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Building consensual scenarios: settlement environments and strategic projects

Paola Pucci

With the preliminary Ptcp Document of the Province of Vicenza it has been resolved to create the basis for an integrated territorial project grounded upon concerted development and consensual ideas relating to the future of the Vicenza territory. It is in this sense that the preliminary Document has been given a 'process function' and a 'strategic' significance which will be put into effect thus through:
- the formulation of an image of the Vicenza territory which will strive to restore its 'multiple nature' and the specific developmental potentialities of the various settlement contexts (which we have termed 'settlement environments') proceeding from the ascertainment of 'planning from below' which indicate the diverse ways in which a given territory may be lived in;
- the restitution of territorial transformation processes currently underway through a 'census' relating to the project, that is opinions expressed by a range of local or non-local persons for whom the Provincial government can be perceived as having, and in fact should have, the role of 'director';
- the identification of a 'group' of integrated projects having a transversal nature, namely involving both institutional and non-institutional persons, private and public subjects, capable of taking on a strategic attitude towards the creation of consensual approaches around which to organize a 'territorial project' whose effectiveness is evidenced by bringing together pathways and objectives on a territorial scale with local projects that are to be sustained and valorized in that they are 'selective agreements' with which to 'territorialize' and 'institutionalize' the multiple image of the proposed Vicenza territories.
The recognition of settlement environments is therefore to be understood from the perspective of building up a 'multiple' image of the Vicenza territory which restores variety to the territories where problems, questions and common interests have, or are currently, generating projects and scenarios, with local government support, of territorial transformations or wherever relevant project subject matter is forthcoming.
With the identification of settlement environments it is therefore understood to restore the presence, within the Vicenza territory, of a clear-cut assembly of figures from the sphere of urban planning and environmental systems where the original structure and transformational processes have defined particular socio-settlement conditions and have combined to trace out specific development itineraries, the outcome of diverse operations by local and non-local persons, bearers of a series of interests and projects to be 'put on the network'.
For some of these domains, in fact, come in existence certain construction processes having a more complex territorial identity which, in some cases, lays the groundwork for the definition of forms of institutional co-ordination and models of governance that at times take shape in different landscapes and forms of living and mobility and about which we have endeavoured to give some account.
Settlement environments are the outcome of interpretations formulated both on the basis of the identification of profiles and potentials on a territorial scale by means of which we can define the specific features, possibilities and critical aspects that emerge for certain discreet areas of the territory and the mapping out of projects relating to infrastructure, environment and settlement e as well as the identification of the coalitions for which they are promoters. They are also the outcome of the assessment of initiatives addressed to the reinforcement of internal cohesion, to making the most of local identities as well as to the associated management networks and existing projects of an institutional and 'functional' kind.
Restoring the image of the Vicenza territory as a location for settlement environments in order to 'give a name' to agreed-upon objectives, has enabled us to indicate, for each settlement environment, significant schemes for the government of the territory and for the formulation of an overview of issues that might crop up in the local political and institutional agenda.
At the stage of coming to grips with the community and local administrators, the settlement environments are faced with the opportunity of coming together as 'project territories' and of mapping out the direction for those policies and projects that are in a position to transform choices into a physical space, thereby enabling us to control the physical features of these transformations into Ptcp.
Getting this stage underway has generated a preliminary comparison between the significant planning schemes contained in the 'agenda for territorial policies' of each settlement environment and the political intentions of the Provincial council with the purpose both of acquiring projects already underway, integrating with the strategic policies of the Provincial council, and to redirect those policies that are in conflict with the general provincial objectives and strategic choices.
Alongside the recognition of policies formulated with specific reference to settlement environments, which combine in the formulation of the administrative policies for the provincial territories according to principles of equity and sustainability, conceived by us as a consequence of the institutionalization of the ability of the operators as a whole to create agreed-upon choices, there have also been identified certain projects which we have defined as strategic Projects identified as being strategic policies touch upon diverse and interrelated dimensions of territorial transformational processes, involving institutional and non-institutional subjects, both public and private, this being a condition that often poses a problem in terms of building up consent and the integration of operations.
The purpose is to treat these projects as 'integrated territorial projects', namely as opportunities for the development of the Vicenza territory, inserted into itineraries of the 'reformulation' of sectorial policies which also guarantee additional resources that are not only of a financial nature, and for which to point out 'process mechanisms' useful to ensure their consensual implementation.
As regards the complexity and transversal features of the selected projects, a methodology appropriate for the definition of operative methods has been proposed, starting from a preliminary distinction between the various strategic projects according to their typology and hence:
- to create a preliminary investigation document, useful to define the state of the project and the related problems;

- to identify the operators and counterparts the involvement of whom becomes necessary so as to guarantee the feasibility of the project and the effectiveness of its operation, and hence it may be described as 'an integrated territorial project';
- to identify the tools useful for the starting up of the project and/or for the creation of a consensual approach.

The grid, formulated for every settlement environment, provides:
- settlement form and territorial matrixes as regards residence, production, the system of infrastructure, open spaces, agricultural areas, the system of protected areas and objects of historical and monumental value;
- socio-economic profiles;
- territorial-scale projects (parks and natural areas, infrastructures, important functions...);
- territorial geography and local project schemes;
- themes and questions relative to the administration of the territory;
- a preliminary agenda for territorial policies.