

Design as a resource for valuing territorial assets and local cultures: An experimental model applied to Estrada Real, Brazil

Design como um recurso para valorização de território e culturas locais: um modelo experimental aplicado a Estrada Real, Brasil

Claudio Germak

claudio.germak@polito.it

Politecnico di Torino, Department of Architectural and Industrial Design – DIPRADI. Viale Mattioli, 39, 10125, Turin, Piedmont, Italy.

Dijon De Moraes

dijon.moraes@uemg.br

Minas Gerais State University – UEMG, School of Design, Centre for Studies, Theory, Culture and Design Research. Av. Presidente Antonio Carlos, 7545, 31270-010, Belo Horizonte, MG, Brazil

Paulo Miranda

paulo.miranda@polito.it

Politecnico di Torino, Department of Architectural and Industrial Design – DIPRADI. Viale Mattioli, 39, 10125, Turin, Piedmont, Italy.

Lia Krucken

lia.krucken@pq.cnpq.br

Minas Gerais State University – UEMG, School of Design, Centre for Studies, Theory, Culture and Design Research. Av. Presidente Antonio Carlos, 7545, 31270-010, Belo Horizonte, MG, Brazil.

Abstract

This project aims to present a joint initiative for cultural and territorial recovery through design, that have been carried out by the Politecnico di Torino, the Minas Gerais State University and the Minas Design Center. The project involves professors/tutors and students from Industrial Design Courses of the both universities, using resources and tools for training at distance between the regions of Minas Gerais (Brazil) and Piedmont (Italy). The main focus of research is to apply the design to enhance cultural assets in certain specified places of interest along the Estrada Real ("Royal Road"), in the state of Minas Gerais. The project is considered an experimental model for the development and cultural and territorial enhancement, based primarily in the tourism and economic development potential, which is estimated by the Government of Minas Gerais to be 1.25 billion dollars and 2.5 million tourists/year in 2010. The study will include training activities and a cultural project involving Brazilians and Italians communities. The main expected results are: (a) applying the perspective of design to improve the territorial competitiveness, through the development of research and analysis of elements of identity; (b) the development of product design and services based on the territory resources and sustainable development; (c) the exchange of knowledge and experience, through the interaction between the institutions.

Key words: design, territorial culture, material culture, sustainable development.

Resumo

Este projeto tem como objetivo apresentar uma iniciativa para a recuperação cultural e territorial através do design, conduzida conjuntamente pelo Politecnico di Torino, a Universidade Estadual de Minas Gerais e o "Centro de Design Minas". O projeto envolve professores/orientadores e alunos do curso de Design Industrial das duas universidades, utilizando recursos e ferramentas para a formação à distância entre as regiões de Minas Gerais (Brasil) e Piemonte (Itália). O foco da pesquisa é aplicar o design para melhorar os bens culturais e do território, especificamente em trechos selecionados da Estrada Real, no Estado de Minas Gerais. O projeto é considerado um modelo experimental ao desenvolvimento e valorização da diversidade cultural e territorial, especialmente voltado ao marketing territorial, cuja justificativa está principalmente no potencial de desenvolvimento econômico, atualmente estimado pelo Governo de Minas Gerais em 1.250 milhões de dólares e 2,5 milhões de turistas por ano em 2010. O estudo também inclui atividades de treinamento e um projeto cultural disponível para as comunidades italiana e brasileira. Os principais resultados esperados são: (a) aplicação da perspectiva do projeto para melhorar o território, através do desenvolvimento de pesquisa e análise de elementos de identidade; (b) o desenvolvimento de projetos de produtos e serviços com perfil baseado nos recursos do território e desenvolvimento sustentável; (c) a troca de conhecimentos e experiências, através da interação entre as instituições e profissionais.

Palavras-chave: design, cultura territorial, cultura material, desenvolvimento sustentável.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to present an initiative for valuing the territory throughout design, starting by the application of goal-project tools. Firstly, we present some considerations about the Estrada Real, Brazil, region where the present investigation is being made. Aiming to analyze the possibilities of intervention, we relate the experience of the Ecomuseu Scopriminiera, developed for the Region Valdesse do Piemonte, Italy.

Finally, we present proposals of intervention to value the territory's culture and identity. The delimited route is considered an "experimental laboratory" and the local identity a model of project reference, delineating a proposal to transform this route in places of Eco-museum.

