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When History Repeats: Heritage Regeneration and Emergent Authenticity in the Marche's Peripheral Areas

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ABSTRACT

This article looks at the way in which historical re-enactments contribute both to the development of a peculiar tourism experience and to the regeneration of the historical and cultural heritage, adding up value and a certain “sense of place” to areas normally considered “marginal” from a variety of points of view. This will be achieved through the analysis of two events — the historical Palio “Giuoco dell’Oca” in Cagli and the Battle of the Nations in Sentinum (now Sassoferrato) — and specifically of the role that such “staged” events play in the regeneration of cultural heritage as well as of their role in creating collective identities. Moreover, it will be discussed whether such happenings can help develop a kind of cultural tourism based on the fruition of authentic experiences. The data were collected through ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2016 in the scope of a wider research project on the “National Strategy for Inner Areas in Italy”, a development strategy launched in 2012 by the Italian Minister for Territorial Cohesion at the time, aimed at creating tools likely to foster a series of basic services access improvements in the Italian peripheral areas.

Keywords: Heritage; Tourism; Authenticity; Local Development; Historical Re-enactments

Questo contributo esamina il modo in cui le rievocazioni storiche contribuiscono sia all’emergere di un peculiare tipo di esperienza turistica, che alla rigenerazione del patrimonio storico e culturale, aggiungendo valore e un certo “senso del luogo” a zone normalmente considerate come marginali da molteplici punti di vista. L’articolo propone l’analisi di due eventi – il Palio storico “Giuoco dell’Oca” di Cagli (PU) e la

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Battaglia delle Nazioni di Sentinum (oggi Sassoferrato, AN) – per metter in luce il ruolo che tali manifestazioni giocano nella rigenerazione del patrimonio culturale, nonché nella creazione di identità collettive. Inoltre, sarà discusso se tali eventi possono contribuire a sviluppare una sorta di turismo culturale basato sulla fruizione di esperienze autentiche. I dati sono stati raccolti attraverso ricerca etnografica condotta nel 2016 nell'ambito di un progetto di ricerca più ampio sulla "Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne", una strategia di sviluppo lanciata nel 2012 dall'allora Ministero per la Coesione Territoriale, finalizzata alla creazione di strumenti atti a favorire il miglioramento dell'accesso ai servizi di base nelle aree periferiche italiane e a fermare l'attuale decrescita demografica.

Keywords: Patrimonio; Turismo; Aree Interne; Eventi; Rievocazioni Storiche

Introduction

Much of the Italian territory is organised around “minor centres” able to guarantee only limited accessibility to essential services to their residents. The specific features of these territories (defined under “Inner Areas”) represented the starting point of a development strategy through the launch of the “National Strategy for Inner Areas” (SNAI) in 2012 by the then Italian Minister for Territorial Cohesion, aimed at finding an integrated approach that could help address the issue. What emerged from most of the preliminary policy documents available so far was a shared idea that the creation (or implementation) of a tourism market through the regeneration of the already-existing material and immaterial capital could serve as the trigger for local development processes.

Although the political debate on Inner Areas (“Aree Interne” in Italian) in Italy is rather recent (Barca, Casavola, & Lucatelli, 2014; Calvaresi, 2015), the awareness of European peripheral areas that are affected by progressive depopulation — a decrease in economic and social capital and a growing distance from basic services (namely transport, health and education) — has been explicit for some years (i.e. ESPON & University of Geneva, 2012).

SNAI takes the cue from the presupposition that peripherality is not only geographical but also socio-economical; the method used for the selection of SNAI inner areas is based on the degree of distance specific territories have from those urban centres that serve as hubs for health, education and transport services. The use of the “distance” indicator, aimed at developing a relational model between centre-periphery, led to the identification of 4,261 municipalities that can be defined as being inscribed within inner areas because they are situated at least 20 minutes, and up to 75 minutes, away from urban hubs (3,831 in total). More than 13 million people reside in an inner area municipality, and that makes 22,8% of the population living on about 61% of the entire Italian territory.¹

The strategy is implemented through the writing of three documents for every area, namely a “Draft”, a “Preliminary”, and an “Area Strategy”. These documents represent the three project phases through which every area is required to proceed, and before an area can move on to the next one, the document needs to be approved by a Committee.

This contribution takes the cue from a wider analysis on the implications of such a strategic view, particularly in the Marche region. This area has focused its development strategy on the implementation of a culture/heritage/agro/food-driven tourism offer, levered on already existing, but currently perceived as underemployed, material and immaterial heritage. The paper will show that although Inner Areas are, by definition, considered to be marginal, remote and peripheral (Pezzi & Urso, 2016), they can still count on high degrees of local agency, and rely on both existing and built heritage to create a culture-driven tourism sector, which leans – among other elements – on new and renewed historical re-enactments.

