

**Community heritage and heritage community.
Participatory models of cultural and natural heritage management in some inner areas
of the Abruzzo region**

**Patrimonio di comunità e comunità di patrimonio.
Forme di gestione partecipata dei beni culturali e naturali in “aree fragili” dell’Abruzzo
interno**

Abstract

The purpose of my study is to analyze how research projects involving communities and stakeholders can achieve a deeper understanding of natural and cultural landscapes and provide key elements for a self-sustainable territorial development. These development strategies find a fertile field for action in the “fragile areas”, characterized by socio-economic marginality and affected by increasing depopulation, because they can persuade people to stay or to come back and can activate re-territorialization processes. The abandoned places (the “third landscapes”, according to Gilles Clément’s definition) require restoration works to be reconverted into resources, within the framework of a global territorial development plan. My paper focuses on some inner Abruzzo’s areas, many times affected by earthquakes and by hydrogeological hazards and disadvantaged by marginalization and depopulation. Abruzzo is also marked by a great geodiversity, a high percentage of mountain areas, a rich fauna and flora. These features have led to the establishment of numerous natural parks and reserves throughout the region. Some natural parks and ecomuseums are included into national and European networks and act in partnership with institutions and foundations on a regular basis; this entrepreneurship does not exclude, but rather encourages the contribution of local communities. Inhabitants and other stakeholders cooperate with institutions and play a proactive role in the enhancement of the territory and in the production of social wealth. I’m going to focus on the Majella National Park that particularly favours the integration between formal planning and informal planning. The “good practices” evidenced through my study lead to envisaging future scenarios that increase and improve (even on a legislative level) the connection between research, innovation, participatory management and sustainability.

Lo scopo del mio studio è analizzare come i progetti di ricerca che coinvolgono comunità e *stakeholders* possano raggiungere una comprensione più profonda dei paesaggi naturali e culturali e possano fornire elementi chiave per lo sviluppo autosostenibile del territorio. Queste strategie di sviluppo trovano un fertile campo d’azione nelle “aree fragili”, caratterizzate dalla marginalità socio-economica e colpite da un crescente spopolamento, in quanto possono indurre le persone a restare o a tornare e attivare processi di riterritorializzazione. Gli spazi abbandonati (il “terzo paesaggio” di Gilles Clément) richiedono interventi di ripristino e valorizzazione delle risorse nell’ambito di un piano di sviluppo globale del territorio. Il mio articolo si focalizzerà su alcune aree dell’Abruzzo interno, più volte colpite da terremoti e da dissesti idrogeologici, penalizzate dalla marginalizzazione e dall’abbandono. L’Abruzzo si caratterizza anche per una notevole geodiversità, per un’alta percentuale di zone montane, per un ricco patrimonio faunistico e vegetale, fattori che hanno determinato l’istituzione di numerosi parchi e riserve naturali in tutta la regione. Inseriti in *network* nazionali ed europei, i parchi naturali e gli ecomusei abruzzesi stipulano convenzioni con enti e fondazioni; questa imprenditorialità non esclude, anzi stimola il contributo delle comunità locali che cooperano con le istituzioni e svolgono un ruolo propulsivo per la valorizzazione del territorio e per la produzione di ricchezza sociale. Tra i vari esempi possibili, mi soffermerò sul Parco Nazionale della Majella, che favorisce l’integrazione fra strumenti di pianificazione formale e informale. Le “buone pratiche” e le iniziative presentate in questo saggio inducono a prospettare futuri scenari che incrementino e che favoriscano, anche a livello legislativo, l’integrazione tra ricerca, innovazione, progettazione partecipata e sostenibilità.

1. Cultural heritage and sustainable development. Integration between the local and the global

The publication of *Un paese* dates to 1955¹. It is a report by the American photographer Paul Strand and accompanied by a commentary by Cesare Zavattini, already an established writer and screenwriter. The volume, which should have been the first in a series², was created in a period of cultural fervor and of interest for the immediate reality of social life, in line with the poetics formulated by Zavattini, one of the main exponents of the Italian Neorealism. On the dust jacket of the book you can read:

Spero che il turista quando si metterà in viaggio per il nostro bel paese dia un'occhiata ai libri della collana *Italia mia*. Vi troverà pochi monumenti ma parecchi uomini, donne, bambini, e sarà un buon risultato se il turista di passaggio per un luogo illustrato dalla collana guarderà più attentamente la gente che lo abita e di qualcuno ricordando una frase, cercherà perfino di rintracciarlo per scambiare due parole con lui. Spero insomma che si cominci una biblioteca dove ogni villaggio, ogni città sia presente con la sua raccolta la più numerosa possibile di voci e di facce³.

Zavattini's words show how, in non-institutional environments, respect and interest for the inhabitants were assessed as indispensable aspects for the true understanding and the correct promotion of the historical heritage and of the local peculiarities.

