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Innovation in rural development: "neo-rural" farmers branding local quality of food and territory

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the case of "neo-rurality" in inner areas in the Campania region (southern Italy). Inner areas are the scenery of innovative development processes, founded on structural and territorial resources, as well as on individuals and social capitals.

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[1] The article was conceived and discussed jointly by the two authors who have written together introduction and conclusions. Brigida Orria curated paragraphs 'Living Now in Inner Areas', 'Research Design', 'Bottom-up Innovation', and Vincenzo Luise curated 'Four Questions' and 'Neo-rural as Brand'.

Neo-rural exponents promote a new relationship between production and consumption. They are not only anti-consumerist: they articulate in a different way sustainability, visions of market relations, values and practices. Neo-rurality as a narrative-based brand collects various ideals, values and marketing behaviours, representing different economic actors in a common narrative.

Based on fieldwork and interviews, undertaken in Campania during 2015, our study points out that, through the collective narrative, farmers are constructing a "neo-rurality" brand of local quality food and promotion of territory.

We highlight how neo-rural farmers propose a novel combination of economic practices and value production in Alternative Agri-food Movements.

Producers promote a combined approach to local development towards increasing food quality and cultural and environmental resources of territory. Furthermore, this is in line with recent studies on how agriculture and rural life have changed their role in post-modern society, and there we see also a trajectory for the future of inner areas.

INTRODUCTION

The Italian government's study (UVAL, 2014) on marginal and central areas[2] contributed greatly to design the country's territory and future policies. This new analytical perspective prompted us to reflect on the development opportunities for inner areas. Geographic maps don't give an exhaustive explanation of the peripheral condition of these areas, while the same morphological condition of soil (whether mountains, hills or coasts) can similarly prelude a more marginal or connected area. Therefore, our fieldwork research seeks to highlight processes of growth in inner areas that are connected to social and economic dimensions.

In the last 10 years, a change has started in Campania challenging the established capitalist food economy, where no infrastructural signs of development are given, but social ferment is on stage. In the first part of this paper, we present the concept of "neo-rural" farmers who are contributing to a sustainable rural development through different approaches to agricultural production. Then we discuss how our fieldwork study sheds some light on what is going on in remote areas, in the inner areas of Campania[3]. We considered actors based in the inner areas and also their relationship with actors of central areas, mostly based in Naples. In the third part, consistent theoretical approaches to bottom-up practices are presented referring to important contributions made by Constance (2014) to agri-food

[2] Marginalisation is defined depending on the distance from the nearest Service Provision Centre able to provide: secondary education services; at least one grade-1 emergency care hospital (DEA); and at least one "regional category" railway station.

[3] Back-to-the-land communes, often incorporated into the slightly broader notion of 'intentional communities', have generally received more academic attention than disparate individual back-to-the- land initiatives.

studies, basing on four questions on environment, soil, food and emancipation, and by Bock (2012) to the rural social innovation, naming mechanism, responsibility and innovation of society.

This brings us to consider analytically how neo-rurality is expressed through different examples of agriculture and food production, more connected to social networks, and through a wider conception of environment, care for health and human justice. In fact, a principal characteristic of neo-rural exponents (Ferraresi, 2013) is to promote a new relationship between producers (mainly in inner areas) and consumers (mainly in central areas). Neo-rural farmers measure and communicate the value of high-quality local food in a different way, bridging the gap between supply and demand in the market through a collaborative approach. This is in line with recent studies on how agriculture and rural life have changed their role in post-modern society, and there we also see trajectories for inner areas' development.

Finally, we expose how the bottom-up movement is creating a new form of brand, baring neo-rurality as a label for a healthy and ethical lifestyle and food quality.

LIVING NOW IN INNER AREAS: NEW PEASANTRIES AND NEO-RURALITY

Migrants from cities to rural areas who attempt to achieve a predominantly agrarian lifestyle have been christened with several labels: neo-farmers (Mailfert, 2007), neo-peasants (Brunori et al., 2013), new pioneers (Jacob, 1997), new agrarians (Tregear, et al. 2007) and back-to-the-landers (Belasco, 2005).

