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Provincia di Pordenone Osservatorio Politiche Abitative
The Housing Policies Observatory of the Pordenone District in collaboration with Mountain Dossier has selected seven original contributions regarding topics concerning the development of mountain areas, giving particular attention to the ways of living the mountain and the socio-economic dynamics involving its’ territories and influencing its’ development.

The mountain territories’ development has become a topic of great interest inspiring studies, analysis and special funding provided by the European Programme 2014-2020. We shall find a reason to this attention in the awareness of the role played by agri-cultural, forestal and pastoral activities in producing highly relevant environmental services, that go from hydro-geologic safety to tourist fruition, from landscape maintenance to biodiversity and to protection and valorization of natural and cultural resources.

From this perspective, the importance of mountain towns is quite central in defining a system able to valorize its’ surrounding territory and its’ most precious components such as historical, architectural and cultural richness, along with typical products. This ensemble can become a vector for new positive scenarios, new policies meaning to renovate the use made of the territory itself, thanks to new technologies which can support and incentivize local actions aiming to transform the territory following a “smart” path.

The main purpose of these actions, which in a mountain territory can be molded into smart policies producing a so-called “smart land”, is, above all, to create conditions that permit a quality living, focusing on raising smart communities and integrated economic and social development systems, working on 5 fields of actions requested by the EU in order to generate smart policies in cities and territories: environment, culture and tourism, knowledge economy, mobility and accessibility, landscape valorization.

In a diffused non-metropolitan territory such as a mountain area, carrying out smart policies means launching sustainable practices and actions able to adopt new technologies in order to increase competitiveness of places, to organize transports, to enlarge ITCS, to valorize the social capital, to raise life quality, to preserve and protect the environment and to strengthen the governance.

These are the topics on which all the analysis of papers hereby presented have been based and hopefully will be able to bring up a discussion and a useful in-depth examination regarding themes such as: the mountain, living the mountain and creating conditions which allow integration between mountains and Italian and European socio-economic development processes.

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L’Osservatorio Politiche Abitative della Provincia di Pordenone in collaborazione con Mountain Dossier ha selezionato sette contributi originali sui temi dello sviluppo delle aree montane, con particolare riferimento alla tematica dell’abitare in montagna e delle dinamiche socio-economiche che interessano i territori e che ne connotano lo sviluppo.


In questo contesto l’importanza dei borghi montani è centrale nella definizione di un sistema in grado di valorizzare il territorio e le sue componenti più preziose dal punto di vista storico, architettonico, culturale e dei prodotti tipici. Quest’insieme è in grado di essere vettore di nuove positività, di nuove politiche adatte a rinnovare l’uso dello stesso territorio, grazie alle nuove tecnologie che possono sostenere e incentivare azioni locali volte a trasformare il territorio secondo un modello smart.

Obiettivo di queste azioni, che in un territorio montano si configurano come politiche smart che possono essere identificate con il termine di “smart land”, è soprattutto creare condizioni tali da permettere un vivere di qualità, mettendo al centro dell’attenzione la creazione di smart communities e di sistemi integrati di sviluppo non solo economico ma anche sociale, agendo sui cinque campi d’azione oggi richiesti dall’UE per lo sviluppo delle politiche smart nelle città e nei territori: ambiente, cultura e turismo, economia della conoscenza, mobilità e accessibilità, valorizzazione del territorio.

In un territorio diffuso non metropolitano come quello delle aree montane, attuare politiche smart significa avviare pratiche ed azioni sostenibili che adottino le nuove tecnologie per aumentare la competitività dei luoghi, organizzare i trasporti, incrementare le ITCS, valorizzare il capitale sociale, incrementare la qualità della vita, preservare e tutelare l’ambiente ed incrementare la governance.
1. INTRODUCTION: REFURBISHMENT OF TRADITIONAL ALPINE BUILDINGS

Traditional alpine buildings are cultural, social and economic testimonies of life in the mountains. Both in their relationship with the context and in their construction techniques, these buildings show a kind of sustainability ante-litteram, through an optimization of a certain number of resources.

Today, alpine territories must face the task of managing the future of these heritages (homes, barns, stables) or at least of those that are still standing. The conservation and refurbishment of such buildings, in order to transmitted their constructive knowledge, have been faced by different European Alpine Space Project (e.g. AlpHouse and AlpBC), considered by architectural awards (e.g. the latest Constructive Alps prize 2015) and national initiatives (e.g. “Case di montagna abbandonate”), an initiative led in 2014 by Corrado, Dematteis, Di Gioia (2014).

The refurbishment of traditional alpine buildings could represent not only an opportunity for tourism, but also for the local communities and the population. In fact, the maintenance decreased or stopped due to the population decrease in mountainous areas. In these cases these buildings turn into second homes. The building materials which were still in good condition, building materials which were still in good condition and therefore contribute to the general picture of a mountain valley, were used in the laying of the clay
delakt. The fact that the tadelakt must be done with Marseille soap to close all the pores of the clay [...] . We treated the building with our own hands, not with the mill machine the handmade manufacturing is something we are proud of. The interviewee is Daniela dal Bosco, owner of the B&B Gian, together with her partner Pierpaolo.

The first remarkable aspect regards the owners involved in the refurbishment. This happened not only because her partner Pierpaolo was the designer, but also because they both participated in an accurate research on the most suitable materials to create a state of inner well-being... The fact that the environment is still comfortable, right [...] . We have done investigations before. We attended trade fairs where there were talks of green building materials, sustainable environments and good materials. We carried out a thorough research on the most suitable materials to create a state of inner well-being... The fact that the environment is still comfortable, right [...] . We have done investigations before. We attended trade fairs where there were talks of green building materials, sustainable environments and good materials. We carried out a thorough research on the most suitable materials to create a state of inner well-being... The fact that the environment is still comfortable, right [...] . We have done investigations before. We attended trade fairs where there were talks of green building materials, sustainable environments and good materials. We carried out a thorough research on the most suitable materials to create a state of inner well-being... The fact that the environment is still comfortable, right [...] . We have done investigations before. We attended trade fairs where there were talks of green building materials, sustainable environments and good materials. We carried out a thorough research on the most suitable materials to create a state of inner well-being... The fact that the environment is still comfortable, right [...] . We have done investigations before. We attended trade fairs where there were talks of green building materials, sustainable environments and good materials. We carried out a thorough research on the most suitable materials to create a state of inner well-being... The fact that the environment is still comfortable, right [...] . We have done investigations before. We attended trade fairs where there were talks of green building materials, sustainable environments and good materials. We carried out a thorough research on the most suitable materials to create a state of inner well-being... The fact that the environment is still comfortable, right [...] . We have done investigations before. We attended trade fairs where there were talks of green building materials, sustainable environments and good materials. We carried out a thorough research on the most suitable materials to create a state of inner well-being... The fact that the environment is still comfortable, right [...] .

2. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS: INTERVIEW WITH OWNERS OF REFURBISHED TRADITIONAL ALPINE BUILDINGS

The work here presented is a part of an ongoing PhD Thesis on the refurbishment of traditional alpine buildings. The first aim of the research is to analyze the refurbishment process of traditional alpine buildings with a double approach, in order to identify some guide lines in the process. The double approach includes a “top-down approach”, which takes into consideration the Italian legislation and some case studies of a wide number of handbooks on recovery of traditional alpine buildings which have been published since the eighties inside many Italian alpine valleys and areas (Ferrario, 2001). From another point of view the “bottom-up approach” tries to analyze the refurbishment process by interviewing different stakeholders involved in the refurbishment: clients, designers, construction companies, firms and authorities. The best practices that follow are the result of the interviews with two owners of refurbished traditional alpine buildings. Additional information on the interviewee have been taken from output materials of two different cultural projects in which they were involved.

The interview, in addition to general information about the building (year of construction/refurbishment, past and present use, location) focused on the reason of the refurbishment, also at the positive and negative aspects of using a refurbished traditional building, the expectations and the requests to the architects, the criterion of materials and companies selection, the choices in the field of energy saving and the active involvement in the design and construction works. In this item we focus on the activities that had a least practices show some innovative aspects, distinctly on a broader meaning of refurbishment, the owner’s involvement and the architectural choices.

3. REFURBISHMENT OF A “MASO” IN VALLE DEI MÖCHENI (TN)

The first best practice refers to a family who decided to move from the nearby city (Rovereto - TN) to an hamlet called Località Stefani in Valle dei Mòcheni (TN), at about 900 amsl. They bought and refurbished a traditional alpine building that in the area is named “maso”. The building, which dates back to 1704, originally hosted both the residential and the rural function. After the refurbishing, which was realized in 2005, the building became a residential building with some rooms used for a “Bed and Breakfast”. The interviewee is Daniela dal Bosco, owner of the building and manager of the B&B Gian, together with her partner Pierpaolo.

The first remarkable aspect regards the owners involved in the refurbishment. This happened not only because her partner Pierpaolo was the designer, but also because they both participated in an accurate research on the most suitable materials to create a state of inner well-being... The fact that the environment is still comfortable, right [...] .

4. REFURBISHMENT OF A BARN AND A STABLE IN VALLARSA (TN)

The second best practice refers also to a family who decided to move from the nearby city (Rovereto - TN) to Vanza di Trambileno (TN), in a place called Località Dei Mòchel (TN). They bought a traditional alpine building that in the area is named “maso”. The family, and in particular the interviewed person, Luigina Marcella Speri, was looking for a better place to live, far from the urban environment. Luigina, and her family, is the owner of the refurbished building and manager of the farm “Masseram”, which was established in the eighties inside the surrounding land.