The "professionals of culture" had not yet discussed and elaborated on the concepts of sustainable development, community maps, identity and local awareness, community heritage and heritage communities, systemic approach to the territory and participatory management. According to the Law no. 1089 of 1 June 1939, the promotion and protection were still limited to only "things": «le cose, immobili e mobili, che presentano interesse artistico, storico, archeologico o etnografico» («movable and immovable things of artistic, historic, archaeological or ethnographic interest», Law 1089/1939, article 1). The Code of Cultural Property and Landscape (Codice dei Beni Culturali e del Paesaggio) enacted in 2004 (Legislative Decree no. 42 of 22 January 2004) incorporates the restrictive approach of Law no. 1089 and continues to identify heritage in "things":

1. Il patrimonio culturale è costituito dai beni culturali e dai beni paesaggistici. 2. Sono beni culturali le cose immobili e mobili che [...] presentano interesse artistico, storico, archeologico, etnoantropologico, archivistico e bibliografico e le altre cose individuate dalla legge o in base alla legge quali testimonianze aventi valore di civiltà. 3. Sono beni paesaggistici gli immobili e le aree [...] costituenti espressione dei valori storici, culturali, naturali, morfologici ed estetici del territorio [...] (Decreto Legislativo 22 gennaio 2004, n. 42, art. 2, commi 1-3)⁴.

In the last twenty years, local initiatives have been multiplying, and projects aimed at re-evaluating traditional knowledge have been formulating. At the same time, the spread of the "Territorialist philosophy" has supported the idea of the interdependence between socio-cultural environment and community heritage; consequently, development processes are supposed to be based on local priorities and needs⁵. This widening of perspective has also been reinforced by the European funding

¹ Strand, Zavattini 1955.

² The book is dedicated to Luzzara, the village of the lowlands of Reggio Emilia where Zavattini was born. The *Italia mia* series, left unfinished, should have included a volume on De Sica and Naples, another on Visconti and Milan, and another one on Rossellini and Rome.

³ I hope that when a tourist will travel to our beautiful country, he'll take a look at the books of *My Italy* series. He will find few monuments but many men, women, children, and it would be a good outcome if the tourist passing through a place illustrated by the series would look more closely at the people who live there and, remembering a sentence of somebody, he would try to track him down to exchange two words with him. I hope, in short, that we'll be able to build a library where every village, every city is represented with the largest possible number of voices and faces.

⁴ 1. The cultural heritage consists of cultural property and landscape assets. 2. Cultural property consists of immovable and movable things which [...] present artistic, historical, archaeological, ethno-anthropological, archival and bibliographical interest, and of any other thing identified by law or in accordance with the law as testifying to the values of civilization. 3. Landscape assets consist of the buildings and areas [...] which are the expression of historical, cultural, natural, morphological and aesthetic values of the land [...] (Legislative Decree no. 42 of 22 January 2004, article 2, clauses 1-3).

⁵ The Territorialists' Society, founded in 2011, welcomes scholars of various training and promotes the global and multidisciplinary approach to the territory, seen as the result of long standing coevolutionary processes between the human settlements and the environment. It also encourages the self-sustainable development, the increase of the welfare economy

and by the stipulation of international conventions, such as the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe (2000) and the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). The central role of “heritage communities” is explicitly underlined in the Faro Convention (Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, Faro, 27 October 2005), which is a recognition of an evolving situation and, at the same time, acts as a stimulus for the participatory management of cultural and natural assets, integrating top down and bottom up approaches.

The first section of the Faro Convention establishes the aims, definitions and principles. The article no. 2 clarifies the concepts of community heritage and heritage community:

For the purposes of this Convention, a cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time; b a heritage community consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations⁶.

These statements lead to rethinking of the relationships between cultural heritage and sustainable development and between protection and planning. They also envisage a total reversal of the traditional idea of protection and move the focus from the value in itself to the value in use, from the museification to the valorization⁷.

In order to analyse the concept of sustainable local development and to define its concrete applications, one can't ignore the lucid considerations of Giuseppe Dematteis and Alberto Magnaghi⁸. Dematteis wants a systemic model of approach to the territory and its application to certain local “milieu”⁹. With the expression “local milieu” the scholar means a set of socio-cultural characteristics stratified through the historical evolution of intersubjective relationships and through the connections between communities and environmental resources. The current structure of the lived spaces is, therefore, the result of permanencies and transformations. Moreover, Dematteis's observations focus on the opposition between “local” and “global”, on the role of social actors in the building of landscapes and networks, on the close interrelations between the past, the present and the future.

The systemic vision and the attention to the place identity and to the social value are at the basis of Magnaghi's views: he illustrates the connections between development, sustainability and “milieu”. He also argues that the economic globalization should be subordinate to the growth of local society and its ability for self-government. These are the foundations to produce individual and collective well-being¹⁰; thus, the concept of “sustainability” has to be configured as “self-sustainability” and has to involve the political, social, environmental and educational fields¹¹.

In the Fordist economy, the “local” was synonymous with “marginal”, but it is currently becoming the focus of the production policies because the appropriation and management of resources generates heritage and wealth. The global market requires the differentiation of goods and the enhancement of “niche and local products”, thus the local development project translates into a top down approach and the local competitiveness increases within the global economic system. Local communities, on the other hand, are becoming aware of their patrimonial resources (cultural, social, productive, territorial, environmental, artistic) and are self-organizing bottom-up processes. These development strategies guarantee inclusion, sharing, environmental protection and economic well-being, and allow for the reactivation of the local resources and for building a balance between nature and culture.

and the search for the social well-being. The central themes of the conferences and workshops organized by the Society are also the attention to the historical and productive dimension of the “places”, the integrated planning and the revitalization of the “fragile areas”. See <www.societadeiterritorialisti.it>, 16.06.2018.