About Estrada Real, Brazil

Estrada Real is the historical complex of many paths built in the Colonial Brazil, between the regions of Minas Gerais, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Its name started to represent the official natural routes of the Portuguese Crown. Between the territories in which its ways are extended, the region of Minas Gerais is where there is the greatest extension of these paths, which were highly explored in the XVII century. The "roadies" paths were used for the transport of merchandizes and wealth, mainly gold and diamonds, from the countryside of the territory of Minas Gerais to the coast side of Rio de Janeiro, capital of the colony, from where the ships used to leave towards Portugal.

Its more than 1.600km (994 miles) of history comprehend the different local cultures, more intensely in the Brazilian Colonial Period, propitiating the construction not only of the routes and paths, but also of a singular history of this territory and the actors that were involved in it, such as: the "bandeirantes", "tropeiros" (muleteers), military officials and many travelers and peddlers, who found in its ways the material and cultural transportability throughout merchandizes, gold and diamonds.

The importance of the old Estrada Real paths caused the appearance of villages and cities that were populated throughout their way, where appeared chapels, ranches, stores, offices, houses of "pau-a-pique", and the social actors that took part of their political, economical and social history, with a strong urban nucleation in the Center-South of the Colony, by promoting, also, a rich gastronomic culture, having as basis the mobility of the travelers and local ingredients, such as the singular plant "Ora-pro-nobis" (*Pereskia aculeata*), used in many ways in the culinary of the Estrada Real.

With the end of the gold and diamond economical cycle, and with the beginning of industrialization, the paths of Estrada Real became outdated, forgotten and degraded. Through actions that were intensified in the 90s, new projects were established and its historical value was rescued and recognized. This way, the Estrada Real reappears with the potential exploration of the Eco-sustainable Tourism and with the Culture of valuing the local identity as an economical mode to be explored.

The Estrada Real Great Complex is constituted by 178 towns, 163 in Minas Gerais, 08 in Rio de Janeiro and 07 in

São Paulo. The union of these destinies gathered material and immaterial attractions with great commercial potential, celebrating, the local culture and its expressions, such as: singular colonial constructions, baroque churches with local materials and components, museums that portray the splendor of the golden era, unexplored natural ecological reserves, adventure sports as a tourist attraction, springs of pure and healthy mineral water, the rich regional culinary and, mainly, the people with their stories and costumes markedly regional.

The complex's formation was originated in the systemic connection between three paths that were formed in different moments: *Caminho Velho* (Old Path) and *Caminho do Sabarabuçu* (extension of the Old Path), *Caminho Novo* (New Path) and *Caminho dos Diamantes* (Diamond Path) (Figure 1).

We present a brief description of the paths.

(a) *The Paths of Minas Gerais*: Between the XVII and XIX centuries, a group of terrestrial paths, many of them simple re-appropriations of indigenous ones, approximated different regions of the Brazilian territory, such as the so called *Caminho da Bahia* (Bahia's Path) or *Caminho dos Currais do Sertão* (Sertão's Corrals Path) and their variants, connecting the Captaincy of Bahia to the Mines. Also the so called *Caminho do Rio de Janeiro* - Rio de Janeiro's Path (afterward called *Caminho Velho* do Rio de Janeiro - Rio de Janeiro's Old Path - and nowadays called Estrada Real) and its variants, connecting the Captaincy of Rio de Janeiro to the Mines. Afterward, with the discovery of diamonds in the region of "Serra", between the years 1725 and 1735, a new path was made, appearing the *Caminho dos Diamantes* (Diamonds Path), connecting Ouro Preto to Diamantina, to which the trail of Goiás and the one of Mato Grosso would be united. It also appeared the *Caminho do Sabarabuçu* (Sabarabuçu Path), connecting Catas Altas and Glaura (district of Ouro Preto); this path, recently identified, would be an extension of the Old Path (*Caminho Velho*), which this way could reach the villages of Sabará and Caeté. This variant had as reference the river "Rio das Velhas" and the mountain "Serra da Piedade", in the height of Caeté. Among the transported genders, were registered: bovine cattle of the sertão's corrals, between the Captaincy of the Mines and of Bahia; luxury products and slaves from the ports of Salvador (Bahia) and Rio de Janeiro; and mounts of the Captaincy of Pernambuco.

