

The resilient potential of some Sicilian inner areas: the case of the Calatino Project Area

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Resumen

El potencial resiliente de algunas zonas interiores sicilianas

El carácter resiliente de los territorios marginales, a nivel nacional, está siendo investigado por la Agencia de Cohesión Territorial que, en 2014, elaboró la Estrategia Nacional para Áreas Internas (ENAI). Nuestro caso de estudio se refiere al área del proyecto «Calatino», que fue identificada por el ENAI, y describimos sus características esenciales y cualidades territoriales. A través del Sistema de Información Geográfica (SIG), hemos creado cartografía funcional para la identificación del área, y para la descripción de algunas de sus principales características. Para evaluar algunas características de resiliencia, se identificaron los actores y redes que tienen un papel en la activación de estrategias resilientes, mientras que se realizó un análisis a través de la red de afiliación de Análisis de Redes Sociales (ARS). Por un lado, este análisis destacó algunos problemas y, por otro lado, las potencialidades que pueden buscarse en la debilidad de las relaciones que los municipios parecen mantener entre sí, así como en un cierto grado de fermento cultural.

Palabras clave: Áreas internas; Despoblación; Resiliencia; SIG; ARS

Abstract

The resilience of marginal territories, at a national level, is being investigated by the Territorial Cohesion Agency which, in 2014, produced the National Strategy for Internal Areas (NSIA). Our case study concerns the Project Area «Calatino», which was identified by the NSIA, and we describe its essential characteristics and territorial qualities. By means of the Geographic Information System (GIS), we have created cartography functional to the identification of the area, and for the description of some of its main characteristics. In order to evaluate some resilient characteristics, the actors and networks that have a role in the implementation of resilient strategies have been identified, while analysis was carried out through the affiliation network of Social Network Analysis (SNA). On the one hand, this analysis highlighted some problems and, on the other hand, potentialities that can be sought in the weakness of the relationships that the municipalities seem to maintain among themselves, as well as in a certain degree of cultural ferment.

Keywords: Inner Areas; Depopulation; Resilience; GIS; SNA

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1. Introduction

Given the complexity of definitions and concepts of resilience, whose discussion would require a long and in-depth debate, we would like to directly propose a use closely related to the purpose of the present research work. The concept of resilience is in fact applied extensively in the environmental, cultural, social, historical, economic and political debate, dependent on the geographical scale as well as temporally oriented, but in this case we will choose the characteristics that most closely resemble the dynamics of the area that is the subject of our investigation. For this reason, we will refer to a concept of resilience that refers to the «ability of a system to maintain its identity and adapt its essential structure and function in the face of disturbance» (Holling, 1973; Orchiston et al., 2016). Also, from the tourism point of view, it is possible to find in the literature further definitions that respond to our needs, in fact, the concept of resilience is often used to help local actors plan sustainable (tourism) development (Simmie, Martin, 2010; Martin, 2012).

In our opinion, the issue is particularly important when looking at the territorial scale. We are, in fact, facing small local communities and «internal» territories that, for decades, have been witnessing emptying processes from essential services, functions and population, which have weakened their socio-economic structure. However, it is not automatic that the system can react to these disturbances, because in the case of marginalized and weakened territories, the ability to cope with economic challenges and poor policies may fail. Hence the need to verify whether or not these declinations of resilience are present in local territories, certain in this case of the presence of important territorial endowments but uncertain about the resilient capacities of the communities; therefore it seemed more appropriate to deal with resilient «potential», since only a conscious and adequate use of resources would allow the local community to cope with crises by systematising what's available. The next step was to verify the presence of the most representative territorial endowments of the area that was formally identified by the National Strategy for Internal Areas. This was followed by a socio-economic analysis in order to verify its essential characteristics, in addition to what the SNAI has already elaborated, allowing us to understand how much was still available to the local communities and possible object of valorization on their part. Being essentially territories with obvious agricultural connotations, what emerged is related to the promotion of agricultural production, as indicated inter alia by the Institute for Research and Promotion of Internal Areas of Sicily (IRPAIS), some of which can be ascribed to the category of European certified specialties. Among other things, this analysis revealed the alarming fact concerning the continuing loss of young people of working age. These and other elements have suggested a particular choice of strategies that could, on the one hand, recover identifying aspects and, on the other hand, slow down this type of depopulation; specifically we analyzed the cultural offer of events such as Festivals and Events related to both local traditions as well as innovative topics in the process and product. As we will see, what emerged was an element of further debate to understand whether we were faced with mere potential or instead with real resilience tools.

2. The inner areas of Sicily, an already familiar «problem»

It is extremely difficult to understand a moment in which a large part of the «internal» national territory has also become marginal, and this is especially true for the south of Italy. Here, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, extensive cultivation was dominant, and there was no lack of cultivation of intensive vineyards and farms that fed a flourishing trade in meat and also supplied raw materials for the processing of cheese and leather. Farms devoted to the production of

crops and livestock existed alongside cottage industries, and a fishing industry which also supported local industries processing and conserving tuna, swordfish and other species of fish. Other industries concerned the transformation of sea salt and rock salt. In later times, the area used for the cultivation of vineyards was enlarged, and constituted the base for small and medium rural properties, which increased their economic and social influence as wine production grew.

The Sicilian urban plot, which has ancient origins, was remodelled in different periods by the alternating dominations on the island, each of which had an impact on the relationship between countryside and city, and on the organization of the rural spaces and territorial assets, which were subjected to a continuous and uninterrupted restructuring. It was gaining more and more weight in concentrating the economic and cultural vivacity which was previously scattered over agricultural land feuds. With the birth of new centres and the decadence of others, the economic-social processes of the island were accelerated: for example, in the centuries of Spanish and Bourbon domination (1573-1714), 113 new centres were built on the island, mostly in terms of agricultural colonization of large estates, some of which still exist today and have more than 50 thousand inhabitants.

The creation of the new «urban economy» was already more apparent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is, however, in the nineteenth century that certain timid forms of industrialization were strengthened, such as the exploitation of the sulphur and salt mines of the geographically more internal areas; or the new impetus to wine cultivation and fish processing, even though many of these activities were later abandoned due to a lack of structural adaptation. This was inherent in the lack of aptitude for entrepreneurship of the local social fabric and also due to chronic delay in providing Sicily with the necessary infrastructure (Barone, 1987). Simultaneously with the initial decline of industrial activities, it is possible to witness the polarization of economic activities in the main urban centres, especially those situated in coastal parts. These increasingly take on the role of coordination and organization of the surrounding territory, either including agricultural fiefs or conflicting with them (Iachello and Signorelli, 1987).

