

5.5 Landscape: whose is it after all?

Il paesaggio: di chi è, in fondo?

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Abstract

In the current debate on the future of the European landscape a large role is reserved for non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Although in many landscapes the direct functional ties with the local communities are gradually being lost, and replaced by development trends dictated by global economy, landscape still presents the basis of regional identity and is increasingly being considered as a leisure commodity. In this sense landscape is a common good that should be taken care of in a conscious way, not only in conserving terms but also in developing new functions. The engagement with landscape is large with local NGOs, but can certainly be improved as is solicited by the European Landscape Convention as well. Several types of actions can be defined, and some examples are very briefly described, as an inspiration for NGOs committed to the landscape.

These actions can be characterised as

1. setting the agenda, 2. opposing threats, 3. assessing values 4. developing solutions, 5. just do it, and 6. informing the public.

It is concluded that the landscape belongs to us, citizens, but that we will have to safeguard it by our own actions, enhanced by clear governmental policies stimulating such actions.

Riassunto

Nel dibattito in corso circa il futuro del paesaggio Europeo grande spazio è riservato alle Organizzazioni non-governative (ONG). Sebbene in molti paesaggi il legame diretto con le comunità locali si stia gradualmente perdendo, sostituito da modelli di sviluppo dettati dall'economia globale, il paesaggio in sé rappresenta comunque la base dell'identità regionale e sempre più viene considerato come un bene usato per fini ricreativi.

In questo senso il paesaggio può essere considerato un bene comune del quale prendersi cura in maniera consapevole, non solo in termini conservazionistici ma anche per lo sviluppo di nuove attività.

Il legame fra paesaggio e ONG è forte, ma può certamente migliorare, così come sollecitato dalla Convenzione Europea del Paesaggio. Si possono definire diversi tipi di azioni, ed alcuni esempi possono essere brevemente descritti come indicazioni per le ONG che si occupano del paesaggio. Queste azioni possono essere indicate come:

1. Definizione delle azioni da intraprendere, 2. Contrasto alle minacce 3. Analisi dei va-

lori, 4. Sviluppo di soluzioni, 5. Azioni concrete e 6. Informazione.

In conclusione, il paesaggio appartiene a noi, cittadini, che dovremo salvaguardarlo attraverso le nostre stesse azioni, potenziate da politiche governative in grado di stimolare tali azioni.

I. Introduction: Europe's landscapes under pressure

I.1. Landscape as a common good: the everyday landscape at stake

Europe's everyday landscapes are facing considerable challenges. New functions are becoming more and more important for the maintenance of the physical as well as the social landscape in rural areas. European landscapes are increasingly appreciated as leisure commodities. The consequence of this can be far reaching, as the values attributed to natural landscapes are changing substantially. The emergence of leisure landscapes can be seen as a threat or as a relieve. Especially the commercial forces accompanying this development might converge these landscapes into market-oriented landscapes, where the natural landscape is merely a décor for superficial experiences and consumption (Turri 1998, Pine & Gilmore 1999). This trend might stimulate the re-emergence of the concept of landscape in discourses about rural development. The social demand in landscape is not for food production or pure nature, but for beautiful, recognisable and accessible landscapes (Buijs et al. 2006). More essentially, landscape forms the backbone of quality of life, and determines identity (Dixon & Durrheim 2000, Bonesio 2007, Lévêque et al. 2007). The beautiful and the neglected, the rural and the urban, the special and the forgotten landscapes: they all contribute to Europe's identity, including the identity of its citizens. In other words, it is the everyday landscape that is at stake. Who's landscape is that after all?

I.2. Action for landscape

It is the European Landscape Convention under the auspices of the Council of Europe (COE 2000) that has drawn the attention to the landscape, as a part of our joint cultural heritage, but also as a reflection of our current societal organisation. The European Landscape Convention means a big step ahead in the consciousness-raising regarding the enormous variation in landscapes that characterises Europe. The countries that ratify the Convention commit themselves to implement a systematic landscape policy, and at the same time to stimulate the citizens' involvement in the landscape. But the Landscape Convention is not yet a commonly known reference for the people. Therefore it is useful to consider the contribution of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention. Action groups, local environmental groups, village protection groups, Eco-museums, etc., they all play a role in the debate about the future of our landscapes. They actively take part in the process of landscape development, from forming visions and plans until the implementation and management. Non-governmental organisations are often the trendsetters in such processes: they anticipate on policies to be developed and often function as spokespersons for strong feelings in civil society that are not yet recognised by the decision makers. Only when people – individually but also collectively – are connected to their local environment, living landscapes with a sustainable future can develop. NGOs (non-governmental organisations) play a key role in this process. This chapter is meant to inspire non-governmental organisations to enter a debate and a dialogue with policy makers (think globally), but first and for all to unite forces in just engaging in landscape protection, development and planning (act locally!). Therefore first the European

Landscape Convention and some of its background thoughts are introduced. Then the types of landscape action that can be envisaged in the sense of the Convention are described and illustrated with some examples. Finally recommendations for further action are defined.

