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There are a number of different future-city visions being developed around the world at the moment: one of them is Smart Cities: ICT and big data availability may contribute to better understand and plan the city, improving efficiency, equity and quality of life. But these visions of utopia need an urgent reality check: this is one of the future challenges that Smart Cities have to face.

METHODS, TOOLS AND BEST PRACTICES TO INCREASE THE CAPACITY OF URBAN SYSTEMS TO ADAPT TO NATURAL AND MAN-MADE CHANGES

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2 (2017)

Cover Image: Tabiat pedestrian bridge in Tehran, Iran by Leila Araghian from Diba Tensile Architecture – Photo by Mohammad Hassan

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Methods, tools and best practices.

The fragile/resilience city represents a topic that collects itself all the issues related to the urban risks and referred to the different impacts that an urban system has to face with. Studies useful to improve the urban conditions of resilience (physical, environmental, economical, social) are particularly welcome. Main topics to consider could be issues of water, soil, energy, etc.. The identification of urban fragilities could represent a new first step in order to develop and to propose methodological and operative innovations for the planning and the management of the urban and territorial transformations.

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- the territorial risks and fragilities related to mobility of people, goods, knowledge, etc.;
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BETWEEN COMMUNITY SPACES: SQUARES OF MINOR CENTERS OF CALABRIA

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ABSTRACT

The theme of open "community spaces" in recent years has to the development of important interdisciplinary issues.

Nevertheless, the reading of smaller towns, in urbanistic, historical-anthropological and geographical terms appears less extended, considering the declination of public spaces as "squares." Starting from this declension we would like to introduce the first results of a research. The research had the aim of (re)interpreting the particular characteristics of these areas in specific areas such as small towns, using the region of Calabria for the case of analytic application.

These communities have diverse and stratified living cultures, altered by settlement processes that have triggered two different types of urban contexts. The former often lead either to urban areas in depopulated decay or, in contrast, in places of memories: empty containers of relationships, sterile and crystallized museum objects, reduced to scenarios on which passing groups of visitors move necessarily from those realities. The latter often encircle primitive nuclei, asphyxiating them, or characterizing the so-called "dual" or "satellites" towns, completely detached from the original urban center in which all public functions are decentralized.

The applied methodology is based on the reading of the historical-functional evolution of squares by the identification of codified compositional criteria.

Through this research we seek to verify how urban planning, in synergy with other disciplines, can define processes of regeneration aimed at restoring the meaning of "center", and thus of an urban-community reference center.

KEYWORDS:
Community spaces; Interdisciplinary approach; Culture of living; Vernacular architecture; Urban regeneration.

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社区空间之间：
卡拉布里亚小中心广场

摘要

开篇提及的"社区空间"主题广义而言指的是公共区域。近年来，"社区空间"推动了国内外领域重要跨学科事务的发展。然而，从城市化角度、历史人类学角度和地理学角度，对小镇的解读依然不够，认为公共区域的衰退是"广场"。本文以这一衰退为切入，从历史衰退、健康和功能解读两方面进行研究，介绍了调查的初步结果。它以卡拉布里亚地区为分析应用实例，旨在（重新）解读小镇等特定区域的这些空间的特殊性质。
我们希望通过这一解读，突出城市规划与其它原则可以如何帮助这些区域重获"中心"意义，最终成为参考城市社区极点。
参考领域可分为两种不同城市环境：历史环境和现代集群。第一种会导致城市区域降级、人口减少或者反过来，成为记忆之城：空空如也的关系容器、锁在博物馆中的无菌或结晶的物件，最终变成与现实完全脱节的游客观光地。第二种往往围绕初生核，要么使其窒息而亡，要么形成"双倍"或"行星"村落，完全不同于所有公共功能彼此分散的原始城市中心。

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1 INTRODUCTION

The theme of open "community spaces", generally considered as public spaces, in recent years has to the development of important interdisciplinary issues both internationally and nationally. Specifically, reference is made to Enrico Guidoni's historical-urbanistic analysis which intersects the cultured and the traditional dimension; to the more recent writings of Marco Romano, with the aim of reviving the notions of squares and streets, avoiding the "wrongdoings" of the past; to Salvatore Settis's critical notes on the assault on cultural heritage, including that inherent to public spaces, once an expression of the town's identity; to Stefano Boeri's appeals urging us to open "enclosed squares"; to the contributions to the size of premises of Alberto Magnaghi and Bernardo Secchi[1].

Nevertheless, the reading of smaller towns, in urbanistic, historical-anthropological and geographical terms appears less extended, considering the declination of public spaces as "squares." Starting from this declension – investigated both in terms of historical development, and in terms of physical and functional reading – we would like to introduce the first results of a research. The research had the aim of (re)interpreting the particular characteristics of these areas in specific areas such as small towns, using the region of Calabria for the case of analytic application. This is because it is a region which is mainly characterized by smaller centers. In fact, of the 405 municipalities, 318 have a population of less than 5,000 inhabitants.

These communities have diverse and stratified living cultures, altered by settlement processes that have triggered two different types of urban contexts. The former often lead either to urban areas in depopulated decay or, in contrast, in places of memories: empty containers of relationships, sterile and crystallized museum objects, reduced to scenarios on which passing groups of visitors move necessarily from those realities. The latter often encircle primitive nuclei, asphyxiating them, or characterizing the so-called "dual" or "satellites" towns, completely detached from the original urban center in which all public functions are decentralized.

The applied methodology is based on the reading of the historical-functional evolution of squares by the identification of codified compositional criteria. These criteria will contribute to the definition of a support instrument for project modelling, especially in terms of understanding the supra-structural patterns imposed by economic and political power on the organization of space.

Through this research we seek to verify how urban planning, in synergy with other disciplines, can define processes of regeneration aimed at restoring the meaning of "center", and thus of an urban-community reference center[2].