It is interesting to recall how the 1881 population census already reported that about 54% of the population were settled in a coastal strip 10 kilometres wide (Di Martino, 1984). Already known as the «Southern question» («Questione meridionale» as indicated by the Italian politician Antonio Billia in 1873), the disproportion in economic and social development between the North and the South of the country, for which remedies were unsuccessfully sought from that time forward, was noted. With coastal polarization that drained economic, cultural and human resources from the innermost areas, the experience of two world wars, and an economic policy that has consistently enacted exogenous top-down policies, the so-called area of «Southern Italy» has been for a long time a 'sick man', in constant need of attention.

This state of affairs continued, at least until 1957, which was when Law n. 635 was introduced, with the aim of compensating the regions of Northern Italy with direct incentives to lower income areas. It thus initiated a succession of policies concerning «disadvantaged» areas in a transverse and longitudinal direction with respect to the geography of the nation as a whole. The problem that had apparently been brought to light, i.e. a certain «delay in development», showed in all its crudeness an even deeper problem, namely that some areas of Italian territory were more «refractory» than others to development and many of these, if not most, were in the South of Italy.

The lexicon of economic and territorial analysis was thus enriched and modified with the ever more frequent use of the term «inner areas», especially common when there were many imbal-

ances, as a result of transformations in the economic and social structures of areas capable of attracting investments, and areas that remained in the margin or even yielded resources to the former. To this should be added the institutional innovations of the '70s, that anticipated the shift of competences related to the infrastructures of the area at a smaller scale, through the establishment of the non-autonomous regions (Becchi Collidà et al., 1989).

What seems to characterize the so-called inner areas until the 1990s are some exclusionary features and the marginalization of development trajectories, where it is precisely development, so to speak, that suffers from lack of innovation. The attempts to «industrialize» large areas of the country or even the industrialization of agriculture are clear examples. Precisely in this second case, the maintenance of so-called traditional activities at the expense of the market and the progress of important sectors of the economy were attributed to the condition of generalized marginality or disadvantage.

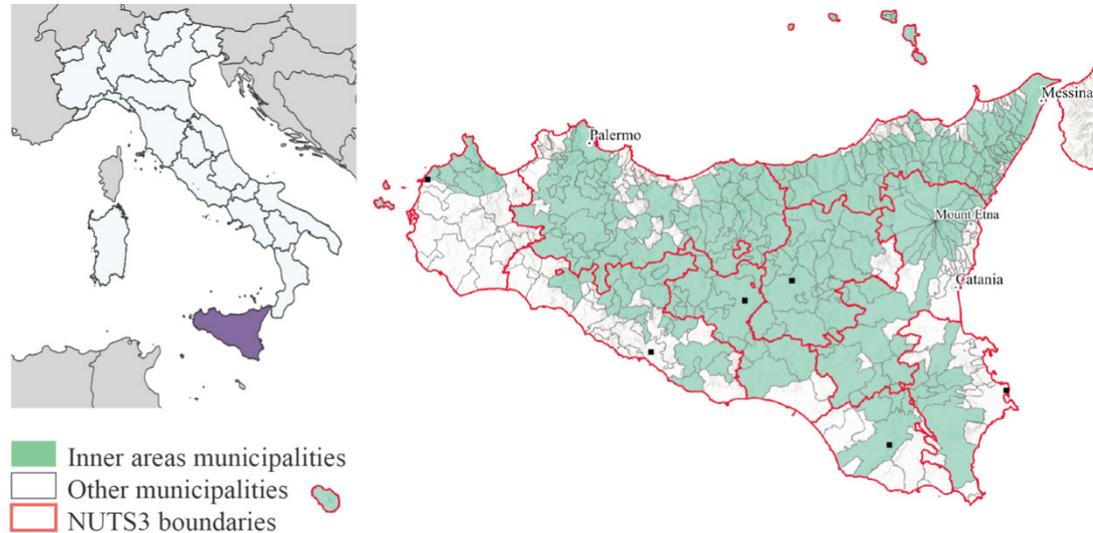
It is indeed possible to trace in European, national and regional legislation since the mid-70s, a whole series of natural and infrastructural «disadvantages» that were only later re-interpreted in a post-modern key, restoring other visions and other problems.

Directive 75/268/EEC on mountain agriculture and certain disadvantaged areas was introduced on April 28th 1975, addressing the problem of the social structure and disparities between the different agricultural regions, which are better defined as the most disadvantaged agricultural areas with reference to the natural conditions of production. The same directive also highlights aspects such as the problem of safeguarding the natural environment and abandoning land as a consequence of abandoning agricultural activities, and maintaining a minimum level of population. In addition, key elements were introduced for the integration of farmers' income through forms of differentiation of primary activity, within the context of an integrated approach to tourism. This directive is, so to speak, a milestone because it introduces many elements that were innovative in their time, or at least because it considers them to be integrated and essential, such as low productivity, the natural environment, demographic regression and avocation for tourism, in addition to the question of overcoming the inner area purely in a physical geographic sense, recognizing that even some coastal areas, in the presence of particular disadvantages, may be the object of intervention. The only limit of Directive 75/268/EEC is represented by the component of direct intervention to farmers, which made economic support ineffective, indeed, destroying it; in this regard, mention should be made of the Council Directive of 15 November 1982 which amended the previous one, and established at least two hectares as the minimum area to be owned in order to apply for economic support.

In Sicily, following the national application of Directive 75/268/EEC and its amendments and further regulatory pronouncements, a process began that would lead the Sicilian Region to be among the most advanced regions on the inner areas issue: Regional Law n. 13 of 25 March 1986 (where, in particular, specific territories are identified in Article 47); Regional Law n. 26 of 9 August 1988 in which a development project was planned for the inner areas of Sicily, and which aimed at the protection and conservation of the environment, territorial and productive rebalancing and the economic-social valorization of mountainous, hilly and particularly disadvantaged areas. These also involved local authorities such as the Regional Provinces and Municipalities, Park Authorities and reserve managers (WWF, LIPU, etc.), also in agreement with public and private entities in accordance with the provisions of the then current legislation; the Decree of the President of the Region of 10 May 1989 (*Gazzetta Ufficiale della Regione Sicilia - GURS - 3*

June 1989), in which the inner areas are identified in accordance with Regional Law n. 26 of 9 August 1988 (see Map 1).