(b) *The Paths of São Paulo*: During the second half of the 17th century, with the economical crisis of the Colony's sugar agriculture-manufacture and the expulsion of the Dutch in 1654, identifying new sources of resource became crucial. Expedition batteries left from the São Paulo village towards the countryside. These expeditions were known as "bandeiras" and their entrepreneurs as "bandeirantes". The "paulistas" (from São Paulo), mestizos of Portuguese and indigenous, had the knowledge not only of the millenarian paths of the natives (*peabirus*), but also of their survival techniques in the "sertões" (arid and remote interiors). Some of the many "Bandeiras", recovering the so called "trilha dos Guaianases" (Guaianases' Path), from the valley "Vale do Rio Paraíba do Sul", through a passage of "Garganta do Embaú", in the mountain "Serra da Mantiqueira", directed to the "Sertão" after



Figure 1. Estrada Real Complex; *Caminho dos Diamantes* (Diamonds Path), *Caminho Velho* (Old Path) and *Caminho Novo* (New Path).

Source: Instituto Estrada Real (2010).

the nominated Minas Gerais. With the finding of the alluvium gold, at the end of that century, the traffic of people, animals and goods intensified between the coast and the region, defining many ways: *Caminho dos Paulistas* (Paulistas' Path) or *Caminho Geral do Sertão* (Sertão's General Path), connecting the Captaincy of São Paulo to the Mines (to Minas Gerais).

(c) *The Paths of Rio de Janeiro*: They formed a network of paths, popularly known as Estrada Real. Their main variants were the *Caminho Velho* (Old Path), that went from Paraty to Vila Rica (Ouro Preto nowadays). Since the finding of gold in the region of Minas Gerais, at the end of the XVII century, this path became the preferred route to get to the region of Minas Gerais, as well as to flow off the gold, which was transported through the coast, from Paraty to Rio de Janeiro, from where they embarked to Portugal. This way had an extension of more than 1.200km (745 miles) recovered in about 95 days of traveling. Afterwards, appeared the formation of the *Caminho Novo* (New Path) that went from the bottom of the bay "baía de Guanabara" until it met with the *Caminho Velho* at Ouro Branco, and then with the small village of Vila Rica, Ouro Preto nowadays. The *Caminho Novo* was opened by Garcia Rodrigues Pais, in 1707, as an alternative to the *Caminho Velho*, as a way to avoid the maritime route between Paraty and Rio de Janeiro. This new path started on ports of the river Iguaçu and of the river Pilar, such as Piedade do Iguaçu, today Iguaçu Velho, at Nova Iguaçu, or Pilar do Iguaçu (nowadays a

neighborhood of Duque de Caxias), went through the fluvial ports up to Vila de Xerém, passed through the today's Biological Reserve of the Tinguá, through the Extinct "freguesia", "arraial" and the Santana das Palmeiras' church, went up the mountain until "Paty do Alferes" and, from there, went down towards Paraíba do Sul, where it crossed the river with this same name, going at last until Ouro Branco. Also appeared the *Caminho do Proença* (Proença's Path), a variant of the *Caminho Novo* that passed through the today's city of Petrópolis and through Santana de Cebolas (or Sebollos), today's district of Inconfidência, at Paraíba do Sul; the General Road (*Estrada Geral*) that connected the clientele of Santo Antônio de Jacutinga and Nossa Senhora Conceição de Mariapicú, connected with the Estrada Real today, where the city of Belford Roxo is situated (nowadays the path is divided in two different ways: the road Plínio Casado and the road Abílio Augusto de Távora, the old "Estrada do Madureira").

During the last decades, several authors have studied the Paths of Minas Gerais that are the investigation focus of this paper. We highlight the studies about cultural characteristics of this territory carried out by Arruda (1990), Abdala (1997), Duarte and Silva (2006), Vilas Boas (2007).

Problem and analysis focus

Up to now, an expressive recognition and systemic exploration of the Paths, and their variants, as a social-envi-

ronmental and economical-tourist potential, have not been consolidated in the ambit of the Estrada Real complex.

Estrada Real possesses, inside of today's state of art, parts still little structured to receive tourists, routes still without homogeneity of paths and deficiency of adequate guiding signalization. Besides the inherent physical problems, there is also the lack of consciousness by the local actors in truly assimilating the potential of massive tourism that is destined to it as a reference yet to be explored.