1. Fieldwork and methodology

This research is focused on the inner area “Appennino Basso-Pesarese and Anconetano”, situated in the northern part of the Marche region, which is located in the Central area of Italy and borders Emilia-Romagna and the Republic of San Marino to the north, Tuscany to the west, Umbria to the southwest, Abruzzo and Lazio to the south and the Adriatic Sea to the east. The land is hilly, except for river valleys and the often very narrow coastal strip. The areas on the Apennines are usually less urbanised and less interconnected with the rest of the region, mainly due to the absence of a railway system, which is only present along the coastal line. That means that mobility in the area is difficult and subordinated to the maintenance of streets and to the use of private means of transports, since often the many little municipalities do not offer an integrated schedule for public transports.

Nine municipalities belonging to the northern provinces of Pesaro-Urbino and Ancona have been selected by the SNAI Committee to constitute an association of districts under the leadership of the Unione Montana “Catria e Nerone”.² The area submitted its preliminary document in November 2015, which was approved in January 2016 (VVAA, 2016a), while the “Area Strategy” was approved in July 2016 (VVAA, 2016b). At the time of writing (January 2017) the area is at the end of the project-phase and about to start the implementation one.

Figure 1: The Marche Region and the Inner Area “Appennino Basso-Pesarese e Anconetano” (in grey).



Source: Graphic elaboration by Grazia Di Giovanni (GSSI).

According to SNAI guidelines each selected area, when planning its development strategy, has to inscribe every action within two pillars: 1) fostering access to essential services – health, education and transport; 2) improving local development, focusing on i.e. agriculture, sustainable tourism, renewable energies, environmental protection of the territory, conservation of local craftsmanship, etc. as possible triggers for a localized development path.

The kind of development wishing to emerge in this area is defined as “agro-tourism”, which is described as an original mix of wine and food products, a fruition of the natural landscape and cultural consumption (VVAA, 2016a), where the starting point is knowing the availability and potential of resources in order to create a new kind of rural economy: agriculture and tourism need, in this sense, to be considered as two communicating vessels within which the constituting elements of each category can move quite freely.

This part of the Marche Apennines has indeed known consistent tourism development, although in exiguous numbers compared to the coastal area, thanks to its proximity to the coast, in particular regarding typical products (i.e. truffles from Acqualagna), nature and landscape (the Apennines), cultural heritage, and rural/farm tourism and “roots” tourism (typically emigrants or their descendants returning to their homeland as tourists; *ibidem*, p.3).

The area has, moreover, decided to concentrate its development strategy on the creations of so called “Asili d’Appennino” (Appennines Asylums³), that is on repurposing currently empty or underemployed buildings as residences for artists where they could experiment and create in complete freedom. These “asylums” should integrate their activities with the local community, generating a sort of beneficial flux of new ideas, which would trigger the creation of new cultural contents to fill in the already existing, but to date neglected, “containers” (see also VVAA, 2016a).

The research on which this contribution is based takes the cue from a wider research project on the Italian National Strategy for Inner Areas, and was carried out between July and August 2016 (two weeks each), as concerns ethnographic fieldwork, and since September 2015 in relation to the desk analysis of available data. It uses a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, with a strong accent on the former, particularly through participant observation and interviews. Interlocutors and interviewees were selected among people directly involved in the drawing up of the SNAI documents for this area and included local politicians, entrepreneurs (mainly in the tourism sector), local actors and stakeholders. The preliminary document drafted by the area in object made it also possible to individuate a series of “relevant actors”, which served as a basis to get directly in contact with, and interview, local stakeholders who had been recognised as possible interlocutors for the implementation of the strategy. Among these actors were also the two associations – “Giochi Storici di Cagli” and “Happennines” – which (co)-organize the events taken in consideration for this study and provided precious collaboration. Interviews and participant observation have been selected by the author as tools to effectively investigate the adherence of the strategic

measures contained in the policy documents with multiple aspects observable on the field, i.e. the informants' knowledge of SNAI's policy aims and desired impact, the awareness of the potentialities of fostering a culture-heritage-driven tourism, the degree of local entrepreneurship and people's perceptions and experience during public events, festivals and performances.