⁶ Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, Faro, 27 October 2005, section I, article 2.

⁷ Montella, in Montella *et alii* 2016.

⁸ Dematteis 2004; Magnaghi 2010.

⁹ Dematteis 2004; Dematteis, Governa 2009.

¹⁰ Becattini 2002.

¹¹ Magnaghi 2010.

The adoption of territory-oriented strategies promotes local identities and transforms resources into assets. These identities are not closed, but interact with each other and share experiences, knowledge and values: they are “complex identities”¹². According with the Faro Convention, they should be involved in the management of the cultural heritage and improving the human development and the quality of life¹³. In fact, heritage is a complex living ecosystem that must be safeguarded and passed on to future generations in its historical dimension; thus, it requires knowledge, maintenance and care¹⁴. In order to achieve these objectives, it is necessary to consolidate non-hierarchical networks and involve different disciplines that ensure an effective evaluation of the numerous variables that outline the “history of the territory”.

2. Towards a global approach to natural and cultural heritage: the network strategy

The construction of non-hierarchical collaborative networks is an effective tool for the management of museums and ecomuseums, because it highlights the link with the territory as a whole and emphasizes the social value of private participation in the integrated enhancement of public properties¹⁵. Thus, the networks of museums and ecomuseums increase the informational potentiality of local institutions and advance their economic competitiveness.

Developing the analysis made by Golinelli¹⁶, Mara Cerquetti defines the following cultural advantages: continuity, capillarity, contextuality, complementarity¹⁷:

(1) *continuity*, that is the deep historical stratification of cultural heritage and the uninterrupted evidence of humanity and its environment through time; (2) *capillarity*, meant as the pervasiveness of cultural heritage distribution on the national territory; (3) *contextuality*, thanks to the deep cultural and historical relationship between museum collections and the local context – not only squares, roads, monuments and countryside, but also works of art preserved beyond museum doors, in churches, convents, monasteries, and other historical buildings and open spaces; (4) *complementariness*, in so far that each museum refers to other ones as in “snakes and ladders”.

From an economic point of view the networks allow to achieve better results in three sectors: operational capacity, creation of public value, legitimacy and support¹⁸:

(1) *operational capacity*, achieving economies of scale, scope and learning, exchanging information and equipment, and saturating the productive capacity of resources, through the allocation of fixed costs and the reduction of transaction costs; (2) *public value creation*, building more qualified projects, widening the range of museum services and raising high levels of quality, thus achieving museum mission; and (3) *legitimacy and support*, getting a better competitive position and image, “thereby ensuring that resources and authority will flow”.

In addition to supporting the management of individual areas, the networks encourage shared strategies and action plans, enhance the economic and social resources, and promote the exchange of information and skills. The inclusion of parks, museums and ecomuseums in national and European networks brings visibility and reputation.

The Majella National Park belongs to a European network of wild protected areas (PAN Parks) that has been awarded the Official Certification by the International Protected Area Network (PAN) Foundation. It has become the eighth park in Europe and the first of the Mediterranean area to obtain

¹² Tosco 2014, pp. 177-179.

¹³ Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, Faro, 27 October 2005, section I, article 1.

¹⁴ Magnaghi 2010, pp. 96-99.

¹⁵ The available bibliography on the subject is broad and ranges from the theoretical perspectives to the field experiences. See Hinna 2005; Cammelli, Della Torre 2013; Seddio 2013.

¹⁶ Golinelli 2008.

¹⁷ Cerquetti 2017, p. 82.

¹⁸ For bibliographic references see Cerquetti 2017.

such recognition, reserved for protected areas of considerable naturalistic value and high management standards, both for the quality of the initiatives and for the strategies of sustainable tourism¹⁹.

Most of the networks are territory-oriented.

The strong naturalistic imprint of the Abruzzo region has led to the establishment of numerous parks and reserves that live in close symbiosis with the ecomuseums and with a network of thematic museums spread throughout the territory. They are often linked to archaeological sites and hosted in historical buildings.

The goal is to reach beyond the concept of “widespread heritage”, and to develop the aspect of “synergy”. The “productive synergies” have shaped the territory and must be studied, recovered and valued in the same way as the “landscape synergies”, because they are both testimonies of the local communities’ stories and are the elements on which the place identities are founded.

A growing phenomenon is the organization of neo-rural networks. The local associations and the producers’ consortia that belong to the “neo-rural world” are an evolving reality. This new model of rural economy is spreading widely in Abruzzo and is acquiring a progressive awareness of their being there. The meeting opportunities, the workshops, the conferences, the fairs favor the creation of a network culture, which does not limit, but stimulates the territorial specificities and the vocations of the “neo-rural group”.

In Abruzzo, social farming projects are also recently underway. The “social agriculture” is a particular and innovative form of neo-rurality. It supports medical therapies and social assistance services, allowing the inclusion of disadvantaged workers and people with disabilities. The phenomenon still tends to develop through bottom-up initiatives and spontaneous collaborations between social workers and agricultural entrepreneurs. But the protagonists of these experiences are engaged in coordinating the different territorial realities to build a supra-territorial body that promotes and manages networking projects.

