

Chapter 2

The Evolution of Landscape in the Italian Urban Planning Culture

Abstract In the second chapter are introduced the cultural issues of the book, in order to understand what are the reasons of the centrality of the landscape in the Italian context. A completed analysis of the literature on the evolution of this theme is structured to bring out the relationship between landscape and urban planning and thus marking what we can consider as “critical issues” and the emerging trends in the debate on the subject. On the one hand, the chapter is articulated into a consideration of the evolution of the planning practices in the twentieth century, following a precise periodization: the early twentieth century; from the WWII to the late '80s; the landscape planning in new millennium. On the other, it consider the cultural context of the same periods, emphasizing the contribution of other disciplines such as geography, history, aesthetics, and the differences between Anglo-American and European cultures, in particular by highlighting the effects deriving from different planning systems and interpretations.

Keywords Landscape · Urban planning · Nature conservation · History

The intention to investigate the relationship between landscape and planning from local plans moves from the observation that the history of the city and the territory, planned, in most cases was carried out under different ways from those laid. The resolution of the relationship between landscape and planning appears quite difficult: this difficulty, however, is not only the result of inadequate regulation, but it is also the result of some theoretical conflicts that still remain within the national and international cultural debate.

The Italian landscape is a notoriously a densely populated landscape. It is historically characterized and determined by the relationship between the natural environment and the environment transformed by man. This is also recognizable in the most prestigious parts of the Italian landscape, in fact characterized by a strict correlation. It is evident that although the Italian urban planning tradition has progressively compromised that relationship, this for different causes and, often, poorly investigated. There are indeed differences due to the cultural matrix of the experts who deal with it, as well as to major events that have shaped the way the

landscape is entered in the territorial and urban planning, dealing from time to time with different phenomena related, for example, to a marked acceleration of economic processes and to always more rapid and extensive urban transformations. In many cases, the approach to landscape planning in Italy has followed some significant milestones that, below, have been identified in three basic phases:

1. Early twentieth century
2. From post-war period to '80s
3. From '80s to today.

These three phases refer not only with the change at the legislative, but also at the cultural level: an evolution that has significantly also highlighted some elements of ambiguity, principally relating to an improper separation between the landscape protection and territorial development that, even today, it is far from a possible solution. Added to this is a partial interpretation, or at least incomplete, of the European Landscape Convention (see Chap. 1), which while constituting the foundation of the new Italian legislative system in the field, suffered not a few intrusions. The outcome of this evolution, legislative and cultural, still needs to deal with a conservative approach which still is the only attitude Italian urban planning, through the use of territorial constraints, increasingly abstract and ineffective for the control of landscape transformations.

2.1 Early Twentieth Century

The protection of the landscape in Italy has been developed on average a few years later than in other European countries. What it is interesting to note is that in Italy the protection of the landscape takes its first steps in the early years of the twentieth century, however, in advance if we consider the consequences of the economic growth of the postwar period. Although in Italy the industrial growth was more late and the problems posed by urbanism in respect of the urban-rural relationship were still huge, some protection movements were developed, in line with what happened in Europe, in defense of the landscape and, in particular, of the natural beauty, according to an aesthetic point of view of nature conservation.

The history, thus not only Italian but international, of the territorial government has placed for a long time in antithesis *protection* and *development*, reserving to the first privileged but circumscribed spaces and to the second everything not falling in the special rules governing the protection. This is demonstrated by the fact of the institution, at international level since the last decades of the nineteenth century, of the national parks: an “American invention” (Nash 1970), born precisely to preserve nature oasis free from the use by man, saving for the public interest of the nation and more directly to counter the threats of destructive human interventions on resources and natural areas such as the occupation of the American West, which inspired the establishment of the Yellowstone National Park (1831), followed by

the Hot Springs in Arkansas (1832), the valleys of the Sierra Nevada (1864) and the Yosemite National Park (1890).

The concerns of the founding fathers of the nature protection movements¹ in the early twentieth century were fundamentally linked to the depletion of forest resources due to deforestation for agriculture or to the risks for some wildlife species due to hunting. Emiliani (2011) has even used for comparison these protectionist movements with the philosophical and sociological theories of Marxism. The author takes up the contribution of Marx and Engels on this issue, reports a stance of Engels against the deforestation in the Italian Alps (a theme, this, that will be more widely and systematically taken up by Filippo Turati during his parliamentary speech “*Rifare l'Italia*.”² in 1920, which is almost a manifesto for the environment). It is impossible not to be noted that the first political-cultural protest organized against capitalist exploitation of the primary cultural heritage comes from the utopian thinking, from anarchic-communist trend, particularly by the Russian geographer Kropotkin (1899): “Anarchy that embraces all of nature”, town and country that are integrated in a federal structure. In this sense, Emiliani stresses that anarchy is federalist and opposes the Marxist statism, even if Marx never developed a true doctrine of the State.

The thought of Kropotkin, in particular, has influenced a very important strand of American sociology and experts like Lewis Mumford: a contribution that, with almost half a century in advance on the contemporary technical and economic thought, Kropotkin had understood the benefits of the ductility and adaptability of communications and electricity, plus the possibility of an advanced agriculture. This philosophy of community type has nonetheless produced some impact even in Italy.³ In short, even in the Italian context, the Kropotkin idea, but also of Reclus, has provided important indications for the territorial and landscape planning not limited only to the natural beauty conservation.

In Europe, in the specific case of London (1898), the protectionist movements (especially by private associations) were compared to the scale of the city and presented to the House of Commons, with specific reasons: the protection of landscapes and picturesque sites against deterioration and alteration not justified by public interest considerations; the maintenance of open spaces, parks and public gardens; the preservation of the buildings and places that have special interest for

¹At the cultural level these protectionist movements refer to authors like Ruskin and Morris (1862), who rose up against the disfigurement of nature perpetrated by the modern industrialism; Croce (1922), whose thought contributed to outline the forms of protection of the landscape in Italy, and Llewellyn (1939), who wrote the novel “How green was my valley”.

²Trad. “Rebuilding Italy!”.

³See, for example, the important cultural contribution, and not only, of Adriano Olivetti and the *Movimento di Comunità* since 1948. This movement undertook to precisely realize his ideal of Community in Canavese region (Ivrea), thus assuming in Italy of the 50 s considerable importance in the field of economic culture, society and politics and bringing together an extraordinary amount of intellectuals like Park, Burgess, McKenzie, Mumford, Weber, Simmel, who worked on different disciplines, pursuing the project of a creative synthesis between the technical-scientific and humanistic culture.

their age, their beauty, their historical and literature memory; the conservation of the beauty, simplicity and dignity of their outward appearance.

Other protection requests of nature and landscape are developed in the same period, as Benedetto Croce, former Minister of Public Education, reminds us during the presentation of the Bill no. 204 of 25 September 1920 “*Per la protezione delle bellezze naturali e degli edifice storici di particolare interesse*” (trad. “For the protection of natural beauty and historic buildings of particular interest”)⁴:

In many of these countries, in fact, they promulgated some time (before the war, of course) more or less effective protection laws; Hess in the Grand Duchy the 1902 law on the conservation of monuments provided also to the protection of natural phenomena, of rivers, rocks, trees; in Bavaria, a 1901 decree imposed the general protection of natural beauty; in Prussia, not only a 1904 decree placed among the monuments what is required to the effect of remarkable scenes and landscapes (the ruins, for example) but a national institution was provided for the defense of nature; in Austria, after an investigation into the natural beauty of the country made by the Faculty of Philosophy of the Vienna University, a law extended to landscapes and natural phenomena the protection of monuments; in France on 21 April 1906 was published the law “*pour organiser la protection des sites et monuments naturels*”; in Switzerland, for which it is known as the beautiful landscapes are the principal source of its economic prosperity, federal and cantonal laws for the protection of natural beauty and especially of the waterfalls are various, and in 1913 was established, with the assistance of the Government, the National Park of the Lower Engadine.

In Italy, the first laws in defense of the landscape were approved in 1905⁵ and in 1909,⁶ and concerned the protection of the Adriatic coast and the Pine forest of Ravenna (Fig. 2.1). In these laws we can see the influences of several cultural and artistic phenomena that helped to educate the aesthetic taste of the Italian society towards the natural beauty and landscape intended as a “scene”. They are related to the jurist and deputy Luigi Rava, in that moment Minister of Agriculture and then of Education. At the base of these first legislative references, landscape was considered as the conjunction and the integration of man with the natural environment: at that time Rava raised the question of extending the protection of works “consecrated in marble and bronze” to mountains, water, forests, throughout those parts of the native soil that long traditions associated with the moral attitudes and Italian political affairs (Peano 1992).