In regard to the two particular events analysed in this contribution, the research was conducted in two phases: interviews with the respective organizing associations were conducted about two weeks prior to the historical re-enactment, with the aim to obtain background information about the forthcoming events, i.e. how and why they had been conceived as such, who were the actors involved, where funds and financing came from, the expected audience participation. During the events, participant observation was achieved by standing in the audience with key informants met during fieldwork, who explained the features of what was happening in the arenas. Right after the event, the author has been collecting "on-the-spot" comments from participants, re-enactors and the audience on site, given the varied composition and provenience of by-standers. During the first phase the author had contacted the associations clearly stating what was the aim of the research and the fact that this was branching out from a wider research project on SNAI, and indeed the first interviews touched many other topics relevant to the study of this areas' development strategy. The author's positioning towards the topic of research has been maintained clear through the whole period of fieldwork research, and contacts with informants have been facilitated by the fact that the area in study is characterized by little populated cities and villages, where informal interactions are easy and frequent. Another element, which facilitated entering the field, was that every interlocutor seemed very eager to share details, information and personal remembrances on any feature of the local culture and every day life, and was prone to introduce friends, relatives, colleagues etc. into the discussion.

2. What kind of tourism for Inner Areas?

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the inner area "Appennino Basso-Pesarese e Anconetano" has declined its developmental strategy through the implementation of an agro-pastoral tourism market, which already exists in nuce, through a culture/heritage-driven tourism offer. Local entrepreneurs and public administrators, when interviewed about the possible outcomes of concentrating on a more integrated and systemic tourism strategy, all stressed the fact that they were already aware that the area couldn't aim at reaching the numbers of near coastal destinations (i.e. Rimini or Cattolica) or other popular rural tourism destinations, as Tuscany and Umbria, and to some extent, that wasn't even their desire; they were well aware that it was vital for the area not to turn into the new "Toscana-shire", but they also recognised some sort of positive outcome from the touristic neglect that the area had suffered, at least in the last 20 years, stating that the current "raw" and unspoilt landscape now constitutes its biggest asset.

The area “Appennino Basso-Pesarese e Anconetano”, indeed, is not the only one to see tourism as a possible driver for local development: 20 out of the 21 prototypical SNAI areas have, in fact, expressed their wish to see tourism as the main instrument for local development. This choice is partly to be considered as a consequence of the fact that the SNAI Committee has provided a series of guidelines⁴ as an outline to write the policy documents, inviting the territories to build their strategy on the two pillars “access to essential services” and “local development”. While the former requires the areas to reflect on the enhancement of transports, health services and education, the latter entails reasoning on several aspects: the protection of the environment and of local communities, sustainable tourism (through the valorisation of natural and cultural resources), agriculture, renewable energies, and craftsmanship. It could be maintained, on the one hand, that sustainable tourism has often appeared in the documents as one big umbrella under which the other aspects could coexist; and on the other, that tourism has been seen as a driver for the implementation of those essential services currently lacking or being perceived as inadequate in the inner areas, i.e. a focus on slow tourism could positively impact transports and mobility.

A document recently published by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism (MiBACT) titled “Guidelines for the National Strategy for Inner Areas”⁵ (MiBACT, 2016) encourages the idea that the two pillars are complementary, and sees tourism and culture as development factors that could also have an impact on essential services in an integrated approach:

Tourism actions, as a part of a multiform territorial development strategy, need to be transversal, to the advantage of the entire area, and above all they need to be linked, as much as possible, to other initiatives, both on the side of local development and on the side of services (ibidem, 2016, p. 7).

MiBACT, though, also explicates its awareness of the dangers inherent to this approach, stating that “tourism is not the universal solution to the problems arising from a lack of development. It would be wrong to see in that sector the only alternative to a situation of economic difficulties” (ibidem, p. 4), therefore any proposals should go through an attentive evaluation of the effective tourism potentialities.

Whether tourism actually plays a role in local development, and whether it weakens or enhances the pristine qualities of a nearly untouched place has been a source of debate now for decades in a variety of academic fields (i.e. Abram & Waldren, 1998; Brown & Hall, 2000; Burns & Novelli, 2006; Christaller, 1963; Smith, 1989; Wanhill, 1997;). The consumption and commodification of peripheral areas through tourism have been the focus, for example, of an extensive article by Hall et al. (2013), which includes a variety of theoretical perspectives on the relation of tourism-peripherality, focusing on the attributes that symbolise the alterity of peripheral areas in relation to urban cores.

Similarly, Chaperon and Bramwell, in a study on tourism development on the island of Gozo (Malta), maintain that the same distance that makes such areas “peripheral” actually constitutes one of their biggest strengths:

Many features (...) that are disadvantageous for economic development can be positive attractions for tourists (...). In particular, despite the inconvenience of reaching peripheral areas, tourists may see them as worth visiting because they are relatively unchanged and unspoilt (Chaperon & Bramwell, 2013, p. 133).

