

Territorial resources as *levers* of local development in a globalized context

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to deepen the *role* that the territorial resources (material and immaterial) can have in local development politics, considering the actual connections between local territorial level and global level. First of all, the significance of this issue derives from the *renewed* importance of territorial resources - in urban and territorial politics - as elements, which can be mobilised to carry out territorial and contextual actions of local development and to improve the competitiveness of territories.

In this context, it becomes very important to explain *which* territorial resources can be really considered as *specific levers*, on which to base local development actions, and *in what way* the territorial resources *can be put on work*.

So, my purpose is to point out that the individuation, the recognition, and, consequently, the valorisation of territorial resources by local network of actors allow to create *territorial added value* in local development projects. The hypothesis, which this research is based on, are: a) the territorial resources are *in* territory, as incorporated and sedimentary values, and they are recognizable among components of the milieu (locally specific socio-cultural heritage). These components are meant as endogenous potentialities of development, not separated by actors and projects, in which they are recognized like such; b) the territorial resources can be individuated and singled out *by local networks of actors*, who have co-operative and/or conflicting interactions among them for use, valorisation and reproduction of components of the milieu.

In order to answer to the aim of this research, this paper is articulated in three parts. In the first part, I deal with the relationships between local territories and global level, taking on with, as concept of local, *one* of the possible points of observation of outside reality, of vertical relations (between actors and territory) and horizontal relations (among actors). Vertical relations link the local territorial systems to their environment and horizontal relations join the same systems among them. In the second part, I put my attention on the concept of valorisation of territorial resources with regard to two issues, the competitiveness of local system and its auto-sustainability, that have an important role in actual processes of local development. In the third part, I finally illustrate a case study on the valorisation of territorial resources with regard to construction of relationships in a global context between local networks of a defined local territorial system and other local territorial systems.

The construction of the local territory

The social, cultural, economical and political changes of the last decade have produced those controversial phenomena of globalisation, post-fordism, mondialisation and - on the opposite site - localism, exclusion, etc. With regard to these phenomena, the deep transformations in the actual society have contributed to (re)put on attention to *the issue of territory* in the present debate: the local territory has become a new (?) *actor* in urban and territorial politics.

In fact, the globalisation has allowed the creation of *territorial interconnections* - through flows and networks - that have exceeded time-space compression and collapse of spatial barriers (Harvey, 1993). So, if, on one side, the globalisation has supported connections among different levels of geographic scale; on the other side, the two extreme levels are been really strengthened: the local one and the global one. The globalisation is a process of

indifferent homologation only for specific issues: as a matter of fact, its novelty is in the creation of a global hyper-connected network, whose *knots* are local territorial systems, defined by networks of actors, built during the action (Dematteis, 2001). In this way, the globalisation has allowed local societies to surface. These local societies, built in the past and still existing in time, are today re-called in life in form of *local territorial systems*, more or less intentionally built. These local territorial systems connect themselves to the supra-local levels through networks in an autonomous way.

This involves a *fragmentation of territories* in favour of a process of emergence of local territorial systems and a *development of long distance interactions*, instead of middle distance interactions, on which regional and national territorial cohesion is founded. So, this situation puts up with, on one side, an economical, political, social crisis of national states, and, on the other side, the raising and the reinforcement of local dimension in global economy.

In the fordist phase, the local was banished in a niche and it had a subordinate role in the dialectics centre-periphery. Now, *the machine of the globalisation* is deeply greedy of that creative potential, which local territories possess and which derives from an atavistic search of sense and a consolidated tradition of society (Bonora, 2001).

So, on the economical and political stage there are new actors provided of power growing towards national states: *global enterprises*, that are able to build connections with sub-national levels, without the intervention of national states; *regions*, that have had direct admission to global level; *cities or urban agglomerations* considered networks of actors, that have built their positions of advantage among politics of alliance/competitiveness and have redefined the boundaries continually (Perulli, 1998).