Map 1. Sicilian Inner areas according to D.P.R. 10/05/1989



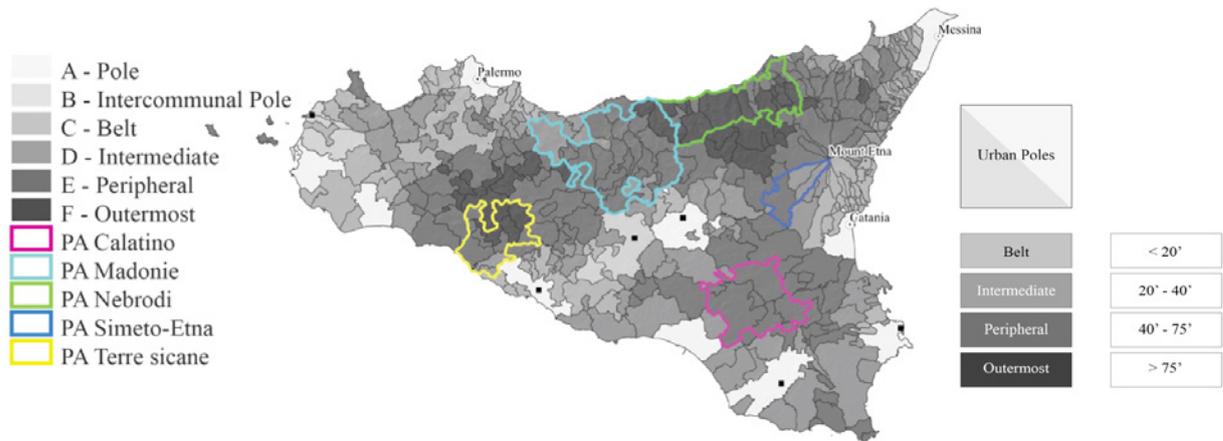
Source: our elaboration of GIS data

The aforementioned legislative process and the rules from that historical point on, ensured that the Region of Sicily, 23 years before the National Strategy for Inner Areas, was equipped with rules and tools to combat the marginalization and depopulation of large portions of its territory. The well-documented conflict over spatial location among countryside, city and industry has thus produced polarizations that - not only from the point of view of resources - have attracted and therefore shifted political interests and related economic flows from the inland areas to the coasts; first of all, to «coastal cities» and then towards the other urban centres where the tertiary sector and its 'power' have largely rewritten the dynamics of development. Such shifts represented a large-scale economic, cultural and demographic setback, above all for the geographical realities whose economy was increasingly based on the primary sector, where agriculture, sheep farming and mining activities, above all, played more than a strategic role.

In recent years, the Territorial Cohesion Agency, taking up the debate on the disadvantages of some areas of the country, has identified as 'inner' those areas that are at a significant distance from centres offering essential services (education, health and mobility), but are rich in important environmental and cultural resources, strongly diversified in kind, and follow centuries-old processes of anthropization (Barca et al., 2014). More specifically, based on the distance from the urban nodes that provide services, it classifies them as a pole, belt, intermediate, peripheral and ultra-peripheral (see Map 2).

This characterization made it possible to identify how about 30.6% of the national territory is more than 40 minutes away from centres that offer a complete system of basic services. These are areas in which about 7.6% of the population live (a percentage that is further decreasing, due to the latest depopulation trends), and are also characterized by an aging population.

Map 2. Classification of Municipalities according to NSIA 2014



Source: our elaboration of GIS data

In order to contrast the aforementioned phenomena, and in an attempt to identify homogeneous areas of intervention and experimentation, as early as 2012 the National Committee for Inner Areas, coordinated by the «Department for Development and Territorial Cohesion» (Dipartimento per lo Sviluppo e la Coesione territoriale - DPS), acting together with the Regions, selected 72 project areas (PAs), five of which were in Sicily:

- the Simeto-Etna area, an experimental area of national interest,
- the Calatino area,
- the Sicanian lands (Terre sicane),
- the Madonie area,
- the Nebrodi area.

The five interested areas belonging to Sicilian territory have, so to speak, characteristics of territorial and structural homogeneity, on which they base their formal adhesion to the PAs and aggregation by territorial proximity, even if they do not have a municipal classification that corresponds to their state of development (see Map 2).

2.1. *The south-eastern territory of Sicily between models, problems and strategies*

The economic and social imbalances that characterize the various areas of the Italian 'Mezzogiorno' can be considered as some of the main obstacles to territorial development based on socio-economic integration and cohesion. To these, it is possible to add the never-ending intolerance to institutional regionalization schemes which, from above, have to some extent partitioned and divided, through consolidated administrative conventions, realities endowed with specific autonomous configurations, perhaps better able to respond to the phases of retreat of the local economy and society.

It is also known that, in times of crisis, it is a useful practice to recover and deepen the «knowledge» of peripheral and marginal realities. This regards those areas that, for different reasons have experienced, and perhaps still do, a certain disadvantage in development remaining, so to speak, less equipped and less able to react to processes of general impoverishment (resilience). These processes, without interruption, would lead to a further socio-economic and sometimes

even environmental «retreat». This is the case of internal municipalities (inner areas), areas that, for specific characteristics, have for some years (in Sicily, some decades) catalysed the attention of policy makers because they are considered strategic for local territorial structures.

This is the reason why we have chosen the «case study» of the «Calatino» Project Area. A few years after its conception, it is legitimate to ask whether we are facing a new consolidated administrative reality or rather, once again, a territorial alchemy extraneous to specific territorial endowments. The mix that emerges from these two conjectures needs necessary insights both in terms of academic conventions as well as paradigmatic superstructures that, in any case, are based on the absence of populations, products and minimum services from which is possible to profit.

The Project Area «Calatino» consists of eight municipalities: Caltagirone, Grammichele, Licodia Eubea, Mineo, Mirabella Imbaccari, San Cono, San Michele di Ganzaria, Vizzini. According to the NSIA classification (2014), they are all peripheral, with the exception of San Cono (intermediate), which is the smallest of all, with a population incidence of 3,5% compared to the total population of the area. The area shows an overall population loss of 5,25% in the period between 2001 and 2018; the figures are apparently not high but, observing the data in the table, we may observe how seven out of eight municipalities register a loss of population, which, in the case of San Michele di Ganzaria, is as high as 32.62%. Caltagirone records the only positive data, simply because the component of public employment is greater than in the other municipalities (see Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic evolution of the PA Calatino

	POP. 2001	POP. 2011	POP. 2018	DIFF. %	SUP. KM ²	AB/KM ²
Caltagirone	37.373	38.493	38.295	2,47	383,38	100,4
Grammichele	13.395	13.347	13.267	-0,96	31,02	430,32
LicodiaEubea	3.161	3.066	3.087	-2,34	112,45	27,27
Mineo	5.586	5.117	5.088	-8,92	246,32	20,77
Mirabella Imbaccari	6.331	4.832	4.764	-24,75	15,3	315,79
San Cono	2.961	2.662	2.656	-10,30	6,63	401,42
San Michele di Ganzaria	4.749	3.250	3.200	-32,62	25,81	125,91
Vizzini	7.105	6.164	6.072	-14,54	126,75	48,63
	80.661	76.931	76.429	-5,25	947,66	183,81

Source: our elaboration of ISTAT data

From the point of view of territorial allocations, a summary scheme is shown below (see Table 2), from which it is possible to note the weight of the 'rural' component of the PA through the Rurality Index data; this index is that of the Italian Institute of Statistics and relates the utilized agricultural area (UAA) and the municipal area (ISTAT 2016), and shows that as many as seven out of eight municipalities have a ratio of more than 40%, compared to a weighting which sees municipalities with a ratio of more than 30% classified as rural, and municipalities with a ratio of more than 60% as ultra-rural.

