

Small Historical Centres and Their Connection with The Landscape: Fragility and Complexity in Italian Contexts

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the issues of fragility and complexity of small towns, particularly regarding the Italian case. Results define a possible conjunction between the landscape historical characteristics and the creation of circuits for the usability of smaller centres that can be connected to each other, based on their features. A prototype schedule, including GIS elaboration, is the novel proposal illustrated in the paper: it derives from the investigation carried out within the Working Group of the Italian Ministry of Culture, aimed at defining a Charter for Small Villages. The approach innovativeness consists in the comparison methodology between different landscape units that can also be extended to similar cases, defined on the basis of the involved factors matrix.

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1. Introduction

The investigation focuses on the study of smaller settlements and the potential interventions able to enhance the landscape in which they are located. The scientific literature addresses this topic from multiple perspectives. On one hand, there are numerous sectoral studies aimed at the conservation of historical centres, particularly from an architectural and restorative point of view (Pelà, 2018; Satterthwaite, 2021; McKnight et al., 2019). On the other hand, there are numerous sectoral studies focused on the preservation of the territory: in fact, these centres are often located in fragile areas, especially regarding the hydro-geological characteristics of the terrain on which they are built (Rodríguez et al., 2018; Ramírez Eudave & Ferreira, 2021). This research attempts to integrate the themes of fragility and complexity, the two main characteristics that distinguish these centres. The issue of

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fragility is increasingly recognised in historical centres, whereas the complexity - involving active perception and participation in decision-making processes - is less explored and is the focus of this work. These aspects take on comparable connotations, especially in European countries (Megyesi & Boldizsár, 2016; UCLG, 2017; Klusáková & Vic Ozouf-Marignier, 2017; Matoga & Pawłowska, 2018; CTME, 2020; European Commission, 2023).

Fragility arises from physical aspects related to risks (exacerbated by climate change) and anthropogenic use (linked to the presence of inhabitants and the changes they have made to the territory). In Italy, a significant portion of the territory is defined as fragile, due to its orographic configuration and geological-structural asset. However, it is important to highlight that, in relation to a widespread process of urbanisation and infrastructural development, the ecological-environmental system's functionality levels are currently severely compromised (Smith TM & Smith RL, 2017; Di Venosa & Morrica, 2018; Acierno, 2019).

Complexity, in its theoretical components - that influence disciplinary debate - and its physical components - that emerge from professional practice - encompasses both natural and urban systems (Vercelloni, 1992; Farina, 2004; Arcduccittà, 2013). It manifests in material and immaterial relationships tied to multiscalarity and to the need to reconcile urban growth with environmental protection. This involves connections between elements closely linked to the landscape, such as urban planning, hidden natural systems, anthropised environments, green networks, and human networks (Connolly, 2004; Shane, 2004; Mostafavi & Doherty, 2010; Turner, 2016). Therefore, it is necessary to consider all concurrent environmental, geographical, biological, and territorial factors to develop management solutions that account for all possible interactions and avoid creating further imbalances (Allen, 1999; Tsenkova, 2016; Allen et al., 2017; Gill et al., 2007; Kelbaugh, 2019).

Fragility and complexity are thus interrelated aspects that manifest in real space, consisting of natural, agricultural, and urban contexts, defining both their potentialities and significant vulnerabilities. The general considerations, briefly listed, are of particular relevance in the Italian context. The general theme, for which the researchers' lines have been outlined, is specifically analysed in this paper concerning the Italian case. It is believed that the specific treatment may be interesting as Italy has always addressed the issue of landscape planning with a specific plan dedicated to it, including the aesthetic sense of landscape beauty and subsequently the importance of perception (Cialdea, 2019).

The approach of the "Landscape Plan" in Italy originates from the 1940s, aiming to enhance the aesthetic aspect with a strong focus on the "panorama" (the first law introducing these concepts is Law No. 1497 of 1939 "On the Protection of Natural Beauties"), and provides for the establishment of landscape constraints on assets for which a list must be drawn up, and for which interventions are subject to the authorisation by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage (Repubblica Italiana, 1939). Things changed in the mid-1980s when Law 431/85 (known as the Galasso Law) introduced new concepts for the protection of areas of particular environmental interest. At that time, more attention was devoted to safeguarding the "environmental system": thus, the concept of landscape constraint also changed from being the legislative tool that ensures the protection of the landscape aesthetic and visual aspect (as sanctioned by Law 1497) to becoming the tool aimed at ensuring the protection of the environment as an "ecosystem". Furthermore, the Galasso Law has the great merit of having, for the first time, required the Regions to carry out an organic and systematic protection of their territory: The Regions are appointed to identify the areas to be protected and to draft Territorial Landscape Environmental Plans for vast areas (Repubblica Italiana, 1985).

The definitive shift in the approach to the landscape topic occurred in 2004 with the promulgation of the new Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape, which came into force in May of the same year. It adopts the concept of landscape heritage in place of the environmental one, emphasising the multiple components of the landscape ranging from the morphology of the places to its architectures and to its history, while not neglecting its environmental component. It states, "*landscape means a homogeneous*

part of the territory whose features derive from nature, human history, or their mutual interrelations. The protection and enhancement of the landscape safeguard the values it expresses as perceptible identity manifestations" (Repubblica Italiana, 2004).

The general approach of the new Code focuses on the provision of enhancing the territory, fulfilling the reformed Title V of the Italian Constitution, which distinguished the activities of protection from those of enhancement. The Regions and Local Authorities are thus called upon to organise activities aimed at constituting an "integrated system" of enhancing the "heritage". It is also noteworthy that in the meantime, the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, 2000) had been signed, and as Urbani Minister stated enacting the Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape: "Regarding the landscape, a true Copernican revolution has been carried out, which will allow overcoming the administrative impasse due to the continuous conflict between regional and local planning instances. Thus, a planning and management of the landscape is reached in accordance to territorial conditions, but still able of safeguarding the extraordinary cultural characteristics of Italian landscapes as the identity heritage of the entire national community". Therefore, the two themes - the landscape interpretation and the definition of landscape quality objectives (as provided by the Code) - merge with the evident interesting potential of a new plan aiming to carry out a threefold action of conservation, requalification, and development (Cialdea, 2018, 2023).