The sense of the landscape that permeates from these first laws is certainly influenced by an aesthetic approach: precisely in 1922, the defense of the Italian landscape will be identified with natural and scenic beauties right on the basis of the aesthetic idealism of Benedetto Croce (1938), according to which the concept of “beauty” is understood as that which produces a state of mind, a feeling that is expressed in an image as an immediate and fantastic knowledge of a moment of

⁴The same bill became, although slightly modified, the Law no. 778 of 11 June 1922, one of the main references of the landscape protection in Italy.

⁵Law no. 411 of 16 July 1905 “*Dichiarazione di inalienabilità in difesa della Pineta di Ravenna*” (trad. “Declaration of Inalienability in defense of the Pine forest of Ravenna”).

⁶Law no. 364 of 20 June 1909 “*Tutela delle cose mobili e immobili aventi interesse storico o artistico*” (trad. “Protection of movable and immovable assets of historical or artistic interest”).



Fig. 2.1 Natural reserve of the Pine forest of Ravenna (*source* Antonella Barozzi's photo)

spiritual life, and which therefore requires the presence of man. In the text of the law no. 778 of 11 June 1922, although full of “lyrical ideas” (Emiliani 2011), we capture well some fundamental issues, starting with the conflict between the reasons of the beauty and the poetic interest, including the respect of the ancient traditions and the need for territorial development: the concept of “natural beauty” was compared with the concept of “scenic beauty”, to be protected as such. However, it is a significant achievement for that period, but the limitation of the law no. 778 is in a rather restrictive concept of the landscape, mainly protected for its beauty and for its links with the civil and literary history, but not for its physical interrelations.

This line of thinking, common to these first legislative references of 1905, 1922 and subsequently, of 1939, affected by the definition and the contribution of the knowledge of the Italian landscape from the works of foreign artists who began taking the Grand Tour through Italy in search of art, culture and the roots of Western civilization between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries (Canevari

and Palazzo 2001). Not only that, according to Dal Piaz (1986), such thinking derives from the influence of the aesthetic theory of Croce and the inclusion of “beautiful by nature” in the category of artistic creations. The reference dimension of the law was strongly anchored to the aesthetic contents and not to the environmental ones (as we understand them today):

The dominant culture at the time (...) having a distinctly idealistic characterization, remained indifferent to the structural problems of the environment (nature conceived only as the abstract assumption of the dialectical development of the spirit) and showed some sensitivity exclusively to the aesthetic problems of the landscape, understood as a complex of external aspects of nature that can affect the emotional sphere of viewers educated to the taste of “harmony” (Dal Piaz 1986).

Against this background the urban planning challenge lies. The center of the-disciplinary debate moves to the search for ways through which to pursue an appropriate level of landscape protection within the planning practices. In this sense, the urban plan seems, even then, the best means of achieving this goal, as capable of guaranteeing (at least in theory) a systematization of the scenarios along with an adequate control of the transformations.

What we can note is that the protection of natural beauty in Italy, and thus of landscape, at that time was not conceived as separate from the planning tools governing the action of man on the territory, as demonstrated by the cultural contribution of some protagonists of the formulation of the Italian landscape protection laws in 1939, including Gustavo Giovannoni and Giuseppe Bottai. In fact, he supported the idea of establishing a landscape planning precisely in order to integrate environmental protection with urban planning development, in order to protect not only the natural scenes, but also those landscapes that are the “work of man” having the values of uniqueness and witness (Giovannoni 1938).

Urban planners, beginning with Giovannoni, move from the refusal of a sterile opposition between conservation and transformation, and explore new paths with the decision to bring the landscape (with its values of tradition and memory) within the new territorial control tools: territorial and urban plans. The protection of the landscape as well assume the innovative characteristics of a audacious reconstruction project between past and future, between the horizontal reasons of Modern Movement and the local identifications of the historic memory, between innovation and tradition. Subsequently, however, the urban planning history of Italy teaches us that the landscape protection, although limited for a long time to an aesthetic fact, has remained separated from local development decisions, opposed to them in both laws and practices.

Law no. 1497 of 1939, similarly to the almost contemporary Law no. 1089 of the same year⁷ about the protection of individual cultural assets, established a

⁷The law 1089/1939 protects the movable and immovable assets (with at least 50 years old) for their artistic or historical interest. The change of such assets must be specifically requested to the Superintendence, but it is not considered as building permit. The Minister may intervene on the state of the asset by means of: prescription of works or measures to preserve and ensure the integrity of the assets beyond the requirements of planning regulations; direct, or authorized to a

comprehensive protection system of landscape using an approach, that could be defined punctual-binding, which consists of the identification of a territory, for its characteristics of rarity and beauty, to be subjected to a specific protection with a constraint of significant public interest. The significant public interest, we are talking about, is what in fact triggers the protection and concerns:

- assets that have conspicuous characteristics of “natural beauty” and geological singularity (art. 1 no. 1);
- villas, gardens and parks that, not covered by the laws for the protection of historical assets of artistic interest, are distinguished by their “uncommon beauty” (art. 1, no. 2);
- the complex of assets that create a distinctive appearance having aesthetic and traditional values (art. 1 no. 3);
- Scenic “scenic beauties”, considered as natural pictures and those viewpoints or belvedere, accessible to the public, from which it is possible to enjoy the spectacle of such beauties (art. 1, no. 4).

This procedural mechanism, however, had some implications:

- It refers to “single parts” of territory, essentially of limited extent, recognizable in their constituent characteristics, as more or less “scenic views”.
- The law, at the art. 5, provided for the possibility to create “landscape plans”, in which are included complex of immovable assets and/or scenic beauties, under the jurisdiction of the State (role later delegated to Regions).⁸ Even then the issue of “landscape plans” is faced with awareness: “the absence of a landscape plan may irreparably compromise a landscape or scenic beauty, as well as an urban plan, executive without the prior consent of the Italian Ministry of National Education, may be able to destroy, as the painful experience teaches us, the few survivors natural beauties within the city and their surroundings” (art. 5).
- The nature of the protection constraints remains unchanged, as it is just procedural (it does not provide and does not express specific limitations or observances for any transformations of the territory, including the total ban on building certain portions of the territory), which requires however to acquire a specific authorization.
- The mechanism of constraints allows the identification of the affected properties and the assessment for the release (or not) of the expected building authorizations, while not completely eliminating the subjectivity of the action itself and its possible arbitrariness.

(Footnote 7 continued)

third party, expropriation; expropriation of buildings or areas surrounding monuments, in order to ensure the public access, enjoyment and decorum.

⁸They are still few regions that have significantly innovated the provisions contained therein. But very few they are also the “landscape plans” approved before the Law no. 431 of 1985 (Ciccone and Scano 1988).

The attempt of Giuseppe Bottai, through the two Laws of 1939, was to overcome, somehow, some unsolved problems of the previous legislation. First, he pointed out a definition of the object, the landscape, too brief and insufficiently comprehensive; the absence of a capable legislation to allow, operatively, the recognition of the asset to be protected⁹; the lack of a clear and effective coordination of the action of the Ministry of National Education with the Ministry of Public Works, precisely in the field of urban planning; and again, the lack of adequate sanctions for damages caused to the landscape (Fuzio 1990).

The constraint that is imposed on an asset, however, prevented the owners to destroy or introduce “modifications which could harm his appearance to that which is protected by this law” (art. 7), without the permission of the Superintendent. This prior control is also extended to the approval of the first building plans and urban plans, but did not determine a condition of a complete safeguarding of places.

The years after 1939 see, however, a substantial weakening of the planning tools provided by these first legislative references. The establishment of the landscape spatial plan (Fig. 2.2) is already suffering at that time of the conflict with the development plan provided for in the Italian National Planning Law no. 1150 of 1942: the law, in fact, does not include the landscape plans and stresses the mere fact that the urban planning should be essentially implemented through the “territorial coordination plans” and the “general municipal urban plans”.

According to Ciccone and Scano (1988) the cause of this lack of recognition and appropriate additions among planning instruments has to be identified within the competition between the Ministry of National Education (which was competent to approve the landscape plans) and the Ministry of Public Works (which was competent to approve the urban plans). This aspect has established that separation between the landscape protection and the territorial development until today: the preservation of the Italian landscape, even if in the 30s–40s compromised by invasive agricultural policies such as the “Battle of Wheat”, was nevertheless happened only thanks to the affixed constraints, considering the effects of the Italian economic development of the following years.¹⁰

The subsequent opening to additions and modifications to the Law 1150/1942, namely the Laws 765/1967 and 1187/1968, towards the protection of the landscape will be counterproductive: although significant parts of the Italian urban planning history, these laws added that the protection of cultural, natural and landscape values must be one of contents that local urban planning had to consider. This “relative” openness increased instead the lack of consideration of the landscape planning at large scale, giving jurisdiction on the contrary to the ordinary planning

⁹Law no. 1497 also states, in reference to a “single natural beauty” and “natural beauties as a whole”, which are “difficult to define” in legal terms, especially the latter. Hence a certain “flexibility” let by the law “in the definition of the landscape as much as panorama”.