Politics of preservation of the cultural and natural patrimony are needed and must be intensified, providing, this way, the infra-structure necessary to welcome the tourism as a means of preservation of the patrimony and of valuing the local culture, generating, at last, income and currency to the communities of the region.

The analysis focus, therefore, is the identification of the possible intervention in the design, considering, as basis, similar experiences carried out in Italy.

Methodology of intervention and case study

We take the Goal-project applied to the local identity of the Territory as a possible project model. According to Moraes, "the goal-project intends to go beyond the project, transcending it through a critical and reflexive reflection about the project's context itself. The goal-project thinks about the project, analyzes the demand and prospects about an existing or future scenario, having as basis the raising of researches, critical analysis and reflections previously done throughout previous data recollection" (Moraes, 2010).

Still according to Moraes (2010) "the goal-project explores all the possible potentialities of the design, but does not produce output as a unique project model, nor pre-established solutions. This methodology aims to propitiate, through a "pack of tools", a previous conceptual analysis (*concept*) or a corrective analysis (*diagnosis*), which shows the positive and negative points co-related to the project, throughout the application of analysis models and goal-project actions." Reinforcing keeps going Moraes (2010), "the aimed result is the one of defining a conceptual proposal (*concept*) for a new industrial artifact or making a diagnosis (*analysis*) of a specific already existing product and/or service, searching, at last, its adequacy" (Moraes, 2010). Before the capacity of the goal-project of approaching the issues that involve the complexity, we have, in this model, the main methodological reference for the development of the Estrada Real project.

Other important references about the valorization of territorial assets are Bistagnino (2007, 2009), Krucken (2009), Germak, Moraes, Miranda and Krucken (2010), Moraes, Krucken and Reyes (2010).

Still inside the intervention methodology to be applied, we will use many Case Studies throughout the applicative examples of Eco-museums. Among them, the Scopriminiera, an Italian Eco-museum, developed for the Region Valdese do Piemonte, in 1998. It is, in fact, a museum in the installations of an old deactivated mineral mine in the Val Germanasca, an alpine valley situated at 70km (43, 5 miles) southeastern of Torino. In the project of this Eco-museum, the coordinators of the action were: Prof. Giorgio de Ferrari, Claudio Germak, Claudia De Giorgi and

Maurizio Lucat, all teachers in the Politécnico di Torino. In this project experience, there was a priori, the raising of the cultural, social and economical value of the region where the ancient mine is situated. According to Germak (2008): "the exaltation of the making and providing, throughout the cultural valuing related by the regional historic context, shows an exponential tourist and economical projection, through simple and directed elements, identified as the social-cultural and iconographic elements of the territory: people, nature, elements of subjectivity, work and artifact tools, culinary".

Case Study: Scopriminiera Eco-museum, Piemonte

The Scopriminiera Eco-museum is one of the most interesting experiences in Italy. The Eco-museum explores the wealth of the mineral patrimony of Val Germanasca, and during the first 10 years of activity has received, in the two subterranean mines, *Paola* and *Gianna*, more than 230.000 visitors. The Eco-museum format as a "museum of the territory" has the intention of proposing to students and tourists an entertainment that is at the same time involving and educational. The children and the tourists become protagonists of a unique experience, throughout the lucid aspects and discovering in the construction of their knowledge about an existing past work. Educational and cultural activities aim to stimulate the visitors throughout a direct experience such as the discovering and the contact with unique environments and that are no longer under activity. The Eco-museums, therefore, are structured throughout a methodology that includes aspects such as: observation, manipulation and experimentation, motivating reflections and experiences to be carried out in environments and spaces previously deactivated, trying to register the art and the work of the past. For that, the Education and Business Department of the Scopriminiera Eco-museum and its project promote the organization of educational and entertainment activities composed by people qualified in the technique, scientific, environmental and ethnographic areas.

In the structure that exists behind the Eco-museums, there is a philosophy of economical and social development, emphasizing the local identity and the cultural regional references. It is a concrete expression of the principles of sustainability, responsibility and ensemble participation for the production of the public and private sector, and of the citizen. The working methods that are directed to the Eco-museums emphasize the crucial importance of planning and of activities to strengthen the participation of the local community, becoming a catalyzing agent. The Eco-museum project becomes, then, the community project, that means, an active and dynamic museum of its territory.