Additionally, the theme of small centres is currently a focus of the Italian Ministry of Culture, which has established a National Committee for the Landscape, of which the first Author of this contribution is the Vice-president since 2018. Specifically, within the Committee, a Working Group named "Gruppo Borghi" has been established, aimed at drafting the National Plan for Small Centres. In fact, the national panorama sees a great preponderance of medium-small towns and small towns. As the "National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change" (MATM, 2015a, 2015b) highlights, there are fewer than 50 large centres, i.e. with more than 100,000 inhabitants: in which a quarter of the total national population lives; medium-large sized centres, i.e. with a number of inhabitants between 40,000 and 100,000, are just over 150 and accounting for almost 15% of the national total; the medium-small sized centres (from 10,000 to 40,000 inhabitants) number just over a thousand in which approximately 30% of the national population resides. But most urban centres are small (with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants). In fact, despite hosting a total population similar to that of medium-small sized centres, they reach the number of seven thousand. In these cases, the almost total absence of the urban-metropolitan dimension means that the relationship between the settlement system and the landscape is closer.

This document is organized into five parts. The first chapter reviews the state of play. The second presents the analysis methodology based on landscape indicators applied to small historical centres. The third and fourth chapters describe results and discussions and finally there are the conclusions.

2. Material and Methods

The research undertakes an inductive analysis of the theoretical disciplinary debate and operational experiences related to landscape design within contemporary landscape planning and the landscape design emerging from bottom-up systems. It proceeds with an applied project experience of Community Landscape from the perspective of the technical-scientific community.

The geographical context considered encompasses the Italian territory, particularly focusing on areas within landscapes deemed minor, where smaller historical centres are located. These territories can be defined as marginal or typically non-urban, with a more rural character. These areas are united by a common convergence of ecological-environmental dynamics and historical-cultural attributes, although they are engaged in landscape projects that utilise heterogeneous approaches, implying a variety of territorial scales and a diversification in the types of cultural and landscape assets involved.

The core analysis examines whether it is possible to integrate two factors: identity and belonging. Identity is approached through an objective vision linked to planning analysis, while belonging is examined from a subjective perspective, considering the ongoing bottom-up initiatives for landscape enhancement. Figure 1 describes the methodology approach, developed to highlight the peculiarities that distinguish the different approaches to landscape design, adopted respectively by top-down and bottom-up systems, in order to extract principles and objectives within the new debate.

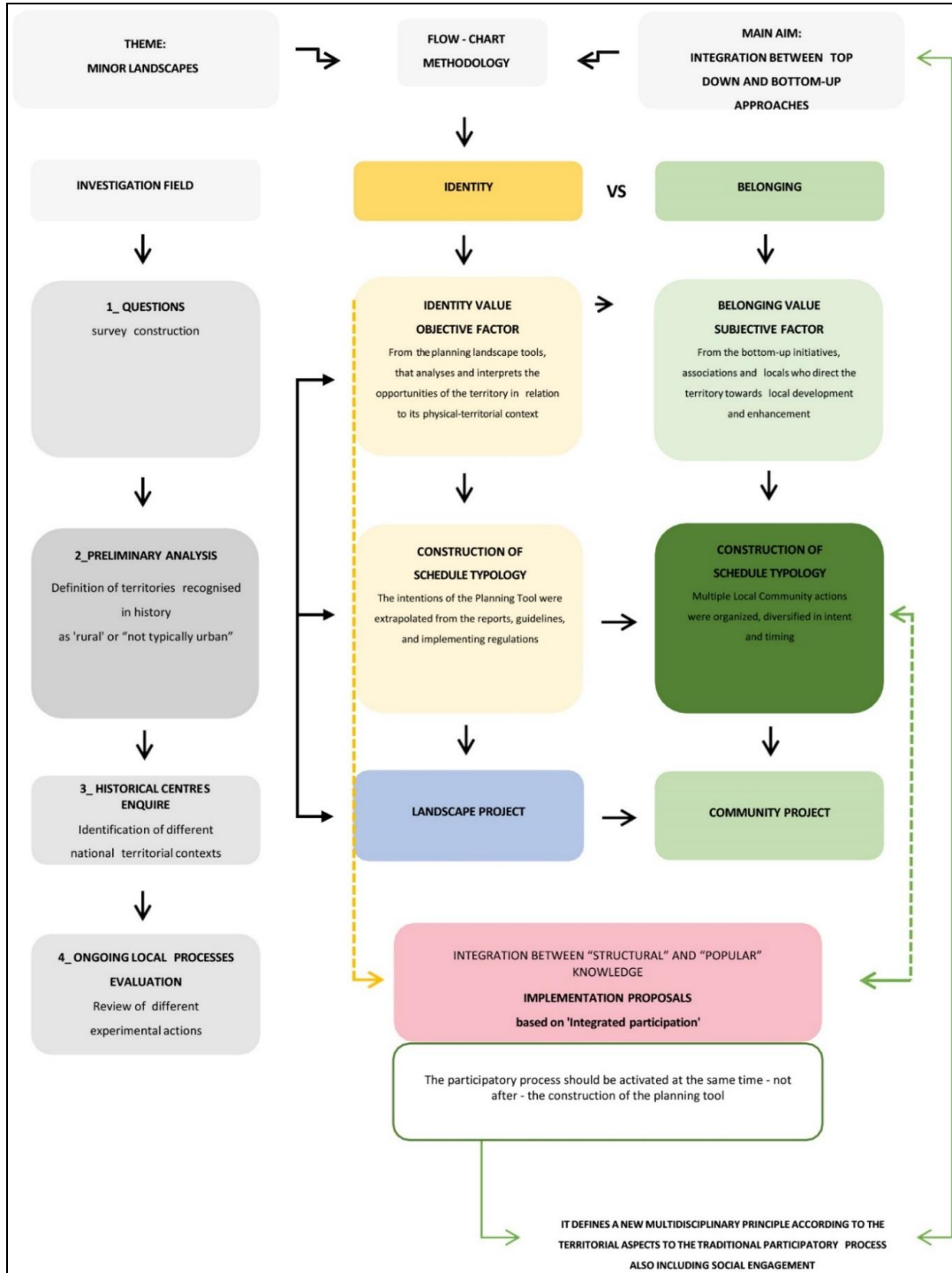


Figure 1. Flow-chart (Author's Elaboration 2024)

A landscape typology schedule was created to synthesise the various processes and to describe both landscape and community projects.