¹⁰The economic development of Italy during the years of Mussolini’s dictatorship was rather slow and modest as it is based mainly the primary sector growth, thus limiting the propensity to speculation, which will become instead aggressive in the years after World War II (’50 and ’60), the so-called era of the “Italian economic miracle”.

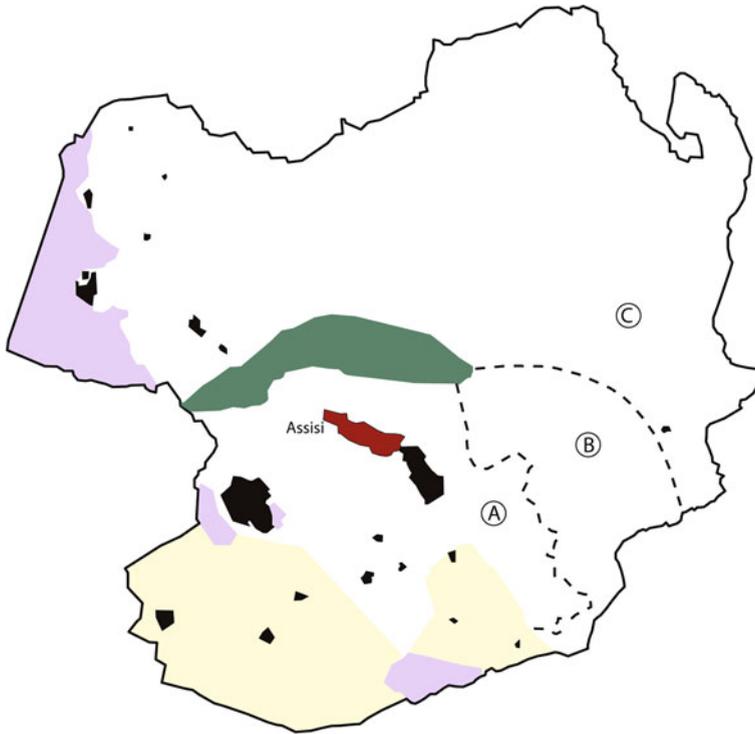


Fig. 2.2 The Landscape Plan of Assisi (by Giovanni Astengo 1969). It represents one of the first applications of the Law n. 1497/1939. They stand out in white agricultural landscape conservation areas **a**, of Mount Subasio **b**, in mountain areas **c**. In black, the building areas; in violet, the industrial areas (*source* Author's reworking)

activities also on the historical, environmental and landscape assets identified by laws 1089 and 1497 of 1939.

The work of the Constituent Assembly of 1946–1947 took on a definite confirmation of the importance of landscape protection, defining the interest of the Republic for this role. Art. 9 of the Italian Constitution reads: “The Republic promotes the development of culture and of scientific and technical research. Protects the landscape and the historical and artistic heritage of the Nation”. In this sense, all parties constituting the Republic (composed at that time by the State, Regions and Local Authorities) are called to protect the landscape. But the subsequent advances in the field, the results of the work of parliamentary committees and the delegation measures to the Regions, even more will sanction the clear distinction between a landscape protection, exclusive competence of the State, and its enhancement, instead assigned to the Regions. Exactly these transfers of competence in subjects such as environment, urban planning and landscape will not have a timely and advanced implementation, with quite a few consequences for local operation.

It must be observed that the art. 9 of the Italian Constitution has remained forgotten and neglected for years. Even the landscape plans have been neglected. Apart from the landscape plan of the Ischia island, which was approved in 1943, in the last months of fascism, in the postwar period before the Law no. 431 of 1985 “Galasso” were approved only 12 landscape plans¹¹: S. Ilario di Genova-Nervi (1953), Osimo (1955), Monte di Portofino (1958), Appia Antica (1960), Versilia (1960), Gabicce Mare (1964), Argentario (1966), Sperlonga (1967), Assisi (1969), Ancona Portonovo (1970), Procida (1971), Terminillo (1972). These landscape plans are very different from how we imagine them today. Some are limited to tiny portions of space. Other landscape plans, instead, albeit in a rudimentary form, consisted of drastic rules, very strict. The landscape plan of Ischia island, approved in 1943, the planner Alberto Calza Bini imposed the ban on building along most of the coast and the inner core of the island. About half of the building areas allowed very low coverage ratios.

2.2 From the Post-war Period to '80s

Ravaged by WWII and aggravated from the end of 1943 by a ferocious civil war, Italy after 25 April 1945 was a heavily damaged country. The Italian built patrimony had been strongly reduced; many industrial areas were damaged and out of commission and the infrastructures was largely inoperative. And yet the decade that followed would later be referred to as the “Italian Miracle”. Between 1945 and the mid-50s, Italy underwent an upheaval that would define its characteristics for many years to come and set the stage for its current position among the world’s most economically advanced countries. All this was made possible by a number of decisive political decisions, including membership of the European Economic Community, the Western Block and NATO and state participation in the development of a strong industrial and banking system. The 1945–1955 period was also witness to the affirmation, according to the most credible sources, of the so-called “dualist” model, within which Italian national framework appeared to be synthetically represented by clear oppositions: by the industrialized north versus the agricultural south; by modern capitalism in the north and semi-feudal society in the south; and by a rapidly growing urban system versus a declining rural one.

We have seen that in Italy, in the field of organization of the territory, there are two distinct regimes: that specific of protections, which belongs to the law of 1939 and the regime of urban transformations, which belongs to the law of 1942 and the

¹¹It is worth mentioning, however, that there is then a sort of second generation of landscape plans, those promoted in the second half of the sixties of the last century from the *Cassa per il Mezzogiorno* (“Fund for the South”) with the laudable aim of protecting 29 tourism development areas identified in the most beautiful places in Southern Italy. They will be defined as “interrupted plans”, because subject of lengthy, complex, sometimes appreciable solutions, but none of them has ever been approved.

subsequent national precepts (and then regional). But in the postwar period the urban planning has hand in hand enriched of content to include the physical integrity and cultural identity preservation. So much so that, sometimes, as we will see below, the urban planning tools have been more effective than the specialized one under Law no. 1497/1939. Since the Second World War in Italy, we can find a background of fairly advanced standards for that time, including the same planning law of 1942. But it is, as mentioned above, the period in which it was advanced a separation between the land use planning and the landscape planning: from now on, the landscape, albeit supported by highly advanced protection laws, seems not included explicitly in the choices of the ordinary planning, as has occurred in the international context.¹² The same landscape plans drawn up in Italy after the Law no. 1497, are not comparable with the experiences of regional and urban planning, as their scale of intervention was strongly inhomogeneous, that went from the detailed one to the territorial one and tried to meet the criteria of aesthetic compatibility of the building transformations in the protected areas.

In this evolutionary process has been fundamental the so-called “Law-bridge” (*Legge ponte* no. 765/1967), which includes among the content of the urban plan “the landscape and historical complex, monumental, environmental and archaeological protection” (for the first time the word “landscape” since the art. 9 of the Constitution is taken up by an ordinary law). The “Law-bridge” was commissioned by Giacomo Mancini, Minister of Public Works, in response to the indignation caused by the landslide of Agrigento in July 1966 caused by the huge speculative housing overload. It was called “bridge” because it had to be a temporary remedy, waiting for an organic urban planning reform (which Italy is still waiting today).

Ten years later, the Presidential Decree no. 616/1977, which regulated the transfer of functions from the State to the Regions, defined in art. 81 urban planning as: “The use of the territorial discipline inclusive of all the cognitive, regulatory and management aspects regarding the soil safeguard and transformation and the environmental protection”.

In Italy, unavoidable changes occurred due to the migration phenomena over the years '50 and '60: on the one hand, in several measures, a greater urban concentration in the so-called “strong territories” of the North; on the other hand, a progressive decline of emigration areas. A “dualist” model, resulting from the national framework, has favored a greater industrialization of the northern cities, compared to the southern ones, which led to major social, cultural and economic problems, especially in the agricultural sector.

Italy's radical post-war process of reconstruction and transformation was accompanied by a vast migration from under-developed areas—primarily the rural countryside towards the city, from inland areas towards coastal settlements and from the south to the north. This led to strong regional imbalances: in 1961, about

¹²In Germany, as in the United States, have been developed in the same period an adequate discipline and a field of specialized studies on the topic of planning and, above all, of the landscape design.