The concept of patrimony has something similar to the territory, it includes the life history of the people and the way they conceive and use their artifacts, aiming to insert the elements of the autochthonous culture, the material and the immaterial, memory and feeling of belonging to a plot that unites the many local fields (culture, nature, tradition, ethnography, history, architecture, religion, language and gastronomy).

According to De Giorgi and Germak (2008) the actions taken by the Scopriminiera Val Germanasca Eco-Museum extend to many areas, as follows:

- (a) Preservation and Valuation of the local patrimony for the creation of products of cultural tourism (interpretative and educational walks);
- (b) Investigation and formation of the local agents;
- (c) Communitarian actions (projects for the creation of communication maps and the production of interactive expositions);
- (d) Activation and management of local networks in a national and international level.

It was, therefore, a real possibility that made easy the permanence of the population in the small cities of Val Germanasca, giving new perspectives of employment, qualifying people and environments, creating perspectives of economical, cultural and tourist potential of the region (De Giorgi and Germak, 2008).

Work proposal

Starting from the premises of the application of the two methodologies previously presented for the Project Estrada Real: the Goal-Project and the Case Study, some guide lines become necessary to point clear and precise objectives for the actions to be implemented in the context of the project now in course:

- *Subjective values*: Actions for the Valuation of the of the product throughout the local culture, from the

comprehension of the space where the product arises, its history and its qualities associated to the territory and to the community of origin, emphasizing its immaterial assets in the spectrum of the regional culture;

- *Objective values*: materials and local traditions, the natural Eco-System, an Eco-compatibility of material and processes, alternatives related to the technology of low environmental impact, the renewal energy and Information Communication and Technology – ICT.

The project actions were directed throughout a preliminary survey (Executed by a group of professors and students of the Ed-UEMG) in the cities of São Brás do Suaçuí, Entre Rios de Minas, Casa Grande, Lagoa Dourada, Resende Costa, Coronel Xavier Chaves, Prados and Bichinho (Figure 2).

Students and tutors/teachers were involved by an action of *design with a sustainable orientation* to support the *territorial marketing* throughout the part determined for the application of the project, with the support of coordinated actions that foresee the involvement of local partners (Brazilian), identified among he institutions, corporations, associations and business men, aiming to coordinate the project's actions and its real problems and exigencies that have priority in the tourist development of the Estrada Real. The same local partners were involved in the operation to verify and confront what emerges from the different phases of the work. Therefore, the "Centro Minas Design" – CMD participates in the role