Nevertheless, as it has already been hinted, many SNAI areas consider tourism as potential triggers for their way out of their marginal conditions, often without considering that tourism can be only one of the many possible agents of change, and yet it cannot be considered as a "solution" to the economic implications of peripherality' (Hall et al., 2013, p. 77).

Moreover, Hall recalls the notion of "pleasure periphery" as seen by Christaller (1963), who argued that what attracts tourists from central places to peripheral ones is the real, intrinsic quality of the latter - their landscape:

It is typical for places of tourism to be on the periphery. In this way, regions economically benefit from factors which cannot be utilized otherwise: high mountains, chains, barren, rocky landscapes (...). Instead, during certain seasons peripheral places become destinations for traffic and commodity flows and become seasonal central points (ibidem, p. 96).

David Weaver (2013) picks up on this assertion, noting that such areas should actually be defined as "pleasure cores" rather than pleasure peripheries, although this newly established core still represents an "economic periphery" (ibidem, p. 82). In this sense, "periphery and core can co-exist in the same place and offer two parallel modes of consumption" (ibidem, p. 83).

The above listed quote by Christaller, moreover, highlights that tourism could actually be one of the few ways to give significance to lands that otherwise would not produce any economic value: if it wasn't for tourism, such areas could not be commoditised for consumption, a statement that implies that selecting any natural/cultural element for tourism consumption is always the result of a negotiation and somewhat arbitrary. How this is possibly put into practice will be shown in the following paragraphs.

3. Two historical re-enactments

The municipalities inscribed in the SNAI area Basso-Pesarese and Anconetano are prolific when it comes to organising events, especially in the summer period, which is consistent with the area's aim to foster the development of a culture/heritage-led tourism. As mentioned, the area is led by the Unione Montana of Catria and Nerone, although not all the municipalities are, at all effects, members of this union. This fragmentation, which should be overcome once the area enters in the active part of the strategy, currently results in extremely fragmented events organisation and cultural offerings. The Marche region has published a leaflet that contains a list of all the events (of any kind, i.e., religious, sportive, culinary, cultural, entertainment, open air cinema, etc.) organised by the municipalities in the Union between July and December 2016: 98 events in July, 120 in August, 22 in September, 21 among October,

November and December, for a total of 261. If we only consider the events taking place in the high season months (July and August), we can observe a striking average of 3,6 events per day in an area inhabited by around 40,000 people.

During interviews with local politicians and tourism entrepreneurs, it has been often pointed out that the number of events for such a small area seemed considerable, and sometimes events ended up overlapping in time and space, with the results that it would have been almost impossible for a tourist to participate in most of them. The interlocutors were well aware of the issue, and they recognized the risk of cannibalization among the total events offered and that a reason could be individuated in a wide parochialism and local rivalry among municipalities. The real challenge was seen in organising lesser events of higher quality, which could be attractive for tourists and local inhabitants simultaneously, as at the time being the quality and reach of the organized events was quite uneven. One local politician, in particular, had made the proposal of creating a common tourism office, responsible for the scheduling and the synchronizing of already existing local events, and particularly of those which had the potentiality to create event-networks rather than a further fragmentation, as in the case of the many food-festivals already organized all over summer in the area with no real attention paid to possible overlapping.

In the following pages, though, two events will be described, as they can be considered as interesting examples of the current attempt to build on the existing cultural heritage to create a sustainable and durable tourism market, while relying on collective identities and senses of place (Cross, 2001; Kalandides, 2013). These two events aim to join ludic activities with more educational ones, which represent (and recreate) the local cultural and historical heritage, and at the same time make it usable for tourism consumption. Moreover they also attempt to fill in those locations described as “empty containers” with new purposes and meanings. These two events give an account of the already present agency of local actors and of bottom-up actions taken to (re)vitalize a collective historic past, showing that the strategy of building up a culture-led agro-tourism offer in the Marche's Apennines is consistent with the existing social and territorial capital.

3.1 The Palio storico “Gioco dell’Oca” in Cagli

The Game of the Goose (“giuoco dell’oca” in the Italian archaic form) is a traditional board game mostly played in Europe. The board consists of a track, often arranged into a spiral, where the centre slot is the one to decree the winner, the player (or team) who manages to “save” the goose. Players move though the board by throwing one or two dice, while the track is disseminated with slots with different symbols, some of them depicting penalties, others aids.