The presence of such plurality of actors both in vertical sense, as multiplication of decision-making centres, and in horizontal sense, supported by the fragmentation of the interest, has had a considerable impact in the construction of urban and territorial politics. In fact, important changes have involved urban and territorial politics both in *the way of action* and in *the goals*.

With regard to the way of action, the changes are linked to the passage from *government to governance*. It means the opening of the decision-making arena to a greater number of actors, in order to build a stable network of actors and to reach a cohesion of resources around a shared project. The accent is placed on the great number of actors, that have entered to take part to the decision-making arena and that now must be considered in the *consensus building*. The results of recent experiences, managed in different European countries, point out the way, in which the urban and territorial governance has favoured the political expression of people, who were always excluded by decision-making arena. "Analytically, the concept of 'governance' is broader than that of 'government'. It recognizes that it is not just the formal agencies of elected local political institutions which exert influence over the pattern of life and economic make-up of local areas. Within the political processes which affect the fortunes of any local area are a wide range of actors. These include the institution of elected local government, to be sure, but also central government, a range of non-elected organizations of the state (at both central and local levels) as well as institutional and individual actors from outside the formal political arena, such as voluntary organizations, private businesses and corporations, the mass media and, increasingly, supra-national institutions, such as the European Union (UE)" (Goodwin and Painter, 1996). So, on one side, the local government can have relationships with actors of a lower scale; on other side, it can establish relationships with actors of global level.

With regard to the goals, the changes are linked to the economic politics of territorial competitiveness promoted by actual local governments. The purpose is to leverage on endogenous resources and local capacity in order to produce competitive politics. However, in many cases, local politics have become a simple support of economic and social politics and they have a subordinate role regard to economic politics and market of work (Cox, 1993). The local governments of all Europe try to elaborate new programmes or plans (for example, *strategic plans*) that may implement local development in order to excel in urban and territorial hierarchy. Referring to Mayer (1995), we must remember that "land is no

longer a cheap resource to be offered generously, but a precious one to be developed strategically”.

The territorial resources in the local-global dialectics

With regard to the relationship local-global, it is possible to carry out local development projects with different attitudes (Magnaghi, 2000). The first attitude corresponds to the model of *competitiveness*, in which the local strong actors exploit the features of the local territory in a given competitive context. The second attitude regards the *glocal model*, which researches a (difficult) balance between the valorisation of components of milieu in global competition and the reinforcement of local society. The third attitude corresponds to the model of *bottom up globalisation*, in which the valorisation of the local milieu is addressed to build not hierarchical and co-operative connections between cities and regions. In these models, it is interesting to underline how two components have a particular role: the competitiveness of the local system and its auto-sustainability. In the first model, it is the competitiveness of the local system, that is expressed through the action of strong actors, visible to administrative machine and with a certain economic, political and institutional power, to be considered *the point of the issue: to do local development*. This model starts from contextual conditions given by the environment. Its goal is to increase the competitiveness of the economical system rather than local development. In the local development “le condizioni decisive non sono quelle che il mutare di condizioni esterne trasforma direttamente in esternalità localizzative, ma quelle costitutive di un certo milieu, come prerequisito per il formarsi e il riprodursi in un sistema locale” (Dematteis 1994). In the second model, instead, the local-global relationship takes shape in a more virtuous way, but it is characterized by a difficult search of balance between localism and globalisation. On one side, it aims to reinforce the local level, meant as reinforcement of ‘short networks’; on other side, it tries to create a relationship between local and global among connections of long networks. According to Magnaghi (2000), the risk of this model is that local system can be taken in long global networks, accepting the rules given by the global level. This reduces the complexity of the system and its auto-reproducibility. The third model is finally the real strategic alternative for the author: “lo sviluppo locale fondato sulla valorizzazione del patrimonio territoriale assume i valori locali (culturali, sociali, produttivi, territoriali, ambientali, artistici) come elemento principale della forza propulsiva necessaria all’attivazione di modelli di sviluppo autosostenibili” (Magnaghi, 2000). The auto-sustainability is in relation with the capacity of the local territorial system to represent itself, to project itself and especially to reproduce itself. For these reasons, the local networks must lever on those territorial resources, that are *renewable*. So, the concept of territorial resource takes on the concept of sustainability in a wider sense, not only as changeability in time of the resources (Haggett, 1983) or imminent exhaustion (Brunet *et al.*, 1992), but also as principle of use to implement local development. In this way, the auto-sustainability of the development stays both in the consciousness by the communities to consider the territory as common resource, whose to ensure the reproduction, and in the capacity of the communities to elaborate projects that purpose the reproduction of conditions of endogenous development.