The final phase arises from the desire to experiment with a practical case of possible integration between "structural" and "popular" processes resulting from multidisciplinary knowledge. It proposes a model of new integrated participation for the enhancement of landscape design defined by the Middle-Lab, as the technical-scientific community. This aims to highlight principles related to the role of the Middle-Lab between top-down and bottom-up approaches in an innovative discussion context.

2.1. Identity: Theoretical approach and Data collection method

The study of landscape identity within the Italian urban planning context is governed by the already cited Landscape Plan, which is responsible for ensuring a preliminary and detailed survey of the territory for effective protection. It highlights the diversity and richness of the landscape, encompassing geographical structure, architectural elements, and historical heritage, while maintaining a constant focus on environmental aspects. The law defines the landscape as a segment of territory characterised by both the natural environment and the historical interaction of humans. The protection and promotion of the landscape aim to preserve its values as tangible expressions of identity. Regions and Local Authorities are required to organise activities to create an "integrated system" for the enhancement of their own heritage. Meanwhile, the Code considers the above-mentioned European Landscape Convention, for which the landscape is a portion of territory perceived by populations, whose character is the result of the interaction between natural and human factors. Authors around the world extensively study aspects of identity (Lynch, 1964; Norberg-Schulz, 1979; Assunto, 2006; Stobbelaar & Pedrolì, 2011; Loupa Ramos et al., 2016; Butler & Sarlöv-Herlin, 2019).

In Italy, legislation has evolved, shifting the focus from mere protection to enhancement and sustainable development, defining the landscape project. Contemporary territorial planning operates in an uncertain context, preserving essential elements and orienting towards sustainable development, responding to environmental dynamics and the needs of various stakeholders. The preliminary phase of information acquisition and analysis integrates technical knowledge and the empirical insights of citizens and stakeholders, central to the definition of public policies. This approach necessitates broad consensus, highlighting the importance of dialogue and mediation to resolve disputes between divergent interests, which are not yet fully integrated to ensure adequate active participation.

Therefore, several elements identified in the numerous cases examined have been captured, and the main parameters useful for comparison with other methods have been established: land use parameters, areas under restriction, settlement systems feature, natural elements peculiarities and interventions strategies.

2.2. Belonging: Theoretical approach and Data collection method

The concept of belonging is associated with an emotional attachment and deep-rooted connection to a territory, perceived as a cohesive and significant whole. This emotional bond links individuals and communities to a place, clarifying, for instance, the sentimental value of villages—places of lived histories, perceived as familiar and meaningful, where people and places are interconnected, and traditions bear witness to the passage of time and the transmission of knowledge. Belonging frames, the community as a crucial environment for developing innovative interpretations of territorial issues and challenges, considering the active bottom-up initiatives at the national level. The community acts as a catalyst for identifying and enhancing unexplored resources and potential, enriching the social fabric and amplifying the collective capacity to respond to local challenges, thus supporting an effective territorial development strategy (Arnerio, 2000; Uwajeh & Ezennia, 2018; Granata, 2021).

In smaller historical centres, practical communities are emerging, activating new territorial paradigms through sociality, culture, and educational tools based on European educational guidelines, such as situated learning. This form of learning is effective for all participants, occurring through the exchange of experiences and circular experimentation—a process that places innovative local initiatives at the

centre of the territorial system. The territory is viewed as a resource for the community, which, through education and training, commits to managing and enhancing it, reusing resources and creating true Community Academies. These are places of exchange and cultural planning, based on a horizontal process (van Empel, 2008; Jankauskaitė-Jurevičienė & Mlinkauskienė, 2021; Aldegheishem, 2023; Deep, 2023). Communities have regained importance as reference points and generative matrices of the very notion of landscape. This resurgence is the result of a cultural shift linked to the concept of belonging to places and the desire to emerge from subordination to metropolitan territories. It places the concept of community-based projects as actions and responses to marginalisation through bottom-up initiatives.

3. Results

Results demonstrate relevant differences between the three distinct processes, related to different outcomes of enhancement projects, developed within the framework of landscape planning tools.

3.1. Landscape-Projects

The present analysis focuses on the added value of linear infrastructures capable of connecting diverse elements, highlighting how the visual and structural influence of various components contributes to defining and enriching the context of the examined territories. These include architectural elements, rural archaeology, historical-cultural itineraries, minor pathways and roads, historical settlement structures, and natural or inhabited features.

The first case specifically synthesises one of the projects derived from the Territorial Address Plan with landscape relevance of the Tuscany Region (Regione Toscana, 2015), titled "Leopoldine in Val di Chiana". The second case comes from the Regional Landscape Plan of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region (Regione Friuli-Venezia Giulia, 2018), titled "Il Cammino delle Pievi in Carnia". It includes the Network of Cultural Heritage, following the regulations of Part II of the Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape and the UNESCO guidelines. One of the main guidelines aims to enhance and protect the scenic road leading to the Pieve. Table 1 summarises the main characteristics of the two selected areas in this discussion, according to the principles defined in the Data Collection Method.