The building was originally a house and a stable. After the refurbishment, which is still on-going, the building has become the permanent home of the owner and a farm, with cultivation of organic agriculture and with...
PIE CHE UN PROBLEMA COSTRUTTIVO: DUE BUONE PRATICHE DI RISTRUTTURAZIONE DI EDIFICI TRADIZIONALI ALPINI

I territori delle Alpi sono disseminati da un consistente patrimonio di edifici tradizionali, un tempo funzionali al sistema economico e socio-culturale della montagna. Si tratta di manufatti, sia rurali che residenziali, in grado di dimostrare attraverso una loro lettura critica della collocazione, dei sistemi costruttori, della codificazione delle scelte materiche e degli accorgimenti tecnici, un atteggiamento che, in termini di costruzione, si riflette in un contenuto e formato adeguato. Le scelte che hanno fatto di questi edifici davvero unico in Vallarsa (TN), la riqualificazione è avvenuta con preferenza per un approccio integrato tra l'intervento sull'esistente e quello di costruzione, promuovendo un modello di coesistenza tra la struttura antica e un'integrazione con le nuove esigenze funzionali e progettuali.

Le buone pratiche riportate, sebbene se ne riconosca la specificità e l'unicità, possono tuttavia fornire indicazioni per l'implementazione di politiche e azioni relative ad una riqualificazione degli edifici tradizionali alpini che cerci di riattivare il “sistema montagna”, tenendo conto della sua evoluzione culturale, sociale e economica. Tali temi l'importanza di azioni integrate tra l'intervento sull'esistente e il contesto, la promozione delle risorse materiche e dei saperi e delle competenze costruttive presenti nei territori. Infine - aspetto altrettanto interessante e innovativo - si è rilevato un coinvolgimento diretto dei committenti nei lavori di riqualificazione, sia dal punto di vista delle scelte figurative-architecturali e materiali, sia nelle attività pratiche di cambiamento-elementi che possono essere pure ricondotti al concetto di “auto-recupero”. Le buone pratiche riportate, sebbene se ne riconosca la specificità e l'unicità, possono tuttavia fornire indicazioni per l'implementazione di politiche e azioni relative ad una riqualificazione degli edifici tradizionali alpini che cerci di riattivare il “sistema montagna”, tenendo conto della sua evoluzione culturale, sociale e economica. Tali temi l'importanza di azioni integrate tra l'intervento sull'esistente e il contesto, la promozione delle risorse materiche e dei saperi e delle competenze costruttive presenti nei territori. Infine - aspetto altrettanto interessante e innovativo - si è rilevato un coinvolgimento diretto dei committenti nei lavori di riqualificazione, sia dal punto di vista delle scelte figurative-architecturali e materiali, sia nelle attività pratiche di cambiamento-
MORE THAN A CONSTRUCTIVE ISSUE: TWO BEST PRACTICE OF REFURBISHMENT OF TRADITIONAL ALPINE BUILDINGS

PICTURE 1. Daniela Dal Bosco in her house, preparing breakfast for guests. Credit: Gianpiero Mendini, Origami Videography

PICTURE 2. The refurbished building. Credit: Daniela Dal Bosco

PICTURE 3. Tradition and innovation: wall heating associated with wattle and daub. Credit: Daniela Dal Bosco

PICTURE 4. Detail of the window with the glazing bar. Credit: Daniela Dal Bosco

PICTURE 5. Luigina working in her land. Credit: Gianpiero Mendini, Origami Videography

PICTURE 6. Luigina working in her land. Credit: Gianpiero Mendini, Origami Videography

PICTURE 7. The building with the connection to the wetland plant. Credit: Flaviana Romagnoli, Studio Vis

PICTURE 8. The building and plantation. Credit: Azienda Agricola Al Massarem

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1. LIGURIA AND ABANDONED VILLAGES: MOUNTAIN VS COAST

The abandonment of mountain villages is a phenomenon characteristic of much of Western Europe, as it assumes a very special connotation in Liguria, because of the morphology of the region itself, mountainous areas with the greatest settlement and economic attractiveness concentrated on the coast. This initially lead to the exodus from the inland valleys to the cities, and then to the coast in general. In fact the villages on the coast, in addition to sharing many of the morphological difficulties of the inland villages and being almost always historically, culturally and anthropologically related to the agro-f祉stic-pastoral activities, also have had the advantage of possessing a strong economic role in maritime activities, and more recently, in tourism, together with being easily accessible.

Thus, over the centuries, the two types of settlements began to differ from each other from a social and an architectural point of view (Ghezzi 2011). The mountain villages in Liguria are the outright majority, they do not have relations, if not indirectly, with the coastal economy, often quite independent from what elevation and proximity to the sea, and the latter characterized by scattered settlements, relying on the proximity to the city. However, the same difference can be found also among mountain villages, as we move away from the social and geographical centre of the region. Thus the historical difference is reflected in the settlement system of mountain villages in Liguria: the area including the far western part of the Alps and the Côte d’Azur sharing the same features of the far East area and Liguria, and those of the central Apenines and the current Piedmontese Alps which are characterized by scattered villages along the former feudal courts (Ghezzi 2011, 95-96).

2. LIGURIA AND ABANDONED VILLAGES: EAST AND WEST VS THE CENTRE

Also in the central part of the region, historically gravitating around the city of Genoa, there are different types of settlements between coast and inland, with the first highly aggregated and fortified against invaders coming to the sea, and the latter characterized by scattered settlements, relying on the proximity to the city. However, the same difference can be found also among mountain villages, as we move away from the political and geographical centre of the region. Thus the historical difference is reflected in the settlement system of mountain villages in Liguria: the area including the far western part of the Alps and the Côte d’Azur sharing the same features of the far East area and Liguria, and those of the central Apenines and the current Piedmontese Alps which are characterized by scattered villages along the former feudal courts (Ghezzi 2011, 95-96).

Such morphological difference had also consequences on the different trajectories of abandonment. The research “Geografia dell’abbandono” (Pastipone 2000) identifies three types of abandonment: 1) completely abandoned villages; 2) partially abandoned villages; 3) abandoned village with a new centre. Looking at the map on page 18 of that report, one might notice several things: first of all, the fact that the Ligurian area stands out for the high number of abandoned villages with respect to the surrounding areas, especially to Northern Italy; secondly, that these are concentrated, indeed, in the far western and eastern areas; finally, that almost all of them are partially abandoned villages.

This does not mean that abandoned settlements in the centre of the region do not exist, but these mostly small difficult to reach villages, once linked especially to pastoralism, irreversibly affected by the proximity to the industrial city. In these areas there is no repopulation, neither institutionalized nor spontaneous, taking place; and it seems that a new form of tourism linked to such characteristic of total abandonment is growing (Roccati, De Lorenzi 2015). The situation is different for what concerns the Eastern and especially the Western part of the Region. In both cases we are dealing with municipalities in their own right, which for the features mentioned previously, are also fine medieval hamlets, that have been recently rediscovered as appealing for cultural tourism and converted into accommodation facilities and almost never entirely abandoned.

3. THE CASE OF LIGURIAN ALPS ABANDONED VILLAGES

As far as the western part is concerned, all the municipalities are included within the area of the Alpine Convention. The research “Geografia dell’abbandono” includes the following municipalities: Balestrio, Finalborgo, Vezzol, Torano, Castelfranco di Rocca Barbena, Stefanello, Castelletta Bianco, Bussana Vecchia, Canvo, Diano Castello, Apricale, Dolpascou Dolceo, Torrassa, Civezza, Savorgna, Torano. With the sole exceptions of Balestrio and Bussana Vecchia, whose historic centres have been abandoned, respectively, due to a landslide and to earthquake damage, leading to the foundation of a new centre nearby followed by spontaneous revitalization, the other villages are all classified as partially abandoned, although recently some of these abandoned spheres have been converted into tourist facilities. They are in a condition of very small municipalities” according to UNESCO’s definition.

Among the aforementioned municipalities, some are defined mountainous by the Liguria Region, and some are defined as partially mountainous, as their situations regarding housing problems and other issues differ substantially.

According to the report “L’italia del disagio abitativo” of Legambiente and Confcommercio (2000), at the beginning of the century the Ligurian Alps were still to be considered as an area with great housing disadvantage, and to be included in the group called “old ancient world”, characterized by small villages with low population density, with high average age population and without migration dynamism. While presenting a better exposure to the general wealth and tourism with respect to weak contexts in the strict sense of the term, they were characterized by the presence of many empty houses and a disintegrated commercial structure, consisting only of a few, badly distributed businesses.