2. The European Landscape Convention for the people

2.1. NGOs contributing to a living landscape of the future

A wide variety of non-profit organisations is active in Europe that are committed to the quality and functioning of landscape: landscape protection groups, local pressure groups, regional heritage groups, trusts to manage architectural monuments, nature conservation groups, associations of cultural history, landscape volunteers, countryside stewards, farmers enhancing volunteer bird protection on their lands, walking and biking clubs, archaeology societies, etc. Many of these organisations have hardly heard of the European Landscape Convention. But often their actions are already beautiful examples of citizens' involvement in landscape as meant by the Convention. The European Landscape Convention explicitly appeals to citizens and the general public for standing up for 'their' landscape. Already in Art. 1, when defining landscape quality, it is indicated that this means: "for a specific landscape, the formulation by the competent public authorities of the aspirations of the public with regard to the landscape features of their surroundings". The Convention – although referring to NGOs as such only in relationship with the Landscape Award in Art. 11 – further mentions the following roles for civil society, to be enhanced by the contracting parties (i.e. governments):

- the general public should be involved through well defined procedure in the definition and implementation of landscape policies (Art. 5c),
- awareness of landscapes, their role and changes to them among the civil society should be increased (Art. 6A),
- training and education of specialists should be promoted (Art. 6B),
- the active participation of the general public is requested in (Art. 6C1)
 - the identification of landscapes,
 - the analysis of their characteristics and the forces and pressures transforming them,
 - the assessment of the landscapes thus identified, taking into account the particular values assigned to them by the interested parties and the population concerned,
- public consultation is required in defining landscape quality objectives for the landscapes identified and assessed (Art. 6D), and
- the international exchange of landscape specialists in particular for training and information purposes should be promoted (Art. 8b).

2.2. Every landscape is valuable

The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. This approach thus stresses the importance of the value of every landscape. This is certainly not yet a commonly accepted issue in Europe. On the other side, an important new accent is the explicit reference to the right of each person to involvement in his/her own everyday environment, the landscape. Every landscape where people grow up, live or work contributes to their identity, whether beautiful or not. Here also a key can be found to the concept of 'quality of life', to which landscape contributes. In the end of the day, also problems like lack for prospects and violence among young suburban town-dwellers, relate to a deficient sense of belonging, an unsatisfactory feeling at home, influencing their identity (Cuba & Hummon 1993, Ingold 2000).

3. The European value of Landscape

3.1. Landscape, a public responsibility

The European Landscape Convention stresses the importance of the subsidiarity principle: arrange your policy measures at the level where they are the most effective. A decentralised governance is clearly preferred in this context, which is a current tendency in many countries requiring a new type of governance, safeguarding the public values from global market imperfections (Görg 2007). The European Landscape Convention requests the public authorities to recognise and acknowledge the landscape values of identity, natural and cultural heritage, and next to this a transparent landscape policy in protection, management and planning. Participation in defining landscape policies is to be stimulated and landscape aspects should be integrated in the other policy domains that affect landscape: spatial planning, environment, agriculture, infrastructure, etc. Although the Convention does not comprise legal measures itself, by ratifying the governments commit themselves to the intentions and agreements of the Convention.

3.2. Landscape, a European asset

With the recent enlargement of the European Union to 27 Member States, and negotiations continuing with further accession countries, the challenge of achieving effective cooperation between countries and regions has grown. Landscape is one of the few policy areas that form a unifying element between social, economic and environmental interests, through holistic and integrative concepts. However, research and policy experts at the European level still consider it to be covered essentially by a geo-science oriented approach, i.e., without much concern for society or the economy (Pedroli et al. 2006). Landscapes thus present a number of conceptual challenges for a wider disciplinary audience in terms of commonly accepted definitions and policy objectives. The mono-disciplinary approach has fortunately started to change (Tress et al. 2005). Most notably, the European Landscape Convention is the first international treaty to be exclusively concerned with the protection, management and enhancement of all European landscapes.

Defining implementation targets for the European Landscape Convention requires the commitment of both national and international institutions. One of the most pressing challenges in this respect is the question of whether these institutions will be able to move from a competitive, sector-oriented style of governance towards an integrated, landscape-oriented form. Against the background of the dilemma between public interest and local involvement, Görg (2007) therefore introduced the principle of 'landscape governance'. This style of governance combines the needs of the local civil society, grounded in their own specific landscapes, with the requirements of public interest at large. In this approach cities and urban regions are no longer simply considered sub-units of the national state but rather play the role of 'local state'. Cultural patterns of perception define societal relationships with nature; and landscape, as a realm of human-environmental interaction, is used as a bridging concept between social scales and biophysical processes. As such, landscape governance represents an approach for handling complex, locally-anchored problems (Antrop 1997).

