



CORAL School in Sicily

The five-day summer school on “Strategies and policies of CWS development in rural and peripheral areas” at the beginning of July 2023 dealt with matters on regional policy, innovative entrepreneurship, and the emergence of remote workers in rural and peripheral areas from a southern perspective. Participants discussed both issues of local development and regional competence, participatory planning, and the geographical spread of CWS. Excursions in Petralia Sottana where the summer school took place as well as Castelbuono to the focal points of remote, inner areas gave the researchers additional insights into the topics. Towards the end of the school, participants focused on the issues that Petralia and Castelbuono face and discussed potential solutions and recommendations. Guests were

divided into three working groups, focused on culture and tourism, infrastructures, and local initiatives. PhD candidates discussed their ideas and received feedback on presented recommendations.

Following the opening on 3 August by Ilaria Mariotti (DASUPolitecnico di Milano) and Pietro Polito (Mayor of Petralia Sottana), there was an introductory presentation by Mario Mirabile and Elena Militello of Southworking in the Italian remote areas. The speakers went into the origins of the Southworking movement which goes back to the pandemic era when Southern and inner Italy became a popular destination for remote workers and digital workers. Capitalizing on the trend, Southworking movement aspires to support the emergence of community hubs and connect them with their local surroundings. The movement see a strong potential of community hubs in reducing economic, social, and territorial gaps in Italy as well helping remote workers to develop professional networks and links with local communities. Gaetano Vecchione (UNINA) keynote lecture provided contextual knowledge regarding 'Mezzogiorno', the left behind regions, and the phenomenon of "Mezzogiornifications", introducing participants to the internal and external north – south divides. Tracing the implementation of regional policies from 1951 till recent times, he commented on European Commission's turn to bottom-up, place-based approaches and the ways Cohesion Policy is being implemented. He concluded by giving space for discussions regarding the future of National Recovery and Resilience Plan and regional policies supporting the institutional quality and the investments of regions.

The seminar titled "Local development policies in the Madonie area" was led by Carolina Pacchi. Having the Madonie area as the focal case study, the seminar discussed how meaningful policies can be constructed and what opportunities and challenges emerge from the presence of remote workers, coworking spaces, and hubs in peripheral areas. Alessandro Gandini traced the evolution of work and more precisely creative work which was once seen as fulfilling and emancipating. However, post-pandemic work cultures reorganized the world of work putting at the epicentre of changes remote working arrangements. Within this rapidly changing landscape of work

cultures, 'neo-craft work' revival is conceptualized as meaningful work in the 'post-employment society' .

Day two started with our keynote speaker, Robert Hassink from Kiel University, introducing smart specialization strategies in regional policy debates and raising critical issues regarding measures that aim at boosting entrepreneurial innovativeness and competitiveness of regional economies. Shifting from macro to micro-perspective, Fernando Merida Martin (Joint Research Center, Seville), Daniela Storti (CREA and Riabitare l'Italia), and Ivana Pais (Università Cattolica del Sacrocuore) presented the case studies of Startup Village Initiative, 'Giovani Dentro' and Riabitare L' Italia, and Posteitaliane triggering debates around the implementation of coworking projects in rural and peripheral areas.

On the third day, the Summer School continued to focus on local initiatives, visiting Castelbuono and attended a round table discussion with Mayor of Castelbuono (Cicero), Andrea Rolando (POLIMI), Adriana Scancarello, Farizio Barreca (Coworking), Gaetano Rizzitello where ways to boost existing and future initiatives of creative economy were explored. Among other projects, the Madonie Living Lab, a collaborative workspace in progress was presented whose mission is to function as an Open Innovation Platform, Educational Hub, Accelerator and Community Lab. Then came the excursions to the Astronomical Park and Planetarium.

In the last part of the summer school, space was given to the ESRs and their projects. PhD candidates shared their work in three parallel sessions divided per Working Packages, discussed publication strategies, and explored joint research articles ideas. The initial findings of the CORAL Index were shared to the CORAL community as well as visual material collected during ESRs fieldwork was shown. The seminars on 'Remote working and its effects on urban and rural areas' Ilaria Mariotti and Federica Rossi (DASU-Politecnico

di Milano) and on 'New ways of working and new real estate strategies' framed the final concluding remarks of the CORAL School.