2 BETWEEN OPEN COMMUNITY SPACES: SQUARES

Open community spaces, coinciding with squares, have different and multiple types. In the first instance, they help to characterize the places and the people who live there: from the most prestigious[3] to smaller yet equally famous ones[4], and to the small squares of "lesser" villages from around the world; we also include areas of the microenvironment, which may even be reached by narrow and bumpy steps that are carved into the rock or covered walkways, between earthen architecture.

In any case, we refer, with all due differences, to places of the urban structure that excel: places of social meeting, of resting, of dialogue, of comparison, of celebrations, of collective symbolic discoveries, of dreams and of the mirror in which the community recognises itself. Yet the squares are also places of the internal-external dialectic, full-empty, open-closed, scene-room, body-gaze; in a continuous succession of events,

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[1]   Guidoni, E. (1980); Romano, M., (2008, 2015); Boeri, S. (2011); Magnaghi, A. (2010); Secchi, B. (2015).

[2]   See. Zali N., Gholami, N., Karimiazeri, A. R., Azedeh, S. R., (2016).

[3]   Piazza di Spagna, Piazza Navona, Piazza S. Pietro in Roma, Piazza S. Marco in Venezia, Piazza del Duomo in Milano, Piazza Plebiscito in Napoli, Piazza del Campo in Siena, etc.

[4]   Piazza delle Erbe in Verona, Piazza della Cisterna in San Gimignano, and so on to foreign squares Place de Vosges in Paris, Piccadilly Circus in Londra, the square in front of the mosque of Djenné in Mali.

functions, representations and maps are to be found, expressions of vitality, of community strength, of togetherness and of centrality. It all has an enormously significant role (sacral, political, celebratory, legal, confrontative, ostentatious, theatrical, folkloristic), since squares were the place of processions, executions, riots, parades, funerals, rallies, sporting events and all kinds of performances.

Until recently, such a dimension was still tangible and the square (or any other place of the community) lived its real initial dimension. Instead, recently, the process of transformation – which actually started in the 1900s and consequent to the becoming of society and the serious crisis throughout almost the entire world – led to macroscopic changes.

In greater centers, such spaces are filled with vehicles, or even by the delineation of monument-squares. In smaller peripheral centres, where squares and wide spaces were long maintained as the fulcrum of the community there is, instead, an inexorable abandonment with consequent decay for several reasons. In each case the relation with the city is lost, its being the glue between the different urban places and, therefore, between both the people and groups living there. The public space becomes an atrophied space rather than a place for social relations between individuals, mediated by images. Some public spaces of those cities are still saved, barely contaminated by the process of mass "modernization" the structures of which still contain the essential reasons of the identity survival of its inhabitants.

The world is ever changing and increasingly projects people into realities like those of Times Square in New York, in the city-market communes, in the new dormitory conurbations, without spaces for exchange and human comparison, in the isolated villas of the bourgeoisie, in the ever-present "media squares" etc.

In this world, as stated by Marco Romano, the challenge is that of making the squares[5] once again become signs of the urbanistic and cultural becoming of a habitat. They, representative of the "collective spheres of our living", must become neuralgic points of irradiation of more recent urban parts, new real and symbolic centres of gravity, perhaps even designated by the community, between the oldest village and the new building expansion.

3 TEMPORAL AND FUNCTIONAL EVOLUTIONS OF OPEN COMMUNITY SPACES IN CITIES AND LESSER CENTRES

In observing the first symbols of cities, from the Egyptian to the Mesopotamian, it is notable that they are defined by a crossroad of right angle roads. The greatest powers unite and the most important places of exchange, of circulation of goods and people are to be found where the axes converge. It is there that culture coagulates, becoming the representation of the city par excellence, expression of an idea, of an age, and of an institution. It is a central space of the settlement, which continues to be found in the great palaces of Sargon in the fertile crescent, and in Knossos and Festos in Crete, where the internal courtyard around which the other spaces of the great structure are articulated and which became the square of the palace/city and even the centre of the entire empire. With the successive transmigration in Greece, the square transformed from an internal court to a mega construction in an open clearing of the intricate urban fabric of the low city. This new urban invention, called agorà[6], is the first that, due to form and function, is comparable with our squares: in fact, it is a religious centre, due to the presence of the main places of worship of the polis, in particular those of the founder and protector divinity; political centre, becoming the place elected by citizens for assemblies, to discuss civic problems, to create and maintain interpersonal relations, to make decisions; economic and commercial centre as the market place.

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[5]   The reference is more specifically addressed to the Italian reality.
[6]   In ancient Greek ἀγορά from ἀγείρω = assemble, gather.

Later, during the Roman Empire, following the Hellenistic experience of the *plateia*[7], the *agorà* transforms into a *forum*. It is an open and central place of the city (Figure 1), almost always located at the crossroads of the two main roads, the cardo and the decumanus, around which the most important buildings were located (the basilicas in which justice was administered, buildings for the local judiciary, the most important temples, the workshops of the most prestigious trades).

The slow deterioration of the Empire and the start of the new urbanisation process of the territory, between the Early Middle Ages and the Late Middle Ages, led to the reinvention of the city and of the open and closed spaces suitable for the new needs of the inhabitants. In this new world, unlike previous ages, squares acquired a monofunctional character, as well as reflecting the most representative buildings. They are substantially differentiated: for religious activity in front of churches; for political occasions, in front of the town hall; for the sale and exchange of products or for fairs, often in proximity of the walls, thus decentred compared to previous ones for obvious logistical reasons. The solutions of squares nearby other squares, including the citizen market of daily needs, were grouped together and positioned in central places of the settlement; both due to the limited urban extension and to exploit the same system of streets. Numerous systems of squares derive from it – squares with different shapes that are, for the main part, religious or civil, simply separated by one of the public or religious buildings of which they are a function, and the unique squares that join them both – strong symbolic centres of the community – since, during the Middle Ages, religious and civil life often had many shared aspects. All this was realised without the adoption of a preformed scheme or without proportions between building height and walkable surfaces, but through the structuring of frequently irregular typologies.