3. Stakeholder involvement in cultural heritage management and in territorial planning

The current attitude on cultural heritage is to overcome the opposition between the public and the private sectors, and to encourage citizen participation in the enhancement of public property²⁰. According to the Faro Convention of the Council of Europe, the participation of local communities, within the framework of public action, is an essential factor in valuing specific aspects of cultural heritage to be safeguarded and passed on to future generations. Moreover, the involvement of interested parties, both in the nomination process and in the management of the UNESCO’s World Heritage properties, is explicitly required in the Operational Guidelines. It also is (or should be) systematically monitored to ensure the spread of community-based initiatives and the preservation of local identities that might otherwise disappear²¹.

Stakeholder participation and informal planning have proved to be indispensable tools for understanding cultural landscapes and have provided key elements for the self-sustainable territorial development and for creating a bond of trust between institutions and communities.

A recent contribution, dedicated to three archaeological sites in northern Europe, shows how the self-organization processes have had positive effects on the economy of the territory and on the recovery of collective memory²². Residents focus on the relationships between the place awareness and the enhancement of the local resources on which they have traditionally subsisted; thus, they accept the presence of legislative restrictions, which are perceived not as elements of annoyances, but as protection of their identity²³. On the contrary, resource conservation strategies, mainly characterized

¹⁹ See <www.parcomajella.it>, 16.06.2018.

²⁰ For a review of recent government initiatives and for a comparison with the European directives on participatory management of cultural heritage, see Volpe 2016.

²¹ Díaz-Andreu 2016.

²² Maluck 2016.

²³ The case study of Daming Palace (China) is particularly meaningful. The UNESCO World Heritage nomination and the consequent development of tourism have remarkably changed the relationship between the communities and the

by top-down approaches, may lead to resentment by communities towards any restriction attempt. The consequence is a growing sense of extraneousness between the communities and their places, which can also result in acts of vandalism. The arson-induced fires that hit the Majella and Morrone massif in the summer of 2017 are still an open wound and require restoration and reconversion interventions within a spatial development plan. In the natural reserves farmers and breeders protest against the limitations imposed for the conservation of the floristic and faunistic biodiversity. This situation needs a transition from preservationist and state-driven strategies of natural and cultural resources management to a collaborative management approach. Institutions are becoming more sensitive to these issues and more flexible towards communities' requirements.

The Majella Park, in agreement with the local municipalities and with the agro-zootechnical companies, implements active protection policies, adopts the eco-economic development model, and promotes projects for the functional recovery of the territory. In paragraph 4.3 I will present the positive experience of the Sant'Antonio's Wood (Pescocostanzo), a wood pasture nationally and internationally recognized as a biotope of high environmental and historical value. These experiences teach that socio-cultural environment and community heritage are interdependent and that even traditional practices are an essential part of the place social value²⁴. Furthermore, they demonstrate that the implementation of an inclusive policy and the recognition of the stakeholders' role help to resolve conflicts between different social actors competing over land use and to harmonize the different needs and requirements, such as development, protection and inhabitants' well-being.

There is an increasing demand for public participation because people and communities are becoming more self-confident in claiming their rights to manage their heritage and to participate in developments that are impacting their lives. Institutions tend to respond positively and to involve stakeholders in spatial planning processes. This strategy ensures the flexible control of community-based initiatives, the promotion of the balance between economic and social needs and the protection of ecosystems and historical-cultural assets.

Institutional bodies also welcome the participation of and funding from entrepreneurs and business interested in gaining visibility and promoting their brand. The advantages for the maintenance of properties, the communication of knowledge and the common well-being are undeniable. The Majella Park, for instance, takes part in research activities and encourages long-term collaborative partnerships between different stakeholders, such as businesses, universities, municipalities, government agencies, landowners, local associations and groups of volunteers. In such a way the Park provides a variety of educational offerings and a wide range of high-quality tourist opportunities.

Sharing knowledge and objectives stimulates research, innovation and growth. Historical-archaeological awareness is particularly valuable both in spatial planning and in heritage management. Planners can recover the anthropic activities that have shaped the landscapes and can apply historical-archaeological views to define and develop environments for high quality of life.

4. Inner areas of the Abruzzo region: future scenarios built on the past

From a long-term perspective, in Abruzzo, many inner areas – affected by earthquakes and by hydrogeological hazards, disadvantaged by marginalization and depopulation – have demonstrated their resilient capacity and have been able to retain their own identities by rediscovering a cultural heritage that it's worth preserving and promoting. These “fragile areas” require restoration works to be reconverted into resources, within the framework of a global territorial development plan. Abruzzo is marked by a great geodiversity, a high percentage of mountain areas, a rich fauna and flora, features which lead to the establishment of numerous natural parks and reserves throughout the region.

I focus on the Majella National Park that is located in the most inaccessible and wildest area of the central Apennine. Park's territory consists of carbonate mountains (elevated about 2000 m or more) such, separated by valleys and karst plateaus (fig. 1). Its landscapes are impressive and have

archaeological heritage. The international interest has therefore increased the social value assigned by the local groups to "their" heritage (Gao 2016).

