

RESEARCH PROGRAMME - COORDINATOR

Anno 2005 - prot. 2005088977

PART I

1.1 Research Programme referred to

1. Scientific Area	08: Architecture and Civil Engineering	75%
2. Scientific Area	11: Historical, Philosophical, Pedagogic and Psychological Sciences	25%

1.2 Research Programme Abstract

The Agricultural Park: a New Territorial Planning Instrument for Unbuilt Areas

1.3 Research Programme Abstract

The processes of urban sprawl and the growing degradation and abandonment of unbuilt territories increasingly highlight the inconsistency between the various disciplines' functionalist models which make a clear distinction between the settlement (urban) and environmental dimensions.

With its different facets, unbuilt territory appears a theme which requires urgent treatment by the territorial disciplines to deal not only with the aim of creating a quality environment and living area but also in relation to the self-sustainability of development models.

By integrating the environmental dimension (ecosystem) with the economic (food and agriculture) and cultural (historic, landscape and social) dimensions, a new way of reading the dynamics of unbuilt territory is outlined which in particular envisages a new tool for governing the territory: the "agricultural park" model.

The present research program, which continues the now consolidated tradition of the territorialist school (e.g. the MIUR projects "For Local Self-Sustainable Development: Theories, Methods and Experiences", "Effectiveness of Identity Representation for Unbuilt Areas in Territorial Planning" and "Constructing Strategic Scenarios for Territorial Planning: Methods and Techniques", coordinated by Alberto Magnaghi), tries to define the characteristics and ways of constructing processes and tools to govern the territory centred on the use of agricultural parks through a characteristic approach involving a variety of disciplines and sectors.

This territorial form is seen as a tool for establishing a connection between the different dimensions that characterise unbuilt territory and define its different roles from the point of view of food, agriculture, production, recreation, history and society.

The approach that the different research units use is directed precisely at sounding out and checking the consistency of the "form" of the agricultural park for the various disciplines through reference to the various local contexts, while trying in particular to develop the aspects relating to:

- redefining polycentric and lasting settlement models based on the city as a complement to the rural territory and vice-versa;
- producing social and cultural (environmental) common goods and more generally built-up environments together in contexts of elevated urban sprawl;
- defining management and cultural models for unbuilt territory and parks aimed at restoring the dimension that sees settlements, agricultural production and landscape quality evolve together;
- forming and supporting networks of local actors which help new ways of production and consumption founded on trust relationships; and therefore, in practice, "short" commercial networks that are sensitive to the quality and local nature of the product;
- defining local development and integrated multi-sector planning models that can combine the territorial and economic dimensions of the development.

The various research units develop programs in relation to the various local contexts through:

- the construction of knowledge frameworks of the experiments underway in the above mentioned

directions (new forms of production, cooperation networks, projects, forming agricultural parks) in the various contexts;

- new strategic planning tools (on a municipal and wider scale) to activate processes to integrate policies, actions and projects in the fields of agricultural, environmental and economic production, landscape and fruition;
- studies of territorial scenarios in relation to various forms of agricultural park: in peripheral urban and metropolitan areas, in regenerating river systems, coastlines, hills and mountains;
- elements of know-how as regards concrete experiences of new forms of production, forming new agricultural parks and projects, and networks for using the products and the operating conditions/tools.

1.4 Time

24 Months

1.5 Disciplinary Areas

ICAR/20 - Urban Planning and Techniques

ICAR/21 - Urban Planning

M-GGR/01 - Geography

AGR/01 - Rural Economy

AGR/02 - Agriculture

1.6 Keywords

SELF-SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ; TERRITORIAL HERITAGE ; INTEGRATED PLANNING ; AGRICULTURAL PARK ; TERRITORIAL ECOSYSTEM ; HISTORICAL ECOLOGY ; COMMON GOODS ; RURAL LANDSCAPE ; LOCAL AGRICULTURE AND FOOD CHAIN

1.10 List of Research Units

Unit	Scientific Responsible	Qualification	Disciplinary Area	University	Department
I	MAGNAGHI ALBERTO	Full Professor	ICAR/20	Università degli Studi di FIRENZE	Dip. URBANISTICA E PIANIFICAZIONE DEL TERRITORIO
II	FERRARESI GIORGIO	Full Professor	ICAR/21	Politecnico di MILANO	Dip. ARCHITETTURA E PIANIFICAZIONE
III	MORENO DIEGO	Full Professor	M-GGR/01	Università degli Studi di GENOVA	Dip. STORIA MODERNA E CONTEMPORANEA
IV	ROSSI DORIA BERNARDO	Full Professor	ICAR/21	Università degli Studi di PALERMO	Dip. CITTA' E TERRITORIO

PART II

2.1 Research Programme aims and goals

The research aim is to define methods, techniques and operating tools for an integrated approach of different territorial disciplines and planning which allows unbuilt territory to express its different values on different scales and in different contexts, thanks to the different planning tools and also in support of processes of local self-sustainable development.