4. NGOs and the European Landscape Convention

4.1. The NGOs position regarding the European Landscape Convention

The European Landscape Convention is not yet very well known among non-governmental organisations committed to landscape. In talking with many NGOs we found that many of them

are not yet acquainted with the Convention at all. After discussing the challenges of the Convention with them, a number of weak points could be identified, but also a number of positive points ready to be taken up in the NGOs' activities (after Schröder & Pedroli 2005):

Weak aspects of the European Landscape Convention in the view of NGOs:

- the Convention is little known among the general public, because of lack of PR activities on the side of the government;
- there are no own budget flows connected to the Convention (many NGOs are desperately in search of money to finance their activities);
- it is frequently stressed that the different roles of EU and Council of Europe in this area are not clear to the general public and that complicated relationships with EU-policies and subsidy scheme obscure these further;
- hardly any relationship with activities of commercial enterprises and their impacts on landscape;
- last but not least, there is no legal enforcement.

On the other side there are also strong points, to be taken up by NGOs:

- the European dimension does right to the notion that landscape as a whole is a European asset, that cannot be taken care of properly by the separate countries only;
- the notion that every landscape is valuable, and worth to be taken care of, is a strongly felt reason to join efforts for the sake of landscape;
- the solid appeal to citizens to engage in landscape is inspiring people in many places, although the Convention itself is a contract between state governments;
- finally at least there is a strong reason to put landscape on the political agenda, both on national and on European level.

5. The European Landscape Convention and EU instruments

To take up one of the weak points mentioned above, the question arises: how does the European Landscape Convention relate to the EU policies? The convention is defined and worded in a broad way, allowing much room for interpretation. It is a policy document of a cultural and ethical character; strongly dependent on the willingness of the contracting parties to really implement it and calling the public authorities to develop appropriate policies, but without a decisive body to monitor the proper implementation.

The rules of EU subsidies and regulations are much narrower of scope, applicable to separate sectors, and strongly directed to practical implementation often related to financial incentives in specific phases of the policy cycle of landscape planning and management. Landscape NGOs are generally well acquainted with them as far as they are in some way applicable to landscape. On the other side, the European Landscape Convention is very difficult to position, also because there does not exist an EU landscape policy as such. Table 1 gives a global comparison of the instruments of the European Landscape Convention with EU regulations and subsidies pertaining to landscape.

5.1. Various types of actions

Not with standing the political difficulties defining the way NGOs can contribute to the European Landscape Convention, they are already working in many spheres and instances in the spirit of the Convention. Various types of actions can be distinguished, often developing from opposition through problem-solving to design and management.

On the one hand there are general actions, discussing a broad societal development, e.g. landscape fragmentation by large-scale infrastructural developments. On the other hand there are site-specific actions on concrete locations, e.g. concerning the planned development of a new housing area. Both types of actions can be either defensive or initiating. The actions can also be differentiated according to the target group.

Because many actions are focussing on policy makers and governmental authorities, actions focussing on the general public may be mentioned separately. The following types of actions can thus be defined:

- a. setting the agenda
- b. opposing threats
- c. assessing values
- d. developing solutions
- e. just do it
- f. informing the public

Concrete actions can be placed in several categories. A local pressure group e.g. can combine defending against a threat (opposing threats) with creating alternatives (developing solutions). Campaigns and longer actions of professional NGOs often comprise various types of actions: starting from a concrete worry about the degradation of a particular landscape (opposing threats), the need arises to define the assets (assessing values), and to put such problems on the agenda in general (setting the agenda). In the end, many organisations also want to assume responsibility – whether or not in cooperation with the authorities – for solving problems (developing solutions) and for implementing these in concrete cases (just do it). This is illustrated in the scheme of Table 2. Of each type of action some (arbitrarily chosen) examples are given, many of them described in a recent book on Europe's Living Landscapes (Pedroli et al. 2007B). Most examples are not restricted to the category under which they are described. Although many good examples also exist in Italy, it is chosen to refer rather to examples from other countries, so as to enhance international exchange.

a. Setting the agenda

Many landscape actions are meant to draw the attention to a specific problem, and put it on the political agenda. Mobilising political attention and societal involvement is the main purpose of such actions, often with a broad societal worrying trend as a subject, like the decreasing accessibility of landscape, the absence of flowers in the meadows, the disappearance of solitary trees, or the fragmentation of landscape by roads and scattered settlements. With the larger national organisations such actions often translate in campaigns, focussing on various target groups.

- ***Flowering landscape***

In Germany a very active network has developed to enhance the introduction and care of flowering plants in meadows. Many people are engaged in developing new concepts to develop habitats in the landscape for bees and other flower-visiting insects. [www.bluehende-landschaft.de]

- ***Cow in the meadow***

Cattle is increasingly kept inside and tends to disappear from the countryside, where cows were so characteristic. A joint action of environmental and farmers groups was set up in the Netherlands to counteract this trend and to discuss its effects on landscape and animal wellbeing. [www.clm.nl: Koe in de wei]

b. Opposing threats

Under 'opposing threats' actions are considered that are meant to avert a threat from a specific area. Often the interventions are large technical measures like highways or airports, but also creeping developments like urban encroachment or lack of landscape management can be subject of such actions. Characteristic is protest and resistance, including the juridical procedures opposing a development that is perceived as negative.