"Back-to-the-land" generally refers to the adoption of agriculture as a full-time vocation by people who have come from non-agricultural lifestyles or education, originating in the 1960s it situates itself as part of broader counterculture practices.

The back-to-the-land movement of the 1960s and 70s is often framed in relation to general cultural currents that encouraged "dropping out" of mainstream society in search of alternatives. "Multiplying fivefold between 1965 and 1970" writes Belasco of communal back-to-the-land projects, "3,500 or so country communes put the counterculture into group practice" (Belasco, 1989, p. 76).

During the 1970s, the "protestant neo-ruralism" (neoruralismo protestatario, Merlo, 2006) conceives rural areas as the place where an alternative way of life can be experienced through the creation of an alternative agricultural production process. That approach refuses completely the Green Revolution (GR) paradigm, which promoted industrial intensive agriculture, advanced technology, using high-yielding variety (HYV) and high doses of pesticides, driven by multinational interests (Shiva, 2016).

Later, the development of alternative agricultural production was embedded in the agro-ecological paradigm, then absorbed by the global industrial system through the creation of organic certifications. Such a process of integration has developed a new critical reflection on food production and market relations.

Then the back-to-the-land movement splits in two dimensions: ecological entrepreneurship (Marsden & Smith, 2005) and new peasantries (Van der Ploeg, 2010). The first refers to a process where farms contribute to a sustainable rural development using environmentally friendly agriculture and direct marketing to find their economic sustainability. The second is based on autonomy and sustainability from the conventional agri-food system. It promotes interpersonal relationships, independence and a new rural lifestyle. According to Niska (2012) these two dimensions are in some ways complementary: "While traditional peasantry and entrepreneurship are considered contradictory or conflicting frames, new peasantry and ecological entrepreneurship are remarkably compatible framings" (Niska et al., 2012, p. 457).

According to Sesto Censimento Generale dell'Agricoltura 2010, in Italy the term neo-rurality is used to identify both. Neo-rurality is the frame that collects different approaches which are changing rural areas on different levels. It calls for attention to the relation between environmental issues, rural crisis and territorial issues (Ferraresi, 2013). Neo-rural farmers try a new model that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, protects biodiversity and promotes local quality food. In fact, production of quality food is key for the activation of practices and community relationships within the horizon of agro-ecological values.

In Italy pioneers of alternative movements came from different backgrounds: radical left, ecologist movement and anti-conformist or alternative movements. Also, the pioneering phase was characterised by a multiplicity of regional-level and often unconnected initiatives (Brunori et al., 2013; Fonte & Cucchi, 2015).

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The data collection process is part of the Rural Hub research program[4] which involved three regions in southern Italy: Campania, Apulia and Calabria. Given the characteristics of the Rural Social Innovation (RSI) phenomenon (see below in the article) as bottom-up brand based on narrative, our sample is partly based on the neo-rural farmers' definition. Data collection went through two steps: an exploratory study followed by in-depth interviews (Cardano, 2004; 2011).

[4] The Rural Hub project aimed to study and support the neo-rural farmers in developing a rural social innovation business model. Funded by the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, research programme was under scientific direction of prof. Adam Arvidsson - University of Milan.

During the first phase, from March to June 2015, the survey on RSI mapped rural areas characteristics, in terms of innovative actors and neo-rural farmers in southern Italy, reaching more than 180 case studies.