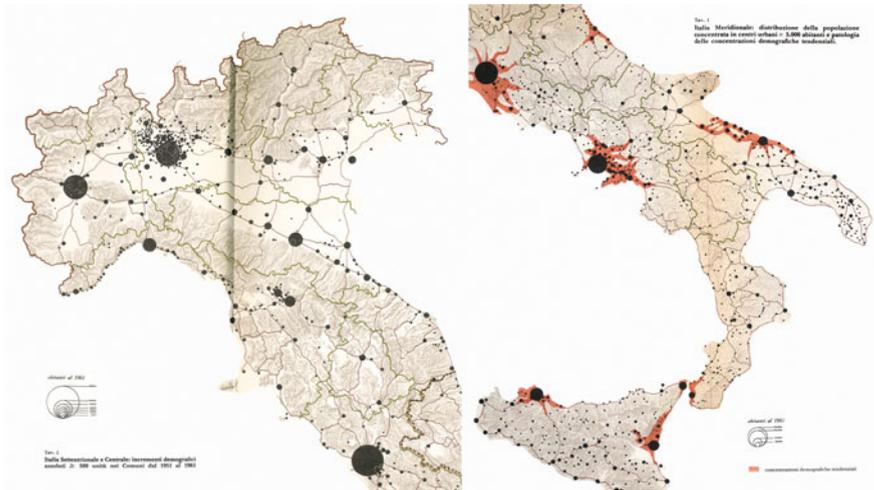


Fig. 2.3 On the left, northern and central Italy: absolute population growth ≥ 500 units in municipalities from 1951 to 1961. On the right, southern Italy: distribution of the population concentrated in urban areas ≥ 5000 inhabitants and trend demographic concentrations (*Source Urbanistica*, n. 49/1967, pp. 10–11)

5.7 million people (11.4% of the entire Italian population) lived in a region different than that in which they were born. The massive transfer of workforce from the agricultural sector to the industrial sector led to a significant increase of population of the northern cities: e.g. in 1950, Milan grew by 30% and Turin by 37% (Mioni 1976). Within this framework (Fig. 2.3), while some cities are emptied, others resorted to prepare the so-called “Building agreements” (in Italian, *Piani di fabbricazione*) which, as is known, were defined only for parts interested by urban expansion.

In 1949 the State promoted its *Provvedimenti per incrementare l'occupazione operaia agevolando la costruzione di case per i lavoratori*,¹³ a programme that remained valid for 14 years, supported by an obligatory withholding on workers' salaries.

Although its primary objective was that of relieving unemployment, the programme also revealed itself to be an important instrument for the diffusion of a modern culture of architecture and urban planning (Di Biagi 2001). Baptised with the name *INA Casa*,¹⁴ the initiative experimented with new typologies and initiated a debate about neighbourhoods, while constructing not only housing but also services and public spaces. The programme called on numerous young architects and engineers who imported experiences from Britain, the Netherlands and Scandinavia. Their approach to design was differentiated from the rigidity of the International

¹³“Policies for increasing employment by assisting the construction of housing for labourers”.

¹⁴*INA: Istituto Nazionale delle Assicurazioni* (Italian National Institute for Insurance).

Style and the German *Siedlung* of the 1920s and 1930s, which had been the inspiration for many of the neighbourhoods designed by Italian modern architects. The new interventions were widely distributed across Italy (about 2500 communities in 1951; Bottini 2001) and reached out for different and, in any case, less-radical solutions. The most striking and famous example is that of the Tiburtino neighbourhood in Rome, where a group of young architects developed a style of building that was named “neo-realist”, using forms derived from popular rather than complex architecture, in an attempt to alleviate the alienation experienced by local residents with respect to modernity (INCIS¹⁵ 1956, Quaroni 1957, Casciato 2000).

Urbanization, property growth and speculation were a quite negative scenario for the landscape, but also a promising and vast field of action for many of urban planners: a “testing ground” which also at the cultural level hoped for a process cultural renewal.

A new focus to international planning experiences led the Italian urban planning debate to a direct comparison with the foreign experts and with the most topical issues for the time. In the postwar years were developed and evolved some of the most important movements and associations for the protection of the landscape, that also in Italy played a crucial and indispensable role. One need only to consider the campaign for the protection of the Appia Antica road, carried out by Antonio Cederna and the Italia Nostra Association (1955); or, at the cultural level, the famous article of Arrigo Benedetti (1955) published on L'Espresso Journal “Corrupted Capital = Infected Nation”; or the birth of ANCSA (Italian National Association of Historic and Artistic Centres) and the drafting of the Gubbio Charter for the protection of historic centres (VV. AA. 1960); or, even, the birth of Italian section of WWF (1966, see Pratesi 2010).

The issue of recovery of the historical centres, in particular, has led to a way of working in favor of the landscape. Some urban plans have been emblematic in this sense: the Urban Plan of Assisi (1958) by Giovanni Astengo; the Urban Plan of Florence (1962) by Edoardo Detti (1963, see Fig. 2.4); the recovery urban plan of the historic centre of Bologna (1973); all characterized by very extensive studies and detailed photographic surveys.

In many of these experiences, the town planning and architectural heritage have been considered as a matter from which one could not do without: the historical centre is part of contemporary design, whether directly as subject of intervention or in the case in which its protection becomes, through its actualization, part of that project.¹⁶ This idea was in part applied in many historic centres, sometimes with

¹⁵INCIS: *Istituto Nazionale per le case degli impiegati dello Stato* (Government Employees Housing Institute).

¹⁶Just at the beginning of the article of Edoardo Detti “The arduous rescue of Florence”, published on *Urbanistica* n. 39/1963, Giovanni Astengo said in this regard: “A few positive examples emerge from the bankruptcy of Italian town planning in that years. Among them the revision of the urban plan of Florence implemented in two years of unspeakable hardships, which has heavily engaged the administration (...); a revision that bravely lowers the building index, broadens the areas for equipment, undersized in the previous plan, reorganizing the whole plan in response to actions planned by the administration and stimulates at the same time an intermunicipality plan.

by degradation and the WWII, required a different design culture that could highlight the question of historical preservation. Therefore, it is remarkable that these urban plans, and in the face of these problems, emphasized the theme of landscape as a necessary component in the moment of the urban reconstruction.

However, building and land speculation have played a decisive role in the choices of local governments, compromising largely many urban landscapes. Leonardo Benevolo, in *Le origini dell'urbanistica moderna* (1974), has supported the hypothesis of the “political” nature of the urban planning and its consequences on the value of some places. In fact, the construction of most of the urban plans have not used particularly innovative methods: according Avarello (1997) also the reflections and researches of interest carried out as part of the construction of some excellent urban plans remained within the attachments accompanying the planning tools. The analytical section, which in some cases included a vast apparatus of knowledge, in accordance with the teachings of Geddes, has often been disregarded in the moment of the drafting of planning regulations, as well as within urban projects, under the responsibility of local authorities.

Since the 60s, we can still record a margin: urban dynamics, which took on highly pervasive forms, determined the need to provide for a decisive breakthrough towards speculative interests in the territory and, in general, in the perspective of provide for a more careful and consistent affixing of constraints, *ex lege* n. 1497/1939, on assets and scenically interesting areas. In Italy, the so-called debate on urban planning reform,¹⁸ advanced by Fiorentino Sullo, member of Italian Parliament in 1962, was aimed at a possible resolution to this sort of separation (moreover increased in those years, by the totally autonomous policies of the Ministry of Agriculture, with consequent landscape impacts) between the protection of natural beauty and of landscape assets, under the Ministry of Public Education and then of Cultural heritage, and the mechanisms and the ordinary planning tools, under the Ministry of Public Works, presiding urban and territorial development. The Sullo's urban planning reform, in short, provided for the expropriation in advance of the areas considered for zoning and the better coordination of relations between economic programming and urban planning: the reform also stipulates that the orientation and coordination of urban planning must take place within the framework of national economic programming and its objectives and strategies. The urban master plan and the district plan (which could have the value of an urban plan) are implemented through executive planning tools, such as detailed plans, which prescriptions have value for an unlimited period of time: the municipality can expropriate *all* undeveloped areas and the areas already built if they differ from the plan. Acquired the areas, the municipality must provide for the primary infrastructure works and assign the so-called “surface rights” on areas for residential housing, which remain in public ownership. For several reasons, however, this urban planning reform is rejected in 1963 because considered fundamentally “antidemocratic”.