Fig. 1 Roman forum to Scolacium

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[7]   Columned square/street ornamenting the city, bordered by workshops and other commercial activities. From the Greek version of this word, πλατεία, deriving from the latin *platea*, and therefore "piazza".

However, the typologies respected the lines of the horizon, result of a precise settlement culture and of adaptation to sites and of the organic development of the urban complex the connective tissue of which became vital organs. In any case, it is a diversified system due to dimensions and forms that are dependent on the functions and which are generally closed and self-contained. However, their opening and spaciousness is clear compared to the compactness of the settlement fabric and of the narrowness of paths, from which they are served without being crossed; this occurred at the edges and never at the centre so as to not alter the occurrence of facts and of daily actions[8] that make it a continual field of community life. Conventual squares will be distinguished which, following the experience of Eiximenis will regularise new urban parts on square links, thematising the respective areas.

The general setting given to the squares in the Middle Ages also continued to be manifested in the following centuries; but, the functioning mode and form would change. From the Renaissance on, they lost their character of "accidentality" and of adaption to functions, to needs, to sites and to local cultures, actions "from below"; instead, they become works designed at a table, like any other architecture for schemes, geometries, symmetries, applied regularity and modularity, with a "from above" procedure, desired by the most visible society to mark their power. Therefore, they acted on the existing fabric to improve and add value almost exclusively to the spaces in front of churches and palaces, giving them greater decorum that is more appropriate for the new canons of beauty, regularising and geometrising a previous square, eviscerating part of the existing fabric to obtain and remodel new spaces structuring as a square part of the city that had yet to be defined, in the case of urban expansions.

This occurred by paying great attention to the rules of proportion between walkable surfaces and the height of buildings, as well as to that of perspective, paying significant attention to the view of the observer and, consequentially, to connections with roads, placed opportunely, almost always at the centre to exalt the architecture and the monuments situated within. Instead, the creation of new cities with relative squares are scarce, notwithstanding the numerous elaborations of "ideal" models, namely of perfect forms of cities to be block built from nothing, consequent to the cultural revolution of the age.

In the Baroque age, even though squares were still of a similar character to Renaissance squares regarding the value given to the city, their renewal would be notable. They were to be characterised prevalently by a marked tension translated into a constant movement of curved forms, in fantasy, in theatrical scenery, consequent to the new moral and intellectual climate, to the change of social and political conditions, to the new geographical discoveries, to the reaction of the Catholic church towards Lutheran and Calvinist reformist attacks, to the anxiety of innovation. They would, thus, be engaged in the structuring of large "stages", correlated to the network of streets in which one could constantly move, with squares conceived as nodes, fastenings, points of reference around which the building fabric and the community could gravitate. In any case, it would be important to correlate a monument of notable importance to it – constructing it ex novo, before a significant pre-existence, which would be further valued by the space in front, or even by raising the reference building (churches, palaces, convents, hospitals, etc.) – or an attractive centre which would deputize it (such as an obelisk, a column or a fountain), perceivable from several angles, as the end or junction of the path. The novelty of all this is that it gives significant space to urban circulation, in particular that of the ruling classes, whether they be on foot or on-board coaches in which they show themselves to the population, in a scenic urban extension of aristocratic residences (Figures 2, 3, 4).

Starting from the nineteenth century, the accelerated changes of society, which were increasingly engrained by the leadership of the middle classes, were not matched by new propositive theories neither on the organic conception of the city nor on the component elements such as the squares.

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8   For the same reason, sacral architectures (such as aedicules and votive chapels), as well as fountains are placed along the sides.

Fig. 2 The picture of the Cathedral's plaza of the eighteenth-century Cosenza
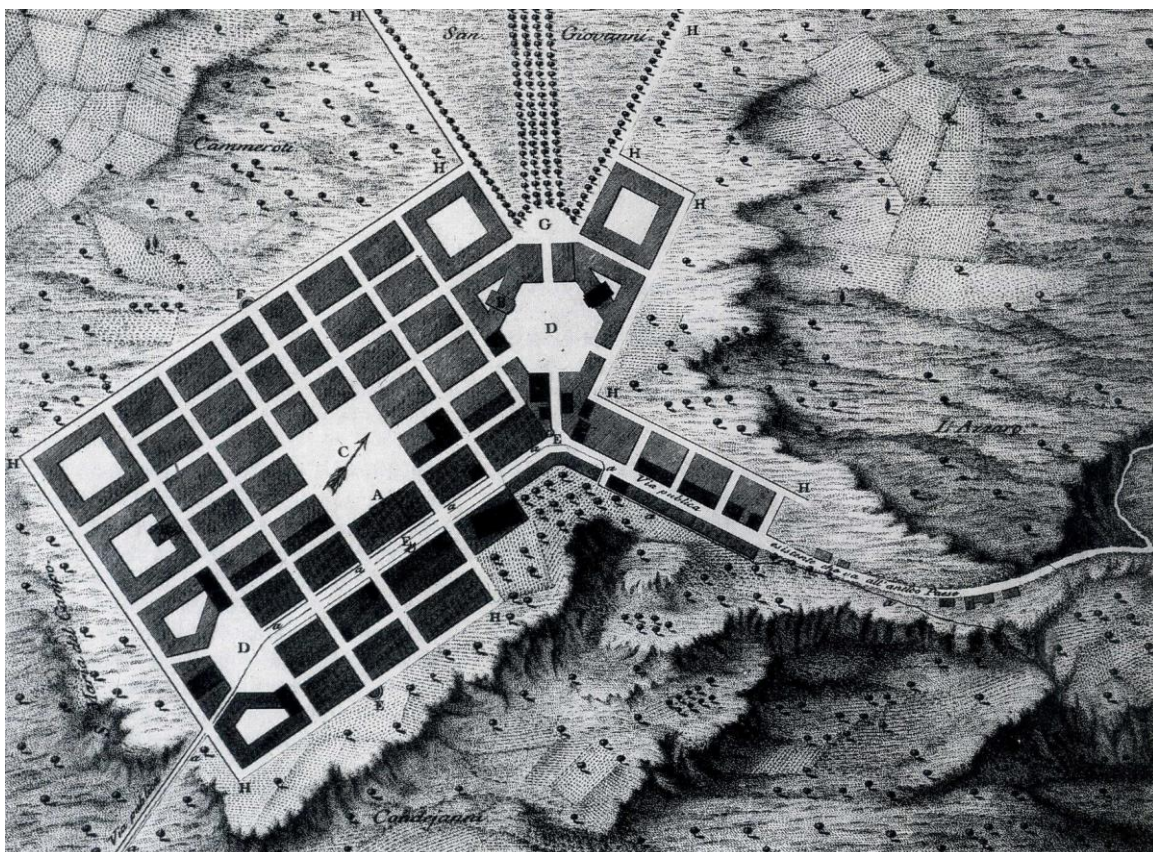
Fig. 3 The Enlightenment plan of Palms with central plaza