This marked rurality is partially compensated for by the significant presence of agricultural specialties, in the form of numerous European Geographical Indications (GI) such as the 'Ficodindia di San Cono DOP'.

These specialties also tend to characterize the tourism aspect of the municipalities of the area, as they become elements of attraction for new tourist flows, drawn in by the territorial and landscape elaboration deriving from the presence of these exceptional products. The used Cultural Value (CV) is that of the Higher Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale - ISPRA) and proposes a weighting of places of culture (1), of the Orange Flags of the Italian Touring Club (TCI) (0.75), places of the Italian Environment Fund (FAI) (0.75), environmental assets recognized as parks/reserves/SIC/SPA (0.50) and enogastronomic peculiarities (0.25) (ISPRA 2017) for each municipality of the PA, as shown in Table 2; with the exception of Caltagirone, the CV is very low for almost the totality of the municipalities (below the value 2) and, in any case, the data is composed almost exclusively of the various PDO and PGI productions that are found in the territories.

Table 2. Characteristics of the municipalities

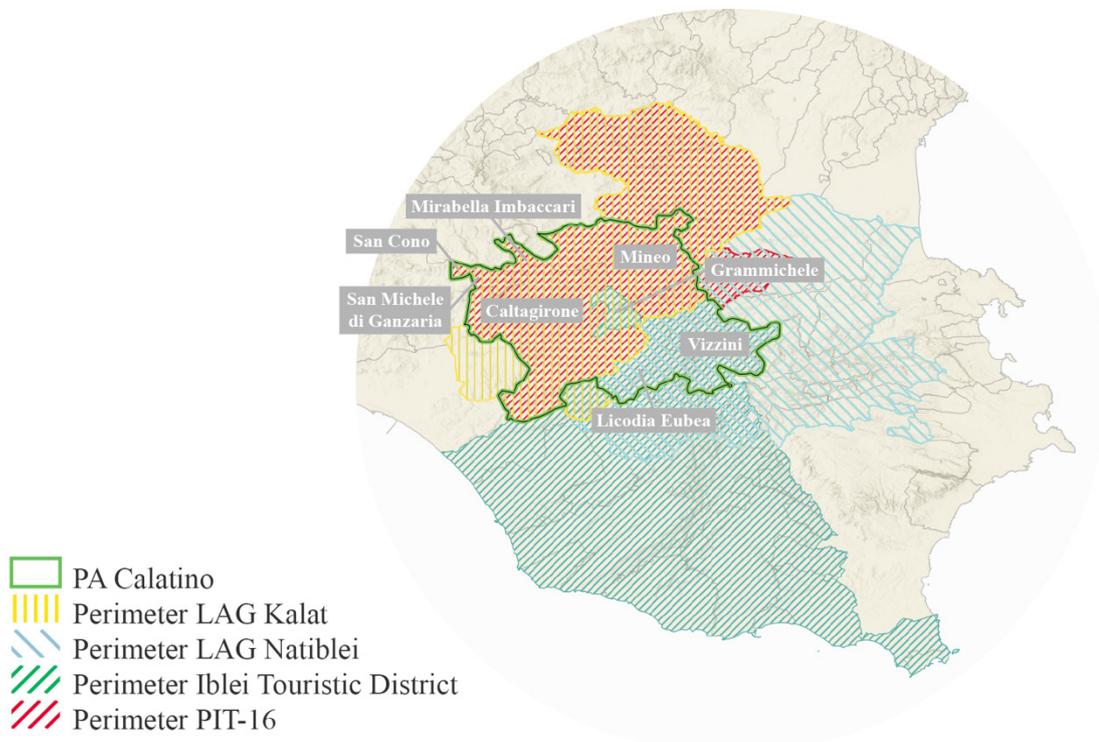
	NSIA Tip.	RI (SAU on Km2)	TPI (beds on Km2)	TFI (beds on population)	CV
Caltagirone	Peripheral	60,01	No Tourism Penetration Activity	No Touristic Activity	6,5
Grammichele	Peripheral	44,99	Little Tourism Penetration Activity	No Touristic Activity	1,25
LicodiaEubea	Peripheral	59,69	No Tourism Penetration Activity	No Touristic Activity	1,25
Mineo	Peripheral	62,30	No Tourism Penetration Activity	No Touristic Activity	1
Mirabella Imbaccari	Peripheral	62,29	No Tourism Penetration Activity	No Touristic Activity	0,5
San Cono	Intermediate	28,19	No Tourism Penetration Activity	No Touristic Activity	0,75
San Michele di Ganzaria	Peripheral	44,13	Little Tourism Penetration Activity	No Touristic Activity	1
Vizzini	Peripheral	71,50	No Tourism Penetration Activity	No Touristic Activity	0,75
Area		61,87			1,86

Legenda: NSIA= National Strategy for Internal Areas, RI= Rurality Index, TPI= Tourism Penetration Index, TFI= Tourist Function Index, CV= Cultural Value. Source: our elaboration

We used two indicators to interpret and represent the structural consistency of the tourism offer: the Tourism Function Index (TFI 2016) and the Tourism Penetration Index (TPI 2016). The first helps us to understand the increasing stages of tourist penetration in order to measure the spatial concentration of tourism; to this, changes were made to update it to the altered conditions of tourist hospitality (from hotel rooms to beds, and to consider within the indicator also b&b, holiday homes, etc.) (Borzyszkowski et al., 2016; Salvatore et al., 2018). The second indicator helps us to understand the increase in the weight of the tourism sector in the general economy, considering the increase of beds as a positive phenomenon for the economy, but at the same time considering its negative effects from the point of view of the physical and social environment (gentrification, urban sprawl, rising prices, etc.) (McElroy and de Albuquerque, 1998). Both indicators denote an almost total absence of activity or tourist penetration. In spite of these results,

the union of the municipalities of the area (PA) was created; it proposes to exercise, in an associated form, the activities and functions concerning land registry services, energy policies, local development, services to people, the one-stop shop for production activities (Suap) and logistic activities, planning of civil protection and coordination of first aid, the enhancement of natural resources, cultural and sustainable tourism, the development of the agri-food system, energy saving and the local renewable energy supply chain. Among other things, some of these services and functions also constitute the basis of our reflection. In order to better understand the current conditions of territorial elaboration of the PA, the role of the political superstructures must also be considered, in terms of performance, regulation and political direction; although the boundaries of these superstructures are broader than the individual municipalities of the PA (see Map 3), it should be remembered that in the area there are also the Metropolitan City of Catania (former Catania Regional Province), the Tourist District of the Iblei, the Kalat (East & West) and Natiblei LAGs, and the already concluded Integrated Territorial Project (PIT 16).