- **Landscape inspection**

After acquisition for conservation, our cultural landscapes often are managed by professional nature managers. It appears that frequently cultural landscape elements suffer from such nature management. A citizens landscape inspection is set up to audit the activities of the managers and advise on alternative solutions. www.landschapswacht.nl

- **New ring forts in defence of the Irish landscape**

The Landscape Circle was introduced by Landscape Alliance Ireland (O'Regan 2007), and is intended to serve as an integrated template to assist local communities to become proactively involved protecting existing landscape quality and to intervene creatively in the processes of change and development at work in the local landscape.

c. Assessing values

Actions focussing on assessing values intend to survey the values and qualities of an area that are – according to the activists – not adequately recognised. Several types of pleas to realise the values of an area can be envisaged: for the protection of historical patterns of parcels, for stories related to landscape, for regional products etc.

- **Cross-boundary landscape RijnNiers**

Although many elements of natural and landscape beauty are still present in the border region between the rivers Rijn and Niers between Kleve (D) and Nijmegen (NL), there was no joint approach to landscape planning. A citizens initiative assessed the mentioned values and developed a proposal for a cross-boundary landscape park, enhancing landscape protection, eco-tourism and cultural awareness. www.rijnniers.net

- **Nature conservation on arable land**

In the village of Grossdittmendorf voluntary nature conservationists, united in the local branch of the German Nature Conservation Association (NaBu), including a youth and a children's group, have been very active for almost 30 years. They analyse bird populations, manage nature reserves, collaborate with landowners and farmers (e.g. protecting white storks), and do public awareness work (Bastian 2007).

d. Developing solutions

Currently more and more actions are taking over the initiative from competent authorities and develop alternatives and solutions for problematic developments in the landscape. This 'thinking along with' extends further than the plea to recognise values and comprises broader societal developments and various forms of public policies, like the design of green structures in town neighbourhoods by the inhabitants, the development of alternative routes for road transport, or the planning of bicycle routes for mountain bikers.

- **Landscape plans by local authorities**

A strong national co-operative of people active in local landscape management, often on voluntary basis, has developed in the Netherlands: 'Landschapsbeheer Nederland'. Since 1980 they actively support the development of landscape management and development plans by municipalities, including public participation in matters of cultural identity, water manage-

ment, economic feasibility etc. [www.landschapsbeheer.nl]

- **Living summer farms**

In Norway a project was set up to restore the summer farming system (Norderhaug & Sicel 2007). Main goal was to utilise local resources from outlying land to maintain the summer farming landscape and at the same time to secure the future for mountain farms by supporting the farm economy. It was shown that it is possible to develop modern practices which made it profitable for farms situated in mountainous areas to use the transhumance system.

e. Just do it now

A very effective way of action – both for the landscape and for the community – is the concrete landscape work, improving the landscape with the own hands. This can be in larger and also in smaller projects. Increasingly NGOs take responsibility to develop larger landscape projects on their own, often, but not always, subsidised by public authorities, like realising landscape trails, rehabilitating waterways and rivers, and building visiting centres. But many more small actions are based on volunteer involvement in landscape management, like restoration of terrace walls or dry stone walls, trimming hedgerows, protecting bird nests in meadows, etc.

- **Urban nature park De Ruige Hof**

In one of the suburbs of Amsterdam a citizens initiative developed to introduce nature values into the town. Active since 1986, volunteers now manage 12 ha of nature area, and public awareness raising is enhanced by a visitors centre with two gardens, restoring the former cultural landscape. The area now has a large biodiversity value as well. [www.deruigehof.nl]

- **Developing landscape by farming**

An example of developing landscape through agriculture is described by Pedroli et al. (2007). A biodynamic farm of 80 hectares outside the gates of Schwerin in eastern Germany. Recently, 150 additional hectares were leased, 120 of which are adjacent to the existing property. It would have been easy to plan the crop rotation and subdivisions of the area from behind a desk. One of the responsible farmers decided he wanted to really acquaint himself with the new land, and organized a seminar for this purpose, which resulted in practical new ways of managing his farm.

f. Informing the public

A more indirect type of action is the distribution of information to the broader general public, mostly non-involved and non-expert. This is the most well-known form of action, and especially internet is a very efficient medium for it. But also folders in tourist visitors centres, books and posters contribute well to attract new public to the own purposes. Also education and training can be considered an essential part of this type of action.