Table 1. Landscape-Projects (Author's Elaboration 2024)

Localisation	Infrastructure	Landscape Unit	Cultural Heritage Value	Previous Usability	Final Realisation
Stradone di Montecchio	Historical Buildings along the Stradone (Tuscany, Italy)	Agricultural area of the Tuscan territories with buildings known as 'Leopoldine', owned by the Medici family of Florence later reclaimed by Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo I di Lorena.	Leopold-era villas, farms, farmhouses and land systems, agricultural plots and roadways of historic origin, hydraulic drainage works for water control.	Agricultural area with strong value Abandoned buildings	Recovery of the area and restoration of the Leopoldine, buildings founded between the 16th and 17 th centuries. Preservation and valorisation of the reclaimed land with the recovery of the historical and cultural elements and the introduction of a new usability linked to slow mobility.
Il Cammino delle Pievi in Carnia	Historical Buildings in the Carnia Mountain Chain (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy)	A mountainous area in the upper Val But, Val Pontaiaba and Val Chiarsò in Carnia that passes through historic Carnic Pievi and two Sanctuaries.	Carnic churches, Alpine Club nature trails, historic mountain villages and nuclei, religious archaeological architecture, spiritual sites.	Small villages located in carnic areas and valley floors Watercourses and streams Mountain areas between the Pre-Alps and the Carnic Alps	The path of the Pievi in Carnia represents a strong memory of the ancient Alpine peoples who guarded the lives of Christians. They were erected between the 5th and 14th centuries. In the Landscape Plan it is inserted in Sacred Paths for enhancing the landscape value.

The Stradone di Montecchio (Figure 2) is located in the 15th District, the Piana di Arezzo and Valdichiana, as defined by the Landscape Plan of the Tuscany Region. This area is characterised by the creation of an infrastructural corridor named "Leopoldine in Val di Chiana", focusing on the buildings along the historic road infrastructure. The area boasts a heritage that combines architecture and nature, with historic nuclei serving as the pillars of the settlement fabric. Evidence of the interaction between humans and the environment includes kilns and structures related to the land reclamation carried out between 1703 and 1736 by the Leopoldine Dynasty, such as the Leopoldine and the Grand Ducal Farms, which are notable for their architectural features and agricultural character. These structures form aggregated units along significant routes, including the Stradone di Montecchio and the Abbadia axis. The project proposes the development of a cycling and pedestrian pathway aimed at enhancing the reclamation scheme, which is currently compromised due to the abandonment of many Leopoldine farmhouses. It proposes the restoration of historical and landscape heritage. Within the project proposal, particular attention is given to the creation of rest areas along the Reclamation Path, designed as places for gathering and information for travellers.

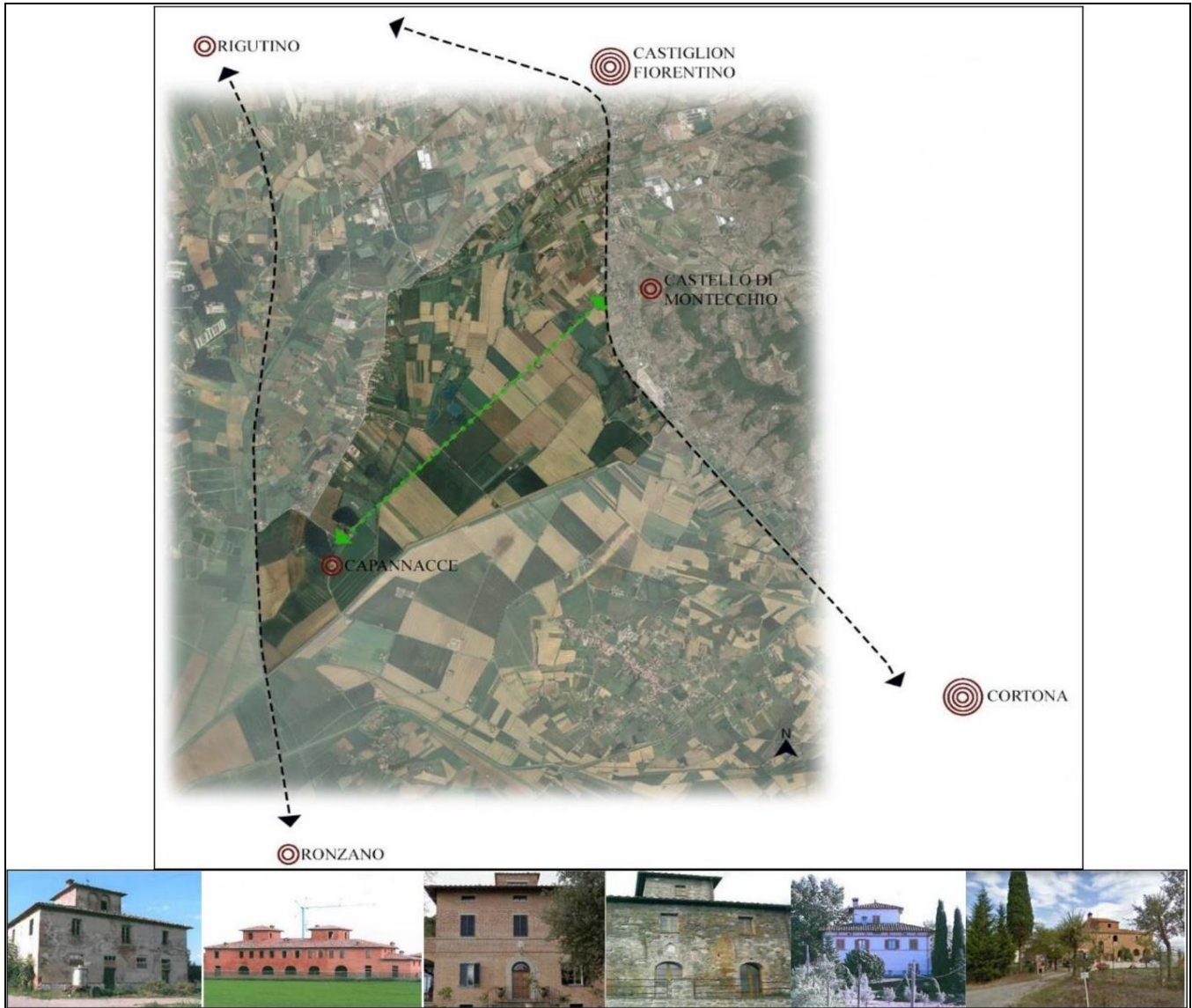


Figure 2. Stradone di Montecchio and prevailing elements
 (Map: Author's Elaboration 2024; Photos sources: Regione Toscana, 2015)