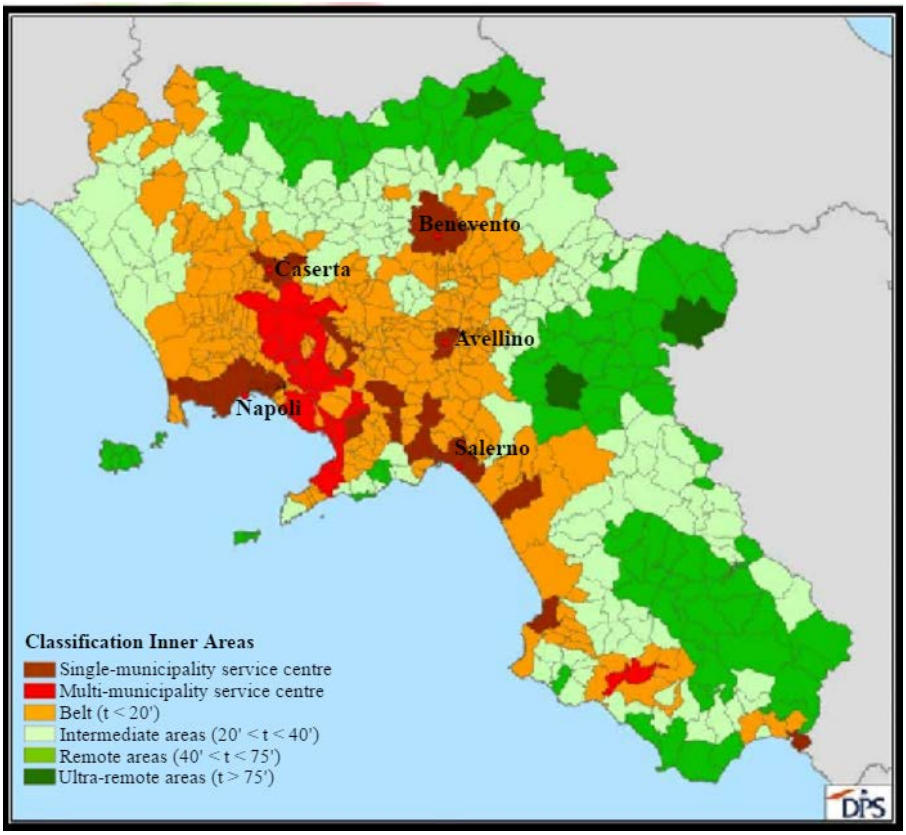
In the second phase, in June - September 2015, we focused on Campania's inner areas and traced their relation with more central areas. We interviewed 26 actors, selected from our sample on the basis of two dimensions: annual sales volume and percentage of trades/self-consumption. Qualitative research took place in farms or during relevant events promoted by neo-rural farmers in Campania as #Campdigrano-2015 and FoodStock-2015.

From our results the birth of neo-rural organisations stretches between the end of the 1970s and 2015, and it includes firms and organisations that changed management during that time. In line with ISTAT statistics (2016), the highest rate of birth is around 2005 and after, a date outlining the birth rate increase in the agricultural sector in southern Italy; organisational form and firm size tendency to micro or small businesses (from 1 to 5 members), often a single trader and a good figure of informal groups, associations, and food networks (recognisable as forms of peer-to-peer organisations).

From a qualitative point of view, interviews show our actors involved in a variety of activities, not only productive but also organisational and educational ones. They all act moving from similar ethical considerations, differences have been found mostly in actors' relation with market, distinguishable in two types: moderates who seek to create explicitly a new niche of market, and radicals who are ideally hostile to market and aim to introduce barter and other forms of exchange.

Multifunctional agriculture is key for neo-rural organisations (Huylenbroeck & Durand, 2003).

Figure 1 - Inner areas in Campania Region



Source: BURC, Rapporto di istruttoria (2014).

BOTTOM-UP INNOVATION, FROM LAND TO PRACTICES TO POLICIES

Academic interest in the critiques of the negative impacts of the agri-food business economy, and on the Alternative Agri-food Movements (AAMs) embraces farmers' markets (Trobe, 2011), community supported agriculture (Brown & Miller, 2008), food security (Pinstrup-Andersen, 2009), food sovereignty (Patel, 2009), AAFNs (Higgins et al., 2008), local food (Starr, 2010).

Exponents of neo-rural economy, as part of AAMs, have promoted participation in alternative infrastructures contrasting the conventional market system, developing specific organisational forms, negotiating new forms of collaborative economy (Kostakis & Bauwens, 2014).