Therefore, today, *the local territory should be pro-active with regard to global processes*: on one side, strengthening its identity, considering its endogenous potential, doing local society and carrying out local development processes; on other side, not only trying to compete at global level in order to promote itself outside, but also to improve its level of welfare and quality of life.

Competitiveness and auto-sustainability put in evidence the significance of two issues: a) *the horizontal relations of local territorial system*, as result of the capacity of local actors both to establish short networks inside of system in the processes of urban and territorial governance, and to link the local system to superior levels through long networks; b) *the local potential territorial resources*, which represent the territorial element of development projects

and contribute to the formation of competitive advantages, that differentiate the local territorial systems. This differentiation depends on the fact that territorial resources are *located* – they are anchored to a certain territory and cannot be transferred, if not with high costs and long times (*fixed assets*, Amin, 2000) - and *specific* – they cannot be reproduced, as they are a result of a *social construction*, became in time among specific actors and between those actors and their environment. According to Buell “place connects milieu or environment to a subject, individual or collective. It implies an ‘active reciprocal relation between inhabitant and context” (Entrikin, 1995).

Therefore, the recognition of the role of the features and potential resources of local territory in competitive processes of global level becomes the knot of the issue local-global. This concept is evident in a lot of local development politics, where the strategy of local actors is based on the valorisation of a specific mix of present sources, that allows to compete at supra-local levels through the creation of an *attractive image* of the territory.

Networks of territorial resources: what has happened between the territory of L’Argentière-la-Bessée and Val Germanasca?

Specific attention to those themes (local development, creation of networks, etc.) is in a case study that regards two experiences linked by common traditions and culture. One is located in France, exactly at L’Argentière-la-Bessée, and the other one is located in Italy, in the territory of Val Germanasca. These two territories, that belong to Haute Savoie Department and Piemonte Region respectively, form a part of cross-border territory between Italy and France. The tie, that links this part of cross-border territory is historical. Going back to 1343, after a hard opposition of territories of Briançonnais to Umberto II, the Chart was signed, that established the deliverance of five territories of the region of Briançon, that took the name of *escartons* (from *ecar*, payment of the exemption), l’Escarton du Pragela ou Valcluson; l’Escarton du Château-Dauphin; l’Escarton de Briançon; l’Escarton du Queyras; l’Escarton d’Oulx. These territories had a wide autonomy and great freedom for a long time, they were exempted by the payment of whichever tax and they had the possibility to elect consuls and officials. In particular, among these territories, Val Germanasca, Val Pellice, L’Argentière-la-Bessée, Val Cluson, Freissinières formed *Les Vallées Vaudoises*, characterized by common language and traditions. In 1713 with the treaty of Utrecht, three of the *escartons* - Oulx, Val Cluson and Chateaux-Dauphine – were annexed to Italy and, after the French Revolution, all the *escartons* lost their privileges definitively.

Even if the historical vicissitudes have separated these territories from a part to another of the Italian and French frontier, on the contrary nature has preserved and maintained its characteristics, such as the presence of mountains, parks, a particular flora and fauna, that find a perfect habitat in this zone of frontier, *only institutionally*. So, beginning from this historical and territorial tie, in July 1992 the Italian and French administrations (representatives of SIVOM of Briançon, Pays des Écrins, Val Pellice, Val Chisone, Val Germanasca and Alta Valle di Susa) have constituted *Comunità degli Escartons e delle Valli Valdesi*. The goal of this community is to favour the cross-border cooperation in field of cultural and natural heritage, education, training, economic development, transports, communications, promotion and management of territory.