¹⁸See in this regard, the fundamental text of Sullo (1964): *Lo scandalo urbanistico*.

In the same years, the protection constraints imposed on a large scale seem to be the only instruments to which the protection of the landscape is entrusted, but this has not however been a hindrance to the pressure exerted by the urban development. During the following decade, other initiatives were aimed at improving the protection of the historical and artistic heritage and preserve, at least partially, the agricultural areas from an often indiscriminate urban sprawl.¹⁹

The definition of “cultural heritage” is thus introduced: this was one of the merits of the Franceschini Commission²⁰ (instituted as a result of the Law no. 310 of 26 April 1964 proposed of the Ministry of Education), which had the task of the investigation for the “protection and enhancement of the Italian historical, artistic and landscape heritage”. The result of the Commission’s work led in fact to the adoption of 84 “statements”, including the definition of “cultural heritage” as well as “of all that is material testimony having the value of civilization”. The statements included some firm and clear complaints concerning the deterioration, the state of abandonment and the poor enhancement of the Italian cultural heritage, due above all to the speculations conducted at the urban level. The Commission was able to complete its work of study aimed at the formulation of a bill intended to allocate special funds to safeguard from abandonment the Italian artistic and cultural heritage (VV. AA. 1967). We must emphasize the importance of this heritage of definitions, guidelines and insights contained in the statements for the cultural context of the landscape disciplines: in fact, the statements will anticipate of almost twenty years the Law no. 431/1985, for example with regard to the widening of the notion of “natural beauty” to conceptions less linked with a purely aesthetic evaluation (Declaration n. 34). According to Canevari and Palazzo (2001), in the Commission’s works it was given great importance to the relationship between the protection of the assets and planning activities, in relation to the urban plan and not so much regarding to the landscape plans defined by the Law 1497/1939. In conclusion, the works had some effects at the conceptual level, but in reality they were hardly translated into the local planning practices.

The rhythm of urban and economic development, more intense during the ’60s and ’70s, brought about a more consideration of the urban, natural and agricultural

¹⁹In this sense, we can remember the importance of the amendments to the Italian urban planning law of 1942, that is, the Law no. 765 of 1967 (and the subsequent Decree no. 1444 of 1968, on the definition of urban standards). In particular, this law was aimed at three main objectives: (1) Initiating a comprehensive application of urban plans on all Italian territory and ensuring the compliance of them (by fixing time limits and a “safeguard regime” for adopted plans but not yet approved); (2) Limiting the uncontrolled urban development, placing some limitations to the building in the absence of urban planning tools; (3) Obtaining private contributions to the costs of urbanization, until then imposed only on the public sector.

²⁰The Commission, chaired by On. Franceschini was consisted of eight study groups: (1) Archaeology; (2) Works of art and historical and cultural objects, and contemporary art; (3) Monuments, historic towns, urban planning and contemporary architecture, landscape; (4) Museums, collections; (5) Archives, libraries; (6) Tools and scientific and technical organizations for the protection; (7) Training of staff, facilities and administrative systems; (8) Review of the standards of protection (Canevari and Palazzo 2001).

landscape. In the same years, some initiatives aimed at reforming the legislation and planning practices were developed. Such initiatives greatly influenced the promotion of a landscape culture no longer exclusively based on local interventions or sectoral initiatives, but based on the economic planning strategies at the national level, linked to assumptions of new territorial organizations governed by planning tools promoted and managed by Regions, to whom are delegated powers which hitherto were of the exclusive competence of the State. In the same period, the conditionings deriving from a society that was evolving proposed the need to support the ordinary planning practices with a more strategic vision, as evidenced in the so-called *Progetto '80* (MiBPE 1969), namely an Italian national strategy for the future economic development, supported by a National Territorial Framework and by the Regional Committees for Economic Planning (CRPE). Beside the traditional urban planning, a long-term facility was thus defined, even if it do not determined concrete and positive results. Indeed, it was demonstrated in this way a further distance of landscape and local issues. The transfer of responsibilities in territorial and landscape planning from the State to the Regions (Presidential Decree no. 8 of 15 January 1972) substantially confirmed the removal of these themes from urban planning at local level. The transfer²¹ from the State to the Regions of the functions in some fields of planning also included the preparation and approval of landscape plans, thus making explicit the mismatch between urban planning and landscape planning activities.

2.3 From '80s to Today

Throughout the '70s in Italy as elsewhere processes of urbanization as they were known appeared to enter a state of crisis. Once-important industrial sectors, such as chemical and steel processing, were radically downsized. Major cities stopped to grow and even the building industry faced serious difficulties: although the problem of housing continued to be dramatic for many, numerous buildings remained unsold. Trade Unions acquired a greater ability to represent and organize national manifestations to request better public transport and public housing. Unemployment, social tension, disorder, fears, inflation and, finally, terrorism were concentrated in large cities, in many cases those that, up to this point, had been the privileged areas of development. Large industries released numerous employees and decentered production, entrusting it to a growing number of external companies. Large numbers of immigrants returning from other European countries pooled their savings and recently acquired skills to create new businesses in their native towns. A significant number of local economies began to develop as primarily small and

²¹The term “transfer” was later corrected by the term “proxy” with the Presidential Decree no. 616 of July 24 1977, just about the administrative functions exercised by the central and local agencies of the State for the protection of natural beauties (art. 82).

medium-small-sized businesses began to organize themselves into highly specialized industrial districts (chairs, shoes, etc.) and strongly oriented towards export, they were characterised by an elevated level of innovation: a rapid reply to changing demands from consumers and an aggressive approach to new markets (Becattini 1989).

As the old economy depended on and favoured the development of large cities, the new economy, which had no need for strong concentrations of labour, grew up around smaller centres or spread across extra-urban territories that were progressively less agricultural and progressively more urban as manufacturing facilities moved towards the workers who, in turn, no longer needed to move towards large cities. This was the period of the development of what would later be called the “diffuse city” or urban sprawl (Malusardi 2003). Even urban planners, traditionally involved in controlling the growth of large cities, were forced to orient their analyses towards the protection of environmental resources, the development of territorial infrastructures and the creation of a new urban geography characterised by lower density. However, this condition was not entirely new: a number of avant-garde studies had, since the '60s (De Carlo 1961) observed the formation of networks of social, economic and spatial relations that went beyond the urban dimension although at this point the phenomenon had not yet acquired the weight of a general model found in a growing number of areas. The growing awareness of “environmental issues” during the '70s has subsequently laid the basis for the search for solutions in the field of urban and regional planning. Nature and landscape conservation in the city is one of the biggest challenges for sustainable urban development, as a result of a social and ecological coevolution (Powell et al. 2002). In the studies conducted by Sundseth and Raeymaekers (2006) the value of nature and landscape in the city, however, goes far beyond its influence on the inhabitants' quality of life or rather has an intrinsic value: urban areas are surprisingly rich in biodiversity, as demonstrated by the presence of Natura 2000 sites in 32 European cities. The conservation and management of nature and biodiversity in urban areas is often very complex: there are more people, stronger urban development pressures, less space, a multiplicity of involved actors, etc. Often, the analyses reveal that the urban natural reserves are few but large and have high density. Large natural reserves can be especially important in urban landscapes, as the difference between the urban and natural environment can be high.

It should be noted, however, that the strategies of urban planning and those of nature conservation are generally separated. One possible reason is that the protection of nature has favoured a vision purely “conservative” towards nature outside the city and has made the vision of urban nature conservation trivial and distorted. However, the identification of urban nature is also part of a broader change in perspective within the conservation policies and remains as a necessary point of reference for a sustainable urban development (UNEP 1992; IUCN 2003). In many cities, this change of perspective was manifested through the institution of urban areas for nature conservation, supported by a general concept of “urban landscape”. In this sense, Dudley (2008) reminds us that a formally protected nature conservation area may be defined as “a clearly defined geographical space, recognized,

dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values”.

In the urban context, the establishment of these areas has been started during the twentieth century as a reaction to the rapid degradation of the urban environment due to industrialization and the consequent urban growth. It was therefore seen as a necessary step to keep nature and landscape away from private exploitations. Today, instead, the public interest is more oriented to the preservation of social values, biodiversity of nature and landscape. In the recent decades, in effect, the nature conservation and landscape policies have changed: today, a possible alliance between nature and landscape is assumed to be an essential condition for sustainable development (UNEP 1992; ECTP 2003; Hooper et al. 2005; IUCN 2012) and lays itself at different scales (Antrop 2001, 2004; Potschin and Haines-Young 2006; Selman 2006; Gambino 2009).