They resumed sumptuous baroque concepts, among forms that were usually circular, semi-circular, and elliptical, albeit with specific adaptations to the new urban dimensions. The demolition of portions of the "lesser" historical fabric, believed to be less important, were recurrent in order to isolate a monument and render it visible from several sides and also to give the city wide representative spaces.

With few exceptions – that use galleries, squares and covered streets to define connections between buildings and urban parts – the result was to be that of a reduction of courtly architecture to a museum exhibit, often isolating it in large and bare spaces, thus breaking the relationship between it and the whole urban context for which it was meant.

This was followed, due to increasing traffic, by a widening of roads and the transformation of the squares connected to them into roundabouts around the central flower beds: rough copies of British *squares*, hard for people to reach except through underpasses or slaloms between vehicles.

With regards to large urban centres, where the direct action of communities on constructions was surpassed by that of architects and urbanists (badly in the present), the reality of "minor" centres is different (Figure 5). They are expressions of compositional community choral acts in which the sense of the squares, intended as a place of social integration and centrality, is felt more than in cities. In fact, they were more guarded archaic and metaphorical meanings.

The symbolic manifestation of power and of the commodified material relations, in which the social life of the village is still felt, that sense of villager collectiveness, of "tranquillity", of instant communication, in an area where there are still flavours and an old way of life, are dissolute.

Apart from the accommodation of war memorials and other green oases in squares that were supposed to give more "decorum" in spaces that were already relevant in their own right, transformations were limited.

Fig. 4-5 The neoclassic "Pitagora" Plaza to Crotone (on the left) and the "Ferrante" Plaza to Bonifati in early 1900s images (on the right)

This occurred despite the inexorable arrival of the frantic metropolitan way of life, the recent economic decline of villages and consequential depopulation, and then the shift to the new urbanized suburbs, which tended to desert squares and empty them of meaning. Fetes are an expression of this, in all their manifestations, in which the space is still maintained as a physical fact, but not in its cultural dimension between the material and the symbolic. A greater continuity with the past is found in community spaces, which frequently are more numerous and more connected with everyday life, even if they are also increasingly being abandoned. Besides the squares, which are not very numerous, and the streets that conflux in them, it is the microenvironment which represents the minimum level of interference between the private (family house) and the community (the space used by several families or by the entire community) (Guidoni, 1980). It is a "privileged field", to be considered as a social exteriorisation of the internal, familiar or architectural or economic structure; including signs of religion, service equipment, spaces destined for work activities. It is here that regulations and customs of coexistence between different families unfold. Each element is mutually connected and, besides contributing to the definition of formal and spatio-functional compositions, it allows them to assume an important social and symbolic significance. In this light, the urban system, according to the organic principle of Mediterranean societies, does not only represent a path structure but it is also imposed as a community set: a place of encounter and exchange, like the house, not to be considered only as an exclusive space, but strongly compared to other households in a community vision (Figures 6, 7).

The associative models of the communities that found their origins both in familial groups (clans) and in those related by a productive activity were thus concretized. The structures differ qualitatively and quantitatively depending on the multiple cultural aspects of the different sites involved and the diverse historical periods during which such groups were formed.

There are, thus, individual families, families with extensive ties of kinship and, finally, situations characterized by different matrix aggregate forms, which are situated within diversified urban spaces that, however, correspond in both the model and dimension of the inhabitants' needs.

Despite this phenomenon characterizing each urban area, of course in a less intense manner than in the past, settlements that have a more complex urban grid appear as those most affected. The urban systems with a curvilinear-parallel or regular mesh trend, due to the usability of the roads, do not favour the permanence of these relationships; on the contrary, the intricate urban fabric – characterized by numerous clearings and from a few crossing axes, as can be seen in Islamic matrix installations – seems to have been composed precisely to facilitate interfamilial relationships.