4. REGIONAL POLICIES IN FAVOUR OF MOUNTAIN SETTLEMENT

Regarding economic activities, regional policies seem once again to be addressed solely to agricultural disadvantage, with no mention, for a long time, of a possible development in terms of tourism, considering that only by recovering traditional activities, we could stop the abandonment of mountain villages and their territory, and consequently the housing disadvantage and the natural and hydro geological degradation. Therefore the Liguria Region’s measures aimed at encouraging agriculture and the mountain economy have a territorial scope determined almost solely by previous identification of disadvantaged agricultural areas, using the municipality area as a reference unit. The used data relate to Liguria’s agricultural area, evaluated considering their geo-physical and socio-economic features, and classed as areas affected or not by criticalities and disadvantages, compared to other territories. These considerations are based solely on the agricultural potential, to allow adoption of policies aimed at balancing economic and agricultural conditions only through instruments such as administrative benefits of a financial and fiscal nature to agricultural settlement. The region identified four main types of classification:

a) municipalities classified as disadvantaged under Law 25th July 1952, n. 991, 25th July 1952. “Measures in favour of mountain areas”

b) municipalities classified as disadvantaged under Directive 75/268/EEC of 28th April 1975 on agriculture in the mountain and disadvantaged areas

c) municipalities classified as disadvantaged or particularly disadvantaged under d.lgs. 146/97, concerning agricultural welfare;

d) municipalities identified as disadvantaged categories under the art. 5 of the l.r. 33/1997, concerning a new identification of elevation and of socio-economic disadvantage (then abrogated by the art. 63 of the l.r. 4th July 2008, n. 24).

Based on this set of classifications, as many as 46 municipalities in the Ligurian Alps (among those in the perimeter of the Alpine Convention and obviously only those within Ligurian borders) out of 62 were found to be disadvantaged, namely: 18 mutually; 18 entirely mountainous under law 991/1952, entirely disadvantaged under Directive 75/268/EEC, and particularly disadvantaged under d.lgs. 146/97.

Furthermore, all those classified as partially mountainous are classified as “disadvantaged”. Given that the outcome of a policy is determined by its broad framing, it is clear that this definition of the problem, solely based on agriculture issues, even if to a court recovery of mountain centres, is likely to fail in the naming, and then to fail completely, not taking into account other relevant elements. This classification, even if an agricultural activities that, although not resulting as significant,
They are: Airole, Apricale, Aquila Nervina, Toirano, Triora, Vendone, Vessalizza, Teco, Pigna, Pornassio, Prelà, Ranzo, Ligure, Montegrosso Pian Latte, Murialdo, Montalto Giustenice, Isolabona, Magliolo, Massimino, Carpasio, Castel Vittorio, Castelbianco, d’Arroscia, Bormida, Calizzano, Caravod’Arroscia, Armo, Aurigo, Badalucco, Bar

The renewal of abandoned villages in the Ligurian Alps: policies and informal practices

As often happens in Liguria (Lastrico 2014; De Michelis, Lastrico and Tebaldi 2010), the most evident results in the context of urban and territorial renewal, for better or for worse, are not the outcome of specific policies, i.e. institutional actions oriented towards a specific and planned purpose; but rather by grassroots action, in an informal and spontaneous way, if not even chaotic. Some of these are examples of best practices recognized and often taken as case studies at both national and European level (Squatrito 2012). Out of seven Italian good practices analysed by the aforementioned research “Geografia dell’abbandono” (Postpinne 2009), as many as three come from these areas.

The first, certainly the most famous, is not actually a mountain settlement. Rusana Vecchia, near Sanremo, was abandoned after the earthquake in 1887, which damaged many of the mountain villages (above all, Bairdi), and then repopulated spontaneously in the’50s by artists of various nationalities. They later formed a committee and the town is now partially recovered and rebuilt and is known as “the village of artists”.

Another example of best practice is shown by the mountain village, Torri Superiore, which is perhaps the most interesting case situation. Situated between the Ligurian Alps and the Maritime Alps, Torri remained in a state of abandonment until, in the late 1970s, the local community decided to buy a good portion of it. However, this was not the only reason; over time other people were involved, until the creation of the “Associazione Culturale Torri Superiore” in 1989, for the restoration of the medieval village dwellings and its transformation into an “ecovillage”, together with environmental impact, using renewable energy sources and practising communitarian organic farming. The eco-village is now inhabited by a resident community, which, with its transformation into an “eco-village”, minimising its environmental impact, using renewable energy sources and practising communitarian organic farming. The eco-village is now inhabited by a resident community, which

Lastrico V. (2014) “Scelte tra produttività estrapolata e demenza di stato. Una possibile risposta alla critica dell’’alessandria” mémoire dimanche géographique”, in Sociologia presso la Graduate School in Social and Political Sciences graduate from the University of Milan. His work focuses on environmental conflicts, public policies and the local decision making processes on environmental issues. He is also a qualified hiking guide.

Valerio Lastrico (born in Genoa, 17 March 1983) is a Social Sciences graduate from the University of Milan. His final dissertation project was on participatory local redevelopment, and took his PhD in Sociology from the Graduate School in Social and Political Sciences of Milan, with a comparative dissertation project on the environmental conflict created by the High Speed Railway Service Turin-Lyon in the Susa Valley and in Maurienne. His research focuses on environmental conflicts, public policies and the local decision making processes on environmental issues. He is also a qualified hiking guide.

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Il recupero di villaggi abbandonati nelle Alpi Liguri: politiche e pratiche informali

The paper sets out the strategies of recupero of the borghi montani of the Liguria as an integral part of the Convenzione delle Alpi, analysing the aspects most relevant to the area. While it is not the aim of this work to draw up a list of positive and negative aspects of the intervention, there are several points that are important to be considered.

Italian paper. The study is based on a case study analysis of the relationship between the main environmental impacts and the local population in the area. The results show that the presence of a strong environmental impact has a significant effect on the local population. The study also shows that the local population is highly sensitive to the environmental impacts of the project and is willing to participate in the decision-making process.

The second case study is that of Lastrico, another completely abandoned medieval village, in the alpine Val Pennavera. An institutional organic rescue in this village was presented in the report (Postpine 2009). The municipalities in the Ligurian Alps, therefore, continue to lose population, in favour of the city, the coast, and for work opportunities, not assisted by planned interventions, however, is always that of gentrification. In this case there is the concrete possibility to transform mountain villages, with their traditions and culture, into destinations for wealthy foreigners attracted by the beauty of the area, thereby achieving a very different objective from that of bringing livelihood back to the mountains. Informal and spontaneous restoration and development activities do not come without problems and downsides, and it is therefore still possible to support the idea “good practices - bad policies” and the sales of a slogan which is often implicitly or explicitly expressed when dealing with these topics.

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5 They are: Arce, Arpione, Aquila d’Arroscia, Arcio, Arrecio, Bolzana, Pigna, Apricale, Apricale, Aquila Nervina, Toirano, Triora, Vendone, Vessalizza, Teco, Pigna, Pornassio, Prelà, Ranzo, Ligure, Montegrosso Pian Latte, Murialdo, Montalto Giustenice, Isolabona, Magliolo, Massimino, Carpasio, Castel Vittorio, Castelbianco, d’Arroscia, Bormida, Calizzano, Caravod’Arroscia, Armo, Aurigo, Badalucco, Bar

The renewal of abandoned villages in the Ligurian Alps: policies and informal practices

As often happens in Liguria (Lastrico 2014; De Michelis, Lastrico and Tebaldi 2010), the most evident results in the context of urban and territorial renewal, for better or for worse, are not the outcome of specific policies, i.e. institutional actions oriented towards a specific and planned purpose; but rather by grassroots action, in an informal and spontaneous way, if not even chaotic. Some of these are examples of best practices recognized and often taken as case studies at both national and European level (Squatrito 2012). Out of seven Italian good practices analysed by the aforementioned research “Geografia dell’abbandono” (Postpinne 2009), as many as three come from these areas.

The first, certainly the most famous, is not actually a mountain settlement. Rusana Vecchia, near Sanremo, was abandoned after the earthquake in 1887, which damaged many of the mountain villages (above all, Bairdi), and then repopulated spontaneously in the’50s by artists of various nationalities. They later formed a committee and the town is now partially recovered and rebuilt and is known as “the village of artists”.

Another example of best practice is shown by the mountain village, Torri Superiore, which is perhaps the most interesting case situation. Situated between the Ligurian Alps and the Maritime Alps, Torri remained in a state of abandonment until, in the late 1970s, the local community decided to buy a good portion of it. However, this was not the only reason; over time other people were involved, until the creation of the “Associazione Culturale Torri Superiore” in 1989, for the restoration of the medieval village dwellings and its transformation into an “ecovillage”, together with environmental impact, using renewable energy sources and practising communitarian organic farming. The eco-village is now inhabited by a resident community, which...
The cultural heritage of alpine areas includes rural architecture that has been recovered in the last decades. Since the beginning of the twentieth century the history of many mountain villages in Piedmont were marked by a progressive abandonment and a depopulation due to the attraction of the industries of the lower valleys and the plains. Nowadays, the new interest for the mountains is accompanied by a social phenomenon, a slight reversal of the negative demographic trends: what answers may be drawn on the vernacular architecture of mountain housing policies? The aim of this paper is to reflect on the results of an anthropological research in the Piedmontese Alps on the best practices of hamlet restoration. The ethnographic approach allows us to emphasize the social changes that locally show different approaches on how to repopulate mountain areas.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 30s of the twentieth century, and especially after the Second World War, the Italian mountain areas lost their inhabitants. The economic model based on agro-pastoral activities was rejected in favour of the industries in the cities and it was followed by a feeling of total rejection and denial to the native highlands. This neglect resulted in the decline of paths, terraces, fields, typical crops and in the unravelled growth of woods. Consequently, the rural architecture, with its empty original dwellings, appeared as a symbol of underdevelopment in face of the urban buildings of the plains. The economic well-being of the 90s gave an idea of the mountain related to leisure activities which involved the emergence of a building industry that an- nexed the new economic and cultural interests allowed a huge entrepreneurial activity, especially for tourist accommodation (Legge regionale n. 31, 14 marzo). In fact, this new form of musealization gave importance to the landscape and its material and immaterial aspects, being one of the first institutional subjects to restore alpine buildings with a cultural importance, e.g. mills and ovens, and to begin a participatory project with the local population.