One of the conventional responses of the policies against environmental degradation is the “park” with the specific function of defending some areas and rebalancing the environment against processes of urban sprawl. It is a reproposal of the functionalist view which makes parks one of the functions that the territory is divided into (leisure, the catering function, remedy against the degradation of development, forming virtuous “natural” islands).

These approaches proved to be ineffective in structurally inverting the processes of degradation and rebuilding balanced settlements in urban sprawl where “there is no longer either city or country”. Instead, entering the field are theoretical approaches and empirical experiences (that this research project refers to) that propose processes of enhancing the territory and local development as methods of identifying and giving value to the differences and distinctive characteristics of the territory with the aim of producing “added territorial value” and as the base of new development and lasting wealth.

In this direction of work, agriculture tends to once again be proposed as “care and cultivation” of the territory: not only the appropriate ecological and local production of primary goods but also at the same time production of a territory and environment.

A new generation of territorial plans and projects uses the concept of a park in an innovative light: no longer referring to the concept of protecting and safeguarding the environment with a restricting action, but enhancing the productive capacity of unbuilt areas' environmental systems in harmony with the enhancement of the environmental systems, landscape and environmental and cultural use. Nevertheless, on this level a vast sphere of methodological, substantive and management questions open up which pose the problem of integrating skills from different disciplines and ways of communication within the various planning tools so as to make it possible to put into practice the plans themselves and make them effective and extend the field of experience and topics dealt with.

The paradigm that the research intends to experiment and check therefore no longer interprets the park as a protected area, an area of bans, “fencing off” nature, but as a laboratory area for new productive, environmental and user relations between the city and the rural world, giving back to the latter a fundamental value by building new models of self-sustainable local development starting from production that is socially recognised and economically re-evaluated, on the basis of the quality of the specific features of the product and the context.

It is important to repeat that as well as overcoming the mere environmental “limit” of the defence of open lands, the proposal of an agricultural park instead puts forward the structural objective of recovering the value and meaning of the rural territory, the capacity to resist consumption of the territory and active construction of a landscape based on a constructive and not defensive process: This project of identifying new economies and values of the unbuilt territory therefore becomes the precondition for rebuilding a new balance and new alliance between the city and the country as subjects that dialogue and are vital to each other; and it is possibly of great importance in the current context of crisis of the industrialist model of development and the growing and standardised/degraded form of urbanisation of the territory: as an experiment of one of the exit routes from these crises, as a structural alternative.

There is another significant dimension of these approaches and experiments of other primary production and local enhancement that also needs taking into consideration: it concerns the formation and increasingly widespread action of networks of local actors that express new lifestyles and new ways of consumption and direct relationships with production; and therefore the practice of “short” commercial networks that are sensitive to the quality and local character of the product. In this connection, we quote the “purchase networks” and “districts of fair economies” and other similar forms also founded on alternative credit structures (“ethic banks” and the like) which are beginning to “come out of their niches” of pioneering experimentation to affect wider circles of subjects and forms of social and productive organisation.

This “subjective move” (of lifestyles and forms of self-organisation) is also accompanied by theoretical and empirical tools which once again make the knowledge of the methods and sites of production and their certification the basis of new types of exchange (“municipal denomination”, “traceability” of the production process, “source price”).

The planning and design of an agricultural park therefore involves various disciplines (corresponding to which there must be multi-sector administrative structures) to make the variety of functions that it covers coherent and in harmony:

high quality typical local food production; energy production; production of a quality environment and landscape; production of short networks for selling products; production of the tendency to close food, waste and water cycles on a local level; rural tourism and farm holidays.

In order to sustain research of such complexity and involving such a variety of disciplines, we propose forming skill groups for forestry, ecology and the economy as well as for territorial and town planning.