²⁴ UNESCO 2013, p. 12.

found expression in artistic and literary works. In the play *L'avventura di un povero Cristiano*²⁵, Ignazio Silone, attentive to the historical and social events that marked the inland Abruzzo, identify in the Majella landscapes a sort of *genius loci*:

I suoi contrafforti le sue grotte i suoi valichi sono carichi di memorie. Negli stessi luoghi dove un tempo, come in una Tebaide, vissero innumerevoli eremiti, in epoca più recente sono stati nascosti centinaia e centinaia di fuorilegge, di prigionieri di guerra evasi, di partigiani, assistiti da gran parte della popolazione. [...] avvenimenti così disparati [...] mettono in luce alcuni tratti costanti dell'indole di questi montanari. Tra questi non sono mai mancati individui bizzarri portati all'utopia religiosa o politica, e altri (come ovunque, la maggioranza) del tutto ordinari semplici chiusi e anche rozzi e gretti; ma, all'occorrenza, gli uni e gli altri, capaci di eccezionali prove di generosità e coraggio²⁶.

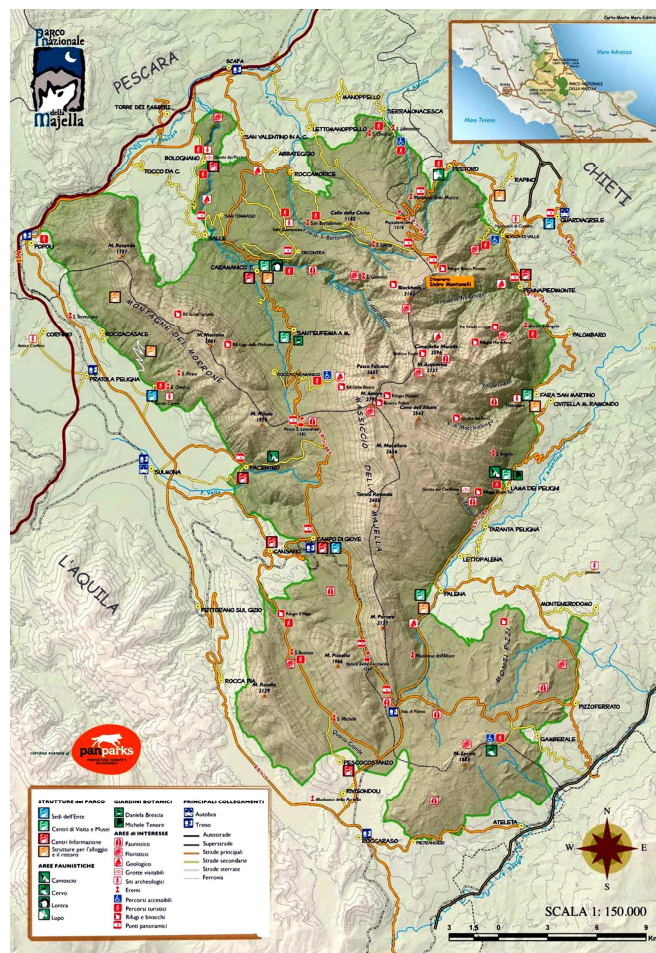


Fig. 01. Majella National Park. Map of the protected area (74.095 ha). Source: www.parks.it

At the present, the Majella National Park boasts remarkable natural and cultural heritage, such as archaeological sites, historical monuments, dry-stone tholos huts and walls, abandoned mines. It preserves different types of cultural landscapes shaped by traditional economic activities and

²⁵ Silone 1968.

²⁶ Its spurs, its caves, its passes are laden with memories. In the same places where once upon a time, as in a Thebaid, innumerable hermits lived, in more recent times hundreds and hundreds of outlaws, of escaped prisoners of war, of partisans, assisted by a large part of the population were hidden. [...] events so disparate [...] bring to light some constant traits of the character of these mountaineers. Among these, there has never been the lack of bizarre individuals brought to the religious or political utopia, and others (like everywhere, the majority) completely ordinary, common, closed and even rough and narrow-minded; but, if necessary, both, capable of exceptional proof of generosity and courage (Silone 1968, pp. 18-19).

perceived as testimonies of the communities' history, including agro-forestry-pastoral landscapes, mining and industrial districts, cave and karst landscapes, and religious places. The holistic reading of landscapes is expressed in thematic projects, and requires an interdisciplinary approach, in order to define the relationships between the past and the present. The good practices evidenced through my study lead to envisaging future scenarios that improve (even on legislative level) the integration between research, innovation, participatory management and sustainability.

4.1. Mining landscape and participatory management

In the northern Majella asphalt has been mined from prehistory until recent periods. The mining deposits are mostly located in the municipalities of Abbatiggio, Manoppello, Lettomanoppello, Roccamorice, San Valentino, Scafa (fig. 1). The river Lavino, a right-hand tributary of Pescara, is the hub of the innermost mining districts, and the valleys of Santo Spirito, San Bartolomeo, Fosso Sant'Angelo, Fosso Cusano flow into its riverbed. For years the inhabitants used asphalt to waterproof buildings; shepherds used it to light fire around the sheep pens ("stazzi") and to mark the animals. The mining industries grew in the last two centuries. Between the nineteenth and twentieth century English, French and German companies opened new mines or took over and expanded existing ones. They also provided the territory with infrastructures (narrow-gauge railway lines, cableways) in order to connect the extraction sites with the refining factories and the viability of the bottom valley. The mines were connected by means of movable railroad tracks, locomotives and Decauville wagons. These activities have left traces that may be identified using remote sensing and applying a regressive analysis and an ethnoarchaeological approach²⁷.