The Cammino delle Pievi in Carnia (Figure 3) is a 260 km route located in the heart of Friuli's Carnia region, offering an immersive and intense journey akin to the renowned Camino de Santiago. This path allows travellers to explore the natural beauty of the region and its medieval churches. Originally composed of 18 stages, the Cammino delle Pievi was extended to 20 stages in 2013. It now includes, in addition to the Conca Tolmezzina, Val Tagliamento, Val del Lumiei, Val Degano, and Val Pesarina, the communities and territories of Alta Val But, Val Pontaiba, and Val Chiarsò, while maintaining its start in Imponzo di Tolmezzo and its end in Zuglio. The Pievi today stand as testaments to the memory of the evangelisation of ancient Alpine populations—isolated communities perched on hills and highlands. These communities, though distant, have preserved the Christian way of life, governing all aspects, not solely the spiritual.

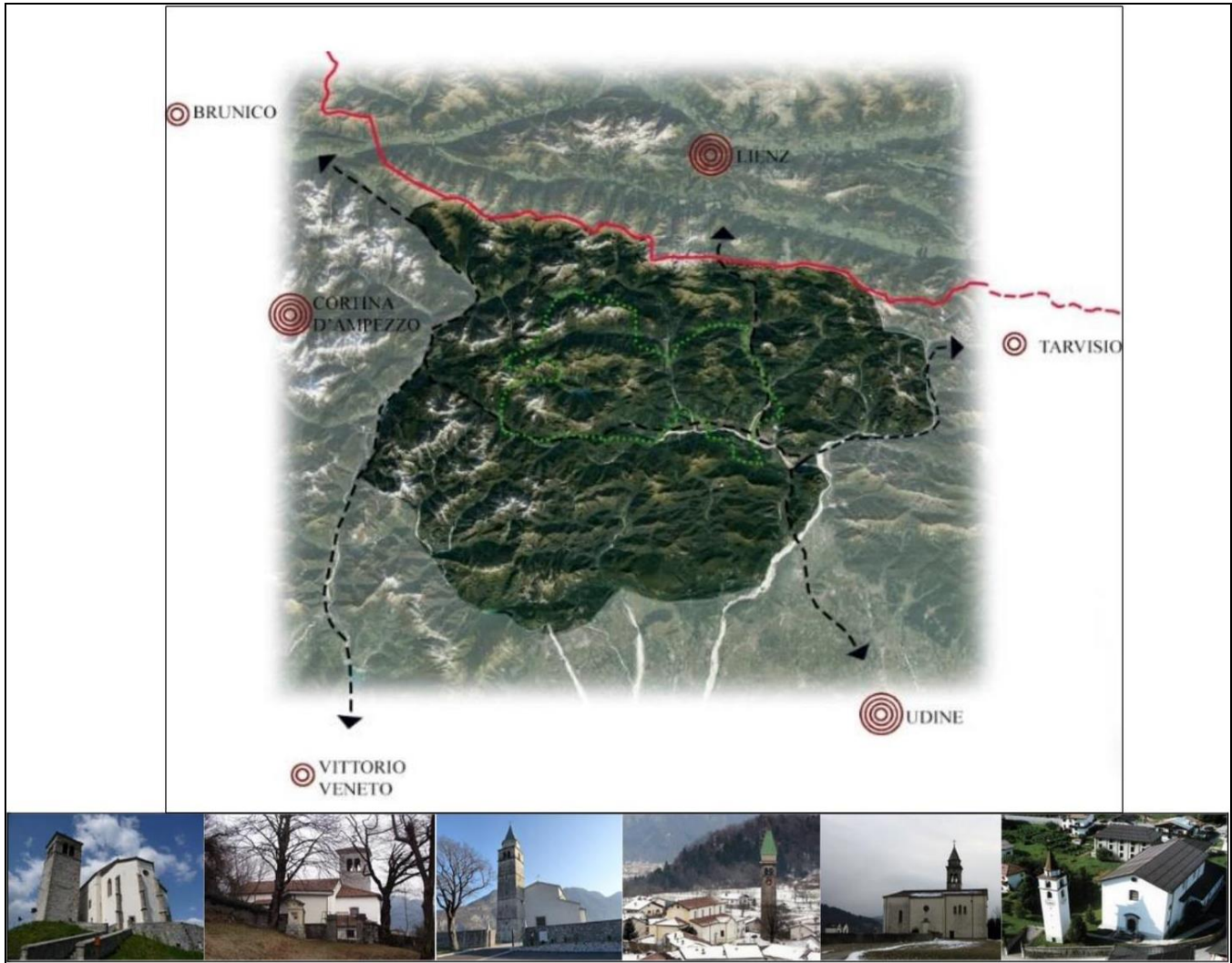





Figure 3. Cammino delle Pievi and prevailing elements
 (Map: Author's Elaboration 2024; Photos sources: <https://camminodellepievi.it/>)

3.2. Community -Projects

Territorial experiments are often constructed with a multidimensional character, oriented towards redefining the rules and forms of local and material well-being. These initiatives combat social exclusion by increasing opportunities for settled communities and creating conditions for local economic development. In the post-pandemic era, with the exodus from cities and interventions from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Italian plan aimed at the country's economic recovery after COVID-19), expectations align with opportunities to build new processes in territories through bottom-up activation.

Community projects, therefore, represent a novel experimental approach. This study focused on three selected cases: the "Dolomiti Hub" project developed in Veneto in 2020, the "Borgofuturo +" project initiated in the municipality of Ripe San Ginesio in the Marche region, and the "Da mare a mare" project realised in Sicily in 2017. Table 2 summarises the main characteristics of the analysed experiments, as defined in the Data Collection Method. The table shows the comparison and study of the selected cases within the framework of bottom-up initiatives, recognising the values and objectives of each by analysing the territorial context, the environmental and landscape values of these areas, and their cultural values.