Before this, in the 90s there were already some examples of private restoration in the Western Alps, in particular by foreigners, such as Germans, who migrated to Piedmont looking for a place to relax (Pettin- nat, 2012). In the last decade, however, the awareness of new development models increased in local people and stakeholders and the existing local heritage was interpreted as a keystone in response to financial crisis and consumerist lifestyles. New inhabitants arrived and old residents came back; some of them attracted by the rediscovery of traditional work activities such as farming; others looking at existing buildings in view of new uses, especially for tourist accommodation.

In these cases, building conservation meant finding new functions as well as appropriate restoration techniques and to recover the knowledge of the local materials employed, e.g. wood and stone. Thanks to this, new economic and cultural interests allowed local workers to maintain the know-how related to the traditional way of building, and research institutions, such as universities, to look for environmentally friendly solutions. Nowadays we see how local strategies are inevitably tied to a larger international context that involves the Alps completely. On one hand alpine areas are seen more and more as a strategic macroregion for a new kind of social and sustainable development, as highlighted by the Alpine Convention (signed in 1991) that protects the interests of the people living there and embraces the environmental, social, economic and cultural dimensions. One of its paragraphs is entitled “Population and Culture”, where they are considered a priority to respect and preserve, and promote the cultural and social independence of the indigenous population. In concern to future dynamics, the Alpine Convention points out the active role of local populations; the declaration highlights the shared responsibility of the alpine and non-alpine populations for the maintenance of the cultural uniqueness of the Alps.

On the other hand, the European Landscape Convention (signed in 2000) promotes the protection of the different landscapes as the result of the local people’s opinion on their environment. Landscape protection and valorisation are also based on what local people want to share and transmit. Landscape, as a common place for human life and nature, could be defined as a tamed place where people exercise their specific culture and traditions. In an historical perspective, landscapes represent values reflecting the world views of various social groups and their interactions and relations with nature as components of the cultural context. Vernacular architecture is the most evident material characteristic of anthropized landscape. Its transformation in heritage is a recent social phenomenon: currently it is no longer tied to monuments of exceptional character, but it includes small villages with their complex of buildings and accessories as demonstrated by Italian associations like “I borghi più belli d’Italia” or “I borghi autentici d’Italia”. Vernacular architecture acquires importance also in the local claims and negotiations to achieve of- ficial recognition as in the UNESCO’s policies.

2. LOCAL AND EUROPEAN CONTEXTS

A short history regarding the cultural transformations and the rethinking of alpine architecture may give a better prospective on the phenomenon. In the 90s the restoration of local architecture was evident with the foundation and implementation of Ecumuseums in Piedmont, the first Italian region with a specific law on the matter (Legge regionale n. 31, 14 marzo). In fact, this new form of musealization gave importance to the landscape and its material and immaterial aspects, being one of the first institutional subjects to restore alpine buildings with a cultural importance, e.g. mills and ovens, and to begin a participatory project with the local population. Before this, in the 90s there were already some examples of private restoration in the Western Alps, in particular by foreigners, such as Germans, who migrated to Piedmont looking for a place to relax (Pettinat, 2012).

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3. METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

My research started in 2011, regarding the ethnographic fieldwork and the comparative observation of some alpine villages (Ostana in Po Valley; Valliera and Campodè in Grana Valley, Bourcet in Chisone Valley, Montecrestese in Ossola Valley, Massello in Ger- manasca Valley) where different approaches—from bottom up to top down—emerged and where interesting dynamics occurred both in the rediscovery of the know-how related to the building industry, both in terms of new functions of several buildings for new economic and cultural activities. With bottom-up strategies, local actors are sentimentally involved, perhaps due to previous ties with the territory, sometimes the land of their ancestors, or by an economic will, which sees these places as an alternative to a dominant ur- ban model of development.

But the prosperity of the traditional aspects of the past can also be expressed by the musealization of tourist interest sites.

4. CONCLUSION

My study is aimed at understanding the role of the community in the process of recovery and valorisation of rural areas. The role of the local population in the process of green heritage can be of utmost importance for the cultural and social valorisation of the territory, and for the promotion of a sustainable development model. The process of recovery and valorisation of rural areas can be defined as a niche in the sector of cultural tourism, as an alternative to the dominant urban model of development.

In conclusion, my research approaches the phenomenon of alpine architecture from a social perspective, and it highlights the importance of the local population in the process of recovery and valorisation of rural areas.

END
4. SOME REFLEXIONS: WHAT POLICIES AFTER THE MEASURES 322 OF PIEDMONT REGION?

During my PhD I had the opportunity to follow the measure 322 from the beginning to the end. As a part of these projects several manuals for good practices have been edited, related both to the existing interventions and contemporary buildings. These latter are, however, only of “architectonic” acuteness (De Rossi, 2013). Referring to the manual of best practices for architectural interventions in the municipality of Ostana (CN), we found that interventions make readable the differences between the old and new parts of settlement. In fact this manual states that the correct interpretation of type, functions, structures, materials and methods of construction of the building is needed in order to preserve the original elements. The existing buildings are presented as “an enormous encyclopaedia that history has given us” (Deci, Bardeschi, 1990 in De Rossi, Crotti, Dini and Giusiano, 2012), this is why the primary purpose of the intervention must be the conservation, in the most original way possible. The restoration project must not only be a task of embalming but must be able to welcome the transformation, provided that it will be both appropriate and respectful. Approvable because they can also use new forms related to current needs; respectful because it can implement the transformation in a contemporary reinterpretation of traditional materials such as wood, stone and iron. The manual also informs that it is not desirable to fall back on the past and to indulge in a nostalgic view, disguising or camouflaging the simultaneous operations but developing reasoned interventions going beyond the kitsch and which are nothing more than the material conditions to agevaluate the return to these places focusing on their future. After almost two years from the end of my fieldwork period and after one and a half years beyond of the measure 322, returning to the places and observing the transformations, it can be said that those once “too empty spaces” (Coggiard, 2008) are now filled with new meanings and new projects thanks to a relocation of marginal areas to the center of new cultural, social and political interactions.

The restoration of vernacular architecture, that historically informed us of agro-pastoral culture, is following some of the most modern styles, such as the use of renewable sources (flowing water to the geothermal), and therefore it is becoming a pull factor for a new type of residency. In my work I theorized that the recovery of abandoned Alpine villages was the premise for the population increase. Currently migratory movements in the Alps are complex but often related to the new neo-ruralism in which people seek new jobs or amenity life projects in natural areas (Merlo, 2006). It isn’t a coincidence that the hamlets in which restoration was—and actually is being carried out—show a return. The “returnees”, new residents who create the conditions for living in the mountains are attracted by the link with the past in the same manner in which they are open to the technology and the most modern housing solutions. The potential of the “empty”, which became “margin”, in the past is well expressed in the work of Cognard on those who moved to the French Alps of Dios: “ils ont particulier compris assez tôt les limites du modèle productiviste et anticipé l’évolution de la perception des espaces ruraux au sein de la société, et donc le nouveau potentiel offert à des territoires tels que le Dios, restes en marge du modèle économique dominant, et pouvant justement valoriser leur aspect préservé dans une perspective du développement durable” (2008, p. 8).

Where the depopulation was not total, the amalgamation between the residents of the most long-running and those that migrate has given and is giving rise to forms of cultural creativity, where the term “creativity” can be explained both as the result of the meeting between cultures (Favole, 2010), both as inside attitude of the single subject (Remotti, 2011), and it can be combined with the term “generativity” (Magatti, 2014) as a basic anthropological movement, which expresses itself in art, in crafts, in cooperative work and in some entrepreneurships, beyond the technology of the capitalist economic system. The new European Programme, ERDF (European Rural Development Fund) and EARDF (European Agricultural Cultural Rural Development Fund), and in particular the DSR interventions to support other recoveries of the existing architectural heritage in the Piedmontese Alpine villages of Piedmont and will intervene where recoveries have already been made: renovated hamlets must not be reduced to empty containers but must be considered a potential to attract people, for this reason, policies are needed to enhance them on the housing market.

Therefore, housing policies must point in the direction of supporting returns and curing existing services or implementing others, because returning people must imagine themselves in the mountain in a long term period.4

5. CONCLUSIONS

The small-scale approach to the restoration description of the Alpine landscape and architecture shows some of the best practices that can be analyzed in a comparative manner not only between the different states of the European Alpine areas but also beyond. In fact, the mountain regions are the first to be affected by new forms of migration. The new created communities bring new styles of life which reinvent aspects of the local life. Migrations, however, are not just for economy but for a different way of thinking about the future oriented on green economy and sustainable forms of land use. It means that the alpine world is much more dynamic than the plains. Buildings are restored according to very specific guidelines, trying not to forget the life of the past while creating spaces conform to present needs. Multifunctionality is the keyword when speaking about the recovery of alpine villages: any restoration must be linked to the creation of new job positions related to the cultural, architectural and environmental protection, but also tourism, aircraft and local production in order to induce virtuous processes of sustainable development.
L'architettura rurale delle borgate di montagna fa parte di un più vasto patrimonio culturale alpino che ha subito, negli ultimi anni, un processo di rivalutazione, al quale sono seguite azioni di recupero e di valorizzazione. Sin dall'inizio dello scorso secolo, la storia di molti villaggi alpini in Piemonte è stata caratterizzata da un progressivo abbandono e spopolamento da parte degli abitanti, a causa dell'attrazione che hanno esercitato i modelli produttivi ed industriali dei fondovalle nonché della pianura, soprattutto a seguito del boom economico. Tuttavia, al giorno d'oggi – come molte ricerche sottolineano – il nuovo interesse per le Alpi e le Terre Alte è accompagnato da fenomeni sociali di rivalutizzazione e di riappropriazione tali da invertire le tendenze demografiche negative del ‘900: alla luce di questi processi, quali possono essere le risposte dell'architettura vernacolare alpina nelle nuove politiche abitative per le montagne? Lo scopo di questo contributo è quello di riflettere sui risultati di una ricerca antropologica condotta nelle Alpi piemontesi che ha avuto come oggetto di studio il recupero e la rivalutazione delle case e delle borgate montane del territorio alpino. Ha preso parte al progetto europeo E.CH.I. per la catalogazione del patrimonio alpino immateriale.