Palio, on the other hand, in the Italian tradition, is an annual competition in which the hamlets (“contrade”) of a municipality engage in a contest against each other to win a trophy, indicated by the word Palio itself, that can vary depending on the geographical contest. Palios are, nowadays, mainly intended to be re-enactments of historical

competitions that primarily took place in the Medieval era and were based on existing rivalries between “contrade”, and therefore, they entail the incorporation of lots of historically accurate elements, from the use of flags, elaborate clothing, the serving of medieval-inspired food, as well as the historical kinds of competition trials, which usually include medieval sports such as crossbow shooting, archery, horse racing, tug of war, etc. The most internationally famous Palio in Italy is surely the Palio in Siena, although the country is disseminated with such happenings (according to some estimations, they are held in over 20 cities), which have actually proven to be a sort of staged event that has become very popular with visitors and tourists.

In the city of Cagli, the Game of the Goose and the Palio have found a meeting point in the creation of the Palio Storico di Cagli “Giuoco dell’Oca”, which has come to its 30th edition as of 2016. Despite the fact that its modern tradition is quite recent, historical evidence have shown that the “Giuoco dell’Oca” had actually been played in the form of a Palio in Cagli at least until the year 1542, and it was a competition typically held during carnival.

The decision to bring the historical Palio back to life was made in 1986 by a small group of “cagliesi” who had casually found information about the ancient competition. After much consideration, they decided to revitalise this long lost tradition.⁶

Within a few months, they managed to take important steps toward the realisation of the event: the board game was created through hand-painted wooden boards for all the 54 slots, the game rules were set with all its penalties and rewards, the date of the Palio was decided — each year on the second Sunday in August. The four “contrade” were formed, respecting the original division and representing colours, and the prize was created: a goose in wrought iron, made by artist Antonio Cerretini. Moreover, it was decided that the patron of the Palio would be the patron saint of Cagli (San Geronzio), who was himself believed to have had his life saved by a group of geese before becoming a martyr in 501 BC.

In the following years, after the first edition in 1986, the Palio of Cagli and the events revolving around it — i.e. the accuracy of the historical re-enactments and costume parades (involving nowadays around 500 figurants) — have been constantly refined and perfected, to the extent that the event is gaining more and more resonance from a tourism perspective, due to both its ludic aspects and to its one-of-a-kind character.

The historical Palio of Cagli is managed and organised by the “Associazione Giochi Storici”, established in 1987. The organising association can often count on the help and support of “contrade” team members and the assistance of around 150 volunteers.

What is worth being evidenced, moreover, is that the involvement of the whole “cagliese” community around the Palio has created a great sense of belonging, and each year, the event is awaited with greater expectation. Winning the trophy goose is considered a great honour, and the prize gets to be kept in the “condrada”’s tavern (or headquarter) until the following edition. The existence of the Palio creates a form of genuine rivalry between the four “contrade”, which is deeply felt during the week of the Palio, although it doesn’t find a correspondence in the relationships among “cagliesi” during the rest of the year. One of the members of the winning team described the trophy winning experience in such terms:

To many, it is only a goose; to others, it is only a trophy to watch and keep. It is the symbol of the union of so many persons. It is the tradition; it is the joy and the pain; it's the smiles of many people that for some days a year, come together and live a reality that you cannot understand if you haven't experienced it (man, 35 years old, Cagli inhabitant).

3.2 Ad Pvgnam Parati: the historical re-enactment of the battle of Sentinum, 295 BC

The battle of Sentinum (295 BC) is also known as the Battle of the Nations, since it involved the Romans against big coalitions of different populations living in central Italy at that time: Samnites, Umbrians, Senone Gauls and Etruscans. The Romans won the battle, and consequently the Samnite war. The battle took place in Sentinum, now a plain just a few kilometres out of the small but modern town of Sassoferrato (in the province of Ancona), where an archaeological park is found. Although this battle is one of those elements that most denotes the territory of Sentinum-Sassoferrato from a historical point of view, its potential had never been really valorised until 2016 when, for the first time, a re-enactment of the battle has been organised by an association of "re-enactors" called Ad Pvgnam Parati (Latin for "ready for the battle"), with the support of the Municipality of Sassoferrato and of its tourist centres (Pro Loco and IAT-Happennines, in particular).

Ad Pvgnam Parati is a project aimed at re-enacting famous battles in the places where they happened. The final purpose of organising such events is aiding the creation or the improvement of cultural tourism activities in locations that already have a high degree of historical and cultural heritage. The association's goal is not only that of creating spectacular performances but also that of mixing ludic activities with formative and educational ones.