Map 3. PA Calatino and political superstructures

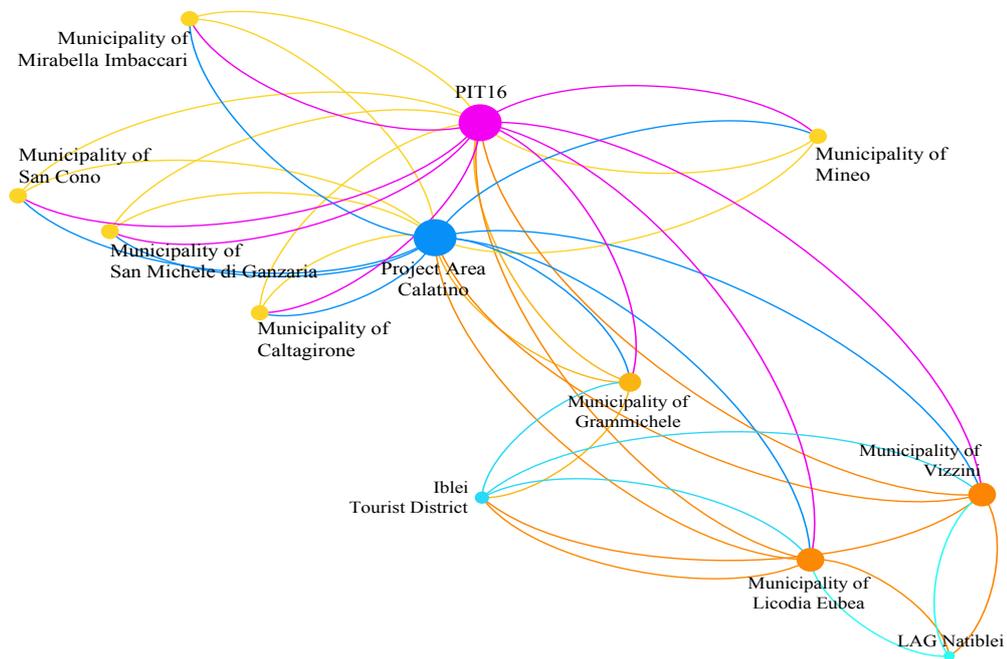


Source: our elaboration of GIS data

Of special interest are the Metropolitan City of Catania as a performance institution and the LAGs as regulatory institutions. The first because it is the provider of shared services at the basis of the establishment of the PA (waste disposal, management of water resources, mobility, education, etc.), the latter as the local «system regulation» is the basis of the resilient capacity (potential) of the local system (D'Amico R. et al., 2015). Of the Metropolitan City there is not much to say except that it is the substitute of the former Regional Province from which it inherits all the functions and all the limits, while as regards the LAGs we can say that they fully represent the place-based approach supported by the European Union and, although neighbouring one another, they represent different local action strategies. The Kalat has, so to speak, a cooperative strategy, a relational approach based on consultations and cooperation, while Natiblei has a more competitive

action strategy, selecting the network of relationships more because of the competitive ability of the partners than territorial proximity (Santoro P., 2015). The presence of these superstructures is important because it serves to create a historical overview of the various development policies from the 90s to the present day, to understand what rhetoric and which inefficiencies have been produced and what tools and what results we have available today. The territory can be thought of as a systemic region, ideally characterized by unifying factors; making use, also in this case, of the Social Network Analysis we have highlighted some of these socio-economic factors, identified in the links between political superstructures and urban centres, through which it is possible to observe the potential relationships between the municipalities (see Graph 1).

Graph 1. Diagram of the relations between the municipalities and the superstructures



Source: our processing (Gephi)

3. Analysis of the creative and cultural offer in Sicily through events

Generally speaking, it could be said that in some contexts culture, more than producing economic value, absorbs it, using value produced elsewhere, in greater proportion where public resources are concerned (Sacco and Teti, 2017). In fact, if there were not large transfers of public resources, many cultural products would not be able to survive (sustainability) or could not fully express their potential (threshold, scope, duration). If we wanted to frame the current cultural offer in a paradigmatic sense, we could identify at least three major categories, in a temporal sense and as territorial and infrastructural endowments: these are patronage, cultural and creative industries, as in our case study, and open digital platforms (Sacco and Teti, 2017). If we still wanted to address the issue in a geographical sense (it is a question of geographical scale), the observation would become even more complex, because it may pose the problem of the distinction between the origin and fruition of culture, between stages suitable for representation and flows of specta-

tors, between types of cultural message and target, taking into account that the city is different from the country. To this must necessarily be added the tourism phenomenon and the relations that are normally established with it in order to attract customers and make the cultural product economically sustainable. In fact, it is also possible to imagine by how much it is notoriously easier to propose cultural awareness in the cities, which if large enough in size and population, possess basic services able to deal with the management of tourist flows, leaving very little to the rest of the territory.

Studies on overcoming critical points in areas characterized by depopulation and «reduced» economies often identify tourism as an instrument through which it could be possible to initiate local development mechanisms (Payne and Mervar, 2010; Andreoli and Silvestri, 2017). The attraction factor, in this case, may be represented by the local resources (cultural, traditional, naturalistic and those relating to the landscape) that the communities must, however, be able to «put into the network», both in order to communicate about them and also to facilitate the organization of their coordination in the territory. It must be stressed that, in different cases, the local resources themselves are able to attract visitors, even before the territories. This is the specific case of products eligible for Community protection which, when exported, themselves assume the characteristics of media, becoming tools that can induce «remote consumers» to complete their experience, firstly by means of research on the web, and then by going to the production sites (Napoli and Petino, 2018). To this must be added the important role played by all those activities (fairs, festivals and other events) in promoting products and places, as well as communicating history, traditions and local identity.