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For the biennium 2012-2014 the “Scuola di Specializzazione in Sieri Architettonici e del Paesaggio” (Postgraduate School of Architectural and Landscape Heritage) in Turin’s Politecnico chose the areas of middle “valle Stura di Demonte” in the Western Alps for its analysis and research. A case study was identified in the inhabited village of Saret, which was once closely related to Bergemolo and Demonte and is now a significant example of the abandonment of the mountain settlements in the Cuneo area. The decline of the mountain economic system began in the early twentieth century with the advent of industrialization concentrated in the city of Cuneo and the strong attractive power of the nearby plain. This caused the progressive loss of interest in the middle valley and the abandonment of numerous settlements in the Cuneo valleys. In the last fifty years of the twentieth century the depopulation of mountain areas led to profound changes in the Alpine landscape. The Governance discontinuity affected the stability of the hydro geological and the agro forestry ecosystem and destroyed the bond between the environment and its inhabitants. The abandonment of “terre alte” (highlands) meant a loss of identity for these places, if exacerbated their economic and social exclusion, threatened the territorial assets and altered, often irreversibly, the perception of the landscape. In recent years, there has been a turnaround. Although it is still limited, the re-settlement phenomenon leads to reconsider the strategic role of “terre alte” as a programming field at all scales. The return to the mountain, mainly from urban areas, is generated by the search for a balance between the contemporary living style and a new relationship with nature, with a reinterpretation of the landscape. The alpine tradition is utterly fascinating and is nourished from its inhabitants determined not only the structural deterioration of its buildings, but also the re-appropriation of the settlement by the woods, its only true “inhabitants” which also put its conservation at risk.

2For further information about how the “Terre Alte” area has been mapped in the “Bollettino del P.A.V.”, n. 177-178-119 (2003), pp. 161-177.

3Pedroche Canção. Territorial dynamics of repopulation in the Alpine area and their impacts on local development paths. “In: la ricerca delle Aree Proteggiate” a “reuso” (Società Idrospaziale, 2009), pp. 55-137.

The complexity of these abandonment issues and revitalization of the mountain can become an opportunity for sustainable development. After the economic boom that hit the region, Saret was afflicted not only by the abandonment trend, but also, more recently, by the declaration of “inadmissibility” that affected Bergemolo as part of the proposal “for organic and integrated programs aimed at the recovery and the development of a limited number of mountain villages” under the Piedmont Rural Development Plan (Piano di Sviluppo Rurale Piemonte 2007-2013; Measure 322, Action B). Among the questions that immediately animated the “study site”, this verdict of “inadmissibility” was certainly an issue deserving more reflection, specifically on the role Saret can play as an indicator of the ambiguity that often surrounds the definition of “mountain village”. The complexity of Bergemolo’s settlement structure is marked by the close relationship among the four rural settlements (Saret, Laugar, Folco, Carlen) which revolve around the same agro forestry and pastoral system. Bergemolo’s settlement could not be exclusively explained as a “compact thickening [...] of buildings that doesn’t assume the character of a single productive / residential settlement” (Measure 322, Action B, PSR 2007-2013) but it was rather necessary to reconsider it in the light of the mountain villages features identified in the Regional Landscape Plan.

Furthermore, three favourable conditions allowed the launching and development of this learning experience: an heterogeneous group of students, interested in cultural education and geographical origin; a present and alert local authority, sensitive to the problems affecting their territory; a banking foundation committed in the support of educational activities as an opportunity for the community’s future development. These conditions, far from being obvious, are essential for a post-graduate training, to build knowledge, and acquire the necessary skills and expertise to deal with future professions. The study program has been perfected over time and the progressive knowledge of the site has contributed to the fine-tuning of its purpose, that is to offer proposals and strategies for a sensitive and fundamental issue of our times: the sustainable re-use of mountain areas. At the beginning, the re-search object was limited to the Saret di Bergemolo settlement, but along with further awareness came the need to recover the entire surrounding landscape. This became the real challenge, the one which could undermine established certainties, open opportunities to make comparisons with other ways of living and weave together different knowledge through historical and cultural analysis. At first, the abandonment trend in Saret showed specific features, since the absence of its inhabitants determined not only the structural deterioration of its buildings, but also the re-appropriation of the settlement by the woods. Its only true “inhabitants” which also put its conservation at risk.

PICTURE 1. Schematic section of valle Stura di Demonte

PICTURE 2. The system of the four settlements setting up Bergemolo

Nature and buildings coexist in a precarious balance, so in the absence of maintenance and recovery interventions, vegetation takes its toll on buildings. This research work began with the investigation carried out on a regional scale over the entire Valle Stura and goes on with the study of historical sources, the recording of oral testimony from the last inhabitant before the abandonment in the early 1950’s and the dialogue with the local government.
The analysis considered the entire village of Bergemo- lo, comprising four villages overlooking the two plateaus forming a “hanging” side valley: Lauger, Folco, Laù, and Sant’Anna di Valdieri. The path towards Saret defined issues into themes and remember that the state of abandonment of Saret and the consequent reapropriation of the area by the woods, determine the need for a first reclamation and completion: the structure of the village readable again and allowing a proper development of the building site.

The attention put on the physical aspects of the landscape is expressed through the management of woods and the enhancement of elements such as the linear formations on the sides of the higher plateau and the visual arrangements on the path towards Saret. The definition of the forestry intervention follows the legislation (Legge Regionale Piemonte n. 4 del 2000 s.m.i. art. 3 c. 3 bis, Testo unificato dei progetti di legge regionale n. 511, 345, 423 427 − Gestione e promozione economica delle foreste), and particularly aims at enhancing cultivation of cultural value, such as some fruit trees inside the settlement. The securing plan uses naturalistic engineering in order to stabilize terraced areas and drywalls. Actions range from the simple restoration of stone elements with traditional techniques, to the use of cages made out of recyclable materials obtained after demolition, to the increase of the hydro geological safety of slopes through reinforced and greened soils: - enhancement of the connective tissue and the common areas: accessibility to the settlement is renewed and integrated through interventions on the connective tissue involving the arrangement of internal footpaths and the creation of two parking areas at two different ends of the settlement, one downstream, along the way connecting Lauger to Folco, and the other upstream.

The pedestrian access to Saret retraces and enhances a path, today abandoned, which starts from the fountain at the foot of the mountain, reaches the ridge path on the main route that runs through the entire village, and continues on the historical route connecting Bergemoletto and Sant’Anna di Valdieri. The path intercepts all public spaces, the historical ones and the new ones, created where it was needed; - re-proposal of the original building volumes: the project aims at recreating the original volumes and the settlement tissue by stressing solids and voids that define the skyline of Saret from the upper plateau. Criticalities have been identified in the building operations, in the presence of the forest encroachment inside the built core, in the high degree of structural criticality, in the use of poor materials and poor quality construction techniques and the lack of service networks. On this basis it was possible to define specific action criteria referring to the following issues: the transmission of the documentary value, the conservation of the original relationship between solids and voids, the re-proposal of the original volumes and the typologies of buildings, the conservation and the refurbishment of the pitch slopes, the conservation, - refurbishment of the settlement through the inclusion of new uses: the integrated project begins with the analysis of the identifying characters and the local opportunities. On one side, it develops the cultural landscape of the traces left by men who transformed the territory in order to inhabit it. On the other side, it focuses on tourism, especially for summer and winter sports. The refurbishment project mixes four main function categories including: activities related to farming and related services; receptivity; sports; tourism and educational sites. The decision to locate all the activities on the ridge path, allow visitors to experience all of them, from downstream to upstream, while discovering the new Saret architectures. An innovative element is the idea of considering Saret building site as an educational opportunity for all its duration: a site to test materials and construction techniques, experiment the transengenerative transmission of knowledge, renew and focus the community’s attention on the abandonment of Alpine settlements and the development of a new community of informed inhabitants.

The actions that structure the scenario of Saret enhancement are part of a perspective focusing on making Bergemolo’s system for visitors, residents and businesses more appealing, in order to revive the mountain inhabitants as “middle mountain”. Campobase1000 therefore offers the mountain scenery. Campobase1000 therefore offers the mountain scenery. Campobase1000 therefore offers the mountain scenery. Cam-
Alessandra Barberis (architectural engineer, graduated at the Università di Genova), Nadia Frullo (architect, graduated at the Politecnico di Torino), Dino Genovese (Doctor of Forest and Environmental Sciences, graduated at the Università di Torino), Ivanno Menso (architectural engineer, graduated at the Politecnico di Torino), Alice Vergano (architect, graduated from the Politecnico di Torino).