Therefore, the Italian and French experiences rise in a cross-border cooperation, already supported by ancient links and extraordinary, but sad, concomitance of events. In fact, in 1985, the factory Péchiney Aluminium Works was closed at L’Argentière-la-Bessée. This factory constituted the main source of work for local community and, in many years of activity, it had recalled in this area a great number of immigrants, who searched occupation. In this way, the territory lives a phase of economic decline, that favours the radication of the idea in local community of having entered in a long phase of depression, due to the loss of the only resource of the town, the fordist factory. In the same period in Val Germanasca, the

number of employers in the talc mines was reduced- main source of profits for all the alpine valley in the last century - in a drastic way, because of important technological innovations. For these reasons, the Italian and French administrations decided to carry out a territorial politic, based on the valorisation of local resources: in particular on the mining heritage. In fact, in the territory of L'Argentière-la-Bessée (towards Val du Fournel) there are silver mines of nineteenth-century and medieval age and in Val Germanasca there are important talc mines, now abandoned.

The mining heritage is recognised by these two administrations as a potential territorial resource on which it is possible to lever in order to implement the process of local development. They well understand that the mines and the life of the miners of those communities constitute part of the component of the *milieu* of those local territories.

So, in January 1992 at L'Argentière-la-Bessée was instituted the *Centre de Scientifique Cultures, Technique et Industrielle*, to which it is attributed a wide local authority with regard to: conservation and development of territorial heritage, programming of cultural and educational activities, tourism development at local level, training, cross-border co-operation, implementation of local development projects. The *Centre* also attends to study the mining archaeology, to exchange scientific information with other centres of research, organising conferences and seminaries. This link of the *Centre* with the research has the aim to create not a passive institution, but a structure that always produces new information and culture, as resources to value.

So, the researchers of the *Centre* work a lot to carry out an open air museum: a collection, planned and managed in scientific way with the task to illustrate ways of life, architecture, economy of the local mining community *in situ*. The goals are: the diffusion of the knowledge of past history of the community and the implementation of the tourism in that territory.

On the basis of this initiative the relationship between the *Centre de Scientifique Cultures, Technique et Industrielle* and the *Comunità Montana della Val Chisone e Germanasca* was built. The *Comunità Montana* had the task to carry out the eco-museum of Val Germanasca in order to illustrate the life of the job of the miners.

The co-operation between these two territories allows the elaboration of numerous programmes, promoted by the European Union: *Interreg I e II* "draws together three alpine mining sites in France and two in Italy. Both sides of the border have a common culture and identical problems of relative isolation from poles of economic activity, so wish to benefit from exchange of knowledge about development in a post-European Union Agreement environment and the availability of European funding for this" (Cowburn, 1999); CEDRE programme, that "permitted the organisation of a colloquium in 1993 with the Italian partners on the subject of alpine mining heritage development" (Cowburn, 1999). The co-operation between the *Centre de Cultures Scientifique, Technique et Industrielle* and the *Comunità Montana della Val Chisone e Germanasca* purposes to define actions for the valorisation of the alpine industrial heritage.

The presence of the same potentialities in these territories and their recognition by both local government has allowed to connect these local resources. This connection has created an added value, that has allowed the construction of an *effective co-operation*.

This co-operation has found a wider space into the European network MINET (European Mining Heritage Network), constructed for the promotion of European mining sites and the spread of the *expert knowledge*.

Nowadays, it is possible to see the results of many actions, carried out by the Italian and French local governments, such as the opening of the Mine Museum and the visitor centre, the organisation of free walks in the Fournel gorge, an interpretation circuit in the mining village and a guided tour in the Old Workings at L'Argentière-la-Bessée. In Val Germanasca the eco-museum was opened: it provides guided tours and an exposition on the community life of the miners.