3.1. Methodology

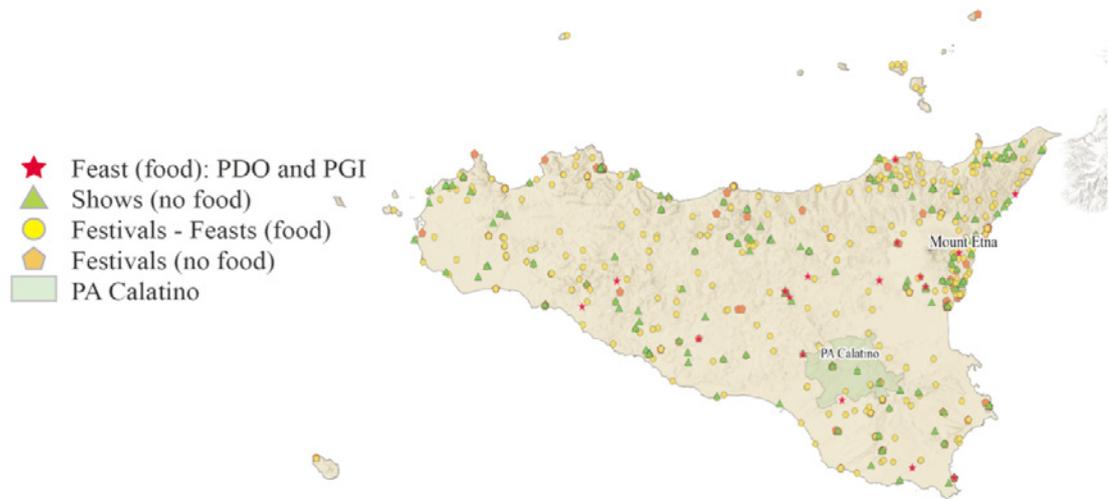
Our analysis of the creative and cultural offer has therefore followed a first phase of collection and collation of the events organized at regional level, through the consultation of institutional and private portals for the promotion of products and cultural events.

In order to carry out analysis of the web of relations in the area, we proceeded by examining certain regional tourist portals, useful for collecting and collating data about events occurring throughout the entire regional territory. These were subdivided into Food and no-Food events, though it is plain that the supply of food and wine is generally involved in the organization of any event; no-Food events were therefore considered as such in cases where these aspects did not figure as prevalent in the proposed event. In the case of Food events, the results were far more numerous (485) and, of these, a small part (17) were linked to the promotion of PDO and PGI products. Among the no-Food events (254) were included, for example, all historical and religious events, as well as the most recent ones that were concerned with visual, musical and literary arts (Map 4).

After this first phase, we proceeded with the details of the area in question. Contrary to the regional trend, which sees a clear prevalence of Food events, no-Food events prevail among the municipalities of PA Calatino, with the town of Caltagirone in a leadership role, presenting various events related to local crafts. All the events carried out in the area are represented through the concentration map, which immediately highlights the areas with the highest density of activity (Map 5).

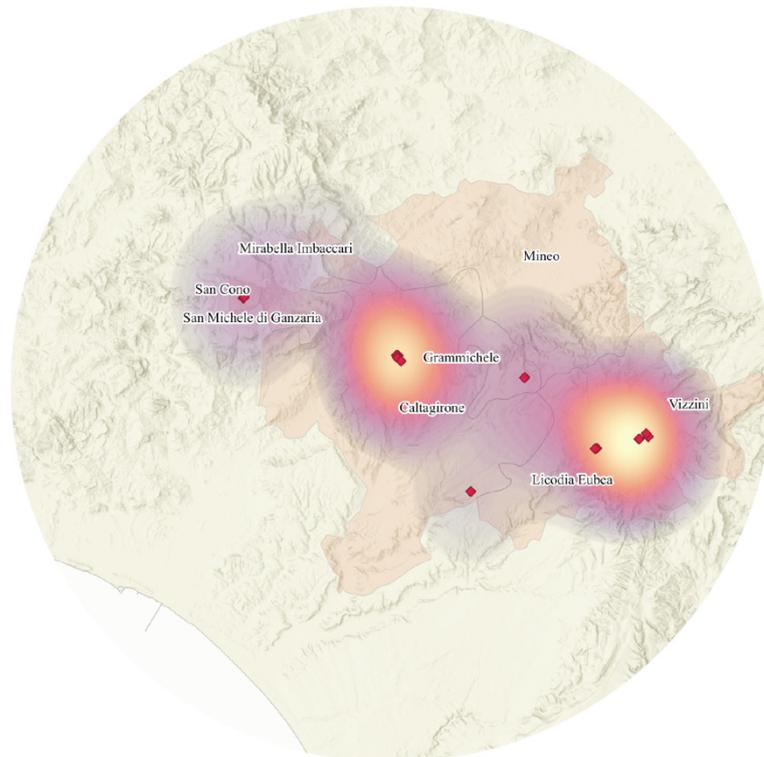
Given the attention, at national and regional level, for enogastronomy, which is seen as a tool for the promotion of territories and as a tourist attraction, we have focused on the Food events carried out by the municipalities involved. This choice was necessary if we consider this type of event as representative of the economy of the places.

Map 4. Collected events in Sicily and localization of PA Calatino



Source: our elaboration of GIS data

Map 5. Concentration map of the events in the PA Calatino



Source: our elaboration of GIS data

In particular, three events were identified, which were recently included in the Project of Excellence «Territories of wine and taste. A trip to discover the genius loci», funded by MiBACT and the Sicilian Region: the Grape Festival of Licodia Eubea, the 'Ficodindia di San Cono PDO' Festival and the Vizzini Ricotta and Cheese Festival (now included in the broader event called «Festival of Flavours and Folklore in the Land of Verga»).

The three selected events have therefore in common the fact of being comparable by category (Food), the fact of insisting on the same territory and of being part of regional projects aimed at enhancing the local identity. Later, we wanted to analyze if and how the three events relate to each other, in terms of sharing knowledge, partners, resources.