Up to those years, the consideration of nature and landscape in the Italian urban planning tradition has privileged the aesthetic approach, oriented to the historical and cultural heritage of excellence. During those years, when in Italy the debate was focused on the general “crisis of planning”,²² at the international level, an important shift on focus could be observed towards the *landscape planning* (Turner 1983), a new way of understanding the landscape in the plan, closer to the urgency of reducing ecological problems and supported by an emerging environmentalist currency in the cultural and political scenes. On the one hand, there was a growing need to put an end to environmental disasters; on the other hand, the issue of landscape merged forcefully in different disciplinary contexts.

The texts of reference, which have supported this period, are mainly two American books: “Silent Spring” of the biologist Rachel Carson (1962), about the scourge of pesticides effects and “The Closing Circle” of the economist Barry Commoner (1971). The political and economic relevance of the environmental issues was then outlined at the end of the '60, thanks to first criticism put forward by the “Report on Limits to Growth” (Meadows et al. 1972) against the “modern” myth of unlimited growth and the gradual domestication of nature, criticisms that invested the scientific basis of the modern project and the credit provided by the scientific objectification to the false ideas of progress and criticisms that allowed to develop the equation, already understood by Weber (1922), among the progressive “urbanization of the idea of nature” and the “naturalization of the idea of the city”. But it is especially with the concept of “sustainable development”, introduced in 1987 (WCED 1987) by the Brundtland Commission, in which the relationship between environmental issues and social issues became crucial, focusing not only on the global environmental emergencies but also on the influence they may have on the local development.

²²About the crisis of urban planning in Italy or, more specifically, on the “urban plan crisis”, and on the centrality of the “ordinary” plans, see Gabrielli (1995).

In the Italian legislative context, the period between the late '70s and the '90s, however, saw the enactment of some laws relating to landscape, watersheds, and parks.²³ In practices, instead, there was a progressive lack of responsibility in the disciplines of urban planning, which gave way to, firstly, the large-scale territorial studies (priority of the analysis and understanding of the phenomena) and then to the research on architectural quality. The need to seek new rules in a world rapidly changing by size and timelines seemed obvious, but, in fact, the problem was even more clearly given by the separation between the preservation of landscape, at a large-scale, and the interpretation of changes, within a “localism”, that did not seem to provide adequate preservation of the authenticity and integrity.

Since its entry into force, we cannot say that the Law no. 431 of 1985 has not played an important role in the protection of the landscape in Italy: it has been a great cultural advancement in the field, having expanded the framework of environmental protection, overcoming an exclusively “aesthetic” vision of landscape. The Law no. 431 was referring in particular to the signs that characterize both the ecological dimension and the historical, settlement and cultural, processes. The regulatory constraints, which were at the time still related to the Laws of 1939, have received with this Law the specific name of “landscape constraints”. The Law no. 431 has thus integrated the reference legislation in the field of landscape, introducing some innovations inspired by new protection criteria, based on the concepts of “extension” and “integration”: it extended the concept of constraint to entire typologies of areas identified under Law and it strengthened the institution of landscape planning: despite having boosted the constraints, the Law effectively stated the obligation for the Regions of drawing up the Territorial landscape Plan or the Territorial Urban Plan with specific consideration of environmental and landscape values (Art. 1). The definitive entry of territorial planning in the protection of the landscape, albeit reduced to specific areas and assets, consequently marked the end of the only constraint-based approach. A reason this, so the Constitutional Court declared, with the Judgment no. 151 of 27 June 1986 that the law no. 431 of 1985 has “markedly moved away from the discipline of natural beauties contained in the pre-constitutional legislation in the sector”.

Introducing an approach to preserving landscape based on pre-coded categories, the Law has effectively contributed to the recognition of the landscape in the contemporary debate: was a turning point, “a first comprehensive measure of landscape protection after decades of legislative inaction” (D’Angelo 2009), however, coinciding with a period of excessive land consumption. In its provisions, however, it supports the substantial renewal of the environment landscape, producing conceptual ambiguities that will certainly be expected in the production

²³Including the Law no. 431 of 8 August 1985 (“*Conversione in legge con modificazioni del decreto legge 27 giugno 1985, n. 312 concernente disposizioni urgenti per la tutela delle zone di particolare interesse ambientale*”) for the landscape, the Law no. 183 of 18 May 1989 (“*Norme per il riassetto organizzativo e funzionale della difesa del suolo*”), on soil conservation and the establishment of the Basin Authorities, Law no. 394 of 6 December 1991 (“*Legge quadro sulle aree protette*”), parks and protected areas.

plans. The overlap of meanings of environment and landscape in urbanism determines from this time a further and gradual separation from the aesthetic way of understanding the landscape, causing primarily a downsizing of the visual dimension. Having to move from a defensive “insular” approach for individual landscape assets to an enlarged defence of entire portions of territory, the Law defined designed categories to discretize the physical, geographic and biological characteristics of territory.

We can say that, from this time, planning practices move away from the local scale: landscape planning in Italy becomes of prevailing regional competence. The level of landscape plans was not yet so satisfying, especially following a practice of filing “mechanistic” of assets without any planning projection and thus keeping within an anachronistic vision of the constraint. In fact, despite the constraints (extended on almost half of the national territory) imposed by the Laws of 1939 and 1985, the areas under protection remained very general, failing to ensure a complete protection of the identity of the places and postponing a competence authorisation by the Government Department responsible for the environment and historical buildings. Within this framework, urban planning is very far away and the transition from the constraint system, intended as an administrative procedure of landscape protection to the project, intended as a perspective of enhancement of landscape assets coherently with the territorial contexts, is still a goal to achieve.

In the same years, even in the field the urban planning debate, specifically engaged on the topics of the relationship between planning and environmental issues,²⁴ there is an atmosphere of ferment: among the various emerging issues, we can add the consideration, into the Italian legislative order and into the practices, of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedures, in line with the EU guidelines. In view of this, the first generation of Italian landscape plans has led to a general diffusion of knowledge of environmental and landscape resources of specific territories, as evidenced by the dissemination of maps, statutes, atlases, descriptions. At the same time, however, the rest of the territory generally remained weak in landscape attention, both as regards the numerous situations of degradation either that with regard to the new transformation interventions.

In 2000, the European Landscape Convention (ELC) has placed the landscape at the centre of the policies of individual nations, introducing significant innovations in concepts and practices, even the ordinary and degraded landscapes, recognising it as the representative of people’s identity and as an economic as well as ecological and cultural resource, which needs articulated protection, management and planning interventions.²⁵ The European Landscape Convention has been an important opportunity to emphasize the theme of ordinary landscape (though not defining in

²⁴It is no coincidence that in the same period a particular interest has grown in the planning of national parks, at all levels, starting from 1989: National Park of Aspromonte (1989); Park of the Belluno Dolomites (1990); the Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga, Cilento and Vallo di Diano, Majella, Gargano (1991), Val Grande (1992).

²⁵Not only the ELC even the main strategies for a balanced and competitive development of the European territory of the same period are focused on environment, landscape, quality of

detail the operational rules by which this should be done), innovating the binomial *nature-city* and has placed an innovative push launching a triple challenge:

1. A clear and explicit statement that the landscape quality objectives to be pursued even at an urban scale does not concern a few pieces of undisputed value landscapes (for example, natural beauties and scenic areas or panoramic views) but relate to the whole territory.
2. The recognition of the complex landscape significance as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors” (art. 1a) and as “an essential component of people’s surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity” (art. 5a).
3. The systematic reference to population, involved in the definition and implementation of landscape policies.

The type of legal protection and the subsequent intervention on landscape, depend on its objective and subjective characteristics, where there is a strong recognition by the local community involved by that particular intervention. The ELC does not eliminate the possibility for landscapes of exceptional value affixing constraints, which must be determined by the Countries. If we consider the landscapes not owning a particular value, the ELC urges States to put in place a specific legal protection that normally does not pursue a further goal of safeguarding, but rather guarantees the realization of actions, in the perspective of sustainable development, to ensure the landscape governance, in order to harmonize the transformations to enhance, restore and create new landscapes. At Art. 5d, the European Convention emphasizes the need for integration of the landscape into the general and sector policies, even at the local level of planning. In the Italian situation, this statement is considered differently from Region to Region, as it calls into question the various sectors of activity (for example, soil, water and waste management, tourism, economic and social development), traditionally managed with rather different modes and forms.

The Cultural Heritage and Landscape Code (Repubblica Italiana 2004)²⁶ is actually the most significant legislative instrument within the evolution of the Italian landscape legislation following the signing of the European Landscape Convention. In general, the Code seems to be inspired by the principles of the Convention: while confirming in the third section “Landscape Assets” the contents of the previous law, it includes some innovations that specifically relate to the

(Footnote 25 continued)

architecture and design for the development of territories (see, for example, the European Union’s Territorial Agenda 2020, EU 2011).