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Lo scenario integrato di valorizzazione e di ruriforestalizzazione si è configurato quindi quale progetto complesso del Polo territoriale in cui la trasformazione o modificazione di una di queste comporta necessariamente effetti sull’intero sistema.

I temi d’indagine sono:

- bonifica del bosco di inondazione, messa in sicurezza del terreno montano e dei muri a secco di contenimento;
- valorizzazione del tessuto connesso e degli spazi comuni;
- proporzionamento delle volumetrie dei manufatti;
- ruriforestalizzazione del nucleo attraverso l’inserimento di nuove destinazioni d’uso.

Da quest’esperienza didattica è emerso come il filo conduttore di un progetto di rivitalizzazione di contesti a rischio, come quello delle borghi della “montagna di mezzo”, non possa dipendere solamente dalla sensibilità di professionisti e dall’integrazione di tutti i fotoni che un tema così complesso intercetta.

Queste borghi da un lato offrono grandi opportunità di sviluppo e dall’altro, resilienti all’abbandono, conservano ancora intatte la tracce del paesaggio culturale tipiche dell’arco alpino. Il progetto deve quindi fondarsi sulla volontà, l’impegno e attenzione da parte dell’impianto pubblico amministrativo, oltre che sul coinvolgimento e affezione ai luoghi di altri attori sociali e in primo luogo della popolazione.

Per rispondere a questa necessità di un strumento adeguato a dialogare e a mettere in relazione i diversi attori coinvolti nella gestione e nella fruizione del territorio nasce l’associazione culturale Campabase.

L’intento dell’associazione è quello di porre come ponte tra il territorio, le istituzioni e la popolazione facendosi da parte attiva, non solo nella salvaguardia della vitalità economica e sociale delle comunità locali ma di rafforzare le specificità attraverso un approccio integrato capace di riconciliare i segni della tradizione attraverso la proposta di “buone pratiche” di intervento coerenti e sostenibili.

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DIDATTICA LA NASCITA DI
STEPPING STONES: DA UN’ESPERIENZA
NEWCOMERS IN THE ALPS: BENEFITS OF HAVING “SECOND HOMERS”.

A CASE STUDY IN THE EASTERN ITALIAN ALPS

1. DEMOGRAPHIC TURNAROUND AND (SECOND-HOME) NEWCOMERS’ IN THE ALPS

The Alps have witnessed a tremendous demographic development over the last decades. More and more communities have long been affected by emigration and an ageing population are now becoming in-migration areas (Corrado 2010; Messerli et al. 2011; Bender & Schneidhuber 2012; Corrado et al. 2014; Löffler et al. 2014).

This return migration involves re-migrants, retirees, working and seasonal migrants as well as newcomers. Within the newcomer category, “second homers” make up a significant part of the new inhabitants (multi-local residents). This is not always seen as positive, as they sometimes only spend limited time in the village, do not get involved in community life, are responsible for the increase in real estate prices while the village infrastructure has to be optimized for full capacity year-round (to include the second-home owners).

As these problems are well known and have already been discussed intensively (CIPRA Info 87, 2008), here we want to mention the positive aspects of second-home newcomers on the basis of various case studies in the remote areas of the Eastern Italian Alps. We found second-home owners all over the Alps in the most diverse communities; therefore we chose among the municipalities with a good proportion of second-home newcomers:

1. a peripheral community composed of several hamlets (Canal San Bovo),
2. a community that experienced a complete, forced resettlement (Erto e Casso),
3. a particularly tourism-oriented community (Sauris),
4. a small village that has no road access (Stavoli).

During our field trips throughout the Alps we spoke to locals, newcomers, community officials, “second homers”, tourists, traders, tourism experts, and farmers, and very often we noted the interesting opinion that owners of a part-time residence are in some ways important for the community: without them many villages and settlements would not be able to maintain their buildings which is unfavorable for the villages’ appearance. Even though second-home owners only spend few days, weeks or months in the destination area, they care about their homes and keep them in good condition, and this seems always better than vacant and run-down houses.

2. NEW FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND “GHOST HAMLETS” - ZORTEA, GASPERSI, FOSSE

Zortea, part of the community of Canal San Bovo (Province of Trento), has registered many re-migrants – mainly retirees – within the last couple of years. The main reason for this return migration was affordable real estate in the mountains. Besides retirees, as the map (fig. 1) shows, we also find some newcomers in Zortea: two families with a total of six children, a single woman, two couples – one of them established a goat farm and is producing cheese –, an architect with his family, and a few others. In regards to children, it is important to mention that a number of young couples live in Zortea, and in 2012 they registered 12 newborns. Many of the second-home owners originate from Veneto and Rome and – when present – are well integrated in the village. In many other communities in the Italian Alps, numerous “second homers” are registered as primary residents as this brings several benefits for them, such as lower real estate taxes.

In the hamlets Fosse, Gasperi and Busini second-home newcomers own around half of the dwellings. Here it is obvious that without them the situation would be much worse: Busini would even be a “ghost hamlet” because apart from the three agricultural buildings, all the houses are owned by newcomers.

3. LANDSLIDE, FORCED RE-SETTLEMENT, RETURN MIGRATION – ERTO E CASSO

In Friuli, second-home owners – although in a very special manner – were the main driver for the resettlement of the villages Casso and Erto (Comune Erto e Casso/Province of Pordenone, pop. 2014: 387). In 1963, a devastating landslide from “Monte Toc” into the Vajont dam (“Disastro del Vajont”) left the settlements Erto and Casso uninhabitable. The people were first accommodated in private houses, taverns and shacks in the surrounding areas and then had to move to the newly constructed settlement Vajont (community of Maniago) about 50 km southeast outside the Alps in the Friulian “pianura” (plain) (Zucco 2010). Although they were not allowed to move back to their places of origin for several years, the people, however, soon started to return to their houses to see what was left and started clearing up and renovating.

Due to the inhabitants’ determination not to give up their birthplaces and to – sooner or later – return to their birthplace, Erto and Casso are now populated again.

4. NEW FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND “GHOST HAMLETS” - ZORTEA, GASPERSI, FOSSE

Casso has been characterized by a huge renovation boom in the last years (also with financial support of the EU), with new electrical power and energy supply, new paving, reconstruction of houses, establishment of stores and restaurants and much more. Many “Erntari” who moved away still own a house in Erto Vecchio and use it as a vacation home.

The German-language pocket of Sauris (pop. 2014: 413), the highest community in Friuli (Sauris di Sopra: 1390 m a.s.l.), is on one hand characterized by a unique language and culture and on the other hand by a rapid structural transformation from an agricultural settlement to an economic and tourism oriented one (Steinicke 1991).

The cultural business, most children decided to work in the much less labor-intensive jobs in the trade and tourism sectors; or they moved away (Steinicke et al. 2014).

To stimulate tourism, Sauris implemented in 1994 the concept of “albergo diffuso” which was developed already in the 1980s. According to this concept, traditional, partly vacant houses have been renovated and are now used as tourist accommodations. Besides the complete range of a regular hotel business it intends to provide the guest with a stay as authentic as possible. The core of this accommodation form is located in Sauris di Sopra (fig. 5) and nowadays consists of about 140 beds overall.

Many houses in Sauris are second and holiday homes and mainly used during the Easter, summer, Christmas and New Year holidays, and on weekends. The owners of these houses come mainly from Udine, Trieste, Bologna, Bergamo and some from Germany. Locals look at the growing second-home market with concern because of the resulting real-estate price increases, but at the same time they also know that by themselves they could not keep up the appearance of their village, which is a unique feature and selling point in tourism competition.

5. SURVIVING THE EARTHQUAKE - STAVOLI

One of the most interesting examples of the importance of second homes is the hamlet of Stavoli in the municipality of Moggio Udinese (Friuli). In 1976, a series of earthquakes lead to enormous destruction in the region Friuli-Venezia Giulia with nearly 1,000 deaths, tens of thousands of people affected, and countless houses ruined. Because Stavoli was close to the epicenter it was lifted rather than shaken and therefore the destruction was far less than in many other villages in the area. Even though today Stavoli is no longer populated year-round, nearly all houses are in a good condition and used as second homes by locals as well as newcomers (fig. 6). Stavoli is surrounded by pastures and agricultural land which is still used, and although there is no road to Stavoli –only a pathway and a material cableway –the pastures are mown and the hay is used.

6 CONCLUSION

The negative effects of second homes on a community are well known, among other the property and real-estate price increase, higher expenses for the municipality, and closed shutters in the off-season.