The abandoned mining landscape is relatively well preserved. The open-air quarries are located where the slope is less accentuated, and the bitumen veins are on the surface. They have produced macroscopic features (landfills, residues of the extraction and refining processes, traces/fragments of infrastructures), that delineate a "third landscape" (according to Gilles Clément's definition), easily identifiable on the orthophotos. In the most heavily exploited sites the quarry fronts are clearly visible and the different height levels in the excavation areas can be perceived through the 3D modelling. The geomorphological and environmental characteristics determined the great number of tunnel mines. The survey has allowed the identification and positioning via the Global Position System (GPS) of numerous entries, mostly located along the rocky ridges and covered by shrub vegetation (fig. 2).



Fig. 02. Acquafredda (Roccamorice, PE). Mine's entry (photo by Silvano Agostini).

²⁷ Colecchia, Agostini 2014, with bibliographic references.

The research carried out by the institutional bodies (Archaeological Superintendence, Majella National Park) effectively supports the systematic activities of the GRAIM (Majella Industrial Archeology Research Group). In June 2015 the exploration of the tunnel mines along the Santo Spirito valley, near the medieval hermitage, led to the discovery of the “Grotta della Lupa” (about 1075 m a.s.l.), a karst formation of considerable speleological and scientific value, in which osteological and fossil findings have been identified (fig. 3).



Fig. 03. Grotta della Lupa (Roccamorice, PE). The cave was discovered in 2015. It is accessible from the Santo Spirito mine (about m 1075 a.s.l.). Photo by Alessandro Di Cicco (Speleo Club Chieti).

The Speleo Club, the Archaeological Superintendence of Fine Arts and Landscape and the Majella National Park were involved in the surveys. Furthermore, the Majella Park initiated and coordinated a multidisciplinary study aimed at investigating the geomorphological, palaeontological and historical-anthropological aspects of the geosite (fig. 4). More recently (summer of 2017), a tunnel was discovered in the Orta valley in the municipality of San Valentino in Abruzzo Citeriore (“zone A” of the “Majella Park”). The existence of this tunnel, which was part of the whole mining system, has been reported to the Archaeological Superintendence, and the site has been detected and documented.



Fig. 04. Grotta della Lupa (Roccamorice, PE). The cave is a karst formation of considerable geological and paleontological value. Photo by Matteo D’Alessandro (Speleo Club Chieti).

Due to the consistency of the archeominerary district, partly to be investigated, and due to the importance of the geological heritage, the Park has submitted to the National Commission its candidacy to UNESCO Geopark. A complex dossier was therefore drawn up and the most significant geosites were selected; some of them have been already declared of international importance and of scientific interest and have been protected by the MiBACT (Legislative Decree 42/2004).

This participatory process was triggered from the bottom (bottom up processing) and has stimulated initiatives from the top (top down processing). It has solicited direct institutional interventions establishing an effective collaboration between different stakeholders. As further step, a Memorandum of Understanding between different bodies has been established, including the State Property Administration, the Archaeological Superintendence, the Abruzzo Region, and the Majella National Park. Subsequently, these partners will be joined by the interested Municipalities, the GRAIM association, and the "D'Annunzio" University in order to protect and enhance the underground mines and the industrial archaeology structures. The purpose is to develop a Mining Park consisting of mines open to the public, a museum, a documentation centre for the conservation of artefacts, archival documents and intangible heritage consisting of the memories and testimonies of the miners and their families²⁸.



This is the result of participatory planning, which is presently being used in study meetings sponsored by the Majella Park and the Superintendence and in workshops involving the volunteers of the GRAIM, who are engaged in their research and in the distribution of their experiences, through videos, photos, articles, and the use of the social networks (figs. 5, 6).

Fig. 05. Acquafredda (Roccamorice, PE).
The inside of the abandoned mine (photo by Gabriele La Rovere, GRAIM – Speleo Club).



Fig. 06. Miniera di Pilone Cusano (Roccamorice, PE).
The inside of the abandoned mine (photo by Matteo D'Alessandro and Alessandro Di Cicco, Speleo Club Chieti).

²⁸ An interesting example of archeominerary park is located in the Val-de-Travers (canton of Neuchâtel, Switzerland), where the asphalt mines were exploited from the 17th century to the end of the 20th century. At the present, the whole industrial district is musealized and attracts a large number of visitors. See <www.best-of-switzerland.net/en/asphalt_mines_val-de-travers>, 16.06.2018.

On special occasions, such as the Week of the Planet Earth 2017 (October 15-22), the Park, together with the Superintendence and the GRAIM, planned a geological and historical-cultural excursion to the complex of bituminous mines in the territory of Roccamorice and Lettomanoppello. The participation of the local and non-local communities was considerable. On a regular basis, local cooperatives – such as *Majambiente*, *Majellando*, *Abruzzo Parks* – organize walking tours in and around the safest and most accessible mining sites.