The re-enactment of the battle of Sentinum took place from 29 to 31 July 2016, and behind the performance of the battle itself, it included a series of linked dissemination events. Moreover, in the plain of Sentinum, two military camps were built, one for each faction, where visitors could experience the everyday life of an encampment and figurants would explain the use of certain utensils or the function of specific war garments. Additionally, visitors could attend archery and troop training demonstrations. The Roman camp and the Gauls-Samnites camp also featured educational itineraries.

The event was concluded with the re-enactment of the Battle of the Nations (which lasted about 30-40 minutes), where the historical events were performed by figurants on the original battlefield. Visitors could follow the stream of events, thanks to a voice-over impersonating a Roman soldier.

The association Ad Pvgnam Parati has reported that about 5,000 people attended the whole event, 2,000 of which attended only on the day of the re-enactment.

4. Authenticity, heritage and verisimilitude

The relationship between tourism and authenticity has often proven to be a difficult one, to the extent that they have frequently been thought of as hardly compatible categories: “the modern tourist-pilgrim is (...) damned to inauthenticity” (Cohen, 1988, p. 373). Nevertheless, while tourists are believed to travel in a constant “quest for authenticity”, which is the result of the alienated modern life in urban assets (MacCannell, 1973), *tourees*⁷ are seen as constantly trying to meet the expectation of tourists by adapting cultural elements and making them usable for tourism consumption, producing what MacCannell described as “staged authenticity” (ibidem), a conceptualization which has known much luck in the academic research on tourism, although the debate of what authenticity (and the lack of) actually entails, is still open and ever evolving (Kim & Jamal, 2007; Knudsen & Waade, 2010; Pezzi, 2013; Salazar, 2009; Silver, 1993; Simonicca, 2015; for a detailed analysis of how the concept of authenticity has turned from “fixed” to “negotiable” over time please refer to Reisinger & Steiner, 2006).

In a matter of events such as the ones described above, the question whether historical re-enactments can be considered authentic or not and whether the experience they provide to both local participants and tourists is to be considered as authentic is particularly important. Therefore, on the one hand, we should ask ourselves,

Can events remain embedded in specific locales and retain meanings for place-based communities while meeting the needs of visiting audiences? In this, the reproduction of events is conceptualized as being akin to the reproduction of tourism places: it illuminates at once the twin processes of global homogeneity and local heterogeneity that characterize modern capitalism (Quinn, 2009, p. 23).

On the other hand, though, it is also worth noting, as Jenkins (2000) maintains in relation to local traditions and economic development, that “cultural diversity is an economic asset which, marketed appropriately, can generate sustainable income and employment” (ibidem, p. 307).

Another aspect to be defined, is how heritage is understood in relation to tourism, since heritage has become one of the fastest growing components of the tourism industry, and the link between the two is definitely tight, to the extent that Kirshenblatt-Gimblett maintains that “heritage and tourism are collaborative industries, heritage (converts) *locations* into *destinations*” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998, p. 151) (author’s emphasis). On the other hand, it is important to note that,

Culture can serve as an excellent and favourable tool of competitiveness strategies in many regions because it “only” requires the exploration and creative utilisation of local capabilities. Its most important resource requirements are human capital and creativeness (Bujdosó et al., 2015, p. 309).

If, as folklorist Bendix maintains, “cultural heritage does not exist; it is made” (Bendix, 2009, p. 255), defining whether a certain material or immaterial object pertains to the heritage-category always entails a selection process that is never neutral and can make manifest economic and political purposes (Kuutma, 2009, p. 9). This selective, and to

some extent arbitrary, process is what is usually defined as “heritagisation”, a word that is mostly intended to negatively refer to the ennoblement of certain cultural features accompanied by a sort of amnesia toward others. However, not all aspects of “heritagisation” are to be conceived as negatively affecting material or immaterial cultural objects, as Leal (2016) maintains in his performative view on group-making role of events and festivals, “heritagisation produces something new, including groups and communities” (ibidem, p. 594).

A reflection on “heritagisation”, anyway, inevitably leads to that on “tourismification”, an expression which has similar implications, since it is considered to be “a socio-economic and socio-cultural process by which society and its environment have been turned into spectacles, attractions, playgrounds and consumption sites” (Wang, 2000, p. 197). Salazar (2009), moreover, following up his study on the tourismification of Maasai culture, further explains in this regard that

the conversion of culture into an object of tourism means that traditional values are transformed into commercial ones, in a bid to meet (projected) tourist expectations and desires. This transformation comes with several semantic changes, both positive and negative to vernacular traditions (ibidem, p. 61).

What he notes about Maasai, and other indigenous tribes, is that they “seem to be selling their own marginality” (ibidem). Whether it would be possible to argue the same about tourism development projects in inner areas is a matter that is definitely worth investigation.