- **Lancewad: The Cultural landscape of the Wadden Sea**

The Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (DK, D and NL) is active in collecting information on the landscapes in the three countries of the Wadden Sea, to supply this information in a user-friendly way to the interested public. One example is a beautiful book "Landscape and Cultural Heritage in the Wadden Sea Region", Gemeinsamer Wattenmeersekretariat (2005). The book is published by Tirion, a Dutch publishing house, in collaboration with the Theiss Verlag, Stuttgart (Germany) and the Danish Wadden Sea Counties (Ribe and South-Jyland).

- **Countryside Stewardship**

Countryside Stewardship was introduced as a pilot scheme in England in 1991 by the then Countryside Commission and operates outside the Environmentally Sensitive Areas. Pay-

ments are made to farmers and other land managers to enhance and conserve English landscapes, their wildlife and history and to help people to enjoy them (DEFRA 2006). This scheme is connected to many concrete landscape actions as well, like country walks, restoring hedgerows, ponds and trees, etc.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

In this concluding section some recommendations are given for NGOs. In the same time they may well be inspiring for competent authorities as well.

6.1. NGOs should be encouraged to

- **effectively use win-win situations, also between governmental and non-governmental organisations**

In some countries like in Scandinavia, the UK and the Netherlands, the NGOs are strong in thinking along with the authorities. Therefore a certain basic mutual trust is a prerequisite, but if this is available, very effective actions can be realised. Experiences with such type of actions can well be transferred to parallel organisations in other countries (see e.g. ECO-VAST 2006).

- **exchange experiences and cooperate on European level**

It is remarkable how little the landscape NGOs are focussed on the European dimension of the landscape. Transfrontier thinking and European cooperation and exchange can largely enhance the public support of a good landscape policy and management, also in holiday destinations. A user friendly European web-portal for good landscape practice is currently under construction (www.civilscape.org).

- **make use of scientific knowledge in assessing values and management needs**

Many NGOs have a basis not only in their concern with threatening developments but rather in their the dedication to the values present, by volunteer activities of scientifically interested people. Often this knowledge driven work is extremely valuable in convincing both the decision makers and the general public of the importance of the values at stake (An-trop et al. 2007).

- **prevent conflicts between landscape care and nature conservation**

Nature and landscape values are generally considered as related and sometimes even synonymous. But conservation of cultural history and nature management based on self-regulation e.g. can certainly also be conflicting. It is recommended that such conflicts between different views and visions on landscape management and planning are solved by joint workshops (see e.g. Pegel 2007, Kizos et al. 2007, Pérez Soba et al. 2007).

- **stress the importance of public access to landscape**

Currently there is a strong trend in increasing attention to perception and legibility of the landscape and improved accession to it. If such actions are coordinated well, they can mutually strengthen each other (see e.g. Højring 2002).

- **pay attention to risks and opportunities of 'marketing' the landscape**

In some countries NGOs are strong in developing regional products and thus 'market' the landscape like in France with the association of Villages de France, which is primarily a tourist promoting action, but in the same time safeguards a certain standard of maintenance and management of the villages accredited. But also many regional products sell the (often imaginary) value of landscape through labels of products, like of cheese (Michelin et al. 2007). On the other hand there are clear risks associated with marketing landscape values (Power

1996). Negative commercialisation and tourism effects on biodiversity and landscape values have been reported e.g. from many UNESCO World Heritage Sites after designating them (e.g. Messerli 1983; Siegrid et al. 2006).

- **make use of the promising potentials of urban-rural relationships**

Last but not least, the NGOs should profit from the increasing attention of urban citizens to the qualities of the countryside and the potential services that the rural areas can offer to increase that qualities. In fact, a large majority of the European people can be considered urban citizens already, connected to each other by cell phones, internet and efficient road networks. The effect of alienation that is brought about by that development should be counteracted by connecting the people with the landscape again, together with the local population, also in their holiday destinations. There is certainly a demand for such reconnection (Quayle et al. 1997; Raffestin 2005).

7. Opportunities for public authorities as well

Thus far, mostly the NGOs committed to landscape have been addressed here. But on the other side the authorities could make much more use of the activities of NGOs in this area if they would value these activities more positively. The European Landscape Convention explicitly demands for public participation in landscape matters and the authorities are thus challenged to develop procedures that stimulate such participation. This could be facilitated by installing regional and national platforms representing key persons and stakeholders in the debate on landscape both from official side and from societal and commercial organisations. In some countries there exists a function of National Advisor on the Landscape, like in the Netherlands (Schröder et al. 2006), or a special Landscape Bureau in the competent Ministry, like in France (CNP 2001). Under the umbrella of the European Landscape Convention many activities could still be initiated in this area. A special challenge is lying here for the international networks ENELC and UNISCAPE, described elsewhere in this volume. CIVILSCAPE the Network of NGOs for the European Landscape Convention will surely contribute their own constructive role in this challenge.

8. The European landscape is ours

The answer on the question whose landscape it is at after all, is inescapably that it is ours. This is both a right and a responsibility for every citizen. It makes it the more important to enhance citizens in their efforts to take care of it, even if this would require a fundamental change in those policies that do affect landscape without taking into consideration the interests of the local civil society.