These two experiences give us the opportunity to put in evidence the significance to create networks in order to valorise potential territorial resources into local development projects.

With regard to this concept it is necessary to distinguish that the importance to create networks is reflected on two issues at least: the first one is *economic*, in terms of competitive advantages, and the second is *scientific*, in terms of sprawl of expert knowledge.

Regard to the first one, the case study show us as the *actors-pivot* of the local development process (both at L'Argentière-la-Bessée and in Val Germanasca) didn't limit themselves to set out some of the components of the local milieu as potential resources, but they looked at the potentialities of a wider milieu, that is the milieu of the *Comunità degli Escartons e delle Valli Valdesi*. So, they haven't only levered on endogenous resources, but on resources that – even if they are exogenous in comparison with the local territorial system - are resulted from the capacity of the local actors to interact with other localities. To this interaction – that in this case study has a cross-border character – follows the creation of networks of territorial resources, once estimated the complementariness, the scale effects and the synergies of offer.

The competitive advantage of a hypothetical local territorial system is also in ability of the system to create networks of resources through trans-local interactions. Therefore, it is necessary to support the phase of individuation and recognition of the potential endogenous resources with the phase of individuation of potential resources derived, that can be linked to the first one in order to increase the inner competitiveness of local territorial system at global level.

So, it is important to consider into the process of local development also the possibility of definition of “strategic cities alliances” (Soldatos, 1991), as they are defined into scientific debate. “The approaches to be followed in the process of establishing strategic cities alliances ought to be of a multidimensional nature:

- ✍ the alliances should be *diversified*, meaning that cities should participate in a wide-range scheme of cities linkages (...) with the aim of reciprocal reinforcement,
- ✍ they should also be of a *multiple* type, established, if necessary, with more than one foreign partner (multiple partnerships) in different areas;
- ✍ *differentiation* is equally important with the alternative involvement of the public sector or of the private or scientific sectors;
- ✍ an *institutionalization* is also appropriate, in order to control the management and the follow-up of the alliances;
- ✍ an innovative approach should also be present aiming at future-oriented strategic cities alliances, looking for long-term advantages and based on strategic intent, ‘where the emphasis is on leveraging resources to reach seemingly unattainable goals’ (Hamel, Prahalad, 1989);
- ✍ a concentric circle approach is necessary in the process of the establishment of such alliances (...) It is important that a strategic cities alliances policy takes into consideration and serves the various spatial realities (...)” (Soldatos, 1991).

The construction of such territorial alliances (among cities or local territorial systems, region, etc) contributes to the creation of territorial added value, in the sense of value that the territory gives to the projects, as it does not only come from vertical relations of own local territory, but also from the ability to establish horizontal relations, that interact with vertical relations of other localities. So, referring to Dematteis (2001) “conviene parlare di valore aggiunto territoriale (VAT) solo in presenza di giochi a somma positiva, cioè di processi di sviluppo locale autorganizzato, che nel corso del loro svolgimento diano origine – per sinergia e/o per innovazione territoriale – a risorse di vario tipo, non presenti all’inizio del processo”.

Regard to the second issue the construction of networks for the spread of *expert knowledge* begins from the Nineties, because of numerous funds distributed by the European Union in specific programmes of local development. The main characteristic of these networks is to be voluntary and to have as aim the co-operation in different fields, from the administrative management of the cultural heritage to the problems of mobility, environment and physical and social degradation. The main goals are the economic promotion, the transfer of

experiences and acquaintances, the support to the local administrations and the promotion of new comunitary politics.