Rural Social Innovation

In public opinion and in both US and European literatures (DuPuois & Goodman, 2005) globalization of agri-food system is conceived as the expression of the logic of capitalism in production and consumption of food, whereas localism is represented as the resistance place where food is embedded in local context. Such dualistic perspective does not explain the complexity of the relation between the two. Furthermore, the boundaries between local and global systems are blurred, since some alternative movements are becoming conventionalized and co-opted (Friedland, 2008), and in the end "in real life local and global do not always belong to separate settings or domains" (Brunori et al., 2016, p. 17).

On one side the neo-rural farmers challenge the sustainability failures of the industrial food systems proposing alternative business and organisational models, on the other side they are intertwined with the global system competing in conventional markets with "local typical food".

Relation between these two sides has often encountered radicalism, especially in rural phenomena, claiming localism as a normative solution to globalization.

Indeed, according to DuPuis and Goodman (2005), localism can reveal on one hand defensive politics rather than a strong turn-to-quality based on organic and ecological production, and on the other hand the production of alternative standards that are vulnerable to corporate cooptation.

Neo-rural farmers adopting a more radical approach develop forms of innovation and cooperation between producers and consumers, that are bottom-up practices leading to active social innovation.

Our results are in line with Bock (2012) highlighting correspondence between social innovation practices and rural social innovation process. Three main interpretations of social innovation are distinguished: social mechanisms, social responsibility, and innovation of society.

Social mechanisms. Innovation takes place within specific social and cultural contexts, innovations are, hence, socially, culturally and territorially embedded (Fløysand & Jacobsen, 2011).

Here, we consider the aspect of collective and creative learning which is no longer structured as a linear transfer, but becomes a shared, social and circular process, in which the combination of different sources and types of knowledge creates something new (Oreszczyn et al., 2010). In this sense the rural social innovation is built on networking and communication among different actors and takes place during markets, conferences, private meetings and festivals.

Social responsibility. It includes the effect of innovation on society: calling upon businesses to invest in society as part of their corporate responsibility for 'people and planet' and not only 'profit' (Phills et al., 2008), including processes of co-design or co-construction and collaboration with society. In our case, it happens by replacing the 'bio-economical', productivist modernisation paradigm with a system in which agriculture is place-based and relocated into 'the regional and local systems of ecological, economic and community development' (Marsden, 2012, p.140). Farmers no longer aim to maximise production minimising costs, but develop new products and services, such as local, high quality food, nature conservation as well as rural tourism and green care (Roep & Wiskerke, 2004).

Innovation of society. It is a prerequisite for solving pertinent problems such as discrimination, poverty or pollution (Gibson-

Graham & Roelvink, 2009) regarding the socio-economic system and seeking to meet unmet public needs, creating public value where markets and common socio-economic policies have failed (Phills et al., 2008). Social innovation, hence, refers to society as the arena where change takes place, as well as the need for society to change.
Levels of action are intertwining at such point that actors feel the social and political relevance of their rural commitment, they talk as a community, as a radical producer states in an interview: "I'm talking using 'us' because for most producers this point is very clear. Our effort makes sense because it converges in this logic. You can survive selling to consumers and building on social and political action towards the future" (Radical producer 2, June 2015).

FOUR QUESTIONS AND NEO-RURAL TRAJECTORIES

The environmental question

The environmental crisis was the first dimension questioned by alternative social movements in the early 1960s. Soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, emerging human health problems caused by pollution and contaminated food and fertilisers use, were some of the critiques to the unquestioning acceptance of industrial agriculture. Such critiques are often reported by producers, one interviewee states: "Now in Italy the lawns are vanished, the farmers make hay with only one type of grass, there are no more herbs, there is no more biodiversity, they destroyed all zootechnics, there is only corn and some clover" (Moderate producer, July 2015).
While modernisation converted the land into a commodity and transformed it in guarantee for the credit operations, agroecology perspective (Gliessman, 2014) views agriculture in terms of ecosystem where farming and nature contribute to create a sustainable and regenerative environmental system. It consists in the re-

appropriation of ancestral peasant knowledge, based on a reflexive process of re-discovery of pre-capitalist traditions and productive techniques. Such perspective is shared by neo-rurals, as the president of a radical organization reports in name of the collectivity: "We must return to be autonomous, we must recover traditions that were lost or contaminated by a "no-culture" (Radical organization president, June 2015).