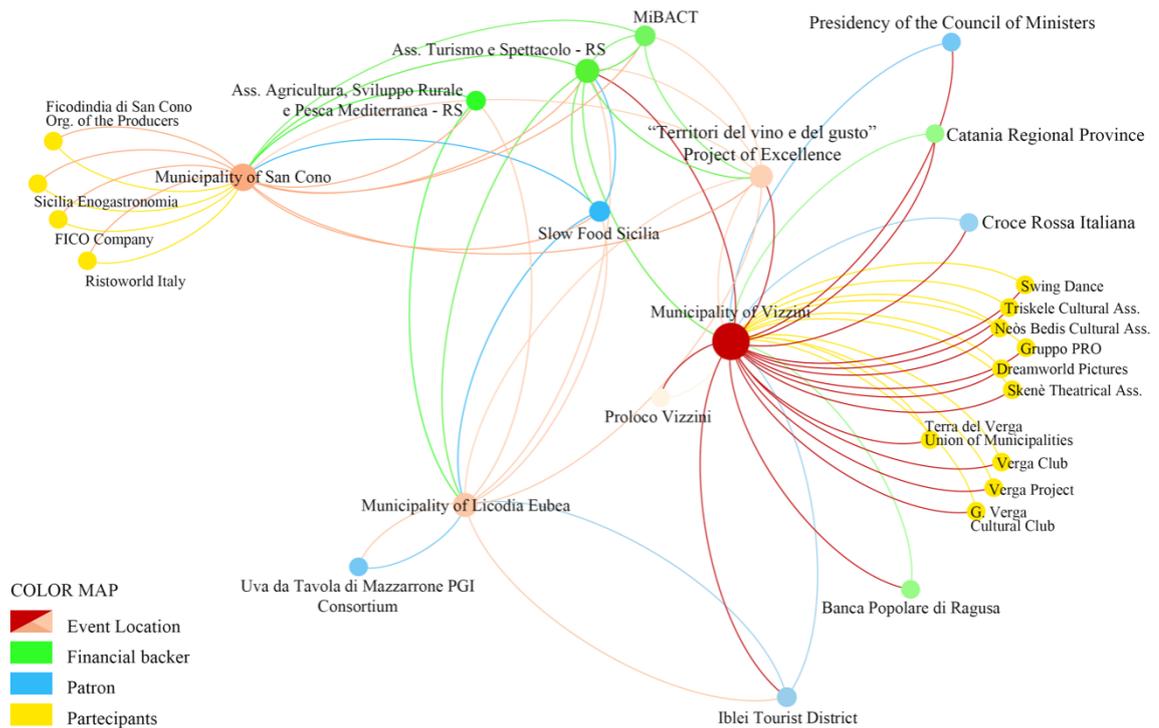
The Social Network Analysis is, in this sense, a very useful tool because it is able to represent the involvement of each actor of the system within a network, highlighting the weak points that can damage the cohesion or, conversely, the strengths around which it is possible to build successive strategies of planning and communication of events capable of intercepting tourist flows. In particular, the use of the Affiliation network makes it possible to relate events and actors, considering events as opportunities for contact and sharing (Rizzo and Lo Giudice, 2013), permitting the transmission of material or nonmaterial resources (Wasserman and Faust, 1994). Using an event-based selection procedure (Trobis and Milia, 2011, p. 29), we collected material relating to the latest edition of selected events (that of 2017), looking for information about the participants in various capacities of the organization (funding, patronage, sponsorship), comparing the data obtained with those relating to the political superstructures (administrative, management) to which the municipalities have acceded in order to evaluate the collaborative potential and the degree of involvement of the various organizations of the network.

The collected data were used to elaborate the matrices necessary to graphically visualize the relationships between the different actors, allowing us to quickly and intuitively understand which of the municipalities have the most contacts for the organization of the event in question, obtaining for it funds, sponsorships or other forms of collaboration (Graph 2):

- the financial backers are mainly entities directly interested by virtue of their mission (departments, ministry through specific projects), or more rarely, banks;
- patrons/sponsorships come from state institutions and associations, and structures directly related to the subject/object of the event, participating in educational, cultural and information activities (tasting workshops or product information);
- there are also numerous collaborators/participants in various capacities on the days of events, which mostly offer reimbursed catering and entertainment services.

The directed graph, resulting from the Affiliation matrix composed by the set of events and the set of participating actors, shows at a glance how, in the organization of the event, the municipality of Vizzini has the widest network. This may be the consequence of its having enhanced the gastronomic contents of the Ricotta and Cheese Festival, which registered its 44th edition in 2018, including a broader series of cultural events, focusing on Verga's literature. On the other hand, however, the event held in Vizzini, despite being the longest-lived of the three selected, does not refer to a PDO or PGI product, but to dairy products more generally.

Graph 2. Relationship structures for the selected events



Source: our processing (Gephi)

3.2. Discussion

From an analytical point of view, the structure of the network that emerges is «sparse».

The network graph, in fact, is said to be complete the more the density value is close to 1, thus configuring itself as a tight mesh network in which there are many relationships of those possible among its participants (Trobia and Milia, 2011). If the density value summarizes the number of present relationships in relation to the potential ones, in our case, however, the density value is equal to 0.091, which means that there are only 9% of relationships compared to the possible ones, so the resulting graph is sparse, a typical feature of the large mesh networks (0), such as the Internet, for example, that are characterized by the least trust/quality of relationships, even though we might, in this case, be concerned with a network of local actors who act on the same territory (Oehler and Sheppard, 2010) (Table 3).

Table 3. Statistics of the analysed network

Number of organizations (nodes)	29
Number of links (edges)	74
Density	0.091
Average Degree	2.552
Average Path Length	2.573
Diameter	4

Source: our processing (Gephi)

Reading the other statistical values returned by the analysis of the network, compared to the number of participants in the «community» (29) and the number of links (74), it is possible to notice that, on average, each organization has 2.5 links with the others (Average Degree) and that, on average, the distance between two nodes is 2.5 steps, that is to say that in order to put two organizations in communication, the presence/ intermediation of at least another 2.5 organizations of the network is necessary (4 in the case of organizations more distant from each other). Not considering all those organizations that have only one relationship within the network, it is immediately noticeable that the Municipality of Vizzini participates in the largest number of relationships (36 out of 74).

The fact that the municipalities, as promoters of the selected events, have the greatest number of links, is quite normal. Rather, it is interesting to note the degree of involvement of the other nodes which, as we can see, entertain a limited number of relationships, also in the case of institutional actors of a regional and national nature (Table 4).

Table 4. Degree and Degree centrality of the analysed network

Municipality of Vizzini	36	0.48
Municipality of Cono	18	0.24
Municipality of Licodia Eubea	12	0.16
Department of Tourism, Sport and Entertainment, Sicilian Region	12	0.16
Project of Excellence «Territories of wine and taste»	10	0.13
SlowFood Sicilia	6	0.08
Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Cultural Activities and Tourism	6	0.08
Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Mediterranean Fisheries, Sicilian Region	4	0.05

Source: our processing

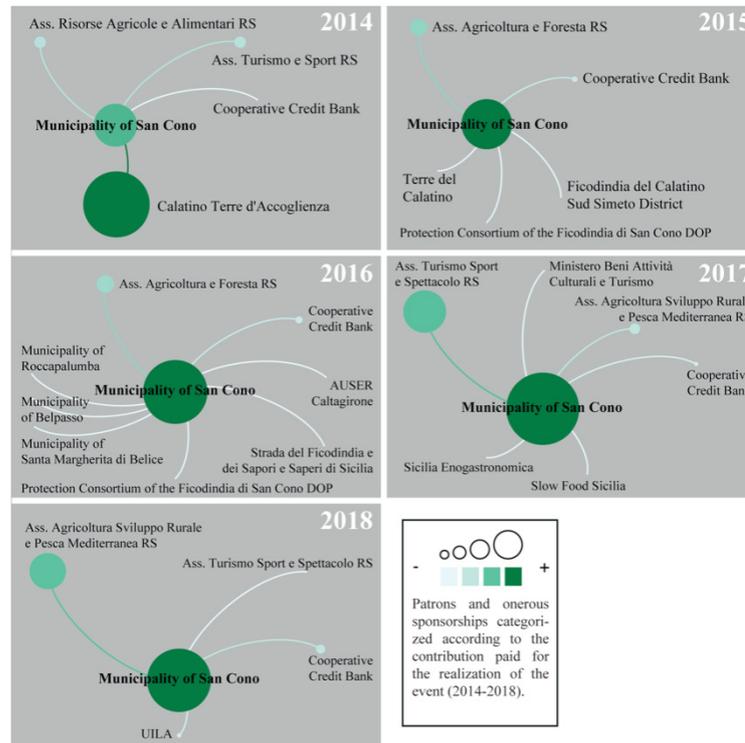
Degree centrality, meanwhile, represents the proportion of possible connections in which an organization participates and ranges from 0 (when no link is established) to 1 (when all the possible links are present); in our case, except for the Municipality of Vizzini, the values are all rather low and denote a low visibility of the organizations within the community.