	Treaty (Council of Europe)	EU-regulations	EU-subsidies
<i>Policy instrument</i>	political, cultural, ethical	juridical, binding	incentive
<i>Example</i>	European Landscape Convention	Habitat Directive	'Leader'
<i>Subject</i>	landscape	nature	rural development
<i>Objective</i>	sustainable development	protection	development, modernisation
<i>Target group</i>	governments, regional and local authorities, civil society	public authorities	entrepreneurs
<i>Vision</i>	holistic, integrated	sectoral	sectoral
<i>Phase in policy cycle</i>	motivating, inspiring, vision building	decision making, balancing interests, permitting	implementing, planning, managing
<i>Area of validity</i>	everywhere	nature reserves	sparsely inhabited rural area and threatened species

Table 1 - Comparison of some elements characterising the European Landscape Convention and EU regulations and subsidies (after Schröder & Pedroli 2005).

	General	Location specific
<i>Defensive</i>	setting the agenda	opposing threats
<i>Offensive</i>	developing solutions	assessing values
<i>Implementation oriented</i>	developing solutions	just do it
<i>Public oriented</i>	informing the public	informing the public

Table 2 - Various categories of NGO actions

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5.6 I valori culturali e spirituali nella conservazione e gestione del paesaggio

Cultural and spiritual values in landscape conservation and management

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Riassunto

Uno dei fondamenti teorici della Convenzione Europea del Paesaggio è quello di identificare e valutare il paesaggio utilizzando aree di ricerca che abbiano una particolare connessione con la popolazione locale. Ogni area di ricerca dovrebbe considerare sia le componenti naturali che quelle artificiali, insieme a quelle forze esterne capaci di produrre cambiamenti al quadro generale. Mentre si contano diversi studi che hanno preso in considerazione la bellezza, lo scenario e le caratteristiche estetiche del paesaggio, la ricerca passata ha comunque studiato maggiormente le componenti fisiche del paesaggio, con la sua morfologia, la configurazione, l'uso del suolo, la natura e gli habitat naturali.

Un altro fondamento teorico della Convenzione di Firenze è la considerazione del paesaggio come base per l'identità locale. Con il presupposto che il benessere del paesaggio è strettamente legato al livello di coscienza pubblica e al coinvolgimento pubblico nelle decisioni che condizionano l'ambiente e gli organismi viventi, la Convenzione pone la popolazione al cuore della conservazione e gestione del paesaggio.

Questo richiede una considerazione più ampia del patrimonio culturale dei paesaggi europei, che sono strettamente collegati alla popolazione che li ha formati e che vi ha riposto per secoli valori e significati. L'integrazione dei valori culturali e spirituali del territorio e delle popolazioni locali nella conservazione del paesaggio diventa quindi imperativa. Tale integrazione è nello specifico la missione del CCLP, il Centro di Cambridge per il Paesaggio e la Popolazione, ed è senza dubbio in grado di sostenere la diversità paesistica, e allo stesso tempo la coscienza e la comprensione dei paesaggi europei.

Questo contributo si concentra sui valori culturali e spirituali del paesaggio, sulla loro importanza in alcuni paesaggi italiani di notevole pregio ed in particolare sulle Foreste Casentinesi.

Abstract

One of the theoretical foundations of the European Landscape Convention is to identify and assess landscape using research fields in a particular conjunction with the local people. Each research field should consider both natural and artificial

components, together with external drivers that can induce changes to the general picture. While several studies have considered beauty, scenery and aesthetical characters of landscape, past research has focussed more on the physical characters of landscapes, taking into account morphology, patterns, land use, nature and its wildlife habitats.

Another theoretical foundation of the Florence Convention is to consider landscape as the basis of local identity. With the assumption that *the well-being of the landscape is closely related to the level of public awareness and public involvement in decisions affecting living environments* (Council of Europe, 2000), the Convention indeed places people at the very heart of landscape conservation and management.

This calls for a stronger consideration of the cultural heritage in the European landscapes, strictly connected to the people that have shaped them and have attached for centuries their values and meaning to them. Therefore the integration of cultural and spiritual values of land and local communities into landscape conservation becomes imperative. This integration, which is the mission of CCLP, the Cambridge Centre for Landscape and People, can certainly support landscape diversity, as well as awareness and understanding of our European landscapes.

This paper focuses on the cultural and spiritual values of landscape, on their importance in some outstanding Italian landscapes and in particular in those of the "Foreste Casentinesi".

I. Cultural and spiritual values of landscape and nature

"For many people around the world, protected areas are perceived not so much as in-situ repositories of genetic wealth, but as primal landscapes of the creation that deeply touch the spiritual, cultural, aesthetic and relational dimensions of human existence" (Putney, 2006).

Sacred natural sites and other places of importance to faith groups, accordingly, have been identified both inside and outside parks. Recognition has been given to them by the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, IUCN (The World Conservation Union), WWF International and ARC (Alliance of Religions and Conservation) among other organisations.