Nearby seats, projections, external staircases, atriums, lodges, landings and galleries which primarily characterise these sectors, a network of reciprocity, of social and economic relations, of courtesies or even of hostilities[9], were created. In any case, membership in a neighbourhood[10] was deeply felt, sometimes more than the membership of the community as a whole. People identified with it and everyone was proud of it, considering such an area significantly more beautiful, orderly, important and safe if it is compared to others. There were also frequent conflicts between neighbourhoods, including those related to the celebrations of madonnas and saints belonging to those specific places, which was attenuated during main or patron saint feasts, involving and aggregating the entire village. Furthermore, these places are generally referred to as

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[9]   *Lassa u fuocu ardente e scappa duve a parturente*, states a Calabrian proverb highlighting the need to quickly lend help at a birth. Almost daily, instead, were cooking reciprocities, as can be drawn from another proverb from the same region: *alla vicina a pitta cchiù china* that tells you how important it was to reserve the best portions for the neighbours opposite. Special help was also given on the occasion of illnesses and death, when even enemies ran to help; economic exchanges regarded, instead, services and food stuffs: in practice, who had something or brought it home had to share it with the others. Neighbours, instead, helped each other if there was an immediate need for money, often paid back with interest, or even for the workforce or for weddings; in any case without social distinction because, as stated in another Calabrian proverb: *A regina avietta bisogno da' vicina* meaning everyone could need others.

[10]   *Ruga* in Greek communities, *vaglio* and *slargu* in Islamic ones and *gjitonia* in the Arbërësh communities of Calabria.

"intermediate spaces": in fact, numerous services find place there, as well as storage rooms for furnishings, which simultaneously allowed for the execution of domestic work, rest and other collective activities of food preparation and rural or fishing crafts. Despite the differences compared to the past, they are still areas that have been able to maintain their typological characteristics as protected. The latter, in particular, overlook housing units that are aligned and easily accessible, which have been adjusted to citizens' models (asphalt or concrete surface coverage of what was once pedestrian, or frequently used for the passage of horses and chariots) and affected by other customs such as car use and new services. The transformations, in the latter case, were even more invasive and, in addition to involving the use of different materials from tradition, have determined: demolition of walls; physical annulment of stepped paths for very steep roads for light traffic; change of destination of numerous rooms, with the consequent alteration of the facility layout.

In any case, the presence of commercial activities, usually along the recently constructed main roads more used by transport and by people, is scarce.

The movements which occurred usually regarded activities of the overlooking home or rare entertainments between neighbours and passers-by. It is believed, however, that when the urban arrangement was defined, there was a certain harmony. The creation of collective spaces occurred through the participation of all overlooking families; the same people who kept them clean, who provided them with services and ensured their maintenance. Being spatial entities with multiple characters, each could also intervene in the formal classification, usually following the construction of their own home.

Fig. 6-7 Women and microenvironment to Tiriolo. The competition of the piñatas to Monterosso

Everyone was a direct protagonist of their own distribution, decorative and symbolic choices; interpretive freedoms were nonetheless accurate and consolidated, which made it possible to express a language belonging to a code in which everyone could recognize themselves and relate to. A process, therefore, to be understood

not as a passive adaptation to different situations, nor as a refinement of beauty (intended as an external variable), but rather as an interpretation rich in functional meanings. Such an interpretation, devoid of theory, drew on the complex cultural heritage of each area, consolidated by experience and handed down by tradition, with very little codification from outside. Therefore, it consists of places with different but very specific meanings, both in the cultured and traditional dimension. Center of the city from which they take nourishment, it was also the stage of the community's life until a few decades ago. In these, people, materially acknowledging their citizenship, were mixed, they compared themselves with their peers, and represented themselves. This allowed them to give vent to their personality which was often stifled in the home, in a continuous flow between private and public life. They were urban structures that were consistently projected onto the social ones, where the voices, the din, the sounds, the noises and the ritual music created family resonances, where distances were measured with looks: from the largest squares, often a symbol of individual emotions to the more contained squares, closely linked to the evolution of the various moments of existence. This can be related to a past dimension, echoing between the lines and always less current. It deals with places of the community, paradoxically no longer in the hands of the community, and therefore victims of a modern schizophrenia and swallowed up by an urban planning and architecture whose members are not able to understand, maintain and propose them in contemporary days. It is no coincidence that in neighbourhoods built in recent decades no provision has been made for squares, reducing suburbs to deserts where often social marginalisation is cruelly underlined by symbolic marginalisation (Romano, 2015).

Added to this is the reality of sprawl, the widespread "city", due to powerful cultural, economic, social and anthropological factors; in such contexts there are no longer community places; they have been replaced by a disorder that is seemingly irrational, a reflection of the ways of using and perceiving the space of today's society. Thus, we encounter the *private city* dispersed in vast territories, fragmented, consisting of settlement islands in their own right, without central spaces and hubs of community life; but we also come across atrophied sites, places of remembrance, destroyed areas, topologically but not typologically recognizable, as they are without the functions for which they were created.

They, in particular, gave meaning and identity to the same shape since these are areas characterized by strictly commercial meanings. This connotation coincides with their trivial reconsideration, with a view to the re-use of historic centers, as places of meetings and holiday strolls; places compared and "replaced" by other "squares" (such as centers and shopping streets, or replaced by stations, airports, stadiums, gymnasiums, media "squares", etc.) that overturn the out of community space into an increasingly "internised" inner space. It passes, then, following the rhythms of social impoverishment: from an emptiness, dense in relations and sociality to a complete emptiness of meanings and values; from their being a scene to progressively becoming a screen, increasingly misty, an irrefutable sign of suffering towns and villages (Figures 8, 9).

4 AMONG MINOR CENTRES: THE CASE OF CALABRIA

As indicated above, this paper aims to introduce the first results of a research aimed at (re)interpreting the particular characteristics of such spaces in specific areas such as minor centers: the case of analytical application is the region of Calabria. To do so, we start from the analysis of the squares, both in terms of historical evolution, and in terms of physical and functional reading.

It is to grasp different facets of a territorial area of peripheral southern Italy. In it – due to several factors including distance from the centers of power, the physical-territorial disintegration and the presence of a long-monarchical feudal regime – since the Middle Ages the settlements remain strongly marked by the simple and essential character of the rural world, in particular of the hinterland; and these are maintained, with few exceptions, up to the mid-1900s, in respect of customs and in the sharing of common reference horizons inherited from tradition. In addition, the continued frequency of natural disasters – such as earthquakes and

floods, incident on the devastation of constructions and the insecurity and anxiety of naturally scattered communities – which involve the maintenance of urban facilities, the most difficult to remove, but the constant renovation of the architectures.