Then it represents a critical negotiation between traditional knowledge and modern ecological and natural sciences in a more sustainable relationship (Snipstal, 2015). According to Van der Ploeg (2010) the beginning of the twenty-first century represents the turning point for a new reflection on how the land needs to be reconsidered and new ways in which the neo-rural farmers are reconstituting themselves. In other terms, land is now being considered as ecological capital.

In the past, peasants had no choice in using their land as ecological capital. With the development of GR paradigm and the global agri-food system, farmers had the possibilities to use their land in a commodity perspective.

Today the use of the land as ecological capital reflects agency and represents a conscious choice. It also represents the possibility to reconstruct the rural local knowledge. The land as ecological capital contributes to a relative autonomy especially in the input farming (seeds, water, etc.) but it is not possible to consider it in a completely oppositional relationship with the conventional system.

The agrarian question

The prominent scholar and activist in alter-globalization movement Vandana Shiva (2016) argues that the GR and the global agri-food business have had undesirable impacts on lives of the most of rural peoples. From the uncritical adoption and diffusion of the dominant

model, grounded on functionalist theoretical assumptions, two types of crisis emerge: the ecological one, posed by the destruction of natural resources like water, land, forest and all ecological biodiversity, and the cultural and ethnic one, which implies the erosion of social and cultural capitals and local knowledge. Thus the structure of modern agriculture affects in a negative way the quality of life of farmers and rural communities.

The discourse on life conditions of peasantries emerged in the beginning of the 1970s with a critical assessment proposed by rural sociologists (Havens & Flinn, 1975). They questioned how development became a strategy to combat scarcity and dominate nature, generating material abundance in both rural and urban areas. Then New Rural Sociology (Newby, 1983) focused especially on political economic system and how the state and corporations maintain their control on little farmers.

In countering the political-economic power of the conventional industrial system, small farmers need to create a space to promote initiatives based on local food cultures and food democracy practices (Hassanein, 2003). In line with this approach, neo-rurals propose alternatives to long distribution chains, as explained by the president of an organization: "We were interested in making an alternative to supermarket foods and we started with the idea of fair trade (...) we wanted to develop an economic activity based on our territory and on healthier products" (Moderate organization president, June 2015).

Re-localisation of the agri-food system can create social and economic benefits for farmers and their communities. Indeed, the sustainable rural development relates to the innovation of socio-economic systems, the aim to meet unmet public needs and to create public value where markets and other socio-economic policies have failed (Phills et al., 2008). The importance of coherence between policies and practices, knowledge and production, is at the core of rural development in terms of agrarian question:

According to Van der Ploeg (2010) the main question is whether agricultural production is to be understood as a commodity system or as a specific form of social and economic practices. Within the second dimension the relationship between local ecosystem and agricultural practice takes a variety of forms. Thus AAMs represent the possibilities to create a diverse agricultural ecosystem based on a trust relationship among actors along the value chains, and sustainable economic and social practices based on long-term rural development.

The food question

There is a growing concern on food quality, health of consumers and farmers, poor nutrition, obesity and food safety. That shift from production to consumption studies is represented by the 'quality turn' in agri-food studies (Goodman, 2003). This perspective focuses on the re-localisation of local food system toward a direct relationship between producers and consumers, and Contance states that the quality turn reveals the dissatisfaction with the "impersonal 'industrial food world' and a concerted turn to the 'interpersonal food world' where quality conventions embed trust and tradition within a moral economy of place and provenance" (Constance *et al.*, 2014, p. 2).

Following a food regime perspective, "Food from Somewhere" builds on the notion of food sovereignty and the processes of re-localisation, challenging the "Food from Nowhere" (Campbell, 2009) which is expression of a neo-liberal food system (Pechlaner & Otero, 2008).

From the Nutritional Regime perspective, the agri-food system is based on two dimensions: it produces unhealthy food for masses through the global commodity chains; it gives quality-certified healthy food for the elites (Dixon, 2009). The active political role of

consumers forces the agri-food system toward the production of health and quality foods, instead of commodity foods.