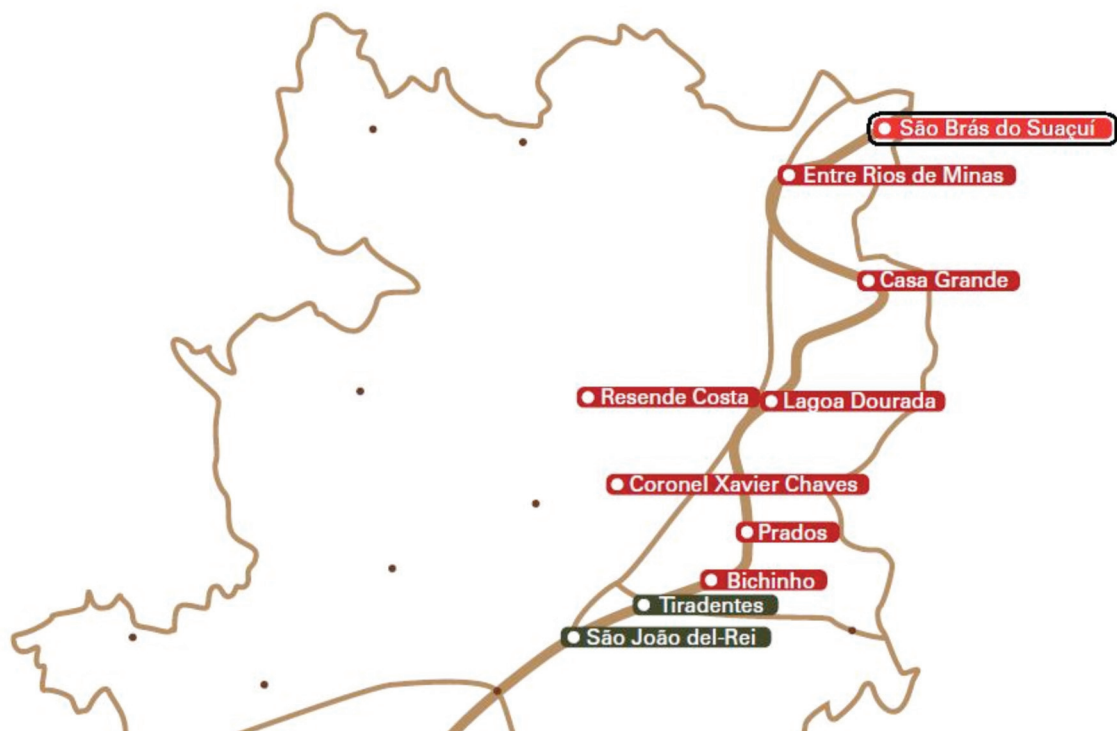


Figure 2. Selected part inside the Estrada Real complex for the actions of this project, comprehending the cities situated from São Brás do Suaçuí to Bichinho, this one next to the city of Tiradentes.

Source: Representation elaborated by the project team of the UEMG's School of Design (2010). The project team of the UEMG's School of Design is integrated by the professors Dijon De Moraes, Roberto Werneck, Lia Krucken, Paulo Miranda, José Nunes, Ana Luísa Cerqueira, Glaucinei Correa, Igor Rios, Márcio Lambert, Ricardo Portilho, and students of the third year of Products Design and Graphic Design.

of promoter, and in the role of scientific coordination participate the professors and tutors/teachers identified in the ambit of the Course of Industrial Design in Brazil (throughout the Ed-UEMG) and of the Course of Laurea in Disegno Industriale (throughout POLITO) in Italy.

The activities of the students of UEMG and POLITO will be guided by the supply of guide lines of approximation and management of the many problems indicated by the local partners in the localities of interest previously chosen. This phase will count with a methodological contribution that refutes today the academical formation (particularly the academical formation of Torino) and that can be summarized in the following methods and objectives:

- (a) *Design for exploration*: A formation phase where the designer answers to the question: where to do? The more the scenario of possibilities to the actions enhances, more the research field enhances. The field now is represented by deliberately very generic ambits (the water, the area, the time etc.) to generate directions of research before the solutions. Fundamentally, for the research, the “cognitive” exploration throughout “sections” in which the many students identified will be involved in an emotional approximation around the problem are considered.
- (b) *Contextual design*: A project dimension in which the design is taken to the cultural value of the context (historical, social economical) and to a confrontation in which products/services must take positions among the possible attitudes of adequacy, interpretation and contrast.

The proposal is structured in three main phases, as described in the Table 1. Two project groups (an Italian and

a Brazilian) will be involved in the research, with different objectives and also complementary specific ones.

All the students (Italian and Brazilian) will strive themselves in the actions proposed by the teachers and researchers, who will strive themselves, throughout instruments of distance didactic studies, in presence classes and in the analysis of the thematic of disciplinary common interest.

Due to economical and technological initiative, in the whole project, for the project action and communication, will be made contacts, realizations and cultural and operational exchanges, throughout virtual platforms, specifically:

- (a) *Web Space*, dedicated to the cultural exchange, in cooperation with UEMG, POLITO and Centro Minas Design (using existing platforms).
- (b) *Skype Space*, dedicated to interviews, brief commentaries between students, teachers and testimonies.
- (c) *You Tube Space*, (or similar) for the registration of classes and communication of the teachers and testimonials, useful in the initiatives and in the diffusion of an updated culture about arguments in question.
- (d) *Video conference*, between business men and representatives of the institutions of Piemonte and of the State of Minas Gerais, in the platform Polito-UEMG, and/or in the institutional portals of existing design.

Expected results

General Ambit: Transformation of the route delimited as an experimental lab, considering the local identity

Table 1. General structure of the proposal: main phases and activities.