4. The «Calatino» Project Area as a new paradigm for the creation of a network. Results and further directions

What emerged from the present investigation is an overall negative picture. In fact, the area is characterized by decrease in population, by a marked rurality, and by a scarce or absent economy based on tourism. Political superstructures show a tension between supporting individual private enterprises rather than network mechanisms. Creative and cultural activities are based on public support, without which they would not even exist. To demonstrate this, the experimental analysis of the three events that we are interested in has been useful. Neither the LAGs nor other local realities seem to believe in the importance of the events described above, which is shown by their lack of support for them, either with free or inexpensive sponsorships. The only support base appears to be public funding which, among other things, tends to maintain the rural character of the area, as can be seen from the type of events. Social Network Analysis, in our case, has served to bring out certain inconsistencies within the network investigated. If it is true that the selected

events are not promoted by a single actor, it is also true that the various promoters insist on a delimited territory, realize events that can be associated with each other by virtue of the object itself of the event (among other things, all are united by being present in a project of excellence), and share institutional partnerships. Given these assumptions, the analysed network should give different results, that are all coherent in portraying a dense and cohesive group, in which all the participants entertain relationships with others in order to function effectively, yet the elements in our study present a different picture. In order to understand why we are faced with the results so far acquired, we are currently trying to create a history of individual events, if the availability of information will allow us (Graph 3).

Graph 3. Relationship structures for the San Cono event (years 2014-2018)



Source: our processing

Specifically, for example, we have collected data and information in order to observe which changes in the network structure have occurred in a short period of time (2014-2018). So far, this has been possible only for the event linked to the promotion of the 'Ficodindia di San Cono PDO'; of this, a general outline is reported with reference to the network created by the Municipality of San Cono. In this case, gathering information about the different financiers of the festival and then creating the matrix useful to visualize these data, it was possible to represent the «weight» that each actor had, in terms of economic contribution, through the size and colour of the node (greater size and saturation = greater funding).

What can be noticed, moreover, is a low cohesion between one year and another, with few actors participating continuously in the realization of the event, thus giving the idea of a network within which structural centrality is attributed to the organizer but only by convention, without this being able to acquire a well-connected and effective network.

In fact, in the various years, the density of the graphs also varies from a minimum of 0.222 to a maximum of 0.4, always remaining, therefore, in the area of large mesh networks even though they are small local networks (Graph 4).

Graph 4. Density chart of the San Cono event (years 2014-2018)



Source: our processing on Gephi data

As mentioned, the analysis of the different networks in time series and their comparison will constitute the necessary continuation of the research, focusing also on the identification of cut points or those fundamental nodes that, within the network, allow sub-networks to stay connected; these could have a guiding and aggregating role within the group, improving the organization, communication and, in general, the functioning of the network itself.

5. Conclusions

In accordance with the National Strategy for Internal Areas, this contribution ultimately addresses the issue of enhancing local heritage, composed of cultural heritage and territorial heritage (IRPAIS, 2016), believing that this cultural and tourist enhancement process constitutes a fundamental lever for the reactivation of local development.

Still referring to the NSIA, the authors also believe that the dynamics of development must be territorially integrated, capable of using in their favour the so-called «diversity of proximity», that is, capable of making use of the mixité of even contiguous territories, which highlight and exploit the material and immaterial components, even in diversity, of territories which, despite the continuing economic crisis, obtain the only possibility of redemption from this.

As has been highlighted, with the internal areas of Sicily and the selected project areas, of which a deepening has been proposed with the case study of the Project Area Calatino, we are faced with a limited availability of socio-economic alternatives because they are increasingly based on agriculture. To verify possible alternatives and opportunities for development, an in-depth analysis was

carried out on what is available in the internal municipalities of the AP Calatino since, as in most of the inland areas, it was assumed a wealth of minor historical centres, sites of cultural interest, UNESCO sites, protected natural areas, etc., as well as a multitude of creative and cultural events that make up the enormous immaterial richness of the internal areas that, from a certain point of view, can represent the vitality of anthropic action (Santagata, 2009).

Following the mission of IRPAIS, we wanted to observe how the political superstructures of territorial government have, over time and through the organization of cultural events representative of the territorial identity, built the aforementioned integration, even in diversity, and found old and new ideas for reaction to the decades of economic crisis and depopulation. Thus, proceeding in the analysis, we wanted to verify which features the municipalities belonging to the Calatino AP had, which superstructures of government of the territory were present and what their action had been, which economic activities had resisted and which cultural events were present. The idea consisted that, through cultural events representative of the local culture and still active economic activities, one could deduce the resilient capacity of these territories and, above all, the contrast strategies adopted where territorial networks were identified and created. What we have called «resilient potential» is what, without considering the self-awareness of the local populations and the present and operating in-situ regulatory structures, was available and not fully exploited. What we have learned is that there is probably a general underestimation of the importance of cultural events and an underestimation of their potential effects, for example as collaborative tools between territorial entities, as a barrier to the loss of young people of working age, as a tool to promote food and wine riches, and among other things promoting the image of the territory so that potential users will correctly perceive its value (Kotler et al., 1993).

In conclusion, we can reiterate that the internal territories have lost population, especially young people of working age, in favour of the coastal zones, the most developed national territories and even foreign nations. To reverse this trend, it is necessary to identify strategies such as, for example, the implementation of the supply of cultural and creative events that may generate new tourist flows. This would allow for the recovery and systematisation of the main territorial allocations, with the result of creating new jobs that will attract young people. The fact is that, through our analysis, we have discovered that PA Calatino is far from being able to activate such a short-term strategy. The results obtained through the indexes used, and the analysis performed, are consistent in the confirmation of a marked structural weakness, not so much in terms of natural endowments but of organizational ones (hospitality and network).

Our observation has just begun and we would like to improve it and apply it to all events in the project area, in order to verify the effective resilience of the Calatino territory.

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