Although European landscapes contain values important to one or more faiths, the predominant relation is with the Catholic religion and with the mainstream faiths. Recent projects and initiatives like the 3S and Delos of the IUCN Task Force on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas, have proved that these landscapes retain also high conservation values (Mallarach and Papayannis, 2007; McIvor and Pungetti, 2008) and therefore are important for studies on the relationship between nature and culture.

In Italy nature and culture have shown a clear interface. Traditional practices have demonstrated that a balance between nature and culture is still achievable (Makhzoumi and Pungetti, 1999; Pungetti 1995, 1996). However, when these practices decline due to land use changes, nature expands with comprehensible consequences to the landscape. Nature spontaneously takes over,

in some cases with reduction of biological and landscape diversity, in other cases with the re-establishment of ecosystems and ecological improvement (Pungetti and Romano, 2004). In Italy, moreover, the link between natural habitats and human practices is evident and marks a dynamic and co-existent evolution of the resulting landscapes.

2. Italian sacred landscapes

In Italy, furthermore, there is a long standing relationship between people and their landscape. The construction or destruction of sacred landscapes in Roman times, for example, can be linked in some regions to particular community stress or socio-political instability. Moreover, sacred landscapes can be referred to as a network of smaller and larger sanctuaries with different functions and appeals. Areas of historical and spiritual importance in Roman and Italic periods are found in Molise, in particular in two sanctuaries in the heartland of Samnium: San Giovanni in Galdo and Gildone in the province of Campobasso (Pelgrom and Stek, 2006).

Later than these are the archaeological sites of Paestum and Velia from classical times, and the Certosa of Padula from the medieval times, in the Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park. They were listed Heritage Sites by the World Heritage Committee in 1988. Cilento is an outstanding cultural and spiritual landscape with groups of sanctuaries and settlements along its mountain ridges. History has deeply marked the Cilento region, as it was a major route not only for trade, but also for cultural and political interaction during the prehistoric and medieval times (Indelli, 1999). The Cilento was in fact the boundary between the Greek colonies of Magna Graecia and the indigenous Etruscan and Lucanian peoples.

Italy is scattered with sacred sites connected with Christian saints and monks; the best known are those of Saint Francis and his followers. Although his native home was Assisi in Umbria, he favoured La Verna in Tuscany and was also fond of the Valley of Rieti in Latium where he performed many miracles. For this reason the area is called "The Sacred Valley". Four Franciscan sanctuaries are situated here. Among these is Santa Maria della Foresta, where it is told that the Cantic of All Creatures and the Rule of the Franciscan Order were produced. Another is Rivodutri with the "Saint Francis Beech Tree", famous for the remarkable way its branches intertwine and create gnarls of unusual beauty.

In an adjacent region, Abruzzo, the National Park of Majella, Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga counts over 40 churches, abbeys and hermitages related to Piero Angeleri, who became Pope Celestino V in 1294. Among these are S. Spirito a Majella, S. Onofrio al Morrone, S. Bartolomeo in Legio, S. Giovanni, S. Onofrio all'Orfento and Madonna dell'Altare in the woods of Porrara. To add to these, cultural heritage sites such as Pescocostanzo, Pacentro, Guardiagrele and Roccasale can be found on the slopes of the Majella Mountain. On the one hand, the mountains of Abruzzo have been for centuries an ideal place for meditation and retreat; they count in fact nearly 100 hermitages (Micati, 2000). On the other hand, they retain a rich wildlife, fascinating views and interesting population, elements that make their landscape particularly precious (Ardito, 2000).

Lastly, the nine Sacred Mountains of northern Italy, the so called *Sacri Monti*, present groups of chapels and other architectural features created in the late 16th and the 17th centuries and dedicated to different aspects of the Christian faith (Melis, 2005). In addition to their symbolic and spiritual meaning, these chapels are attractive and well integrated in the surrounding natural landscape of hills, forests and lakes. They house not only wall paintings and statues of artistic interest (Fontana et al., 2004), but also Franciscan priests likewise in the other case studies. The area was listed Heritage Site by the World Heritage Committee in 2003.

3. National Park of the Casentino Forests, Mount Falterona and Campigna

The National Park of the Casentino Forests, Mount Falterona and Campigna covers a territory of around 36,000 hectares (i.e. 360 square kilometres) in the Apennines where the river Arno rises (AAVV, 2003). In this area between Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna there are three points of main spiritual importance: the Sanctuary of La Verna, the Monastery of Camaldoli and the Hermitage of Camaldoli.

The park stands as one of the most valuable forest areas of Europe. The Casentino State Forests are the core of the park, which includes the Integral Nature Reserve of Sasso Fratino. Pinewoods and silver firs, beech and mountain maple, make up ancient and mixed woodlands with rich biodiversity. Over 1000 species of flora have been recorded (*ibidem*), the most valuable collection being found in the Mount Falco-Falterona massif.