Therefore, the elements and goals of the research programme can be (also with different reciprocal importance in the various locations):

- the construction of knowledge frameworks of the experiments underway in the abovementioned directions (new forms of production, cooperation networks, projects, forming agricultural parks) in the various contexts;
- new strategic planning tools (on a municipal and wider scale) to activate processes to integrate policies, actions and projects in the fields of agricultural, environmental and economic production, landscape and fruition;
- studies of territorial scenarios in relation to various forms of agricultural park: in peripheral urban and metropolitan areas, in regenerating river systems, coastlines, hills and mountains;
- elements of know-how as regards concrete experiences of new forms of production, forming new agricultural parks and projects, and networks for using the products and the operating conditions/tools.

2.2 Scientific background on the national and international level

The study of “peripheral urbanisation” and more generally the urban sprawl trends which have been happening in western Europe for the last two decades has made it possible to outline the notable shortcomings of certain development models and urban planning which lie both far from the concept of the preservation and ability to reproduce the ecosystem and identity of the unbuilt territory. On one hand, many studies have pointed out the opportunity of approaching the problem of the shape of human settlement on a compact basis which can preserve the “capacity” of the ecosystem of the open territory, rather than on a non-sprawl one (Boscacci, Camagni, Hall 1996); on the other hand, there is the need to reconsider rural territory not as a residual element of local development processes but as a “whole” of cultural/environmental resources, the protection and reproduction of which play a strategic role in improving the living quality of the settlements and in pursuing a form of local development that focuses on the identity and liveability of the settlement itself (Magnaghi 2000).

A way out of the old Man/Nature dichotomy emerged very early in land-ecology research conducted in Britain late in the 1960s at the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology in Huntington (UK). This still provides the basis for the planning and management models and practices in protected areas in Italy. This was the historical approach to the problems of the conservation and management of environmental and rural resources known as "historical ecology" (O. Rackham, 1976, 1986; Watkins and Kirby, 1998; Grove-Rackham, 2001). Though with little success compared to the still-prevailing trends in "natural" and environmental sciences (e.g. on the topics of landscape ecology, biodiversity, etc. – Farina, 2001), historical ecology has at times also been applied in historical, geographical and environmental research in Italy (Moreno, 1990; Moreno et al., Caneva ed., in print; R. Balzaretto, M. Pearce, Ch. Watkins (eds.), 2004).

One of the results obtained from these first investigations which could be defined as an applied historical/geographical microanalysis saw the emergence of the determining role of local agricultural, forestry and sheep-breeding production on the ecology of the sites, areas, complexes and spaces, examined on an appropriate scale, that have been and can still be connected to these production chains.

They are precise links that can be identified with research and observations on a topographical scale. This can provide historical and environmental documentation on which to base the identification of the functions and qualities that this agricultural production gives to the rural space. It can also lead to new enhancement strategies and policies through the environmental quality of this local production.

In relation to this complex way of looking at it, parks can be thought of as different loops of the networks of social fruition of the territory: such as networks of leisure, of enjoyment, contemplation and discovery of nature, of open-air recreation, of environmental education and spiritual inspiration" (Gambino, 1997) and, at the same time as exemplary territorial projects where the dimensions of the environment, settlement, production and consumption and also common and intangible goods can once again evolve alongside each other (Perna, 2002; Baldeschi, 2000; Besio, 2002).

A further reference basis concerns the recent production of this "territorialist" research network in the set of co-financed MIUR projects of the last few years: "For Local Self-sustainable Development: Theories, Methods and Experiences" (1998-2000), "Effectiveness of Identity Representation for Unbuilt Areas in Territorial Planning" (2001-2003) and "Constructing Strategic Scenarios for Territorial Planning: Methods and Techniques" (2003-2005), coordinated by Alberto Magnaghi. The network has obtained important results on (from a theoretical viewpoint and on the basis of field experiences) themes of land interpretation and improvement through the application of the reference basis to the theories and practices of local development as a strategic alternative:

- the drawing up of atlases of the territorial value and heritage;
- the study of approaches to representing the territory and especially unbuilt areas;
- the drawing up of strategic scenarios for territorial planning;

This has led to the production of texts, essays and projects in on-site operations and has made specific contributions on the theme of the agricultural park which will be dealt with later: some of the contributions are mentioned in the bibliography enclosed herewith.