In the case study, it is interesting to observe the role of support and stimulus carried out from the European network MINET into the process of local development both in Italy and in French. In fact MINET is an European network of recent institution, co-funded by the European Union in Raphaël Programme (1998-2000), to which the *Comunità Montana della Val Chisone e Germanasca* e the *Centre de Scientifique Cultures, Technique et Industrielle di L'Argentière-la-Bessée* stick, besides The Trevithick Trust, Camborne, Cornwall, ECTARC, The European Centre for Traditional and Regional Cultures, Ilangollen, Wales, Geological Survey of Ireland, Dublin, Colectivo Proyecto Arrayanes, Linares, Jean, Andalucia.

The participation to MINET network has - as main goal - the exchange of experiences, acquaintances, cultures and knowledge referred to the mining heritage, that must be considered as "l'héritage technique, culturel, social et économique créé par plus de 9000 ans d'extraction et d'utilisation des ressources de la terre par l'homme". The partners of the network are "les héritiers, pouvons l'utiliser aujourd'hui pour d'autres buts : ceux des activités de valorisation du patrimoine, de la pédagogie" (Cowburn, 2000). The goal of the MINET network regards especially: a) the elaboration of a programme to obtain the status of *Itinéraire Culturel*, promoting, on one side, the single specificities of the places, on the other side, the presence of a common European identity; b) a work of co-ordination of expert knowledge in favour of possible exchanges of experiences among projects partners through meeting and technical visits.

The experience of local development in these cross-border territories, also based on a reticular support, sets out the great usefulness to create networks into the local development projects: at first, for the possibilities that are offered to the local actors to approach to information and new acquaintances, that can improve the quality of the offered product; then, for the strengthening of common identities.

Conclusion

The subjects, discussed in this paper, allow me to do some reflections on the issues expressed at the top: on what territorial resources it is possible to lever in local development projects in order to be able to enter in global networks and in which terms we can valorise territorial resources in order to carry out *effective* local development politics.

Regard to the first issue, the case study described puts in evidence that different territorial resources can enter in local development projects: *endogenous territorial resources*, meant as own potentialities of a local territory, which are included in that group of physical, social and cultural conditions sedimented in that local territory in time and valorised in collective and shared projects; *exogenous territorial resources*, which are not in a local territory, but they come from the outside - in the most frequent case they are external funds or capitals, for instance the funds of the European Union distributed in various programmes of regeneration and development of territory -; and *derived territorial resources*, which don't belong to a local territory, but derive from the ability of local network to interact with other localities on the basis of local milieu, not or not only shared, but above all defined from some complementary physical and/or social and/or cultural elements.

So, it is very difficult to think that it is possible to elaborate a fixed list of territorial resources - in which to consider, for example, mountains, lakes, rivers and so on - as territorial resources need a *social transaction* to be defined. They only obtain their identity into a territorial project and they must be recognised by local and supra-local actors and must be valorised in territorial projects. Referring to Sauer (1941) territorial resources can only be "cultural appraisal".

The second reflection points out that the valorisation of territorial resources depends on the ability to innovate of local actors, who should be able to build a network and have

consciousness of their local potential of development in order to valorise it and to link to global project. So, after having recognised their local potential (endogenous, eventually exogenous and/or derived), local actors should carry out shared and collective actions. It is necessary that these actions have an *integrated character*, meant as different sectors involved; an *innovative character*: the action must not be repetitive, as the transformation of the territory derives from forms of local auto-organization, which are not previewed neither expectable; and they must be set up on a *sustainable approach*. In other words, local network must not have annihilator relationships with the environment.

The realization of actions, meant as above, allows an effective and real valorisation of territorial resources, which contributes to create *territorial added value* into processes of local development. The territorial added value defines the value that can be obtained by leveraging on the potentialities offered by local territory. This added value also derives from the local development project and it refers to the value that the realization of the project adds and incorporates in local territory. In fact, if the project is collective and shared effectively, it has carried the local actors to reason and to interact on/of their local territory, helping in the construction and/or the strengthening of their common identity through a social work.

I conclude asserting that if, on one side, the valorisation of the territory contributes to incorporate new values in territorial capital, on other side, it favours the shaping of new or renewed territorial identities.

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