Fig. 8 Abandoned plaza to S. Lorenzo

Fig. 9 Modernity to Melito Porto Salvo

The investigation therefore moves in territories that, as in much of the South, see the sea but which are not seen from it, without deriving economic activity, mentality or behaviour from it. It is, therefore, a landscape area not located near the coast, but, basically, lived folded neatly between the hills and overlooking high ground. A situation that has occurred for about a thousand years; since the decline of the Roman Empire, the new territorial urbanization process and reinvention of the settlements with the respective community spaces suited to new needs started. It is a historical phase in which the countryside assumes a leading role and rural centers proliferate. Different urban traditions coexist, and are founded and, in part, differentiate, tending in any case to build a common heritage. The inhabited appear defined, accordingly, by settlement cultures determined by long experimented and precise design rules. They are rules that are constituted by dimensions, relations between houses, use of common spaces, building materials, etc.; they are transmitted orally from generation to generation and, each time, adapted to all stimuli and to the new requirements developed within a community.

This territorial context often manifests itself "floating" and consists of a mosaic of places, each with their own historical and geographical individuality. They are delimited by precise boundaries, within which each community interprets and defines its own environment, according to specific organizational models; such models are expressions of social life and originate from an intense relationship with nature, history and religion.

Fig. 10 The village of Fuscaldo

A close interdependence binds the settlement network to the natural field of belonging, which constitutes an inseparable unicum centred on the strength of bijective relations and of the relations of lived knowledge, between man and his surroundings. This phenomenon marks each urban setting in a less intense manner than in the past; nevertheless, there is still a difference between settlement patterns depending on compactness,

on complexity and on the articulation of the connective tissue, which are the fundamental and differentiating parameters of the community structure.

In this context, among the different ways to build and organize the urban fabric, curvilinear road models[11] appear to have an important role. With regard to the study in question, they are among those that least facilitate rest and entertainment between community members. In its early forms, the phenomenon should not be seen only as a passive adaptation to the natural landscape, but also as the externalization of the will not to impose artificial signs. It slowly loses this last value, while continuing to manifest itself during the Middle Ages as a "curvilinear style": it is one which will be repeatedly employed, even with the use of more durable materials, to resolve defensive and road urban problems.

The research has highlighted that these signs are still to be found in many settlements of both the Tyrrhenian coast[12] (including Fuscaldo[13] and, further south, Monterosso, Arena[14]) and of the Ionian coast (in the case of Staiti, St. Severina, Rocca Imperiale and some villages of Greek Sila[15]) as indicated in Figures 10, 11, 12, 13. These settlements are characterized, in the historic part, by compact or elongated urban networks; however, they follow conformation of the ground and are differentiated by the ground's different morphology, clearly highlighting a similar settlement grammar. The agglomerations are usually situated on hilly offshoots and along often inaccessible slopes or natural terraces hanging over gorges (such as Grisolia). Furthermore, they are connected by roads that cross the territory strongly mark constructions. In each case, the structural organization occurs around a military or religious center, placed in a central position which, in the past, functioned as the point of origin and of urban attraction.

The blocks, arranged on steep terraces (such as in Cleto, Sorianello or Sangineto), usually occupy spaces that are more easily buildable and better exposed, yet this is not an absolute rule. Some districts have developed on apparently inaccessible rock formations that determine (such as in the case of Tortora, Maierà or Roccabernarda) urban forms of particular interest and fascination; among them the upper part of Amantea stands out, modelled directly on the rock with buildings that overlook large and high caves.

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[11] The roots of this system lie the early history; it disappears in Roman times and then resurfaces after the collapse of the Empire, when the State authorities and citizens cease to exercise control of town planning which, in a moment of antiurban tendency of new populations, will be handled directly by the inhabitants themselves according to the ways of their own peasant-pagan culture. It is a settlement tradition also rooted in North European peoples, in predominantly rural areas, and centred on the natural elements which reflect the characters. Its forms, spread throughout the territory by the Normans and Lombards clearly contrast the classical heritage; they have less rigid lines, the use of which will be facilitated by the use of timber structures, for the construction of defensive structures and housing, irreversibly decreeing the switching between ancient and medieval settlement structures.

[12] Tortora, San Nicola Arcella, Grisolia, Maierà, Buonvicino, in part Bonifati, Acquappesa, Longobardi, Arena.

[13] In Fuscaldo, the village is crossed by a sinusoidal road which, at the top, wraps around the primitive nucleus, still arranged according to the steepness of the site, degrading compared to a fortified structure

[14] The village belongs to a seriation of centers that first saw the dawn at the beginning of the second millennium; it covers the top of a hill, extending upstream with a fairly consistent nucleus. The buildings, made up predominantly of terraced types of a popular matrix, respect the lines of nature; along with the urban routes, they define a fusiform settlement system of historical-urban interest, which still retains the characteristics of its medieval origins. In addition to the particularly valuable ecclesiastical buildings, there are important palaces and an old disused mill, which was later transformed into an olive oil mill, which along with other building episodes embellish historical buildings.

[15] The oldest inhabited area is bordered by a group of older homes; it extends to the North over a hilly tuft offshoot that ends, gradually, in a sharp incline, with steep external traits defining the boundaries. In respect for the steepness of the site, the belonging to urban and architectural typological characters of the rural world; they come with traditional forms that are strongly influenced by an exclusive adaptation to the needs and to the essential. The dwellings are designed on a human scale, with a few emerging architectural elements; overall, they assume a decidedly homogenous urban collection, confirming a commonality of material and cultural resources and to life experiences of unitary life. There are numerous groups of row houses, usually on two floors, forming compact blocks and developed on four fronts; they are usually formed by a single row of houses with shared side walls and two faces. Rarer are cases of living cells in adherence to walls with rocks or with another house that opens onto the parallel street.