4.2. Agro-forestry-pastoral landscapes: a key-point for the sustainable development

The signs of the agro-pastoral activity are one of the strong points of the touristic opportunities provided by the Majella Park. Pastoralism, associated with forms of “marginal” agriculture, has been one of the cornerstones of the Abruzzo economy since Neolithic times and has marked the landscape, culture and lifestyles of local communities. The stone huts, used by both shepherds and farmers, are the most evident marker of the Abruzzo agro-pastoral landscape. There are also traces of seasonal agricultural practices: the land to be cultivated was obtained along the slopes, appropriately terraced; the stones were removed from the fields and piled up in “macere” or were used for the construction of huts and walls; the huts served as temporary shelter and storage for tools (fig. 7). The project “Paesaggio Agrario Costruito” (“Built Agricultural Landscape”), funded by the Abruzzo Region, aims to recover dry stone artefacts for understanding and filing them. In order to restore them properly, traditional techniques are employed and the workers are re-educated on the ancient construction methods. The park provides detailed information by using classic media such as paper catalogues, educational brochures and conferences, as well as more modern media such as websites, GPS tracking, online browsing and smart applications. Visitor can utilize them to organize a physical or a virtual tour.



Fig. 7. Agro-pastoral landscape in the area of Roccamorice (PE). The most remarkable features of this landscape are the dry-stone masonry, the tholos huts used by both shepherds and farmers, and the piles of stones removed from the fields.

Recent research has shown a further factor to be highlighted in the creation of valorisation projects and in the articulation of touristic itineraries. The coincidence between the mining sites and the structures linked to pastoralism, already verified in the Neolithic, can also be found in the last two centuries in various places. These include Acquafredda, San Giorgio, Fosso Sant'Angelo, Stalle del Papa, Fonticelle and Decontra di Caramanico. The Acquafredda site (900-1000 m altitude) is an interesting example of continuity of attendance. It's occupied by an extensive open-air cave, mined until the end of the last century. Today it's covered by wild vegetation, collapsed layers, as well as traces of pastoral usage (fig. 8).



Fig. 8. Excursion to the mining complex of Acquafredda (Roccamorice, PE). The picture shows one of the quarry fronts and dry-stone masonry.

The project “Coltiviamo la diversità” (“Cultivating Diversity”) directly involves the communities that have conserved a cultural *substratum* still linked to traditions and ancient knowledge. The “Park Custodian Farmers Network” recovers, grows and markets indigenous varieties, supplying restaurants and agritourisms that offer dishes of the local food. To avoid the risk of extinction of the local cultivars, the ‘Majella Germplasm Bank’ and botanical gardens were created, where the varieties are grown in the showcase fields.

From the activities described so far, it comes clear that in planning future scenarios combining research, innovation and sustainability, we can’t neglect forms of bottom-up planning and recognition of the driving role played by local communities in the revitalization and management of fragile areas.

4.3. Towards the development of an active and participatory protection culture: the management of Sant'Antonio's Wood (Pescocostanzo, AQ)

In south-eastern Majella, the territory of Pescocostanzo (AQ) preserves notable features of the landscape system known as *difesa*. The *difesa* is a land use system similar to the *dehesa* in Spain²⁹ and characterized by the combination, in the same area, of the forestry and the grazing components interrelating with each other³⁰. The *difese* (Spanish *dehesas*) were state or feudal wood pastures for collective use. They were south-facing and generally located near the settlements, and they allowed for seasonal agriculture and the breeding of farm animals to coexist harmoniously. During the summer the herd had access to the *difese*, while in the valley the pastures were mowed to produce hay. In the early nineteenth century, due to the subversive laws of feudalism and to the crisis of the transhumance, the *difese* lost their function and their identifying characteristics: many wood pastures were divided into lots to be allocated to farmers for private use.

The Bosco di Sant'Antonio (Saint Anthony's Wood) is still well preserved; thus, it is one of the most valuable Italian historical landscapes³¹. The wood pasture (*defesa*) is spread over three hills and covers about 710 hectares in the northern part of the Pescocostanzo basin. It has been included in the Majella National Park as a high protection territory (Zone A - "integral reserve") since 1991. The most peculiar characteristic of the *difesa* system is its savanna-like physiognomy, with changing densities along a continuous tree cover and livestock grazing in the undercover (fig. 9). The trees (beches, turkey oaks, apple trees and wild pear trees) were of considerable size. They provided livestock with shade, and they also guaranteed seeds, fruit and above all branches. The 'candelabra shape' of the most ancient trees derives from the 'capitozzatura', which is a peculiar pruning practiced to supply livestock with branches and wood essences, to favour the growth of the plants and to defend them from the attacks of pathogens (fig. 10). There are clearings between the trees³².



Fig. 9. Wood pasture (*difesa*) known as Bosco di Sant'Antonio (Pescocostanzo, AQ). The most peculiar characteristic of the *difesa* system is its savanna-like physiognomy (photo by Luciano De Martino).

²⁹ San Miguel Ayanz 1994.

³⁰At present, the wood pasture system is widespread in the Alpine regions of Austria and Switzerland, in the Vosges and in the central French Massif, in the Iberian Peninsula (the Spanish *dehesa*, the Portuguese *montado*), in Hungary, in England and in Germany (Emanueli, Agnoletti 2016, pp. 142-143). In Italy, the wood pastures are currently concentrated in Sardinia, in the Appennin area and in some regions of the South (Grove, Rackham 2003).