Also connected to the above is a rethinking of the recent practices of using the territory near the urban context for agricultural ends. In these cases, after the structural support of aids and incentives from the EU, reliant on purely economic strategies, we see a progressive deterioration of the ecosystem and landscape of the territory itself. It is not by chance that the most recent EU regulations regarding agricultural policies (EC regulation 1257/99) focus on the spin-off on the environment and quality of the measures themselves, steered towards supporting good practices to protect the environmental, agricultural and anthropological systems especially in areas that are critical and fragile in terms of geomorphology and earning capacity in a multifunctional agricultural perspective (Menghini 1999, Shortall, Shucksmith 1999).

As a result of these issues, disciplines such as environmental, regional and urban planning have given increased importance to integrated and multi-sectorial approaches to the territorial project in

some cases and fields of research (amongst others, Gambino, 1996; Magnaghi, 2000; Camagni et al, 1999). In particular this has been in order to consolidate the complex identity of the peripheral urbanisation territories in both analytic and descriptive phases as well as in the design stage with specific reference to:

- elements of the ecosystem and its cycles (Malcevski, 1996);
- relationships between the agricultural ecosystem and landscape quality (Baldeschi, 2000);
- settlement structures and long-term rural heritage;
- scenario projects supporting the integrated development of rural land.

In particular, there are several situations where the problems and disciplinary approaches mentioned above could be correctly used to highlight critical relations, hypothetical methods and operational means for defining criteria for the design, planning, sustainable management of rural unbuilt areas in settings with a strong urban character or nevertheless landscapes of environmental interest. From this perspective, within the national framework there are some practices that go about planning and integrated management of the unbuilt territory by drawing up models of "agricultural park" models. Even though relatively diverse in terms of institutional, operative and thematic profile - outskirts parks, river parks, cultural parks - they are normally oriented towards underlining agriculture's multifunctional role, sustaining and enhancing the production of environmental, leisure, cultural and food services, closely connected to the adjacent urban system or to the settlements in the surrounding area.

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2.3 Description of the Research Programme and of the role of local Units

Description of the Research Programme

From the operative point of view, the research goals involve defining and further investigating some specific topics through a multi-disciplinary approach. This will result in the characteristics of the elements of the knowledge framework as well as the performance profiles of the various types of agricultural park identified in the case studies being defined.

In line with the general layout of the research, the concept of agricultural park is dealt with in terms of its twofold task:

- as a management model for protecting and enhancing the environmental and cultural heritage;
- as a strategic, multifunctional and territorial project that binds together the agricultural economy and the environment, settlements and landscape regeneration.

To this end, the investigation will consist of:

1. defining the unvarying relations between the elements of the environmental, physical and cultural heritage of the territory which appear as conditions and qualities for the evolution of regeneration and local development processes through the creation of agricultural parks;
2. methods and techniques for highlighting the role of protecting hydrogeology, the ecosystem and

- landscape thanks to good agricultural practices for use of the unbuilt territory;
3. analysis of the agronomical, economic and ecosystem profiles of agricultural forms and set-ups centred on producing quality aimed at the multifunctional development of agriculture;
 4. construction of models to represent the territorial heritage and processes of communication with the inhabitants and local actors in order to mobilise the local actors themselves to build integrated and shared projects of agricultural and food parks;
 5. definition of methods and models of strategic assessment that can increase the production of common goods and positive external effects for the well-being of the inhabitants produced by practices of care of the peripheral urban territory;
 6. regulatory and multi-disciplinary project tools that can integrate the various dimensions and qualities of the unbuilt territory in the context of integrated territorial development programming plans and action.

It may be recalled that the research group has got an its own legacy in analysis, methodology and procedure, coming from the past research experiences (exemplified by the three MIUR researches - coordinated by Alberto Magnaghi - already mentioned on 2.2): thus, this program represents a way to test the acquired results with respect to an experimental project which deserves strategic attention. Therefore, the research will also look further into the highlighted methodological and substantive issues in relation to the various specific features of the group's operational locations by referring to some case studies that allow the various problems connected to the planning and management regulations of integrated and multi-sector models of agricultural park to be sounded out.

The research programme in particular intends to develop guidelines for analytical and project activities that are suitable for the different local contexts with reference to both the various aspects of the geography and settlements and the territory's institutions and government.

In addition, the national research group will also study the main scientific references and national and international experiences in coordination with the different units and define the main contributions and factors of importance in the various disciplines.