Therefore, collaboration between consumers and producers is needed, as a farmer explains: "Local markets are organised by consumers themselves. (…) Thus consumers do logistics, find a place. While we care of production and alternative certifications" (Radical producer 2, June 2015)

Political consumerism (Stolle et al., 2015) investigates the use of the market for ethical, political and environmental reasons (Sassatelli, 2015).

Security is also a key aspect: setting standards for supervision is a primary means by which public and private participants (standard makers) become new influencers in the market (Bain et al., 2005, p. 71). Indeed, certifications are emerging as mechanisms through which institutional and private actors (governments and alternative movements) explore new possibilities to trace the food production and its commercialisation along the value chain.

In Europe, EU policies set standards on production and labels, defined in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform in 1992. At the same time, bottom-up movements help developing knowledge and opening new frontiers, challenging old establishments.

In fact, if in classical economics price was the main management form to set quality, convention theory argues (Eymard-Duvernay, 1989) that price works only if there is no radical uncertainty about quality, and, we add, if consumers' action is not involved in the producing process. When price alone cannot evaluate quality, actors set up conventions linked to other "forms of coordination" (Ponte & Gibbon, 2009).

The emancipatory question

Globalisation of agriculture creates a race to the bottom that exposes farmers to global pressures, implying less social safety, global labour regimes and South/North migrations (Rudra, 2008). The extensive literature on these topics explores the relation among GR's impacts on economic growth, food self-sufficiency, poverty, environmental sustainability and gender inequality.

The emancipatory question focuses on the relation among agri-food system, social justice and food sovereignty. Framing political economy, it remarks the role of the global agri-food system as an instrument for the benefit of rich countries over the poor people, and enquires how industrial agriculture privileges short-term profits over long-term sustainability, through externalisation of the negative impacts on ecological, economic and social dimensions (Magdoff et al., 2000), like reducing production costs through legal or illegal recruitment of cheap seasonal labour (Gertel & Sippel, 2014).

Collective political action is necessary to counter the hegemony of the conventional system (McMichael, 2014). Even market-based AAMs rarely address the social inequality issues. "The discourse on collective rights and entitlements of citizens protected by the state is replaced by neoliberal arguments about individual responsibility and choice in the market." (Constance et al., 2014, p. 27). The case of Fair trade (Nicholls, 2005) represents a way in which profits are used to support small producers, it is not challenging directly the conventional system but creates a new ethical space for informed consumers and new sales opportunities for small farmers (Shreck, 2005).

Other experiences, as in the case of La Via Campesina in Honduras (Martinez-Torres & Rosset, 2010), challenge globalisation through protests and creating an agri-food self-sufficiency system using local knowledge and agro-ecological principles. Neo-rurals give a new value to ancient knowledge and traditions, as a farmer explains: "Now capitalist modernisation has lost the sacred aura and there is

more space for the pre-capitalist rural pride. It may be a value that makes you look forward to experiment alternative models" (Radical producer, July 2015).

The global peasant's and human rights movements created the "Food Sovereignty" concept, which is, according to Desmarais (2007), an alternative conception of modernity, contrasting "Food Safety" which excludes the social justice component. Food Security promotes a "Second Green Revolution" based on genetic and high-tech technologies commodity paradigm, solving the food supply problem through sustainable intensification (Tilman et al., 2011) of agriculture, but "avoided discussing the social control of the food system" (Patel, 2009, p. 665). Meanwhile, Food Sovereignty is based on agro-ecological principles, local knowledge systems and social justice.

"NEO-RURAL" AS BRAND OF QUALITY

In this study we also see how "neo-rurality" as a narrative-based brand collects various ideals, values and marketing behaviours, representing different economic actors in a common narrative.

The concept of "brand" includes a set of marketing and communication methods that help to distinguish a company or any productive subject from competitors, and to create a lasting impression in the minds of customers. Originally brands referred to producers, as a trademark or a "maker's mark" that worked to guarantee quality or to give an identity. Now the brand, or the "brand image", refers also to the significance that commodities acquired in the minds of consumers (Arvidsson, 2005).