Table 2. Community-Projects (Author's Elaboration 2024)

Localisation	Association feature	Landscape Unit	Cultural Heritage Value	Previous Usability	Final Realisation
Cultural platform promoting social transformation actions	<p>Dolomiti Hub</p>  <p>Dolomiti Lab S.r.l. Social enterprise https://dolomithub.it/</p>	Industrial area of Fonzaso, in the province of Belluno and neighbouring villages (Veneto, Italy)	<p>Dolomites = UNESCO World Heritage Site</p> <p>Venetian Villas Nature trails</p> <p>High-quality agriculture</p>	historic villages and hamlets with declining populations, agricultural or disused areas	Community Centre with co-working spaces with bistro and viewing room. Barch Art is a unique opportunity for the Fonzaso area: its history linked to its agricultural vocation. A typical structure of the Fonzaso plain, is linked to haymaking, peasant culture. Four poles and a roof, to collect stories and dry grass and feed the cows during the winter
Participatory process for inland area	<p>Borgofuturo+</p>  <p>Borgofuturo, Non-profit Association https://borgofuturo.net/</p>	<p>Val di Fiastra municipalities (Marche, Italy)</p> <p>Interventions in the Municipality of Ripe San Ginesio</p>	<p>The exploration of productive relations (agriculture and craftsmanship), settlement relations (historic hillside centres and valley settlements)</p> <p>Valorisation of the products of the Fiastra Valley and its community</p>	Historic villages and rural settlements	<p>Participatory pathway: Local project. Six Val di Fiastra municipalities, four territorial tables involving more than 100 local actors to define Urban Regeneration</p> <p>Ripe San Ginesio: mapping of unused spaces within the borough with a festival of Sustainability and Social Camp</p>
Sea to sea: recovery of the historical route Welcoming Committee, which acts as the guardian of the route.	<p>Friends of the Francigena Routes of Sicily</p> 	The Magna Via Francigena of Sicily is a historic route linking Palermo to Agrigento (Sicily Italy)	Historic villages, rural architecture, archaeological sites, terraces of naturalistic value, valuable agriculture	Historic villages undergoing depopulation, derelict or rural areas	Magna Via Francigena di Sicilia, a route inaugurated in 2017 and travelled by more than 5,000 pilgrims before the Sars-Cov-2 pandemic.

The first example (Figure 4a) is situated in the industrial area of Fonzaso, in the province of Belluno (Northern part of Italy). In 2020, a community centre emerged from the vision of an intergenerational group, featuring a co-working space, a bistro, and a cinema. The organisation, named Dolomiti Lab S.r.l. (Benacchio et al., 2022), rapidly evolved into a social enterprise, serving as a platform for aggregation, collaboration, and cross-pollination, open to the participation and contributions of both local and external human resources (Vifillo, 2018). Various aggregation events have been organised, and the structure has also participated in European project bids for the territory, providing support for participation in the above-mentioned National Recovery and Resilience Plan calls and monitoring funded projects. Among the numerous creative projects, “Barch Art” is a unique opportunity for the whole area to revive its history tied to agricultural vocation, blending its memories and landscapes into a vision only avant-garde art can trigger. Barch Art, funded by the Cariverona Foundation, aims to culturally regenerate these particular structures. They are unique agricultural structures typical of the area, related to haymaking and peasant culture: four poles and a roof on the plains' meadows, to collect stories, dry grass, and feed cows during the winter.

The second example is the “Borgofuturo+” experiment (Figure 4b): it started ten years ago by director and screenwriter Damiano Giacomelli in Ripe San Ginesio, a small village in the Marche region in Val di

Fiastra, at the foothills of the Sibillini Mountains (Central part of Italy). This location was devastated by a severe earthquake in 2016-2017, just three years before the global pandemic crisis. Initially, a festival focused on cultural and environmental themes was activated. Subsequently, Borgofuturo evolved into a municipal project known as "QUI Borgofuturo". The vacant spaces of the historic centre were made available for artisanal and socio-cultural activities aligned with the festival's philosophy through symbolic rent. Supported by the Municipality of Ripe San Ginesio, Borgofuturo has launched several innovative initiatives, including the "Social Camp", an educational project that critically explores sustainability-related themes (Giacomelli, 2022). The festival has also collaborated with the European Horizon 2020 Ruritage project, which studies rural regeneration through local cultural heritage. Additionally, a larger-scale local project involving neighbouring municipalities is under development.

The "Da mare a mare" project (Figure 4c) is the third example: it features the establishment of the "Magna Via Francigena di Sicilia," a historical route connecting Palermo to Agrigento, in the Southern part of Italy. This project was implemented by the "Amici dei Cammini Francigeni di Sicilia" Association and inaugurated in 2017. Each stage of the journey and each municipality traversed is associated with a Welcome Committee, which acts as a custodian of the route, playing a crucial role in managing the path and serving as an effective form of local self-governance (Keuffer & Horber-Papazian, 2020). A distinctive feature of these Committees is their mutual interaction, which has helped overcome the geographical, social, and economic fragmentation of inland Sicily (Comunale, 2021; Ferreri, 2022), generating continuity of exchanges and relationships between previously separated places and acting as bridges between communities and territories.

3.3. Community-Landscape Project

The research aims to combine the themes of fragility and complexity for historical centres, considering the theme of fragility as well-understood, while framing the theme of complexity within the realm of uncertainty. This involves experimenting with a middle-up-down model (Cialdea & Pompei, 2020, 2021) to incorporate the notion of "active" perception and community participation in decision-making processes.




The findings stem from the experimental project titled "*Community-Landscape*" for the Lazio Region, specifically "Il Cammino dei Briganti," which extends through the municipalities of Montelanico, Carpineto Romano, and Sezze. These municipalities are located in territories of high natural and landscape value (Regione Lazio, 2021) and possess significant agricultural characteristics. The route is notably marked by the presence of karst caves historically used by brigands as hideouts (Sconocchia, 2011), and it is significantly linked to the Via Francigena del Sud, a historically and culturally important itinerary proposed for UNESCO international recognition (Ghiara, 2020).