Closely connected to the system of buildings, the trend of paths is presented: the frequent curvilinearity does not imply contorted and irregular structures.
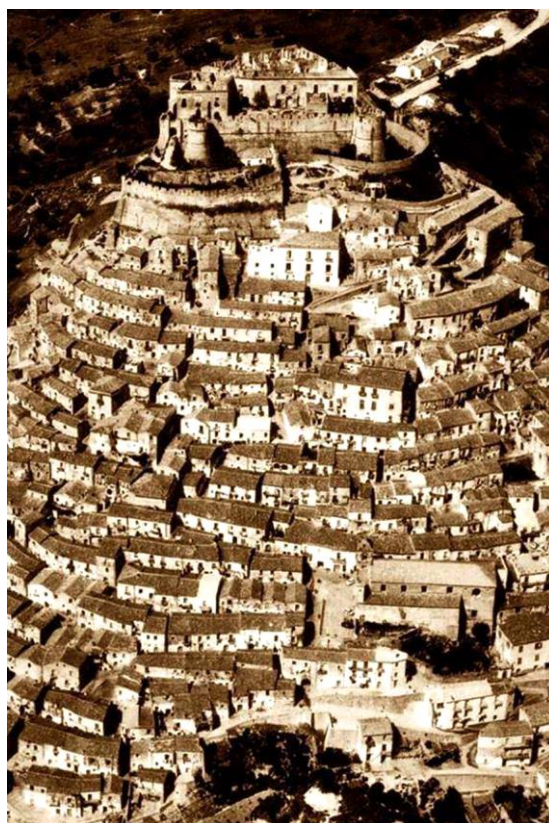

Fig. 11-12-13 Curvilinearity in the villages of Monterosso and Arena. The village of Rocca Imperiale.

There are many parts that horizontally follow land orography; others serve as a connection between the various heights with both inclining slopes, in order to ensure drivable communications, as well as stepped slopes, in the direction of the slope, for pedestrian use.

In this territorial situation, which is already in itself highly diversified, the radically innovative Islamic cultural component is also connected. It has had some influence on the investigated territory both in a direct yet marginal manner during the fleeting presence of such peoples, as well as indirectly, continuing to transmit some forms of organization of the cultural landscapes over centuries which can still be found today[16].

Without handing down forms of courtly architecture, it enabled indirect evidence to reach the current day, including common Arabisms and indications of place names, as well as several significant traces. They can be found here, as in other areas of the region, especially in the presence of some aggregation modes of living spaces: these are ways which can be attributed to the habits of small groups bound by relations of common ethnicity or family relations or work. Some case studies are characterized by: compact and irregular fabrics, blind alleys, covered streets, road arcs, bayonet paths, sudden changes of direction, sudden widenings, denticulation of buildings on street fronts, rounded edges, exterior stairs and frequent angles. These characters facilitate the relations of the community even more compared to the previous model, creating open places that are more difficult to cross and which are protected. In the original nuclei of many centers there are signs of this way of conceiving the settlement, although some similarities compared to previously seen examples remain, concerning: morphology and geological properties of the site; the presence of architectural centers; connection routes with the territory (Chimirri, 2008, 2015).

It is the case of the following towns, as further shown in Figures 14, 15, 16: Belmonte, crossed by a steep penetrating road onto which flow minor connection paths with more external areas; Paola, where in the part above Piazza del Popolo, the housing units, in contrast with the 1800s expansion areas, form a rather compact agglomerate; Cetraro, perched above a hilly offshoot slightly deviated from the coast, that in the outer portion is defined by a series of dense housing units; Belvedere, circumscribed by a curving road that also encircles the castle, from which some crossing paths depart; Scalea, situated along a steep hill facing the coastal plain, on which on which unfolds a dense branching of steps converging on the ruins of a fortified structure; Morano and Saracena, defined by intricate and at times labyrinthine settlement systems; Crotone, relative to its historic center, consisting of a maze of streets with a very complex pattern, with clearings and squares wedged between them; Catanzaro, where the settlement complexity appears in the district of *Grecìa*; Cosenza, which presents an urban fabric south-west of Corso Telesio that is heavily influenced by an alternation of uncovered and covered paths, interspersed with clearings of different extensions.

They do not deviate from the latter way of conceiving the settlement organisation of villages of arbërësh origin or remodelling (Santa Sofia d'Epiro[17], San Demetrio Corone[18], Vaccarizzo, San Cosmo Albanese and Mongrassano, San Benedetto Ullano, Cervicati, respectively on the right and on the left of the river Crati,

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[16]   The process started around 1000, when along the entire Calabria coast there was a series of landings and raids by the populations. As well as constituting permanent bases such as Amantea and Reggio, the seat of emirates, they penetrated inland also affecting productive organisation and settlement organisation both of small existing nuclei as well as those to be built.

[17]   The inhabited area is made up of a somewhat irregular urban fabric; inside it is possible to note elements belonging to different settlement cultures. The buildings come together and form very large but also isolated housing units; between them, paths (*rrugat*) of different shapes, spaced by widenings and squares (*sheshe*). Of particular interest are the street underpasses with visible beams: they are frequent in primitive area of the lower zone, where there are many external stairs to the buildings. The prevailing building typology is one with very small dimensions, with simple finishes in both the wall surfaces and the openings

[18]   The original nucleus, planimetrically uneven, consists of a row of buildings; they often have jagged edges formed by masonry stairs, arranged above along a rough stretch and one below of a lesser steepness. There are also many aristocratic houses and some row houses, with interesting carved stone portals. Between the urban and architectural features of interest, road underpasses assume a considerable role, often overlooking more or less wide open spaces even sloping.