Phases	Foreseen activities and conduction strategies
Phase 1 Exploratory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Goal-project Research: Brazilian students will have to broach a reading of the synthesis and of the critics of the chosen localities of interest, developing, this way, a descriptive and narrative documentation of reality. (ii) Case study: Italian students will document international experiences compatible with the themes and contents under study. (iii) Scenario, Vision and Concept: All the students (Italian and Brazilian) elaborate the mapping of the data and the construction of the different scenarios related to the satisfaction of the many values/objectives (see). (iv) Project definition: All the students (Italian and Brazilian) elaborate the specific objective and the conception of the foreseen final project actions.
Phase 2 Development of guide lines	<p>The project Groups (Italian and Brazilian) will strive themselves in the elaboration of the guide lines of the goal-project that describes all the characteristics of the service or product, for example, the ones necessary for the territorial marketing, besides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Services/products for interiors</i> (furniture, merchandising, communication) of tourist structure such as hotels, bars/cafes, commerce and space. • <i>Services/products for exteriors</i> (signalization, external/urban furniture) demonstration and fairs of local handicraft and art.
Phase 3 Analysis of opportunities and interventions	<p>This is a phase that involves the elaborated study inside the school (guide lines) and gives the opportunity of a vaster involvement with the Design System as a complementary methodology when interacting: product, communication, distribution and service.</p>

as a project reference model. Proposal of transforming this route in an Eco-museum, using the tools of the goal-project model.

During Phase 1: In course nowadays, together with the UEMG's School of Design and the CMD – were carried out activities of exploratory character: identification of the geographical part in which will be done the intervention, data collection and documents raising, initial technical visits and identification of critical factors and opportunities (Figure 3).

Some opportunities for the involved students are:

- (a) Confrontation with the professional dimension of design, during the definition of the guide lines and the project activities (executive project, definition of prototype);
- (b) Development of final work (final project) about the theme, by means of a more elaborated and interdisciplinary exploration.

From the didactic coordinating agents UEMG and POLITO, it is expected a greater synergy and interaction of the academic-didactic actions in the ambit of design and of the material culture, by promoting experiences between students and teachers of the two institutions, Brazilian and Italian. Trying to define the format and making the participation of the students possible on the two institutions, in accordance with the double title program.

The Centro Minas Design, as a supporter of the project, will involve teachers and tutors in the consolidation of strategic actions in order to promote complementary actions such as:

- (a) *Contests Calls* that involve external designers and business men of the tourist, industrial and handicraft sector.

- (b) *Summer School* in Brazil (Estrada Real), dedicated to the development of concrete actions with the local partners. A return of the virtual formation at distance, always wanted among those who are involved in the initiative.

- (c) *"Estrada Real official supplier"*, that means, a quality brand conceded to the local companies that are willing to make prototypes or experiments of the innovative processes emerged throughout the action carried out.

We also stand out the opportunity of promoting co-operation between the Italian and Brazilian institutions, making possible the knowledge sharing and the development of ensemble intervention methods.

Final considerations

The application of design actions in territorial projects is still a recent activity in Brazil. This way, many challenges and opportunities take place, that start with the sensitization about the importance of valuing the culture and the identity related to the territory, and the awareness about the vast range of possibilities of design intervention.

During the initial phase of the proposal, which in course, we observed opportunities of cultural and social rescue, mainly related to: valuing the history of the cities; strengthening the vision of the communities about the local identity; and working the existing "links" between the cities of the delimited territory.

It is evident the importance of analyzing the experiences carried out in the Piemonte, specially the ones related to the development of Eco-museums, aiming to promote and to diffuse the project and design culture, applied to the territory in Brazil.



Figure 3. Preliminary analysis of potentialities related to the design intervention in the delimited area. Source: Synthetic board elaborated by the project team of the UEMG's School of Design (2010), based on Moraes (2010) and Krucken (2009).

We expect that with this experience between the University of the State of Minas Gerais – UEMG, the Politécnico di Torino - POLITO and the Centro Minas Design – CMD, throughout the project denominated *Design as a resource for valuing territorial assets and local cultures: the case of Estrada Real, Brazil*, new opportunities will be opened in the ambit of the local-global relation, having as support the design; new opportunities of consume will appear, throughout the exploration of the potential of the local original handicraft; innovative interaction networks will be established, throughout the territorial marketing of the villages, farms and resting places that compound Estrada Real; and, above all, it will promote a fertile research and study field in the academical ambit, by establishing a rich space of professional maturation for the students and teachers, of Brazil and Italy, involved with the challenges of this project.

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