³¹ Bevilacqua 2013, pp. 405-407.

³² Manzi 2012.



Fig. 10. Wood pasture (*difesa*) known as Bosco di Sant'Antonio (Pescocostanzo, AQ). The most ancient trees are 'candelabra shaped', due to the traditional pruning technique called "capitozzatura" (photo by Luciano De Martino).

The system is threatened and the resulting landscape has undergone a notable reduction in the last decades. In fact, an overly conservative protection has been causing the advance of the forest, the uncontrolled development of the undergrowth and, consequently, the reduction of the clearings; thus, new trees have been growing near the old ones. The involvement of local communities in the maintenance and reuse of the *difesa* system would limit this phenomenon and promote the self-sustainable development. Furthermore, the restoration of collective and multifunctional land use could reduce the progressive depopulation of these mountain areas.

In Spain, for instance, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Biodiversity Foundation launched the "Somos Dehesa" project³³. The project, started in 2008, aims to promote the extensive breeding of cattle in the wild state and to avoid the degradation and destruction of its original habitat (the *dehesas* of Extremadura). It also encourages the local economic development, enhances the historical and ethnographic heritage of the *dehesas* and creates self-sustainable tourism circuits. These goals have been achieved through participatory planning initiatives.

Recently, even in the Pescocostanzo basin, interventions for the functional community recovery have been started. In this area, animal husbandry still plays a fundamental role. Despite having undergone modernization, the zootechnical activity is still practiced in compliance with the traditions and customs that regulate land access breeding, the mowing of the meadows, and the use of the wood pasture for the feeding of cattle. In the marginal areas of the protected reserve of Sant'Antonio's Wood, around 40 small and medium-sized farms are operating, raising livestock to a semi-wild state, and grazing cattle and sheep in places still subject to the common lands management³⁴. The emergence of farms and local producer cooperative organizations fuels the self-sustainable development, complements the touristic opportunities, and enriches the potential of the Majella National Park.

In such a way, the active and participatory protection of the local assets has been realized by implementing the management skills of all the actors within the territorial system. In addition to ensuring the rational use of environmental resources, the rules of common land guarantee the maintenance of an agro-forestry-pastoral landscape of extraordinary beauty. It is a strong attraction for a qualified and demanding tourism and a valuable ecological reserve for floristic and faunistic biodiversity. It would be ideal to adopt a more flexible approach and to authorize, even within the most protected reserve (Zone A), interventions to restore natural resources by allowing the grazing of animals and the traditional pruning of trees ("capitozzatura") and by reconnecting rural to urban areas and contributing to the well-being of the entire population.

³³ See < <http://rurex.juntaextremadura.es/somosdehesa>>, 16.06.2018.

³⁴ Di Renzo 2013.

5. Conclusions

Cultural heritage, identity and brand play an important role in local development strategies, characterized by the patrimonialisation of territories as the basis for the social production of wealth. This assumption is now widely shared and accepted by professionals and institutions involved in the management of cultural and natural properties. According to the Faro Convention of the Council of Europe and to the UNESCO's operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the participation of local communities, within the framework of public action, is an essential factor in valuing specific aspects of cultural heritage to be safeguarded and passed on to future generations.

This paper has provided an overview of cultural properties protection laws, and it has also underlined a reversal of perspective and a development of an increasingly active and participatory protection culture: top-down bottom-up projects are being carried out both in Italy and in other countries. A fundamental goal to reach is the enhancement of local resources by promoting the place identities and by creating self-sustainable tourism circuits. In the last twenty years, many scholars from different disciplines have been discussing self-sustainable development, community maps, place identity, community heritage and heritage communities, systemic approach to the territory, top-down and bottom-up planning, and network strategies. At the same time, local initiatives have been multiplying in order to re-evaluate traditional knowledge and environmental resources.

After reviewing the most meaningful contributions on these subjects, this paper focuses on some inner Abruzzo's areas that are disadvantaged by marginalization and depopulation. In these "fragile areas" natural parks assume a fundamental driving role in the management of natural and cultural heritage. For instance, the Majella National Park provides a wide range of high-quality tourist opportunities and encourages stakeholder participation and informal planning, overcoming the opposition between the public and the private sectors. By involving local communities, the Park gives them the opportunity to develop cohesive partnerships and to create innovative local enterprises and new sources of revenue. It is worth asking what marginality is and when a territory becomes marginal. All the spaces where agriculture can't impose itself as the prevalent productive activity are usually defined "marginal", as is the case of the mountainous areas, the marshes and the humid areas. These spaces are marginal for their location, for the infertility of the soil, for the climate that make them unsuitable for the main activities of agricultural transformation and production; they are marginal because they are not involved inside an efficient and developed system of communication and they are not easily reachable from a political, religious or economic hegemonic centre (Burri 2014). In many inner areas, however, the environmental conditions and the balanced exploitation of resources have allowed forms of adaptation, which have proved to be positive for the territory development. In the last century, the gradual depopulation of the mountain has given rise to an increasing economic crisis; nevertheless, the initiatives to re-appropriate mountain areas and to activate a sustainable development plan are key in curbing this phenomenon and promoting the recovery of the local tangible and intangible heritage as well as of the place identities.

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