So, how can the Palio in Cagli and the Battle of Sentinum be considered as authentic? And how can such staged events have a role in the regeneration of cultural heritage? Is the peripheral character of the small towns an enhancer of the experiences that such events offer? First of all, it has to be pointed out that, although the two events seem to be extremely different from one another, they have quite many similarities.

The most evident difference is in terms of participation and engagement: the Palio in Cagli entails the active participation of a relevant part of “cagliesi”, who take part in the event more or less actively, i.e., they are “contrade” team members, figurants in the parades, volunteers, etc. Many of them are also alternatively spectators but with a high engagement degree, as they actively participate as supporters of family members and friends and root for their own “contrada”. Indeed “local residents, as producers and as established audiences, can engage meaningfully in festivals in ways that address both their own needs and those of visitors at the same time” (Quinn, 2009, p. 25). The battle of Sentinum, on the other hand, is organised and re-enacted by semi-professionals, or anyway by people who dedicate relevant portions of their free time collaborating to the historical portrayal of historical battles. Such an activity requires great dedication in studying the Roman culture and behaviour as well as rehearsing just as if the re-enactment were a theatre play. The Sentinum audience mostly participated as spectators and were not actively involved as figurants (with a few exceptions, i.e., vendors at food or bookstands), so the level of active engagement was relatively low. What sets a difference, then, is the active vs. passive participation to the event by the inhabitants of the area: in Cagli, we can assume that the Palio constitutes a ritual, in the Turner sense, able to create *communitas* (Turner, 1995), and therefore, it acts as

“an important means of collective identification” (Quinn, 2006, p. 6), but also constitutes “opportunities for asserting, reinforcing, reproducing and sometimes contesting prevailing social norms, cultural values and beliefs” (ibidem). The Battle of Sentinum, on the other hand, is an event produced by the tourism industry, though with educational and entertainment purposes, and being a re-enactment, it does not, by definition, aim to be authentic by any means, but it aims at reaching the highest possible “verisimilitude” (Cohen, 1988, p. 379), which is a particular trait of the event fruition that presupposes that although the audience is to some extent aware that the event is being staged, it still experiences an “authentic” involvement, as Cohen himself well explains in relation to tourism and the fruition of cultural products:

Recreational tourists, whose concern with authenticity is relatively low, may well accept even a substantially staged product and experience as “authentic.” This would not be necessarily because they have been misled by the staging but because even the faintest vestige of, or resemblance to, what experts would consider an “authentic” trait of the product may suffice for them to play the make-believe game of having an “authentic” experience. Therefore, such tourists may playfully consent to buy fake products or experiences as if they were genuine, merely because their resemblance to the genuine thing gives these tourists an inkling of authenticity (ibidem).

Another element to be considered is that of the “emergent authenticity”, a concept that finds its legitimation in the belief that authenticity is always negotiable and socially constructed and so is the conception of what heritage is. According to Cohen, “a cultural product, or a trait thereof, which is at one point generally judged as contrived or inauthentic may, in the course of time, become generally recognized as authentic” (Cohen, 1988, p. 379), and so an event which re-elaborates the past with a modern connotation, as the Palio in Cagli, can end up considered as an authentic local custom and be lived and perceived as such. Similarly, the re-enactment of the Battle of Sentinum could be a newly established event that will turn emergently authentic and will end up strongly connoting the whole area of Sassoferrato, both from a local and tourism point of view. Paraphrasing the classical work by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1987), while in the case of Sentinum we can talk about an invention of tradition *per se*, we could define the Palio in Cagli as the “re-invention of tradition”. In any case, this is achieved through the institutionalised repetition of historically accurate events.

The last element to be underlined, in fact, is the authenticity originating by reiterated performances of a built heritage (Handler & Saxton, 1988), which involves the replication or simulation of a real, or recreated, past. Repetition and location are the two elements which contribute to a kind of experiential authenticity by the audience/tourists, while on the other hand the strong link with heritage increases the intrinsic value of the re-enactment or the repetition of past events, adding value and information: heritage makes history alive again (Simonicca, 2015, p. 337).