We look at brand through practices that make it real. In our case study, we found that material practices of caring for the earth and products, as well as immaterial ones like a reinvented imaginary

linked to a collective ancestral imaginary, involve people to commit on different levels (productive, consumerist, narrative).

Practices connect behaviours, performances, and representations through a sharing of procedures, understanding and engagement (Shau & Muniz, 2009). First, procedures are explicit rules, principles, precepts, and instructions called "discursive knowledge"; second, understanding the knowledge of what to say and do, skills and projects, or know-how (i.e., tacit cultural templates for understanding and action); and third, engagements are ends and purposes that are emotionally charged insofar as people are committed to them (Duguid, 2005; Warde, 2005).

The brand of "neo-rurality" creates a sense of belonging, through procedures, understanding and engagement, through practices of resources sharing and their valorisation. We assert that an emergent sense of membership and identity arises from the trajectory, or the development of practices that foster the exchange of collectively defined and valorised resources. This is consistent with prior work on communities of practice (Wenger, 1998).

The neo-rurality represents a meta-brand (Carmagnola, 2017) which is constructed around both the ethical conception of market relationships and the collective elaboration of a cultural frame focused on local typical food. Carmagnola (2017), speaking of Made in Italy brand, argues that identity and distinctive characteristics of a collective meta-brand have an extraordinary economic value, which is anchored on the continuous narrative production around it. Indeed, Bonetti (2004) argues that communication management in a coordinate way among economic actors is a key in meta-brand. Instead, in the case of neo-rural farmers meta-branding is not a coordinated activity and each farmer contributes autonomously to build up and aggregate characteristics inside the neo-rurality frame.

CONCLUSION

Our study highlights innovation in the inner areas of Campania through a focus on neo-rural changes and challenges. The promotion of local quality food and of cultural and environmental resources available are key factors for Rural Social Innovation (Bock, 2012). In fact, neo-rurals are innovators for their approach to collective and shared knowledge, responsibility for environment, and the look at the planet as an arena where social change takes place. Their challenge to the conventional food system fit into interstices, or around margins (Maye et al., 2007).

As a first result, this study suggests that not-productive participants are part of the neo-rural phenomenon too, as supporters in distribution, information and consumption AAMs. The "back-to-the-land" concept must be rethought in light of new technologies, and new social, cultural and economic practices that connect inland people with urban areas.

As a second result, innovation influences inner areas introducing technologies and organisational forms that are borrowed from the collaborative peer production economy, and affects social and cultural dimensions. It contributes to a redefinition of economic value and to set off higher standards of quality and authenticity of local food.

Third, the transformation takes place thanks to bottom-up practices which develop rural social innovation processes in inner areas. In this sense neo-rurals not only oppose the conventional system but actively try to overcome distortions of that model through innovative practices, recalling Constance's four analytics questions on environment, food, soil and emancipation: valorisation of biodiversity as ecological capital, self-provisioning to reduce external input in the agricultural productive process, actively constructed distance from global agri-food business, dynamic co-production with nature and among humans, resistance as rediscovery of pre-capitalist rural value

and the creation of extended networks through AAFs and new niche marketplaces (Van der Ploeg, 2010).

In scientific literature the neo-rural farmers are named in several ways, always referring to people passing to agriculture as vocation, often migrating from urban areas to the countryside. As emerged during our interviews, boundaries between those strictly neo-rural farmers and those who are not: the disintermediated market, that bridges the gap between producers and consumers, and new organisational forms based on peer-to-peer architectures blur the borders of categorisation.

Future development trajectories move towards the re-appropriation of material, cultural and social factors in the production of high-quality local food. Indeed, the neo-rural economy is based on a novel combination of material and immaterial values. They communicate this value in a different way. Neo-rurality is a brand through which they construct an ethical and disintermediated approach to the food market, where products' value is not defined only by economic aspects, but is also founded on human and social components (Arvidsson & Peitersen, 2013).

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