²⁶The Code was developed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism according to the provisions of Art. 10 of Law no. 137 of 2002. The Code was issued by the President of the Italian Republic with the Legislative Decree no. 42 of 2004 and it was subsequently amended by the Legislative Decree no. 157 of 2006 and the Legislative Decree no. 63 of 2008.

definition of the term “Landscape”, the policies for the landscape protection and enhancement and the extension of the landscape planning the entire regional territory from the descriptive prescriptive and proactive point of view. With the Code, certain provisions relating to consultation and participation of stakeholders in the landscape protection are introduced. Specifically it aims to:

- extend landscape protection and enhancement to the entire regional, and therefore national, territory;
- coordinate the formulation of general landscape policies by the competent Ministry that must propose the general guidelines for landscape planning;
- provide that in the phase of approval of the landscape plans consultation and participation of all stakeholders are met;
- establish that the forecasts of the landscape plans should be:
 - mandatory for planning instruments of municipalities, metropolitan cities and provinces;
 - prevailing on differing provisions which may be contained in planning instruments and sector, including those of authorities managing protected areas.

Following this philosophy, the Code has made major changes in the planning system landscape, especially in relation to the issue of competencies and landscape protection and enhancement, but moving away from some assumptions that have guided the European Landscape Convention: on the one hand, it further emphasizes a separation between “landscape protection” and “landscape enhancement”, through the attribution of the first to the exclusive competence of the State and the second to the competence shared between the State and the Regions; on the other hand, the Code seems to mark a greater distance from the well-established internationally leanings that support the need for integration between landscape preservation and sustainable spatial development, to be pursued especially at the local scale. According to Peano (2011), in this way, “still seems to perpetuate the old Italian view that has always followed two parallel roads to protect the landscape: as the passive safeguard of cultural and landscape assets and the territorial development (e.g. urban planning). The obvious risk is to neglect marginal and degraded landscapes that invest a large part of Italy and for which recovery and revitalization require active policies, social and economic, to put them back inside the circuits of sustainable development. It is not coincidental, in this regard, that the Code neglect, even in the definitions, the economic significance of the landscape, emphasizes instead by the Convention”. On the one hand, therefore, the Code supports an almost absolute preservation of landscape; on the other, the Convention emphasizes the fundamental role of populations with regard to their landscape. It seems to prevail, once again, the role of the landscape obligations, defined at the large scale and far from the choices of the local urban planning. A distancing, this, not only from the local level but also between the State and the Regions, that should instead co-plan for the preparation of landscape plans.

At the local level, new urban practices have entrusted the control of the transformations to specific “key projects”, often autonomous if compared to the plan, in order to define fabrics and urban forms, but without a specific cogency than the current regulations, and transforming the plan into a more “flexible instrument”, prepared to express only general strategies. In this regard, landscape and environment are likely to remain a “pretext”, away from the possibility of operationally guiding the urban transformations. At the local level, then, the idea of a single planning system, able to synthesize the methods and characteristics of the future development, collides with the apparent inability to manage the increasingly close relations between local and global dynamic conditions. As a result, the Regions have begun to establish new regional laws that require a new articulation of the urban plan, often divided into two separate instruments: the “structural plan” and “operational plan”. The first, of a strategic nature and valid in the medium to long term, substantially defines the territorial elements to be preserved, in terms of the environment, landscape, culture, and the related development choices; the second, which is valid in the short term, states the procedures for the management of zoning transformations (Campos Venuti 2008).

The experiences that have occurred in recent years have effectively enriched a reflection on the importance of the landscape, although attributed to the environment, which seems to be a common reference concerning the fields and methods of intervention in the organization of urban space. In particular, the proliferation of specific sectorial plans (e.g. transport, water, parks, businesses, rural development, etc.) represents, in fact, an attempt to address the complexity of the contemporary city. In this sense, it is possible to “read” the landscape within a high number of local planning experiences, but highlighting a certainly “comforting reasoning” (Sampieri 2008), which even more emphasizes the inability to reply operationally to the urban transformations affecting the Italian culture and society. And it is in this sense that, since 1990, starts the so-called season of “complex urban programs”,²⁷ generally connected ad hoc to financial programs and often, although not always, associated with the need to regenerate brownfield sites or historic towns and degraded residential areas, but often in conflict with the ordinary planning instrument, calibrated on a different temporality.

However, in some Italian experiences, the sustained idea has allowed to experience some attempts to overcome the only restriction-based approach of urban planning as “static” and often not shared by people and institution. In these cases, for example, landscape and nature have been assumed as strategic elements for the identification of scenarios for sustainable urban development and at the same time for testing some initiatives to bring in operational terms a shared sense of urban landscape transformations. In fact, the impasse in which the urban planning is today in some cases has been overcome with the aid of less codified forms of planning (for

²⁷It is perhaps not a coincidence that the season of complex programs evolved in parallel with the EU initiatives (Urban Programs, Urban Pilot Projects, Integrated Territorial Plans, etc.), bringing together the resources provided by different sources, public and private.



Fig. 2.5 Schematic representation of the strategic area no. 6 “Neighbourhood of Grumello al Piano” (Source Annexes to *Urbanistica* no. 144 of 2010)

example, public participation initiatives to favour the practice of landscape management). Among other supplementary and implementation tools, the PGT of Bergamo proposes strategic programs (for example, the “Framework document on integrated intervention programs” of 2006), urban policies and complex urban programs, such as the “Neighbourhood Contract” of Grumello al Piano (see Fig. 2.5).

The Neighbourhood Contract, concerning both urban areas and open spaces, tries in this case to redevelop a periurban area characterized by the deterioration of the urban environment with strong social problems, through four lines of action:

1. Public housing actions, not so much aimed at the special maintenance of housing, but at the new buildings with interventions for increasing energy conservation;
2. Social cohesion;
3. Prevention and territorial control;
4. Economic revitalization (agricultural park and local businesses).

A significant case study, then, is that of the Nature and Landscape Guidelines²⁸ of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano—Alto Adige which require specific landscape plans at different scales: municipal, inter-municipal, parks. The current landscape planning instruments of Alto Adige are represented by rules on the protection of species, protected areas and local plans, which fulfil to the current tasks of the protection of nature and landscape. The landscape plan currently constitutes a traditional tool for nature conservation, considered in fact that the main objective is the imposition of constraints on individual assets. The idea proposed by

²⁸Approved by Resolution n. 3147 of the Provincial Council of 2 September 2002, published in the ordinary supplement no. 1 to the Regional Official Bulletin n. 3 of 21 January 2003.

Table 2.1 Procedural steps of the landscape plan and the urban plan (*Source* Author’s reworking from landscape guidelines, province of Bolzano—Alto Adige 2002)

Step	Landscape plan	Urban plan
1. Municipal decision to draw up the plan	Municipal decision to draw up the landscape plan	Municipal decision to draw up the Urban plan
2. City council, associations of interest	Discussion on the acquired data and draft version of the landscape plan	Discussion on the acquired data and draft version of the Urban plan
3. Preliminary draft version of the plan	Landscape plan: preliminary draft and report	Urban Plan: preliminary draft and report
4. Municipal council meeting	Landscape plan	Urban plan
5. Public exhibition	Any amendments	Any amendments
6. Analysis of the plan	1st Committee for the landscape protection	Provincial committee for urban planning
7. Approval of the plan	Municipality side: returns to City Council with opinions Provincial side: Provincial Council approval	Provincial council approval

the Province of Bolzano—Alto Adige states that the landscape plan is a useful tool to all municipalities, since it is able to integrate the care and development of the landscape, as well as all the recreational needs related to it (Table 2.1).

At the municipal level, it requires to be carried out a specific study of landscape and its evaluation (landscape inventories), developed specific guidelines and established the necessary measures for the development and promotion of the landscape. The priority in this case is attributed to development strategies, although it is not denied the possibility of laying down protective measures for individual elements of the landscape in the municipal area (for example, the dry stone walls, mills, irrigation canals, avenues, walks, tree species of aesthetic value, etc.), to be included as a category “nature reserves and protected landscape elements”.²⁹

In addition to the ecological requalification plans, the guidelines require the drafting of a specific landscape inventory, both of larger landscape units (peat lands, dry grasslands, hedges, monumental trees, etc.) and for the cultural landscape elements (typical houses and farms, dry walls “waale”, wooden fences, chapels and crucifixes, etc.). Even in this case, the inventory tool (which could be also considered as “analysis of the biotopes”) constitutes the basis for the design of urban plans, landscape plans

²⁹For major projects, the guidelines require to ensure compatibility landscape through the presentation of specific ecological rehabilitation projects. These plans, in this case, must provide safeguards and compensatory measures for each project. The same ecological rehabilitation aims should also be mandatory in the case of involving sensitive environments (such as protected areas, free, landscape, areas above the forest boundaries, wetlands, etc.).

and plans for the enhancement of the rural territories, as well as a valid meter of environmental impact assessment of individual actions and projects.