The contribution that each local unit will make will mean that the different interpretations of the concept of agricultural park can be further investigated both in relation to the interaction between the different disciplines and in reference to the various prevailing topics in each of the studied experiences.

Description of the role of local Units

Unit I
MAGNAGHI
Alberto

The Florence unit will continue the research by: analysing the main experiments underway in the region both in terms of the scientific and operational set-ups, further investigating the importance, analytical rural territory methods, project criteria and institutional profile for planning agricultural parks in peripheral urban contexts with strong pressure for settlements. This is with specific reference to the case study of the Prato Plain Agricultural Park Integrated Multifunctional Project contained in the Prato PTCP (Provincial Territorial Coordination Plan) and the feasibility study for the Arno river park along the Empolese Valdelsa stretch (Florence).

The research unit will also look further into the theme of the agricultural park as a strategic planning model for the unbuilt territory through investigations relating to the studies on the Chianti Fiorentino landscape project in order to highlight the relations between good agricultural practices, the quality of production and protection of the environmental landscape.

Then, the research will select a specific case study from those analysed in order to

define the main elements for a strategic project scenario and methods and disciplinary criteria for the complete planning and design of agricultural parks.

Unit II
FERRARESI
Giorgio

The Milan unit specifies the general contents with respect to Lombardy and the Milan areas which constitute an important case and type in the Italian and European panorama of transformation of the territory on a metropolitan scale. Therefore, the unit's research will once again take up the sphere of work relating to the agriculture/park/territory theme and theoretical reflection on the relevance and ability to propose the agricultural park approach in the new post-metropolitan context, also using the previous research bases (atlases, representations, scenarios). The territorial sphere of the study will cover the specific case of the south Milan agricultural park and will deal with the following topics:

- the agricultural park as the production of a "territorial structure" for giving new meaning and definition to production in relation to the identity of the territory and the quality of the settlements;
- new local production/consumption chains, polycentric settlement models and new ways of living;
- the metropolitan agricultural park for appropriate and characteristic production through complex production chains of common goods as a strategy against the invasion of large-scale works and the decay of economic vitality.

These analytical and theoretical passages are intended to give results that:

- direct the project and management of the agricultural parks;
- provide methods for studying territorial scenarios in relation to different types of agricultural parks;
- and more generally provide outlines for the policies to activate operations to enhance the territory by regenerating the agricultural product and the production/consumption cycle.

Unit III
MORENO
Diego

By experimentally developing and applying the first results achieved with the historic ecological method, the Genoa unit is investigating the concept of "positive external factors" that connect traditional production, local habitats and communities settled in unbuilt territories. This is with the aim of directing the research specifically towards the historical-environmental characterisation of "agriculture for the parks".

The research programme will develop by building new knowledge frameworks for precise areas of study to be identified in protected or marked areas of interest as regards protection of the north-western Apennines. This will be done in particular through:

1. a better definition of the resources that can come about from this service and quality agriculture to be reintroduced onto the market;
2. a specific definition of the role that the farms with these characteristics can take on in managing protected areas in terms of the historical ecology of sites, areas and complexes;
3. the identification of the components of the historical and environmental heritage that can have a role in forming the processes of local self-sustainable development;
4. the identification of new forms of co-enhancement of the environmental and cultural heritage that the agricultural parks may allow and their application by activating communication processes.

Unit IV
ROSSI DORIA
Bernardo

The goal of the Palermo unit is to define the role of the agricultural park with cultural/archaeological and landscape/environmental features with reference to a wide territorial system centred around the Valley of Temples area in Agrigento. The study will be carried out on a network model which both physically and ideally compares the natural reserves near the area of the Agrigento archaeological

park.

In this sense, the unit's programme will involve:

- analysing the system of "local" socio-cultural, food, agricultural and archaeological values aimed at preserving and promoting the site of the Valley of Temples not only as regards the ancient remains and archaeological assets, but also the landscape with all its geological, botanical and morphological components;
- defining the operations to safeguard the environment in terms of conserving and reproducing the elements that give it its identity, also through forming an open-air museum that allows the capital to be "used" and diffused socially;
- defining an analytical and project system that can integrate the definition and use of the park with the different tools of environmental protection, ecosystem analysis and territorial planning in the context of a socially shared scenario of enhancing the park's heritage.