In this study we want to point out that “second homes” can also have positive impacts in the remote areas of the Alps. The appearance of a small village is often connected to the presence of second homes as the community itself would not be able to afford the maintenance of all the houses, which would lead to many abandoned buildings. In Friuli, without second-home owners there would be many more “ghost towns” than there already are. They keep the buildings in good condition, and in some villages people even started to move back and live there all year round. Where this has not taken place yet, second and vacation home owners in some areas at least set the pre-conditions for a possible re-settlement.
NUOVI ABITANTI NELLE ALPI: I VANTAGGI DI AVERE PROPRIETARI DI SECONDE CASE, 
UN CASO DI STUDIO NELLE ALPI ORIENTALI

Negli ultimi anni le Alpi sono state teatro di uno straordinario sviluppo demografico: sempre più comuni, alpini, per lungo tempo caratterizzati da una forte emigrazione e da un invecchiamento della popolazione, sono nel frattempo diventate aree d’immigrazione. I nuovi immigrati sono emigranti di ritorno, pensionati, lavoratori immigrati, lavoratori stagionali come anche nuovi mantanenti. Una percentuale relativamente alta dei nuovi mantananti (newcomers) è costituita dal gruppo dei proprietari di seconde case. La loro presenza non è sempre vista di buon occhio. Da un lato le infrastrutture dei comuni devono funzionare in maniera efficiente anche per loro, dall’altro lato gli stessi comuni, a causa dei molti negozzi chiusi, appaiono in bassa stagione paesi fantasmati. Inoltre i proprietari di seconde case si fermano in paese solo per brevi periodi, non partecipano alla vita sociale e sono visti come corresponsabile dell’aumento dei prezzi d’immobili. Tali problemi sono ben noti e sono già stati affrontati come problemi di invecchiamento, ma non sono state trovate soluzioni efficaci.

In questi comuni, la presenza di proprietari di seconde case, sparsi nei remote Alpi orientali, gli aspetti positivi derivanti dalla loro presenza, la maniera autonoma di mantenere questa immagine, non possono passare inosservati. Molti comuni traggono vantaggio dal fatto che i proprietari di seconde case mantengono le loro case in buono stato e forzato abbandono (Erto e Casso), (Canal S. Bovo), (Zahre). In: Porcellana, V. & Diémoz F. (eds.): Minoranze etno-linguistiche nel territorio alpino, Edizioni dell’Orso, pp. 205-228.

Research Group
“Demographic Change in the Alps”
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Project at the Institute of Geography, University of Innsbruck
Current Demographic Changes in the European Alps – Effects on the Autochthonous Linguistic Minorities
The Impact of Current Demographic Transformation on Ethno-Linguistic Minorities in the Alpine Area

Research Interests
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FOREIGN IMMIGRATION AND HOUSING ISSUE IN SMALL ALPINE VILLAGES

1. In recent years, thanks to foreign immigration and demographic change in the Italian Alps after decades of strong demographic crisis - which has resulted in a widespread depopulation, accompanied by aging, in many parts of the area - the population has slowly grown in various areas (first of all, along the axis of Aosta and Adige valleys, inside per-urban municipalities and in the main tourist resorts). This increase is not however endogenous - as most of the Alpine municipalities show a natural stable or negative growth rate - rather it appears as exogenous, precisely because the phenomenon of international and internal migration (DIMMICHANGE, 2012) within the diversified population of the new mountain inhabitants, the presence of foreign citizens, who arrived either directly or via more complex routes in the Alpine municipalities, is taking on a significant role (Corradi, Demattei and Di Giusto, 2014): almost 350,000 foreigners, most of which come from non-EC countries with high rates of emigration are in fact residents in the 1,749 Italian municipalities, whose territory is included in the Alpine Convention (ISTAT and Confindustria della Alps, 2014). This is an interesting presence in numerical terms, and even more so, as a social phenomenon impacts on local lasting crisis contexts. It would be interesting to study the dimension of social innovation brought by this phenomenon (Membretti, 2015) and cultural transformation caused by this significant demographic turn (Vizzaccio, 2013). Among the factors that pull migrants to the Alps there is the addition to employment opportunities (which may be present on-site or in nearby areas), also the availability of affordable housing, the lower cost of living that enables to escape the chaos and risks of the metropolis, by living in rural settings emerging areas), also the availability of affordable housing, the lower cost of living that enables to escape the chaos and risks of the metropolis, by living in rural settings emerging areas), also the availability of affordable housing, the lower cost of living that enables to escape the chaos and risks of the metropolis, by living in rural settings (Demattei, 2010).

2. LIVING IN THE FRINGE

The “rebound” of the immigrants towards rural areas in small municipalities (with a population less than 10,000) is a phenomenon which primarily welcome foreigners who decide to live in the Italian Alps: these tend to be “fragile areas” (Ostì and Ventura, 2012), in a recent past land of emigration and dramatic depopulation, for a long time marginalized by the post-war industrial development, and now becoming the destination of opposing immigration flows. They are fragile also because they are neglected, living the contrast between the relative simplicity of their social-cultural structure - simplified further by depopulation and the scarcity of social relations - and the higher diversity and dynamism brought by the foreigner. Small municipalities are an important player in the national context: in 2010 they represented 70.2% of Italian municipalities and occupied 54% of the perinatal area (81.1% of the national population lived in these same regions - such as the Alps - the small municipalities are more prevalent than the national average, for example, they are 74% in Trentino-Adige, 88.7% in Piedmont, 77.5% in Liguria and 71.1% in Friuli Venezia Giulia (Ostì and Ventura, op. cit.). Among them, the municipalities most affected by this phenomenon: those with a population of less than 150 inhabitants / sq km) represent an important observatory to observe the migration phenomenon: for these areas, in fact, it is now possible to notice a series of cultural advances (Demarchi, Gaburri and Stabuppi, 2003) related to the intensification of some migration dynamics, as a result of the interaction between the spatialized local demographic structure and the arrival of new residents. In small Alpine municipalities the migration from abroad is often manifested as a “rebound effect” of foreigners from the city (first immigration destination) to rural areas, in many cases a more general process of intentional suburbanization, affecting the foothill territory (Brighenti, 2013). Although the causes of impending ecological succession are by now very few, however, there are several small municipalities in which the arrival of foreign communities (which is usually accompanied by a positive birth trend, due to family reunification and higher average fertility rate) allows to maintain essential services in the mountains (schools, post offices, etc.) otherwise these facilities would have disappeared, given the very low number of users accelerating exponentially the depopulation process. The small Alpine municipalities, especially those located in the west and east ends of the mountain range, after being adversely affected (especially in the period 1951-1981) by depopulation and socioeconomic crisis (Baltz, 2005), have shown inverse signals in recent decades, even if widespread and patchy. Since the early 80s, the “return to the mountains” has mainly assumed (in terms of total numbers) the characteristics of a perurban development of settlements, first of all in the territories of the lower valleys, close to major metropolitan agglomerations, and then back to the small towns of the foothills or highlands, those most easily accessible and therefore a place of residence for commuters traveling between the main centres (Perik, Messieli and Baltz, 2001). Assuming that, somehow, the peculiar characteristics of small communities in the Alps may influence the attractiveness - and the social integration, too - of foreign immigrants, and focusing the attention on the spatial dimension of these processes, which play the role of housing availability - in relation to the location of small Alpine villages on the edge of larger urbanized areas - inside these dynamics?

3. FOREIGN IMMIGRATION AND HOUSING IN THREE SMALL ALPINE COMMUNITIES IN ORDER TO FIND SOME ANSWERS TO THE ABOVE QUESTIONS

I have considered three case-studies among Italian Alpine municipalities characterized by the presence of foreigners. Two of these municipalities: located to the extreme west and east of the Alps (which are the areas historically affected by depopulations; with a significant and consolidated presence of foreign immigration (above the national average, that was 8.1% in 2014); and, finally, characterized by different forms of housing processes regarding foreigners, with respect to the private market and public intervention.

Bagno di Romagna: the settlement of an ethnic enclave, the municipality is located - at an altitude of 365 m above sea level - in the extreme northern part of the Cemo province (Piedmont region), on the left bank of the mountains marking the border with France. Gran over an area of 62.92 sq km, live 6,120 inhabitants with a population density of 97.3 inhab. / sq km; there are 822 foreign residents, 13.43% of the total population (ISTAT, 2014). This small in-depth study was carried out in April-May 2015 and it was based on the analysis of socio-demographic data and on qualitative interviews, conducted with the author together with the mayors of the selected municipalities.

For centuries one of the most important economic activities of this area is linked to the presence of numerous quarries for the extraction of Lucama building stone; in the municipality there is also a tourist location, which in recent decades has had a remarkable development as a summer and winter holiday destination. Foreign presence in the village is determined primarily by a large Chinese community (about 500 people, entirely from the same province of PRG, long term residents in this territory whose male components are all employed in the local quarries. The Chinese have replaced, work-wise and in terms of housing, the previous community of Sardinian immigrants, arrived in the area in the 70s, working as miners. The Sardinians had occupied the old houses of the historic village, partially renovating them, and these properties were taken - 20 years later - by the Chinese, in these apartments, that have meanwhile become quite uncomfortable, the Chinese (all men at the beginning of their migration) lived in poor and overcrowded conditions. Women had to abandon their employment situation today they are almost all permanent employees of mining companies and some of them are entrepreneurs, too, then came family reunion: the arrival of women has changed the lifestyle and expectations of the community also in regard to housing, where immigrants have started looking for the quality, the reliability of dwelling and use of space. The availability of good wages and the guarantee of long term employment, together with the positive charge of status, in recent years, has pushed the Chinese to abandon the old houses in the historic centre, in order to rent more modern apartments, cottages or portions of detached houses, with more space per capita and little gardens or courtyards. The result has been an overall positive impact on the local housing market, and because the Chinese have first occupied the vacant houses of the old town (in which Italians were no longer interested and because they are now turning towards new houses, it is always an impact on the rental and not on the purchase market, since immigrants regard their presence in this territory (and in Italy, too) as temporary and finally to the actualization of economic resources, in order to start thinking about their country of origin in the future. It should be noted how, in the last few years, some Chinese, especially young people, are leaving Bagno, due to the commercial and social dynamics of the town, and it has led to an economic situation, currently quite depressed, with per capita incomes among the lowest in the region and a substantial absence of productive activities.

