through the "joint" offering of goods and services centered on a given theme (ex: wine), develops "structuring principles" that create material and symbolic externalities that, by allowing the differentiation of the specific territory of the global markets, lead producers to obtain a reputation-based advantage. At the same time, they also generate network externalities through which producers perceive, for example, positive effects on the costs of the corporate structure, such as the possibility of using collective marketing services, learning through interaction with other partners and organizational and technical innovations to reduce organization and transaction costs.

5 Final considerations

The networks, systems of structured connections between the multiplicity of actors and resources present in the rural environment, play an increasingly important role in the transition processes from homologated agriculture to endogenous territorial development models focused on multifunctional agriculture. This multifunctional agriculture is characterised by qualitative differentiation of production, the extension towards new activities of production of goods and services, and the recovery of more direct exchange channels with the final consumer.

In this essay, we identify and discuss the plurality of key functions that networks can play in endogenous rural development processes. In particular, we identify the function of building connections between capitals to create meanings, i.e., symbolic capital, characterized by the development of economic/organizational functions, by the creation and sharing of internal standards and management of territorial common goods; added to this is a metafunction, the one of the effective governance of the relationship between agents.

The rural area and its processes of endogenous development, evidenced by the two cases analyzed - of agriturism and the valorization of origin products - can be interpreted respectively as a network of networks, more or less formalized, and a result from their interactions. The role of policies at various levels is increasingly to monitor and support the development of networks.

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