Conclusions

Italian inner areas in general, and specifically that of "Appennino Basso-Pesarese and Anconetano", are currently undergoing a re-defining process: on one side, their inclusion into the SNAI project has implemented the awareness of being situated into a system of relations that functions at a much bigger scale than the basic territorial one, since a periphery only exists in relation to a centre. On the other hand, it has been pointed out how economic peripheries can become leisure cores through the development of a tourism market, which makes it possible to economically benefit from factors that cannot be utilised otherwise, and yet come to constitute "markers", i.e., the apparently raw and unspoilt character of these areas, which constitutes one of the biggest assets in terms of future tourism development, although it originated from years of economic crisis. Moreover, as Jenkins (2000) points out, the "redistribution of economic activity away from rural areas, particularly from marginal regions, has resulted in a renewed search by consumers for authenticity and for products and services associated with tradition, heritage and culture" (ibidem, p. 306) and therefore regions able to build up marketing strategies focusing on their cultural diversity might be advantaged. If we agree on the fact that cultural diversity can be a source for sustainable income and employment (ibidem), it is also possible to see that, next to the improvements of essential services, the focus on a heritage-driven tourism market could be a facilitator towards the achievement of the main goal of SNAI, that of reverting the current negative demographic trend.

In the case of Marche, thinking of marginality as a commodity to be sold on the tourism market as a plus value poses the issue of considering the effects and the economic sustainability of such a strategic plan in the long run. Nevertheless, it has been recognized by most of the people interviewed that marginality has served a form of protection for many years, not only concerning the natural heritage but to some extent also in relation to the cultural one. This opinion reflects one of the classical paradoxes of tourism: on the one side tourists are keen on choosing destinations on the basis of their unspoilt character (and lack of tourism), but on the other hand these areas look to achieve development through tourism to overcome that very same condition which constitutes their main attraction.

The two case studies presented show that staged events can play a relevant role in the regeneration of cultural heritage, as well as in creating (or re-creating) collective identities. The Palio in Cagli, for some days a year, reunites the whole community around the "Giuoco dell'oca", not only on the basis of its ludic and entertaining character, but also provides a sense of historical continuity through the re-enactment of a traditional competition that has become part of the cultural heritage of the area. To some extent the Game of the Goose could be considered as a ritual that has both a collective and individual component, in a Durkheimian sense. In fact, as Leal (2016) stresses, "ritual is a central aspect of the Durkheimian projects of social engineering: not a mere reflection of something already there, but a technique for activating something new" (ibidem, p. 596). One key aspect of such "techniques" is the "repetitive, cyclical nature of festivals" (ibidem) through which groups are continuously produced and reproduced. In the current constant tension between global homogeneity and local heterogeneity, the Palio in Cagli seems indeed to be playing an important role in reinforcing community bonds and the sense of belonging to the city,

inscribing Cagli simultaneously within a territorialized and a glocalized identity, producing not only a new sense of place, but also a new sense for locality (Appadurai, 1996, pp. 179–180). Similarly, one could maintain that the re-enactment of the battle of Sentinum has helped enhancing the relationship of the inhabitants of the area with their own territory, adding value to a location (the plain of Sentinum) that has come to constitute a relevant place in the perceptions of the audience, and has shown them a part of their common historical heritage which they probably were not completely aware of. Moreover, such happenings can help develop a kind of cultural tourism based on the re-enactment of historical events and feasts, through authentic, or at least verisimilar, experiences, performances and participation, the repetition of which over the years contributes in legitimating such events on the basis that a tradition that has been (re)-invented becomes institutionalized. Additionally, such events provide the tourists with the illusion of being able to glimpse into these areas' back stages, though actually being kept at the front stage level (MacCannell, 2008), through the more or less active participation to what could be called and "authentic mise-en-scene".

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¹ Data from 2012 (Fondazione IFEL, 2015: 22-23).

² The nine municipalities are Acqualagna, Apecchio, Arcevia, Cagli, Cantiano, Frontone, Piobbico, Sassoferrato and Serra San'Abbondio.

³ In this case the word "Asylum" is used in its etymological sense of "refuge" or "shelter" from any kind of violence. For extension, "Appenines Asylums" are conceived to be locations in the Appennines where people can reside and create, learn and follow their personal interests without any fear or preoccupation, as explained by Mr. Pascucci, the current director of the Theatre in Cagli, who created this definition.

⁴ http://www.agenziacoesione.gov.it/it/arint/Documenti_di_lavoro/Linee_guida_amministrazioni_centrali.html (accessed 4th January 2017).

⁵ "Linee Guida per la Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne" in Italian.

⁶ The reconstruction of the process that led to the (re) creation of the historical Palio in Cagli can be found at the following link: <http://www.giochistoricidicagli.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Cagli-II-Palio-dellOca-Trenta-anni-fa.pdf> (accessed 20th August 2016).

⁷ "Tourees" can be defined as "locals, generally obliterated by the media and by the official tourist gaze" (Francesconi, 2012, p. 32).