Lona Lases: immigration pushed towards the suburbanization localized at the beginning of the Centro valley (Trento Alto-Adige region), at an altitude of 639 m above sea level, the municipality covers an area of 11.17 sq km, with a population density of 73 inhab. / sq km; foreign residents are 204, that is 23.02% of the total population (ISTAT, 2014). This small in-depth study was carried out in April-May 2015 and it was based on the analysis of socio-demographic data and on qualitative interviews, conducted with the author together with the mayors of the selected municipalities.

The village is among the first in the Italian Alps for the presence of foreigners, mostly Macedonians (about half of the total) and, then, Moroccans: the first wave of immigrants, arrived in the 90s, consisted mainly of men who came to work in the quarries - often fleeing from the war zones of former Yugoslavia - they used to live in shared apartments, often in precarious and overcrowded living conditions, in old houses not yet renovated. Since the early twenty-first century, mainly because of ongoing family reunion processes, the women started to come to Lona since they then the situation has changed radically and therefore the way of living has changed accordingly. Almost all the foreign residents took rented accommodation, often refurnished for this purpose by the owners, but also many new homes were rented. Due to this, the municipality states that there was never the necessity to intervene in support of housing policy for foreigners. Local governments over the years have worked to avoid possible housing overcrowding, by establishing the minimum size (45 sq m) an accommodation needed to be obtained residential practicability. Nevertheless, today foreign residents are working less and less in the quarries, given the crisis that invested the sector in recent years: there is rather a growing phenomenon of commuting workers, first towards the neighbouring town of Perige but also, increasing, towards the local capital of Trento, where the Chinese community, that appears integrated in the social and cultural structures, has had a remarkable development as a summer and winter holiday destination. For centuries one of the most important economic activities of the area is historically the excavation of porphyry, and it has led to an economic situation, currently quite depressed, with per capita incomes among the lowest in the region and a substantial absence of productive activities.

Taipana: housing policies against depopulation on the border with Slovenia (Friuli Venezia-Giulia region), Taipana is located at 478 m above sea level, on the first mountain ranges of the Julian Alps, in a process that has long been characterized by abandonment, it covers an area of 65.44 sq km, where live 651 people live, with a population density of 9.95 inhab. / sq km, with 85 foreigners, 14.9 % of the total population (ISTAT, 2014). Historically the village hosts the minority of Slovenian citizens in Italy, it is an area of employment of citizens of Slovenian origin, that has been accounted for almost 75% of the entire population but has gradually been declining, in conjunction with the depopulation phenomenon, in the territory in which it is located and it has led to an economic situation, currently quite depressed, with very low interests of the area. It is a place of the mountain, with a significant presence of foreigners, especially children of the families that have moved in the area in the immediate post-war period, in order to return to China or move outside the country. The Chinese community, that appears integrated in terms of work and housing, nevertheless leads a parallel existence with respect to the native population, in a social dimension of life that is so closely divided between home and quarry, with very rare interactions outside their ethnic enclave.
IN IMMIGRATION STRAINER AND QUESTION EMBRACED IN THE ALPINE VILLAGES

Dopo decenni di soppiantamento, che ha colpito numeroso aree dell’arco alpino italiano e in particolare i suoi estremi orientali ed occidentali, in anni recenti si notano segni di una inversione di tendenza, specialmente nelle zone montane più prossime alla pianura urbanizzata, nei fondi oltreoceano, lungo i grandi assi di collegamento transalpino e orientale ed occidentale, nei maggiori centri del turismo estivo ed invernale. Questo incremento demografico, anzi numericamente notevole e inconfondibile con il mutamento del paesaggio agricolo e industriale post-bellum, ha permesso ai piccoli comuni alpini di risvegliare la loro attività di consulenza per enti pubblici relativamente alla questione socio-demografica e culturale nel mondo alpino contemporaneo, Padova University Press, Padova.

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L’analisi dei tre studi di caso ha fatto emergere come i piccoli comuni alpini risultino attirati per gli immigrati stranieri, in comprensione di un insieme di fattori, ovvero: l’urbanizzazione dei territori prossimi alla pianura o ai fondi oltreoceano; l’urbanizzazione in loco o in aree limitrofe facilmente raggiungibili di opportunità lavorative; la disposizione dei soggetti a sfuggire a una condizione di “vizi spaziali”, che può diventare necrotico e allergico per gli immigrati. Se possiamo quindi affermare che i territori marginali alpini costituiscono un habitat favorevole, a data condizione, per l’insediamento di popolazioni straniere, ciò non sembra però accompagnarsi alla presenza in queste località di maggiori insediamenti e di infrastrutture, ma sembra oltretutto costituire una caratteristica comunale, che conducono a una vita parallela a quella degli abitanti, questa segmentazione sociale mostra delle analoga con quante accade nei processi di insediamento degli stranieri a livello urbano e metropolitano, laddove gli immigrati spesso vanno a costituire di fatto dei quartieri segregati e sembra in linea con le dinamiche tipiche del processo di suburbanizzazione.

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If an area was privately owned, all single plots were cancelled and reconverted into ownership percent-age rates. A brand new parceling of landplot (includ- ing infrastructure) was established on the basis of the action plan. Areas reserved to infrastructure were transferred to the municipality for free; areas for so- cial housing were expropriated or assigned to benefi- ciaries while private owners received a portion of the remaining area according to the original ownership percentages. On those remaining lots private owners could build providing that more than half of the dwell- ings became first homes.

When an area was transformed into residential expan- sion, private owners were assigned 40% of the entire volume and the corresponding plots of land calculated according to the building density for the entire area. Still private owners were not allowed to build dwell- ings which could be rented or sold freely but were obliged to rent or sell more than half of those estates to people leaving or working steadily in the province and who did not already own a house. By doing so only a small percentage of the built up volume within residential areas could be used as second homes or for other scopes.

The system was so conceived that no totally privately owned residential areas were legally possible since the minimum dimension of such an area had to allow the realisation of at least a social dwelling and a first home.

The system generated main advantages, not only by avoiding any unnecessary expansion, thus limiting land take but also generating a sense of certainty and confidence in the requirement for social housing, eliminating the need to negotiate on each expansion, which was beneficial for both private owners and lo- cal authorities. The obligation to reserve part of the realised dwellings to social and first homes applied throughout the province was generally accepted.

Action plans were mostly developed in full consulta- tion, achieving a shared understanding and avoiding lengthy disputes. They were mostly sensitive to differ- ent habits and needs in the various parts of the region considering local specificities and social organisation, particularly in the peripheral rural contexts.

The system generated a sense of place: it guaranteed the acceptance of social housing within private areas while the neighbourhood feeling was reinforced.

In like all well working systems there were also some disadvantages. First of all were areas sometimes made available by private owners in unsuitable places and small mu- nicipalities were not in the position to steer or force location decisions with the result that residential ar- eas were not always coherently expanded generating urban sprawl. In the rural villages the availability of areas frequently depended on the will of farmers to transform parts of their fields in residential lots, thus reducing the size of their farm units to the minimal vital dimension. The result was that areas were some- times made available in less favourable positions jeopardizing the correct expansion of villages.

Still the real estate demand in some attractive tour- ist destinations increased causing speculation and the overall rise of dwelling prices. According to statistical analysis in the last decades the number of second homes increased steadily up to the ’90s to decrease afterwards until the last census in 2011 when the amount of “dwellings which are not steadily occupied” resulted to be 9% of all homes. In 2011 the amount of people living in the province slightly exceeded the half million units. The total amount of dwellings was of 220,000 units while about 20,000 resulted not to be steadily occupied.
LE POLITICHE TERRITORIALI ED ABITATIVE NELLA PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI BOLZANO: UN’ESPERIENZA DI DIVERSI DECENNI

Le politiche territoriali ed abitative nella Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano: un’esperienza di diversi decenni. L’Alto Adige è la provincia bilingue situata nell’Italia settentrionale nella zona delle Dolomiti, dichiarata patrimonio naturale dall’UNESCO. La superficie è di ca. 740.000 km² di cui più dell’85% al di sopra dei 1.000 m s.l.m. La popolazione è di ca. mezzo milione di abitanti suddivisi in 116 Comuni, ma solo la città capoluogo, Bolzano, ne conta poco più di 100.000. Dalla sua posizione in ambito alpino solo il 6% della sua superficie può essere utilizzata per le diverse attività umane (dagli insediamenti, alle infrastrutture, alle produzioni agricole) imponendo quindi un uso parsimonioso. La provincia detiene dal 1948 una notevole autonomia in ambito legislativo, con competenze primarie in una serie di settori tra cui la pianificazione territoriale e le politiche abitative. Le prime riforme riguardanti tali materie furono apportate a partire dagli anni ‘60 e le leggi di allora sono ancora parzialmente in vigore anche se emendate più volte in questi decenni. La legge urbanistica provinciale aveva tra i suoi scopi principali quello della salvaguardia del carattere rurale e dell’identità locale ed in particolar modo del territorio e dell’identità locale ed in particolar modo del territorio e urbanistica e dell’identità locale e dell’identità locale. Con il piano di attuazione era stabilito il disegno territoriale per un periodo di dieci anni, previsti nei piani urbanistici come un periodo di transizione. Ad essi vennero scelti per l’attuazione i centri urbani maggiori, overt雷锋2想起了什么