Fig. 14-15-16 Road arches in Belmonte and Saracena. Covered path in Cosenza.

Fig. 17-18-19 Settlement tradition and modernity in Vaccarizzo Albanese. The "gijtonìa" to S. Demetrio. Urbanistic linearity to Guardia Piemontese.

Falconara, along the Cosentinian Tyrrhenian coast, Civita and Lungro, close to the Pollino) which, in the gijtonia, cell/space of the neighbourhood, have a meeting place par excellence for community relations (see Figures 17, 18).

The shapes of the villages of sixteenth-seventeenth century[19] foundation/expansion (Figure 19), or those rebuilt after 1783 according to Enlightenment models[20], appear finally rather different and less compact; they are therefore less open, but do not exclude rests nor relationships. In such centers, despite the diversity of both morphological and altitude situations, urban networks are characterized by a road system consisting of a checkerboard of mainly straight and parallel streets, forming very elongated and regular blocks. There is a large central square around which the settlement system and community gather, while clearings and more isolated lanes are usually absent; instead, the roads are the "open air rooms" of the people, parallel to the inner courtyards in the blocks.

5   CONCLUSIONS

There are numerous studies that have led to the definition of genuine manuals that gather principles, operative instruments and case studies at the disposal of urban context administrators to support them and guide them on the best way to interpret, create and manage community spaces, intended as quality public spaces[21].

These studies show that ensuring an increase in quality of life and prosperity, including economic prosperity, means preparing roads, green areas, parks, squares and other public spaces in the best way, providing them with services and efficient infrastructures.

Critical to the success of the city, like in the villages and the territorial systems, is a high consideration of the importance of the community space intended as a public space: the adequate distribution and proportion of urban areas devoted to streets and public spaces, as well as greater connectivity, make the territories more liveable and productive. The territories that revalue and promote widespread access to common assets, to urban *commons*, thus increase social cohesion, civic identity and the quality of life of all citizens, including and above all the most vulnerable.

Therefore, in order to contribute to the definition of such practices this research has focused on squares as specific public spaces, using the case of Calabria. Calabria is a region where the geographical and social capital is weaker than other regions and, consequently, it is necessary to look for answers that are as effective as they are encouraging, to be compared and exported.

The open community space, in these contexts, should be an admonition to rethink the new urban design; it must not conflict the historical legacies and natural evidence nor conflict the current needs of socio-economic development which these territories need, that will also lead to a reversal of the trend of population decline.

Obviously, seeking to reverse the demographic trend in such contexts solely through the rethinking of these spaces is not sufficient; on the contrary, it is not at all inappropriate to think of local development actions which rethink appropriate community spaces, contributing to enhancing territorial peculiarities, also for the purposes of transversal tourism activities.

The reversal of demographic trends occurs when a recovery of the labour demand is credible and sustainable and when adequate conditions of citizenship, both for the young and the not so young, are restored. By contrast, such a reversal determines the reuse of unused fundamental territorial capital elements, particularly the settlement system, enabling recovery, maintenance and safety which would otherwise not be activated; it

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[19]   Guardia Piemontese, Diamante, Fabbrizia, Cittanova.
[20]   Filadelfia, Palmi, Cortale.
[21]   It is noted, for example, the preparation of the *Global Toolkit on Public Space*, created by the partnership between the UN agency UN-Habitat and INU. It sees the two organizations merge capabilities, resources, skills and knowledge in the production and dissemination of policies and guidelines on the topic of Public Space.

also leads to the restoration and consolidation of the vitality of local communities. Given those necessary and essential assumptions, it emerges that the definition of community spaces in general, and smaller centers in particular, lies in the delineation of a collective creative process.

This process, however, cannot fail to take into account, in the specific case of squares, that they obey codified compositional criteria. These criteria in turn follow a particular design model, understood as an instrumental aid to the understanding of the superstructure schemes imposed by economic and political power on the organization of space.

Therefore, both in regenerating the existing community spaces and in the delineation of new spaces, it is necessary to identify the moment and the reasons of the design, of the visual and theatrical relations between the dominant monuments, the building and the roads that connect these areas; it thus necessary to interpret urban and architectural transformations in the long term (see Figure 20).

Fig. 20 The square of St. Severina

From our analysis of the case of Calabria, it emerged that the action of designers must be strong and decisive both on a small scale (single center) and a large scale (territorial system of the individual centers). Such actions must be open not only to aesthetics, but a humanly deeper and shared dimension: they must know how to interpret the continuous process of modification of the community places whilst favouring the connection between new and old anthropized contexts and between suburbia and compact centers. The overall objective is to help develop a wider urban design, aimed at generating social and economic development; specific targets for these spaces are substantiated, however, in: making them desirable again, reclaiming their respective anthropological properties; assigning them the role of urban connection, as well as integration and social cohesion between people belonging to different cultures; associating a role of collective service and

struggle against settlement desertification and the abandonment of old buildings[22]. The concept of memory, therefore, can have a significant and transversal relevance if it is not considered as a stronghold of values at risk of extinction or the foundation of the embalming of parts of the territory to be subtracted from the historical development and from the use of the people. Memory should be considered as "context" in which it is possible to find elements of the past which are still alive and current to relate to modernisation in a system that is dynamic, flexible, open and ready for exchange and interaction. Innovative development programs, stimulating revivification, to be continually rebuilt redrawing boundaries, must be founded on it.

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[22]   It is for this reason that Unesco, as well as preserving the material aspects of sites, also intervenes in the maintenance of intangible culture (such as the wealth of the Jamaa El Fna Square of Marrakech).

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IMAGE SOURCES

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Fig. 11, 12: aerial view takem from Google maps

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