Finally, we can still reference to the green management plans, which are provided for the design of new building areas, as an integral part of the urban implementation plans. These instruments contemplate all measures necessary for the protection, care and development of the natural areas considered still intact and, in addition, also integrate design of open spaces, quality of housing, fruition networks and natural parks. In short, the experiment carried out by the Province of Bolzano—Alto Adige proves to put in place a solution to the traditional setting of the bond landscape, experimenting with new ways through the introduction of new instruments and actions, aimed exclusively at promoting the quality of the sites. The local level plan is not only designed for the purpose of regulating the building rights, but also for managing the complexity and the dynamism of the landscape. The factors of interest can then be summarized in the following aspects:

- the systematic involvement of the population in all stages of drawing up the plan, for the sharing of new awareness and new interests;
- the temporal gradation of the proposed strategies, proposing a scan for the implementation of the various projects;
- the place the landscape in the centre of the plan's interests, identifying effective legislation and regulations for the protection of the landscape dimension of the territory.

The evident approach in the guidelines of the Province of Bolzano—Alto Adige is identifiable in the German town planning thought, which has always been considered the landscape as an important component in the planning process and urban and territorial transformation. No coincidence that we speak of so-called *Stadtlandschaft*, or “city landscape”, which has been further extended to the concept of “landscape in the city”. The translation of this concept, mainly geographic-naturalistic, in terms of instrumentation of planning has led to the situation where the open spaces are of responsibility of special offices that elaborate at all scales (regional, provincial, local) landscape plans, atlases and studies on the ecological-environmental system of the city.³⁰ The competence of the municipal landscape plans contain mandatory provisions that are subject to the approval of the town planning instrument at the municipal level or intended as preliminary tools for driving the subsequent planning activities.

³⁰To get to the present situation, even in Germany it took decades of continuous search for dialogue between urban planning and ecology, as early as since the first federal law on protection of nature *Bundesnaturschutzgesetz*, in 1976. Since then it has been highlighted the open space as a scarce resource and three different levels of landscape planning related to the land respectively were introduced, those of the government and municipalities. To the latter is given the task of producing, according to the general lines posed by higher-level plans, a landscape plan, *Landchaftsplan*, which is one municipal statute dealing only non-built-up areas to be applied within the limits defined by the urban master plan, *Flächennutzungsplan*. Another tool is the master plan of green spaces, which, while not expected within the Federal Law on nature protection, is widely used for its organic connection with urban planning.

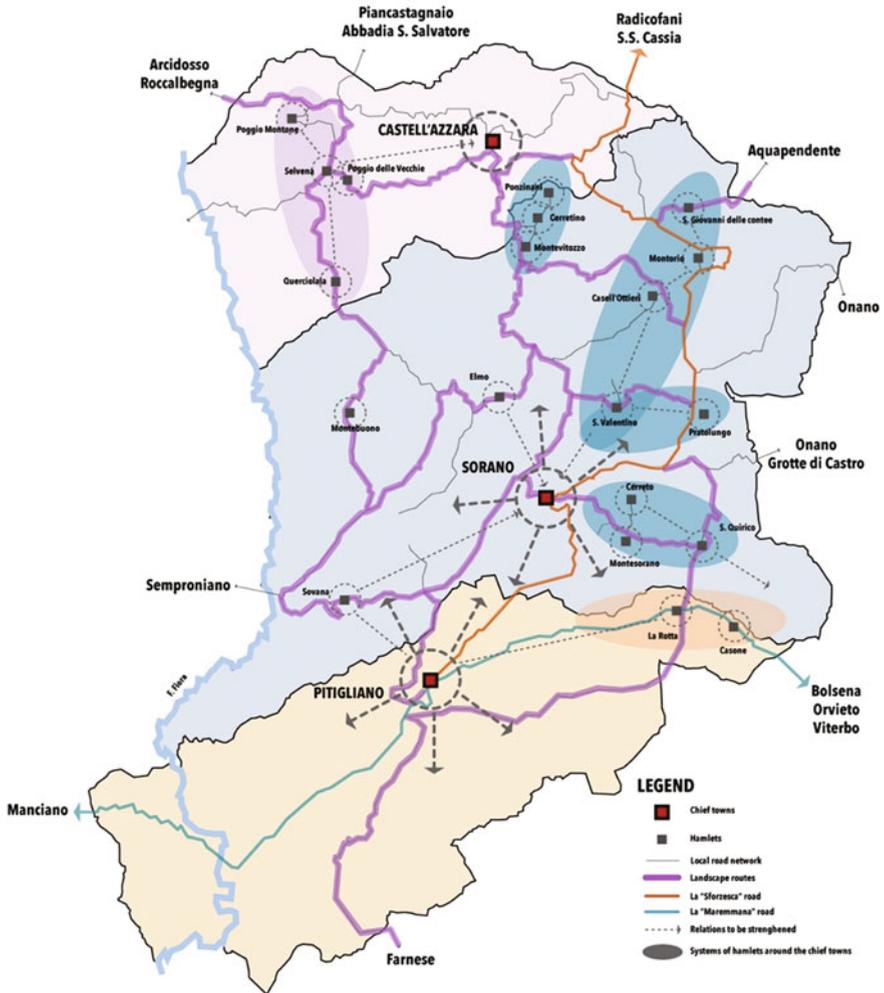


Fig. 2.6 Local planning forms: the case of the “Città del Tufo” (Castell’Azzara, Sorano, Pitigliano). Some municipalities agree to cooperate in a spontaneous way for a structural and integrated landscape planning Landscape planning (Source Author’s reworking from Structural Coordinated Plan 2008)

In other case, in the so-called “Città del Tufo”³¹ in Tuscany, nearby local governments (Castell’Azzara, Sorano, Pitigliano; see Fig. 2.6) attempted to integrate different aspects related to their area of jurisdiction, in inter-municipal key, according to a common system of addresses and regulations and in line with the

³¹Many historic hill towns of Tuscany, Umbria, and Lazio exist in a distinctive geological landscape carved out over millions of years from a volcanic tuff plateau.

dictates of the Tuscan Regional Territorial Plan. The quality of this territory derives not only from the existence of an exceptional archaeological heritage, but also by the presence of many historic centres, often well preserved, of works produced by the activity of excavation of clay pits and, more recently, from the identification of areas of geological interest. Such presence of cultural and natural resources, which also adds a quality agriculture especially in wine production, however, has not been able to enhance local identity characters into real, unique and internationally recognizable “regional brands”. For this reason, the Structural Coordinated Plan has become one of the main mechanisms of cooperation for the integrated development of the area and at the same time a spatial planning tool, as a cornerstone for the conservation of environmental resources, historical and cultural values of the landscape and settlements.

The Structural Plan, coordinated among the three Municipalities (2008), consists of three highly integrated parts: a Reference Cognitive Framework, a Statute of Territory, and the Strategic Directives for the Urban Planning Regulations.

The Statute of the Structure Plan Coordinated, in fact, contains:

- the identification of landscape assets;
- the discipline of landscape enhancement and of the historic and cultural assets;
- the indication of areas where, in relation to the specific character of the landscape, the compatibility verification should take place after the authorization (according to the dictates of the Cultural Heritage and Landscape Code) and by verification of compliance with specific provisions contained in the planning instruments;
- the identification of severely degraded areas in which the restoration and requalification does not require the granting of a specific landscape authorization.

This experience is in fact an attempt to achieve operativity at the local level, where otherwise the limited administrative information and technical expertise would have put a stop. It is the idea of sharing common aspirations, adapting them to the scale of inter-municipal landscape objectives and in order to facilitate the adjustment of local plans to the large-scale planning instruments.³²

³²For further reading on this subject, see the critical review published on *Ri-Vista. Ricerche sulla progettazione del paesaggio* (vol. 13), dedicated to research PRIN 2007 “The making of Landscape: from regional planning to local planning and design” (scient. resp. prof. Attilia Peano). The research highlights that only some Italian Regions have focused, in a new plan or in its revision in compliance with the Code, on the central role of local planning, in this way deviating from the guidelines expressed by the European Landscape Convention, just where it emphasizes the need to extend the action for the landscape to the entire territory, including also the ordinary and degraded landscapes that actually represent the majority in Italy.

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