The Apennine wolf, the most significant predator of the area, shares the territory with the wild boar; the roe deer; the fallow deer; the common deer and the mountain sheep. Nearly 100 species of birds can be found in the park (*ibidem*). They are typical of central Europe, e.g. the alpine tree-creeper; the bullfinch and the ring ouzel, or of the Mediterranean, e.g. the Sardinian warbler; the whitethroat and the black-headed bunting. The birds of prey include the sparrow hawk and goshawk, the golden eagle and the peregrine falcon. The spectacled salamander, the alpine newt, the spotted salamander and the small Italian geotritona are only a few of the 13 species of amphibians. Among the reptiles the most famous is the viper; while the insect life is extremely rich.

4. Spiritual and cultural values of the Casentino Forests

Stone bridges are significant culturally related values of the site. They still enable visitors to reach towns, villages, the hermitage and monasteries on foot, and mark ancient roads rich in history and art. Others include the Etruscan settlements and the "Pilgrims' Way" which begins in far-off Germany, and follows the Via Roma (Roman Way) till descending into the Casentino and continuing to Rome.

There are also other signs of ancient habitation: country cottages, some isolated and some clustered in small villages, abandoned and ruined castles and strongholds, and small stone shrines. The most spiritually related values of the site are found in La Verna and Camaldoli. The Sanctuary of La Verna has been Hermitage of Saint Francis since 1213, while the Hermitage of Camaldoli was founded in 1024 by Saint Romuald (Cetoloni et al., 2003). The former is surrounded by firs and beech trees, and the latter by white firs. Today the natural heritage of the area, and part of its cultural heritage, are mainly managed by the Park.

The bodies responsible for the cultural and spiritual heritage of the place are the National Park of the Casentino Forests, Mount Falterona and Campigna, together with the Hermitage of Camaldoli, the Monastery of Camaldoli and the Sanctuary of La Verna. The work of secular and spiritual communities, and the values of these landscapes, are significantly respected by both the local population and visitors.

5. Driving forces of the Casentino landscape

Casentino has always shown the signs of its people and their shaping of the landscape. With the Second World War; however; a mass exodus began, leading today to just 1,500 inhabitants inside the Park (AAVV, 2003).

Figure 1, 2 – A beechwood forest and a landscape of the Casentino Forests.
Foto di M. Mafai



The most dynamic activities here are connected to the religious orders on one side, and to culture, nature and the forests on the other. Among pilgrimage, forest management, hiking and tourism, the latter is the most evident driving force. However, this has a major impact both on the landscape of the forest and the religious institutions within it.

Continuous cooperation between the religious and laic institutions is imperative in a place where the religious community has such a long-lasting presence. These forests have been preserved for about eight centuries by the Camaldolesi and Franciscan monastic orders, which set up the roles for their forest management in 1520 with the Forestry Code of Camaldoli, continuing in force until 1866 when the forest became state property and a part of the National Park (Frigerio, 1991).

6. Conclusions

Case studies around the world have confirmed the hypothesis that sacred natural sites and sacred landscapes serve to conserve both natural and cultural values (Putney, 2006; Mallarach and Papayannis, 2007; McIvor and Pungetti, 2008). Nevertheless, these landscapes are also under increasing pressure and urgent measures to preserve them are necessary.

On this line, IUCN projects and initiatives on sacred natural sites are attempting to develop improved legal frameworks and guidelines for the recognition and management of these sites. Among these are the 3S, the CCLP Initiative on Sacred Species and Sites, and Delos, the Medina-Silene Initiative on Sacred Natural Sites in Technologically Developed Countries. The Casentino Forests Case Study belongs to both.

In this area, the natural, spiritual and cultural heritage of the site is understood and accepted not only by the monastic communities and the park authorities, but also by the local authorities and people. However, better planning and management are necessary to reduce the conflicts between the needs of the religious communities and those of the visitors.

Furthermore, the local communities should be involved in the planning and management decisions taken for the area and people should be educated about the link between the natural and cultural values of these forests. This should assist in preserving also the spiritual values of these landscapes, as was done in the past.

Finally these values, which are at the core of the Cambridge Centre for Landscape and People, can support landscape diversity as well as awareness, understanding and respect of our European landscapes. CCLP has therefore become for the Florence Convention a focal point for the cultural and spiritual values of our European landscapes, with a network covering all Europe and linking UNESCO, IUCN and WWF with the Council of Europe. CCLP, consequently, is carrying out studies which promote interdisciplinary cooperation and dialogue on landscape and on the people that live in it.

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Il WWF si pone l'ambizioso obiettivo di coinvolgere il maggior numero possibile di attori sociali ed economici, dai semplici cittadini ai rappresentanti delle Istituzioni, dalla comunità scientifica al mondo della cultura e dello spettacolo, per impedire la perdita di territorio vitale, essenziale per il benessere degli ecosistemi e dell'uomo.

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