Table 3 summarises the main characteristics of the proposal developed in the Monti Lepini area in the Lazio region, following the principles defined in the Data Collection Method (Ruggiero, 2024).



Figure 4. Community-based lab: 4a Dolomiti Hub (Source: <https://dolomithub.it/>); 4b Borgofuturo+ (Source: <https://borgofuturo.net/>); Da mare a mare (Source: <https://www.viefrancigenedisicilia.it/MVF.php>)

Table 3. Community-Landscape Project (Author's Elaboration 2024)

Localisation	Collaboration	Landscape Unit	Cultural Heritage Value	Previous Usability	Final Realisation
Carpintero Romano-Montelanico-Sezze Municipalities	<p>Lazio Region Landscape Plan</p>  <p>Lepini Company</p>  <p>University</p> 	Lazio Landscape Plan priority areas E7, E8, E9. (Lazio, Italy))	<p>Historical centres and cores</p> <p>Nature trails that cross important SPA and SCI areas</p> <p>Karstic formations (caves, ouzo, chasms) that through 'lived' use have defined the history of the local and territorial community.</p> <p>Valuable agricultural landscape with production of local DOC and PDO products</p>	Landscape of historic centres and cores, mountain areas, rural landscape, charcoal formations	Cammino dei Briganti del Lazio, a 35 km route that crosses the three municipalities of Montelanico, Carpineto Romano and Sezze, rejoining the Southern Via Francigena. The route extends along the natural sites of the karstic caves that defined the 'lived' during the Brigandage in the 19th century, providing them with shelter.

The municipality of Carpineto Romano (Figure 5) boasts the highest number of caves in the Lazio Region, estimated at approximately 250, some of which are accessible for speleological excursions, representing a significant naturalistic and historical-cultural asset for the entire territorial system. The study of brigandage, which outlines the history of this territory, is particularly important. This phenomenon developed specifically in this area due to its unique geomorphological conformation and dates back to the early 19th century in the Monti Lepini (De Caprio, 2020).

The applied experimentation emerges through multidisciplinary views concerning the multi-criteria study of the territory, proposing the infrastructure of a historical-cultural route defined in proximity to linear and point elements, including caves and geosites. The historical narrative of land use and the "experience" along the Monti Lepini chain, through this reformulation, emphasises the importance of territorial and social dynamics in landscape transformations. It suggests approaches to landscape planning that integrate the historical-cultural asset of the territory, geographical studies, and associations, thereby allowing the definition of a route, the Cammino dei Briganti, which spans thirty-five kilometres. This route enables the discovery of traditions, "lived" places, cultural and geomorphological heritage, traditional culture, and communities through the slow enjoyment of the landscape.

Thus, a potential connection between the historical characteristics of the landscape and the creation of circuits for the accessibility of minor centres is established.

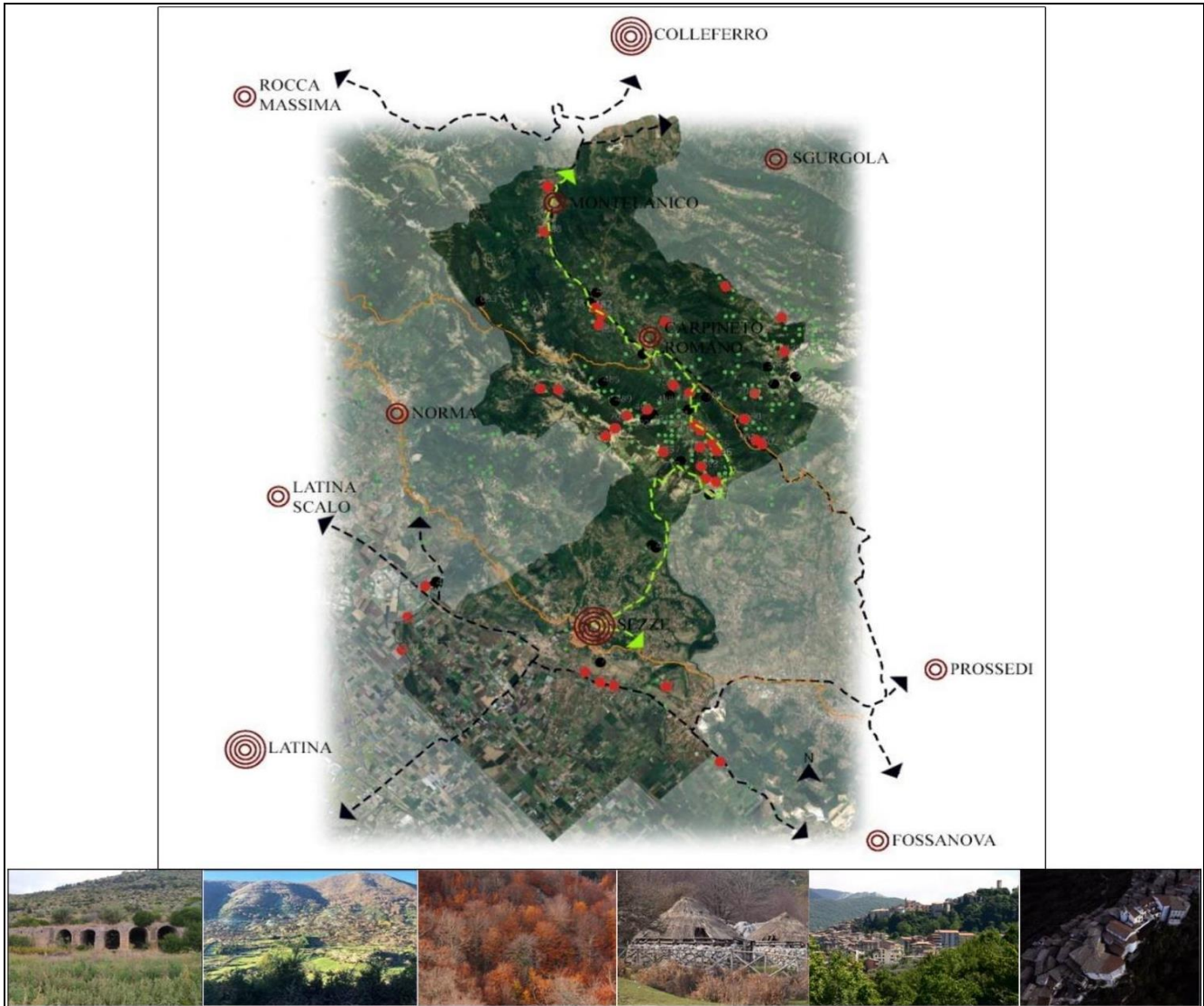


Figure 5. Carpineto Romano e il Cammino dei Briganti (Map: Author's Elaboration 2024; Photos sources: <https://www.compagniadellepini.it>, Esposito, 2011; Authors)

4. Discussion

This research considers the identification of components that constitute the landscape project for "minor" centres to achieve proper integration of top-down and bottom-up processes while simultaneously fulfilling the concept of territorial enhancement.

The objective is to highlight critical issues and propose useful recommendations for constructing guidelines and suggestions for integrated participation. This involves analysing and comparing, for each model, the potential positive and negative effects derived from the examples analysed, with the most significant findings reported in this study.

The solution may increasingly qualify as a middle-up-down process, originating from the shared interests of local authorities and citizens, thereby initiating a "circle of knowledge" of the territory. While the bottom-up model develops according to an informal organisation where each stakeholder is autonomous and exchanges information limited to their sphere of interest, and the top-down model

often fails to interact with local populations, the middle-up-down model can create a continuous cycle of interaction. The technical-scientific community provides knowledge, skills, and expertise to mediate between local authorities and stakeholders. Given the rapid pace of changes, not only those related to climate but also historical-cultural shifts, this community can introduce innovative and experimental tools for a more effective reading of the territory, thus aligning more closely with the Community-Landscape Project. This integration is reflected in Table 4, which analyses the intersection of correlated positive and negative elements emerging from participatory processes, alongside data derived from an in-depth analysis of the Landscape Plan.

Table 4. Different approaches and their impacts (Author's Elaboration 2024)

IMPACTS	IMPACT'S AREA	TOP-DOWN	BOTTOM-UP	MIDDLE-UP-DOWN	
Positive Impacts	Inside local interventions	Realisation of Territorial Studies with in-depth studies related to the history of places Enhancing the IDENTITY factor	Citizen Participation Processes with increased sense of community Enhancing the BELONGING factor	In the middle-up-down model the figures middle figures are inserted between the up figures (Local Authorities) and the down figures (Stakeholders). The "middle" figures can be the Scientific Communities representing the "Technical Knowledge" useful to guarantee an effective integration for the Landscape Project. Enhancing the IDENTITY/ BELONGING INTEGRATION	
	External Influence	Strengthening Inter-Municipal Projects	Multiplication of Networks of associations	Ability to 'influence' authorities <u>on the basis of</u> local needs	
Negative Impacts	Inside local interventions	Limited local Participation	Possible identification of local needs	/	
	External Influence	Possible non-involvement of population in the definition phases of the Plan	Possible lack of knowledge of and/or compliance with the Plan's protective regulations	/	
Present Results	Inside local interventions	Recovery and new usability	Inside local interventions	Recovery and new usability	Inside local interventions
	External Influence	Replicability (supported by the Plan's technical regulations)	Capacity Building of Local Tourism Networks	/	External Influence
Integrative Suggestion	Inside local interventions	/	/	Implementation of effective local projects with a high degree of resident satisfaction aggregative factors favouring the inclusion of dwellings, including temporary ones	Inside local interventions

The multidisciplinary approach applied in this paper arises from an interest in fundamental infrastructures, specifically historical-cultural itineraries in proximity to linear or point elements, whether constructed or "lived," within agrarian landscape contexts. These contexts vary in opportunities and value but simultaneously face conditions of degradation and/or abandonment.

The essence of the landscape project intertwines the historical-cultural matrix with the spatial organisation of the infrastructure, emphasising the importance of visual, functional, and sequential relationships between rural landscape elements. The spatial organisation and historical-cultural infrastructure of the rural landscape are interwoven into a complex system of visual, functional, and sequential relationships. Understanding these elements and their interconnections is crucial for landscape planning to enhance cultural heritage and promote the sustainable development of the studied territories. Each project contains elements of cultural heritage, defined physically within the itinerary as linear or point assets, although varied in territorial dimensions.

5. Conclusions

The process must certainly retain its characteristic as a "planning tool," as stipulated by the cited Urbani Code. However, it could increasingly qualify as a middle-up-down process, which originates from common interests that may begin even before the enactment of the plan. It then coordinates the expression of public interest during the actual development phase, enhancing stakeholder participation while simultaneously refining territorial analyses.

In the context of landscape planning, this interaction is absolutely necessary. The middle-up-down model, in which intermediary figures (middle) are positioned between higher authorities (up) and lower stakeholders (down), can ensure greater effectiveness of the entire process.

Proposals arise from the theme of cultural heritage, with a local desire to reclaim their heritage. This includes attention to intangible assets, such as traditions, through the proposal of slow itineraries with multiple functions related to agricultural activities, the recovery of historical traces of the territory, and the restoration of infrastructures such as ancient historical-cultural routes for new recreational purposes. New solutions and possibilities derive from the ability to define potential new data and factors, currently managed in georeferenced databases within Geographic Information Systems, through broad public and scientific participation. This involves more than just mapping, identity, and/or belonging; it constitutes a functional construct for the territory that interacts between sociality and information, transforming into useful data for the enhancement of places.

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Ethics statements

Studies involving animal subjects: No animal studies are presented in this manuscript.

Studies involving human subjects: No human studies are presented in this manuscript.

Inclusion of identifiable human data: No potentially identifiable human images or data is presented in this study.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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